

UKRAINE

Displacement associated with Conflict and Violence

Figure Analysis – GRID 2020

CONTEXT

Internal displacement has been one of the main challenges and consequences of the conflict in Ukraine since its onset in 2014. Over the past five years, large numbers of people have been forced to flee their homes because of violence, hostilities, difficult living conditions and a lack of safety and public services. Some internally displaced people (IDPs) have been able to return or resettle, but many others continue to be displaced and to live in difficult and vulnerable conditions.

The displacement crisis in Ukraine has been largely a protracted one. IDPs who were displaced at the early stages of the conflict continue to suffer from displacement-related vulnerabilities, and a resolution to the conflict, at least in the near future, seems highly unlikely. New displacements, meanwhile, continue to occur on a regular basis, largely as a result of violence, partial or total destruction of homes, and lack of government and other public services in non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs).

[The crisis began in November 2013](#), with protests opposing President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject a deal for greater economic integration with the EU. The protests, as well as clashes with security forces, escalated until the president stepped down and fled the country. In March of 2014, Crimea held a disputed local referendum to join the Russian Federation. Russian troops then invaded and annexed Crimea in a move that was widely condemned by the international community. The conflict has continued ever since with varying levels of intensity and violence. Russian military presence in Crimea has increased exponentially since 2014, and it has become very difficult to access information on the humanitarian situation and the levels of displacement there.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation signed the Minsk Agreement under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014 to bring about a ceasefire which has been repeatedly violated since. Ukraine's government took an important step [towards implementation of the agreement in October 2019 with the "Steinmeier formula"](#), through which elections will be held in the eastern provinces, self-governing status might be granted, and Ukraine would take back control of its border with Russia.

In recent years, new displacements have been mainly along the "contact line" that separates government-controlled areas (GCAs) and NGCA. These have been, mostly a product of ongoing hostilities as well as forced evictions in occupied areas.

Ukraine's government has taken measures to assist and protect IDPs in the Ukraine, including adopting a law on "ensuring the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons". It has also developed, in partnership with the international community, programs aimed at supporting, resettling, and protecting IDPs. In 2017, the government adopted the "Strategy for the Integration of Internally Displaced Persons and Implementation of Long-Term Solutions to Internal Displacement for the Period until 2020." [Many IDPs have benefited from these measures, but many are still in a precarious situation.](#)

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 (Year figure was last updated: 2019)	Flows (1 January – 31 December 2019)
60	730,000	255	255	-

**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's estimate is based on the numbers of people who were evacuated as a result of violence, as well as on approximations of new displacement flows. These approximations are, in turn, based on cases of housing destruction using the average household number in Ukraine. IDMC estimates that there were about 60 new displacements as result of conflict in 2019.

All new displacements in Ukraine in 2019 were associated with conflict. Seven houses were evacuated because of shelling in Zolote on 26 February, and more than 19 houses were destroyed during the year because of armed confrontations. These 26 households were multiplied by the average household size to determine the number of new displacements in the country. There are about 2.3 people in each household.

Sources and methodologies

IDMC's estimate for new displacements is based on data from the OSCE, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, the Protection Cluster, media sources, and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which provided numbers, dates, and locations of houses destroyed or damaged in the conflict. Information on the context of housing destruction was obtained through a report entitled "[Armed conflict in the East of Ukraine: the damage caused to the housing of the civilian population](#)", published by the Ukrainian NGO Donbas SOS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Renaissance Foundation.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

There are several caveats regarding the new displacements figure for Ukraine in 2019. There is a lack of data in the NGCAs, particularly in Crimea, and the figure is likely to be an underestimate.

Most of the new displacement figures in Ukraine were calculated based on housing destruction estimates. In instances where only the number of families or homes displaced were available, IDMC

approximated new displacements by multiplying the average household size by the number of households evacuated. For this reason, some approximated figures may be inaccurate.

Over the years, a significant number of new displacements in Ukraine have been a result of housing damage, not just housing destruction. IDMC estimates that there were about 628 new displacements resulting from housing damage caused by the conflict but has decided not to include this estimate as it could not be verified. The estimate is based on surveys conducted by Donbas SOS, which found that about 61 per cent of people affected by housing damage in Ukraine become displaced and do not return to their homes. The number of people displaced by housing damage was calculated using this percentage, such that, 61 per cent of the houses damaged were assumed to cause new displacement. This figure was multiplied by the average household size number. This is the percentage of displacement resulting from damaged housing since the beginning of the conflict and not only for 2019, a year in which there have been some reductions in violence. For that reason, it was decided that not enough evidence was available to include this estimate. It serves, however, as evidence that the reported figure is likely to be an underestimate.

Significant changes from last year

The decrease in the number of new displacements in Ukraine in 2019 from 12,000 in 2018 was mainly caused by a general reduction in violence. It is also a result of the fact that the new displacements figure in 2018 came from one event in particular, a series of explosions near Kiev on 9 October 2018 which led to the evacuation of 12,000 people. There was no event on that scale in Ukraine in 2019.

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 is based on data provided by its partners, mainly the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). There were [1,428,919 IDPs registered with Ukraine's social policy ministry as of 9 December 2019](#). The actual number of IDPs, however, is estimated at between 730,000 and a million. This disparity between the figures published by Ukraine's government and IDMC is a result of the fact that many people registered in the government database are not actually in a situation of displacement.

The government has placed a number of restrictions and conditions on its payment of pensions and other social benefits, such that many people in the NGCAs who are not actually displaced have [registered as being so in order to receive their pensions](#).

The number of IDPs in the NGCAs is unknown. The only figure which has been verified is the number of IDPs living in the GCAs: more than 730,000. [This was endorsed as the baseline figure of IDPs residing in the GCAs in 2019 by OCHA and other humanitarian partners in the Humanitarian Needs Overview for Ukraine](#), published in January 2020. Given that the number of IDPs in the NGCAs cannot be verified and that the figures published by the government are widely believed to be an overestimate, IDMC's estimate is also that of 730,000.

It is important to bear in mind that the question of pension payments for registered IDPs is controversial. The number of IDPs registered in the government database is inflated. The government, however, has taken several measures to limit pension payments through a reduction of its IDP figures. At present, the receipt of pensions and social benefits for residents of the NGCAs is contingent on their IDP status. Now that the government is working towards reducing the number of

IDPs in the database, this has created human rights concerns for registered IDPs who, although not in a situation of displacement, rely on their status to receive government support.

Sources and methodologies

IDMC's estimate for the total number of IDPs living in Ukraine is based on data provided by OCHA, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NRC. These partners have confirmed that the government's IDP statistics are not an accurate depiction of the actual number of IDPs. This is because many people in the NGCAs [registered in the IDP database so they can receive pensions and other benefits](#).

The number of IDPs living in the GCAs was provided by OCHA and was confirmed by NRC Ukraine. The primary source of this figure is OCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan of 2019 for Ukraine. This provided a number for IDPs living in the GCAs and confirmed that the number of IDPs living in the NGCAs was difficult to assess.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

IDMC's stock figure is likely to be an underestimate. It includes only the number of IDPs living in the GCAs, not the number of IDPs living in the NGCAs. One of the continued monitoring challenges is the lack of data on the humanitarian situation in the NGCAs given that humanitarian actors have limited access to the areas.

Significant changes from last year

There was a reduction in the stock figure published by IDMC from 2018 and 2019. Whereas the stock figure for 2018 was 800,000, it is 730,000 for 2019.

The figure for 2018 was based on data provided in 2015 by OCHA, which estimated there were about 800,000 IDPs in the GCAs. The figure for 2019 is based on the Humanitarian Needs Overview published by OCHA in 2020 which estimates there are 730,000 IDPs living in the GCA. OCHA presents this as the baseline figure of IDPs agreed upon by the humanitarian partners working in the country. The latter claim to have reached the figure by applying the endorsed calculation methodology for the 2020 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) and by refining and improving their methodology for the calculation of IDPs.

Because this change in the figures is a result of an improvement in the methodology for the calculation of IDPs, the difference between the two figures, of 70,000, was not included in the stock for people who have reached partial or unverified solutions. The reduction reflects an improvement in the methodology and not a change in the situation of IDPs.

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's estimate is based on data provided by the Ukraine Protection Cluster and Ukraine's government on housing provision for IDPs. An apartment building was opened in the city of Vinnytsia in April 2019 under an affordable housing program that [provided apartments for five IDP families](#). [Families of IDPs received 107 apartments in a new municipal property building in Rubizhne](#) in the second half of 2019.

There is also information indicating that many other IDPs have reached partial solutions through returns, local integration, government subsidies and other measures, but there is not enough data available to add these to the partial solutions figures.

Since the beginning of the conflict, more than 50,000 civilian homes have been damaged or destroyed as a result of hostilities. The government has provided compensation [and alternative housing to some families, but it has not done so in a consistent manner](#).

Sources and methodologies

IDMC's estimate for new displacements is based on data from the Ukraine Protection Cluster on housing construction and provision for IDPs as well as reports by Ukraine's government which highlight its support for IDPs.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The crisis of IDPs in Ukraine is largely a protracted one in which IDPs continue to suffer from displacement-related vulnerabilities years after their displacement first occurred. Many IDPs have found employment and housing in other locations in Ukraine, but it is very difficult to gather data on these populations and their current living conditions.

Significant changes from last year

There was a reduction in the number of IDPs who have made partial progress towards durable solutions compared with last year. In 2018, IDMC recorded the evacuation of 12,000 people resulting from a series of explosions in Kiev. It also reported the return of these people. This was reflected in the figure.

There was no similar event in 2019 that would indicate returns from evacuations and more information available on housing construction and provision for IDPs. This is why there is a change in the figure.

NUMBER OF IDPS WHOSE PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS CANNOT BE VERIFIED

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 that occurred in 2019 rather than a total number of people

IDMC figure and rationale, caveats and monitoring challenges

IDMC does not currently have an estimate on the number of IDPs whose progress towards durable solutions cannot be verified. This is largely because limited data is available on the situation of IDPs. It is also because the numbers for IDPs are highly contested.

Significant changes from last year

There is no significant change from last year, as no data was available on this metric in 2018 either.

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	Media monitoring, partner engagement, other.	Partner engagement, media monitoring, Registration
Geographical disaggregation	Admin 2 or more	Subnational – admin1
Frequency of reporting	Every month	Other
Disaggregation by sex	No	No
Disaggregation by age	No	No
Data triangulation	Some local triangulation	Some local triangulation
Data on settlement elsewhere	Yes	Yes
Data on returns	No	No
Data on local integration	No	Partial
Data on cross border movements	No	No
Data on deaths	No	No
Data on births	No	No

For any additional questions please email: data@idmc.ch

For the full country profile on Ukraine please visit:
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ukraine>