

20 April 2015

## INDIA

# Countrywide response urgently required to address chronic internal displacement

As of April 2015 an estimated 616,140 people were displaced in India as a result of armed conflict and inter-communal violence. Over half, or 364,100, are concentrated in two areas: the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, where there are 251,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), most of them since 1990, and the north-eastern state of Assam, which is hosting some 113,000 IDPs, the majority of whom fled inter-communal violence in late 2014. Some 252,000 IDPs are found in the capital, Delhi, and in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Nagaland, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. At least 346,000 were newly displaced by conflict and violence between January 2014 and March 2015, most fleeing inter-communal violence in Western Assam.

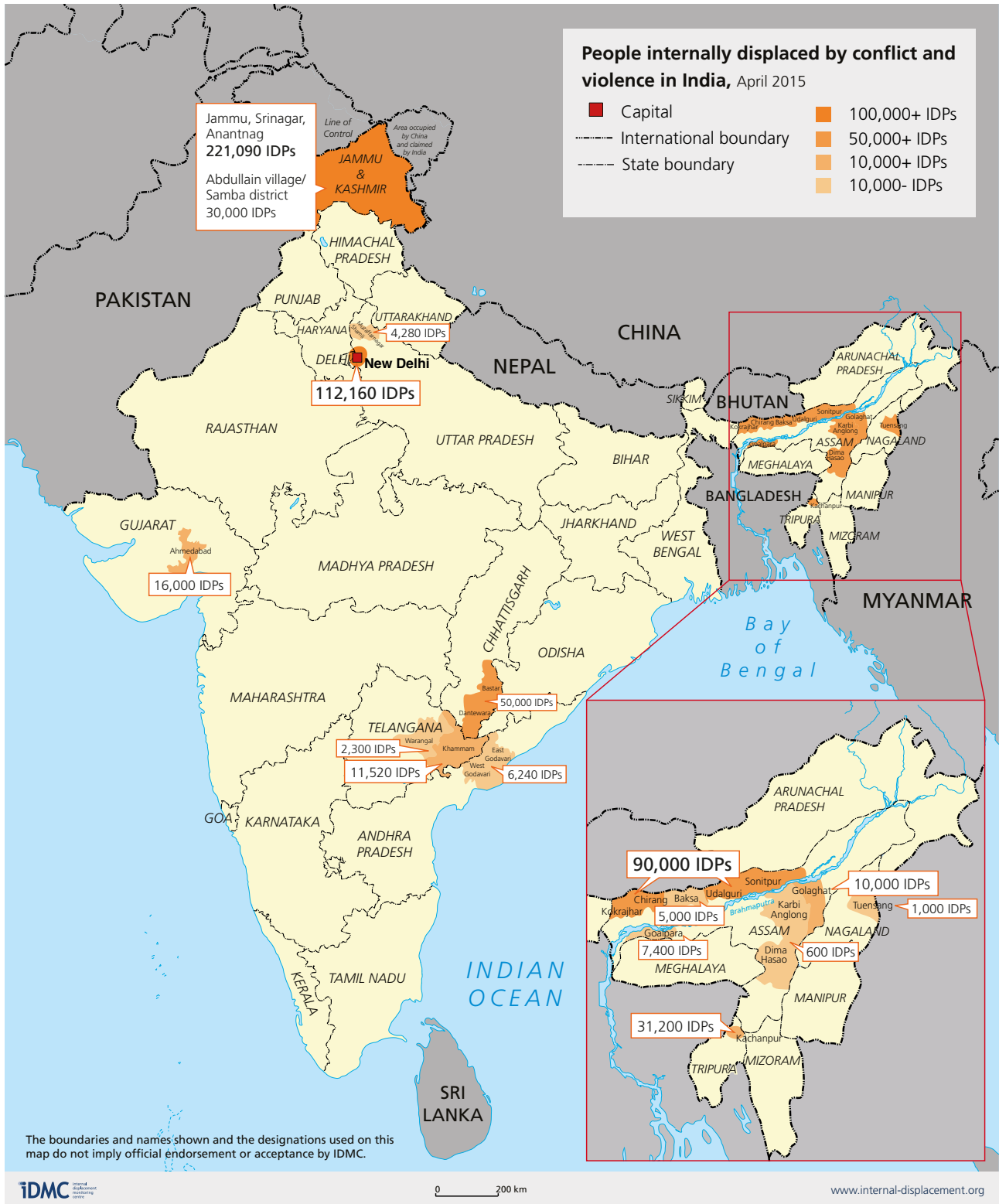


Adavasi tribal villagers along with their belongings move to a safe place after their family members were killed by the National Democratic Front of Boroland (Songbijit faction) militants in Tenganala village in Sonitpur district of Assam state, India, 24 December 2014. Photo: Ritu Raj Konwar/The Hindu

Many IDPs live in protracted displacement, having been displaced for up to 25 years and having failed to return or successfully find other durable solutions. The majority live in camps, including informal ones, where they often have only limited access to food, clean water and adequate sanitary facilities and little opportunity to secure sustainable livelihoods. Relief assistance provided by local authorities in government-run camps has included food, water and shelter but has tended to be temporary, only lasting a few weeks or months, after which camps are officially closed and IDPs are expected to either return or find alternative solutions on their own. Those who fail to do so often end up in nearby informal makeshift camps where they are left to fend for themselves. There is little information on IDPs living outside camps, including in urban areas.

The main obstacles to return are linked to ongoing insecurity, including hostility from former neighbours and unresolved disputes around demarcations of state boundaries. Insufficient state assistance to support IDPs' local integration or settlement elsewhere is preventing nearly half a million IDPs from achieving durable solutions, in particular in the states of Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. In Gujarat and Tripura return has been hindered by a failure to restore their enjoyment of housing, land and property (HLP) rights.

States, not the central government, are charged with assisting IDPs. In the absence of any national policies and procedures, the response is often ad-hoc and focused only on meeting immediate humanitarian needs. International humanitarian agencies continue to face barriers to assisting IDPs, including a number of government restrictions and insecurity in conflict-affected areas.



**Map by: IDMC**  
**More maps are available at [www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map](http://www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map)**

The designation of an IDP focal point at the national level and the adoption of a policy and regulatory framework upholding the rights of IDPs would help ensure a more comprehensive countrywide response.

## Background and causes of displacement (by region)

The largest country in South Asia, India is divided into 29 states and seven union territories and has a population of nearly 1.3 billion. Under one method of measuring poverty in India some 53.7 per cent are classified as poor ([OPHI](#), January 2015). Widespread lack of access to adequate living standards increases vulnerability to natural hazards, conflict and violence. Displacement resulting from recurrent disasters, conflict and development projects are key drivers of poverty. Socially excluded communities, including scheduled castes (an official designation for castes traditionally facing discrimination) and tribes and religious minorities, tend to be disproportionately affected by displacement, with many propelled deeper into poverty and marginalisation ([ECHO](#), 14 October 2013, p.2).

In recent years, economic growth has led to an overall decline in poverty, but has failed to resolve the growing problem of inequality between social groups and between those living in the cities and those living in the countryside ([Miklian & Kolas](#), 2014 pp.204-223). People living in acute poverty are mainly concentrated in India's rural areas. In the last decades, state-led land acquisitions have led to the displacement of millions of people ([Brookings](#), 21 October 2013). Those particularly affected include members of Adivasi (aboriginal) communities and the Dalit (so-called 'untouchable') caste ([Oxfam](#), February 2015, p.1; [Brookings](#), 21 October 2013).

The social and environmental impact of development projects has also fuelled tensions and conflict over land access and management. Leftist non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have often drawn support

from marginalised communities unable to assert their land rights. Rapid population growth and the poorest groups' inability to benefit from the country's economic development have exacerbated inter-ethnic or inter-religious tensions around access to land and state resources. In many cases, this competition has been articulated by ethnic-based NSAGs over larger political claims including autonomy.

The areas having experienced internal displacement, including protracted and new displacement, are the capital Delhi and the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

### *North-east India*

Since independence in 1947, India's north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura have seen armed conflict and generalised violence ([Bhaumik](#), 2009, p.1). Assam and its border areas with other Indian states including Nagaland and Meghalaya, as well as Tripura/Mizoram, are where much of the conflict and displacement has been concentrated in recent decades. There are up to 102 active NSAGs in the north-east, with insurgency closely linked to identity and ethnicity ([UNSW](#), 2 October 2014).

In 1958, in response to demands for outright independence by NSAGs, India enacted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which has since been in force in the region. For those areas that have been declared "disturbed", the AFSPA provides for the presence of armed forces and grants them wide-ranging powers. It has been criticised for creating a culture of impunity for human rights violations ([HRW](#), 19 October 2011; [IDMC](#), November 2011, p.9; [Aljazeera](#), 8 March 2014; [UNSW](#), 2 October 2014). In November 2014, the AFSPA was extended in Assam as well as in other states of the north-east for another year ([Indian Express](#), 2 January 2015). On April 7, 2015, AFSPA was extended to 12 districts Arunachal Pradesh by the Central Government ([Reuters](#), 8 April 2015).

At the same time, generalised violence and resulting displacement have been driven by intense competition for land. This is a consequence of the increasing privatisation of land, which started during British colonial rule. In addition, the British brought in migrant workers from Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. After independence in 1947, the privatisation of land continued, with less and less collective land available for indigenous people to practise subsistence agriculture (Bhaumik, 2009, pp.60-71; IDMC, November 2011, pp.9-10).

The result of this privatisation was a significant factor behind 'anti-foreigner' agitations, massacres, generalised violence and forced displacement which indigenous groups have perpetrated since the 1980s against people they regard as non-indigenous. In addition, the region has seen violence between different indigenous groups who historically have not lived in distinct areas. Ethnic cleansing of minorities has been carried out by some groups to ensure they achieve majority status and are in a position to create de facto ethnic homelands by establishing Autonomous Councils under the terms of the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India (Bhaumik, 2009, pp.60-71; IDMC, November 2011, p.10).

#### *Western Assam*

Conflict, violence and displacement in Western Assam over the last two decades has mostly stemmed from demands by the indigenous Bodos, for a separate Bodoland state to be carved out of Assam. In 1993 the central government, the Assam state government and some Bodo NSAGs signed an agreement (the Bodo Accord) which provided increased autonomy to Bodos and led to the establishment of the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC). However, disagreement over which villages would be part of the BAC triggered violent attacks by other Bodo NSAGs against other ethnic groups, including Muslims and Hindus of Bengali descent and Adivasis, with tens of thousands displaced as a result (MCRG, February 2007, p.7; Bhaumik, 2009, p. 135; IDMC, November 2011). Further violence in 1995-98 between Bodo NSAGs and newly formed

Adivasi and Bengali Hindu NSAGs displaced more than 200,000 people (Teheka, 23 September 2006; Bhaumik, 2009, p.136).

In 2003 the central and Assam state governments and the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force signed a second agreement, replacing the BAC with the Bodo Territorial Council with jurisdiction over the districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Udalguri and Baksa. This, however, has not put an end to inter-communal violence. In 2012, protests relating to the forced eviction of Muslims from forestland turned violent and resulted in 90 deaths and the displacement of between 400,000 and 485,000 people (The Hindu, 15 August 2012; ACHR, September 2012).

Violence and displacement continued in 2014. In May, armed Bodo forest guards were allegedly responsible for the killing of at least 45 people, destruction of 70 houses and displacement of 5,000 Bengali-speaking Muslims (ABC, 4 May 2014; CPA, May 2014, p.6). In late December 2014, inter-communal violence again broke out in the districts of Chirang, Kokrajhar, Sonitpur and Udalguri in Western Assam. As a result of attacks by Bodo militants against five Adivasi villages, over 70 people were killed and 300,000 IDPs sought shelter in at least 85 IDP camps in open fields and schools (ACHR, 2 January 2015). Retaliatory attacks resulted in the killing of at least five Bodos and the displacement of thousands (DSG, January 2015). Around 90,000 IDPs remain unable to return or access other durable solutions to displacement with the majority living in camps (Frontline, 23 January 2015; Win-G-India, 19 January 2015; DSG, January 2015).

#### *Assam-Nagaland border*

The state of Nagaland was carved out of Assam in 1962 (Bhaumik, 2009, p.18). The border between Nagaland and Assam was poorly defined and disputes have continued for three decades, with both sides claiming cross-border encroachments. Pending a decision by the Indian Supreme Court, people residing in border villages continue to live in uncertainty with ongoing sporadic violence be-

tween Adivasi (reported by the media as Assamese) and Nagas. In August 2014, a land dispute along the border of the Golaghat district of Assam and the Wokha district of Nagaland claimed 17 lives, destroyed at least 200 houses and displaced 10,000 people into camps along the Assam side of the border ([Aljazeera](#), 24 August 2014; [WinG-India](#), August 2014, pp.3-5; [EPW](#), 13 September 2014, p.15).

#### *Assam-Meghalaya border*

Violence between the mainly Hindu Rabha and predominantly Christian Garo in December 2010 and January 2011 displaced 50,000 people, with 35,000 in camps in the Goalpara district of Assam and 15,000 in camps in the East Garo Hills district of Meghalaya ([IDMC](#), November 2011, p.12). In February 2013, election-related violence in Goalpara district claimed 19 lives, destroyed 100 homes and forced members of three villages to seek refuge in camps ([DNAIndia](#), 13 February 2013). Some 7,400 people displaced by inter-communal violence in February 2013 were still living in eight camps along the Assam-Meghalaya border ([HRLN](#), 16 June 2014).

#### *Karbi Anglong*

Conflict in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam pivots around control of land between Karbi and Rengma Naga NSAGs as the former seeks to establish a separate 'Karbi homeland' ([AJHSS](#), August 2013, p.95). In December 2013, attacks by the Karbi People's Liberation Tigers on members of non-Karbi ethnic groups in the Dima Hasao (formerly North Cachar Hills) and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam were followed by retaliatory attacks by the Naga Rengma Hills Protection Force. This led to the displacement of 3,000 Karbis and Rengma Nagas mostly to camps, with some also residing in host communities ([HRLN](#), 2014, pp.4-5; [AHRC](#), 15 April 2014). In the districts of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong, 600 of the 3,000 people were still living in camps and with host communities in early 2014 ([The Hindu](#), 7 January 2014; [The Hindu](#), 31 January 2014; [HRLN](#), 2014; [AJHSS](#) 1:2, August 2013).

#### *Tripura-Mizoram border*

In 1996, an armed rebellion was launched by the

Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) with the aim of establishing a separate 'Bru homeland' in the state of Mizoram. Following the killing of a Mizo forest guard by members of the BNLF in Mamit district in October 1997, clashes between ethnic Bru and ethnic Mizo led to the displacement of at least 30,000 Bru from the districts of Mamit, Lunglei and Klasib into six IDP camps in the Kanchanpur district of Tripura ([GoI](#), 14 January 2015, p.1). In November 2009, the Mizoram government unilaterally announced that the displaced would be returned to their homes. However, a few days later the killing of a Mizo man, allegedly by a Bru NSAG, was followed by retaliatory attacks and the destruction of Bru houses ([IDMC](#), November 2011, p.22). An estimated 5,000 Bru were subsequently displaced to Tripura, while an unknown number of people fled to Karimganj district in Assam ([ACHR](#), 2010 p.8).

As of early 2015, around 31,200 IDPs displaced by inter-communal violence in the north-eastern state of Mizoram between 1997 and 2009 are still living in six camps the state of Tripura ([Times of India](#), 13 February, 2015).

## **Central Eastern India ('the Red Corridor')**

Displacement in central and eastern India results from the ongoing Naxalite/Maoist insurgencies which started in the late 1960s. The Naxalites are believed to number between 10,000 and 20,000 and are active in 13 of India's 28 states, in particular Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Orissa, Telangana ([RULAC](#), 13 April 2012; [Miklian & Kolas](#), 2014 p.73; [Aljazeera](#), 24 August 2013), an area stretching from Andhra Pradesh to West Bengal widely known as the 'Red Corridor.' In a political vacuum created by weak governance and corruption, the Maoist movement has drawn on civilian support and mobilised indigenous groups and tribes with promises to address shared grievances – poverty, land rights, access to and use of forest-based resources and political disenfranchisement ([Foreign Policy](#), 16 August 2010; [Miklian & Kolas](#), 2014 p.83).



Adivasis have been particularly affected over the past decades by both state land expropriations and development projects ([Miklian](#) 6 December 2012; [HRW](#), 30 July 2012; [Aljazeera](#), 24 August 2013). These are reported to have displaced tens of millions of people since the 1950s, with the majority not benefiting from any planned resettlement and ending up impoverished and further marginalised ([Brookings](#), 21 October 2013). The failure by the government to protect land rights and address the livelihoods needs of some of its most disadvantaged citizens, despite existing constitutional provisions guaranteeing these rights, has played into the hands of the Naxalites, allowing the movement to gain ground ([The Guardian](#), 30 October 2009; [Foreign Policy](#), 16 August 2010).

Considering the Naxalites as India's greatest "internal security threat", the government has relied heavily on a security response through counterinsurgency operations and in particular the 2009 military operation 'Operation Green Hunt' ([HRW](#), December 2009, pp.23-26; [Miklian & Kolas](#), 2014 p.74; [The Guardian](#), 30 October 2009). Militia groups have also joined the conflict, in particular the Salwa Judum ('Movement for Peace'), which was founded in the early 2000s and which recruited many of its members from victims of Maoist violence. The group was disbanded in 2011 following a Supreme Court ruling that considered it to be "illegal and unconstitutional" ([Frontline](#), 29 June 2013; [Dialect Anthropol](#) (2009) 33: 441-459). While there are signs that the conflict is receding, there has been little emphasis placed on addressing the needs of victims.

All parties to the conflict have been responsible for human rights violations, including killings, torture, recruitment of child soldiers, attacks on schools and forced displacement ([HRW](#), July 2012, p.31; [HRW](#), December 2009; [HRW](#), July 2008). Over 40 years of insurgency-related violence has claimed an estimated 10,000 lives and displaced millions of people ([Aljazeera](#), 21 October 2011).

In recent years, the conflict has been particularly intense in the state of Chhattisgarh. Following

escalation of violence in 2005, some 300,000 people were displaced in the districts of Dantewada and Bastar, with some fleeing across the state border to Khammam district (at the time part of Andhra Pradesh, since June 2014 within the new state of Telangana) ([AID India](#), 2010; [Frontline](#), 29 June 2013; [Dialect Anthropol](#) (2009) pp.441-459).

As the Andhra Pradesh government discouraged assistance to the displaced from Chhattisgarh, many sought to integrate with local indigenous populations ([Dialect Anthropol](#) (2009) pp.441-459). Further violence in 2013 led to the displacement of thousands of people, many seeking again refuge across the border in Telangana ([The Telegraph](#), 29 May 2013; [Times of India](#), 28 May 2013).

In the central state of Chhattisgarh, some 50,000 IDPs displaced in 2005 by the conflict between Maoists, Salwa Judum and the government were still living in 23 camps spread across the districts of Bastar and Dantewada ([Aljazeera](#), 24 August 2013). As of 2014, there were 20,000 IDPs living in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (which was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014) states (Action Aid -report on file with IDMC, April 2014).

## Other regions

### *Gujarat*

Tension between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat first escalated in 1992 over a mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh which Hindus claimed had been built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on a sacred Hindu site. These tensions triggered riots that led to the deaths of 1,000 people and set the scene for politicians to capitalise on the religious divide ([NYT](#), 26 September 2014).

In February 2002, further violence flared when a train carrying Hindu nationalist activists returning from Ayodhya to Gujarat was set alight in a Muslim neighbourhood, killing 59 Hindu pilgrims. Chief Minister Narendra Modi (since May 2014 India's Prime Minister) from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP) called a general strike, accusing Muslims of having caused the tragedy. Modi's political decisions at the time have been widely criticised as complicit to the violence and active involvement in the orchestration of events that galvanised the divide between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat ([HRW](#), 30 June 2003; [Jaffrelot](#), 2003). Over two months of resultant violence by militant Hindus against Muslims, included sexual violence, looting, destruction of religious sites, the killing of 2,000 people and the displacement of over 200,000 ([NYT](#), 26 September 2014; [Janvikas](#), 2007; [Centre for Social Justice and Anhad](#), 2007).

The majority of those displaced are Muslims and some 16,000 IDPs still live in 83 IDP camps in and around Ahmedabad ([Vice news](#), 6 May 2014; [Janvikas](#), 2012). In addition, unknown numbers are displaced in Muslim ghettos in various areas of Ahmedabad ([BBC](#), 1 March 2012; [Reuters](#), 14 May 2012).

#### *Jammu and Kashmir*

The conflict in Kashmir has its origins in the partition of British India into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan in 1947, which led to the displacement of an estimated 14 to over 15 million people and claimed between 225,000 and one million lives ([UNHCR](#), 1 January 2000, p.59; [ICRC](#), 30 June 1998). Predominantly Muslim Kashmir was ruled by a Hindu maharaja, Hari Singh, and was given the choice to accede to India or Pakistan. A choice to remain independent was rejected by Singh and Kashmir became divided between India and Pakistan by the contested Line of Control (LoC). The Indian part of Kashmir, including the Kashmir valley, became part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, while the Pakistani part became the provinces of Azad (free) Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

In 1990, following threats by Muslim militants some 57,000 families, most from the Hindu Pandit minority, fled their homes in the Kashmir valley to seek refuge in Jammu district, in Delhi and elsewhere in India ([Shekhawat](#), 2012, pp.49-65; [Gol](#), 15 July 2014).

As of July 2014, the total number of families registered by the government as "Kashmiri migrants" (the national authorities' term for Kashmiri IDPs) stood at 60,452 ([Gol](#), 15 July 2014), or 350,621 people based on the national family size average of 5.8 people ([Gol](#), 2011). The majority, or 221,090 people, are Kashmiri Pandits forced from their homes in 1990 and now living in Jammu district. Many Kashmiri Pandits displaced in 1990 also moved to other regions of the country, mainly to Delhi, where an estimated 112,160 are now living. In addition some 17,321 Kashmiri Pandits moved to other states ([Gol](#), 15 July 2014).

Ongoing tensions along the LoC led to the displacement of people residing near the border caught in cross-fire at the end of 2014 ([NDTV](#), 3 January 2015). Around 40 km. from the city of Jammu in Jammu and Kashmir, some 30,000 people displaced by cross border tensions with Pakistan at the end of 2014 remain unable to return ([Reuters](#), 10 October 2014; [BBC](#), 6 January 2015).

#### *Uttar Pradesh*

In September 2013, inter-communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts of Uttar Pradesh displaced 51,000 people ([NHRC](#), January 2014). One year after the riots, the BJP appointed Sanjeev Balyan as a Minister, despite his having been charged with inciting violence ([HRW](#), January 2015). There is also ongoing migration of Muslims to towns with higher concentrations of co-religionists, symptomatic of ongoing tensions and insecurity and, in turn, contributing to increased segregation ([EPW](#), December 2014).

Displacement also remains unresolved and 27,000 of the 51,000 people displaced in September 2013 remain unable to return, integrate or resettle elsewhere ([NHRC](#), January 2014; [Times of India](#), 14 June 2014; [HRW](#), January 2014). While the most vulnerable continue to live in camps, others are living in rented accommodation or houses purchased with financial compensation offered by the government ([EPW](#), December 2014, p.11) Recent reports from

April 2015 suggest that there are 750 families residing in 11 camps, amounting to 4,275 people in the districts of Shamli and Muzaffarnagar (MAJMA-on file with IDMC, April 2015). It is unknown how many people remain displaced outside of camps.

## Natural hazard-related disasters

India is a disaster-prone country and is regularly hit by a variety of natural hazards, including cyclones, floods, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. India is the country in South Asia where the population is most at risk of displacement due to disasters. Rapid urban growth, unplanned development and the large number of people lacking adequate living standards increase India's vulnerability to natural hazards. India's high displacement risk is due to the high population density and the large number of vulnerable people living in disaster-prone areas ([IDMC](#), 2015).

### *Displacement caused by natural hazard-related disasters*

In 2014 over 1.6 million people in India were displaced as a result of natural hazard-related disasters. Floods associated with heavy rains, landslides and a cyclone were the major drivers of displacement.

Between June and September 2014, close to 200,000 people were displaced by floods in the state of Assam ([ECHO](#), 26 June 2014; [Economic Times](#), 24 July 2014; [Times of India](#), 28 August 2014; [Floodlist](#), 9 September 2014). Some of the affected districts were already hosting people previously displaced by conflict. Other states particularly affected by floods in 2014 included Bihar (over 110,000 IDPs), Eastern Uttar Pradesh (45,000), Gujarat (20,000) Odisha (270,000) and Jammu and Kashmir (over half a million) ([Daily Mail](#), 17 August 2014; [Sphere India](#), August 2014; [IPS](#), 23 October 2014). In October heavy rains and strong winds associated with Cyclone Hudhud displaced 400,000 people from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha and caused major damage to houses and crops ([BBC](#), 13 October 2014).

## Displacement figures

There are at least 616,140 people currently internally displaced as a result of conflict and violence in India as of April 2015. This estimate is compiled from reports from national NGOs, civil society organisations, the media and the national authorities. Due to data collection challenges and limitations, IDMC's estimate should be considered as conservative. This figure does not include those displaced due to land acquisitions or large-scale development projects and only includes those still displaced since 1990. Some estimates put the number of displaced from development projects since 1950 at 65 million ([Brookings](#), 21 October 2013).

Over half of the displaced, or 364,100 people, are concentrated in just two states: the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, where most people were displaced by violence some 25 years ago and the north-eastern state of Assam, where the majority fled inter-communal violence in late 2014. Some 252,000 IDPs are scattered across India, including Delhi and the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Nagaland, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

### *New displacement in 2014-2015*

At least 346,000 were newly displaced by conflict and violence between January 2014 and March 2015. All new displacements occurred in the states of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland.

In Western Assam violence in the Baksa district in May 2014 killed at least 45 people and displaced 5,000 Bengali-speaking Muslims ([ABC](#), 4 May 2014; [CPA](#), May 2014). In late December 2014 inter-communal violence again broke out in the districts of Chirang, Kokrajhar, Sonitpur, Udalguri of the western part of the state. Around 300,000 people were displaced to at least 85 IDP camps in open fields and schools ([ACHR](#), 2 January 2015). In August, violence triggered by a land dispute along the border of the Golaghat district in Assam and the Wokha district of Nagaland displaced 10,000 people into camps along



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### Breakdown of IDP figures by states

State	District/village	Nb. of IDPs	State of origin	Source/date	Year displacement started
Andhra Pradesh	East and West Godavari	6,240	Chattisgarh	ActionAid-on file with IDMC, 2014	2005
Assam	Chirang, Kokrajhar, Sonitpur, Udalguri	90,000	Assam	<a href="#">DSG</a> , January 2015	2014
Assam	Baksa	5,000	Assam	<a href="#">ABC</a> , 4 May 2014; <a href="#">CPA</a> , May 2014	2014
Assam	Goalpara	7,400	Assam	<a href="#">HRLN</a> , 16 June 2014	2013
Assam	Golaghat	10,000	Assam	<a href="#">ECHO</a> , January 2015; <a href="#">NDTV</a> , 19 August 2014; <a href="#">Win-G-India</a> , August 2014	2014
Assam	Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao	600	Assam	<a href="#">The Hindu</a> , 31 January 2014	2013
Chhattisgarh	Bastar, Dantewada	50,000	Chattisgarh	<a href="#">ECHO</a> , 14 October 2013, p.3; <a href="#">Aljazeera</a> , 2013	2005
Gujarat	Ahmedabad	16,000	Gujarat	<a href="#">Vice news</a> , 6 May 2014 ; <a href="#">Janvikas</a> , 2012;	2002
Jammu and Kashmir	Jammu, Srinagar, Anantnag	221,090	Jammu and Kashmir	<a href="#">Gol</a> , 15 July 2014; <a href="#">Times of India</a> , 15 March 2015	1990
Jammu and Kashmir	Abdullain village/ Samba district	30,000	Jammu and Kashmir	<a href="#">Reuters</a> , 10 October 2014; <a href="#">BBC</a> , 6 January 2015	2014
Nagaland	Tuensang	1000	Nagaland	<a href="#">The Shillong Times</a> , 31 March 2015).	2015
National Capital Territory of Delhi	New Delhi	112,160	Jammu and Kashmir	<a href="#">Gol</a> , 15 July 2014	1990
Telangana	Khammam	11,520	Chattisgarh	ActionAid-on file with IDMC, 2014	2005
Telangana	Warangal	2,300	Chattisgarh	ActionAid-on file with IDMC, 2014	2005
Tripura	Kanchanpur	31,200	Mizoram	<a href="#">Times of India</a> , 13 February, 2015	1997 & 2009
Uttar Pradesh	Muzaffarnagar, Shamli	4,280	Uttar Pradesh	MAJMA- on file with IDMC, April 2015	2013
Other states		17,350	Jammu and Kashmir	<a href="#">Gol</a> , 15 July 2014	1990
<b>Total</b>		<b>616,140</b>			

the Assam side of the border ([Aljazeera](#), 21 August 2014; [WinG-India](#), August 2014, pp. 3-5; [EPW](#), 13 September 2014, p.15).

In October 2014, cross border tensions with Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir flared again, causing the displacement of 20,000 people ([Reuters](#), 10 October 2014). An additional 10,000 people were displaced in December 2014 from border areas ([BBC](#), 6 January 2015).

In February 2015, clashes between two Nagaland tribes in Tuensang district, which arose from an aggravated land dispute, led to the displacement of 1,000 people to camps in nearby villages and Shamator town ([The Telegraph](#), 18 February 2015; [The Shillong Times](#), 31 March 2015).

### *Gaps in data collection*

There is no national authority or international organisation comprehensively monitoring and reporting on displacement in India. Data gathering is hampered by the lack of access to some conflict-affected areas, including in particular parts of the north-east.

A significant number of IDPs are not counted because of gaps in state and central government official data, and the common misunderstanding that displacement ends when relief camp funding and services cease. A large numbers of IDPs are also believed to live outside official camps, including in urban areas, but they are not captured in official data.

## **Protection concerns**

Lack of comprehensive monitoring and data on displacement hinders comparative assessments and analysis of protection and assistance needs. While basic relief assistance is generally provided to IDPs in government-run camps, it is often only on a temporary basis. IDPs living in protracted displacement in informal camps or settlements are often the worst off as living conditions have deteriorated over time.

### *Access to adequate water, food and shelter*

The level of access to basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and medical care varies considerably depending on the location and type of displacement site, the ethnic identity of the displaced, the length of displacement, the availability of resources and the authorities' political will. Overall, conditions in camps where most IDPs live are characterised by poor access to shelter, food, drinking water and medical care. In some contexts, such as in Khammam district, Telangana, IDPs have faced bureaucratic hurdles in accessing assistance, in part due to language barriers, but also limited literacy levels (ActionAid –on file with IDMC, March 2013).

Most IDPs in Western Assam live in overcrowded conditions under makeshift shelters and there are reports of insufficient food rations and lack of drinking water and sanitation facilities ([Win-G-India](#), 19 January 2015). Similar living conditions and assistance gaps are reported for IDPs living along the Assam-Nagaland and Assam-Meghalaya borders and in the states of Tripura and Telangana ([Win-G-India](#), August 2014; [Indian Express](#), 27 August 2014). In Uttar Pradesh, these inadequate living conditions reportedly led to the death of over 47 IDPs, including 30 children between September and December 2013 ([NHRC](#), January 2014; [HRW](#), January 2015; [WSJ](#), 3 January 2014).

IDPs in camps tend to live in precarious makeshift shelters which provide little protection against the elements. Shelter structures are usually of poor quality, as they are not intended to last more than a few months. In Gujarat, civil society and religious groups assisted the displaced in building new camps on the periphery of Ahmedabad following the closure of government camps in 2002, but the new shelters were sub-standard and only intended to be temporary ([Vice News](#), 6 May 2014; [CSRC](#), March 2010; [Janvikas](#), 2012).

IDPs in and from Jammu and Kashmir fare comparably better than those in other states. Most families live in government-run camps, while some live with

host communities or in rented accommodation ([Reuters](#), 27 October 2014; [ICG](#), 3 June 2010, p.5). Since 2004 the government has constructed over 5,200 two-room houses in the city of Jammu and 200 flats in the Kashmir valley for displaced families ([Raj, Sharma & Singh](#), August 2014 p. 51). These IDPs, who are registered by the government, also receive monthly cash allowances and food rations ([Gol](#), 15 July 2014).

#### *Gender-based violence and specific needs*

Displaced women and children, particularly those living in camps, are at significant risk of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, trafficking and prostitution. The specific vulnerabilities and needs of women and children are generally not addressed in camps. In Western Assam, women displaced to camps by the 2012 violence had inadequate access to sexual reproductive healthcare, lacked privacy and had no separate shelters or toilets. Poor lighting facilities exacerbated protection risks for women. Fetching water and wood outside the camps exposed women to high risks of sexual violence. Risks of trafficking and sexual exploitation were also reported ([Doctors for you](#), 9 March 2015).

Education has been severely disrupted by conflict and ensuing displacement. Although many displaced children in Western Assam are able to enrol in local schools, parents can often not afford to pay for lunchtime meals, thus leaving many children with no choice but to drop out of school ([IPS](#), 29 January 2015). Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh Muslim children displaced in September 2013 could no longer attend school and had already lost up to two academic years ([EPW](#), 20 December 2014, p.12).

## **Durable solutions**

Obstacles to durable solutions in India vary but are predominantly linked to ongoing insecurity in places of origin which also hinders effective and long lasting solutions to the root causes of the conflict. Protracted displacement is compounded

by the challenges in asserting the IDPs' HLP rights. Local authorities tend to close camps after a certain period of time to encourage returns, even if conditions are not conducive. The authorities seldom offer any alternative settlement solution. Financial compensation has sometimes been used by IDPs to rent or purchase land and housing.

#### *Long-term safety and security*

Across India continued hostility from former neighbours of different ethnicity or religion and a failure by the authorities to provide sufficient guarantees to ensure the security of the displaced in areas of return are significant obstacles to return. Many IDPs are also often discouraged by the lack of assistance to help them rebuild their homes and re-establish their lives.

In the north-east, along the Assam-Nagaland border, IDPs are unable to return due to ongoing insecurity in their home villages. They are not given sufficient compensation to repair housing and receive no assistance from local authorities to resettle elsewhere ([Win-G-India](#), August 2014 pp.14-15). In some cases return is impossible as their property is occupied in their absence and even if owners are in possession of title deeds, delays and bribes in the justice system obstruct their repossession.

The more than 30,000 Bru people displaced since 1997 in Tripura have expressed an unwillingness to return to Mizoram without guarantees for their security and sufficient assistance ([ACHR](#), 2010; [Tripura Infoway](#), 17 June 2014).

In Jammu and Kashmir, the main obstacle to the return of Kashmiri Pandits is the militarisation of the Kashmir Valley and fear of renewed violence ([EPW](#), 15 November 2014). Previous governments' promises for the return of displaced Kashmiri Pandits have not been implemented. However, return of the displaced featured in the BJP's election manifesto in 2014. Since becoming Prime Minister, Mr Modi has prioritised housing construction in secure zones ([BJP Manifesto](#), 2014 p.8; [Reuters](#), 27 October 2014).

Reports of failed returns quashed hopes for durable solutions in Chhattisgarh for those displaced by the Naxalite conflict in 2005, with Salwa Judum forcing back IDPs to Andhra Pradesh ([Dialect Anthropol](#) (2009) pp.441-459; [HRW](#), 31 July 2012). Return is also made more complex due to development related land-grabs of Adivasi land and rural-urban migration trends.

#### *Access to housing, land and property (HLP)*

Return of HLP is a major barrier to return for Muslims in Gujarat but also an obstacle to local integration. The socio-economic legacy of the riots in Gujarat is evident in the growth of minority ghettos around the outskirts of Ahmedabad, where many Muslims have had no other choice but to settle, thus resulting in very few remaining mixed religious communities and a segregated city ([CSRC](#), March 2010 p.7; [DNA](#), 26 February 2012; [The Hindu](#), 28 October 2013). Local property and development laws have perpetuated segregation through discriminatory land policies. Many IDPs lack the means and tenure security to rebuild, with the others having since occupied and built on their land ([Reuters](#), 14 May 2014; [EPW](#), 27 October 2007 pp.10-12; [NYT](#), 26 September 2014).

In Jammu and Kashmir the long-term consequences of failure to return HLP is evident in the lost income and impoverishment that has ensued after 25 years of displacement. IDPs rely on government assistance and many live in cramped one-room tenements having suffered significant economic loss from distress sales, damage to property and encroachment on their land in their absence and lost revenue from suspended business operations ([Shekhawat](#), 2009; [Raj, Sharma & Singh](#), August 2014 p.56, [Raj, Sharma & Singh Waris](#), September 2014 p.79 and pp.83-84).

In Uttar Pradesh many displaced Muslim families have been unable to obtain compensation for property damage during attacks. There is a financial cap on claims for material damage and many families have been forced to make distress sales ([EPW](#), December 2014 pp.10-12).

#### *Premature closure of IDP camps*

In many states, the government has prematurely shut down IDP camps despite ongoing insecurity in areas of return and no support offered for alternative settlement options. Often the displaced are only given three days to vacate camps ([EPW](#), December 2014, p.13). In Uttar Pradesh, the closure of IDP camps during 2014 resulted in a decline of official IDP numbers, but the extent to which IDPs were actually able to sustainably return or find alternative durable solutions remains largely unknown ([Times of India](#), 14 June 2014; [HRW](#), 17 January 2014; [HRW](#), January 2015).

In late February 2011, only two months after inter-communal violence had displaced some 50,000 people along the Assam-Meghalaya border, the local authorities stopped the distribution of relief assistance and closed camps so as to coerce IDPs to return home. Those who were too afraid to return due to continued security concerns had no choice but to construct makeshift shelters near their former camp, while those who did return struggled to access basic necessities ([IDMC](#), November 2011, p.13). Likewise in Western Assam, a few months after the displacement of nearly half a million people in 2012, the government closed the camps to encourage return. However, faced with continuing insecurity, many IDPs chose to live in makeshift camps outside their villages ([CPA](#), May 2014; [ACHR](#), September 2012).

## **National response**

Despite strong civil and human rights provisions in the Constitution, India has no national policy or legislation that addresses the needs of those displaced by armed conflict, inter-communal violence or human rights violations. In the absence of national guidance to regulate assistance and protection to IDPs, state authorities are left to decide the extent and scope of the relief to IDPs. As a result, responses are often ad-hoc and discretionary with significant differences between regions and sometimes between IDP groups. Socially excluded communities,

such as scheduled castes and tribes and religious minorities, often disproportionately affected by displacement caused by conflict and natural hazards, also tend to be excluded from government assistance ([ECHO](#), 14 October 2013).

While assistance is generally provided to meet the immediate relief and protection needs of the displaced, this tends to be short-term with little attention paid to long-term rehabilitation needs, in particular when return is not an option.

Terminology used by national authorities reflects a lack of awareness of international protection standards related to IDPs with often no distinction made between economic migrants, refugees and IDPs. Camps sheltering internally displaced people are often designated as refugee camps ([Bhaumik](#), 2009, p.129).

In 2013, the *Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Act (LARR)* (2013) was adopted. Under the LARR, the authorities have an obligation to resettle IDPs and provides for compensation and specific entitlements for Adivasi and Dalits. However, LARR's scope is not only limited to displacement resulting from development projects, but it was also being contested through legislative amendments in late 2014. Such amendments would decrease safeguards against forced displacement and do away with the previous requirements for social impact assessments ([Oxfam](#), February 2015; [BBC](#), 24 February 2015; [Times of India](#), 27 February 2015).

There is an urgent need for a nation-wide legal framework and standards that address all triggers of displacement across all states of India, in order to ensure that the rights of all IDPs are respected, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Such a framework and standards should also allow for a more predictable and comprehensive response to the needs of IDPs. The designation of an IDP focal point at the national level and the adoption of a policy and regulatory framework

upholding the rights of IDPs would ensure more consistent and comprehensive protection of IDPs and facilitate durable solutions.

The level of assistance provided by state authorities varies greatly, and may include construction of temporary shelter and housing, food assistance, cash relief and resettlement incentives. In some instances, the central government has also provided funds to state authorities to help them assist the displaced, for example in Jammu and Kashmir and Mizoram.

In Western Assam, following the most recent displacement in December 2014, the state government provided one-off assistance in the form of food items to IDPs ([Win-G-India](#), 19 January 2015). IDPs in camps along the Assam-Nagaland border have received assistance grants of Rs. 50,000 (\$800) per family, a sum which IDPs report to be inadequate ([Win-G-India](#), August 2014). The central government has provided financial assistance to the government of Mizoram for the repatriation of Brus which includes Rs. 38,500 (\$600) for housing assistance per family, Rs.41,500 (\$650) in cash grants per family and food ration cards for one year ([Gol](#), 2014 p.22).

In Jammu and Kashmir, central government assistance to displaced Kashmiri Pandits has mainly consisted of monthly cash allowances and food rations but has so far failed to address their livelihood needs ([Shekhawat](#), 2012, pp.49-65). In 2014, the government reported providing cash relief of Rs.1650 (\$26) per person per month in addition to food rations ([Gol](#), 15 July 2014). In March 2015, the state authorities announced that 3,000 jobs would be made available for unemployed displaced Kashmiri Pandit youths ([Times of India](#), 11 March 2015).

Civil society groups have often complemented state government assistance and filled key gaps. Immediately after the 2002 riots in Gujarat, make-shift relief camps were set up to accommodate IDPs, assistance being predominantly provided by civil society and Muslim groups. Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh, much of the assistance provided to Muslim IDPs



came from local Muslims and civil society groups. Some families did receive compensation from the government for resettlement purposes with Rs.500,000 (\$8,000) allocated to selected families. This was contentious as entitlement depended on proof of residence and presence in affected areas at the time of the violence, thus excluding those who had fled pre-emptively ([EPW](#), 20 December 2014 p.11). Many IDPs, often the poorest and most vulnerable living in camps, have been excluded from any compensation ([EPW](#), 20 December 2014 p.11; [WSJ](#), 3 January 2014).

Both the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and National Commission for the Protection of Child's Rights have undertaken visits and assessments in conflict-affected areas and advocated with the government for better protection of the human rights of IDPs including recommendations on the protection of children in civil unrest, and on relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons ([NHRC](#), April 2015; [NCPCR](#), 2013, p.14, [NHRC](#), 2008, [NCPCR](#), 2010).

maternal and paediatric health care to IDPs displaced by the Naxalite conflict ([Médecins du Monde](#), May 2014).

International aid agencies providing assistance to people displaced by natural hazard-related disasters have often faced fewer barriers. In 2014, the Indian government received international support to respond to displacement caused by natural hazards, including the provision by ICRC and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency of essential household items to people displaced by floods in Jammu and Kashmir ([ICRC](#), 24 November 2014; [ADRA](#), 2014). In the north-east, the Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement conducted awareness-raising to promote resilience and more effective responses to recurrent floods along the Brahmaputra River in 2014 ([ACTED](#), 17 February 2014).

## International response

International humanitarian agencies continue to face barriers to assisting IDPs, including a number of central government restrictions and insecurity in conflict-affected areas. The central government does not encourage international assistance, in particular in situations of displacement caused by conflict and violence, preferring itself to handle responses ([ECHO](#), 14 October 2013, p.4).

Considering the size of India and the number of IDPs, there are few international agencies directly involved in assisting IDPs ([OCHA](#), April 2015). They include Action Aid, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Médecins du Monde, ACT Alliance, Oxfam, UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and CARE. In 2014, Oxfam provided clean water, sanitation, hygiene materials and public health promotion to IDPs in Assam ([Oxfam](#), 2015). In Andhra Pradesh, Médecins du Monde has provided primary

## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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