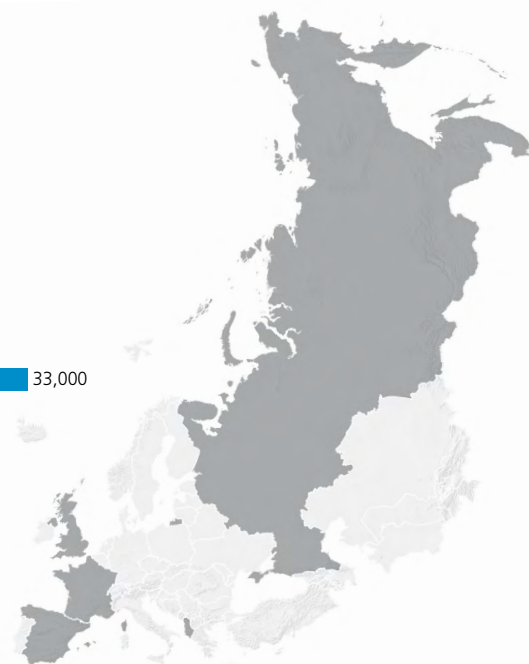
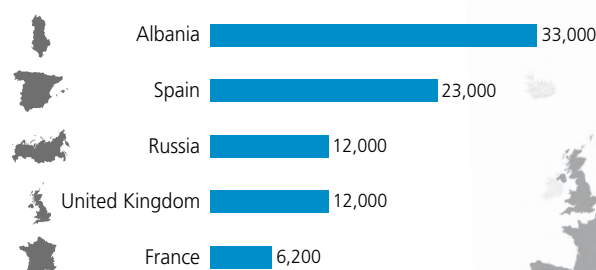


EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Conflict 2,800
Disasters 101,000
0.3% of the global total

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENTS



Relatively little displacement was recorded in Europe and Central Asia compared with other regions in 2019, preserving a trend set in previous years. The number of new conflict displacements was the lowest since 2014, largely the result of a de-escalation in fighting in eastern Ukraine. The figure for the country itself was the lowest since the conflict broke out that same year (see Figure 19).

The region is, however, home to more than 2.8 million people still living in internal displacement as a result of the war in Ukraine and previous conflicts in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Russia and Turkey. The length of people's displacement and the severity of their conditions vary from one situation to another, but some IDPs have been displaced for as long as twenty years. In many cases it is difficult to ascertain whether or not they have achieved durable solutions.

Disasters triggered 101,000 new displacements across the region in 2019, more than double the figure for the previous year. The majority were the result of floods and summer wildfires, but three earthquakes in Albania displaced the largest numbers of people at once. The availability and quality of data on disaster displacement varies from country to country, making estimates for many conservative. There is very little evidence, for example, about the scale and impacts of disasters in Central Asia.

Eastern Europe

Albania recorded 33,000 new disaster displacements in 2019, the highest figure in the region. A 5.2 magnitude earthquake destroyed more than 50 homes and triggered around 250 displacements near the south-eastern city of Korçë in June, and 5.8 magnitude event and after-shocks around 500 in September.³⁸³



The most powerful quake, however, and the strongest in decades in Albania, was a 6.4 magnitude event that struck coastal areas near the city of Durrës in November.³⁸⁴ It damaged more than 95,000 homes and triggered around 32,000 displacements. Ninety schools were also closed as result of damage they sustained. Most of those forced to flee their homes were still displaced as of the end of the year.³⁸⁵

Russia recorded 12,000 disaster displacements in 2019, most of them triggered by floods. The most significant event took place in Irkutsk, where heavy rain caused the Angara river to burst its banks in June.³⁸⁶ The subsequent flooding destroyed 1,200 homes in 50 villages and triggered more than 10,000 displacements. The same area was flooded again the following month, triggering more than 1,100 evacuations.³⁸⁷ The two episodes of flooding together left around 5,000 homes unfit for occupation.³⁸⁸

Record high temperatures, electrical storms and strong winds led to unusually fierce wildfires in the south-east of the country. Fires in Trans-Baikal territory burned more than 100 homes and triggered 340 displacements in April.³⁸⁹ More intense fires in July and August destroyed around 4.5 million hectares of Siberian forest, but no information was available about possible displacements.³⁹⁰

No new conflict displacements were recorded during the year, but around 1,800 people were still living in displacement as of 31 December from conflicts in the 1990s.

The number of new conflict displacements recorded in **Ukraine** fell considerably in 2019 as fighting in the east of the country waned. Just 60 were recorded along the contact line that divides government and separatist-held areas, the result of violence, damage to homes, lack of services and forced evictions.³⁹¹ There were, however, still around 730,000 people living in displacement at the end the year as a result of the five-year conflict.

The government has taken measures to assist and protect the country's IDPs, including the adoption of a law on internal displacement in 2014.³⁹² It also adopted a three-year strategy in 2017 to reintegrate displaced people and facilitate their pursuit of long-term solutions, and has run programmes in partnership with international organisations to support, resettle and protect them.³⁹³ Many IDPs have benefited from these measures, but many others still live in precarious conditions.

Representatives from Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) met in October 2019 to discuss the next steps in the imple-

mentation of the Minsk Agreement and agreed to a multi-step process known as the Steinmeier Formula.³⁹⁴ This Formula provides for the holding of elections and a potential special status for the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk. The modalities of these elections, however, which would be held under OSCE standards and Ukrainian legislation, have not yet been decided.

Western Europe

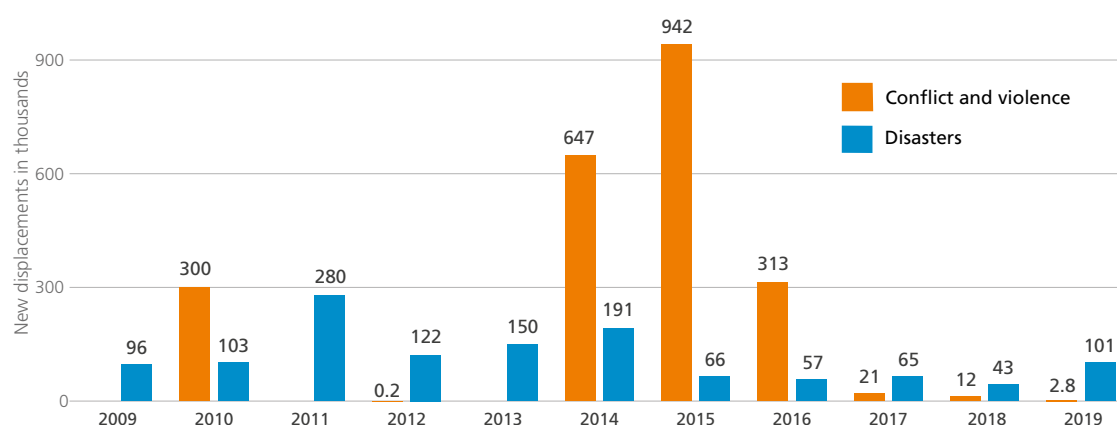
Spain recorded more than 23,000 new disaster displacements in 2019, the highest figure in western Europe. Around 18,000 were triggered by summer wildfires



that burned nearly 90,000 hectares of land. The fires in the Canary Islands, the most affected region, were the worst in a decade.³⁹⁵ Around 10,000 people were evacuated in August, many of them from the municipalities of Artenara and Vallesco on Gran Canaria.³⁹⁶ Most people were able to return to their homes in the days after the fires were put out.³⁹⁷ Unusually hot and dry conditions helped to fuel the fires, but their impacts were also aggravated by increased development and tourism that mean firefighters have to tackle blazes over wider areas.³⁹⁸

Electrical storms and torrential downpours hit the east and south-east of mainland Spain in September.³⁹⁹ The ensuing floods triggered about 5,000 displacements across the autonomous communities of Valencia and Murcia. They included the evacuation of 2,200 residents from the town of Santomera in Murcia for fear a local dam would overflow.

FIGURE 19: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in Europe and Central Asia (2009-2019)



Thirty-two disasters triggered more than 6,200 new displacements in **France**. Around 3,400 were the result of a series of floods, half of them evacuations in southern parts of the country in November. Heavy rains and high winds in the south and west also triggered 635 displacements in December.

The largest single displacement event, however, was an earthquake in Ardèche department in November that destroyed more than 800 homes and triggered 2,000 displacements. The people affected were still living in displacement as of the end of year. Ardèche is in a low-risk area for seismic activity, but the quake was the strongest in France for at least 15 years.⁴⁰⁰ Wildfires and landslides also forced people to flee their homes during the year.

Localised disasters triggered around 12,000 displacements in the **United Kingdom** in 2019. Torrential rain caused so much runoff from the Toddbrook reservoir in Derbyshire that the volume of water caused structural damage to its dam.⁴⁰¹ More than 6,500 people were evacuated for fear it would burst as the rains continued. Local authorities, firefighters and the Environmental Agency worked together to reduce the risk of a collapse, including by pumping water out of the reservoir to reduce pressure on the dam.⁴⁰² The incident was a reminder of the need to maintain and reinforce aging concrete infrastructure.

Some parts of the county of South Yorkshire received the equivalent of a month's rain in a day in November. This led to severe flooding in and around the cities of Sheffield and Doncaster. More than 100 schools were closed, and around 1,800 homes and businesses badly affected.⁴⁰³ Around one in six homes in the UK are at risk of flooding, and insured losses amount to around £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) a year. The combination of climate change and variability and poor compliance with building standards only serve to heighten the risk.⁴⁰⁴

Floods triggered around 2,400 of the 3,400 disaster displacements recorded in **Italy** in 2019. The most significant event took place in June in towns near Lake Como in the north of the country.⁴⁰⁵ Heavy rains caused flash floods that prompted the pre-emptive evacuation of 1,000 people across several municipalities.

A 4.8 magnitude earthquake triggered around 600 displacements near Florence in the province of Tuscany in December. Most of the people displaced were shel-

tered in civil protection facilities.⁴⁰⁶ A volcanic eruption on the island of Stromboli triggered about 70 displacements in August. The Stromboli volcano is one of the world's most active and has been erupting regularly since 1932. The island is sparsely populated but is frequented by tourists on day trips.⁴⁰⁷

Central and western Asia

Attacks against Turkish soldiers launched from inside neighbouring Syria triggered more 2,000 new displacements in **Turkey** in October 2019.⁴⁰⁸ The figure should be considered an underestimate because other attacks also took place in border areas but there was little access to information on the ground with which to estimate the scale of any possible displacement.

Around 1.1 million people were still living in displacement as of the end of the year as a result of conflict between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the 1990s and security operations in the south-eastern Anatolia region in 2015 and 2016.

Around 550 disaster displacements were also recorded in 2019, figures that should be considered underestimates.

Obtaining displacement figures in countries across Central Asia is challenging. We were only able to compile an estimate for disaster displacement in **Tajikistan**, where 4,800 people were evacuated in the south-western districts of Vose' and Farkhor in June as a result of heavy rains, mudflows and widespread flooding.⁴⁰⁹ More than 1,000 homes were damaged, 354 of them seriously.⁴¹⁰ The people affected incurred significant financial losses and lacked food, safe water and sanitation. About 2,100 people were estimated to still be displaced by the end of the year.

People in several countries in the region continue to suffer the legacies of previous conflicts and violence. Intercommunal violence in southern **Kyrgyzstan**, for example, triggered more than 300,000 displacements in 2010.⁴¹¹ Around 170,000 people were still living in displacement the following year, but little information is available about their conditions since.⁴¹²

Around 770 new displacements were recorded in the country in 2019. People were evacuated from a village



near the border with Tajikistan after clashes in March and July.⁴¹³ The human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan has improved in recent years, but minorities continue to suffer discrimination and have few education and job opportunities.⁴¹⁴

Since the conflict started in 2014, this man and his family have been living in an abandoned house on a farm near the village of Novyi Donbas in Eastern Ukraine. Photo: IOM/Muse Mohammed, August 2018

