

GLOBAL 20 HUMANITARIAN 19 OVERVIEW

UNITED NATIONS COORDINATED
SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AFFECTED
BY DISASTER AND CONFLICT



United Nations

Trends in Humanitarian Needs and Assistance

On 4 December, the World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2018 report, focusing on humanitarian data over a five-year period, will be launched in Geneva as a companion to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2019 – the authoritative, evidence-based assessment of global humanitarian needs and how best to respond to them. Here are highlights from the Data and Trends report.

Crises in numbers

Over the past decade, humanitarian crises have been increasing in number and duration. Between 2005 and 2017, the number of crises receiving an internationally led response almost doubled, from 16 to 30, while the average length of a crisis with an active inter-agency appeal increased similarly.

Since 2015, appeals for crises lasting five years or longer have commanded 80 per cent of funding received and requested, compared with approximately 30 per cent in 2015.

The number of people in need and targeted for assistance has also steadily grown in recent years.

Displacement

Some 16.2 million people were newly displaced by conflict and violence in 2017 alone – this amounts to 44,000 people being forced from their homes every day. An additional 18.8 million people were displaced by natural disasters. Nearly 70 million people across the world are currently displaced, most of them within their own borders.

Syria tops the list of countries with people internally displaced by conflict, with 6.8 million; followed by Colombia, with 6.5 million; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 4.5 million; Sudan, with 2.1 million; and Iraq, with 2 million.

Disasters affect an average of 350 million people each year, and cause billions of dollars in damage. Climate change could bring internal displacement figures to 140 million people by 2050.

In the absence of political solutions to long-standing crises, these trends are likely to continue.

Hunger and malnutrition

After years of decline, the number of undernourished people is rising because of conflict and climate change. Conflict displaces people from the land they farm and disrupts food markets and transport systems, driving up food prices, while climate change exacerbates cycles of droughts and floods.

In 2017, 821 million people were undernourished, compared with 804 million in 2016. Some 124 million people in 51 countries experienced crisis-level food insecurity in 2017, a nearly 15 per cent increase from 2016. The worst-affected countries were Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

In 2017, 50 million children under age 5 – some 7.5 per cent of all children – experienced wasting due to severe acute malnutrition, putting them at a higher risk of mortality. Some 80 per cent of the world's chronically malnourished and stunted children live in countries in conflict. Today, the threat of famine looms in Yemen, with at least 8.4 million Yemenis who do not know where their next meal will come from. If the trajectory of the crisis does not change, up to 12 million people could soon be entirely reliant on aid to survive.

In 2017, some 2.1 billion people lacked access to safe drinking water, and 1.9 billion lived in severely water-scarce areas.

Women and girls

Proliferation of arms, mass displacement and the collapse of the rule of law due to disasters and conflicts exacerbate existing gender inequalities and trigger patterns of sexual violence. An estimated one in five women refugees has experienced sexual violence – actual numbers could be much higher.

Girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school in conflicts. They are also more likely to be pulled out of school in natural disasters such as droughts, as they are called on to fetch water and care for family members.

Some 60 per cent of all preventable maternal deaths take place in settings of conflict, displacement or natural disasters, because women and adolescent girls cannot access critical health care.

Attacks on health facilities and schools

Health-care workers experienced more than 700 targeted attacks in 2017, and many more are thought to have gone unreported. Attacks on health workers and health facilities have dire consequences on people's access to health care.

Schools and education staff continued to be targeted in conflicts in 2017, with a 24 per cent rise in the number of attacks as compared with 2016.

In 2017, 263 million children worldwide were not enrolled in primary or secondary school: 61 million of them at primary level and 202 million at secondary level.