

Climate Displaced People

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**European Security Research
Conference**
Stockholm
September 2009



Definitions

- **Refugee:** fear of persecution; basis of race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion; outside country of nationality; unable/unwilling to avail to protection or to return
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** forced to flee home or place of habitual residence; affected by: armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters; not crossed internationally recognised State border
- **IOM definition of Environmental Migrant:** obliged/choose to leave habitual home; sudden or progressive changes in the environment; temporarily or permanently; move within territory or abroad
- **Forum definition of Climate Displaced Person (CDP):** predominantly involuntarily forced to move or displaced due to climate change impacts and shocks; permanently or temporarily

Numbers of Climate Displaced Persons



Global
Humanitarian
Forum Geneva

Source	Current	Future
Global Humanitarian Forum	26 mio.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 160 mio. living in low lying areas at risk of flooding from storm surges. • 135 mio. at risk of displacement by desertification. • 60 mio. estimated to move from desertified areas of Africa and Europe by 2020.
Norwegian Refugee Council/NRC (and OCHA)	20 mio. displaced in 2008 alone - NRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 146 mio. living in areas with elevation less than one meter above sea level. • 1 mio.+ people living in the Ganges-Brahmaputra, Mekong and Nile deltas affected
Christian Aid	25 mio. (2007) all natural disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 mio. by 2050
IPCC and Stern Review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 – 200 mio. permanently displaced by rising sea-levels, floods and droughts by 2050.
World Bank		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56 mio. in 84 developing countries displaced by sea levels rising a single meter.

Global Comparisons

Refugees and asylum seekers: 16 mio.* (2008)

Internally Displaced (IDPs): 26 mio.* (2008)

Forcibly Displaced: 163 million*
(2007)

CDPs: 20/26 mio.**
(2008/10)

* UNHCR

** Christian Aid

*** NRC-IDMC-OCHA/Global Humanitarian Forum

Regions Worst Affected

- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** particularly the Sahel
- **Low-elevation coastal zones and river deltas:** Bangladesh, Netherlands, Florida (US), Egypt
- **Small island states:** The Maldives, Tuvalu, Kiribati
- **Conflict/post-conflict or least developed states:** due to weak local protection and assistance systems

Available Protections

Cause of Movement	Protections
<p>Hydrometeorological extreme hazard events</p>	<p>Within existing borders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International human rights law if move voluntarily • International human rights law and the Guiding Principles on internal displacement if forcibly displaced
<p>Environmental degradation and/or slow onset extreme hazard events</p>	
<p>Significant permanent losses in state territory due to sea level rise</p>	
<p>Armed conflict/violence over shrinking natural resources</p>	<p>Within existing borders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International humanitarian law (IHL) • International human rights law • The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement <p>Across international borders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International humanitarian law (IHL) • International human rights law • International refugee law
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidiary and temporary protection regimes

Legal Gaps

Cause of Movement	Potential Gaps as identified by the IASC and Forum
Hydrometeorological extreme hazard events	Gap 1: Those crossing international borders: Not entitled to admission and stay in another country. Not automatically protected by 1951 refugee convention unless meet established criteria. Might need protection and assistance temporarily pending return. More analysis necessary to determine if covered by existing regional conventions regardless of formal status.
Environmental degradation and/or slow onset hazard	Gap 1 + Gap 2: Lack of criteria to distinguish between voluntary and forced movements in hazard related disaster settings.
Significant permanent losses in state territory due to sea level rise etc.	Gaps 1,2 + 3: Not clear whether statehood would continue to be recognized, population could be rendered stateless. Issues relating to retention of territorial and fishing rights under maritime law. UNHCR has a mandate for prevention of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons, but specific arrangements needed to permit movement and prevent statelessness.

Institutional Issues

- **Actors:** including IOM, UNHCR, OCHA, Norwegian Refugee Council, Christian Aid
- **Increasing pressure on budgets**
- **Rapid scaling-up of operations necessary in-line with growing climate impacts**
- **Coordination of greater, more complex assistance and protection work**
- **Artificial divisions of prevention, assistance and development budgets and agendas**





- **Who is responsible?**
- **Who is most affected?**
- **Who pays?**
Costs being allowed to fall on the shoulders of most vulnerable states alone will only compound the issue

- **Financing:** Substantial increases needed for adaptation, prevention, protection and assistance to minimize displacement and support unavoidable movements
- **Cooperation:** Need for an international agreement to ensure reliable support to the world's poorest who are worst affected
- **Legal Issues:** Address lacuna in international protection and assistance mechanisms and laws
- **Operative Framework:** Environmentally Displaced People – due to practical difficulties to distinguish between climate and other cause factors involved in displacement

