

[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com)

# Conflict and climate disasters combine to create record rise in displaced people

*Lizzy Davies*

3–4 minutes

---

The number of people around the world who were forced to flee their homes leapt by a fifth last year, as a “perfect storm” of Russia’s assault on [Ukraine](#) and climate disasters brought displacement on an unprecedented scale.

By the end of 2022 the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) – those forced from their homes but remaining within their country of residence – reached 71 million, according to figures published by the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre ([IDMC](#)), up from [59.1 million in 2021](#).

The number of movements made by people, often repeatedly, as they went in search of safety and shelter was also unprecedented, with the figure of 60.9m marking an increase of 60% on the previous year.

📷 Ten countries with the highest number of internally displaced people

About 17m of those movements were triggered by the [war in](#)

[Ukraine](#), where an estimated 5.9 million people are thought to have fled their homes, many having to move repeatedly in an effort to find resources or a place to stay, or just a refuge from fighting. The report warns that, due to the difficulty in obtaining reliable data from areas occupied by military forces, even those numbers “should be considered conservative”.

The [“monsoon on steroids”](#) that hit Pakistan last summer was also a leading driver of displacement, with the [flooding that devastated](#) much of the country triggering more than 8m movements.

“Conflict and disasters combined last year to aggravate people’s pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, triggering displacement on a scale never seen before,” said Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

“The war in Ukraine also fuelled a [global food security crisis](#) that hit the internally displaced hardest. This perfect storm has undermined years of progress made in reducing global hunger and malnutrition.”

The report, released on Thursday, does not include the early months of 2023 but indicates a dramatic rise in displacement after the [latest outbreak of fighting](#) in Sudan. The civil war between forces allied to two rival Sudanese generals has already triggered more than double the number of internal displacements in three weeks than in all of last year, it said.

Many IDPs face protracted displacement due to conflicts that drag on for years without ever being resolved. Almost three-quarters of the global IDP population live in just 10 countries, all of which are experiencing a certain level of conflict, be it the raging open warfare of [Sudan](#) or Ukraine, or the more sporadic violence of

Nigeria or Somalia.

Many of those countries also face extreme levels of food insecurity, a problem made worse by the conflict in Ukraine, a leading grain exporter.

Alexandra Bilak, IDMC's director, said: "Today's displacement crises are growing in scale, complexity and scope, and factors like food insecurity, climate change, and escalating and protracted conflicts are adding new layers to this phenomenon.

"Greater resources and further research are essential to help understand and better respond to IDPs' needs," she said.