WITH THANKS

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Cover Photo: The mosque of al-Nuri is still in ruins, as is much of Mosul’s old city. Throughout Iraq, many internally displaced people (IDPs) are returning, and there has been an overall decrease in new displacement for the last two years. Despite the challenges, durable solutions are within reach. Photo: Tom Peyre-Costa/NRC, 2019
SUMMARY

New displacements in 2019

33.4 million
the highest figure since 2012

8.5 million by conflict and violence

24.9 million by disasters

driven by increasing levels of violence in Burkina Faso, Yemen and Libya

of which 23.9 million were weather-related

New displacements by conflict, violence and disasters per region


* Updated figures. For further details see methodological annex, available online.
Total number of IDPs

50.8 million

45.7 million as a result of conflict and violence
an all-time high

34.5 m
in the top 10 countries

5.1 million as a result of disasters
the first-ever estimate

3.4 m
in the top 10 countries

18.3 million IDPs are children under 15 and 3.7 million are over 60

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.
Internal displacement by conflict and violence

New incidents of conflict displacement were recorded in 50 countries in 2019. The majority took place in low and middle-income countries including Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia, which accounted for more than a million new displacements each.

Sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the highest figure. Many new displacements were triggered by escalating violence and an overall deterioration of security in the Sahel, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Ongoing conflict also forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in Somalia and South Sudan.

Long-running conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya also led to an increase in displacement in the Middle East and North Africa, both in terms of new displacements and people still living in displacement at the end of the year.

The global number of IDPs has never been higher. All regions are affected by conflict displacement, but it is highly concentrated in a few countries. Of the global total of 45.7 million people still displaced at the end of the year, three-quarters or 34.5 million, were in just 10 countries.
Internal displacement by disasters

Around 1,900 disasters triggered 24.9 million new displacements across 140 countries and territories in 2019. This is the highest figure recorded since 2012 and three times the number of displacements caused by conflict and violence.

Disaster displacement was recorded in low and high-income countries alike. Cyclones Idai and Kenneth forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and the archipelagos of Comoros and Mayotte. Hurricane Dorian’s impacts on the Bahamas were unprecedented, and the storm also triggered displacement on neighbouring islands and in the US and Canada.

Beyond the absolute numbers, disasters hit many communities that were already vulnerable, displacing people with little capacity to recover. Widespread flooding in South Sudan displaced people who had already fled conflict for a second time. Relative to population size, the impacts of cyclone Kenneth in Comoros were devastating.

Much of the new displacement reported in 2019 took place in the form of pre-emptive evacuations. Cyclones Fani and Bulbul triggered more than five million in India and Bangladesh alone. Evacuations clearly save lives, but many evacuees had their displacement prolonged because their homes had been damaged or destroyed.

Around 5.1 million people in 95 countries and territories were living in displacement as a result of disasters at the end of the year. This includes people who fled disasters not only in 2019 but also in previous years. From the 1.2 million people displaced by drought and floods in Afghanistan over the past few years to the 33,000 still living in displacement a decade after the Haiti earthquake, these figures are just the tip of the iceberg.
Finding solutions to internal displacement

There were visible efforts to prevent and respond to internal displacement in 2019, and promising developments in a number of countries highlighted the key ingredients for success.

New national initiatives showed greater levels of political commitment. Countries such as Niger and Somalia improved their policy frameworks on internal displacement. Others, including Afghanistan, Iraq and the Philippines, incorporated displacement in their development plans, in their reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, or when updating risk management strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Strengthened capacity across humanitarian and development sectors manifested in better coordination and increased investment. Improvements in the quantity and quality of data available also enabled better reporting and analysis, which in turn informs more effective responses and risk mitigation measures.

SUMMARY

Anas, 10, spends his day helping his family in sheep breeding. “I’m the man of the house and I help my family with the work”. There were 6.5 million IDPs in Syria as of the end of 2019. Photo© UNHCR/Antwan Chnkdji, August 2019
What have we learned?

1. The recognition of internal displacement is a vital first step toward addressing it. Changes in how the phenomenon was understood contributed to a significant shift in national policy and practice in Somalia.

2. Policies and programmes may integrate internal displacement or be dedicated to it, but they should always align with national priorities. The Afghan government understands internal displacement as both a humanitarian and development issue, and recognises it as a consequence of both conflict and disasters. This has the potential to strengthen institutional coordination and responses.

3. Regional and global initiatives act as catalysts for national commitment and local action. Dialogues hosted by the African Union and regional commissions have galvanised political support across the continent. Global initiatives such as the UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement also have the potential to unlock national action.

4. Effective local initiatives require more predictable and sustained funding. Multi-year funding in Haiti has enabled a longer and more transparent planning framework, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund’s support for durable solutions in Somalia was channelled to local organisations.

5. Existing tools can be used to provide planners and policymakers with evidence that goes beyond numbers. Combining official monitoring of disaster displacement in the Philippines with mobile phone tracking data and social media analysis has helped to improve planning for shelters, reconstruction and longer-term urban recovery.

6. Improved collaboration is making data more available and accessible. Regional initiatives in Africa, Europe and Latin America strengthen collaboration and coordination, and so make data more coherent and trustworthy as well as increase ownership among providers, users and donors.

7. Accounting for displacement and reporting on progress is a vital tool in generating and sustaining political commitment. National data strategies and dedicated budgets in Mali and the Philippines have enabled systematic and regular reporting, which in turn helps to attract more internal and external support for durable solutions.
NEW DISPLACEMENTS BY CONFLICT AND DISASTERS IN 2019

The country and territory names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures. The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by OCHA.
The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the world’s authoritative source of data and analysis on internal displacement. Since our establishment in 1998 as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), we have offered a rigorous, independent and trusted service to the international community. Our work informs policy and operational decisions that improve the lives of the millions of people living in internal displacement, or at risk of becoming displaced in the future.