Today it is not possible to speak about the end of forced displacement

By the Norwegian Refugee Council-NRC

In 2016, conflict and violence forced 171,000 people to flee their homes in Colombia, according to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) report published in June 2017.

According to the report, despite the historic peace accords, in Colombia it is still not possible to speak about a definitive end to the armed conflict, and as a result it is also not possible to speak about the end of forced displacement. Confrontations for territorial control among other non-state armed actors, such as the ELN, the EPL and organized armed groups, continue causing displacement.

Humanitarian assistance is still vital in specific areas of the country

Despite a reduction in the number of displaced persons in Colombia, compared to figures from 2015 and 2016, the number of newly displaced people is concerning (171,000). In this context, the recognition of the displaced population – their assistance, access to registry, recognition of their situation and protection – is fundamental during the implementation phase of the peace agreements.

Displacement figures have been particularly worrisome in the case of Colombia; the country is among the five countries with the highest level of internally displaced persons by conflict since the first displacement monitoring report was launched in 1998.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the people displaced by conflict in Colombia, now in their sixth decade, have mainly resettled in cities within the country, but it is impossible to determine with certainty how many of the 6.3 million people, that fled their homes between 1996 and 2015, have yet to overcome the situation of displacement.

The registry in Colombia, aimed primarily at facilitating and promoting State response in the area of reparations in conformance with the Law 1448 of 2011, does not allow for the...
identification of persons who have overcome the situation of displacement, be it because they have managed to access a durable solution, or because they have passed away. This means that the number of internally displaced in the country does not diminish and it is urgent to develop a framework of durable solutions that allows clear identification of the displaced population that has overcome its situation of victimhood.

In 2016, at a global level, each second a person was forced to flee their home within their own country. The number of internally displaced twice surpasses the number of refugees. In this context, it is urgent that the issue of forced displacement be a priority on the global and national agenda. In total, 40.3 million people around the world live in forced displacement. Historically, Colombia is the country with the largest number of displaced persons, 7.2 millions. According to the global report Syria (6.3), Sudan (3.3), Iraq (3.0) and Democratic Republic of Congo (2.2) complete the list of the five countries with the highest number of displaced at a global level.

See the full global report at: http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/

### Semester overview

#### Events causing mass displacement

- Armed actions: 36%
- Unilateral Unknown / Others: 33%
- Unilateral PDAG: 14%
- Unilateral ELN: 14%
- Unilateral EPL: 3%

#### Events causing mobility restrictions and access constraints

- Unilateral PDAG: 52%
- Unilateral ELN: 11%
- Armed actions: 13%
- Unilateral Unknown / Others: 1%
- Unilateral EPL: 1%

The information covers the period from 1 January – 30 June 2017. Source: Monitoring, cut off dat 4 July 2017.
In the context of the first semester of 2017, Colombia has posed important challenges for humanitarian action.

Since the beginning of the year and the exit of the FARC-EP towards the concentration zones (“zonas veredales”), a change in the dynamics of the armed conflict in certain territories has been evidenced. Despite the fact a reduction in the total number of armed confrontations can be shown, the appearance of new armed groups, the strengthening of others, the consolidation of certain dissident groups of the FARC-EP and the dispute over territorial, social and licit and illicit economies control has generated new reconfigurations of presence and actions by armed actors.

The civilian population continues being most affected by these dynamics: communities continue suffering displacement due to confrontations and armed violence. Although armed actions between actors has reduced, an increase in direct attacks against the civilian population has been evidenced.

The presence and actions of armed groups in the territory continues causing mobility limitations and restrictions to the access of goods and services in the communities, in particular affecting access to food, potable water, livelihoods and the right to education by boys, girls and adolescents. Additionally in 2017, for the first time a series of violent actions against international cooperation actors, such as threats, direct attacks and closing humanitarian spaces has been evidenced. This could further affect the capacity to access communities and respond to their needs.

**No end to mass displacement**

Although the process between the FARC-EP and the government has brought significant changes in the total number of armed confrontations, the continuation of conflict with other groups, as well as the dispute for territorial control by non-state armed actors and other post-demobilization armed groups PDAG, continue being the primary actors responsible for mass displacements in Colombia.

During the first semester of 2017, mass displacement has increased by 10% when compared to the same period from last year. At least 7,682 people have been displaced in mass fashion between January and June, which corresponds to 70 per cent of the total of displaced in 2016. If this tendency continues for 2017, the year could end with more than 15,000 people displaced in mass events.

The Pacific region is the most affected. Eighty per cent (80%) of the total persons displaced in mass fashion are concentrated in the departments of Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. More than one event can be highlighted for the municipalities of Buenaventura (4), Litoral de San Juan (4), Lloró (3), Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé (3), Alto Baugó (2), and Tadó (2), all municipalities located in the Pacific region (see map above).

Additionally, in 2017 mass displacements have presented themselves in 15 municipalities where last year no displacement was recorded (see graphic), which could be related to the new dynamic and the presence of other groups looking to consolidate their control in these zones.
For example, the municipality of Tadó, Chocó, had not reported mass displacement since 2012, while in the course of 2017 two events have presented themselves, affecting 359 persons.

A similar situation can be found in Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé, Nariño, where three mass displacement events have occurred in 2017, affecting more than 530 people, while during the first semester of 2016 not a single mass displacement presented itself in the municipality.

The mass displacements have resulted primarily from confrontations between armed groups and confrontations with the public force. Confrontations between the ELN and GAPD, or the ELN and unidentified groups can be highlighted, representing 35% of total confrontations, possibly indicating a struggle for territory and for social and economic control. The unilateral action of unidentified groups and the PDAG, which concentrate 31 per cent of victims, can also be highlighted.

Compared with the first semester of 2016, the impact of unilateral actions by the PDAG, ELN, EPL and unidentified armed actors (see table) which implies that the threats, presence and risks generated by these groups have increased their impact on the civilian population. Cases have been identified where even small groups of armed men (such as five armed men) have managed to intimidate the population and cause mass displacements; which could signal the high impact and fear that their presence is causing in the territories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total displaced population by perpetrating actor: unilateral actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring of access restrictions, a challenge for the humanitarian community

Between January and June more than 65,500 people have suffered mobility limitations and restrictions to the access of goods and services as a result of armed violence.

While this figure represents a reduction with the previous year, it is likely that the total number of victims is higher. OCHA has registered 82 events limiting the access of goods and services. Nonetheless, it was not possible to identify the number of affected persons in all cases. Just analysing the events related to access restrictions, an increase of 67 per cent when compared to last year is noted.

The difficulties in reporting the number of affected persons by these events could be related to limited capacity in the field, as well as the dynamics of the events themselves. For example, it is difficult to quantify the number of people affected by curfews or the prohibition of movement, although it is possible that these events are generating humanitarian and protection needs.

Some of the more reported restrictions are related to limitations of mobility and access to transport; limitations to access livelihoods that affect the food security of communities.

According to OCHA monitoring, access restrictions and limitations on mobility have been evidenced in 13 departments throughout the country (see map), which means an increase of 30% in the number of departments compared to the same period last year. Although the main impacts are found in Norte de Santander and Antioquia, the Pacific departments have also suffered restrictions. In 50% of the municipalities with impacts due to mass displacements, access restrictions have also been identified.

Among the identified access restrictions, the cases in Norte de Santander where unilateral actions by the ELN (threats against transporters and an attack against an oil pipeline) restricted the access and mobility of more than 15,000 persons are highlighted. In Antioquia threats from a GAPD against the public service limited the free movement of more than 38,000 people in Medellín’s urban zone.

Access for humanitarian organizations has also been affected

Humanitarian access for international organizations could be at risk given the changes in context and the dynamic of armed groups. As a result, seven departments faced restrictions on humanitarian missions. Additionally, armed groups have caused direct restrictions and attacks against personnel from international organizations, which has impeded the continuity of planned actions.

Increase in attacks against the civilian population

During the first semester of 2017, 729 attacks against the civilian population were registered, a 12% increase compared to the same period in 2016.

In a total of 233 municipalities located in 30 of the 32 departments in the country, at least one attack against the civilian population was registered. Nevertheless, 30% of the
attacks against the civilian population are concentrated in 11 municipalities located in the departments of Nariño, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Antioquia, Cauca and Chocó. At the same time, these regions (Pacific, North-East and, to a lesser degree, Antioquia) are also at the top of the list for victims of mass displacement and restrictions in humanitarian access.

In nearly half of the cases of attacks against civilians, the perpetrating actor is unknown, which represents a challenge for the follow-up to these cases. Among known actors the GAPD, with 20% of the events, followed by the ELN with 13% of the actions are highlighted. The EPL went from 3 to 23 attacks against civilians in the first semester of 2017 when compared to the same period during the previous year.

Among the attacks against the civilian population, in first place are international homicides to protected persons, with 188 events highlighted, representing a 236% increase when compared to the first semester of 2016. In second place, the threats, that despite presenting a slight reduction (6%) in 2017 when compared to the same period in 2016, maintain their relevance with 377 events registered in 170 municipalities. Among the threats, the use of pamphlets, text messages and other measures aimed at imposing fear in broad categories of the population are highlighted (see maps).
An inspiring thought  

By the Norwegian Refugee Council-NRC

Before telling her story, Wendy spoke for several minutes. In a particularly beautiful moment, she mentioned she would like to become a doctor to help people; an impressive aspiration considering her family past.

The situation that Wendy and her family were subjected to by the conflict is moving. Wendy turned nine-years-old without a single opportunity to study.

Some parents do not have anything to offer their children as a result of forced displacement, and her mother – Diana – knows how difficult it is to raise children in the middle of a conflict.

But, how can you become a doctor without access to education?

Wendy’s family started off with nothing. Her mother lost everything when she fled her land to save her life. “The burst of gunfire surrounded us and a man was killed. Before, I lived in a very dangerous area. In the past, while we walked, you could feel the blood that splashed on your clothes," says Diana.

They knew it would be difficult to start over. In fact, Wendy and her three brothers did not have opportunities to go to school. Nevertheless, Wendy’s mother knew that education was a great privilege that could lead anywhere. She arrived at that conclusion because she herself never managed to study; neither before her forced displacement or after.

A year ago, Wendy had the opportunity to attend her first school, her eyes were filled with the most uncontrollable happiness describing the emotion of going to study. We could finally see that she was accessing the life she imagined as a girl. “School is beautiful, there are classrooms, a person that prepares food and teachers,” said Wendy.

Education saves lives and is a fundamental sector in the humanitarian response.

Wendy currently lives in Tumaco, a corridor for drugs, arms, and that is more and more frequented by unidentified armed persons. Community leaders have been assassinated and the shots have become part of life in her neighbourhood; but Wendy knows that education is the key to changing her life, and perhaps the lives of others too, if one day she becomes a doctor.

This is an opportunity for Colombia, the government must and can do more to fulfil the dreams of Wendy and millions of children affected by the situation caused by the conflict and forced displacement. Guaranteeing access to their rights is necessary in order to overcome the situation of displacement.

People we help
At NRC we focus on protecting the right to education of girls and boys affected by the armed conflict in Colombia. We offer bridge programs where children receive educational materials and personalized support to learn the skills, knowledge and behaviours necessary to return to school. We promote safe learning spaces.

Colombia continues to suffer one of the most dramatic humanitarian situations in the world. Despite the peace accord with the FARC, violence and conflict continue impeding vulnerable communities from accessing basic services. NRC is present in Colombia, where more than 7.1 million people have been forced into displacement.

The Colombia Humanitarian Funds contributes to saving lives

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund has consolidated as an important source of financing to respond to sudden onset and chronic emergencies through humanitarian assistance projects implemented by national and international NGOs.

In 2017, 12 projects are under implementation and three new projects have been approved through the Reserve Fund modality to respond to sudden onset emergencies in the municipalities of Riosucio, Tumaco and Saravena, located in the departments prioritized by the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The three new projects focus their attention on the following sectors: Water, Basic Sanitation and Hygiene, Protection, Health and Food Security and Nutrition. The strategy for assigning resources responds to the objectives of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), to each cluster’s strategy and the guidelines of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund.

Among the projects currently being implemented, the project Attention in health, nutrition and rapid response in safe water and hygiene promotion in Wayuu communities affected by “el Niño” in the Maicao municipality, Guajira department, carried out by Action Against Hunger between 1 November 2016 through 31 October 2017, is highlighted.

Mowasisirra is one of the 16 Wayuu communities attended to by the project and has 65 families. One of these families is under the responsibility of Mrs Mercedes Epieyú Ipuana, who lives in a house with a dirt floor, mud walls and a yotojoro roof and is charged with the care of 10 grandchildren, four of which are under 5 years of age.

Mrs Mercedes is the only person responsible for the care of her grandchildren, she symbolizes kindness, warmth and an unconditional sense of family. She knows that her grandchildren only have her to survive.

To sustain her family, Mercedes and her oldest granddaughter of 15 years make “Mochilas Wayuu” (Wayuu bags) that must be sold in Maicao, and with the money they receive from that they purchase food for the grandchildren. Access to water is also a challenge, they must walk more than two hours before finding a water well and return...
home with large jugs of non-safe water that cause diseases like diarrhea and dehydration.

As part of the attention carried out by Action Against Hunger through the Colombia Humanitarian Fund financing, an outside team of health and nutrition diagnosed three of Mrs Mercedes’ grandchildren with acute malnutrition. Thanks to the project’s intervention, they have received micronutrient supplements and have been administered a treatment to remove parasites under a community-based focus. Their recovery has advanced considerably. They also received a water filtration system to remove contaminants and convert the water into water safe for human consumption, thereby reducing illnesses.

That is how this project, and all the projects financed by the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, contribute to saving the lives of the most vulnerable, such as Ismael, Mersheylis and Luis Raúl; through strategic and intersectoral attention to the humanitarian needs prioritized in the Humanitarian Response Plan.
Projects funded through the Reserve Fund for sudden onset emergencies in 2017

Total amount: US$ 450,000.00
Total of projects: 3

Beneficiaries’ profiles:
- Recent internally displaced people (IDPs)
- Indigenous and afrocolombian people
- People affected by access restrictions and confinement
- People affected by disasters related to natural events

- **5,527** Total beneficiaries
  - 847 (1.9%) Men
  - 2,793 Male
  - 1,546 (35%) beneficiaries Boys
  - 737 (1.6%) Women
  - 2,734 Female
  - 1,997 (36%) beneficiaries Girls

**Plan**
- $150,000.00

**NRC**
- $150,000.00

**CRC**
- $150,000.00

**Sudden onset emergencies**

**Bar chart**
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): $60,000 (20%)
- Protection: $80,000 (20%)
- Health: $80,000 (20%)
- Food Security and Nutrition: $60,000 (13.3%)
- Emergency Education: $45,000 (10%)
- Shelter: $45,000 (10%)
- Early recovery: $30,000 (6.8%)
Working together, a strength for disaster response

By the National Unit of Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD)

For Colombia, 2017 continues to be a year for follow-up in the transformation processes of the National System of Disaster Risk Management (SNGRD), accompanied by the participation of both national and international public, private and community actors; all acting under mechanisms of operations coordination, without casting aside the knowledge of risk, and risk reduction.

We have had to face some key challenges, among them reviewing the border situation with Venezuela, whose internal political situation has generated an alert for preparedness for providing humanitarian assistance. These actions have been carried out based on the experience of mass migration of Colombians two years ago, whose lessons learned have strengthened procedures and advanced the preparedness work with the United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – OCHA – and the Humanitarian Country Team, thereby creating important synergies and effective coordination mechanisms should the National Government activate its response plans.

Hydro-meteorological emergencies have cause impacts that have put the response capacities of the SNGRD to the test. The rainy seasons this year have been very atypical, showing their effects since the end of February through mid-year with the arrival of tropical waves and cold fronts. In particular, we had a situation that severely affected Mocoa, Putumayo, caused by a torrential downpour the night of 31 March that left 332 dead and 330 injured, and that caused the activation of all response protocols. The response phase was executed in 18 days; during July the stabilization phase is wrapping up which will give way to the reconstruction that will be carried out over the next three years.

International cooperation has represented an important support in these operations: support based on prior meetings, continuous information, complementarity in response lines with the SNGRD, and with the participation of a delegate of the Local Coordination Team in the Unified Command Post (PMU) in Mocoa, mechanism under which the Humanitarian Country Team demonstrated its rapid and coordinated effectiveness.

As a result, this first semester has seen emergencies focused in the departments of Putumayo, Caldas and other regions of the country. The response to these situations is led by the capacities of the SNGRD together with international cooperation, including support from the Humanitarian Country Team, reflected through technical and operational assistance, as well as international cash and in kind donations that have complemented the humanitarian work, as always, adhering to the standards that regulate assistance at national and international levels.

Today the SNGRD maintains admiration and respect for the Humanitarian Country Team, which has been a strategic partner in times of need with regards to Disaster Risk Management, through its support in knowledge and in disaster reduction and management.
Humanitarian Bulletin Colombia

**Map 1: Number of armed actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>#Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nariño</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocó</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arauca</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>249</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*

**Map 2: Number of attacks to civilian population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>#Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nariño</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arauca</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauca</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>729</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*

**Map 3: Number of threats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>#Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nariño</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauca</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle del Cauca</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>377</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*

**Map 4: Number of victims with limitations in mobility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>#Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>15,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocó</td>
<td>5,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle del Cauca</td>
<td>1,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauca</td>
<td>1,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,516</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*

**Map 5: Natural Disasters (UNGRD)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>#Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chocó</td>
<td>37,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>36,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td>25,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle del Cauca</td>
<td>24,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putumayo</td>
<td>22,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>322,940</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*

**Map 6: Mass displacement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th># Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chocó</td>
<td>4,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nariño</td>
<td>1,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risaralda</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle del Cauca</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,682</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OCHA cut off date 4 July 2017*