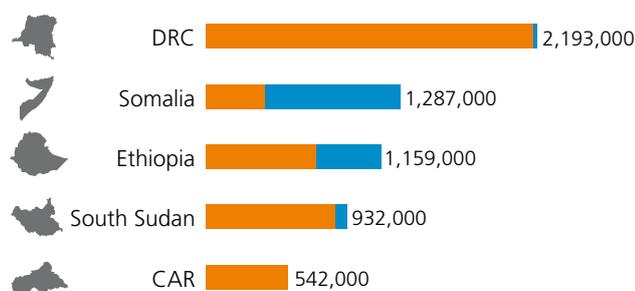


SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



CONFLICT 46.4%
DISASTERS 13.6%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict and disasters)



Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 14 per cent of the world's population, but almost half of new conflict displacement took place in the region.⁶² There were 5.5 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2017, double the figure for the previous year.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** was hardest hit, with almost 2.2 million new displacements, more than twice the number in 2016 and more than the next three worst-affected countries in the region combined. Together, **South Sudan**, **Ethiopia** and the **Central African Republic (CAR)** accounted for a total of more than 2.1 million new displacements.

The international response to the crisis in **DRC** is severely underfunded despite the UN declaration of a level-three emergency in the country and the huge number of people newly displaced, second only to Syria globally (see spotlight, p.20).⁶³ In the meantime, 857,000 new displacements were recorded in **South Sudan**, the result of food insecurity fuelled by conflict and widespread violence targeting civilians.⁶⁴ There is little or no humanitarian access to some regions and communities, making an already dire situation worse.

In addition to DRC, in Central Africa there were 539,000 new displacements in **CAR**, more than ten times the figure for 2016, and 86,000 in neighbouring **Republic of Congo**. In the Lake Chad Basin a combination of the Boko Haram insurgency and clashes over diminishing

resources led to 279,000 new displacements in **Nigeria's** North-Eastern states, 99,000 in **Cameroon's** Far North region, 40,000 in **Niger's** Diffa region and 5,800 in **Chad's** Lac region. The Basin as a whole accounted for eight per cent of new displacements associated with conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa (see spotlight, p.21).

The Horn of Africa accounted for a fifth of the region's new displacements, the result not only of conflict but also sudden and slow-onset disasters and the complex, overlapping dynamics between them.⁶⁵ In **Ethiopia**, border disputes and revenge attacks, and competition over increasingly scarce resources such as land and water in the Oromia and Somali regions triggered more than 725,000 new displacements, most of them in the last quarter of the year. Ongoing instability in **Somalia** caused by al-Shabaab attacks and food insecurity continued to drive the country's protracted conflict, triggering 388,000 new displacements.

The causes of flight in **Somalia** are closely interlinked and it is difficult to disaggregate estimates by trigger, or the event that ultimately left people with little or no choice but to flee their home. Figure 4 (p.18) shows the complexity of the situation, laying out the range of triggers that appear in the data sources.

We are able for the first time to estimate the number of new displacements associated with drought, and the figure is high, at 858,000 out of the total for the

country of 1,287,000. Included in the overall figure are new displacements associated with sudden- and slow-onset disasters and various types of conflict and violence – clan conflict, military offensives by the Somali army and the African Union’s military mission, and other conflict that mainly covers attacks by al-Shabaab and other militias against the civilian population. Also included is the inability to access healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance due to insecurity.

The complexity of the crisis in Somalia and the Horn of Africa more widely, coupled with the lack of high-quality disaggregated data on displacement and its drivers and triggers, means the number of IDPs reported for the sub-region is likely to be an underestimate.

Disasters also triggered significant displacement elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017, forcing almost 2.6 million people to flee their homes. Drought triggered most of the 434,000 displacements recorded in **Ethiopia**, cyclone Enawo displaced 247,000 people in **Madagascar**, floods 189,000 in **Niger** and cyclone Dineo most of the 170,000 in **Mozambique**. Other countries affected by disasters were **Nigeria** (122,000), **Uganda** (95,000) and **Malawi** (84,000).

This type of displacement in the region tends to involve short-term movements before people return and rebuild. Small-scale and frequent disasters go relatively unnoticed as conflict takes centre stage, but what these localised crises illustrate is that displacement is more about an endogenous problem of poverty and lack of development than the consequence of external threats posed by natural hazards. Sub-Saharan Africa’s population and urbanisation rate are predicted to

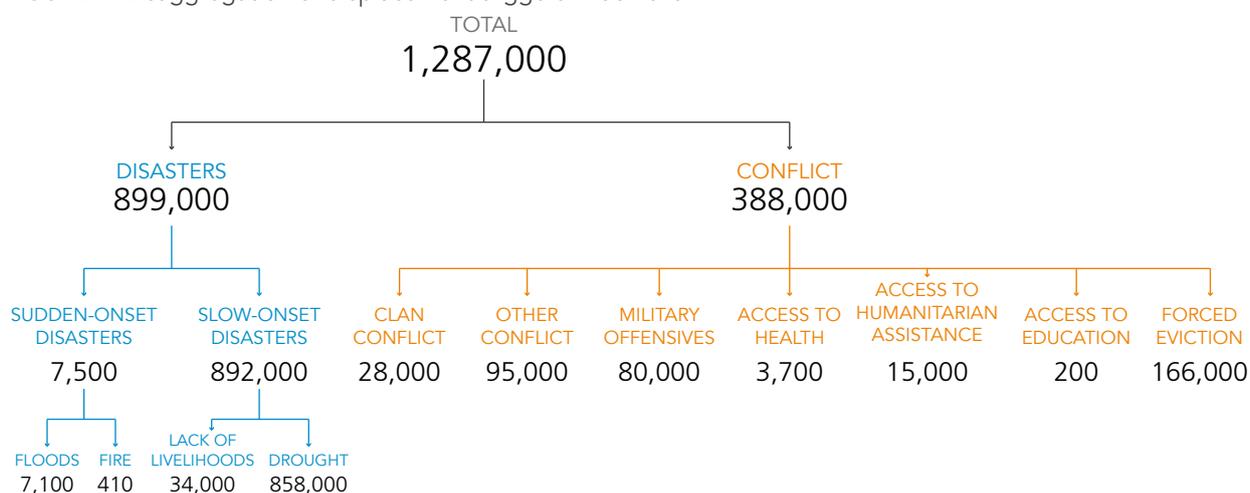
increase dramatically in the coming decades, putting more people at risk of disasters. If unaddressed, poverty, vulnerability and climate change will increase the risk of displacement.⁶⁶

The drivers of displacement in the region are a complex overlap of social, political and environmental factors, particularly slow-onset hazards such as drought, desertification, coastal erosion and land degradation. A combination of conflict and loss of livelihoods attributed to diminishing grazing land and loss of livestock, continues to cause displacement in the Horn of Africa and Sahel region.

Against this backdrop, attacks by extremist groups triggered displacement in many African countries during the year with al-Shabaab in **Somalia**, Boko Haram in **Nigeria**, **Cameroon**, **Chad** and **Niger**, and local Islamist groups in **Mali**, **Burkina Faso** and **Mozambique**. Despite some regional dimensions and ties to global jihadist movements, these insurgencies are, first and foremost, the product of local socioeconomic and political grievances in areas worst affected by slow-onset hazards. Conflict over natural resources such as precious stones and minerals in **CAR** and **DRC**, and oil in **Nigeria** and **South Sudan** have also triggered some of the worst violence and largest waves of displacement in the region.

Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa is not only a growing humanitarian crisis, but also an obstacle to the region’s development. The continent as a whole is in a unique position, however, because in 2009 it adopted a legally binding regional instrument, the Kampala Convention, which aims to reduce the number of people displaced by

FIGURE 4: Disaggregation of displacement triggers in Somalia





An internally displaced family sit in the shade of their tent, shielded from the midday sun. They have been living in Monguno village in northeast Nigeria since Boko Haram attacked their village in 2015. Photo: NRC/Michelle Delaney, October 2017

conflict and disasters and guarantees their protection. Article 10 also highlights the need to address displacement associated with development projects.⁶⁷

States have taken a range of measures to implement the convention and its provisions, which entered into force in 2012, including the development of national laws and policies on internal displacement and the establishment of structures for the coordination and monitoring of responses. Forty countries have signed the convention, and 27 have ratified it.⁶⁸ Some, such as **Sudan** and **Kenya**, have not signed, but have developed their own national laws and policies independently.⁶⁹ This reveals a widespread recognition of internal displacement as a problem, and the need to address it and reduce future risk.

Progress in domesticating and implementing the convention's provisions, however, has been modest. The reasons vary from country to country, but can be summarised as lack of capacity, failure to make the issue a political and economic priority, and unclear budget allocations at the national level. Additionally,

domestic courts have not made specific provisions to prosecute state or non-state perpetrators of crimes under the convention.⁷⁰ This major gap raises the issue of accountability and responsibility for the protection of people displaced by conflict. The situation in terms of displacement associated with disasters and development projects is even more complex, given the role of the private sector and multinational investors, and the fact that measures to mitigate growing risk have not been laid out in clear legal frameworks.

As with the Kampala Convention, however, the growing gap between words and action is concerning, and the displacement figures we present in this report show that the adoption of policies does not necessarily translate into change on the ground. The region should do more to implement existing laws and policies, and in doing so, realise its potential as a leader in addressing the impacts of internal displacement.

SPOTLIGHT

DRC

An acute L3 emergency without the funding to match

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been ravaged by conflict for decades, and there is no end to the violence in sight. The already dire humanitarian situation in the country deteriorated still further in 2017, prompting the UN to declare a level-three (L3) emergency, a designation reserved for only the most complex crises.⁷¹ As many as 2,166,000 new displacements were recorded during the year, second only to Syria, and there were about 4.5 million IDPs in the country as of the end of 2017.

The L3 designation is intended to highlight the scale of the needs involved and mobilise maximum funding and capacity to respond, but little has changed on the ground since it was declared. Nor is the designation countrywide. It applies only to the provinces of South Kivu and Tanganyika and the region of Kasai, raising the concern that funding earmarked for other provinces with acute humanitarian needs, such as North Kivu, will simply be reallocated to the L3 areas.

Doing so would have potentially serious implications. There has already been a significant reduction in the number of humanitarian organisations working in North Kivu because of funding shortages, and this despite a resurgence of mass displacement caused by renewed fighting between DRC's armed forces and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel group. With as many as 1.2 million people living in displacement as of the end of the year, North Kivu accounted for about 26 per cent of the country's IDPs.

The humanitarian coordinator in Kinshasa has described DRC as "one of the world's largest, most acute and complex" humanitarian crises with "unrelenting cycles of violence, diseases, malnutrition and loss of livelihoods", and OCHA has launched its largest-ever funding appeal for the country to assist the 10.5 million people in need of aid in 2018.⁷² The importance of attracting new funds rather than diverting existing commitments has been widely stressed, and the development sector,



which has been all but absent from DRC, has been called upon to play its part in re-establishing the health and other key services, so that much-needed humanitarian funding does not have to be redirected.

DRC's IDPs have a wide range of protection needs, and children make up about 60 per cent of the country's displaced population.⁷³ The UN verified 2,334 grave violations against children in 2016, the highest number since 2012. The figure includes the recruitment of 492 children by armed groups, 82 per cent of which occurred in North Kivu.⁷⁴ NRC also reported that the education of as many as 64,000 children was at risk in the Kasai region because armed groups had occupied schools and instilled a climate of fear.⁷⁵ Children deprived of education opportunities are more likely to join armed groups.⁷⁶

Food insecurity is also at the highest level on record. About 9.9 million people in DRC are food insecure and two million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition, accounting for 12 per cent of the global caseload.⁷⁷ More than 55,000 people contracted cholera in 2017, during an epidemic that claimed more than 1,000 lives. It is against this backdrop that OCHA has requested \$1.68 billion for DRC in 2018, but given that the 2017 appeal for \$812.5 million was only 50 per cent met, the outlook for closing the funding gap this year is bleak.⁷⁸

SPOTLIGHT

Displacement in the LAKE CHAD BASIN

An Islamist insurgency that began in Nigeria's predominantly Muslim northern state of Borno in 2009, Boko Haram, soon sparked a regional crisis that spread into neighbouring countries.⁷⁹ Eight years later, the group is still active despite concerted and often heavy-handed campaigns against it by national militaries and the Multi-national Joint Task Force set up in 2012 and made up of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Boko Haram's violence continued unabated in 2017, with an increase in the number of attacks recorded in Cameroon and Nigeria.⁸⁰ Counterinsurgency operations have also been stepped up. These have caused internal and cross-border displacement not only of civilians but also insurgents, effectively helping to spread the violence. This impact was felt in Cameroon in 2017, where the group's attacks also fuelled internal displacement. The conflict led to 119,000 new displacements in Cameroon, 279,000 in Nigeria, 40,000 in Niger and 5,800 in Chad. There were more than 2.2 million people living in displacement in the Lake Chad Basin as of the end of 2017.

Despite the increase in Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, a large number of returns to the north-east of the country were recorded during the year. Nigeria, Cameroon and UNHCR also signed a tripartite agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon back to areas deemed safe.⁸¹ The agreement and the 1951 Refugee Convention both safeguard against forced returns, but Human Rights Watch and others have documented clear violations, such as Nigerian refugees in Cameroon being forcefully trucked back to Nigeria.⁸² UNHCR also denounced forced returns in June and called on the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to uphold the agreement to facilitate a voluntary process in line with international standards.⁸³

There have also been waves of what the government calls spontaneous returns to north-eastern Nigeria, meaning people going back voluntarily. Instead of returning, they



have found themselves living in various forms of temporary settlements in their local government areas. The Nigerian military has also sealed off areas it deems to be active conflict zones, preventing civilians from returning. Given these circumstances, many of the movements described as returns might more accurately be defined as failed returns or secondary displacements.

Besides clear physical impediments, returnees face other significant obstacles to achieving durable solutions. Many are pastoralists, farmers and fishermen who previously relied on cross-border trade for their livelihoods, which have been severely affected by their loss of access to land and restrictions on their movement.⁸⁴ The heavy security presence in the region and constraints on activities such as fishing, which the militants are said to have infiltrated, have placed an additional burden on returnees, IDPs and their host communities.⁸⁵ People's inability to sustain their traditional livelihoods has fuelled further displacement toward camps and other areas where humanitarian assistance is available, increasing aid dependency and making durable solutions a distant prospect.

A purely military approach will not defeat Boko Haram or end the region's crisis. It is a region that has long been plagued by lack of investment in basic health and education infrastructure and widespread poverty, inequality and political marginalisation. It has also suffered prolonged droughts which, combined with the overuse of water resources, have caused Lake Chad to shrink to a fraction of its size in 50 years.⁸⁶ All of these elements have coalesced to undermine people's livelihoods, and it is in this environment that Boko Haram emerged and has come to thrive and expand. Those factors will also continue to impede the pursuit of durable solutions, leading to protracted displacement that could in turn fuel further conflict.