

RAINY SEASON HORN OF AFRICA

(GU RAINS, SHORT RAINS, KIREMT RAINS)

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

Glide N°: TC-2019-000165-SOM; FF-2019-000161-DJI; FL-2019-000156-DJI; FL-2019-000138-KEN; FL-2019-000133-SOM; FL-2019-000116-ETH

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

The disaster events

In 2019, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, which are located in the Horn of Africa, experienced one of the [wettest rainy seasons of the last 40 years](#). The rainy season takes place between October and December and has a different name in each country – Gu rains in Somalia, Kiremnt rains in Ethiopia and short rains in Kenya. These extreme meteorological events affected the region after several consecutive seasons of severe drought between 2015 and 2019 and a [record high rainfall in May and June 2018](#).

Cumulative rainfall between October and December 2019 in most of the region ranged from 200 per cent to 400 per cent of average rainfall. This represented, according to the country, either the wettest or second wettest seasons on record since 1981. The extensive rains were caused by an exceptionally strong Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). The IOD occurs because of differences in tropical western and eastern Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures. When the western region is warmer than normal and the eastern region is cooler than normal, strong moist winds are directed towards East Africa [causing extensive rainfall and floods](#).

Widespread flooding across the four countries caused displacement and [severe damage to people's livelihoods](#). It damaged more than 130,000 housing units and 73,000 hectares of cropland while killing more than 96,000 livestock. The IOD conditions also led to the creation of Tropical Cyclone Pawan, which made landfall on 7 December in Puntland, Somalia, bringing several days of [strong rains and flash floods accompanied by strong winds](#). The unusually wet conditions facilitated the spread of desert locusts in the region in December, resulting in the worst locust outbreak of the past 25 years. The outbreak is further destroying people's livelihood, contributing to [increased food insecurity, and hampering recovery efforts after the flood](#).

Displacements linked to the rainy season between October and December 2019

Table 1: Summary of internal displacement for rainy season in Horn of Africa

| Country | Somalia | Ethiopia | Kenya | Djibouti | TOTAL |
|--|---------|----------|--------|----------|---------|
| New displacements ¹ | 407,000 | 177,000 | 71,000 | 10,000 | 665,000 |
| Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019 ² | 649 | N/A | 308 | N/A | 956 |
| Houses destroyed ³ | 428 | N/A | 78 | N/A | 506 |
| People pre-emptively evacuated before the event ⁴ | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| People officially sheltered after the event ⁵ | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Notes

¹ This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement related to the disaster event
² 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
³ This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed by the disaster event
⁴ This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster event
⁵ This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the event

The above average rainfall during the wet season caused floods, landslides and storms. These led to 665,000 new displacements between October and December 2019 in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Somalia recorded the highest number of new displacements at 407,000. Of those, more than a half, or 230,000, were displaced from Belet Weyne city. This city is regularly affected by floods and disaster displacement when the Shabelle river overflows its banks and breaches flood defences. By mid-December about 80,000 residents were thought to have returned to Belet Weyne. The sustainability of the returns, however, is questionable given the widespread destruction of infrastructure, livelihoods and homes. Given the lack of any disaster risk reduction measures in the city, [displaced people also are at risk of new displacement with the onset of the next rainy season](#). In early December, northern areas of Somalia were hit by Cyclone Pawan which displaced hundreds of people, mostly in [Eyl town in Nugaal region](#).

About 170,000 new displacements were recorded in Ethiopia, about two-thirds of them in the Shabelle zone of the Somali region, which is regularly affected by floods and displacement during the wet seasons. The flood waters damaged schools in the Shabelle zone, [putting 12,000 students out of school](#).

The combination of floods, mudslides and landslides displaced 71,000 people across 27 counties in Kenya, with Tana river and Wajir reporting nearly half of the displacements. Tana river was still recovering from the heavy floods in May 2018, which destroyed large swathes of the county. On 22 November, landslides and mudslides in West Pokot resulted in the death of [at least 72 people and the displacement of more than 10,000](#). The devastation in West Pokot is the latest in a series of mudslides that have hit various parts of the country in recent years, killing hundreds of people and causing widespread destruction. The government's response has been to urge affected people to move to safer ground. Residents, however, blame the government, saying [it has not provided them with alternative areas where they might stay](#).

Djibouti was struck for the second time in less than two years by a disaster that destroyed people's shelters and livelihoods. Communities in Djibouti town were hit by Cyclone Sagar in May 2018. While still recovering, they were hit by a flash flood in November 2019. That occurred when the equivalent of [two years of rainfall](#), or more than 295 mm, fell during a three-day period from 21 November to 23

November. A fourth of the country's population has been affected and more than 10,000 people displaced. The disaster harmed food security, as [95 per cent of affected households in Djibouti town reported having lost key household food stock](#).

The countries in the Horn of Africa may be increasingly affected by the impacts of climate change, including more intense rainfall events and increased displacement. In the past ten years, these countries have been hit by severe droughts followed by heavy floods, which together have caused millions of new displacements. These disasters very often affect the same populations repeatedly, eroding their livelihoods and traditional lifestyle. Extreme events are expected to happen more frequently in the future and, without efficient disaster risk reduction measures, [forced displacement and humanitarian needs will keep growing across the region](#).

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

IDMC used multiple sources to calculate its figure on new displacements. In Somalia, our main source was the Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN). We independently analysed its data. In Ethiopia, we used and verified an analysis of several sources carried out by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In Kenya, we combined several sources, including OCHA, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and local media, to calculate the final figure. In Djibouti, we used the UN-led assessment for the estimation. IDMC's confidence in the figure is medium as only limited triangulation was available across the region and no time series data was published to assess the situation over time. There was also no time series data available for any of the events.

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](http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2020-GRID-methodology.pdf))

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

| Country | New displacements | Estimation of the Total number of IDPs | Number of houses destroyed |
|---------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Somalia | 407,000 | Not available | 428 |

In Somalia, the main data source used to come up with the final displacement estimate was the PRMN. We analysed the raw dataset, corrected errors and added up all displacement flows that referred to floods, flash floods and storms. These added up to 407,000 new displacements. The Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) is a platform led by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) for identifying

and reporting on displacements and returns in Somalia, as well as the protection incidents triggering such movements. On behalf of UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) works with 39 local partners in the field to collect data on internal displacement in Somalia. PRMN is the only source of data on displacement flows and, as a result, the triangulation is limited to the reporting on specific events by several local media. The PRMN data contains errors when it comes to identifying displacement triggers and figures. IDMC conducted a thorough review of the data to eliminate the errors, but there is still a risk that some erroneous figures, which IDMC could not verify, were reported for some entries.

| Country | New displacements | Estimation of the Total number of IDPs | Number of houses destroyed |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Ethiopia | 177,000 | Not available | Not available |

In Ethiopia, the main data source used to come up with the final displacement estimate was OCHA, which based its analysis on reports from the Ethiopian government's National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), multi-agency assessments and reporting by the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM). NDRMC tends to overestimate the scale of the displacement, and our confidence in the figures is low. IDMC has not obtained any information on the methodology used for the multi-agency assessments. IOM DTM reports, with regards to floods, are based on key informants interviews. OCHA has low confidence in the figure given the lack of a systematic assessment of the scale of the disaster.

| Country | New displacements | Estimation of the Total number of IDPs | Number of houses destroyed |
|--------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Kenya | 71,000 | Not available | 78 |

In Kenya, the main data sources used to come up with the final displacement estimates were OCHA, IFRC, the Kenyan government's National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), NGOs and local media such as *Daily Nation* and the *Kenyan News Agency* (KNA). A third of the figure is based on the IFRC report, which summarised assessments carried out by the Kenyan Red Cross Society. The assessments were done in person or through drones in inaccessible areas. The figures published by the IFRC are reliable. OCHA published figures following assessments done by the local authorities, but these authorities methodologies are unknown. The local media usually cite local authorities and visit the affected areas to describe the impacts and report on displacement figures. NDMA publishes monthly updates on climate-related developments in the country, including displacements associated with natural hazards. Its methodology is unknown. We also used one assessment carried out by Episcopal Relief and Development, which is supporting Anglican Development Services-Nyanza, the humanitarian agency of five Anglican dioceses in Kenya. Their methodology is unknown.

IDMC managed to gather a large number of triangulation reports, mostly based on local authorities' assessments. This increases our confidence in the figure.

| Country | New displacements | Estimation of the Total number of IDPs | Number of houses destroyed |
|----------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Djibouti | 10,000 | Not available | Not available |

In **Djibouti**, the main data source used to come up with the final displacement estimate was the UN joint assessment. An initial rapid assessment was undertaken on 27 November and 28 November 2019 following the international rapid humanitarian assessment methodology. This had already been used during Cyclone Sagar, which hit Djibouti in May 2019. Thirteen inter-agency, multisectoral teams, encompassing 50 interviewers, visited 19 of the 35 flooded areas of Djibouti city and covered 84 per cent of the affected areas. Other teams, operating under the leadership of the prefects, visited affected places in the regions. The teams included government officials, as well as personnel from the UN and NGOs. The teams used direct observation and carried out structured interviews with key informants, including local chiefs, social workers, health and education staff, and imams. An inter-agency team compiled data that was subsequently analysed by sectoral groups co-led by government departments and UN entities.

This is our only source of information, as no other assessments were carried out. Our confidence is quite high, however, given the robust methodology.