Beat: News

All-time high of nearly 60 million people internally displaced worldwide

Global Report on Internal Displacement

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19 May 2022, Geneva - The number of people living in internal displacement around the world reached a record 59.1 million at the end of 2021, up from 55 million a year earlier.

The unprecedented figure is the result of new waves of violence and protracted conflict in countries ranging from Ethiopia and Afghanistan to Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)'s annual global report.

“The situation today is phenomenally worse than even our record figure suggests, as it doesn’t include nearly eight million people forced to flee the war in Ukraine. We need a titanic shift in thinking from world leaders on how to prevent and resolve conflicts to end this soaring human suffering,” said the secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Jan Egeland.

Around 38 million internal displacements, or movements, were reported during 2021, the second highest annual figure in a decade after 2020's record-breaking year for disaster displacement. Conflict and violence triggered 14.4 million movements, an increase of almost 50 per cent on the year before Sub-Saharan Africa was the most affected region, with more than five million displacements in Ethiopia alone, the highest figure ever for a single country. The DRC, Afghanistan and Myanmar also registered unprecedented numbers in 2021. The Middle East and North Africa recorded its lowest in ten years as conflict in Syria, Libya and Iraq de-escalated, but the region's overall number of internally displaced people (IDPs) remained concerningly high by the end of the year.

"The trend toward long-term displacement will never be reversed unless safe and sustainable conditions are established for IDPs to return home, integrate locally or resettle elsewhere," said IDMC's Director, Alexandra Bilak. "Peacebuilding and development initiatives are needed to resolve the underlying challenges that hold displaced people's lives in limbo."

Disasters continued to trigger most internal displacements globally, with 23.7 million recorded in 2021. Weather-related hazards accounted for 94 per cent of the total, many of which were pre-emptive evacuations in the face of cyclones and floods that struck densely populated areas of Asia and the Pacific region. China, the Philippines and India recorded their highest figures in five years at six million, 5.7 million and 4.9 million, respectively.

Conflict and violence collided with disasters in many countries, forcing people to flee several times. Be it in Mozambique, Myanmar, Somalia or South Sudan, overlapping crises had severe knock-on effects on food security and heightened the vulnerability of millions. Covid-19 also aggravated inequalities and made IDPs' lives even more precarious.

Around 25.2 million of the world's IDPs are under the age of 18 and the effects of their displacement go well beyond their immediate safety, wellbeing and education. A healthy and happy child is more likely to contribute to an equitable society and a functioning economy.

More data is needed to better understand these broader and longer-term impacts, but it is clear that protecting and supporting displaced children and young people not only safeguards their rights, but also contributes to a more stable future for all.

"Children and young people are agents of change. Recognising them as such is vital to protect development gains and reduce the risk of future crises," said Alexandra Bilak. "Preparing the world of tomorrow must start with their active participation and leadership."

SOURCE: IDMC via ARAC International global media partner ReliefWeb
About IDMC:
"Every day, people flee conflict and disasters and become displaced inside their own countries. IDMC, established in 1998 as part of

the Norwegian Refugee Council, provides data and analysis and supports partners in identifying and implementing solutions to internal displacement. For interviews please contact":

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