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1.1 billion people live in multidimensional poverty, nearly half a billion of these live in conflict settings

UNDP and OPHI's new research found that poverty rates in countries affected by conflict are nearly three times as high as compared to countries not affected by conflict

New York, 17 October 2024 – A staggering 455 million of the world's poor live in countries exposed to violent conflict, hindering and even reversing hard-won progress to reduce poverty, according to the latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released today.

Jointly published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) based at the University of Oxford, this year's report features original statistical research on multidimensional poverty for 112 countries and 6.3 billion people, as well as fine-grained analysis of the relationship between conflict and poverty. It includes new survey data for 20 countries.

The 2024 edition of the MPI report found that 1.1 billion people live in acute poverty worldwide, with 40 percent living in countries experiencing war, fragility and/or low peacefulness according to at least one of the three widely used datasets of conflict settings.

Due to lack of data, the global MPI is measured over a ten-year period (2012-2023) to create a comparable index of global levels and trends. In this new report the poverty data per country were matched to the country's conflict/fragility status at the time to generate new insights on the overlap between conflict and poverty. The challenges of gathering data in conflict-affected countries likely lead to an underestimation of multidimensional poverty in these countries, with available data still underscoring the catastrophic effect of conflict on poverty reduction.

“Conflicts have intensified and multiplied in recent years, reaching new highs in casualties, displacing record millions of people, and causing widespread disruption to lives and livelihoods,” said Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator. “Our new research shows that of the 1.1 billion people living in multidimensional poverty, almost half a billion live in countries exposed to violent conflict. We must



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accelerate action to support them. We need resources and access for specialized development and early recovery interventions to help break the cycle of poverty and crisis.”

Countries at war have higher deprivations across all ten indicators of multidimensional poverty, underscoring the devastating impact of conflict on the world’s most vulnerable populations. For instance, in conflict-affected countries, over one in four poor people lacks access to electricity, compared to just over one in twenty in more stable regions. Similar disparities are evident in areas such as child education (17.7 percent vs. 4.4 percent), nutrition (20.8 percent vs. 7.2 percent), and child mortality (8 percent vs. 1.1 percent). The analysis finds that deprivations are markedly more severe in nutrition, access to electricity, and access to water and sanitation for the poor in conflict settings relative to the poor in more peaceful settings.

Poverty reduction tends to be the slowest in countries most affected by conflict – where poverty is often the highest. The report includes an in-depth case study on Afghanistan, where 5.3 million more people fell into multidimensional poverty during the turbulent period 2015/16–2022/23. Data are available now to examine Afghanistan’s post-conflict situation and the results are alarming. In 2022/23, nearly two-thirds of Afghans were poor (64.9 percent).

Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, says, “This study provides the first measured global analysis at this scale examining how in conflict settings multidimensionally poor people are affected. And it is sobering. Using the global MPI we find that out of the 6.3 billion people living in 112 countries, 1.1 billion are poor. And 455 million poor people live in countries experiencing conflict, fragility and/or low peacefulness. So poverty is not their only struggle. Moreover, the level of poverty in conflict-affected areas is far higher. In countries at war, over one in three people are poor (34.8 percent) whereas in non-conflict-affected countries it’s one in nine (10.9 percent) according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. And sadly, poverty reduction is slower in conflict settings – so the poor in conflict settings are being left behind. These numbers compel a response: we cannot end poverty without investing in peace.”

In addition to the in-depth analyses of poverty in conflict settings, the latest MPI report offers nuanced insights on the lived experience of poor people and trends in poverty reduction around the world:

- Over half of the 1.1 billion poor people are children under the age of 18 (584 million). Globally, 27.9 percent of children live in poverty, compared with 13.5 percent of adults.
- Large proportions of the 1.1 billion poor people lack adequate sanitation (828 million), housing (886 million) or cooking fuel (998 million).



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- Well over half of the 1.1 billion poor people live with a person who is undernourished in their household (637 million). In South Asia 272 million poor people live in households with at least one undernourished person, and in Sub-Saharan Africa 256 million do.
- Of 86 countries with harmonized data, 76 significantly reduced poverty according to the MPI value in at least one time period.
- Of 17 countries with trend data that end in 2021/22 or later, seven spanning at least part of the COVID-19 pandemic, only nine (Benin, Cambodia, Comoros, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Kenya, Mozambique, the Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Trinidad and Tobago) experienced significant reductions in both MPI value and incidence of poverty.

Since its inception in 2010, the global MPI has been instrumental as an analytical tool to identify the most vulnerable people – the poorest among the poor, revealing poverty patterns within countries and over time, enabling policy makers to target resources and design policies more effectively.

To learn more about the 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Index, including data on children living in poverty, rural–urban patterns, disaggregations by 1,359 subnational regions, or the composition of poverty across continents, countries and subnational regions, visit: hdr.undp.org and ophi.org.uk

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About UNDP: UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at [@UNDP](https://twitter.com/UNDP).

About OPHI: The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) is a research centre based in the University of Oxford working on the multidimensional measurement of poverty and wellbeing to help guide effective policymaking around the world.