

Terminology of Forced Displacement



Migrants or talk about immigration is a big focus of news and political discussions today, and there is often a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about how different terms are used. At IAFR we serve *forcibly displaced people* – a broad category which describes people who have fled their homes involuntarily. Forcibly displaced people are often referred to as *refugees*, *asylum seekers*, and *internally displaced people (IDP)*. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are distinct ideas which are important for making sense of the global movements of forcibly displaced people.

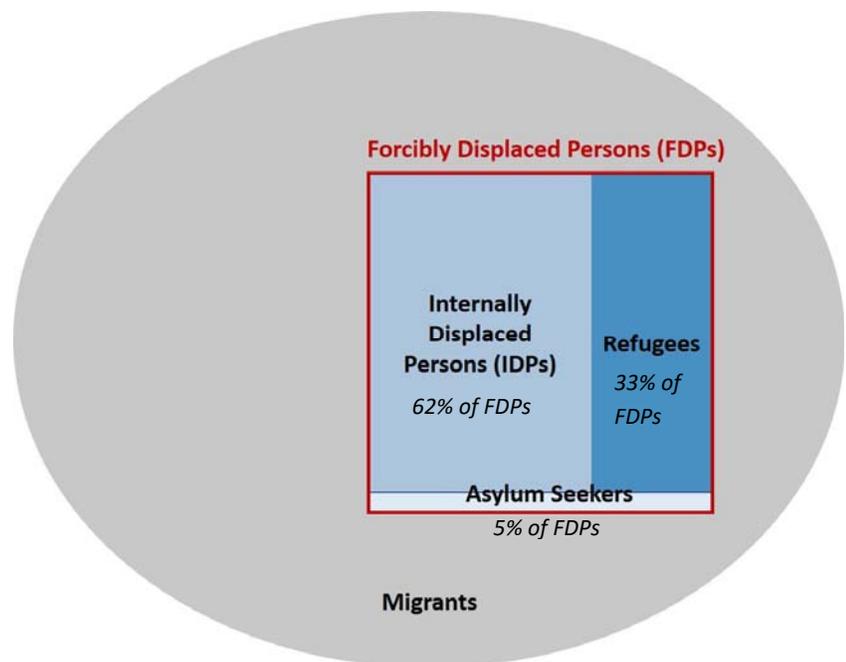
The diagram below aims to depict how the proportions of these groups relate to each other.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS

International Migrants are people living outside of the country of their birth. There are approximately 244 million migrants in our world today.ⁱ

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Forcibly Displaced People (FDPs) are people uprooted from their homes involuntarily, often in response to war, violence or other humanitarian disaster. There are 65.3 million forcibly displaced people in our world today, comprising about 27% of the world's international migrant population. Every minute 24 more people become forcibly displaced.ⁱⁱ



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are a sub-category of forcibly displaced people. IDPs have been forced to flee their homes, but not their country. There are approximately 40.8 million Internally Displaced People in our world, making them the largest group of forcibly displaced people (about 62%). They remain under the authority of their own government, even though it might be the direct cause of their displacement.ⁱⁱⁱ IDPs are among the most vulnerable uprooted people as there is no international treaty to protect or assist them.

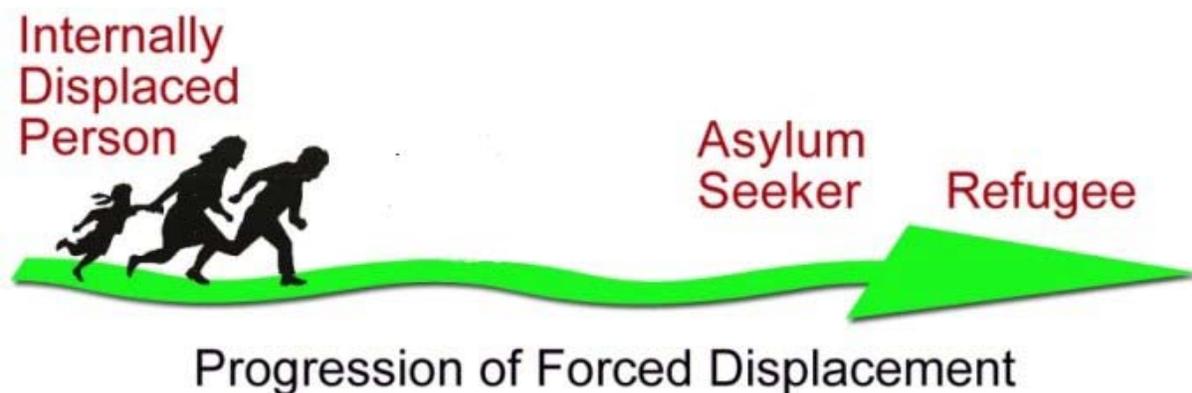
REFUGEES

Refugees are another sub-category of forcibly displaced people. Refugees have had to cross an international border in search of safety, seeking refuge outside of their home country.^{iv} There are 21.3 million refugees in our planet, accounting for nearly 33% of forcibly displaced people.^v

ASYLUM SEEKERS

An *Asylum Seeker* is someone asking for permanent refuge in a foreign country but whose claim to need protection has not yet been definitively evaluated. If their case is approved, they will receive refugee status. There are about 3.2 million people seeking asylum in our world,^{vi} making up 5% of the world's forcibly displaced people. If their case is rejected, they may receive another form of temporary protection or be ordered to leave or be deported to their country of origin.

For some forcibly displaced people they begin as internally displaced, forced to flee within their own country after disaster strikes. If they fail to find refuge inside their home country, they will often cross international borders in search of help. At this point they could be described as asylum seekers. If they have had a chance to have their case heard by a neutral party and are given permanent refuge by another country, they have become a refugee.



ⁱ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/01/244-million-international-migrants-living-abroad-worldwide-new-un-statistics-reveal/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/background.shtml>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/internally-displaced-people.html>

^{iv} According to the UN Refugee Agency: "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries." <http://www.unrefugees.org/what-is-a-refugee/>

^v <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

^{vi} <https://s3.amazonaws.com/unhcrsharedmedia/2016/2016-06-20-global-trends/2016-06-14-Global-Trends-2015.pdf>