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Population displacement is a devastating feature of armed conflict with far-reaching political and humanitarian consequences. This book demonstrates the extent to which displacement is a deliberate strategy of war, not just a consequence of it. Adam Lichtenheld draws on field research in Uganda and Syria; case studies from Burundi, Indonesia, and Vietnam; and an original dataset of strategic displacement in 166 civil wars to show that armed groups often uproot civilians to sort the targeted population, not to get rid of it. When combatants lack information about opponents' identities and civilians' loyalties, they can use human mobility to infer wartime affiliations through "guilt by location." Different displacement strategies occur in different types of civil wars, with some relying on spatial profiling rather than ethnic profiling. As displacement reaches record highs, Lichtenheld's findings have important implications for the study of forced migration and policy responses to it.

Adam Lichtenheld is Executive Director of the Immigration Policy Lab at Stanford University. He has previously worked as a senior researcher at Mercy Corps and a consultant for the United Nations Refugee Agency, the World Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development. He has designed and evaluated policies and programs on migration and displacement, violence prevention, and conflict resolution with governments, donor agencies, and nongovernmental organizations around the world. His articles have appeared in a number of academic and policy journals, as well as the *Washington Post*, and *Foreign Policy*, and the Conversation.

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Forced Displacement and Population Sorting in Civil Wars

Adam Lichtenheld
Stanford University

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For Andrea, حبيبتي

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We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before.

António Guterres, UN Secretary General

I could never understand those that left, how they could just leave like that, leave everything behind, all that life, all that living … how were we supposed to go when we had so many commitments, so many responsibilities?

Paul Lynch, *Prophet Song*[1]

The doctors of this neighborhood might also be informers who would consider Abdel Latif a terrorist if they knew where he'd been these last few years – stubbornly clinging on inside that besieged village …

Suspicions alone were enough to lead to corpses lining the streets. Suspicions alone were enough to cause someone to disappear without a trace.

Khaled Khalifa, *Death Is Hard Work*[2]

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Acknowledgments

This book is a work of scholarship: clinical, analytical, data-driven. But ultimately it is a deeply human story. During the decade I spent working on this project, I met extraordinary people who had endured unimaginable hardship. They welcomed me to their neighborhoods and villages, They opened up their homes and allowed me to trespass on their lives. The difficulty of being a social scientist studying conflict and displacement is knowing that your work will never adequately convey the anguish, courage, and resilience of those who participate in your research. The search for explanations can seem futile (as my grandfather liked to quote from a Gertrude Stein poem: "There ain't no answer") or ethically dubious (by explaining mass violence, one can be accused of rationalizing it). Still, I hope the following pages do some justice to the experiences of the dozens of refugees, displaced people, ex-combatants, and other war survivors whom I interviewed during my time in the field. While I fear they do not, I am deeply grateful for the willingness of these individuals to share their stories. So I must first and foremost express my gratitude to them.

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Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda)
CDF	civil defense force
CNDD	National Council for the Defense of Democracy (Burundi)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
FNL	National Liberation Forces (Burundi)
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdek (Indonesia)
GDP	gross domestic product
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement (Uganda)
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	internally displaced person
IGO	intergovernmental organizations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JAN	Jabhat al-Nusra (Syria)
LC	Local Council (Uganda)
LDU	Local Defense Unit (Uganda)
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLF	National Liberation Front (Vietnam)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda)
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
PITF	Political Instability Task Force
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Turkey)
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SAA	Syrian Arab Army

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SDCC	Strategic Displacement in Civil Conflict Dataset
SNC	symmetric nonconventional
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesia)
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency)
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Vietcong (Vietnam)
VDC	Violations Documentation Centre (Syria)
YPG	People's Protection Units (Syria)
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front (Uganda)

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