

20 December 2012

## HAITI

# A humanitarian crisis in need of a development solution

Internal displacement has been a frequent and significant part of Haiti's history since its foundation in 1804. The current mix of inter-related causes includes frequent natural hazard-induced disasters, human rights violations, and large-scale development projects. These are dominated by the impacts of the major earthquake disaster of 12 January 2010, which displaced up to 2.3 million people, mostly from or within the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Over the last three years, more than 61,000 of these internally displaced people (IDPs) have been displaced again as a result of forced evictions and other threats. As of December 2012, 357,000 IDPs remain in camps or camp-like

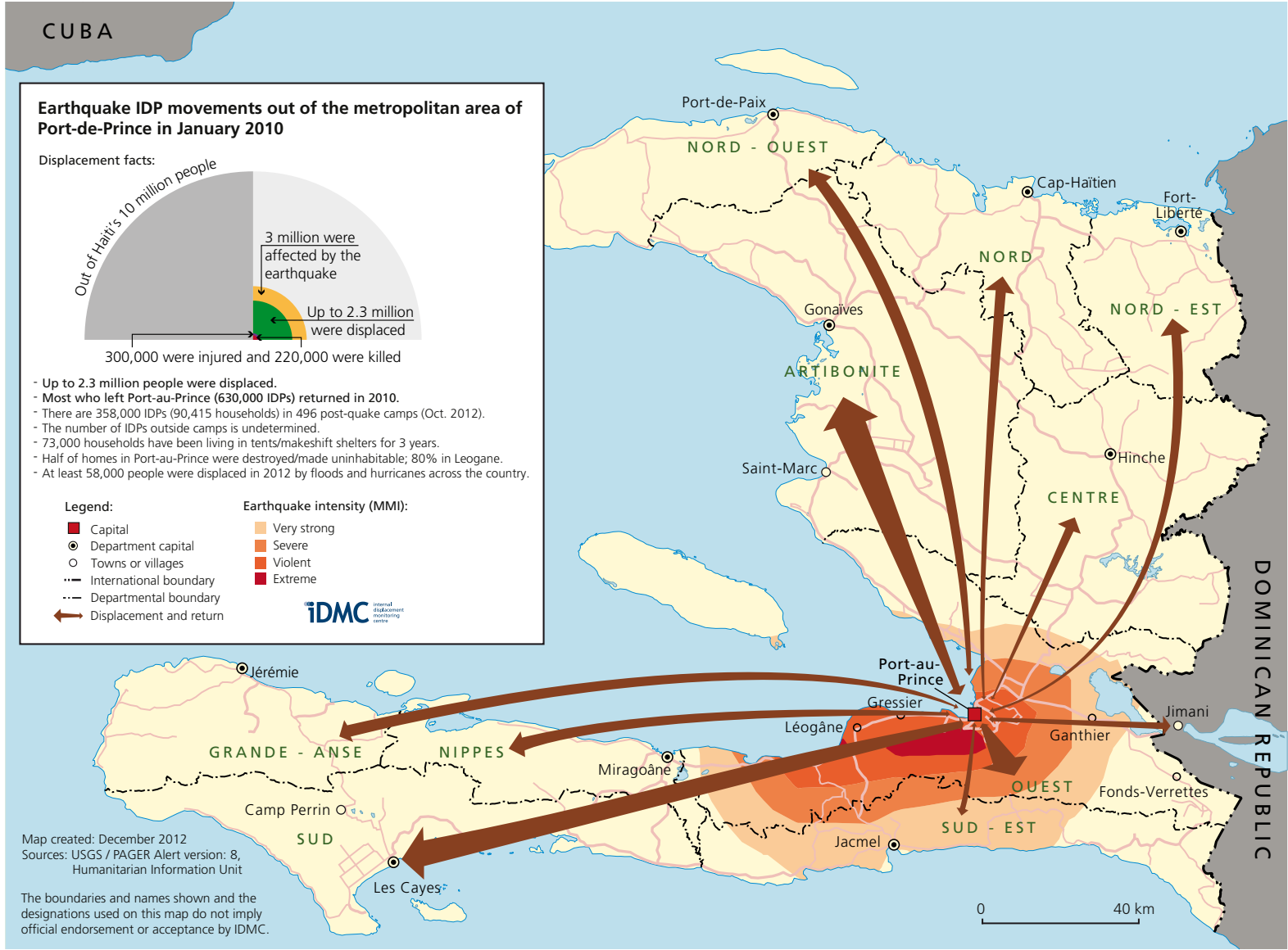
situations (also referred to as "camps"), while a lack of information makes the number of IDPs living outside these situations difficult to assess. This includes IDPs staying with host families, those who previously lived in the camps and those whose situation continues to put them at high risk of further displacement.

During 2012, storm and flood disasters including Tropical Storm Sandy at the end of October have caused the new or repeated internal displacement of at least 58,000 people. Recurrent displacement has cumulative impacts on the vulnerability of people unable to fully recover between shocks felt not only by IDPs, but also by families or communities that host them. Storms and floods, further added to by drought, has left around 20 per cent of Haiti's population or 2.1 million people suffering severe food insecurity - another likely driver of displacement (Haiti Humanitarian Action Plan 2013, 18 December 2012).

Established patterns of population movement between rural and urban areas, together with family and community networks and livelihood coping strategies centred on the capital, Port-au-Prince, play a significant role in determining IDPs' movements and intentions. Within a context of widespread structural impoverishment, extreme environmental degradation, rapid urbanisation and weak government capacity, IDPs' continue to face both immediate and new obstacles to their recovery related to their displacement. Durable solutions can only be achieved through the pursuit of long-term development goals led by central and local government and which place disaster risk reduction and human rights protection at their core. The current period of transition from international to government-led response is, therefore, critical.



IDP families pack their belongings to relocate out of earthquake camp Mais Gate 24. (Photo: IOM Haiti, June 2012)



Source: IDMC

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

## BACKGROUND AND CAUSES

### A long history of multiple and inter-related causes

Internal displacement in Haiti has been fuelled by a long and complex history of multiple and inter-related causes dating back to the time of the nation's foundation. More than two centuries ago, *marron* slaves organised clandestinely to escape and resist the society their French oppressors had built, eventually achieving independence in 1804.

From the 1950s, certain development projects, including the building of a hydroelectric dam in the highland region, added to severe environmental degradation that destroyed resources upon which livelihoods depended. Land grabbing also forced small farmers to seek a home elsewhere ([Refuge](#), August 1997). The mass movement of displaced or migrant families towards urban areas over several decades contributed to the formation of overcrowded informal settlements or slums on the outskirts of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and drove political demands for land reform and distributive justice.

Governance by violent and abusive regimes forced thousands of people to flee persecution over the second half of the 20th century. After overthrowing the elected president, Bertrand Aristide, in 1991, a military junta forced the mass displacement of 300,000 people. This was both a product and a cause of widespread human rights violations, called *marronage* in reference to the country's past ([HRW](#), 1 August 1994). A US-led multinational force returned Aristide to power in October 1994, but political instability, violent conflict and persecution following his contested re-election in 2000 caused increasing internal displacement, and the turmoil continued over the next four years. Very few IDPs were identified as having congregated at specific sites, but significant numbers were reported to have moved out of insecure urban areas or returned to their places

of birth in the mountains ([USCR](#), 24 February 2004; [USAID](#), 23 February 2004). In early 2004, armed groups backed by the country's economic elites escalated a campaign of violence against the government, and the president was airlifted out of the country ([CJA](#), November 2012). In May 2004 a flood disaster near the southern border with the Dominican Republic devastated entire communities and displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border. A UN Stabilisation Mission (MINUSTAH) was deployed to Haiti the following month ([UN OCHA](#), 5 June 2004).

Disasters caused by seasonal, weather-related events have regularly caused internal displacement, while earthquake disasters are much rarer. Prior to the devastating 2010 earthquake (see below) the last major earthquake to affect Haiti had been in 1842 ([NOAA earthquake database](#), November 2012). Just two years before the 2010 earthquake, four successive hurricanes hit the country in rapid succession, causing a major disaster in which many thousands were displaced as more than 100,000 homes were badly damaged or destroyed ([UN OCHA](#), 6 October 2008).

National authorities and the international community largely ignored the issue of internal displacement, and responses lacked both strategy and sufficient credible information on the situation of IDPs (NRC, July 2008).

### Displacement risk related to natural hazards

Natural hazards on top of extreme vulnerability create acute and ongoing disaster and displacement risk in Haiti. The Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, for example, notes that the 2010 earthquake disaster was not caused only by the earthquake itself, but also by "an excessively dense population, a lack of adequate building standards, the disastrous state of the environment, disorganised land use and an

unbalanced division of economic activity" ([GoH/PARDN](#), March 2010).

#### *Natural hazards*

As a tropical, mountainous country in an active seismic region, Haiti is regularly subjected to a number of natural hazards. The entire country experiences frequent rainfall from April to June, followed by tropical storms and hurricanes from June until the end of November. During the northern winter season, drought, floods, landslides and torrential debris flows are not uncommon. Coastal communities are vulnerable to strong winds and to flooding caused by local tsunamis, storm surges and possibly by rising sea-levels as a result of climate change. Low-lying areas and estuaries are prone to riverine floods. Most decades of the 20th century saw a one to three-year period of drought, often accompanied by falling agricultural productivity and drinking water supplies, which in turn caused food insecurity ([NATHAT](#), 26 March 2010).

Haiti is highly vulnerable to the erosion of its fertile but thin topsoil. Eighty per cent of the country is mountainous, with a risk of slow or sudden movements of mud, rocks and debris down steep, deforested slopes with linear watersheds. All but three per cent of the land has been deforested, and slopes were made more unstable by the 2010 earthquake. Intensive farming has made the impact of natural hazards much worse and destroyed livelihoods. The disposal of rubble created by the earthquake on slopes near populated areas had added to this type of hazard ([NATHAT](#), 26 March 2010). Coastal erosion in the towns of Léogane and Saint Marc has destroyed roads and threatens homes.

#### *Vulnerability*

Rapid population growth and urbanisation, economic underdevelopment characterised by a large informal sector, environmental degradation, social and political instability and weak governance contribute to Haiti's ranking as one of the

world's poorest countries, at 158 out of 187 in the human development index for 2011 ([UNDP](#), 2011). Eighty per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and 54 per cent in abject poverty. Donor countries cancelled Haiti's outstanding foreign debt following the 2010 earthquake, but this has since risen again to more than \$600 million. The country remains highly dependent on international aid and on remittances from the Haitian diaspora ([CIA World Factbook](#)).

Repeated events and displacement in the same areas have a cumulative effect on vulnerability over time as populations are unable to recover fully between shocks. In 2012, the combined impact of drought and the successive shocks of storm and flood disasters have had a devastating effect on food security. As of December 2012, an estimated 2.1 million people are living in severe food insecurity, compared with 800,000 in 2011. Of these, 500,000 are classified as extremely vulnerable (FAO, 22 November 2012; [Humanitarian Action Plan](#) 2013, 18 December 2012).

In the urban centres the poor majority live mostly in low quality rented housing and crowded informal settlements. Houses are often shoddily built in the absence of regulated standards. A lack of urban planning has resulted in neighbourhoods being established in areas prone to floods, landslides and other natural hazards. Even before the 2010 earthquake, access to basic services was very limited, particularly in rural areas ([World Bank](#), November 2007).

Haiti suffers long-standing social and political instability fuelled by the lack of a broad political consensus, the partisan composition of national institutions, high levels of exclusion and inequality between the small, wealthy elite and the poor majority. National and international criminal networks are also a major threat to stability, and a strong national police force has yet to develop ([UN-HABITAT](#), 2010).

At the end of 2012, the government faced demonstrations against price increases and unfulfilled campaign promises since its election in May. Tense relations between the executive and legislative branches have delayed parliamentary and local elections, now scheduled for mid-2013. Governance, humanitarian assistance, a focus on recovery and preparedness for the next disaster are likely to continue to be hampered in this context.

#### *Disaster preparedness and mitigation*

Preparedness and response mechanisms were in place at the national and local level before the 2010 earthquake, but many were not functioning effectively. Significant further investment to mitigate against future disasters and prevent new and recurrent displacement is needed, including the development of Haiti's infrastructure to improve access to remote areas, the pre-positioning of assets, stocks and supplies in the most vulnerable locations, and the strengthening of community-based resilience.

Some progress has been made in 2012, including the establishment of special emergency units within various national institutions and contingency planning led by the Department for Civil Protection ahead of the hurricane season (GoH, June 2012). The water and sanitation ministry now has such a unit, and another has been set up within a special body responsible for the reconstruction of housing and public buildings, including for returned and relocated IDPs. These new units facilitate the strengthening of capacity for decentralised emergency response and the establishment of contingency plans in various sectors.

Further measures might include increased mapping of natural hazard risks to inform neighbourhood-based disaster risk reduction and reconstruction plans, continued improvement of access to evacuation shelters and the strengthening of evacuation management to systematically include the specific concerns of women, older people,

children and other vulnerable groups which often go unaddressed (GOH/DPC, June 2012).

## **The 12 January 2010 earthquake disaster**

The epicentre of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake which struck Haiti on 12 January 2010 was 25 km from the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince in Léogane, and was followed by at least 52 aftershocks measuring over 4.5 Mw over the next 12 days. At least three million people, or around 30 per cent of Haiti's total population, were affected in the worst-hit West and South-East departments. The government estimates that more than 220,000 people were killed, including around 20 per cent of Haiti's civil servants, and more than 300,000 were injured (GoH, DPC). Around half of the homes assessed in the metropolitan area were found to be either damaged or destroyed while up to 90 per cent of the town of Léogane was turned into rubble ([Haitian Ministry of Public Works/Miyamoto International/UNOPS/PADF](#), March 2011; [HPN](#), February 2011).

People were displaced for a number of reasons, including the damage to their homes, fear of aftershocks and the disruption of livelihoods and fragile coping strategies. This left many unable to find or afford housing or to meet their survival needs. Access to basic services, which was already poor, was further restricted. Estimates for the total number of people displaced range between 1.5 and 2.3 million ([IOM/DTM](#), July 2010; [UN OCHA](#), 11 January 2012; [Humanitarian Action Plan](#) 2013, 18 December 2012).

#### *Displacement due to post-earthquake reconstruction and development*

Reconstruction and development in the wake of the January 2010 earthquake and other disasters has caused further displacement when the human rights of local populations have not been respected.

For example, the \$300 million Caracol industrial park was opened in 2012, built on a 600-acre site in the north with hurricane relief funds, a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank and contributions from the US government and the Clinton Foundation. More than 400 small-scale farmers who used to cultivate the land on which the park was built left two years ago on the basis of government commitments to provide them with adequate compensation. The amount they have received, however, is equivalent to less than two months of living expenses. They have also faced discrimination in that people over the age of 32 are excluded from job opportunities in the new factories, and they continue to accuse the government of having made false promises ([Let Haiti Live](#), 25 September 2012).

## New displacement in 2012

Since the 2010 earthquake, recurrent natural hazard-induced disasters caused by seasonal rains, hurricanes and storms have triggered both new displacement and the secondary displacement of IDPs in earthquake-affected and hosting areas. Approximately 70,000 people were displaced by new disasters in 2012 alone.

With the early start of the rainy season in March 2012, almost 20,000 people, most of whom were IDPs living in camps, were affected by floods, landslides and loss of crops and livestock across six departments. Further floods in early April affected North and North-East departments and some 7,600 people were evacuated ([REDLAC](#), May 2012). In August, Hurricane Isaac affected more than 50,000 IDPs in post-earthquake camps, and caused the evacuation of another 15,000 people ([Haiti Emergency Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp management- E-shelter and CCCM Cluster](#); [UN OCHA](#), September 2012).

Tropical Storm Sandy at the end of October 2012 displaced an estimated 31,370 people, damaged

or destroyed around 30,000 homes and prompted the government to declare a national state of emergency. Around 20,000 people were evacuated. In Ganthier, just outside Port-au-Prince, heavy rain triggered the collapse of river banks and the formation of two new rivers where villages once stood, leaving IDPs without land or homes to return to (Haiti E-shelter/CCCM cluster; [SNGRD/DPC](#), 01 November 2012). In Fond-Verrettes near the border with the Dominican Republic, flash floods left hundreds of homes buried under a foot of rubble ([Shelterbox](#), 04 December 2012). More than a month later, the majority of those displaced by Sandy were still living in makeshift shelters or with host families and around 3,000 people remained in evacuation shelters ([GoH and E-shelter/CCCM cluster](#), December 2012). Sandy also made the situation of nearly 32,000 IDPs in 119 post-earthquake camps significantly worse, destroying 5,800 shelters. Hurricane Isaac had hit 78 of the same camps just three months earlier ([DPC and E-shelter/CCCM cluster](#), 06 November 2012). After Sandy, more floods affected North department and Nippes in the south-west, leading to the displacement of up to 17,000 people, including 1,500 evacuees ([UN OCHA](#), 15 November 2012).

Heightened and acute food insecurity related to these multiple events raises the potential for further displacement as people are forced to move from the provinces to urban areas where there is better access to imported food and alternative livelihood opportunities.

## PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

### Displacement outside earthquake-affected areas

In the immediate period after the earthquake, regions outside the impacted areas were affected by the mass influx of around 630,000 people from the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince alone. All departments received IDPs, the highest num-

bers fleeing to other areas of West department and to South and Artibonite departments ([US/HIU](#), January 2010; [Karolinska Institute/Columbia University](#), August 2011; [HDS/UNFPA](#), September 2010). Relatively few responses targeted these IDPs, as the majority of aid organisations focused on the earthquake-affected areas ([GoH](#), March 2010).

The majority of those displaced from Port-au-Prince returned in the six months after the earthquake. It is not known, however, how many have remained in the provinces, have (re)integrated there or are still in search of a durable solution. A relatively small number left the country, some of them in search of medical services ([US/HIU](#), January 2010).

Movements to departments other than West and North-West were mostly to rural agricultural areas from where many IDPs had migrated in the years and decades before the earthquake in search of work and access to education ([HDS/UNFPA](#), September 2010). Those who moved to Lower Artibonite, for example, were originally from the area, and as of spring 2010 almost all were being hosted by close family members (ACTED, April 2010). On the other hand, IDPs in the northern town on Cap Haitien were hosted by people they did not previously know ([Haiti shelter cluster](#), April 2010). In some areas, the number of households hosting IDPs rose by as much as 43 per cent ([Shelter cluster](#), June 2010).

Such movements between rural and urban areas were common prior to the earthquake. Many IDPs may have been hosted by the same families on a regular basis and repeated movements back and forth between rural and urban areas have been observed, driven by the agricultural cycle and school term times ([Shelter cluster](#), June 2010). These pre-established patterns of movement and support explain much of the movement out of Port-au-Prince following the earthquake. The government also encouraged such movements by offering free public transport to IDPs wishing to

leave the metropolitan area ([CNSA-FEWSNET](#), 26 January 2010).

Camp registration data, assessments and agency experiences, including of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) suggests that many internally displaced children and older people who moved to the provinces to stay with host families remained there, while other members returned to the capital in search of work to pay for their immediate and recovery needs. Men began returning to Port-au-Prince before women, probably influenced by opportunities for manual labour or cash-for-work programmes in the capital ([HDS/UNFPA](#), September 2010). Proportionately more adults - and particularly men aged between 15 and 44 - but fewer children and older people were registered in camps in Port-au-Prince, compared with the populations in surrounding neighbourhoods ([IOM](#), 13 December 2012).

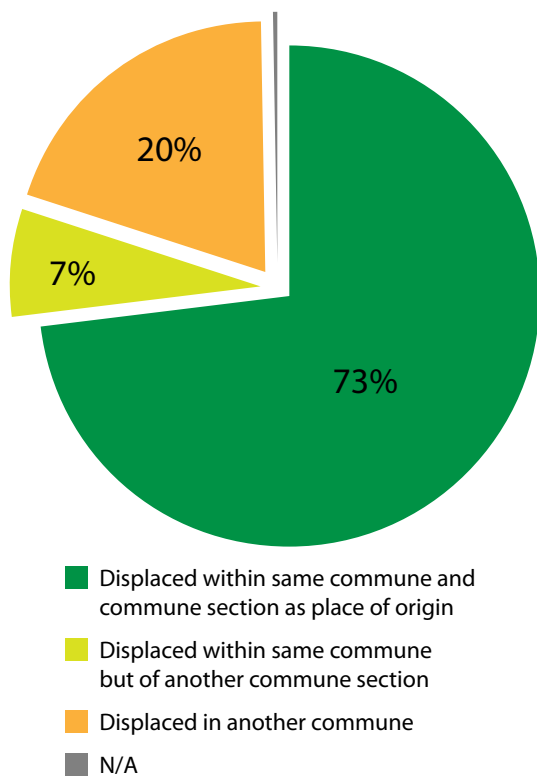
Family separations were also observed in previous disaster situations in Haiti, including the 2008 hurricane disasters, when an unknown number of IDPs placed their children with host families or in unrecognised orphanages, which led to cases of exploitation and abuse (ProCap End of Mission Report, 2009). Many children from very poor families, 80 per cent of them girls, became domestic servants or *restaveks* with families in exchange for accommodation in the house, where they were often mistreated and subjected to sexual violence and rape.

## Displacement within earthquake-affected areas

IDPs' movements to places of shelter within the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince were highly dynamic, particularly in the first year following the disaster. That said, various sources suggest that most IDPs in the metropolitan area remained in or returned to their original neighbourhoods or communes. Some

IDPs formed spontaneous settlements of makeshift shelters on the streets or in any available space, or took refuge in collective accommodation or with host families. Others returned to live in damaged and unsafe homes, or divided their lives between their homes and their makeshift shelters. Most IDPs in camps or camp-like situations were situated close to their former homes in the same or neighbouring communes, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Where were IDPs in camps living at the time of the earthquake? (Source: IOM, Camp Registration Phase II, 2012)



While IOM began tracking and registering families living in camps and camp-like situations from February 2010, IDPs given shelter by host families have remained less visible and there is relatively little information available to identify them. A survey conducted in September 2010 found that around 25 per cent of IDPs living in their original neighbourhoods were taking refuge either in a different house or in a tent or makeshift shelter (HDS/ UNFPA, September 2010). For those living in a different house, the number who staying with host

families is unclear. The Haiti shelter cluster estimated that around 30 per cent of the total displaced population took shelter with host families, and that around 10 percent of the families in Leogane and Carrefour were hosting IDPs while numbers with host families in Port-au-Prince was expected to be high (Haiti Shelter Cluster, 2010 and April 2010). Also unclear is the number who reoccupied the same but unsafe homes (see below).

As of October 2012, 357,000 IDPs or more than 90,000 households were living in 496 camps or camp-like situations set up following the 2010 earthquake in directly impacted areas. This is a fall in the number of IDPs living in camps of over 77 per cent since its peak in July 2010 (IOM/DTM, October 2012). However, as IOM Haiti's Chief of Mission has warned, "many of those who have already left camps may not have found a lasting housing solution, living instead with friends and family, or in tents in their neighbourhoods" (IOM, 11 February 2011). Furthermore, the closure of camps slowed significantly in 2012, reflecting obstacles to return or relocation, particularly for IDPs who rented rather than owned their own homes before the earthquake (IOM, 13 December 2012).

The vast majority of the remaining camps were set up soon after the earthquake, 90 per cent of them being groups of makeshift shelters and tents that IDPs erected themselves. A comparison of household registration data for camps in 2010 and 2012 shows that 84 per cent of IDPs in the remaining sites have been living there since January 2010 (IOM/DTM, October 2012). Other surveys in 2011 also found that more than 90 per cent of IDPs in six camps targeted by the president's relocation and housing plans had lived there since the first days after the earthquake struck (USF and BAI, July 2011). New sites are still occasionally identified and camp populations remain dynamic to some extent as new residents occupy shelters abandoned by others (IOM/DTM and Haiti E-shelter and CCCM cluster, 2012).



The vast majority of the remaining camps were set up soon after the earthquake and a comparison of household registration data for camps in 2010 and 2012 shows that 84 per cent of IDPs in the remaining sites have been living there since January 2010 ([IOM/DTM](#), October 2012). The camps are located mainly in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and the southern regions of Leogane, Gressier, Petit-Goave and Grand-Goave and include sites in gullies and other areas prone to flooding ([GoH](#), September 2010). Ninety per cent of the camps are made up of groups of makeshift shelters and tents that IDPs erected themselves, some of which have been earmarked for conversion into more permanent settlements. Eleven planned resettlement sites have been opened for IDPs relocated from camps in the congested city centre. These sites, most of which are on public land, currently accommodate almost 7,000 households, or 29,596 IDPs.

## CURRENT IDPS' NEEDS AND PROTECTION CONCERNS

Many protection risks faced by the poor and disaster-affected population in general are heightened in the insecure environment of the camps. The UN considers those IDPs still in camps to be the most vulnerable, with fewer resources to recover from the shock of the earthquake (Humanitarian Action Plan 2013- draft version). IDPs who have left the camps, particularly when forced to do so through violence or coercion, and those still staying with vulnerable host families and communities are less visible and less monitored. Furthermore, while most IDPs who moved from the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince to the provinces have returned, little is known about the number and situation of those who have not.

### Basic necessities of life

The arrival of IDPs put pressure on the limited food, fuel, housing and other resources of host

families and communities. This was a particular concern in Artibonite and North-West departments, which were already suffering chronic food insecurity. The agricultural cluster found that many host households were coping by reducing the number of meals they ate ([Host Community Guidelines](#), June 2010). Host families surveyed in lower Artibonite were willing to continue sheltering their relatives, but 50 per cent said they were struggling with the increased costs involved, and 27 per cent said they were suffering food shortages. Eighty per cent said they had no paid work (ACTED needs assessment, April 2010).

IDPs' reported reasons for leaving camps, whether of their own accord or as a result of coercion, are telling and include the generally squalid conditions as well as forced eviction ([Schuller, M.](#), 16 November 2012). Improved preparedness and small mitigation projects have reduced the impact of natural hazards to some extent in the most vulnerable camps. However, conditions have continued to worsen as humanitarian assistance and capacity has decreased. Only a third of IDPs currently resident in camps are living at the 25 sites reported as having camp management support (DTM data, October 2012). The international Sphere standards for humanitarian response go unmet, though some agencies have found them less applicable to Haiti's urban settings (E-shelter and CCCM cluster). Access to water and sanitation is extremely limited, increasing the risk of cholera and other diseases. A cholera epidemic has led to 7,787 deaths since October 2010, and in Port-au-Prince alone, around 5,000 new cases were reported in November 2012 ([UN OCHA](#), December 2012).

Minimum standards described by the right to adequate housing have also not been respected ([OHCHR/UN HABITAT](#)). Conditions within emergency shelters are very uncomfortable and insecure. As they have deteriorated over extended periods of use, far beyond their intended lifespan, many have been replaced but provide little protection from hurricanes, storms and

floods. Thousands of IDP families' shelters have been destroyed, most recently by Tropical Storm Sandy. Transitional shelters have been provided in 47 of the 496 sites currently open, but while these provide a safer living environment, they still leave IDPs in limbo (IOM/DTM, October 2012). Of 15,000 IDPs in camps surveyed in August 2011, 94 per cent said they would leave if they had alternative accommodation (ACTED/IOM, 5 August 2011), but scarcity of land, informal ownership or unclear tenure, the presence of rubble and widespread damage to existing buildings constitute major obstacles to longer term housing solutions.

## Physical security and integrity

### *Sexual, gender-based and gang-related violence in the camps*

Pre-existing problems of violence and exploitation have become more prevalent in the camps, where 14 per cent of households reported that one or more family member had been molested, and nine percent reported that a family member had been raped (NYU/CHRGJ, March 2011). Makeshift shelters have no walls, doors or locks to keep vulnerable IDPs safe. Women-headed households with children to support make up almost a quarter of all households living in camps, and the loss of spouses and livelihoods has left them with few means to feed themselves and their family (IOM camp registration data, Phase II). Efforts have been made to improve the security of women at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including improved lighting in camps and the creation of six safe houses, but an increase in transactional sex and Gender Based Violence has still been reported (E-shelter and CCCM cluster, 2012).

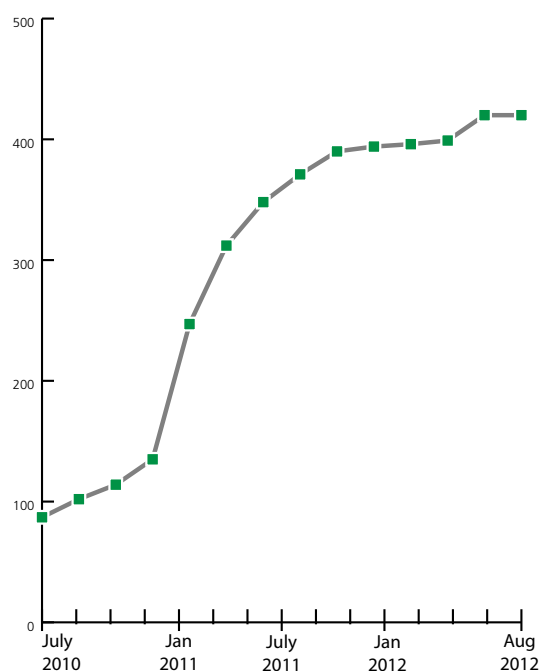
The earthquake destroyed the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Rights along with many courtrooms and police stations, further hampering the reporting of SGBV in a country with a pre-existing culture of impunity for rapists and other offenders. These threats to physical security and integrity

have in themselves been observed to cause some displacement and movement between camps, but statistics are not publicly available.

### *Forced evictions*

The violent and unlawful eviction of IDPs from camps, mostly on private land, has been an increasing protection concern since shortly after the earthquake, and the number of reported threats rose sharply during the first half of 2011. Between July 2010 and August 2012, IDPs in 420 camps faced eviction threats, and around 61,000 were evicted from 152 sites by private individuals, local government officials or the police. As of October 2012, eviction threats were still a major concern for 21 per cent of IDPs in camps, or more than 78,000 people. Such threats violate Haitian and international law and binding recommendations issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR, 18 November 2011). The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing drew attention to this issue at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council in 2011 (OHCHR, October 2011). The number of

Figure 2: Cumulative total of eviction threats made against IDPs in camps, July 2010-August 2012 (Source: E-Shelter and CCCM Cluster)



new threats has since slowed considerably, and most recent camp closures have rather been the result of return and relocation assistance offered to IDPs in camps ([IOM/E-shelter/CCCM cluster](#), August 2012).

#### *IDPs in areas at high risk from natural hazards*

Many camps were spontaneously established in areas highly vulnerable to the impact hurricanes, floods and landslides. Following Hurricane Isaac in 2012 and advocacy by the E-shelter and CCCM Cluster, the government prioritised 115 camps for return and relocation assistance, and for evacuation support given the repeated destruction of shelters and other impacts on residents. As of December 2012, however, 99 of these camps remained open and were accommodating 42,000 internally displaced households (E-shelter and CCCM Cluster). At the same time, IDPs who have moved from camps to return or relocation areas that are highly vulnerable to natural hazards, also remain at high risk, including from further displacement.

IDPs with host families and communities have also been at risk. This was the case in South and Nippes departments in early March 2010, when more than 22,000 people were affected by floods and mudslides and thousands evacuated ([IFRC](#), 1 March 2010).

#### *Return to unsafe housing*

Forty-six per cent of "housing units" in the metropolitan area assessed for structural damage following the earthquake, (246,182 out of 530,280) were found to be unsafe for habitation ([Haitian Ministry of Public Works/Miyamoto Intl./UNOPS/PADE; GoH and E-shelter/CCCM cluster](#), December 2012). Nevertheless, IDPs reoccupied many of them, as the manager of the assessment commented: "We now know that most people have already returned home, whether the homes were repaired or not [...] People occupy these houses despite communications and warnings from MTPTC engineers since they have nowhere to go but the camps. People do not want to stay in

these tents. Security is poor and they are exposed to diseases." ([CHAN](#), June 2011). Clearly, return in such situations does not represent a durable solution, and how many earthquake IDPs are still living in unsafe housing is unclear.

## **Livelihoods, education and housing**

IDPs in camps in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince face great difficulties in accessing livelihood opportunities. Fifty-eight per cent of IDPs in camps have no work, while over half of those who do have work are unskilled labourers ([IOM](#), 18 December 2012). The creation of construction jobs and cash-for-work programmes benefited men in particular during earlier phases of the response, but a recent survey found that the average income of a camp family is \$38 a week, while their survival costs amount to around \$35 ([Humanitarian Action Plan 2013](#), 18 December 2012). The relocation of IDPs from vulnerable camps in the city to permanent settlement sites in peripheral areas such as Camp Corail has distanced them from livelihood opportunities in the city. Without adequate public transport or livelihood recovery assistance, this creates greater dependence on limited humanitarian aid.

The income earners in 80 per cent of the families who moved out of Port-au-Prince to the regions became unemployed as a result of their displacement, and their children's school attendance rates dropped drastically. An IFRC study in South department, however, found that many IDPs left their children behind with host families to attend school, while they moved in search of work and other services ([Host Community Guidelines](#), June 2010).

Access to adequate housing in places of return, relocation or local integration remains a core displacement-related need for IDPs both in camps and elsewhere. This is discussed further in the final section of this overview.

## Access to documentation

Many IDPs in camps lost all their belongings as a result of the earthquake and their subsequent displacement, including their birth certificates and documents related to land and property. Some children born in camps have not been registered and risk becoming de facto stateless or encountering other problems as they have no birth certificates, which are essential to access employment, education, health care and other services ([RSG on IDP rights](#), October 2010). While the need for assistance in this area outstrip capacity to respond, protection specialists have worked to provide access to legal documentation for vulnerable groups ([UNHCR](#), 11 January 2011), and in April 2012, Argentina and Venezuela agreed to provide support to strengthen Haiti's National Identification Office in an effort to improve the system ([MINUSTAH/OHCHR](#), October 2012).

## Protection of IDPs at particular risk

The most vulnerable IDPs living in camps include separated or unaccompanied minors, pregnant and lactating women, female-headed households, adolescent mothers, older people and people with disabilities. Challenges include discrimination in accessing services, physical and sexual violence and abuse, a lack of social integration and manipulation by armed groups.

Haiti's legal framework for the protection of vulnerable groups was strengthened in 2012. A national law on the integration of people with disabilities was adopted by parliament and promulgated by the president, a draft law on violence against women was finalised and the government ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which covers the right to an adequate standard of living and adequate housing, including in camp settings.

## RESPONSES AND OBSTACLES TO DURABLE SOLUTIONS

The Haitian reality is one of chronic crises and acute disaster risk, caused by underlying issues of structural poverty, inequality and the widespread abuse of human rights, and a government hugely challenged by instability and fragile capacity. Solutions require humanitarian and development challenges be addressed as part of the same problem rather than as separate issues through collaboration that marries short term, critical responses with long term approaches across a wide range of actors. The roles of UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator being held by one person has been questioned in other situations, but appears appropriate in Haiti in this regard. As the former Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights of IDPs put it: "Haiti is a humanitarian crisis that needs a development solution." ([Kaelin, W.](#), October 2010)

The fulfilment of IDPs' right to a durable solution is achieved through a gradual process of reducing their displacement-linked needs. This requires stronger and more consistently applied linkages between mechanisms that restore housing, land and property or provide compensation, together with measures to address long-term safety and security and an adequate standard of living including access to livelihoods and basic services ([see IASC Framework on Durable Solutions](#)). Any solution that does not incorporate disaster risk reduction and protection from further displacement cannot be seen as durable.

The current number and situation of all IDPs yet to achieve a durable solution to their displacement following the earthquake and other more recent disasters, together with the families and neighbourhoods who host them, is unknown. The overall picture includes, but is not limited to, the 358,000 IDPs or 90,415 households still living in post-earthquake camps and camp-like situations as of October 2012 and whose situation is

well monitored. Less clear are the living conditions of IDPs who have left the camps but remain displaced and of those who may be living with a host family and facing ongoing obstacles to their recovery and reintegration. IDPs not living in camps or camp-like situations also have a right to be included in recovery and development plans, and the continued absence of information on this diverse group, the lack of monitoring of their specific needs to enable integration, and the risk of their exclusion from rehabilitation and development plans remains a protection gap. If left unaddressed, protracted displacement creates the risk of additional social and political instability in the country, including through further displacement.

Land scarcity and complex, poorly documented and often informal land tenure and occupancy arrangements are often cited as a key obstacle to progress for IDPs, while others have argued for flexible, incremental approaches based on community enumeration rather than top-down ownership models to approach the issues ([HPN/CARE International UK](#), October 2010; [HPG-ODI/Groupe URD](#), September 2012). Uncleared rubble has also been a major impediment, though this has now moved forward considerably and further projects were launched in 20 neighbourhoods in 2012 ([Humanitarian Action Plan 2013](#), 18 December 2012). However, the mismatch between camp closures as part of return and relocation programmes and the pace of neighbourhood rehabilitation

efforts creates a significant risk that people who have left the camps - especially those forced to leave - are being caught in less visible, protracted displacement.

Housing and land is not the only displacement-related need of IDPs, but does play a central role in achieving a durable solution. As of December 2012, over 152,000 internally displaced households had received either a year's worth of rental subsidies, support to repair or rebuild their homes or a transitional shelter of better quality than a tent. About a third of those assisted were IDP families living in camps. As most camp-based families were tenants rather than owners of property before their displacement, rental subsidies were specifically intended to help them, while most of the support in terms of repair and (re)construction and transitional shelters went to IDPs living outside camp situations (See Table 1). Rental subsidies are also seen by the government and many agencies as an effective, complementary way to support the faster closure of camps, assuming sufficient and safe rental stock is available. Private landlords are estimated to have repaired 40,000 rental properties themselves, but further assessment is needed to ensure absorption capacity in the market and security of tenure for renters ([GoH and E-shelter/CCCM cluster](#), December 2012). The Humanitarian Action Plan for 2013 aims to provide return and relocation assistance to those remaining in camps, dependent on funding.

Table 1: Number of internally displaced households staying in or outside camps who received improved shelter or housing assistance, as of December 2012. Source: E-shelter and CCCM Cluster Coordination Unit

Type of housing support provided	Number of IDP households <u>outside camps</u> provided with assistance	Number of IDP households <u>in camps</u> provided with assistance	Total of IDP households assisted (inside and outside camps)
Reconstruction/repairs	18,536	6,100	24,636
T- Shelters	85,588	24,412	110,000
Rental subsidies	0	23,233	23,233
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,891 (65%)</b>	<b>53,745 (35%)</b>	<b>152,636 (100%)</b>

All of these types of support provide IDPs with an immediate alternative to living in camps in makeshift shelters or in unsafe buildings or tents outside camps and may amount to progress towards durable solutions. However, IDPs risk remaining in protracted displacement if stronger linkages are not made to the development of livelihood opportunities and access to basic services. Those in transitional housing and rental subsidies also risk becoming homeless again or being left in limbo if more durable housing solutions are not identified. This is a particular concern in relation to the relocation of IDPs in Port-au-Prince camps to large, planned relocation sites outside the capital, such as Camp Corail, without ensuring access to basic services, livelihood opportunities and public transport ([Global Post](#), December 2012).

It should be noted that, as suggested by the figures in Table 1, 3rd column, around 80 per cent of the 270,585 internally displaced households who left the camps after July 2010 did so independently of assistance from the government or humanitarian organisations or were forcibly evicted. Return and relocation assistance to camp-based IDPs to date provides an important but only partial view of the picture in terms of progress. Follow-up is especially needed for IDPs with specific vulnerabilities including women-headed households with dependants, older people, those with disabilities, people who have been forcibly evicted and for host families (Haiti Protection cluster).

Haiti does not have a durable solutions strategy or other policies that together address the needs and rights of all IDPs. Given that housing and urban development is central to addressing displacement-related concerns, policy in this area is urgently needed to guide the actions and coherence of multiple organisations and entities ([Submission to UN UPR](#), October 2011). The government has recognised this, and the recently established system of multi-actor, sectoral platforms which it leads - known as *tables sectorielles* - includes one on housing which may develop

into a key mechanism. Such a policy needs to be comprehensive, action-oriented and rights-based, and include affordable social housing for the most vulnerable households. Internal displacement and its prevention should be integrated as core issues to address based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the right to adequate housing. Further collation of existing documentation and additional assessments to address gaps in knowledge on IDPs and host family strategies will also be needed to inform this process. At the same time, complementary strategy needs to address IDPs with host families and outside the metropolitan area, and a *table sectorielle* that specifically considers displacement, as advocated for by the E-shelter and CCCM cluster, should also be considered.

Durable solutions in Haiti can only be fully achieved as part of an integrated and accountable government-led approach. This in turn requires long-term commitment from international donors and other partners to support the government's ability to fulfil its obligations as the primary protector of the rights and interests of all Haitian people. Central to this is ensuring IDPs' right to participation in the formulation of solutions that respond to their specific local contexts, with particular attention being paid to vulnerable groups and those with specific needs. The government-led 16 neighbourhoods/6 camps pilot programme provides a promising approach to assisting return, relocation and neighbourhood rehabilitation, including improvements in living conditions and the establishment of income-generating activities. Launched in September 2011, it has assisted the return of nearly 44,000 IDPs to their neighbourhoods of origin in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, and rehabilitation work is now beginning ([HRE](#), October 2012). Lessons must be applied, however, to ensure that rights violations and forced evictions from camps in the pilot phase are not repeated, with stronger protection measures and accountability to IDPs built in.

Government capacity is still fragile, and in the current transition to a government-led response and a reframing of the post-earthquake interventions towards longer-term development, a significant emphasis and injection of resources is being directed at strengthening the capacity of various parts of government ministries and civil structures. This support is mostly being provided at the national level through the secondment of technical experts to assist in policy formulation and institutional support. Stronger emphasis on the capacity of municipal or local authorities is imperative, however, given their key role in providing protection at the interface between host neighbourhoods, IDPs and the government. Further delays to local elections must be avoided to allow the work to progress. The development of local level networks, resources and technical capacity and the direct participation of neighbourhood groups and IDPs themselves should be further facilitated and reinforced in the identification and implementation of solutions.

## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998, upon the request of the United Nations, to set up a global database on internal displacement. A decade later, IDMC remains the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement caused by conflict and violence worldwide.

IDMC aims to support better international and national responses to situations of internal displacement and respect for the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs), who are often among the world's most vulnerable people. It also aims to promote durable solutions for IDPs, through return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country.

IDMC's main activities include:

- Monitoring and reporting on internal displacement caused by conflict, generalised violence and violations of human rights;
- Researching, analysing and advocating for the rights of IDPs;
- Training and strengthening capacities on the protection of IDPs;
- Contributing to the development of standards and guidance on protecting and assisting IDPs.

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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