

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

**TRENDS AND IMPACTS IN CONFLICT SETTINGS:
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CONFLICT-DRIVEN
DISPLACEMENT IN THE ESCWA REGION**

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Preface

This study on the socio-economic impact of conflict-related issues on the ESCWA region is the first to appear in the series on trends and impacts in conflict settings. The purpose of the series is to identify and analyse significant conflict-related trends and their socio-economic implications for ESCWA member countries. The studies include policy recommendations that are aimed at enhancing the capacity of policymakers in countries experiencing conflict and political tensions to develop appropriate strategies and programmes for the region to attain social and economic development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

This issue is the first in a series of studies on displacement in the ESCWA region, and is meant to be an overview of displacement issues as a precursor to more in-depth, narrow and focused studies on specific issues. The purpose of the study is to draw awareness to the fact that displacement in the Middle East is a regional issue, and that solutions for displaced populations in the region require coordinated international, and more important, regional strategies.

The Study identifies and analyses the different displacement trends in the ESCWA region and their impact on the displaced populations, the host countries and the region as a whole. The Study also identifies data gaps in order to develop effective policies and programmes which address the issue of displacement. In addition to providing policy recommendations for member countries and the international community on the development of regional policies and programmes to support displaced communities, the study identifies opportunities for further research that would assist United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and governments working with displaced populations to more effectively support them.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CAP | Consolidated Appeal Process |
| CPA | Comprehensive Peace Agreement |
| ECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECHO | Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission |
| ESCWA | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia |
| IASC | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| ICG | International Crisis Group |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IDPs | Internally displaced persons |
| IDMC | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IRIN | Integrated Regional Information Networks of the United Nations |
| LACS | Local Aid Coordination Secretariat |
| LDF | Local Development Fund |
| LPDC | Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NGCI | NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OAU | Organization of African Unity |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PLO | Palestinian Liberation Organization |
| PNA | Palestinian National Authority |
| SARC | Syrian Arab Red Crescent |
| TFPI | Task Force on Project Implementation |
| UNAMI | United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNMIS | United Nations Mission in Sudan |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and World Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UNSCO | United Nations Special Coordinator Officer for the Middle East Peace Process |
| USCRI | United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

Executive summary

Thirty-six per cent of displaced persons in the world are to be found in the ESCWA region, where conflict-driven displacement has resulted in 7.6 million refugees and 7.2 million internally displaced. Internal conflict, local insurgencies, resistance and regional wars have generated recurring waves of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum-seekers. The 4.6 million Palestinian refugees form one of the largest protracted refugee populations in the world and account for more than 25 per cent of all refugees worldwide. The Sudan alone hosts 4.3 million IDPs. In Iraq, 2.2 million IDPs and 2 million refugees have fled to neighbouring countries. In addition to those displaced by conflict within the region, conflicts outside the region have created large refugee populations in ESCWA member countries, as reflected in the presence of IDPs and refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia in Egypt and Somali and Eritrean refugees in Yemen. The vast majority of refugees in this region are hosted by two countries that are adjacent to the conflict zones of Iraq and Palestine, namely Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The majority of recent IDPs and refugees are currently living in urban areas, with the exception of 1948 Palestinian refugees living in camps.

Transit, emergency and protracted displacement are the three main displacement trends that are relevant in studying the socio-economic impact of displacement. The majority of displaced populations in the ESCWA region have experienced recurrent emergency and protracted displacement, which renders the task of designing responses and solutions extremely complex.

The absence of rule of law and disregard of the United Nations Charter, human rights statutes and international conventions at the national and international level, is one of the main driving forces behind displacement in the ESCWA region. While it is conflict that directly produces displacement, weak State institutions are prolonging displacement situations, and contributing to a vicious cycle in which negative trends have tended to reinforce one another. Such circumstances undermine the ability of State institutions to deal with the needs of the displaced, particularly with regards to upholding their rights,

ensuring their safety, and facilitating their return and access to their property.

About 15 million displaced persons originate from ESCWA member countries. The largest displaced populations in the ESCWA region are Palestinians, Iraqis and Sudanese. The protracted situation of Palestinian refugees continues to be politically, socially and economically significant for the whole region. Lebanon experiences new flows of displaced persons at regular intervals, and Egypt quietly hosts thousands of displaced persons in major urban settings. Ethnic and sectarian tensions or discrimination against minority groups have resulted in small-scale displacement throughout the region, and some ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq, such as Kurds, Palestinians, Turkomans, Christians, Jews, Mandaean and Yazidi, have been highly vulnerable to displacement as a result of ethnic targeting. Approximately 300,000 Syrians remain displaced in the Syrian Arab Republic – descendants of those expelled from the Golan Heights in the Six Day War in 1967.

New emergency displacements in the ESCWA region have, in many cases, been superimposed on existing cases of protracted displacement, as is illustrated by the most recent example of the displacement of approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees following the Israeli military assault on the Gaza Strip in December 2008. The emergency displaced usually face continuing risks to their personal security as a result of the ongoing conflict, for example in Darfur, or as a result of lawlessness in the streets of some Iraqi cities. The emergency displaced also face challenges obtaining access to food, water, shelter and sanitation facilities, and access to education and health services. The protracted displaced face the additional challenges of finding durable solutions and cannot exercise their rights to economic and social self-determination and development, experience a loss of identity and face movement restrictions. Protracted Palestinian refugees face obstacles created by occupation and unresolved disagreements over territorial and political sovereignty, which render durable solutions even more illusive.

The search for durable solutions, resettlement, integration or return, form an integral part of the challenge of protecting and assisting the displaced. Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen each suffer to various degrees from the impact of conflict-related displacement. The burden of hosting displaced populations in the region is disproportionately borne by Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, which also host the largest numbers of protracted refugees (the Palestinians). The number of displaced who could be considered protracted refugees in Egypt is potentially much larger, as many of the estimated 3-4 million Sudanese currently living there have probably fled conflict in the Sudan. Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic have also been affected by displacement from southern Lebanon as a result of the 2006 war with Israel. The Sudan and Yemen, both low-income countries affected by recent conflicts, are producers of refugees and host IDPs and refugees from neighbouring countries. The socio-economic impact of hosting a refugee population is different from that of having to manage large numbers of IDPs, who are mostly citizens and nationals of the country in which they are displaced. Internal displacement invariably takes place during an ongoing conflict or following a recently ended crisis; in such contexts, the capacity of the countries concerned to absorb and manage the displacement is significantly weakened. The characteristics of protracted displacement have different impacts on host countries when compared with, for example, the arrival of refugees requiring a humanitarian response. In addition, it is often difficult to distinguish between the costs of displacement and the costs resulting from the conflict that caused the displacement in the first place.

Emergency or protracted displacement in the ESCWA region have subregional and regional impacts as they create a potential threat to interregional relations, regional security and impede social stability and development.

A number of factors and regional characteristics raise challenges to developing an effective and coordinated regional response to displacement. Certain countries in the ESCWA region have limited financial and human resources and displaced populations are creating financial burdens for these countries. Governments are concerned about potentially upsetting delicate ethnic and sectarian balances, and also have security concerns. In addition, in some countries basic human rights concepts have not been mainstreamed in domestic policy or social structures.

At the regional level, there has been little or no cooperation between regional countries on displacement issues, particularly on finding durable solutions for the displaced. That is because displacement has political and humanitarian dimensions: indeed, most countries of the region fear implementing policies that could impact the resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem. On the global level, developed countries are putting pressure on conflict-affected countries to limit the flow of displaced to their shores. On the technical level, there are gaps in the collection and processing of data and poor coordination between host countries and aid organizations.

Despite these challenges, the massive flows of forcibly displaced persons in the Middle East, coupled with the cultural acceptance of the concept of asylum and aid to the displaced, warrant a renewed attempt to improve regional cooperation.

I. OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE ESCWA REGION

A. INTRODUCTION

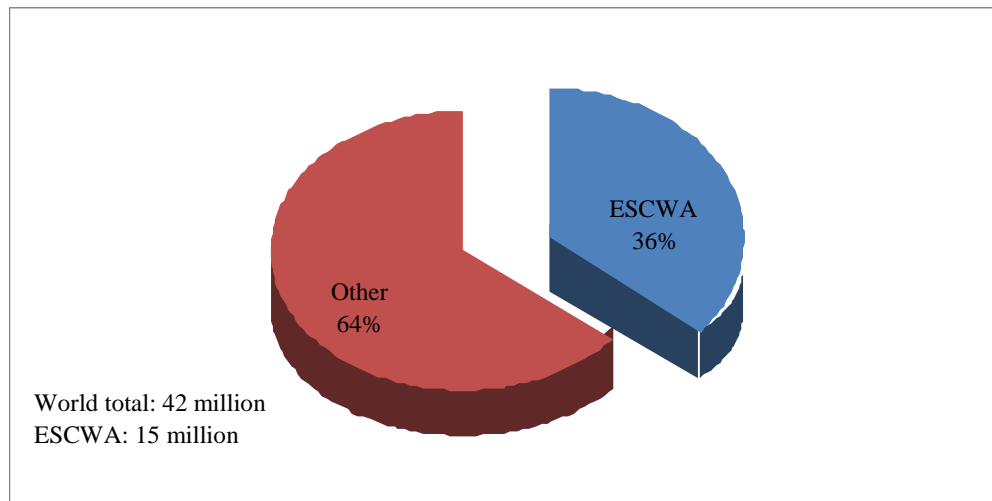
1. Overview

More than 42 million people around the world are currently displaced by conflict. Of these, 16 million are refugees and more than 26 million have been displaced inside their own countries.¹ Conflict-related displacement is a major contributing factor to poverty and a stumbling block to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.²

Thirty-six per cent of displaced persons in the world can be found in the ESCWA region. Internal conflicts, local insurgencies, resistance movements and regional wars have generated recurring waves of internally displaced persons

(IDPs), refugees and asylum-seekers, and there are now an estimated 7.6 million refugees and 7.2 million IDPs in the region. Historically, Arab countries have adopted liberal immigration policies towards fellow Arabs, and provided safe havens for waves of displaced persons fleeing conflict. Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen have allowed and, for the most part, tolerated large numbers of displaced persons on their soil, for example 700,000³ Palestinians in 1948, 2 million Iraqi refugees from the First Gulf War in the 1990s⁴ and 2.7 million Iraqis since 2003.⁵

Figure I. Share of global displacement in the ESCWA region



Sources: UNHCR, ESCWA, OCHA, Human Rights Watch and USCRI.

¹ UNHCR. 2007. *Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*, p. 2.

² United Nations. 2008. *The Millennium Development Goals Report*.

³ United Nations. General Progress Report and Supplementary Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Covering the Period from 11 December 1949 to 23 October 1950 (UN General Assembly Official Records, 5th Session, Supplement No. 18, Document A/1367/Rev.1) Appendix 4, Paragraph 15.

⁴ Zard, M. 2003. *Protecting the Rights of Displaced in Iraq*. Migration Policy Institute, May. Available at: <http://www.migrationinformation.org>.

⁵ See figure II, infra at p. 9.

The Middle East, along with sub-Saharan and Central Africa, both hosts and produces the largest populations of displaced persons in the world. Palestinians are one of the largest protracted refugee populations in the world and comprise the single largest refugee population in the ESCWA region. The 4.6 million Palestinian refugees account for more than 25 per cent of all refugees in the world.⁶ The Sudan alone hosts 4.3 million IDPs.⁷ In Iraq, one in 10 residents is internally displaced and 2 million have fled the country to find asylum in neighbouring countries. In 2007, Iraq was the second largest producer of refugees in the world, and the Syrian Arab Republic the second largest host of refugees.⁸ In addition to those displaced by conflict within the region, conflicts outside the region have created refugee populations in ESCWA member countries, such as Somalis and Ethiopians in Egypt and Somali and Eritrean refugees in Yemen.

Despite the fact that displacement is such a prevalent phenomenon and potentially destabilizing force in the Middle East, there have been few formal attempts to address the issue of displacement from a regional perspective. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) analysis of refugee situations reveal two global patterns: the vast majority of refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries – over 80 per cent of them remain within their region of origin – and about half of the world’s refugees were residing in urban areas.⁹ These global patterns are reproduced in the ESCWA region. With the exception of 1948 Palestinian refugees living in camps, the vast majority of recent IDPs and refugees are living in urban areas, and are hosted by two countries – Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic – both adjacent to conflict zones in Iraq and the occupied Palestinian territories.

This document is the first in a series of studies on displacement in the ESCWA region, and presents an overview of displacement issues. It is hoped that it will be followed by additional in-depth, narrow and focused studies on specific

issues (see annex I). The purpose of the study is to raise awareness on the regional nature of displacement in the Middle East and on the need for coordinated regional strategies to address the issue of displaced populations in the region. The objectives of the study are: (a) to identify and analyse displacement trends in the ESCWA region; (b) to identify the causes and challenges raised by displacement in the ESCWA region; (c) to analyse the impact of conflict-driven displacement on the ESCWA region; (d) to identify data gaps in order to develop effective policies and programmes addressing displacement and opportunities for further research that would assist operational agencies to more effectively fulfil their mandates; and (e) to formulate recommendations on the development of regional policies and programmes to support displaced communities.

This study provides an overview, a description of the research methodology and a brief literature review. It describes and defines the characteristics of displacement in the ESCWA region, the regional causes for displacement and significant displacement trends and patterns in this region. It also gauges the impact of different shelter models for displaced populations. It provides an overview of the historical and current waves of displacement that have had a significant impact on the ESCWA region and then assesses the socio-economic impact of displacement on some of the displaced populations themselves. The study evaluates the socio-economic impact of displacement on ESCWA member countries, and the methods of the humanitarian response to displacement in the ESCWA region. The concluding sections propose topics for future research, both for ESCWA and other relevant organizations. Recommendations for enhancing regional cooperation and developing regional policy to address displacement in the ESCWA region are also included.

2. Research methodology

This study is based on a desk review of the vast and ever increasing repository of literature on displacement in the ESCWA region. In addition, ESCWA member countries have provided data and information on displaced populations and their policies and approaches vis-à-vis

⁶ UNHCR. 2007. Op. cit., p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

displacement. Information and feedback have also been received from the regional aid community.

The study presents an overview of the scale and scope of displacement in the ESCWA region, but does not attempt to provide an exhaustive presentation of each and every displacement challenge faced by ESCWA member countries. Instead, in each section, a displaced population group or displacement situation may be highlighted as particularly illustrative of the point being made, while others may be mentioned only briefly.

The scope of this initial study is intentionally broad in order to emphasize the vastness of displacement in the region and to identify regional trends and opportunities to improve the information available to decision makers and provide recommendations for regional policy development. Thus, minimal original data production has been undertaken at this stage. Instead, recommendations for possible future interventions by ESCWA and other agencies have been outlined in the concluding sections of the study.

3. *Literature review*

The vast literature on the phenomenon of displacement reflects growing awareness and concern about the scale of displacement around the world. The literature on refugees, IDP and affected communities in the ESCWA region, falls largely under four umbrellas: the technical variety, in the form of appeals or reports by United Nations agencies and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs); humanitarian advocacy, which draws attention to the scale and nature of displacement in the ESCWA region; foreign policy literature highlighting the security dimensions of displacement; and academic literature emanating from a variety of research centres and universities, which analyse the underlying causes of displacement and their political and social implications.

The fluid and dynamic nature of displacement situations does not facilitate the process of collecting and processing accurate data on displaced populations. This study makes every attempt to use the most recent and most accurate

data and will highlight any relevant discrepancies between sources.

The repository of literature on displacement has grown in line with the recognition of the problem of displacement by the international media and aid agencies. However, gaps continue to exist, particularly in the types of data and analysis needed to formulate a coordinated regional approach on displacement. One concern for the ESCWA region is that political considerations might play a role in the response by the international community to a humanitarian crisis, and thus affect the quality, quantity and comprehensiveness of information produced on the different categories of displaced populations. The three largest cases of displacement in the ESCWA region, namely that of Iraqis, Palestinians and Sudanese, are extremely political in the global and regional context, and the quantity of literature on these crises is proportional to the political importance the international community places on these issues. Less effort appears to be made on documenting, assessing and monitoring other populations of displaced persons, or places of displacement, that do not feature in political dilemmas with global dimensions, for example in the case of displaced persons in Egypt and Yemen and the displacement of various minority groups in Iraq.

More data is available on refugees than on IDPs. This is due to the fact that most IDPs in the ESCWA region do not live in camps and do not register with national authorities or international agencies. In addition, data collection on refugees tends to be performed more regularly and systematically than data collection in IDPs, particularly as there is no single international agency designated to address IDP concerns.¹⁰

Previous efforts have been made to analyse the phenomenon of displacement in the ESCWA region, particularly with regard to Iraqi, Palestinian or Sudanese refugees and IDPs. In addition, the literature on displacement, particularly in recent years, has focused on the problem of protracted displacement on both the regional and global scale, as well as on the gap between humanitarian assistance for the emergency displaced and development

¹⁰ Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement. 2007, pp. 23-24.

implications for the protracted displaced. However, there has been insufficient analysis of the composite impact of displacement on the region as a distinct entity, and on the fact that many displaced populations in the region face a combination of both protracted displaced and repeated emergency displacement. The literature has also highlighted the rising trend of displaced persons fleeing to urban areas, as opposed to displacement camps, and the implications of this trend for displaced populations, host countries and aid organizations. What is still lacking in the literature are in-depth national assessments of the socio-economic impact of displacement and an exploration of how host countries and aid organizations must change their modus operandi in order to address the challenges of monitoring and providing assistance to the increasing numbers of urban displaced in the ESCWA region.

ESCWA member countries were asked to provide substantive contributions and data. The information provided by member countries consisted of national data and policies and approaches and additional data was obtained from aid agencies. While there are usually some discrepancies in the data collected by different organizations, the literature also revealed a lack of coordination and cooperation between aid agencies and host countries on data collection and monitoring of displaced populations.

Gaps in the available data on displaced persons make it difficult to conduct a more complete analysis of regional displacement trends and the impact of these trends on the displaced populations and the region as a whole. These gaps present opportunities for ESCWA member countries and international organizations, including ESCWA, to improve the quality and quantity of data in order to develop a more coordinated and focused regional approach towards the issue of displacement.

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE ESCWA REGION

1. *Definitions and distinctions*

There are three distinct categories of displaced persons in the ESCWA region: refugees; asylum-seekers; and IDPs. Palestinian displaced persons are not recognized as refugees

by UNHCR and considered as a separate category. The categories of displaced persons have been defined under international law, which in turn shapes the treatment received by displaced persons. This report does not address individuals who leave their country of origin for economic reasons or because of environmental disasters.

(a) *Definitions of the terms of “refugee” and “asylum-seeker”*

(i) *1951 Refugee Convention*

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (“Refugee Convention”), a refugee is a person “who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.” The concept of a refugee was expanded by the 1967 Protocol to the Refugee Convention and by regional conventions in Africa and Latin America, to include persons who had fled war or other forms of violence in their home countries. Iraqis form the largest population of Convention refugees in the ESCWA region. The vast majority of Palestinian refugees are not protected by the Refugee Convention, as will be elaborated in this section.

Asylum-seekers are persons who have pending applications for asylum or refugee status.¹¹ Displaced persons, for the purposes of this report, includes not only asylum-seekers, but also those who have fled their homes due to conflict and those who have not registered as refugees or submitted applications for asylum with UNHCR or their host nation.

(ii) *Palestinian refugees*

Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom fall under the humanitarian mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), are treated differently than other refugee populations. UNRWA was established in 1949 and began its

¹¹ UNHCR. 2008. Op. cit. p. 4.

operations in May 1950.¹² It provides relief, education health and social services to Palestinian refugees who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance in its five areas of operations, namely the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

UNRWA defines a “Palestine” refugee as a person (or his descendent) whose place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948. In addition, a “Palestine” refugee is someone who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. This extends to those who were forced to flee outside Palestine, and to different areas within Palestine, and includes refugees and IDPs. UNRWA later extended the services it offered to Palestinians displaced in 1967 (but did not include them in the definition of Palestine refugee), which included refugees and individuals displaced for the first time.¹³

The 4.5 million Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA do not fall within the mandate of UNHCR, which was established at a later date to address the problems faced by refugees worldwide. Some Palestinian refugees who benefit from the services provided by UNRWA, for example Palestinians who were forced to flee to areas outside of UNRWA jurisdiction, may fall under UNHCR’s protection mandate, but the majority do not. In 2008, UNHCR registered 340,000 Palestinian “persons of concern” living in different countries in the region.¹⁴

The original UNRWA mandate of providing humanitarian relief has been expanded over the years to include the provision of education, health care, social services, housing,

¹² The mandate of UNRWA was originally conceived by the General Assembly as a temporary mandate. However, because of the intractability of the Arab-Israel conflict and the absence of a comprehensive solution for Palestine refugees, its mandate has been extended ever since.

¹³ UNGA Resolution 58/92, Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, 17 December 2003.

¹⁴ UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/population/database>. Accessed on 24 November 2008.

micro-credit loans and emergency aid, but continues to have a very limited protection role. At the time of the establishment of UNRWA, the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine was created with the mandate of finding durable solutions to protect Palestinian refugees. However, UNRWA activities are currently limited to a reporting function. UNHCR, in contrast, has a mandate to protect, assist and find durable solutions for all other refugees and “persons of concern” to the Agency.¹⁵ Thus, the majority of Palestinian refugees are not covered by any international institutional framework that would provide them with legal protection and durable solutions.

(b) *Definition of internally displaced persons (IDPs)*

Internally displaced persons are “persons or groups 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 violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”¹⁶ The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* highlight the coercive or otherwise involuntary nature of movement due to forces beyond the control of the person or persons involved.

In recent years, conflicts in the ESCWA region have tended to generate more IDPs than refugees.¹⁷ In the Sudan, for example, there are currently 4.3 million IDPs, in addition to further 600,000-700,000 refugees.¹⁸ Internally displaced persons are different than refugees in that they are displaced within national borders and therefore

¹⁵ See UNRWA and UNHCR. 2007. *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees*, January.

¹⁶ United Nations. 1998. Human Rights, Mass Exoduses and Displaced Persons. Report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, 54th session, (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add. 2).

¹⁷ Mundt, Alex and Ferris, E. 2008. *Durable Solutions for IDPs in Protracted Situations: Three Case Studies*.

¹⁸ UNHCR. 2008. *Protecting Refugees and the Role of UNHCR 2007-2008: Evaluation of UNHCR’s returnee Reintegration Programme in Southern Sudan*, September.

legally remain under the protection of the Government of their country of residence. National authorities are therefore obliged to continue to provide the same rights and privileges to IDPs as to the rest of the population.¹⁹ In practice, Governments are often unable or unwilling to do so due to the nature of the conflict causing the displacement, insufficient human and financial resources or the inability to access the displaced, among other factors. Sudanese and Iraqis currently make up the largest contingent of IDPs in the ESCWA region, although Lebanese and Palestinians have been subjected to recurrent waves of forced internal displacement. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced from the southern suburbs of Beirut, southern Lebanon and the west Bekaa during the Israeli attack on Lebanon in July 2006. Likewise, thousands of Palestinians were displaced as a result of the Israeli military offensive on the Gaza Strip, which began on 28 December 2008, and lasted for three weeks. Thousands of Palestinian refugees have also been internally displaced by the May 2007 Nahr el-Bared conflict in northern Lebanon and the December 2008 war waged by Israel in the Gaza Strip.

The majority of refugees are protected by an international institutional mechanism, elaborated in the Refugee Convention of 1951. IDPs, on the other hand, do not benefit from a specific framework that defines their rights or addresses their needs; their protection has been based rather on general human rights law, which has been grounded in the 1988 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted by the United Nations Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). First presented to the Human Rights Commission in 1998, the Guiding Principles are not binding but have become widely recognized as authoritative and are increasingly being used by Governments and aid agencies as a framework in their internal displacement programmes. The international response to the growing number of IDPs is reflected in the involvement of a wide range of international, national and civil society organizations. UNHCR has a protection mandate for certain specific IDP situations, and the

¹⁹ See IDMC website, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org>.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) also plays an important complementary role.

Other human rights mechanisms are equally important for refugee and IDP protection, for example the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2. Significant displacement trends in the ESCWA region

Three displacement trends in the ESCWA region are particularly relevant in the study of the socio-economic impact of displacement, namely transit displacement; emergency displacement; and protracted displacement. It is important to distinguish the characteristics of these different trends since such distinctions have implications in the context of any discussion on socio-economic impacts and durable solutions; it will also be shown that because displacement trends in the region are fluid, ongoing and recurrent, and that it may be difficult to describe a population as distinctly transit, protracted or emergency. It will probably be more accurate to conclude that the majority of displaced populations in the ESCWA region experience recurrent emergency displacements and situations of protracted displacement, which makes the task of designing responses and solutions extremely complex.

(a) Transit displacement

Transit displacement is characterized by migrants who undertake long-distance journeys and who transit through a number of countries on their way to their final destination. In the course of a single journey, it is quite possible for a transit migrant to slip in and out of irregularity, depending on the ease of movement in a specific country.²⁰

The pattern of movement is being shaped by increasingly stringent visa and entry requirements in ESCWA member countries and in developed countries. Thus, many refugees (and economic migrants) emigrate in stages. For example, some Iraqis fleeing the conflict in Iraq head to Egypt, via Jordan and the Syrian Arab

²⁰ Düvell, F. 2008. *(Irregular) Transit Migration in the European Space*, pp. 5-6.

Republic, as they expect the cost of living in Egypt to be lower. They may also hope to be able to move on to Western Europe. Sudanese entering Egypt may hope to move on to Israel. Jordan has been a significant transit country for Palestinian refugees moving into and out of Palestine. Many Lebanese fleeing the 2006 Israeli war against Lebanon transited through the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan on their journey to other countries. Refugees deprived of basic protections and rights, such as Iraqis who entered Lebanon illegally, are also more likely to pursue irregular migration options. The illegal status of displaced persons in transit also renders them more vulnerable to human trafficking and are willing to pay large sums to traffickers to reach Europe and other developed nations.

Transit migrants tend to rely on their own resources, social or religious networks and the diaspora population to facilitate their travel, and do not for the most part access the services or assistance of international aid agencies, at least in countries where their sojourn is short. As a result, it is very difficult to determine the overall numbers of transit-displaced, or whether they are driven by conflict or economic considerations. For this reason, the study will not attempt to determine whether a certain percentage of conflict-driven displaced in a host country intend to transit to another country or not. However, this topic could form the subject of a future study.

(b) *Emergency displacement*

Conflict-driven displacement usually occurs as a result of military conflict when there is a real danger that large numbers of people could face death, injury, disease, homelessness, and so on. This type of displacement occurs suddenly and normally involves large numbers that tend to overwhelm national and international relief organizations. Thus, conflict-driven displacement by definition starts out as an emergency. What distinguishes the emergency displaced from other displaced persons is that their personal security is at risk. Populations that can be described as “emergency displaced” are usually IDPs, at least in the ESCWA region. Although, at different points in time, Palestinian refugees in Palestine continue to face emergency situations, which may or may not cause repeated displacements, such as forced evictions, house demolitions and construction of a barrier in the West Bank.

In the past five years, different crises in the Arab world have generated significant emergency displaced communities, for example Iraqis fleeing within and from their conflict-affected country; Lebanese displaced during the 2006 war with Israel; Palestinian refugees displaced from the Nahr el-Bared camp in northern Lebanon; refugees and IDPs who continue to flee the ongoing Darfur crisis in the Sudan; internally displaced Yemenis fleeing the conflict in the northern Governorate of Sa’ada; and the Palestinian refugees displaced during the December 2008 war on the Gaza Strip. The emergency status of the displaced community may be relatively short-lived, as it was with the 2006 displaced Lebanese, or more long term, as is the case with the internally displaced in Iraq and the Sudan.

In emergency displacement situations, humanitarian organizations play a crucial role in helping the displaced to cope and survive, but security concerns often inhibit their ability to carry out this role. Thus, another factor that distinguishes emergency displacement is the need for cooperation and coordination between humanitarian organizations and military and security organs. The link between humanitarian assistance and security has been particularly crucial in Palestine, Iraq and the Sudan. While violence in Iraq has abated, aid workers in the Sudan are increasingly under threat, and peacekeeping operations are ineffectual. During the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, relief workers and refugees came under fire from Israeli weaponry, as was the case during the December 2008 war on the Gaza Strip, where United Nations schools and facilities were targeted by Israeli forces – a clear violation of international conventions and humanitarian law.

(c) *Protracted displacement*

Between 11 and 13 million people around the world are thought to be experiencing protracted displacement.²¹ UNHCR has described a protracted refugee situation as “one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential

²¹ Reuters. 2008. *Six Million Trapped as Long-term Refugees* – UNHCR. 10 December. Available at: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LA736503.htm>.

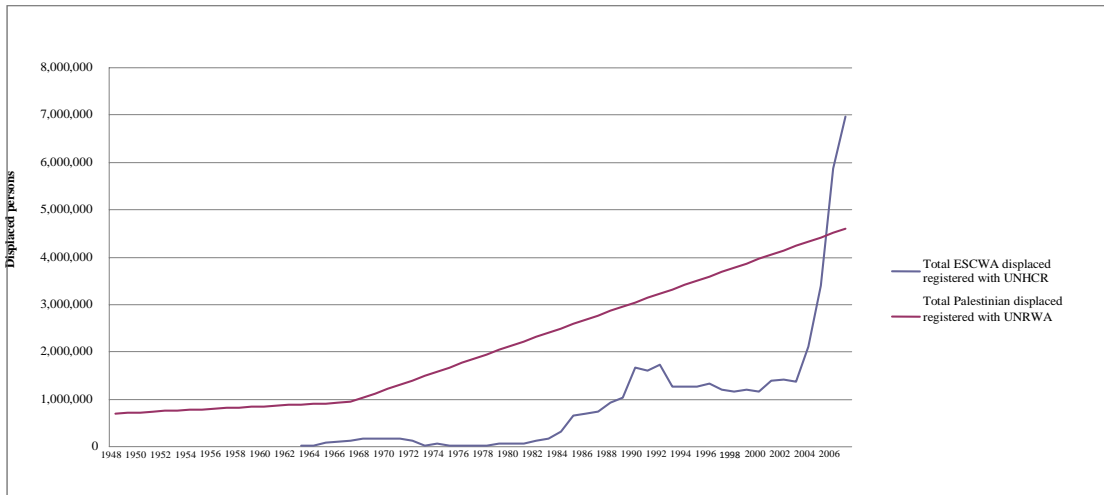
economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance.”²² A protracted refugee population is usually said to consist of “25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries.”²³ A similar definition can be derived for and applied to protracted IDPs. Other analysts have broadened the definition by specifying that it occurs within contexts in which the process for finding durable solutions is stalled and that IDPs are marginalized as a consequence of violations of their right to protection and that their economic, social and cultural rights have not been respected.²⁴ As new waves of displacement overlap and overlay prior waves, most protracted displacement situations are fluid and dynamic.

There are numerous cases of protracted displacement in the region, including 4.6 million Palestinian refugees, between 170,000 to 600,000

Lebanese still displaced from the civil war and Israeli military operations and occupation, 1.2 million Iraqis displaced before 2003, and 300,000 Syrian Arabs displaced from the occupied Syrian Golan.²⁵ Figure II presents the levels of protracted and recurring displacement in the ESCWA region over the past 60 years.

As UNHCR notes, protracted displacement situations stem from political stalemates that exist after a conflict ends, or from conflicts that are ongoing, during which displacement recurs and continues.²⁶ In the ESCWA region, political tensions, conflict and ongoing displacement are inextricable as causes for the large majority of protracted displaced, such as Palestinians and Sudanese. The discussion paper on Protracted Refugee Situations prepared for the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges provides an in-depth analysis of the approaches to humanitarian assistance to the protracted displaced in the ESCWA region.²⁷

Figure II. Displacement in the ESCWA region in the past 60 years



Sources: UNHCR and UNRWA.

²² UNHCR. 2004. *Protracted Refugee Situations*. Report presented to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, Standing Committee, p. 2.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement (2007), Op. cit., p. 2.

²⁵ For numbers of displaced populations; IDMC. 2007. *Syria: Forty Years on: People Displaced from the Golan Remain in Waiting*, 31 October, p. 1.

²⁶ UNHCR. 2004. Op. cit. p. 2; and Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2007. Op. cit, p. 25.

²⁷ UNHCR. 2008. *Protracted Refugee Situations*, December.

3. Causes of displacement in the region

The absence of rule of law and disregard of the United Nations Charter, human rights statutes and international conventions, both by States, Governments, non- or quasi-governmental groups and at the international level, is one of the leading driving forces of displacement in the ESCWA region.

At the international level, for example, the protracted nature of Palestinian displacement is caused primarily by the refusal of Israel to adhere to or recognize international law, and the failure of the international community to enforce it. For decades, and in direct infringement of international norms and conventions, Israel has been establishing settlements on occupied Arab land that has resulted in hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians and Syrians. In addition, Israel has constantly refused to grant Palestinians the right to return, in direct infringement to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948.

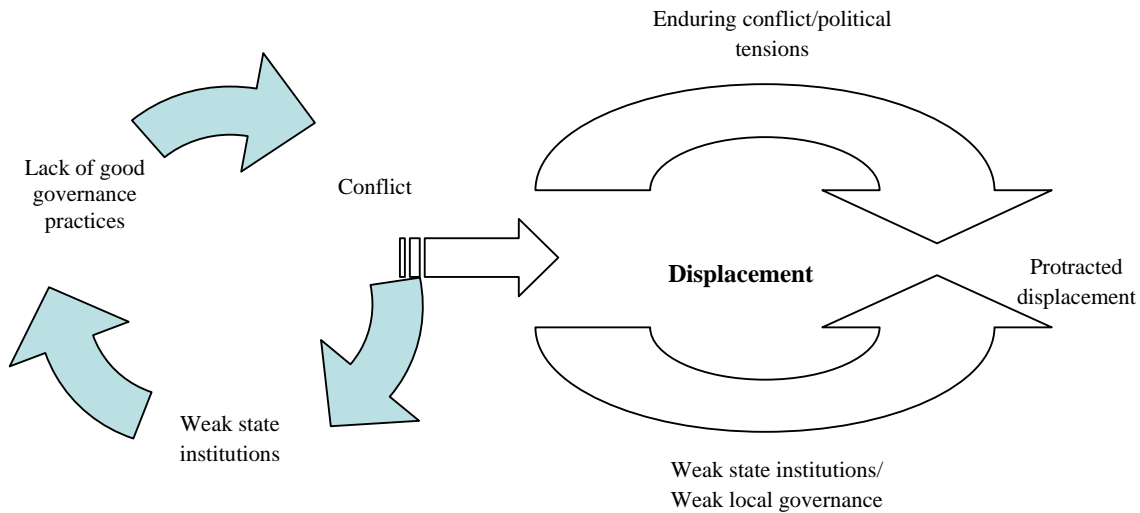
At the national level, the absence of respect for the rule of law is, in some cases, an indirect cause of displacement. Protracted displacement is inextricably linked with the protracted nature of political tensions and conflicts in the ESCWA region. Local and international political discord and conflicts in this region are closely related and

long-lasting, and have serious local and regional socio-economic ramifications. Displacement is one of these ramifications.

While it is conflict that directly produces displacement, the existence of weak State institutions have the effect of prolonging displacement situations. Countries affected by conflict often face political, social and economic challenges, for the simple reason that the rule of law, good governance (in other words, the existence of democratic processes, political participation, equality, accountability, effectiveness and transparency) are not practiced or have not yet taken root. Consequently, political discord may turn into civil strife, exposing the country to civil war and making it vulnerable to regional and international interference.

Even in post-conflict situations, weak State institutions may be unable to cope with the displacement crises, thereby prolonging displacement. Thus, conflict, poorly functioning public institutions and displacement are caught in a vicious cycle, negatively reinforcing each other (see figure III). Such circumstances undermine the ability of State institutions to deal with the needs of the displaced, particularly with regards to upholding their rights, ensuring their safety, and facilitating their return and access to their property.

Figure III. Conflict-displacement cycle



Even if mechanisms to promote peaceful co-existence are incorporated into national

policies, in practice they are often difficult to enforce when regressive and divisive tendencies

are formalized into political and social systems, thereby preventing national cohesion, reform and the development of good governance. These dynamics tend to aggravate any pre-existing tensions that might have contributed to the displacement in the first place. The reintegration of displaced persons could be a short-lived exercise if not accompanied mechanisms ensuring peaceful co-existence.

Prolonged displacement in ESCWA member countries is characterized by:

1. Ethnic and/or religious conflict in the place of origin:

Those who were forced to flee from their residence for fear of ethnic or religious persecution are more hesitant to return. A survey by UNHCR on Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic revealed that an estimated 70 per cent of those interviewed had been subjected to interrogation or harassment by militias or other groups in Iraq, including receiving death threats. Sixteen per cent of them were also tortured, mostly by sectarian militias.²⁸

Urban areas with ethnically and religiously diverse populations are usually the first to divide into areas of homogeneous ethnic or religious concentrations. For instance in Iraq, a large number of Sunnis went to Sunni areas, Shiite to Shia areas, and Kurds to Kurdish areas.²⁹ Even after the conflict subsided, some displaced persons choose to return to areas where there are established communities with the same ethnic or confessional background, rather than to their place of origin.

2. Economic factors:

Certain economic factors (mainly the lack of employment opportunities), could negatively affect the decision of displaced persons to return to their place of origin. For example, 40 per cent of IDPs in camps in North Sudan report that a

²⁸ UNHCR. 2008. Trauma Survey in Syria, 22 January. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/4795e6222.html>.

²⁹ See Al-Khalidi, A. and Tanner, V. 2007. *Iraq Bleeds: The Remorseless Rise of Violence and Displacement. Forced Migration Review*, June, p. 8. Available at: <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/Iraq/full.pdf>.

lack of financial resources prevents them from returning to their place of origin in the South.³⁰

3. Stability and security of place of origin:

If conditions continue to be unsafe in the place of origin, returnees, and in particular skilled workers, are likely to opt for permanent residency in a country which offers them long-term security and stability. Thousands of Iraqis who fled Iraq prior to 2003 have settled semi-permanently in Jordan, for example.

4. Absence of mechanisms to process and assist those who wish to return:

The absence of mechanisms to process and assist those who wish to return are often absent in countries with weak public institutions. Returnees may be unable to go back to their place of origin because their residences, businesses and/or property have been taken over by other displaced persons, or armed factions that have taken over the neighbourhood. State institutions and multilateral organizations are often unable to evict such refugees or armed elements due to a number of constraints, such as humanitarian considerations, and lack of funds to provide incentives to vacate and find alternative shelter. Across Iraq, only 16.7 per cent of potential returnees reported that their property was accessible; among people displaced from Baghdad – the origin of more than 80 per cent of Iraqi displaced – nearly two thirds of respondents said that they did not have access to their property.³¹

There is also evidence in the region that removing such obstacles helps to create an environment which is conducive to the return of displaced persons once hostilities have ceased. For instance, immediately after the cessation of hostilities in the aftermath of the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war, more than one million refugees moved back to their homes in the southern suburbs of Beirut, southern Lebanon and the Beqa'a, in spite of the dangers of unexploded

³⁰ IOM. 2006. *IDP Intentions Survey*. Vol. 1, p. 21.

³¹ IOM. 2009. Emergency Needs Assessments, Post-February 2006 Displacement in Iraq, Monthly Report. Available at: <http://www.iom-iraq.net/Library/IOM%20Iraq%20Displacement%20Assessments%20and%20Statistics%201%20Jan%202009.pdf>.

ordinance and the state of their homes. They returned because they felt no real security threat, had relatively free access to their property or to financial incentives through immediate cash payments, a strong sense of national pride, and quick action by different local and international relief agencies and other concerned organizations.

It is therefore important for policymakers involved in developing regional displacement policies to consider methods and incorporate mechanisms to strengthen State structures, promote good governance and promote ethnic and sectarian tolerance.

C. SHELTER MODELS FOR DISPLACED POPULATIONS: URBAN AND CAMP SETTINGS

Globally, more and more displaced persons are fleeing to urban areas.³² In the ESCWA region, displaced persons reside in both camp settings and non-camp settings. Protracted Palestinian refugees live in UNRWA camps and have integrated into the societies of some host countries. Sudanese emergency and protracted IDPs live in camps and on the move. Iraqi IDPs and refugees have moved into mainly urban settings. In Yemen, protracted refugees and many IDPs find shelter in urban communities, while some emergency IDPs reside in camps. In Egypt, the vast majority of displaced persons reside in urban areas, such as Cairo.

Depending on a variety of factors, including security, the length of displacement and the resources available to the displaced, there are advantages and disadvantages to both types of shelter. In the ESCWA region, political considerations also play a role in determining the type of shelter available for displaced persons.

1. *The displaced in camp settings*

While camp settings can be instrumental for the provision of security, shelter and humanitarian assistance in short-term emergency displacement situations, camp environments for protracted displaced populations can contribute to their marginalization from society, unemployment, poverty and can create additional problems.

³² UNHCR. 2007. Op. cit, p. 2.

For example, conditions in some Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon can be difficult for those living there because some laws and regulations are sometimes disregarded. The absence of planning policies and the non-enforcement of construction laws means that hundreds of unsafe buildings are built along narrow alleys with no natural light; camp residents are also exposed to hazardous building materials, inadequate temperature control and poor ventilation. The identity and political status of camp dwellers becomes integrally tied to the camp itself as a segregated and isolated spatial unit. Long-term camp dwellers, gathered in a centralized and controlled space, can become more passive and reliant on the provision of services from aid agencies. Confinement to camps also isolates the displaced from society and provides few opportunities for achieving economic self-sufficiency.

There are, on the other hand, some advantages to living in a camp setting. Palestinian refugee camp dwellers by and large enjoy relatively adequate health and education services thanks to UNRWA, preserve social and family structures and maintain their identity as Palestinians. However, they can be overlooked in the socio-economic structures of some host countries. Protracted displaced populations remain in camps for long periods of time for a variety of political and socio-economic reasons, for example out of fear of losing their identity by being integrated into a host society, lapsing into the status of illegal immigrant with no formal rights or protection, lack of funds or employment opportunities and lack of alternative accommodation outside the camp.

2. *The displaced in urban settings*

Iraqi and Palestinian refugees in Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen who do not live in camps are sometimes well integrated in their host country. The urban displaced tend to exercise self-reliance and coping mechanisms, and are able to maintain some degree of self-sufficiency through use of savings, remittances from home or abroad or through employment in the host city. Some urban refugees are often able to benefit, legally or otherwise, from municipal services, such as schools and

health centres in the urban centres where they live.

However, the resources at the disposal of middle-class refugees and IDPs, for example their savings and remittances, cannot last forever and gradually dry up. Reduced to living on subsistence levels, these displaced persons are unable to pay their fees for visas and permits and fall into illegal situations and become impoverished. Most urban displaced do not register with the host Government or international aid agencies, either because they felt that they did not need to do so or because they feared being deported. As a result, it becomes very difficult to assess the scale of displacement and the socio-economic status and conditions of the displaced. In large urban environments, such as Cairo, many of the displaced exist on the margins of society, stagnating in poverty, as their illegal status restricts their options for survival.³³

The positive or negative impact of living in a camp situation is related to the length of the displacement period. Refugee camps may be a life-saving alternative for the emergency displaced. However, for prolonged cases of displacement, camp settings marginalize and isolate the displaced. Information on the status of and access to camp dwellers is far more complete than for non-camp-dwellers. The inability to access the urban displaced compromises efforts to evaluate the impact of displacement in the region, and makes it difficult to provide them with assistance. Governments and international organizations in the region must therefore find ways to access and assist displaced populations that have “disappeared” into urban landscapes, and who have no legal status or rights in their place of displacement, or who are reluctant to come forward for fear of arrest or deportation.

³³ See Grabska, K. 2006. Marginalization in Urban Spaces of the Global South: Urban Refugees in Cairo, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 289.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE ESCWA REGION

Continuous waves of displacement have direct negative repercussions for all countries and populations in the ESCWA region. While each country in the ESCWA region has its own pre-existing set of characteristics that contribute to socio-economic development and living standards, conflict-driven displacement consistently impedes development. In addition, displacement indirectly impacts neighbouring countries which are experiencing direct displacement, including the Gulf countries.

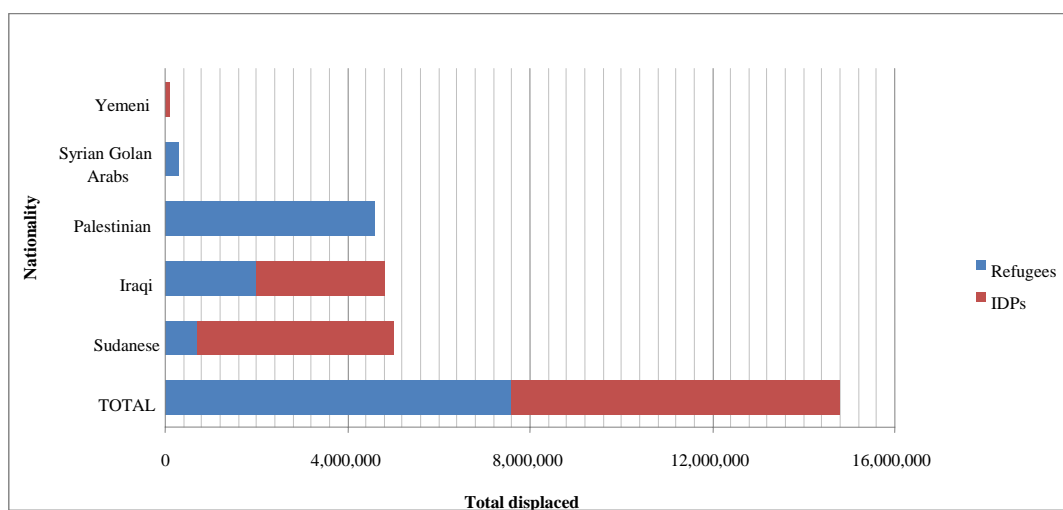
This chapter provides an overview of the historical and current waves of displacement that have had a significant impact on the ESCWA region and then assesses the socio-economic impact of displacement on some of the displaced populations themselves. It also evaluates the socio-economic impact of displacement on

ESCWA member countries, and it evaluates the methods of the humanitarian response to displacement in the ESCWA region.

A. IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT

Almost 15 million displaced persons originate from ESCWA member countries (see figure IV), and account for 35 per cent of all displaced persons worldwide. The largest populations of ESCWA region displaced are Palestinians, Iraqis and Sudanese. The protracted situation of Palestinian refugees continues to be politically, socially and economically significant for the whole region. Lebanon experiences a new flow of displaced persons at regular intervals, and Egypt quietly hosts thousands of displaced persons in urban areas, such as Cairo.

Figure IV. Displaced persons originating from the ESCWA region



Sources: UNHCR, ESCWA, OCHA, Human Rights Watch and USCRI.

Displacement occurs throughout the region on a smaller scale as well, as a result of internal conflicts, ethnic and sectarian tensions or discrimination against minority groups. In Iraq, ethnic and religious minority populations, such as Kurds, Palestinians, Turkomans, Christians, Jews, Mandaeans and Yazidi, have been highly vulnerable to displacement due to ethnic targeting. Approximately 300,000 Syrians remain displaced

in the Syrian Arab Republic, descendants of those expelled from the Golan Heights in the Six Day War in 1967.³⁴ While these displaced persons have been integrated into Syrian society in other parts of the Syrian Arab Republic, many wish to return or maintain contacts with family members among the estimated 21,000 Syrians who remain

³⁴ IDMC. 2007. Op. cit., p. 1.

in the Golan Heights. However, Israel continues to deny them access to their place of origin.³⁵

In the ESCWA region, the phenomenon of new emergency displacements comes on top of protracted displacement, as is illustrated by the most recent example of the displacement of approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip following the December 2008 Israeli military initiative there.³⁶ Emergency displaced persons usually face continuing risks to their personal security due to ongoing conflict, as in Darfur, or as a result of lawlessness in the streets of some cities in Iraq. The emergency displaced also face challenges obtaining access to food, water, shelter, sanitation facilities, education and health services. The protracted displaced face the additional challenges of finding durable solutions, deprivation of the right to economic and social self-determination and development, loss of identity and movement restrictions. Protracted Palestinian refugees also face the obstacles created by occupation and unresolved disagreements over territorial and political sovereignty, which render durable solutions even more illusive.

It can be difficult to compare the conditions facing the different displaced populations in the region, as the quality and quantity of statistics vary greatly and their circumstances depend on a range of disparate factors. While the situation and characteristics of displaced populations in the region varies, from poverty among IDPs in the Sudan to the situation of middle-class Iraqi families in Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, the long-term effects of displacement are profound. Refugees and IDPs alike are forced to live in limbo and experience homelessness, dismemberment from family and social networks, restrictions on basic human, social and economic rights and insecurity. Many emergency and protracted displaced populations are confined to slum-like camps or urban settings, with dangerously poor environmental health conditions and few prospects of employment.

³⁵ ICRC. 2007. *Operational Update on ICRC Activities in the Occupied Golan*, 22 March.

³⁶ IRIN. 2009. *ISRAEL-OPT: Thousands of Gazans Remain Homeless*, 17 February. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82965>.

Personal security is one of the main concerns of many IDPs in the region, particularly those who remain displaced in conflict zones. In some countries in the region, where displacement is occurring as a result of internal conflict, warring between state and non-state actors, and ethnic and sectarian-based violence, crime, lawlessness and inter-tribal friction, contribute to continuous population movement. In addition, poor security conditions make it very difficult for humanitarian agencies to work, and assistance to both the displaced and the general population is restricted. In such situations, armed groups are able to assert their influence and control over neighbourhoods and their populations, posing as both persecutors and protectors of the vulnerable.

Many of those who became displaced due to internal conflict are women and children. The Iraqi Red Crescent Organization estimated that, as of October 2007, more than 80 per cent of IDPs in Iraq were women and children under the age of 12, including many orphans and widows.³⁷ Women and children are clearly impacted by the high cumulative level of casualties among men. When a family loses the main male bread winner, employment opportunities for the remaining female head of household are limited. Family separation due to displacement places women at higher risk of rape, physical abuse, kidnapping and prostitution. Many children in Iraq and the Sudan have been separated from their families and are living on the street where they face the risk of exploitation and abuse. Children also suffer the most from psychological traumas, lack access to schooling, and are sometimes forced into child labour and recruited into militias because of poverty.³⁸

Minority populations are also highly vulnerable to displacement due to ethnic targeting. The plight of about 15,000 displaced Palestinian refugees in Iraq was highlighted in 2007 when they were refused entry into neighbouring countries, leaving them stranded in camps in border areas; many of these same Palestinians

³⁷ Iraqi Red Crescent Organization. 2008. *The Internally Displaced in Iraq*, Update 35, June.

³⁸ IOM. 2006. *Iraq Displacement 2006 Year in Review*.

were forced from their homes in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.³⁹

The following section briefly examines available statistics on the socio-economic conditions facing the major displaced populations in the ESCWA region. The adequacy of access to shelter, health care, education and employment will be considered for each population, and will be followed by a discussion on the possibility of durable solutions regarding return, integration and resettlement.

1. *Palestinian displaced persons*

The case of Palestinian displacement is a stark example of the implications of protracted displacement. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, more than 700,000 Palestinians,⁴⁰ about half the Palestinian population at that time, were displaced from the territory under the British Mandate for Palestine. Palestinians were displaced both internally within Palestine, and to the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and outside the region. Today, it is estimated that 5-7 million of the 10 million Palestinians are refugees or displaced persons who have been barred by the Israeli Government from returning to Palestine.⁴¹ It has been estimated that 83 per cent of Palestinian refugees live in Palestine or in neighbouring countries, 10 per cent in other Arab countries and 7 per cent in other regions of the world.⁴² The number of Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA has grown from 914,000 in 1950 to more than 4.6 million in 2008

³⁹ UNHCR Briefing Notes. 2008. Situation of Palestinians on Iraq-Syria Border Continues to Deteriorate, 18 March.

⁴⁰ United Nations. General Progress Report and Supplementary Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Covering the Period from 11 December 1949 to 23 October 1950 (UN General Assembly Official Records, 5th Session, Supplement No. 18, Document A/1367/Rev.1) Appendix 4, Paragraph 15.

⁴¹ Hasan, Abu-Libdeh. 2007. Statistical Data on Palestinian Refugees: What We Know and What We Don't, in Rex Brynen and Roula El-Rifai (eds). 2007. *Palestinian Refugees: Challenges of Repatriation and Development*; Badil. 2007. *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, 2006-2007*, p. 43.

⁴² Ibid.

(see table 1).⁴³ However, UNRWA's tally is not complete, as it does not include 1948 refugees, who did not voluntarily register with the Agency, or those who became refugees for the first time in 1967, or those outside of UNRWA's area of operations. It is estimated that there are 4-5 million Palestinians living in the diaspora who consider themselves to be Palestinian refugees, even though they are not registered as such with either UNRWA or UNHCR.⁴⁴

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH UNRWA, BY COUNTRY OF EXILE

| West Bank | Gaza | Lebanon | Syrian Arab Republic | Jordan | Total |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 754 263 | 1 059 584 | 416 608 | 456 983 | 1 930 703 | 4 618 141 |

Source: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pdf/population.pdf>.

* There are over 400,000 registered refugees on UNRWA's roster; however, UNRWA estimates that only between 240,000 and 300,000 actually are in the country. UNRWA, 30 June 2008. See: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html>.

Repeated emergency displacement of protracted Palestinians refugees

Within a protracted state of displacement, Palestinians have experienced recurring waves of emergency displacement. The second Arab-Israeli war in 1967 caused 240,000 Palestinians to be newly displaced, while another 193,500 Palestinian refugees were displaced a second time from Palestine to neighbouring countries.⁴⁵ Although exact figures are difficult to tabulate, researchers estimate that about 400,000 Palestinians have been displaced from Palestine since 1967.⁴⁶

Palestinians have also been subject to displacement, both within and from their countries of exile, including Jordan, Lebanon and most recently Iraq. Between 18,000 and 20,000

⁴³ UNRWA. *Who is a Palestine Refugee?* Available at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/whois.html>.

⁴⁴ Abu Zayd, K. Palestine Refugees in the Contemporary Context: A View from UNRWA, *Forced Migration Review* 30.

⁴⁵ Badil. 2007. Op. cit.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

Palestinians were expelled from Jordan in 1970 as a result of the conflict between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian Government, some 200,000 were displaced during hostilities in the 1980s in Lebanon, and hundreds of thousands were deported from Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf War.⁴⁷ Of the estimated 34,000 Palestinians in Iraq in 2003, more than 15,000 have fled since the invasion of coalition forces, while some 10,000-15,000 remain in Iraq.⁴⁸ About 32,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon became displaced when the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp was destroyed during three months of conflict between the Lebanese army and the militant group Fatah al-Islam in May 2007.⁴⁹

Internal displacement of protracted Palestinian refugees

Protracted Palestinian refugees have also been subject to internal displacement in Palestine. Close to 50 per cent of the Palestinian population in Palestine are 1948 refugees. These Palestinians continue to be subject to internal displacement because their homes have been destroyed, their property confiscated and their residency permits revoked, and lastly because many of them were deported by the Israeli Government. It is estimated that Israel has deported more than 6,500 Palestinians since 1967 and revoked the residency status of more than 100,000 in Palestine.⁵⁰ In 2007, the number of Palestinian residence permits that were revoked rose by 600 per cent and house demolitions in East Jerusalem rose by 30 per cent relative to the previous year.⁵¹

The ongoing construction of the separation barrier is also contributing to population displacement throughout the West Bank and

occupied East Jerusalem. In January 2008, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian territories reported that the barrier had already caused the displacement of about 15,000 persons.⁵² In 2007, 17.3 per cent of the Palestinian who lived in Jerusalem have moved homes as a direct result of the construction of the separation wall,⁵³ and that a further 70,000 Palestinians out of a total population of 250,000 Palestinian with Jerusalem identification cards risked losing their residency rights because of the separation wall.

Most recently, the massive December 2008 Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip caused the internal displacement of approximately 500,000 Palestinian civilians, including 280,000 children, as a result of large-scale bombing that destroyed residential infrastructure and forced families to flee their homes for safety. As of February 2009, an estimated 100,000 remained displaced.⁵⁴

(a) *General socio-economic impact of displacement on Palestinians*

Comprehensive data on the living conditions of Palestine refugees generally (both registered and unregistered) cannot be compiled from one source, and there are significant gaps and inconsistencies as Palestinian refugees are scattered in different countries. What is clear is that Palestinian refugees in the ESCWA region, regardless of whether they live in Palestine or Jordan, Lebanon or the Syrian Arab Republic, experience varying degrees of marginalization from society, inadequate housing, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and restricted access to basic public services. Unlike other refugee populations, the majority of Palestinian refugees are also labelled as “stateless persons”, which makes travel very difficult and, in many cases, impossible.

UNRWA is the principal agency designated to provide for the human development of

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸ UNHCR. 2007. Op. cit.

⁴⁹ UNRWA Relief and Social Services Department. 2007. UNRWA IDPs from Nahr el-Bared. 7 August. Available at: <http://www.unrwa-lebanon.org/nle/wp-content/uploads/2007/08/idps20070807.xls>.

⁵⁰ Badil. 2007. Op. cit, p. 17.

⁵¹ United Nations. 2007. Note by the Secretary-General, Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. A/62/360.

⁵² United Nations. 2007. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. A/HRC/7/17.

⁵³ United Nations. 2007. Op. cit.

⁵⁴ IRIN News. 2009. *ISRAEL-OPT: Thousands of Gazans Remain Homeless*. 17 February.

Palestine refugees in the areas under its mandate, namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic. Of the 4.6 million registered Palestine refugees, only 1.36 million live in one of the 58 UNRWA refugee camps.⁵⁵ The majority of the remaining registered refugees live outside the camps, but within UNRWA's area of operations, and are thus still eligible for services, while a smaller percentage have moved to countries outside of UNRWA's operations.⁵⁶ Other governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations also provide services for Palestinian refugees, including social services, tertiary education and health services. The degree of access for Palestinian refugees to other sources of socio-economic assistance and services in the region varies considerably from one area or country of residence to another.

(b) *Palestinians in Palestine*

Palestinian refugees face particular hardships in Palestine, and are subject to arbitrary arrest and detention, disproportionate use of force, house demolitions, severe internal and external mobility restrictions and border closure policies by the Israeli authorities.

Generally, Palestinians in Palestine have access to services provided by the Palestinian Authority, aid agencies and UNRWA, but the occupation, protracted border closure and Israeli military offensives have substantially eroded the impact of this assistance, resulting in soaring poverty and unemployment levels. Since June 2007, Israel began to intensify border closures and restrictions on the access of goods and people to and from the Gaza Strip; these measures have been so severe that they resulted in near total closure and isolation. This isolation led to shortages of food, medical and relief items, raw materials for commerce and industry and the closure of critical health and water sanitation installations. An unprecedented number of Palestinians are dependent on food aid in the Gaza Strip. The December 2008 war displaced thousands, has left Gaza on the verge of collapse

⁵⁵ UNRWA. 2008. *UNRWA in Figures*, 30 July.

⁵⁶ UNRWA and UNHCR. 2007. *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees*, January.

and the population living near subsistence level. At the time of writing, the entry of essential supplies and humanitarian access continues to be restricted by the Government of Israel.⁵⁷

(c) *Palestinians in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic*

Palestinian refugees in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are better off than their counterparts in Palestine as they have access to public services and the labour market. The largest number of Palestinian refugees lives in Jordan, where most are entitled to Jordanian citizenship and enjoy the right to work. However, 150,000 Palestinians who were expelled from the West Bank in 1948 and fled to Gaza for refuge, and then fled from Gaza to Jordan after the Israeli occupation of Gaza in 1967, do not enjoy these same privileges. These Palestinians are not entitled to Jordanian citizenship, and while they are given temporary residence permits, they do not qualify for the same rights and services as Palestinian holders of Jordanian passports.⁵⁸ Palestinian refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic cannot acquire Syrian nationality, but have almost the same legal rights as Syrian citizens, including the right to work.⁵⁹

(d) *Palestinians in Lebanon*

This study will look more closely at Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, where they are more socially and economically marginalized than in other host countries. There are four main categories of Palestinian displaced in Lebanon: UNRWA-registered refugees; non-registered refugees; non-ID Palestinians; and Palestinians with Lebanese citizenship.

UNRWA has registered over 400,000 registered refugees in Lebanon; however, UNRWA estimates that only between 240,000 and 300,000 actually are living in refugee

⁵⁷ OCHA. 2009. *Situation Report from the Humanitarian Coordinator*, 5 January, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁸ See Olwan, M. 2008. *Irregular Migration in Jordan – a Policy of No Policy*, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁹ UNRWA. 2007. Report of the Commissioner General of UNRWA.

camps.⁶⁰ “Non-registered refugees” are refugees that have not registered with UNRWA, but have registered with the Lebanese Directorate of Political and Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior. These Palestinians include those that were either forced to leave Palestine after 1948, those that originally fled Palestine to a country where UNRWA is not active, or did not register with UNRWA because they did not require any assistance. The Lebanese Ministry of Interior unofficially estimates that 13,000 non-registered Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon, but the Palestinian Camp Popular Committees provides estimates their number at 15,000. A recent study commissioned by ECHO establishes the number of non-registered Palestinian refugees at between 30,000 and 35,000.⁶¹ “Non-ID Palestinians”, are not registered with the Government of Lebanon or with UNRWA. Many of them entered Lebanon after being exiled a second time as a result of the 1967 Arab/Israeli war, or after being expelled from Jordan in 1970. They are considered illegal immigrants by the Government of Lebanon. According to recent estimates, there are about 3,000-5,000 non-ID Palestine refugees in Lebanon.⁶² In addition, there are an estimated 56,000 Palestinians refugees who have obtained Lebanese citizenship and enjoy the same rights and privileges as Lebanese citizens.⁶³

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are generally not allowed to work, practice professions, run businesses, own property and have no access to public health, education and social services in Lebanon, and the majority of them are unable to afford the cost of private education and health services.⁶⁴ Consequently, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are almost entirely dependent on UNRWA services. In November 2005, the Government of Lebanon

⁶⁰ UNRWA. 2008. *UNRWA in Figures*, 30 June. Available at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html>.

⁶¹ ECHO. 2008. *The Status and Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon – A Review of the Current Documentation*, July.

⁶² Danish Refugee Council. 2007. *Survey Report on the Situation of Non-ID Palestinian Refugees, Lebanon*, September. ECHO. 2008. Op. cit.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

formed an inter-ministerial body called the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) to implement Government policies towards resident Palestinian refugees.⁶⁵ This inter-ministerial body coordinates work with UNRWA, the PLO and Lebanese and Palestinian civil society. While the Government continually reinforces its position against the settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, in accordance with the right of return as set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 237 and General Assembly Resolution 194, LPDC has begun to work on improving conditions in the camps in collaboration with UNRWA, NGOs and international organizations.⁶⁶

UNRWA is the main provider of education, health care, housing, water and sanitation in official camps. Due to legal aspects of land ownership and funding shortages, UNRWA does not always provide housing and water and sanitation services assistance outside the camps.

(i) *Shelter*

About 53 per cent of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon reside in one of 12 UNRWA refugee camps. A total of 63,000 Palestinians live in 39 Palestinian refugee “gatherings”, which are very poor settlements outside the camps. Camps are overcrowded, as the Government of Lebanon does not permit reconstruction, expansion or new houses to be built. When camps cannot expand horizontally, the only solution for the population is to build upwards. Built originally as a temporary solution, camp infrastructure has not kept up with population growth. Sewage, water, and drainage systems are now inadequate and detrimentally affect the environmental health conditions in the camps. Housing conditions in refugee camps in Lebanon are extremely poor, with corrugated sheeting, flooding, vermin infestations and poor ventilation.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Government of Lebanon. 2005. Lebanese Council of Ministers’ decision 89/2005.

⁶⁶ Government of Lebanon. *Government Strategy towards Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*. Available at: <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb>.

⁶⁷ ECHO. 2008. Ibid., FAFO. 2005. *Falling behind: A Brief on Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*.

(ii) *Health*

UNRWA provides free primary health care through 25 primary health care facilities and partially funded hospital care through contractual arrangements with nine private hospitals. The patient-to-doctor ratio is 7,634 to one, as compared to 356 to one for the Lebanese population as a whole.⁶⁸ Palestinians are not entitled to national health services and must pay for any health care that is not provided by UNRWA.

(iii) *Education*

Palestinians are not legally prohibited from attending schools in Lebanon, where 10 per cent of places are reserved for foreigners. Private schools are accessible, but the fees are beyond the means of most Palestinian refugees. More than 95 per cent of Palestinian refugee children attending school attend UNRWA schools. However, 21 per cent of children aged 7-18 are not enrolled in any school, due to a combination of factors, including lack of motivation and poor job prospects. Access to higher education is quite limited: UNRWA only operates a single vocational centre and has made available 106 scholarships to Palestinians to attend university in 2007-2008. Only one in twenty Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has completed semi-professional or higher levels of education.⁶⁹

(iv) *Income and employment*

Foreigners may only work in Lebanon if there is a reciprocity agreement between Lebanon and the country of origin. This effectively bars Palestinians from working legally in Lebanon, as Palestinians are stateless. There are no official statistics, but it is estimated that unemployment, including under-employment, is as high as 60 per cent.⁷⁰ Some skilled and semi-skilled workers in the camps are employed by UNRWA, Palestinian institutions or NGOs. UNRWA provided almost 3,000 posts in 2005. In 2006, the Lebanese authorities issued only 223 work permits to

Palestinians.⁷¹ The fact that most are employed on the black market and receive no public welfare services means that high unemployment rates have resulted in high poverty levels. It is estimated that 35 per cent of Palestinian households in refugee camps live below the poverty line.⁷²

In 2005, the Ministry of Labour partially repealed provisions which restricted access by Palestinians to 70 professions; about two thirds of these professional sectors have since been opened up, mainly in low to medium-skilled jobs. However, the 1964 law that effectively prohibits Palestinians from membership in the main professions (law, medicine engineering and journalism) still remains in force.

2. *Displaced persons in the Sudan*

Forced displacement in the Sudan is fluid and complex, and consists of protracted and emergency displacement, and includes Sudanese refugees, emergency Sudanese IDPs, Sudanese returnees and non-Sudanese refugees in the Sudan. Up-to-date figures on the total number of displaced persons in the Sudan are difficult to tabulate accurately due to the complex and protracted nature of the conflicts in the country and in neighbouring countries. Likewise, it is also difficult to come by accurate statistics on the socio-economic conditions of displaced populations in the Sudan as there are limited mechanisms to comprehensively track and monitor their numbers and status of displacement.

(a) *Sudanese civil wars*

The Sudan has experienced protracted civil wars resulting in waves of emergency population displacement and protracted displacement since independence in 1956. The civil wars and military conflicts between Government forces or Government-backed militias in the north and rebel groups and inter-factional fighting in the south of the country lead to large-scale displacement in the Sudan. The first civil war from 1956 to 1972 displaced an estimated one million people.⁷³ Two

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Verney, P. 2006. Country Guide: Sudan. *Forced Migration Online*. February.

million people were killed during the second civil war between 1983 and 2005 and resulted in more than four million people being displaced. Although the war ended in January 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), hundreds of thousands of Sudanese remain displaced.

(b) *Darfur crisis*

Deep-seated and historical tensions erupted in the western region of Darfur in February 2003, when rebel groups clashed with Government forces and Government-armed and supported Janjaweed militias. The ongoing conflict has resulted in over 300,000 deaths and over 2.5 million displaced, with numbers increasing daily.⁷⁴ In addition to the internally displaced, hundreds of thousands have fled into Chad, spurring additional cross-border battles that displaced Chadians into the Sudan. It is estimated that 300,000 people were newly displaced in 2008.⁷⁵

(i) *Sudanese refugees*

UNHCR estimates that there are between 600,000 and 700,000 Sudanese refugees, many of them protracted displaced from Sudanese civil wars.⁷⁶ The Government of the Sudan reports that there were over 700,000 Sudanese refugees living outside the country, but that 200,000 of these refugees had returned, as of November 2008, according to a recent census.⁷⁷ Most of these refugees had fled to neighbouring east African countries, such as Uganda and Chad.

Egypt is the only significant host country for Sudanese refugees in the ESCWA region. An estimated 3-4 million Sudanese are currently living in Egypt,⁷⁸ which has hosted Sudanese refugees since the first civil war, with more recent arrivals fleeing the conflict in Darfur. While

⁷⁴ IRIN News. 2008. *Sudan: IDPs Out of Reach as Violence Hinders Agencies*, 2 November.

⁷⁵ IRIN News. 2008. *Sudan: Preparing for Massive Demobilization*, 21 October.

⁷⁶ UNHCR. 2008. *Protecting Refugees and the Role of UNHCR 2007-2008: Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee Reintegration Programme in Southern Sudan*, September.

⁷⁷ Contribution of the Government of the Sudan.

⁷⁸ Contribution of the Government of Egypt, p. 3.

UNHCR has only registered 23,000 refugees, it is estimated that thousands more could be considered refugees.⁷⁹ Sudanese who have fled conflict in the Sudan to Egypt reside in urban centres, rely on their own resources and networks for support and mingle with Sudanese economic migrants. Thus, it is very difficult to distinguish potential refugees from economic migrants. The Government of Egypt, in its contribution to this report, expressed interest in receiving the concepts and mechanisms available to distinguish between refugee and economic migrants in its country, and the extent to which international protection criteria would be applicable to them.⁸⁰ This subject clearly requires further study.

According to the Government of Egypt, Sudanese refugees are allowed and even encouraged to form Egyptian-Sudanese organizations and entities.⁸¹ The new influx of Darfur refugees, however, has had a more significant toll on Egypt's capacity to manage the flow. Unlike other refugee populations in Egypt, under the reciprocal Four Freedoms Agreement of 2004, Sudanese refugees in Egypt enjoy the same as Egyptians, including employment rights. However, these refugees generally face the same economic challenges faced by a large percentage of the Egyptian population, such as urban poverty and rising food and fuel prices.⁸² The Government of the Sudan reports that it is currently undertaking negotiations to enter into a tripartite agreement with Egypt and Chad over the voluntary return of Sudanese refugees.⁸³

(ii) *Sudanese IDPs*

There are currently approximately 4.3 million Sudanese IDPs, including 2.7 million from Darfur. It is estimated that 300,000 Darfuris

⁷⁹ Grabska, K. 2005. *Living on the Margins: Analysis of the Livelihood Strategies of Sudanese Refugees with Closed Files in Egypt*. FMRS Working Paper 6, p. 17, June.

⁸⁰ Contribution of the Government of Egypt, p. 5.

⁸¹ Grabska K. 2005. *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁸² UNHCR. 2007. *Country Operations Plan, Egypt*, p. 3.

⁸³ Contribution of the Government of the Sudan.

became IDPs in 2008.⁸⁴ The remaining 4 million became IDPs following the second civil war, many of whom are returning voluntarily.⁸⁵ About 1.5 million Sudanese IDPs are living in refugee camps and shanty towns in and around Khartoum.⁸⁶ The remainder lives in barren and remote areas of the Sudan. Thousands are being further displaced by raids on IDP camps to sites in desert areas where there are virtually no life-sustaining facilities.⁸⁷

a. *IDPs from South Sudan*

The most recent survey on the demographic characteristics and socio-economic conditions of IDPs in camps in northern the Sudan was carried out in 2006 by IOM. About 40 per cent of IDPs in the camps in Khartoum are from southern Sudan and have been displaced for a lengthy period of time.⁸⁸ The average period of displacement is 17 years, although some have spent as long as 22 years as IDPs.⁸⁹ More than 54 per cent of IDPs in northern Sudan live in mud brick houses, while 21 per cent live in traditional mud huts and 16 per cent live in structures made of cardboard, plastic and sticks.⁹⁰ Sixty per cent of adults and 50 per cent of children reported having only two meals per day; only 22 per cent of adults and 31 per cent of children had three meals per day. An IOM survey of 40,000 IDPs identified only 27 doctors out of a total of 277 health professionals.⁹¹ About 36 per cent of IDPs aged 7 and over had not received any formal education; about half of the school age population attended school, and only 27 per cent of children

of primary school age attended primary schools.⁹² Close to 20 per cent of IDPs in North Sudan were employed in 2006, and 14 per cent reported that they were not working. The remaining IDPs were students, minors or housewives.⁹³

b. *Darfuri IDPs*

The main concern for IDPs in Darfur is personal security. Access for humanitarian workers is extremely difficult and dangerous and widespread violence continues to trigger waves of population displacement.⁹⁴ Women and children are particularly vulnerable to violence in IDP camps, and an estimated 4,500 children are associated with armed groups.⁹⁵ In early 2009, the Secretary-General of the United Nations warned that if the fighting in Darfur did not stop, the humanitarian consequences would be catastrophic.⁹⁶

Millions of Darfuris are dependent on humanitarian aid for their basic needs. During the month of October 2008, 3.5 million Darfuris received food aid, and approximately 2.5 million received assistance to access clean water, adequate sanitation and primary health care and basic drug supplies.⁹⁷ Only 65 per cent of school age children in Darfur enrolled in school in 2008.⁹⁸

c. *Returnees*

Forced population movement inside the Sudan is complicated by the approximately two million individuals who returned to South Sudan

⁸⁴ United Nations. 2008. *Work Plan for Sudan, Mid-Year Review of Consolidated Appeal Process*; UNHCR. 2008. *Sudan Operations at a Glance*, 30 June; OCHA. 2008. *Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 32*, July. IRIN News. 2008. *Sudan: Preparing for massive demobilization*. 21 October

⁸⁵ IDMC. 2007. *Sudan: Outlook for IDPs Remains Bleak*, 12 October.

⁸⁶ UNHCR 2007. *Op. cit.*

⁸⁷ IRIN News (21 October 2008). *Op. cit.*

⁸⁸ IOM. 2006. *IDP Intentions Survey 2006, Survey Results*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. vi, 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 31.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹⁴ Office of the UN Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan. 2008. *Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 33*, 1 October, p. 3.

⁹⁵ See UNICEF website at: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan_darfuroverview.html. Accessed on 23 January 2009.

⁹⁶ IRIN News. 2009. *SUDAN: UN Warns of Humanitarian Catastrophe if Darfur Fighting Continues*, 19 January.

⁹⁷ Office of the UN Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan (2008). *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

from the North. Almost 300,000 registered refugees from the second civil war have also returned, mostly from neighbouring countries. Most of these IDPs are returning to the South under their own steam, and only about 10 per cent have received assistance from UNHCR.⁹⁹ The challenges associated with assisting the reintegration of the returnees are enormous. In 2008, it is reported that more than half of the families returning to southern Sudan are headed by a single female head of household.¹⁰⁰ Most returnees are returning to areas that have been ravaged by war, where infrastructure and humanitarian and basic social services, such as clean water, health and education facilities either never existed in the first place, or have been destroyed.¹⁰¹

(iii) *Non-Sudanese refugees in the Sudan*

The Government of the Sudan reports that there are currently over 600,000 non-Sudanese refugees in the Sudan.¹⁰² UNHCR registered some 220,000 refugees in the Sudan in June 2008, 157,220 of whom are from Eritrea, 52,030 from Chad, 11,000 from Ethiopia, and the rest from Central African Republic and Somalia. About 125,000 of these refugees live in 25 refugee camps; 30,000 of them live in urban areas in Khartoum and 50,000 are in Darfur, while the remainder live in shanty towns and various urban areas.¹⁰³

The Government of the Sudan has had a generous approach towards refugees on its soil, and is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. However, it also has its own refugee law, the 1974

Regulation of Asylum Act, which imposes restrictions on land ownership and movement.¹⁰⁴

3. *Displaced persons in and from Iraq*

The almost 4.8 million Iraqi displaced persons are experiencing both emergency and protracted displacement. With 2.8 million internally displaced and up to two million refugees hosted by ESCWA member countries,¹⁰⁵ the ongoing crisis in Iraq is one of the worst this region has experienced since the Palestinian exodus in 1948.

TABLE 2. UNHCR ESTIMATES OF NUMBERS OF IRAQI REFUGEES AND IDPS SINCE 2003

| Period | Refugees | IDPs |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Before 2003 | - | 1 000 000 |
| From 2003 to 2006 | 1 200 000 | 190 000 |
| After 2006 | 800 000 | 1 600 000 |
| Total | 2 000 000 | 2 790 000 |

Note: Data valid as of November 2008.

One million of the 2.8 million IDPs in Iraq are in a protracted state of displacement as a result of four decades of wars and uprisings. From 2003 to 2006, 1.2 million Iraqis fled to neighbouring countries, while an additional 190,000 became internally displaced.¹⁰⁶ The bombing of the Shiite Al-Askari mosque in Samarra in 2006 led to intense civil strife and sectarian conflict, and produced a further 1.6 million IDPs and about 800,000 refugees.¹⁰⁷ These figures are, however, only estimates as the lack of security, fluid population movements and the fact that most IDPs are in urban areas, prevent access to and regular monitoring of the displaced. Registration with Government agencies designated to assist displaced persons is voluntary and contingent upon documentation which may be unavailable to the displaced.

⁹⁹ United Nations. 2008. Op. cit; UNHCR. 2007. Evaluation of UNHCR's Returnee Reintegration Programme in Southern Sudan.

¹⁰⁰ IRIN News. 2008. *Sudan: More Young Southerners Returning Home*, 27 October.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR. 2008. *South Sudan Operation*.

¹⁰² Contribution of the Government of Sudan, p. 1.

¹⁰³ UNHCR. 2008. *Sudan Operations at a Glance*, 30 June.

¹⁰⁴ Assal, M. 2007. *Refugees from and to Sudan*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR estimates available at: <http://unhcr.org.iq>.

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR. 2008. *Iraq Operation, Monthly Statistical Update*, October, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

In addition to the ongoing displacement of Iraqis, the country also hosts 42,000 registered refugees from neighbouring countries, including 15,000 Palestinians, 15,000 Turkish Kurds, 11,000 Iranians, 580 Syrians and 140 Sudanese.¹⁰⁸ The protection and assistance needs of these refugees varied according to their ethnic background, some refugees, especially Palestinians and Turkish Kurds, required assistance with respect to their personal security and survival needs.¹⁰⁹

(a) *Iraqi IDPs*

Those Iraqis displaced prior to 2003 remain displaced for a variety of reasons, including the fact that many did not have a home to go back to, and because there were few employment opportunities, property disputes and the presence of unexploded ordnance.¹¹⁰ Fighting between the Coalition Forces and insurgents and sectarian violence forced many Iraqis into internal displacement after 2003. Crime and inter-tribal friction also contribute to internal displacement. Sectarian violence normally takes place in settings with large ethnically diverse populations.¹¹¹ Furthermore, there tends to be less violence in areas where there is a functioning local authority – mainly in the Kurdish North and the southern Shia towns (other than Basra). The main pattern of displacement is based on the consolidation of territory; in essence, people flee to areas where they feel safer. Shiites go to Shia areas, Sunnis go to Sunni areas, Kurds go to the northern provinces, and Christians go to parts of Nineweh province.¹¹²

While the rate of displacement inside Iraq has slowed down considerably, IDPs in Iraq continue to face deteriorating living conditions with poor access to shelter, food, health care,

water, and other basic services.¹¹³ Sixty-five per cent of IDPs displaced since 2003 originated from Baghdad.¹¹⁴ The main reasons given for a change of residence are security (48 per cent) and ethnic conflict (30 per cent).¹¹⁵

The number of displaced in Iraq is comparable to the number of displaced in the Sudan.¹¹⁶ Unlike Sudanese IDPs, most IDPs in Iraq do not reside in camps, but are for the most part integrated into the general population. Only about 2 per cent of Iraqi IDPs live in camps.¹¹⁷ This makes it much more difficult to register, assess, monitor and provide humanitarian assistance to them. For the same reason, and because population movement is still taking place, it is also difficult to obtain accurate statistics about the living conditions of IDPs as a distinct segment of the population. Nevertheless, information about living conditions is relevant to the extent that it can be extrapolated that conditions for IDPs are equal or worse. With mass internal movement of people and a Government hampered by severe security restrictions, reliable data on overall social conditions are difficult to tabulate. Reports on socio-economic conditions reveal slightly inconsistent statistics, but the overall trend is consistent: standards of living and quality of life for Iraqis is far below acceptable levels.

Unemployment, inflation, displacement and lack of security all contribute to high poverty levels in Iraq. Poverty levels vary between 25 to 54 per cent.¹¹⁸ Many displaced families are unable

¹⁰⁸ UNHCR estimates available at: <http://unhcr.org.iq>.

¹⁰⁹ UNHCR. 2008. *Iraq Operation at a Glance*, 16 November, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ IDP Working Group. 2008. *Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq: Update*. 24 March, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Al-Khalidi, A. and Tanner, V. 2006. Op. cit. p. 7.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 7; IOM. 2008. *Iraq Displacement 2008: Year in Review*.

¹¹³ OCHA. 2008. *Consolidated Appeal for Iraq*, 12 February, Executive Summary.

¹¹⁴ WFP. 2008. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment in Iraq*, p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁶ See opening remarks by John Holmes, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Available at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/YSAR-7DHL88?OpenDocument>.

¹¹⁷ Ferris, E. 2008. *The Looming Crisis: Displacement and Security in Iraq*. Foreign Policy at Brookings, Policy Paper Number 5, August, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Government of Iraq. 2007. *The International Compact with Iraq: Mid-Year Progress Report*, 20 July; Ferris, E. and Hall, M. 2007. *Update on Humanitarian Issues and Politics in Iraq*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 6 July 2007.

to collect Government child support allowances that are conditional upon proof of school attendance.¹¹⁹ Another programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to pay widows about US\$ 50-100 per month, which is not enough to support a family.¹²⁰

(i) *Shelter*

It is estimated that one million Iraqi IDPs are in need of adequate shelter.¹²¹ About 16 per cent of displaced families are currently living with friends or relatives, 60 per cent are renting homes and 5-7 per cent of them live in public buildings and makeshift townships, respectively.¹²² As most IDPs left jobs and the bulk of their assets behind, they must rely on savings or the generosity of relatives for survival. In addition, many IDPs have been unable to obtain official identity and travel documents, and so remain in hiding to avoid arrest or detention. These factors also serve to partially disguise the massive scale of displacement, and make it difficult to provide assistance to relieve the strain placed on host communities.

(ii) *Health*

Fourteen per cent of IDPs have reported that they have no access to health care, and 30 per cent report that they could not obtain the medicines they needed.¹²³ Lack of access to health care has been reported to be as high as 65 per cent in Kirkuk, while 11 per cent in Baghdad did not have access to health care.¹²⁴ The malnutrition rate is 8 per cent and the under-five mortality rate is 46 per 1,000 persons.¹²⁵ In addition, about 300,000 Iraqi IDPs do not have

¹¹⁹ Oxfam and NCCI. 2007. *Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq*.

¹²⁰ Ibid.; IRIN News. 2007. *IRAQ: Women MPs, Activists Call for More Support for Widows, Divorced Women*, 17 December.

¹²¹ IDP Working Group. 2008. *Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq*, Update, 24 March, p. 1.

¹²² IDMC. December 2008, p. 238.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 216.

¹²⁴ IDP Working Group. 2008. P. 17.

¹²⁵ OCHA, February 2008.

access to clean water and require legal assistance to access other basic services.¹²⁶ The difficulties faced by IDPs in accessing health services varied from district to district, for example in Diyala 42 per cent did not have access to water, as compared with 17 per cent in Baghdad.¹²⁷

(iii) *Education*

Access to schools in Iraq has been restricted by poor security conditions and a shortage of teachers. While 90 per cent of IDP children are registered to go to school, an estimated 86 per cent of these children did not attend on a regular basis.¹²⁸ Internally displaced children have great difficulty accessing education. Many are forced to work to support their families, or cannot attend school because of their status as IDP children and lack of documentation.¹²⁹

(iv) *Income and employment*

One million Iraqis do not have a regular income.¹³⁰ Most Iraqis, but particularly IDPs, face widespread unemployment because of the shortage of job opportunities.¹³¹ Unemployment levels are estimated to range between 40-60 per cent.¹³² About one million Iraqis are classified as food insecure by the World Food Programme (WFP). An additional 2.8 million are dependent on food rations from the Public Distribution System (PDS); the latter would be classified as food insecure if they did not have access to these food rations.¹³³ The PDS represents the main safety net for vulnerable Iraqis. For IDPs, access to PDS rations can be more difficult, as many are unable to transfer their ration cards, issued on the basis of residence, to their place of displacement. In a 2008 assessment, 49 per cent of IDPs reported that they had periodic access to their rations, while 21 per cent reported that they were

¹²⁶ IDP Working Group. 2008. Op. cit., p. 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

¹²⁸ WFP. 2008. P. 30.

¹²⁹ IDMC. 2008. Op. cit., p. 18.

¹³⁰ IDP Working Group. 2008. P. 1.

¹³¹ IOM. 2008. Op. cit., p. 6.

¹³² Ferris, E. 2008. Op. cit., p. 4.

¹³³ WFP. 2008. Op. cit. p. 2.

unable to access rations at all.¹³⁴ As a result, WFP has provided food assistance to up to 750,000 of these IDPs in 2008.¹³⁵

(b) *Iraqi refugees*

Over two million Iraqi citizens have fled to neighbouring countries, mainly in the Middle East, but also to other countries. There are an estimated 450,000 to 500,000 Iraqi refugees in Jordan,¹³⁶ 1.2-1.4 million in the Syrian Arab Republic,¹³⁷ 200,000 Iraqis in the Gulf States, 100,000 in Egypt,¹³⁸ 57,000 in the Islamic Republic of Iran,¹³⁹ and 50,000 in Lebanon.¹⁴⁰

As is the case inside for those displaced inside Iraq, those that have left the country have left in a steady flow over a period of years rather than in one mass exodus. Iraqi refugees do not live in camps but have instead melted into urban centres and surrounding suburban areas. As a result, the scale of displacement and living conditions and needs of the displaced are largely hidden, thereby making it very difficult to evaluate, monitor and assist Iraqi refugees in ESCWA member countries. It is probably safe to conclude that the majority of Iraqi refugees are surviving without institutional assistance, and the financial strain on host countries is perhaps less important because they have developed effective coping mechanisms.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, it is estimated that diminishing resources is leading to deteriorating living conditions among IDPs and

refugees due to rising prices in food, fuel and rent, dwindling Government resources available to care for refugees and inadequate support from donor countries.

The numbers and status of displaced Iraqis are not known with any certainty due to the dearth of accurate and reliable data, but it is clear that the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan are shouldering the highest financial burden arising from this displacement.

(i) *Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan*

Jordan accepted Iraqis as “temporary guests” and the Syrian Arab Republic granted them automatic refugee status under its national laws.¹⁴² However, in November 2006, Jordan introduced new entry restrictions requiring Iraqis to obtain visas before entry; this same practice was adopted by the Syrian Arab Republic in 2007.¹⁴³

The Iraq-Syrian Arab Republic border extends over 600 km. The influx of Iraqi refugees as a result of the 2003 invasion is the latest of large waves of refugees who have previously been exiled in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic did not at first impose stringent entry requirements on most of the Iraqi refugees wishing to enter the country, and allowed them to settle freely and have access to basic services. According to Government statistics, Iraqi refugees represent over 8 per cent of the total Syrian population. Moreover, 85 per cent of these refugees reside in or around Damascus.¹⁴⁴ Amnesty International has reported that Syrian officials have expressed concern over the growing number of Iraqi women and girls that have been forced by their families, or by desperation, into the sex trade to earn money to meet the daily needs of their families.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁴ IDMC. 2008. P. 211.

¹³⁵ WFP. 2008. P. 23.

¹³⁶ FAFO. 2007. *Iraqis in Jordan. Their Number and Characteristics*.

¹³⁷ UNHCR Iraqi Refugees in the World, 2007.

¹³⁸ Government of Egypt contribution to this report (estimates), December 2008; UNHCR estimates this figure to be up to 70,000.

¹³⁹ UNHCR. 2007. *Statistics on Displaced Iraqis around the World*, April.

¹⁴⁰ Danish Refugee Council. 2007. *Iraqi Population Survey in Lebanon*, November, p. 10.

¹⁴¹ See University of Sussex Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, Forced Migration and Policy in the Middle East. Available at: <http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/projects/project6b.html>.

¹⁴² Fargues, P. et al. 2008. *Iraqis in Egypt. A Statistical Survey in 2008*, pp. 10-12.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 10-13.

¹⁴⁴ Contribution of the Government of Syria, December 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

The most recent accurate survey on Iraqi refugees in Jordan was carried out by FAFO in 2007. The report states that the migration of Iraqis to Jordan is predominantly a migration of families, with the highest volume of movement of population taking place in 2004 and 2005, according to the Jordanian border authorities. The survey showed that the vast majority of Iraqi refugees in Jordan reside in Amman, and had originally come from Baghdad. Thirty-five per cent of the Iraqis in Jordan have registered with UNHCR.¹⁴⁶

In Jordan, 25 per cent of Iraqi refugees own their own homes, which is a very high percentage. The remainder rent their homes, as is the case for the majority of Iraqis in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon.¹⁴⁷ Most Iraqis in Jordan are well educated, but only 30 per cent of working age adults are employed.¹⁴⁸ Most Iraqi households in Jordan are highly dependent on savings and transfers as a source of income, and 42 per cent receive transfers from Iraq.¹⁴⁹ According to a 2008 survey of Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, 33 per cent have financial resources for three months or less and 24 per cent rely on remittances from abroad.¹⁵⁰ Thus, as the Iraqi refugee situation becomes more protracted, more and more Iraqis will become vulnerable as their savings and remittances dry up.

In both Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraqis are entitled to access Governmental health care. Because most Iraqi refugees are living in urban areas in ESCWA member countries, they benefit from municipal services: in Jordan, for example, the majority are connected to public sewage, water and electricity networks.¹⁵¹ Both Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic allow Iraqis to have access to Government education. However, in the Syrian Arab Republic, 10 per cent of Iraqi refugee children are reportedly working, and 46 per cent

have dropped out of school.¹⁵² In Jordan, enrolment is better, with 78 per cent of school age children enrolled in school.

(ii) *Iraqi refugees in Lebanon*

The actual number of Iraqi refugees or asylum-seekers in Lebanon is difficult to estimate, as it is believed that many remain in hiding. Estimates put the figure at 50,000, about 11,000 of whom have registered with UNHCR.¹⁵³ Most Iraqi asylum-seekers entered Lebanon in the course of 2006 and 2007; the numbers entering in 2008 were significantly lower and it is projected that the number will decrease further in 2009.¹⁵⁴ Only 30 per cent of Iraqi refugees living in Lebanon have obtained legal status and the majority of them are single males. More than 80 per cent of them live in Beirut and its suburbs. In February 2008, the Government began to implement a policy allowing those Iraqi asylum-seekers who entered the country illegally to regularize their status within three months, and thereafter obtain residency and work permits.¹⁵⁵

There is limited information available on the socio-economic status of Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers in Lebanon, as most of them entered the country illegally and are living in hiding in urban centres. A recent Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Iraqi Population Survey of about 3,000 Iraqis in Lebanon shows that most of them work in the informal sector and earn an average of US\$ 250 per month per household.¹⁵⁶ Seventy-five per cent reported that their main source of income came from their livelihood, while the rest relied on savings and outside assistance. As most Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are illegal immigrants, they mainly work in the non-formal labour market as daily or weekly paid workers. About 60 per cent of the men and 18 per cent of women surveyed were working. Twenty per cent of boys and adolescents aged under 18 were active in the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵⁰ UNHCR. 2008. *Iraq Situation Update*, 4 January, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ FAFO, p. 11.

¹⁵² UNHCR. 2008. *Iraq Situation Update*, op. cit.

¹⁵³ Danish Refugee Council. 2007. Op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ OCHA. 2008. *Consolidated Appeal 2009, Lebanon: An Overview*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁵ IRIN News. 2008. *Lebanon: UNHCR Welcomes Move to Ease Plight of Iraqi Asylum-seekers*, 21 February 2008.

¹⁵⁶ Danish Refugee Council. 2007. Op. cit.

labour market.¹⁵⁷ Recent reconstruction activity and demand for cheap labour has created limited employment opportunities for Iraqis in Lebanon. UNHCR reports that many Iraqis in Lebanon have difficulty paying rent.¹⁵⁸ Iraqis in Lebanon are able to access both Government and private health services provided that they can pay for them out-of-pocket. UNHCR has provided health services for the 11,000 registered refugees who need such services.¹⁵⁹ More than 50 per cent of the Iraqis in Lebanon report that they pay their own expenses for private health care, while 25 per cent report receiving health services from NGOs or other non-profit organizations.

The Ministry of Education has confirmed to UNHCR that all Iraqi children in Lebanon, regardless of their status, are in theory allowed to access public and private Lebanese schools. It is estimated that 66 per cent of all school-age children are enrolled in school.¹⁶⁰ However, the DRC survey found that many Iraqi families do not send their children to school because of the prohibitive cost, or because many children must work to help support their families.

(iii) *Iraqi refugees in Egypt*

According to the Government of Egypt, Iraqis have been welcomed in the country, thus allowing them to buy and own business and real estate.¹⁶¹ In 2006, the Government introduced visa requirements for Iraqis wishing to enter the country.¹⁶² The Egyptian Government estimates that there are 100,000 Iraqis refugees in Egypt, although in 2008 UNHCR had only registered about 11,000 of them.¹⁶³ However, there has been no formal assessment of their numbers or the socio-economic conditions they are experiencing.

As in the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan, in the absence of any real data, Iraqis in Egypt are assumed to be middle-class professionals with their own resources; they also live in urban areas and do not require, or only need, minimal outside assistance.¹⁶⁴ However, as is also the case in the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan, even middle-class Iraqis are vulnerable when their personal resources dry up; as their displacement becomes more prolonged, they also face an increased risk of lapsing into illegality, unemployment and poverty. In a recent survey of 1,000 mostly UNHCR-registered Iraqi families in Egypt, about 80 per cent of them had residency permits, but only 11 per cent of those of working age were actually working.¹⁶⁵ Educational services have been provided to Iraqi students since the first Gulf war, which caused an influx of Iraqi refugees into Egypt in 1992. According to the Government of Egypt, hospitalization in public hospitals is provided free of charge to Iraqi refugees in Egypt.¹⁶⁶

4. *Displaced persons in and from Lebanon*

Lebanon has a history of migration, with a diaspora of about 16 million people, more than four times the estimated population of Lebanon of 3.8 million.¹⁶⁷ Lebanon has also experienced mass waves of conflict-driven displacement, both as a country of origin and a host country. The main populations of conflict-related displaced are Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi, who became displaced as a result of the Lebanese civil war, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the July 2006 war with Israel, the conflict in Iraq and the Nahr el-Bared crisis in northern Lebanon. There are also smaller numbers of refugees of other nationalities in the country.

(a) *Protracted displacement in Lebanon*

It is estimated that one million Lebanese were either temporarily or permanently displaced

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operations Plan Lebanon 2008-2009*.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ OCHA. 2008. *Consolidated Appeal 2009*.

¹⁶¹ Government of Egypt contribution to this report (estimates), December 2008.

¹⁶² Fargues et al. 2008. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁶³ UNHCR Fact Sheet – Egypt, July 2008.

¹⁶⁴ Fargues et al. 2008. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶⁶ Government of Egypt contribution to this report (estimates), December 2008.

¹⁶⁷ See the website of UNDP, available at: <http://www.undp.org.lb/about/AboutLebanon.cfm>.

when the city was divided along sectarian lines by militias representing the various confessional groups during the 1975-1990 civil war. While there was no systematic monitoring of displacement during this period, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Lebanese also fled the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands were displaced as a result of Israeli military invasions in 1978, 1982 and 1996.¹⁶⁸ Many of these displaced persons have never returned to their homes. Permanent displacement of different sectarian groups into more homogeneously populated neighbourhoods and regions has reinforced sectarian divisions in the country. In the absence of any formal surveys, estimates of the numbers of Lebanese that remain displaced vary from 17,000 to 600,000.¹⁶⁹ A study published in 1997 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on post-war Lebanon sums up the difficulty in calculating the numbers of displaced: “Many surveys and studies have been undertaken to determine the magnitude of the problem of permanent displacement [in Lebanon in the 1980s and 1990s]. However, any attempt to compare the figures on population movements and distribution reveals large disparities. Despite the many discrepancies, all surveys give some indication of the scale of a phenomenon that has affected every region of Lebanon”.¹⁷⁰

The other enduring displacement issue in Lebanon is its role as one of the host countries to the population of Palestinian refugees, originally expelled from Israel as a result of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars and the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan in 1970.

(i) *IDPs in Lebanon*

More recent waves of internal displacement have been caused by the July 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon and the 2007 Nahr al-Bared crisis. About one million people, one quarter of the population, were displaced during the Israeli bombardment of

¹⁶⁸ Assaf, G and El-Fil, R. 2007. Resolving the issue of war displacement in Lebanon. *Forced Migration Review*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Norwegian Refugee Council and IDMC. 2008. *Internal Displacement, Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2007*.

¹⁷⁰ Nauphal, N. 1997. *Women and other War-affected Groups*.

civilian targets and municipal infrastructure in the July 2006 war.¹⁷¹ Out of that number, some 735,000 were internally displaced, and some 230,000 fled for the most part to the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan.¹⁷² Over 100,000 IDPs fleeing the country, including many highly educated and skilled individuals, chose to settle permanently outside Lebanon.¹⁷³ The total number of displaced from the 2006 war includes the secondary displacement of about 16,000 Palestinian refugees.¹⁷⁴ Most Lebanese IDPs received compensation and returned to their homes or were resettled into new housing, either of their own accord or with the assistance of the Government, charitable organizations or other donors.¹⁷⁵ It is estimated that 40,000-70,000 Lebanese people remain displaced, mainly because their homes have been destroyed.¹⁷⁶

In addition, about 32,000 Palestinian refugees and some Lebanese became displaced when the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp was destroyed during three months of fighting between the Lebanese Army and the radical militant group Fatah al-Islam in May 2007.¹⁷⁷

(ii) *Refugees in Lebanon*

The Lebanese Constitution pledges that the country abides by Article 14 of the Universal

¹⁷¹ See UNHCR website, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/lebanon-crisis>; the Government of Lebanon Higher Relief Council: <http://www.lebanonunder siege.gov.lb/english/f/main/index.asp>. See also the Government of Lebanon paper “Lebanese Republic Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform”, International Conference for Support to Lebanon, 25 January 2007, Paris.

¹⁷² World Bank. 2007. *Quarterly Update*, First Quarter.

¹⁷³ Government of Lebanon. 2006. *Rebuilding Lebanon Together: 100 Days After*, 21 November.

¹⁷⁴ Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution S-2/1, 10 November 2006.

¹⁷⁵ IDMC. 2006. *Lebanon: Displaced Return Amidst Growing Political Tension*, 15 December.

¹⁷⁶ ESCWA Interview with Head of UNHCR, 4 November 2008; Consultation and Research Institute. 2007. *Post Conflict Social and Livelihoods Assessment in Lebanon*, June; IDMC. 2006. *Op. cit.*

¹⁷⁷ Norwegian refugee Council and IDMC. 2007. *Op. cit.*

Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to seek and enjoy asylum. While it is true that Lebanon does not wish to see refugees staying forever, they have granted temporary stay to asylum-seekers while durable solutions are found outside Lebanon.

There are two main refugee populations in Lebanon consisting of about 240,000 Palestinians and 50,000 Iraqis. Lebanon is not signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and has been somewhat less generous towards refugees and asylum-seekers than the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan, for example.¹⁷⁸ In 2003, the Government of Lebanon signed a memorandum with UNHCR, in which it declared that it does not consider itself an asylum country. Under the memorandum, UNHCR is solely responsible for determining whether an asylum-seeker is a refugee. The memorandum, which covers only those individuals who entered the country after its entry into force, allows persons of concern who have approached UNHCR to stay in the country up to one year so that UNHCR can attempt to resettle or repatriate them.¹⁷⁹

5. Displacement into and within Yemen

There are three relevant waves of forced migration into and within Yemen today: internal displacement as a result of armed conflict in the northern governorate of Sa'ada; migration from the Horn of Africa as a result of the conflict in Somalia and persecution and extreme poverty in Ethiopia and Eritrea; and refugees from Iraq who reach Yemen predominantly through other countries in the Middle East. Much of the migration to and through Yemen is due to its location along a historical migration route from the Horn of Africa to the richer Gulf counties. Displacement in Yemen includes persons displaced by conflicts, economic migrants, and those who may be fleeing economic hardship or

¹⁷⁸ IRIN News. 2007. Iraqi Refugees Face Prison and Deportation, 6 November. Article available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=75172>.

¹⁷⁹ Lebanon Operational Highlights in UNHCR. 2008. Op. cit., June; United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. 2008. *World Refugee Survey Report 2009*; Human Rights Watch. 2007. *Rot Here or Die There, Bleak Choices for Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon*, Volume 19, no. 8 (E), November.

political persecution in Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea and who may qualify for asylum under UNHCR standards.¹⁸⁰

(a) Internal displacement in Yemen

The conflict in the Sa'ada governorate is essentially between Huthi rebels and local tribes in the North and the Government and its allied tribes.¹⁸¹ Between June 2004 and November 2008, over 100,000 people have been internally displaced as a result of five consecutive rounds of battles.¹⁸² About 20,000 people live in seven camps in and around Sa'ada town, 40,000 are living with relatives or other supporters in the city itself, with the remainder displaced to other areas.¹⁸³

The conflict in the Sa'ada governorate shares important elements with other conflicts in the ESCWA region, as it also has tribal and sectarian elements. The most basic common characteristic between Yemen and the Sudan and Iraq is that of a weak and fragile State that is unable to either establish sufficient control over parts of its territory to prevent armed rebellions, or to meet the needs of affected populations. Reported restrictions on access to information about the conflict and on access of humanitarian agencies to the conflict area has prevented adequate assessment of the socio-economic condition and humanitarian needs of the displaced.¹⁸⁴ Those agencies that do have access have reported that IDPs face severe conditions, including poor access to potable water and health and sanitation services.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ UNHCR. 2008. Country Operations Plan for Yemen, 2008-2009.

¹⁸¹ IRIN News. 2008. *Yemen: 100,000 People Affected by the Rebellion in the North, May; and Yemen: The Conflict in the Sa'ada Governorate – Analysis*, July.

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch. 2008. *Invisible Civilians, The Challenge of Humanitarian Access in Yemen's Forgotten War*, November, p. 2.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸⁴ IRIN News. 2008. *Yemen: Tens of Thousands beyond Reach of Aid Agencies – Rights Group*, 20 November; Human Rights Watch. 2008. Op. cit., pp. 25, 37-38.

¹⁸⁵ ICRC Operational Update, 5 May 2008, ICRC New Release 08/73, 14 May 2008.

(b) *Refugees in Yemen*

Yemen hosts about 800,000 refugees and non-refugees from the Horn of Africa.¹⁸⁶ According to UNHCR, there are approximately 127,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Yemen. Most of them are Somalis, who have been arriving in increasing numbers since the beginning of the Somali civil war in 1988. The Government of Yemen reports that there are 700,000 refugees in Yemen.¹⁸⁷ This number probably includes economic migrants. Yemen is one of the few regional signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and Somalis are given automatic refugee status upon entry into the country.¹⁸⁸ Asylum-seekers, mostly Ethiopian and Eritrean, do not enjoy many of the rights of Somalis who are automatically granted refugee status; many do not apply for fear of being deported and thus many live a semi-legal existence with very few guaranteed rights and lack of access to basic services.¹⁸⁹

Iraqi refugees have also arrived in Yemen via other Arab states, mainly Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and many do not register as refugees. A reported 11,000 have arrived since 2003 to join a community of 70,000 who have lived there since the Iran-Iraq war. Many Iraqis do not feel the need to register as refugees as they enjoy greater rights as Arab citizens than as refugees under Yemeni law, so the actual number of Iraqis may differ greatly from reported numbers.¹⁹⁰

6. *Other cases of forced displacement throughout the ESCWA region*

Displacement occurs throughout the region on a smaller scale, as a result of internal conflicts, ethnic and sectarian tensions, or discrimination

¹⁸⁶ IRIN News. 2008. *Yemen: Influx of Migrants Strains Resources*, 20 November.

¹⁸⁷ Contribution from the Government of Yemen received 17 December 2008.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; UNHCR Asylum and Migration, July-August 2008.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ USCRI. 2008. *World Refugee Survey, Yemen*. Available at: http://www.refugees.org/countryreports_spx?id=2180. Accessed on 13 October 2008.

against minority groups. Ethnic and religious minority populations from Iraq, including Kurds, Palestinians, Turkomans, Christians, Jews, Mandaeans and Yazidis, have been highly vulnerable to displacement due to ethnic targeting.

Approximately 300,000 Syrian Arabs remain displaced in the Syrian Arab Republic, descendants of those expelled from the Golan Heights in the Six Day War in 1967.¹⁹¹ Many have expressed the wish to return or to maintain contacts with family members among the estimated 21,000 Syrians who continue to live in the Golan Heights. However, Israel continues to prevent their return and has denied them access to the Golan Heights.¹⁹²

B. DURABLE SOLUTIONS

The search for durable solutions for displaced populations is an integral part of protecting and assisting the displaced. In theory, there are three possible solutions to end displacement: resettlement, whether to another country (for refugees) or to another area within a country (for IDPs); integration into the place of displacement; or return to place of origin. The preferred durable solution, and right of all displaced persons, is the right to return to their place of origin. In reality, ESCWA member countries are faced with several protracted displacement issues that have no clear cut and obvious durable solutions. This is notably the case for refugees from Palestine, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and Sudanese IDPs.

It is considerably more difficult to find durable solutions for victims of displacement caused by internal conflict than for those who have been displaced as a result of an external threat. This is especially the case in situations where the displacement is pre-mediated, in other words where it was “both an objective and a strategy”¹⁹³ of either Governmental bodies or

¹⁹¹ IDMC. 2007. *Syria: Forty Years On, People Displaced from the Golan Remain in Waiting*, 31 October, p. 1.

¹⁹² ICRC operational update. 2007. ICRC Activities in the Occupied Golan, 22 March.

¹⁹³ Ferris, E. 2008. *The Looming Crisis: Displacement and Security in Iraq*, August.

armed groups to alter the demographic balance of the country or region. This is in contrast to the displacement which occurred in Lebanon following the July 2006 war. Most of those displaced were able to return to their homes or communities because national authorities and civil society organizations were able to assist the displaced following the cessation of hostilities.

The right to durable solutions for most displaced populations is enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The durable solutions available for Palestinian refugees are set out in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948, which confirms the inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their place of origin. Most displaced populations in the ESCWA region can exercise their right to return whenever conditions are suitable, or alternatively can elect to be absorbed or resettled; however, this has not been the case for Palestinians who have not been able to exercise their right of return, after more than 60 years in exile. As the options of absorption and resettlement are either undesirable, or in some cases unavailable, to most Palestinian refugees, durable solutions will not be found until such time as international law is implemented and a political solution is found to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

1. *Iraqi displaced*

UNHCR submitted 21,000 cases for Iraqi refugees to resettlement in a third country in 2008.¹⁹⁴ Political and social conditions for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are not favourable for integration, particularly for those displaced since 2003. Neither country has the capacity nor the political will to absorb large numbers of displaced, especially as they already host large longstanding populations of Palestinian refugees.

For Iraqi refugees and IDPs, return is becoming an increasingly critical issue, especially as the security situation continues to improve. While some Iraqi IDPs may choose to stay in their

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR. 2008. *UNHCR Appeals for \$261 Million for Iraqi Refugee Programmes in 2008*, 8 January. Press release available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/iraq?page=press&id=47834b574>.

place of displacement, especially if the demographic boundaries of neighbourhoods have been redrawn, 61 per cent of IDPs recently surveyed by the IOM wish to return home, a figure that rises to 82 per cent among IDPs who were displaced within the same governorate.¹⁹⁵

However, adequate conditions must be in place before large-scale returns can occur. If returns occur too soon or too quickly, the returnees will only rejoin existing displaced populations. By the end of 2008, United Nations agencies were still hesitant about officially sanctioning returns due to insufficiently improved security conditions. Nevertheless, the Iraqi Government had begun providing cash and other incentives to encourage returns, and has introduced measures to assist IDPs to repossess their property and belongings.¹⁹⁶ In August 2008, the Government issued a decree authorizing evictions of people occupying private properties.¹⁹⁷ In 2008, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration opened a second return centre in Baghdad to facilitate registration and provide legal and protection assistance to returning IDPs and refugees. Displaced Iraqi families have also been informed on the availability of Government benefits, financial compensation and restitution of property.

By November 2008, about 200,000 Iraqis had returned to their places of origin, 91 per cent of which were IDPs and 9 per cent refugees.¹⁹⁸ The majority of IDPs returned given that they felt confident about the security situation.¹⁹⁹ Refugees returning from the Syrian Arab Republic did so mainly for financial reasons and because they had no work or lacked funds to pay for visa renewals, and because they wanted to access personal resources and Government benefits in Iraq.²⁰⁰ However, many of the original homes of IDPs are

¹⁹⁵ IOM. 2008. *Iraqi Displacement Mid-Year in Review*.

¹⁹⁶ IOM. 2008. *Monitoring and Needs Assessments: Assessment of Iraqi Returns*, August, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁰⁰ UNHCR. 2008. *Iraq Situation Update – 4 January*, p. 2.

uninhabitable, and 32 per cent of IDPs report that their original home had been occupied, causing prolonged and repeated displacement.²⁰¹

2. Sudanese displaced

Return to their places of origin has become the solution of choice for many Sudanese IDPs and refugees. Under the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which ended the civil war in the Sudan, more than two million displaced persons returned to South Sudan, about 10 per cent of these returnees received assistance from IOM, the United Nations and their partners. About 300,000 of the two million returnees were registered refugees and mostly returning from neighbouring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.²⁰² About 40 per cent of IDPs in North Sudan who decided not to return said that they were unable to do so due to lack of funds. Other reasons included lack of transport, lack of basic services at the place of return and uncertain security conditions.²⁰³

The challenges associated with assisting the resettlement of returnees in the Sudan are enormous. Most returnees are returning to areas that have been ravaged by war, where infrastructure and humanitarian and basic social services, such as clean water, health and education facilities, either never existed in the first place or have been destroyed.²⁰⁴ Evaluating the socio-economic status of returnees is extremely difficult as there is no coordinated national, regional or international inter-agency strategic framework for facilitating the return of IDPs and refugees, and limited assistance to returnees and the communities they are returning to.²⁰⁵ This has

²⁰¹ IOM (August 2008), *Ibid.*

²⁰² United Nations. 2008. *Work Plan for Sudan, Mid-Year Review of Consolidated Appeal Process*; UNHCR. 2008. *Sudan Operations at a Glance*, 30 June; UNHCR. 2008. *Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee reintegration programme in Southern Sudan*, September, p. 8.

²⁰³ IOM. 2006. *IDP Intentions Survey, Survey Results*, Vol. 1, p. 21.

²⁰⁴ UNHCR. 2008. *South Sudan Operation*.

²⁰⁵ Humanitarian Policy Group. 2007. *The Long Road Home, Opportunities and Obstacles to the Reintegration of IDPs and Refugees Returning to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas*. Report of Phase 1, August, p. 11.

been attributed to a diversion of attention and resources to the ongoing conflict in Darfur, parallel Governments in the North and South, the fragile state of the CPA and weak international coordination mechanisms.²⁰⁶

The ongoing conflict in Darfur prevents a meaningful analysis of the possibility of finding durable solutions for Sudanese IDPs from this region of the Sudan. Identifying durable solutions is extremely difficult in the absence of a peace agreement between the parties to the conflict, particularly as ending the armed conflict and finding durable solutions for displaced populations are closely intertwined.²⁰⁷

3. Displaced in Yemen

Durable solutions for refugees in Yemen will not be easy to find. For refugees from the Horn of Africa, particularly Somalis, the option of repatriating significant numbers of refugees cannot be envisaged for the time being. Yemen, along with the Syrian Arab Republic, has among the highest ratio of refugees per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the world. There are 128 refugees per US\$ 1 million of GDP (2006), which places Yemen in ninth place in the ratio of refugees hosted to per capita GDP.²⁰⁸ Thus, Yemen has a very limited capacity to care for and absorb refugees without significant international assistance. Resettlement is thus seen as the only viable option for protracted Somali refugees in Yemen.²⁰⁹ However, very small numbers of refugees have been able to resettle legally in the developed world. This is where the traditional role of Yemen as a transit country between Africa and the wealthier nations of the Gulf becomes instrumental for refugees. Many refugees and asylum-seekers move on to other parts of the Middle East because of the lack of other survival

²⁰⁶ UNHCR. 2008. *Evaluation of UNHCR's Returnee Reintegration Programme in Southern Sudan*, September, pp. 20 and 29; Humanitarian Policy Group. 2007. *Op. cit.*, p. 11-13.

²⁰⁷ See Walter Kälin. 2007. *Displaced Populations and Peace Negotiations in Africa*, ExCom Side Event, Geneva, 4 October.

²⁰⁸ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operations Plan for Yemen*. Section A.1.3.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

options once in Yemen. Most refugees enter and leave Yemen with the assistance of human trafficking networks.

4. *Durable solutions for displaced in Egypt*

Egypt has traditionally been an attractive destination for refugees, in part because of the perception that the options for eventual resettlement in the industrialized world are greater than in other countries in the region. In actual fact, very few refugees are eventually resettled in the West.²¹⁰ In Egypt, UNHCR focuses on promoting voluntary repatriation, and only resettles refugees in exceptional and limited cases.²¹¹ As discussed above, many Sudanese from South Sudan are beginning to return to their place of origin. Nevertheless, a significant number of refugees who register with UNHCR, along with the many more that do not do so, remain in Egypt and continue to rely on their own coping mechanisms to survive.

C. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES AND THE REGION

This section focuses on the socio-economic impact of displacement on ESCWA member countries and on the region as a whole. An initial analysis of the developmental challenges facing conflict-affected and neighbouring countries in the ESCWA region is essential in order to understand the impact of the socio-economic strains created by displaced populations and large influx of refugees.

Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the occupied Palestinian territories, the Sudan and Yemen have all, in varying degrees, experienced the impact of conflict-related displacement. They are characterized either as emerging markets, as in the case of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, or are least developed countries, such as the Sudan and Yemen. According to the World Bank, the occupied Palestinian territory, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic are low middle-income countries,²¹² with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of between US\$ 930 to US\$ 3,700. The economy of Gaza has significantly weakened over the past three years, and over 79 per cent of its population was living in relative poverty in 2007.²¹³

As can be seen in figure V below, the burden of hosting displaced populations in the region has disproportionately been placed on the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan, which also host the largest numbers of protracted refugees. The number of displaced persons who could be considered protracted refugees in Egypt is potentially much larger, as many of the estimated 3-4 million Sudanese currently living there have probably fled the conflict in the Sudan.²¹⁴ These countries have also experienced new waves of refugees as a result of the crisis in Darfur and the conflict in Iraq. Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic have also been affected by displacement from southern Lebanon as a result of the July 2006 war with Israel. The Sudan and Yemen, both low-income countries affected by recent conflicts, are producers of refugees and equally host IDPs and refugees from neighbouring countries.

²¹⁰ Grabska, K. 2006. Op. cit. p. 288.

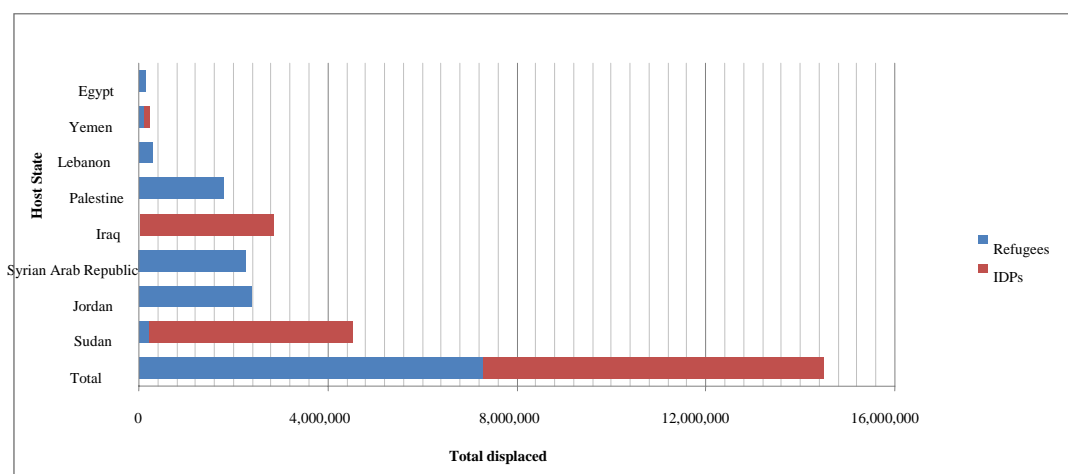
²¹¹ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operations Plan for Egypt*, p. 13.

²¹² IMF. 2008. *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia*. October, p. 4.

²¹³ UNCTAD. 2008. *Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People*. Trade and Development Board, fifty-fifth session, TD/B/55/2, Geneva, 15 July, p. 5.

²¹⁴ Contribution of the Government of Egypt, December 2008.

Figure V. Displaced persons hosted in ESCWA member States



Source: UNHCR, ESCWA, OCHA, Human Rights Watch and USCRI.

Two clear distinctions are made in this section. The first distinction relates to the impact of hosting a foreign refugee population and hosting IDPs on a particular country. In fact, the socio-economic impact of hosting a refugee population is quite different from that of having to manage large numbers of IDPs, who are mostly nationals of the country in which they are displaced. Internal displacement also implies either an ongoing conflict or a recently ended crisis; in such contexts, the countries involved have a significantly weakened capacity to absorb and manage IDPs. The second distinction which will be made is that between situations of protracted displacement and emergency displacement. Indeed, characteristics of protracted displacement have different impacts on host countries when they are compared with, for example, the arrival of refugees requiring a humanitarian response. Finally, it must be noted that it is often difficult to distinguish between the costs of displacement and the costs resulting from the conflict that caused the displacement in the first place.

1. Iraq

The socio-economic impact of displacement since the start of the war in 2003, both within and outside Iraq, has been devastating. Its economy has been significantly weakened by the conflict and society has been ravaged by the massive internal and external

displacement of 10 per cent of its population,²¹⁵ many from the educated middle class. Continuing violence and civil conflicts in Iraq have delayed reconstruction efforts, with exception of the region of Kurdistan. The real GDP growth rate of 9 per cent in 2008 was largely driven by external demand for oil exports;²¹⁶ however, growth in domestic demand in real terms fell far short of GDP growth levels. Moreover, high inflation rates in 2006 and 2007 at 53 and 30 per cent respectively,²¹⁷ resulted in an already vulnerable displaced population falling deeper into poverty.

The IDP crisis in Iraq has exacerbated persistent food shortages in the most heavily affected areas. A study conducted in 2007 indicated that resentment was growing among many local Governments and residents because of the presence of IDPs in their regions and the demands they made on already meager social services.²¹⁸ Most of these IDPs live in crowded conditions with family or friends or in abandoned buildings and public spaces, and therefore create

²¹⁵ Based on United Nations population estimates for Iraq in 2007 approximately 28,800,000 persons, United Nations Statistics Division, Population and Vital Statistics Report, Table 2: latest census and estimates, 19 January 2009, available at: <http://unstats.un.org>.

²¹⁶ IMF. 2008. Op. cit., p. 36.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 41.

²¹⁸ Riera, J. and A. Harper. 2007. Iraq: the Search for Solution. *Forced Migration Review*, June, p. 10.

an additional strain on dwindling resources, such as water and basic urban infrastructure. Iraqi refugees are also to be found in significant numbers in Amman, Beirut and Damascus.

Displacement in Iraq has also meant that valuable human resources have left the country. A large percentage of Iraqi refugees were skilled labourers and managers before fleeing the war, and their departure has hindered reconstruction efforts, and according to some estimates, potentially dispossessed the country of its professional human capital for a decade or more.²¹⁹ Furthermore, the mass exodus of professionals also has had a ripple effect, leading others to leave due to the collapse of basic infrastructure and health care and education systems.

The health care situation in Iraq has been described as “catastrophic”.²²⁰ The Iraqi Government has admitted that its budget for basic health care can only meet 70-80 per cent of actual needs.²²¹ The State-owned medical supply company is unable to adequately stock hospitals and primary health care centres with basic supplies, and hospitals lack 90 per cent of medical and surgical supplies.²²² It has also been estimated that over 50 per cent of medical staff have left the country.²²³ Moreover, provision of and access to water and sanitation services has been greatly compromised by the conflict and population movement.²²⁴ Water supplies are often contaminated because of poorly maintained sewage and water supply networks, and the

discharge of untreated sewage into rivers, the main source of drinking water.²²⁵

High unemployment rates, which are estimated to range between 25 and 40 per cent of the workforce²²⁶ and insecurity, especially in certain parts of Baghdad and other areas in Iraq, have discouraged refugees from returning, thus further delaying recovery and reconstruction efforts. Indeed, “the displacement crisis is both an effect and a cause of Iraq’s violence. When sectarian violence produces displacement, the resulting sectarian polarization can lead to further violence and displacement”.²²⁷

2. The Syrian Arab Republic

The presence and continuing influx of millions of Iraqi refugees into the Syrian Arab Republic, an economy which already faced significant developmental challenges prior to the refugee crisis, has had a considerable impact on the country. The situation faced by the country has been aggravated by the arrival of 200,000 Lebanese refugees fleeing the Israeli onslaught in July 2006. The country experienced economic decline in 2007, particularly in the agricultural, industry and manufacturing sectors,²²⁸ but it is unsure whether this decline is a direct result of the presence of large numbers of refugees.

A study by Al-Khalidi et al (2007) states that ordinary Syrians routinely say they believe there are between 3 and 6 million Iraqis in their country, which reflects the perceived impact of these refugees on everyday life in the Syrian Arab Republic.²²⁹ As in most countries in the ESCWA region, inflation has been rising in recent years.

²¹⁹ International Crisis Group. 2008. Failed Responsibility: Iraqi Refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Middle East Report no. 77, 10 July, p. 13.

²²⁰ Oxfam and NCCI. 2007. *Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq*, July.

²²¹ Government of Iraq. 2007. *The International Compact with Iraq 2007: Mid-Year Progress Report*, July 2007.

²²² Oxfam and NCCI. 2007. Op. cit.

²²³ Bruno, G. 2007. *Rebuilding Iraq*. Council on Foreign Relations, 12 December.

²²⁴ IDMC. 2008. *Iraq: Challenges of Forced Displacement within Iraq: A Profile of the Internal Displacement Situation*. 29 December, p. 235.

²²⁵ ICRC. 2007. *Civilians Without Protection: The Ever-worsening Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq*. April.

²²⁶ Brookings Institution. 2009. *Iraq Index: Tracking Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*. Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20090131.pdf>. Accessed 30 January, p. 40.

²²⁷ Al-Khalidi, A. and Tanner V. 2007. Op. cit., p. 8.

²²⁸ World Bank. 2008. *Syrian Arab Republic at a Glance*. September.

²²⁹ Al-Khalidi, A, Hoffmann, S. and Tanner, V. 2007. *Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field-Based Snapshot*. Occasional Paper, June 2007, p. 46.

Rising prices, rents and crime is often reported to be due to the presence of Iraqi refugees. Figures from the Syrian Consulting Bureau for Development and Investment (SCB), compiled from the State-run press, found that since the Iraqi influx began in early 2005, the demand for bread in Damascus had increased by 35 per cent, electricity by 27 per cent, water by 20 per cent and kerosene by 17 per cent.²³⁰

The issue of rising rents is an emotional issue for Iraqis and Syrians alike. Demographic growth in the Syrian Arab Republic is estimated at 2.5 per cent per annum, partly due to the arrival of Iraqi refugees and accelerated migration of the poor from rural areas to large urban centres. This development has created a serious problem of inadequate accommodation for millions of people.²³¹

At the same time, the presence of so many Iraqis desperate for work undermines the position of Syrians working in the informal sector, which constitutes the large majority of the work force. For instance, it is reported that an Iraqi labourer will work for a lower daily wage than a Syrian labourer.²³²

Iraqi children are allowed free access to State schools in the Syrian Arab Republic. According to the Government, the number of pupils per class in primary education has doubled, in some cases to 45 pupils per class, in areas hosting Iraqi refugees,²³³ thereby placing further burdens on education resources.

The Government of Syria has expressed an interest in working with the international community to address the needs of the Iraqi population, but many Iraqis are still unable to access basic services, as the Government cannot adequately address all the demands placed on it

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

²³¹ Raphaeli, N. 2007. Syria's fragile economy. *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, no. 2, Article 4/8, June, p. 4.

²³² Al-Khalidi, A, Hoffmann, S. and Tanner, V. 2007. Op. cit, p. 47.

²³³ Government of Syria contribution to this report, December 2008.

because of population growth.²³⁴ Moreover, the Syrian Government is not currently able to offer specialized medical care to Iraqis for certain medical conditions, such as cancer and heart diseases. The International Committee of the Red Cross is concerned about the inability of the current water system to provide clean water in neighbourhoods where Iraqis live because of population density levels, thereby forcing residents and refugees to buy their water.²³⁵

Al-Miqdad (2008) claims that the relief and aid provided by the Syrian Arab Republic to Iraqi refugees on its territory in 2005 and 2006 amounted to US\$ 162 million. Over the following two years, 2007-2008, the cost of humanitarian, health and education support for Iraqi refugees increased to US\$ 256 million due to the rising number of Iraqi refugees.²³⁶

3. Jordan

Jordan has a population of 5.7 million.²³⁷ Fourteen per cent of Jordanians live under the national poverty level,²³⁸ and at least 13 per cent are unemployed.²³⁹ Half of Jordan's population is Palestinian refugees, 1.9 million of whom live in camps managed by UNRWA. As discussed above, most Palestinians enjoy similar rights and citizenship as Jordanian nationals and are therefore well integrated into the labour market and local economy.

²³⁴ Refugees International. 2007. *Iraqi Refugees: US and Donor Governments Must Provide Bilateral Assistance to Host Countries*, September, p. 2.

²³⁵ WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, SARC. 2007. *Joint Assessment Mission: Syria*, October, p. 12.

²³⁶ Al-Miqdad, F. 2008. *Iraqi Refugees in Syria. Forced Migration Review*, p. 20.

²³⁷ United Nations Statistics Division, *Population and Vital Statistics Report*, Table 2: latest available census and estimates. Available at: <http://unstats.un.org>. Accessed 19 January 2009.

²³⁸ UNDP. 2008. *Human Development Report 2007/2008*.

²³⁹ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2005-2006*. Available at: http://www.dos.gov.jo/sdb_pop/unempl/eus_fs_e1.htm.

Jordan also hosts about 450,000 Iraqi refugees, most of them residing in or around the capital, Amman. Most Jordanians consider that rising costs are due to the sudden rise in the number of people living in the country.²⁴⁰ The perceived pressure on dwindling resources has led to growing tensions, particularly as the refugee situation remains unresolved. As one of the most water deprived countries in the world, the strain on water supply has been particularly severe. Indeed, water scarcity is the single most important natural constraint to development in Jordan. In 2004, UNDP reported that estimated water use exceeded renewable water supplies. In addition, Jordan uses only 10 per cent of its land for economic activities.²⁴¹ Today, a growing population and higher production activities have increased pressure on this limited land resource.

Many commodities and services in Jordan are highly subsidized by the Government and the increased provision of services required by the refugee population has resulted in budgetary pressures.²⁴² Jordan's soaring inflation rate (15 per cent in 2008 compared with 5 per cent in 2007),²⁴³ has affected many vulnerable groups, as well as middle-class Jordanians and Iraqi refugees. It is feared that the plummeting purchasing power of Jordanians and Iraqis alike could ultimately lead to discontent and potential social instability.

A recent report by the International Crisis Group (2007), however, surmised that although the refugees place a burden on the Government budget, the overall economic impact appears to be relatively small.²⁴⁴ The report shows that the rise in fuel, food and housing costs is explained by other factors, such as the loss of preferential and subsidized access to Iraqi oil, very high international oil prices, exports of domestic food

²⁴⁰ FAFO. 2007. *Iraqis in Jordan: Their Number and Characteristics*.

²⁴¹ UNDP. 2004. *Jordan Human Development Report*, p. 18.

²⁴² Mukhaimer, A.J. 2007. The World must Shoulder Iraq Refugee Burden. *Forced Migration Review*, June.

²⁴³ IMF. 2008. *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia*, October, p. 41.

²⁴⁴ International Crisis Group. 2008. Failed Responsibility: Iraqi Refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, *Middle East Report* no. 77, 10 July, p. 12.

items to Iraq and the rising cost of food imports.²⁴⁵ Among the hidden benefits of the presence of these refugees in Jordan is the fact that many Iraqis are well educated and now staff hospitals and universities, and provide valuable know-how to local businesses. Iraqis have also injected significant amounts of money into the economy, using their savings and, in some cases, continued transfers from Iraq of pensions and family remittances.²⁴⁶

Another potential negative impact of the presence of Iraqi refugees in Jordan is the deterioration of the security situation. Fears have been expressed on the possibility of sectarian violence and increased militant activity within the refugee population and from discontented Jordanians frustrated by a dwindling economy which they blame on the presence of Iraqi refugees. In response to these fears, Jordan increased its security expenditure by 20 per cent since 2005.²⁴⁷ The Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan are worried that their poorly functioning economies, combined with growing resentment towards refugees, will lead to violence between refugee populations and local host populations.

4. Lebanon

The 2006 Israeli war against Lebanon weakened the production sector and the general infrastructure of Lebanon, in addition to displacing one million people. Civilian infrastructure and several industrial establishments were destroyed by Israeli military attacks. Moreover, the war negatively affected the tourism sector, which had already been damaged by political instability since February 2005. In 2006, Lebanon recorded negative growth estimated at -5 per cent and reconstruction activities were unable to bring GDP growth into positive figures. However, the economy of Lebanon did gain momentum in 2007²⁴⁸ and registered 6.0 per cent in real GDP growth in

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴⁷ Chatelard, G. 2008. *Jordan's Transient Iraqi Guests: Transnational Dynamics and the National Agenda*.

²⁴⁸ ESCWA. 2007. *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 2006-2007*, May, pp. 15-16

2008,²⁴⁹ largely as a result of increasing political stability.

The return of large numbers of displaced persons after the 2006 war, especially in southern Beirut, caused rental prices to soar, as many homes were destroyed and families were forced to find rented accommodation. The destruction of factories and businesses also lead to higher unemployment. The direct cost of the 2006 war in Lebanon was US\$ 2.8 billion, and the long-term indirect cost to the economy was estimated at over US\$ 2 billion.²⁵⁰ While the 2006 war did not produce protracted displacement, the Government had to shoulder substantial costs to care for the displaced. By May 2007, the Government had paid US\$ 181 million to people whose homes had been destroyed and additional US\$ 42 million to aid those displaced.

Palestinian refugees have been present in Lebanon for six decades. The demographic expansion of the refugee communities initially occurred within the confines of the refugee camps. This was followed by a significant demographic spillover in the vicinity of the 12 (originally 16) Palestinian camps in Lebanon, resulting in fringe Palestinian communities. The spillover from the Palestinian camps has affected surrounding Lebanese communities and led to intercommunal tensions. Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon can be seen as restricted urban enclaves with slum-like features, such as a lack of urban planning, and characterized by the absence of rule of law and provision of public services. Impoverished and secluded, these enclaves are inhabited by disadvantaged communities and form an integral part of the wider local economy with linkages to their surroundings.

The protracted presence of Palestinian refugees and the expansion of Palestinian refugee camps have resulted in significant indirect costs for the Government, despite an agreement with UNRWA to manage and care for this population. Most of these costs are generated through the use of municipal resources, illegal use of electricity lines and the environmental costs of irregular waste disposal. Local municipal budgets are

²⁴⁹ IMF. 2008. Op. cit., p. 36

²⁵⁰ Government of Lebanon. 2006. Op. cit.

stretched to their limits as the spillover effects of camps into adjacent Lebanese municipal land require additional payouts by local Government. On the other hand, recent surveys have shown that there are some benefits to the Lebanese economy, as Palestinian refugees account for 10 per cent of consumption in Lebanon, and least one person in each family is employed.²⁵¹

The impact of the presence of 50,000 Iraqi refugees – mainly single men – has not been as significant for the Government of Lebanon as it has been for its neighbours. Indeed, Iraqis do not benefit from social services as most entered the country illegally and have generally kept a low profile. The physical absorptive capacity of Lebanon is limited due to its small population base, pre-existing tensions surrounding the large Palestinian refugee population and the delicate sectarian balance.²⁵²

5. Egypt

Egypt hosts refugee populations from 36 countries, with the bulk coming from Somalia, the Sudan and Palestine, in addition to a population of Iraqi refugees who arrived in Egypt through other ESCWA countries.²⁵³ It is difficult to estimate the number of displaced who could be considered as forming part of the conflict-driven displaced, as the vast majority of migrants in Egypt, some of whom are economic migrants, live in urban areas and have not registered as refugees. UNHCR has only registered 43,000 persons of concern, including 23,000 Sudanese and 11,000 Iraqis.²⁵⁴ One estimate indicates that there are between 150,000-165,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, including approximately 70,000 Iraqis, 61,600 Palestinians, 23,000 Sudanese and 5,300 Somalis.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Association Najdeh. 2009. *Contributions of Palestinian Refugees Residing in Camps and some Gatherings to the Lebanese Economy: Household Survey and Qualitative Research*, February.

²⁵² International Crisis Group. 2008. Op. cit., p. 27

²⁵³ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operations Plan: Egypt*.

²⁵⁴ UNHCR. 2008. *Fact Sheet – Egypt*, July.

²⁵⁵ USCRI. 2008. *World Refugee Survey, Egypt*. Available at: www.refugees.org/countryreports.aspx?id=2135. Accessed on 13 October 2008.

As a poor and developing nation, many displaced persons consider Egypt a transit country to another more desirable destination. Many Somali and Sudanese consider Israel as their ultimate destination; most Iraqis who go to Egypt do so because they expect the cost of living to be lower there than in Jordan, and ultimately see the country as a staging post to another country. The overwhelming majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt live in urban settings, such as Cairo.²⁵⁶

An estimated 3-4 million Sudanese are currently living in Egypt.²⁵⁷ Egypt has hosted Sudanese refugees ever since the first civil war broke out in southern Sudan in 1955, with more recent arrivals fleeing the conflict in Darfur. While UNHCR has only registered 23,000 Sudanese refugees, it is estimated that thousands more could be considered refugees.²⁵⁸

Iraqis have been streaming into Egypt since 2001, but their number rose in the wake of the Samara Mosque bombings in February 2006.²⁵⁹ The Egyptian Government estimates that there are 100,000 Iraqis currently living in Egypt,²⁶⁰ however, only 11,000 of them have registered with UNHCR. A recent survey carried out by the American University of Cairo of 1,000 Iraqi families concludes that 64 per cent of refugees registered with UNHCR are Iraqi refugees; according to this premise, the total number would therefore be around 17,000.²⁶¹ There are also an estimated 61,600 Palestinians.²⁶²

Egypt is one of three countries, in addition to the Sudan and Yemen, in the ESCWA region

²⁵⁶ Yoshikawa, L. 2007. Iraqi Refugees in Egypt, Forced Migration Review. 2007. *Humanitarian Reform: Fulfilling its promise?* No. 29, December.

²⁵⁷ Government of Egypt contribution to this report, December 2008.

²⁵⁸ Grabska, K. 2005. *Living on the Margins: Analysis of the Livelihood Strategies of Sudanese Refugees with Closed Files in Egypt*. FMRS Working Paper 6, June, p. 17.

²⁵⁹ Yoshikawa. 2007. Op. cit.

²⁶⁰ Government of Egypt contribution to this report, December 2008.

²⁶¹ Fargues, P. et al. 2008. Op. cit. p. 16.

²⁶² USCRI. 2008. Op. cit.

that has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention. Egypt has also signed the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa. A 1984 presidential decree called for the creation of a permanent refugee affairs committee within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to adjudicate asylum applications under the 1951 Convention; however, under a 1954 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Government delegated this responsibility to UNHCR. Egypt's commitment to its obligations under these conventions, including Article 53 of its constitution, forbids the deportation or expulsion of refugees seeking asylum from persecution in their own countries.²⁶³ The refugee protection programme in Egypt is one of the oldest and largest programmes managed by UNHCR in urban areas.

The large numbers of Sudanese refugees in Egypt have made a substantial contribution to the economy, and are mainly employed in the construction and services sectors. According to the Government of Egypt, Sudanese are allowed and even encouraged to form Egyptian-Sudanese institutions.²⁶⁴ The new influx of refugees from Darfur, however, has had a more significant toll on Egypt's capacity to manage refugee flow. As a result, churches and faith-based organizations in Egypt have cared for the largely Christian Darfuris.

The socio-economic impact of Iraqi refugees in Egypt is probably less significant as most of them are relatively better off than other refugees. They are reported to have bought land and property in and around Cairo, which is said to have contributed to rising inflation in the property market. According to the Government of Egypt, Iraqis are allowed to buy real estate, and have public hospitals provide services free of charge to Iraqis. Educational services are provided to Iraqi students, according to Cabinet Resolution 24 of 1992.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ See Constitution of Egypt at: <http://constitution.sis.gov.eg/en/2.htm>.

²⁶⁴ Contribution of the Government of Egypt, December 2008.

²⁶⁵ Government of Egypt contribution to this report, December 2008.

The presence of large numbers of vulnerable groups of displaced populations in Egypt has led to emergence of trafficking networks offering to take people to Europe for high fees. The trafficking problem is significant in Egypt and a National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons was created in 2007 to combat such practices.²⁶⁶ Another impact on Egypt is its position as a buffer country for refugees and asylum-seekers wishing to reach Israel, which has forced Egypt to take responsibility for preventing many from doing so, especially illegal immigrants.

Egypt has reaped benefits from the presence of large numbers of migrant and refugee populations as they provide an inexhaustible supply of cheap labour. A recent report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa states that Egypt has experienced exceptionally high growth rates in its manufacturing industries, construction and public works sectors.²⁶⁷

6. Yemen

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world and categorized as a least developed country. The main challenges faced by the country include a fast growing population, a weak economy, declining oil resources, depleting water resources, poor standard of public health and education, widespread poverty, poor governance and internal insecurity problems.²⁶⁸

Border controls remain a challenge as the country has 2,200 kilometres (kms) of sea coast and about 2,000 kms of porous land borders, which are very difficult to control. The trafficking and smuggling of people, arms, goods and money across the border with Saudi Arabia and across the sea with Somalia is rising steadily and fuelling instability in Yemen.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ United States Department of State. 2008. *Trafficking in Persons Report 2008 – Egypt*, 4 June.

²⁶⁷ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, North Africa Office. 2008. *Conditions Sociales et Economiques en Afrique du Nord en 2007*, May, p. 8.

²⁶⁸ World Bank. 2009. *World Development Report*; IMF. 2008. Op. cit., p. 4.

²⁶⁹ European Community. 2007. *Strategy Paper for Yemen: 2007-2013*, p. 29.

Despite a ceasefire brokered by Qatar in June 2007, the situation in Sa'ada governorate has deteriorated rapidly and hostilities continued into mid-2008, thereby further exacerbating the hardships faced by about 100,000 displaced persons.²⁷⁰ High oil prices in 2007 and at the beginning of 2008 could not alleviate an otherwise bleak overall economic situation because of rapidly decreasing oil production and the absence of sufficiently diversified economic alternatives. Combined with rising international prices for grains and cereals, this has caused considerable hardship to the poorest segments of Yemeni society.²⁷¹

A joint evaluation conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR reported at least 35 smuggling boats carrying more than 3,500 people from Somalia in September 2006 alone. Yemen is the final destination for some of the refugees arriving from Somalia, particularly those arriving from Bossasso, but for many others it is only a transit country and the final destination is either the Gulf States or Europe.²⁷² Every month, urban refugees are transferred to refugee camps as they are unable to cope and cannot afford high rents and living costs. Also, the country faces budget constraints and there are few NGOs to promote self-reliance projects.

As in the case of Jordan, Yemen has experienced significant strains from depleting water resources, rapid demographic growth, a constant influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa, the impact of regional crises, for example in the Sudan and the Horn of Africa, and development challenges.

7. Socio-economic impact of displacement on the ESCWA region

The various cases of displacement in the region, either emergency or protracted, have subregional implications and impacts on the region as a whole. Displacement creates a potential threat to interregional relations, impacts regional security and impedes social stability and development on a regional level.

²⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch. 2008. Op. cit., p. 2.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² UNHCR-WFP. 2007. *Joint Assessment Mission Report: Yemen*, April-May, p. 7.

Various assessments by the donor community, the United Nations and international NGOs have found that refugees can have a positive and negative effect on host countries. For example, refugees can have a positive impact on the economy by contributing to agricultural production, providing cheap labour and increasing the income of local vendors of essential foodstuffs.²⁷³ In some cases, individual Governments can benefit from increased international assistance and flow of aid for the benefit of their own nationals, for example in the construction of new hospitals and schools.

On a subregional level, there is a clear socio-economic impact on countries hosting displaced populations. Governments in the region are concerned about the economic impact of sudden population spikes, the strain on public services and social stability.²⁷⁴ The negative impact of the presence of large numbers of refugees, includes increases in the price of essential food commodities, overcrowded local markets, and decreased purchasing power among the poorer segments of society. Slum-like refugee camps in some countries, for example in Lebanon, have a detrimental effect on the environment and, in some cases, on the availability of agricultural land. Such constraints can create potential obstacles to socio-economic development on a national and regional level.

Regional Governments are also worried about a possible spill-over from the Iraqi conflict and the possibility that the long-term presence of refugees on their soil could exacerbate social problems. Regional reactions to the Iraqi refugees are also deeply conditioned by regional experiences with Palestinian refugees over the past 60 years.²⁷⁵

Another significant negative regional impact is the deterioration of interregional relations between host countries and the countries where the refugees came from. The Government of Yemen has maintained close relations with countries in the Horn of Africa, in particular with

the Sudan and Ethiopia, in order to develop regional economic and security links. Yemen is continuing to play an active role as a mediator to solve internal disputes in neighbouring Somalia, and its commitment is driven by concerns over the increasing number of Somali refugees reaching its shore.²⁷⁶

Protracted displacement also has indirect security implications for the region. Tensions can arise between the urban displaced and local populations, especially if access to local social services, such as health and education, is limited. As donor Government engagement for camp-based displaced persons decreases over time, competition over scarce resources is a source of increasing insecurity. For the displaced residing in camps, limited basic services may lead some IDPs and refugees to pursue coping strategies, such as banditry, prostitution and petty theft, which creates additional local concerns.²⁷⁷

In 2009, the burden of large numbers of displaced populations has been compounded by falling oil revenues, the global economic downturn and existing development challenges.

D. DELIVERY OF ASSISTANCE TO THE DISPLACED IN THE ESCWA REGION

The task of ensuring that the human rights and basic needs of refugees and IDPs are met is a complex and often difficult task. A wide range of international and local actors have taken up these challenges and are guided by various conventions, guidelines and institutional arrangements. The humanitarian response to the needs of displaced populations also requires large amounts of resources, political will and complex international coordination.

In the ESCWA region, provision of assistance to displaced populations is further complicated by the following factors:

²⁷³ UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. 2004. Op. cit., p. 144.

²⁷⁴ Ferris, E. 2008. Op. cit., p. 2.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ European Community. 2007. Op. cit., p. 14.

²⁷⁷ Loescher, G. et al. 2007. *Protracted Refugee Situations and Peacebuilding*. United Nations University, Policy Brief no. 1, 2007, p. 2.

1. Displaced populations in the ESCWA region comprise three legally distinct populations: refugees, IDPs and Palestine refugees. Although these populations may have similar needs and protection concerns and may be located in the same countries, international responsibility for these populations falls to different and distinct bodies under the United Nations system.

2. The absence of rights-based approaches in providing assistance to the displaced renders the displaced more vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking. Displaced persons in the region are often too afraid to claim their civil and socio-economic rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to work, health care and education.

3. Providing for the basic needs of displaced populations implies coordination and cooperation for development programming, particularly as many of them have been displaced for a considerable period of time, particularly Palestinian refugees.

4. There is a growing number of urban displaced in the region. Existing mechanisms for assisting and monitoring displaced persons are based on camp models and are ineffective in addressing needs of the urban displaced, who are often more difficult to reach than those living in camps.

5. For many displaced populations in the ESCWA region still living in emergency settings, protection remains a concern, as high levels of violence and insecurity not only exacerbate humanitarian crises, but also pose major challenges to organizations carrying out humanitarian assistance, particularly in Gaza, Iraq and the Sudan.

6. New models of aid provision are needed in highly insecure operational environments, such as those seen in the Sudan and Iraq. One of these new humanitarian assistance models is the remote management of aid provision.²⁷⁸ However, some concerns have been aired on this model of aid provision, particularly with regard to the transfer

²⁷⁸ UNHCR. 2007. Difficult Delivery: The 'Remote Management' of Aid in Iraq. *Refugees Magazine*, No. 146. Issue 2.

of risks and accountability to local implementers, the development of long-term and sustainable activities, and the quality of the humanitarian assistance being provided.

7. Iraq and parts of the Sudan are complex emergencies in which assistance to displaced populations is conducted in the context of large-scale peacekeeping operations and United Nations missions, and in which new paradigms of humanitarian intervention (within the context of humanitarian reform) are being carried out without proper assessments, analysis and monitoring.²⁷⁹

This section analyses the operational implications of the legal distinctions between the different displaced populations in the ESCWA region, and then highlight the different assistance frameworks that have been put in place to address the challenges faced by displaced persons.

1. Operational implications of legal distinctions between displaced populations

The humanitarian reform process being led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is addressing critical gaps between needs and responses in crises and the difficulties in coordinating the different actors providing humanitarian assistance and resulting overlap, inefficiency and lack of accountability and predictability in humanitarian assistance. In this process, the importance of a designated lead agency has been identified as crucial for providing coordination, accountability and provider of last resort.

UNHCR has a clear mandate with respect to refugees. The Geneva Convention of 1951 defines the special legal status and rights of refugees and provides the institutional mandate for UNHCR to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and address refugee-related problems, and its lead role in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees has been reaffirmed by IASC.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ IRIN News. 2008. *Sudan: Concerns Rising over Darfur Restrictions*, 24 June.

²⁸⁰ IASC. 2006. *Guidance Note on the Implementation of the Cluster System*, 24 November.

In contrast, IDPs do not enjoy a special legal status under any international convention, and as resident citizens of their country of origin, their respective Governments are responsible for their protection. IDPs may be more vulnerable than refugees in complex emergencies as their respective Governments may be unable or unwilling to provide protection, or may be responsible for the displacement and related persecution or abuse. International protection of and assistance to IDPs is based on human rights law and rights-based development principles and universal minimum standards of humanitarian assistance for all crisis-affected groups. A wide range of international actors are active in caring for IDPs and UNHCR, among others, increasingly playing an important role in this regard. The absence of a model framework on assistance and sovereignty-related issues, however, has meant that IDP populations have not benefited from the same level of protection and assistance as refugee populations. The international community has recognized this gap. The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement state that:

“While responsibility for the protection of IDPs rests first and foremost with national governments and local authorities, it is important for the international community to see how best it can contribute to enhancing the protection of IDPs in conflict and crisis situations. We must also design humanitarian assistance in such a way that it will promote the protection of IDPs.”²⁸¹

The drafting of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement has been an important step in filling protection gaps for IDPs. While the Guiding Principles are not binding, they have become widely recognized as authoritative and have increasingly been utilized by governments and aid agencies as a basis for programmes related to internal displacement. The humanitarian reform process led by IASC represents another important step in ensuring humanitarian assistance to IDPs. In 2006, UNHCR was designated as the lead agency for IDPs fleeing conflict with regards

²⁸¹ OCHA. 1998. Foreword to the Guiding Principles by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, 1998.

to emergency shelter, camp coordination and management and protection.²⁸²

Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom fall under the mandate of UNRWA, are treated differently than all other refugee populations. UNHCR, however, is responsible for Palestinian refugees who live or have lived in locations outside UNRWA's area of responsibility, for example, those Palestinian refugees who have been displaced as a result of the conflict in Iraq.

2. Humanitarian response to the displaced in non-complex emergency settings

Humanitarian response differs greatly in complex emergency settings, defined as “a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/ or the ongoing United Nations country programme”,²⁸³ and those settings or countries which have not been designated by IASC as experiencing a complex emergency.

Humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in non-complex emergency settings can take place if a prior needs assessment has been carried out and if they can be accessed. As many refugees in ESCWA member countries are dispersed in urban settings, including the majority of refugees in the Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen,²⁸⁴ any response to the need of refugees in such settings takes a very different form than those aid programmes administered to those living in camp settings, where humanitarian agencies may be the primary or sole provider of essential goods and services.

While aid to the urban displaced may include distribution of essential food and non-food items, as well as provision of services,

²⁸² IASC. 2006. *Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response*, 24 November.

²⁸³ OCHA. 1999. *Orientation Handbook on Complex Emergencies*, August.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

humanitarian agencies do not act as sole provider, but rather complement the goods and services that have already been made available by local authorities and personal resources of displaced persons. Programming promotes self-reliance of target populations through income-generation and community development initiatives.

The operating environment in non-complex emergencies is also quite different than that of complex emergencies. In such contexts, programming is conducted primarily through local implementing partners and capacity-building of local authorities and civil society is also a key objective. The less chaotic environment facilitates humanitarian access on one level; in contrast to many complex emergency settings where high levels of insecurity is a protection concern in some urban settings in Yemen and Egypt,²⁸⁵ but not a major barrier to the presence of aid workers, as is the case in Iraq and Darfur.

A less volatile operating environment allows for more normalized planning and coordination of activities with ongoing development assistance. However, significant coordination gaps exist between international agencies, local organizations and national development programmes with respect to aid to both camp and non-camp dwelling displaced persons. For example, displacement-related issues are not included in Yemen's national development agenda or the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme. UNHCR participates in United Nations Country Team coordination mechanisms in Egypt and Yemen, but difficulties have been encountered in integrating refugee issues into larger development frameworks, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), particularly in Egypt.²⁸⁶ The Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan includes provision for the displaced to have a say in the implementation of the provisions of the agreement; however, in practice these provisions have had little effect.²⁸⁷

3. *Humanitarian response to the displaced in complex emergencies: the cases of Iraq and the Sudan*

In complex emergencies, the provision of humanitarian aid and the response towards displacement differ greatly in Iraq and the Sudan than in other countries. In addition to the scale and operational challenges involved in delivering assistance to displaced populations, the context of a complex emergency creates great challenges, particularly with regard to the coordination of assistance between civilian and military bodies, for example. In Iraq and the Sudan, international assistance to displaced populations is carried out by a wide range of international and local actors, and under the aegis of both United Nations peacekeepers and non-United Nations international military presence and large civilian missions. In Iraq and the Sudan, the United Nations system has taken important, and in many ways unprecedented, steps to accommodate the regional nature of the conflict and displacement, through coordinated appeals and implementation of humanitarian aid.

After a major or complex emergency is announced by IASC, as is the case in Iraq and the Sudan, a "cluster system" mechanism is put into place. This cluster is composed of humanitarian actors who cooperate and coordinate in a cycle of shared assessments, strategic planning, drafting of a consolidated appeal and division of labour under the leadership of a humanitarian coordinator.²⁸⁸ The cluster approach is activated in non-refugee situations, including emergencies involving IDPs. Different agencies are chosen to lead the appropriate sectoral responses. On the global level, lead agencies for different humanitarian assistance sectors, include: nutrition (led by UNICEF); health (led by WHO); and emergency shelter, camp coordination and management and protection for IDPs from conflict (led by UNHCR).²⁸⁹ On the country level, agencies are chosen to lead sectoral responses, as agreed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian

²⁸⁵ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operation Plan – Yemen*

²⁸⁶ UNHCR. 2008. *Country Operation Plan – Egypt*.

²⁸⁷ UNMIS. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, available at: <http://www.unmis.org/English/cpa.htm>.

²⁸⁸ IASC. 2006. *Technical Guidelines for the Consolidated Appeals*, available at: <http://www.humanitarianreform.org>, downloaded January 2009; IASC. 2006. *Guidance Note on the Implementation of the Cluster System*, 24 November.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

Country Team, and where possible in line with the lead agency arrangements at the global level.

(a) *Responses to the complex emergency in the Sudan*

The nature of displacement and operational environments differ greatly throughout the Sudan, and represent some of the most complex and difficult cases in the world today. As displacement in the Sudan includes populations that have been internally displaced by both the civil war and the ongoing conflict in Darfur, as well as refugees from neighbouring countries, assistance programmes must include humanitarian and protection elements and more general development activities in order to assist the returns process in the South.

The cluster approach was introduced in the Sudan in December 2008, creating a humanitarian coordination structure that covers both national authorities and the UNCT under the supervision of a humanitarian coordinator.²⁹⁰ In addition to the UNAMID and UNMIS peacekeeping operations, the international presence includes a wide range of United Nations and humanitarian agencies and organizations. In response to this complex and diverse set of needs, UNCTs in the Sudan have drafted a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) covering recovery and development programming and a consolidated appeal for the jointly assessed and drafted 2008 United Nations and Partners Work Plan for the Sudan, covering humanitarian assistance and early recovery activities, and promoting coordination between various United Nations agencies and bodies, Government parties, international and local civil society organizations and donors.²⁹¹ The Work Plan adopts a sectoral approach in which assistance to IDPs, refugees and returning refugees are included in the main target populations for relevant sectors, including basic infrastructure and settlement development; food security and livelihoods; health and nutrition; non-food items and emergency

²⁹⁰ See: <http://www.humanitarianreform.org>. Accessed on 3 January 2009.

²⁹¹ OCHA. 2008. Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Mid-Year Review of the United Nations and Partners. Work Plan for Sudan, July.

livelihoods; protection and human rights; and water and sanitation.

While the cluster system has enabled the aid community to take important steps in the coordination of humanitarian efforts in the Sudan, significant gaps still exist, such as large funding gaps between the amounts pledged and received. Furthermore coordination gaps still exist, in particular in civil-military cooperation. An effective humanitarian response is further restrained by the inability of aid providers to reach displaced populations because of security concerns. A further challenge is posed by ongoing waves of displacement, particularly in Darfur, and the fact that peacekeeping forces cannot fulfil their protection mandate because they lack adequate human and material resources.

(b) *Responses to the complex emergency in Iraq*

The cluster system was rolled out in Iraq in the 2008 and 2009 cycles of consolidated appeals. However, the format of the 2009 consolidated appeals process (CAP) for Iraq was substantially revised, and now takes into consideration the regional scope of the conflict and the phenomena of displacement by reflecting both the humanitarian needs of IDPs and Iraqi refugees displaced to other countries in the region.

The 2009 CAP for Iraq and the region is composed of two pillars to reflect the cluster approach inside Iraq, on the one hand, and UNHCR's refugee mandate in neighbouring countries, on the other. Pillar I is coordinated by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq addresses the humanitarian needs of the general population and the displaced. Re-integration of returnees is identified as one of the priorities. Pillar II is coordinated by UNHCR and seeks to address the protection and assistance needs of Iraqi refugees in the wider ESCWA region, focusing primarily on Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the resettlement of refugees in third-party countries.²⁹² Pillar II brings together international agencies and local organizations operating in the different counties hosting Iraqi refugees. The emphasis of Pillar II is to assist

²⁹² OCHA. 2009. *Consolidated Appeal for Iraq and the Region*, November.

host countries to maintain “welcoming environments in which Iraqi refugees can live their lives in safety and dignity while awaiting return or resettlement”.²⁹³

While it is too early to evaluate the impact of the 2009 CAP, the pillar approach is an innovative and potential groundbreaking approach which could be replicated in other displacement contexts with regional dimensions.

4. *Responses to emergency internal displacement in Yemen*

The United Nations does not currently have a large role to play in the provision of assistance to conflict-related IDPs and refugees in Yemen, although there has been a United Nations response to displacement resulting from natural disasters, such as floods. The ICRC and the Yemeni Red Crescent Society have been the main providers of humanitarian assistance to IDPs produced by the ongoing conflict in Sa'ada governorate in northern Yemen.²⁹⁴ Access to displaced populations is limited by mountainous terrain, poor infrastructure, isolation and insecurity. As a result, these two agencies have only been able to provide basic emergency assistance, mainly to displaced persons close to Sa'ada city.²⁹⁵ The basic humanitarian needs of many IDPs in Yemen may remain unmet.

5. *Response to displacement in Palestine*

In Palestine, assistance to Palestinian refugees and non-refugees is governed by a complex system of coordination mechanisms made up of various stakeholders, including the Palestinian Authority, UNRWA, and various other United Nations bodies and international organizations, including the Local Development Forum (LDF) which is composed of the Palestinian Authority, aid agencies and donor country representatives. A Task Force on Project Implementation (TFPI) liaises with the

Government of Israel on project implementation and comprises USAID, UNSCO, the European Commission and the World Bank. Four Strategy Groups (SGs) have been established to deal with economic policy, governance, infrastructure development and social development and humanitarian issues. The SGs focus on policy formulation and programmatic coordination, and seek to enhance the design of donor projects to support the sectoral priorities of the PA and greater harmonization of donor procedures.²⁹⁶ The SGs are further supported by 12 working groups and other groups devoted to the technical aspects of coordination. These working groups are furthermore supported by a Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS). A CAP for humanitarian assistance is also issued each year by OCHA, in coordination with the UNCT and the mechanisms mentioned above.

The humanitarian needs of displaced Palestinians have not been met in their entirety, as can be seen in the continuing humanitarian crisis and declining social indicators. Existing response gaps are in large part due to the volatile situation prevailing in Palestine over the past few years and existing obstacles to humanitarian access in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, rather than promoting aid harmonization and supporting the predictability, accountability and efficiency of aid, the presence of so many coordination bodies may sometimes create further inefficiencies in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ ICRC. 2008. *Yemen: War and Water Woes*, September.

²⁹⁵ ICRC. 2008. *Operational Update. ICRC Needs Better Access to People Affected by Conflict in Northern Yemen*, May-June.

²⁹⁶ Local Development Forum. Available at: <http://www.ldf.ps/article.aspx?id=24>. Accessed on 3 January 2009.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CHALLENGES THAT CONSTRAIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL APPROACH TO DISPLACEMENT

A number of factors and regional characteristics present challenges to developing an effective and coordinated regional response to displacement. At the national level, certain countries of the region have limited financial and human resources; displaced populations therefore present a burden on the economy and a strain on the provision of public services. Governments are concerned about the potential unravelling of delicate ethnic and sectarian balances, and have their own security concerns. In addition, basic human rights concepts have not been mainstreamed in domestic policy or social structures in some ESCWA member countries.

At the regional level, there is sometimes a lack of cooperation between countries. Most importantly, finding durable solutions for the displaced has both political and humanitarian dimensions: indeed, most countries of the region fear implementing policies that could impact the resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem. On the global level, there is pressure from developed countries to limit the flow of displaced to those countries.²⁹⁷ On the technical level, there are gaps in the collection and processing of data and poor coordination between host countries and aid organizations.

However, the concepts of socio-economic justice, community responsibility, asylum and assistance to the displaced are ingrained in the legal statutes and traditions of most ESCWA member countries.²⁹⁸ However, the manner and extent these principles are translated into policy or

²⁹⁷ Zaiotti, R. 2006. Dealing with non-Palestinian Refugees in the Middle East: Policies and Practices in an Uncertain Environment. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Volume 18, No. 2, p. 350.

²⁹⁸ See generally, Muzaffar, S. 2001. Practicable Ideals? A Proposal for Revitalizing the Rights of Forced Migrants in Islam. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3; Elmadmad, K. 2008. Asylum in Islam and Modern Refugee Law. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No.2; Elmadmad, K. 1991. An Arab Convention on Forced Migration. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Volume 3, No. 3, p. 477; and UNHCR. 2008. Op. cit.

put into practice, however, varies from country to country.

At the national level, policies addressing refugee issues in the ESCWA region do not match international standards. The national laws of most ESCWA member countries refer to the concept of asylum as a right and tradition under religious law, but procedures for the application of these laws are not specified and refugee status is rarely implemented.²⁹⁹ The only ESCWA member countries that are parties to the Refugee Convention are Egypt, the Sudan and Yemen. Thus, most refugees and asylum-seekers in ESCWA member countries are simply treated as foreigners, with no formal special rights or protection. While most ESCWA member countries recognize the mandate and presence of UNHCR in their respective countries, they often do not provide formal guarantees with regard to the rights these refugees are entitled to once they have been formally recognized as refugees by UNHCR.

Despite these challenges, the massive flow of forcibly displaced persons in the ESCWA region, coupled with the cultural acceptance of the principles of asylum and aid to displaced persons, warrant a renewed attempt to improve regional cooperation on these issues.

B. REGIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR REGIONAL PROBLEMS

To date, there have been few formal attempts to address the issue of displacement from a regional perspective, despite the fact that it is such a prevalent phenomenon and a potentially destabilizing force. The ESCWA region does not currently have an enforceable regional framework to protect, determine or enforce the rights of displaced persons. Other regions, on the other hand, have enforceable regional frameworks, for example, in Africa it is the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems of September 1969, and in the Central American region it is the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of November 1984.

²⁹⁹ Zaiotti R. 2006. Op. cit., p. 350.

The massive flows of forcibly displaced persons in the Middle East, coupled with cultural *acceptance of the concept of asylum and aid to the displaced warrant a renewed attempt* to improve regional cooperation. Initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cooperation on addressing the concerns of displaced persons in the Arab world have been formulated in the past, for example the 1965 Protocol on the Treatment of Palestinian Refugees (the “Casablanca Protocol”) of 10 September 1965. This protocol, prepared by the League of Arab States, established regional standards for the treatment of Palestinian refugees, including freedom of movement, permission to work and residency rights.³⁰⁰ In 1988, the Human Rights Commission of the Arab League prepared a draft Arab Convention on Asylum, but it did not garner wide support.³⁰¹ In 1992, a further effort was made to enact a regional agreement on Arab displacement, the Declaration on the Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Arab World.

In 1997 and 1998, UNHCR facilitated consultations on population displacement in Central and South-West Asia and the Middle East, which were aimed at encouraging regional cooperation and burden-sharing for the displaced.³⁰² More recently, attempts have been made to re-invigorate regional cooperation to address the problem of displacement. A three-day workshop on Refugees in the Arab region was organized in Cairo by UNHCR, Saudi Arabia and Naif University for Security Sciences in 2008, in addition to the Third Expanded Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq, that took place in Kuwait City on 22 April 2008. Participants in the meeting explored ways to support countries that host Iraqi refugees and to provide better services to the refugees themselves.

³⁰⁰ Akram, S. and Rempel, T. 2003. *Temporary Protection for Palestinian Refugees*. The Stockholm Conference on Palestinian Refugee Research, Ottawa, Canada, 17-20 June, pp. 6-9.

³⁰¹ Elmadmad, K. 1991. Op. cit.

³⁰² UHCHR. 1997. Consultations on Population Displacements in Central Asia, South-West Asia and the Middle East, (Amman, Jordan, 12-13 March; UNHCR. 1998. Second Regional Consultations on Refugees and Displaced Populations in Central Asia, South-West Asia and the Middle East (CASWAME), Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 3-4 March 1998; see also, Muzaffar. Op. cit., pp. 262-263.

These documents and agreements have no legal force, but could create a solid foundation for moving forward and for putting the topic of displacement back on the regional agenda for debate and policy development. In the following recommendations, ESCWA calls on its member countries and the international community to treat displacement as a regional problem and the need for a coordinated regional approach.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The issue of protracted displacement in the ESCWA region needs to be placed on the regional agenda for debate.
2. Government authorities, in conjunction with civil society organizations, academic institutions and international agencies, need to collaborate to improve data gathering and analysis and disseminate relevant data on the location, condition and needs of IDPs and refugees and the communities in which they live in the ESCWA region.
3. Decision-making processes at both national and regional levels and the implementation of programmes on displacement need to involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders, and particularly the displaced populations themselves.
4. Regional countries and international organizations must coordinate and cooperate to ensure that protection and assistance programmes address the needs of host communities of the ESCWA region, particularly as host communities make invaluable contributions in assisting the displaced.
5. In the case of internal displacement, national laws, policies and plans need to be based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and need to be developed with the support of the highest levels of Government. Such laws, policies and plans need to be formulated through broad consultations and need to reflect a national consensus on how best to address the protection and assistance needs of IDPs, as well to seek to determine the causes and phases of displacement.
6. International treaties, conventions and agreements which protect the rights of refugees

and displaced persons need to be ratified, translated into legal statutes and implemented by all ESCWA member countries.

7. ESCWA member countries need to consider mechanisms to facilitate the social and economic integration of displaced persons into the local economy and the labour market; such mechanism should be based on the granting of residency status for those displaced due to conflict.

8. Mechanisms to facilitate returns must be put in place to ensure that: (a) refugees have adequate information about the security situation of the area they wish to return to; and (b) that

receiving countries ensure the re-integration of returnees through, among others, facilitating property restitution and employment.

9. ESCWA member countries and the international community need to increase the assistance provided to regional countries and United Nations agencies hosting and assisting IDPs and refugees in the region. An Arab Fund could be set up for this purpose and be based on 0.7 per cent of oil revenues.

10. Ensure that the interventions undertaken on behalf of the displaced promote self-reliance and community sustainability, rather than dependence.

Annex

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND POLICY PAPERS

Participants were presented with the following proposals for future research and policy papers:

(a) Comparison and analysis of the different frameworks for protection and assistance of displaced persons in the ESCWA region.

Attempts have been made to centralize aid tracking and monitoring. How successful have they been and how do they compare with efforts in other countries under study. Can a regional approach provide “aid for displacement” to be conceived? And how can the efforts of civil society actors be integrated in a centralized aid tracking and monitoring mechanism?

Palestinian refugees are not included within the mandate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as they became refugees before the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is the sole agency responsible for providing services to Palestinian refugees, but it does not have a protection mandate. Therefore, Palestinian refugees are unique in that they are the only population of displaced persons that is not covered by a formal international protection mechanism, although UNRWA has adopted certain unofficial protection measures.

The “cluster approach”, whereby a division of responsibilities is agreed for specific United Nations and other partners under the coordination of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has been adopted by the United Nations with respect to assistance to IDPs. Therefore, Sudanese and Iraqi IDPs and those in Lebanon, for instance, are protected and assisted through coordinated responses by United Nations agencies.

The proposed paper would also include an analysis of the “gap” between humanitarian assistance and development for displaced populations in the ESCWA region.

(b) An analysis of the quality of data on the different populations of displaced persons in the ESCWA region.

The quality of data available on displaced populations in the ESCWA region varies dramatically. The research would examine the different mechanisms for collecting baseline data and profiling displaced populations, and assess how they can be improved? What obstacles are there? For example, in Lebanon, asylum-seekers are treated as illegal immigrants and remain in hiding. Can certain aspects of more successful frameworks be replicated in other displacement situations?

(c) Durable solutions for displaced population in the ESCWA region: an analysis of the possibilities of repatriation, resettlement and absorption for Palestinian refugees, Iraqi and Sudanese refugees and IDPs in Iraq, the Sudan and Lebanon.

The rights of displaced persons in the ESCWA region are defined under, and implemented by, different international and institutional mechanisms. What remedies and long-term solutions do these different mechanisms provide, and how effective are they? What are the implications of each for the region?

(d) Refugee, asylum and IDP policies of ESCWA member countries, and the implications of these policies on displaced persons and the region as a whole.

The research would determine the policies of ESCWA member countries with respect to entry, asylum, absorption, settlement and return. It would also determine the degree of responsibility taken by different ESCWA member countries for displaced persons in the region, and the burden placed on member countries? What are the implications for the region as a whole?

Which ESCWA member countries are signatories to United Nations treaties and other international agreements governing refugees and IDPs? What are the policies of ESCWA member

countries with respect to refugees wishing to enter their country? How do host countries register and document refugees? What programmes/policies do they have in place to provide basic assistance as well as improving livelihoods and reducing dependence on external assistance?

(e) An in-depth look at the most vulnerable displaced in the ESCWA region: women and children. What are the problems they face (loss of head of household, sexual violence, forced or under-aged labour, etc.) What mechanisms are in place to obtain data on their status and provide them with special assistance? Compare and contrast the problems facing the different displaced populations and the responses from the national and international community.

(f) The status and treatment of returnees in the region.

This research will focus on the status and treatment of returnees in the Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq, the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp and the Gaza Strip. It will examine the approach taken to sustain livelihoods, and will examine whether any other countries in the region have conducted studies on vocational training needs and labour markets for returning IDPs and refugees. It will also address whether a regional approach could be developed to create sustainable livelihoods for displaced persons.

(g) Comparison and analysis of the impact of displacement of ESCWA countries at the national level.

The research will examine the socio-economic impact of refugees on individual countries, and use rigorous economic analysis and evaluate any impact in a comparative manner.

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