DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

Report 2025

March 2025 – Copenhagen, Denmark

Global Displacement Forecast 2025

Using data modelling to predict displacement crises

About DRC

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) operates in 40 countries around the world. 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.

Executive Summary

Key messages

This Global Displacement Forecast Report for 2025 highlights a troubling trend: the number of displaced people worldwide is expected to rise significantly from the current 122.6 million. By the end of 2026, an additional 6.7 million people are projected to be displaced globally, with sub-Saharan Africa and Asia experiencing the largest increases of approximately 3.1 million and 1.8 million respectively, followed by the Middle East with an anticipated increase of around 900.000 displaced people. Of the 6.7 million people forecasted to be displaced by the end of 2026, some 70% will be internally displaced.

This projected surge in displacement is driven primarily by ongoing conflict and violence against civilians and attacks on civilian infrastructure further compounded by the impact of climate change and ecological degradation. In 2024, the number of conflict events increased by 11% in the 27 countries of focus with a particular increase observed in the Middle East, Ukraine and Ethiopia, and violations of international humanitarian law remained widespread. Violence specifically targeting civilians increased by 8% globally year on year, with the occupied Palestinian territory ranking highest followed by Lebanon.

The conflict in Sudan has resulted in the world's current largest displacement crisis, with 8.8 million people internally displaced and another 6.7 million refugees. Starvation has been used as a weapon of war, pushing the country from one catastrophic famine to another. In Myanmar, the ongoing conflict has intensified significantly since 2023, with widespread armed clashes. The situation has deteriorated into a complex, multi-front civil war with severe humanitarian consequences. Displacement is projected to increase by 2.1 million in Sudan and 1.4 million in Myanmar which means that these two countries alone account for almost half of the total number of people projected to be displaced by the end of 2026.

In Yemen, the number of additional displaced is expected to increase by almost 400,000 people by the end of 2026. Yemen is the fifth-largest internal displacement crisis in the world, with an estimated 4.8 million internally displaced, most of whom are women and children, experiencing repeated and protracted displacement and limited prospects of return. Turning to Gaza, 90% of the population of 2.2 million was internally displaced during Israel's 15-month-long military offensive. Many of these people continue to be displaced because of the pervasive destruction of homes and basic infrastructure as well as the risk of unexploded ordnances preventing their return.

Not only do we see a surge in conflict and displacement, but humanitarian efforts are also being significantly hampered, particularly because of insufficient funding, increasingly dangerous operating environments, and restricted humanitarian access to affected populations. Of the 27 countries covered in this report, 16 are categorised as having either very high or extreme humanitarian access constraints – illustrating the correlation between poor humanitarian access, insufficient protection of civilians and forecasted displacement.

Development assistance, including to peacebuilding, is crucial in shaping future displacement trajectories. Data show that countries receiving higher shares of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for peacebuilding tend to see lower increases in displacement. A reduction in peacebuilding tends to lead to higher conflict rates, which in turn fosters increased displacement. Furthermore, reductions in funding have significant negative impacts on the humanitarian system's ability to reach people in protracted displacement situations. In 2025, 307 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance globally.

Recent announcements of funding cuts by donor countries such as the UK and Germany, and, in particular the US stop-work order on foreign assistance followed by contract terminations, are very concerning and

likely to have severe humanitarian consequences. In a scenario where all US funding is terminated, an estimated 57 million fewer people could be reached and only 26% of the 307 million people in need worldwide would receive the required assistance.

The increase in displacement and severe funding cuts will be felt particularly in low-income countries that host the majority of displaced people, and that simultaneously face their own socio-economic and climate-related challenges. These countries, already struggling with high levels of poverty and vulnerability to climate change, are shouldering the responsibility of hosting the majority of the world's displaced despite not receiving adequate financial and technical support to do so.

The funding cuts will also have severe repercussions for the ability of displaced people to return and successfully reintegrate. Peacebuilding efforts contribute to preventing further escalation of conflict that forces people to flee and are crucial to creating an environment which allows for safe returns and reintegration as one of the pathways to durable solutions. Peacebuilding efforts can build confidence in potential lasting peace, even if peace has not yet been fully achieved.

The data analysis for the report also points to the importance of socio-economic empowerment of refugees, by securing their rights to access land, livelihoods, basic services and participation in society. . By supporting the self-reliance of refugees, they become better equipped, psychologically, socially and economically, to access durable solutions pathways once they are available, including return and re-integration in their countries of origin, and re-establish their lives.

For internally displaced people (IDPs), additional factors such as age and climate vulnerability influence whether they will choose returns as their pathway to a durable solution. Higher proportions of young people in the population and amongst the displaced correlate with higher return rates, while increased climate vulnerability decreases returns. The impact of climate vulnerability on the overall feasibility of return and reintegration is an area that warrants further study.

Despite climate vulnerability and conflict being obvious barriers for safe returns, only a minority of displaced people return to countries in peaceful conditions. This indicates that many returns are neither safe nor durable and often lead to new humanitarian needs and potential secondary displacement It is against this background that local integration as a pathway to durable solutions is increasingly seen as the most feasible, and by many displaced people the preferred, pathway out of protracted displacement situations. Similarly, addressing the root causes of displacement and empowering the displaced must be seen as critical to enable progress towards any durable solutions including returns, and thereby counter the ever-increasing number of people living in displacement.

Recommendations

- Improving access to durable solutions for all displaced should be at the core of donor policies and strategies pertaining to both acute and longer lasting emergencies as forced displacement continues to increase while also becoming increasingly protracted, primarily as a result of armed conflict and insufficient protection of civilians, exacerbated by the impact of climate change.
- Donor countries must allocate more ODA to peacebuilding to address root causes of displacement and help foster more conducive conditions for safe and voluntary returns.
- Third states must continue and increase support for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) including through ensuring enhanced responsibility-sharing with refugee-hosting countries and ensuring these countries have adequate technical and financial support to shoulder this responsibility.

- Hosting states should continue to provide opportunities for refugees and internally displaced, including access to employment, education and other basic services, and should also provide pathways for local integration of refugees and their inclusion into national systems.
- Countries with resettlement commitments should seek to fulfil and expand their commitments to ensure the most vulnerable refugees have access to resettlement in third countries.
- All states have an obligation to safeguard the principle of refoulement: that is, not prevent refugees from crossing borders in search of safety or coerce them to return to unsafe and undignified conditions. In addition, states must ensure respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) during armed conflict, and hold all parties to conflict to account when violations occur, in order to guarantee protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure as well as adequate access to humanitarian assistance and basic services.
- Donors must continue to provide funding to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of displaced people, including for preparedness and early action. Currently, the vast majority of displaced people face protracted situations and the world is experiencing an unprecedented decline in aid, it is therefore even more important to direct funding towards initiatives that support displaced people's self-reliance and solutions to end their displacement, instead of falling back exclusively on repeated life-saving emergency programming that perpetuates cycles of aid-dependency.
- Donors need to increase their investment in prevention as the most cost-effective means of reducing future displacement-related needs, focusing both on conflict and climate-linked displacement drivers, by building resilience of communities in areas prone to chronic shocks through disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding and adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- Donors, humanitarian actors and governments can mitigate the negative impacts of displacement by designing better preparedness and risk-mitigation strategies through the enhanced use of anticipatory action tools, social protection mechanisms and data-driven approaches.

Proven and scalable solutions exist to both prevent and end forced displacement when national governments prioritise the rights of displaced people (and receive support for this) and when development and humanitarian efforts are directed towards empowering local communities to drive change for improved resilience and self-reliance.

Contents

Introduction

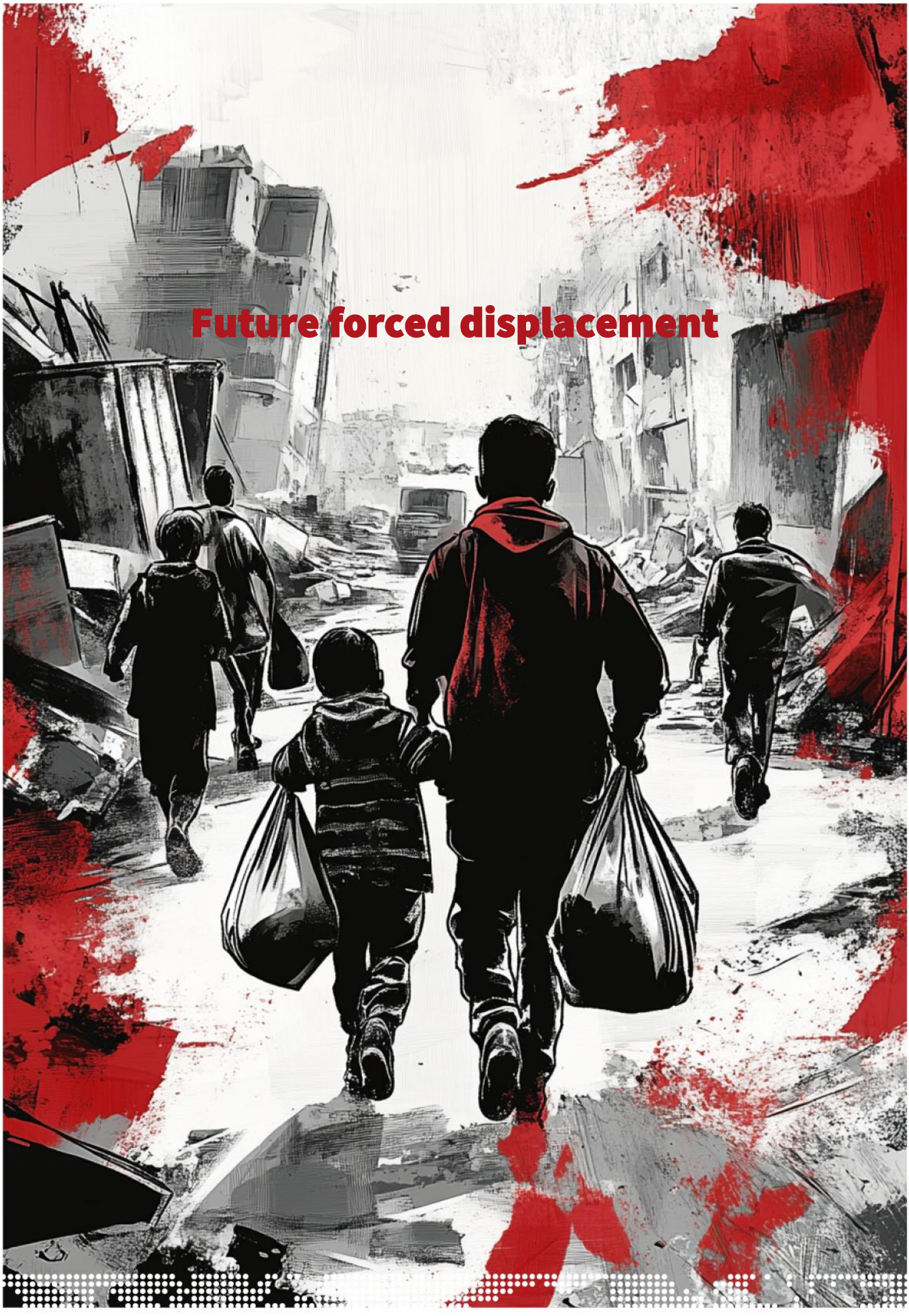
This report presents the expected forced displacement in 2025 and 2026, as forecasted by the Foresight model. The Foresight model was developed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and IBM with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The model uses the historical relationships and patterns in the data on 148 displacement-relevant indicators from 18 different open sources to forecast, with a high degree of accuracy, the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people one to three years into the future. DRC uses the Foresight model to support country operations and the wider humanitarian system with more accurate forecasts for strategic planning for better prevention, response to and protection of displacement-affected populations. The model has been employed to forecast the cumulative number of people displaced from 27 countries[1] that have ongoing and evolving displacement crises. These countries account for approximately 93% of all global displacement.

The report presents an overview of the displacement forecasts in 2025 and 2026 and 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 the various factors in the country of origin, as well as in host countries that shape the decisions of displaced people 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 on the basis of having the highest absolute change in displacement forecasted in 2025 and 2026.

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 organisations, 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 2024 for the countries covered by the model was not available at the time of writing. Therefore, the level of displacement in 2024 has been estimated based on the latest available displacement updates 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 2024 is available to the end of November 2024, while the number of externally displaced (refugees and asylum seekers) is mostly available to the end of June 2024. The forecasts are thus preliminary in nature and will be updated once the final, official numbers on the level of displacement in 2024 have been published in around June 2025.

[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

Combining forecasts for the 27 countries covered by the model, the cumulative number of displaced people is projected to increase by 4.2 million in 2025, with a further 2.5 million increase expected in 2026, resulting in a total increase of 6.7 million between the end of 2024 and the end of 2026. Five countries are forecasted to see a decrease in the number of displaced people, while the remaining 22 are forecasted to see an increase. These developments will result in a significant escalation of humanitarian needs globally. In 2024, OCHA projected that 305 million people would require humanitarian assistance in 2025.[2]

Clear geographical trends emerge from the forecasts. Of the 6.7 million people forecasted to be displaced by the end of 2026, approximately 3.1 million are estimated to reside in sub-Saharan Africa, and 1.8 million in Asia. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, an increase of 0.9 million is forecasted, and in Latin America 0.5 million. Europe and North America combined are projected to host an increase of 140,000 displaced people. These trends indicate that close to 70% of the 6.7 million displaced will be IDPs.

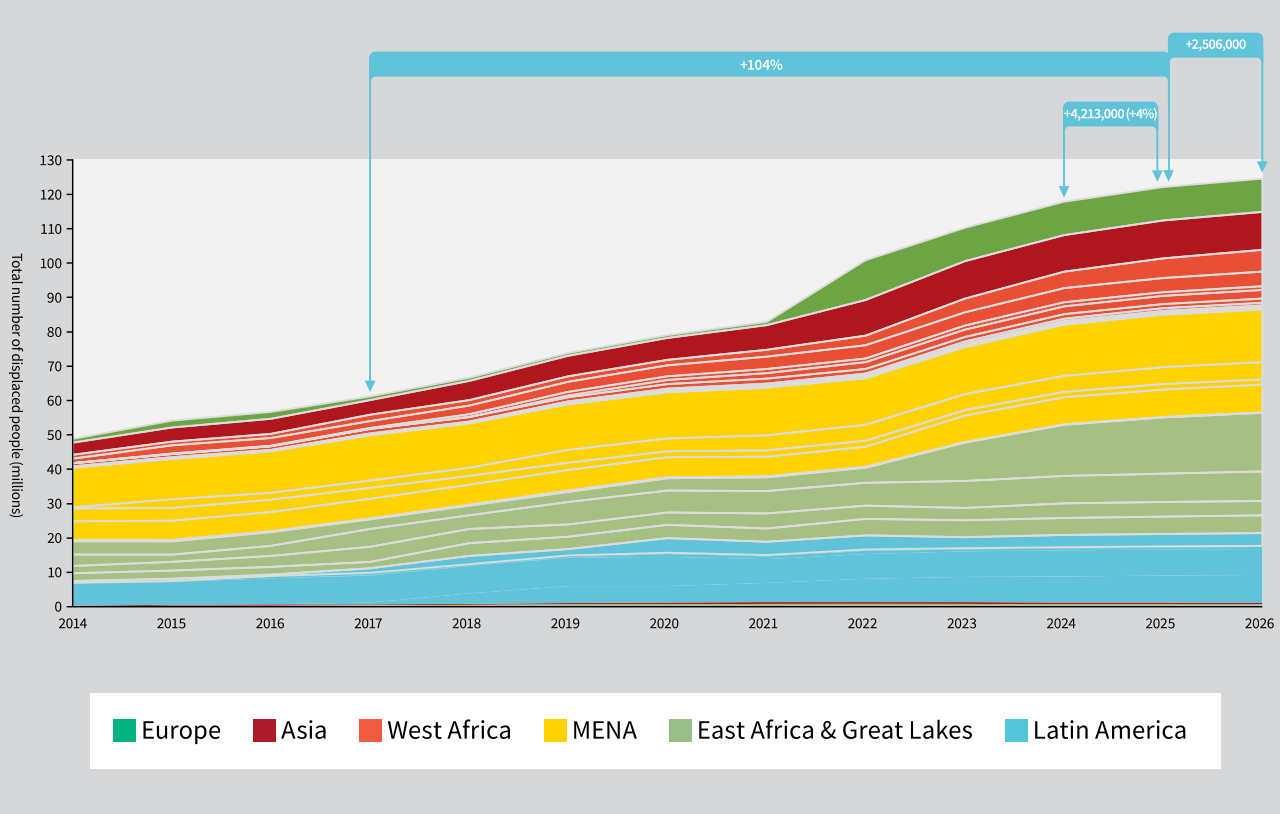


Figure 1: Displacement trends

[2] OCHA (2024): Global Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025. Available at: unocha.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

Displacement hotspots

The surge in **displacement in 2025** is propelled primarily by substantial increases forecasted in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Myanmar, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen. Forecasts indicate that displacement in these countries is set to increase by more than 250,000 people in each country. This contrasts with last year's projections, when only three countries were anticipated to experience such significant increases in displaced populations. This shows the significant proliferation of displacement crises at the moment.

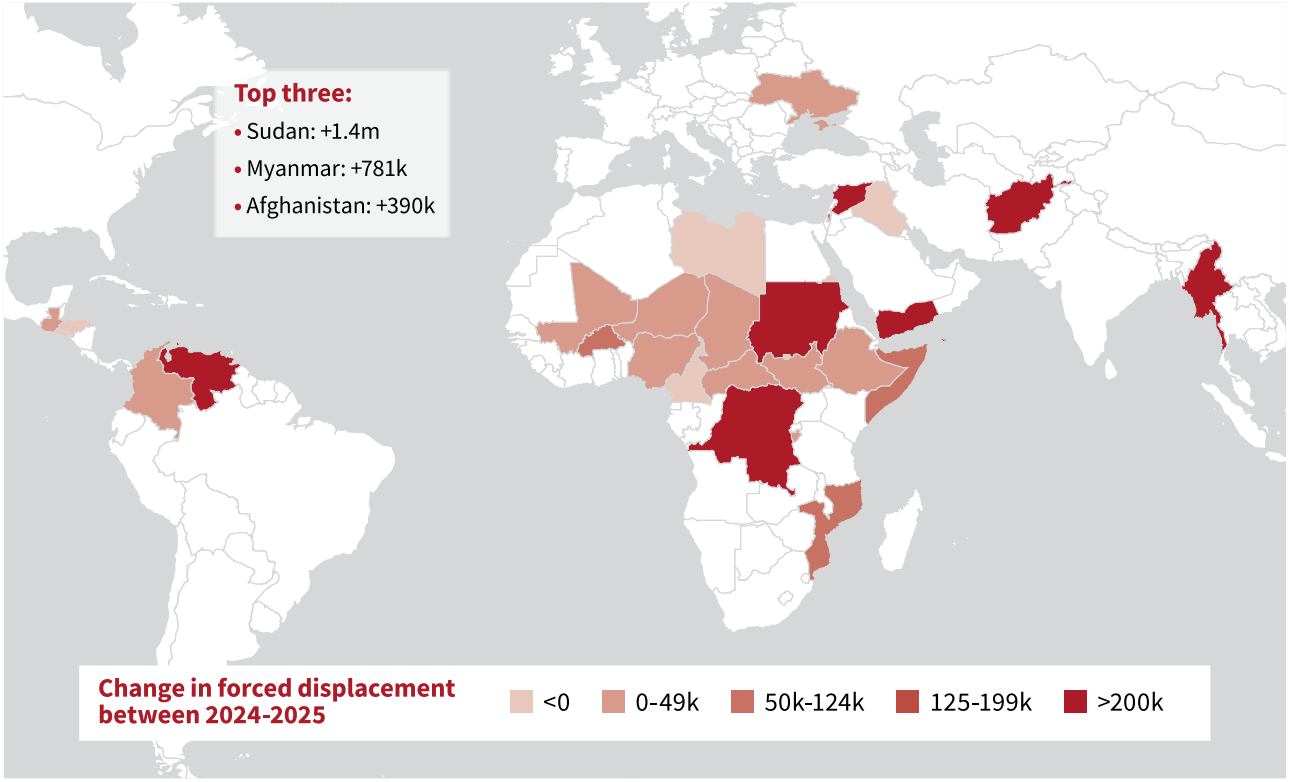


Figure 2: Forecasted displacement hotspots in 2025

Afghanistan continues to face climate-induced disasters and socio-economic instability compounded by decades of conflict that all contribute to dynamic migration flows. Throughout 2024, there has been a continuation of forced returns that were initiated by the Government of Pakistan in November 2023, as well as a persisting high rate of deportation from Iran. With continued pressures expected into 2025, the high number of forced returns further burdens over-stretched basic services and local resources in host communities and underlines the need to invest in durable solutions in a country already grappling with an estimated 6.3 million people in protracted displacement.[3] Afghanistan is forecasted to witness an increase of 390,000 people displaced in 2025.

Syria remains the second world's second-largest displacement crisis, with an estimated 7.2 million IDPs and an additional 6.4 million Syrians registered as refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond. While the intensity of active conflict has reduced in recent years, protracted displacement continues at a significant rate. Reports indicate that thousands of individuals continued to be displaced each month, with the majority of IDPs having experienced multiple displacements because of continued instability, localised violence, and economic hardship. On December 8, 2024, Syria experienced a historic turning point with the collapse of the Assad-led government. This unprecedented shift has raised both uncertainty and cautious

[3] OCHA (2024): Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (December 2024).

optimism regarding the future of the country and potential pathways toward durable solutions for displaced Syrians. Syria is forecasted to witness an increase of 360,000 people displaced in 2025.

In **Yemen**, the situation remains dire, with the country's population continuing to face challenges driven by ongoing conflict, displacement, and worsening economic conditions. According to the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan[4] (HRNP), for 2025, 19.5 million people in Yemen will require humanitarian assistance and protection services. Additionally, more than 17 million, almost half the country's population, will experience acute food insecurity this year, with 5 million expected to face emergency levels of food insecurity. Yemen is forecasted to witness an increase of 340,000 people displaced in 2025.

In recent years, **Venezuela** has faced a severe socio-economic crisis as a result of the political turmoil in the country and economic sanctions. The country has witnessed rampant inflation and a 75% reduction in GDP and about quarter of Venezuela's population have left the country. Results of the elections in July 2024 were widely contested and could spark further migration and displacement. A poll before the election suggested that 40% of Venezuelans intended to leave the country if the current leader Nicolas Maduro remained in place.[5] Venezuela is forecasted to witness an increase of 275,000 people displaced in 2025.

Looking ahead to 2026, the biggest forecasted increase in displacement is found in Sudan, Myanmar, and DR Congo, where displacement is forecasted to increase by more than 250,000 people.

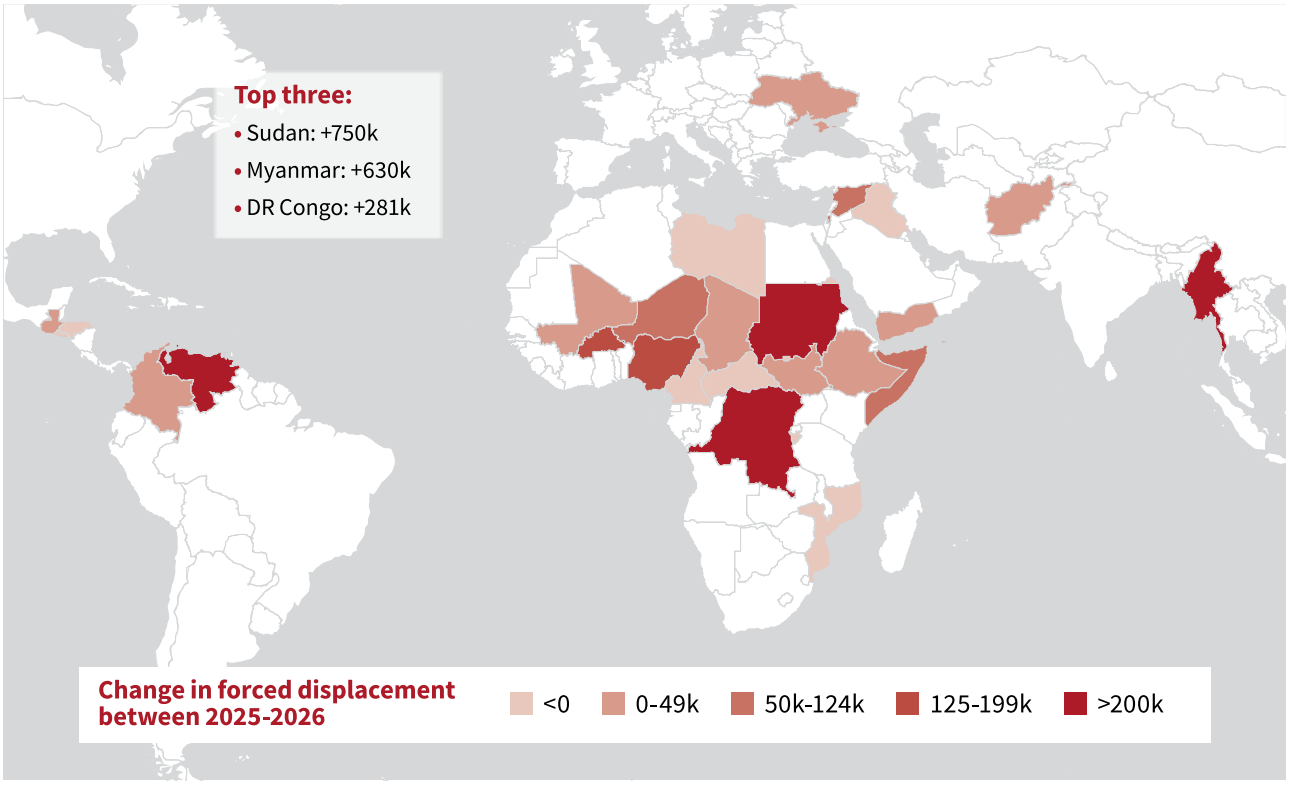


Figure 3: Displacement hotspots in 2026

DR Congo faces one of the world's most complex and protracted humanitarian crises, driven almost exclusively by conflict and violence. The country is home to more than 6.7 million IDPs and 25.6 million

[4] OCHA (2025): Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (January 2025)Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 5 March 2025).
[5] Omar Hammoud Gallego (2024): A new wave of Venezuelan refugees would threaten a humanitarian crisis – Latin America could learn from Europe, *The Conversation*. Available at: theconversation.com (accessed 8 March 2025).

people in high levels of acute food insecurity. The crisis escalated in the first months of 2025, where M23 took the city of Goma, North Kivu's capital, before pushing the offensive southward and seizing Bukavu, capital of South Kivu. The takeover of both cities was marked by extreme violence, including gender-based violence, mass displacement, looting, prison breaks and the recruitment of child soldiers. According to UNHCR estimates, 500,000 people were newly displaced in eastern DR Congo between 1 January and 20 February 2025. DR Congo is forecasted to witness an increase of 280,000 people displaced in 2026.

In **Sudan**, the conflict has resulted in the world's largest displacement crisis, food security crisis, and overall humanitarian crisis in more than a generation. Starvation has been used as a weapon of war, pushing the country from one catastrophic famine to another. With no resolution in sight, Sudan remains one of the most perilous environments for humanitarian operations as the crisis continues to deepen and set the stage for a protracted war. With 11.5 million IDPs – including 8.8 million displaced since April 2023 – Sudan now hosts the world's largest number of internally displaced. A further 6.7 million people have fled across international borders to Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic. Sudan is forecasted to witness an increase of 750,000 people displaced in 2026

The ongoing conflict in **Myanmar** has intensified significantly since 2023, with widespread armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and various armed groups across multiple regions. The situation has deteriorated into a complex, multi-front civil war with severe humanitarian consequences. In Southeast Myanmar, the number of IDPs exceeded 1 million by the end of November 2024. Sudan is forecasted to witness an increase of 635,000 people displaced in 2026

Given the forecasts, displacement is set to increase by 2.1 million in Sudan and 1.4 million in Myanmar, which means that these two countries alone will account for more than half of the total forecasted displacement of 6.5 million between the end of 2024 and the end of 2026. From a broader regional perspective, East Africa[6] and Asia[7] have the highest forecasted growth in the number of displaced people. In East Africa, the forecast indicates a staggering increase of almost 3 million displaced individuals between the end of 2024 and the end of 2025, accounting for approximately 45% of the total growth in displacement. Meanwhile, in Asia, the number of displaced individuals is anticipated to increase by slightly more than 1.8 million, which constitutes a 12% increase – the highest of all regions.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the overwhelming majority of displaced people will be internally displaced. Among the forecasted 6.7 million people to be displaced between the end of 2024 and the end of 2026, approximately 70% are expected to be IDPs. This percentage is notably higher than the current rate, where approximately 63% of the displaced people in the 27 countries are IDPs.

[6] East Africa includes Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.
[7] Asia includes Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Trends in displacement drivers

Armed conflict remained at a very high level in 2023 and increased when looking across all the countries of focus together. Globally, approximately 680 million people were exposed to political violence in 2024, up from 650 million in 2023; 183 million were living within 1 kilometre of at least one conflict incident.[8]

According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the number of conflict events increased by 11% in 2024 in the 27 countries of focus, with a particular rise seen in the Middle East (occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Syria and Iraq), and in Ukraine and Ethiopia. Violence in Libya increased by 186% in 2024 compared to 2023, while in Mozambique it increased by 76%. That being said, almost half the countries covered by the model witnessed a decrease in conflict events in 2024. This included countries in Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras), as well as countries such as Venezuela and Yemen.

Violations of international humanitarian law remained widespread. Violence specifically targeting civilians increased by 8% globally. oPt had the highest number recorded globally, accounting for almost 13% of all global events, and witnessed an 80% increase in such events compared to 2023. Lebanon had the second-highest increase in the number of incidents of violence targeting civilians, followed by Mexico and Sudan.[9] 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. On average, the total number of displaced people increases by 32,000 when there are below-normal levels of violence against civilians. On the other hand, when there are above-normal levels of violence against civilians, the average increase in the number of displaced people is 193,000.[10] Attacks on healthcare facilities and workers increased by 8% in 2024, with attacks in Lebanon and oPt accounting for more than 50% of such incidents. In the GDF 2024 report, it was documented that attacks on health facilities and workers are a significant driver of displacement across borders.[11]

Climate change continues to affect conflict dynamics. A significant increase in the number of conflicts triggered by issues over water has been documented.[12] Approximately 550 conflict events involving pastoralists were recorded in 2024, down from approximately 675 in 2023.[13] Many such episodes revolve around access to land and pasture. As an example, throughout November 2024, clashes occurred between the clans in Hiraan and Hirshabelle districts in Somalia because of disputes over water sources and grazing pastures. At least 10 people were killed, and several others were injured.

Despite the immense need to address drivers of conflict, support to development and peacebuilding in displacement-generating countries is vastly below the average allocated to 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[14] was 25% in 2023 up from 24% in 2022, but low considered that the average share in the preceding decade was 33%. It is now USD17 billion below the peak in 2005.

[8] ACLED (nd): Conflict Exposure. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).
[9] ACLED (nd): Anti-Civilian Violence dataset. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).
[10] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Global Displacement Forecast Report 2024. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025).
[11] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Global Displacement Forecast Report 2024. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025).
[12] The Pacific Institute (2024): Fact Sheet: Water Conflict Chronology Update. Available at: pacinst.org (accessed 5 March 2025).
[13] ACLED (nd): Conflict Data Export Tool. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).
[14] As defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2023 is latest available data

The share of ODA to the 27 countries of focus was approximately 26% of the total ODA provided by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries / Development Assistance Countries (DAC) in 2023. This was an increase compared to 2022; however, this was largely because of the significant funding provided to Ukraine, which accounted for 40% of the total ODA given to the 27 countries. For the other 26 countries, the level of ODA remained the same as in 2022 but in absolute sums and is share of the overall ODA given globally. Further, as displacement numbers have increased in these countries, the ratio between displaced persons and ODA almost halved between 2012 and 2023.[15]

The total share of ODA allocated to peacebuilding activities[16] increased from about 12% in 2022 to 14 % in 2023. The vast amount of ODA for peacebuilding is provided to Ukraine, which consumes 45% of the total ODA provided to peacebuilding. If funding for Ukraine is disregarded, the amount provided to other crises is lower than in 2022. While some of the funding to Ukraine is new and additional and as such has increased the total amount of funding to peacebuilding over the past two years, some of the funding provided to Ukraine has come at the expense of funding to other crises. Major displacement crises like those in Sudan and Afghanistan saw decreases in their ODA for peacebuilding, decreasing by USD57 million and USD82 million respectively, representing a 44% and 37% decline. Twelve other countries also witnessed declines in their ODA for peacebuilding. Without the financial support to address the root causes of conflict and displacement, the displacement crises will not be resolved.

For those countries, where a small share of ODA was provided for peacebuilding activities in 2022 – Afghanistan, Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), DR Congo, Ethiopia, Syria and Yemen displacement is forecasted to increase by an average of more than 270,000 people (or 5%) between the end of 2024 and the end of 2026. In the countries where a high share of ODA was allocated to peacebuilding activities – Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Libya and Ukraine – displacement is forecasted to decrease by an average of 5,000 people, or 4%.

Analysis for the GDF 2023 update report demonstrated that development assistance and its allocation towards peacebuilding is linked with future displacement trends. Over the past two decades, in conflict and displacement-affected countries[17], low levels of development assistance and a minimal share directed towards peacebuilding correlated with an average 134%[18] increase in displacement the following year. Conversely, when robust engagement through development assistance was combined with achieving a peace agreement, displacement increased by only 31% on average the following year.[19] As will be shown later in this report, assistance for peacebuilding is also a significant factor in shaping return flows.

[15] From USD857 in 2012 to USD484 in 2022 and USD450 in 2023 in ODA per displaced person.

[16] Using the definition and Creditor Reporting System (CRS) codes developed by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. Available at: psdata.un.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

[17] Countries that have experienced >0 battle-related deaths and >25,000 increase in displacement. This includes a total of 366 country-years.

[18] In the Global Displacement Forecast update report 2023, 253% was cited. This new figure has been calculated after including more data and removing significant outliers.

[19] Danish Refugee Council (2023): Global Displacement Report 2023 – July update. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025).

Trends in conditions for humanitarian response

With crises not being resolved, funding is needed to address the humanitarian needs arising from both newly emerging and ongoing, protracted crises. However, the scale of humanitarian funding is insufficient. So far[20] 47% of the required funding for humanitarian response plans (HRPs) in 2024 has been provided, compared to 40% at the same time in 2024, while the figure was 55% in 2022. In 2024, the gap between needs and funding stood at USD26 billion – down from USD31 billion in 2023.

Of the countries of focus, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela and Ethiopia, were among the least funded in 2024, with less than one-third of the required funding for the HRPs having been provided. Previous DRC analysis of funding and displacement trends across over 189 HRPs have 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 ability of the humanitarian community to respond adequately, alleviate suffering, ensure protection for vulnerable groups, implement early action and prevention activities, and enhance the resilience of communities.

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 for humanitarian actors to reach people in need, is often challenged by restrictive environments. Of the 27 countries in focus, 16 are categorised as having either very high or extreme humanitarian access constraints[21] Forecasted displacement is on average higher in countries with poor humanitarian access. Countries with extreme access constraints, such as Burkina Faso, Myanmar, oPt, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, are forecasted to see an average increase of 350,000 people displaced in 2025. In countries categorised as facing very high access constraints, such as Afghanistan, DR Congo, Ethiopia and Syria, the average forecasted increase is 142,000 displaced people. In countries categorised as having high to moderate access constraints, such as Iraq, Colombia, Niger and Venezuela, average displacement is forecasted to increase by only 25,000 people.

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

US stop-work order and contract terminations and displacement

The US State Department issued a 'stop-work' order on Friday 24 January 2025 for all existing foreign assistance and paused new aid.[22] On 25 February 25, the US administration decided to terminate 90% of the USAID programmes.[23] As the biggest donor worldwide, this will have severe consequences.

In 2023, USAID contributed approximately 60% of all funding to peacebuilding. As highlighted above, the loss of this funding can have a significant impact on conflict dynamics and result in increased displacement. Further, as will be shown in the next chapter, this can also have a negative impact on the opportunities for return of those already displaced.

USAID contributed 47% to HRPs in 2024 and 66% of emergency response funding in 2023. As highlighted, low funding of HRPs has a relationship with increased displacement in the following year. The ability to support those in need, in particular when emergencies happen, will be severely hampered by the funding cuts. Change in prevalence of undernourishment has been found in the sensitivity analysis of the Foresight model to be the fourth-most influential indicator of next year's displacement, with a relative influence of 7.4% - the highest-ranked non-conflict indicator.

USAID contributed 34% of ODA funding for human rights programming in 2023. Sensitivity analysis of the Foresight model finds that the human rights score has a relative influence of 5.6% when it comes to predicting the following year's displacement and is ranked seventh among the 50 key variables tested.

USAID contributed 65% of the ODA funding to the government and civil society sector, including 94% of the funding to public sector policy and administrative management. One study has found that a one-point increase towards democratisation reduces the risk of large-scale forced displacement by 10%.[24] Another study has also found a positive correlation between changes in the political structures of a state towards autocracy and the overall number of displaced persons from that country.[25]

Furthermore, the funding cuts by the US and other donors can have severe impact on the ability to reach people already displaced. In 2025, 307 million people are in humanitarian need. Coordinated plans are targeting roughly 185 million of these, where we estimate 137 million will actually be reached, if there is no US funding cuts, as the total required funding for the plans rarely materialize. In a scenario[26] where US funding is completely cut, 57 million fewer people would be reached and/or fewer people would receive a comprehensive response to their needs. As such, in a scenario where the US funding is completely withdrawn, it could potentially lead to only 26% of the people in need worldwide receiving support (i.e. 80 million out of 307 million). It could also lead to a situation where a higher share of the people in need receive support that however to a lesser extent addresses their humanitarian needs. If the funding were to be reinstated after the freeze period (i.e. 25% funding decrease), then 13 million fewer people will be reached.

[22] Reuters (2025): US issues broad freeze on foreign aid after Trump orders review. Available at: reuters.com (accessed 5 March 2025).
[23] Reuters (2025): Services to millions of people collapse as USAID cuts contracts worldwide. Available at: reuters.com (accessed 5 March 2025).
[24] Murat Bayar & Mustafa M. Aral (30 October 2019): An Analysis of Large-Scale Forced Migration in Africa, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Available at: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov (accessed 5 March 2025).
[25] Clionadh Raleigh (2011): The search for safety: The effects of conflict, poverty and ecological influences on migration in the developing world, *Global Environmental Change*, Volume 21, Supplement 1, Pages S82–S93, ISSN 0959-3780. Available at: doi.org (accessed 5 March 2025).
[26] Analysis is done using data on people targeted and reached (source: Humanitarian Action) and funding targets and actuals (source: OCHA FTS) from humanitarian plans from 2020 onwards to fit a regression model and estimate how changes in funding affect the proportion of people reached. On the basis of the model, a baseline is estimated for the number of people that would be reached if historical funding levels continued. Based on the specific country's historical US funding share we simulate the funding cuts by reducing the projected funding and as a result the fewer people reached compared to the baseline

Future displacement hosting and solutions

Low-income countries continue to be the main hosts of displaced people. Approximately 4.3 million of the total increase of 6.7 million displaced people are estimated to be hosted in low-income countries, while another 1.2 million will be hosted in lower-middle-income countries. The proportion of displaced people from the 27 focus countries that is hosted in low-income countries dropped from 46% in 2021 to 40% in 2022, mainly because of the Ukraine crisis, but has since increased to reach 45% in 2024 and is set to return to 46% in 2026. A significant increase in hosting in upper-middle-income countries was witnessed in 2024, when the share jumped from 20% to 27%. This was largely because Iran and Ukraine, major hosting nations, moved from being lower-middle-income countries to upper-middle-income countries.

It is estimated that approximately 40% of displaced people will be hosted in sub-Sahara Africa by the end of 2026 and a further 25% will be hosted in the MENA region. Only 9% 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+ experienced a decline of approximately 10% in asylum applications in 2024 compared to 2023[27], while displacement for the 27 countries of focus alone is estimated to have increased by more than 7 million people (or 7%). While the GDP per displaced person hosted in European countries amounted to USD1.7 million per person in 2022 it increased toUSD2.1 million in 2024. At the same time, the amount in sub-Saharan Africa only comes to USD45,000 down from USD55,000 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.

That major host countries of displaced people are facing development challenges is not new. These countries face many socio-economic challenges.[28] 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, 45% of displaced people from the countries of focus are hosted in countries that are among the overall most vulnerable[29] 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 million in 2024 and is set to increase further to 53 million by the end of 2026. For example, Chad and Niger are ranked among the top-five most vulnerable countries in the world. Finally, 48% are hosted in the countries most exposed[30] 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, which is a significant *current* risk as well as a rising future one. In 2025, 57% of displaced people will be living in countries that are among those at highest risk of experiencing a flood, 45% in countries that are among those at highest risk of experiencing a drought and 40% in countries most at risk of experiencing an earthquake.[31] Many of the host countries are facing multiple hazards and as such 20% of displaced people will be living in countries that are among those most at risk of experiencing floods, drought and an epidemic. This is a significant increase from 2024, where the figure was approximately 13%.

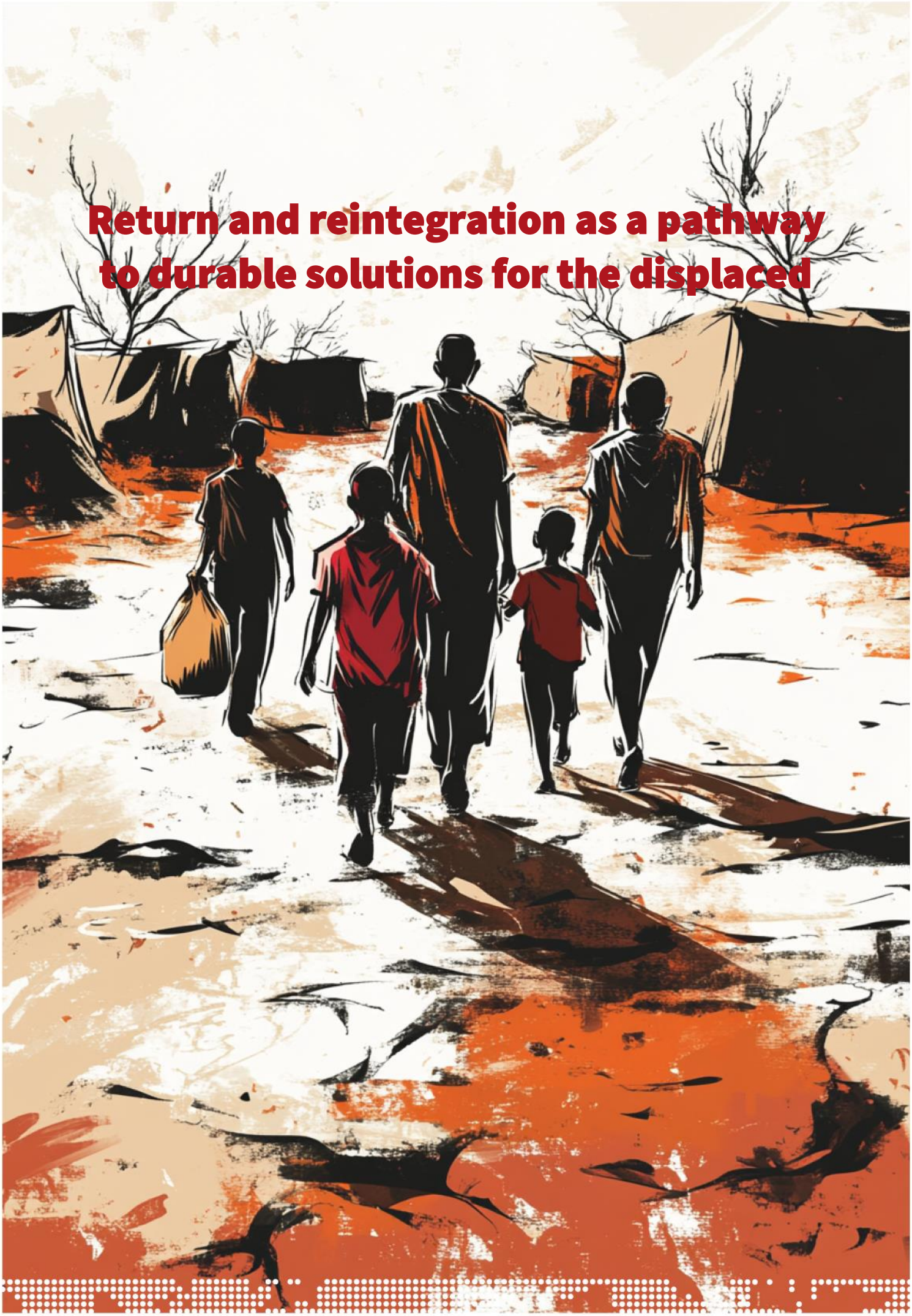
[27] European Union Agency for Asylum (2025): Latest Asylum Trends - Annual Analysis. Available at: euaa.europa.eu (accessed 6 March 2025).
[28] Defined as among the worst 25% based on the scoring in the INFORM Risk Index. Available at: drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu (accessed 6 March 2025).
[29] This is developed using the ND-Gain scores from 2020. More on the ND-Gain methodology is available at: gain.nd.edu (accessed 6 March 2025).
[30] Degree to which a system is exposed to significant climate change from a biophysical perspective.
[31] 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 6 March 2025).

Hosting displaced people in these fragile, climate-exposed, low-income settings – often for decades – is also a result of the limited progress made on realising durable solutions to displacement. In 2023, 154,000 people were resettled and by mid-2024 85,000 had been resettled. UNHCR projected that 2.4 million refugees were in need of resettlement in 2024.[32] The number of IDPs and refugees who returned to their place of origin decreased from 10 million in 2022 to 6 million in 2023, and by mid-2024 only 2.2 million had been able to return. Returns only amounted to around 3% of refugees and 8% of IDPs in 2023. Given the lack of progress in resolving conflicts and addressing root causes of displacement, the share of displaced people able to return will remain limited. At the end of 2023, an estimated 24.9 million refugees and other people in need of international protection were in 58 protracted situations, in 37 host countries.[33] In 2024, this probably increased because of a number of additional situations including Ethiopians in Sudan, Malians in Burkina Faso and Somalis in South Africa. In 2025 it could further include Myanmar people in India, Haitians and Venezuelans in Mexico, as well as Central Africans in the Republic of Congo.

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

[32] UNHCR (2023): Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2024. Available at: reporting.unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[33] UNHCR (2024): Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2023. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

Return and reintegration as a pathway to durable solutions for the displaced



This chapter focuses on return and reintegration as a durable solution for displaced people. A durable solution can be defined as a situation in which "displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement".[34] Return and reintegration constitutes one of the three formal durable solutions pathways, alongside local integration and resettlement. For the purpose of this report, the focus is on understanding the factors that shape returns as a pathway, but this does not imply that this is necessarily a preferred option as opposed to other durable solutions.

Return and reintegration as a concept

Return and reintegration can take many forms, and not all fall within the durable solutions category. The principle of non-refoulement is a cornerstone of refugee protection and enshrined in the 1951 Convention. It entails the protection against the removal of a person to a territory or frontiers of a territory, when there are substantial grounds for believing that the person's life or freedom would be threatened because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Under refugee law, the principle applies to refugees and asylum seekers. Protection against refoulement under human rights law implies that a person cannot be returned but does not necessarily lead to the person being granted refugee status. Forced returns is another concern, and would not be defined as a durable solution. This is the case when rejected asylum seekers or refugees for whom cessation of refugee status or temporary protection status apply, but who do not consent to return home and where, as a result, authorities are applying pressure through sanctions and/or are using physical force in conjunction with the departure. While forced return can be legally sanctioned in the case of rejected asylum seekers or refugees for whom cessation of refugee status or temporary protection status apply, this is not the case for IDPs as they, as citizens of a country, have a right to choose their place of residence. However, in practice, IDP return processes are often premature, politically motivated and do not meet international standards for safety, dignity and voluntariness.

Return and reintegration is considered a durable solution when voluntary. This refers to the free, informed and voluntary movement of refugees back to their country/area of origin in safety and in dignity. For IDPs, as citizens of a country, the right to return to the place of origin is equal to the right to integrate locally or settle in another part of the country.

Development in returns

In the past 20 years (2004–2023), more than 73 million refugees and IDPs have returned, according to UNHCR data. This data set includes 'Returned refugees' – former refugees who have returned to their countries of origin, either spontaneously or in an organised fashion, but are yet to be fully integrated; and 'Returned IDPs' – beneficiaries of UNHCR's protection and assistance activities, and who returned to their areas of origin or habitual residence.[35] While this data is probably not exhaustive, it is probably a fairly strong indicator of the developments and trends in total returns.

In this 20-year period, the number of returns peaked in 2022, when almost 10 million displaced people returned. However, this does not necessarily mean that returns have become more feasible, or conditions for returns have become more conducive. These numbers are also a reflection of the growing number of people that are displaced in the first place and hence the increase in the base of potential returnees. Looking at the developments in the share of displaced returning, there has been a noticeable declining trend for refugees, although with a small uptick in the past two year. For IDPs, the trend is less discernible, with significant fluctuations from year to year.

[34] Danish Refugee Council (2018): DRC Return Policy. Available at: pro.drc.ngo (accessed 6 March 2025).
[35] UNHCR (n.d.): Data finder – Methodology and definitions. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

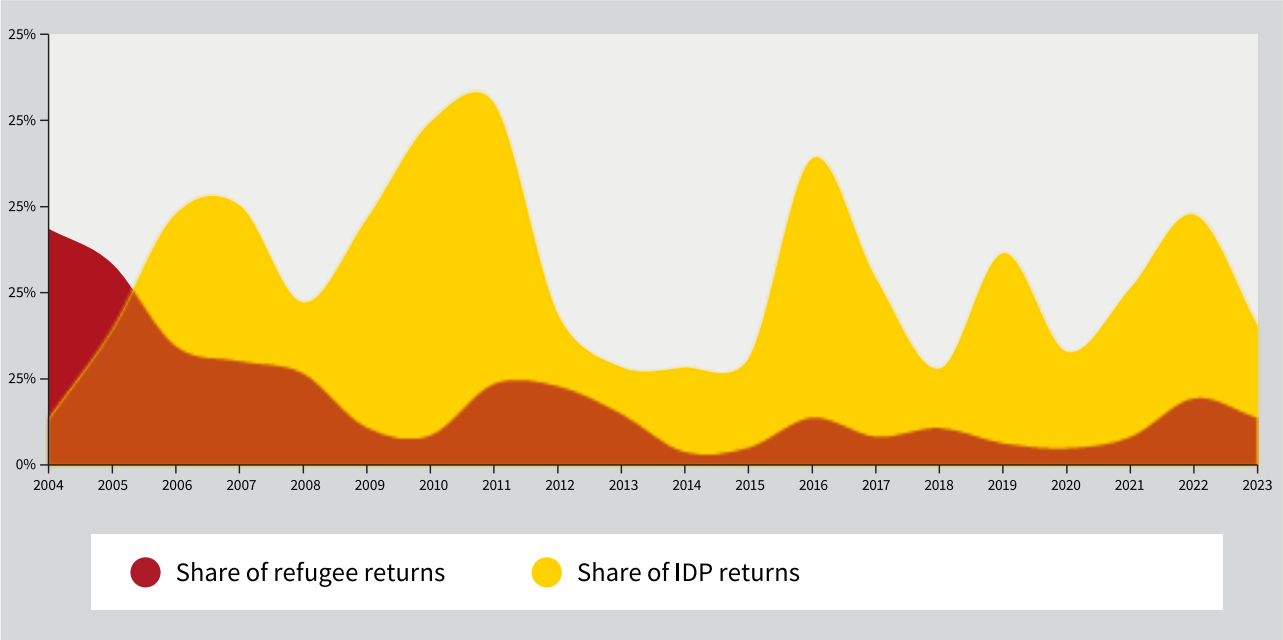


Figure 4: Share of the total number of IDPs and refugees able to return past 20 years

Overall, the number of returns is low compared to the number of displaced people. Among the different groups of displaced people, returns are noticeably lower for refugees compared to IDPs. The average annual number of IDPs that have returned between 2004 and 2023 relative to the number of displaced IDPs in the period is 11%, while for refugees the same figure is 4%. Return rates have been slightly higher for displaced refugees from countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, but lower in the cases of the MENA region, and Latin America. A similar pattern is visible when it comes to IDPs, where Asia stands out with an average of 23% of IDPs returning per year. Part of the explanation behind the regional differences is the different durations of the conflicts, because the duration of displacement affects possible solutions. International Organization for Migration (IOM) analysis has shown that the longer IDPs are displaced, the more likely they are to prefer local integration or settlement elsewhere rather than return.[36]

Interestingly, the average annual share of returns for IDPs from upper-middle-income countries has been slightly below average, while higher for IDPs from low- and lower-middle-income countries. A similar pattern can be seen when it comes to refugees. In 2023, there were approximately 123,000 refugees from high-income countries, yet only five returns. The vast majority of these (including the five returns) were from Russia. Upper-middle-income countries with a significant number of refugees and few returns include China, Azerbaijan and Türkiye. This may be because the displacement from these contexts is more often the result of individualised persecution or threats, rather than more generalized violence and threats. That individualized threats are a bigger deterrent for return than generalised persecution or violence has also been found in a study of IDP returns in Colombia, which found that households that are displaced in response to a direct attack or threat are 4 percentage points less willing to return, partly because of the psychological impact of such threats and attacks.[37]

[36] IOM (2023): Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS). IOM, Geneva. Available at: un.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[37] María Alejandra Arias, Ana María Ibáñez and Pablo Querubin (2014): The Desire to Return during Civil War: Evidence for Internally Displaced Populations in Colombia, *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2014, pp. 209–233. Available at: doi.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

Analysing factors shaping returns in the past 20 years

The analysis of returns focuses on returns at the country level. For the analysis of factors in country of origin, it includes data from countries that in a given year had more than 100,000 people displaced.[38] This includes 656 cases (country-year) spread across 58 different countries. The analysis of factors in country of asylum includes data from host countries that in a given year hosted more than 100,000 refugees and/or asylum seekers. This includes 699 cases spread across 67 countries.

Research on returns to date has largely focused on different categories of factors shaping return flows.[39]

1. *Conditions in country of origin* typically looking at the security situation, political change, employment opportunities, access to services, etc.
2. *Conditions in country of asylum* typically focused on livelihood opportunities, rights violations and discrimination, access to services and housing conditions
3. *Individual / household-level factors* typically focused on emotions, trauma, future aspirations
4. *Social factors* typically focused on family ties, social networks, nostalgia
5. *Policy interventions* typically focused on (voluntary or forced) return programmes, crackdowns, etc.

In this analysis, the focus is primarily at the more macro-level, looking at conditions in country of origin and country of asylum. This is complemented with aspects related to the three other categories of factors as they intertwine with findings from the macro-level analysis in specific case examples. To better understand the macro-level factors that have shaped the return trends, there has been deeper analysis of the data combing the UNHCR returns data with other relevant datasets.

[38] I.e. if China had 100,000 people living in displacement by the end of 2004, but in 2005 the number fell below 100,000 then only China, 2004 is included as a case and not China, 2005. The threshold has been selected to include only major displacement crises.

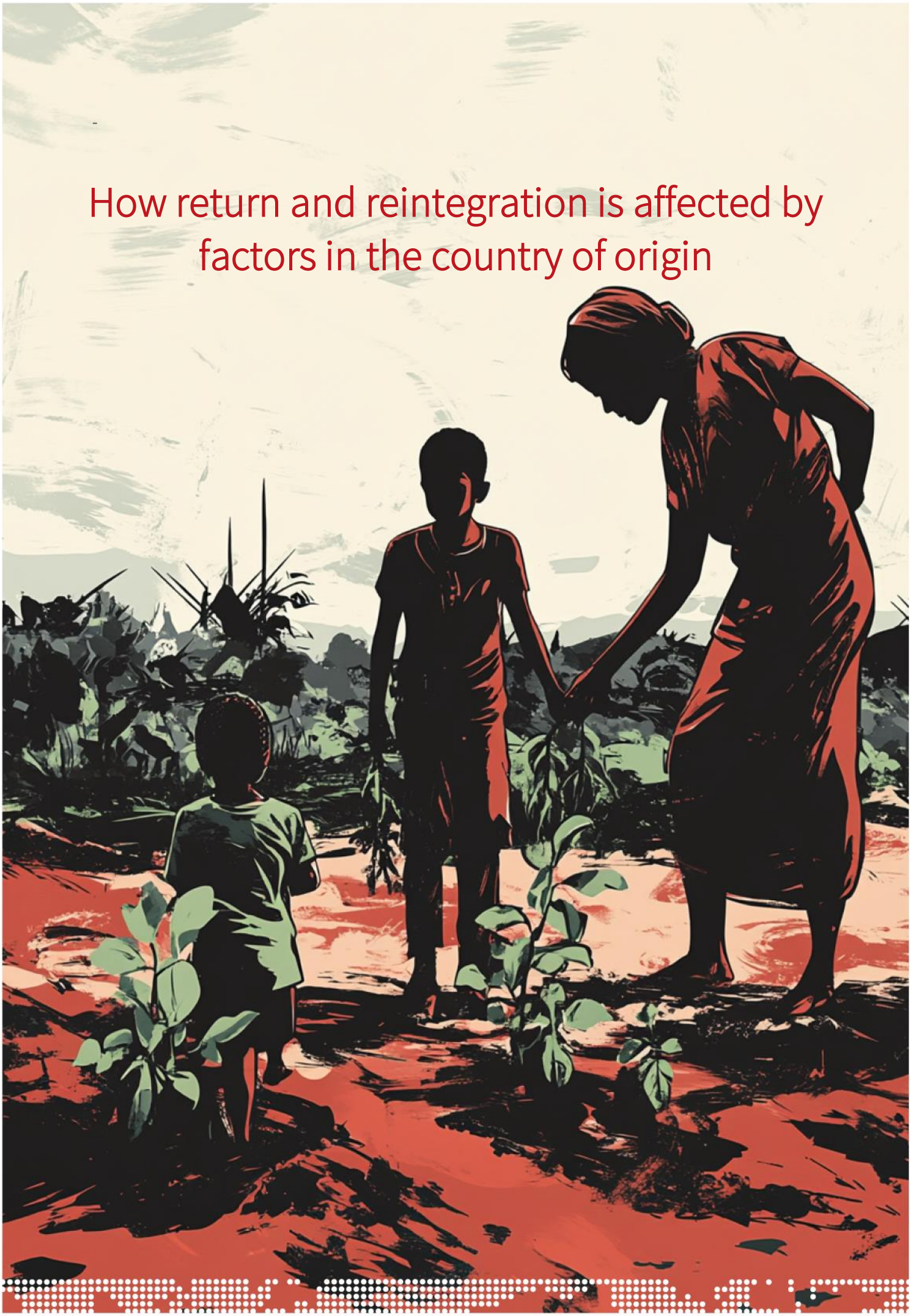
[39] Koser, K. & Kuschminder, K. (2015): Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants. International Organization for Migration (IOM): Switzerland. Available at: iom.int (accessed 6 March 2025).

Key datasets include

- Dataset of World Refugee and Asylum Policies (DWRAP).[40] DWRAP codes all national laws pertinent to forcefully displaced populations in a total sample of 193 countries globally from 1951 (the year of the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees) to 2022. This *de jure* exercise covers five core dimensions: 1) Access: the ease of entrance and security of status, 2) Services: Provision of public services and welfare, 3) Livelihoods: The ability to work and own property, 4) Movement: encampment policies, and 5) Participation: Citizenship and political rights.
- Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). V-Dem provides a multidimensional and disaggregated dataset that reflects the complexity of the concept of democracy as a system of rule that goes beyond the simple presence of elections. V-Dem typically gathers data from five experts per country-year observation, using a pool of more than 4,000 country experts who provide judgment on different concepts and cases.[41] From this dataset, we focus particularly on the index of political civil liberties[42], the private civil liberties index[43], the civil liberties index[44] and the rule of law index[45].
- Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN).[46] ND-GAIN is a free, open source index that shows a country's current vulnerability to climate disruption. In this analysis, we use the vulnerability index. ND-GAIN assesses the vulnerability of a country by considering six life-supporting sectors: food, water, health, ecosystem services, human habitat and infrastructure. Each sector is in turn represented by six indicators that represent three cross-cutting components: the exposure of the sector to climate-related or climate-exacerbated hazards; the sensitivity of that sector to the impacts of the hazard and the adaptive capacity of the sector to cope or adapt to these impacts.
- World Bank Development Indicators. The World Bank offers a number of indicators related to development. In this analysis, the focus is on GDP per capita, % rural population and % population aged 0–14.
- Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalised indices for each of the three dimensions.

[40] World Bank (2024): Dataset on World Refugee and Asylum Policy. Available at: datacatalog.worldbank.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[41] Varieties of Democracy (n.d.) Methodology. Available at: v-dem.net (accessed 6 March 2025).
[42] Understood as freedom of association and freedom of expression. Among the set of civil liberties, these liberal rights are the most relevant for political competition and accountability.
[43] Understood as freedom of movement, freedom of religion, freedom from forced labour, and property rights.
[44] Understood as liberal freedom, where freedom is a property of individuals. Civil liberty is constituted by the absence of physical violence committed by government agents and the absence of constraints of private liberties and political liberties by the government. It is derived from a combination of the index of political civil liberties, index of private civil liberties and index of physical violence
[45] Understood as the extent to which laws are transparently, independently, predictably, impartially, and equally enforced, and the extent to which the actions of government officials comply with the law.
[46] Available at: gain.nd.edu (accessed 6 March 2025).

How return and reintegration is affected by factors in the country of origin



Returns to countries of origin often take place as a result of improvements in the conditions in these countries. Such changes are often referred to as 'pull factors', but could also be considered as an improvement in, or absence of, the 'push-factors' that caused the displacement in the first place.

Research on returns has typically focused on the aspect of security as a fundamental factor shaping whether displaced people return. As an example, a prominent study found that a one standard deviation improvement in conflict conditions relative to the previous quarter increases returns by 6.2% for Syrian refugees living in neighbouring countries.[47] Intention surveys conducted among displaced people typically find that the aspect of security and stability in the home country is a key factor shaping displaced people's perceptions of return viability. On a related note, a study has found that the presence of peacekeeping missions increases returns of refugees (but not IDP returns), in particular if the peacekeeping mission has a specific displacement mandate, e.g. to support voluntary and safe returns and resettlement.[48]

Despite a key focus on stability and security, returns can often happen to insecure areas. In Ethiopia, approximately 2 million people were reported to have returned in 2022, despite the fact that more than 100,000 battle-related deaths were recorded in Ethiopia that year[49] – higher than in Ukraine. In 2016, more than 400,000 Afghan refugees returned, despite more than 16,000 battle-related deaths being recorded that year – a high level compared to other years in Afghanistan. These findings confirm that other factors are also important in shaping return movements. A study on returns of Ukrainian refugees found that among all surveyed returnees to Ukraine, 27% have settled in frontline areas, and 5% of returnees are residing in frontline areas where active hostilities are occurring on the ground. These returns have largely been shaped by factors such reunification with family, a strong sense of belonging in country of origin, as well as a wish to return to their pre-displacement jobs.[50]

Economic development and access to services is another often-cited factor for returns. Return of Syrian refugees from neighbouring countries have been seen to be significantly influenced by access to utilities, as well as access to schools. In a hypothetical scenario used in a perception survey where schools are under-resourced in Syria, Syrian refugees have been found to be 19 percentage points less likely to return. This is more than a 40% reduction in the likelihood of expected return.[51] Another study on Syrian refugees in Lebanon found that safety in Syria, economic prospects in Syria, the availability of public services in one's hometown, and respondents' family and friend networks in Syria were positively and significantly associated with return intentions. When shifting focus to those that had taken the extra step of preparing for returns, only the availability of services and the size of social networks were found to be statistically significant.[52] The aspect of access to services was also found in research conducted for the Global Displacement Forecast Report 2024.[53] The report focused on violations of international humanitarian law, including the aspect of humanitarian access. Here it was found that returns decrease when people in need face restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance, and denial of existence of

[47] Lori Beaman, Harun Onder and Stefanie Onder (2022): When do refugees return home? Evidence from Syrian displacement in Mashreq, *Journal of Development Economics* 155 (2022). Available at: sciencedirect.com (accessed 6 March 2025).
[48] Stefano Costalli, Jessica Di Salvatore and Andrea Ruggeri (2023): Do UN Peace Operations Help Forcibly Displaced People? *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 61, Issue 6. Available at: ora.ox.ac.uk (accessed 6 March 2025).
[49] PRIO (2023): New figures show conflict-related deaths at 28-year high, largely due to Ethiopia and Ukraine wars. Available at: prio.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[50] REACH Impact Initiatives (2024): Unsafe returns: what makes refugees return to Ukraine and settle in the frontline areas of the country? Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 6 March 2025).
[51] Lori Beaman, Harun Onder and Stefanie Onder (2022): When do refugees return home? Evidence from Syrian displacement in Mashreq, *Journal of Development Economics* 155 (2022). Available at: sciencedirect.com (accessed 6 March 2025).
[52] Ala Alrababah, Daniel Masterson, Marine Casalis, Dominik Hangartner and Jeremy Weinstein (2023): The Dynamics of Refugee Return: Syrian Refugees and Their Migration Intentions, *British Journal of Political Science* (2023), 53, 1108–1131. Available at: cambridge.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[53] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Global Displacement Forecast Report 2024. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025).

humanitarian needs or entitlements to assistance. When there are zero to few constraints for people to access humanitarian aid, returns are on average 68% of the total number of people displaced. When people's access to humanitarian aid is marked by high constraints, returns drop to 10% and when access is completely blocked, returns drop to 6% of the total number of people displaced.

Our analysis of return data confirms some of these findings. Generally speaking, only a minority of refugees and IDPs return to/in countries with an absence of violence. Only 10% of IDP returns happened in a year where zero battle-related deaths were recorded, while on the other hand 25% happened in situations where more than 5,000 battle-related deaths were recorded the same year. For refugees, where return is likely less spontaneous and fluid than for IDPs, 20% have returned in years where zero battle-related deaths were recorded. However, 29% returned in years when more than 5,000 battle related deaths were recorded. This does not necessarily mean that the displaced returned to frontline areas, since the areas to which these returns happened could be relatively more peaceful. But it does highlight that returns for the most part happen in very fragile and volatile contexts.

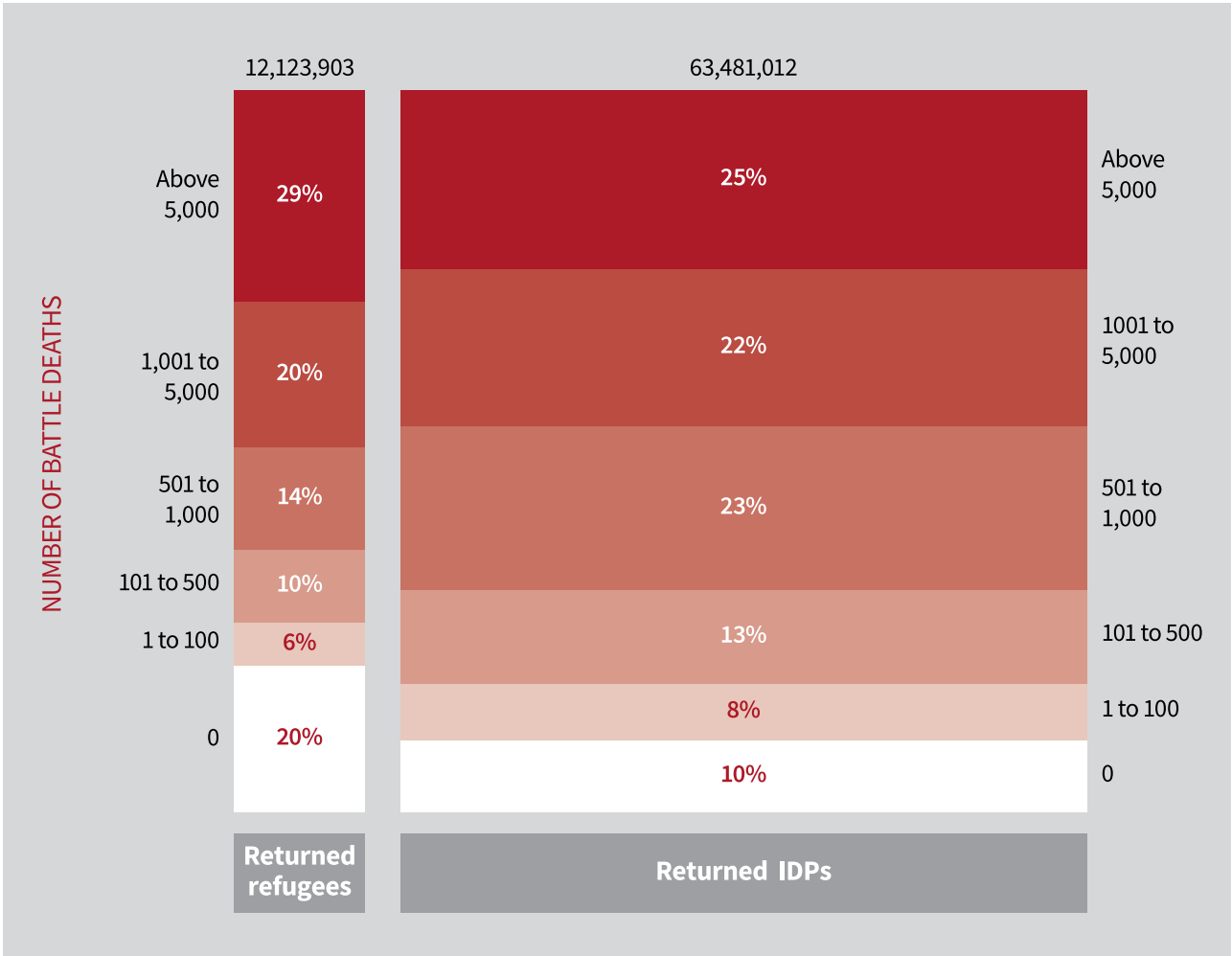


Figure 5: Number of refugees and IDPs that have returned relative to conflict level in country of origin

In addition to safety, dignity is a key condition for returns to be considered durable. Using a fairly low threshold[54] for respect for civil liberties, the analysis suggests that 75% of refugees who have returned since 2004 have returned to areas marked by instability and violations of civil liberties. Only 4% have returned to countries where civil liberties were somewhat respected and the situation was peaceful. For IDPs the figures are 85% and 2% respectively. In 2023, only seven countries in which refugee returns occurred were both peaceful and had a minimum level of respect for civil liberties.

Conducting regression analysis of the factors common across countries in the past 20 years driving *return of refugees*, a number of significant drivers of returns have been identified. The analysis sought to test the significance of climate vulnerability, human development, economic development, conflict termination, battle-related deaths, ODA per capita and ODA for peacebuilding, and various types of civil and political liberties, while controlling for a few background variables.[55] The analysis found that the key, significant drivers of returns has been ODA for peacebuilding and % growth of annual GDP per capita.

The significance of ODA for peacebuilding somewhat underscores the findings of other research related to peacekeeping missions. It shows that peacebuilding efforts can contribute to the building of confidence in a potential lasting peace, even if peace has not yet returned. The findings also underscore that many people return to unstable situations, as neither battle-related deaths nor conflict termination is a significant driver of returns. The data shows that when there is conflict termination and a high level of ODA for peacebuilding to contribute to sustaining the peace in the short-term, approximately 20k refugees return on average. In situations where there is conflict termination but a low level of ODA for peacebuilding, then only 7k return on average; when neither are present, only 5k return.

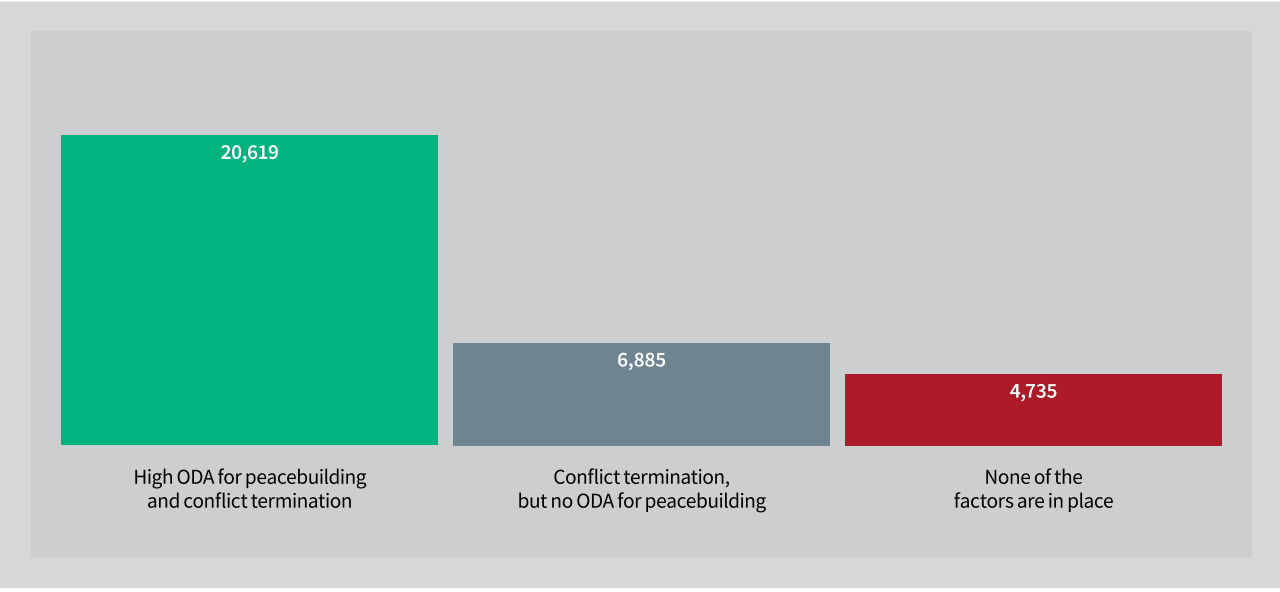


Figure 6: Average annual refugee returns per country during different conditions in country of origin

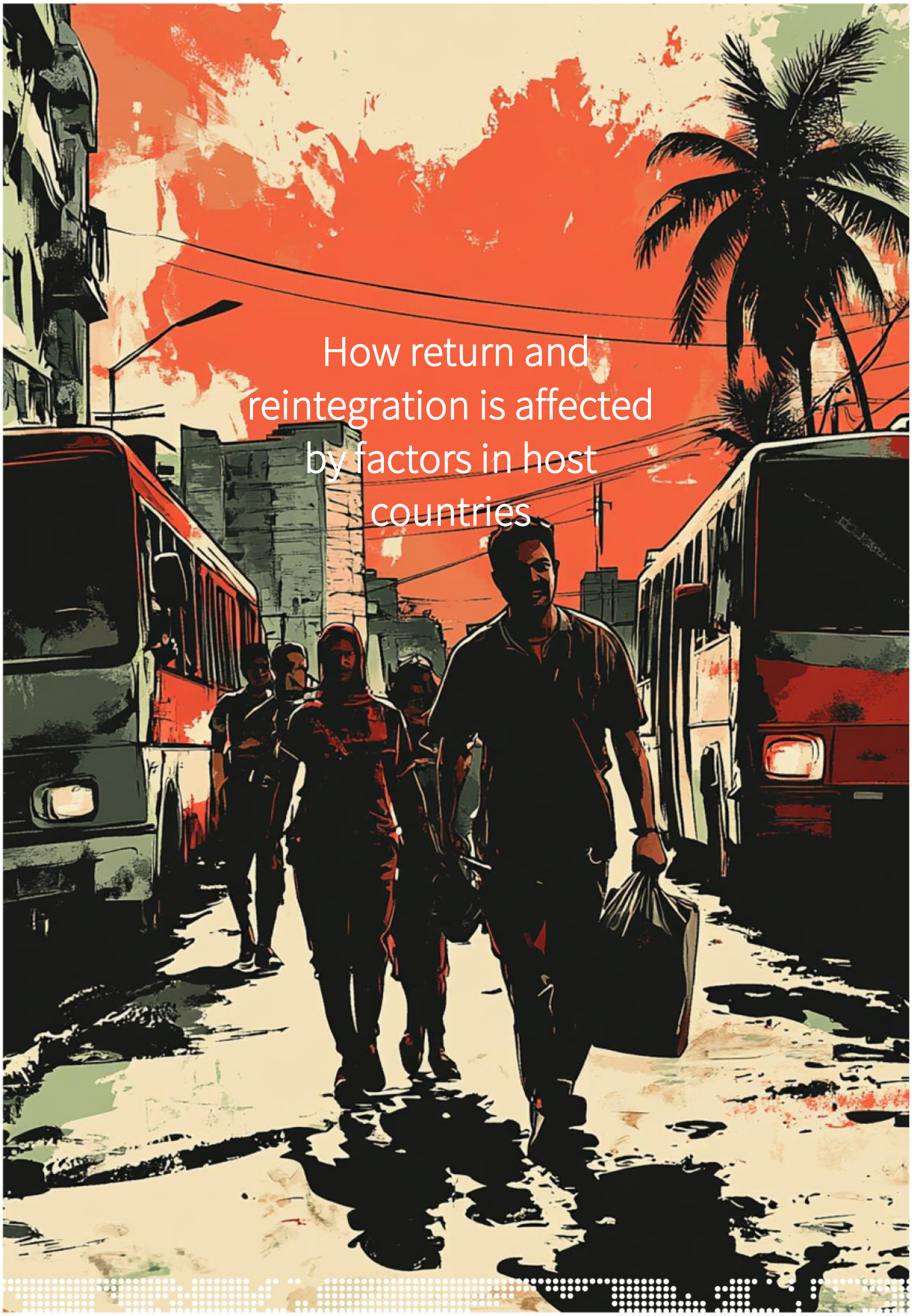
The significance of GDP per capita growth underscores the findings of other research highlighting that economic and livelihood opportunities are key for refugees to decide to return to their home countries. Positive economic development could also be a proxy for improved access to services, which other research, as highlighted, has also found to be a significant driver of return intentions.

[54] 0.6 on the v2x_civlib V-Dem index. In 2023, two-thirds of countries worldwide were above this threshold.
[55] Such as age composition, population size, country effects, % of population living in rural areas and number of refugees.

Conducting the same analysis on *return of IDPs*, a number of other factors are identified. Generally, age stratification influence on returns, as when countries have a higher share of the population aged 0–14 they witness higher levels of returns. This could be due to increased mobility, which other researchers have also found. Furthermore, climate vulnerability is found to be a significant factor in returns. i.e. when climate vulnerability increases, return decreases. The data further shows that in situations where there is high level of ODA for peacebuilding, conflict termination and low level of climate vulnerability, 150k IDP on average return. In situations where there is a high level of ODA for peacebuilding and a low level of climate vulnerability, but no conflict termination, returns drop to 130k. When there is low level of peacebuilding ODA, high climate vulnerability and no conflict termination, returns decrease to 59k. The impact of climate vulnerability on returns is fairly understudied. For example, in our Global Displacement Forecast Report 2022, we found that drought-prone areas or areas experiencing frequent extreme temperatures may become uninhabitable or decrease livelihood opportunities and thereby render return difficult or impossible. Increased conflict over access to land and water, fuelled in part by climatic changes, could also prevent returns of those displaced. IOM research in Ethiopia found that a much higher percentage of conflict-displaced IDPs returned to their communities of origin than those displaced by drought, as drought-induced IDPs were more reluctant to return to areas affected by drought for fear that droughts may reoccur in the same area, provoking further hardship and repeated displacement.[56]

What these findings underscore is that returns often happen to very fragile contexts and as such there is a high risk that the returns that have been recorded are not truly durable, but rather lead to new needs and secondary displacement.

[56] IOM (2023): Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS). IOM, Geneva. Available at: un.org (accessed 6 March 2025).


How return and reintegration is affected by factors in host countries

In addition to the 'pull-factors' in the country of origin, 'push-factors' in the country of asylum can also be a cause of returns. Such 'push-factors' can take the form of positive incentives (e.g. repatriation programmes, empowerment, etc.) or negative incentives (e.g. legal barriers to livelihoods, access to services, etc.)

Research on Syrian refugees has generally found that factors in Syria seem to be a stronger determinant of returns than conditions in countries of asylum. The conditions in host countries factor was generally found to affect returns in more complex and less straightforward ways.[57]

Conducting regression analysis of the factors in common across countries of asylum in the past 20 years driving *return of refugees*, a number of significant drivers of returns have been identified. The analysis sought to test the significance of climate vulnerability, human development, economic development, battle-related deaths, civil and political liberties, rule of law, as well as *de jure* level of protection of rights related to 1) Access: the ease of entrance and security of status, 2) Services: Provision of public services and welfare, 3) Livelihoods: The ability to work and own property, 4) Movement: encampment policies, and 5) Participation: Citizenship and political rights. The analysis found that the key, significant drivers of returns have been political liberties, *de jure* protection of access to services, livelihoods and participation. Lastly, battle-related deaths and climate vulnerability in the host country can also be drivers of returns.

The relationship between services and returns is negative, i.e. when there is a decrease in the *de jure* protection of services, the number of refugee returns goes up (both in absolute numbers and as a share of returnees). As an example of how services can affect returns, there have been cases where cuts in humanitarian aid have forced refugees to return to their home country in search of support, income-generating opportunities, etc. to sustain their lives and livelihoods.

Suspension of food aid in Ethiopia

Gambella in western Ethiopia is one of the least developed and more remote parts of the country. It was also home to approximately 400,000 South Sudanese refugees in June 2023, when all food assistance across Ethiopia was suspended in response to allegations of 'widespread food aid diversion' The suspension of life-critical aid, as well as an increase in insecurity led to an exodus of south Sudanese refugees returning across the border to South Sudan. While some cross-border movements between Gambella and South Sudan has always been witnessed, the numbers recorded between August and October was more than four and a half times higher than over the same period in 2022. More than 100,000 people were recorded to have returned in the period. This put severe strains on the communities in South Sudan, which already faced high levels of food insecurity and poor access to services. When food aid was resumed in Ethiopia, the number of returnees started to decrease.[58]

Research on South Sudanese returnees from Uganda has also shed light on how difficult conditions in the host country can lead to returns. Research found that South Sudanese returned home to generate a higher income that would allow them to support their families that had remained in the settlements, in particular to cover cost of education. This type of return, where families are split apart, causes significant socio-emotional challenges for the families.[59] IOM research found that in southern South Sudan, the main drivers

[57] World Bank (2020): The Mobility of Displaced Syrians: An Economic and Social Analysis. Available at: worldbank.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[58] REACH (2024): Humanitarian Situation Overview: Ethiopia - South Sudan Cross-Border Displacement. Available at: repository.impact-initiatives.org (accessed 6 March 2025).
[59] Naohiko Omata & Yotam Gidron (2025): Returning to fund refugeehood: dispersal and survival between Uganda and South Sudan, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 51:1, 101–121. Available at: doi.org (accessed 6 March 2025). (accessed 6 March 2025).

for return were a reduction of aid and friction with the host community. Furthermore, IOM research in Afghanistan found that approximately 28% of Afghan IDPs who returned home in 2021 and 2022 reported that the main reason for return was that they could not afford to remain in displacement.[60]

Interestingly, returns increase when refugees' rights to access livelihoods and participation have stronger legal protection and when the authorities in the hosting country exercise stronger protection of political civil liberties. This may seem counterintuitive as one would expect that limited opportunities for participation and income generation in the host country could spur refugees to return to their country of origin. However, the findings are quite robust. The relationships hold both when analysing the absolute number of returns, as well as the share of returns, and also when analysing bilateral return flows[61]. Some of the countries with the most progressive legal protection of access to livelihoods include countries like Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Ecuador. The most progressive legal regimes for participation is found in countries like Ecuador, Belgium, Ireland and Zambia.

There is substantial research across different contexts that has shown how economic, social and political empowerment of refugees can be a driver of returns. Several studies have shown that while conditions in Syria are the most important in determining return intentions, the conditions in the host countries also have an impact. One study found that social well-being i.e. aspects such as freedom of movement, ability to find a job and friendliness/hostility in engagement with authorities and general public was positively associated with intentions to return. The study also finds that higher levels of economic well-being i.e. level of income, access to work permit, household assets, etc., networks, and social well-being in Lebanon increases the likelihood of having taken steps to prepare to return to Syria.[62] Another study on Syrian refugees also found that better livelihood opportunities had a positive relationship with the number of Syrian returnees. There are several ways in which improved access to livelihoods can increase returns. One aspect is the fact that returns can be costly and require resources. As such by allowing refugees to work, they are able to generate the resources needed to pay for returns. As an illustration of this, the cost of obtaining a Syrian passport – a prerequisite for return – is around USD325 yet the average cash transfer received by refugees is USD27 per person per month.[63] Another pathway includes a more negative element: despite having better opportunities to work, refugees (and migrants) often find themselves in situations of professional downgrading (i.e. working in jobs that require fewer skills than they possess) and generally interact more with host community members which can expose them and make them more aware of discrimination. This has also been coined the 'integration paradox': the more highly educated and structurally integrated immigrants turn away from the host society, rather than becoming more oriented towards it. This has been documented among refugees in the Netherlands[64] as well as among Syrians[65].

A study on Iraqi refugees also contributes to understanding how participation and legal protection of refugees' access to citizenship and political rights can facilitate returns. While Iraqi returnees were aware of the precarious conditions at home, they still sought to return to rebuild their lives. However, to ensure

[60] IOM (2023): Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS). IOM, Geneva. Available at: un.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[61] Bilateral return flows means the flows of from a specific country of asylum to a specific country of origin e.g. the share of Afghan refugees in Iran returning to Afghanistan
[62] Ala Alrababah, Daniel Masterson, Marine Casalis, Dominik Hangartner and Jeremy Weinstein (2023): The Dynamics of Refugee Return: Syrian Refugees and Their Migration Intentions, *British Journal of Political Science* (2023), 53, 1108–1131. Available at www.cambridge.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[63] Lori Beaman, Harun Onder and Stefanie Onder (2022): When do refugees return home? Evidence from Syrian displacement in Mashreq, *Journal of Development Economics* 155 (2022). Available at: sciencedirect.com (accessed 7 March 2025).
[64] Aysegul Kayaoglu, Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek & M. Murat Erdoğan (2022) Return Aspirations of Syrian Refugees in Turkey, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 20:4, 561–583. Available at: tandfonline.com (accessed 7 March 2025).
[65] Lea Müller-Funk and Sonja Fransen (2023): "I Will Return Strong": The Role of Life Aspirations in Refugees' Return Aspirations, *International Migration Review* 2023, Vol. 57(4) 1739–1770. Available at: sagepub.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

their international freedom of movement should the situation deteriorate or should they have to leave to maintain their mental and physical well-being, they considered obtention of permanent residence or citizenship status in a third country (not subject to restrictive migration regimes) as an important condition for return. As such, access to citizenship or permanent residency provided refugees with a means to ensure they would not risk becoming trapped in an insecure environment in Iraq.[66] On the other hand, for those not granted such a 'safety valve', the inclination to return before situations have fully stabilised with a durable peace, is significantly lower. Such refugees often return to areas close to the border, to have better access to their former host countries. "I have seen how things change quickly in Burundi, I decided to settle next to the border because I can cultivate land on the other side of Burundi but also I want to be able to flee quickly if things get worse again".[67]

Hosting policies in Uganda

According to the DWRAP dataset, Uganda, along with Ecuador, Ethiopia and Guinea, has one of the most liberal refugee policies. The Refugees Act 2006 and the Refugees Regulations 2010 are the primary pieces of legislation governing the administration of refugees in Uganda. This regulatory framework is one of the most progressive legislative acts in relation to refugees worldwide. Refugees can, upon registration, be provided with a plot of land by the Government in a settlement and have free use of this land for cultivation or pasturing. They have access to employment opportunities and engage in gainful employment and can also establish commercial and industrial companies. Furthermore, they have the same rights to naturalisation as other foreigners in Uganda.[68] This progressive legislation comes in the context of Uganda hosting the fourth-largest number of refugees globally and the highest number in Africa, as well as being classified as a low-income country.

Uganda was also one of the early implementers of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), a central part of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) adopted in 2018. A key focus has been the inclusion of refugees into national development plans and the development of sector response plans across a wide array of key sectors from as early as 2018. Despite political goodwill, implementing the CRRF in Uganda remains challenging, in particular because of funding shortfalls.[69]

Furthermore, the combined effects of greater and more robust opportunities to participate in livelihoods and civic life, as well as stronger general, political civic liberties can be underscored by the fact that a combination of economic and social capital can be a strong driver of return. A return and reintegration process is daunting and requires mental bandwidth, social capital and significant economic resources to both plan and execute. A study of Syrian refugees also found the wish to return "strong" and "successful". "I would not go back to any country without having something in my hand, which I could build on… to rebuild my region… If I improve, I can help others. To actively do something… We all think that if we return to our country, we will return strong."[70] This is a strong testimony to the fact that empowering refugees can be an important element in facilitating their return to their home countries in a durable manner.

[66] Vanessa Iaria (2014): Post-Return Transnationalism and the Iraqi Displacement in Syria and Jordan, International Migration Vol. 52 (6). Available at: wiley.com (accessed 7 March 2025).
[67] Theodore Mbazumutima (2023): "Staying in Tanzania or Returning to Burundi is all the Same": Re-Imagining the Reintegration of Burundian Returnees, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2023, 42, 336–360. Available at: oup.com (accessed 7 March 2025).
[68] ILO (2023): Review of national policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and practice in Uganda. Available at: ilo.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[69] Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee and Norwegian Refugee Council (2021): The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On: Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries. Available at: rescue.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[70] Lea Müller-Funk and Sonja Fransen (2023): "I Will Return Strong": The Role of Life Aspirations in Refugees' Return Aspirations, *International Migration Review* 2023, Vol. 57(4) 1739–1770. Available at: sagepub.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

Lastly, climate vulnerability and battle-related deaths are also found to increase the share of refugees returning, i.e. when conflict and climate vulnerability increases, returns also increase. This finding is not as strong as the others, as the two factors are not significant drivers of the absolute number of returns, nor do they help explain bilateral return flows. For example, IOM research has found that a lack of safety in displacement camps is a driver of IDP returns.[71] Descriptively, it is possible to show that when access to services is legally protected, there is no conflict, and climate vulnerability is low in the place of asylum, then on average 5,000 refugees return; however, when there is conflict, high climate vulnerability and poor access to services, returns increase to 26,000. That refugees can be pushed out of asylum countries because of violence has been highlighted in the case of Sudan, where more than 800,000 refugees, mainly South Sudanese, have had to return to their home countries since the outbreak of violence in April 2023. Furthermore, the impact of climate vulnerability on returns was illustrated by the earthquake in Türkiye in 2023: within 20 days of the earthquake, more than 40,000 Syrians returned home. In addition to such sudden disasters, increased exposure to droughts or floods can affect living conditions in a way that would lead people to choose to return, just as the same type of climate hazards in areas of origin would serve to discourage returns.

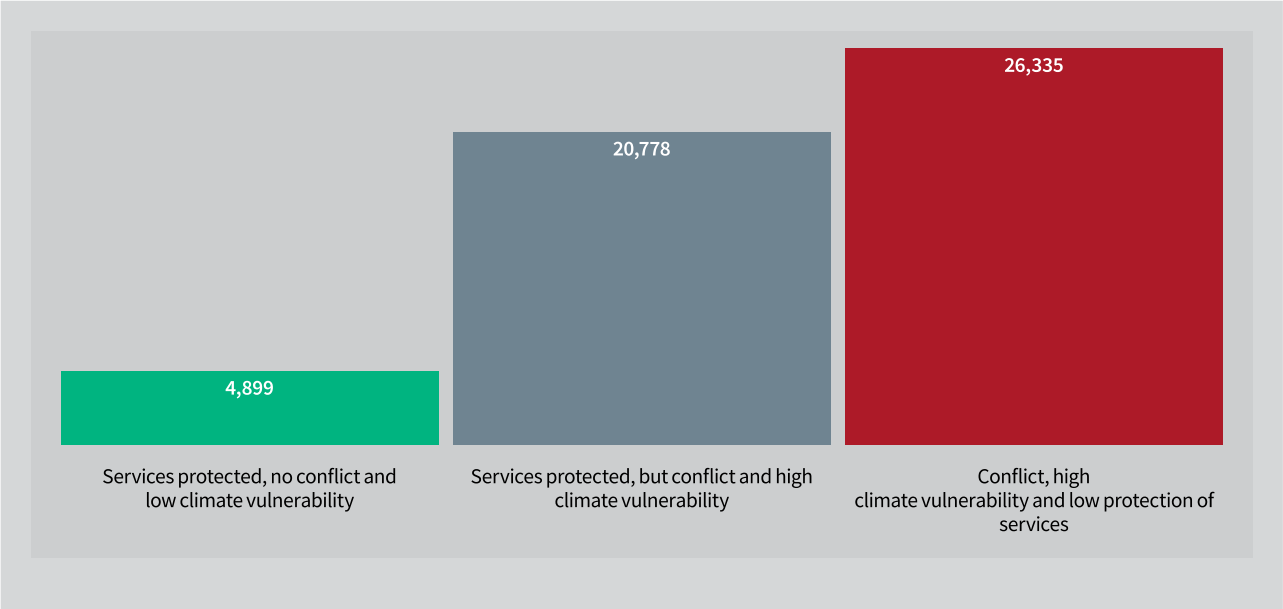


Figure 7: Average annual refugee returns per country during different conditions in country of asylum

Summary

What these findings underscore is that often returns will happen with some degree of coercion (for example, related to a lack of access to services, exposure to violence and/or climatic hazards), going against the global principles of safe, voluntary and dignified returns. . This can also help explain why returns often happen to very fragile contexts as illustrated in the previous chapter. However, the findings also underscore that conducive policies and legal regimes can help by empowering those refugees and IDPs who wish to return in a more durable and sustainable manner.

If such empowerment in the country of asylum is coupled with support for sustainable, positive and peaceful developments in the countries of origin, return and reintegration as a pathway to durable

[71] IOM (2023): Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS). IOM, Geneva. Available at: un.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

solutions can make an important contribution to decreasing the number of people living in situations of protracted displacement. However, return and reintegration should not be seen as the preferred and only pathway to durable solutions, instead it is critical that all pathways to durable solutions, including local integration and resettlement, are equally promoted and supported, if we are to solve the many protracted displacement situations.

Increased forced returns from Iran throughout 2024

Afghans go to Iran for a number of reasons – seeking protection, looking for job opportunities and searching for better life prospects for their families. However, with Iran facing its own economic challenges and political tension, the situation for vulnerable Afghans is becoming increasingly precarious, particularly since the Government of Iran announced its intention to expel at least two million Afghans by the end of March 2025. However, even as deportation rates increase, the number of Afghans migrating to Iran has not decreased, nor has it deterred some who were deported, to try again. For some, such as Farid* who fled in search of international protection, staying in Afghanistan is not an option. Affiliated to the former regime, he saw his family suffer in retaliation. "I have to try again. I don't have a job, I don't know if I am safe here, and I have no legal way of going anywhere else."[72]

If able to provide for their families, some Afghans will try to stay in Iran until they have exhausted all options – despite being confronted with abusive practices and discrimination in Iran, they want to find some level of peace. Some do run out of options and are deported, but many men then go back to Iran alone, as they have often better chances of finding work there. In January 2025, Afghan wife and mother Shakiba explained to us that she was forced to return to Afghanistan when her husband was arrested and deported a few months earlier. While she decided to stay in Badghis with her father, her husband decided to return to Iran so he could send back money for paying the rent. "I hope that one day my husband can come back and find work here. And I hope that my daughter can get an education and have more in her life."

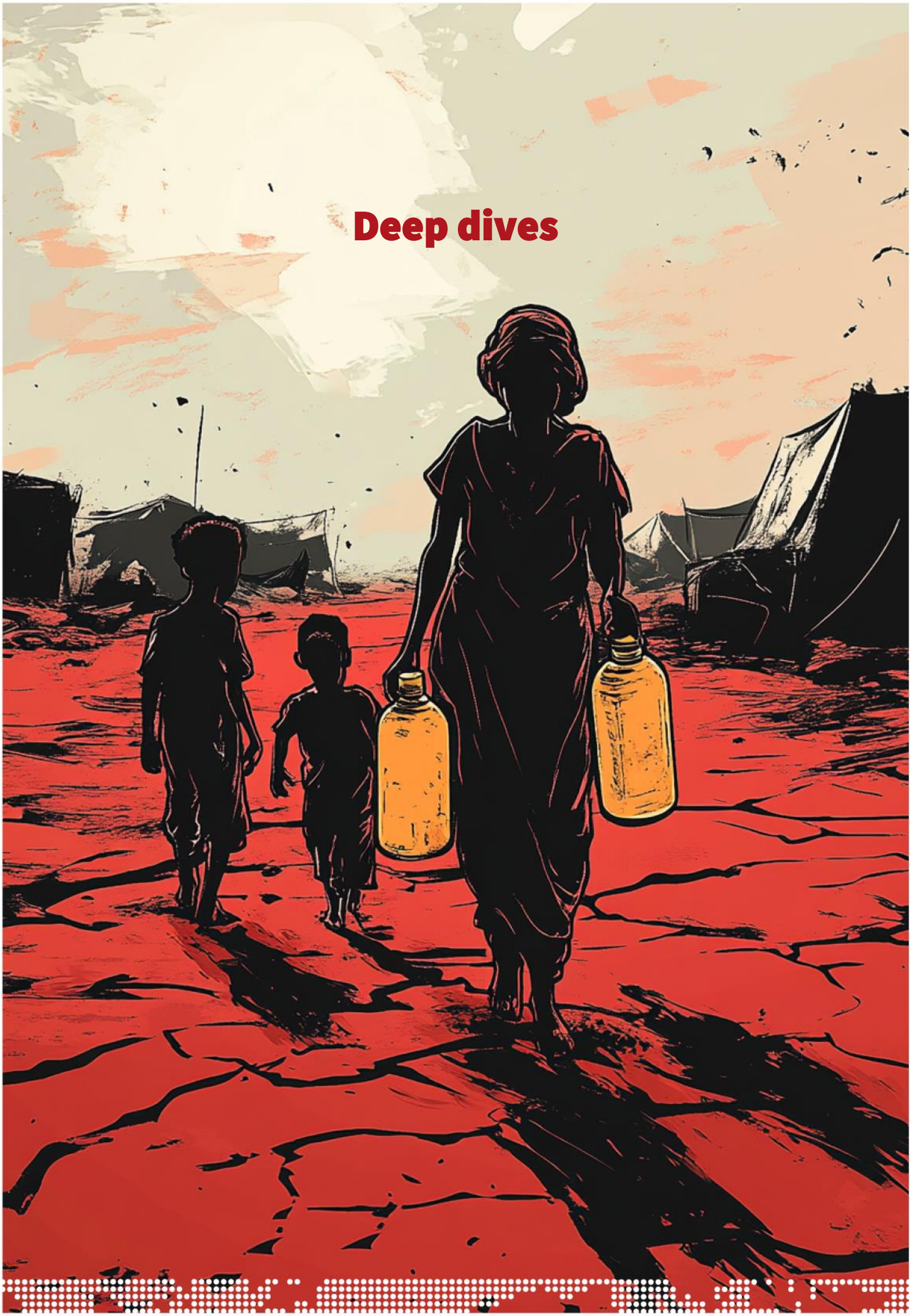
Continued threats of forced return in Pakistan

In September 2023 the Pakistani government announcement a deportation plan that started by targeting all undocumented Afghans in their country. Since then many families have been forced to return to Afghanistan. To keep the number of deportations low, the Pakistani authorities have reportedly used threats and harassment to ensure Afghan families return by their own means. Many of the families we have spoken to have told us of their desperation at being forced to return to a country where they have nowhere to go to, no shelter, no land and limited support networks. Even with the abuse some of them have experienced, they are considering leaving Afghanistan again. For the majority of them, their first priority is to find a safe home and a reliable source of income to provide for their family. Without this, some, such as Abdul, may have no choice but to engage in traversing dangerous migration routes again. "I am afraid, but I am responsible for my family, I need to provide for them, one way or another."[73] As resources are already stretched across the country, with decreasing humanitarian funding levels and barriers to identify sustainable solutions to their displacement, increased international cooperation is needed.

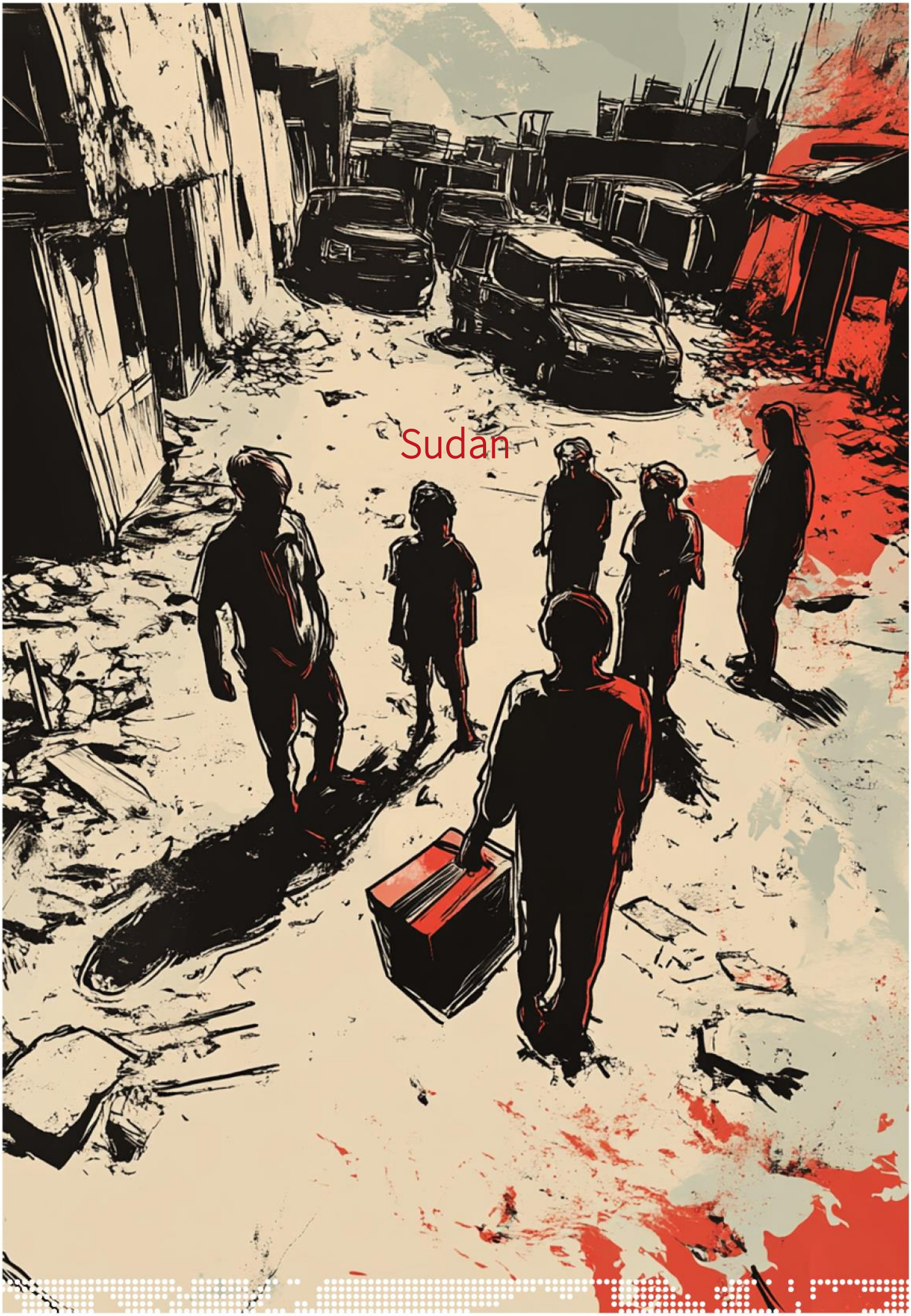
[72] Danish Refugee Council (2024): Afghans increasingly forced to return from Iran, an overlooked population in dire need of protection. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025).

[73] Danish Refugee Council (2023): Homebound: The horrendous journey of close to half a million Afghans forced to return from Pakistan, through their voices. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025).

Deep dives



While increasing safe, orderly, voluntary and durable returns can contribute to decrease the number of people living in situations of displacement, a number of crises still need to be resolved to help prevent more people becoming displaced. As highlighted in the Future Forced Displacement chapter, the forecasts indicate specific hotspots for future displacement. This section examines the situation in selected areas in more detail and 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 on the basis of forecasted increase in displacement in 2025 – taking into account both the absolute and relative increase.


Sudan

The conflict in Sudan has resulted in the world's largest displacement crisis, food security crisis, and humanitarian crisis in over a generation. Starvation has been used as a primary weapon of war, pushing the country from one catastrophic famine to another. With no resolution in sight, Sudan remains one of the most perilous environments for humanitarian operations as the crisis continues to deepen and set the stage for a protracted war.

After nearly two years of relentless conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudan has become one of the world's largest displacement and protection crises, as well as one of the most dangerous environments for humanitarian operations. The ongoing war has forced 12.8 million people into displacement, creating an unprecedented humanitarian emergency. Alongside the conflict, climatic shocks and disease outbreaks continue to drive displacement and exacerbate humanitarian needs.

What began as a power struggle between General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (head of the SAF) and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) (leader of the RSF) has evolved into a protracted and devastating war, plunging Sudan into one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history.

The impact of escalating violence

The conflict remains extremely violent, with civilians bearing the brunt of the fighting. Inside Sudan, people face constant risk of death and injury due to widespread violations of IHL, including heavy shelling and aerial bombardment of residential areas, summary executions, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and torture and sexual violence and targeted attacks on those attempting to flee the country.

Reports of ethnic-based violence in Darfur mirror the genocidal atrocities that occurred 20 years ago, further heightening fears of mass atrocities. All parties to the conflict have been accused of committing war crimes, with grave violations against civilians, including women and children.

One of the deadliest tactics in this war has been the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) in violation of international law, which has resulted in mass civilian casualties. The widespread presence of explosive ordnance in conflict zones not only endangers those fleeing but also blocks access to essential services, hinders humanitarian aid delivery and creates long-term obstacles to safe return and durable solutions

As the RSF continues to lose territory, it has taken steps towards establishing a breakaway 'government of peace and unity'. In February 2025, the RSF held a political meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, with allied political and armed groups, signalling a move towards solidifying control over its held territories. If this occurs, Sudan risks a deepening territorial divide, with separate governing entities controlling different regions.

Efforts to broker peace have so far failed, largely due to an absence of confidence-building measures. The international community has struggled to find effective diplomatic interventions, as both sides remain entrenched in their military objectives.

Widespread destruction and economic collapse

The war has caused immense damage to Sudan's critical infrastructure, severely affecting:

- Food production and supply chains, leading to extreme food shortages
- Healthcare facilities, with fewer than 25% of hospitals functional in conflict-affected areas
- Financial institutions, exacerbating hyperinflation and economic collapse
- Agricultural land, reducing people's ability to sustain their livelihoods
- Transport and trade routes, limiting access to essential goods and humanitarian aid

Even if the war were to end today, it would take decades for Sudan to recover from the widespread destruction and economic downfall.

Humanitarian crisis

With 11.5 million IDPs – including 8.8 million displaced since April 2023 – Sudan now hosts the world's largest internal displacement crisis. A further 6.7 million people have fled across international borders to Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Uganda, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. Among them, more than 718,000 South Sudanese refugees who previously sought asylum in Sudan were forced to return to their home country because of the conflict, despite the absence of conditions for safe and sustainable reintegration.

The conflict has triggered an unprecedented food security crisis, with 26 million people facing acute food insecurity as of September 2024, particularly in active conflict zones where famine has already been declared, most notably in Zamzam Camp (North Darfur) in July 2024. Hunger has been weaponised, driven by mass displacement disrupting agriculture, market collapse and soaring inflation making food unaffordable. Restricted aid access due to conflict and bureaucratic barriers, and widespread looting and destruction of food reserves, are exacerbating shortages. Without urgent interventions, famine conditions are expected to expand in 2025, further worsening the humanitarian catastrophe.

Across Sudan, basic services have collapsed under the weight of war, leaving two-thirds of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. In the worst-affected regions, fewer than 25% of health facilities remain functional, depriving millions of medical care, while cholera and measles outbreaks spread rapidly among displaced populations. Access to clean water and sanitation has deteriorated, escalating health risks, while education has crumbled, with schools either destroyed or repurposed as shelters for displaced families. The compounding effects of conflict, displacement, disease outbreaks, and climate shocks continue to deepen the humanitarian crisis, pushing millions to the brink of survival.

Based on the developments in Sudan, the Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Sudan will increase by more than 1.35 million in 2025 and a further 750,000 in 2026 – a total increase of 2.1 million displaced people by the end of 2026.

Figure 8: Sudan displacement forecast 2025–2026

DRC's response in Sudan

DRC remains at the forefront of humanitarian efforts in Sudan, addressing the unprecedented displacement crisis triggered by ongoing conflict, food insecurity, and famine. DRC's displacement response strategy is built on emergency relief, shelter rehabilitation, food security, health support, and advocacy. It delivers essential non-food items (NFIs), clean water, and protection services, particularly for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Additionally, DRC constructs and rehabilitates shelters within displacement camps and supports IDPs who are hosted by communities. The organization also coordinates humanitarian assistance through partnerships with local and international actors to ensure a more effective and sustained response. One of DRC's primary interventions is its Famine Response Plan, which identifies and provides life-saving assistance to severely acutely malnourished (SAM) individuals and their families. These individuals receive integrated support including food security, health and nutrition services, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions. DRC's site management services ensure that these vulnerable families receive sustained support throughout their displacement journey.

Despite the challenging operating environment, DRC maintains consistent access to many areas, even as humanitarian operations are disrupted by insecurity, bureaucratic restrictions, and targeted attacks on aid workers. DRC has successfully re-established access in critical regions by leveraging relationships with local authorities, humanitarian coordination bodies, and community-based protection networks (CBPNs). The organisation's DRC's adaptive strategies enable it to navigate complex political and security landscapes, ensuring continued service delivery.

DRC is addressing critical gaps in site management for displaced populations, which remain one of the largest challenges in the Sudan humanitarian response. Pilot projects in Gedaref, supporting more than 60,000 IDPs, have demonstrated the effectiveness of a structured approach to site management, service mapping, and coordination. Building on this success, DRC is expanding its site management efforts in South Kordofan, White Nile, Central Darfur and South Darfur, while supporting ACTED's efforts in Gedaref. DRC is establishing dedicated governance structures within displacement sites, training local leadership in humanitarian coordination to ensure better resource distribution and service planning.

DRC is also scaling up its protection programmes, as displaced communities face heightened risks of violence, exploitation and deprivation. Protection interventions focus on addressing GBV, preventing forced recruitment, and mitigating ethnic-based violence targeting displaced populations. In conflict-affected regions, DRC is developing community-led protection initiatives that engage local leaders, humanitarian partners, and peacebuilding organisations to strengthen civilian protection strategies.

To mitigate the devastating impact of displacement on food security, DRC has launched targeted interventions to improve food access, stabilise local food systems, and build resilience. Recognising that traditional aid mechanisms cannot scale to meet the overwhelming needs, DRC has adopted a systems-based approach that integrates market actors, mutual aid groups, and private sector stakeholders. This approach aims to create long-term solutions to food insecurity by addressing key constraints in food supply chains, financial access, and agricultural resilience.

Furthermore, given the limited liquidity and economic blockades affecting displaced communities, DRC is expanding its voucher programming and exploring alternative payment mechanisms such as blockchain-based transfers to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid distribution.

By leveraging local systems, strengthening humanitarian coordination, and building sustainable livelihood opportunities, DRC is helping displaced populations not only survive but rebuild their lives in the face of ongoing conflict and displacement.


Myanmar

The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has intensified significantly since 2023, with widespread armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and various armed groups across multiple regions. The situation has deteriorated into a complex, multi-front civil war, with severe humanitarian consequences.

The conflict has had a devastating impact on civilians across Myanmar. In Rakhine State alone, at least 967 fatalities and 1,369 injuries have been reported since November 2023. The use of airstrikes, artillery shelling and landmines has resulted in numerous civilian casualties and extensive damage to homes, schools and essential infrastructure.[74]

In Southeast Myanmar, amid relentless violence, civilians have endured fear, insecurity and limited access to essential resources. The destruction of bridges, schools and religious buildings has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

The northeast region has seen more than 18 civilian deaths, including children, as a result of airstrikes and shelling. The conflict has had a severe impact on livelihoods, with 80% of assessed individuals reporting unemployment and 45% unable to meet basic needs.[75]

Humanitarian crisis

The ongoing conflict has led to massive internal displacement across Myanmar. In Rakhine State and Paletwa Township of Chin State, more than 361,853 individuals (85,207 households) have been newly displaced. Major towns like Ann have seen up to three-quarters of their residents forced to flee.

In southeast Myanmar, the number of IDPs exceeded 1 million by the end of November 2024. Tanintharyi Region alone saw more than 61,000 individuals displaced as a result of MAF operations.

The northeast region has experienced multiple waves of displacement, with 40% of assessed individuals reporting being displaced more than once. Short-term and repeated relocations have had significant impacts on people's safety, livelihoods and psychological well-being.

Humanitarian access remains severely constrained across all conflict-affected regions. Fifteen out of 17 townships in Rakhine, along with Paletwa Township in Chin State, remain without electricity. The displacement crisis has created enormous humanitarian need across Myanmar.

Key priorities include:

1. Food Security: Severe food shortages have been reported in multiple regions, with some residents forced to subsist on porridge because of rising prices and supply constraints.
2. Shelter: IDPs face inadequate shelter conditions, overcrowding and privacy concerns. In the colder months, there is an urgent need for winter supplies, including blankets and warm clothing.
3. Health: Access to healthcare remains limited, with only 45% of assessed individuals in the northeast reporting access to healthcare support in their IDP sites. Shortages of medical supplies and high costs of treatment pose significant challenges.
4. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: WASH needs are critical in both emergency displacement sites and protracted camps. There are reports of widespread skin disease among adults and children because of inadequate sanitation facilities.

[74] Protection Cluster (2024): Protection update report, December
[75] Protection Cluster (2025): Protection update report, January

5. Protection: Civilians face numerous protection risks, including arbitrary arrest and detention, forced recruitment and the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance.
6. Education: Conflict has severely disrupted education services, with many schools non-functional or inaccessible. Children and youth face significant barriers to continuing their education.

Based on the developments in Myanmar, the Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Myanmar will increase by more than 780,000 in 2025 and a further 635,000 in 2026, – a total increase of 1.4 million displaced people by the end of 2026.

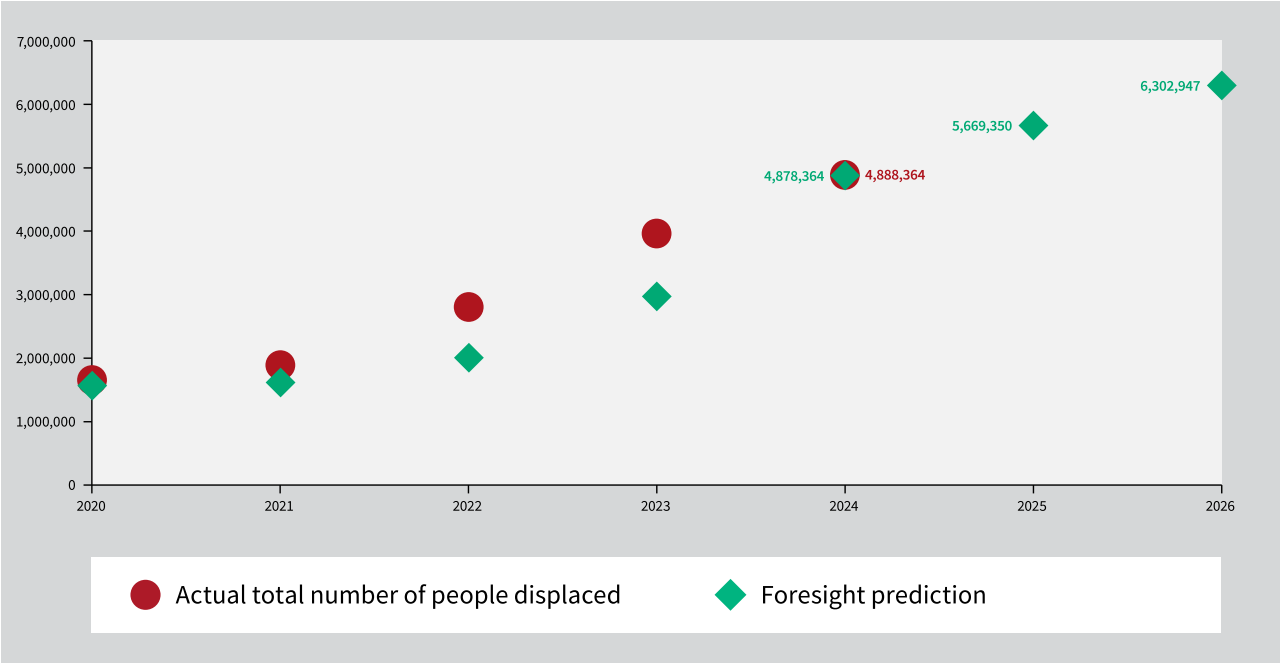
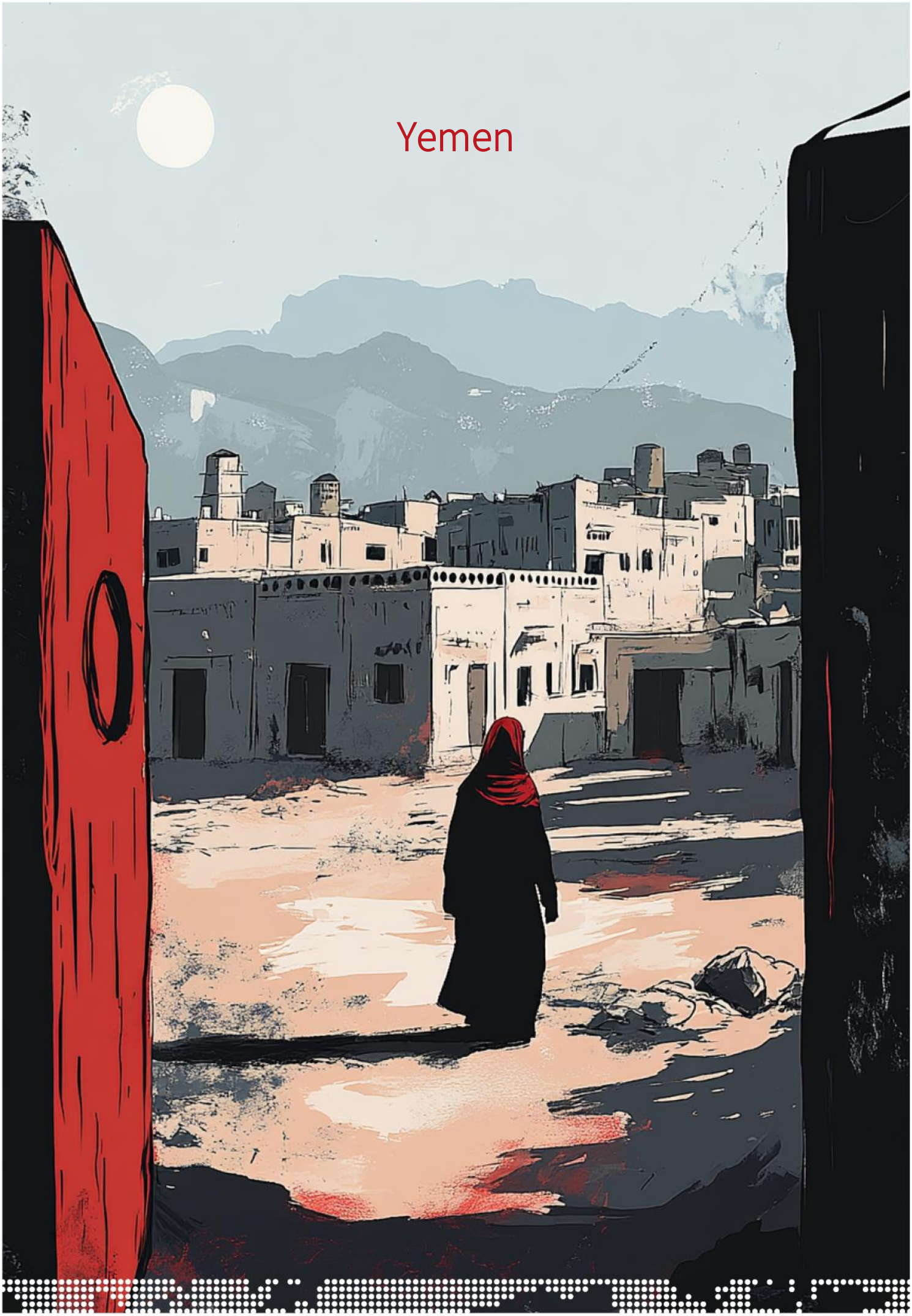


Figure 9: Myanmar displacement forecast 2025–2026

DRC's response in Myanmar

In the context of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, DRC is strengthening its strategic positioning in order to support multi-sectoral interventions and respond better to the needs of displaced populations, children made vulnerable by the conflicts, people at risk of, and survivors of, Gender Based Violence (GBV), as well as people with disabilities.

DRC responds to the immediate needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and the communities hosting them, as well as building their resilience to shocks and stresses in the longer term. Humanitarian assistance is provided through multi-sector and integrated responses in Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan states. Efforts are made to further scale up and scale out responses to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar through all five core DRC sectors - namely Protection, Economic Recovery, Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding, Shelter & Settlements, and Camp Coordination & Camp Management, as well as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).


Yemen

The situation in Yemen remains dire, with the country's population continuing to face challenges driven by ongoing conflict, displacement and worsening economic conditions. Furthermore, the humanitarian landscape is and has been affected by diminishing funding, shrinking humanitarian space, and concerns over the safety of humanitarian actors. According to the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan[76] (HRNP), for 2025, 19.5 million people in Yemen will require humanitarian assistance and protection services – an increase of 1.3 million year on year. Additionally, more than 17 million, almost half the country's population, will experience acute food insecurity this year, with 5 million expected to face emergency levels of food insecurity. According to the World Food Programme (WFP)[77], Yemen's food security situation remains critical. Data from November 2024 show that approximately 61% of surveyed households nationwide struggle to access sufficient food.

Yemen is classified as a low-income country and consistently ranks among the world's least-developed nations.[78] The conflict has severely affected the country's fragile economy, significantly damaging infrastructure, trade networks, and economic institutions. Moreover, Yemen's oil and gas production has been declining, which has had a negative impact on the country's revenue. The ongoing conflict has exacerbated existing challenges, leading to increased levels of poverty, food insecurity and unemployment. Additionally, the country faces high inflation, further intensifying the population's economic hardship. The economic outlook for Yemen in 2025 remains grim, with risks arising from potential escalations of attacks in the Red Sea. Furthermore, escalating political tension is heightening the risk of worsening fragmentation between the areas controlled by de facto authorities (DFAs) and those governed by the internationally recognised government (IRG), thereby widening economic and financial disparities.[79]

Adding to the ongoing crisis, Yemen is suffering from the impacts of severe weather. The country faces one of the world's worst water and food crises because of its arid climate and fast-depleting groundwater reserves, making the country the 12th-most-water-scarce country globally. The high scarcity of water has a significant impact on food security and nutrition, and climate-induced human mobility and rapid population growth put additional pressure on the limited water resources. Water scarcity and changing rainfall patterns, combined with inadequate water management policies, are causing conflict over agricultural and domestic water supplies, further burdening vulnerable populations. Climate change is expected to worsen these challenges. The impact of climate change, along with conflict-related environmental damage and resource scarcity, is leading to migration across Yemen.

In 2024, Yemen experienced unprecedented rainfall, resulting in severe flooding that caused destruction and displacement. It was estimated that approximately 655,011 people were affected by the heavy rains and floods, with 240 people killed and 635 injured. The floods affected 20 of Yemen's 22 governorates, destroying numerous water sources and roads, disrupting livelihoods and causing severe damage to livestock. They also threatened food security levels and displaced unexploded ordnance into residential areas. Furthermore, significant damage to IDP sites, homes, temporary shelters and infrastructure affected thousands of families.[80]

[76] OCHA 2025): Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (January 2025)Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).
[77] WFP (2024): WFP Yemen Food Security Update, December 2024. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).
[78] World Bank (n.d.): Yemen Overview. Available at worldbank.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[79] World Bank (2024): Yemen Economic Monitor: Confronting Escalating Challenges. Available at worldbank.org (accessed 10 March 2024)
[80] IFRC (2024): Yemen: Flood Operation Update #1 (MDRYE014) Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

Conflict in Yemen

It is now ten years since the escalation of the conflict in Yemen (in March 2015). The conflict remains a longstanding and complex situation involving multiple local actors and regional powers. The conflict in Yemen has deep roots, shaped by years of inequitable governance, poor management and inequitable access to resources. Some regions and communities have been excluded and marginalised, making it more difficult for people to access basic services such as healthcare, education and clean water. Over time, key institutions have weakened, further complicating efforts to address people's needs and resolve disputes. These enduring issues have contributed to the country's ongoing crisis. The complex and multifaceted nature of Yemen's conflict has evolved into an intricate system, with the IRG and Southern Transitional Council (STC) remaining in conflict with the DFA at the national level. Local tribal disputes also persist, often influenced by regional actors. Economically, Yemen remains deeply divided, with the IRG and DFAs operating separate financial systems, including different currencies and tax structures. This division has disrupted trade, weakened the private sector, and worsened the humanitarian crisis, further complicating efforts to achieve long-term stability.[81]

The conflict in Yemen has undergone significant shifts, driven by ongoing regional tension and instability. The escalation of attacks[82] – including airstrikes that have damaged critical infrastructure such as Sana'a International Airport, Red Sea ports, and power stations – combined with increased hostilities in the Red Sea, has further strained diplomatic efforts and complicated prospects for a sustainable political solution.

In parallel to the more recent escalation tied to the conflict in Gaza, Yemenis continue to benefit from the reduction in hostilities resulting from the de facto continuation of the UN-brokered truce that began in April 2022. This truce led to a significant decrease in violence and civilian casualties, increased fuel deliveries through Hudaydah port, and the resumption of international commercial flights from Sana'a for the first time in almost six years. However, the conflict remains a significant driver of humanitarian needs across the country, with localised clashes and regional tension continuing to worsen the crisis[83, 84].

This is especially apparent in frontline areas, where families are left with no choice but to flee to other regions, sometimes multiple times. Another driver of displacement is the economic deterioration caused by the conflict, with job scarcity, inflation and the depreciation of the Yemeni rial pushing some people to move in search of better livelihood opportunities. Climate change is also a displacement factor, increasing risks due to extreme weather conditions such as floods, landslides and droughts.[85]

Yemen is the fifth-largest internal displacement crisis in the world, with an estimated 4.8 million IDPs, most of whom are women and children, experiencing repeated displacement. Data indicate that from 1 January to 1 March 2025, 2,190 individuals from 365 households experienced displacement at least once. IDPs face several challenges that increase their vulnerabilities, including the lack of civil documentation, which restricts their access to essential services and legal protection. Additionally, IDPs encounter critical housing and land property challenges, along with threats of eviction from displacement sites, as landowners reclaim land because of increased demand and investment opportunities.[86] Women, in

[81] ACAPS (2024): Yemen: Selected drivers of the current conflict and their impact on women, men, girls, and boys. Available at: acaps.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[82] UN (2024): UN chief condemns escalation in Yemen as airstrikes hit Sana'a Airport, key infrastructure. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158546 (accessed 7 March 2025).
[83] IOM (2025): Yemen Crisis Response Plan 2025. Available at: crisisresponse.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).
[84] UN (2022): Welcoming Truce Renewal for Two Months, Secretary-General Urges Yemen Government, Houthis to Fully Implement Agreement's Terms. Available at: press.un.org/en (accessed 7 March 2025).
[85] IOM (2025): Annual Rapid Displacement Tracking Report 2024. Available at: dtm.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).
[86] IOM (2025): Yemen — Rapid Displacement Tracking Update (16 - 22 February 2025). Available at: dtm.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

particular, experience increased vulnerability because of violence and restrictive social norms. Furthermore, there are challenges related to addressing IDP needs, such as insufficient livelihood support and inadequate assistance at IDP sites.[87] Women and girls are also at risk of GBV and harmful coping mechanisms, such as child labour and child marriage, without access to adequate protection services.

Additionally, female-headed households, women with disabilities, and individuals from minority or migrant communities face further barriers because of vulnerability and discrimination, which limit their access to essential support and justice[88]. Displaced families face challenges in meeting their food intake needs and often resort to less expensive or small meals with a preference to ration food. Furthermore, there are urgent protection needs, with the majority of displaced families having at least one vulnerable member, including women, children at risk, or individuals with disabilities.

Several challenges hinder the return of IDPs to their areas of origin, including restricted access to livelihoods and adequate housing, as well as risks from landmines and unexploded ordnance. Displaced families and individuals must be empowered through durable solutions that enable them to rebuild their lives with dignity.[89]

Based on the developments in Yemen, the Foresight model predicts that the cumulative number of displaced people from Yemen will increase by more than 344,000 in 2025 and a further 48,000 in 2026 – a total increase of 392,000 displaced people by the end of 2026.

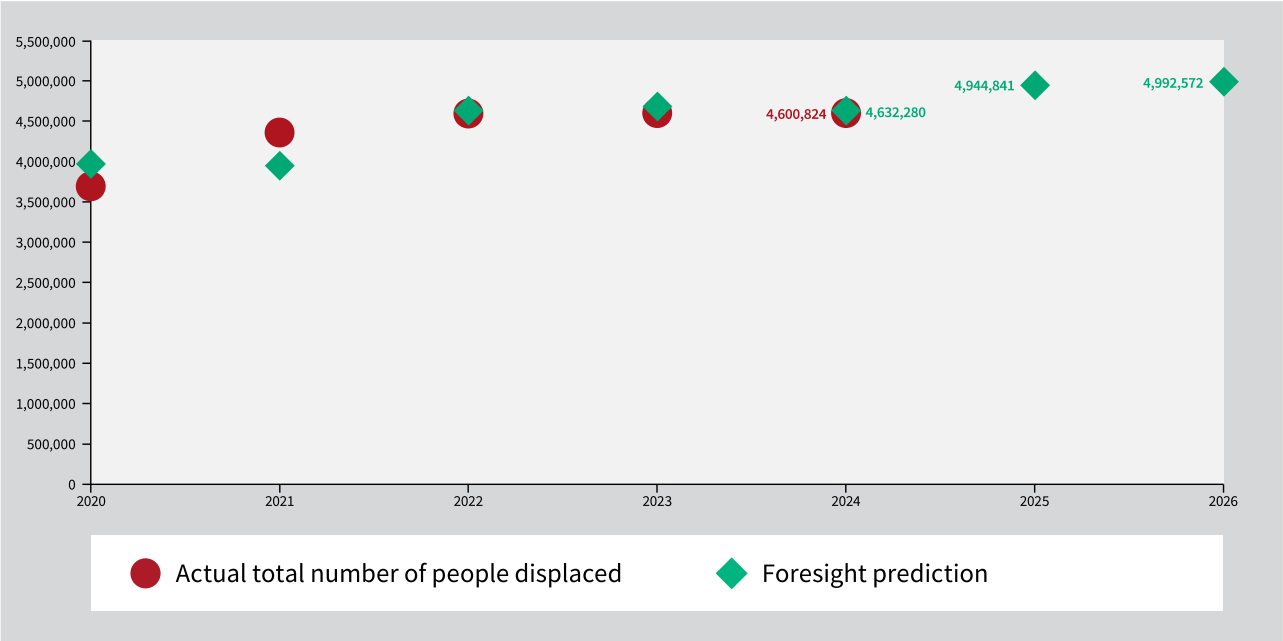


Figure 10: Yemen displacement forecast 2025–2026

[87] IOM (2023): Report on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Yemen. Available at: environmentalmigration.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).
[88] UNFPA (n.d.): Yemen: Gender Based Violence Available at: yemen.unfpa.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[89] UNHCR (2024): Yemen Crisis: 9 Years of Conflict, Economic Strain, and Environmental Challenges Push Displaced Families to the Brink [EN/AR]. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

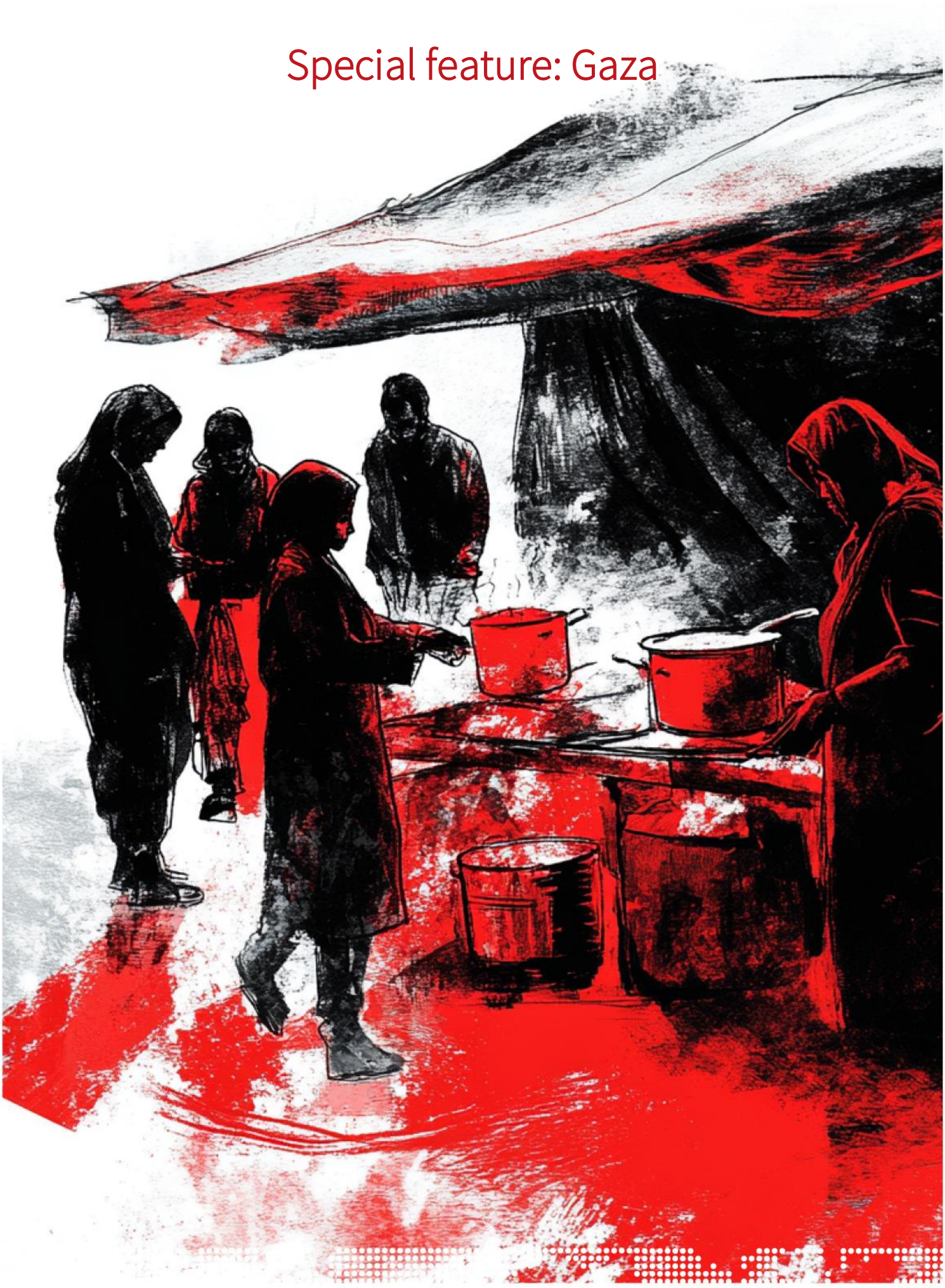
DRC's response in Yemen

DRC began operations in Aden in 2008, primarily responding to migrant needs, and scaled up its operations in 2015. Today, it is one of the largest international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Yemen, providing life-saving assistance while fostering resilience and self-reliance among affected communities. DRC also tackles the root causes of humanitarian needs to ensure the protection and rights of IDPs and migrants.

DRC's programming spans protection, emergency response, shelter, food security and livelihoods, disaster risk reduction, WASH, camp management, and humanitarian mine-action. DRC prioritises the most vulnerable, including newly displaced populations, those at risk of displacement, protracted displaced communities, migrants, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, women, children, people with disabilities, and civilian war victims.

DRC in Yemen focuses on strengthening climate resilience and promoting climate adaptation within local communities. Through an integrated approach, DRC aims to economically empower local farmers, promote climate-smart agriculture, and encourage sustainable community-led natural resource management. The organisation also provides socio-economic support and climate-smart agriculture interventions to enhance local livelihoods. Additionally, DRC works to strengthen local governance and decision-making while building the capacity of community structures to manage natural resources, including rangelands and water. It also raises awareness among stakeholders about the impacts of climate change and encourages collective action to address these impacts.

Special feature: Gaza



Approximately 6 million registered Palestinian refugees are scattered across the Middle East, with many living in overcrowded camps. An estimated 2.1 million people currently reside in Gaza, including more than 1.7 million registered refugees under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Before the current military offensive, a significant proportion of these refugees lived in densely populated camps, often with limited access to essential services.

The latest Israeli military offensive, following attacks by Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2024, has resulted in the death of at least 48,405 Palestinians and the injury of 111,835 others as of March 4, 2025[90], with more than 90% of the population displaced. The escalation of violence meant that most people were displaced within the first few months, driven by Israeli shelling, bombardments or other military actions, with many people reporting repeated displacements in response to active warfare. People were often forced to flee at very short notice, in a state of panic and fear. Many people report running to the streets amidst crowds of petrified neighbours, with no safe route identified for them and no clarity on which direction would lead them away from the violence. These displacements often occur at night, in the dark, surrounded by the sound and light of bombardments.

In addition to fleeing because of bombardments and military operations, Gaza's population has repeatedly been forced to flee as a result of Israel's policy of issuing forced displacement orders[91]. Prior to the ceasefire agreement, 87% of Gaza was under displacement orders, with only small portions of Khan Younis, Deir al-Balah, and Rafah excluded from these directives.

Based on research by DRC and partners, on average, people had been displaced an average of six times, once every two months, and up to 19 times between October 2023 and October 2024. The United Nations has recorded 70 forced displacement orders between 7 October 2023 and 14 December 2024, averaging approximately one order per week. Forced displacement from active warfare and repeated displacement orders have drastically altered the population distribution across governorates. Displacement in Gaza is not a straightforward escape but an unending cycle of departures and returns within a strictly confined area. People are trapped under a siege and a 17-month-long blockade, enduring repeated displacement yet never finding safety.

The population data shows a north-to-south displacement trend, as civilians have been repeatedly ordered to move towards the unilaterally declared "humanitarian zone" a small slither of land located along the coast of Deir al Balah and Khan Younis. Yet this zone, whilst declared safe by Israel, has been frequently subjected to bombardment and military action. The result has been a humanitarian catastrophe where people are not only endangered by ongoing warfare, but by a lack of ability to meet their basic needs in overcrowded displacement sites.

Despite this north to south trend, nearly half a million civilians in Gaza city and North Gaza were trapped amidst intense military bombardment with little to no aid or basic necessities because of the near-total blockade of goods entering the north since October 2024. The towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia as well

[90] OCHA (2025): Humanitarian Situation Update #269 | Gaza Strip. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

[91] The Government of Israel has referred to these directives as "evacuation orders"; yet, as they do not meet the legal criteria for evacuation under international law, the term is both misleading and dangerous. As both party to the conflict and the occupying power in Gaza, Israel's actions are subject to international humanitarian law (IHL). Under IHL, forcible transfer is prohibited and if committed with intent, constitutes a war crime. The sole exception to this prohibition is when a party to the conflict evacuates people for their safety or due to imperative military necessity. For such displacement to be lawful, specific conditions must be met, including that people are moved safely without being separated from family members, people should be provided with adequate access to food, water, sanitation and healthcare. In addition, evacuations must always be temporary, with people being able to return home as soon as the security situation allows. As the Government of Israel has not ensured that these evacuations are safe, nor that people received the basic necessities of food, water, sanitation and healthcare, DRC uses the term displacement order, to reflect that these directives do not meet the legal requirements of an evacuation.

as Jabalia Refugee Camp remained besieged, with frequent military attacks in these small areas and severe risks to Palestinian civilians' protection and rights. DRC partners confirm that men and boys have been taken for questioning in northern Gaza, with some women reporting they do not know where their male relatives have gone.

Displacement drivers in Gaza also reveal a stark gendered impact. Many women reported having little to no agency in decisions about where and when to move. Many reported feeling powerless as male family members decided their fate, with women's husbands often requesting them to reunite in an area of their choosing, or men deciding to move the entire family to unite with extended family. In situations where women's husbands are absent – whether due to death, detention, disappearance, or being trapped in another location in Gaza – women often report that male relatives assume the authority to decide when and where they should move. This dynamic significantly affects female-headed households, as nearby male relatives continue to make decisions on their behalf, as well as women who have relocated to live with male family members. Ultimately, women are often left little choice but to follow their male relatives.

The military offensive and repeated displacement in Gaza have devastated community and family dynamics, dismantling once-strong community networks and leaving people isolated and struggling to cope. Women have taken on overwhelming caregiving and domestic responsibilities, often with little or no support from their spouses, while men increasingly withdraw due to frustration and a sense of helplessness. Overcrowded and makeshift shelters have heightened tension, fuelling family conflicts, straining relationships, and eroding resilience. The lack of privacy and constant stress has deepened feelings of loneliness and isolation, leaving many families fractured and emotionally drained as they endure the relentless hardships of displacement.

The primary focus of the Foresight model and this report is on the increases in the total number of displaced people. The model does not predict 'new displacements', i.e. how many people who were not previously displaced will be displaced this year and next year; rather, it predicts the total increase – the difference between the number of new people displaced and people returning, resettling or integrating. Furthermore, the model does not take into account repeated displacement of the same people. If someone was an IDP in 2024, and this year is displaced to another place internally or moves abroad and becomes a refugee, this is not accounted for in the model. Such secondary displacement can have impacts as severe as the impacts of the initial displacement. The case of Gaza illustrates this point in stark reality. The number of people displaced in Gaza is already such a high share of the population that the model cannot predict any significant increase. But that does not mean that significant displacements are not likely to occur in Gaza.

More than 500,000 Palestinians have returned to northern Gaza after the temporary ceasefire was agreed in January 2025. Israeli military operations have turned large swathes of Northern Gaza into desolate areas, with more than 60% of housing destroyed. Returning families are in need of lifesaving assistance, including water and shelter. With no materials readily available to rebuild their homes, families resort to quick repairs or developing makeshift shelters from materials they can find close to their homes. Basic services such as water and sanitation systems are largely destroyed. The fragile ceasefire has not translated into up-to-scale levels of aid reaching Gaza, with early recovery and reconstruction efforts limited without adequate resources, materials or debris removal necessary to start. Without a significant improvement in humanitarian access, a long-term ceasefire and principled recovery, large-scale protracted displacement in Gaza is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.[92]

[92] Adapted from the report by DRC, Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and Women's Affairs Centre (WAC) (2025): Suffering by Design: The Human Cost of Repeated Displacement in Gaza. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March, 2025).

Other countries of concern

Afghanistan

Afghanistan continues to face climate-induced disasters and socio-economic instability compounded by decades of conflict that all contribute to dynamic migration flows. Migration and forced displacement in Afghanistan are highly intricate and multifaceted, reflecting the country's complex role as both a place of origin and significant return movements. Over the past four decades of conflict and violence, Afghanistan has endured prolonged instability, which has contributed to widespread displacement both within its borders and beyond. More than 7.6 million Afghans reside in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, where they have sought refuge from the ongoing turmoil in Afghanistan.[93] Throughout 2024, we have seen a continuation of forced returns initiated by the Government of Pakistan in November 2023, and a persisting high rate of deportation from Iran. This led to the return of more than 1.4 million displaced individuals in 2024,[94] primarily from Iran and Pakistan, the vast majority of those returns being neither safe nor dignified, and rarely voluntary.[95] With continued pressures expected into 2025, this high number of forced returns further burdens over-stretched basic services and local resources in host communities and underlines the need for durable solutions in a country already grappling with an estimated 6.3 million people in a situation of protracted displacement.[96]

Since the change in governance in August 2021 with the takeover of the de facto authorities, Afghanistan remains trapped in a continued humanitarian emergency, politically and economically isolated from the international system. Most of the time, Afghans leave their country for compounding reasons, including search for international protection, physical safety, work opportunities, and better life prospects for themselves and their families. Human rights violations, in particular towards women, have severely increased in the past three years,[97] and are driving additional attempts to leave the country. Many Afghans are worried about the lack of access to education for their daughters, movement restrictions, and the increased control of the morality inspectors (from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice - PVPV) in their everyday lives. Afghanistan is also grappling with frequent and devastating natural disasters that further exacerbate the displacement crisis. Every year, thousands of Afghans suffer the consequences of increasingly common environmental hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, avalanches and droughts. These disasters not only displace large numbers of people within and outside of the country, but also lead to widespread destruction of homes, infrastructure and essential services, worsening the already difficult living conditions for those affected.

Durable solutions, that address both the immediate needs of displaced Afghans and the root causes of their displacement, are needed urgently, with the recognition that returns must not be seen as the only viable solutions, both within the country and from other countries. It is also urgent for governments to increase safe legal pathways for Afghans who seek international protection, as well as demonstrate responsibility sharing through increased levels of resettlement to third countries.

Based on the developments in Afghanistan, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of displaced people from Afghanistan will increase by 390,000 in 2025 and by further 40,000 in 2026 – increase of more than 430,000 people by the end of 2026.

[93] OCHA (2024): Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, June 2024. Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[94] OCHA (2025): Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements (January–December 2024). Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[95] See DRC stories: (1) Afghans increasingly forced to return from Iran, an overlooked population in dire need of protection. Available at drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025), (2) Homebound: The horrendous journey of close to half a million Afghans forced to return from Pakistan, through their voices. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025), (3) Afghans returning from Pakistan after expulsion order have nowhere to go, warn aid agencies. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025).
[96] OCHA (2024): Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (December 2024). Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).
[97] The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (2025): Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October December 2024 update. Available at: unama.unmissions.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

DR Congo

DR Congo faces one of the world's most complex and protracted humanitarian crises, almost exclusively driven by conflict and violence. The country is home to over 6.7 million IDPs[98] and 25.6 million people in high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3 and above).[99]

The eastern provinces of North and South Kivu are the most affected because of the presence of more than 120 non-state armed groups. Of particular concern is the dramatic escalation in the conflict between the Congolese army (FARDC) and the March 23 Movement (M23) in the first months of 2025. Reignited in early 2022, the clashes between FARDC and M23 had already resulted in civilian deaths, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and large-scale displacement, including secondary displacement resulting from attacks on IDP sites. The collapse of peace talks in December 2024 was a major turning point. Following violent clashes in late January 2025, M23 took the city of Goma, North Kivu's capital, before pushing the offensive southward and seizing Bukavu, capital of South Kivu, by mid-February. The takeover of both cities was marked by extreme violence including gender-based violence, mass displacement, looting, prison breaks and the recruitment of child soldiers. IDPs who had previously sought refuge in IDP sites in and around Goma were forced to evacuate, and most of the sites have been dismantled, leaving at least 450,000 IDPs without shelter, food and water. Many IDPs live with host families in Goma, which often do not have the resources to support them.

According to UNHCR estimates, 500,000 people were newly displaced in eastern DR Congo between 1 January and 20 February 2025.[100] Only 11 percent of IDPs[101] forced to evacuate sites are returning to their area of origin, most of them to find their house and/or their farmland destroyed or taken over by other people – including armed groups, heightening the short-term risk of land conflict and/or community tension that could lead to displacement.

The displacement triggered by the conflict does not, however, stop at the border. Around 39,000 Congolese sought international protection in Burundi between 14 and 20 February 2025 alone[102], a figure that is probably going to increase.

The situation is expected to deteriorate further as the conflict intensifies. Goma is a strategic humanitarian hub in eastern DR Congo and the disruption of key trade routes has a direct impact on aid delivery, which could in turn lead to increased displacement. In addition, land contamination with unexploded ordnances in and around Goma is a serious immediate and longer-term concern.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations extended the mandate of its peacekeeping force, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for another year until 20 December 2025. MONUSCO has been in the country for nearly 25 years and is in the process of drawing down based on a comprehensive disengagement plan.

The risk that the conflict will spread across borders cannot be disregarded. Regional actors are taking steps to defuse the conflict, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) are merging the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes.

[98] UNHCR (2025): Situation: Regional Bureau of Southern Africa. Available at unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[99] IPC (2024): Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July - December 2024 and Projection for January - June 2025. Available at icpinfo.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[100] UNHCR (2025): Eastern DRC Situation. Available at unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[101] WFP (2025): Democratic Republic of the Congo - M23 Goma Crisis 2025: Assessing the situation of the IDPs via mobile (mVAM), Data collected on 4-7 February 2025. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)
[102] UNHCR (2025): Eastern DRC Displacement Overview (As of 20 February 2025). Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

Based on the developments in DR Congo, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of displaced people from DR Congo will increase by 313,000 in 2025 and by another 281,000 in 2026 – a total increase of more than 594,000 people by the end of 2026.

Syria

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the country has experienced one of the most significant displacement crises globally. Syria remains the second world's second-largest displacement crisis, with an estimated 7.2 million IDPs and an additional 6.4 million Syrians registered as refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond.[103] While the intensity of active conflict has reduced in recent years, protracted displacement continues at a significant rate. Reports indicate that thousands of individuals continue to be displaced each month, with the majority of IDPs having experienced multiple displacements – many more than three times – as a result of continued instability, localised violence, and economic hardship.[104]

On 8 December 2024, Syria experienced an historic turning point with the collapse of the Assad-led government following a large-scale military offensive by various armed groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). This offensive, which began on 26 November, saw the rapid capture of Aleppo – Syria's second-largest city – and other key strategic locations, including Hama and Homs. By 7 December, Damascus itself had fallen, leading to the retreat of government forces and the departure of President Bashar al-Assad. This unprecedented shift has raised both uncertainty and cautious optimism regarding the future of the country and potential pathways toward durable solutions for displaced Syrians.

Despite the volatile situation, return movements have already begun. By January 2025, an estimated 292,000 Syrians[105] had returned from neighbouring countries, with a notable increase in expressed intent to return among refugees. The January 2025 Regional Perceptions and Intentions Survey (RPIS) found that 27% of Syrian refugees in the region intended to return within the next year – a significant rise from just 1.7% in June 2024.[106] Further, more than a third of refugees have indicated a willingness to return within the next three to five years, reflecting shifting perceptions in light of the government's collapse and the potential for political transition.

Within Syria, internal displacement dynamics remain fluid, with frequent population movement between governorates. Aleppo and Al-Raqqa have recorded the highest number of returns, reflecting both the perceived improved stability locally and the search for economic opportunities. Nevertheless, new conflict-driven internal displacement continues to be recorded in parts of the country, especially in northwestern Syria. Up to 1.1 million people were displaced in early December 2024 as the result of the spike in conflict, with approximately 650,000 still displaced as of 29 January 29. Further, large-scale, organised refugee returns from host countries including Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan have not yet materialised. Despite the recorded shifts in return intentions, 73% of interviewed refugees do not intend to return within the next 12 months or are undecided (RPIS). Further, up to 57% of refugees either do not express hope to return at all or are overly undecided.

Overall, conditions in Syria remain challenging for sustainable reintegration. The country's infrastructure has suffered immense destruction, and from lack of resources, with key services such as healthcare,

[103] UNHCR (n.d.): Syria situation. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)
[104] IOM (2025): IOM Flash Appeal for Syria Crisis Response. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)
[105] UNHCR (2025): Syria Governorates of Return Overview (as of 20 February 2025). Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025
[106] UNHCR (2025): Flash Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return to Syria. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

education, and water and electricity supply systems severely limited and unfit for purpose. The fragile political transition, ongoing security concerns, and the presence of various armed groups continue to pose risks to Syrian communities, including returnees. Additionally, unresolved legal and property rights issues, compounded by the loss of civil documentation among displaced populations, present significant barriers to reintegration. The economic crisis that has affected Syria since long before December 2024 continues to have a severe impact on both public and private sectors alike, and the effects of lack of liquidity or livelihood opportunities and inflation severely limit access to basic items such as staple food for millions inside the country. In 2024, 2.6 million people inside Syria were already at risk of food insecurity.

The humanitarian response is further constrained by limited funding and restricted access to affected areas. The ability of local authorities, humanitarian actors and the newly established caretaker government to meet the needs of returnees remains inadequate. Underfunded aid efforts and bureaucratic challenges hinder the delivery of essential services, increasing vulnerabilities among returnees and IDPs alike. A large-scale influx of returnees in the short term could exacerbate these already fragile conditions, placing additional strain on local infrastructure, public services and the humanitarian response.

The collapse of the Syrian government has created a rare opportunity for a political transition, raising hopes for stability and long-term solutions to displacement. However, the success of any return and reintegration for displaced families will depend on the establishment of security guarantees, legal frameworks for property restitution, and robust international support for reconstruction and economic recovery. The international community, including regional stakeholders and humanitarian agencies, must prioritise a rights-based approach to return, ensuring that movements are voluntary, safe and dignified in accordance with international protection principles.

Based on the developments in Syria, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of displaced people from Syria will increase by 362,000 in 2025 and further 56,000 in 2026 – a total increase of more than 418,000 people by the end of 2026.

Venezuela

In recent years, Venezuela has faced a severe socio-economic crisis as a result of the political turmoil in the country and economic sanctions. The country has witnessed rampant inflation and a 75% reduction in GDP and about quarter of Venezuela's population have left the country.

Results of the elections in July 2024 were widely contested and could spark further migration and displacement. A poll before the election suggested that 40% of Venezuelans intended to leave the country if the current leader Nicolas Maduro remained in place.[107] So far, most people leaving Venezuela have relocated within Latin America. Colombia hosts the largest number of Venezuelans, while countries such as Brazil, Peru, Chile and Ecuador have also received a significant number of Venezuelans. In these countries, Venezuelans face various legal restrictions. In 2019, Peru, Ecuador and Chile required visas for Venezuelans. Colombia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay have maintained an open-door policy and do not require a visa to enter the country. Argentina and Uruguay have granted Venezuelans two-year residency on arrival and in 2021 Colombia also adopted the practice of offering temporary protection status.[108] Research has shown that countries adopting more strict measures neither deters nor prevents migration.

[107] Omar Hammoud Gallego (2024): A new wave of Venezuelan refugees would threaten a humanitarian crisis – Latin America could learn from Europe, *The Conversation*. Available at: theconversation.com (accessed 8 March 2025).
[108] Abigail Weitzman and Katarina Huss (2024): The Venezuelan Humanitarian Crisis, Out-Migration, and Household Change Among Venezuelans in Venezuela and Abroad, *Demography* (2024) 61 (3). Available at: read.dukeupress.edu (accessed 8 March 2025).

Such measures only drive migration underground, with significant costs both for migrants and host countries. Introduction of visa restrictions led to a 38% increase in the number of Venezuelan migrants who crossed borders via unauthorised routes, and a 41% rise in migrants without a regular residency permit in their destination country. There is no evidence to suggest that migrants changed their migration routes towards countries with more open policies.[109]

One such irregular route is through the Darien Gap. Research from the Mixed Migration Centre found that 15% of women interviewed reported having suffered sexual violence in the Darien Gap. Almost 50% of the respondents had experienced robbery and about one-third had experienced physical violence.[110] With a recent change in US immigration policy, Venezuelans seeking to migrate to the US risk becoming stranded in Mexico. Many more will choose to stay in their current host countries, where many struggle to build new lives because of the difficult economic realities and increasing xenophobic rhetoric.

Based on the developments in Venezuela, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of displaced people from Venezuela will increase by 277,000 in 2025 and a further 224,000 in 2026 – a total increase of more than 500,000 people by the end of 2026.

[109] Omar Hammoud Gallego (2024): A new wave of Venezuelan refugees would threaten a humanitarian crisis – Latin America could learn from Europe, *The Conversation*. Available at: theconversation.com (accessed 8 March 2025).
[110] Mixed Migration Centre (2022): Safety risks in the Darien Gap and assistance needed among refugees and migrants. 4Mi Infographic. Available at: mixedmigration.org (accessed 8 March 2025).

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 11). 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 marginalised groups, urbanisation, size and composition.

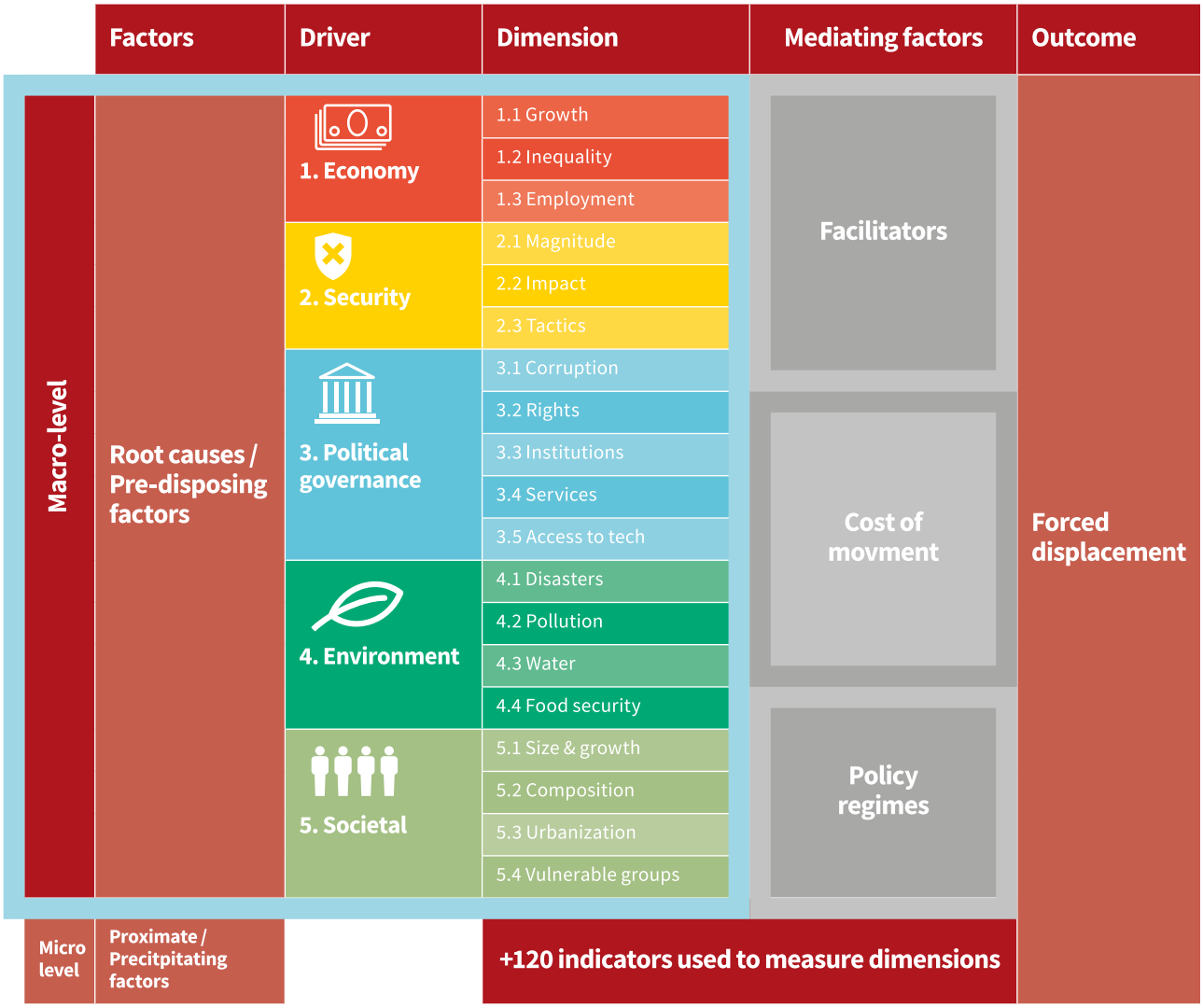


Figure 11: Foresight Model Framework

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 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 organisations 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 leave out some people who have been displaced in 2024.

Given that the data is taken from reputable data sources, it is deemed to be highly reliable. However, the data has some shortcomings. Coverage is uneven across geographies and across dimensions. For instance, economic and labour statistics tend to have better availability 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 the missing data in the features (or indicators) and missing target variable (i.e., forced displacement). Data with missing target variables is simply 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 auto-regressive model (i.e. AR(n) model). An auto-regressive model is a time-series forecasting model where 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 simply treat it as missing, which is preferable to projecting incorrectly. Intermediate missing values are computed by interpolation.

We follow a simple standardisation scheme, intended to keep data-ingestion tasks lightweight. A data transformer is implemented for each of the data sources to ensure that each indicator data point is associated with a country and 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 a five-year period: 2015–2022. Following the standard cross-validation set up 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-year time period.

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 by means of 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 by an empirical bootstrap method, where the source error distributions were generated on a retrospective analysis. Model training data was limited to data from 1995 onwards.

Accuracy

The average margin of error of the 271 forecasts made so far is 18%. Overall, 50% of the forecasts have a margin of error below 10% and almost two-thirds of the forecasts 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 2024. In a few countries, additional years are used in the evaluation, as 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 12: Model accuracy across 27 covered countries

The margin of error on the 27 forecasts for 2024 was 8%. Major missed forecasts in 2024 include:

- Libya (27% off): 164k forecasted vs. 129k estimated displaced
- Honduras (25% off): 586k forecasted vs. 469k estimated displaced
- Niger (22% off): 422k forecasted vs. 542k estimated displaced

Most accurate forecasts in 2024 include:

- Myanmar (0% off): 4.88m forecasted vs. 4.89m estimated displaced
- Yemen (1% off): 4.63m forecasted vs. 4.60 estimated displaced
- Burundi (1% off): 398k forecasted vs. 396k estimated displaced

Limitations

There are a number of 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 271 forecasts derived from the model, approximately 56% 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., 2024). As such, recent developments are not taken into account.
- 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, refugee and asylum seekers, nor does it forecast where people might move to. The estimations used in the report for future hosting of displaced and number of IDPs are based on the current (2023) 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 such indicators might act as a 'threat' multiplier; but where 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 both captures 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 2024 will not be available until around June 2025. The IDP figures are typically released by IDMC in May, while the figures on refugees and asylum seekers are released by UNHCR in June. However, it is possible to estimate the number of displaced people with a fair degree of accuracy by building on 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

Bibliography

Abigail Weitzman and Katarina Huss (2024): The Venezuelan Humanitarian Crisis, Out-Migration, and Household Change Among Venezuelans in Venezuela and Abroad, *Demography* (2024) 61 (3). Available at: read.dukeupress.edu (accessed 8 March 2025).

ACAPS (2024): Humanitarian Access Overview. December 2024. Available at: www.acaps.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

ACAPS (2024): Yemen: Selected drivers of the current conflict and their impact on women, men, girls, and boys. Available at: acaps.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

ACLED (nd): Anti-Civilian Violence dataset. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).

ACLED (nd): Conflict Data Export Tool. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).

ACLED (nd): Conflict Exposure. Available at: acleddata.com (accessed 5 March 2025).

Ala Alrababah, Daniel Masterson, Marine Casalis, Dominik Hangartner and Jeremy Weinstein (2023): The Dynamics of Refugee Return: Syrian Refugees and Their Migration Intentions, *British Journal of Political Science* (2023), 53, 1108–1131. Available at: cambridge.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

Aysegul Kayaoglu, Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek & M. Murat Erdoğan (2022) Return Aspirations of Syrian Refugees in Turkey, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 20:4, 561–583. Available at: tandfonline.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

Clionadh Raleigh (2011): The search for safety: The effects of conflict, poverty and ecological influences on migration in the developing world, *Global Environmental Change*, Volume 21, Supplement 1, Pages S82–S93, ISSN 0959-3780. Available at: doi.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

Danish Refugee Council (2024): Afghans increasingly forced to return from Iran, an overlooked population in dire need of protection. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025).

Danish Refugee Council (2023): Global Displacement Report 2023 – July update. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025)

Danish Refugee Council (2024): Global Displacement Forecast Report 2024. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 5 March 2025).

Danish Refugee Council (2023): Homebound: The horrendous journey of close to half a million Afghans forced to return from Pakistan, through their voices. Available at: drc.ngo (accessed 7 March 2025).

Danish Refugee Council (2018): DRC Return Policy. Available at: pro.drc.ngo (accessed 6 March 2025).

Danish Refugee Council, Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and Women's Affairs Centre (WAC) (2025): Suffering by Design: The Human Cost of Repeated Displacement in Gaza. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March, 2025).

Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee and Norwegian Refugee Council (2021): The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On: Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries. Available at: rescue.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

European Union Agency for Asylum (2025): Latest Asylum Trends - Annual Analysis. Available at: euaa.europa.eu (accessed 6 March 2025).

IFRC (2024): Yemen: Flood Operation Update #1 (MDRYE014) Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

ILO (2023): Review of national policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and practice in Uganda. Available at: ilo.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

INFORM Risk Index. Available at: drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu (accessed 6 March 2025).

IOM (2025): Annual Rapid Displacement Tracking Report 2024. Available at: dtm.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

IOM (2025): IOM Flash Appeal for Syria Crisis Response. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

IOM (2023): Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal

IOM (2023): Report on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Yemen. Available at: environmentalmigration.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

IOM (2025): Yemen Crisis Response Plan 2025. Available at: crisisresponse.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

IOM (2025): Yemen — Rapid Displacement Tracking Update (16 - 22 February 2025). Available at: dtm.iom.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

IPC (2024): Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July - December 2024 and Projection for January - June 2025. Available at icpinfo.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

Koser, K. & Kuschminder, K. (2015): Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants. International Organization for Migration (IOM): Switzerland. Available at: iom.int (accessed 6 March 2025).

Lea Müller-Funk and Sonja Fransen (2023): "I Will Return Strong": The Role of Life Aspirations in Refugees' Return Aspirations, *International Migration Review* 2023, Vol. 57(4) 1739–1770. Available at: sagepub.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

Lori Beaman, Harun Onder and Stefanie Onder (2022): When do refugees return home? Evidence from Syrian displacement in Mashreq, *Journal of Development Economics* 155 (2022). Available at: sciencedirect.com (accessed 6 March 2025).

María Alejandra Arias, Ana María Ibáñez and Pablo Querubin (2014): The Desire to Return during Civil War: Evidence for Internally Displaced Populations in Colombia, *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2014, pp. 209–233. Available at: doi.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

Mixed Migration Centre (2022): Safety risks in the Darien Gap and assistance needed among refugees and migrants. 4Mi Infographic. Available at: mixedmigration.org (accessed 8 March 2025).

Murat Bayar & Mustafa M. Aral (30 October 2019): An Analysis of Large-Scale Forced Migration in Africa, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Available at: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov (accessed 5 March 2025).

Naohiko Omata & Yotam Gidron (2025): Returning to fund refugeehood: dispersal and survival between Uganda and South Sudan, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 51:1, 101–121. Available at: doi.org (accessed 6 March 2025). (accessed 6 March 2025).

ND-Gain methodology is available at: gain.nd.edu (accessed 6 March 2025).

OCHA (2024): Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (December 2024). Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

OCHA (2024): Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, June 2024. Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

OCHA (2025): Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements (January–December 2024). Available at: unocha.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

OCHA (2024): Global Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025. Available at: unocha.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

OCHA (2025): Humanitarian Situation Update #269 | Gaza Strip. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

OCHA (2025): Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (January 2025)Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 5 March 2025).

OCHA 2025): Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (January 2025)Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

Omar Hammoud Gallego (2024): A new wave of Venezuelan refugees would threaten a humanitarian crisis – Latin America could learn from Europe, *The Conversation*. Available at: theconversation.com (accessed 8 March 2025).

PRIO (2023): New figures show conflict-related deaths at 28-year high, largely due to Ethiopia and Ukraine wars. Available at: prio.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

Protection Cluster (2024): Protection update report, December

Protection Cluster (2025): Protection update report, January

REACH (2024): Humanitarian Situation Overview: Ethiopia - South Sudan Cross-Border Displacement. Available at: repository.impact-initiatives.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

REACH Impact Initiatives (2024): Unsafe returns: what makes refugees return to Ukraine and settle in the frontline areas of the country? Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 6 March 2025).

Reuters (2025): US issues broad freeze on foreign aid after Trump orders review. Available at: reuters.com (accessed 5 March 2025).

Reuters (2025): Services to millions of people collapse as USAID cuts contracts worldwide. Available at: reuters.com (accessed 5 March 2025).

Stefano Costalli, Jessica Di Salvatore and Andrea Ruggeri (2023): Do UN Peace Operations Help Forcibly Displaced People? *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 61, Issue 6. Available at: ora.ox.ac.uk (accessed 6 March 2025).

Theodore Mbazumutima (2023): "Staying in Tanzania or Returning to Burundi is all the Same": Re-Imagining the Reintegration of Burundian Returnees, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2023, 42, 336–360. Available at: oup.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

The Pacific Institute (2024): Fact Sheet: Water Conflict Chronology Update. Available at: pacinst.org (accessed 5 March 2025).

UN (2024): UN chief condemns escalation in Yemen as airstrikes hit Sana'a Airport, key infrastructure. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158546 (accessed 7 March 2025).

UN (2022): Welcoming Truce Renewal for Two Months, Secretary-General Urges Yemen Government, Houthis to Fully Implement Agreement's Terms. Available at: press.un.org/en (accessed 7 March 2025).

UNFPA (n.d.): Yemen: Gender Based Violence Available at: yemen.unfpa.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

UNHCR (n.d.): Data finder – Methodology and definitions. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

UNHCR (2025): Eastern DRC Displacement Overview (As of 20 February 2025). Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

UNHCR (2025): Eastern DRC Situation. Available at unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

UNHCR (2025): Flash Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return to Syria. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

UNHCR (2024): Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2023. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

UNHCR (2023): Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2024. Available at: reporting.unhcr.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

UNHCR (2025): Situation: Regional Bureau of Southern Africa. Available at unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

UNHCR (2025): Syria Governorates of Return Overview (as of 20 February 2025). Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025

UNHCR (n.d.): Syria situation. Available at: unhcr.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

UNHCR (2024): Yemen Crisis: 9 Years of Conflict, Economic Strain, and Environmental Challenges Push Displaced Families to the Brink [EN/AR]. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (2025): Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October December 2024 update. Available at: unama.unmissions.org (accessed 7 March 2025).

Vanessa Iaria (2014): Post-Return Transnationalism and the Iraqi Displacement in Syria and Jordan, International Migration Vol. 52 (6). Available at: wiley.com (accessed 7 March 2025).

Varieties of Democracy (n.d.) Methodology. Available at: v-dem.net (accessed 6 March 2025).

WFP (2025): Democratic Republic of the Congo - M23 Goma Crisis 2025: Assessing the situation of the IDPs via mobile (mVAM), Data collected on 4-7 February 2025. Available at reliefweb.int (accessed 10 March 2025)

WFP (2024): WFP Yemen Food Security Update, December 2024. Available at: reliefweb.int (accessed 7 March 2025).

World Bank (2024): Dataset on World Refugee and Asylum Policy. Available at: datacatalog.worldbank.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

World Bank (2020): The Mobility of Displaced Syrians: An Economic and Social Analysis. Available at: worldbank.org (accessed 6 March 2025).

World Bank (2024): Yemen Economic Monitor: Confronting Escalating Challenges. Available at worldbank.org (accessed 10 March 2024)

World Bank (n.d.): Yemen Overview. Available at worldbank.org (accessed 10 March 2025)

Annex

Country	Estimated displacement 2023	Forecast 2024	Forecast 2025
Ukraine	9,687,000	9,703,000	9,707,000
Afghanistan	10,613,000	11,003,000	11,044,000
Myanmar	4,888,000	5,669,000	6,303,000
Nigeria	4,090,000	4,110,000	4,250,000
Cameroon	1,188,000	1,149,000	1,117,000
Burkina Faso	2,270,000	2,330,000	2,471,000
CAR	1,247,000	1,296,000	1,266,000
Mali	729,000	734,000	739,000
Chad	511,000	533,000	550,000
Niger	542,000	561,000	622,000
Syria	14,920,000	15,282,000	15,338,000
Yemen	4,601,000	4,945,000	4,993,000
Iraq	1,569,000	1,550,000	1,535,000
oPt	7,876,000	7,984,000	8,076,000
Libya	130,000	128,000	124,000
Sudan	14,975,000	16,343,000	17,091,000
DR Congo	7,945,000	8,258,000	8,539,000
South Sudan	4,178,000	4,212,000	4,240,000
Somalia	4,949,000	5,045,000	5,122,000
Ethiopia	3,621,000	3,655,000	3,664,000
Burundi	398,000	399,000	399,000
Mozambique	587,000	587,000	587,000
Colombia	7,513,000	7,527,000	7,539,000
Venezuela	7,612,000	7,889,000	8,113,000
Guatemala	479,000	482,000	485,000
Honduras	469,000	445,000	426,000
El Salvador	263,000	244,000	229,000

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

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL
· We are there

DRC Dansk Flygtningehjælp | Borgergade 10, 3. | 1300 København K | Tel.: 3373 5000 | drc@drc.ngo | www.drc.ngo