iDMC internal displacement monitoring centre

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Multiple crises hamper prospects for durable solutions

The internal displacement crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is multi-faceted, and despite apparent similarities, its causes, dynamics and perpetrators vary from context to context. The country also faces both protracted and fresh displacement situations, sometimes in the same locations, meaning that internally displaced people (IDPs) have varying needs and face different challenges. Both national and international responses need to take this complexity into account if all IDPs are to achieve a durable solution to their displacement.

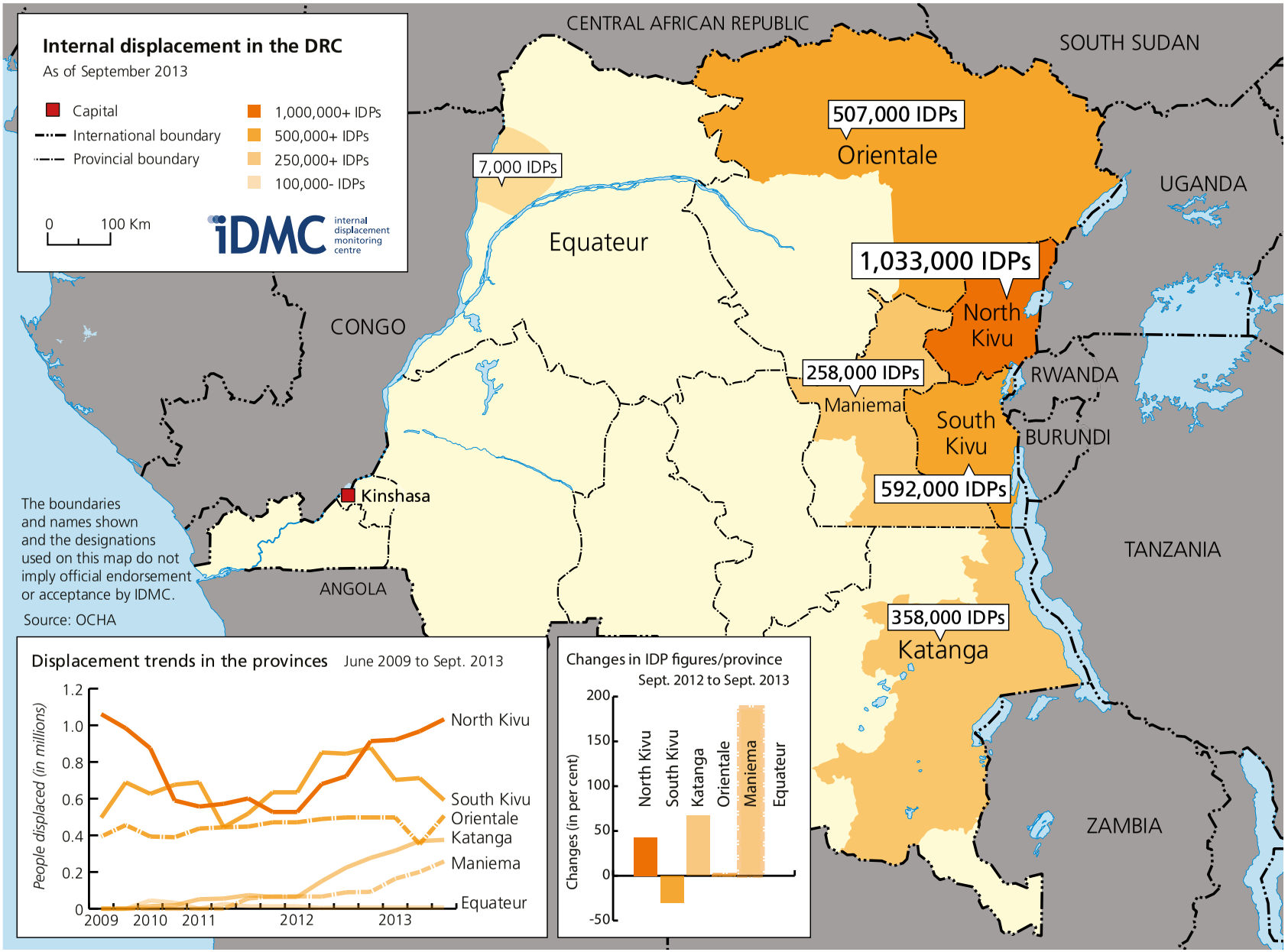
A resident of the eastern DRC town of Kanyaruchinya points to an area where houses once used to be, before an attack in August 2013 destroyed them. (Photo: IRIN/Aubrey Graham, October 2013)

DRC is home to an estimated 2.7 million IDPs, making it one of the largest internal displacement crises in the world. Most have fled violence and human rights abuses committed by armed groups and the military, but inter-communal tensions and disputes over land and the control of natural resources have also caused displacement, as have natural hazards. Conflict and violence are concentrated in eastern DRC, as are the country's IDPs. More than half live in the provinces of North and South Kivu, and the remainder in Orientale, Katanga, Maniema and Equateur.

Many IDPs, especially those in the two Kivu provinces, have been displaced more than once. Some may only be displaced for days or weeks, but others have been living in displacement for years.

Protection is a major concern for IDPs, who are more vulnerable than other civilians to human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests, torture, killings, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), forced recruitment, extortion, looting and forced labour.

The vast majority of IDPs in DRC live with host families (77 per cent), who often share their resources with them. These resources, however, tend to be very limited, meaning that both IDPs and host communities often need humanitarian assistance including shelter, water, food and health care. Other IDPs live in sites (17 per cent) and camps (six per cent).



Source: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/maps

Women, men, children and elderly IDPs all have specific needs in terms of livelihood opportunities, health, education and social networks. Some groups are also particularly vulnerable to SGBV, forced recruitment and exploitation. Those responding to internal displacement need to pay special attention to these groups.

The main obstacles to IDPs achieving durable solutions are both ongoing and new flare-ups of conflict and violence. Despite the surrender of the armed group M23, others continue their activities and contribute to chronic insecurity in the east of the country. Poor living conditions, including limited access to basic services, land and alternative livelihoods, and the breakdown of community structures are also significant challenges.

Both national and international responders to internal displacement in DRC have worked to improve their efforts, and there are encouraging opportunities which could serve as a basis to build a more holistic and coherent response. The government has created a parliamentary working group to draft national legislation on internal displacement and a national dialogue was held in September and October 2013. The governments of the Great Lakes region and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) also signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region in February 2013, and are in the process of implementing the agreement.

Background and history of displacement

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has a long history of internal displacement, caused primarily by conflict and violence but also by other factors such as natural hazards, natural resource extraction and development (Prunier, 2009; Rift Valley Institute, n/d).

Conflicts and crises in DRC have centred on the east of the country, with the result that large-scale internal displacement has become part of the landscape across a number of eastern provinces. The many and often interlinked conflicts relate to disputes over political and traditional power, control of territory and people, and the access they afford to natural resources.

Regional dynamics are also a factor (Lemarchand, 2009). Eastern DRC has traditionally had stronger cultural links and more trade, both legal and illegal, with the Great Lakes region than with the capital, Kinshasa. Widespread cross-border migration, often economically motivated, is an established feature. Over the last two decades, however, forced displacement has accounted for the largest population movements, first in response to the Rwandan genocide and latterly with large numbers of refugees from DRC fleeing to Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and beyond (IOM, December 2011).

As of September 2013, there were more than 2.7 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in DRC. The country was also hosting 185,000 refugees, while 435,000 Congolese were themselves living as refugees in neighbouring and other African countries (UNHCR, September 2013; OCHA, October 2013).

With the onset of the two Congo wars, which took place from 1996 to 1997 and from 1998 to 2003, DRC experienced its first mass internal displacements. As many as 3.4 million people were displaced at the peak of the fighting in 2003 (IDMC, October 2004). Both wars involved the invasion of armies from neighbouring countries, and in the second as many as eight foreign forces were present in DRC (Enough Project, November 2011; Hawkins, January 2004). Since the end of the second war, armed opposition groups and self-defence militias have posed a permanent threat to the state and the civilian population, and have caused large-scale displacement. The 23 March

Movement (M23), which was active in North Kivu province in 2012 and 2013, received much media attention, but it is merely the latest and will by no means be the last of such groups. National political developments have also contributed to escalations of violence, as did the much-contested presidential elections in 2011, which were won by the incumbent, Joseph Kabila.

Major sudden-onset natural hazards have caused significant displacement at times. In 2002, the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano near Goma, the capital of North Kivu, displaced 400,000 people. Some fled within DRC and others to Rwanda. In 2008, an earthquake left thousands of people homeless in South Kivu province (IDMC, December 2010). The exploitation of natural resources and the extension of natural parks have also forced people to flee their homes.

Socio-economic context

Despite its abundant natural resources, DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2013, it was ranked last alongside Niger in the UN Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP, 2013). Its other socio-economic and health ratings are also poor. Of an estimated population of 65 million, 87.7 percent were living below the international poverty line across the country as a whole in 2012 (UNDP, 2013; World Bank, n/d).

Weak governance - including in relation to the exploitation of natural resources - poverty, insecurity and poor public service provision have created fertile ground for the proliferation of armed groups. Not only does this increase the likelihood of conflicts, it also makes responding to violence and displacement more difficult. A long-needed and effective reform of the security sector would help to establish a more peaceable environment.

Displacement figures and patterns

Figures

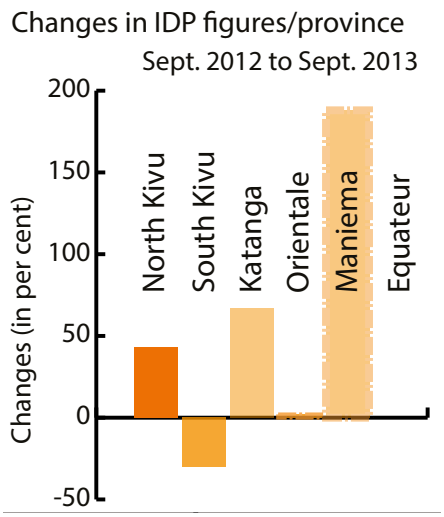
As of the end of September 2013, there were 2.77 million IDPs in DRC, the highest figure in five years. The vast majority fled violence and human rights abuses (OCHA, October 2013). By province, there were 1.03 million IDPs in North Kivu, 5912,000 in South Kivu, 507,000 in Orientale, 358,000 in Katanga, 258,000 in Maniema and 7,000 in Equateur. The presence of IDPs in cities further afield such as Kinshasa was documented until 2006. There are no current figures available, but anecdotal evidence suggests this continues to be the case.

The internal displacement crisis in North Kivu is DRC's largest, and between them North and South Kivu host more than half of the country's IDPs, spread across all areas of the two provinces. Katanga's IDPs are concentrated in the east of the province, and Orientale's in the districts of Haut-Uélé, Bas-Uélé and Ituri, reflecting armed groups' main areas of activity. Maniema's IDPs are concentrated in areas bordering North and South Kivu, from where many originate (HCT, November 2013).

Between January and September 2013, more than 600,000 people were newly displaced, while around 1.7 million IDPs returned to their homes between March 2012 and September 2013. These figures show that DRC's displacement crisis is relatively fluid, though there are areas where the situation is more static. The provinces with the sharpest percentage increase in the number of IDPs between March 2012 and September 2013 were Katanga (485 per cent) and Maniema (285 per cent). North Kivu's displaced population almost doubled over the same period. All three provinces have witnessed an escalation in armed conflict and violence since early 2012. The figures for South Kivu and Orientale changed only slightly (down six per cent and up 7.6 percent respectively) and Equateur remained unchanged.

According to the UN, the lower figure for South Kivu was the result of better data management and assessment of formerly inaccessible areas, rather than significant return movements (OCHA, October 2013; HCT, July 2013; OCHA, March 2012). Some sources, including the UN-supported Radio Okapi, reported an increase in the number of IDPs in Equateur in late 2013, but this was not reflected in UN figures (Radio Okapi, November 2013).

Trends in the number of IDPs by province between 2009 and 2013



Sources: OCHA, quarterly snapshots of the displaced population in DRC

Limitations

The above figures provide only an indication of the scale of internal displacement in the different provinces, and there are a number of limitations to the data. Current UN figures only include IDPs displaced since January 2009 (or 2008 for the two Uélé districts of Orientale). It is unclear whether those already living in displacement before those dates - estimated at 1.4 million based on IDMC monitoring at the time - have achieved durable solutions or whether they are still effectively IDPs. The ongoing difficulty in tracking and assessing return, local integration and resettlement also means that such movements are not fully reflected in cumulative totals.

Current figures tend to focus on conflict and violence-induced displacement and to a lesser extent on that caused by sudden-onset natural hazards. The effects of other drivers, including slow-onset natural hazards and development projects such as mining and the creation of national parks, are not fully understood and figures are not systematically tracked. As a result, the scale of the displacement they cause is unknown. There is only limited data on displacement in urban areas such as Goma, in terms of the number of people who may be living as new or long-term IDPs, the scale of secondary displacement, and the vulnerabilities likely to result from the poor tenure security and poverty that urban IDPs tend to experience.

Patterns

Multiple displacements are a feature of DRC's crises, particularly in the Kivus but also in other provinces. One IDP near Dungu in Haut-Uélé, Orientale province, said he had been displaced by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from South Sudan in the 1990s, and then by Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 2009 (IDMC, July 20131). Many IDPs in North Kivu have been displaced two, three or even more times in the last 18 months alone, and surveys suggest that a significant majority of people in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri have been displaced at least once since 1993 (University of Berkeley, August 2013).

Data on protracted displacement is limited in many provinces, but available information suggests it is far from uncommon. More than 55 per cent of IDPs in Haut and Bas-Uélé are believed to have been displaced since 2008 or 2009, and in South Kivu 11 per cent of current IDPs were displaced in 2009 or 2010 (IDMC, July 2013; OCHA, September 2013). Urban growth in Goma has been considerably higher than in other cities in DRC over the past 20 years, suggesting that successive waves of displacement have contributed to urbanisation (UN Habitat/IFRC, 2010).

1 "IDMC, July 2013" refers to interviews and focus group discussions IDMC staff conducted during field missions to DRC in July 2013.

As of September 2013, an estimated 77 per cent of DRC's IDPs were living with host families, 17 per cent on sites and six per cent in camps (OCHA, October 2013). The percentage of IDPs in camps and sites in North Kivu and Orientale is higher than the average, but still well below the proportion living with host families (OCHA, October 2013; OCHA, November 2013). The number of IDPs in North Kivu who seek refuge in camps and sites has risen in recent years. In the past, such places were deemed more exposed and less secure, in part because of attacks on camps housing Rwandan Hutus in 1996. Latterly, however, IDPs have increasingly sought the protection and assistance on offer there, something their counterparts with host families are less likely to receive. The fact that many host families are overstretched may also be contributing to the trend (Oxfam, September 2008; McDowell, April 2008).

Causes of internal displacement

The causes of displacement in DRC are often interlinked and cannot be dealt with as separate issues. Violence by armed groups is often associated with access to, and control of territory, people and natural resources. This competition for power and profit is overlain, however, with ethnic rivalries. State political agendas within the Great Lakes region have at times led to external support for armed groups within eastern DRC, in what amounts to a highly complex proxy war. Natural hazards have also caused or contributed to displacement, as have development projects.

Conflict and violence

Abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by armed groups and elements of the national security forces are characteristic of areas where internal displacement takes place in DRC (UN SG, September 2013).

The east of the country is affected by several different conflict dynamics, including violence by armed groups and militias, inter-communal conflicts and land disputes, all of which are interlinked and frequently perpetuate each other. Dozens of armed groups, some estimates say more than 40, are active in the region, where they take advantage of lawlessness, impunity and the absence of the state (IRIN, November 2013).

DRC's armed groups are extremely diverse and vary enormously in size from a few dozen to thousands of fighters. Some, such as M23, were established with political goals in mind, while others were set up as self-defence groups, as was the case with Raia Mutomboki in South Kivu and the Mayi-Mayi militias.

A number of foreign armed groups are also present in eastern DRC. The LRA is infamous for its atrocities in the north-east, while another Ugandan group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) is active along the Uganda-DRC border. The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (known by its French acronym FDLR) was initially made up of Hutu rebels involved in the 1994 Tutsi genocide and still operates in the Kivus.

Not all groups are present in all provinces, but the Kivus suffer the presence of the largest mix of groups. M23, FDLR, Raia Mutomboki, several Mayi-Mayi militias, ADF, the Patriotic Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (known by its French acronym ACPLS) and others are all active in North Kivu. M23 and ADF are not active in South Kivu but FDLR, Raia Mutomboki, Mayi-Mayi militias and others are. Maniema has relatively little displacement caused by conflicts within the province, but hosts IDPs fleeing the crises in North and South Kivu, while various Mayi-Mayi militias are active in Katanga. The LRA, the Patriotic Resistance Forces in Ituri (known by its French acronym FRPI), poachers and others are present in Orientale, where pastoralist migration is a seasonal phenomenon that has also caused tensions with local populations and at times displacement (IRIN, November 2013; Radio Okapi, July 2012).

The scenario in eastern DRC is further complicated by the fact that armed groups appear to shift alliances regularly, including to collaborate with government forces and/or splitting into new factions (ECHO, November 2013).

Conflicts in the region, especially localised and inter-communal conflicts, often have an ethnic dimension (ECHO, November 2013). Land is fought over not only because it represents a means of subsistence, but also because it is significant in terms of identity, status and power. The extraction of natural resources is also a driver of conflicts between communities, armed groups and the armed forces, with those who control mining areas able to profit from the expropriation of land, smuggling and the imposition of illegal taxes (ICG, October 2012; IPIS, November 2013; UNSC Group of Experts, July 2013).

Civilians often get caught in the crossfire, putting them at risk of death and injury, and as a result many flee pre-emptively as fighting approaches. Armed groups, including the military, target civilians with revenge attacks, extortion, harassment and other human rights violations, sometimes based on their ethnicity, forcing many more people into displacement (UN SG, September 2013). Large-scale attacks and intense fighting cause people to flee en masse, while smaller-scale violence leads to displacement trickles which are much harder to track and respond to. Persistent and recurring violence mean displacement sometimes becomes protracted, leading some IDPs to commute regularly between their places of refuge and origin.

Natural hazards

Natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and wildfires have all caused displacement throughout DRC, but on a much smaller scale than conflict and violence. Around 23,000 people were displaced by sudden-onset natural hazards in 2012, and as of September 2013 an estimated 17,000 people were living in displacement as a result of such phenomena (IDMC, May 2013; IDMC, December 2010; OCHA, October 2013).

The M23

In April 2012, former rebels who had been integrated into DRC's armed forces (known by their French acronym FARDC) defected and established a new armed group in North Kivu called the 23 March Movement (M23). Clashes between it, other armed groups and FARDC, and the human rights abuses that accompanied them, are believed to have forced 800,000 people to flee their homes in 2012 and 2013 (Enough Project, November 2013). In November 2012, Goma fell to the rebels and in the process an estimated 140,000 people were displaced in a matter of days. In November 2013, FARDC supported by the UN's MONUSCO intervention brigade managed to regain control of M23's strongholds and as a result the group announced its intention to lay down its arms and further its aims by political means.

M23's activities were concentrated in North Kivu, but their impacts were also felt in other areas. Not only were civilians displaced to neighbouring provinces, putting additional pressure on host communities there. Government troops were also redeployed from other provinces to North Kivu, leaving behind a security vacuum that gave other armed groups an opportunity to take control of more territory (ECHO, November 2013).

Natural hazards can also cause secondary displacement, highlighting the challenges of finding safe refuge. IDPs near Dungu, for example, said flooding had forced them to leave their first place of refuge in 2010 (IDMC, July 2013).

Development projects and natural resource extraction

There is very little information on development projects carried out in ways that cause displacement, for instance by not respecting the right to an effective remedy (Guiding Principles 6 and 7). It is also difficult to differentiate in some cases between conflict and development-induced displacement,

especially natural resource extraction. Evidence gathered on IDMC field missions, however, suggests there have been at least a number of occasions on which mining projects have forced people to relocate with little opportunity either to appeal or seek compensation. Some humanitarian workers considered mining to be the second largest cause of displacement in some areas (IDMC, July 2013).

The eviction of populations from rural areas to make way for the creation or expansion of national parks has also been observed in the past (Schmidt-Soltau, November 2010). These same projects have also hindered durable solutions in cases where IDPs who fled conflict and violence have not been able to return because their areas of origin have been designated as protected.

In both cases, land rights and inadequate mechanisms for judicial recourse and compensation are key issues. The overlap of customary and statutory legal frameworks, the customary nature of land tenure in rural areas, and the fact that those affected do not always hold official deeds mean that obtaining compensation has been extremely difficult if not impossible (IDMC, July 2013).

Protection and assistance needs

Given the variety and complexity of displacement dynamics in DRC, IDPs most urgent needs vary from province to province and context to context. It can, however, be said that for many protection - or rather the lack thereof - is the main challenge they face (ECHO, November 2013).

Both armed groups and the military (known by its French acronym FARDC) are known to commit human rights abuses against IDPs and other civilians, including arbitrary arrests, torture, killings, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), forced recruitment, extortion and illegal taxation, looting and forced labour. There have been cases in which rebel fighters, individual FARDC soldiers and even host community members have invaded displacement camps and sites at night to rape and pillage.

IDPs are particularly vulnerable to looting during and after the distribution of humanitarian aid if no effective protection mechanisms are in place. The looting incident at Mugunga 3 camp following the distribution of a two-week food ration in early December 2012 is a case in point (UNHCR, December 2012). IDPs also get caught in the crossfire when clashes occur near their places of refuge. Displacement camps and sites near Goma have been hit repeatedly by shelling and gunfire during fighting between the military and M23, sometimes forcing IDPs to flee again (MSF, May 2013; UNHCR, August 2013).

As the state is unable to provide effective protection, communities turn instead to local armed groups, which are often ethnically based. This fuels inter-ethnic tensions and can lead host communities to treat IDPs with suspicion as they are perceived as allies of one party to the conflict or another. Some IDPs have been the direct target of revenge attacks based on their ethnicity, leaving them with ever fewer safe havens.

IDPs also face protection risks in their pursuit of livelihoods and food security. Farming is the main means of subsistence for the majority of communities in eastern and north-eastern DRC, and IDPs' efforts to access land on which to cultivate have led to tensions and even conflicts with host communities. As a result, they tend to travel further in search of land, making them more vulnerable to attacks and extortion en route. Some IDPs travel back to their places of origin regularly, even if it is not safe to do so, in order to cultivate and to check on their belongings.

Most IDPs live with host families and at least initially rely on their hosts' supplies to get by, putting additional pressure on already scarce resources and living spaces. Some hosts provide refuge to several displaced families at a time.

As displacement becomes protracted and the number of IDPs remains high or even increases, resources are depleted at both the household and community level. IDPs' needs also change from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term development assistance. Some have specifically asked for support that helps them to become more self-reliant (OCHA, June 2012; IDMC, July 2013).

Multiple displacements are often thought to increase IDPs' vulnerability. They may have adapted to fleeing quickly and pre-emptively, but many will not have been able to replace goods and social support networks lost when they initially fled. Interviews with IDPs affected by repeated displacement also suggest that apathy becomes a problem, as aspirations fade and they lose the will to pick up and start again. As such, they would appear to become more dependent on host communities or external aid with each wave of displacement.

As the number of IDPs has increased, so have their humanitarian assistance needs, particularly in terms of food, health, water and shelter (UN SG, September 2013). Access to livelihood opportunities is also often difficult, and some IDPs have turned to day labour as a coping mechanism. Such work, however, tends to be underpaid and unsustainable. Given the informal nature of day labour, it also risks exposing IDPs to abuse by their employers.

Groups with specific needs

Internally displaced women in DRC have specific vulnerabilities, both in terms of protection and assistance. SGBV is a particular concern both as a deliberate weapon of war and in the context of growing violence within communities, and displaced women are at greater risk of being victims than their counterparts in the general population (Brookings, November 2013; UN, June 2013). IDPs in camps and sites tend to live and sleep in makeshift shelters which offer little protection against intruders, and in some cases displaced women have been placed in the same communal shelters as single men (RI, March 2013). Women are also often responsible for collecting firewood and water, meaning that they have to leave the relative safety of their camps, sites and host communities, and making them vulnerable to attacks en route (RI, March 2013; IDMC, July 2013).

Men tend to be the traditional primary carer in their families, but displacement and the disruption of livelihoods it brings have often meant they no longer are able to fulfil this role, which leave some feeling emasculated (IDMC, July 2013). As such, access to alternative livelihood opportunities is important for displaced men. In its absence, displaced women, and particularly those who are heads of household, tend to shoulder the burden of meeting their family's needs. This can lead them to accept hard and low-paid work, and some have resorted to prostitution as a coping mechanism (RI, March 2013; IDMC, July 2013).

Children are among the most vulnerable groups of IDPs, especially those who are orphans or unaccompanied. They are at risk of abduction and forced recruitment into armed groups to serve as porters, cooks and even combatants. Between 25 and 30 per cent of Raia Mutomboki fighters are estimated to be children (UN Group of Experts, October 2013). Child labour also is an issue, as displaced children are often called upon to complement their parents' income. The need to work combined with their family's inability to pay school fees means that many are unable to access education. Many schools in host communities are also overwhelmed by the influx of displaced children.

Elderly IDPs and those with disabilities are highly vulnerable to the breakdown of their social support networks during displacement. This is particularly true of those who have lost or become separated from their family members, those who have been repeatedly displaced and those living in protracted displacement. While in other circum-

Urban displacement in Goma

Little is known about the situation of urban IDPs in Goma, but the city's population is estimated to have grown by 45% since 2012. There is not enough information available to make a thorough assessment of this growth, but conflict and continuing instability in North Kivu suggest the arrival of IDPs may have contributed significantly to it.

Preliminary results of a survey recently undertaken by the Norwegian Refugee Council in Goma show that social links are main reasons IDPs choose to move to the city, where members of their families or other people from their places of origin are already living. Others mentioned better economic opportunities and the poor conditions in camps – particularly the lack of space and prevalence of illness – as reasons for coming to Goma.

IDPs in the city either live with host families or independently. The majority of host families support more than one family, and many have been hosts for over a year. This had led to their resources becoming severely depleted and in many cases to their being unable to feed both families.

The initial survey results indicate that access to adequate housing is a concern for most displaced households. Many IDPs struggle to pay rent, and living and sleeping space are in short supply. Both IDPs and their hosts report that increasing numbers of family members have to sleep outside. Access to water, electricity and livelihoods is also a concern. The majority of IDPs do not have secure jobs, and the displaced are twice as likely to resort to begging as their counterparts in the general population. A greater proportion of displaced children do not attend primary school, and IDPs are also more likely to report feeling discriminated against.

IDPs in Goma are very often less visible than those in camps, and as such tend to receive less humanitarian attention and assistance. In the hope of better access to aid, some have moved out of the city to official camps where relief efforts are focused, despite the poor living conditions they face there (IDMC, July 2013).

stances, the rest of the community would step in, IDPs said this was often not possible during displacement (IDMC, July 2013). Those affected are left dependent on external assistance or having to work to meet their needs despite their incapacities.

Prospects for durable solutions

The long and volatile history of conflict and displacement in DRC means that those responding to it face something of a dilemma. Humanitarian attention is often necessarily focused on the scale of fresh displacement and the immediate needs that arise from it, but the question of durable solutions and what the future may hold for those already living in displacement also needs to be addressed. It is important to ascertain the prospects for all IDPs of achieving a durable solution regardless of when they were displaced, and to ensure such considerations are integrated into the wider response across the country.

Some IDPs have been living in displacement for years and are reluctant to go home, but others have returned and others still may have integrated locally or resettled elsewhere in the country. These movements, however, are not properly

tracked, making it hard to assess to what extent they can be said to constitute durable solutions. It is difficult, for example, to know whether the 1.7 million returns which took place between March 2012 and September 2013 were sustainable.

There are many obstacles to the achievement of durable solutions in DRC. Ongoing and resurgent insecurity and violence and the unsatisfactory disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants are key challenges, and until the situation improves all civilians are at risk of becoming the next victim. Many IDPs and returnees live in constant fear of being attacked and having to flee again, preventing them from starting a new life (Mahony, March 2013; IRIN, November 2013; IDMC, July 2013).

The fear of renewed victimisation and displacement, combined with the memories of past violence and flight, prevents many from returning to their home areas even though they face difficult living conditions in their places of refuge. Many IDPs feel trapped between physical insecurity on the one hand and food insecurity on the other.

As such, a key step towards the facilitation of durable solutions is to ensure that IDPs' prospects in terms of security and living conditions, including access to basic services, are the same in their home areas as in their places of refuge. Their lack of access to land for cultivation or alternative livelihoods is also important to address. It often prevents them from improving their living conditions in their places of refuge, and while many had land, or access to it, in their places of origin, they may find it occupied upon return. Weak tenure security tends to mean they are unable to access judicial mechanisms to reclaim it.

National response

The primary responsibility for the prevention of displacement and the protection and assistance of IDPs lies with the Congolese state. DRC is a state party to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, including its protocols relating to internal displacement. It has also signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention) and is currently considering its ratification. The government is also working to strengthen its national legal framework on internal displacement, and a parliamentary working group has been charged with drafting national legislation on IDPs. Some civil society organisations have, however, voiced disappointment that consultation during the process has been only limited.

The Congolese authorities take part in the humanitarian cluster system and appear to intent on becoming more involved in the response to displacement (HCT, November 2013). The Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education are both members of their respective clusters. The National Refugee Commission (known by its French acronym CNR) has a role in the management of displacement camps and sites, and takes part in population movement working groups in some provinces (HCT, July 2013; RI, March 2013; IDMC, July 2013).

Despite these efforts, the government struggles to meet its responsibilities as the primary provider of assistance to IDPs as it lacks the necessary capacities, resources and political will (ECHO, November 2013). Public expenditure on social services and infrastructure is low, given the scale of needs (ECHO, November 2013). Local authorities collect some data on internal displacement, but the government relies largely on its international partners to do so.

The government's main response to ongoing insecurity in the east of the country is military, though it also makes some efforts to reach negotiated solutions. Military efforts to solve crises often come with immense cost to civilian populations,

who are exposed to reprisal attacks, and these in turn can be a major cause of displacement (Boutellis, September 2013). In 2008 and 2009, the LRA carried out mass atrocities against the civilian population in response to Lightning Thunder, a joint Ugandan, Congolese and southern Sudanese military operation aimed at wiping out the group. These included the infamous 2008 Christmas massacres, in which 865 people were killed in less than two weeks in Haut-Uélé district (HRW, February 2009).

In 2012 and 2013, much national and international attention was drawn to North Kivu and the crisis caused there by M23. Financial and human resourcing reflected that focus, to the detriment of other provinces and crises. Now that the M23 insurgency appears to have ended, there is an opportunity to readjust priorities and work towards a more comprehensive national response.

International response

Humanitarian response

A vast number of international humanitarian organisations, both UN agencies and NGOs, respond to internal displacement in DRC. They work mainly through the cluster system, which was set up in 2006, and provide aid in areas such as food security, health, water, sanitation, nutrition, shelter, education and protection. Coordination, however, remains a challenge despite efforts to improve it via the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) and pooled funding managed by the UN *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*. This stems in part from the absence of a lasting political settlement and the extent to which conflict and humanitarian needs have become protracted. In response, many organisations have taken small piecemeal initiatives in the hope of making a greater local impact, rather than focusing on a more comprehensive approach (Mahony, March 2013).

Coordination has been a particular challenge in North Kivu, where the level of assistance that IDPs receive depends on whether they live in official camps, informal settlements or with host communities. Those outside camps, and particularly those in urban settings, are for the most part invisible. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) only manages official camps, and until recently IDPs in informal settlements received less consistent and less frequent assistance and protection. This has changed somewhat since the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) took on the coordination of informal sites in the province (RI, March 2013).

The humanitarian system in DRC has a rapid response mechanism to assess and respond to population movements. It is an inter-agency and multi-sector initiative co-led by OCHA and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and implemented by a number of NGOs in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale provinces. A rapid response can, however, still take several weeks and in some cases up to three or four months, the result largely of unwieldy processes (IDMC, July 2013).

Funding continues to be a major challenge. As of 13 January 2014, the 2013 HAP was only funded at 67.2 per cent, in keeping with a trend of underfunding seen in previous years (FTS OCHA, January 2014). The sectors with least funding were emergency shelter and non-food items, which are particularly relevant for IDPs (7.7 per cent), education (8.6 per cent) and water, sanitation and hygiene (12.7 per cent) (FTS OCHA, January 2014).. The protection cluster was relatively well-funded, but still at only 21.8 per cent. The best-funded sectors were food security (94.3 per cent) and support functions such as coordination (80 per cent) and logistics (31.8 per cent). Funding shortages have forced some agencies to close their offices in recent years, and to interrupt or abandon their projects and programmes (RI, March 2013; IDMC, July 2013)

Insecurity, shrinking humanitarian space and poor infrastructure mean access is difficult in many areas. This complicates logistics and makes programming expensive. A lack of awareness and understanding of guidelines for civil-military relations in the context of a UN integrated mission, one part of which has an offensive mandate, is also a challenge in terms of ensuring respect for humanitarian principles (ECHO, November 2013).

MONUSCO

The United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) plays an active role in the international response to internal displacement, and over the years the UN Security Council has given it an increasingly strong mandate to protect civilians. It has, however, been constantly criticised for failing to do so effectively, undermining its credibility and popularity among the Congolese population (Boutellis, September 2013). A study undertaken in late 2012 found that peacekeeping and humanitarian organisations attached too much importance to protecting IDPs by military means, to the detriment of community-based approaches (Mahony, March 2013).

In August 2013, a MONUSCO intervention brigade was deployed for the first time, as part of a regional peace and security agreement. The brigade has an offensive mandate to neutralise armed groups and reduce the threats from them, which has raised concerns in the humanitarian community, especially in terms of the risks it may pose to civilians (IRIN, May 2013). The government's military defeat of M23 with the brigade's support provides evidence of the unit's potential, but concerns about the protection of civilians and displacement remain as it proceeds to take on new targets (IRIN, December 2013).

In an effort to allow MONUSCO to focus on its core mandate, over the next two years it will transfer activities in the areas of demining, technical election support, civil affairs, gender, child protection, sexual violence and justice and corrections to the UN country team and the government (UN SG, September 2013). MONUSCO's current mandate expires on 31 March 2014.

Development response

Given the protracted nature of conflict and many of the country's displacement situations, with peaks of emergencies and fresh displacement, simultaneous engagement from both the humanitarian and development sectors is needed to respond adequately. The focus of donors and agencies in eastern DRC is generally on humanitarian intervention, meaning that support for longer-term development initiatives is limited. In Goma, for instance, there is no long-term urban development plan, despite the need to address protracted displacement in the city. That said, it is encouraging that the World Bank has proposed $1 billion in funding to support development in the Great Lakes region (World Bank, May 2013).

If IDPs and host families in DRC are to achieve durable solutions, it is important that a truly comprehensive response covering all phases of displacement be implemented. As such, it is crucial that the development sector engage early to address both structural poverty and the impacts of displacement on IDPs and their host communities, including in areas where low-level violence and displacement continue. All causes of displacement, including violence and human rights violations committed by armed groups, self-defence militias and the armed forces; unresolved land and inter-communal conflicts; localised natural disasters; and mining and development projects need to be understood and addressed. All contexts in which displacement takes place also need consistent levels of attention.

There have recently been encouraging political developments at both the national and regional level. In February, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda other countries from the region signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (AU, February 2013). A national dialogue was also held in DRC between September and October, which concluded among others things with a promise of to create a government of national unity (Radio Okapi, October 2013). The two processes could pave the way for stability, economic cooperation and development. Together with the planned ratification of the Kampala Convention and the development of national legislation on internal displacement, they could provide a basis on which to build a comprehensive understanding of the issue and an equally thorough assessment of the best way forward for both humanitarian and development responses.

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. IDMC advocates for better responses to the needs of the millions of people worldwide who are displaced within their own countries as a consequence of conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or man-made disasters. It is also at the forefront of efforts to promote greater respect for the basic rights of internally displaced people (IDPs). IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

What we do:

- Promote appropriate responses to internal displacement through targeted advocacy
- Provide timely, accessible and relevant information on internal displacement worldwide
- Develop research and analysis to help shape policies and practices that have positive outcomes for IDPs
- Provide training and support to country-based policy-makers and practitioners with a responsibility to protect IDPs

Who do we target?

IDMC is best placed to effect positive change for IDPs through advocacy to influence the decisions and practices of duty bearers and all those with a responsibility or capacity to promote or fulfil the rights of IDPs.

How do we operate?

As information on internal displacement is often controversial and politically sensitive, IDMC must continue to operate and be seen to operate as an independent and effective global monitor of this widespread phenomenon.

IDMC has become an indispensable resource for anyone seeking impartial data and analysis on internal displacement, independent of political or operational considerations. www.internal-displacement.org

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