

Study: War, climate displaced tens of millions in 2020

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A key group that monitors internal displacement is reporting Thursday that violence and disasters—often caused or worsened by the impact of climate change—forced people to relocate within their countries more than 40 million times last year, the highest such tally in over a decade.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, in its latest annual global

report, says a record 55 million people were living away from their homes but within their countries at the end of last year, as storms and floods, as well as both protracted and new conflicts, drove up the figures that have been growing for more than a decade. Sometimes people have moved two or three times.

The Geneva-based center, which is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council, said the number of internally displaced was more than twice that of refugees—those who flee to another country—at the end of last year. The group cautioned that the figures were likely a "significant underestimate" because COVID-19 travel restrictions impeded the collection of data.

"It's shocking that someone was forced to flee their home inside their own country every single second last year," said NRC secretary-general Jan Egeland. "We are failing to protect the world's most [vulnerable people](#) from conflict and disasters."

Of those displaced at the end of the year, some 48 million people had fled conflict and violence and 7 million had escaped from disasters, the group said.

The center pointed to escalating violence and wider activity from [extremist groups](#) in countries like Ethiopia, Mozambique and Burkina Faso last year, and ongoing wars in places like Congo, Syria and Afghanistan. It also noted intense cyclone seasons in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and long rainy seasons in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, saying such weather woes uprooted millions.

Overall, the highest number of internally displaced people last year was in China, which faces floods regularly and authorities encourage or require internal displacement to get out of the way of rising waters, followed by the Philippines and Bangladesh. More than 5 million people

in China were forced into internal [displacement](#) last year.

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