# Global Displacement Forecast 2026

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL 70 YEARS

*Supporting refugees and displaced towards a dignified life*

**About DRC**
The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) operates in 40 countries worldwide. We work with humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities to ensure a dignified life for refugees, the displaced, and displacement-affected people. We work in conflict-affected areas, along displacement routes, and in the countries where refugees settle. Our work includes everything from relief operations to strengthening opportunities for a brighter future for refugees and internally displaced people.

**About the Foresight Model**
The Foresight model can, with a high degree of accuracy, forecast the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people one to three years into the future. The model uses more than 120 indicators related to conflict, governance, economy, environment and population/society to forecast future displacement. The model has been employed to forecast the cumulative number of people displaced from 27 countries. The countries included in the model account for approximately 92% of all global displacement. Of the 271 forecasts made so far for the coming years' displacement, 136 have been <10% of the actual number of people living in displacement in the coming year.

The forecasts tend to be conservative, i.e. underestimate the level of displacement in the coming year. The Foresight model also has limited ability to forecast unprecedented events or high surges in displacement.

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# Executive summary

## Key messages

The current global asylum and refugee hosting architecture rests on an increasingly fragile assumption: that neighbouring low and lower-middle-income countries will continue to absorb the majority of large-scale displacement, despite persistent conflict, intensifying climate stress, and contracting external financing. Many of these states are themselves classified as fragile or conflict-affected, and sustained hosting without commensurate support from the international community risks reinforcing cycles of fragility and cross-border instability.

Recent trends in 2025 show that large-scale returns can reduce overall displacement figures without addressing the structural drivers of displacement or restoring conditions needed for sustainable reintegration. In contexts marked by ongoing violence, restricted access, and limited institutional capacity, such returns are unlikely to meet the criteria for durable solutions and may instead increase the risk of renewed displacement.

The DRC forecasts presented in this report point to continued growth in displacement, concentrated in fragile and climate-exposed contexts, with three structural drivers converging:

1. Ongoing conflict and institutional fragility remain the primary drivers of large-scale displacement. Elevated levels of violence against civilians, limited capacity and political space to resolve disputes through negotiated and non-violent means, and limited state capacity to deliver security and basic services continue to generate movement within and across borders.
2. Climate stress and natural resource pressure are increasingly interacting with existing fragility, compounding displacement risk in already vulnerable contexts.
3. Constrained financing environments are weakening both prevention and response systems. Reductions in official development assistance, including peacebuilding and resilience financing, alongside underfunded humanitarian response plans, are associated with higher subsequent displacement pressures in fragile settings.

These dynamics carry direct implications: Humanitarian access will remain constrained in many high-risk contexts, limiting protection monitoring and response capacity precisely where needs are rising. Returns will increase under pressure, particularly from saturated host countries, but many will occur in environments characterized by continued insecurity. Protracted displacement will deepen, with more internally displaced people living outside formal settlements and relying on overstretched municipal systems.

## Recommendations

**1. Strengthen anticipatory and early action mechanisms**

Where displacement risk is visible, earlier intervention reduces long-term cost. Donors should scale anticipatory finance for both conflict and climate-related displacement.

**2. Rebalance financing toward peacebuilding and fragility reduction**

Donors should protect and expand allocations to fragile and conflict-affected settings, particularly for peacebuilding and strengthening institutions responsible for service delivery in major host countries. Funding volatility increases displacement volatility. Multi-year, flexible financing linked to forward-looking risk analysis is essential.

**3. Move from humanitarian containment to systems investment**
In major host countries, displacement must be integrated into national development planning, service delivery (education, health, WASH, etc.), and labour market strategies. This applies not only to refugee-hosting areas, but also to districts affected by internal displacement, where most displaced people remain within their own countries. Development finance institutions and bilateral donors should align support with displacement-affected districts and systems, rather than treating displacement as a parallel humanitarian issue.

**4. Safeguard protection space and humanitarian access**
Diplomatic engagement should prioritise civilian protection, access guarantees, and adherence to international humanitarian law in high-risk contexts. Rising violence against civilians directly correlates with displacement growth.

**5. Re-anchor return processes in protection standards**
Support to return processes must be conditioned on safety, voluntariness, and sustainability benchmarks, including access to services, livelihoods, and legal documentation. Systematic post-return monitoring should also be required to assess whether returns are sustainable and to identify risks of renewed displacement.

**6. Restore and protect funding for displacement data and analysis as core humanitarian infrastructure**
Displacement data systems, including the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), protection monitoring, and multisector assessments, are essential to understanding displacement dynamics, identifying emerging risks, and enabling timely, evidence-based responses. They should be treated as core humanitarian infrastructure and funded in a predictable manner.

Where access is constrained, donors and operational agencies should invest in complementary methods such as remote sensing, community-based reporting, and mobile surveys. At the same time, humanitarian planning documents should report transparently on data gaps, coverage limitations, and uncertainty.

**7. Expand meaningful responsibility-sharing**
Resettlement quotas, complementary pathways for admission and stay, and regional mobility arrangements remain disproportionately limited relative to need. Without broader responsibility-sharing, pressure will continue to accumulate in fragile host states.

The international system is unlikely to revert to a grants-heavy, peacebuilding-centred model in the near future. The question, therefore, is not how to restore a previous paradigm, but how to recalibrate responses to minimise long-term developmental loss and human capital erosion in a world of persistent polycrisis, where conflict, climate stress, economic volatility, and fragility reinforce one another.

# Contents

**Key acronyms used in this report**

| Acronym | Full Term |
|---|---|
| **AA** | Anticipatory Action |
| **AHEAD** | Anticipatory Humanitarian Action for Displacement |
| **ACLED** | Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project |
| **CCCM** | Camp Coordination and Camp Management |
| **DRC** | Danish Refugee Council |
| **DTM** | Displacement Tracking Matrix |
| **EAP** | Early Action Protocol |
| **ECHO** | European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations |
| **EWS** | Early Warning Systems |
| **EU+** | European Union + associated countries in the European asylum system (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| **FCS** | Food Consumption Score |
| **FCS (contextual)** | Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations |
| **GDF** | Global Displacement Forecast |
| **GBV** | Gender-Based Violence |
| **HRP** | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| **IHL** | International Humanitarian Law |
| **IDMC** | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| **IDP** | Internally Displaced Person |
| **IFRC** | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **IPC** | Integrated Food Security Phase Classification |
| **MSSMEB** | Multi-Sector Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket |
| **MPCA** | Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organization |
| **OCHA** | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| **ODA** | Official Development Assistance |
| **OPT** | Occupied Palestinian Territory |
| **RSF** | Rapid Support Forces (Sudan) |
| **SAF** | Sudanese Armed Forces |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNHCR** | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **WASH** | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| **WFP** | World Food Programme |

# Introduction

This report presents the expected forced displacement in 2026 and 2027, as forecasted by the Foresight model. The Foresight model was developed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and IBM, with funding from the Danish and Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The model uses historical relationships and patterns in 148 displacement-relevant indicators from 18 open sources to forecast, with high accuracy, the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people over the next one to three years. DRC uses the Foresight model to support country operations and the wider humanitarian system with more accurate forecasts for strategic planning, improving prevention, response, and protection for displacement-affected populations. The model has been employed to forecast the cumulative number of people displaced from 27 countries.[1] These countries, which have ongoing and evolving displacement crises, account for approximately 93% of all global displacement.

The report presents an overview of the displacement forecasts in 2026 and 2027. It highlights key trends and patterns in the forecasts, focusing on the overall and regional trends, developments in the underlying conditions and funding, and estimates of how the hosting of displaced people will evolve. The report also includes more detailed analyses of factors in the country of origin and in host countries that shape displaced people's decisions to return. Lastly, the report puts the spotlight on specific regions and countries where significant displacement is forecasted to occur in the coming years. The countries of focus have been selected based on the greatest absolute change in displacement forecast for 2026 and 2027.

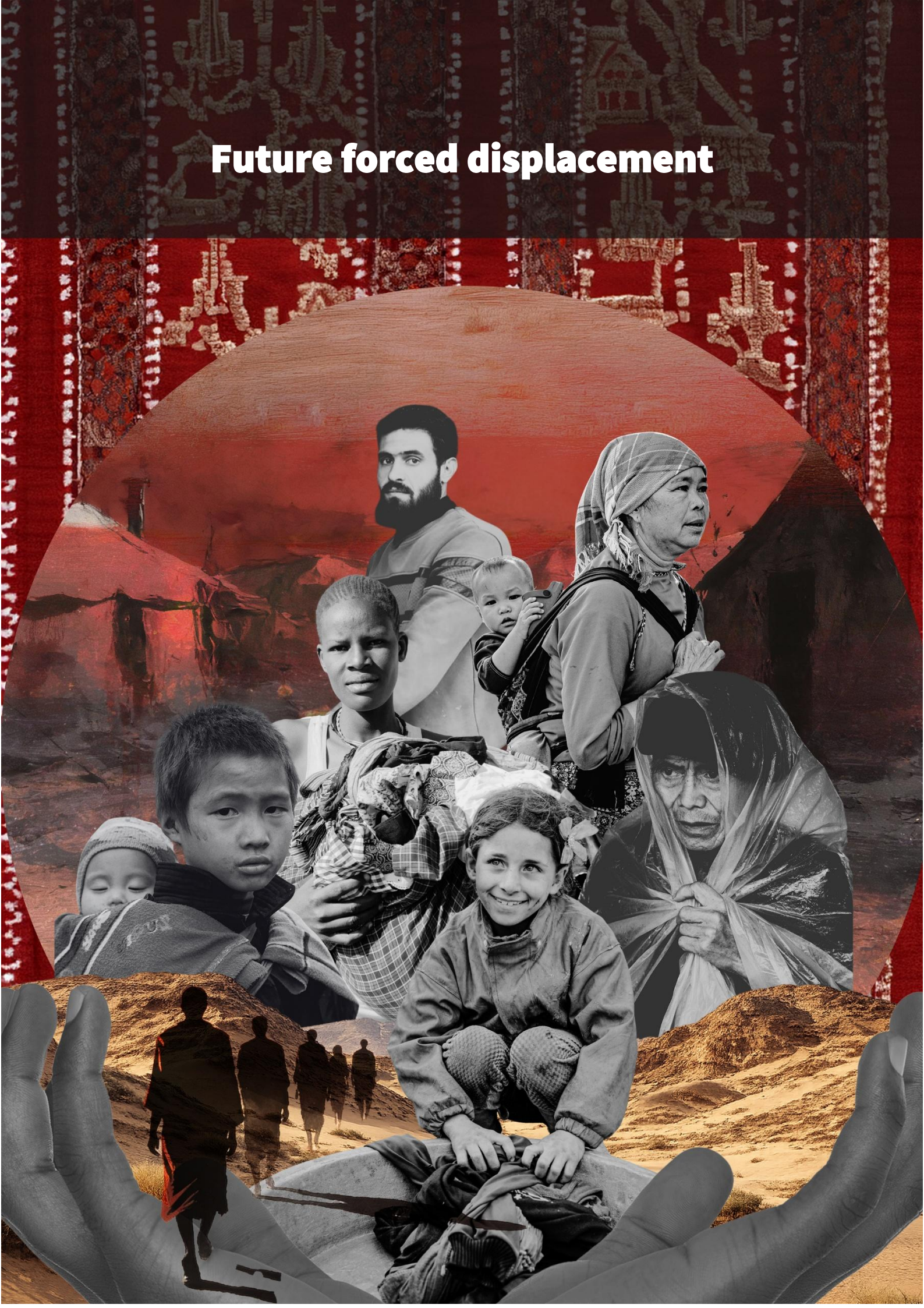
The report aims to facilitate the uptake of the forecasts and analysis for better planning and preparedness by providing a broader narrative and understanding of the numbers and trends presented. With an improved understanding of future displacement trends and crises, international organizations, humanitarian actors, donors, and national and local authorities can collaborate to better prepare for, mitigate, and respond to these developments.

In this report, forced displacement is defined as refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people (IDPs). The official number of people displaced in 2025 for the countries covered by the model was not available at the time of writing. Therefore, the level of displacement in 2025 has been estimated using the latest available displacement data from agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In most cases, the number of IDPs in 2025 is available by the end of November 2025, while the number of externally displaced (refugees and asylum seekers) is mostly available from the end of June 2025 to the end of December 2025. The forecasts are thus preliminary and will be updated once the final, official numbers on the level of displacement in 2025 are published, expected around June 2026.

Further, the forecasts presented are based on data available at the time of modelling and therefore predate the escalation of conflict in the Middle East in February 2026. As a result, potential displacement linked to these developments is not reflected in the projections.

[1] The 27 countries include: Europe: Ukraine; Asia: Afghanistan, Myanmar; West Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria; MENA: Iraq, Libya, oPt, Syria, Yemen; East Africa & Great Lakes: Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan; Latin America: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela.

# Future forced displacement



## An unprecedented year

2025 turned out to be an unprecedented year in many ways, including in terms of displacement. The total **number of displaced people is estimated to have declined** by approximately 3.4 million people in 2025. This is the first time since 2016 that the number of displaced people has fallen globally. It is the first time since 2003 that the decline has been above 1 million people, and if the estimates hold, it will be the highest decrease recorded by UNHCR.

The decrease in the total number of displaced people recorded in 2025 reflects specific dynamics, rather than a structural easing of displacement pressures. The decreases are largely driven by four major crises: Afghanistan, DR Congo, Sudan, and Syria. While it's difficult to provide conclusive explanations for this unprecedented development, a few considerations need to be borne in mind:

- **Forced returns**. In both Iran and Pakistan, authorities have actively pursued policies forcing Afghans to return.[2] In Iran alone, 1.8 million Afghans returned in 2025, contributing to an estimated decline of around 1 million Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in the country. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the armed group M23 forcibly closed several IDP camps housing hundreds of thousands of people, compelling residents to return to their areas of origin or seek shelter in churches, schools, or with host families in nearby villages.
- **Violence**. In several countries, conflict and violence also appear to have contributed to people deciding to return. When the place of refuge becomes a place of conflict, displaced people are left with the option of secondary displacement or returning home, despite it still not being safe. In DR Congo, the spread of violence in the eastern part of the country led many IDPs to either voluntarily or, as mentioned, forcibly return to their areas of origin. An estimated 2,870,180 IDPs were compelled to return to their place of origin. While many of the returns from Iran are forced, returns significantly increased in June and July, which coincides with the aerial bombing campaign by Israel starting in mid-June and general fears of a wider conflict escalation.
- **Displacement saturation.** The drops in DR Congo and Sudan can, in part, be explained by the fact that a very big share of the population is already displaced, so even if conflict continues, it does not necessarily lead to the total number of displaced people increasing. For example, in North Darfur, around 80% of the population had been displaced by July 2025. Despite continued high levels of conflict, the total number of recorded IDPs decreased slightly. By comparison, in July 2024, when approximately 60% of the population had been displaced, the same level of conflict led to a +34,000 increase in IDPs. These dynamics illustrate how high levels of existing displacement can influence how displacement trends appear in aggregate statistics.
- **Lack of data.** Lastly, the severe decrease in humanitarian funding has significantly reduced the availability of timely displacement data. In our 27 countries of focus, IOM DTM – our key source for IDP figures - had an active monitoring of the number of IDPs in 18 of them in 2024. Across the 18 countries, 57 nationwide IDP assessments of the number of IDPs were published in 2024. This number dropped to 36 in 2025. For 5 countries, no new assessments were published in 2025, and only 6 of them have recently updated public data (Q4 2025 or more recent). It means that, for many countries, the estimates are uncertain, and many new cases of displacement may not have been captured. More broadly, OCHA estimates that 68 % of crisis data is available and up-to-date across 22 humanitarian operations, down from 74 % in the previous year – the lowest completeness level since 2021.[3] This reflects a broader decline in the knowledge production[4] in the sector, which dropped an estimated 27% last year, essentially wiping out the increases made in the last 10 years.

[2] Both people registered as refugees and migrants
[3] OCHA (2026): The State of Open Humanitarian Data, Centre for Humanitarian Data, Available at unocha.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[4] Based on the number of published evaluation, assessments, analyses, situation reports and manuals/guidelines on ReliefWeb from 2016-2025.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that the estimated decrease in the number of displaced should be interpreted with caution. While the data may initially indicate some limited improvement in conditions across 2025, as is largely the case in Syria, in many contexts, the declines are linked to worsening conditions, as detailed above. The decrease in the total number of displaced people in some contexts masks critical dynamics on the ground, including multiple waves of displacement that increase protection risks, household vulnerabilities, and the overall severity of humanitarian needs. Crucially, neither the forced nor the pressured returns observed across these crises constitute progress toward durable solutions. These "returns" do not restore rights, safety, or self-reliance. Instead, they often entrench protracted displacement in less visible forms and heighten the risk of renewed displacement.

Looking ahead, combining forecasts for the 27 countries covered by the model, the cumulative number of displaced people is projected to increase by 2.0 million in 2026, with a further 2.2 million increase expected in 2027, resulting in a total increase of 4.2 million between the end of 2025 and the end of 2027. Only one country is forecasted to see a decrease in the number of displaced people, while the remaining 26 are forecasted to see an increase.

Clear geographical trends emerge from the forecasts. Of the 4.2 million people forecasted to be displaced by the end of 2026, approximately 1.9 million are estimated to reside in sub-Saharan Africa, and 900,000 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In Asia, an increase of 615,000 is forecasted, and in Latin America 450,000. Europe and North America combined are projected to host an increase of 330,000 displaced people. While 59% of the currently displaced are IDPs, 63% of the forecasted displacement is estimated to be IDPs, suggesting a larger growth in the IDP crises than the refugee crises.

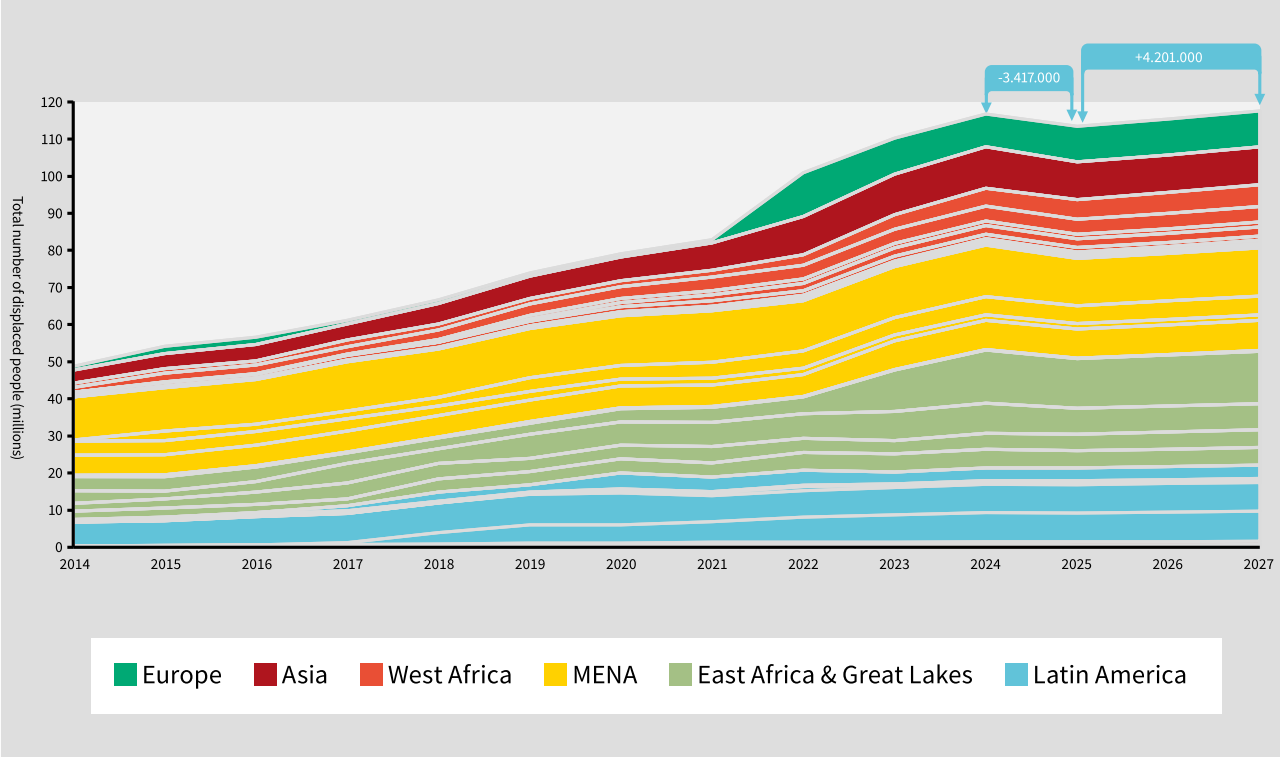



Figure 1: Displacement trends

## Displacement hotspots

The surge in **displacement in 2026** is propelled primarily by substantial increases forecasted in Sudan and Myanmar. Forecasts indicate that displacement in these countries is set to increase by more than 150,000 people in each country. Beyond these two countries, high increases are also forecasted in Venezuela, South Sudan, and the occupied Palestinian territory.

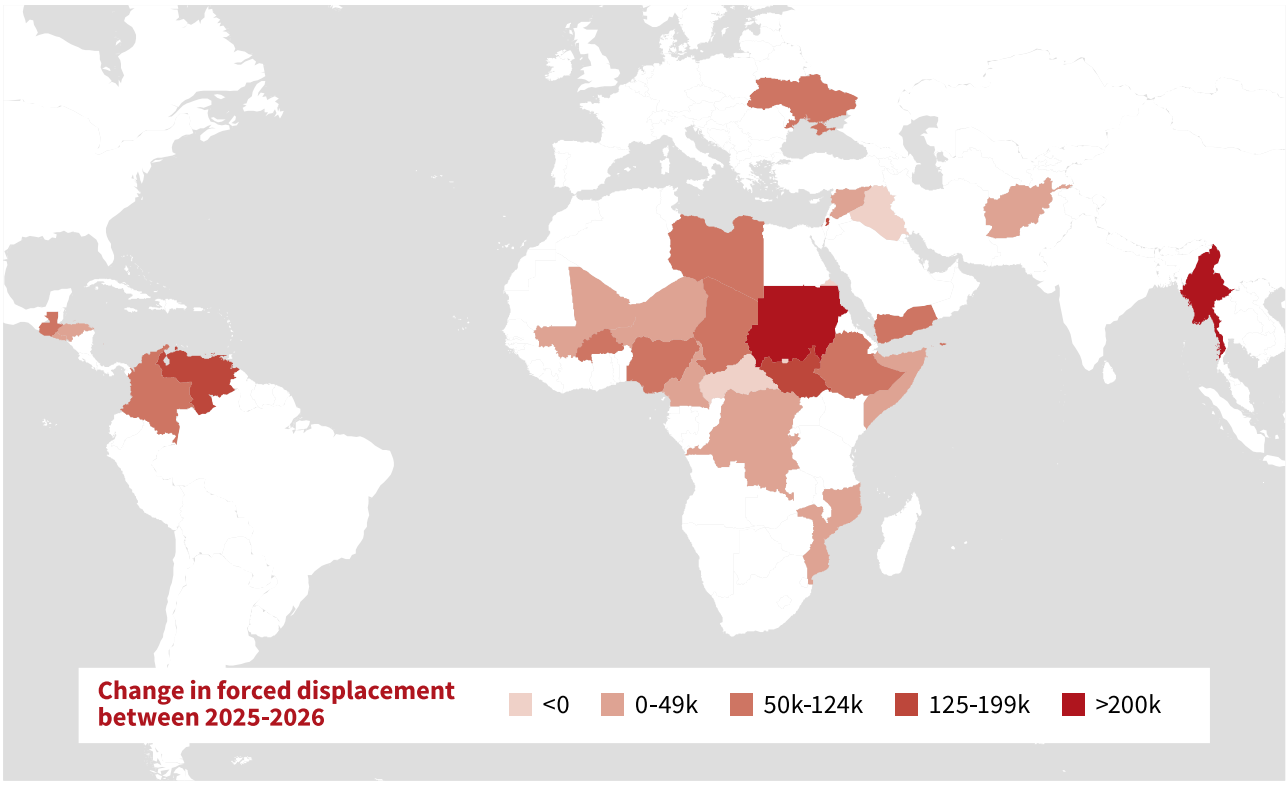



Figure 2: Forecasted displacement hotspots in 2026

In **Sudan,** since April 2023, the conflict between the SAF and RSF has escalated into a global humanitarian crisis, leaving 33.7 million people—67% of the population—in urgent need of support as of February 2026. Widespread atrocities, including ethnic violence, have decimated essential infrastructure and triggered famine conditions (IPC Phase 5) in North Darfur and parts of Greater Kordofan. The crisis has become the world's largest displacement event, with over 11.8 million people forced from their homes, including 7 million internally displaced and 4.5 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. While over 3 million people attempted to return to their origins in 2025, most face destroyed services and high risks of secondary displacement due to economic hardship and ongoing insecurity. The Foresight model projects an additional 350,000 displaced persons in 2026 and 320,000 in 2027, bringing the total new displacement to nearly 690,000 by the end of 2027.

**Myanmar** is engulfed in a multi-layered crisis of intensifying armed conflict, collapsing public services, and severe economic downturn, which the World Bank estimates was further hindered by a 4% growth hit following a major earthquake in March 2025. The humanitarian situation is exacerbated by environmental volatility—including cyclones, floods, and seismic activity—and the resurgence of communicable diseases like HIV, TB, and malaria due to the degraded healthcare system. Over four million civilians have been displaced to date, facing acute shortages in food and shelter while navigating extreme risks from one of the world's highest concentrations of landmine and explosive ordnance contamination. The Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Myanmar will increase by more than

315,000 in 2026 and a further 190,000 in 2027, totalling over 500,000 additional displacements by the end of 2027.

Now in its tenth year, **Venezuela**'s crisis has entered a volatile new phase following international military interventions in 2026, leading to a breakdown of civic space and heightened risks of guerrilla warfare. The structural collapse of the economy and essential services has left 7.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, with critical deficits in healthcare, water, and energy affecting 80% of the population. Protection risks have intensified for vulnerable groups—including women, indigenous communities, and older persons—as armed groups like colectivos and the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* [ELN]) threaten to exploit the current power vacuum. Humanitarian operations are severely hampered by restrictive 2024 NGO laws and funding shortages, which have forced the closure of multiple field offices just as the risk of criminalization for aid workers rises. The number of displaced people from Venezuela is forecast to increase by 270,000 towards the end of 2027.

**Looking ahead to 2027**, the largest forecasted increase in displacement is in Sudan, where it is again forecast to rise by more than 300,000. In Myanmar, displacement is predicted to increase by close to 200,000 people, and a substantial increase in displacement is also forecasted in Afghanistan, Chad, Ethiopia, the occupied Palestinian territory, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and Venezuela.

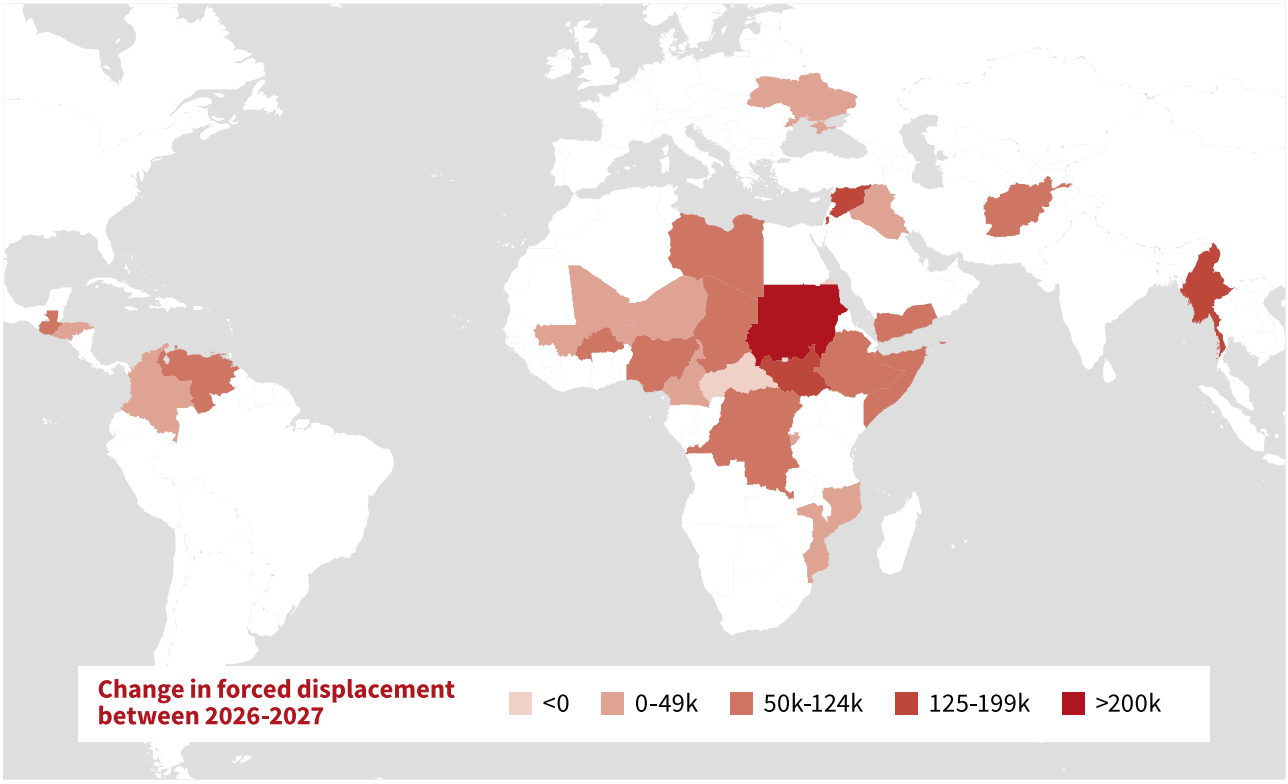



Figure 3: Displacement hotspots in 2026

Despite the formal end of the Assad government in 2024, **Syria** remains gripped by instability, with renewed military escalations in Aleppo in early 2026 forcing 140,000 people to flee. Economic collapse has pushed 90% of the population into poverty, leaving households dependent on debt and irregular daily labor to survive amid crippled agricultural and electricity sectors. The country faces a "threat multiplier" in the climate crisis, exemplified by 2025's record-breaking droughts and wildfires in Latakia that destroyed vital livelihoods and infrastructure. Severe protection risks persist—including child labor and

widespread explosive ordnance contamination—while only 57% of hospitals remain functional to serve a traumatized population. The Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Syria will increase by approximately 50,000 in 2026 and by a further 165,000 in 2027, totalling 215,000 by the end of 2027.

A renewed political crisis and intensified inter-communal violence over land and cattle have pushed **South Sudan's** 2018 peace agreement to the brink of collapse, sparking fresh combat in early 2026. The country is reeling from simultaneous climate shocks—affecting 1.3 million people with floods, while others face drought—alongside its largest cholera outbreak on record, with 96,000 cases. The spillover from Sudan's conflict has forced nearly 1.3 million people across the border and disrupted oil pipelines, causing a state revenue collapse and a threefold increase in food prices. Severe food insecurity is projected to affect 7.55 million people during the 2026 lean season. Yet, only 4.1 million of the 10 million in need are targeted for aid due to funding and access constraints. The number of displaced people from South Sudan is forecast to increase by 275,000 towards the end of 2027.

**Yemen** has entered its most dangerous phase in a decade, with over 19.5 million people—more than half the population—requiring aid due to a near-total breakdown of public services and economic collapse. The crisis is being pushed to the brink by a historic drop in international funding, which reached a ten-year low in 2025 and dismantled essential food and health systems just as famine-like conditions began to emerge. Environmental shocks have intensified the misery, as Yemen is now the world's third most climate-vulnerable country, with 2025 flooding affecting nearly half a million people and destroying vital farmland. Displaced populations, 80% of whom are women and children, face severe protection risks and systematic exclusion, with 76% of IDP households lacking the civil documentation required to access healthcare or education. The number of displaced people from Yemen is forecast to increase by more than 200,000 towards the end of 2027.

After two years of war, a fragile October 2025 ceasefire has provided only a rocky respite from a conflict that has caused over 70,000 fatalities in **Gaza** and a confirmed famine as of August 2025. The humanitarian landscape faces a "deliberate policy" of obstruction, with 37 international NGOs warned that their registrations will expire in early 2026, threatening to collapse food and health pipelines across the territory. Gaza's development has been set back by nearly seven decades, with over 80% of water facilities and 92% of housing destroyed, leaving 3.62 million people in urgent need of $4.06 billion in aid. Displacement has reached an unprecedented scale, with 90% of Gazans uprooted—many more than ten times—while military operations and settler violence have displaced over 40,000 Palestinians in the West Bank. The number of displaced people from oPt is forecast to increase by 274,000 towards the end of 2027.

Compared to last year's forecast, this year's forecast has fewer major hotspots but a wider spread of smaller yet substantial increases. As an example, in last year's forecast, the combined increases in Myanmar and Sudan accounted for more than half of all the forecasted increases. From a regional perspective, 45% of the forecasted increase in displacement was estimated to occur in East Africa. This year, the combined increase for Myanmar and Sudan is approximately ¼ of the total increase. And while East Africa[5] still accounts for the highest share of the increase in displacement with 1.4 million people or about 33%, it is lower than last year. In both West Africa[6], Asia[7], Latin America, and MENA,[8] displacement is forecast to increase by more than 500,000 people.

[5] East Africa includes Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.
[6] West Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria;
[7] Asia: Afghanistan and Myanmar.
[8] MENA: Iraq, Libya, oPt, Syria, Yemen;

## Trends in displacement drivers

Globally, approximately 869 million people were exposed to political violence in 2025; 225 million were living within 1 kilometre of at least one conflict incident.[9] Armed conflict remained at a very high level in 2025 and increased when looking across all the countries of focus together. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the number of conflict events increased by 6% in 2025 across the 27 countries of focus, with notable rises in Libya, Guatemala, and Somalia. In DR Congo, violence increased by 47% while in Ukraine it increased by 42%. 16 of the 27 countries saw an increase in violence.

Violations of international humanitarian law remained widespread. Violence specifically targeting civilians increased by 9% globally, while it rose 14% for the 27 countries of focus. Syria, Nigeria, and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) had the highest number of recorded incidents among the 27 countries.[10] The Global Displacement Forecast Report (GDF) 2024 showed that violence against civilians is a significant driver of change in the total number of displaced persons: i.e., when the level of violence against civilians is higher than usual, there is an increased change in the total number of displaced people that same year. While it's estimated that overall displacement decreased in 2025, the average decline is lower in the five countries with the highest levels of violence against civilians than in the other 22 countries with a higher average decline.

Despite the urgent need to address the drivers of conflict, development and peacebuilding support in displacement-generating countries remains significantly lower than in non-fragile contexts. Development aid is a key instrument in promoting good governance, reducing poverty and inequality, and fostering longer-term, locally anchored peacebuilding and development. Globally, the share of ODA given to fragile and conflict-affected countries[11] fell to 24% in 2024 from approximately 27% in 2023, and also fell in absolute terms, to approximately $4 billion.

The total share of ODA allocated to peacebuilding activities[12] decreased from about 12% in 2023 to 11 % in 2024. The vast majority of ODA for peacebuilding is provided to Ukraine, accounting for 44% of the total. In the five countries where we estimate the highest increases in displacement in 2025, the level of ODA to peacebuilding declined on average by 23%, whereas in the five countries that witnessed the sharpest estimated declines in displacement in 2025, funding for peacebuilding grew on average by 15% in 2024. This underscores the importance of financial support to address the root causes of conflict and displacement. A recent study has found that the severe aid cuts in 2025 have led to a roughly 5% increase in armed conflict events in Sub-Saharan Africa, among other effects, due to the cancellation of peace-building and conflict-resolution projects.[13]

For those countries where a small share of ODA was provided for peacebuilding activities in 2024 — Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Yemen — displacement is forecast to increase by an average of more than 179,000 people (or 5%) between the end of 2025 and the end of 2027. In the countries where a high share of ODA was allocated to peacebuilding activities – Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Libya, and Ukraine – displacement is forecast to increase by an average of 87,000. This confirms the broader trend documented in the GDF 2023: peacebuilding funding is intrinsically tied to future displacement.

[9] ACLED (nd): Conflict Exposure. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2026).
[10] ACLED (nd): Anti-Civilian Violence dataset. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2026).
[11] As defined by the World Bank FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations. 2024 is latest available data
[12] Using the definition and Creditor Reporting System (CRS) codes developed by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. Available at: psdata.un.org (accessed 5 March 2026).
[13] Lee Crawfurd (2026): US Aid Cuts Fueled Conflict in Africa, Center for Global Development, Available at cgdev.org (accessed March 3 2026)

## Trends in conditions for humanitarian response

With crises unresolved, funding is needed to address the humanitarian needs arising from both newly emerging and ongoing protracted crises. However, humanitarian funding declined sharply in 2025 as several major donors reduced their contributions. So far[14] 30% of the required funding for humanitarian response plans (HRPs) in 2025 has been provided, compared to 47% at the same time in 2024. In 2025, the gap between needs and funding stood at $31 billion – up from $24 billion in 2024. The total amount of funding is the lowest provided since 2016, a year when the humanitarian sector aimed to support 100 million fewer people than in 2025.

Of the countries of focus, Honduras, Mali, Myanmar, and Venezuela were among the least funded in 2025, with 20% or less of the required funding for the HRPs having been provided. Previous DRC analysis of funding and displacement trends across over 189 HRPs has found that when response plans were under two-thirds funded, the subsequent year saw, on average, a 39% increase in the cumulative number of displaced individuals. Conversely, if plans were funded by more than two-thirds, the average increase in displacement was only 8%. While multiple factors may contribute to this trend, insufficient humanitarian funding hampers the humanitarian community's ability to respond adequately, alleviate suffering, ensure protection for vulnerable groups, implement early action and prevention activities, and enhance community resilience.

Funding is not the only major challenge in responding to the growing humanitarian need arising from the displacement crises. Humanitarian access is also an issue: even in situations where funding is available, the ability of people in need to access services and assistance, and of humanitarian actors to reach them, is often challenged by restrictive environments. Of the 27 countries in focus, 15 are categorized as having either very high or extreme humanitarian access constraints.[15] On average, forecasted displacement is higher in countries with poor humanitarian access. Countries with extreme access constraints, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, oPt, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen, are forecasted to see an average increase of 160,000 people displaced in 2026. In countries categorized as having high to moderate access constraints, such as Iraq, Colombia, Niger, and Cameroon, average displacement is forecast to increase by only 42,000 people.

One of the major challenges for humanitarian access is the increasing number of states disregarding established international IHL norms. This erosion of accountability directly affects humanitarian organizations' ability to deliver protection and assistance, and advocate for the rule of law and the protection of civilians. More than 300 aid workers were killed in 2025, a slight decrease compared to 2024. The most insecure place to be an aid worker continues to be Gaza, where the number of aid workers killed increased in 2025, and accounts for about 2/3 of the total number of aid workers killed. One of the most severe incidents happened in Sudan in April, when the RSF attacked the Zamzam Camp, and at least nine aid workers were killed. In March, eight aid workers were killed in an airstrike as they were setting up tents in northern Gaza. Systematic violations of IHL, including the targeting of civilians, humanitarian workers, and civilian infrastructure, are becoming the "new normal."

[14] Because of delays in reporting, the total figure for funding provided to the 2024 HRPs is not available.
[15] ACAPS (2025): Humanitarian Access Overview. December 2025. Available at: www.acaps.org (accessed 5 March 2026).

## Future displacement hosting and solutions

Low-income countries continue to be the main hosts of displaced people. Approximately 2.3 million of the total increase of 4.2 million displaced people are estimated to be hosted in low-income countries, while another 700.000 million will be hosted in lower-middle-income countries.

It is estimated that approximately 37% of displaced people will be hosted in sub-Saharan Africa by the end of 2027, and a further 24% in the MENA region. Only 11% will be living in Europe, one of the richest economic zones in the world, and only 2% will be hosted in North America. Further accentuating this, EU+ continues to experience a decline in asylum applications. Another shift in 2025 was that, for the first time in years, the largest number of applicants were no longer Syrians; both Afghans and Venezuelans lodged more applications.[16]

While the GDP per displaced person hosted in European countries amounted to $2.1 million per person in 2025, the amount in sub-Saharan Africa was only $47,000, down from $55,000 in 2022. As such, host countries in sub-Saharan Africa disproportionately bear the responsibility of supporting displaced populations, while having very limited resources to do so. The fact that major host countries of displaced people are facing development challenges is not new. These countries face many socio-economic challenges.[17] Overall, 50% of displaced people are in countries with the lowest levels of human development and highest levels of poverty. Another major challenge facing host countries is climate change. Overall, 46% of displaced people from the countries of focus are hosted in countries that are among the most vulnerable[18] to the impacts of climate change. In 2015, 16 million displaced people, or 33% of the displaced, were hosted in countries most vulnerable to climate change. This has increased to 48.5 million, or 46%, in 2025, and is set to further increase to 50.7 million by the end of 2027. For example, Chad and Niger are ranked among the top five most vulnerable countries in the world, while Sudan, Somalia, and the Central African Republic are among the top 10. Finally, 48% are hosted in the countries most exposed[19] to the impacts of climate change, which include Myanmar and Niger in the top 10 globally.

As such, many displaced persons are living in countries at significant risk of climate hazards, both current and rising future risks. In 2027, 56% of displaced people will be living in countries at high risk of flooding, 41% in countries at high risk of drought, and 40% in countries at high risk of earthquakes.[20]

Hosting displaced people in these fragile, climate-exposed, low-income settings — often for decades — is also a result of the limited progress made on realizing durable solutions to displacement. By mid-year 2025, only 28,000 refugees had been resettled, significantly fewer than in 2024, when 85,000 had been resettled mid-year and 188,000 by the end of the year. As highlighted earlier, a significant number of returns were recorded in 2025, but not all were voluntary or a durable solution. Almost 7 million returns were registered by mid-year by UNHCR. The GDF 2025 showed that roughly 29% of refugee returns and 25% of IDP returns in the past 20 years have been to countries that experienced very high levels of violence. This appears to have been significantly higher in 2025, where it's estimated that more than 70% of the returns have happened to countries with very high levels of violence, such as Sudan, Ukraine, and DR Congo.

[16] EUAA (2026). Latest Asylum Trends: Monthly overview. Accessible at euaa.europa.eu (accessed 21 January 2026)
[17] Defined as among the worst 25% based on the scoring in the INFORM Risk Index. Available at: drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu (accessed 6 March 2025).
[18] This is developed using the ND-Gain scores from 2020. More on the ND-Gain methodology is available at: gain.nd.edu (accessed 6 March 2025).
[19] Degree to which a system is exposed to significant climate change from a biophysical perspective.
[20] Defined as among the worst 25% based on the scoring in the INFORM Risk Index relevant indicators. Available at: drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu (accessed 21 January 2026).


overview of the specific displacement forecasts for each of the 27 countries is available in the annex.
Anticipatory action for displacement

**The concept and background of anticipatory action**

This chapter focuses on anticipatory action (AA) for displacement. AA represents a fundamental shift in humanitarian response, moving from a reactive model that addresses impacts after they occur to a proactive approach that mitigates them before they occur. It is defined as a set of actions taken ahead of a predicted hazardous event to prevent or reduce its acute humanitarian impacts on lives and livelihoods before they fully unfold.[21] This approach is built on three core components: credible forecast information, pre-positioned financing mechanisms, and pre-agreed anticipatory action plans.[22]

The primary objective of AA is to reduce human suffering and protect development gains by acting within the critical window between a reliable forecast and the peak impact of a crisis. By doing so, it preserves people's dignity and delivers value for money by reducing overall humanitarian needs and costs.

Unlike traditional humanitarian funding, which responds to loss, anticipatory finance (AF) seeks to proactively reduce suffering and speed up recovery. This is achieved, for example, by providing at-risk communities with accurate and actionable early warning information, as well as cash or resources, days before a disaster strikes. This support expands choice and upholds dignity, allowing families to make earlier and more informed decisions, such as stockpiling essentials, securing shelters, protecting assets, or evacuating early on their own terms.[23] This proactive stance is critical in a world where climate change is intensifying the frequency and severity of hazards, making purely reactive systems increasingly unsustainable.

**The evolution and global expansion of anticipatory action**

Over the past decade, and particularly in the last three years, the implementation of anticipatory action has expanded significantly in scale, scope, and institutional acceptance. Data demonstrates clear and rapid growth across key indicators, moving the approach from a niche pilot to an increasingly mainstream component of disaster risk management.

**Global Growth Metrics (2022-2024)[24]**

| Metric | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Active Frameworks** | 70 | 107 | 154 |
| **Countries with Active Frameworks** | 35 | 47 | 48 |
| **Frameworks Under Development** | 97 | 133 | 197 |
| **Number of Activations** | 47 | 98 | 121 |
| **Financing Triggered** | $53.8 million | $198 million | $110.7 million |
| **People Reached** | *Not Available* | 12.8 million | 17 million |

A significant expansion in the scope of hazards addressed has accompanied this growth. While initially focused on hydrometeorological events like floods and cyclones, AA frameworks now cover a wider range of crises, including drought, heat waves, cold waves (dzud), disease outbreaks, landslides, volcanic ash,

[21] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[22] Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): *Already displaced, now facing disaster: climate change impacts on displaced people*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[23] Oenone Chadburn and Maria Theresa Niña Espinola-Abogado (2025): *Anticipatory financing: enabling choice amid displacement in the Philippines*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[24] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026), Anticipation Hub (2024): Anticipatory action in 2023: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026).

and conflict-related violence. Notably, frameworks are increasingly being developed for complex, non-weather-related crises such as population movements and epidemics.[25]

**The case for anticipatory action**

A growing body of evidence from diverse contexts—including floods in Bangladesh, extreme winters in Mongolia, and El Niño events in Peru—demonstrates that anticipatory humanitarian action can significantly mitigate the impact of climate-related disasters on vulnerable households. Rigorous evaluations, employing quasi-experimental and randomized controlled trial methodologies, have documented a range of positive impacts of anticipatory interventions. The evidence is strongest in food security, financial resilience, and asset protection.

*Food Security and Consumption.* The most consistent outcome observed across multiple studies is the positive effect of anticipatory cash on household food security. A meta-analysis of 16 World Food Programme (WFP) studies found that 13 showed a positive effect on Food Consumption Score (FCS)-based indicators, with interventions consistently shifting households from "poor" or "borderline" consumption to "acceptable" levels (WFP, 2024). Specific country studies provide granular evidence of this impact:

- Bangladesh (2020 Floods): An anticipatory cash transfer made households 36% less likely to go a day without eating during the flood. The intervention had a significant positive impact on both children's and adults' food consumption, and this effect was still measurable three months later. Five months post-intervention, the positive effect on the quality and quantity of adult food consumption persisted.[26]
- Bangladesh (2017 Floods): Households that received forecast-based cash grants were over three times less likely to have skipped meals more than ten times compared to a control group. The intervention also improved dietary quality, with only 71% of beneficiary households being forced to eat only rice for a day, compared to 95% of the control group.[27]
- Nepal (2022 Floods): The timing of assistance was critical. Households receiving cash in an early, anticipatory phase had a significantly higher average Food Consumption Score (48.6) than those who received aid in a post-shock phase (45.3), demonstrating that "the earlier the response, the better the households' food security".[28]

*Financial Resilience and Coping Strategies.* Anticipatory cash provides households with critical liquidity, enabling them to avoid negative coping strategies that can lead to long-term debt and destitution.

- Reduced High-Interest Debt: In the 2017 Bangladesh floods, households without anticipatory cash were more than four times as likely to borrow from banks (at interest rates typically above 20%)

[25] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[26] Pople, A., Hill, R. V., Dercon, S., and Brunckhorst, B. (2021): *Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Climate Disaster Response*, Working paper 6, Centre for Disaster Protection, London.
[27] Clemens Gros, Meghan Bailey, Saroja Schwager, Ahmadul Hassan, Raymond Zingg, Muhammad Mamtaz Uddin, Mohammad Shahjahan, Hasibul Islam, Stefanie Lux, Catalina Jaime, Erin Coughlan de Perez (2019): *Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh*, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 41, 101275
[28] WFP (2023): *Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of Forecast-based Anticipatory Action Project (FbAA) – 2022.* Available at wfp.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

and twice as likely to take loans from private money lenders.[29] Similar reductions in borrowing were observed in subsequent flood responses in 2020.[3031]

- Avoidance of Negative Coping: A WFP meta-analysis found that seven of nine studies reported a positive effect on the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), meaning beneficiaries were less likely to resort to negative food-based coping strategies.[32] In Nepal, the rCSI score for anticipatory-response beneficiaries was significantly lower than for post-shock beneficiaries, confirming this trend.[33]
- Destitution Sales: Qualitative data from Bangladesh in 2017 indicated that anticipatory cash may have prevented households from selling valuable assets at destitution prices after an initial flood peak. However, this benefit was erased by a second, more severe flood peak for which no additional support was provided.[34]

*Asset Protection, Livelihoods, and Well-being.* Evidence shows that anticipatory action helps households protect their physical and productive assets, although the impact on livelihoods is more varied.

- Physical Asset Protection: An intervention in Peru provided vulnerable households with special kits to reinforce their homes against El Niño-related rains and flooding. An evaluation found the kits reduced the scale of house damage by approximately 63% compared to a control group.[35] In Bangladesh, cash recipients were better able to protect their productive assets, with only 51% experiencing loss or damage to working equipment compared to 72% of the control group.[36]
- Livelihood Impacts: Findings on livelihoods are mixed. A study in Bangladesh found that cash recipients reported higher earning potential three months after the flood.[37] However, other studies in the same context found no effect on the time adults took to resume productive activities.[3839] In Mongolia, an intervention during an extreme winter had no detectable impact on the herd size of pastoralists across the full sample. However, it had significant positive effects on subsistence-

[29] Clemens Gros, Meghan Bailey, Saroja Schwager, Ahmadul Hassan, Raymond Zingg, Muhammad Mamtaz Uddin, Mohammad Shahjahan, Hasibul Islam, Stefanie Lux, Catalina Jaime, Erin Coughlan de Perez (2019): *Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh*, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 41, 101275

[30] Pople, A., Hill, R. V., Dercon, S., and Brunckhorst, B. (2021): *Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Climate Disaster Response*, Working paper 6, Centre for Disaster Protection, London.

[31] Clemens Gros; Andrea Pronti; Khairul Sheikh; Ahmadul Hassan; Mohammad Shahjahan (2023): *Effects of anticipatory humanitarian cash assistance to households forecasted to experience extreme flooding: evidence from Bangladesh*, Hydrology Research (2023) 54 (11), https://doi.org/10.2166/nh.2023.111

[32] WFP (2025): WFP's evidence base on Anticipatory Action 2015-2024. Available wfp.org. (accessed 6 January 2026)

[33] WFP (2023): *Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of Forecast-based Anticipatory Action Project (FbAA) – 2022.* Available at wfp.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

[34] Clemens Gros, Meghan Bailey, Saroja Schwager, Ahmadul Hassan, Raymond Zingg, Muhammad Mamtaz Uddin, Mohammad Shahjahan, Hasibul Islam, Stefanie Lux, Catalina Jaime, Erin Coughlan de Perez (2019): *Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh*, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 41, 101275

[35] Aguirre, J., De La Torre Ugarte, D., Bazo, J. *et al.* Evaluation of Early Action Mechanisms in Peru Regarding Preparedness for El Niño. *Int J Disaster Risk Sci* **10**, 493–510 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13753-019-00245-x

[36] Clemens Gros; Andrea Pronti; Khairul Sheikh; Ahmadul Hassan; Mohammad Shahjahan (2023): *Effects of anticipatory humanitarian cash assistance to households forecasted to experience extreme flooding: evidence from Bangladesh*, Hydrology Research (2023) 54 (11), https://doi.org/10.2166/nh.2023.111

[37] Pople, A., Hill, R. V., Dercon, S., and Brunckhorst, B. (2021): *Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Climate Disaster Response*, Working paper 6, Centre for Disaster Protection, London.

[38] Clemens Gros; Andrea Pronti; Khairul Sheikh; Ahmadul Hassan; Mohammad Shahjahan (2023): *Effects of anticipatory humanitarian cash assistance to households forecasted to experience extreme flooding: evidence from Bangladesh*, Hydrology Research (2023) 54 (11), https://doi.org/10.2166/nh.2023.111

[39] Clemens Gros, Meghan Bailey, Saroja Schwager, Ahmadul Hassan, Raymond Zingg, Muhammad Mamtaz Uddin, Mohammad Shahjahan, Hasibul Islam, Stefanie Lux, Catalina Jaime, Erin Coughlan de Perez (2019): *Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh*, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 41, 101275

oriented pastoralists with smaller herds, increasing their post-disaster herd size and herding investments.[40]

- Psychosocial Well-being: Anticipatory assistance appears to reduce the psychological distress associated with disasters. Beneficiary households in Bangladesh reported feeling miserable, unhappy, anxious, or depressed significantly less frequently than non-beneficiaries.[41] In a separate study, their life satisfaction was 12.5% higher three months after the flood.[42]

While the evidence for the effectiveness of anticipatory action is strong, evaluations have also identified significant challenges and lessons critical to improving the design and implementation of future programmes.

- Government Leadership is Essential: The institutionalization of anticipatory action within national disaster risk management policies is crucial for sustainability and scale. The leadership of national bodies in Mozambique (INGD) and Bangladesh (MoDMR) has been instrumental in coordinating and mainstreaming the approach.[43]
- Locally-Led Action is More Effective: Participatory approaches that integrate local and indigenous knowledge strengthen outcomes. In the Philippines, the B-READY programme embedded local disaster knowledge into early warning systems and triggers, significantly improving the timeliness and appropriateness of actions.[44] Placing community leadership at the center ensures interventions are relevant to local realities.[45]
- Coordination and Harmonization are Critical: The proliferation of anticipatory action actors and models can lead to confusion at the community level. In the Philippines, differing triggers between agencies caused frustration. This highlights the need for shared protocols, open data, and coordinated frameworks, facilitated by bodies such as OCHA and national technical working groups.[46]
- Financing Remains a Major Barrier: Insufficient funding holds back wider adoption. In 2024, anticipatory action funding was released for activations ($110.7m)[47] represented just 0.4% of the total humanitarian funding provided ($24.03bn)[48]. A distinction must be made between "fuel money" (direct funds for activations) and "build money" (structural funds to develop systems), with both requiring significant increases.

**The critical gap: displacement and anticipatory action**

Despite the rapid evolution of anticipatory action, its application to protect forcibly displaced populations has been a significant and persistent gap. AA has historically focused on predictable climate-related hazards and disease outbreaks, while largely neglecting the complex dynamics of forced displacement.

[40] Mogge, Lukas; Roeckert, Julian; Krähnert, Kati (2024) : Impacts of anticipatory cash transfers in the context of weather disasters, Ruhr Economic Papers, No. 1065, ISBN 978-3-96973-236-6, RWI - Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Essen, https://doi.org/10.4419/96973236
[41] Clemens Gros, Meghan Bailey, Saroja Schwager, Ahmadul Hassan, Raymond Zingg, Muhammad Mamtaz Uddin, Mohammad Shahjahan, Hasibul Islam, Stefanie Lux, Catalina Jaime, Erin Coughlan de Perez (2019): *Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh*, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 41, 101275
[42] Pople, A., Hill, R. V., Dercon, S., and Brunckhorst, B. (2021): *Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Climate Disaster Response*, Working paper 6, Centre for Disaster Protection, London.
[43] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[44] Oenone Chadburn and Maria Theresa Niña Espinola-Abogado (2025): *Anticipatory financing: enabling choice amid displacement in the Philippines*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[45] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[46] Oenone Chadburn and Maria Theresa Niña Espinola-Abogado (2025): *Anticipatory financing: enabling choice amid displacement in the Philippines*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[47] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[48] OCHA (n.d.) Financial tracking services – Coordinated plans 2024. Available at unocha.org (accessed 6 January 2026)

The absence of AA for displacement is related to the fact that, for many years, AA has largely been implemented in more stable settings. Analysis of the active frameworks in 2024[49] shows that only about 1/3 of the frameworks were active in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS), and slightly more than half of the frameworks in FCS countries were implemented in non-fragile, non-conflict-affected areas within those countries.

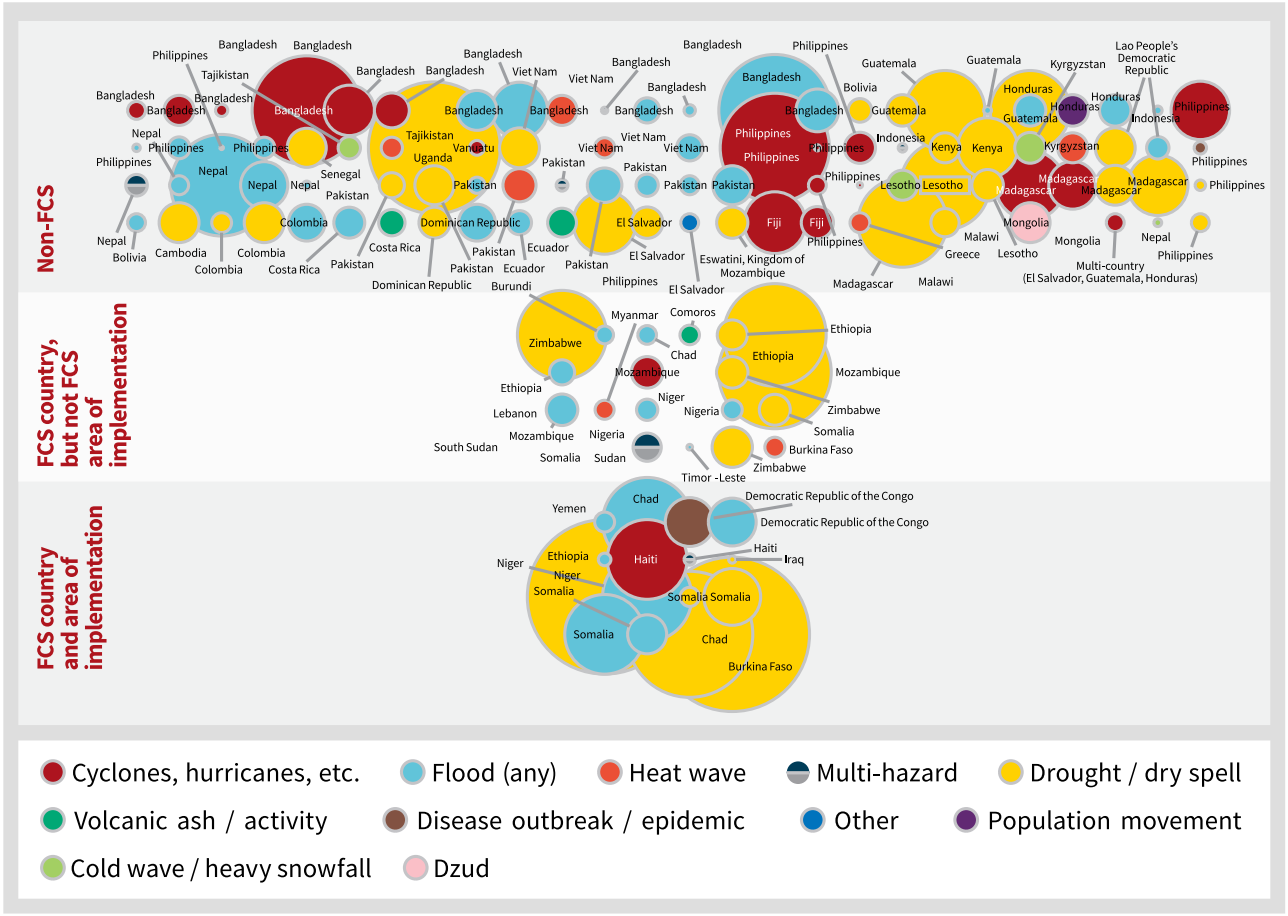



Figure 4: Active Anticipatory action frameworks in 2024. Bubble-size relative to budget available for activation (Source: Anticipation Hub, Global Overview 2024, Table A2)

While fragility and conflict remain a primary driver of humanitarian crises globally, conflict-induced displacement is largely unaddressed by existing AA frameworks. In 2024, there were three AA frameworks related to displacement and broader migration. In Honduras, IFRC had an active protocol for migrants on the move, which, upon trigger, would provide health support (e.g., transit first-aid kits), WASH support (e.g., distribution of communication materials with key hygiene promotion messages in different languages), and protection (e.g., identification and referral of cases).[50] In addition, DRC had two active protocols in Burkina Faso and South Sudan, which will be explored in more detail later.

Furthermore, until recently, the discourse on extreme weather shocks and disaster displacement focused primarily on newly displaced people, while the severe effects on *already displaced* populations were largely under-acknowledged.[51] In 2024, 66 million displaced people lived in a country with an active AA

[49] Anticipation Hub (2025): Anticipatory action in 2024: a global overview. Available at anticipation-hub.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[50] IFRC (2023): Early Action Protocol Summary. Honduras – Population movement. Available at: ifrc.org (accessed 17 December 2025).
[51] Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): *Already displaced, now facing disaster: climate change impacts on displaced people*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people

framework, primarily for climate hazards. Some of the major displacement-hosting countries without an AA framework included Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Iran, and Cameroon. Furthermore, among the active frameworks in 2024 for countries hosting a significant number of displaced people, only about 1/3 made explicit reference to targeting or activities specifically related to the displaced. None of the frameworks included larger intervention components specifically designed for the vulnerabilities, needs, and challenges faced by those displaced in the face of predictable hazards and shocks. For example, none of the frameworks made specific mention of the challenge of extending early warning messages to already displaced population groups. Early warning systems commonly bypass refugee or IDP settlements, forcing communities to rely on informal, grassroots efforts like youth-led WhatsApp groups to disseminate urgent alerts.[52]

In January 2026, DRC conducted a survey with a broad range of AA stakeholders. The stakeholders were asked whether, based on their experience, they think it is feasible to do AA in response to conflict- or climate-induced displacement. Of the 211 stakeholders surveyed, 81% considered AA feasible or very feasible in the context of conflict-induced displacement. For climate-induced displacement, it was 95%.

Despite this, several challenges help explain the exclusion of displacement, especially conflict-induced displacement, from AA frameworks, which are rooted in several interconnected challenges:

- **Modelling and Prediction Failures:** Predicting conflict is notoriously difficult and politically sensitive. A review by OCHA concluded that existing conflict prediction models lack the necessary performance for anticipatory action. They perform poorly in forecasting the *onset* of new conflicts and often fail to establish a clear link between a predicted conflict event and its specific humanitarian impact.[53] According to the stakeholder survey, 64% of respondents who think AA for conflict-induced displacement is feasible cite the lack of reliable forecasting models as a challenge.
- **Sensitivities**: Acting ahead of conflict raises challenges related to humanitarian neutrality and "do no harm" principles. Sharing predictive information could be perceived as encouraging displacement or questioning a state's ability to protect its citizens, and could even be misused by parties to a conflict.[54] This was also highlighted as a challenge by 61% of stakeholders who did not think AA for conflict-induced displacement was feasible, compared with 39% among those who thought AA was feasible.
- **Policy Gaps:** Refugees and IDPs are routinely marginalized in global climate policy frameworks, negotiations (UNFCCC), and access to climate finance. They often lack representation in national climate processes like National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).[55] Global policy frameworks such as the Global Compact on Refugees and the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement acknowledge the need for anticipation but fall short of providing concrete commitments or guidelines for applying AA to conflict-induced displacement, with most policies remaining focused on climate shocks. This challenge was also highlighted, as 40% of stakeholders believed AA for conflict-induced displacement was feasible.

[52] Ayoo Irene Hellen, Qiyamud Din Ikram and Jocelyn Perry (2025): *Leading in displacement: refugees at the forefront of climate action*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[53] Seth Caldwell (2022): *Assessing the technical feasibility of conflict prediction for anticipatory action*. OCHA. Available at humdata.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[54] Alexander Kjærum and Bo S. Madsen (2025): Pushing the boundaries of anticipatory action using machine learning, *Data & Policy*, 7: e8 doi:10.1017/dap.2024.88
[55] Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): *Already displaced, now facing disaster: climate change impacts on displaced people*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people

If the international community is to fulfil its commitment to initiatives like "Early Warnings for All," it is imperative that the more than 123 million forcibly displaced people worldwide are explicitly integrated into EWS and AA frameworks. This requires moving beyond viewing them as passive victims and recognizing them as agents of change whose inclusion is essential for designing fairer and more effective climate policies.[56]

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[56] Ayoo Irene Hellen, Qiyamud Din Ikram and Jocelyn Perry (2025): *Leading in displacement: refugees at the forefront of climate action*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people

**The scale of the challenge**

The global scale of forced displacement has reached an unprecedented crisis point, fundamentally challenging the capacity of the traditional, reactive humanitarian system. In 2025, over 117 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations—a figure that has tripled in the last decade. This number is compounded by millions more displaced by climate-related disasters, with projections indicating a continued rise. This surge in displacement directly correlates with a dramatic escalation in humanitarian needs. In 2025, 305 million people required humanitarian aid, a nearly fourfold increase from 78 million in 2015.

This new era of "polycrises" generates complex and profound humanitarian needs. Displacement severs people from their land, livelihoods, assets, and social support systems, driving up food insecurity and poverty. Displaced populations face immense challenges in accessing essential services like health and education, and are exposed to severe protection risks, including violence, GBV, forced recruitment into armed groups, and exploitation. Livelihoods collapse, trauma is pervasive, and families are frequently separated. Research consistently finds that women and girls are disproportionately affected, as displacement reinforces harmful, pre-existing gender norms.[57] The impact extends to host communities, which are often located in low- or middle-income countries and struggle with their own vulnerabilities. The influx of displaced populations strains already scarce food, land, and water systems, as well as local infrastructure and services, sometimes leading to social tensions.[58]

Analysis of REACH MSNA data, compiled by IDMC, gives some insights into the specific vulnerabilities that arise for displaced people. Across 11 countries, on average, IDPs had a 24%-point higher number of people with lack of access to adequate housing, a 17%-point higher number of people fearing exposure to conflict or violence, and a 13%-point higher number of people lacking stable income sources. On all but one of the 19 indicators, IDPs are worse off than the host communities. While this does not perfectly demonstrate the impact of displacement on needs, as it does not specify the baseline needs of the IDP before becoming displaced, it does indicate that displaced people experience higher levels of needs than those living in the same area who are not displaced.

[57] Alexander Kjærum and Bo S. Madsen (2025): Pushing the boundaries of anticipatory action using machine learning, *Data & Policy*, 7: e8 doi:10.1017/dap.2024.88

[58] Adam-Bradford, A.; Anagreh, A.; Dessalegn, M.; Hafeez, M.; Khalid, S.; Mekuria, W.; Melaku, D.; Schindler, A.; Singh, R.; Ruckstuhl, S. (2024) *Anticipatory action in communities hosting refugees and internally displaced persons: a synthesis report with case studies from Ethiopia, Jordan and Pakistan*. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute (IWMI). CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration

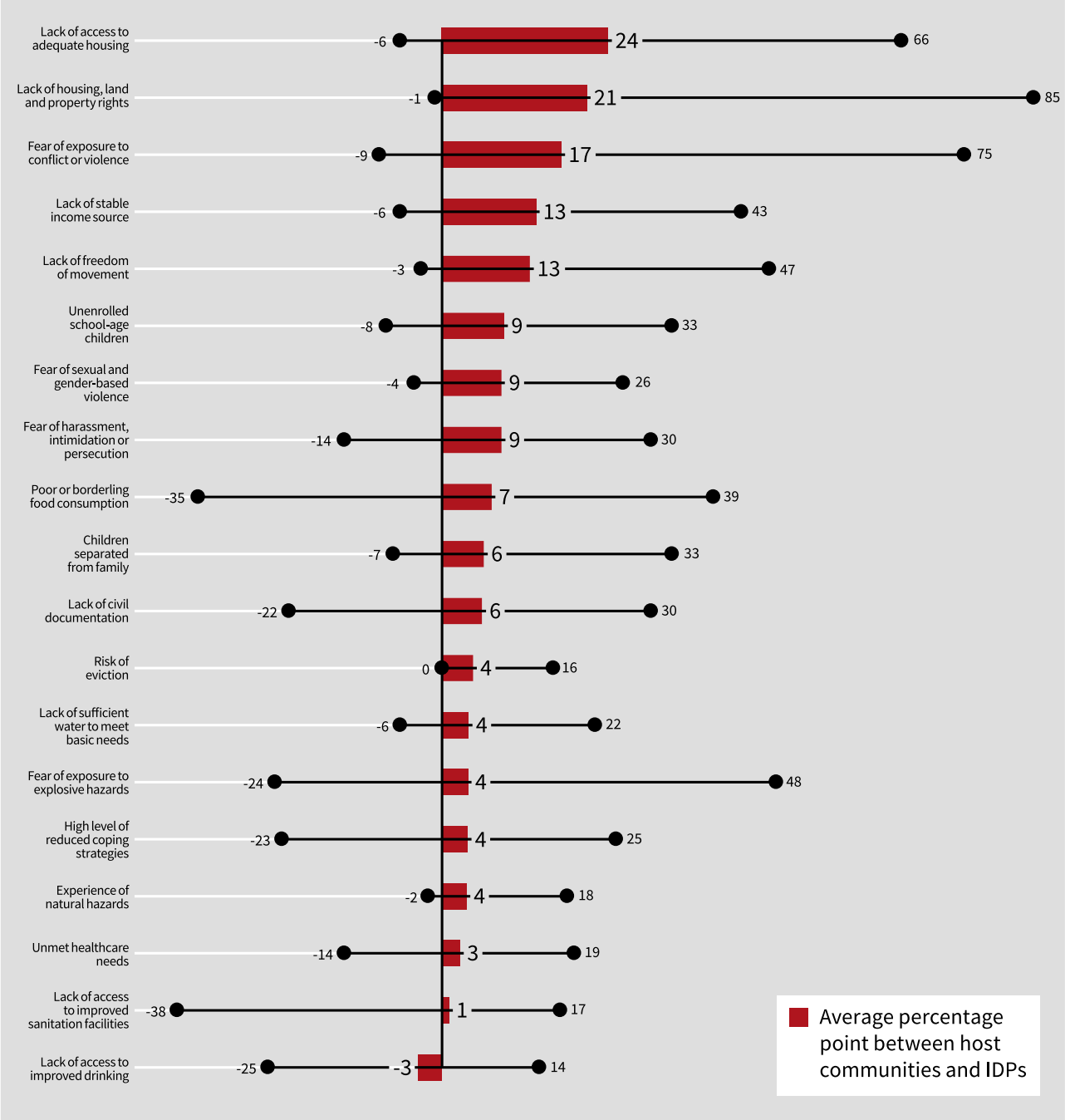



Figure 5: Difference between needs among host communities and IDPs (Source: IDMC Severity Assessment 2024, based on REACH MSNA Data from 11 countries)

Analysis of the link between people in need and displacement largely confirms this analysis. Over time, a 10% rise in displacement has been associated with a roughly 4% increase in the number of people in need the following year. These increases are often most clearly reflected in the needs for shelter, education, health, and protection.

Displaced populations often live in precarious and vulnerable situations with limited access to proper housing and services. This increases their exposure to the negative impacts of climate change, yet they are often systematically excluded from the very systems designed to mitigate these risks. Research shows that

over 75% of forcibly displaced populations are exposed to three or more hazards, and refugee camps are frequently situated in vulnerable locations like floodplains.[59]

Climate change impacts the displaced through different pathways. A key direct and highly visible impact is on shelter. The Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh mostly live in Cox's Bazar, which is located on the coast and susceptible to cyclones and storm surges. The camp is frequently affected by flooding and landslides during the monsoon season, which destroy the camp's shelters. This climate vulnerability has been exacerbated by the camp's construction, which has led to widespread deforestation and soil erosion.[60] Similarly, in Sudan, Ethiopian refugees arriving from Tigray have been exposed to severe weather conditions, including heavy rains, strong storms, severe floods, and heat waves, which have destroyed 50% of their shelters and around 2,000 latrines.[61] In Africa's largest refugee camp, Dadaab, which is remotely situated in Kenya, severe flooding occurs at annual intervals, causing severe harm to the residents. On several occasions, the floods have destroyed hundreds of shelters or washed the shelters away completely, leaving thousands of refugees homeless and jeopardizing access to food supplies and crucial health care.[62]

Refugees living in informal settlements in urban settings are also particularly affected by climate change. Many informal settlements are on land unsuitable for settlements, chosen in part because residents are less likely to be evicted as the land is unattractive. Housing structures tend to be poor. Living in informal settlements entails elevated risk from most climate change impacts, including high temperatures, more intense precipitation, storms, flooding, and landslides.[63]

Displaced populations are also affected by the overall liveability of the areas where they are hosted and its impact on their well-being. A survey conducted among IDPs in two camps in Iraq highlights these aspects. The surveyed IDPs reported issues such as reduced rainfall (78%), extreme hot or cold weather (62%), dust storms (55%), and recurrent droughts (45%). Of those surveyed, 74% believed climate change affected their life. One of the camps – Hassan Sham – is in an area that is severely affected by drought and heatwaves. The other camp is located in Duhok, a mountainous area with milder temperatures. The study found that residents of the Hassan Sham camp – being more exposed to extreme heat – had reduced ability to concentrate on tasks, socialize, and maintain their sleep, and were more irritable than those living in the less-affected camp in Duhok.[64] In the Ugandan refugee camp, Nakivale, with refugees from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Somalia, climate change is a reason why some refugees want to leave the settlement they had originally sought refuge in. Many of the refugees here have subsistence-oriented livelihoods, as refugees are typically given a small plot of land upon arrival. However, climate change has made the rainy season unpredictable and farming difficult, leaving those who rely on subsistence farming particularly vulnerable.[65]

[59] Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): *Already displaced, now facing disaster: climate change impacts on displaced people*, Forced Migration Review 76: Climate change: Choices for displaced people
[60] Sturridge, C. & Holloway, K. (2022): *Climate change, conflict and displacement: five key misconceptions*. HPG briefing note. London: ODI, Available at odi.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[61] Ayman Ahmed, Nouh Saad Mohamed, Emmanuel Edwar Siddig, Talha Algaily, Suad Sulaiman, Yousif Ali (2021): The impacts of climate change on displaced populations: A call for action, *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, Volume 3, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joclim.2021.100057
[62] UNHCR (2017): Heavy Floods hit Dadaab Refugee Camp. Available at unhcr.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[63] David Satterthwaite, Diane Archer, Sarah Colenbrander, David Dodman, Jorgelina Hardoy and Sheela Patel (2018): *Responding to climate change in cities and in their informal settlements and economies*, International Institute for Environment and Development
[64] H.A. Marzouk, Y. Duman, J. Meier, et al. 2022. Assessment of Perceptions of Climate Change and Its Causes and Impacts on Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing among a Group of Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq. Intervention, 20(1), 98–106.
[65] S. Nakueira. 2020. Unpacking vulnerability: an ethnographic account of the challenges of implementing resettlement programmes in a refugee camp in Uganda. In: M-C Foblets and L. Leboeuf (eds.), Humanitarian admission to Europe: the law between promises and constraints (1. ed., pp. 239-270). Baden-Baden; Oxford: Nomos.

**Advancements in getting ahead of the challenge**

The ability to act ahead of a crisis depends on accurate forecasting of future events. In recent years, significant advancements in data science, machine learning (ML), and artificial intelligence (AI) have moved displacement forecasting from a theoretical exercise to an operationally viable tool for the humanitarian sector. These new methodologies combine many weak signals to identify latent data structures and unnoticed dependencies, often outperforming traditional analyses based on a small number of strong signals.[66]

A diverse range of forecasting methodologies has been developed, each with distinct strengths and applications. These models integrate high-dimensional data from sources covering conflict, climate, economics, politics, and demographics to produce increasingly accurate and granular predictions. Several pioneering models exemplify these advancements:

- **UNHCR Global Early Warning Model:** This novel model uses gradient boosting classification to assess two distinct displacement risks at the country of origin: the likelihood of significant refugee flows and the probability of sudden increases in those flows. It integrates conflict forecasts with 95 feature variables across economic, political, and demographic categories, producing monthly risk indices with one, three, and six-month prediction horizons. The model demonstrates high accuracy, particularly for larger-displacement events.[67]
- **DRC AHEAD (Anticipatory Humanitarian Action for Displacement):** An operational model that forecasts displacement at the sub-national (admin 2) level with a 3-4 month lead time. It uses a Bayesian state-space model with data on conflict, food insecurity, and health to inform direct humanitarian response.
- **World Bank DCRM (Uganda):** An AI-driven model that forecasts refugee influxes from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan into Uganda with over 80% accuracy. It uses more than 90 variables to provide a 4-6-month lead time, aiming to increase the availability of public services for arriving refugees. [68]

Despite their growing sophistication, forecasting models face significant constraints that must be addressed for their effective use in humanitarian action.

1. **Data deficits:** The single largest bottleneck is the pervasive challenge of data availability, consistency, and reliability. In many conflict zones, "ground truth" displacement data is itself an estimate rather than a headcount, making model training and validation extremely difficult. This scarcity is particularly acute in the context of internal displacement.[69]
2. **The "black box" problem:** The complex and opaque nature of many ML models creates a "trust deficit" among humanitarian decision-makers, who are often reluctant to act on predictions they cannot fully understand or explain. While some tools are integrating "explainable AI" to show what drives a forecast, this remains a key hurdle. [70]
3. **Predictive accuracy for onset and surges:** Models perform well in predicting trends in protracted crises but struggle to forecast "black swan" events—sudden onsets or unprecedented surges in

[66] Lia Petrova (2025): How well can machine learning tools for humanitarian forecasting be used in predicting the consequences of forced displacement? Thesis Submitted to EEMCS Faculty Delft University of Technology
[67] Geraldine Henningsen: An Early Warning Model for Forced Displacement, 10.48550/arXiv.2505.06249
[68] Robin Mearns, Benjamin Reese and Chris Mahony (2025): How AI can support anticipatory action to address forced displacement, World Bank, Available at worldbank.org (accessed 18 December 2025)
[69] Bo Schwart Madsen (2025): Forecasting Methodologies Related to Displacement: A companion brief for the 'Anticipatory Action for Displacement' workshop, 5 December 2025, Berlin, Germany (not published)
[70] Bo Schwart Madsen (2025): Forecasting Methodologies Related to Displacement: A companion brief for the 'Anticipatory Action for Displacement' workshop, 5 December 2025, Berlin, Germany (not published)

displacement—which are often the most devastating. This limitation has led some, such as OCHA, to conclude that conflict prediction itself is not yet sufficiently skilled for AA, advocating instead a focus on predicting the *impacts* of observed conflict.[71]

4. **Ethical and security risks:** The use of predictive models in humanitarian contexts raises serious ethical concerns. There is a risk of misuse of results, which could lead to preventive border closures, attacks on aid convoys, or the political instrumentalization of forecasts. Data privacy and security are paramount, as is the need to keep "humans in the loop" to ensure accountability in life-or-death decisions. [72]

**The trigger mechanism: combining science and local knowledge**

The decision to activate an anticipatory action plan is governed by a trigger mechanism, which is arguably the most critical component of the framework. Rather than relying solely on a single model's output, leading approaches combine quantitative forecasts with real-time, ground-level monitoring.

- **Phased and Layered Triggers:** Frameworks often use a phased approach. In a DRC flood-response pilot in Beletweyne, Somalia, the trigger was layered using river-level data from FAO SWALIM. When the river exceeded 6.5 meters (moderate risk), early warning messages were sent. When it surpassed 7.3 meters (high risk) *and* a 7-day forecast predicted a high discharge, cash distributions were initiated.
- **Triangulating models with community monitoring:** In its conflict pilots, DRC combines the AHEAD model's predictions with community-level protection monitoring. In Akobo, South Sudan, preliminary actions would be taken if *either* the model or community indicators were triggered. The full spectrum of actions was reserved for cases in which *both* triggers were met. Community-identified indicators included:
    - Pre-emptive movement of people from outlying areas into Akobo town.
    - Incidents of killings occurring outside the town, signalling encroaching armed groups.
    - Observed recruitment of youth into armed groups.
    - Movement restrictions, where community members feel insecure accessing fishing or hunting grounds

This hybrid approach addresses the "black box" problem by grounding technological forecasts in the lived experiences and intricate knowledge of affected communities, enhancing both the accuracy of the trigger and local ownership of the process.[73]

Leaving forcibly displaced people—among the world's most vulnerable populations—out of this proactive approach is a significant missed opportunity. Further, if the current displacement forecasts have demonstrated accuracy, then it arguably becomes part of the ethical duty of specifically displacement-mandated organizations to act on credible information of imminent displacement crises to reduce their humanitarian and financial footprint.

[71] Seth Caldwell (2022): *Assessing the technical feasibility of conflict prediction for anticipatory action*. OCHA. Available at humdata.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[72] Lia Petrova (2025): How well can machine learning tools for humanitarian forecasting be used in predicting the consequences of forced displacement? Thesis Submitted to EEMCS Faculty Delft University of Technology
[73] Alexander Kjærum and Bo S. Madsen (2025): Pushing the boundaries of anticipatory action using machine learning, *Data & Policy*, 7: e8 doi:10.1017/dap.2024.88

The case for AA is therefore not merely operational; it is a strategic and moral imperative to protect lives better, preserve livelihoods, and restore dignity in an era of escalating global crises.

**Building on what is already there**
As part of the Anticipatory Humanitarian Action for Displacement (AHEAD) project in-depth contextual research was carried out in +15 communities across seven of the world's most complex displacement crises —Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Yemen, and Myanmar—the project sought to understand how to get ahead of displacement in protracted crises where violence, weak institutions, and climatic or economic stress converge.

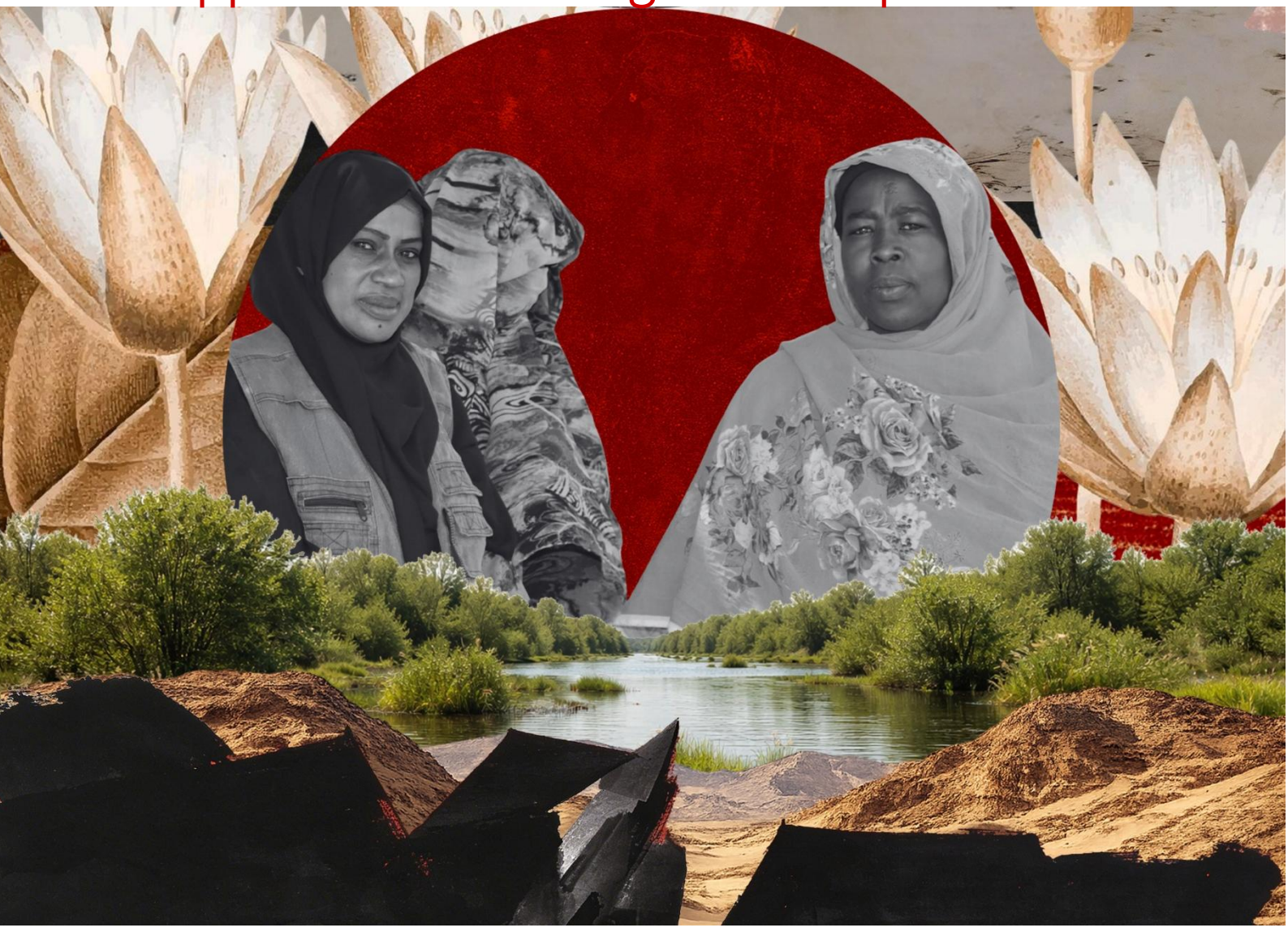
**Early warning runs on trust, not technology.** The common assumption is that early warning systems (EWS) are about technology—satellites, data models, and formal committees. But across all the communities, the AHEAD analysis dismantles this myth. Formal, institutional EWS are often fragmented, under-resourced, or simply non-functional in conflict settings. In the rare FCS examples in which a pre-agreed link between early warning information and action is in place, the gap between the issuance of an alert and the triggering of a response is vast. The *real* early warnings, the ones people trust and act on, come from informal, community-based networks deeply embedded in the social fabric. These systems are powerful because they rely on human connection, not just data. From the *gabaya* in Ethiopia, to chiefs, church networks, and religious leaders.

The critical gap is not a lack of information; communities are acutely aware of rising risks. The failure lies in the disconnect between connecting these trusted, local channels and the formal humanitarian systems that control funding and resources.

**Anticipation isn't new; it's a survival skill.** While the humanitarian sector is still developing formal, trigger-based AA programmes for conflict, communities on the front lines have been practicing it for generations. For them, anticipation is not an innovative pilot project; it is a long-standing survival strategy. The AHEAD analysis found that across all contexts, communities are masters of informal early action. However, the analysis reveals a critical nuance: communities are often more adept at anticipating natural hazards than conflict and displacement. This distinction is vital, showing that the bridge to institutional support must be designed differently for different types of crises.

The challenge for humanitarian organizations, then, is not to invent anticipatory action from scratch. It is to build the bridge that connects these existing community practices to predictable funding, structured support, and a system that recognizes and reinforces local expertise.

# Approaches for doing AA for displacement



An anticipatory action framework translates a forecast into a concrete set of pre-agreed actions designed to be implemented within a specific timeframe before the peak impact of a shock. This requires, in addition to a clearly defined trigger mechanism, a pre-planned menu of interventions tailored to the context and the needs of the affected population.

The specific anticipatory actions implemented depend on the context and the primary objective, which can range from preventing forced displacement altogether by buffering its key drivers to mitigating its impacts or preparing host communities for arrivals. As such, the response can take place in the origin of displacement, along the displacement route, and in the place of arrival.

**In the place of shock/hazard**

Most anticipatory action is done in the place of origin or where the shock is occurring. Many efforts can help to mitigate the impacts of the shocks in the place of origin, including:

- **Protecting the displaced from further harm.** This can help already displaced population groups prepare for and thereby mitigate the impacts of the shock. A key aspect is ensuring displaced people have access to early warning information ahead of shocks, enabling them to make informed decisions about protecting themselves. DRC deploys this operational option to prevent secondary displacement, thereby shortening displacement cycles and offering quicker solutions to end forced displacement. Identifying specific communication tools and messaging for displaced people is a key activity. Furthermore, e.g., to protect IDPs from low-lying IDP sites in Beletweyne, Somalia, DRC provided IDPs two instalments of $100 each, with the first distributed four days before the river overflowed. This provided households with the resources to prepare for and temporarily relocate themselves and their assets. In Somalia, the IFRC has an early action protocol (EAP) to provide multi-purpose cash assistance to IDPs to cope with the cascading impacts of drought (water scarcity and food insecurity).[74]
- **Protecting displaced shelters and assets.** As IDP and refugee shelters are often vulnerable to climate shocks, support to shelters can be important to mitigate their impacts. E.g., the 2025 OCHA Anticipatory Action and Early Response Framework for cyclones in Mozambique included deploying CCCM teams to provide tools, materials, or sector-specific cash to site management committees to strengthen key infrastructure and roads at displacement sites.[75] In Yemen, IFRC's early action protocol for flood included a particular focus on IDP camps with activities such as cleaning of drainage systems inside and surrounding IDP camps/sites to minimize surface runoff and water levels that could damage shelters, provision of sandbags, and other flood mitigation solutions, and basic emergency shelter/repair kit to households with unprotected and weak shelters.[76]
- **Preventing displacement.** In contexts where the drivers of displacement can be directly addressed, anticipatory action can focus on prevention. In the context of smaller-scale conflict, e.g., inter-community conflicts, efforts can be made to de-escalate tension and mitigate the compounding impacts of forced displacement. As an example, in South Sudan, DRC anticipatory action mechanism alerted local peace committees, who mobilized 200 representatives—including youth leaders, community leaders, and local authorities from both the Lou Nuer and Murle communities—to de-escalate tensions and agree on pledges to end violence. As part of the

[74] IFRC (2024): Early Action Protocol Summary. Somalia, Drought. Available at ifrc.org (Accessed on 22 December 2025)
[75] OCHA (2025): Anticipatory Action and Early Response Framework. Mozambique – Cyclones. Available at unocha.org (Accessed 22 December 2025)
[76] IFRC (2024): Simplified Early Action Protocol. Yemen – floods. Available at ifrc.org (Accessed on 22 December 2025)

mechanism, information was also shared with other peacebuilding and humanitarian actors to ensure comprehensive actions to prevent the conflict from escalating.

- **Anticipated assistance during displacement.** In many cases, preventing conflict and displacement from materializing is challenging. In these cases, anticipatory action can help mitigate the impacts of displacement on the humanitarian needs of affected communities. I.e., limit the extent to which displacement exacerbates pre-existing humanitarian needs and/or creates new humanitarian needs, which, as highlighted in the previous section, is the normal result of displacement. This can include protection awareness-raising to ensure that people know their rights and the risks associated with displacement before the movement occurs, identifying and informing about safe routes, and supporting pre-departure document and asset safeguarding. It can also include mine risk education to ensure that people know what to do in case they encounter unexploded ordnance while fleeing. As an example, Start Network worked with communities in Kenya to develop their own plans and identify safe spaces where they could escape should violence erupt during the 2017 elections.[77] Other activities can include conducting an anticipatory needs assessment to ensure a proper understanding of the pre-existing needs that will need to be addressed as people move into and arrive in host communities.

**While people are on the move**

An emerging area of anticipatory action focuses on supporting people as they move from their place of origin toward host communities. Assistance can be provided through humanitarian service points along displacement routes.

- **Addressing existing needs.** Support displaced people while on the move to ensure that existing humanitarian needs do not further escalate or create new ones. For example, in Honduras, IFRC's EAP provided various health services to migrants on the move, including deploying mobile health units, distributing standardized transit first-aid kits, and providing pre-hospital care. Activities can also include facilitating access to telecommunication services to support family reunification.[78]
- **Preventing further needs.** Activities at humanitarian service points can also help prevent further humanitarian needs. This can entail information akin to that shared in the place of origin related to protection awareness, mine-risk education, etc. It can also be done by deploying technical staff to assess and refer people on the move to protection services, distributing hygiene kits, and establishing temporary accommodation centers to ensure proper shelter.

**In host communities**

Finally, anticipatory action for displacement can take place in the future host communities. Some of this may be similar to broader emergency-preparedness responses. Anticipatory interventions in host communities align more closely with traditional responses. Still, they are informed by displacement forecasts and provide first-wave assistance before response mechanisms kick into gear, thereby bridging a critical assistance gap.

- **Preparing host communities for influx.** Several challenges can be mitigated by working closely with the host communities and local authorities to prepare for an influx of displaced people. Activities can focus on ensuring social cohesion to avoid tensions and friction caused by the influx. This can include efforts to strengthen conflict prevention mechanisms for resources shared between host communities and displaced populations. Furthermore, efforts can focus on ensuring

[77] Start Network (2017): Start members act in anticipation of high stakes election in Kenya. Available at startnetwork.org (accessed 5 January 2026)
[78] IFRC (2023): Early Action Protocol Summary. Honduras, population movement. Available at ifrc.org (accessed 5 January 2026)

access to appropriate settlement areas for the displaced and on advocating for the opening of services (e.g., schools, hospitals, water points) to arriving displaced people.

- **Addressing existing needs.** Responding early to existing needs helps to ensure that they do not spiral out of control and reach crisis-level escalation. This can include activities such as deploying rapid-response teams ready to support people as they arrive and pre-positioning relief items based on the needs assessment conducted in host communities. It can include establishing camps/shelters and emergency water and sanitation services (e.g., emergency latrines) to be ready when people arrive. It can further include updating referral pathways and coordination structures.
- **Preventing further needs.** Several activities can help prevent further exacerbation of humanitarian needs arising from displacement, to build self-reliance among the displaced. Market systems and economic recovery analysis can help determine entry points for sustainable livelihoods for the displaced, ensure equity, and support the local economy in absorbing the shock. Rehabilitation of infrastructure (e.g., water points) can help ensure that services do not become overwhelmed under increased demand. Protection awareness-raising can help prevent protection incidents, while strengthening community-based protection mechanisms can help identify and refer future protection cases to mitigate further protection needs.

**Protection- and conflict-sensitive anticipatory action**

A guidance note under development by FAO and Danish Refugee Council aims to provide **practical, field-ready safeguards** to ensure AA is safe, ethical, and adaptable in FCV settings. Core principles

- Conflict sensitivity and protection are not add-ons; they are fundamental safeguards that determine whether AA does good or causes harm.
- **Rights-based and inclusive approach and ethical use of data**—AA must be grounded in Core Protection Standards, upholding dignity, safety, and meaningful access for all affected populations, with particular attention to sex, age, disability, and displacement status.
- AA must be **adaptive** – designed for disruption, changing authorities, and shifts in feasible geographies. Build capacity for judgment and adaptation through preparedness, not just rigid protocols.
- Tools must be **light, fast, realistic**, and matched to short activation windows and constrained operating conditions.
- Community knowledge and local structures are essential sources of insight when formal systems stall and critical for validating protection and conflict risks.
- **Do No Harm as baseline, positive contribution as aspiration**—Minimize harm first; where preparedness allows, and trust exists, pursue opportunities to strengthen social cohesion and reduce conflict drivers.

# Lessons learned

While still an emerging field, anticipatory action for displacement has generated a compelling body of evidence demonstrating its potential to transform humanitarian response. This evidence highlights significant opportunities but also illuminates the profound challenges—operational, ethical, and systemic—that must be navigated to scale these approaches effectively.

Concrete pilot projects have demonstrated that AA delivers measurable benefits in protecting lives, livelihoods, and dignity, while also being an efficient use of limited resources.

**Enhanced peace and stability:** The DRC AA pilot in South Sudan showed that by triggering inter-community dialogues before conflict escalation, displacement could be prevented. Qualitative findings also suggested that the dialogues, while in themselves not able to create longer-term peace, do create a window of opportunity for further entrenching the commitments made to enhance longer-term peaceful coexistence. The South Sudan case study highlights the untapped potential of layering AA onto longer-term peacebuilding efforts, serving as a protective buffer and helping avoid setbacks in progress towards peace.[79]

**Improved humanitarian outcomes:** In Somalia, DRC implemented an AA activation ahead of floods for IDPs in Beletweyne, producing striking improvements compared to a group that received assistance only after the shock. Among households receiving anticipatory cash transfers[80]:

- **Food security:** Average Food Consumption Scores improved by 26 points, compared to just 14 points for the post-shock group.
- **Livelihoods:** Average per-person income rose from $6 to $31.
- **Protection:** Child labor outside the home fell from 6% to 0%, whereas it *increased* to 15% in the post-shock group.

Qualitative findings from the pilot in South Sudan showed that, by helping to de-escalate the conflict, the AA response enabled communities to regain access to hunting and fishing grounds, improved food security during the lean season, and facilitated the faster return of those initially displaced.

**Timeliness:** In Burkina Faso, DRC implemented anticipatory actions in the host community to prepare for the influx of displaced people. The response and support to the displaced arrived in half the time of the normal response time in the rapid response mechanism in place in the country, making the case for the utilization of AA as forecast-informed first wave assistance, bridging a critical time window between the early onset of displacement and the deployment of response resources.[81]

[79] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Anticipatory Action for conflict-induced displacement in South Sudan. Assessment Report. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[80] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Lessons learned: Anticipatory action response for IDPs exposed to floods in Somalia. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[81] Dr. Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): Lessons Learned: Anticipating displacement in South Sudan and Burkina Faso. Danish Refugee Council. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)

**Avoided humanitarian costs – returns on investments in preventing displacement**

Given the conclusion that the inter-community dialogue made a significant contribution to de-escalation in Akobo and that, had it not been conducted, significant displacement would have occurred, it is possible to assess the humanitarian costs avoided. The simple way of calculating this is:

**(Average duration of displacement x Cost of humanitarian assistance x # of people avoided displacement) + Cost of delivering humanitarian assistance**

The underlying math is presented in more detail below. As shown in the figure, the cost of implementing the anticipatory action mechanism was approximately €37,000 during the activation period, including €6,000 for the activities. If the mechanism had only prevented 200 people from becoming displaced, the anticipatory action approach would not have been cost-efficient, as the cost of responding to 200 displaced people would be approximately €18,000. In the most likely scenario, where the mechanism managed to avoid approximately 2,800 people becoming displaced, the return on investment is significant: for every euro spent during the activation, €6.6 was saved on avoided displacement, which, in response costs, would amount to almost €250,000. In this scenario, the entire cost of building the system would also be recovered, as the total cost of the anticipatory action project up until June 2024 was €206,000. In the high benefit scenario, the return on investment is 1:17, and including the building funding, it is 1:3. The breakeven point, disregarding the build cost, is 420 displaced people. In this situation, the return on investment further improves. In the low-benefit scenario, the return on investment is roughly 1:2.5, while in the high-benefit scenario, it is 1:4 when including build costs.

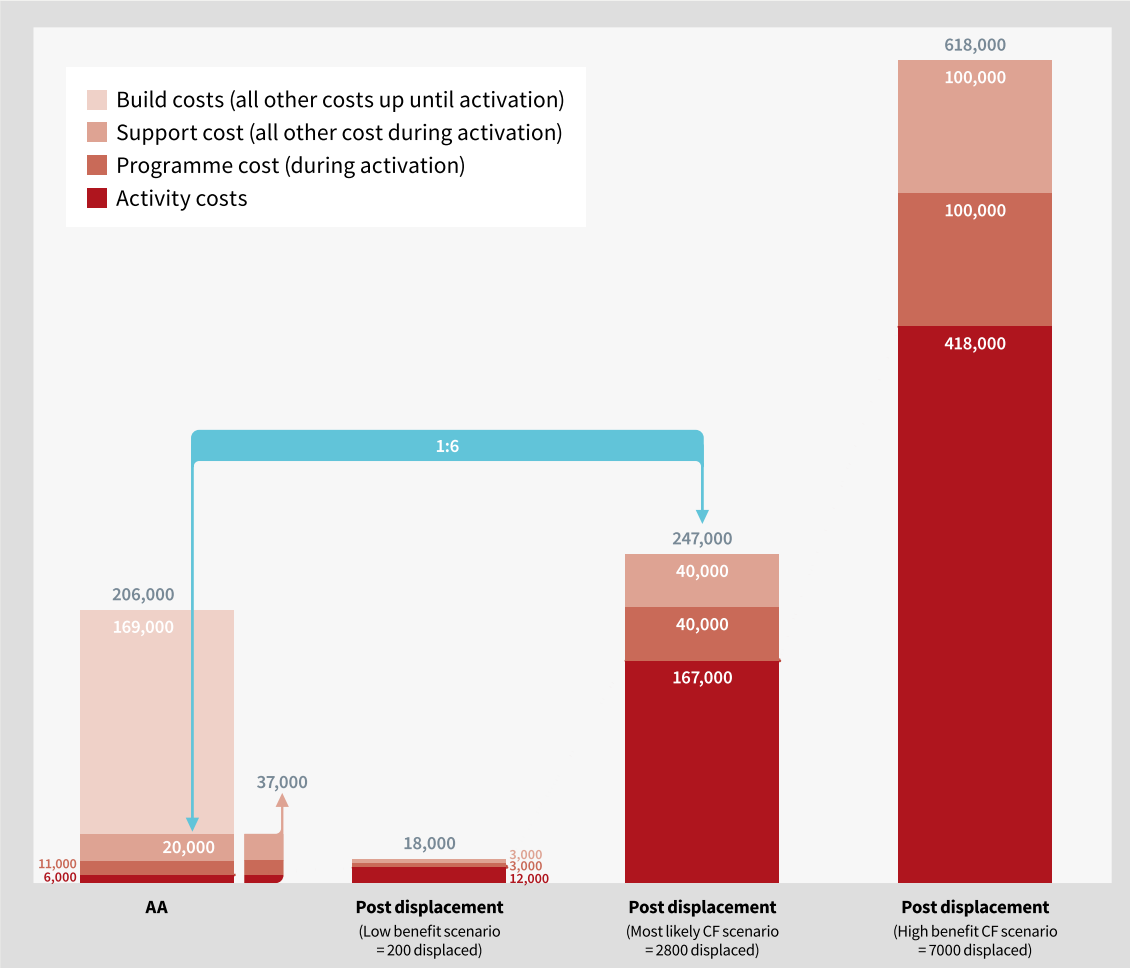



Figure 6: Cost comparison between actual AA response and counter-factual post-shock response

**The math**

The average duration of displacement is conservatively estimated[82] to be 40 months for people displaced within Akobo, as highlighted earlier. This does not necessarily capture people who are only displaced for a short period between data collection rounds. Based on key informant interviews, also highlighted in the section on returns, the likely duration would be 6 months. In the calculations, **a 2-month duration was assumed, with everyone expected** to return at the start of the rainy season. This is optimistic, as only up to 2/3 of those displaced in May actually returned within 3 months. The cost of displacement is calculated by using the cost of the MultiSector Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (MSSMEB), which in May stood at $**189**[83] or equivalent to €179. This should be considered the bare minimum cost of the humanitarian response and does not take into account the lasting effects of displacement (e.g., lost access to education, health impacts, etc.) nor protection risks and harms.

The cost of delivering humanitarian assistance is calculated based on the multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) distribution component of a larger ECHO-funded project conducted by DRC in Malakal, with a distribution in March 2024 to approximately 2,500 individuals. Programme (i.e., technical staff to deliver the aid) and support (i.e., transport, finance, HR, procurement, etc.) costs have been calculated based on the value delivered. This assumes that there are no economies of scale in delivering MPCA. Programme cost was approximately 24% of the MCPA value, and support cost was roughly the same in the month leading up to and the month of distribution.

These costs are benchmarked against the anticipatory action mechanism, i.e., the activity costs (inter-community dialogue) and the programme and support costs needed to deliver these efforts (for the month before and the month during the efforts). In addition to this, all other costs incurred in the project in the month leading up to the activation, which can largely be considered the build cost, i.e., the cost of setting up the entire framework and mechanism, and ongoing data collection.

### Key challenges to implementation and scale-up

Scaling AA for displacement requires confronting a complex set of barriers that span from field-level logistics to global policy frameworks.

**Operational and logistical hurdles:**

- **Timeliness:** In complex crises, "early" is not always possible. In DRC's Burkina Faso pilot, administrative requirements, such as the need to register IDPs before providing individual assistance, delayed the full response by 40 days after the trigger. While this was still more than a month earlier than the average "rapid" response, it highlights the need for a more flexible understanding of AA as "acting earlier".[84]

[82] This is based on IOM DTM (2024): South Sudan - Baseline Assessment Round 15. This data includes the year people were displaced. The conservative estimate is derived by using the least amount of time people can have been displaced e.g. for people displaced in 2024 they could have just arrived and therefore the duration is set at 0 months. For people displaced in 2023, the duration is set at 9 months (the assessment was completed in September, so this is assuming they were displaced 31 December 2023).

[83] REACH Impact Initiatives (June 2024): South Sudan | Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI). Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)

[84] Dr. Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): Lessons Learned: Anticipating displacement in South Sudan and Burkina Faso. Danish Refugee Council. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)

- **Access:** In many conflict settings, insecurity, administrative restrictions, and poor infrastructure make it difficult to reach affected populations, a constraint that applies to both anticipatory and reactive aid.

**Ethical and political dilemmas:**

- **Legitimizing displacement:** Planning for displacement in advance risks being perceived as legitimizing or encouraging it, raising difficult ethical questions for humanitarian actors.
- **Risk of harm:** Providing support to people at risk of displacement could inadvertently incentivize movement or, conversely, cause people to remain in dangerous situations to receive aid. Furthermore, conflict forecasts and monitoring data are highly sensitive and could be misused by conflict parties for security purposes if not handled with extreme care. [85]
- **Political sensitivity:** Acting on conflict forecasts carries far greater political risk than responding to natural hazards and may be perceived as interfering in a country's internal affairs, running contrary to core humanitarian principles.

[85] Dr. Evan Easton-Calabria (2025): Lessons Learned: Anticipating displacement in South Sudan and Burkina Faso. Danish Refugee Council. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)

# Deep dives

While anticipatory action in the future may increasingly help to prevent increases in displacement and mitigate the humanitarian impacts of displacement, several crises in the coming years are likely to see severe increases in displacement. As highlighted in the chapter on future forced displacement, the forecasts indicate specific hotspots for future displacement. This section examines the situation in selected areas in more detail. It considers how different factors – conflict, disregard for international humanitarian law (IHL), climate change, etc. – are driving the observed displacement trends. The countries of focus have been selected based on the forecasted increase in displacement in 2026, accounting for both absolute and relative increases.

# Sudan

Almost three years since the conflict erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudan is currently facing one of the most severe humanitarian, protection, and displacement crises globally. What began as a power struggle in the capital Khartoum has evolved into a conflict marked by widespread civilian harm, ethnic violence, mass displacement, and the systematic erosion of essential services. As of February 2026, 33.7 million people —67% of the total population — are in urgent need of humanitarian support[86].

The conflict has been characterized by repeated atrocities amounting to violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, with devastating consequences for civilians. The fall of Al Fashir in October 2025 marked a decisive escalation, with indiscriminate shelling of populated areas, ethnically targeted killings, widespread sexual violence, enforced disappearances, and the burning and looting of civilian homes, alongside deliberate attacks on hospitals, markets, and water infrastructure. In Kordofan, the targeting of health centres and markets has accelerated the collapse of already fragile urban systems. Limited accountability has contributed to continued violations and heightened protection risks for civilians.

Humanitarian access in Sudan is severely constrained, particularly in areas most affected by active conflict. Access impediments have further narrowed the operational space for humanitarian actors. The presence of armed actors along major supply corridors and attacks on aid convoys and humanitarian responders have severely disrupted national supply chains, leaving families unable to meet minimum food needs, particularly in areas subjected to prolonged siege conditions. As more than 24 million people across Sudan face acute food insecurity, IPC Phase 5 conditions, amounting to Famine, have been declared across several areas, including localities in North Darfur, where 47% of households are severely food insecure[87]. In parts of Kordofan and Darfur, siege—like conditions have increased reliance on local responders and community-based networks, who face heightened risks of retaliation, including harassment and arbitrary detention. In the absence of sustained and coordinated political efforts to guarantee safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access, operations are likely to remain fragmented and reactive. At the same time, people in isolated and high—risk areas remain beyond reach.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of hostilities: 28% of households across Sudan reported high or extreme levels of unmet needs in 2025, rising to 33% among internally displaced persons (IDPs) who face heightened exposure to violence, exploitation, and restricted access to assistance[88]. Widespread reports document killings, abductions, sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), and attacks on civilians, particularly during displacement and along transit routes. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these risks — the demand for GBV services increased by 288% between December 2023 and December 2024[89]. Overcrowded displacement sites, inadequate shelter planning, and the absence of safe spaces increase exposure to GBV. Meanwhile, children continue to arrive unaccompanied or separated from caregivers and face limited access to protection services, education, and psychosocial support. Without strengthened protection, monitoring, and expanded prevention and response services, risks are likely to intensify further.

The cumulative impact of the conflict has driven Sudan into the largest displacement crisis worldwide. Over 11.8 million people have been forcibly displaced due to the current conflict, including 7 million internally and 4.5 million in neighbouring countries. Movement trends in the last quarter of 2025 have often reflected repeated, short-distance relocations within small family units rather than large-scale, highly

[86] OCHA (2026): Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan Sudan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[87] IPC (2025): Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September 2025 and Projections for October 2025 - January 2026 and for February - May 2026. Available at icpinfo.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[88] IOM (2025). Sudan Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA) August 2025. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[89] UN Women (2024). Gender alert: No excuse: Calling for an end to gender-based violence in Sudan. Available at unwomen.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

visible population flows, with civilians largely moving in response to shifting security conditions. Along increasingly dangerous transit routes, people report facing harassment, violence, intimidation, and gender-based violence, while informal checkpoints, illegal taxation, and movement restrictions along displacement corridors impede their flights.

While returns are increasing in numerical terms, with more than 3 million people returning to their areas of origin in 2025, conditions in most localities do not yet meet the minimum thresholds for safe, dignified, and sustainable return[90]. Movements appear to be driven by economic hardship and reduced assistance in displacement sites rather than durable solutions. As a result, returnees are often arriving in areas characterized by destroyed infrastructure, limited services, and contamination from unexploded ordnance, significantly increasing the risk of renewed displacement. At the same time, hyperinflation, market disruption, and the erosion of livelihoods continue to push households toward increasingly harmful coping strategies, disproportionately affecting displaced and recently returned populations.

Sudan's crisis is entering a phase defined less by sudden escalation than by entrenched, cumulative harm. Displacement is expected to continue to increase in Sudan. Future movement intentions remain low — 83% of households intend to stay in their current location over the next six months, while only 7% plan to return to their place of origin, indicating a protracted displacement scenario[91]. The Foresight model projects an additional 350,000 displaced persons in 2026 and 320,000 in 2027, bringing the total new displacement to nearly 690,000 by the end of 2027. Without improvements in safety, services, and demining, returns are likely to remain fragile and may result in secondary displacement.

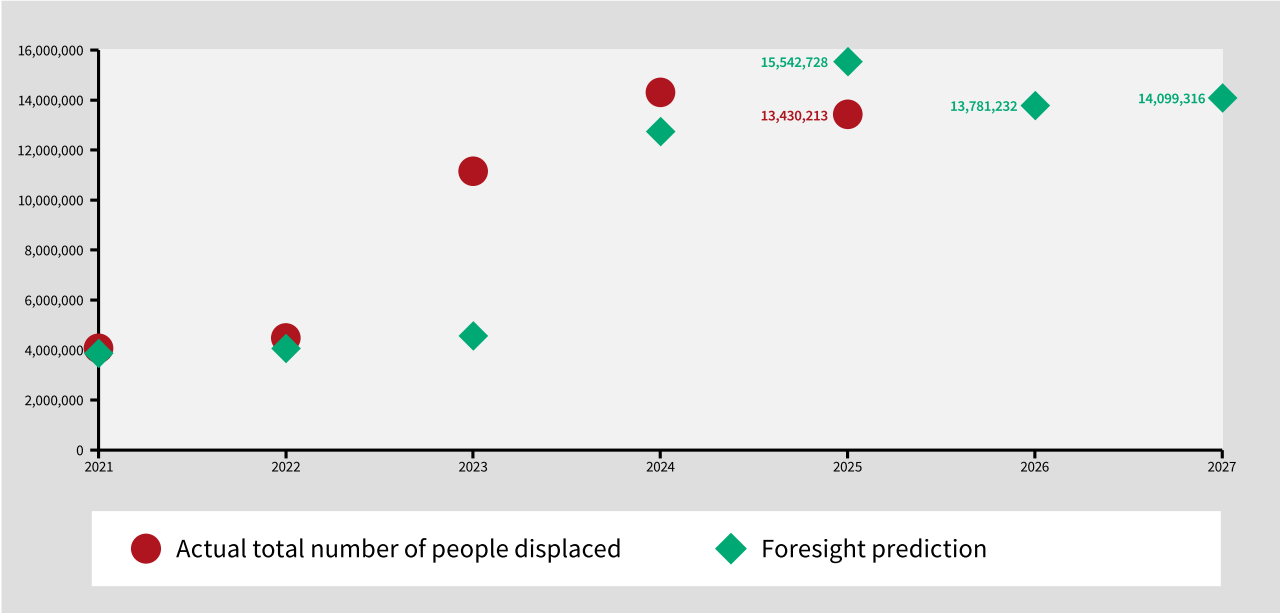



Figure 7: Sudan displacement forecast 2026–2027

[90] UNHCR (2026): Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan 2026. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[91] IOM (2026): Displacement Tracking Matrix Sudan. Available at dtm.iom.int (accessed 24 March 2026)

**DRC's response in Sudan**

Amid the severe and rapidly evolving humanitarian crisis in Sudan, DRC is delivering integrated protection-led assistance to internally displaced persons and host communities across Sudan. DRC Sudan's programming spans Protection, Shelter and Infrastructure, WASH, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Economic Recovery, and Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive comprehensive and dignified support. Alongside our emergency response work, DRC also implements longer-term systems-based approaches to expand access to basic services, strengthen food security, and reinforce community-based protection mechanisms.

Operating in a complex environment, DRC maintains access to hard-to-reach areas through strong local partnerships and adaptive approaches. Our response addresses urgent needs while supporting resilience and recovery, including through site management, service coordination, and area-based interventions. By working across the full displacement cycle, DRC supports communities in stabilizing, rebuilding livelihoods, and progressing toward durable solutions, while continuing to respond flexibly to evolving humanitarian needs.

# Myanmar

Myanmar has been entrenched in a complex crisis characterized by armed conflict, disruption to public services, challenges in movement and access, and a deteriorating humanitarian situation.

In 2025, the conflict dynamics intensified, resulting in extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and severe harm to civilians.[92] Humanitarian access remained uneven, shaped primarily by shifting conflict dynamics and other challenges.[93]

A devastating earthquake in Sagaing in March 2025 killed over 3,700 people. While the disaster prompted unilateral ceasefire declarations from many warring parties, these humanitarian pauses were short-lived and did not lead to sustained de-escalation.

The armed conflict has severely impaired governance and contributed to the deterioration of public services, including health and education systems. The impaired governance and service provision have also created enabling conditions for harmful coping mechanisms and criminality to expand in some areas, including illicit economies and exploitation. Unchecked natural resource exploitation in certain areas is causing severe environmental degradation and damaging livelihoods across the country.[94]

This instability has precipitated a severe economic downturn, driving high rates of labour migration and unsafe cross-border movement as individuals seek survival elsewhere, which increases risks of exploitation and entrapment in trafficking and forced labour networks. The World Bank estimates the March 2025 earthquake alone will cause a 4% hit to economic growth. The deterioration of the public health system has resulted in a resurgence of communicable diseases, including HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria. Globally, protracted crises are associated with deepening extreme poverty, which is projected to become increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected states by 2029.[95]

Myanmar sits in a wider context of environmental volatility, in which climate change interacts with recurrent hazards such as cyclones and storms, heavy monsoon rainfall, flooding and landslides, and major earthquakes, all of which can drive recurrent displacement and compound conflict-related humanitarian needs.

Taken together, these factors have contributed to a dire, worsening humanitarian situation. The armed conflict has displaced more than four million civilians. The UN's 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan and the earthquake flash addendum together required around US$1.41 billion, yet remained among the most underfunded appeals. Needs are acute across all sectors, including food, shelter, health, and protection. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the conflict and the earthquake. Humanitarian access is a primary operational challenge.[96]

Displacement has become one of the most significant consequences of the complex situation on civilians, especially as hundreds of thousands of people have now been displaced multiple times.[97] The armed conflict continues to uproot communities, while Myanmar's extensive landmine and explosive ordnance contamination heightens civilian risk and complicates humanitarian access, safe movement, and returns.

[92] COAR-CASS (2026): Fortnightly Update for Humanitarian Responders.
[93] IRC (2025): Emergency Watchlist 2026: New World Disorder. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[94] International Crisis Group (2025): Myanmar's Dangerous Drift: Conflict, Elections and Looming Regional Détente, Briefing No. 184. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[95] IRC (2025): Emergency Watchlist 2026: New World Disorder. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[96] IRC (2025): Emergency Watchlist 2026: New World Disorder. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[97] Global Protection Cluster (2025): Myanmar Protection Analysis Update. Available at globalprotectioncluster.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

The vast majority of those displaced remain within Myanmar's borders or in neighbouring countries, placing immense strain on already vulnerable host communities.

Displacement trends are expected to worsen in 2026. Based on developments in Myanmar, the Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Myanmar will increase by more than 315,000 in 2026 and by a further 190,000 in 2027, for a total increase of more than 500,000 by the end of 2027.

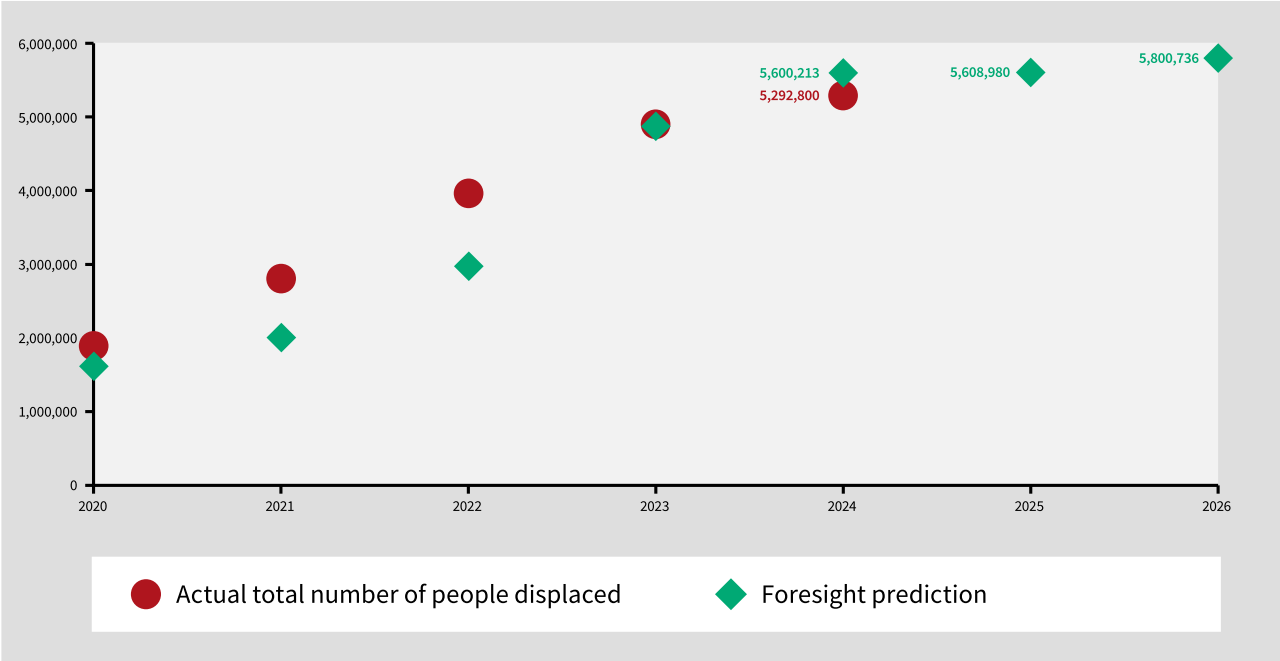



Figure 8: Myanmar displacement forecast 2026–2027

**DRC's response in Myanmar**

In the context of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, DRC is strengthening its ability to deliver integrated, protection-led support to conflict-affected and displaced populations, including people at risk of, and survivors of, gender-based violence, children in vulnerable situations, and persons with disabilities.

DRC responds to the immediate needs of internally displaced people and host communities, while supporting resilience to recurrent shocks and stresses over time. Humanitarian assistance is provided through flexible, integrated, and mobile as well as static multi-sector and integrated responses. Efforts are made to further scale up and scale out responses to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar through all DRC core sectors. DRC combines emergency response with anticipatory action to address acute needs and to act earlier ahead of potential shocks.

# Syria

Syria's 14-year civil war officially concluded in 2024 with the end of the Assad Government. However, the country continues to face a profound humanitarian crisis marked by a deepening economic collapse, widespread displacement, and escalating climate shocks. The transition period has been characterized by significant instability, with renewed conflict in early 2026 forcing new waves of displacement and complicating the already fragile humanitarian situation across the country.

The humanitarian context is one of acute need and vulnerability. In early January 2026, military escalation in Aleppo forced 140,000 people to flee their homes, compounding years of suffering and adding to the existing displaced population. The 2025 wildfires in Latakia, fueled by severe drought conditions described as the worst to hit the country in decades, destroyed homes, agricultural land, and essential infrastructure, displacing families and eliminating their primary source of income. These cascading crises, among others, demonstrate the profound vulnerability of Syria's population to both conflict-related and climate-driven shocks, creating complex humanitarian emergencies that require urgent international attention and support.

Economic devastation remains the primary driver of humanitarian need. With 90% of the population living in poverty, households face an untenable struggle for survival. Assessments conducted by DRC across Rural Damascus and Aleppo found that 90% of households face challenges accessing sufficient food, while 87% have fallen into debt, primarily to cover food and healthcare expenses. Job opportunities are extremely scarce, with 51% of households relying on daily labor as their primary source of income. The agricultural sector, traditionally a critical source of livelihoods, has been crippled by conflict, asset loss, and high input costs, leaving rural populations particularly vulnerable. Housing conditions are dire, with 63.5% of surveyed households residing in damaged shelters following years of conflict and the February 2023 earthquake. The vast majority lack the financial resources to conduct repairs, leaving families exposed to the elements and disease.

Unreliable electricity, with households receiving only a few hours per day, severely affects living conditions and significantly hinders economic recovery. The lack of a consistent power supply disrupts basic services, prevents businesses from operating, and creates additional hardship for vulnerable populations, particularly older persons, persons with disabilities, and families with young children and infants.

The escalating climate crisis is a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and deepening humanitarian need. In July 2025, devastating wildfires swept through Latakia, fueled by drought conditions that represent the worst climatic stress the country has experienced in decades. These fires destroyed homes, agricultural land, and essential infrastructure, displacing families and depriving them of their primary source of income. This event serves as a stark reminder of the escalating climate crisis in Syria and highlights the critical need for emergency preparedness and recovery efforts. Furthermore, unsustainable water extraction, declining groundwater levels, and reliance on unsafe water sources are intensifying public health risks and threatening the viability of agriculture, which remains essential for food security and livelihoods.

The convergence of conflict, economic collapse, and climate shocks has generated immense and multifaceted humanitarian needs across Syria, perpetuating a cycle of displacement and vulnerability. Even with the formal end of the civil war, displacement, economic crisis, and the destruction of infrastructure continue to drive widespread protection concerns. Communities face severe protection risks, including child labor, early marriage, and gender-based violence. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities, face systematic exclusion and heightened risks of abuse and neglect.

The presence of unexploded ordnance poses a lethal threat, particularly in agricultural or grazing land areas where over 60% of explosive ordnance casualties occur, hindering safe returns and the resumption of livelihoods. Explosive ordnance contamination, with 996 incidents recorded since December 2024, resulting in 1,789 casualties, continues to restrict movement and prevent displaced populations from safely returning to their homes and fields.

Access to essential services is critically compromised across the country. Only 57% of hospitals are fully operational, with facilities lacking staff, essential equipment, and reliable power, hindering adequate care. Education infrastructure is severely damaged, with 2.5-3 million children out of school, disrupting their development and future opportunities. Water systems remain nonfunctional in key regions, leaving 1.8 million people without access to safe water and exposing them to waterborne diseases and serious health risks. Mental health and psychosocial support services are critically insufficient to meet the profound needs of a traumatized population that has endured years of violence, displacement, and loss.

Syria's conflict has displaced over 12 million people internally and externally, making it one of the world's largest displacement crises. While active hostilities have subsided in many areas, displacement remains a defining feature of the humanitarian crisis, with new and ongoing displacement continuing. The return of displaced families is gradual and fraught with barriers. While improved security and high living costs in displacement areas are push factors for return, significant obstacles remain. These include destroyed or damaged homes affecting 1.3 million housing units, a lack of basic services, persistent security concerns, and the inability to prove property ownership due to lost or destroyed civil documentation. These significant barriers mean that many displaced persons cannot safely or sustainably return to their communities, even if they wish to do so and face pressure to do so.

Labour market assessments reveal that more than 80% of small and micro-enterprises operate without registration or formal arrangements. Youth under 30 comprise most of the workforce across agriculture, construction, and textile sectors, employed mostly in daily or temporary jobs with generally low skill levels. Women's participation remains largely informal and restricted to traditional roles, with cultural norms, safety concerns, and lack of childcare options acting as key structural barriers to their economic inclusion. Wages are low and irregular, often insufficient to meet basic living costs, with construction workers earning between $7 and $ 12 per day and agricultural workers averaging below $100 per month.

Based on the developments in Syria, the Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Syria will increase by approximately 50,000 in 2026 and a further 165,000 in 2027, a total increase of 215,000 displaced people by the end of 2027.

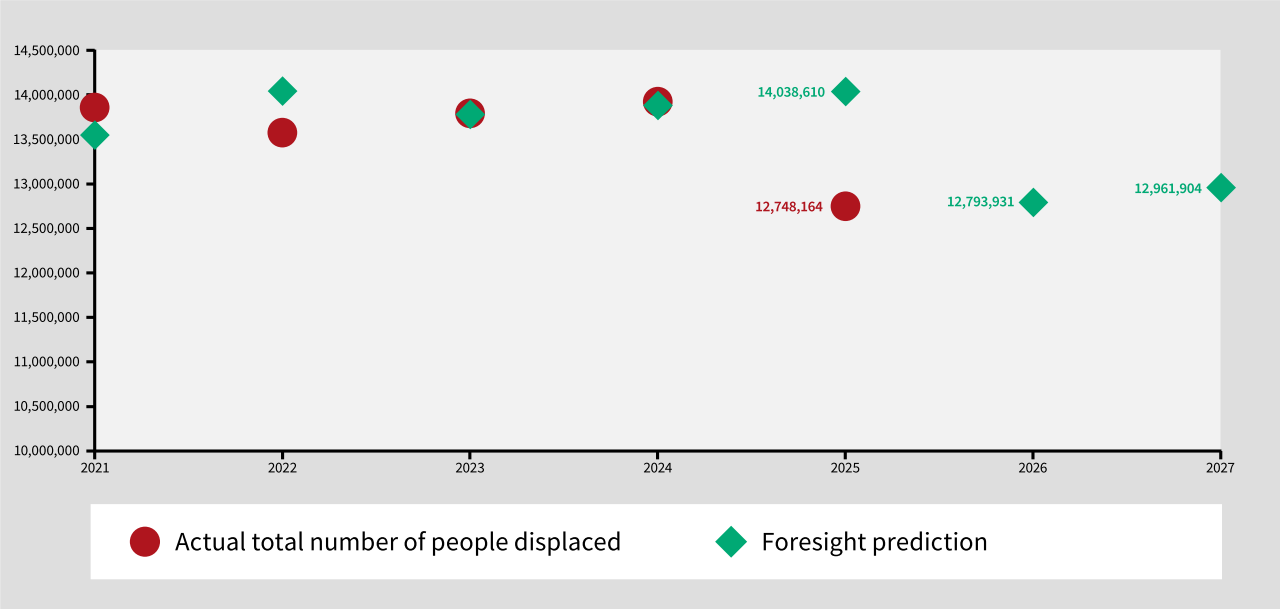



Figure 9: Syria displacement forecast 2026–2027

**DRC's response in Syria**

As Syria remains at a pivotal moment, with ongoing humanitarian needs and persistent challenges, DRC's approach focuses on strengthening local systems, restoring essential livelihoods, and facilitating safe access to resources and economic opportunities, all while supporting stable, inclusive communities. DRC's work spans the full cycle of displacement, addressing urgent humanitarian needs and supporting community recovery until sustainable solutions can be achieved.

DRC Syria uses an area-based approach to assist internally displaced persons, returnees, and host communities across key sectors: Economic Recovery and Resilience, Protection, WASH, Shelter and Infrastructure, and Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding. Recognizing the significant need for early recovery and resilience programmes to ensure dignified, sustainable solutions for fragile communities, DRC's initiatives build resilience for individuals and communities in situations of protracted displacement and during the initial phases of post-conflict recovery, working toward durable solutions.


Other countries of concern

**Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Following two years of devastating conflict since the attacks of 7 October 2023, humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) have exponentially deteriorated. The war has resulted in over 70,000 Palestinian fatalities and more than 170,000 injuries in Gaza. At the same time, in the West Bank, over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and settlers since October 2023. A fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, brokered by the United States, took effect on 9 October 2025. This brought a respite from the relentless bombardment that led to a confirmed famine in Gaza in August 2025.[98] However, implementation has been rocky, with continued lethal violence, accusations of non-compliance, and more than 460 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the ceasefire started. Aid flows consistently fall far short of targets.[99]

Humanitarian operations face severe and growing impediments. In December 2025, Israel notified 37 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) that their registrations would expire, with 60 days to cease operations. This is described as a "deliberate policy choice" that would "obstruct humanitarian assistance at scale," thereby violating legal obligations under IHL.[100]

The future is precarious. The International Crisis Group warns of a scenario where the truce stalls in its first phase, trapping Gaza in a "humanitarian purgatory".[101] The most immediate threat is the potential halt of INGO operations, which are indispensable to the humanitarian response. Their removal would shutter health facilities, halt food distribution, and collapse shelter pipelines across the oPt.[102]

The scale of the crisis is staggering, with 3.62 million people in need across the oPt, requiring a combined $4.06 billion for the 2026 humanitarian response. This includes $3.72 billion for 2.1 million people in Gaza and $351.2 million for 1.52 million people in the West Bank. In Gaza, the conflict has caused an unprecedented level of destruction, setting back development by an estimated 69 years. Key infrastructure is decimated: 92% of housing units, 81% of all structures, and 80% of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities are destroyed or damaged. The health system has collapsed, with over 62% of service points non-functional. The entire population faces food insecurity, and acute malnutrition threatens 132,000 children under five.[103] The crisis disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable. Persons with disabilities, older persons, and single women are often left behind in the chaos of evacuations.[104] In Gaza, a woman now heads one in seven households, and over 58,000 children have lost one or both parents.[105]

Displacement has occurred on a massive scale. In Gaza, over 90% of the population has been displaced since October 2023, and most of the population remains displaced, with some 1.3 million people estimated to be sheltering in over 970 sites, the majority of which are located in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis. Many of the displaced have faced repeated displacement, with families uprooted an average of six times and

[98] OCHA (2026): Occupied Palestinian Territory - Flash Appeal. Available at ochaopt.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[99] International Crisis Group (2025): Gaza's Ceasefire is Vital, but Only a Start, Briefing No. 97. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 25 March 2026)
[100] Danish Refugee Council and more (2026): 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[101] International Crisis Group (2025): Gaza's Ceasefire is Vital, but Only a Start, Briefing No. 97. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 25 March 2026)
[102] Danish Refugee Council and more (2026): 53 International NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[103] OCHA (2026): Occupied Palestinian Territory - Flash Appeal. Available at ochaopt.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[104] Danish Refugee Council (2025): Khaled: Left behind but not forgotten. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[105] OCHA (2026): Occupied Palestinian Territory - Flash Appeal. Available at ochaopt.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

some more than ten times. In the same period, more than 40,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank due to Israeli military operations, demolitions, and settler violence.

The number of displaced people from oPt is forecast to increase by 274,000 towards the end of 2027.

### South Sudan

South Sudan is experiencing a renewed political crisis that, together with external shocks, is contributing to increased instability and displacement pressures.[106] Throughout 2025, political tensions have escalated, and armed confrontations have resumed in several areas, threatening the 2018 peace agreement.

Concomitantly, inter-communal violence has intensified, with more frequent and organized attacks by armed youth groups linked to competition over cattle and grazing land, particularly in Jonglei and Upper Nile states. These overlapping dynamics are driving new displacement, constraining humanitarian access, and increasing protection risks for civilians, especially in already fragile and displacement-affected areas.

Climate shocks have led to simultaneous flooding and drought in different areas. In 2025, extensive flooding affected over 1.3 million people in Greater Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei, while other regions experienced prolonged dry spells. The country is also battling its largest cholera outbreak on record, with over 96,000 cases and nearly 1,600 deaths reported by November 2025.[107]

The conflict in neighbouring Sudan has had a severe spill-over effect, triggering the return of close to 850,000 South Sudanese refugees that had sought asylum in Sudan, in addition to the arrival of almost 420,000 Sudanese asylum seekers since April 2023.[108] The conflict disrupted oil pipelines that account for the vast majority of state revenue.

Against this backdrop, the food security situation remains critical. Recurrent drought across the Horn of Africa — particularly in southern and eastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, and large parts of Somalia — has reduced agricultural production, pasture availability, and cross-border trade, exacerbating South Sudan's chronic food insecurity. 7.55 million people are projected to face crisis-level or worse food insecurity during the 2026 lean season in South Sudan, including 28,000 people in IPC5.[109] The prices of essential food items have increased by threefold in some areas, leaving millions unable to afford to feed themselves.

These intersecting shocks have systematically eroded community resilience and shattered essential services, and 10 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2026, out of which only 4.1 million are targeted by the 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. Yet, access and security constraints regularly disrupt aid delivery – including for DRC's mobile response teams.

Renewed fighting since late December 2025 has led to significant displacement. In the first month of 2026 alone, close to 280,000 people were displaced by renewed fighting in Jonglei State. The fighting is expected to worsen food insecurity while simultaneously reducing humanitarian access.

[106] International Crisis Group (2025): Succession Fever Deepens South Sudan's Malaise, Briefing No. 207. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[107] OCHA (2026) South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[108] UNHCR (nd): Sudan Situation Overview. Available at data.unhcr.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[109] OCHA (2026) South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)

At the time of writing, 2.2 million people are internally displaced within South Sudan, among whom 900,000 are in overcrowded displacement sites. Around 2.4 million South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers currently live in neighbouring countries. The number of displaced people from South Sudan is forecast to increase by 275,000 towards the end of 2027.

**Venezuela**

Venezuela's protracted humanitarian crisis, now in its tenth year, has entered a new and volatile phase following the recent military and international interventions and political developments. This phase has been marked by the progressive erosion of civic space, increased coercive practices, and restrictive governance measures affecting civilian safety and freedom of movement, exacerbating pre-existing humanitarian needs. The crisis, rooted in a long-standing political conflict, institutional fragility, and structural economic collapse, was significantly exacerbated by developments in 2025 and early 2026.

The international military intervention in Venezuela has ushered in a period of extreme uncertainty.[110] The presence of armed groups—including colectivos, citizen militias, criminal gangs, and the Colombian ELN—poses a significant threat of exploiting any power vacuum and escalating violence.[111] The worst-case scenario envisions a descent into a protracted guerrilla conflict, prolonging civilian suffering. This military escalation is expected to deepen fragile socio-economic conditions and increase exposure to intimidation, surveillance, and selective enforcement practices by state and non-state actors, contributing to heightened fear and displacement, reduced freedom of movement, and increased other protection risks.[112]

As of 2026, an estimated 7.9 million people require humanitarian assistance. The response plan targets 5.4 million of the most vulnerable, with an urgent focus on 900,000 individuals facing the highest severity of intersectoral needs.[113] Persistent and severe deficits exist in healthcare, water and sanitation, education, and energy. The structural collapse has deprived millions of access to these essential public services. Critical protection risks include gender-based violence, child protection, and mental health support.[114] Specific vulnerable groups include women, children, older persons, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people on the move, including a growing number of returnees.[115]

The operational space for humanitarian actors is increasingly restricted. A new law governing NGOs, approved in August 2024, revoked the legal registrations of all civil society organizations and imposed a complex re-registration process, creating a high risk of criminalization and persecution for humanitarian workers.[116] Limited funding in 2025 forced the closure of several UN and partner field offices, reducing operational capacity and leaving populations in access-restricted areas at heightened risk.[117]

The crisis has generated one of the world's largest displacement events, with nearly eight million Venezuelans—roughly a quarter of the population—forced to flee the country.[118] Concurrently, a sustained

[110] Atlantic Council (2026): Experts react: The US just captured Maduro. What's next for Venezuela and the region? Available at atlanticcouncil.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[111] International Crisis Group (2025): Ten Conflicts to Watch in 2026. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[112] OCHA (2025): Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[113] OCHA (2025): Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[114] HumVenezuela (2025): Follow-up Report on the Complex Humanitarian Emergency in Venezuela – 2024. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[115] OCHA (2025): Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[116] HumVenezuela (2025): Follow-up Report on the Complex Humanitarian Emergency in Venezuela – 2024. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[117] OCHA (2025): Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[118] International Crisis Group (2025): Ten Conflicts to Watch in 2026. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 24 March 2026)

trend of Venezuelans returning has emerged, driven by deportations and policy changes in host countries. These returnees often arrive in highly vulnerable conditions, placing additional strain on already overstretched services. [119] The current military escalation threatens to trigger further large-scale refugee flows.[120]

The number of displaced people from Venezuela is forecast to increase by 270,000 towards the end of 2027.

**Yemen**

After more than a decade of armed conflict, Yemen is gripped by one of the world's most complex and protracted humanitarian crises, now entering its most dangerous phase in years. The compounded impacts of overlapping conflicts, economic collapse, climate change, and the near-total breakdown of public services have left over half the population in need of assistance.[121] In addition to conflict, Yemen is the world's third most climate-vulnerable country and increasingly battered by extreme weather. Flooding in August 2025 affected nearly half a million people across 20 governorates, destroying homes, farmland, and critical infrastructure.[122]

2025 was further marked by a catastrophic decline in humanitarian support, which severely worsened the crisis. The Humanitarian Response plan was less than 30% funded, and the amount received was the lowest in a decade. This historic contraction in aid has dismantled essential food security, health, and nutrition systems just as needs are peaking.

The ongoing arbitrary detention of humanitarian staff by authorities in northern Yemen remains a grave concern, obstructing the delivery of lifesaving aid. As of late 2025, 59 UN staff remained in detention, some since 2021.[123] The widespread presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war, particularly in Hodeidah, Ta'iz, and Ma'rib, impedes safe access for both civilians and aid workers. [124]

The convergence of these factors creates a bleak outlook for 2026. Without immediate and substantial international action, famine-like conditions are expected in multiple districts by early 2026. [125]

The situation is rapidly deteriorating, pushing millions to the brink of survival. An estimated 19.5 million people—over half the population—require humanitarian assistance. Yemen has become the world's third-largest food crisis, with over 18 million people expected to face crisis levels of hunger by early 2026, including approximately 41,000 at risk of famine. Nearly half of all children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, and over 100 districts face a critical nutrition emergency. In some areas, such as the Abs District in Hajjah, children have died of starvation. [126] This surge is not driven by conflict escalation but by a collapse in household purchasing power and the dramatic decrease in aid. [127] Over 80% of the population lives below the poverty line. In 2025 assessments, 43.4% of internally displaced (IDP) households and 45% of refugee households reported having no income at all. [128]

[119] OCHA (2025): Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan. Available at humanitarianaction.info (accessed 24 March 2026)
[120] International Crisis Group (2025): Ten Conflicts to Watch in 2026. Available at crisisgroup.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[121] UNHCR (2025): Protection Brief – Yemen. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[122] IRC (2026): Starving in Silence: Surging Food Insecurity in Yemen. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[123] Danish Refugee Council (2025): Yemen's Escalating Hunger Crisis: Nearly Half the Population Struggles to Find Enough Food. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[124] UNHCR (2025): Protection Brief – Yemen. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[125] IRC (2026): Starving in Silence: Surging Food Insecurity in Yemen. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[126] Danish Refugee Council (2025): Yemen's Escalating Hunger Crisis: Nearly Half the Population Struggles to Find Enough Food. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[127] IRC (2026): Starving in Silence: Surging Food Insecurity in Yemen. Available at rescue.org (accessed 24 March 2026)
[128] UNHCR (2025): Protection Brief – Yemen. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)

Displaced populations face heightened barriers to basic services, social marginalization, and severe protection risks. Women and children, who constitute 80% of IDPs, are disproportionately affected. Access to civil documentation is a critical barrier; 76% of IDP households have at least one member without a national ID card, and 43% of displaced children lack a birth certificate. This prevents access to healthcare, education, employment, and freedom of movement, and heightens the risk of statelessness. [129] Families are being driven to impossible choices. Assessments found 75.8% of displaced families borrowed money for essential goods, and 68.8% reduced meal sizes. Parents skip meals for their children, pull them from school for child labor, and resort to early marriage. [130]

Yemen hosts 4.8 million internally displaced people and over 62,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, who are among the most vulnerable groups in the country. Furthermore, Yemen remains a key transit country for migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa, with over 130,000 arrivals recorded by November 2025. These individuals face perilous journeys and grave risks of abuse, exploitation, and death at the hands of traffickers and on militarized borders. In 2025 alone, at least 747 people on the move from third countries were reported dead or missing within Yemen. [131]

The number of displaced people from Yemen is forecast to increase by more than 200,000 towards the end of 2027.

[129] UNHCR (2025): Protection Brief – Yemen. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)
[130] Danish Refugee Council (2025): Yemen's Escalating Hunger Crisis: Nearly Half the Population Struggles to Find Enough Food. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 24 March 2026)
[131] UNHCR (2025): Protection Brief – Yemen. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 24 March 2026)

# About the Forecasts

**Framework**

The Foresight model is based on a theoretical framework that focuses on the root causes or macro-level drivers of displacement (Figure 10). The dimensions and associated indicators have been grouped into five categories:

1. Economy: Covers the economic well-being and equality in a given country
2. Security: Covers the level of violence, different types of violence, and fatalities
3. Political/Governance: Covers aspects related to the legitimacy of the state, public service provisions, and human rights
4. Environment: Covers aspects related to climate disasters, access to water, agricultural stress, and food security
5. Societal: Covers aspects related to marginalized groups, urbanization, size, and composition.

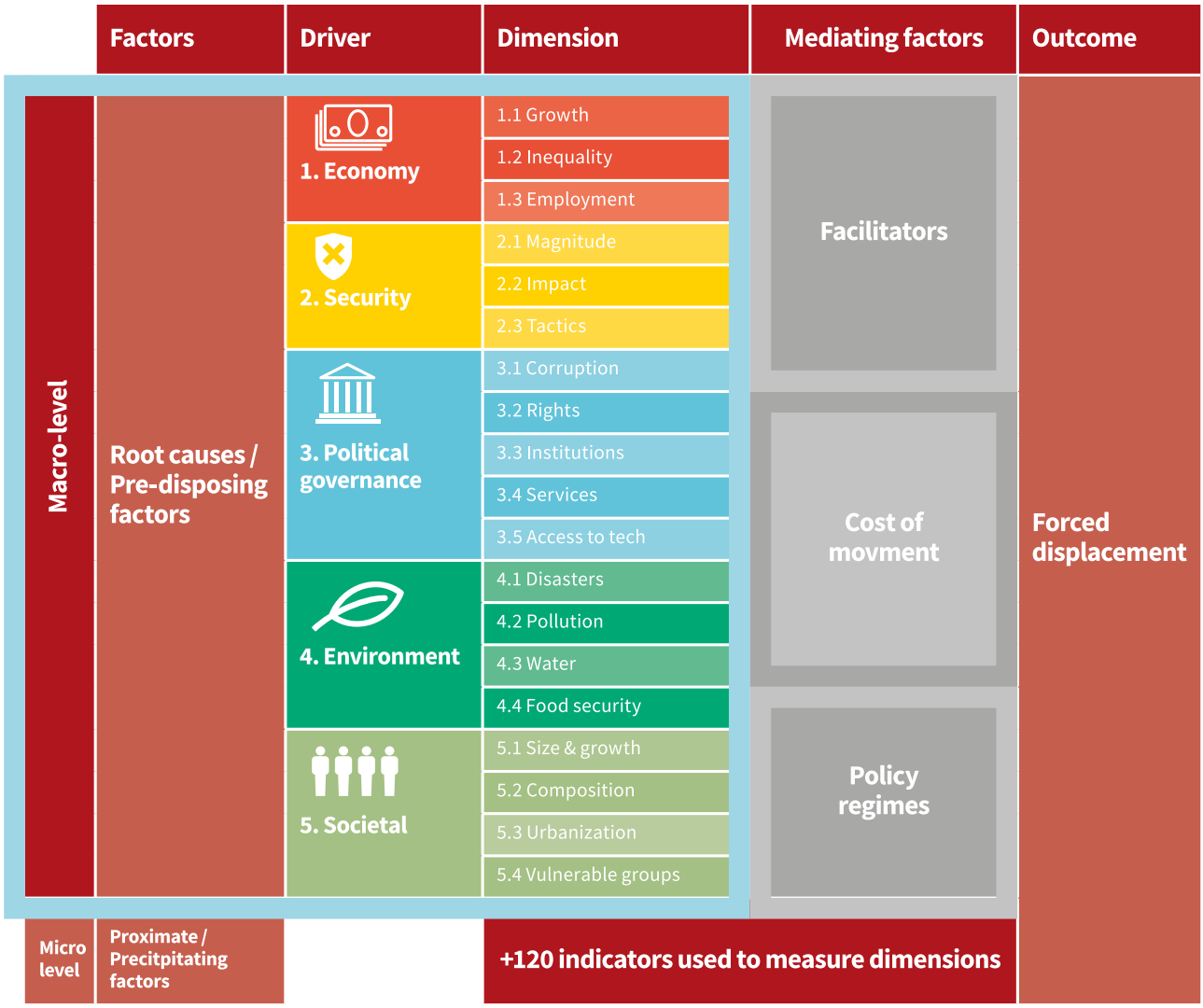



Figure 10: Foresight Model Framework

**Data**

All data used by the Foresight model is derived from open-source databases. The main data sources include the World Bank development indicators, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), EM-DAT, United Nations agencies (UNHCR, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). In total, the system aggregates data from 18 sources and contains 148 indicators.

The data on forced displacement depends wholly on the information from UNHCR and IDMC. These organizations make an extraordinary effort to collect and verify the numbers. Even so, gathering this data is difficult, and the total forced displacement numbers used in the modelling may exclude some people displaced in 2025.

Given that the data are taken from reputable sources, they are deemed highly reliable. However, the data has some shortcomings. Coverage is uneven across geographies and across dimensions. For instance, economic and labour statistics tend to be more readily available than governance and violence statistics. Data from institutional providers can often be outdated, and the most recent indicators can be several years old. The data is collected globally.

The system uses several methods to address data gaps. We distinguish between missing data in the features (or indicators) and in the target variable (i.e., forced displacement). Data with missing target variables is excluded from training. For missing values in indicators, we employ two methods. To address data lag, we make indicator projections for each country using an autoregressive model (i.e., AR(n) model). An autoregressive model is a time-series forecasting model in which future values depend only on previous values of the variable. The ‘n’ denotes the number of lag variables and is determined using a heuristic approach. For cases where data is insufficient, we treat it as missing, which is preferable to projecting incorrectly. Intermediate missing values are computed by interpolation.

We follow a simple standardization scheme, intended to keep data-ingestion tasks lightweight. A data transformer is implemented for each data source to ensure that each indicator data point is associated with a country and a year. The resulting dataset can be cross-referenced and serves as input to the model.

For training, we limit the data to the period 1995–2022, the latest data available for displacement. For cross-validation, we use five years: 2015–2022. Following the standard cross-validation setup for time-series data, models are trained on data for the years (1995, y) and predictions made for y+t, where y is in the five years.

**Model**

The machine-learning model employed is an Ensemble. An Ensemble model works by leveraging several constituent models to generate independent forecasts that are then aggregated. Here we employ two gradient-boosted trees to generate the point forecasts. The model hyperparameters were determined using a grid search. Each year-ahead forecast has a separate model. In other words, we train a set of Ensemble models for $y(t + h) = f(x(t))$, where $h = 0, 1, 2, 3$. The associated confidence intervals were generated using an empirical bootstrap method, with the source error distributions estimated from a retrospective analysis. Model training data was limited to data from 1995 onwards.

**Accuracy**

The average absolute margin of error of the 298 forecasts made so far is 17%. Overall, more than half of the forecasts we have made have an absolute margin of error below 10%, and almost two-thirds are less than 15% off the actual displacement.

Figure 12 shows the average margin of error. In most cases, this is evaluated based on the last forecasts for 2015 to 2025. In a few countries, additional years are used in the evaluation, with a maximum going back to 2010. The figure shows both the overall margin of error and the margin of error for the last three years.

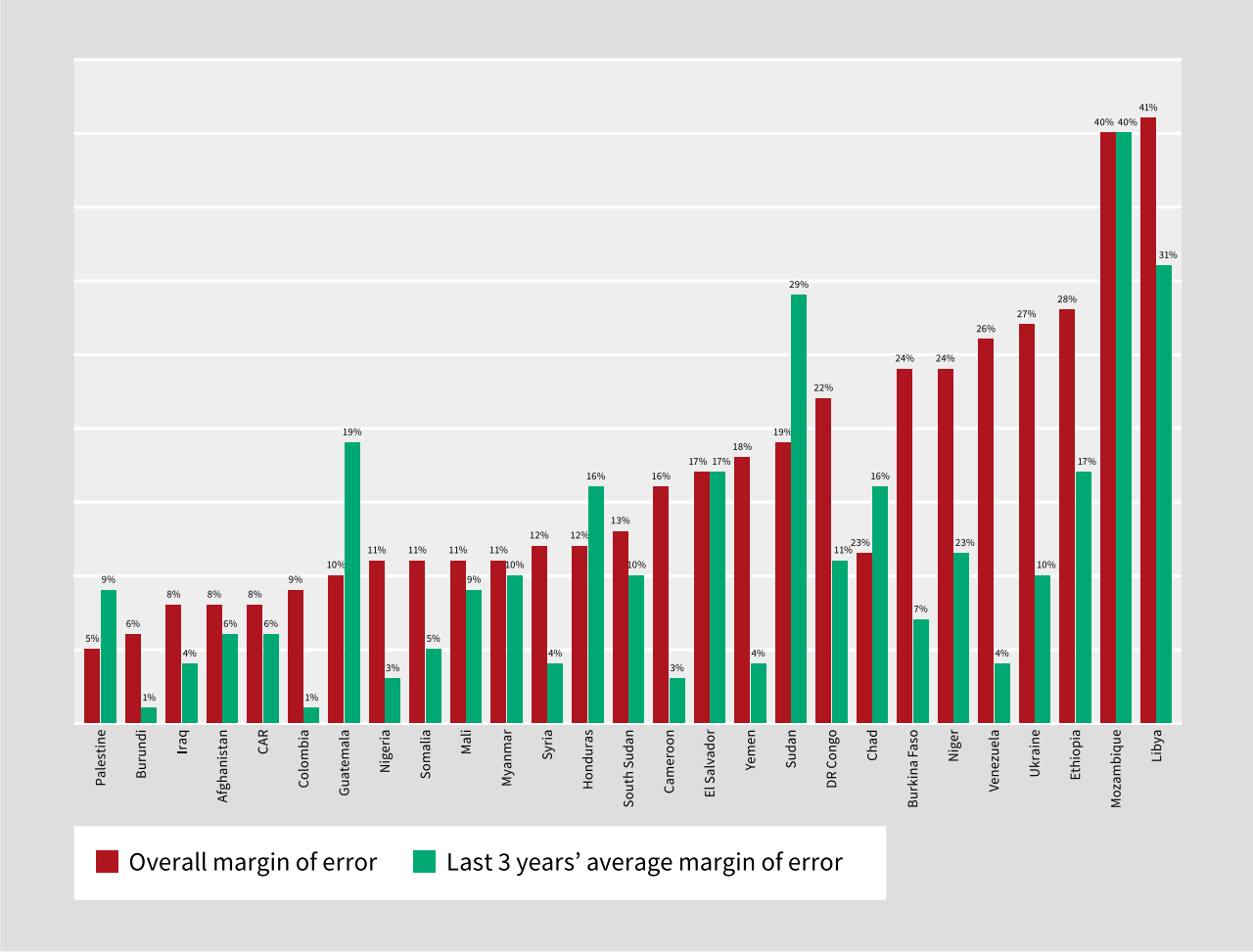



Figure 11: Model accuracy across 27 covered countries

The margin of error for the 27 2025 forecasts was 8%. Major missed forecasts in 2025 include:

- Niger (23% off): 636k forecasted vs. 517k estimated displaced
- DR Congo (20% off): 8.3m forecasted vs. 6.9m estimated displaced
- El Salvador (20% off): 189k forecasted vs. 236k estimated displaced

Most accurate forecasts in 2024 include:

- Colombia (0% off): 7.57m forecasted vs. 7.59m estimated displaced
- Cameroon (1% off): 1.21m forecasted vs. 1.22m estimated displaced
- Central Africa Republic (1% off): 1.11m forecasted vs. 1.12m estimated displaced

**Limitations**

There are several limitations to the model that are important to bear in mind when using and working with the forecasts.

- The model tends to be conservative. Of the current 298 forecasts derived from the model, approximately 55% underestimate the level of displacement for the coming year.
- The forecasts are based solely on data and developments up until the previous year (i.e., 2025). As such, recent developments are not taken into account (e.g., regime change in Venezuela, an attack on Iran, etc.).
- Because the model is built around national-level indicators, it does not perform as well in cases where conflict and displacement are largely regionally confined within a country.
- Given the methodology of building on historical trends and patterns, the model generally does not tend to capture unprecedented developments or sudden surges in displacement, such as the Sudan 2023 displacement, Ukraine 2022 displacement, or Rohingya 2017 displacement.
- The model does not distinguish between IDPs, refugees, and asylum seekers, nor does it forecast where people might move to. The estimates used in the report for future hosting of displaced people and the number of IDPs are based on the current (2025) distribution of displaced people from the given country.
- The model only captures conflict-induced displacement and, as such, does not include climate-induced displacement. Climate-related indicators are included in the model to capture how they might act as a 'threat' multiplier, but when climate is the main cause of displacement, this is not included. This is, for example, the case for the +1 million people displaced by drought in Somalia in 2022.
- The results are the cumulative number of displaced people, i.e., the total number of people living in displacement at year-end and not 'new displacement'. The model, therefore, captures both new displacement and returns, and as such, more people than predicted by the model can be displaced over the course of the year. As such, it also does not capture secondary displacements.
- The model only includes data from the given country and is thus not sensitive to developments in neighbouring countries that can affect displacement. This could be the case in spill-over violence or when one country invades another.

**2025 displacement estimates**

As mentioned in the introduction, official figures for the number of people displaced in 2025 will not be available until around June 2026. IDMC typically releases the IDP figures in May, while UNHCR releases figures on refugees and asylum seekers in June. However, it is possible to estimate the number of displaced people with a fair degree of accuracy by building on the displacement updates being provided. These include:

- UNHCR mid-year displacement figures
- IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix assessment data on IDPs
- UNHCR 'Situation' website, providing regional data on refugee and asylum-seeker figures for certain crises
- OCHA and UNHCR country operation pages

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# Annex: Countries covered in report

| Country | Estimated displacement 2025 | Forecast 2026 | Forecast 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ukraine | 9,554,000 | 9,634,000 | 9,680,000 |
| Afghanistan | 10,104,000 | 10,114,000 | 10,218,000 |
| Myanmar | 5,293,000 | 5,609,000 | 5,801,000 |
| Nigeria | 4,111,000 | 4,190,000 | 4,254,000 |
| Cameroon | 1,223,000 | 1,261,000 | 1,308,000 |
| Burkina Faso | 2,357,000 | 2,424,000 | 2,485,000 |
| CAR | 1,119,000 | 1,102,000 | 1,096,000 |
| Mali | 812,000 | 849,000 | 886,000 |
| Chad | 410,000 | 485,000 | 609,000 |
| Niger | 518,000 | 543,000 | 581,000 |
| Syria | 12,748,000 | 12,794,000 | 12,962,000 |
| Yemen | 4,881,000 | 4,978,000 | 5,086,000 |
| Iraq | 1,458,000 | 1,449,000 | 1,468,000 |
| oPt | 7,814,000 | 7,950,000 | 8,088,000 |
| Libya | 130,000 | 189,000 | 257,000 |
| Sudan | 13,430,000 | 13,781,000 | 14,099,000 |
| DR Congo | 6,943,000 | 6,965,000 | 7,044,000 |
| South Sudan | 4,463,000 | 4,604,000 | 4,740,000 |
| Somalia | 4,648,000 | 4,685,000 | 4,765,000 |
| Ethiopia | 3,469,000 | 3,537,000 | 3,639,000 |
| Burundi | 402,000 | 415,000 | 424,000 |
| Mozambique | 618,000 | 633,000 | 651,000 |
| Colombia | 7,595,000 | 7,657,000 | 7,697,000 |
| Venezuela | 7,845,000 | 7,991,000 | 8,112,000 |
| Guatemala | 800,000 | 865,000 | 915,000 |
| Honduras | 404,000 | 428,000 | 450,000 |
| El Salvador | 237,000 | 247,000 | 272,000 |

Founded in 1956, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is Denmark's largest international NGO, with a specific expertise in forced displacement. DRC is present in close to 40 countries and employs 9,000 staff globally.

DRC advocates for the rights of and solutions for displacement-affected communities, and provides assistance during all stages of displacement: In acute crisis, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. DRC supports displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies. DRC works with civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and inclusion.

Our 7,500 volunteers in Denmark make an invaluable difference in integration activities throughout the country.

DRC's code of conduct sits at the core of our organizational mission, and DRC aims at the highest ethical and professional standards. DRC has been certified as meeting the highest quality standards according to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

HRH Crown Princess Mary is DRC's patron.

To read more about what we do, see: www.drc.ngo

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