

Climate, security and displacement



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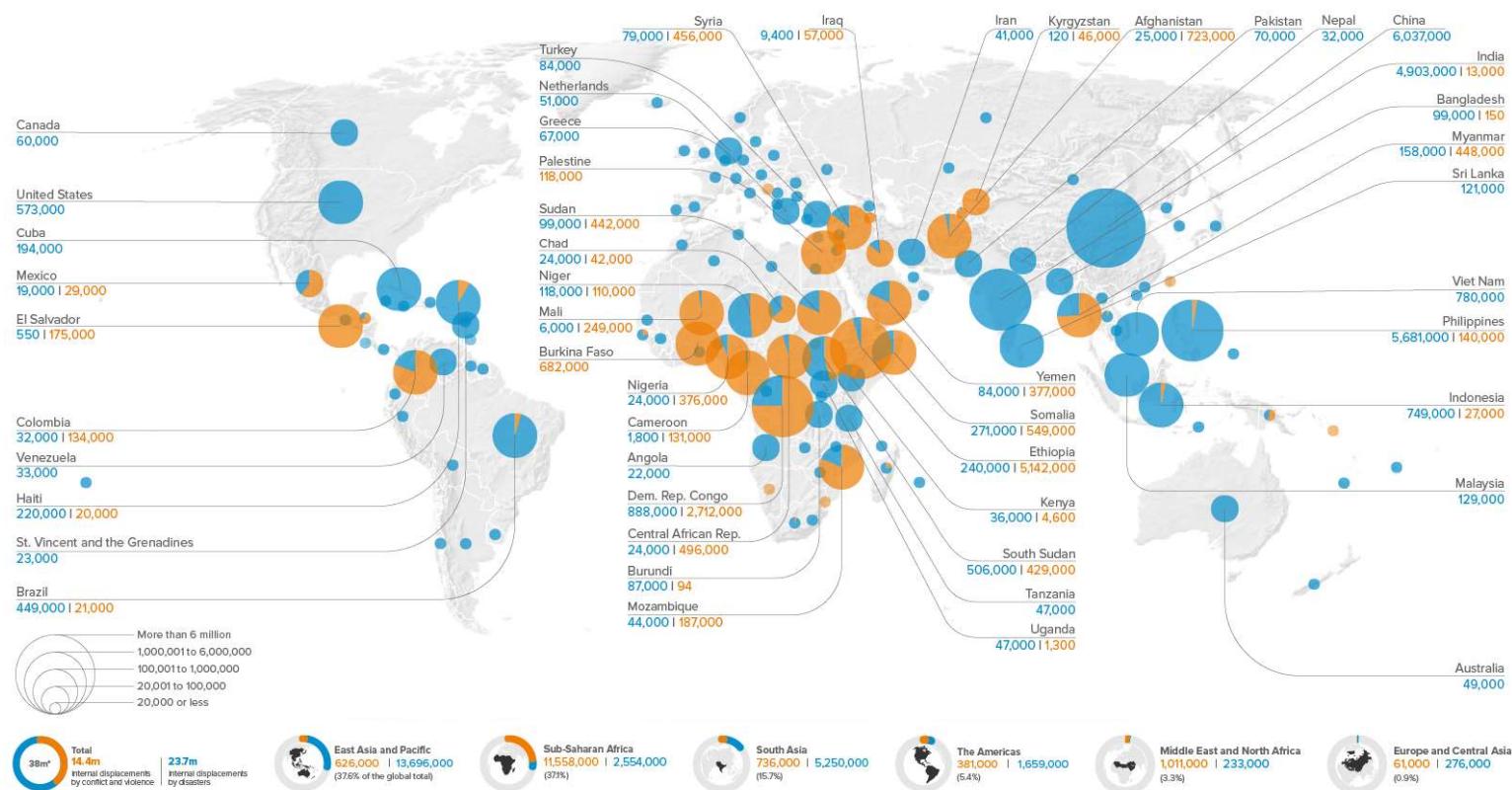
What is the link?

Displaced People are on the Frontlines of the Climate Crisis

Climate change amplifies peoples' vulnerability through multiple impacts: extreme & unpredictable weather, food & water insecurity, natural resource-based livelihoods, communal tensions, displacement

- **70% of refugees & 80% of IDPs** originate from **countries least able to adapt** and most vulnerable to climate change
- **Nine in every ten conflict-displaced returnees** in 2021 returned to highly climate vulnerable countries or situations, **including 99% of all refugee returnees**.
- In 2021, among the 15 countries most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change **11 were in a state of conflict** or high institutional or social fragility.
- People in **low-income states – least adaptive capacity – are 4 x likely to be displaced**

Internal Displacement by **conflict** and **disasters**



Source: IDMC GRID 2022

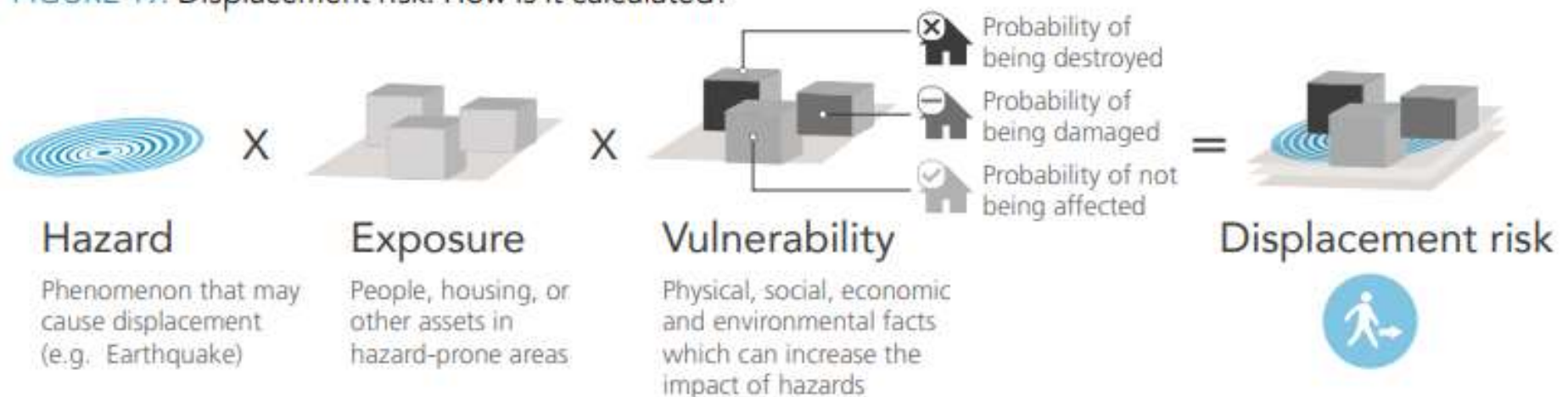
➤ Between 2008-2018 natural hazards triggered **~265 million new displacements**

➤ 3 x as many forced movements as those caused by conflict & violence

➤ Disaster Displacement is multi-causal with climate change being an important, but not the only factor

Disaster Displacement

FIGURE 19: Displacement risk. How is it calculated?



Impacts of climate change + Increasing population in areas exposed to storms/floods/droughts
=
Increased displacement risk

NEWS & VIEWS

Barbados PM Mia Mottley tells COP27 there will be 1 billion climate refugees by 2050

NEW ZEALAND / CLIMATE

COP27: Cut emissions or face tens of millions of climate refugees - Bahamas PM

How many people will be displaced by climate change?

There could be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050. Here's what you need to know

PRESS RELEASE | SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

Climate Change Could Force 216 Million People to Migrate Within Their Own Countries by 2050

Predicting Displacement in the Context of Climate Change

- Figures should be treated carefully, as the nexus between climate change and human mobility is extremely complex.
- The impact of climate change on displacement is also not a uniform process and includes sudden- and slow onset events, and climate-related conflict.

Challenges

1. Statistics in relating to displacement in the context of climate change
2. Lack of historic precedent
3. The link between climate change and forced displacement is difficult to measure

What about climate refugees?



[Views](#)

How do we prepare our cities for the inevitable wave of climate refugees?



”Climate Refugees”

- Added to Oxford English Dictionary in 2021
- Can be a useful and evocative shorthand describing the situation of people forced to move from their homes due to climate-related events who may need protection and assistance

BUT:

- Not a part of current international law
- May generate confusion or misplaced fear
- Most people displaced in the context of climate change are displaced within their own countries

Human Rights Committee Case Teitiota v New Zealand

- The claim to protection by Mr. Teitiota was denied on grounds that he was not at imminent risk
- The committee nonetheless determined that people who flee the effects of climate change and natural disasters should not be returned to their country of origin if essential human rights would be at risk on return.
- Recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change and disasters have diverse consequences for States and societies, as well as the well-being and enjoyment of rights by individuals



Application of refugee law in providing a framework for protecting people displaced across borders in the context of climate change

Legal Considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters



1951 Refugee Convention Article 1A(2)
as modified by 1967 Protocol defines a ‘*refugee*’ as any person who:

'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'

1951 Refugee Convention

- People fleeing in the context of climate change or disasters **may have valid claims for refugee status under the 1951 Convention**
- Risks giving rise to a need for international protection under the 1951 Convention may stem from **effects of climate change/disaster interacting with conflict/violence**
- The impacts of a disaster may create conditions that **reinforce or bolster claims for refugee status under the 1951 Convention**

Other relevant instruments

- **Regional refugee instruments (1969 OAU Convention and 1984 Cartagena Declaration):** may apply where events seriously disturb public order
- **Complementary forms of protection:** may apply where there is a real risk of serious harm
- **Temporary protection** after sudden-onset disasters or where international refugee and HR law do not apply

Thank you

