BRAZIL

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

SUMMARY OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2019

There were more than 295,000 new displacements associated with disasters in Brazil in 2019. These were triggered by more than 500 small-scale events, aggregated and recorded as 96. Internal displacement in Brazil is primarily caused by disasters such as floods, storms, wildfires, landslides, drought and coastal erosion. There were also various cases of internal displacement caused by pre-emptive evacuations. These were a response to the risks posed by mines and dams around the country that did not meet national security standards and represented a danger to local populations amidst heavy rain and flooding.

IDMC was able to identify a stock figure for one displacement event in Brazil as of 31 December 2019. IDMC believes, however, that this stock figure is an underestimate because it reflects a very limited amount of data concerning the duration of internal displacement in Brazil or the extent to which internally displaced people (IDPs) have achieved durable solutions, especially in light of the large number of new displacements recorded.

Table 1. 2019 summary of internal displacement in Brazil

Number of events that triggered displacements[1]	96
Total new displacements[2]	295,000
Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019[3]	1,400
Houses destroyed[4]	2,420
People pre-emptively evacuated before events[5]	1,400
People officially sheltered after events[6]	1,400

Notes

[1] *This corresponds to number of disaster events the triggered displacement during the year of 2019*
[2] *This corresponds to new instances of total internal displacement related to the disaster event during the year*
[3] *This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in a situation of internal displacement as of 31 December 2019 due to the disaster event*
[4] *This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed during the year*
[5] *This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster events*
[6] *This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the disasters events*
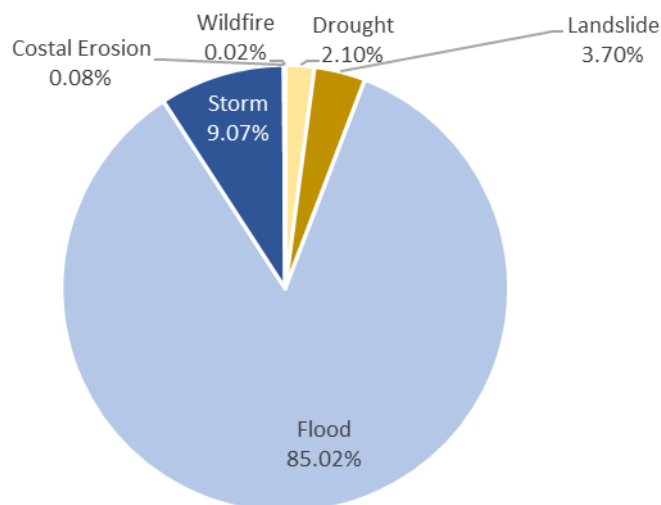
New Displacement in 2019 by hazard type

Disasters are the main cause of internal displacement in Brazil. The Igarapé Institute, a Brazilian think tank, says that "in Brazil, one person every minute is forced to leave their home".

Several disaster events triggered waves of new displacement. Floods were the main cause, triggering 248,938 new displacements. Heavy rains and storms were the second main cause of new displacements, with 29,475, followed by landslides and mass movements with 10,842, drought with 6,146, coastal erosion with 244 and wildfires with 65.

One displacement event was recorded as a pre-emptive evacuation, a result of the risk of dam and mine collapse from floods. The mining company Vale apparently did not follow safety regulations while engaged in construction, and a mine and a dam collapsed in January 2019 killing various people. The company pre-emptively evacuated more than 430 families, estimated to be about 1,419 people, and was housing them in hotels or rented apartments around the country as of September 2019. It is doing so to prevent similar incidents, amidst the risk of dam collapse from heavy rain and floods in the area.

It is believed that these families will not be able to return to their homes for at least two years. This is also why these families were included in the stock figure for IDPs in Brazil.

Fig. 1. Distribution of new displacements by hazard types in Brazil in 2019

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

IDMC's estimate for new displacement events is based on data collected from a wide range of sources which include those from the government, official disaster databases and media monitoring.

The primary sources of displacement data in Brazil are the Ministry of National Integration and the National Secretariat for Protection and Civil Defence (SEDEC). SEDEC publishes a publicly available database, the Integrated Disaster Information System (S2iD). This records information about national disasters, collected by civil defence personnel in affected areas, and information about states of emergency and public calamities reported by the government or state authorities. It is the most comprehensive database on disasters and its effects on local populations in the country. By using the search and filter functions in the database, IDMC gathered the relevant disaster events that triggered internal displacement in 2019.

IDMC also triangulated information from the government database with the displacement events it reported on throughout the year through media monitoring and partner engagement. Certain events that were not already in the government database were added to the government figures. This resulted in the final displacement figures.

All the data collected and published by IDMC was analysed, verified and triangulated through multiple sources to guarantee its accuracy.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The final displacement figures for 2019 were reached after a comprehensive process of data collection from multiple sources, data triangulation and analysis. Although the process was thorough, several caveats must be made in the presentation of the figures, and several challenges remain in the monitoring of internal displacement in the country.

The main caveats involve a few remaining data gaps. The first such data gap is the limited amount of information related to the duration of displacement after the initial displacement trigger in the media and in official government databases or regarding the degree to which IDPs have achieved partial or durable solutions. IDMC was able to collect information for the duration of displacement and a stock figure for only one displacement event because of this lack of information, both spatial and temporal.

The new displacement figures, and particularly those drawn from media monitoring, are also likely to be an underestimate. In many reports, official statements and news articles, the numbers for displaced people were presented in ambiguous terms, like "dozens", "hundreds" or "more than…". IDMC in such cases published the most conservative figure to guarantee a degree of accuracy in its reporting. It follows that although IDMC can assert with confidence that all the new displacements which it recorded did in fact occur, it cannot confirm that these encompassed all the new displacements.

An additional caveat is that where only the number of families or households displaced were available, IDMC approximated the number of new displacements by multiplying the average household size in Brazil by the number of households evacuated. Some of these approximated figures may be inaccurate.

There is also a data gap related to internal displacement associated with violence. According to the Igarapé Institute and its Forced Migration Monitor, a large number of new displacements in Brazil are caused by gang violence, but there is limited data available on this kind of displacement and the number of people forced to flee their homes as a result of it. IDMC has thus not reported on internal displacement triggered by conflict in Brazil in 2019. The final displacement figures are also likely to be an underestimate for this reason.

Finally, the wildfires in Brazil, which destroyed more than 50,000 hectares of vegetation, are suspected to have caused displacement and to have left people in protected indigenous reserves of the Amazon in a highly vulnerable situation.[40] Displacement figures on these populations are, however, quite limited.

Our stock estimation in 2019: Providers of disaster displacement data tend not to include information about when, how and for how long people were displaced. One of the main gaps and challenges in accurately estimating the number of IDPs is the lack of measurement of return flows. Nor does data tend to be collected on people who have achieved durable solutions by integrating locally or resettling elsewhere in the country.

Our year-end estimate is based on time series data and housing destruction data for specific disaster events, as well as aggregated figures about the number of people displaced by disasters recorded by governments and other stakeholders. (more information on - http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2020-GRID-methodology.pdf)
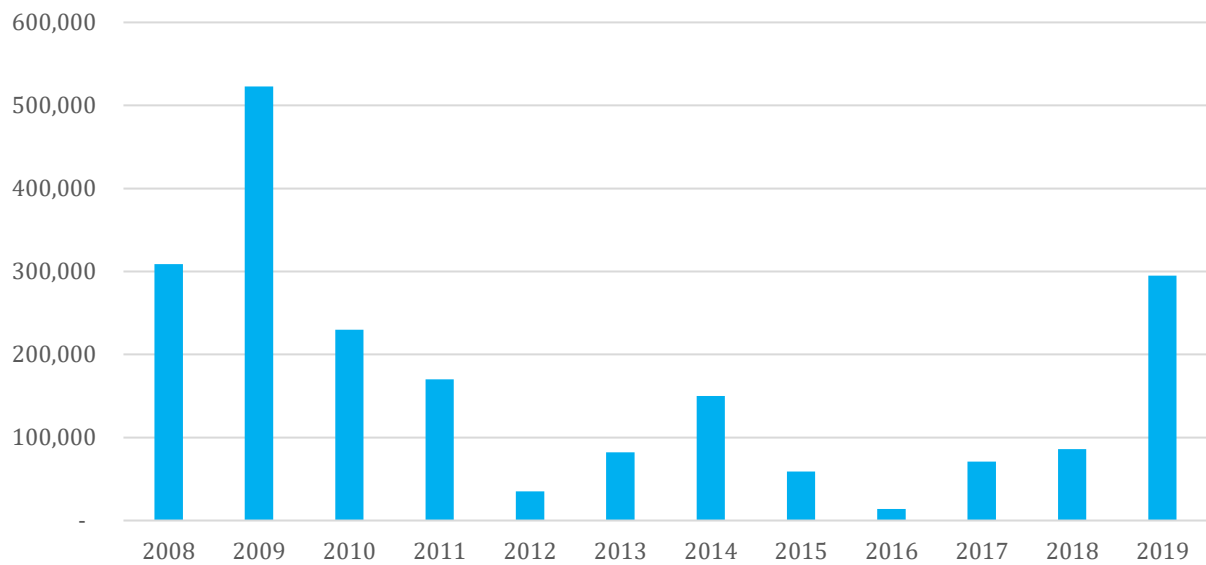
CONTEXT

Brazil has one of the highest numbers of internal displacement in the world. It is also highly prone and vulnerable to floods, wildfires, storms and landslides.

Significant changes in the displacement figures for Brazil over the years have been largely a result of disparities in the availability of data as well as changes in IDMC's data gathering strategies. IDMC began analysing the data published by the Brazilian government through the National System for Protection and Civil Protection (SEDEC)'s S2iD database in 2018. The use and assessment of this government database has significantly increased the number of disaster events, new displacements, and destroyed housing that IDMC records.

Trends analysis 2008-2019

Fig 2. Historical displacement trends in Brazil

For the full country profile on Brazil please visit:
http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/brazil