

PRESS RELEASE
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International conference in Bonn \ **Understanding the perspective of displaced persons**

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To understand the root causes of displacement and to find sustainable solutions for protracted refugee situations, the perspective of displaced persons must be given greater weight. This is the conclusion of the international research conference "Fleeing Conflict—Trajectories of Displaced Persons", which was organized by BICC and took place on 3 November 2016 in Bonn.

"This conference mainly served to, above all, understand the perspective of the refugees and the displaced. We often talk about a phenomenon and forget to take into account the needs of the refugees themselves", concludes **Conrad Schetter, Director for Research at BICC**. This approach was put forward by various examples of research on the situation of displaced persons discussed at the conference. BICC-researchers, for instance, reported on their fieldwork in South Sudan, Myanmar and Afghanistan in the framework of a German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)-financed project ("Protected rather than protracted") on protracted refugee situations.

In his welcome address, **Thomas Grünewald**, State Secretary at the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, also stressed the importance of innovative research on displacement and integration.

The researcher **Elisabeth Ferris**, Georgetown University / Brookings, pointed out that a mere 1.3 million people were looking for asylum in Europe—a region with 550 million inhabitants. "**The numbers themselves are not a crisis—would we be talking about a crisis if refugees were not arriving in OECD countries?**", Ferris critically commented on the perception of flight and displacement in her keynote address.

"Displacement is not a topic specific to Germany or Europe. We have to increasingly acknowledge that more than 90 per cent of the refugee movements

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take place in countries of the Global South", stressed **Conrad Schetter**. The final panel of the scientific conference with 100 international participants from academia and practice, too, advised to view the widening of research on displacement as a strategic challenge.

The BICC conference was funded by the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Savings Bank in Bonn and the US Consulate General in Düsseldorf.