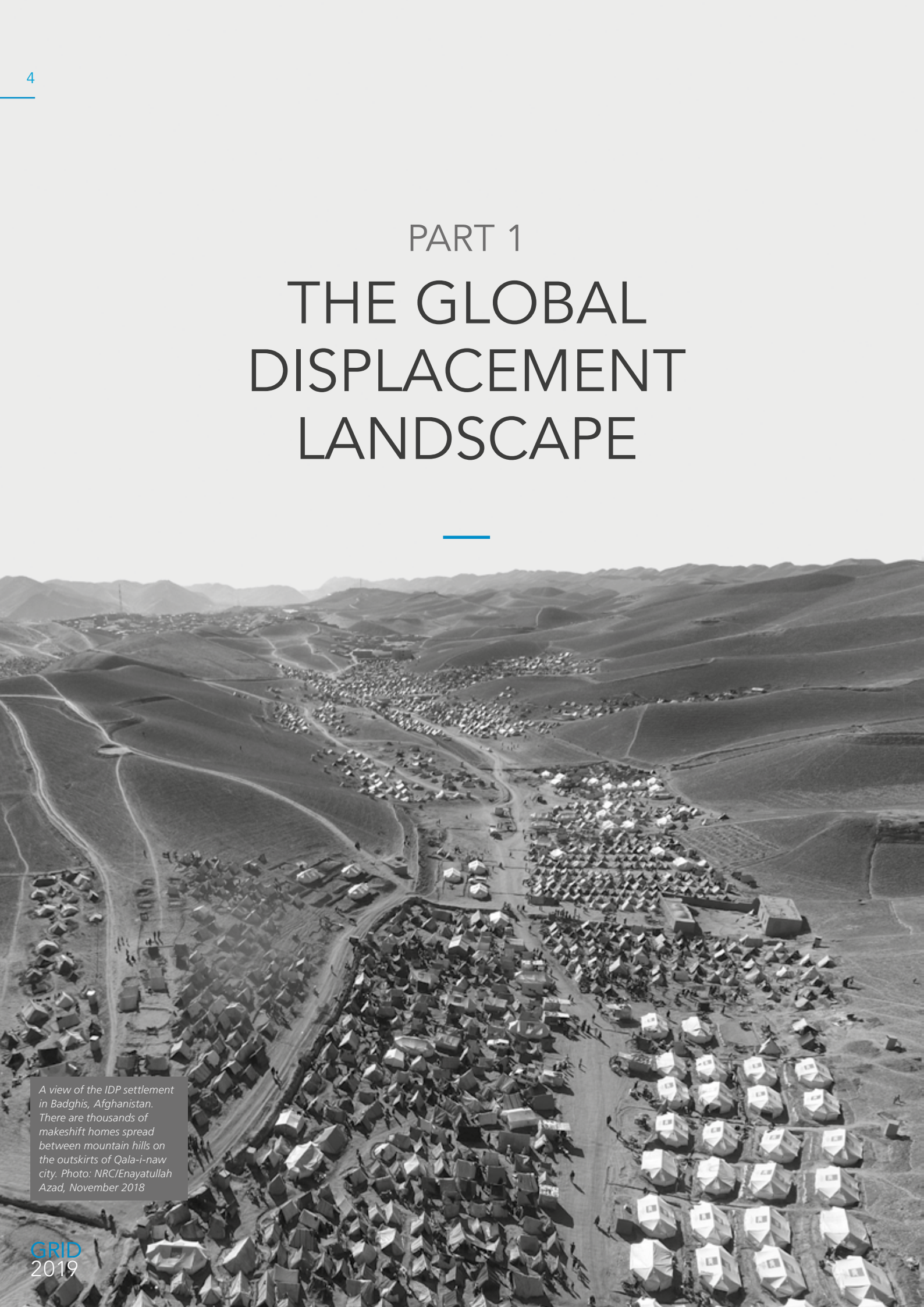PART 1

THE GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT LANDSCAPE

—

A view of the IDP settlement in Badghis, Afghanistan. There are thousands of makeshift homes spread between mountain hills on the outskirts of Qala-i-naw city. Photo: NRC/Enayatullah Azad, November 2018

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2018: NEW DISPLACEMENTS

There were 28 million new displacements associated with disasters and conflict recorded in 2018 across 148 countries and territories. Nine out of the ten worst-affected countries accounted for more than a million new displacements each. Several countries such as **Ethiopia**, **Nigeria** and **Afghanistan**, were affected by displacement associated with both conflict and disasters. Many people who fled disasters in countries such as **Syria**, **Somalia**, **Iraq** and **Yemen**, had already been displaced by conflict.

These are the best estimates of a complex and dynamic global phenomenon that manifests in significantly different ways across countries and situations. The severity and duration of displacement are not captured,

and the need for a more nuanced understanding of its drivers and impacts are discussed throughout the report.

Robust information on all of these dimensions is needed to form an evidence base for the decisions and actions of policymakers, planners and responders working to provide durable solutions to IDPs and reduce the risk of future displacement.

FIGURE 3: Highest number of new displacements in 2018 (50 countries and territories)
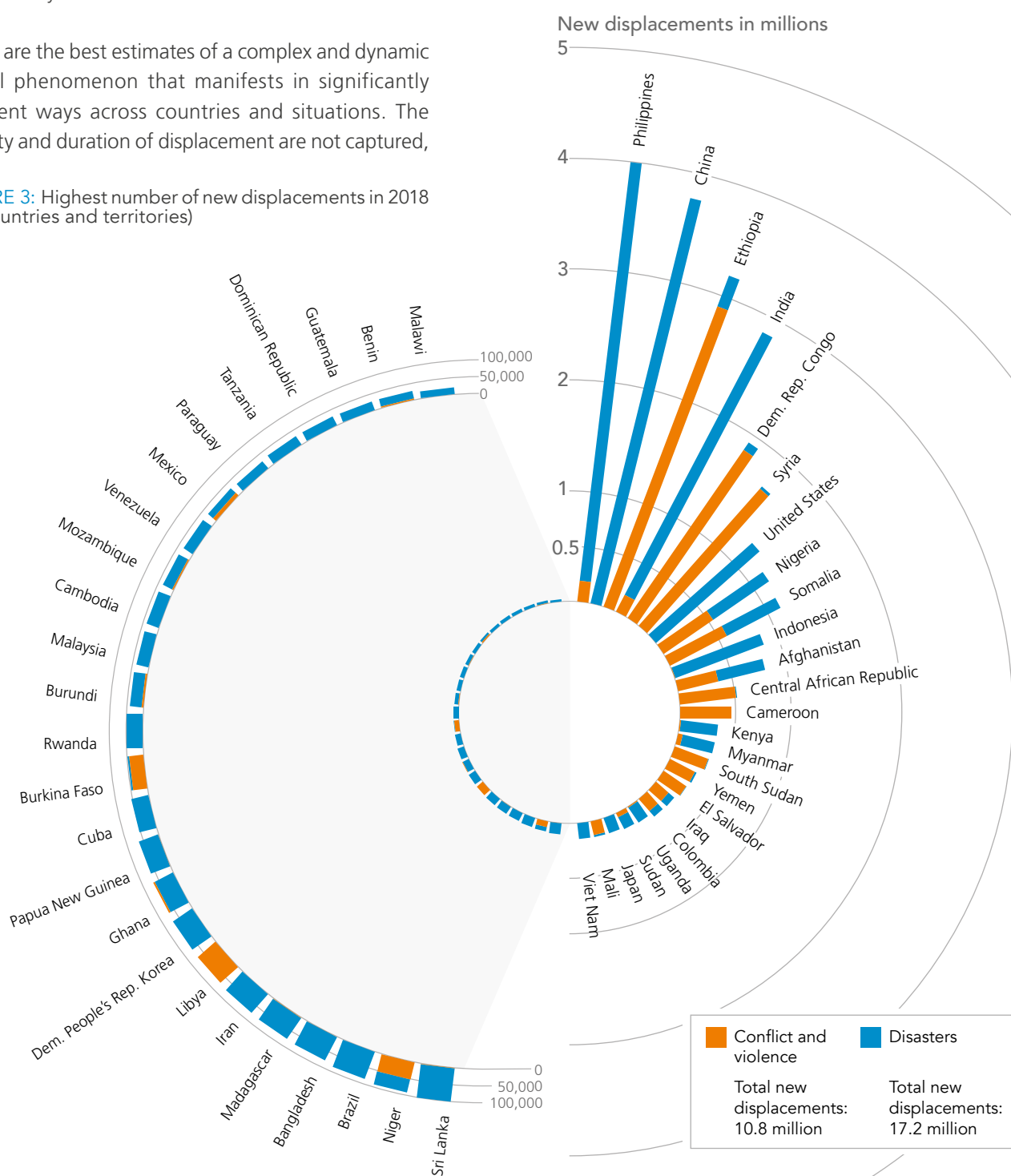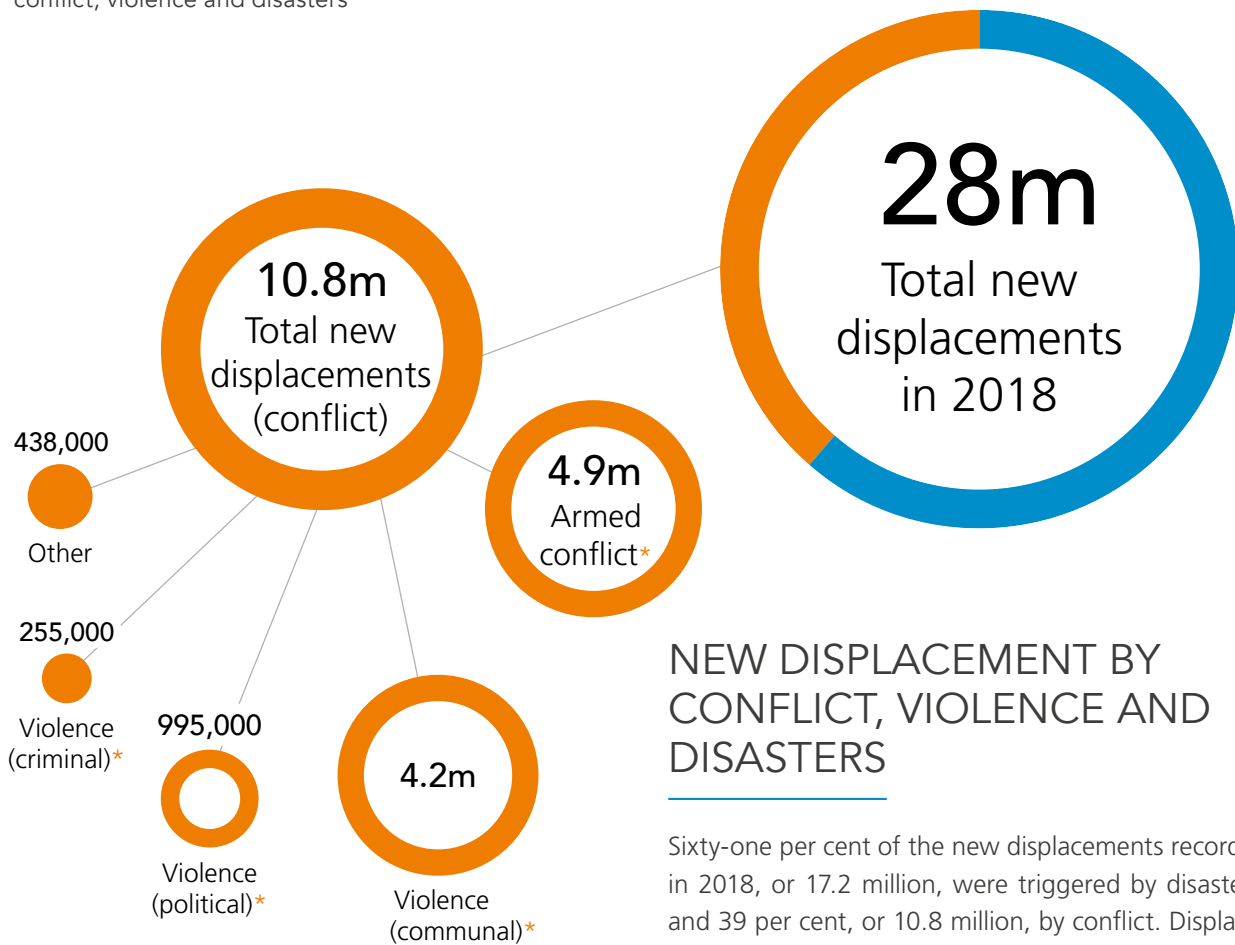

New displacements in millions

Legend:
- Conflict and violence
- Disasters

Total new displacements: 10.8 million

Total new displacements: 17.2 million

FIGURE 4: New displacements in 2018: Breakdown for conflict, violence and disasters

28m
Total new displacements in 2018

10.8m
Total new displacements (conflict)

4.9m
Armed conflict*

438,000
Other

255,000
Violence (criminal)*

995,000
Violence (political)*

4.2m
Violence (communal)*

* For defintions see Glossary p.105

NEW DISPLACEMENT BY CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND DISASTERS

Sixty-one per cent of the new displacements recorded in 2018, or 17.2 million, were triggered by disasters, and 39 per cent, or 10.8 million, by conflict. Displacement associated with communal violence increased considerably compared with 2017. Criminal violence also continued to trigger displacement but numbers should be considered underestimates.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria, Somalia, Central African Republic (CAR) and Afghanistan were again among the countries with the highest number of new displacements associated with conflict. New waves of conflict and violence triggered displacement in Nigeria and Cameroon, that were among the ten worst-affected countries globally. Ethiopia had the highest figure, with 2.9 million new displacements, a considerable increase that influenced global trends.

Almost 1,600 disaster events triggered new displacements during the year, most of them associated with weather-related hazards. Storms, particularly tropical
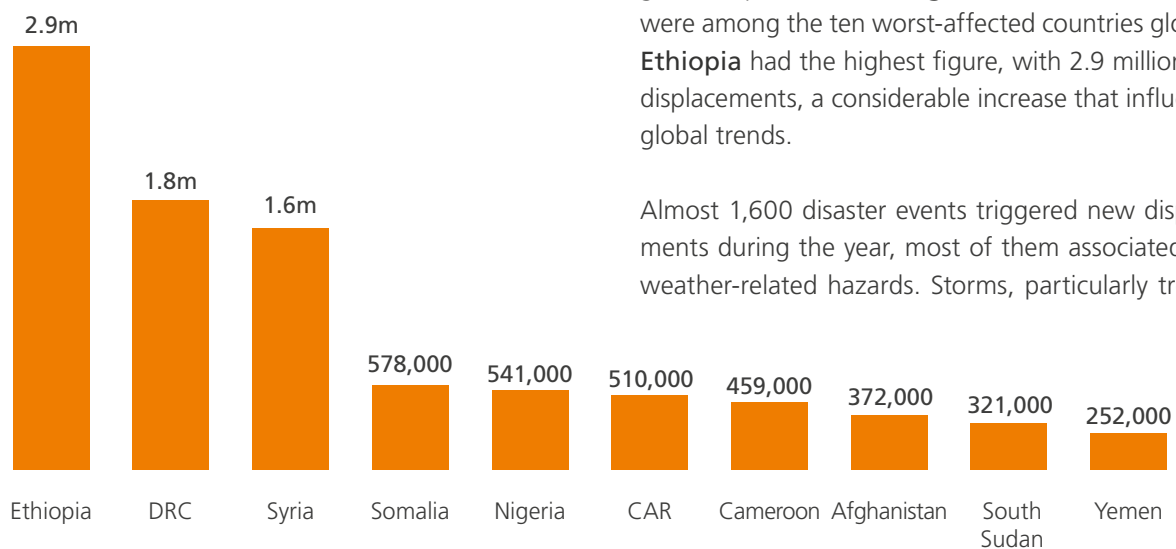
NEW DISPLACEMENTS (CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE)

2.9m	1.8m	1.6m	578,000	541,000	510,000	459,000	372,000	321,000	252,000
Ethiopia	DRC	Syria	Somalia	Nigeria	CAR	Cameroon	Afghanistan	South Sudan	Yemen

FIGURE 5: Ten countries with most new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2018

915,000

Earthquakes

186,000

Volcanic
eruptions

28,000

Dry mass
movement

1.1m
Geophysical

1,000

Mass
movement

17.2m
Total new
displacements
(disasters)

16.1m
Weather
related

24,000

Extreme
temperatures

5.4m
Floods

165,000

Landslides

424,000

Wildfires

764,000

Droughts

9.3m
Storms

1.4m
Other storms

7.9m
Cyclones,
hurricanes,
typhoons

cyclones, accounted for the majority, a reminder of the importance of reducing the risks associated with vulnerability and exposure to climate change. Geophysical events including earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions triggered 1.1 million new displacements, a considerable increase compared with 2017.

The **Philippines**, **China** and **India** between them accounted for about 60 per cent of all new displacements associated with disasters. Many were pre-emptive evacuations of people living in high-risk areas, highlighting the unmitigated exposure of people and assets. Vulnerability also played a key role in preventing people from returning and recovering from the impacts of disasters in many countries.

NEW
DISPLACEMENTS
(DISASTERS)

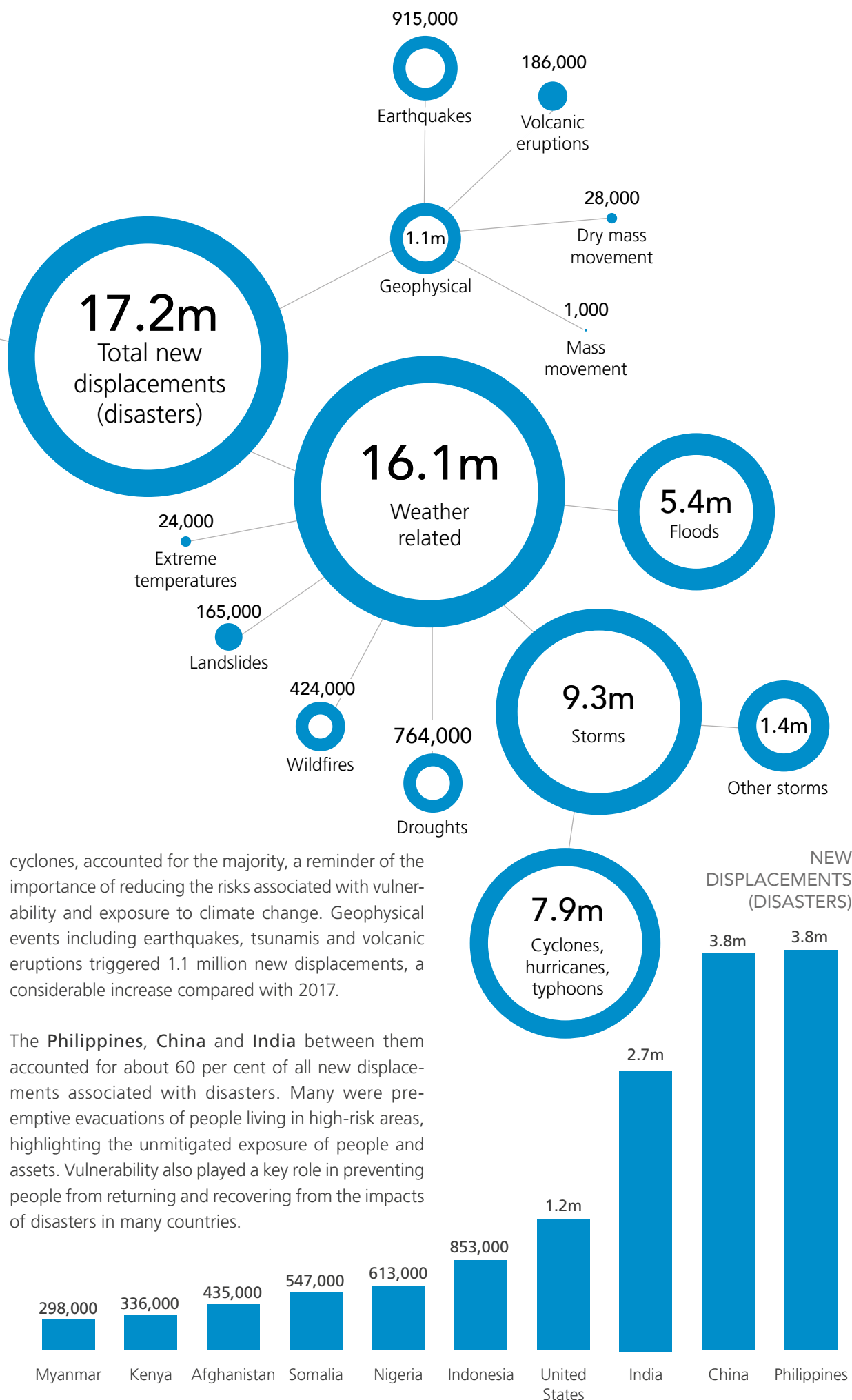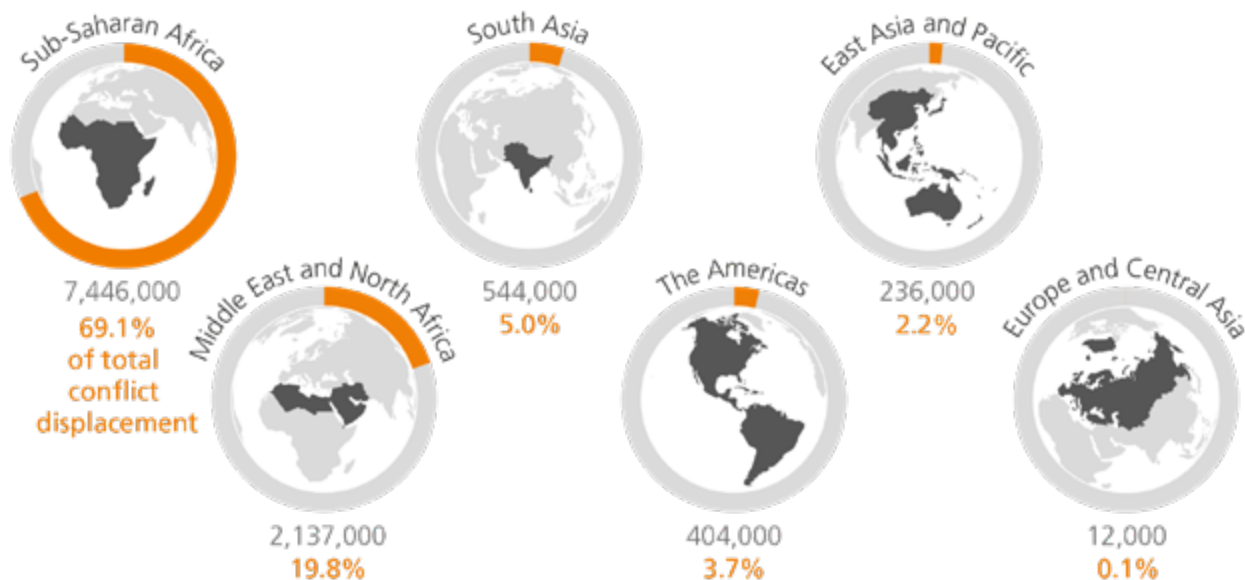|									
298,000	336,000	435,000	547,000	613,000	853,000	1.2m	2.7m	3.8m	3.8m
Myanmar	Kenya	Afghanistan	Somalia	Nigeria	Indonesia	United States	India	China	Philippines

FIGURE 6: Ten countries with most new displacements associated with disasters in 2018
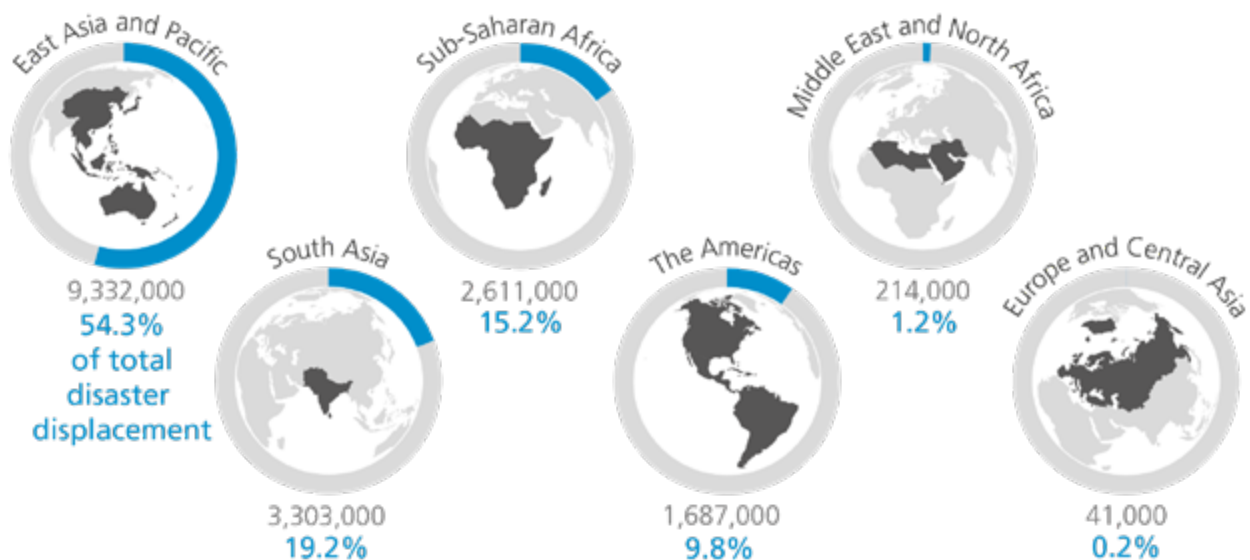
REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East were disproportionally affected by displacement associated with conflict in 2018, and new waves were also recorded in South Asia. Figures for the Americas mirrored those of previous years. Displacement associated with disasters mainly affected East Asia and Pacific, and South Asia, both regions with high levels of population exposure and vulnerability to hazards. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas were relatively lightly affected, but floods and storms still triggered millions of new displacements. This section presents data, contextual analysis and urban perspectives by region. Detailed analysis is presented in the form of country spotlights.[9]

Conflict and violence: New displacement by region

Sub-Saharan Africa
7,446,000
69.1%
of total conflict displacement

South Asia
544,000
5.0%

East Asia and Pacific
236,000
2.2%

Middle East and North Africa
2,137,000
19.8%

The Americas
404,000
3.7%

Europe and Central Asia
12,000
0.1%

Disasters: New displacement by region

East Asia and Pacific
9,332,000
54.3%
of total disaster displacement

Sub-Saharan Africa
2,611,000
15.2%

Middle East and North Africa
214,000
1.2%

South Asia
3,303,000
19.2%

The Americas
1,687,000
9.8%

Europe and Central Asia
41,000
0.2%

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Conflict 7,446,000
Disasters 2,611,000
36% of the global total

**5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST
NEW DISPLACEMENT**
(conflict, violence and disasters)

Ethiopia		3,191,000
DRC		1,921,000
Nigeria		1,154,000
Somalia		1,125,000
CAR		519,300
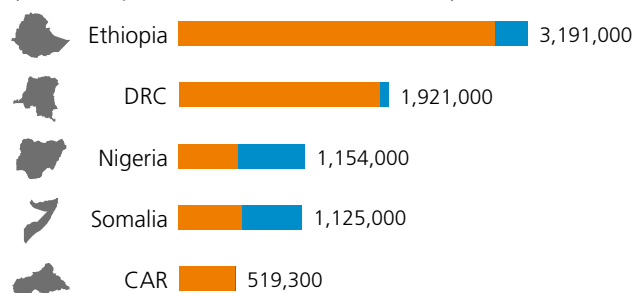
Sub-Saharan Africa experienced ongoing as well as new conflict and violence throughout 2018 and in addition, suffered droughts, floods and storms that forced millions of people to flee their homes. Around 7.4 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence and 2.6 million associated with disasters were recorded, more than any other region and accounting for 36 per cent of all displacements worldwide. Ethiopia, DRC, Nigeria, Somalia and CAR were the countries worst affected. Around 16.5 million people were living in internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa as a result of conflict as of the end of the year. This figure once again shows that protracted displacement is a significant issue for many countries.

Against a backdrop of important and many positive political changes, 2.9 million new displacements associated with conflict were recorded in **Ethiopia**, the highest figure in the world and four times as many as in 2017. Old conflicts became more entrenched and new conflicts escalated along various state borders, prompting the government to establish a new Ministry of Peace in response to the increasing violence (see Ethiopia spotlight, p.14).[10] Disasters also triggered 296,000 new displacements, many of them associated with flooding in the Somali region.[11]

More than 1.8 million new displacements associated with conflict were recorded in **DRC**, primarily in North and South Kivu, Tanganyika and Kasai Central provinces, where conflict and insecurity continued. The province of Ituri had been embroiled in conflict between 1999 and 2007 and had since been relatively peaceful, but

intercommunal violence reignited in December 2017, leading to 60 deaths and more than 576,000 new displacements. What rekindled the conflict is unclear, but a national political crisis, the disintegration of state authority and the increasing activity of politically-motivated militias may all have been contributing factors.[12] The western province of Mai-Ndombe also experienced an outbreak of intercommunal violence between 16 and 18 December 2018, when at least 535 people were killed in a massacre and around 12,000 people displaced from the town of Yumbi.[13]

More than three million people were thought to be living in internal displacement as of the end of 2018 in DRC, a highly conservative figure that does not capture the whole country. There are hopes that presidential elections that took place on 30 December after a two-year delay will help to stabilise the political situation.[14]

More than 578,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in **Somalia**, the highest figure in a decade and the result of three main factors. Evictions from urban centres, mainly of IDPs, accounted for about 44 per cent of the figure. Driven by a lack of adequate housing and informal tenure agreements in increasingly crowded areas, the number of evictions reached a record high.[15] Tensions between Somaliland and Puntland over the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag also flared, and Al Shabaab fighters clashed with government and African Union troops, particularly in the southern regions of Middle and Lower Shabelle.[16]

In addition, around 547,000 new displacements associated with disasters were recorded in Somalia. Almost half of the figure, or 249,000, were associated with drought, mainly in the southern regions of Bay, Lower Shabelle and Bakool, as people moved from rural areas in search of water and livelihood opportunities. Above average rainfall also caused flooding in southern and central areas of the country during the rainy season in April and May, triggering around 289,000 new displacements. Some families in remote villages were cut off from the rest of the country for months, leaving them in particularly vulnerable conditions.[17]

Conflict and violence in the north-eastern and Middle Belt regions of **Nigeria** triggered 541,000 new displacements in 2018, and floods inundated 80 per cent of the country, triggering 600,000. Clashes between northern herders and southern farmers competing for scarce resources have taken place in Middle Belt since 2014, but the violence escalated significantly last year, triggering 200,000 new displacements. Whole villages and herder settlements were burnt down and hundreds of people were killed, making the conflict more deadly than the Boko Haram insurgency.[18]

Fighting between the government and armed opposition groups in the north-east of the country entered its tenth year, triggering 341,000 new displacements. Despite the ongoing insecurity, the government insists that Boko Haram is near defeat and has been promoting returns to some parts of the north-east. At least 311,000 IDPs were recorded as having returned in 2018, along with more than 30,000 Nigerian refugees returning from Cameroon.[19] Based on data on housing conditions of returnees, however, at least 86,000 people returned to partially damaged housing or makeshift shelters. Around two million people were thought to be living in displacement as a result of conflict as of the end the year (Nigeria spotlight, p.18).

Other countries in the Lake Chad Basin also continued to be affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, with more than 52,000 new displacements recorded in **Niger** and 22,000 in **Cameroon**. There was not enough reliable information to compile an estimate for new displacements for **Chad** for 2018, but displacement is thought to be ongoing in the country.

The impact of Boko Haram in **Cameroon** was overshadowed by 437,000 new displacements in the Northwest and Southwest regions, where tensions over government moves to impose French on the anglophone population that had been simmering since 2016 erupted into armed conflict between separatists and the military (Cameroon spotlight, p.16).

Continued fighting between armed groups in **CAR** triggered 510,000 new displacements in 2018, leaving around 641,000 people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. Clashes in Ouham Pende, Ouaka and Haut-Kotto prefectures triggered the majority of the displacement, including in the urban centres of Bambari and Bria. The government signed a peace deal with 14 armed factions in February 2019, raising hopes that levels of violence and displacement would decrease in the future.

In **South Sudan**, more than 321,000 new displacements associated with conflict were recorded during the year, leaving almost 1.9 million people living in internal displacement as of December. The two main parties to the conflict signed a peace deal in September 2018, but there was no immediate reduction in violence.[20]

Clashes in neighbouring **Sudan** between the government and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) triggered 41,000 new displacements in the Jebel Marra mountains at the intersection between South, North and Central Darfur. Torrential rains and landslides also triggered 420 new displacements in the same area in early September.[21] SLM/A declared a unilateral three-month ceasefire the same month to allow humanitarian access to those affected.[22]

Around 5,600 returns to the five states that make up the Darfur region were recorded in 2018, but a lack of information about people's circumstances and reports of returnees being attacked raised serious questions about their sustainability.[23] The Sudanese government is also working with the international community to convert a number of displacement camps into residential areas, leading to IDPs' de facto local integration –a positive move though the outcome remains to be seen.[24]

Around 126,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in **Mali**, 42,000 in **Burkina Faso**, 5,000 in **Ghana**, 3,500 in **Benin** and 3,000 in **Sierra Leone**, between them accounting for a significant increase in the overall figure for West Africa compared to 2017. Inter-communal clashes in Mali between Fulani herders and Dogon and Bambara farmers escalated during the year, and intra-community

violence among the Fulani and attacks by extremist groups added to the instability. Many villages were looted and torched, making returns more challenging. Armed Islamist groups have increased their presence in Burkina Faso since 2016, prompting counterterrorism operations in 2017 and 2018 that led to numerous allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and the abuse of suspects in custody.[25]

Small to medium-scale disasters affected many countries in the region in 2018, events that tend not to receive enough attention or resources despite their severe impacts on people and local economies. Around 336,000 new displacements were recorded in **Kenya** as heavy rains led to flooding in all of the country's 47 counties. Thousands of hectares of farmland were inundated and livestock killed, threatening the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers alike.[26] At least six dams burst, triggering around 12,000 new displacements. Flooding also led to 158,000 new displacements in **Uganda**, 121,000 in **Sudan**, 56,000 in **Ghana**, 15,000 in **Liberia** and 3,000 in **Côte d'Ivoire**.

These significant levels of displacement occurred despite policy progress in the region. 2019 marks the tenth anniversary of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.[27] Also known as the Kampala Convention, it is the world's only legally binding regional instrument on internal displacement. Renewed commitment to its provisions on the part of African Union member states is needed, however, given that new and protracted displacement continue to be a major challenge. **Niger** should be commended for becoming the first country to incorporate the convention into its domestic legislation, when parliament voted unanimously to adopt a national law on internal displacement in December 2018.[28]

Urban perspectives

Internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa takes place against the backdrop of unprecedented urbanisation. The region is still substantially rural with 40 per cent of its population living in cities, but this is set to change considerably in the coming years.[29] African cities are among the fastest growing in the world and some, including Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Kampala in Uganda, Abuja in Nigeria, Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso and Bamako in Mali, are expected to double in size by 2035.[30]

The rapid and unplanned nature of much of this urbanisation has the potential to aggravate existing challenges and create new ones. Many of the region's urban dwellers have little or no access to water and sanitation.[31] Millions of people live in inadequate housing in overcrowded, underserved and marginalised neighbourhoods, in conditions of high exposure and vulnerability to hazards and displacement risk.[32] Some cities are also trying to cope with significant influxes of IDPs from rural areas.

Urban floods are a major challenge. Six of the ten largest flooding events that triggered displacement in 2018 were in Sub-Saharan Africa, and urban areas bore the brunt of the impacts. Thousands of people were displaced during the rainy season in cities including Beledweyne in Somalia and Lagos in Nigeria. IDMC's flood displacement risk model suggests that floods are likely to displace on average 2.7 million people in the region at any given year in the future, two-thirds of them in urban and peri-urban areas.

When crises hit, local authorities often struggle to respond to the needs of those affected, including IDPs.[33] They tend to be understaffed and underfunded, and rely on resources provided by national authorities and in some cases the international humanitarian community. Response capacity also varies between smaller and larger cities, an issue that needs to be considered in future interventions and investments that aim to tackle the challenges associated with urban displacement.[34]

The municipal governments of Maiduguri in Nigeria and Mogadishu in Somalia have taken some positive steps to this end. IDPs in both cities face specific vulnerabilities related to their displacement, including access to employment and livelihoods and the risk of forced evic-

tions. In response, the local government in Maiduguri has collaborated with Nigeria's central bank to set up entrepreneurship centres for unemployed young people and IDPs. In Mogadishu, the Banadir regional authority has worked with the UN and the private sector to create a durable solutions unit to support employment creation and entrepreneurship programmes for IDPs.[35]

Such initiatives serve as examples to other local governments of their potential to facilitate durable solutions. Urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to play a major role in shaping the region's development. It has the potential to bring significant social and economic benefits, including alleviating poverty and inequality and reducing the risks and impacts of displacement.[36] To do so, the role of local authorities must be leveraged.

Somali families that fled conflict and drought live in crowded and unhealthy conditions in a shelter camp in Kismayo in southern Somalia. With shelters made only of plastic, cloth and sticks, families here are vulnerable to flooding and insecurity. Photo: NRC/Jepsen, February 2019
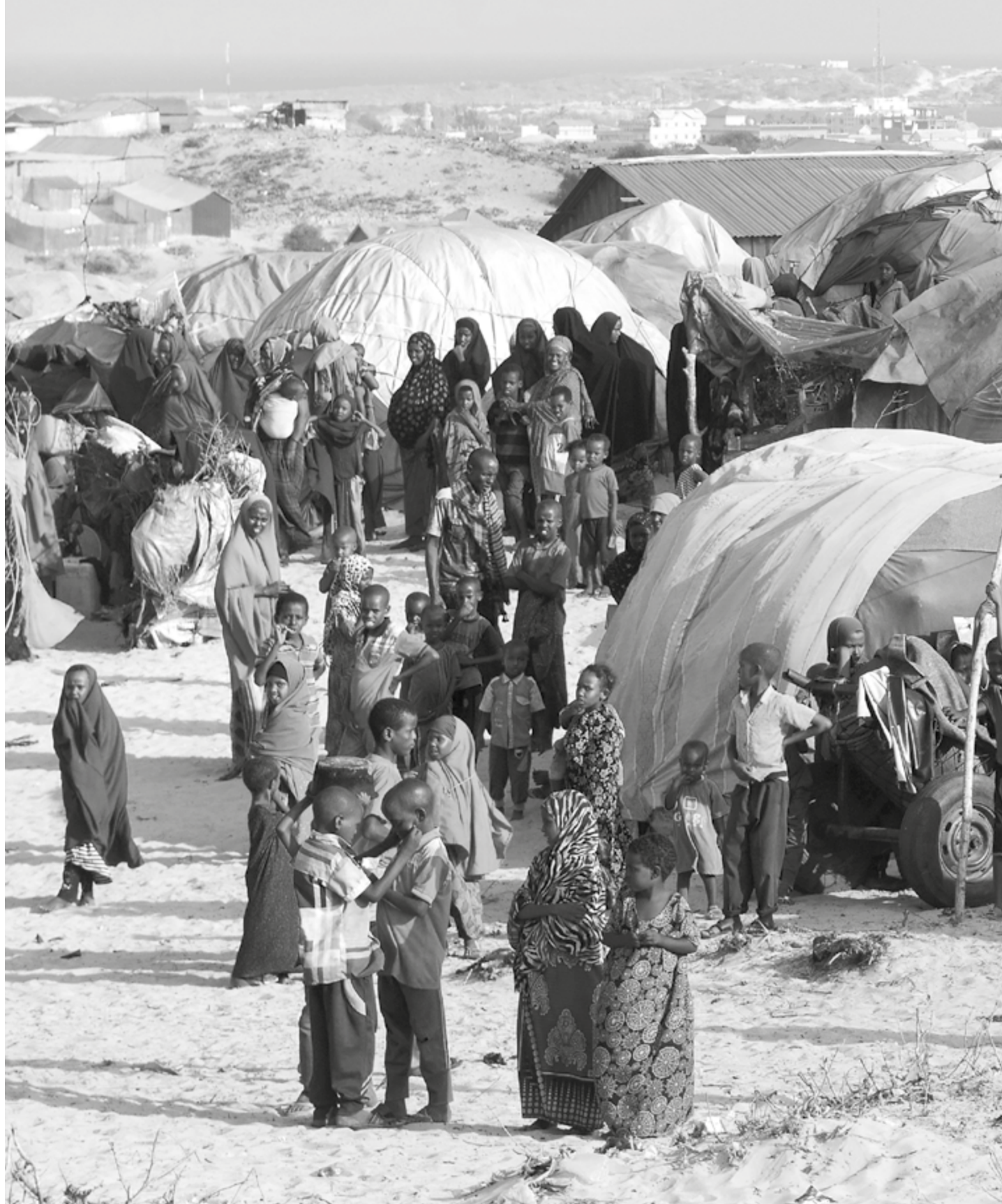
ETHIOPIA

New waves of conflict cause unprecedented displacement

Ethiopia had the highest number of new internal displacements associated with conflict worldwide in 2018. The country's crisis has been deepening steadily since 2016, but conflict and intercommunal violence escalated significantly and spread to new areas last year, triggering almost 2.9 million new displacements, four times the figure for 2017. Conflict and displacement were recorded along three of the Oromia region's borders, with the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) region in the south-west, the Benishangul-Gumuz region in the north-west and the Somali region in the east. Urban centres were also affected, including Addis Ababa and Jijiga, the capital of the Somali region.[37]

This unprecedented rise in new displacement comes against the backdrop of significant political change in the country, with a new prime minister taking power in April 2018. The new government ended the country's state of emergency, released political prisoners and forged a peace deal with Eritrea.[38] It has also been praised for abandoning past practices including the excessive use of force to curb protests and for its cooperation with aid agencies in responding to acute humanitarian needs. By doing so the new government has acknowledged the presence of conflict-induced IDPs within its border. A crucial step towards addressing their plight.[39]

After two decades of relative calm, the most significant displacement was triggered by inter-communal violence between the Guji and Gedeo ethnic groups that erupted in April and again in June in the West Guji zone of Oromia and the Gedeo zone of SNNP. Underlying ethnic tensions were aggravated by competition for land and scarce resources.[40] The conflict left hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in overcrowded collective centres, where humanitarian agencies struggled to provide food, health, water and sanitation for the rapidly growing displaced population. The government collaborated with the agencies, who had no previous

Areas most affected by the conflict
*Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region

presence in the south of the country, to set up and coordinate a large-scale response.[41]

Ethnic violence also broke out between Oromos, Amharas and Gumuz in Benishangul Gumuz in October following the killing of three local police officers.[42] Around 62,000 new displacements were recorded between October and December. Humanitarian needs were acute, but insecurity hampered agencies' access and only one aid delivery was reported.[43]

Fighting and displacement that began along the border between the Oromia and Somali regions in 2017 continued unabated last year. Conflict over the disputed border was aggravated by drought, which increased competition for scarce resources, leading to the displacement of ethnic Oromos living in the Somali region and ethnic Somalis living in Oromia. Hundreds of thousands of new displacements were recorded. Heavy fighting in the Oromo town of Moyale between the Somali Garreh and Oromi Borenas sub-clans triggered around 80,000 new displacements in two weeks in December. The town also suffered significant damage. Its hospital was destroyed and its shops and banks looted.[44]

Inter-communal violence in Jijiga, a previously calm and vibrant city, led to the displacement of 140,000 people in just a few days in August, of whom 35,000 remained in the city and sheltered in and around churches. Jijiga was inaccessible for several weeks as a result of the insecurity, but economic activity had resumed by the middle of the month and many people returned once the situation had stabilised.[45] Clashes on the outskirts of Addis

Displaced women attending a focus group discussion on beneficiary satisfaction in Guji Zone, Oromia Region. Photo: Rikka Tupaz / UN Migration Agency (IOM) 2017

Ababa in September, when Oromo youth flocked to the capital to welcome Oromo Liberation Front fighters returning from Eritrea, displaced 15,000 people.[46]

Ethiopia's new government has put a number of measures in place in response to the country's displacement crisis, including peace-building activities to promote voluntary returns and programmes to support those who prefer to integrate into their host communities or settle elsewhere.[47] A minister for peace has also been appointed. A durable solutions strategy for the Somali region was developed in 2017 in line with the Guiding Principles and the Kampala Convention, a regional treaty on IDPs' protection and assistance.[48]

The government has been criticised, however, for encouraging premature returns to regions not yet safe and for not doing enough to protect civilians.[49] Nor has Ethiopia ratified the Kampala Convention yet. In light of the country's growing internal displacement crisis and in the spirit of improving policies to tackle the phenomenon, the tenth anniversary of the convention's adoption in 2019 presents an ideal opportunity to do so.
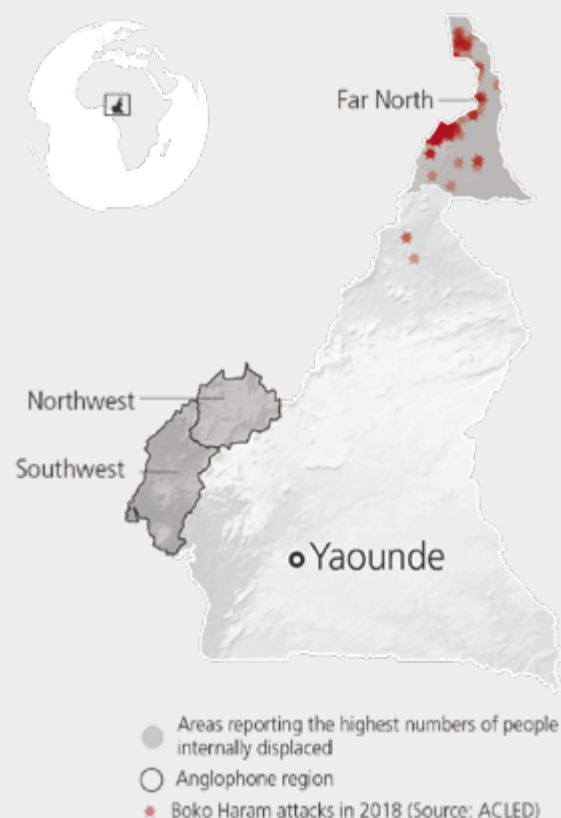
CAMEROON

A deepening but neglected crisis

Boko Haram's regional insurgency continued to cause displacement in Cameroon in 2018, but events in the Far North region were all but eclipsed by an internal conflict that erupted in the Northwest and Southwest regions, home to the country's anglophone minority. A protest movement that began in 2016 escalated into fighting between armed separatists and the country's military, triggering around 437,000 new displacements during the year. Another 30,000 people fled across the border into Nigeria.

The Northwest and Southwest regions, with a population of four million people, have long been marginalised and have experienced occasional outbreaks of violence as the government suppressed protests. The latest violence has its roots in a strike declared by lawyers' and teachers' trade unions over the government's efforts to impose French on the two sectors. Cameroon's security forces launched a violent crackdown on protests in support of the strike, and numerous anglophone activists were arrested, including 47 in Nigeria.

This repression in turn led elements of the opposition to take up arms, and separatist groups calling for an independent Ambazonia Republic have engaged in armed confrontation with the military since January 2018. The government has responded with full-blown counterinsurgency operations. It has been accused of engaging in extrajudicial executions, excessive use of force, the torture and ill-treatment of suspected separatists and other detainees and the burning of homes and property.[50]

Military operations have been recorded in more than 100 villages in the Southwest and Northwest regions since October 2017.[51] Most if not all of the inhabitants of the villages targeted have fled, and around 80 per cent are thought to have sought refuge in the forest, where they have no access to shelter, water or sanitation.[52] Meme Division in the Southwest region has borne the brunt of the crisis, producing and hosting the majority of IDPs.

Areas reporting the highest numbers of people internally displaced

Anglophone region

Boko Haram attacks in 2018 (Source: ACLED)

Education has been severely disrupted. Many schools shut down as part of the initial protests, and armed groups have banned them from reopening. They have also burned some schools down, and threatened others who did not comply with the ban. Around 42,500 children are thought to be out of school as a result, and the figure is expected to rise to 311,000 in 2019.[53]

The insecurity and violence have also undermined people's livelihoods. The majority of the population depends on agriculture and small-scale trade for a living, and people's inability to access their land and markets as a result of displacement has led to serious food shortages.[54]

Humanitarian needs in both the Southwest and Northwest regions are acute, but the response has been limited. Instances of new displacements have even been reported in the Ouest and Littoral regions, as the conflict has spilled over into neighbouring regions. The UN's Humanitarian Response Plan published in May 2018 called for $15.2 million to reach 160,000 people, but the number of IDPs and others in need has since risen significantly. Very few international agencies are present on the ground, and those who are have had to prioritise the little funding they receive to address the basic needs of the newly displaced people.[55] The

response began to gather pace in the second half of the year, but by the end of the year, only 40 per cent of the requested funding had been secured.[56]

Education lies at the heart of Cameroon's new conflict, and the government has continued to enforce French in anglophone schools despite intense and widespread opposition. Doing so drives the tensions that have triggered violence and displacement. The education sector has been particularly hard hit, but the response has been hampered by limited funding and competing priorities.[57] More humanitarian assistance will reduce the impact on those affected, particularly children, but a political solution to the conflict is key to preventing further displacement.
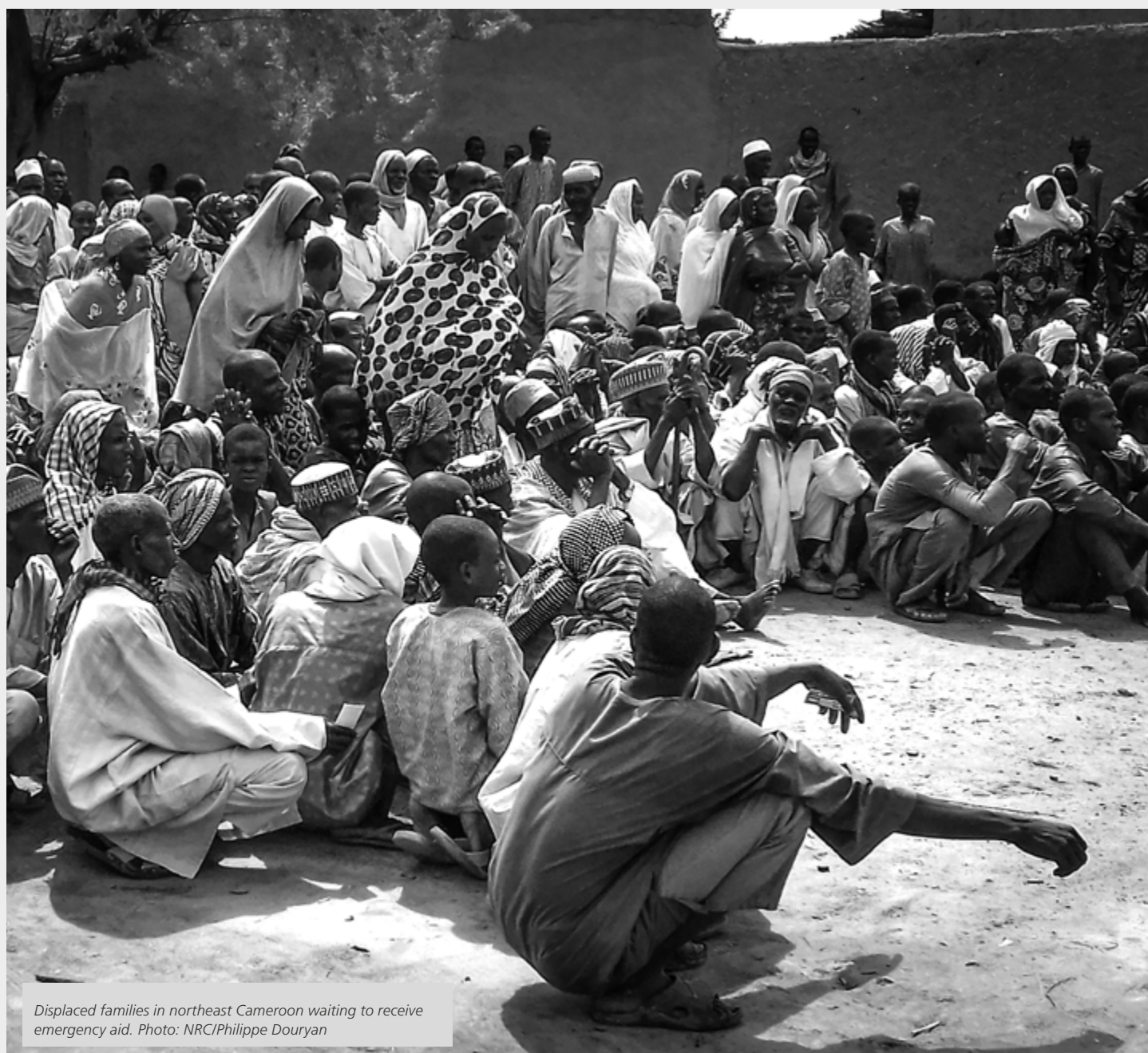
Displaced families in northeast Cameroon waiting to receive emergency aid. Photo: NRC/Philippe Douryan

# NIGERIA

Floods and conflict converged to deepen an existing crisis

- Attacks by Boko Haram in 2018 (Source: ACLED)
- States most affected by floods and conflict
- Areas affected by floods in 2018 (Source: GDACS)
- Middle Belt states where internal displacement was reported in 2018

More than 541,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in Nigeria in 2018, bringing the number of people living in displacement as of the end of the year to 2.2 million. Ongoing conflict in north-eastern states and new conflict between herders and farmers over scarce resources in the Middle Belt led to 341,000 and 200,000 new displacements, respectively. Thirty-four of Nigeria's thirty-six states were also affected by flooding as the banks of the Benue and Niger rivers burst, triggering 600,000 new displacements and submerging thousands of homes.[58]

Despite official insistence that Boko Haram is close to defeat, attacks by armed opposition groups continued last year, particularly in the north-eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.[59] About 90 per cent of IDPs, or just over two million, were living in the north-east of the country as of the end of 2018. An estimated 832,000 people also continue to live in areas under the control of armed groups in the north-east and remain inaccessible to aid workers.[60] Humanitarian access has been severely restricted throughout the ten years of conflict, despite organisations' efforts to negotiate entry points.

Over 311,000 movements were reported as returns by data providers in 2018; however, these are not considered sustainable as IDPs are returning to damaged or destroyed housing, or are still living in areas plagued by security risks. The Nigerian government is investing in reconstruction initiatives to promote IDPs' return.[61] In the Bama area of Borno state, it built or renovated around 10,000 homes, more than 150 classrooms and more than 50 hand water pumps. It approved the return of 120,000 IDPs in March 2018, but armed groups are still active in the area.[62] Concerns about the volatile security situation led the UN and the Borno state governor to sign a returns policy framework, which states that basic services and security must be restored
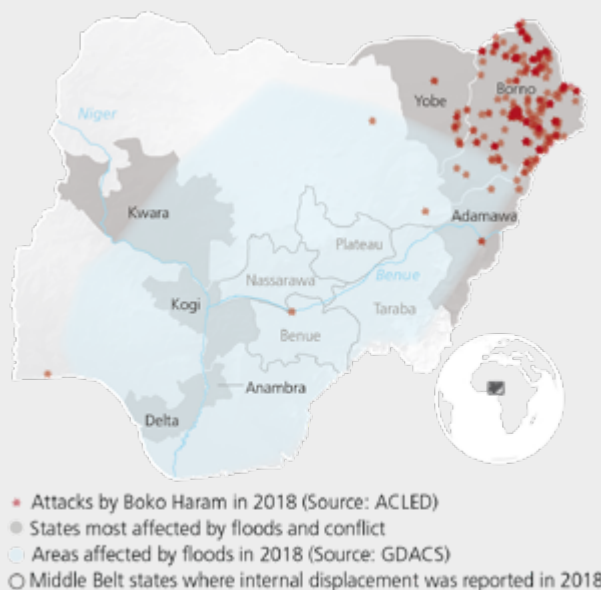
before IDPs go back to their areas of origin. As such, it is an important step toward ensuring safe, sustainable and dignified returns.[63]

In the Middle Belt, tensions that had been brewing for four years between pastoralists from the north of the region and farmers from the south erupted into armed conflict in 2018, leading to significant violence and destruction. Desertification associated with climate change was a factor, degrading already overstretched pasture and forcing herders to move south in search of grazing land. The conflict in the north-east has also driven herders south. These factors combined with others in 2018 to inflame tensions. New anti-grazing laws in Benue state enraged herders, who were pushed into neighbouring states where they clashed with farmers, and a culture of impunity for past crimes, including killings and the destruction of villages, has aggravated the situation further by encouraging people to take the law into their own hands. Only five people have been tried and sentenced for killings in the region since 2017. The under-reporting of the crisis and the lack of humanitarian presence in the area mean that reported displacement figures are likely to be underestimates.[64]

The majority of the new displacements associated with the Middle Belt conflict were recorded in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau states. Local emergency management agencies have been responding to the crisis. For example, the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency has been providing food and water to IDPs in camps in the state, but shortages are still reported.[65] Camp residents complain of overcrowding and lack of water. More than 60 per cent of those displaced in the

Congestion of the Teachers Village camp in Maiduguri, Borno State resulted in lack of shelter and more than 10,000 internally displaced persons had to be moved to a new site. Photo: IOM/Jorge Galindo, March 2019

region are children, who are out of school.[66] There has been a significant international response to the displacement situation in the north-east, but no significant international presence is engaged with the unfolding Middle Belt crisis.[67]

Nigeria is also highly prone to flooding, which was particularly widespread in 2018. Eighty per cent of the country was inundated at some point during the year, and the government declared a state of emergency in the worst-affected states of Anambra, Delta, Kogi and Niger.[68] Hundreds of thousands of hectares of agricultural land were flooded, harming the livelihoods of farmers who lost crops.[69] In urban areas, poor planning and zoning means many residential areas have been built on exposed river banks and flood plains. This combined with poor drainage systems makes homes highly vulnerable to regular flooding.[70] The Nigerian Red Cross has been at the forefront of the response to those displaced by the flooding.[71]

Nigeria has Sub-Saharan Africa's largest population and economy, but conflict, disasters and development projects cause significant displacement each year.[72] The government was presented with a draft national policy on internal displacement aligned with the Guiding Principles and the Kampala Convention in 2011. Eight years later, however, it is still to be adopted.[73] Designing and implementing policies to reduce people's vulnerability and exposure to displacement and address the needs of those already displaced must be a priority for the government.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Conflict 2,137,000
Disasters 214,000
8.4% of the global total

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict, violence and disasters)

Syria	1,676,000
Yemen	270,000
Iraq	219,000
Iran	74,000
Libya	70,000
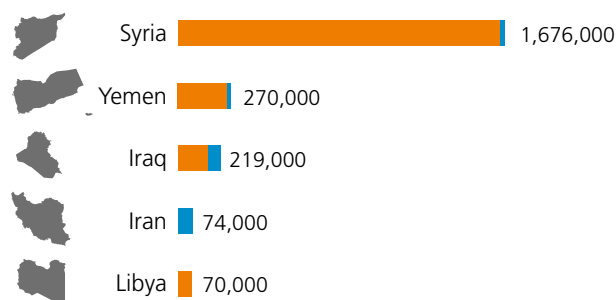
Conflict and violence continued to drive internal displacement in the Middle East and North Africa. More than 2.1 million new displacements represented a drop of more than 50 per cent on the previous year, but almost 11 million people were living in internal displacement in the region at the end of the year, accounting for more than a quarter of the global total. The decrease in new displacements was mainly the result of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria winding down as both countries' armies consolidated their hold on territory recovered from Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups. Disasters triggered more than 200,000 new displacements.

Despite the decline in conflict and displacement in **Syria** during 2018, the country's civil war, in its eighth year, continued to trigger some of the largest population movements in the world. More than 1.6 million new displacements were recorded, the highest number in the region for the fourth year running. Government offensives to retake areas of Idlib and Dara'a governorates and the Damascus suburbs led to the majority of new displacements. The battle for Dara'a triggered more than 285,000, the largest single displacement event of the war.

Large-scale returns were also recorded shortly after each offensive, and these are likely to continue in the coming months. It will be important to monitor such movements closely to better understand the conditions to which people are returning (see Syria spotlight, p.24). Heavy rains and flooding, which were

particularly intense in 2018, displaced as many as 27,000 people in Al Hasakeh, Idlib, Aleppo and Ar Raqqa governorates, all of them IDPs already living in precarious conditions in camps.

The conflict in **Yemen** escalated significantly in the second half of 2018 as the Saudi-led coalition stepped up its offensive to take control of Hodeidah port, which is controlled by the Houthi movement. Residents began to flee the city pre-emptively in early June, when fighting appeared imminent, eventually leading to mass movements. At least 64,000 new displacements could be verified, but several unvalidated media reports cited hundreds of thousands of displacements and the true figure is likely to be much higher. There was subsequently a temporary lull in the fighting, but it escalated again in October and November, raising serious humanitarian concerns.

The parties to the conflict met in Stockholm in December and agreed to mutually redeploy their forces, swap prisoners and discuss de-escalation along the Taiz frontline.[74] Many details of the agreement were still to be ironed out as of early 2019 and exchanges of fire continued to threaten the fragile ceasefire, but it succeeded in preventing a major humanitarian crisis.

Across the country as a whole, 252,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded and at least 2.3 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. These figures are considered underestimates, due to chal-

lenges in data collection caused by access constraints. More than 18,000 new displacements associated with disasters were also recorded, the result of cyclones that struck southern governorates in May and October.

Around 1.1 million returns were recorded in **Iraq** in 2018, outnumbering new displacements. At 150,000, the number of new displacements was at its lowest since 2014 when the war against ISIL began. Despite the official end of the conflict on 9 December 2017 and the high number of returns, almost two million people were still living in displacement as of the end of 2018. Their living conditions are generally difficult, and many of those in camps have to make do with inadequate shelter and services, and struggle to meet their most basic needs.[75]

Whether those who have tried to return have been able to achieve durable solutions is unclear. Almost 9,000 people deemed to have returned actually returned to displacement, but not enough information is available to determine the situation of the vast majority. Potential obstacles to durable solutions include bureaucratic procedures, damage to homes and basic infrastructure, a lack of livelihood opportunities and the presence of

landmines and unexploded ordnance.[76] These factors have combined to slow the pace of returns as IDPs choose to remain in displacement until conditions in their areas of origin improve.

Flooding and drought triggered the majority of the 69,000 new displacements associated with disasters recorded in Iraq last year. Flooding affected the north of the country particularly hard, triggering more than 35,000 in Ninewa, Salah al Din, Dahuk and Kirkuk governorates in late November and early December. A significant number of IDPs were displaced again from camps when their tents were destroyed. Drought triggered 20,000 new displacements in the south of the country as people fled their homes in search of livelihoods, particularly in Thi Qar, Missan and Qadissiya governorates.[77]

The situation in **Libya** deteriorated significantly in 2018, with 70,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence recorded, more than double the number for the previous year. New conflict in the urban centres of Tripoli, Derna and Sebha led to the destruction of infrastructure and breakdown of basic services, triggering more than 63,000 new displacements. Migrants

Children play at the Al Habbari informal camp for displaced people in Sana'a, Yemen. Photo: NRC/Becky Bakr Abdulla, August 2018

and refugees whose detention centres were caught in the crossfire were also affected (see Libya spotlight, p.26). Fighting and displacement also took place in the districts of Jufra and Murqub and the cities of Sirte and Sabratha, and across large swathes of the south, where foreign armed groups continued to establish safe havens and fuel insecurity.

Military offensives in **Egypt** against an ISIL affiliate led to evictions and the widespread destruction of homes, commercial buildings and farms in North Sinai governorate. More than 15,000 new displacements were recorded, but that is likely to be an underestimate given that the area is inaccessible and the figure was compiled using satellite imagery and eyewitness accounts.[78]

More displacements associated with sudden-onset disasters were recorded across the region in 2018 than in previous years. **Iran**, which is prone to a range of natural hazards, was worst affected. Snow storms in January and February triggered 24,000 new displacements, while floods led to more than 1,400 throughout the year. In November, an earthquake struck the western province of Kermanshah, in particular Sar Pol-e Zahab, triggering almost 47,000 new displacements.

Urban perspectives

More than 65 per cent of the region's population lives in urban areas, in a region where cities have historically been key hubs of trade and development.[79] Much of the region's conflict and displacement in recent years has also taken place in towns and cities.[80] Examples include Aleppo, Dara'a, Idlib and Raqqa in Syria, Aden, Hodeidahand Taiz in Yemen, Benghazi and Tripoli in Libya and Mosul in Iraq.[81] Some of the conflicts are ongoing, and among those that have concluded or stabilised, reconstruction and recovery challenges have impeded the achievement of durable solutions.

Some conflicts have involved sieges being laid to entire neighbourhoods, trapping civilians in their homes or immediate surroundings. Eastern Ghouta in Syria is a case in point. Home to a million people, it was under siege for five years. Repeated airstrikes and mortar fire disrupted the provision of basic services and blocked the entry of food and humanitarian aid. When the siege was broken in March 2018, more than 158,000 people moved out.[82]

In cities such as Aleppo, Mosul and Taiz, intra-urban displacement patterns have been observed as residents move to safer neighbourhoods in search of safety and services.[83] In Aleppo, Baghdad and Damascus, power struggles influenced such movements, with conflict and violence used to reorganise and divide populations into ethnic and religious groups, dictating where people are able to go and whether or not they are able to return.[84]

Urban conflict is not a new phenomenon, but it creates specific challenges for IDPs. Unexploded ordnance, landmines and booby traps constitute an important security threat for people wanting to return to previously densely populated areas.[85] The destruction of infrastructure and disruption of essential services have direct, indirect and cumulative impacts that have the potential to render whole neighbourhoods and entire towns or cities uninhabitable.[86] Once the fighting is over, the extent of the destruction and damage may mean recovery takes years. More than a year after its liberation from ISIL, most of Raqqa still lies in ruins and unexploded ordnance litters the town.[87]

De-escalating protracted urban conflict is key to promoting long-term stability and development in the Middle East and North Africa. Reconstruction is essential for peace-building and to ensure those affected are able to re-establish their lives. Delays may destabilise cities and countries, fuelling future conflict and displacement. Beyond immediate and much-needed humanitarian assistance, the setbacks caused by urban conflict and displacement will not be overcome unless the development sector engages in implementing longer-term recovery initiatives. Reinvigorating local economies will be key to reducing poverty, and robust urban planning will be equally important in supporting recovery and reducing the underlying drivers of insecurity and conflict across the region as a whole.[88]

Displaced people in Al-Areesha camp in Syria were severely affected by heavy rains and widespread flooding in December 2018. Photo © UNHCR/Hisham Arafat, December 2018

SYRIA

A decisive year for the conflict,
but not for those displaced

● Areas under the control of the government as of December 2017

● Territory taken by the government as of December 2018

● Areas under the control of non-state armed groups as of December 2018

● Areas under the control of Syrian Democratic Forces as of December 2018

● Areas under the control of the Turkish administration as of December 2018

Sources: ISW and Liveuamap (2017, 2018)

The Syrian government brought large swathes of territory back under its control in 2018, making it a decisive year in the country's civil war. Non-state armed groups suffered severe losses as the government and affiliated forces retook Eastern Ghouta, Dara'a and Quneitra governorates, the southern Damascus suburbs and the city of Homs and its surrounding countryside. Only Idlib governorate remains in the hands of non-state actors.

As the conflict nears its end, discussions about post-conflict reconstruction and returns have begun. The government passed a new law in April which designates reconstruction zones across Syria. Law No. 10 also gives landowners in those areas a year to prove ownership or risk losing their land with no compensation.[89] This law has been criticised for its potential to create significant obstacles to return (see Spotlight, p.96).[90]

The year began with government forces advancing toward the north of Hama and west of Aleppo governorates northern areas of rural Hama and western areas of rural Aleppo, triggering more than 325,000 new displacements over a six-week period.[91] An offensive launched in February to retake the besieged enclave of Eastern Ghouta lasted seven weeks and triggered more than 158,000 new displacements between 9 March and 22 April.[92] Around 66,000 people were displaced to areas of north-west Syria including Idlib and Aleppo, which were still under the control of non-state armed actors. These areas have received large numbers of displaced fighters and their families over the years as a result of local ceasefires.[93]

Heavy fighting also broke out in the southern governorates of Dara'a and Quneitra in June and July, culminating in an agreement that restored government control. The offensive led to the single largest displacement event of the war.[94] The month-long campaign triggered at least 285,000 new displacements, the majority over a period of just two weeks.[95]
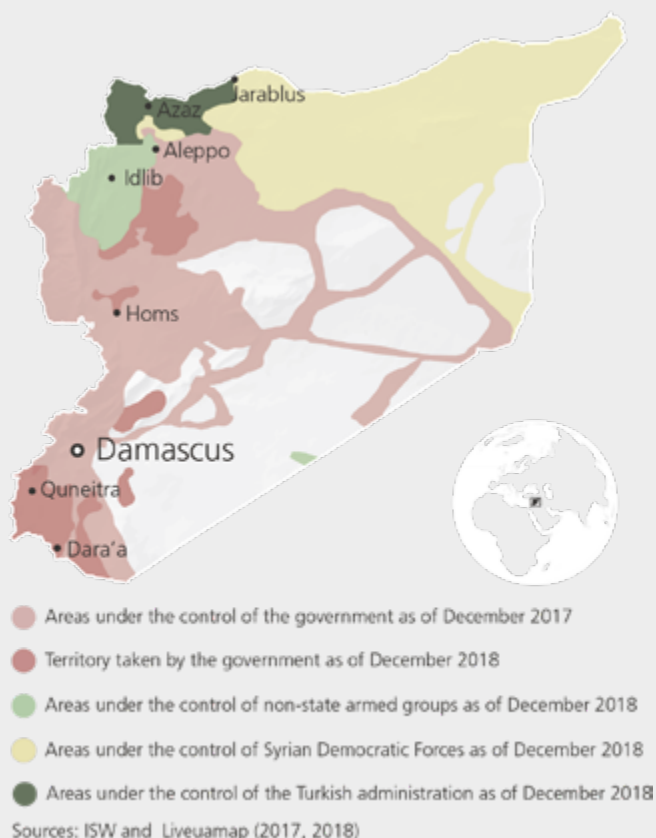
A similar fate seemed to await Idlib governorate in late August and early September. The build-up of government and affiliated forces along the conflict line in the north of Hama and west of Aleppo governorates and a subsequent increase in aerial bombardments prompted an international outcry and calls for restraint. The UN, international NGOs and governments around the world warned that further escalation would result in a humanitarian disaster.[96] The area is home to 2.3 million people, almost half of them IDPs, who would have had nowhere to flee because Turkey has shut its border.

Idlib is the largest host of displaced people in the country relative to population size, both in and outside camps, and repeated displacement within the governorate is commonplace. Aid agencies on the ground report that families have been displaced an average of three or four times, and some as many as a dozen times.[97] Many may have chosen to flee abroad had Turkey not closed its border. The proliferation of armed groups has further destabilised the region, with occasional clashes between factions and criminality disrupting daily life and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Turkey and Russia brokered an agreement on 17 September to establish a demilitarised zone between 14 and 19 kilometres wide along the contact line and extending into north-eastern areas of rural Latakia. Turkish military police have been stationed to monitor

High levels of damage, destruction and displacement in Aleppo.
Photo: UNHCR/Antwan Chnkdji, October 2018

compliance, which includes the withdrawal of all heavy weaponry. The agreement may have averted a humanitarian disaster for now, but reports of violations by all parties are a cause for concern.[98] The initial stability it has introduced should be built on to establish a more lasting solution which genuinely protects Idlib's civilians.

Many of the IDPs who fled their homes in 2018 have since returned to their areas of origin, particularly in the south. About 695,000 people have been reported to have returned to their homes in 2018. However, given the extent of the damage caused by the fighting, ongoing insecurity and lack of basic services and livelihood opportunities, it is unclear how many of these will have reached durable solutions. An unknown number have been unwilling to return, preferring to wait and see what life will be like in their areas of origin under government control.[99]

Southern residents who want to remain in their homes, including former fighters, have been told to "regularise" their status with the government, which involves visiting a local registration centre to begin a reconciliation process and be granted amnesty. What this will mean for the many people who previously lived in areas beyond government control remains to be seen, but there have been some initial reports of former fighters and other young men being arrested.[100]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the security situation in the south has improved somewhat. Basic services are still lacking, however, particularly in rural Dara'a and Quneitra, and restrictions to humanitarian access means little aid has been delivered. Unemployment is also a problem, particularly for low-skilled workers and those suspected of being anti-government activists, ex-combatants or former officials in non-state armed groups.[101] Many government employees who have not been directly affiliated with armed groups have reportedly returned to their jobs.

As the conflict apparently nears its end, important post-conflict questions remain. It is unclear who will fund the reconstruction of major urban centres such as Aleppo and Raqqa so that those displaced are able to return in safety and dignity.[102] Nor is it clear how north-eastern Syria and Idlib governorate will be administered, a situation that has the potential to reignite conflict.

In a country where nearly half of the population has been displaced, managing the safe and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs will be a huge challenge. Pressure should be put on the Syrian government to address its displacement crisis with comprehensive policies in line with the Guiding Principles to prevent the country from descending into conflict again.[103]

LIBYA

Urban displacement driven by escalating conflict and insecurity

There was hope in 2017 of a decrease in fighting and displacement in Libya, but clashes escalated in several areas of the country in 2018. Fighting took place particularly in the urban centres of Tripoli, Derna and Sebha, triggering 70,000 new displacements. Around 221,000 people were living in displacement nationwide as of the end of year, suffering dire conditions and unable to return because of destroyed housing, ongoing insecurity and a lack of resources.[104]

In Tripoli, the seat of the internationally recognised government, the deteriorating economic situation fuelled new conflict. Militias from outside the city attacked its southern neighbourhoods in late August, and the intense clashes continued until early October. The fighting was sparked by a push to gain greater control over economic institutions based on the perception that a small number of rival militias and interest groups in the capital have disproportionate access to the country's wealth.[105]

Almost 33,000 people were displaced as a result, and many others were trapped in their homes without access to basic goods and services. The Libyan Red Crescent received more than 2,000 calls from families asking to be evacuated, of whom only ten per cent had their request granted. The use of heavy weaponry caused severe damage to homes, roads, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure and health and education facilities. Most of those displaced sheltered with family or friends, though about 200 families sought refuge in five schools across Tripoli.[106]

Libya continues to be the main point of departure for people attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe and a final destination for economic migrants from West Africa. Thus, the fighting also affected the lives of around 8,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers held in detention centres in the city. Humanitarian access to the areas affected by conflict was severely restricted, leaving thousands of detainees without food or water for several days.[107] Hundreds more were evacuated to safer locations or simply released and left to find their own way to safety through the conflict zone. Others were pulled out of the detention centres by militias, who then forced them to take part in the hostilities.[108]

The coastal city of Derna has been under siege by the Libyan National Army (LNA), linked to the authorities in the east of the country, since July 2017. It was controlled by a coalition of local fighters and Islamists known as the Derna Shura Council, and was the only city in the east resisting LNA control.[109] A renewed offensive to take the city began in May 2018 and heavy fighting and shelling continued into June, triggering almost 24,000 new displacements. Electricity and water supplies were cut and the provision of basic services disrupted. Markets ran short of food and non-food items, and only one hospital was left working at severely reduced capacity. Entry points to the city were initially closed, hindering the delivery of life-saving assistance, but the authorities opened a humanitarian corridor and began allowing families to leave the city at the end of May.[110]

Conflict in southern city of Sebha erupts periodically between the Tebu and Awlad Suleiman tribes over the control of smuggling and trafficking routes, and fighting in 2018 triggered almost 7,000 new displacements. Those who fled the southern and eastern districts of the city were initially housed in schools that were on holiday, but they have since been moved on to allow them to reopen.[111] Civilians' freedom of movement was also restricted and severe shortages of basic goods and services were reported.[112] Very few reports mentioned the plight of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, but given that Sebha was named the world's human traf-

ficking capital last year, they are very likely to have been affected. Assessments undertaken in Sebha's districts report the presence of refugees and migrants in every assessed area.[113]

The violence in Sebha was further testament to the government's lack of control over southern Libya. The region's porous borders aggravate insecurity, allowing foreign armed groups to establish safe havens in the area, and facilitate the trafficking of people heading north. The combination of mounting lawlessness and deteriorating basic services mean conditions are dire for many residents in the south, including the displaced.[114] IDPs in the area are in desperate need of adequate shelter, food and basic household items, but prevailing insecurity across the south means humanitarian access is sporadic at best.[115]

The internationally recognized government in Tripoli adopted the first package of economic reforms since the 2011 fall of Muammar Gaddafi in September 2018, but fighting over resources is likely to remain a central feature of the country's crisis, particularly in coastal and urban areas where economic activity is concentrated.[116] The government also recognises the importance of improving security in the south, but the vastness of the territory makes doing so a daunting task with relatively little promise of a political dividend.[117]

There is hope that presidential and parliamentary elections due to take place in 2019 may break Libya's political gridlock. Yet divisions remain between the rival governments in the east and west, and national reconciliation conferences have been delayed, leaving the way open for fighting to continue.[118] It will likely be some time before the country is safe, for Libyans and for those migrants and refugees who continue to pass through the country.
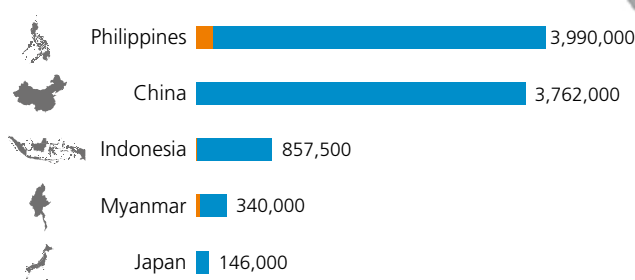

Members of the Tawergha ethnic minority gather their belongings after their homes were demolished by a local militia near Tripoli. Photo © UNHCR/ Tarik Argaz, August 2018
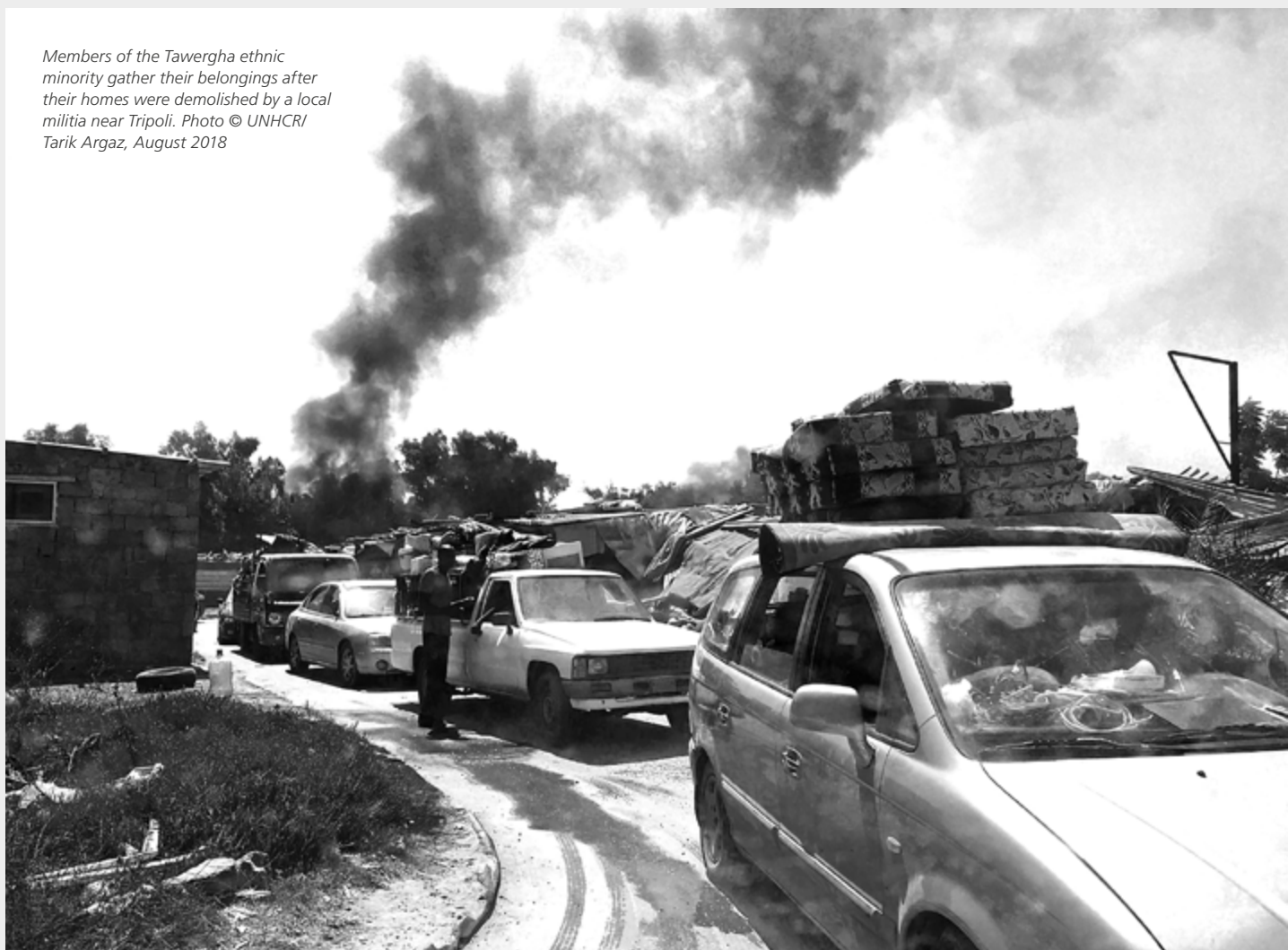
EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict, violence and disasters)

Country	New displacement
Philippines	3,990,000
China	3,762,000
Indonesia	857,500
Myanmar	340,000
Japan	146,000

Conflict 236,000
Disasters 9,332,000
34.2% of the global total

As in previous years, the East Asia and Pacific region accounted for most of the internal displacement associated with disasters recorded worldwide in 2018. Typhoons, monsoon rains and floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions triggered 9.3 million new displacements. From highly exposed countries such as the Philippines, China, Indonesia and Japan, to small island states and territories such as Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and Vanuatu, the impacts varied significantly across the vast region.

The **Philippines** alone recorded 3.8 million new displacements associated with disasters, more than any other country worldwide. Pre-emptive evacuations organised by the government to mitigate the impacts of typhoons between July and December accounted for a significant portion. The most powerful, typhoon Mangkhut, triggered 1.6 million new displacements or around 40 per cent of the national total. Monsoon flooding, volcanic eruptions and landslides also triggered displacements during the year.[119]

Armed conflict between the Filipino military and Islamist groups, and other violence including clan feuds and land disputes, triggered 188,000 new displacements in 2018, the majority in Mindanao region. There was also a positive development in efforts to bring peace to the region with the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law in July. The new legislation is intended to address some of the longstanding grievances that have fuelled conflict in Mindanao for decades.[120]

There were 301,000 people living in displacement as a result of conflict in the Philippines as of the end of the 2018. They include around 65,000 in Marawi who have been unable to return to their homes more than a year after the country's military retook the city from affiliates of ISIL, because of the extent of the damage and presence of unexploded ordnance (see Philippines spotlight, p.32).

Almost 3.8 million new displacements associated with disasters were recorded in **China**, particularly in southeastern provinces that were hit by typhoons. Despite the fact that some of the storms were severe, including the category five typhoon Maria, disaster management authorities successfully reduced the risk of loss of life by evacuating people from high-risk areas. China and the Philippines between them accounted for much of the increase in both regional and global figures for disaster displacement in the year.

Most of the 853,000 new displacements associated with disasters recorded in **Indonesia** were triggered by geophysical events. A number of earthquakes struck the island of Lombok in July and August, triggering 445,000 new displacements, and an earthquake and tsunami in Central Sulawesi province a month later triggered 248,000. The event caused soil liquefaction and extensive damage and destruction of housing, particularly in the coastal city of Palu and the surrounding area. At least 1,754 people were killed. Another tsunami following a volcanic eruption in the Sunda Strait resulted

in 47,000 new displacements in Lampung province in December.

In **Myanmar**, monsoon rains and flooding triggered most of the 298,000 new disaster displacements recorded during the year. All fourteen of the country's states and regions were affected, and a dam breach caused by a swollen river in Bago region in August triggered almost 79,000 new displacements.[121] Around 42,000 associated with conflict and violence were also recorded. Many of these were triggered by an escalation in fighting between the military and the Kachin Independence Army in Kachin and northern Shan states.[122] Inter-ethnic violence over disputed resource-rich areas of Shan state also triggered displacement, as did other events in Karen, Chin and Rakhine states.[123]

Around 146,000 new displacements were recorded in **Japan**, the result of typhoons, storms, monsoon rains and floods, earthquakes and landslides. The country was hit by an unusually high number of disasters in 2018 and though it is generally well prepared, some weaknesses in local disaster risk management and early warning systems were exposed, particularly in terms of ensuring citizens' responsiveness (see Japan spotlight, p.30).

In the Pacific, an earthquake triggered more than 58,000 new displacements in **Papua New Guinea**. Volcanic activity triggered most of the 13,000 recorded in **Vanuatu** and floods most of the 12,000 in **Fiji**. A series of deadly bushfires aggravated by record drought conditions in **Australia** caused significant damage and triggered around 10,000 new displacements.[124]

A number of countries have made significant progress in reducing disaster displacement risk, and regional monitoring, preparedness and response initiatives have also been strengthened.[125] Many countries including Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia have put disaster displacement high on their political agendas by developing and implementing disaster risk management laws and policies. Pre-emptive evacuations carried out by national and local authorities are among the measures which, while they cause displacement, save lives and reduce the impacts of disasters.

Some Pacific small island states have adapted their laws and policies to emerging climate change risks. Fiji, for example, has developed planned relocation guidelines that take into account future risk.[126] Vanuatu also developed a national policy on displacement associated with

climate change and disasters last year, an initiative that other countries facing similar challenges would do well to emulate.[127]

URBAN PERSPECTIVES

The East Asia and Pacific region has undergone rapid urbanisation in recent decades.[128] Often hailed as a success for reducing poverty and improving people's access to markets and basic services, urban growth has also brought challenges, including inequality that fuels social tensions.[129]

The expansion of the region's cities has also increased disaster displacement risk, particularly in areas ill-planned to withstand hazards' impacts.[130] Many are located in the tropical cyclone belt and the Pacific Ring of Fire, which is the world's most active seismic and volcanic zone.[131] Given this degree of exposure, the combination of early warning systems and robust urban planning, building regulations and land management will be key to reducing risk as cities continue to expand.

IDMC's global disaster displacement risk model suggests that an average of more than 5.4 million people are likely to be displaced by floods in the region in any given year in the future, the highest level of flood displacement risk globally (see Part 3). Many Pacific small island states and territories such as Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Palau rank among the highest in the world in terms of risk relative to population size. Many Pacific cities have expanded in recent years, including informal settlements on river banks and estuaries, peri-urban areas, waste disposal sites and mangrove swamps. This has increased not only exposure to hazards but also the vulnerability of populations and assets, which in turn drives up the risk and potential impacts of displacement.[132]

The policy developments mentioned above point in the right direction, but it is important to strengthen capacity for implementation. Urban development planning that takes disaster and displacement risk into account will also be key, particularly given that East Asia and Pacific's annual urban growth rate is projected to be three per cent, among the highest in the world.[133]

JAPAN

Disaster evacuations and the importance of resilience

Located at the intersection of three tectonic plates and in the path of seasonal typhoons, Japan is prone to a range of hazards that have the potential to trigger large-scale displacement and cause significant damage to homes and infrastructure. Last year was no exception. Storms, floods, flash floods, landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions triggered more than 146,000 new displacements.

The country has, however, developed significant resilience to the disasters natural hazards can cause.[134] Most new displacements recorded were pre-emptive evacuations, which are an effective measure to reduce loss of life when people are exposed to hazards. Japan's ability to manage disaster risk via early warning systems and evacuation schemes is generally effective at reducing impacts, but last year showed that citizens are not always as responsive as they could be.

Disaster displacement events in 2018 ranged from two people displaced by a landslide in Oita prefecture in April to more than 30,000 by typhoon Prapiroon in early July.[135] Less than three weeks after Prapiroon's rains triggered widespread flooding and landslides in south-west Japan, the same region was struck by typhoon Jongdari. The government issued pre-emptive evacuation orders for Jongdari, but research conducted in Hiroshima city suggests that less than four per cent of people heeded them.[136] Some of those who stayed put became trapped by landslides and rising floodwaters and more than 170 people died, making Jongdari Japan's deadliest weather-related disaster in decades.[137]

When typhoon Jebi hit in August, citizens' responsiveness was similarly low. Japan's Cabinet Office ordered around 30,000 people to evacuate, but studies conducted in Kobe prefecture after the disaster showed that less than 10 per cent had followed the order. Power cuts prevented some people from receiving the order, while others were unable to hear it over the sound of the wind and rain. In some areas the order to evacuate was issued after flooding had begun.[138] Jebi was the most powerful typhoon to hit Japan in 25 years, and the magnitude of the disaster did help to raise awareness about the importance of pre-emptive evacuations among affected communities.[139] Around half of the respondents in Kobe said they would evacuate next time if they received a similar order.[140]

Evacuations associated with earthquakes appear to paint a very different picture. A pre-emptive order to evacuate issued to 100 people before a 6.6 magnitude earthquake that struck Hokkaido in September was heeded by 12,000.[141] The earthquake triggered landslides that caused casualties and significant damage, including a power cut that affected 5.3 million people.[142] The evacuation order was issued early enough, however, to allow people in the city of Sapporo to flee to safer areas before it struck. This suggests that the Japanese public is more sensitised to the dangers of earthquakes than those of flooding, in part perhaps because of the amount of media attention the former receive.

The government took steps to improve its disaster response in 2018 with the pre-positioning of supplies in evacuation centres, as opposed to sending them after the event at the request of municipal authorities.[143] It also recognised the phenomenon of "at-home evacuees", people who remain in their damaged homes after a disaster but use facilities at evacuation centres because of the disruption caused to the supply of water, electricity and other basic services. Some may also have

to rely on humanitarian assistance for food and non-food items.[144]

Others seek shelter outside officially designated evacuation areas, and these "self-evacuees" tend not to be included in disaster recovery efforts. Some people who evacuated by their own means during the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake, for example, faced significant challenges in accessing housing and other basic services earmarked for evacuees because they did not figure in official government records.[145] Addressing the issue of at-home and self-evacuees would be an important step in ensuring that all displaced people are able to achieve durable solutions. Not having provisions for those who evacuate on their own can create inequalities in compensation mechanisms and increase the risk of protracted displacement.

The disasters that struck Japan in 2018 showed that even in a well-prepared country there is still room for improvement. With the very high level of exposure of people and assets to hazards, the country will need to continuously invest in reducing disaster risk further and responding more comprehensively to those displaced. A number of challenges remain, including raising disaster risk awareness at the local level and ensuring that early warning systems are effective so that timely and well-disseminated evacuation orders are issued and heeded. More comprehensive data on the movement of people during and several months or even years after the event is also needed. Beyond pre-emptive evacuations, there is a lack of information on how long displacement lasts, when people return or where they resettle or integrate locally.
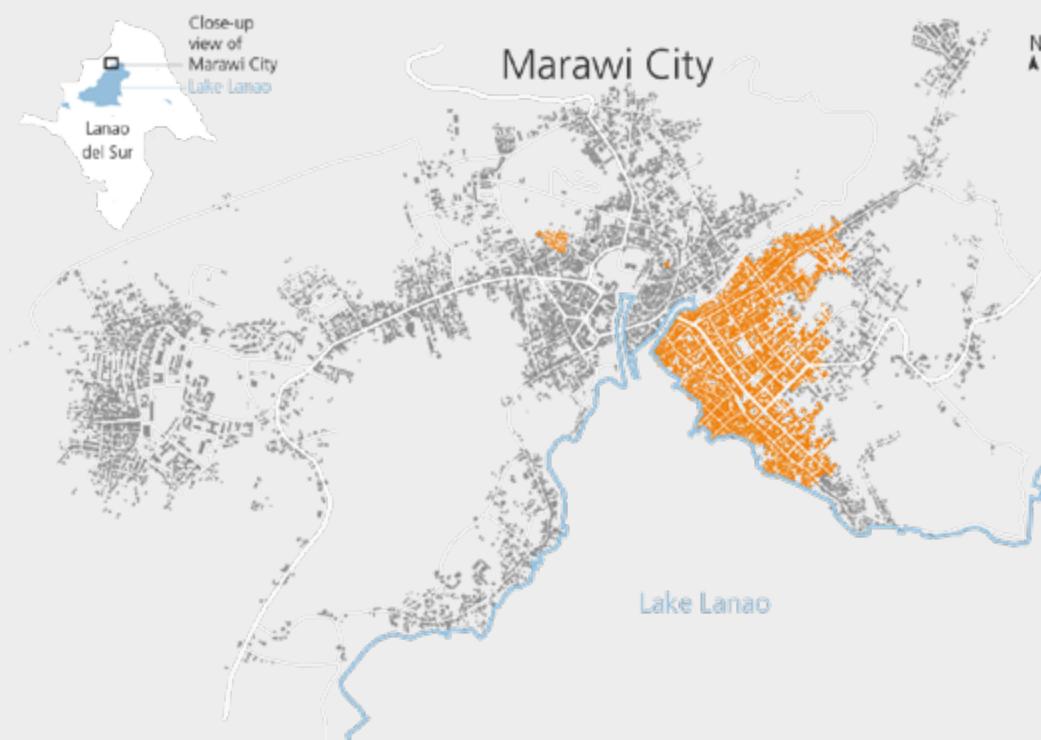
PHILIPPINES

Solutions still a distant prospect in Marawi, one year on

See close-up view of Lanao del Sur

Marawi, a majority Muslim city of 200,000 people, is the capital of Lanao del Sur province and the economic hub of the southern Philippines. Between May and October 2017, it was also the scene of the country's longest urban conflict, during which more than 1,000 people were killed and 350,000 displaced. A year later, reconstruction of the city has begun and most people have returned. Around 65,000 remain displaced, however, of whom around 14,000 are still living in evacuation and transitional shelters.[146]

The conflict erupted on 23 May 2017 when the Filipino security forces raided the home of the leader of the Abu Sayyaf group, a local affiliate of ISIL. The Maute Group, another local radical Islamist organisation and an Abu Sayyaf ally, was called in to provide reinforcement. The militants waged urban warfare unseen in the region but similar to that of ISIL in Mosul and other Iraqi and Syrian cities. They created a maze of improvised tunnels in the densely-built city centre to evade airstrikes, engaged the security forces and resisted a siege for five months. The city's roads were choked with traffic during the first three days of the battle as residents attempted to get out. Between 80 and 90 per cent eventually fled, some of them on foot.[147]

By the time the fighting was officially declared over, after the leaders of both Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group had been killed, the city had suffered extensive damage. The financial and business district, which accounted for 30 per cent of the urban area, was completely destroyed.[148] The military escorted residents

■ Structures ■ Damaged structures as of October 23, 2017 — Main roads — Roads 1 Km

Analysis: IDMC, Source: OSM, Google earth V 6.2.2.6613. (April 04, 2019). Marawi City, Philippines. Eye alt 1.68 Km. DigitalGlobe 2017

In April and May 2018, the Government of the Philippines allowed residents of Marawi City to visit their homes, which had been left in ruins after the five-month long conflict. Photo © UNHCR/ Alecs Ongcal, April 2018

in to retrieve what they could from the rubble of their homes before the area was cordoned off. It remains uninhabitable, and reconstruction will not begin until the debris has been cleared and roads rebuilt, which is expected to take at least 18 months.[149]

As many as 70 per cent of those displaced, or more than 270,000 people, were thought to have returned as of the end of 2018.[150] In some areas deemed habitable, however, returnees still have no electricity or running water, nor access to education or livelihood opportunities, which prevents them from rebuilding their lives.[151] Others have had to go back to evacuation centres while they wait for their homes to be repaired. The majority of those still displaced are living with family or friends, but almost 2,000 families live in 21 government-run evacuation centres where they face sanitation and waste management issues.[152]

The government intends to transfer the people still living in evacuation centres to temporary shelters, but those already transferred say that families of six or more members have had to share a single room, which barely constitutes an improvement on their previous conditions.[153] Food security is another major concern, because many IDPs have been unable to find work since they

fled. Lanao del Sur was the country's poorest province even before the fighting, and malnutrition levels were among the highest with half of its young population affected.[154]

Resolving displacement in cities decimated by urban warfare is a long and complex process that governments in many regions are grappling with. The cost of rebuilding Marawi has been put at around $1.2 billion, of which the international community had pledged around $670 million as of November 2018.[155] Reconstruction is likely to take years, however, leaving thousands of people displaced in the meantime. Their protracted displacement has the potential to fuel further conflict as the young and working-age, in particular, may grow tired of slow and inadequate progress. A transparent reconstruction process that includes community consultation will be key to quelling residents' fears and frustration.

SOUTH ASIA

Conflict 544,000
Disasters 3,303,000
13.8% of the global total

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict, violence and disasters)

India	2,844,000
Afghanistan	807,000
Sri Lanka	101,100
Bangladesh	78,300
Nepal	12,000
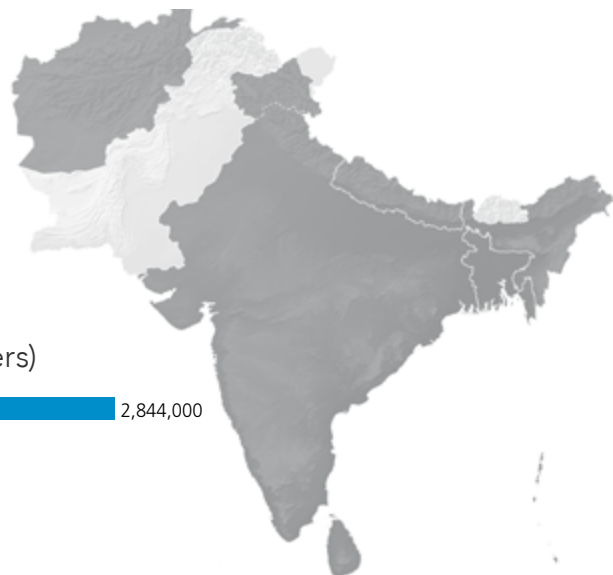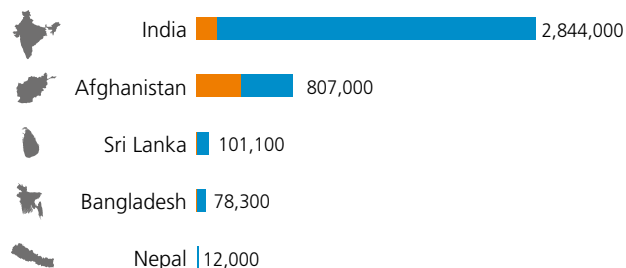
Large-scale displacement in South Asia was once again triggered by a series of floods, storms and droughts as well as unresolved conflicts and violence. Countries in the region continue to struggle with managing seasonal and recurring weather-related extreme events, resulting in more than 3.3 million new displacements. In addition to tropical storms and floods in India and Pakistan, the monsoon season took a heavy toll in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as did drought in Afghanistan. New waves of conflict and violence in India and Pakistan and ongoing fighting in Afghanistan triggered around 544,000 new displacements.

India accounted for most of the region's new displacements. Its overall total of 2.8 million was among the highest in the world, of which nearly 2.7 million were triggered by disasters across 15 states. The country was particularly hard-hit by the monsoon season, when flooding devastated the south-western state of Kerala.[156] Almost 1.5 million new displacements were recorded in Kerala in what were described as the worst floods in a century. Cyclone Titli struck Orissa and Andhra Pradesh states in October, triggering 400,000 new displacements, and cyclone Gaja hit Tamil Nadu in November, triggering 249,000.[157]

More than 160,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Communal violence in Kashmir and West Bengal cast violence in Maharashtra and political violence in Tripura also triggered small-scale displacement (see India spotlight, p.38).

Years of successive dry spells and below average rainfall in **Afghanistan** led to drought conditions in 2018, particularly in the rural north-west of the country. More than 371,000 new displacements were recorded as people's livelihoods became unviable and their living conditions untenable. Conflict triggered roughly the same number, leaving around 2.6 million people living in displacement as of the end of the year, one of the highest figures in the world (see Afghanistan spotlight, p.36).

Afghanistan's four-decade conflict involves not only the country's military, international forces, the Taliban and ISIL, but also various ethnic, communal and Islamist militias.[158] Exact numbers are hard to come by, but military operations by the government triggered a significant portion of the new conflict displacements recorded, with a total of 372,000.

Intercommunal violence triggered localised, small-scale displacement in neighbouring **Pakistan**, but this is not systematically reported on, so the figure of 1,800 is likely to be a significant underestimate. Numbers are not available for Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, but frequent ceasefire violations and cross-border shelling in 2018 strongly suggest that displacement must have taken place. For disasters, more than 2,100 new displacements were recorded, mainly triggered by localised floods.

The monsoon season also brought significant flooding to both **Sri Lanka** and **Bangladesh**. Around 75,000 new displacements were recorded in Sri Lanka in the second half of May, and nearly 16,000 in the first

half of October, though the latter figure is likely to be conservative. Riverine floods in Bangladesh triggered 12,000 new displacements in Moulvibazar district and riverbank erosion around 44,000 in Shariatpur, mainly in September. Flooding was also reported in Cox's Bazar district, which is currently home to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled violence in Myanmar.

While relatively few new displacements associated with floods were recorded in Bangladesh in 2018, IDMC's flood displacement risk model shows that the country has the third-highest flood displacement risk in the world. Around 1.8 million people are likely to be displaced at any given year in the future, with more than 96 per cent of the risk concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas (see Part 3).

Urban perspectives

Rural to urban migration and natural population growth in the region's towns and cities give South Asia one of the highest annual urbanisation rates in the world at 2.5 per cent.[159] This does not, however, equate with economic growth and higher levels of human development.[160] Major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata in India, Dhaka in Bangladesh and Karachi in Pakistan are among the most densely populated in the world, but high numbers of people live in informal settlements in peri-urban areas that lack adequate housing, infrastructure and services.[161] Recent data shows 30 per cent of the urban population across the region as living in informal settlements.[162]

Urban infrastructure development is unable to keep up with the pace of population growth in the region. In countries such as India, complex political structures, capacity gaps, corruption and funding shortfalls, hamper infrastructure development as well as basic service provision.[163] Such challenges generate widespread and growing socioeconomic inequality.[164]

Many urban plans are devised without involving locals in decision-making, and new investments in infrastructure and the upgrade of informal settlements have the potential to push the most vulnerable into displacement and isolate them from their livelihoods.[165] That said, in-situ initiatives to upgrade informal and unserved settlements in several Indian cities have been effective in reducing the risk of evictions and displacement.[166]

As in the rest of the world, the true scale of urban internal displacement in South Asia is essentially unknown, which

makes it difficult to estimate how the phenomenon is contributing to urbanisation trends. The evidence that is available, however, suggests that disasters, climate change impacts and conflict trigger displacement both to and within urban areas. A study conducted in Bangladesh suggests that a significant proportion of people who live in informal urban settlements may have been displaced from rural areas by riverbank erosion, a major hazard in the country, projected to increase in the coming years.[167]

IDPs are also drawn to urban areas by the prospect of better livelihood and income-generating opportunities.[168] Many, however, struggle to adapt and find themselves living in deepening poverty. They are also vulnerable to secondary displacement triggered by urban disasters and evictions.[169]

The Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, has been identified as the country's main destination for people fleeing disasters and climate change impacts, and local authorities have been unable to cope with the influx. New approaches to develop the potential of secondary cities to host IDPs, however, hold the promise of alternative durable solutions and a reduction in the risk of repeated displacement.[170]

People who flee to urban areas to escape conflict face similar challenges to those displaced by disasters. IDPs in the Afghan capital of Kabul struggle to secure tenure over adequate housing, which puts them at constant risk of secondary displacement, mainly in the form of evictions. Kabul's IDPs tend to have significant protection concerns and often live in sub-standard housing in marginalised areas of the city.[171] Policy initiatives such a 2006 white paper on tenure security and community-based upgrading and a 2013 policy on the upgrading of informal settlements point in the right direction, but adoption and implementation remain a challenge.[172]

South Asia's high urbanisation rate presents both major challenges and opportunities.[173] The meaningful participation and engagement of local communities in urban planning and development will be paramount if the region is to meet sustainable development targets under international frameworks and reduce the risk of future displacement.[174]

AFGHANISTAN

Drought displaced as many as conflict

Afghanistan has been plagued by four decades of armed conflict, undermining development efforts across the country and triggering displacement every year. In 2018, drought added to the existing crisis and triggered more than 371,000 new displacements, a similar number to those associated with conflict. After four years of below average rainfall in the north-western provinces of Badghis, Ghor and Herat, the situation became critical as a lack of rain and snow melt caused crops to fail and livestock to perish. Large numbers of people began to move from rural to urban areas in April, in search of livelihood opportunities, basic services and humanitarian aid.

In reality, the drivers of displacement in Afghanistan are intertwined. The impact of the drought was the final straw for many families who had been living in rural areas underserviced after years of armed conflict. Their resources and coping mechanisms had been eroded over time, and 2018 marked a tipping point when conditions became unbearable, leading to the country's largest disaster-related displacement in at least a decade.

North-west Afghanistan is primarily rural, and the drought has decimated the livelihoods of tens of thousands of households dependent on livestock and rain-fed agriculture.[175] Eighty-four per cent of landowners surveyed in IDPs' areas of origin said production was down by half compared with 2017. Those who owned livestock said they had lost almost all of their poultry, camels and horses and 90 per cent of their large and small ruminants. Respondents also said the lack of water for domestic use was a significant concern. Rain-filled reservoirs are used not only for irrigation but also for drinking water, because groundwater from hand pumps and wells is unpotable.

As of September 2018, more than 250,000 IDPs were living in scattered informal camps on the outskirts of Qala-e-Naw and Herat, the capitals of Badghis and Herat provinces, respectively.[176] Conditions in the camps are deplorable and protection issues rife. Shelters are overcrowded and provide little privacy, and with the onset of winter and sub-zero temperatures members of different families were huddled together in one tent in an effort to keep warm. People are destitute and have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms, including child labour and early marriage. There were 161 reported cases of child marriage in Herat and Badghis provinces between July and October 2018.[177]

There is a misconception that people who flee slow-onset disasters have time to pack their belongings and organise their departure, putting them in a better position than those displaced by sudden-onset disasters or conflict. The situation in Afghanistan disproves this. People fleeing the drought had already sold many of their assets and left their areas of origin with almost nothing.

Humanitarian response teams in the country have extensive experience in dealing with displacement triggered by conflict, which affects the entire country but tends to be localised and relatively small-scale. Their usual response mechanisms have not been able to cope with the mass movements concentrated in the north-west of the country associated with the drought. Some humanitarians may also have been influenced by the reluctance of host communities and authorities to allow IDPs to settle in their areas, due in part to ethnic and tribal differences, but also security concerns; this caused delays in the initial response to the displaced. Given that the drought has predominantly affected areas that are contested or beyond government control, authorities fear the new arrivals may include members of non-state armed groups.

The response has been further complicated by the fact that people living in protracted displacement

As winter approached in Afghanistan, many families displaced by drought and conflict were still living in makeshift tents. Photo: NRC/Enayatullah Azad, November 2018

and vulnerable host community members have set up makeshift shelters among the new IDPs in an attempt to secure humanitarian assistance, making it challenging for humanitarians to target the most vulnerable recently displaced households. As drought is a slow-onset phenomenon, it is also unclear who has the responsibility to respond: at the outset of the drought-induced displacement crisis, there was much debate about which agencies had the mandate to respond, with many humanitarian agencies suggesting that the emphasis of the response should be on development in the places of origin, and thereby fall to development agencies rather than humanitarians.

Despite the reticence of local authorities and hosts to let IDPs settle, many intend to stay. Only about one per cent of IDPs interviewed in Herat and eight per cent in Badghis said they would consider an assisted voluntary return, and 71 per cent in Herat said they would not consider returning regardless of the assistance on offer.[178] They cite factors such as insecurity, lack of food and livelihoods, and poor access to water and basic services as reasons for not wanting to return to their places of origin.[179]

This raises the question of how to secure suitable, long-term housing, land and livelihoods for people displaced by the drought.[180] Most have pitched their shelters on private land where landlords only grudgingly accept their presence, which leaves them vulnerable to eviction. The Afghan Land Authority has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation to allocate state-owned land to IDPs for five years, but this is on the assumption that they will eventually return to their areas of origin so does not constitute a durable solution.

The Afghan government is already struggling to facilitate durable solutions for the 2.6 million people displaced by conflict in the country. Strong political will and substantial support from the international community will be needed to make real progress towards durable solutions for those displaced by conflict and drought in the country.[181]

INDIA

Monsoon and conflict displaced millions

Conflict-affected areas   Areas most affected by disasters

Cyclone tracks (Source: GDACS)

India is not unfamiliar with heavy monsoon rains and floods, but the 2018 season was particularly intense. Above average rainfall triggered flooding and landslides nationwide between June and August. Tropical cyclones also struck the country's east coast between October and December, severely damaging homes and affecting millions of people in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu and Puducherry territory. Disasters triggered as many as 2.7 million new displacements during the year, nearly double the figure for 2017. The poverty and vulnerability of many of the households affected was a significant factor in aggravating the losses, damage and displacement caused.

The monsoon season was the world's second largest disaster displacement event in 2018 after typhoon Mangkhut, triggering almost two million displacements between May and October. The impacts were widespread, but most media attention focussed on the state of Kerala, where severe flooding in 13 out of 14 districts was described as the worst in a century.[182]

The Kerala floods accounted for more than half of India's new displacements in 2018. As many as 1.5 million people were recorded as displaced in about 5,600 camps set up by the authorities. That figure is a significant underestimate of the overall scale of displacement, given that an unknown number of IDPs stayed with friends and family or in rented accommodation.[183] By the end of the monsoon season, as many as 2,000 homes had been destroyed and as many as 22,000 damaged, hampering return for many people.[184]

Three cyclones struck India's eastern seaboard during the year. Cyclone Titli triggered around 300,000 pre-emptive evacuations in Odisha and around 100,000 displacements in Andhra Pradesh in October, the latter figure calculated using housing destruction as a proxy. Communities living in affected coastal areas tended to live in mud and bamboo homes or dwellings with corrugated tin sheets, which were unable to withstand the

storm. When cyclone Phethai hit two months later, many were still living in damaged homes.[185] Phethai triggered as many as 32,000 displacements in the two states in December. Cyclone Gaja triggered 249,000 displacements in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in November. It also destroyed homes and livelihoods, potentially hindering return for many of those displaced.[186]

Though dwarfed in scale, conflict also triggered displacement in India in 2018. Cross-border shelling led to more than 160,000 displacements in Indian-controlled Kashmir.[187] Heavy fire from Pakistani forces triggered about 54,000 in January, when people deserted a number of border villages, and as many as 100,000 from Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts in May.[188] The intensity of cross-border shelling and subsequent displacement has increased in recent years, but it repeats past patterns of short-term but recurring movements that disrupt daily life, education and the provision of other basic services.[189]
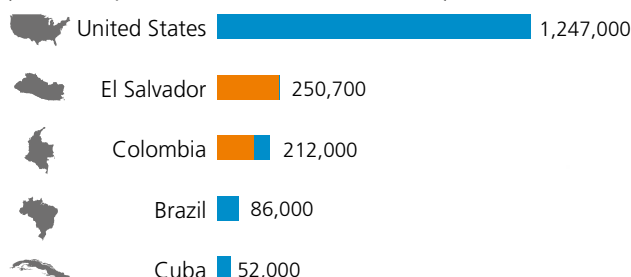
The events of 2018 serve as a reminder that displacement is an everyday reality in India, and one which has the potential to drag down the country's emerging economy if measures to reduce displacement risk are not taken. The authorities have made commendable efforts in improving early warning and disaster management systems, but they continue to face challenges when it comes to preventing and responding to crises. The last 12 months also showed that poverty and vulnerability, which are key drivers of risk, need to be better addressed. Given ever more frequent and intense weather events and continuing tensions along the country's disputed border with Pakistan, these challenges may only get more severe in the future.

THE AMERICAS

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict, violence and disasters)

United States	1,247,000
El Salvador	250,700
Colombia	212,000
Brazil	86,000
Cuba	52,000

Conflict 404,000
Disasters 1,687,000
7.5% of the global total

Weather-related disasters once again impacted several countries in the Americas in 2018. In addition, unresolved conflict, criminal violence and social and economic crises continued to push people to flee. Disasters triggered the majority of new displacements in the region, accounting for around 1.7 million. In addition, about 404,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded.

Hurricanes and wildfires triggered more than 1.2 million new displacements in the **United States**, the highest figure in the region. Florida was struck by two major hurricanes during the year. Hurricane Florence triggered 464,000 new displacements in August, and hurricane Michael another 375,000 in October. Unprecedented and devastating wildfires triggered 354,000 new displacements in California in the second half of the year, accounting for around 30 per cent of the total new displacements in the US (see United States spotlight, p.42).

Confrontations between different armed groups, intimidation and extorsion triggered 145,000 new displacements in **Colombia** in 2018, an increase compared with previous years. The government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed a peace agreement in 2016, but to date the country's military has been unable to secure areas the demobilised guerrilla group used to control. The power vacuum has been filled by other armed groups vying for control of land, illegal mining and drug plantations and trafficking routes. Fighting between two smaller guerrilla

groups, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), triggered most of the new displacements.

Norte de Santander was the worst affected department. Around 30,000 new displacements were recorded, the highest figure since 2002 and 20 per cent of the national total for last year. The department also shares a border with Venezuela, and its capital Cúcuta has been the main crossing point for refugees and migrants fleeing Venezuela's political and economic crisis (see Colombia spotlight, p.44).

More than 67,000 new displacements associated with disasters were also recorded in Colombia. Floods in the northern department of Antioquia led to more than 26,000 evacuations in April and May, when construction failures at the Ituango hydroelectric complex, Colombia's largest and one of its most controversial development projects combined with rising waters upstream, raising fears the dam would burst.[190] Torrential rains caused several rivers to break their banks in the southern department of Putumayo triggering more than 30,000 in August.

Around three million people have been recorded as fleeing **Venezuela** in the past 18 months, but the government's unwillingness to acknowledge its population's growing humanitarian needs means solid information about any internal displacement is scarce.[191] Evidence suggests that it has been significant, however, particularly toward border areas as people seek easier

A city bus burned by gang members in Apopa, 19 kilometres away from the city of San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo: Shutterstock/ES James

access to basic services in Colombian and Brazilian border towns.[192] Venezuela's crisis escalated significantly in 2018 as food shortages increased and the provision of basic services including electricity and healthcare deteriorated.[193]

At least 420 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in **Ecuador**, as the presence of FARC dissidents and drug trafficking groups such as the Mexican Sinaloa cartel in the province of Esmeraldas forced people to flee.[194] Esmeraldas is a strategic location for these groups because it shares sea and land borders with Tumaco, the largest coca-producing municipality in Colombia.[195] Joint military operations have taken place on both sides of the border and the emerging situation shows that drug production and trafficking remain significant drivers of conflict, instability and displacement in the region.

Violence associated with the drug trade also triggered at least 11,000 new displacements in **Mexico**, where the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca and Sinaloa were worst affected. Figures on internal displacement and policies to address it are far from comprehensive, but the modification of the country's General Victims Law to include IDPs as a vulnerable group and the Senate proposition to establish a specific law on IDP protection in 2018 are positive steps forward.[196]

Mexico also saw 13,000 new displacements triggered by hurricane Willa, which tracked across six states with wind speeds of up to 220 kilometres an hour in November. Many of these displacements can be attributed to evacuations organised by the authorities as a result of the advanced disaster risk management systems in place in the country.

In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which make up the **Northern Triangle of Central America**, high levels of violence, much of it urban, continued to trigger displacement. Gang activity, structural violence, generalised insecurity, heavy-handed state security responses, corruption and a culture of impunity have all been identified as drivers of internal and cross-border displacement in the region.[197]

Around 246,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in **El Salvador** and 950 in **Honduras**. Ongoing violence in **Guatemala**

suggests that displacement has taken place there too, but not enough data is available to compile an estimate. Of the three countries, not all recognise internal displacement associated with violence let alone collect data on it systematically, effectively rendering the phenomenon all but invisible. It is clear, however, that many IDPs fail to find safety and security in their own country, leading to significant numbers of cross-border movements within and beyond the region.[198] The caravans that gained momentum in 2018 are illustrative of this point.

Urban perspectives

Many countries in the Americas have undergone rapid urbanisation over the last 50 years, and with it came a concentration of economic development in and around large cities. Increasing trade and employment opportunities have drawn economic migrants from rural areas and secondary and less economically active cities toward capitals and other major urban centres.[199] Internal displacement has tended to follow similar patterns.[200] These influxes have combined with natural urban demographic growth to make the Americas the most urbanised region in the world, with around 80 per cent of its population living in towns and cities.[201]

Its urban centres are characterised by the concentration of wealth in specific pockets and among specific groups, creating socioeconomic and spatial inequalities that drive urban poverty, segregation and marginalisation. Many poor people, including IDPs, live in rapidly expanding but unplanned, unregulated and underserved settlements in peri-urban areas.[202]

This issue is among the region's main urban challenges. Poorly planned urban development in the US has increased disaster risk in many cities, and evidence shows that disasters disproportionately affect poor households living in exposed areas, often leading to their displacement.[203] Estimates also suggest that more than 20 per cent of Latin America's urban population live in unregulated and underserved settlements, many of them built in hazard-prone and often insecure areas.[204] This puts the urban poor at particularly high risk of displacement triggered by disasters, criminal violence and evictions.

Many of the region's cities rank among the most dangerous in the world, and cases of individuals and families being forced to flee targeted and generalised gang violence have been documented.[205] Violence perpetrated by criminal groups associated with drug trafficking in Mexico has triggered displacement in many cities, including Ciudad Juárez, Culiacan and Tijuana.[206] Direct and indirect security threats have also been observed to trigger intra-urban displacement, in which people move from one neighbourhood to another, in cities including San Salvador in El Salvador and Medellin in Colombia (see Medellin and San Salvador spotlight, p.81).[207] The scale and dynamics of urban displacement associated with criminal violence, however, remain poorly captured and understood across the region.

Some countries have implemented successful urban poverty reduction measures, particularly by upgrading informal settlements. Many initiatives in Brazil have combined physical and architectural with social and participatory components to prevent evictions and displacement.[208] Urban regeneration projects in Colombia that combine improved transport, security and social support have benefited hundreds of thousands of poor urban dwellers, including IDPs living in marginalised peri-urban areas.[209] Disaster risk reduction initiatives have also helped to mitigate displacement risk in cities such as Santa Fe in Argentina, Montego Bay in Jamaica and Lima in Peru.[210]

Cities in the Americas will play an ever-greater role in supporting durable solutions and reducing the risk of displacement. Robust urban planning with a focus on risk reduction and conflict prevention will be vital if its triggers and drivers are to be addressed and its impacts reduced.[211]

UNITED STATES

California wildfires: urban expansion and the risk of displacement

Density of wildfires reported in 2018 by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Analysis: IDMC)

High density
Low density

2018 Wildfires that triggered most evacuations in California

The western US state of California is highly prone to wildfires. In recent years, the combination of climate change and people's increased vulnerability and exposure to hazards made the wildfire seasons longer and more destructive. The extension of the two long seasons, the first spanning from June to September and the other from October to April, has the potential of turning wildfires into a year-round threat.[212] Prolonged drought, higher temperatures, stronger winds and the overuse of water for agriculture have caused significant harm to local ecosystems, leaving forests tinder-dry and littered with dead wood.[213] The increasing housing stock in the wildland-urban interface, where housing meets and intermingles with wildland vegetation, also means ever more homes are exposed to fire risk, which in turn increases the risk of displacement.[214]

The state experienced the deadliest and most destructive outbreak of wildfires in its history in the second half of 2018, burning about 355,000 hectares of land, four times the annual average for the past five years.[215] More than 100 people are thought to have died. At least 22 wildfires triggered over 354,000 new displacements, accounting for almost 30 per cent of the total new displacements recorded in the United States last year. The Carr, Holy and Mendocino Complex fires, named after the places where they started, forced the evacuation of over 90,000 people in July and August, and during the Woolsey and Camp fires a further 235,000 people in November.

Camp fire alone killed 85 people, displaced at least 53,000 and destroyed almost 14,000 homes.[216] It burnt 62,000 hectares of land and caused between $11 and $13 billion in commercial and residential losses. It was not the largest fire. Mendocino Complex burned almost
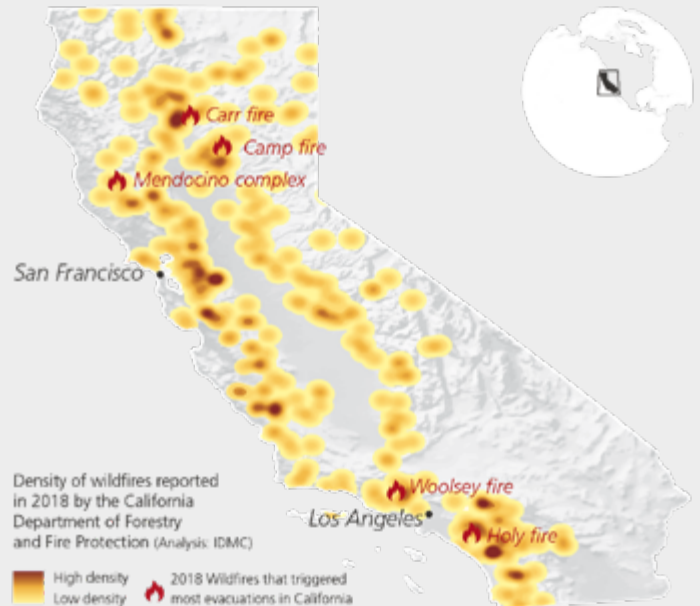
four times the area. Nor was it unique in how fast it spread. The Tubbs fire in 2017 moved at similar speeds. What set Camp fire apart and made it the deadliest and most destructive fire in California's history was what happened in Paradise, a town which lay in its path.[217]

Paradise, a picturesque town in Butte county nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills, had a large percentage of its homes in the wildland-urban interface, increasing the town and its residents' exposure and vulnerability to wildfires.[218] Within a few hours of taking hold, the fire had spread and destroyed most of the town, displacing about 30,000 people. It was an example of urban conflagration, a phenomenon last seen more than a century ago in which a fire leaps from structure to structure igniting them as it goes.[219]

Since the 1906 San Francisco fire, urban design and development have included better materials and more defensible spaces, space between buildings and grass, trees or shrub, to prevent fire from spreading quickly.[220] Since the 1990s, however, millions of homes have been built in undeveloped areas on the fringes of towns and cities. This has increased the interface between wilderness and urban areas, and the trend is set to continue as ever more people move to such places to live closer to nature and reduce living costs.[221]

If future urban conflagrations are to be prevented, homes in the wildland-urban interface will have to be built with more fire-retardant materials and larger defensible spaces between them to slow the spread of fires.[222] The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection recommends that homes have between 30 and 100 feet (10 to 30 metres) of defensible space, but without
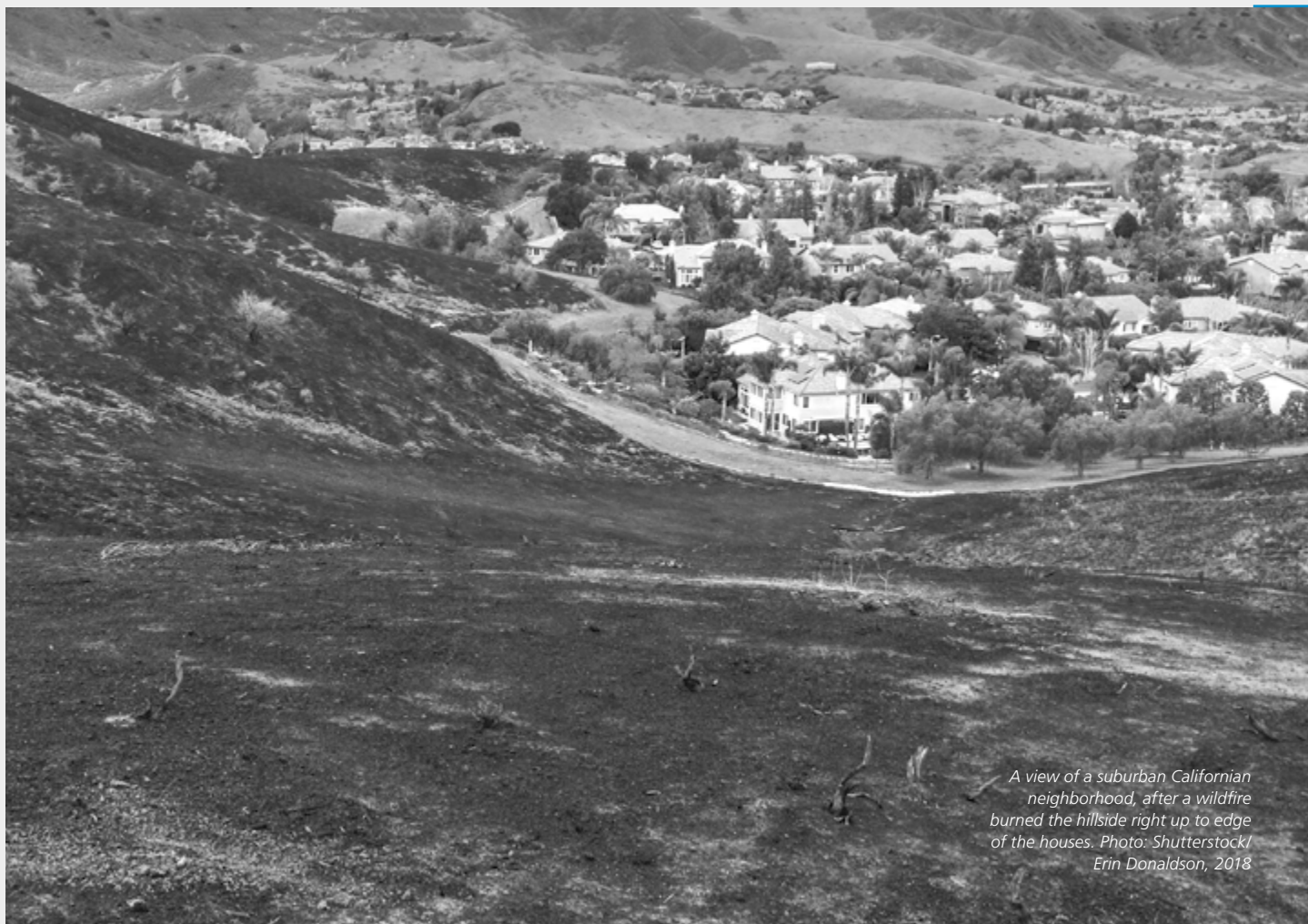
A view of a suburban Californian neighborhood, after a wildfire burned the hillside right up to edge of the houses. Photo: Shutterstock/ Erin Donaldson, 2018

state enforcement of regulations on private property, such guidelines are more often than not ignored.[223]

In an area that was already experiencing a housing shortage, Camp fire left thousands of people homeless. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has dispersed millions of dollars in assistance to those who lost their homes, but many of those displaced still struggle to find somewhere to live locally. FEMA is encouraging people to look for housing in Sacramento, 135 kilometres away, and further afield, but this would disconnect people from their livelihoods and social networks.[224] The lack of available and affordable housing in the area will inevitably affect those with fewer resources the most.

The 2018 wildfire season in California demonstrates how climate change and urban expansion have combined to intensify fires, alter their patterns and extend the seasons. Average temperatures will continue to rise and populations living in the wildland-urban interface to grow, exposing more people to the risk of displace-ment. The disaster in Paradise offers an example of what the future may hold if authorities do not enforce urban planning legislation and strengthen disaster prevention and response.[225]

COLOMBIA

Norte de Santander, where two displacement crises converge

Two displacement crises converged in Colombia in 2018. The one that has attracted by far the most media attention had its origins in neighbouring Venezuela, where more than 3.4 million people are thought to have fled the country to escape economic meltdown and hyperinflation, increasing criminality and human rights abuses, worsening food shortages and deteriorating provision of goods and services.[226] Colombia has received more than half of Venezuela's refugees and migrants. Some have continued their journey onward to Ecuador and elsewhere in the region, but more than a million have stayed in the country.[227] Between 300,000 and 500,000 Colombians have also returned from Venezuela since the start of the crisis.[228]

These events have diverted the international community's attention and resources away from ongoing internal displacement in Colombia. Many aid providers now dedicate less than 30 per cent of their resources to the issue.[229] Despite the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the FARC, the number of new displacements associated with conflict and violence increased in 2018 compared with the previous year to more than 145,000.[230] In addition, 5.8 million people remain displaced in Colombia as of the end of the year.

The situation in Norte de Santander department, which borders Venezuela, is of particular concern. Around 30,000 new internal displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in 2018, the highest figure since 2002.[231] Within the department, the Catatumbo region has been particularly hard hit. Once a FARC stronghold, the territory has since been retaken by the ELN and the EPL, two other guerrilla groups which have been present in the area for decades. FARC dissidents and other armed groups have also joined the fray.[232]

Catatumbo region
Norte de Santander

Armed clashes intensified after the breakdown of an agreement between these groups on illegal businesses, including drug trafficking. Not only did coca cultivation in Catatumbo increase by 145 per cent between 2015 and 2017, but the expansion of the drug trade combined with the reconfiguration of conflict has led to a growing number of attacks against civilians.[233] At least 31 social leaders were assassinated in Norte de Santander in 2018, out of a national total of 172.[234]

Fighting between ELN and EPL in January and March restricted the movement of almost 18,000 civilians, whose access to basic goods, livelihoods and health services was also impeded. Humanitarian organisations struggled to reach those affected.[235] Children's education was also disrupted when 80 schools had to suspend classes because of violence and the presence of landmines.[236]

The accompanying influx of Venezuelans risks undermining livelihood opportunities for the department's IDPs and poor host communities. The situation in the capital, Cúcuta, highlights some of the challenges associated with the combination of internal and cross-border movements. Not only is it a destination for IDPs fleeing conflict and violence in rural areas of the department. It is also the busiest border crossing between Colombia and Venezuela, and hosts more Venezuelans than any

other municipality in the country. Thousands cross the border every day in search of food, medicine and basic services.[237] Hospitals and other social service providers struggle to meet the growing population's basic needs, and local authorities are close to overwhelmed.[238]

Cúcuta has the highest unemployment rate in the country, reaching 15.8 per cent between September and November 2018.[239] It also has the highest participation rate for informal labour, at more than 68 per cent of the workforce.[240] The influx of Venezuelans has increased competition for this type of work. There are few alternatives and some IDPs report finding it harder to secure employment.[241] The integration of Venezuelans into the workforce is well recognised as an unprecedented challenge for Colombia.[242]

This, in turn, has led to a rise in xenophobia toward Venezuelans. Threatening leaflets have been circulated in Cúcuta, Molotov cocktails have been thrown at places where they live and they have been targeted for robbery and extortion.[243] The lack of opportunities and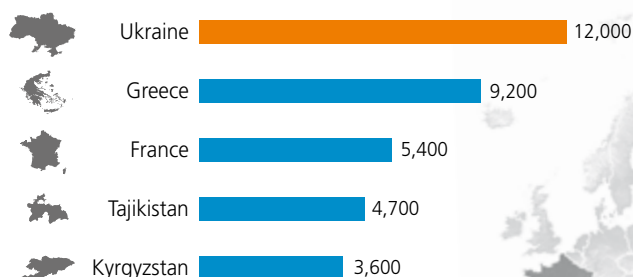 increasingly hostile environment have led some who cross the border into the city to move on directly elsewhere in Colombia, or further afield to Ecuador, Peru and Chile.[244] International humanitarian organisations, government agencies and the private sector have introduced initiatives to tackle xenophobia and refocus attention on the true priorities of the region's unprecedented displacement crisis.[245]

The government in Bogota has adopted an open and supportive approach to the influx of Venezuelans, of whom as many as 770,000 entered Colombia in 2018. In a spirit of reciprocity, it has acknowledged that in the past, Colombians have flowed into Venezuela in search of better opportunities or to escape conflict and violence. More than 574,000 Venezuelans were officially registered in Colombia as of February 2019, 240,000 were in process of registering and 218,000 had no legal status.[246] Supporting these refugees and migrants is rightly a priority in the region, but doing so should not be at the expense of those internally displaced, particularly at a time when peacebuilding and reconciliation are key priorities in Colombia.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict, violence and disasters)

Country	Value
Ukraine	12,000
Greece	9,200
France	5,400
Tajikistan	4,700
Kyrgyzstan	3,600

Conflict 12,000
Disasters 41,000
0.2% of the global total

Every year, Europe and Central Asia have lower numbers of new displacement than other regions and fewer people living in displacement. However, a total of 53,000 new displacements were still recorded in 2018, of which 41,000 were associated with disasters and more than 12,000 with conflict. Almost 2.9 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year, the result of old and unresolved conflicts and territorial disputes in several countries.

The latter figure includes 800,000 in **Ukraine**, where the country's conflict entered its fifth year. New displacements were recorded in October when 12,000 people were evacuated following an explosion at an ammunition depot east of Kyiv, thought by the government to have been an act of sabotage.[247] The majority were able to return home two weeks later. Around 200 new displacements were also recorded in settlements along the contact line, where ceasefire violations including shelling continue.

Around 344,000 people were living in protracted displacement in **Azerbaijan** as a result of the country's unresolved conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. An additional 301,000 IDPs were estimated to have made partial progress towards durable solutions, thanks to the government's efforts to relocate them into temporary housing. In **Georgia**, 293,000 people remain displaced because of long-standing territorial disputes in Abkhazia and South

Ossetia. Similar conditions were faced by around 228,000 people in **Cyprus**, who remain displaced as a consequence of the deadlock between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot authorities over the status of the north of the island. Many of Europe's IDPs have been living in displacement for 15 years or more.

There is no up-to-date information about displacement in **Turkey**, but renewed fighting between the government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2015 and subsequent security operations triggered hundreds of thousands of displacements in the south-east of the country. In 2018 the government began building new homes in the region as part of an urban renewal project and to compensate victims of the conflict. Around 25,000 homes are thought to have been built to date, but it is unclear who the beneficiaries will be. Some of the housing offered to IDPs for compensation are far from city centres, pulling them away from their livelihoods and social networks.[248] Several people who remained in their homes in areas affected by the conflict, such as in the historic Sur district of Diyarbakir, have also been evicted to make way for regeneration initiatives.[249]

Tajikistan, **Kyrgyzstan** and **Russia** accounted for an important share of the region's new displacements associated with disasters. Days of heavy rain caused flooding in Tajikistan's southern province of Khatlon in May, triggering more than 5,400 new displacements

and damaging homes, roads, bridges and farmland.[250] Landslides in the Jalal-Abad region of Kyrgyzstan triggered almost 4,700 new displacements in April, and floods 1,500 in the Russian republics of Altai, Tuva and Khakassia in March.

Storms and floods triggered at least 5,400 new displacements in **France**, including 1,500 in the Ile-de-France area around Paris when the banks of the river Seine burst in January.[251] A riverine flood in the Piave basin in **Italy** led to 1,300 new displacements in October, and flash flooding and storm surges pushed a similar number out of their homes in **Greece** in late September when a storm struck the island of Evia and the southern Peloponnese peninsula.

A short winter, warm spring and record-breaking temperatures and below average rainfall in the summer led to one of Europe's most destructive wildfire seasons in recent years.[252] Approximately 3,000 homes were destroyed in the Greek region of Attica in July, triggering more than 7,000 new displacements.[253] Wildfires in the Valencia region in **Spain** triggered 2,600 in August.

The European parliament and Council of Europe approved plans in December 2018 to improve the EU's management of disaster risk. The scheme, known as rescEU, will create a reserve of civil protection capacity to support national responses to the impacts of natural hazards and epidemics. Member states will also share national prevention and preparedness plans to identify and address possible gaps.[254]

Urban perspectives

Europe and Central Asia is one of the most urbanised regions in the world. Seventy-two per cent of its population live in towns and cities.[255] It is a diverse region, and as in other contexts, the drivers, triggers and impacts of urban displacement vary across it, making it difficult to generalise. From Spain to Uzbekistan, the way national and local authorities respond to the phenomenon also vary widely.

Many IDPs in Ukraine come from urban backgrounds, particularly cities such as Donetsk, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, Luhansk and Sloviansk.[256] The country's urban centres, including the capital Kyiv, have also been important destinations for those fleeing the conflict.[257] Ukraine's towns and cities offer better access to services and income-generating opportunities than rural areas, and

many IDPs have managed to establish themselves in their new urban environments.[258]

Housing, land and property rights are challenges, however, because Ukraine does not have a specific mechanism to process claims on properties affected by the conflict.[259] Nor does Ukrainian legislation list IDPs as a group entitled to social housing. The local authorities in Bakhmut, Kramatorsk and Slovyansk have made efforts to address some of these issues with support from the international humanitarian community.[260]

Local governments and international agencies have also worked together to address displacement in **Kosovo**, where policies have been put in place to help municipalities support sustainable returns for people displaced by conflict between 1998 and 2004. The Regulation on the Return of Displaced Persons and Durable Solutions in Kosovo, for example, calls for municipal action plans on the issue and emphasises the importance of IDPs' socioeconomic integration based on their skills, gender, age and disabilities.[261] It also aims to improve cooperation between national and local authorities to ensure return conditions are comparable across the territory.[262]

In many parts of the region, however, urban IDPs face marginalisation and unequal access to basic services. Those in many post-Soviet countries receive lower quality service provision than host communities, particularly in terms of healthcare.[263] The dynamics of urban displacement in Central Asian countries remain poorly understood, but evidence suggests that urban renewal and beautification projects have caused displacement in cities including Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, Dushanbe in Tajikistan and Tashkent in Uzbekistan.[264]

The Council of Europe called in 2018 for renewed action by states and regional bodies to address internal displacement in the region.[265] Among many recommendations, it highlighted the importance of addressing IDPs' housing, land and property rights and providing humanitarian assistance to those living in protracted displacement. The role of local authorities and cities in unlocking solutions will be central to implement these national and regional commitments.

PEOPLE LIVING IN DISPLACEMENT AS A RESULT OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

There were an estimated 41.3 million people living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in 55 countries as of the end of 2018, an increase of about 1.4 million on the previous year. Around 70 per cent were living in just ten countries (see Figure 7).

Ethiopia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Nigeria and Cameroon saw increasing numbers of people living in internal displacement. The end of year figures for countries such as Syria, Iraq, India and Myanmar fell, but they remain among the highest in the world.

As figures 7 and 8 show, displacement associated with conflict and violence is highly concentrated, mainly in countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa that are in the throes of protracted crises.

These are conservative estimates that should be treated with caution. Each country and organisation that reports on the number of people living in displacement as of the end of the year faces numerous challenges and limitations when it comes to compiling their figures. They include inconsistent methodologies for collecting, analysing and sharing data, reporting biases, political considerations and out-of-date datasets.

The data for 2018 shows, however, that as in previous years, millions of IDPs around the world have been unable to achieve durable solutions, and the figures serve an important purpose in reminding us not just of their existence, but also of our collective failure to address their predicament.

FIGURE 7: The ten countries with the highest number of people displaced by conflict and violence as of the end of 2018

41.3 m
People living in displacement as result of conflict and violence in 55 countries and territories as of 31 December 2018

30.9 m
People living in displacement in the **10** countries reporting most IDPs

Syria	6.1 m
Colombia	5.8
Dem. Rep. Congo	3.1
Somalia	2.6
Afghanistan	2.6
Yemen	2.3
Nigeria	2.2
Ethiopia	2.1
Sudan	2.1
Iraq	2

FIGURE 8: People internally displaced by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2018

PEOPLE INTERNALLY DISPLACED BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE
as of 31 December 2018

Palestine 238,000
Iraq 1,962,000
Afghanistan 2,598,000
Pakistan 119,000
Bangladesh 426,000
Myanmar 401,000
Thailand 41,000
Philippines 301,000

Syria 6,119,000
Azerbaijan 344,000
Georgia 293,000
Turkey 1,097,000
Cyprus 228,000

India 479,000
Yemen 2,324,000
Somalia 2,648,000
Ethiopia 2,137,000
Sudan 2,072,000
Kenya 162,000
South Sudan 1,869,000
Sri Lanka 37,000

Uganda 32,000
Burundi 49,000

Bosnia and Herzegovina 99,000
Ukraine 800,000

Egypt 97,000
Libya 221,000
Chad 90,000
Niger 156,000

Côte d'Ivoire 302,000

Nigeria 2,216,000
Cameroon 668,000
Central African Republic 641,000
Congo 107,000

Dem. Rep. Congo 3,081,000
Abyei Area 31,000

Mali 120,000
Burkina Faso 47,000

Mexico 338,000
Guatemala 242,000
Honduras 190,000

Colombia 5,761,000
Peru 59,000

Total:
41.3 m
people displaced

More than 1,500,000
500,001-1,500,000
100,001-500,000
20,000-100,000
Less than 20,000

The country name and the figure are shown only when the value exceeds 20,000 people displaced.
The boundaries, names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

ASSESSING PROGRESS TOWARD DURABLE SOLUTIONS

We have not included people reported to have made some progress toward achieving durable solutions in our global end-of-year estimate of the number of IDPs. To do so would have significantly risked inflating the figure and double counting anyone who was displaced more than once. This is because most of the data on internal displacement does not track the trajectory or conditions of individual IDPs or households over time, nor does it distinguish between new and repeated displacements. For example, once an IDP has returned or left a camp with the intention of returning, this is the last we hear of them. If they were to become displaced and counted again as an IDP we would end up accounting for them twice.

Rather than continue to account for these people in our global headcount, we have developed additional metrics that allow us to shine a light on their situations and underscore the need for governments and data providers to capture the number and conditions of people reported as having returned or achieved durable solutions (see Table 3, p.123). This is vital to prevent people who may still be extremely vulnerable from falling off the radar.

Total number of IDPs: The map on the previous page presents IDMC's best estimate of the number of people living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of 31 December 2018. It encompasses a wide range of situations across 55 countries, each of which is unique. The global total includes people who have been displaced for vastly different lengths of time and who face a wide array of challenges in their efforts to achieve durable solutions to their displacement. If IDMC is able to verify that returned IDPs or refugees are still effectively living in displacement, they are included in the global figure.

This was the case for 9,000 "returnees" in Iraq who, although they had returned to their areas of origin, were living in collective shelters, in displacement camps or with host families. As such they were, by IDMC's definition, still displaced. They and a number of other groups whom IDMC still considers IDPs but its data providers no longer count as such are included in the global figure.

Number of IDPs who have reportedly returned, been resettled or locally integrated but who may still have vulnerabilities linked to their displacement: In some cases, IDMC's sources provide evidence that those who have returned, resettled or begun to integrate into their host communities still face risks related to their displacement. We have therefore accounted for these movements as partial solutions.

In north-east Nigeria, for example, 86,000 people were reported as having returned home, but information on their shelter conditions suggested they had gone back to damaged or destroyed housing or were living in temporary structures in their original place of origin. In DRC, almost 1.5 million people were reported as having returned, but there was significant evidence to suggest that their situation was not sustainable given high levels of insecurity. In both cases, IDMC accounted for the returns as partial solutions.

Number of IDPs whose reported return, resettlement or local integration cannot be verified: In other cases, IDMC's sources report only that people have left a shelter, camp, evacuation centre or host community, sometimes with the stated intention of returning home. No further information is available about what happens to them or the conditions they face after leaving. Characterising these movements as durable solutions would be both misleading and inconsistent with the Guiding Principles, which clearly state that IDPs who continue to face risks and vulnerabilities related to their displacement should still be considered internally displaced.

In Burundi, for example, the total number of IDPs reported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) declined by around 25,000 between 2017 and 2018 because security had improved. IDMC characterised this change as an unverified solution, because no further information about these people was available. In South Sudan, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and local media reported that 12,000 IDPs returned. IDMC accounted for these returns as an unverified solution since it could not obtain any information about the conditions to which people had returned.

Children run through 'Bhola Slum' in the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Many people have been forced to relocate to the capital as a result of coastal erosion and other climate impacts in the country's southern regions. Credit: Mahmud Hossain Opu for IDMC, February 2019