

Internally displaced Ethiopians take refuge from heavy rains in a manufacturing centre in Yirga Chefe woreda, Gedee Zone. Photo: UNHCR/Anna Hellge, August 2018



MID-YEAR FIGURES

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2018

12 SEPTEMBER 2018

SUMMARY: NEW DISPLACEMENTS BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 2018

There were about 5.2 million new internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in the first half of 2018, based on the analysis of data from the 10 worst-affected countries. There were also about 3.3 million associated with disasters in 110 countries and territories. Sub-Saharan Africa was disproportionately affected by displacement associated with conflict and violence, accounting for six of the 10 countries with the highest figures.

Countries in the Horn of Africa bore the brunt of displacement more broadly. On top of more than 1.7 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence in Ethiopia and Somalia, significant numbers of people fled devastating floods and drought in both countries.

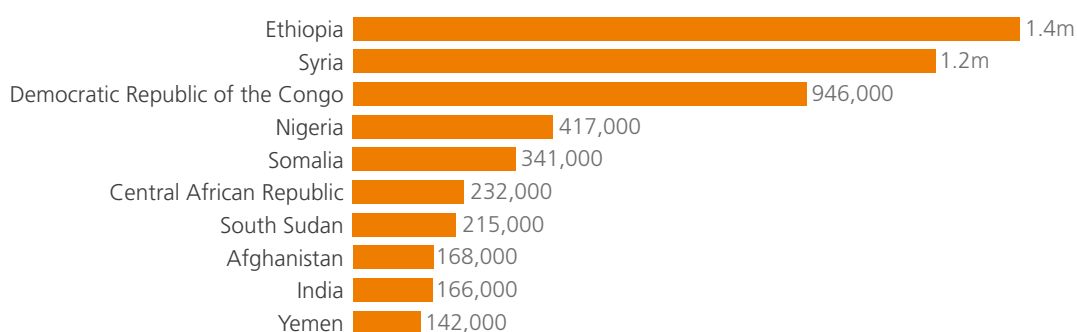
Four situations are examined in more detail in the spotlights below: Ethiopia, where new conflict in the south of the country triggered more new displacements than in any other country; Yemen, where significant displacement continues as the country's conflict enters its third year; the Horn of Africa, where extreme flooding after an extended period of drought caused hundreds of thousands of new displacements in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya; and the impact of tropical cyclone Gita, which caused displacement and major damages in New Zealand, as well as the small island states of American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga. These countries were not among the 10 worst affected by displacement associated with disasters, but they highlight its significant relative impact on small island states.

NEW DISPLACEMENTS

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

There were an estimated **5.2 million** new internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in the 10 countries most affected in the first half of 2018

COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2018

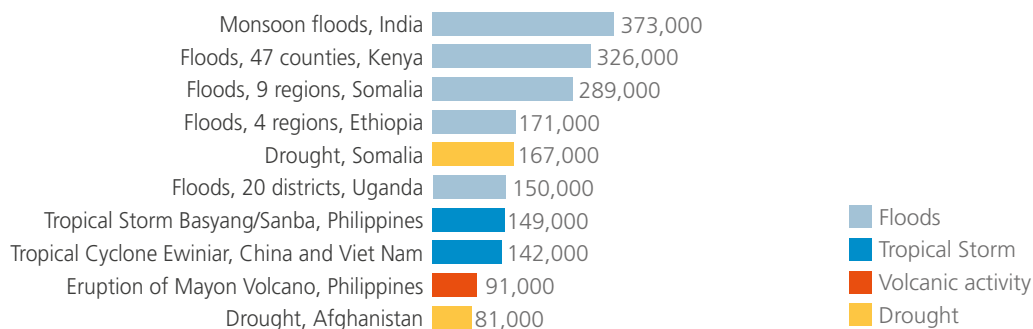


NEW DISPLACEMENTS

DISASTERS

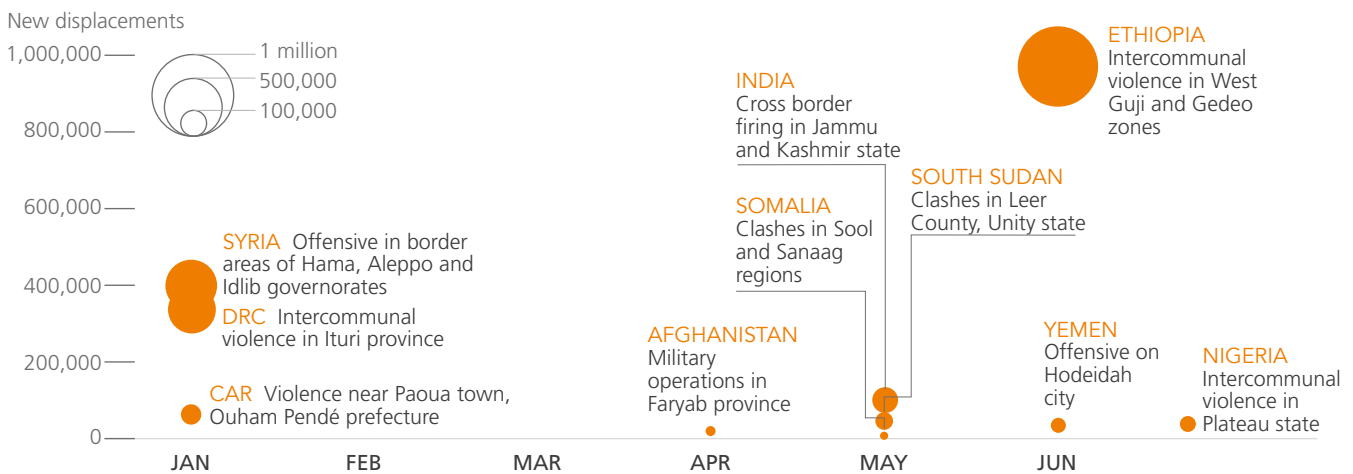
There were an estimated **3.3 million** new internal displacements associated with more than 700 disaster events in 110 countries and territories in the first half of 2018

TEN LARGEST DISASTER DISPLACEMENT EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2018



CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

I MAIN CONFLICT EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2018



The chart above shows the main conflict events that led to displacement in the first half of 2018. Estimated new displacement is plotted by the approximate start date of the conflict event. This is only indicative. It is not always possible to disaggregate national displacement estimates to obtain data for separate events, and data is liable to change due to the dynamic situation on the ground. The most significant events for each country have been chosen.

I COUNTRY UPDATES

ETHIOPIA: 1,391,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

The humanitarian situation in Ethiopia deteriorated significantly in the first half of 2018. New conflict broke out in West Guji and Gedeo, along the border between the Oromia and Southern Nations, Peoples and Nationalities (SNNPR) regions, triggering more than a million new displacements. Intercommunal violence also continued along border areas of the Oromia and Somali regions. The overall number of new displacements increased sharply compared to the 213,000 reported during the same time period last year (see **Ethiopia spotlight, p.5**).

SYRIA: 1,216,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

The first half of 2018 was marked by government advances on opposition-controlled areas that caused significant numbers of new displacements. The mid-year total was a significant increase on the 692,000 reported during the same period in 2017. The increase reflects not only the deteriorating security situation on the ground, but also improved data collection coverage as new figures become available in government-controlled areas.

The government's offensive on the border areas of Hama, Aleppo and Idlib governorates led to the highest number of new displacements, at more than 400,000 in the first six weeks of the year. More than 270,000 were reported in just three weeks in the opposition-controlled areas of Dara'a and Quneitra as the Syrian army advanced through the territory at the end of June and in early July.

In eastern Ghouta, an enclave of about 400,000 people who had been under siege since 2013, an escalation in government offensives forced more than 158,000 to leave

I NEW DISPLACEMENTS

There were an estimated 5.2 million new internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in the 10 countries most affected in the first half of 2018

the area between mid-February and mid-April. About half of those displaced opted for evacuation to opposition-held areas in Aleppo and Idlib, while the other half chose to stay in camps in Rural Damascus. Humanitarian conditions inside the enclave were dire with insufficient food and medicines, and the reported use of chemical weapons during the last days of the siege placed a huge strain on already limited health services.¹

DRC: 946,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), conflict escalated in Ituri province and continued in North Kivu, South Kivu and Kasai region in the first half of the year. Provisional estimates show that there were at least 946,000 new displacements between January to June, compared to 997,000 during the same time period the previous year.

In the previously peaceful province of Ituri, intercommunal violence escalated significantly between December 2017 and early 2018, triggering around 343,000 new displacements between January and March alone.²

In North and South Kivu, militia activities and clashes between armed groups continued, leading to significant displacement. In Bijombo town in South Kivu, inter-communal conflict between various ethnic groups over access to land and water spiralled into wider conflict involving local militia groups.

Intercommunal violence that began in Kasai in mid-2016 also continued with regular outbreaks, but the number of people displaced was lower than reported in 2017. People also began to return to their areas of origin in the first half of the year, but the scale of destruction means that many remain in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.³

NIGERIA: 417,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

The humanitarian situation in Nigeria deteriorated significantly in the first half of 2018, which is reflected in the steep

rise in the number of new displacements from the 142,000 reported during the same time period last year. Clashes between government forces and Boko Haram became more frequent in the north-east of the country, displacing 217,000 people as the announcement of elections in 2019 heightened tensions in the region.⁴

Violence between herders and farmers also escalated in the Middle Belt region, where 1,300 people have reportedly been killed and 300,000 displaced since the start of the crisis in late 2017. In the most notable event around 38,000 people were displaced in the Plateau state in late June. The increase in violence is linked both to the environmental degradation of pasture in the Middle Belt and the fighting in the north-east of the country spilling into neighbouring regions, forcing herders to move south.⁵ The government banned open grazing in April 2018 in an effort to reduce the violence.⁶

SOMALIA: 341,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Conflict in Somalia continued in the first half of 2018, escalating in some areas, and the number of forced evictions also rose sharply. There were about 191,000 forced evictions in the first six months of the year, compared with 166,000 during the whole of 2017. Forced evictions are linked to widespread tenure insecurity, disputes over land ownership and the reclaiming of state property, particularly in urban areas. They usually occur without notice, and often involve violence and the destruction of housing.⁷ Most of the people displaced were IDPs living in temporary housing in the Kaxda and Daynile districts of Banadir region.

Conflict escalated in Somaliland and Puntland, particularly in the disputed areas of Sool and Sanaag regions. Clashes near Tukaraq in Sool caused about 10,000 new displacements in May. In south-eastern Somalia, clashes between Al Shabaab and government forces and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) also continued to cause new displacements. About 49,000 were reported in Lower Shabelle region, with most people seeking refuge in displacement camps in Mogadishu.

CAR: 232,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Intense violence continued in the Central African Republic (CAR) in the first half of 2018, and clashes between armed groups and militia attacks against civilians spread to new towns and communes. The number of new displacements represents a slight increase on the 206,000 reported during the same time period last year.

In Ouham Pendé prefecture, clashes between the National Movement for the Liberation of the Central African Republic (MNL) and the Revolution and Justice (RJ) group near the town of Paoua displaced more than 62,000 people in January. Many villages in the area were looted and torched.⁸ The deployment of government forces and UN peacekeepers brought some calm to the area and led to returns to the villages, but there is little information with which to gauge how sustainable they were.⁹

In Mambere Kadei prefecture, a number of incursions by armed groups displaced about 19,000 people in April, and a single attack on the village of Dembia in Mboumou prefecture triggered more than 18,000 new displacements in early January. In Ouaka prefecture, there were about 13,000 new

displacements in Bambari, CAR's second largest city, as people fled clashes between armed groups between mid-May and mid-June.

The frequent unpredictability of the violence means that many IDPs have few options but to seek shelter in the bush or in churches.¹⁰ With insecurity rife across the country as a whole, humanitarians have also struggled to access people in need, meaning that many IDPs have not received much-needed assistance.¹¹

SOUTH SUDAN: 215,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Despite ongoing peace treaty negotiations, violence was undiminished in South Sudan in the first half of 2018 as the country's conflict entered its fifth year.¹² The conflict is multi-faceted, and includes clashes and raids by armed groups, intercommunal violence and fighting over land and livestock. The number of new displacements represents a significant rise from the 163,000 reported during the same period last year, in part the result of changes in data collection methods that yielded more detail on the impact of individual events.

More than 47,000 new displacements were recorded in Unity state, where clashes in Leer county in May were accompanied by indiscriminate killings, sexual violence, the burning of homes and looting.¹³ In Jonglei state, there were more than 40,000 new displacements as a result of cattle raids and intercommunal clashes, which peaked in January and April in Pibor, Akobo, Nyirol and Uror counties.

In Central Equatoria state, clashes around Yei town displaced nearly 38,000 people. Repeated clashes between armed groups in Western Equatoria state led to more than 18,000 new displacements in April and May, and further displacement associated with conflict was also reported in Western Bahr el Ghazal state, Upper Nile and Lakes states.

Five years of conflict and displacement have devastated local economies and contributed to repeated failed harvests, because people have been unable to access their fields at crucial times during the agricultural cycle. Six million people are currently food insecure.¹⁴

AFGHANISTAN: 168,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

New displacements were recorded in 31 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces in the first half of 2018 as military operations and clashes between armed groups unfolded along shifting fronts. The half-year figure represents a modest increase on the 159,000 new displacements recorded during the same period last year. Fighting and other violence over territory between the Taliban, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and government forces led to much of the new displacement.

The worst affected provinces included Faryab, Kunduz and Farah, where 33,000, 21,000 and 19,000 new displacements respectively were reported. Clashes were particularly severe in Faryab, where 15,000 people were displaced in April alone.

Inadequate shelter, lack of food and water, insufficient access to sanitation and health facilities and lack of protection combined to leave many IDPs with significant needs.¹⁵ The humanitarian situation is complicated further by ongoing drought, which led to as many as 81,000 displacements during the first six months of the year (see **Afghanistan spotlight, p.8**).

INDIA: 166,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Conventional armed conflict, separatist insurgencies, riots and often localised violence linked to politics, caste, ethnicity or religion combined to cause significant new displacement in India in the first half of 2018.

The vast majority of new displacements were linked to a series of incidents of cross-border shelling across the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir state, which forced as many as 159,000 people to leave their homes. More than 100,000 were displaced by a single episode in May. The increased intensity of the shelling has reportedly forced civilians to adopt new coping strategies and evacuate for longer periods, which has had an impact on their livelihoods.¹⁶

More than 7,000 people were displaced by political violence associated with local elections in Tripura state, where repeated clashes between supporters of the two main opposing parties also led to homes being destroyed. There were also more than 740 new displacements associated with localised conflicts and intercommunal conflicts linked to caste and religion in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Meghalay states.

YEMEN: 142,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Conflict in Yemen continued unabated in the first half of 2018. New displacements were largely concentrated in areas of western Yemen controlled by the Ansar Allah (the Houthi movement), where a series of Saudi-led airstrikes hit densely populated areas of the cities of Taizz and Hodeidah. The half-year figure represents an extremely conservative estimate (see **Yemen spotlight, p.6**).

SPOTLIGHT

| ETHIOPIA

The number of new displacements in Ethiopia increased sharply in the first half of 2018 to 1,391,000. Most were associated with the outbreak of new intercommunal conflict that displaced more than a million people in West Guji and Gedeo, along the border between Oromia and SNNPR regions in April and June. The exact causes remain unclear, but it is thought that disputes over borders and the allocation of pasture and water resources are likely to have contributed to the sudden escalation of violence.¹⁷

Violence also continued along the border between Oromia and Somalia regions, where a spike in clashes displaced up to 500,000 people in the last three months of 2017. The intensity of the fighting decreased in first half of 2018, but another 200,000 people still fled their homes and the situation remains highly unstable and insecure.

Most of the newly displaced people in West Guji and Gedeo are living in dire conditions in overcrowded collective shelters. The affected area was already one of the most densely populated parts of Ethiopia before the current displacement crisis, and the influx of IDPs has doubled the population of some districts or *woredas*.¹⁸ Water and



Newly displaced people find refuge in the Gedeo and West Guji zones. Photo: NRC, June 2018

health services are stretched beyond capacity and food insecurity is rapidly increasing.

The crisis has unfolded just after the lean season when food stocks were depleted. Most IDPs also lost livestock and cash reserves during flooding in April and May, and many will struggle to re-establish their usual livelihoods. Many others will not even be able to return home, given that more than 9,000 homes are so far known to have been damaged or destroyed.¹⁹ Humanitarians also fear a major disease outbreak because of substandard sani-

tation and hygiene facilities and lack of mattresses and blankets that forces people to sleep on cold floors.²⁰

The security situation has improved in many areas, but the full extent of the crisis is not yet known because others remain insecure and inaccessible.²¹ Continuous clashes and tensions hamper the provision of assistance.²² The onset of the second rainy season in July is also affecting IDPs' living conditions and hindering the humanitarian response.²³

SPOTLIGHT

YEMEN

Relentless armed conflict drove more people into displacement in Yemen, with a total of 142,000 new displacements reported between January and June. Following the spike in violence and related displacements through December 2017, new displacements continued to occur in districts along Yemen's Red Sea coast, particularly from the Hodeidah and Taizz governorates. Increasing numbers of people headed north, east and south to escape airstrikes and sustained fighting on the ground. On 13 June, the Saudi-led coalition announced the start of Operation Golden Victory, its campaign to take control of the port city of Hodeidah. At least 34,000 people fled as the offensive approached the city and a greater emergency unfolded. Some unverified estimates suggest that as many as 114,000 people were displaced.²⁴

About 108,000 people are thought to have fled to or within Yemen's southern governorates between January and early June 2018.²⁵ Violent clashes between opposing factions in Yemen's southern governorates also took place across densely-populated areas in the city of Aden for several days in late January.

Yemenis have been enduring conflict since 2015, and living conditions in many parts of the country are dire. Recent attacks on civilian infrastructure by both parties to the conflict, particularly as part of the Saudi-led assault on Hodeidah, risk hampering the delivery of essential goods and humanitarian aid, including food and medicines. Humanitarian operations also continue to face restrictions, particularly in areas of the north controlled by Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement, and the government is failing to pay public servants, leaving thousands of patients without adequate healthcare and even more children out of school.²⁶

With access to many areas of the country limited, it is difficult to gather accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date figures on IDPs and their movements and needs, never mind provide timely assistance.²⁷ In such volatile circumstances nearly a million returnees are vulnerable, and return is not even a viable option for many displaced families. Instead they resort to moving from one place to the next, often finding accommodation in shared rented apartments which drain their already meagre finances, or in informal settlements with little or no infrastructure.

To make matters worse, tropical cyclone Mekunu struck the southern regions of Hadramaut and Al Mahrah and the island of Socotra in late May, causing extensive damage and displacing more than 5,300 people in an area still recovering from cyclone Helen in November 2015.²⁸

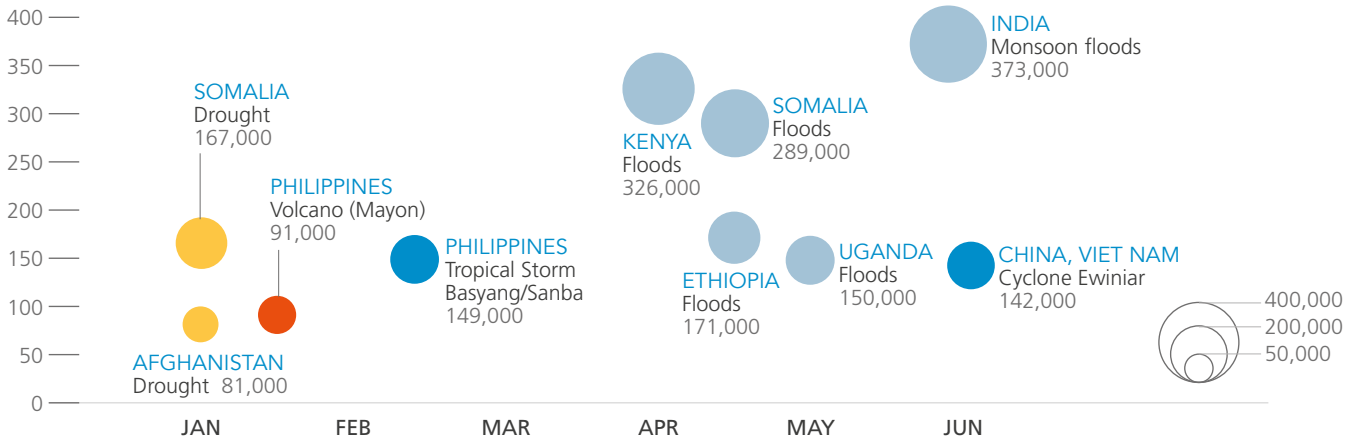


Al Habbari informal settlement by displaced people, Sana'a. Photo: NRC/Becky Bakr Abdulla, August 2018

DISASTERS

I MAIN DISASTER EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2018

New displacements, in thousands



The chart above shows the main disaster events that have led to displacement in the first half of 2018. These show provisional estimates of new displacements by the approximate start date of the disaster. Estimates can change as some of these events are ongoing, and new figures can come to light in post-disaster assessments.

I NEW DISPLACEMENTS

There were 3.3 million new displacements associated with more than 700 disaster events in 110 countries and territories in the first half of 2018

I SUMMARY OF MAIN DISASTER EVENTS

MONSOON FLOODS, INDIA: 373,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

India traditionally experiences flooding and landslides during the monsoon season, which accounts for 70 to 80 percent of most countries' annual rainfall in South Asia.²⁹ The onset of the 2018 monsoon in late May caused flooding in many states, including Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal in the north-east; Kerala in the south; Maharashtra in the centre-west and Uttar Pradesh in the north. Assam was among the worst affected, with about 215,000 new displacements as people were evacuated to relief camps in June.

FLOODS, KENYA: 326,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

After suffering the effects of the East African drought since 2015, Kenya experienced its highest precipitation in 50 years during the rainy season, causing flooding across all 47 counties in April and May. Northern and coastal counties were worst affected, including Tana River where nearly half of the population, or about 120,000 people, were displaced (see Horn of Africa spotlight, p.8).

FLOODS, SOMALIA: 289,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Above average rainfall in April and May caused flash flooding and riverine flooding in nine of Somalia's 18 regions. The country was already the worst affected by the ongoing East African drought. The flooding was particularly severe in the Shebelle and Juba river basin districts in the south and centre of the country (see Horn of Africa spotlight, p.8).

FLOODS, ETHIOPIA: 171,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Heavy rain in April and May led to flooding in the Afar, Oromia, Somali and SNNPR regions in the east and south of the country, which had already been affected by the East African drought and a surge in intercommunal violence and clashes. The flooding was worst in Somali region, where the Genale and Wabi Shebelle rivers burst their banks and about 151,000 people were displaced (see Horn of Africa spotlight, p.8).

DROUGHT, SOMALIA: 167,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Somalia has been affected by the East African drought since 2015. Its effects were most acute in late 2016 and 2017, when more than 800,000 people fled their homes in search of water and livelihoods. The situation improved significantly in the first half of 2018 because of above-average precipitation during the rainy season, which improved conditions for livestock and arable farming. In some areas of south-east Somalia, however, conditions remain dire. Most of the new displacements associated with drought in 2018 took place in the Bay, Lower Shabelle and Bakool regions, which are still badly affected.

FLOODS, UGANDA: 150,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Heavy rains during May caused displacement across 20 districts in Uganda, primarily in the mountainous Eastern region. Numerous mudslides forced many people to seek refuge in schools and shelters in the valleys below. The evacuations were temporary, and almost a month later most IDPs had returned home.

TROPICAL STORM SANBA/BASYANG, PHILIPPINES: 149,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Tropical storm Sanba, known locally as Basyang, brought heavy rainfall, winds and mudslides to the MIMAROPA, VI, VII, VII and Caraga regions between 11 and 16 February. About 77,000 people sought refuge in evacuation centres, and 72,000 with family and friends. The worst affected region was Caraga, where there were 93,000 new displacements, 1,558 homes were partially damaged and 378 were completely destroyed.

TROPICAL CYCLONE EWINIAR, CHINA AND VIET NAM: 142,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Tropical cyclone Ewiniar formed in the South China Sea on 2 June, passing east of the coastal city of Da Nang in Viet Nam before making landfall in southern China on 6 June. It brought heavy rain, high winds and mudslides to the provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan and Hunan, which between them accounted for about 142,000 evacuations. About seven people were displaced in Viet Nam when their homes were washed away by flooding in Than Hoa province.

MAYON VOLCANO ERUPTION, PHILIPPINES: 91,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

The Mayon volcano in Albay, Bicol region, began a phreatic or steam-driven eruption on 13 January that worsened over the next three months as the crater progressively released lava, rockfall and toxic gases. About 82,000 people sought shelter in evacuation centres, and about 9,000 with family and friends. The alert level was lowered on 29 March and as of 4 April all 91,000 people had returned home.

DROUGHT, AFGHANISTAN: 81,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS

Drought conditions in Afghanistan worsened in the first half of 2018, following a winter period during which only 30 per cent of necessary rainfall fell across most of the country, affecting the wheat planting season for a fifth year in a row. Drought was reported in 20 of the country's 34 provinces, and displacement took place in nine - Badghis, Bاميان, Daykundi, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Kunduz and Sar-e-Pol. People were displaced when they were no longer able to sustain themselves because of failed harvests, livestock losses and reduced livelihood opportunities. Many people fleeing the hard-hit rural areas of Ghor and Badghis are reported to have moved to Herat city.

SPOTLIGHT

FLOODING IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have been affected by drought exacerbated by El Niño since 2015. Its effects were most acute in late 2016 and 2017, when more than a million people were displaced in search of food, water and livelihoods. The situation began to improve at the end of 2017, but precipitation was still erratic and below average until the onset of the first rainy season at the end of March 2018. The season started several weeks earlier than usual and changed the situation dramatically, bringing record rainfall and flooding to the whole region.

Kenya was worst affected by the onset of the rains. All 47 counties experienced flooding and more than 326,000 new displacements were recorded. Kilifi, Mandera, Tana River, and Turkana suffered the worst damage and accounted for most of the displacement. In Turkana and other northern counties, people were already highly vulnerable after the drought, and the floods destroyed most of their remaining assets. More than 6,000



Flooding due to the heavy rains made shelters unlivable in one of the many camps for displaced people in Baidoa, Somalia. Photo: NRC/Adam Nur Omar, April 2018

head of livestock were killed and 8,500 hectares of farmland destroyed across the country, threatening the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers alike.³⁰

Accumulated heavy rainfall caused a dam to break in Nakuru county in May, leading to widespread flooding and killing at least 38 people.³¹ Almost four months after the disaster, tens of thousands of people were still living in makeshift tents, and as attention faded assistance also dwindled and shortages of food, shelters and medicines have been reported.³² Landslides around Nairobi rendered at least 12 villages uninhabitable and most of their residents were still staying with friends and relatives.³³ Many other villages were still

submerged or inaccessible because of damaged infrastructure.³⁴

In Ethiopia, the Somali region bore the brunt of both the flooding and the ongoing drought. Nearly 13,000 hectares of farmland were destroyed, and public services – mostly health-care and schooling – were interrupted because of damaged infrastructure.³⁵

In Somalia, the south of the country and particularly the Shabelle river basin was worst affected, not least thousands of IDPs previously displaced by drought and living in makeshift shelters unable to withstand heavy rain.³⁶ Most were forced into secondary displacement, heightening their vulnerabilities and further eroding their coping mechanisms. →

→ Just after the floodwaters receded in late May, Somalia was hit by cyclone Sagar, the strongest in its history with gusts of up to 100 kmph.³⁷ Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed regions in Somaliland were worst affected, but other parts of northern Somalia were not spared. The humanitarian situation was made worse by renewed clashes in disputed

areas of Sool and Sanaag regions, which displaced more than 10,000 people just after the cyclone had hit.³⁸ Sagar displaced another 9,000 people in northern Somalia.³⁹ It also caused more than 9,000 displacements in Djibouti, where Djibouti City was worst affected, and more than 4,000 in Ethiopia's Somali region.⁴⁰

These recent events confirm that the Horn of Africa is and will continue to be heavily affected by the effects of the climate change. Prolonged drought, heavy flooding and cyclones are expected to become more common and intense, making it important to invest in disaster risk reduction to improve people's resilience to such shocks.⁴¹

SPOTLIGHT

TROPICAL CYCLONE GITA

Tropical cyclone Gita began to form in the southern Pacific Ocean in early February, before developing into a category four hurricane with wind speeds of more than 230 kmph. The storm left a trail of destruction across the region, and caused more than 10,000 new displacements in American Samoa, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga as a result of evacuations and severe damage to homes and infrastructure. In New Zealand, intense winds lifted roofs and trees, generating power cuts, water outages and road closures.⁴²

Tonga bore the brunt of storm, which made landfall in the country on 12 February and caused severe damage on the main island of Tongatapu.⁴³ It destroyed more than 800 homes and damaged 4,000, and caused the evacuation of more than 4,500 people. More than 80 per cent of homes in Tonga were left without power. Gita was the most powerful cyclone to pass so close to Tonga's main island in at least 60 years.⁴⁴ It caused \$164 million worth of damage, equivalent to 38 per cent of the country's GDP.

American Samoa was also heavily affected by Gita's destructive force.



One of the many houses that have been completely destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Gita after it hit Tonga's main island. Photo: IFRC/Gemma Snowdon, February 2018

About 4,600 people were displaced after their homes were rendered uninhabitable.⁴⁵ The cyclone also caused nearly \$7 million worth of damage to government buildings and other infrastructure.⁴⁶ The US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced on 11 February that emergency aid had been made available to the territory to supplement local response efforts.⁴⁷

The destruction wrought by Gita shows how small island developing states (SIDS) such as those in the Pacific

experience highly significant consequences in terms of damage and displacement relative to their population size. Around eight per cent of American Samoa's population was displaced, the equivalent of 26 million people in the US. Impacts on IDPs and host communities translate into significant costs at the local and national level, which need to be planned for given that displacement risk in SIDS is only likely to increase in the future.⁴⁸

DISCLAIMER

The figures in this publication represent provisional estimates for the number of new displacements which occurred between 1 January and 30 June 2018. The figures are based on data which IDMC was able to verify by the time of publication. In the coming months, IDMC will update these figures to account for new information received and to account for displacements which have occurred during the second half of the year.

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ABOUT OUR SOURCES

IDMC figures come from a range of sources, including national and local governments, the UN and other international organisations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, civil society and the media. To calculate the best possible displacement estimates, our monitoring experts triangulate sources and validate figures across a range of partners.

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