



NRC

NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

THE WORLD'S
MOST **NEGLECTED**
DISPLACEMENT CRISES

2022



- 1: Burkina Faso
- 2: DR Congo
- 3: Colombia
- 4: Sudan
- 5: Venezuela
- 6: Burundi
- 7: Mali
- 8: Cameroon
- 9: El Salvador
- 10: Ethiopia



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Design: Tove Skjeflo/Claes Holmberg

Cover photo:

“Tell the world we have suffered. We have suffered a lot. Our neighbours have suffered. Our friends have suffered. Our relatives have suffered. We lost many. Most of them killed. I am thanking God because none of my family was left there, and we are all in safety. I do not want to return, but I am asking God for peace, for peace in this place,” says Halimata (35). “Together with her family, she fled fighting in the East of Burkina Faso and sought safety in Kaya.”

Photo: Ingebjørg Kårstad/NRC

Sources: UN Financial Tracking Service, Meltwater, HRW, WFP, ACAPS, IDMC, UNOCHA, UNHCR, NRC

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definition

neglect

1. To pay little or no attention to; fail to heed; disregard
2. To fail to care for or attend to properly
3. To fail to do or carry out, as through carelessness or oversight

Source: www.thefreedictionary.com/neglected

Neglect is a choice

Around the world, millions of displaced people endure exceptional hardship, overlooked and cast aside by those in power and with the resources to bring a brighter future. This suffering is not inevitable, as the urgency and scale of the response to the war in Ukraine has demonstrated.

Each year, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) publishes a report of the ten most neglected displacement crises in the world. The purpose is to focus on the plight of people whose suffering rarely makes international headlines, who receive little or no assistance, and who never become the centre of attention for international diplomacy efforts.

This is the list for 2022.

Once again, countries in Africa dominate this report of the most neglected displacement crises – many have never made it off the list.

This year also sees a return to the list of countries in Latin America, a region with growing humanitarian crises vastly overlooked by the international community.

None of these countries is neglected by accident

The powerful response to the suffering inflicted by the war in Ukraine has shown that neglect is in fact a choice. Where there is the will, political action can be impactful and swift, funding vast, and media coverage extensive. This is in stark contrast to the reality for millions of people forced to flee in other countries, far from media headlines and international pledging events.

Global decision makers, powerful media outlets, and donors are too often swayed by geopolitical interests and

the rhetoric of the day, rather than allocating resources based on need. We cannot stand by and let this selectivity become ever-more entrenched. A life is worth the same, whether the person is from Ukraine or from Burkina Faso – we need to take lessons from the Ukraine response and show the same humanity elsewhere.

2022 saw the warnings of increased disparity become a reality around the world – fuelled by a global economic downturn and the reallocation of resources due to the Ukraine response.

The gap between the funding needed and the amount provided for humanitarian assistance was larger than ever in 2022. For every dollar raised per person in need in Ukraine, just 25 cents were raised per person in need across the world's 10 most neglected crises. People fleeing from Ukraine were also met with open borders and strong solidarity by the public. We should aspire to this for all crises and responsibility for this support must be truly global – new donor countries must come on board and step up their support.

Neglect is reversible

The number of people requiring humanitarian aid continues to spiral as global inflation deepens suffering and climate change knocks resilience. It is the most vulnerable, often those facing conflict and displacement,

envoys to the conflict were taken into consideration, as were any high-level international discussions or other international engagements in, for example, peacebuilding or human rights. Recognising that not all neglected displacement crises are in conflict-affected countries, the analysis also looked at any significant trends in bilateral and multilateral donor support. Finally, the level of political engagement was considered in relation to the size and severity of the displacement crisis and the number of refugees hosted – for this we used the Fund for Peace Fragile States Index, the INFORM Severity Index, ACAPS Humanitarian Access Overviews, and relevant displacement figures from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).

The methodology

All displacement crises* resulting in more than 200,000 displaced people have been analysed – 39 crises in total. The report was generated based on three criteria, which were given equal weight:

1. Lack of international political will

A qualitative analysis of the international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions was carried out on all 39 crises. For situations of ongoing conflict, the analysis covered relevant UN Security Council resolutions, peacekeeping missions, UN special procedure mechanisms, UN investigations, and any other relevant regional and international diplomatic efforts throughout 2022. The number and importance of special



A student in Burkina Faso reads in front of the other 151 students in her class. Photo: Ingebjørg Kårstad/NRC

who bear the brunt. And as new emergencies appear, existing crises only deepen and become ever more protracted. The vast majority of the countries featured in this report have done so since its inception seven years ago. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not dropped below second place. Here neglect is entrenched.

Yet it is possible to lift these contexts out of neglect. Seven out of ten countries in this year's report represent the

smallest humanitarian appeals, each around just 1 per cent or less of what's been requested for humanitarian aid globally. A little bit of political will would go a long way.

While the picture is bleak, we must not lose hope. If neglect is a choice, then the world can choose to end it.

2. Lack of media attention

The level of media attention towards the various displacement crises was measured using figures from the media monitoring company Meltwater, which measures online media coverage. When comparing media attention towards the different crises, we calculated the media coverage relative to the number of people displaced by each crisis, using the latest figures from UNHCR and NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

3. Lack of international aid

Every year, the UN and its humanitarian partners launch funding appeals to cover peoples' basic needs in countries affected by large crises. The amount of

money raised for each crisis in 2022 was assessed as a percentage of the amount required to cover the needs. Where there was both a humanitarian appeal for support inside the country and a regional refugee response plan, these were averaged. Where there was no funding appeal, this criterion has been omitted from the analysis.

The percentage of the appeals covered gives us an indication of the level of economic support, but the results may be skewed by the humanitarian community sometimes adjusting their appeals to what they think may be achievable. While the international community in some countries tries to reach all people in need, the ambition level may be much lower in other countries.

*It was not possible to analyse the situation in China, Eritrea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, due to lack of information and reliable figures.

1 Burkina Faso

2021 ranking | 2

For the first time, Burkina Faso is the world's most neglected crisis. Increasing violence and displacement have left nearly one in four Burkinabè in need of aid in this deepening and overlooked crisis.

Burkina Faso is one of the youngest crises featured in this report, but its decline has been swift and devastating. Since the conflict began five years ago, the number of people who are severely food-insecure increased ninefold and over 14,000 people have been killed – half of them since January 2022. Some 2 million people are now internally displaced.

2022 saw humanitarian needs skyrocket, with 4.9 million people in need of aid by December – a 40 per cent increase from the start of the year. Attacks on water points by non-state armed groups cut off water access for 830,000 people. The number of schools closed due to insecurity nearly doubled, to over 6,200, disrupting education for over a million children. Despite the dire needs, just 42 per cent of the requested humanitarian funding was delivered in 2022, leaving many without aid.

Political instability added another layer to the crisis, with two military takeovers eight months apart. The first in January deposed the democratically elected President, the second pitted two military sides against each other. While both coups occurred quickly and with a low level of violence, principled humanitarian work was further strained, and the year ended with the UN's most senior humanitarian in the country being declared *persona non grata*.

Access for humanitarians to people in need became increasingly tenuous and remains so in 2023. Around 40 per cent of the country is considered to be outside of state control, making aid operations in these areas extremely challenging. Some 23 towns and cities, home to 800,000 people, are under blockade by a range of armed groups leaving people cut off from the rest of the country, with no access to operational markets or basic social services. NGOs and UN agencies have relied on a UN air bridge to reach these populations, but cargo is limited and fails to meet their needs. In the city of Djibo, home to nearly half the people living under siege, food insecurity became so dire in late 2022 that up to 85 per cent of families' meals consisted of wild leaves.

International media coverage of the crisis remained limited and primarily focused on political upheavals and high-profile attacks. The scale of the humanitarian crisis too often remained a side note, due in part to near-impossible access for journalists to conflict and displacement areas.

Humanitarian space has already shrunk further in 2023. A new ban on cash transfers implemented in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions – two of the most affected regions – is leaving roughly 2 million people without much-needed cash assistance. Ongoing negotiations to open humanitarian corridors have so far stalled but remain vital to deliver larger amounts of lifesaving aid as over 3.3 million people are expected to go hungry this summer.



We want the world to know about our difficulties, about what is worrying us now," says Maïga Abibou. Maïga is from Wapassi in the North region of Burkina Faso, but fled to Kaya in search of safety. Photo: Jacques Bouda/NRC

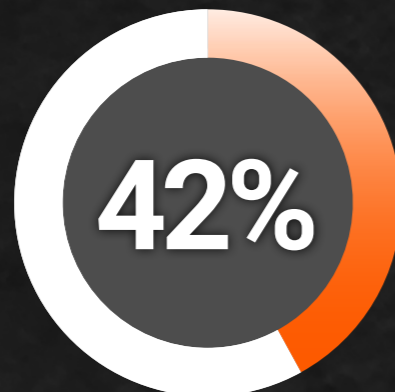
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



Political engagement

2 DR Congo

2021 ranking | 1

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to face instability, violence and conflict in 2022.

Despite some positive momentum in the region, global political engagement and media attention towards this crisis remained shockingly low, leaving DR Congo once again among the top two most neglected displacement crises.



"Security is a big concern. We are neighbours with the rebels. They will come as bandits, to steal and kidnap," says the director of a school in Djugu territory in DR Congo. Many children are too scared to come to school.
Photo: Hugh Kinsella Cunningham/NRC

Eastern DR Congo continued to see multiple and overlapping crises that worsened the humanitarian situation and made life ever-more challenging for the country's 5.7 million displaced people. Ongoing peace negotiations in Nairobi, supported by other countries in the region, presented an opportunity for progress. Yet, for the 27 million people in need of aid across the country this has yet to translate into a better daily reality.

Across the east of the country, civilians were forced from their land and out of their homes by conflict, leaving them reliant on aid. In North Kivu province, an ongoing offensive by the armed group M23 has now forced 1.3 million people from their homes, with many seeking refuge in and around the regional capital Goma. In Ituri province, the crisis in the town of Djugu continued, with tens of thousands displaced and humanitarian access greatly limited, leaving people out of reach of aid.

Areas where conflict had abated also faced the impact of neglect. In Tanganyika province, displaced communities returned to their homes and fields, but the root causes of local disputes – including competition over resources and land – remained unresolved. Without adequate longer-term support the road to self-reliance will be long.

The humanitarian response across DR Congo was greatly curtailed by a lack of funding, leaving people without safe drinking water, adequate food or a livelihood to support their families. Without greater support from the international community in 2023 for lifesaving assistance, resilience and peace programming, the country likely faces another year as one of the world's most neglected crises.

3 Colombia

2021 ranking | NEW

Colombia faced three critical interrelated crises that contributed to a worsening humanitarian landscape in 2022: the continuation of the 60-year-old armed conflict, the ongoing Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis, and the impact of climate change and extreme weather events.



The indigenous community of Egoróquera in Chocó, Colombia has been heavily affected by the armed conflict in the area.
Photo: Alejandro Camelo López/NRC

Six years after a ground-breaking peace agreement, no less than seven internal armed conflicts still tormented Colombia and its people in 2022. The conflicts displaced entire communities, while armed groups forcibly confined over 100,000 people to their homes or neighbourhoods without access to food and other fundamental rights. In 2022, the number of internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in Colombia were the highest in more than a decade.

Further strain was put on Colombia due to the inadequate resources to support the 2.4 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants who now live in the country, as well as those who transit through. Climate change and extreme weather events also brought great challenges including a loss of livelihood, particularly to refugees, migrants and internally displaced who were among the worst affected by the floods, tropical storms and torrential rains that wreaked havoc.

Across the country, over 7.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, one million more than in 2021. Yet, despite the staggering humanitarian needs and an increasing number of people uprooted from their homes, international media interest in the impact of the armed conflict declined, and the situation received very little coverage.

Humanitarian funding, too, saw a drop-off. Despite skyrocketing needs, just 38 per cent of required funding needs were met last year. 2023 looks set to be another challenging year for Colombia. With international support waning, the gap between needs and resources is likely to grow, making life worse for displaced people in the country.

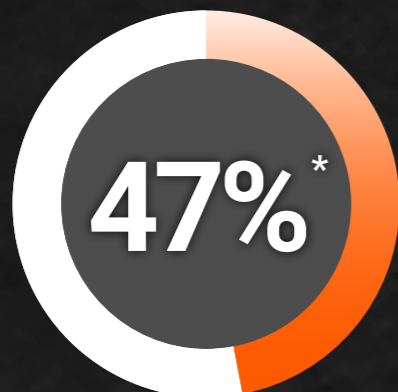
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



Humanitarian funding

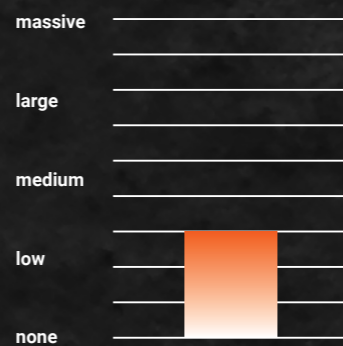
Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.*



*Humanitarian response plan + Regional response plan

Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



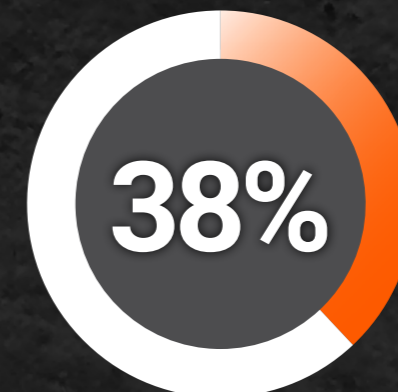
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



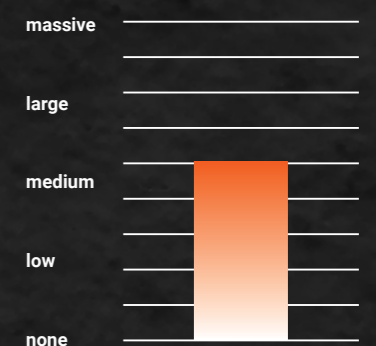
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



4 Sudan

2021 ranking | 7

After another year marked by hardship, uncertainty, and increasing violence, a third of the Sudanese population needed aid by the end of 2022 – the highest figure in a decade. In 2023, the country has already made headlines as it collapsed into widespread conflict.



Mariam is not able to move and spends every hour of every day in one room, in the same spot. She lives with her family in Geneina, a city in West Darfur, Sudan. Photo: Rawan Kara/NRC

A political and constitutional crisis, intertwined with escalating conflict and climate change, further deepened humanitarian needs in Sudan and left 15.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. The number of people facing hunger rose for the third year in a row.

Humanitarian funding remained inadequate. Less than half of the required funding was received, and most bilateral aid remained frozen due to the October 2021 military coup. A growing economic crisis, the effects of climate change and skyrocketing food prices also continued to erode communities' resilience.

Fighting spread from the Darfur region to the states of North, South and West Kordofan, as well as Blue Nile state. Civilians – including internally displaced people – were the target of extreme violence. Hundreds of villages were set ablaze, killing 991 people and forcing over 310,000 people to flee.

Violence and displacement affected all aspects of life, leaving many people without a livelihood, children without an education and families without legal documentation. Many displaced people were unable to access even basic services.

Sudan hosts over a million refugees, one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. The vast majority are from South Sudan. Despite difficulties, it kept borders open in 2022 and gave asylum to over 52,000 refugees. Yet, the rights of refugees are extremely limited, so many continued to depend on diminishing humanitarian aid, including food rations which have been halved due to a lack of funding.

With Sudan being thrown into turmoil in 2023, the country's humanitarian crisis will likely reach catastrophic levels, with an exponential increase in people displaced and in need as the state systems fall apart.

5 Venezuela

2021 ranking | NEW

Now in its eighth year, the Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis has with sad predictability evolved into a protracted crisis receiving little international attention. The crisis continues to deepen, with over 1 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants leaving their homeland in 2022.



Faride López (52) supports her four grandchildren alone and has sold everything she owns to put food on the table. Photo: Ingrid Prestetun/NRC

In 2022, Venezuelans continued to suffer from a deep economic, social, and political crisis, compounded by increasing levels of armed violence. This complex humanitarian crisis showed little sign of abating, and Venezuelans remained highly mobile, often on the move within the country or regularly crossing borders. Driven by a dire daily reality, 7.2 million people have left the country in search of international protection and a safer and better life since the crisis began.

At the end of 2022, close to 20 million people in Venezuela needed humanitarian assistance and almost a third of the population was food insecure. Despite the huge needs, donors only provided 36 per cent of the funding needed.

Diplomatic relations between Venezuela and neighbouring countries, including the Caribbean, did appear to improve in 2022. Notably, bilateral ties with Colombia were directly affected by the change in government there, and the borders between the two countries reopened after the pandemic. Yet, the relationship with the United States remained strained by sanctions, the lifting of which is also contingent on the successful negotiations between political parties inside Venezuela, and the upcoming 2024 elections.

Any improvements, or reported economic growth, have yet to trickle down to vulnerable Venezuelans who increasingly resorted to high-risk journeys, including through the notorious Darien Gap. In Panama alone, the number of refugees and migrants arriving from Venezuela increased to over 150,000, 50 times more than in 2021.

With hyperinflation, the devaluation of the Bolivar and the global economic crisis continuing to deepen – and with no sign of greater international donor engagement on Venezuela – it is likely that the situation in the country will remain dire in 2023.

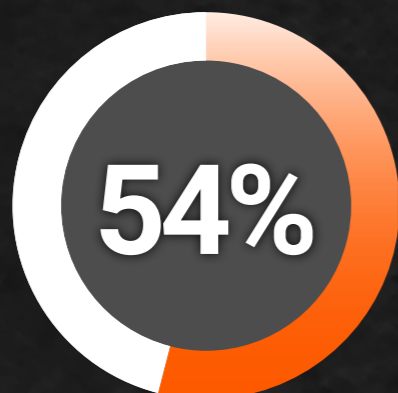
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



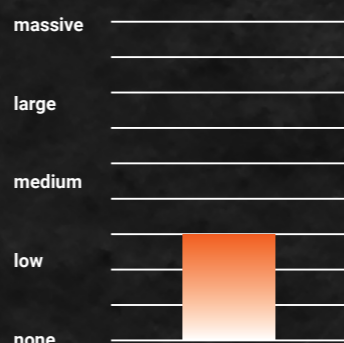
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



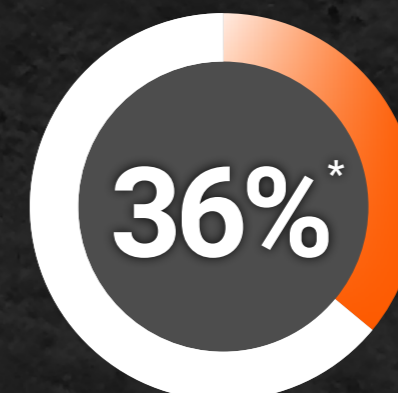
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



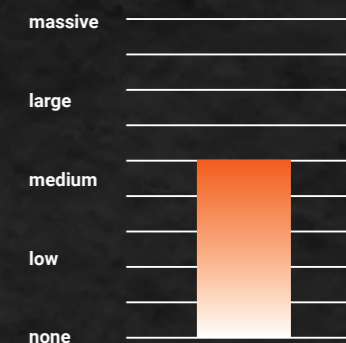
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



*Humanitarian response plan + Regional response plan

6 Burundi

2021 ranking | 9

Burundian refugees returned in large numbers last year, but the human rights situation in their home country saw little improvement. Despite persistent needs international support continued to wane.



Ntakirutimana (72) returned to Burundi in 2020. She now cares for 14 grandchildren whose parents are still seeking protection in neighbouring countries. Photo: Samuel Otieno/UNHCR

Almost a decade since their displacement, more than 300,000 Burundian refugees remained in neighbouring Tanzania, Rwanda, DR Congo and Uganda. Since 2017, a total of 200,000 Burundians have been repatriated. The situation in Tanzania, the country hosting the largest number of Burundian refugees, was increasingly precarious. While the government agreed that return should be voluntary, a lack of basic services, no livelihood opportunities and extremely limited humanitarian support left many people with no real choice but to return to Burundi.

Inside Burundi, human rights violations continued. In 2022, the government encouraged the ruling party's youth league, the Imbonerakure, to perform law enforcement duties to tighten their control. Many cases were also reported of family members who feared reprisals for reporting disappearances or other human rights violations.

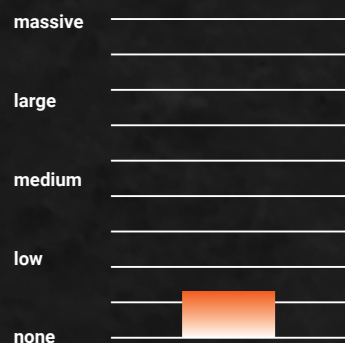
A special rapporteur was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021, and the mandate prolonged in 2022, but Burundi has rejected the rapporteur's request for access to the country.

Burundi remained one of the world's poorest countries. In 2022, an already dire food insecurity situation worsened due to a combination of soaring prices for food and goods, and climate hazards, including a delayed rainy season, followed by torrential rains and flooding. Some 52 per cent of children under 5 years were reportedly stunted and 1.8 million people were in need of aid.

This silent crisis was heavily affected by donor fatigue. The humanitarian response plan for 2022 was just half funded. In early 2023, the World Food Programme announced that food rations for refugees would be reduced by half due to lack of funding.

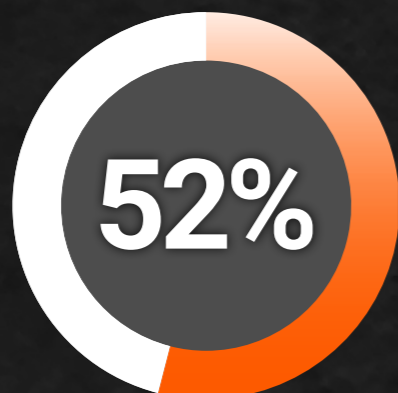
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



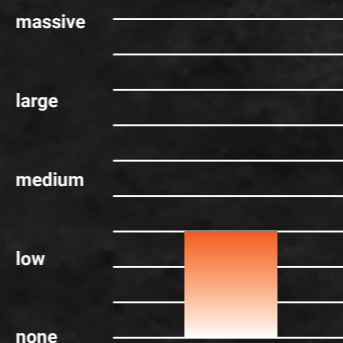
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



7 Mali

2021 ranking | 6

In 2022, political instability alongside growing violence and displacement caused suffering for people in Mali, while cuts in humanitarian and development funding continued the country's trajectory as a neglected crisis.



Amadou Ag Baye (46) fled with his family to Ménaka in Mali. "Our most urgent need right now is food. The next need is education for our children, as well as income generating activities for us," he says. Photo: Itunu Kuku/NRC

Clashes between non-state armed groups in the northern regions of Gao and Ménaka once again uprooted people from their homes, worsening an already dire humanitarian situation. By the end of 2022, 412,000 people were displaced across Mali, nearly 40 per cent of them within the northern regions.

Humanitarian space was further restricted and people's ability to access essential services, including health and education, was obstructed by insecurity. In remote areas, the non-functioning of civil registry services left communities increasingly vulnerable. Children have been the most affected with an estimated 150,000 children in Mali lacking birth certificates and more than half a million children out of school last year.

Mobilisation around the humanitarian response remained low with only 40 per cent of the required funds delivered for the 7.5 million Malians who were in need in 2022. Low media coverage of the humanitarian crisis in favour of political and military aspects, as well as low interest by world leaders in humanitarian issues in the country, further contributed to this situation.

With the withdrawal of French development funds from Mali, and the subsequent decision by the Malian government to suspend French humanitarian funding at the end of last year, the already limited humanitarian response is likely to shrink. Projections for 2023 are worrying, with the number of Malians in need likely to increase by 17 per cent to 8.8 million people.

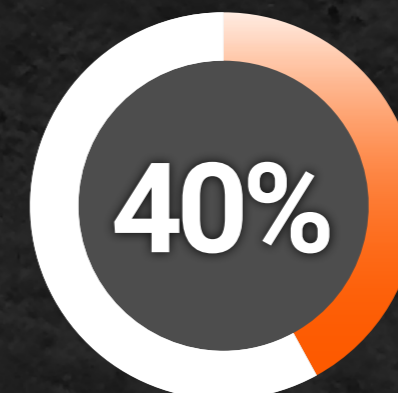
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



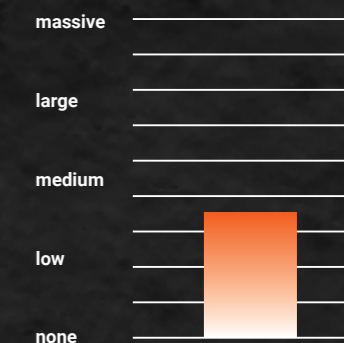
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



8 Cameroon

2021 ranking | 3

Last year saw little improvement for the people of Cameroon. Nine out of the country's ten regions remained affected by three separate and deepening humanitarian crises, and levels of need are matched only by an equally high level of international lethargy.



Zakia (8) fled from the Central African Republic and is now living in a refugee camp near Batouri in Cameroon. Photo: Tom Peyre-Costa/NRC

The Northwest and Southwest regions, also known as Anglophone regions, continued to experience a protracted armed conflict that has already uprooted 600,000 people from their homes. The slamming of bullets into houses and schools, and the suffering of Cameroonians caught in the middle, was largely overlooked, garnering little international media attention.

In the Far North region, hostilities and violence continued. Civilians were frequently attacked by non-state armed groups, forcing more people to flee their homes. Large-scale inter-community violence also persisted, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change and pressures on shared resources. In the North, Adamawa, and East regions, durable solutions for the over 350,000 Central African refugees have yet to be found, while the whole country faces growing food insecurity exacerbated by increasing commodity prices.

At the start of 2022, 3.9 million people across Cameroon required aid, a number that rose to 4.7 million by the end of the year as the country remained far from the international community's focus. Funds remained limited, with only 55 per cent of the humanitarian response covered by international donors.

With little international initiative to find political solutions to Cameroon's triple crisis, the level of need in the country is not expected to show any sign of improvement in the short to medium term. 2023 looks set to be another challenging year for the people of Cameroon.

9 El Salvador

2021 ranking | NEW

In 2022, El Salvador faced several devastating humanitarian crises driven by generalised violence, recurrent extreme weather events, and widespread poverty and inequality. These factors compounded to leave 1.1 million Salvadorans in need of aid.



"Many of the people my age that I grew up with have either been killed or have disappeared. The gangs target young people because they can manipulate them," says Samuel (23) from El Salvador. Photo: Ingrid Prestetun/NRC

The people of El Salvador struggled with the daily impact of food insecurity, natural disasters and climate change, and a pervasive state of violence last year. People in the neighbouring countries of Guatemala and Honduras faced similar challenges.

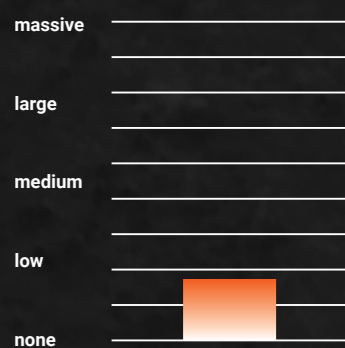
Two years after the devastation following hurricanes Eta and Iota, El Salvador was again impacted by severe flooding in 2022, caused by Hurricane Julia. The floods deepened communities' vulnerabilities and worsened conditions for 180,000 people who were already acutely food-insecure. In addition, despite the recent drop in murders in El Salvador, disappearances remained high, and violence – including gender-based violence – displaced tens of thousands.

Many Salvadorans embarked on dangerous journeys in search of safety and better lives in Mexico and the United States. In 2022, asylum applications from Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans surpassed 44,000 in Mexico alone. Almost 200,000 people were deported from Mexico and the United States to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras during the year.

Despite the UN launching its first Humanitarian Response Plans for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2021, the world continued to largely overlook the deteriorating situation. International donors provided a mere 28 per cent of the funding required in El Salvador in 2022, making it one of the most underfunded crises worldwide and limiting the scope of the humanitarian response. The vast majority of funding came from the United States, with the crisis barely registering on many donors' agendas. The picture looks no better for 2023, with little international focus on the crisis in the beginning of the new year.

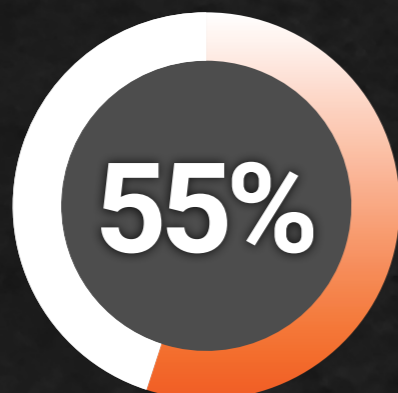
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



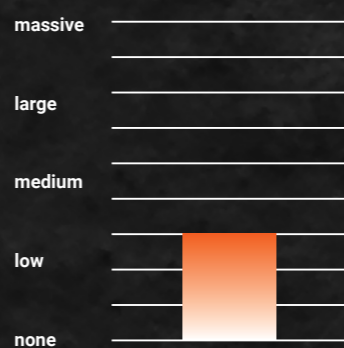
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



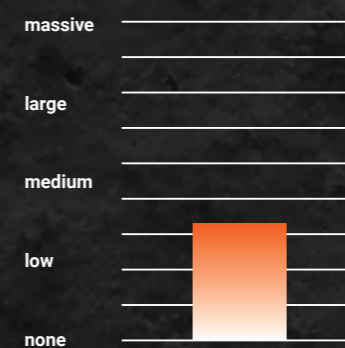
Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



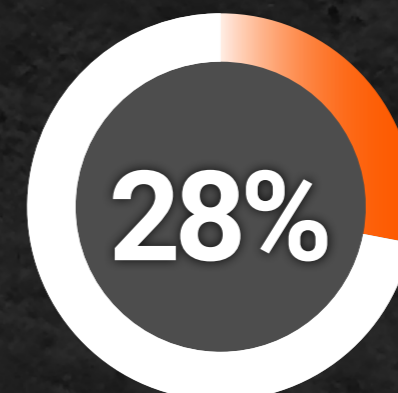
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



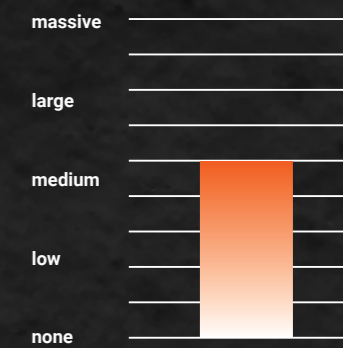
Humanitarian funding

Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



10 Ethiopia

2021 ranking | 10

Ethiopia is facing a series of severe humanitarian crises, which have received little attention from the international community and have had devastating consequences for millions. The fallout of conflict combined with the impact of climate change continues to worsen needs.

Although the conflict in the Tigray region has somewhat calmed since the cessation of hostilities in November 2022, 2 million people remain displaced and in urgent need of aid. The conflict resulted in exceptionally heavy civilian casualties, with estimates of the numbers killed over the course of the conflict as high as 600,000. The conflict also caused extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities, and the fallout of the conflict is also still causing extreme levels of need in the Amhara and Afar regions.

Separately, the ongoing and much-neglected crisis in the north-western state of Benishangul-Gumuz continued unabated. In the eastern Somali region, over 100,000 refugees have now arrived from Somalia putting pressure on local resources and communities.

Ethiopia faced the worst drought in generations last year, exacerbated by climate change. Impacts of extreme climate events continued in 2023, with flooding already affecting tens of thousands, displacing families and killing livestock in areas that are barely reached by humanitarian aid.

In total, there were over 20 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia in 2022. Despite the severity of the humanitarian crisis, it received little attention from the global community. Funding for humanitarian assistance has been limited, with just half the required funding received last year. This left aid organisations struggling to meet the needs of those affected by the crisis.

There are few signs 2023 will see an improvement in political and donor engagement, leaving Ethiopia, and its people, once again neglected.



Thousands of families displaced by armed conflict reside together with the local community in Mutsa Shewara in Ethiopia. The forced displacement adds pressures to the community, including high demand for water. Photo: Karl Schembri/NRC

Conclusions

While each of the ten crises outlined in this report should be given dedicated support and attention, we can draw several broad conclusions across them:

- Once neglected, it is difficult to lift a crisis out of neglect. Out of the ten crises in this year's report, eight have featured repeatedly during recent years. This points to a vicious cycle of international political neglect, limited media coverage, donor fatigue, and ever-deepening humanitarian needs.
- The majority of today's humanitarian crises are protracted in nature and involve multiple crises happening in tandem. Across the countries in this report, a disastrous combination of conflict and violence, displacement, and recurring climate change-induced disasters makes humanitarian needs all the more severe.
- Hunger levels are on the rise in most of the countries in this report, an issue exacerbated by global inflation partly caused by the war in Ukraine.
- Across many countries in this report, people are increasingly unable to reach or access humanitarian support and basic services due to ongoing hostilities, bureaucratic impediments, and a fatal disrespect among conflict parties for international humanitarian law.
- A lack of funding, and the poor quality of that funding, is compounding neglect across all countries in this report. The vast majority of humanitarian funding is short term and comes from a limited number of countries, leaving these crises vulnerable to donor budget cuts and shifting geopolitical interests.
- In conflict-affected countries, only lasting peace deals and inclusive political solutions will allow conflict-affected populations to resume or rebuild their lives. Further political efforts – at national,



Nelsa, a teacher in Antioquia in Colombia, tries to inspire and teach her community to preserve their traditions, to protect themselves and stay alive. Photo: Ivonne Marcela Olarte Acosta/NRC

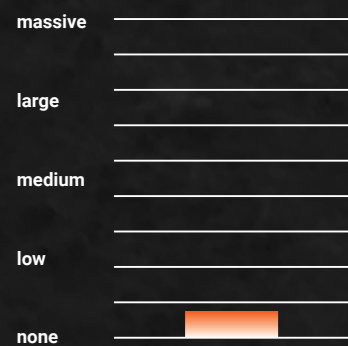
regional and international level – and strengthened humanitarian diplomacy are essential to encourage parties to join, or return to, the negotiating table.

- The lack of media attention towards these neglected crises is compounded by the strict restrictions on freedom of the press and a lack of access to areas of great humanitarian need in several of the countries in this report.

Recommendations

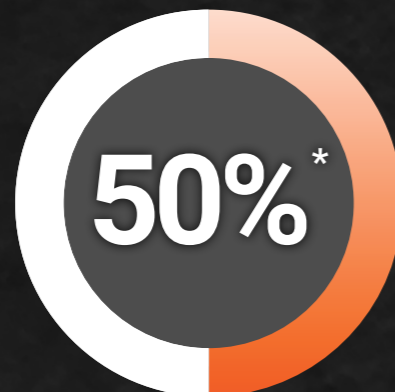
Media reach

Media coverage of the displacement crisis relative to the number of people displaced.



Humanitarian funding

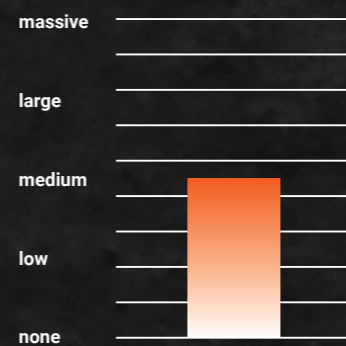
Percentage of requested humanitarian funding received.



*Humanitarian response plan + Regional response plan

Political engagement

The international community's willingness to contribute to political solutions.



Recommendations

Although an identical formula will not work for all the neglected displacement crises in this report, the recommendations below suggest several actions that can be taken by different stakeholders to address political, financial, and media neglect.

Recommendations to donor governments:

- Provide humanitarian assistance according to the needs of people affected, and not according to geopolitical interests or levels of media attention towards certain crises. Similarly, ensure that all humanitarian issues receive an equitable distribution of resources to prevent the recurring neglect of some sectors such as education and protection.
- Increase quality funding in the humanitarian system – including timely, flexible and multi-year allocations – in addition to direct funding for local response actors in line with commitments of the Grand Bargain to better address the overlapping factors of conflict and violence, displacement, and recurring climate-related disasters.
- Increase humanitarian and development budgets particularly to neglected and underfunded crises to meet the existing target for countries to spend 0.7% of their gross national income on official development assistance. Increased allocations should not include refugee costs in their countries.
- Commit to increasing refugee resettlement quotas and ensure safe and legal routes for all those fleeing all crises – not the just those in the headlines.
- Coordinate more effectively with development finance actors, including international financial institutions and climate finance actors, to encourage investment in displacement-affected contexts. Complementary humanitarian, development, and climate financing is key to meeting the needs of displacement-affected people, addressing recurring challenges, and tackling root causes.
- Move from reactive to proactive discussions to respond to neglected crises by initiating mechanisms and platforms to put neglected crises back on the radar. Together with like-minded states, organise high-level pledging events, appoint special envoys, and champion accountability or political dialogue mechanisms as relevant.

- Support the ability of humanitarians to work in complex contexts by simplifying due diligence procedures, offering more manageable risk-sharing models for aid agencies and local partners, and implementing consistent humanitarian safeguards within sanctions and counterterrorism laws.

Recommendations to UN Security Council and UN member states:

- Ensure that situations of neglected or protracted crises are given adequate attention by the UN Security Council and relevant bodies. This includes dedicated geographic and thematic meetings, and tabling votes or resolutions where appropriate.
- Use your mandate to urge all conflict parties to respect international humanitarian law. Where violations are identified, support international accountability mechanisms.
- Foster high-level political engagement at national and regional level in support of inclusive political solutions, as only an end to conflict and violence will bring longer-term stability in complex and protracted displacement crises.
- Help humanitarian organisations overcome barriers to safe and unimpeded access to hard-to-reach areas, negotiate with all parties to a conflict, and lessen the administrative constraints imposed by governments.
- Ensure that counterterrorism measures and sanctions do not unintentionally impact humanitarian organisations working in difficult operating environments and trying to reach those most in need quickly and safely. Member states must transpose humanitarian exemptions under UN Security Council Resolution 2664 into domestic legislation.
- Ensure that the mandate of UN peacekeeping missions is sensitive to humanitarian concerns, adequately resourced, and prioritises the protection of civilians. Close coordination with aid agencies and accountability to local populations is equally important.

Recommendations to humanitarian organisations:

- Strengthen humanitarian leadership in-country, including through seasoned country directors and humanitarian coordinators who can engage with national and international stakeholders on behalf of the humanitarian community and raise issues at the highest level.
- Broaden advocacy efforts for more and better funding to new stakeholders, including new donor countries, the private sector, and foundations.

- Provide evidence-based analysis to donors to help shape annual humanitarian aid allocations based on the severity of needs.

- Improve coordination between aid organisations on the ground. Optimise the use of resources and avoid unnecessary competition for the limited resources available.

- Invest in advocacy. Often country operations that receive the least funding cannot afford advocacy and communication resources, creating a vicious circle and making it difficult to draw attention to these crises at an international level.

- Link up with foreign policy think tanks, research institutions, and other organisations that can help approach neglected crises from different perspectives to collectively press for humanitarian issues to be included in broader policy debates or decisions.

Recommendations to journalists and editors:

- Invest in journalism from underreported crises. Inform and stimulate debate, and act as a watchdog.
- If red tape such as lack of media permissions, visas or other access issues hinders reporting from a crisis, use media platforms to advocate for the necessary changes, and explore digital solutions to get firsthand accounts from people on the ground.
- Advocate for the protection of press freedom and the safety of journalists to ensure domestic and



"Since the war, we've never had enough to eat, we have nothing to pay if the children get sick," says Patient*, a displaced father of six in Ituri province in DR Congo. Photo: Hugh Cunningham/NRC

international journalists working in crisis-affected countries can continue to report.

- Report in a way that focuses on solutions and does not contribute to exacerbating conflicts or stereotypes.

Recommendations to the general public:

- Help hold your government and politicians to account against existing commitments around aid levels and displacement-related policies – such as legal routes for migrants and asylum seekers and resettlement quotas, among other – by writing letters, signing petitions, and submitting questions to national legislatures.
- Read up on neglected crises and support quality journalism that covers forgotten conflicts. Speak up about these crises and share articles or stories on social media.
- When donating to a crisis, try to match generosity towards those in the headlines with those far from the media spotlight, who have often been displaced multiple times as a result of conflict, insecurity and climate hazards.



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