

# FRANCE

## Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

### SUMMARY OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2019

France suffered from several serious and deadly disasters that caused multiple new displacements and destroyed or severely damaged many houses in 2019. IDMC estimates that there were 36 disaster events which triggered more than 16,700 new displacements. The main triggers of displacement were floods, heavy rains, storms, landslides, earthquakes and wildfires. All new displacements were caused by disasters, none by conflict or violence.

France had one of the highest recorded numbers of new displacements resulting from disasters in Europe. In metropolitan France, there were 32 new displacement events, 6,157 new displacements, 674 pre-emptive evacuations and more than 800 houses destroyed. Most new displacements were caused by storms and floods.

The most significant displacement event in metropolitan France was [an earthquake on 11 November in Ardèche which displaced more than 2,000 people](#). At least 2,000 people affected by the disaster were living in a situation of displacement as of 31 December 2019. The second largest displacement event took place [on 23 November and led to the evacuation of 1,655 people](#).

The most significant displacement event in France as a whole, including Overseas France, was Cyclone Belna, which in December led to the displacement of more than 10,000 people in the overseas territory of Mayotte.

IDMC was only able to identify a stock figure for the number of IDPs living in France as of 31 December for one displacement event: the earthquake in Ardèche. The true figure, however, may be larger. One of the most significant challenges of monitoring displacement in the country is the lack of time series data related to the duration of displacement and the extent to which people have reached durable solutions, such as returns or resettlement.

Disasters triggered more than 10,550 new displacements in the French overseas territories and departments in 2019. Two disaster events triggered 10,450 new displacements in Mayotte. Cyclone Belna displaced more than 10,000 people in December, and 450 people were displaced by Cyclone Kenneth in April. In Martinique, there were more than two new displacements as a result of floods in October, and in French Polynesia there were 98 new displacements resulting from storms and evictions for development projects.

Table 1 - 2019 summary of internal displacement in France

<b>Number of events that triggered displacements<sup>1</sup></b>	36
<b>Total new displacements<sup>2</sup></b>	16,700
<b>Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019<sup>3</sup></b>	2,000
<b>Houses destroyed<sup>4</sup></b>	803
<b>People pre-emptively evacuated before events<sup>5</sup></b>	674
<b>People officially sheltered after events<sup>6</sup></b>	2,000
<b>Notes</b>	
<i>This corresponds to the number of disaster events that triggered displacement during 2019</i>	
<i><sup>2</sup> This corresponds to new instances of total internal displacement related to the disaster event during the year</i>	
<i><sup>3</sup> This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in a situation of internal displacement as of 31 December 2019 as a result of the disaster event</i>	
<i><sup>4</sup> This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed during the year</i>	
<i><sup>5</sup> This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster events</i>	
<i><sup>6</sup> This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the disasters events</i>	

## New Displacement in 2019 by hazard type

Wildfires were the main cause of displacement events in France in 2019. These caused 11 displacement events. These events were followed by floods, which caused 10 displacement events; storms, seven; landslides and mass movements, three; earthquakes, two; tornados, one; and evictions for development projects, one.

Most new displacements in France, including Overseas France, were a result of storms, which caused 10,604 new displacements. Floods were the second largest trigger of displacement, causing 3,366 new displacements

In metropolitan France, most new displacements were triggered by floods, which caused 3,364 displacements. These were followed by earthquakes, which caused 2,002 new displacements. There were also 548 new displacements resulting from wildfires, 124 resulting from storms, 60 from tornados and 59 from landslides.

In the overseas regions and territories, where there were more than 10,550 new displacements, the largest displacement triggers were storms.

The earthquake on 11 November in Ardèche was the event that caused the largest number of new displacements in Metropolitan France. It led to the displacement of more than 2,000 people and the destruction of more than 800 houses. It was notable not only for the vast number of people displaced, but also the duration of the displacement. As of 31 December 2019, these people continued to be displaced and were being sheltered in a temporary camp.

Floods in 11 departments of France on 23 November, following heavy rains, were the second most significant displacement event. These floods led to the evacuation, some of it pre-emptive, [of 1,655 people in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Occitanie](#).

Two displacement events were responsible for all the destroyed housing recorded by IDMC. The first was the earthquake in Ardèche. [The second was a landslide caused by heavy rain on 12 December in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence which destroyed three houses](#).

Fig. 1. Distribution of new displacements by hazard types in France including overseas in 2019

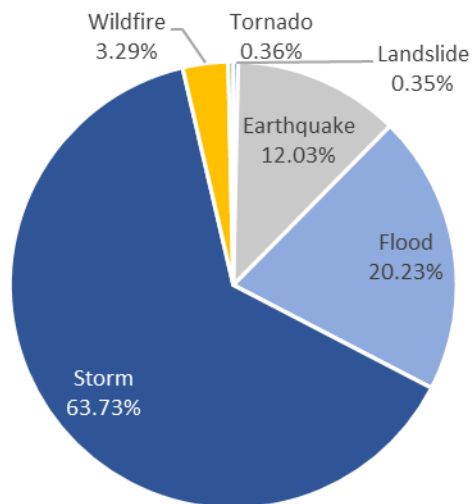
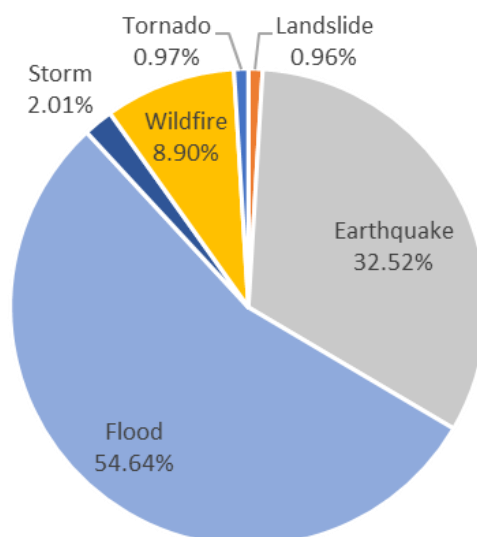


Fig. 2. Distribution of new displacements by hazard types in Metropolitan France in 2019



## DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

IDMC's estimate for new displacement events is based on data collected from a wide range of sources, including government sources and media monitoring. Data is largely based on statements made by the French government, mainly by the Ministry of Interior, as well as by local authorities, such as city mayors, local prefectures and emergency response authorities, like fire brigades and police authorities, among others. IDMC also collected data from articles and videos released by reputable media sources, including international newspapers, national newspapers and news channels, and local media.

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

In cases where IDMC received information on numbers of families or households displaced, an approximation of new displacements was made using the average household number in France and multiplying it by the number of households displaced.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

The final displacement figures for France in 2019 were reached after a comprehensive process of data collection from multiple sources, data triangulation and analysis. Although the process was thorough, certain caveats should be highlighted with regard to the presentation of the figures, and remaining challenges noted with regard to monitoring internal displacement.

The main caveat is that the figures for France's internal displacement in 2019 are likely to be an underestimate. In many reports and official statements, as well as in many news articles, the number of displaced persons was presented in ambiguous terms, such as “dozens”, “hundreds” and “more than...”. In such cases, IDMC published the most conservative figure which it could draw based on the available information to ensure a minimal accuracy in its reporting. It follows, that although IDMC can assert with confidence that all the new displacements it recorded occurred, it cannot confirm that these were the only new displacements.

Another significant caveat is that some of the displacement figures were calculated using the average household size in France. In instances where only the number of families or households displaced were available, IDMC approximated new displacements by multiplying the average household size by the number of households evacuated. Some approximated figures may thus be inaccurate.

Gathering data on the duration of displacement in France is particularly challenging. There are multiple government and media reports related to the beginning of displacement and its trigger. There is significantly less information, however, on displacement's duration and the extent to which people can return to their homes, when they can do so, and under what conditions.

Displacement in France, in contrast with other countries, is generally of short duration. It is, however, difficult to get information on the exact duration of these displacements and determine the number of IDPs that should remain in the stock figure. IDMC was only able to identify an IDP stock figure for one displacement event but believes the figure may be higher.

IDMC also encountered a dilemma in its analysis of displacement events and made a decision regarding the evacuation of migrant camps that is worth highlighting. The French government evacuated a large number of migrant camps throughout 2019. Some of the migrants had been living in the country for a year or more and might therefore be considered permanent residents of the country and counted as IDPs after their eviction from the migrant camps. IDMC decided, however, that not enough evidence was available to determine how many of these migrants could actually be considered permanent residents or whether their evictions could be counted as new displacements and thus decided not to count the evictions in its assessment.

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>)

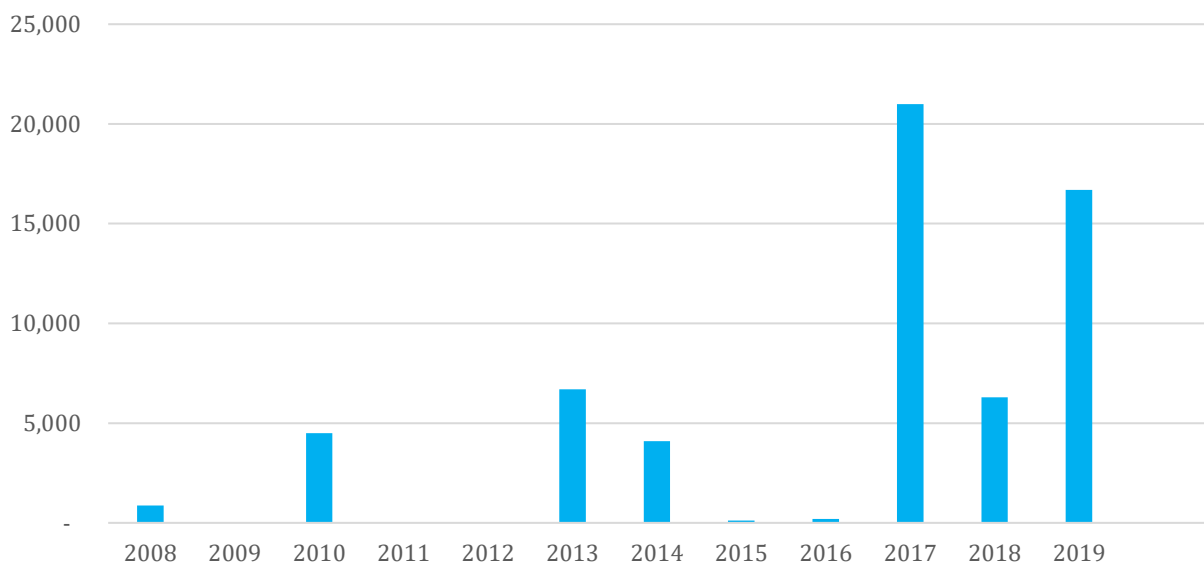
## CONTEXT

France has one of the highest numbers of new displacements in Europe. It is a country vulnerable and highly prone to storms, floods and wildfires and has suffered from various landslides and earthquakes.

In order to understand and assess the degree and severity of internal displacement in France in 2019, it is essential to not only examine the main displacement events of the year, but also to compare them with previous years. Such an exercise reveals a number of important trends.

### **Trends analysis 2008-2019**

Fig 3. Historical displacement trends in France



For the full country profile on France please visit:

<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/france>