

# SOUTH AFRICA

## Displacement associated with Conflict and Violence

### Figure Analysis – GRID 2020

#### CONTEXT

Cases of xenophobic violence towards foreign-born individuals increased in various urban areas of South Africa in 2019. Recurrent since 1994, these episodes of targeted violence occurred amid political tensions ahead of national elections in May, as well as a difficult economic situation, with the [unemployment rate](#) at the beginning of the year at 29 per cent.

IDMC recorded a total of 2,288 new displacements in 2019. A major episode of xenophobic violence took place in the larger metropolitan area of Johannesburg in Gauteng province in September. Migrant workers from various countries, including Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Malawi, were targeted in attacks. [Shops, homes and businesses belonging to foreign individuals were destroyed](#). In most cases, people have been able to return to their place of origin provided and were provided with materials for shelter support while rebuilding.

IDMC’s data also covers an episode of violence in Durban in March, when 50 foreign nationals and residents sought shelter at a police station after being forced out of their homes following [a week of violent protests](#).

This is the first year IDMC has reported on violence-related displacement in South Africa.

New displacements that occurred in 2019	Total number of IDPs as of 31 December 2019  (Year figure was last updated: 2019)	Partial Solutions and Unverified Conditions		
		Number of IDPs who have made partial progress towards a durable solution*		Number of IDPs whose progress towards durable solutions cannot be verified**
		Flows (1 January – 31 December 2019)	Stocks	Flows (1 January – 31 December 2019)
2,288	251	2,037	-	-

\*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2019 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances, this number may refer to movements having taken place in 2019 (flows) rather than a total number of people (stock).

\*\*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2019 but for whom there is no available evidence to corroborate progress toward durable solutions. In a few instances, this number may refer to movements having taken place in 2019 (flows) rather than a total number of people (stock).

## NEW DISPLACEMENTS THAT OCCURRED IN 2019

*This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement that occurred in 2019.*

### **IDMC figure and rationale**

IDMC estimates that 2,288 people were displaced in 2019 in South Africa. The figure is based on two caseloads reported by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), both referring to xenophobic violence.

### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC's estimate for new displacements is based on cases of xenophobic violence which were obtained through IFRC and HRW, reporting on two different caseloads.

The main case refers to a widespread case of xenophobic violence that erupted in Richards Bay in Kwala Zulu Natal province and then intensified in Johannesburg, Germiston and Pretoria in Gauteng province between 1 September and 12 September 2019. Two thousand thirty-seven people were forcibly displaced after the destruction of their houses. Those people then took shelter in various evacuation centres across Pretoria, Germiston and Richards Bay. IFRC established this figure based on assessment reports from the South African Red Cross Society, operating from the shelters.

The second caseload is based on an estimate from HRW, reporting on cases of xenophobic violence in the city of Durban and surrounding towns in March and April 2019. Foreign nationals were forced to seek shelter at a police station after their homes were destroyed. HRW and South African-based, African Diaspora Forum examined those incidents through interviews with displaced people and various local authorities.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

First, IDMC's figure is likely to be an underestimate since only people who were sheltered were considered. Displaced people staying with relatives or in a situation of homelessness were not reported. Another complexity can be found in the guidelines framing IDMC's everyday monitoring. Only people forcibly displaced from their habitual place of residence are accounted for. In the case of xenophobic violence, it has been challenging to determine whether targeted foreign-born individuals were residents in South Africa at the time of the attack.

### **Significant changes from last year**

This is the first year IDMC has reported on displacement associated with violence in South Africa.

## TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS

*This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in internal displacement as of 31 December 2019.*

### **IDMC figure and rationale**

IDMC's estimate of 251 is based on a report from HRW on displacements associated with xenophobic violence.

### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC's estimate for the total number of IDPs is based on data published by HRW which was obtained, in collaboration with the African Diaspora Forum, through interviews with displaced people and local authorities. They refer to xenophobic violence towards foreign-born individuals in the city of Durban and surrounding areas in March and April 2019. As a result of these attacks, many people had their houses destroyed and were forced to flee for their lives.

IDMC has not succeeded in obtaining any evidence that those displaced people returned by 31 December 2019, so it is assumed that 251 people are still in a situation of displacement.

#### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

The number of reported internal displacement-related events remains low in South Africa, suggesting that such incidents are poorly covered by the media and South African authorities.

#### **Significant changes from last year**

This is the first year IDMC has reported the number of individuals still living in internal displacement in South Africa.

## NUMBER OF IDPS WHO HAVE MADE PARTIAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A DURABLE SOLUTION

*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2019 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements that occurred in 2019 rather than a total number of people.*

#### **IDMC figure and rationale**

IDMC estimates that 2,037 internally displaced people (IDPs) have made partial progress towards a durable solution in 2019 in South Africa. All displaced people have returned to their habitual or usual place of residence to rebuild their houses after being displaced by xenophobic violence.

#### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC's estimate for people who have made partial progress towards a durable solution is based on data obtained by email from the South African Red Cross Society.

IFRC provided displaced people with materials such as tarpaulins and blankets for shelter support while they rebuilt their houses. IDMC has no evidence as to whether IDPs were able to eventually rebuild, and it is assumed that they only achieved partial progress towards a durable solution.

#### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

It is assumed that people left the shelters voluntarily to return home. There is no information to confirm this assessment.

#### **Significant changes from last year**

This is the first year IDMC reports on IDPs achieving partial progress towards a durable solution.

## CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

The Confidence Assessment provides an at-a-glance overview of the comprehensiveness of the data available regarding displacement associated with conflict for each country. It describes the methodologies used, frequency of reporting, data disaggregation and geographical coverage. Here two key metrics are analysed: the new displacements and the total number of IDPs.

Displacement metric	New displacements	Total number of IDPs
Reporting units	People, Households	People, Households
Methodology	Key informants, Media monitoring	Key informants, Media monitoring
Geographical disaggregation	Admin 2 or more	Admin 2 or more
Frequency of reporting	Other	Other
Disaggregation by sex	Partial	Partial
Disaggregation by age	Partial	Partial
Data triangulation	Some local triangulation	Some local triangulation
Data on settlement elsewhere	No	No
Data on returns	Partial	Partial
Data on local integration	No	No
Data on cross border movements	Partial	Partial
Data on deaths	No	No
Data on births	No	No

For any additional questions please email: [data@idmc.ch](mailto:data@idmc.ch)

For the full country profile on South Africa, please visit:  
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-africa>