

chapter 1

people and crisis

Crises are increasingly complex and long-lasting. Currently, over one billion people (16% of the world's population) live in countries experiencing protracted crisis.¹ The number of countries experiencing protracted crisis rose from 13 in 2005 to 31 in 2019. These countries are home to half the world's people living in extreme poverty. A strategic approach is required to meet the immediate and longer-term needs of those experiencing crisis, including strengthening their resilience to new shocks.

Crises exacerbate inequalities and vulnerabilities for women and girls, yet a lack of gender-disaggregated data masks the extent of this. An increasing volume of official development assistance is being reported with the purpose of ending gender-based violence, although in 2018 this accounted for under 1% of total ODA allocations.

Severe and prolonged crises persisted in 2019. Conflict and forced displacement drove many of these crises, with an estimated 215.6 million people assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. In five countries – Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Palestine – the equivalent of more than half the population required humanitarian assistance. Numbers of displaced people globally increased for the eighth consecutive year in 2019, with the majority being internally displaced.

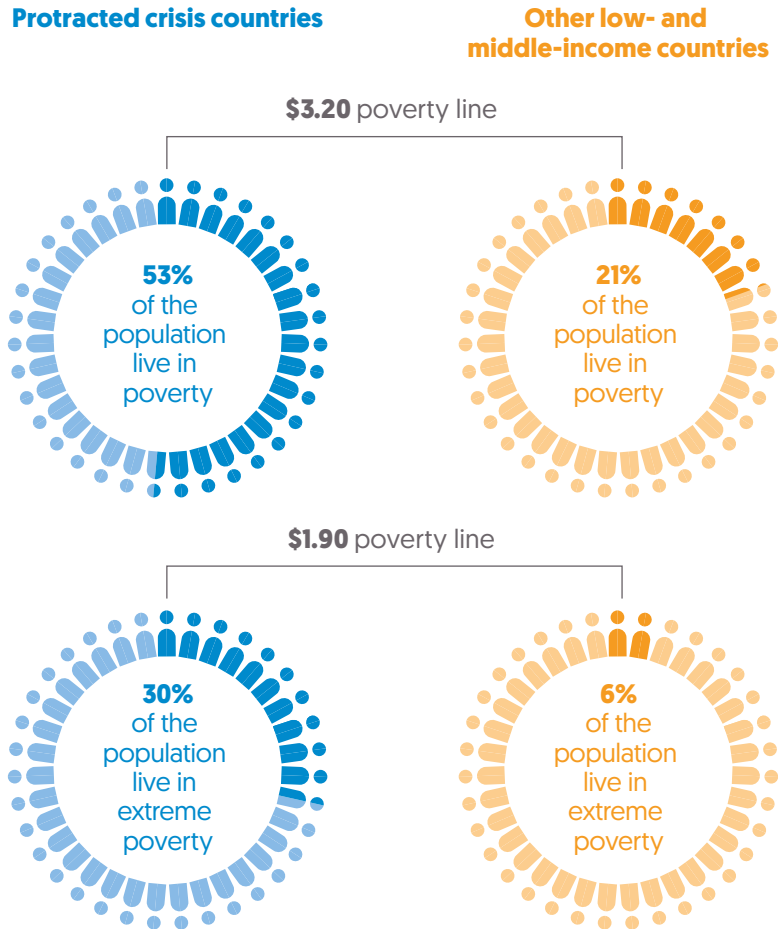
Displaced people may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.² In 2019, almost one in five displaced people were in countries classified as being at very high risk in terms of health and humanitarian impacts of the pandemic. Displaced persons are already vulnerable, often facing protection challenges and a lack of access to shelter, food and other basic services.³

Poverty and protracted crisis

Figure 1.1

On average 30% of the population in protracted crisis countries live in extreme poverty

Average share of the population living in poverty and extreme poverty in protracted crisis countries, compared to other low- and middle-income countries



The impacts of crises are felt disproportionately by people living in poverty, as crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Protracted crises are becoming increasingly prevalent, requiring humanitarian assistance to be provided in longer-term responses. Protracted crises often involve more than one crisis happening at once (such as conflict, displacement and natural disasters). They combine acute and long-term needs, requiring strategic support to meet immediate needs and to address structural causes and reduce vulnerabilities to new shocks.

- Over one billion people live in countries experiencing protracted crisis. The number of countries experiencing protracted crisis has increased over the past 15 years: from 13 in 2005, to 20 in 2010, and 31 in 2019.
- Compared to other low- and middle-income countries, countries experiencing protracted crisis have significantly higher poverty rates, with almost one third [30%] of people living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 a day).⁴

Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank PovcalNet, World Development Indicators, International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook and various national survey sources.

Notes: People living in poverty are defined as living on less than \$3.20 a day (2011 PPP); people living in extreme poverty are defined as living on less than \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP). Protracted crisis countries are defined as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of 2019. No poverty data is available from Cambodia, Grenada, Kosovo and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (PDR Korea).

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- Countries experiencing protracted crisis are home to half of the world's people living in extreme poverty (357 million of the 712 million people living in extreme poverty), despite accounting for only 16% of the world population overall. More than half of people living in countries experiencing protracted crisis live in poverty (defined as living on less than \$3.20 a day).
 - Crises hinder and reverse progress, leaving places and populations even further behind. In countries experiencing protracted crisis, poverty rates tend to stagnate or even increase over the course of the crisis. Since 2015, the share of people living in poverty in countries experiencing protracted crisis has remained at 30%, while in other low- and middle-income countries, poverty rates dropped from 8% to 6%.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is key to ensuring positive health outcomes. Many people living in poverty, however, experience poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene, exacerbating their vulnerability to the impact of crises. Proper handwashing is a key prevention measure against Covid-19, yet household surveys show that access to handwashing facilities is lower in countries experiencing protracted crisis.

- In 2018, 43.7% of households in countries experiencing protracted crisis had access to handwashing facilities.⁵ This compares with 60.7% in other developing countries.
- Access to handwashing facilities drops further for households that are also in the poorest 20% of the world's population.⁶ Only 30.5% of households in both a country experiencing protracted crisis and the poorest 20% of the global population have access to handwashing facilities.



Box 1.1

The gender data gap

Women are often disproportionately affected by humanitarian crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic. While women are often first responders in a crisis, they are also disadvantaged by existing gender inequalities and vulnerabilities. Such pre-existing imbalances are often exacerbated in crises.

- Women face unique challenges in the Covid-19 pandemic. Women are more likely to be front-line healthcare workers, hold low-wage jobs, and be responsible for the care of family members.
- Natural disasters on average kill more women than men, or kill women at an earlier age.⁷
- Women and girls experience high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian settings.⁸

Despite the disproportionate effect of crises on women and girls, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data in aid spending. While the gender data gap is not a new issue, it continues to obscure the extent to which women and girls are affected in humanitarian crises, and hinders the design of effective responses and gender-responsive programming for recovery. A gender-informed and targeted response is crucial to an effective response to Covid-19, yet it is difficult to identify how much aid is targeted at women and girls and reducing GBV.

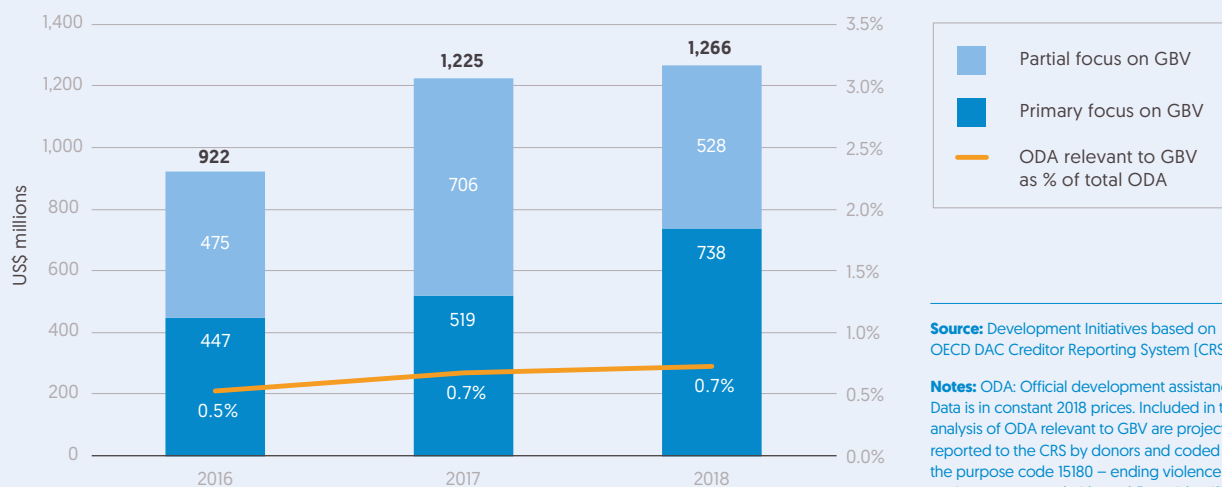
In 2016, the Development Assistance Committee Creditor Reporting System of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development introduced a new 'ending violence against women and girls' purpose code. This is to monitor aid focused on ending violence against women and girls, in order to improve accountability and tracking.

To obtain a fuller picture of ODA directed at the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls, Development Initiatives combined existing data from the specific purpose code with newly identified flows from the Creditor Reporting System. These flows were identified using a keyword search methodology, flagging projects with a primary or partial focus on GBV.

Figure 1.2

ODA relevant to gender-based violence (GBV) has increased gradually since 2016

ODA relevant to gender-based violence (GBV), 2016–2018



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: ODA: Official development assistance. Data is in constant 2018 prices. Included in the analysis of ODA relevant to GBV are projects reported to the CRS by donors and coded with the purpose code 15180 – ending violence against women and girls, and flows identified by keyword search as having a primary or partial focus on GBV. Total ODA refers to total gross bilateral ODA as recorded in the CRS.



Box 1.1 (continued)

The analysis showed that ODA from Development Assistance Committee donors and multilateral organisations reported under the 'ending violence against women and girls' purpose code more than tripled over three years: from US\$138 million in 2016 to US\$427 million in 2018. This spike was largely due to a significant increase in EU funding for GBV connected with the Spotlight Initiative.⁹

While reporting to the specific purpose code increased over the three-year period, a substantial amount of funding for GBV prevention and response did not use the new purpose code. The keyword search analysis showed US\$300 million in aid that was targeted to GBV prevention and response activities each year, but not marked accordingly.

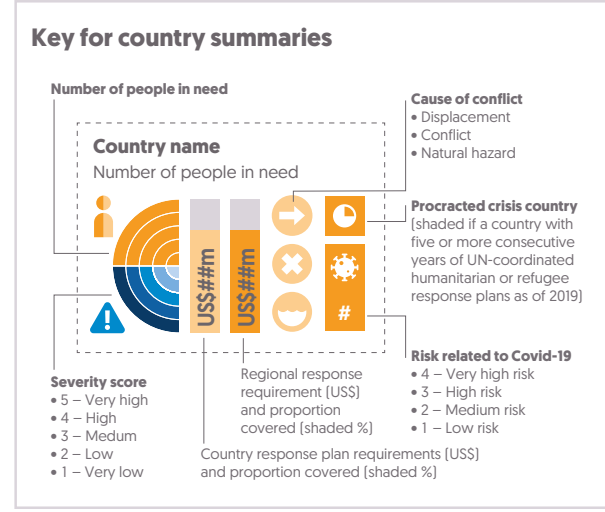
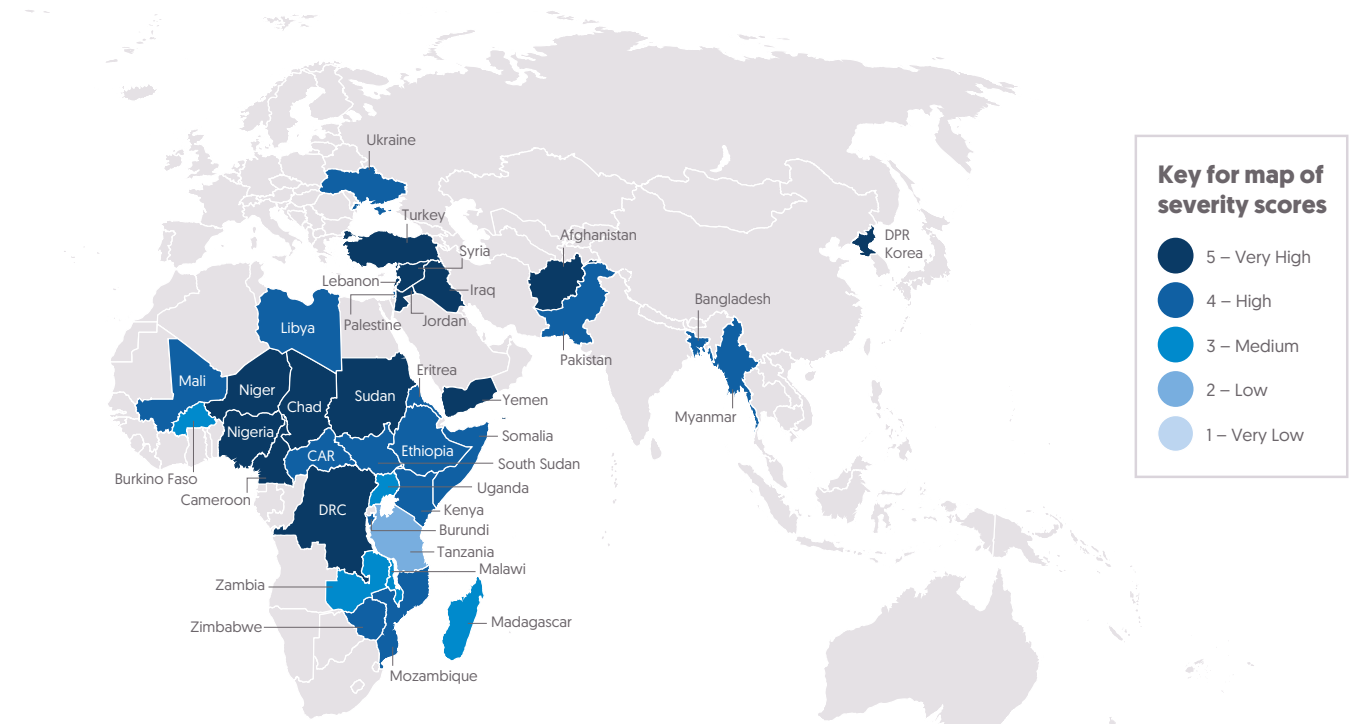
A further US\$528 million was identified as having a partial focus on GBV in 2018. This includes projects that might be part of a wider programme of work or a cross-cutting area, and for which a clear separation of GBV activities might not be possible due to reporting gaps and inconsistencies.

When combined, these categories total US\$1.3 billion in aid to GBV in 2018. This represents less than 1% of total ODA allocations in that year.

People affected by crisis

Figure 1.3
Severe crises are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East
People in need, type and severity of crisis, and funding requirements, 2019

Country summaries
Ordered by number of people in need



Source: Development Initiatives based on ACAPS, Food and Agriculture Organization, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), INFORM Index for Risk Management, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service data.

Notes: CAR: Central African Republic; DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo; RRP: regional response plan. Protracted crisis countries are defined as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of 2019. Countries are selected using ACAPS data and corresponding estimates of people in need. Countries with fewer than an estimated 0.7 million people in need are not shown. For further information on coding crisis types, see our online 'Methodology and definitions'.

Severe and ongoing crises persisted in 2019. Conflict and violence fuelled high numbers of people in need in Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Syria, while ongoing socioeconomic and political crisis in Venezuela saw high numbers in need.

- In 2019, an estimated 215.6 million people living in 69 countries were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. More than half (57%) of those in need lived in just 10 countries.
- A high number of people in need were concentrated in just 6 of these 10 countries, with more than 10 million people in need identified in each of the following: Yemen (24.2 million people in need), DRC (15.9 million), Venezuela (14.3 million), Syria (11.7 million), Afghanistan (11.3 million) and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (PDR Korea) (10.9 million). These six countries made up more than two fifths (41%) of people in need globally, totalling 88.3 million.

UN humanitarian and regional response plans and appeals set out the need of populations affected by humanitarian crises, as well as proposed responses and funding requirements.

- Only 4 of the 10 countries with the highest numbers of people in need (Yemen, DRC, Syria and South Sudan) are among the 10 countries receiving the largest volumes of funding through UN appeals.

In 2019, conflict and forced displacement continued to drive the crises impacting the largest populations of people in need. Many countries experienced more than one form of crisis (conflict, natural disaster and displacement).

- Of the 10 countries with the highest numbers of people in need, 8 experienced conflict: Yemen, DRC, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The remaining two countries are Venezuela and PDR Korea; they did not experience high levels of violent conflict¹⁰ but did experience ongoing socioeconomic and political crisis, and poor harvests coupled with severe food shortages, respectively.
- Displacement crises occurred in 47 countries, with 176.8 million people in need. Of the 10 countries with the highest numbers of people in need, 9 experienced displacement: Yemen, DRC, Venezuela, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan.
- Eleven countries experienced both conflict and displacement, with a total of 69.4 million people in need, 32% of the global total.
- Nine countries experienced conflict, displacement and natural disasters, accounting for 64.5 million (30%) of all people in need globally: DRC, Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Iraq, Niger and Mozambique. Four of these were in the top 10 countries experiencing the highest numbers of people in need: DRC (15.9 million), Afghanistan (11.3 million), Sudan (9.3 million) and Ethiopia (8.9 million).
- Of 69 countries assessed as needing humanitarian assistance, 8 were classified by the INFORM Epidemic Risk Index as being at very high risk of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic: DRC, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Chad, Haiti, Central African Republic and Burundi. Of the 69 countries, 36 were classified as high risk and 23 as medium risk; 2 were classified as low risk; and none of the countries were classified as very low risk.
- Of the 10 countries with the highest numbers of people in need, 3 were at very high risk from effects of the Covid-19 pandemic (DRC, Afghanistan and South Sudan), 4 were high risk (Yemen, Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia) and 3 were medium risk (Venezuela, Syria and PDR Korea).

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- Of the 28 countries in Figure 1.3 that are experiencing protracted crisis, 7 are at very high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic (DRC, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Chad, Haiti and Central African Republic), 13 were high risk, and 8 were medium risk (Syria, PDR Korea, Iraq, Turkey, Ukraine, Libya, Myanmar and Jordan).

Despite the limitations of collecting population data in crisis contexts, the proportion of a population identified as in need can give an indication of the extent of crisis and need.

- In 2019, five countries had a total number of people in need that was equivalent to more than half of their population: Yemen (equivalent to 84.8% of its domestic population), Syria (69.3%), South Sudan (63.8%), Central African Republic (55.7%) and Palestine (54.7%).

Displacement and vulnerability to the Covid-19 pandemic

Numbers of displaced people around the world increased for the eighth consecutive year in 2019, almost doubling since 2009 [see Figure 1.4]. The past decade has seen an increasing number of displaced people in long-lasting displacement situations, as fewer refugees and internally displaced people are able to return home.¹¹ Conflict and crisis continue to drive displacement, with the majority of displaced people being internally displaced, while one third are refugees.

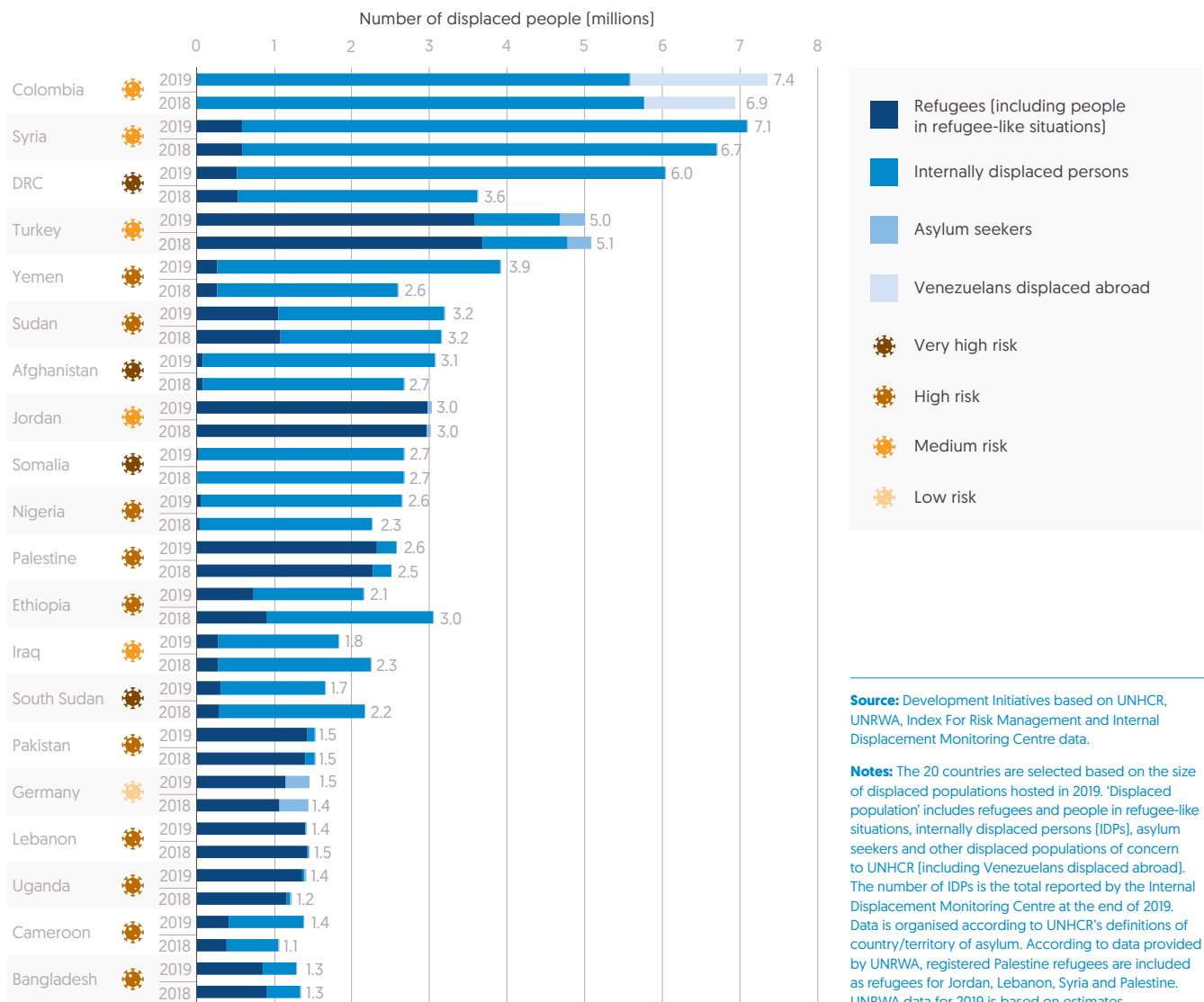
- In 2019 the total number of displaced people increased to 79.5 million, up 8% (6.1 million) from a total of 73.3 million in 2018. This is almost double the 2009 total of 41.1 million.
- Of all displaced people in 2019, 57% (45.6 million) were internally displaced, while 33% (26.1 million) were refugees and 5.2% (4.1 million) were asylum seekers.
- In 2019, 10 countries hosted more than half (55%, 44.0 million) of all displaced people worldwide. The 10 countries hosting the highest numbers of displaced people all saw an increase in their displaced populations in 2019, with the exception of Turkey, which saw a slight decrease to 5.0 million from 5.1 million in 2018.
- Yemen was the country with the biggest increase in the number of displaced people in 2019, increasing to 3.9 million from 2.6 million in 2018. Of the total number of displaced people in Yemen in 2019, 92% (3.6 million) were internally displaced, with the remainder (300,000 people) being refugees.
- The South of Sahara region hosted the largest number of displaced people in 2019, with around a third (33%, 26.1 million) of all displaced people. The Middle East and North of Sahara region hosted over a quarter (28%, 21.9 million) of all displaced people, followed by Europe (13%, 9.9 million), South America (12%, 9.9 million) and South and Central Asia (10%, 7.7 million).

Numbers of displaced people in South America rose significantly in 2019, driven in part by the number of Venezuelans displaced abroad. Venezuelans displaced abroad are recognised as a distinct group of people of concern, although they do not fit the typical criteria for being considered as refugees.

- The total displaced population in South America reached 9.9 million people in 2019. This was an increase of 13% [1.1 million] from 2018. Over half (57%, 5.6 million) of the displaced people in South America were internally displaced.
- The number of Venezuelans displaced abroad reached 3.6 million in 2019, up 38% from 2.6 million in 2018. Venezuelans displaced abroad comprised over a third of the total displaced population in South America, and 4.5% of the total number of people displaced globally in 2019.
- Colombia was the country hosting the largest displaced population in the world in 2019, with 5.6 million internally displaced people and 1.8 million displaced Venezuelans.

Figure 1.4

Numbers of displaced people increase for the eighth consecutive year
20 countries with the largest numbers of displaced people and vulnerability to Covid-19 pandemic, 2018 and 2019



Covid-19 poses a challenge for all countries, yet populations of displaced people may be particularly vulnerable, especially where they are hosted in countries at high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- In 2019, almost one in five displaced people (19%, 14.8 million) were displaced in countries classified as at very high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost one third (31%, 24.9 million) of displaced people were in countries classified as at high risk from the impacts of the pandemic.
- Of the 20 countries with the biggest populations of displaced people, 14 were classified as at high or very high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The South of Sahara region saw a 12% (2.7 million) increase in displaced people in 2019, reaching 26.1 million people. Of these, 11.7 million were in countries at very high risk from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic; 14.1 million were in high-risk countries, and 0.3 million were in medium-risk countries.

notes

chapter 1

1. Development Initiatives defines countries experiencing protracted crisis as countries with at least five consecutive years of UN-coordinated humanitarian or refugee response plans as of the year of analysis.
2. According to the INFORM Epidemic Risk Index, which aims to identify countries at risk from health and humanitarian impacts of Covid-19 that could overwhelm current national response capacity, and therefore lead to a need for additional international assistance. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/annual-reports/inform-covid-19-risk-index>
3. European Commission, 2020. Forced displacement: refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people (IDPs). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what-we-do/humanitarian-aid/refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons_en
4. This figure is in PPP (purchasing power parity) to allow for comparison of poverty data across countries. PPPs are constructed by comparing the cost of a common basket of goods in different countries. To reflect internationally comparable poverty lines, we use the \$1.90 and \$3.20 poverty lines derived from 2011 prices.
5. Development Initiatives based on data from USAID's demographic and health surveys, Unicef's multiple indicators cluster surveys and World Bank PovcalNet.
6. For more information on Development Initiatives' methodology on identifying the poorest 20% within the P20 approach, see <https://devinit.org/resources/p20-benin-consultation-consensus/methodology/>
7. Neumayer E. and Plümpert T., 2007. The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/3040/>
8. UN OCHA, 2019. Global humanitarian overview 2019. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO2019.pdf>
9. Hanssen S. with Development Initiatives, 2020. Gender-based violence and the nexus: global lessons from the Syria crisis response for financing, policy and practice. Available at: <https://devinit.org/resources/gbv-nexus-global-syria-crisis/>
10. Defined as not having an INFORM Currently Highly Violent Conflict Intensity of 7 or above.
11. UNHCR, 2020. Global trends: forced displacement in 2019. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>