

SOUTH SUDAN

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

SUMMARY OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2019

South Sudan's disasters in 2019 added to the challenges arising from an ongoing conflict which has been ravaging the country since 2013. Even before the floods, nearly half of country's population, or more than 3 million people, were in need of humanitarian assistance. [Weather events exacerbated this situation](#). There were 289,000 displacements associated with floods during the year, a considerable proportion of which were [secondary displacements of IDPs and Sudanese refugees who were sheltered in flood-prone areas](#).

Local communities also had to flee, as the [floods destroyed crops and grazing areas and killed many livestock](#). This resulted in a [worsening situation of food insecurity](#) in areas where there were already high levels of malnutrition. In some parts of the country, food prices doubled or even tripled because of [decreased access to food and markets](#). The floods contaminated the majority of water sources, further increasing the [risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera](#). Submerged roads also caused [significant delays in the provision of aid](#) by humanitarian organisations. In response, the government declared a [state of emergency](#) in Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria in late October.

The floods also affected the ongoing peace process. The latest peace deal was signed in September 2018 and sparked a large number of returns in 2019. But heavier than expected rains created yet another setback for some families that returned. [Floods submerged or destroyed their homes](#), displacing some of them yet again and [slowing down the peace process](#).

Table 1. 2019 summary of internal displacement in South Sudan

Number of events that triggered displacements ¹	8
Total new displacements ²	294,000
Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019 ³	245,000
Houses destroyed ⁴	129,000
People pre-emptively evacuated before events ⁵	Not available
People officially sheltered after events ⁶	Not available
Notes	
¹ This corresponds to the number of disaster events that triggered displacement during 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 as a result of 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	

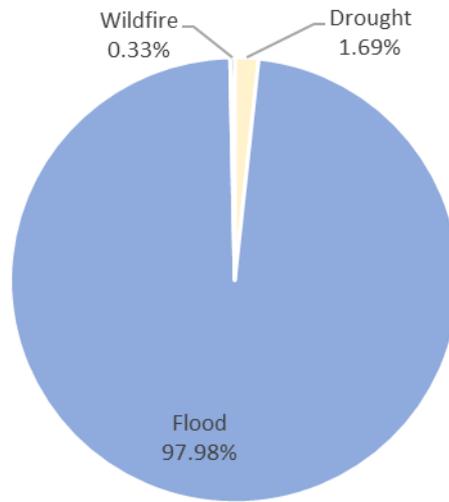
The country experienced an abnormally heavy rainy season that displaced more than 246,000 people between July and November of 2019. These rains were caused by an exceptionally strong Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). The IOD occurs when there are significant changes in the sea surface temperatures between the tropical western and eastern Indian Ocean. 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](#).

Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile reported nearly half of all the displacements. Floods affected the country in May and June, displacing over 45,000 people in Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Juba. Drought was also a driver of displacement. About 5,000 people were recorded as displaced in Lakes State in September and were in search of food and water as a result of a localised dry spell. Nearly 1,000 people were displaced by wildfires that spread quickly as a result of strong winds.

New Displacement in 2019 by hazard type

Most new displacements are attributed to floods, the most common driver of displacement in South Sudan as well as in sub-Saharan Africa. South Sudan has also been affected by drought, although it is usually very difficult to attribute displacement to this phenomenon. Displacement is a result of a combination of factors including not only drought, but insecurity and the limited access to fields it causes, and underlying poverty. In this particular case, there was a strong localised dry spell. IDMC was able to determine that it was mainly this natural hazard that displaced people. We included it in our statistics as such.

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



DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Monitoring of displacement associated with disasters in South Sudan is challenging as most humanitarian and development partners focus on displacement associated with conflict and violence. IDMC relies on assessments by the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM), ad hoc reports by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and articles from the local media, which usually quote local authorities as their sources. We also use ad hoc reports from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and local NGOs, if available.

Our sources use a large array of methodologies, ranging from key informant interviews and registration carried out by IOM DTM, to multi-sectorial assessments led by UN agencies, as well as NGOs, which usually rely on household-level assessments. Local authorities' methodologies are unclear and most likely rely on estimates from local leaders.

IDMC was able to triangulate a lot of the disaster data between different reports from OCHA, IOM DTM and the local authorities for 2019. Even though we identified some discrepancies in their estimates, major trends were confirmed by the three sources. This increases our confidence in the figures.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The main data sources used to come up with the final displacement estimates for South Sudan were IOM DTM, local media (Radio Tamazuj, Eye Radio, Sudan Tribune), OCHA, and IFRC's assessment. The main caveat for the IOM DTM data is that information is collected on the total number of internally displaced

people (IDPs) at a given moment in time. As a result of the large timespan between each assessment, short-term displacements are not captured. This is significant because disaster displacement tends to be localised in South Sudan, and people return home to rebuild and recover soon after the flood waters recede. IOM DTM also faces access limitations as a result of the prevailing insecurity and cannot always assess all sites.

Local media usually quote local authorities as their sources. We have low confidence in their reporting as they tend to inflate figures, and we use their estimates only if nothing else is available. We always try to find triangulation sources to verify them. OCHA and IFRC conduct ad hoc assessments in affected areas using different methodologies, including household-level assessments and direct observations. Their reporting is irregular, but we have confidence in it as they tend to verify their figures.

Monitoring internal displacement in South Sudan remains a challenge because of the prevailing insecurity, as well as the administrative constraints. It usually takes a long time before the data is published because data collection can be lengthy. This is a result of restrictions on movement and road conditions, as well as the fact that the verification and validation process takes a long time.

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.

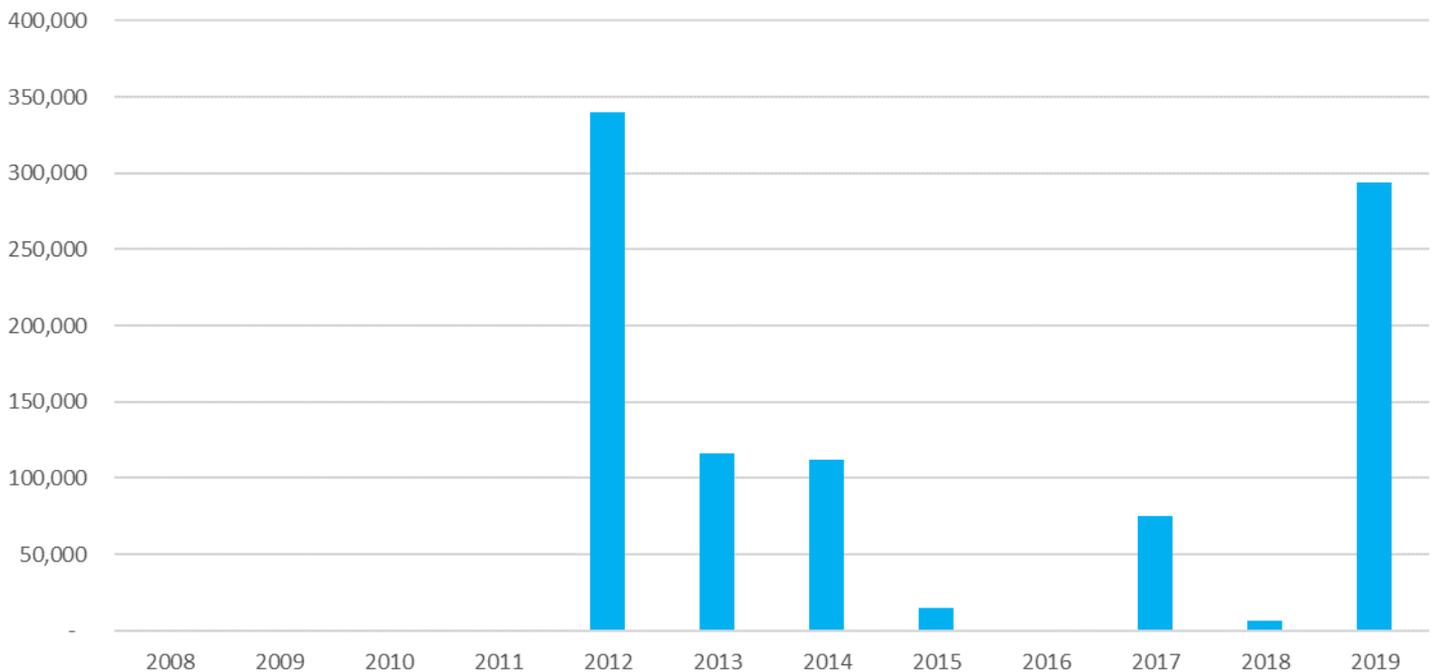
Our year-end estimate is based on time series data and housing destruction data for specific disaster events, as well as aggregated figures about the number of people displaced by disasters recorded by governments and other stakeholders. (more information on - <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2020-GRID-methodology.pdf>)

CONTEXT

Most of the humanitarian and development response in South Sudan is focussed on conflict and violence. Disasters seem to be overlooked. Despite the fact that conflict has been a major driver of displacement since the civil war started in 2012, disasters have also driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in the past decade (figure 2).

Trends analysis 2011-2019

Fig 2. Historical displacement trends in South Sudan



The disasters which occurred in 2019 accounted for the highest number of displacements since 2012 and are a stark reminder of the effects disasters have on this war-torn country.ⁱ Despite a much needed conflict response, more attention needs to be paid to disaster risk reduction in the country and the prevention of future displacements.

For the full country profile on South Sudan please visit:

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