

# GRID 2024

## Global Report on Internal Displacement

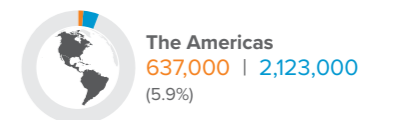
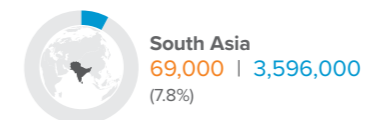
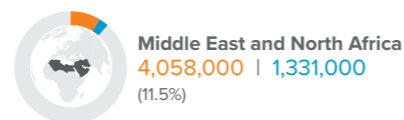
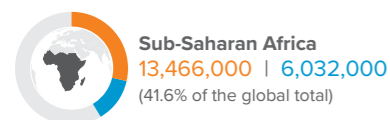
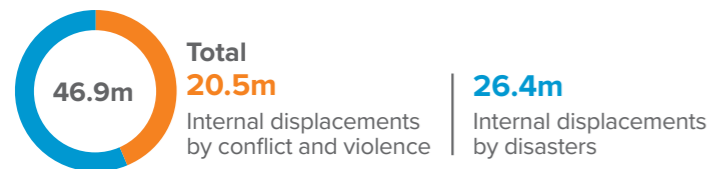
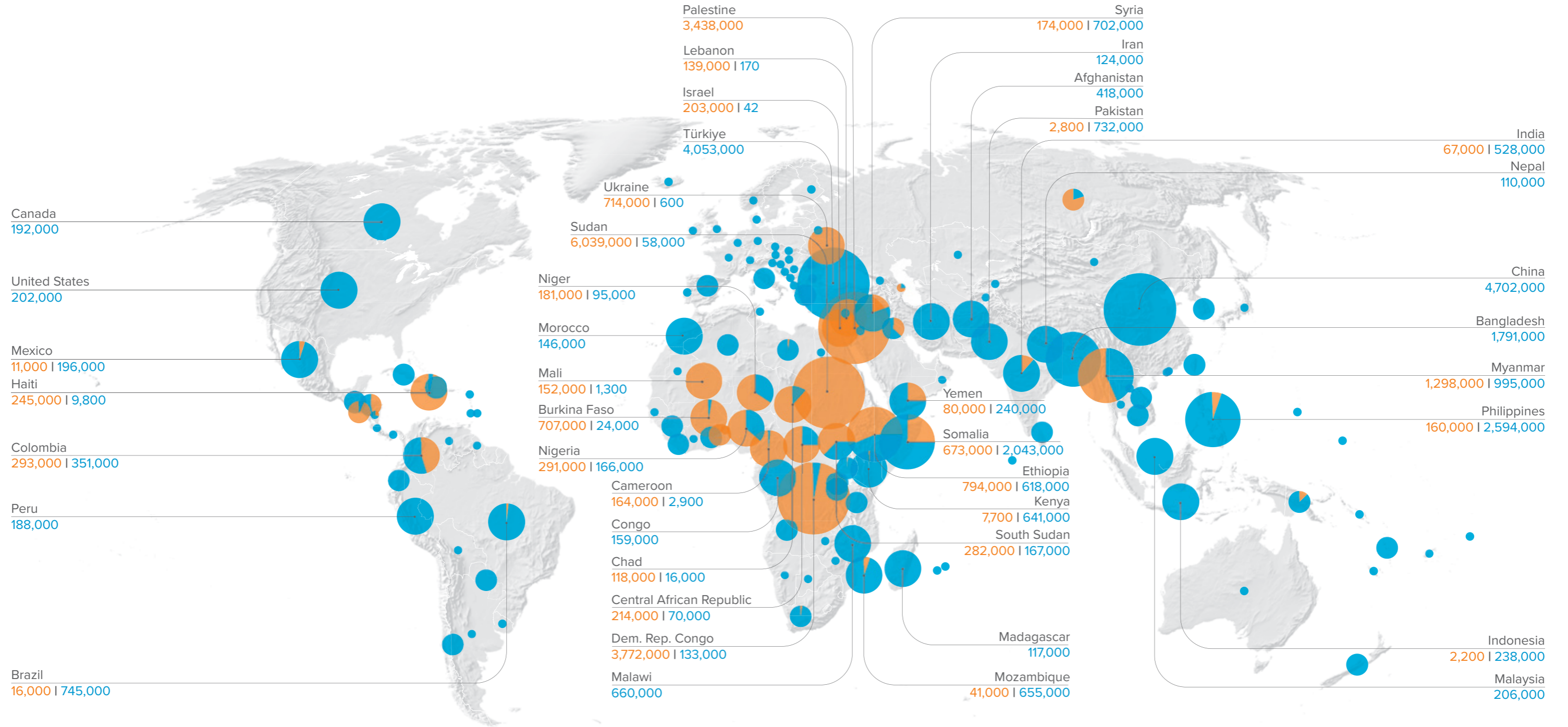
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REFUGEE COUNCIL

**NRC**



# Internal displacements by conflict and disasters in 2023



The country and territory names and figures are shown only when the total internal displacements value exceeds 100,000.

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 IDMC.

# With Thanks



Women carrying goods over flooded ground in a site for internally displaced people in South Sudan. Countries across the Greater Horn of Africa recorded significant displacement as a result of both conflict and disasters in 2023.  
© UNOCHA/Alioune Ndiaye

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## About the cover

Cover illustration © Matt Murphy/Handsome Frank, April 2024

When conflict, violence or disasters force people to flee their homes, it upends their lives in many difficult, and often tragic, ways. While their situations can be overwhelming and their needs can be significant, their hope, fortitude and resilience are an inspiration. We wanted a cover that could show the reality of the challenges facing internally displaced people, but also the hope they hold for re-establishing their lives and the agency they exercise in achieving solutions to their displacement.

Matt's captivating artwork shows internally displaced people tearing through the negative situations forced upon them, revealing that hope. It conveys positivity without shying away from the realities of living through war, violence and disaster. The bright light shining from the future they are working towards, through the torn scene and onto their arms and faces, shows the prospect for progress in moving from darker to brighter times in their lives. By shining a light on internally displaced people, it also reinforces the need for the world to give more attention to this all too often invisible crisis.



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*A damaged government building in Jajarkot District, Nepal. A 6.4 magnitude earthquake and its aftershocks caused significant infrastructure damage and triggered 107,000 displacements in November. © UNICEF/UNI471176/Prasad Ngakhusi*

# Foreword



Students at a school for internally displaced children in the Tillabéri Region of Niger. In 2023, the country reported its highest conflict displacement figure since data became available. © UNOCHA/ Alassane Sarr

You have seen the horrific images – people fleeing violence, homes destroyed by bombs, storms, wildfires and earthquakes, makeshift-camps crowded with families who have lost everything. The images from Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan are only the most recent in a trend towards increasing upheaval and dislocation of civilians across the globe. But once the cameras turn away, all too often these people forced from their homes become invisible.

Despite widely held perceptions to the contrary, the overwhelming majority of these forcibly displaced persons stay inside their home country as they struggle to survive and rebuild their lives. They did not choose this fate, and while they have the same rights as any other citizen, they too often do not have the same opportunities. It can take months, even years, for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to no longer need assistance and protection. Finding lasting solutions to displacement is never easy, and being invisible does not help.

Two years ago, I was appointed as Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to the United Nations Secretary-General to help improve how national governments and their partners address internal displacement. With strong government leadership, international support and finance, and a genuine commitment to listen to IDPs themselves, we can better support internally displaced people in their efforts to achieve solutions, and to break out of protracted displacement.

Increased visibility and improved understanding are fundamental to making progress toward solutions for IDPs; IDMC's Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) is indispensable for both.

Each year, governments, their humanitarian and development partners and countless others rely on the data and analysis in the GRID. Its presentation of the scale of the issue is a stark reminder of the lives at stake and the work we still have left to do. The GRID's analysis of the causes of displacement and its impacts helps us to assess nuances in situations across the globe and adapt our plans to work better for those displaced. The GRID also often gives us reasons for hope, highlighting emerging lessons and best practices across the spectrum from prevention to response to solutions.

This year, however, the GRID confirms what we feared – the continuing rise of conflict around the world is forcing yet more millions of people to flee their homes and making it harder for others, already displaced, to find solutions. Without clear pathways to concrete solutions, today's surge in displacement will show in the overall number of IDPs for years to come. And while the numbers fluctuate year-on-year, disaster-related displacements remain high, in nearly every corner of the world and often intertwined with conflict dynamics in fragile settings.

My mandate comes to an end in December of this year, but the surge toward solutions is just beginning. Based on what we have learned, we need strong national and local government leadership, with sectoral ministries mobilized to support solutions pathways for displacement anchored in the longer-term development plans and investments of the country. Most governments also need and expect the right kind of financial support to accompany them in what is a longer-term, structural effort – the kind of support provided especially by international development and financing

institutions. Injecting solutions-thinking as early as possible into humanitarian plans can also reduce the lag between humanitarian response and development solutions.

If all of this sounds complicated, it is. We need to re-configure and re-train systems to overcome outdated assumptions that internal displacement is a small-scale, short-term, largely rural phenomenon that can be solved with short-term remedies - wrong on almost all counts.

Together, and with strong, relevant data and analysis like that provided in the GRID, we can make IDPs more visible and solutions more effective. And we don't have a moment to lose.

Robert Piper

Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to the United Nations Secretary-General

# Key findings

## Internal displacement broke new records in 2023

- There were **75.9 million** people living in internal displacement globally as of the end of 2023, up from **71.1 million** in 2022.
- This figure continues to rise, as people forced to flee by disasters, conflict or violence join those who have been living in displacement for years or even decades and have not yet achieved a durable solution.

## Conflict displacement continued to increase

- **68.3 million** people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of 2023, the highest figure since data became available. Sudan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Colombia and Yemen host nearly half of the world's internally displaced people.
- The figure has increased by **49 per cent** in five years, fuelled by escalating and protracted conflict in Ethiopia, DRC, Sudan, and Ukraine.
- Conflict and violence triggered **20.5 million** new internal displacements, or movements, across **45 countries and territories** during 2023. Sudan, DRC and Palestine accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total.

## El Niño shifted disaster displacement patterns

- There were **7.7 million** people living in internal displacement globally as a result of disasters at the end of 2023. Although data gaps on the duration of disaster displacement make this figure conservative, it shows that, like conflict, disasters can keep people displaced for long periods of time.
- Disasters triggered **26.4 million** new internal displacements, or movements, across **148 countries and territories** during 2023. This is the **third highest figure in the last decade**. A third took place in China and Türkiye as a result of severe weather events and high-magnitude earthquakes.
- Displacements associated with weather-related disasters decreased by a **third** compared with 2022, partly the result of the change from La Niña to El Niño during the year. Storms and floods led to fewer displacements across most of Asia, but floods in other areas triggered record numbers, particularly in the Horn of Africa.
- Earthquakes triggered **6.1 million** displacements, the highest figure since 2008. Beyond Türkiye and Syria, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Morocco also reported their highest numbers of displacements linked to earthquakes.

## Regional trends

- **Sub-Saharan Africa**, which hosts 46 per cent of the world's IDPs, was again the region most affected by internal displacement in 2023. Conflict and disasters overlapped in many countries, forcing people to flee again and/or prolonging their displacement.
- The conflict in Palestine contributed to an eight-fold increase in conflict displacements in the **Middle East and North Africa** in 2023 after three years of consecutive decreases. Disaster displacement figures were also the highest ever reported for the region, largely the result of earthquakes and floods.
- **East Asia and the Pacific** recorded the highest number of disaster displacements globally, although the figure was the lowest since 2017. Conflict displacement there increased for the third year running, mostly the result of the situation in Myanmar.
- Conflict and disasters triggered 47 per cent fewer displacements than the average of the past decade in **South Asia**, although disasters still uprooted millions of people from their homes.
- Severe storms in **the Americas** triggered fewer than half the displacements recorded in 2022 and fewer than a quarter of the annual average since 2015. Conflict and violence triggered the largest number of movements in the region since records began in 2009, with Colombia and Haiti accounting for 85 per cent of the total.
- **Europe and Central Asia** recorded by far its highest number of disaster displacements in 2023. The earthquakes in Türkiye accounted for most of them, but wildfire, storm and flood displacements also increased around the Mediterranean basin. Almost all of the conflict displacements recorded in the region were associated with the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

*A child plays in the schoolyard at a camp for internally displaced people in Yemen. After years of conflict, the country has one of the largest populations of IDPs globally. Floods struck in 2023, further complicating their situation.*

© UNICEF/UNI530328/Alhamdani

# The global picture



A family in an internal displacement camp in Idlib, Syria, after massive earthquakes in neighbouring Türkiye triggered millions of displacements across both countries.  
© UNOCHA/Madevi Sun-Suon

# Internally displaced people (IDPs) at the end of 2023

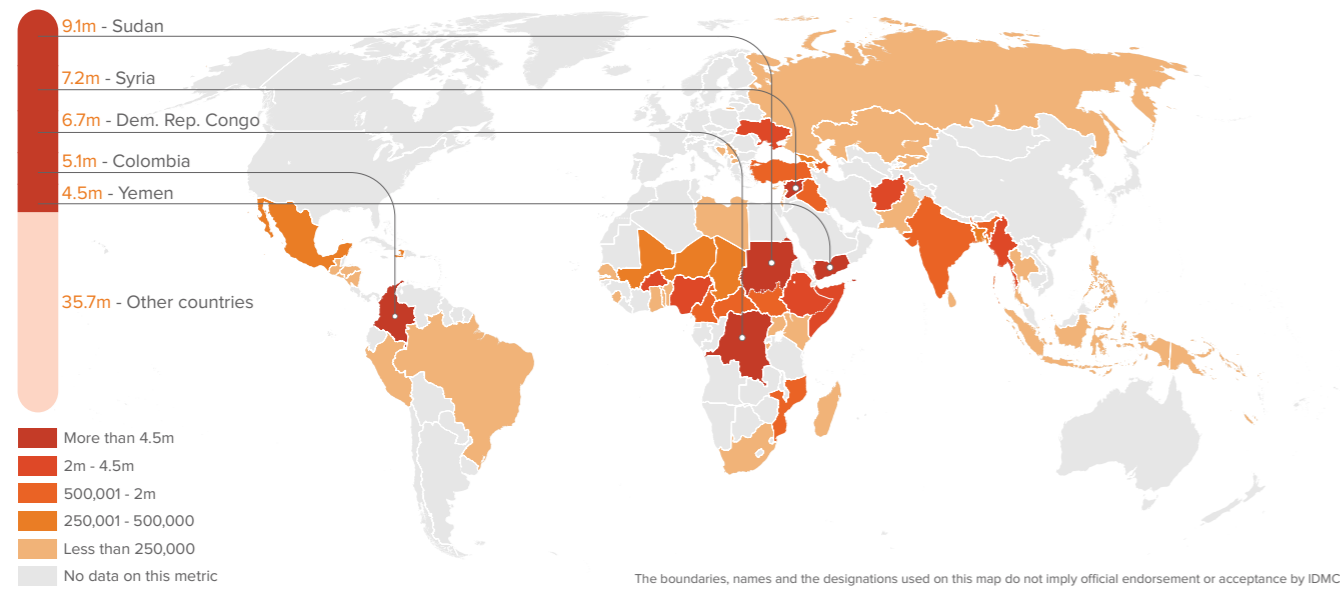
# 75.9m



## What is the total number of IDPs?

The total number of IDPs is a snapshot of all the people living in internal displacement at the end of the year. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures. (see p. 127 for further information)

## Displaced by conflict and violence



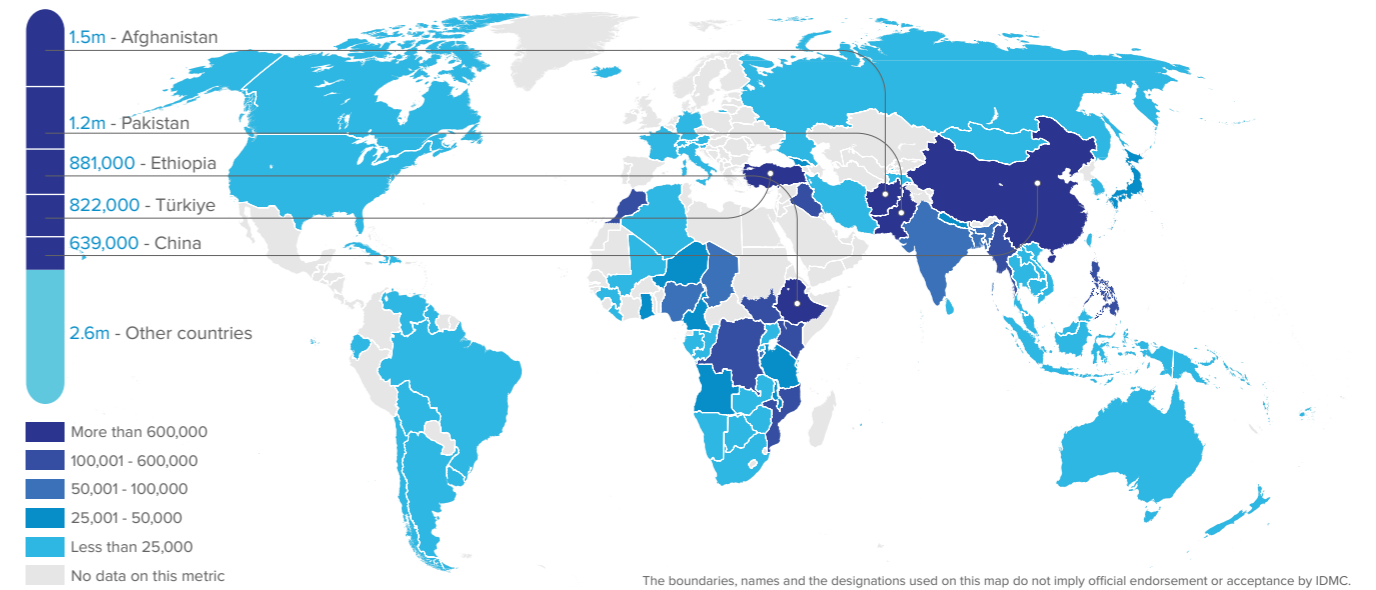
## 68.3 million

Internally displaced people as a result of conflict and violence in 66 countries and territories as of 31 December 2023

## ↑ 9%

Increase in the number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence since 2022

## Displaced by disasters



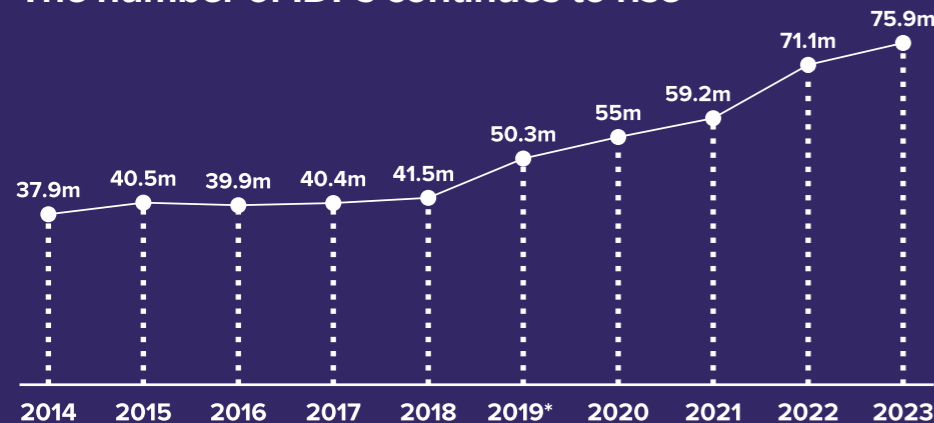
## 7.7 million

Internally displaced people as a result of disasters in 82 countries and territories as of 31 December 2023

## ↓ -11%

Decrease in the number of people internally displaced by disasters since 2022

## The number of IDPs continues to rise



The total number of people living in internal displacement increased by 51% over the past five years, reaching a record high of 75.9 million people across 116 countries at the end of 2023

Total number of IDPs in millions  
 \*First year disaster data is available

## Why does the number of IDPs keep increasing?

New escalations of conflict such as in Sudan and Palestine forced millions of people to flee in 2023, adding to the tens of millions already living in displacement from ongoing or previous conflicts. Earthquakes, storms, floods and wildfires destroyed large numbers of homes, forcing even more people to remain displaced at the end of the year. In the absence of durable solutions to displacement, the number will likely continue to rise.

## What is needed to reduce the number of IDPs?

Supporting return, local integration or resettlement, and addressing IDPs' vulnerabilities, is essential. To prevent new and repeated displacement and end ongoing crises, governments need to reinforce conflict resolution, peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction, poverty reduction and climate action. Better data to inform prevention and response, as well as monitoring progress towards solutions, will help maximise the impact of these interventions.



# Internal displacements in 2023

## Conflict and violence

# 20.5m

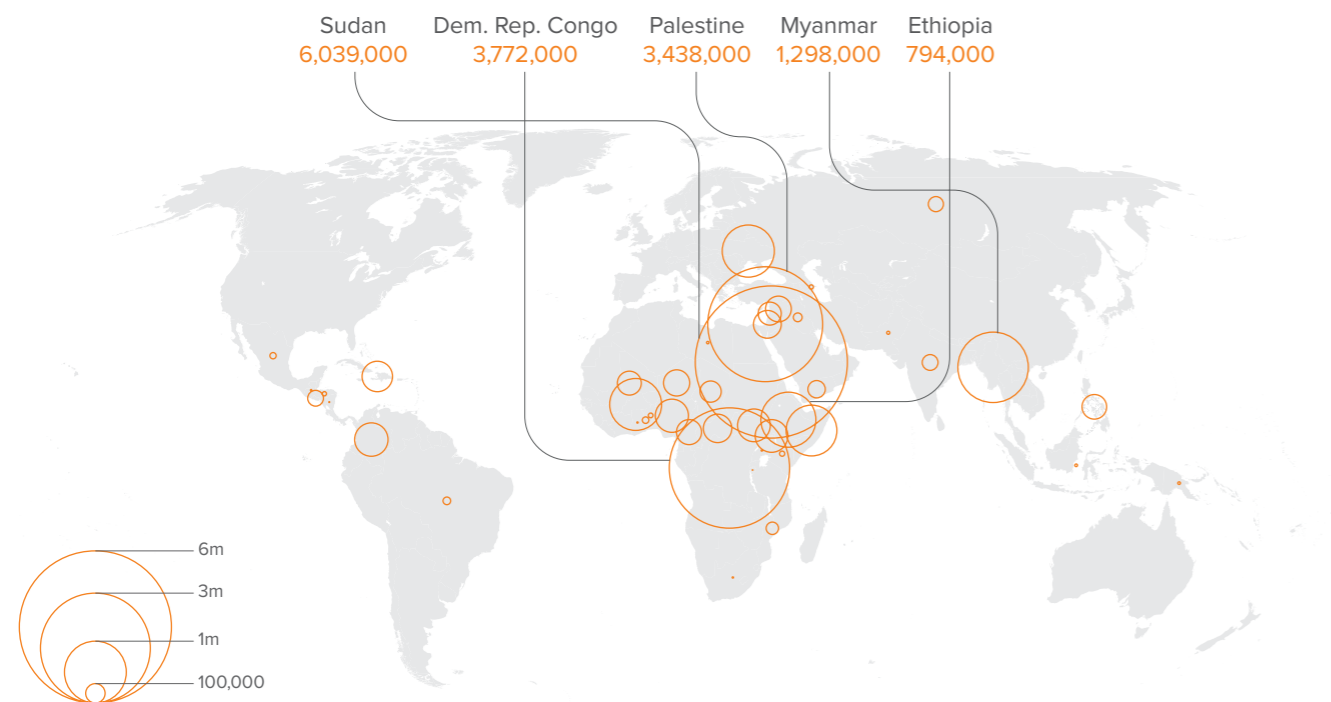


**44%**  
of internal displacements  
were caused by conflict  
and violence

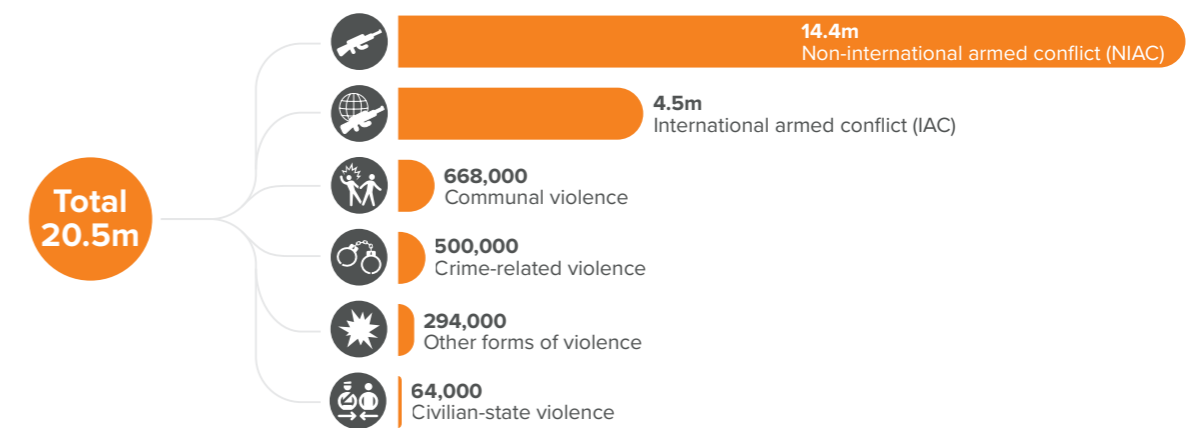
### What are internal displacements?

The internal displacements figure refers to the number of forced movements of people within the borders of their country recorded during the year. This helps capture repeated and multiple movements. (see p. 127 for further information)

### Five countries reporting the highest figures



### Breakdown by type of violence



**~1/2**  
of all conflict displacements in 2023 were reported in Sudan and DRC

**45%**  
increase in displacements triggered by crime-related violence from 2022, mostly in Haiti and Nigeria

*Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.*

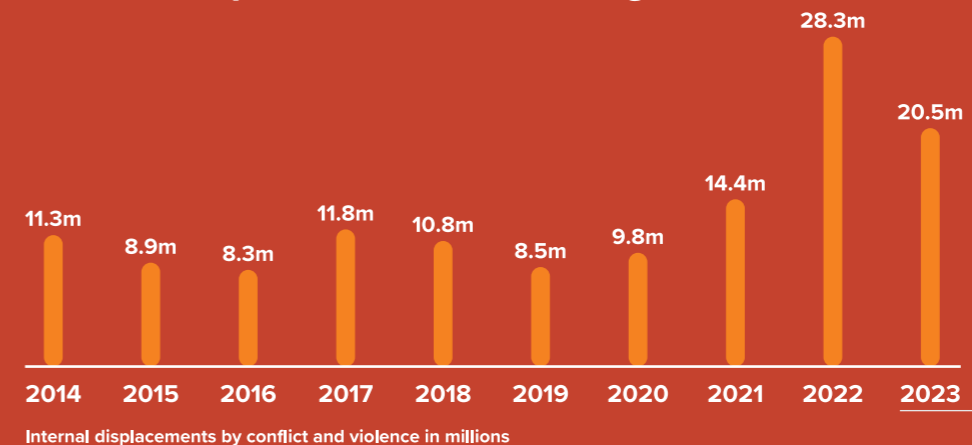
### Key displacement situations

**6 million**  
displacements by conflict in Sudan, the second-highest figure ever recorded after Ukraine in 2022

**3.4 million**  
displacements by conflict in Palestine, its highest figure since data became available in 2008

**707,000**  
displacements in Burkina Faso, the highest figure since the escalation of conflict in 2019

### Conflict displacement remains high



**28%**  
fewer conflict displacements compared to 2022, mostly due to fewer movements in Ukraine as the front lines became more static. Still, global figures were **70%** higher than the annual average of the past decade

# Conflict and violence

## are driving ever-increasing levels of displacement

The number of people living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence increased sharply in 2022 and again in 2023 to a record 68.3 million at the end of the year. Major escalations of conflict in Ukraine in 2022 and Sudan and Palestine in 2023 displaced millions of people (see spotlights, p. 35 and 49), adding to the many millions already living in displacement around the world.

But year-to-year numbers are only part of the story. Conflicts often last for long periods of time, and even when they become less intense or are resolved, the instability, insecurity, infrastructure damage and institutional disruption they have caused can leave people displaced for years. Syria is a prime example. The number of internally displaced people reached a peak of 7.6 million in 2014 but still stood at 7.2 million in 2023, despite a significant reduction in violence since the height of the conflict in 2017.

How, when and where people move varies greatly. As conflicts evolve, the violence can force some people to move several times. Others move less often but remain displaced. Even in relatively stable times or after peace agreements, simmering tensions can erupt into new violence, displacing more people and compelling

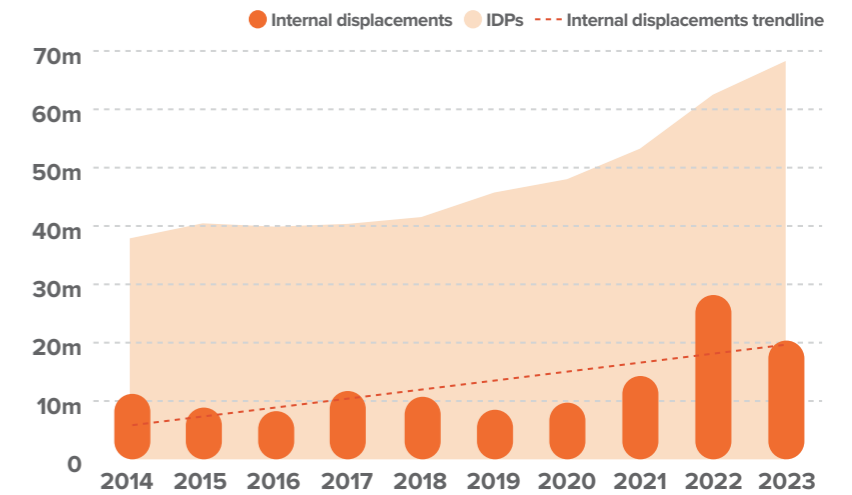
*The instability, insecurity, infrastructure damage and institutional disruption conflicts cause can leave people displaced for years.*

others already displaced to move again. In Colombia, years after the peace agreement with the country's largest non-state armed group, landmines and ongoing violence involving other groups are still displacing large numbers of people and forcing others into confinement (see spotlight, p. 91).

Conflict settings also make it difficult to collect displacement data. Disaggregated data, which tells us who has been displaced, for how long and the specific challenges different groups face in trying to resolve their displacement, tends to be particularly scarce. Better data collected over time would help policymakers assess how displaced people's needs evolve and design more effective paths to durable solutions.

### The number of people displaced by conflict and violence continues to rise

The number of displacements triggered by conflict and violence fluctuates from one year to the next (bars), but the number of people living in displacement at the end of each year has risen inexorably over the past decade (area chart). This illustrates how difficult it has proven for people to bring their displacement to a sustainable end.

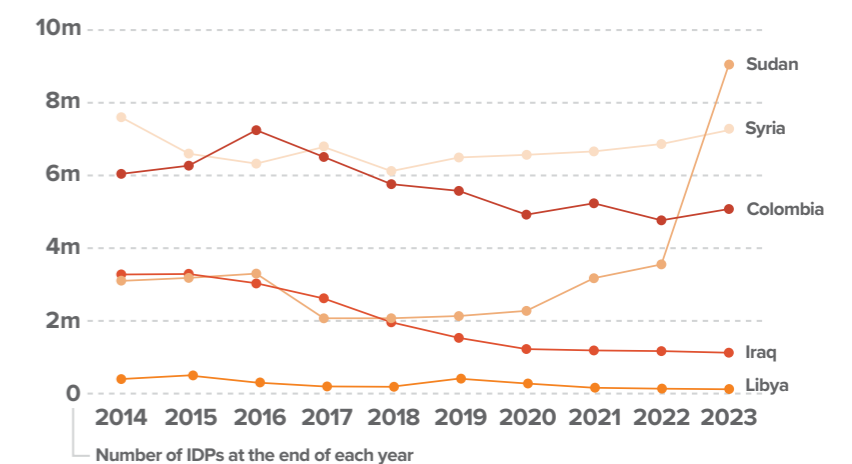


*As conflicts evolve, the violence can force some people to move several times.*

A girl in the Shahshabo camp in Northwest Syria finds reason to smile despite her circumstances. Persistent violence has prolonged the displacement of millions of Syrians, contributing to increasing numbers of IDPs in each of the last five years. © UNOCHA/Bilal Al-Hammoud

### Achieving durable solutions can take many years

Since the ceasefire in Libya in 2020, increased stability has made it possible for more than half of the people displaced after years of conflict to return to their areas of origin to seek solutions to their displacement. Other countries, such as Colombia and Iraq, have also had some success, but the persistently high numbers of internally displaced people are testament to the scale of this challenge.



# Internal displacements in 2023

## Disasters

# 26.4m

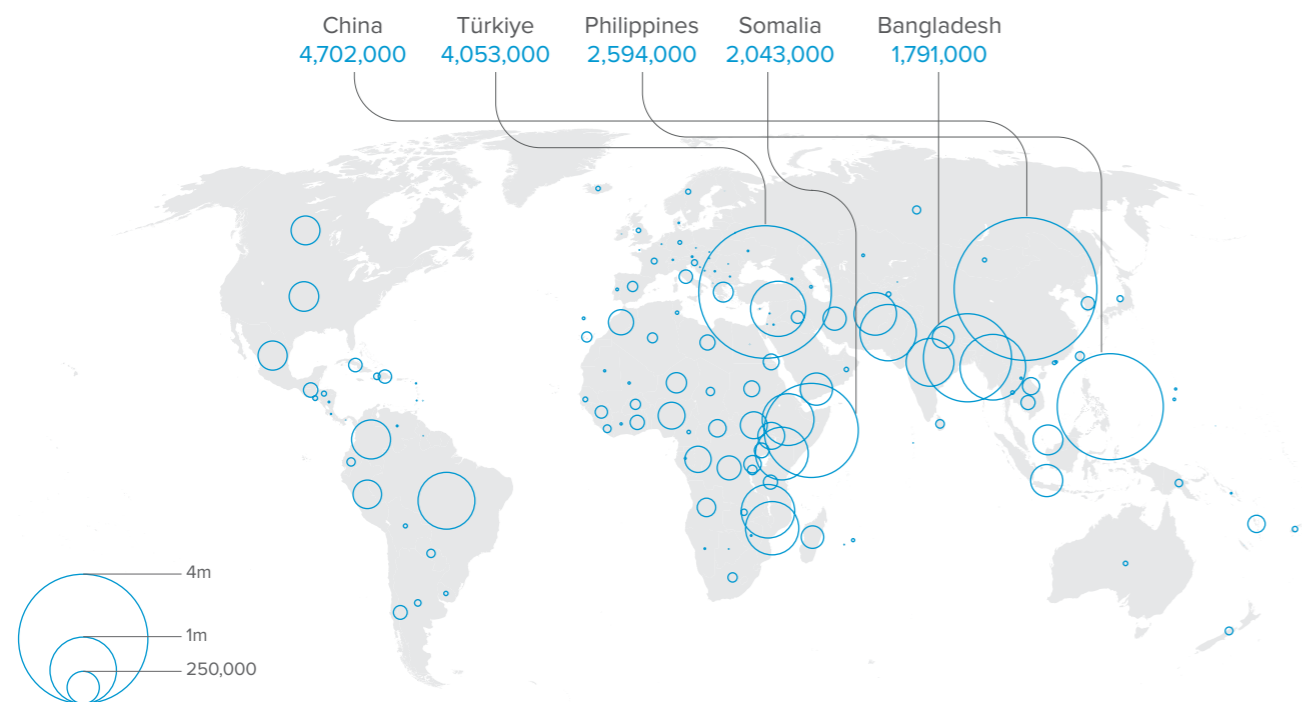


**56%**  
of internal displacements  
were caused by  
disasters

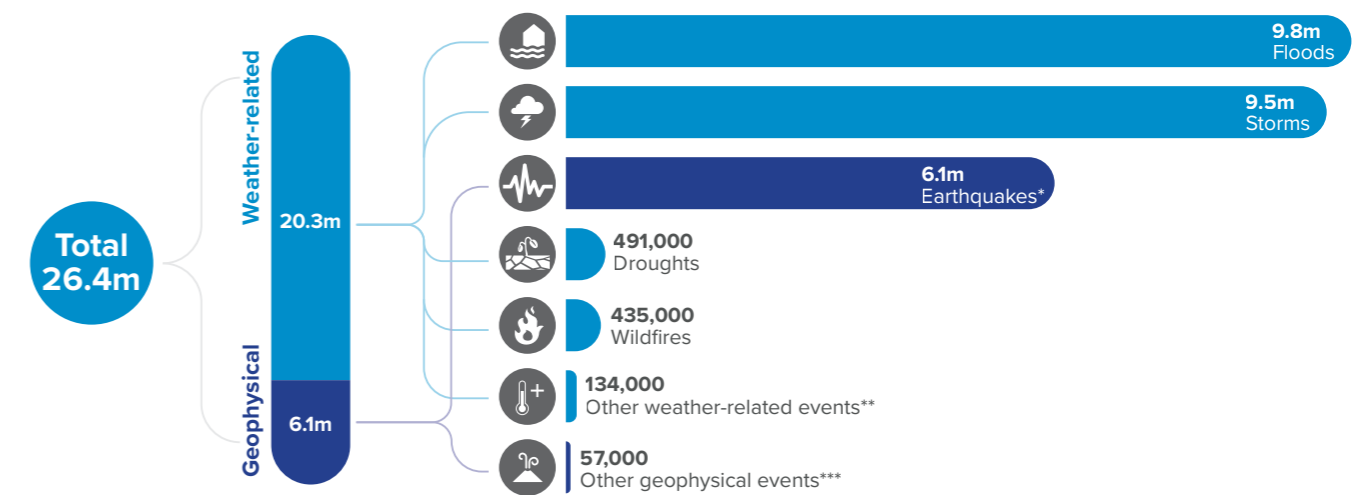
### What are internal displacements?

The internal displacements figure refers to the number of forced movements of people within the borders of their country recorded during the year. This helps capture repeated and multiple movements. (see p. 127 for further information)

### Five countries reporting the highest figures



### Breakdown by hazard



**~1/4**  
of all disaster displacements  
were triggered by earthquakes

**1/3 reduction**  
in displacements by weather-related  
disasters compared to 2022, in part given  
the end of La Niña and the onset of El Niño

\*May also include tsunamis  
\*\*Includes extreme temperatures, wet mass movements, erosion and wave action  
\*\*\*Includes volcanic eruptions and dry mass movements  
Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

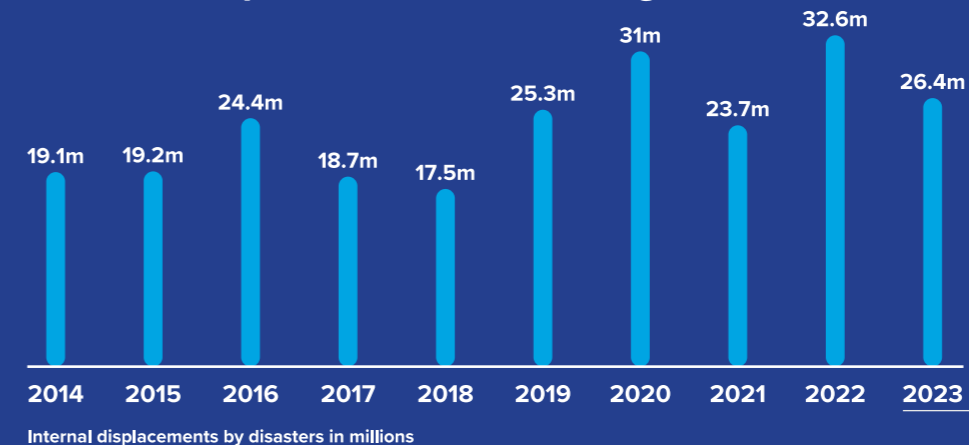
### Key displacement situations

**4.7 million**  
displacements by the  
Türkiye-Syria earthquakes,  
the highest figure for  
earthquakes since 2008

**2.9 million**  
movements by floods in  
the Horn of Africa following  
years of drought

**~2/3**  
of all displacements by  
wildfires were recorded in  
Canada and Greece

### Disaster displacement remains high



**3<sup>rd</sup>**  
highest figure in the last  
decade despite fewer  
displacements by  
weather-related hazards

# Disaster displacement

*can affect anyone, anywhere*

We detected disaster displacement in 148 countries and territories in 2023, with significant events across six continents. Some high-income countries, such as Canada and New Zealand, reported their highest figures ever (see spotlights, p. 93 and 65).

Earthquakes and volcanic activity triggered as many displacements in 2023 as in the previous seven years combined, in large part the result of severe earthquakes that affected Türkiye, Syria, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Morocco (see spotlights, p. 103, 51 and 79). After a record year in 2022, weather-related displacements were down in 2023, in part because of the end of the La Niña phase of warmer ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific.

Floods and storms continued to cause the most displacements, however, including in south-eastern Africa where cyclone Freddy triggered 1.4 million movements across six countries and territories (see spotlight, p. 37). Wildfires and droughts are increasingly part of the overall story, but comprehensive global data is hard to acquire.

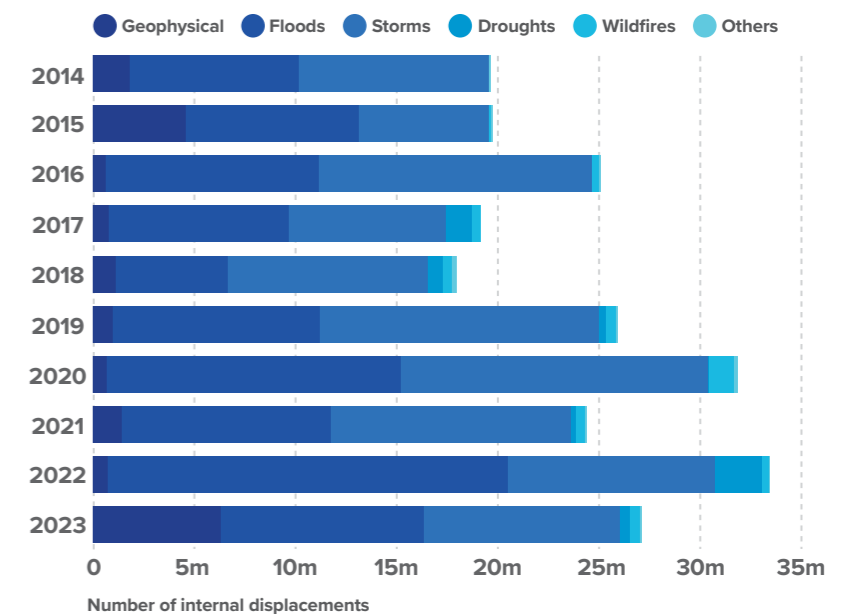
*Some high-income countries, such as Canada and New Zealand, reported their highest figures ever.*

Not all weather-related disasters are the result of climate change, but it is making some hazards more frequent and intense. It is also making communities more vulnerable and addressing the underlying drivers of displacement more urgent.

Having data on reconstruction rates, the duration of disaster displacement and the distances people are forced to travel is essential for the development of long-term plans that mitigate the risks displacement poses to communities. It is important to collect data not only in the emergency phases of a disaster but also throughout the recovery period. Local governments are often best placed to gather detailed information, and national and international data collection initiatives should empower them to do so.

## Floods and storms trigger most, but by no means all, disaster displacements

*Storms and floods consistently trigger the highest numbers of displacements. Major geophysical events also trigger high numbers, but their occurrence varies widely from year to year. Investments in meteorological and seismological technology can help predict many of these events.*

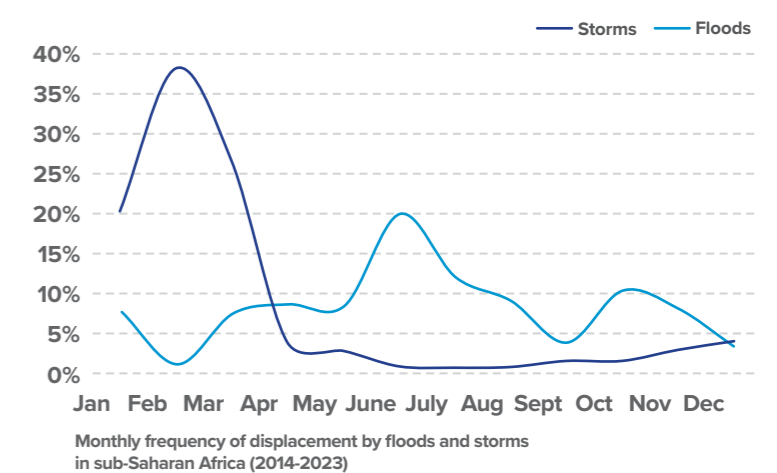


*Not all weather-related disasters are the result of climate change, but it is making some hazards more frequent and intense.*

Disasters, such as floods in New Dehli, India, can occur anywhere, making preparation essential for all countries. © REUTERS/Adnan Abidi

## Weather-related displacement often occurs in predictable patterns

*When we look at the average monthly displacement triggered by storms and floods in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade, recognisable patterns emerge. Understanding such patterns can help improve preparedness, response and long-term development planning to minimise the risk and impact of displacement.*



# Conflict and disasters

*often overlap, multiplying vulnerabilities*

Because displacement in conflict settings often lasts for months or years, there is an increased risk that those displaced will endure added challenges as a result of a disaster. All but three of the 45 countries and territories that reported conflict displacement last year also reported disaster displacement.

Earthquakes in Syria and Afghanistan struck areas where large numbers of people already displaced by years of conflict were living (see spotlights, p. 51 and 79). In Somalia and Nigeria it was floods, and there are many other examples. Conflict and violence can also come on top of disasters. After major flooding in South Sudan in 2022, non-state armed groups looted aid convoys and disrupted the provision of relief to affected communities.

It is not unusual for cycles of conflict and disaster to emerge. Gang violence surged in Haiti in 2020 after years of repeated and largely unresolved devastation and displacement from earthquakes and hurricanes. Residents of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique were struggling with the effects of severe floods when violence erupted in 2017. The violence was still ongoing when

*All but three of the 45 countries and territories that reported conflict displacement last year also reported disaster displacement.*

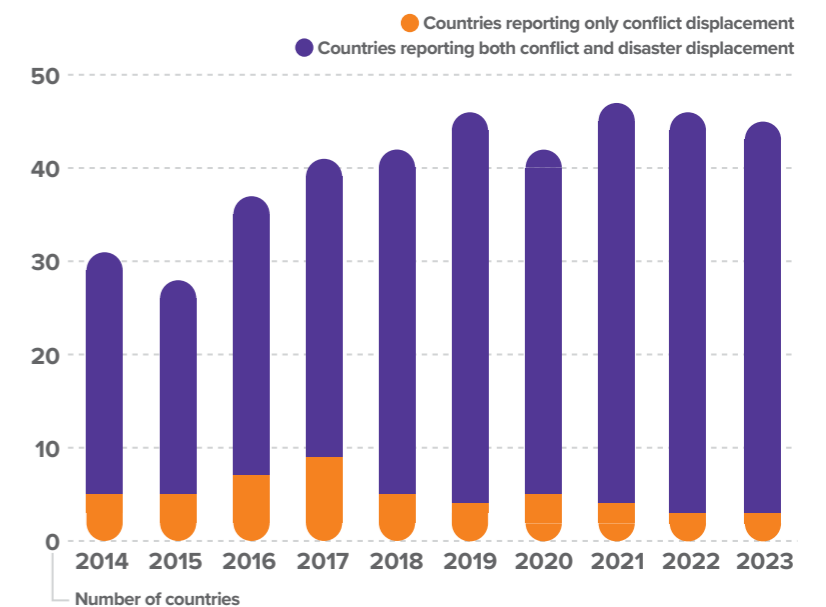
cyclones Idai and Kenneth struck in 2019 and last year when cyclone Freddy made landfall in the country twice. Both Haiti and Mozambique were still facing the combined impacts of these events in 2023.

Conflict can also increase non-displaced people's vulnerability to disaster displacement. Years of civil war in Libya limited investment in maintaining infrastructure, including the dams that burst above Derna city last year, killing thousands of people and displacing nearly a quarter of the city's population (see spotlight, p. 53).

The success of efforts to address these situations depends directly on knowing how conflict and disasters contribute to displacement in specific situations. Disaggregated data that shows the number of times people have been displaced, by which trigger and in what sequence can help response and development planners to mitigate impacts on displaced people and host communities.

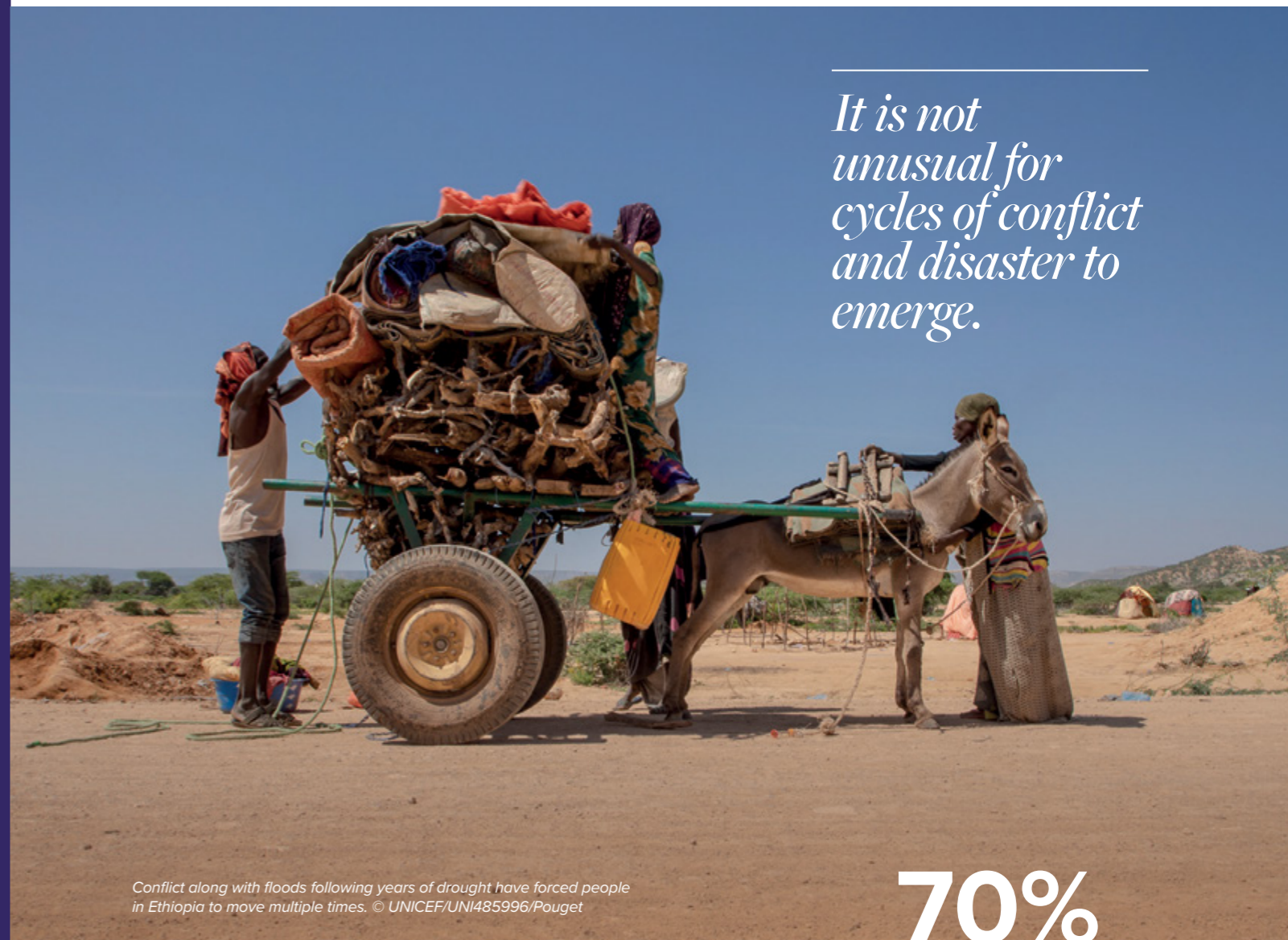
## Disasters often add to challenges in countries facing conflict displacement

Over the past decade, countries that recorded conflict displacement often also recorded disaster displacement. This combination complicates efforts to address the immediate needs of those affected and help them achieve durable solutions.



This graph does not include countries exclusively reporting disaster displacement.

*It is not unusual for cycles of conflict and disaster to emerge.*



Conflict along with floods following years of drought have forced people in Ethiopia to move multiple times. © UNICEF/UNI485996/Pouget

**70%**  
of countries facing both conflict and disaster have low or medium UN Human Development Index scores.

# Regional overviews



*People salvage items from destroyed homes in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Palestine. More than 60 per cent of the strip's housing stock was damaged or destroyed as of the end of 2023, so even once the conflict recedes, durable solutions are likely to remain a distant prospect for many IDPs.*  
© Ahmad Hasaballah/Getty Images



# Sub-Saharan Africa

Internally displaced children at the Bulengo camp, west of the city of Goma, DRC. Violence in North Kivu province triggered more than 821,000 displacements in the space of two months, with many people fleeing to the provincial capital and its surroundings. © UNICEF/UNI418264/Ndebo

## Internally displaced people (IDPs)

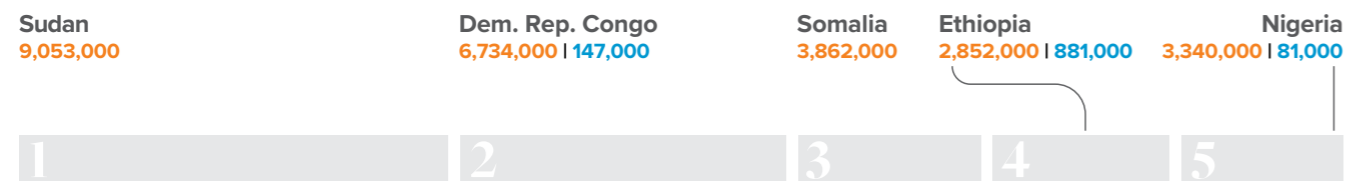
**34.8m**  
at the end of 2023

**46%**  
Share of the  
global total

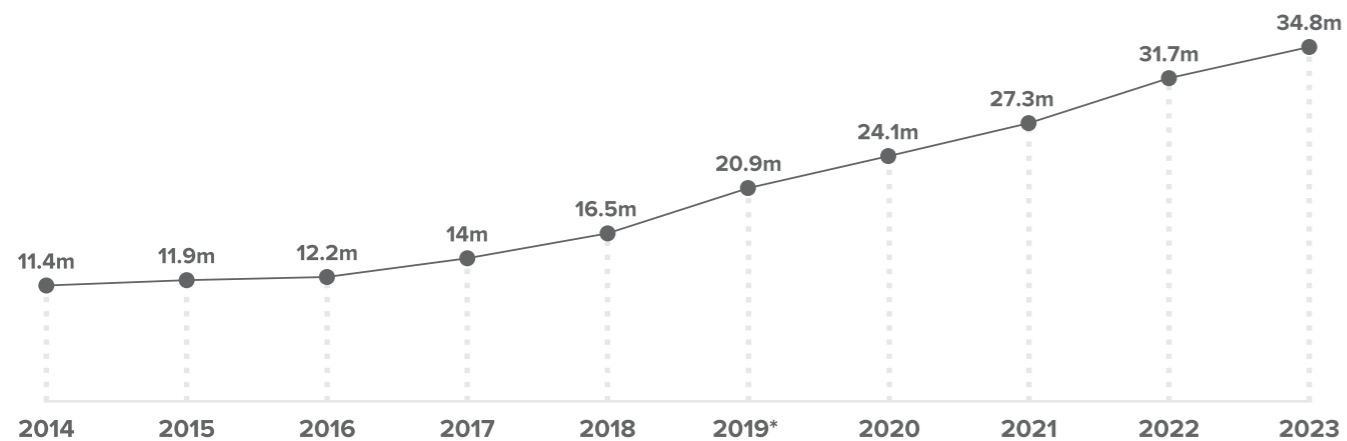
**32.5m**  
IDPs by conflict  
and violence

**2.3m**  
IDPs by  
disasters

### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

## Internal displacements (movements)

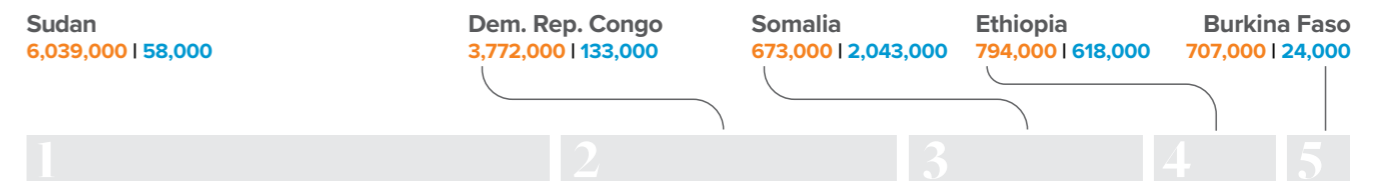
**19.5m**  
during 2023

**42%**  
Share of the  
global total

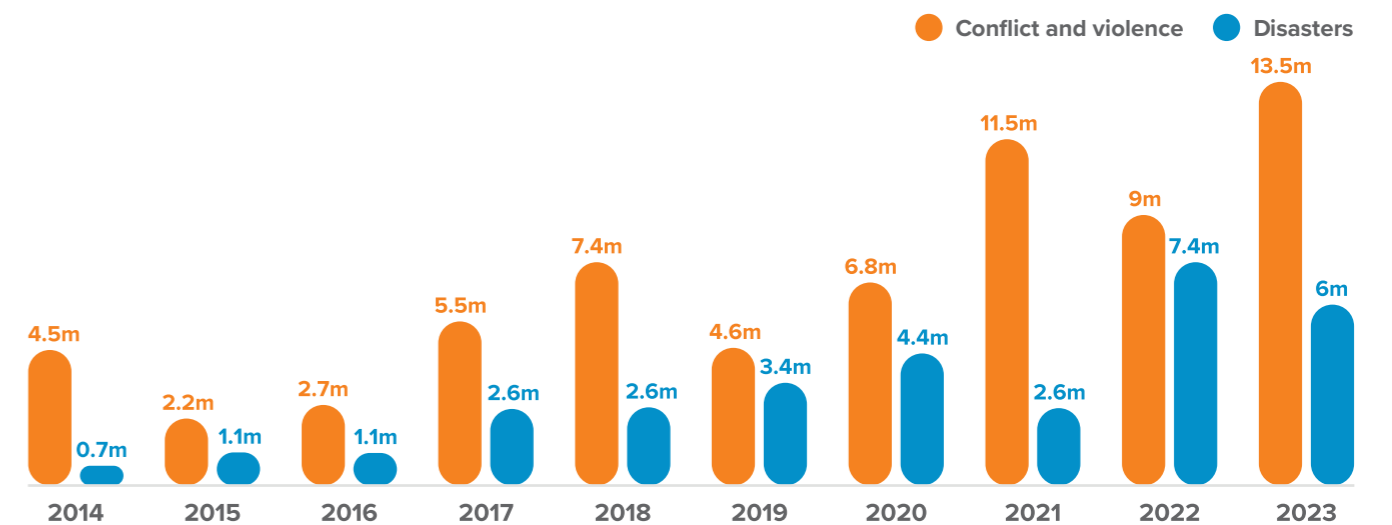
**13.5m**  
Internal displacements  
by conflict and violence

**6m**  
Internal displacements  
by disasters

### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in millions

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Sub-Saharan Africa

The number of internal displacements in sub-Saharan Africa reached a record 19.5 million in 2023, up from the 16.5 million reported in 2022 and 42 per cent of the global total. Figures for the region have risen for the last five years in succession.

Conflict and violence triggered 13.5 million movements, the highest figure for the past 15 years. Sudan made up 45 per cent of this total and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) recorded the second-highest figure. Between them, they accounted for almost half of all conflict displacements worldwide. Significant displacement also continued in other countries grappling with protracted conflicts across the Greater Horn, Central and West Africa.

Disasters triggered six million displacements across the region, the second-highest figure since records began in 2008 and nearly double the average of the past decade. They were mainly the result of heavy flooding in the Horn of Africa after years of drought. Cyclone Freddy was the largest storm to hit the region, with most displacements reported in Malawi and Mozambique.

Disasters and conflict are presented as different triggers, but their impacts can overlap, often leading to repeated and/or protracted displacement. Together, conflict and disasters left 34.8 million people living in internal displacement across the region as of the end of 2023, 46 per cent of the global total. Looking at the longer-term trend, the total number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa has nearly tripled since 2013.

### Conflict and disasters overlap in the Greater Horn

Countries across the Greater Horn of Africa continued to record significant displacement in 2023 as a result of both conflict and disasters. Figures for some were the highest ever reported.

**Sudan** accounted for most of the increase in conflict displacement in the region, with a new wave of violence that began in mid-April triggering six million movements in 2023 and leaving 9.1 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of the year. This figure is the highest ever reported for a single country globally since 2008 (see spotlight, p. 35).

**Ethiopia** recorded 794,000 displacements by conflict and violence, down from two million in 2022. A peace agreement between the government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in November 2022 enabled better humanitarian access and allowed hundreds of thousands of people to return. IDPs' needs were still high, however, particularly for food, in part the result of a locust infestation in August.<sup>1</sup>

*Conflict and violence triggered 13.5 million movements in the region, the highest figure for the past 15 years.*

While the security situation improved in Tigray, a new wave of violence erupted in the neighbouring region of Amhara, triggering around 407,000 displacements, almost half the national total. Access constraints hampered data collection in the area, however, which may have influenced the decrease compared with 2022. Major cities, including the region's capital of Bahir Dar, were affected, prompting the government to declare a six-month regional state of emergency in early August.<sup>2</sup>

Around 140,000 displacements were also reported in the Oromia region, mostly the result of clashes between government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army.

Around 2.9 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, down from the 3.9 million reported in 2022. Figures for Tigray reduced by nearly half, but the region was still home to 949,000 IDPs, the largest proportion



*Displaced women and children wait at a water disbursement area in an IDP settlement in Somalia's Gedo region. Somalia is among the ten countries with the highest number of conflict IDPs globally © Giles Clarke/UNOCHA/Getty Images*

of the country's total. Oromia, Somali and Amhara were also hosting significant numbers.

The number of conflict displacements recorded in Somalia increased for a fourth year in a row to reach 673,000. Clashes between the Somaliland National Army and the SSC-Khatumo forces of the Dhulbahante clan triggered about 157,000 movements in Laas Aanood, the capital of the northern Sool region, in February and March, as people fled to rural areas and sought refuge with host families. Another wave of violence erupted in the same area in May.<sup>3</sup>

Displacement also took place in the central regions of Galgaduug, Mudug and Middle Shabelle, as Somalia's military made territorial gains in its fight against al-Shabaab with support from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).<sup>4</sup> The threat that al-Shabaab continued to pose to the country's security and stability, however, led to an extension of ATMIS's mandate.<sup>5</sup>

Around 3.9 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, keeping Somalia among the ten countries with the highest number of conflict IDPs globally.

*The number of conflict displacements recorded in Somalia increased for a fourth year in a row.*

Al-Shabaab attacks also triggered displacement in **Kenya**, particularly in counties along the border with Somalia, including Lamu, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera.<sup>6</sup> Only limited data was available, however. Communal violence elsewhere in the country accounted for 90 per cent of the 7,700 movements recorded overall. The majority took place in Samburu county at the beginning of March, when people were forced to flee to neighbouring villages.<sup>7</sup>

Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya also suffered severe floods in 2023. Fuelled in large part by the onset of El Niño, these triggered 2.9 million movements, nearly a third of all



displacements caused by floods globally. The floods were preceded by six consecutive failed rainy seasons and drought as a result of La Niña, which affected pastoral and agricultural livelihoods across the three countries and fuelled an ongoing food security crisis, including among IDPs.<sup>8</sup>

Drought triggered 331,000 displacements in **Somalia** at the beginning of the year, mostly in the southern regions of Bay, Gedo and Lower Shabelle. As El Niño conditions settled in, high precipitation during the Gu and Deyr rainy seasons from April to June and October to December, respectively, caused severe flooding across the country that triggered a total of 1.7 million movements.<sup>9</sup>

*Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya suffered severe floods, fuelled in large part by the onset of El Niño.*

The Deyr floods disrupted humanitarian relief efforts and prompted the federal government to declare an emergency in the states of Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Puntland, and South West. Some sites hosting IDPs were flooded in Galmudug, displacing people again.<sup>10</sup> Around 85 per cent of the city of Beledweyne was left under water in May, triggering 260,000.<sup>11</sup> Flood displacement takes place in this city nearly every year, which has proved to be gradually eroding the resilience of those affected.<sup>12</sup>

Between them, drought and floods triggered two million movements in Somalia in 2023, the highest disaster displacement figure for the country. Lack of data meant it was not possible to estimate how many people were still living in displacement as a result of disasters by the end of the year.

Kenya also reported its highest number of disaster displacements, with 641,000. Floods and flash floods particularly hit the north-eastern counties of Mandera and Wajir and the eastern county of Garissa.<sup>13</sup> Significant flooding also took place in the

north-western county of Turkana, where refugees living in the Kakuma camp were affected.<sup>14</sup>

Floods triggered 550,000 displacements in **Ethiopia**. Most took place during Deyr in southern and south-eastern areas, where rainfall was 300 per cent higher than average.<sup>15</sup> The Somali region was among the most affected, but displacements also occurred in South Ethiopia, South West Ethiopia, Oromia, Afar, Amhara and Gambela. The floods also fuelled a cholera outbreak, including among IDPs, particularly in the Amhara and Somali regions.<sup>16</sup>

Significant flood displacement also took place in countries along the White Nile basin, albeit on a lesser scale. The conflict in **Sudan** hampered data collection, meaning the figure of 58,000 movements is likely to be conservative. The overlap of disaster and conflict displacement was evident in River Nile state, which recorded the highest share of the country's flood displacements while hosting its second-largest number of people displaced by conflict and violence.

In South Darfur state, home to the highest number of people displaced by conflict and violence and the second-most affected by disasters, floods hit people who had already fled conflict, forcing them to move again.<sup>17</sup> Here too, the floods aggravated a cholera outbreak.<sup>18</sup>

After significant floods in 2022, **South Sudan** recorded a fall in disaster displacements in 2023 to 167,000, its lowest figure since 2018. Most occurred in Unity and Jonglei states, where conflict and violence also forced people to flee their homes. Conflict and disasters combined led to 450,000 displacements across the country as a whole. A significant influx of refugees from Sudan also heightened humanitarian needs.<sup>19</sup>

**Uganda** reported over 50,000 disaster displacements, more than half of which took place during the rainy season in October, which was fuelled by El Niño.<sup>20</sup> This was 49 per cent higher than in 2022, but fewer than the decadal average. Neigh-



*A family travels along a flood-damaged road in Garissa County, Kenya. Floods and flash floods in the east and northeast of the country contributed to its highest disaster displacement figures on record.*

© Luis Tato/AFP/Getty Images



Internally displaced people at the Rusayo camp in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. DRC has been among the two countries most affected by conflict displacement globally since 2016. © UNICEF/UNI418238/Ndebo

bouring **Rwanda** registered its highest figure since 2008 at 70,000, almost ten times more than the previous year. A storm that hit areas along Lake Kivu in May accounted for 38,000. More than 18,000 displacements were then recorded across the country during the rainy season between October and December.<sup>21</sup>

### Central Africa continues to be a conflict hotspot

Conflict and violence triggered 3.8 million displacements in **DRC** in 2023, a slight fall from the record four million in 2022, but still the second-highest figure globally after Sudan. DRC has been among the two countries most affected by conflict displacement globally since 2016.

A number of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), in particular the March 23 Movement (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO), continued to operate in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, Ituri and South Kivu, conducting attacks against civilians, including IDPs.<sup>22</sup>

The government made efforts to restore peace and security, including through the deployment of the East African Community Regional Force in November 2022.<sup>23</sup> Angola and the African Union also facilitated a ceasefire between the government and M23 in March 2023, leading to the group's withdrawal from some areas and a slight lull in fighting and displacement.<sup>24</sup> The ceasefire was generally respected until October, when violence increased again in North Kivu and triggered more than 821,000 displacements in the space of two months.<sup>25</sup>

The province has recorded the highest figures in DRC since M23's resurgence in November 2021, and accounted for more than half of the national total for conflict in 2023, with almost two million movements. Most took place in the same hotspots as previous years, particularly the territories of Masisi and Rutshuru. Many people fled to the provincial capital of Goma and its surroundings.<sup>26</sup>

Disputes over land and resources fuelled an escalation in conflict and displacement in neighbouring Ituri, where approximately a million displacements were recorded.<sup>27</sup> Many involved the repeated movement of people fleeing clashes between NSAGs. The violence also undermined the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on subsistence agriculture, which aggravated food insecurity in the province.<sup>28</sup> South Kivu recorded at least 330,000 movements, mostly the result of localised clashes between NSAGs.

Around 6.7 million people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year in DRC. This is the highest figure ever reported for the country, partly because of wider coverage in data collection. Fifty-two per cent of IDPs were in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, where many faced significant food insecurity, water, sanitation, health and education challenges.<sup>29</sup>

The number of conflict displacements in the **Central African Republic** decreased for the second consecutive year to 214,000, the result of an improvement in the overall security situation.<sup>30</sup> Communal violence and clashes between NSAGs particularly affected the north-western prefecture of Ouham which recorded 75,000 movements in 2023.<sup>31</sup>

*Conflict and violence triggered 3.8 million displacements in DRC in 2023, the second-highest figure globally after Sudan.*

Around 512,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, mostly in Ouham and Ombella M'Poko prefectures and the capital, Bangui. Humanitarian needs were high across the country, the result not only of the internal displacement situation, but also of the most recent influx of refugees from Sudan.<sup>32</sup>

Conflict and violence triggered 164,000 displacements in **Cameroon**, of which 93,000 were reported in the Northwest and Southwest regions and 71,000 in the Far North region. Most movements in the latter took place in Logone-et-Chari, Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga departments, which border Nigeria and Chad. The concentration of displacement in these areas is in part the result of NSAGs taking advantage of porous borders to launch attacks against government forces and threaten civilians, sometimes triggering repeated movements.<sup>33</sup>

More than a million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, the highest figure ever recorded for the country. Around 422,000 were in the Far North and 284,000 in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

Conflict displacement figures in neighbouring **Chad** reached a record high of 118,000 movements, a 48 per cent increase on the figure for 2022. Most took place in Lac province, where the longstanding conflict affecting the Lake Chad basin continued to uproot people from their homes. There too, NSAGs operated across borders with Cameroon and Nigeria, triggering displacement by conducting attacks, kidnappings and extortion and otherwise intimidating communities. Some people were forced to flee several times during the year.<sup>34</sup>

*About a quarter of Chad's IDPs were Chadian nationals who fled the war in Sudan and returned to a situation of internal displacement.*

Communal violence also escalated sharply in the southern province of Logone Oriental, triggering 26,000 displacements in Nya Pendé, Monts de Lam and Pendé departments between April and May. More than a thousand homes were burnt, prolonging the plight of those forced to flee.<sup>35</sup>

The number people living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence had reached a record high of 452,000 by the end of the year. More than half were living in protracted displacement in Lac province, and about a quarter were Chadian nationals who fled the war in Sudan and returned to a situation of internal displacement.<sup>36</sup>

Countries in Central Africa did not record significant disaster displacement in 2023, with the notable exception of the **Republic of the Congo**. The country reported one of its highest figures on record with 159,000 movements, an almost four-fold increase from 2022. They were the result of the country's worst floods since 1961, which took place in the last days of the year near the capital, Brazzaville, and departments including Cuvette, Likouala, Plateaux and Sangha.<sup>37</sup>

## A spillover of violence and displacement in West Africa

Countries in Central Sahel including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have experienced an overall increase in displacement associated with conflict and violence over the last five years as NSAGs have taken advantage of porous borders to expand their territorial and economic gains, pushing people to flee.<sup>38</sup>

Displacement in 2023 took place against the backdrop of a significant shift in security dynamics in the region. The Malian government asked the UN peacekeeping operation in the country to withdraw in June.<sup>39</sup> The military in Niger took over the government in July and ended the presence of French troops, which began to withdraw in October.<sup>40</sup> The governments of the three countries then entered into a new military pact, known as the Alliance of Sahel States, and sought other foreign support for their counterinsurgency operations.<sup>41</sup> They also withdrew from the G5 Sahel force, a regional security initiative established in 2014, leading to its dissolution.<sup>42</sup>

**Burkina Faso** recorded most conflict displacements in the broader West Africa region with



*Metche displacement camp in Chad. Conflict displacement figures in Chad reached a record high of 118,000 movements, a 48 per cent increase on the figure for 2022. © Abdulmonam Eassa/Getty Images*

707,000, up 61 per cent from 2022 and the highest figure since the escalation of conflict in 2019. Movements were reported across all regions, the result of a rise in fighting between government forces and several NSAGs, in particular Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), an al-Qaeda affiliate, and Islamic State in the Sahel, both of which operate in the Liptako-Gourma region along the border between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.<sup>43</sup>

Most displacements took place in the northern regions of Centre-Nord, Est and Boucle du Mouhoun, where NSAGs continued to exert control over local people, including by restricting their movement.<sup>44</sup> In the Sahel region, for instance, the number of communes under blockade doubled in 2023, disrupting markets and fuelling food insecurity and malnutrition. In Djibo, home to 300,000 people, many were facing emergency levels of food insecurity, and some catastrophic levels.<sup>45</sup>

*Burkina Faso recorded 707,000 conflict displacements, the most in West Africa and its highest figure since the escalation of conflict in 2019.*

Almost 2.1 million people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence as of March, when data last became available. That is a 268 per cent increase on the figure for 2019, but it is almost certainly an underestimate given that violence and new displacement continued unabated for the rest of the year.

**Niger** recorded 181,000 conflict displacements in 2023, the highest figure since data became available in 2015. As in previous years, most took place in the regions of Diffa in the Lake Chad basin and Tillabéri in the western Liptako-Gourma region.

Several NSAGs continued to uproot people from their homes in areas of Diffa near the border with Nigeria and Chad, triggering more than 44,000 movements.<sup>46</sup> NSAG

attacks in Tillabéri, which increased in the weeks after the military takeover, led to around 104,000. International and regional sanctions, the closure of borders and access restrictions which the de facto authorities imposed in some areas meant many people in need, including IDPs, could not be reached.<sup>47</sup> Around 347,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, a figure that should be considered conservative.

Conflict and violence triggered 152,000 displacements in **Mali** in 2023, a figure similar to the previous year but which should be considered conservative because access restrictions hampered data collection in many areas. Increased insecurity prompted UN peacekeepers to accelerate their withdrawal.<sup>48</sup> Soon after, fighting intensified between government forces and NSAGs, some of which were signatories to the 2015 peace agreement.<sup>49</sup> This led to a significant escalation in violence, particularly in the central and northern regions of Gao, Ménaka, Mopti and Tombouctou in September and October.

*Criminal and communal violence triggered nearly three-quarters of Nigeria's 291,000 conflict displacements.*

Around 344,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, a slight decrease from the figure for 2022. IDPs faced greater needs than their non-displaced counterparts. Many lost their income as a result of their displacement, which hindered their ability to sustain themselves.<sup>50</sup>

Violence and displacement in Central Sahel also spread into coastal West Africa, particularly Togo and Benin.<sup>51</sup> **Togo** recorded around 12,000 movements, a more than five-fold increase on the figure for 2022. Most took place in the northern region of Savanes, where

many IDPs were unable to return because of insecurity and unexploded ordnance. Around 18,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, prompting the government to request more support from its humanitarian partners.<sup>52</sup>

**Benin** recorded 6,500 movements by conflict and violence, also five times more than in 2022, leaving 8,800 people living in displacement at the end of the year.

Neighbouring **Nigeria** was again among the countries in West Africa to record the highest number of conflict displacements at 291,000, almost double the figure for 2022. The increase was mostly the result of more comprehensive data collection. Conflict persisted in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, where various NSAGs operate. The number of attacks against military and government installations in Borno fell, but clashes between NSAGs and attacks on civilians continued and, in some areas, intensified.<sup>53</sup>

Most displacements in Nigeria a decade ago were associated with armed conflict, particularly in the north-east, but nearly three-quarters of the total for 2023 were triggered by criminal and communal violence, including clashes between herders and farmers, in north-western states.<sup>54</sup>

The government resumed its plan to close displacement camps, and although some IDPs were able to return or relocate, basic service provision and security were not always conducive to durable solutions.<sup>55</sup> Insecurity also sometimes overlapped with disasters, impeding IDPs' access to aid.<sup>56</sup> Floods triggered 166,000 displacements in 2023, a decline from the 2.4 million recorded in 2022 but in line with the average of the past decade.

Around 3.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of the year, about half of them in Borno state. This was a slight decrease from the 3.6 million reported in 2022, but Nigeria

was still among the ten countries with the largest number of IDPs globally.

Persistent conflict and violence hampered data collection on disaster displacement in many countries in West Africa. Such data has been scarce since 2021, mostly because of access constraints and the fact governments and their humanitarian partners focus their data collection on informing their responses to conflict.

## Weather-related disasters and displacement in southern Africa

**Mozambique** was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa to record a significant reduction in conflict displacements in 2023 with 41,000, down 86 per cent on the figure for 2022 and the lowest since 2020. Government forces, supported by the Southern African Development Community Mission to Mozambique and the Rwandan Defence Forces, improved security in many areas of Cabo Delgado province.<sup>57</sup> Many IDPs were also able to return as a result, leaving 592,000 people living in displacement at the end of the year, down from a million in 2022. However, this trend ended in early 2024 as violence reignited in the province.<sup>58</sup>

*Mozambique was the only country in the region to record a significant reduction in conflict displacements, but it also recorded its highest number of disaster displacements.*

Conversely, the country recorded its highest number of disaster displacements since data became available in 2008 at 655,000. Cyclone Freddy accounted for around 640,000, in some cases affecting households already displaced by violence.<sup>59</sup>

Freddy was the longest-lasting tropical cyclone on record worldwide. It made landfall in Mozambique twice, on 24 February in Inhambane and again on 12 March in Zambezia. It struck during the harvesting season, forcing people to replant their crops and heightening food insecurity. It affected 8 of the country's 10 provinces and destroyed over 129,000 homes.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the damage and destruction, pre-emptive evacuations helped to save lives compared to previous cyclones of similar strength. Applying lessons learned from previous disasters, the government developed early warning systems and evacuation protocols. Better technology helped to identify at-risk areas, evacuation routes and safe areas, while a community-based and multilingual approach improved the dissemination of information. The government also inaugurated a radar system a few months after Freddy struck to further improve its hazard identification and early warning capacities.<sup>61</sup>

The storm also triggered 659,000 movements in neighbouring **Malawi**, the highest disaster displacement figure for the country since data became available in 2009 (see spotlight, p. 37). **Madagascar**, which had experienced extensive damage in 2022 as a result of consecutive storms, was also affected. Freddy made landfall in the country on 21 February, triggering almost 63,000 movements, the second-highest disaster displacement figure for the country since 2018. Almost half were recorded in Atsimo-Andrefana in the south-eastern province of Toliara. Disaster risk management authorities evacuated at least 7,000 people from coastal regions which had been hit by cyclones Batsirai and Emnati in 2022.<sup>62</sup>

Freddy left around 26,000 people living in displacement at the end of the year, but given that information was not available for all six countries and territories affected, the figure should be considered highly conservative.



Flooding from Cyclone Freddy in the province of Zambezia, Mozambique. The storm accounted for around 640,000 displacements in the country, in some cases affecting households already displaced by violence.  
© UNICEF/UN0801711/Zuniga

Increased data collection elsewhere in southern Africa helped to paint a clearer picture of disaster displacement in other countries. More than 79,000 movements were recorded in **Angola**, 36,000 of which were triggered by a storm in the coastal province of Cuanza-Sul in mid-December.<sup>63</sup> Heavy rains and flooding triggered another 6,800 in Malanje at the start of November.<sup>64</sup> Other smaller-scale disasters throughout the year triggered the remainder.

*Cyclone Freddy left around 26,000 people living in displacement at the end of the year, a highly conservative figure.*

In **South Africa**, floods in Cape Town triggered more than 9,100 displacements in September, almost half of the disaster displacement figure for the country.<sup>65</sup> KwaZulu Natal province, which had reported record flood displacements in April 2022, was affected again in December 2023, but the floods only triggered 4,700 movements, almost ten times fewer than the previous year.<sup>66</sup> The number of disaster displacements across the country as a whole also decreased compared with 2022, but the figure of 20,000 was still the second-highest in a decade.

## Spotlight – Sudan

### Conflict triggers more displacement than in previous 14 years combined

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted on 15 April 2023, engulfing Sudan in its largest internal displacement crisis since data became available for the country in 2009. The conflict triggered 6 million displacements during the year, more than the previous 14 years combined. It left 9.1 million people internally displaced as of the end of the year, making Sudan the country with the highest number of IDPs globally.

Despite the national scope of the conflict, nearly two-thirds of the internal displacements recorded in 2023 originated from Khartoum state. More than 39 per cent of the state's inhabitants were forced to flee, leaving entire neighbourhoods empty. Most IDPs sought safety with host families in other urban areas, while refugees, mostly from South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, had to relocate to already overcrowded camps.<sup>67</sup>

As the conflict expanded, many IDPs were forced to move again.<sup>68</sup> This was the case in the state of Al Jazira, where conflict ignited in December, triggering 327,000 displacements, many of which were secondary movements involving people who had already fled Khartoum.<sup>69</sup> Other IDPs moved to rural areas during the year, where they required humanitarian support to establish alternative livelihoods and access services.<sup>70</sup>

Most of the remaining displacements in 2023 were reported in Darfur, a region historically affected by conflict and displacement. Two decades ago, the RSF's predecessor, the Janjaweed, conducted large-scale attacks in the region targeting civilians along ethnic lines, leading to displacement.<sup>71</sup> Long-standing communal tensions reignited in the latest outbreak of violence, and

some camps hosting IDPs were targeted, triggering secondary displacements.<sup>72</sup> The escalating conflict also triggered more than 616,000 cross-border movements into neighbouring Chad.<sup>73</sup>

The destruction of critical infrastructure concentrated in urban centres had significant repercussions on IDPs' access to basic services and livelihood opportunities, with most left to support themselves. Between 70 and 80 per cent of hospitals in conflict-affected areas stopped working, leaving almost two-thirds of the population without health services and hindering the response to a cholera outbreak.<sup>74</sup> The rainy season between May and October added a further layer of complexity to the situation, as floods hit camps sheltering people who had already fled conflict, particularly in River Nile and South Darfur states.<sup>75</sup>

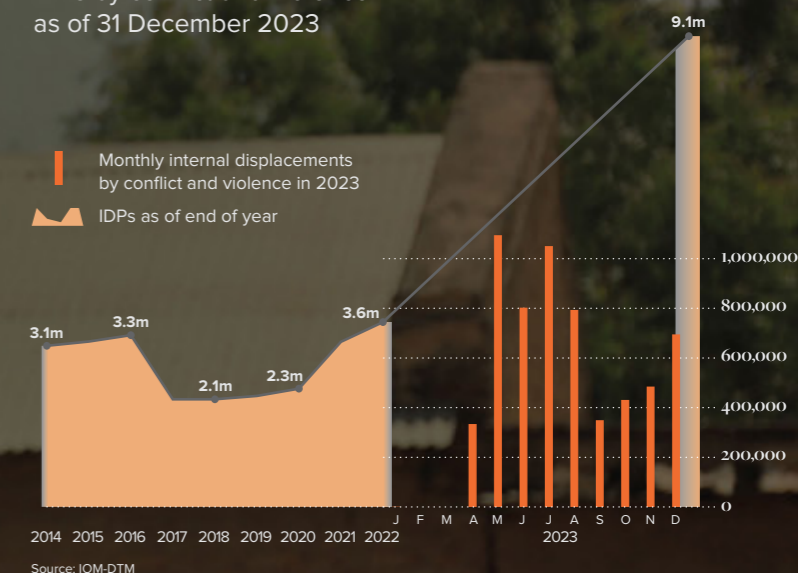
Food insecurity also became a major challenge as markets, food supply chains and agriculture were disrupted, leading to severe economic decline. As of the end of the year, 37 per cent of the population was acutely food insecure. West Darfur was the state with both the highest share of its population displaced and the highest rate of acutely food insecure people in the country.<sup>76</sup>

Conflict and food insecurity put a significant toll on internally displaced children. As of November, the malnutrition rate among children under five was the highest in the world, and Sudan was considered the largest child displacement situation globally, with an estimated 7,600 children forced to flee daily.<sup>77</sup> With many education facilities closed, 19 million children had lost access to education and were left vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, exploitation and gender-based violence.<sup>78</sup>

The country's deepening humanitarian and displacement crisis was one of the world's most neglected in 2023.<sup>79</sup> Access constraints persisted, hampering humanitarians to cover the increasing needs of IDPs.<sup>80</sup> As the year concluded, international mediation to bring hostilities to an end did not yield results and violence and displacement continued unabated, leaving nearly 20 per cent of Sudan's population internally displaced.<sup>81</sup>

## 9.1 million

IDPs by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2023



Students at a school for internally displaced children in South Kordofan, Sudan. Conflict left 9.1 million people internally displaced as of the end of the year, the highest number globally.

© Rawan Kara/NRC

# Spotlight – Malawi

## Cyclone Freddy puts disaster risk management to the test

Tropical Cyclone Freddy formed in the Indian Ocean on 5 February 2023 and sustained cyclonic conditions until it dissipated in Malawi on 14 March, making it one of the longest-lasting cyclones ever recorded worldwide.<sup>82</sup> It was also exceptional in terms of intensity, becoming the third deadliest storm on record in the southern hemisphere.<sup>83</sup> Freddy triggered 1.4 million internal displacements across six countries and territories in south-eastern Africa, twice as many as Cyclone Idai in 2019. More than 659,000 were recorded in landlocked Malawi, the highest figure since disaster displacement data became available for the country in 2009.

Malawi's Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services activated its early warning protocols a week before the storm's arrival, disseminating information to communities at risk and encouraging them to seek safety elsewhere, move to higher ground and avoid river basins. These measures enabled some communities to use displacement as a life-saving strategy, but the cyclone's impact exceeded the coping capacity of many who lost their homes and livelihoods.<sup>84</sup>

Displacements were reported in the Southern region, particularly in the districts of Nsanje, Mulanje, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Zomba and Blantyre. Most took place in the first two districts, which were still recovering from the impacts of Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombé in 2022.<sup>85</sup> Roads, bridges and power supplies in these predominantly rural areas were extensively damaged, hindering the delivery of food and other types of assistance to remote communities, some of which had to be accessed by helicopter.<sup>86</sup> Crop damages

and losses were lower than expected, but the cyclone contributed to worsening food insecurity.<sup>87</sup>

Fewer displacements were recorded in Blantyre, but mud and landslides caused a higher death toll. After weeks of heavy rain, Freddy triggered structural failures in the soil and the fragile buildings on the hillsides of the urban area of Blantyre city, causing significant housing destruction and impeding the return of those displaced. Deforestation and the construction of informal settlements on slopes heightened the risk of mud and landslides, something that was not contemplated in Malawi's previous disaster risk management strategy, which focused more on flood prevention and risk reduction.<sup>88</sup>

As hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, authorities established emergency camps. Most were decommissioned by mid-October, but an estimated 26,000 people were still displaced by the end of the year. The government, in collaboration with international organisations, supported IDPs' return or relocation by providing cash assistance and non-food items.<sup>89</sup>

Freddy's impacts were in many ways exceptional, but weather-related disasters have affected Malawi regularly in recent years. This has prompted the government to increase its efforts to build resilience and reduce disaster displacement risk. In terms of legal and policy frameworks, it passed the Disaster Risk Management Act a month after Freddy hit, placing greater emphasis on early warning, prevention and risk reduction, as well as response and recovery.<sup>90</sup>

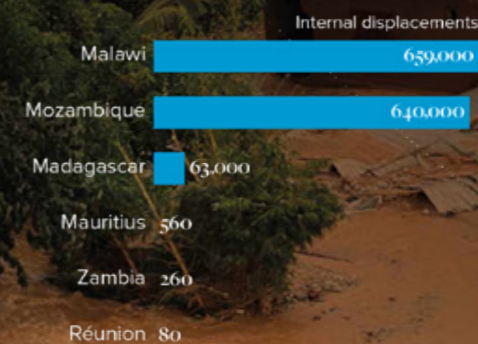
It also updated its disaster risk management system plans, assigning roles and responsibilities to conduct a multi-hazard risk assessment to prevent reconstruction in areas most frequently affected by disasters and, when necessary, relocate people to safer areas. The act also details the process of pre-emptive evacuations, including reference to a maximum duration for emergency shelters. This should allow for better monitoring of the length of displacement.<sup>91</sup>

These initiatives are timely given that the frequency and intensity of cyclones are projected to increase in the region.<sup>92</sup> Regional collaboration through data sharing and technical support could also further improve disaster risk management and responses to displacement.



# 659,000

internal displacements triggered by tropical cyclone Freddy



Sources: ENGRC Madagascar, DoDMA-Malawi, OCHA, IOM DTM, DMMU Zambia, Minister of Social Integration Mauritius, St-Joseph Commune La Réunion, UN Geospatial



People cross a flooded area in Muloza, Malawi in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Freddy. The storm's exceptional impacts show the importance of the government continuing its efforts to build resilience and reduce disaster displacement risk.

© Reuters/Esra Alexander



# Middle East & North Africa

A mother and her children at Al Sha'ab Camp in Aden, Yemen. The number of conflict displacements in Yemen was its lowest in a decade, yet IDPs continued to face shortages of food and shelter. © UNICEF/UN0793388/Bin Hayan - YPN

## Internally displaced people (IDPs)

**15.3m**  
at the end of 2023

**20%**  
Share of the  
global total

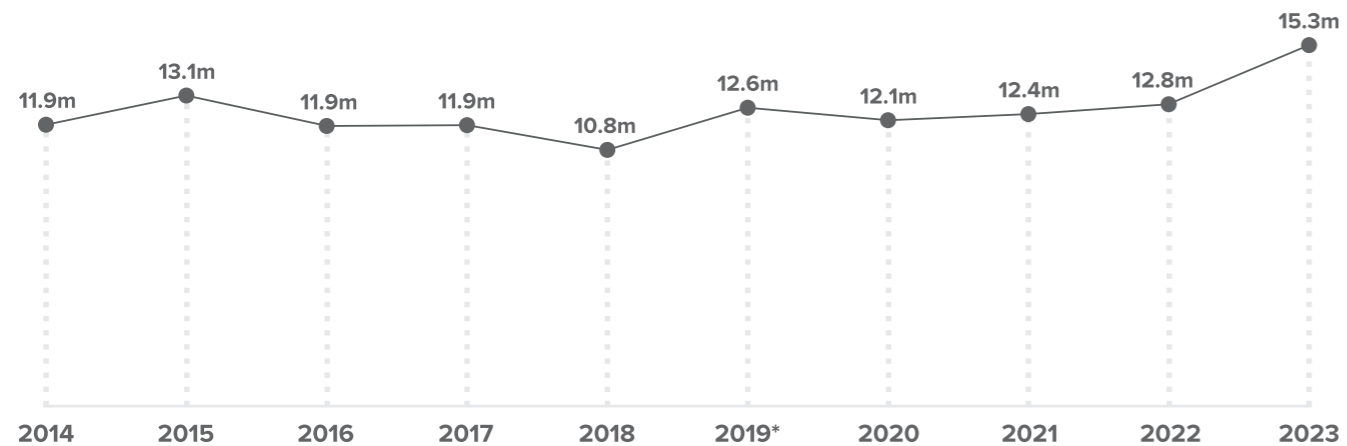
**15m**  
IDPs by conflict  
and violence

**285,000**  
IDPs by  
disasters

### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

## Internal displacements (movements)

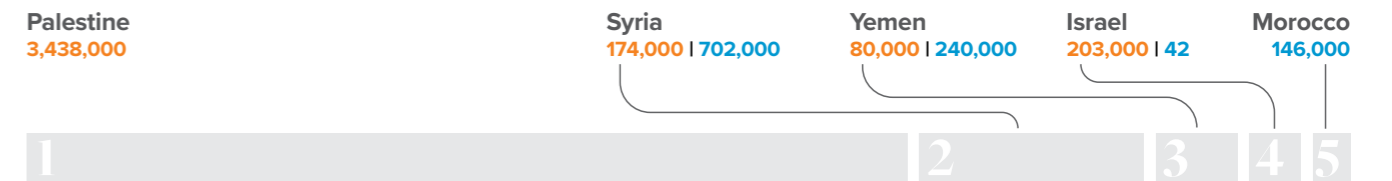
**5.4m**  
during 2023

**11%**  
Share of the  
global total

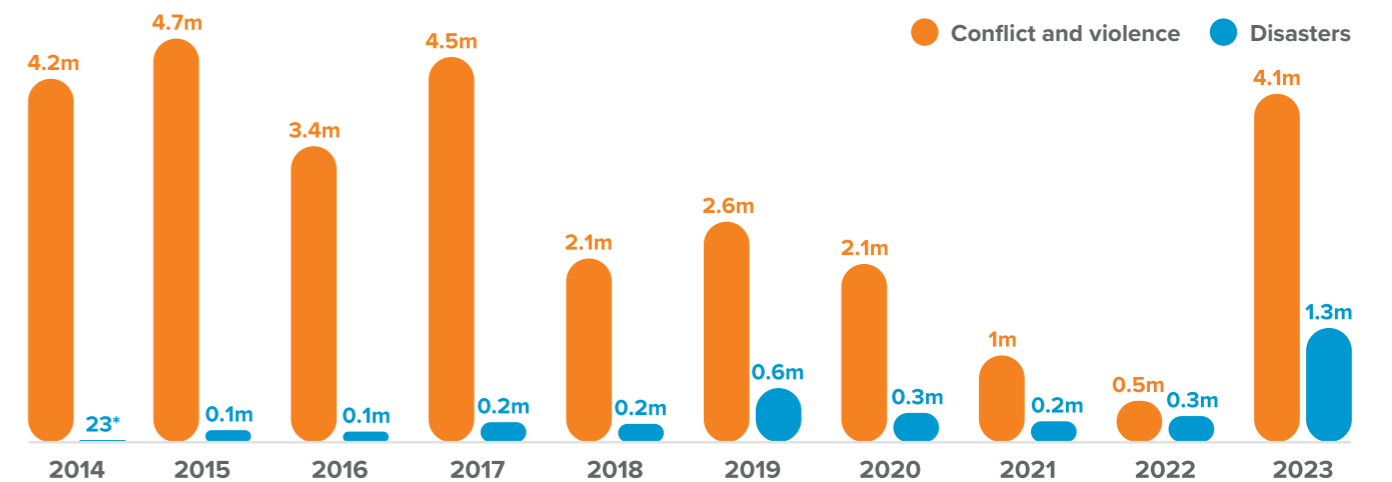
**4.1m**  
Internal displacements  
by conflict and violence

**1.3m**  
Internal displacements  
by disasters

### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in millions  
\*in thousands

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for Middle East and North Africa.



## Middle East & North Africa

Around 5.4 million internal displacements were recorded across the Middle East and North Africa in 2023. After three years in which the number of conflict displacements decreased, a more than eight-fold increase was observed from 2022 to 2023. An estimated 4.1 million movements were reported, of which 203,000 took place in Israel and 3.4 million in Palestine, the vast majority in the Gaza Strip (see spotlight, p. 49). Conflict displacements were also recorded in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Libya.

Disaster displacements reached their highest level since data became available in 2008 at 1.3 million, almost as many as the previous four years combined. The February earthquakes in Türkiye triggered 678,000 displacements in Syria's north-western governorates, home to the largest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) from the country's long-running conflict (see spotlight, p. 51).

Floods triggered 239,000 displacements across the region, a 14 per cent increase on the figure for 2022. Most were reported in Yemen, and many in governorates already affected by conflict and violence. The combined impacts of conflict and disaster displacement were also visible in Libya, where storm Daniel triggered 52,000 displacements across several districts, mostly in Derna city which was affected by conflict and violence in previous years (see spotlight, p. 53).

The number of people living in internal displacement across the region reached 15.3 million as of the end of the year, an all-time high since records began in 2009. Syria and Yemen recorded the highest figures, putting them among the six countries with the largest number of IDPs globally.



*Displaced Palestinians flee along the destroyed coastal highway to a the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip. Conflict in Gaza triggered a record 3.4 million displacements in the territory in 2023. © Majdi Fathi/NurPhoto/Getty Images*

## Record conflict displacement in Palestine, Israel and Lebanon

Even before a new wave of conflict erupted in Israel and Palestine on 7 October, both countries had experienced an increase in displacement associated with conflict and violence. Around 6,200 movements were recorded in **Palestine** between 1 January and 6 October, a more than three-fold increase on the total for 2022. Figures for **Israel** during this same period also doubled compared with the previous year to reach 2,700.

*The number of IDPs across the region reached 15.3 million, an all-time high.*

Violence between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinian non-state armed groups (NSAGs) escalated in the Gaza Strip between 9 and 13 May, resulting in more than 1,200 displacements and the destruction of 122 homes.<sup>93</sup> Around 2,000 emergency evacuations were then reported in the Southern District of Israel.<sup>94</sup>

Two months later, the IDF launched a large-scale air and ground operation on the densely populated Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank, triggering 3,500 displacements. The operation constituted a notable escalation in violence, given that airstrikes had not taken place in the territory since 2006.<sup>95</sup> The number of displacements as a result of this operation was almost double the 2022 figure for the whole of Palestine.

The demolition of Palestinian homes and Israeli settler violence increased across the West Bank in the first nine months of 2023, triggering nearly 1,500 internal displacements, 30 per cent more than in 2022.

The situation rapidly escalated following 7 October when Hamas and other Palestinian NSAGs launched an attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip, prompting the Israeli government to declare a state of war and launch a military operation by air, land and sea in Gaza.<sup>96</sup> The ensuing conflict trig-

gered a record 3.4 million displacements in the territory, almost 17 per cent of the global total for conflict in 2023 (see spotlight, p. 49). The conflict also spread into Lebanon, where a record 78,000 displacements were reported.

Settler violence and demolitions increased in the West Bank after 7 October, triggering nearly 8,100 displacements by the end of the year. Of these, 5,900 involved movements of people who originally lived in Gaza and worked in Israel but whose permits were revoked on 10 October, forcing them to flee to the West Bank.<sup>97</sup> Others, including people from Bedouin communities, were forced to flee the rise in settler violence.<sup>98</sup>

The displacement figures for **Israel** in 2023 were the highest ever recorded, at 203,000. Around 120,000 took place in southern areas bordering Gaza as violence escalated and rockets were fired from the strip during the second week of October, prompting whole communities to evacuate.<sup>99</sup> As tensions mounted between the IDF and NSAGs based in Lebanon, Israel's National Emergency Management Authority announced a plan to evacuate residents from the northern areas of the country up to two kilometres from the Blue Line that separates Israel and Lebanon, affecting around 80,000 people.<sup>100</sup>

Around 200,000 people were still living in internal displacement in Israel as of the end of the year, with the government assessing measures to support them. These included grants and resettlement to safer areas, given the impossibility of some communities of returning to their homes in areas bordering the Gaza Strip.<sup>101</sup>

As in Palestine and Israel, displacement associated with conflict and violence was also on the rise in **Lebanon**, reaching 62,000 movements from 1 January to 7 October, by far the highest figure since data became available for the country in 2015. About 49,000 were triggered when clashes between opposing Palestinian NSAGs erupted in El Hilweh, the country's largest Palestinian refugee camp, in late July.<sup>102</sup> Educational facilities run by the

UN were affected, disrupting children's education.<sup>103</sup> After a brief lull, violence broke out again for a week in September, triggering 13,000 movements.<sup>104</sup>

*Beyond triggering repeated movements, persistent violence has prolonged the displacement of millions of Syrians.*

From 8 October, localised clashes between the IDF and NSAGs based in Lebanon escalated and forced people from their homes, particularly in areas around the Blue Line.<sup>105</sup> Much like in northern Israel, frequent hostilities caused casualties and damage in southern Lebanon and triggered 78,000 displacements.<sup>106</sup> More than three-quarters were from the Bint Jbeil and Marjaayoun districts in the governorate of El Nabatieh. Most households fled by their own means and took refuge with host families, the majority in the neighbouring Sour district.<sup>107</sup> More than 74,000 people were still living in displacement at the end of the year, which is the highest figure reported in Lebanon in more than a decade.

### Displacement persisted in other countries affected by protracted conflict

Elsewhere in the region, displacement continued in countries grappling with protracted conflicts. **Syria** recorded 174,000 movements, a slight increase on the previous year after a declining trend since 2020. A rise in violence in the north-west of the country at the end of August triggered around 8,100 displacements.<sup>108</sup> Then, in early October, an unclaimed attack on a military event in Homs prompted the government to launch retaliatory operations in more than 1,100 locations, triggering a further 79,000 movements. Some camps hosting IDPs were hit, forcing many to flee again.<sup>109</sup>

Beyond triggering repeated movements, the persistent violence has prolonged the displacement of millions of Syrians. The number of people living in displacement as a result of conflict and disasters rose



*Children at the Kabarto Camp for internally displaced people, Dohuk Governorate, Iraq. The government launched a national plan to resolve protracted displacement, but many IDPs still lack basic services and livelihood opportunities. © IOM/Sarah Gold*

for a fifth consecutive year, reaching a record 7.2 million at the end of 2023 – the second-highest figure globally after Sudan.

In **Yemen**, although the truce between the Saudi-led coalition and Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement, expired in October 2022, elements of it were generally observed in 2023, with no major escalations reported. The number of internal displacements by conflict and violence was its lowest in a decade as a result, at 80,000. Sixty per cent of them were reported in the frontline governorates of Hodeidah and Taiz.<sup>110</sup>

IDPs in Yemen continued to face significant humanitarian needs, however, including for adequate shelter and food. Economic challenges undermined their capacity to overcome the vulnerabilities associated with their displacement, which explains why the number of people living in displacement as of the end of the year remained at 4.5 million.<sup>111</sup>

*The number of internal displacements by conflict and violence in Yemen was its lowest in a decade.*

**Iraq** recorded 21,000 movements associated with conflict and violence in 2023, the lowest figure in a decade. That said, around 1.1 million people were still living in displacement by conflict, many of whom had been doing so for protracted periods. This figure has barely changed for the last three years, and there are indications that some secondary displacement has taken place.<sup>112</sup>

Most of Iraq's IDPs face complex and multi-layered challenges that hamper their pursuit of durable solutions. Research by IDMC reveals a substantial disparity between displaced and non-displaced people in terms of access to adequate housing and income-generating activities. In Dohuk governorate, for example, IDPs cited a lack of housing as one of their most significant barriers to return. They also

mentioned a lack of job opportunities as an obstacle to their local integration. Findings from another study show that about half of IDPs said they had difficulty sustaining a stable income, compared with fewer than a third of non-displaced people.<sup>113</sup>

The government launched a national plan in 2020 to return IDPs to areas liberated from the Islamic State group, designed to resolve protracted displacement and move from crisis response to longer-term recovery and solutions.<sup>114</sup> As part of the plan, it set a target of closing all camps by mid-2024.<sup>115</sup> Many people have returned to their areas of origin as a result, but a lack of basic services and livelihood opportunities continued to be quoted as some of the main challenges. Social cohesion issues have also been reported on the basis of returnees being perceived as affiliates of NSAGs.<sup>116</sup> This has forced some to move again to areas where protection concerns, including gender-based violence, have been reported.<sup>117</sup>

Conflict displacement increased slightly in **Libya** in 2023 compared with the previous year to 1,700 movements, but remained significantly lower than the annual average of 95,000 over the past decade. Clashes between NSAGs in Tripoli in mid-August triggered 1,300 displacements, but the situation calmed within a day, allowing people to return.<sup>118</sup>

More favourable conditions since the establishment of a government of national unity in March 2021 have allowed many IDPs to return, bringing their number down to 119,000 as of the end of 2023, the lowest figure since 2013 and a significant decrease from the peak of 500,000 in 2015. Not all returns constitute a durable solution, however, given a lack of assistance and services in many areas.<sup>119</sup>

Around 15 million people across the region were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of 2023. This is an 18 per cent increase on the figure for 2022 and the highest since 2009 when data first became available.

## Record disaster displacement

The increase in disaster displacement in the Middle East and North Africa in 2023 was mostly attributed to a series of high-magnitude earthquakes that struck Syria, Morocco and Iran, which together triggered more than 929,000 movements. Most were reported in north-western Syria (see spotlight, p. 51).

A 6.8 magnitude earthquake in **Morocco** on 8 September triggered 146,000 displacements. This number constitutes by far the largest disaster displacement event since data became available for the country in 2008, but is still a significant underestimate based on the fact that more than 19,000 homes were destroyed. The quake struck mainly the region of Marrakesh-Safi and mostly affected remote villages in the High Atlas mountains, many of which had mud houses that were unable to withstand such an event.<sup>120</sup>

Roads were also damaged, making some villages even more difficult to access and complicating the delivery of aid to those displaced. The government set up tents and took measures to address water, sanitation and health issues, which were reported as some of the IDPs' most pressing needs.<sup>121</sup>

*Not all returns constitute a durable solution, however, given a lack of assistance and services in many areas.*

A series of earthquakes hit the province of West Azerbaijan in **Iran** in January and triggered around 104,000 displacements. The area had already been affected by a 5.4 magnitude earthquake three months earlier.<sup>122</sup> The government and humanitarian organisations provided IDPs with shelter, food and heating as the disaster struck in the middle of winter.<sup>123</sup>



*A woman poses near piles of rubble in Imzalin, Morocco. A 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck in September, triggering 146,000 displacements, by far the largest disaster displacement event since data became available for the country.*  
© Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images



Internally displaced children stand near a tree in the Al Rebat camp for IDPs in Lahj, Yemen. Despite a reduction in new displacements, there were still 4.5 million people living in internal displacement in the country at the end of 2023. © UNOCHA/YPN-Alaa Noman

Across the region, even with geophysical events excluded, disaster displacement figures still increased by more than a third compared with 2022, in large part because of weather-related hazards. **Yemen** was among the countries that reported the highest figures, with 174,000 movements. It also accounted for almost three-quarters of the region's flood displacements, which were mainly concentrated in the coastal governorates of Hajjah, Taiz and Hodeidah.<sup>124</sup> The same governorates have reported significant levels of conflict and disaster displacement in recent years.

*About 285,000 people were living in internal displacement across the region as a result of disasters at the end of 2023.*

Tropical cyclone Tej struck Yemen on 23 October. The storm hit the eastern governorates of Al Maharah and Hadramawt, triggering 65,000 movements and making it the largest storm displacement event in Yemen since records began in 2008. Tej caused floods that destroyed homes and infrastructure, hampering many people's return.<sup>125</sup> It triggered 4,500 evacuations in the Dhofar governorate in neighbouring **Oman**, but shelters there had closed by the end of the month.<sup>126</sup>

*Across the region, even with geophysical events excluded, disaster displacement figures still increased by more than a third compared with 2022.*

**Libya** reported its highest disaster displacement figure since records began in 2013 at 53,000, almost all of which were triggered by storm Daniel, a rare Mediterranean storm that made landfall in the country on 10 September. More than 23,000 movements were reported in the

coastal city of Derna, which had already been affected by years of conflict and instability (see spotlight, p. 53). The remaining displacements linked to the storm were from other locations across the north-east of the country. Around 45,000 people were still living in displacement as a result of Daniel at the end of the year.<sup>127</sup>

About 285,000 people were living in internal displacement across the region as a result of disasters at the end of 2023. This should be considered a highly conservative figure given that comprehensive data on the number of people displaced in countries such as Syria and Yemen, where significant disaster displacement takes place every year, could not be obtained. This is in part the result of the ongoing conflict and violence, which has hindered the collection of disaggregated data by trigger. The lack of a solid baseline on the scale and duration of disaster displacement will continue to hamper the development of policies and programmes that fully consider the overlapping impacts of conflict and disasters in the region.

## Spotlight – Palestine

### Conflict in Gaza leaves 83 per cent of the population internally displaced in less than three months

Hamas and other Palestinian non-state armed groups launched an attack on southern Israeli communities on 7 October 2023, prompting Israel's security cabinet to declare a war situation the next day.<sup>128</sup> The ensuing conflict has triggered the highest number of internal displacements since data became available for both Palestine and Israel in 2008 and has had wider regional implications (see MENA regional overview, p. 39).

Most movements took place in the Gaza Strip as a result of a military campaign launched by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from the air, land and sea.<sup>129</sup> Evacuation calls, airstrikes and shelling triggered 3.4 million internal displacements in the last quarter of the year as people fled in search of safety and humanitarian assistance. This figure should be considered conservative, because many people were displaced within governorates before moving across them, but such movements were unaccounted for.<sup>130</sup> Repeated displacement heightened IDPs' vulnerabilities, including increased protection risks, food insecurity, and reduced access to water and sanitation. Around 1.7 million people were living in internal displacement in the Gaza Strip as of the end of the year, all of them facing acute humanitarian needs.

Displacement trends changed significantly as early as 13 October, when the IDF ordered more than a million civilians to evacuate from the northern part of the strip, which was home to around half of Gaza's population.<sup>131</sup> In the days that followed, people sought shelter in makeshift settlements, hospitals, schools and other public buildings in the southern governorates of Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah, where they faced increased food insecurity and respiratory

and waterborne diseases.<sup>132</sup> The situation was further aggravated as Israel's offensive moved south. Some areas that IDPs were told to evacuate to were bombed, which led to an increase in civilian deaths and people's onward displacement.<sup>133</sup>

For two weeks after the start of Israel's military campaign, the people of Gaza endured a complete siege. No food, fuel or water was allowed to enter, impeding humanitarian organisations' efforts to deliver much needed aid.<sup>134</sup> Persistent bombardments caused substantial damage to homes and infrastructure, and schools managed by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were used as shelters. Many, however, were also damaged in the conflict.<sup>135</sup>

Following a series of negotiations, the Rafah border crossing with Egypt was opened on 21 October, allowing aid to enter Gaza.<sup>136</sup> The limited amount let in, however, was far from enough to meet IDPs' growing needs. Access constraints were significant in many areas, particularly in the north of the strip.<sup>137</sup> Damage to water and sanitation infrastructure and the scarcity of fuel added to the challenge of delivering lifesaving assistance and significantly affected the operation of hospitals, which were already struggling to manage the influx of people seeking safety and care.<sup>138</sup>

As days went by, overcrowding in shelters emerged as a pressing issue, with some facilities exceeding their intended capacity more than fourfold.<sup>139</sup> Internally displaced children, elderly people and pregnant and lactating women faced significant mental and physical health impacts as a result of their displace-

ment and the harsh living conditions in shelters.<sup>140</sup> Many people were residing outside the shelters, where they faced additional hardships from seasonal rains, flooding and the onset of winter.<sup>141</sup>

On 24 November, a week-long humanitarian pause agreed by the parties to the conflict came into effect, providing a window for increased humanitarian aid to enter Gaza and slowing the pace of displacement.<sup>142</sup> The IDF, however, restricted movement to and within the north of the strip.<sup>143</sup>

On the same day that the humanitarian pause ended, the IDF instructed residents around the city of Khan Younis to leave as its troops advanced into southern Gaza.<sup>144</sup> With hostilities intensifying in the Khan Younis governorate, aid delivery faced obstructions again, exacerbating the needs of civilians and forcing many to flee for the second or third time.<sup>145</sup>

By 7 December, 93 per cent of the population of Gaza were facing acute levels of food insecurity as per the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Of them, 42 per cent were estimated to face emergency levels, and 17 per cent faced catastrophic levels. To put the situation in perspective, conflict and displacement in Gaza left the largest proportion of a population facing acute food insecurity globally since IPC measurements started in 2004.<sup>146</sup>

The situation among children, who make up nearly half of Gaza's population, was particularly dire.<sup>147</sup> By the end of December, all children under five were at high risk of severe malnutrition and increased risk of famine.<sup>148</sup> Only 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals were still partially functional

as of 27 December, and the lack of food and other basic survival items and poor hygiene conditions further increased the risk of physical and mental health issues for IDPs.<sup>149</sup>

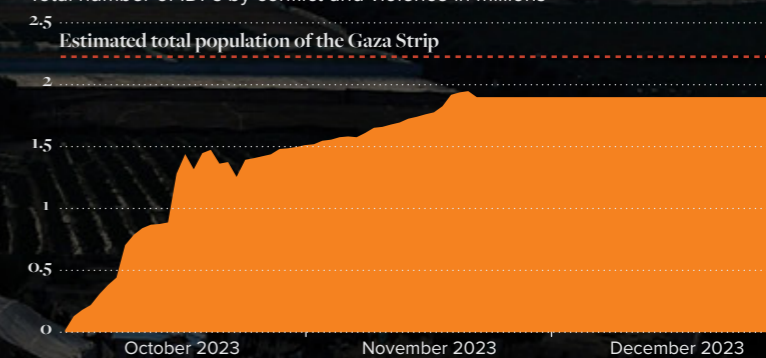
About 83 per cent of people in the Gaza Strip were living in internal displacement as of 31 December. Around half of the population was sheltering in the southernmost governorate of Rafah, where they faced acute humanitarian needs as the conflict continued into the new year.<sup>150</sup> More than 60 per cent of the strip's housing stock was damaged or destroyed, so even once the conflict recedes, durable solutions are likely to remain a distant prospect for many IDPs.<sup>151</sup>



# 1.7m

IDPs by conflict and violence in the Gaza Strip as of 31 December 2023

Total number of IDPs by conflict and violence in millions



Sources: UNRWA, OCHA, UNFPA, UN Geospatial

*A camp housing displaced Palestinians in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip. The conflict left 83 per cent of Gaza's population displaced at the end of the year, with 40 per cent in the governorate of Rafah and many enduring acute humanitarian needs. © Reuters/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa*

# Spotlight – Syria

## Disasters bring challenges for IDPs and drive first increase in displacements in four years

Syria continues to grapple with one of the world’s largest and most protracted internal displacement situations, with 7.2 million IDPs as of the end of 2023, a 6 per cent increase from 2022. The number of displacements recorded during the year rose for the first time since 2019, especially in the north-western governorates of Aleppo and Idlib, which already hosted 52 per cent of the country’s IDPs.

Both governorates were the scene of conflict and disasters in 2023, which triggered new and repeated movements, prolonging IDPs’ needs. A series of high-magnitude earthquakes, with epicentres in neighbouring Türkiye, struck in February, illustrating how conflict and disasters combine to amplify displacement risk. These events left millions of Syrians living in heightened vulnerability.

The humanitarian situation in the north-west was dire even before the earthquakes. Mirroring trends in previous years, floods and winter storms destroyed tents in displacement sites in early February, triggering 9,300 onward displacements.<sup>152</sup> The structure of many buildings, including health and education facilities, was already weakened after 12 years of conflict. They were severely damaged or destroyed when the earthquakes hit, further hindering basic service provision to those affected.<sup>153</sup>

The earthquakes triggered about 678,000 internal displacements, making them Syria’s largest disaster displacement event since data on disaster displacement became available for the country in 2014. The vast majority of those displaced had already fled conflict in Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia governorates and were living in highly vulnerable conditions in makeshift settlements.<sup>154</sup> The earthquakes also contributed to a dam burst in Idlib’s Harim district, forcing around 9,500 people to evacuate.<sup>155</sup>

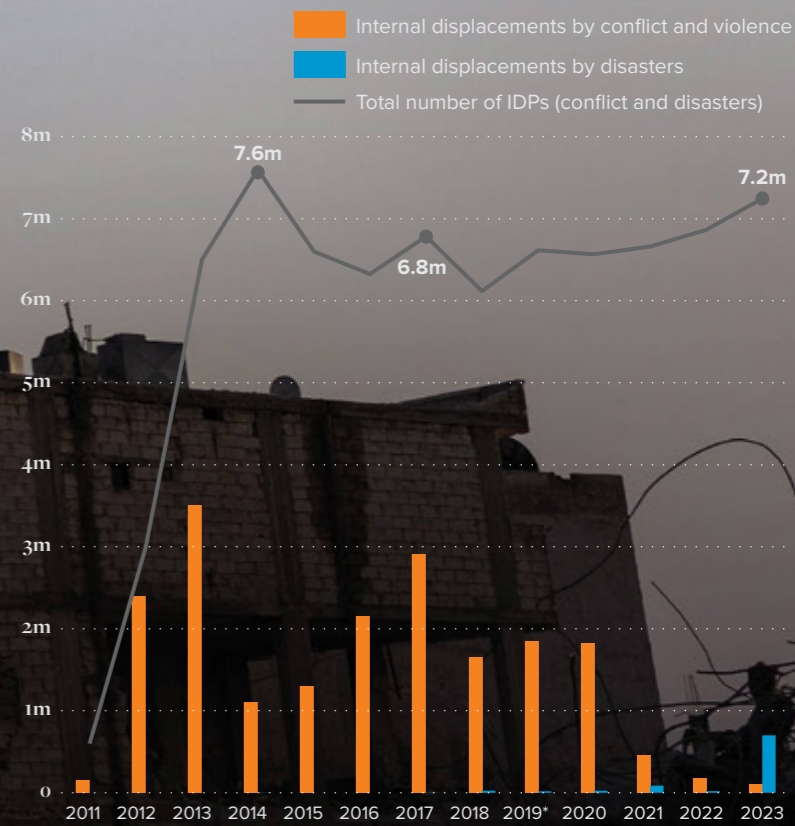
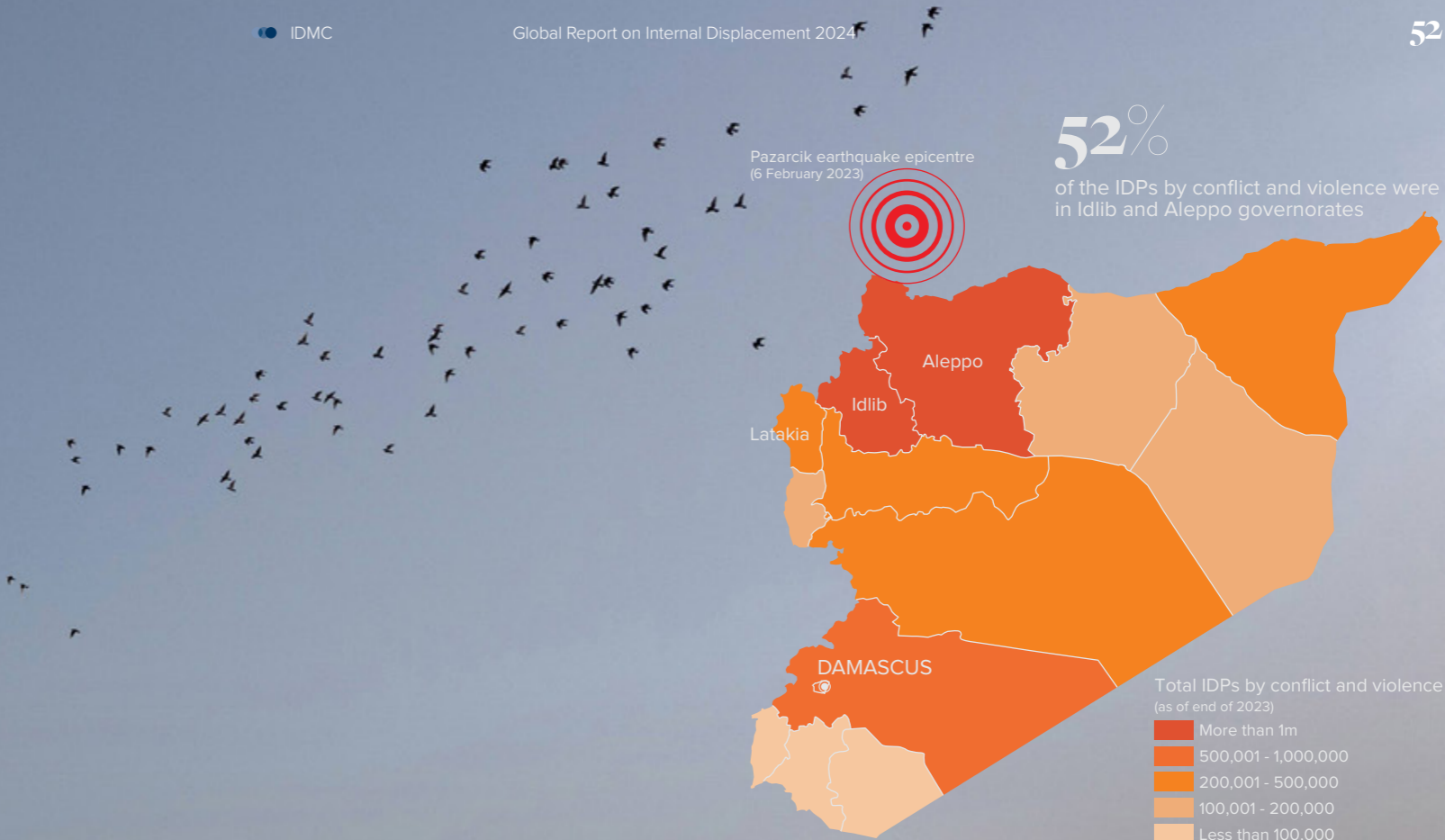
Family separation during displacement and the loss of relatives has left some children as heads of their household, increasing their risk of child labour and early marriage.<sup>156</sup> Winter conditions, including snowstorms and floods, persisted in the aftermath of the disaster, triggering almost 6,300 further onward displacements from overcrowded camps in March.<sup>157</sup>

Humanitarian access constraints obstructed the delivery of aid, adding a layer of complexity to the situation.<sup>158</sup> Only one border crossing from Türkiye was open in the first week of the response, until negotiations secured two more crossings on 13 February, allowing aid organisations to reach more people in need.<sup>159</sup> Aleppo International Airport was, however, closed on 7 March as a result of airstrikes, forcing aid organisations to suspend their flights and bring in aid via Damascus or Latakia.<sup>160</sup>

Fighting between government forces and non-state armed groups escalated in early October, with displacement camps sometimes being targeted. The violence triggered more than 79,000 movements in a matter of weeks, particularly in north-eastern Aleppo and southern Idlib governorates.<sup>161</sup> Many people were able to return by early December, but insecurity persisted, and hampered some to return.

The combined impacts of disasters and conflict increased in 2023. The lack of development assistance has limited reconstruction and disaster risk reduction efforts, leaving the population exposed to future disasters.<sup>162</sup> Beyond restricting IDPs’ capacity to cope with the recurring shocks they face, funding shortfalls also limit comprehensive data collection, making displacement figures conservative and impeding our understanding of the true scope and scale of the situation.<sup>163</sup>

Conflict resolution and disaster risk reduction remain distant prospects for Syria, but improved data collection will be needed to inform more effective responses to crises and help ensure that assistance and support is targeted towards those who need it most. Increasing humanitarian access and, with it, the gathering of more harmonised, timely and disaggregated data is also essential to paint a fuller picture of internal displacement in Syria.



Destroyed buildings near Aleppo, Syria, where earthquakes hit communities already displaced by conflict and violence. © Abdulmonam Eassa via Getty Images

## Spotlight – Libya

### Years of conflict and weakened infrastructure compound Derna flood impact

Storm Daniel, an unusually powerful Mediterranean storm, hit the coast of Libya on 10 September 2023.<sup>164</sup> It triggered 52,000 internal displacements, 45 per cent of which were reported in the port city of Derna, home to 100,000 people, which experienced precipitation levels 100 times the monthly average.<sup>165</sup> Lack of investment in infrastructure also contributed to increasing disaster displacement risk. Two ageing dams near the city breached, causing extensive flooding, severely damaging infrastructure and killing thousands.<sup>166</sup> Derna's inhabitants were already in a vulnerable situation as a result of recurring conflict and violence, illustrating how the impacts of disasters and conflict can combine and lead to catastrophic outcomes.<sup>167</sup>

Derna's infrastructure was underfunded for decades, a situation that worsened after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.<sup>168</sup> The Islamic State group captured the city in 2014, just as a nationwide conflict erupted between two opposing governments. The Libyan National Army, based in the east of the country, took Derna back in early 2019 after a prolonged siege that led to at least 24,000 displacements and further damaged the city's infrastructure and basic services.<sup>169</sup> Despite a ceasefire established in 2020 between the two governments, insecurity and political instability have persisted, further weakening disaster risk reduction efforts, including the renovation and maintenance of dams.

Before Daniel hit, the city was home to around 8,700 migrants, many of whom lived in precarious conditions in low-lying neighbourhoods along the valley below the dams. These areas were

among those that bore the brunt of the flooding.<sup>170</sup> More than 90 per cent of the migrants displaced by Daniel were reported in Derna.<sup>171</sup>

Despite their varied backgrounds, IDPs, returnees and migrants faced similar needs, especially in accessing accommodation, food and healthcare.<sup>172</sup> All of these needs were even more difficult to meet because the floods damaged more than three-quarters of the city's markets and hospitals and a third of its housing stock.<sup>173</sup> The greatest challenge, however, was affordability, pointing to financial needs and struggles to rebuild livelihoods.<sup>174</sup>

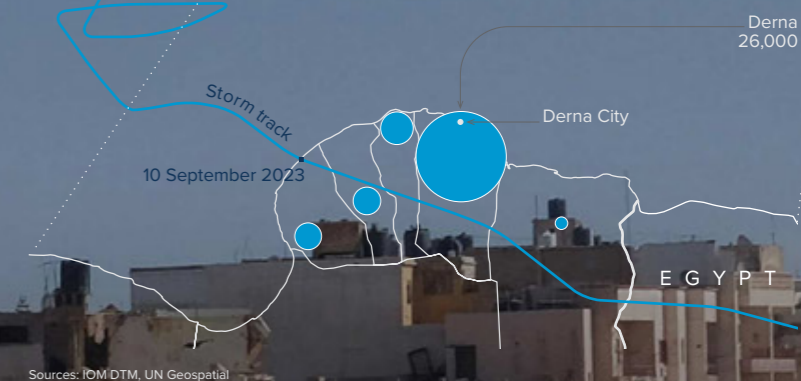
Disagreements between the two governments hindered response efforts in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.<sup>175</sup> The absence of a centralised system for shelter management and registration was a challenge for survivors whose homes were destroyed.<sup>176</sup> Data collection to determine the exact number of people killed, missing and displaced also faced access constraints.<sup>177</sup> Improved cooperation between the two governments over time and the involvement of international partners helped to step up the response and early recovery.<sup>178</sup> However, based on the last assessment in November 2023, 52 per cent of those displaced by the floods were still living in displacement across the country, 24,000 of them in Derna.<sup>179</sup>

Peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction initiatives will need to be mainstreamed and strengthened as part of Derna's recovery. Reconstruction will need to include building resilience to future shocks and supporting both newly displaced people and those living in longer-term displacement in overcoming their vulnerabilities.

# 52,000

internal displacements  
by storm Daniel in Libya

Internal displacements



Sources: IOM DTM, UN Geospatial

*Flood damage in Derna after Storm Daniel caused two aging dams to breach above the city. After years of conflict and political instability delayed investment in the dams, the destruction in Derna shows the catastrophic outcomes that can occur when conflict and disasters combine. © Reuters/Esam Omran Al-fetori*



# East Asia & Pacific

A flooded road and submerged houses in Johor state, Malaysia, after 630 mm of rain fell in 48 hours in early March, triggering around 87,000 displacements. © Mohd Rasfan/AFP/Getty Images

## Internally displaced people (IDPs)

**4.2m**  
at the end of 2023

**5%**  
Share of the  
global total

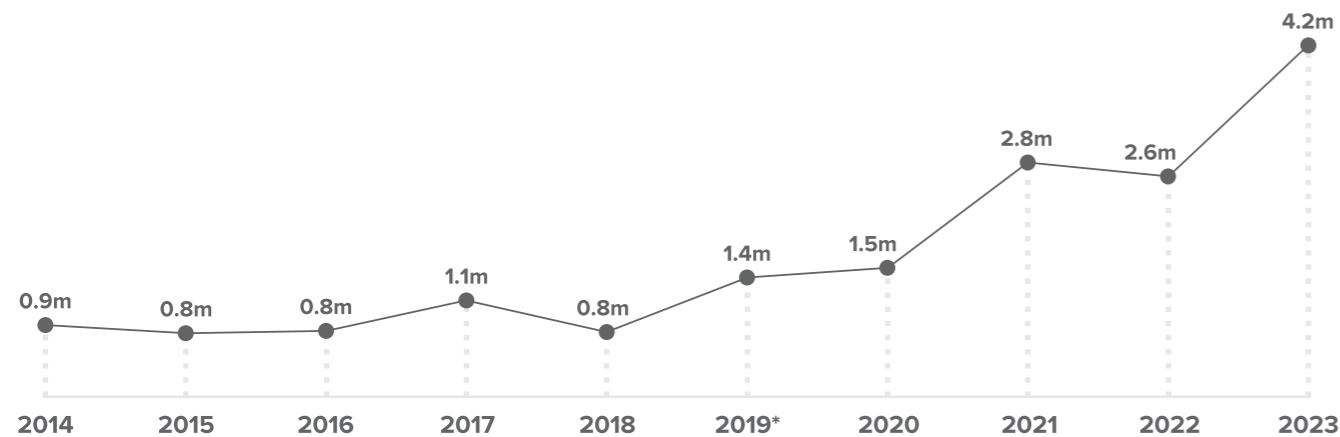
**2.9m**  
IDPs by conflict  
and violence

**1.2m**  
IDPs by  
disasters

### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

## Internal displacements (movements)

**10.5m**  
during 2023

**22%**  
Share of the  
global total

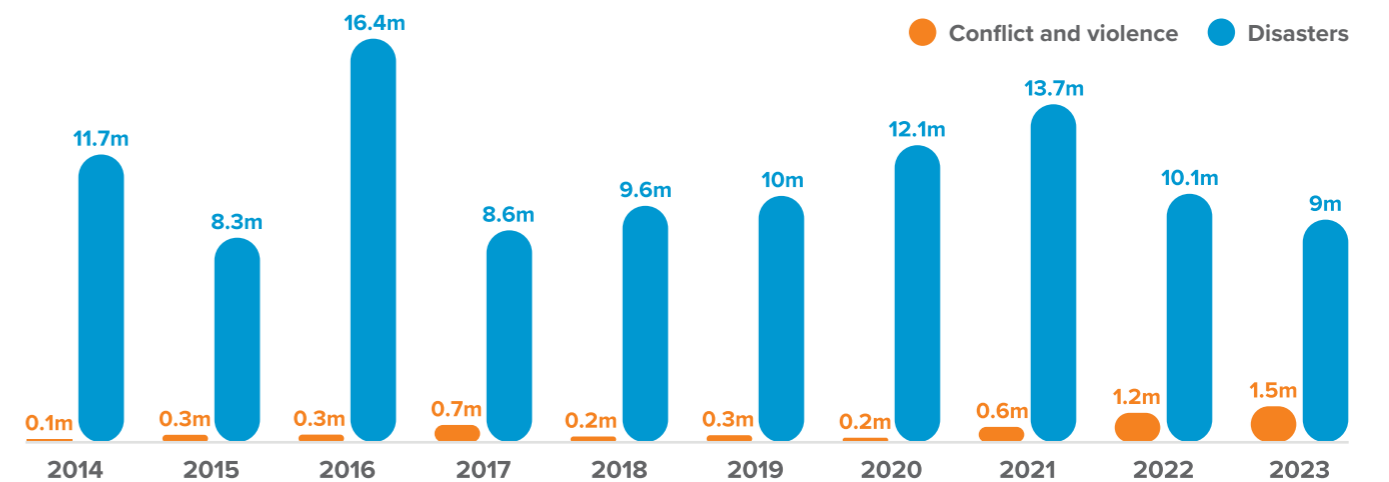
**1.5m**  
Internal displacements  
by conflict and violence

**9m**  
Internal displacements  
by disasters

### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in millions

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for East Asia and Pacific.



## East Asia & Pacific

East Asia and Pacific reported the second-highest number of internal displacements globally in 2023 after sub-Saharan Africa with 10.5 million, of which nine million were triggered by disasters and 1.5 million by conflict and violence.

It recorded the highest number of disaster displacements globally, although the figure was the lowest since 2017. As in previous years, China, the Philippines and Myanmar reported most movements, mainly the result of cyclones and floods. Pacific countries, including Vanuatu and New Zealand, also reported significant displacement as a result of major storms. New Zealand's figure of 14,000 was the highest since data for the country became available in 2010 (see spotlight, p. 65).

*East Asia and Pacific recorded the highest number of disaster displacements globally, although the figure was the lowest since 2017.*

Conflict displacement increased for the third year running, primarily the result of the situation in Myanmar, which accounted for nearly 90 per cent of the regional total, and where displacement figures have risen almost three-fold since the February 2021 military takeover. The Philippines also recorded an increase, mostly the result of localised violence in Mindanao. The island is home to the largest number of people living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in the country. Most were living in a situation of protracted displacement following the conflict in Marawi city in 2017 (see spotlight, p. 67).

Taken together, conflict and disasters left 4.2 million people living in internal displacement as of the end of 2023, a 59 per cent increase on the previous

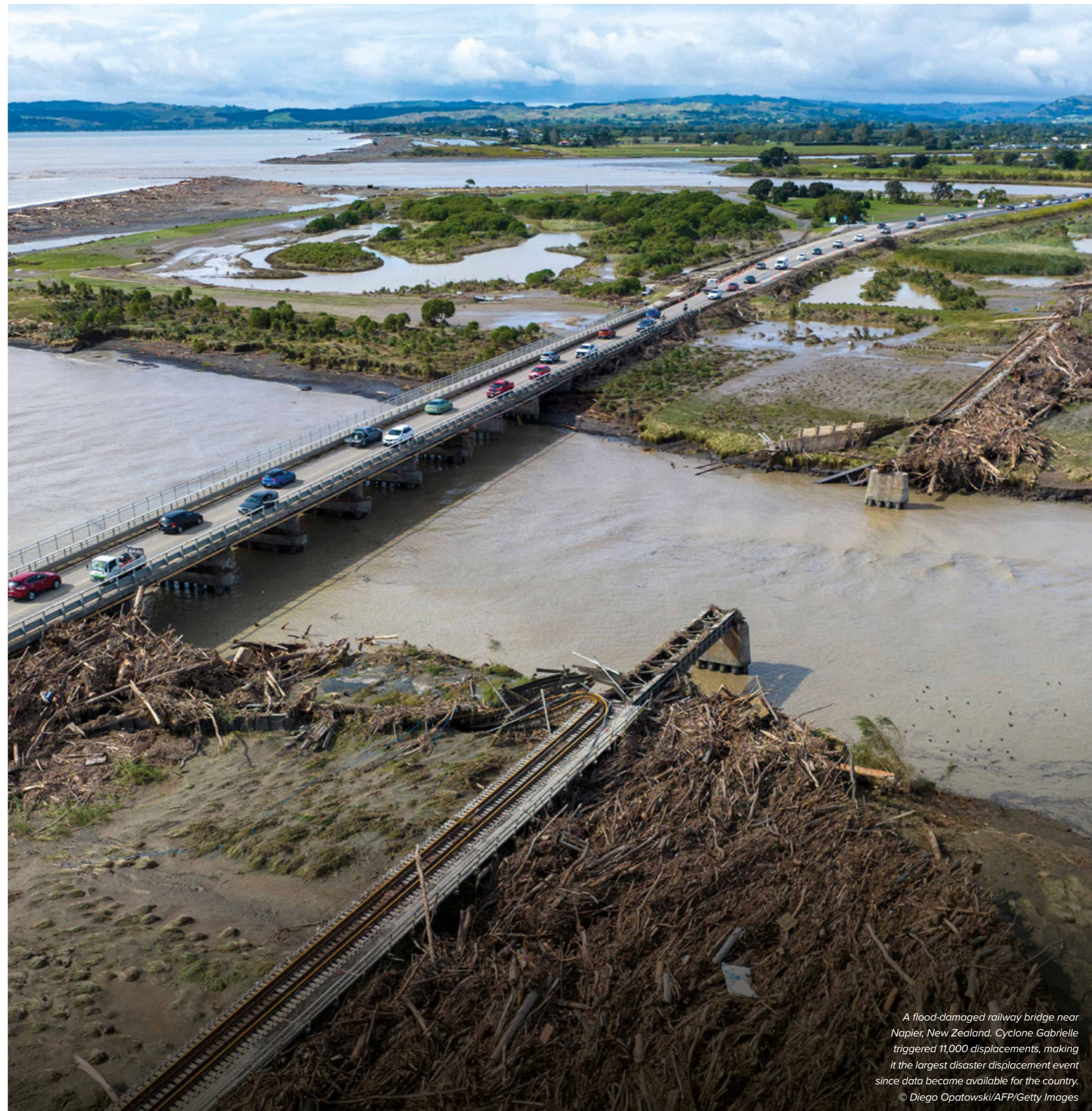
year and nearly four times higher than the annual average of the past ten years. The escalating conflict in Myanmar, where cyclone Mocha also uprooted a significant number of people, accounted for almost 63 per cent of the total. Major disasters in China, too, left more than half a million people living in displacement.

### Storms and floods recede as El Niño sets in

Storms accounted for 53 per cent of the disaster displacements recorded in East Asia and Pacific in 2023 at 4.8 million. Floods accounted for 39 per cent or 3.5 million. Displacement trends shifted significantly during the year and across subregions, influenced by the end of the La Niña phenomenon and the onset of El Niño by mid-2023.<sup>180</sup> Most movements in the first quarter were triggered by floods in south-east Asia and storms in the Pacific. East Asia's typhoon season by mid-year triggered further displacements. Then, as El Niño settled in, the number of displacements reduced, particularly in the last quarter of the year.

Most flood displacements in south-east Asia were concentrated in the first months of 2023. Of the one million flood displacements recorded in the **Philippines** during the year, 589,000 occurred in January. The regions most affected were the Zamboanga peninsula, Eastern Visayas and Mimaropa, which do not usually experience flooding at that time of year.<sup>181</sup>

Similarly, almost two-thirds of the 184,000 movements recorded in **Indonesia** in 2023 were triggered by a single event in January when heavy rains caused flooding across seven regencies in the province of Aceh.<sup>182</sup> Deforestation and land degradation likely played a role in aggravating the floods' impacts.<sup>183</sup> The rest of the year was relatively calm, leading to a reduction in displacement compared with the average for the past decade.



*A flood-damaged railway bridge near Napier, New Zealand. Cyclone Gabrielle triggered 11,000 displacements, making it the largest disaster displacement event since data became available for the country. © Diego Opatowski/AFP/Getty Images*

**Malaysia** recorded 206,000 disaster displacements, the highest figure since 2014. Floods in the first quarter of the year accounted for around 60 per cent of the total. The main event took place in the state of Johor, where 630 mm of rain fell in 48 hours in early March. As rivers burst their banks and flooding set in, people were forced to move to evacuation centres set up by the country's disaster management agency across ten districts.<sup>184</sup> Around 87,000 displacements were reported.

Abnormal weather-related disasters took place across the Pacific early in 2023. The city of Auckland in **New Zealand** recorded its wettest January since 1853, prompting local authorities to declare a state of emergency.<sup>185</sup> The heavy rains and ensuing floods triggered around 2,500 displacements. Two weeks later, in early February, North Island was hit by cyclone Gabrielle, which triggered another 11,000, making it the largest disaster displacement event since data became available for the country in 2010 (see spotlight, p. 65).

Two cyclones hit **Vanuatu** within 48 hours in March. Judy, a Category 4-equivalent storm, struck several islands on the first day of the month, including Efate, home to the capital Port Vila. Another Category 4-equivalent storm, Kevin, followed on 3 March, bringing heavy rain, storm surges and winds of up to 157 km/h.<sup>186</sup>

Based on the 13,000 homes they destroyed, Judy and Kevin triggered around 64,000 displacements, the second largest figure in the country after cyclone Harold in 2020. Some people returned during the year, but many did so to disaster-prone areas and rebuilt their homes with materials unlikely to withstand future events of similar magnitude.<sup>187</sup>

The most significant disaster to hit Asia was cyclone Mocha, which triggered 1.3 million displacements in Bangladesh before making landfall in **Myanmar** on 14 May as a Category 4-equivalent storm, triggering an additional 912,000. It struck Sittwe, the

capital of Rakhine, and damaged homes across the state. At least 63,000 displacements took place from camps sheltering people already displaced by conflict, including Rohingya communities living in protracted displacement.<sup>188</sup>

The storm also caused significant agricultural damage and led to increased food insecurity among internally displaced people (IDPs).<sup>189</sup> This, coupled with access constraints associated with conflict, heightened overall humanitarian needs, particularly in areas hosting large numbers of IDPs, such as Rakhine and Chin states.<sup>190</sup>

*Cyclone Mocha triggered 912,000 displacements when making landfall in Myanmar.*

When La Niña began to transition to El Niño by mid-year, it coincided with east Asia's typhoon season, which affected heavily populated areas. China and the Philippines accounted for more than three-quarters of the storm displacement recorded across East Asia and Pacific in 2023. Given the recurrence of typhoons in both countries, many of the movements were government-led pre-emptive evacuations.

Typhoon Doksuri made landfall in late July in the **Philippines**, where it triggered almost half a million displacements across 12 regions. It then tracked towards **China**, weakening as it moved inland, but still causing significant flooding across ten provinces and triggering 768,000 displacements. It was said to be the country's costliest typhoon on record.<sup>191</sup>

Three further typhoons, Saola, Haikui and Yun-yeung, struck the **Philippines** in quick succession about a month later. Their consecutive nature made it difficult to disaggregate their individual impacts, but between them, they triggered 247,000 displacements in the country. Saola and Haikui then followed similar paths as Doksuri, making landfall in **China**, where they triggered more than 1.1 million and 444,000 displacements, respectively.<sup>192</sup>



*A local resident wades in floodwaters in Hebei Province south of Beijing, China. Floods in the province in August were the world's third largest disaster displacement event of 2023. © Kevin Frayer/Getty Images*

Severe floods also affected China in the third quarter of the year. Torrential rains in Hebei province in the first week of August prompted the national government to declare a level II emergency response and move 1.5 million people to safer areas. The provincial government put measures in place to retain floodwaters and avert further damage across several river basins and major urban centres.<sup>193</sup> The floods were the world's third largest disaster displacement event of 2023 after the Türkiye earthquakes and cyclone Mocha.

## Earthquakes and volcanic activity

Geophysical hazards triggered 639,000 internal displacements in East Asia and Pacific in 2023, the highest figure since 2019. The region's location on the Pacific Ring of Fire means it has the highest seismic and volcanic risk globally, with Indonesia, Japan, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines being the main hotspots. Governments in the region have put policies and measures in place to identify geophysical risks, issue early warnings, and manage evacuations and responses.<sup>194</sup> That said, the impacts of these geophysical hazards are still devastating and prolong the displacement of people whose homes are severely damaged, destroyed or deemed by authorities to be uninhabitable.

The **Philippines** accounted for almost three-quarters of the regional total with 462,000 displacements. Of these, 401,000 were triggered by a 7.4 magnitude earthquake and its aftershocks, which struck off the coast of the Hinatuan municipality in Mindanao on 2 December. This was the highest displacement figure associated with earthquakes in the country since records began in 2009. About half of those displaced sheltered in centres organised by the authorities.<sup>195</sup> Most people were able to return soon after the event, but nearly 600 were still living in displacement at the end of the year because their homes had been destroyed.<sup>196</sup>

Two earthquakes struck the Davao region in March and November, triggering 37,000 and 2,900 displacements respectively. An increase in activity at Mount Mayon, the country's most active volcano, also led to 20,000 pre-emptive evacuations in early June 2023. Monitoring by the Philippines Institute of Volcanology and Seismology led it to issue alerts and call for the mandatory evacuation of communities at risk, for fear of a major eruption.<sup>197</sup> Most people were able to return as the alert levels were reduced, and all had done so by the end of the year.

*The Philippines accounted for almost three-quarters of the region's displacements from geophysical hazards.*

This example highlights the efforts the government has made to reduce disaster risk. The daily monitoring of Mayon's activity made it possible to identify the imminent threats in good time, and the country's previous experience with volcanoes meant preparedness guidelines and protocols were in place.<sup>198</sup> National and local authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) carried out the evacuations in a coordinated way and made sure the needs of those displaced were met, including by providing them with transport, medical attention, food and other aid.<sup>199</sup>

*The region's location on the Pacific Ring of Fire means it has the highest seismic and volcanic risk globally.*

In **China**, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake, with its epicentre in Jishishan county in the central province of Gansu, struck during the night of 18 to 19 December, triggering around 112,000 displacements.<sup>200</sup> Homes, roads and power lines were damaged or destroyed, disrupting communications and the provision of relief to people displaced in freezing winter temperatures.<sup>201</sup>



*When volcanic activity on Mount Mayon in the Philippines increased in June, monitoring led to alerts and 20,000 pre-emptive evacuations. Most people were able to return as alert levels reduced, and all had done so by the end of the year.*  
© Lisa Marie David/NurPhoto/Getty Images

That said, the authorities and humanitarian organisations deployed more than 3,000 fire and rescue personnel to support operations, deliver food and non-food items, and restore the power grid. Children's education had resumed and IDPs had moved to warm shelters and were receiving psychological support within ten days of the earthquake striking.<sup>202</sup>

The response was facilitated by an earthquake alert which was issued less than five seconds after the first tremor, helping authorities to put the necessary measures in place quickly.<sup>203</sup> China has invested heavily in recent years in speeding up the reporting of earthquakes and the issuing of alerts, proof of its increased awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction and management.<sup>204</sup>

**Indonesia** registered 36,000 displacements associated with geophysical hazards. The largest event was a 7.1 magnitude earthquake that hit the Papua region on 2 January, triggering 8,200 movements. Another earthquake, of 6.9 magnitude, triggered 8,100 on Mentawai Island, West Sumatra, in April. Two more earthquakes hit Central Sulawesi province in August and September, leading to 7,700 movements between them. These two quakes affected coastal areas, but neither caused tsunamis. Some residents fled as a precaution, however, because the same area had suffered a devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2018 that triggered 248,000 displacements.<sup>205</sup>

In neighbouring **Papua New Guinea**, Mount Ulawun, one of the country's most active volcanoes, erupted on 20 November, triggering 8,600 displacements. After the last major eruption in 2019, a community care centre was built in the town of Kabaya to provide shelter. Some of those displaced last year sought safety there, but they faced overcrowding and tensions with host communities. Others built shelters out of tents and tarpaulins. Schools were closed, disrupting children's education, and a lack of drinking water meant many had to collect water from nearby creeks and rivers that were polluted by ashfall.<sup>206</sup> Around 6,900

people were still living in displacement as a result of the eruption at the end of the year.

Mount Bagana, in the autonomous region of Bougainville, also erupted on 7 July, triggering 3,900 displacements. Most of those displaced went to care centres to receive humanitarian assistance, but children's education was disrupted because schools were used to shelter IDPs. Overcrowding and sanitation issues were reported.<sup>207</sup>

Geophysical disasters are common in Papua New Guinea, but responding to IDPs' needs is challenging because of the remoteness of some communities. The government, private sector entities and humanitarian agencies have adjusted to this reality by making innovative use of mobile data to assess displacement and inform disaster responses.<sup>208</sup>

## Record conflict displacement

The number of internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in East Asia and Pacific rose for a fourth consecutive year to a record 1.5 million in 2023. Myanmar accounted for the vast majority with 1.3 million, the Philippines 160,000, and Indonesia and Papua New Guinea the remainder.

The figure for **Myanmar** has seen a three-fold increase since the February 2021 military takeover of the government, the result of an escalation in violence between the armed forces and an array of non-state armed groups (NSAGs).<sup>209</sup>

The number of displacements increased throughout 2023, but particularly after 27 October when a coalition of NSAGs in northern areas of Shan state decided to conduct coordinated attacks against the military. A rapid escalation in fighting

and displacement ensued and spread to other areas, where NSAGs took control of several towns and military outposts and the military conducted retaliatory attacks.<sup>210</sup>

Around half of the displacements recorded during the year, or 670,000, took place in November and December, particularly in Sagaing, Shan and Rakhine states.<sup>211</sup> Sagaing was already hosting the largest number of IDPs fleeing conflict in the country, and the new wave of violence increased their number to 1.1 million as of the end of 2023, 41 per cent of the national total of 2.6 million.

*In Myanmar, the number of conflict displacements has seen a three-fold increase since February 2021.*

In the western state of Rakhine, the Arakan Army, the main NSAG in the state, took advantage of the security situation in other regions to conduct attacks against the military, leading to a rise in displacement from mid-November. Rakhine was among the few states where a reduction in the number of IDPs was observed in 2022, in part because of an informal ceasefire between the military and the Arakan Army.<sup>212</sup> The new wave of violence in November 2023 triggered 124,000 displacements, leaving 325,000 people living in displacement in the state as of the end of the year.

The escalating conflict meant that many people were forced to flee repeatedly. Access restrictions posed significant challenges to humanitarian organisations and camp closures left many IDPs in precarious conditions, particularly in the north-east and south-east of the country and in Rakhine.<sup>213</sup>

Conflict and violence also triggered 160,000 displacements in the **Philippines**, the highest figure since 2019 and the result of localised clashes between NSAGs and government forces across various islands between March and May.<sup>214</sup> As in previous years, most movements were reported on the southern island of Mindanao.

Around 113,000 people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in the Philippines at the end of the year, up from 102,000 at the end of 2022. About 71 per cent of them had originally been displaced by the 2017 conflict in the city of Marawi (see spotlight, p. 67).

The government officially opened peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, one of the country's oldest NSAGs, on 23 November.<sup>215</sup> This development, together with the ongoing peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mindanao, holds the promise of pathways to resolving both new and protracted displacement in the country.<sup>216</sup>

*The number of internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in East Asia and Pacific rose for a fourth consecutive year to a record 1.5 million.*

**Papua New Guinea** recorded 2,000 displacements associated with conflict and violence, a conservative estimate based on two incidents of escalating violence in Enga province in September and October.<sup>217</sup> The figure represents a reduction compared with 2022 and was accompanied by a fall in the number of people living in displacement at the end of the year to 87,000.

The number of conflict displacements in **Indonesia** fell significantly to 2,200 in 2023, down from 7,100 in 2022 and the lowest figure since 2017. Thirteen small-scale incidents of conflict and violence were reported in various parts of the Papua region. The largest displacement was triggered by criminal violence in Yahukimo regency, Highland Papua province in September.<sup>218</sup> About 55,000 people were living in displacement at the end of the year, down from 69,000 in 2022.

By the end of the year, 2.9 million people were estimated to remain in a situation of internal displacement by conflict and violence across East Asia and Pacific, a 63 per cent increase from 2022 and the highest since data became available in 2009.

## Spotlight – New Zealand

### Disaster resilience and tailored responses mitigate impact of Cyclone Gabrielle

In 2023, New Zealand recorded 14,000 internal displacements, its highest number since 2010. Cyclone Gabrielle, a category 3 storm, accounted for 11,000 of these when it struck North Island on 13 February. In a country more usually affected by floods, Gabrielle's impacts were in many ways unprecedented. The event triggered ten times more displacements than all the storms in the previous five years combined. It caused more than \$8bn in damage, making it the southern hemisphere's costliest tropical cyclone.<sup>219</sup>

The eastern region of Hawke's Bay, home to 183,000 people, was the most affected with around 9,000 displacements. Strong winds and heavy rain caused power cuts and hindered communications, while floods and landslides damaged and destroyed roads, delaying rescue efforts and the emergency response, particularly for remote communities.<sup>220</sup> This increased a push for greater local self-reliance, response mechanisms and infrastructure investment.<sup>221</sup>

In the months after Gabrielle, many IDPs registered for support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Temporary Accommodation Service, which assists households displaced by disasters to find safe, secure and accessible temporary accommodation while their homes are repaired or rebuilt.<sup>222</sup> The government also supported recovery and reconstruction efforts, allocating resources to help local businesses reactivate the economy and providing families and individuals with financial support.<sup>223</sup> Non-governmental organisations and civil society groups, including Māori communities, played an important role in supporting local-level initiatives to support recovery.<sup>224</sup>

Around 70 per cent of damaged homes in Wairoa District were occupied by Māori whānau (families), many of whom were uninsured tenants.<sup>225</sup> In acknowledgement of the burden borne by Māori communities and businesses, the government dedicated specific funds to those affected.<sup>226</sup>

The extent of housing damage also led the government to develop a land categorisation system in affected areas to ensure homes would be rebuilt safely and better prepared for future disasters.<sup>227</sup> The Hawke's Bay regional council determined areas in which properties could simply be repaired by their owners, areas that required individual or community-level risk mitigation to make them safe, and those in which future risk was high enough that it may no longer be safe for people to live there. In the latter case, the government offered property owners a voluntary buy-out option.<sup>228</sup>

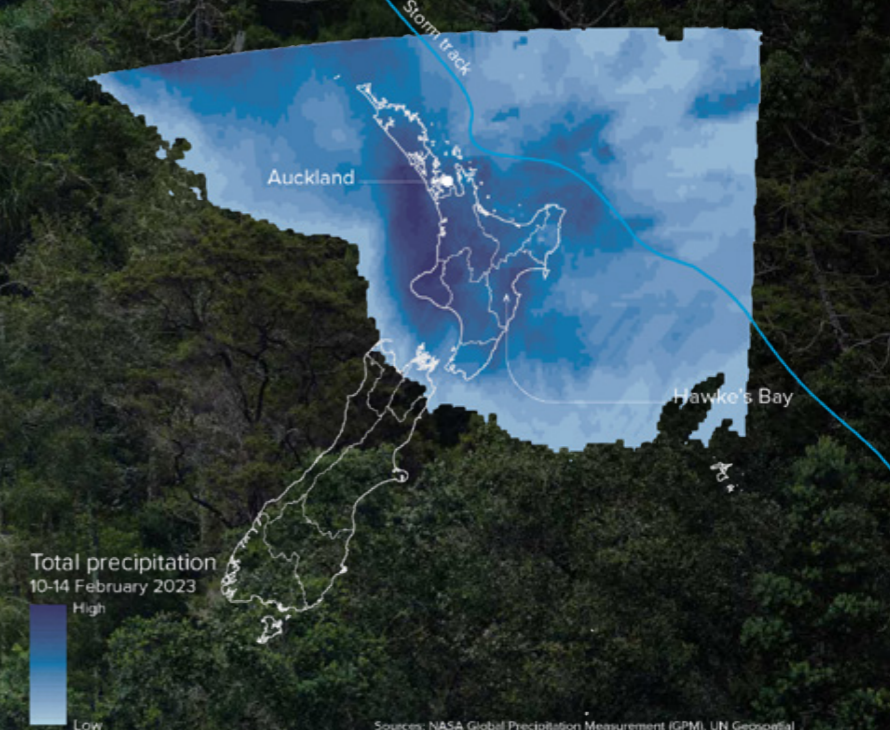
Auckland, the country's main metropolitan area, experienced its wettest January since 1853, which triggered floods in and around the city and led the city council to declare a state of emergency. Around 2,500 internal displacements were recorded.<sup>229</sup> Gabrielle brought further heavy rain two weeks later, triggering another 1,500 displacements.<sup>230</sup> Here too, the government provided temporary accommodation and offered financial support to those displaced.<sup>231</sup>

Years of innovative climate and flood mitigation measures, including the expansion of permeable surfaces such as rain gardens, green roofs and wetlands around the city's riverbeds helped to better manage water

runoff. These initiatives are likely to have helped reduce losses and damages, as well as displacements.<sup>232</sup>

Gabrielle's impacts reinforced the need to continue implementing the country's 2022 national adaptation plan, the first in a series that will be revised every six years. It is intended to identify risks and adaptation options, and to embed climate resilience in all government strategies, policies, planning and investment decisions.<sup>233</sup> The storm was also a reminder of the importance of strengthening local-level initiatives to build resilience to similar events in the future.

**11,000**  
internal displacements  
by cyclone Gabrielle



*A landslide near a home outside Auckland, New Zealand, following cyclone Gabrielle. The storm triggered the country's highest number of internal displacements since 2010 and spurred the government to develop new tailored responses to support those it displaced. © Brendon O'Hagan/Bloomberg via Getty Images*

## Spotlight – The Philippines

### Six years after conflict, progress and challenges for IDPs

The city of Marawi in the southern Philippines was the scene of a major urban conflict between May and October 2017 pitting government forces against non-state armed groups, including Abu Sayyaf, a local affiliate of the Islamic State group, and the Maute group, which controlled the city. Around 1,000 people lost their lives and 350,000 were internally displaced.<sup>234</sup> The government has since put significant efforts into rebuilding Marawi and supporting IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions. The process has not been without challenges, but it shows that the achievement of durable solutions entails long and complex procedures that require a whole-of-government approach that is multifaceted and sustained over time.

Marawi's built environment was severely damaged in the conflict, impeding IDPs' swift return.<sup>235</sup> Soon after the army had retaken the city, the government established the inter-agency Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) to facilitate post-conflict recovery, repair and reconstruction. TFBM included sub-committees dedicated to housing, health and social welfare, business and livelihoods, and peace and order.<sup>236</sup> The government also secured an emergency assistance loan and a series of grants from the Asian Development Bank, which provided immediate and flexible financing to scale-up programmes targeting those displaced.<sup>237</sup>

These initiatives helped to significantly reduce the number of IDPs in the first year after the conflict.<sup>238</sup> Data collection, however, was uncoordinated in 2017 and 2018, creating discrepancies from one area to the next and hindering understanding of displacement patterns and trends. The government and its humanitarian partners have since improved their monitoring by conducting

assessments of IDPs' needs and protection risks and producing monthly updates on the number of people living in transitory and permanent shelters. This improved coverage has provided insight into the differentiated impacts among population groups, which in turn has informed a better response.<sup>239</sup>

National agencies, including the departments of public works and highways, trade and industry, agriculture and agrarian reform, as well as the national housing authority, played an active role in accelerating the recovery.<sup>240</sup> At the local level, the government established a Special Committee on Marawi City Rehabilitation in 2019 to further speed up efforts, especially in terms of infrastructure and housing reconstruction.<sup>241</sup> The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was also granted autonomy in the same year as part of a peace agreement intended to secure long-term stability.<sup>242</sup>

These efforts were hindered by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, when lockdowns prevented IDPs from relocating or returning to Marawi, accessing aid or registering for government-led programmes.<sup>243</sup> The pandemic also led to increased needs because people lost their livelihoods and some or all of their income. Despite concerted efforts to fight the spread of the virus, cases were reported in displacement sites, which often had water, sanitation and health issues.<sup>244</sup>

As the pandemic's impacts receded, efforts to bring IDPs' plight to a sustainable end were reinvigorated. Government agencies, the United Nations and international and national non-governmental organisations increased their support, including to reinforce the healthcare system.<sup>245</sup> IDPs also

established their own cooperatives and livelihood programmes, taking an active part in pursuing solutions.<sup>246</sup>

Congress passed a law in April 2022 to compensate those affected by the conflict for the loss of life and property incurred.<sup>247</sup> The process has continued despite financial constraints, and by mid-2023 the local government had begun offering free legal aid to expedite the processing of applications.<sup>248</sup> The national government also put forward its national development plan for 2023 to 2028, which recognises the complexity of finding long-term solutions to displacement and reaffirms its commitment to IDPs' and the city's recovery. The plan stresses the importance of long-term stability and disaster risk reduction efforts, a welcome step towards preventing future displacement.<sup>249</sup>

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity has also implemented a series of initiatives and programmes to address the root causes of the conflict, including by alleviating poverty and increasing access to justice.<sup>250</sup> Conscious of the challenges IDPs continue to face, the government issued an order on 30 December 2023 to speed up bureaucratic procedures and facilitate recovery and durable solutions for the estimated 80,000 people still living in displacement.<sup>251</sup>

While displacement was still unresolved for many, the efforts made at all levels of government to address IDPs' needs and resolve their situation should be seen as a remarkable example of government ownership and responsibility to its displaced citizens. If sustained, these initiatives will help resolve the largest conflict displacement situation in the Philippines moving forward.



*A woman salvages items after homes were destroyed by conflict in Marawi, Philippines. Six years after the conflict, the government has made significant efforts to rebuild Marawi and support IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions. It is working to speed up recovery and durable solutions for the estimated 80,000 people still living in displacement.*

© Jes Aznar/Getty Images



# South Asia

Women and children collecting water in Pakistan's Sindh province in the aftermath of cyclone Biparjoy, which triggered 85,000 displacements. © UNICEF/UNI431676/Sokhin

## Internally displaced people (IDPs)

**8.2m**  
at the end of 2023

**11%**  
Share of the  
global total

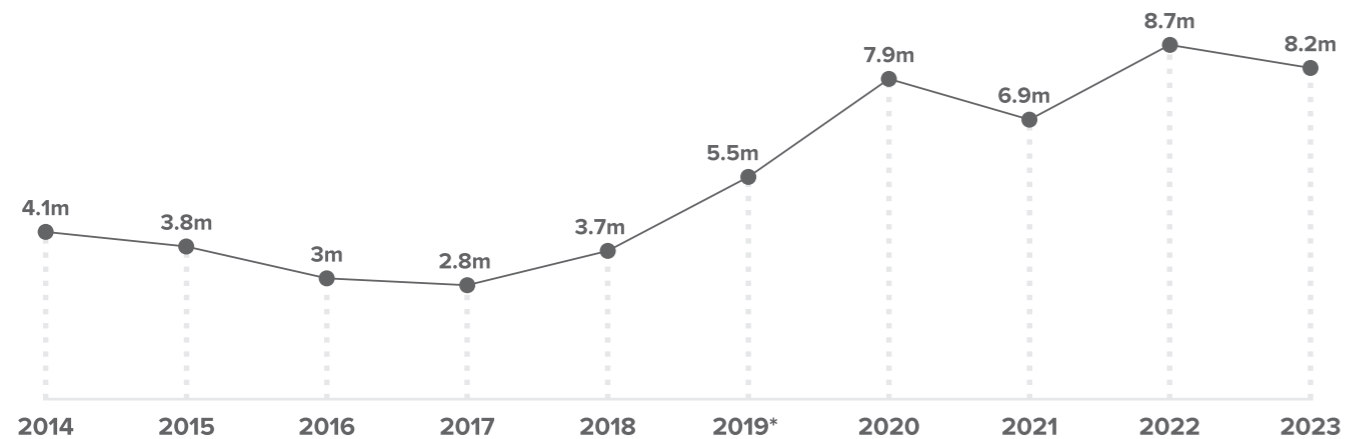
**5.3m**  
IDPs by conflict  
and violence

**2.9m**  
IDPs by  
disasters

### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

## Internal displacements (movements)

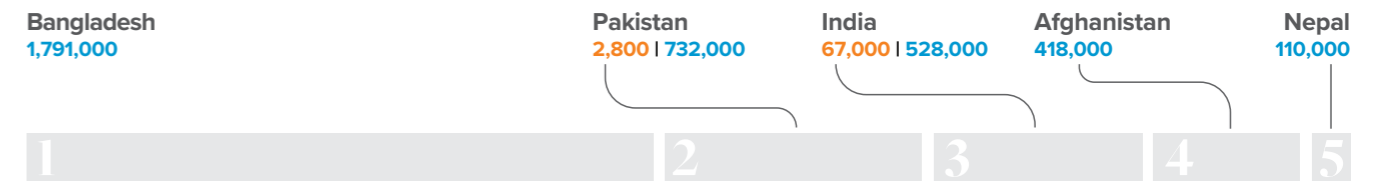
**3.7m**  
during 2023

**8%**  
Share of the  
global total

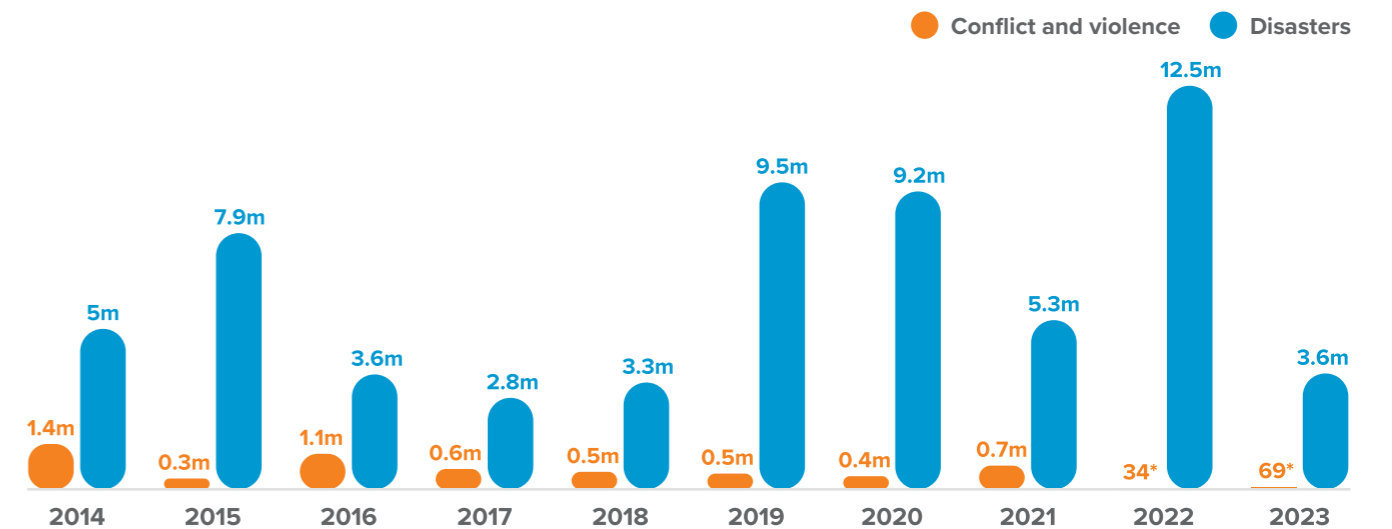
**69,000**  
Internal displacements  
by conflict and violence

**3.6m**  
Internal displacements  
by disasters

### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in millions  
\*in thousands

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for South Asia.

## South Asia

Around 3.7 million internal displacements were reported in South Asia in 2023. Disasters triggered 3.6 million, the lowest figure since 2018. The decrease is partly explained by the onset of the El Niño phenomenon, which led to below average rainfall during the monsoons and a weaker cyclone season.<sup>252</sup> That said, floods and storms continued to uproot people from their homes, often in the same places where displacement tends to be recorded year after year.

Earthquakes triggered 491,000 movements, the highest figure since 2015. More than three-quarters of these were recorded in Afghanistan's western province of Herat, which was hosting the country's largest number of people displaced by conflict when a series of earthquakes and their aftershocks forced hundreds of thousands from their homes (see spotlight, p. 79).

Figures for displacement triggered by conflict and violence in South Asia were significantly lower than the decadal average of 576,000 but still double the 2022 number, at 69,000 last year. The vast majority were the result of an increase in communal violence in India's north-eastern state of Manipur. No conflict displacement was reported in Afghanistan in 2023, but decades of violence have left millions of people, including internally displaced people (IDPs), with significant humanitarian needs.

*Displacement triggered by conflict and violence in South Asia was lower than average but still double the 2022 number.*

Around 8.2 million people were living in internal displacement across South Asia at the end of the year, a decrease from 8.7 million in 2022. Afghanistan accounted for about 70 per cent of this figure, with



*Residents of Herat province, Afghanistan, gather to search for survivors after a series of high magnitude earthquakes struck, triggering 380,000 internal displacements and destroying at least 10,000 homes.*  
© UNICEF/UNI452519/Khayyam

4.2 million people displaced as a result of conflict and violence and 1.5 million as a result of disasters. Pakistan recorded the second highest number of IDPs in the region, with about 1.2 million people displaced by disasters. Most were forced to flee their homes during the 2022 floods.

### Progress in building resilience to storms

South Asia's cyclone season was less intense in 2023 than in previous years because of the El Niño phenomenon, but storms still triggered 1.8 million movements, about half of the region's disaster displacements. Government-led pre-emptive evacuations accounted for at least three-quarters of this figure. Pre-emptive evacuations are complex procedures, requiring investment in weather forecasting and early warning systems to ensure information reaches the communities most at risk with enough time for them to safeguard their livelihoods and belongings as much as possible before they evacuate.

Governments in the region have made significant efforts to improve evacuations in recent years. The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre in Delhi, for example, provides governments in various countries with cyclone warnings that inform national preparedness and response measures, including pre-emptive evacuations, which have helped to reduce disaster morbidity and mortality.<sup>253</sup> That said, the impact of cyclones on infrastructure, including damage to homes, roads, agricultural land and fisheries, continues to be significant. This can prolong the displacement of evacuees, undermine their livelihoods and slow their recovery.

Cyclone Mocha was the region's largest disaster displacement event of the year. The storm formed in the Bay of Bengal on 11 May and triggered 1.3 million displacements in **Bangladesh**, mostly in Chattogram division's Cox's Bazar district. Almost all the movements were pre-emptive evacuations from densely populated areas. Forecasting and early warnings helped authorities to put emergency procedures in place a week before Mocha's landfall.<sup>254</sup>



The storm still affected vulnerable communities, however, including Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in Cox's Bazar. About 30,000 refugees were temporarily relocated from their homes. Many had been living in informal shelters made of materials unable to withstand Mocha's impact, impeding their swift return and recovery.<sup>255</sup> The storm destroyed around 3,300 homes in and around Cox's Bazar, leaving more than 13,000 people living in internal displacement at the end of the year.

*Government-led pre-emptive evacuations accounted for at least three-quarters of displacements triggered by storms in the region.*

St Martin's Island was evacuated to avert deaths, and boats were pulled ashore to protect tourism and fishing livelihoods.<sup>256</sup> The cyclone destroyed around 1,200 houses, leaving about 4,900 people, almost half of the island's population, facing prolonged displacement.<sup>257</sup>

Cyclone Hamoon, the second largest storm to trigger displacement in the region, struck the same locations later in the year. It made landfall on 24 October and led to 273,000 evacuations. Rohingya refugees were again among those displaced.<sup>258</sup>

Major storms and floods have hit exposed communities in the Chattogram division year after year, forcing them to move repeatedly. The Bangladeshi government and its partners have made significant progress in reducing the impacts of disasters, but their recurrent nature underscores the need to continue strengthening disaster risk reduction and early warning measures.<sup>259</sup>

On the other side of the Indian subcontinent, cyclone Biparjoy formed in the Arabian sea in early June, prompting governments to issue evacuation alerts to coastal communities in densely populated states of western **India**. Biparjoy made landfall on 26 June as a category three storm, causing widespread flooding across Gujarat and Rajasthan and triggering 105,000 displacements as it moved inland.<sup>260</sup>

The storm also caused flooding in **Pakistan's** Sindh province, where the provincial disaster management authority played an important role in facilitating the evacuation of at-risk communities.<sup>261</sup> Biparjoy triggered 85,000 displacements in Pakistan, but all evacuees were able to return home by the end of the year.

## El Niño brings fewer flood displacements

El Niño conditions had developed for the first time in seven years by mid-2023, bringing drier conditions across South Asia.<sup>262</sup> As a result, floods triggered 1.2 million displacements in the region during the year, a third of the decadal average of 3.7 million.

**Pakistan** accounted for around half of the total with 647,000 displacements, most of which took place in July and particularly in the eastern province of Punjab. Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh were also affected. The same provinces were the worst affected by the exceptional 2022 monsoon floods, and some of the communities displaced were forced to flee again in 2023.<sup>263</sup>

*Floods triggered 1.2 million displacements in the region during the year, a third of the decadal average of 3.7 million.*

There were still 1.2 million people living in internal displacement as a result of the 2022 floods at the end of 2023. Many were living in vulnerable conditions near stagnant and polluted floodwaters, exposed to disease outbreaks.<sup>264</sup> Water pipes, drainage systems and sanitation facilities were still damaged or not fully functioning across many areas more than a year later. Many people who went back to their severely damaged or destroyed homes did not have the means to rebuild, which explains why many returnees were still identifying housing as one of their main needs late in 2023.<sup>265</sup>

Food insecurity also persisted in Pakistan, particularly in the provinces worst affected by the 2022 floods. Around 10.5 million people



*A refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Cyclone Mocha triggered 1.3 million displacements. Most were in the Cox's Bazar district and almost all were pre-emptive evacuations, including about 30,000 refugees who were temporarily relocated. © NRC/Sadia Rahman*



A woman carries debris from damaged homes in Karnali Province, Nepal, following the magnitude 6.4 earthquake that struck in November. The government provided cash support for those affected, but landslides hampered some aid deliveries.

© UNICEF/UN471194/Prasad Ngakhushi

were thought to be acutely food insecure countrywide in 2023, but data disaggregated by displacement status was not available.<sup>266</sup> This hampered understanding of how IDPs' food security situation differed from that of their non-displaced counterparts and whether the combined impacts of the floods in 2022 and 2023 aggravated the situation further – and if so, how.

The flood displacement figure for neighbouring **India** was the lowest since data became available in 2008 at 352,000 movements. The largest event, which triggered about 91,000, occurred in the state of Assam in June when heavy rains hit 20 districts, causing some rivers to burst their banks. Soil erosion was deemed to have worsened the floods' impacts.<sup>267</sup>

Floods are common in Assam, and significant displacement has been recorded there in recent years. This has prompted the government to take a series of measures, including the development of a hazard atlas and a comprehensive disaster management plan encompassing the resettlement of communities, evacuation management, recovery and solutions.<sup>268</sup>

*The flood displacement figure for India was the lowest since data became available in 2008 at 352,000 movements.*

Delhi is another flood displacement hotspot. Heavy downpours on 9 July brought 153 mm of rain, the highest figure recorded for a single day in 40 years. As the rains persisted, rising water levels in the Yamuna river prompted local authorities to evacuate people from their homes.<sup>269</sup> Around 27,000 displacements were reported.

**Bangladesh** also recorded a significant decrease in flood displacements to 213,000, about half the decadal average. This decline is even more striking given that all the movements took place on the same day and in the same place: 5 August in Cox's Bazar. Rohingya refugees' shelters were damaged for a second time in the year.<sup>270</sup>

**Sri Lanka** was the only country in the region to record an increase in flood displacement. The south-west monsoon, which normally runs from May to August, extended until early October, bringing heavy rains that led some major rivers and reservoirs to burst their banks. Damage, losses and displacement were significant, especially in the northern districts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu.<sup>271</sup> The rains continued to trigger floods across the country in the last quarter of the year, bringing the number of movements to more than 13,000, compared with 10,000 in 2022. As water levels receded, most people were able to return to their homes by the end of the year.

### Significant increase in earthquake-related displacement

South Asia's location between the Indian, Eurasian and Arabian tectonic plates makes it highly prone to earthquakes, which triggered 491,000 displacements in 2023, the highest figure since 2015.<sup>272</sup> Most were reported in the Afghan province of Herat in early October (see spotlight, p. 79).

A month later, on the night of 3 November, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake and its aftershocks struck Karnali province in western **Nepal**, causing significant infrastructure damage and triggering 107,000 displacements.<sup>273</sup> The government was quick to organise search and rescue operations and provide cash support for those affected, particularly in the worst hit districts of Jajarkot and Rukum West, but landslides hampered the delivery of aid in some areas.<sup>274</sup>

*Earthquakes triggered 491,000 displacements in South Asia in 2023, the highest figure since 2015.*

Karnali is highly prone to earthquakes and had been experiencing a number since the end of 2022, but this was the first time that displacement was identified there. The area also has the highest poverty rate in the country and limited infrastructure, reducing people's resilience to the

impacts of disasters and displacement. The approaching winter in the mountainous area, where temperatures often fall below zero, increased the need for warm clothing, food and shelter to counter health risks.<sup>275</sup>

At least 40,000 people were still living in displacement at the end of 2023, pending the reconstruction of their homes. Many of them were made of stone with little reinforcement and so were unable to withstand the seismic activity.<sup>276</sup> The Karnali earthquake led to the country's second highest number of associated displacements since the Gorkha earthquake in 2015, which triggered 2.6 million.

Earthquakes tend to increase the risk of other geophysical hazards including dry mass movements, which have also triggered displacement in the region. They are rarely captured, but such movements were reported in the Indian town of Joshimath in Uttarakhand state in early 2023. After cracks appeared in homes and infrastructure, the government declared the area a land subsidence zone and evacuated as many as 4,000 people to temporary relief centres.<sup>277</sup> Around 1,000 people were still living in displacement at the end of the year.

*Earthquakes tend to increase the risk of other geophysical hazards, including dry mass movements, which have also triggered displacement in the region.*

There were around 2.9 million people living in displacement as a result of disasters across South Asia at the end of the year, down from 3.2 million in 2022. The reduction was partly because disasters triggered fewer movements in 2023, but also the result of significant data gaps and challenges in monitoring the duration of displacement during the recovery

phase. Afghanistan is the only country in the region where the duration of disaster displacement is measured, but the original trigger is still difficult to ascertain. The repeated nature of displacement in the country also makes it hard to determine its scale and severity. Producing this information is essential to inform programming for durable solutions.

## Conflict and violence

Conflict and violence triggered 69,000 displacements in South Asia in 2023, double the figure for 2022 but far below the decadal average. No new conflict displacement was recorded in **Afghanistan**, but many protection challenges remained. There was a significant rise in evictions because the Taliban pushed many IDPs living in informal settlements to go back to their areas of origin, based on the argument that people were no longer fleeing conflict.<sup>278</sup> As it was not possible to ascertain the forced nature of such movements, these figures are not included in the data presented in this report.

Evictions still affected thousands of IDPs over the year. One of the largest evictions took place in Kabul in July, after which humanitarian organisations pointed out that conditions in areas of return were not conducive to IDPs bringing their plight to a sustainable end.<sup>279</sup>

Also, hundreds of thousands of refugees and undocumented migrants from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran had to return to Afghanistan in the last quarter of the year, the result of both governments aiming to address the issue of undocumented migrants.<sup>280</sup>

Some people were deported, while others returned by their own means. Upon arrival in Afghanistan, many had nowhere to go or went back to areas already hosting a significant number of IDPs living in protracted displacement with limited access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. These conditions put them at risk of returning to a life of internal displacement and contributed to increasing humanitarian needs across the country.<sup>281</sup>

Around 4.2 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in Afghanistan at the end of the year, the sixth highest figure globally.

Displacement associated with conflict and violence increased elsewhere in the region, mostly due to a rise in communal tensions in **India's** north-eastern state of Manipur. Tensions were prompted, in large part, by the state's high court calling in March for recommendations to be sent to the central government to recognise the Meitei community as a "scheduled tribe", an official status designed to protect minorities from marginalisation.<sup>282</sup> The call was met with resistance from other local scheduled tribes, including the Kukis.<sup>283</sup> Land disputes were also an underlying driver of the tensions.<sup>284</sup>

*Displacement associated with conflict and violence increased elsewhere in the region, mostly due to a rise in communal tensions in India's north-eastern state of Manipur.*

Protests turned violent in Churachandpur district on 3 May, and the violence spread to other districts, including Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Tengnupal and Kangpokipi, triggering around 67,000 displacements. This was the highest figure for displacement triggered by conflict and violence in India since 2018.<sup>285</sup> More than three-quarters of the movements took place within Manipur, but almost a fifth were to the neighbouring state of Mizoram and smaller numbers to Nagaland and Assam.<sup>286</sup>

As the violence escalated, the central government imposed curfews, shut down the internet and dispatched security forces.<sup>287</sup> It also set up relief camps and established a peace committee for Manipur, chaired by the state governor, but the initiative was hampered by disagreements about its composition.<sup>288</sup> All of those displaced by the violence were still living in internal displacement at the end of the year.

Conflict displacement also increased in **Pakistan**, where around 2,200 movements were recorded in early December. The military evacuated villages in the Tirah Valley near the border with Afghanistan ahead of an operation against non-state armed groups. The displaced households took refuge in makeshift shelters in Khyber district.<sup>289</sup> This was the first increase in conflict displacement in the country since 2020 and an almost four-fold rise from the figure for 2022.

Around 5.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence across South Asia at the end of 2023, 80 per cent of whom were in Afghanistan. That said, no updates were provided on the situation of people living in protracted displacement in countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, who have been uprooted for years or even decades.

## Spotlight – Afghanistan

### Earthquakes extend cycle of conflict and disaster displacement

After decades of conflict, the withdrawal of foreign troops and the Taliban's takeover of the country in 2021 was followed by a significant shift in internal displacement dynamics, with no movements associated with conflict and violence recorded in 2023. This does not mean, however, that the plight of 5.7 million people living in protracted displacement has ended. Their number decreased slightly during the year, but most were still living in a precarious situation and highly vulnerable to disasters.

This became evident in October when a series of high-magnitude earthquakes and aftershocks struck the western province of Herat, triggering 380,000 internal displacements and destroying at least 10,000 homes.<sup>290</sup> Increasing social restrictions meant more women and girls were indoors when the earthquakes hit, which in part explains why they accounted for around 60 per cent of the dead and wounded.<sup>291</sup>

The earthquakes became the second-largest disaster displacement event since records began in Afghanistan in 2008. They took place against a backdrop of high levels of poverty and vulnerability resulting from decades of conflict, disasters and the lasting impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Herat was already hosting the country's largest population of displaced people in 2022 when the earthquakes struck, and many of the IDPs surveyed said they had fled both conflict and disasters.<sup>292</sup>

Predominantly rural, the province's agricultural sector has been severely hit in recent years by recurring disasters, including floods, cold snaps, and drought between 2018 and 2019 and again between 2021 and 2023.<sup>293</sup> These have undermined communities' resilience, forcing many to abandon their livelihoods and move to informal urban settlements in search of humanitarian assistance.<sup>294</sup> Covid hit

between the droughts, affecting IDPs living in crowded camps with only limited water, sanitation and health services.<sup>295</sup>

The increased cost of agricultural inputs resulting from an economic downturn since 2021 has also led many farmers to gradually disengage from their activities and in some cases abandon their land.<sup>296</sup> Others have reduced their livestock count to cope with the deteriorating economic situation.<sup>297</sup> This has fuelled deepening food insecurity, which increased further when funding for food aid was cut significantly in September 2023.<sup>298</sup> Almost 889,000 people were living in acute food insecurity when the earthquakes struck, more than in any other province, but no disaggregated data was available to assess how many were IDPs.<sup>299</sup>

The disaster aggravated the overall humanitarian situation as damage to roads and bridges disrupted the supply of aid. Administrative constraints, including a December 2022 decree banning Afghan women from working in national and international non-governmental organisations, later extended to UN organisations in April 2023, also impeded effective assistance for those displaced.<sup>300</sup>

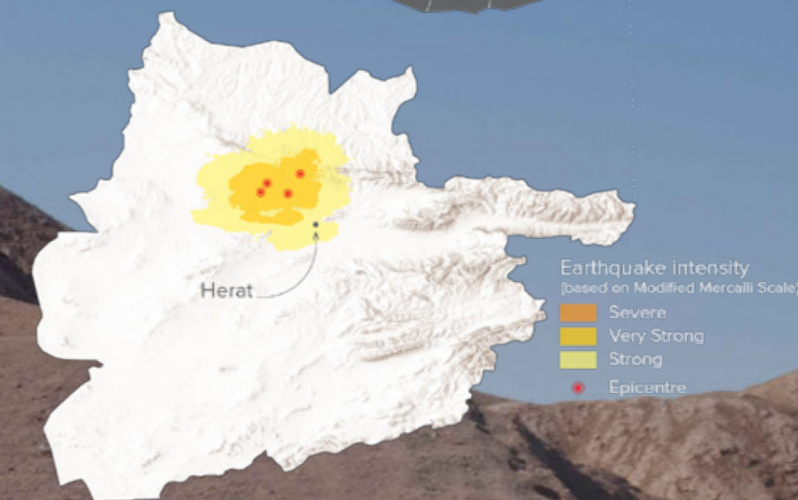
The damage the earthquakes caused to septic tanks, drainage systems, wells and water pumps worsened the impacts of the previous years' droughts, leaving IDPs and host communities with ever less access to clean water and sanitation. Some of those who lost their homes also lost their safe water facilities, resulting in heightened risk of contamination and disease.<sup>301</sup>

The onset of the El Niño phenomenon increased the risk of snowfall as winter approached, creating yet another challenge for the health and safety of those

still living in the open in makeshift tents.<sup>302</sup> Given the trauma of living through the earthquakes, many people were afraid to return to their homes even if they had not suffered significant damage.<sup>303</sup> Around 900 people were still living in displacement in Herat at the end of the year.

# 380,000

internal displacements by 6.8-magnitude quake and aftershocks, destroying at least 10,000 homes



Sources: USGS Earthquake Hazards Program, ESRI, UN Geospatial

*Destroyed homes in Ahmad Abad village in Herat, western Afghanistan, after multiple earthquakes in October 2023. Herat was already hosting the largest number of IDPs in the country when the earthquakes struck.*

© UNICEF/UNI481441/Khayyam



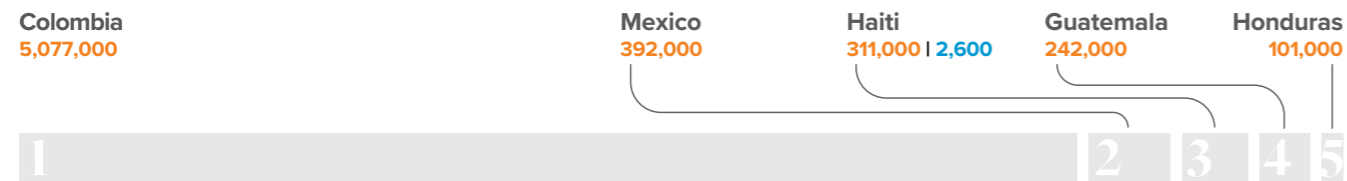
# The Americas

The McDougall Creek wildfire as seen from Kelowna, in British Columbia, Canada. In 2023, the country recorded 185,000 internal displacements by wildfires, many in urban areas not usually affected. © Darren Hull/AFP/Getty Images

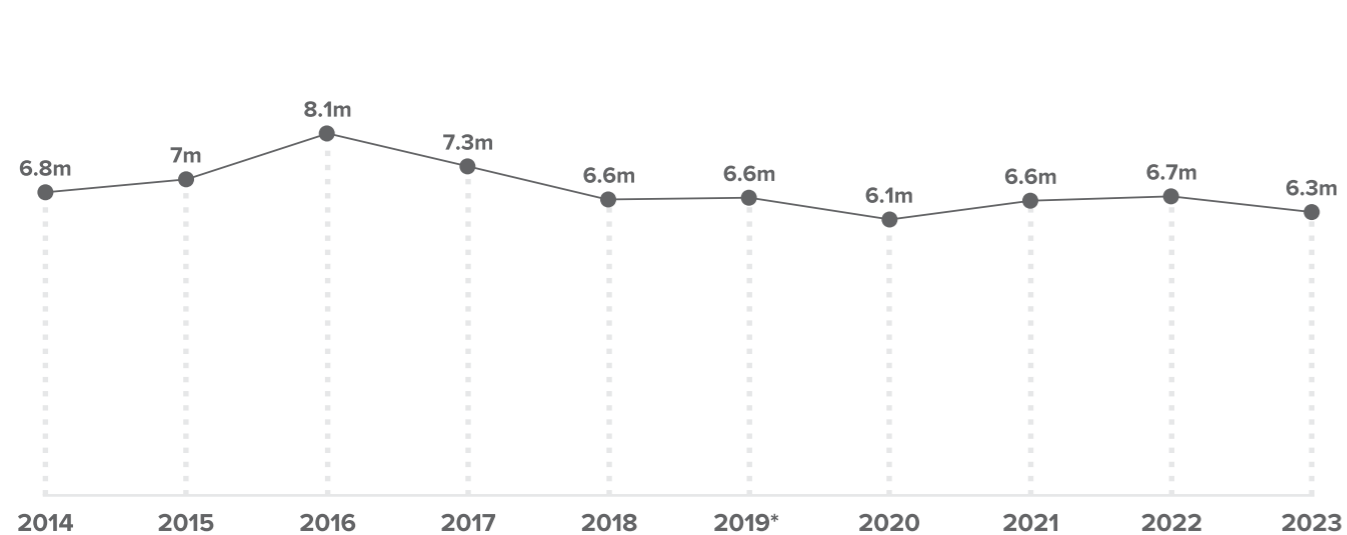
## Internally displaced people (IDPs)



### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

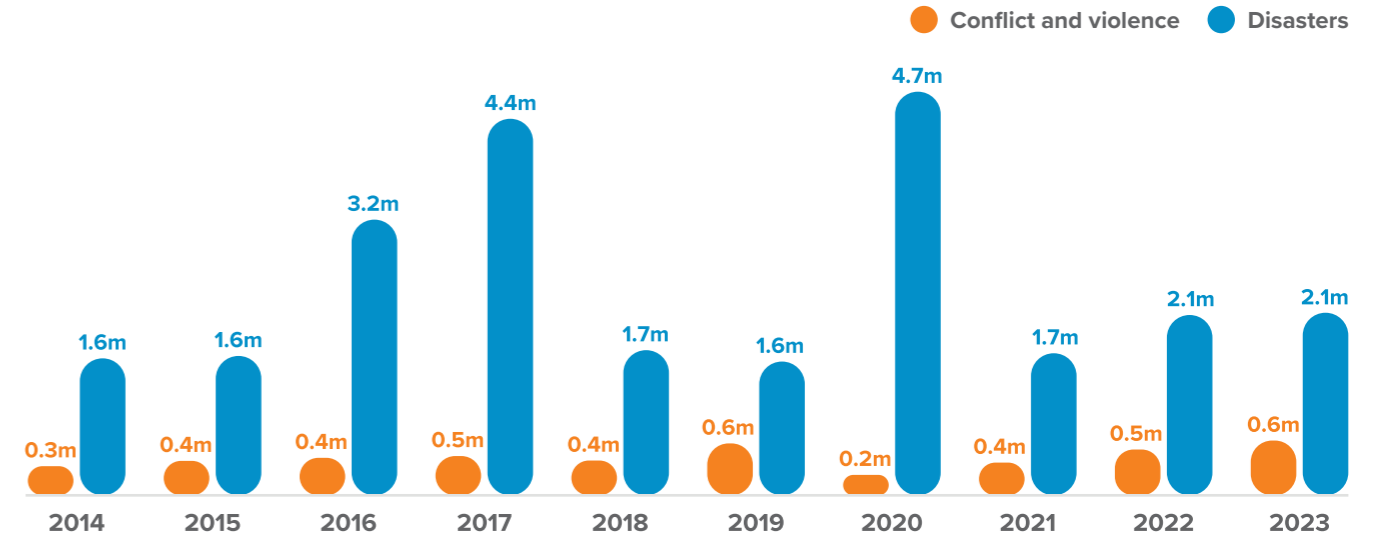
## Internal displacements (movements)



### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in millions

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for the Americas.

# The Americas

Around 2.8 million internal displacements were recorded in the Americas in 2023. Disasters accounted for 2.1 million, a similar figure to that of 2022, and conflict and violence accounted for 637,000. Floods and storms triggered 1.5 million movements, mostly in South America. Major storms, including hurricanes and tornadoes, led to fewer displacements than usual at 315,000.

As in the previous seven years, the Americas recorded the most wildfire displacements globally at 277,000. Canada's figure was the highest in the region for the first time at 185,000, the result of its most destructive wildfire season on record (see spotlight, p. 93).<sup>304</sup>

Conflict and violence triggered the largest number of displacements in the region since records began in 2009, with Colombia and Haiti accounting for 85 per cent of the total. Colombia recorded a slight decrease compared with 2022 at 293,000, mostly in regions historically affected by conflict and violence, such as the Pacific region, where people continued to be affected by displacement and confinement (see spotlight, p. 91).

*Conflict and violence triggered the largest number of displacements in the region since records began in 2009.*

Violence in Haiti led to a record 245,000 displacements, more than double the figure for 2022, making it the country reporting the largest number of displacements by crime-related violence globally. Most situations of such magnitude tend to instead be the result of armed conflict.

Around 6.3 million people were living in internal displacement in the Americas at the end of the year. Data gaps for most countries, especially in terms of disaster

displacement, make this estimate conservative. Colombia accounted for 5.1 million as a result of conflict and violence, a significant share of the regional total because of its greater availability of data compared with other countries.

## Disaster displacement increases in South America

Given the size of their populations and high exposure to hazards, most disaster displacements in the Americas were reported in Brazil and Colombia, where figures increased compared with previous years. Peru and Chile also recorded unusually high numbers of flood displacements.

*As in the previous seven years, the Americas recorded the most wildfire displacements globally.*

The transition of the La Niña phenomenon to El Niño had different impacts in different countries. La Niña brought heavy rains in areas near the equator. The onset of El Niño brought drier conditions in the second half of the year, while the rains moved south towards Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.<sup>305</sup>

**Brazil** accounted for more than a third of the region's disaster displacements with 745,000, the country's highest figure since records began in 2008. La Niña conditions in the first quarter of the year led to an intense rainy season in March in the northern states of Acre, Amazonas and Pará, and in the north-eastern state of Maranhão, triggering a combined total of 116,000 movements.<sup>306</sup>

El Niño conditions had set in by the middle of the year, leading to drier conditions in the north of the country. Amazonas began to experience its worst drought in a century in September, leaving the Amazon river and some of its main tributaries at their lowest levels on record. Hydroelectric power generation was disrupted, severely affecting people's



*A flooded street in the Tumbes region of Peru. Floods and storms accounted for almost 60 per cent of the total disaster displacements in the country.*  
© UNICEF/UN0802546/Pezantes

livelihoods and prompting authorities to declare an emergency across all of the state's municipalities.<sup>307</sup> Around 32,000 drought displacements were recorded, the highest figure ever for the country.

The states of Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná in the subtropical south of the country were affected by record-breaking rainfall in October and November, triggering more than 183,000 displacements. The Jacuí river, which passes through several major cities, burst its banks, flooding streets, damaging infrastructure and prompting many municipalities to declare a state of emergency. The arrival of El Niño is thought to have increased the intensity of the region's traditional rainy season.<sup>308</sup>

*The transition of the La Niña phenomenon to El Niño had different impacts in different countries.*

**Colombia** recorded the second highest number of disaster displacements in the region with 351,000. This was a 25 per cent increase on 2022 and the highest figure in more than a decade, in part the result of more data being available. The departments of La Guajira, Bolívar and Arauca accounted for more than two-thirds of the total.

La Guajira, in the north of the country, was worst affected, with storms and floods triggering 95,000 displacements. Around 64,000 were reported in June and July. These displacements took place against the backdrop of a social, economic and ecological emergency declared by the government in July after drought conditions increased humanitarian needs.<sup>309</sup>

Storms and floods triggered around 57,000 movements in Bolívar in the north, many of them in January and October.<sup>310</sup> The department also recorded 17,000 wildfire displacements during the dry season in January and more than 8,000 again in March, accounting for more than half of the countrywide total of 47,000.



*Damage to the resort city of Acapulco in Guerrero State, Mexico, after Hurricane Otis made landfall in October. Much of the area's disaster risk reduction measures are focused on earthquakes, leaving infrastructure vulnerable to strong winds and floods.  
© Rodrigo Oropeza/AFP/Getty Images*

The eastern department of Arauca reported around 62,000 displacements, all of which were triggered by floods. Half took place in June and August and the rest in December. Many of the same areas were hit by floods in 2022 and were home to people previously affected by conflict and violence.<sup>311</sup>

**Peru** recorded a significant increase in disaster displacement in 2023 with 188,000 movements, its second highest figure since 2008. Floods and storms in March, particularly in the northern coastal departments of Lambayeque, Piura and La Libertad, accounted for almost 60 per cent of the total.<sup>312</sup> In anticipation of wetter conditions continuing throughout the year, the government extended the state of emergency declared in various regions to ensure local authorities had the capacity to prepare and respond to further flooding.<sup>313</sup>

**Chile** recorded its highest number of disaster displacements since 2008 at 44,000, more than the previous six years combined. A storm that struck the central regions of Biobío, Ñuble and O'Higgins in August accounted for 32,000.<sup>314</sup> The same regions were affected earlier in the year by wildfires that destroyed more than 1,700 homes and triggered around 2,200 displacements. This was the highest wildfire displacement figure in the country since 2017.<sup>315</sup>

## Disaster displacement trends shift in North America

Severe storms, including hurricanes and tornadoes, which tend to account for most disaster displacements in North America, only triggered 315,000 movements in 2023. This was less than half of the figure for 2022 and less than a quarter of the annual average since 2015, when disaggregated data by hazard type first became available.

Hurricane Otis, which struck the state of Guerrero on the Pacific coast of **Mexico** on 25 October, was the region's largest disaster displacement event. It triggered 187,000 movements, the highest figure

for storms ever recorded for the country. It was considered the most powerful storm to have hit Mexico's Pacific coast after intensifying rapidly from a tropical storm to a category 5 hurricane within 12 hours.<sup>316</sup> Otis destroyed around 50,000 homes, prolonging displacement for many of those affected.<sup>317</sup>

Given the area's location on geological fault lines, disaster risk reduction measures were geared more towards earthquakes, and much infrastructure was unable to withstand wind speeds higher than 250 km/h.<sup>318</sup> The winds brought down power lines, while floods and landslides left people without other basic services. Some of the most affected municipalities were in mountainous rural areas, making them harder to reach.<sup>319</sup> Guerrero also has one of the highest poverty levels in the country, which reduced people's resilience to the disaster.<sup>320</sup>

*Hurricane Otis, which struck Mexico in October, was the region's largest disaster displacement event.*

The **United States** (US) usually reports some of the highest disaster displacement figures in the Americas, but it only recorded 202,000 movements in 2023, a more than three-fold fall compared with 2022 and the lowest figure since data became available for the country in 2008. The decrease can be explained by hurricanes and wildfires triggering fewer displacements.

Despite warmer temperatures in the Atlantic basin as a result of the El Niño phenomenon, the number of hurricanes recorded during the season was within the historical average. Only one, however, made landfall in the US, in late August.<sup>321</sup> Hurricane Idalia first cut across the west coast of Cuba as a tropical storm, triggering 13,000 displacements.<sup>322</sup> As it moved towards the US and increased in intensity, evacuation orders were issued in counties across Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, but the number of people

who moved independently could not be determined, leading to a conservative estimate of 57,000 movements.<sup>323</sup>

Beyond Idalia, the largest disaster displacement events in the US were triggered by atmospheric rivers over California in January and February. The heavy rains brought on by these phenomena led to significant flooding, mudslides and debris flows. California had suffered from a historic drought and devastating wildfires in recent years, which left the soil less absorbent of rainfall, heightening the likelihood of flash floods and landslides.<sup>324</sup> Around 52,000 displacements were recorded in January and 28,000 in February.

The US usually records the region's highest figure for wildfire displacements, but they were at their lowest level in nine years in 2023 at 39,000, an almost six-fold decrease from 2022. Around 29,000 occurred on the mainland, mostly in Washington state and California, but almost a quarter were recorded in Hawaii between 8 and 9 August.

Fires particularly affected Lahaina district on the west coast of Maui island, where they destroyed 1,700 homes.<sup>325</sup> Many challenges arose as authorities ordered people to evacuate, highlighting the need to improve disaster preparedness and response, including evacuation guidelines and communication.<sup>326</sup> About 4,200 people were still living in displacement as a result of the Hawaii fires at the end of the year.

**Canada** recorded 185,000 wildfire displacements, its highest figure since data became available in 2013. This was more than the previous six years combined and more than 40 per cent of the global total. The fires started earlier than usual, and the season lasted longer than in previous years, fuelled by the country's hottest summer in 76 years.<sup>327</sup> About 40,000 displacements were reported in Alberta as early as May.<sup>328</sup> Displacement was also recorded in other provinces and in urban areas not usually affected by wildfires (see spotlight, p. 93).

## Record displacement by conflict and violence

The rise in crime-related violence in **Haiti** in great part explains the record figure for displacements triggered by conflict and violence in the region. As violence continued to expand across the country, particularly in the capital of Port-au-Prince, displacement figures rose for the fourth year in a row to reach 245,000.<sup>329</sup>

The escalating violence and insecurity led to the formation of vigilante groups at the start of 2023, to counter the gangs, but their activities also fuelled displacement.<sup>330</sup> Most movements took place in and around the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, at least 80 per cent of which was controlled or influenced by more than 200 gangs.<sup>331</sup> As they expanded their presence outside Ouest department, displacement increased in Centre and Artibonite.<sup>332</sup>

The scale and duration of displacement aggravated the impacts of the crisis, exhausting people's resilience. As a result, the proportion of IDPs living with host families dropped in the second half of the year.<sup>333</sup> More IDPs began sheltering in displacement sites, where they were exposed to significant protection issues, including gender-based violence and health risks such as cholera and other waterborne diseases. The situation was even more precarious in makeshift camps with few basic services.<sup>334</sup>

Nor were people spared from the impacts of disasters. Heavy downpours caused flooding in Port-au-Prince on 3 June, damaging some makeshift camps and shelters in the suburbs of Cité Soleil, Tabarre and Carrefour, some of the poorest in the city, and triggering 9,100 displacements.<sup>335</sup>

Almost 311,000 people were living in internal displacement as a result of violence in Haiti at the end of the year, more than 100 times the figure for 2019 when such data first became available for the country.

**Colombia** continued to report the highest number of conflict displacements in the region at 293,000, down from 339,000 in 2022. The decrease is partly explained by ceasefires agreed between the government and different non-state armed groups (NSAGs). These included the National Liberation Army (ELN), the country's oldest NSAG, and the Central General Staff (EMC), made up of dissidents from the demobilised Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).<sup>336</sup>

The number of clashes between government forces and NSAGs fell by 33 per cent compared with 2022 as a result.<sup>337</sup> Most displacements were triggered by direct attacks against civilians or by clashes between NSAGs trying to expand their territorial presence and activities, including drug production and trafficking, and illegal logging and mining.<sup>338</sup>

*In Colombia, the number of clashes between government forces and non-state armed groups fell significantly.*

Most displacements and confinements were reported in the Pacific region, made up of the departments of Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Valle del Cauca, where African-Colombian and indigenous communities continued to be disproportionately affected (see spotlight, p. 91). A notable increase in displacements and confinements was also recorded in the northern departments of Antioquia and Bolívar and the southern department of Putumayo. Conflict and disasters overlapped in most of these departments, aggravating the impacts of displacement.<sup>339</sup>

Around 5.1 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in Colombia at the end of the year, up from 4.8 million in 2022 and the fourth highest figure globally.





A displaced woman cooks in a school sheltering IDPs in downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The country's record 245,000 displacements in 2023 were the largest number of displacements by crime-related violence globally.  
© Giles Clarke/Getty Images

Data on conflict displacement in **Brazil** has only been available to IDMC since 2021, hampering a more in-depth understanding of trends. That said, 16,000 movements were recorded in 2023, almost triple the figure for 2022, a likely underestimate based only on expulsions and the destruction of homes associated with conflicts over land.

*The rise in crime-related violence in Haiti in great part explains the record figure for displacements triggered by conflict and violence in the region.*

The north-eastern state of Bahia accounted for 7,100 movements, of which 3,300 took place in the second half of July in the municipalities of Barra and Porto Seguro.<sup>340</sup>

**Mexico** recorded 11,000 displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2023, 20 per cent more than in 2022 but still below the decadal average. Chiapas was the most affected state, as a result of fighting between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel. The two groups have historically fought over their strongholds in northern states, but have expanded their presence across Mexico and into Guatemala, with which Chiapas shares a border.<sup>341</sup>

The most significant conflict displacement event of 2023 in Mexico occurred between 21 and 26 May in the town of Frontera Comalapa on the border with Guatemala. Clashes triggered around 4,000 displacements, some of which were in fear of forced recruitment. The groups' closure of main roads restricted further movements.<sup>342</sup>

Around 392,000 people were living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence in Mexico at the end of the year, the highest figure since records began for the country in 2009.

Obtaining data for countries affected by criminal and other forms of violence in Central America continues to be a challenge. The only country where survey data allows an annual picture of internal displacement to be painted is **El Salvador**, where around 66,000 movements were reported this year, the lowest figure since 2014 when data first became available. Survey data also pointed to around 49,000 people living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of 2023.

Data from Honduras and Guatemala was difficult to obtain. **Honduras** recorded 5,100 internal displacements, which should be considered a conservative estimate as it only includes beneficiaries of humanitarian support in some parts of the country. The figure for **Guatemala** was an equally conservative 580. Revealing the scale, scope and complexity of internal displacement in these and other countries experiencing mixed migration flows is key to informing policymaking and operational responses.

# Spotlight – Colombia

## Changing conflict dynamics still disproportionately affect the most vulnerable

Conflict dynamics in Colombia have changed since the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), but the same regions and communities continued to report the highest internal displacement figures in 2023.<sup>343</sup> Based on government data, more than half of the internal displacements associated with conflict and violence took place in the Pacific region, where African-Colombian and indigenous communities continued to be disproportionately affected.<sup>344</sup>

The Pacific region, made up of the departments of Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Valle del Cauca, is strategic for the criminal activities of non-state armed groups (NSAGs). Its rich natural resources, vast littoral and remoteness facilitate drug production and trafficking, and illegal logging and mining.<sup>345</sup> The region's borders with Ecuador and Panama have also fostered increasingly lucrative human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Half a million people are estimated to have crossed the border with Panama through the Darién gap in 2023, compared with an annual average of fewer than 11,000 in the previous decade. Migrants face significant protection risks on the perilous journey to cross the border. There is also increasing evidence of migrants being victims of violent attacks by NSAGs.<sup>346</sup>

Across the region, local populations continue to bear the brunt of the conflict's impacts. After the demobilisation of most FARC members since 2016, other NSAGs have fought to expand and consolidate their economic and territorial presence, especially in rural areas.<sup>347</sup> The state's limited presence has allowed them to exert control over communities, pushing them to flee or trapping them in forced confinement.<sup>348</sup>

Displacement and confinement might appear to be opposites, but they share some triggers and impacts. Both confined and displaced communities tend to lack access to humanitarian aid and some of their needs go unmet, particularly in cases of individual displacement (fewer than ten people) and in areas where fighting and insecurity persist.<sup>349</sup> Confinement often results from the presence of unexploded ordnance and landmine contamination.<sup>350</sup> Some prolonged confinements have led to subsequent large waves of displacement when NSAGs have lifted their restrictions, fuelling further vulnerability and instability.<sup>351</sup>

As with displacement, African-Colombian and indigenous communities in the Pacific region are also disproportionately affected by confinement. The differentiated impacts are clear in the data disaggregated by ethnic group, which shows that 62 per cent of the displacements in the region and 94 per cent of the cases of confinement were of African-Colombian or indigenous communities. In Nariño, the department where most displacements were recorded in Colombia in 2023, 75 per cent were from African-Colombian or indigenous communities. This is despite their representing over 33 per cent of the department's population.<sup>352</sup>

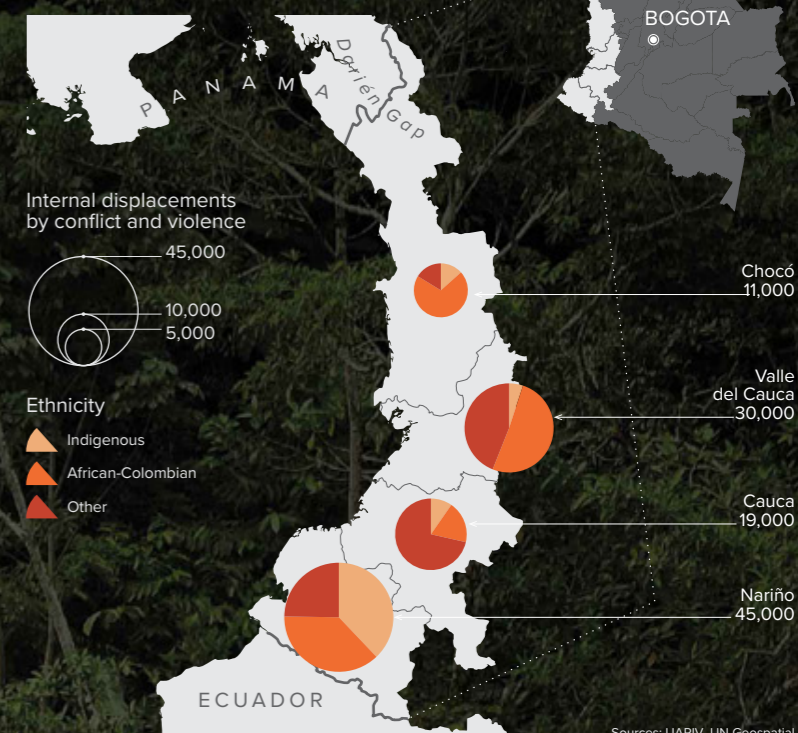
Across the Pacific, assassinations, forced recruitment, threats and attacks on schools are among the reasons vulnerable communities have been forced to flee. Their displacement harms, in turn, their social fabric and resilience and slows down implementation of the 2016 agreement, which has an ethnic chapter calling for the respect of indigenous and African-Colombian communities' land rights and security guarantees.<sup>353</sup> Acknowledging that implementation has fallen behind, the office of the country's vice president has identified

nine priority areas for these communities, including access to land, development programmes and stronger self-protection mechanisms.<sup>354</sup>

The Victim's Registry, a monitoring and reporting mechanism that tracks victims of the conflict, including IDPs, is useful to provide key information to understand displacement dynamics and the different impacts on certain population groups.<sup>355</sup> Other mechanisms including the Monitoring, Promotion, and Verification Commission for the Implementation of the Final Agreement, which was put in place by the government in October 2022, are equally useful in following up on the situation in different territories and communities as the basis for prioritising humanitarian aid and reparations.<sup>356</sup>

# 106,000

internal displacements by conflict and violence in the Pacific region



Members of a non-state armed group on patrol in Chocó, Colombia. Even after the 2016 peace agreement, instability in the Pacific region continues to trigger displacements and forced confinements with a disproportionate impact on indigenous and African-Colombian populations. © Daniel Muñoz/AFP/Getty Images

# Spotlight – Canada

## Record wildfires spread to urban areas

Canada's hottest summer in 76 years fuelled the country's most destructive wildfire season on record in 2023, when almost seven times more land than the annual average was burnt.<sup>357</sup> The extent of the fires was such that they produced nearly a quarter of the year's global wildfire carbon emissions.<sup>358</sup> They also triggered 185,000 internal displacements, the highest figure since data became available for the country in 2008 and 43 per cent of the global figure for wildfires. The fires' scale and impacts highlighted the need to strengthen the country's risk reduction measures, evacuation protocols and overall disaster resilience.<sup>359</sup>

Wildfires regularly affect Canada's vast boreal forests and prairies, putting small communities living at the urban-wildland interface at heightened risk of displacement, housing damage and loss of livelihood year after year. Indigenous communities, 80 per cent of which live in areas highly exposed to wildfires, particularly suffer from repeated displacement, although no systematic data is available.<sup>360</sup> Examples exist, however, such as the Lytton First Nation reserve in British Columbia, which had to be evacuated for the third consecutive year in 2023.<sup>361</sup>

Beyond higher hazard exposure, this trend is partly explained by an approach to fire management based on population density and property value.<sup>362</sup> As such, limited investment, including in infrastructure, has constrained remote communities' ability to implement disaster risk reduction measures and recover swiftly from the impacts of disaster displacement.<sup>363</sup>

Communities living in large urban agglomerations have generally been spared displacement, but this trend shifted during the 2023 wildfire season, when

almost half of the movements recorded took place in urban areas. The largest event of the year, which accounted for nearly a quarter of the total displacements countrywide in 2023, occurred in mid-August when a fire broke out near the cities of Kelowna and West Kelowna in British Columbia. As it approached the west bank of Okanagan Lake, which splits both cities, authorities issued evacuation orders for 45,000 people, more than all the displacements recorded nationwide during the severe 2021 wildfire season.<sup>364</sup>

Another 23,000 displacements were linked to the evacuation of Yellowknife, which is home to half of the Northwest Territories' population.<sup>365</sup> It was the first year wildfire displacement was recorded in the sparsely populated territory and such a large-scale evacuation was unforeseen. Despite the armed forces' intervention and the provision of additional flights, numerous challenges arose.<sup>366</sup> The only highway out of the city was heavily congested as some people had to drive 1,500 kilometres to find emergency accommodation in the neighbouring province of Alberta.<sup>367</sup>

On the other side of the country, the eastern province of Nova Scotia, which usually enjoys a more temperate climate, reported its biggest wildfire on record in late June.<sup>368</sup> The blaze triggered almost 17,000 evacuations from the suburbs of the capital, Halifax, and the rarity of the event caught many unprepared. Some residents struggled to find evacuation routes or reliable information on how to respond to the threat.<sup>369</sup>

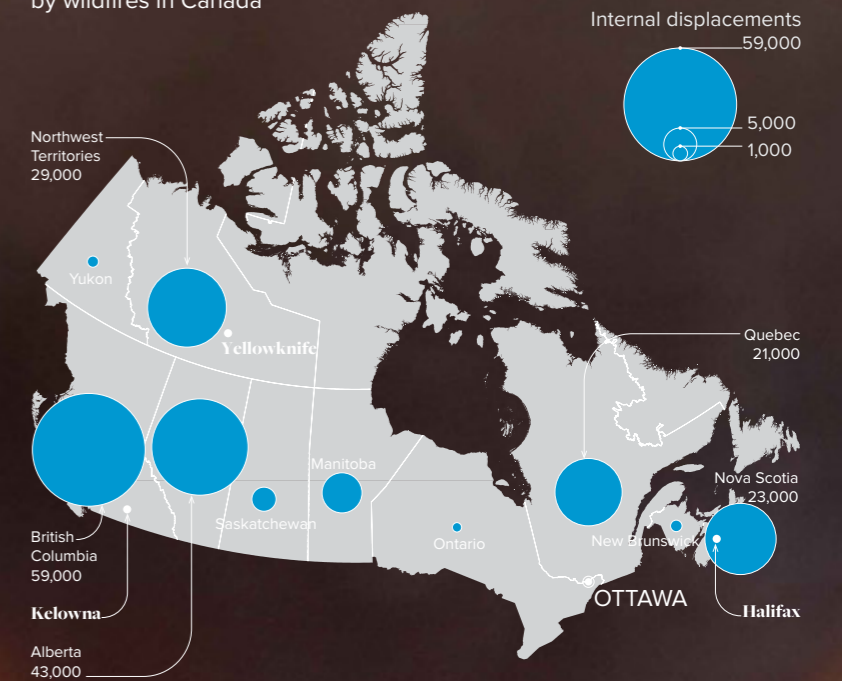
Mindful that wildfires are likely to become more intense and destructive as global temperatures rise, the Canadian government has taken steps to strengthen disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

Its first national risk profile, published in 2023, sets out concrete measures to further reduce wildfire risk.<sup>370</sup> The government has also invested in the FireSmart programme, which raises public awareness about risky behaviours, advises on the use of fireproof building materials and reinforces evacuation protocols.<sup>371</sup> The FireSmart programmes for some indigenous communities integrate traditional knowledge and cultural norms and values into their provisions.<sup>372</sup> Indigenous knowledge, including about controlled burns and the planting of fire-resistant tree species, is also being considered in other fire-management strategies and plans.<sup>373</sup>

The need to decentralise responses has also been highlighted in disaster risk management and climate adaptation strategies, which see the role of provincial authorities as key.<sup>374</sup> In British Columbia, which has experienced four of its most severe wildfire seasons since 1919 in the last seven years, the seasonal wildfire service was changed to a year-round one in 2022.<sup>375</sup> Taken together, these initiatives should help to reduce future wildfire displacement risk.

# 185,000

internal displacements  
by wildfires in Canada



Sources: IDMC based on data from governmental authorities, UN Geospatial

Residents watch the McDougall Creek wildfire in West Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. In 2023, fires triggered the highest number of internal displacements since data became available for the country, many in previously less affected urban areas. © Darren Hull/AFP/Getty Images



# Europe & Central Asia

Women and children walk past a building in Iskenderun, Türkiye, destroyed by earthquakes in February. The quakes triggered four million displacements, one of the largest disaster displacement events ever recorded. © Aziz Karimov/Getty Images

## Internally displaced people (IDPs)

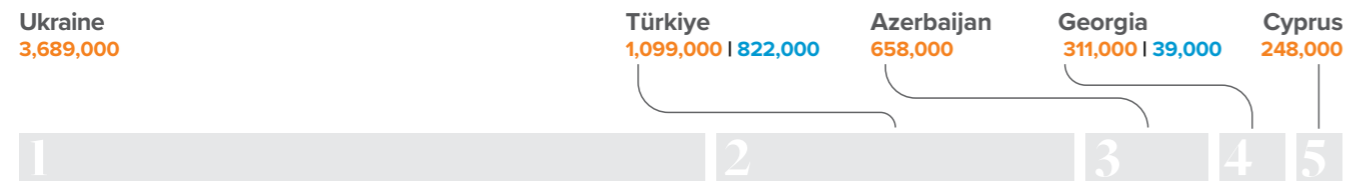
**7.2m**  
at the end of 2023

**10%**  
Share of the  
global total

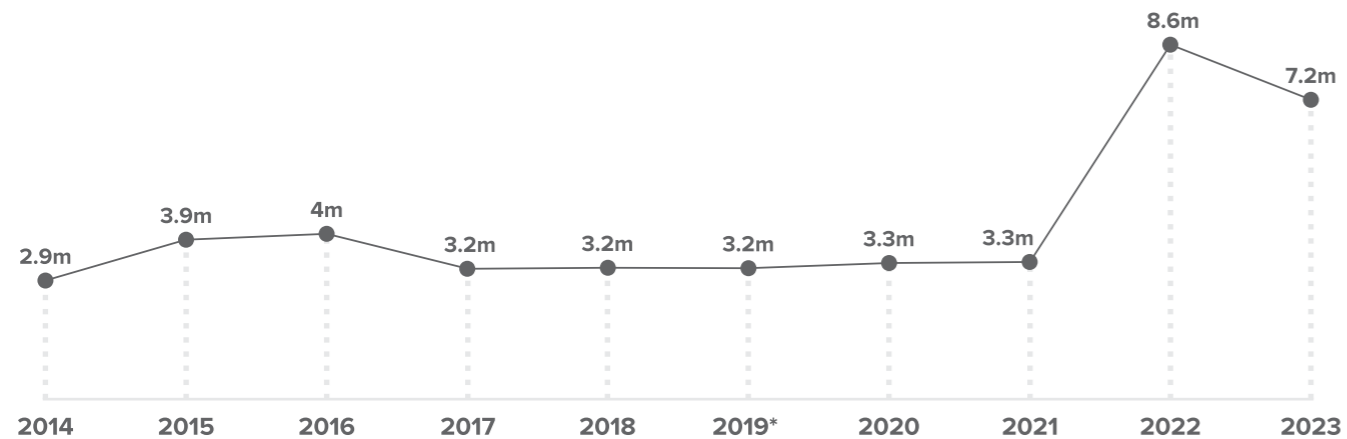
**6.4m**  
IDPs by conflict  
and violence

**866,000**  
IDPs by  
disasters

### Countries with the most IDPs



### Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



Total number of IDPs in millions  
\*First year disaster data is available

## Internal displacements (movements)

**5.1m**  
during 2023

**11%**  
Share of the  
global total

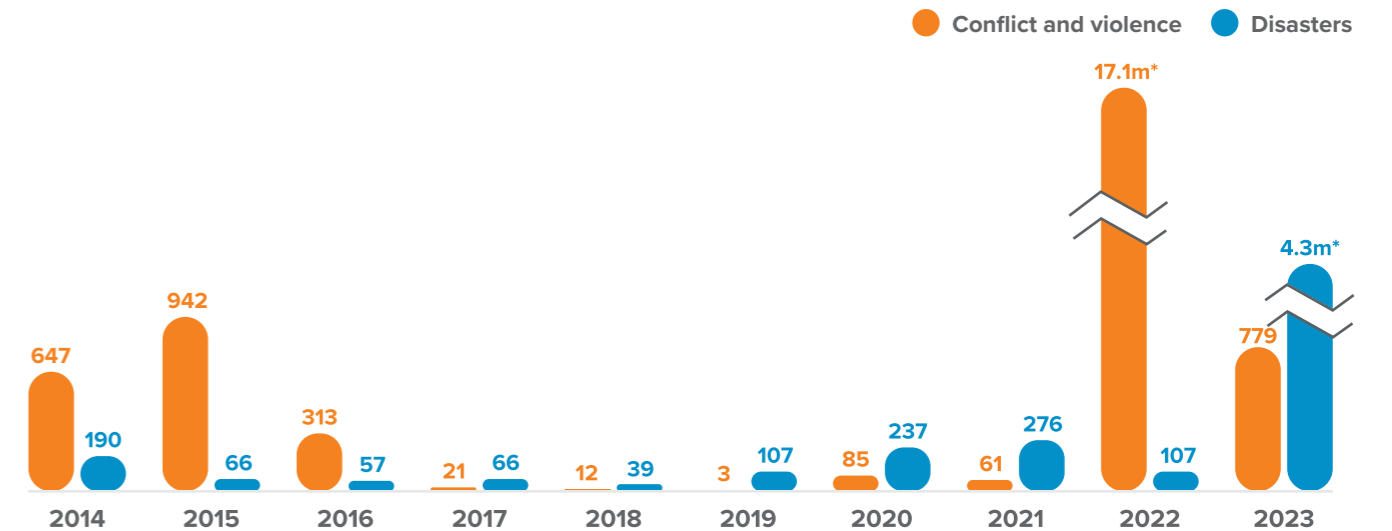
**779,000**  
Internal displacements  
by conflict and violence

**4.3m**  
Internal displacements  
by disasters

### Countries with the most internal displacements



### Internal displacements (2014-2023)



Internal displacements in thousands  
\*in millions

Numbers of IDPs are the total as of the end of 2023. Internal displacements are the total number for all of 2023. All data on these two pages is for Europe and Central Asia.

## Europe & Central Asia

Around 5.1 million internal displacements were recorded in Europe and Central Asia in 2023. Disasters accounted for 4.3 million, and conflict and violence for 779,000. The former figure is by far the highest since data became available for the region in 2008. It was mostly the result of the earthquakes that struck Türkiye in February and which triggered four million movements, making them the largest disaster displacement event of the year globally (see spotlight, p. 103).

Greece recorded its highest number of wildfire displacements, driving up the regional figure to almost a quarter of the global total. Storms and floods triggered 103,000 movements across the entire region, ten times more than in 2022.

Conflict displacement figures decreased from 171 million in 2022 to 779,000 in 2023 as the front lines in the war between Ukraine and Russia remained relatively unchanged during the year. The conflict still accounted for 99 per cent of the region's conflict displacements.

*The war between Russia and Ukraine accounted for 99 per cent of the region's conflict displacements.*

Around 7.2 million people were living in internal displacement across the region at the end of the year, about ten per cent of the global total. Of these, 6.4 million had fled conflict and violence, of whom 3.7 million were in Ukraine. The remaining 2.7 million were people living in protracted displacement from conflict in previous years and even decades. In terms of disasters, 866,000 people were still living in displacement as of the end of the year, of whom 822,000 were still displaced following the Türkiye earthquakes.



*A student stands in what is left of his school in Novohryhorivka, Ukraine. At the end of 2023, 3.7 million people were living in internal displacement in the country as a result of conflict and violence, by far the most of any in the region.*

© UNICEF/UNI431074/Filippov



Burnt forest in a coastal neighborhood near Alexandroupolis, Greece. The country recorded 76,000 displacements by wildfires in 2023, its highest number on record.  
© Athanasios Gioumpasis/Getty Images

## An increase in disaster displacement

Beyond the earthquakes that struck Türkiye in February, which triggered one of the highest numbers of disaster displacements globally since records began in 2008, Europe and Central Asia recorded 229,000 other movements associated with disasters, more than double the figure for 2022. This was in large part the result of an increase in wildfire, storm and flood displacements around the Mediterranean basin.

**Greece** reported the highest figures with 91,000 displacements, including 76,000 associated with wildfires. As in other parts of Europe, extreme summer heat fuelled the fires.<sup>376</sup> The largest displacement event took place north of Athens in Mount Parnitha on 22 August, when more than 35,000 movements were recorded.<sup>377</sup> The second largest displacement event happened simultaneously in Psachna in central Greece, with almost 11,000 movements.<sup>378</sup>

Just a few days later, the north of the country suffered the largest wildfire in the EU since records began in 2000.<sup>379</sup> It triggered relatively fewer displacements, at about 5,600, but it caused significant damage. The main hospital in Alexandroupolis, one of the areas that was worst affected, had to be evacuated, and patients and doctors were transferred to a ferry adapted to serve as a temporary facility.<sup>380</sup>

*The earthquakes that struck Türkiye triggered one of the highest numbers of disaster displacements globally since records began in 2008.*

After weeks of wildfires and dry conditions, storm Daniel, an uncommon Mediterranean storm, made landfall in central Greece on 4 September. It brought record precipitation and floods that triggered almost 11,000 displacements. Around 70 per cent of the flooded area

was agricultural land, which affected crops and livestock in one of Greece's breadbaskets.<sup>381</sup>

The storm also led to around 250 displacements in Bulgaria and Türkiye, but north-eastern Libya suffered the worst impact when two dams burst near the city of Derna, triggering more than 52,000 displacements (see spotlight, p. 53).

Storm Elias hit some of the same areas in Greece, including the port of Volos, three weeks later. It triggered almost 4,600 displacements, many in the form of pre-emptive evacuations. The authorities faced challenges in responding to Elias because they were still dealing with the impacts of Daniel.<sup>382</sup>

An exceptional storm struck **Slovenia** in early August, leading to the largest disaster in the country's history. It prompted the government to activate the national emergency response plan for floods and organise around 8,000 evacuations. The floods, which affected nearly two-thirds of the country, blocked main roads, destroyed bridges and triggered landslides, leaving some areas inaccessible for days.<sup>383</sup>

In neighbouring **Italy**, a storm struck the northern region of Emilia-Romagna, triggering 36,000 internal displacements between 16 and 20 May. Heavy rainfall caused several rivers to burst their banks, leading to significant flooding and hundreds of landslides across 37 municipalities. The storm hit in the aftermath of flooding that the regional authorities had been able to manage two weeks earlier.<sup>384</sup>

As heavy rainfall persisted, however, Italy's Civil Protection Department had to intervene to support the relief and response efforts.<sup>385</sup> More than 8,000 people sheltered in hotels and public buildings, mostly in the Ravenna area, while others took refuge in Bologna and Forlì-Cesena.<sup>386</sup> Some older people and others with disabilities were trapped in their homes.<sup>387</sup>

Italy also registered its highest number of wildfire displacements since records began in 2008, with 3,000 movements.<sup>388</sup> Two-thirds involved evacuations in Sicily in July. Italy's total is relatively low compared with other countries affected by wildfires, but it has increased significantly since 2020.

**France**, by contrast, recorded a significant decrease in wildfire-related displacements in 2023 after its worst wildfire season on record in 2022, going from 45,000 displacements to 3,300. The reduction can be attributed, in part, to increased rainfall across most of the country and lessons learned from the 2022 season.

The government unveiled a pre-emptive wildfire strategy in late 2022 that included more financial resources, heightened surveillance of at-risk areas and technological improvements. There were still a similar number of fires in 2023, but significantly less area was burnt and there were fewer displacements because the blazes were tackled early.<sup>389</sup>

*After its worst wildfire season on record in 2022, France unveiled a pre-emptive wildfire strategy that included more financial resources, heightened surveillance and technological improvements.*

Only four wildfire displacement events were recorded during the year, with most movements taking place in the department of Pyrénées-Orientales on the border with Spain, which suffered one of its worst droughts ever.<sup>390</sup> A fire in mid-August, stoked by a heatwave, dry conditions and high winds, triggered 3,000 evacuations.<sup>391</sup> It destroyed homes, leaving 17 people still displaced at the end of the year. The same department had already been affected by a fire in mid-April, earlier than the usual wildfire season, which triggered 300 displacements.<sup>392</sup>

**Spain** accounted for almost a quarter of the region's wildfire displacements with 24,000, the second highest figure on record for the country. In contrast to previous years, however, only 4,000 were recorded on the mainland, with the Canary Islands accounting for the vast majority.

Wildfires struck La Palma, which had suffered a volcanic eruption two years before, prompting nearly 4,300 evacuations in mid-July.<sup>393</sup> A large fire on Tenerife a month later triggered more than 12,000, and it reignited in early October, leading to another 3,300 movements.<sup>394</sup>

*Spain accounted for almost a quarter of the region's wildfire displacements with 24,000.*

**Russia** registered nearly 15,000 displacements, its highest figure since 2014. The remnants of typhoon Khanun, which made landfall in South Korea in mid-August before hitting Primorye in Russia's Far East region, accounted for 5,000.<sup>395</sup> The same area was affected by another storm at the end of August, triggering an additional 7,100 movements.

In **Iceland**, increased seismic and volcanic activity near the fishing town of Grindavík prompted the government to evacuate the entire town of 3,700 people on 13 November. More fissures opened up in the weeks that followed and further eruptions prolonged the population's displacement. No one had been able to permanently return to their home as of the end of the year.<sup>396</sup>

The scale of disasters in Europe in 2023 highlighted the need to increase disaster management resources and invest in risk reduction measures to change trends and improve regional cooperation, including with the support of the EU, to prevent future displacement.<sup>397</sup>

## Conflict and violence

**Ukraine** recorded 714,000 movements in 2023, a conservative figure given the lack of comprehensive data in parts of the country occupied by Russia. For those who went back to their home areas during the year, return did not necessarily mean they achieved a durable solution to their displacement (see spotlight, p. 105).

Around 319,000 returnees from abroad went back to a life of internal displacement, joining the rest of the country's internally displaced people (IDPs), mostly in the oblasts of Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>398</sup> To address the challenges faced by the displaced population, in April the government approved a national strategy on internal displacement for 2023 to 2025.<sup>399</sup>

*Ukraine approved a national strategy on internal displacement for 2023 to 2025.*

**Russia** recorded 60,000 displacements, a significant increase from the 7,100 reported in 2022 and a record figure for the country. All the movements took place in Belgorod oblast in the first week of June, following cross-border shelling from Ukraine.<sup>400</sup> The majority of those displaced sought shelter with family and friends, but around 8,000 took refuge in temporary accommodation centres set up by the local government.<sup>401</sup> All those displaced were estimated to remain in a situation of internal displacement at the end of the year.

Elsewhere in the region, a military operation carried out by government forces in Khankendi, the capital of the Karabagh region of **Azerbaijan**, triggered 5,100 internal displacements on 19 September.<sup>402</sup> Russian peacekeepers supported the evacuation of people to a base camp, which most had left by 28 September.<sup>403</sup> The offensive also led to significant cross-border movements into Armenia.<sup>404</sup>

Nearly 4,400 IDPs returned during the year to territories Azerbaijan regained at the end of hostilities with Armenia in 2020, joining around 300 who did so in 2022. Around 658,000 people, however, were still living in displacement at the end of 2023. With the support of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the government has put in place initiatives to support IDPs' self-reliance, including programmes to empower women, and has provided IDPs with legal support and social assistance.<sup>405</sup>

Azerbaijan is among the countries in the region that account for and follow up on the situation of IDPs living in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and violence. Others include Ukraine, Georgia, Cyprus, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which maintain registries.

## Spotlight – Türkiye

### Earthquakes trigger largest disaster displacement event of 2023

Türkiye experienced a devastating disaster in February 2023 when two earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 and 7.5 and their aftershocks led to extensive death, destruction and displacement. The epicentres were in Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, but other provinces, in particular Adiyaman, Gaziantep and Malatya were also affected. Four million internal displacements were recorded, making it the world's largest disaster displacement event of the year.

The intensity of the earthquakes, the age of some buildings and noncompliance with construction standards all contributed to the severity of their impacts.<sup>406</sup> Tens of thousands of homes were destroyed and many damaged buildings that were still standing had to be demolished, prolonging displacement for many.<sup>407</sup>

Responding to such a large disaster posed significant challenges and required cross-sector mobilisation and coordination. More than 271,000 rescue personnel and nearly 1.4 million volunteers were deployed to help distribute aid and set up tents, while international emergency teams and the private sector provided financial and technical support.<sup>408</sup> Damage to health and water infrastructure created sanitation issues, and IDPs' mental health and psychosocial needs increased as they struggled with homelessness, family separation, loss of loved ones, post-traumatic stress and uncertainty about their future.<sup>409</sup>

IDPs' most pressing need in the immediate aftermath of the disaster was for shelter. The government set up hundreds of thousands of tents and repurposed hotels and public buildings. It also offered rental support and an option to move to container sites.<sup>410</sup> Most people initially chose to receive rental support, but demand for accommodation led to steep price increases.<sup>411</sup> For example, rental

costs in Gaziantep rose by 47 per cent between February and April, prompting authorities to introduce a temporary cap on increases in earthquake-affected provinces.<sup>412</sup>

Refugees from Syria were also affected by the earthquakes. Around 12,000 were still living in tents and 3,000 in informal sites as of October 2023.<sup>413</sup> Unemployment, the rising cost of living and disruption of children's education were some of the main challenges they faced.<sup>414</sup>

Those IDPs in makeshift shelters gradually moved to container cities during the year. This improved their living conditions and access to services, but they are likely to be living in such circumstances for some time, with local authorities estimating that the containers will be in use for at least three years.<sup>415</sup> Extensive reconstruction efforts were ongoing at the end of the year, but around 822,000 people were still living in internal displacement as of 31 December.<sup>416</sup>

To accelerate the response and improve IDPs' access to assistance and services, the government established an online system to issue temporary identity documents.<sup>417</sup> Türkiye's Catastrophe Insurance Pool had paid out more than \$340 million to policyholders by the end of March.<sup>418</sup> The private sector was also significantly involved in the response. National business federations set up a helpdesk to coordinate offers of in-kind support and provided transport, food and non-food items worth \$11 million. Also, the Connecting Business initiative, a joint undertaking by OCHA and UNDP, coordinated offers of support from a wide range of international private sector entities.<sup>419</sup>

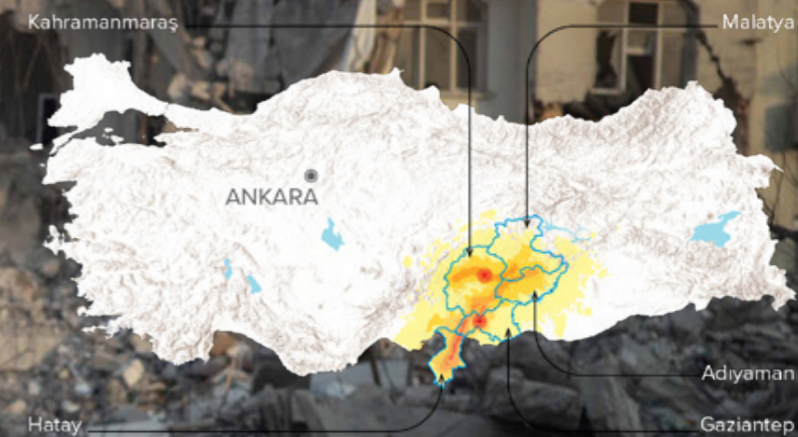
The earthquakes' impacts underscored the need to improve preparedness, continue to invest in retrofitting buildings and making infrastructure more resilient, and apply and

enforce building regulations. That said, Türkiye's extensive experience in disaster risk management helped in the response and recovery efforts. The country's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority was key to ensuring that interventions were well coordinated, including via robust data management and local disaster risk reduction policies.<sup>420</sup> These initiatives, and the lessons learned from this major disaster, will help to reduce future disaster displacement risk and support IDPs in achieving durable solutions.<sup>421</sup>

Earthquake intensity  
(based on Modified Mercalli Scale)

- Violent
- Severe
- Very Strong
- Strong
- Epicentre

**4 million**  
internal displacements  
by earthquakes in Türkiye



Sources: USGS Earthquake Hazards Program; UN Geospatial; ESRI

*A couple looks at destroyed buildings in Hatay, an epicenter of major earthquakes that struck Türkiye in February. Extensive loss of housing and the need to demolish damaged buildings mean extensive reconstruction efforts are required to provide durable solutions for IDPs.*  
© Chris McGrath via Getty Images



# Spotlight – Ukraine

## Durable solutions a distant prospect for many IDPs

Ongoing fighting between Russian and Ukrainian armed forces continued to trigger displacement in 2023, particularly in the east and south of Ukraine, but the number of IDPs in the country fell by a third to 3.7 million as of the end of the year. This decrease is explained by people returning to their place of origin and others leaving the country. However, for many of the 4.5 million people estimated to have returned, doing so did not necessarily result in a durable solution to their displacement.<sup>422</sup>

For both returnees and those trying to integrate locally, finding affordable housing, livelihood opportunities and an enabling environment were among the persistent challenges they faced.<sup>423</sup> Half of the IDPs surveyed in September said housing damage and destruction was one of the main factors hindering their sustainable return. Most also said they had exhausted their savings, leaving them unable to afford to repair or reconstruct their homes, particularly in areas retaken by the Ukrainian armed forces, which suffered some of the most significant damage.<sup>424</sup>

In response, the government has provided financial support to help IDPs find accommodation and rebuild their homes. It has also drafted a law to increase the availability of affordable housing at the municipal level, including through the construction of social and cooperative units. This process was accompanied by the development of a municipal investment tracker to ensure transparency and the effective allocation of resources.<sup>425</sup>

Under-registration on the government's official registry of IDPs, in part a consequence of the dynamic nature of displacement,

including repeated and, in some cases, pendular movements, continued to be an issue. Without proof of their displacement status, some IDPs were unable to access government services and support.<sup>426</sup> The incomplete registry also impeded full understanding of how many people need assistance and where.

IDPs' needs differed depending on their gender and age. Seventeen per cent of internally displaced women, for example, said they found it difficult to access work and livelihoods, compared with ten per cent of their male counterparts, while a higher percentage of the latter were living in precarious accommodation.<sup>427</sup> Older people, who account for almost a quarter of all IDPs, struggled to meet their basic needs, with many living in poverty and sometimes struggling to obtain information and services because they lacked digital literacy.<sup>428</sup>

Social cohesion became a growing concern during the year. Around 20 per cent of IDPs reported tensions with their host communities, mainly the result of perceived unequal access to cash assistance. Tensions differed across the country but tended to be reported more in western regions. In Lviv oblast, for example, IDPs' political, cultural or linguistic differences were more frequently quoted as a source of tension.<sup>429</sup> These variations highlight the need for targeted interventions to foster local integration and sustainable returns.

IDP councils continued to play a significant role in coordinating assistance and early recovery at the local level. They worked with municipal authorities and non-governmental organizations to facilitate cooperation, to ensure that

interventions reflected IDPs' immediate challenges and to improve IDPs' participation in political affairs. Created in 2019 to support those displaced since 2014, these grassroots entities were made a priority in the 2023-2025 national strategy on IDPs, attesting to their relevance and ensuring they endure.<sup>430</sup> They are also a strong example of good practice that recognises and takes advantage of IDPs' agency over their own situations.

*The remains of a residential building stand in Izyum, Ukraine. Housing damage and destruction was one of the main factors hindering sustainable returns. © UNICEF/UNI450828/Pashkina*

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# Summary of key figures

Country	Internal displacements during 2023 (disasters)	Internal displacements during 2023 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (conflict and violence)
Abyei Area	1,000	7,900	4,400	42,000
Afghanistan	418,000		1,502,000	4,187,000
Albania	13			
Algeria	23,000		3,900	
Angola	79,000		26,000	
Antigua and Barbuda	300			
Argentina	9,800		14	
Armenia				7,600
Australia	4,700		1,300	
Austria	670		4	
Azerbaijan	1,700	5,100		658,000
Bangladesh	1,791,000		55,000	426,000
Barbados	29			
Belarus	48			
Belgium	100			
Benin		6,500		8,800
Bolivia	3,800		800	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	130			91,000
Botswana	99		99	
Brazil	745,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Bulgaria	250			
Burkina Faso	24,000	707,000		2,063,000
Burundi	21,000	230	66,000	8,100
Cambodia	46,000		5,200	
Cameroon	2,900	164,000	31,000	1,044,000
Canada	192,000		700	
Central African Republic	70,000	214,000		512,000
Chad	16,000	118,000	86,000	452,000
Chile	44,000		5,000	
China	4,702,000		639,000	
Colombia	351,000	293,000		5,077,000
Congo	159,000		4,700	
Costa Rica	290			
Côte d'Ivoire	1,200			
Croatia	86			
Cuba	42,000		290	
Cyprus	57			248,000
Czech Republic	64			
Dem. Rep. Congo	133,000	3,772,000	147,000	6,734,000
Denmark	530			
Dominican Republic	41,000		390	
Ecuador	16,000		4,900	
Egypt	8			
El Salvador	5,300	66,000		49,000

As part of a methodological revision, some figures published may differ from previous publications due to retroactive changes or the inclusion of previously unavailable data. The countries and territories concerned were: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Puerto Rico, Russia and Uganda.

Blank cells mean no data was available on those metrics.

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Country	Internal displacements during 2023 (disasters)	Internal displacements during 2023 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (conflict and violence)
Ethiopia	618,000	794,000	881,000	2,852,000
Fiji	6,700		350	
Finland	2			
France	7,900		23	
Gabon	900		820	
Gambia	5,300			5,700
Georgia	850		39,000	311,000
Germany	3,300		100	
Ghana	47,000	680	39,000	3,800
Greece	91,000			
Guam	1,600			
Guatemala	48,000	580		242,000
Guinea	35,000		2,600	
Guyana	40		30	
Haiti	9,800	245,000	2,600	311,000
Honduras	5,800	5,100		101,000
Hong Kong, China	1,300			
Hungary	66			
Iceland	4,600		3,400	
India	528,000	67,000	90,000	613,000
Indonesia	238,000	2,200	9,000	55,000
Iran	124,000		25	
Iraq	36,000	21,000	135,000	1,124,000
Ireland	17			
Isle of Man	5			
Israel	42	203,000		200,000
Italy	42,000		5	
Japan	8,600		30,000	
Jersey	84			
Jordan	340			
Kazakhstan	1,700			120
Kenya	641,000	7,700	131,000	40,000
Korea	40,000		6,000	
Kosovo	1,100			16,000
Kyrgyzstan	39			4,000
Lao PDR	1,100		1,100	
Lebanon	170	139,000		74,000
Liberia	14,000		170	
Libya	53,000	1,700		119,000
Macao, China	3,100			
Madagascar	117,000			2,800
Malawi	660,000		26,000	
Malaysia	206,000		9,800	

Country	Internal displacements during 2023 (disasters)	Internal displacements during 2023 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (conflict and violence)
Maldives	54		54	
Mali	1,300	152,000	8,000	344,000
Mauritania	1,100			
Mauritius	2,300		73	
Mexico	196,000	11,000		392,000
Micronesia	5			
Mongolia	3,900		1,100	
Montenegro	1			
Morocco	146,000		146,000	
Mozambique	655,000	41,000	115,000	592,000
Myanmar	995,000	1,298,000	235,000	2,625,000
Namibia	650		620	
Nepal	110,000		43,000	
New Caledonia	2			150
New Zealand	14,000		2,300	
Nicaragua	660	280		1,300
Niger	95,000	181,000	32,000	347,000
Nigeria	166,000	291,000	81,000	3,340,000
North Macedonia				110
Northern Mariana Islands	1,100			
Norway	5,800			
Oman	4,500			
Pakistan	732,000	2,800	1,216,000	23,000
Palestine		3,438,000		1,710,000
Panama	26			
Papua New Guinea	13,000	2,000	7,500	87,000
Paraguay	16,000			
Peru	188,000			75,000
Philippines	2,594,000	160,000	291,000	113,000
Portugal	1,700			
Réunion	80			
Romania	51			
Russia	15,000	60,000	1,200	60,000
Rwanda	70,000		24,000	
Samoa	14			
Senegal				8,400
Serbia	400			194,000
Sierra Leone				3,000
Slovakia	86			
Slovenia	8,200		10	
Solomon Islands	640		640	1,000
Somalia	2,043,000	673,000		3,862,000
South Africa	20,000	620	6,000	620
South Sudan	167,000	282,000	563,000	1,121,000

Country	Internal displacements during 2023 (disasters)	Internal displacements during 2023 (conflict and violence)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (disasters)	Total number of IDPs at the end of 2023 (conflict and violence)
Spain	24,000			
Sri Lanka	17,000		1,400	12,000
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	150			
Sudan	58,000	6,039,000		9,053,000
Switzerland	410		79	
Syria	702,000	174,000		7,248,000
Taiwan, China	18,000		1,200	
Tajikistan	5,100		24	
Tanzania	46,000		31,000	
Thailand	2,800		19	41,000
Togo		12,000		18,000
Tunisia	2,600			
Türkiye	4,053,000		822,000	1,099,000
Uganda	50,000	640	150	4,800
Ukraine	600	714,000		3,689,000
United Kingdom	4,600			
United States	202,000		19,000	
Uruguay	4,300		60	
Vanuatu	69,000		2,400	
Venezuela	730		500	
Viet Nam	68,000		2,600	
Yemen	240,000	80,000		4,516,000
Zambia	9,300		9,000	
Zimbabwe	690		610	

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# How to read our data

## INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS

### Internal displacements (“flows”)

An “internal displacement” refers to each new forced movement of person within the borders of their country recorded during the year.

## TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs

### Total number of IDPs (“stocks”)

The “total number of IDPs” is a snapshot of all the people living in internal displacement at the end of the year.

### What is repeated displacement?

Repeated displacement is when someone is forced to move more than once. Some people become displaced a number of times before finding a solution to their displacement.

 x1	 x2	 x3
100 people were displaced for the first time	100 people displaced twice is counted as 200	100 people displaced three times is counted as 300

A mother and daughter are forced to flee their city in country X when fighting between rival gangs breaks out, resulting in two internal displacements



There were already eight people living in internal displacement as a result of previous conflicts. Two more are added to the total number of IDPs.



Heightened insecurity in the host community sheltering the mother and daughter forces them to flee to a displacement camp.



This counts as a further two internal displacements, but the number of people living in internal displacement stays the same.



An attack on the camp forces the mother and daughter and two other IDPs to flee again in search of safety, in other words triggering four more internal displacements.



Meanwhile two of the 10 people living in internal displacement are able to return home.



We count eight internal displacements triggered by conflict in country X at the end of the year.



$$2+2+4=8$$

We count a total of eight people as living in internal displacement at the end of the year.



$$8+2-2=8$$

### Why is the total number of IDPs sometimes higher than the number of internal displacements?

Because the total number of IDPs includes people displaced in previous years and still living in internal displacement.

Previous years	+	Current year	=	Total number of IDPs
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**Every day, people flee conflict and disasters and become displaced inside their own countries. IDMC provides data and analysis and supports partners to identify and implement solutions to internal displacement.**

**Join us as we work to make real and lasting change for internally displaced people in the decade ahead.**



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