

# Facts and figures

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## *Africa Report on Internal Displacement*

### Africa is in the throes of an internal displacement crisis.

In 2015 alone, there were 3.5 million new internal displacements of people in Africa.

- Conflict, violence and disasters caused 3.5 million new displacements in Africa in 2015 (with some people being displaced more than once). This means that an average of 9,500 people a day had to leave their homes, communities and livelihoods. Preliminary estimates for the first half of 2016 suggest this year will be no better.
- 2.4 million internal displacements were caused by conflict and violence, making the continent second only to the Middle East for violence as a cause of flight.
- Nigeria accounted for more than 30 per cent of all conflict-related internal displacement in Africa, with 737,000 people internally displaced.
- 1.1 million displacements were caused by disasters triggered by rapid-onset natural hazard events. Ninety-three per cent of these were related to floods.
- Displacement due to slow-onset disasters are not captured in the 1.1 million figure and, if they were, would increase it significantly. In Ethiopia, for example, drought-induced food and livelihood insecurity and communal tensions over scarce water and pasture displaced over 390,000 people in Ethiopia between August 2015 and May 2016.
- Climate change is expected to increase the risk of disaster displacement in future, as extreme weather events become more frequent and intense. This includes an increase in drought and heavy rainfall in southern and east Africa, more intense rainfall in west Africa, and more frequent heatwaves in north Africa.

In total, 12.4 million people were living as IDPs in Africa as a result of conflict and violence.

- At the end of 2015, a total of 12.4 million people in Africa were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence.
- There is no similar cumulative figure for disaster-related displacement at the end of the year.
- The total of 12.4 million conflict IDPs represents 30 per cent of the total number of conflict IDPs globally ([40.8 million people](#)) and twice the total number of African refugees ([5.4 million](#)).
- East Africa accounted for more than half of the total because of unresolved displacement and ongoing conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

The figures understate the total number of IDPs.

- The figures in the report paint an incomplete picture. Key gaps include information on internal displacement caused by slow-onset disasters and development projects.
- The total cumulative number of people living in displacement following disasters is also unknown although case study evidence suggests their number is significant.
- These blind spots in the data hamper efforts to prevent or reduce further displacement and provide effective protection and assistance to people who are already displaced.
- We need to understand the interaction of multiple drivers of displacement including conflict, natural hazards and environmental degradation, which can frustrate IDPs' ability to return home or rebuild their lives elsewhere as a sustainable solution to their situations.

## Poverty and state fragility are key drivers of internal displacement

The scale of internal displacement triggered by rapid-onset disasters is largely determined by the location of people's homes in areas prone to their impacts and their underlying vulnerability to shocks and stresses, as seen in poor and fragile states. Eighteen of the 20 African countries with the highest levels of new disaster displacement in 2015 are in the bottom category of the [UN Human Development Index](#). Ninety-seven per cent of people displaced by disasters in 2015 were in countries ranked in the four highest-risk categories of the [Fragile States Index](#).

## Off the Radar: Africa's Overlooked IDPs

Slow onset disasters: Data on disaster displacement linked to slow-onset hazards such as drought and environmental degradation is not systematically collected. Yet one third of Africa's population is dependent on rain-fed agriculture for food and livelihoods.

Lack of data and knowledge limits the ability of governments and other actors to analyse trends, identify effective policy options and take early action to prevent or mitigate negative impacts on people's resilience from one year to the next.

Internal displacement forced by development projects and business activities is also missing from the global data.

Raising awareness and understanding these situations is essential to ensure the human rights of people affected are upheld and that displacement does not undermine development goals. Adequate consultation, preparation and costing should be the norm where displacement is unavoidable in order to preserve positive development outcomes.

## Improving data on IDPs: Bringing unseen internal displacement into focus

Monitoring of IDPs has improved over the past 30 years, yet significant gaps remain.

More and better data on IDPs is needed to meet African governments' commitments to the Kampala Convention, the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction, the UN's Agenda for Humanity, the Africa regional strategy for disaster risk reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Better data can also ensure a timely and well targeted operational and policy response to displacement.

Better data has enabled IDMC, with the support of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), to begin estimating the risk of internal displacement associated with disasters in several African countries, helping governments identify the prevention-related benefits of disaster risk reduction efforts.

IDMC encourages the African Union, regional economic communities and national governments to build capacity in data collection using robust methodologies and to explore innovative approaches such as using satellite images and anonymised mobile phone data.

Partnering with IDMC on filling the data gaps is consistent with a 2013 agreement between the AU Commission and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), which IDMC is part of, to document internal displacement, among other aims.