

# Population dynamics and global conflict

Extending demographic research beyond  
immediate and direct consequences of violence

Orsola Torrìsi


Toward a Demography of Crisis and Resilience

International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

03 March, 2026

\* Own photos – families in refugee settlements, Beqaa Valley (Lebanon) & Fuzuli (Azerbaijan)





Wars kill people.

And hurt them.

Directly & indirectly.

And across generations.

Khan Yunis, southern Gaza

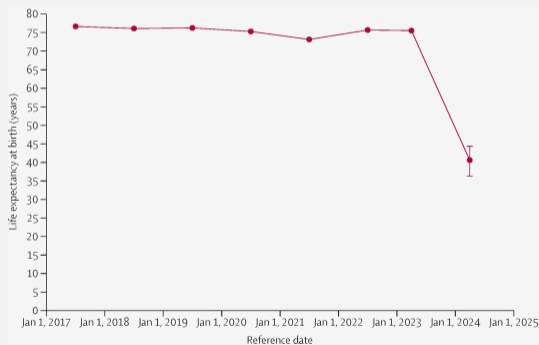
where Israeli forces directed people to go to escape bombardment in the north

# What we, demographers, have done and do well: Documenting direct and immediate consequences of war

*“That the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip generated a life expectancy loss of more than 30 years during the first 12 months of the war, nearly halving pre-war life expectancy levels.”*

Guillot, M., Draidi, M., Cetorelli, V., Da Silva, J. H. M., & Lubbad, I. (2025). Life expectancy losses in the Gaza Strip during the period October, 2023, to September, 2024. *The Lancet*.

$e_0$  in the Gaza Strip (male & female)



# Going beyond standard measures

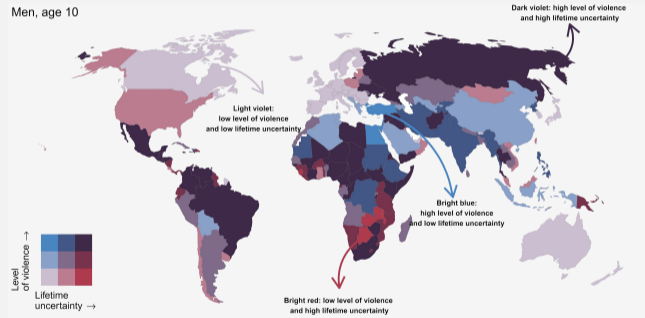
*“The impact of violence on mortality goes beyond cutting lives short.*

*The most violent countries in the world tend to have **the highest lifetime uncertainty.**”*

Aburto, J. M., Di Lego, V., Riffe, T., Kashyap, R., Van Raalte, A., & Torrisi, O. (2023). A global assessment of the impact of violence on lifetime uncertainty. *Science Advances*, 9(5).

## Lifetime uncertainty (SD) and level of violence

Men, age 10

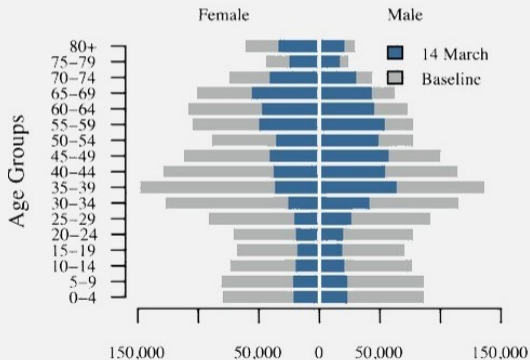


# Getting creative with the data we have

*“Digital trace data can be leveraged in combination with population data to build real-time monitoring systems for rapid targeted assistance for vulnerable populations displaced by a crisis.”*

Leasure, D. R., Kashyap, R., Rampazzo, F., Dooley, C. A., Elbers, B., Bondarenko, M., ... & Mills, M. C. (2023). Nowcasting daily population displacement in Ukraine through social media advertising data. *Population and Development Review*, 49(2), 231-254.

Pre-post Russian invasion population change, Kyiv



# What we, demographers, can do more of: Studying the indirect and long-term consequences of war

Some areas still remain considerably less studied:

- **Family dynamics and relationships, fertility and reproductive health** during and after conflict (Neal et al., 2016; Svallfors et al., 2025)
- **Family bereavement** as a “prolongation of grief” and “driver of collective memory of the violence” (Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022)
- **Ageing populations** and the interaction between exposure to war stressors and their long-term health (Korinek et al., 2024)
- “**Mixed migration**” and **(im)mobility** (Williams et al., 2021)

# Which implies directing more of our attention to some populations

Some groups still remain considerably less studied:

- **Family dynamics and relationships, fertility and reproductive health** during and after conflict (Neal et al., 2016; Svallfors et al., 2025) ⇒ **Women and girls**
- **Family bereavement** as a “prolongation of grief” and “driver of collective memory of the violence” (Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022) ⇒ **Future generations**
- **Ageing populations** and the interaction between exposure to war stressors and their long-term health (Korinek et al., 2024) ⇒ **Survivors and the elderly**
- **“Mixed migration” and (im)mobility** (Williams et al., 2021) ⇒ **Non-movers**

## What we, demographers, should also do more of

- Analyse war and violence both as distinct from and as connected to a growing set of **overlapping challenges** — climate change, epidemics, economic shocks...
- Ask ourselves (more often) — **is this research ethical?**
- Be **transparent and truthful** about the process of conducting demographic research in conflict



**FRE** 

Palestine

**PEACE**  
**FOR**  
**SUDAN**

**PEACE**  
**FOR**  
**YEMEN**