

Major situations of conflict-induced displacement in the first months of 2016
Summary note for Afghanistan Protection Cluster
24.02.2016

See also <http://www.unhcr.af/Applications/SitePages/Default.aspx?idx=0&sitepageid=33>

A. Overall situation – end 2015/ January 2016

- **Conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan reached a record high in 2015.** It is estimated that during the year **some 335,400 individuals/ 52.350 families have been forced to leave their places of origin**¹. This figure represents so far an increase of 78% with respect to the same period in 2014². It is to note that these end-year figures for 2015 may further increase as IDPs displaced in 2015 are being assessed in the first months of 2016. It is estimated that by the end of 2015, Afghanistan hosted more than one million IDPs, in emergency as well as in protracted situations.
- **In 2015, as a result of growing instability, 31 out of the 34 Afghan provinces have reportedly hosted and generated conflict-induced displacement.** Of particular concern, provinces traditionally not heavily-affected by insurgency-related violence have emerged as new hotspots, particularly in the North and North Eastern regions (e.g. Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan). It should be noted, however, that severe limitations in humanitarian access to areas affected by conflict continue, particularly for UN agencies, INGOs and sometimes even local NGOs, which limits the ability of UNHCR and partners to fully detect the size of displaced populations and the scale of the protection and assistance needs.
- **Major trends in 2015**
 - The **North Eastern Region** recorded the highest number of conflict-induced IDPs (some 90,700 IDPs), almost a seven-fold increase from the 2014 levels. These trends reflected the continuous arrivals from neighbouring districts and provinces to Kunduz urban centre during the first part of the year, and subsequently the outflow of more than 14,000 families from Kunduz city to neighbouring provinces (Takhar, and Badakhshan, Baghlan) during the October crisis.
 - The **Central Region** hosted the second highest number of IDPs (some 59,000; similar to the levels of 2014), with multiple primary and secondary movements from the most unstable areas of the same region as well as from the Eastern Region affected by the conflict between Taliban and ISIS-affiliated groups.
 - The **Western Region** (some 57,700 IDPs, almost doubling the 2014 figures) was affected by growing instability due to inter-tribal clashes, including between Taliban rival factions, aside the spill-over of the instability within the bordering provinces of the Northern Region.
 - The **Eastern Region** (some 61,800 IDPs) saw a dramatic increase in displacement trends during the second part of the year, which almost doubled the displacement figures of 2014, and were largely linked to the activities of ISIS-affiliated groups in the remote areas bordering Pakistan. This confrontation with the Taliban generated mass influxes towards the provincial capital and also to the Central Region.
 - In the **Southern Region**, hosting some 33,700 IDPs (+15% from 2014), major displacement generated by the continuous clashes between the ANSF and Non-state Armed groups in the northern districts of Helmand province, which intensified during the course of the year.
- **The age and gender breakdown of the displaced population during the year 2015 is largely in line with national demography and shows a high proportion of children under 18 (61.1% of the population in 2015, 30% girls, 30.1% boys) and 21.4% children under 5).** Women account for 49% of the population displaced in 2015. Older persons
- **During the year 2015, the humanitarian actors, under the IDP task forces, provided life-saving assistance to newly conflict-induced displaced population.** Overall, 38,989 families have been supported with NFI

¹ In 2015, the IDP Task forces had profiled some 378,350 IDPs/some 59,000 families, and targeted them with emergency assistance. The figures reported above represents the IDP who reported having been displaced in the year 2015, while the difference is represented by individuals assessed/ profiled in 2015 but who were displaced in the last months of 2014.

² By the end of 2014, the IDP Task Forces in Afghanistan had profiled some 190,000 individuals.

packages; 38,190 families received food; 14,162 families were assisted with cash *in lieu* of food and / or NFI; 26,291 families received hygiene kits; 959 families were provided with emergency tents³.

- Conflict-induced displacement trends in the first month of the year remained in line with the last part of 2015. For the second consecutive year, the absence of a lull in the conflict during the winter period negatively reflected on displacement trends. **It is estimated that during the month of January 2016, some 30,560 individuals / 4,888 families have been assessed and profiled as genuine IDPs**, largely in the North (27%), the East (26%) and the Central Region (21.5%)⁴.

B. Situation in 2016- Eastern Region / Nangarhar

- Since mid June 2015, the Eastern Region continued to experience continuous displacement, largely within Nangarhar Province. Outflows from the districts of Kot, Ahin and Chaparghar, due to clashes between Taliban and ISIS-affiliated groups as well as multiple military operations, continue to be notified by the authorities to the IDP Task Force
- **From June (or September) 2015 and as of 21 February 2016**

Origin	Kot	Achin	Deh Bala (September 2015)	Pachingham (September 2015)
Notifications Families	323 3,978	296 12,745	20 280	19 664
Assessed so far	3,693 (92.8%)	9,421 (73.9%) (including 4,433 by ARCS/ICRC)	207	502
Genuine IDPs Retention rate	2,284/ 12,831 ind. 61.8%	7,471/ 48,060 ind. 79.3%	135 / 747 ind. 65.2%	356/ 2,106 ind. 70.9%
Main displacement areas	Bihsud 51.7% Sukhrud 24.1% Rodat 12.0% Jalalabad 8.7%	Ghami Khel 45% Mohamandara 12.6% Rodat 10.1% Sukhrud 7.7% Achin and Bati Kot 6.2% Others	Bihsud 48.9% Jalalabad 35.6% Sukhrud 15.6%	Bihsud 69.4% Sukhrud 18.3% Jalalabad 12.4%
Family Assistance committed	2,284 (food/ NFI, cash)	7,471	135	356
Family Assistance delivered (21 feb)	2,150 (94%)	6,978 (93.4%)	135 (100%)	356 (100%)
Main actors	UNHCR, WFP, IRC, NRC, DRC	UNHCR, WFP, IRC, NRC, DRC, ICRC/ARCS major contribution	WFP, UNHCR, NRC/DRC	WFP, UNHCR, NRC/DRC

Source: IDP Task Force Jalalabad 21.02.2016

- A substantial backlog of families displaced and listed in 2015 has been assessed during the first weeks of 2016, also through the increase of the assessment teams (ARCS).
- New notifications/ petitions continue to be submitted by the authorities, and advocacy is ongoing for a proper pre-screening to avoid duplications.
- **During the last days, the Provincial authorities have announced sustained return movements back to Achin district (more than 1,000 families).** According to the authorities, families are reportedly willing to return following ANSF military interventions in the area. However, information on these groups remains unclear to the humanitarian actors, who do not have access to the areas.
- **The principle of voluntary, dignified and safe return needs to be upheld. Therefore, consultations with the communities remain critical to understand their intention and the foreseen challenges to return.** Given

³ This represents the assistance provided to conflict-induced IDPs by the humanitarian actors members of the IDP Task Forces. It does not include Government assistance or the assistance provided by ICRC/ ARCS.

⁴ Source: IDP Task Forces in the regions through UNHCR; OCHA in the North and North East regions.

the dynamics of the conflict and the frequent shifting of fronts, caution need to be exercised. Humanitarian actors will try to increase the contacts with the communities to better understand the attitude, while information on the possible return of 1,000 families will need to be corroborated and more information provided by the provincial authorities.

C. Situation in Baghlan

- The security context in Baghlan has been unpredictable for most of 2015, before and after the Kunduz crisis. New displacement started being reported during the last weeks of January/ beginning of February as the confrontation between ASNF and AGEs intensified. The Provincial Centre and the District of Danda-e-Ghori seems to be the major affected areas, with reports of serious damage to civilian infrastructures and objectives that reportedly prompted the protest of the local affected population.
- **The number of petitions from families that have reportedly been displaced and seeking assistance continued to rise during the last weeks. Currently some 76 petitions, believed to represent some 6,000 families⁵, have been collected by DoRR and are being screened for assessment.**
- Media reports referring to more than 13,000 families so far displaced have not been confirmed and appear exaggerated. It is critical to understand that the real size of the displacement can only be ascertained with household visits, due to the imprecise information at the onset of the emergency. Tendency to inflate figures should be strongly discouraged.
- Reportedly, families are generously hosted by the local communities. The majority of the IDPs appear to be of Pashto ethnicity (some 90%) with the presence of minority groups (Tajik and Hazara). Most of the families are reported to have arrived with no belongings, and only few groups seem to have managed to carry some assets along. Consulted families reported that some members remained in the areas of origin to look after premises and properties.
- **Out of the petitions received, and following a preliminary screening exercise, some 2,782 families listed in petitions from areas not accessible to the humanitarian actors have been provided to the ARCS/ICRC for their consideration and possible action.** It is reported that ARCS is already conducting an assessment in the area of Kuja Alwan Returnee Township (23 km from P-i-K) accessible only from the western side and not from Pul-i-Kumri.
- Teams comprising NPO (UNHCR Partner), ACTED, PIN, Dacaar, DRC, WFP partner are active in the area and started conducting assessments. **So far, some 1.093 families have been visited and 522 families have been identified as genuine IDPs (i.e. less than 48%).**
- Reportedly, the rejected families turned out to be local residents who managed to include their name on the list in the hope to receive assistance. It is important to note that these are emergency interventions and not program of poverty reduction or support to protracted displacement situations. **In the interest of accuracy and effectiveness, the inflation of the figure should be highly discouraged by the authorities.**
- **On 22 February, the number of assessment teams will be reinforced.** Based on the petitions received, DRC and Dacaar will start an assessment in Central Baghlan and in the cluster of villages known as “Fabrika”.

D. Situation in the Southern Region (Helmand)

- The situation in the Southern region remained volatile throughout the last months of 2015, when the insurgency gained strength in several districts of Helmand province, countered by ASNF military operations.
- Since the beginning of the year, insecurity and conflict expanded from the traditionally highly unstable areas in the north (Sangin, Kajaki, Musa Qala) to other areas previously less affected in the central part of Helmand Province and increasingly close to the urban area of the provincial capital Lashkar Gah. As a result, **IDP Task**

⁵ At the beginning of the week of 21 – 28 February.

Force members lost access to previously reachable areas, such as Marjia, Gereskh, Nada Ali, where IDPs previously arriving from northern Helmand had been assessed and assisted.

- In addition, the Kandahar-based IDP Task Force followed other situations of displacement in Kandahar, and Uruzgan, liaising also with ICRC and ARCS.
- With the intensification of the conflict in Helmand in the last weeks, the arrivals of displaced families in Lashkar Gah have continued. **In addition, it is believed that an important number of families may be in displacement in Gereskh and other locations in Nada Ali/ Marja, currently not accessible to humanitarian actors due to insecurity.** Members of the IDP Task Force are however on stand-by to start the assessments as soon as the situation allows.
- **During the month of January and February 2016, humanitarian actors have assessed some 863 families / 6,260 individuals. It is important to note that the number of IDPs increasing as assessments in Kandahar and Lashkar-Gah are still ongoing. It is also foreseen that displacement will increase when other areas become accessible.**
- Assessments conducted in Helmand during first two months of the year highlighted the difficult situation of the displaced families. Several consulted families reached Lashkar Gah in a dire situation, after escaping areas of active conflict and reporting the presence of land-mines and ERW on the main exit roads of their districts towards Lashkar Gah. Reports of civilian casualties often emerged during the assessments, as well as loss of properties, assets and crops. The reported contamination of several areas with mines represents a concern for the future return of the population.
- Assessment teams have often experienced difficulties due to the pressure from local communities to include previously displaced population or local residents. It is important to note that these activities continue to be emergency interventions, which cannot substitute for poverty alleviations strategies.

Assessments by IDP Task Force in SR 01 Jan - 21 Feb 2016						
	Date of Assessments	Province	Families verified	Individuals	Response Provided	Remarks
1	6-18 Jan 2016	Kandahar	62	456	Yes	Distribution completed (NRC NFIs and Cash for food; UNICEF family kits and warm clothes)
2	10 Feb up to date	Kandahar	95	684	Ongoing	Assessment ongoing in Kandahar city
3	28 Dec 2015- 21 Jan 2016	Helmand	471	3,488	Yes	Distribution completed (WFP food; DRC cash for NFIs; UNICEF wash items and warm clothes)
4	10-13 Feb 2016	Helmand	41	297	Distribution planned for Sunday 21 Feb 2016	Nawa District (ACF will provide Cash substituting Food, IRC will provide NFIs, Hygiene and Winter Kits)
5	15 Feb 2016 ongoing	Helmand	61	434	Ongoing	Assessment ongoing In Lashkar Gah City
6	9-10 Feb 2016	Uruzgan	69	464	Distribution planned for Sunday 21 Feb 2016	Distribution planned for Sunday 21 Feb 2016 (WFP Food; UNHCR NFI; UNICEF WASH; Family and Hygiene Kits)
7	10-13 Jan 2016	Nimroz	64	437	Yes	Distribution completed (WFP Food; DRC cash for NFIs; UNICEF WASH items)
Total:			863	6,260		

Source: IDP Task Force Kandahar

E. Central Region

- **The Central Region continued to receive influxes of IDPs, as a result of multiple primary and secondary movements from different areas of Afghanistan.** IDPs largely originate from within the Central region including Ghazni, Maidan Wardak, Kapisa and Logar, and from the Eastern region, particularly the insecure districts of Nangarhar.
- During the last months, immediately after the Kunduz crisis, multiple assessments started throughout the region, but particularly in Kabul province, to assess a sizeable backlog of cases. From November 2015, until the end of January 2016, some 3,776 families have been assessed in various locations of the Central Region, particularly in Kabul and Kabul province (80%). However, the assessment revealed that many IDPs families could not be found in the area (631), while only 1,224 families were genuine IDPs and some 676 (55%) were found in need for humanitarian assistance.
- **During the first two months of the year, the authorities in the Central region (DoRR) have submitted a new series of petitions for some 8,874 families** from multiple locations across the country, including the conflict-affected areas of the Eastern region, Kunduz, and Maidan Wardak. The joint household assessment is being organized, but the process is expected to be complex cumbersome.
- **The main challenges in the urban and semi-urban context of Kabul province remain the tracing of the listed families, due to their high mobility within the city, as well as the very imprecise petition lists submitted by multiple authorities (MoRR, DoRR). Lists generating from double sources regularly provide duplications or unreliable information and extend the timeframe of the assessments.** It is critical that the submission of petitions be done by a unique governmental source, in the interest of efficiency and clear communication flows.

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