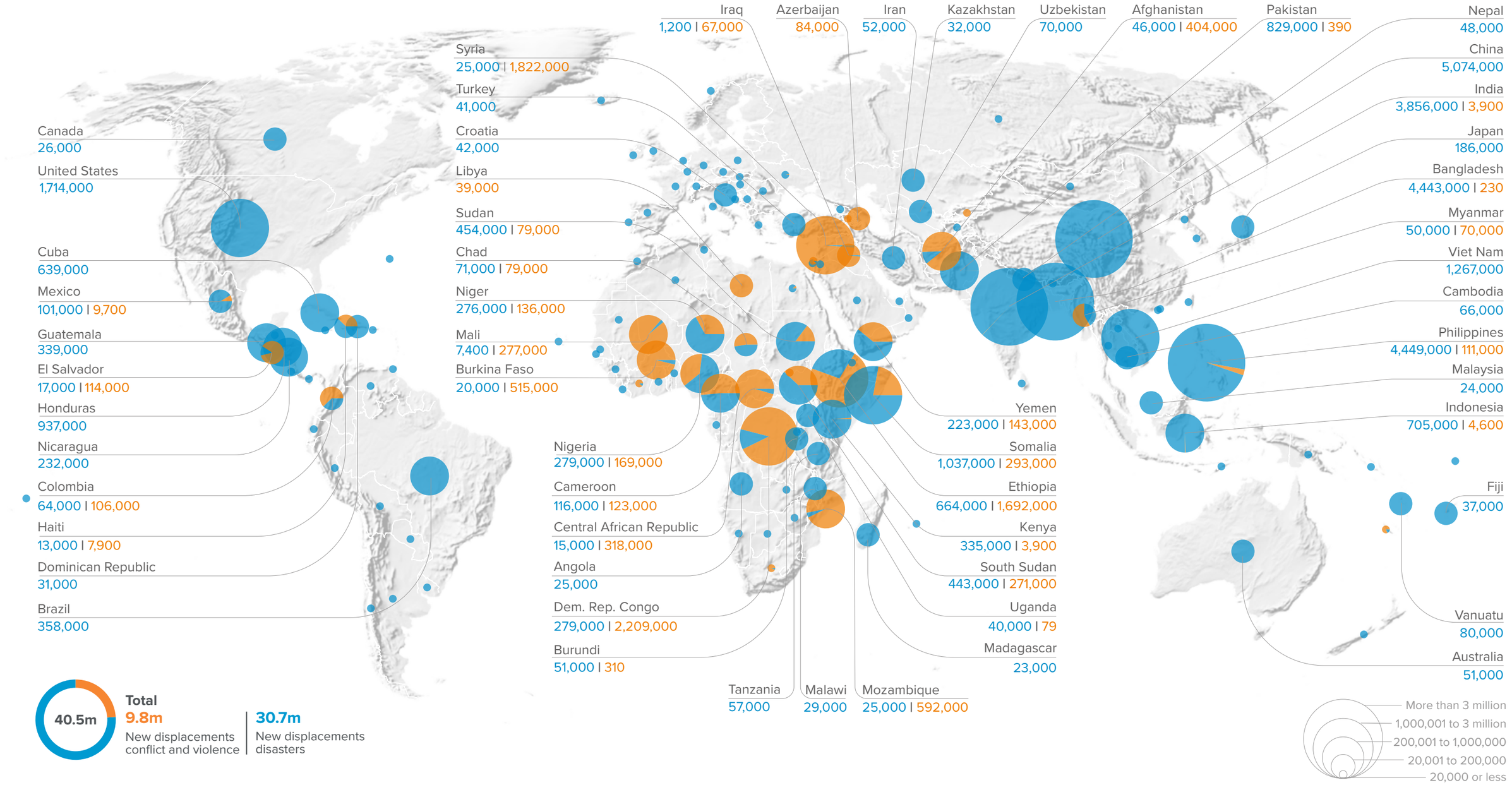
GRID 2021

Internal displacement in a changing climate

iDMC internal displacement monitoring centre

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL NRC

New displacements by conflict and disasters in 2020



Total
9.8m New displacements conflict and violence
30.7m New displacements disasters

East Asia and Pacific
186,000 | 12,063,000
(30.3% of the global total)

Sub-Saharan Africa
6,780,000 | 4,299,000
(27.4%)

South Asia
409,000 | 9,241,000
(23.8%)

The Americas
238,000 | 4,528,000
(11.8%)

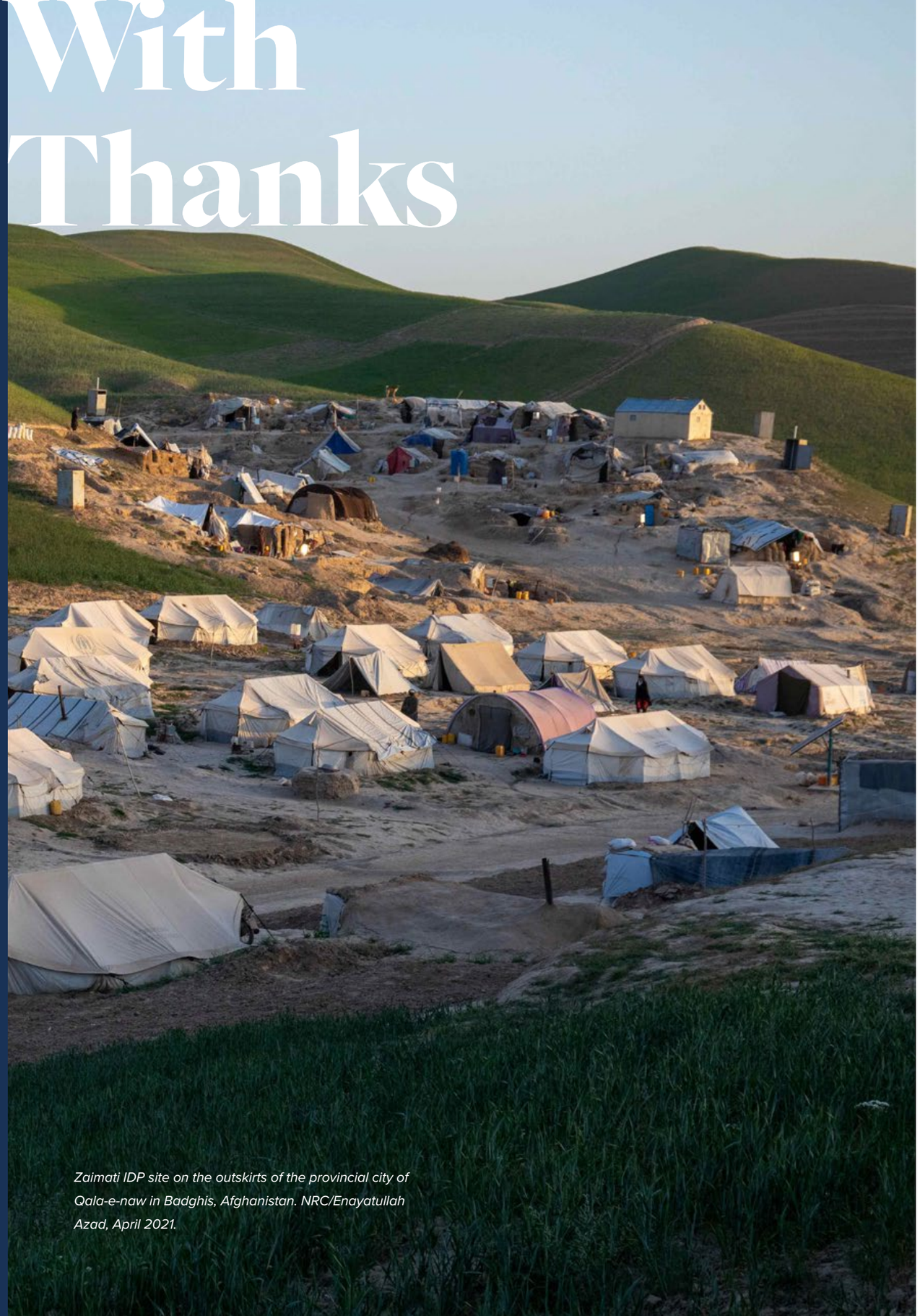
Middle East and North Africa
2,076,000 | 341,000
(5.9%)

Europe and Central Asia
85,000 | 234,000
(0.8%)

The country and territory names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

With Thanks



Zaimati IDP site on the outskirts of the provincial city of Qala-e-naw in Badghis, Afghanistan. NRC/Enayatullah Azad, April 2021.

IDMC's 2021 Global Report on Internal Displacement has been produced with the generous contribution of the following funding partners: the U.S. Agency for International Development, the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Asian Development Bank, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Robert Bosch Foundation, and Liechtenstein's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Cover Photo: Heavy monsoon rains in Bangladesh in July 2019 triggered widespread flooding, with the major river systems of Jamuna and Teesta recording their highest flood levels in a hundred years. The disasters displaced more than 300,000 people. OCHA captured the response six months on. © OCHA ROAP, February 2020

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REGIERUNG
DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN

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Foreword

People cross a lagoon formed by the combined impact of the Eta and Iota storms, in Campur village located in central Guatemala. It was estimated that 70 percent of the town was submerged by the hurricanes.
© UNICEF/UN0376671/Volpe

Every year, millions of people are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and violence. Disasters and the effects of climate change regularly trigger new and secondary displacement, undermining people's security and well-being. The scale of displacement worldwide is increasing, and most of it is happening within countries' borders. While responses must be led by governments and communities, the global implications of displacement require a global response and international cooperation. We have a shared responsibility to tackle this growing challenge, as it is already affecting the sustainable development of communities and entire countries.

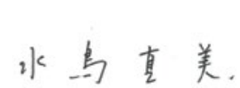
Most internally displaced people are living in low- and middle-income countries that are suffering from the effects of global inequality, the steep rise in extreme weather events, and unsustainable development practices. While effective humanitarian response remains critical, it is not sufficient: we need to tackle the underlying drivers of displacement while challenging our traditional disaster management approaches. Addressing internal displacement in a changing climate is a developmental endeavour that requires increased political will, more strategic financing, and better collaboration between stakeholders working on disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, sustainable development and climate action.

It is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed in any national strategy for disaster risk reduction but especially in countries where disaster displacement is a recurring feature of disaster events. This is essential for reducing the numbers of disaster-affected people, a key target of the global blueprint to reduce disaster losses, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This year's Global Report on Internal Displacement is an important contribution in this regard. It provides the required evidence on the scale and impacts of displacement across different regions and population groups, raising attention on an issue that is often neglected. It debunks a series of myths around the relationship between climate change, disasters, and displacement, and suggests innovative ideas on how we should frame the discussion in order to develop better policies that make a real and positive difference.

Major climate-related disasters have almost doubled in the last twenty years as greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb. Combined with weak risk governance and environmental degradation, persistent inequality and marginalisation are creating new risks and aggravating the impacts of local crises to global scales. The COVID pandemic has been a wake-up call and this Report is another reminder: today, sound evidence and global partnership are more important than ever. Millions of people on the move in a changing climate need us to act in solidarity.

Asako Okai
Assistant Administrator and Director for the Crisis Bureau United Nations Development Programme



Mami Mizutori
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR

Key Messages

1 **The number of people worldwide living in internal displacement has reached a record 55 million** as of 31 December 2020. More than 85 per cent have fled conflict and violence. Around seven million have been uprooted by disasters but given the incomplete data this is likely to be a significant underestimate.

2 **Around 40.5 million new displacements were recorded in 2020**, the highest figure in ten years. Disasters triggered over three times more displacements than conflict and violence. These figures were recorded despite the Covid-19 pandemic, when movement restrictions obstructed data collection and fear of infection discouraged people from seeking emergency shelter.

3 Measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 significantly impeded humanitarian efforts globally. The pandemic also heightened internally displaced people's (IDPs) needs and vulnerabilities, while delaying the search for durable solutions.

4 The UN secretary general called for a global ceasefire to unite against the virus, but **conflict continued unabated, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa**. Persistent conflict continued to force people to flee in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria and Afghanistan, while escalating violence and the expansion of extremist groups in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Burkina Faso fuelled some of the world's fastest growing displacement crises.

5 **Weather-related events were responsible for 98 per cent of all disaster displacement recorded in 2020.** Intense cyclones, monsoon rains and floods hit highly exposed and densely populated areas in South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific, including China, the Philippines and Bangladesh. The Atlantic hurricane season was the most active on record, and extended rainy seasons across the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa uprooted millions more.

6 **The convergence of conflict and disasters led to many people being displaced for a second or even third time, increasing and prolonging their vulnerability**. Many of those who fled flooding in Yemen had already been uprooted at least once by conflict. Drought in Somalia drove people to flee from rural to urban areas where they are now at greater risk of eviction and attacks by armed groups.

7 Internal displacement constitutes a significant economic burden for individuals, communities and economies. **The global cost of one year of displacement was nearly $20.5 billion in 2020**, a figure that covers support for IDPs' housing, education, health and security needs, and accounts for their loss of income.

8 **Persistent misconceptions surround disaster displacement, with serious implications for people, policy and responses**. They include that disasters are natural, when human factors have a major role in how they play out; that disaster displacement is short-term, when in reality it often becomes protracted; that climate change will drive mass migration across borders when actually much displacement is small-scale and localised; and that small events are of little concern, when in fact they undermine people's lives and threaten local development gains.

9 **Rising temperatures are increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards, but climate change is not the only factor that drives displacement risk**. A range of social and economic drivers must be addressed in the face of ever more powerful storms and devastating floods.

10 **There have been significant advances in the development of national and regional policies on disaster displacement and climate-related migration**, and global attention on the issue is growing. A number of countries now recognise the issue. Implementation, and assessing progress in doing so, are the next priorities.

11 When the impacts of climate change, slow-onset environmental change or unsustainable land use make an area uninhabitable, returning after a disaster is not an option. Two alternatives for those displaced are local integration or planned relocation. These **solutions require strong local governance and decentralised interventions that include the perspectives of those at risk and support community-led livelihood initiatives**.

12 **There is an increasing need to connect humanitarian, peacebuilding and sustainable development efforts to prevent and respond to displacement in a changing climate**. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation are key, but more flexible and predictable financing is required.

13 **Filling the data gaps is essential** if we are to understand how displacement impedes progress on the sustainable development agenda. To paint a clear picture, however, we cannot act at the global level alone. Disasters and climate impacts are essentially local phenomena, so local authorities and national governments have a key role to play.

The evening sky with volcanic lightning during the eruption of Taal Volcano, as seen from the nearby province of Quezon. © Getty Images/Mariano Sayno, January 2020.

Part 1: Internal displacement in 2020

Displaced people walking in the main alley of Tsuya camp in the parish of Drodro, north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The parish hosts 20,000 displaced people from surrounding villages. NRC/Tom Peyre-Costa, November 2020.

Global figures at a glance

New displacements in 2020

40.5m new displacements, the highest figure in a decade

9.8m by conflict and violence

30.7m by disasters

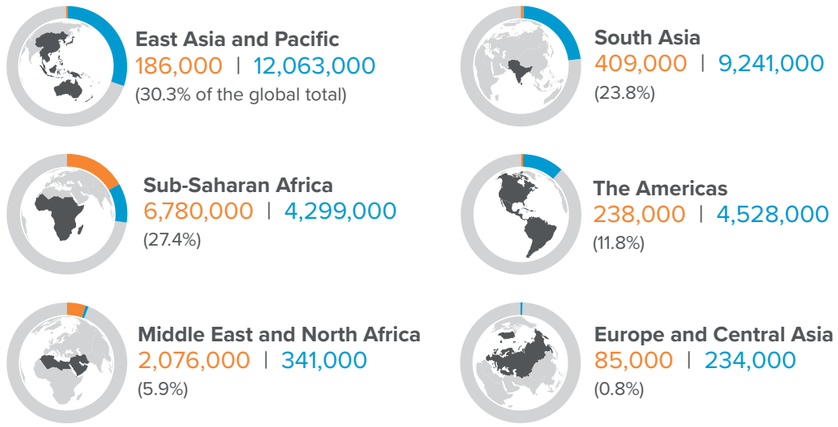


Figure 1: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters per region

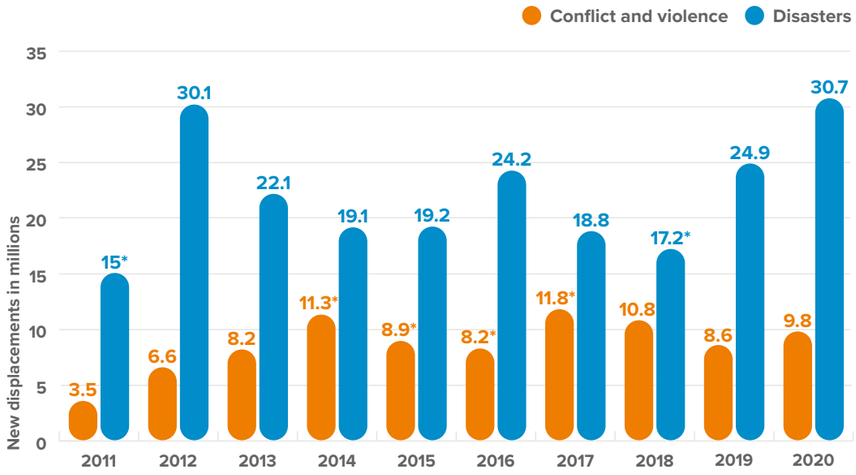


Figure 2: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters worldwide (2011-2020)

**Updated figures. For further details see monitoring methodology, available online.*

Total number of IDPs as of end of 2020

55m people living in internal displacement

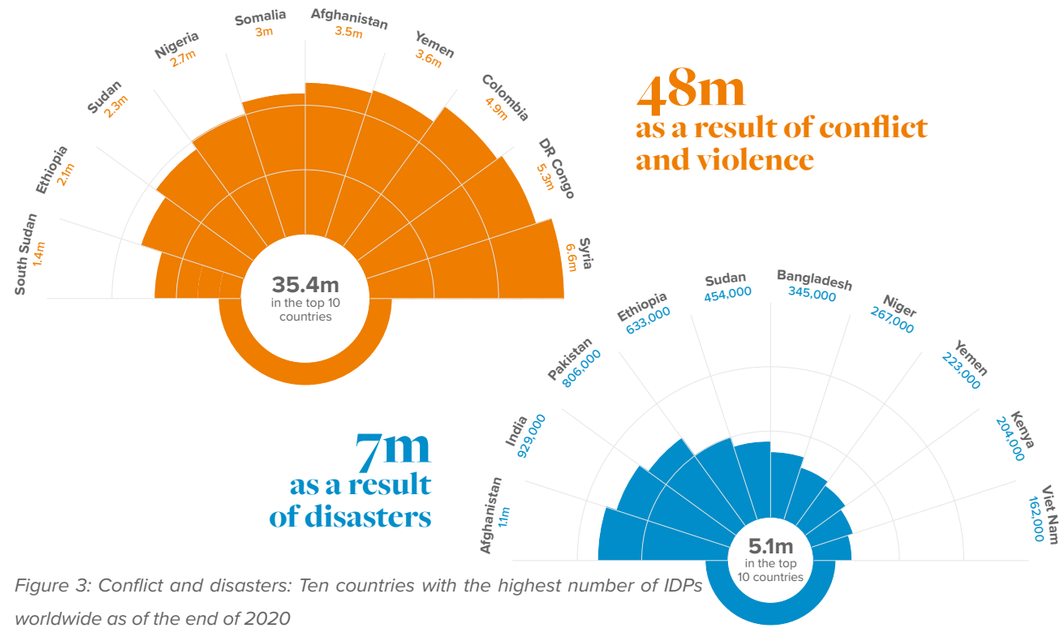


Figure 3: Conflict and disasters: Ten countries with the highest number of IDPs worldwide as of the end of 2020

Figure 4: Total number of IDPs worldwide as of end 2020, by age group

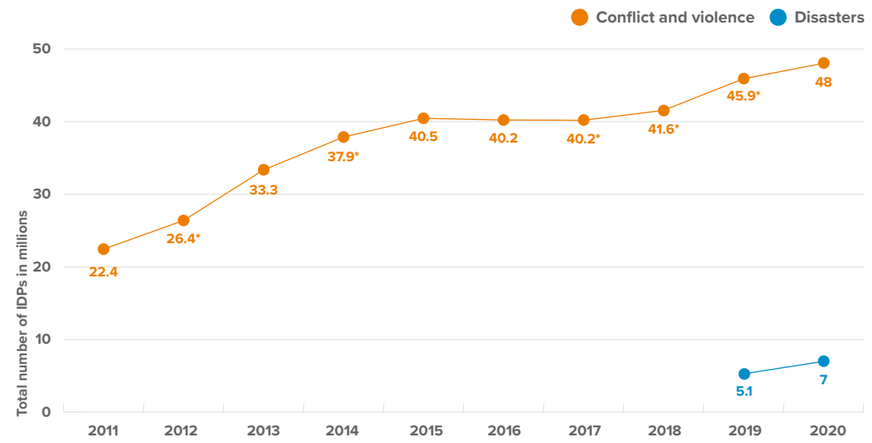


Figure 5: Total number of IDPs worldwide at year end (2011-2020)

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

New displacements

Two brothers play inside a tent erected as a temporary shelter in Kaya, Burkina Faso, after being displaced by insecurity in their home area. © UNICEF/UNI280378/ Tremeau, December 2019.

Conflict and disasters triggered 40.5 million new internal displacements across 149 countries and territories in 2020.

Conflict continued unabated in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria and Ethiopia, which are also home to some of the largest numbers of people living in protracted internal displacement. Violence increased sharply in Mozambique, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic (CAR), forcing significant numbers of people from their homes. In countries such as Yemen and Somalia, disasters forced many already displaced by conflict to flee again.

Most disaster displacements were the result of tropical storms and floods in East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia. China, the Philippines and Bangladesh each recorded more than four million new displacements, many of them pre-emptive evacuations.

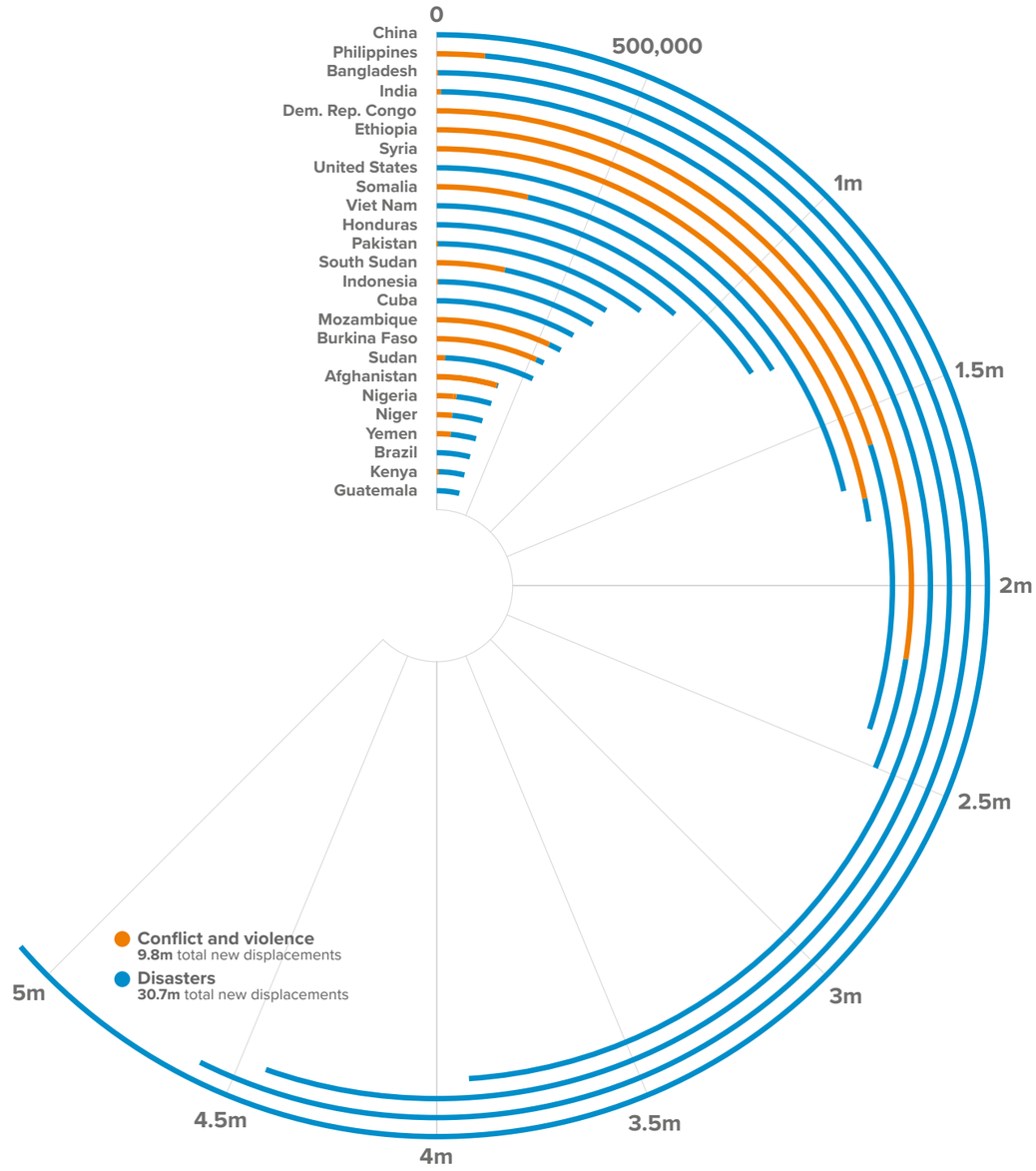


Figure 6: Twenty-five countries with most new displacements in 2020

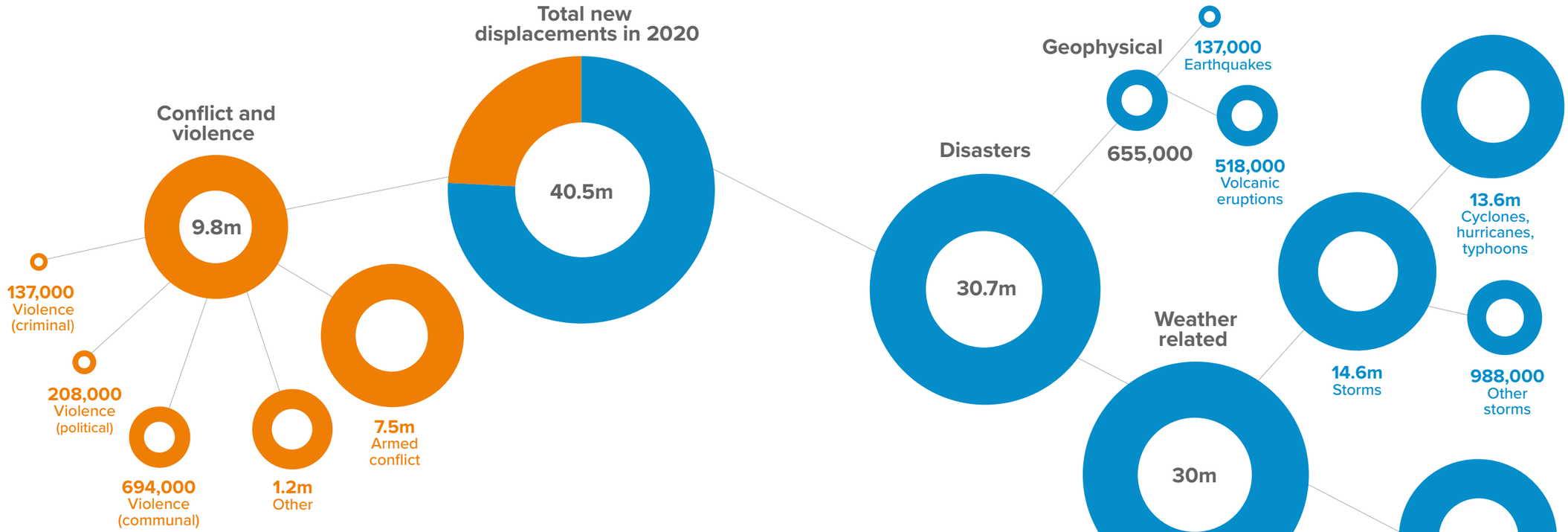


Figure 7: New displacements in 2020: breakdown for conflict and disasters

Disasters triggered more than three-quarters of the new displacements recorded worldwide in 2020, accounting for 30.7 million. More than 98 per cent were the result of weather-related hazards such as storms and floods. The majority of conflict displacements were triggered by armed conflict, but communal violence accounted for a significant proportion of the global total of 9.8 million.

Geolocated data shows that although internal displacement is a global challenge, it tends to be concentrated not only in some regions or countries but in certain areas within them. For conflict, these included Syria's northern governorate of Idlib, border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and eastern provinces of DRC. Disaster displacement was highly concentrated in the Bay of Bengal and the Caribbean basin, where tropical cyclones forced millions to flee.

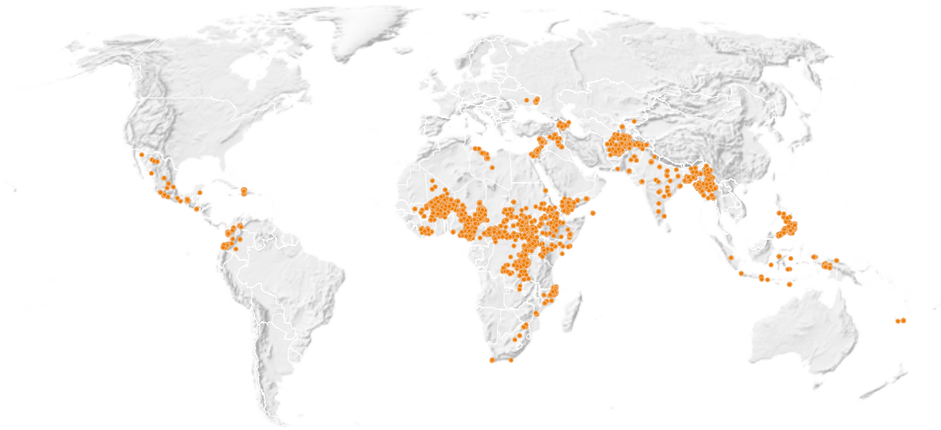


Figure 8: Conflict displacements in 2020 by location

The boundaries, names and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

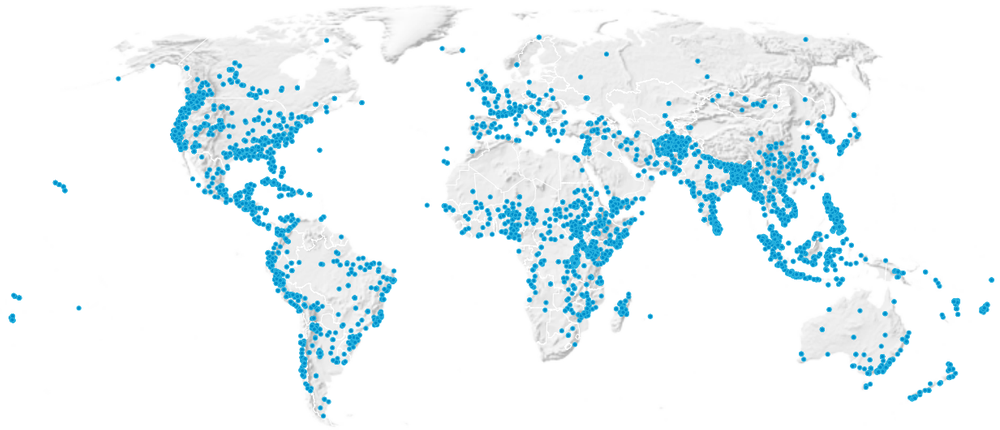
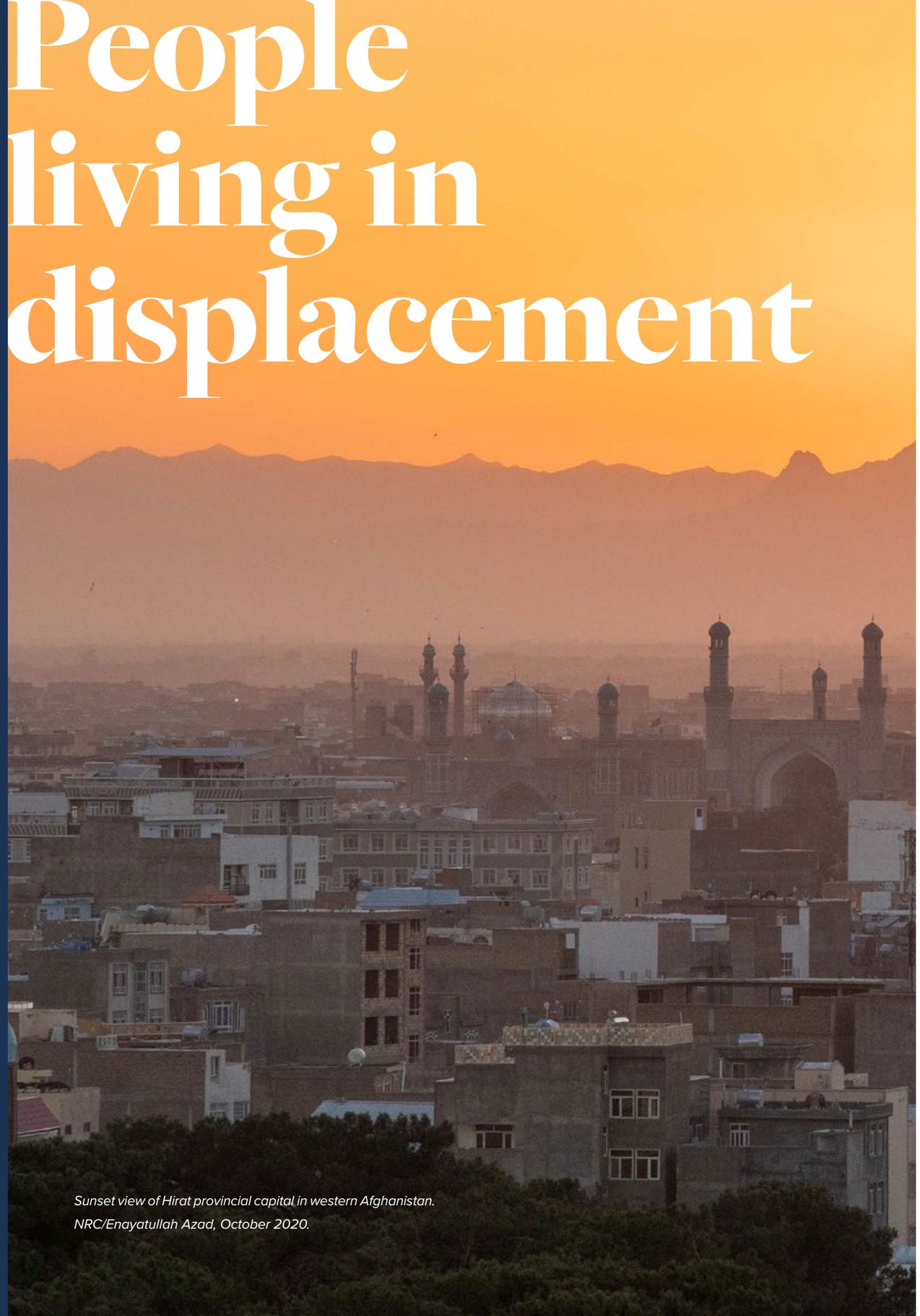


Figure 9: Disaster displacements in 2020 by location

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

People living in displacement

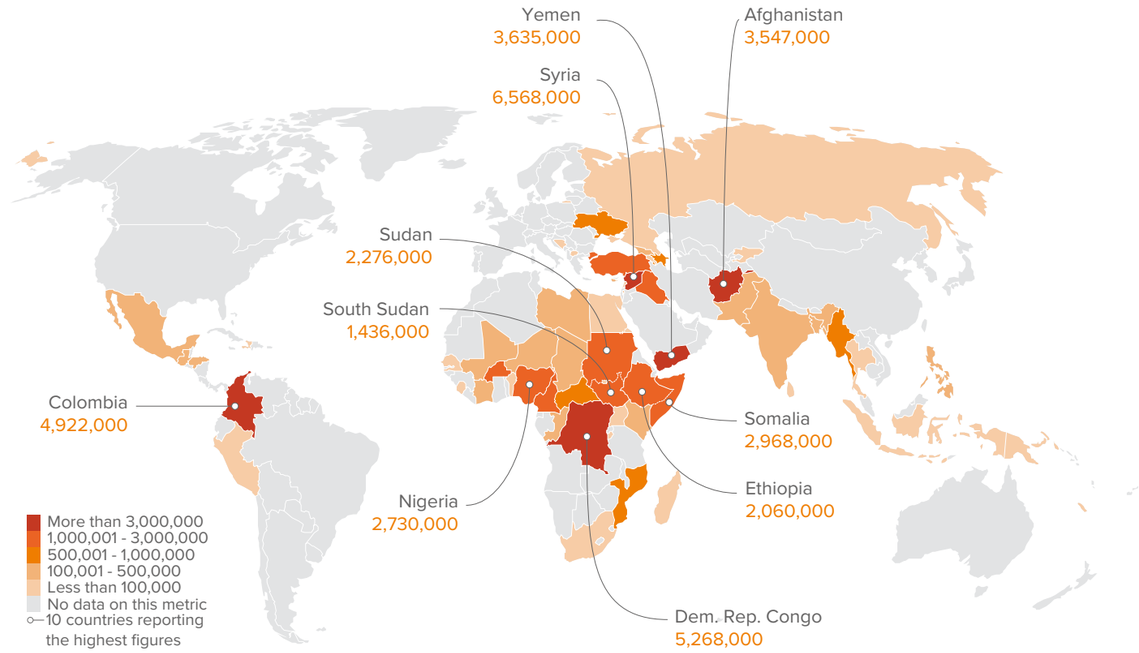


Sunset view of Hirat provincial capital in western Afghanistan.
NRC/Enayatullah Azad, October 2020.

Conflict and violence

Forty-eight million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in 59 countries and territories as of 31 December 2020, an increase of 2.1 million compared with 2019 and the highest figure on record. Most IDPs were in Syria, DRC and Colombia, which between them accounted for more than a third of the global total. People may have been displaced by relatively recent events, but the figures also include those who have been living in internal displacement for decades in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Palestine.

Many still face significant obstacles in their efforts to bring their displacement to a sustainable end, and the Covid-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to their situations.



48 Million people living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence in **59** countries and territories as of **31** December **2020**

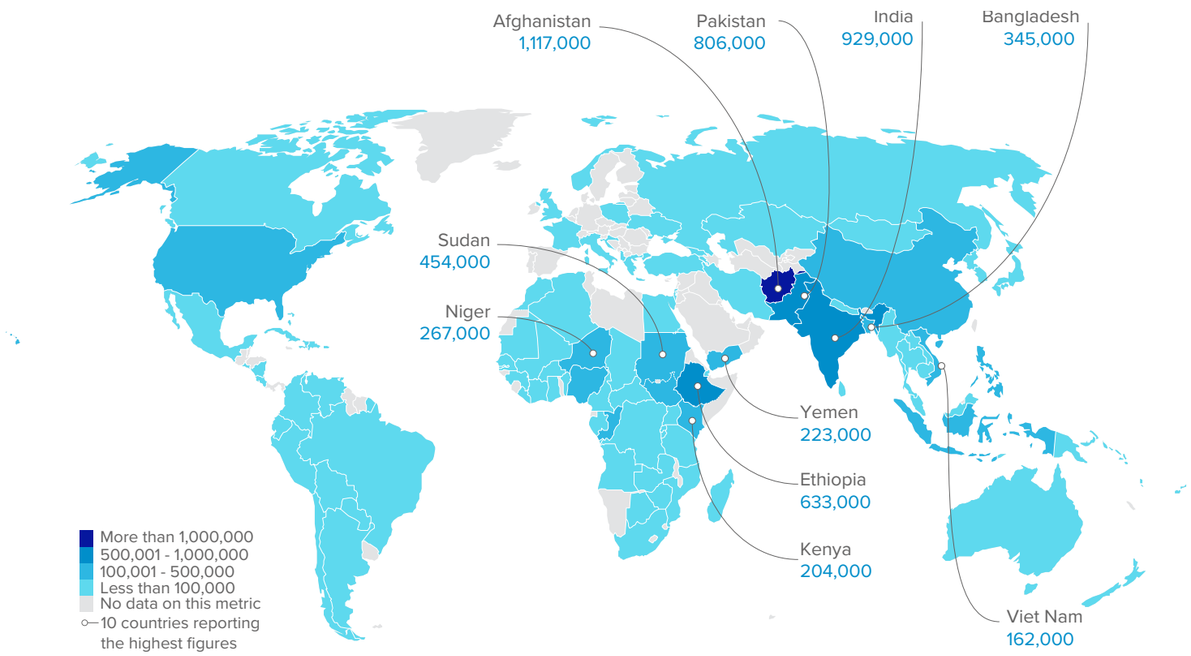
Figure 10: Total number of IDPs by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2020

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Disasters

At least seven million people were internally displaced by disasters across 104 countries and territories as of 31 December 2020. This is only the second time we have compiled such a global figure, and it should be considered a significant underestimate. Afghanistan, India and Pakistan had the highest figures.

Around 250,000 people in Japan, Mexico and Indonesia were still living in displacement years or even decades after devastating disasters. The scarcity of data on how long people remain displaced, however, makes it difficult to fully understand the scale and nature of protracted displacement triggered by disasters and climate change impacts. The misconception that most, if not all, IDPs return to their homes soon after disasters may lead to the incorrect assumption that they no longer have needs associated with their displacement. The reality is often more complex, and these initial estimates constitute a first step toward filling a major knowledge gap.



7 Million people living in displacement as a result of disasters in **104** countries and territories as of **31** December **2020**

Figure 11: Total number of IDPs by disasters as of 31 December 2020

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

A child looks for wood to help his parents rebuild their house after it was destroyed by Hurricane Iota in Nicaragua.© UNICEF/UN0372811/Ocon/AFP-Services, November 2020

The economic and social impacts of displacement

Internal displacement tends to severely disrupt the lives of those affected. Sometimes it presents them with new opportunities, but most often it undermines their welfare and wellbeing. As IDPs are uprooted from their homes and separated from their assets, livelihoods and networks, their ability to earn a living may be compromised. Displacement also creates specific needs that have to be paid for by IDPs themselves, host communities, government agencies and the humanitarian sector.

We estimate that the economic impact of internal displacement was nearly $20.5 billion in 2020.[1] The figure includes the cost of providing every IDP with support for their housing, education, health and security, and accounts for their loss of income for one year of displacement. It does not account for displacement's longer-term consequences for the economy or its impacts on host communities and communities of origin.

The average economic impact per IDP for one year of displacement globally is about $370, based on data from 18 countries. The figure ranges from $109 in Afghanistan to $830 in Syria. The variation arises from differences in the level of needs across affected populations and the estimated cost of meeting them. In countries where the national income is higher, the economic impact resulting from loss of livelihoods is also greater. The highest economic impacts stem from loss of income and the cost of providing IDPs with housing and healthcare. In the case of large-scale, protracted displacement crises that take place in countries with smaller economies, these impacts can amount to a significant proportion of GDP, in Somalia's case around 20 per cent.

These figures are based on information on crises precipitated by protracted conflicts, and for which a UN humanitarian response plan has been published. Most internal displacement, however, does not take place in this type of situation. The economic impacts of smaller-scale, shorter-term displacements triggered by disasters tend to go unrecorded. We have not yet been able to calculate these impacts, but aggregated at the global level they would run to billions of dollars.

Differentiated impacts determine differentiated solutions

Our understanding of internal displacement becomes more complete every year. We must, however, continue to expand our monitoring so that the scale and scope of this global phenomenon are accurately represented, and sufficient resources are dedicated to addressing affected people's needs.

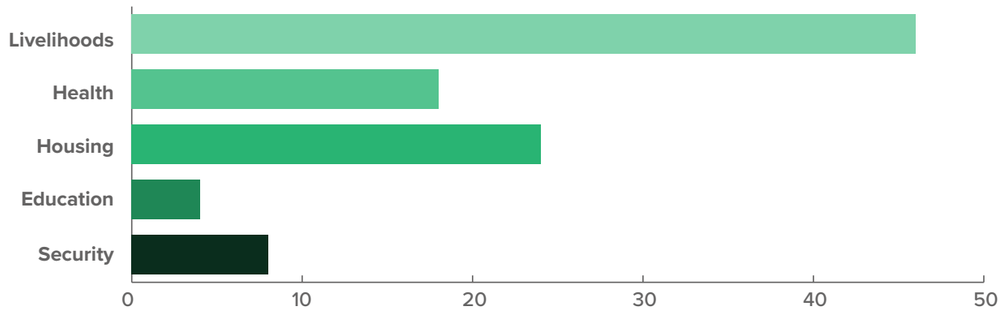


Figure 12: Financial burden of internal displacement by impact dimension for 18 countries analysed

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

One major information gap remains in painting a more precise portrait of IDPs. Their sex, age, disability status and other characteristics are often unknown. An increasing number of data collectors gather and publish local-level information disaggregated by sex and age, but age groups are not standardised, which makes it difficult to compile national-level figures.

In the absence of consistent categories, national-level demographic data can be applied to the number of IDPs in each country to establish estimates by age group. Doing so suggests that 23.3 million people under 18 were living internal displacement worldwide as of the end of 2020. The figure includes 7.2 million children under five and 12.8 million of primary and early secondary school age. There were also 10.5 million IDPs aged between 15 and 24, and 2.6 million over 65.

This type of information is vital to ensure targeted and inclusive responses. Each demographic group faces specific risks and has specific needs that interventions should take into account. Infants may need vaccination and nutritional supplements, for example, school-age children educational support and young people vocational training. Women and girls displaced by conflict face particulars risks, and those displaced by disasters tend to be disproportionally affected.[2] They also have adaptive capacities that are often overlooked and cannot be fully harnessed without disaggregated data.

Figure 13: Total number of IDPs worldwide as of end 2020, by age group

Regional Overviews

Refugees from the Tigray region of Ethiopia board buses to Um Rakuba refugee camp in Hamdayet, Sudan. In addition to cross-border flows, violence in Tigray in late 2020 led to more than 500,000 new displacements in Ethiopia. © Getty Images/Byron Smith, December 2020.

Conflict and violence

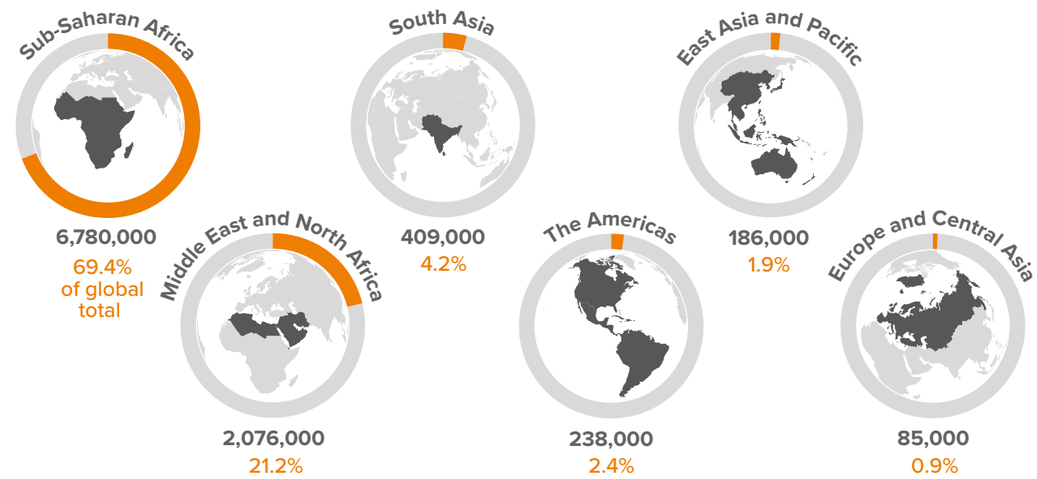


Figure 14: Conflict and violence: new displacements by region in 2020

Most of the new displacements triggered by conflict and violence in 2020 were recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. The majority took place in DRC, Syria and Ethiopia, as in previous years. An unprecedented number were recorded in Mozambique, and there were significant increases in Azerbaijan and Haiti. Movement restrictions imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19 hampered data collection and humanitarian responses in many areas affected by conflict.

The number of new displacements fell in countries including Iraq, Libya and Sudan thanks to ceasefire agreements and peacebuilding initiatives. Many such situations are still fragile, however, and more efforts are needed to reduce the risk of conflict and displacement reoccurring. Humanitarian aid remains essential for IDPs, but it will take longer-term peacebuilding and development interventions to resolve the underlying challenges that prolong the displacement of millions of people.

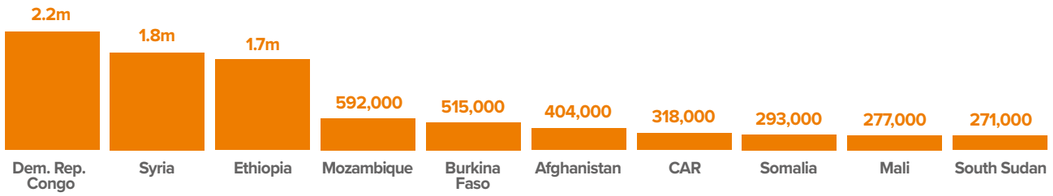


Figure 15: Ten countries with the most new displacements by conflict and violence in 2020

Disasters

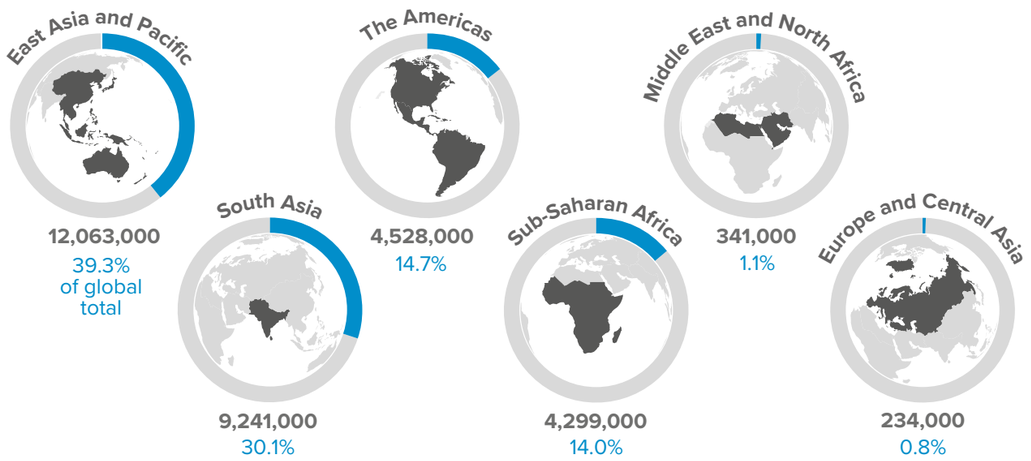


Figure 16: Disasters: new displacements by region in 2020

Most of the new displacements triggered by disasters in 2020 were recorded in East Asia and Pacific and South Asia, as in previous years. Tropical cyclones, monsoon rains and floods hit highly exposed areas that are home to millions of people. Many displacements were in the form of pre-emptive evacuations, but the extent of housing destruction in some disasters suggests that significant numbers of people face the prospect of prolonged displacement.

The Covid-19 pandemic posed additional challenges to disaster responses, because of the difficulty of maintaining social distancing and hygiene measures in crowded places such as evacuation centres. Many people stayed in their exposed homes despite early warnings because of fear of infection. Disaster displacement figures were the highest in a decade, despite lockdowns and other access constraints impeding data collection.

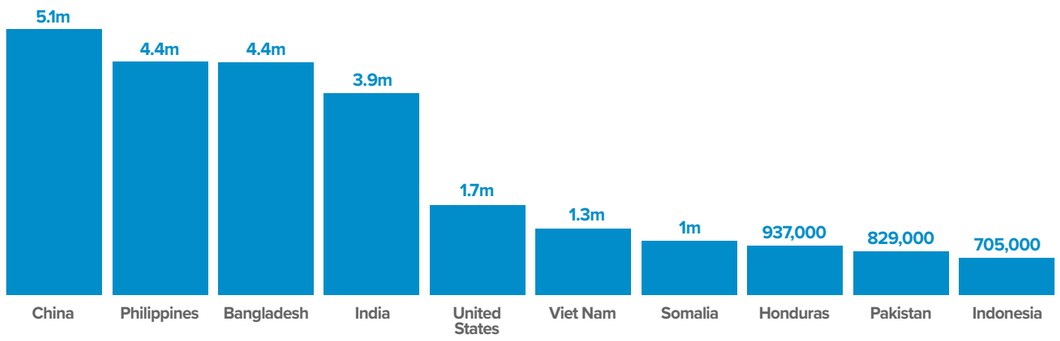
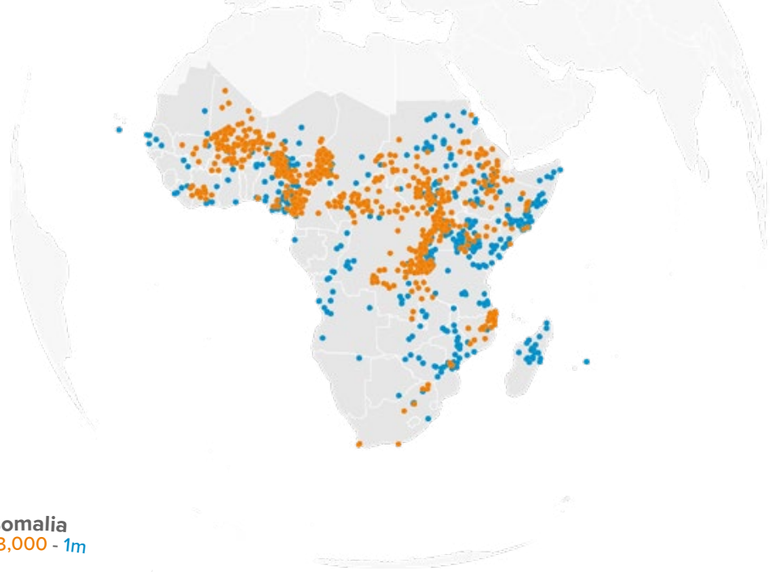


Figure 17: Ten countries with the most new displacements by disasters in 2020

A man washes away the mud from his flooded home in Jakarta, Indonesia. Flooding caused by heavy rainfall resulted in nearly 400,000 new displacements in Jakarta at the start of 2020. © Getty Images/Ed Wray, January 2020.

Sub-Saharan Africa

New displacements in 2020



Conflict and violence
6,780,000

Disasters
4,299,000

11.1m
new displacements

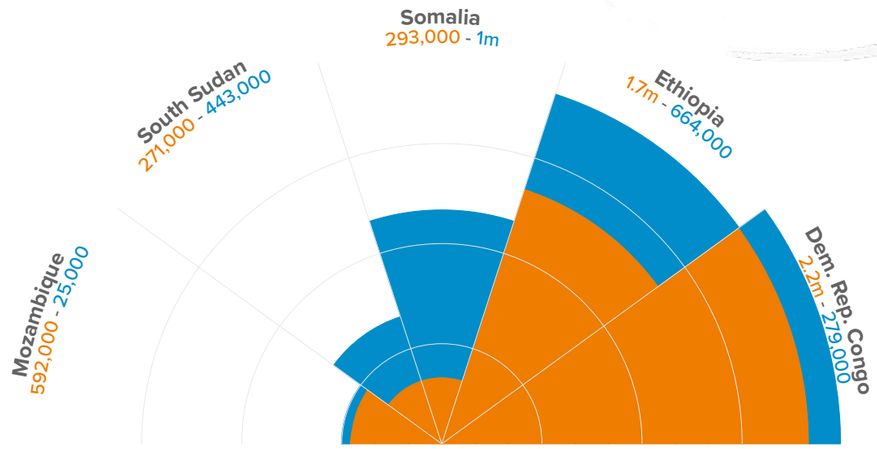


Figure 18: Five countries with most new displacements in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020

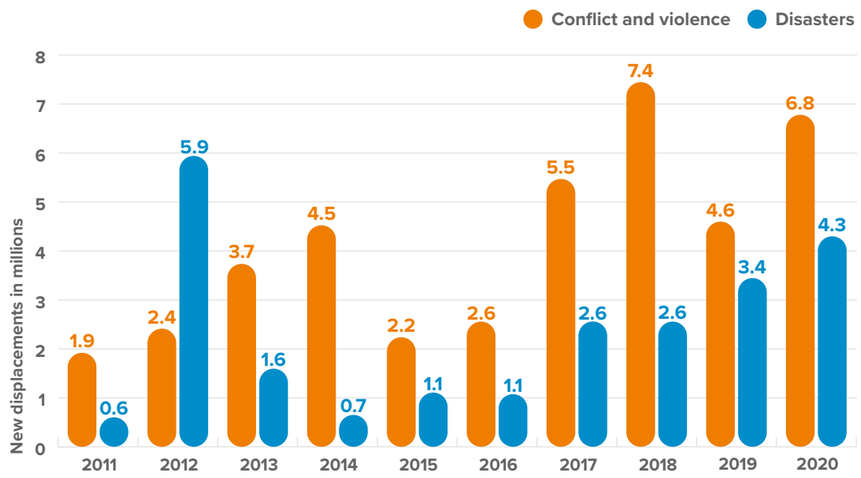


Figure 19: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in Sub-Saharan Africa (2011-2020)

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Total number of IDPs in 2020

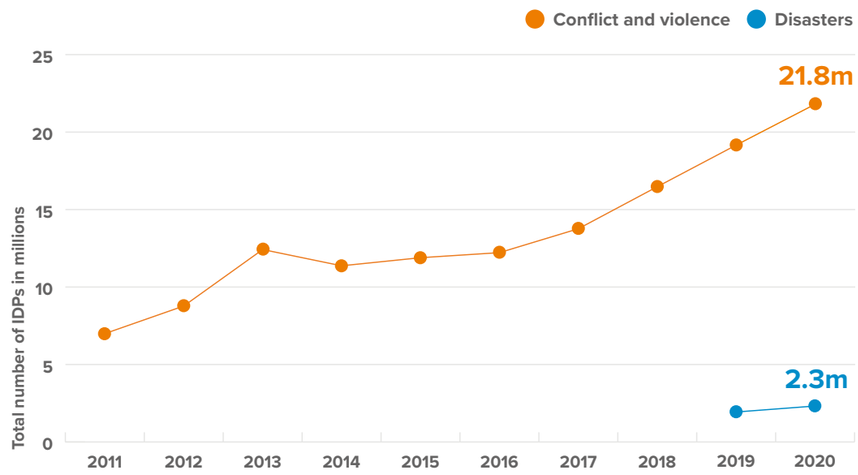


Figure 20: Total number of IDPs in Sub-Saharan Africa at year end (2011-2020)

24.1m
total number of IDPs

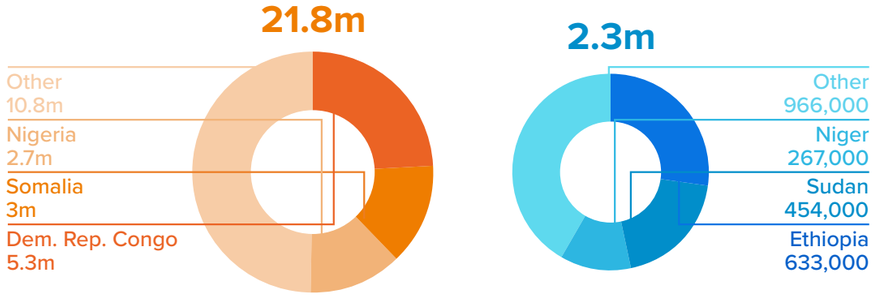


Figure 21: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in Sub-Saharan Africa as of end 2020

Figure 22: Total number of IDPs in Sub-Saharan Africa as of end 2020, by age group

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Internal displacement crises spread to previously relatively unaffected areas of sub-Saharan Africa in 2020, while longstanding upheaval in others was aggravated by the emergence of new armed groups and escalating violence. By the end of the year, nearly 21.8 million people across the region were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence, the highest figure on record. The number of new displacements was also the second highest at 6.8 million.

Violence and displacement continued in the Sahel, particularly in Burkina Faso, and they reached unprecedented levels in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado (see spotlights, page 29 and page 31). The security situation also deteriorated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia, particularly in the latter's northern region of Tigray.

Sub-Saharan Africa also experienced unusually long and intense rainy seasons in 2020. The rains caused flooding in areas already affected by violence, prompting new and secondary displacements in countries including Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Niger. Disasters, mainly floods, triggered 4.3 million new displacements across the region, the second highest figure on record. As of the end of the year, 2.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of disasters, though this figure is conservative.

Political and electoral violence

Political and electoral violence are major triggers of displacement in the region, and they aggravate and prolong pre-existing conflicts and violence. Last year was no exception, as presidential, parliamentary and local elections took place in many countries, in some cases sparking protests and violence that undermined stability and peacebuilding.

Tensions in Ethiopia escalated sharply in September when the northern region of Tigray held elections in defiance of the federal government, which had postponed them over concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic. The federal government launched a military offensive in early November in response to an attack on its forces.[3] The ensuing violence triggered as many as 539,000 new displacements in addition to reports of human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence, as well as food insecurity.[4]

Violence also forced people from their homes in the Afar, Amhara, Beninshangul Gumuz and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) regions, pushing the number of new displacements to nearly 1.7 million in the country as a whole, a 61 per cent increase on the figure for 2019.

Tensions between the federal government and states over elections also flared in Somalia. These descended into conflict in Jubaland in February that triggered 56,000 new displacements, a significant proportion of the 293,000 recorded for the country as a whole.[5] Similar tensions between Mogadishu and federal states escalated during the year over the repeated postponement of federal presidential and parliamentary elections. The latest deadline on 8 February 2021, when the president's term expired, was missed.[6]

The security situation in the CAR deteriorated significantly in December 2020, after the Constitutional Court barred former president François Bozizé from running for office again.[7] A new alliance of armed groups, the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), emerged in response and launched attacks across the country, triggering 185,000 new displacements. More than 30,000 people fled across the border to DRC.[8] The violence, which has continued into 2021, constitutes a serious threat to CAR's peace process, given that several of the groups that make up CPC are signatories to the February 2019 peace deal.[9]

Conflict in the Far North region of neighbouring Cameroon continued unabated in 2020, but worsening violence in the English-speaking regions of Northwest and Southwest triggered the majority of new displacements. Tensions increased further in February as a result of parliamentary and municipal elections. The government deployed additional troops to the two regions after reports of kidnappings and violence against polling stations and officials.[10] By the end of the year, the country was hosting more than a million IDPs.

Electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa tends to occur in countries that are deeply divided along ethnic, linguistic and communal lines, because elections serve to bring existing tensions and grievances into sharp focus.[11] Such violence displaced around 500,000 people in Kenya in the aftermath of the 2007 elections, of whom as many as 190,000 were still thought to be living in displacement as of the end of 2020.[12] Many were still struggling to access decent housing, healthcare, education or livelihoods.[13]

Elections in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2010 sparked violence that displaced more than a million people, of whom 308,000 were still thought to be living in displacement ten years later.[14] The run-up to the October 2020 presidential election was also marked by tensions. Violent protests across the country triggered 15,000 displacements in August and September.[15]

The examples of Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire show that electoral violence can have significant long-term implications on those forced to flee. More elections are planned for 2021 in the region, including in Ethiopia and Somalia. Ensuring credible and inclusive electoral processes and addressing grievances will be necessary to prevent further violence and displacement. Ensuring that IDPs are able to cast their votes should also be a priority.

Violence continues to fuel protracted crises

Countries mired in protracted conflict including DRC, South Sudan, Sudan and many across the Lake Chad region, host some of the largest numbers of IDPs globally. Persistent ethnic and communal violence continued to trigger displacement in 2020, challenging efforts to establish stability and security.

Peace negotiations in Sudan between the transitional government and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, a coalition of armed groups, culminated in the signing of a historic agreement in October 2020. Its main components include a ceasefire, addressing land ownership issues, reparations for those affected by the conflict and plans for IDPs' return.[16] Despite these developments, communal violence has been on the rise since 2019 and triggered most of the 79,000 new displacements recorded in 2020. Nearly 2.3 million people were living in protracted displacement as of the end of the year.

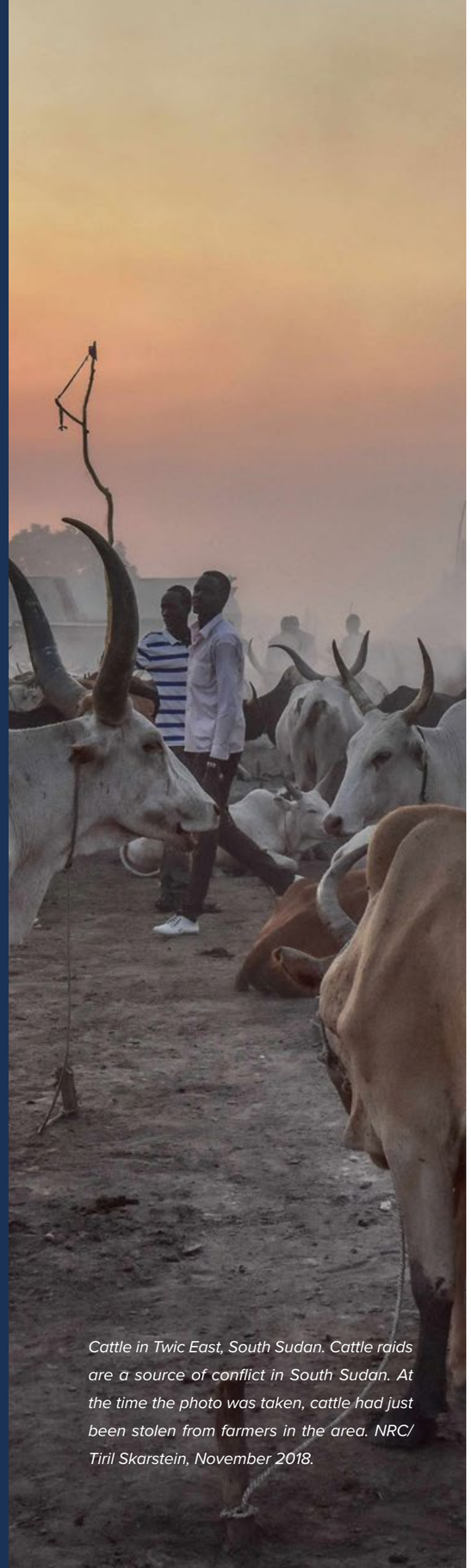
Neighbouring South Sudan faces a similar reality. A unity government was formed in February 2020, marking one of the milestones of the peace deal signed in September 2018.[17] More than 570 violent incidents were still reported in the first half of the year, however, an increase of 300 per cent on the same period in 2019.[18] IDPs in the states of Jonglei, Central Equatoria, Unity, Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal were particularly affected.[19] In some cases whole villages were destroyed and widespread human rights violations were reported.[20] The communal violence also prevented farmers from tending their crops, and pastoralists were unable to undertake their traditional migration to graze their livestock. This deepened food insecurity, which had already reached emergency levels.[21]

Crime, cattle rustling, land disputes, armed violence and tensions between pastoralists and farmers escalated in the central, north-central and north-west regions of Nigeria in 2020, following the trend of the past three years.[22] Longstanding violence between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa farmers in the north-western states of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara has become more frequent, and rural banditry and criminal violence is on the rise.[23]

In DRC, tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities in Ituri province became increasingly violent in 2020 as CODECO, the armed faction of the Lendu community, carried out indiscriminate attacks on civilians.[24] The government had launched military operations in the area since December 2019, which has prompted CODECO to launch further attacks in retaliation.[25]

Of the 2.2 million new displacements recorded across the country during the year, 640,000 were in Ituri. The provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika also remain conflict hotspots, and ethnic and communal tensions continue to be among the main triggers of conflict and displacement in eastern DRC.[26]

Across these complex crises, addressing structural vulnerabilities such as lack of access to services and livelihoods is key if communal tensions are to be eased and the cycle of conflict and displacement broken. Creating the conditions for political dialogue and conflict resolution, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration activities, would reduce new displacement and allow IDPs to achieve durable solutions. As the examples of Sudan and South Sudan show, these initiatives, although beset with challenges, are an important step toward resolving some of the world's most protracted displacement situations.



Cattle in Twic East, South Sudan. Cattle raids are a source of conflict in South Sudan. At the time the photo was taken, cattle had just been stolen from farmers in the area. NRC/ Tiril Skarstein, November 2018.

Attacks by extremist groups

Extremist groups continued to expand their influence and territorial reach across sub-Saharan Africa in 2020, launching attacks against military and civilian targets and triggering significant displacement. The attacks often involved the destruction of villages and farmland, increasing food insecurity and hampering people's efforts to restore their livelihoods.[27]

The groups abduct women and girls and subject them to forced marriage and gender-based violence, and they also recruit among boys and young men. Those who refuse to join run the risk of being executed during raids. Displaced children and youth are particularly vulnerable to these abuses.[28]

Education has been severely disrupted.[29] The extremists have attacked and destroyed schools and targeted teachers, forcing many others to close for lack of staff. Others are used as collective shelters for IDPs. More than 65 per cent of children living in displacement sites in Mali are unable to attend school.[30] Armed groups in Nigeria have regularly targeted and abducted large numbers of students and teachers.[31]

The Liptako Gourma region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger has suffered prolonged periods of drought in recent years, and land and water scarcity have aggravated grievances between farmers and pastoralists.[32] These communal disputes have taken place in a security vacuum, and extremist groups have exploited the situation to establish a foothold and expand their influence in all three countries.[33] Their activities have triggered significant new and repeated displacement.[34] Nearly 14 per cent of the total new displacements in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 were recorded in these three countries.

Violence committed by Boko Haram and other armed groups in Nigeria and counteroffensives by the country's military triggered 86,000 new displacements in the north-eastern states of Adamawa and Borno in 2020, accounting for just over half of the total for the country. As the insurgency entered its 11th year, the government undertook efforts to relocate IDPs in Borno, but the process has been challenged by insecurity and the threats of future attacks.[35] The same issues and a lack of economic opportunities have also jeopardised the reintegration of returning migrants and exposed them to the risk of displacement.[36]

Al-Shabaab intensified its attacks in Somalia last year, triggering 136,000 new displacements, nearly double the figure for 2019. The escalation was in part an effort to thwart planned elections and in part to expand its territorial control. Tensions between the central government and the regions over the elections and the withdrawal of Ethiopian and US troops from the country helped the group to increase its activities.[37] Its violence and its imposition of movement restrictions impeded humanitarians' access to many displaced communities.[38]

Record rainy seasons

Disasters often overlap with conflict in sub-Saharan Africa to trigger new and repeated displacement that in many cases becomes protracted. The rainy seasons in countries including South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria and DRC were unusually intense and prolonged in 2020, flooding areas already affected by violence or other disasters, triggering secondary displacements and heightening IDPs' needs.[39] They triggered a record 4.3 million new displacements across the region as a whole, and left around 2.3 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. People were mostly displaced by floods, but cyclones and drought also triggered displacement.

Warmer surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean combined with favourable atmospheric conditions led to a wetter than usual rainy season in eastern Africa.[40] Sudan and South Sudan experienced their worst floods in decades, and the river Nile in Sudan reached record levels in September.[41] The floods destroyed homes, damaged roads and impeded people's access to health services and humanitarian aid.[42] South Sudan was still recovering from floods in 2019. Waters had still not fully receded when the 2020 rains began, and the reconstruction of homes, villages and infrastructure had not been completed.[43]

The floods of 2019 and 2020 also helped to fuel eastern Africa's worst locust infestation in 25 years.[44] More than 27 million people across six countries were already facing crisis levels of food insecurity or worse when the infestation took hold. By the third quarter of 2020, 9.6 million people in Sudan or 21 per cent of the population were food insecure, a record figure for the country.[45]

Thousands of farmers in Somalia were also forced to move in search of assistance to survive when locusts destroyed their crops.[46] On top of locusts, floods had a widespread impact and triggered 979,000 new displacements in 2020. Urban as well as rural areas were affected, and many people already displaced were forced to move again. Around 81,000 IDPs fled sites around Bay and Mogadishu in April, and tens of thousands left Belet Weyne city in Hiraan when the Shabelle river broke its banks. Covid-19 also influenced displacement patterns as IDPs avoided sites hosting people from different areas for fear of overcrowding and infection.[47] The escalating impacts of floods, locusts and the pandemic meant humanitarian funding for these overlapping crises was limited across eastern Africa.[48]

The government in Niger issued a decree in 2017 that prohibits the building of homes in flood-prone areas, but construction in such areas continues and neighbourhoods are repeatedly inundated during the rainy season.[49] Flooding triggered more than 276,000 new displacements in 2020, many of them involving people who had already fled previous events in the same areas of the Tahoua, Tillaberi, Diffa and Maradi regions. The capital, Niamey, was also heavily affected when the Niger river broke its banks.[50] Floods also affected urban centres in Chad. The main events triggered nearly 32,000 new displacements in the capital, N'Djamena, in early August. The vast majority of displaced households said their houses had been damaged or destroyed, raising the prospect of long-term displacement.[51]

A lack of comprehensive data continues to limit understanding of protracted displacement after disasters in sub-Saharan Africa, and efforts to establish a more solid knowledge base need to be stepped up. Better data on how disasters and conflicts overlap and trigger displacement is also required as the basis for policy development and interventions to address this growing challenge and support IDPs in achieving durable solutions.

Spotlight - Burkina Faso bears brunt of escalating Sahel violence

The number of IDPs in Burkina Faso increased more than ten-fold between 2018 and 2020 to just over a million, making its displacement crisis one of the fastest-growing in the world. The country, which had previously been largely spared from the instability affecting the wider Sahel region, has more recently become the target of a growing number of attacks by non-state armed groups. The violence triggered 515,000 new displacements in 2020, a higher figure than in neighbouring Mali and Niger combined as the regional dimensions of the Sahel crisis expanded.

Burkina Faso's displacement crisis has its roots in a complex set of factors including poverty, inequality and the increasing presence of extremist groups that have emerged partly as a result of the growing marginalisation of certain population groups. Environmental degradation and climate variability are also drivers of vulnerability and displacement risk.[52] Inter-communal clashes over land, water and other scarce resources have become more common in a country previously known for the relatively peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups.[53]

Longstanding discontent among the Fulani people, many of whom are nomadic cattle herders, began to grow in 2016, particularly in Soum province, fuelled by a lack of political representation, social support, basic services and infrastructure. This sense of marginalisation was exploited by extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and home-grown movements such as Ansarul Islam, which have recruited mainly among young people to expand their presence.[54]

Many of the groups have also fought in Mali since its multi-dimensional crisis unfolded in 2012.[55] In Burkina Faso, they offer marginalised populations the promise of protection and reinforce the perception that the state is responsible for their plight.[56]

Civilians have been caught up in the spiralling violence and insecurity, which has triggered large-scale population movements. Armed groups have targeted IDPs, as was the case in October 2020 when 25 were killed in an attack near the town of Pissila in Centre-Nord region.[57] They have also attacked schools, disrupting children's education, and triggered onward displacement among Malian refugees living in the north of the country, where several thousand fled their camp in Goudoubo in the Sahel region in March 2020.[58]

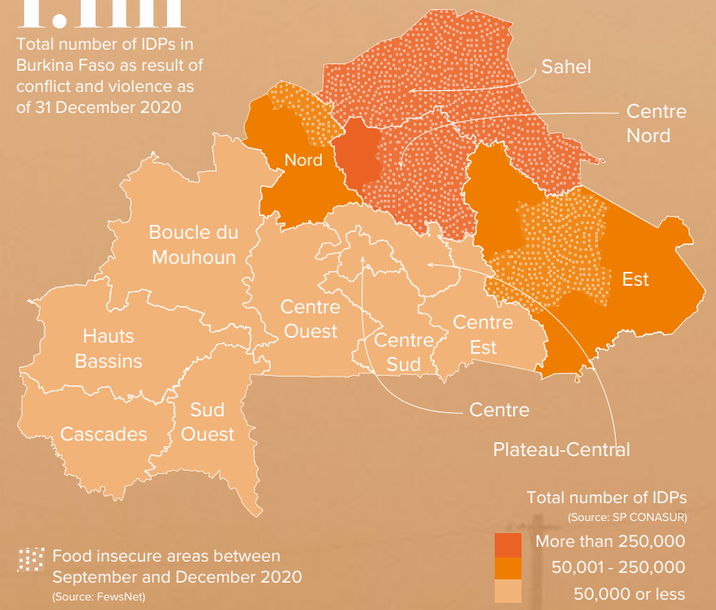
Above-average seasonal rains from April 2020 also caused widespread flooding across the country that destroyed more than 3,300 houses and triggered more than 20,000 displacements.[59] Many of the municipalities affected were hosting IDPs who had previously fled insecurity. More than 1,700 shelters were damaged or destroyed, displacing people for a second or even a third time.[60] This shows how disaster and conflict risk can converge to aggravate the situation of people who are already highly vulnerable.[61]

Most of the country's population live in rural areas and rely on agropastoralism for their livelihoods.[62] The 2020 floods reduced agricultural production and eroded people's resilience. Around 3.3 million people faced a food crisis or emergency during the year, double the figure for 2019.[63] The northern provinces of Soum and Oudalan are among the most food insecure and the worst-affected by violence and instability. The majority of Burkina Faso's IDPs are women and children as conflict and displacement tear families and communities apart.[64]

The UN and its regional and national partners have stepped up their responses in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso to the acute needs of people affected by the surge in violence in recent years, but the protection component of the humanitarian appeals for the three countries was only 26 per cent funded in 2020.[65] The lack of access for aid providers also means that many IDPs' conditions are dire.[66]

1.1m

Total number of IDPs in Burkina Faso as result of conflict and violence as of 31 December 2020



The international community has continued to raise concerns about the deepening insecurity in the wider Sahel region, and has warned of its potential to spread to neighbouring west African countries. Porous borders between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso have facilitated the expansion of armed groups throughout the region since mid-2018.

The escalation of violence in the latter raises significant concerns about it spreading south into Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin and Togo, where an increase in inter-communal tensions and violence has already been reported.[67]

As the violence continues, more urgent steps are needed to address the wider Sahel region's governance crisis. These include the provision of social services for rural communities and addressing local grievances and disputes.[68] Such efforts are supported by the UN's integrated strategy for the Sahel, but an even more holistic approach that includes political dialogue and the stabilisation of the security situation is still needed.[69]

A young boy walks to school in Djibo in the Sahel region, Burkina Faso. Armed attacks have caused major disruptions to education in northern Burkina Faso and forced many schools to close. © OCHA/Otto Bakano, May 2018.

Spotlight - Mozambique: conflict and disasters converge to fuel Cabo Delgado crisis

Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado, one of the poorest and most marginalised in the country, has experienced conflict since 2017 driven by the rise and expansion of Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama (ASWJ), a homegrown non-state armed group.[70]

The drivers of the violence are multiple and evolving, but it is thought that the discovery of offshore natural gas in the province in 2011 partly explains the group's emergence as foreign oil companies contributed to widening inequalities by not generating enough employment opportunities for the local population.[71] ASWJ, which mainly recruits young people, does not have clear links to major jihadist groups operating in other countries in Africa, but it has been conducting an increasing number of highly brutal attacks.[72]

The crisis in Cabo Delgado triggered 584,000 new displacements in 2020, a more than seven-fold increase on the figure for 2019. It left more than 669,000 people living in internal displacement by the end of the year.[73] The violence, which had previously been concentrated in smaller villages, began to expand into larger towns, triggering larger displacement flows.[74] These occurred within Cabo Delgado and to the neighbouring provinces of Niassa, Nampula, Sofala and Zambézia.[75]

The mass arrival of IDPs in Pemba, Cabo Delgado's capital, increased the city's population by more than 30 per cent.[76] Humanitarian aid providers struggled to reach many in the northern districts of the province, the result of lack of access, movement restrictions and general insecurity.[77] There were nearly 67,000 IDPs living in hard-to-reach areas at the end of the year.[78] With armed groups operating in northern areas having destroyed entire villages, the likelihood of displacement becoming protracted is high.[79]

The increase in conflict and displacement in 2020 took place in what was already a fragile situation. Mozambique has been through periods of extended drought in recent years, and in 2019 cyclone Kenneth cut across Cabo Delgado, triggering around 24,000 displacements and causing significant damage and losses, particularly in the agricultural sector.[80]

On top of Kenneth's direct impacts, violence in the northern provinces spread and intensified in the storm's aftermath. Armed groups continued to attack the region's infrastructure which disrupted access for security forces and humanitarian aid providers.[81] This led to an increase in food insecurity levels. Around 580,000 of the 2.7 million people estimated to be acutely food insecure in Mozambique were in Cabo Delgado.[82] Overall, in areas affected by conflict and displacement, most IDPs in temporary accommodation centres and resettlement sites are unable to farm as they would normally because they do not have access to land or inputs.[83]

Displacement by disasters and by the recent attacks in northern Mozambique have heightened protection risks significantly, particularly for women and girls, people with disabilities, older people and those living with HIV/AIDS. Children, who make up around half of the displaced population, are particularly vulnerable. Some have been forcibly recruited by armed groups and others have been deprived of education. Many women and girls have been subjected to forced marriage, abduction and gender-based violence.[84]

To respond to the increasing needs of the communities affected the UN has developed a rapid response plan intended to support the country's National Institute of Disaster Management in providing aid to around 354,000 people. The government of Cabo Delgado has also created a provincial commission to support relocation and resettlement plans.[85]

Although efforts have been stepped up to respond to this fast-growing crisis, the situation remains of significant concern as violence and displacement continue unabated. Attacks on Palma district in March 2021 and the armed forces' response constituted one of the most serious episodes of violence in the country in recent years.[86]

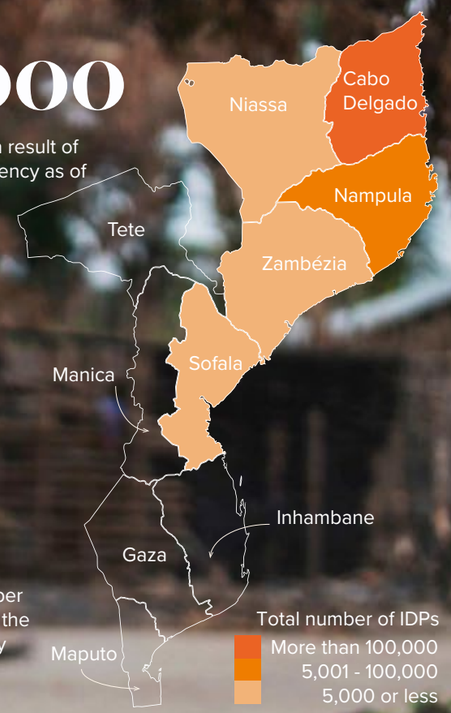
669,000

Total number of IDPs as a result of the Cabo Delgado insurgency as of 31 December 2020

687%

Increase in the total number of people displaced from the Cabo Delgado insurgency since December 2019

(Source: IOM DTM)



A woman holds her younger child while standing in a burned out area in the recently attacked village of Aldeia da Paz outside Macomia, Mozambique.
© AFP/Marco Longari via Getty Images, August 2019.

Middle East and North Africa

New displacements in 2020

Conflict and violence
2,076,000

Disasters
341,000

2.4m
new displacements

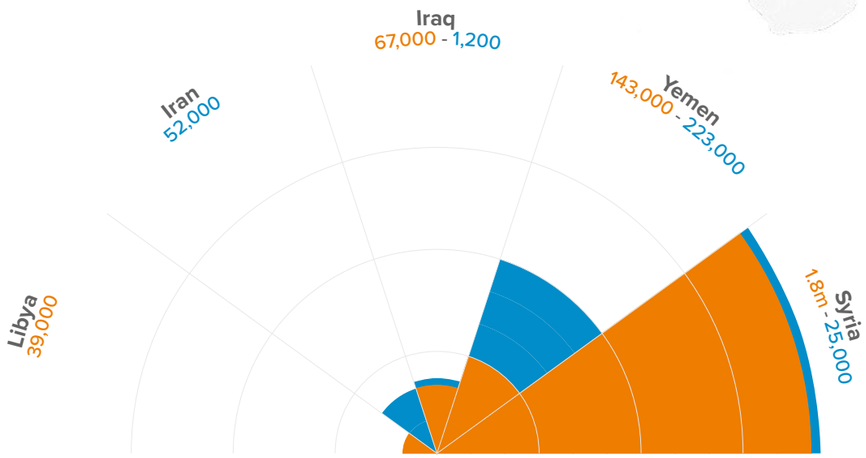


Figure 23: Five countries with most new displacements in the Middle East and North Africa in 2020

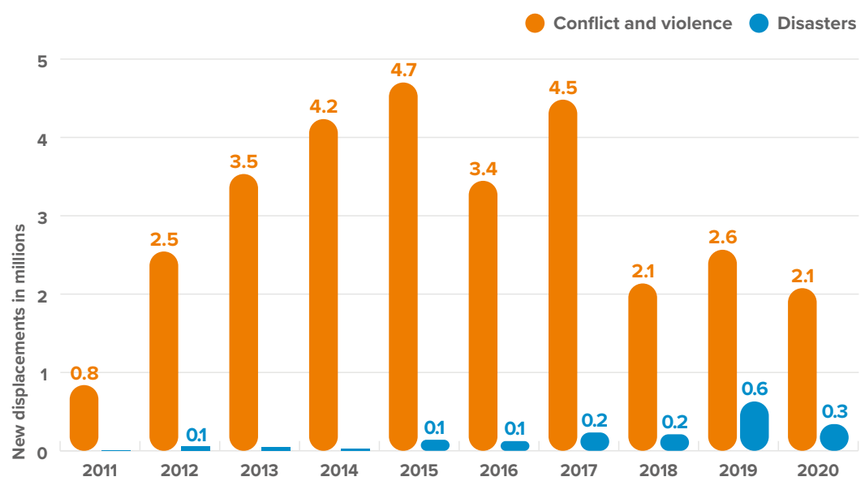


Figure 24: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in the Middle East and North Africa (2011-2020)

Total number of IDPs in 2020

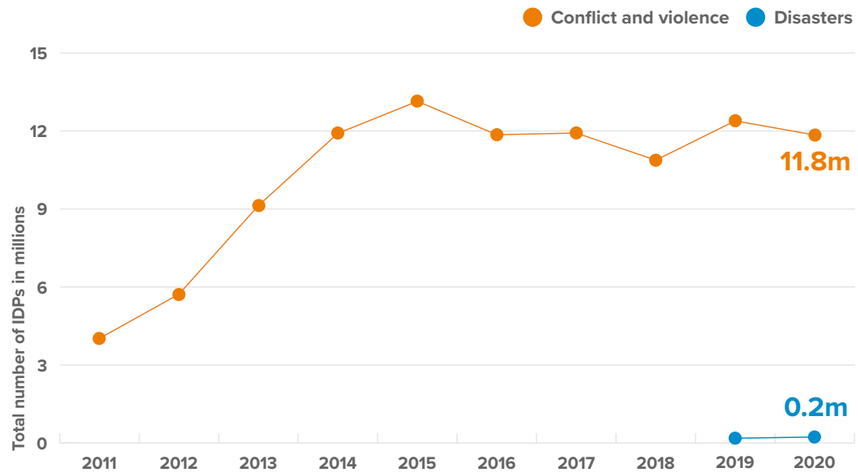


Figure 25: Total number of IDPs in the Middle East and North Africa at year end (2011-2020)

12.1m
total number of IDPs

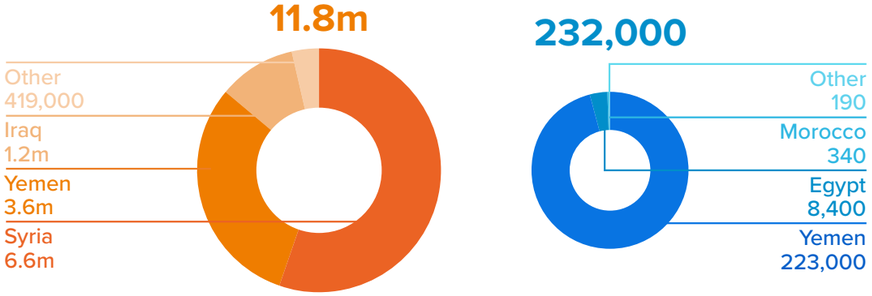


Figure 26: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in Middle East and North Africa as of end 2020

Figure 27: Total number of IDPs in the Middle East and North Africa as of end 2020, by age group

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

The year 2020 marked the tenth anniversary of the start of the Arab spring. In countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen, where the uprisings escalated into armed conflict, internal displacement continues to have devastating impacts.[87] Around 11.8 million people were living as IDPs across the region as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of 2020, and many obstacles remain to their finding safety, rebuilding their lives and achieving durable solutions.

There were also 2.1 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence during the year. A government offensive in Syria's northern governorate of Idlib triggered the biggest single displacement event since the start of the war (see spotlight, page 39). Several offensives also triggered displacement in Yemen. The West Bank recorded its highest number of new displacements since 2016, the result of an increase in the demolition of homes.[88]

Amid the conflict and violence, some progress was made toward conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and warring factions signed several ceasefire agreements. These developments led to a decrease in violence, particularly in Iraq, Libya and Syria in the second half of the year. The number of new displacements across the region represented a modest decline from the 2.6 million recorded in 2019.

Disasters triggered 341,000 new displacements, including in countries such as Yemen where flooding added to the impacts of ongoing conflict and violence (see spotlight, page 41). Wildfires, storms and earthquakes also forced people from their homes across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), resulting in one of the highest numbers of new disaster displacements in a decade for the region.

Redrawing of battle lines and territorial disputes

The government offensive on Idlib in Syria pushed the frontlines of the conflict further north, while hostilities in Yemen intensified in hotspots such as the governorates of Hodeidah and Taizz, and new frontlines emerged.

Escalating violence in Marib governorate, the last government stronghold in the north and a refuge for more than 770,000 IDPs, triggered new displacements and worsened security and living conditions for those already displaced. More than 23 displacement sites had to be evacuated when the violence flared in January, forcing people to move again to new sites unable to provide for their basic needs.[89]

Airstrikes, shelling and an escalation in fighting also triggered significant waves of displacement in Al Jawf governorate.[90] As frontlines shifted and civilians were caught in the crossfire, many IDPs were forced to move several times to escape the violence.[91]

The Libya National Army (LNA) launched a series of offensives between April 2019 and June 2020 in a campaign to take control of cities in western Libya including Tripoli and Tarhuna. Clashes with the Government of National Accord (GNA) triggered significant displacement until GNA reasserted control of these and other cities. The violence in 2020 triggered around 39,000 new displacements before a suspension of hostilities allowed many IDPs to return to their homes.[92]

Israel declared that it would halt demolitions during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the destruction and confiscation of homes triggered 1,000 new displacements in Palestine.[93] In the largest displacement event in more than a decade, 73 people, including 41 children, were displaced in Humsa al Bqai'a in November when homes and other property, including donor-funded humanitarian shelters, were destroyed.[94] The demolition and confiscation of homes within Israel also led to 3,000 new displacements among Bedouin and other Arab Israelis.[95]

Compound crises and protracted displacement

Floods in Iran, Tunisia and Egypt, wildfires in Israel, Lebanon and Syria, and earthquakes in Algeria and Iran, caused a total of 341,000 new displacements in 2020, some of the highest figures recorded in the region during the last decade. Many IDPs were forced to flee for a second, third or even fourth time. The combined effects of disasters, conflict, economic hardship and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic are making displacement chronic, cyclical and protracted in the region.

Floods displaced more people in Yemen than conflict and violence in 2020, aggravating what was already the world's worst humanitarian crisis (see spotlight, page 41). Wildfires in Syria in October affected as many as

A displaced family carry their winter aid package back to their shelter in Marib, Yemen. © IOM, February 2020.

The remains of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, Iraq. Built in 1172–1173, it was destroyed by ISIL on 21 June 2017. NRC/Tom Peyre-Costa, June 2018

140,000 people and triggered 25,000 new displacements in Latakia, Tartous and Homs governorates. They damaged homes and electricity and water networks, as well as crops and farmland which heightened food insecurity. Some of the villages evacuated were home to IDPs who had returned after fleeing conflict.[96]

The fires came on top of a deep economic recession. The country is heavily reliant on imports, and tougher US sanctions imposed in June 2020 led to a steep devaluation of the Syrian pound, which has eroded people's purchasing power.[97] The prices of food, water and hygiene items have reached new highs.[98] These compounding effects have also led to a shift in people's reasons for fleeing. A growing number cite economic decline and lack of livelihood opportunities as the main factor.[99]

These examples illustrate how conflict and disasters can combine to the detriment of IDPs' wellbeing, prolonging their displacement and in many cases forcing them to flee again. This nexus has attracted the increasing attention of researchers and policymakers in recent years, reflecting a significant shift in the way we define and understand the drivers of crisis risk.

Such a shift has begun to take root in MENA, but progress in terms of policy development on disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding and durable solutions has been slow. Nor do all policies that touch on the nexus consider displacement as a factor of crisis risk. More support for these issues is an important prerequisite for the region's stability and IDPs' achievement of durable solutions.[100]

Toward peacebuilding and durable solutions

Some countries in the region made progress toward peace in 2020. Political efforts and ceasefires eased tensions on the ground from Libya to Syria, reducing the number of new displacements compared with previous years and allowing some IDPs to return to their home areas.

Diplomatic efforts in Libya led to a negotiated settlement to end the country's conflict. After fighting in Tripoli and Tarhuna in the first half of the year, the warring parties agreed to a suspension of hostilities, which allowed around 148,000 IDPs to return.[101] This helped to build the momentum for dialogue, peace talks resumed, and on 23 October a ceasefire agreement was signed.[102]

The parties agreed to withdraw all military units, demand the departure of foreign fighters and form a limited joint military force to deter violations of the ceasefire. They outlined procedures to allow the safe passage of civilians and agreed to develop further mechanisms to implement the agreement.[103] This led to a considerable reduction in new displacements, from 215,000 in 2019 to 39,000 in 2020. An interim prime minister was appointed in February 2021 in an important step towards the unification of the country, and national elections are planned for December.[104]

Following the Idlib offensive in Syria, Russia and Turkey negotiated a ceasefire between non-state armed groups and the Syrian government.[105] It has largely held since, leading to a significant decrease in violence. Fighting also subsided in other parts of the country, and the number of new displacements dropped to levels unseen since the start of the war.

A reduction in hostilities in Iraq also led to a drop in new displacements, and the number of IDPs at the end of the year fell by 21 per cent compared with 2019. Around 235,000 people returned to their home areas during the year, particularly in the northern governorate of Ninewa but also in Anbar and Salah al-Din.[106] They were encouraged by improved security, the clearance of unexploded ordnance and the reconstruction of infrastructure. This reflects concerted efforts by the government and humanitarian and development organisations to support voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns.[107]

That said, many IDPs have returned to severely damaged or destroyed houses with only limited access to services, prompted in part by an acceleration in the closure of displacement camps. Many more are still unable to go home for fear of violence and discrimination.[108] IDPs have been offered material support to encourage them to return, but applying for it is a lengthy and complicated process.[109]

The government has developed a matrix to monitor return areas in collaboration with the UN, which should serve as a tool to identify places that are favourable for returns.[110] Humanitarian organisations in Syria have implemented similar initiatives, helping them to understand returnees' most pressing needs and the situation in return areas in terms of security, service provision and reconstruction.[111] These initiatives are important because they also make it possible to monitor how sustainable returns are. They may prove to be examples of good practice that could be replicated elsewhere.

Given how long many IDPs in MENA have been displaced, return may not be their preferred option, which means the options of local integration and resettlement should not be neglected. However, as few examples exist in the region, it is important they be included in durable solutions planning alongside return strategies.

Spotlight - The offensive on Idlib: Syria's largest displacement event in a decade

Armed conflict, disasters and an economic downturn continued to displace hundreds of thousands of people in Syria in 2020. A devastating offensive by Syrian government forces in the northern governorate of Idlib triggered 960,000 new displacements. It accounted for around half of the 1.8 million recorded nationwide and was the biggest displacement event since the start of the war in 2011.[112] More than half of those forced to flee in Idlib governorate had been displaced at least once before.[113]

Idlib has suffered a series of sieges and offensives since the outbreak of the conflict. It has also been the subject of several de-escalation and ceasefire agreements, and the establishment of buffer zones by Turkey and Russia. Despite such initiatives, violence in the governorate escalated several times between 2018 and 2020 as government forces sought to regain control of territory from non-state armed groups, the most prominent of which is Hei'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a former al-Qaeda affiliate.[114]

The mass arrival of IDPs over the years from Aleppo, Dara'a and Rural Damascus governorates as well as other areas has translated into a major demographic change. Idlib's population has doubled to more than 2.7 million, making it one of the most densely populated parts of the country.[115] IDPs make up for almost two thirds of the population, and 56 per cent have been displaced for five years or more.[116]

Households headed by women or elderly people represented more than three quarters of those newly displaced between December 2019 and March 2020. More than half of the IDPs were children, many of them unaccompanied. As the battle unfolded, people fled toward north-western areas of Idlib on the Turkish border that were already hosting hundreds of thousands of IDPs. The population of some districts, such as Dana, increased by nearly 100 per cent during the offensive. [117]

IDPs described chaotic and life-threatening scenes in which their only option was to flee, but damaged roads made their escape difficult.[118] There were also reports of airstrikes targeting vehicles on highways leading to the Turkish border.[119] Shelling impeded IDPs' movements as they were forced to wait in traffic jams for the bombardments to end, making them more exposed to attacks.[120]

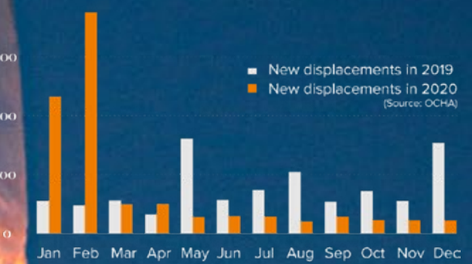
Once in their destination, IDPs took shelter in overcrowded settings. As many as 80,000 were forced to sleep outside in freezing temperatures because camps were full.[121] Children and babies died from the cold.[122] Hospitals in the area have been damaged or destroyed, further limiting the delivery of medical assistance at a time when it was needed most.[123] Access to food and sanitation was also severely restricted.[124]

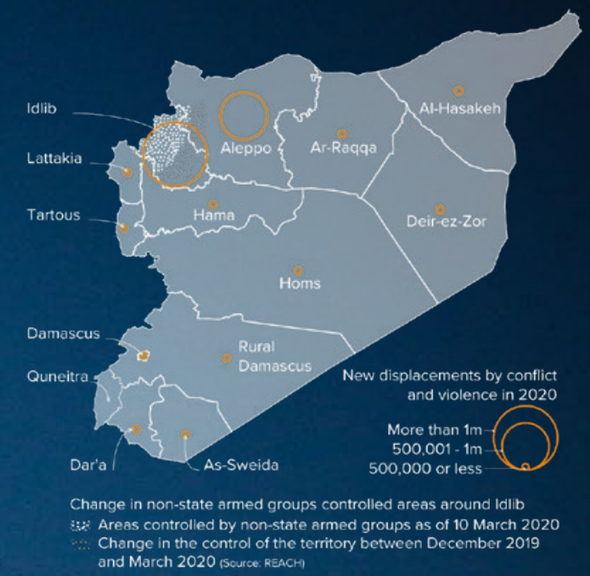
Russia and Turkey agreed to a ceasefire on 5 March 2020, under which they committed to cease military action along the contact line in the Idlib de-escalation zone, and to establish a security corridor and joint coordination centres and patrols.[125] As a result of the reduction in violence, more than 200,000 people displaced by the latest offensive returned between March and July 2020. People's decision to return was also influenced by fears of the spread of Covid-19 in displacement sites.

Return areas, however, have suffered widespread destruction and many are all but uninhabitable. Returnees struggle to access humanitarian assistance while they endure economic hardship and a volatile security situation. Families in most of the communities where IDPs have returned are unable to afford essential food items. Damage to infrastructure and the high price of trucking means that half are also short of water.[126]

1.8m
New displacements by conflict and violence in Syria in 2020

960,000
New displacements as a result of the Government-led offensive on Idlib between Dec 2019 and Mar 2020





The Idlib ceasefire marked the beginning of a reduction in hostilities in Syria that continued throughout the year. Tensions remained and sporadic violations of the agreement continued for several months, but overall there was a steady decrease in attacks and civilian casualties.[127] HTS, which is included in the Security Council's sanctions list of entities affiliated with al-Qaeda and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), has for its part moved away from its most radical and violent approach, becoming more pragmatic in its efforts to protect its hold on Idlib and govern the areas it controls, including through the backing of the Salvation Government's rule in the governorate. Turkish forces also serve as a buffer between the Syrian government forces and non-state armed groups.[128]

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, however, and Syria's collapsing economy and persistent insecurity continue to uproot thousands of people from their homes. Around 9.3 million people were food insecure as of November 2020, an increase of more than 1.4 million compared with 2019 and the highest figure recorded since the war began.[129]

The reduction of violence in Syria in recent months is significant, but the situation remains fragile. Syria's long-suffering population is desperate for the war to end, and a political solution will have to be found if the country's 6.6 million IDPs are to achieve durable solutions to their displacement.

Syrian children living in makeshift tents light sky lanterns in the Betinte village of Idlib, Syria, as the civil war enters its 11th year. © Anadolu Agency/Muhammed Said via Getty Images, March 2021.

Spotlight - Yemen: floods and conflict combine to fuel displacement

Clashes between Yemen's internationally recognised government and Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement, triggered 143,000 new displacements in 2020 as the country's conflict entered its sixth year. Many were the result of indiscriminate attacks and the shelling of densely populated areas.

The country's humanitarian crisis, which remains the world's most acute, was aggravated further by devastating floods and storms during two intense rainy seasons between February and September. Disasters triggered 223,000 new displacements during the year, the highest figure on record for Yemen. The floods caused widespread destruction, killed hundreds of people and forced thousands of IDPs to flee again, highlighting how the impacts of disasters and conflict overlap in the country.[130]

Heavy rain and floods in Hajjah governorate triggered 8,000 new displacements in February, and another 30,000 across nine governorates in just two days between 24 and 25 March. The rains continued unabated throughout April, triggering another 52,000 displacements.[131] A tropical storm also struck the south coast on 21 April, hindering people's recovery from the floods, and the remnants of cyclone Nisarga affected the same governorates in early June. In coastal areas of Hadramaut, torrential rains were preceded by a sandstorm that damaged displacement sites in several districts and the city of Al Mukalla.[132]

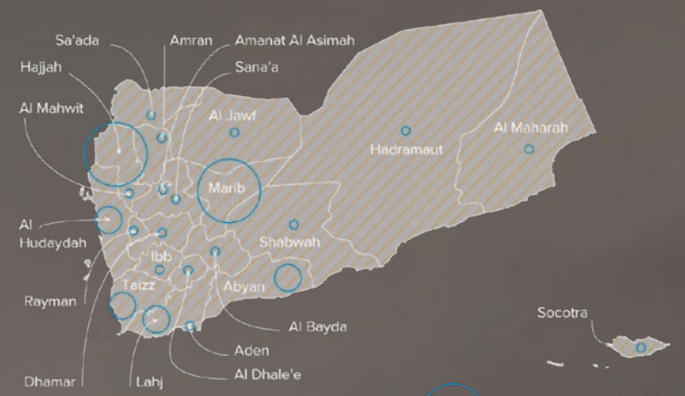
The vast majority of Yemen's IDPs live in makeshift settlements, which puts them at high risk of secondary displacement when disasters strike.[133] Many lost their shelters, property and food stocks due to the rains and floods.[134] IDPs forced to flee again accounted for many of the new displacements recorded in the Abs district of Hajjah in late April.[135]

The floodwaters also overwhelmed sewage systems in displacement sites. Waste flowed into the streets, contaminating water sources and heightening the risk of waterborne diseases in a country already dealing with a significant cholera outbreak.[136] Main roads between the governorates most in need of assistance were cut off, disrupting the movement of humanitarian and medical teams and vital medical supplies including Covid-19 testing kits.[137] There were also reports that the floods had moved landmines and other explosive devices into areas not previously contaminated.[138]

Another period of flooding began on 20 July. This time the west of the country was hardest hit, particularly Marib, Hajjah and Hodeidah governorates, which are also among the worst affected by the conflict.[139] The floods left about 75,000 people in need of emergency shelter, and the rains continued unabated until early August, triggering further displacement.[140]

Because of their high population density and the prevalence of informal settlements, urban areas were particularly hard hit by the floods.[141] Many IDPs in Sana'a city were renting accommodation in flood-prone areas rather than safer neighbourhoods, which are up to four times more expensive. The floods destroyed most of these settlements or rendered them uninhabitable, leaving families homeless again and in many cases living in the open.[142]

There were also significant impacts in rural areas, particularly in early August, when a dam in Amran governorate collapsed and another in Marib overflowed. The subsequent flooding destroyed displacement camps set up informally in empty areas near both structures. Livestock drowned and severe crop damage was also reported.[143]



143,000

New displacements by conflict and violence in 2020 (Source: IOM)

223,000

New displacements by disasters in 2020 (Source: Shelter Cluster)

The floods reduced yields from spring crops across the country and also encouraged locusts to breed and swarm, deepening an already severe food insecurity.[144] More than 16 million people, or over 50 per cent of Yemen's pre-war population, were expected to need food assistance in 2021.[145]

The overlapping impacts of conflict, disasters and the Covid-19 pandemic also weakened Yemen's already precarious economic situation, further worsening living conditions for millions of people.[146] The UN called on the international community in November to step up its support, but greater commitments are needed to end the conflict and avert famine, displacement and a further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis.[147]

There were around 223,000 people living in internal displacement as a result of disasters as of the end of 2020. This is on top of more than 3.6 million displaced by conflict and violence. As disasters continue to compound the country's crisis, it is urgent to implement a country-wide ceasefire and support peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction efforts as well as durable solutions for Yemen's IDPs.

View of an IDP camp on the outskirts of Kharem, Yemen, where many have fled from conflict-affected areas on the border with Saudi Arabia.
© UNICEF/UNI220713/Romenzi, July 2019.

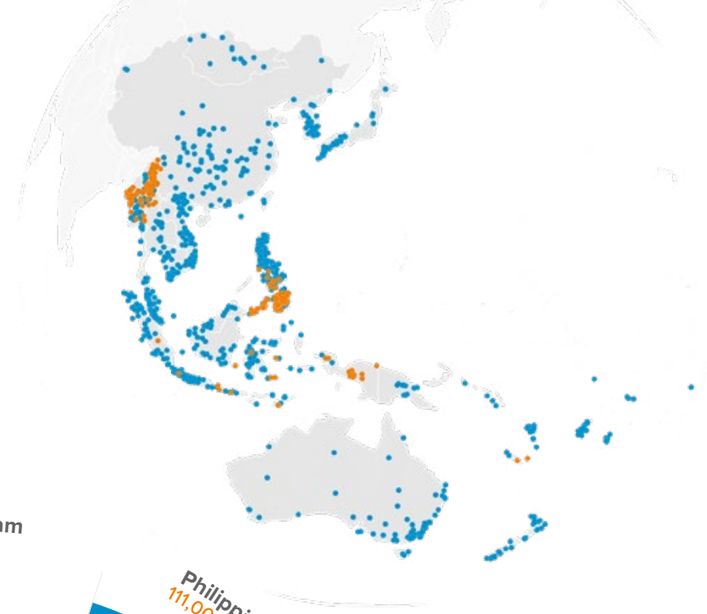
East Asia and Pacific

New displacements in 2020

Conflict and violence
186,000

Disasters
12,063,000

12.2m
new displacements



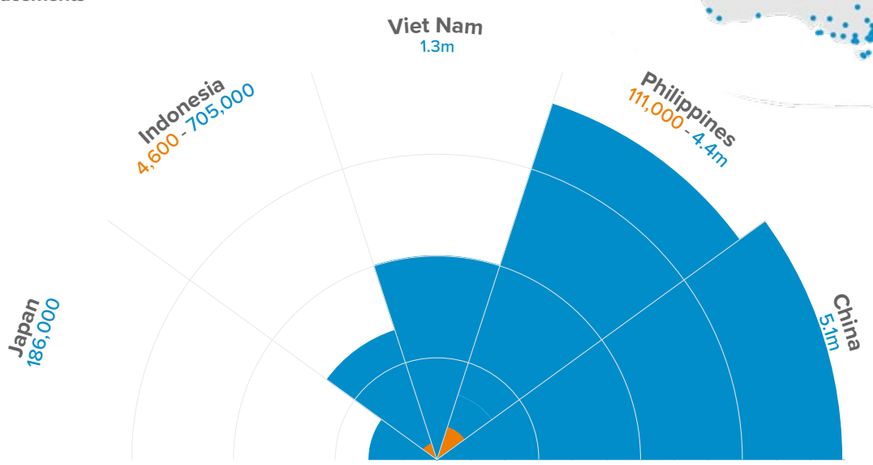


Figure 28: Five countries with most new displacements in East Asia and Pacific in 2020

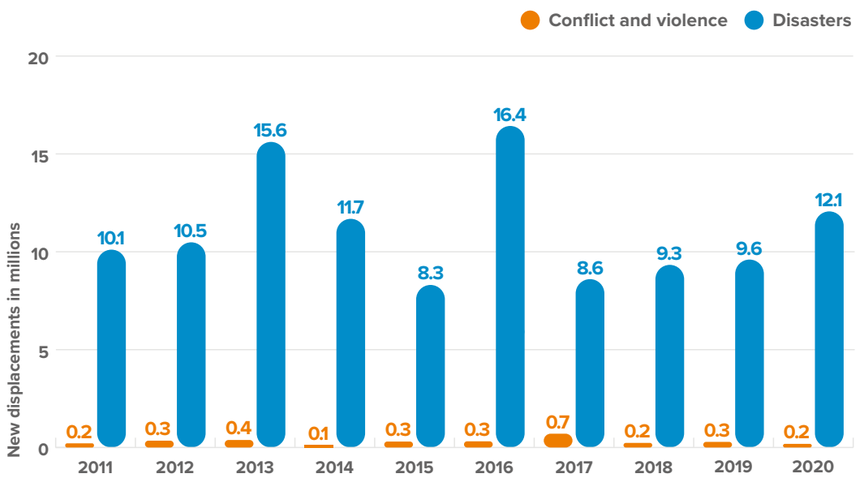


Figure 29: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in East Asia and Pacific (2011-2020)

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Total number of IDPs in 2020

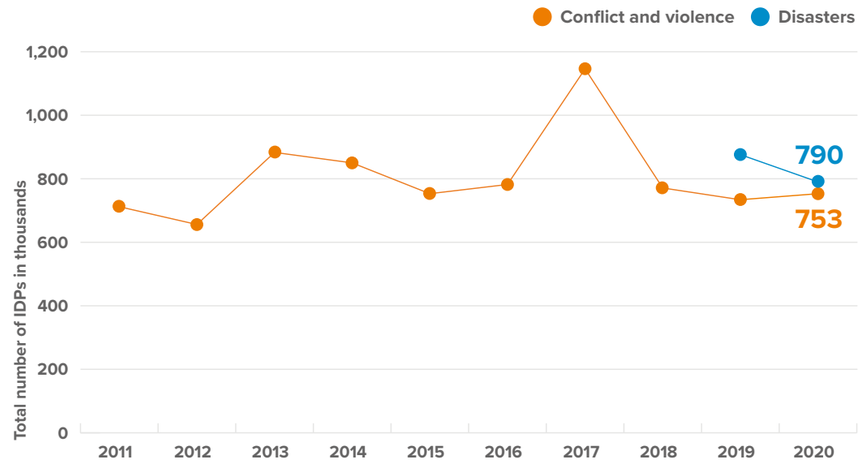


Figure 30: Total number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific at year end (2011-2020)

1.5m
total number of IDPs

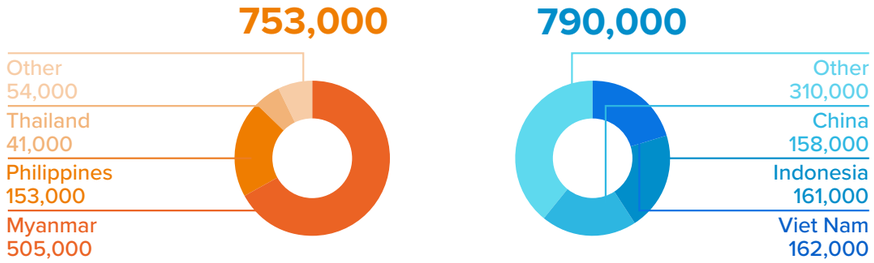


Figure 31: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific as of end 2020

Figure 32: Total number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific as of end 2020, by age group

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Residents of Barangay Baybay, Malinao, in the Albay Province of the Philippines rummage through what was left of their destroyed homes, a week after Typhoon Goni destroyed most of their village. © OCHA/Martin San Diego, November 2020.

As in previous years, most of the disaster displacement recorded globally in 2020 took place in the East Asia and Pacific region. Typhoons, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions triggered 12.1 million new displacements, the highest figure since 2016 and above the region's 10-year average of 11.2 million. Powerful storms and flooding fuelled by climatic variations such as La Niña triggered 94 per cent of them (see spotlight, page 49).

The China, Philippines and Viet Nam were the countries most affected, recording some of the highest figures globally with 5.1, 4.4 and 1.3 million new displacements respectively. Vanuatu was particularly hard-hit relative to its population size. Cyclone Harold triggered around 80,000 displacements, amounting to nearly a quarter of the population. Volcanic activity also forced people to flee their homes in the Philippines, Indonesia and Vanuatu. The eruption of Mount Taal in the Philippines triggered 506,000 displacements in January.

Conflict and violence displaced people in the Philippines, Myanmar and Indonesia, and for the first time in the territory of New Caledonia. Around 186,000 new displacements were recorded across the region, and by the end of the year around 753,000 people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence.

Increased disaster risk

Population exposure and more frequent and intense hazards are the two main factors that drive displacement risk in the region. Millions of people live on deltas and coastlines and in other low-lying areas prone to riverine and coastal flooding, salinisation and erosion, all of which are expected to become worse with climate change and environmental degradation.[148]

East Asia and Pacific also has an average annual urbanisation rate of three per cent, higher than any other region.[149] Rapid and often unplanned urbanisation increases the risk of disaster displacement by concentrating people in areas exposed to hazards.[150]

The unprecedented bushfire season in Australia, which ran from July 2019 to February 2020, triggered 65,000 new displacements, almost three-quarters of them in the first two months of the new year. The fires, which burned around 17 million hectares of land and destroyed more than 3,100 homes, were fuelled by prolonged drought, extreme heat and strong winds.[151] The south-eastern states

of Victoria and New South Wales were worst affected. Most of the displacement was in the form of pre-emptive evacuations, with people alerted to leave their homes by text message or phone call.[152]

Dry conditions at the start of the year then gave way to wet weather intensified by a moderate to strong manifestation of La Niña. This reduced the impact of the wildfires but increased the risk of flooding, landslides and erosion, particularly on burnt land.[153] Floods triggered further displacements in the same areas affected by the fires, particularly in the second half of the year.

While Australia battled wildfires, parts of east and south-east Asia were soon to be underwater. The low-pressure systems of the summer monsoon were particularly strong and slow-moving, allowing them to pick up more moisture than usual from the Indian and Pacific oceans before delivering it to land.[154] Storms triggered more than 5.8 million new displacements as they hit densely populated areas in China, the Philippines, Japan, Myanmar, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

Ninety-eight per cent of the 5.1 million disaster displacements recorded in China in 2020 were triggered during the flooding season, a figure not seen since 2016. The floods affected more than 63 million people and left more than 200 people dead or missing, causing economic losses of around $17 billion, the highest in the world for the year.[155]

Climate variability and change are contributing to these figures, but unsustainable land use, construction on floodplains and the destruction of ecosystems play a critical role. Large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams also alter entire river basins and increase flood risk upstream and drought downstream. Dam failures and releases also increase downstream displacement risk, as has been the case in the Mekong river, that is undergoing rapid change across six countries, from China to Viet Nam.[156]

Many rivers in China rose above warning levels in 2020 and 77 reached record highs.[157] Authorities responded by opening dam floodgates, and at least one dam in Anhui province was blown up to alleviate pressure.[158] In addition, the median age of China's 23,841 large dams is 51 years, which means most have already exceeded or are approaching the lifespans they were designed for.[159] If not retrofitted or adequately managed, they could represent an existential threat for millions of people in years to come.

Torrential rain in Viet Nam throughout the year also caused several dams to overflow. To prevent their reservoirs from bursting, authorities released water downstream, which caused widespread flooding in numerous provinces including Nghe An and Quang Ngai.[160]

The relationship between disaster impacts, infrastructure development and unsustainable practices is also visible in Indonesia. The metropolitan area of Jakarta, home to more than 30 million people and the second largest megacity in the world, is a case in point.[161] More than 397,000 people were evacuated from their homes in three days because of flooding caused by torrential rains that pounded the greater Jakarta region at the start of the year.[162]

In addition to the city being ill prepared to deal with its biggest downpour since 2007, another bout of heavy rainfall caused flooding in and around the capital in February, triggering more than 45,000 displacements.[163] Jakarta, which sits on a swamp, is sinking fast, mainly the result of sea level rise, construction on land prone to subsidence, and illegal pumping.[164] Indonesia's president, Joko Widodo, announced in 2019 plans to move the capital to a safer location. The move, that has an estimated cost of of $33 billion, was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.[165]

Early warning, evacuation and relocation

East Asia and Pacific is exposed to a range of natural hazards and vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate, but countries in the region are also active in managing disaster risk. Evacuations are a form of displacement, but they successfully reduce the number of injuries and lives lost when a disaster strikes.

The eruption of the Taal volcano in the Philippines in early 2020 is an example of how local and national authorities took proactive steps to limit the potential human toll. The National Institute of Volcanology and Seismology issued an alert on 12 January about a possible powerful eruption within hours or days.[166] Authorities advised that all people in the high-risk areas within 14 kilometres of the crater should be evacuated.

Almost 506,000 people evacuated as a result, the largest displacement event triggered by a geophysical hazard in 2020. The government recorded 39 deaths caused by the eruption, some of which were attributed to people opting to remain or return to high-risk areas.[167] Similar evacuations took place regularly during the busy typhoon season in the latter half of the year, averting more injuries and loss of life, and yet having a hugely disruptive impact on people's lives and livelihoods.

The authorities in Fiji identified 48 communities in urgent need of relocation with government support in 2017.[168] Seven have already been relocated following disasters, including the communities of Narikoso village in Kadavu, who received the keys to their new homes on higher ground in 2020.[169] This forms a part of a broader plan to assist and guide relocation efforts at the local level. The government developed planned relocation guidelines in 2018, making Fiji one of the first countries to develop such a national framework.[170] It also established the Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples Trust Fund for Communities and Infrastructure in 2019.[171]

Countries have also adapted their disaster risk reduction and management protocols as new challenges emerge. During the 2019-2020 bushfire season in Australia, the government used mandatory orders for pre-emptive evacuations, rather than advising citizens to choose whether to "stay and defend" their homes or "leave early" as it had done in previous years.[172] It also set up a commission to revise its national policy on disaster response. The commission highlighted the importance of updating evacuation plans and routes and improving shelter facilities.[173]

Japan also stands out as an example of good practice, and provides a wealth of knowledge and lessons learned in managing disasters and associated risks, particularly for earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and flooding. It is also adept at using pre-emptive evacuations to move people out of harm's way. Before typhoon Haishen struck the country in September 2020, more than 174,000 people were evacuated and sheltered.

The country also reviewed its disaster management systems last year in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.[174] Evacuation centres were adapted to allow for physical distancing and avoid overcrowding.[175] Fears of the virus spreading in shelters may still have discouraged older residents from leaving their homes, however, even when people were advised to evacuate because of the risk of flooding. Despite Japan being one of the world's most disaster-prepared countries, some evacuation centres were also located in areas prone to flooding or were unable to withstand heavy rainfall, which made them unusable.[176]

Other countries also altered their disaster management approaches as a result of the pandemic.[177] When cyclone Harold hit Vanuatu, it adapted its response despite having no recorded cases of Covid-19 at the time. Measures to prevent the spread of the virus hampered humanitarian interventions, and overseas aid workers were not allowed to enter the country. This led to innovative ways of strengthening local capacities and systems. Local volunteers were trained online, and other countries and international agencies provided the authorities with remote support.[178]

Conflict and violence

Ethnic and religious tensions fuelled conflict and violence that forced people to flee their homes in several countries and territories in 2020. Most displacement took place in the Philippines, Myanmar and Indonesia, as in previous years.

Almost 111,000 new displacements were recorded in the Philippines, the majority in Mindanao, where the military, the New People's Army (NPA) and the Abu Sayyaf group, which is affiliated to ISIL, clashed several times during the year. Most of the fighting took place in North Cotabato. Outside Mindanao, other displacement events were reported in Central, Eastern,and Western Visayas.[179]

More than 70,000 new displacements were recorded in Myanmar. Armed conflict between the government and the Arakan Army, an ethnic nationalist armed group, triggered about 58,000 in Rakhine and Chin states. The remaining 12,000 were recorded in Shan and Karen states and the Mandalay region, the result of fighting between the military and ethnic armed groups.

New displacements also took place in Indonesia, but information is limited. More than 4,600 were recorded, most of them triggered by ongoing tensions between security forces and rebel groups in the Papua and West Papua regions. An armed group affiliated to ISIL launched an attack in Sigi Regency in Central Sulawesi that triggered further displacements.[180]

Internal displacement associated with violence was recorded for the first time in the territory of New Caledonia. A week of tensions and unrest in the Loyalty Islands city of Maré over the appointment of a new pastor led to clashes between clans that triggered around 140 new displacements. The authorities relocated the IDPs close to the capital, Nouméa, but some complained that they had been uprooted from their land and were afraid to go back because of the risk of further violence.[181]

Spotlight - A year of relentless storms in East Asia and Pacific

Storms are common across the East Asia and Pacific region and trigger significant displacement every year, but the 2020 typhoon season was particularly active. Powerful storms and typhoons struck the region from January to December and affected highly exposed areas that are home to large numbers of people who were forced to flee either ahead of or as a result of their impacts. They triggered almost half of the 12.1 million new disaster displacements recorded across the region during the year, and many people were forced to move more than once. These displacements took place in three different periods, from January to April, May to August and September to December.

January to April

Storm activity began in the south Pacific in January, when cyclone Tino triggered 3,500 displacements in Fiji and Tuvalu. Most of its impacts were felt in Fiji as it passed east of the archipelago as a Category 3 storm, triggering the pre-emptive evacuation of about 100 people.[182] As Tino moved toward Tuvalu, hundreds more were evacuated before strong winds and large storm surges wreaked havoc.[183]

Cyclone Harold then struck in April, triggering more than 93,000 displacements in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The latter was hardest hit by the Category 5 storm, which displaced around a quarter of the country's population in two days, becoming the second strongest storm to hit Vanuatu after cyclone Pam in 2015.[184] Some areas, such as Pentecost Island, were devastated.[185] Many homes were damaged or destroyed, more than 19,000 people were left homeless and the destruction of crops increased food insecurity. Damages were put at around 61 per cent of Vanuatu's GDP.[186]

Fiji opened 250 evacuation centres ahead of Harold's landfall which provided shelter for more than 6,200 people.[187] The storm caused landslides and flooding on the main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu and significant damage to communications networks on more remote islands. Nearly 4,500 people are thought to have had their displacement prolonged because their homes were destroyed.[188]

Covid-19 restrictions hampered assessments in rural and isolated areas of both Fiji and Vanuatu, meaning that estimates of damage and displacement are likely to be conservative.[189]

May to August

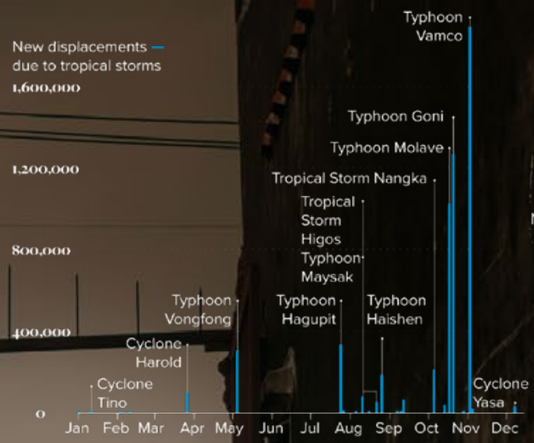
The typhoon season brought widespread flooding to countries across south-east and east Asia between May and August, triggering around 5.4 million new displacements, most of them in the Philippines and China.

Typhoon Vongfong, also known as Ambo, was the first tropical cyclone of the year to hit the Philippines, reaching maximum sustained winds of 157 to 176 km/h.[190] It made landfall on 10 May and triggered more than 298,000 displacements, mostly in the form of pre-emptive evacuations. Covid-19 restrictions complicated the evacuation effort. The need to maintain physical distancing reduced the capacity of shelters, requiring more resources to open up additional evacuation centres.[191]

Multiple major storms affected China during the typhoon season with most hitting the country between June and September. Six hit the country in August alone. Typhoon Hagupit prompted around 326,000 pre-emptive evacuations from vulnerable areas along the east coast early in the month. It brought torrential rainfall to Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, as well as Shanghai, disrupting communications, transport and trade.[192]

Hagupit was followed by tropical storm Higos and typhoon Maysak. Most of the displacements occurred in China, but the storms also prompted pre-emptive evacuations and destroyed homes in North Korea, South Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam.

5.5m New displacements in 2020 due to tropical storms in East Asia and Pacific



September to December

Cyclones, storms and subsequent flooding and landslides triggered more than 5.4 million displacements across several countries in east and south-east Asia between September and December. Most took place in the Philippines and Viet Nam, but typhoon Haishen in September also affected China, South Korea and Japan. It was the second major storm to hit the region in less than a week following typhoon Maysak.

Viet Nam bore the brunt of these storms, and was struck again in October by tropical storm Nangka and typhoon Molave. The country accounted for around half of the 1.2 million displacements the two storms triggered. Molave was one of the most powerful storms ever to hit Viet Nam, and caused around $430 million in damage.[193]

Typhoons Goni and Vamco then triggered more than three million displacements in the Philippines and Viet Nam in October and in November. Goni's torrential rains and violent winds caused storm surges and mudslides around Luzon in the northern Philippines before moving on to Viet Nam, leaving extensive damage and destruction in its wake.[194] Typhoon Vamco triggered another 1.9 million displacements less than two weeks later, most of them in the Philippines. Vamco also destroyed temporary shelters and housing built in response to Goni.[195]

Storms continued to trigger displacement into December, mostly in the Philippines, and midway through the month the south Pacific cyclone season started again. Cyclone Yasa struck Fiji on 18 December as a Category 5 cyclone, triggering more than 23,000 displacements across the archipelago.[196]

Many of the major storms and typhoons of 2020 coincided with periods of seasonal flooding, monsoons and associated landslides, aggravated by a moderate to strong manifestation of La Niña, which brought wetter conditions than normal to the region.

La Niña is one of the main naturally occurring drivers of the earth's climate system, but it now happens against a background of human-induced climate change, which is also affecting the water cycle and making extreme weather events more frequent and intense.[197]

Understanding these seasonal phenomena, the links between them and their impacts, provides evidence on which to base efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to disaster displacement in the region.

Two people wade through water with their belongings after heavy rain caused flooding in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Jethuynh via Getty Images

South Asia

New displacements in 2020

Conflict and violence
409,000

Disasters
9,241,000

9.6m
new displacements

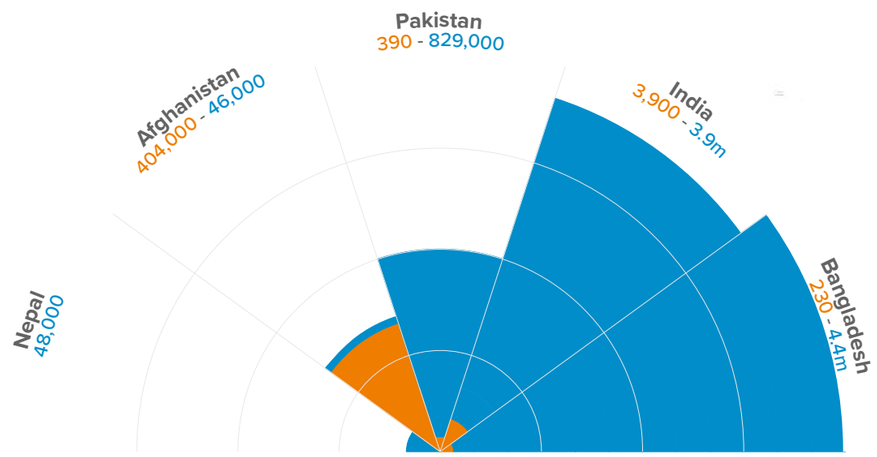


Figure 33: Five countries with most new displacements in South Asia in 2020

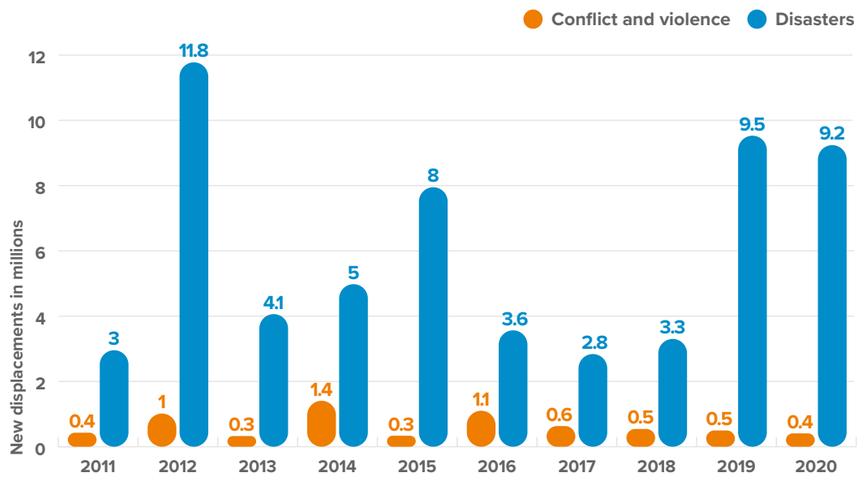


Figure 34: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in South Asia (2011-2020)

Total number of IDPs in 2020

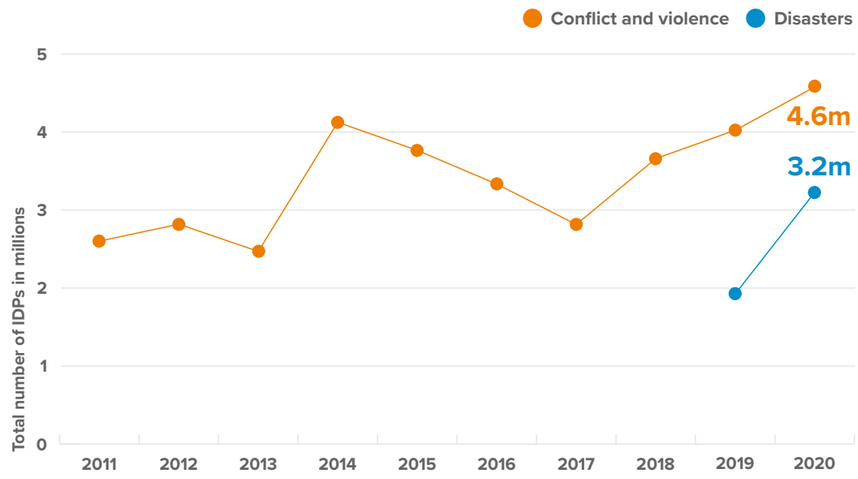


Figure 35: Total number of IDPs in South Asia at year end (2011-2020)

7.8m
total number of IDPs

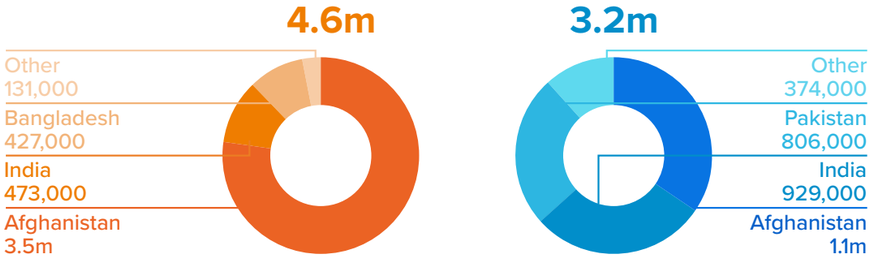


Figure 36: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in South Asia as of end 2020

Figure 37: Total number of IDPs in South Asia as of end 2020, by age group

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

South Asia accounted for almost a third of the world's new disaster displacements in 2020. Around 9.2 million were recorded, an above-average figure for the second year in a row. Cyclone Amphan triggered nearly five million evacuations across Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Bhutan in May, making it the largest disaster displacement event of the year globally.

Monsoon rains and floods affected the whole region from June onwards and particularly Bangladesh, where displacement figures were the highest since data became available in 2008. Around 3.2 million people across the region were living in internal displacement as a result of disasters as of the end of the year.

South Asia is home to nearly a quarter of the world's population. Despite rapid economic growth, inequality is rife and many people still live in poverty, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of disasters and climate change.[198] Unsustainable development practices including unregulated urban expansion, deforestation and land degradation also drive disaster displacement risk.[199] Modelling suggests that floods could displace an average of six million people in any given year in the future in South Asia, making it the region with the highest flood displacement risk.[200]

Displacement associated with conflict and violence remains a concern in several countries. More than 404,000 new displacements were recorded in Afghanistan despite ceasefires and ongoing peace negotiations, and the country was home to more than 3.5 million conflict IDPs as of the end of 2020 (see spotlight, page 57). Conflict displacement was also registered in India and to a lesser extent in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The monsoon and cyclone seasons

Summer monsoon rains affect countries in South Asia every year, forcing people into new and sometimes repeated displacement. Seasonal changes in wind direction and warmer temperatures in the Indian Ocean also fuel powerful storms and cyclones, which climate change has made more frequent and intense. This combined with rising sea levels is also causing more devastating storm surges that flood ever larger areas.[201]

This was the case in May 2020 when cyclone Amphan approached the coast of India and Bangladesh as a category 5 cyclone, prompting governments to evacuate five million people. The storm triggered around 2.5 million new displacements in Bangladesh, mostly in the form of pre-emptive evacuations. It damaged and destroyed homes and other infrastructure and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless.[202]

Amphan also triggered more than 2.4 million evacuations in India, particularly in the eastern states of West Bengal and Odisha. Cyclone Nisarga prompted another 170,000 evacuations in the western states of Maharashtra and Gujarat just two weeks later. Such extreme weather events are no longer exceptional, and severe cyclones are expected to increase in number and intensity on both the east and west coasts of the Indian subcontinent.[203]

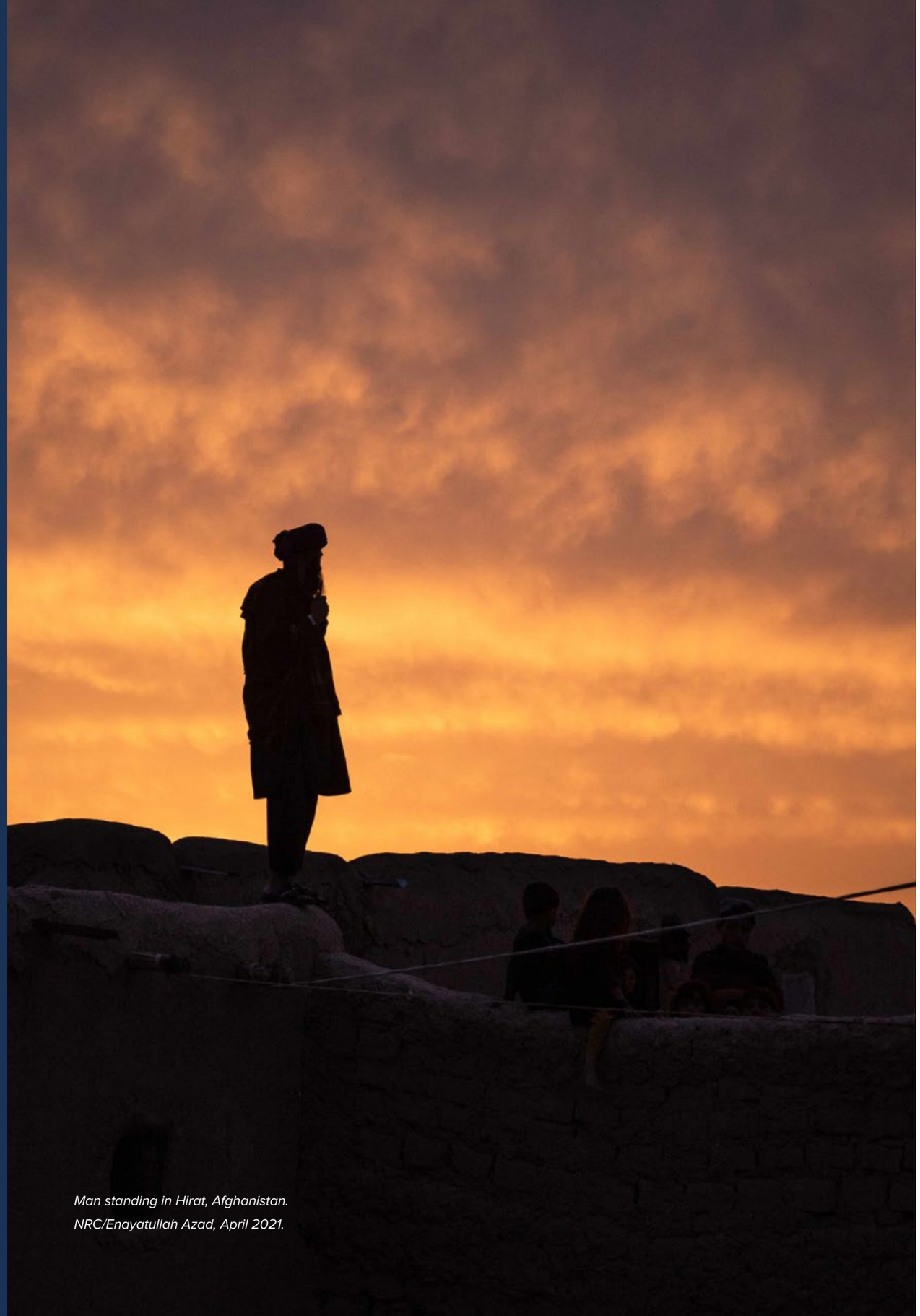
Extended monsoon seasons are also becoming the norm. The withdrawal of the 2020 south-west monsoon was not completed until late October. Such changes prompted the Indian Meteorological Department to take the unprecedented step of revising its monsoon onset and withdrawal dates. It has moved the date of the start of the withdrawal from 1 to 17 September, effectively prolonging the monsoon by more than two weeks.[204] The 2020 south-west monsoon affected 22 Indian states and territories, triggering about 763,000 displacements between early June and late October.

The monsoon in Bangladesh was the longest since 1988 and caused the worst flooding in a decade. Satellite imagery showed that about a quarter of the country was already underwater at the beginning of June.[205] Around 5.4 million people were thought to have been affected by the time the floods reached their peak in early August.[206] The monsoon triggered around 1.9 million displacements nationwide. Some people sought refuge in government shelters, but others did so on high ground, roadsides and embankments.[207]

The floods coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, disrupting the operation of local markets, eroding people's livelihoods and economic resilience and making their impact more severe. Despite these challenges, there were also some positive developments in the humanitarian response, such as the use of anticipatory action forecasting to allocate assistance to affected areas quickly. A helpline was also set up for people seeking assistance.[208]

The monsoon in Pakistan lasted three months and affected the whole country, particularly the south-eastern province of Sindh between mid-August and mid-September.

People use a boat to cross flood waters in the village of Pakahan, Bihar, India in October 2020. © Bloomberg/Prashanth Vishwanathan via Getty Images, October 2020.



Man standing in Hirat, Afghanistan.
NRC/Enayatullah Azad, April 2021.

Sindh accounted for almost all the 810,000 new disaster displacements recorded nationwide during the year. In September 2020, the provincial government declared a state of emergency in affected districts. Some of the province's most fertile land was flooded, disrupting the livelihoods of mostly poor rural communities.[209] Crop losses came on top of the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.[210] In recent decades, coastal communities in the province have gradually been forced to move further inland as land loss caused by seawater intrusion and salination undermines their livelihoods. Increased annual rainfall and a series of cyclones have aggravated the situation further.[211]

The monsoon in Nepal triggered 48,000 new displacements between June and September, far fewer than the country's decade average. The decrease may be explained by Covid-19 restrictions impeding data collection rather than less intense floods. Schools and other public spaces that normally function as shelters for people displaced by disasters were also used as Covid-19 quarantine sites, making it difficult to evacuate and shelter people affected by the monsoon floods and landslides.[212]

Protracted conflict and communal violence

Persistent conflict in Afghanistan and localised inter-communal violence in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh all triggered displacement in 2020. Apart from Afghanistan, data sources for this type of displacement are limited in the region so the figures should be considered underestimates. Evidence suggests, however, that the trends of the past two decades continue in all four countries.

The signing of an agreement between the US and the Taliban in February to withdraw all foreign troops and set up a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan was followed by internal peace talks that began in September in Doha.[213] Despite these developments, 404,000 new displacements were recorded in 2020 (see spotlight, page 57).

Tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities in India have been rising since the Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in 2019.[214] They led to widespread violent protests last year, notably in Delhi in February, when more than 1,800 people were forced to shelter in camps.

Tensions between India and Pakistan over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir have led to cross-border shelling in recent years. Access constraints and information blackouts have impeded data collection, but evidence suggests that ceasefire violations by both sides have led to an escalation in tensions and displacement.[215]

Data on protracted displacement in the region is also limited, but as of the end of the year, around 473,000 people in India, more than 427,000 in Bangladesh and 104,000 in Pakistan were thought to be living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of 2020.[216] Adding figures for Afghanistan, South Asia is home to 4.6 million people living in long-term displacement.

Spotlight - Afghanistan: Violence and displacement continued despite peace talks

After four decades of conflict in which millions of people have been displaced, 2020 may prove to have been a turning point in Afghanistan's history. Initiatives to end the hostilities and reach a political solution took place, raising hopes for an end to one of the world's most protracted crises.

Violence continued unabated, however, triggering more than 404,000 new displacements. There were 3.5 million people internally displaced as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, an 18 per cent increase compared with 2019 and the highest figure in more than a decade.

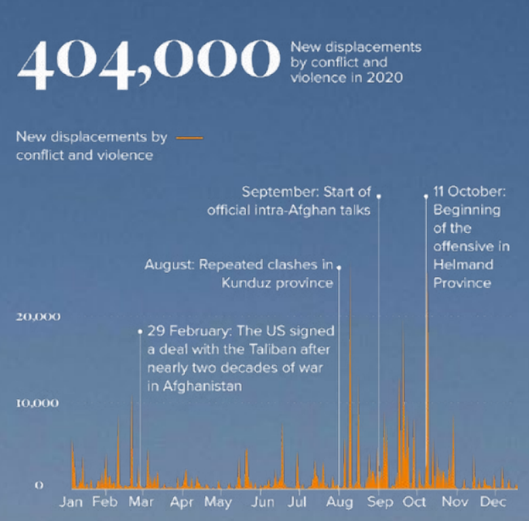
The US signed an agreement with the Taliban in February, and this led to a lull in the fighting and a considerable reduction in displacement in March.[217] However, the violence reignited in May and June, triggering new displacement. Later in the year, for the first time since 2001, representatives of the Taliban and Afghan government officials kickstarted official intra-Afghan talks in September in Doha.[218]

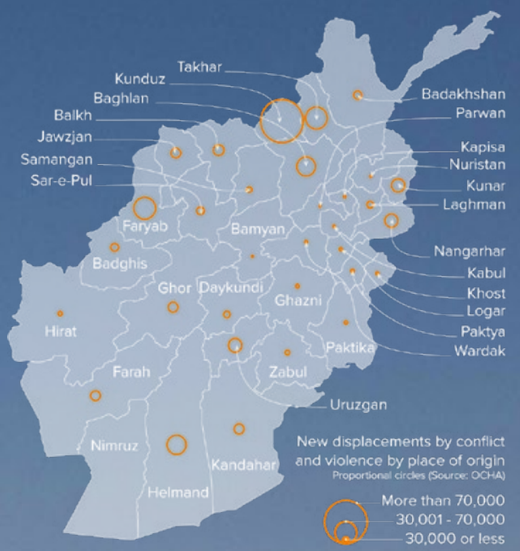
As the talks started, the security situation continued to deteriorate.[219] Nearly 20,000 new displacements were recorded in the northern province of Kunduz after clashes between government forces and the Taliban. Kunduz is a Taliban stronghold strategically connected to Kabul by a highway.[220]

Violence continued across the country in the last three months of the year. Southern provinces, more recently spared from the worst of the conflict, were affected.[221] An attack by Taliban factions in Lashkargah, the capital of Helmand province, triggered more than 20,000 new displacements in a single day in October.

Hostilities persisted across Helmand in November and December, forcing the closure of health facilities and main roads to Kabul.[222] The violence restricted people's movement and left many trapped in conflict areas, though some chose to stay to look after their land and property. Some who fled returned quickly due to lack of livelihood opportunities and tenure security in their areas of destination.[223]

The Covid-19 pandemic aggravated economic hardship, food scarcity and tenure insecurity in Afghanistan. Nearly half of the country's population was considered acutely food insecure by the end of 2020, a 16 per cent increase compared to the previous year.[224] Around 18.4 million Afghans were in need of humanitarian assistance in early 2021, double the figure reported a year earlier.[225]





IDPs and returning refugees and migrants have been particularly vulnerable. Their average household debt has almost doubled in the last two years.[226] Those living in informal settlements also face eviction, their inability to pay their rent being the most common reason.[227]

While intra-Afghan negotiations represent a promising step to end the conflict, it is not yet clear how displacement and durable solutions will feature in the negotiations. As the year concluded, no major changes were observed on the ground. The US announced in early 2021 that it would withdraw all its troops from the country on September 11, after 20 years of operations, as efforts step up to advance the intra-Afghan peace talks.[228]

View of Jamal Nika IDP camp on the outskirts of Kandahar city, Afghanistan, where around 500 families live after fleeing conflict and fighting around the city. NRC/Enayatullah Azad, February 2021.

The Americas

New displacements in 2020

Conflict and violence
238,000

Disasters
4,528,000

4.8m
new displacements

Figure 38: Five countries with most new displacements in the Americas in 2020

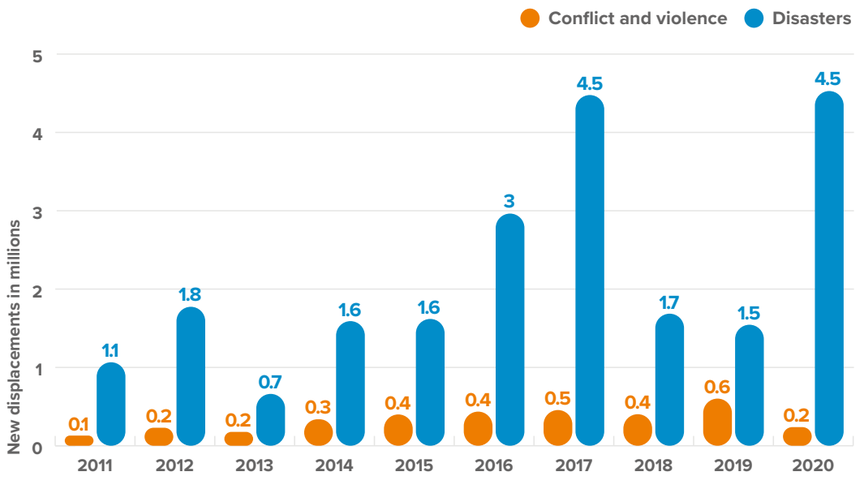


Figure 39: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in the Americas (2011-2020)

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Total number of IDPs in 2020

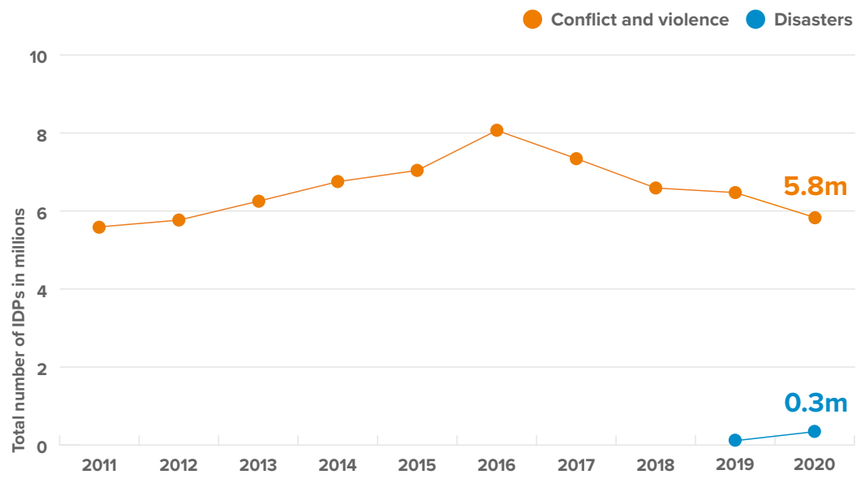


Figure 40: Total number of IDPs in the Americas at year end (2011-2020)

6.2m
total number of IDPs

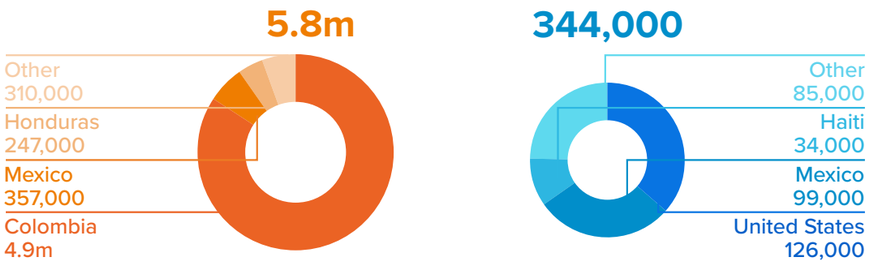


Figure 41: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in the Americas as of end 2020

Figure 42: Total number of IDPs in the Americas as of end 2020, by age group

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

A neighbourhood in Honduras flooded by hurricanes Eta and Iota, which destroyed houses and harvests, and increased food insecurity. NRC/Christian Jepsen, December 2020.

Disasters triggered the vast majority of new displacements in the Americas in 2020 with 4.5 million recorded, the highest figure in ten years. The United States had the biggest numbers, and unprecedented displacement took place in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which were badly affected by the most active Atlantic hurricane season on record (see spotlight, page 65). Floods and wildfires also triggered a significant number of displacements across the region.

Conflict and violence triggered around 238,000 displacements, including in El Salvador, Colombia, Mexico and Haiti. Most were the result of attacks, intimidation and persecution by non-state armed groups, paramilitaries and criminal gangs seeking to exert control over illegal economies and drug-trafficking routes. The figure was lower than in previous years, presumably because of a reduction in violence due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, this could also be attributed to limited data collection during the pandemic.

A year of storms and floods

Weather-related hazards triggered most of the region's disaster displacement in 2020, as in previous years. Climate variations linked to La Niña led to unusually heavy rains that triggered floods and landslides, and many countries reported increases in displacement. Some recorded their highest figures in years. An intense rainy season in Brazil, particularly from January to March, triggered more than three-quarters of the country's 358,000 new disaster displacements.

An unusual subtropical storm named Kurumí formed in the Atlantic Ocean east of São Paulo in January and brought torrential rain to south-eastern Brazil. More than 120 municipalities declared a state of emergency as floods prompted evacuations and destroyed homes.[229] More than 112,000 displacements were recorded in the last week of the month. The state of Minas Gerais was the most affected as its capital, Belo Horizonte, recorded 171mm of rain in 24 hours, the highest figure in more than a century. Entire neighbourhoods were submerged and landslides engulfed homes.[230]

Flooding hit again in March, and Pará was the most affected state. More than 51,000 displacements were recorded as several rivers burst their banks. The municipality of Marabá declared a state of emergency after the waters of two major rivers rose 11 metres above their normal level, triggering 18,000 displacements.[231] By the end of the year, the country as a whole had recorded its highest number of new displacements since 2010 and around 20,000 people were still displaced.

Disaster displacement figures for Mexico increased five-fold in 2020, mostly as a result of floods and storms. Heavy rains in the southern state of Tabasco in November brought on by the remnants of hurricane Eta forced authorities to release water from some dams and close the gates of others to prevent the Carrizal river from overflowing and flooding Villahermosa, the state capital and home to nearly 700,000 people.[232] Displacement was averted there, but rural and indigenous communities in parts of Jalpa, Nacajuca and Centla municipalities were badly affected.[233]

The rains also increased the water levels in some of the country's most voluminous rivers, including the Usumacinta, Puxcatán and Grijalva. Floods led to the evacuation of more than 3,600 people in Tabasco and 740 in Chiapas. Flooding is not new to these states. The same areas are frequently inundated, and authorities have taken steps to strengthen disaster risk reduction measures.[234] Chiapas also has a law on internal displacement that includes provisions to deal with that triggered by disasters.[235]

Natural hazards and the climate variations that are making them more frequent and intense are not the only factors behind the high number of disaster displacements recorded in the region last year. Human practices, including deforestation, unsustainable urbanisation and both the construction and lack of maintenance of grey infrastructure, also increase displacement risk.

In the US, heavy rainfall in the state of Michigan in May caused the Edenville and Sanford dams to fail, triggering 12,000 evacuations and accounting for 70 per cent of the 17,000 displacements due to flooding recorded across the country in 2020. The two dams are among at least 170 dams in Michigan that the US Army Corps of Engineers has classified as having high hazard potential, meaning a failure could lead to loss of life.[236] Federal regulators also removed the Edenville dam operator's license in 2018 over concern the spillway could not carry enough water to avert a failure during a historic flood.[237]

Wildfires: a new normal?

Wildfires have triggered around 3.3 million displacements globally since 2008, when data first became available, and almost 90 per cent have taken place in the Americas region. The figures are conservative and a cause for significant concern, given that wildfires are on the increase. They triggered 1.2 million new displacements globally in 2020, more than a million of them in the US, the highest figure on record for the country.

Large fires fuelled by persistent hot and dry conditions and high winds developed in western states including California, Colorado, Oregon, Utah and Washington.[238] The number of fires reported during the year was below the five and ten-year national averages, but the number of acres burned was well above, and more than double the figure for 2019.[239]

Five of the 20 largest wildfires on record in California took place in 2020, damaging or destroying 10,500 buildings and killing 31 people.[240] Most displacements were pre-emptive evacuations, but those who lost their homes faced the prospect of longer-term upheaval.

The frequency and intensity of wildfires in the Amazon region also seem to be increasing. Brazil recorded 223,000 wildfires in 2020, the highest figure for a decade.[241] Displacement figures are hard to come by, but there is evidence that indigenous communities in several countries have been affected.[242]

The wildfire season in Canada was below the ten-year average, but still triggered 5,800 new displacements. The main event was a fire in Red Lake, Ontario, which accounted for around 3,800.[243] Wildfires also triggered more than 2,000 displacements in Mexico, most of them pre-emptive evacuations in the municipality of Nicolás Flores in Hidalgo state in April, and 690 in Argentina in July and August. Fanned by strong winds after a period of intense drought, fires burned more than 190,000 acres in the central region of Cordoba, the highest figure for 20 years.[244]

Urbanisation and the expansion of agriculture mean that humans are in ever closer contact with wildland, which increases the risk and impacts of wildfires. Deforestation and the use of slash-and-burn practices also increase the risk of drought and fires, which act as threat multipliers that increase the risk of displacement.[245]

Violence, displacement and Covid-19 in Latin America

Conflict, violence and the displacement they trigger decreased significantly across the region in 2020. It is still too early to measure the extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic has played a role, but lockdown restrictions are known to have limited the operations of criminal gangs and other armed groups in some countries, including their use of violence.[246]

Few countries maintain comprehensive registries of IDPs, and there are persistent data gaps in countries where criminal and gang violence trigger displacement.[247] No accurate figures could be obtained for Guatemala and Honduras, for example. The two countries recorded a 24.7 and 14.7 per cent reduction of homicides respectively in 2020, but the impact on displacement trends was impossible to ascertain.[248]

Around 114,000 new displacements were recorded in El Salvador in 2020, but this should be considered an underestimate. The country also passed a law on internal displacement in February, an important first step to address the challenge.[249]

Violence in Mexico continued unabated despite the pandemic.[250] Clashes between the New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) and the Michoacana Family in the municipality of Zirándaro in Guerrero state triggered around 2,300 new displacements in January and February, leaving whole villages depopulated. This was the country's largest displacement event of the year.[251]

CJNG and other criminal groups also stepped up their violence during the country's initial lockdown in March as they sought to capitalise on the situation to expand their activities and territorial control.[252] Guerrero and Chiapas were the most affected states, followed by Oaxaca and Michoacán.

All displacement events reported by media and civil society organisations took place in rural areas. Much urban displacement goes undetected, but results from the 2020 census suggest it is prevalent, particularly in the state of Mexico and the Federal District of Mexico City, which host a large number of IDPs.[253] The ongoing development of a federal law on internal displacement represents an important step toward increased recognition of the phenomenon and action to prevent it and reduce its impacts.[254]

Violence also continued in Colombia despite Covid-19 restrictions, and 106,000 new displacements were recorded during the year. Most combatants with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) demobilised and reintegrated into society after the 2016 peace deal, but dissident factions have since emerged, and paramilitary groups continue to exercise significant territorial control.[255]

Clashes between FARC dissidents, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and paramilitaries took place throughout the year in the Pacific coast departments of Chocó, Nariño and Cauca, and in Antioquia and Norte de Santander. The same departments recorded most internal displacement.[256] African-Colombian and indigenous people represented the majority of those newly displaced, respectively.

The government imposed Covid-19 restriction measures that led to a lull in fighting and displacement in some areas, but armed clashes continued in others. The country's Victims' Unit registered 23 events of displacement and forced confinement that affected 17,400 people during the lockdown.[257] Armed groups also applied their own movement restrictions in areas under their control, which prevented community organisations and the government from implementing elements of the 2016 accord.[258]

Escalating violence in Haiti in 2020 triggered a three-fold increase in the number of new displacements to 7,900, the highest figure recorded in the country. Criminal gangs triggered around 1,800 in the capital, Port-au-Prince.[259] Gang violence also spread north to Saint Luis du Nord, where two hostile armed groups burned 1,500 homes down, triggering 6,100 displacements.[260]

The Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the country's high levels of food insecurity and inflation rates. The sharp increase in violence and social and political instability prompted the UN to raise concerns about the situation spiralling out of control.[261] In this regard, the Security Council also extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti to support efforts towards political stability and good governance.[262]

Wildfires spreading in the San Francisco Bay area of California, United States. © China New Service/Liu Guanguan via Getty Images, August 2020.

Spotlight - The most active Atlantic hurricane season on record

Thirty named storms formed during the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, of which 13 developed into hurricanes, making it the most active on record. It was also one of the longest. Storms formed earlier than the average formation date and two major hurricanes developed as late as November.[263] Around 2.8 million new displacements were recorded across 17 countries and territories.

One of the main factors behind the record-breaking season was the change in Pacific Ocean surface temperatures caused by a moderate to strong manifestation of La Niña.[264] This, coupled with warmer surface temperatures in the Atlantic, favoured the formation and deepening of tropical depressions.[265] Hurricanes Laura, Eta and Iota were particularly destructive.

Hurricane Laura

Laura impacted the Caribbean basin in late-August and reached category 4 strength at its peak.[266] It triggered more than a million new displacements across five countries and territories, a figure second only to Iota. Laura began in the central Atlantic as a weak tropical storm that brushed Puerto Rico before striking the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and the US. It prompted 60 evacuations in Puerto Rico and brought down trees and power lines, leaving around 33,000 people without power. The island's power grid was still fragile after previous storms and earthquakes.[267]

As Laura traversed La Hispaniola, it triggered more than 15,200 pre-emptive evacuations in the Dominican Republic and destroyed the homes of around 960 people in Haiti.[268] As it approached Cuba, a state of alarm was declared in nine provinces, prompting 418,000 evacuations, one of the highest figures on record for the country. Santiago de Cuba was the most affected province with 106,000.[269]

The storm then intensified rapidly as it tracked toward the US, making landfall in south-western Louisiana on 27 August as a category 4 hurricane.[270] Winds up to 240km/h and a storm surge in excess of four metres caused severe damage along the coast and inland as far as the city of Lake Charles. Measured by its maximum sustained wind-speed at landfall, Laura was the most powerful hurricane to hit the state since 1856.[271]

More than 585,000 people were ordered to evacuate in Louisiana and Texas, and at least 22,000 were staying in temporary shelters when the storm was at its peak.[272] It was the costliest disaster of 2020 in the US, with damages put at $19 billion.[273] Damage to housing stock has severely limited alternative accommodation options for households whose homes were made unliveable.[274] Many were still staying in temporary shelters, including hotels and dormitories, as of January 2021.[275]

Hurricanes Eta and Iota

Hurricanes Eta and Iota wreaked havoc in a number of Central American and Caribbean countries in November, together triggering 1.7 million displacements. The region had already been badly affected by summer storms and hurricanes that caused widespread flooding and displaced tens of thousands of people.

Eta formed over the east Caribbean on November 1st and strengthened as it moved west before making landfall in Nicaragua as a category four hurricane. Communities in eastern provinces were cut off as rivers overflowed and trees and power lines were brought down. All 156 homes in the indigenous community of Wawa Bar were destroyed, and more than 71,000 displacements were recorded across the country as a whole.[276]

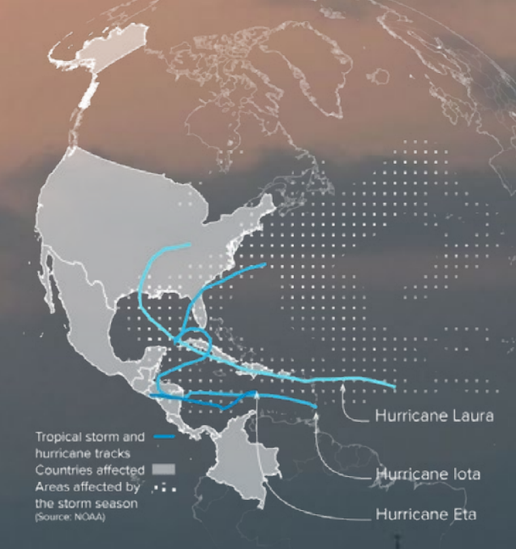
The storm then slowed as it cut across Honduras, bringing torrential rain that caused widespread flooding and triggering around 175,000 displacements, more than in the previous 12 years combined. The northern provinces of Cortés and Yoró were the most affected.[277] El Salvador declared a red alert and set up shelters to host up to 200,000 people but was spared Eta's worst impacts.[278]

Heavy rains prompted around 2,300 evacuations. In Guatemala, rains and floods in northern provinces triggered more than 184,000 displacements.[279]

Two weeks later, tropical storm Iota passed north of Colombia's Caribbean coast, causing flooding in the city of Cartagena and other towns. By the time it reached the archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia it had become a category five hurricane, the first ever to strike Colombia, with winds of up to 259 km/h. The storm devastated Providencia, affecting the island's entire population and 98 per cent of its infrastructure. Around 1,200 homes were destroyed and all communications were cut off. It also ruined people's livelihoods, destroying crops, fishing boats and food stocks.[280]

Iota then struck the coast of Nicaragua on 16 November just 25 kilometres south of Eta's landfall where thousands of people were still in shelters. It brought winds of 250 km/h and torrential rain to the North Caribbean Autonomous Region, which was cut off and left without communications or drinking water and devastated the indigenous community of Haulover.[281] Rivers such as the Wawa, already swollen after Eta, flooded over several kilometres.[282]

The storm also severely disrupted the small-scale fishing and farming on which most of the region's population depend for their livelihoods. Farmland and crops were destroyed by flooding and sea-water intrusion.[283] Eta and Iota between them prompted nearly 160,000 evacuations in Nicaragua.[284]



The disaster management authorities in Honduras ordered evacuations in 10 of the country's 18 departments as Iota approached.[285] Ground was still saturated after Eta, increasing risk of floods and landslides. Water was also discharged from the country's largest dam for the first time in 10 years.[286] With 45,000 people still in shelters after Eta, Iota prompted 743,000 evacuations as it traversed the country as a tropical storm.[287] It also triggered 126,000 displacements in Guatemala.

What does the future hold?

Hurricane seasons are triggering an increasing number of displacements in the region. It is too early to establish clear links between climate change, disasters and displacement, but the relationship between storm characteristics and human-induced climate change is increasingly understood. Storms are expected to become more frequent and intense, meaning more category 4 and 5 hurricanes each season. As sea levels rise, coastal flooding associated with tropical cyclones is also expected to increase.[288]

Beyond hazard intensity, people's exposure and vulnerability are an important part of the risk equation and addressing them must be a priority. As the 2020 hurricane season illustrates, more needs to be done to mitigate disaster risk, particularly in low and middle-income countries which are more vulnerable to climate change impacts and the risk of disaster displacement.

View of Jucutuma Lake in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, which had dried up during a severe drought in October but came back to life after the passage of hurricane Eta in November 2020. © AFP/Orlando Sierra via Getty Images, November 2020.

Europe and Central Asia

New displacements in 2020

Conflict and violence
85,000

Disasters
234,000

319,000
new displacements

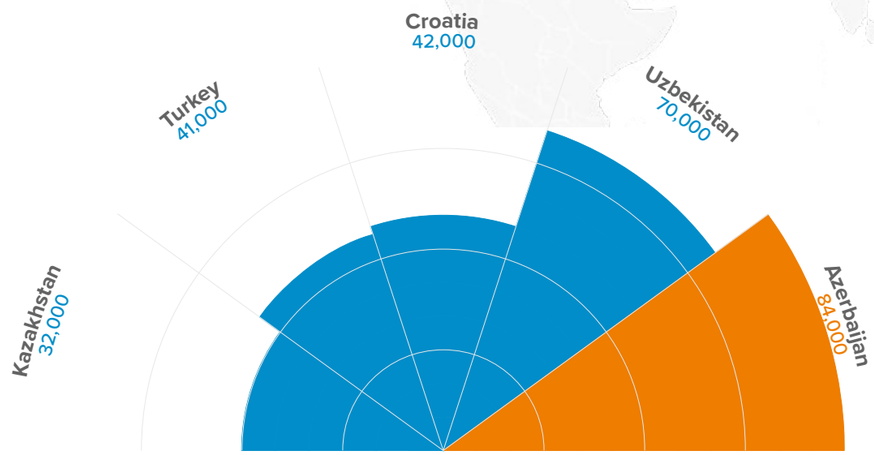


Figure 43: Five countries with most new displacements in Europe and Central Asia in 2020

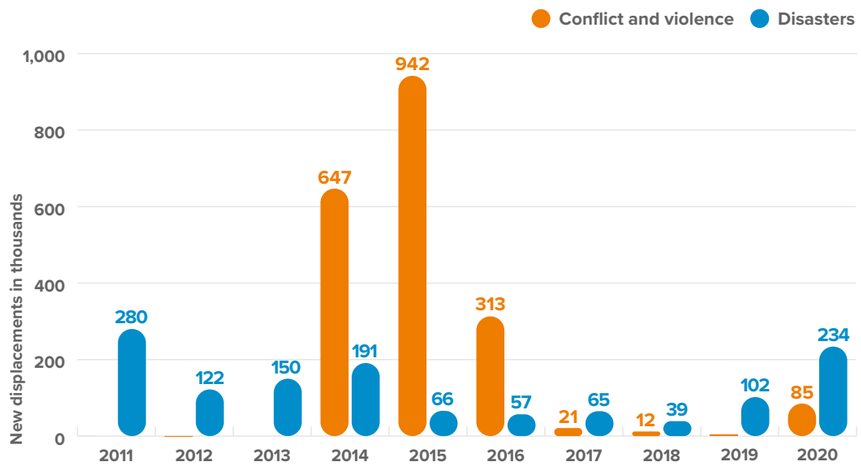


Figure 44: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in Europe and Central Asia (2011-2020)

The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Total number of IDPs in 2020

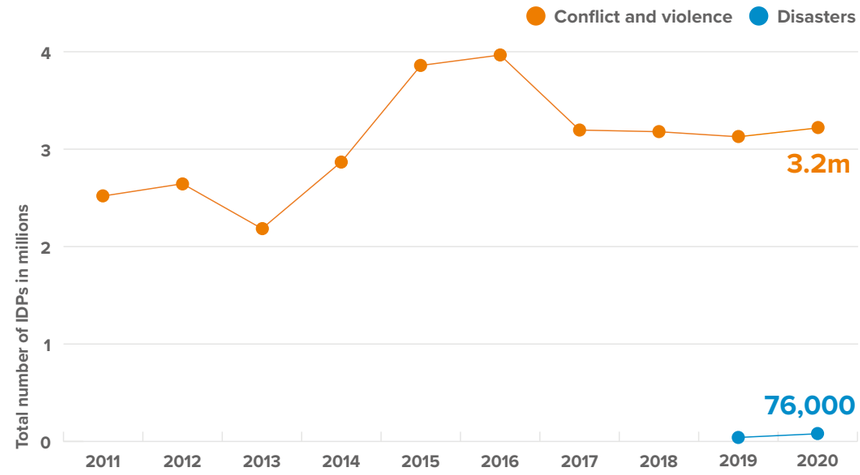


Figure 45: Total number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia at year end (2011-2020)

3.3m
total number of IDPs

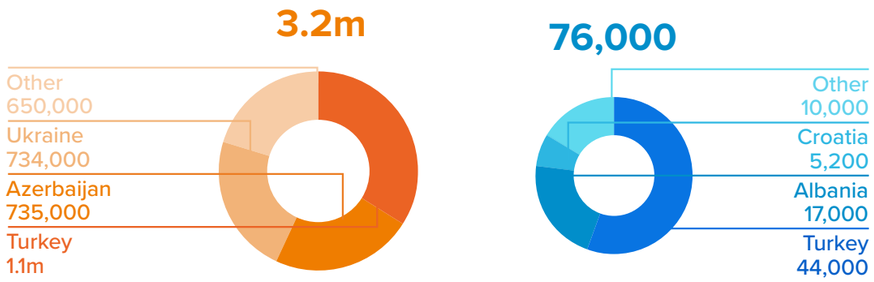


Figure 46: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia as of end 2020

Figure 47: Total number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia as of end 2020, by age group

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Disasters triggered 234,000 new displacements in Europe and Central Asia in 2020, the highest figure on record for the region. Earthquakes in Croatia, Greece and Turkey, flooding in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and intense storms in western Europe were some of the year's most significant events.

New displacements by conflict and violence were also recorded in the region, largely as a result of the fighting that broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas in September.

Disasters in the warmest year on record

Storms and floods accounted for just over half of the new disaster displacements recorded in the region. Flooding triggered a record 120,000, and 15 major storms around 6,200 across nine countries, double the annual average for the last decade.

The first major event reported in the region was storm Gloria, that led to more than 2,200 displacements in south-western France and eastern Spain in January. The equivalent of four to five months' rain fell in 72 hours in the French departments of Aude, Pyrénées-Orientales and Roussillon.[289] Gloria also killed 14 people in Spain, and a storm surge swept three kilometres up the Ebro river delta south of Barcelona.[290] These events happened against the backdrop of Europe's second consecutive warmest year on record, with an average temperature 0.4°C higher than 2019.[291]

February 2020 was the warmest and fifth wettest on record in the UK, where torrential rains triggered around 1,100 displacements. Storm Dennis, which was classified as a "weather bomb" for its atmospheric characteristics, was one of the most intense winter storms in the North Atlantic, and accounted for around a quarter of the displacements recorded in the country.[292] More than 3,400 properties were flooded, with losses estimated at around $415 million.[293] Many of the areas Dennis hit were still recovering from storm Ciara that had struck a week before.[294]

In early May, the most significant displacement event in the region took place in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Heavy rains led to the collapse of the Sardoba dam on the Uzbek side of the Syr Darya river, causing major flooding in both countries.[295] The floods triggered more than 70,000 new displacements from 22 Uzbek villages and around 32,000 in the Kazakh region of Turkistan, a third of which was underwater.[296]

During the summer months, torrential rains continued to take place throughout Europe and Central Asia. About 4,800 displacements were recorded in the eastern region of Evia in Greece in August, and Ianos, a rare Mediterranean cyclone, hit the country in September and led to more than 600 evacuations. The islands of Kefalonia, Zakynthos and Ithaca were particularly affected.[297]

Warmer temperatures in summer also increase the risk of wildfires, which prompted 23,000 new displacements, mainly in Spain, Greece and France. Disaster displacement was also reported for the first time in the Netherlands, when the village of Herkenbosh, home to 4,000 people, was evacuated because of smoke risk from a wildfire.[298]

Ukraine was also hit by wildfires at the end of September, prompting around 1,000 evacuations and damaging or destroying 400 homes in Luhansk. Authorities struggled to contain the fires as they spread across the contact line, detonating unexploded ordnance. The explosions helped to spread the fires further.[299] Wildfires also broke out in April near the Chernobyl exclusion zone, triggering around 200 displacements when they increased radiation levels.[300]

Flooding hit south-western France once again in September and October, triggering 4,800 displacements, particularly in the Occitanie region. Storm Alex also made landfall in Brittany in early October, before tracking south to cause floods and landslides in other parts of France, as well as in Italy and Switzerland. The Vésubie and Roya valleys in the French Alps were worst hit.[301] Alex's impacts triggered 940 evacuations and destroyed around 100 homes, leaving 230 people facing the prospect of long-term displacement.

As the year concluded, storm Bella struck northern France and the UK, particularly western Scotland, Wales and southern England, in December.[302] It led to almost 3,100 displacements over the Christmas period, and left around 34,000 households in eastern and central France without power.[303] Heavy rains in Norway around the turn of the year set off a major landslide that caused more than 1,000 evacuations.[304]

The highest earthquake displacement in years

Earthquakes prompted 82,000 new displacements in Turkey, Croatia and Greece in 2020, the second highest figure recorded for this type of hazard in the region after the Van earthquake in Turkey in 2011.

A 5.4-magnitude quake hit Zagreb in Croatia in March, triggering more than 1,600 new displacements. It occurred during the country's first Covid-19 wave, when government restrictions to contain the virus were in place.[305] Local authorities faced significant challenges in responding to both crises, as the pandemic meant fewer resources were available to respond to the disaster.[306] Given the Croatian economy's heavy reliance on tourism, it is likely to suffer a significant recession, which may also impede recovery and reconstruction efforts.[307]

The country was struck again nine months later by its most powerful earthquake ever recorded, a 6.4-magnitude event near Petrinja, about 50 kilometres south-east of Zagreb.[308] It left almost 13,000 homes uninhabitable, suggesting that around 40,000 people were likely to need long-term alternative accommodation. Displaced households initially stayed in evacuation centres, collective shelters, with host families or in newly built container settlements next to their damaged homes.[309]

Turkey is also highly prone to earthquakes.[310] A 6.8-magnitude event damaged almost 7,000 homes in the central regions of Elazığ and Malatya in January and triggered as many as 25,000 new displacements.[311] Another quake struck the border area with Iran a month later and a third hit the central province of Bingöl in June.[312] A 7.0 magnitude quake affected both Turkey and Greece in October, triggering around 11,000 new displacements in the Turkish city of Izmir and the Greek city of Samos.[313]

Conflict and violence

After several months of increasing tensions and ceasefire violations between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, fighting erupted in September 2020. It was the largest flare up of conflict since a truce was agreed between the parties in 1994.[314] The conflict escalated quickly and lasted for 44 days until a cessation of hostilities was agreed in November.[315]

Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas were affected by the fighting. Artillery fire and airstrikes killed and injured civilians, and damaged homes and infrastructure, including hospitals and schools.[316] Human rights violations and the use of banned cluster munitions were also reported.[317] People's jobs and livelihoods were hard hit.[318]

Preliminary figures suggest the fighting caused 84,000 new internal displacements in Azerbaijan between September and November.[319] Also, around 90,000 people were reported to have fled from Nagorno-Karabakh and were hosted in more than 100 collective shelters across the Armenian provinces of Kotayk and Syunik and the capital district of Yerevan.[320] Fighting also prompted about 800 new displacements in the Syunik and Gegharkunik provinces of Armenia during the same period.[321]

The cessation of hostilities presents an opportunity to improve humanitarian access, including mine clearance, to areas affected by the conflict and to respond to IDPs' and other displaced communities' needs.[322]

Clashes in eastern Ukraine subsided for the second year in a row, thanks in part to new measures to implement the ceasefire agreed in July 2020.[323] This said, thirty-two homes were destroyed in new fighting that triggered 74 new displacements between January and June.[324] The Ukrainian Parliament adopted laws and introduced draft legislation that could play a significant role in improving IDPs' living conditions and supporting their efforts to achieve durable solutions. Resolutions adopted in September provide for compensation for people who have lost their homes or other property in Luhansk and Donetsk.[325] Another resolution adopted in June guarantees IDPs' right to vote in all elections.[326] However, the situation on the ground remains fragile, as fighting and tensions escalated again in eastern Ukraine in March and April 2021.

Around 3.2 million people were still living in internal displacement as of the end of the year across the region, most of them in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Many have been displaced for years, if not decades.

Special Feature

Impacts of Covid-19 on internal displacement

The Covid-19 pandemic heightened IDPs' needs and generated new risks in 2020, while creating significant operational and financial challenges for governments and their humanitarian partners.

Two internally displaced girls in Mopti, Mali, using a solar radio they had received to ensure learning during school closures due to Covid-19 measures. NORCAP/Alassane Guindo, July 2020.

Heightened needs and new risks

The lockdowns and economic downturn that have accompanied the spread of Covid-19 have intensified the financial difficulties many displaced people were already struggling with. Unable to pay their rent and faced with the risk of eviction, many IDPs and returnees in Iraq resorted to negative coping strategies, such as continuing to work in contravention of government restrictions, child labour, selling assets and going further into debt.[327] There were similar concerns in Afghanistan, where deepening poverty has forced more IDPs into early and forced marriages, child labour and begging, putting them at greater risk of violence and abuse.[328]

School closures have increased barriers to education for displaced children, who are less likely to have access to alternative learning approaches than the general population.[329] The suspension of temporary classrooms and child-friendly spaces in countries such as Myanmar also reduced humanitarian actors' ability to engage with displaced children and understand their protection needs.[330]

Economic recession and changes in the availability and price of commodities have heightened food insecurity. By May 2020, humanitarian actors in Colombia were already expecting a two-fold increase in the number of food insecure people, including IDPs.[331] In July, humanitarian actors in Cameroon warned that food insecurity due to market disruptions would lead to an increase in mortality, morbidity and malnutrition amongst the most vulnerable, including IDPs.[332]

There are also concerns at the global level that displaced people may struggle to get vaccinated against Covid-19, given their limited access to health facilities and in some cases lack of legal documents.[333] This despite growing evidence that underlying health conditions, overcrowding and poor hygiene and sanitation in areas where IDPs tend to live make them more vulnerable to the disease than the general population.

Forty-five per cent of IDPs surveyed in Yemen in November said they or someone in their household had experienced Covid-19 symptoms, compared with 30 per cent of non-displaced people.[334] Inability to physically distance from others was the most common challenge IDPs cited in trying to limit their risk of catching or spreading the virus.

Operational and financial challenges

Travel constraints, the disruption of supply chains and measures to limit the spread of the virus have created significant impediments for humanitarian organisations that support IDPs.[335] When cyclone Harold hit the Pacific islands in April, flight restrictions delayed the delivery of aid to those displaced and led to shortages of safe water at a time when handwashing was critical.[336]

Lockdowns, curfews and movement restrictions have also impeded access to affected populations, which was often already difficult because of security and logistical obstacles. The number of districts in Iraq with significant access constraints increased four-fold between November 2019 and April 2020, and as of July humanitarians were unable to reach 30 per cent of the IDPs they had previously been supporting in informal settlements.[337] Some humanitarian workers in Nigeria, South Sudan and elsewhere faced the risk of violence when they were perceived as conveyors of the virus.[338]

Covid-19 measures have hindered primary data collection on IDPs, making it more difficult to track their movements and assess their needs. The cancellation of data collection in camps and informal settlements in Iraq as a result of physical-distancing and movement restrictions has generated gaps in our understanding of the living conditions and risks IDPs face and the level of services provided.[339]

The pandemic has also had financial repercussions for humanitarian assistance. A global Covid-19 humanitarian response plan published by the UN in March 2020 called for $2 billion to address urgent needs in 54 countries.[340] The amount had increased to $9.5 billion for 63 countries a few months later.[341]

National humanitarian response plans were also revised to include additional costs for sanitary measures, epidemiological monitoring, communication, prevention, testing, analyses and medical treatment. All initial budgets for the DRC, for example, were increased by seven per cent, and the cost of the Covid-19 response was estimated at $166.82 per beneficiary.[342]

While the pandemic has increased the need for funding, the economic downturn it has caused has put pressure on donor governments to prioritise their domestic needs.[343] The global Covid-19 humanitarian response plan was only 39 per cent funded as of February 2021.[344] Underfunding directly affects immediate and longer-term responses to displacement. Organisations in South Sudan, for example, will have to scale back activities focused on durable solutions to divert funds to lifesaving interventions for newly displaced people.[345]

Asha workers and antenatal care beneficiaries social distancing before entering a primary health centre in Gujarat, India. © UNICEF/UNI338928/ Panjwani, June 2020.

Two displaced men in conversation in Alta Gracia Sanchez School in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, where they are sheltering after their homes were flooded during hurricanes Eta and Iota. NRC/Christian Jepsen, December 2020.

A silver lining?

Faced with these obstacles, humanitarian organisations have adapted in ways that have the potential to enhance future responses to displacement. Disaster management authorities in Japan issued practical guidelines on evacuations and expanded the use of private facilities including hotels and shopping centres as additional shelters to allow for physical distancing.[346] Although travel bans hindered external aid from reaching people displaced by cyclones in Vanuatu, India and Bangladesh, they prompted the development of more localised disaster management structures and community-led responses.[347]

The number of beneficiaries targeted for semi-permanent shelters in Burundi was increased to avoid overcrowding in camps, also laying the ground for more sustainable housing solutions.[348] In Iraq, OCHA and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster developed a way to assess crowding in camps and identify those at high risk of Covid-19 transmission. The same tool could be used for other diseases in the future.[349]

There is no doubt that the impacts of Covid-19 on internal displacement are immense and will continue to affect IDPs' lives and responses to the phenomenon for years to come, but the post-Covid recovery period will be an opportunity to "build back better", foster more sustainable and inclusive ways of working and strengthen IDPs' resilience. The unprecedented scale of needs has made it clear that, despite the billions invested in aid each year, the current approach is not viable. Longer-term investments and greater coordination are needed.

Part 2: Internal displacement in a changing climate

A young girl runs outside the village of Ngop in the Unity state, South Sudan, at sunset. NRC distributed food to more than 7,100 people in Ngop to mitigate the high risk of famine. NRC/Albert Gonzalez Farran, March 2017.

Disasters and displacement: evidence vs myth

Aerial view of homes underwater in the town of Campur in San Pedro Carchá, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, after hurricanes Eta and Iota struck consecutively in November 2020, with devastating consequence. © UNICEF/ UN0377627/Billy/AFP-Services, December 2020.

Disaster displacement is a global reality and an everyday occurrence. IDMC has recorded an average of 24.5 million new displacements per year since 2008. This is the equivalent of 67,000 displacements each day. Over the years, it has become clear that there are a number of *persistent myths* about the phenomenon, with serious and mostly negative implications for people, policy and response. These include:

- *Disaster displacement is short-term.* Growing evidence shows in fact that it can easily become protracted with significant social and economic impacts.
- *It affects all people in similar ways.* In reality, different groups experience different impacts.
- *Small-scale events are not a major concern.* In fact they have a significant relative impact on individuals and threaten local development gains.
- *Disaster displacement can be understood and addressed in a compartmentalised way, chronologically and by sector.* Converging drivers and compound events actually mean that such responses can generate new risks.
- *Only people forced from their homes suffer the negative impacts of displacement.* In fact, those who remain in place can be equally affected and in some instances even considered displaced.

Disaster displacement can become prolonged with significant impacts

The most common misconception is that disaster displacement is short-term and that after live-saving evacuations people usually return quickly to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. The fact that little data is collected after the emergency phase of a disaster helps to feed this misunderstanding. Evacuees are not tracked to monitor if or when they are able to return.

At worst this means that national policies and response mechanisms may not recognise disaster displacement, and at best that they underestimate its scale. This in turn means there are few if any programmes dedicated to responding to longer-term displacement. It also means support and services for IDPs are severely limited and there is a lack of accountability among local and national agencies.

The limited evidence we have, however, suggests that many who flee are unable to return quickly to their home. We estimate that around seven million people worldwide were living in displacement as a result of disasters at the end of 2020, and examples from last year suggest this figure only scratches the surface of the phenomenon.

By way of example, data suggests Cyclone Amphan damaged more than 2.8 million homes in the Indian state of West Bengal, and that almost 300,000 people remain displaced to this day in Bangladesh (see box 1). Similarly, coastal communities displaced over the past decades from locations submerged by the sea in the Sindh region of Pakistan are still living on hazard-prone land, where they are at significant risk of losing their livelihoods and being displaced again.[350]

The figures in part one of this report show that the socioeconomic impacts of displacement run into billions. Each time a person is displaced, even if only for a few days, costs arise for transport, shelter, the provision of food and other items, and in many cases for loss of income. Lack of data, however, makes it difficult to properly assess these impacts more systematically. The Sendai Framework does not include a related indicator. Advocating to establish such indicators and developing new ways to measure the financial impacts of displacement constitute essential steps toward more comprehensive disaster monitoring, prevention and response.

Where data does exist it points to the potential enormity of the cost of disaster displacement globally. During the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires in Australia, the loss of economic production as a result of one person missing one day of work because of displacement was estimated to be about $510.[351] In a survey in two affected regions, 55 per cent of the 1,058 respondents who were displaced for more than a night said that leaving had prevented them from working as normal.[352] If each person missed just two days of work, the loss would amount to more than $500,000, showing how such costs quickly spiral if a disaster causes significant housing destruction, delaying IDP's return to home and work.

The cost of covering the temporary housing needs of people who lost their homes in the Black Summer fires for a year was estimated to be as much as $52 million.[353] Previous bushfire recovery efforts suggest it can take people between one and four years to rebuild their homes.[354]

Disaster displacement impacts people in different ways

Understanding that displacement impacts vary by age group, gender, disability and other characteristics is equally important.[355] Infants may need vaccination and nutritional supplements, school-age children educational support and young people vocational training. Knowing how displacement affects education is particularly important because the repercussions are long-term (see box 2).

People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of displacement (see spotlight, page 81). They may find it more difficult to reach shelter or access humanitarian assistance, and they may be at higher risk of neglect, abuse and violence. Knowing how many IDPs have disabilities and the nature of their condition is essential in designing policies and programmes that include them, but such information is even more scarce than data on IDPs' sex and age.

Data collection also tends to overlook other factors that may affect a person's experience of displacement, including whether they belong to a sexual or ethnic minority, an indigenous group or a lower-income family. This reinforces the importance of an intersectional approach to collecting and analysing data that seeks to understand how people's identity and characteristics should shape responses.[356] Better data would also help to foster the meaningful participation of various groups in the planning and design of support programmes for IDPs.

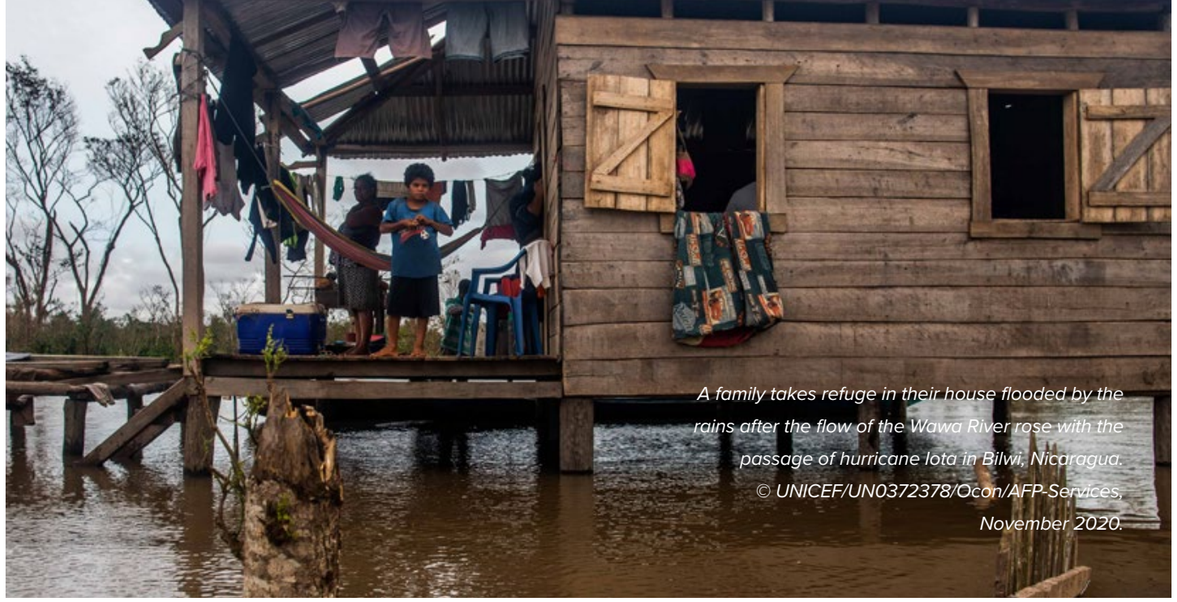
Box 1: Uprooted by Amphan and still displaced[357]

People on the west coast of Bangladesh are used to living through disasters, but cyclone Amphan, which triggered around 2.5 million displacements in Bangladesh alone, may have been a point of no return for many. The storm not only destroyed homes, roads and other infrastructure. It also aggravated other slow-onset hazards such as river erosion. The damage it did to embankments led to the flooding of homes, farms and fields that have been underwater ever since. Those displaced have taken refuge nearby, where they remain dangerously exposed to future hazards.

Life-saving relief and government support was well received, but it has not been enough to redevelop the area sustainably or strengthen its inhabitants' resilience. All those interviewed in a survey conducted seven months after Amphan had reduced their food intake and medical expenses as a result of the hardship the disaster brought, and nearly 70 per cent had resorted to begging, borrowing or selling their household's assets to survive.

Not that Amphan was solely responsible for their plight. Cyclone Sidr in 2008, Isla in 2009 and Fani and Bulbul in 2019 all struck the same area. One displaced man said: "I have been facing calamities since 1988. It's all over. When a disaster comes, we become destitute. I try to get back to normal life in a few years. In between comes another disaster. This is how life goes. If there was a strong embankment, we would not have this problem".

This man's experience, and those of many tens of thousands like him, highlight the link between hazards and people's exposure and vulnerability to them. The need for more inclusive and proactive measures that build the resilience of those regularly exposed to similar hazards is also clear.



A family takes refuge in their house flooded by the rains after the flow of the Wawa River rose with the passage of hurricane Iota in Bilwi, Nicaragua. © UNICEF/UN0372378/Ocon/AFP-Services, November 2020.

Box 2: Including displaced children in local and national education systems[358]

Education is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of disaster and displacement. It is often the first casualty in times of hardship and tends to be neglected in the aftermath of displacement. Education received only 2.6 per cent of humanitarian funding in 2019 and is routinely the most underfunded sector in crisis appeals.

Displaced families may flee to locations that are simply too far from schools for children to continue their learning, while those within reach of facilities may find them damaged, destroyed or used as shelters. Schools that are able to operate are often short of teachers and unable to absorb new students. These issues, however, tend not to be considered in planning processes. New evidence begins to reveal the extent to which displacement disrupts education. We estimate that more than 4.4 million displaced children between the ages of five and 14 are at risk of having their education affected in sub-Saharan Africa. This figure is likely to be conservative, given that 127 million school-age children and young people are not in education in countries affected by crises worldwide.

Climate change is making disasters more frequent and intense, which means education systems need to be adapted and made more resilient to ensure schooling continues during crises. This requires an enabling institutional, policy and financing framework to support planning, financing and coordination. Examples of promising approaches exist, such as crisis-sensitive planning (CSP) and integrating climate risk and vulnerability assessments into education sector analyses, plans and policies.

CSP involves analysing the risks that conflict, natural hazards and climate change pose to education, and identifying measures to reduce their occurrence and impact. Climate change projections should be considered, for example, when choosing sites for new schools to ensure they are not built in areas likely to be affected by rising sea levels, floods or storms. Temporary or mobile education facilities are an effective way of providing schooling in the aftermath of disasters. Existing practices that consider regular population movements such as those of nomadic families may offer useful insights into further opportunities and challenges.

Integrating climate risk and vulnerability assessments improves information on vulnerable populations at risk of displacement. Education policies and sector plans should detail strategies at the school, community and system level to prevent, prepare for and mitigate crises. This might include setting up comprehensive school safety programmes and contingency plans. Education has an important role to play in addressing social inequalities, even in emergencies, if responses to displacement go beyond re-establishing the previous "normality". It can also play a role in healing the psychosocial trauma of displacement.

Spotlight - Disasters, displacement and disability

About a billion people, or 15 per cent of the world's population, have a disability.[359] Higher poverty rates among people with disabilities and inadequate housing can heighten their exposure and vulnerability to hazards, and may increase their risk of displacement.[360] New injuries sustained during a disaster and difficulties in accessing healthcare and essential services during displacement also contribute to high rates of disability among IDPs.[361]

People with disabilities face unique challenges when a disaster strikes.[362] An assessment after cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in 2015 found they were more than twice as likely to suffer storm-related injuries than those without disabilities.[363] Limited knowledge of evacuation processes, a lack of accessible evacuation shelters and delays in fleeing because of functional impairments were all cited as contributing factors.[364] People with disabilities may also become separated from their carers and assistive devices when they flee.[365]

Some may not be able to leave their communities at all.[366] They may not survive the disaster as a result, or they may be forced to live amid the damage and destruction left behind.[367] Many of those who died during the 2018 Camp wildfire in California were older people and those with disabilities left behind when others evacuated.[368]

Discrimination, lack of information and physical and financial barriers may make it difficult for IDPs with disabilities to access housing, livelihoods, healthcare and education. A study conducted three years after hurricane Katrina in the US found many were still struggling with such issues.[369] They also face significant protection risks.[370] Young women with disabilities living in displacement camps and other collective settings after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and trafficking.[371]

The Sendai Framework calls for a disability perspective to be integrated into disaster management, and signs of more inclusive approaches are emerging.[372] A village early warning system in the Philippines incorporates sound and visual signals to improve accessibility.[373] Humanitarian and government agencies in Nepal have received training on disability-inclusive evacuation shelters, and a local disaster risk management office in Indonesia has set up a dedicated disability inclusion unit.[374]

Programmes have also been developed to strengthen the resilience of people with disabilities, which helps to reduce their risk of displacement. Targeted livelihood support in flood-prone areas of northern Bangladesh has enabled them to buy materials to raise the level of their homes and protect their water supplies.[375] A project in Niger seeks to enhance their food security in drought-affected areas, providing the means for them to stay in their communities.[376]

Better data is needed to improve such efforts and illuminate how intersecting factors, including age and sex, affect IDPs' experiences of displacement.[377] Tools and guidance already exist to improve data collection.[378] IOM's DTM in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan covers people's disability status.[379] Given that IDPs with disabilities are best placed to identify their needs and the support they require, ensuring their meaningful participation in planning, risk management and data collection is essential to foster more inclusive approaches.

Two women displaced by heavy flooding assist another through a hedge at a food distribution centre in Afgoye, Somalia, where over 5,000 IDPs were given food. © OCHA/AMISOM/Tobin Jones, August 2013.

Small-scale displacement crises should not be ignored

More than half of the new disaster displacements we recorded worldwide in 2020 were triggered by just ten disaster events. That does not mean, however, that small, localised displacement events should be ignored, because they too can undermine development gains and set back the wellbeing and potential of individuals and communities.

Such events are far more common than large disasters but tend to be underreported. Investment by IDMC in systematically accounting for them over the past three years has shown how extensive they are in scale and geographical scope. Around half of the events we detected in 2020 triggered fewer than 100 displacements (see figure 48).

The drivers and impacts of many small-scale displacements are related more to vulnerability and exposure than the hazards themselves. Last year's spring floods in the UK are a good example. Some of the 40 people evacuated in the county of Kent in March were fleeing flooding for the second time in four months. Some of them had already evacuated twice before, including over Christmas in 2019 and during storm Dennis in mid-February 2020. Recurring displacement of this kind highlights how exposed such households are.[380]

Given that hazard intensity plays a lesser role in such events, however, their scale and impacts can be significantly reduced by improving land use regulations, social protection and insurance coverage, which lessen people's exposure and vulnerability.[381]

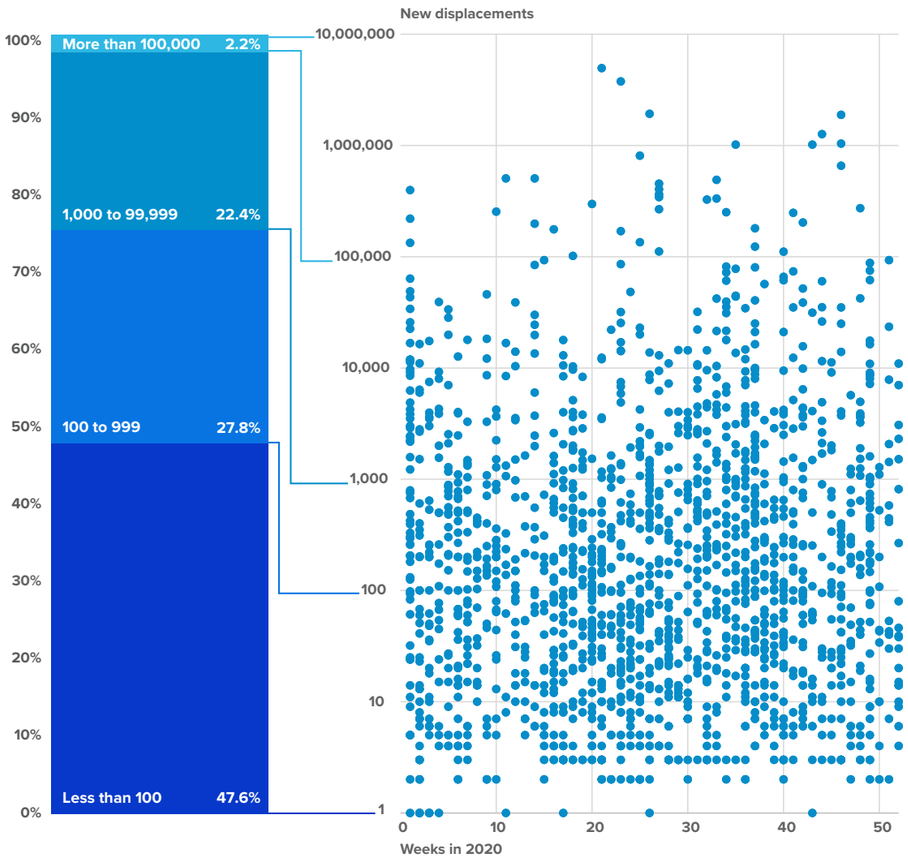


Figure 48: Number of displacement events recorded in IDMC's global displacement database (GIDD) in 2020

Converging drivers and compound events generate new risk

People's ability to move is a key component of their resilience, allowing them to get out of harm's way and continue to access the resources they need to cope with and recover from disasters. When they move, however, they leave behind assets, security and community ties, only to face new risks in displacement. Their flight is, in effect, a trade-off in which they move from a known "risk-scape" to a less familiar one.

Many IDPs have little alternative but to move to marginal areas that are highly exposed to hazards. Such settlements tend to be poorly planned with sub-standard housing, few if any basic services and little attention given to risk reduction. These factors heighten their vulnerability and risk of further displacement.

In Colombia, for example, where conflict displacement has driven the growth of informal urban settlements in hazard-prone areas, landslides triggered secondary displacements in Putumayo department in March 2017.[382] Similarly, people displaced by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti faced recurring flooding and landslides in at least 157 displacement sites, including some formal, planned camps.[383] Around 34,800 people were still living in displacement there as of January 2019.[384]

There were many examples in 2020 of new disasters forcing people already displaced by a previous one to flee again. Flooding in Somalia triggered around 250,000 secondary displacements from overcrowded camps, and many people who fled torrential rains and severe flash floods in Yemen had previously been displaced by conflict or drought.[385] The rains also led to a breach of the al-Roone dam, and the run-off flooded sites hosting thousands of IDPs in al-Tahseen and Souq al-Lill.[386]

Many situations involving compound risks and impacts, including secondary displacement, stem from an earlier displacement event that has still not been fully resolved. An assessment conducted in Mozambique in October 2020 identified more than 81,000 people still displaced after cyclone Idai in April 2019 and 12,000 as a result of floods earlier in 2020.[387] Many were living in resettlement sites, for the most part away from flood-prone areas and so deemed more suitable for habitation.[388] The sites, however, were hard hit by rains as early as December 2019 and again in 2020.[389] They were also affected by tropical storm Chalane in December 2020 and cyclone Eloise in January 2021.[390] In each case some IDPs lost shelters and assets, and Eloise triggered secondary displacement.

Displaced people's choice of destination may increase their displacement risk in several ways. Mogadishu is the most common destination for IDPs fleeing rural conflict and drought in Somalia, but their arrival adds strain to already stretched infrastructure and services, inflaming clan tensions and triggering further displacement.[391]

Box 3: Understanding and addressing urban displacement risk

Many major and expanding cities are located in hazard-prone areas such as deltas, estuaries, coastlines and seismic zones.[392] Displacement risk associated with disasters and climate change is often concentrated in urban areas as a result.[393] People who flee to such cities also often end up living in substandard housing on marginal land that is exposed to hazards.[394]

There is mounting national and international concern about how to address these issues and, in particular, to adapt risk reduction and adaptation approaches to better suit cities with limited resources and large marginalised populations exposed to natural hazards and potential climate change impacts. Better understanding and assessing a city's particular displacement risk constitutes an important first step.

Given that hazards and climate change impacts are experienced locally, local and provincial governments are best placed to reduce risk by aligning climate change adaptation policies with investment in urban development. They are also best positioned to coordinate cross-sector responses to disasters.

A consensus, however, is still to be established on the dimensions of urban displacement risk and how to address it in disaster response and resilience programming. Nor do local governments always have the administrative capacity and financial resources to assess current and future risks and invest in their reduction.[395]

Basic municipal or district risk assessments, such as the one we developed in 2020, enable national and local governments, urban authorities, aid providers and development agencies to establish a common understanding of local displacement risk. They also serve as a convening tool to coordinate efforts across various departments and a first step toward mobilising much-needed resources.[396]

Moving in all its forms is essentially about risk management. Whether it involves evacuees sheltering from a cyclone, IDPs fleeing conflict, pastoralists practising transhumance, migrants seeking alternative income sources or even members of communities relocated out of areas at risk, through their movement people seek to reduce actual and potential impacts of hazards in their areas of origin.[397] Whether they are successful relies to a large extent on whether the risk management strategy is truly risk-informed.

Immobility can be forced but also a matter of choice

When a disaster strikes, not all members of a community necessarily flee. Some may be unable to move even if their livelihoods have been disrupted and their homes damaged or destroyed. "In-situ displacement" can occur for a variety of reasons, including poverty, disability, risk perception and a range of cultural factors and individual preferences.[398]

There are also many situations of "acquiescent" immobility.[399] These are often not considered in adaptation planning, disaster management systems or projections of demographic futures. Pacific islanders faced with the threat of losing territory to sea level rise and increased disaster risk may nevertheless choose to stay.[400] People considered trapped after disasters in Japan may in fact have chosen not to respond to early warnings and advice to evacuate.[401] Understanding the factors that influence people's decision to stay or go, and their choice of time and location, is vital and recognises individuals as agents of their own destiny.[402]

In the Somali region of Ethiopia displacement takes place among pastoralists and agro-pastoralists unable or unwilling to continue or return to a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. Research conducted after the last major drought in the Horn of Africa in 2017 shows that when these communities have lost their livelihoods, mainly livestock and grazing areas, they no longer have the choice of moving.[403] In the Philippines, lack of financial resources and limited social networks prevented people from moving out of hazard-prone regions, keeping them in a situation of high exposure and vulnerability to displacement risk. Here displacement manifests as constrained mobility. Rather than being forced to move, they are unable to move freely again once displaced.[404]

Examples from around the world show that a combination of environmental and social tipping points have to be reached before people either decide to migrate or are forced to flee.[405] Perceptions of risk, individual and cultural preferences, attachment to a community and place, aspirations and expectations of areas of destination, all play a role. A better understanding of these factors and the decisions they inform is required to better support both people forced to flee and those who have to stay behind.[406]

Puntland, Somalia, is a destination area for many IDPs fleeing conflict and violence from the south of the country. The area was hit by heavy rains and flooding in April/May 2020 leading to secondary displacement for a number of IDPs. NRC/Muhktar Nuur, April 2020.

Disaster displacement and the role of climate change

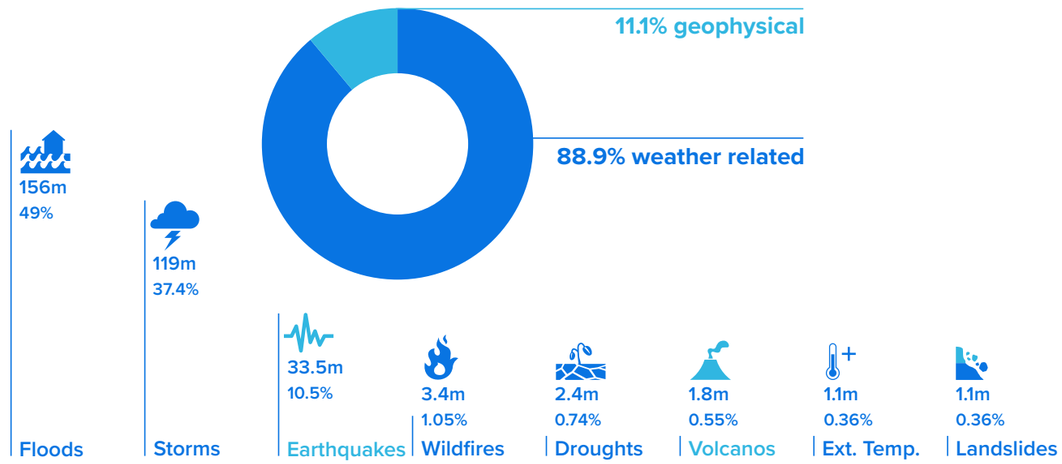
Damaged classroom of a school in the community of El Tenedor, Guatemala, after the flooding and the overflow of the Motagua River due to hurricanes Eta and Iota.
© UNICEF/UN0403886/Billy/AFP-Services, January 2021.

Despite decades of building evidence to the contrary, it is still a common perception that disasters are natural and something that can be prepared for but not prevented. That addressing the exposure and vulnerability of people and assets plays a vital role tends to be overlooked and approaches often focus on structural mitigation measures and hazard responses as a result.[407]

The role that climate change plays in driving disaster displacement is also often seen as a direct one, but evidence does not support this hypothesis. Climate change has been proven to make certain hazards in some regions more frequent and intense. Extreme weather events such as floods, storms and drought account for more than 89 per cent of all disaster displacement (see figure 49).[408] However, not all weather-related disasters and their associated displacement are directly related to climate change, and non-extreme events can also trigger disasters and displacement.[409] It is certainly plausible that climate is driving increased displacement, but it has not been convincingly quantified yet.

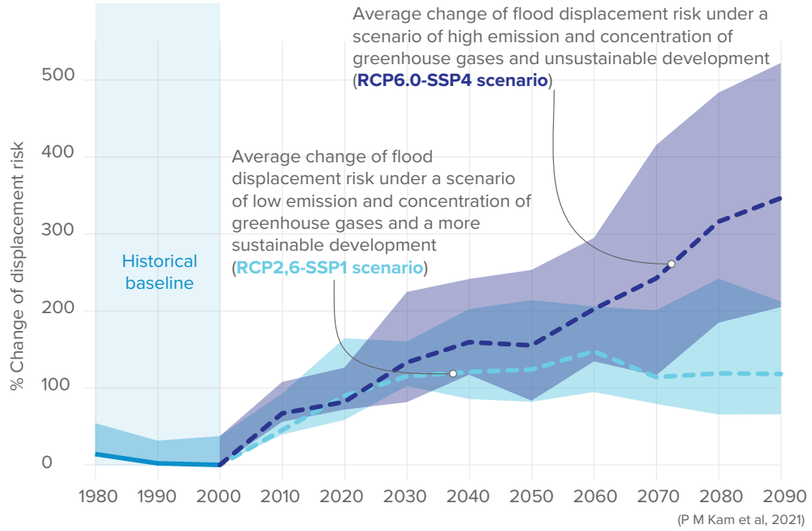
There is broad agreement among scientists that climate change in combination with other factors is likely to increase future displacement.[410] Research shows that even if the world's population were to remain at its current level, the risk of flood-related displacement would increase by more than 50 per cent with each degree of global warming (see figure 50).[411]

Other studies suggest that extreme weather events, lying outside all model predictions, could occur with impacts beyond what has been seen or is expected to date.[412] It is important to note that not only do all these models have high levels of uncertainty, but they are also likely to produce underestimates. Disaster displacement is the result of a complex process with many drivers. A multitude of demographic, historical, political, social and economic factors determine whether people can withstand the impacts of a hazard or are forced to leave their homes. Climate change interacts with all of them, not necessarily triggering displacement directly, but as an additional stressor when natural and social resources and the capacities of humans and systems are already stretched.



Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Figure 49: New displacements by disasters: breakdown by hazards (2008-2020)



What is this graph showing?

This graph shows changes in flood displacement risk compared to historical baseline data. Shaded areas show the different scenarios of flood displacement risk in response to variations in greenhouse gas concentrations, global hydrological systems and social and economic development pathways. Dashed lines show the average values.

Key definitions:

Historical Baseline: The models are tested by simulating the historical baseline calculated with flood hazard frequency and intensity, from 1976 to 2005, and population data of 2000.

Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP): Describe 21st century pathways in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and atmospheric concentrations, other air pollutant emissions and land use change, as per the IPCC.

Shared Socio-economic Pathways (SSP): Describe scenarios of future socioeconomic and demographic conditions.

RCP6.0-SSP4 scenario: Means a high greenhouse gas emissions rate with a highly unequal development path.

RCP2.6-SSP1 scenario: Means stronger greenhouse gas mitigation efforts where the world shifts towards a more sustainable development path. This scenario aims to keep global warming below 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures.

Figure 50: Changes in flood displacement risk considering different climate and developmental scenarios

Nineteen of the warmest years on record have occurred in the past two decades. This has coincided with an increase in the damage and losses weather events cause, but not with the highest number of displacements they trigger. It is currently not possible to establish a direct correlation between climate change and displacement, not least because disaster displacement data has only been available for a little over a decade.

Because the climate varies naturally from year to year, climatologists use standard 30-year averages of temperature, precipitation, humidity and wind speed. These are called “climate normals”.[413] It may also be useful to think about climate anomalies and compare them with the displacement data available. Several anomalies in 2020, such as cyclone Gati in Somalia and the heatwave in Australia, triggered significant displacements, but not all extreme events did (see figure 51).

Climate change can be understood as a displacement trigger in its own right, when coastal land is lost to sea level rise and coastal erosion; a visible aggravator, when livelihoods are eroded by soil degradation and loss of ecosystem services; and a hidden aggravator that increases the intensity of storms and shifts rainfall patterns that result in floods. It can also intensify the negative impacts of displacement.

A deeper and shared understanding is needed of the multi-layered and interdependent nature of the risks people face and how climate change shapes displacement patterns. We need to build on the growing recognition that good practices exist to create a broader range of choices for those at risk of displacement or already displaced, share them and transfer lessons.

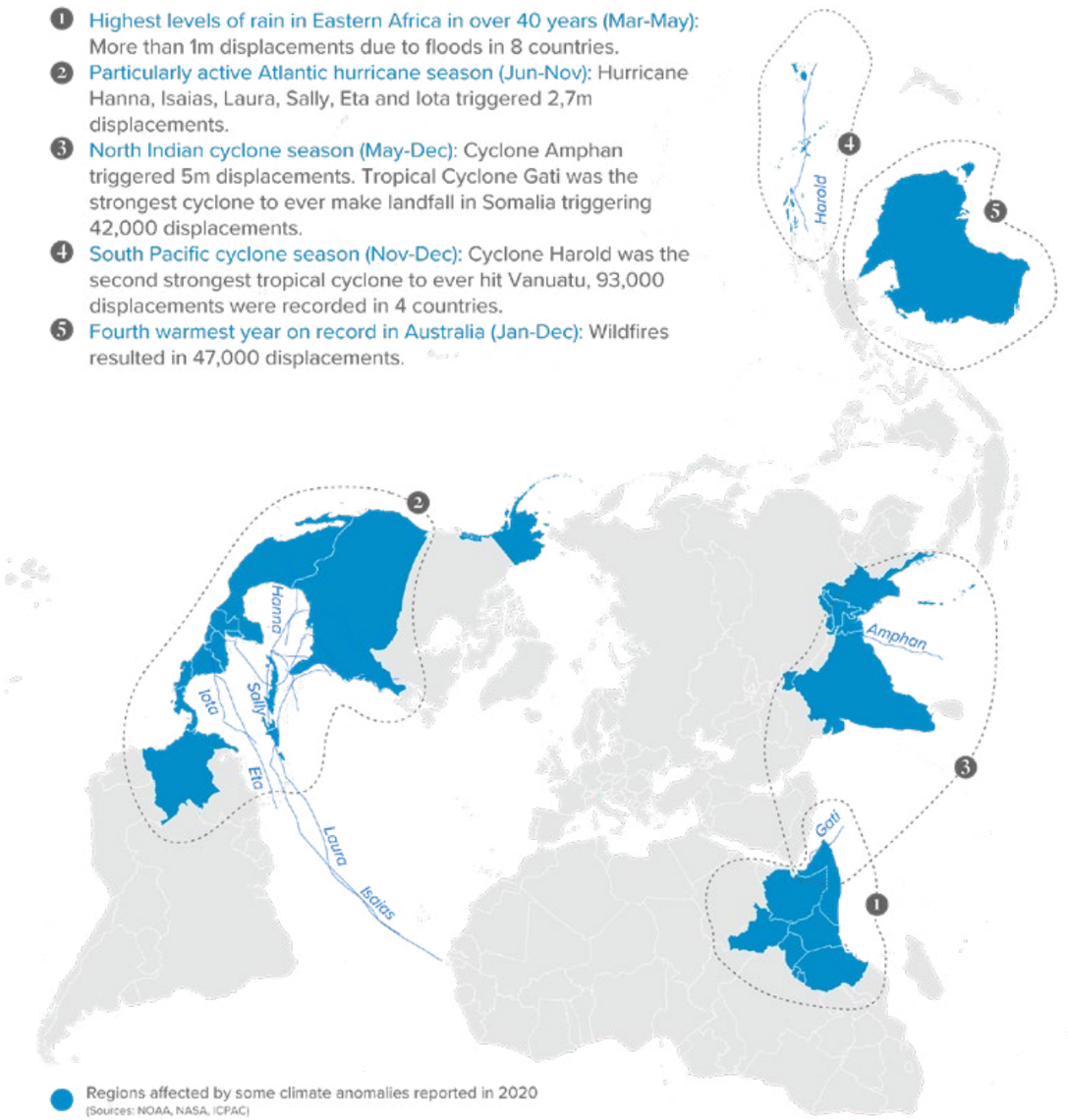


Figure 51: Significant climate anomalies and displacement events in 2020

Slow-onset events and internal displacement

Aerial view of drought-affected land in Somalia. Since 2017, the country has experienced consecutive seasons of drought and the mid-year harvest of 2019 was the worst harvest since 1995. NRC/Ingrid Prestetun, September 2019.

The slow-onset effects of climate change, such as desertification, glacial retreat, increasing temperatures, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, ocean acidification, salinisation and sea level rise are becoming more apparent each year.[414]

They also lead to displacement, but the scale of the phenomenon is unknown because it is particularly difficult to monitor.[415] Slow-onset processes combine with socio-economic and governance factors to set the stage for specific triggers of displacement. These include loss of land, livelihoods, food or water, and impacts of sudden-onset disasters made more frequent and intense by climate change.[416]

Evidence is beginning to emerge, however, that confirms the issue as a growing concern and points to ways to address it.[417] The global mean sea level is rising, and is expected to cause soil salinisation, saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers, damage to coastal infrastructure, including roads and ports, and loss of territory.[418] The degradation of coastal ecosystems also reduces protection against storms, tsunamis and other sudden-onset events, leaving people more exposed and vulnerable and increasing their risk of displacement.

The issue is particularly pertinent for small island developing states, given their low elevation, limited territory and dependence on natural resources and agriculture for subsistence. As saltwater intrusion threatens food and water security, and regular floods and encroachment of the sea affect towns and villages, whole communities may have to consider permanent relocation to higher ground or larger islands.[419]

Soil degradation and increasing temperatures, which reduce its moisture content, lead to nutrient loss and erosion, destroying farming and pastoralist livelihoods.[420] Nomadic pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities are increasingly being displaced from their traditional areas to nearby small towns and peri-urban areas.[421] When such factors combine with drought, it can make their livelihoods irretrievable.[422]

Seawater intrusion and salinisation inhibit seed germination and plant growth, which reduces coastal crop yields and may make arable land unproductive. They also contaminate drinking water sources, undermining people's food and water security and increasing their displacement risk.[423] Glacial melt and retreat, loss of biodiversity and land and forest degradation decrease ecosystem and provisioning services vital for human survival, pushing people to move to areas where they are available.[424] Most of these slow-onset events also contribute to sudden-onset disaster outcomes by either influencing their frequency and intensity or shaping their impact on land, assets and people.[425]

As slow-onset events unfold, however, their impacts and outcomes are not only shaped by the hazards themselves. They are largely determined by people's vulnerability and the effectiveness of investments in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development. For example, mangrove forests and healthy wetlands can reduce the loss of land and the impact of storm surges on hazard-prone coastlines, thereby protecting homes and reducing the risk of displacement.[426] They provide water and food security, increasing the resilience of coastal communities. In addition, effective crisis response and reconstruction can significantly reduce the duration of disaster displacement and the associated negative impacts on livelihoods, health and education.

More often than not, slow-onset events combine with other climate triggers or a range of socioeconomic factors to generate critical thresholds for displacement. A comparison between different countries and contexts yields valuable lessons about these thresholds and the complex decision-making processes related to displacement (see spotlight page 93).

Spotlight - Critical thresholds for disaster displacement in India, Peru and Tanzania

Climate and environmental change are undermining people's livelihoods in India, Peru and Tanzania.[427] The contexts are significantly different, but there are similarities in how the interplay of environmental and social factors determines displacement outcomes and highlights possible interventions.

Climate impacts deplete the resources needed to sustain agricultural production and meet basic living standards in places with few alternative livelihood options. Over time this leads to critical thresholds at which people become displaced or forcibly immobile. This in turn fragments communities and erodes their sociocultural fabric. The severity of hazards, their speed of onset, households' dependency on agriculture and their lack of local coping options are the main factors that determine climate-displacement dynamics.

Erratic rainfall in the Indian state of Uttarakhand disrupts traditional agriculture. When the disruption becomes severe enough, it triggers displacement. Melting glaciers have caused water shortages in Peru, driving people from rural to urban areas. Water is also becoming more scarce, however, in growing cities in the Andes and on the coast. Successive shocks including drought and floods have undermined people's livelihoods in Tanzania, forcing some into displacement and others into immobility.

In all three cases, increasing environmental stress has combined with structural inequalities to lead to situations in which individuals or households decide they have no choice but to move to ensure the survival of themselves, their family and their assets. Without appropriate adaptation measures, including facilitating internal migration, worsening climate impacts make such situations more likely.

A critical mass of people deciding to move may in turn lead larger groups to follow suit as social and community structures break down.[428] Displacement thresholds are closely linked to the concept of uninhabitability, both in terms of an area's environmental carrying capacity and people's perceptions of what is habitable.[429] Understanding the limitations of adaptation is vital. In all three cases above, a business-as-usual emissions scenario would lead to cascading humanitarian crises, driving mass displacement from uninhabitable areas and leaving many others exposed to shocks and unable to move.

View of the desert against the sky during sunset in Shillong, India. EyeEm/Rajan Dutta via Getty Images.

When conflict and disaster collide

A flooded area in Kafr Losin Camp for internally displaced people in northwest Syria, following some of the heaviest winter storms of the season. The rain flooded tents and cut off roads leading to camps. © UNICEF/UN0405685/ Akacha, January 2021.

Many of today's crises are shaped by a complex mix of climate and environmental change, disaster risk, conflict, fragility and displacement. Around 80 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa live in fragile situations, as defined by the OECD.[430] Ninety-five per cent of the new conflict displacements recorded worldwide occurred in countries that are vulnerable or highly vulnerable to climate change impacts (see figure 52).

The links between these factors are intricate and the pathways they take differ (see figure 53). Climate change and the overexploitation of natural resources may aggravate instability and conflict, which in turn may trigger displacement. Conflict may prevent people from moving. Climate change may increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and force people to move, which may reduce pressure on existing resources but increase tensions with host communities. Displacement triggered by conflict and disasters may also increase disaster risk in destination areas.

Studies provide evidence for some of these connections and pathways, for example how slow-onset processes such as drought relate to conflict risk.[431] The evidence does not conclusively support the notion of direct causal links between climate change impacts, disasters, displacement and conflict risk though.[432] In fact, analysis conducted in eastern Africa shows that drought does not automatically polarise different groups or reduce social cohesion.[433] More attention needs to be paid, however, to factors such as natural resource dependency and demographic composition that may increase or reduce the impacts of climate-related hazards on societies.[434]

In situations where people's resilience to shocks is already low, slow and sudden-onset hazards are likely to deepen their poverty. They may also increase inequalities and reduce the availability of scarce resources.[435] Rural communities in Sudan have been badly affected by drought, floods and locust infestations, which have reduced the grazing land available for herders. As they move closer to agricultural areas in search of pasture, tensions with farmers have increased, triggering conflict and displacement.[436]

There is much need for nuance in such analyses. Syria's civil war has been linked to the impacts of climate change on water availability and drought in the region. In reality though, it is driven by a range of complex factors from religious, social and political tensions to deteriorating economic conditions and grievances, particularly among young people.[437] Climate change also appears to interact with conflict dynamics in the Lake Chad region. It is not the sole or even primary driver, but its impacts still need to be understood and addressed as part of stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts.[438]

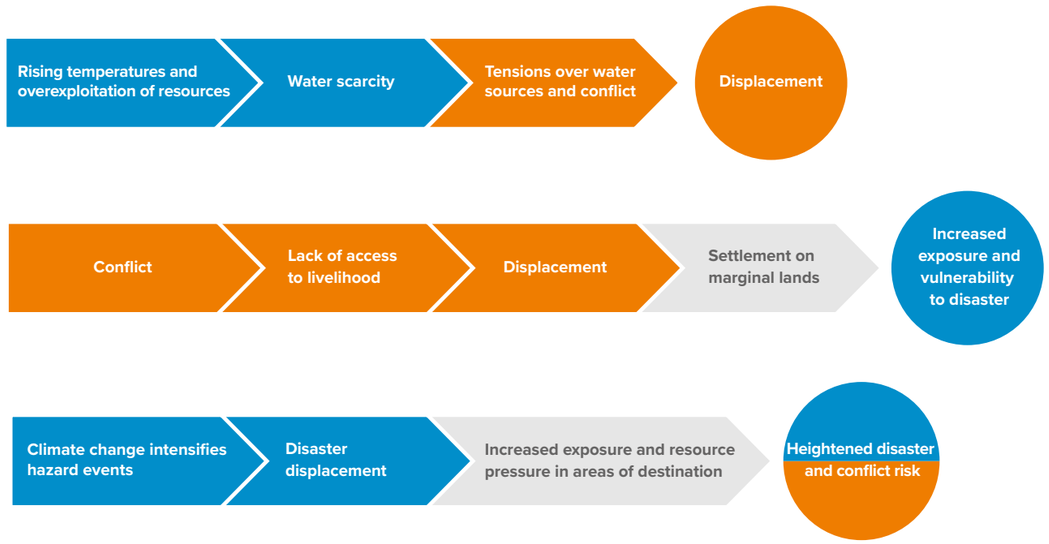


Figure 52: Example pathways in the relationship between climate change, disasters, conflict and displacement

95% of conflict new displacements in 2020 happened in countries that have high or very high vulnerability to climate change according to the 2019 ND-GAIN Index.

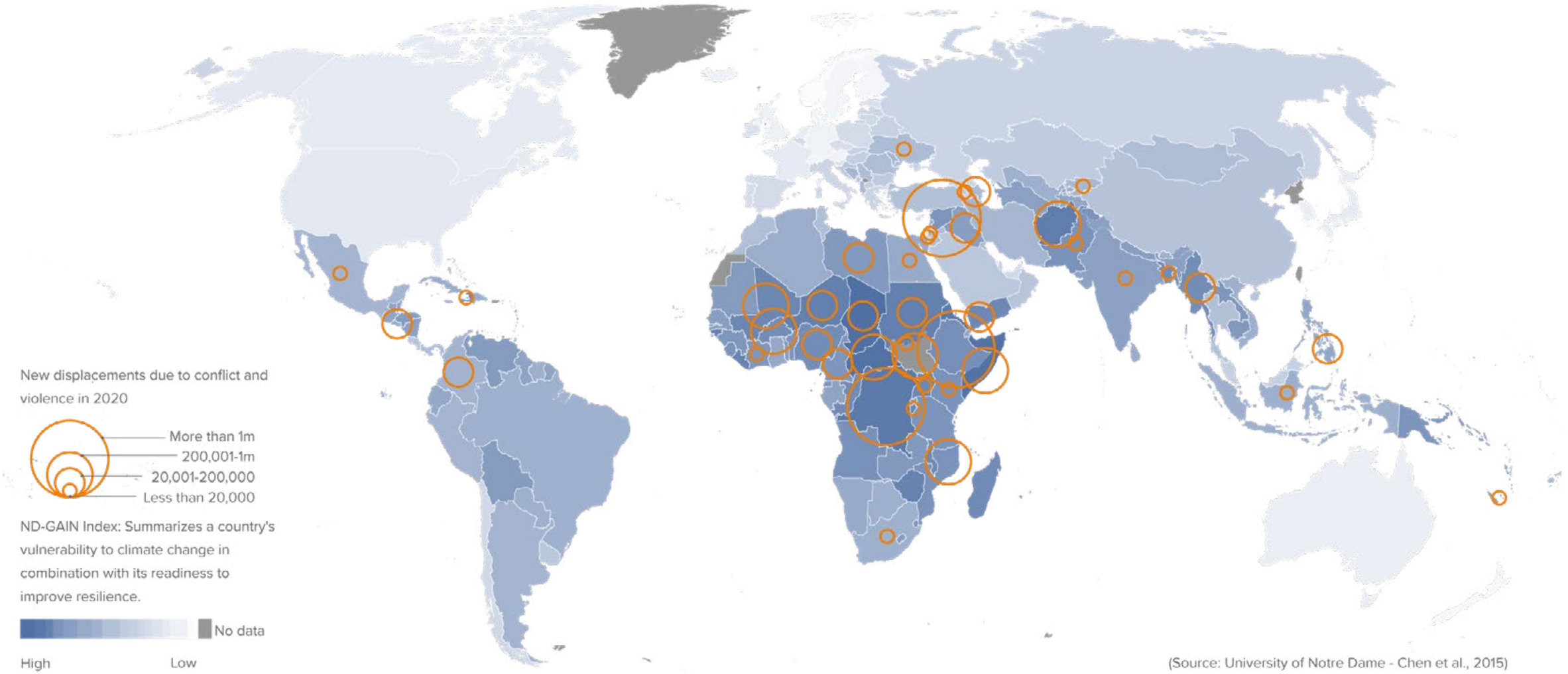
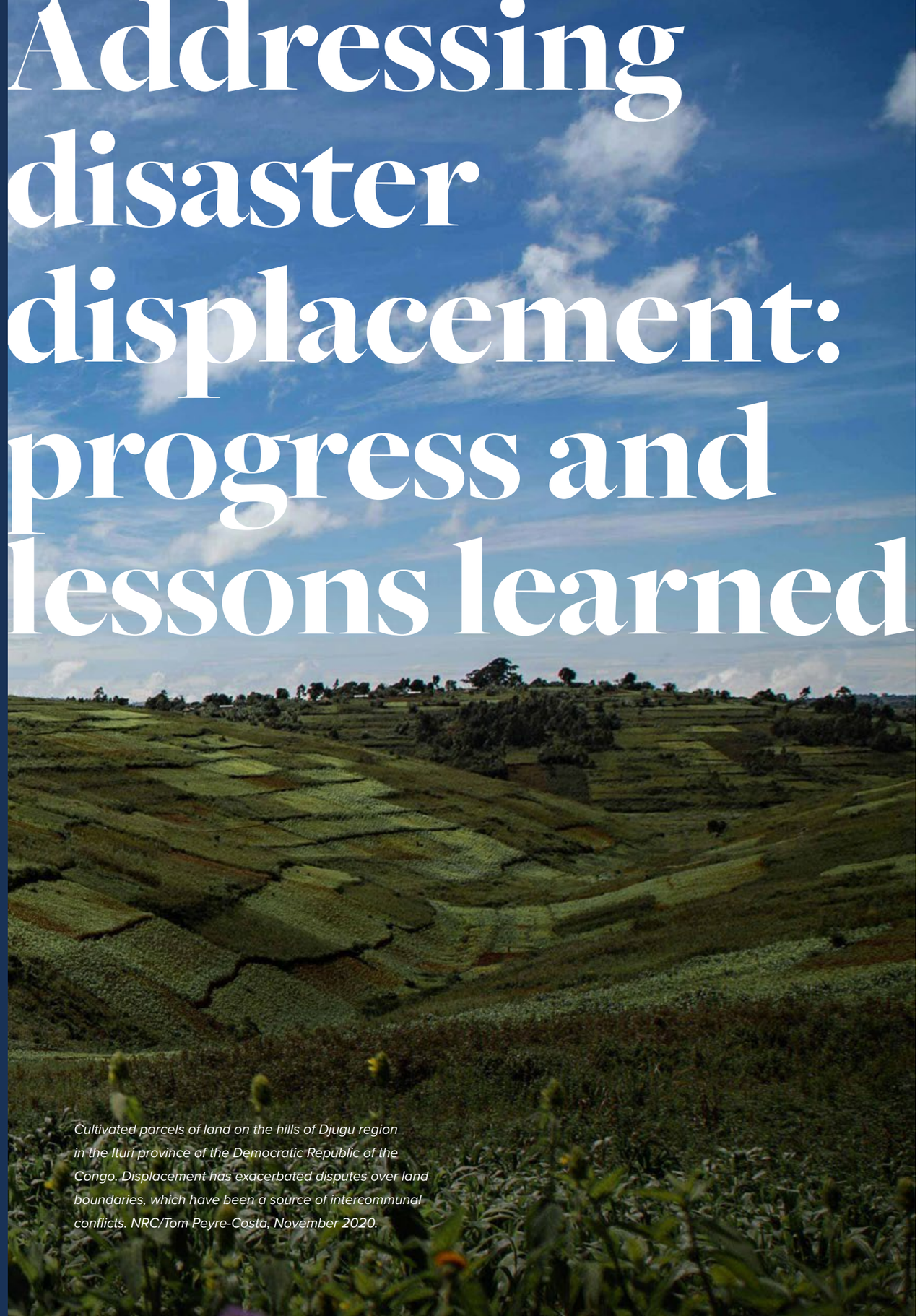


Figure 53: Number of new conflict displacements and countries' vulnerability according to the GAIN Index

When disasters strike camps and informal urban settlements, IDPs and refugees are often pushed into secondary displacement, potentially trapping them in a downward spiral of vulnerability and risk.[439] Floods more than any other hazard trigger this type of displacement, often in situations that are already protracted. Flooding in Syria's northern governorate of Idlib has inundated IDPs' tents a number of times in recent years, forcing them to flee for a second and sometimes even a third or fourth time. This happened most recently in January 2021.[440]

Recent events in Yemen's Marib governorate also shed light on the overlap between conflict displacement and flood risk. Largely spared from conflict until recently, Marib was home to around 770,000 IDPs as of March 2019.[441] Hostilities, however, flared in the governorate in early 2020. They triggered new and secondary displacements, worsened IDPs' living conditions and heightened the risks they faced. IDPs then also bore the brunt of flooding in March, April and July.[442]

Addressing disaster displacement: progress and lessons learned



Cultivated parcels of land on the hills of Djugu region in the Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Displacement has exacerbated disputes over land boundaries, which have been a source of intercommunal conflicts. NRC/Tom Peyre-Costa, November 2020.

Disasters do not automatically translate into large-scale movements of people.[443] Nor is the notion regularly presented in the media, global risk polls and some studies that climate change will result in mass displacement and significant new international migration flows corroborated by science.[444] Despite the lack of evidence, migration policies and approaches to displacement tend to focus on deterring human mobility. However, a number of global and regional frameworks recognise that sustainable development, peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction are more effective ways to mitigate displacement and risk. Recent developments at all levels from the local to the global make the case for more investment in long-term resilience building and improving the crossover between humanitarian responses and development efforts.

Human mobility in the face of environmental change is an adaptation strategy as old as mankind and has always been part of human and socioeconomic development.[445] As such, migration needs to be embraced as part of adaptation planning to foster sustainable development and wellbeing, and to reduce future displacement.

International policy processes and cooperation are making slow progress, but moving in the right direction

Disaster displacement has attracted considerable attention lately, but the issue was largely absent from public and policy discourse as recently as the turn of this century. First acknowledged in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 1998 and then at the regional level in the Kampala Convention in 2009, the phenomenon has since featured in a number of international policy processes and regional consultations and frameworks (see figure 54, page 102).[446] These have laid the ground for more ambitious discourse on reducing displacement risk and ensuring support and protection for IDPs.

Links between climate change and displacement were first formally recognised at the global level at global level at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP16) in 2010. The Cancun Adaptation Framework calls on parties to undertake measures "with regard to climate change induced displacement".[447] The state-led Nansen Initiative and its successor, the Platform on Disaster Displacement, consequently increased the visibility of the issue in international policy processes.[448]

The Sendai Framework does not fully recognise the role of climate change in driving disaster displacement, but it includes provisions that could be the basis for concrete action if states and their partners are willing.[449] The recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement (TFD) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), established in the follow-up negotiations to the Paris Agreement, and those of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) also include far-reaching provisions on climate displacement, including prevention and durable solutions.[450]

The GCM in particular presents an important opportunity to consolidate ideas already mooted but not yet clearly spelled out about the role of climate change in disaster displacement, and to close gaps in the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.[451] Contrary to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which explicitly excludes climate change as a driver of refugee movements, the GCM includes strong provisions on disaster displacement. Its preamble affirms that the compact rests among other things on UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai framework.[452]

The establishment of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement is another step toward consolidating different frameworks and processes. Its terms of reference task the Panel with devising recommendations to advance "collaboration between humanitarian, development, and where appropriate climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and peace actors [...] in addressing and reducing internal displacement".[453] The Panel is due to present its report to the secretary general in September, and is expected to give prominence to the issue of prevention, offering another opportunity to advocate for an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and migration.

Given the soft law nature of all of these frameworks and their only recent adoption, implementation is still to get off the ground. There is cause for hope, however, in developments on policies related to human mobility more broadly at the regional level (see spotlight, page 103).

A woman gathers water from the main river in Uvira, South Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Torrential rains in April 2020 caused the Mulongwe river to break its banks in Uvira city, which led to flooding and mass displacement. © UNICEF/UN0402424/Brown, November 2020.

1998 **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**

Define IDPs as persons forced to flee, inter alia, in the context of natural or human-made disasters

2009 **Kampala Convention**

Explicitly recognises climate change as a driver of displacement in the Africa region

2010 **Cancun Adaptation Framework**

First global framework to recognise links between climate change and displacement

2012 **Nansen Initative**

Launched by Switzerland and Norway as a state-led platform to improve the protection of persons displaced across borders by disasters and climate change

2015 **Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030**

Contains important provisions on human mobility in the context of disasters

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Includes strong references to climate change and migration, but do not explictly link the two issues

Paris Agreement

Confirms the establishment of the Task Force on Displacement (TFD)

2016 **Platform on Disaster Displacement**

Succeeds Nansen Initiative

2018 **Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees**

Includes dedicated sections on migration and displacement in the context of climate change and disasters

2019 **High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement**

Includes disaster displacement in its plan of work

Figure 54: Timeline of international frameworks and milestones in addressing disaster displacement and human mobility associated with climate change

Spotlight - Lessons from regional cooperation

Successfully addressing climate-related human mobility requires sustained political commitment and adequate capacities and resources at various levels.[454] Examples from from three regions – the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Horn of Africa – show how regional policy frameworks and migration protocols can improve management of the phenomenon.[455]

The examples outlined here show that there is no blueprint for how to achieve progress in addressing climate-related human mobility. The requirement rather is for tailored collaborations between national entities willing to blaze the trail and regional organisations that provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and development of joint policies. In all three regions, those involved recognise the value of inter-institutional cooperation and cross-sectoral exchange through dedicated working groups.

The Pacific

The Pacific Island Forum (PIF) member states and regional bodies developed the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017 – 2030, which addresses climate change and disaster risk management in an integrated way.[456] It calls on PIF member states to protect people at risk of climate-related displacement and develop national strategies on climate change and disaster-related relocation. Implementation is supported by a technical working group on human mobility that brings regional organisations, governments, development partners and civil society together in forum for the exchange of new research, initiatives and opportunities for cooperation.

Regional frameworks provide strategic guidance, but they depend on implementation at the national level. Fiji's systematic approach to dealing with climate-related relocations serves as a good example. Given its susceptibility to hazards such as sea level rise, flooding and cyclones, the country is reviewing the permanent relocation of infrastructure and whole communities. Official assessments suggest more than 80 villages may need to be relocated.[457]

The Caribbean

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) adopted the Revised Treaty of Basseterre in 2011, permitting citizens of member states to move, reside and work freely throughout the region. In the aftermath of hurricane Maria in 2017, the treaty enabled people from Dominica to move to neighbouring islands without any bureaucratic hurdles. Maria, however, also shed light on some challenges. The lack of official registration resulted in insufficient data on how many people had moved and where. The true number of people who migrated because Maria remains unknown.

To address climate-related human mobility in a structured way, the OECS Commission has introduced a strategic plan for 2020-2023 that defines priority areas and concrete activities.[458] Local consultations with three affected communities and four scenario workshops were used as a starting point to develop ideas for the plan. The process is an example of how a regional institution can approach the nexus of climate change and human (im)mobility systematically. Close cooperation with member states will also be required though, given they are responsible for implementation.

The Horn of Africa

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) endorsed a free movement protocol in 2020 after years of negotiations.[459] Article 16 calls on member states to allow people displaced by disasters to seek refuge on each other's territory, facilitate their stay and ensure they are able to exercise their rights. The protocol also includes people at risk of displacement, allowing them to move pre-emptively to avoid or mitigate disaster impacts.

IGAD also developed a detailed roadmap for implementation, calling on member states to develop, review and harmonise laws, policies and procedures to facilitate the movement of people displaced by disasters in accordance with article 16.[460] Bilateral arrangements on border areas that are deemed disaster displacement "hotspots" could further expand cooperation between member states in the future.

Identifying the hotspots and anticipating, preventing and responding to disaster displacement requires robust data.[461] The IGAD Climate Predictions and Applications Centre (ICPAC), which provides climate information and early warning services, aims to provide better data on climate-related human mobility to support decision making in policy and operations. The initiative includes methodologies to monitor disaster displacement in the region consistently and risk modelling for sudden and slow-onset events.[462]

An aerial view of a strip of land between the Pacific Ocean and lagoon in Funafuti, Tuvalu. The low-lying island nation has been classified as extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change by the UNDP. Getty Images/Mario Tama, November 2019.

Next step: assessing progress in implementation of national policies

Lessons from around the world are emerging on how countries and communities are investing in reducing disaster displacement risk and finding solutions to climate-related displacement. Comprehensive national laws, policies, strategies and plans are a key marker of a government's engagement on internal displacement.[463]

A growing number of countries recognise disasters as a trigger of displacement. Thirty of the 46 countries in IDMC's 2020 Internal Displacement Index (IDI) have policies in place that do so.[464] Provisions to address the issue, however, vary greatly. Some policies simply mention disaster displacement, while others include comprehensive plans to prevent and respond to it.

Uganda was one of the first countries to adopt a national policy on IDPs, doing so in 2004.[465] It addresses conflict and disaster displacement, and the national disaster policy of 2013 includes the provision of services and support for people displaced and affected by disasters.[466] India updated its national disaster management plan in 2019, and in a potential milestone acknowledged disaster displacement for the first time.[467]

Afghanistan has one of the most comprehensive legal frameworks on internal displacement, including a national policy on IDPs adopted in 2013 and the 2017 Policy Framework for Returnees and IDPs.[468] Together they address both conflict and disaster displacement, but given the immense challenges the country faces implementation has been limited. The same is true for Yemen, which adopted a national strategy on internal displacement in 2013 that covers conflict and disasters.[469]

Box 4: New policy responses to the disaster-conflict nexus

As competition for dwindling natural resources increases, countries have recognised an escalation in conflict among communities grappling with the effects of climate change. Several in Africa have acknowledged displacement as both a cause and a consequence of the interplay between disasters and conflict.[470] The African Union also recently highlighted the importance of better understanding the phenomenon and called for accelerated implementation of the Sendai Framework's target E with a focus on durable solutions.[471]

South Sudan's national adaptation plan recognises that people displaced by conflict are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, and that the convergence of extreme weather events with conflict means climate change adaptation projects need to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding.[472]

A similar shift has begun to take root in the Middle East and North Africa.[473] The Arab strategy for disaster risk reduction, adopted in 2010 and updated in 2018, recognises disaster displacement as an important risk in the region and highlights the need to consider the links between disasters and conflict when developing local and national disaster risk reduction strategies.[474]

The Philippines' National Climate Change Action Plan highlights "the potential for conflict over natural resources, population displacement and migration as the result of sea-level rise or other large-scale biophysical, ecological or social disruptions, and the prospect of increasingly frequent humanitarian disasters as the result of extreme events".[475] It also sets out a long-term process for mapping vulnerable communities, developing resettlement plans in consultation with them and implementing sustainable livelihoods and social protection programmes.

Challenges remain, however, particularly in terms of understanding the complex nature of converging displacement drivers and identifying institutional mechanisms to prevent and respond to them.[476]

Despite the increasing recognition of displacement in disaster risk reduction efforts, many countries have yet to address the phenomenon adequately in their national climate change policies and adaptation plans.[477] Exceptions exist, however, and durable solutions have moved up the agenda in climate adaptation plans.

Most of the 46 countries in the 2020 IDI acknowledge displacement associated with sudden-onset disasters and have climate policies or national adaptation plans in place. Only 27, however, recognise displacement associated with the slow-onset effects of climate change.[478] Around 60 per cent of the policies that recognise displacement include measures to prevent it, but fewer than a third include measures to mitigate its impacts on host communities. Only 15 per cent address durable solutions.

Some good examples stand out. Bangladesh developed a comprehensive policy framework on internal displacement associated with disasters and climate change in 2015. Its national strategy on the issue adopts an integrated approach and includes provisions on return, local integration and resettlement. It includes policy requirements and activities for each durable solution, with support envisaged for housing, livelihoods, community infrastructure and efforts to mitigate potential conflict with host communities.

Ghana has a national migration policy that explicitly covers internal migration, and its national climate change policy of 2013 refers to internal displacement associated with climate change. It also contains provisions to protect IDPs and mitigate consequences for host communities.[479] Peru has a law on climate change that acknowledges environmental drivers of displacement risk.[480] It requires an action plan to prevent and address associated forced migration and mitigate its impacts on host communities.

Box 5: Gender as a cross-cutting issue

Several countries address the gendered impacts of climate-related displacement. Somalia's national adaptation action plan acknowledges the insecurity internally displaced women face, including an increased risk of violence in overcrowded displacement camps. It also identifies women's lack of inclusion in the clan-based systems used to address most issues surrounding natural resources and disasters as depriving them of a voice on such matters.[481]

Bangladesh's climate change and gender action plan of 2013 recognises climate-related displacement and its specific impacts on women.[482]

The Philippines specifies a range of gender-sensitive provisions and actions, including gendered risk assessments and gender sensitivity in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation plans, gender-sensitive outreach to increase awareness on climate and disaster risk reduction, and gender awareness in conflict prevention in the case of resettled "climate refugees". It also includes provisions for post-disaster resettlement and counselling for displaced families and communities.[483]

These examples constitute progress in recognising differentiated impacts, but they focus only on binary gender, and do not consider other gender identities.

Planned relocation efforts from across the globe provide valuable lessons for the future

When disaster impacts or risks render places uninhabitable or unsafe, governments and communities may decide to permanently relocate people out of harm's way. Planned relocation has gained traction as a disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measure.[484] Many of the most prominent examples are from the Pacific region, such as planned relocation policies and projects in Fiji and Vanuatu.[485] Many initiatives are concentrated in Asia, which consistently records most disaster displacements each year, but efforts are underway across all continents (see figure 55).

Planned relocation is often the result of the combined impacts or risks of various hazards over time. Shishmaref, an Alaskan native village in the US, is preparing to relocate after years of flooding and coastal erosion and in anticipation of melting permafrost and sea level rise.[486] The people of Kandholhudoo island in the Maldives had experienced flooding and land degradation and were aware that sea level rise would heighten the risks they faced even before the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami hit. The impacts of the tsunami, however, finally resulted in plans for their permanent relocation to the previously uninhabited Dhuvaafaru island.[487]

Decisions to stay or relocate also involve economic considerations, emotional attachment, characteristics including age and disability, perceptions of risk and opportunity, and social networks. As such, timeframes may play a role, as well as pre-existing levels and perceptions of well-being. Planned relocations need not only to consider logistical and economic aspects, but also broader risk governance, personal resources and community dynamics. They should be devised and implemented with the extensive engagement of the communities concerned.[488]

Trigger moments such as extreme events or the loss of lives and assets may initiate debate about relocation. The decision to leave, however, tends to take much longer to reach and the actual process of relocating longer still.[489] Community members on Gardi Sugdub island in Panama initiated a relocation process in 2010, but they are still to move. A site has been identified on the mainland, but a lack of funding and building materials has delayed process.[490] Members of the Quinault Tribe in Taholah in the US state of Washington began a relocation process in 2012, but they too are still to move.[491]

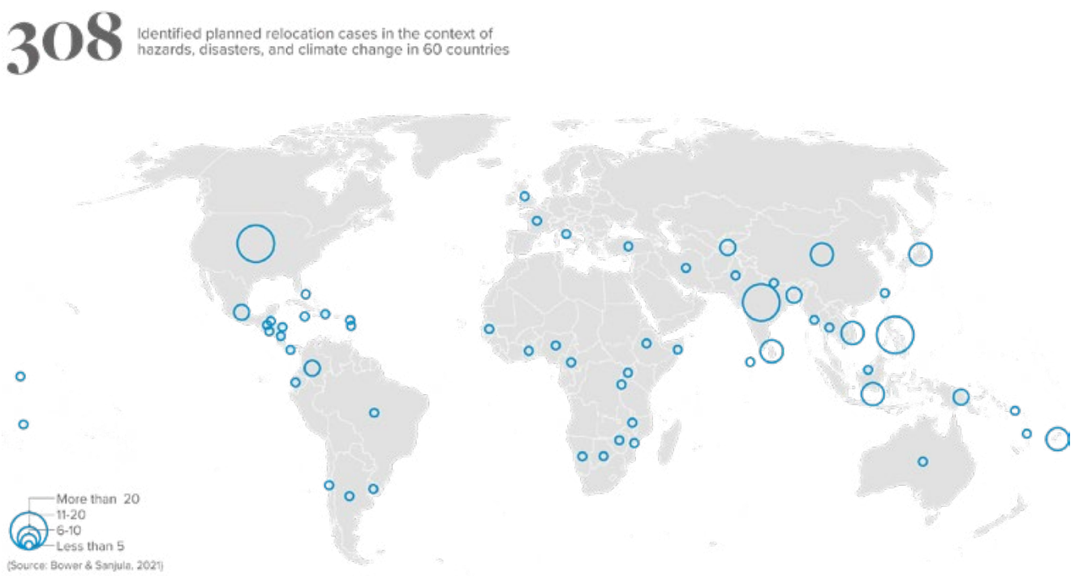


Figure 55: Planned relocation efforts around the world

In all these examples, extensive engagement between local governments and communities have highlighted the vital role that governance plays in the design, management and implementation of planned relocations. The experience of communities from the Danube floodplains in Austria, too, shows that the decision-making, planning and implementation processes involve a range of conflicting regulations, funding schemes and policy directions.[492] These often cut across administrative levels and can pit local governments against national bodies. Such issues need to be considered from the outset.

Local integration may be the preferred option for many, and requires strong local governance

Many people who have been displaced by slow and rapid onset disasters find the prospect of return untenable. Local integration becomes their preferred option, particularly when services and work prospects are better than in their areas of origin. Studies in the Horn of Africa show that many pastoralists and agro-pastoralists displaced during the 2017 drought wish to integrate locally, despite challenges in meeting their basic needs and establishing livelihoods.[493] Their appetite for doing so is based on security considerations, social networks and better living conditions, economic opportunities and public services.

Regional bodies and national governments, UN agencies and NGOs are starting to reach a consensus on what is required to address the challenges of local integration. A common understanding is slowly finding its way into practice in the form of broader coalitions on resolving displacement, such as the durable solutions initiatives (DSIs) and platforms in countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Syria.[494]

Local integration often requires significant adaptation of people displaced from rural to urban areas. Rural IDPs need time to adapt their lifestyles and acquire new skills useful to them in their new urban environment.[495] As such, there is a real need to decentralise efforts to achieve durable solutions and allow for municipalities to invest in appropriate support for different groups of IDPs. Channelling efforts from the federal to the municipal level can also mean more support to local integration beyond areas where the international presence is strong. Programmes in Somalia such as Midnimo, which means unity, and Danwadaag, meaning love, take the localisation approach seriously and focus on strengthening district and state government leadership and capacity to enable durable solutions.[496]

If local integration is to be sustainable, however, the severe development deficits confronting rural populations in countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia will also have to be addressed. Improved access to services and livelihoods in rural areas is essential to avoid repeated displacement.[497] The need to create alternative livelihoods for IDPs and host communities is widely recognised. A number of initiatives have already been successful, including training female heads of household in setting up businesses, start-up grants, vocational skills workshops, the establishment of communal farms for agro-pastoralists to plant cash crops and the provision of livestock to support pastoralists in re-establishing their traditional livelihoods.[498]

As for any of the other options for durable solutions, IDPs need to be at the heart of the decision-making process. The principles that emerge are not new: localising responses and ensuring that communities' agency and resources are respected and supported; improving data collection and including the perspectives and priorities of those who are particularly vulnerable; and supporting locally-owned diversification and adaptation of livelihoods.[499]

This has been repeatedly recognised, but many social, political and economic factors impede action. More must be done in the coming years to understand why national and international actors are not embracing such an approach more fully, and to create the incentives for them to do so.

More easily accessible and predictable financing is needed

The need for more funding to prevent and address displacement is well established, as is the fact that it should be predictable and multi-annual to allow for more flexibility and long-term planning.[500] As in other domains that cut across sectors and development dimensions, such as gender and disaster risk reduction, it is less clear, however, whether such funding should be direct and earmarked for displacement or made part of core sector or humanitarian response budgets.

When it comes to prevention, risk reduction and preparedness, financing instruments that include displacement risk concerns in wider risk management and development financing frameworks may be more appropriate. There is also growing consensus that more funding needs to be channelled into forward-looking approaches and more risk-informed investments.[501] The Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts on disaster displacement responses around the world have made this all the more urgent.

National disaster management plans and budgets commonly make financial provisions for evacuations and shelter.[502] Some can be quite substantial. China's Central Natural Disaster Livelihood Subsidy Fund provides assistance to 80 million disaster "victims" each year. Several countries have sought to make such instruments more flexible to increase investment in preparedness. The Philippines, for example, has revised its National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund so that it can be used for the construction of evacuation centres.[503]

Most financing of this kind, however, is not available for investments in preventing displacement or mitigating its impacts.[504] New types of national funds are also emerging. Fiji set up the Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples Trust Fund in 2019 to mobilise financial assistance.[505] It bundles domestic funding through measures such as an environmental levy on plastic bags with contributions from international donors.

As the need to connect humanitarian, peace-building and development efforts grows, creating new financing tools and mechanisms to address displacement could encourage collaboration across domains and institutions that tend to siloed.[506] In their absence, finding entry points in existing climate finance instruments may be a pragmatic first step. A wide range of such mechanisms has been developed over the past two decades, but they make little or no provisions for displacement.[507]

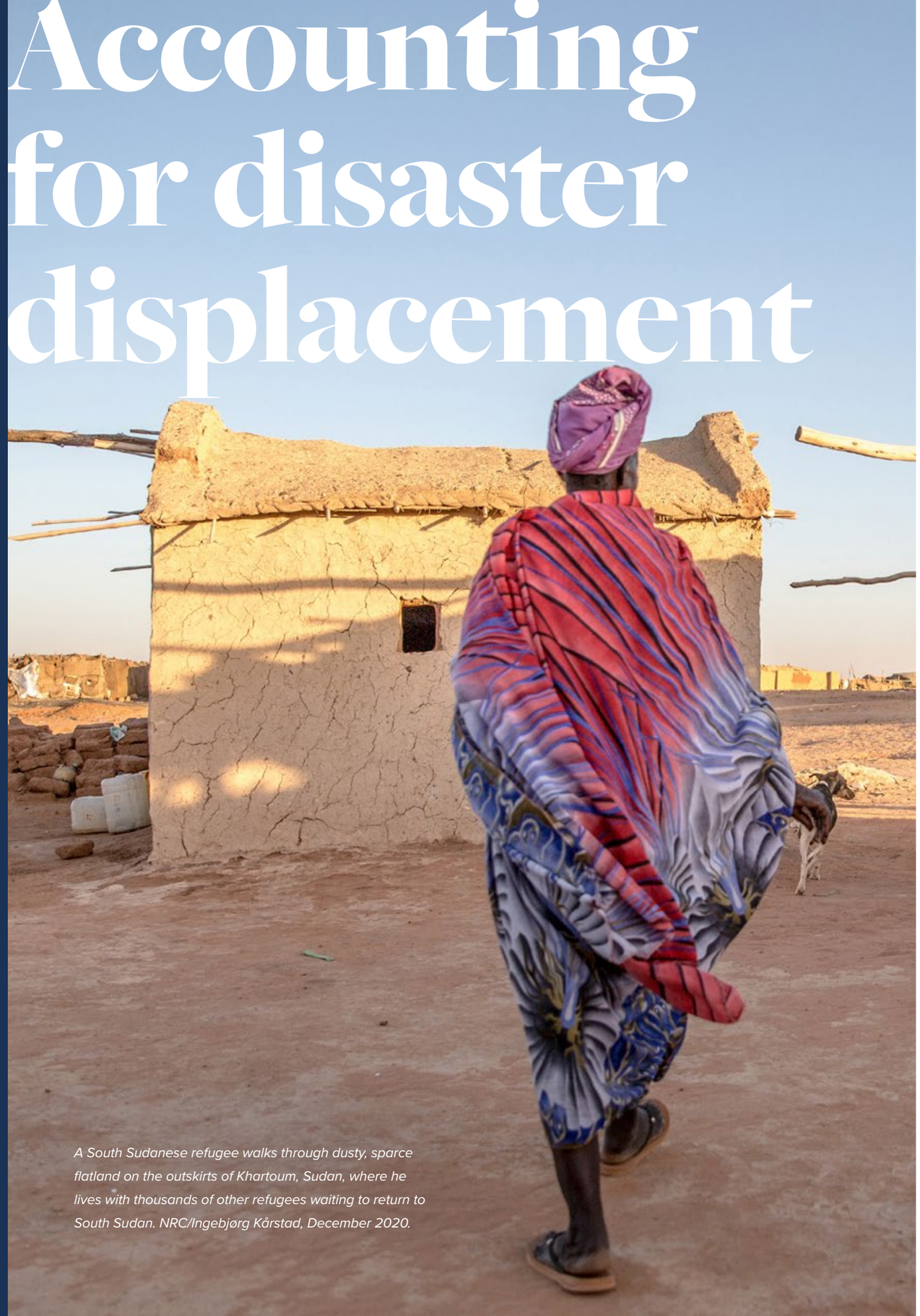
Access to such financing also tends to be limited for countries considered fragile, because eligibility criteria often include strong governance and administrative capacities. This effectively means that countries most in need of support, such as those struggling with both conflict and disaster displacement, are the least eligible to receive it. The Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund set up under UNFCCC are laudable exceptions.[508]

Existing development finance and humanitarian budgets could be made more flexible and responsive to displacement risk and crises. This might include making social protection programmes more adaptive to accommodate seasonal or protracted displacement, making micro-insurance and low-cost loans available to communities at risk of displacement and frontloading development budgets to support local governments in dealing with disaster displacement.[509]

First and foremost, however, it should involve recognising the phenomenon of disaster displacement beyond evacuation. Doing so would pave the way for more dedicated funding streams to emerge, such as local and national forecast-based financing tools or pooled, multi-donor trust funds at the regional and even the global level.[510] It would also lay the ground for the insurance sector and capital markets to play a greater role in financing responses and encouraging risk reduction in the form of index-based insurance, catastrophe bonds and weather derivatives that include displacement risk.[511]

Cyclone Amphan left a trail of destruction in its wake over Satkhira, Bangladesh. The cyclone triggered nearly 5 million evacuations across Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Bhutan in May, making it the largest disaster displacement event in 2020 globally. © NurPhoto/Kazi Salahuddin via Getty Images, August 2020.

Accounting for disaster displacement



A South Sudanese refugee walks through dusty, sparce flatland on the outskirts of Khartoum, Sudan, where he lives with thousands of other refugees waiting to return to South Sudan. NRC/Ingebjørg Kårstad, December 2020.

Despite considerable advances made in moving disaster displacement up national and international policy agendas, progress in monitoring the phenomenon has been modest. Few countries do so comprehensively, which impedes the establishment of a solid global baseline that enables comparisons and learning between countries.

Disaster displacement is a strong people-centred marker of where better policy and action for risk reduction and durable solutions are required.[512] Filling the data gaps on the phenomenon is also vital if we are to understand how it holds back the sustainable development agenda. This cannot, however, be done at the global level alone. Disasters and climate impacts are essentially local phenomena, so local authorities and national governments have a key role to play.

The central role of national governments in generating and using reliable displacement data has been recognised by the international community, culminating in the efforts of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS) and the publication of the International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS).[513] The recommendations cover data and statistics on disaster displacement, and with 45 countries and territories and 20 regional and international organisations involved in their development and implementation, they demonstrate strong commitment to addressing displacement in all its forms collectively.

Within and beyond official statistics, the number of people displaced, their conditions, needs and aspirations, the duration and severity of their displacement and the risk of future displacement all need to be better quantified. Disaster displacement must be assessed in all its dimensions, temporal, geographical and social.

What to measure?

Disasters or the threat of them trigger displacement in many ways: pre-emptive evacuations, planned relocations, reactive flight from life-threatening sudden-onset events or people's gradual shift away from areas affected by slow-onset phenomena such as drought.[514] Each form of movement requires specific indicators to identify and monitor it, which means systematic data collection should be integrated into disaster preparedness, response and recovery systems (see figure 56).

Main phases	Prepardeness and early warning	Emergency	Recovery and reconstruction
Main indicators	# of people pre-emptively evacuated	# of people displaced in community centres, schools, shelters (including improvised shelters), etc. # of people living with host families # of beneficiaries of rental subsidies # of houses destroyed or rendered uninhabitable	# of people displaced in community centres, schools, transition shelters, etc. # of beneficiaries of reconstruction programmes # of beneficiaries of post-disaster housing programmes
Time period	Days, hours or minutes ahead of a disaster	From the immediate aftermath of a disaster to a year	Months to more than a year

Recommendations:
Concerted efforts must be made to collect data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics including socioeconomic status, disability and other vulnerabilities.

In addition to counting the number of IDPs at different points in time, data should be collected on all relevant flows, including new internal and cross-border displacements, returns, local integration and resettlement. Data should also be collected frequently enough to accurately reflect what is happening on the ground. To do so means observing the following schedule:

Pre-emptive evacuations: Daily to hourly
First 10 days after the event: Daily
Day 10 to 30: Every two to three days
Day 30 to 90: Every 10 days
90+ days after the event: Once a month

Figure 56: Measuring disaster displacement across its temporal dimension

That said, displacement also has impacts on economies and societies that go beyond the phases of preparedness, emergency and recovery. Systemic risks and impacts affect the full development spectrum of countries and communities before, during and after disasters, which underscores the need to monitor the phenomenon over longer time periods. This would enable the establishment of a more solid baseline to inform policy development on resilience and durable solutions.

Monitoring displacement risk

To prevent disaster displacement and plan better responses, it is important to measure the number of people at risk of being displaced. From the national to the global level, however, most disaster risk assessments estimate the likelihood of economic losses but overlook human implications, including the risk of displacement.

Mexico, Rwanda and the US are good examples of countries that have developed national disaster risk assessments, indexes and atlases. These help to understand disaster risk levels for different hazards and exposure and vulnerability scenarios, but a displacement element is missing.[515] At the global level, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) coordinates a rigorous annual analysis of the economic risks disasters pose, which it has presented in its Global Assessment Reports (GARs) since 2011.[516] Here again though, displacement is not considered.

To address this gap, and building on UNDRR's approach, IDMC began a unique probabilistic modelling exercise in 2017.[517] Our global disaster displacement risk model covers a wide range of hazard scenarios for earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, cyclonic winds and storm surges. It considers their likelihood and their potential to render housing uninhabitable as a proxy for displacement. It generates findings at the national level, identifying hotspots and enabling risk-informed decisions that can help to prevent and reduce displacement risk.[518]

Given that people's level of vulnerability and exposure to hazards does much to determine the severity of their impacts, it is important to assess how these aspects will change over space and time, and to unpack the economic, social, environmental and governance factors that affect disaster risk.[519] To do so, we are working closely with partners to increase the resolution of the exposure layer of our model to allow more granular assessment, and rethinking how we can assess vulnerability in the displacement risk equation. 'Riskscapes' evolve constantly, and we need to understand population and socioeconomic patterns, and fluctuations in the frequency and intensity of hazards linked to climate change.

Assessing displacement risk will inform governments about where to allocate resources for risk reduction and response and how to prioritise them. More work is needed in this area, but some initiatives already exist. Oxford University's statistics department has used open-access data to build a disaster displacement risk model to predict the likelihood and scale of future displacement, the Integrated Internal Displacement Population Sampler (IIDIPUS).[520]

The model is also one the few that looks at vulnerability beyond the likelihood of structural collapse. It uses sub-national indicators such as income disparity, which sheds light on how disasters are likely to affect poorer households at risk of displacement.

Monitoring evacuations in the preparedness and early warning phase

Target G-6 of the Sendai Framework calls for measuring the percentage of people exposed to or at risk from disasters who are protected via early warnings and pre-emptive evacuation. It encourages member states in a position to do so to provide information on the number of people evacuated.[521] Doing so with data disaggregated by sex and age would allow countries to measure the effectiveness of their early warning and evacuation protocols.

It is difficult to determine how many of the disaster displacements recorded globally are pre-emptive evacuations. The Philippines is one of the few countries to systematically collect disaster displacement data, and represents a good example of strong government ownership. The Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Centre (DROMIC) collects data on the number of people evacuated and the number staying in shelters or with relatives over time and disaggregates its information.[522]

Viet Nam also has a comprehensive disaster damage and needs assessment system that captures the number of pre-emptive evacuations. Its data collection template has been improved over the years, and feeds into its own historical disaster loss accounting system aligned with the DesInventar methodology.[523] The system not only helps to paint a more accurate picture of displacement in the country, but also supports its disaster risk management efforts.[524]

Tracking displacement during the emergency phase

Most countries only collect data on the displacement disasters trigger in their immediate aftermath. They also tend to report on the number of people "affected" by disasters, which leaves an important gap in our understanding of how many were actually displaced (see box 6).

There is no indicator in the Sendai Framework to measure the number of people displaced, but it is vital to understand the scale of the phenomenon and the impacts on those who have to flee. The framework does, however, call for countries to develop their own tailored indicators. Measuring the number of people displaced during and after disasters would allow them to better understand their location, the impacts they have suffered and their needs. Data should ideally be disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Many countries have made important progress in establishing disaster loss and damage databases. Sri Lanka began to do so in 2005, and has since improved its monitoring capacities to the point of having a platform with daily bulletins that track disaster impacts much more thoroughly.[525] Indonesia and Mongolia have developed their own indicators, translated their platforms into local languages and documented what needs to be improved.[526] These examples show that with institutional commitment existing monitoring systems can be adapted and easily integrate displacement.

Where no specific displacement indicators exist, states could report on other Sendai Framework targets. B-4 calls for monitoring the "number of people whose destroyed dwellings were attributed to disasters". This type of information is an important proxy for disaster displacement. IDMC has been collecting data on housing destruction at the global level since 2017, not only as a proxy but also for triangulation.

We analysed more than 2,000 reports that mentioned housing destruction to produce our 2020 estimates. To convert this information into a displacement metric, we multiplied the number of houses destroyed by the national average household size (AHHS). Other extrapolations and proxy data such as insurance penetration, reconstruction rates and the number of people receiving rental subsidies could also be used, but none would be as accurate as measuring the actual number of people displaced.

Box 6: How many people affected by disasters are displaced?

The Sendai Framework implicitly includes IDPs among those affected by disasters, but it leaves an important gap. It states: "People who are affected, either directly or indirectly, by a hazardous event. Directly affected are those who have suffered injury, illness or other health effects; who were **evacuated**, **displaced**, **relocated** or have suffered direct damage to their livelihoods, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets. Indirectly affected are people who have suffered consequences, other than or in addition to direct effects, over time, due to disruption or changes in economy, critical infrastructure, basic services, commerce or work, or social, health and psychological consequences."[527]

The problem is that if countries just monitor and report on people affected, there is no way of knowing how many are displaced. It is vital this gap be filled, because IDPs have specific needs and their conditions tend to be worse than those of people not forced to flee. As countries implement and retrofit their disaster loss databases to monitor their progress against the Sendai Framework, they should start to monitor the number of people displaced so appropriate policies and programmes can be designed and implemented for this particularly vulnerable group.

Continuing during the recovery and reconstruction phase

Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework highlights the need to "build back better" during recovery and reconstruction, but it does not include concrete indicators to measure how successful such processes are. This makes it difficult to monitor how displaced people manage to bring their displacement to an end over time.

Where information is available, it points to the potentially long-term nature of disaster displacement. California experienced the most destructive wildfires in its history in 2018. The Federal Emergency Management Agency spent around 18 months cleaning up the town of Paradise and helping the community to rebuild.[528] As of April 2021, however, more than two years after the fires, only 728 of the 9,000 homes destroyed have been rebuilt. The City of Paradise itself estimates that it may take up to 10 years to fully recover.[529]

Cyclone Amphan triggered around 2.5 million pre-emptive evacuations in Bangladesh last year. Many evacuees were able to return to their homes relatively quickly, but housing destruction data suggests that a significant number of people are likely be displaced for longer periods of time. The cyclone destroyed more than 55,000 homes, which suggests that around 10 per cent of the evacuees were left homeless.[530]

These examples show that IDPs cannot be assumed to return swiftly to their homes after a disaster without monitoring the duration of displacement comprehensively. We know that some people remain displaced for months and even years, but our understanding of the scale of protracted disaster displacement is still limited.

The main reason for this gap is that displacement only tends to be systematically monitored for a few days or weeks after a disaster. When humanitarian aid providers' operations conclude, data collection stops. Collecting accurate data in sometimes hard-to-reach and insecure areas where lack of transport and communications may be obstacles is also extremely resource-intensive. In some cases, however, alternative information such as mobile phone and social media data can be used (see box 7).

Box 7: Understanding disaster displacement via social media

IDMC and Facebook are collaborating to improve Facebook's disaster maps as part of its Data for Good initiative. This partnership, which dates back to 2017, has resulted in the development of a new methodology to measure flows of IDPs in disaster situations and the publication of this data in Disaster Maps products through the GeoInsights portal.[531] In addition to analysing anonymised data from Facebook's mobile app, IDMC has also developed surveys that ask Facebook users about their displacement experience and provide more demographic and contextual details.

The surveys are run by the Data for Good team and help to measure the extent of displacement and its different impact on men and women. One survey in Japan, run after typhoon Hagibis in 2019, found that slightly more men than women had evacuated, but that they were more likely to be displaced for shorter periods.[532]

Surveys after the Black Summer bushfires in Australia revealed interesting findings about the recovery and reconstruction phase in Green Wattle Creek in eastern New South Wales and Cudlee Creek in the Adelaide Hills. Respondents were asked why they had not returned home permanently. Fifty-eight per cent said because it was "unsafe", but 22 per cent cited "new opportunities" as the main reason.[533]

This new source of displacement data has complemented our own analysis and given researchers, responders and planners a better sense of how many people have been displaced, where from and to, and for how long. Results from surveys in Australia, for example, have offered emergency managers invaluable feedback for their public information campaigns and planning for future events.[534]

Not having accurate information on the duration of displacement has significant implications for the provision of protection and assistance to people displaced for longer periods after disasters. Ten years after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, around 48,000 people are still displaced and in need of support. In Mexico, around 91,000 are still displaced today after the 2017 earthquake.

Nor is it possible without this information to provide comprehensive end-of-year estimates of the number of people living in internal displacement as a result of disasters. This in turn means policymakers and practitioners are unable to follow up on their recovery and reconstruction efforts.

To bridge this gap, data collectors should include a temporal dimension in their assessments. It is essential to monitor and report the duration of displacement by counting the number of IDPs on a regular basis at different points in time to accurately reflect what is happening on the ground.

There is still a long way go before we can paint a complete picture of the duration of disaster displacement, but progress has been made in recent years (see box 8).

Box 8: Estimating the number of people living in displacement following disasters

IDMC has been providing global figures for new disaster displacements since 2008, but it was not until 2019 that we were able to publish our first end-of-year estimate of the number of people still living in displacement. The figures of 5.1 million for 2019 and seven million for 2020 are, however, highly conservative. The number of new displacements recorded, at 24.9 million and 30.7 million respectively, shows that we are only starting to scratch the surface of a much bigger challenge.

Our methodology for compiling end-of-year estimates has important caveats and limitations, but it starts to fill what has been a persistent gap and raise awareness about the lack of data on the duration of displacement. As the simplified version of the methodology shows, we applied a series of scenarios to come up with our figures (see figure 58). In order to move on from using proxy data, however, it is vital that data collectors improve their capacity to collect and share time-series data on disaster displacement.

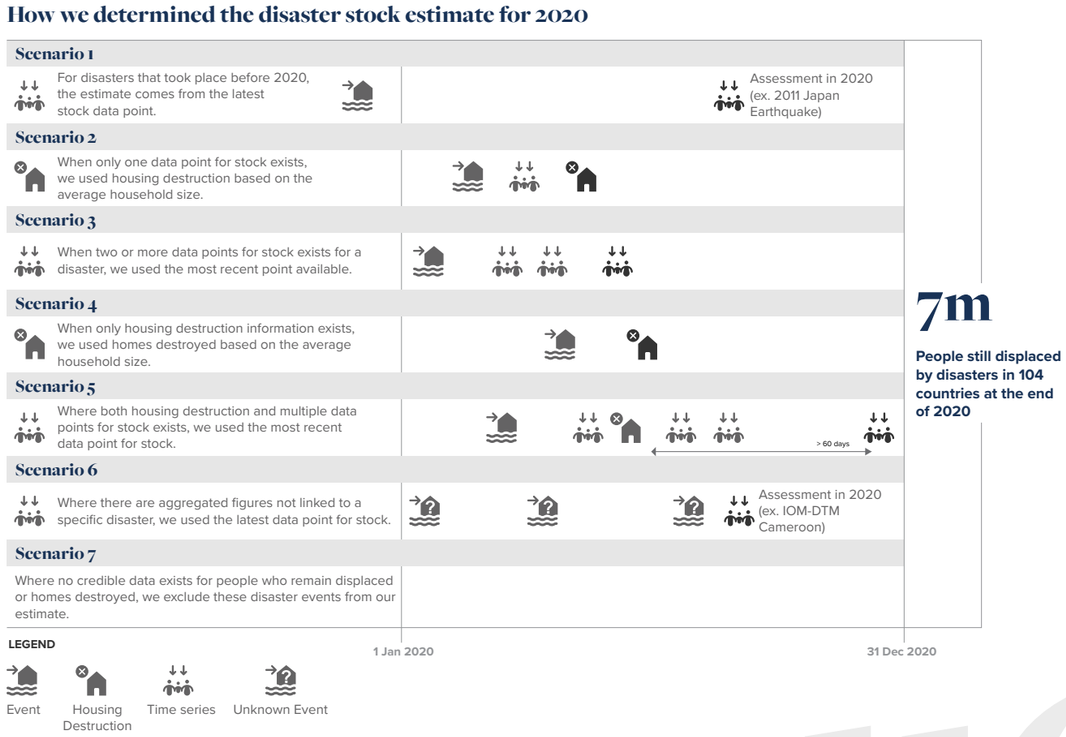


Figure 57: Methodology for estimating displacement based on housing destruction

Better data on longer-term displacement is also required to understand its significant economic impacts on individuals and economies. If these go unrecorded, displaced families may receive no support from the authorities and the repercussions may be felt for years. Understanding the economic impacts of each new displacement would help governments plan more effective support, eventually reducing costs and losses for all (see box 9).

Same as in other phases of the disaster risk management cycle, there is no need to generate new systems to keep track of the duration of displacement in the recovery and reconstruction phase. Data collectors just need to run their assessments over longer periods and adapt their existing systems to capture displacement. Such a repository could be analysed against data on insurance penetration or housing reconstruction costs, enabling policymakers to identify good practices that could be applied to other situations.

Box 9: Measuring the economic impacts of new displacement

The methodology IDMC developed in 2018 to measure the economic impacts of displacement relies heavily on humanitarian response plans (HRPs) for proxy indicators on financial costs and losses. HRPs are only available for crises severe enough to warrant them and focus on situations of protracted displacement.

Most displacement, however, is triggered by smaller-scale events that do not activate HRPs, and its duration can usually be measured in months, weeks or even days rather than years. The repercussions for the lives of those displaced and for economies may be less severe as a result, but their frequency means they add up to a significant global burden.

The figures we have presented on the economic impact of displacement so far have overlooked this burden. They also focus only on the most immediate needs of people already displaced, which means the period between the event that triggered their displacement and their arrival in their area of refuge is unaccounted for. This period also involves costs, including for transport, shelter, other basic needs and loss of income. Our preliminary assessments show that the highest costs stem from impacts on housing, and the highest losses from the disruption of IDPs' usual income-generating activities. Impacts on health, education and security only tend to become visible over longer periods of time.

Uncovering the costs and losses that arise during IDPs' transition period would be particularly useful in assessing the impacts of disaster displacement. Because information on its duration is rarely available and most HRPs focus on conflict situations, its economic impacts remain almost entirely invisible. Being able to assess them at least for known evacuation periods would be a first step toward bridging this knowledge gap.

Monitoring displacement in the context of slow-onset events

Internal displacement associated with slow-onset disasters and environmental change is difficult to account for comprehensively because of the wide range of phenomena, impacts and drivers associated with the hazards, the types of movement they trigger and the situations in the regions they affect. One of the main problems is that the critical nature of a slow-onset event only tends to become apparent when a crisis point has been reached.[535]

Key knowledge gaps on the scale of this type of displacement include the number of people at risk of being displaced, the number of new displacements that such events trigger, the number of people living in displacement as a result of them, and the number of those living in displacement who are likely to remain in their country.

Data is scarce, but we have been able to record cases of drought displacement in the Horn of Africa and Brazil.[536] Developments in information technology coupled with microdata on IDPs offer the prospect of establishing a better sense of the scale of slow-onset and compound disasters and how they evolve over time.

Satellite imagery, mobile phone apps and most importantly better access to information derived from Earth observations and climate models have made large volumes of data available with which to assess and predict disaster impacts. The data not only improves our understanding of current crises. It could also inform the development of models to better understand and prepare for disaster displacement in the future. The inclusion of questions in national censuses and other surveys would also help to increase data and insight on slow-onset events.

The more data we have about such events and their impacts on societies, the more accurate our scenarios and models will become. Collecting data on the number of people displaced by drought, desertification or sea level rise, combined with qualitative contextual analysis and personal narratives, will improve our understanding of what drives and triggers this type of displacement. Models are becoming increasingly sophisticated too, including systems-thinking and holistic approaches to understanding decision-making.[537]

Toward better coordination and collaboration

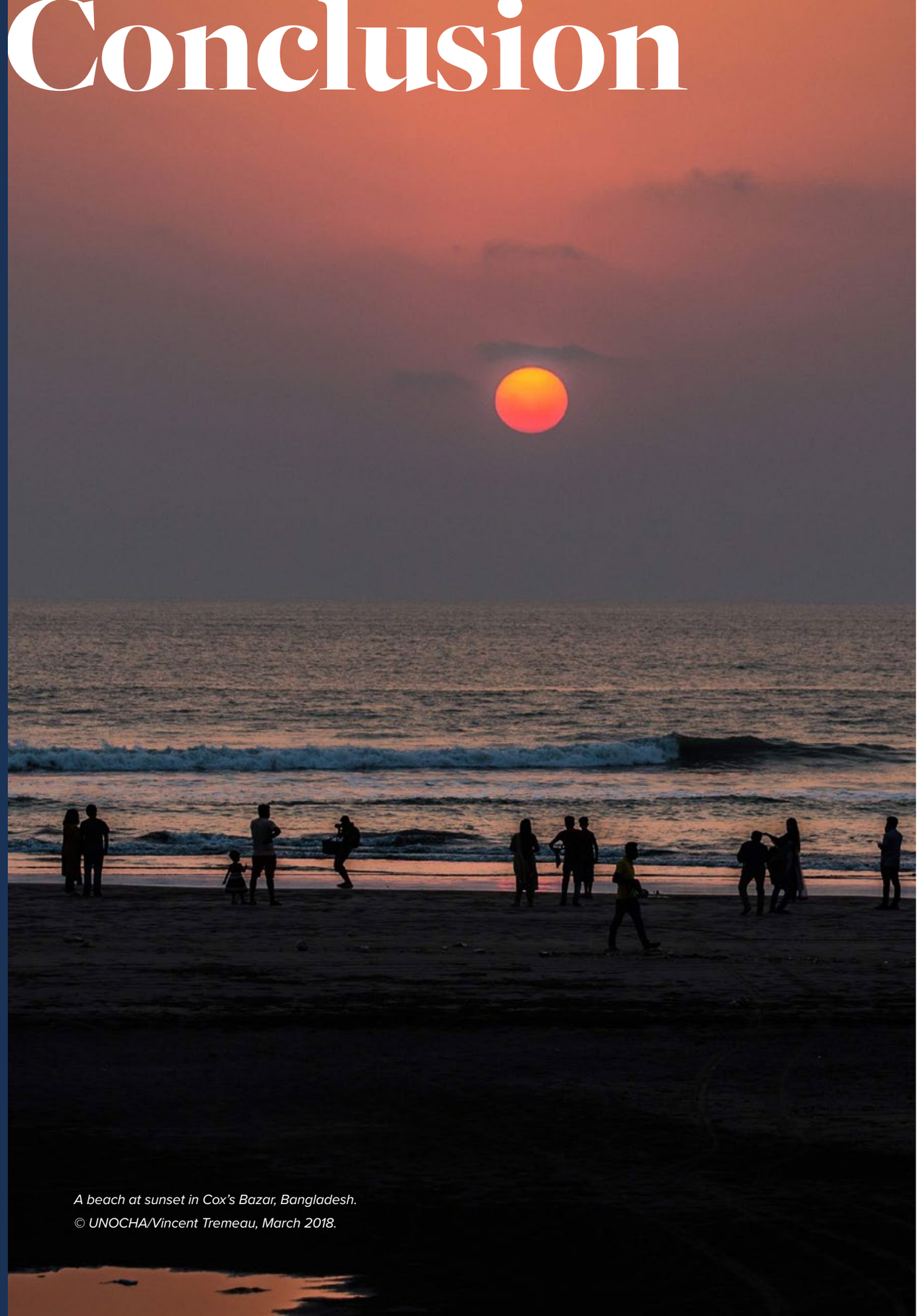
Filling the data gaps on disaster displacement and improving our capacity to monitor the phenomenon is possible. For it to happen, we need ensure that data collection efforts complement each other rather than overlap, and that collectors use common terms and metrics to make their data interoperable.[538] Collection should also comply with data protection guidelines to ensure people's privacy is respected and their security is not compromised.

Displaced people require interventions tailored to their circumstances based on their location, age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background and other characteristics. Data disaggregation is essential to ensure that the most vulnerable people are profiled accurately, their needs are properly addressed, and no one is left behind.

Integrating displacement risk and impacts into national disaster risk reduction policies and measures promotes coherence across a range of ministry and agency mandates, because it spans both the emergency and longer-term action needed to reduce and avoid risk and enable sustainable solutions. It also promotes mutually reinforcing outcomes and efficiencies in data collection and reporting under global policy agendas where displacement is recognised as an important issue.

As we start the countdown to 2030, when progress against the main global agreements will be assessed, there is still time to develop and retrofit disaster damage and loss databases and monitor disaster displacement.

Conclusion



A beach at sunset in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
© UNOCHA/Vincent Tremeau, March 2018.

The year 2020 was the third warmest on record, following a trend of increasing average global temperatures since 2015. Monsoon seasons have also extended, and annual rainfall totals have risen in some parts of the world. Global sea levels continue to rise, as do ocean temperatures, which fuel stronger tropical cyclones. Droughts are becoming longer and more devastating.[539] Data is still limited, but it shows that disasters are becoming more frequent and intense, pointing to a worrying new normal.[540]

Disasters in 2020 were triggered by unusually active cyclone seasons in the Americas and in Asia, longer rainy seasons that led to widespread flooding in the Middle East and North Africa, and unprecedented wildfires in the US and Australia. The Covid-19 pandemic added another layer of complexity to these crises, with devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of those displaced.

We have entered the Anthropocene age, a period of unrivalled planetary and social imbalances that interact to give rise to new risks, including the risk of displacement.[541] Mobility patterns will be shaped by these imbalances in complex and sometimes unpredictable ways. More reliable data is required to focus our actions and investments to tackle displacement in a changing climate. By understanding who is at risk of being displaced and where, and how long those who are displaced are likely to remain so and in what conditions, governments and the international community will be better equipped to prevent future displacement and address IDPs' needs.

We also need better data on displacement associated with slow-onset events including drought, coastal erosion, sea level rise, salinisation, glacial retreat and permafrost melt, and to understand how these phenomena interact with sudden-onset hazards to trigger displacement. Beyond large events that trigger mass displacement, we must assess the impacts of more localised disasters which, although smaller in scale, jeopardise years or even decades of development gains.

In essence, data and evidence will be the prism through which we will learn and succeed. With less than a decade left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, tuning our tools to better understand disaster displacement and the role of climate change has to be a priority. Rather than buy into sensational headlines about "mass climate migration", we must provide robust information on the scale, patterns and impacts of the human mobility involved.

We should focus on risk reduction and supporting those on the move, regardless of the barriers they face, and counter the notion that disasters are "natural". We need to recognise our role in generating risk, and reduce it through sustainable development.

Assessing local, national, regional and global displacement risk will require partnerships at all levels. A multitude of risk-modelling initiatives have emerged in recent years, and it is now time to take stock of progress and ensure collaboration and coordination. We also need to build climate change impacts into these models and do more to assess future vulnerability and exposure. Rapid population growth affects both of these factors so dynamically that models will have to be updated more regularly if they are to inform effective early warning systems and risk reduction measures.

If we are to understand what works and what does not, we will have to systematically monitor disaster displacement, displacement risk and what is being done to reduce it over time worldwide. The insights gleaned, combined with the exchange of good practices among countries dealing with internal displacement would enable more reliable and accessible funding, thereby creating fertile ground for real change and sustainable progress.

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Table 1: Summary of key figures

Country	New displacements in 2020 (conflict and violence)	New displacements in 2020 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (disasters)
Abyei Area	4,700		19,000	
Afghanistan	404,000	46,000	3,547,000	1,117,000
Albania				17,000
Algeria		9,600		23
American Samoa		390		11
Angola		25,000		790
Argentina		3,700		16
Armenia	800		800	2,700
Australia		51,000		5,100
Azerbaijan	84,000		735,000	
Bahamas				250
Bangladesh	230	4,443,000	427,000	345,000
Belize		6,300		
Benin		7,000	3,500	2,500
Bermuda		50		
Bhutan		120		
Bolivia		13,000		13,000
Bosnia and Herzegovina		910	99,000	
Botswana		780		780
Brazil		358,000		20,000
Burkina Faso	515,000	20,000	1,075,000	20,000
Burundi	310	51,000	22,000	76,000
Cabo Verde		750		
Cambodia		66,000		260
Cameroon	123,000	116,000	1,003,000	30,000
Canada		26,000		18
Central African Republic	318,000	15,000	682,000	4,200
Chad	79,000	71,000	342,000	680
Chile		3,400		210
China		5,074,000		158,000
Colombia	106,000	64,000	4,922,000	21,000
Congo			134,000	107,000
Costa Rica		4,200		530
Côte d'Ivoire	15,000	1,900	308,000	70
Croatia		42,000		5,200
Cuba		639,000		3
Cyprus			228,000	
Czech Republic		43		
Dem. People's Rep. Korea		5,300		5,300
Dem. Rep. Congo	2,209,000	279,000	5,268,000	64,000
Djibouti		11		11
Dominican Republic		31,000		3,700
Ecuador		1,200		490
Egypt	1,000	8,400	3,200	8,400
El Salvador	114,000	17,000		62
Ethiopia	1,692,000	664,000	2,060,000	633,000
Fiji		37,000		14,000
France		10,000		230
French Guiana		140		
French Polynesia		27		
Gabon		2		2
Gambia		17,000		1,600
Georgia		160	304,000	10
Germany		2		
Ghana		2,000		550
Greece		13,000		4,800
Guatemala		339,000	242,000	
Guinea		2,400		2,600
Haiti	7,900	13,000	7,900	34,000
Honduras		937,000	247,000	
Hong Kong, China		160		
Hungary		14		
Iceland		590		
India	3,900	3,856,000	473,000	929,000
Indonesia	4,600	705,000	40,000	161,000
Iran		52,000		79
Iraq	67,000	1,200	1,224,000	
Ireland		51		
Israel	3,000	10,000		70
Italy		2,000		22
Jamaica		2		
Japan		186,000		61,000
Jordan		140		
Kazakhstan		32,000		1,800
Kenya	3,900	335,000	190,000	204,000

Country	New displacements in 2020 (conflict and violence)	New displacements in 2020 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (disasters)
Korea		19,000		300
Kosovo			16,000	
Kyrgyzstan	250		770	
Lao PDR		12,000		2,000
Lebanon			7,000	
Liberia		3,700		1,200
Libya	39,000		278,000	
Luxembourg		2		
Macao, China		2,800		
Madagascar		23,000	1,500	100
Malawi		29,000		
Malaysia		24,000		8
Mali	277,000	7,400	326,000	6,700
Mauritania		1,600		1,600
Mauritius		110		
Mexico	9,700	101,000	357,000	99,000
Mongolia		4,200		3,500
Morocco		340		340
Mozambique	592,000	25,000	676,000	93,000
Myanmar	70,000	50,000	505,000	4,600
Namibia		200		
Nepal		48,000		28,000
Netherlands		4,000		
New Caledonia	140	31	140	
New Zealand		4,900		370
Nicaragua		232,000		9,100
Niger	136,000	276,000	257,000	267,000
Nigeria	169,000	279,000	2,730,000	143,000
North Macedonia			140	
Norway		1,000		84
Oman		120		
Pakistan	390	829,000	104,000	806,000
Palestine	1,000	110	131,000	10
Panama		3,700		
Papua New Guinea		3,900	14,000	2,700
Paraguay		5		5
Peru		8,000	60,000	6,800
Philippines	111,000	4,449,000	153,000	145,000
Poland		420		22
Portugal		28		
Puerto Rico		11,000		8,200

Country	New displacements in 2020 (conflict and violence)	New displacements in 2020 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2020 (disasters)
Romania		290		
Russia		250	1,100	130
Rwanda		6,000		4,600
Samoa		55		
Saudi Arabia		610		
Senegal		3,300	8,400	2,000
Serbia		880		
Sierra Leone			5,500	
Slovakia		60		
Solomon Islands		320		310
Somalia	293,000	1,037,000	2,968,000	
South Africa	5,000	370	5,000	14
South Sudan	271,000	443,000	1,436,000	106,000
Spain		7,800		
Sri Lanka		19,000	27,000	1,400
Sudan	79,000	454,000	2,276,000	454,000
Switzerland		13		
Syria	1,822,000	25,000	6,568,000	
Taiwan, China		3,500		
Tajikistan		1,500		
Tanzania		57,000		38,000
Thailand		13,000	41,000	320
Timor-Leste		1,100		1,100
Tonga		2,700		93
Trinidad and Tobago		33		6
Tunisia		10,000		
Turkey		41,000	1,099,000	44,000
Tuvalu		400		
Uganda	79	40,000	1,000	33,000
Ukraine	74	2,000	734,000	240
United Arab Emirates		610		
United Kingdom		4,900		200
United States		1,714,000		126,000
Uruguay		370		
Uzbekistan		70,000		
Vanuatu		80,000		64,000
Venezuela		2,400		2,300
Viet Nam		1,267,000		162,000
Yemen	143,000	223,000	3,635,000	223,000
Zambia		6,000		1,000
Zimbabwe		380		21,000

Table 2: Largest disaster displacement events per region in 2020

Region	Event name	Hazard type	Month disaster began	Countries and territories	New displacements in 2020
Americas	Hurricane Iota	Storm (cyclone)	November	**6 countries**	**1,039,000**
				Honduras	743,426
				Nicaragua	160,000
				Guatemala	126,261
				Colombia	8,329
				El Salvador	880
				Belize	288
	Hurricane Laura	Storm (cyclone)	August	**5 countries**	**1,019,000**
				United States	585,000
				Cuba	417,664
				Dominican Republic	15,210
				Haiti	957
				Puerto Rico	61
	Hurricane Eta	Storm (cyclone)	October	**12 countries**	**658,000**
				Cuba	187,872
				Guatemala	184,011
				Honduras	175,000
				Nicaragua	71,145
				Mexico	15,238
				Colombia	8,000
				Dominican Republic	6,725
				Panama	3,551
				El Salvador	2,264
				Costa Rica	2,056
				Belize	1,900
				United States	94
East Asia and Pacific	Summer monsoon season	Flood	June	China	3,760,000
	Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses)	Storm (typhoon)	November	**2 countries**	**1,885,000**
				Philippines	1,559,972
				Viet Nam	324,780
	Typhoon Goni (Rolly)	Storm (typhoon)	October	**2 countries**	**1,263,000**
				Philippines	1,250,133
				Viet Nam	13,167
Europe and Central Asia	Flood - Dam Collapse	Flood	May	**2 countries**	**102,000**
				Kazakhstan	31,606
				Uzbekistan	70,000
	Earthquake - Petrinja	Earthquake	December	Croatia	40,000
	Earthquake - Elazığ and Malatya	Earthquake	January	Turkey	25,000
Middle East & North Africa	Rainy season	Flood	February	Yemen	223,000
	Wildfires	Wildfire	October	**3 countries**	**35,000**
				Syria	25,000
				Israel	10,000
				Palestine	30
	Flash floods	Flood	January	Iran	16,000
South Asia	Cyclone Amphan	Storm (cyclone)	May	**4 countries**	**4,950,000**
				Bangladesh	2,508,819
				India	2,441,213
				Bhutan	84
				Myanmar	78
	Monsoon floods	Flood	June	Bangladesh	1,921,000
	Monsoon floods	Flood	June	Pakistan	810,000
Sub-Saharan Africa	Gu rains	Flood	March	Somalia	505,000
	Rainy season	Flood	July	Sudan	454,000
	Rainy season	Flood	July	South Sudan	404,000

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Background papers

Island Stories

Mapping the (im)mobility trends of slow-onset environmental processes in three island groups of the Philippines

Dr Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson, UNU-EHS
Dr Noralene Uy, Ateneo de Manila University

There is a lack of empirical evidence how slow-onset events influence human (im)mobility across the globe. This is a significant knowledge gap that makes it difficult to safeguard vulnerable populations, whether on the move or left behind. This study investigates slow-onset-induced (im) mobility trends in the Philippines through the participation of approximately 500-550 women and men in 48 narrative group research sessions. The twelve selected study sites were distributed across six provinces in the three major island groups; Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The research participants mapped out their personal (im) mobility experiences and the (im)mobility trends within their households. They outlined how slow-onset events contributed to (im)mobility, often by harming individual wellbeing and disrupting livelihoods, and how policies can better support those affected.

Hot, wet, and deserted: Climate Change and Internal Displacement in India, Peru, and Tanzania

Insights from the EPICC project

Julia M. Blocher, Jonas Bergmann,
Himani Upadhyay, Kira Vinke
Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

This background paper summarises research from Peru, India and Tanzania showing that climate hazards affect multiple, interconnected drivers of displacement. It demonstrates that the severity, frequency and speed of onset of hazards influence people's reactions to them, mediated by factors such as individual and household attributes, vulnerabilities, livelihood options and structural inequalities. Displacement can ensue both in response to overwhelming, rapid-onset hazards and when cumulative impacts exceed subjective critical thresholds for agricultural livelihoods with limited diversification alternatives. When a critical mass of people flees, feedback effects can accelerate additional out-movement. Without appropriate greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation measures, worsening impacts may render more places uninhabitable and raise the likelihood of such situations occurring. These findings underline the need to understand adaptation limitations of risks related to forced immobility. This research is part of the multi-year East Africa Peru India Climate Capacities (EPICC) project.

Adapting on the move

Climate change displacement and local solutions in coastal communities in Sindh, Pakistan

Dorien Braam, University of Cambridge / Praxis Labs
Love Kumar, University of Florida

Coastal communities are increasingly at risk from the negative impacts of climate change, including more intense storms, floods, coastal erosion and sea intrusion. Climate change displacement in Sindh's coastal zone is a gradual and complex process, and a mix of temporary and permanent, forced and voluntary migration. Socioeconomic and political factors make people vulnerable to hazards, with disasters causing significant land and livelihood loss, ultimately resulting in displacement. This paper presents some of the findings of a study conducted in 2019-2020 to better understand people's vulnerabilities, agency and responses to the risks of climate change, disasters and displacement. We discuss the main determinants and pathways to climate change displacement of coastal communities, and introduce adaptive responses which strengthen displaced people's agency against ongoing threats. Supported by sufficient resources, improved policies and institutional frameworks, community-based organisations can play an important role in durable solutions by enhancing adaptive capacity in current locations and supporting safe onwards migration.

Disasters and Displacement in Bangladesh: Re-conceptualising Strategies of Risk Reduction and Resilience

Megan Denise Smith, IOM Bangladesh
Sarah Henly-Shepard, MPH, Mercy Corps

Among the highest recorded levels of disaster-related internal displacement globally, Bangladesh is also one of the most climate-vulnerable countries and currently host to the world´s largest refugee camp, with nearly a million Rohingya refugees exposed to the effects of climate change. Applying a socio-ecological systems resilience lens, this background paper provides a snapshot of critical intersections related to climatic and disaster risks, displacement, migration, environmental degradation and public health. It presents a novel technical approach centred on human rights and climate justice, and highlights the participation of affected communities in risk reduction and resilience strategies. It emphasises that through the everyday practices, adaptive mechanisms, capacities, agency and navigational strategies of internally displaced people, refugees, stateless and displacement-affected host communities, more long-term solutions can be re-envisioned and better catalyse risk reduction and resilience-building for and by those on the frontlines of climate change and displacement.

Moving from one risk to another

Dynamics of hazard exposure and disaster vulnerability for displaced people, migrants and others on the move

Lorenzo Guadagno, IOM

People moving in anticipation or in response to the impacts of natural hazards and environmental change move from one "riskscape" to another. While moving is often essential, it is also likely to result in exposure to a different set of hazards for people whose livelihoods, resources and resilience have been eroded. This paper compiles evidence on the role moving plays as a dynamic of risk by looking at examples of displacement, migration and planned relocation. They show that while this dynamic nature is intrinsic to any kind of movement, more forced and more constrained movements are more likely to result in people ending up in marginal and unprotected areas, where they are more exposed to hazards. This points to the adoption of risk-informed and risk reduction approaches in all interventions to prepare for and manage population movements associated with disasters and environmental change as a key element for reducing future impacts, including those linked with secondary displacement.

Generating Political Commitment to Address Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change on the Regional and National Level

Experiences from the Caribbean and Pacific regions and the Horn of Africa

Thomas Lennartz, Jasmin Remlinger, Felix Ries, Dorothea Rischewski, GIZ

There is increasing recognition in many regions and countries across the globe that human mobility in the context of climate change (HMCCC) needs to be integrated into a variety of facets of development policies and frameworks. This requires action and collaboration on different levels. This paper showcases different initiatives in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Horn of Africa regions to address climate-related human mobility. The examples show how determined actors and sustained collaboration on the national and regional level are instrumental in pushing the HMCCC agenda and improving its governance. In future, there will be a need to further strengthen the smooth interplay between committed national actors that are willing to explore new approaches and regional organisations that provide a platform for exchanging ideas and bringing good practices to scale.

Rethinking Predictive Analytics for Disaster Resource Allocation

Integrating vulnerability and sustained impact into risk modelling

Hamish Patten, University of Oxford

Informed disaster management requires detailed knowledge of the affected environment. Predictive analytics can help to provide such insight. The University of Oxford's statistics department and IDMC have collaborated to develop both the Integrated Internal Displacement Population Sampler (IIDIPUS) statistical engine and the Oxford Disaster Displacement Real-time Information Network (ODDRIN) interactive data visualisation software. This paper discusses the software's potential to inform disaster resource allocation in the short to mid-term. IIDIPUS is intended to estimate human displacement rather than damaged assets. This shift helps to predict the spatial distribution of displacement more accurately and highlight hotspots. Temporal displacement predictions utilise mobile phone data-based displacement information, and emergency shelter optimisation is possible through open-source mapping software.

Understanding the climate change-displacement-education nexus for building resilient and equitable education systems

Luke Pye, UNESCO
Anna Seeger, UNESCO IIEP
Jean Claude Ndabananiye, UNESCO IIEP

The nexus between climate change, displacement and education is poorly understood, with little supporting education-specific data, evidence and research. This paper begins to fill this gap in understanding by conceptualising climate-displacement in the context of education and highlighting how climate displacement is likely to multiply and aggravate risk in and through education. The analysis and evidence presented leads to an active agenda for climate change adaptation and mitigation in and through education, centred on the role crisis-sensitive educational planning can play in building climate-displacement resilience. Furthermore, climate-displacement, as with the climate crisis, exposes how education must go beyond adaptation and sustaining "normalcy" by addressing underlying injustices, inequalities and trauma. Such an approach requires education to change course towards the concept of "regenerative education", which is alive to past and present injustices and inequalities allowing education in contexts of climate-displacement to fulfil its transformative potential.

Planned relocation from Danube floodplains in Austria

Lessons learned from five decades of policy practice

Arthur Schindelegger, Sebastian Seebauer, Thomas Thaler

Planned relocation for flood risk management is a grave intervention in people's livelihoods and rarely conducted in the European context. An exemption is the Austrian scheme along the Danube river. It dates back to the 1970s and provides an exceptional long-term case study. The paper looks into the spatial context of relocation areas - exposure to flooding, past events - the development of a sophisticated governance scheme over time, the accumulation of pre-signals facilitating policy implementation, and the household choices and reactions once confronted with an offer to relocate. The research builds on a mixed-method approach combining document analysis and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and affected households to establish a comprehensive perspective of policy dynamics and decision-making processes. The paper concludes with policy recommendations on how to support affected households and residents and on how to improve governance arrangements.

A displaced young boy sits in Jamal Nika IDP camp outside Kandahar city, Afghanistan, after fleeing from Maiwand district with his family. He has not been able to attend school since fleeing his home. NRC/Enayatullah Azad, February 2021.

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Every day, people flee conflict and disasters and become displaced inside their own countries. IDMC provides data and analysis and supports partners to identify and implement solutions to internal displacement.

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