

KEY FIGURES

- 31 out of 34 Provinces in Afghanistan produced and/or hosted conflict-induced IDPs in 2015.
- 378,347 conflict-induced IDPs jointly profiled by the IDP Task Forces members in accessible areas across the country in 2015.
- Almost 86,000 IDPs fled Kunduz during the October 2015 crisis but returned in the following months. They were also profiled and assisted during displacement.
- 384,480 IDPs out of all profiled IDPs reported to have been displaced in 2015. This represents a 96% increase if compared to 2014 records.
- Of the displaced IDPs in 2015:
50 % male
50 % female
61 % children (under 18)
21.6% Children under 5
- Some of the IDPs displaced in 2015 have been profiled in January and February 2016, due to backlogs in profiling/assessment. The final figure of conflict-induced displacement in 2015 may further slightly increase with the profiling in March-April 2016.
- It is estimated that at the end of 2015, Afghanistan hosted more than one million IDPs in emergency as well as in more protracted situations.

PARTNERSHIP IN 2015

Regional IDP Task Forces chaired by DORR and co-chaired by UNHCR were active in Jalalabad, Herat, Mazar, Maymana, Kunduz, Kandahar and Gardez. The IDP Task Forces collected information on conflict-induced displacement; verified and assessed new displacement; coordinated the response to address the most immediate emergency needs. A National IDP Task Force was chaired by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and co-chaired by UNHCR.

AFGHANISTAN

CONFLICT-INDUCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

2015: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Key Trends, Facts & Figures

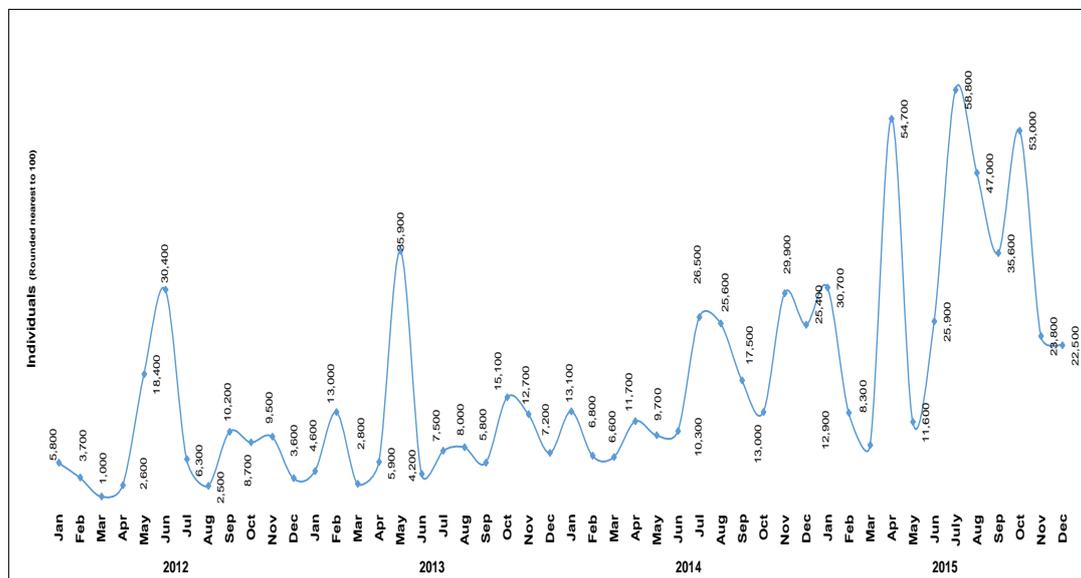
Region	IDP Displaced in 2015 (as of Feb 2016)												Total	%
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	August	Sep	Oct	Nov			
Central	21,522	4,618	996	4,441	5,407	5,033	4,580	10,523	0	9,055	0	66,175	17.2%	
Central High	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	22	0.0%	
East	1,580	582	762	663	81	3,671	25,259	17,035	17,207	2,317	12,081	81,477	21.2%	
North	495	3,876	944	1,043	1,327	419	11,060	2,912	454	2,673	1,389	28,980	7.5%	
Northeast	4,959	69	228	35,562	2,319	9,056	8,306	661	11,273	18,079	0	100,482	26.1%	
South	692	2,743	3,128	996	0	2,834	0	4,960	200	12,005	4,598	38,711	10.1%	
Southeast	363	119	1,095	1,249	798	772	6,482	1,082	714	1,219	232	14,125	3.7%	
West	1,086	913	1,182	10,724	1,572	4,110	3,059	9,800	5,718	7,640	5,453	54,508	14.2%	
Total	30,697	12,920	8,335	54,689	11,504	25,895	58,746	46,973	35,577	52,988	23,753	384,480	100.0%	

The table represents the number of IDPs who reported having been displaced in the specific month of 2015 in accessible areas. This information is based on the information provided by IDPs during the assessment/profiling activities conducted by the IDP Task Forces as of end February 2016.

Displaced conflict-induced IDPs by region of displacement (2012-2015)

Region	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
Central	31,742	6,657	67,409	66,175
Central High	-	-	117	22
East	10,097	14,970	27,453	81,477
North	12,779	21,307	23,583	28,980
Northeast	178	3,739	14,380	100,482
South	11,515	51,930	29,236	38,711
Southeast	1,823	3,416	6,198	14,125
West	34,581	20,796	27,778	54,508
Total	102,715	122,815	196,154	384,480

Actual displacement trends – January 2012 to December 2015



Overall Analysis

Conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan reached unprecedented levels in 2015

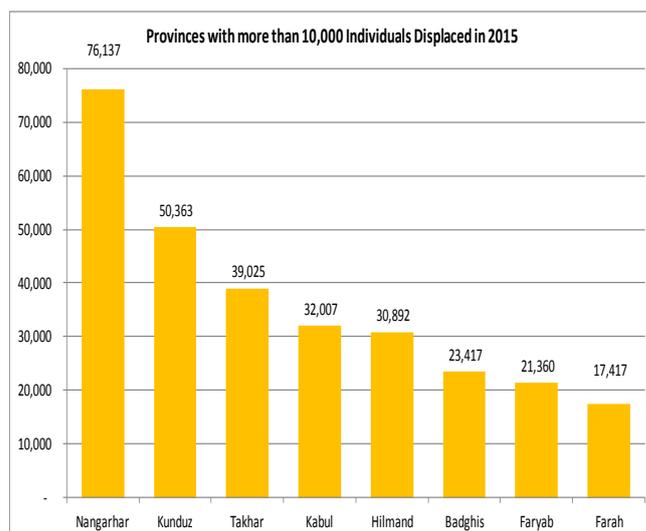
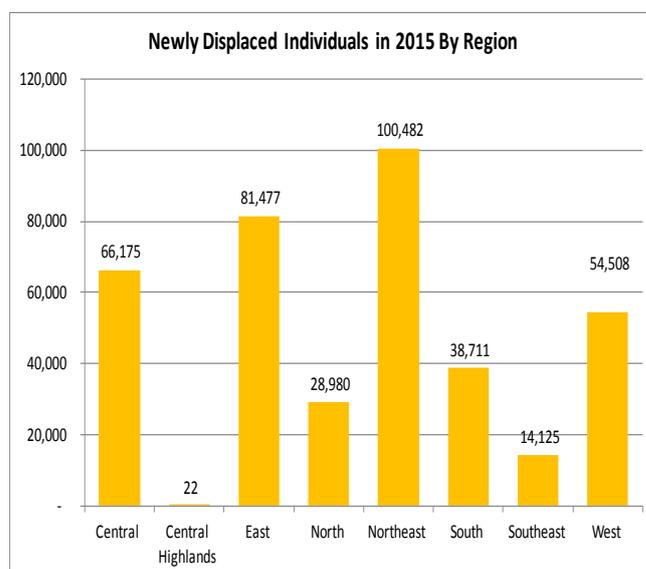
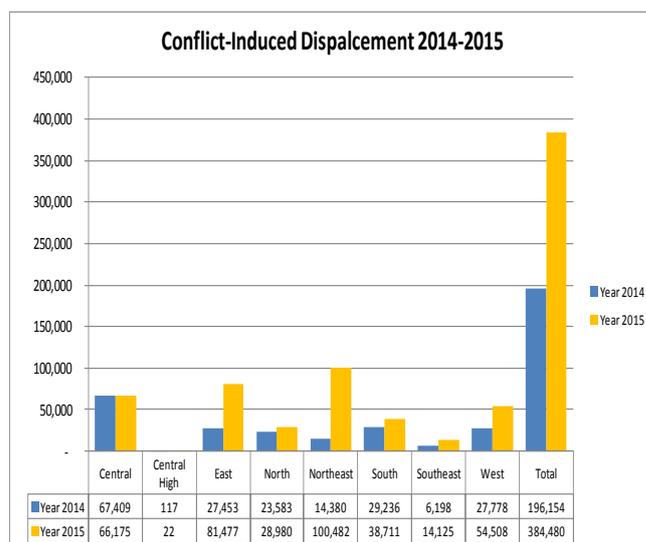
It is estimated that during 2015 some **384,480 individuals/ 63,432 families** have been forced to leave their places of origin due to conflict¹. This figure represents an increase of **96%** compared with 2014². Moreover, it should be noted that this figure does not include the estimated 87,000 people displaced following the September 2015 attack on Kunduz, due to the relatively quick return of IDPs to the province following the restoration of government authority in October. Had UNHCR included Kunduz in the year-end total, the overall conflict-induced displacement in 2015 would exceed 470,000 individuals.

The breadth and severity of conflict-induced displacement mirror the main findings of UNAMA's report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, which documented a record number of civilian casualties in 2015, with more than 11,000 individuals injured or killed as a result of the spreading conflict³.

It is estimated that by the end of 2015, Afghanistan hosted some **1.2 million IDPs**, in emergency and as in longstanding, protracted situations.

In 2015, as a result of growing instability, **31 out of 34 Afghan provinces** were affected by conflict, either generating displacement or hosting large populations of IDPs. Fifteen provinces were estimated to host more than **5,000 new IDPs** and ten provinces more than **10,000 new IDPs**. Of particular concern is the fact that provinces traditionally not heavily affected by insurgency-related violence and displacement have emerged as new hotspots, particularly the North and North Eastern regions.

It should be noted, however, that severe limitations in humanitarian access to areas affected by conflict persisted, particularly for UN agencies, INGOs and sometimes even local NGOs. This often limited the ability of UNHCR and partners of the IDP Task Forces to fully detect the size of displaced populations and the scale of the protection and assistance needs.



Causes of displacement were varied: the recurrent offensives and counter-offensives between non-State

¹ These figures have been updated from an earlier UNHCR release of December 2015. As in previous years, a segment of the population displaced in late 2015 was assessed/ profiled in January and February 2016 and was subsequently added to the 2015 displaced population to improve the correctness of the statistics.

² The recorded number of individuals displaced in 2014 was 196,154

³ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/HRReports.aspx>

Armed Groups and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF); military operations, which were often conducted in total disregard for basic principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, as highlighted by the UNAMA annual report on the situation of Protection of Civilians; conflict between non-State Armed Groups, particularly among Taliban and emergent groups affiliated with ISIS in the Eastern Region; inter-tribal clashes, often as proxy to the traditional parties to the conflict; and an increasing trend of targeted acts of violence, harassment, intimidation by non-State Armed Groups against individuals and families.

In a scenario characterized by an emboldened insurgency and pervasive instability, the **return of conflict-induced displaced population to areas of origin** was minimal. Aside from the relatively quick displacement/return cycle following the Kunduz crisis in October 2015, limited return movements were occasionally detected elsewhere in the country, mainly in the Western Region. However, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors faced severe limitations in their ability to monitor potential return trends. Chief among these was the largely spontaneous and small-scale character of the movements, as well as the rapid evolution of the conflict, which forced humanitarian actors to dedicate the bulk of already over-stretched resources to responding to new emergencies, rather than engage in sustained monitoring over time of more protracted displacement. However, based on the limited post-displacement monitoring conducted, the IDP Task Forces estimated that some 100,000 IDPs may have returned in 2015, including the population displaced from Kunduz in October, which likely accounted for approximately 85% of the country-wide return movements.

Regional trends

The **North Eastern Region** recorded the highest number of conflict-induced IDPs (some 100,500 IDPs), almost a seven-fold increase from 2014 levels. These trends reflect the continuous arrivals of displaced populations from neighbouring districts and provinces to Kunduz city during the first part of the year, as well as the massive outflow of more than 14,000 families from the city to neighbouring provinces (Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan provinces) during the October crisis. This sudden outflow was followed by a return of some 87,500 individuals from neighbouring provinces and from Kabul,

estimated at 80-85% of the pre-displacement population.

The **Eastern Region** (some 81,500 IDPs) also witnessed a dramatic increase in conflict-induced displacement trends during the second part of the year, which almost tripled the levels of 2014⁴. These trends were largely connected to the activities of ISIS-affiliated groups in the remote areas bordering Pakistan and their clashes with rival non-State armed groups, primarily the Taliban, for control over territory. The confrontation generated mass influxes towards the provincial capital Jalalabad, and also to the Central Region.

The **Central Region** continued to host significant numbers of conflict-induced IDPs (some 66,200, similar to the levels of 2014⁵). The region witnessed multiple situations of new displacement following insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, particularly in Kapisa, Ghazni, and Wardak. The region was also affected by the Kunduz crisis in October and the continuing flow of IDPs from the Eastern Region as a result of conflict between the Taliban and ISIS-affiliated groups.

The **Western Region** (some 54,500 IDPs, almost doubling the 2014 figures) was particularly affected by growing instability due to inter-tribal clashes in Farah and Ghor provinces, including between rival Taliban factions. It was also affected by the spill-over of the instability in the bordering Northern Region, affecting particularly Badghis province.

In the **Southern Region**, instability in certain provinces, notably Helmand, provoked an overall surge of conflict-induced displacement (+33% from 2014). By the end of the year, the region hosted some 38,700 IDPs, particularly in Lashkar-Gah and Kandahar. IDP families largely originated from the northern districts of Helmand province, which continued to be affected by recurrent and intensifying clashes between the ANSF and NSAG. Humanitarian access to those areas, however, severely constrained the capacity of the humanitarian actors to profile the displaced population, assess their needs and deliver assistance. There is undisputed evidence that the size of the displaced population in the region was well above the number of the profiled families.

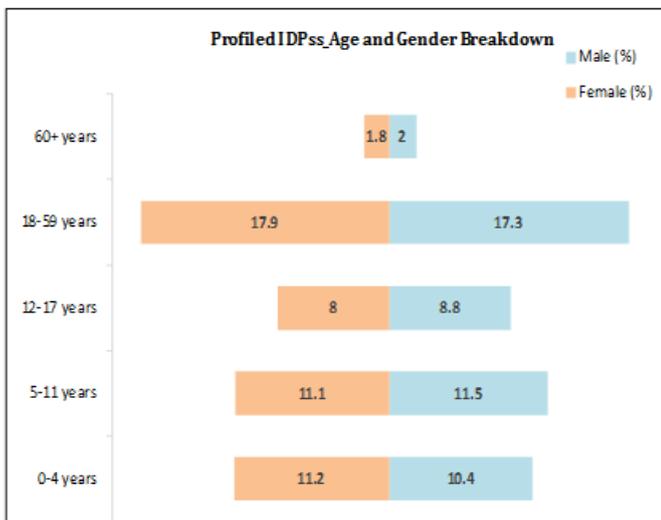
Overall Situation

The **demographic breakdown of the newly displaced population during 2015** continued to show a high prevalence of children under 18 (61% of the population,

⁴ It cannot be excluded that the number may be higher, due to the presence of a significant backlog of population that in February 2016 still needed to be assessed/ profiled.

⁵ As above

30.3% girls, 30.7% boys; 21.6% children under five). Overall, the female and male populations were evenly represented (around 50%), with a slight predominance of women (19.7%) over men (19.3%) in the adult population (< 18 years old).



Profiling and consultations with affected population revealed that **IDP families often fled areas of origin leaving the majority of their possessions and assets behind**. Even if some movements have been of preventive nature, the rapid shifts in the frontlines of the conflict and logistic constraints generally impeded families from adequately planning movements to safer areas.

In areas of displacement, IDP families were generally hosted by extended families or acquaintances, with tribal affinities and community bonds continuing to support the displaced population in the first phases post-flight. In only a few circumstances have IDPs been compelled to settle in makeshift camps. However, the widespread poverty of host communities, coupled with the strain of sharing limited resources with displaced families, necessitated the provision of life-saving assistance by humanitarian agencies.

Conflict-induced displacement continued to have a significant impact on individuals with specific needs such as children, who constituted more than 61% of the population displaced in 2015, as well as women, older persons and persons with disabilities. These segments of the population continued to be the most vulnerable to the deprivations of forced displacement, including over-crowding and drastically sub-standard accommodation, lack of privacy, and precarious water and sanitation facilities. Aside from material hardships,

⁶ The Afghanistan Protection Cluster has recently encouraged a better dialogue, coordination and strengthened response amongst actors operating in the field of psychosocial support during the first phases of an emergency. Advocacy for donors' contributions to psychosocial support activities was also conducted during the Kunduz crisis.

the psychological impact of the conflict and subsequent flight has been only superficially assessed due to the weak capacity of the national health-care system, particularly in remote areas, and the presence of very few actors working in this specialised field⁶.

Access to education in displacement has been severely hindered by the destitute conditions of the displaced families, which are often obliged to engage children in household livelihood activities. The lack of proper civil documentation, as well as the limited absorption capacity of schools, also emerged as serious barriers to access to education in displacement. A particular concern during the course of 2015 has been the rise in intimidations and threats against education facilities and teachers (up 165% from 2014⁷), including the closure of an increasing number of schools, particularly in the Eastern region, where ISIS-affiliated groups exercised growing authority. The reopening of the facilities was often conditional to the adoption of a radicalized the teaching curriculum.

Recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups remained a concern in the context of a surge in conflict and a multiplication of non-State armed groups, with different ideological profiles and hence different levels of interest in compliance with IHL principles, including those related to the protection of children. Poverty and lack of coping mechanisms, including during the more prolonged phases of displacement, is also thought to be a factor that contributed to recruitment as a subtle form of coercion. While UNHCR and the IDP Task Forces were not in a position to confirm or verify reports of recruitment, anecdotal information was often picked up during rapid assessments following new displacement and was shared with the Task Force on Children in Armed Conflict.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in situations of displacement continued to be a concern. It was however difficult to discern a clear causal nexus between the emergency/displacement related situations and the general environment in Afghanistan, where violence against women and girls remains endemic, deeply rooted in rural traditions and socio-cultural mores, and exacerbated by extreme poverty and lack of access to education.

There has been no systematic evidence that displacement in Afghanistan has resulted in a growing incidence of GBV, with the exception of the Kunduz crisis in October 2015. While UNAMA investigations did not

⁷ Task Force on Children in Armed Conflict, February 2016, data available to UNHCR

find evidence that GBV against women and girls occurred systematically or on a large scale during the Kunduz crisis, credible reports suggested that some incidents indeed occurred, with armed men taking advantage of the general breakdown of law and order. In addition, UNAMA confirmed that fear of gender-specific violence was a key factor in the mass displacement of women from the city, including women’s activists and human rights defenders⁸.

The risks of GBV and exploitation are equally possible, if not greater, after the first phases of the emergency, when prolonged hosting arrangements may trigger exploitative situations. UNHCR and the Protection Cluster therefore recommended to the GBV Area of Responsibility of the Protection Cluster an expansion of dedicated monitoring, a strengthening of referral pathways and the provision of information on GBV remedial services to the IDP population.

Risks posed by anti-personnel landmines, anti-tank mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war to civilians, in particular to children, continued to be extremely high. IEDs remained the leading cause of civilian casualties attributed to anti-Government elements and caused the second highest number of civilian casualties (21%), according to UNAMA 2015 Protection of Civilians report. During profiling and monitoring, affected individuals have often been detected and IDP Task Force members have generally referred such cases to specialised service providers for specific interventions.

Provinces of major displacement

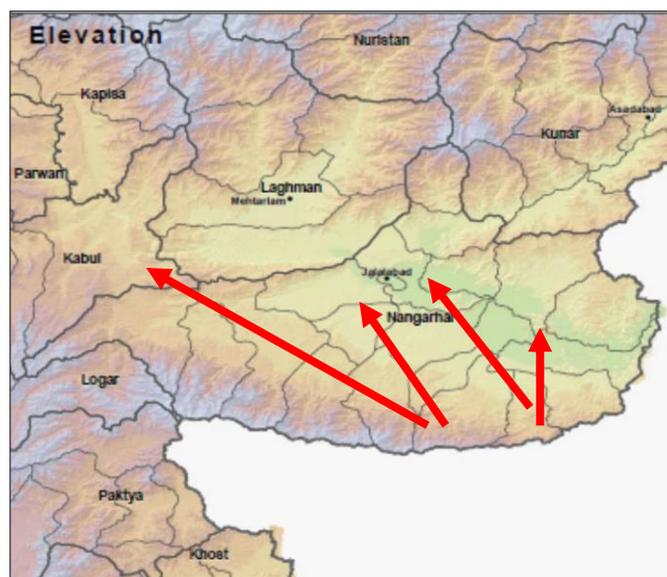
Provinces with more than 20,000 new conflict-induced IDPs in 2015

Province	Families	Individuals
Nangarhar	12,309	76,137
Kunduz	8,953	50,363
Takhar	6,914	39,025
Kabul	5,177	32,007
Hilmand	4,008	30,892
Badghis	3,993	23,417
Faryab	3,411	21,360

Note: In addition to the above-mentioned provinces, 8 other provinces recorded more than 5,000 new conflict-induced displaced individuals in 2015 (Farah, Badakhshan, Paktya, Wardak, Kapisa, Ghazni, Hirat, Ghor) and other 7 provinces reported more than 2,000 IDPs (Kandahar, Parwan, Khos, Logar, Sar-i-Pul, Balkh, Langhman).

The following section provides a summary of the major developments in the key regions affected by conflict and displacement. More detailed information can be found in UNHCR 2015 Monthly Updates, which were regularly produced and posted on UNHCR Afghanistan web-page dedicated to internal displacement when UNHCR served as the overall coordinator for conflict-induced internal displacement⁹.

Eastern Region Nangarhar



During the first half of 2015, displacement trends within and to the Nangarhar province were relatively low and small-scale, with slight variations in response to local dynamics. Groups of families from Kunar, Langhman and remote districts of Nangarhar province moved mainly to the urban centre of Jalalabad, either pre-emptively or to avoid targeted acts of intimidation, harassment, violence,

⁸https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/special_report_on_kunduz_province_12_december_2015.pdf

⁹<http://www.unhcr.af/Applications/SitePages/Default.aspx?idx=0&sitepageid=33>

including kidnapping of family members. Such acts were reportedly imputed to AGEs and motivated by a retaliatory intent against families with members serving in the ASNF or perceived to support the Government. Displacement trends experienced a drastic uptick from the end of June. Steady influxes of IDPs were reported from the remote provincial districts bordering Khyber agency in Pakistan FATA (Kot, Achin, Charparkar) to the central districts of Behsud, Sukrod near to Jalalabad, to Jalalabad urban area, and to more remote areas in the eastern part of the province (Ghani Khel, Der Bala). According to affected families, forced movements were caused by intimidation, threats and harassment perpetrated by groups of fighters who had pledged allegiance to ISIS in those districts.

Consultations with the displaced families during emergency assessments revealed that those groups had exercised unprecedented pressure on the local population through extortion and targeted intimidation against families perceived to be associated with the Government or other non-State armed groups, notably the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan/ Taleban. IDPs from areas where ISIS-affiliated groups had established their presence and influence also reported the imposition of stricter rules and regulations on the civilian population, including more rigid social codes and attire for women and further limitation in their freedom of movement. Practice of recruitment reportedly resumed by ISIS-affiliated groups, coupled with vigorous activism in finding proselytes through religious schools and congregations.

Since July and in the months following, as the clashes between the two non-State armed groups intensified, IDP arrivals to the central areas of Nangarhar continued unabated, often in poor condition and in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Petitions for assistance were submitted on a daily basis to the authorities in Nangarhar, and deferred to the IDP Task Forces. Joint needs assessments continued throughout the second part of the year along the main axes of displacement, in Ghani Khel, in accessible areas of districts bordering Achin, in Jalalabad, Surkhrod, and Behsud. The IDP Task Force relied on a broad range of local and humanitarian actors in the assistance effort, particularly in areas with significant risks or access restrictions, such as in Achin District.

The start of a robust Government military operation in autumn, which lasted through the end of the year, resulted in escalating levels of violence and added further complexity to the displacement context. Since September 2015, the presence of IDPs from conflict-affected districts was also reported in Kabul and the Central Region. Enhanced protection monitoring

suggests that families had decided to seek more permanent security in Kabul Province, fearing a further expansion of the conflict to other areas of Nangarhar. During the whole second half of 2015, the strain put on the humanitarian community in assessing and assisting the displaced population in the Eastern Region and in Nangarhar province in particular was severe. The earthquake that affected other areas of the Eastern Region at the end of October added yet another layer of complexity to the humanitarian situation, diverting human and material resources to the natural disaster response.

Humanitarian assistance efforts were also complicated by high levels of attempted fraud, as non-IDP families petitioned for emergency humanitarian assistance as a means of poverty alleviation. This situation significantly hindered the assessment process, generating a significant backlog of outstanding IDPs waiting to be assessed and verified, and who were only assessed in the first months of 2016.

high contamination of the conflict-affected areas and the desire of the IDP population to return as soon as the conflict subdued to engage in harvesting.

While the city of Kunduz remained in government control during the May/June offensive, the instability in the surrounding areas continued. Territorial gains and losses and a shifting of front lines in the conflict continued throughout the summer. During the months of July and August, a new influx arrived in Kunduz from the eastern district of Dashte Archi and the southern district of Khanabad. Prior to the fall of Kunduz in September 2015, the IDP Task force estimated that Kunduz hosted more than 40,000 IDPs from neighbouring locations.

The last week of September saw a marked deterioration of the security situation around Kunduz. During the last days of the month, a powerful offensive by Taleban against Kunduz prompted the majority of the resident and hosted IDP population to flee the city in search for safety. The attack against Kunduz city prompted the massive displacement of more than 18,000 families across the North-Eastern Region and toward Kabul. IDPs fled to Taloqan in Takhar Province (more than 14,000 families), where a significant number of families settled in public buildings and makeshift camps, partially assisted by the authorities. IDPs also fled to Faizabad in Badakhshan (some 800 families), largely in search of support from extended families and acquaintances. Other groups reached Mazar city (some 1,250 families), and several families were accommodated in the airport area of Mazar-i-Sharif (“Haji camp”) after having been airlifted to safety as they attempted to flee through the northern border with Tajikistan, which was temporarily closed.

The magnitude and severity of the Kunduz crisis brought worldwide attention on the conflict in Afghanistan, and also for the widespread violations committed by all parties to the conflict, including the widely-reported bombing of an MSF-run hospital. Given the high visibility, the emergency response to displaced population was prompt, including from the Government, and continued until late 2015.

It is estimated that more than 85% of the population, some 85,700 individuals, returned from the various provinces of displacement between the end of October and during November, as soon as the Government regained control over the city.

However, the end of the October crisis did not mark a return to stability in the North Eastern Region. Although expelled from the city, AGEs continued to control several areas in the immediate surroundings, particularly in Imam Shaib, Chardara, Dashte Archi districts, and rapidly extended their operations

southwards towards Baghlan province to disrupt ANSF communication lines to Kabul and Mazar. In this volatile environment, Kunduz remained a barometer of the security climate.

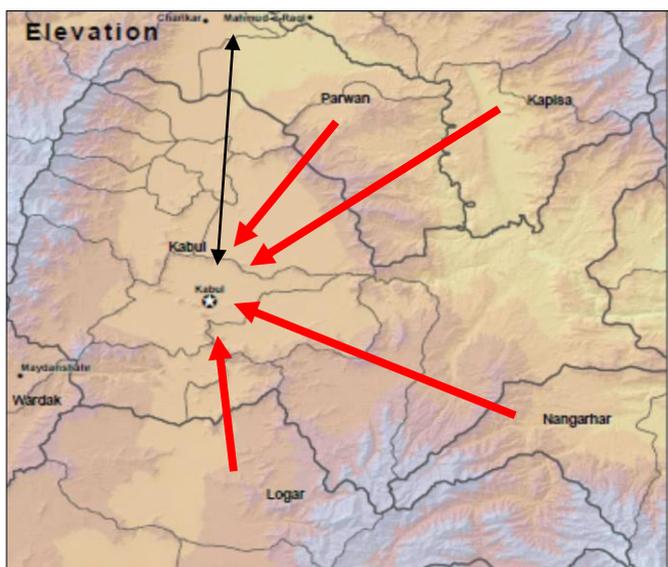
During the final months of the year, repeated clashes occurred in the rural belt around the city, with alternate successes of the two parties in conflict, creating new instability and fresh population displacements. By year’s end, Kunduz city again became the destination of some 6,600 IDPs and the influx was uninterrupted.

Likewise, the end of the Kunduz crisis did not result in a stabilisation of the situation in neighbouring Takhar province. Events in Takhar have largely unfolded from the situation Kunduz. Takhar province, which had almost never produced or hosted conflict-induced displacement, ranked amongst the most affected provinces in the country in 2015.

During the summer months, as a spill-over of the confrontation in Dashte Archi district, military operations started in Khuja Ghar district, with intense clashes and abrupt displacement within the same district and towards Baharak, Taloqan and Dashte-Qala. After the massive influxes caused by the Kunduz crisis and the rapid return of the Kunduz IDPs, during the month of November a renewed insurgency destabilised again some districts in the northern part of Takhar, causing the displacement of more than 3,000 individuals.

Central Region

Kabul



Throughout the year, Kabul province remained a major destination for Afghan families displaced by conflict, mainly from the Central Region but also from further afield. IDPs chose Kabul Province largely due to the perception of a better security situation and the hope to find better coping mechanisms in an urban environment.

Throughout the first part of the year, Kabul province received conflict-induced IDPs on a steady pace from Kapisa, Maidan Wardak and Parwan Provinces. The movements largely followed the sequence of ANSF counter-insurgency operations in those locations. The IDP Task Force of the Central Region routinely organised joint assessments to identify the genuine IDPs and their immediate protection and assistance needs.

During the summer months, the intensification of the conflict in the Eastern Region between the Taliban and ISIS-affiliated groups generated a continuous influx of

families, who reportedly arrived directly to Kabul Province, particularly in the eastern district of Surobi, fearing a rapid expansion of the conflict throughout Nangarhar province. While such scenarios did not materialise, influxes continued unabated during the latter half of the year. This in turn affected the backlog of cases to be assessed by the IDP Task Force of the Central Region, particularly when the Kunduz crisis generated additional massive arrivals of families to Kabul.

While the greatest majority of the displaced population from the October Kunduz crisis sought immediate safety in the neighbouring provinces of Takhar and Badakhshan, some 3,500 families also managed to reach Kabul at different stages, through the insecure route via Baghlan/Pul-i-Khumri. Several families, including government officials, had political connections or family links in the city.

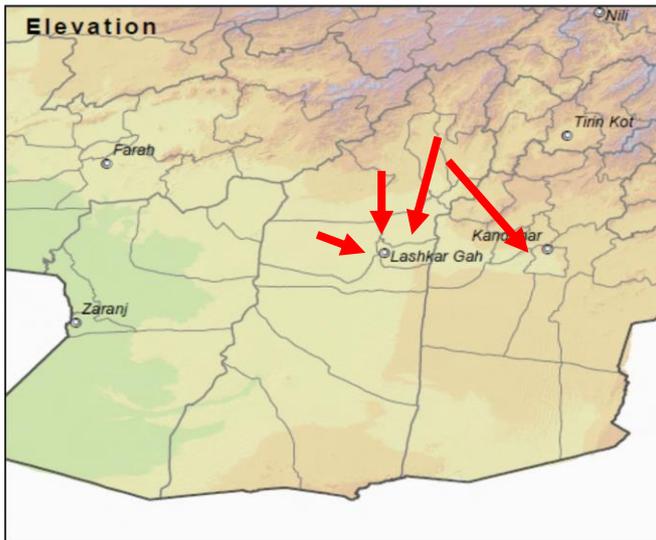
Given the visibility of the Kunduz crisis, the humanitarian situation in Kabul became a matter of national concern and the central authorities exerted significant pressure on the humanitarian actors to promptly assess and assist the population, under the leadership of a newly appointed State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs. The creation of IDP camps in designated locations to host part of the Kunduz displaced population was ruled out, both by the Government and by the humanitarian community. In some cases, temporary accommodation in public spaces was organised for families without alternative options.

As in other provinces, the cycle of displacement of the conflict-IDP originating from Kunduz was relatively brief. During the weeks following the re-establishment of Government control over the city, the IDP Task Force partners contacted IDP families previously assessed in Kabul city and province and obtained information that at least some 12,500 individuals had reportedly returned to their areas of origin.

During November and December 2015, Kabul continued to receive IDPs from various locations in the Central Region and from other neighbouring areas, notably the Eastern Region. Joint profiling and humanitarian response continued, amidst challenges in keeping pace with the influxes and the backlogs of non-assessed cases from the previous months.

Southern Region

Helmand



Throughout 2015, the province was one of the most volatile areas in the country. Helmand was at the centre of repeated offensives by AGE and counter-offensives by the ANSF, particularly in the Northern districts of the province (Sangin, Kajaki, Musa Qala). The intense fighting provoked continuous waves of displacement to the urban and semi-urban areas around the provincial capital Lashkar-Gah, and the central districts of Marja and Nada Ali. ANSF territorial gains were however hardly stable and frontlines rapidly shifted provoking repeated forced movements of population.

The vast military operation “Zulfiqar” conducted during the months of February and March 2015 triggered the displacement of more than a thousand of families from Sangin, Kajaki and Musa Qala districts, engaging the IDP Task Forces in repeated assessments during the month of March and April. IDPs were profiled in Lashkar-Gah, Marja and Gereskh, but also in Kandahar, where IDP families had found refuge with extended families and communities with the same tribal affiliation, often displaced from the same areas in the previous years.

The humanitarian needs and the situation of the civilian population was often severe, with reports of violations of basic International Humanitarian Law principles by all parties to the conflict.

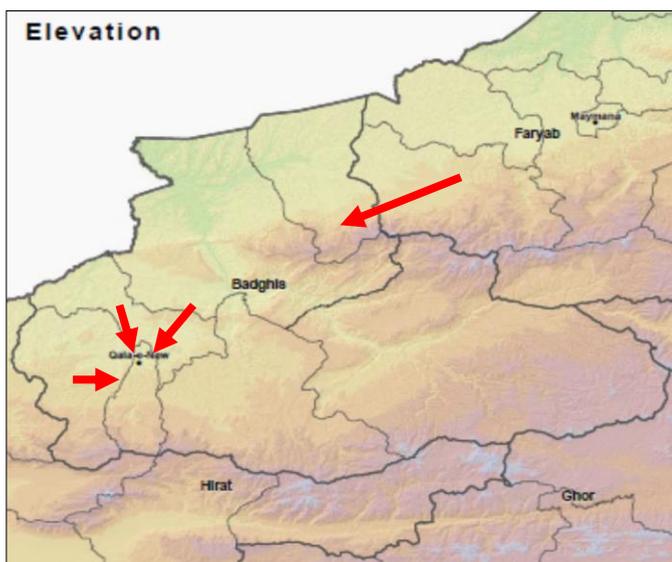
Intermittent clashes in northern Helmand continued throughout the summer months provoking similar, if more limited, forced population movements. Gradually, as a result of loss of territory earlier under the control of the ANSF, the conflict moved south toward the districts of Marja, Nada Ali and Nadi Seraj. While displaced families continued to enjoy the support of the local communities and could find accommodation in hosting arrangements, they generally fled the sudden eruption of the conflict and arrived with no assets and in precarious conditions, often after having crossed the lines of fire. IDP task Forces remained engaged in emergency needs assessments and distribution of assistance in accessible areas as soon as reports of fresh displacement were provided by the authorities or the communities.

In the latter part of the year, the conflict intensified. Districts such as Sangin, Musa Qala, large parts of Kajaki, but eventually also extensive parts of Marja and Nada Ali fell into the hands of AGEs, or were deliberately evacuated by the ANSF in a strategic withdrawal to better protect the provincial capital. In the final months of the year, the conflict approached the outskirts of Lashkar-Gah and created a new surge of displacement. While the IDP Task Forces were able to address the needs of those IDPs reaching Lashkar-Gah, access was severely curtailed in areas immediately surrounding the provincial capital and previously at reach (Gereskh, Marja). This loss of access seriously impeded the outreach to affected populations and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The intervention of other independent humanitarian actors cooperating with the IDP Task Forces partially addressed the situation.

In 2015, Helmand province has been amongst the displacement-affected areas where the lack of access most severely hindered humanitarian action. It is therefore believed that the displacement figures in Helmand contained in this report under-state the true extent of internal displacement and humanitarian needs in the province.

Western Region

Badghis



Internal displacement in Badghis resulted from critical events in several volatile areas within the province as well as the spill-over of the conflict from neighbouring Faryab province, particularly Qaisar district.

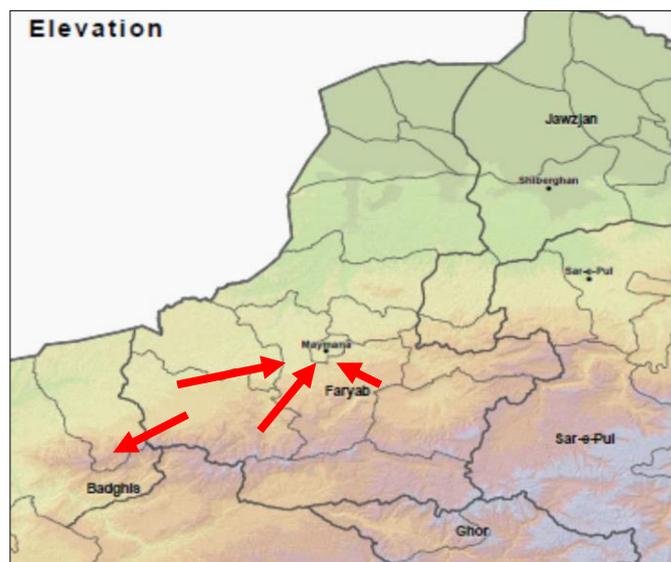
In April, inter-tribal clashes in remote areas of Ab Kamari district generated a significant influx of almost 1,300 families/7,000 individuals into the provincial Capital Qala-I-Now and the immediate surroundings.

In the following months, armed conflict between ANSF and AGEs as well as incidences of extortion, illegal taxation and intimidation by armed groups triggered other localised forced movements within Badghis.

From June to November, more than 14,000 individuals were displaced from Abkamary, Muqur, Qadis, Bala Murghab districts to surrounding areas of Qala-e-Naw city. The delivery of assistance to remote areas of Bala Murghab was often hindered by access constraints.

Northern Region

Faryab



During 2015, Faryab province emerged as one of the most volatile areas in Afghanistan. Displacement was generally confined to the provincial territory, particularly to the city of Maymana and the surrounding areas. From February until the end of the year, forced movements were recorded on a steady basis, triggered by an extremely active insurgency.

During the first half of 2015, displacement rates were particularly high from the western part of the province, particularly from Almar and Qaisar districts, with arrivals also in the neighbouring Qarmac district of Badghis province.

Faryab witnessed a peak of instability during the months of July and August, when multiple AGE offensives, armed clashes with the ANSF, and further advancement of non-State armed groups dislodged almost 13,000 individuals from Qaisar (clusters of villages in the south and southern part of the district), Almar (southern part), Pashtunkhot (southern part) as well as from the Astana

Valley in Shirin Tagab district. A large part of the displaced population reached the provincial capital of Maymana, where families were assessed and assisted by the members of the local IDP Task Force. Access was repeatedly sought to Almar and Qaisar districts, which remained hard-to-reach also for other humanitarian actors, with limited and intermittent success.

From August through the end of the year, the situation in the province remained highly volatile. Earlier territorial gains of the ANSF were again eroded by the AGEs' renewed offensive. In parallel, the reported involvement of paramilitary groups and civilian defence forces added complexity to the dynamics of the conflict and increased the fragmentation of the armed groups making humanitarian access more complex and fuelling violations and impunity. IDPs often reported that the decision to flee areas of origin was due to the presence of ANA and ANP bases close to their village. The frequent attacks against these military installations worsened the risks for the civilian population, which was often caught in the exchanges of fire.

This highly unstable situation persists at the time of writing, with steady displacement flows and continuous reports of violations against the civilian population by all parties in conflict.

Assistance

In line with the Humanitarian Response Plan strategy, the humanitarian community continued to substantially contribute to meeting the most immediate needs of the displaced population through the provision of life saving assistance such as food, basic relief and hygiene items; unconditional cash *in lieu* of in-kind food and NFI assistance; targeted support to persons with specific needs, in the form of cash-based assistance or protective services and the implementation of Mine Action activities.

During 2015, the humanitarian actors, through the IDP Task Forces coordination provided the following life-saving assistance to newly conflict-induced displaced population:

- 38,989 families were supported with NFI packages, with more than 70% covered by UNHCR;
- 38,190 families received food from WFP;
- 14,162 families were assisted with cash in lieu of food and / or NFI, mainly by the ERM-ECHO partners (DRC, NRC, PIN, ACF, Dacaar);

- 26,291 families received hygiene kits, largely from UNICEF and UNHCR;
- 959 families were provided with emergency tents, mainly from UNHCR¹¹.

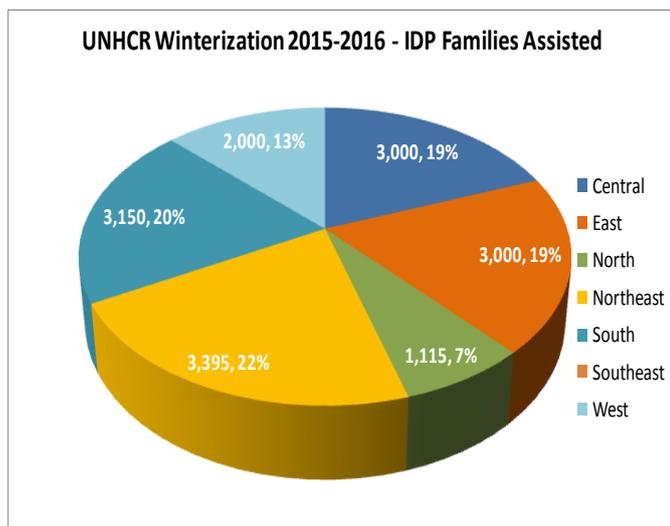


Assistance distribution / Photo UNHCR 2015

In addition to the joint response, during the winter months, some humanitarian agencies, including ECHO ERM partners UNICEF, UNHCR distributed additional assistance to support families during the cold period. UNHCR's winterisation program was likely the largest of these interventions. The programme covered almost all regions of the country and distributed unconditional cash (100 USD) to eligible families, largely new IDPs or families displaced in the previous years and still in severely vulnerable conditions. Through its winterisation program, directed also to other categories of persons of concern, UNHCR assisted 15,664 conflict-induced IDP families in all regions.

¹¹ The data reflect information on delivered assistance as provided by the various agencies members of the IDP Task Forces. It does not include Government assistance or the assistance provided by other independent humanitarian actors (notably ICRC/ ARCS). A complete

table with breakdown by region is included at the end of this report, based on information received from the assisting parties.



Source UNHCR

Interagency Developments – Transition of Overall Coordination Responsibilities

Since 2005, UNHCR exercised a coordination and operational role in relation to conflict-induced internal displacement in Afghanistan through dedicated inter-agency and multi-sector coordination fora. The IDP Task Forces - co-chaired by UNHCR and MoRR/DoRR - were operational at regional as well as at national level, to gather and exchange information on displacement, coordinate the joint needs assessments for newly displaced population, as well as organise and implement the delivery of assistance.

In 2015, UNHCR critically assessed its engagement in the response to conflict-induced displacement within the country following the Humanitarian Architecture Review for Afghanistan undertaken under the auspices of the HC. As a result, UNHCR handed over the overall coordination of conflict-induced displacement to OCHA to focus material and human resources on its global accountabilities as Protection and Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster Lead under the Transformative Agenda.

The actual transition of overall coordination responsibilities on conflict-induced IDPs in Afghanistan commenced in late 2015 as a phased approach from the Northern and North-Eastern Regions. It progressively expanded to other regions and was finally completed and formalised country-wide as of 1st March 2016.

The coordination role exercised by the IDP Task Forces was assumed by the OCHA-led Operational Coordination Teams (OCTs) at provincial level and by the existing Humanitarian Regional Teams (HRTs)¹² for coordination at broader regional level. Both

¹² Presently, HRTs are active in the Central Region, Eastern Region, Northern Region, Western Region and Southern Region

coordination fora see a more structured representation “by Cluster”.

The transition process, however, does not signal disengagement by UNHCR from its involvement in situations of conflict-induced internal displacement in Afghanistan. In its role of Protection and Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster Lead, UNHCR and its partners will continue to participate in the joint emergency assessments in all regions and support the analysis of needs, the response and the advocacy in both sectors of intervention.

Processes and mechanisms for assessment and assistance delivery adopted by the IDP Task Forces are largely still in place at the time of writing. However, a wider discussion is progressing at national level, within the Inter-Cluster Team facilitated by OCHA, on how to improve assessment methodologies, harmonise assessment tools and shift to more marked vulnerability-based criteria in the distribution of assistance to IDPs.

As a humanitarian coordination body and the convener of the HRTs and OCTs, OCHA is now responsible for facilitating the overall coordination of internal displacement in Afghanistan, together with the Clusters and their members. Henceforth, in 2016 all statistics on conflict-induced displacement will be produced by OCHA, with inputs from the various Clusters.

IDP Policy implementation

Afghanistan remains one of the few countries in the region to have endorsed a comprehensive national policy on internal displacement.

In 2015, in collaboration with other interested agencies, UNHCR invested significant efforts in working with government counterparts to implement the IDP Policy, which was endorsed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2013 and launched in 2014.

At national level, the National IDP Policy Working Group was institutionalized, with terms of reference assigning to it an advisory role to the Policy implementation process, and reinforcing government participation (MoRR, ANDMA, Administrative Office of the Presidency, IDLG, MRRD), aside the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and representatives from the humanitarian and development community (UNHCR, OCHA, IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, NRC).

Sensitization material was prepared, including explanatory brochures, a Guide for Officials, and community leaflets to facilitate outreach to and

knowledge-sharing on the Policy with national and local authorities and within affected communities.

Promotional sessions were organized in the three Pilot Provinces where the Policy was to be initially implemented (Nangarhar, Balkh, and Herat) as well as in other provinces hosting IDPs such as Kandahar, Gardez, Kabul, Parwan.

Following a road-map in the selected three Pilot Provinces, workshops were organized in February (Jalalabad), September (Herat) and November (Mazar) aimed at launching the implementation process through the constitution of Provincial IDP Policy Implementation Committees. The Committees were tasked to coordinate the drafting of Provincial Action Plans, geared towards strategic interventions for durable solutions along the Policy provisions (Annex 3).

The IDP Policy is a significant achievement for Afghanistan in that it is a strong right-based document – in line with both the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Afghan Constitution – and vests primary responsibility with government authorities to respect and fulfill the rights of IDPs. It provides a set of strong right-based principles and establishes the accountability of several line ministries. The Policy also reinforces the concept that development programs of the Government are tools to advance and facilitate durable solutions for IDPs, as citizens of the country, and that IDPs should be fully included in these interventions – if not even prioritized by virtue of their specific needs.

The implementation of the IDP Policy in a context of endemic conflict, large-scale forced displacement and deep structural constraints within an often divided government has not been without challenges. The Policy perhaps overestimated the capacity of certain national and local authorities and institutions to effectively lead and coordinate the response to internal displacement.

The eventual success of the IDP Policy implementation needs to be measured against the full Government ownership rather than a partial success obtained through the substitution of the international community in strategic leadership and implementation.

One of UNHCR's conclusions from attempts to roll-out and integrate the IDP policy over the past year is that the ambitious National or Provincial Action Plans may need to be temporarily set aside in favor of simpler approaches based on concrete initiatives grounded in local realities in which the Policy's goals are perceived as achievable and promoted by the local authorities in consultation with affected communities. The current initiative to facilitate the local integration of protracted IDPs in Herat is a good start in this respect, which could

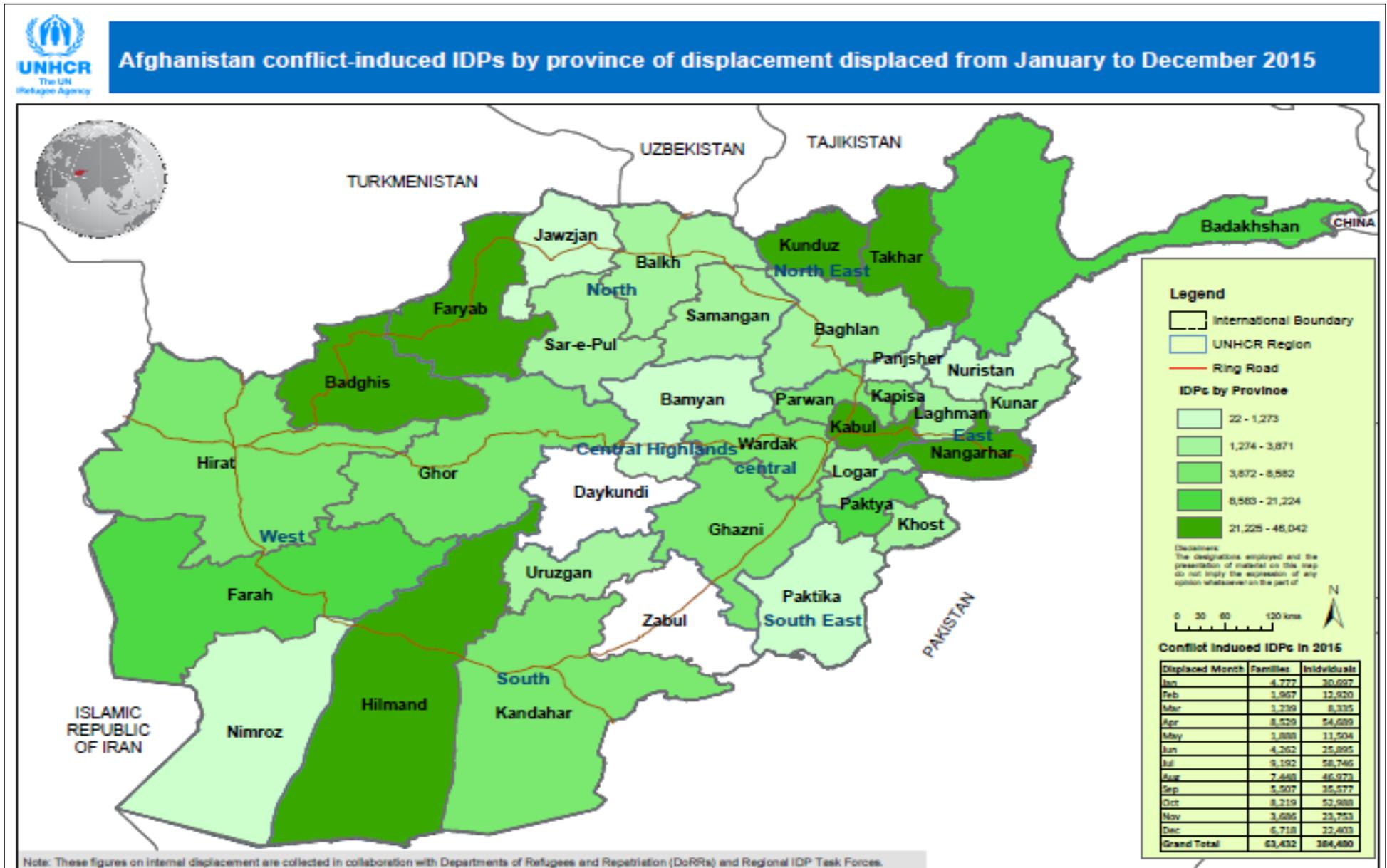
be replicated in other provinces where similar political determination and collaboration emerge.

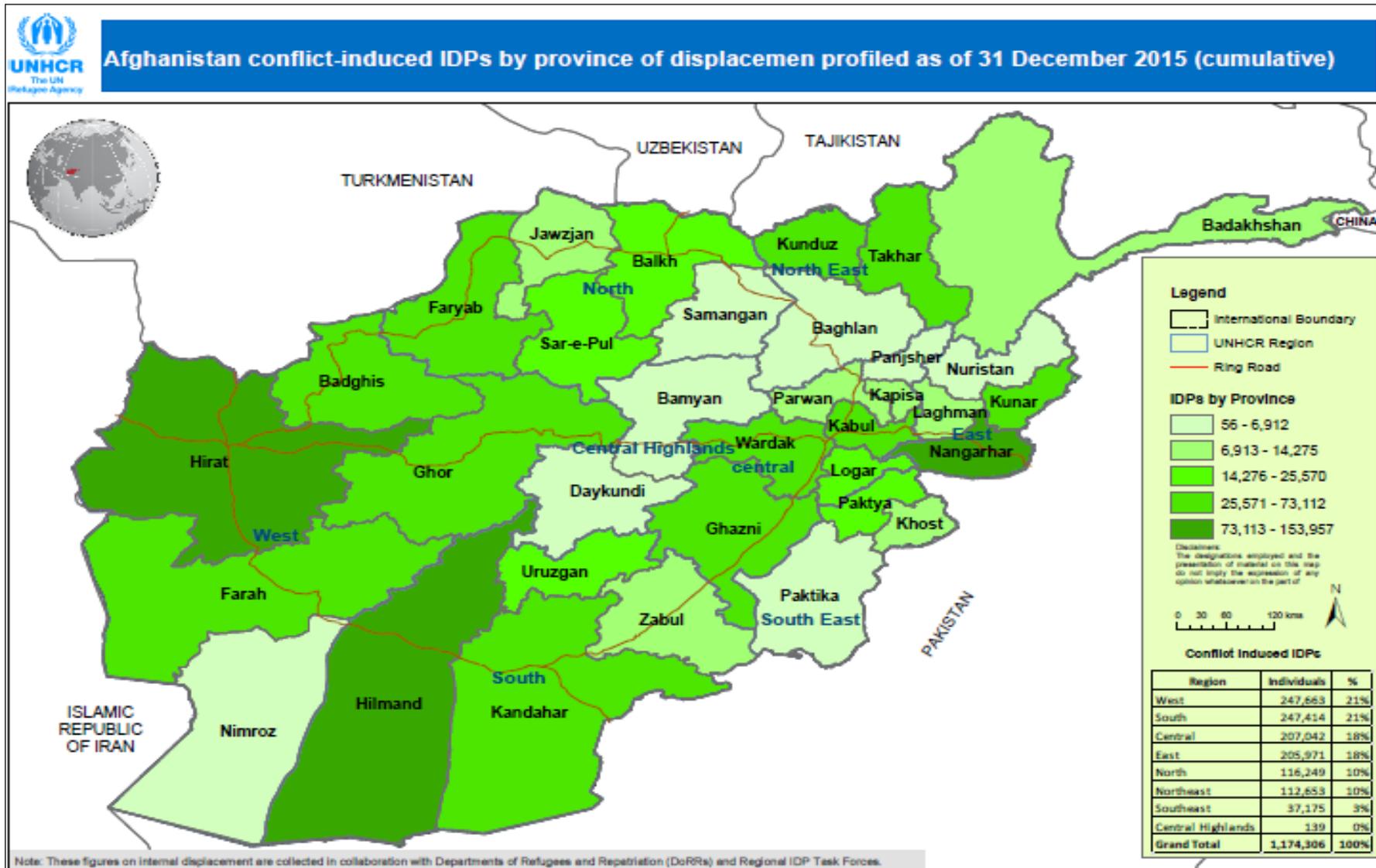
Breakdown of Assistance Distribution by IDP Task Forces (by families) - Cumulative January to December 2015

Region	NFI											Food					Cash*				Sanitary/Hygiene Kits								Emergency Tents								
Agency	UNHCR	NRC	DRC	IRC	ACF	SCI	PIN	CARE	GIZ	Concern	UNICEF	WFP	NRC	DRC	Islamic Relief	ACF	NRC	DRC	ACF	PIN	UNHCR	DRC	IRC	SCI	UNICEF	PIN	DACCAR	NRC	ACF	NRC	UNHCR	DRC	UNICEF	IRC			
Central Region																																					
	6,603	0	0	0	0	0	0	550	0	0	0	7,153	0	0	106	0	0	735	0	150	5,694	0	0	0	0	0	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Region																																					
	1,729	93	195	600	0	69	0	0	0	0	412	3,785	93	0	0	0	586	675	781	0	243	70	0	289	1,419	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	8
Western Region																																					
	1,760	309	535	955	23	0	0	0	0	0	2,167	4,594	34	59	0	24	519	484	559	0	1,570	323	344	0	500	0	0	183	92	0	488	109	5	218			
Eastern Region																																					
	4,636	330	91	97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,236	0	0	0	0	989	648	0	0	7,355	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	8	0	21			
South-east Region																																					
	2,065	0	0	32	0	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	326	0	0	4	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18			
Central Highlands																																					
	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Northern Region																																					
	2,326	393	0	135	0	1,586	0	0	0	0	0	4,325	0	0	0	0	1,410	0	57	55	0	0	0	191	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	0				
North-east Region																																					
	8,782	450	0	740	0	0	0	0	300	740	0	12,594	0	0	0	0	3,591	1,042	450	1,105	0	0	0	0	7,841	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Total by Agency	27,920	1,575	821	2,559	23	1,655	48	550	300	740	2,579	37,687	127	59	111	24	7,095	3,584	1,847	1,636	14,862	393	348	480	9,760	32	96	183	137	12	560	117	5	265			
% by agency	71.6%	4.0%	2.1%	6.6%	0.1%	4.2%	0.1%	1.4%	0.8%	1.9%	6.6%	98.7%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	50.1%	25.3%	13.0%	11.6%	56.5%	1.5%	1.3%	1.8%	37.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	58.4%	12.2%	0.5%	27.6%			
Total by category	38,989											38,190					14,162				26,291								959								

Source: IDP Task Forces in the regions

* Cash Note: The contribution of ICRC/ARCS is not included in the above table, and the organisations remain the authoritative sources to report on their assistance distributions to IDPs. Cash may be given as a substitution for NFI, for Food or for both, So far largely provided by the ERM partners





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[UNHCR thanks its donors for their generous contributions that made this update possible.](#)

IDP Data available at
<http://www.unhcr.af/Applications/SitePages/Default.aspx?idx=0&sitepageid=33>