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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Invisible and neglected protracted displacement

As of November 2014, at least 22,500 people were displaced in Papua New Guinea (PNG) as a result of conflict or natural hazard-related disasters. Two thirds of internally displaced people (IDPs) have been displaced by natural hazards, the remainder by conflict. In many areas, natural disasters, conflict, violence and development projects often coincide to create an environment conducive to displacement.

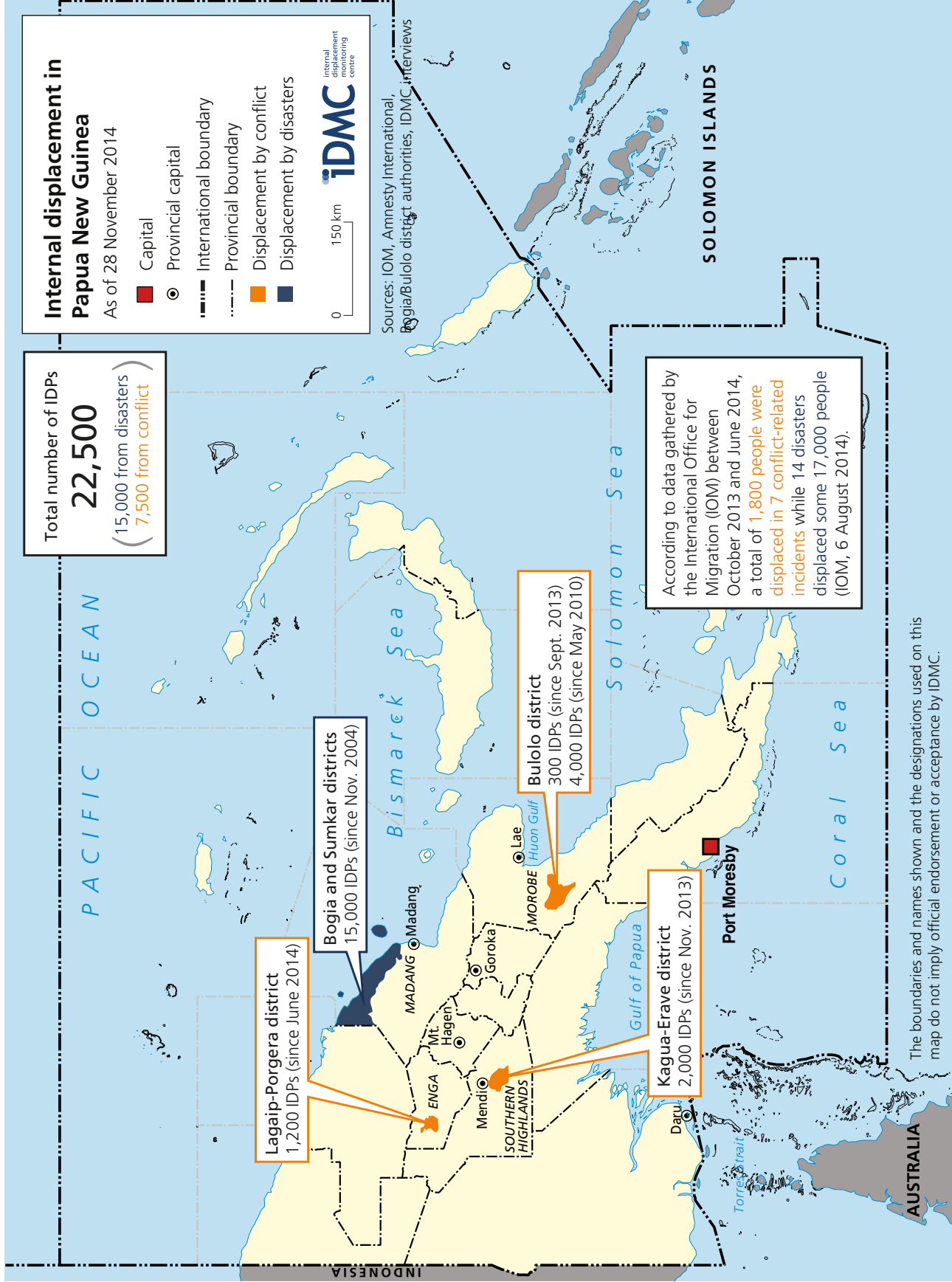
The majority of those displaced by conflict and disaster live in Madang and Morobe provinces on PNG's northern coast. A conservative estimate puts the number of people newly displaced by violence in 2014 at 1,200. Data collection on the number and needs of IDPs is a major challenge in the absence of a clear IDP definition and weak disaster monitoring and data collection systems. IDPs are not recognised as a distinct category of affected people with specific protection or assistance needs and their numbers are not captured in disaster assessments.

Nearly all IDPs are living in protracted displacement, having been displaced for between four and ten years and having failed to return or successfully find other durable solutions. Around 85 per cent of the displaced are living in government-established IDP camps, officially termed "care centres", while the remainder are living with host families. Prolonged displacement in camps is often accompanied by a deterioration of living conditions, with IDPs increasingly left on their own to meet their basic needs and sustain themselves. Tension with host communities has sometimes erupted into conflict over land and resources, putting IDPs at risk of violence and sometimes secondary displacement. Lack of food, clean water and adequate sanitary facilities and reduced access to healthcare is a major problem both in IDP camps and host communities.

Lack of funding, capacity and political will hamper the search for durable solutions. The fact that almost all land is held under customary tenure complicates efforts to provide land for those who choose not to return.



Displaced boys in the Bulolo care centre, Morobe province. Many of the children are reported to have been traumatised by the ethnic clashes that led to their displacement in May 2010 and they have not been able to return to school. Photo: IDMC/ Frederik Kok, October 2014



Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map

At the provincial level, disaster management is constrained by poor resources and capacity. State assistance has tended to be temporary, with insufficient attention paid to the long-term needs of the displaced. The presence of international humanitarian and development organisations in PNG is limited. With the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), few organisations provide direct assistance to IDPs. Most operational international agencies are involved in development work or focus on supporting the government to build capacity in disaster risk management.

The first step in effectively addressing the needs of IDPs is for the government to make internal displacement a priority and recognise it as both a humanitarian and development concern. Increased involvement by the international community is essential to help increase visibility on issues around internal displacement. Technical support currently provided by the UN for the revision of the 1984 Disaster Management Act could also include assistance to address key gaps in government response to the needs of IDPs, including the lack of an institutional IDP focal point and a policy and regulatory framework upholding the rights of IDPs.

Background

PNG, the largest country in the Pacific, occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, sharing a border to the west with the Indonesian province of Papua. Gaining independence from Australia in 1975, PNG is highly fragmented by terrain, history, ethnicity and language. A census in 2011 estimated PNG's population to be about 7.3 million with an annual growth rate of three per cent (PIDP, 24 January 2014). PNG is one of the world's most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries, with about 840 distinct languages spoken (MRGI, 2007).

PNG has an abundance of natural resources and its economy is largely based on agriculture, minerals and energy. In recent years, economic growth has been mainly driven by large-scale private investment in mining and gas production. Concerns have been raised about the environmental and human rights impact of large-scale extractive projects on local communities and their potential to spark social unrest and conflict (HRW, 2013). There are also concerns about the capacity of the government to ensure that these new revenues translate into palpable improvements in the living standards of the general population (WB, 1 October 2014).

Human development indicators are among the lowest in the world with the country ranking 157 out of 187 countries (UNDP, 24 July 2014). Some 85 per cent of the population lives in rural areas with the majority engaged in subsistence agriculture. The country has the worst health status in the Pacific, one closely associated to poverty. It is estimated that 40 per cent of the population lives on less than \$1 per day (UNDP, 2014). Those living in remote areas are particularly affected due to their isolation, lack of income opportunities, poor education and vulnerability to shocks (CARE, October 2011).

Causes of displacement

Internal displacement in PNG is caused by a wide range of often overlapping and interlinked factors. In many areas, elements of natural disasters, conflict, violence and development projects often combine to both create an environment conducive to displacement, one that increases the vulnerability of affected populations and undermines their resilience.

Displacement caused by inter-communal violence and tribal conflicts

Although PNG is generally stable, the country has a history of inter-communal violence and tribal

conflicts, often triggered by land disputes or political rivalries. Post-independence political rivalries have increased competition for access to state resources and public goods (Reilly, 2008, p.16). The proliferation of guns since the 1990s has resulted in higher casualties (Oxfam, November 2010, p.2). Tensions around access to land are exacerbated by rapid population growth and by natural resource extraction projects which displace indigenous communities and have the potential to spark social unrest and violence. With the exception of the Bougainville conflict, which claimed up to 20,000 lives between 1989 and 1998 and caused the displacement of an estimated 80,000 people (Wallis, 2012; UN Inter-Agency Team, March 1998, p.19), most inter-communal clashes have tended to remain localised and have not challenged the national government (Reilly, 2008). Much violence is concentrated in the central Highlands region resulting in recent years in recurrent small to medium-scale displacement. Other areas, such as Morobe Province, have also been affected.

Displacement caused by tribal fighting is a recurrent problem in Hela, considered one of the most volatile and violent provinces in PNG (ANU, 2007). High levels of poverty, in particular in remote rural areas where infrastructure is poor and few have access to education and health services, are compounded by widespread corruption, a dysfunctional bureaucratic and political structure and an absence of the rule of law (Moya, June 2011). Factors contributing to insecurity and tribal conflicts include pressures on land, inequality and envy, drug or alcohol abuse and weakening social cohesion (Kopi et al., March 2011). Though the most common trigger of tribal violence is land disputes any minor grievance often has potential to escalate into full-blown violence (Oxfam, November 2010, p.57). As of November 2014, at least seven tribal fights were reported to be on-going in the province (The National, 12 November 2014). Loss of life and property are the most common consequences of the violence but displacement has also been reported. In April

2014, a tribal dispute near the town of Tari in Hela Province resulted in loss of life and property destruction with an unknown number of people seeking refuge in safer neighbouring villages (Fiji Times, 23 April 2014).

In late 2013, significant displacement took place in the Kagua Erave district of Southern Highlands Province, where fighting between two opposing tribes in Sugu Valley affected some 8,000 people and displaced at least 2,000 who sought refuge with host families (ICRC, 21 January 2014). The conflict was reportedly triggered by the death of a former parliamentarian and accusations of sorcery levelled against one tribe by their rivals. At least 600 homes were burnt down during the attacks which also left 40 people dead (ABC, 15 November 2013).

Inter-communal violence has also led to displacement in other parts of PNG. In May 2010, some 10,000 people, mainly Sepik settlers, were reported displaced from their homes in Bulolo district in Morobe Province, as a result of a violent clash with locals (PNG Post Courier, 20 May 2010; ABC, 19 May 2010). Government figures later reduced this number by half (IDMC interviews, October 2014). The displaced sought refuge in a camp set up near the nearby police station where some 4,000 remain living today due to a failure to resolve the conflict (IDMC interview, October 2014). The displaced are fourth and fifth generation descendants of men who migrated to Bulolo from East Sepik Province as contract labourers for colonial era gold mining operations during the 1930s. Though many have long integrated and married into local communities, they are still considered as 'settlers' by locals who want them to return to East Sepik. In September 2013, an additional 1,000 people were displaced in Bulolo district, by a clash between ethnic Watut and Bubu. At least 40 homes were destroyed by the violence which also claimed one life (The National, 23 September 2013).

Displacement caused by forced evictions and violence

Several provinces of the Highlands region, such as the Southern Highlands, Hela and Enga, are resource-rich but have very low socio-economic indicators as the majority of the people have few economic opportunities and poor access to basic services. Most are yet to benefit from increased revenues from natural resource extraction projects such as the Exxon Mobil LNG project in Hela Province or the Porgera gold mine in Enga Province ([The Guardian](#), 12 October 2011). In recent years, both projects have been associated with reports of corruption, violence, environmental damage and serious human rights abuses often perpetrated by paramilitary police officers or private security personnel. These have included extra-judicial killings, sexual assault, forced evictions, destruction and looting of houses and property ([The Nation](#), 19 May 2014; [HRW](#), February 2011; [AI](#), 2 February 2010).

In June 2014, some 200 houses in the village of Wangima, near the Porgera mine, were razed by the police leaving close to 200 families homeless and without access to an adequate standard of living ([AI](#), 10 June 2014). The displaced were mainly mine workers designated by the government as “illegal miners”. Already in 2009, some 180 homes had been burnt down in the same area by the police ([AI](#), 2010).

Natural hazard- related displacement

The country faces multiple natural hazards threats, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, droughts, floods, tropical cyclones and landslides. PNG is also highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and climate variability and sea-level rise. Between 2008 and 2013, IDMC recorded a total of 151,000 people newly displaced in PNG. Almost all occurred in 2008 (75,000) and 2012 (75,000). No data was available for 2010 and 2011, while only 52 people were reported as displaced in 2013 ([IDMC](#), 9 October 2014). These discrepancies and gaps are mainly explained by weak disaster monitoring and data collection systems.

So far in 2014, Papua New Guinea has experienced a number of significant disasters caused by volcanoes, cyclone and floods which have affected over 50,000 people. In August 2014, thousands of people were temporarily evacuated from their homes on Matupit Island following the eruption of Mount Tavurvur which devastated the island ([ABC](#), 29 August 2014). In July 2014, major floods hit the Southern Highlands Province with an estimated 40,000 people affected ([RNZI](#), 22 July 2014). Thousands were reported to have lost their homes and gardens, with entire villages swept away by the floods and landslides ([PNG Post Courier](#), 22 July 2014). In April 2014, Cyclone Ita affected some 12,000 people in the south-eastern Milne Bay Province, with the Louisiade archipelago hardest-hit. A total of 1,134 houses and 5,390 gardens were destroyed ([RNZI](#), 11 April 2014). At least 4,850 people were displaced (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

In recent years, one of the largest displacements due to a volcanic eruption occurred in 2004 when an eruption on Manam Island, Madang Province, displaced at least 9,000 people. All were evacuated to the mainland near Bogia and hosted in several IDP camps and with host communities where they have since remained ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, p. 11).

Environmental degradation caused by natural resource extraction projects also contribute to higher disaster risk and displacement ([IRIN](#), 18 July 2013). In January 2012, a landslide killed at least 25 people and destroyed 42 homes from two villages living below a quarry used by Exxon Mobile LNG. Some 3,000 people took refuge in a temporary shelter and were provided with minimum relief assistance ([ISCI](#), September 2012). Investigating the causes of the landslide the government concluded that the disaster was “natural” and no mention was made of the LNG project ([RNZI](#), 9 February 2012). Locals, however, blamed the LNG project, saying drilling and the use of explosive in the area had put pressure on the quarry ([IPS](#), 9 March 2012).

Displacement figures

There are no accurate figures on the number of people newly displaced in PNG in 2014 or on those who have not yet found solutions to their displacement after earlier episodes of violence or disasters (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

As of December 2014, IDMC estimates that at least 7,500 people are displaced by conflict or violence, with some 15,000 people still also displaced by natural hazard-related disasters. Nearly all had been displaced for between four and ten years.

These are conservative estimates. Many displacement incidents remain under-reported. There is no comprehensive monitoring of displacement at national or provincial levels. Another challenge is the absence of a clear definition of who is an IDP. There is no distinction between people who are “affected” and “displaced” by disasters. Provincial disasters offices often have very limited resources and capacity to effectively monitor displacement or assess needs resulting from conflict or natural hazard-related disasters (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

New displacement in 2014

According to data gathered by IOM, between October 2013 and June 2014 a total of 1,800 people were displaced in seven conflict-related incidents while 14 disasters displaced some 17,000 (IOM, on file with IDMC, 6 August 2014). Not included are an estimated 1,200 people forcibly evicted from their village near the Porgera mine by the police in June 2014. The number of IDPs was calculated by assuming each of the 200 homes destroyed housed one family and based on evidence the average household size in rural areas in PNG is at least six, ([CARE](#), October 2011, p. 25).

The number of people displaced by natural hazard-related disasters in 2014 is unknown but based on data gathered by IDMC these have affected at least 52,000 people since January. The

two main disaster events have included Cyclone Ita, which affected some 12,000 people in Milne Bay Province in April and floods which affected 40,000 people in the Southern Highlands Province in July ([RNZI](#), 22 July 2014; IDMC interviews, October 2014).

Displacement prior to 2014

As of November 2014 at least 6,300 people who had fled due to conflict or violence before 2014 were still living in displacement.

The figure includes 4,000 people displaced in May 2010 in Bulolo district as well as another 300 displaced there in September 2013 (IDMC interviews, October 2014, [PNG Loop](#), 27 December 2013). In Kagua Erave, a district in Southern Highlands Province, some 2,000 people displaced by conflict at the end of 2013, remained unable to return to their homes due to lack of reconciliation (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

In addition, some 15,000 people displaced from Manam Island by a volcanic eruption in 2004 were still living in three care centres (the official title of IDP camps) in and around Bogia in Madang Province (IDMC interviews, October 2014, [ABC](#), 26 September 2012).

Patterns of displacement

Around 85 per cent of the displaced are living in government run care centres. The 15,000 Manam IDPs are living in three camps in Bogia and Sumkar districts of Madang Province. In Bulolo district of Morobe Province, the majority of those displaced in May 2010 are living in a camp in Bulolo town, while some 300 people displaced in September 2013 are living in an informal camp located on the Bulolo river. The 2,000 people displaced by tribal conflict since the end of 2013 in Kagua-Erave, a district in Southern Highlands Province, are living with host communities, mainly extended family (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

Seeking refuge outside camps with their extended family or in nearby villages is the predominant pattern of displacement for people displaced by small scale conflicts between local ethnic groups. Return only takes place when the conflict has been resolved, a process that can take weeks or months, but sometimes years ([Lowry](#), 11 March 2014; [Oxfam](#), November 2010, p. 90).

When conflict has opposed 'locals' to 'settlers' the latter may have more limited options to rely on extended family support and thus have often sought refuge in camps. This was the case for the Bulolo IDPs who were displaced in May 2010 but also for the estimated 70,000 people displaced during the Bougainville conflict who were accommodated in up to 50 camps. These camps also served a counter-insurgency purpose, to separate rebel forces from their civilian base with some IDPs describing the care centres as "prison camps" ([Jubilee](#), September 2014, p.10; [AI](#), 26 February 1997; [UNCHR](#), 26 February 1996).

IDP camps are also often established by the government in response to medium to large-scale displacement caused by natural hazards. Intended to be temporary, these camps may become semi-permanent when return is not possible and when the process to settle IDPs elsewhere is stalled, as for example the Manam IDPs who have now been displaced for a decade.

When government-run camps have not been established, IDPs have sought shelter in informal camps often located close to their original homes so they can more easily check on their property, access fields or otherwise maintain livelihoods. For example, some of the people displaced in Bulolo in September 2013 decided to establish an informal camp close to the market as the majority were vendors (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

Protection concerns

IDPs living with host families or in camps are generally safe from physical threats and face few other protection concerns.

However, over time IDPs are increasingly left to meet their own basic needs and sustain themselves. Resources available in camps rapidly dwindle and host communities find themselves no longer able to share resources with the displaced. Prolonged displacement in IDP camps or with host communities is thus generally accompanied by a gradual deterioration of living conditions. Tensions with host communities sometimes erupt into conflict over land and resources, putting the displaced at risk of violence and, sometimes, of secondary displacement.

For example, threats of physical attacks are reported as a major obstacle to freedom of movement in the Manam IDP camps. Over the years, the relations between the displaced and the host community have become increasingly tense, with regular clashes between the two groups generally triggered by disputes over land and resources (IDMC interviews, October 2014). Some Manam displaced women and girls have suffered from sexual violence and discrimination ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, p. 2). In Hela Province, protracted displacement in host communities has further increased IDPs' dependence on their hosts and added to risks of displaced women being subjected to violence and abuse by their hosts ([Oxfam](#), November 2010, p.90).

Access to food, water and sanitation

Lack of access to basic necessities such as food, clean water and adequate sanitary facilities is a major concern in all IDP camps (IDMC interviews, October 2014). In the immediate wake of their displacement, IDPs in camps are generally provided by local authorities with relief assistance which has included food, clean water, medicine and materials for temporary shelters. However,

assistance tends to be temporary and often stops after a few weeks or months, after which IDPs are generally expected to either return or find alternative solutions on their own.

For example, following their displacement in May 2010, Sepik settlers who sought refuge at the Bulolo IDP camp were provided by the government with food, water and shelter materials. Assistance lasted for less than a year with amounts gradually diminishing despite continued needs. In March 2011, the UN Resident Coordinator visited the camp and reported that food was the main need, with IDPs saying food assistance was only provided by district authorities three times a week. IDPs had few opportunities to generate revenue to buy supplementary food. (UN, 23 March 2011, on file with IDMC). At the time of IDMC's visit in October 2014, IDPs reported that no food assistance had been provided for at least 12 months. At the end of 2013, a district official cited lack of funds as the reason for the absence of food assistance ([PNG Loop](#), 27 December 2013). Other problems included lack of access to clean water and poor sanitation facilities. There was no well or hand pump in the camp and most IDPs relied on rain water collected in drums (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

Accessing assistance is even more challenging for IDPs dispersed within host communities, in particular in the Highland region. IDPs in host communities seldom receive any government assistance and they depend almost entirely on the solidarity of the neighbours or extended kin. In some areas such as in Hela Province, already limited access to health and education is exacerbated by insecurity. This makes it hard for government responders to access areas affected by conflict and displacement ([Oxfam](#), November 2010, p. 26). Some of the 2,000 people displaced in late 2013 in the Southern Highlands Province relied on assistance from the PNG Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to meet their basic needs ([ICRC](#), 24 January 2014).

Living in an informal settlement not recognised as an official 'care centre' also reduces the likelihood of being assisted. Shortly after their displacement in Bulolo in September 2013, some 250 of the 1,000 ethnic Bubu who had sought refuge near the police station were reported to be living under tents, with others sleeping in the open. Most had very limited supplies of water and food after having lost access to their land ([EMTV](#), 26 September 2013). One year later, some 300 IDPs remained living in the Wakaya informal settlement. It has only two latrines and no immediate access to clean water, which has to be fetched near the market, a ten minute walk to and from the camp (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

Access to healthcare

Lack of access to healthcare is a serious concern for most IDPs. While the general population is often concerned about limited access to health services, IDPs are even worse off. Precarious living conditions in IDP camps with reduced access to clean water, inadequate sanitary facilities and poor nutrition leaves IDPs more vulnerable to disease.

In October 2013, an outbreak of bacillary dysentery was reported to have originated in the Bulolo IDP camp before spreading to the general population ([Benny et al.](#), 2014). Nearly a quarter of the 400 cases recorded by the Bulolo health centre were IDPs (EMTV, 24 October 2014, on file with IDMC; [Pina](#), 4 October 2013). In an effort to improve sanitary conditions, the local authorities built temporary toilets in the camp.

In June 2010, 17 IDPs living in the Potsdam IDP camp in Bogia district were reported to have died from cholera. This could have been prevented had there been an early warning outbreak detection system, available medicine to rapidly treat the disease and had IDPs been able to afford the high transport costs of traveling by boat (PGK100 or \$40 to a health facility). It is likely that underlying malnutrition among IDPs contributed to the death toll ([Roswell et al.](#), 2 September 2013).

Access to healthcare was also hampered by insecurity caused by tensions between the displaced and the host community. Women reported being too afraid to access health centres outside the camps. This reportedly contributed to an increasing number of infants and mothers dying in childbirth ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, p.14).

Access to adequate housing

Most IDPs do not have access to adequate housing in their area of displacement. While conditions are usually better in government-established camps than in informal settlements, even there IDPs often live in poor quality shelter without access to basic services and with no tenure security.

Nearly all IDPs in the Bulolo camp live in precarious makeshift shelters which provide little protection against the elements. After their displacement in 2010 the government provided some with tarpaulins and housing materials but shelter structures are now in poor condition and most are in need of repair or replacement. Homes have been built without full consideration of space per individual and there is no proper drainage or waste-water management (IDMC interviews, October 2014). The land on which the camp is located is reported to be government-owned with no long-term security for IDPs temporarily allowed to stay there.

Conditions are even worse in the nearby Wakaya informal settlement hosting ethnic Bubu displaced in September 2013. Few have received any shelter assistance from the government and their tents and makeshift shelters sometimes host two families. The camp is located on a river bank which periodically overflows, inundating the camp and destroying their shelters. This has happened three times since their arrival, forcing them to temporarily seek refuge on higher ground. IDPs report the land on which they are staying is owned by locals and they are at constant risk of eviction if they provoke landowners (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

In the Manam IDP camp most houses are a decade old. In 2010, it was reported that most needed to be repaired or replaced as roofs are leaking and walls in poor shape ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, p. 12). IDPs report being unable to access the forest to get bush material to repair their homes or build new ones as these resources belong to the locals. Faced with challenges in maintaining their homes, some IDPs travelled back to their island to fetch better timber but the transport added to the cost of the material (IDMC interviews, October 2004). The land on which the camps are located is reportedly government-owned. IDPs report they have been given permission to stay but they have no documentation. Ownership of the land is disputed by the locals who claim they, not the state, are the rightful owners ([PMC](#), 15 January 2011).

Durable solutions

People displaced by conflict, violence or natural hazards-related disasters usually return to their homes as soon as conditions permit. The government's response has generally followed and facilitated this settlement option. Assistance to IDPs has therefore tended to be short-term, based on the assumption that displacement would only be temporary (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

In situations where return has not been possible, or where IDPs did not wish to return, alternative settlement solutions, including local integration or settlement elsewhere, have proven more problematic and have tended to receive less state support. Lack of funds and political will, together with poor local level capacity to plan and implement relocation or local integration programmes have been major obstacles. Lack of land is another major challenge. Some 97 per cent of land in PNG is held under customary forms of land tenure by traditional landowners ([Dixon](#), 2006, p.220). Thus, finding new land for IDPs trying to integrate locally or hoping to settle elsewhere is a further significant obstacle to achieving durable solutions

Obstacles to return and local integration for conflict IDPs

The preferred settlement option of the majority of people displaced by conflict is return. Without a local reconciliation process and state support, however, this is often not possible. Thus IDPs are left with no option but to try to integrate locally or to rely on the extended solidarity of host communities.

In Bulolo, Sepik settlers displaced by clashes with locals in May 2010 are still waiting for the government to support their return. A peace and reconciliation agreement was signed between the displaced, the locals and the district authorities in 2013 with the government committing to provide PGK60,000 (\$24,000) to support the process. However, as of October 2014, no money had been forthcoming (IDMC interviews, October 2014). In 2011, the government attempted to solve the displacement problem by relocating the displaced back to their ancestral homes in East Sepik Province. However, the programme proved a failure as only 284 IDPs agreed to take part. Nearly all returned to Bulolo a few weeks later as they had failed to find land or establish livelihoods (IDMC interviews, October 2014; PDC, 2011, on file with IDMC). Since then the displaced have struggled to integrate locally. Some IDPs have managed to work their land during the day but those previously employed by a local mining company lost their jobs after their displacement and now survive as petty traders (UN, 23 March 2011, on file with IDMC).

In Hela Province, IDPs living with host communities and unable to return due to a failure to resolve the conflict, which triggered their displacement, have faced considerable challenges when attempting to integrate locally. Over an extended period of time, the sharing of food and other resources between the hosts and the displaced has become more problematic. This has sometimes led to tensions between the two. Frustration and anger over the additional burden caused by the

presence of IDPs has, on occasion, led hosts to ask them to leave and return to their homes ([Oxfam](#), November 2010).

Obstacles to local integration and settlement elsewhere for disaster IDPs

In situations where people displaced by natural hazards-related disasters are unable to return, for example when their home area is considered at high risk of further disasters and unsafe, alternative settlement options have often failed to provide durable solutions. IDPs have also been at risk of forced return as a result of conflict between locals and the displaced.

The local integration or settlement elsewhere of Manam IDPs has proven highly problematic. Insufficient attention has been paid to IDPs' long-term integration needs, in particular for permanent housing, land and sustainable livelihoods. Efforts to settle them elsewhere have remained largely stalled since 2005. Scarcity and poor quality of land has meant that the rapidly growing IDP population has been unable to secure a livelihood. Moreover, the land is disputed by locals and conflict over access to land and resources has been the underlying cause of repeated clashes between the locals and IDPs since 2004 ([PMC](#), 15 January 2011). Between 2008 and 2009, these clashes led to the forced return by the police of some 2,000 IDPs back to Manam island, despite the risk of a new eruption and lack of government services there ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, pp.13-14).

Land to relocate the Manam IDPs was identified in 2005 in Andarum, some 50 kilometres from Bogia. A decade later, however, the government had still not managed to purchase it due to a combination of lack of funds and political will, corruption and bureaucratic delays ([OHCHR](#), April 2011, p.12). In 2013, some progress was reported, with the signing of an agreement between the Madang provincial government and the landowners in Andarum whereby the latter agreed to start the land acquisition process (Madang government,

July 2013, on file with IDMC). However, serious challenges remain. During 2013, the government provided PGK3 million (US\$1.7 million), with an additional PGK3 million planned for 2014 ([PNG Loop](#), 13 December 2013). Substantially larger sums are needed to launch the project ([RNZI](#), 19 September 2012). The lack of a legal foundation for the project is another problem. In 2013, a bill was introduced by the governor of Madang, also a Member of Parliament, to establish the Manam Restoration Authority Act. By November 2014, however, it had not received parliamentary approval ([EMTV](#), 21 November 2014; [PNG Parliament](#), 13 February 2014). In August 2014, the Madang governor called on the government to stop delaying approval and to allocate funds ([RNZI](#), 15 August 2014).

National response

Despite recent efforts by the PNG government to improve its capacity to respond to and manage disasters, there is still no systematic and institutionalised response to internal displacement which continues to be primarily regarded as a temporary humanitarian concern. As a result, assistance efforts tend to be short-term, focusing on helping people return to their homes. There have been insufficient efforts to address IDPs' long-term needs, particularly when return is not an option and displacement becomes protracted.

There is no clear IDP definition at the national level and there is insufficient effort to collect data on the number and conditions of IDPs. IDPs are not considered as a distinct category of affected people with specific protection or assistance needs. PNG has yet to develop any policy or framework upholding the rights of IDPs. The government has also no institutional focal point agency in charge of addressing internal displacement ([PNG Loop](#), 7 July 2014).

The National Disaster Centre (NDC), located within the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, is the main government

body in charge of coordinating the government's disaster risk reduction and relief activities for both natural hazard-related disasters and conflicts. In principle, NDC is also responsible for ensuring protection and assistance to those affected, including IDPs. There is, however, no specific reference to IDPs in existing legislation and policy documents. The rare references made to IDPs in official documents have been mainly in relation to its commitments to address displacement caused by agro-business projects as well as that resulting from climate change ([IDMC](#), September 2013; [Government of PNG](#), May 2013, p.30).

Lack of capacity and resources and poor governance hamper the response

NDC lacks the financial and human resources to effectively respond to and manage the consequences of natural hazard-related disasters ([ABC](#), 29 January 2013; [WB](#), 2010, p.9). In 2013, the government decided to strengthen NDC's capacity by increasing its budget from \$1.3 million to close to \$22 million ([IRIN](#), 18 July 2013). The same year, NDC started revising the 1987 Disaster Management Act (DMA), a process that is still on-going ([UN](#), 2014, p. 42; [UNDP](#), 1 March 2013). These measures underline the intention of the government to better integrate disaster risk management in its development plans and to invest more in capacity building for communities and provincial disaster offices. However, these pledges have still to result in palpable improvements in capacity at the provincial level.

Decentralisation means that provincial and district-level authorities have the main role to play in disaster preparedness and response. Most of the 22 provincial disaster offices, however, lack the resources and capacity to adequately respond to disasters or implement disaster prevention and mitigation measures. This is also hampering coordination between the provincial disaster offices and the NDC ([UNDP/GoPNG](#), 2011, p.7). Response at the local level is further constrained by bureaucratic delays and political disputes.

In 2014, Bulolo's Member of Parliament, called on the Morobe provincial authorities to resolve political differences and work together to find durable solutions for the Bulolo IDPs. According to the MP, both financial and technical assistance needs to be provided to Bulolo district by the provincial and national authorities so as to help put an end to Bulolo's protracted displacement situation ([PNG Loop](#), 31 January 2014).

International response

Most operational UN agencies and international NGOs focus on development issues, supporting the government to deliver public services and addressing key national public health, human rights and socio-economic concerns ([UN](#), 17 April 2012, p. 13). A number of international partners and donors are working to strengthen state capacity for disaster risk reduction and response, in particular through financial and technical support to NDC. The main coordination mechanism is the inter-agency Disaster Management Team which is co-chaired by NDC and the UN Resident Coordinator ([UN](#), 2014, p.42).

The lack of international engagement with issues around internal displacement is partly explained by the fact that international presence outside the capital, Port Moresby, is limited due to high operating costs, insecurity and access constraints ([ECHO](#), August 2014; [UNDP](#), 2011). As a result, assistance to IDPs varies greatly across the country, depending on the presence of humanitarian partners at the sub-national level. This contributes to internal displacement remaining largely an invisible problem, one perceived as neither a humanitarian nor development concern.

Few international organisations are providing direct assistance to people displaced as a result of conflict and natural hazard-related disasters. IOM, ICRC, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Caritas are the main international agencies providing

humanitarian relief and assistance to IDPs. In addition to its technical assistance on disaster risk management, IOM is also working at the community level to reduce man-made and natural disaster risk and build resilience. Since October 2013, IOM has also started collecting data on displacement incidents and using it as a basis for encouraging the government to strengthen its legal and regulatory framework to better respond to internal displacement (IDMC interviews, October 2014).

ICRC has been working in the Southern Highlands Province since 2010 providing assistance and protection to thousands of people affected by tribal violence, including IDPs. Assistance has focused on the provision of healthcare and medical supplies to affected communities as well as construction and livelihood support to facilitate return ([ICRC](#), 24 January 2014). ICRC has also advocated with local authorities and communities to guarantee respect of human rights and humanitarian principles and improve access to healthcare ([ICRC](#), 2014). MSF has also been working in the region since 2009, providing medical assistance to conflict and violence-affected communities ([ABC](#), 6 February 2014).

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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