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Global Displacement Forecast 2021

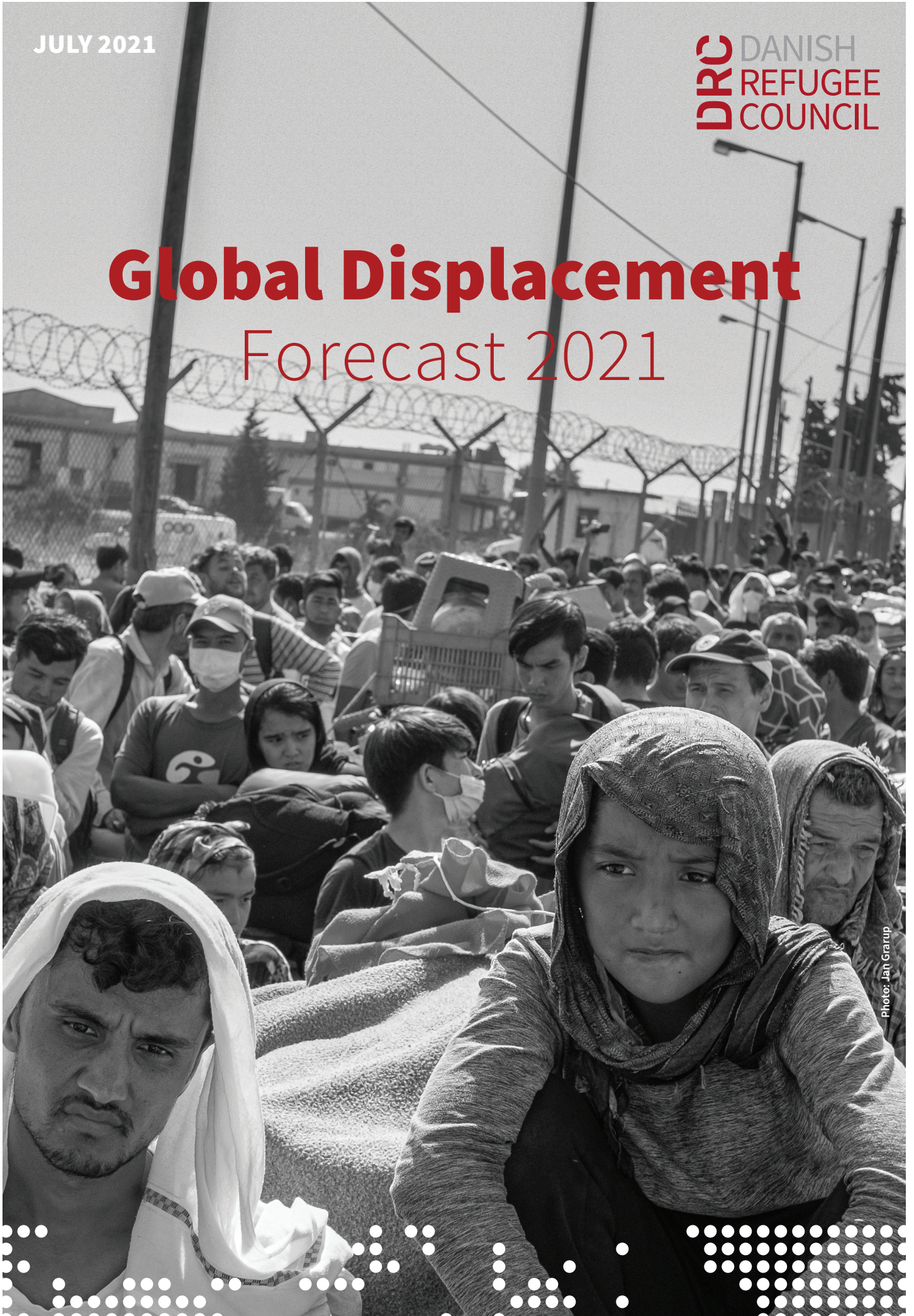


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Executive Summary

July 2021

This report presents a forecast of forced displacement in 2021 and 2022 developed on the basis of the Foresight model – a machine learning model developed in cooperation with IBM and with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tool has been developed to support the wider humanitarian system in having accurate forecasts for strategic planning for better prevention, response and protection to displacement affected populations. The model has currently been employed to provide forecasts for 24 countries, covering approximately 84% of all global forced displacement.

Context

Forced displacement continues to rise, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. At a global level, 2020 marked a slight increase in the number of forcibly displaced people. In the past 10 years the number of forcibly displaced has almost doubled from 43 million to more than 82 million in 2020. With increased displacement and displacement becoming increasingly protracted, the need for international support and engagement including humanitarian assistance is also growing. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 235 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, up from 62 million in 2012 and 168 million in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed significantly to the increase in humanitarian needs. The devastating economic impact of the pandemic has increased the number of people living in extreme poverty by 97 million, which in turn has led to decreased resilience of people of concern and increased tension and conflict. COVID-19 can further exacerbate conflict dynamics and has enabled non-state armed groups (NSAGs) to gain momentum, for example in the Sahel region. The momentum for NSAGs is partially driven by the negative impact the pandemic has had on good governance and human rights. The COVID-19 crisis has often been instrumentalized to curtail respect for basic human rights and oppress opposition, which has led to an overall decline in democratic governance. In addition to the increased concerns related to protection and livelihoods, food security has been a major casualty of the pandemic. The number of people living in acute food insecurity increased by 20 million people last year compared to 2019. Currently, 155 million people live in acute food insecurity across 55 countries.

Vulnerable groups have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19. The movement restrictions imposed because of the pandemic have, in many instances, reduced the access of migrants, refugees and displaced people to basic services, humanitarian assistance and protection – including the ability to seek refuge and asylum. As of January 2021, 144 countries still had restrictions on accessing their territory in place and 64 of those countries did not make exceptions for people seeking asylum. Overall, COVID-19 has been a threat multiplier for refugees and migrants, who have faced increased risk of abuse or rights violation, including risk of arrest and detention, pushback/denial of entry, theft and extortion, since the pandemic began.

Main forecast findings

Looking ahead, more than 10,000 people will be forced to flee every day in 2021 in the 24 countries covered by the model. The combined forecasts suggests that the cumulative number of people displaced will increase by 3.7 million in 2021. This amounts to approximately seven people every minute or 10.000 people every day for the entire year being

forced to flee their homes. This number is further projected to increase to 7.2 million by the end of 2022. These developments will likely trigger significant increases in humanitarian needs in the coming years. The increased displacement in 2021 is driven particularly by a number of complex crises. Displacement from **DR Congo** is forecasted to increase by almost 2 million people in 2021, driven by armed violence and natural disasters, such as the recent eruption of Mount Nyiragongo. Unlike the global trend, DR Congo witnessed a sharp increase in conflict events and fatalities in 2020 and violence has continued unabated in 2021. 19.6 million people are facing severe and acute food insecurity. Yet, the crisis is largely forgotten and is not high up on the agenda of the international community. **Burkina Faso** is another country with high displacement forecasted – 300,000 in 2021 alone following a 20-fold increase from 2018 to 2020. Burkina Faso has become the epicenter of violence in the Central Sahel region and tied to violence in Mali and Niger. **South Sudan** is forecasted to see an increase of almost 500,000 displaced in 2021. Despite the formation of a unity government and ceasefire agreement, the number of armed violence incidents and victims were more than twice as high in 2020 compared to 2019 and violence has so far continued unabated in 2021 at a similar intensity. In 2022, countries such as **Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Nigeria** are also forecasted to witness significant increases in displacement.

Humanitarian funding is lacking, in particular in countries where displacement is forecasted to grow. Looking at the current forecasts for 2021, it is clear that in areas of “forgotten crises”, where humanitarian funding and attention from the international community is lacking, displacement is forecasted to increase significantly. The average growth in displacement in 2021 projected for countries where the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) were less than 50% funded is 11%, whereas for countries where the plans were more than 50% funded, displacement is forecasted to increase by only 4%. Looking at the few plans with funding above 75%, the forecasted displacement is set to decrease by 5%. Funding for the current 2021 HRP in DR Congo is only 13% funded and in Burkina Faso is only 17% funded.

Increased numbers of displaced people to be hosted in low-income countries. In 2020, the number of displaced people from the 24 countries covered in the model hosted in low-income countries increased compared to previous years, from 42% to 48%. Based on the forecasted displacement in the 24 countries, the number of displaced people hosted in low-income countries is set to increase to 50% by the end of 2022. At the same time, hosting in upper-middle-income countries is forecasted to decrease, while hosting in high-income countries is set to remain stable at 5%.

Recommendations

The forecasts highlight the pressing need for global solutions, responsibility sharing and solidarity. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) calls on donor and host governments to:

1. Ensure access to protection for all displaced persons. Promote durable solutions to displacement and uphold the principles enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees to ensure access to asylum, protection and inclusion in host societies, global responsibility sharing, and the commitments to expand access to third-country solutions including resettlement.
2. Increase long-term predictable funding levels to match the needs of people affected by crisis and displacement to avoid further suffering and increase in needs, and prevent further displacement. Increased funding is needed to ease the pressures on host countries and support displaced people’s self-reliance.
3. Put pressure on actors involved in violence and human rights abuses targeting civilians and hence causing displacement, urging them to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. This includes the protection of civilians and humanitarian aid workers to ensure unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for people in need.

With the ability to forecast displacement, the global community has an opportunity to prepare and respond appropriately to prevent or mitigate such displacement and related needs forecasted to materialize. Displacement is not always an unforeseen and sudden event, but a matter of the degree of pressure experienced and the degree of political will and resources available to engage appropriately to prevent and respond.

About DRC

DRC is present and active in the major displacement crises globally. DRC is actively responding to the humanitarian emergencies as they unfold by working to ensure the right to life, liberty and security of people, and ensuring access to basic needs such as food, water, sanitation, housing and medical care. DRC is also engaging in responding to protracted displacement situations and supports implementation of activities that reduce displacement-related risks and vulnerabilities and facilitate access to durable solutions. Lastly, DRC is working on addressing the causes of forced displacement, through building economic, environmental and conflict resilience in displacement-affected communities. DRC's work is centered around the sectors of protection, economic recovery, humanitarian disarmament and peacebuilding, shelter and settlements and camp coordination and management.

About the Foresight Model

The Foresight model can, with a high degree of accuracy, forecast the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people one to three years into the future. The model uses more than 120 indicators related to conflict, governance, economy, environment and population/society to forecast the future displacement. The model has been employed to forecast the cumulative number of people displaced from some 24 countries. The countries included in the model account for approximately 84% of all global displacement or a combined total of 69 million people displaced in 2020.

There are some limitations with the tool. The forecasts tend to be conservative, i.e. underestimate the level of displacement the coming year. It further has limited ability to forecast unprecedented events or high surges in displacement.

Introduction

At a global level, 2020 marked a new high in forcibly displaced people. In the past 10 years the number of forcibly displaced has almost doubled from 43 million to more than 82 million in 2020. While numbers continue to grow, displacement crises are not being resolved. The number of protracted refugee situations has gone up from 25 in 2009 to 49 in 2020 and the number of refugees living in protracted displacement has tripled since 2009.¹

With increased displacement, the need for humanitarian assistance is also growing. According to OCHA, more than 235 million are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020, up from 62 million in 2012 and 168 million in 2020.² The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed significantly to this significant increase in humanitarian needs.

This report will present the forecasted forced displacement in 2021 and 2022. In this report, forced displacement is defined as refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people (IDP). The forecasts have been developed on the basis of Foresight model – a machine learning model developed together with IBM with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The model can, with a high degree of accuracy, forecast the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people one to three years into the future. The model uses more than 120 indicators related to conflict, governance, economy, environment and population/society to forecast the future displacement. The tool has been developed to support the wider humanitarian system with more accurate forecast for strategic planning for better prevention, response and protection to displacement affected populations. The model has been employed to forecast the cumulative number of people displaced from some 24 countries. The countries included in the model account for approximately 84% of all global displacement or a combined total of 69 million people displaced in 2020.

The report will explore the effect of COVID-19 on displacement by analyzing how the different drivers of displacement – conflict, economy, governance, etc. – have evolved during the pandemic. The report will then present an overview of the forecasts of displacement in 2021 and 2022 and highlight key trends and patterns in the forecasts. The report will explore the situation in some of the countries where significant displacement has been forecasted either for 2021 or 2022, looking at the underlying drivers of displacement, how the situation is evolving in 2021 and how the DRC is responding to the situation. Lastly, the Foresight model will be introduced in more detail, including the methodology, data sources and limitation.

¹ UNHCR (19 June, 2021): Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2020

² OCHA (10 December, 2020): Global Humanitarian Overview 2021

COVID-19 and Displacement

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on a number of the drivers used to forecast displacement.

Economy. According to the IMF, the global economy contracted by 3.5% in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The economic contraction was less severe in emerging and developing economies where growth contracted by 2.4%.³ The economic impact was also felt in labor markets. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 8.8% of global working hours were lost in 2020, which is equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs.⁴ Phone survey data from the World Bank suggests that women, youth and lower-educated workers were significantly more likely to lose their jobs and experience decreased incomes. Self-employed and casual workers were also among the groups most hard hit by the economic downturn.⁵ ILO projects that the COVID-19 induced 'jobs gap' will reach 75 million in 2021, before falling to 23 million in 2022. As a result, global unemployment is expected to stand at 205 million people in 2022 compared to 187 million in 2019.⁶

The devastating economic impact of the pandemic has increased the number of people living in extreme poverty by 97 million, including 20 million who were otherwise projected to escape extreme poverty. Of the 97 million, 23 million will be in sub-Saharan Africa. The total number is estimated to increase to 98 million in 2021.⁷

Conflict. The immediate impact of COVID-19 on conflict may not have been severe. Overall, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the number of conflict events declined compared to 2019.⁸ This is despite the fact that peacekeeping and diplomatic activities in several contexts were affected by the pandemic.⁹ The slight decline in conflict events may be partly a result of the call for global ceasefire by the UN Secretary General in March 2020. Within the first weeks, conflict parties in 11 countries recognized the ceasefire call.

However, in the medium to longer-term COVID-19 may exacerbate conflict dynamics. Disruption to the global economy can drive increased levels of violence because violence is more likely during periods of economic volatility.¹⁰ Furthermore, the pandemic has enabled NSAGs to gain momentum. As governments and security forces diverted their attention to fighting the pandemic, upholding restrictive measures, etc. NSAGs increased their attacks and support to affected populations in order to build legitimacy.¹¹ Lastly, grievances caused by the imposition of restrictive measures and the economic fallout, etc. have resulted in social unrest in many countries – social tension and dissatisfaction can quickly escalate into violence and conflict.¹² This is particularly the case, given that the pandemic has deepened inequalities by affecting the most marginalized groups the hardest.

³ IMF (January 2021): World Economic Outlook Update

⁴ ILO (25 January, 2021): COVID-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition Updated estimates and analysis, ILO Monitor

⁵ Bundervoet, Tom; Davalos, Maria E.; Garcia, Natalia (March, 2021): The Short-Term Impacts of COVID-19 on Households in Developing Countries: An Overview Based on a Harmonized Data Set of High-Frequency Surveys. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 9582. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank

⁶ ILO (June, 2021): World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021, International Labour Office – Geneva

⁷ Daniel Gerszon Mahler, Nishant Yonzan, Cristoph Lakner, R. Andres Castaneda Aguilar & Haoyu Wu (June 24, 2021): Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty: Turning the corner on the pandemic in 2021?, World Bank Data Blog

⁸ Dr. Roudabeh Kishi (April, 2021): A year of COVID-19: The Pandemic's Impact on Global Conflict and Demonstrations Trends. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

⁹ Robert Malley (30 December, 2020): 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2021, International Crisis Group

¹⁰ Robert Malley (30 December, 2020): 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2021, International Crisis Group

¹¹ Katarina Mustasilta (23 October, 2020): The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Peace and Conflict, Global Observatory

¹² Vanda Felbab-Brown (15 January, 2021): The key trends to watch this year on nonstate armed actors, Brookings

Governance and human rights. Governance and human rights have also been heavily affected by the pandemic. With states challenged in their ability to cope with the situation, the legitimacy of states has deteriorated. This has been exacerbated by the decline of democratic governance in the face of the pandemic, as governments have postponed or cancelled elections and limited access to public services. The pandemic has in itself challenged many assumptions about the fragility, resilience and coping capacity of states in the face of crisis.

Basic human rights have been curtailed under the guise of the pandemic. In certain instances, restrictions have been used to repress political opposition in electoral processes. More broadly, the right to peaceful assembly has been curtailed. And many activist and human rights defenders have been detained and prosecuted for criticizing government responses to the pandemic.¹³

Amnesty International has also found that 2020 brought an increase in violations related to the rights to life, health and social protection and gender-based violence, particularly in developing countries. They further found that, like the economic impact, this was most felt in marginalized groups, including women and refugees.¹⁴

The deteriorating conditions related to governance and human rights are causing people to leave. Interviews conducted by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) with refugees and migrants on the move found that more than one-third indicated that the COVID-19 related-crisis was in some way a factor in their decision to leave. A significant number of refugees and migrants mentioned the impact of the pandemic on rights and freedoms, access to services and the impact on conflict and violence, as a reason for leaving.¹⁵

Climate Change, Environment and Food Security. While the pandemic and decreased economic activity led to some reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, these are likely to return to normal when economies recover and will thus in the longer term not significantly alter the outlook. In the shorter term, the economic downturn, movement restrictions and disruption to the agricultural sector have exacerbated the effects of extreme weather and climate events along the entire food supply chain and has complicated disaster risk reduction efforts, according to the World Meteorological Organization.¹⁶

The disruption in the agriculture sector and global food markets caused global food prices to soar by as much as 14% in 2020.¹⁷ This is driving an unprecedented increase in food insecurity. According to the Global Network Against Food Crises, acute food insecurity increased by 20 million last year compared to 2019, reaching a total of 155 million people living in acute food insecurity across 55 countries. While conflict was the main driver of the increase in food insecurity, the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic pushed 40 million people into food insecurity.¹⁸

Population/Society. The pandemic has had a significant impact on population and societal dynamics. Displaced people have been severely impacted. The movement restrictions imposed because of the pandemic in many instances deprived displaced people of access to basic services.¹⁹ Further, the ability to seek refuge and asylum has been challenged. As of January 2021, 144 countries still had restrictions on accessing their territory in place and 64 of those countries did not make exceptions for people seeking asylum.²⁰ Interviews conducted by the MMC highlight the increased vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants. Overall, refugees and migrants reported that the risk of abuse or rights violation had increased since

¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (18 January, 2021): Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the enjoyment of human rights around the world, including good practices and areas of concern. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Forty-sixth session, 22 February–19 March 2021, Agenda item 2

¹⁴ Amnesty International (2021): The State of the World's Human Rights, Amnesty International Ltd, London, United Kingdom

¹⁵ Mixed Migration Centre (10 December, 2020): Impact of COVID-19 on the decision to migrate, COVID-19 Global Thematic Update #4

¹⁶ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) (19 April, 2021): State of the Global Climate 2020, WMO-No. 1264

¹⁷ David Malpass (1 February, 2021): COVID crisis is fueling food price rises for world's poorest, World Bank Voices Blog

¹⁸ Global Network Against Food Crises / Food Security Information Network (May, 2021): Global Report on Food Crises 2021

¹⁹ Benton, Meghan, Jeanne Batalova, Samuel Davidoff-Gore and Timo Schmidt (April, 2021): COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020. Migration Policy Institute and International Organization for Migration, Washington, D.C., and Geneva.

²⁰ Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) (29 March, 2021): How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective Volume III, The World Bank's Development Data Group with support by UN DESA and UNCTAD

the pandemic began, confirming that COVID-19 acts as a threat multiplier. This included a perceived increased risk of arrest and detention, pushback/denial of entry, theft and bribery/extortion. Furthermore, more than 40% agreed that domestic violence had increased.²¹

Access to vaccines is also challenging for refugees. 123 of the 126 countries that host refugees have included refugees in their vaccination plans or provided assurances that they would do so. And in 91 countries vaccination campaigns with refugees have begun. Yet there are a number of barriers for refugees to receive the vaccine. Several states require identity documents that refugees often do not have. Booking or registration systems are in some instances online, which require recipients to have internet access and be (computer) literate. Lastly, in several countries, vaccination sites are not located close to where refugees live, further deterring refugees from participating in the vaccination campaigns.²² Barriers for refugees and migrants also include limited information on where and how to get vaccinated, language barriers and fear of arrest, detention or deportation.²³

In 2020, DRC developed a scenario-based forecast by analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on displacement drivers in four countries in the Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria and Niger). The forecasts estimated that the cumulative number of displaced people from the four countries would increase from 4.14 million in 2019 to 5.43 million in 2020 and 5.99 million by the end of 2021. This was almost 1 million higher than the baseline forecast.²⁴ The cumulative number of displaced people in the four countries by the end of 2020 was 5.47 million, indicating that this method of forecasting the impact of COVID-19 on displacement is quite accurate, albeit slightly underestimating the increase.

²¹ Mixed Migration Centre (2 October, 2020): Impact of COVID-19 on protection risks for refugees and migrants, COVID-

²² UNHCR (24 June, 2021): UNHCR calls on states to remove barriers to access to COVID-19 vaccines for refugees

²³ Australian Red Cross & IFRC (30 June, 2021): Sight Unseen: A vision for effective access to COVID-19 vaccines for migrants, Global Migration Lab

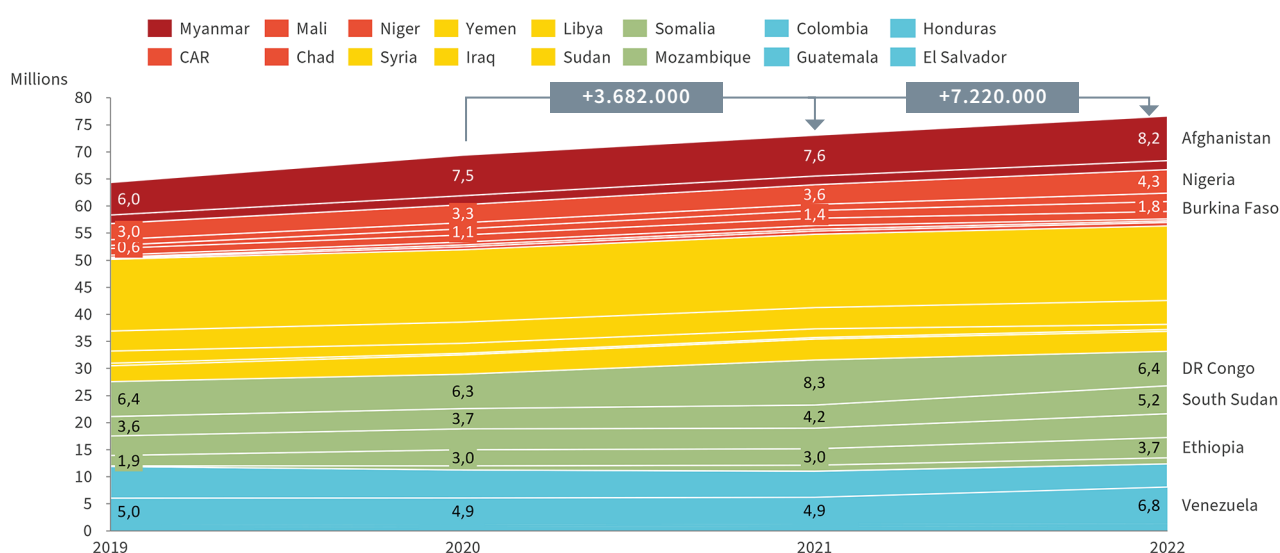
²⁴ Kate Hodal (11 August, 2020): Covid to displace more than a million across the Sahel, new tool predicts, The Guardian

Displacement Forecast

Overview

Combining the forecasts for the 24 countries covered in the model, the cumulative number of people displaced is forecasted to increase by 3.7 million people in 2021. This amounts to approximately seven people every minute or 10,000 every day for the entire year being forced to flee their homes. This number is projected to increase to 7.2 million by the end of 2022. These developments will likely trigger significant increases in humanitarian needs and needs for durable solutions in the coming years.

Table 1
Funding Targets, Actuals (US\$)



The increased displacement in 2021 is driven in particular by significant growth forecasted in DR Congo, where displacement is forecasted to increase by almost 2 million to reach more than 8 million. This is already visible on the ground in DR Congo, where up until April 300,000 had been displaced as a result of violence. The Mount Nyiragongo eruption in June displaced another 400,000. Other countries such as Burkina Faso, Mozambique, South Sudan and Sudan are also projected to experience significant displacement increases in 2021. In 2022, while projections are more uncertain, significant increases are forecasted in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Venezuela.

For other countries such as Libya, Iraq and Colombia the displacement situation is projected to improve and displacement forecasted to decrease in 2021. For Iraq and Colombia this trend is projected to continue into 2022 and Mali is also expected to have fewer displaced people than in 2020.

The forecasts are based solely on data and developments up to the previous year (i.e., in this case, 2020). As such, recent or unexpected developments are not taken into account. In the current forecasts, countries such as Central African Republic, Chad and Myanmar are forecasted to have limited increases in displacement, but significant displacement has already taken

place because of unforeseen events. In Chad the situation has been tense since the president died unexpectedly. As of mid-March, an increase of 65,000 IDP had already been recorded.²⁵ In Myanmar the military coup in February and subsequent protests have also changed the situation significantly and more than 220,000 people are reported to have been displaced so far.²⁶ These developments highlight the fact that the forecasted 3.7 million is likely a conservative estimate and the actual numbers could end up being higher overall.

Looking at the forecasts from a regional perspective, East Africa²⁷ and West Africa²⁸ have the highest forecasted growth in the number of displaced people in 2021: 16% and 9% respectively. In 2022 the cumulative number of people displaced in West Africa is forecasted to continue, with 14% growth; while in East Africa the number is forecasted to grow by only 1% compared to 2021. In Latin America²⁹ a small decrease of approximately 2% is forecasted for 2021. However, in 2022 the cumulative number of people displaced is expected to increase by 12% compared to 2021. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region³⁰ and Asia³¹, the cumulative number of displaced people is expected to be stable in 2021. This is set to continue in 2022 in MENA, while Asia is forecasted to experience an increase of 8%. As highlighted above, the 2021 forecast for Asia should be taken with a note of caution because of developments in Myanmar.

Conflict is a key driver of displacement. In 2020 there was an overall decrease in the number of battle incidents (17% decrease) in the 24 countries covered in the model, as well as in fatalities (44% decrease), while violence against civilians increased slightly. Countries such as DR Congo, Burkina Faso and Mozambique, which are forecasted to have significant increases in displacement in 2021, also saw significant growth in conflict incidents and fatalities in 2020. Some countries, such as Ethiopia and Niger, also witnessed significant increases in violence and fatalities, but this has not led to higher displacement being forecasted for 2021. Other countries such as Colombia, Myanmar and Venezuela, saw fairly sharp declines in conflict incidents and fatalities, contributing to the limited displacement being forecasted in these countries in 2021.

In 2020 the number of displaced people from the 24 countries covered in the model that were hosted in low-income countries increased compared to previous years. Hosting in low-income countries was stable between 2015 and 2019, when approximately 42% of displaced people were hosted in low-income countries. In 2020 this increased to 48%. Based on the forecasted displacement in the 24 countries, the number of displaced people hosted in low-income countries is set to increase to 50% by the end of 2022.³² At the same time, hosting in upper-middle-income countries will decrease and hosting in high-income countries will remain stable at 5%. This development is likely linked to COVID-19 movement and entry restrictions and to record-low resettlement numbers. In 2020 only 34,400 people were resettled, even though UNHCR assessed that close to 1.44 million people were in acute need. Also, displacement is more likely in low-income countries and forecasts are on average higher in countries with a higher share of internally displaced. In countries where more than 75% of the displaced are internally displaced, the forecasted growth in displacement is 13%. In countries where less than 75% of the displaced are internally displaced, the forecasted growth is only 4%. Countries with a high share of internally displaced people include Burkina Faso, DR Congo and Mozambique.

Looking at the current forecasts for 2021, it is clear displacement is forecasted to increase significantly in areas of ‘forgotten crisis’, where humanitarian funding and attention from the international community is lacking. The average growth in displacement in 2021 projected for countries where the 2020 HRP were less than 50% funded, is 11%, whereas for countries where the plans were more than 50% funded, displacement is forecasted to increase by only 4%. In the few instances where funding was above 75%, the forecasted displacement is set to decrease by 5%. Analysis of funding and displacement trends in more than 100 historical humanitarian response plans corroborates these findings. When response plans were less than

²⁵ Displacement Tracking Matrix (15 June, 2021): Rapport sur les déplacements | Round 14 | 17 février — 17 mars 2021, IOM

²⁶ OCHA (24 June, 2021): Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 8

²⁷ East Africa includes DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia and South Sudan

²⁸ West Africa includes Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Mali

²⁹ Latin America includes Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela

³⁰ MENA region includes Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen

³¹ Asia includes Afghanistan and Myanmar

³² This assumes that the future displacement will have the same distribution to hosting countries as in 2020

50% funded, the cumulative number of people displaced the following year increased by 36% on average. If the plans were more than 75% funded, the increase in displacement was only 10% on average. The lack of humanitarian funding means the humanitarian community cannot respond adequately to alleviate the suffering and ensure protection of vulnerable groups, implement early action and prevention activities and increase the resilience of displacement-affected communities. The current 2021 HRP in DR Congo is only 13% funded, in Burkina Faso it is only 17% funded and in Cameroon it is only 20% funded.

An overview of the specific forecasts for each of the 24 countries is available in the annex.

Country Deep Dives

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a longstanding humanitarian crisis. In 2021 more than 18.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance – the third highest number in the world. This is almost double the number of the 9.4 million in need in 2020. In particular, the number in need has increased in the food security and agriculture sector (from 8.2 to 17.6 million) and the health sector (from 3.7 to 14.5 million).³³

Displacement and humanitarian needs in Afghanistan are driven by a number of factors, including natural hazards, armed violence and economic deterioration. At the beginning of 2020 a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban led to decreased fighting. However, fighting has re-intensified, with more than 2.5 times the number of battle incidents in the second quarter of 2021 as in the same period in 2020 and the number of fatalities is the highest since 2018. The uptick in fighting has limited the hopes for the peace process.³⁴ The increased violence and the full withdrawal of US military forces in September will bring significant risk of collapse of the peace process between the Taliban and the Afghan government and an increase in violence. Without US or international military presence, the Taliban is likely to expand control in southern and eastern Afghanistan. This has already been seen: a number of districts have fallen into Taliban control since June 15. If the Taliban is able to gain control of Kandahar, it may be able to increase its power in urban centers in addition to the countryside. There has already been an increase in targeted assassinations in urban areas.³⁵ The pressure on the Afghan security forces could lead to fragmentation in the security apparatus, which could see a return to the ‘warlordism’ of the 1990s.³⁶

People displaced by fighting face substantial dangers from explosive ordnance (EO) contamination along displacement routes, and lack of access to food, water, shelter and health care. Even where fighting has ceased, contamination continues to kill returning populations, and destruction of shelters and farms means returnees struggle to meet even basic survival needs.

The potential increased power and control of the Taliban is a considerable threat to the already fragile human rights situation in the country. The uptick in assassinations has particular targeted journalists, human rights workers and civil society activists in what appears to be a forewarning of what is to come. The progress witnessed in relation to women’s rights is also under threat of significant roll-back.³⁷

The situation is likely to worsen in 2021. To date, public statements and intractable negotiation stances by political and military actors indicate that the conflict is likely to continue at similar or increased levels in 2021 as a result of: 1) the announcement of the withdrawal of international troops and recent political developments, including the postponement of the Istanbul conference between the conflicting parties; 2) the anticipated spike in conflict-related displacement; 3) the impact of cyclical droughts – the upcoming drought is forecast to be on par with the 2018 drought; and 4) the COVID-19 pandemic, which has already had catastrophic consequences for people’s health, incomes and levels of debt.

COVID-19 has cast a new shadow over the complex challenges Afghanistan is facing, including the economic situation. It has sparked large-scale returns from neighboring Iran and Pakistan because of joblessness or direct deportations. The return of un-

³³ OCHA (January, 2021): Humanitarian Response Plan Afghanistan 2018–2021

³⁴ International Crisis Group (13 January, 2021): What Future for Afghan Peace Talks under a Biden Administration?, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°165

³⁵ Laurel Miller (20 January, 2021): Top Conflicts to Watch in 2021: Increasing Violence in Afghanistan, Council on Foreign Relations

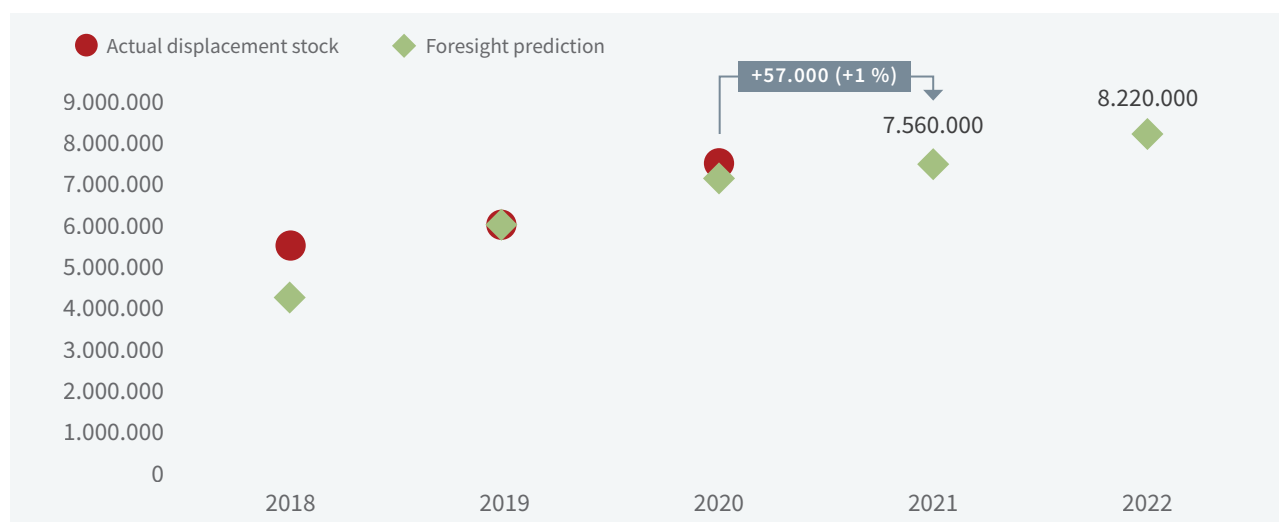
³⁶ Max Boot (14 April, 2021): Biden’s 9/11 Withdrawal from Afghanistan: What to Know, Council on Foreign Relations

³⁷ Clayton Thomas (11 June, 2021): Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy: In Brief, Congressional Research Service

documented Afghan migrants in 2021 is anticipated to exceed the largest ever return year on record for undocumented Afghan migrants in 2020. COVID-19 has increased protection risks for vulnerable people, with significant evidence of increased gender-based violence and child abuse, and increased reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse. A large survey conducted by the DRC together with other humanitarian partners in May 2020 found that two-thirds of respondents had been under lockdown in the past few days. Of those, 26% said they had lost their livelihood or income-generating activity altogether. Another 53% said that livelihood/income-generating activities had strongly or slightly decreased. The impact was felt among younger Afghans in particular. The lockdown and containment measure also affected small businesses: 30% of the members of the Federation of Afghan Craftsmen and Traders were unable to recover from the lockdown and went bankrupt because of the immediate loss of revenue. With already meager public finances, also under pressure because of general economic contraction, the ability of the Afghan state to mitigate these negative impacts through social safety nets have been very limited. This inability is likely to deteriorate because funding for security – already consuming around 30% of government spending – is likely to increase as US and international troops are withdrawn.³⁸

Adding to these challenges, Afghanistan has also been hit by a severe drought, declared on 23 June, with 80% of the country classified as being in either severe or serious drought status. The drought is the result of low winter rainfall, and high temperatures have had a negative impact on rain-fed and irrigated agriculture/livestock, and availability of water for drinking, washing and sanitation.³⁹ The drought is likely to affect more than three million Afghans, who are now faced with mounting food insecurity, having to rely on negative coping mechanisms and potential displacement.⁴⁰

Based on the developments in Afghanistan, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from Afghanistan will increase by more 55,000 in 2021 to reach almost 7.6 million. The number of displaced is expected to increase to 8.2 million by the end of 2022 – a 10% increase compared to 2020. Given the significant changes in the context in 2021, a scenario-based forecast for 2021 has been developed based on a number of qualitative assumptions about the developments.⁴¹ This forecast suggests that the level of displacement could increase by 530,000 in 2021 to reach more than 8 million people. As of 25 July 2021 almost 360,000 people were reported to have been internally displaced. This includes around 35,000 people in Kunduz who have been displaced because of fighting between Afghan security forces and NSAGs.⁴² Given the current situation, there seems to be limited impetus for internally displaced people to return. Protection monitoring conducted by DRC in Farah, Herat and Wardak in late 2020 showed that 12%, 1% and 0% of IDP respectively intended to return to their place of origin.⁴³



³⁸ Lucile Martin & Saeed Parto (November, 2020) On Shaky Grounds COVID-19 and Afghanistan's Social, Political and Economic Capacities for Sustainable Peace, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

³⁹ OCHA (17 March, 2021): Afghanistan Spring Disaster Contingency Plan, March–June 2021

⁴⁰ Norwegian Refugee Council (June, 2020): Running out of time: A looming drought in Afghanistan, Briefing note

⁴¹ The key assumptions derived based on qualitative analysis of the situation with partners included 1) conflict to increase 120%, civilian fatalities by 50% and total fatalities by 100% compared to 2020, 2) agricultural stress index at rate above 2018, 3) undernourishment increasing, 4) major drought affecting 16 million people and 5) human rights situation similar to the period 1998-2000. This is an updated scenario compared to an earlier version shared of this report, which estimated an increase of 370,000, which had been developed in March 2021.

⁴² OCHA (June, 2021): Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (7–13 June, 2021)

⁴³ Danish Refugee Council (16 June, 2021): Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report – Herat – Q2 | September – November, 2020, Danish Refugee Council (16 June, 2021): Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report – Farah – Q2 | September – November, 2020, Danish Refugee Council (16 June, 2021): Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report – Wardak - Q2 | September – November, 2020

DRC has been present in Afghanistan since the 1990s and is one of the primary humanitarian actors with a robust operational capacity responding to the needs of returnees from both Pakistan and Iran, as well as the highly vulnerable IDP. As of 2021 DRC works in 21 provinces in Afghanistan, with activities in multiple sectors.

DRC remains committed to maintaining a widespread geographic footprint in Afghanistan because of the continuum of needs in the country and its people. DRC remained operational during the COVID-19 emergency and intends to continue growing based on needs. In particular, DRC sees multi-purpose cash assistance as the primary avenue for humanitarian aid, as this form of cash allows households to determine how they will support their individual needs and provides dignity and self-determination for displacement-affected people. DRC will continue to advocate for more funding to grow its early recovery and development portfolio, working in partnership with the government and other actors on initiatives that have long-term impacts. DRC particularly sees opportunities to do this through social protection and governance initiatives managed by the government. This can be an impossible task without the international community's active support to enable humanitarian and development actors to deliver early recovery as well as resilience-building both at the place of origin and at the place of displacement. This support is critical if displacement-affected people are to be able to consider return or integration and reach durable solutions to their displacement.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has been an emerging humanitarian crisis since violence escalated in 2019. According to the UN, 3.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021, up from 2.9 million in 2020. Needs are particularly increasing in relation to shelter, food security and gender-based violence.⁴⁴

Conflict and violence have affected Burkina Faso since 2015 but escalated in 2019, in particular in the North and East regions of the country. The conflict involves a complex mix of state security forces, local self-defense groups or Koglweogo and extremist groups. The central government has tried to crack down on extremist-group insurgency by relying on Koglweogo and other self-defense groups. This has created a vicious cycle of retaliatory violence between communities⁴⁵, particularly between farmers and herders, where armed groups are exploiting pre-existing tension. The violence is further tied to the cross-border movement of extremist groups in neighboring Mali and Niger. While battles continued to rage in 2020 there was a decrease in fighting in the last months of the year, which has continued into 2021. However, violence against civilians has reached all-time high levels and has increased by more than 33% in the first half of 2021 compared to the second half of 2020.⁴⁶ The development has established Burkina Faso as the epicenter of violence in the Central Sahel region and the conflict, already tied to violence in Mali and Niger, could spread into other neighboring states such as Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.⁴⁷ By the end of 2020, the violence had displaced more than 1 million Burkinabe, mainly internally.⁴⁸ Current conflict forecasts suggest high violent events (+25 fatalities) are highly likely in Burkina Faso in July 2021 – Sahel region is in the top-5 of high-risk areas in Africa and has seen a noticeable increase in violence.

The violence has erupted as a result of a number of factors, including political marginalization, climate change and limited economic opportunities.⁴⁹ Governance is generally weak and there is very limited presence of state institutions and authority outside major cities. The institutions are plagued by insufficient funds lack of ability to deliver basic services to the population, including health care, water, education and electricity. While decentralization efforts have been undertaken to

⁴⁴ OCHA (January, 2021): Plan De Réponse Humanitaire Burkina Faso 2021

⁴⁵ IRC (15 December, 2021): 2021 Emergency Watchlist

⁴⁶ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): Data dashboard

⁴⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center: Burkina Faso

⁴⁸ Violence Early Warning System (ViEWS): The Risk Monitor: July 2021, Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

⁴⁹ OCHA (1 February, 2021): Burkina Faso: Situation Report

⁵⁰ Institute for Peace and Security Studies (March, 2020): Burkina Faso, Conflict Insight vol. 1, Addis Ababa University

remedy these shortfalls, these efforts have so far failed to deliver.⁵⁰ These shortfalls have fueled conflict between communities over access to scarce resources, services and land, which has escalated into violence. The local authorities' inability to resolve conflicts and protect the communities from the violence committed by extremist groups and self-defense groups have further undermined their legitimacy.⁵¹ The Koglweogo and other self-defense groups are gradually taking on the state's role by engaging in taxation, justice and policing in addition to security.⁵² This further challenges the state's authority, which is also challenged by human-rights abuses and atrocities committed by state security forces and the Koglweogo and other self-defense groups as part of their campaign against the extremist groups.⁵³

As highlighted, tension arising in communities over access to land and resources is a key element in the crisis. Climate change and environmental degradation is reducing access to fertile soil, pasture and water, which is affecting farmer and herder communities. This is upsetting the balance between herder and farmer communities as traditional routes of transhumance are transformed, creating the foundation for tension and conflict.⁵⁴ The country is also prone to sudden-onset disasters, especially floods and heavy rains. In 2020 more than 20,000 people were displaced because of seasonal flooding.⁵⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the challenges. The country has recorded more than 13,000 confirmed cases. Containment measures have led to the closure of schools and limited access to health services and vaccination services. The economy contracted by 2% in 2020 but is expected to recover somewhat in 2021, with a forecasted growth rate of 3.9%. However, growth is not expected to return to 2019 levels by 2025.⁵⁶ A study conducted in May 2020 showed that 48% of informal workers, constituting an estimated 66% of the total employment in Burkina Faso, had lost their jobs. Of the informal workers who had managed to keep their jobs, 65% had experienced decrease in earnings.⁵⁷

As a result of the violence and the impact of COVID-19, food insecurity is soaring. The number of food-insecure people increased by 66% from December 2019 to December 2020 and an estimated 11,000 people were entered the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5 condition of 'catastrophic/famine'. While the situation seemed to have improved slightly at the beginning of 2021, the projections for June to August 2021 suggest that approximately 40% or 800,000 people will be in IPC Phase 3–5 – crisis to famine conditions.⁵⁸

Based on the developments in Burkina Faso, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people living in displacement from Burkina Faso will increase by almost 300,000 in 2021 to reach almost 1.4 million. This means a 27% increase in the number of displaced people from Burkina Faso compared to the number in 2020. Several large-scale displacements have already occurred. At the beginning of May a number of attacks were carried out in different regions of the country, with assailants burning down houses and killing civilians. Almost 18,000 people fled as a result of the violence.⁵⁹ At the beginning of June more than 7,000 people, including 4,800 children, fled violence in the Sahel region following

⁵¹ Marcel Maglo & Fiona Grathwohl (10 May, 2020): Regional Instability Drives Worsening in Burkina Faso, Fragile States Index.

⁵² International Crisis Group (24 February, 2020): Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence, Crisis Group Africa Report N°287

⁵³ Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

⁵⁴ Institute for Peace and Security Studies (March, 2020): Burkina Faso, Conflict Insight vol. 1, Addis Ababa University

⁵⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center: Burkina Faso

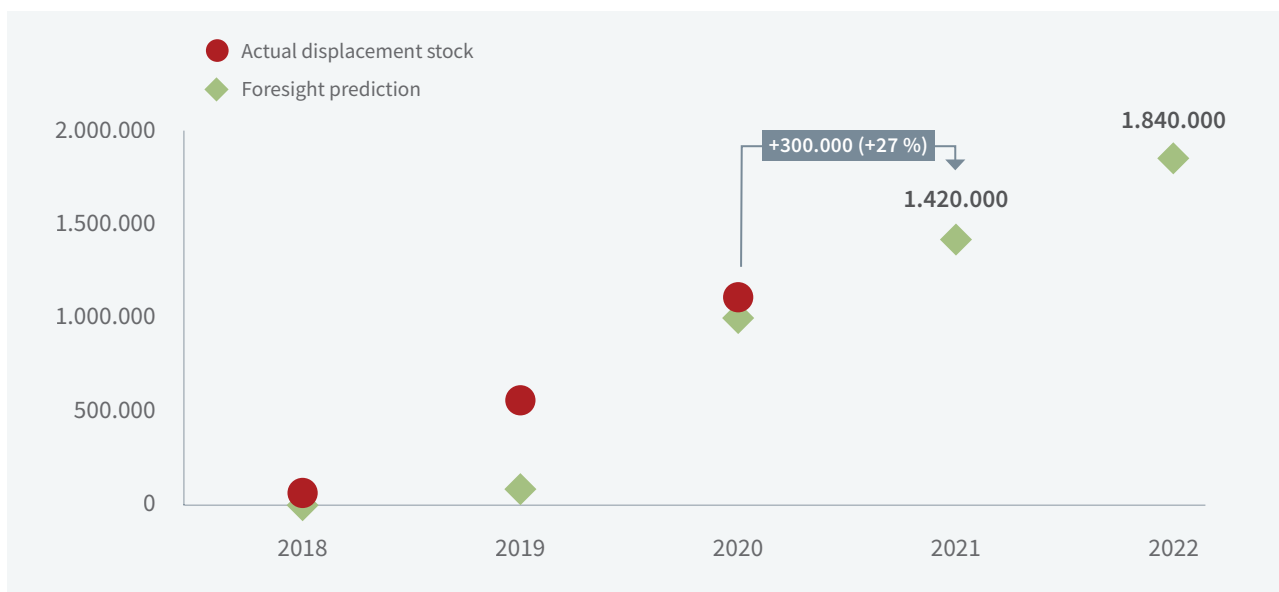
⁵⁶ IMF (October, 2020): World Economic Outlook

⁵⁷ Racky Balde, Mohamed Boly, & Elvis Avenyo (May 2020): Labour market effects of COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa: An informality lens from Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, UNU-MERIT Working Papers #2020-022

⁵⁸ Réseau de prévention des crises alimentaires (RPCA) (March, 2021): Situation alimentaire et nutritionnelle / Burkina Faso

⁵⁹ UNHCR (7 May, 2021): Series of attacks force thousands to flee in Burkina Faso

⁶⁰ ECHO (9 June, 2021): Burkina Faso – Insecurity and forced displacements, Daily flash



attacks by armed groups.⁶⁰

DRC has six fully operational and established offices, covering four of the six regions declared to be in emergency in 2021. In line with its mandate and commitment to rapid, agile, needs-based action and the vision that every displaced person has a right to dignity, DRC’s operation in Burkina Faso has expanded and adapted its operations and presence in the country. From a small operation focused on providing protection assistance and durable solutions to refugees, the mission has become a major humanitarian response agency, providing assistance and protection to thousands of displaced people in 2019 and 2020.

DRC is working to respond to the most urgent needs, prevent and reduce the risks of protection and conflict, and support the population in the search for early and sustainable solutions. DRC is working on food security and livelihoods through training and apprenticeship in trades in training centers and practical work placements, enhancing the employability of youths and to avoid youths being recruited into armed groups. DRC is further working on income-generating activities and village savings and loan associations, and has initiated a 3-year graduation approach to monitor and support vulnerable populations reduce their level of vulnerability.

Protection is at the core of DRC’s work in Burkina Faso. In addition to being integrated into the work in other sectors, DRC is also working directly with protection through monitoring of both individual- and community-level protection risks. Individual assistance activities are carried out in response to protection incidents, risks of incidents and extreme vulnerabilities. The provision of assistance through cash transfers will be assessed and gradually integrated into the range of possible responses. Psychological first aid activities will be stepped up. DRC will engage in case management with a view to supporting social services, to support them when they lack resources and strengthen the synergy between humanitarian actors and state services in responding to the needs of the population.

Lastly, activities contributing to social cohesion, strengthening local protection systems, raising awareness of rights and services, supporting the green bio-circular economy, in order to inform future sustainable solutions are a core focus going forward. This involves raising awareness, training and bringing together stakeholders to create a space for learning and reflection, and will be based on information collected individually by stakeholders and collectively through joint initiatives to inform a common agenda on early and durable solutions and future durable solutions, policies and programs.

Cameroon

Cameroon is both a major host country to refugees, and, increasingly, a source of displacement because of two distinct conflicts in Cameroon that have left more than a million people internally displaced.

The ‘Anglophone’ conflict began in 2016, when a separatist movement emerged in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions following strikes and protest over the dominance of the French language in the education and judicial system.⁶¹ The second crisis in the Far North region is a result of the violence driven by NSAGs in the Lake Chad Basin that has spilled over into Cameroon. The eastern regions of Cameroon (North, Adamawa and East) have been hosting refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) since 2003, with new arrivals continuing in 2021 following post-election violence. According to the UN, 4.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, an increase from 3.9 million in 2020.⁶²

The Far North was first affected by spill-over violence from neighboring countries in 2014; conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions added to the humanitarian burden in the country. In 2020, battle incidents and violence against civilians increased by 56% compared to 2019. This reflected a trend in the wider Lake Chad Basin, which had the highest monthly number of security incidents related to NSAGs since 2018.⁶³ The violence increased despite the fact that a least one of the separatist groups, Southern Cameroons Defence Forces (SOCADEF), declared an initial two-week ceasefire in March following the call from the UN Secretary General for a global ceasefire in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ceasefire was extended twice to last into May.⁶⁴

The conflict is playing out within a context of broader political tension. The political landscape has become deeply divided following the 2018 election in which several irregularities have been documented. Since then, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement has boycotted both parliamentary and regional elections in 2020 and been a vocal critic of the handling of the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest.⁶⁵ Further deepening the political conflict, the president has sought to decrease political space by arresting political opponents. State legitimacy and capacity is being challenged further by the inability to secure appropriate service delivery to the population. In the Northwest and Southwest, schools and teachers have been targeted by NSAGs. The areas hosting the significant number of IDP and refugees from other countries also experience strains on the ability to deliver services.⁶⁶

The human rights situation in the country is also deteriorating. There are reports of widespread human rights abuses, including extrajudicial or summary executions and mass killings, committed by government forces and NSAGs in the Northwest and Southwest regions. There have been efforts to restrict freedom of expression and association, and a crackdown on the political opposition.⁶⁷ DRC protection-monitoring data shows a spike in arbitrary arrests reported to DRC in January before the elections, around the Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development launch in June, and around the regional elections.⁶⁸

Since 2017 NSAGs have advocated and enforced a ‘no-school policy’, leading to closures of public school and leaving 700,000 children out of school in late 2020. The armed groups have burnt schools, intimidated, kidnapped and killed teachers and students. In DRC Rapid Protection Assessments in the Southwest region, 87% of key informants said there was an operational primary school in their community before the crises but only 27% said there was an operational school currently. The closure of school leads to children being sent away from their homes in search of education or economic

⁶¹ ACAPS (19 February, 2021): Cameroon: The education crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions, Thematic Report

⁶² OCHA (March, 2021): Humanitarian Response Plan Cameroon

⁶³ OCHA (March, 2021): Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon

⁶⁴ University of Edinburgh: Ceasefires in a Time of Covid-19

⁶⁵ Arrey Elvis Ntui (12 February, 2021): Cameroon’s Ethno-Political Tensions and Facebook Are a Deadly Mix, International Crisis Group

⁶⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (22 March, 2021): Out of Sight: Cameroon’s Downward Spiral of Violence and Displacement

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

⁶⁸ Danish Refugee Council (8 February, 2021): Protection Monitoring Report: Southwest Cameroon – January to December 2020

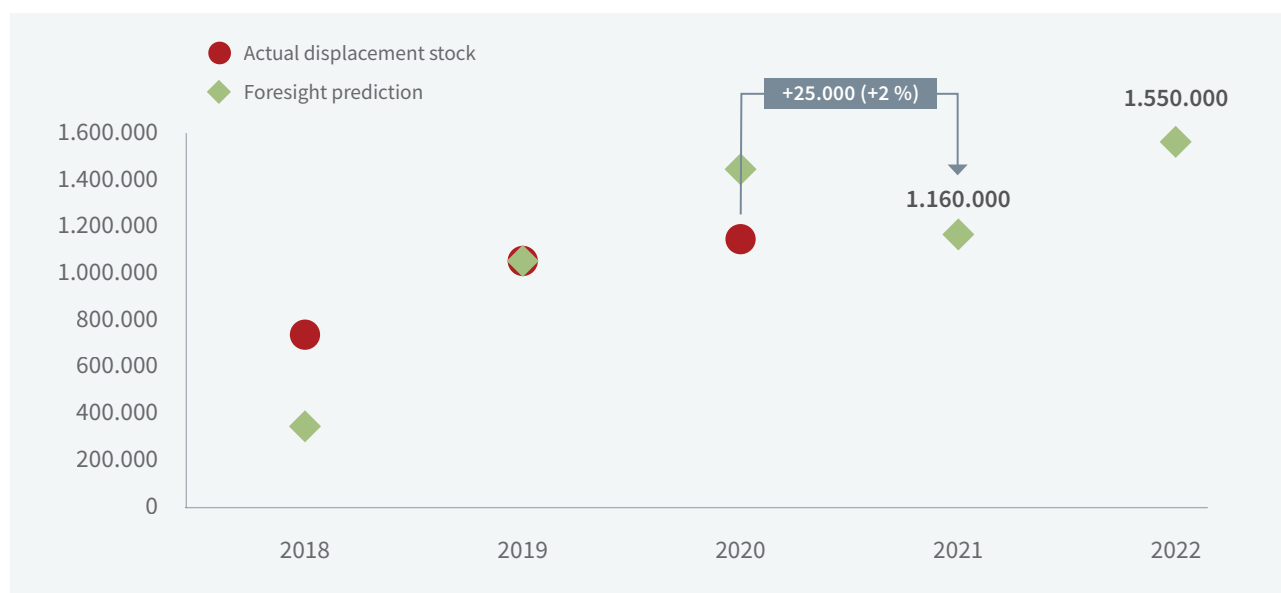
opportunities. An estimated 9% of the population in the communities assessed by DRC in Southwest Cameroon were Un-accompanied and Separated Children.⁶⁹

Some of the measures, such as limiting public gatherings, have been implemented in the context of containing the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been more than 78,000 confirmed cases in the country as of June 2021. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy and GDP has contracted by 2.8%. The impact has also included reduced public and private revenues, which has forced the government to reduce its financial budget.⁷⁰

Cameroon is also vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation. More than 116,000 people were displaced in Cameroon in 2020 as a result of natural disasters. The vulnerabilities include floods, which are particularly problematic in the Far North region, an area also plagued by violence. The country also experiences frequent droughts, landslides and bush fires, which all add to the environmental challenges.⁷¹

These factors have all had an impact on humanitarian needs. Approximately 10% of the population – 2.7 million people – were food insecure in March 2021, although the number is expected to decrease in July– August.⁷² A DRC rapid protection assessment in Southwest Cameroon found high levels of vulnerability in all communities, particularly affecting female-headed households, elderly individuals, pregnant and lactating women and girls, unaccompanied and separated children, and people living with disabilities. These vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by a clear decline in access to basic services, in particular in terms of education, health facilities, and markets.⁷³

Based on the developments in Cameroon, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from the country will increase by approximately 25,000 in 2021 to reach almost 1.16 million. The model further expects the numbers will increase rapidly in 2022 and could reach 1.55 million by the end of 2022. The displacement of approximately 20,000 people as a result of violence has already been reported this year in the Northwest and Southwest regions alone.⁷⁴



⁶⁹ Danish Refugee Council (8 February, 2021): Focus Group Discussion report: Child Protection Needs in South-West Cameroon, December 2020

⁷⁰ OCHA (March, 2021): Humanitarian Needs Overview: Cameroon

⁷¹ OCHA (March, 2021): Humanitarian Needs Overview: Cameroon

⁷² FAO (6 May, 2021): Pres de 2.7 millions de personnes en insecurite alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Cameroun

⁷³ Danish Refugee Council (8 February, 2021): Rapid Protection Assessments Summary Report – Southwest Cameroon

⁷⁴ OCHA (3 June, 2021): Situation Report: Cameroon, OCHA (28 February, 2021): Cameroon: Northwest and Southwest Situation Report No. 28

DRC started operations in Cameroon in 2018, responding to the humanitarian needs of refugees from CAR and vulnerable host communities in the Adamawa region, with a focus on protection and economic recovery interventions. Currently, DRC intervenes in both the Adamawa and East regions with an integrated approach aiming to improve the individual and community protection environment while providing food security and livelihoods support. Activities include individual protection assistance, the creation and training of community-based protection committees, assistance to obtain birth certificates, awareness raising on protection issues, provision of unconditional cash assistance, creation of village savings and loans associations and support for income generating activities.

DRC expanded its humanitarian activities to the Southwest region in January 2019, with a focus on assisting IDP and their host communities in rural, hard-to-reach areas affected by conflict. DRC responds to the emergency protection, shelter, non-food items (NFIs), and food security needs of vulnerable populations. Activities include individual protection assistance, the creation and training of community-based protection committees, psychosocial support for children and their parents/caregivers, awareness raising, emergency shelter/NFI kit for recently displaced people, and unconditional food assistance through vouchers.

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, DRC has also provided hygiene awareness sessions and hygiene kits to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

DR Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) is a longstanding, complex humanitarian crisis. According to the UN, 19.6 million people will need assistance and protection in 2021, an increase from 15.6 million at the beginning of 2020. This is the second-highest number of people in need in the world, only surpassed by Ethiopia.

Displacement and humanitarian needs are driven by armed violence and natural disasters, while the economic impact of COVID-19 has deepened vulnerabilities. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), almost 5.3 million people were internally displaced in DR Congo by the end of 2020 as a result of conflict, while another 64,000 people were displaced because of natural disasters.⁷⁵ While the number of people living in displacement slightly decreased in 2020 compared to 2019, the number of newly displaced increased by almost 32%. In addition to the internally displaced, there are almost 1 million refugees from DR Congo – approximately half of them hosted in Uganda.

Conflict increased significantly in 2020 compared to 2019 as measured by the number of battles, episodes of violence against civilians and fatalities arising from these events. Violence and insecurity have so far continued unabated in 2021; with the planned reduction in size and mandate of The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the myriad of armed groups in the country will have more opportunities to expand.⁷⁶ Despite the surrender of dozens of armed groups over the past years, the absence of functioning demobilization programs means it has had little impact on conflict dynamics on the ground. There are still more than 120 or so armed groups that have either existed for many years or are splinter factions of other groups – as such, the conflict continues to be characterized by significant fragmentation.⁷⁷ Current conflict forecasts suggest high violent events (+25 fatalities) are almost certain in DR Congo in July 2021, putting DR Congo in the top 2 of high-risk countries in Africa. In addition, Ituri and Kivu provinces are in the top 5 of areas at high risk of conflict.⁷⁸

The political situation in DR Congo remains fragmented and unstable. In December 2020 the president announced the end of the ruling coalition. In April 2021 a new government was approved by the parliament. The new ruling coalition has given more political space for the president, but remains unstable and without a clear, unifying political agenda. The political turmoil is likely to continue in the country, which can hamper the ability to address the security situation in the eastern part of the country.⁷⁹ One of the first steps of the new ruling coalition was to implement martial law in North Kivu and Ituri provinces and put in place military rule to replace civilian authorities. The appointed governor in North Kivu, Lt Gen Constant Ndima, has been accused by the UN for committing serious crimes in Ituri in the 1999-2003 war.⁸⁰

These developments happened in a broader context of the deteriorating human-rights situation in the country. Under the pretext of COVID-19, the authorities have intensified crackdowns on peaceful protesters, journalists and politicians.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center: Democratic Republic of the Congo

⁷⁶ IRC (15 December, 2021): 2021 Emergency Watchlist

⁷⁷ Kivu Security Tracker (February, 2021): The Landscape of Armed Groups in Eastern Congo: Missed Opportunities, Protracted Insecurity and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, Congo Research Group, Kivu Security Tracker & NYU Center on International Cooperation

⁷⁸ Violence Early Warning System (ViEWS): The Risk Monitor: July 2021, Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

⁷⁹ Onesphore Sematumba (5 May, 2021): DR Congo: No Grace Period for the New Government, International Crisis Group

⁸⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center: Displacement crises to watch: Internal displacement in 2021

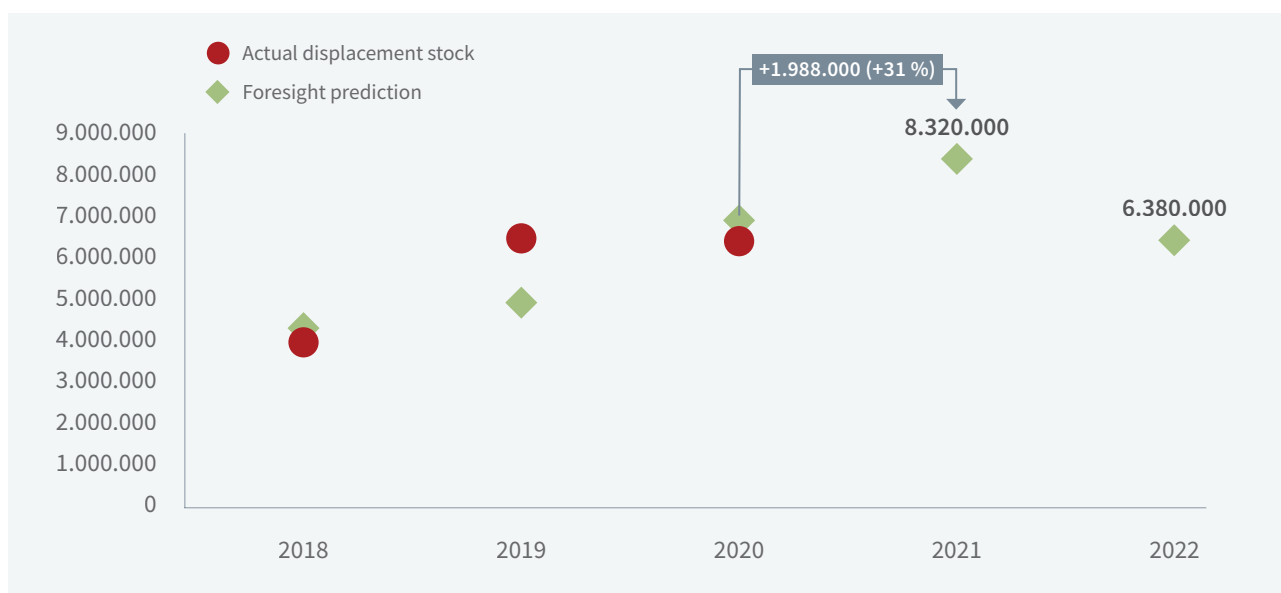
⁸¹ Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

The economic situation in the country also offers little room for optimism. In 2020 DR Congo experienced its first recession in 18 years because of COVID-19 and GDP contracted by 1.7%. The economy is expected to rebound, with 3.3% growth in 2021 and 4.5% in 2022. The COVID-19-containment restrictions have had a significant impact on livelihoods and income-generating opportunities. In 2018, approximately three-quarters of Congolese lived in poverty (less than \$1.90 a day). Hence DR Congo has the third-largest population of poor worldwide. COVID-19 has likely exacerbated this situation.⁸²

Together with other factors, the economic decline and increased poverty have led to worrying levels of food insecurity, which has now reached the highest level ever recorded. According to the IPC analysis, 19.6 million people will have faced severe and acute food insecurity between January and June 2021.⁸³

In addition to the significant challenges increasing displacement risk and humanitarian needs, environmental factors also contribute to heightened displacement risk. In the beginning of February, less than three months after the previous outbreak, new cases of Ebola emerged.⁸⁴ The outbreak was declared over in the beginning of May only to be replaced by another emergency: the sudden volcanic eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, which led to lava flow towards the northeast of Goma and the immediate displacement of around 400,000 people. The eruption will increase humanitarian needs because basic services have been destroyed and because of the potential spread of cholera and COVID-19.

Based on the developments in DR Congo, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from DR Congo will increase by more than 2 million in 2021, to reach more than 8.3 million. This is a 31% increase in the number of displaced people from DR Congo compared to 2020. Significant displacement has already been recorded in the country in addition to the displacement caused by the Mount Nyiragongo eruption. Up until April, more than 300,000 had been displaced in DR Congo as a result of violence.⁸⁵ Since then a number of large-scale displacement events have taken place. In Mandima, more than 29,000 people were displaced at the beginning of May as a result of ongoing violence and abuse targeting civilians.⁸⁶ At the end of May there was an attack on the village Kinyanjojo: 129 civilians were killed, houses were set on fire and approximately 19,000 people had to flee – mostly women and children.⁸⁷



⁸² World Bank: The World Bank in DRC: Overview

⁸³ OCHA (4 February, 2021): The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Democratic Republic of Congo will provide urgent assistance to 9.6 million vulnerable people. A budget of US\$1.98 billion will be required to meet these needs, Press Release

⁸⁴ IMC (May 11, 2021): Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Ebola Situation Report, #41

⁸⁵ OCHA (18 May, 2021): République Démocratique du Congo. Factsheet: Mouvements de Population

⁸⁶ OCHA (May, 2021): République Démocratique du Congo Note d'information humanitaire pour les provinces du Bas-Uélé, du Haut Uélé, de l'Ituri et de la Tshopo Du 1er au 18 mai

⁸⁷ Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (June, 2021): Evaluation Rapide – Suivi des Urgences (ETT): République Démocratique du Congo, IOM

DRC has been present in DR Congo since 2009, with operational presence in North Kivu, Ituri, and Haut-Uelé. DRC has eight bases and sub-bases in the country, including in the key humanitarian centres of Fataki, Bunia, Mahagi and Tchomia in Ituri; Beni, Birambizo and Goma in North Kivu; and Aba in Haut-Uelé.

Currently, DRC's programmes focus on general protection, child protection, education, shelter, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), and Peacebuilding. DRC carries out protection assessments and provides protection services (protection monitoring, referrals, community sensitization, awareness-raising and cash for protection). At the same time, DRC works to rapidly boost community protection structures, providing training and material support to help communities identify and mitigate protection risks, particularly relating to child protection, and to provide support for survivors of gender-based violence. DRC is also engaged in Education in Emergencies programming, where activities focus on the distribution of school kits for displaced or returnee girls and boys, improvement of hygiene facilities, protection mainstreaming including training on psychosocial support, and supporting schools through reintegration grants and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure.

DRC's current programming promotes an integrated, multi-sector approach in the areas of shelter, WASH and livelihoods Restoration to achieve durable solutions through long-term economy recovery to address the root causes and priority needs for people of concern. Livelihood activities include technical agriculture training and small-business-development workshops, adapted at local level, to boost capacity and delivery of agricultural and non-agricultural kits and materials for microenterprises.

Finally, DRC works to address local-level conflicts through a multi-sectoral community-driven safety and economic recovery approach, which engages communities to work together towards common objectives. Overall, this work seeks to improve communities' immediate safety situation, strengthen communities' capacity to prevent armed violence and situations contributing to violent conflict, and create behavioral changes at individual and community levels to reduce outbreaks of violence, and support the resolution of conflicts.

Ethiopia

The most recent humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia emerged in November 2020, when conflict erupted in the northern Tigray region of the country. The UN estimates that more than 5.2 million people are in need assistance in 2021 in the northern part of the country – representing over 90 percent of the population of the region. All in all, 21.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance according to the UN, making it the country with the highest number of people in need.

In June 2020, because of COVID-19, the Ethiopian government decided to postpone elections and extended all local-government terms. In opposition to this decision, a regional election was held in Tigray in September and subsequently won by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The central government declared the election unconstitutional and labelled the TPLF a terrorist organisation, which led to the breakout of fighting between the two parties on 3 November.⁸⁸ The violence has continued into 2021, with an approximately 33% increase in the number of battle incidents in Q1 2021 compared to Q4 2020.⁸⁹ The crisis has had a significant impact on humanitarian needs. More than 4.5 million people have been without access to electricity, communications and other essential services for several months. Access for aid agencies and media was blocked for longer periods. More than two-thirds of health facilities have been destroyed and banks have been closed. The fighting is not set to abate. The TPLF have established a strong presence in rural areas of the region and appears to have popular support among the local population. In end-June 2021, the TPLF entered major towns and cities of Tigray, including Adwa, Aksum, Shire and Humer, as well as the Tigray capital Mekelle. On June 28, the Ethiopian government announced a unilateral ceasefire in Tigray.

The crisis had repercussions on broader national and regional instability.⁹⁰ It sparked regional tensions within Ethiopia, most notably in Oromia with the Oromia Liberation Army, and the participation of Eritrean troops in the hostilities will have long-term implications for the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea.⁹¹ The crisis also exacerbated tensions over the Al Fashaga border and Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, with direct implications on Ethiopia's relationship with Sudan and Egypt.⁹² In addition, the withdrawal of troops from Somalia to Tigray has implications in the war against Al Shabab and potentially on the Somali election scheduled for 10 October 2021. Current conflict forecasts suggest high violent events (+25 fatalities) are highly likely in Ethiopia in July 2021. The Tigray and Benishangul-Gumuz regions have seen the most substantial increases in risk compared to previous forecasts in Africa.⁹³

Partial elections were eventually held in June 2021, but were postponed to 6 September in 64 constituencies, including in Tigray. The backdrop to the elections featured the opposition's widespread accusations of political harassment and some opposition leaders are in prison. The broader context has also been one of a deteriorating human-rights situation, where censorship has increased, internet is frequently shut down and security forces are accused of extrajudicial killings, mass arrests and detentions. To exacerbate the situation, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a declaration of a five-month state of emergency.⁹⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic, the political turmoil and conflict have had a significant impact on the country's economic performance. Unlike many other economies, Ethiopian GDP did not contract in 2020, according to the IMF, but slowed to 2% growth after witnessing almost 9% growth in 2019. However, the outlook for 2021 is a small contraction of 0.023%. According to World Bank phone surveys, around 8% of respondents lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic, with

⁸⁸ International Crisis Group (11 February, 2021): Finding a Path to Peace in Ethiopia's Tigray Region, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°167

⁸⁹ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): Data dashboard

⁹⁰ International Crisis Group (2 April, 2021): Ethiopia's Tigray War: A Deadly, Dangerous Stalemate, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°171

⁹¹ International Crisis Group (11 February, 2021): Finding a Path to Peace in Ethiopia's Tigray Region, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°167

⁹² International Crisis Group (24 June, 2021): Containing the Volatile Sudan-Ethiopia Border Dispute, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°173

⁹³ Violence Early Warning System (VIEWS): The Risk Monitor: July 2021, Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

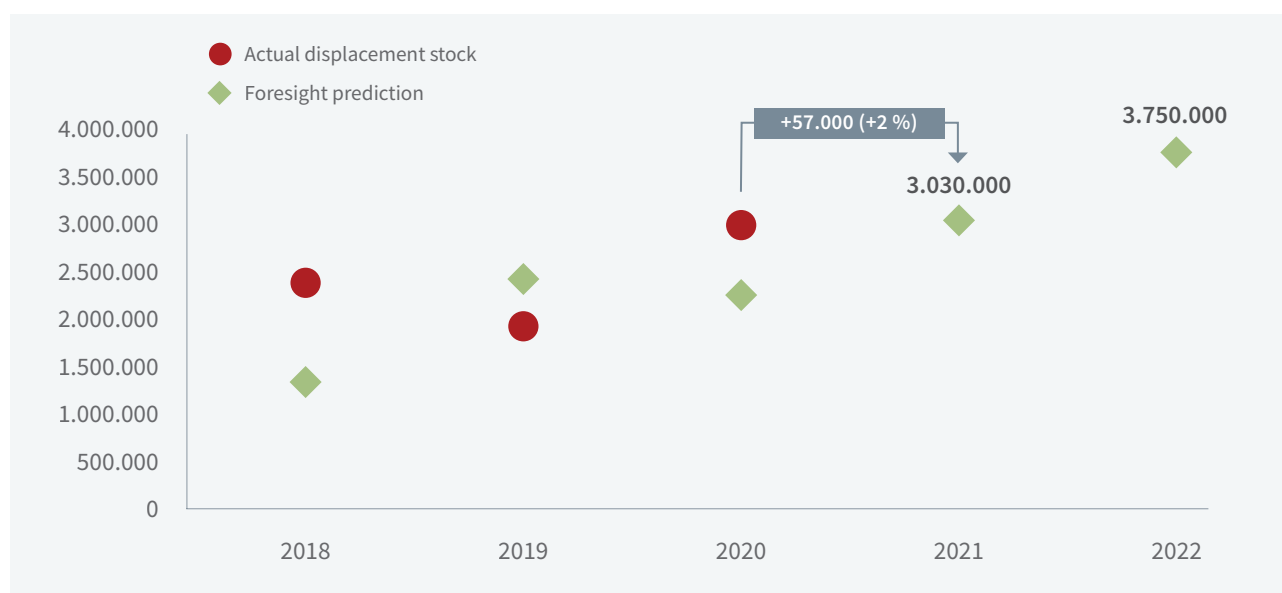
⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

job losses being more severe in urban areas (20%). By October employment rates were back to pre-COVID-19 levels, but many had moved from more stable to more vulnerable types of job. Many households have also incurred debt to cope with the crisis: four out of ten households reported taking a loan from any source since the onset of COVID-19 compared to one in ten households pre-COVID-19.⁹⁵

The combined effect of the political crisis and Tigray conflict, which coincided with the harvest season and the COVID-19 pandemic, has had a negative impact on food security in the country. This has been exacerbated by the desert locust upsurge, which has been the worst in 25 years. The locusts destroyed crops and pasture in both Belg- and Meher-dependent areas of the Amhara, Tigray, Afar, Somali and Oromia regions, significantly reducing food availability and affecting the livelihoods of populations in the region. In October–December 2020 about 8.6 million people were facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above).⁹⁶ Since then, the situation has deteriorated: a June 2021 analysis projected that more than 350,000 people were in Catastrophe Level (IPC Phase 5) between May and June 2021 in Tigray and the neighboring zones of Amhara and Afar. This is the highest number of people in IPC Phase 5 since the 2011 famine in Somalia.⁹⁷ An estimated 79 per cent of the severely food insecure people—around 3.2 million people—currently live in areas affected by severe humanitarian access constraints (with 1.24 million people in hard-to-reach areas and almost 2 million in partially accessible areas).

Based on the developments in Ethiopia, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from Ethiopia will increase by more than 55,000 in 2021, to reach more than 3 million. In 2022 displacement is projected to increase significantly, to reach almost 3.7 million.

While the Foresight model does not predict the direction of the movement, a recent MMC analysis of the crisis suggests that mass internal displacement and involuntary immobility are the most likely results of the crisis. Some cross-border movement of Tigrayans and Eritrean refugees should be expected. To a much lesser degree, efforts to move beyond neighboring countries is expected to be undertaken by Ethiopians, while this appears more likely for Eritreans and Somalis, particularly if Somalia is further destabilized as a result of the conflict.⁹⁸



⁹⁵ World Bank (30 April, 2021): Monitoring COVID-19 Impacts on Households in Ethiopia, Report no. 9

⁹⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (December, 2020): Ethiopia

⁹⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (December, 2020): Ethiopia (Tigray, Afar & Amhara): Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification Snapshot, May–September 2021

⁹⁸ Chris Horwood (26 January, 2021): Mixed migration consequences of the Tigrayan crisis, Mixed Migration Centre

DRC has been present in Ethiopia since 2009 and is present in Addis Ababa, Bule Hora, Dimma, Gambella, Jijiga, Dolo-Ado, Mai Tsebri and Shire, and will open an office in Shiraro in the coming weeks. DRC works to help the most vulnerable among the displaced, particularly women and children. Its protection services include providing free legal aid to refugees and host communities, providing individual assistance, and supporting expanded access to land, property and individual rights. DRC further develops livelihood initiatives designed to strengthen opportunities for self-reliance among refugees. DRC has supported youth in establishing small businesses that are available to refugee and host community youth groups, promoting social cohesion and integrated service deliveries, and improving their livelihoods.

DRC provides support with multi-purpose cash distribution targeting the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. All DRC initiatives are developed with a strong focus on resilience and sustainability. DRC further provides shelter solutions in emergency situations and during cases of protracted displacement. In Gambella, DRC has contributed to the improvement of the physical environment of the Gambella refugee reception centers and camps, constructing transition shelters and mud brick shelters, and providing refugees with communal facilities. These initiatives enable vulnerable displaced populations to live in dignity and security.

DRC has been present in Tigray since 2016 and adapted its pre-crisis programming focusing on protection and the Ethiopia Migration Programme (EMP) to a multi-sectorial integrated response addressing the needs of IDPs, refugees and the host-communities around Mai Tsebri, Shire and Shiraro. DRC supports coordination efforts for the emergency response through its involvement in the Humanitarian Country Team (HTC), staffing support to the HINGO Forum – including dedicated safety and access expertise for Tigray – as well as the protection cluster at national and Tigray levels. Through the EMP, DRC continues to address the immediate humanitarian protection and integration needs of refugees and returnees, including for the high numbers of Tigrayans currently returning from Saudi Arabia and unable to return to Tigray.

Nigeria

Major humanitarian needs and displacement have been affecting Nigeria since 2013. The UN estimates that more than 8.7 million will need assistance in 2021 in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States alone.⁹⁹

The humanitarian crisis is driven by a multi-faceted conflict landscape. In the northeast, JAS (Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād) has targeted civilians and the military, causing widespread displacement, while the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has targeted the military, Christians, international organizations and government representatives. The conflict is tied to the wider, destabilized Lake Chad Basin. In the northwest, local conflicts between farmers and herders have escalated in recent years with kidnappings and ethnic massacres. Local ethnic militias or vigilante groups have proliferated in the region and are gaining strength.¹⁰⁰ Farmer-herder conflict is further connected to longstanding conflicts between these groups in the Middle Belt region. In the south, general insecurity and crime is rife.¹⁰¹ Conflict incidents and violence against civilians have, so far, increased in 2021 compared to the last two quarters of 2020. Fatalities from battles are also high and already higher than the yearly total for 2018 and 2019.¹⁰² Current conflict forecasts suggests high violent events (+25 fatalities) are almost certain in Nigeria in July 2021, putting Nigeria in the top 2 of high-risk countries in Africa. Borno State is in the top 5 of areas at high-risk of conflict and South-South, South-East, Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara have all witnessed significant risk elevations.¹⁰³

The crisis has created a vicious cycle. In many instances, the conflict dynamics can be attributed to grievances caused by the weak state and lack of strong institutions to ensure rule of law, security and dispute resolution, as well as the limited provision of public services and vast corruption. As the security challenges increase, the government's ability to perform key functions decreases, as exemplified by the postponement of the 2021 census. The provision of public services is further affected by the crisis because government funds are being diverted to the military and security forces to enable them to respond to the security challenges. As access to public services dwindles and state presence and authority is weakened, grievance and conflict grow.

Grievances have further been fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exposed the limits of the social-protection system in Nigeria. The country's GDP has been forecasted to decrease by 4.2% in 2020, which is limiting public finances. Furthermore, security forces have been accused of using excessive force to enforce the government's COVID-19 mitigation measures. More broadly, the police continue to arrest, detain, and use excessive force against civilians who publicly voice their grievances.¹⁰⁴ DRC noted a 71% increase in protection incidents reported last year, up from 3,853 rights violations in 2019 to 5,361 in 2020.¹⁰⁵ The hike in reported figures is directly linked to the deteriorating capacities of the community to cope with increased stressors of conflict and COVID-19 restrictions.

The crisis is further deepened by climate change and environmental degradation, which have forced many herders in the northern regions to move south in search of pasture and water. This has in turn created conflict with local crop farmers and fueled further tension and conflict. Furthermore, the agricultural output is being affected by the presence of vigilante groups, which are imposing taxation on farmers. In one state more than 50,000 hectares of farmland has been abandoned by farmers as a result of pressure from vigilante groups.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ OCHA (February, 2021): Humanitarian Response Plan Nigeria 2021

¹⁰⁰ International Crisis Group (26 May, 2021): Halting the Deepening Turmoil in Nigeria's North West

¹⁰¹ Tomas F. Husted & Lauren Ploch Blanchard (18 September, 2021): Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, Congressional Research Service, RL33964

¹⁰² Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): Data dashboard

¹⁰³ Violence Early Warning System (ViEWS): The Risk Monitor: July 2021, Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

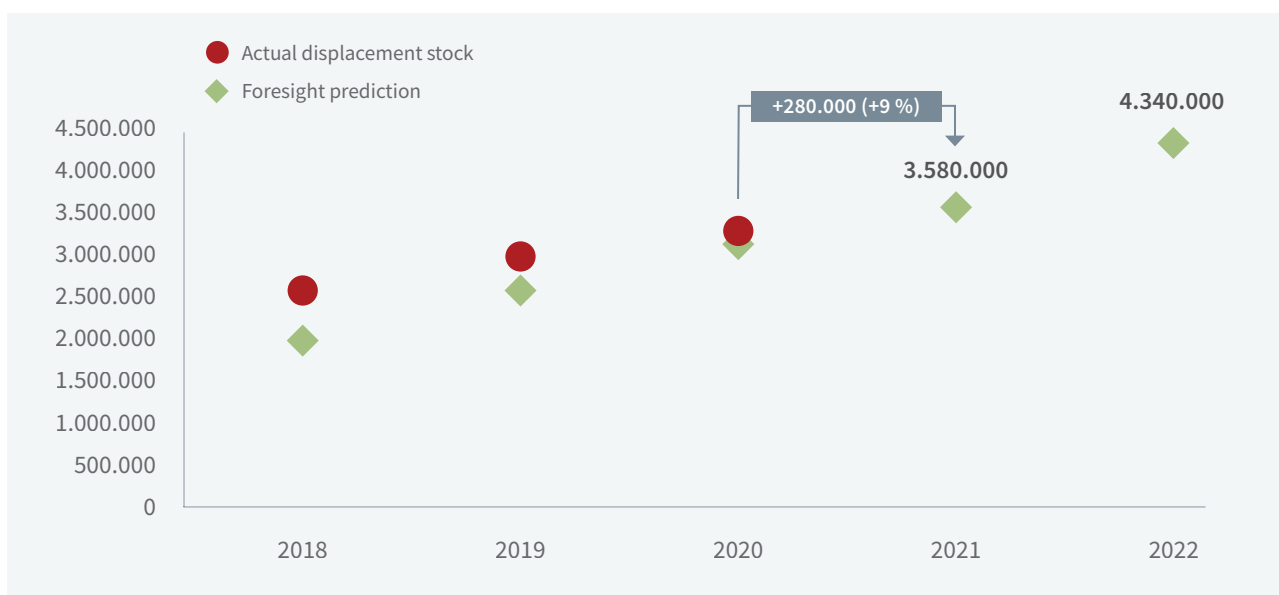
¹⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

¹⁰⁵ Data gathered from DRC's protection concern dashboard

¹⁰⁶ International Crisis Group (26 May, 2021): Halting the Deepening Turmoil in Nigeria's North West

Already home to one of the world’s largest populations living in extreme poverty and with COVID-19 limiting livelihood opportunities and pushing many more into poverty and debt, food insecurity is on the rise. 9.2 million people have been found to be food insecure in the period March to May 2021, in the northern states alone. This number is projected to increase to 12.8 million in June–August 2021.¹⁰⁷ Displacement-affected people and communities lack protection, have limited or no access to health facilities or to water, sanitation, and hygiene, have limited economic opportunities or are living in overcrowded camp conditions, with some still sleeping in the open. In 2021, these concerns are likely to have worsening outcomes in the backdrop of the recent directives by the government in which the newly established Resettlement Committee aimed to resettle all IDP by the end of May 2021.¹⁰⁸

Based on the developments in Nigeria, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from Nigeria will increase by more than 280,000 in 2021 to reach almost 3.6 million. This is a 9% increase in the number of people displaced from Nigeria compared to 2020. The model further expects the numbers will continue to rise and could reach 4.3 million by the end of 2022, which is an increase in displacement of more than 1 million people from 2020. A number of major displacement events have already taken place in Nigeria this year. At the end of April Geidam town was attacked, with sporadic shooting targeting civilian homes and property. More than 150,000 people were displaced as a result. About a week later the neighboring town of Kanama was attacked, causing the entire civilian population of 30,000 to flee.¹⁰⁹ Since February Dikwa has suffered a number of attacks, leading to more than 21,000 being displaced.¹¹⁰ At the end of May clashes between neighboring Tiv and Fulani communities in Taraba state were reported, leading to more than 1,300 people being displaced.¹¹¹ While the next months may see a decrease in attacks because the rainy season will hinder movement of the insurgents and military, an uptick in violence and displacement could occur in September/October.



DRC has had an operational presence in Nigeria since July 2015, including the main field offices in Mubi (Adamawa state), Maiduguri (Borno state) and Damaturu (Yobe state). The overall response currently focuses on the provision of assistance to conflict-affected IDP in camp or camp-like settings and among host communities, returnees and host communities.

DRC is addressing the rising food insecurity through distribution of emergency food assistance (in-kind, voucher and/or cash) and working on protection concerns by providing context-specific, timely protection responses to individual cases, monitoring and reporting protection risks and establishing solid referral mechanisms with relevant service providers, and

¹⁰⁷ Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (March 2021): Cadre Harmonisé Result for Identification of Risk Areas and Vulnerable Populations in Sixteen (16) Northern States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria

¹⁰⁸ Nextier SPD (29 June, 2020): The Pros and Cons of Resettlement

¹⁰⁹ OCHA (May 5, 2021): North-East Nigeria: Flash Update #2, Geidam and Yunusari LGAs, Yobe State

¹¹⁰ Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (June 2021): Flash report: Population Displacement North-East Nigeria – Dikwa LGA (Borno State) 12–18 June 2021. IOM

¹¹¹ Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (June 2021): Flash report: Population Displacement North-East Nigeria – Gassol LGA (Taraba State) 1 June. IOM

psychosocial assistance. DRC is also engaged in explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), raising awareness on unexploded ordnance among IDP, returnee and host communities to limit risk during displacement and early return together with undertaking non-technical surveys (NTS), thereby identifying hazards and reducing potential hazards and subsequent harm.

Furthermore, DRC has worked on solutions to displacement by supporting reconstruction of communities destroyed by conflict, capacity building of duty bearers, and advocacy on behalf of IDP, as well as on vocational skills training and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate recovery and stabilization.

Lastly, DRC is working to address the root causes of displacement and conflict in northeast Nigeria by mainstreaming conflict sensitivity through programs, support to dialog and positive integration between communities and security providers, developing community safety plans, and directly targeting youths to ensure their engagement and empowerment. Through peacebuilding activities, DRC Nigeria empowers civilians with the knowledge they need to be better prepared and protected against conflict-related threats.

South Sudan

South Sudan has been a fragile country since civil war broke out two years after it gained independence. According to the UN, 8.3 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2021, an increase from 7.5 million at the beginning of 2020. Needs have increased in the food security and livelihoods, health and education sectors.¹¹²

In recent years the conflict in South Sudan has shifted character but the country can still be regarded as “a failing state with multiple distinct war theatres, interlinked at the elite level by a revolt against a common political center”.¹¹³ The initial conflict erupted in late 2013 between the supporters of President Salva Kiir and rebels in the Greater Upper Nile region. A peace agreement in 2018 paved the way for the creation of a unity government in 2020. Since 2016 another conflict has erupted in the Equatoria region and, despite a ceasefire agreement between the government and the insurgency, fighting continued.¹¹⁴ COVID-19 and ongoing massive floods that started in 2019 hindered the restarting of peace negotiations because of travel restrictions. In October 2020 the conflict parties recommitted to the ceasefire; however, the joint monitoring mechanism of the ceasefire that was due to start in January 2021 not materialized.¹¹⁵ Despite the unity government formation and ceasefire agreement, the number of armed violence incidents and victims were more than twice as high in 2020 compared to 2019.¹¹⁶ Violence levels have so far continued unabated in 2021.¹¹⁷ As such, there are few signs that the insurgency in Equatoria will fade out or that rebels will lose their resolve in demanding greater autonomy and political decentralization. Current conflict forecasts suggest high violent events (+25 fatalities) are highly likely in South Sudan in July 2021 and South Sudan is among the countries with the biggest increase in violence risk compared to the risk in June.¹¹⁸

Looking further ahead, elections slated for 2022 in South Sudan could threaten the existing peace agreement and thus reignite conflict in other regions of the country in addition to the conflict in Equatoria.¹¹⁹ Regardless of the outcome of the elections, state legitimacy will be frail. The country is plagued by poor- to non-existent public services, tribalism along ethnic or clan cleavages, and limited accountability for abuses, crimes, etc.¹²⁰ According to Transparency International, South Sudan is ranked as the world’s most corrupt country together with Somalia.¹²¹ Activist, human rights defenders, journalist, etc. face arbitrary detention.¹²² In custody, often for extended periods without being charged, being put before a judge or having access to legal representation, many face torture, ill-treatment or murder.¹²³

Conflict and poor governance are not the only drivers of displacement and humanitarian needs. The country has also faced significant flooding in the past two years, affecting more than 1 million people each year.¹²⁴ This year more than 110,000 have been displaced as a result of flooding in February and March. The floods, combined with conflict and competition over farmland, grazing land and water, have hampered agriculture production, destroyed production assets and increased vulnerabilities.¹²⁵ It was projected that 7.4 million would face high levels of acute food insecurity in April-July 2021, including 108,000 in the catastrophe/famine level.¹²⁶

¹¹² OCHA (March 2021): Humanitarian Response Plan South Sudan 2021

¹¹³ Alan Boswell (April, 2021): Conflict and Crisis in South Sudan’s Equatoria, Special Report NO. 493, United States Institute for Peace (USIP)

¹¹⁴ Alan Boswell (April, 2021): Conflict and Crisis in South Sudan’s Equatoria, Special Report NO. 493, United States Institute for Peace (USIP)

¹¹⁵ International Crisis Group (25 February, 2021): South Sudan’s Other War: Resolving the Insurgency in Equatoria, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°169 Juba/Nairobi/Brussels

¹¹⁶ Human Rights Division (2021): Annual Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians: January – December 2020, UNMISS

¹¹⁷ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): Data dashboard

¹¹⁸ Violence Early Warning System (ViEWS): The Risk Monitor: July 2021, Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

¹¹⁹ International Crisis Group (10 February, 2021): Toward a Viable Future for South Sudan, Africa Report N°300

¹²⁰ Matthew Pritchard & Aly Verjee (1 March, 2021): South Sudan: From 10 States to 32 States and Back Again. United States Institute for Peace (USIP)

¹²¹ Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index 2020

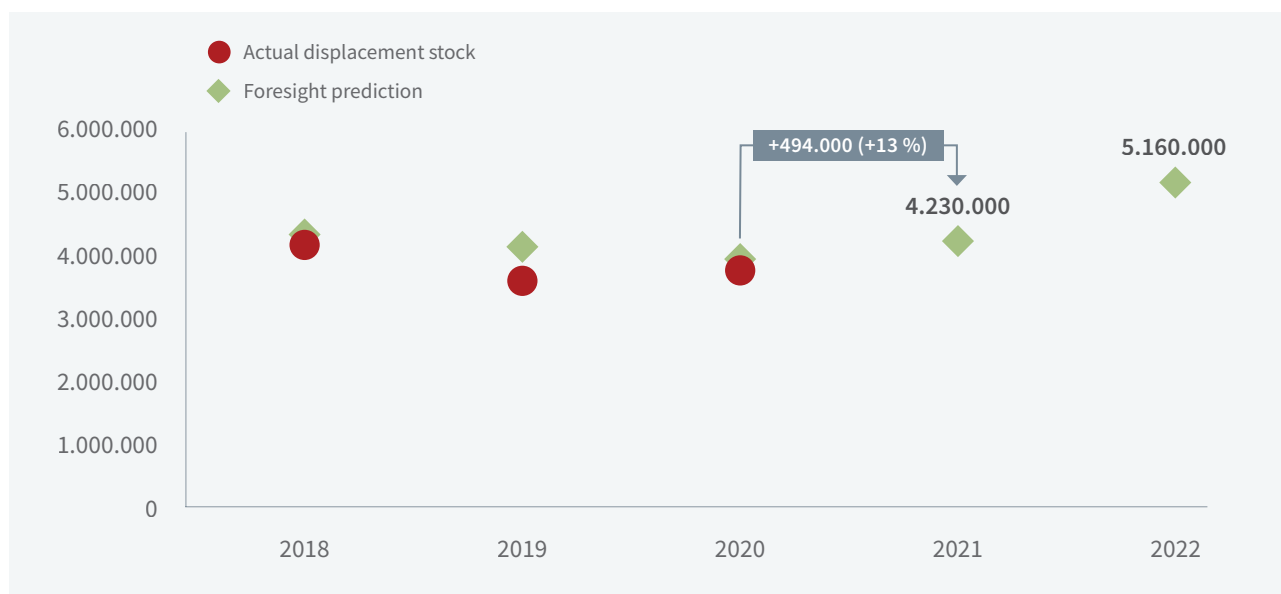
¹²² Human Rights Watch (23 January, 2021): World Report 2021

¹²³ Carine Kaneza Nantulya (May 6, 2021): Will South Sudan rein in its notorious National Security Service? Human Rights Watch

¹²⁵ FAO & WFP (13 May, 2021): 2020 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to the Republic of South Sudan, Special Report

¹²⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC): South Sudan: Consolidated Findings from the IPC Technical Working Group and External Reviews – October 2020 to July 2021.

Based on recent developments in South Sudan, the Foresight model is predicting that the cumulative number of people displaced from South Sudan will increase by more than 490,000 in 2021 to reach 4.2 million. This is a 13% increase compared to 2020. The model further projects that the numbers will continue to rise and could reach 5.1 million by the end of 2022, which would be an increase in displacement of 1.4 million people compared to 2020. A number of major displacement events have already taken place in South Sudan this year. In May Gumruk town was overtaken by armed attackers, which displaced more than 19,000 civilians to Pibor town.¹²⁷ In Thordong and Malualadoor in Gogrial East 11,000 people were displaced following violent clashes in April.¹²⁸



DRC is working in South Sudan with the objective of reducing acute humanitarian needs, improving the protective environment for emergency-affected populations, strengthening resilience, and reducing displacement risk. DRC’s work is further focused on ensuring more access to durable solutions to displacement, including return, relocation or local integration. Lastly, the work is guided by the objective of supporting men, women, boys and girls to live in a more peaceful, inclusive and resilient society and to reduce the root causes of displacement.

DRC is implementing integrated multi-sector programs, with a core focus on camp management, protection, gender-based violence, conflict sensitivity, peace-building, food security and livelihoods. Other sectors are also covered based on needs and focus in the given areas. Activities include providing basic services to displacement-affected populations, including protection services, provision of shelter and non-food items, food security and camp coordination/management. In famine- and conflict-affected areas across the country, DRC is deploying mobile response teams (MRTs) to provide life-saving, multi-sectoral responses, including WASH, camp coordination and camp management (CCCM), shelter/non-food item (SNFI), protection and gender-based violence services.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRC has included COVID-19 messaging and safety protocols in its programs, in coordination with other agencies and government partners.

¹²⁷ Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (24 May, 2021): Event Tracking and Rapid Needs Assessment in Pibor Town, IOM

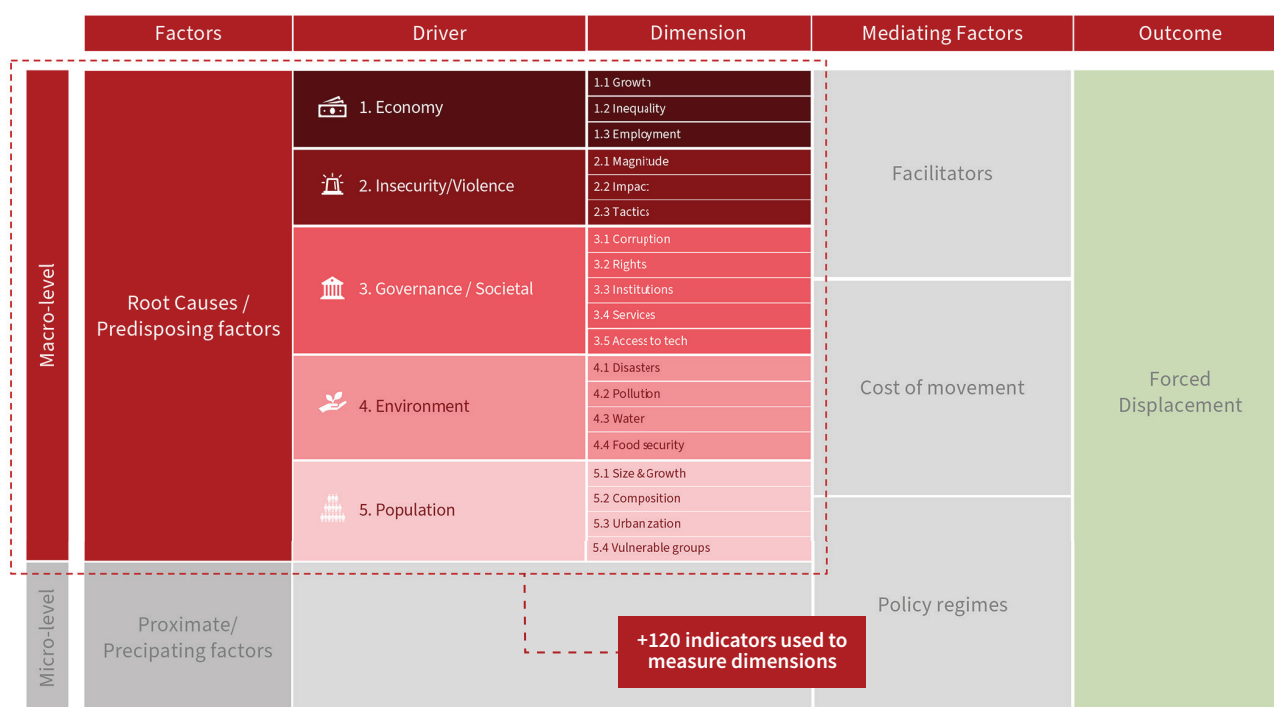
¹²⁸ Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster for South Sudan (April 2021): Situation report

About The Freight Model

Framework

The model is based on a theoretical framework focusing on the root causes or macro-level drivers of displacement. The dimensions and associated indicators have been grouped into five categories:

- 1. Economy:** Covers the economic well-being and equality in a given country
- 2. Violence:** Covers the level of violence, the different types of violence and fatalities
- 3. Governance:** Covers aspects related to the legitimacy of the state, public service provisions and human rights
- 4. Environment:** Covers aspects related to climate disasters, access to water, agricultural stress and food security
- 5. Population:** Covers aspects related to marginalized groups, urbanization, size and composition



Data

The data is all derived from open source. The main data sources are the World Bank development indicators, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), EM-DAT, UN agencies (UNHCR, the World Food Programme, The Food and Agriculture Organization), Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), etc. In total, the system aggregates data from 18 sources, and contains 148 indicators.

The data on forced displacement depend wholly on the numbers from UNHCR and IDMC. These organisations make an extraordinary effort to collect and verify the numbers. Even so, gathering these numbers are difficult and the total forced displacement numbers used in the modelling may leave out some that have been displaced in 2020.

Given that the data is taken from reputable data sources, the data is deemed to be highly reliable. However, the data has a few shortcomings. Coverage is uneven across geographies and across dimensions. For instance, economic and labour statistics tend to have better availability compared to governance and violence statistics. Data from institutional providers can often have a delay. The most recent indicators can be a few years old. The data is collected globally.

The system uses several methods to address data gaps. We distinguish between the missing data in the features (or indicators) and missing target variable (i.e. forced displacement). Data with missing target variables are simply excluded from training. For missing values in indicators, we employ two methods. To address data lag, we make indicator projections for each country using an auto-regressive model (i.e. AR(n) model). An auto-regressive model is a time series forecasting model where future values depend only on previous values of the variable. The 'n' denotes the number of lag variables and is determined using a heuristic approach. For cases where data is insufficient, we simply treat it as missing which is better than projecting incorrectly. Intermediate missing values are computed by interpolation.

A simple standardization scheme is followed, intended to keep data ingestion tasks lightweight. A data transformer is implemented for each of the data sources to ensure that each indicator data point is associated with a country and year. The resulting dataset can be cross-referenced and serves as input to the model.

For training we limit the data from 1995 through till 2020, the latest data available for displacement. For cross validation, we use a 5-year period between 2015-2020. Following the standard cross-validation setup for time series data, models are trained on data for the years (1995, y) and predictions made for y+t, where y is in the 5-year time period.

Model

The machine learning model employed is an Ensemble. An ensemble model works by leveraging several constituent models to generate independent forecasts that are then aggregated. Here we employ two gradient boosted trees to generate the point forecasts. The model hyperparameters were determined by means of a grid search. Each year-ahead forecast has a separate model. In other words, we train a set of Ensemble models for $y(t+h) = f(x(t))$, where $h = 0, 1, 2, 3$. The associated confidence intervals were generated by empirical bootstrap method, where the source error distributions were generated on a retrospective analysis. Model training data was limited to data since 1995.

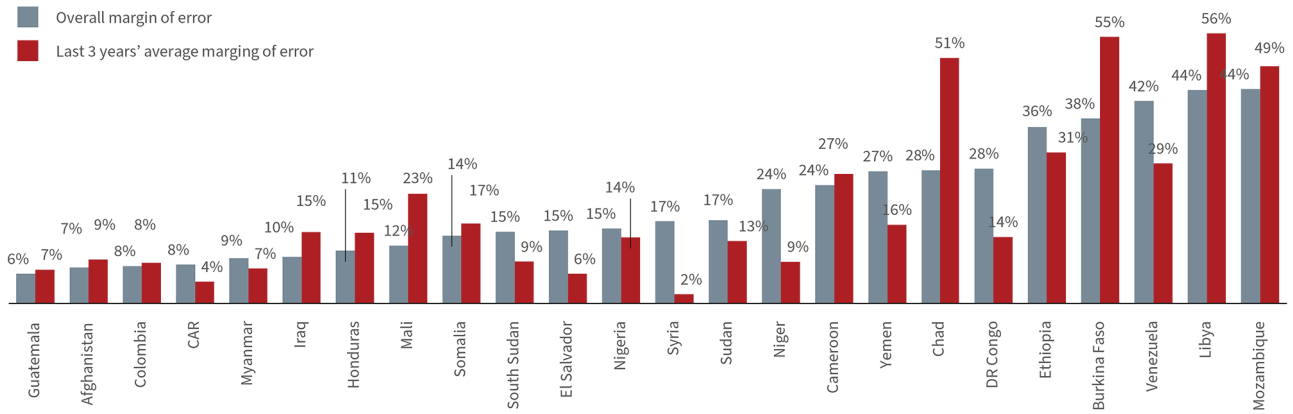
Limitations

The model tends to be conservative and of the current +150 forecasts derived from the model, approximately 2/3 underestimate the level of displacement for the coming year. The forecasts are solely based on data and developments up until the previous year (i.e. 2020). As such, recent developments are not taken into account. In the current forecasts, countries such as Myanmar and Central African Republic are forecasted to have limited increases in displacement, but significant displacement has already taken place due to unforeseen events.

Because the model is built around national level indicators, it does not perform as well in cases where conflicts and displacement is largely regionally confined.

Given the methodology of building on historical trends and patterns, the model generally does not tend to capture unprecedented developments.

The figure below shows the average margin of error. These are in most cases evaluated based on the last forecasts for 2015 to 2020. In a few countries, additional years are used in the evaluation, as a maximum going back to 2010. The figure shows both the overall margin of error and the margin of error for the last three years.



Major missed forecasts in 2020 include:

- Libya: 632,000 forecasted vs. 301,114 actual cumulative displacement
- Mozambique: 297,000 forecasted vs. 777,752 actual cumulative displacement
- Chad: 215,680 forecasted vs. 359,461 actual cumulative displacement

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ANNEX

Overview of all country forecasts for 2021 and 2022

Country	2020 (actual)	2021	2022
Afghanistan	7,502,469	7,557,254	8,224,416
Burkina Faso	1,119,665	1,417,692	1,835,522
Cameroon	1,134,556	1,162,925	1,550,068
CAR	1,343,566	1,369,905	1,369,026
Chad	359,461	361,094	323,130
Colombia	5,203,783	4,850,287	4,302,055
DR Congo	6,331,876	8,318,831	6,382,309
El Salvador	213,765	226,318	242,424
Ethiopia	2,972,873	3,028,244	3,745,713
Guatemala	429,072	457,090	448,158
Honduras	543,634	596,519	639,063
Iraq	1,829,366	1,584,204	965,910
Libya	301,114	296,452	307,004
Mali	508,419	644,633	344,548
Mozambique	777,752	1,083,986	1,137,014
Myanmar	1,653,257	1,618,902	1,668,086
Niger	546,977	560,516	612,484
Nigeria	3,299,021	3,579,664	4,340,507
Somalia	3,836,391	3,849,701	4,369,683
South Sudan	3,735,734	4,226,293	5,155,543
Sudan	3,587,584	3,877,753	3,694,922
Syria	13,372,541	13,548,904	13,767,767
Venezuela	4,880,873	4,912,191	6,764,417
Yemen	3,912,934	3,949,771	4,427,585



Founded in 1956, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is Denmark's largest international NGO, with a specific expertise in forced displacement. DRC is present in close to 40 countries and employs 9,000 staff globally.

DRC advocates for the rights of and solutions for displacement-affected communities, and provides assistance during all stages of displacement: In acute crisis, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. DRC supports displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies. DRC works with civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and inclusion.

Our 7,500 volunteers in Denmark make an invaluable difference in integration activities throughout the country. DRC's code of conduct sits at the core of our or-

ganizational mission, and DRC aims at the highest ethical and professional standards. DRC has been certified as meeting the highest quality standards according to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

HRH Crown Princess Mary is DRC's patron.

To read more about what we do, see: www.drc.ngo

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