



THE STORY

In 2013, 59% of the population of Central African Republic (CAR) was affected by the conflict there – including these children displaced in the capital, Bangui.

Called “the worst crisis people have never heard of” by US Ambassador Samantha Power, the severity of the situation in CAR led the UN to declare it a top priority (or ‘Level 3’) emergency. By mid-February 2014, the humanitarian community was facing the challenge of responding to four such Level 3 emergencies – CAR, Syria, Philippines and South Sudan – as well as other ongoing crises affecting millions of people elsewhere.

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WHO WAS AFFECTED?

Following a year of 'recurring disasters'¹ in 2012, 2013 saw a dramatic rise in the number of major humanitarian crises, which affected many tens of millions of people and stretched the international response. The crises in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Philippines and Syria were all classified as 'Level 3' (L3) emergencies by the UN – a category reserved for the most severe, large-scale and complex crises. At the same time, crises elsewhere, such as in South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen affected growing numbers of people and called for a significant international humanitarian response.

The exact numbers of people affected remains unknown but an estimated 10.7 million people were newly displaced by conflict or persecution in 2013, compared to 7.6 million people newly displaced in 2012. Globally, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) rose from 28.8 million in 2012 to an unprecedented 33.3 million in 2013 –and the number of refugees from 15.4 million to 16.7 million. At 51.2 million, the total number of people living in forced displacement in 2013 was at the highest level since the second world war.²

Around 96 million people were affected by disasters such as floods, earthquakes and storms in 2013, compared with 111 million in 2012. While 2013 figures are preliminary estimates, the fall is likely to be explained by the high number of people affected by disasters in China alone in 2012 (45 million).

Not all those affected by disaster in 2013 were in need of international humanitarian assistance. For example, domestic resources responded to the 27 million people in China and 17 million people in India affected by natural disasters. However, as Chapters 7 and 8 show, many countries repeatedly affected by crisis have low domestic capacity to respond.

FIGURE 1.1

Humanitarian needs, 2013

Top 10 countries by number of people affected and % of population affected

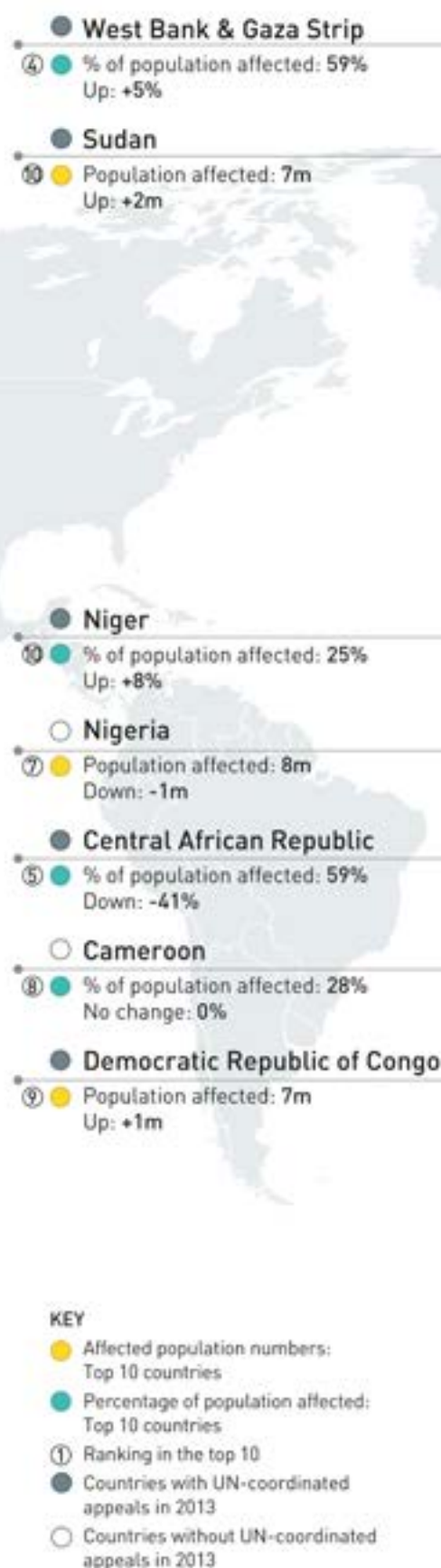
It is impossible to know exactly how many people are directly or indirectly affected by crises. There are many reasons for this: emergency situations and limited access may mean that broad estimates take the place of precise figures; people who are indirectly or long-term affected may not be counted; unregistered refugees or internally displaced people outside camps might be invisible in statistics; and population data in many fragile states simply does not exist. As Chapter 9 explains, assessment methods must, and do, continue to evolve to give a picture not only of the numbers affected but also the specific nature and severity of different people's needs and vulnerabilities.

In the absence of exact numbers of crisis-affected people, a number of indicators give some measure of who was affected and where. These include data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and data from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) on the numbers affected by natural disasters. The numbers targeted by UN appeals also serve as a partial indicator of the scale and location of crises.

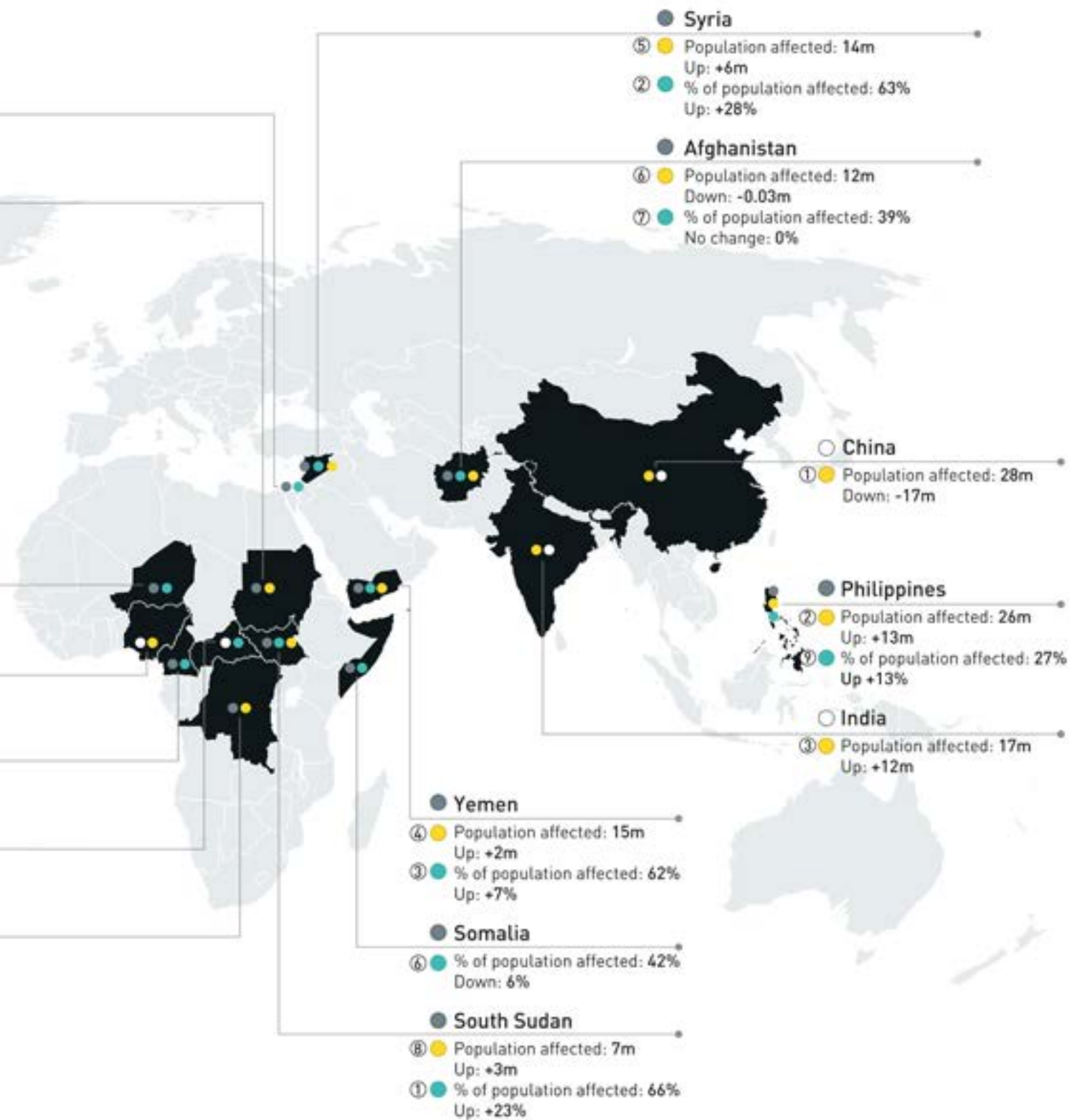
On the basis of this data, China and the Philippines had the largest number of people affected by emergencies in 2013. However, South Sudan and Syria had the highest proportion of their populations affected by the ongoing crises there – 66% and 63% respectively. Yemen, CAR and the West Bank & Gaza Strip all saw well over half of their populations affected.

While not all crises generate international appeals, in 2013, UN-coordinated appeals targeted 78 million people for assistance, compared to 95 million in 2012. There may be a number of reasons for this decrease. The 2013 total does not include the two appeals launched following the Bohol earthquake and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines towards the end of 2013, which are classified by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) as 2014 appeals. Overall, there were fewer UN-coordinated appeals in 2013 than in 2012 – down to 23 from 26. In 2012, two appeals alone (for the Pakistan Floods Early Recovery and for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)) targeted over 25 million people – neither of these appeals were repeated in 2013.

As crises developed or emerged over the year, the number of affected people, as counted in UN-coordinated appeals, fluctuated. In South Sudan, UN planning figures from late 2012 estimated 4.6 million affected people. By the end of 2013 this number had escalated to 7.1 million. Numbers in Syria, Yemen, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Niger also climbed during the year. In CAR at the end of 2012, UN planning estimates indicated that the whole population was affected by the conflict. This estimate had fallen to 59% of the population by the end of 2013.



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS, UN-coordinated appeals, UNHCR, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and World Bank 2012 population data



ABBREVIATIONS

RRP: Syria regional refugee response plan covers refugees (and some host communities) in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey
SHARP: Syria humanitarian assistance response plan

Notes: Data on the number of people affected in each country is taken from UN-coordinated appeals, or from EM-DAT CRED data where no appeal was launched, as well as UNHCR data on numbers of refugees. Within UN appeals the figures used are those in need of assistance, not those targeted to receive assistance. The numbers include those affected within a country as well as those displaced to neighbouring countries.