
Press release

‘Internal displacement adds a critical dimension to the Syria debate’, says global monitor

Geneva, 16 August, 2012: *As the UN supervision mission (UNSMIS) prepares to withdraw from Syria, global monitor the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) warns that unless the needs of the growing numbers of internally displaced people are addressed, the future stability of the country remains bleak*

1.5 million people in Syria have lost their homes and livelihoods since the outbreak of the uprisings that swept the region in 2011. ‘Syria is in an internal displacement crisis’ says IDMC’s Syria analyst Guillaume Charron. ‘For hundreds of thousands of men, women and children being forced from their homes and livelihoods by the current violence, hunger and dehydration is as much of a threat as the bombs and the bullets’.

‘The escalating internal migration patterns within the country will have profound effects on any efforts to readdress the future stability of Syria in the long-term, particularly in a country which already has a long and complicated history of internal displacement’ says Charron.

In its recent report on Syria, IDMC notes that the current uprisings represent the ‘fourth displacement crisis’ within Syria. The first dates back to Israel’s occupation of the Golan Heights in 1967, the second the forcible eviction of Kurds from the north-eastern province of al-Hasakah during the 70s, and the third the 1982 assault on the city of Hama following a revolt by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. It is estimated that these three events resulted in the half a million people currently living in situations of long-term internal displacement, often for up to 40 years.

‘The government’s historic inability to tackle displacement within the country has created a divided and disenfranchised society’ says Charron. ‘The “divide and rule” mentality is now paying dangerous dividends, and the hundreds of thousands of people displaced in the current conflict not only face grave challenges in the short-term as food and basic necessities become increasingly scarce, but further face joining the half a million people already living as exiles within their own country who have suffered almost half a century of human rights abuses’.

‘Considering internal displacement adds an important dimension to the current debate surrounding Syria which must be recognised by the international community, the Syrian government and the media’ says Charron. ‘The 1.5 million Syrian citizens who have lost their homes and livelihoods have not just been temporarily “affected” by the current situation; they have experienced a life changing event which will profoundly influence the future stability and health of the country’.

Notes to Editors

About IDMC: *The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (www.internal-displacement.org) was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in 1998, upon the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Monitoring internal displacement caused by conflict, violence, human rights violations and natural disasters in over 50 countries, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is widely respected as the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement throughout the world.*

Visit www.internal-displacement.org for more information.

IDMC’s Syria analyst Guillaume Charron is available for interviews. To arrange, or for more information please contact:

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Profile: Guillaume Charron, Country Analyst



Guillaume Charron is IDMC's analyst on the Middle East. A former humanitarian worker with extensive experience in the Middle East, Charron has had first-hand experience of most of the recent armed conflicts in the region including Iraq, Darfur and Syria. Working for the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross has enabled Charron to gain field experience of humanitarian issues related to conflict and displacement.

Charron's expertise includes the humanitarian implications of the war in the Middle East. He has written papers on Syria and in particular the causes and effects of displacement in the country over the decades. He has also presented papers at a number of conferences and meetings on forced displacement, and has advised humanitarian actors responding to the situation in Syria. Charron is a native French speaker, and is fluent in both English and Arabic.

For interviews or a high-resolution image of Guillaume Charron, please contact:

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