PART 1
ON THE GRID
The global displacement landscape

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2017

30.6 million new displacements associated with conflict and disasters were recorded in 2017 across 143 countries and territories worldwide. The ten worst-affected countries – **China**, **the Philippines**, **Syria**, **the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, **Cuba**, **the United States**, **India**, **Iraq**, **Somalia** and **Ethiopia** – accounted for more than a million new displacements each (see figure 2).

People were not all affected in similar ways: from those pre-emptively evacuated by their governments to avoid the impacts of disasters, to those who lost their homes to bombs and fled in a desperate attempt to save their lives, the levels of displacement severity vary hugely between and within countries.

The numbers presented in this report are the best estimates of a complex reality that requires urgent political attention. Behind the figures are human lives that are uprooted and disrupted, all too often in the most traumatic of circumstances and in many cases for months and even years.
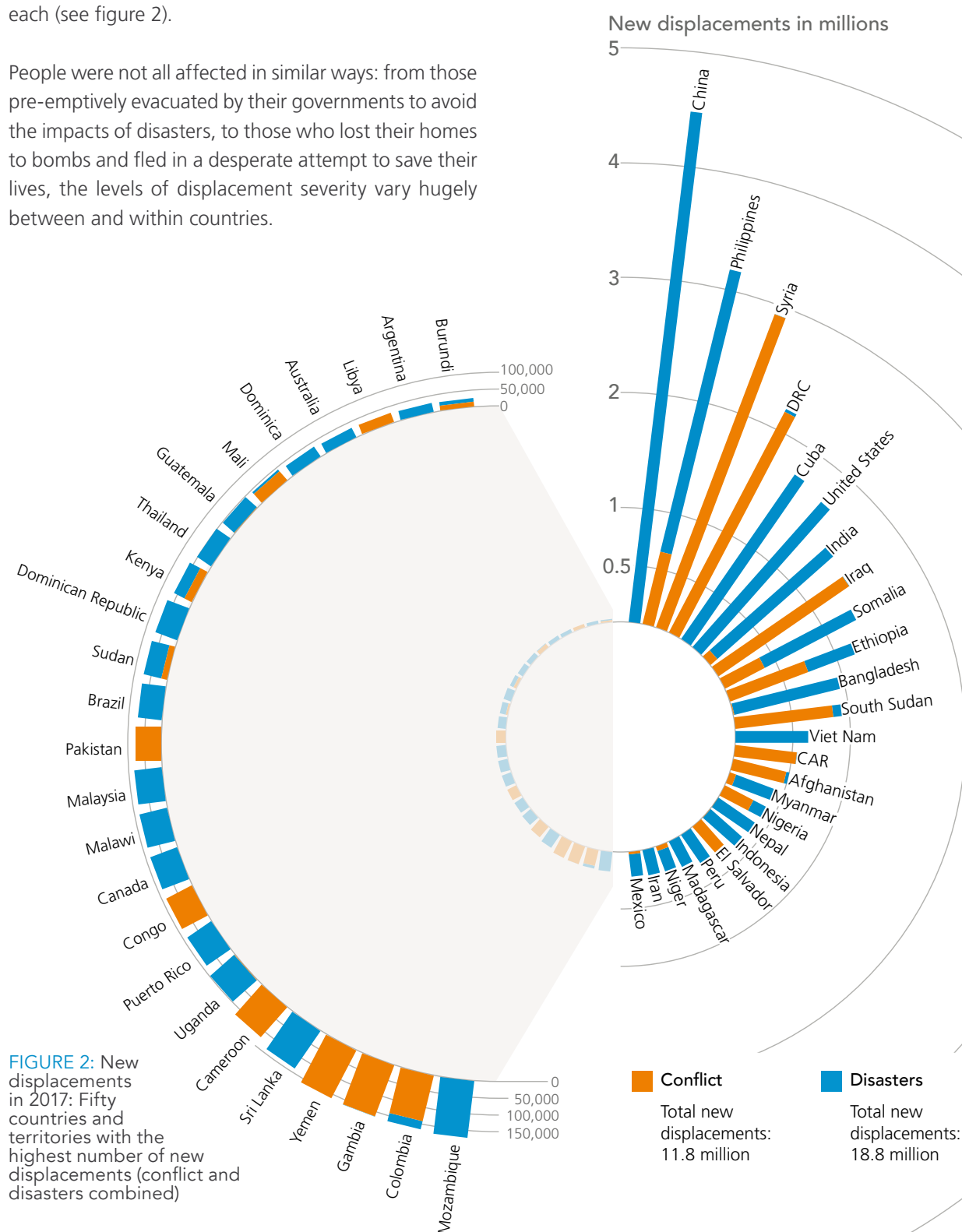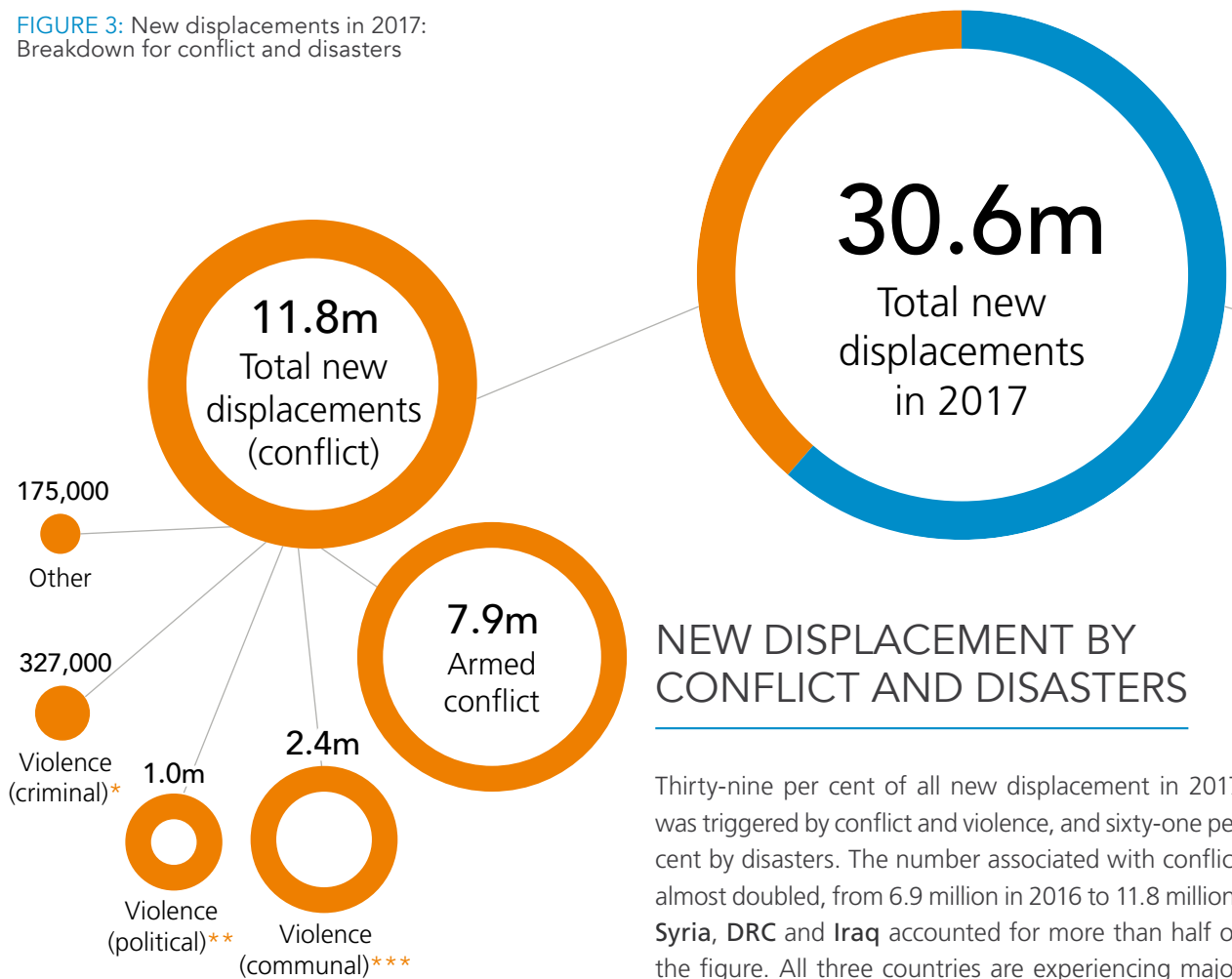

FIGURE 2: New displacements in 2017: Fifty countries and territories with the highest number of new displacements (conflict and disasters combined)

New displacements in millions

Conflict — Total new displacements: 11.8 million

Disasters — Total new displacements: 18.8 million

FIGURE 3: New displacements in 2017:
Breakdown for conflict and disasters

30.6m
Total new
displacements
in 2017

11.8m
Total new
displacements
(conflict)

7.9m
Armed
conflict

175,000
Other

327,000
Violence
(criminal)*

1.0m
Violence
(political)**

2.4m
Violence
(communal)***

*Homicides, threats, extortion and a general atmosphere of violence due to drug cartels, organised crime, or gang violence, in a situation that has not met the threshold of a non-international armed conflict.

**The use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation, such as surrounding an electoral process or during civil unrest, riots, state repression or demonstrations, in a situation that has not met the threshold of a non-international armed conflict.

***Violence perpetrated across ethnic, religious or communal lines that has not met the threshold of a non-international armed conflict. Communal, in particular inter-communal violence can overlap to a significant extent with political violence with one type of violence triggering the other.

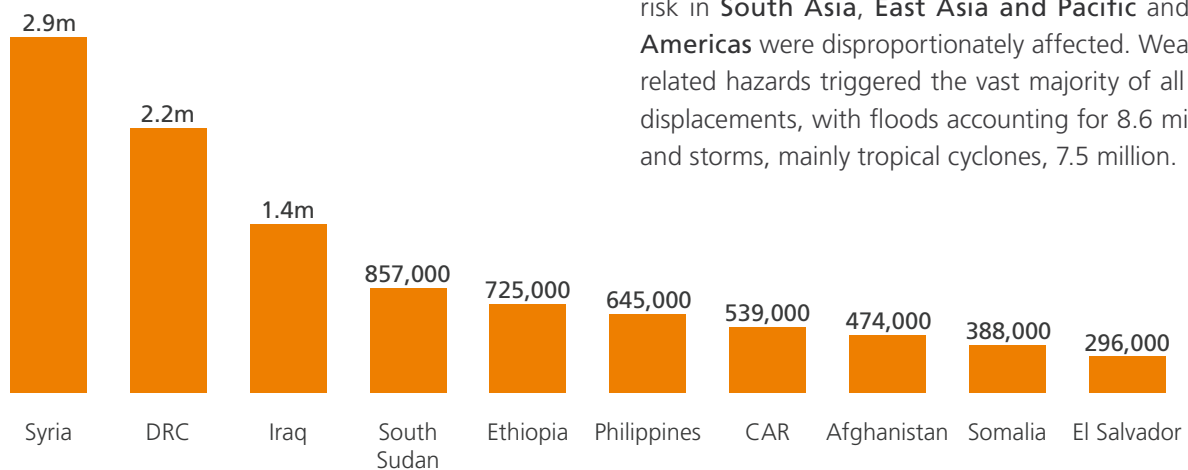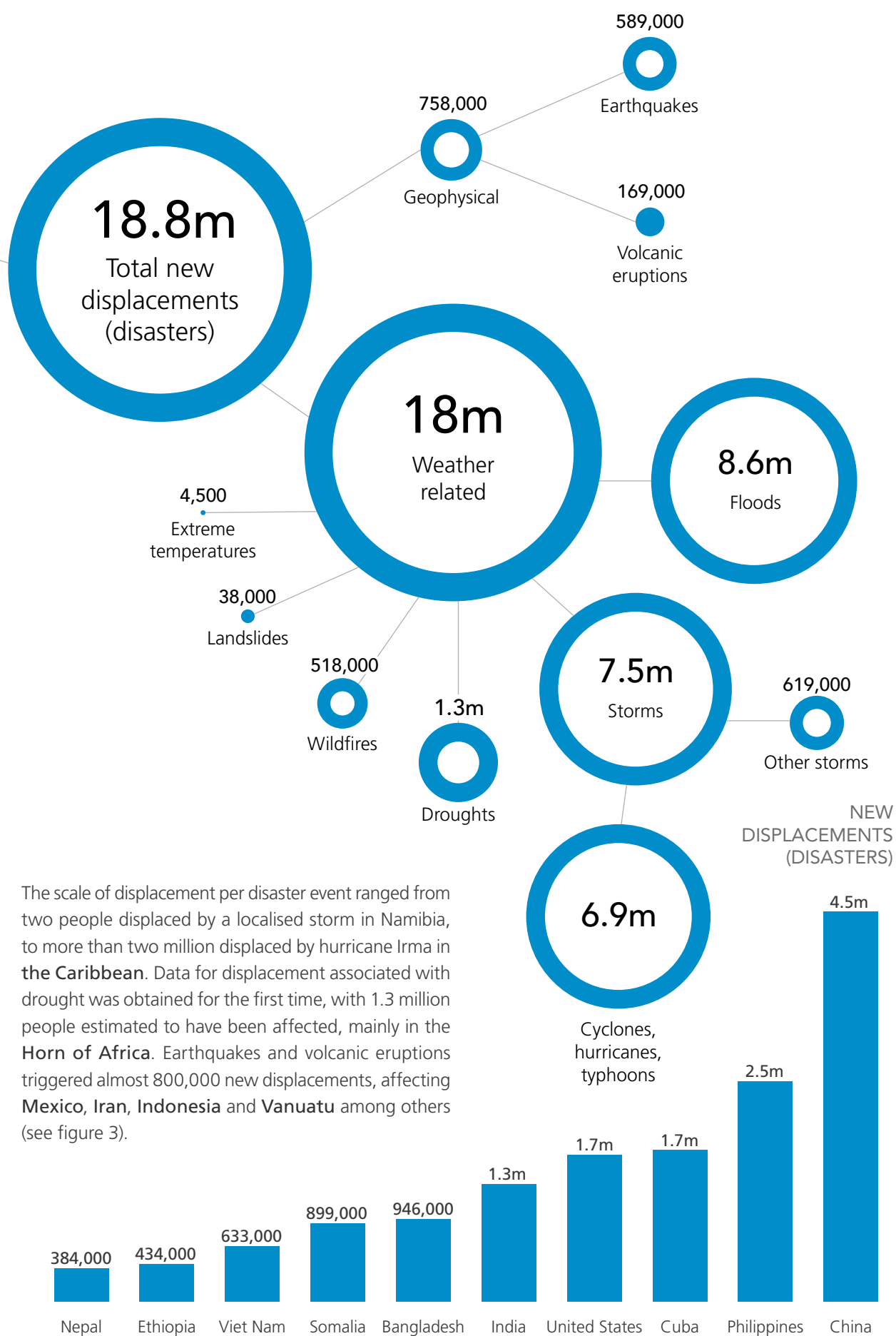## NEW DISPLACEMENT BY CONFLICT AND DISASTERS

Thirty-nine per cent of all new displacement in 2017 was triggered by conflict and violence, and sixty-one per cent by disasters. The number associated with conflict almost doubled, from 6.9 million in 2016 to 11.8 million. **Syria**, **DRC** and **Iraq** accounted for more than half of the figure. All three countries are experiencing major humanitarian crises, and at the end of the year they were categorised as level three emergencies, the highest alert status within the UN system. While new waves of violence brought the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, **El Salvador** and **Somalia** among the ten worst-affected countries, **Yemen** dropped off this list because of insufficient data, despite remaining one of the world's largest and most severe humanitarian crisis.

18.8 million new displacements associated with disasters were also recorded in 135 countries and territories, and as in previous years those with high disaster risk in **South Asia**, **East Asia and Pacific** and **the Americas** were disproportionately affected. Weather-related hazards triggered the vast majority of all new displacements, with floods accounting for 8.6 million, and storms, mainly tropical cyclones, 7.5 million.

NEW
DISPLACEMENTS
(CONFLICT)

2.9m	2.2m	1.4m	857,000	725,000	645,000	539,000	474,000	388,000	296,000
Syria	DRC	Iraq	South Sudan	Ethiopia	Philippines	CAR	Afghanistan	Somalia	El Salvador

589,000
Earthquakes

758,000
Geophysical

169,000
Volcanic
eruptions

18.8m
Total new
displacements
(disasters)

18m
Weather
related

8.6m
Floods

4,500
Extreme
temperatures

38,000
Landslides

518,000
Wildfires

1.3m
Droughts

7.5m
Storms

619,000
Other storms

6.9m

Cyclones,
hurricanes,
typhoons

NEW
DISPLACEMENTS
(DISASTERS)

The scale of displacement per disaster event ranged from two people displaced by a localised storm in Namibia, to more than two million displaced by hurricane Irma in the Caribbean. Data for displacement associated with drought was obtained for the first time, with 1.3 million people estimated to have been affected, mainly in the Horn of Africa. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions triggered almost 800,000 new displacements, affecting Mexico, Iran, Indonesia and Vanuatu among others (see figure 3).

Nepal	Ethiopia	Viet Nam	Somalia	Bangladesh	India	United States	Cuba	Philippines	China
384,000	434,000	633,000	899,000	946,000	1.3m	1.7m	1.7m	2.5m	4.5m

DISPLACEMENT HEADLINES: THE YEAR IN FOCUS

People were forced to flee in very different circumstances throughout 2017. The following events and displacement situations of the year merit our particular attention due to the sheer scale or the level of violence and insecurity involved; the way they highlight chronic vulnerability or the fact that they have been neglected internationally; their potential for regional ripple effects; and the impact they have, thereby generating future risk.

DISPLACEMENT IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

There was significant new displacement in 2017 in countries in the throes of complex and long-term humanitarian emergencies. Complex emergencies are crises caused by extensive internal or external conflict and are often characterized by a complete or partial breakdown of authority, displacement of populations and widespread damage to societies and economies which necessitate large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance.[7] Moreover, these contexts often pose significant security threats to relief workers, further amplifying the already high needs. In 2017, the situation in some countries plumbed new depths, especially in **DRC**, **Yemen**, **Somalia** and **South Sudan**.

On 20 October, the UN declared the crisis in **DRC** a level-three emergency (L3), the highest alert level in the international humanitarian system, and called on the humanitarian community to scale up its response.[8] The number of new displacements recorded for DRC in 2017 reached an all-time high for the country and represents more than twice that reported for 2016. The increase was driven by the outbreak of fighting in the Kasai region and Tanganyika province in addition to protracted conflict in North and South Kivu provinces.[9]

DRC's crisis involves political gridlock, violence between militias and government forces, inter-communal clashes, cholera outbreaks, chronic food insecurity, low levels of school enrolment and severely restricted humanitarian access. Despite the UN's level-three declaration and the fact that the country had the second-highest number of new displacements worldwide in 2017, the crisis was one of the world's most underfunded (see spotlight, p.20).[10]

A level-three emergency was also declared in **Yemen** as far back as 2015, and the situation has deteriorated significantly since.[11] UNHCR described the situation in 2017 as the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with 21 million people affected, about 76 per cent of the total population.[12] The number of new displacements recorded in Yemen in 2017 is not as high as that recorded in other countries suffering from conflict and violence. However, lack of access, the invisibility of IDPs moving to urban areas, the no-camp policy and prevalent dynamics of families fleeing and returning once violence subsides means this number does not paint the full picture.

Saudi-led blockades on air and sea ports deprived the population of much needed medical supplies, food, fuel and aid throughout the year, leaving two-thirds of Yemenis, about 17 million people, severely food insecure and 8.4 million of these on the verge of famine.[13] The shortage of medicines and widespread lack of access to safe water has also been blamed for the rapid spread of cholera, an otherwise preventable disease (see spotlight, p.26).[14]

There was also a sharp increase in the number of IDPs in **Somalia**, more than three times the figure for 2016. This has put additional strain on camp infrastructure, and restricted humanitarian access in the southern and central parts of the country led to a further deterioration of conditions for vulnerable populations.[15] Drought and consequent loss of livelihoods was a major driver of displacement and exacerbated ongoing conflict in the country. Levels of acute malnutrition have spiked across the country and the threat of famine is expected to increase.

Conflict also continued to drive extreme food insecurity throughout **South Sudan**, causing significant new displacements in 2017. It also prevented people from pursuing their agricultural livelihoods.[16] Famine condi-

tions in the first half of the year and the dire food security situation more broadly have also been blamed for the high prevalence of gender-based violence.[17]

The country also experienced its most protracted and widespread cholera outbreak in recent history, a cause for particular concern in densely populated areas such as displacement camps, where the transmission rate was high.[18] Humanitarians providing life-saving aid to IDPs and host communities were attacked, their convoys looted and their access denied by both authorities and non-state groups.[19]

DISPLACEMENT IN A YEAR OF CYCLONES

Cyclones displaced millions of people around the world in 2017. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria broke several records in **the Atlantic and Caribbean**. A series of typhoons in South and East Asia and Pacific displaced large numbers of people (see spotlights on p.32 and p.42).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, tropical cyclone Enawo was the strongest to strike **Madagascar** since Gafilo in 2004.[20] South Asia, in the meantime, was hit by cyclone Mora, which displaced people in **Bangladesh**, **India** and **Myanmar** and affected several Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh.[21]

Our global disaster displacement risk model suggests that cyclones, and the storm surges they cause, are likely to displace an average of 2 million people in any given year in the future.[22] Prospective estimates based on current levels of exposure and vulnerability are likely to be conservative, but they are still useful in informing response plans and resilience-building interventions.

Knowing that such events are likely to become more frequent and intense, it is important to reduce disaster risk, including disaster displacement risk.[23] Not only is there an urgent need to curb greenhouse gas emissions, but more efforts are also required to reduce people's vulnerability and exposure to hazards.

A house damaged by Hurricane Maria in Loma Atravesada, Dominica. Photo: IFRC/Catalina Martin-Chico, November 2017

DISPLACEMENT DESPITE CEASEFIRES

Peace processes and ceasefires do not always have the desired outcome, that of reducing violence, thus reducing the risk of further displacement and creating an environment that allows IDPs to achieve durable solutions. This was clearly demonstrated in 2017 in **CAR**, **Colombia** and **Syria**, where displacement continued despite ceasefires and peace-building efforts.

The government of **CAR** signed an "immediate cease-fire" with 13 of the country's 14 main armed groups on 19 June, but groups that had signed the agreement killed 50 people in the town of Bria the following day.[24] Violence continued during the second half of the year, leading to ten times more new displacements in 2017 as compared to the previous year.

A ceasefire agreed between the **Syrian** government and opposition forces in March to end the blockade of al-Wa'ar neighbourhood in Homs province led to the forced displacement of thousands of people in three waves of evacuations.[25] People evacuated in the first two waves were taken to camps established in the countryside of northern Aleppo. Those in the third wave, however, were taken to temporary collective shelters in Idlib province, where they were housed until they were able to find a longer-term solution.[26] The population had to choose between displacement far from their homes or remaining in al-Wa'ar, where they faced the possibility of harassment and arrest by government forces (see spotlight, p.24).

The **Colombian** government signed a peace agreement in 2016 with the country's largest guerrilla group, which has been effective in bringing the conflict to an end. Violence in areas previously controlled by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has continued, however, and has intensified in some parts of the country.[27] Perpetrators include reconstituted para-military groups, organised crime and drug-trafficking militias and FARC dissidents fighting for the territory the guerrillas used to control.[28]

These groups have targeted social leaders and farmers who have gradually been replacing coca plants with other crops.[29] At least 205 social leaders have been murdered since the peace deal was signed, 170 of them in 2017.[30] Large numbers of new displacements were

also recorded over the year. The ongoing violence as Colombia's conflict morphs rather than concludes is of particular concern given an environment of impunity and lack of accountability.[31]

These examples highlight the need for more concerted efforts to ensure that peace deals are successfully implemented. Doing so means making sure their terms are favourable to all, and that compliance is more thoroughly monitored. Understanding and catering to the needs of those most affected, including IDPs, is of the utmost importance to prevent further conflict.

DISPLACEMENT IN CITIES

As in previous years, 2017 saw new displacements taking place in urban settings, bringing with them specific challenges in terms of humanitarian access, the delivery of basic services and heightened IDP vulnerabilities. Hurricanes and earthquakes in **the Americas** and conflict in **Iraq**, **Syria** and the **Philippines** tested urban response mechanisms in a new way.

Several natural hazards wreaked havoc in urban centres. In **the US**, the approach of hurricane Irma prompted the governor of Florida to ask millions of people in Miami to evacuate, and hurricane Harvey brought heavy flooding to Houston, Texas, where tens of thousands of people were displaced. Hurricane Maria hit the island of **Puerto Rico** hard, devastating its urban centres, destroying roads and communications infrastructure and displacing tens of thousands (see spotlight, p.20). A 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck central **Mexico** in September, displacing more than 100,000 people, almost 30,000 of them in Mexico City. Other quakes displaced people in the **Philippine** city of Surigao and in Tehran, **Iran**. Additionally, a landslide destroyed houses and pushed people to displacement in Freetown, **Sierra Leone**.

Given the density and exposure of urban populations, conflicts in cities have also had a devastating impact. Those in **Iraq** and **Syria** are among the most destructive of our times, disrupting public service provision and distorting urban markets and economies. Unexploded ordnances, ambushes and sniper fire add to the grave risks urban populations face, and humanitarian agencies have struggled to adapt their interventions to such complex scenarios.[32] The battle for the Iraqi city of Mosul between October 2016 and June 2017 displaced a large portion of the city's population. In Syria, the

offensive on Raqqa that ended in October 2017 forced nearly the entire population of the city to flee. Outside the Middle East, fighting in Marawi, the **Philippines**, displaced hundreds of thousands of people between May and October 2017.

Urban IDPs are often described as invisible, because they mingle with the broader urban poor and become difficult to identify and track. Their needs are rarely met as a result, leaving them short of food, drinking water and basic services, and vulnerable to illness and disease.[33] They often seek shelter in unfinished or abandoned buildings, basements and public buildings such as schools and religious centres, which become unofficial collective shelters.

Despite the fact that urban warfare often leaves whole neighbourhoods in ruins, IDPs tend to return as soon as they are allowed to do so. Their homes, however, may have been damaged, destroyed or looted, and many are forced back into displacement because they are unable to re-establish their lives. This dynamic was

clearly visible in Mosul.[34] Other barriers to return include the widespread presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances, as was the case in Raqqa and Marawi. The challenges and particularities of urban displacement need further analysis. If unaddressed, forced displacement in cities can have longer term effects on urban recovery and resilience, which could increase future displacement risk.

CYCLICAL CONFLICTS, CHRONIC DISPLACEMENT

Ongoing conflict increases people's vulnerability, and with each new surge in violence and displacement, those affected become less resilient. Relapses and deteriorating conditions in a number of countries caused great concern in 2017 as the number of IDPs and other people in need of assistance spiked.

CAR has suffered decades of instability, conflict and stalled development. Violence perpetrated by the Séléka coalition of armed groups has escalated since the country's former president François Bozizé was ousted in March 2013. The political conflict has also become increasingly sectarian, leading to inter-communal violence and significant displacement. In 2016, the number of people displaced fell to 46,000, and there were hopes that a new government and its reconciliation efforts would take hold. Violence flared again in 2017, however, to levels unseen since 2013. A UN statement issued in August 2017 warned of early signs of genocide and called for more peacekeeping troops to be sent to the country.[35] The Security Council unanimously approved the deployment of an extra 900 peacekeepers in November, but the humanitarian response remains underfunded.[36]

Ethiopia has faced a steady stream of displacement over the years, but it rose sharply in 2017. Drought increased competition for already scarce resources, particularly between farmers and pastoralists, and this heightened long-standing ethnic tensions both within and across

borders. Drought was also thought to have been the primary cause of displacement during the year. The number of new displacements associated with conflict also increased compared to 2016, the result of escalating confrontations between the security forces and armed groups, particularly in the Oromia and Somali regions.

In a repeat of conflict patterns, Myanmar's Rohingya minority bore the brunt of unprecedented violence in the western state of Rakhine in 2017. Attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army on 30 police stations on 25 August prompted a fierce military crackdown and inter-communal violence that forced more than 655,000 people to flee to Bangladesh, which led to accusations of ethnic cleansing.[37]

Rohingya IDPs also remain in camps in Rakhine itself, where they live in appalling conditions with restrictions on their movement and the risk of renewed violence. Others were trapped in remote and inaccessible locations beyond the reach of humanitarians. Renewed clashes also flared between ethnic armed groups and the military in Kachin, Shan and Chin states, triggering new displacements.[38]

Marguerite Nguena sits in the house she occupies with her children and grandchildren in Bazanga, CAR. Photo: NRC/ Alexis Huguet, August 2017

RETURNING TO DISPLACEMENT

While the world's attention is focused on refugees fleeing in search of safety, protection and opportunities abroad, many make the return journey each year back to their countries of origin. Even when returns are voluntary, however, which is by no means always the case, many refugees go back to fragile situations. Refugees unable to return to their former homes or integrate sustainably elsewhere in their country in effect become internally displaced, and face the same obstacles to durable solutions as other IDPs. Returnees may also be forced to move again if the underlying drivers of insecurity and displacement in their home country remain unaddressed.[39] Of the almost 2 million recorded returns in 2017, the majority took place to countries still in the midst of armed conflict and unresolved displacement crises.

Nigeria, Somalia and Afghanistan all offered insight into the plight of refugees who returned to a life of internal displacement in 2017. Serious concerns were raised about the forcible return of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon. People were trucked back to militarised displacement camps and villages in Borno state, where the Boko Haram insurgency and military operations against it are ongoing.[40] As a senior UN official in Nigeria said, "the return of refugees under the prevailing conditions … is essentially a return to an IDP situation".[41] This was thought to be the case for many of the returnees as of the end of 2017.

Somali refugees returned from Kenya, often prompted by fear of camp closures.[42] Others returned to take advantage of the cash assistance UNHCR provides as part of its repatriation package to pay off their debts.[43] Many, however, were unable to return to their areas of origin and joined the ranks of the country's IDPs instead.[44] The high cost of accommodation and land in Mogadishu has pushed most of those going back to the capital into living in informal settlements, and returnees to Kismayo have joined IDPs in overcrowded camps with sub-standard housing.[45]

Many returnees to Afghanistan have also gone back to a life of internal displacement and increased vulnerability. Large numbers of undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan and Iran in 2017, and the voluntary nature of these movements is widely contested (see spotlight, p.36).[46] Both returned refugees and IDPs struggle to secure safe and dignified accommodation, obtain documentation and access education and other basic services.[47]

IDPs IN HARM'S WAY

Displacement as a result of conflict all too often fails to provide IDPs with the safety they seek and need, as evidenced in 2017 by attacks on displacement camps and settlements, and during evacuations.

IDPs in Nigeria fell victim to extreme violence perpetrated both by Boko Haram and the country's military. Boko Haram sent suicide bombers into densely populated displacement camps, and government airstrikes in January intended to target Boko Haram fighters in the north-eastern town of Rann hit settlements sheltering IDPs instead.[48] An international outcry ensued and the government expressed its regret, but despite calls for the authorities to do more to protect IDPs, Boko Haram bombings, beheadings and shootings inside displacement sites increased during the year.[49]

Insecurity in IDPs' places of refuge often leaves them with little choice but to flee again. Thousands of IDPs fled from camps in Kajo-Keji in South Sudan's Central Equatoria province in October to escape fighting between government and opposition forces and clashes between insurgent groups. Some subsequently crossed the border into Uganda.[50] Artillery shelling near camps in Myanmar's Kachin state caused new displacements in January, and in CAR a hospital sheltering displaced people was attacked in the town of Zemio in August.[51] Hundreds of IDPs also fled their camp in the Cameroonian city of Kolofata after suicide bombings killed scores of residents in June.[52]

IDPs in transit also came under indiscriminate attack. A car bomb was detonated in a transfer centre in the Syrian town of al-Rashideen in April, killing 125 people and injuring more than 400 despite an agreement between the government and rebel groups for their evacuation.[53] A month earlier, 73 IDPs were killed in a similar explosion while trying to return to their homes in al-Bab city.[54]

Temporary IDP shelters by the mountains in Sortony, North Darfur, Sudan. Photo: OCHA/ Amy Martin, January 2017

NO SOLUTIONS IN SIGHT

Tackling protracted displacement should be a core priority if countries are to achieve sustainable socio-economic growth, and, for those emerging from conflict, sustained peace. The phenomenon, however, is becoming the norm.[55]

A number of factors feed such chronic situations, including governments' inability or unwillingness to address underlying fragility, cycles of violence in the absence of lasting political solutions, poverty and the disruption of livelihoods caused by sudden-onset disasters and slow-onset phenomena such as drought, land degradation, desertification and coastal erosion.

In theory IDPs should be able to achieve durable solutions via return, local integration or resettlement elsewhere, but in reality, the first option is often impossible and third only available in relatively few cases.[56] Part of the problem lies with the international community's limited engagement beyond providing humanitarian assistance and governments' failure to undertake structured development planning that helps IDPs bring their displacement to a sustainable end.[57]

Haiti provides a clear example of how the unaddressed consequences of a disaster such as the 2010 earthquake have fuelled subsequent displacement associated with natural hazards. We highlighted this phenomenon in 2012, showing how its cumulative impacts increase the vulnerability of IDPs and host communities alike and fuel further cycles of displacement.[58] Since the 2010 earthquake, Haiti has been hit by at least nine significant floods and eight storms, the most intense being hurricane Sandy in 2012, hurricane Matthew in 2016 and hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017.

Limited information about people who remain displaced long after initial humanitarian responses have ended makes it difficult to paint a comprehensive picture of protracted displacement in Haiti, but according to the UN around 2.2 million vulnerable people, or about 20 per cent of the country's population, are still in need of humanitarian assistance.[59] Help is needed to reduce

food insecurity, rein in a cholera epidemic that has claimed more than 9,700 lives, support IDPs still living in camps and people affected by recent disasters in urban areas, and improve disaster preparedness.[60]

The situation in **Palestine** highlights how the failure of the parties to a conflict and the international community to resolve an entrenched political problem can drive protracted displacement. This has the world's oldest caseload of IDPs, dating back to the 1967 war. The conflict has also produced the world's oldest stock of refugees, dating back to 1948, some of whom still live in camps inside the occupied territories.

Despite the signing of a peace deal for Darfur in July 2011, millions of IDPs are still living in camps in **Sudan**. The government has tried to close displacement camps over the years, claiming they are breeding grounds for further rebellions and asking IDPs to choose between returning to their homes or resettling in urban areas. The drivers of insecurity and conflict have not, however been addressed, making sustainable returns impossible and leading to protracted displacement.
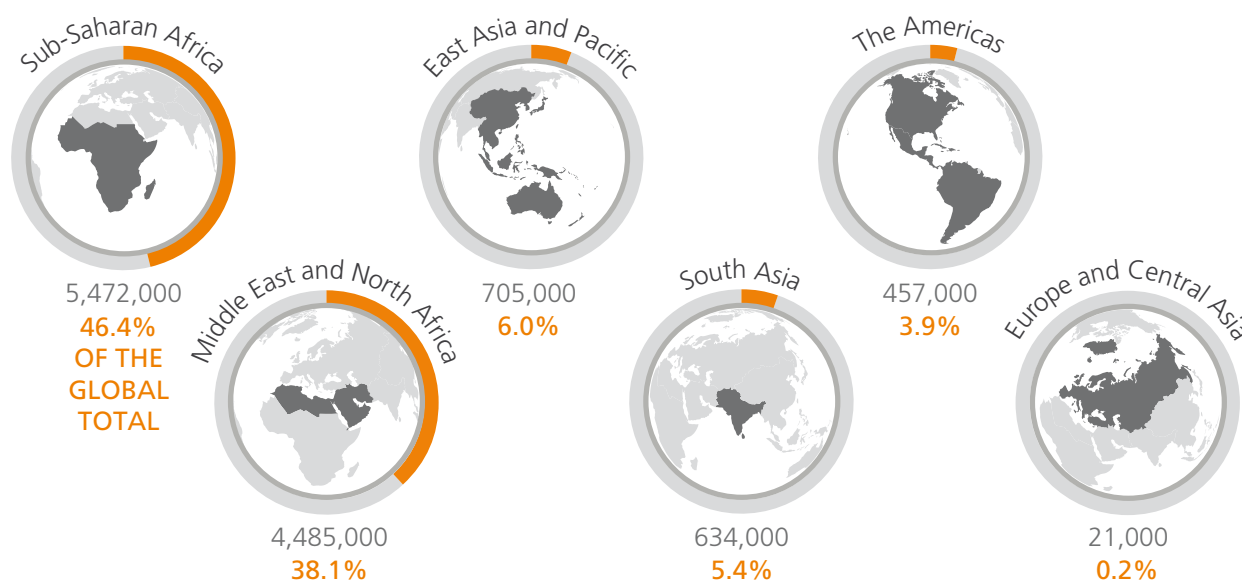
The government announced in February 2018 that it plans to turn some displacement camps in Darfur into permanent settlements, giving IDPs the option of a residential plot or returning to their homes. It remains to be seen whether the new plans are implemented, and if so whether they help Darfur's IDPs achieve durable solutions.

These are but a few examples of long-running and unresolved internal displacement crises, which in turn have created extremely vulnerable populations. Ignoring them poses a real risk to long-term stability and development in the countries concerned.
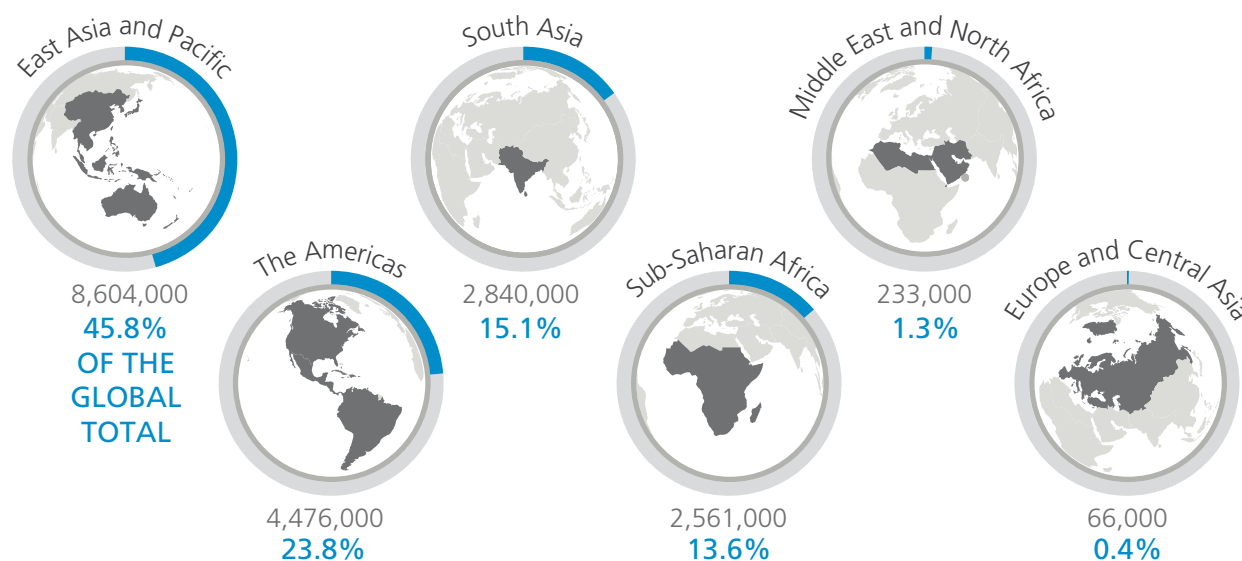
REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

The distribution of displacement across the globe in 2017 mirrored the patterns of previous years. Most conflict displacement took place in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, although there were also significant new displacements in South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific. Displacement associated with disasters, on the other hand, was prevalent in East Asia and Pacific, the Americas and South Asia.[61]

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE: NEW DISPLACEMENTS BY REGION

Sub-Saharan Africa
5,472,000
46.4%
OF THE
GLOBAL
TOTAL

East Asia and Pacific
705,000
6.0%

The Americas
457,000
3.9%

Middle East and North Africa
4,485,000
38.1%

South Asia
634,000
5.4%

Europe and Central Asia
21,000
0.2%

DISASTERS: NEW DISPLACEMENTS BY REGION

East Asia and Pacific
8,604,000
45.8%
OF THE
GLOBAL
TOTAL

South Asia
2,840,000
15.1%

Middle East and North Africa
233,000
1.3%

The Americas
4,476,000
23.8%

Sub-Saharan Africa
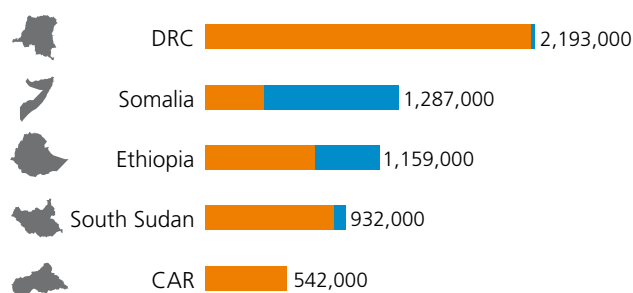2,561,000
13.6%

Europe and Central Asia
66,000
0.4%

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

CONFLICT 46.4%
DISASTERS 13.6%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

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

DRC		2,193,000
Somalia		1,287,000
Ethiopia		1,159,000
South Sudan		932,000
CAR		542,000

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 14 per cent of the world's population, but almost half of new conflict displacement took place in the region.[62] There were 5.5 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2017, double the figure for the previous year.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** was hardest hit, with almost 2.2 million new displacements, more than twice the number in 2016 and more than the next three worst-affected countries in the region combined. Together, **South Sudan**, **Ethiopia** and the **Central African Republic (CAR)** accounted for a total of more than 2.1 million new displacements.

The international response to the crisis in **DRC** is severely underfunded despite the UN declaration of a level-three emergency in the country and the huge number of people newly displaced, second only to Syria globally (see spotlight, p.20).[63] In the meantime, 857,000 new displacements were recorded in **South Sudan**, the result of food insecurity fuelled by conflict and widespread violence targeting civilians.[64] There is little or no humanitarian access to some regions and communities, making an already dire situation worse.

In addition to DRC, in Central Africa there were 539,000 new displacements in **CAR**, more than ten times the figure for 2016, and 86,000 in neighbouring **Republic of Congo**. In the Lake Chad Basin a combination of the Boko Haram insurgency and clashes over diminishing

resources led to 279,000 new displacements in **Nige-ria**'s North-Eastern states, 99,000 in **Cameroon**'s Far North region, 40,000 in **Niger**'s Diffa region and 5,800 in **Chad**'s Lac region. The Basin as a whole accounted for eight per cent of new displacements associated with conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa (see spotlight, p.21).

The Horn of Africa accounted for a fifth of the region's new displacements, the result not only of conflict but also sudden and slow-onset disasters and the complex, overlapping dynamics between them.[65] In **Ethiopia**, border disputes and revenge attacks, and competition over increasingly scarce resources such as land and water in the Oromia and Somali regions triggered more than 725,000 new displacements, most of them in the last quarter of the year. Ongoing instability in **Somalia** caused by al-Shabaab attacks and food insecurity continued to drive the country's protracted conflict, triggering 388,000 new displacements.

The causes of flight in **Somalia** are closely interlinked and it is difficult to disaggregate estimates by trigger, or the event that ultimately left people with little or no choice but to flee their home. Figure 4 (p.18) shows the complexity of the situation, laying out the range of triggers that appear in the data sources.

We are able for the first time to estimate the number of new displacements associated with drought, and the figure is high, at 858,000 out of the total for the

country of 1,287,000. Included in the overall figure are new displacements associated with sudden- and slow-onset disasters and various types of conflict and violence – clan conflict, military offensives by the Somali army and the African Union's military mission, and other conflict that mainly covers attacks by al-Shabaab and other militias against the civilian population. Also included is the inability to access healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance due to insecurity.

The complexity of the crisis in Somalia and the Horn of Africa more widely, coupled with the lack of high-quality disaggregated data on displacement and its drivers and triggers, means the number of IDPs reported for the sub-region is likely to be an underestimate.

Disasters also triggered significant displacement elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017, forcing almost 2.6 million people to flee their homes. Drought triggered most of the 434,000 displacements recorded in **Ethiopia**, cyclone Enawo displaced 247,000 people in **Madagascar**, floods 189,000 in **Niger** and cyclone Dineo most of the 170,000 in **Mozambique**. Other countries affected by disasters were **Nigeria** (122,000), **Uganda** (95,000) and **Malawi** (84,000).

This type of displacement in the region tends to involve short-term movements before people return and rebuild. Small-scale and frequent disasters go relatively unnoticed as conflict takes centre stage, but what these localised crises illustrate is that displacement is more about an endogenous problem of poverty and lack of development than the consequence of external threats posed by natural hazards. Sub-Saharan Africa's population and urbanisation rate are predicted to increase dramatically in the coming decades, putting more people at risk of disasters. If unaddressed, poverty, vulnerability and climate change will increase the risk of displacement.[66]

The drivers of displacement in the region are a complex overlap of social, political and environmental factors, particularly slow-onset hazards such as drought, desertification, coastal erosion and land degradation. A combination of conflict and loss of livelihoods attributed to diminishing grazing land and loss of livestock, continues to cause displacement in the Horn of Africa and Sahel region.

Against this backdrop, attacks by extremist groups triggered displacement in many African countries during the year with al-Shabaab in **Somalia**, Boko Haram in **Nigeria**, **Cameroon**, **Chad** and **Niger**, and local Islamist groups in **Mali**, **Burkina Faso** and **Mozambique**. Despite some regional dimensions and ties to global jihadist movements, these insurgencies are, first and foremost, the product of local socioeconomic and political grievances in areas worst affected by slow-onset hazards. Conflict over natural resources such as precious stones and minerals in **CAR** and **DRC**, and oil in **Nigeria** and **South Sudan** have also triggered some of the worst violence and largest waves of displacement in the region.

Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa is not only a growing humanitarian crisis, but also an obstacle to the region's development. The continent as a whole is in a unique position, however, because in 2009 it adopted a legally binding regional instrument, the Kampala Convention, which aims to reduce the number of people displaced by

FIGURE 4: Disaggregation of displacement triggers in Somalia
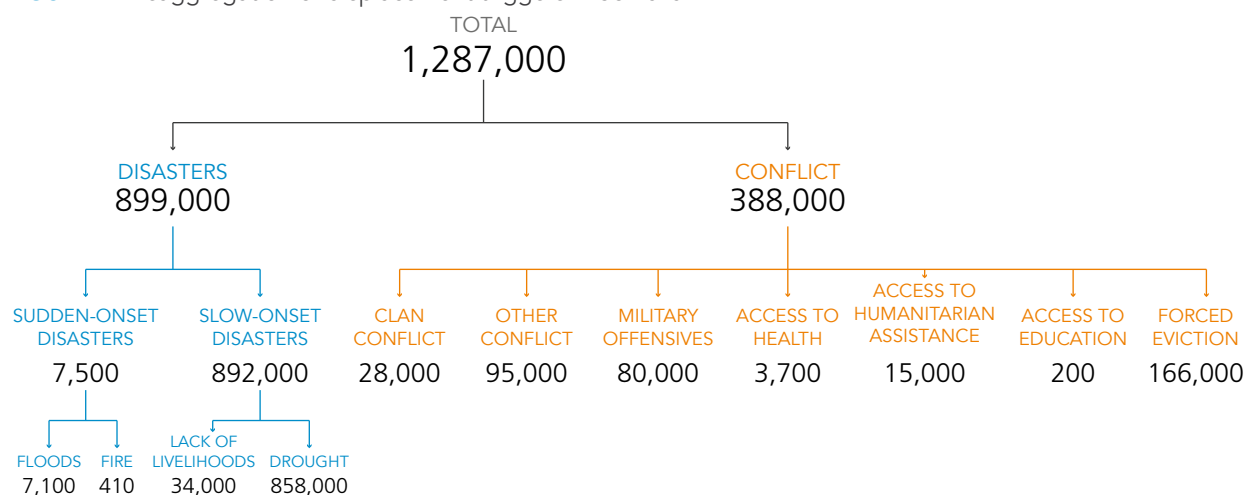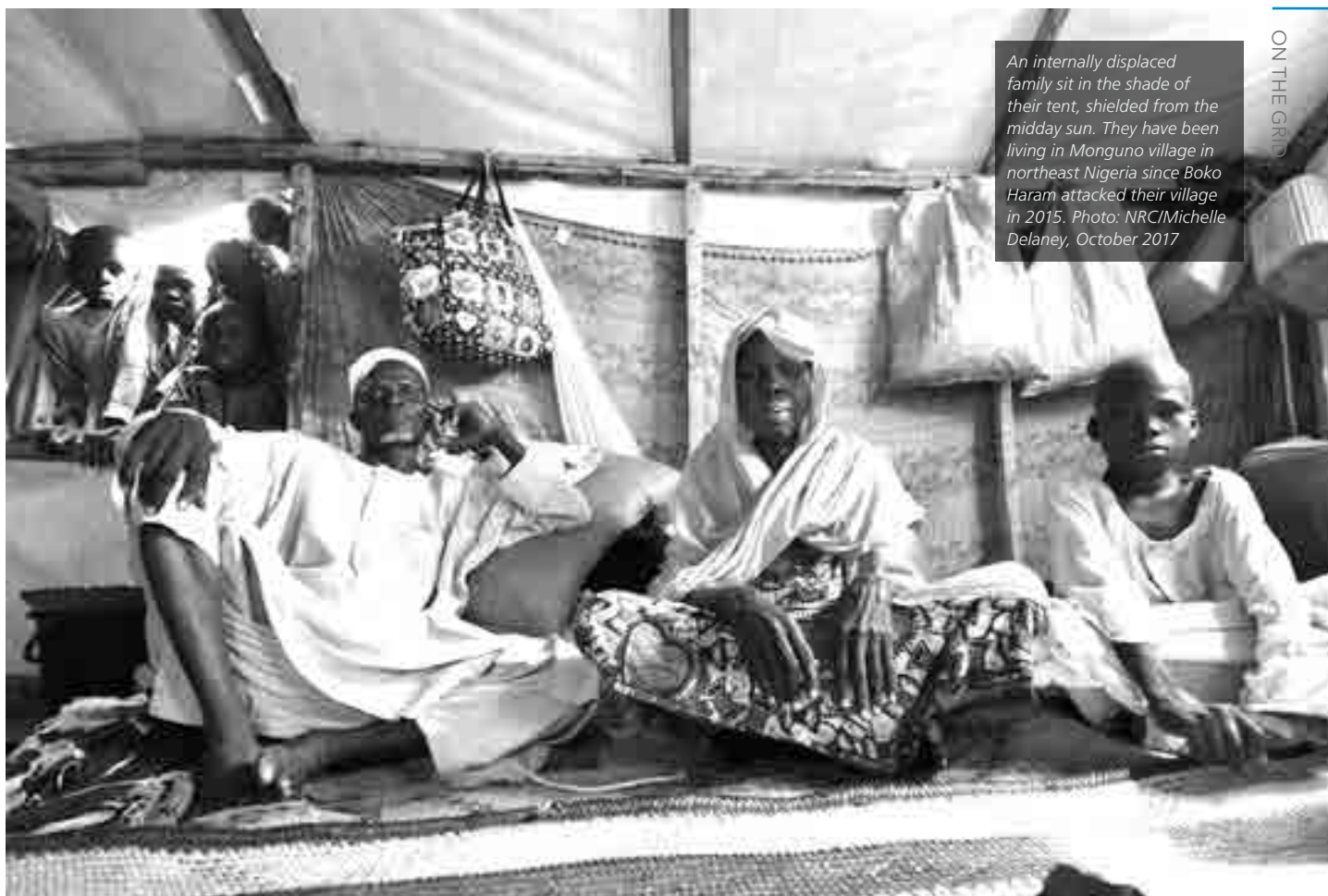
conflict and disasters and guarantees their protection. Article 10 also highlights the need to address displacement associated with development projects.[67]

States have taken a range of measures to implement the convention and its provisions, which entered into force in 2012, including the development of national laws and policies on internal displacement and the establishment of structures for the coordination and monitoring of responses. Forty countries have signed the convention, and 27 have ratified it.[68] Some, such as **Sudan** and **Kenya**, have not signed, but have developed their own national laws and policies independently.[69] This reveals a widespread recognition of internal displacement as a problem, and the need to address it and reduce future risk.

Progress in domesticating and implementing the convention's provisions, however, has been modest. The reasons vary from country to country, but can be summarised as lack of capacity, failure to make the issue a political and economic priority, and unclear budget allocations at the national level. Additionally, domestic courts have not made specific provisions to prosecute state or non-state perpetrators of crimes under the convention.[70] This major gap raises the issue of accountability and responsibility for the protection of people displaced by conflict. The situation in terms of displacement associated with disasters and development projects is even more complex, given the role of the private sector and multinational investors, and the fact that measures to mitigate growing risk have not been laid out in clear legal frameworks.

As with the Kampala Convention, however, the growing gap between words and action is concerning, and the displacement figures we present in this report show that the adoption of policies does not necessarily translate into change on the ground. The region should do more to implement existing laws and policies, and in doing so, realise its potential as a leader in addressing the impacts of internal displacement.

DRC

An acute L3 emergency without the funding to match

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been ravaged by conflict for decades, and there is no end to the violence in sight. The already dire humanitarian situation in the country deteriorated still further in 2017, prompting the UN to declare a level-three (L3) emergency, a designation reserved for only the most complex crises.[71] As many as 2,166,000 new displacements were recorded during the year, second only to Syria, and there were about 4.5 million IDPs in the country as of the end of 2017.

The L3 designation is intended to highlight the scale of the needs involved and mobilise maximum funding and capacity to respond, but little has changed on the ground since it was declared. Nor is the designation countrywide. It applies only to the provinces of South Kivu and Tanganyika and the region of Kasai, raising the concern that funding earmarked for other provinces with acute humanitarian needs, such as North Kivu, will simply be reallocated to the L3 areas.

Doing so would have potentially serious implications. There has already been a significant reduction in the number of humanitarian organisations working in North Kivu because of funding shortages, and this despite a resurgence of mass displacement caused by renewed fighting between DRC's armed forces and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel group. With as many as 1.2 million people living in displacement as of the end of the year, North Kivu accounted for about 26 per cent of the country's IDPs.

The humanitarian coordinator in Kinshasa has described DRC as "one of the world's largest, most acute and complex" humanitarian crises with "unrelenting cycles of violence, diseases, malnutrition and loss of livelihoods", and OCHA has launched its largest-ever funding appeal for the country to assist the 10.5 million people in need of aid in 2018.[72] The importance of attracting new funds rather than diverting existing commitments has been widely stressed, and the development sector, which has been all but absent from DRC, has been called upon to play its part in re-establishing the health and other key services, so that much-needed humanitarian funding does not have to be redirected.

DRC's IDPs have a wide range of protection needs, and children make up about 60 per cent of the country's displaced population.[73] The UN verified 2,334 grave violations against children in 2016, the highest number since 2012. The figure includes the recruitment of 492 children by armed groups, 82 per cent of which occurred in North Kivu.[74] NRC also reported that the education of as many as 64,000 children was at risk in the Kasai region because armed groups had occupied schools and instilled a climate of fear.[75] Children deprived of education opportunities are more likely to join armed groups.[76]

Food insecurity is also at the highest level on record. About 9.9 million people in DRC are food insecure and two million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition, accounting for 12 per cent of the global caseload.[77] More than 55,000 people contracted cholera in 2017, during an epidemic that claimed more than 1,000 lives. It is against this backdrop that OCHA has requested $1.68 billion for DRC in 2018, but given that the 2017 appeal for $812.5 million was only 50 per cent met, the outlook for closing the funding gap this year is bleak.[78]

Displacement in the
LAKE CHAD BASIN

An Islamist insurgency that began in Nigeria's predomi-nantly Muslim northern state of Borno in 2009, Boko Haram, soon sparked a regional crisis that spread into neighbouring countries.[79] Eight years later, the group is still active despite concerted and often heavy-handed campaigns against it by national militaries and the Multi-national Joint Task Force set up in 2012 and made up of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Boko Haram's violence continued unabated in 2017, with an increase in the number of attacks recorded in Came-roon and Nigeria.[80] Counterinsurgency operations have also been stepped up. These have caused internal and cross-border displacement not only of civilians but also insurgents, effectively helping to spread the violence. This impact was felt in Cameroon in 2017, where the group's attacks also fuelled internal displacement. The conflict led to 119,000 new displacements in Cameroon, 279,000 in Nigeria, 40,000 in Niger and 5,800 in Chad. There were more than 2.2 million people living in displacement in the Lake Chad Basin as of the end of 2017.
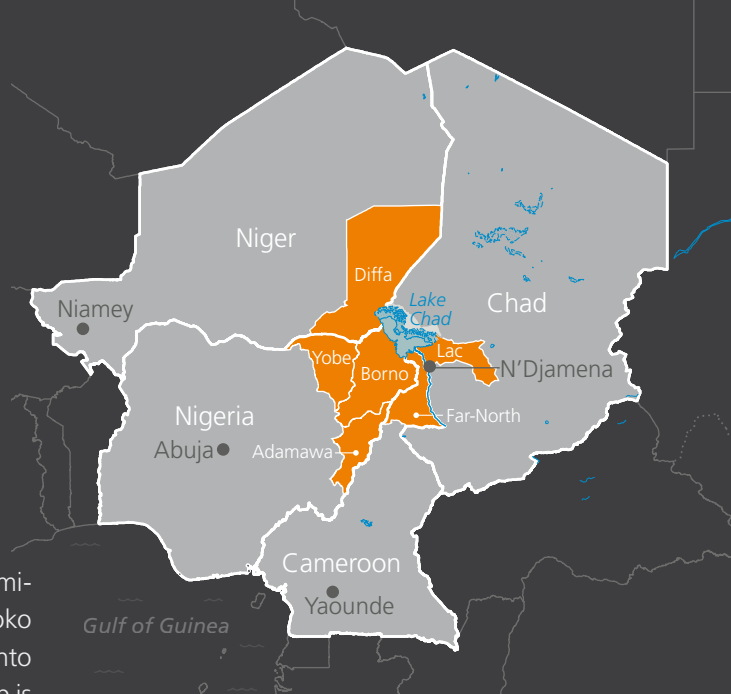
Despite the increase in Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, a large number of returns to the north-east of the country were recorded during the year. Nigeria, Cameroon and UNHCR also signed a tripartite agreement for the volun-tary repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Came-roon back to areas deemed safe.[81] The agreement and the 1951 Refugee Convention both safeguard against forced returns, but Human Rights Watch and others have documented clear violations, such as Nigerian refugees in Cameroon being forcefully trucked back to Nigeria.[82] UNHCR also denounced forced returns in June and called on the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to uphold the agreement to facilitate a voluntary process in line with international standards.[83]

There have also been waves of what the government calls spontaneous returns to north-eastern Nigeria, meaning people going back voluntarily. Instead of returning, they have found themselves living in various forms of tempo-rary settlements in their local government areas. The Nigerian military has also sealed off areas it deems to be active conflict zones, preventing civilians from returning. Given these circumstances, many of the movements described as returns might more accurately be defined as failed returns or secondary displacements.

Besides clear physical impediments, returnees face other significant obstacles to achieving durable solutions. Many are pastoralists, farmers and fishermen who previously relied on cross-border trade for their livelihoods, which have been severely affected by their loss of access to land and restrictions on their movement.[84] The heavy security presence in the region and constraints on activities such as fishing, which the militants are said to have infiltrated, have placed an additional burden on returnees, IDPs and their host communities.[85] People's inability to sustain their traditional livelihoods has fuelled further displace-ment toward camps and other areas where humanitarian assistance is available, increasing aid dependency and making durable solutions a distant prospect.

A purely military approach will not defeat Boko Haram or end the region's crisis. It is a region that has long been plagued by lack of investment in basic health and educa-tion infrastructure and widespread poverty, inequality and political marginalisation. It has also suffered prolonged droughts which, combined with the overuse of water resources, have caused Lake Chad to shrink to a fraction of its size in 50 years.[86] All of these elements have coalesced to undermine people's livelihoods, and it is in this environ-ment that Boko Haram emerged and has come to thrive and expand. Those factors will also continue to impede the pursuit of durable solutions, leading to protracted displacement that could in turn fuel further conflict.
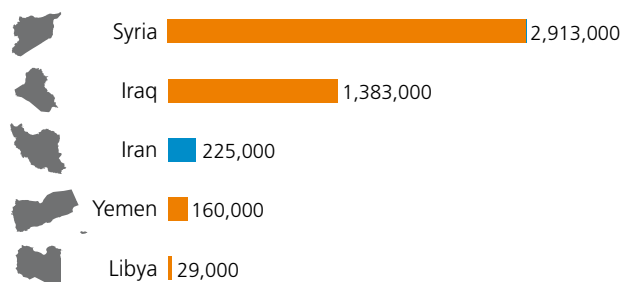
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict and disasters)

Country	Displacement
Syria	2,913,000
Iraq	1,383,000
Iran	225,000
Yemen	160,000
Libya	29,000

CONFLICT 38.1%
DISASTERS 1.3%
OF THE GLOBAL TOTAL

The Middle East and North Africa accounted for 38 per cent of new displacements associated with conflict and violence worldwide in 2017, with almost 4.5 million recorded. New displacement in the region was concentrated in **Iraq**, **Syria** and **Yemen**, all of which the UN classified as L3 emergencies.[87] The three countries also figure among the ten with the largest stock figures globally, accounting between them for 11.4 million people living in displacement as of the end of 2017. Syria and Iraq had the first and fourth-highest figures at almost 6.8 million and 2.7 million respectively, and Yemen the sixth-highest at 2 million.

The fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) caused much of the new displacement in **Iraq** and **Syria** during the year. The battle to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul led to more than 800,000 displacements in 2017, while in Syria, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) drove ISIL out of its self-proclaimed capital of Raqqa, causing the displacement of the city's entire population of about 230,000 people.[88] Syrian government forces also retook Deir Ezzor from ISIL, causing more than 800,000 new displacements in the process.

We also estimate that there were over 1.8 million returns in Iraq in 2017, most of which to areas previously held by ISIL. People trying to return have experienced a number of significant obstacles, including unexploded ordnances, mines and booby traps, as well as complex administrative processes and new local dynamics. This has left them unable to achieve durable solutions, meaning we still consider them internally displaced and count them as such.

Returns are also being discussed in **Syria**, both to areas previously controlled by ISIL and opposition enclaves where de-escalation zones were set up in 2017, particularly in Idlib and Daraa governorates. Unsafe conditions in the former and ongoing conflict in the latter, however, continue to displace people and prevent those returning from achieving durable solutions. Return conditions and obstacles in both countries will be important to monitor in 2018 (see spotlight, p.24).

Conflict continued to be the main trigger of displacement in **Yemen** in 2017. The launch of Operation Golden Spear by pro-government forces backed by the Saudi-led coalition and airpower led to new displacement early in the year, with at least 41,000 people fleeing the most affected coastal areas in the immediate aftermath of the operation, followed by many more. Blockades throughout the year caused severe shortages of food and basic medicines, forcing people to move in search of basic services and humanitarian assistance. They have even forced homeless, destitute and hungry IDPs to return to what may have been left of their homes in frontline areas. 160,000 new displacements were recorded in Yemen over the year, a number that should be considered an underestimate (see spotlight, p.26)[89].

More people returned in **Libya** than were displaced in 2017, but conflict between local militias in several areas of the country still led to about 29,000 new displacements. In **Palestine**, about 700 new displacements were recorded. Demolitions, forced evictions, settler violence and the illegal expansion of settlements continued to force Palestinian families from their homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Discriminatory laws that systematically deny Palestinians building permits and access to basic services are also an underlying driver of displacement.

The Middle East and North Africa region faces significant challenges in protecting and assisting people displaced by conflict. **Yemen** adopted a national policy on internal displacement in 2013, but the lack of government capacity and legal framework for its implementation along with the state of paralysis the government has found itself in since 2014, places responsibility for responding to the country's IDPs primarily in the hands of the international community.[90] Other countries also have policies, but they are reactive in that they are mainly a framework for land and property restitution for a specific past event, such as the pre-March 2003 Baathist era in **Iraq** and the 1975 to 1990 civil war in **Lebanon**.[91] They were not designed as a foundation for the management of future displacement crises.

Despite the relatively low disaster displacement figure, the region is not spared from disaster risk. Drought, desertification, sand storms, flooding and earthquakes are the most common hazards affecting the region, some of which have put a considerable number of people to move. Rapidly growing and increasingly dense urban populations, poor urban planning and low construction standards heighten people's exposure and vulnerability to hazards.

Disasters displaced about 234,000 people across the region, 225,000 of them in **Iran**. The country is prone to seismic activity, and a series of earthquakes caused displacement throughout the year. The largest, of magnitude 7.3, struck western areas in November, reducing whole neighbourhoods to rubble and destroying almost 80 per cent of the infrastructure in the cities of Sar Pol Yahab and Ghasr Shirin.[92] Storms and flooding also displaced as many as 21,000 people in Iran throughout the year.

The Arab League adopted an eight-year DRR strategy in 2012, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) committed to developing a risk reduction roadmap.[93] The Arab League's DRR strategy is one of only a few that explicitly mention the need to prioritise vulnerable groups, including IDPs. Such initiatives demonstrate political will, but many challenges remain, chief among them increasing the capacity of national bodies, clearly delineating their roles and developing standardised data collection methods to inform decision-makers.

Displacement has reached unprecedented levels in the Middle East and North Africa, and the dearth of national or regional policies or legal mechanisms tackling the phenomenon reflects a lack of political will to protect IDPs and address root causes of displacement, in particular the conflicts that plague the region. These conflicts are characterised by blatant disrespect for human rights and international humanitarian law. The international community has sometimes been complicit in, and has otherwise largely failed to address such violations. Without renewed efforts by states in the region, and the wider international community to resolve these political crises, engage in reconstruction and build stability, internal displacement will continue to grow.

SYRIA

No let-up in displacement despite new agreement

An end to the conflict in Syria is still nowhere in sight, but 2017 may have marked the opening of a new chapter. The government now controls more territory than it has since mid-2012, and de-escalation zones were negotiated and briefly put into operation. Despite signs of a potential improvement in the security situation, however, there were still 2.9 million new displacements in 2017, the highest figure in the world.

An initial agreement signed by Iran, Russia and Turkey in Astana, Kazakhstan, in May 2017 led to arrangements for a ceasefire and the establishment of de-escalation zones, and subsequent meetings reiterated the parties' resolve to uphold and expand it. The four zones covered by the final agreement signed in September primarily include non-government controlled areas of the southern governorates of Daraa and Quneitra, besieged pockets around Damascus and Homs, all of Idlib province and portions of Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia governorates.[94] The deal envisages unhindered humanitarian access, the restoration of basic services and the cessation of ground assaults and airstrikes.[95]

If upheld, this could greatly improve the lives of a large number of people, prevent further displacement and prompt a significant wave of returns. More than 2.5 million people currently live in these areas.[96] The displacement figures, however, tell a very different story. More than 130,000 new displacements were recorded in Idlib in the first half of the year, and another 150,000 in the second half, while implementation of the agreement was in full swing. In other provinces and areas covered by the deal, conditions have deteriorated severely.

The situation in eastern Ghouta, a besieged area of the Damascus suburbs, was particularly dire in the latter part of 2017. Aid workers said they had less access to the almost 400,000 civilians living there than before the de-escalation zones were agreed.[97] The already extremely high cost of basic foodstuffs skyrocketed, making it difficult for most inhabitants to afford even
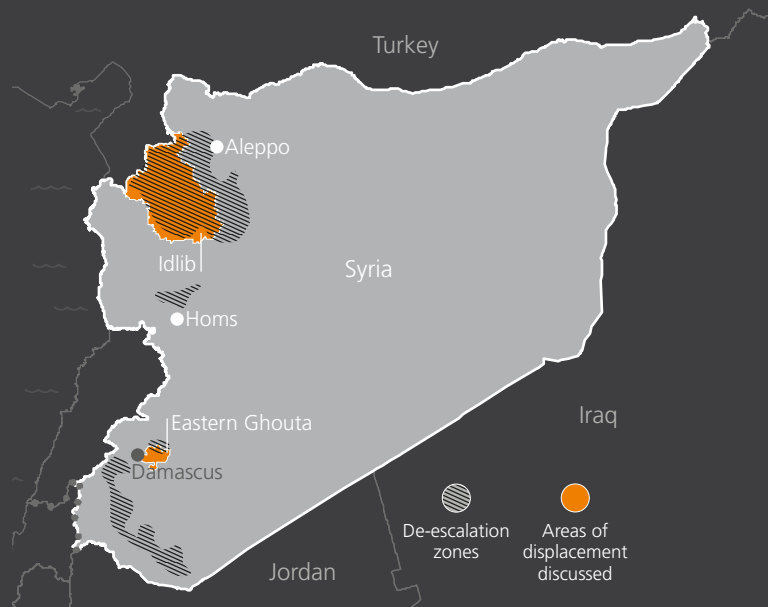
one meal a day, and the proportion of children suffering from acute malnutrition shot up from 2.1 per cent in January 2017 to 11.9 per cent in early November.[98] An assessment published in December also noted that infant deaths caused by lack of food had been reported for the third consecutive month, and that some people had resorted to going days without eating since November.[99]

The UN and other aid agencies compiled an evacuation list of 500 patients in need of urgent medical attention, but as of March 2018, the evacuations had not been approved and 12 people on the list had already died while the agencies stood by waiting.[100] The UN's special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, told a press conference in December there was "no reason whatsoever to have this medieval type of approach regarding civilians, patients, children, women, particularly if the conflict is getting close to the end, one reason more to consider this unacceptable".[101]

Against this backdrop, an unprecedented number of returns was also recorded in 2017. More than 800,000 IDPs and about 56,000 refugees were said to have made their way back to their places of origin during the year.[102] The bulk of the returns have been to places still hosting high numbers of IDPs, putting added pressure on already overstretched communities. Detailed information about returnees' situations and the push and pull factors that prompted their decisions is still unavailable, however, making it impossible to draw a direct correlation between return movements and implementation of the de-escalation zones.

An internally displaced couple look after their eight grandchildren at a camp in Hasakeh, Syria. Photo: NRC, 2017

Continued displacement as an outcome of their implementation would not be unexpected. Similar dynamics were seen when so-called local ceasefires or evacuation agreements were agreed in Daraya in Rural Damascus, eastern Aleppo city, Al Waer in Homs and Four Towns in Idlib in 2016 and 2017. Russia and Iran sponsored the arrangements and the Syrian government framed them as reconciliation efforts, but in reality they involved prolonged sieges and bombardments that concluded with the displacement of the populations in question.[103]

The previous arrangements differ from those of the Astana agreement, but there are fears that the establishment of the de-escalation zones will prove to be another political rather than humanitarian initiative. During the drafting of this report, the Syrian government began a full-fledged offensive in southern Idlib, northern Hama and southern Aleppo to retake key areas, leading to the displacement of as many as 385,000 people in the first quarter of 2018.[104]

The government was also leading an unprecedented offensive to retake the besieged enclave of eastern Ghouta, which led to the displacement of at least 85,000 people within the enclave in March when the siege was partially breached.[105] It appears that despite new agreements, de-escalation zones and ongoing international peace efforts, heavy fighting and significant displacement are set to continue.

YEMEN

Insecurity and shrinking humanitarian space

Unrelenting violence and shifting insecurity propelled Yemen to several bleak milestones in 2017: 1,000 days of war, a million suspected cases of cholera, two million people displaced by conflict as of end of year and a humanitarian crisis now widely regarded as the world's most acute.[106]

Conflict continues to be the primary driver of displacement, as a coalition led by Saudi Arabia in support of Yemen's government battles Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement. Of the 3.1 million people forced to flee their homes since the violence escalated in March 2015, two million were still living in internal displacement as of the end of 2017. People have been displaced across 21 of Yemen's 22 governorates, but the overwhelming majority of IDPs come from Taiz, Hajjah, Amanat Al Asimah and Amran.

The new displacements of 160,000 over the course of the year is a relatively small figure, but it masks much larger fluctuations and dynamics in which families flee and return as violence flares and subsides. An escalation of the conflict, including sustained airstrikes and ground clashes has also hampered access to various parts of the country for humanitarians, the media, researchers and data collectors, making it impossible to get a full picture of displacement in the country.

Much displacement takes place locally, and movements across frontlines are rare. Forty-four per cent of IDPs remain within their governorate of origin.[107] Their main consideration when they flee is to move toward areas where they are able to access humanitarian assistance and potential livelihood opportunities, which for many means urban rather than rural areas. Family ties, security concerns and financial restrictions are also factors in deciding where to seek refuge. Movement is prohibitively expensive for most, and fraught with safety risks for all.

The situation in Taiz city illustrates this point clearly. It is an active frontline, and movement in and out of the old city, which is home to around 600,000 people, is considered very dangerous. The frontline has moved little in the past year, but there has been significant artillery shelling and sniper fire. Movement within the old city, which is held by affiliates to the Saudi-led coalition, is also heavily controlled by checkpoints. Family, tribal and political allegiances also dictate the extent to which people are able to move in and around the area.

Fewer than 200,000 people have crossed Yemen's borders into neighbouring countries in search of protection since the conflict escalated, amounting to less than ten per cent of the overall displaced population.[108] The country's geography and conflict dynamics restrict the options of people trying to flee abroad, effectively trapping them between a hostile party to the north, extensive and highly insecure terrain to the east and impoverished neighbours reachable only via a perilous sea journey to the south. The country's main airport has also been closed to civilian traffic since August 2016. The fact that relatively few people have fled outside the country is likely to have played a significant role in keeping Yemen's crisis off the radar.

Blockades on the import and transport of basic supplies, including food and fuel, have led to shortages and spiralling inflation, further reducing the purchasing power of people with very few resources left. The price of the average food basket has been driven up by more than 40 per cent since the escalation of the conflict, and 8.4 million people are on the edge of starvation.[109] The irregular or non-payment of salaries to around 1.25 million civil servants since August 2016 has led to a breakdown in services and further economic deterioration. Fewer than 50 per cent of Yemen's health facilities were still fully functional as of the end of 2017, and 16 million people struggled to access safe water.[110]

Displaced people are among the most vulnerable to the worsening humanitarian and food security conditions.[111] Yemen's government adopted a national policy on IDPs

in June 2013 that provides a principled foundation for preventing displacement, protecting those affected and promoting durable solutions, but the breakdown in central governance since has impeded its implementation.[112]

Eighty per cent of the country's IDPs live in private dwellings, most commonly with family or in rented accommodation, a potentially protective factor that reflects longstanding trends and the fact that the national policy on IDPs allows for the establishment of displacement camps only as a last resort. The remaining people are accommodated in collective centres and spontaneous settlements established in repurposed schools and health facilities, religious buildings, abandoned premises and makeshift shelters. In some cases, community leaders have actively encouraged such settlements in an effort to ensure IDPs' access to humanitarian assistance and relieve pressure on struggling hosts.

Women and children constitute 75 per cent of Yemen's displaced population, and their protection concerns are particularly acute.[113] Their safety, access to services and livelihoods opportunities are compromised by entrenched inequalities, which puts them at increased risk of abuse and exploitation. Despite social norms that discourage the reporting of gender-based violence, a 36 per cent increase in access to related services was reported in 2017.[114] Displaced children are at extremely high risk of falling out of education and many become embroiled in negative coping mechanisms such as child labour, recruitment into armed groups and child marriage. A survey conducted across three governorates with large displaced populations in late 2016 found that 45 per cent of marriages involved girls under the age of 15.[115]

As the fighting continues, Yemen has also suffered large-scale outbreaks of preventable diseases. The country hovers on the brink of famine, and 22.2 million people out of the total population of 29.3 million are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance or protection.[116] Meaningful steps to revive peace talks offer the only hope of preventing what already constitutes an unprecedented crisis from deteriorating further into a situation that the UN's emergency relief coordinator has said "looks like the apocalypse".[117]
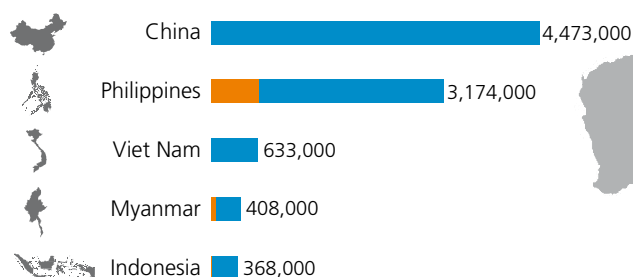

Internally displaced people living in the Al-Zuhra district of Al-Hudaydah governorate, Yemen. Photo: NRC, January 2017

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

DISASTERS 45.8%
CONFLICT 6%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST
NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict and disasters)

Country	New displacement
China	4,473,000
Philippines	3,174,000
Viet Nam	633,000
Myanmar	408,000
Indonesia	368,000

Sudden-onset disasters triggered most of the internal displacement recorded in East Asia and Pacific in 2017. This is not surprising given that the region is the most disaster-prone in the world. Disasters displaced 8.6 million people during the year, accounting for 46 per cent of the global total. **China**, the **Philippines** and **Viet Nam** were among the ten worst-affected countries in the world, with 4.5 million, 2.5 million and 633,000 new displacements respectively. **Indonesia** and **Myanmar** ranked 12th and 13th with 365,000 and 351,000.

The region is affected by both intensive (less frequent but high-impact) and extensive (recurrent but lower impact) events.[118] Our disaster displacement risk model estimates that sudden-onset disasters are likely to displace an average of more than 1.3 million people in **China**, more than a million in **Viet Nam** and more than 700,000 in the **Philippines** during any given year in the future. Across the region as a whole the prospective figure is five million. Thirty-six per cent of global disaster displacement risk is concentrated in East Asia and Pacific, more than any other region.[119] Flooding is the most common and recurring natural hazard and claims most victims.[120]

The Hunan floods in southern **China** between June and July triggered the region's largest displacement,

more than 1,620,000 people. Further flooding displaced 547,000 in other southern provinces. Tropical storm Tembin, known locally as Vinta, displaced 865,000 people in **Viet Nam** and the **Philippines** in December, and tropical storm Kai-tak, known locally as Urduja, 765,000 in the Philippines and **Malaysia**, also in December. A number of smaller-scale storms, floods and volcanic eruptions also caused displacement in the region.

Beyond the nature and intensity of the hazards themselves, two factors lie behind the scale of displacement associated with disasters in East Asia and Pacific. The number of people and assets exposed to floods and cyclones is thought to have increased by around 70 per cent between 1980 and 2015, largely as a result of urban expansion driven by the region's booming economy.[121] Today the region accounts for 30 per cent of the global population, most of whom live in urban areas exposed to a wide range of hazards including cyclones and storm surges, coastal and riverine floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis.[122] Vulnerability is also important. As of 2014, 25 per cent of urban residents lived in slums and other settlements less able to withstand the impact of natural hazards.[123]

Disasters have historically caused significant physical and economic losses, but the region has succeeded in

reducing mortality, the result of several countries introducing disaster risk reduction measures including early warning systems and pre-emptive evacuations.[124] The latter also constitute displacement, but of a different nature to that caused by the impacts of hazards themselves. If successfully implemented by more countries across the region, such measures would greatly reduce the scale of disaster mortality (see spotlight, p.30).

Pacific states in particular have established policies and guidelines to address human mobility associated with disasters, and these initiatives should be monitored closely for best practices and lessons learned for use in other countries and regions.[125] **Fiji**, **Kiribati** and **Vanuatu** have led the way in incorporating relocation, IDPs' human rights and cross-border movements into their governance arrangements, but clearer links between these national initiatives and the Nansen protection agenda and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are needed.[126]

Though the vast majority of people displaced in East Asia and Pacific in 2017 fled disasters, the region was not immune from displacement associated with conflict. At least 655,500 Rohingya Muslims fled across the border into Bangladesh to escape **Myanmar**'s military crackdown and inter-communal violence in Rakhine state, which also caused the internal displacement of about 26,700 non-Muslims. An unknown number of Rohingya may also have been internally displaced en route to Bangladesh. There were reports of thousands of people stuck at the border in northern Rakhine.

The refugee crisis in Bangladesh has been well-documented in the media, but access constraints in Rakhine mean little is known about the scale of internal displacement during the second half of the year, and figures cannot be verified.[127] Only a few international NGOs are able to operate in Rakhine, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNHCR. The scale of the refugee crisis, however, gives some indication of the protection concerns that any Rohingya still displaced in northern areas of the state, and more than 128,000 Rohingya and Kaman Muslims living in protracted displacement in central areas since 2012, are likely to face.

Nearly 22,000 new displacements were also recorded in Kachin, Shan and Chin states, areas where ethnic minorities have been in armed conflict with the **Myanmar** state for nearly seven decades. About 16,000 took place

in Kachin, where more than 89,000 people have been living in protracted displacement since 2011.

In the **Philippines**, the battle between the armed forces and ISIL affiliates for Marawi was the most significant outbreak of urban warfare in the country's recent history.[128] It began in May, lasted for five months and led to more than 350,000 new displacements before the government declared its military victory.

The Philippines adopted a national law in 2010 that recognises IDPs' rights in line with the Guiding Principles.[129] There are numerous examples of how it has helped people displaced by disasters, but it is unclear whether it has been put into action to protect and provide restitution for people fleeing conflict, including those in Marawi.[130]

There are clearly disparate levels of governance capacity and responses to disaster and conflict induced displacement across East Asia and Pacific. Good practices such as some governments' recognition of the importance of protecting IDPs via laws, policies and strategies, and the implementation of measures to minimise or prevent displacement, such as pre-emptive evacuations, are encouraging. But better monitoring and disaggregation of displacement data will be required in order to assess gaps in responses, and allow countries with differing capacities to design and implement concrete measures to better support the region's IDPs.

INDONESIA AND VANUATU

Displacement for good reason

The responses of the governments of Indonesia and Vanuatu to volcanic activity in 2017 show how effective early warning systems can be in reducing people's exposure to hazards. They also illustrate the fact that displacement need not always be a negative outcome, in that pre-emptive evacuations save lives and are an effective resilience measure. The two countries have unique approaches to disaster risk management, using the Sendai framework and the Sustainable Development Goals to improve their preparedness and responses as a means of reducing loss of life and people's vulnerability.

The **Indonesian** island Bali was on high alert for much of the last four months of the year as seismic activity around Mount Agung on the eastern end of the island increased. Shallow volcanic earthquakes began in August and evacuations started in September, peaking on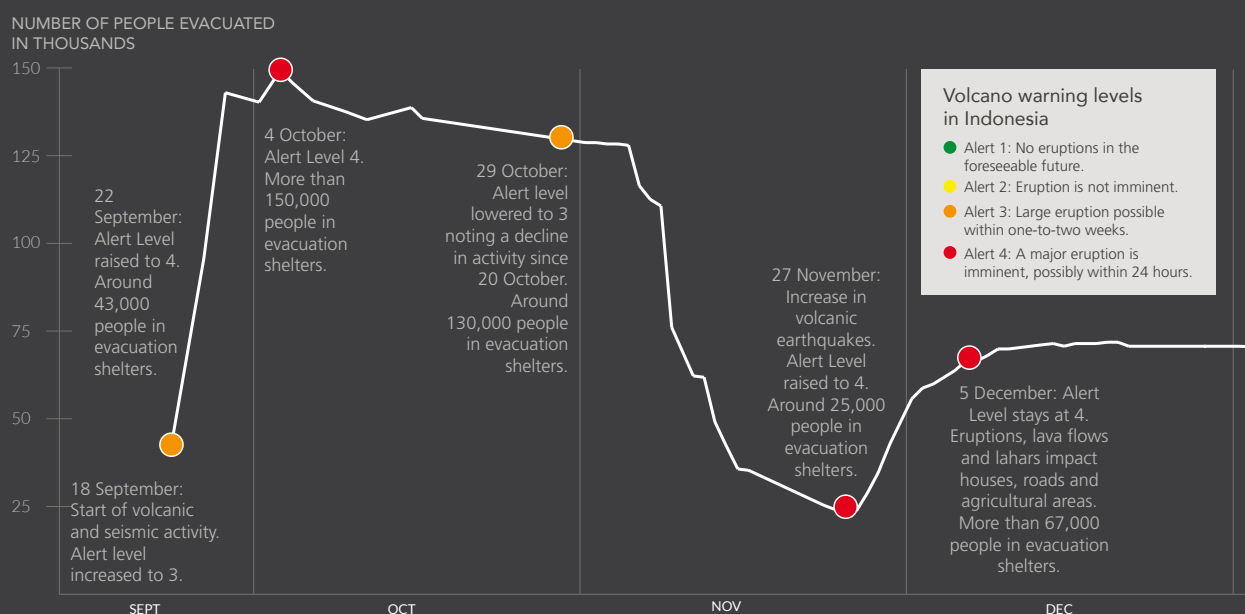 4 October when more than 150,000 people were staying in 435 shelters.[131] Agung's activity and the subsequent alert level continued to fluctuate, and the exclusion zone around the volcano was extended from six to 12 kilometres before a series of eruptions began in late November.

Evacuations were carried out effectively, and can be attributed to Indonesia's disaster management system, which includes agencies that monitor and respond to natural hazards. Volcanic activity is closely watched by the country's Centre for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation.[132] Its alerts and notifications inform the National Disaster Management Agency, the police and the military, who in turn prepare potentially affected populations for evacuation.[133] Memories of Agung's eruption in 1962-63, which claimed 1,100 lives, also helped to make people more responsive to alerts, warnings and evacuation orders.[134]

The primary purpose of displacement in the form of evacuations is to save lives, but it still takes a toll on people's physical and psychological wellbeing. About 10,000 evacuees in Bali were reported to be suffering from fatigue and stress, and from cold and uncomfortable living conditions in their shelters.[135] Evacuations also separate people from their livelihoods, homes and other assets, and they may take undue risks to protect them.

Some evacuees in Bali returned early to tend to their land and livestock, while others, particularly those in

FIGURE 5: Evacuation trends in Bali

NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVACUATED
IN THOUSANDS

22 September: Alert Level raised to 4. Around 43,000 people in evacuation shelters.

18 September: Start of volcanic and seismic activity. Alert level increased to 3.

4 October: Alert Level 4. More than 150,000 people in evacuation shelters.

29 October: Alert level lowered to 3 noting a decline in activity since 20 October. Around 130,000 people in evacuation shelters.

27 November: Increase in volcanic earthquakes. Alert Level raised to 4. Around 25,000 people in evacuation shelters.

5 December: Alert Level stays at 4. Eruptions, lava flows and lahars impact houses, roads and agricultural areas. More than 67,000 people in evacuation shelters.

Volcano warning levels in Indonesia
● Alert 1: No eruptions in the foreseeable future.
● Alert 2: Eruption is not imminent.
● Alert 3: Large eruption possible within one-to-two weeks.
● Alert 4: A major eruption is imminent, possibly within 24 hours.

Source: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNPB), Pusat Vulkanologi dan Mitigasi Bencana Geologi (PVMBG), The Smithsonian Institution's Global Volcanism Program

Map showing Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, with labels for Indonesia, Jakarta, Mount Agung, Vanuatu, Manaro Voui, and Port Vila. A globe inset in the upper right shows the region's location.

isolated mountain communities, refused to leave at all.[136] In an effort to prevent people on Bali making daily trips in and out of the exclusion zone, the authorities also evacuated as many as 30,000 cows.[137]

While Indonesia was responding to the threats posed by Mount Agung, **Vanuatu** was preparing for the possible eruption of Manaro Voui, also known as Aoba, on the island of Ambae. Faced with an event that potentially put the whole island at risk, the government took extraordinary steps to protect its population of around 11,600 people.[138]

The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD) is a national body whose tasks include monitoring the country's active volcanoes.[139] When its alert levels change on a scale of zero to five, it notifies various agencies which in turn use the information to guide responses. VMGD issued a level-four alert on 23 September in response to Manaro Voui's increased activity, which in turn prompted the government's council of ministers to declare a state of emergency on Ambae.

Some residents were moved to temporary shelters between 28 September and 2 October, but the national disaster management office then decided that the entire population of the island should be evacuated before 6 October.[140] The state of emergency was lifted on 27 October, when the government announced that conditions were suitable for the evacuees to return. Most did so within three days. Manaro Voui's activity continues, but as of 31 December the alert level stood at two.

The government has initiated discussions to relocate the population permanently due to the increasing risk of future eruptions.[141]

The Bali and Ambae evacuations highlight the importance of robust early warning and disaster management systems which ensure that alerts are translated into action. Such displacement should be seen not as an unnecessary inconvenience, but as a preventive necessity that reduces loss of life. These examples also point to socioeconomic and other challenges that must be considered when planning for pre-emptive evacuations in the context of natural hazards.

VIET NAM

Disasters, poverty and displacement

Viet Nam is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. More than 65 million people, or 70 per cent of the population, live in coastal areas and low-lying deltas exposed to typhoons, tropical storms and floods.[142] The mountainous interior is also frequently hit by flash floods and landslides.

The combination of hazard intensity, high exposure and vulnerability puts the Vietnamese population as a whole at high risk of disaster displacement.[143] Our global risk model estimates that sudden-onset disasters are likely to displace an average of more than a million people in any given year in the future, giving Viet Nam the 4th highest disaster displacement risk ranking behind India, China and Bangladesh.

Ten disaster events caused 633,000 new displacements in 2017. Typhoon Doksuri caused 117,000 evacuations in the country's North Central administrative region in October, and typhoon Tembin 431,000 across southern provinces in December. Tembin was unusual in that its course was outside the usual typhoon trajectory. Typhoon Damrey, which occurred in November, caused only around 35,000 evacuations, but attracted significant media attention because it made landfall while the 2017 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit was underway in Viet Nam. Like Tembin, it struck an area unaccustomed to such ferocious storms, in this case the touristic Khanh Hoa province in the South Central Coast region of the country.

The fact that most of the displacement associated with disasters in Viet Nam in 2017 was in the form of pre-emptive evacuations is encouraging, but Tembin and Damrey point to the longer-term risks associated with the uncertainties of climate change. While it is difficult to attribute the characteristics of individual storms directly to climate change, these storms were in line with the government's official climate projections,

which forecast more frequent, intense and unpredictable typhoons, often on southerly tracks.[144]

A single typhoon has the potential to destroy families' homes and crops, and rebuilding a modest 30 square-metre house to a standard that can withstand future storms costs about $2,000 - a huge sum for rural farmers and foresters who often earn less than $2 a day.[145] The cost of recovery on top of livelihood losses has the potential to plunge those affected into a cycle of unaffordable debt, which it turn helps to drive the rural to urban migration associated with Viet Nam's rapid economic transformation over the past 30 years.[146]

Working-age members of families affected by disasters face pressure to look for work in provincial capitals and megacities such as Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but population movements following disasters appear to be significant. According to Viet Nam's central statistics office, around 17,000 people, or one in 100 residents, left Kiên Giang province during and after drought in 2016.[147]

Rural to urban displacement carries its own risks. All Vietnamese citizens have equal rights under the constitution, but in practice the country's household registration system - which determines access to social services, utilities, land and housing - creates barriers for non-residents, including migrants and IDPs. These impede poor families' access to benefits such as free healthcare and primary education, and unregistered and temporary migrants may be unable to access any services at all.

Flooding in Hoi An, the World Heritage site of Viet Nam. Photo: Shutterstock. com/ NguyenQuocThang, November 2017

Some cities, such as Ho Chi Minh, have relaxed their rules and taken steps to facilitate household registration, but significant obstacles remain.[148]

Concern about the environmental sustainability of rural livelihoods is also growing. Viet Nam's provincial governance and public administration performance index (PAPI) for 2016 found that behind poverty and hunger, citizens ranked environmental concerns as the most urgent matters they wanted their authorities to address.[149]

The government has begun in recent years to realise the importance of providing low-income groups with flood and storm resilient housing, and of promoting community-based approaches to disaster risk management. A national programme has helped more than 20,000 of the most vulnerable households build safer homes, and is now being improved and scaled up through Viet Nam's first Green Climate Fund project, a partnership between the United Nations Development Program and the government.[150]

To be truly effective, however, safe housing needs to be combined with efforts to build resilience and better manage climate risk. As smallholders' farms continue to be divided, becoming smaller with each generation, targeted funding to support more efficient and diversified agricultural livelihoods and more integrated rural planning is essential to create the necessary resilience to climate impacts. So is the facilitation of safe and voluntary movement for those who want to undertake it.

SOUTH ASIA
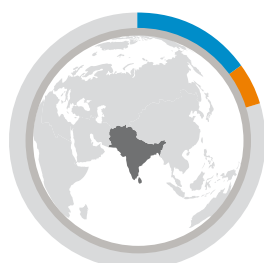
DISASTERS 15.1%
CONFLICT 5.4%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict and disasters)

India		1,424,000
Bangladesh		952,000
Afghanistan		501,000
Nepal		384,000
Sri Lanka		135,000
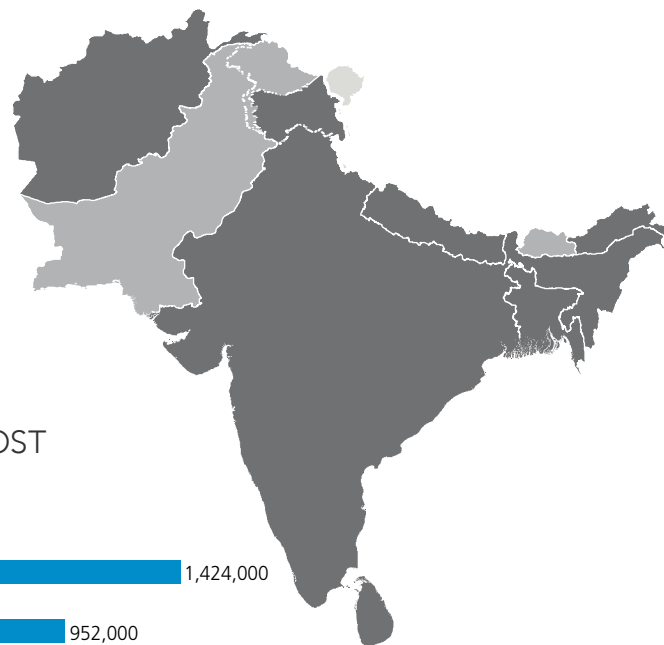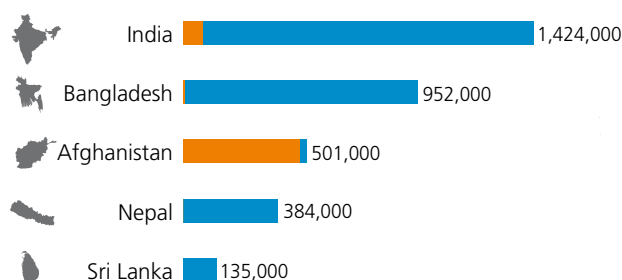
Disasters triggered most of the displacement in South Asia in 2017, with the exception of **Afghanistan** where conflict triggered 474,000 new displacements. Many of the 2.8 million new displacements associated with sudden-onset disasters took place in **Bangladesh**, **India**, **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** during the monsoon season. Except for tropical cyclone Mora, which struck Bangladesh in May, most of the disasters were small-scale and attracted little, if any, international media coverage. Even intensive events such as Mora received relatively little coverage compared with the Atlantic hurricanes, despite displacing considerable numbers of people and creating greater needs in countries with lower income, resilience and capacity to respond.

Overall, the monsoon season was similar to those of previous years in terms of precipitation levels and the number of people displaced, but its impacts were still significant in a region of high exposure and vulnerability associated with poverty, inequality and unsustainable development. About 855,000 people were evacuated and hosted in camps in the **Indian** state of Bihar, where flooding also hit agricultural production. This harmed livelihoods and caused a sharp rise in unemployment, which in turn added to the number of people migrating from rural to urban areas in search of work.[151]

More than 436,000 people were displaced in **Bangladesh** by torrential rains that flooded up to a third of the country for several weeks. Poor communities in the capital of Dhaka, which is home to more than 18 million people, were particularly hard hit.[152] The city is one of the fastest growing in South Asia, and is expanding over marsh lands, leaving no space for water run-off.[153] Korail, its largest slum, is growing across a lake.

Recurrent flash floods and landslides destroyed nearly 89,000 homes and displaced 381,000 people across 35 districts of **Nepal**, including some, such as Biratnagar and Monrang, where flooding is relatively unusual. The Nepal Red Cross Society said the rains were the worst in 15 years.[154] In **Sri Lanka**, seven disaster events, mainly floods and landslides, triggered more than 135,000 new displacements. The country's Disaster Management Centre recorded widespread floods in May in the southern districts of Galle, Matara, Kalutara and Ratnapura, which forced 127,000 people to take refuge in official shelters.

The 2017 monsoon season highlighted again the negative consequences of poor planning and lack of preparedness. National and local authorities struggled to provide aid to millions of people in need.[155] The expansion of slums is an integral part of urbanisation in South Asia, which also heightens people's exposure, vulnerability and displacement risk. **Bangladesh**, **India** and **Nepal** have relatively low levels of urbanisation, at 35, 33 and 19 per cent respectively compared with the global average of 54 per cent.[156] This, however, is starting to change. India has 25 of the 100 fastest growing cities in the world, and Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata are among the ten fastest.[157]

Our global model puts **Bangladesh**, **India** and **Pakistan** among the ten countries in the world with the highest disaster displacement risk, and the region as a whole has the highest number of people at risk of displacement by sudden-onset hazards relative to its population size. An average of 240 out of every 100,000 people might be expected to be displaced during any given year in the future, not including pre-emptive evacuations.[158]

Some countries in the region have taken policy steps to address displacement associated with disasters. **Afghanistan**, **Bangladesh**, **the Maldives**, **Nepal**, **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka** have begun to report against the Sendai framework by conducting data readiness reviews. Some also mention the need to assist and prioritise IDPs and other vulnerable groups in their DRR policies. Bangladesh has a specific policy on the management of displacement associated with disasters, and India has one that protects the rights of people displaced by development projects.[159]

With 474,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence, **Afghanistan** accounted for the majority of the conflict figures for the region (633,000). No major offensives took place during the year, but the security situation deteriorated to such an extent that the country was reclassified from post-conflict to one in active conflict again.[160] The US and its allies also stepped up their bombing raids, including the US' use of the world's most powerful non-nuclear weapon to target groups affiliated to ISIL in the Achin district of Nangarhar province, close to the border with Pakistan.[161]

The number of displacements directly associated with the increased bombing is not clear, but the eastern and southern provinces most affected also had the largest number of displacements. The voluntary and involuntary return and deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, Iran and the EU added to the number of IDPs in the country and will continue to do so in 2018 (see spotlight, p.36).

Periodic violations of the ceasefire between **India** and **Pakistan** in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir led to at least 70,000 new displacements in Indian-controlled areas and at least 53,000 in Pakistani-controlled areas.

A woman affected by the floods wades through the waist-deep water in search of clean water. Photo: BDRCS/ Aminul Shawon, August 2017
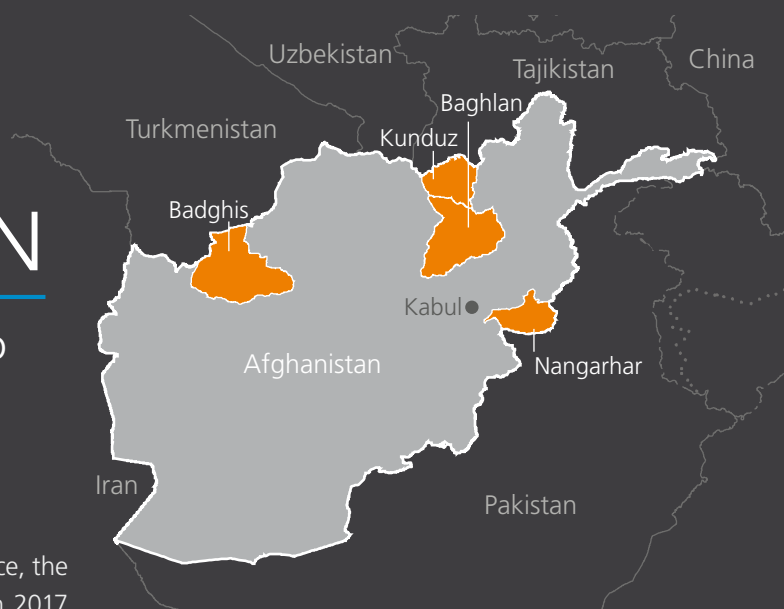
AFGHANISTAN

Moving from humanitarian to development planning

After almost four decades of conflict and violence, the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated in 2017 and the country was reclassified from post-conflict to one of active conflict again.[162] The year was marked by a shift in conflict dynamics as the military moved to secure urban areas.[163] This left a vacuum in rural areas that allowed the Taliban to consolidate control over 16 new districts.[164]

Large numbers of people fled these areas toward urban hubs in search of safety, aid and government services. At the same time sectarian violence surged in Kabul, where a truck bomb in May and a string of smaller attacks in June killed hundreds of civilians.[165] The attacks triggered protests against an already fragmented government and led to the announcement of elections set for July 2018.[166]

Displacement has become a familiar survival strategy and in some cases even an inevitable part of life for two generations of Afghans faced with continuous violence and insecurity and recurrent disasters. There were 474,000 new displacements in 2017, and as of the end of the year there were 1,286,000 IDPs in the country.[167] Nangarhar province was hosting the highest number as of mid-November, followed by Kunduz, Badghis and Baghlan.[168] More than 50 per cent of people displaced by conflict in Afghanistan have now been forced to flee twice or more, compared with seven per cent five years ago.[169]

Despite the worsening security situation, more than 560,000 refugees and undocumented migrants returned from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.[170] The voluntary nature of these movements is questionable, however, and many of these returnees went back to a life of internal displacement because insecurity prevented them from returning to their place of origin or achieving a durable solution elsewhere.[171]

This trend will grow while insecurity and a struggling economy continue to make it difficult for the country to absorb and reintegrate returnees.[172] Afghanistan's 2014 policy on IDPs grants returning refugees the same right to petition for assistance as their internally displaced counterparts, but like other IDPs they tend to lack information on the process or are unable to afford to travel to government offices to register.

Responsibility for putting the policy into operation has been largely decentralised to provincial Directorate of Refugees and Repatriations (DoRR) offices, but they receive little or no support from stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation.[173] With 30 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces affected by renewed or ongoing conflict in 2017, many DoRR offices have also had to switch their focus from development and planning for durable solutions back to meeting immediate needs.[174]

IDPs' needs have changed little over the past five years, and returnees who go back to life in internal displacement face similar challenges.[175] Some aspects of their situation have improved, but their most important reintegration needs remain the same: safety and security from conflict and violence, housing and shelter, and decent jobs.[176] Many, however, continue to struggle to meet even their most basic needs for food and water, the result in part of significant aid reductions. Many also lack the information and documentation required to access education and other services.[177]

Without safe and reliable job opportunities or the information needed to make well-informed and dignified choices about their future, displaced people in Afghanistan are unable to lift themselves out of cycles of vulnerability and poverty.[178] It is also clear that these challenges

An internally displaced man from Ghor Province collects scraps and clothes to burn during the winter to keep his home warm and cook food in Police Rah camp on the outskirt of Herat city, Afghanistan. Photo: NRC/Jim Huylebroek, May 2017

cannot be addressed by humanitarian interventions alone.[179] A shift from humanitarian to development planning, and from national to local implementation is not just a generic recommendation but an urgent priority.[180]

The country made some policy progress in 2017. It was one of 43 to present a voluntary national review of its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that year, which echoed the need for the localisation of development efforts.[181] It also raised challenges associated with data availability and management, and the need for a comprehensive database that pools all information related to the SDGs and facilitates disaggregation.[182]

The review also gave specific mention to internal displacement as an impediment to the economic growth and poverty reduction envisaged under SDG 1. As it stands, the national policy framework considers measures to include returnees and IDPs in local community development councils, handled by the national Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR).

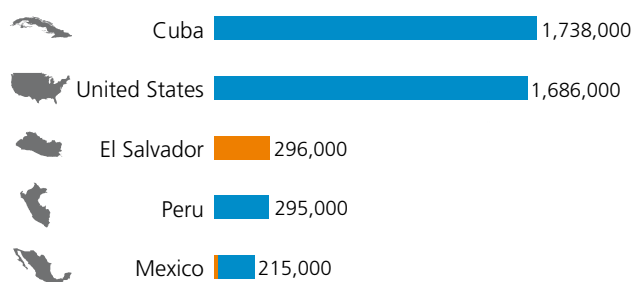Once IDPs' immediate assistance needs are met, transitions already underway toward localised and longer-term development planning should be bolstered as the foundation for a stronger collective response with rights-based outcomes.[183] This also means spreading awareness of returnees' and IDPs' rights under the constitution and the national policy on displacement, so they are better positioned to pursue durable solutions.

THE AMERICAS

DISASTERS 23.8%
CONFLICT 3.9%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict and disasters)

Country	New displacement
Cuba	1,738,000
United States	1,686,000
El Salvador	296,000
Peru	295,000
Mexico	215,000

At 4.5 million, the number of people displaced by disasters in the Americas was about ten times higher than the 457,000 who fled conflict and violence in 2017, affecting high and low-income countries alike. People fled their homes from **Canada** to **Chile** to escape earthquakes and climate extremes in the form of cyclones, wildfires and floods. The region as a whole accounted for 24 per cent of displacement associated with disasters globally, second only to East Asia and Pacific.

Displacement associated with conflict and violence saw a steady increase, from 436,000 in 2016 to 457,000 in 2017. Mirroring previous years, countries like **El Salvador**, **Colombia** and **Mexico** were among the most affected. Criminal violence was also widespread in **Guatemala**, **Honduras** and **Venezuela**, but figures for internal displacement in those countries are difficult to come by.

The Atlantic hurricane season accounted for the vast majority of the region's displacement associated with disasters. Hurricane Irma was the largest disaster event of the year worldwide, displacing around 2 million people over two weeks in August and September. Hurricane Harvey displaced another 848,000 and Maria around 146,000. About twenty countries and territories, most of them small island developing states in **the Caribbean**, suffered the worst impacts of the season (see spotlight, p.42).

The US was also highly affected, particularly by Harvey, which caused unprecedented flooding in Houston, Texas. It is ironic that a subsidised flood insurance mechanism the federal government introduced in 1968 actually ended up promoting the construction of housing in flood-prone areas.[184] In this sense, Harvey's impacts were as much due to decades of unsustainable, badly conceived and poorly implemented urban planning as the intensity of the hazard itself. The storm displaced around 848,000 people in the US.

The west coast of **the US** and **Canada** suffered the impacts of major wildfires. In southern California the biggest wildfires affected an area the size of New York City and Boston combined, triggering the evacuation of more than 204,000 people.[185] Other wildfires in the US triggered more than 181,000 new displacements, and in Canada around 78,000. British Columbia experienced the worst wildfires in the province's history, displacing around 65,000 people.

Central **Mexico** was hit by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake that affected seven states and displaced 104,000 people. It struck on 19 September, the same day as in the 1985 Mexico City earthquake that killed thousands. Following the 1985 earthquake, Mexico established laws, policies, strategies and institutions to manage disaster risk, and now has one of the world's most sophisticated earthquake early warning systems.[186]

Emergency drills have been conducted throughout the country every year since 1985 on 19 September as a reminder of the importance of disaster awareness.[187]

The 2017 earthquake struck hours after the annual emergency drills, damaging and collapsing buildings and killing 230 people.[188] This showed that despite having strong governance and civil society engagement, Mexico still needs to do more to reduce disaster risk and avoid losses, damage and displacement.

Floods caused displacement throughout the continent with **Argentina**, **Bolivia**, **Canada**, **Guatemala**, **Nicaragua**, **Paraguay**, **Peru**, **Uruguay** and **the US** as the most affected countries. The flooding in Peru was the worst in 20 years, and displaced around 295,000 people.[189]

Displacement associated with conflict and violence in the Americas accounted for about four per cent of the global total. **El Salvador** appeared to be the worst affected country, with 296,000 new displacements, followed by **Colombia** with 139,000. This figure for Colombia was fewer than the 171,000 recorded in 2016, the result in part of the peace agreement signed between the government and the country's largest armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The end of FARC's 50-year insurgency followed more than a decade of policy initiatives intended to address the plight of the country's IDPs, including the 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law, which laid the foundations for the negotiations that eventually led to the 2016 peace deal.[190] The process was backed by the international community and is widely considered a success to be emulated in other countries and regions affected by conflict.

Despite this important milestone in **Colombia**'s recent history, violence continues to cause displacement. Criminal gangs, guerrilla groups such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), dissident FARC fighters and reconstituted paramilitary groups have occupied many of the territories FARC used to control. They have taken over illegal activities prevalent in these areas such as drug production, illegal mining and other extractive practices. The highest numbers of IDPs were recorded in the marginalised Pacific coast departments of Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Valle del Cauca. Indigenous and African-Colombian communities have been disproportionately affected by the new wave of conflict.

The situation in Colombia has been defined as an ongoing humanitarian crisis characterised by urban displacement and dire conditions for IDPs, with two out of three living below the poverty line.[191] Progress in implementing the land restitution and reform agreed by the government and FARC has been slow, raising fears that the peace process might be undermined and new waves of violence sparked.

The political and economic situation in neighbouring **Venezuela** deteriorated over the course of the year. The number of IDPs in the country is unknown, but as of the end of 2017 more than 500,000 Venezuelans were estimated to be living in exile across the border in Colombia, and about 110,000 people fled the country in October 2017 alone.[192] It is also hard to establish how many of the people on the move have fled criminal violence, repression and intimidation, and how many the country's dire and deteriorating economic situation. Most, however, are in desperate need of food, medicines and healthcare.[193]

The **Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA)** continues to be plagued by drug-related criminal and gang violence. An extrapolation of findings from a national survey in **El Salvador** suggests there were around 296,000 new displacements in the country as a result. An unknown number of people have been displaced in **Honduras**, while in **Guatemala** there are only reports about evictions, which represent a small part of all displacements. Internal displacement in the NTCA has tended to be invisible, but a number of policy developments in 2017 have the potential to begin filling an urgent knowledge and action gap (see spotlight, p.40).

The Americas as a whole also made important policy advances toward government transparency, responsibility and accountability for internal displacement. The 2017 San Pedro Sula Declaration, adopted by Central American countries, lays out the region's position on joint protection mechanisms for IDPs and migrants. This declaration also addressed forced displacement as a component of the 2030 Agenda, and referenced the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the SDGs.[194] This was a clear step in the right direction as countries continue to strengthen their regional, sub-regional and national efforts to address both violence and disaster-induced displacement in the region.

NORTHERN TRIANGLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

A reluctant and fragmented response

There has been a marked upsurge in recent years in the number of people fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – known collectively as the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) – to escape drug-related violence, the activities of organised crime gangs, conflicts over land and other generalised violence.[195] This rise in the number of asylum seekers, many of them unaccompanied minors or whole families, is undoubtedly symptomatic of a larger displacement crisis inside the three countries' borders.[196]

Information about internal displacement is, however, largely anecdotal, making NTCA's IDPs all but invisible. Partly because of this knowledge gap, authorities have been reluctant to acknowledge and tackle the phenomenon. Given their reluctance and the lack of systematic data, responses to IDPs' needs have been fragmented. It is also difficult to judge their effectiveness.

The causes of flight within and from the region are much less ambiguous than its scale. Homicide rates in NTCA were nearly seven times the global average in 2017, despite reductions in recent years.[197] Aside from assassinations, extrajudicial killings and femicide, the region is also haunted by disappearances, rape, kidnappings, threats, the forced recruitment of children, intimidation and extortion. There tend to be few official investigations into crimes and even fewer convictions, even for homicides, creating an environment of flagrant impunity.[198] Some communities also face the impact of structural violence rooted in the reallocation of resources in ways that limit their ability to secure their basic needs.

Faced with such endemic violence, many people feel they have no choice but to uproot their families and livelihoods in search of safety elsewhere in their countries. Given the criminal organisations' wide reach and states' lack of protection capacity, and in some cases political will, they often find that internal displacement does not provide the sanctuary they seek. Studies have found that people who had fled NTCA countries to Mexico crossed the border after those perpetrating violence or threats against them had caught up with them.[199] Many people are also reluctant to file reports for fear of reprisals, deep distrust of some authorities and the lack of a guarantee of state assistance if a report is made.

Amid mounting evidence of a displacement and protection crisis in NTCA, stakeholders worked at the local, national and regional level in 2017 to strengthen responses for those affected.[200] Such efforts are cause for cautious optimism, but it remains to be seen whether they will translate into real change for people at risk of, or affected by displacement.

The Honduran government has taken the regional lead in officially recognising displacement, and it took several promising policy steps during the year. The Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection of People Displaced by Violence, created in 2013, was endowed with a human rights secretary and a directorate for IDPs' protection. Draft legislation on preventing and responding to internal displacement is due for presentation to congress in 2018, which would make gang-related displacement a criminal offence. Several municipalities also began designing displacement response

plans, a first step toward creating local public policies to address the phenomenon.

In El Salvador, the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court accepted petitions filed in November referring to internal displacement associated with criminal violence. The move came after the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights granted precautionary measures in favour of one of the cases and following an amendment to the Criminal Code in 2016 that included the crime of restricting freedom of movement by threats, intimidation or violence.[201] The country's justice and security minister also officially recognised displacement associated with gang violence, a significant development for a government that had previously been reluctant to do so.[202]

This progress was undermined, however, by the US government's announcement in January 2018 that it was to revoke temporary protective status for nearly 200,000 Salvadorans who had been living legally in the country since two earthquakes struck in 2001.[203] In the absence of clear and effective protocols for reintegrating returnees, it is feared that deportations on such a scale could overwhelm El Salvador's political and economic capacity to receive them and add to the country's displacement crisis.

A national government's acknowledgement of internal displacement on its territory and its responsibility for addressing the phenomenon is an essential first step toward an effective and integrated response.[204] It is, however, only a first step. A broad range of measures are needed to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of a displacement crisis. Long-term solutions lie in socio-economic development and regional cooperation based on a full understanding of the breadth and depth of the crisis.

With this in mind, countries of origin, transit and asylum met in October 2017 for a conference on the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in the Americas.[205] With the adoption of the global refugee compact due in 2018, national and regional stakeholders discussed ways of putting commitments made in their 2016 San José action statement into practice to better protect people who flee violence in NTCA.

The US government had been one of nine - along with those of the three NTCA countries, Belize, Canada, Mexico and Panama - that welcomed the 2016 San José action statement. Together with representatives from international organisations, academia and civil society, they pledged to prevent and address the causes of violence, improve asylum and protection responses and promote regional cooperation.[206]

Policymakers and responders in NTCA need to harness this momentum and implement the political commitments already made. Legislative, administrative and budgetary measures should be based on reliable and timely data on the numbers and needs of IDPs that sheds light on risk across the displacement continuum, from internal flight to cross-border movement and back again. In parallel, countries outside the region should recognise the need to share responsibility for addressing the situation and achieving durable solutions. Otherwise the impact on individuals, communities and countries as a whole of a growing displacement crisis will continue unchecked.

THE ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON

and the importance of resilience

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was the seventh most active since records began in 1851 and the most active since 2005. Ten hurricanes affected around 20 countries and territories, of which six developed into category 3 storms or above.[207] The three major hurricanes, Harvey, Irma and Maria, displaced over 3 million people in the space of a month. They hit as the region was still

recovering from the devastation wrought by hurricane Matthew, which displaced 2.2 million people in 2016.

The 2017 season set several new records. Harvey was the wettest recorded tropical cyclone in US history, dumping around 137 centimetres of rainfall on the continent.[208] More than 19 trillion gallons of rainwater fell in parts of Texas, causing widespread floods and prompting the largest disaster response in the state's history.[209] It was also the first major hurricane to make landfall in the US since Wilma in 2005, the 12-year gap being the longest on record.

Hurricane Irma was the most powerful hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic, with maximum sustained winds of 296 km/h, accompanied by torrential rain and storm surges.[210] It also triggered the highest number of new displacements associated with a disaster in 2017 at more than 2 million, accounting for 11 per cent of the global total of 18.8 million. Irma affected 15 countries and territories, more than any other storm of the season.

FIGURE 6: People displaced by the three main storms of the Atlantic Hurricane Season 2017
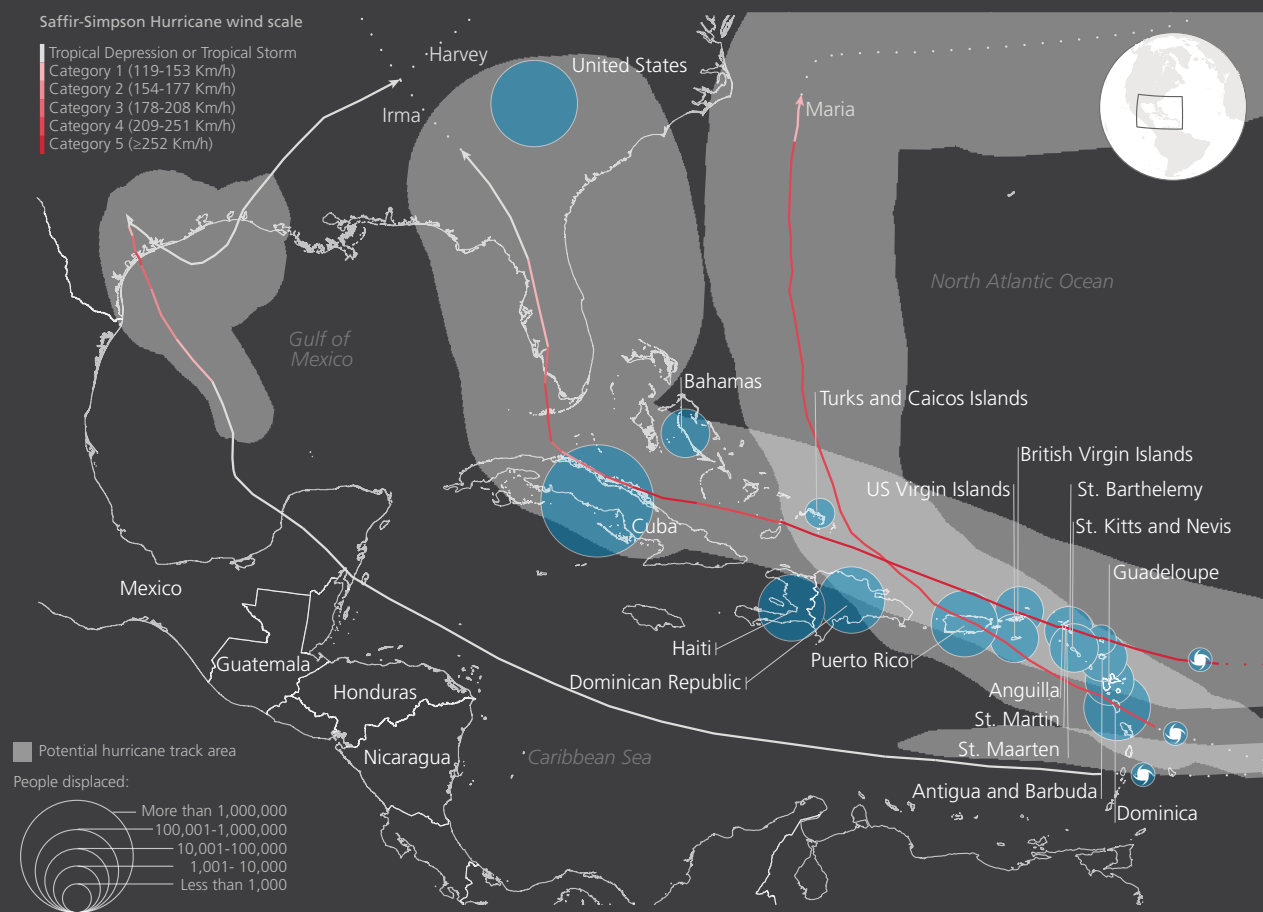
Sources: IDMC analysis from several sources (e.g. FEMA, COE, Copernicus EMS, IOM, CDEMA, local governments, IFRC DMIS), Hurricane paths and track area NOAA (2017), population data from the Demographic and Social Statistics of the United Nations (UNSD, 2015).

The US endured significant impacts and received most of the media coverage, but a number of Caribbean islands, including **Cuba**, 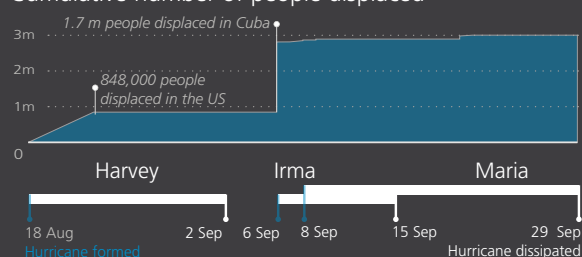**Dominica** and **Puerto Rico** also suffered substantial losses and displacement both as a result of pre-emptive evacuations and the damage and destruction of homes.

Dominica bore the brunt of hurricane Maria, which tore across the island as a category 5 storm on 18 September. Every household was affected. Dominica was unprepared for such an intensive event, making recovery and reconstruction challenging and slow. Three months after the disaster, only eight per cent of the island's inhabitants, mainly those living in the cities of Roseau and Portsmouth, had had their electricity supply restored.

Around **3 million** people in 16 countries and territories were displaced during the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Most of the displacements were triggered by three major hurricanes: Harvey, Irma and Maria.

Event name	Country	Displaced People	Percentage of the displaced population in the territory
Harvey	United States	848,000	0.3
Irma	Cuba	1,738,000	15.3
	United States	202,000	0.1
	Dominican Republic	24,000	0.2
	St. Maarten (Dutch part)	13,000	31.7
	Haiti	13,000	0.1
	St. Martin (French part)	11,000	2.7
	British Virgin Islands	6,000	19.2
	Bahamas	1,600	0.4
	Guadeloupe	1,500	0.3
	St. Barthelemy	1,500	16.2
	Antigua and Barbuda	1,400	1.5
	Anguilla	500	3.4
	US Virgin Islands	390	0.4
	Puerto Rico	190	0.01
	Turks and Caicos Islands	60	0.2
	St. Kitts and Nevis	33	0.1
Maria	Puerto Rico	86,000	2.3
	Dominica	35,000	47.4
	Dominican Republic	23,000	0.2
	US Virgin Islands	1,900	1.8

Cumulative number of people displaced

1.7 m people displaced in Cuba

3m
2m
1m
0

848,000 people displaced in the US

Harvey   Irma   Maria

18 Aug   2 Sep 6 Sep 8 Sep   15 Sep   29 Sep
Hurricane formed   Hurricane dissipated

The economy, which depends on tourism and agriculture, was also hard hit. Post-disaster needs assessments suggest the tourism sector is likely to take at least a year to recover given the extent of infrastructure damage. This leaves people who depend on tourism for their living to face the dual challenge of losing their income while trying to rebuild their homes.[211]

Crops, boats and other farming and fishing equipment were also lost or destroyed, which will have a knock-on effect on neighbouring countries because Dominica is an important exporter of food to the region.[212] The extent of the damage to the economy was such that people may be forced to leave the island in search of decent job opportunities and living conditions.[213]

The total number of people Maria displaced on Dominica is hard to quantify. IOM identified around 3,000 people still living in collective centres across the island two weeks after the storm struck, but numerous unofficial displacement sites and host families were not assessed. Initial assessments of destroyed and damaged buildings put their number at between 17,000 and 20,000. These would have been home to 54,000 people, or about 80 per cent of the island's population.[214] Based on building assessments conducted by the government in mid-December 2017, we estimate that more than 35,000 people were displaced, and they are likely to remain so, until they fully recover from Hurricane Maria.

Like Dominica, **Puerto Rico** was also unprepared for Maria's impacts, making recovery and reconstruction slow. The island's economy was already in crisis, the result of years of mismanagement, and around 40 per cent of its inhabitants were living in poverty. This in turn meant that spending on social programmes was high, but Puerto Rico – which is an unincorporated US territory – receives little federal funding relative to its population size.[215] Nor had it received any federal disaster aid a month after Maria struck, unlike other affected areas of the US such as Florida, Georgia, Texas and the US Virgin Islands.[216]

This despite the fact that Puerto Rico was left without mains drinking water, 80 per cent of its power grid was destroyed and mobile and other communications infrastructure badly damaged. Around 60,000 homes were still roofless three months after the disaster.[217] The island's economic losses were estimated to amount to around 73 per cent of its GDP, and the poverty rate to have increased by 10 per cent.[218]

On the island of St. Maarten, the hurricane damaged or destroyed 70 per cent of homes and buildings. Photo: The Netherlands Red Cross/Arie Kievit, September 2017

The situation in Puerto Rico shows how economic drivers combine with a storm's short and longer-term impacts to reduce a population's resilience and heighten its vulnerability, which in turn increases the risk of displacement. Maria displaced at least 86,000 people on the island, of whom 70,000 were evacuated from flood-prone areas after the failure of the Guajataca Dam.[219] Many people who fled their homes, however, took shelter with friends and family and were not counted, making the estimate conservative. There was also significant migration to the continental US, and this is likely to continue. Some estimates suggest the island could lose around 14 per cent of its population by 2019 as a result of Maria's impacts.[220]

The 2017 hurricane season also hit **Cuba** hard. The island was in the throes of a severe drought and was still recovering from the aftermath of hurricane Matthew in 2016 when Irma made landfall on 9 September. The storm raged for more than 71 hours and affected 12 of Cuba's 15 provinces. More than 158,000 houses were reported damaged, of which more than 16,600 were partially collapsed and around 14,600 completely destroyed.[221]

Cuba, however, offers a lesson in resilience. All Cubans are taught what to do when hurricanes approach from an early age. Disaster preparedness, prevention and response are part of the national curriculum, and people of all ages take part in drills, simulation exercises and other training. The island's civil defence system and meteorological institute are pillars of its disaster risk management system, and every individual has a role to play at the community level as a storm bears down. Schools and hospitals are converted into shelters and transport is quickly organised.[222]
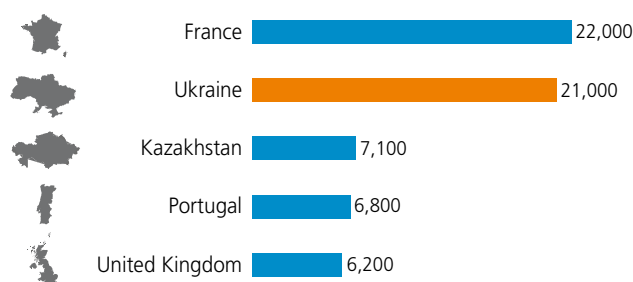
Around 1.7 million people were evacuated before and during Irma, keeping them safe from its destructive power and demonstrating that, when managed as a resilience measure, displacement need not always be a negative outcome.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

DISASTERS 0.4%
CONFLICT 0.2%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT
(conflict and disasters)

Country	Value
France	22,000
Ukraine	21,000
Kazakhstan	7,100
Portugal	6,800
United Kingdom	6,200

Three-quarters of the displacement recorded in Europe and Central Asia in 2017 was associated with disasters. Natural hazards including floods, wildfires and landslides, displaced 22,000 people in **France**, 7,100 in **Kazakhstan**, 6,800 in **Portugal**, 6,200 in **the UK**, 5,900 in **Russia**, 4,700 in **Tajikistan** 3,500 in **Albania**, 3,300 in **Kyrgyzstan**, 2,100 in **Italy** and 2,100 in **Spain**. The most intensive natural hazard recorded was a wildfire in September that forced as many as 10,000 people to leave their homes on the French island of Corsica.

Accurate figures for displacement associated with conflict are difficult to come by. Ceasefire violations along the contact line in **Ukraine** led to 21,000 new displacements in 2017, but a number of issues prevent the accurate profiling of the country's IDPs. These include a lack of access to non-government controlled areas and an overly bureaucratic registration process. Figures are thought to be inflated in some regions and underreported in others (see spotlight, p.47).

Displacement associated with conflict in **Turkey** continues to be an extremely sensitive topic. The government has banned local and international media access to Kurdish areas, creating an information blackout. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) requested access to conduct an assessment in 2016, but to no avail. The organisation nonetheless interviewed victims of the conflict in the Kurdish areas and assessed that around 200,000 people were newly displaced in 2016.[223]

No new information exists on the fate of these people nor is data available for new displacements in 2017. We have, however, used open source satellite imagery of three towns – Sirnak, Idil and Yüksekova, where clashes had occurred and curfews were instated – to identify housing destruction associated with the conflict and estimated that at least 5,300 people had been displaced in those towns in 2016. More detailed satellite imagery for other towns and time periods can provide a more accurate number of the damages and the people that were displaced as a consequence. Additionally, the unknown number of families occupying damaged structures make the figure a gross underestimate.

Other governments in the region have stopped reporting on displacement or claim there is none on their territory. Our figures for **Cyprus** include old caseloads of IDPs, but the authorities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have provided no new information since declaring displacement over in 1975. In Russia, the government has not reported any IDPs despite ongoing skirmishes in Chechnya.

There are also two situations of unresolved conflict and protracted displacement in the region: in Nagorno-Karabakh, where **Azerbaijan** and **Armenia** dispute control of the territory; and in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, **Georgia**'s two breakaway republics. The Georgian government shares its annual report on IDPs with IDMC, and 289,000 people were still recorded as displaced as of the end of 2017. A ceasefire over Nagorno-Karabakh

was negotiated in 1994 and kept conflict at bay until tensions escalated last year. No number of new displacements is available, but there was thought to be considerable damage to property and housing in the areas around the contact line.[224] The total number of people displaced in **Azerbaijan**, primarily by the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, is 393,000.

A number of regional policies and programmes that relate directly or indirectly to displacement have been put in place. The EU's action plan for DRR for 2015 to 2030 sets out policy actions required to put the Sendai framework into practice.[225] Among its recommendations, the European Commission recognised the importance of addressing IDPs' specific needs when establishing urban resilience policies in order to fulfil Sendai's "understanding disaster risk" priority.[226]

The EU funds various programmes to improve disaster preparedness and response, including the Central Asia Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction (CACESDRR), which **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan** inaugurated in 2016. Its goals are to improve the coordination of regional-level preparedness initiatives, DRR capacities, contingency planning, monitoring and the sharing of early-warning information.[227] The PPRD East 2 programme, which began in 2010, aims to improve the protection of people affected by disasters in **Armenia**, **Azerbaijan**, **Belarus**, **Georgia**, **Moldova** and **Ukraine**.[228]

In terms of displacement associated with conflict, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on IDPs in line with the Guiding Principles, which proposes that governments consider the principle of human rights for all when formulating legislation and practices.[229]

Some national-level policies also exist. **Azerbaijan** has had a policy in place on the protection of people displaced by its conflict with **Armenia** since 1993. Amendments in 1999, 2007 and 2011 aimed to improve and widen the assistance provided to IDPs and train state officials in data collection. IDPs in Azerbaijan are entitled to a monthly allowance, temporary housing, a plot of land, tax privileges, free secondary school textbooks, heating fuel, utilities, local telephone calls, health services and higher education.[230]

Armenia, on the other hand, does not recognise internal displacement as an entitlement criterion, and IDPs there have received assistance via government poverty alleviation and welfare programmes instead.[231] The last updated Armenian survey on IDP was in 2004, and no more recent information is available.

Georgian law protects people displaced by conflict and recognises displaced children as IDPs entitled to allowances and accommodation.[232]

The EU funds a project to improve IDPs' protection in Ukraine. It aims to promote sustainable long-term solutions to displacement by working with the government to align national legislation with EU standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights.[233]

While Europe and Central Asia suffer little new displacement, there are as many as 2,946,000 people still living in displacement as a result of conflicts that date back to the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia more than 20 years ago, and another 1,113,000 people in Turkey as a result of the government's decades-old conflict with Kurdish groups. Around 15 per cent of Europe's protracted IDPs still live in makeshift shelters or informal settlements with little access to basic services.[234] They, and the unresolved conflicts that displaced them, tend to receive little public or media attention, nor do the relatively small-scale disasters that hit the region.

The difficulties of counting IDPs in
UKRAINE

The conflict in Ukraine between the government and pro-Russia separatists in the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk began in 2014 and remains unresolved, despite the Minsk I and II agreements signed in 2014 and 2015. The agreements provided for an immediate ceasefire and aimed to pave the way for the gradual return of the disputed territories to Ukrainian control, but fighting and shelling along the contact line continues to cause loss of life, displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure.

The Ukrainian government's policies and frameworks to guide its response to displacement acknowledge the protracted nature of the phenomenon and demonstrate its willingness to address it. Its most recent initiative was the adoption on 15 November of a strategy to integrate IDPs and facilitate durable solutions.[235] Significant gaps remain, however, in the way the government defines, registers and subsequently responds to IDPs and their needs.

The Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP) currently has a national database of nearly 1.5 million IDPs, but the highly bureaucratic registration process means that the figure is likely to be an underestimate for some areas of the country, particularly those where IDPs' financial situation is less acute and they may feel that the scant state benefits they would receive by registering are not worth the time and effort.[236] That said, the fact that registration determines IDPs' social benefits means it is likely to be an overestimate elsewhere, particularly in non-government controlled areas (NGCAs), where registering as an IDP is the only way to ensure people continue to receive what is rightfully theirs as Ukrainian citizens.

Given these difficulties, OCHA has made its own calculations for its humanitarian needs overview. It was able to estimate the number of IDPs in the national database living "more permanently in government-controlled areas" separate from those in NGCAs. This was done because it is unclear whether the latter are indeed IDPs or simply residents who had registered to access social benefits.[237] OCHA identified 760,000 IDPs as living in government-controlled areas, a figure which it rounded up to 800,000 to account for those who are unregistered. According to various surveys, this applies to between five and nine per cent of the country's IDPs.[238]

The number of IDPs in NGCAs remains unknown. The de-facto authorities there have severely restricted humanitarian access, making it impossible to gauge the scale of displacement. The fact, however, that around 1.2 million residents a month crossed into government-controlled areas in 2017 to obtain personal documentation and pension payments, access medical care, education, food and other supplies or maintain social ties is an indication of how dire their situation is.[239]

There have been no accurate profiling exercises carried out for IDPs, which makes it difficult to respond appropriately to their assistance and protection needs, or to develop strategies for durable solutions. It is clear, however, that those directly affected by the conflict, primarily those who live along the contact line, remain highly vulnerable and are in need of emergency assistance including shelter, food and non-food items. Those living in protracted displacement in government-controlled areas away from the contact line would benefit from early-recovery and recovery assistance such as income-generating activities.

TALLYING UP THE NUMBERS
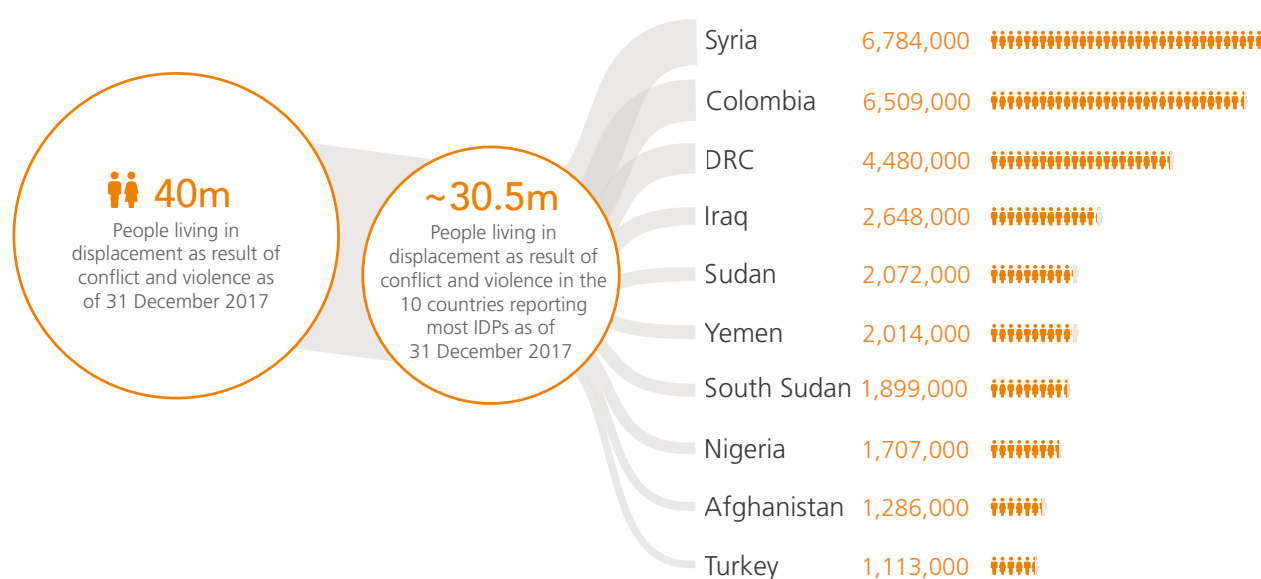# FOR A BETTER GLOBAL PICTURE

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE: UNPACKING THE GLOBAL 'STOCK'

A total of 40 million people are estimated to be living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of 2017 (see map 1, p.49). Seventy-six per cent of the world's conflict IDPs are concentrated in just ten countries (see figure 7). Of these, **Syria**, **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Iraq**, **Sudan** and **South Sudan** have been among the ten countries with the world's largest IDP populations in recent years.

The persistence of large numbers of IDPs across the world reflects the intractability of conflict and crisis, notably in the **Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa**. It also highlights the inability of governments to cope with and recover from the impacts of displacement, particularly those that suffer high levels of new internal displacement each year while already hosting some of the largest IDP caseloads in the world. This was the case in 2017 for **Syria**, **DRC**, **Iraq**, **South Sudan** and **Afghanistan**.

There are a number of uncertainties around the total cumulative number of people displaced worldwide as a result of conflict and violence. Besides problems of out-dated data, the uncertainty is largely due to the lack of tracking of IDPs' movements and vulnerabilities over time. Insufficient data on the three movements typically associated with a 'durable solution' – i.e. return, relocation and local integration – makes it difficult to determine whether someone's displacement has come to a definitive end, and whether they can objectively be removed from official records. This means that, in some cases, existing conflict displacement stock figures may be overestimates.

FIGURE 7: The ten countries with the highest number of people displaced as of the end of 2017

40m	~30.5m	
People living in displacement as result of conflict and violence as of 31 December 2017	People living in displacement as result of conflict and violence in the 10 countries reporting most IDPs as of 31 December 2017	

Country	Number
Syria	6,784,000
Colombia	6,509,000
DRC	4,480,000
Iraq	2,648,000
Sudan	2,072,000
Yemen	2,014,000
South Sudan	1,899,000
Nigeria	1,707,000
Afghanistan	1,286,000
Turkey	1,113,000

MAP 1: People internally displaced by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2017

PEOPLE INTERNALLY DISPLACED BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE
as of 31 December 2017

Palestine 231,000

Iraq 2,648,000

Afghanistan 1,286,000

Pakistan 249,000

Azerbaijan 393,000

Philippines 445,000

Syria 6,784,000

Thailand 41,000

Myanmar 635,000

Bangladesh 432,000

Sri Lanka 42,000

Georgia 289,000

Turkey 1,113,000

Yemen 2,014,000

Somalia 825,000

India 806,000

Cyprus 217,000

Ethiopia 1,078,000

Kenya 159,000

Uganda 24,000

Ukraine 800,000

Burundi 57,000

Egypt 82,000

Central African Rep. 689,000

Congo 108,000

Sudan 2,072,000

Abyei Area 31,000

Dem. Rep. Congo 4,480,000

South Sudan 1,899,000

Cameroon 239,000

Bosnia and Herzegovina 99,000

Libya 197,000

Chad 158,000

Niger 144,000

Mali 38,000

Senegal 22,000

Nigeria 1,707,000

Mexico 345,000

Guatemala 242,000

Honduras 190,000

Colombia 6,509,000

Peru 59,000

Total:
40m
people displaced

More than 1,500,000
500,001-1,500,000
100,001-500,000
20,001-100,000
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 the IDMC.

In 2017, IDMC collected for the first time information regarding the conditions under which return movements took place and the extent to which they may have led to a significant reduction in the needs and vulnerabilities of those displaced. However, for 8.5 million IDPs worldwide reported as having either returned, relocated or locally integrated, the information on their current condition is either too sparse or unavailable. Knowledge of the overall context suggests that most of these 8.5 million had not overcome a situation of vulnerability at year end. Some had returned to damaged or destroyed homes, others were still living in temporary accommodation, or had no access to income and livelihoods. Because they may only have achieved 'provisional solutions' to their displacement, we report on them separately below in order to call attention to their situation (see figure 8, p.51). Countries with some of the highest numbers of IDPs having reached these 'provisional solutions' include **Afghanistan**, **DRC**, **Iraq**, **Syria** and **Yemen**. More data is needed to monitor their situation over time in order to determine whether they will need to be added to the global stock, or whether they can be definitively removed from it.

DISAGGREGATING STOCK FIGURES BY LEVELS OF SEVERITY

The severity of displacement varies considerably between and within countries. IDPs in different situations face different vulnerabilities, and these are important to assess for several reasons. First, they are key to nuancing global displacement stock figures, and understanding the heterogeneity that lies behind them. Second, they are needed to inform targeted interventions to help bring displacement to a sustainable end.
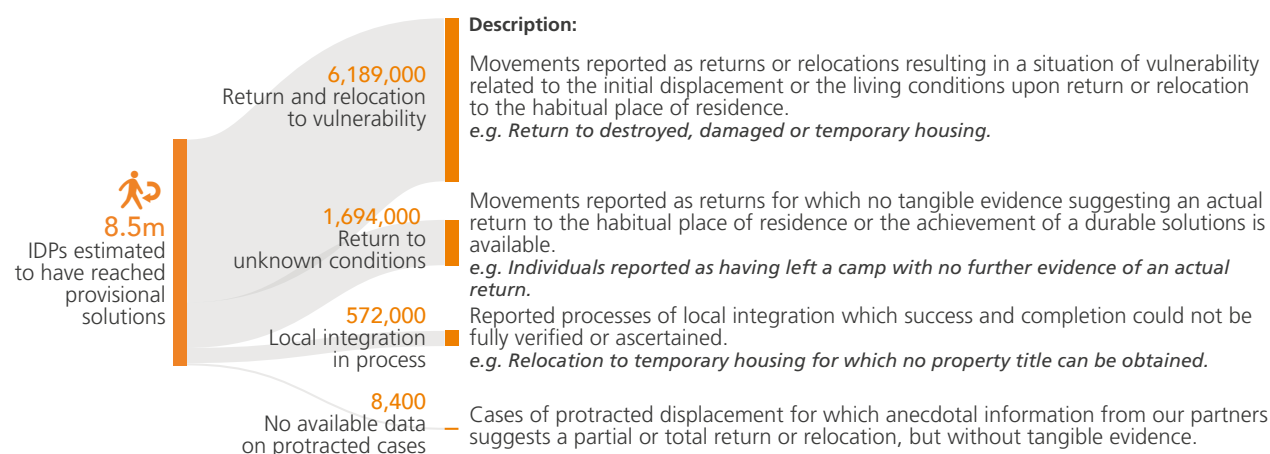
The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions sets out eight benchmarks against which this process can be measured: long-term safety and security; access to livelihoods and employment; enjoyment of an adequate standard of living; effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property; access to personal and other documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs and access to effective remedies and justice.

An assessment of IDPs' situations in **Colombia** and **Syria** helps to understand the extent to which the severity of displacement can vary. The two countries had similar numbers of people displaced by conflict as of the end of 2017: 6.5 million for Colombia and 6.8 million for Syria. But this is where the similarity ends.

Displacement in **Colombia** dates back to the start of the conflict between the government and FARC in 1964, and in Syria to the start of the civil war in 2011. The Colombian government has made efforts to understand IDP's needs based on vulnerabilities along seven categories, many of which mirror IASC's benchmarks: housing, family reunification, documentation, nutrition, health, education and income. The currently available information does not provide the whole picture: the Colombian government has complete information for less than 20 percent of all registered IDPs. Of those, around 459,000 have overcome vulnerability in general, and almost one million have overcome the housing related vulnerability. We have reflected this in our stock figure for Colombia, which decreased from 7.2 million as of the end of 2016, to 6.5 million as of the end of last year. As more information becomes available, the figure might continue to be revised downwards.

Data on **Syria**'s IDPs is not so comprehensive, but the information available from humanitarian partners, including OCHA's 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, and knowing that countrywide conflict is still ongoing and has led to the largest number of new displacements anywhere in the world in 2017, allows for a

FIGURE 8: Provisional solutions for IDPs displaced by conflict

6,189,000
Return and relocation
to vulnerability

8.5m
IDPs estimated
to have reached
provisional
solutions

1,694,000
Return to
unknown conditions

572,000
Local integration
in process

8,400
No available data
on protracted cases

Description:

Movements reported as returns or relocations resulting in a situation of vulnerability related to the initial displacement or the living conditions upon return or relocation to the habitual place of residence.
e.g. Return to destroyed, damaged or temporary housing.

Movements reported as returns for which no tangible evidence suggesting an actual return to the habitual place of residence or the achievement of a durable solutions is available.
e.g. Individuals reported as having left a camp with no further evidence of an actual return.

Reported processes of local integration which success and completion could not be fully verified or ascertained.
e.g. Relocation to temporary housing for which no property title can be obtained.

Cases of protracted displacement for which anecdotal information from our partners suggests a partial or total return or relocation, but without tangible evidence.

broad assessment of their situation. Vulnerabilities and the severity of displacement in the country are clearly very high, however, a systematic measurement against IASC's benchmarks is missing to date.[240]

Measuring specific IDP caseloads against the eight benchmarks systematically in the future would allow us to draw conclusions about the severity of each displacement situation, and to provide a more nuanced reading of aggregated global displacement stock figures.

Indigenous people in Colombia struggle to cope with displacement one year after the peace agreement. Photo: NRC/Ana Karina Delgado Diaz, November 2017

DISASTERS: BETTER ACCOUNTING FOR DURATION, SEVERITY AND RISK

More than half of the new displacements associated with disasters in 2017, or 9.9 million, were triggered by just ten events (see figure 9). This figure includes all forms of displacement, from people pre-emptively evacuated in anticipation of a disaster, to those fleeing their homes in response to a hazard's impacts. Disaster events in 2017 struck countries with very different income levels and capacities to prevent and respond to displacement, meaning that while some IDPs were able to return home quickly, many remained and are likely to remain displaced for weeks, months or years, depending on the extent of the damage and losses wrought.

The new displacement figures based on evacuation data encompass both short and long-term movements, and as such do not imply that everyone displaced by a specific hazard underwent the same experience. It is currently not possible to disaggregate the data we obtain by type and duration of movement for most of the events, yet this is key to understanding the severity of the displacement. It also makes it difficult to estimate a global stock figure for disaster IDPs that would show many people worldwide are currently living in displace-

ment as a result of disasters that may have occurred in previous years.

To overcome this limitation, and to understand what the likely scale of future disaster displacement is, IDMC has developed a global model to assess the risk of displacement associated with sudden-onset hazards. This model estimates that an average of 13.9 million people will be displaced during any given year in the future.[241] This figure, however, only includes people whose houses are likely to be severely damaged or destroyed, not those who may be displaced as a result of pre-emptive evacuations. Nor are forced movements associated with slow-onset hazards such as drought or sea-level rise included, which makes the risk estimates very conservative.

Despite such limitations, we know that the scale of displacement risk is significant and affects almost every country in the world. We also know that there are different levels of disaster displacement risk across the globe, and that understanding these variances is vital for decision-makers to be able to prepare and adjust their investments to reduce it accordingly (see map 2, p.53).

FIGURE 9: The ten largest disaster events that triggered displacement in 2017
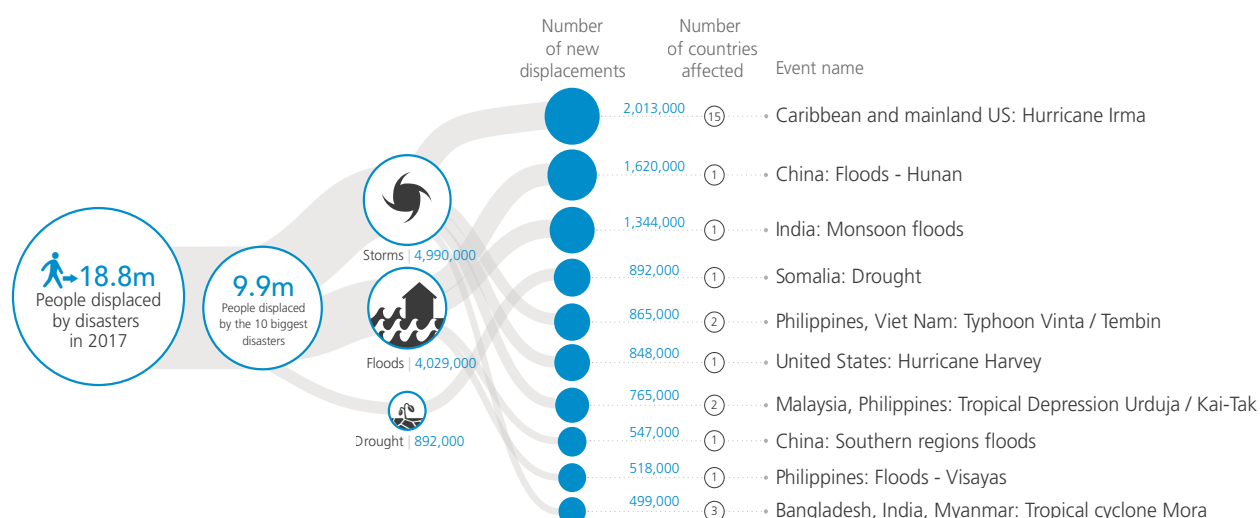
MAP 2: Countries at low, medium and high disaster displacement risk

Absolute disaster displacement risk

High
Medium
Low
Not included
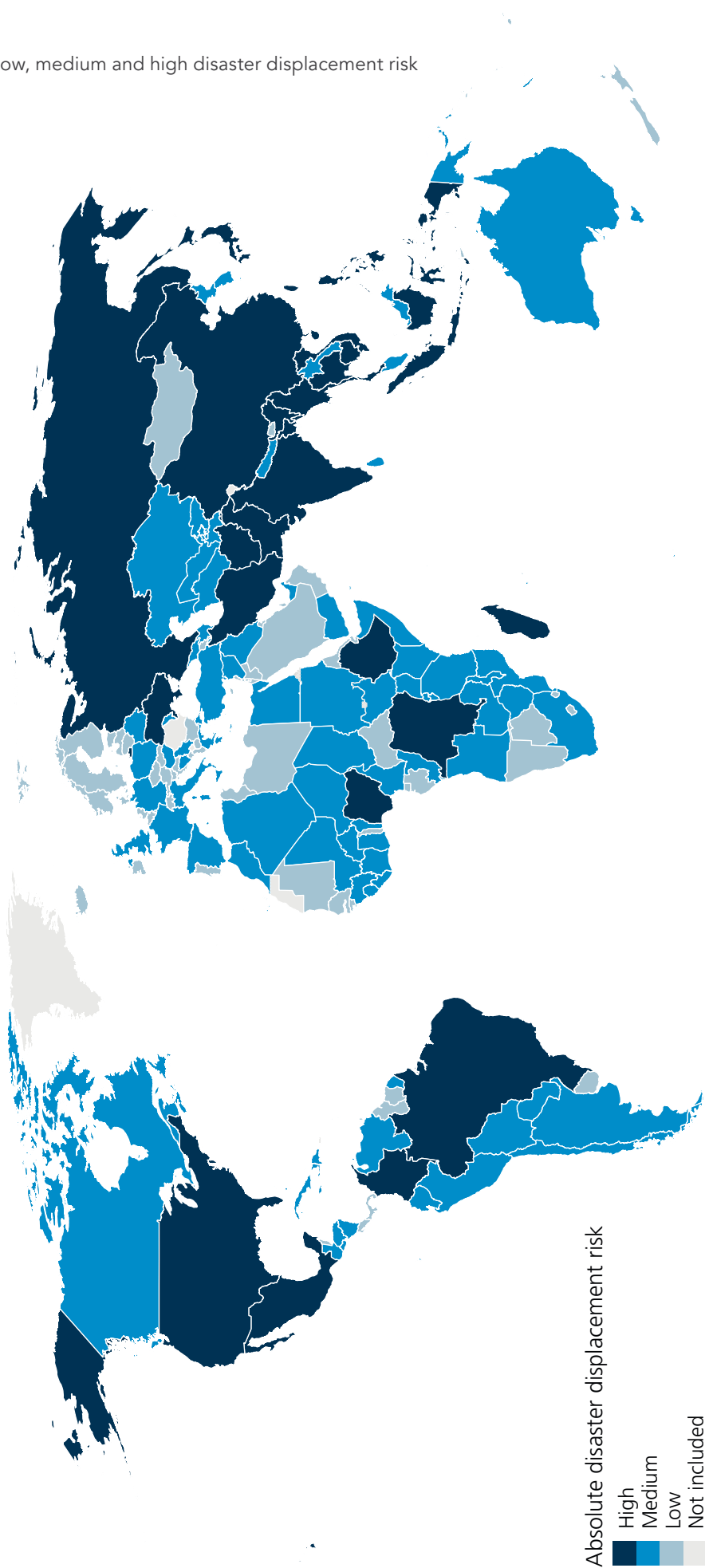
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: PUTTING MORE DISPLACEMENT ON THE GLOBAL MAP

There is no recent global estimate of the number of people displaced by development projects. The last one, of 15 million people a year, is more than ten years old, and was derived from a previous estimate of 10 million people displaced annually by dams, urban and transport projects published in 1996.[242] The figure was increased to 15 million to account for mining and other sectors and the general proliferation of development projects worldwide. It is considered conservative, but there is no evidence to substantiate that.[243]

Given the wide range of project types and varying provisions to deal with their impacts, it is difficult to monitor when displacement starts and ends, where people move to and in which conditions. As such, this type of displacement remains a global uncertainty. In an effort to bridge the data and knowledge gap, for this year's GRID we applied both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to start building a global picture. Based on an analysis of resettlement plans published by the World Bank for 30 countries in 2016, around 19,000 people can be considered to be at risk of displacement in the near future as a consequence of 115 projects (see map 3).

MAP 3: People at risk of being affected or displaced as a consequence of development projects

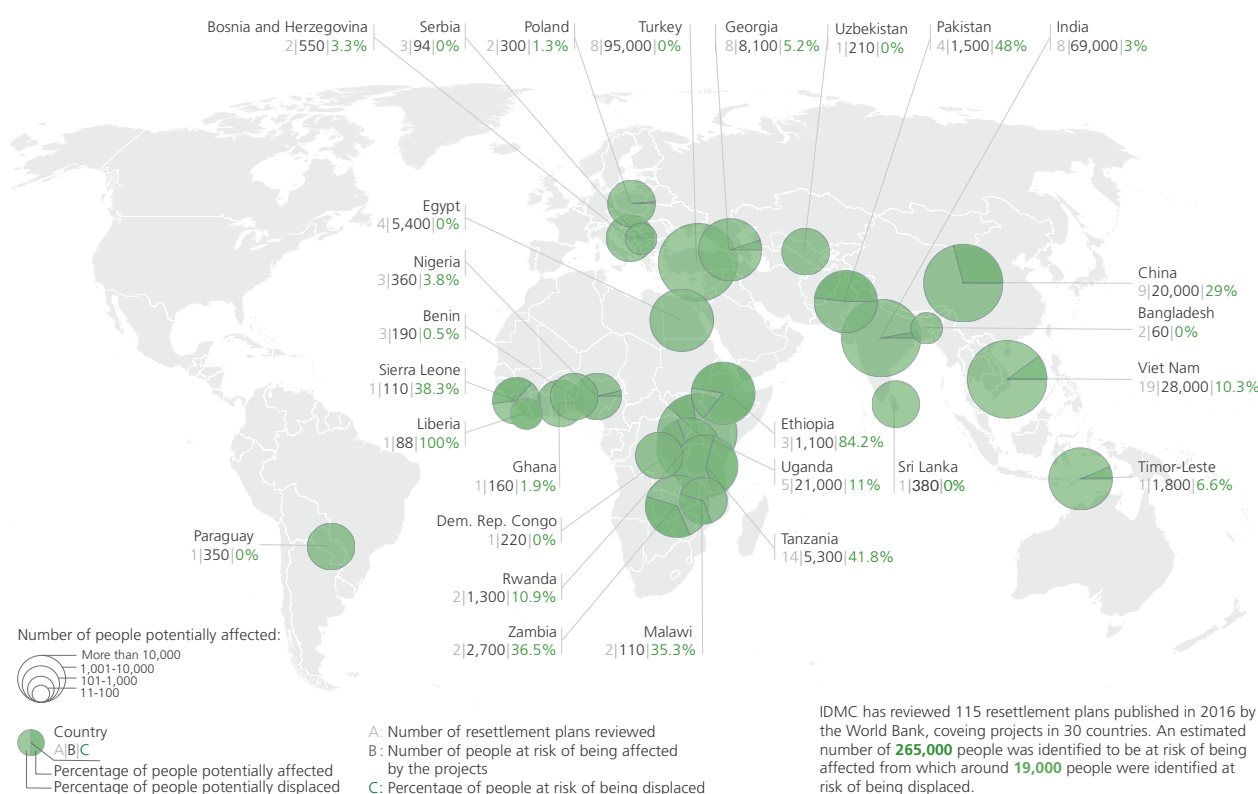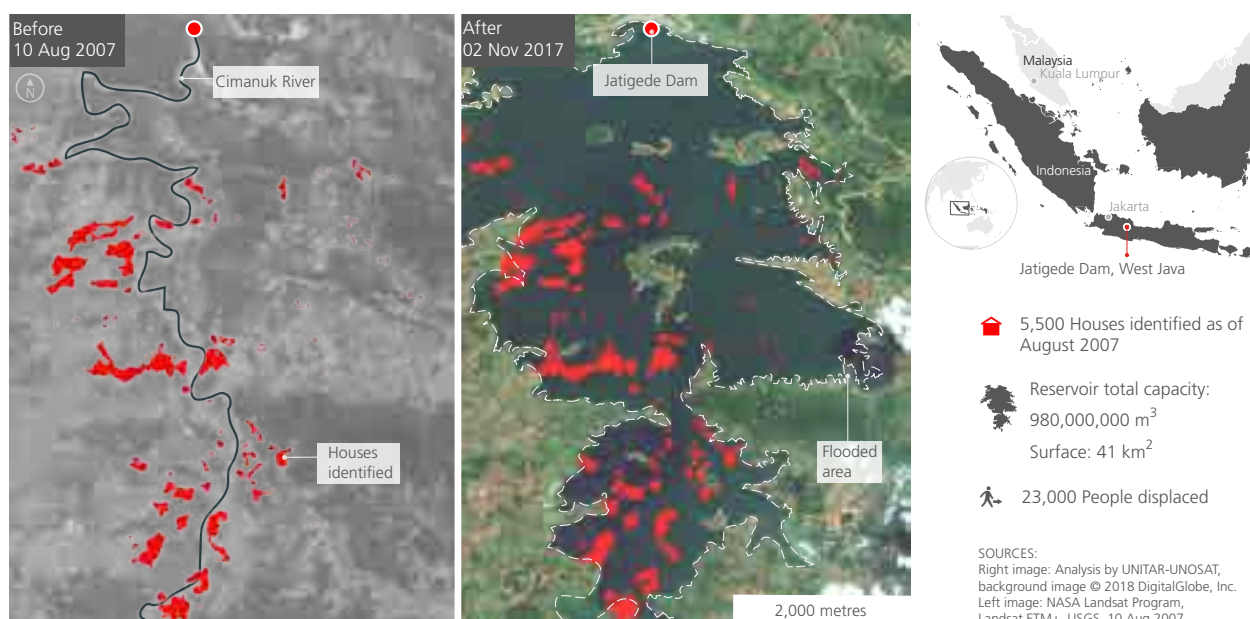IDMC has reviewed 115 resettlement plans published in 2016 by the World Bank, coveing projects in 30 countries. An estimated number of **265,000** people was identified to be at risk of being affected from which around **19,000** people were identified at risk of being displaced.

FIGURE 10: Assessing displacement in the Jatigede dam, Indonesia

Before 10 Aug 2007 — Cimanuk River — Houses identified

After 02 Nov 2017 — Jatigede Dam — Flooded area

2,000 metres

Malaysia — Kuala Lumpur — Indonesia — Jakarta

Jatigede Dam, West Java

5,500 Houses identified as of August 2007

Reservoir total capacity: 980,000,000 m^3

Surface: 41 km^2

23,000 People displaced

SOURCES:
Right image: Analysis by UNITAR-UNOSAT, background image © 2018 DigitalGlobe, Inc.
Left image: NASA Landsat Program, Landsat ETM+, USGS, 10 Aug 2007.

This figure represents just a small fraction of the risk associated with development investments, a fact confirmed by analysing the displacement associated with previous projects such as dams.[244] New analysis of satellite imagery for 39 dams with a completion year from 2016 into the future shows that 55,000 people are at risk as result of these investments alone. These estimates, however, are not straightforward, and the case of the Jatigede dam on the Cimanuk river in West Java, Indonesia, exemplifies the complexity of monitoring this type of displacement. This dam, the second biggest in the country, was first proposed in 1963. Most of the families to be affected received compensation and agreed to relocate when construction began in the early 1980s, but many of them returned after learning that the project had stalled as a result of funding issues and other setbacks in the 1990s.[245]

After decades of planning and protests, the Indonesian government announced in 2004 that the project would resume. Construction restarted in 2008 and the reservoir began to be filled in 2015, forcing the remaining people to move. Analysis of satellite imagery shows around 5,500 submerged structures as of end of 2017. By applying national average household size, this translates into around 23,000 people displaced (see figure 10).

Forced displacement associated with large development projects throws a spotlight not just onto a country's development priorities, but also more broadly onto the underlying global paradigm that drives large-scale investment. Studies on this type of displacement have tended to focus on how to better understand and mitigate the negative impacts on those displaced, rather than questioning whether development investments that displace large numbers of people are necessary in the first place.

More investment is needed in new approaches to monitoring the global scale of this type of displacement, and future research also needs to further unpack the underlying assumptions and risks associated with large development investments. This is particularly relevant to projects planned as part of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 9 on resilient infrastructure.