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## SENEGAL

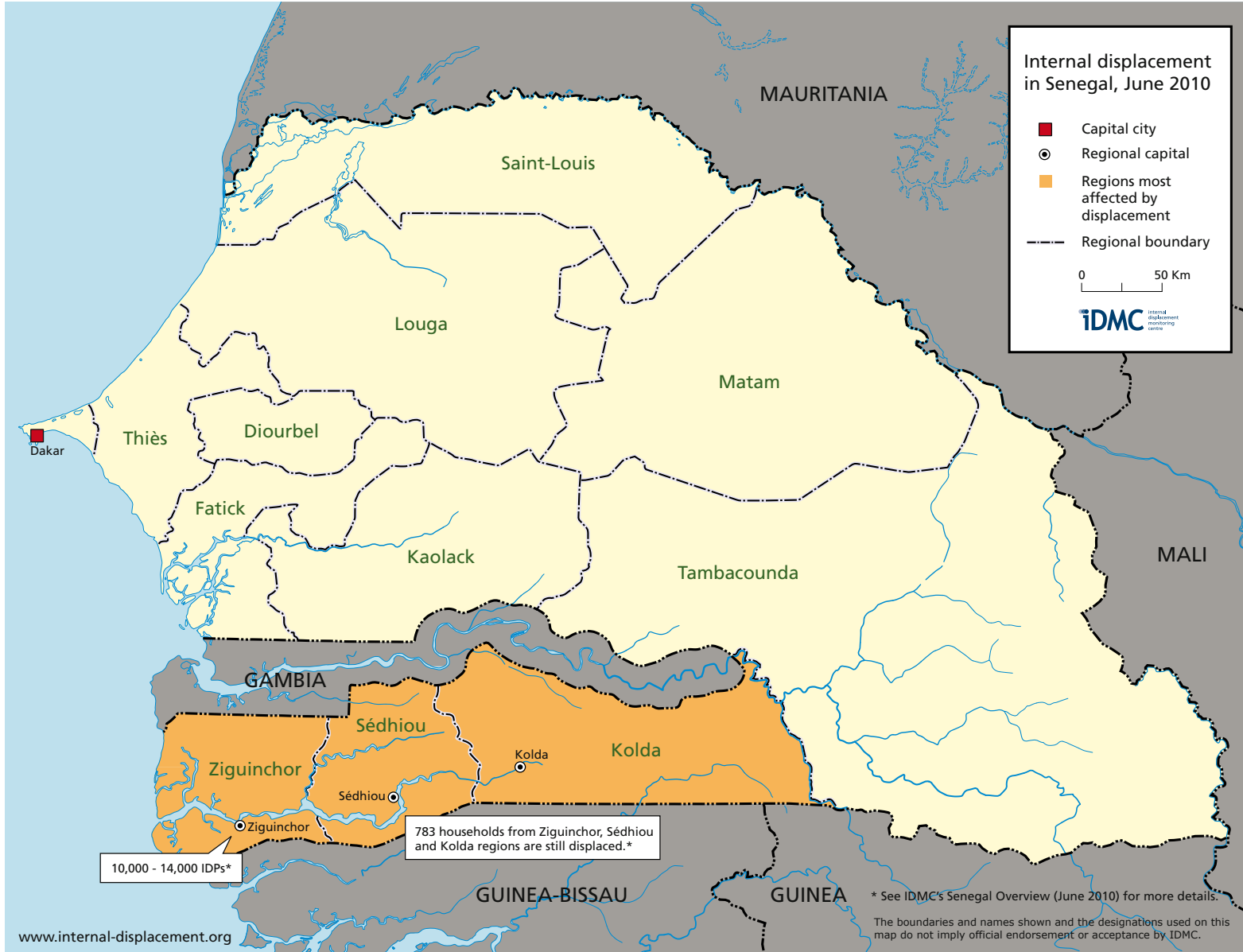
# New displacement and challenges to durable solutions in Casamance

New clashes between the Senegalese army and members of the separatist Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC) have caused new displacements since 2009 and hindered durable solutions for long-term internally displaced people (IDPs). Estimates of the overall number of IDPs in Casamance in 2010 range between 10,000 and 40,000, and figures remain unreliable in the absence of a comprehensive survey. The vast majority of IDPs have sought refuge with family, friends and host communities. In line with wider rural-urban migration trends, many have found refuge in Ziguinchor, the largest city of Casamance. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 14,000 IDPs are sheltering in the city.

Large return movements have also been witnessed since 2008. Anecdotal evidence shows IDPs' wish to return but there has been no survey of their intentions nor data on how many have successfully locally integrated or settled nearby or elsewhere in the country.

Restricted access to farm land because of continuous rebel attacks has affected the livelihoods of both rural and urban IDPs as well as host communities. Women heads of households in particular have had to find alternatives to farming and in some cases have resorted to prostitution. Internally displaced children often fail in school or risk being abandoned by families facing poverty and stress, with many adults having been forced to look elsewhere for income. Social and psychosocial problems are also prevalent among IDPs.

In areas of return, the legacy of the long conflict has continued to hamper IDPs' sustainable reintegration. Infrastructure and services remain limited, and the presence of mines has stopped people farming again. Extended humanitarian demining operations as well as increased access to basic social services and the inclusion of land grievances in reconstruction programmes are all necessary for the achievement of sustainable returns.



Source: IDMC  
 More maps are available at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

## Background and causes of displacement

Internal displacement in Senegal's southern Casamance region has been caused by a protracted low-intensity conflict between government forces and separatist rebels which has continued since 1982 despite various peace agreements. At the heart of the conflict lie a disputed land rights reform, cultural discrimination and a lack of employment opportunities. Casamance is bordered to the north by Gambia and to the south by Guinea-Bissau. The Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (*Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance*, or MFDC) was established in the 1960s and developed throughout the 1970s to assert local people's land rights after a reform imposed by the government in Dakar had led to an influx of people from other regions. The government's clampdown on mass protests in region's main city of Ziguinchor in 1982 and 1983 led to an open insurgency, and as channels for peaceful protest were closed off, the MFDC started waging war through its armed wing, Atika (P. Chang, March 2008). Violent demonstrations continued throughout the 1980s and Atika started organising attacks on both military and civilian targets in Casamance in 1990 (A. Manley, November 1998). The consequent large-scale army deployment fostered a cycle of sporadic violence and human rights abuses by both sides. The area became increasingly unsafe and isolated from the rest of the country.

Although the MFDC has a large ethnic Diola population, the conflict has reportedly been caused principally by the social and geographical marginalisation of Casamance (CODESRIA, 2004). As the conflict spread from the Ziguinchor areas into western parts of Kolda region from 1995, it also quickly became regionalised. Thousands of people fled into neighbouring Gambia and Guinea Bissau. The Diola people in both countries lent support to the MFDC from outside Casamance in the 1990s (Escola de Cultura de Pau, 19 June 2009).

By the mid-1990s, inhabitants of large areas in Casamance along the border with Guinea-Bissau had fled their homes as a result of MFDC attacks and the government's counter-insurgency operations. Access to land became more difficult as rebels began planting anti-personnel mines along the border with Guinea-Bissau in 1997 to protect their bases. In the early 2000s, sporadic but violent clashes between the army and the MFDC continued to cause short and longer-term displacement.

Foreign governments including those of France, the United States, Gambia and Guinea Bissau have since 2000 facilitated the resolution of the conflict through mediation and also military support to the government: the Catholic Church was also actively involved in supporting the peace process between 1992 and 2000 (Escola de Cultura de Pau, 19 June 2009). Since his election as Senegalese president in 2000, Abdoulaye Wade has tried to negotiate with the armed elements of the MFDC, sidelining to some extent the political wing, and the peace process has made significant progress. In 2004, the government and the MFDC signed an agreement which provided for the MFDC to give up armed struggle and the use of violence and for the government to give fighters an amnesty, provide for the reintegration of former combatants and support demining and reconstruction programmes in Casamance (IRIN, 31 December 2004). However, a faction of the Southern Front of the MFDC rejected the agreement, and occasional armed skirmishes, violent attacks and political killings continued (VOA, 14 May 2007; IRIN, 5 December 2006).

Following reported divisions within the MFDC and a "lack of vision and coherent policy on the part of the Senegalese government" (IRIN, 18 September 2009) violence increased during 2009 and the beginning of 2010 (MISNA, 4 February 2010). Plagued by factionalism and a lack of political strategy, the MFDC has failed to unite the people of Casamance behind it (CODESRIA, 2004) and it has moved from attacks on military targets to forms of violence which have an impact

on civilians, for example armed robberies and attacks restricting their access to farming land and undertaking (Chatham House, December 2004). Control over the sale of cashew nuts has provided the MFDC with a regular source of income, and a rise in their market value also explains the rise in attacks against farmers over the control of the crops since 2008 (IRIN, 4 August 2008). Political instability in Guinea Bissau, following the assassination of the country's president in March 2009, has also contributed to the worsening of the situation in Casamance (IRIN, 5 March 2009).

## New displacement reported

A resumption of hostilities in 2009 between the Senegalese army and separatist groups, with clashes increasing in number and intensity through the year, reportedly resulted in new displacement. An unknown number of people had to flee their homes following heavy clashes in the outskirts of Ziguinchor at the end of August 2009. MFDC members were reportedly stealing identity papers, bicycles and mobile phones from residents, while blocking entry and exit to some neighbourhoods (IRIN, 26 August 2009). Following renewed fighting at the beginning of September, 85 households – or some 600 people – reportedly fled the Ziguinchor neighbourhoods of Diabir and Baraf (IRIN, 4 September 2009). A needs assessment conducted by the Senegalese Red Cross revealed that some 370 people from Baraf were still displaced as of May 2010 (ICRC, 17 May 2010). While heavy clashes have continued into 2010 (Le Quotidien, 15 April 2010; AFP, 22 March 2010; Reuters, 16 February 2010), no large-scale displacement of civilians has been reported (UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010).

Due in part to the complex patterns of displacement in Casamance, there have been no reliable statistics on the number of internally displaced people (IDPs), with numbers reported varying according to the source. Most recent estimates

have ranged between 10,000 and 40,000. Citing government sources, the US Department of State reported that about 10,000 people remained internally displaced at the end of 2009 (USDoS, 11 March 2010), while the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated in 2010 that some 40,000 people were still displaced in Casamance (ICRC, 4 March 2010). Citing UNICEF figures, OCHA's Regional Office for West Africa suggested that some 20,000 people had been displaced for more than a decade while another 4,000 had been affected by the clashes in 2009 and at the beginning of 2010 (UN OCHA by email, 9 February 2010)

According to primary data collected by the German Technical Cooperation (ProCas-GTZ), 783 households are still displaced from the three Regions of Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sédhiou in mid-2010. Of these some 30 per cent have found refuge in Guinea Bissau and the Gambia (ProCas-GTZ, forthcoming).

## Patterns of displacement

Displacement has been large-scale and long-term in areas south of the Casamance River, especially along the border with Guinea-Bissau (M. Evans, April 2007). The vast majority of displaced people in Casamance have sought refuge with family, friends or host communities, with almost 80 per cent seeking refuge with family and friends (WFP, June 2007). Some of the new IDPs have joined families who were themselves displaced (IRIN, 19 October 2009), while some 150 people displaced by the September 2009 clashes had reportedly no family or friends to host them (IRIN, 4 September 2009). Given the long-term nature of displacement, host communities' resources have become extremely stretched (IRIN, 19 October 2009).

The initial movement of IDPs has been based on the need to find a safe haven in the vicinity, and only subsequently have people tended to move to where family and friends have already

settled (ProCas-GTZ, May 2008). A 2001 study on urban IDPs in Ziguinchor found that some of the displaced people had come to the town only after their first area of displacement had become unsafe itself (M. Evans, April 2007). A recent study sponsored by ProCas showed how households in the Regions of Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sédhiou had been displaced twice on average between 2004 and 2009 (ProCas-GTZ, forthcoming). Ziguinchor is estimated to have received between 14,000 and 38,000 IDPs over the years (M. Evans, April 2007), and between 10,000 and 14,000 IDPs are still believed to be finding shelter in the city (Jeune Afrique, 8 December 2009; ICRC, 17 May 2010; UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010). The idea of a survey to obtain better estimates of numbers and needs of IDPs in the commune of Ziguinchor has been put forward by local authorities.

Displacement to Ziguinchor has followed wider rural-urban migration trends, "with urban wage-earning activities providing remittances crucial to most households in the region" (M. Evans, 6 January 2009). This has complicated the identification of IDPs in the city. However, unlike in the case of voluntary migration, the conflict has also forced the most vulnerable to move, including children, the elderly and the sick (M. Evans, April 2007). In the city, IDPs have generally tended to cluster by village of origin. For those arriving from the east, the main reception areas include certain eastern suburbs of the town such as Kandé, Alwar and Tilène. In general, the geography of IDP clustering has tended to follow pre-existing patterns of settlement. In the areas of Alwar and Kandé, for example, IDPs tended to stay with family members who had settled in the area as land had not yet been parcelled when they had first arrived (M. Evans, April 2007).

Besides long-term displacement, short-term and sometimes repeated displacement, combined with return, is also common. Many IDPs have apparently returned to their homes after violence has subsided. Many of the hundreds of people displaced in

September 2009 started to return to their homes only a few days after the clashes that forced them to flee ended (IRIN, 19 October 2009). Others commute to their home areas by day and leave as the night falls. This strategy has allowed them to tend to their orchards and engage in agricultural activities that do not require their constant presence.

## Humanitarian and protection concerns

Continuing rebel attacks have affected the livelihoods of both rural and urban IDPs as well as host communities by restricting their access to their land. Though IDPs have shown a high degree of flexibility in adapting to changing contexts, chronic constraints linked to the under-development of the area have prevented them from building viable livelihoods. Long-term IDPs in Ziguinchor have reportedly become worse off than their non-displaced neighbours, as the inability to access their agricultural capital has left them unable to invest in other production assets, pushing them to engage in more urban-based activities (M. Evans, April 2007). The increased impoverishment of Casamance due to the protracted conflict has also resulted in open tensions between IDPs and their hosts, leading IDPs into a situation of social marginalisation and financial hardship.

In addition to IDPs, families and communities who have decided to stay in their fields also present specific vulnerabilities (IRIN, 3 February 2010). Women and children are among the most vulnerable. With support from their kin fading, and without a husband to rely upon, many women heads of households have had to adopt new survival strategies. Many have given up farming and depend on odd jobs for income. For some, begging and prostitution have become the only options (ICRC, 4 March 2010).

Hundreds of adults and children are believed to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder,

as a consequence of the protracted conflict (IRIN, 20 May 2010). The majority, however, have not sought specialist treatment. Among the most common social and psycho-social problems identified by the NGO APRAN were increasing levels of stress, rising divorce rates and concerns over their loss of dignity (APRAN, April 2008).

Internally displaced children integrated in classes in areas of displacement often fail in school, while others risk being abandoned by families facing poverty and stress, with many adults having been forced to look elsewhere for income (UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010). Educating teachers on the symptoms and referral protocols for post-traumatic disorders is essential to overcome the stigma attached to them and provide children with the help they need (IRIN, 20 May 2010).

Landmine victims and their relatives are also at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder. Much of Casamance is contaminated by landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The districts of Diattacounda, Niaguis, and Nyassia, close to the border with Guinea-Bissau, have been identified as the most contaminated (ICBL, 2009). In 2008, Landmine Monitor identified at least 24 mine incidents while casualties continued to be reported in 2009. As of July 2009, the Senegalese National Mine Action Centre (*Centre National d'Action Antimines du Sénégal*, or CNAMS) had identified a total of 702 reported casualties of mines or other ERW (152 killed and 550 injured) for the period from 1988 to 2009. The majority of them were civilians. The total number of mine/ERW survivors, including those not reported, remains unknown (ICBL, 2009).

## Durable solutions

Casamance has witnessed large return movements since 2008. Several villages that were abandoned in 2006 have been slowly repopulated (UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010). IDP returns

have mostly been spontaneous and unassisted. Anecdotal evidence has shown IDPs' wish to return (Jeune Afrique, 8 December 2009), even after many years in displacement, but there has been no comprehensive survey of their intentions with regard to settlement options, or data on how many have successfully locally integrated or settled nearby or elsewhere in the country.

Return has been ongoing at varying rates since at least 2001. IDPs initially started returning to villages closer to Ziguinchor, and gradually returned into rural areas. Rates of return have accelerated in the past few years, as many families and communities have copied the example of the first individual families who returned (M. Evans, 6 January 2009). Returnees initially maintain a foothold in their place of displacement to ensure a continued access to livelihoods while reconstructing their homes and restarting agricultural production in their areas of return. Where the distance between areas of displacement and return makes commuting difficult, such as along the border with Guinea-Bissau, some returnees have built temporary shelters close to their former homes and used them as a base despite the poor living conditions (M. Evans, 6 January 2009).

Land issues constitute an important factor in return movements in Casamance and need to be taken into account in all reconstruction programmes. With communities basing their livelihood activities mainly on agricultural production, the demining for the most part of only the return villages and not of the surrounding farm land has hindered the success and sustainability of many return movements (N. Robin & B. Ndione, April 2006). Ongoing security concerns have also led to changes to the layout of some villages from their original dispersed form into a more compact core of houses. This process has naturally called for considerable flexibility in land tenure mechanisms, with some owners having to cede part of their ownership rights to allow for the construction of new homes in the village centre. It has also forced changes in long-standing settlement habits (M. Evans, 6 January 2009).



1960s land reforms and a local perception of having lost the land in favour of “northerners” (the Casamance name for people from Senegal north of Gambia) have also continued to cause land ownership disputes. Population movements have complicated access to land and recognition of land rights even further (USAID, 1 June 2006). Accordingly, most reconstruction programmes sponsored by local or international organisations have been accompanied by conflict prevention and resolution measures.

While the majority of the returnees have faced obstacles to their full reintegration, a number of IDPs in 2010 were still prevented from returning to their homes. Armed clashes and violent crimes against civilians, risks posed by mines, lack of basic social services and reconstruction challenges in areas of return have all discouraged returns (UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010).

The latest violence in 2009 has not only prevented many IDPs from returning but has also put at risk the progress achieved by returnees in the past few years, experts believe (IRIN, 19 October 2009). Ongoing insecurity has led to restrictions on civilians’ freedom of movement, as the governor of Ziguinchor established new security measures, including increased military checkpoints, travel restrictions at night and on certain roads in 2009 (USDoS, 11 March 2010). Finally, increased clashes have also limited humanitarian demining operations, which are for many a precondition for return. Operations have suffered from several restrictions as uncertainty reigns over the changing security situation (IRIN, 19 October 2009).

Roads and tracks around Ziguinchor as well as areas of Oussouye and Bignona departments have been heavily mined during the course of the conflict (Manley, November 1998). In a study conducted by UNDP covering some 251 villages of the Casamance region, 93 villages were identified as being heavily affected by landmines and other unexploded ordnance, while 60 others were abandoned. The Emergency Landmine Impact Survey

of Casamance (ELISC) carried out by Handicap International and UNDP between October 2005 and May 2006 found that the departments most affected were Ziguinchor, Sédhiou, Oussouye, Kolda and Bignona (ICBL, October 2007). There have been, however, confusing reports of the actual extent of mine contamination in the area in recent years and a “better idea of the total number of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) across the Casamance was expected from general surveys being conducted during 2009” (ICBL, 2009

## National and international response

The approach currently adopted by the Senegalese government and the local authorities is to include the needs of IDPs into wider reconstruction and development programmes for Casamance. The objectives of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) for 2006-2010 include a return to peace and security, development of local infrastructure and increased access to basic services in Casamance. The PRSP-II also emphasises the need to improve the lives of vulnerable groups including IDPs. The implementation of the emergency reconstruction programme for Casamance is given priority (Republic of Senegal, October 2006).

Government support to IDPs has mainly come through the Programme for Revival of Economic and Social activities (PRAESC), which was launched in June 2001 with the support of donors and other humanitarian agencies. PRAESC consists of demining operations, demobilisation of combatants, reconstruction and community development linked to reintegration, and longer-term sustainable development activities. It is intended to support the peace process and promote social cohesion within a more global development strategy directed towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Assistance to IDPs and refugees is devolved to regional bodies chaired by the governor of each region (WFP, 2007).

The government has implemented PRAESC with partners including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as national and international NGOs. WFP's relief and recovery operation in Casamance has targeted areas including with large concentrations of IDPs and returnees. In 2008 and 2009 WFP implemented food-for-work schemes to help make returns sustainable and promote returnees' self-reliance, and the provision of school meals to encourage school attendance and contribute to restoring livelihoods (WFP, August 2009). Starting 2010, WFP will gradually disengage in Casamance while building national and local capacities to address seasonal food gaps in chronically food-insecure areas.

In partnership with Ziguinchor Academy, UNICEF has established schools for internally displaced children in the commune of Ziguinchor and in the border village of Mpack, it has provided support to train teachers in stress management and has led mine risk education (UNICEF by email, 16 May 2010). More broadly agencies within the UN system have worked with local administrative authorities and local NGOs in a pilot project to support return in the two villages of Laty and Boffa Bayotte. However, the involvement of different actors in peace building initiatives has led to some duplication and confusion in programme implementation.

The funding of projects in Casamance has mainly been channelled through USAID and the World Bank. USAID, one of the major donors in the area, has been funding peace building activities in northern Casamance since 1999. It chose to implement a large-scale programme covering many sectors, reportedly helping the return of other donors (USAID, 1 June 2006, p.57). The programme was designed to provide substantial development support to promote both peace building efforts and a sense of normality among communities.

As part of the Casamance Emergency Reconstruction Support Project, the World Bank has committed some \$20 million since 2004 in

programmes for the demobilisation of combatants, the reintegration of combatants, IDPs and refugees, and the reconstruction of infrastructure in areas of return (The World Bank, 9 September 2004). After some initial delays, the project started in 2006 and was readjusted in 2008 by transferring funds from the demobilisation component, which had been consistently delayed, to reconstruction activities (The World Bank, 20 February 2008). GTZ has been one of its main implementing partners, supporting the state reconstruction programme and linking it with the peace process. GTZ has worked mainly in southern Casamance to introduce conflict resolution structures and mechanisms.

Because of limited access to border areas in Casamance, most relief and recovery programmes have been carried out by local NGOs, which have engaged in a broad spectrum of activities, from food distribution to reconstruction and peace building, resulting at times in limited coherence (USAID, 1 June 2006, p.56). Although sought after mainly for their local knowledge and access, local NGOs have reportedly benefited from partnerships with international NGOs, and they have also succeeded in improving their administrative capacities, thus obtaining direct funding arrangements with major donors like USAID.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) resumed its presence in Fogny, northern Casamance in April 2008, after a mine accident in Lefeu killed a delegate and injured three other staff in September 2006 (ICRC, 11 April 2008). ICRC has been "focusing on providing emergency assistance, repairing health facilities and water systems and supporting veterinary assistants, women's groups relaunching market gardening and the community activities of the Senegalese Red Cross Society" (ICRC, 17 May 2010).

**Note:** This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Senegal. The full profile is available online [here](#).



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## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people.

In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

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