

10 million people internally displaced across sub-Saharan Africa in 2018

10 May 2019, Geneva – Sub-Saharan Africa experienced more internal displacement than any other region in 2018, according to a new report from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Unresolved and cyclical conflict combined with new waves of violence to trigger 7.4 million displacements between January and December 2018, an increase on 2017 and three times more than in the Middle East and North Africa. The Global Report on Internal Displacement also reveals 2.6 million new displacements associated with disasters, mostly weather-related.

“Sub-Saharan Africa hosts some of the largest protracted displacement crises in the world. Emerging conflicts and the effects of climate change forced millions more people to flee last year, but many of these crises are overlooked and underfunded,” said Alexandra Bilak, IDMC’s director.

Conflict over resources and ethnic violence triggered 2.9 million new displacements in Ethiopia in 2018, more than in any other country worldwide and four times the figure for 2017. Regional clashes, fighting between al-Shabaab and pro-government forces and forced evictions also triggered the highest number of new displacements in a decade in Somalia.

New waves of violence over scarce resources in Nigeria’s Middle Belt region combined with the ongoing insurgency of Boko Haram and other armed groups in the north-east to trigger 541,000 new displacements. The outbreak of internal conflict in the anglophone region of neighbouring Cameroon led to similar levels of displacement. New conflicts also erupted in countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso, linked to the emergence of extremist groups, intercommunal clashes and unresolved socioeconomic grievances.

Around 16.5 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict or violence in Sub-Saharan Africa as of the end of the year. More than three million were in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where decades of unrest continues to cause new displacements. Figures for DRC are highly conservative and do not capture the whole country.

Record rainfall following several years of drought in eastern Africa led to devastating flooding in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia which, combined with storms, led to 820,000 displacements. Flooding in Nigeria affected 80 per cent of the country and triggered 600,000 new displacements.

Internal displacement is an increasingly urban phenomenon. Conflict, climate shocks and large-scale development projects drive people from rural to urban areas, and such influxes present great challenges for cities and may aggravate existing risk factors. People who fled fighting in rural Somalia, for example, face abject poverty, tenure insecurity and onward displacement from flooding and evictions in Mogadishu. Displacement also originates in cities, whether triggered by conflict, disasters or infrastructure and urban renewal projects.

“The fact that cities have become sanctuary to more and more internally displaced people represents a challenge for municipal authorities, but also an opportunity. Leveraging the positive role that local government can play in finding solutions to displacement will be key to addressing this challenge in the future,” said Alexandra Bilak.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Regional press releases:

Regional press releases detailing more specific displacement within geographical areas are available for sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Asia and Middle East and North Africa.

About IDMC:

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the world's authoritative source of data and analysis on internal displacement. Since its establishment in 1998, as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), IDMC has offered a rigorous, independent and trusted service to the international community. Their work informs policy and operational decisions that improve the lives of the millions of people living in internal displacement, or at risk of becoming displaced in the future.

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Live interviews can be arranged today with Alexandra Bilak, IDMC's Director and Jan Egeland, NRC's Secretary General.

Landing page:

From 10 May, visit www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019 to read and download the full report and summary; explore stories of displaced people and access a media pack, containing global and regional press releases, biographies of spokespeople, photos and b-roll.

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