SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENTS

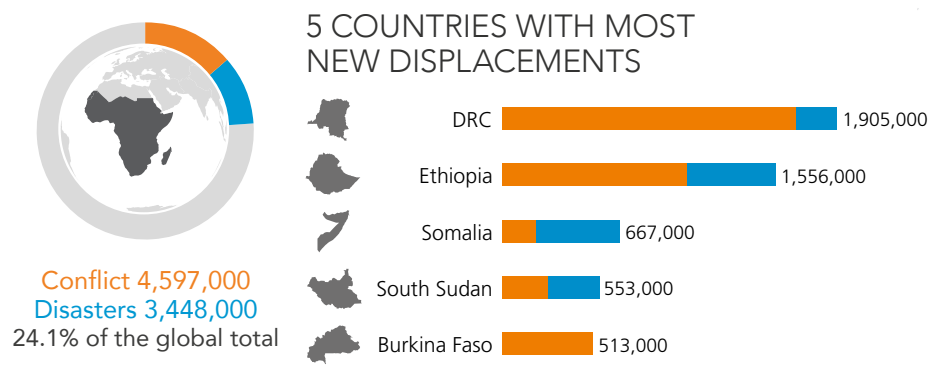| Country	New Displacements
DRC	1,905,000
Ethiopia	1,556,000
Somalia	667,000
South Sudan	553,000
Burkina Faso	513,000

Conflict 4,597,000
Disasters 3,448,000
24.1% of the global total

Sub-Saharan Africa was once again the region most affected by conflict displacement in 2019. Armed conflict, communal violence and jihadist attacks continued in several countries, some of which are struggling to deal with protracted crises. Widespread poverty, longstanding economic stagnation, lack of development, competition over diminishing resources and the effects of climate change are among the factors that increase the risk of displacement.

The same factors also aggravate its impacts, heightening and prolonging IDPs' vulnerability. Around 19.2 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of 2019, the highest figure in the world and the highest ever recorded for the region.

Historical data shows that internal displacement associated with conflict and violence has increased in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade (see Figure 11). There were 4.6 million new displacements recorded in 2019, accounting for nearly 54 per cent of the global total. Jihadist groups operating in the Sahel region escalated their attacks and triggered mass displacement in countries including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger (see The Sahel spotlight, p.23).

Boko Haram's insurgency, now in its tenth year, and operations against the group continued to trigger significant new displacement and prolong its duration across the Lake Chad basin, a region that also has to contend with environmental degradation and desertification.

Many countries in Central Africa continued to suffer the effects of communal conflicts, while the interlinked triggers of conflict and climate change in East Africa forced people to flee their homes in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.

Figures for displacement associated with disasters in sub-Saharan Africa are lower than for conflict and violence, but they are still cause for concern. The 3.4 million new displacements recorded in 2019 represent one of the highest figures ever for the region (see Figure 11). Unusually heavy rains caused widespread flooding in several countries, where a chronic accumulation of vulnerabilities and risks aggravated its impacts and fuelled displacement.

Countries in the East and Horn of Africa experienced one of the wettest rainy seasons in 40 years.[3] Flooding along the White Nile basin forced many people already displaced by conflict to flee again (see White Nile basin spotlight, p.27). Mozambique bore the brunt of cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which triggered hundreds of thousands of displacements and destroyed homes, infrastructure and crops. Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe were also hard hit (see Mozambique spotlight, p.25).

Nearly two million people were thought to be living in internal displacement as a result of disasters in sub-Saharan Africa as of the end of the year.

Central Africa

The region's most affected country in 2019 was the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, where ethnic tensions, local grievances and chronic poverty are the major drivers of internal displacement. Nearly 1.7 million new conflict displacements were reported during the year, compared with more than 1.8 million in 2018 and 2.2 million in 2017.

Clashes between the military and armed groups in the eastern province of North Kivu triggered 520,000 new displacements, primarily in Lubero and Rutshuru territories, and an upsurge in intercommunal violence between the Hema and Lendu communities triggered 453,000 in the north-eastern province of Ituri. There was also an escalation of conflict between armed groups and intercommunal violence in South Kivu, where 401,000 displacements were recorded, mainly in Mwenga and Fizi territories. Most of the people displaced were women and children.

The political situation in DRC remains tense, despite the fact that 2019 marked the first peaceful transition of power in the country's history.[4] The new government inherited a series of challenges, not least the activities of more than 100 armed groups in the east and ongoing conflict in other areas.[5] Around 5.5 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of the year, and around 15.9 million were expected to need humanitarian assistance in 2020.[6] The country also had to deal with its second largest Ebola outbreak, a measles outbreak and a cholera outbreak, which between them killed thousands of people.

Heavy rains and flooding affected 12 of DRC's 26 provinces between October and December.[7] The country as a whole recorded 233,000 new disaster displacements, the highest ever figure. Floods triggered 137,000 in Nord-Ubangui and Sud-Ubangui provinces, which border the Central African Republic (CAR), and Tshopo province was also badly affected. Around 168,000 people in DRC were thought to be living in displacement as a result of disasters as of the end of the year.

The government of **CAR** signed a peace deal with 14 armed groups in early February after more than two years of negotiations facilitated by the African Union.[8] Implementation is progressing despite several setbacks and disagreements that were resolved with help from the international community, and the number of new conflict displacements fell from 510,000 in 2018 to 96,000 in 2019. The security situation remains fragile, however, and IDPs' needs largely unmet.

The most serious violence of the year occurred in Birao in Vakaga prefecture, where 24,000 new displacements were recorded in September as a result of clashes between the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic and the Movement of Central

FIGURE 11: New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters in Sub-Saharan Africa (2009-2019)
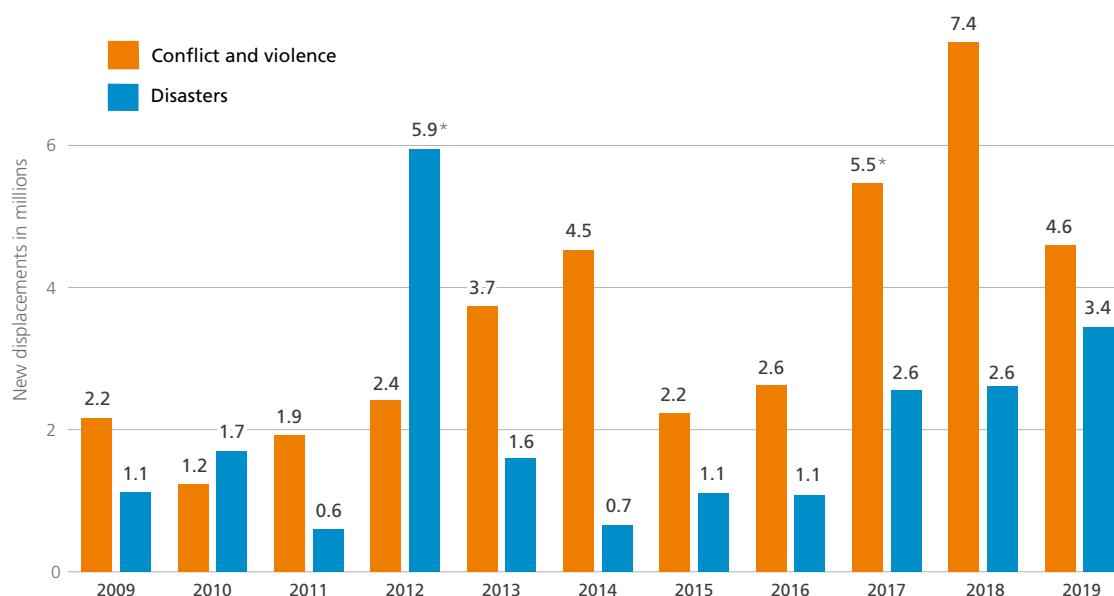
Updated figures. For further details see methodological annex, available online.

African Freedom Fighters for Justice, both signatories to the peace deal.[9]

CAR also suffered its worst flooding in 20 years in 2019, and the capital Bangui was among the places hardest hit. About 102,000 new displacements were recorded across the country, and the floods caused extensive damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. More than 10,000 homes were destroyed, and wells and latrines overflowed.[10] About 6,700 hectares of farmland in Ouham prefecture were inundated, aggravating food insecurity. More than a third of CAR's population of 4.7 million were facing acute food insecurity and in need of emergency assistance as of the end of the year.[11]

The **Republic of Congo** was also hit by its worst floods in decades, which damaged or destroyed infrastructure, crops and livelihoods. The Ubangi and Congo rivers burst their banks between October and December, inundating hundreds of villages and triggering as many as 163,000 new displacements in the departments of Cuvette, Likouala, Plateaux and Sangha.[12]

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration activities continued in the east of the country following the signing of a peace deal between the Ninja militia and the government in December 2017.[13] The region has regained stability since, but there were still around 134,000 people living in displacement as a result of the conflict at the end of the year, around 79,000 of them in Pool department.

The security situation in anglophone areas of **Cameroon** has been deteriorating for the last two years. Clashes between anglophone separatists and the security forces have increased in Northwest and Southwest regions, and they spilled over into West and Littoral regions in 2019.[14] Lack of access has impeded an accurate assessment of the number of new displacements, leading to a conservative estimate of 26,000. Boko Haram also continued its activities in Far North region, triggering around 40,000 new displacements during the year.

Despite the scale of displacement and the extent of people's needs, Cameroon's crisis is among the world's

A displaced family stand by their tents in the Gossi region of Timbuktu, Mali.
Photo: NRC/Togo Moise, February 2018

most neglected. Nearly a million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year, including in the relatively peaceful regions of Adamaoua and Centre region, which have increasingly become destinations for IDPs fleeing conflict in other areas of the country.

Lack of access also impeded an accurate assessment of disaster displacement in Cameroon, but in common with other countries in the region it experienced widespread flooding and landslides in 2019. Around 24,000 new displacements were recorded, but the figure should be considered an underestimate. The floods affected displacement camps in the Far North region, forcing some IDPs into secondary displacement.

No figures on internal displacement associated with Boko Haram's insurgency were available in neighbouring **Chad** until 2019, when improved monitoring mechanisms were put in place in Lac province. These revealed around 52,000 new displacements during the year.[15] Clashes between pastoralists and farmers in other provinces including Moyen-Chari, Ouaddai and Sila also forced people to flee their homes, bringing the number of new conflict displacements across the country as a whole to 58,000.

Around 30,000 new disaster displacements were also recorded. The most significant event was flooding in Salamat province in August. The Logone river and Lake Maga burst their banks, which affected not only areas of south-western Chad but also north-eastern Cameroon.

West Africa

Long-running conflict and violence persisted across **Nigeria** in 2019. Around 248,000 new conflict and violence displacements were recorded during the year, and nearly 2.6 million people were thought to be living in internal displacement as of 31 December. The government established the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development in August, an important step intended to improve the coordination and mobilisation of resources to prevent and respond to humanitarian and displacement crises.[16]

Boko Haram carried out a series of attacks in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe during the year, triggering more than 105,000 new displacements.[17] More than 473,000 IDPs were living in camps without adequate shelter across the three states as of October, and another 34,000 were living out in the open.[18] Torrential rains also flooded several displacement camps, forcing many IDPs into secondary displacement. Insecurity has impeded humanitarian access and the response has been further stretched by the mass arrival of new IDPs, leaving many camps overwhelmed.[19]

Long-standing ethnic conflict between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa farmers in north-western Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states triggered new displacements in 2019 as it took on new dynamics in the form of rural banditry and criminal violence. Around 178,000 people were living in internal displacement across the three states as of the end of the year.[20] Clashes between farmers and herders in the central states have also escalated in recent years, triggering 53,000 new displacements in 2019. The figure, however, should be considered an underestimate. The growing and shifting patterns of violence in both areas require better monitoring to ascertain the true scale of displacement.[21]

As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria is highly exposed to disasters, particularly floods. It is traversed by several major rivers that often burst their banks during the rainy season. Adamawa and Borno states, which were already affected by conflict, bore the brunt of flooding in 2019 during an exceptionally long rainy season. Flooding in the Niger river basin also destroyed almost 2,700 homes in Niger state in August and September. Disasters triggered around 157,000 new displacements across the country as whole, and were thought to have left about 143,000 people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year.

The security situation in **Burkina Faso**, a relatively peaceful country in recent years, deteriorated sharply in 2019, triggering an unprecedented 513,000 new displacements (see The Sahel spotlight, p.23). Jihadist militants, including al-Qaeda affiliates from neighbouring Mali, were quick to exploit the security vacuum left by the fall of the former president Blaise Compaoré in 2014, and a homegrown group known as Ansaroul Islam emerged in late 2016. Initially active in northern Soum region, the militants have spread by

tapping into local grievances in the east and south-west.[22] They launched near-daily attacks on the security forces in 2019, and as the state struggles to protect civilians, a growing number of self-defence militias have emerged, aggravating the situation still further.[23]

Violence in central **Mali** has been escalating since early 2018 and continued to do so last year. It has its roots in a long-standing crisis in the north, where Tuareg separatists and jihadist militants seized swathes of territory in 2012 following an attempted coup in Bamako.[24] A French-led military intervention pushed the militants back the following year, but they have since regrouped and expanded from the desert north into the country's fertile central regions (see The Sahel spotlight, p.23).

The government signed a peace agreement with a number of militias in 2015, but despite some progress in terms of social and economic development, political instability has impeded its implementation. The country has since had four prime ministers, and a series of cabinet reshuffles have undermined continuity.[25]

Mali is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Increasing variation in rainfall patterns, land degradation and erosion have disrupted many people's livelihoods. About 60 per cent of the population live in rural areas and rely on rain-fed agriculture. Around 400,000 people are thought to be affected by drought each year, and 500,000 by flooding.[26] There were 6,600 new disaster displacements in 2019, but limited data means the figure is conservative.

In neighbouring **Niger**, the eastern region of Diffa remains highly unstable. Boko Haram and other non-state armed groups carried out a series of attacks during the year, including one that triggered more than 18,000 new displacements in late March and early April.[27] The situation in the western states of Tahoua and Tillaberi is also cause for serious concern (see The Sahel spotlight, p.23).[28]

The government declared a state of emergency in all three states in mid-March, and the UN and a number of NGOs suspended their humanitarian operations in some areas for several weeks in early May.[29] Some have been able to resume their work since, but in a climate of violence and insecurity.

Extensive flooding triggered 121,000 new displacements in 2019, mainly in the capital Niamey and Diffa

state. Drought is also a major trigger of displacement, but robust data is hard to come by. It is also difficult to distinguish drought and conflict as triggers, and in many areas they are interlinked. What is known is that ever more frequent and intense episodes of drought disrupt pastoralists' livelihoods to the extent that they become unsustainable, forcing many into displacement. Some farmers have no choice but to move seasonally to urban areas in search of alternative income.[30]

East and the Horn of Africa

There was a significant fall in the number of new displacements in **Ethiopia**, from 2.9 million in 2018 to over a million last year. Many IDPs, however, live in insecure areas with little or no access to basic services or humanitarian assistance, and a significant number have been displaced more than once. There were around 1.4 million people living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of the end of the year, also considerably fewer than in 2018.

The decreases are the result of a national steering committee led by the Ministry of Peace approving a three-phase plan in March to return all IDPs to their places of origin in the following months.[31] Implementation began almost immediately, and 1.2 million IDPs were thought to have returned by the end of the year. Most displacement sites in Gedeo, West Guji and East and West Wollegas were dismantled.

Not everyone returned voluntarily, however, and many returnees encountered significant obstacles in re-establishing their lives. Many found their homes damaged or destroyed or were confronted by other issues in trying to reclaim their property and land. Few have access to assistance or basic services, and farmers and small business owners whose livelihoods have been disrupted have received little support. Insecurity in some return areas has led to a significant number of secondary displacements.[32] Some IDPs went into hiding and sought to relocate themselves to avoid having to return to their areas of origin.[33]

Disasters triggered 504,000 new displacements in 2019. Around 190,000 were recorded during the first rainy season between April and June, and 177,000 during the second in October and November, when the rains were

The Horn of Africa experienced above-average rainfall that triggered widespread flooding. This man and his wife lost their home and shop in Lodwar, Turkana county, Kenya. © UNICEF/UNI250645/Chinyenze, December 2019

unusually heavy. Eastern and south-eastern parts of the country were affected by drought, particularly lowland pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas of Somali region, Oromia region, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' region (SNNP) and parts of Afar region.[34] The situation is of particular concern in Somali, where most of the 131,000 drought displacements recorded in Ethiopia last year took place. More frequent and intense episodes of drought had previously affected nearly 56,000 households in the region between 2015 and 2017.[35]

Internal displacement clearly represents a major challenge for the country, but there were important policy developments intended to address the phenomenon during the year. With support from the UN and the international community, the government launched a durable solutions initiative in December.[36] It provides a framework for the achievement of sustainable solutions to displacement, from the policy and legislative to the operational level.

The initiative acknowledges that internal displacement is a development priority that needs to be addressed through coordinated planning and action across sectors.[37] Given its recent launch, 2020 will begin to reveal the extent to which putting it into practice enables safe, voluntary and dignified returns. The government also organised a series of national consultations that

culminated in Ethiopia ratifying the Kampala Convention in February 2020.[38]

Conflict and violence in **Somalia** triggered 188,000 new displacements in 2019, mainly in the south-east where the al-Shabaab militia, which is affiliated to al-Qaeda, has its stronghold. More than half were recorded in Lower Shabelle region as a result of clashes between the group and the Somali army supported by African Union forces. Persistent insecurity in rural areas impeded the provision of humanitarian aid, leading many people to flee to overcrowded camps in urban areas, mainly in Mogadishu, in search of refuge and assistance.[39] Tens of thousands of IDPs returned home during the year, but many only temporarily to work their land during the sowing and harvest seasons.[40]

Disasters triggered 479,000 new displacements. In common with other countries in East Africa, Somalia was affected by widespread flooding in the second half of 2019 during an unusually wet rainy season influenced by El Niño. About a quarter of the displacements took place in Belet Weyn city in Hiraan state.[41] Other regions were affected by drought, which triggered around 60,000 new displacements.

Internal displacement is fuelling Somalia's rapid urbanisation, as people who struggle to survive and make a living in rural areas seek opportunities in urban areas.[42]

Communities affected by Cyclone Idai test out the first drops of water from a new water point installed by the Spanish Red Cross. The cyclone has left many people in Mozambique at risk of disease.
Photo : IFRC/Corrie Butler, May 2019

Many, however, establish themselves in informal settlements where they are at high risk of eviction. More than 264,000 people, most of them IDPs, were evicted during the year, making forced evictions one of the main triggers of secondary displacement in the country.

In response to the new and protracted displacement across the country, the government launched a durable solutions initiative (DSI) with UN support in 2016.[43] In 2019 it established an inter-ministerial durable solutions secretariat, ratified the Kampala Convention and approved a national policy on IDPs and returning refugees.[44] Somalia's DSI has been a significant catalyst for these and other developments, leading the government to fully own the country's response to internal displacement, and providing an example for others to follow.

Unprecedented flooding in the East Africa, particularly **Ethiopia**, **Kenya** and **Somalia**, not only triggered widespread displacement but also established conditions for a locust infestation that caused damage across the region. This further eroded people's livelihoods and negatively affected food security.[45] Away from the headlines, the floods also displaced hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people along the White Nile basin, in many cases forcing IDPs who had already fled conflict into secondary displacement (see White Nile basin spotlight, p.27).

The most affected country along the basin was **South Sudan,** where the floods were described as the worst in the country's history.[46] They triggered 98 per cent of the 294,000 new disaster displacements recorded in 2019, and left around 246,000 people still living in displacement as of the end of the year.

The signing of a revitalised peace agreement between the government and a number of armed groups in September 2018 has led to a reduction in conflict and violence.[47] The number of associated new displacements also fell from 321,000 in 2018 to 259,000 in 2019, but there were still 1.4 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. Implementation of the agreement has been slow and there was an increase in violence and displacement in the second half of 2019, but the formation of a unity government in February 2020 has rekindled hopes of lasting peace.[48]

The tense political situation in **Sudan** aggravated ethnic and intercommunal disputes over scarce resources during the year. Clashes in East and Central Darfur and White Nile state triggered nearly 10,000 new displacements in May and June. Violence between Massalit and Arab communities in West Darfur in the last two weeks of December also triggered more than 46,000. There were 84,000 new conflict displacements recorded across the country as a whole, and more than 2.1 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year.

The number of disaster displacements in 2019 was among the highest recorded for Sudan, and the vast majority were triggered by flooding in White Nile state.[49] The floods also led to a cholera outbreak in Blue Nile, Gezira, Khartoum and Sennar states (see White Nile basin spotlight, p.27).[50]

Disasters triggered 130,000 new displacements in **Uganda** in 2019, mainly in Bukedi, Sironko and Teso regions, and 74,000 in **Kenya**. The latter figure includes 10,000 recorded in West Pokot county, which was hit by landslides in November. The two countries also recorded 2,300 and 1,800 displacements respectively triggered by localised intercommunal violence.

The small landlocked countries of **Burundi** and **Rwanda** experienced significant disaster displacement. Storms, heavy rains and landslides triggered 25,000 new displacements in Burundi, which peaked in November and December. About 6,000 people were evacuated pre-emptively from high-risk areas of Rwanda in December to escape the onset of heavy rains.[51]

Southern Africa

Mozambique bore the brunt of two unusually powerful storms in 2019 that triggered hundreds of thousands of new displacements, and left around 132,000 people still displaced as of the end of the year. The impacts of cyclones Idai and Kenneth were also felt in Comoros, Malawi and Zimbabwe (see Mozambique spotlight, p.25).[52]

Kenneth triggered around 24,000 new displacements in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, where its impacts were aggravated by an escalating conflict between government forces and jihadist militias. There were more than 160 attacks in 2019, compared with 60

in 2018 and six in 2017.[53] Around 5,300 new displacements were recorded, but the figure should be considered an underestimate given the difficulties in gathering data on highly localised incidents of violence. Many people fled to neighbouring provinces or across the border into Tanzania. Others sought shelter on islands off the coast of Cabo Delgado.[54] Violence and displacement increased around the time of elections in October, and some IDPs were unable to vote in their registered polling stations.[55]

Kenneth also hit **Comoros** hard, destroying about 4,600 homes and affecting people who were already poor and vulnerable, mostly on the island of Grand Comore. Around 19,000 disaster displacements were recorded during the year. The situation on Comoros received little media attention, but damages and losses were put at $185 million, and recovery and reconstruction costs could be as high as $277 million.[56]

Idai struck **Malawi** before it strengthened into a tropical cyclone, but it still triggered around 110,000 new displacements in Southern region. After later wreaking chaos in Mozambique it also triggered 51,000 in **Zimbabwe**, mainly in the rural districts of Chimanimani and Chipinge in Manicaland province. Extensive crop losses aggravated an already fragile food security situation in the area after an extended period of drought.[57] It was not possible to obtain drought displacement figures either for Zimbabwe or the wider region, which has been suffering episodes of severe drought for the last five years. However, evidence shows that its impacts have been widespread, and that they are playing a role in heightening people's vulnerabilities.[58]

THE SAHEL

A deepening crisis of regional dimensions

The Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa suffered a sharp increase in violence and mass displacement in 2019. A number of jihadist groups have become increasingly active in border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, commonly known as the Liptako Gourma region, carrying out attacks, stoking communal and ethnic violence, and raising concerns about a major and escalating security challenge with regional implications. Boko Haram's insurgency and military offensives against the group have also continued to force people to flee their homes in the Lake Chad basin.[59] Around 854,000 new internal displacements were recorded across the three countries in 2019.

The jihadist groups, which are local but globally oriented, have spent years exploiting local grievances, laying the ground for armed insurgencies to emerge and expand. Some of the disputes involve access to land and water, but many attacks are part of efforts to root out individuals linked to one extremist group or another, or to take revenge for previous violence. The militants have also taken advantage of porous borders and the absence of government forces. They have forcibly recruited people, laid siege to villages, burned homes, destroyed the livelihoods of whole communities and perpetrated severe human rights violations.[60]

The security situation in Mali has been deteriorating since 2013.[61] Islamist militants have regrouped in the desert north and expanded into the fertile centre of the country. They have gained ground by recruiting from the Fulani community, nomadic herders left behind by government and development programmes that favour agriculture. Long-standing grievances between Dogon farmers and Fulani herders over land and resources have also increased considerably.[62] More than 290,000 new internal displacements were recorded in 2019, most of them triggered by escalating communal violence in Mopti and Gao. The two regions currently host the largest numbers of IDPs, of whom there were 208,000 across the country as a whole as of the end of the year.

Insecurity has also spread to eastern and southern regions of neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso, where different armed groups are using similar methods to recruit and expand. The situation in Niger is of particular concern because the country sits at a dangerous crossroad of violence, surrounded on all sides by countries facing security crises. The eastern region of Diffa has suffered the effects of Boko Haram's insurgency for a decade, and the government has also been forced to step up military activity and protection efforts in the western regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua in response to escalating violence and displacement, particularly over the last two years.[63]

There are worrying signs that the dynamics of these two separate conflict hotspots are becoming more intertwined, and that Niger may form a potential bridge between them.[64] There were 57,000 new internal displacements, due to conflict and violence, recorded in the country last year, of which 26,000 were in Tillaberi and Tahoua.

It is Burkina Faso, however, which faces the most alarming security situation.[65] Violence spread from northern to eastern regions of the country in 2019, triggering 513,000 new displacements, a ten-fold increase on the figure from 2018. Around 560,000 people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. Communities have been generous in hosting displaced people, but the country's infrastructure is poor, the government has struggled to respond to IDPs' largely unmet needs and the international community has paid little attention to the crisis.[66]

Access to health services and education has deteriorated, and IDPs are in urgent need of protection. There are more than twice as many displaced women as men, and many have been subjected to abuse and sexual violence. There are particular concerns about the protection of women in hard-to-reach areas where violence goes unchecked.[67]

The presence and influence of armed groups is growing in all three countries, and their shifting activities and the complex dynamics of the situation make it difficult for individual governments to rein in the insurgents. Military efforts to do so have also triggered significant displacement. New initiatives intended to respond more effectively to the crisis have emerged, including the creation in 2017 of the Joint Force of the Group of Five of the
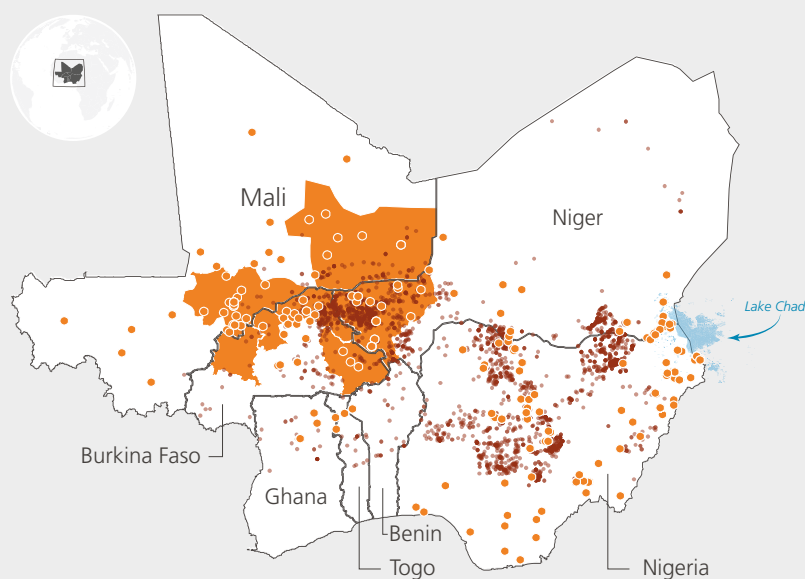
1.1 m new displacements in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo as a result of conflict and violence in 2019.

New displacements by country in 2019:

Burkina Faso	513,000
Mali	284,000
Nigeria	248,000
Niger	57,000
Ghana	2,300
Togo	2,000
Benin	190

- • Conflict or violence events *
- • Location of displacement events
- ■ Liptako Gourma region

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.
*Source: ACLED events associated with air/drone strikes, armed clashes, attacks, looting/property destruction, non-state actor overtakes territory and shelling/artillery/missile attacks in 2019
Displacement data: ACLED, CMP, CONASUR, DRC, ECHO, IOM DTM, IRC, local authorities, local media, MSF, NADMO, OCHA, Protection Cluster, SEMA, REACH, RRM, UNHCR, 2019
The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Sahel (G5 Sahel) to fight jihadist violence and insecurity in the region with UN and African Union support.[68] Many challenges remain, however, and meanwhile there is a growing sense of fear among local communities, including those who have been displaced, prompted by the realisation that living in a conflict zone is becoming the new normal.[69]

There is also increasing concern that the violence and insecurity will spread further south to countries such as Benin, Ghana and Togo. Attacks by Fulani militias triggered new displacements in Benin's northern Atacora region in 2019. Further west, a land dispute between Gangan and Tchokossi communities in northern Togo triggered as many as 2,000 new displacements in late June, and intercommunal violence and clashes forced people to flee their homes in northern Ghana between January and May.

If violence continues to spread into previously calm countries, much more displacement is only to be expected. More efforts to address the main triggers and drivers of conflict across the Sahel are required if the current situation is to be prevented from spiralling into a new regional crisis.

MOZAMBIQUE

The long-term impacts of cyclones Idai and Kenneth

After an extended drought that halved agricultural production and caused widespread food insecurity, two powerful tropical storms wreaked havoc across southern Africa in 2019. Cyclones Idai and Kenneth were unprecedented in the region, and triggered 640,000 and 45,000 displacements respectively. Countries including Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe were hard hit, but it was Mozambique that suffered the worst of the damage and where most of the displacement was recorded.[70]

First to strike was Idai, which as a tropical depression caused severe flooding and forced tens of thousands of people to flee in northern Mozambique and Malawi in early March. It then moved out to sea, where it developed into an intense tropical cyclone equivalent to a category two hurricane.[71] Idai then skirted the west coast of Madagascar before moving back toward Mozambique, where it made landfall on 15 March near the coastal city of Beira, home to 500,000 people. About 90 per cent of the city was damaged, and much of it destroyed. Most of the people displaced were from poor and vulnerable communities living in informal settlements ill-equipped to withstand the ravages of the storm.[72]

As it moved inland, Idai cut across the central provinces of Manica, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia and then neighbouring Zimbabwe, damaging crops and displacing whole rural communities.[73] The storm triggered around 478,000 displacements in Mozambique and left millions in need of humanitarian assistance. More than 93,500 people were still displaced in 71 resettlement sites in the four central provinces as of the end of the year.[74]

Cyclone Kenneth, the equivalent of a category four hurricane, struck just over a month after Idai, between 23 and 29 April. It developed in the Indian Ocean and hit Comoros and Mayotte before making landfall in the province of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique. Kenneth triggered significantly fewer displacements than Idai, but it was the most powerful cyclone to hit Africa since records began with gusts of up to 220 km/h.[75] An ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado, where several Islamic militias have been attacking and displacing people since 2017, added to the challenges brought on by the disaster. The conflict slowed down the delivery of aid to those affected and is a significant barrier to recovery and reconstruction efforts.[76]

A number of factors combined to make Idai and Kenneth among the most devastating disasters the region has experienced. International meteorological services projected the intensity and path of both storms and national authorities declared them emergencies, but local early warning systems proved ineffective. Few people evacuated from high-risk areas before either made landfall.[77] Even after the wrath of Idai, there was little evidence of displacement being pre-emptive as Kenneth approached. Most people moved during or after the storm, once their homes had been damaged or destroyed.[78]

Both storms also struck places where people were already living in vulnerable conditions. Poor communities in urban areas such as Beira were disproportionately affected and had little capacity to recover and rebuild.[79] Millions of people in rural areas were already facing food insecurity as a result of drought, and the storms only served to aggravate the situation. Harvests and seed stocks were decimated, leaving many farmers unable to sustain their livelihoods. Across the regions affected most people rely on agriculture for a living.[80] Around 67,500 children were facing malnutrition in the country as of the end of the year, and 2.5 million people - or 10 per cent of the country's population - were in need of humanitarian assistance.[81]

As the emergency phase of the response to Idai and Kenneth receded, new challenges emerged, including the resettlement of IDPs in areas at less risk from future disasters. With support from international organisations, the government designated areas it deemed suitable for habitation. About 89,000 people in Manica, Tete and Zambezia provinces were resettled in new sites and allocated plots of land on which to build new homes and farms.[82]

Many of the plots, however, have proved unsuitable for agriculture, leaving many still dependent on food aid.[83] Many of the resettlement sites were also affected when the rainy season arrived toward the end of the year. Downpours destroyed hundreds of tents and emergency
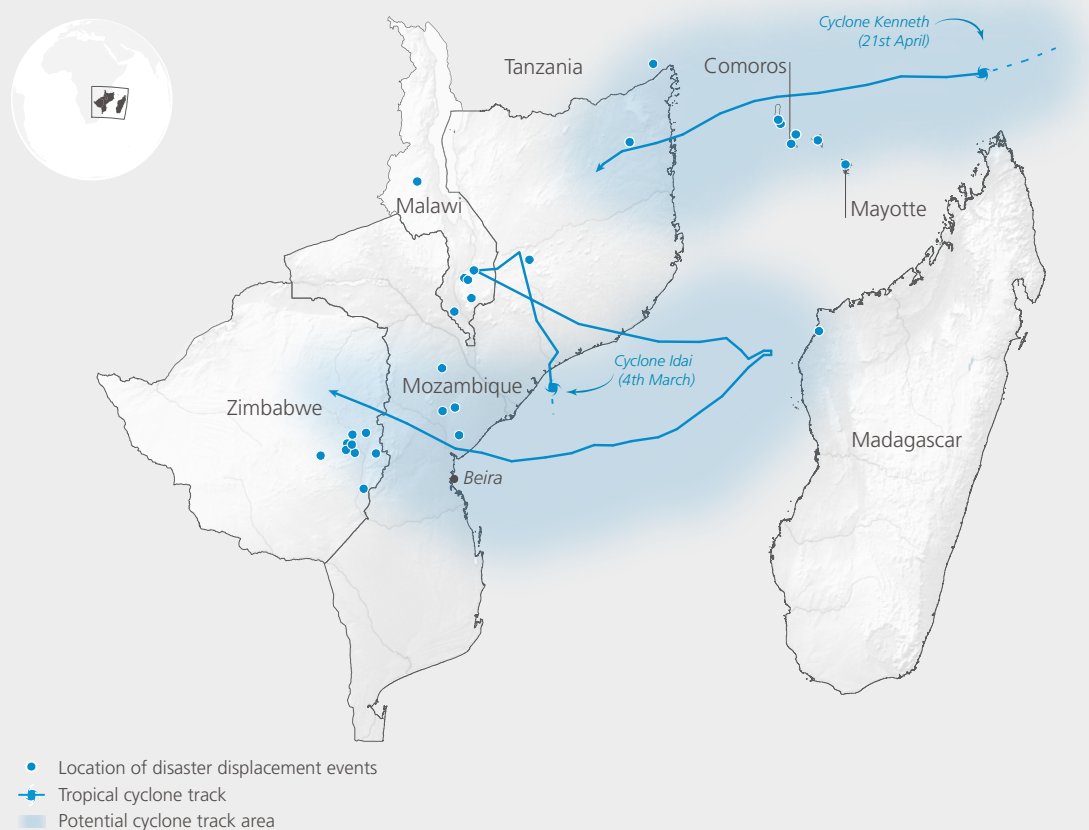
shelters, triggering more than 2,800 secondary displacements between December 2019 and January 2020.[84] This trend continued during the first months of 2020.

Basic humanitarian needs such as food, water and shelter were still unmet across Mozambique several months after the disasters. Only 11 per cent of people surveyed in resettlement sites said they planned to live there permanently, and most cited precarious living conditions, a lack of livelihood opportunities and poor access to basic services as the main reasons. Displaced children and young people, who make up the majority of those in resettlement sites, also struggled to restart their education.[85]

Cyclones Idai and Kenneth show that the impacts of climate change and variability are most acutely felt by people who are already vulnerable, highly exposed and unprepared to respond. Disaster risk reduction measures, including better early warning systems and contingency plans, and the building of climate-resilient infrastructure, are vital if the risk of future displacement is to be reduced.

Significant numbers of people are also still living in displacement as a result of the two storms, and it is clear that humanitarian assistance alone will not address the challenges they face. Mozambique's government and international organisations are planning for the kind of long-term investment needed for reconstruction and the pursuit of durable solutions.[86] Whether these efforts bear fruit remains to be seen and will depend on sustained commitment at all levels.

- Location of disaster displacement events
- Tropical cyclone track
- Potential cyclone track area

New displacements by country in 2019:

Country	Displacements
Mozambique	502,000
Malawi	110,000
Zimbabwe	51,000
Comoros	19,000
Tanzania	1,000
Madagascar	500
Mayotte	450

Cyclones Idai and Kenneth triggered around **685,000** new displacements in Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mayotte, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.
Sources: Local authorities, relief workers, local media, OCHA, Red Cross, INGC, IOM, ECHO and DODMA, 2019. Cyclone data from GDACS, 2019
The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

WHITE NILE BASIN

Chronic impacts, cyclical displacement

Floods triggered 73 per cent of the 3.4 million new displacements associated with disasters across sub-Saharan Africa in 2019. Ethiopia, Somalia and Mozambique recorded some of the highest figures. Relative to population size, however, the situation in several areas of the White Nile river basin was cause for particular concern. This includes parts of Uganda, South Sudan, the contested Abyei Area and Sudan, where the people affected were already highly vulnerable in social and economic terms.
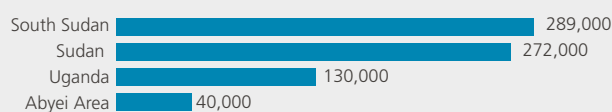
Heavy rains caused the White Nile and its tributaries to burst their banks several times during the year, triggering a combined total of more than 700,000 new displacements. Some people already displaced by conflict and violence were forced to flee again by the floods, which made few media headlines and attracted little international attention despite their widespread impacts.

The White Nile basin is 3,700 kilometres long and covers about 1.8 million square kilometres. Different rainy seasons take place along the territories it cuts through, and floods are not uncommon. The river flows from the Ugandan highlands to the vast floodplains of South Sudan, which are home to one of Africa's largest wetlands, known as the Sudd. Its ecosystem supports farming and pastoral cultures and major wildlife migrations.[87]

A complex combination of social, economic and political pressures are at play in this vulnerable sub-region. The river basin has been subject to decades of significant transformation, including for the irrigation of ever greater expanses of cultivated land, the construction of hydropower dams and urban expansion, all of which have increased the risk of disasters.[88] Ongoing conflict, weak governance and political instability in different

areas also contribute to making the White Nile basin a displacement risk hotspot.[89] Last year's floods were not a single disaster, but rather several events of varying intensity that had different impacts on communities along the basin.

Upstream in Uganda, rainy season downpours led to localised floods and landslides, triggering 130,000 displacements. Government regulations seek to avert the construction of housing in high-risk areas and there are plans to relocate populations, but people have continued to establish themselves in informal settlements on steep slopes where the risk of landslides is high. When the rains came, thousands were forced to flee as a result.[90]

Floods triggered 289,000 displacements in South Sudan, many involving people already internally displaced by

New displacements by country or territory in 2019:

South Sudan	289,000
Sudan	272,000
Uganda	130,000
Abyei Area	40,000

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.
Sources: Local authorities, IFRC, OCHA, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Save the Children and UN, 2019

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

conflict and Sudanese refugees who were sheltering in at-risk areas and who became displaced for a second time.[91] Local communities were also forced to flee, crops were damaged and livestock lost. This aggravated food insecurity in areas where malnutrition levels were already high.[92] The floods contaminated the majority of water sources, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera.[93] Submerged roads also delayed the provision of humanitarian aid significantly.[94]

South Sudan's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management put a two-year strategic plan in place in 2018 that acknowledged the need to address the challenges brought on by the combination of disasters and conflict.[95] The events of 2019, however, revealed the continuing limitations in efforts to prevent and respond to disasters in areas affected by conflict. They also raised concerns about the extent to which humanitarian crises put the brakes on recent peacebuilding and recovery gains.[96]

Further north in the contested Abyei Area, unprecedented rains and floods destroyed at least 5,000 homes and triggered more than 40,000 new displacements, accounting for about a third of the population.[97] Abyei is also home to 31,000 people living in protracted displacement as result of conflict. Many have been doing so for years, and some for decades. The majority were staying in temporary shelters unable to withstand months of heavy downpours and strong winds, and many IDPs were forced into secondary displacement as a result. People who had previously fled conflict in South Sudan were also displaced for a second, and in some cases a third time.[98]

The floods destroyed roads, bridges and other public infrastructure. They also severely damaged farmland, reducing agricultural production. With access routes cut, many communities were isolated for extended periods and local markets were also affected. Fewer than ten per cent of displaced households had livestock or food stocks, meaning the majority had to restrict themselves to one meal a day.[99] The lack of adequate shelter and access to livelihoods and the ongoing risk of further displacement only served to aggravate people's already precarious living conditions.[100]

Flooding in Sudan triggered 272,000 new displacements, most of which were recorded in White Nile state over the period of a few weeks. More than 16,500 homes were destroyed across the state.[101] Some people without social or family networks struggled to find shelter, and some families were reported as having to sleep in the open air. Both IDPs and refugees from South Sudan were among those displaced. Food insecurity also increased.[102]

The disaster took place on top of a major political transition. The country's president of three decades, Omar al-Bashir, was deposed in April following months of protests over an economic crisis. A transitional government was finally put in place in August, at the height of the flooding, which slowed down the coordination of response efforts.[103] Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission activated the country's flood steering committee and task force, but they were unable to cope with the situation and UN and civil society organisations had to provide support for those affected.[104]

The displacement triggered along the White Nile basin in 2019 shows that disasters can have devastating outcomes when they hit vulnerable communities in politically fragile countries where unsustainable development practices, environmental change and weak governance heighten disaster displacement risk. When conflict and insecurity are also factors, impacts can become chronic and cyclical, as seen with IDPs and refugees forced to flee for a second or third time. Ongoing peacebuilding efforts will have to be reinforced and sustainable development planning and disaster risk reduction supported across the basin to avert what for many has become a downward spiral of vulnerability and displacement risk.