

GRID 2022

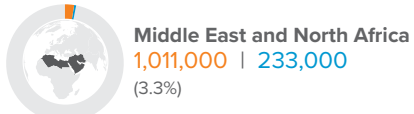
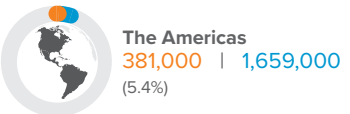
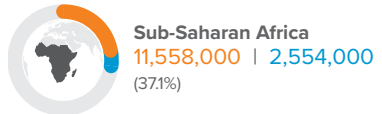
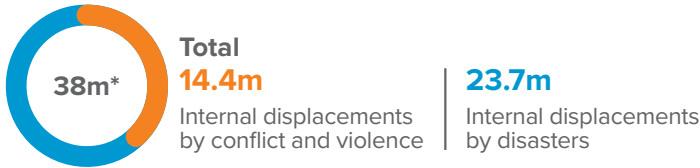
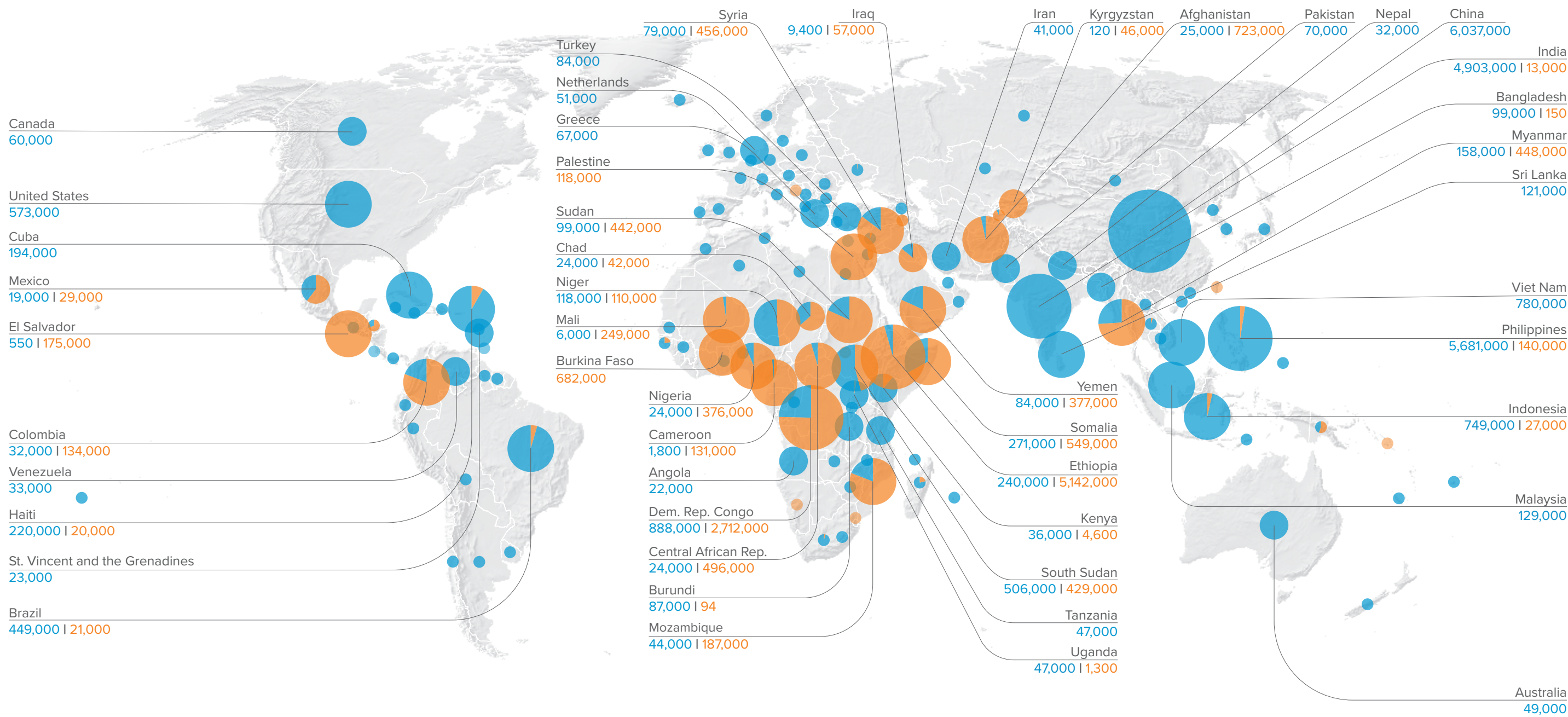
Children and youth in internal displacement

iDMC internal
displacement
monitoring
centre

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NRC

Internal displacements by conflict and disasters in 2021



*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.

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.

With Thanks



Women and children going to Zaimati IDP site, Badghis Province, Afghanistan. © Enayatullah Azad /NRC, April 2021

IDMC's 2022 Global Report on Internal Displacement has been produced with the generous contribution of the following funding partners: Asian Development Bank, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, European Union, German Federal Foreign Office, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Liechtenstein's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Robert Bosch Foundation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development, and United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Cover photo: With adequate support to overcome risks and opportunities to influence solutions, internally displaced children and youth can help design a better future for all.
© Illustration by Matt Murphy, April 2022

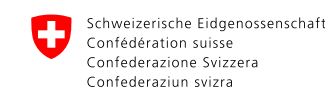


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One of the six lakes of Band-e Amir National Park in Afghanistan. © Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images, October 2021

Foreword



A young girl makes a drawing from inside a camp for displaced people in Northern Iraq. © Beate Simarud/NRC, October 2021.

After her school in Yemen was hit by a missile, Emtinan and her family took shelter wherever they could, moving from one place to the next only steps ahead of the violence. She was out of school for an entire year and feared for her own future.

As conflicts and crises multiply around the world and more people than ever are internally displaced, the lives and futures of a growing number of children and adolescents like Emtinan are at risk.

This year's Global Report on Internal Displacement shows the magnitude of the problem: over 59.1 million people worldwide were living in internal displacement across 59 countries and territories at the end of 2021. More than half of these internally displaced persons were children and young people.

This problem is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, and the Pacific regions – and, with ongoing and emerging crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Yemen, and more recently Ukraine, these numbers may be set to rise even further.

That is why this Global Report's focus on children and youth is both important and timely. It underscores the critical importance of understanding the immediate and long-term impacts of the ongoing global displacement crisis on children - and their societies.

The evidence presented here shows that internal displacement can delay development, eroding and reversing gains made through long-term investments - affecting not only this generation of children, but generations to come. Indeed, internal displacement affects every facet of children's lives, with cascading impacts on their security, nutrition, health, education, and aspirations for the future.

For instance, educational disruptions can result in learning losses and reduced social interactions with peers. Lack of access to safe spaces heightens vulnerability to risks, like child marriage, violence and abuse, with consequences for children's physical wellbeing and mental health.

These disruptions can have long-term impacts, including disengagement from school, fewer educational and professional opportunities, and reduced future income - in turn, deepening intergenerational poverty. Conversely, protecting children and youth, and ensuring their contin-

ued learning and health, can contribute to their future individual development, positively shaping sustainable and peaceful societies.

To meet the needs of internally displaced children, we need to learn more about the challenges they face. Indeed, robust evidence is the best foundation for effective displacement prevention and response, and it is essential for developing durable solutions.

Yet around the world, millions of internally displaced children continue to be invisible in the data. We join the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre in calling for better data on internally displaced children and youth to inform timely and effective decision-making.

UNESCO and UNICEF are already taking steps to improve the availability of quality data in this field. But more investment is needed in local and innovative data collection methods. Most importantly, information must be collected and used in ways that respect children's best interests, recognising their hopes and dreams and making them the starting point for action.

Whether the world's displaced children flourish or fall behind depends on our commitment to them and to their communities' wellbeing. As we work to implement the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, we call on our partners to join our collective efforts to leave no internally displaced child behind.

Catherine Russell
Executive Director
UNICEF

Audrey Azouley
Director-General
UNESCO

Key Messages

Global picture:

- 1** More people are internally displaced worldwide than ever before, a record 59.1 million.
- 2** The majority have fled conflict and violence, and the figure does not yet include people recently displaced in Ukraine.
- 3** Disasters, mostly cyclones and floods, continued to trigger most internal displacements, or movements, in 2021.
- 4** A record number of internal displacements associated with conflict and violence occurred during the year, however.
- 5** More than 80 per cent of them took place in sub-Saharan Africa.
- 6** The direct economic impacts of internal displacement worldwide were at least \$21 billion in 2021.

Children and youth:

- 1** Of the nearly 60 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 25.2 million are children under the age of 18.
- 2** Protecting them from abuse and supporting their health, wellbeing and education not only safeguards their rights, but also contributes to a more stable future for all.
- 3** Displacement's impacts on children and youth are not felt equally, and they vary by individual, family and community. Neither are they felt only locally or in the moment, they have wider repercussions for years to come.

Recommendations:

- 1** Investment in peacebuilding and development initiatives that offer IDPs options to return home, integrate locally, or resettle elsewhere are needed to resolve protracted displacement.
- 2** Beyond the direct impacts of displacement on individual youth, we must better understand how they have longer term consequences on future societies.
- 3** Children and young people are agents of change. Preparing the world of tomorrow must start with their active participation and leadership.
- 4** Filling the data gaps will help us to understand their specific needs, aspirations and potential; and to support them with tailored, inclusive responses.

A boy walks past fog near Chenna, Ethiopia, a village from which many people fled in 2021. © AMANUEL SILESHI/AFP via Getty Images, September 2021.

How to read our data

Example 1: Conflict and violence

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS

Internal displacements (“flows”)

An “internal displacement” refers to each new forced movement of person within the borders of their country recorded during the year.

TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs

Total number of IDPs (“stocks”)

The “total number of IDPs” is a snapshot of all the people living in internal displacement at the end of the year.

What is repeated displacement?

Repeated displacement is when someone is forced to move more than once. Some people become displaced a number of times before finding a solution to their displacement.

 x1	 x2	 x3
100 people were displaced for the first time	100 people displaced twice is counted as 200	100 people displaced three times is counted as 300

A mother and daughter are forced to flee their city in country X when fighting between rival gangs breaks out, resulting in two internal displacements



There were already eight people living in internal displacement as a result of previous conflicts. Two more are added to the total number of IDPs.



Heightened insecurity in the host community sheltering the mother and daughter forces them to flee to a displacement camp.



This counts as a further two internal displacements, but the number of people living in internal displacement stays the same.



An attack on the camp forces the mother and daughter and two other IDPs to flee again in search of safety, in other words triggering four more internal displacements.



Meanwhile two of the 10 people living in internal displacement are able to return home.



We count eight internal displacements triggered by conflict in country X at the end of the year.



$2+2+4=8$

We count a total of eight people as living in internal displacement at the end of the year.



$8+2-2=8$

Why is the total number of IDPs sometimes higher than the number of internal displacements?

Because the total number of IDPs includes people displaced in previous years and still living in internal displacement.

Previous year	+	Current year	=	Total number of IDPs
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How to read our data

Example 2: Disasters

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS

Internal displacements (“flows”)

An “internal displacement” refers to each new forced movement of person within the borders of their country recorded during the year.

Is an “internal displacement” the same as a “person newly displaced”?

No. A “newly displaced person” would refer to someone fleeing for the first time, and this data does not exist globally. In fact, many people are displaced more than once. If a person were to flee conflict or disasters four times during a year, it would be counted as four internal displacements, not four people newly displaced.

A cyclone strikes a coastal village in country Y, triggering two internal displacements.



The number of people living in internal displacement is two.



A second tropical storm hits, uprooting the same two people again and forcing two more to flee for the first time, in other words triggering four further internal displacements.



The total number of IDPs increases by two, resulting in four people living in internal displacement.



The camp where the four IDPs are sheltering is flooded, sending them further inland in search of safety, in other words triggering another four internal displacements.



Three of the IDPs are then able to return home, leaving one person still living in internal displacement.



We count ten internal displacements triggered by disasters in country Y at the end of the year.



$$2+4+4=10$$

We count a total of one person as living in internal displacement in country X at the end of the year.



$$2+2-3=1$$

TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs

Total number of IDPs (“stocks”)

The “total number of IDPs” is a snapshot of all the people living in internal displacement at the end of the year.

Why is the total number of IDPs in a country often lower than the number of internal displacements?

If a person flees three times in a year, it counts as three internal displacements but adds only one to the total number of IDPs - if that person is still displaced at the end of the year. If the same person and others like them have returned to their homes by the end of the year, their initial flight adds to the number of internal displacements, but not to the total number of IDPs.

Part 1: The global picture



Mbela displacement camp, Central African Republic.

© Tom Peyre-Costa/NRC, February 2021.

Global figures at a glance

Internal displacements in 2021

38 million*
Internal displacements

14.4m by conflict and violence
23.7m by disasters

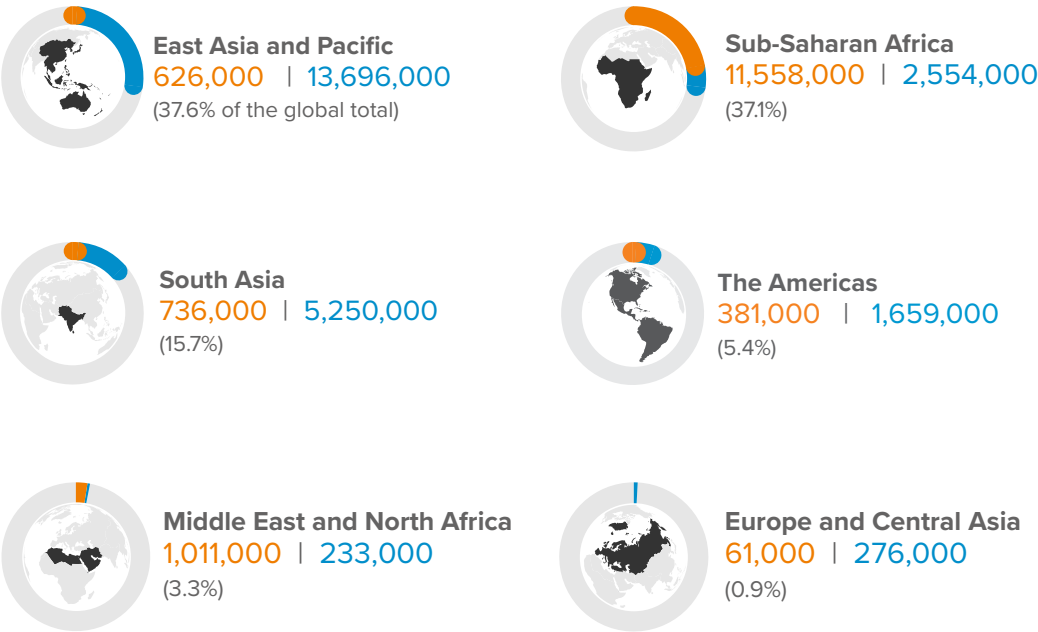


Figure 1: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters per region

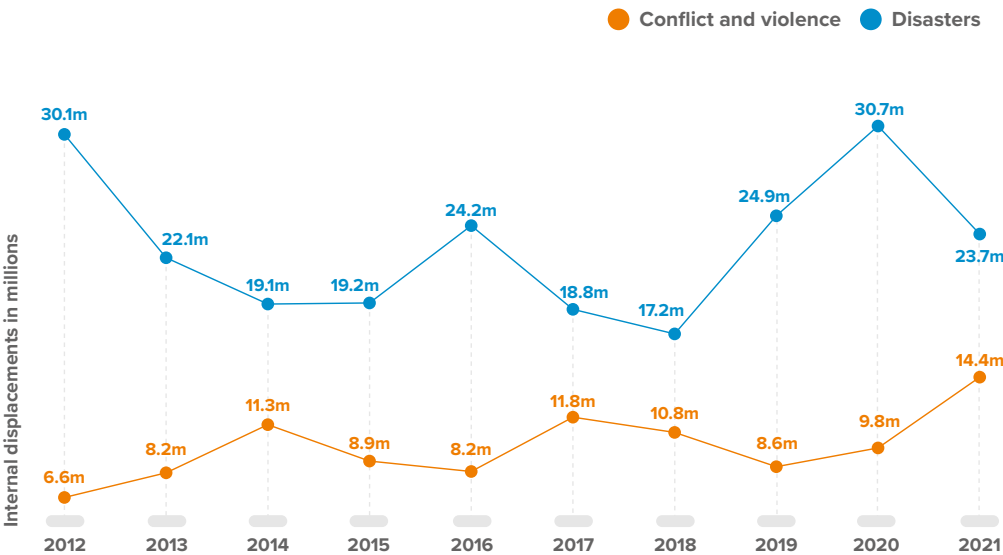


Figure 2: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters worldwide (2012-2021)

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

Total number of IDPs as of end of 2021

59.1 million
Internally displaced people

53.2m by conflict and violence
5.9m by disasters

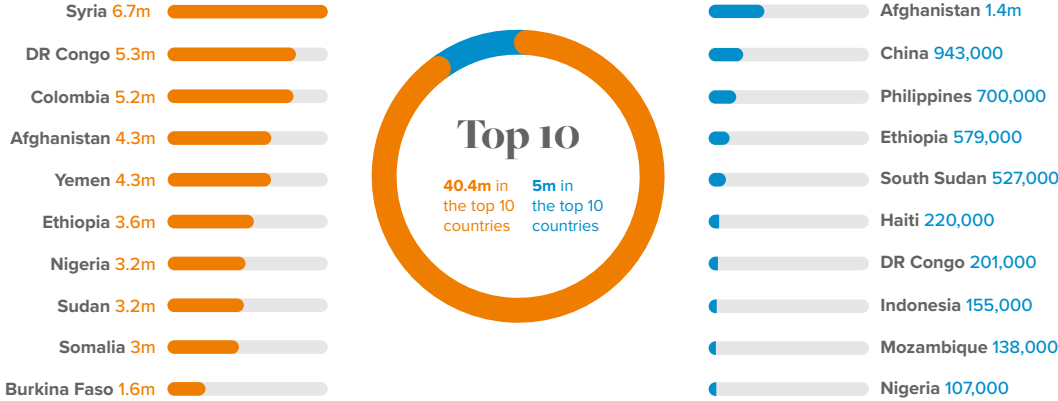


Figure 3: Conflict and disasters: Ten countries with the highest number of IDPs worldwide as of the end of 2021

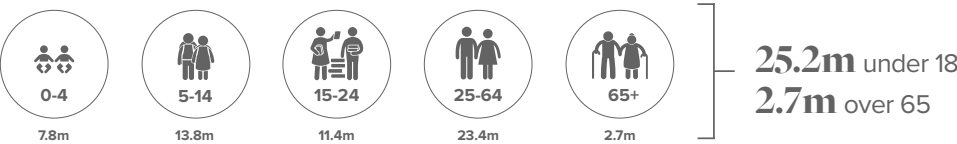
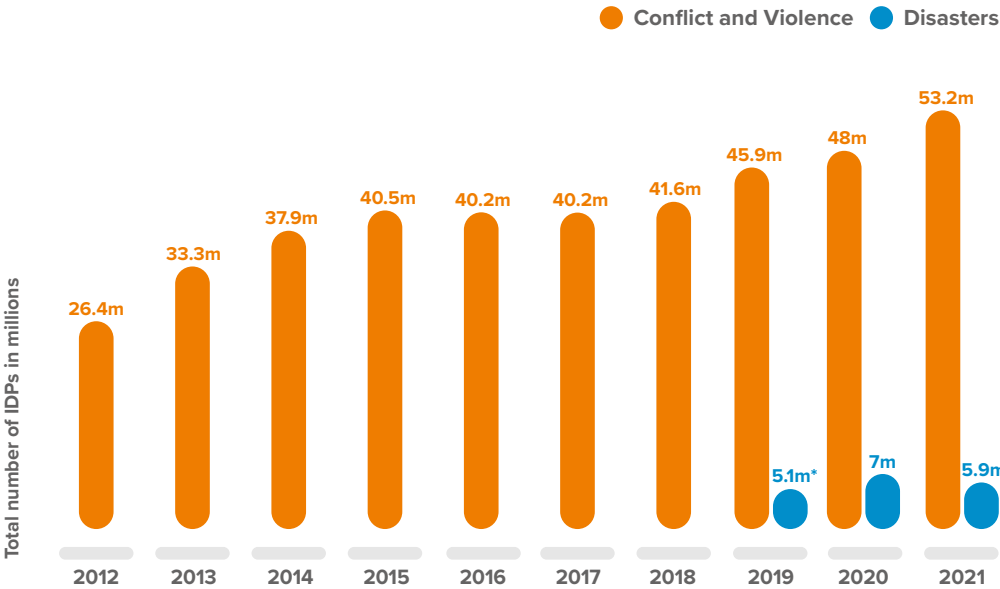


Figure 4: Total number of IDPs worldwide as of end 2021, by age group



* First year this data is available

Figure 5: Total number of IDPs worldwide at year end (2012-2021)

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

Internal displacements in 2021

Conflict, violence and disasters triggered 38 million internal displacements across 141 countries and territories in 2021.¹

The global figure for conflict and violence was the highest ever recorded at 14.4 million, and individual countries including Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Afghanistan also registered all-time highs. Many communities fled repeatedly as conflict frontlines shifted. Camps hosting internally displaced people (IDPs) were attacked in some countries, forcing people to move again.

The global figure for disaster displacements was lower than in 2020 at 23.6 million. Large Asian countries including China, the Philippines and India recorded the highest figures as in previous years, but significant displacement also took place in smaller countries such as Haiti and Sri Lanka.

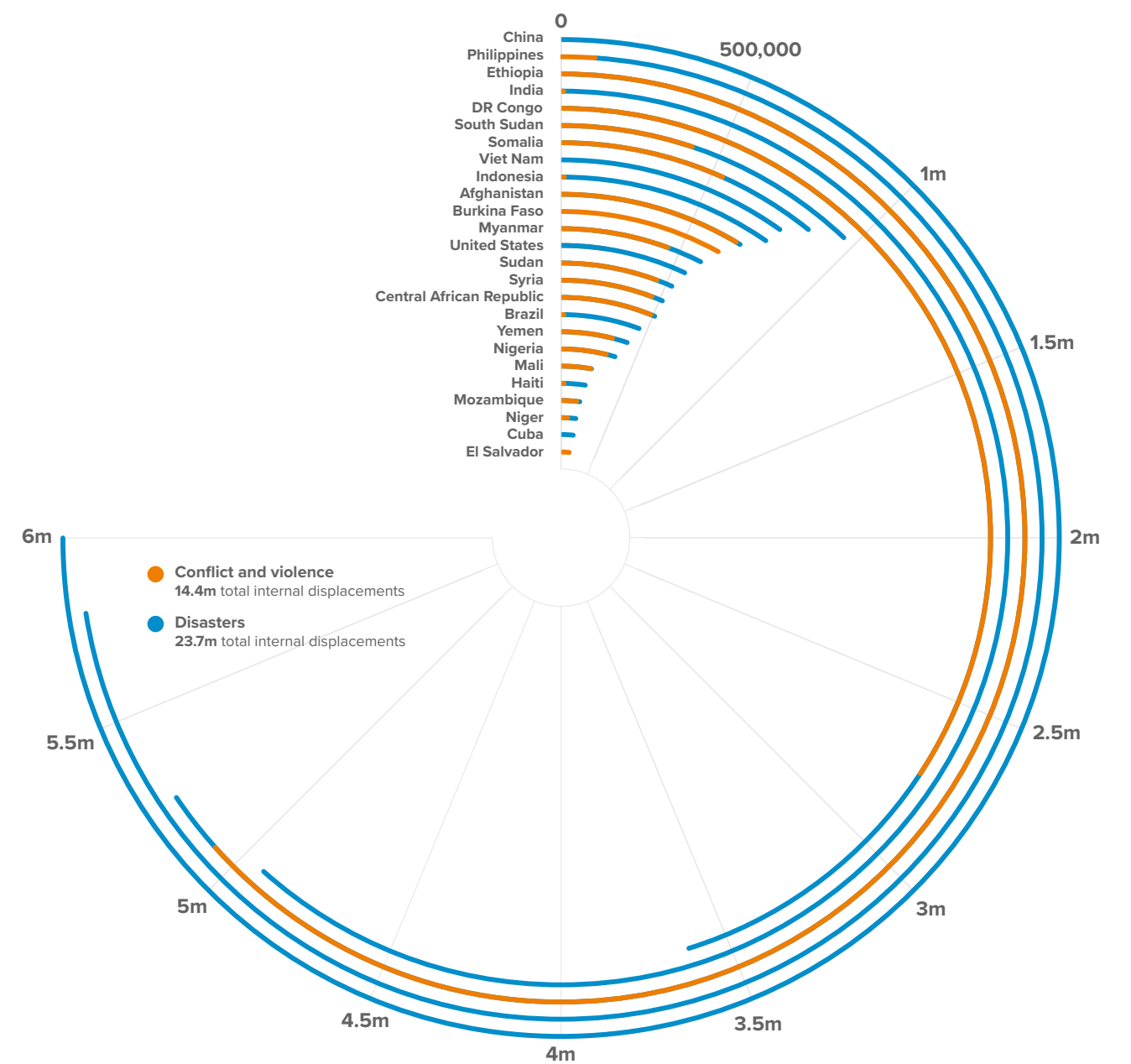


Figure 6: Twenty-five countries with most internal displacements in 2021

Coastal villagers are seen on the Bay of Bengal's Chandipur beach in Odisha, eastern India as police evacuate people ahead of the arrival of cyclone Yaas. © STR/NurPhoto via Getty Images, May 2021.



The 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on 14 August 2021 caused significant damage to schools and educational centres. Pictured: sustained damage to College Mazenod in Camp-Perrin, Ley Cayes, Haiti. © UNICEF/UN0503647/Rouzier, August 2021.

Disasters triggered more than 60 per cent of the internal displacements recorded worldwide in 2021. More than 94 per cent were the result of weather-related hazards such as storms and floods. The hurricane season in the Americas and rainy seasons in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were less severe, which partly explains why figures were lower than in 2020 and 2019. Drought in several regions triggered 240,000 displacements and fuelled other hazards such as wildfires that also forced people to flee.

The Nyiragongo volcano in DRC erupted in May, triggering more than 599,000 displacements, the highest figure for a geophysical event in 2021 and the highest for a volcanic eruption since data became available in 2008. Nyiragongo is in the province of North Kivu, which is also home to millions of IDPs who have fled conflict and violence. A number of new and repeated conflict displacements were also reported in the province, and the combined impacts of the two crises were particularly severe.

In countries such as Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria, disasters and conflict collided, triggering high numbers of new and repeated displacements. Although presented as separate metrics, the reality is that many IDPs are forced to flee by a combination of both factors.

At 12.5 million, most of the displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2021 were triggered by armed conflict. Prevailing insecurity in countries such as Iraq and Syria forced many IDPs to flee for a second or third time. The fact that many of the displacements recorded in these countries were repeated movements meant that their number of IDPs at the end of the year did not change significantly.

Intercommunal violence triggered 1.3 million internal displacements across 24 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Assessing displacement associated with criminal violence is still challenging, but evidence shows that it was an important trigger in several countries in the Americas including El Salvador, Mexico and Haiti. Other types of violence, which mostly refer to a mix of intercommunal and criminal violence, led to 237,000 displacements, many of them in countries around the Lake Chad Basin.

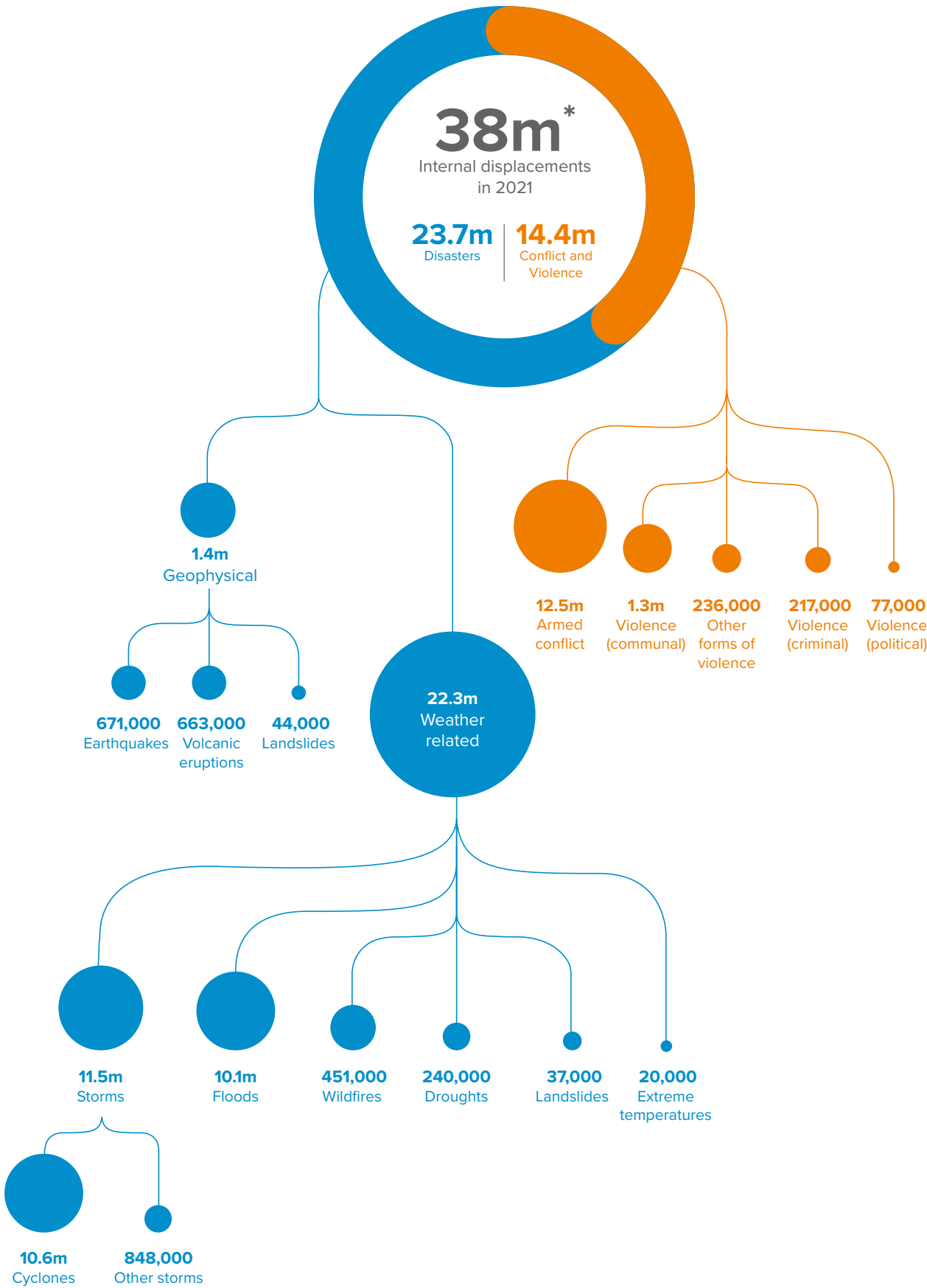


Figure 7: Internal displacements breakdown by conflict, violence and disasters in 2021

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

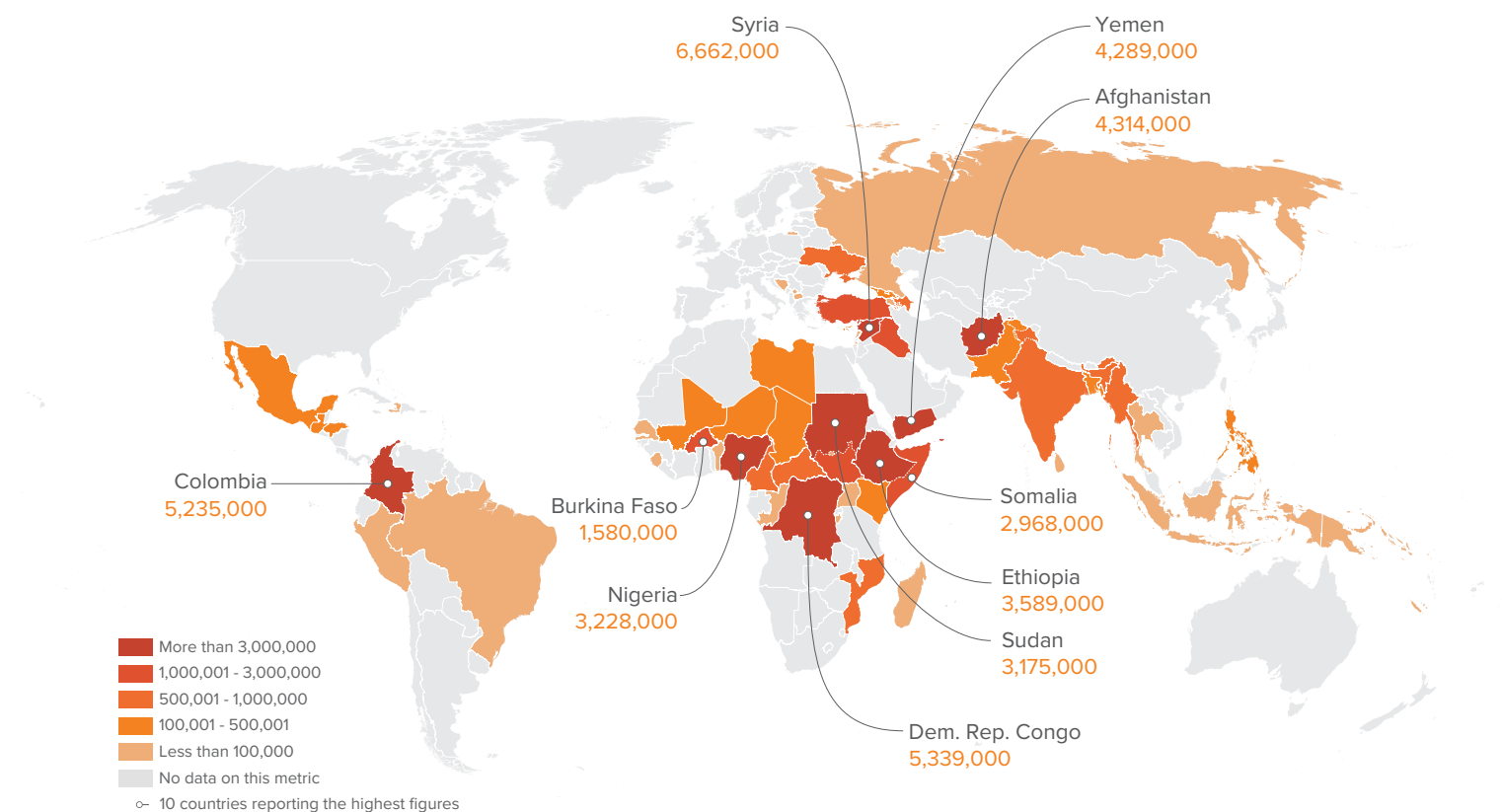
People living in displacement

Violence continued to surge in Colombia in 2021, forcing more people to move in search of safety. Rural areas such as the one shown were heavily impacted. © Tomás Méndez/ NRC/Consortio MIRE, November 2021.

Displaced by conflict and violence

An unprecedented 53.2 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year across 59 countries and territories.² This is an increase of 5.8 million compared with 2020, driven mostly by growing numbers of IDPs in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Yemen. Their number also remained worryingly high in Syria, DRC and Colombia, which between them accounted for nearly a third of the global total (see figure 8).

The global figure includes not only people displaced last year, but also those who fled their homes several years or even decades ago. The overwhelming majority of the IDPs in Nigeria, for example, have been living in displacement for five to seven years, while most of those in Mozambique have been displaced over the course of the past 24 months.



53.2 million internally displaced people as a result of conflict and violence in **59** countries and territories as of **31 December 2021**

Figure 8: Total number of IDPs by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2021

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



Fafin displacement camp, north rural Aleppo.
© UNICEF/UN0581300/Almatar, October 2021

In other countries, it is not possible to ascertain how long people have been displaced for despite high and even increasing figures. Data on the number of IDPs in Afghanistan, DRC and Yemen as of the end of 2021 is up to date, but there is no information available on when they were displaced. This gap continues to be a major barrier to understanding the true scope and scale of protracted displacement globally.

Data on displaced populations in countries such as Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, India and Turkey has not been verified and updated for a very long time, making it impossible to know if any of those who fled their homes in past years or decades were still displaced as of the end of 2021. Collecting more disaggregated and up-to-date information on these populations is key to the design of tailored prevention and response measures intended to decrease their number.

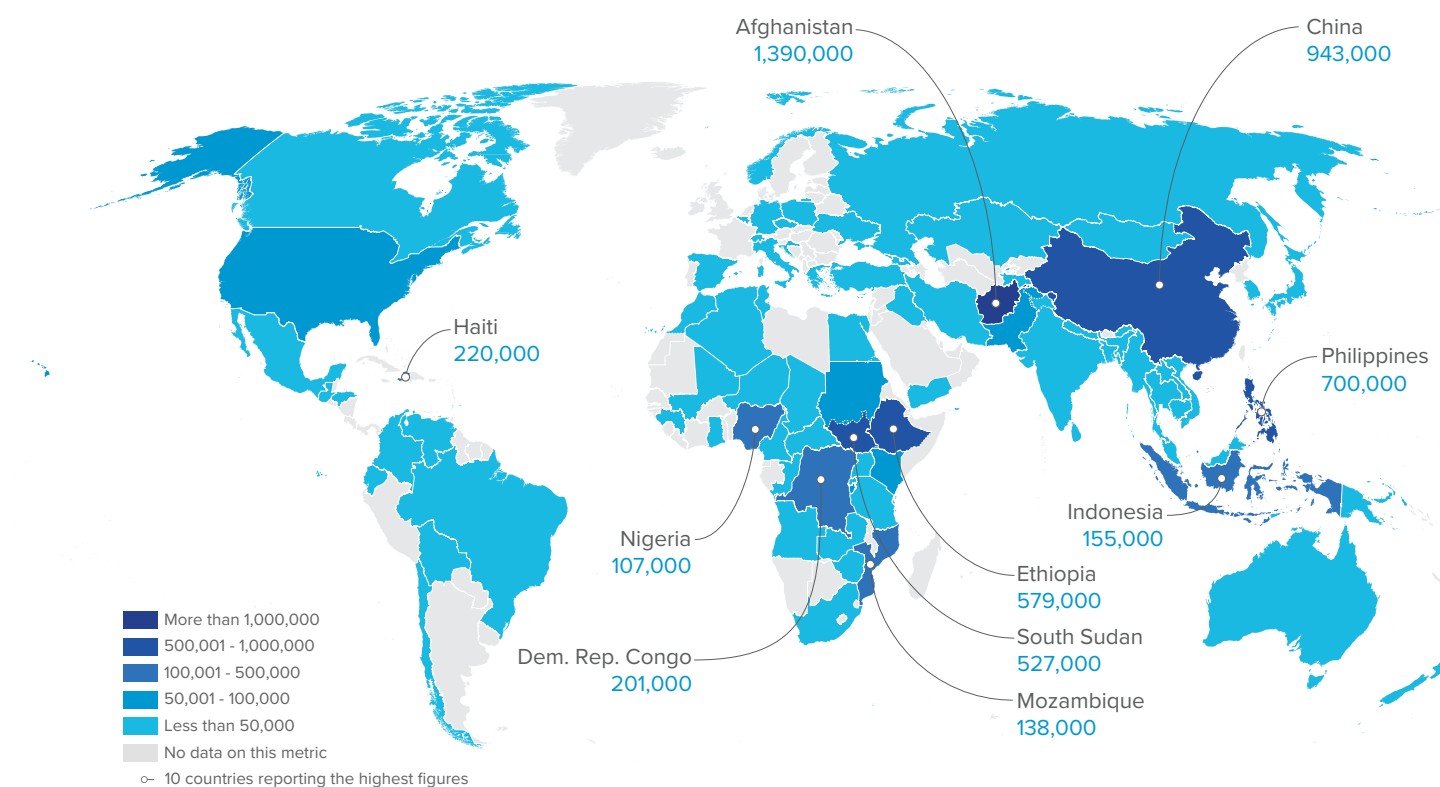
A further challenge is that few countries have mechanisms to monitor progress towards durable solutions. The process of IDPs returning or integrating locally in Somalia and Yemen has not followed, making it impossible to remove people from the statistics, which in turn influences trends.

Colombia, on the other hand, offers an example of good practice. The country's number of IDPs is high partly because the government keeps a record of all those displaced by conflict and violence for historical purposes. The Victim's Unit also recently began to conduct assessments to gauge IDPs' progress in overcoming the vulnerabilities associated with their displacement, which allows to revise the figure and provide a more accurate and up-to-date total.³

Displaced by disasters

At least 5.9 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of disasters at the end of 2021 across 84 countries and territories. This is only the third year that we have compiled such a global figure, and it should be considered a significant underestimate. Afghanistan, China and the Philippines had the highest figures, accounting for more than three million (see figure 9).

Most of the people still displaced by disasters in Afghanistan were forced to flee their homes before 2021, the majority by drought and floods that have affected the country since 2018. Some of our estimates for China and the Philippines are based on housing destruction data, because both countries tend to be significantly affected by typhoons that cause widespread devastation of this type.



5.9 million internally displaced people
as a result of disasters in **84** countries and territories
as of **31 December 2021**

Figure 9: Total number of IDPs by disasters as of 31 December 2021

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

The internal displacements triggered by earthquakes in Haiti in August and Pakistan in October contributed substantially to the increase in the number of IDPs in the two countries as of the end of the year. Similarly to powerful storms, earthquakes tend to cause severe damage to homes that takes significant time to repair.

These examples help to debunk the common misconception that most if not all IDPs return to their homes soon after disasters. Available data suggests they may be displaced or have vulnerabilities associated with their plight for many months or even years. Of the 727,000 people still displaced by cyclone Idai across Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar and Zimbabwe in December 2020, for example, there is evidence that 162,000 were still living in displacement as of the end of 2021.

Such evidence, however, is rare. There is all too often a lack of follow-up on the number of people displaced after a disaster strikes. This makes it difficult to fully understand the scale and nature of protracted displacement triggered by disasters and climate change impacts. Hurricanes Eta and Iota left 1.9 million people internally displaced across several countries in Central America in 2020, but no follow-up assessments were conducted last year, limiting our understanding of the duration of displacement following such storms.

Our approach to estimating the number of people still displaced by disasters at the end of each year is more conservative than the one we apply to conflict and violence, because we normally take reports that contain up-to-date information on IDPs or those estimated to be displaced by housing destruction at the end of each year into consideration. Older caseloads are excluded, which goes some way to explaining the large gap between the two totals.



The Buzi River which flooded during Cyclone Idai. IDMC estimates that there are 162,000 people still living in displacement nearly two years after the cyclone hit south-east Africa. © UNICEF/UN0305956/Oatway, August 2019.

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 worldwide was more than \$21 billion in 2021. 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 is based on information published in humanitarian response plans and only considers the cost of covering IDPs' basic needs and immediate losses.

It does not include the economic impacts of displacement on host communities or IDPs in the process of returning. Nor does it account for investments made by governments or development stakeholders to address the longer-term consequences of displacement. Put simply, when it comes to understanding the financial burden of the phenomenon, the figure is just the tip of the iceberg.

The average economic impact per IDP for a year of displacement is about \$360, based on data from 18 countries. The figure ranges from \$90 in Colombia to about \$710 in Libya. The variation arises from differences in the level of needs across affected populations and the estimated cost of meeting them. In countries where national income is higher, the economic impact of livelihood loss is also greater.

Across the countries analysed, the highest economic impacts stem from loss of livelihoods and the cost of providing IDPs with support for their basic needs, including healthcare, food and nutrition. The Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing conflict and disasters have aggravated food insecurity among IDPs in many countries and increased their reliance on humanitarian assistance.

In Libya, for example, about 77,000 IDPs were estimated to be food insecure and in need of food assistance in 2021, up from 17,000 just before the pandemic.⁴ In the case of large-scale, protracted displacement crises that take place in countries with fragile economies, the economic impacts of displacement can amount to a significant proportion of the GDP, in Syria's case around 15 per cent.

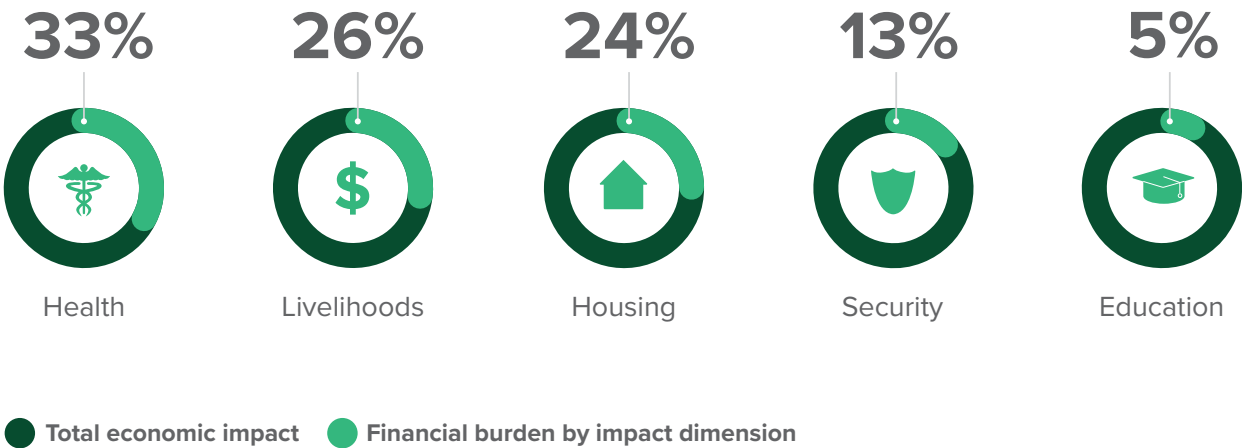


Figure 10: Financial burden of internal displacement in 2021 by impact dimension for 18 countries analysed

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



Recurrent drought resulted in low productivity of crops and displacement in Badghis province of Afghanistan in 2021. © Enayatullah Azad/NRC, April 2021.

Regional Overviews



Two teenage girls prepare millet in the family compound in which they currently reside in Burkina Faso. They were displaced with their families in 2021 when an armed group burned their village to the ground. © Ingebjørg Kårstad/ NRC, May 2021.

Conflict and violence

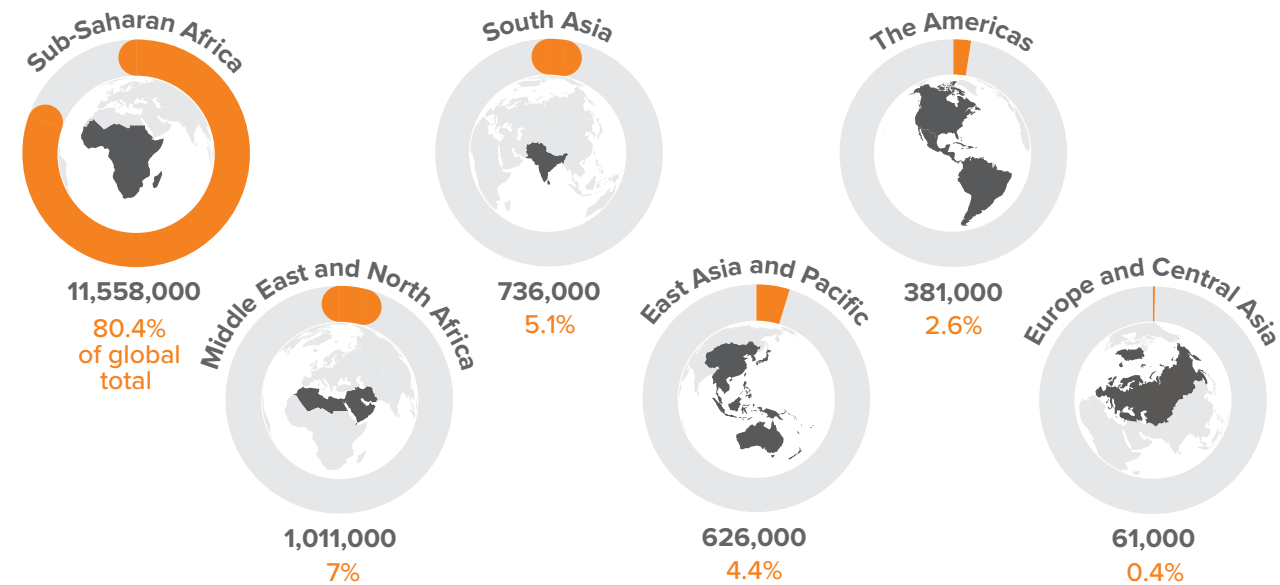


Figure 11: Conflict and violence: internal displacements by region in 2021

Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for more than 80 per cent of all internal displacements triggered by conflict and violence worldwide in 2021. The regional total was 4.7 million higher than the figure for the previous year, driven mostly by conflict in Ethiopia, DRC, Burkina Faso, Somalia and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Some countries in South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific also recorded their highest displacement figures ever. The total for Afghanistan helped to make the overall figure for South Asia nearly double that reported in 2020. The overall figure for East Asia and the Pacific more than tripled, mostly the result of a sharp escalation in conflict and violence in Myanmar and significant displacements in the Philippines.

The number of internal displacements in the Middle East and North Africa decreased by about half compared with 2020 to its lowest in a decade. This was mainly the result of a lull in conflict in Syria and Libya. Lower figures were also reported in the Americas, Europe and Central Asia, but the number of IDPs at the end of 2021 was all but unchanged from a year earlier. It will take significant longer-term peacebuilding and development interventions to resolve the underlying challenges that prolong the displacement of millions of people around the world.

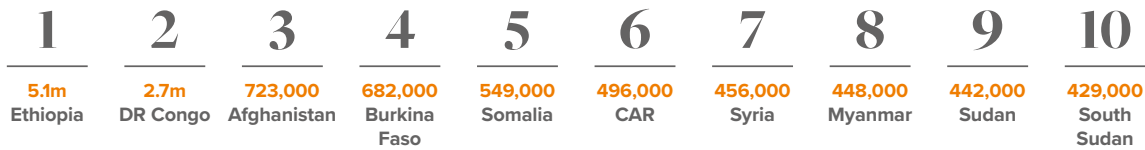


Figure 12: Ten countries with the most internal displacements by conflict and violence in 2021

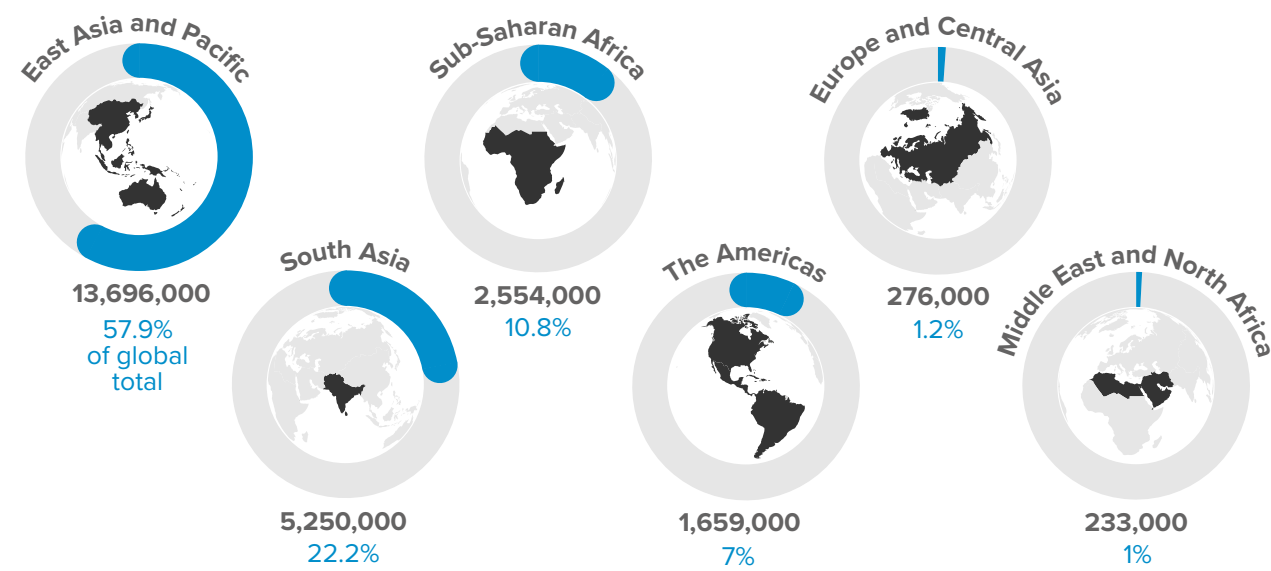


Figure 13: Disasters: internal displacements by region in 2021

Most of the new and repeated displacements triggered by disasters in 2021 were recorded in East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia, which together accounted for about 80 per cent of the total. Tropical cyclones, monsoon rains and floods hit highly exposed areas that are home to millions of people. The most affected countries were China, the Philippines and India. Many displacements were in the form of pre-emptive evacuations, but the extent of housing destruction in some of the disasters suggests that significant numbers of people face the prospect of prolonged displacement.

Despite a less intense hurricane season in the Americas, and less rainfall in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, all three regions were hit by severe droughts and extreme temperatures that led to hundreds of thousands of displacements. The dry conditions also fuelled other hazards such as wildfires, which forced more people from their homes. Europe suffered weather extremes which caused heatwaves, wildfires and heavy flooding that led to more than 261,000 displacements, an increase compared to 2020.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6m	5.7m	4.9m	888,000	780,000	749,000	573,000	506,000	449,000	271,000
China	Philippines	India	DR Congo	Viet Nam	Indonesia	United States	South Sudan	Brazil	Somalia

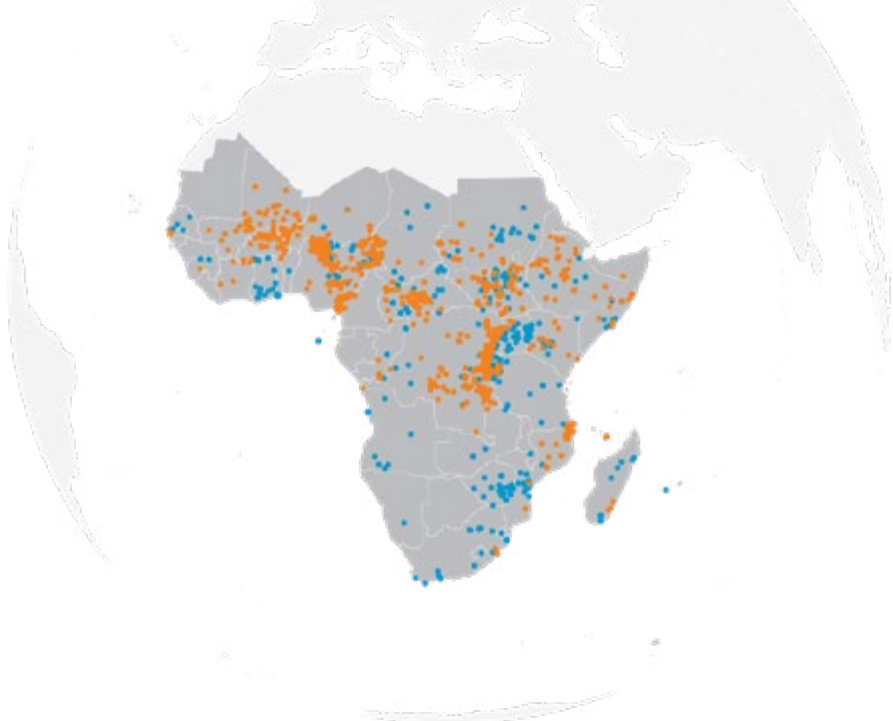
Figure 14: Ten countries with the most internal displacements by disasters in 2021



A mother and child stand next to their crops that were lost by drought in early 2021 in southern Madagascar.
© UNICEF/UN0406829/Andrianantenaina, January 2021.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Internal displacements in 2021



Total number of IDPs in 2021

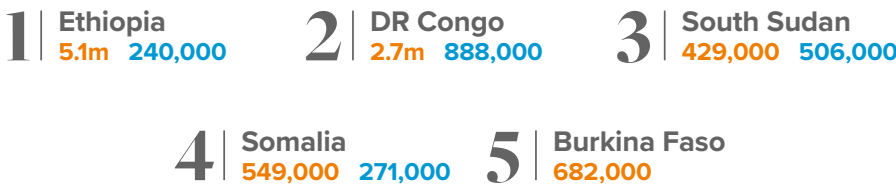


Figure 15: Five countries with most internal displacements in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021

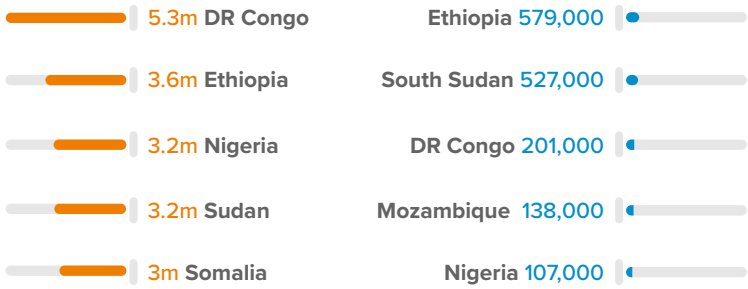


Figure 17: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa as of end 2021



Figure 18: Total number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa as of end 2021, by age group

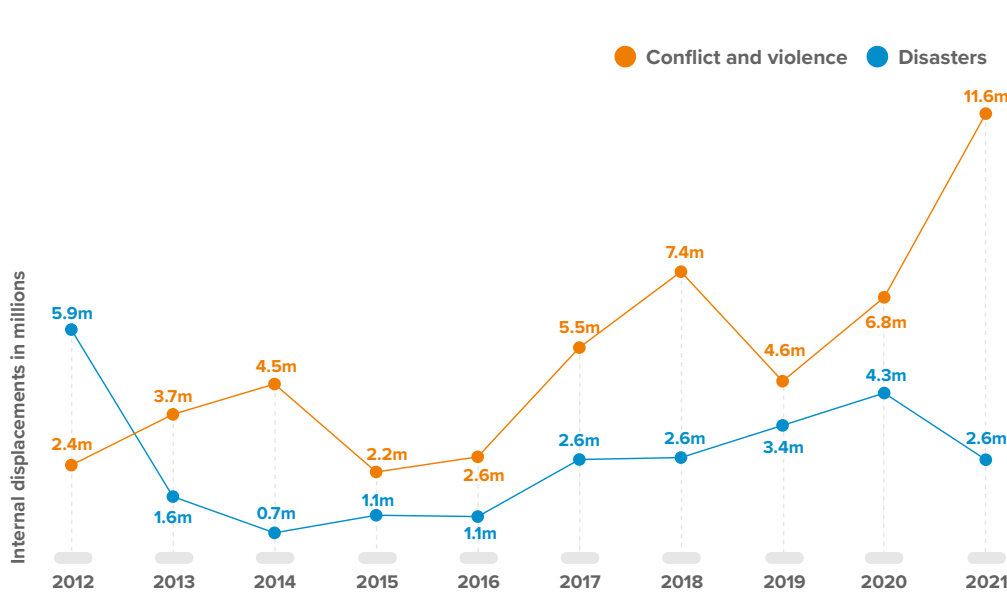
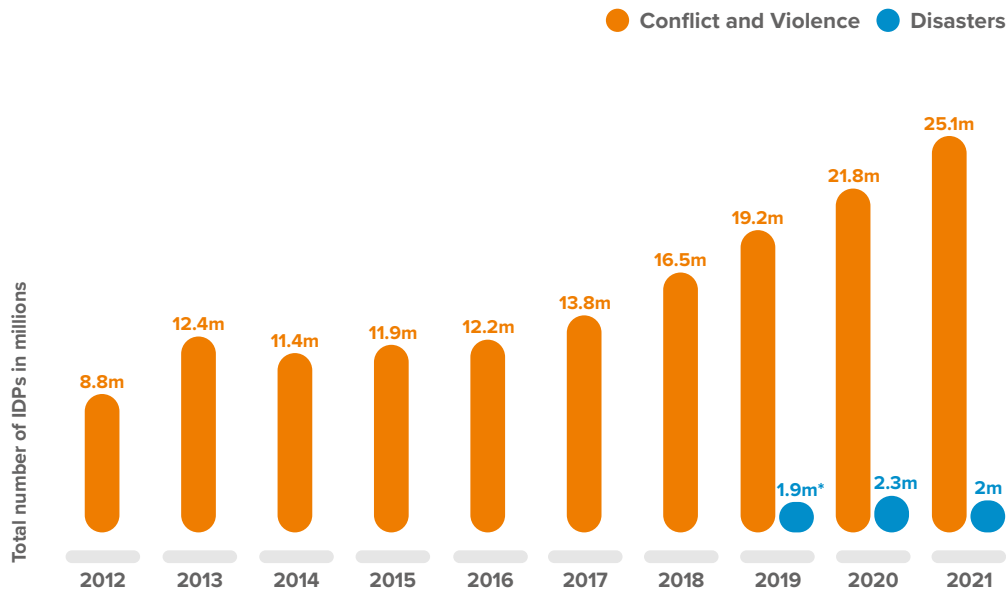


Figure 16: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in sub-Saharan Africa (2012-2021)

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



*First year this data is available

Figure 19: Total number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa at year end (2012-2021)

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

Conflict and violence triggered 11.6 million internal displacements in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021, the highest figure ever recorded for the region. New waves of violence in eastern Africa and escalating tensions and conflict in the central Sahel and Lake Chad regions accounted for most of the movements, but violence also led to displacement in southern and central Africa, most notably in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mozambique. Foreign military activity also influenced displacement and return trends in a number of countries.

Disasters triggered 2.6 million displacements, fewer than in 2020. Floods were less intense and widespread, accounting for about 60 per cent of the total, compared with 98 per cent the previous year. Volcanic activity, drought, storms, earthquakes, and wildfires accounted for the remaining 40 per cent. Some disasters displaced people in areas already coping with the impacts of conflicts and violence, and these overlapping crises pushed millions of people into acute food insecurity. Many countries recorded their worst ever levels, including famine conditions.⁵

There were 27.2 million people living in internal displacement across the region as a result of conflict, violence and disasters at the end of the year, an increase of 3.1 million on the figure for 2020. IDPs came under attack in several countries, forcing some to flee again, increasing their vulnerability and impeding humanitarian access. These concerning trends are a reminder of the urgent need to scale up efforts to address and reduce internal displacement in the region.

A number of countries have adopted promising practices. These include the life-saving evacuation of people before disasters strike, and better tracking of the duration of displacement with the aim of providing more tailored responses for those affected. Government-led return operations also took place in at least five countries. These positive developments, however, face a number of challenges.

Escalating violence against civilians

Armed conflict and violence continued to expand geographically in eastern, central and western Africa in 2021, affecting areas previously relatively peaceful or where violence had decreased in recent years.⁶ Indiscriminate attacks against civilians also increased

significantly, leading a growing number of people in countries including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger to form self-defence groups or join existing non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and adding more complexity to the spiralling violence.⁷ The rise in attacks against civilians also triggered large new and repeated displacements, causing further harm to thousands of IDPs and creating more obstacles to durable solutions.

The number of internal displacements in Nigeria increased more than two-fold in 2021 to reach 376,000, mostly the result of major attacks by NSAGs in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. The most significant events were two consecutive attacks in Yobe in April, which triggered 190,000 displacements.⁸ The violence also led to the closure of several humanitarian operations, as in the Damasak and Dikwa local government areas of Borno in March and April.⁹ Many people across all three states were forced to flee their homes various times, including some who had recently returned after the government's closure of displacement camps.¹⁰

NSAGs traditionally active in the north-east also extended their influence to north-western and north-central regions, increasing violence against civilians as they tried to establish a foothold in areas previously largely affected by criminal violence, as well as inter-communal violence between herders and farmers.¹¹ The number of internal displacements in these regions rose twice as a result, to reach 123,000.

Repeated displacements in Cameroon were triggered by frequent NSAG attacks and inter-communal clashes in the Far North region and ongoing violence between NSAGs and the security forces in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Across the country as a whole, there were 131,000 new and secondary displacements in 2021 and 909,000 people were living in displacement as a result of violence by the end of the year. IDPs' humanitarian needs were considered to be between severe and extreme as of March, and access remained challenging throughout the year.¹²

Around 110,000 new and secondary displacements were recorded in Niger, mostly the result of increased NSAG attacks against civilians in Tahoua and Tillabéri regions, and intercommunal and criminal violence that spread into Maradi region from neighbouring Nigeria.¹³



A displaced man rests against a wall outside of an indoor sports stadium in Pemba, Mozambique. The stadium is being used as a camp for IDPs fleeing attacks in the north of the country. © HN WESSELS/AFP via Getty Images, May 2021.

In Burkina Faso, violence perpetrated by NSAGs as well as communal tensions spread further south, displacing communities near the border with Côte d'Ivoire and Benin.¹⁴ Both countries experienced several large-scale deadly attacks against civilians that forced thousands to flee.¹⁵

Attacks against civilians, including IDPs sheltering in camps, health facilities and schools also triggered an unprecedented number of new and repeated displacements in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia.¹⁶ Nationwide around 4.2 million people were living in displacement by the end of the year, the highest figure ever recorded for the country (see spotlight, p.39).

In Sudan, deteriorating intercommunal violence led to a six-fold increase in internal displacements, reaching 442,000. Civilians at displacement sites in Darfur were also attacked, and violence in and around the Krinding camps in West Darfur triggered about 108,000 secondary movements in April (see spotlight, p.41).¹⁷

Beyond driving millions of people from their homes, these attacks against civilians involved the large-scale destruction of housing, livelihoods and infrastructure.¹⁸ As such, they also significantly set back the prospect of durable solutions, and all the more so when people who had already been displaced at least once were targeted.

This is evident in eastern DRC, which hosts one of the world's largest and most protracted displacement situations. The number of civilian deaths and new and repeated displacements in the provinces of Ituri and North and South Kivu continued to rise in 2021, and protection became the main humanitarian concern.¹⁹ The three provinces recorded 1.1 million, 912,000 and 462,000 displacements respectively.

In response, the government declared a "state of siege" in Ituri and North Kivu on 30 April, but violence, human rights abuses and displacement continued unabated.²⁰ The number of internal displacements across the country increased by 23 per cent compared with 2020 to reach 2.7 million, and around 5.3 million people were living in displacement at the end of the year.

Foreign military activity shapes displacement trends

Several governments across central, southern and western Africa increased the presence of foreign militaries in 2021

in an effort to curb escalating violence. Others took steps to reduce their presence, and both measures affected displacement patterns and trends.

The security situation in CAR deteriorated significantly at the end of 2020 when violence linked to general elections in December broke out. The situation was exacerbated by the emergence of a new alliance of NSAGs, the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), which united several of the signatories to the 2019 peace deal.²¹ The UN stabilisation mission in CAR (MINUSCA), Russian private security personnel and others stepped up their military presence and activities in response, leading to the worst violence in the country in recent years.²²

As many as 496,000 internal displacements were recorded in 2021, the highest figure since 2018. The four prefectures where foreign military activity was at its highest – Haute-Kotto, Nana-Mambéré, Ouaka and Ouham-Pendé – accounted for about 45 per cent of the total.²³ CAR's president declared a unilateral ceasefire with NSAGs in October, raising hopes of renewed efforts to implement the 2019 peace deal that might reduce violence and displacement.²⁴

Similarly, the government of the DRC stepped up its military response to the insecurity caused by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the eastern provinces. The Congolese armed forces, supported by the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), started joint operations with the Ugandan military in North Kivu in November 2021.²⁵ As the offensive started towards the end of the year, it is still too early to assess whether or not the coalition will succeed to provide more security and decrease the alarming displacement levels.

Increased external military presence also shaped conflict and displacement dynamics in Mozambique, where NSAGs launched a major assault on the city of Palma in Cabo Delgado province in early 2021. The attack, which triggered around 92,000 displacements, prompted a regional military intervention by several member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and a bilateral deployment from Rwanda.²⁶

With their support the national army retook many areas controlled by NSAGs, improving security after four years of conflict in Cabo Delgado, where the number of people living in displacement had risen from 10,000 at the end of 2017 to 676,000 at the end of 2020. The figure reached 735,000 by the end of 2021, but the number of new and

Displaced from their homes by flooding in South Sudan this group of people use a tarpaulin to float down the river in search of higher grounds. © UNICEF/UN0548073/Grarup, September 2021.

secondary displacements was significantly lower than in the previous year.²⁷ Smaller-scale attacks continued to take place, but the government also approved a three-year reconstruction plan for the province and announced it would start returning IDPs to towns it had retaken.²⁸

The armed forces in Ethiopia were joined in their conflict against the Tigrayan forces by the Eritrean army, which contributed to a rise in violence and aggravated the humanitarian situation in the north of the country. Limited access to data and the high number of parties to the conflict made it impossible to estimate the number of displacements directly triggered by the Eritrean intervention, but overall figures for the country were the highest ever recorded.²⁹

The foreign military presence in Somalia and Sudan declined in 2021. The US completed the withdrawal of its troops from Somalia, and some Ethiopian troops also pulled out after years of bilateral presence and a role in the African Union's mission (AMISOM), a move Addis Ababa made to strengthen its capacity to deal with the internal conflict in Tigray.³⁰ AMISOM's future is unclear, but its role is likely to change as it continues to hand over its responsibilities to Somalia's security forces.³¹

This, coupled with a political crisis caused by delayed presidential and parliamentary elections, led to the expansion of the Islamist extremist group al-Shabaab, which already controlled swathes of Somali territory.³² The group's violence triggered tens of thousands of displacements during the year, and there are widespread concerns about the group strengthening and expanding its influence after the withdrawal of foreign troops.³³ The political crisis also fuelled violence between forces loyal to different political leaders at the national and local level, triggering hundreds of thousands more displacements, mostly in Banadir region and Galmudug state.³⁴

In Sudan, the withdrawal of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which was completed on 30 June, left a security vacuum in which escalating intercommunal violence led to hundreds of thousands of internal displacements (see spotlight, p.41).³⁵

Despite a major foreign military presence in western Africa, insecurity and displacement remain significant. One of the main objectives of the Multinational Joint Task Force

(MNJTF), which has been present in the four countries that share the shores of Lake Chad since 2015, is to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency and enable the return of those displaced. It had a degree of success in securing some areas, but many of its gains were lost in 2021 during a resurgence of the group's violence.³⁶ The governments of Niger and Nigeria, however, continued to support IDPs' return to areas affected by the ongoing insecurity.³⁷

Under the French-led Operation Barkhane, the G5 Sahel Joint Force - made up of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger - and most recently Europe's Takuba task force continued to fight NSAGs across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.³⁸ The operation has weakened some groups, but any impact on displacement trends is difficult to assess for lack of data.³⁹ France announced in mid-2021 that it would reduce its military presence in Mali, which it did in early 2022 through an official withdrawal.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the presence of Russian military personnel started to increase.⁴¹

When conflict, disasters and food insecurity collide

Conflict, disasters and economic decline were significant drivers of deepening food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021.⁴² Disasters hit areas already affected by violence and displacement, leaving millions of people to face acute food shortages and creating a downward spiral of vulnerability and displacement.⁴³ Hundreds of thousands were pushed into famine-like conditions in some areas, and around 91.8 million people faced severe food insecurity across the region as a whole.⁴⁴

The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in North Kivu on 22 May triggered the highest number of disaster displacements in the region. It also led to the most internal displacements by a geophysical event globally. The eruption and associated seismic activity destroyed 4,044 homes and 130 fields, triggering 599,000 internal displacements within DRC and 25,000 cross-border movements to Rwanda, where more than 13,000 people were left homeless.⁴⁵

North Kivu is home to millions of people displaced by conflict and was already in the throes of a humanitarian emergency when the eruption took place.⁴⁶ The combined impacts of the two crises were particularly severe and aggravated the province's already high levels of food

insecurity. Around 27 million people in DRC were facing acute food shortages as of October, the highest number in the world for a single country. A significant majority of them were in the eastern provinces.⁴⁷

South Sudan, which has been affected by conflict and violence since 2013, experienced severe flooding for the third consecutive year in 2021. The floods struck nine of the country's ten states, with Jonglei, Warrap, and Unity worst affected. They triggered 506,000 displacements and caused widespread damage to crops, livelihoods, homes and infrastructure.⁴⁸ When they hit, about 100,000 people were still living in displacement as a result of floods in previous years.⁴⁹

Local food production was severely affected because most farms were submerged. Many livestock animals drowned, and families sold others that they were unable to keep alive. The consecutive years of widespread flooding also mean that livelihood opportunities such as planting during the lean season are no longer an option for people living in affected areas.⁵⁰ The country as a whole faced its highest levels of food insecurity since its independence in 2011 as a result.⁵¹

The combination of disasters, conflict and food insecurity caused humanitarian emergencies in eastern and southern Africa in 2021, when several countries suffered their worst drought in four decades.⁵² In the Grand Sud region of Madagascar, a combination of drought, pest infestations and sandstorms reduced harvests by 60 per cent, leaving millions of people severely food insecure. Many communities left their homes and land in search of resources further north, with children making up the majority of those displaced, and there was an upsurge in cattle rustling, particularly in the districts of Amboasary and Taolagnaro. Such criminal violence also aggravated the situation by limiting humanitarian access and triggered 1,300 displacements.⁵³

In Somalia, the government and the UN declared an emergency in April when more than 80 per cent of the country was affected by drought. Around 200,000 people in Jubaland region required urgent water assistance as of October.⁵⁴ The drought triggered 168,000 internal displacements across the country as a whole, the highest figure since 2018, and 3.5 million people were facing acute food insecurity as of December, including 1.1 million

IDPs.⁵⁵ Drought in Kenya led the government to declare a national disaster in September, by which time around 2.1 million people were severely food insecure. Information on displacement was difficult to come by.⁵⁶

The link between conflict, disasters, food insecurity and displacement is complex, but the examples above suggest a pattern. Countries that experience a combination of disaster and conflict displacement crises tend to have the worst levels of food insecurity, as those forced to flee abandon their fields and livestock, seek shelter at displacement sites located far from markets and become trapped in repetitive displacement and deepening food insecurity.⁵⁷ The four countries with the highest number of severely food insecure people in the world were also among the five with the highest number of IDPs.⁵⁸ Food security and livelihoods are key factors to address in bringing displacement to a sustainable end. Failure to do so is only likely to set back IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions.⁵⁹

Promising practices for reducing and resolving displacement

Against the backdrop of increasing numbers of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa, the prospects for those affected to improve their living conditions and achieve durable solutions are bleak in most countries. Humanitarian access deteriorated in 2021 in countries including Cameroon, CAR, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan, and with it the living conditions of millions of IDPs.⁶⁰ Lack of access also impedes data collection, which in turn hampers the design of response and prevention measures.

That said, several governments made progress in responding to crises by laying out options for IDPs to integrate locally, return or resettle elsewhere in their countries, and by making efforts to reduce displacement risk and move people out of harm's way.

After the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, the government of DRC ordered 400,000 people to evacuate from ten districts in the city of Goma considered at a high risk from further eruptions or seismic activity. It also laid on transport to facilitate the evacuation.⁶¹ By the end of June, 80 per cent of those displaced had returned, less than two months after the disaster occurred.⁶² Around 30,000 people, five per cent of the total, remained displaced as of December

2021. The government also built 700 temporary shelters for those rendered homeless, and to decrease the risk of future displacement it prohibited reconstruction in areas considered at high risk of future lava flows.⁶³

The government of Niger took preventive action to reduce flood displacement risk by building and reinforcing drainage systems. It also provided relocation options for IDPs sheltering in displacement sites as a result of rainy season floods.⁶⁴ Zimbabwe provided a permanent solution to some of its IDPs in 2021 when most of the people displaced by cyclone Dineo in 2017 were relocated to new homes.⁶⁵

In an effort to resolve large and long-term displacement crises, the governments of Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger and Nigeria implemented strategies for IDPs to return home or resettle elsewhere, and the governments of Somalia and Sudan developed national strategies for durable solutions.⁶⁶ The focus, however, is on returns and these may be hampered by ongoing insecurity and widespread destruction in many areas of origin, which could also increase the risk of returnees being displaced again.⁶⁷

An integrated approach to returns, as adopted in Mali in 2021, may provide a more viable option. The country's Regional Reconciliation Support Team, together with the civilian affairs division of the UN stabilisation mission (DAC-MINUSMA), rebuilt and repopulated several villages in the Mopti region that had suffered major attacks. This was achieved through local reconciliation agreements, the involvement of women in the decision-making, the reopening of local schools and the rebuilding of infrastructure to prepare for IDPs' return, and the provision of support to help them reintegrate.⁶⁸

Local integration is also an important means of resolving displacement and should be included in strategies for durable solutions.⁶⁹ The Danwadaag durable solutions programme in Somalia provided a good example in 2021, when progress was made toward the local integration of urban IDPs in Baidoa by supporting them to buy plots of land through communal contributions to mitigate the risk

of forced evictions, build more permanent structures and formalise their ownership.⁷⁰

A number of countries also reinforced their monitoring systems. Zimbabwe and Mozambique improved their disaster displacement monitoring by tracking IDPs over time, making it possible to assess the number of people who remain displaced many months after disasters hit.⁷¹ The authorities in South Africa similarly continued to follow up on the needs of people displaced by floods in 2019.⁷²

Similar practices could be replicated in the region, but doing so will require substantial investment in peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction. Without it, the number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa will continue to rise in the years to come.



Students, determined to continue schooling, raise the flag of Niger in the schoolyard at dawn in Tillaberi, Niger. © Tom Peyre-Costa/NRC, February 2022.

Spotlight – Ethiopia: crisis in the north leads to unprecedented displacement

Conflict and violence triggered more than 5.1 million internal displacements in Ethiopia in 2021, three times the number in 2020 and the highest annual figure ever recorded for a single country.⁷³ The crisis in the northern region of Tigray deepened, spreading to neighbouring regions and uprooting millions of people from their homes. Fighting was intense, and widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties of the conflict were reported.⁷⁴

Conflict between the Ethiopian military and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) broke out in November 2020. The military took control of most of the region, including the capital Mekelle, in the first weeks of the fighting.⁷⁵ Much of the conflict then moved to rural areas of central, southern and western Tigray in the following months, triggering 1.8 million displacements.⁷⁶ In May, the military also carried out raids on displacement camps in Shire, home to the largest number of IDPs in the region. Many IDPs were subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention and ill-treatment.⁷⁷

Conflict dynamics and frontlines shifted in the second half of the year. Federal forces declared a unilateral ceasefire in June and together with their allies retreated from most of Tigray. Most of the region, however, remained under a de facto humanitarian blockade.⁷⁸ In an effort to reopen aid channels and recapture territory lost in the conflict, the TPLF began to move south and then into the Amhara and Afar regions, where fighting triggered 2 million displacements.⁷⁹

The Tigrayan forces' rapid advance prompted the government to declare a nationwide state of emergency for six months.⁸⁰ All parties to the conflict targeted civilian populations along ethnic lines, leading to widespread human rights violations, and displacement was often used as a means to secure territorial control.⁸¹

The TPLF announced in mid-December that its forces would retreat to their home region, which led to a lull in the fighting and allowed hundreds of thousands of people to return to their places of origin in Amhara and Afar.⁸² Violence continued, however, and people had very limited access to basic services such as healthcare, water and education, a situation aggravated by the widespread destruction of public and private infrastructure.⁸³

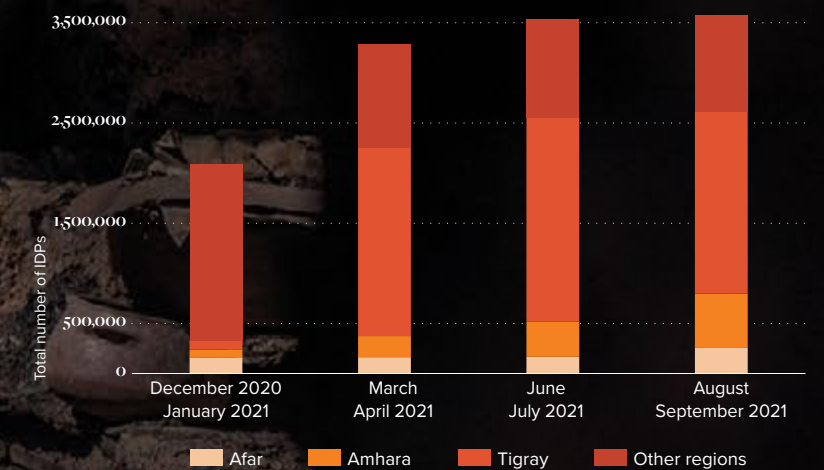
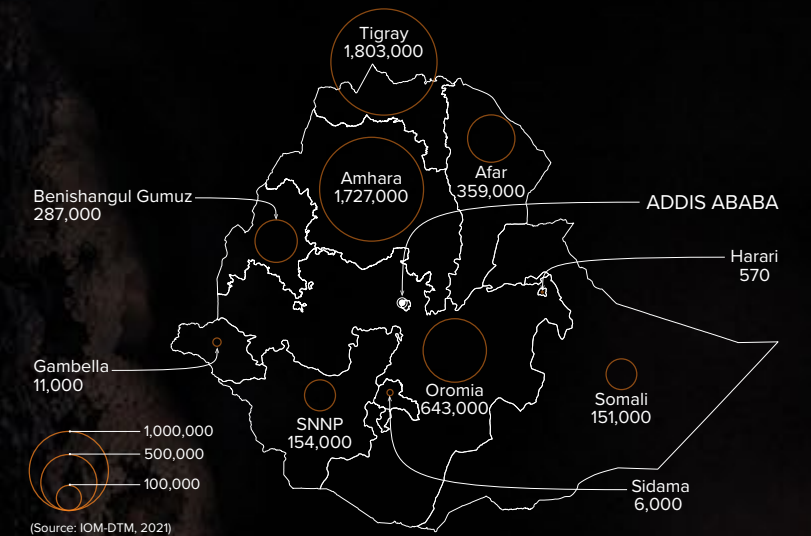
Many people in Tigray and some parts of Amhara and Afar faced extreme difficulties in working their land and accessing markets, making food one of their most pressing needs.⁸⁴ Around 5.2 million required food aid in Tigray as of the end of the year, and 400,000 were facing severe food insecurity.⁸⁵ The de facto blockade of Tigray has led to severe shortages of food and fuel, and UN stocks for aid distribution were all but exhausted as of January 2022.⁸⁶ Nor has it been possible to assess the full extent of needs.

The conflict in the North accounted for the vast majority of the internal displacements recorded in Ethiopia in 2021, but intercommunal violence in other regions also triggered a significant number. Across the country as a whole, around 3.6 million people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, including 1.7 million children without access to education.⁸⁷

Ethiopia's social fabric is more fragile than ever and humanitarian needs are at their highest.⁸⁸ Without a reduction in conflict, improved humanitarian access and an opportunity for communities to recover and rebuild, these needs are likely continue to increase along with the risk of repeated and protracted displacement.⁸⁹

5.1m Internal displacements by conflict and violence in Ethiopia in 2021

Highest displacement figures ever recorded for any country in any given year



A man sits in his house that was burned down during attacks between Tigrayan and armed forces in Ethiopia.
© Amanuel Sileshi/AFP via Getty Images, December 2021.

Spotlight – Sudan: A five-fold increase in internal displacement

The humanitarian situation in Sudan deteriorated significantly in 2021, as intercommunal violence intensified and the number of IDPs increased to 3.2 million.⁹⁰ Around 442,000 internal displacements were reported during the year, more than five times the figure for the previous year and the highest since 2014.⁹¹ The increase was mainly the result of the escalating violence, but better access to affected areas also improved the quantity and quality of data available, painting a more accurate picture of the displacement situation.

Violence across the country, and mainly in Darfur, stems mostly from intercommunal disputes over land, grazing routes and other resources.⁹² Clashes between nomads, farmers, herders and other groups date back many years, particularly during the harvest season.⁹³ Disasters, Covid-19, a severe economic crisis and worsening food insecurity intensified competition for resources in 2021 and contributed to the steep rise in violence and displacement.⁹⁴

Shifting power dynamics after the fall of Omar al-Bashir in 2019 have also played a role. The transitional government and an array of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) in October 2020, with the aim of tackling key issues such as land, IDPs' return, transitional justice, security sector reform and political representation.⁹⁵

Implementation, however, has faced challenges and delays.⁹⁶ Notably, not all of the country's NSAGs signed the agreement and some communities feel excluded.⁹⁷ Cattle-herding communities in Darfur in particular fear being evicted if the traditional system of land ownership is fully restored and IDPs return to what used to be their land, as envisaged in the JPA. They have not traditionally been allocated their own land and rely on accessing that of others along their migration routes.⁹⁸

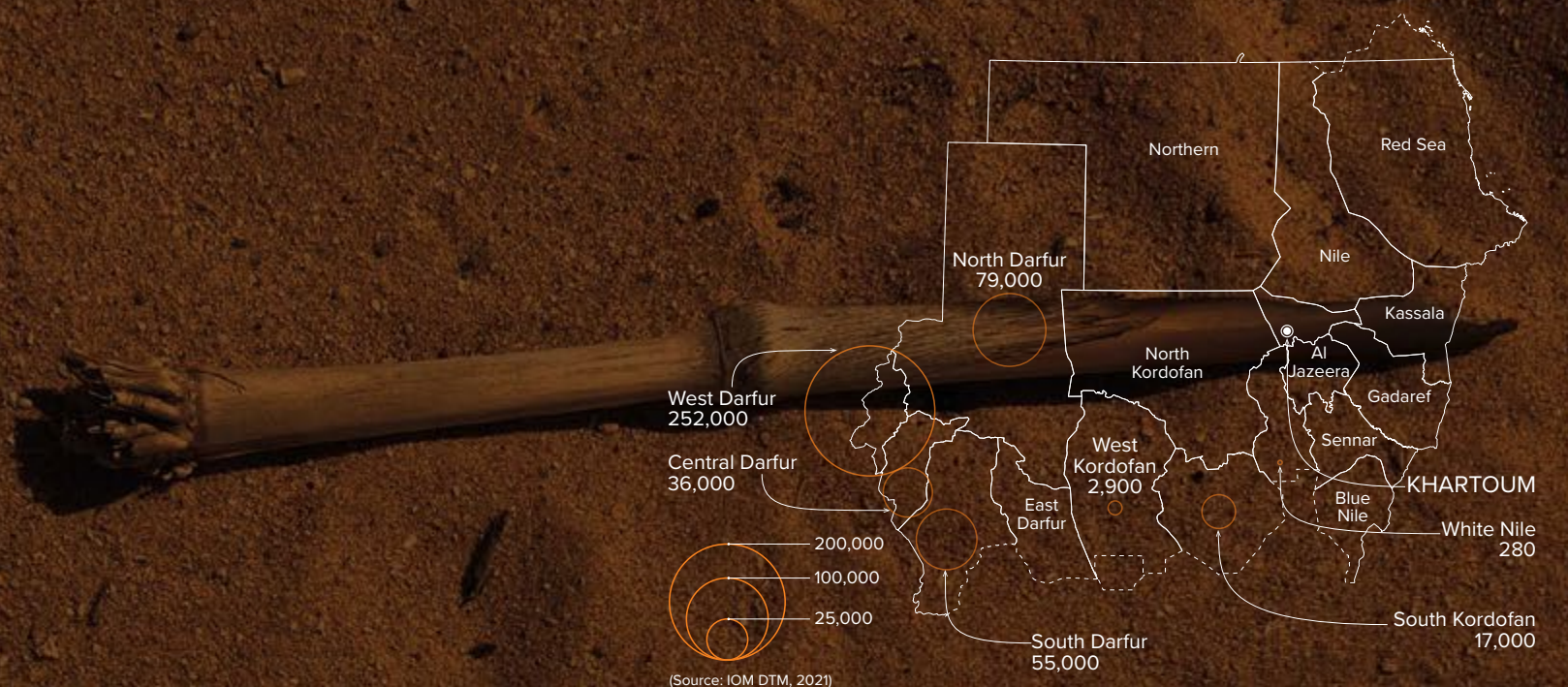
Tensions arising from the fear of losing control of resources descended into violent clashes between communities across Darfur in 2021.⁹⁹ A number of villages and displace-

ment sites were affected, particularly in North and West Darfur, where land is contested.¹⁰⁰ The withdrawal of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in June also left a security vacuum that reduced protection for civilians, including IDPs.¹⁰¹

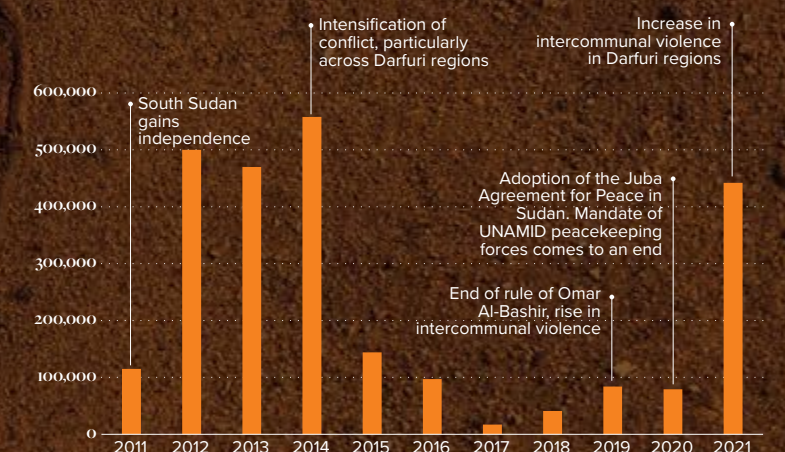
Around 422,000 displacements were reported in Darfur during the year. Armed clashes in Ag Geneina in West Darfur triggered more than 170,000 in January, surpassing the country-wide figure for 2020 in three days.¹⁰² Around 104,000 people were still displaced in the town as of the end of the year, many living in overcrowded shelters with no access to water, sanitation or other essential services.¹⁰³ Intercommunal violence also triggered 48,000 displacements in Tawila in North Darfur on 31 July and 1 August, and tens of thousands more elsewhere in the country during the year, including in West and South Kordofan (see map).¹⁰⁴

The humanitarian response was worryingly underfunded as of the end of the year.¹⁰⁵ This, combined with deepening insecurity and an uncertain political landscape after the military took control of the government on 25 October, represent major barriers for IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions. Around 56 per cent of Sudan's IDPs have been displaced for more than ten years, highlighting the protracted nature of this crisis.¹⁰⁶

To tackle these challenges, the national authorities in collaboration with the UN and other stakeholders have set up a durable solutions working group and drafted a national strategy on the issue for IDPs, returnees, refugees and host communities.¹⁰⁷ These initiatives have laid the foundations for and built momentum toward bringing a definitive end to displacement. Sustaining them is much needed, given the scale of the phenomenon and the extent of IDPs' ongoing needs. Political solutions are equally needed to address the causes of violence, including through implementation of the JPA.



2.5m Internal displacements by conflict and violence in Sudan between 2011 and 2021



A pair of shoes left behind when a village was burnt to the ground in West Darfur. Many villages and camps were torched during intercommunal clashes which caused significant displacement.

© NRC, December 2021.

Middle East and North Africa

Internal displacements in 2021



Total number of IDPs in 2021

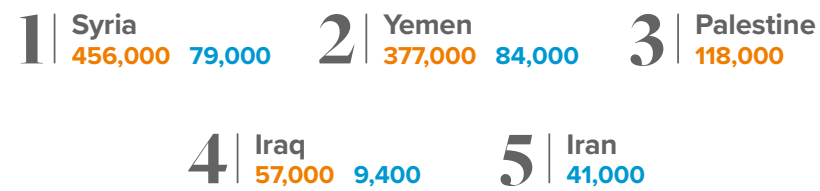


Figure 20: Five countries with most internal displacements in the Middle East and North Africa in 2021



Figure 22: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in the Middle East and North Africa as of end 2021



Figure 23: Total number of IDPs in the Middle East and North Africa as of end 2021, by age group

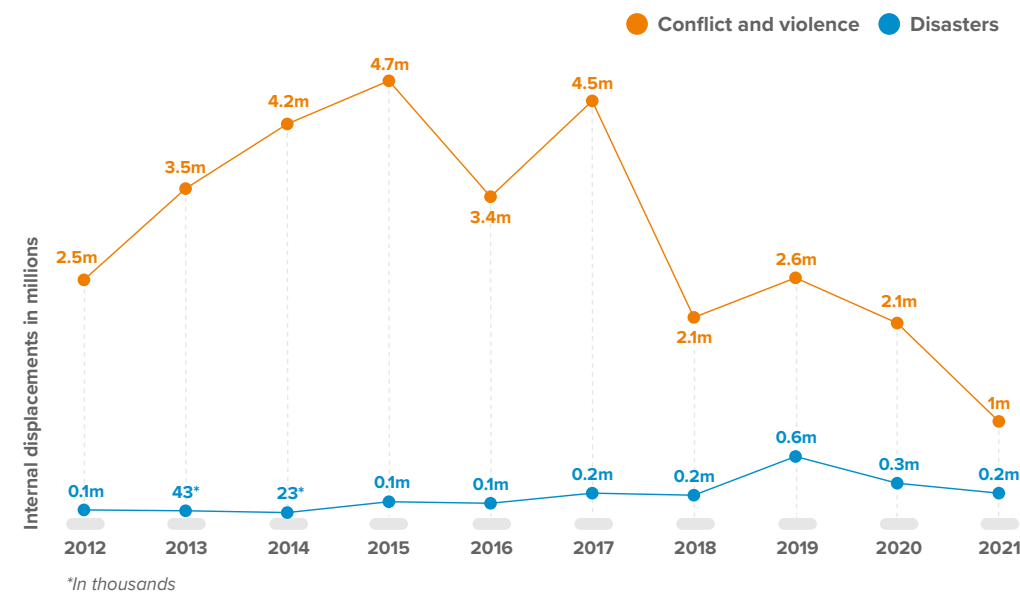


Figure 21: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in the Middle East and North Africa (2012-2021)

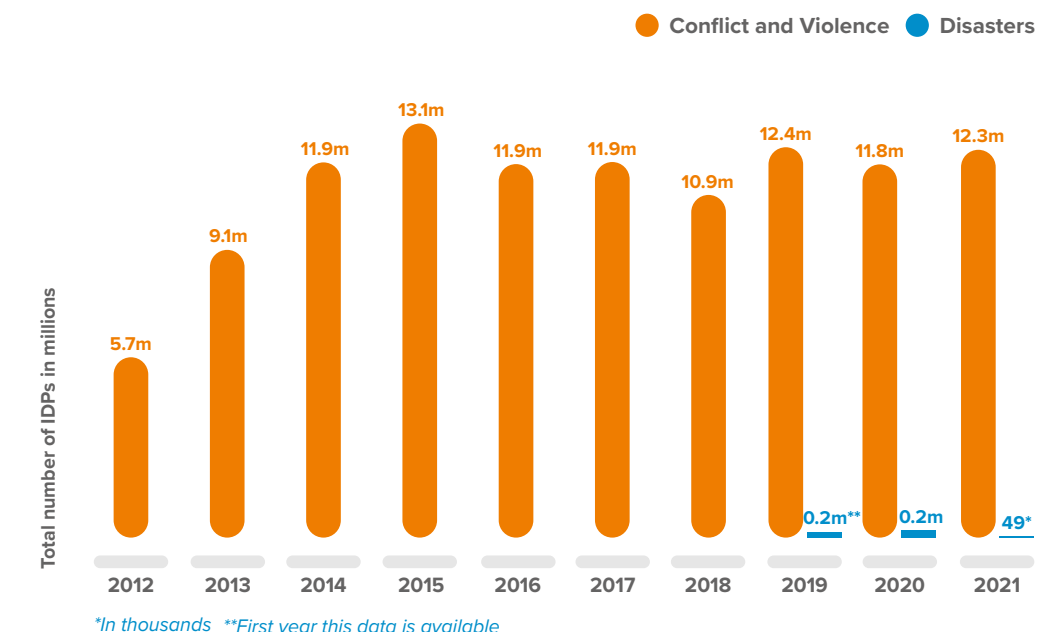


Figure 24: Total number of IDPs in the Middle East and North Africa at year end (2012-2021)

Conflict and violence triggered one million internal displacements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2021, less than a half of the 2.1 million recorded the previous year and the lowest figure for the region in a decade. The decrease was mainly the result of de-escalating conflict in Iraq, Libya and Syria. These countries continued to experience instability, however, and violence increased in Yemen. Conflict also reignited in Gaza in May, triggering more than 117,000 displacements, and violence led to small-scale displacements in Lebanon and Israel. Across the region as a whole, the number of people living in displacement at the end of the year as a result of conflict and violence was largely unchanged from 2020 at 12.3 million.

Disasters also triggered fewer internal displacements in 2021 at 233,000, the lowest figure since 2018. Floods accounted for most at 178,000, followed by earthquakes and storms. The trend toward lower figures, however, should be read with caution. The region was affected by severe drought during the year, which caused water scarcity and wildfires from Algeria to Iran, but no countries were monitoring associated displacement systematically, which means the overall figures are conservative.¹⁰⁸ As of the end of the year, around 49,000 people were living in displacement as a result of disasters across the region.

Renewed conflict and violence triggers displacement

Renewed conflict and violence pushed hundreds of thousands of people from their homes across the region in 2021. Conflict between Israel and Palestine triggered 117,000 internal displacements in the Gaza Strip in May, the highest number since 2014 and the region's most significant displacement event of the year.¹⁰⁹ Rocket fire from Gaza also led thousands of Israelis to evacuate to shelters, and other forms of violence triggered displacement in the West Bank (see spotlight, p.49).

Offensives by Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement, displaced people across several governorates in Yemen. The group made significant gains in Shebwa, Abyan, Bayda, and parts of the oil and gas-rich governorate of Marib, the northernmost part of the last contiguous bloc of government-controlled territory. This sparked fears that Ansar Allah could seize Marib city and the other parts of the governorate not currently under its control, potentially heralding a new and more violent phase of the war.¹¹⁰

As the group's offensive in Marib intensified, frontlines also shifted on the west coast around the strategic port city of Hodeidah, which has been subject to blockades, conflict and displacement in recent years.¹¹¹ The fighting triggered 377,000 internal displacements in 2021, with a spike in the last quarter of the year.¹¹²

The looming battle for Marib governorate is of major concern, because it hosts more than 876,000 IDPs, the largest number in the country. Eighty per cent are women and children, and many have already been displaced repeatedly within the governorate by the ongoing violence. Resources and services such as shelter and healthcare are overstretched, and the humanitarian situation is expected to worsen if the fighting continues.¹¹³

Despite an overall decrease in fighting in Syria, the south-western governorate of Dara'a experienced several waves of violence. Fighting between the government and opposition groups reignited with the presidential election in May.¹¹⁴ The violence triggered more than 38,000 internal displacements before a deal between the warring parties in September brought about a de-escalation. A significant majority of those displaced were women and children who were left in precarious living conditions.¹¹⁵ As of October, 3,700 people were still living in displacement because their homes had been destroyed in the fighting.¹¹⁶

The north-western governorate of Idlib experienced the largest escalation of violence and displacement since a ceasefire signed in March 2020. Renewed airstrikes and shelling in southern areas of the governorate triggered nearly 12,000 new and repeated displacements in June 2021.¹¹⁷ IDPs have arrived en masse in Idlib over the past decade, and it is now one of the most densely populated areas of the country. The governorate has also suffered a series of sieges and offensives since the outbreak of the conflict. The most significant took place in the first quarter of 2020 and led to nearly a million internal displacements.¹¹⁸

Renewed violence also led to displacement in Lebanon, which is in the throes of an unprecedented economic crisis.¹¹⁹ Many people have been forced to choose between basic necessities such as food, medicine and housing, and the situation fuelled intercommunal tensions that triggered 61 internal displacements.¹²⁰

The economic hardship and violence also led to cross-border movements. Around 78,000 were recorded during the

year, a significant increase compared with 2020. About 63 per cent of people surveyed said they would leave the country permanently if they could, and there are fears that a further deterioration of the economic situation could lead to an escalation in violence and displacement.¹²¹

A year of weather extremes

MENA experiences some of the world's highest levels of interannual hydrological variability, which means it is affected by both long droughts and severe floods.¹²² Disaster displacement risk is further heightened by water infrastructure that has been damaged during conflicts and the precarious shelter conditions in which millions of IDPs live.¹²³ Around 233,000 disaster displacements were recorded in 2021, triggered by weather-related hazards varying from severe drought and water scarcity to flash floods and storms. Among those displaced were IDPs and refugees who had already fled conflict and were uprooted again.

Heavy flooding triggered 53,000 displacements among IDPs living in more than 400 sites across Idlib and Aleppo in north-west Syria in January. Most of the sites were informal with poor drainage systems. The rains and floods also aggravated IDPs' already acute needs, the most pressing being for food and adequate shelter.¹²⁴ Severe storms brought further suffering to many of the same IDPs weeks later, when damages and displacement were reported across 88 sites in March.¹²⁵ The same areas were affected for a third time in December, when floods struck 210 settlements.¹²⁶

Displaced Syrian households in Lebanon also suffered the impacts of storms and high winds in February. Half of them were living in substandard accommodation unable to withstand the harsh weather conditions, but with nowhere else to go only two families were displaced again. Thousands of others stayed in their flooded shelters.¹²⁷ These are vivid examples of how displaced people can be caught in a downward spiral of vulnerability and displacement when conflict and disasters collide.

Storms displaced people across several countries towards the end of the year. A rare cyclone-like event in the Mediterranean basin led to more than 53 displacements in Algeria and Tunisia in October, and tropical cyclone Shaheen triggered 5,000 in Oman the same month. Shaheen also caused flooding and a dust storm in Iran,

where severe snowstorms accompanied by cyclone-like winds had triggered more than 2,300 displacements in southern provinces earlier in the year.¹²⁸

The whole region also grappled with severe drought in 2021, which was aggravated in some countries by reduced water flow in the Euphrates river, which is regulated by Turkey.¹²⁹ Rivers in Iraq and Syria reached historically low levels, depleted dam reservoirs led to power cuts and water scarcity to reduced harvests and drinking water shortages.¹³⁰ Around 20,000 people were living in displacement as a result of drought in Iraq's central and southern governorates as of November.¹³¹ Many of them were young people from farming communities who had fled to urban centres in search of economic opportunities.¹³² Iran too was affected by its worst drought in 50 years, but no displacement figures were available.¹³³

Capturing displacements associated with drought in MENA is extremely challenging because of a lack of reliable monitoring systems, but it was possible to account for those triggered by wildfires, which were aggravated by heatwaves and extremely dry conditions.¹³⁴ They led to more than 11,500 internal displacements in Algeria, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, and Tunisia, the second-highest figure in more than ten years. Algeria was particularly affected and requested international assistance to respond to the disaster.¹³⁵ A combination of drought, desertification and heatwaves also triggered 30 displacements in Yemen.

The lack of disaster displacement monitoring systems across the region makes it difficult to fully understand the phenomenon as the basis for tailoring preventive measures and responses to mitigate future risks. Sixty per cent of MENA's population live in highly water-stressed areas, which can be expected to continue experiencing droughts, heatwaves and water scarcity interspersed with severe storms and flash floods.¹³⁶ As evidence grows of the disproportionate effects of disasters and climate change on countries and populations affected by conflict, the region appears to be extremely vulnerable given the high risk it faces of such dual crises and associated displacement.¹³⁷

Protracted displacement a concern

Efforts to build peace and improve governance in Iraq, Libya and Syria were key factors in reducing the number of new and repeated displacements in 2021, but many



An elderly man living in a camp for the displaced in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.
© Beate Simarud/NRC, October 2021.

areas remain destroyed, unsafe and deprived of economic opportunities. This leaves IDPs reluctant or unable to return. Many countries in the region have also been affected by severe drought, increased food insecurity and economic hardship aggravated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.¹³⁸ The compounding effects of these crises make it difficult to support IDPs in achieving durable solutions.

Syria is a case in point. Conflict lines did not shift significantly in 2021, but the potential for renewed destabilisation and violence remained high in many areas as warring parties formed complex and sometimes fragile alliances.¹³⁹ At the same time, the country experienced its worst drought since 1953, putting five million people at risk of losing access to water, food and electricity.¹⁴⁰ More than 90 per cent of the population was thought to be living below the poverty line as of October.¹⁴¹ The price of a basket of staple foods more than doubled in the space of a year, making them unaffordable for millions of families.¹⁴²

This convergence of factors has also rendered displacement increasingly protracted. Four out of five households to have fled their homes have been displaced for more than five years. Only three per cent of IDPs wanted to return home as of November, the overwhelming majority preferring to stay in their areas of displacement. Insecurity and the lack of housing and economic opportunities in their places of origin were the key concerns behind their wish to stay put.¹⁴³

Economic factors, however, were the most prominent in influencing displacement and return patterns in 2021.¹⁴⁴ The number of returns fell significantly during the year, for IDPs to its lowest level since 2018 and for refugees the lowest since 2016.¹⁴⁵ In an effort to reverse these trends, civil society organisations called for displacement, housing, land and property to be included in negotiations between key Syrian stakeholders spearheaded by the UN secretary general's special envoy, but the talks have progressed slowly so far.¹⁴⁶

In Iraq too the number of returning IDPs fell from an average of around 500,000 a year between 2018 and 2020 to only 121,000 in 2021.¹⁴⁷ The overwhelming majority of returnees have gone back to their homes, but about half of them live in moderately to severely inadequate conditions linked mostly to housing damage, lack of services and insecurity.¹⁴⁸ Some IDPs affected by camp closures in

late 2020 also ended up either in informal sites or areas that may not yet have been conducive to safe returns.¹⁴⁹

At the same time, the country is experiencing its worst drought in 40 years, and increasing water and food prices have disproportionately affected those displaced.¹⁵⁰ This is particularly the case in the largely agricultural governorate of Ninewa, where IDPs and returnees have struggled to grow crops and have few if any alternative sources of income or options to sustain themselves.¹⁵¹

These issues have contributed to slowing the rate of returns and setting back the pursuit of durable solutions. Greater efforts to provide missing civil documents, adequate housing, public services and livelihoods options are needed to make returns sustainable and end the displacement of the country's remaining 1.2 million IDPs, the large majority of whom live in informal settings outside camps.¹⁵²

The number of IDPs in Libya fell by around 118,000 in 2021 to 160,000. The year was one of hope for the country as the peace process progressed, planning for presidential and parliamentary elections was under way, and overall humanitarian needs decreased significantly.¹⁵³

Despite these positive trends, the elections set for 24 December 2021 were postponed, and those displaced continue to face only limited access to essential services such as healthcare, safe drinking water and suitable housing.¹⁵⁴ Returning IDPs have the greatest needs, mainly linked to severe food insecurity and lack of access to water, and most have gone back to their original homes despite finding them severely damaged in many cases.¹⁵⁵ National funds to help IDPs and returnees rebuild their communities are still to be approved, and it remains unclear what type of compensation or support they will receive.¹⁵⁶

Given the prevailing displacement situation in the region in 2021, particularly the stubbornly high number of IDPs and their prevailing humanitarian needs, more efforts are needed to support durable solutions in the years to come. These include reducing the risk of secondary displacement, addressing increasing food insecurity and offering options for local integration as well as return. Given that disasters triggered significant new and repeated displacements during the year, efforts to mitigate the risks posed by future hazards by establishing monitoring and management systems are also indispensable.

Spotlight - Palestine: escalation of hostilities aggravates crisis

There were more than 118,000 internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in Palestine in 2021, the second highest figure on record after the 501,000 triggered by the 2014 conflict in the Gaza Strip. Most of the displacement was the result of escalating hostilities between Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli military in Gaza in May, but property destruction, including home demolitions and seizures, forced evictions and a coercive environment also forced people to flee in the West Bank.¹⁵⁷

Tensions increased in April and May when the Israeli Supreme Court was due to rule on the possible eviction of Palestinians from the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah.¹⁵⁸ After growing protests and clashes in the lead-up to the expected ruling, and after the Israeli authorities raided the Al Aqsa Mosque and closed the Damascus Gate in the Old City, Hamas and other armed groups launched rockets into Israel. The Israeli military responded with a campaign of aerial and artillery bombardment of the Gaza Strip.¹⁵⁹

Around 117,000 displacements were recorded in the Gaza Strip at the height of the hostilities between 10 and 20 May, 77,000 of them to shelters in schools set up by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Other people took refuge with host families or in informal settlements.¹⁶⁰ The airstrikes destroyed 1,663 homes and damaged 58,000. At least 140 schools and nine hospitals were also damaged.¹⁶¹

Thousands of Israelis also took refuge in shelters as 4,300 rockets were fired indiscriminately into the country from

the Gaza Strip. Some sources suggest that up to 70 per cent of the Israeli population were forced into shelters at some point during the fighting.¹⁶² Many families in southern Israel were displaced for several days as the rocket-fire continued.¹⁶³ A ceasefire on 20 May eased the fighting, but minor exchanges continued throughout the year.

The Gaza Strip was already facing a humanitarian crisis before the latest escalation. Israel's 14-year blockade of the territory has increased poverty and unemployment and caused significant shortages of food, medical supplies and electricity.¹⁶⁴ Nearly 2,000 people were also still living in displacement after the 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel.¹⁶⁵

The closure of some border crossings after the latest hostilities impeded the humanitarian response to their immediate aftermath and deepened the crisis.¹⁶⁶ The fighting also affected the mental health of Gaza residents, particularly IDPs and children, who were traumatised by the violence and destruction they witnessed.¹⁶⁷

Forced evictions, demolitions and the seizure of Palestinian homes and other property by the Israeli authorities triggered more than 1,200 displacements in the West Bank, around 660 of them involving children.¹⁶⁸ Intimidation, the excessive use of force, the destruction of critical infrastructure and the expansion of Israeli settlements continued to fuel the coercive environment in the territory. Palestinians' livelihood opportunities have also been eroded by freedom of movement restrictions, poor access to essential services and rising levels of settler violence. All of these factors serve to drive displacement.¹⁶⁹

640,000 Internal displacements as a result of conflict and violence since 2010



Israeli military operations also forced people to evacuate temporarily on various occasions, and many more households are at risk of being displaced as a result of ongoing evictions in the West Bank.¹⁷⁰

Conflict, violence, displacement and the impacts of Covid-19 aggravated the humanitarian crisis in Palestine in 2021.¹⁷¹ Around 10,500 people were still living in internal displacement in the Gaza Strip and 1,200 in the West Bank as of the end of the year.¹⁷² The latter figure is conservative, however, and could be as high as 73,000.¹⁷³ There is a growing need for negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to resume, international humanitarian law to be adhered to, and support to be provided to rebuild the Gaza Strip and help IDPs in their pursuit of durable solutions.

Palestinians seen sheltering in tents they set up amongst the rubbles in Gaza. © Mustafa Hassona /Anadolu Agency via Getty Image, May 2021.

East Asia and Pacific

Internal displacements in 2021

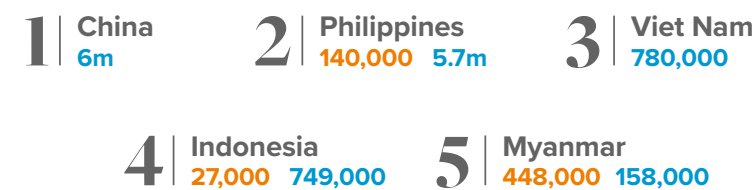
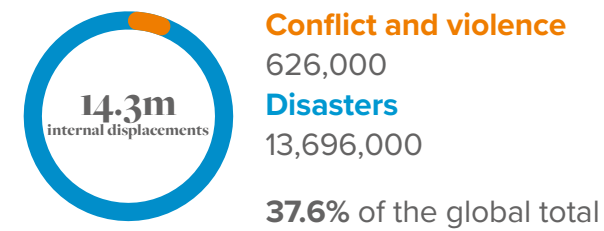


Figure 25: Five countries with most internal displacements in East Asia and Pacific in 2021

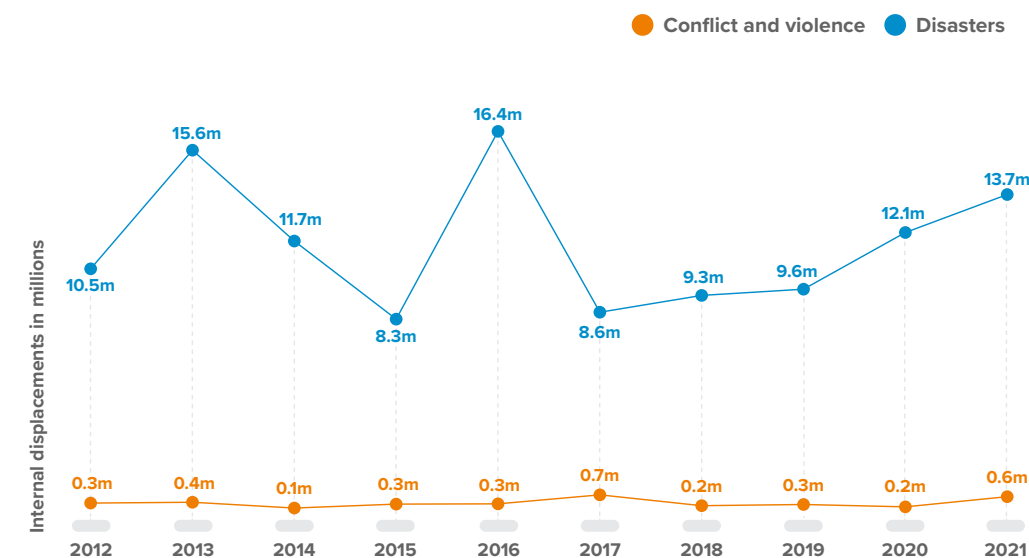


Figure 26: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in East Asia and Pacific (2012-2021)

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

Total number of IDPs in 2021



Figure 27: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific as of end 2021

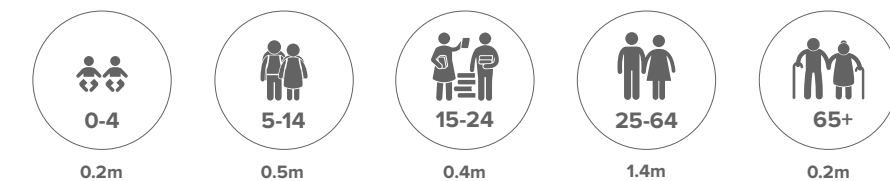
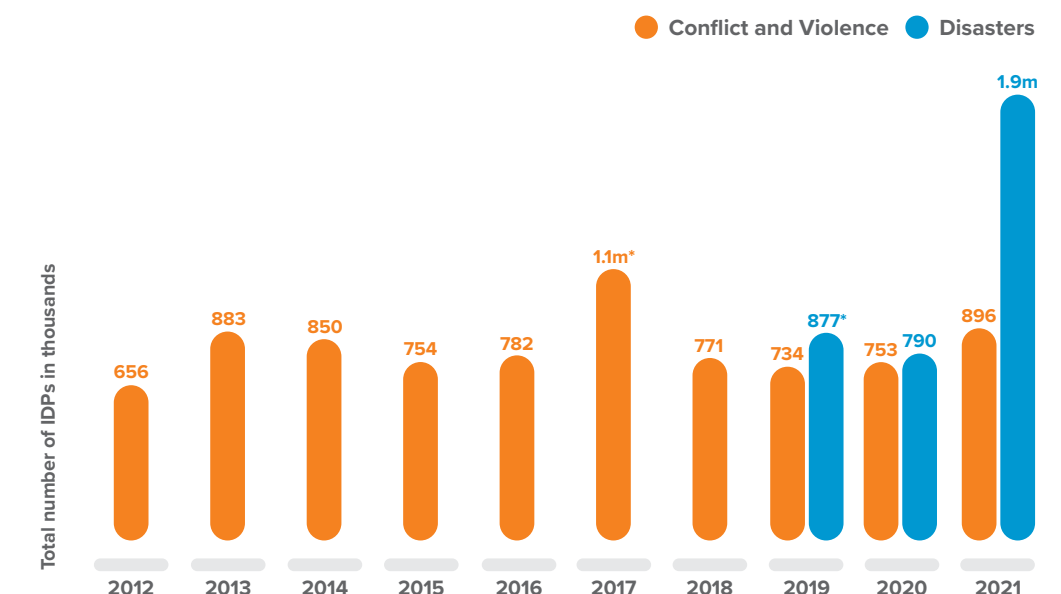


Figure 28: Total number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific as of end 2021, by age group



*First year this data is available

Figure 29: Total number of IDPs in East Asia and Pacific at year end (2012-2021)

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

Disasters triggered 13.7 million internal displacements in East Asia and the Pacific in 2021, the highest figure since 2016 and above the annual average for the last decade of 11.6 million. As in previous years, the region accounted for the majority of disaster displacements recorded worldwide. It is home to most of the world's population, many of whom live in areas prone to a wide range of hazards including storms, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

The effects of La Niña manifested across different countries for the second year in a row. Storms hit the South Pacific and east and south-east Asia, triggering more than 8 million displacements, the vast majority in the form of pre-emptive evacuations. Floods prompted around 5.3 million. Flooding was particularly intense in China, where one event in Henan province in July triggered around 1.5 million displacements (see spotlight, p.59).

Conflict and violence led to 626,000 internal displacements across the region, three times the figure for 2020 and the highest since 2017. This was mostly the result of escalating conflict in Myanmar, particularly after the military takeover in February. Around 448,000 displacements were recorded, the highest figure ever for the country but still a conservative estimate. The conflict also overlapped with disasters, further aggravating the humanitarian situation (see spotlight, p.61). About 2.8 million people were living in internal displacement in East Asia and the Pacific as of the end of the year, 896,000 of them as a result of conflict and violence.

Another year of relentless storms

Storms accounted for 58 per cent of the disaster displacement recorded in the region, fuelled by a moderate to strong La Niña that started in late 2020 but continued into 2021.¹⁷⁴ This naturally occurring phenomenon involves the large-scale cooling of ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, which changes weather patterns and brings wetter conditions than normal.¹⁷⁵ Three powerful storms – Rai, In-fa and Conson – triggered the largest number of displacements in the Philippines, China and Viet Nam.

Storms are referred to differently across East Asia and the Pacific depending on their location and strength. Some countries refer to them as "typhoons", some as "tropical cyclones" and some simply as "cyclones". Some coun-

tries also assign storms different names. Typhoon Rai, known in the Philippines as Odette, triggered the largest number of disaster displacements globally in 2021. The storm formed on 11 December and over the next ten days it increased in intensity, reaching category five with sustained winds of 260 kilometres an hour. On its course across Palau, the Philippines and Viet Nam it prompted 3.9 million displacements.¹⁷⁶ The overwhelming majority were in the Philippines, in particular the regions of Caraga, Eastern Visayas and Western Visayas.¹⁷⁷

Rai destroyed around 415,000 homes across the archipelago and damaged around 1.7 million. At least 16 million people were affected, including children whose education was interrupted when their schools were destroyed. IDPs' livelihoods were also disrupted and food prices increased, heightening the risk of food insecurity.¹⁷⁸ More than 590,000 people were still displaced as of the end of December.

Viet Nam and Palau reported around 3,700 and 2,000 displacements respectively, mostly people evacuated to shelters or other temporary locations. Some people in Viet Nam were still displaced at the end of the year, but all those in Palau had returned to their homes.

As in previous years, much of the disaster displacement in East Asia and the Pacific was recorded in the second half of the year.¹⁷⁹ Another significant storm was typhoon In-fa, which triggered around 1.4 million displacements in China and another 200,000 in the Philippines and Taiwan in the last two weeks of July. In-fa was also China's second-wettest storm on record.¹⁸⁰

The third-most significant was typhoon Conson, which formed on 5 September and triggered more than 877,000 displacements across the Philippines and Viet Nam, the vast majority in the latter. The storm had reduced in intensity by the time it made landfall in Viet Nam, but it still prompted more than 728,000 across 11 provinces.¹⁸¹ It accounted for 93 per cent of the country's disaster displacement in 2021, and exposed coastal areas were particularly badly affected.

Storms also triggered displacement in 20 other countries across the region. As the effects of La Niña gathered momentum in the South Pacific, two consecutive tropical cyclones, Ana and Bina, struck Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in late January. They brought more than 350mm



Typhoon Rai triggered the largest number of disaster displacements in 2021. Pictured, a boy sitting in the debris of his broken home. © UNICEF/UN0570020/Hogsholt, December 2021.

of rain in 24 hours to some areas of Fiji and triggered around 14,000 displacements across the archipelago.¹⁸² Storms hit as the country was still recovering from cyclone Yasa, which displaced tens of thousands of people in December 2020.¹⁸³

The South Pacific rainy season usually runs from November to April, and while it is not uncommon that cyclones form during the tail end of the season, Seroja, that formed in April, was an outlier in many ways.¹⁸⁴ It triggered more than 71,000 displacements in three countries, 16,000 of them in Timor-Leste, where it caused flash floods and landslides.

The floods were the country's worst in 40 years, and damaged infrastructure including roads, bridges, schools and medical centres, which hampered rescue operations.¹⁸⁵ They also destroyed around 4,200 homes and disrupted water and electricity supplies and internet connectivity.¹⁸⁶ Seroja also revealed significant shortfalls in terms of risk reduction. Not all communities were informed of the dangers they were likely to face, and no evacuation centres were set up ahead of the disaster. Most people sought shelter in government buildings and schools.¹⁸⁷

Seroja was also the most powerful storm to hit Indonesia since 2008, destroying homes and triggering 55,000 displacements.¹⁸⁸ It also prompted 340 evacuations in Western Australia, where damage was significant because the infrastructure was not built to withstand such a high-intensity hazard and communities were not prepared to cope with its impacts.¹⁸⁹

Climate change is expected to increase the intensity of tropical storms in East Asia and the Pacific, exposing populations further inland to their devastating impacts.¹⁹⁰ More needs to be done to reduce risk, but some countries have already invested in strengthening their monitoring systems and evacuation protocols.

Authorities in the Philippines built on the lessons learned from typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and carried out hundreds of thousands of pre-emptive evacuations ahead of typhoon Rai, saving many lives.¹⁹¹ The Fijian government launched a national disaster awareness campaign focused on the preparedness of local communities.¹⁹²

China's Meteorological Administration worked with the World Meteorological Organization to launch the Asia-Pacific Typhoon Collaborative Research Centre, intended to

improve regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction and research into storms.¹⁹³ Such initiatives also have the potential to strengthen knowledge and capacity to manage displacement risk.

Floods fuelled by La Niña

Floods triggered 5.3 million internal displacements in 19 countries across East Asia and the Pacific in 2021, with China, Indonesia and the Philippines most affected. The majority occurred during the countries' rainy seasons.

China's high population exposure to floods means it recorded the highest number of related displacements in the region and globally at 3.8 million. Flooding in Henan province between 16 and 31 July alone accounted for almost 1.5 million (see spotlight, p.59). Around 800,000 displacements took place outside the rainy season, of which 590,000 were mostly in Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces in October, when rainfall exceeded historical records in some areas.¹⁹⁴

Floods also prompted more than 616,000 displacements in Indonesia. Two-thirds took place toward the end of the October to March rainy season, when the heaviest precipitation tends to occur.¹⁹⁵ Fuelled by La Niña, the two events that triggered the largest displacements took place in South Kalimantan in mid-January and Java in February.¹⁹⁶

The South Kalimantan floods were the province's worst in 50 years, triggering 190,000 displacements across all 11 of its regencies and prompting the government to declare a state of emergency.¹⁹⁷ Provincial authorities also provided stipends to those affected, including IDPs, and set up a recovery and reconstruction task force.¹⁹⁸ West, East, and Central Java, Banten and Jakarta were hit by a series of floods that led to 161,000 displacements, most of them in West Java after the Citarum river burst its banks.¹⁹⁹ Around 69,000 people were living in displacement in Indonesia as a result of floods at the end of the year.

The Philippines experiences significant rainfall during two monsoon seasons: the south-west, which runs from June to September, and the north-east, which runs between October and March.²⁰⁰ Almost 63 per cent of the 478,000 flood displacements recorded for the country in 2021 took place during the south-west monsoon season. The overall figure was nine times higher than in 2020, and around 16,000 people were still living in displacement as a result of floods at the end of the year.

Floods also triggered displacement in Pacific countries. La Niña brought more rain than usual to Australia in the first months of the year, particularly in states in the east and south-east, which were badly affected by the devastating wildfires of 2019 and 2020.²⁰¹ Colliding weather systems brought persistent downpours to New South Wales, leading to its worst flooding in six decades and triggering 40,000 displacements.

Some of the worst floods in the Westport and Marlborough regions of New Zealand prompted around 2,900 displacements in July, and hundreds of people were displaced in the Canterbury region in May and June when a once-in-100-year event caused rivers to burst their banks.²⁰²

A surge in conflict displacement

Conflict and violence led to 626,000 internal displacements across East Asia and the Pacific in 2021, more than triple the figure for 2020 and the highest since 2017. Most occurred in Myanmar, where the 448,000 recorded were more than the last eight years combined.

The country's armed forces overthrew its democratically elected government on 1 February, reigniting several long-running ethnic conflicts and sparking new types of violence.²⁰³ Resistance to the takeover led to the formation of People's Defence Forces (PDF), local militias intended to protect participants in the civil disobedience movement.

Clashes between the PDF and the military forced thousands of people to flee in a number of areas relatively unaffected by conflict in recent times.²⁰⁴ These included Kayin state and Bago region in the south of the country, where the military launched airstrikes for the first time in 20 years, leading to 40,000 displacements.²⁰⁵ In Shan state, violence previously limited to its northern townships spread to southern areas for the first time.²⁰⁶

The year's largest conflict displacement event took place in the central state of Kayah, where no such movements had ever been recorded before. The military responded to an increasingly active PDF with heavy artillery bombardments, particularly in Demoso township, triggering 104,000 displacements in late May and early June.²⁰⁷

Clashes between local resistance forces and the military in the north-western region of Sagaing prompted tens of thousands more across several townships.²⁰⁸ There and

in other border areas affected by conflict, some people sought shelter in neighbouring countries.²⁰⁹

The humanitarian situation was particularly dire in areas where access had already been limited before the military takeover, and the increased insecurity also hampered data collection, meaning that the true scale of displacement remains unknown.²¹⁰ This is particularly true in urban areas such as Yangon and Mandalay, where political violence against protesters, martial law and forced evictions reportedly forced many people to flee.²¹¹

The insecurity combined with a struggling economy disrupted people's livelihoods and the availability of food in both urban and rural areas, and disasters added another layer of complexity to the country's displacement crisis (see spotlight, p.61).²¹² The same factors are also fuelling further instability, raising serious concerns about a growing risk of civil war.²¹³ Around 649,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of the year, the highest figure ever recorded for the country but still likely an underestimate.²¹⁴

Conflict displacement also took place in the Philippines, particularly in the south, which has a long history of internal conflicts, mostly related to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).²¹⁵ The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has waged an armed rebellion for more than 40 years in pursuit of an autonomous Islamic state for the indigenous Moro people.²¹⁶ Despite a peace agreement signed in 2014 between the MILF and the government, violence has continued as other smaller groups continue to fight.

The situation in Mindanao accounted for 136,000 of the 140,000 displacements recorded for the country as a whole, the overall figure being an increase of 27 per cent compared with 2020. Most displacement events were small-scale, except for one in March when government forces clashed with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Mindanao's Datu Saudi Ampatuan municipality. The fighting spread to surrounding areas, triggering at least 66,000 displacements. More than 4,400 people were still displaced six months later.²¹⁷

Intercommunal conflict and violence also led to displacement in the Cordillera region and Eastern, Western and Central Visayas. Around 108,000 people were still living in displacement across the country as a whole as of the end of the year. The decrease from 153,000 at the end of

2020 was mainly the result of the return of about 80 per cent of those displaced by conflict in Marawi in 2017.²¹⁸

The largest conflict displacement event recorded in Indonesia in 2021 took place in the Puncak regency of Papua province. The assassination of the provincial intelligence chief in April led to an escalation of violence between government forces and non-state armed groups that triggered at least 15,000 displacements in October and November. People were forced to seek shelter in churches, police stations and forests, and most were still displaced towards the end of the year.²¹⁹

Attacks by non-state armed groups against civilians and clashes with government forces also led to a number of smaller-scale displacement incidents in Papua, Riau and West Papua provinces, bringing the total for the country to 27,000. Around 73,000 people were still living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, the majority of them in protracted situations.

Papua New Guinea has a long history of intercommunal violence, often triggered by land disputes, but the use of heavy weaponry in recent years has led to an escalation that triggered 8,500 displacements in 2021 (see spotlight, p.63). Smaller-scale conflict displacement was also recorded in Thailand, the Solomon Islands and the French territory of New Caledonia.

Given the vast scale of disaster displacement in East Asia and the Pacific each year, governments and other stakeholders should continue to build on the region's substantial experience in managing disaster risk and put displacement at the heart of risk reduction, recovery and reconstruction initiatives. This should not, however, be at the expense of efforts to better understand how conflict and violence are fuelling displacement, and how disasters and conflict combine to heighten the vulnerability of IDPs and host communities and erode their coping capacities.²²⁰



A city worker stands on the median of a flooded road on February 20, 2021 in Jakarta, Indonesia.
© Ed Wray/Getty Images, February 2021.

Spotlight – China: Henan floods

China records some of the highest numbers of disaster displacement globally each year. Most are pre-emptive evacuations ahead of major storms and floods that take place during the monsoon season, which runs from May to September. Disasters triggered 6 million internal displacements in 2021, and one event – flooding in Henan province between 16 and 31 July – accounted for 25 per cent of them. Almost 15 million people in 150 counties were affected and 398 lost their lives.²²¹

The floods were caused by unprecedented rainfall throughout the province.²²² In the capital, Zhengzhou, 201.9 mm fell in just an hour on 20 July. This was thought to be the heaviest rain in 1,000 years.²²³ Tropical cyclones Cempaka and In-Fa, which made landfall in other parts of China on 21 and 23 July and triggered 105,000 and 1.4 million displacements respectively, brought further heavy rain to Henan.

Henan's geography makes it particularly prone to floods, and this is especially true of Zhengzhou, which is home to 12.6 million people.²²⁴ China introduced a 'sponge city' initiative in 2014 to minimise the risk of urban flooding. The idea is to reduce cities' hard-surface areas and increase areas that are permeable such as rain gardens, green roofs and constructed wetlands, which mitigate surface-water flooding and peak run-off, and improve the purification of urban runoff and water conservation.²²⁵

Since its introduction in Zhengzhou in 2018, sponge city infrastructure has reduced flooding in 125 areas and recycled 380 million tons of water.²²⁶ Consequently, the city recorded fewer displacements linked to the monsoon season. The 2021 floods, however, were an outlier. The equivalent of a year's rainfall fell in three days, overwhelming the city's capacity to absorb water and forcing millions of people from their homes. Despite the scale of displacement, a review of the emergency response found that many more people could have been evacuated if it had been quicker and better organised.²²⁷

Despite continuous rainfall that began on 16 July, the response was only launched three days later, and evacuations took place between 21 and 31 July.²²⁸ The time lag can be partly explained by the confidence placed in Zhengzhou's sponge city infrastructure. By the time evacuations were under way the number of casualties and people missing had begun to rise, and efforts were further complicated by measures to counter an outbreak of Covid-19.

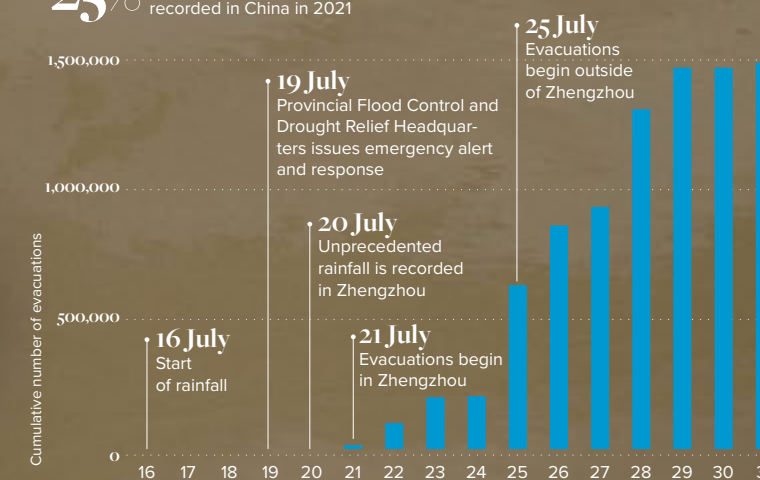
Authorities had organised 933,800 people for emergency transfer and resettlement across Henan as of 9 August, but plans shifted to avoid virus transmission in resettlement sites and in the end less than 200 people were moved and the number of sites reduced from over 2,100 to five.²²⁹ As of the end of the year, around 630,000 people were living in displacement as a result of the floods.

The Henan floods triggered mass displacement, but it is likely that Zhengzhou's sponge city infrastructure helped to reduce its scale and duration despite its limitations.²³⁰ Comprehensive standards, national guidelines and more financial and human resources will be needed to make China's cities more resilient to future climate shocks, and so further reduce the risk and scale of displacement.²³¹ Given that almost all of the country's major cities are exposed to frequent flooding, this should be a priority as extreme weather events become more frequent and intense.²³²



1.4m Internal displacements as a result of the Henan floods between 16 and 31 July 2021

25% of the total disaster displacements recorded in China in 2021



(Sources: Ministry of Emergency Management, China, 2021. Provincial Emergency Management Bureau of Henan, 2021)

Cars sit in floodwaters following heavy rains, in Zhengzhou in China's central Henan province. © Noel Celis /AFP via Getty Images, July 2021.

Spotlight – Myanmar: Disaster displacement, the other side of the crisis

Conflict in Myanmar reached new levels in 2021. A military takeover on 1 February and the unrest and fighting that ensued triggered 448,000 internal displacements, six times more than in 2020 and the highest figure ever recorded for the country.²³³ These events dominated the headlines, but disasters also triggered more than 158,000 displacements, aggravating the needs of communities also affected by conflict and violence.²³⁴

Monsoon floods between June and September accounted for most disaster displacements, and 95 per cent took place over just four weeks from 20 July to 19 August. Flooding was recorded in areas such as Kayin and Mon states in the south-east, Magway and Sagaing regions in the north-west and Rakhine state in the west, all of which are also affected by conflict.²³⁵ Most of the displacement associated with the floods also occurred in these areas. Rivers burst their banks in Kayin and Mon, triggering 59,000 and 49,800 evacuations, respectively, and 37,500 were recorded in Rakhine.²³⁶

The floods forced some people already displaced by conflict to flee again. Around 500 displacements were recorded in August in Maga Yang Camp in Kachin state, home to 1,600 IDPs.²³⁷ Thousands of people who had already fled hostilities in Gangaw township, Magway region, were also forced to abandon their temporary shelters in October when the Myitthar river burst its banks.²³⁸

Recurring displacement aggravates the impact of conflict and disasters, reducing people's resilience and increasing their vulnerability.²³⁹ Conflict can also hinder people's ability to flee disasters or prevent it altogether. Checkpoints and the risk of armed clashes restrict their movement and may force communities to remain in place rather than move to areas where they would normally seek shelter.²⁴⁰

Most disaster displacements took the form of pre-emptive evacuations, but nearly 2,300 were triggered by the destruction of homes, primarily the result of storms and landslides in Ayeyarwady division and Yangon and Bago regions. Such hazards tend to be smaller in scale, often leading to fewer than 100 displacements, but their potential to cause long-

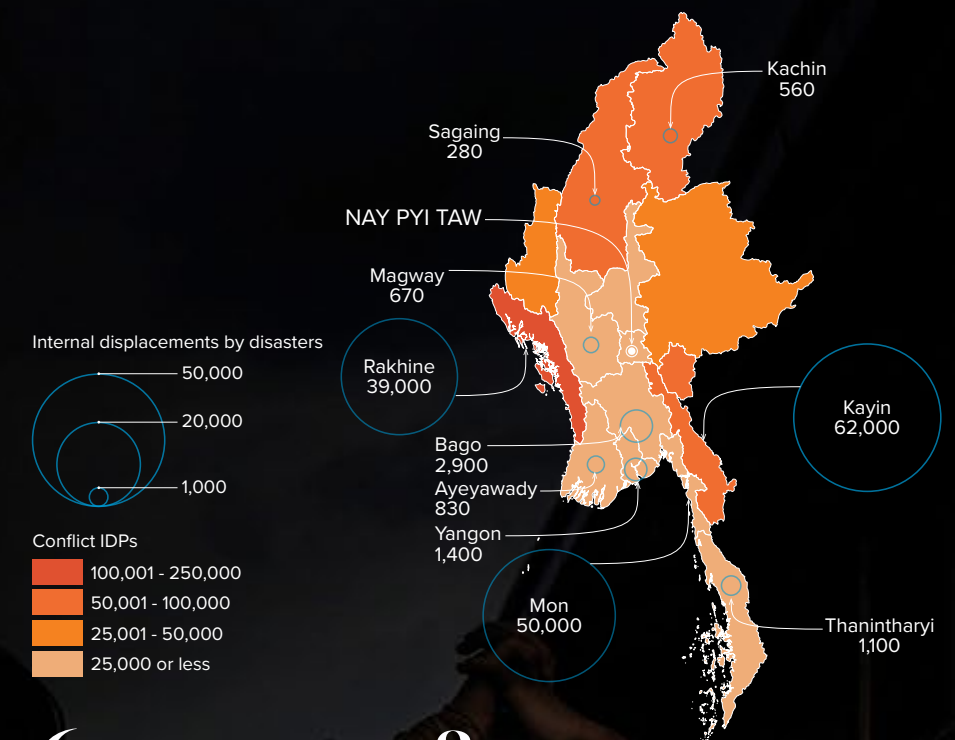
term displacement is greater because they have a more permanent impact on housing and livelihoods.

Myanmar's disaster management law stipulates a government role in providing compensation and shelter for those whose homes are destroyed, but in practice this often happens ad-hoc according to customary law, leading to gaps in response and impeding durable solutions.²⁴¹ The military takeover further complicated the disaster management system and restricted humanitarian programming across the country.²⁴²

Disasters also increase the humanitarian needs of IDPs living in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and hinder their ability to resolve their plight. This has been the case for years in Rakhine, one of the states most affected by conflict and violence, and home to 215,000 long-term IDPs.²⁴³ Flooding in displacement sites in July damaged shelters, destroyed sanitation facilities and disrupted livelihoods.²⁴⁴ The situation was also aggravated by a strict Covid-19 lockdown, which further restricted IDPs' movement and their ability to access basic goods and services, as was the case, for example, in Mrauk-U district.²⁴⁵

In areas of Rakhine where efforts to support IDPs in returning or relocating are ongoing, disasters are just one of many barriers to durable solutions. Many planned relocation sites are in poorly connected areas that are prone to flooding, increasing the risk of future displacement and the disruption of livelihoods when disasters strike.²⁴⁶ Disaster risk, insecurity and protection concerns also encourage IDPs to remain in their displacement sites.

The overlapping effects of conflict and disasters in Myanmar are not new. Many of the 2.2 million displacements triggered by Cyclone Nargis in 2008 were people who had already fled conflict and violence, and whose prospects of achieving durable solutions were set back by the disaster.²⁴⁷ There were fewer disaster displacements in 2021 than in previous years, but they added to the instability and insecurity caused by the February military takeover, which has increased the risk of new and protracted displacement.



649,000 **158,000**

Total number of IDPs as a result of conflict and violence as of 31 December 2021

Internal displacements by disasters in Myanmar in 2021

(Sources: OCHA, 2021; UNHCR, 2021; CCCM/Shelter Cluster, 2021; Humanitarian Partners, 2021; Local Media 2018, 2020, Myanmar Department of Disaster Management, 2021; AHA Centre, 2021; Local Media, 2021)

A lack of clarity about the national disaster response architecture and cash shortages have led to delays in disaster programming and limited organisations' ability to divert their scarce resources to disaster responses. The increasing insecurity has also forced a shift in priorities toward communities affected by conflict and violence.²⁴⁸

The compounding impacts of conflict, disasters, Covid-19 and the economic crisis that has followed the military takeover, mean that IDPs and those who support them in pursuing solutions will continue to face significant challenges.²⁴⁹ Data tends to present disasters and conflict as separate triggers of displacement, but the situation in Myanmar shows that they can be tightly interwoven, and that prevention and response measures need to be adapted to that reality.

Children play inside an IDP camp in Kachin state, Myanmar, where the compounding impacts of conflict, disasters and Covid-19 have combined to create new challenges for IDPs. © Mizayar Oo – UNICEF, July 2020.

Spotlight – Papua New Guinea: the changing face of violence

Despite not making international headlines, intercommunal clashes in Papua New Guinea's most remote inland regions and a surge in criminal violence in urban areas triggered 9,500 internal displacements in 2021, the highest figure recorded since data became available for the country in 2014.

Papua New Guinea has a long history of intercommunal violence, driven by issues ranging from customary land ownership to ethnic and cultural rivalry.²⁵⁰ The country's most remote regions have also experienced rapid social and economic changes in the past 30 years, and many of the traditional mechanisms that used to govern disputes have been eroded. This has led to an increase in the number of clashes, their intensity and incidents of displacement.²⁵¹

Women and children have been caught up in the violence, and homes and vegetable gardens protected under customary codes of conduct have regularly been destroyed.²⁵² A proliferation of high-powered weapons, including hand grenades, has also made the clashes more deadly.²⁵³

Events in the Highlands region, which is home to nearly 40 per cent of the country's population, illustrated these trends in 2021.²⁵⁴ Most of the violence and associated displacement played out at the local level between the different tribes of the region's provinces. This does not make them less significant, however, given that such clashes cause hundreds of deaths and trigger thousands of displacements each year, the majority of which go unreported.²⁵⁵

Intercommunal violence in Eastern Highland province in April led to the largest displacement event of the year, when a two-month dispute over land ownership between members of the Tapo and Agarabi clans descended into full-blown violence.²⁵⁶ Thirty-eight people were killed and more than 5,000 displacements were triggered.²⁵⁷

Displacement associated with intercommunal violence over land rights is also a recurrent problem in Hela province, considered one of the most volatile and violent in the country.²⁵⁸ A dispute between two clans escalated into open warfare in February, triggering 2,900 displacements, among them families previously displaced by violence.²⁵⁹ Women, children and elderly people accounted for more than 80 per cent of those displaced.²⁶⁰

The consequences of displacement for women in the Highlands are serious, because they tend to face significant challenges in accessing protection, food and basic services. Nor does violence against them necessarily end when they flee. Many are subjected to sexual violence and discrimination in host communities.²⁶¹ Tensions with host communities may also result in displaced women not being able to access land they used to farm, aggravating their food insecurity.²⁶²

Criminal violence driven by the effects of poverty, unemployment and the Covid-19 pandemic also led to a surge in displacement in urban areas of the country in 2021. Frustration over income inequality and lack of work opportunities has long been a driver of urban crime and violence, particularly among young men, and the situation deteriorated last year into social disorder across a number of cities.²⁶³ Around 1,000 displacements were recorded as a result of criminal violence, a figure that should be read as conservative given that the phenomenon goes largely unreported.

Many obstacles remain to breaking Papua New Guinea's cycles of violence and displacement in both urban and hard-to-reach areas. The police do not have the financial and human resources to tackle the country's escalating law and order problems and fill security vacuums, and the absence of legislation on internal displacement means that provisions for IDPs' protection and assistance are limited and ad hoc.²⁶⁴

9,500 Internal displacements by intercommunal and criminal violence in Papua New Guinea in 2021

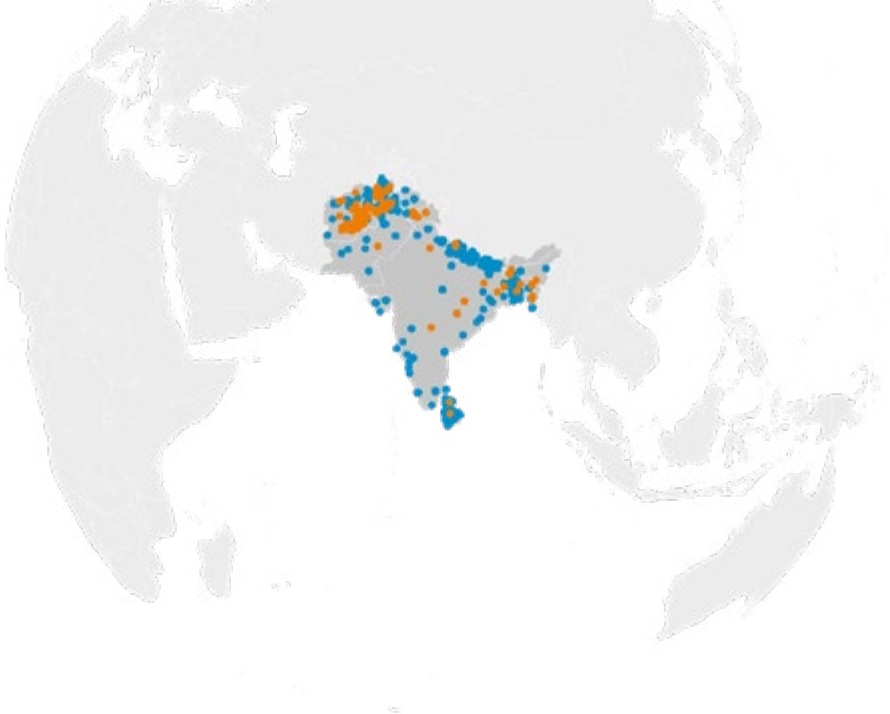
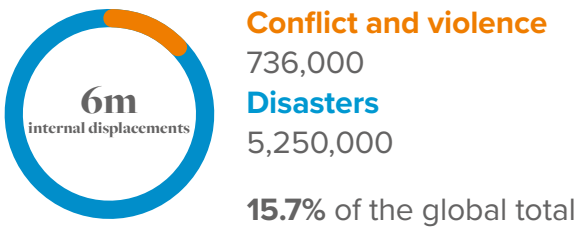


Initiatives such as the Highlands Joint Programme 2020-2022 raise hopes of reducing violence in the region by addressing its long-overdue development needs.²⁶⁵ Others, such as the Urban Youth Employment Project, are intended to improve the capacity of young people to engage in income-generating activities.²⁶⁶ These efforts hold the promise of addressing some of the drivers of displacement, and an ongoing assessment of prospects for durable solutions could play a significant role in shaping the country's first policy on IDPs' rights.

The Highlands region of Papua New Guinea, home to 40% of the country's population, was marked by high levels of violence and related displacement in 2021. © CHRIS MCCALL/AFP via Getty Images, November 2021.

South Asia

Internal displacements in 2021



Total number of IDPs in 2021

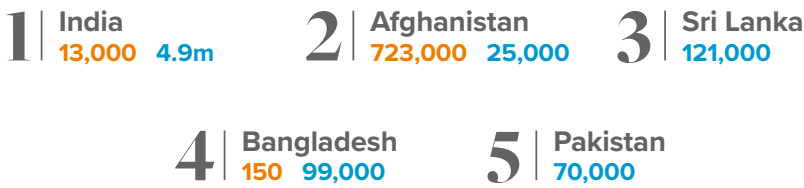


Figure 30: Five countries with most internal displacements in South Asia in 2021



Figure 32: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in South Asia as of end 2021



Figure 33: Total number of IDPs in South Asia as of end 2021, by age group

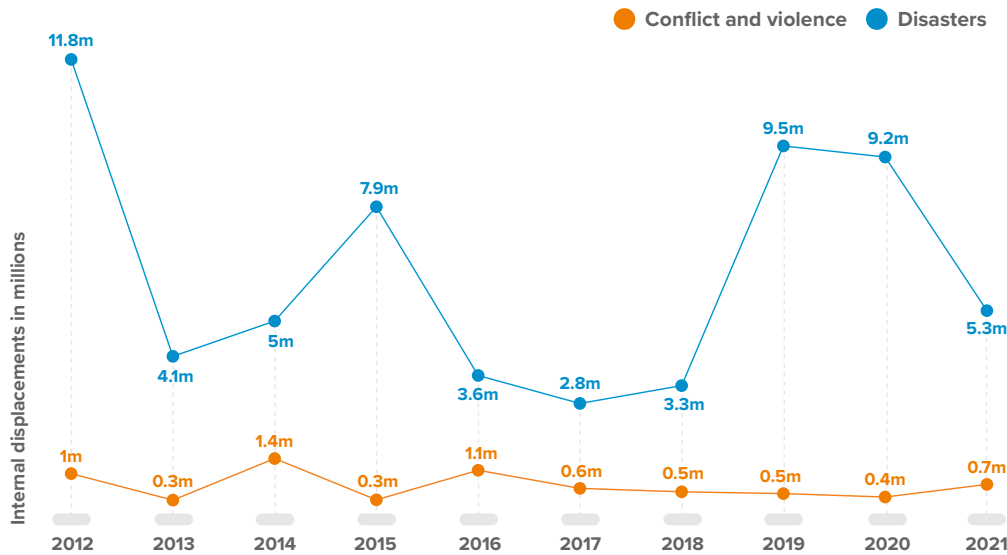
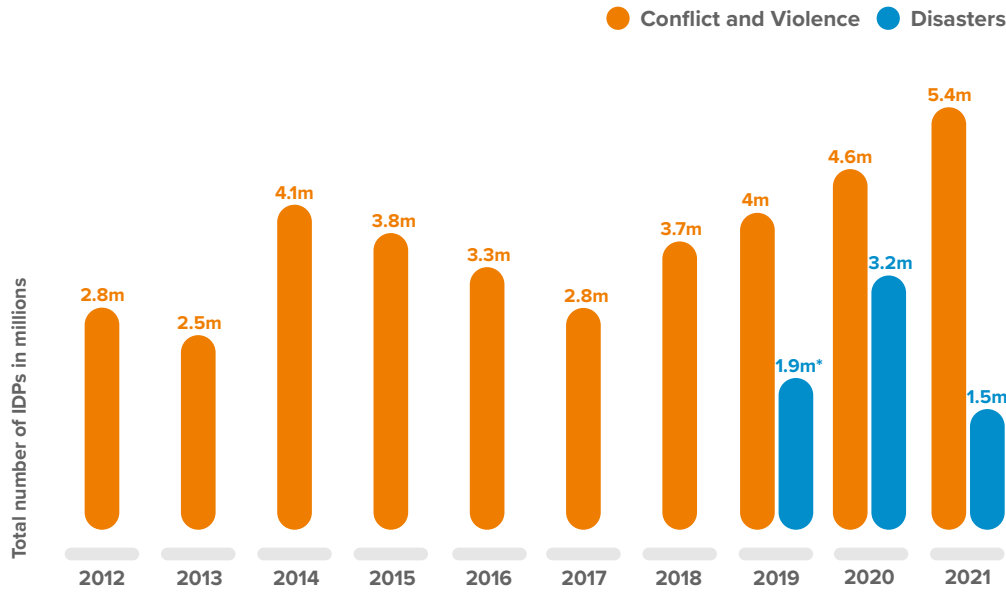


Figure 31: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in South Asia (2012-2021)



*First year this data is available

Figure 34: Total number of IDPs in South Asia at year end (2012-2021)

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.

Disasters trigger most of the internal displacement that takes place in South Asia each year, and 2021 was no exception. Nearly 5.3 million disaster displacements were recorded during the year, a relatively high figure globally but lower than the region's decade average of 6.2 million. The decrease was partly the result of a weaker monsoon season.

Conflict and violence also accounted for more than 736,000 displacements, the vast majority of which took place in Afghanistan. As US and NATO troops began their final withdrawal and the Taliban clashed with government forces, insecurity and deteriorating humanitarian conditions triggered 723,000, the highest figure ever recorded for the country (see spotlight, p.71).

Around 6.9 million people were living in internal displacement across the region at the end of the year, 5.4 million as a result of conflict and violence and 1.5 million as a result of disasters.

Overlapping floods and storms

Climate drivers including La Niña weakened South Asia's 2021 monsoon season, which in turn forced fewer people from their homes than in previous years.²⁶⁷ The south-west monsoon in India, however, was erratic and prolonged, running from June until October rather than September.²⁶⁸ Its withdrawal overlapped with the onset of the north-east monsoon, as a result, bringing unusually heavy rains and floods to several southern states.²⁶⁹ Kerala received 84 per cent of the rainfall that it typically receives during the season as a whole in the first half of October, triggering nearly 14,000 evacuations.²⁷⁰ Subsequent flooding in Tamil Nadu led to 312,000 in November.

The country was also hit by three major storms that triggered significant displacements, bringing the total recorded for the year to 2.5 million. Cyclone Tauktae made landfall in Gujarat on 17 May. The most powerful storm to hit India's west coast in more than 20 years, it prompted 258,000 evacuations and caused damage and destruction across five states and union territories.²⁷¹ Less than a week later, Cyclone Yaas began to form in the Bay of Bengal. It made landfall on 26 May, triggering a further 2.2 million, primarily in Odisha and West Bengal.²⁷² Disaster management authorities in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha also organised more than 50,000 evacuations on 26 September in preparation for Cyclone Gulab.²⁷³

Yaas accounted for the highest number of displacements in India and the region in 2021, hitting areas that were severely affected by Cyclone Amphan the year before. This was also the case in neighbouring Bangladesh, particularly in Khulna and Barisal divisions, where Amphan had triggered around 2.5 million displacements in May 2020. Around 15,000 people made homeless by the storm were still living in temporary shelters along the coast when Yaas struck, forcing many of them to flee again.²⁷⁴ The cyclone did not make direct landfall in Bangladesh, but it still led to widespread flooding and 18,000 displacements.

Monsoon rains and floods triggered a further 80,000 between June and October, particularly in Chattogram division. Flash floods, landslides and high winds also struck Cox's Bazar, forcing thousands of Rohingya refugees to flee again.²⁷⁵

Nepal was also confronted with overlapping disasters, as the worst wildfires in a decade destroyed homes and forced people to flee across Koshi and Lumbini provinces.²⁷⁶ Several flood-prone districts in these and other provinces were affected, and the fires burned large areas of natural ecosystems that normally absorb monsoon floodwaters. Flooding and landslides were worse than usual as a result.²⁷⁷ A landslide in Bagmati province on 15 June blocked the Melamchi river, causing a dam to burst and destroying 500 houses.²⁷⁸ In India, the monsoon prompted significant displacement outside the typical June to September season. Unusually heavy rain and flash floods affected eight provinces in November and triggered 411,000 displacements in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

Two incidents of widespread flooding accounted for most of the 121,000 disaster displacements recorded in Sri Lanka, a significant increase on the figure for 2020 and the highest since 2017. The trend towards a prolonged monsoon season was also particularly visible. Floods and landslides triggered more than 66,000 displacements across eight of the country's nine provinces between October and November. Many of the same areas and communities had previously been flooded in June, when 50,000 displacements were recorded.²⁷⁹ Affected districts including Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara and Kegalle had also experienced flooding in May.²⁸⁰



*Children warm themselves by a fire during the early morning hours in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.
© UNICEF/UNI252583/Siegfried Modola,
December 2019.*

Drought and earthquakes

The region's weaker monsoon season also prompted the government of Afghanistan to declare a drought in June.²⁸¹ Food insecurity and water scarcity increased, heightening the needs of those affected, including IDPs.²⁸²

Some assessments confirm that the conditions forced people from their homes, but compiling a comprehensive national estimate was challenging because conflict escalated and masked other triggers and drivers of displacement.²⁸³ What is clear, however, is that the overlapping impacts of drought and conflict, a liquidity crisis caused by a disruption in international funding and the Covid-19 pandemic combined to heighten overall humanitarian needs in the country. Some projections suggest that 97 per cent of Afghans could be living in poverty by mid-2022.²⁸⁴

Neighbouring Pakistan also experienced drought, and the dry conditions across the country meant the monsoon season only triggered around 2,000 displacements in 2021, the lowest figure in years. The effect of La Niña was particularly strong in the southern province of Sindh, where a significant rainfall deficit was observed, particularly in August when some districts did not record a single drop of rain.²⁸⁵

The most significant disaster to strike the country was the 5.9 magnitude Harnai earthquake, which hit Balochistan province on 7 October and triggered 68,000 displacements. Many homes in the area were built of mud and stone, making them vulnerable to earthquakes, and housing destruction was widespread, leaving many IDPs to face the prospect of long-term displacement.²⁸⁶

Data on disaster displacement in Pakistan is limited, which impedes a clear understanding of the phenomenon, but recent assessments show that both sudden and slow-onset disasters are contributing to increasingly dynamic population movements in which people are forced to move towards already stressed urban centres and provincial capitals.²⁸⁷

Conflict and violence

Armed conflict, political violence and intercommunal disputes triggered 736,000 internal displacements in South Asia in 2021, the highest figure since 2016.

Afghanistan's conflict accounted for the vast majority, as in previous years, and 2021 was particularly violent as the Taliban seized control of the country and fighting with government forces escalated. Around 4.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, 80 per cent of the total for the region (see spotlight, p.71).

Conflict and violence also triggered 13,000 displacements in India, the majority associated with post-election violence in West Bengal. After the announcement of election results on 2 May, violent clashes erupted between supporters of the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Homes, shops and political offices were burnt and more than 11,000 displacements recorded.

More than 506,000 people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, the highest figure in the region after Afghanistan. Nineteen of the country's 36 states and union territories have displaced populations, some of the largest being in Assam, Tripura and Mizoram in the north-east, and Jammu and Kashmir in the north-west.

Much of the displacement recorded in 2021 occurred in areas already hosting significant numbers of IDPs. In Jammu and Kashmir, violence against minority communities and migrant workers flared in October, prompting a crackdown by security forces.²⁸⁸ The situation triggered 500 displacements, particularly among Pandits, a Kashmiri Hindu community. Around 111,000 Pandits have been living in displacement across India due to violence between Muslim and Hindu communities in the 1990s. In Tripura, tensions with Bru IDPs triggered 1,500 displacements among the Halam and Chorei indigenous communities at the end of July. Around 37,000 Brus have been living in displacement camps in Tripura since 1997.²⁸⁹

An escalation in tensions between Muslim and Hindu communities in Bangladesh led to intercommunal violence across the country in October.²⁹⁰ Mob violence and arson attacks destroyed homes and pushed people into displacement.²⁹¹ However, the majority of the 427,000 people who were still displaced by conflict and violence as of the end of 2021 in Bangladesh have been displaced for decades. Most fled conflict that took place in the Chittagong Hill Tracts from the 1970s until 1997 between government forces and Shanti Bahini, the armed wing of the indigenous peoples' political party, Parbatya Chattagram Jana

Samhati Samiti (PCJSS).²⁹² Around 275,000 people were still displaced in the region as of 2009, and according to new information in 2021 many have no access to basic services, economic opportunities or prospects of return or resettlement.²⁹³

Many of the people living in displacement across South Asia have been doing so for years and even decades. Much of the data on these populations is outdated, however, because there is little if any systematic reporting of protracted displacement in affected countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Progress in policy and durable solutions

Despite the new, repeated and long-term displacement recorded in the region in 2021, there were also positive developments that helped to facilitate IDPs' return, create opportunities for durable solutions and reduce displacement in areas historically affected by conflict.

The government of Bangladesh took steps to implement its national strategy on the management of displacement associated with disasters and climate change, which is a positive step towards a more systematic approach to monitoring, addressing and preventing the phenomenon.²⁹⁴

The government of Sri Lanka continued to support durable solutions for people still living in displacement since the end of the country's civil war in 2009. Approximately 908,000 had been resettled or returned to their places of origin in Northern and Eastern provinces as of 31 July last year.²⁹⁵ Around 11,000 IDPs were still living in displacement sites or with relatives at the end of the year, down from 26,000 in December 2020.²⁹⁶

The government of India signed an agreement in January 2020 with the state administrations of Mizoram and Tripura to resettle Bru people displaced from the former to the latter.²⁹⁷ More than 400 families were resettled in April 2021 and provided with support to establish a permanent residence and livelihood.²⁹⁸ How quickly the remaining IDPs will be resettled and how sustainable their resettlement will be remains to be seen, but the initiative has the potential to resolve one of the country's most protracted displacement situations.

India and Pakistan also announced a ceasefire in the disputed Kashmir region in February 2021.²⁹⁹ Shelling across the line of control decreased significantly in the following months and no internal displacements were recorded on either side.³⁰⁰ Small-scale displacements may still be taking place, but a lack of regular and official reporting means they may not be captured.

The developments observed in 2021 show that there are promising initiatives for durable solutions across the region, which should be continued and strengthened. Looking ahead, preventing new displacement from happening and resolving the situation of millions of IDPs should continue being a priority for governments. Be it by disasters, conflict or violence, the quality, comprehensiveness, and coverage of the data on internal displacement varies significantly, which calls for more efforts in monitoring and reporting on the phenomenon.

Spotlight – Afghanistan: A surge in urban displacement

Afghanistan's 2020 peace process raised hopes that a solution to the country's conflict was within reach, but these faded in 2021 when talks stalled.³⁰¹ As foreign forces began their final drawdown on 1 May, the Taliban launched a nationwide offensive that culminated in the capture of Kabul on 15 August.³⁰² The fighting triggered 72 per cent of the 723,000 internal displacements reported in 2021, the highest figure ever recorded for the country.³⁰³

As the Taliban swept across the country and targeted provincial capitals, displacement and civilian casualties soared.³⁰⁴ Urban centres, historically a destination for IDPs from rural areas, became hotspots of new and secondary displacement.³⁰⁵ Around 31,500 displacements were recorded in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, in the first weeks of May, and as the situation escalated in early August authorities urged all 200,000 residents to evacuate.³⁰⁶ Fighting in the capital of neighbouring Kandahar province triggered 11,200 displacements to safer areas of the eponymous city in July, among them IDPs forced to flee a second time.³⁰⁷

As provincial capitals came under threat, IDPs began moving toward Kabul. An estimated 45,000 arrived between 9 and 15 August alone.³⁰⁸ The Afghan capital had long been a destination for IDPs, but the scale of their arrival in 2021 was unprecedented.³⁰⁹ Kabul and other Afghan cities were sheltering 80 per cent of the country's IDPs by September, putting strain on already overstretched public services.³¹⁰

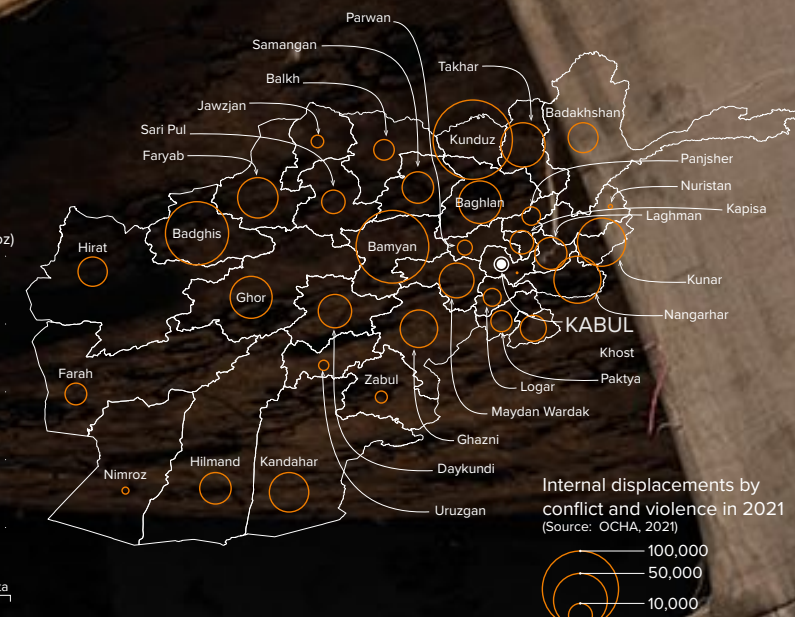
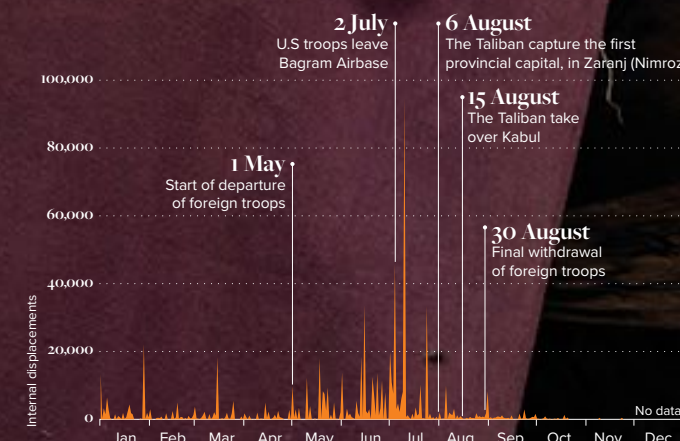
The true number of arrivals in, and departures from urban centres in 2021 is unknown. Growing insecurity and funding interruptions disrupted data collection, and many urban IDPs stay with relatives or host families, making them difficult to detect in the first place.³¹¹

Fighting decreased after the Taliban's takeover, but humanitarian needs soared.³¹² Urban IDPs, who in the past tended to have better protection and opportunities than their rural counterparts, have begun to face similar levels of need.³¹³ The country is suffering its second drought in four years and an economic crisis that has the potential to plunge 97 per cent of Afghans into poverty.³¹⁴ Half of the population is likely to experience crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in 2022. Ten of Afghanistan's 11 most densely populated urban districts face emergency levels.³¹⁵ Protection risks, such as evictions and violence against ethnic and religious minorities, are also on the rise in both urban and rural areas.³¹⁶

The situation for women and children, who accounted for 80 per cent of those newly displaced in 2021, is dire.³¹⁷ They are restricted in their freedom of movement, economic participation and access to basic services, and those displaced are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence and forced and early marriage. Their living conditions are also likely to worsen.³¹⁸

Nor does the absence of active conflict mean an end to new and repeated displacement. Even after the lull observed in August, urban displacement continued, driven by the economic crisis and growing humanitarian needs. Around half of Kandahar city's population of 600,000 was thought to have fled by mid-September, either for the countryside or a border crossing.³¹⁹ As people flee urban areas and attempt to cross into neighbouring countries, border closures and pushbacks have fuelled further internal displacement and driven people to seek irregular routes out of Afghanistan.³²⁰

723,000 Internal displacements by conflict and violence in Afghanistan in 2021



The combination of reduced conflict in the provinces and insecurity and deteriorating living conditions in cities led around 170,000 newly displaced IDPs to return to their places of origin by the end of the year.³²¹ Whether their return will prove sustainable, however, is far from certain. Decades of conflict have caused widespread destruction and made Afghanistan one of the countries most contaminated by landmines and improvised explosive devices in the world.³²² Homes, businesses and schools have been severely damaged or are littered with unexploded ordnance, undermining IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions.³²³

The situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly in 2021. As the country grappled with conflict, economic collapse and climate shocks, displacement affected urban and rural areas alike. A disruption in international funding and a liquidity crisis meant humanitarians were unable to respond at the pace and scale required.³²⁴ In the absence of a comprehensive response, the needs of IDPs and host communities are likely to continue to grow, as will the likelihood of further internal and cross-border displacement.

A displaced woman holds her son in her arms in Shari Naw Park in Kabul, Afghanistan. © Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images, September 2021.

The Americas

Internal displacements in 2021

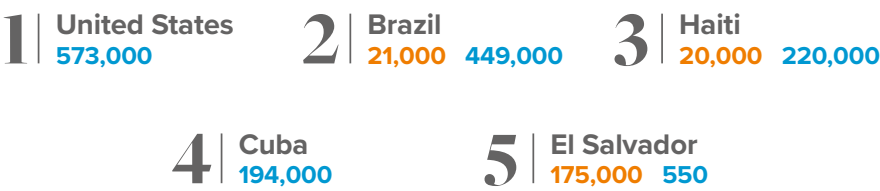


Figure 35: Five countries with most internal displacements in the Americas in 2021

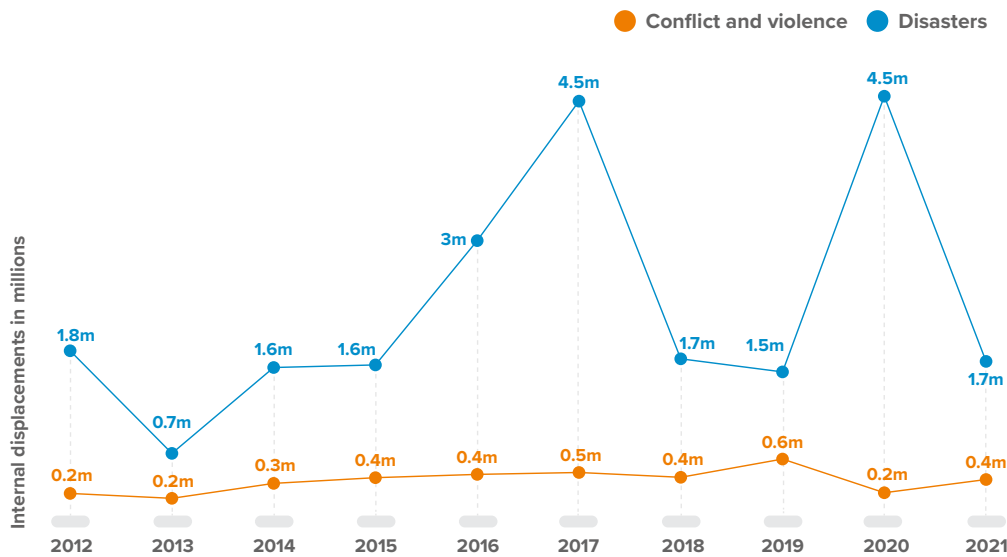


Figure 36: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in the Americas (2012-2021)

Total number of IDPs in 2021



Figure 37: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in the Americas as of end 2021



Figure 38: Total number of IDPs in the Americas as of end 2021, by age group

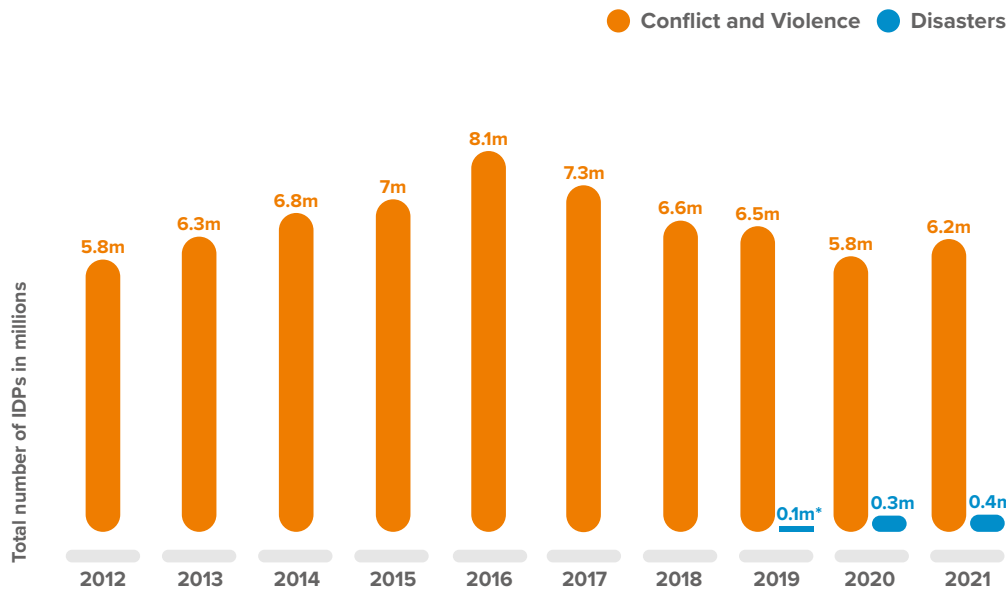


Figure 39: Total number of IDPs in the Americas at year end (2012-2021)

Disasters were the main trigger of internal displacements in the Americas in 2021, accounting for nearly 1.7 million, more than half of which were the result of storms and floods. The region was also significantly affected by wildfires and geophysical hazards. The availability and accessibility of data vary significantly between countries, which plays a role in the trends discussed below. Smaller-scale disasters tend to go unreported, but they should not be ignored given their impacts on local communities, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Conflict and violence triggered 381,000 displacements, mostly in Colombia and Central America, and a surge in criminal violence led to the highest figure ever recorded for Haiti (see spotlight, p.79). We also obtained data on displacement due to violence in Brazil for the first time, but here as elsewhere in the region the information compiled is unlikely to reflect the full reality as in many countries this type of displacement is not collected systematically.

Storms and floods

Storms and floods triggered about 1.1 million internal displacements across the region last year, a significant drop from the 3.4 million recorded in 2020, of which 2.8 million occurred during the hurricane season. The lower figure reflects the fact that storms triggered fewer displacements in 2021. Last year's hurricane season was the third most active on record in terms of named storms, but fewer developed into full-blown hurricanes than in 2020.³²⁵

Hurricane Ida was the event to trigger most displacements, prompting nearly 14,000 pre-emptive evacuations in Cuba and more than 258,000 in the US.³²⁶ Most occurred in the state of Louisiana and particularly in New Orleans, where around 200,000 people, or half of the city's population, were evacuated.³²⁷ Ida caused widespread damage to homes and infrastructure, particularly the electricity grid.³²⁸ Power cuts affected more than a million people and lasted for up to more than a month.³²⁹ As the storm moved north it weakened in intensity, but it still brought flooding and high winds that left thousands homeless in Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.³³⁰

The disaster revealed gaps in the response, particularly its potential to widen social and economic inequality. Low-income homeowners are indeed at greater risk of being displaced for longer periods, because they may not receive enough financial assistance to rebuild.³³¹ Acknowledging that there were social disparities in the provision of

aid, in 2021 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) started taking measures to address the issue.³³² It changed its rules for verifying homeownership which disfavoured low-income neighbourhoods, communities of colour, the elderly, and people with disabilities.³³³ In 2022, it started collecting data on the race and ethnicity of aid applicants, in order to assess disparities in its programmes and their impact on vulnerable populations.³³⁴

Hurricane Elsa also caused significant displacement in the region, triggering 180,000 pre-emptive evacuations in Cuba, and a lesser number in Barbados, the Dominican Republic and the US.³³⁵ The storm also damaged 43 homes in St Vincent and the Grenadines, which were still recovering from a volcanic eruption earlier in the year.³³⁶

Many people displaced by hurricanes in 2020 still faced vulnerabilities last year. Some in the US were still struggling to recover, most notably from hurricane Laura, one of the most powerful storms ever to hit Louisiana, which was still waiting for federal aid for long-term housing and other needs.³³⁷ In the city of Lake Charles, which was hit by a series of storms and floods in 2021, housing needs alone amounted to \$900 million. Inability to rebuild often delays the return of people displaced by disasters, but some in Lake Charles went back to their damaged homes anyway because they were no longer able to afford alternative housing.³³⁸

Many communities in Central America also continued to live with inadequate water and sanitation, poor housing and food insecurity after hurricanes Eta and Iota destroyed homes, infrastructure and livelihoods in 2020, a situation accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic.³³⁹

Outside the 2021 hurricane season, storms and floods triggered a high number of displacements in the US and Canada, particularly in the Pacific Northwest region, where many took place in areas already affected by wildfires. The fires burnt large areas of forest, reducing the land's capacity to absorb precipitation and increasing the risk of floods and landslides.³⁴⁰ Industrial agriculture practices and clear-cut logging also lowered the landscape's absorption capacity.³⁴¹

Summer wildfires may have had a similar effect in Canada's British Columbia, where floods triggered 18,000 evacuations in November after a storm considered the worst in a century dropped nearly a month's worth of rain in two days.³⁴² Some people took refuge in shelters, but others stayed with friends or family, in hotels, and even

in their cars. Homes and infrastructure were severely damaged or destroyed, and the impacts on agriculture were significant.³⁴³

Similar trends were observed in California in October, where areas burnt by fires in 2020 and 2021 received heavy rain and snowfall that caused flash flooding, landslides and debris flows, prompting more than 10,000 evacuations.³⁴⁴

Cold temperatures and winter storms triggered at least 18,000 displacements across eight US states in February, when more than 73 per cent of the mainland was covered in snow.³⁴⁵ About 3.8 million homes and businesses were left without power, and some people were forced to flee as a result.³⁴⁶ Texas was the most affected state and recorded 15,000 displacements, but the figures are likely to be underestimates.³⁴⁷

Brazil recorded 411,000 flood displacements in 2021, 170,000 of them in what was considered the wettest December in the past 15 years.³⁴⁸ The state of Bahia was worst affected with more than 143,000 displacements and nearly 4,600 homes destroyed, prompting several municipalities to declare a state of emergency.³⁴⁹ Indigenous and rural black communities, who lost their homes and crops, struggled to meet their basic needs, including for food and potable water.³⁵⁰

Unprecedented precipitation induced by La Niña also led to flooding in North region in May and June, when the Negro river burst its banks and its waters reached record levels.³⁵¹ The floods affected more than 455,000 people in the state of Amazonas and triggered around 41,000 displacements.³⁵² Agricultural losses were significant, particularly for indigenous communities who rely on subsistence farming and fishing.³⁵³ The situation was aggravated by a surge of Covid-19 infections and escalating criminal violence, particularly in the state capital of Manaus.³⁵⁴

The neighbouring state of Acre recorded 29,000 flood displacements between 15 and 26 February. Several municipalities declared a state of emergency as heavy rains caused principal rivers to burst their banks, affecting nearly 130,000 people.³⁵⁵

Other parts of South America also experienced heavy precipitation that led to displacement. Rains and floods destroyed more than 8,000 homes in 85 municipalities across Venezuela in August, triggering around 32,000

displacements.³⁵⁶ Another 15,000 were recorded across the Colombian departments of Bolívar, Córdoba and Sucre.³⁵⁷ The latter figure, however, does not reflect the full impact of disasters in the country, which also heighten the needs and vulnerabilities of people affected by conflict and violence. In 2021, around 301,000 people were affected by disasters across 557 municipalities throughout Colombia, and non-state armed groups were present in 318 of them.³⁵⁸

The region most affected by wildfires

The Americas recorded 282,000 internal displacements associated with wildfires in 2021, more than any other region and 62.4 per cent of the global total. The trend, which has been consistent since data on disasters became available in 2008, is partly explained by the prevalence and intensity of fires, but also by better monitoring and reporting than in other regions. North America was particularly affected as burning conditions reached extreme danger levels earlier than usual in parts of the US and Canada.³⁵⁹

Some areas of the US experienced their hottest summer on record, which helped to fuel the fires.³⁶⁰ Forty-nine events triggered around 238,000 displacements, of which 67 per cent occurred in California. The Dixie fire, which began in July, was the second-largest fire recorded in the state history and led to more than 50,000 displacements.³⁶¹ The Caldor fire, although smaller in area, triggered nearly 73,000 in August.³⁶² Previous wildfires in the state have shown that urban expansion increases the risk of displacement.³⁶³

Wildfires in Canada triggered 41,000 displacements. British Columbia, where 1,610 fires burned between 1 April and 30 September, was particularly affected.³⁶⁴ At least 180 evacuation orders were issued, leading to 32,000 evacuations.³⁶⁵

Fires also caused displacement elsewhere in the region. At least 1,100 evacuations were reported in Mexico, and 815 in Chile.³⁶⁶ Evidence suggests that wildfires trigger displacement on a much larger scale in Latin America, but the phenomenon is largely unreported there.

In Brazil, for example, only 77 wildfire displacements were recorded in 2021, despite a lack of environmental governance that has contributed to an increase in

deforestation and wildfires, even in supposedly protected areas.³⁶⁷ Wildfires in the country are closely linked to deforestation. Forests are cut in the wet season and burned in the dry season, often by landowners and landgrabbers for logging or with a view to converting land for agribusiness.³⁶⁸ Deforestation in the Amazon increased by 79 per cent between 2019 and 2021, compared with 2016 to 2018. The rate is even higher for indigenous land, where it rose by 138 per cent.³⁶⁹

Deforestation is also linked to illegal extractive activities and as such to organised crime, notably in the Amazon.³⁷⁰ Data on displacement triggered by wildfires is limited, but information on that triggered by violence corroborates the connection between the two. Most of the latter recorded in Brazil in 2021 was the result of the actions of those engaged in slash-and-burn cycles.

Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions

Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions triggered 251,000 internal displacements in the Americas in 2021, the highest figure for six years. The most significant event was an earthquake that struck Haiti's southern peninsula in August, prompting around 220,000. The disaster added to a fragile situation marked by escalating gang violence, the assassination of the country's president and significant difficulties in delivering aid (see spotlight, p.79).

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, three months of increasing volcanic activity culminated in an explosive eruption of La Soufrière volcano in April. The government issued mandatory evacuations that led to the displacement of more than 23,000 people, or 21 per cent of the country's population, of whom three-quarters moved in with friends or relatives, a fifth to government shelters and the remainder to hotels and informal shelters.

The eruption caused damage to homes, water shortages, power cuts, livelihood losses, food insecurity and trauma, but the evacuations succeeded in averting death and injury.³⁷¹ The government declared the evacuated areas safe to return to in September, but 117 people were still in shelters and around 500 families with hosts or in rental accommodation as of the end of November because their homes were uninhabitable.³⁷² The event also had a significant impact on the agricultural sector, the main source of income on the island.³⁷³

Northern Peru was hit by a 7.5 magnitude earthquake in November. It destroyed 488 homes, rendered at least 1,618 uninhabitable and triggered around 7,200 displacements, mostly in Amazonas department.³⁷⁴ The most affected areas were also the hardest to reach, particularly because the earthquake coincided with flooding on the Utcubamba river, which isolated many displaced communities.³⁷⁵

Violence, a persistent trigger of displacement

Armed conflict and criminal and gang-related violence continued to affect several countries in 2021. The figures should be interpreted with caution, however, because while data for countries such as Colombia is robust, major gaps remain in others. This is notably the case in northern Central America and Mexico, where the full scale and nature of displacement is difficult to determine.³⁷⁶

The Colombian government signed a peace agreement in 2016 with the country's main guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Five years into implementation, however, violence has surged in regions historically affected by conflict.³⁷⁷ Along the Pacific Coast, for example, disputes between NSAGs and criminal organisations over the control of land and resources proliferated in the power vacuum left by the FARC's absence and a lack of effective state presence.³⁷⁸

The country's four Pacific departments accounted for 49 per cent of the 134,000 internal displacements recorded during the year. Nariño recorded 30,000, Cauca 14,000, Chocó 12,000 and Valle del Cauca 11,000.³⁷⁹ Antioquia and Norte de Santander, where several NSAGs are present, also recorded high figures at 23,000 and 10,000 respectively.³⁸⁰ Many communities moved to escape violence, but others were trapped in the crossfire or unable to move because of threats to their security. Nearly 23,000 cases of forced confinement were also reported, about 72 per cent of them in Chocó.³⁸¹

In some cases, the violence and displacement recorded at the department level were concentrated in a few municipalities.³⁸² In Valle del Cauca, for example, 87 per cent of the displacements took place in Buenaventura, a city historically affected by the conflict and criminal violence.³⁸³

This concentration of violence, displacement and forced confinement is partly explained by the importance of the areas in question to illegal economies.³⁸⁴ Buenaventura, for example, is the largest port on Colombia's Pacific coast and a major transit point for narcotics and contraband. The dynamics at play here and elsewhere in the country are testimony to a highly complex situation that tends to be understood as an armed conflict, while in reality it is marked by criminal violence in which paramilitary groups ally with local gangs to control illegal economies and drug-trafficking routes.³⁸⁵

Despite the absence of the systematic monitoring of displacement associated with criminal and gang violence elsewhere in the region, data that does exist for El Salvador, Haiti and Mexico begins to paint a different picture.

The results of a national survey in El Salvador suggest that around 111,000 people changed their residence because of threats to their life and security in 2021. Given that some moved several times, the total number of internal displacements was estimated to be around 175,000, of which gang violence triggered just over 80 per cent.³⁸⁶ The survey is not without limitations, but it gives a sense of what could be a much more complex phenomenon affecting the country.

Gang violence in Haiti escalated in 2021, triggering 20,000 displacements, an unprecedented figure for the country. Many took place in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Gang activity also impeded the delivery of assistance to areas affected by both violence and disasters, aggravating the humanitarian situation in a country grappling with a multifaceted displacement crisis (see spotlight, p.79).³⁸⁷

The number of internal displacements associated with violence in Mexico was three times higher than in 2020. Around 29,000 took place across the states of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas. Ninety-five per cent were triggered by criminal violence, most of them in Michoacán, Guerrero and Chiapas.³⁸⁸

Michoacán was most affected, accounting for 13,000, more than ten times the figure for 2020. Much of the displacement was driven by violence between drug traffickers,

particularly clashes between the Cartel Jalisco New Generation and the United Cartels.³⁸⁹ Criminal violence also triggered 3,600 displacements in Zacatecas and further cases in Nayarit, the first time the phenomenon has been recorded in either state.³⁹⁰

Around a quarter of the displacements triggered by violence nationwide involved indigenous populations, which were also affected by intercommunal violence. This type of violence triggered around 380 displacements among both indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Chiapas and Oaxaca, where incidents included cases of conflict over land.³⁹¹

Land conflict also triggered 21,000 displacements in Brazil. The phenomenon is not new in the country, but 2021 was the first year that data could be obtained to estimate its scale.³⁹² Violence committed by land-grabbers and farmers accounted for 44 per cent of the total, and more than half of those displaced were indigenous people whose homes were destroyed.³⁹³

Around 6.6 million people were living in displacement at the end of the year, 94 per cent of them as a result of conflict and violence and most of them in Colombia. More efforts are needed to understand the different drivers and triggers of displacement, and to assess for how long people remain displaced. Filling these persistent data gaps is vital to inform policy making and action for displacement risk reduction and durable solutions.

Spotlight – Haiti: Violence and disasters trigger highest displacement in a decade

The humanitarian situation in Haiti deteriorated in 2021, the result of increasing gang violence, consecutive disasters and the Covid-19 pandemic. Conflict and violence triggered 20,000 internal displacements, an increase of 157 per cent on 2020 and the highest ever recorded for the country. Disasters prompted another 220,000.

The country was struggling with a contracting economy and deepening poverty, which were driving instability and insecurity even before the onset of Covid-19. Criminal and gang violence have been on the increase since 2018. It was initially concentrated in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area but has since spread, forcing growing numbers of people to flee their homes.³⁹⁴

Gangs clashed with each other and with the security forces in 2021, taking advantage of the uncertainty caused by the assassination of the country's president, Jovenel Moïse, on 7 July.³⁹⁵ They also resorted to various forms of violence against civilians, including assaults and threats.³⁹⁶ Gender-based violence has been of particular concern as gangs use it to assert their control over local populations.³⁹⁷

Data on displacement triggered by gang violence in 2021 could only be obtained for Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, but as in 2020 it is likely to have taken place elsewhere in the country too.³⁹⁸ Roadblocks and insecurity impeded both data collection and the delivery of humanitarian aid.³⁹⁹

Haiti's southern peninsula was also struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake on 14 August. It killed more than 2,200 people and triggered at least 220,000 displacements, a scale unseen since the devastating 2010 earthquake that caused nearly 1.5 million.⁴⁰⁰ Around 54,000 homes were destroyed across the Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes departments, leaving many IDPs facing the prospect of protracted displacement.⁴⁰¹ Most are likely to have been displaced in rural areas, where homes were built with materials unable to withstand a powerful earthquake.

Housing destruction in the countryside was five to seven times higher than in urban areas.⁴⁰²

Three days later, many of the same areas were hit by flooding associated with tropical storm Grace. No data on displacement was available, but Grace hampered rescue and relief efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake.⁴⁰³ The storm interrupted humanitarian routes, as access to roads and bridges was cut off by heavy rains and floods.⁴⁰⁴

Gang activity also impeded the response to humanitarian needs heightened by the two disasters. The delivery of aid was slowed in the months that followed by a blockade that led to fuel, power and food shortages.⁴⁰⁵ Humanitarian workers were also kidnapped, disrupting access to parts of Port-au-Prince and forcing the closure of hospitals in the capital.⁴⁰⁶

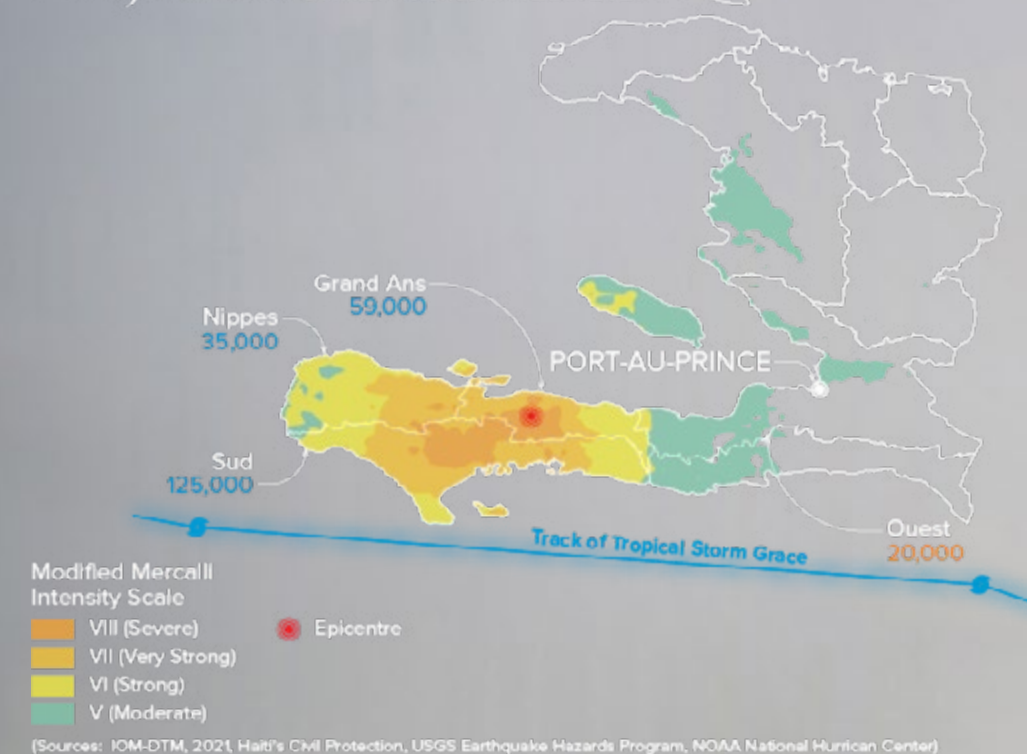
Some of the displacements reported in 2021 were secondary, which illustrates IDPs' chronic vulnerability. An attack by armed gang members on Tabarre Issa, a displacement site dating back to 2010, triggered nearly 2,200 such movements in March.⁴⁰⁷ Camp Lapiste, which had hosted hundreds of people with disabilities since the 2010 earthquake was also burned down in June.⁴⁰⁸ Fear of further such incidents may have pushed more IDPs into secondary displacement without their movements being detected, given the challenges to humanitarian access.

The situation in Haiti led tens of thousands of people to leave the country in 2021, but many also returned. Given the prevailing insecurity and instability, however, many may have gone back to a life of internal displacement. Of 15,000 people who returned between September and December, 21 per cent did not go back to their communities of origin.⁴⁰⁹

The events of 2021 show how violence and disasters can combine to trigger new and secondary displacement and drive further vulnerability and displacement risk. With UN support, the government has sought to reduce gang

220,000 Internal displacements as a result of the 2021 earthquake in Haiti

20,000 Internal displacements by criminal violence in Haiti in 2021



violence by strengthening police capacity, countering arms trafficking and setting up cash-for-work, vocational training and microcredit schemes.⁴¹⁰ It also asked the UN Security Council in October to adjust the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti to address the growing instability, and it approved a national disaster risk management plan for 2019 to 2030 in July 2020.⁴¹¹ Building on these efforts will be key to helping the country's IDPs achieve durable solutions.

A woman crosses the bay to Zétoit to join her daughter who is being treated for injuries from the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti last year. She lost both her baby and her home in the earthquake. © UNICEF/ UN0527140/Haro, October 2021.

Europe and Central Asia

Internal displacements in 2021

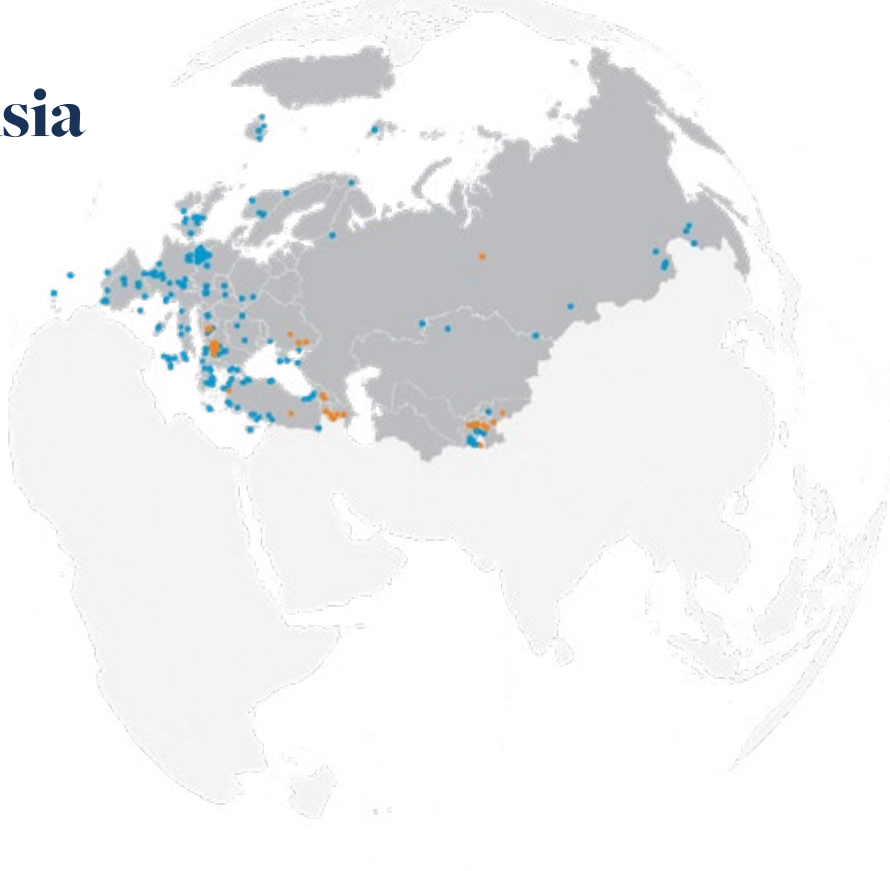


Figure 40: Five countries with most internal displacements in Europe and Central Asia in 2021

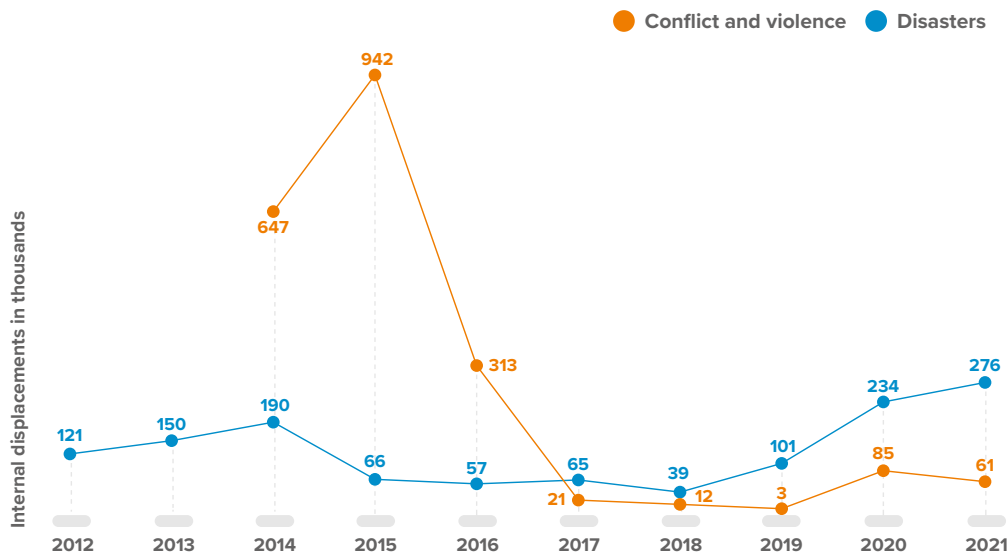


Figure 41: Internal displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in Europe and Central Asia (2012-2021)

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

Total number of IDPs in 2021

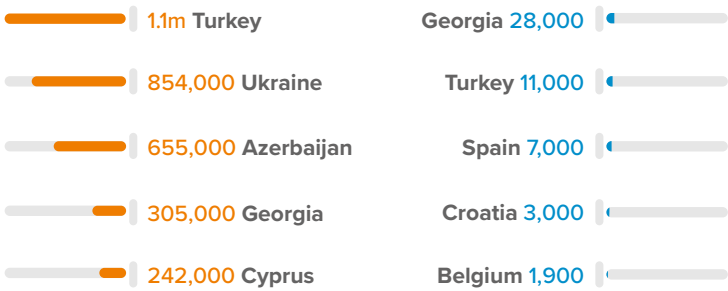


Figure 42: Countries with the highest number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia as of end 2021



Figure 43: Total number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia as of end 2021, by age group

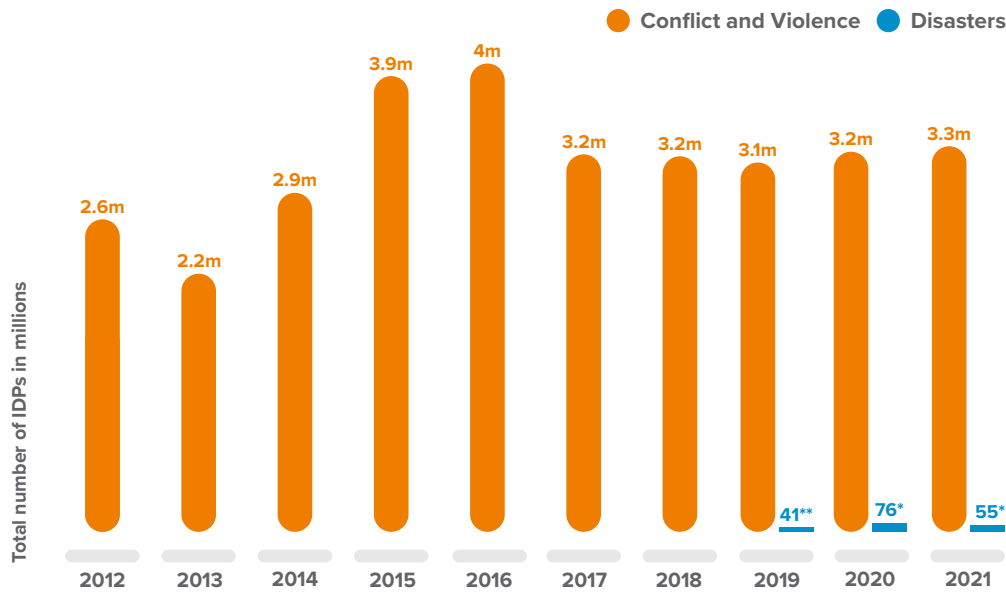


Figure 44: Total number of IDPs in Europe and Central Asia at year end (2012-2021)

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

Disasters triggered 276,000 internal displacements in Europe and Central Asia in 2021. The most significant included wildfires in the Mediterranean, storms and flooding in western and central Europe and a volcanic eruption in Spain’s Canary Islands.

Violence prompted at least 61,000 internal displacements, the highest figure for the region since 2016. Two days of border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan accounted for 56,000 or just over 90 per cent of the total. Very few displacements were recorded in Ukraine in 2021, but Russia’s military offensive in February 2022 has led Ukraine to become the largest and most rapidly evolving internal displacement situation in the world.

Wildfires in the Mediterranean

Wildfires triggered most disaster displacements in the region at 155,000, nearly seven times the figure for 2020. The overwhelming majority occurred in areas with a Mediterranean climate in southern France, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Spain and Turkey.

Temperatures in Turkey reached an all-time high of 49.1°C, and the country witnessed its worst wildfires since records began in 2003.⁴¹² Widespread fires burned in the southern and south-western provinces of Antalya, Adana, Mersin, Muğla and Osmaniye at the end of July and beginning of August.⁴¹³ They triggered 81,000 displacements, by far the highest figure ever recorded for this type of hazard in the country. Almost half took place in the Marmaris district of Muğla.⁴¹⁴ Overall, the fires destroyed at least 2,500 homes, leaving more than 9,000 people facing the prospect of long-term displacement.⁴¹⁵

Neighbouring Greece experienced its worst heatwave in more than three decades. Temperatures reached a record 45°C and wildfires triggered more 58,000 displacements, the highest figure ever for the country.⁴¹⁶ Fires on the island of Evia and in the regions of Ilia and Varympompi on 3 and 4 August accounted for around 40,000, or almost 70 per cent of the total.⁴¹⁷

A single wildfire in south-eastern France triggered the 8,000 displacements recorded for the country, in the form of evacuations. The figure for Spain was more than 4,600, of which a single fire in Andalucía accounted for almost 60 per cent.⁴¹⁸ Italy recorded 1,700, at least 1,500 of them being evacuations associated with a fire in Sardinia

in late July that caused damage estimated in the order of €1 billion.⁴¹⁹

A range of factors contribute to these countries’ greater vulnerability to wildfires. Their location means they have little cloud cover and high sun exposure, particularly during the summer months. This in turn leads to lower humidity and higher temperatures, both of which increase the risk of fires.⁴²⁰ Human-driven factors including changes in land use, overgrazing and deforestation play a role too.⁴²¹ Rural depopulation and the abandonment of farmland has also meant that some areas have become overgrown with vegetation, which can serve as fuel for wildfires when conditions are dry.⁴²²

Europe is warming faster than the global average, and some of the highest levels of warming are projected for areas around the Mediterranean basin.⁴²³ The summer of 2021 was the hottest on record in the region, and nearly 98 per cent of the displacement that wildfires triggered occurred in July and August.⁴²⁴ Climate change is only expected to increase the frequency of heatwaves and drought, which are major drivers of wildfire risk and resulting displacement.⁴²⁵

Exceptional rainfall and tornados

Floods and storms have historically triggered most disaster displacements in the region, and the figures for 2021 were higher than the average for the past 10 years at nearly 104,000, most of which occurred during the summer months.

Unusually heavy rain fell on catchment areas of the Rhine and Meuse rivers in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands in mid-July, triggering 83,000 displacements in the three countries. Around 51,000 evacuations were recorded in the Dutch province of Limburg alone.⁴²⁶ Nearly 16,000 displacements were recorded in the Belgian regions of Flanders and Wallonia, including 10,000 in the city of Verviers.⁴²⁷ The figure for Germany was more than 16,000, but this is likely to be an underestimate (see spotlight, p.87). Austria, France and Luxembourg were also affected by the same weather system, but far fewer displacements were recorded.

Floods also led to displacement in Russia. The Amur River in the eponymous region bordering China burst its banks in June, triggering 2,700 evacuations, 780 of them involving children.⁴²⁸

Wildfires also contributed to flood risk in some parts of Europe, reducing the absorption capacity of land by burning off forest and ground cover. In Greece, residents of Evia were still recovering from devastating wildfires that destroyed about a third of the island’s forest cover in the summer of 2021 when storms struck in the first weeks of October. Consequent flooding triggered at least 100 evacuations.⁴²⁹

Central Europe was hit by unprecedented storms, including tornadoes that struck in June. The Czech Republic recorded its strongest ever tornado, which severely damaged 1,200 homes and triggered around 2,800 displacements in South Moravia near the Czech-Slovak border.⁴³⁰ Recovery efforts were helped by insurance companies that covered damages even for families whose policies did not explicitly cover tornados, and uninsured families received state compensation.⁴³¹ The structural damage was such in some cases, however, that 200 homes were listed for demolition.⁴³²

Tornadoes hit southern Poland as well, destroying at least 42 homes and prompting 113 displacements.⁴³³ Farmers who suffered agricultural losses were able to apply for state financial assistance.⁴³⁴

Storms with cyclone-like conditions were also recorded in the region.⁴³⁵ An intense event hit the Black Sea in June, bringing heavy downpours to the Crimea peninsula.⁴³⁶ Nine cities and 27 settlements were flooded and nearly 1,800 evacuations were triggered, 325 of them involving children.⁴³⁷ Crimea was affected by heavy rains and floods again in early July, leading to more than 160 evacuations.⁴³⁸

Another severe storm led to heavy rains and flooding in Turkey in August that killed 82 people and triggered nearly 2,500 evacuations in the provinces of Bartın, Kastamonu and Sinop.⁴³⁹ The same storm struck the Russian region of Krasnodar, prompting more than 1,500 in August and leaving more than 100,000 people without power.⁴⁴⁰

Similar storms hit Italy in October and November, triggering nearly 400 displacements.⁴⁴¹ Another struck Malta and Greece in October, but it is unclear whether any displacement occurred.⁴⁴²

Geophysical hazards

Earthquakes and volcanic activity triggered 15,000 internal displacements in 2021. The most significant event was the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano on the Canary Island of La Palma, which began on 19 September and triggered 7,000 evacuations in the weeks that followed.⁴⁴³ The eruption is considered the most serious in Europe for a century, and became the island’s longest lasting in almost 350 years.⁴⁴⁴

Some evacuees began to return home in January 2022, but their numbers were limited and precautions were put in place given the risk of houses collapsing and exposure to toxic gases and high temperatures in return areas.⁴⁴⁵ Other evacuees have been unable to go back to their homes because the eruption destroyed nearly 3,000 buildings.⁴⁴⁶ The local government has adopted exceptional fiscal measures to facilitate reconstruction in both urban and rural areas, but it may be a year before works begin and up to two years before they are completed.⁴⁴⁷

Earthquakes triggered 7,900 displacements in Greece, the second-highest figure on record for this type of hazard in the country. The region of Larissa was struck by 6.3 and 5.6 magnitude earthquakes on consecutive days in March, rendering 1,800 homes uninhabitable and prompting around 4,400 displacements.⁴⁴⁸ A 5.8 magnitude quake on the island of Crete in September destroyed nearly 1,500 primary residencies and led to a similar number of displacements.⁴⁴⁹

Another earthquake triggered around 40,000 displacements in Croatia on 29 December 2020. The event falls outside the period covered by this report, but its consequences were felt well into 2021. Around 2,900 people were still displaced as of mid-March.⁴⁵⁰ The country had spent the equivalent of \$110 million in reconstruction efforts as of July, but some of the areas affected were still in need of support for their economic recovery.⁴⁵¹

Conflict displacement

Conflict and violence triggered more than 61,000 internal displacements in the region in 2021. Two days of border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in April

accounted for nearly 56,000 or 92 per cent of the total. It was the most intense episode of violence in the area since the end of the Soviet Union, and illustrates the links between water scarcity, conflict and displacement in the sub-region (see spotlight, p.89). Fear of further clashes elsewhere on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border led to a further 5,600 pre-emptive displacements in June.⁴⁵²

The Ukrainian government has been in conflict with non-state armed groups in the eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk since 2014. The parties agreed on a new ceasefire in July 2020, but the security situation deteriorated in 2021. By the second half of the year, the number of security incidents recorded each month had reached pre-ceasefire levels and they continued to increase until the end of the year.⁴⁵³

The shelling of a frontline settlement in November was the only event identified as having forced people to flee their homes in 2021. It triggered 40 displacements, the lowest figure since 2014. That said, there were still around 854,000 people living in protracted displacement as result of the conflict at the end of the year.⁴⁵⁴

In the second half of 2021, Russia began to amass troops near its border with Ukraine, seeking among other demands that Kyiv abandons its plans to join NATO. Moscow had mobilised 100,000 soldiers by the end of the year, along with tanks and other military hardware.⁴⁵⁵ Its military offensive, which began in February 2022, falls outside the period covered by this report, but has served to drastically change the scale of displacement in Ukraine.⁴⁵⁶ As of 1 April 2022, around 7.1 million people were estimated to be internally displaced across the country.⁴⁵⁷ Events are still unfolding, but the crisis has already triggered the highest annual figure for internal displacements ever recorded for a single country. The widespread damage and destruction of homes and infrastructure and the presence of unexploded ordnance are likely to hamper returns in a foreseeable future.⁴⁵⁸



The owner of the house closest to the Cumbre Vieja Volcano that erupted in La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain in February cleans up the surroundings of his house. © Kike Rincon/Europa Press via Getty Images, February 2022.

Spotlight – Germany: Floods trigger the highest displacement in years

A low-pressure weather system brought heavy rainfall across western Europe in mid-July 2021, which led to severe flooding that triggered at least 84,000 displacements across Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Germany was badly affected, especially on 14 and 15 July, when catastrophic floods in the western states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate killed 182 people and triggered around 16,000 displacements, the highest figure for the country since 2013.⁴⁵⁹ It was Germany's costliest ever disaster and the deadliest in more than 60 years.⁴⁶⁰

Earlier summer rains had already filled dams and saturated the ground in both states, heightening the impacts of the July downpours.⁴⁶¹ Rivers burst their banks and flash floods devastated villages across several river basins, destroying homes, businesses, infrastructure and agricultural land. Concern that dams would collapse triggered evacuations in several districts of North Rhine-Westphalia, including Euskirchen, where around 4,500 people had to move for several days for fear the Steinbachtal dam would give way.⁴⁶² Another 800 evacuations were ordered in Hückeswagen for the same reason.⁴⁶³ In Wassenberg, a dam on the Rur river did break, triggering 700 evacuations.⁴⁶⁴ Others took place by boat and helicopter as waters rose in flooded buildings, some of which were in danger of collapse.⁴⁶⁵ Overall, more than 16,000 displacements were recorded.

The vast majority of damages were reported in the Rhineland-Palatinate district of Ahrweiler, through which the Ahr, a tributary of the Rhine, flows. More than 40,000 people were affected by the flooding in the district, of whom 17,000 faced considerable damage to their homes and assets.⁴⁶⁶

Some evacuees returned once the danger had subsided, but many were unable to because their homes had been damaged or destroyed. A variety of temporary solutions were found to house those displaced, including emergency shelters and temporary accommodation in

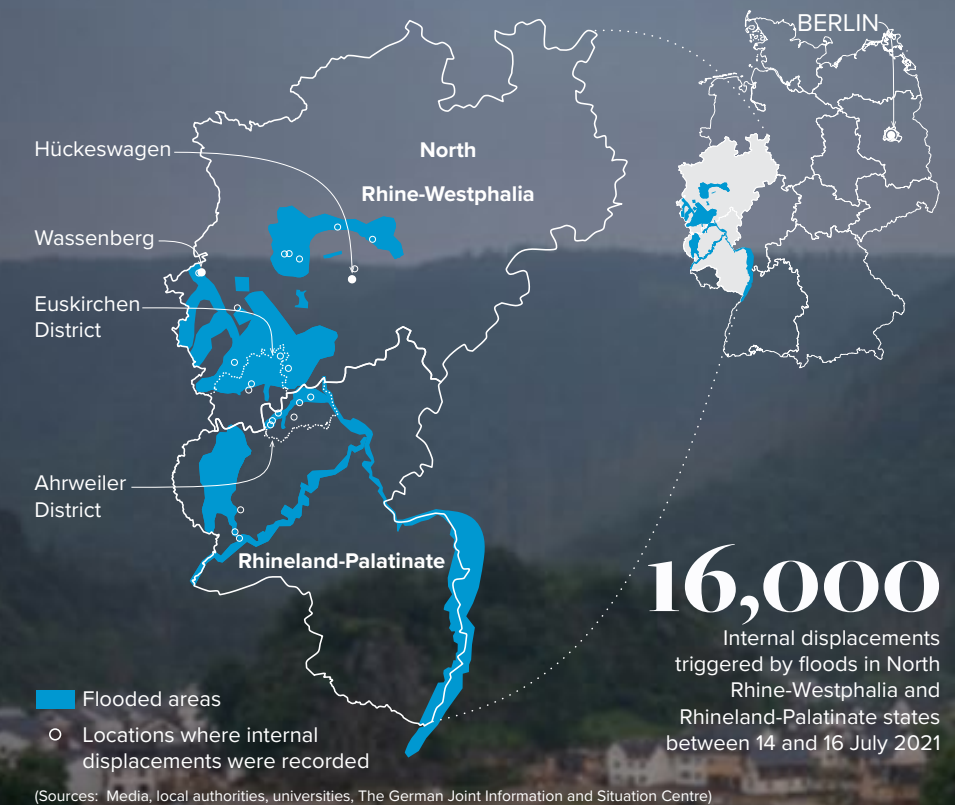
converted shipping containers, small mobile homes, and holiday homes.⁴⁶⁷

For some in the Ahr valley who wished to stay close to home, temporary housing solutions were inaccessible because the floods had destroyed cars and roads and severed public transport links, limiting movement in and out of the valley.⁴⁶⁸ Many people chose to remain on the upper floors of their flooded homes instead, while others took refuge in hotels, holiday homes or with friends and family.⁴⁶⁹

Infrastructure works continue, but reconstruction has been a slow process.⁴⁷⁰ As winter set in, many homes were still without hot water and heating. Applying for financial support also proved time-consuming, leaving many people to face financial hardship.⁴⁷¹ Those displaced are managing their recovery in different ways. Many are determined to rebuild their homes and towns, but others have opted to move away permanently.⁴⁷² The emotional toll and uncertainty about the future are significant pressures that may persist over longer periods of time.⁴⁷³

The disaster highlighted shortfalls in the way early warnings and preventive action were managed, driving reforms to improve future risk management.⁴⁷⁴ A variety of digital and analogue warning systems were in place at the time of the floods. The storm, however, damaged power lines and transmission masts, meaning that some systems failed. Additionally, not all warnings were communicated on time or in a manner that relayed the gravity of the situation. This in turn meant that not all those who might have evacuated did so, which played a significant role in the high death toll from the floods.⁴⁷⁵

For future disasters, SMS warnings will be issued via the mobile phone network to supplement other emergency notification systems, and the siren network will be expanded to reach as many people as possible in at-risk areas.⁴⁷⁶ These measures may drive more displacement in the form of pre-emptive evacuations, but they will help to reduce the number of fatalities.



It was difficult to obtain accurate figures for the number of people displaced by the July 2021 floods. There is no centralised repository of data on disaster loss and damages in Germany, and the many stakeholders involved in the response did not always report in the same way. Some datasets do not differentiate between residential and non-residential buildings, or between damaged and destroyed housing. Given that fewer than half of the homes in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate are insured against natural hazards, insurance estimates do not provide a comprehensive picture of the damage and destruction either.⁴⁷⁷

For evacuations, local authorities and media published orders, but they did not consistently report the estimated number of residents affected or evacuated. Impacts were frequently reported on in financial terms, but not in terms of people displaced. These issues mean that the overall displacement estimates are likely to be conservative.

More and better data will be needed to fully understand the scale, duration and social and economic impacts of future displacement, and the risk of it occurring. Such information is vital to inform land and building regulations that prevent it from happening in the first place.⁴⁷⁸

The district of Kreuzberg of Altenahr, western Germany, was particularly hard hit with flooding in July 2021 which caused damage to housing and infrastructure and resulted in significant displacement. © TORSTEN SILZ/AFP via Getty Images, July 2021

Spotlight – Water scarcity, conflict and displacement in Central Asia

The Fergana valley is a vast area of irrigated land that stretches across southern Kyrgyzstan, northern Tajikistan and eastern Uzbekistan. It is the most densely populated area in Central Asia and is experiencing rapid population growth.⁴⁷⁹ The valley has a history of conflict and violence, including border clashes stemming from geographical divisions imposed during the Soviet era.⁴⁸⁰

Conflict over border demarcations has been common in recent years, most notably between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which dispute nearly half of their 971 km border.⁴⁸¹ Cross-border water management issues have also contributed to rising tensions among the valley's communities, who depend on irrigated agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihoods.⁴⁸²

Clashes erupted in April 2021 along the border between Kyrgyzstan's Batken region and Tajikistan's Sughd region in the southern part of the valley, triggering 56,000 internal displacements. The incident was reportedly sparked by a dispute over the installation of surveillance cameras around the Golovnoi station, which distributes water between the Kyrgyz and Tajik sides of the border and has been the scene of clashes in previous years, most notably in 2014.⁴⁸³

What began as scuffles and stone-throwing from both sides escalated rapidly into heavy machine-gun fire from the two countries' security forces.⁴⁸⁴ This triggered around 41,000 displacements on the Kyrgyz side, nearly 24,000 of them involving children, and around 15,000 on the Tajik side.⁴⁸⁵ All of the displaced were able to return home, but the incident – in which around 55 people were killed and more than 270 injured – had longer-lasting impacts, including on the mental health of those affected.⁴⁸⁶

The April clashes were the most intense and widespread violence this area has experienced since the end of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸⁷ They also triggered displacement that was unprecedented. Clashes along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border triggered only 770 displacements in 2019 and 250 in 2020.⁴⁸⁸

Water scarcity also fuelled violence in other parts of Central Asia in 2021. Disputes between farmers over water sources took place in Kyrgyzstan's northern province of Chui and Uzbekistan's provinces of Namangan and Surkhandarya.⁴⁸⁹ No displacement was reported, but there is a risk that violence could flare again and trigger displacement in the future.⁴⁹⁰

Climate change is already aggravating water scarcity in Central Asia, even in more humid countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁴⁹¹ The Fergana valley has experienced low precipitation and variable ground temperatures in recent years, and water levels in the Tortkul reservoir, which provides vital supplies to farms on both the Kyrgyz and Tajik sides of the border, diminished drastically in 2020.⁴⁹²

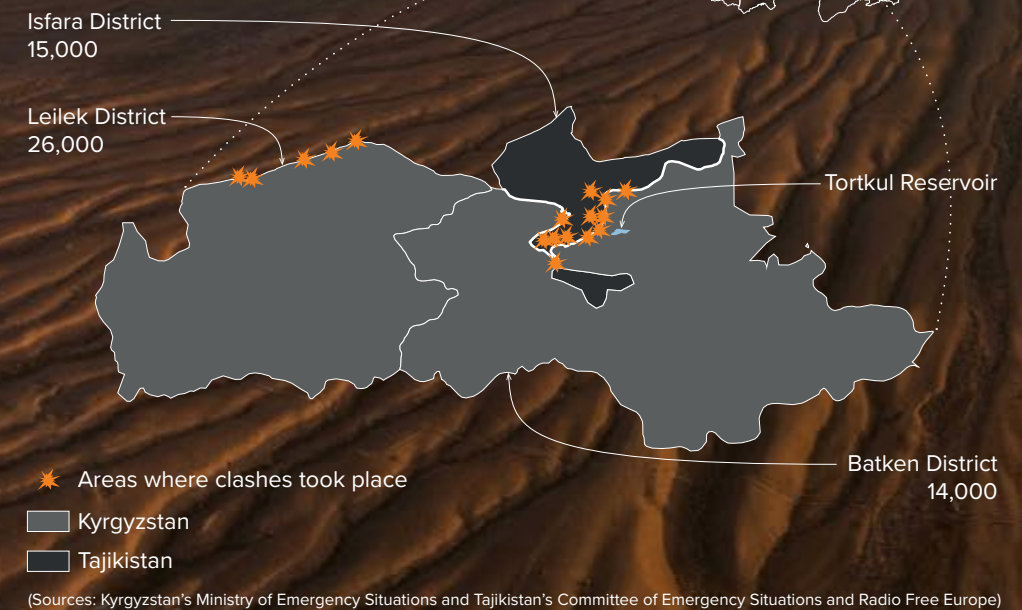
In the region more broadly, dam construction, unsustainable agricultural practices and glacial melt are further threats to its water supplies.⁴⁹³ Drought and other environmental factors are already affecting the agriculture sector, which accounts for a significant part of the Central Asian economy.⁴⁹⁴ Human mobility patterns are also shifting, particularly those of communities that rely on transhumance and pastoralism.⁴⁹⁵

Regional cooperation will be key to improving water management and mitigating the impacts of climate change, including drought, water scarcity, violence and displacement.⁴⁹⁶ Measures should include investment in water-saving technologies and promoting alternative land-use practices.⁴⁹⁷ Despite their limitations, existing bilateral agreements and the Soviet-era regional framework for transboundary water governance could serve as the basis for cooperation on the issue.⁴⁹⁸ This is much needed, given that inadequate water supply and sanitation costs the region around \$2.1 billion a year, an estimate that excludes the potential costs associated with displacement.⁴⁹⁹

Some countries in Central Asia have laws and policies on internal displacement, but there is room for stronger

56,000

Internal displacements associated with the border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in April 2021



provisions to address and reduce that associated with drought and the adverse effects of climate change.⁵⁰⁰ Data will play an important role in filling the gaps on the scope and scale of the phenomenon. A more solid evidence base would also help to understand how slow-onset events fuel conflict and violence, which in turn could inform policymaking for displacement risk reduction and durable solutions.

Low precipitation in the region is leading to water scarcity. Low water levels shown here in Ortotokoy reservoir in Kyrgyzstan. © Anton Petrus via Getty Images

Special Feature

Covid-19: An added burden on the precarious lives of IDPs

A young child in his classroom in Honduras. In areas of high violence, education provides protection, stability, essential knowledge and life skills. The closure of schools due to Covid-19 resulted in the loss of safe spaces for displaced children in countries who, like Honduras, are affected by conflict and insecurity. © Delmer Membreno, November 2021.

Covid-19 continued to affect people and economies across the world in 2021 and had negative impacts on IDPs' lives.⁵⁰¹ Comprehensive data is lacking, but several studies and programme insights confirm that the pandemic was uniquely threatening to people on the move.⁵⁰² Rather than acting as a leveller, it has aggravated structural inequities and vulnerabilities.⁵⁰³

It tends to be difficult to disentangle cause and effect and identify whether the pandemic caused, prolonged or worsened a particular crisis.⁵⁰⁴ Coming at a time when the world has more IDPs than ever before, however, it has without question made the lives of millions on the move even more precarious. As countries continued lockdown measures and other restrictions to fight the spread of the virus, IDPs felt the consequences on their income, food security, basic services and ability to return to their homes or move onwards to safe havens.

Precarious livelihoods and food security

Of the many impacts IDPs felt from the pandemic, the most significant probably was on their employment. They have been shown across all continents to be more at risk of losing their jobs or having their income reduced because they tend to work without job security or in the informal sector.

IDPs at more than half of the displacement sites surveyed in Ethiopia - excluding Tigray and parts of Amhara and Afar, where the ongoing crisis prevented data collection – said they had lost a job or found it harder to find work because of the pandemic.⁵⁰⁵ More than half said they had faced financial problems and had to resort to coping mechanisms such as reducing meals, borrowing money, using savings and selling livestock as a result.

Similar effects were reported in South Sudan, where between 11 per cent of displaced households in Malakal town and 39 per cent in Juba town experienced a substantial drop in income. Their situation was further complicated by unusually high prices for food, limited availability in markets and depreciation of the national currency.⁵⁰⁶

Everyone in Beledweyne, Somalia, suffered from the economic slowdown and business closures caused by Covid restrictions in 2021, but the town's IDPs faced an additional struggle because the organisations that would usually support them had to operate with reduced funding. The restrictions also led to price rises for items from food to mobile phones, putting them out of reach for many who also faced extra costs for temporary housing or to replace items lost as a result of their displacement.⁵⁰⁷ Many people displaced by conflict in Caucasia, Colombia, earn a living as street vendors and in the informal sector. Lockdowns and other restrictions affected their income particularly severely.⁵⁰⁸ Thirty-three per cent of displaced households surveyed in Iraq in the second half of 2020 said at least one family member had lost their employment as a result of Covid.⁵⁰⁹ In places where social protection and welfare systems are limited or do not include IDPs, loss of income could mean acute food insecurity and an increased risk of chronic poverty.⁵¹⁰

Displaced children and young people were at heightened risk of hunger as food security deteriorated as a result of the pandemic.⁵¹¹ Unaccompanied minors were particularly vulnerable given that Covid restrictions put an end to the common practice of sharing communal meals, in which they were included. Overall, increased economic pressures and eroding livelihoods also had consequences for child protection, with heightened exploitation risks.⁵¹²

Heightened protection risks

As livelihoods were eroded and poverty increased because of the pandemic, so did the risk of children being pulled out of school and forced into potentially dangerous work, including sexual exploitation.⁵¹³ Displaced children faced similar if not heightened risks, including domestic violence and - when schools were closed and food insecurity was high - child marriage and recruitment into armed groups. Those surveyed in Ethiopia said they had been at greater risk of physical abuse from parents and carers, with disabled children and girls particularly vulnerable.⁵¹⁴

Evidence available on refugees suggests the pandemic has heightened the risk of gender-based, including sexual, violence for all displaced populations and in several countries, with cases reported in Mali and displacement camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.⁵¹⁵ Harmful practices including child marriage and female genital mutilation increased as officials' attention shifted to enforcing Covid restrictions.⁵¹⁶ While protection risks rose, they tended to not receive the attention they required. Humanitarian and administrative responses were focused more on trying to meet immediate food and basic health needs while their capacity was limited by Covid restrictions, cases among staff and reduced funding.⁵¹⁷

Elsewhere the pandemic seems not to have affected IDPs' sense of safety and security. Indeed, some displaced households surveyed in Iraq reported greater integration into their host communities.⁵¹⁸

A particularly urban problem

Covid-19 spread more rapidly in cities and all the more so in their most densely populated areas, where vulnerable populations faced particular economic hardship. The poverty rate in Afghanistan's urban areas rose from 41.6 per cent in 2016-17 to just over 55 per cent during the initial lockdown in 2020.⁵¹⁹ Migrants and IDPs living in informal settlements faced greater socioeconomic risks, in part because Covid restrictions and social distancing further reduced their access to support systems and basic services.⁵²⁰

The pandemic also triggered internal displacements, particularly in urban areas. Lockdown measures hampered the livelihoods of millions of workers, especially those engaged in informal labour. Unable to continue paying their rent, many were forced into the streets.

This was the case for thousands of people in Brazil who, once homeless, faced the prospect of further displacement.⁵²¹ They established settlements on vacant land near the cities where they used to live, but as these multiplied so did government-led operations to remove them.⁵²² At least 4,000 such people were evicted in São Paulo and 3,000 in Manaus in 2021.⁵²³ The dismantling of encampments also increased in parts of the US as Covid-19 intensified a long-unfolding eviction crisis, particularly in communities where federal assistance was slow or tenants had little protection.⁵²⁴

As Covid drove many into homelessness it may also have heightened their vulnerability to disasters by reducing their access to warnings and eroding their trust in government institutions.⁵²⁵ The issues and examples discussed here are, however, anecdotal. They demonstrate the aggravating impacts of the pandemic on urban poverty and displacement risk, but robust data on their scope and magnitude is scarce.



In the Bounaye mahadra in Nouakchott, Mauritania, street children learn how to protect themselves against Covid-19 and other protection risks linked with the pandemic.
© UNICEF/UNI350977/Pouget, July 2020

Closed schools and lost education

The pandemic forced the closure of schools around the world, and unequal access to technology means that many children and young people may have been excluded from digital learning.⁵²⁶ Girls were often more likely than boys to have their schooling interrupted, and for those displaced it may have meant a point of no return to education.⁵²⁷

Displaced children were particularly unlikely to have been able to learn remotely when schools closed, whether because conditions in shelters or camps were not favourable, or because they were unable to afford internet access or devices.⁵²⁸ Non-displaced students went back to class as soon as schools reopened, but some displaced students did not. After the difficulties they had already faced as IDPs, they left the education system to work and help support their families.⁵²⁹

School closures posed similar challenges to returnee children's education in terms of access to online learning. Thirty-six per cent of returning parents with school-aged children surveyed in Iraq said lack of an internet connection was their main obstacle, and 23 per cent had no computer, smartphone or tablet. Another 33 per cent mentioned lack of devices as their second biggest obstacle. Ninety-four per cent said they intended to send their children back to class when schools reopened.⁵³⁰

The shutting of schools in places affected by conflict and insecurity often meant the loss of safe spaces for vulnerable and displaced children. Displaced children with disabilities were particularly at risk. Being deprived of their usual routines and support structures made it even harder for them to overcome marginalisation and discrimination. Online courses in Nepal tended not to cater for deaf children because it was difficult to sign online, and they also proved challenging for children with learning disabilities when parents and teachers were not there to supervise.⁵³¹



In India, UNICEF launched a 'Blue Brigade' campaign which engages youth as agents of change while supporting families to access essential services. Pictured: a volunteer teaches children in the compound of a house under the initiative in Nagoi Lafa, district Korba. © UNICEF/ UN0387459/Altat Ahmad, December 2020

Health impacts and vaccine inequality

The rapid spread of an infectious disease has immediate implications for local and national health systems and on the health of all population groups, but particularly those vulnerable and displaced. Beyond direct infections, systems overwhelmed by the sheer number of Covid cases also struggled to deliver broader healthcare services worldwide.⁵³²

Measures to curb the spread of the virus also increased health risks related to violence, food insecurity and malnutrition, and impeded access to water and sanitation in displacement camps and other settings. As observed during the Ebola crisis, girls are likely to have been disproportionally exposed to these risks.⁵³³

The pandemic also had severe mental health impacts worldwide at the same time as disrupting or halting critical mental health services in 93 per cent of 130 countries surveyed.⁵³⁴ Online support and telephone hotlines expanded, however, often in collaboration with government health departments.

Efforts to improve vaccine coverage among IDPs continued in 2021, and progress was made in some countries. Vaccine inequality remains a global challenge, however, and humanitarian and development agencies have struggled to get doses to major hosting areas.⁵³⁵ Availability has been a problem, as has a lack of funding to roll out major vaccination programmes in hard-to-reach areas.⁵³⁶

Many IDPs also struggled to protect themselves from the virus in other ways, whether because they were unable to afford to buy masks, sanitiser, and other hygiene items, or because they lived in crowded conditions where distancing was not possible, and water and sanitation was not always available. Such issues were reported in displacement camps in Beledweyne, Somalia.⁵³⁷

Elsewhere disasters and displacement may have played a role in increasing the spread of Covid-19. Timor-Leste was already in the grip of a new wave of infec-

tions when cyclone Seroja struck the country in April, but the flooding it caused and the resulting evacuations of thousands of people may have aggravated the outbreak.⁵³⁸ Strict lockdowns were also lifted briefly in some areas to facilitate the response and flooding affected warehouses storing medical supplies and vaccines.

Displacement patterns, returns and durable solutions

The picture we are able to paint of the pandemic’s impacts on IDPs is far from complete, but we have even less information about how it may have triggered internal displacement or altered its patterns. Anecdotal evidence does exist, however, to show that some people lost their source of income and consequently their homes. Examples from Brazil and the US show that thousands of people made homeless in this way were subsequently evicted from the informal settlements they established.⁵³⁹

Covid-19 has not only impeded the provision of humanitarian assistance and support for IDPs, potentially prolonging their displacement. It has also set back efforts to recover, rebuild and return.⁵⁴⁰ This was the case in New Zealand for hundreds of Auckland residents displaced by a tornado in June and floods in early September. A national shortage of building supplies caused by disruption to global supply chains combined with labour shortages and strict measures to curb the spread of the virus impede repairs and reconstruction to this day.⁵⁴¹

Covid restrictions and other impacts also hampered progress made in Iraq, particularly in terms of living standards and access to justice, and more specifically the compensation paid for housing damaged or destroyed during the ISIL crisis. Among returnee households, 56 per cent said the biggest challenges they faced in their pursuit of a durable solution were loss of income and Covid’s national economic impacts. Fifty-eight per cent said they had temporarily lost their job as a result of the pandemic.⁵⁴²



Female community health volunteers in Gorkha District, Nepal, where some 25,000 IDPs from the 2015 earthquake are residing. UNICEF is supporting the government with the provision of Covid-19 vaccines for both the displaced and host communities. © UNICEF/UN0447354/Prasad Ngakhusi, April 2021.

Part 2: Children and youth in internal displacement



A woman and child living in the camp of Lazare in the Central African Republic (CAR). Nearly one in seven people are living in internal displacement in CAR. © Tom Peyre-Costa NRC, February 2021.

There are 33 million children and young people under 25 living in internal displacement, of which 25.2 million are children under 18 and 11.4 million are young people between 15 and 24 years old. Millions are forced to flee their homes every year, leaving many unable to go to school, without enough to eat, with little access to health-care, at risk of abuse and violence and traumatised by the events they have witnessed. Displacement can also tear families apart to the severe detriment of their wellbeing.

Many children are displaced for years and some young adults spent their entire childhood in displacement, which compounds the negative effects they may be

experiencing. Those living in protracted displacement are severely set back in fulfilling their potential, and there have been repeated calls to better protect and support them.⁵⁴³

Displacement's impacts on children and youth are not equally felt. Their experiences vary depending on their age, gender and other characteristics. Neither are the impacts felt only by the individuals in question, but also by their families and communities. Nor are they felt only locally or in the moment. They have repercussions on economies and societies as a whole for years and even generations to come.

Addressing and resolving the displacement of children and young people is a matter of urgency to protect their immediate and future wellbeing. Doing so at the same time as harnessing the opportunities that come with recognising them as agents for change is also vital to protect development gains and reduce the risk of future crises.

The ways in which different displacement impacts interact are manifold, and local dynamics are specific and complex. Three main links, however, can be established:

- 1. Impacts on one dimension affect others.** Loss of income and livelihoods, for example, may lead families to resort to negative coping strategies such as child labour or early marriage.
- 2. Individual impacts have broader social implications.** Children's disrupted education may eventually result in less economically productive communities, which in turn renders them less resilient to future shocks and may perpetuate a cycle of crises.
- 3. Impacts today have repercussions for the future.** Food insecurity and malnutrition in young children can result in stunting, which severely affects their wellbeing and physical health as adults.

to lead fulfilling lives. Malnutrition, childhood trauma and early pregnancy, which tend to be more prevalent among displaced populations and directly affect individual development, are three notable examples.

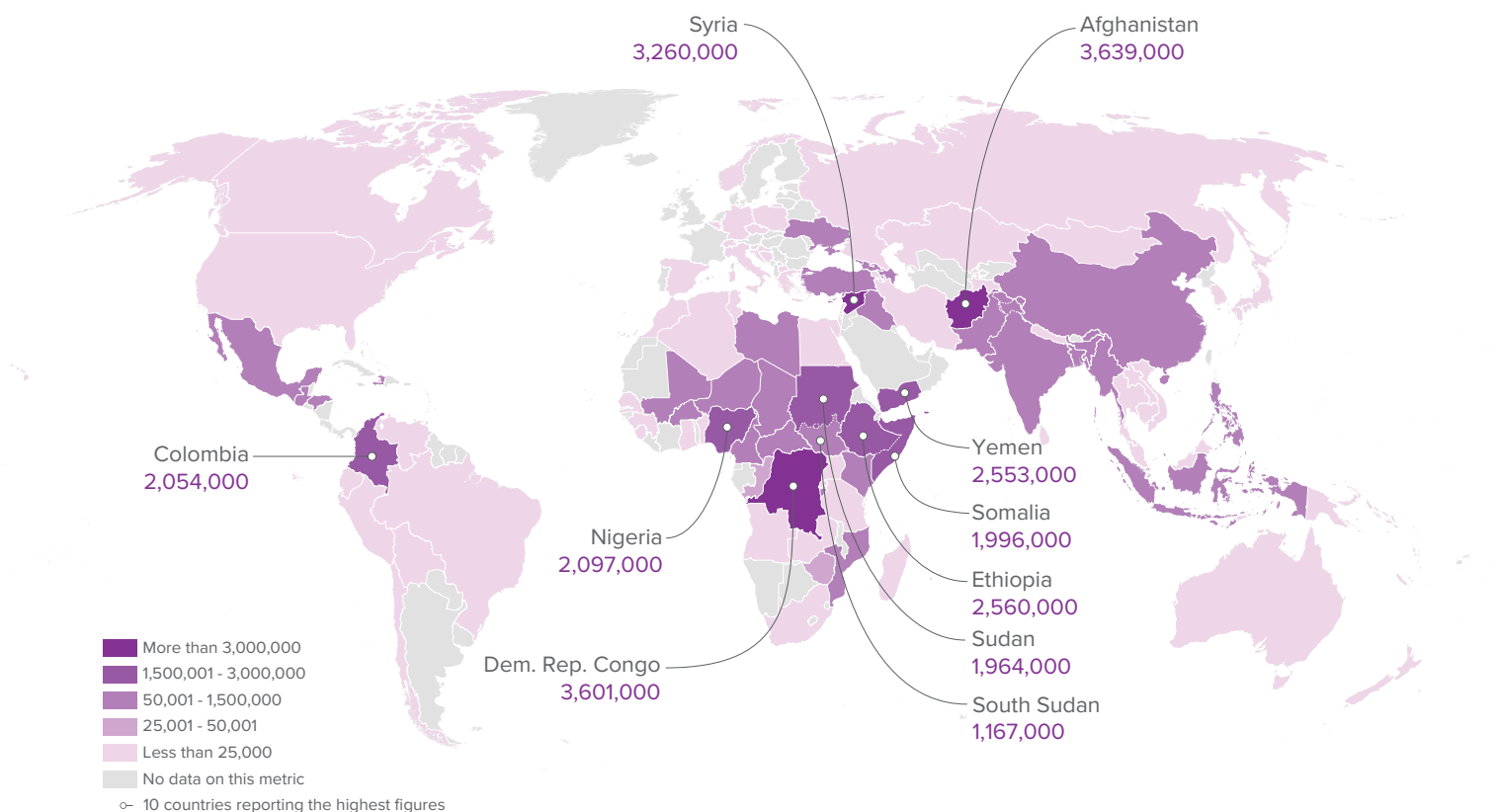
How displacement of individuals has an effect on societies, is less well understood. Evidence exists for some domains, such as the effects of loss of learning on future productivity, but only limited information is available for areas such as security and health.

The following sections build on the evidence that does exist to further unpack the multidimensional and temporal impacts of displacement on children and youth. They also shed light on the links between individual wellbeing and broader societal development in the future. In doing so, they make a case for supporting displaced children not only to protect their immediate integrity and rights, but also as a long-term contribution to sustainable development and equitable societies.

This part of the report also discusses the fact that children and youth are largely invisible in displacement data.⁵⁴⁵ This has direct consequences for our collective ability to understand their needs, aspirations and potential, and from there to identify appropriate policy and programme responses, particularly in long-term planning to prevent and resolve displacement.

There are, however, a few promising initiatives that start to fill knowledge gaps and take the specific perspectives of children and youth into account. These are highlighted with the aim of promoting further investment in solutions that address some of the above considerations.

We already have a relatively good understanding of the first link, and a number of assessments and studies have examined how it plays out for displaced children and youth.⁵⁴⁴ The third is increasingly well documented and recognition is growing that children who are displaced for long periods of time or born in displacement may continue to feel its effects into adulthood, undermining their development and ability



33 million internally displaced people under the age of 25 as a result of conflict, violence and disasters in **104** countries and territories as of **31 December 2021**

Figure 45: Total number of internally displaced children by conflict, violence and disasters as of 31 December 2021

The number of IDPs under the age of 25 is estimated by applying national level age distribution data from the 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects produced by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to IDMC's stock figures for conflict, violence and disasters at the end of 2021.

The percentage of each country's total population by broad age group (in this case 0-24) for both sexes, estimated for 2020 (the closest year to 2021 available), is applied to IDMC's stock figure for end of 2021.

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

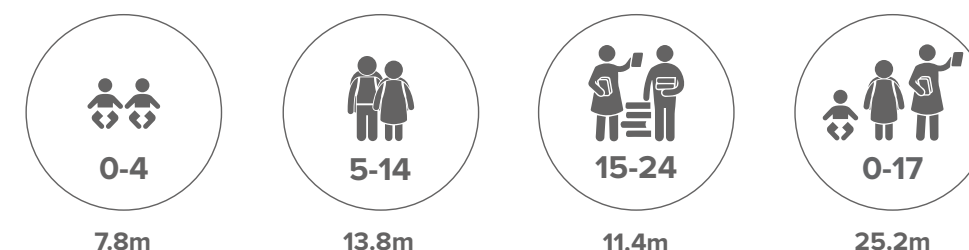


Figure 46: Breakdown of the global number of children and youth living in internal displacement by age group

	Total				Women and girls				Men and boys			
Region	0-4	5-14	15-24	0-17	0-4	5-14	15-24	0-17	0-4	5-14	15-24	0-17
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.4m	7.3m	5.5m	13.6m	2.2m	3.6m	2.7m	6.7m	2.2m	3.7m	2.8m	6.9m
Middle East and North Africa	1.5m	2.7m	2.4m	5m	0.7m	1.3m	1.2m	2.4m	0.8m	1.4m	1.2m	2.5m
South Asia	0.9m	1.8m	1.5m	3.2m	0.5m	0.9m	0.7m	1.6m	0.5m	0.9m	0.8m	1.6m
Americas	0.5m	1m	1.1m	1.9m	0.2m	0.5m	0.6m	0.9m	0.3m	0.5m	0.6m	1m
Europe and Central Asia	0.2m	0.5m	0.4m	0.8m	0.1m	0.2m	0.2m	0.4m	0.1m	0.2m	0.2m	0.4m
East Asia and Pacific	0.2m	0.5m	0.4m	0.8m	0.1m	0.2m	0.2m	0.4m	0.1m	0.2m	0.2m	0.4m

Figure 47: Breakdown of the number of internally displaced children by region and age groups

Box 1: Definitions and age groups used in this part of the report

Children: People under 18, or age groups 0-17 inclusive.

School age: Definitions of school age vary between countries, but data collected by UNESCO Institute for Statistics shows that compulsory education starts on average at six and lasts until 15, in most cases covering the full primary and lower-secondary cycles.⁵⁴⁶ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 calls for 12 years of compulsory education by 2030.

Youth: The exact ages that mark the transition from the dependence of childhood to adult independence vary from individual to individual and between communities and countries. For statistical purposes, the UN General Assembly defines youth(s) as people aged between 15 and 24 inclusive.⁵⁴⁷



A school-aged child in an IDP site in Dar Sa'ad District, Aden Governorate, Yemen. © OCHA/Rania Abdulraheem, May 2021.

Their future in jeopardy: children and youth at risk of displacement worldwide

Children across the globe are exposed to the impacts of conflict, violence, disasters and climate change, threatening their safety and ability to prosper. There are, however, no sound estimates of the number of children at risk of being displaced by conflict. Risk modelling for conflict itself is still in its infancy and conceptual models of conflict displacement risk only serve to highlight the complexity of the dynamics at play.⁵⁴⁸

The science for disaster displacement risk is a bit more advanced. We know that children in low and middle-income countries tend to be most at risk, and that they bear the brunt of climate change impacts on their wellbeing and ability to learn, on the land around them and on their cultural heritage.⁵⁴⁹

Unless climate policy pledges are significantly strengthened, today's children and youth will face increasingly frequent and intense hazards. Even if emissions were successfully cut immediately, they would still grow up with more extreme weather events because climate change impacts would continue to intensify over the coming years. This means children and youth are already highly vulnerable and exposed to disaster displacement and that future generations will be more so.

The Children's Climate Risk Index estimates that around a billion children, or nearly half of the world's under-18s, live in "extremely high-risk countries".⁵⁵⁰ Around 820 million are exposed to heatwaves, 920 million to water scarcity and 870 million to cyclones or flooding. Heatwaves and water scarcity can also trigger drought and wildfires, forcing people from their homes just as floods and cyclones do. This high level of exposure should not be equated with displacement risk, but it is a strong indicator of where such risk is highest.⁵⁵¹

Other modelling reveals how the risk of exposure to extreme weather events has increased over the last 60 years, accelerated by climate change. It suggests that a child born in 2020 will experience a 6.8-fold increase in heatwaves compared with a person born in 1960 and a 2.8-fold increase in floods.⁵⁵² More investment is needed in the coming years to assess the scale and distribution of associated displacement risk.⁵⁵³

Beyond immediate impacts

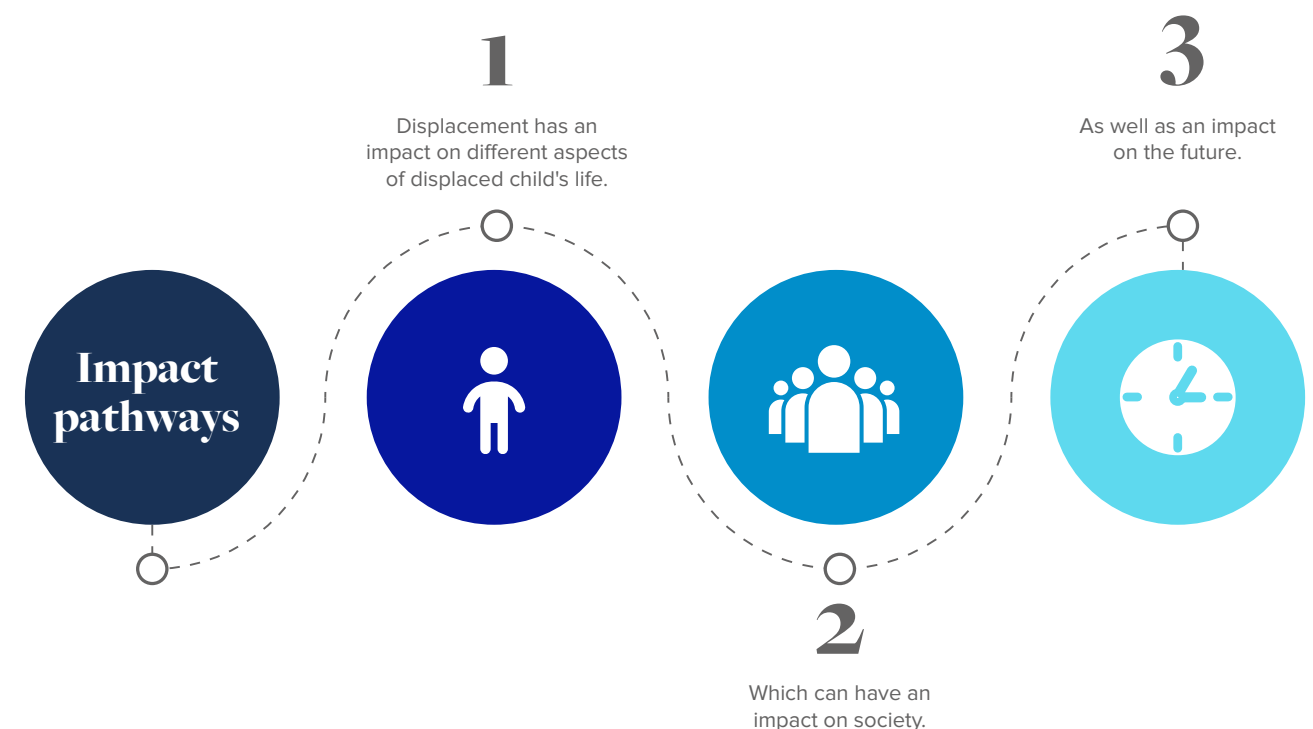


Figure 48: The multidimensional and temporal impact of displacement on children and youth

Reducing the negative impacts of displacement on children and youth contributes to a more prosperous future for all. Impacts in one dimension of their life, such as education, can have direct effects on another, such as health (see figure 48). The immediate impacts they suffer may also have long-term repercussions on their wellbeing. Therefore, looking beyond immediate impacts on just one aspect of children and young people's lives is the basis for comprehensive response and successful prevention.

Studies have already shown strong links between displacement and self-reported health, and between poor early-life conditions associated with displacement and ill-health later in life.⁵⁵⁴ Most importantly, perhaps, individual impacts can lead to long-term effects for communities and even societies as a whole. This multiplicity of impacts, their mutual connections and temporal dimensions must be better understood.

It is also important to distinguish between the different way displacement affects children and young people

depending on their age, gender and other factors. They have different needs, abilities and aspirations that require different types of support and the autonomy to make decisions that will shape their future.

Adolescents and young adults, for example, face specific risks and have growing agency and aspirations that must be differentiated from those of younger children.⁵⁵⁵ Adolescence is also a phase when sociocultural expectations and norms related to gender begin to shape the roles individuals are expected to fill, and when girls are particularly at risk of exploitation, early marriage, sexual violence and exclusion from education.

In the following sections, we highlight some of the areas that are vital to young people's wellbeing and development - protection from psychological and physical harm, poverty and livelihoods, and health and education - and explore how displacement affects each one for individuals, communities and broader society, both now and in the future.

Protecting children from abuse and violence

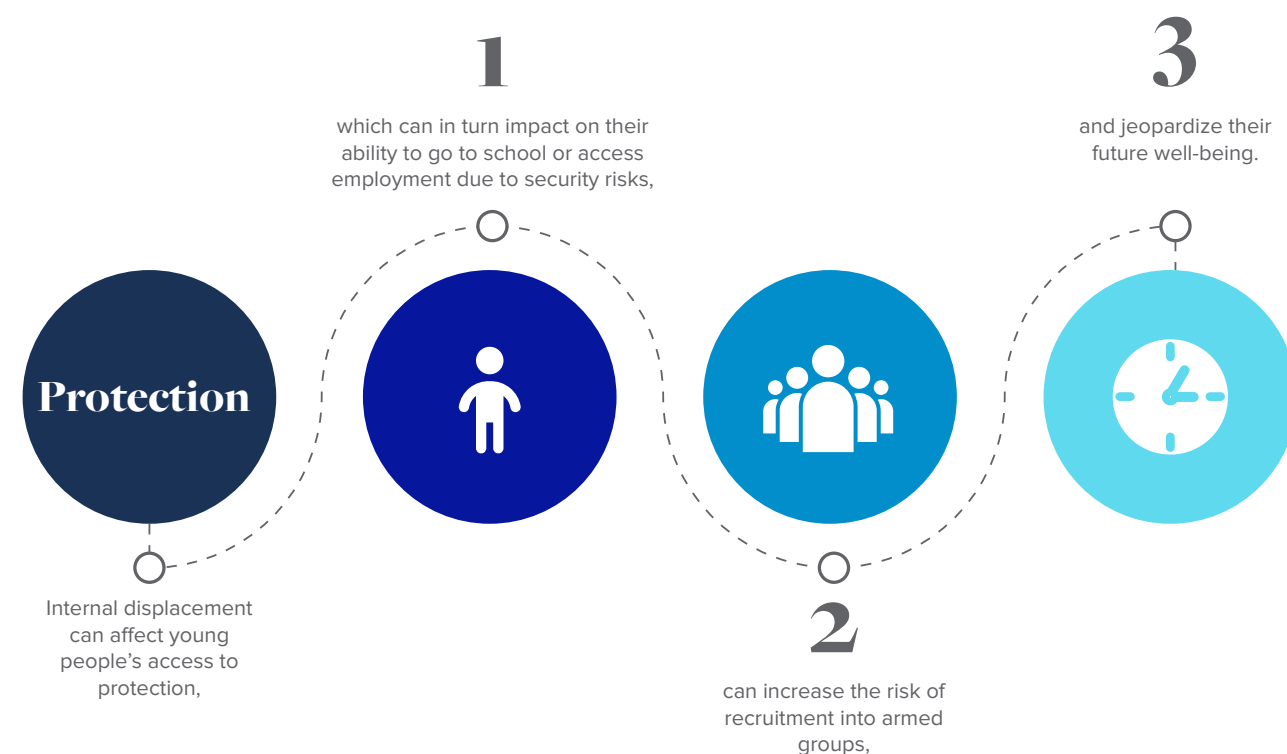


Figure 49: Example of impact pathways of loss of protection due to internal displacement

Displaced children are at higher risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Several factors increase this risk and certain groups, such as unaccompanied minors and children separated from their families, are among the most vulnerable. Impacts can also last a lifetime, if the physical or psychological trauma endures, sometimes long after displacement has ended. This trauma can then have further repercussions on their families and their communities.

Children may become separated from their families during their flight, and if they lose their identity documents it may be difficult to reunite them. Others may flee without their parents after losing them or becoming separated from them in the conflict or disaster that triggered their displacement.⁵⁵⁶

Some may become heads of households, caring for younger siblings and forced to work much sooner than they should have to. Already in charge of their own and

others' lives before their time, they should receive tailored support that reflects the burden of responsibilities they have taken on.

Other groups face extreme protection risks, including children who are street connected and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ).⁵⁵⁷ The marginalisation they often face isolates them from support networks and increases their risk of deprivation, abuse and violence.

Documentation is essential for all displaced children and youth to ensure adequate support. Those without birth certificates, identity cards or residency documents may have little or no access to education or health services and may also be more vulnerable to child marriage and exploitation.⁵⁵⁸ Given that younger children tend to depend on their parents' documentation, separation from their family may mean they are completely cut off from social protection and assistance.

The financial difficulties IDPs tend to face may force children to engage in dangerous income-generating activities, including crime, transactional sex or joining armed groups.⁵⁵⁹ Child labour was found to be more prevalent among IDPs than their non-displaced counterparts in Iraq, particularly among boys, and there is evidence of child trafficking, child labour and sexual exploitation in displacement camps in north-east Nigeria.⁵⁶⁰ Daughters may also be married off earlier and against their will, as documented in Afghanistan, Nepal and Yemen.⁵⁶¹

Displaced girls and boys confront different risks. Girls are at particular risk of gender-based violence.⁵⁶² Temporary shelters in displacement camps are easy to break into, and girls living in tents in Haiti were highly exposed to sexual violence.⁵⁶³ Girls are also often responsible for fetching wood and water and may be exposed to attack when doing so, as in Somalia.⁵⁶⁴ Boys face a greater risk of recruitment into armed groups, as for example unaccompanied boys displaced in South Sudan who have been enticed to join armed groups in exchange for food.⁵⁶⁵

Strengthening child protection systems that consider these risks is essential. Examples of successful investments in this area include the training of social and community workers, police officers, lawyers and teachers in child rights and protection.⁵⁶⁶ Helping frontline workers understand how displacement affects children's safety, rights and access to services equips them to prevent and respond to all forms of abuse and to recognise and address specific threats.⁵⁶⁷

Examples also exist at the policy level, including Afghanistan's national policy on IDPs of 2013, which stresses the importance of protecting displaced children and reuniting those separated from their parents with their families.⁵⁶⁸ How lack of protection may affect the future behaviour of displaced individuals or groups is yet to be fully studied, but the limited evidence available suggests the broader observation that violence perpetuates violence also applies to displacement situations.⁵⁶⁹



Two young children in the flooded village of Canal, South Sudan. © UNICEF/UN0548047/Grarup, September 2021.

Ensuring food security and physical health

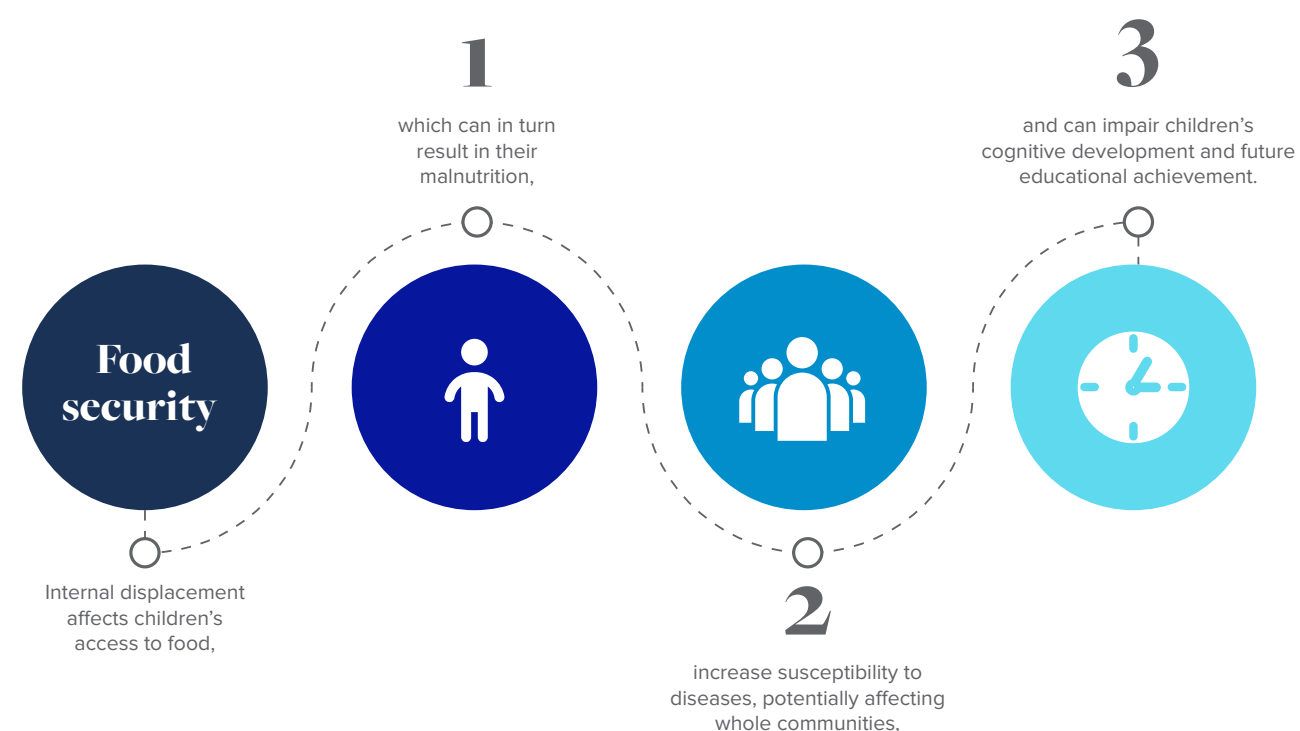


Figure 50: Example of impact pathways of food insecurity due to internal displacement

Evidence on IDPs' health and access to medical services shows they tend to face greater challenges and worse health outcomes than people otherwise affected by conflict world-wide.⁵⁷⁰ The impacts of displacement on children's health in particular have far-reaching consequences as their parents struggle to secure livelihoods in host areas.

Malnutrition is a clear example. Beyond its immediate health threats and related mortality in children, it impedes physical and cognitive development, and has been associated with lower levels of education and social and economic productivity in adulthood.⁵⁷¹ Stunting has been linked to a higher risk of type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and pancreatic failure, and malnutrition in pregnant women may contribute to low birth weight, which can heighten the risk of neonatal mortality and undermine babies' growth and future health.⁵⁷² These impacts have both immediate and longer-term implications for healthcare provision.

Food security and nutrition assessments regularly show displaced populations to be more vulnerable, and the prevalence of malnutrition among displaced children is often high.⁵⁷³ It has led to the death of hundreds in north-eastern Nigeria in recent years, and thousands more show severe or mild-to-moderate symptoms.⁵⁷⁴ Malnutrition rates may be particularly high for IDPs even in areas where food insecurity is a wider challenge. The acute malnutrition rate among displaced children in Chad, for example, is more than 20 per cent, compared with 16 per cent for their non-displaced peers.⁵⁷⁵

The impacts of malnutrition on individuals, families, communities and countries as a whole are estimated to cost the global economy around \$3.5 trillion a year, which equates to \$500 per person.⁵⁷⁶ Food insecurity can also trigger new and repeated displacement.

Efforts to address malnutrition are under way in some countries. Plan International has adapted its communication on nutrition in Mali and South Sudan to ensure it is accessible to parents of displaced children under five and to pregnant and lactating women, their target beneficiaries.⁵⁷⁷ In Somalia, UNICEF and the government collaborate to plan and deliver programmes as part of emergency responses that include treatment of acute malnutrition and counselling on nutrition and health practices at home.⁵⁷⁸ Much more, however, needs to be done.

More efforts are also required to mitigate the short-term health impacts of displacement. Displaced children are at higher risk of communicable diseases as a result of poor living conditions, lack of clean water and sanitation and reduced access to preventative measures and health-care.⁵⁷⁹ Malaria cases among displaced children in the DRC, for example, are significantly higher than among their non-displaced counterparts.⁵⁸⁰ Displacement can also interrupt vaccination programmes.⁵⁸¹ Immunisation rates in Syria fell from 91 per cent before the conflict to 45 per cent in 2017, leading to a resurgence in polio.⁵⁸²

Lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services for displaced adolescents, combined with a greater risk of sexual violence, may result in higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and early pregnancies.⁵⁸³ Displaced girls aged between 13 and 19 have higher pregnancy rates than their non-displaced peers.⁵⁸⁴ In Colombia, displaced women and girls between the ages of 13 and 49 report 40 per cent more unintended pregnancies.⁵⁸⁵

In the absence of family planning services, unintended pregnancies also expose displaced women and girls to medical complications during childbirth and unsafe abortions. Among displaced women in the DRC who reported having an induced abortion, 60 per cent were self-induced.⁵⁸⁶ Beyond immediate health and wellbeing concerns, early and unintended pregnancies are also likely to affect girls' education and future income, given that pregnancy often prompts them to drop out of school.⁵⁸⁷

Despite its many negative impacts, displacement can - with the right support - also lead to better livelihood opportunities for young IDPs, a key priority for many. This is particularly likely to be the case for those who move from rural to urban areas, or from areas heavily affected by conflict, violence or disasters to a more stable area.

One project in Sierra Leone run by the government, UNDP and CAUSE with the aim of improving youth employment at the national level supported 5,000 young IDPs in starting their own businesses and provided mentoring and career advice, contributing to higher incomes and food security for their families.⁵⁸⁸

Supporting children's mental health



Figure 51: Example of impact pathways of affected mental health due to internal displacement

Displacement has direct effects on children's mental health and psychosocial safety, and protecting them from such impacts is as vital as shielding them from physical violence and exploitation. Sources of potential harm include family break-up, loss of friendships and social networks, a lack of opportunities real or perceived, or the general trauma of displacement and the events leading up to it.

The effects of trauma from experiencing or witnessing conflict, violence and disasters are well-documented, as are increases in domestic violence and abuse during displacement. Affected communities show high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly among women and children.⁵⁸⁹ The economic burden of PTSD on individuals and societies is also significant.⁵⁹⁰

The specific and often additional mental stress of displacement have been studied, but better assessing and reducing such impacts is important both to children's individual wellbeing and to sustainable development in countries dealing with large-scale displacement.⁵⁹¹

Displaced children and youth are rarely equipped to deal with the disruption and trauma, and their distress may take the form of aggressive behaviour, difficulty concentrating in school, trouble sleeping or bedwetting.⁵⁹²

Displaced teenagers in Colombia were found to be almost twice as likely to suffer from anxiety and depression as their non-displaced peers, more than four times as likely to have attempted suicide and nearly six times as likely to have PTSD.⁵⁹³ Teachers in Ethiopia said pupils displaced by violence were aggressive and easily upset, and sometimes fainted from stress at exam time.⁵⁹⁴ Mental health issues among adolescent IDPs in Kachin state in Myanmar led to physical impacts including dropping out of school, drug and alcohol abuse and involvement in crime.⁵⁹⁵

Childhood trauma may also have long-lasting effects on physical health and wellbeing, including an increased risk of diabetes, heart problems, obesity and substance abuse.⁵⁹⁶ Three-quarters of children in displacement camps in Darfur, southern Sudan, showed signs of PTSD

and 38 per cent signs of depression.⁵⁹⁷ Displaced adolescents in the DRC also reported higher levels of PTSD than their non-displaced counterparts.⁵⁹⁸

There tends to be little or no psychosocial support in areas affected by displacement, but if trauma symptoms remain untreated, they can develop into chronic mental illness. More than 50 per cent of displaced households surveyed in the CAR in 2021 said they had at least one child showing symptoms of mental illness, compared with 35 per cent of their non-displaced counterparts.⁵⁹⁹

Beyond immediate support to treat trauma and stress, longer-term investments in creating psychosocial safety for children and youth are required. Three aspects are particularly important to create a strong foundation for young people's wellbeing: access to meaningful opportunities, a sense of connectedness and agency in decision-making.⁶⁰⁰

Opportunities exist to mitigate such impacts, and there are lessons to be learned from historical cases. A much-cited study on mortality and morbidity among Finnish adults

born between 1927 and 1944 and displaced during the second world war "found no support for the hypothesis that the traumatic event of being forced to migrate during childhood has long-term negative health consequences". The effectiveness of Finland's policy in preventing those displaced from becoming economically disadvantaged is considered a key factor in this outcome.⁶⁰¹

Countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Yemen have national laws and policies on internal displacement that recognise displaced children's need for psychosocial support.⁶⁰² Those of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sri Lanka mention the need to protect them from exploitative labour, and those of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Uganda the importance of community care.

Most humanitarian and development organisations have recognised the need to provide more than just basic health and education to displaced children and young people. Psychosocial support is not yet fully built into education services, either in humanitarian crises or in national curricula, but investment is increasing and examples of good practices are multiplying (see box 2).

Box 2: Psychosocial safety in the classroom

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) integrates psychosocial safety into its education services by offering tailored support to affected children in the classroom. Its Better Learning Programme (BLP) consists of three phases. BLP1 provides support to all children, BLP2 targets struggling students in small-group interventions and BLP3 offers a specialised, clinical approach to addressing nightmares and other symptoms of traumatic stress.

With expert input from the University of Tromsø, the programme combines NRC's goals of providing emergency education to displaced children and youth with mitigating

the psychosocial impacts and trauma of their plight. The three phases cover the different stages of displacement, from immediate assistance in emergencies under BLP1 to long-term support during protracted displacement and recovery under BLP3.⁶⁰³

Continued education in displacement



Figure 52: Example of impact pathways of loss of access to education due to internal displacement

The displacement of children and youth has an immediate effect on their education. It usually interrupts schooling, sometimes only for a few days or weeks, but in other cases for much longer periods of time.⁶⁰⁴ This affects not only children’s educational achievement but also their psychosocial wellbeing, security, health, social life and future livelihood opportunities.⁶⁰⁵

The latter may also have wider impacts over time, for example on the labour force of a community or region. The mental health impacts of disrupted education, which may include aggravating the trauma of displacement, may similarly have broader long-term consequences.

School attendance contributes to children’s well-being and health and helps to address food insecurity through the provision of school meals.⁶⁰⁶ Schools also provide safe spaces for children and young people, particularly in fragile and post-conflict environments.⁶⁰⁷

Displaced children and youth highlight education as a “core building block for long-term solutions” to their plight.⁶⁰⁸ In reality, however, they face many obstacles to it. Distance from school is one of the most frequently cited, particularly for IDPs living on the outskirts of town, on previously uninhabited land or in displacement camps.⁶⁰⁹

Others may have lost the documents they need to enrol their children, or stigmatisation and language barriers may impede their attendance. For those able to attend, schools in host areas may not have enough teaching staff to cope with the influx of IDPs and classrooms may be overcrowded. Elsewhere schools may not be available at all. They may be in unsafe areas, damaged or destroyed during disasters or conflict, or occupied by IDPs using them as refuge.⁶¹⁰

Assessment data from 2021 shows that young IDPs across 17 displacement situations tended to have less access to education than their non-displaced peers.⁶¹¹ More

displaced households surveyed in Afghanistan reported having fewer than half of their children aged 6 to 17 in formal schooling than non-displaced counterparts.⁶¹² In the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions of Niger, where displacement increased significantly in 2021, 75 per cent of displaced households had at least one child out of school, compared with 57 per cent among the general population.

In addition to security concerns, cost is a significant barrier to education for many IDPs given that displacement almost invariably means a significant drop in income, leaving them less able to afford school fees, uniforms, supplies, meals or transport. Even if schooling is free and families are offered assistance with related expenses, it may not be enough to keep their children in education. Some in Mogadishu, Somalia, were kept out of school despite such provisions

to look for work or food to help their families survive.⁶¹³ The extent to which cost represents a barrier to education depends on IDPs’ situation. Thirty-eight per cent of surveyed families living outside camps in Iraq said it was their main obstacle, compared with 18 per cent of those in camps.⁶¹⁴

Certain groups of displaced children also face more barriers to education than others. They include those with disabilities, those from indigenous or minority communities, those who speak a different language to their host communities, and very often girls (see spotlights p.115 and p.117).⁶¹⁵



A young boy in an NRC educational programme in Herat, Afghanistan, raises his hand to share his drawing of his future self showing a bright future as a teacher.
© Enayatullah Azad / NRC, April 2021.

Spotlight: Barriers for displaced children with disabilities and promising practices

Interviews with practitioners supporting inclusion in Ethiopia, Nepal, Nigeria and Somalia reveal that displaced children with disabilities face significant obstacles in enrolling in school and receiving support tailored to their needs.⁶¹⁶ Common barriers include inaccessible buildings and transport, access to and cost of special teaching materials, and a lack of adequately trained teachers and learning materials such as braille books. Parents' safety concerns, social stigma and discriminatory policies are also factors.

These insights are reflected in data from Syria, which shows that 60 per cent of IDPs aged 12 to 17 with a disability were attending school, compared with 73 per cent of those without a disability.⁶¹⁷ About a quarter of households with members with disabilities and children out of education cited cost as the main reason for not sending their children to school.⁶¹⁸

The Covid-19 pandemic added to the challenges children with disabilities face, given many did not have adapted technology and assistive devices to learn remotely.⁶¹⁹

The fact that data on the experiences of displaced children with disabilities is limited makes them less visible and impedes the development of policies and programmes to improve their inclusion.⁶²⁰ There are promising examples, however, which show that a “twin-track approach” to inclusive education can enhance their outcomes. This involves adapting mainstream programmes while making tailored interventions to address the specific needs of children with disabilities and their families.⁶²¹

Light for the World works with local organisations in South Sudan to make education accessible to children with disabilities in displacement camps.⁶²² The project trains teachers in inclusive education and skills such as braille and sign language. It also offers children adapted learning materials and assistive devices. The project had supported 280 children with disabilities and trained 97 teachers as of 2019.

In coordination with the Syrian government, UNICEF ran a cash transfer programme for households of children with disabilities to improve access to services.⁶²³ Surveys of beneficiary households, 37 per cent of whom had been displaced, revealed a reduction of 68 percentage points in school dropout rates.⁶²⁴ The proportion of children with disabilities with access to specialised education rose from 14 to 29 per cent.⁶²⁵

Data collection tools such as the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) and the Washington Group/UNICEF Child Functioning Module have been used to better identify displaced children with disabilities in surveys and inform more inclusive programming.⁶²⁶ The 2020 multi-cluster needs assessment (MCNA) in Iraq incorporated WG-SS in and outside displacement camps and included additional questions about barriers to education.⁶²⁷ The 2021 humanitarian response plan, which was informed by the MCNA, included measures to improve distance learning for displaced and returnee children using a disability-sensitive approach.⁶²⁸

Barriers to inclusive education can reinforce marginalisation by undermining the social integration of children with disabilities. They can also hinder their access to free school meals and psychosocial services, and limit their future employment opportunities. Ensuring that children with disabilities have equitable access to education during displacement is essential both for their immediate learning and wellbeing and their longer-term development.



This young disabled girl, originally from Aleppo is now living with her family in a camp in Idlib. She was injured five years ago by unexploded ordnance. While she has been offered prosthetic limbs, the nearest school is too far from the camp for her to reach. © UNOCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman, April 2022.

Spotlight – Overcoming disadvantage: the benefits of improved access to education for girls

Displaced girls face more barriers to education than their male peers. Displacement often aggravates harmful social norms that discriminate and devalue girls' education, which together with gender-based violence, early marriage and pregnancy, create obstacles to learning.⁶²⁹ Other obstacles include parental concerns about girls' safety and a lack of female teachers.

There was a greater percentage of boys than girls in school in four displacement situations we surveyed in 2021. School enrolment for boys in Jos, Nigeria, actually increased as a result of displacement from 90 to 93 per cent, while for girls it decreased from 89 to 81 per cent (see figure 53).⁶³⁰ The majority of respondents with children out of school cited cost as the main reason, particularly for girls.

Displaced families' limited financial resources are one of the most frequently reported barriers to girls' education. Among those surveyed in Mogadishu in 2019 who earned more than \$60 a month, 92 per cent of girls were in school,

compared with 77 per cent for families earning less than \$50 a month.⁶³¹ Parents forced to choose which of their children to send to school may often enrol boys while keeping girls at home to help with domestic and childcare work.⁶³²

Without concerted efforts to improve access, secondary education may only be available to one in three girls in countries affected by crises by 2030.⁶³³ This is of significant concern given that education offers many pathways for displaced girls to better their current situation and secure a brighter future.

Research by the Malala Fund reveals numerous potential benefits associated with educational achievement for girls generally.⁶³⁴ There are strong links between the completion of secondary school and higher earnings and better living standards, health, nutrition and wellbeing. It also increases personal agency, decision-making ability, social capital and institutional participation.

Women with secondary education make almost twice as much, and those with tertiary education almost three times. The more educated women are, the more likely they are also to be working full time. Women who have completed primary school earn 14 to 19 per cent more than those with no education at all.

Secondary education also increases women's knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health. Every year they receive reduces the likelihood of marriage before 18 by six percentage points. The likelihood of early pregnancy also decreases, and those who complete secondary school tend to improve their knowledge of diseases such as HIV/ AIDs and their risk of intimate partner violence also drops significantly.

These benefits accrue for all girls but they are all the more significant for those displaced, who face greater barriers to employment and are at higher risk of gender-based violence, unintended pregnancy and STIs.

There are psychosocial benefits to schooling too. For displaced girls traumatised by their plight, schools provide a safe space and allow them to integrate organically into their host communities. The Malala Fund also found that women with secondary education are more likely to behave more altruistically, something crucial to building meaningful relationships.

Secondary education also changes women's perceptions of their country's institutions, making them less likely to be satisfied with governments that do not deliver. That can spur them to participate politically and lend their much-needed voices to the crafting of their futures.

Beyond the individual and more immediate benefits to displaced girls and their communities, improving their access to education is key to tackling these issues and to the achievement of peace and sustainable socioeconomic development.

A young girl currently residing in Tillabéri, Niger, was able to reconnect with her classmates and peers after receiving psychosocial support to help deal with her own experiences with displacement. © Tom Peyre-Costa/NRC, April 2022.

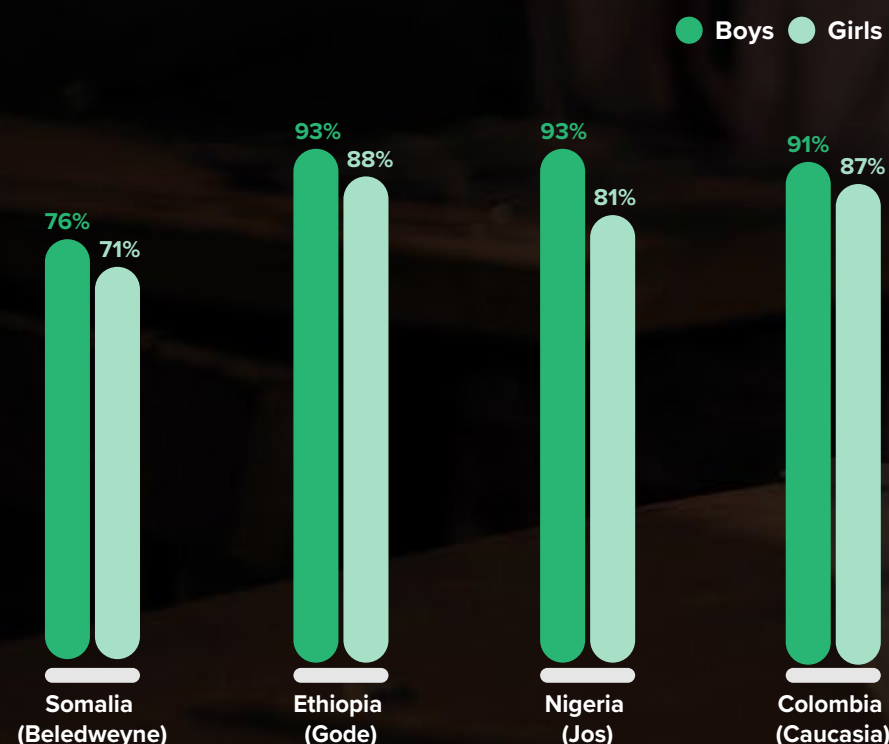


Figure 53: Percentage of displaced boys and girls in school (data: IDMC, 2021)

The cost of inaction in addressing all displaced children's access to education goes far beyond negative impacts in the short term. Each year of schooling is estimated to increase an individual's earning potential by 10 per cent in many countries.⁶³⁵

Several studies have sought to quantify the economic impact of missed education, particularly in light of school closures linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶³⁶ A recent assessment based on data from 157 countries estimates that if schools were closed for seven months and remote learning measures largely ineffective, children could lose an average of \$25,680 in earnings over their lifetime.⁶³⁷ The figure for Latin America and the Caribbean is \$15,229.⁶³⁸

Displaced children can be out of school for much longer than a few months and may lack the resources to continue self-learning. Not only do they miss out on the opportunity to learn and develop skills for future jobs, but they are also at risk of forgetting what they have already learned, which can push them further behind.⁶³⁹

Nor are the effects of lost earning potential restricted to the individual. They have wider and lasting repercussions for economies as a whole by reducing annual GDP and tax revenues.⁶⁴⁰ The long-term impact on Syria's economy of 2.8 million children never returning to school as a result of the conflict is estimated to be as much as 5.4 per cent of GDP.⁶⁴¹ Studies that have applied the economic concept of opportunity costs to educational investments also show that the benefits far outweigh the costs.⁶⁴²

These considerations make it clear that ensuring continued quality education for displaced children is a sound investment for the present and future of all. There is also growing evidence that by increasing income opportunities for young people and fostering socioeconomic development, education reduces the likelihood of conflict, and with it the risk of future displacement.⁶⁴³ Integrating education services for host and displaced children also helps to encourage social cohesion, making inclusive rather than parallel systems an effective tool to support peacebuilding efforts.

Despite the overwhelmingly negative effects of displacement on IDPs' lives, it can sometimes result in access to better services. Research among 528 IDPs in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria and Yemen shows that 35 per cent of those surveyed thought the education their children received in their host areas was good or very good. Only 21 per cent felt the same about their areas of origin.⁶⁴⁴

Improved access to education builds appetite for local integration and helps to discourage IDPs from going back to underserved or unsafe areas of origin. Many in Ethiopia said that better access to services, and in particular education, had acted as a strong incentive to remain in their host communities.⁶⁴⁵ Conversely, school closures in host areas including camps in the Sinjar region of Iraq led IDPs to return to their home areas despite ongoing security risks there that could trigger a further round of displacement.⁶⁴⁶



Children in Dara, Syria, participate in an NRC educational programme created for out-of-school children to help prepare them for formal education and reverse any negative impacts displacement has had on disrupting their access to a quality education.
©Tareq Mnadili/NRC, December 2020.

Let them lead: children and youth as agents of change

Most of the world's IDPs are under the age of 25. Preparing the world of tomorrow and ensuring a better future for all people affected by displacement must start with their active participation and leadership. Some have already shown that they can contribute to solutions and they have the recognised right to do so.⁶⁴⁷

Learning about how children and young people are affected by displacement is essential to provide the support they need to make the most of these capacities and fulfil their broader potential.⁶⁴⁸ Similarly, involving them in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian and development responses to their plight is vital to ensure interventions are inclusive and effective in the long-term.⁶⁴⁹

Examples of good practices exist, such as the Philippines' Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act. Developed in consultation with young people, it is the first national policy in the world to set out initiatives both to prevent displacement and protect displaced children.⁶⁵⁰ It includes a range of child-centred measures to meet basic needs, establish evacuation and transitional centres for orphaned or unaccompanied children and increase protec-

tion against child trafficking and abuse. It also focuses on measures to improve data collection and monitoring.

The Honduran organisation Jovenes contra la Violencia, or Youth against Violence, has been recognised for its community-based work with IDPs. It also successfully presented a bill on displacement for debate in the national congress.⁶⁵¹ This and many other examples show the vital role that volunteering plays in local youth-led organisations.⁶⁵² They also reveal young people's willingness to engage as first responders in crises and key figures in community reconstruction and peacebuilding after disasters, conflict and displacement.⁶⁵³

A 24-year-old former IDP in Yemen, for example, coordinates a team of volunteers to support displaced communities in a collective centre.⁶⁵⁴ Eighty per cent of respondents to a recent survey on young IDPs' attitudes to displacement in Colombia said they were contributing to the Covid-19 response, including through activism and sharing public health information. Young people from displaced and host communities in Syria similarly helped to spread public health information and messages.⁶⁵⁵

Despite this evidence, few initiatives related to displacement involve children and young people in problem analysis and solutions planning, which results in their perspectives being sidelined. Decision-making in Fiji about village relocation in the face of disaster risk and climate change impacts, for example, rests largely in the hands of elders who see such a move as a last resort. Children and young people, however, tend to be in favour.⁶⁵⁶

Similar discrepancies among displaced community members exist elsewhere. A recent survey in Darfur suggested that 86 per cent of displaced households living in camps would prefer to go back to their areas of origin because of the lack of livelihood opportunities in their host area.⁶⁵⁷ For their part young people, who made up 35 per cent of the IDPs, showed a preference for local integration. This different viewpoint was not adequately captured in the survey data though. It only emerged from community engagement sessions that actively sought out young people's opinions.

Consultations with young IDPs in Cameroon, Colombia, Nigeria and South Sudan also show that they are not usually consulted by community leaders, aid providers

or the government, making them feel powerless and unseen.⁶⁵⁸ Age aside, disability and gender were also identified as barriers. Young women in particular tended to be left out of consultations and in some cases were not allowed to engage with officials without a man present. The overwhelming majority of the participants in the consultation, however, wanted their voices to be heard and to engage in local decision-making processes.⁶⁵⁹

This enthusiasm should be tapped into. Young IDPs must be encouraged to express their wants and needs and invited to take an active part in planning and implementing interventions that affect them and their communities. Their aspirations and local initiative can also be strengthened with regional and global support. Networks such as Youth-Connekt and SDNS Youth could be expanded to include and target displaced young people who are pursuing of durable solutions.⁶⁶⁰

Filling persistent data gaps to build a future for all

Challenges in painting a global picture of children and youth in internal displacement persist. 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. 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 nutritional supplements, school-age children educational inputs and young people vocational training.

Internally displaced children are particularly invisible in global and national data. Compared with those who cross an international border when forced to leave their homes, those who remain in their country are largely unaccounted

for. If they find refuge with family or friends, they are rarely registered as IDPs. Those who shelter in displacement camps are somewhat better recorded, but they represent a minority of all IDPs worldwide. Age disaggregation is also limited for any kind of data, and all the more so for internal displacement data.

There are logistical constraints in identifying and collecting data on and with children and youth in displacement. Usual methods such as random sampling and the generation of representative disaggregated data become a challenge that can only be addressed with additional investments into preparatory scoping exercises, secondary data analysis and qualitative data collection.⁶⁶¹ There are also ethical considerations that limit the extent to which collecting data on children is possible (see box 3).

Box 3: The ethics of collecting data on and with children and youth

We need more information on internally displaced children, but it is particularly challenging to ensure their participation in primary data collection exercises. As with all subjects, research must, first of all, do no harm, meaning it must not create risk for participants.⁶⁶² This can be an issue for internally displaced adults too, in cases where being displaced can cause stigma, discrimination or even threats to their physical safety.

Asking IDPs how displacement has affected their lives can also cause harm by forcing them to relive the traumatic events they have gone through. In the absence of dedicated protection measures, asking for details about what happened to them may also expose them to retribution from perpetrators. All data collection on IDPs must consider this key principle and ensure participants' safety and wellbeing.

Additional issues arise if children are involved, such as age-sensitive communication that ensures they understand the purpose of the exercise and the questions asked, and

that they are able to provide the information needed. Written material may not be an option at all for younger children, and alternatives may have to be designed to match their capacities.

Having a parent or adult present when a child is interviewed may be intended to protect them, but it can also be an obstacle to obtaining accurate information and ensuring confidentiality. Children who may be at higher risk or in greatest need, such as those with disabilities, lower education levels or suffering from psychosocial distress, may be unable to participate in standard data collection exercises.⁶⁶³

Several organisations have developed specific guidelines and tools for collecting data on displaced children. Save the Children's Durable Solutions for Children Toolkit, published in 2019, is designed to monitor progress towards ending displacement from a child's perspective.⁶⁶⁴ Plan International conducted focus groups discussions and qualitative interviews with displaced youth in Nigeria, Colombia and South Sudan in 2020 to understand their experience of displacement and capture their opinions on solutions and how they might contribute to them.

Children born into displacement are even more invisible.⁶⁶⁵ Some countries do count them as IDPs, but by strict definition they are not, given that they themselves were not forced to leave their homes. International recommendations published by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS) in 2020 advise against counting them per se because doing so would increase the number of IDPs even if there were no internal displacements, which in turn would give a false sense of inflow.⁶⁶⁶

EGRIS does, however, recommend they be accounted for as a separate "IDP-related population" group so they can be included in policies and programmes. Some humanitarian responses and national programmes already consider them on the basis that they are affected by their parents' displacement and should not be invisible in data.⁶⁶⁷



A photo of an internally displaced child who seeks refuge and safe shelter in UNRWA Salah Eldein school. © UNRWA/ Mohamed Hinnawi, May 2021.

Disaggregation by age and other characteristics

Official statistics and data used for humanitarian and development purposes have long been criticised for their lack of inclusiveness. People who are already most marginalised and potentially in greatest need of support may be left out for a wide range of reasons, not least because there is a lack of disaggregated data. Collecting such data may be difficult as the most marginal may be unable to read or write, live in inaccessible locations or speak minority languages, or because they do not have a home address and so are not included in censuses or surveys.⁶⁶⁸

In order to address this issue, the 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN in 2015 includes a specific target to “increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”.⁶⁶⁹

EGRIS’ international recommendations also advocate that data should be disaggregated by age, sex, date and place of birth, as well as date of first and most recent displacement, main reason for initial and most recent displacement,

number of displacements, place of habitual and current residence, whether parents were also displaced and type of habitation.⁶⁷⁰ Few if any datasets, however, do this. In fact, only five per cent of the records we collected in 2021 included some form of age disaggregation, and half of them were from Nigeria.

When data is disaggregated by age, it tends to be limited to the number of children under 18 without further break down. Infants, school-age children and young people, however, have very different needs in terms of protection, healthcare, education and livelihoods. More granular information is needed, not just by age group but by actual age, particularly for the provision of education in emergencies and during recovery and reconstruction.⁶⁷¹ In the absence of real data, innovative approaches have been developed to bridge this gap (see box 4).⁶⁷²

Box 4: School-age population estimates for education in disasters

UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) launched a tool in 2021 to produce school-age population estimates. It combines open-source data and software with open-access statistical literature to generate figures by actual age rather than age group at the super-local level, on a grid of around 100m2. From that starting point, any school-age group can be extrapolated to match any geographic area, regardless of administrative boundaries. This allows school-age populations’ exposure to hazards such as floods, storms and drought to be assessed.

Such information allows planners, service providers and other stakeholders to estimate education requirements at a granular level and develop preparedness plans for

education in emergencies. Adding schools to the analysis, including their location, size and structural properties, further supports relief efforts by identifying schools that have been damaged and community facilities that could be used as schools, emergency shelters or resource centres (see figure 54).

The approach also makes it possible not only to estimate the number of people directly exposed, in this case to floods, but also those indirectly exposed, such as people living in neighbouring areas who may suffer from secondary impacts such as food insecurity or an influx of IDPs. This could be valuable information for broader relief efforts beyond education provision.

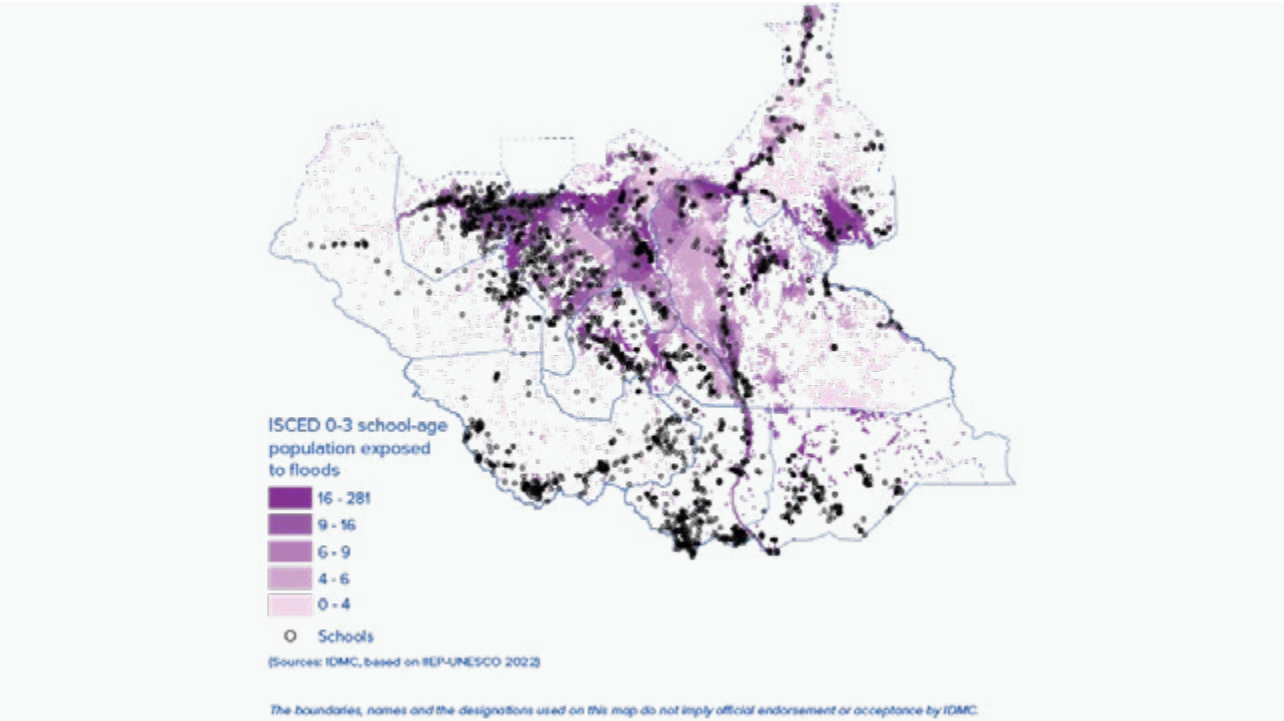


Figure 54: Affected areas, school-age populations and school facilities exposed to floods in South Sudan

Gender, disability status and other aspects also have a direct influence on how children experience displacement and their needs. Additional information on such characteristics is required, but it is even more challenging to come by because it is often not possible to use national or global-level demographic distribution data as we do for age groups.

The availability of disability data is highly uneven across countries and disability rates vary. Around 15 per cent of the population worldwide lives with a disability, but the figure for some countries is much higher, particularly during and in the aftermath of conflict. After decades of war in Afghanistan, 80 per cent of the country’s adult population lives with a disability.⁶⁷³ Our studies among IDPs also show significant variances in disability rates, from two per cent in Jos, Nigeria to 20 per cent in Caucasia, Colombia.

Data on children with disabilities is particularly sparse, but they are thought to account for around 10 per cent of under-17s worldwide.⁶⁷⁴ How many are living in displacement is unknown, though two per cent of displaced households who took part in our research in Caucasia said a family member aged 6 to 14 was living with a disability.

Information on young IDPs from indigenous communities or sexual minority groups is also too scarce to attempt an estimate of their number and much less the conditions they live in. Instead, they remain invisible despite the likelihood of their facing specific challenges and needs, and in some situations, the very act of collecting data on them could put them at risk.

This type of information is, however, a prerequisite for the design of inclusive and effective support for displaced children and youth, because different aspects of their identity come together to create advantages and disadvantages, and discrimination or privilege.⁶⁷⁵ These must be captured and understood to ensure their safety, wellbeing and development into healthy, happy and productive adults.

Over and above disaggregated data, disaggregated analysis is also needed, particularly in protracted displacement situations to inform support for the pursuit of durable solutions.⁶⁷⁶ Such analysis means involving communities and young people early in the data collection process and engaging with them actively throughout.

Assessing protection risks safely and reliably

It is tricky enough to estimate displaced children’s immediate and longer term needs for nutrition, education or water, sanitation and health, but assessing child protection needs is all the more difficult because it is not possible to obtain robust data on the prevalence of incidents. Including questions in surveys and other data collection efforts can put respondents at risk of harm, and nor does it yield meaningful results. Sensitive issues such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and exploitation are under-reported anyway, meaning that data collected on their prevalence is not reliable.

Box 5: Assessing protection risks for children in emergencies

The difficulties in collecting data on child protection needs among IDPs leave humanitarian responders and protection agencies trying to respond to an issue the true scale and nature of which is hidden.

In an effort to circumvent this problem one new approach assesses the risk of child protection incidents occurring via needs identification and analysis frameworks (NIAFs) rather than trying to measure their scale. The basic premise, which is aligned with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines, is to assume that violence and abuse is taking place against displaced children and youth, and to identify

Responders and donors, however, often demand evidence of violence and abuse or the risk of it occurring in order to justify investments in child protection programmes. In order to fill the information gap, new approaches try to measure the risk and potential prevalence of child protection incidents by assessing a range of factors and vulnerabilities (see box 5).⁶⁷⁷

situations in which it is most likely to happen because social protective measures break down.

In food insecurity situations, for example, vulnerable families are more likely to resort to negative coping mechanisms that are harmful to children, such as neglect and child marriage, labour and exploitation. Similarly in displacement settings, measuring distance and routes to water sources gives insight into where children may face higher protection risks because they are often sent to fetch water alone.

Combining a number of such “protection sensitive” indicators allows for a safe and more insightful assessment of protection risks in emergencies.

Data sharing and interoperability

Many different types of entities collect data on displaced children and young people, including humanitarian organisations, education ministries, UN agencies, civil society organisations and national statistics offices. All do so with their respective priorities in mind. For some it might be to assess the health needs of children with disabilities in a particular location; for others the educational achievement of primary school-age girls in an area affected by drought.

This diversity, and the fact that participants may be defined in terms such as “crisis-affected children” rather than “internally displaced children”, makes it difficult to identify and use these data sources. Nor do the collectors and publishers of displacement data always have the capacity and resources to consider data sharing and interoperability in their processes, given that they gather much of their information during crises and emergencies.

Each sector also requires a different age breakdown according to national school or health systems. School ages tend to start at around three to five years, but primary and secondary curricula vary in length and age group. Nutrition programmes target infants of different ages, from zero to six months, six to 12, and 12 months to five years, creating many sub-divisions of age-disaggregated data.

This creates collective inefficiencies if different organisations seeking to address similar issues are unaware of each other’s work and duplicate efforts instead of filling knowledge gaps. Agreeing on standard definitions for data collection on IDPs and on ways to make results accessible and interoperable is essential, and there are signs of progress in this direction.

EGRIS, which was established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2016, published its International Recommendations for IDP Statistics in 2020 after years of consultations with representatives from 45 national statistics authorities and 25 regional and international organisations.⁶⁷⁸ They call for data on IDPs to be disaggregated and for children born to displaced parents to be accounted for, albeit as a separate population group from IDPs themselves. They also include definitions of inflow, outflow and stock statistics for all to use, and work is continuing on identifying measures of solutions to displacement. EGRIS will now focus on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing among its members and other partners as the next step towards implementation.

Other initiatives have sought in the last few years to improve coordination in the collection of data on displaced children and youth and those affected by crises. They include the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and its Inclusive Data Charter, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies’ reference group on data and the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC).

IDAC is a global coalition that brings together governments, national statistics offices, multilateral organisations, NGOs and academia to improve data on migrants and displaced children.⁶⁷⁹ It provides a platform for stakeholders at the intersection of human mobility, development, data and children’s issues to identify data gaps on children on the move and their needs; to share data, good practices, experiences and interests; and to work together to find solutions to data challenges. It also has a working group dedicated to data on internally displaced children.

Conclusion



Children play at Kigaramango IDP camp, on the outskirts of Bujumbura, Burundi. © OCHA/Camille Marquis, May 2021.

The number of people living in internal displacement worldwide has again reached record levels. The unprecedented figures presented in this report are fuelled by large numbers of internal displacements, the result of both new and protracted conflicts and crises, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Millions more people have also fled their homes in Europe in recent months as Ukraine suffers war and the biggest displacement crisis of its history. Disaster displacement continues unabated and across the globe, affecting tens of millions of people each year.

With more IDPs in the world than ever, Covid-19 has made millions of lives even more precarious, aggravating inequalities and deepening vulnerabilities. As countries restricted movement to curb the spread of the virus, displaced people bore the brunt of the impacts on their incomes, food security, access to services and ability to return home or move onwards to safe havens.

Behind the data in this report are millions of lives disrupted, communities torn apart, and children deprived of their future. The high numbers do not only have a heavy toll on generations today, but also on future generations. We must look beyond the direct impacts of displacement on children and young people to better understand how these are connected to longer-term impacts on communities. This is particularly the case as for many, displacement is becoming increasingly protracted.

The displacement of children and young people has many impacts and hidden costs, both direct and indirect. Their physical health, psychosocial wellbeing, livelihoods, education and security are directly affected in ways that may play out into adulthood. The links between individual wellbeing and broader social development have been documented in other domains, but evidence is limited for displacement. Displaced children's experiences and their effect on sustainable development and equitable societies need to be better understood.

The report of the UN secretary general's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and the subsequent action agenda highlight the key role that access to quality education plays in achieving durable solutions. Other international processes, including on the implementation of the Sendai framework, the Global Compact for Migration and the SDGs, all point to the need to better consider children and young people in analyses, policies and programmes. Importantly, UN Security Council resolutions on youth,

peace and security urge countries to strive for their inclusive representation in decision-making and offer ways for their voices to be heard, particularly in post-conflict situations and peacebuilding processes.

This not only makes good social and economic sense. Access to education and learning is also a basic child right recognised by the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the regional frameworks and national policies that incorporate them. For the global agenda on internal displacement to take their needs and aspirations fully into account, displaced children and young people should become a core part of planning at the local and national level.

To address the lack of qualitative and quantitative information that continues to hamper the design and implementation of tailored policies and programmes, more investment in local data collection and in national and regional monitoring systems is also required. Most importantly, information should be collected and used in ways that build on children's and young people's agency and take their perspectives, not as a target for action, but as its starting point.

1 The metric “internal displacements” refers to the number of movements recorded (not people displaced), which may include new or repeated displacements

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Table 1: Summary of key figures

Country	Internal displacements in 2021 (conflict and violence)	Internal displacements in 2021 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (disasters)
Abyei Area	600		15,000	
Afghanistan	723,000	25,000	4,314,000	1,390,000
Albania		250		
Algeria		6,600		3,500
Angola		22,000		7,500
Argentina		710		
Armenia	37		840	
Australia		49,000		220
Austria		56		
Azerbaijan			655,000	
Bangladesh	150	99,000	427,000	42,000
Barbados		380		380
Belgium		16,000		1,900
Benin		10,000	2,700	
Bolivia		910		310
Bosnia and Herzegovina		310	92,000	
Brazil	21,000	449,000	21,000	26,000
Bulgaria		25		
Burkina Faso	682,000		1,580,000	
Burundi	94	87,000	19,000	94,000
Cambodia		15,000		5,800
Cameroon	131,000	1,800	909,000	28,000
Canada		60,000		1,900
Cayman Islands		41		
Central African Republic	496,000	24,000	692,000	36,000
Chad	42,000	24,000	392,000	24,000
Chile		2,500		1,400
China		6,037,000		943,000
Colombia	134,000	32,000	5,235,000	1,400
Congo		6,700	57,000	100
Cook Islands		12		
Costa Rica		290		
Côte d'Ivoire			302,000	
Croatia				3,000

Country	Internal displacements in 2021 (conflict and violence)	Internal displacements in 2021 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (disasters)
Cuba		194,000		
Cyprus		59	242,000	59
Czech Republic		2,800		460
Dem. People's Rep. Korea		5,000		
Dem. Rep. Congo	2,712,000	888,000	5,339,000	201,000
Dominican Republic		10,000		
Ecuador		5,700		720
Egypt		1,100		1,100
El Salvador	175,000	550		
Eswatini		110		
Ethiopia	5,142,000	240,000	3,589,000	579,000
Fiji		14,000		
France		9,100		
Gambia	700	2,400		
Georgia		85	305,000	28,000
Germany		17,000		740
Ghana		12,000		3,700
Greece		67,000		1,600
Guatemala	130	16,000	243,000	22,000
Guinea		2,600		2,600
Guyana		220		
Haiti	20,000	220,000	17,000	220,000
Honduras	550	260	247,000	30
Hong Kong, China		400		
Iceland		220		-
India	13,000	4,903,000	506,000	22,000
Indonesia	27,000	749,000	73,000	155,000
Iran		41,000		13,000
Iraq	57,000	9,400	1,187,000	20,000
Ireland		25		
Israel	3,200	3,900		
Italy		2,600		7
Jamaica		16		
Japan		14,000		39,000
Kazakhstan		140		72
Kenya	4,600	36,000	190,000	54,000
Korea		2,900		330
Kosovo		70	16,000	
Kyrgyzstan	46,000	120		
Lao PDR		5		3,600
Lebanon	61	850	50	

Country	Internal displacements in 2021 (conflict and violence)	Internal displacements in 2021 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (disasters)
Lesotho		730		
Libya		1,200	160,000	
Luxembourg		560		
Macao, China		37		16
Madagascar	1,300	4,800	2,800	
Malawi		600		
Malaysia		129,000		7,000
Mali	249,000	6,000	326,000	24,000
Mayotte	8		8	
Mexico	29,000	19,000	379,000	23
Mongolia		6,300		6,300
Morocco		10		10
Mozambique	187,000	44,000	735,000	138,000
Myanmar	448,000	158,000	649,000	1,400
Namibia		260		
Nepal		32,000		8,400
Netherlands		51,000		
New Caledonia	13	5,500	150	
New Zealand		4,400		50
Niger	110,000	118,000	224,000	40,000
Nigeria	376,000	24,000	3,228,000	107,000
North Macedonia		80	110	
Norway		780		4
Oman		5,200		
Pakistan		70,000	104,000	70,000
Palau		2,500		-
Palestine	118,000		12,000	
Panama		2,200		
Papua New Guinea	9,500	7,500	24,000	17,000
Peru		11,000	60,000	
Philippines	140,000	5,681,000	108,000	700,000
Poland		120		120
Portugal		20		
Réunion		14		
Romania		410		
Russian Federation		5,600	470	130
Rwanda		15,000		700
São Tomé and Príncipe		500		
Senegal		1,300	8,400	
Serbia		34		

Country	Internal displacements in 2021 (conflict and violence)	Internal displacements in 2021 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2021 (disasters)
Sierra Leone			5,500	
Solomon Islands	1,000	5	1,000	
Somalia	549,000	271,000	2,968,000	
South Africa	520	10,000		7,800
South Sudan	429,000	506,000	1,369,000	527,000
Spain		14,000		7,000
Sri Lanka		121,000	12,000	33
St. Vincent and the Grenadines		23,000		1,800
Sudan	442,000	99,000	3,175,000	85,000
Suriname		6,500		
Switzerland		140		13
Syria	456,000	79,000	6,662,000	
Taiwan, China		11,000		
Tajikistan	15,000	1,200		780
Tanzania		47,000		940
Thailand	520	9,400	41,000	3,000
Timor-Leste		16,000		110
Tunisia		1,200		150
Turkey		84,000	1,099,000	11,000
Uganda	1,300	47,000	1,700	24,000
Ukraine	40	2,000	854,000	12
United Arab Emirates		40		
United Kingdom		510		
United States		573,000		56,000
Uruguay		160		
Venezuela		33,000		32,000
Viet Nam		780,000		1,800
Yemen	377,000	84,000	4,289,000	11,000
Zambia		1,300		220
Zimbabwe		2,400		43,000

Acknowledgements

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Country engagement, policy advice and administrative support: Moulay Thami Essabih Eddafali, Barbara Essig, and Youssef Jai.

External contributions and support

IDMC would like to thank especially the expert advice provided by the following persons:
Editor: Jeremy Lennard
GRID 2022 Expert Group: Michel Anglade (Save the Children), Shannon Hayes (IOM), Henny Ngu (UNDP), Nuno Nunes (IOM), Annelies Ollieuz (NRC), Edgar Scrase (UNHCR), Lindsay Stark (Brown School at Washington University), Bindu Sunny (UNESCO), Danzhen You (UNICEF), Greta Zeender (Follow-up Team to the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda).
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Vázquez (CMDPDH), Ricardo Pia Cordero (UNHCR), Simon Randles (West Bank Protection Consortium), Mathilde Rietmatten (ICRC), Sahud Sakalla (OCHA Myanmar), Mari Sawai (OCHA Myanmar), Paola Serrao Emerson (OCHA Sudan), Wan Sophonpanich (IOM), Jason Spierings (OCHA Myanmar), Wan Sophonpanich (IOM), Mark Stevens (OCHA Sudan), Syinat Sultanalieva (Human Rights Watch), Enzo Tabet Cruz (Plan International), Jeremy Taylor (NRC East Africa and Yemen), Linda Tom (OCHA Afghanistan), Mariam Traore (IOM), Daniel Tyler (NRC Afghanistan), Ilana Tyler-Rubinstein (Save the Children), Catalina Uribe (UN RCO Myanmar), Mathilde Vu (NRC Sudan), Sanjula Weerasinghe (IFRC), Christina Wille (Insecurity Insight), Ronja Winkhardt-Enz (German Committee for Disaster Reduction), and Caroline Zullo (NRC Iraq).

Background papers and external contributions: Alexis Reynod (IMPACT Initiatives), Margarita Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, Ola Samara and Wilhelmina Welsch (JIPS), Shannon Hayes (IOM and UNICEF), Enzo Tabet Cruz (Plan International), Laura Kivela, William Low and Ilana Tyler-Rubinstein (Save the Children), Amélie A. Gagnon and German Vargas Mesa (UNESCO-IIEP).

Special thank you to the Governments of the following countries for their engagement and support in internal displacement data collection and analysis: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Chile, Colombia, Rep. of Congo, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Niger, North Macedonia, Philippines, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Somalia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United States of America, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia.

We thank the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) offices in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso/Niger, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Regional Office for North of Central America and Mexico, Regional Office for East Africa and Yemen, Regional Office for Central and West Africa, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

We thank the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with special thanks to Nuno Nunes, Muhammad

Rizki, Raúl Soto, Robert Trigwell, DTM Regional Coordinators (Damien Jusselme, Chiara Lucchini, Lorenza Rossi) and country offices in Afghanistan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, , Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Madagascar, Myanmar, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine, Vanuatu and Yemen.

We thank the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) offices in Afghanistan, Asia and the Pacific regional office, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Latin America and the Caribbean regional office, Myanmar, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Office of the Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand (Regional Office), Ukraine, West and Central Africa regional office, Yemen.

We thank the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) offices in Afghanistan, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Geneva Headquarters, Kosovo, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Ukraine.

We thank the following institutions for their continuous collaboration: Andrés Bello Catholic University; Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS); the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), Bangladesh Red Crescent Society; Caribbean Development Bank; CCCM Cluster for Myanmar; CCCM Cluster for Syria, CCCM Cluster for Somalia, Civic United Nations Holding Group of Influence; Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH); Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT); Cristosal; Department of Environmental Systems Science of ETH Zurich (ETH); Department of Statistics, University of Oxford; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Kenya, Directorate of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees; Displacement Management Cluster (Bangladesh); Egyptian Red Crescent, European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC); Meta’s Data for Good Program; Floodlist; Durable Solutions Working Group (Sudan, Iraq), Groupe de Coordination Opérationelle de la Rapid Response (GCORR), Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP); IDP Working Group in Somalia; Instituto Universitario de

Opinión Pública (IUDOP) de la Universidad Centroamericana (UCA); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); International Crisis Group; International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC); IFRC São Tomé and Príncipe; IFRC Southern Africa Regional Office, The National Coordination Centre of the Australian Red Cross; The National IDP Network Kenya, Needs Assessment Working Group (Bangladesh); the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality; Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS); Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS); Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR); Protection Cluster (Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Niger, Ukraine), R2P-Right to Protection; Rafael Landivar University; REACH Initiative (Afghanistan, Somalia, Ukraine); Rwandan Red Cross, Shelter Cluster (Bahamas, Myanmar, Palestine, Yemen); State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and IDPs Republic of Azerbaijan; ; South African Red Cross Society; South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA); Unit for Integral Attention and Reparation of Victims (Colombia); Tanzania Red Cross Society; The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR); The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); The United Nations Resident Coordinator's Offices in Nepal and Egypt;; Uganda Red Cross Society; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT);; United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and the World Food Programme (WFP), West Bank Protection Consortium, and the Yemen Population Task Force.



A boy collects water in the IDP settlement in Burco, Somaliland, Somalia. Seventy-five per cent of the camp's population are women and children originally displaced from their homeland © UNOCHA/Ahmed Fais, November 2021.

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