

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

AFGHANISTAN

Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

Conflict displacement
Figures analysis



AFGHANISTAN - Contextual update

Stock:	1,286,000
New displacements:	474,000
Returns:	34,000
Provisional solutions:	533,000

The UN reclassified Afghanistan as a country in active conflict again in 2017. Persistent clashes between the Afghan military and Taliban and ISIL forces produced waves of new displacements in eastern, northern and north-eastern regions. Nangarhar province was worst affected and there were also regular attacks in Kabul. A truck bomb in May and a string of smaller attacks in June killed hundreds of civilians. The attacks triggered protests against an already fragmented government and led to the announcement of elections set for 2018.

The year was also marked by a shift in conflict dynamics as the military moved to secure urban areas, leaving a vacuum in rural areas that allowed the Taliban to consolidate control over 16 new districts. Large numbers of people fled these areas toward urban hubs.

International politics also played a role in increasing of the number of IDPs in the country through the implementation of measures to return Afghans to their country of origin. Many went back “home” to a life of internal displacement.

AFGHANISTAN - Major new displacements in 2017



Sources: Displacement data (IDMC); map (OCHA, Reliefweb) created in Sep 2013. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and IDMC.

AFGHANISTAN - Stock: 1,286,000 IDPs

This corresponds to the total number of individuals in a situation of internal displacement at the end of 2017



Sources and methodologies

Our sources for this estimate are REACH/OCHA, UNHCR and IOM. Methodologies included primary data collection after the identification of informal settlements (REACH/OCHA), headcount (IOM) and registration and deregistration processes (UNHCR).

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

There are serious concerns about accounting for IDPs in Afghanistan. Shrinking humanitarian and development spaces create a reporting bias reflected in the availability of data, historical data collected before 2014 is not entirely reliable because of methodological concerns, working percentages are applied but based on estimates, IDP returnee movements are not systematically tracked in the long term and in some cases such people may not qualify as IDPs according to the Guiding Principles.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale

Our estimate is the sum of four different caseloads produced by the above sources. Within these caseloads, the following categories are included: recent, prolonged and protracted IDPs, undocumented deportees, undocumented spontaneous returnees and documented voluntary returns from Pakistan.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year

The figure has been updated in the light of better data, building on a more transparent and accurate methodology.

AFGHANISTAN - New displacements: 474,000

This corresponds to the estimated number of internal displacement movements to have taken place during the year



Sources and methodologies

This figure consists of the "newly displaced population due to conflict between 01 January 2017 and 31 December 2017", compiled by OCHA sub-offices based on inter-agency assessment results.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The numbers are not verified until a screening or household-level assessment procedure has been completed, which causes delays in obtaining verified figures. Community members often do not register the exact number of displaced families, and sometimes come forth for late registrations if there is a backlog. Community members also tend to report the number of families rather than individuals. As for the stock figure, shrinking humanitarian and development space creates a reporting bias reflected in the availability of the data, and OCHA does not track IDPs after the emergency phase, or six months after their displacement begins.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale

Our estimate is based on the number of displaced households whose petitions to the government for registration and assistance have been accepted and validated, as published by OCHA, multiplied by Afghanistan's AHHS.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year

Our 2017 figure is lower than the previous year's but we were unable to identify any significant methodological change to account for the decrease, which may have been caused, at least in part, by access restrictions in some parts of the country.

AFGHANISTAN - Returns: 34,000



This corresponds to the number of individuals for which sufficient evidence exists to indicate a return to the habitual place of residence

Sources and methodologies

The source for our figure is UNHCR, which monitors flows in both directions across the Afghan border. Refugees visit either the UNHCR office or the voluntary repatriation centre in their country of asylum, where they deregister as refugees, schedule their return and receive an information package. Returnees are subsequently welcomed by UNHCR staff in Afghanistan.

Caveats, limitations and monitoring challenges

Numbers may vary depending on UNHCR's follow-up with returnees in Afghanistan. We did not include voluntary, spontaneous or deported returnees from Iran in our figure because we did not have the information needed to categorise them either as IDPs or returnees.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale

Our figure represents the 60 per cent of documented voluntary returnees to Afghanistan from Pakistan whom we estimate went back to live in their province of origin based on information from our partners in the field.

AFGHANISTAN - Provisional solutions: 533,000

This corresponds to cases of individuals who IDMC considers to not have achieved a durable solution



Challenges in accounting for returns

It is difficult to collect and analyse robust data on cross-border returns to Afghanistan from Iran, Pakistan and other countries, because someone's categorisation as an IDP or returnee depends heavily on the circumstances of their movement, which are not always clear.

Return to unknown circumstances: Our figure includes IOM caseloads of undocumented spontaneous returns and deportations from Iran, and undocumented spontaneous returns from Pakistan, and UNHCR caseloads of documented voluntary returns from Iran and other countries.