

The impact of internal displacement on the refugee migration crisis

O impacto dos deslocamentos internos na crise de refugiados

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the potential impact of forced internal displacement on international refugee migration, considering the relation between internal and international migration: Are today's IDPs tomorrow's refugees? It is likely that many refugees were forcibly displaced in their own countries before applying for asylum. Therefore, to develop this investigation, this article is divided into three sections. In the first section, it presents a general approach about internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, including definitions and the bases of its protection under international law. Afterwards, it analyzes data on international migration and on internal displacement. At the end, these data are compared and possible link between internal and international forced migration is analyzed.

Keywords: Internal displacement. Internally displaced person. International migration. Humanitarian law. Refugee.

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o potencial impacto dos deslocamentos internos forçado na migração internacional de refugiados, considerando a relação entre migração interna e internacional: os deslocados internos de hoje são refugiados de amanhã? É provável que muitos refugiados tenham sido deslocados à força em seus próprios países antes de solicitar refúgio. Portanto, para desenvolver esta investigação, este artigo divide-se em três seções. Na primeira seção, apresenta uma abordagem geral sobre pessoas deslocadas internamente (deslocados internos) e refugiados, incluindo definições e as bases de sua proteção sob o direito internacional. Depois, analisa os dados sobre migração internacional e deslocamentos internos. No final, esses dados são comparados e o possível vínculo entre migração forçada interna e internacional é analisado.

Palavras-chave: Deslocados internos. Deslocamentos internos. Direito humanitário. Migração internacional. Refugiados.

Introduction

Human migration is the movement of people who leave their origin town to move to other cities in their own country or even to other countries. There are many reasons for this movement, such as conflicts, violations of human rights, economic and environmental factors, self-convenience.⁴ Then, people can migrate for various reasons, and this migration can be voluntary or not.

Today, international society faces the worst migratory crisis since World War II. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2018 there were 70,8 million people who were forced to leave their homes, and about 41 million people were estimated to be living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence⁵. So, the number of people who were forced to flee but failed to cross the borders of their own country is higher than those who have achieved. Therefore, the humanitarian crisis currently experienced by international society is extremely serious.

⁴ IOM - INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION. **Key migration terms**. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁵ UNHCR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Global trends 2018: forced displacement**. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 Nov. 2019; IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **GRID 2019**. Global Report on Internal Displacement. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

This article aims to analyze the potential impact of forced internal displacement on international refugee migration, considering the relation between internal and international migration: Are today's IDPs tomorrow's refugees? It is likely that many refugees were forcibly displaced in their own countries before applying for asylum in other country⁶.

Considering this hypothesis, to develop this investigation, this article is divided into three sections. In the first section, it presents a general approach about internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, including definitions and the bases of its protection under international law. Afterwards, it analyzes data on international migration and on internal displacement. At the end, these data are compared and possible link between internal and international forced migration are studied.

This is a qualitative, quantitative and exploratory research, which is based on primary and secondary sources. As primary sources it is used international treaties and other legal documents, General Assembly of the United Nations resolutions, UNHCR documents and United Nations Human Rights Council (OHCHR). Besides these documents, it was also used books, articles and research on the United Nations (UN) website, UNHCR website and African Union Organization websites. For the purposes of statistical data about IDPs, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) bases will be used, such as the Global Internal Displacement Database (GIDD)⁷, since UNHCR bases indicate smaller numbers of IDPs because they are restricted to the agency's locations.

⁶ This article is an investigation in process on internal displacement. See other articles of the same authors about the issue: BRIGIDO, Eveline Vieira; ZIBETTI, Fabiola Wust; PILAU SOBRINHO, Liton Lanes. Internal displacement in the current migratory crisis. **Justiça do Direito** (UPF), v. 31, p. 705-726. 2018. Available at: <<http://seer.upf.br/index.php/rjd/article/view/7653/4649>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. BRIGIDO, Eveline Vieira; ZIBETTI, Fabiola Wust; PILAU SOBRINHO, Liton Lanes. The protection of internally displaced persons by international migration law. **Revista do Direito** (UNISC), v. 1, p. 186-204. 2018. Available at: <<https://online.unisc.br/seer/index.php/direito/article/view/11316/7330>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. See also: SILVA, S. F. M; WUST ZIBETTI, Fabiola. Dos direitos humanos dos imigrantes: políticas públicas municipais de inclusão. In: Liton Lanes Pilau Sobrinho. (Org.). **Desafios da sustentabilidade na era tecnológica: a proteção dos direitos humanos**. Florianópolis: Habitus Editora. 2018, v. 1, p. 291-303.

⁷ IDMC. **Global Internal Displacement Database** (GIDD). Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/database>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

In addition, the UNHCR itself indicates the IDMC as data source. For data on the migratory crisis, including refugees, the UNHCR database will also be used.

1. Forced migration: refugees and internal displacement persons

Forced migration occurs when a person is forced to flee and leave their hometown. When a forced migrant crosses the border of his home country, he/she can apply for asylum and become a refugee. In the other hand, when a person only leaves his hometown but not his country, his is considered an internally displaced person.

In order to better understand these concepts, it is important to explain the position of international agencies and the international documents that regulate the definitions and rights of refugees and IDPs.

The UNHCR was created in January 1st, 1950 as a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly. It should ensure international protection for refugees, as well as seek for permanent solutions and assist several States.⁸ In addition, it should follow the directive policies set by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of United Nations.⁹

To ensure such protection, the UNHCR promotes the international protection of refugees through the promotion of international treaties about protection of refugees; the conclusion of agreements with governments to ensure measures to improve the refugees situation and to reduce the number of applications; the assistance to the voluntary repatriation or local integration; the facilitation of admission of refugees and assists in the eventual transfer of refugees asset; the obtention of government's information about refugees and theirs conditions in their territories; the permanent contact with governments and other organizations that also deal with refugees.

The international protection of refugees:

⁸ See UNHCR. **Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**. 2010. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁹ Art. 3 of the Convention (UNHCR. Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees).

(...) begins with securing their admission to a country of asylum, the grant of asylum and respect for their fundamental human rights, including the right not to be forcibly returned to a country where their safety or survival are threatened (...).¹⁰

UNHCR's functions has been expanded since 1951, when the Refugee Convention was adopted¹¹, in order to secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection activities to persons other than refugees, including internally displaced persons and stateless persons.¹² The UNCHR is the only international agency with specific mandate to protect refugees at global level¹³ as well as to protect asylum-seekers, stateless persons and, with restrictions, internally displaced persons.

The Refugee Convention, also known as Refugee Statute, and the 1967 Protocol of the Convention¹⁴ are currently the base of Refugee International Law and defines who can apply for asylum and the basic treatment and rights to these persons. However, in practice, this Convention reflected the political situation of the post-World War II. According to these international instruments, any person who is suffering persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and is outside the country of his nationality may apply for asylum¹⁵.

Based in this definition, any other reason of persecution will be not considered, and, besides the persecution, it is also necessary that people flee from their origin country to be considered refugee. Therefore, the Convention and

¹⁰ UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Un introduction to international protection**: protecting persons of concern to UNHCR. 2005. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/3ae6bd5a0/self-study-module-1-introduction-international-protection-protecting-persons.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. p. 07.

¹¹ See UNHCR. **Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**.

¹² UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Un introduction to international protection**: protecting persons of concern to UNHCR. p. 08.

¹³ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) also is na international agency, but only for palestina refugees (see UNRWA - UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES. **Who we are**. Available at: <<https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019).

¹⁴ UNHCR. **Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees**.

¹⁵ UNHCR. **Cartagena Declaration On Refugees**. Adopted by the Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama. Cartagena De Indias, Colombia, 22 November 1984. Genevé: UNHCR, 2006, pp. 31-39. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc19084/cartagena-declaration-refugees-adopted-colloquium-international-protection.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

the Protocol do not assist IDPs, which are forced migrants, as they are persons who cannot cross state borders.

As a result of the limited reasons considered, two important regional treaties were adopted: one in Africa; other in America.

The decolonization process in Africa caused many violent conflicts and the Organization of African Union (OAU) discussed the necessity to expand the reasons to apply for asylum,¹⁶ and in 1969 it was created the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees Problems in Africa.¹⁷ This Convention establish a broader definition of refugee:

2. The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.

In 1984, this same issue was discussed in Latin America due to the increase of migratory flows caused by dictatorial regimes in the region. It was held in Colombia the International Colloquium which resulted in the creation of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.¹⁸ It was not an international treaty such as the African Union Convention, but an international document considered as *soft law*, that is, it is not legally binding as a treaty (*hard law*), but can be used as a "model law" for countries to adapt their domestic law. The third conclusion of the Declaration¹⁹ foresees an extension of the term refugee:

¹⁶ JUBILUT, Liliana Lyra; MADUREIRA, André, de Lima. Dossiê: migrações forçadas – os desafios de proteção aos refugiados e migrantes forçados no marco de Cartagena+30. **Revista Interdisciplinar de Mobilidade Humana**. Brasília, v. XXII, n. 43, p. 11-33. Ju./dez. 2014. p. 15.

¹⁷ ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNION. **OAU convention governing the specific aspects of refugees problems in Africa**. 10 sep. 1969. Available at: <<http://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc1a682/oau-convention-governing-specific-aspects-refugee-problems-africa-adopted.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

¹⁸ JUBILUT, Liliana Lyra; MADUREIRA, André, de Lima. **Dossiê: migrações forçadas – os desafios de proteção aos refugiados e migrantes forçados no marco de Cartagena+30**. p. 19.

¹⁹ UNHCR. **Cartagena Declaration On Refugees**. p. 36.

(...) Hence the definition or concept of a refugee to be recommended for use in the region is one which, in addition to containing the elements of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, includes among refugees persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.

Despite being restricted to Africa and Latin America²⁰, these documents conceptually expand the possibilities to apply for asylum, including serious violations of human rights, foreign aggression and generalized violence, as well as other circumstances that affect public order. These documents, however, do not include a treatment for internally displaced persons.

The IDPs are those people who suffer persecution or violence but are unable to leave their country of origin and, unlike refugees, have only recently come to the attention of the international community. Until the late 1980s international community worried mainly about migrants who crossed the borders of their own country, and the expression “internally displaced person” was used only when organizations recognized those people as a potential refugee. So, although, internal displacement can be considered a problem as old as migration between countries, this subject has just received international notoriety in the 1990s.²¹

Two Conferences held in the end of 1980s highlighted the problem concerning IDPs. In 1989, the International Conference on Plight of Refugee, Returnees and Displaced Persons, in Southern Africa²² and the International Conference on Central America Refugees, in Guatemala City.²³ No international treaty was drawn up in these meetings, but it was published an UN Report on Internally Displaced Persons²⁴. In this document, the definition of IDPs has

²⁰ In Europe, after the creation of the European Union in 1992, the organization has established many asylum regulations, also expanding the possibilities to apply for asylum.

²¹ OLIVEIRA, Eduardo Cançado. A proteção jurídica internacional dos deslocados internos. **Revista do Instituto Brasileiro de Direitos Humanos**. v. 5, n. 5, p. 73-92. 2004. p. 74.

²² ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNION. **International conference on the plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Southern Africa**. CM/Res/1181 (XLIX). 25 fev. 1989. Available at: <<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/cm-res-1181-xlix-e.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

²³ ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES. General Assembly. **AG/RES. 1021(XIX-O/89)**. 18 nov. 1989. Available at: <https://www.oas.org/dil/AG-RES_1021_XIX-O-89_eng.pdf>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

²⁴ UNITED NATIONS. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). **Note by the Secretary-General pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/78**. Addendum: report on refugees,

focused on the difference between these people and refugees, emphasizing that countries of origin have primary responsibility to protect their displaced people.²⁵

This issue was getting more attention and the UN Commission on Human Rights drafted its first resolution in 1991. Although it did not define the expression “internally displaced” persons, it emphasized the need for their protection and requested a report from the UN Secretary-General.²⁶

In 1992, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to designate a representative to deal specifically with issues related to displaced people.²⁷ In response to that request, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General of Internally Displaced Persons was assigned for the following functions: to develop international, regional and national laws; to coordinate missions in the States and to research related issues.²⁸ And one of the Special Representative’s findings was the absence of an international legal document regulating the needs of those people, as well as the absence of UN organs that could act in emergency situations.

Regarding to these agencies, it was established that a mechanism for mobilizing activities would be created among the various agencies that provide humanitarian aid. Regarding a legal document, it was proposed the “Guiding Principles on Internally Displacement”, which was unanimously approved by the Commission on Human Rights in 1998.²⁹ These Principles define internally displaced persons as follows:

displaced persons and returnees, prepared by Mr. Jacques Cuénod, Consultant. E/1991/109/Add.1, 27 June 1991. Available at: <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/49997afe4.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

²⁵ See NOGUEIRA, Maria Beatriz Bonna. A proteção dos deslocados internos na sociedade internacional: evolução conceitual e normativa. **Revista da Faculdade de Direito da UFRGS**. volume especial, p. 67-91. 2014. p. 74.

²⁶ UNITED NATIONS. Commission on Human Rights. **E/CN.4/RES/1991/25**. 5 mar. 1991. Available at: <<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=3b00f0b1c>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

²⁷ UNITED NATIONS. Commission on Human Rights. **E/CN.4/RES/1992/73**. 05 mar. 1992. Available at: <<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=3b00f0e71c>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

²⁸ UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Un introduction to international protection**: protecting persons of concern to UNHCR. p. 12.

²⁹ UNITED NATIONS. Economic and Social Council. Commission on Human Rights. **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**. E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2. 11 February 1998. Available at: <<http://www.un-documents.net/gpid.htm>>. Accessed: July 10, 2019. See also UNITED NATION. Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner. **IDPersons: International Standards**. Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Standards.aspx>>. Accessed: July 10,

2. For the purposes of these Principles, internally displaced persons are persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border³⁰.

Therefore, the main element of the concept of IDPs is forced migration which does not go beyond the borders of the State of origin. It should also be noted that, unlike the provisions of the Refugee Statute, there is no provision about persecution based on nationality, race, ethnic origin, religion or political opinion in the Guiding Principles. The reasons for the migration set forth in this document are wider than those foreseen by the Convention. The document does not intend to provide legal status to the IDPs, so it does not determine the reasons to flee.

It should be noticed that there are two regional treaties which emerged from the Guiding Principles: The Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (2006)³¹ and the Kampala Convention (2009)³². In any case, they are both restricted to the respective regional scope.

Then, there are only a few documents to regulate the issue of IDPs. In this sense, it is difficult to say that there is an international protection for them. But nowadays this issue is coming to the attention of international community and is being recognized as a humanitarian problem. And, although it is not a treaty, the Principles set forth in the Guiding Principles reflect the rights foreseen in others international treaties and customary law. In addition, it should be noticed that the Refugee Statute and the 1967 Protocol may also be applied to IDPs by analogy,

2019; OLIVEIRA, Eduardo Cançado. **A proteção jurídica internacional dos deslocados internos**. p. 75.

³⁰ UNITED NATIONS. **Guiding principles on internal displacement**. s/p.

³¹ INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION. **Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons**. 30th November 2006. Available at: <<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/52384fe44.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

³² AFRICAN UNION. **Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)**. Adopted by the Special Summit of the Union held in Kampala, Uganda, 23rd October 2009. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/4ae9bede9/african-union-convention-protection-assistance-internally-displaced-persons.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

in cases that these people can be compared to refugees. The International Committee of the Red Cross states that:

These principles reflect currently International Law and are widely recognized towards an international framework for the protection of these people during all stages of displacement, including return, resettlement and reintegration.³³

Anyway, the Guiding Principles provides that national authorities have primary responsibility for IDPs. However, it should be noted that, sometimes, these authorities are oppressive and, therefore, they are the reason for forced migration. Another situation is when the State is not oppressive but cannot guarantee the minimum rights of these people - in these cases, as foresaw in the Guiding Principles, States should ask international agencies for humanitarian aid.

Although there is no specific agency to assist IDPs, the UNHCR also play the role to provide vital assistance for these people whenever the reasons for internal displacement are the same reasons to apply for asylum. Depending on the situation, it is possible that other agencies also provide assistance to IDPs, such as World Health Organization (WHO) and The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

There is a Special Representative to IDPs, who is responsible for identifying the needs of these people, although there is no operational mandate. The Special Representative has several functions, such as: to negotiate free passage to displaced people, to negotiate protection and humanitarian assistance and to coordinate resources mobilization. The Special Representative may act at the request of the UN Secretary-General, together with the consent of national authorities of the affected country and under the condition of adequate resources, such as security.³⁴

³³ COMITÊ INTERNACIONAL DA CRUZ VERMELHA. **Como o DIH protege os refugiados e os deslocados internos?** 22 jan. 2015. Available at: <<https://www.icrc.org/pt/document/como-o-dih-protege-os-refugiados-e-os-deslocados-internos>>. Accessed: 1o July 2019. Our translation.

³⁴ UNITED NATIONS. **Un introduction to international protection: protecting persons of concern to UNHCR.** p. 88-89.

2. Forced migration flows from 2011 to 2018: IDPs and refugees

In 1997 there were already 33.9 million forced migrants. It was the highest number of migrants since World War II. However, the current migratory crisis is related to events that occurred after 2011/2012, because from this time on thousands of people were forced to flee from their cities of origin, which made the number of forced migrants reaching about 65 million by 2015. Particularly, this was due to the Syrian civil war³⁵, in addition to the conflicts in Iraq³⁶, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)³⁷, the Central African Republic³⁸ and South Sudan³⁹.

Regarding refugees and asylum-seekers, there was a large increase in migration after 2011. In order to better compare the evolution in the number of forced migrants in recent years, see table#1, table#2 and the comparison chart below:

Table #1 Total number of refugees from 2011 to 2018

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Refugees	15,2 million	15,4 million	16,7 million	19,5 million	21,3 million	22,5 million	25,4 million	25,9 million

³⁵ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Syria**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/syria>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

³⁶ See CHARRON, Guillaume; HOWARD, Caroline; KILANI, Sarah. **Iraq: IDPs caught between a rock and a hard place as displacement crisis deepens**. 2015. Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201506-me-iraq-overview-en.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Iraq**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/iraq>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

³⁷ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Democratic Republic of The Congo**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

³⁸ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Central African Republic**. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/central-african-republic>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

³⁹ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **South Sudan**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

Asylum-seekers	895.000	937.000	1,2 million	1,8 million	3,2 million	2,8 million	3,1 million	3,5 million
Total	16,09 million	16,33 million	17,9 million	21,3 million	24,5 million	25,3 million	28,5 million	29,4 million

Source: Elaborated with UNHCR Data⁴⁰

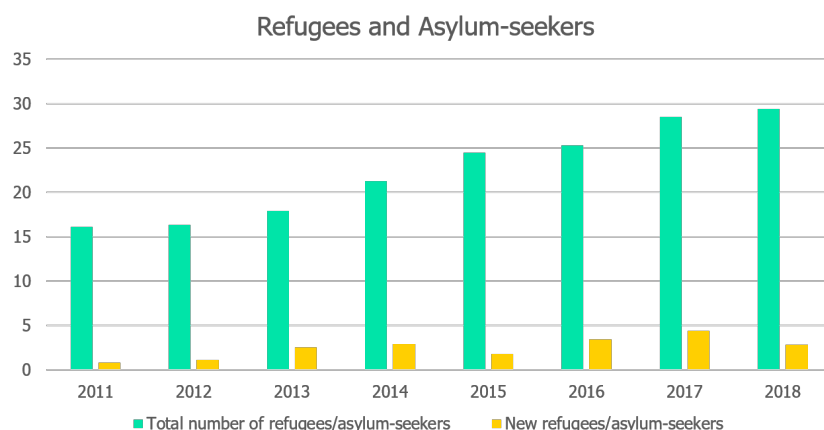
Table #2 – New refugees and asylum-seekers from 2011 to 2018

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Refugees and asylum-seekers	800.000	1,1 million	2,5 million	2,9 million	1,8 million	3,4 million	4,4 million	2,8 million

Source: Elaborated with UNHCR Data⁴¹

⁴⁰ UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Global trends 2012:** Displacement – The New 21st Century Challenge. Geneva: UNCHR, 2013. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/51bacb0f9/unhcr-global-trends-2012.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNCHR. **Global trends 2013:** War's Human Cost. Geneva: UNCHR, 2014. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/5399a14f9/unhcr-global-trends-2013.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNCHR. **Global trends 2014:** Forced Displacement. Geneva: UNCHR, 2015. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/556725e69/unhcr-global-trends-2014.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNCHR. **Global trends 2015:** Forced Displacement. Geneva: UNCHR, 2016. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNCHR. **Global trends 2016:** Forced Displacement. Geneva: UNCHR, 2017. Available at: <<http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNCHR. **Global trends 2017:** Forced Displacement. Geneva: UNCHR, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNHCR. **Global trends 2018:** forced displacement. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 Nov. 2019.

⁴¹ UNCHR. **Global trends 2012. Global trends 2013. Global trends 2014. Global trends 2015. Global trends 2016. Global trends 2017. Global trends 2018.**



Source: Elaborated with UNHCR Data⁴²

Comparing the total number of refugees and the number of new displacements, the total number has increased year after year, while the number of new displacements increased from 2011 to 2014 but decreased in 2015. In 2016 and 2017 there was a further increase in new displacements and a reduction in 2018. Therefore, the number of new refugees is variable. But it does not mean that the migration crisis presents periods of reductions, once it is also necessary to analyze the internal displacements.

In 2011 a large influx of refugees began, reaching a peak between 2014 and 2015. There were 15.2 million refugees and about 895,000 asylum seekers. This was the biggest increase since 1995, when it reached 14.9 million.⁴³ The year 2012 was marked by an increase in refugees, with 1.1 million refugees over the previous year as a result of the conflicts in Syria and others African countries. About 3,000 people a day became refugees that year, a 5-fold increase over 2010.⁴⁴ The table above does not show this increase because there were about 500,000 former refugees that have returned to their country of origin and because of the “[...] application of the cessation clause to Angolan and Liberian refugees

⁴² UNCHR. **Global trends 2012. Global trends 2013. Global trends 2014. Global trends 2015. Global trends 2016. Global trends 2017. Global trends 2018.**

⁴³ UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Global trends 2014: Forced Displacement.** .

⁴⁴ UNCHR - UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. **Global trends 2012: Displacement – The New 21stCentury Challenge.**

across sub-Saharan Africa and from the revision of Government estimates for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and in the Syrian Arab Republic.”⁴⁵

In 2013, the number of refugees reached 16.7 million, with a considerable increase in Syrian refugees. In addition to the war in Syria, other conflicts on the African continent have contributed to the increase in the asylum-seekers: Central African Republic, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Mali.⁴⁶ In 2014, there was a new increase in the number of refugees, reaching 19.5 million. And 53% were from only 3 countries: Syria, Afghanistan⁴⁷ and Somalia⁴⁸. In 2015, the number of refugees reached a new record: 21.3 million refugees and 3.2 million asylum seekers. This was the fifth consecutive year of a steady increase in the number of refugees, especially as a result of the conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.⁴⁹

In 2016 there was an average of 20 people fleeing per minute. It should be noted that the number of refugees from South Sudan increased by 64% in the second half of 2016 alone, from 854,100 refugees in 2015 to 1.4 million in 2016. Part of this increase was offset in the "general numbers" by the return of 552,200 refugees to their home countries, most of them in bad conditions, such as the return of 384,000 Afghans to a country still in a very unstable situation.⁵⁰

The three main states of origin for refugees or asylum-seekers in 2017 were Syria (6.3 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million) and South Sudan (2.4 million).

⁵¹ But with the exception of Syria and Afghanistan, the origin of the refugees has alternated between 2011 and 2018. Afghanistan, between 2011 and 2013,

⁴⁵ UNCHR. **Global trends 2012**. p. 11.

⁴⁶ UNCHR. **Global trends 2013**.

⁴⁷ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Afghanistan**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan>>. Accessed: 19 abr 2019. IDMC. **Afghanistan: country information**. 2017. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. UNITED NATIONS. Security Council. **S/Res/1386**. 24 dec 2011. Available at: <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1386>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. GLATZ, Anne-Kathrin; HOWARD, Caroline. **Afghanistan: new and long term IDPs risk becoming neglected as conflict intensifies**. 16 jul. 2015. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/afghanistan/2015/afghanistan-new-and-long-term-idps-risk-becoming-neglected-as-conflict-intensifies>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁴⁸ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Somalia**. 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/somalia>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁴⁹ UNCHR. **Global trends 2015: Forced Displacement**.

⁵⁰ UNCHR. **Global trends 2017: Forced Displacement**.

⁵¹ UNCHR. **Global trends 2017: Forced Displacement**.

ranked the first among refugee countries of origin and was outdone by war in Syria and has moved to second place since then. Syria, for its part, was among the top 4 countries of origin of refugees between 2011 and 2013, becoming the first position since then. By 2017, Syrian refugees accounted for about 1/3 of the world's refugees. Iraq was among the 10 countries of origin of refugees between 2011 and 2014 (the largest number of Iraqi refugees was prior to 2011 due to the civil war), no longer belonging to the top ten. But although the number of Iraqi refugees has declined, the number of internally displaced remains fairly high.⁵²

As shown in table #1, a considerable increase in refugees can be seen in 2017. Part of this increase continued to be related to the war in Syria. There were 6.3 million, about 500,000 more than in 2016. But the country that has generated the most refugees between 2015 and 2017 was South Sudan. In 2015, there were 778.697 refugees, rising to 1.436,719 in 2016 and 2.439,907 in 2017, and between 2011 and 2013 the country was not among the top ten countries. Between 2016 and 2017, Myanmar also generated large numbers of refugees. In 2017, there were 1.156,743 refugees, while between 2011 and 2016, although among the top ten countries, the number ranged from 414.000 to 1,2 million by the end of 2017.

By 2017, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for about 1/3 of the total number of refugees, which represented an increase of 22 per cent over 2016, mainly due to the crisis in South Sudan. And the Asia-Pacific region increased by 21% compared to 2016 due to the worsening crisis in Myanmar. The Middle East and North Africa has seen little increase but still remains with about 1/3 of the refugees because of the war in Syria. In other words, the countries that generated the most refugees in 2017 were, respectively, South Sudan, Myanmar and Syria, with significant emphasis on the first two.

According to UNHCR data, the American continent had a slight decrease in the number of refugees in 2017 (5.6%): 682,700 refugees in 2016 and 644,200 in 2017. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Venezuela, by serious migratory crisis currently, is not included in the UNHCR data, because part of its nationals were received in the countries of the region by means of "other legal alternatives",

⁵² UNCHR. **Global trends 2017: Forced Displacement.**

allowed by the legal systems of the region.⁵³ In any case, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates a number of 1.6 million Venezuelan migrants, with about 900.000 migrating between 2015 and 2017. In Central America and the Caribbean, for example, the number of Venezuelan migrants has doubled between 2015 and 2017, from 50.000 to 100.000⁵⁴.

The UNHCR estimates that there were more than 1 million Venezuelan migrants in 2017, totalizing more than 1.5 million in 2018. An increase of 2.000% between 2014 and 2018. However, many Venezuelan have applied for visas or other alternative protection, which makes it difficult to obtain data on Venezuelan migrants. As UNHCR estimates, there are 567.561 requests for alternative protection. Many migrants choose other alternatives because they are easier ways to get documentation, ease of use, and access to basic services.

By the end of 2018 there was over 3 million forced Venezuelan migrants, the vast majority fled to South America countries. And about 1 million are living in these countries under alternatives legal forms.

Although the number of refugees is very high, about 29 million in 2018, most forced migrants are internally displaced persons.⁵⁵ See table below:

Table #3 – Internal displacement from 2011 to 2018

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Internall y displace d person	26,4 millio n	28,8 millio n	33,3 millio n	38 millio n	40,8 millio n	40,3 millio n	40,0 millio n	41,3 millio n

Source: Elaborated with IDMC Data⁵⁶

⁵³ UNCHR. **Global trends 2017: Forced Displacement.**

⁵⁴ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).** 2019. Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/venezuela>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁵⁵ IDMC. **2017 GRID.**

⁵⁶ IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Internal displacement global overview 2011:** people internally displaced by conflict and violence. 2012. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2012/internal-displacement-global-overview-2011-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **Global overview 2012:** people internally displaced by conflict and violence. 2013. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2013/global-overview-2012-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **Global overview 2014:** people internally displaced by conflict and violence. 2014. Available at:

These data is related to the total number of IDPs, but if one analyzes country-by-country, the IDMC database shows that in some countries there was a decrease, while in others there was an increase in the number of IDPs. That is, the table above does not reflect the actual movement of IDPs. On the contrary, there were still 10.8 million new displaced people in 2018, due to the war. See table #4 below:

Table #4 – New displacements from 2011 to 2018

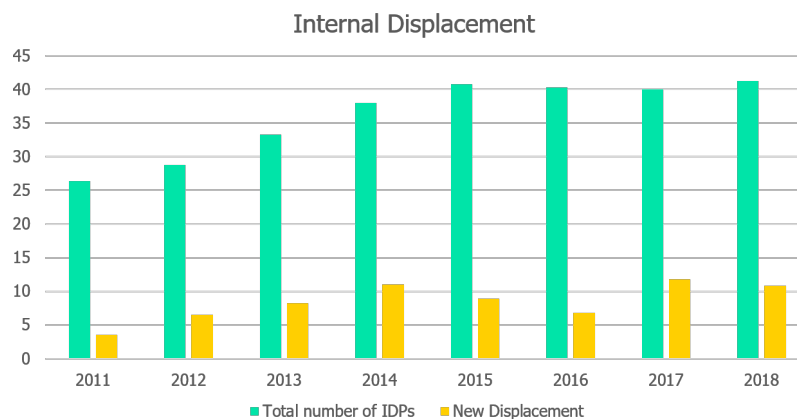
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New displacements	3.5 million	6.5 million	8.2 million	11 million	8.9 million	6.9 million	11.8 million	10.8 million

Source: Elaborated with IDMC Data⁵⁷

For better understanding, see comparison chart below:

<<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2014/global-overview-2014-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **Global overview 2015:** people internally displaced by conflict and violence. maio 2015. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2015/global-overview-2015-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **2016 GRID:** Global Report on Internal Displacement. 2016. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2016/2016-global-report-on-internal-displacement-grid-2016/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **2017 GRID:** Global report on internal displacement. 2017. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **2018 GRID:** Global Report on Internal Displacement. 2018. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019. IDMC. **2019 GRID:** Global Report on Internal Displacement. 2019 Available at: <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁵⁷ IDMC. **Internal displacement global overview 2011; Global overview 2012; Global overview 2014; Global overview 2015; 2016 GRID; 2017 GRID; 2018 GRID; 2019 GRID.**



Source: Elaborated with IDMC Data⁵⁸

These data is related to the total number of IDPs, but also if one analyzes country-by-country, the IDMC database shows that in some countries there was a decrease, while in others there was an increase in the number of IDPs. Among the new IDPs, 4.5 million are in the Middle East and North Africa and 5.5 million in sub-Saharan Africa, representing 84.5% of the increase in new IDPs⁵⁹. According to the IDMC⁶⁰, this increase in the number of displaced people occurred because of the conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, especially DRC. $\frac{3}{4}$ of internally displaced people are concentrated in 12 countries. And Colombia⁶¹, DRC, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan have been among the 12 countries since 2003.⁶²

The global number of IDPs has doubled between the year 2000 and the end of 2016. Comparing the total number of IDPs and the number of new displacements, the total number has increased from 2011 to 2015. By the end of 2016, however, there were a reduction (40.3 million), while at the end of 2015 there were 40.8 million IDPs. And a new small reduction in 2017. On the other hand, in 2018 there was an increase. In fact, the number of new displacements increased from 2011 to 2014 but decreased from 2014 to 2016. And there was

⁵⁸ IDMC. **Internal displacement global overview 2011; Global overview 2012; Global overview 2014; Global overview 2015; 2016 GRID; 2017 GRID; 2018 GRID; 2019 GRID.**

⁵⁹ IDMC. **2018 GRID.**

⁶⁰ IDMC. **2017 GRID.**

⁶¹ See IDMC - INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTER. **Colombia.** 2019. Available at: <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia>>. Accessed: 10 July 2019.

⁶² IDMC. **2018 GRID.**

another big increase in 2017 and a reduction in 2018. Therefore, the total number of IDPs and new internal displacements can be variable. It also does not mean that the migration crisis presents periods of reductions. For a better analysis, it is necessary to compare refugee data and internal displacement data.

3. Comparison of data on refugees and internal displaced persons

This section is therefore intended to make a comparison between six key points: a) total number of refugees, b) new refugees, c) total number of IDPs, d) new IDPs, e) returned refugees and f) returned IDPs. Unfortunately, return movements of IDPs are under-reported or even not reported. Then, data on the returns of displaced persons is limited. This undermines a more specific analysis of the movement on internal displacement, as it makes it difficult to relate the increase in internal displacement to the increase in refugees. In fact, it is important to note that migration data, particularly domestic ones, is not accurate. There is a difficulty in obtaining data on migrants. There are places that organizations do not have access to and therefore data is inaccurate. In the case of internally displaced persons, there is no record of all persons, since there is no adequate control of internal migrations and the movement of people within their own countries does not have the same control as the movement of foreigners. In addition there is still the situation of Venezuelan migrants, who are not part of the official refugee data, although it is one of the largest flows. Many Venezuelans goes to neighboring countries and not apply for asylum or applying for another legal protection.

Besides, this article analyzes only the global number of domestic and international forced migrants. In further research the countries will be analyzed. Then, in order to better compare the evolution in the number of forced migrants, see tables below:

Table #5 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants
from 2011 to 2012

	2011		2012	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	16.09	26.40	16.33	28.80
New displacements	0.8	3.5	1.1	6.50
Returnees	0.52	2.4	0.53	2.1

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁶³

Between 2011 and 2012 there was a small increase in the total number of refugees and in new international displacements. On the other hand, there was a significant increase in the total number of internal displaced persons, as well as in new displacements. Although there is no significant variation in the number of new refugees between 2011 and 2012 and the high number of returnees, it should be noted that 800,000 new refugees in 2011, together with 1.1 million new refugees in 2012, led to an increase in the total number in 2013, as seen in the table below:

Table #6 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants
from 2012 to 2013

	2012		2013	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	16.33	28.80	17.90	33.33
New displacements	1.10	6.50	2.5	8.2
Returnees	0.53	2.1	0.41	not available

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁶⁴

⁶³ UNCHR. **Global trends 2012. Global trends 2013.** IDMC. **Internal displacement global overview 2011. Global overview 2012.**

⁶⁴ UNCHR. **Global trends 2013. Global trends 2014.** IDMC. **Global overview 2012. Global overview 2013.**

From 2012 to 2013, in addition to the increase in the total number of refugees, there was also a large increase in new refugees. Regarding internal displacements, it is also possible to notice a remarkable increase.

Table #7 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants from 2013 to 2014

	2013		2014	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	17.90	33.33	21.30	38.00
New displacements	2.50	8.20	2.90	11.00
Returnees	0.41	not available	0.12	not available

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁶⁵

Once again, the large increase in new refugees in the previous period (2012-2013) led to a large increase in the total number. Regarding the new international forced migrants, from 2013 to 2014 the number remained high, and the number of returnees has decreased. According to UNHCR, “this figure was the lowest level of refugees returns since 1983”.⁶⁶ With respect to internal displacement, there was one more big increase.

Table #8 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants from 2014 to 2015

	2014		2015	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	21.30	38.00	24.50	40.80
New displacements	2.90	11.00	1.80	8.90
Returnees	0.12	not available	0.2	not available

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁶⁷

⁶⁵ UNCHR. **Global trends 2013. Global trends 2014.** IDMC. **Global overview 2013. Global overview 2014.**

⁶⁶ UNCHR. **Global trends 2014.**

⁶⁷ UNCHR. **Global trends 2014. Global trends 2015.** IDMC. **Global overview 2014. Global overview 2015.**

The high number of new forced migrants between 2013 and 2014 led to a further large increase in the total number of refugees between 2014 and 2015. On the other hand, for the first time since the beginning of the migratory crisis there was a reduction in the number of new displacements during this period although it was still high. Regarding internal displacements, the total number also increased due to the high number of new IDPs in the previous period (2013-2014). And between 2014-2015 there was also a decrease in the number of new displacements, although remaining high. The number of returnees remained low.

Table #9 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants from 2015 to 2016

	2015		2016	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	24.50	40.80	25.30	40.30
New displacements	1.80	8.90	3.40	6.90
Returnees	0.2	not available	0.55	not available

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁶⁸

From 2015 to 2016 there was a further increase in the total number of refugees, while there was a small reduction in the number of IDPs. As in previous years there were many new IDPs, this reduction in the total number in 2016 does not mean that there has been an improvement in the migration crisis. On the contrary, considering the large increase in the number of new refugees and the large number of new IDPs (although there was a reduction compared to previous years), it appears that many displaced persons have crossed the borders of their countries to seek for asylum. According to UNHCR, “Part of this reduction was due to the fact that many IDPs crossed the borders of their countries to apply for asylum in others, increasing the number of asylum-seekers and refugees.”⁶⁹

With respect to returnees, it has been the highest number of returns since 2011, but the majority have been in a precarious situation with land or property occupied, confiscated or destroyed.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ UNCHR. **Global trends 2015. Global trends 2016.** IDMC. **Global overview 2015. 2016 GRID.**

⁶⁹ UNCHR. **Global trends 2016.**

⁷⁰ UNCHR. **Global trends 2016.**

Table #10 – comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants
from 2016 to 2017

	2016		2017	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	25.30	40.30	28.50	40.00
New displacements	3.40	6.90	4.40	11.80
Returnees	0.55	not available	0.67	2.00

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁷¹

Between 2016 and 2017 there was a further large increase in the number of refugees (total and new) and new IDPs (almost double compared to the previous year). On the other hand, the total number of internal displacements was further reduced. That is, this sum is not accurate. Internal migrations got worse, but the total number shows the opposite. And compared with the increase in the number of new refugees, this indicates that displaced people have become refugees/asylum-seekers, since the number of returnees is high, but is much lower compared to the number of new displacements. According to IDMC, “returns have not kept pace with the rate of new displacements”.⁷²

Table #11 – Comparison of the global numbers of refugees and forced migrants
from 2017 to 2018

	2017		2018	
	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)	Refugees (million)	IDPs (million)
Total	28.50	40.00	29.4	41.30
New displacements	4.40	11.80	2.8	10.80
Returnees	0.67	2.0	0.6	2.3

Source: Elaborated with IDMC and UNCHR Data⁷³

⁷¹ UNCHR. **Global trends 2016. Global trends 2017.** IDMC. **2016 GRID. 2017 GRID.**

⁷² IDMC. **2017 GRID.**

⁷³ UNCHR. **Global trends 2017. Global trends 2018: forced displacement.** IDMC. **2017 GRID. 2018 GRID.**

From 2017 to 2018 there was a small increase in the total number of refugees and IDPs. About the new displacements, there was a significant reduction in the number of refugees, but for internal displacements the reduction was small and still remains a larger number. On the other hand, the number of IDPs returning to their hometown was greater than that of refugees.

Conclusion

The current migration crisis which began in 2011 involves both internal and international migrations. Comparing the number of refugees and internally displaced persons, it is perceived that there are many more IDPs than refugees. On the other hand, it is also noted that the total number and new displacements of refugees has been increasing, while the total number of IDPs has remained relatively stable. Nevertheless, the number of new internal displacements has been very high in recent years. That is, the number of new IDPs increases, but the total number does not change much, while the number of refugees increases. That's why this article aims to analyze whether there is a relation between internal and international migration.

In fact, there is a link between the increase in the number of new IDPs and the increase in the number of refugees, however the relationship between internal and international displacement is difficult to measure and compare. As above mentioned, data about forced migration is limited, especially regarding returnees. For a more accurate analysis it would be necessary to obtain these data, including the return conditions. In other words, the return occurred because the cause of the forced migration ended or because the place where the refugee/IDP was located was in a worse situation than the city of origin. If the return did not occur because of the end of a war or the end of a situation of generalized violence, this return will not be definitive. Exists many countries with protracted conflicts and even with some IDPs or refugees returning, it is not a definitive return. Those are people who are at risk of constant migration and are likely to become an IDP or refugee again. For example, the decline in the number of displaced people in some countries reflected rare moments of "relative

stabilization of conflicts" or it was due to the risks of extreme violence on the escape route or the risk of family separation.

In any case, although there is no exact data, international organizations recognize the link between domestic and international migration. And, throughout this research, it was possible to perceive this relationship, although it was not possible to quantify more precisely. As the reasons for forced migrations and returns vary from country to country, it is concluded that a more detailed analysis will only be possible based on an individual study by each country. Analyzing the 10 countries of origin of refugees and the 10 countries with the largest number of internal displacements, it will be possible to have a greater understanding of this relationship. It is also possible that there are countries in which there is no link between IDPs and refugees or that link is of little significance, as in the case of Colombia. While in the case of Syria, the relationship is likely to be quite significant. The present research, therefore, will continue in order to answer these questions.

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