

## **Displaced by disasters: 32.4 million people uprooted in both rich and poor countries**

**For immediate release**

**GENEVA, 13 MAY 2013 – A new report released today by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reveals that 32.4 million people were forced to flee their homes in 2012 by disasters such as floods, storms and earthquakes. While Asia and west and central Africa bore the brunt, 1.3 million were displaced in rich countries, with the USA particularly affected.**

98% of all displacement in 2012 was related to climate- and weather-related events, with flood disasters in India and Nigeria accounting for 41% of global displacement in 2012. In India, monsoon floods displaced 6.9 million, and in Nigeria 6.1 million people were newly displaced. While over the past five years 81% of global displacement has occurred in Asia, in 2012 Africa had a record high for the region of 8.2 million people newly displaced, over four times more than in any of the previous four years.

“In countries already facing the effects of conflict and food insecurity such as in Nigeria, Pakistan, and South Sudan, we observe a common theme” says Clare Spurrell, Chief Spokesperson for IDMC. “Here, vulnerability to disaster triggered by floods is frequently further compounded by hunger, poverty and violence; resulting in a ‘perfect storm’ of risk factors that lead to displacement.”

There is also increasing scientific evidence that climate change will become a factor. A 2012 Special Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that there is some evidence to support the claim that “[d]isasters associated with climate extremes influence population mobility and relocation, affecting host and origin communities.”

IDMC’s report highlights how disaster-induced displacement takes a toll in both rich and poor countries with the USA appearing among the top ten countries with the highest levels of new displacement, with over 900,000 people being forced to flee their homes in 2012. People in poorer countries, however, remain disproportionately affected and make up 98% of the global five year total.

“In the US following Hurricane Sandy, most of those displaced were able to find refuge in adequate temporary shelter while displaced from their own homes” says Spurrell. “Compare this to communities in Haiti, where hundreds of thousands are still living in makeshift tents over three years after the 2010 earthquake mega-disaster, and you see a very different picture”.

According to the IDMC report, a critical component to improving community resilience and government responses to disasters is better data collection on people who have been displaced. “Currently the information available is biased, often only focusing on the most visible people who take shelter in official

evacuation sites or camps” says Spurrell. “We need to know more about those who seek refuge with families and friends, people who are repeatedly displaced by smaller disasters, or those who are stuck in prolonged displacement following a disaster– not just those that make headlines.”

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***The following assets are available to download at the bottom of this email:***

- Key findings document
- Map of displacement by disasters worldwide
- Copy of the full report

**Notes to the editor:**

- IDMC considers that ‘natural’ hazards are events or conditions originating in the natural environment that may affect people and critical assets located in exposed areas. They include climate- and weather-related events as well as geo-physical events such as earthquakes. The impact of these hazards is often strongly influenced by human actions that contribute to disaster risk and long-term changes in the global climate; therefore, the causes of these hazards and disasters related to them are often less than ‘natural’.
- It is widely agreed that the vast majority of people displaced by disasters are internally displaced (defined by the 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*), which is the focus of displacement situations highlighted by the Global Estimates report. A smaller number are displaced across borders, but this has not been quantified globally.
- The global figures relate to cases of new displacement each year. They do not include people who have remained displaced for prolonged periods of time following disasters in preceding years. This is a global information blind spot that should be of concern to governments, given that the risks faced by displaced people tend to increase the longer that they are displaced.

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***Please note, interviews can only be arranged in English or French***

**About IDMC**

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. Through its monitoring and analysis of people internally displaced by conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or human-made disasters, IDMC raises awareness and advocates for respect of the rights of at-risk and uprooted peoples.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). For more information, visit our website at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

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