FORCED MIGRATION AND HUNGER

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Across the globe, people are being forcibly displaced from their homes on a massive scale (Figure 3.1). There are an estimated 68.5 million displaced people worldwide, including 40 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 25.4 million refugees, and 3.1 million asylum seekers (UNHCR 2018g). These groups are compelled to flee conflict, violence, and natural or human-made disasters in order to reach safe places where they can support themselves and their families. Most people are displaced not as the result of just one factor, but because of a combination of factors, with hunger often figuring prominently in their experience. Hunger is a persistent danger that threatens the lives of large numbers of forcibly displaced people and influences their decisions about when and where to move.

There are 6,790 people in the camp, living in makeshift shelters made of branches and plastic sheeting. We all suffer in the camp. I came with nothing except for the clothes I was wearing. There is not enough food, not enough water, and not enough medication to treat the sick.
—An internally displaced woman at a camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo, March 2018

During periods of conflict, hunger may be both a cause and a consequence of forced migration[1]. People affected by conflict experience it not only as a threat to their lives but as an assault on their livelihoods that can undermine their ability to provide for their most basic needs, including food. Conflict can restrict people's movement and their access to markets, farmland, and jobs. If they cannot produce the food they need to survive or earn an income to purchase that food, their nutritional well-being is compromised. Some people do indeed manage to flee to safety with the bulk of their savings or assets intact and so do not face the immediate threat of hunger before they are displaced. Others are not as fortunate: by the time they move, they have lost everything. Still others are displaced multiple times, with each move further eroding their resilience, livelihood, and food security. Predicting when people are likely to be displaced is an inexact science; some clues may be found by analyzing past displacements within the same population. However, levels of risk and violence and perceptions of the opportunities or resources that may be available at the intended destinations may lead to very different decision-making pathways among individuals and households, even within the same population.

Particular crises present enormous challenges to already poor regions in terms of both hunger and displacement. The Syria crisis, now in its seventh year, has displaced more than 6.7 million people inside the country and sent more than 5 million refugees into neighboring countries (IDMC 2018d; UNHCR 2018j). It has rendered 4 million people in host communities in need of assistance (UNHCR 2017b). Since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, more than 1.5 million people have been internally displaced and another 1 million are living as refugees in the region (UNHCR 2018h). The recent resurgence of fighting in South Sudan has resulted in more than 2.4 million refugees and 1.7 million IDPs (UNHCR 2018i). These crises have put severe pressure on the Horn of Africa region.

Ninety-five percent of the 2.6 million Afghan refugees are sheltered in just two countries—Iran and Pakistan (UNHCR 2018a). The long-standing predicament of stateless Rohingya from Myanmar has come to a head with nearly 1 million people—many suffering from acute food insecurity, poor health, and injuries caused by violence—seeking shelter in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, which has become the most densely populated refugee settlement in the world (Safi 2018).

As different as these cases are, they share a number of similarities. In each situation, the displaced are fleeing conditions that make it unsafe to remain in place. Their access to basic food and other supplies is insecure. And although displaced people can and often do make valuable contributions to local economies and communities, they can—by their sheer force of numbers and scale of needs—also place a heavy burden on the communities, governments, and regions that host them, particularly if humanitarian assistance is lacking or inadequate. It is, however, possible to overstate the costs of hosting refugees. As Maystadt and Breisinger's review of refugee hosting concludes, "in developing countries, the impact of refugee inflows can be positive if there is sufficient donor aid" (2015, 3).

An analysis of the interplay between hunger and forced migration reveals four common misperceptions. These misperceptions about both hunger and forced migration are persistent and continue to influence policy despite considerable evidence showing that they are not productive. They stand as obstacles to tackling the root causes of displacement, to meeting people's range of needs for the full duration of their displacement, and to working toward effective solutions.

[1] Throughout this essay, I use the term *forced migration* based on the definition adopted by both the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It refers to "movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects" (Forced Migration Online 2012; IOM 2018). This broad definition—adopted by both the research and the policy/practice communities—encompasses more than just refugees to include other types of displaced people, as well as a wide range of potentially overlapping causes of displacement, and is particularly relevant when discussing hunger and food and nutrition insecurity in connection with displacement.

Note: The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Welthungerhilfe or Concern Worldwide.

This essay challenges each of these misperceptions and proposes the following ways of understanding and addressing the issues:

1. **HUNGER AND DISPLACEMENT** should be recognized and dealt with as political problems.

2. **HUMANITARIAN ACTION ALONE** is an insufficient response to forced migration, and more holistic approaches involving development support are needed.

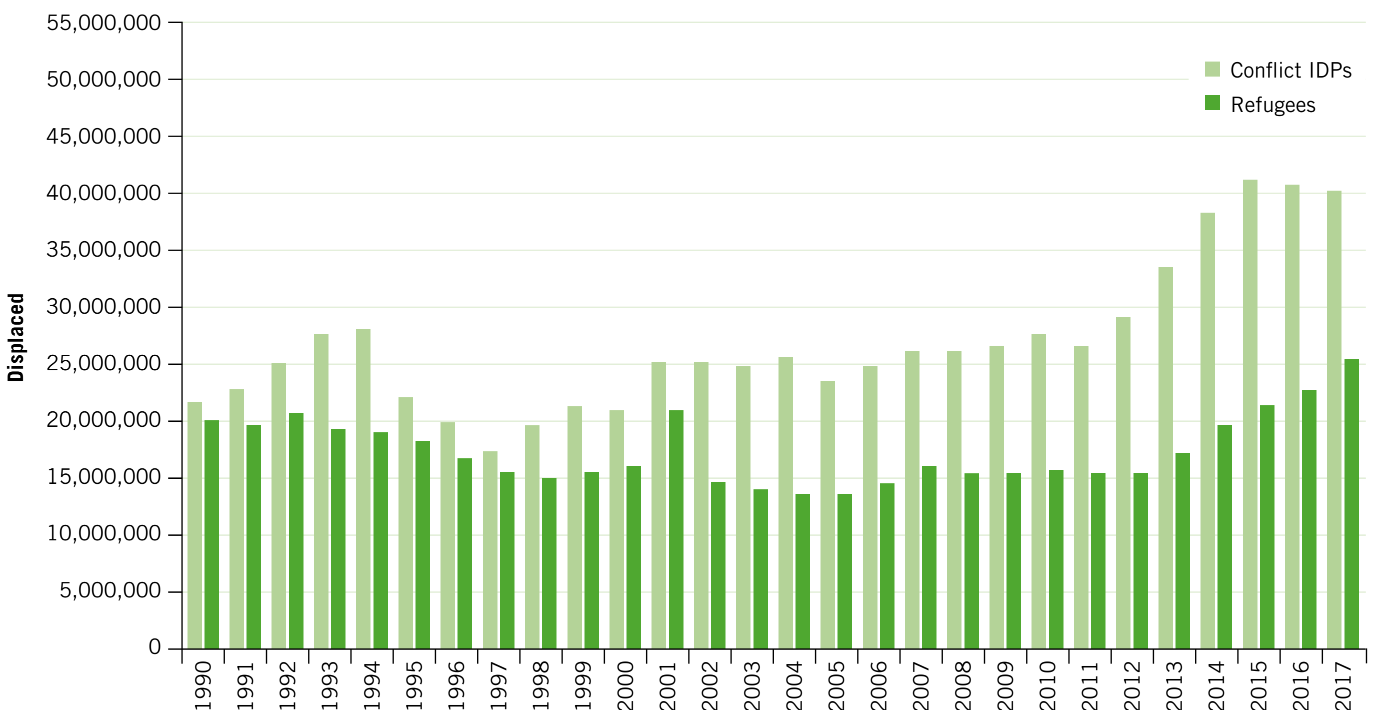
3. **FOOD-INSECURE** displaced people should be supported in their regions of origin.

4. **THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT** should be based on the resilience of the displaced people themselves, which is never entirely absent.

Overall, the tools currently used to respond to forced migration are insufficient because they focus on technical, short-term humanitarian responses rather than addressing the political economy of displacement and the longer-term needs of the displaced.

This call to refocus the world's approach to forced migration and hunger is relevant and timely. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promise to "leave no one behind," and SDG2 commits the world to ending hunger by 2030. Yet for regions hosting millions of displaced persons, the prospects for meeting those goals without considering how to include displaced populations are slim. In September 2018, the Global Refugee Compact, a nonbinding agreement, was ratified by the UN General Assembly 2018. This agreement seeks to bring together the international community to address a perennial gap in the international system for the protection of refugees: the need for more predictable and equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility among states and other stakeholders (UNHCR 2018f). Furthermore, in May 2018 a Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–2020 was launched (Global Protection Cluster 2018) to mark the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Progress in these areas will depend on a clear understanding of the causes and consequences of hunger and forced displacement.

FIGURE 3.1 **REFUGEES AND IDPS DISPLACED BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE, 1990–2017**



Source: IDMC (2018b), UNHCR (2016, 2018g).

1 Hunger and Displacement Must Be Understood and Addressed as Political Problems

Hunger is often understood to result from environmental or natural causes. Many analysts attributed the 2011 famine in Somalia, for instance, to the "worst drought in 60 years" (BBC 2011) rather than to the complex interplay of violent conflict and the blocking of humanitarian access and displacement routes—factors that, when combined with the drought and the extreme destitution of people living in agricultural and agro-pastoral areas of southern and central Somalia, led to mass starvation.

In fact, hunger, like displacement, is usually the result of political circumstances. Natural disasters—droughts, floods, and severe weather events—lead to hunger and displacement only when governments are unprepared or unwilling to respond because they either lack the capacity or engage in deliberate neglect or abuse of power. Drought, for example, is a slow-onset disaster that takes several years to develop. With adequate early warning and response systems, as well as a healthy dose of political will, there is no reason that drought must lead to hunger and famine.

As Alex de Waal pointed out in his 2015 essay for the Global Hunger Index report, large-scale famines are becoming a thing of the past (von Grebmer et al. 2015). Governments are increasingly able to predict, prepare for, prevent, and respond to the circumstances that once caused millions of people to starve to death, and they are held to account by their citizens, who expect them to take these actions. Early warning systems, emergency food security reserves, strategies to protect and build assets, risk insurance, and employment schemes are but a few mechanisms for ensuring that people affected by natural disaster, economic misfortune, conflict, or violence do not go hungry. Moreover, as Amartya Sen has argued, governance systems that are held to account by the people they represent—through a free press, democratic participation, and transparent leadership—are much less likely to allow hunger to develop on their watch, lest they find themselves removed from power by their constituents (Sen 2001). This argument can be extended to non-state actors that aspire to take control of government at local or national levels; demonstrating the capacity and willingness to work to prevent hunger and displacement may help attract supporters if a non-state actor is seen as behaving like an accountable state.[2]

Nonetheless, hunger and its most extreme form—famine—are still allowed to occur, often because of deliberate policy or targeting, negligence, or lack of capacity that prevents people from getting access to the resources they need. Culpability for causing hunger can often be assigned to individuals or institutions (Edkins 2008; Menkhaus 2012). Countries with the highest incidence of hunger in 2018 are also places affected by conflict, political violence, and population displacement.

Populations affected by disaster often face an increased risk of hunger whether they are forcibly displaced or forcibly immobilized. The factors that compel people to move also block their access to food. People who are unable to work, to move freely in their home area, to sell their farm products at market, or to access basic services face major challenges in securing enough food to support themselves and their family. Sometimes they are unable to move in the face of these risks because it is too dangerous to leave or because they cannot afford to go. Civilians facing starvation in Syria and Yemen in 2018, for instance, include both internally displaced people and people trapped in siege conditions. In Syria in 2016, 1 in 3 people who were internally displaced or living under siege was unable to afford basic food items; the displaced were reported to be the most vulnerable citizens remaining in the country (Lovelle 2016). In Yemen, Human Appeal reports that "the Household Hunger Scale (HHS) has nearly tripled since 2014, seeing 40% of Yemeni households going to sleep hungry, and nearly 20% of households reported having gone 24 hours without eating" (Human Appeal 2018, 15).

International humanitarian law prohibits the use of food deprivation or hunger as a weapon of war. This prohibition includes the deliberate targeting of "foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purposes of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive" (Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, 1977: Article 54(1)). This prohibition is reiterated in UN Security Council Resolution 2417 on hunger and conflict, passed in May 2018, condemning the starving of civilians and unlawful denial of humanitarian access as a tactic of war. However, violations of humanitarian law take place regularly, and making people go hungry is a common tactic used by state and non-state actors.

The tactic was used in 2011 in Somalia, where drought, conflict, lack of humanitarian access, and high global food prices combined to create a deadly perfect storm in which it is estimated that more than 250,000 people died (LSHTM and Johns Hopkins University 2013). One factor precipitating the famine was action by the rebel al-Shabaab movement, which blocked people who were trying to leave the areas worst affected by drought so that they could not reach the IDP camps in the capital, Mogadishu, or the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya (Menkhaus 2012; Maxwell and Majid 2016). The movement

[2] This is a reason that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are promoted not only among state parties but among non-state actors. See Bellal, Giacca, and Casey-Maslen (2011).

claimed that it did not want to encourage dependency among those who had been affected by drought and that it would be better for people to be assisted closer to their homes so that they could get back to work as quickly as possible. This strategy was intended to maintain al-Shabaab's base of support in the rural areas by preventing people from going to government strongholds in urban centers, a strategy that was generally unsuccessful and worsened the suffering of those who were unable to leave the area. At the same time, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) blocked aid agencies' access to areas under al-Shabaab control. According to Menkhaus, "humanitarian agencies were also targeted by the TFG, which accused them of channeling food aid and colluding with 'the enemy.' Many security incidents involving aid agencies were suspected of being the work of TFG officials and their paramilitaries, not al-Shabaab. The operating environment was thus not only much more dangerous and nonpermissive, but unpredictable" (Menkhaus 2012, 32).

This reality means that responses to forced displacement must engage with the underlying political factors. Support is needed for policies designed to prevent conflict and build peace at all levels, as well as for policies that reinforce government accountability and transparency, which make it more difficult for governments to shirk their duty to meet citizens' basic needs for safety and food security.

2 Humanitarian Action Alone Is an Insufficient Response to Forced Migration

The world's response to situations of forced migration is almost always to undertake humanitarian action—and nothing else. When a displacement crisis begins, humanitarian operations are launched for refugees and IDPs to save lives and provide basic shelter, health care, water and sanitation, and food security and nutrition. Assistance is designed to protect people from imminent death, disease, and starvation. This support can help stabilize an emergency situation and save many lives in the short term, particularly the lives of those weakened by the conditions of displacement and the journey to safety.

Humanitarian assistance is not designed to support people over the long term. Refugees receive assistance to meet only their most basic food and nonfood needs, often in the hope and expectation that they will be able to return to their areas of origin before long. This wager has proven time and time again to be misguided, as people remain displaced for years. Most forced migration is protracted: people spend many years—even generations—being displaced. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of the world's 22 million refugees have been displaced for more than 10 years, while 40 percent have been displaced for more than 20 years. The average duration of displacement for a refugee is currently 26 years (UNHCR 2017a). Even where people are displaced short distances and can sometimes return to their homes, as in South Sudan, the dynamics of violence and the unpredictability of attacks prevent people from returning in the longer term.

Protracted displacement is both a political and a development problem, and the failure to see it as such leaves people unable to secure their livelihoods in ways that would protect them from hunger and make them more resilient to shocks. In refugee settings, food rations and cash support are minimal, and after the initial emergency phase is over, micronutrient diseases—such as iron-deficiency anemia, vitamin A deficiency, pellagra (niacin deficiency), and scurvy (vitamin C deficiency)—are common (Seal and Prudhon 2007). Displaced people's mobility, legal status, access to services, and employment remain constrained and therefore precarious. Often, they are not integrated into labor markets, they do not own productive assets such as land or livestock, and they do not have reliable access to affordable education, health care, or other services. They may not be able to call on their relatives and neighbors as effectively to help them if the entire community has been displaced for the same reasons or if they have moved without that social network. Moreover, the humanitarian tools used to prevent and respond to hunger among the displaced, or those at risk of displacement, cannot keep hunger at bay because they tend not to address the long-term dynamics and implications of displacement. Furthermore, they do not sufficiently address the causes of hunger, which means that those who are affected do not recover sufficiently to withstand future shocks.

In the Horn of Africa, Somali refugees living in camps in Kenya are not able to move freely outside the camps; they lack access to land and livestock and most forms of employment. IDPs living in Somalia are similarly constrained, not by regulations but by extreme marginalization and destitution; they lack access to steady employment and are often unable to return to their areas of origin owing to continued insecurity.

There has been some recognition of the need to address protracted displacement as a development issue, but little action has been taken. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) called for a "new approach" to "recognize both the humanitarian and development challenges of displacement" (WHS 2016). In a follow-up initiative to the WHS titled the Grand Bargain, countries committed to "enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors" (UN OCHA 2018). Several initiatives have been devised to try to coordinate humanitarian and development activities for displaced populations—including the EU's efforts to link relief, rehabilitation, and development (LRRD) (EU 2012) and the Committee on World Food Security's Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS 2015). At present, however, there

is no effective way of transitioning from humanitarian assistance to more development-oriented support. Funding for development-oriented support for protracted displaced persons—those displaced for more than five years—is in short supply. The result is that there is inadequate (and sometimes a complete lack of) support to help people rebuild their lives while they live as displaced persons or refugees. This causes emergency operations to extend for years and years, while the very nature of protracted displacement renders people chronically vulnerable to hunger and destitution. They become reliant on external support for food and other basic requirements of life, and when these resources are not available on a regular and adequate basis they may be vulnerable to the effects of food insecurity.

Protracted displacement is a growing phenomenon, reflecting failed and failing politics at many levels. Within this political vacuum, humanitarian aid has been—and continues to be—the default response. Yet the burden on that humanitarian system is growing year on year as the number of emergencies rises and the gap between promised and delivered funding widens. In 2017, global humanitarian funding stood at just over US$27 billion; even so, the UN appeals suffered a shortfall of 41 percent (Development Initiatives 2018). Such funding gaps not only leave humanitarian budgets significantly overstretched but also diminish the capacity to invest in long-term efforts to overcome chronic food insecurity by, for example, promoting economic livelihoods and building resilience.

A more holistic approach would also offer benefits to the communities that host displaced people. Displacement can bring food insecurity to host populations, who share what they have with their displaced relatives and neighbors. In some cases, the hosts themselves are former displaced persons who may become unable to continue hosting or may even themselves be displaced again when they run out of resources to share, leading to "overlapping displacements" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016). In Kenya, families hosting IDPs during the post-2007 election violence were initially generous, but they "eventually struggled to make ends meet, particularly in the context of high inflation and elevated food costs" (Brookings-LSE 2013, 13). In other cases, as with IDPs in Colombia, relations between hosts and displaced persons become strained as they compete for resources (Arredondo et al. 2011; Brookings-LSE 2013).

3 Food-Insecure Displaced People Usually Stay in Their Region of Origin and Need Support There

The large numbers of refugees and migrants entering the European Union, particularly since 2015, have preoccupied many policymakers, but this attention has produced a misleading picture of the global refugee crisis. In 2015, more than 1 million people—mostly refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, and parts of East and West Africa—entered the EU through extremely hazardous sea and land crossings. More recently, these movements have dropped dramatically: in 2017 the International Organization for Migration estimated that 186,768 "irregular migrants" (including refugees as well as migrants traveling without legal documentation)[3] entered the EU. Even at their peak in 2015, however, refugees to Europe accounted for only about 6 percent of the global refugee population (UNHCR 2016). Moreover, refugees entering the EU tend to move for reasons other than hunger, given that traveling across multiple countries to reach Europe is an expensive undertaking that is likely beyond the reach of people who lack the basic resources to meet their immediate food needs. The situation in the United States is similar: the issue of how to handle the arrival of forcibly displaced people receives heavy media and policy attention, but the actual number of migrants is small in the global context.

In contrast, people facing food insecurity tend to seek the closest possible place of safety. Evidence from the Horn of Africa in 2017, for instance, shows that the regional food crisis did not result in large increases in the numbers of people fleeing to Yemen and Saudi Arabia, but rather produced large increases in displacement to urban areas (EUTF REF 2018). People affected by food insecurity typically move to the nearest city or across an international border to the closest refugee camp or market center, because they often cannot afford to go any further. They may also prefer to stay closer to their homes to preserve social networks and to be able to maintain their agricultural, pastoral, or trading practices. They may want to stay in areas where they have ethnic, religious, or language affinities. This does not, however, mean that efforts to curb hunger and address the drivers of forced migration are not related or that there is not a pressing need for European governments to take action. Rather, it shows where the focus of such efforts should be directed.

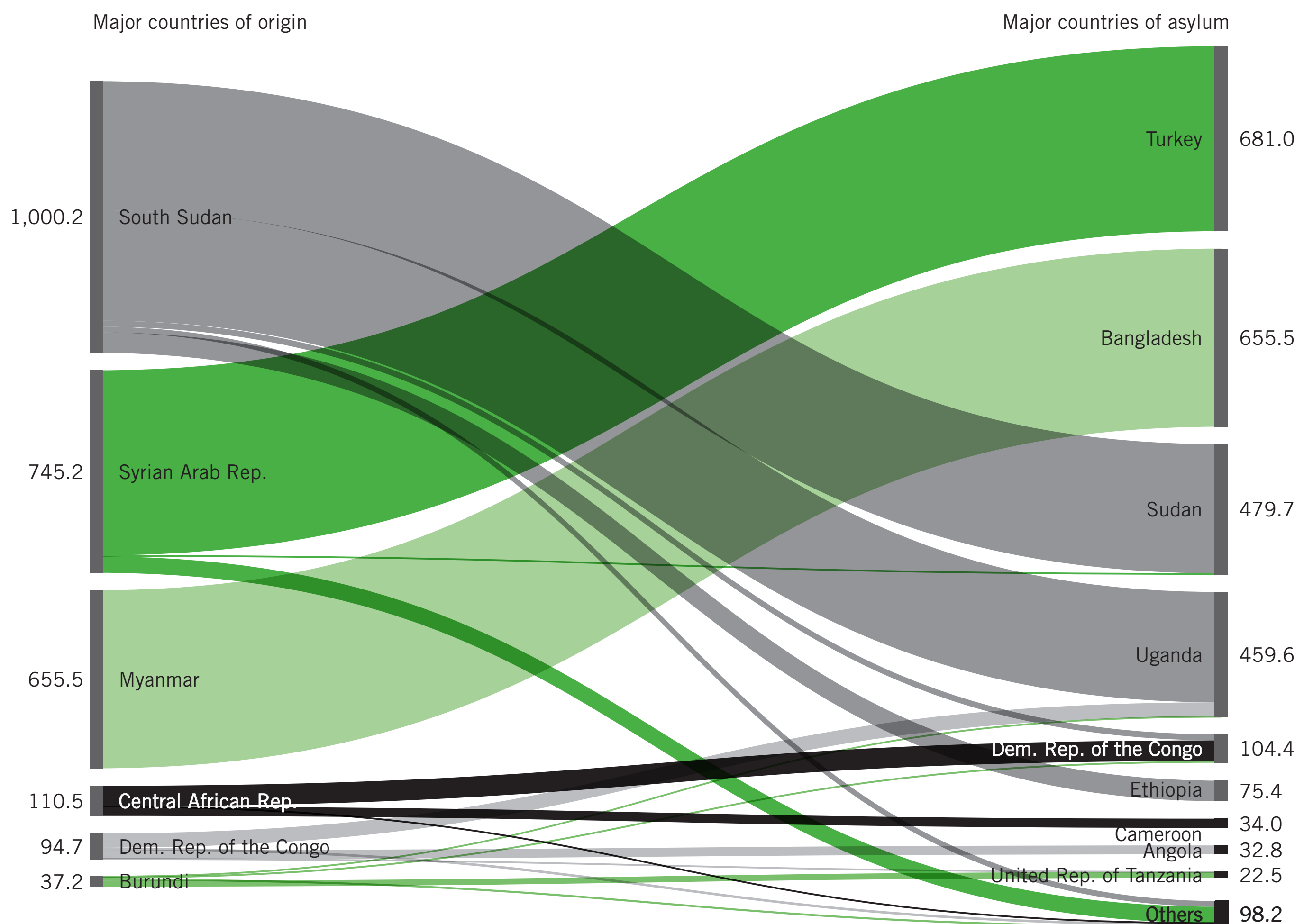
The major displacement centers in the world—those involving people from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria—host many more forcibly displaced people than those coming to Europe. These centers are also in poorer regions whose ability to absorb large numbers of displaced is extremely limited (Figure 3.2

[3] Irregular migrants are people who lack legal documentation and authorization to enter a country. Irregular migrants entering the EU from Africa and the Middle East do not have entry visas, and many lack passports or other identity documents.

shows how new displacements tend to be contained within regions of origin). Of the 20 countries ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index, 16 have current or very recent experience with displacement and/or hosting of refugees (UNDP 2017), and all fall into either the *serious*, *alarming*, or *extremely alarming* categories in this year's GHI or lack sufficient data but remain cause for significant concern.

International agreements and laws contribute to the reality that displaced people tend to stay in their region of origin. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who has a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (Article 1) (UNHCR 2010). Under these terms, the risk that a refugee faces must be directed at that person individually and must be the result of the state's direct persecution or its inability or unwillingness to protect that person. In essence, when a person is unable to call on his or her country's government to provide the basic protection that a citizen should be able to expect, then international refugee law asserts the right to protection to be provided by another country or by the United Nations.

FIGURE 3.2 **WHERE NEW REFUGEES FOUND ASYLUM IN 2017 (NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THOUSANDS)**



Source: UNHCR (2018g).

In Africa and Latin America, binding regional refugee conventions acknowledge "breakdowns in civil order"—including hunger and famine—as additional legitimate grounds (beyond the terms of the 1951 Convention) for a person to be recognized as a refugee.[4] Regional instruments—such as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (sometimes referred to as the Kampala Convention)—extend much of this protection to IDPs as well. This distinction between African and Latin American legal protection for refugees and the 1951 Convention's definition is crucial. It means that an individual who flees famine in Somalia, for example, would be recognized de facto as a refugee in Ethiopia or Kenya, because all African states have signed and ratified the African Union's Convention and the United Nations abides by this convention in Africa. In other words, under the 1951 Convention, this individual would not automatically be afforded refugee status.

Given their short-range movements and the disproportionate burden on host communities, food-insecure refugees and IDPs need to be assisted, if possible, in their regions of origin. Food security support may take the form of food aid, but this approach comes with a host of disadvantages, including the high cost of procuring and transporting foodstuffs, the potential for distorting local markets, and the difficulty of providing food in adequate amounts and variety to sustain populations over long periods of time. Other instruments are increasingly being used, including cash transfers or vouchers that allow people to buy what they need from local markets and employment generation schemes that enable people to earn incomes, thus preserving their resilience and reducing the risk of dependency. Such support can also—in the right contexts—help promote prevention before and recovery after disaster or displacement. These kinds of cash-based assistance are transforming food security programming, although careful assessment is needed to determine when local economic conditions are conducive to using cash and when they are not.[5]

Assistance must also include safeguards for people's ability to move and to find secure livelihood options in and near the places to which they are displaced. Evidence from Uganda suggests that when the displaced are able to move freely and are supported in securing their own livelihoods, they are more self-sufficient and can contribute more to local and national economies than when they are confined to camps and dependent on external assistance (Betts et al. 2014). The Ugandan government had provided farmland to refugees from South Sudan. This practice has raised challenges as the number of displaced people has increased and the availability of land has dwindled. However, the principle of supporting refugee resilience and livelihoods in open settlements remains an important one.

More broadly, regional development is needed to help support displaced people and combat hunger at the same time within the same populations. Such regional development can create thriving economies in host communities so that they support the resilience of the displaced. With increased economic resilience, people are often in a better position to move more safely. For those who are displaced, economic opportunities in regions closer to home may mean that they have a wider range of choices about where to go, and ultimately may be able to avoid the risks associated with irregular migration—often across longer distances.

Promoting economic and social development in areas and communities affected by displacement also requires engaging with governance structures, state policy, and civil society in ways that will necessarily help protect resilience at the individual, household, and community level and that will prevent the kinds of persecution, societal breakdown, and food insecurity that leads to further mass forced migration and hunger. This type of political engagement can be a challenge for assistance providers and donors, who have sometimes strategically side-stepped political issues, fearing that their access to populations in need may be compromised if they speak out on political issues. Remaining silent, however, risks helping perpetuate the circumstances that give rise to displacement.

Despite the focus on providing protection and assistance to the displaced in their regions of origin, there may, under certain circumstances, be a need to support some refugees outside the region of origin, such as when there is no prospect of return or the host country is unable to provide for the needs of the refugees who have sought asylum. Some hosts rank so far down on the Human Development Index that they are not able to care adequately for their own citizens, let alone for their refugee populations. In such cases, resettlement to a third country outside the region may be necessary for some refugees. Consequently, although willingness to resettle refugees has waned in recent years, it is still needed in many instances.

[4] See the 1969 OAU (now African Union) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU 1969) and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984).

[5] See, for example, Danish Refugee Council (2014) and Kiaby (2017).

4 The Resilience of the Displaced Is Never Entirely Absent

Displacement is a coping strategy that people take to escape danger, whether political or hunger-related, but it takes various forms. Different people choose to move at different times. Some move before they have lost their assets, whereas others wait in their home areas until they have lost everything, hoping that conditions will improve and that they will not have to move. Some families move all together, while others leave one or two relatives behind to protect their houses and land, making it more feasible—they hope—to return soon.

Understanding why and when people have been displaced is essential to identifying their assistance and protection needs, determining the conditions that are likely to keep them displaced, and taking the actions that might give them the confidence to return (or understanding why return will not be possible and why other solutions must be found to their displacement). Such an understanding will incorporate the intricacies of the local political economy, the dynamics of conflict, and the multiple layers of causation that explain not only why people move, but whom they move with, what they bring with them, and where they move to.

Despite being compelled to move, forcibly displaced people never entirely lose their agency and resilience. Displacement is itself an act of agency, of moving in order to reach security and safety. No matter how destitute they are or what circumstances surround their displacement, refugees and IDPs work to secure access to food, often in creative ways that assistance providers mistake for manipulation or misuse of aid. To cope with infrequent and inadequate food distribution, they may seek to secure more ration cards than they are entitled to. Some supplement their food rations with food obtained from markets through, for instance, trade, wage labor, and sale of charcoal. They diversify their livelihood activities by engaging in daily wage labor, selling assets, or sending children to work for urban households. Some people share their assistance with relatives who remain in their original homes to protect their property; they do this as a long-term investment in the future, even when the assistance they receive is barely enough to sustain them. A recent study found that many IDPs in Mogadishu, Somalia, are sharing meager assistance with relatives living in rural areas to help keep them there, so that when security conditions finally improve they might have some property to return to outside the city (EUTF REF 2018).

Policies designed to assist refugees and IDPs should build on their resilience, but in fact such policies often work to undermine the resilience of displaced people. They may be legally prohibited from moving through the country, owning property, or working legally. In Kenya, for instance, Somali refugees are subject to all of these restrictions. This limits the ability of displaced people to gain access to food that is adequate in quantity and quality. In Ethiopia and Jordan, among other countries, jobs are being created especially for refugees, enabling them to work alongside nationals of the country. These efforts may have the benefit of providing income to refugees, but unless they also address protection risks, they raise the risk that refugees will be seen primarily as workers, that their other needs besides the need for income may be overlooked, and that tensions between hosts and refugees will deepen (Crawley 2017).

Conclusion

Forced migration and hunger—closely intertwined challenges—affect some of the poorest and most conflict-ridden regions of the world. This essay has focused on key obstacles to supporting people before, during, and after displacement more effectively. Support for food-insecure displaced people needs to be improved in four main areas:

1. **RECOGNIZING** and addressing hunger and displacement as political problems;

2. **DEVELOPING** more holistic approaches to protracted displacement settings involving development support;

3. **PROVIDING SUPPORT** to food-insecure displaced people in their regions of origin; and

4. **RECOGNIZING** that the resilience of displaced people is never entirely absent and should be the basis for providing support.

Policy documents, international agreements, advocacy pieces, and academic writing often pay lip service to these four points, but they are rarely incorporated into action on the ground. Addressing the challenges effectively requires going beyond humanitarian responses, recognizing the political solutions that must be encouraged and strengthened, and engaging in longer-term development efforts in the meantime. This approach must extend to all sectors: facilitating mobility and income-generation opportunities, supporting education and training linked to employment opportunities in and around areas of displacement, providing health care support to people with chronic illnesses, and ensuring that people have access to markets so they can obtain enough high-quality food for the long term. From the outset, displacements should be seen not as short-term crises but as potentially long-term moves that will extend over many years. If such a view is taken from the start, a great deal of time, resources, and suffering can be saved.

A holistic response to forced migration and hunger must involve deep engagement with the political factors that undermine resilience and create risks of hunger and displacement. It must seek to integrate development into support for the displaced even as humanitarian assistance is provided. It must focus on supporting livelihoods in regions of origin and bolstering resilience in ways that support local markets and strengthen livelihood systems, thus making people's own self-help strategies more effective. Finally, efforts to tackle hunger and displacement in developing countries should take a regional approach, helping host countries and communities better respond to the needs of the displaced without becoming impoverished themselves.

In the past half-century the world has made great strides in reducing the severity of famines. In the next half-century, similar progress in reducing mass displacement, wherever it occurs, could result in lasting gains for food and nutrition security for millions of people.