KIN INSTITUTE

KIN ATLAS · 05

Internal Displacement in the Middle East: A Region That Cannot Be Added Up

Eight records, three routes and one rule: preserve the definition, territory and limit beside every figure.

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Editorial direction: Patric Berjeaut · Research and verification: KIN Institute

1 Reading the data

Every number has a face. Every number also has a date, a definition, a source and a limit.

This paper distinguishes People still internally displaced (People still displaced) from Movements registered during the year (New displacements). It also makes the Limit of the available evidence (Coverage limit) visible before figures are compared or cited.

2 Suggested citation

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2.1 A region that cannot be added up

The Middle East does not yield one responsible displacement total. Its records refer to different territories, causes, reporting systems and reference dates. A movement in an evacuation setting is not a person counted once. A year-end stock is not a sum of movements. A return is not proof of a durable solution.

This edition follows eight separately documented records: Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Iraq, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Lebanon, Israel, Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye. It does not include North Africa, and it does not merge the oPt and Israel records. Türkiye is kept as a disaster-focused record while retaining IDMC's Europe and Central Asia allocation in the evidence note [1] [2].

> *Every number has a face. In the Middle East, every number also has a territory, a date and a boundary that cannot be erased.*

2.2 Three routes, not a regional average

Route 1 follows Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iraq through protracted displacement, returns and unfinished solutions. Syria's end-2025 conflict stock was 5,963,668 people; Yemen's published conflict stock was 4,795,983, carried forward from end-2024 because no 2025 update was available; Iraq's was 997,334. These are separate country records and are not a regional total [1].

Route 2 retains the Levant's distinct records. GIDD recorded 2,755,779 conflict-related movements in the oPt during 2025 and an end-year conflict stock of 2,035,131, with significant coverage limits. Lebanon recorded 41,242 conflict movements and 64,417 conflict IDPs. Israel recorded 9,304 conflict movements, 7,000 disaster movements and 31,382 conflict IDPs. These records remain separate [1].

Route 3 makes the limits of movement counts visible. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, GIDD recorded 10,000,000 conflict-related movements in 2025, mainly evacuation-related. It did not publish an end-year stock. In Türkiye, GIDD recorded 155,759 disaster movements and 651,261 people still living in disaster displacement at end-2025. These figures cannot be combined with one another or turned into a regional sum [1] [3].

2.3 When a zero is not a zero

A blank field is not evidence of no displacement. Nor is every raw zero an observed zero. For Syria, Yemen and the oPt, IDMC recorded a disaster-stock zero because it could not remove the risk of double counting with the conflict caseload. The Atlas therefore reports the separately attributable disaster stock as unavailable. Lebanon and Israel have no published 2025 disaster stock. Iraq's published disaster stock was 186,006 people (186,000 rounded): people remaining internally displaced at the end of 2025 due to drought in central and southern Iraq. IDMC considers the figure a likely underestimate, notes it may include other climate-induced disasters and assigns medium confidence. Iran has no published end-2025 stock of either cause [1].

This is not a technical footnote. It is a decision about what a public atlas is allowed to claim. The interface will show an unavailable state instead of a zero bar, and it will not reconstruct a value from disaster flows, older series or humanitarian reporting.

> *Unavailable is an evidence statement. It says the source has not supplied a separately usable value — not that displacement has disappeared.*

2.4 Women and children: estimates, gaps and denominators

The evidence supports country-specific demographic insets only where a matching end-year stock and a stated denominator exist. IDMC's modelled estimates for Syria's conflict stock indicate 2,977,254 female people and 2,090,136 children aged 0–17. In Yemen, the matching estimates are 2,365,857 female people and 2,264,148 children. The model uses national population projections and is not direct IDP profiling [1]. For the oPt, the conflict-stock estimate includes 587,082 female IDPs aged 18+ and 892,593 children aged 0–17. Lebanon, Israel and Türkiye also have bounded modelled estimates for their matching stock. For Iraq, GIDD's modelled SADD table supports matching end-2025 stock denominators: conflict—496,375 female people of all ages and 421,363 children aged 0–17 of 997,334; disaster—92,576 female people of all ages and 78,586 children aged 0–17 of 186,006. These are estimates based on national population projections, not direct IDP profiling. Iran has no published end-year stock for a matching demographic inset [1].

> *A denominator is part of the fact. Without it, a percentage can look precise while saying very little.*

2.5 Three places to look beyond a single number

A number helps us see the scale. It cannot show every route, every day or every home. These notes say plainly what the data lets us see — and what it still cannot confirm.

Yemen — school after displacement

[Afnan was 15 when UNICEF documented her living in internal displacement with her family in Marib in September 2025. In the UNICEF article published on 30 November 2025, she describes wanting to return to school. Her account illustrates one child's experience of education during displacement. It does not establish when her family was displaced or how many other children shared that experience [10].]

occupied Palestinian territory — a number that needs to be read with care

[The number for the oPt needs to be read with care. For the Gaza Strip, the source uses an estimate made in October 2024. For the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reliable information is more limited. So the 2.0 million figure is an important reference, but it does not describe every place or every person in 2025 with the same precision. That is why the Atlas keeps this limit visible [1] [6].]

Islamic Republic of Iran — movement is not a census

[In June 2025, evacuation warnings led many people to move from Tehran towards northern provinces. The 10 million recorded by GIDD are movements during the year. They do not mean 10 million different people were displaced, and they are not a count of people still displaced at year-end [1] [8].]

3 References

1. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Global Internal Displacement Database (GIDD), annual displacement-data export, 2008–2025.
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3. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Global Report on Internal Displacement 2026 (GRID 2026).
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8. OCHA. MENA Regional Escalation Flash Update 1, 17 June 2025.
9. IOM. Three Years On, Türkiye's Earthquake Survivors Navigate Recovery, 6 February 2026.
10. UNICEF Yemen. Restoring Hope for Internally Displaced Children in Yemen, 30 November 2025.

4 Key terms

Coverage limit **– Limit of the available evidence**: A geographic, temporal or methodological boundary on what a figure can establish.

New displacements **– Movements registered during the year**: Movements or episodes registered during a year; the same person may appear more than once.

People still displaced **– People still internally displaced**: People who remained internally displaced at the end of the reference period.