

New report sheds light on cross-border displacement

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The number of people compelled to flee their homes because of conflict or mass disasters such as floods and earthquakes has almost doubled over the last 10 years. Of these displaced individuals, approximately 40% have been forced to cross borders in search of refuge. While some EU countries have played an important role in granting asylum and helping people resettle, the truth is that the EU and developed countries host a

very small share. In fact, an estimated 73% of refugees or asylum seekers settle in neighboring countries that are usually developing countries with limited resources, have conflicts and generalized violence, and are politically unstable.

To gain a better understanding of cross-border displacement, researchers from the Center for European Policy Studies, Belgium, analyzed the duration from events possibly bringing about displacement to migration into the neighboring country. Their work sheds light on which and how many time lags of conflict and mass disasters in countries of origin are significant in explaining the changes in forced migrations of people to neighboring countries.

As noted in the researchers' report, the evidence gathered will make it possible "to provide early warnings and support to neighboring countries and humanitarian organizations" and consequently to plan the allocation of resources to refugee camps. It will also help to predict "possible developments in mixed-[migration flows](#) to the EU, as neighboring host countries often represent the starting points of journeys along the migration routes."

For their analysis, the research team conducted monthly observations of seven countries of origin and 21 neighboring countries. The countries of origin studied were Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria.

Conflicts are the bigger problem

The results of the analysis suggest that [conflicts](#) can have a long-lasting impact on displacement, with significant effects noted five months after the conflict has taken place. "Moreover, the response of cross-border displacement to conflict is hump-shaped, with the largest effect found one month after the event," the report states. "The results for mass

disasters are more mixed: Although estimated coefficients are larger than those for conflict, the only positive and significant (at the 10% level) effects are found one and four months after the event."

Overall, the findings show that conflict has a stronger impact on displacement into neighboring countries compared to mass disasters. In addition, "the effects of conflict are persistent and can last for several months after the occurrence of the events themselves," the report informs. "However, it is important to keep in mind that mass disasters are considerably less frequent than conflict events, but are found to have a larger impact when coefficients are significant. Finally, disasters can also be the cause of escalating tensions and conflicts within countries characterized by precarious stability, and therefore, indirectly cause [displacement](#) into neighboring [countries](#)."

More information: Mattia Di Salvo et al, [Time sequence of forced displacement into neighbouring countries \(2022\)](#).

Provided by CORDIS

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