

# FORCED TO FLEE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Red Cross and Red Crescent action addressing  
climate and disaster displacement in Africa



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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 16 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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**COVER: KENYA, 2011** – Climate change is intensifying floods and droughts across Kenya, with arid and semi-arid regions in the north and east particularly affected. Water distribution points like this one in Lago, near Garissa, are essential lifelines for communities facing chronic water shortages. *Jonathan Kalan / IFRC*

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## About this report

In the face of the changing climate, people in Africa are being forced to flee their homes. Using case studies of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society action in Africa, this report underscores the need to scale up efforts to support people and communities to adapt, reduce the risks of displacement, address the needs from displacement, and strengthen resilient and sustainable recovery. It articulates where we need to do more – individually and collectively – anchoring our action in local leadership and the meaningful participation of affected people and communities.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the people who contributed to this report.

The report would not have been possible without the valuable contributions, insights, and perspectives of the staff and volunteers of the National Societies actively working across Africa to reduce risks and address the needs related to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. These National Societies include: Burkina Faso Red Cross, Red Cross of Chad, Ethiopian Red Cross, The Gambia Red Cross, Kenya Red Cross, Malawi Red Cross, Mali Red Cross, Mozambique Red Cross, Red Cross of Niger, Nigerian Red Cross, Senegalese Red Cross, Somali Red Crescent, South African Red Cross, South Sudan Red Cross and Uganda Red Cross.

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The report was reviewed by Bruce Burson; Sarah Koeltzow, PDD; Ezekiel Simperingham, IFRC Geneva; and Kirsten Hagon, IFRC Geneva. The production and review of this report was also supported by many IFRC colleagues across Geneva and Africa, including those from the Climate, Urban, Resilience and Environment; Community Engagement and Accountability; Disaster Law and Auxiliary Role; Emergency Operations; Health and Care; Humanitarian Diplomacy; Protection, Gender and Inclusion; and Socio-Economic Empowerment teams, as well as relevant IFRC Country and Cluster Delegations and Representation offices.

Hanna Butler coordinated the editing and production of the report, with design from MakeReady. Graphic content was developed by Eszter Sarodzy. All photographs were sourced from the IFRC ShaRED collection and are credited to the photographers.

Irish Aid provided support for the development of this report. The British Red Cross provided support for the editing and design of this report.



Several National Societies also support the work of National Societies in Africa in reducing risks and addressing needs related to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. These include the American Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Kuwait Red Crescent, Luxembourg Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, Spanish Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross.

## Get involved

There are many ways to support the work of National Societies in addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.

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## Acronyms

CEA	Community engagement and accountability
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
EAP	Early action protocol
eVCA	Enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessments
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFRC-DREF	IFRC-Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
PASSA	Participatory Approach for Safer Shelter and Settlement Awareness
PER	Preparedness for Effective Response
PGI	Protection, gender and inclusion
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene



# FOREWORD

Imagine being forced to flee, leaving not just your home, but your sense of place, your history and the future you had envisioned. Imagine watching floodwaters rise, feeling the earth crack beneath your feet and droughts claim your crops, or hearing the winds of a storm tear apart all that you have built. Imagine knowing that leaving is no longer a choice, but a necessity.

Across Africa, millions of people are forced into this reality every year, as displacement in the context of disasters and climate change uproots lives, fragments communities, and compels people to move into situations that are often uncertain, prolonged and fraught with risk. These crises do not just destroy homes; they disrupt livelihoods, take a psychological toll, and tear at the fabric of societies. And with climate change accelerating, the impacts are only deepening.

Displacement can be lifesaving, yet displacement is also loss. It is the loss of human security, of identity, of belonging. When people are forced to flee, their risks and vulnerabilities are heightened. They do not leave their struggles behind, they carry them forward into new, often precarious realities.

This report is a call to recognize what is at stake. Behind every statistic is a human story. Behind every number is a life forever altered. As you read, I ask you to connect, not just with the facts and figures, but with the people. Because their story is our story. Their future is tied to ours.

Yet, there is also hope, hope found in the resilience of people, in the power of community, and in local action. Hope is in the tireless efforts of those responding on the front lines. This report highlights the critical role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across Africa in reducing the risks of displacement, addressing urgent humanitarian needs, and strengthening long-term resilience. Whether by establishing early warning systems, taking early action before disasters strike, or supporting communities in recovery, National Societies are working to ensure that people can adapt, prepare, and when movement is necessary, do so safely and with dignity.

At IFRC, we recognize that locally led action is central to reducing the risks of displacement and meeting the needs of those already displaced. The 30 case studies in this report are a testament to the power of community-driven responses across the different phases of displacement. They underscore the need for greater investment, collaboration, and innovation to support people. Scaling up opportunities for adaptation, strengthening preparedness, and ensuring the meaningful participation of affected people and communities must be at the heart of our efforts.

The time to act is now. We must take bold, collective action to help people stay in their homes, move safely out of harm's way, and recover with dignity in the face of disasters and climate change. Together, we can ensure that displacement does not mean despair, and that those forced to leave behind their homes are not forced to leave behind their future.

**Charles Businge**  
Regional Director for Africa, IFRC

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change and disasters are increasingly undermining the lives, health, protection and well-being of people and communities across Africa. Each year, millions of people face greater risks and devastating impacts – many are forced to leave their homes, becoming displaced, while others remain unable to move without support.

This report highlights the essential role of National Societies in Africa in reducing the risks of, and addressing the needs from, displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. The report showcases how locally led and collective action can help people to adapt, move to safer areas, and recover and rebuild with dignity. It serves as both a description of challenges surrounding displacement and a practical resource for policymakers, practitioners and partners seeking to enhance efforts in this critical space.

The urgency for action has never been greater. Over the past 60 years, Africa's warming trend has exceeded the global average. Recent years have seen heatwaves, heavy rains, floods, storms, cyclones and prolonged droughts. In 2023 alone, these events triggered over six million displacements – 23 per cent of the global total. In 2024, 7.8 million displacements were triggered, and the situation is expected to worsen.

More frequent and intense climate and weather-related disasters are becoming the norm. Consecutive and cyclical events leave communities with little time to recover, increasing the risk of repeated displacement and worsening living conditions. Displacement is also becoming more protracted and complex, driven by the interconnected impacts of climate change, disasters, conflict, violence, poverty and other factors.

Empowering people and expanding their options are essential to helping them stay safely in their homes, move out of harm's way and recover with dignity on their own terms. Achieving this requires sustained investment in risk reduction, climate adaptation and early action, alongside robust preparedness measures, targeted humanitarian support and efforts to strengthen sustainable and resilient recovery.

Through 30 case studies from 15 National Societies in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda, this report demonstrates how they are working with local communities and leading efforts to reduce risks, protect lives and support recovery. These examples of addressing displacement and strengthening resilience across Africa offer insights and inspiration for action.

## Who we are

As the world's largest humanitarian network, the IFRC is made up of 191 National Societies, 49 of which are in Africa. National Societies are uniquely placed to address displacement. As trusted and present community members with networks of local staff and volunteers, and as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies bridge gaps between communities, governments and other actors to address the needs of the most vulnerable. This unique dual positioning also allows them to engage with decision-makers and opinion-shapers, elevating community voices and priorities to inform policy and programmatic action.

Working closely with diverse communities, including people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, National Societies play a pivotal role in identifying those at risk of displacement, reducing risks and advancing climate adaptation. Their work encompasses preparedness, early warning and early action, humanitarian response, recovery and resilience-strengthening. These efforts are complemented by work on disaster risk governance, protection, gender and inclusion, community engagement and accountability and humanitarian diplomacy. National Societies take an inclusive approach, working to leave no one behind by supporting internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and host communities while empowering them to shape programming and services.

For the IFRC, addressing the needs of people and communities at risk of or adversely impacted by displacement in the context of disasters and climate change is a global strategic priority. This commitment is reflected in the IFRC's Strategy 2030 and the newly adopted Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024–2030. Through the Global Climate Resilience Platform, IFRC is generating financial resources to scale-up locally-led climate action, focusing on meaningful participation and active leadership by marginalized groups, including those at risk of or affected by displacement. Climate resilience programming is already underway in at least 94 countries. These commitments underscore the reality that National Societies are already responding to this challenge in every corner of the globe – and will continue to do so for years to come.

## The challenge

In Africa, the ways in which disasters and climate change increase the risks of displacement – and exacerbate challenges for people who are already displaced – are complex and constantly evolving. Economic, social, political, environmental and demographic factors intersect to shape whether, how and when people move in response to disasters and climate change.

Evidence from Africa shows:

- People are experiencing repeat displacement as disasters such as seasonal flooding, droughts or storms force them to flee.<sup>1</sup>
- People are experiencing prolonged displacement, as disasters and the impacts of climate change overlap with conflict, poverty, marginalization, and food, water and resource insecurity.<sup>2</sup>
- People already displaced by conflict and disasters, and living in camps and informal settlements, are disproportionately concentrated in areas exposed to disasters and climate change, putting them at risk of further displacement.<sup>3</sup>
- As the impacts of climate change make rural lives and livelihoods more difficult, people are moving toward urban areas, including informal settlements in climate-exposed areas with limited access to essential services and more structural risks.<sup>4</sup>

- Climate change is disrupting traditional movement practices across the continent with mobile communities such as pastoralists changing their practices, including by moving into urban areas in search of alternative livelihoods.<sup>5</sup>
- Displacement is heightening exposure to health and other risks, with displaced people and others on the move in the context of climate change facing greater health risks and barriers to accessing essential health and other services.<sup>6</sup>
- Displacement is disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including people living in poverty, women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

Scientific projections also indicate:

- The number of people exposed to compounding hazard – such as heatwaves and drought, or drought followed by extreme rainfall – is projected to rise.<sup>8</sup>
- The number of people moving toward urban areas is expected to grow, resulting in larger populations in urban areas and informal settlements exposed to floods, heatwaves and other hazards.<sup>9</sup>
- Africa's low-lying coastal population is expected to grow faster than that of any other region from 2000 to 2060, increasing risks of displacement associated with sea-level rise, coastal flooding and coastal extreme events.<sup>10</sup>
- The impacts of some hazards, including average temperature increases and sea-level rise, threaten the ability of land to support human life and livelihoods in arid regions and low-lying coastal settlements.<sup>11</sup>

## Hazards and displacement in Africa



**Floods** triggered **30 million** displacements, over 70 per cent of disaster displacements in Africa between 2013-2024.



**Drought** triggered **five million** displacements, or 12 per cent of disaster displacements in Africa between 2013-2024. While drought affects Africa more than any other continent, this data is only reported for some countries and partially.



**Storms** triggered **5.1 million** displacements, 12 per cent of disaster displacements in Africa between 2013-2024.



**Sea-level rise** poses multiple and compounding risks to Africa's coastal regions. However, data on displacement linked to sea-level rise, coastal erosion and salinisation is severely lacking.



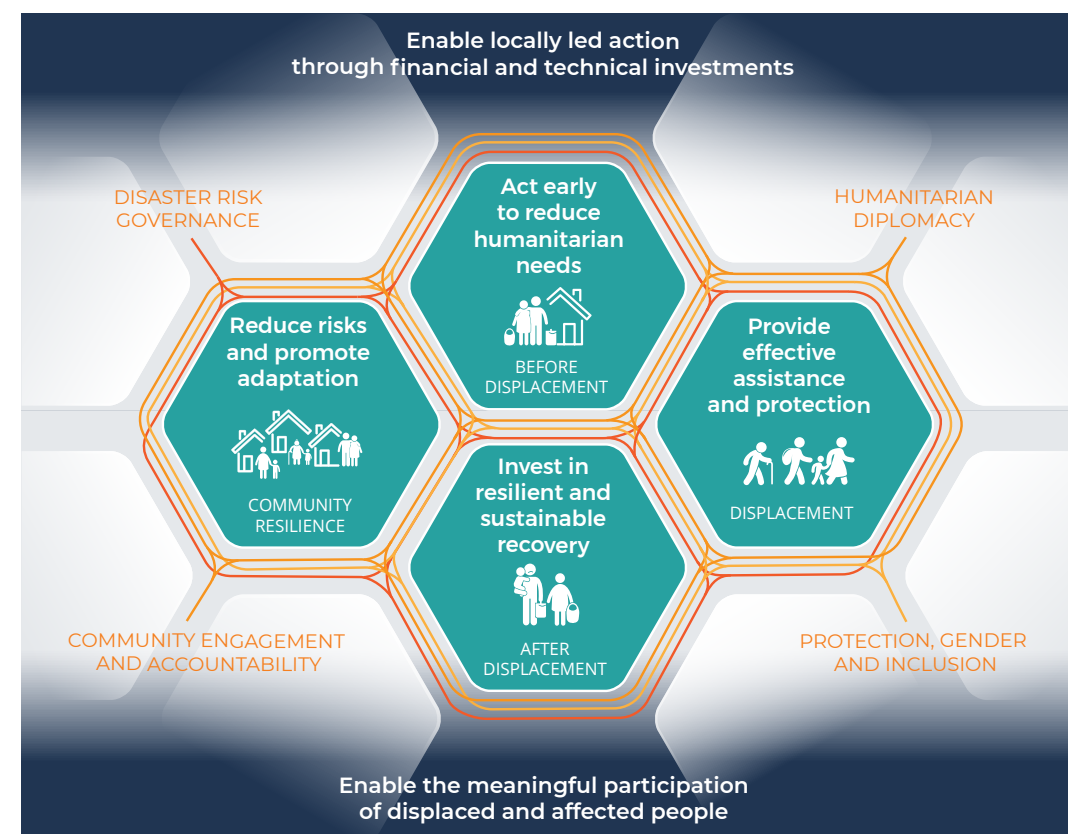
**Rising temperatures and extreme heat** affect the health and livelihoods of millions of people across Africa. While data on displacement linked to rising temperatures and extreme heat remains limited, heat stress not only reduces options for adapting locally but also increases risks for people on the move.



## How we can do more

There is a need to scale up individual and collective action to both reduce the risks of, and address the need arising from, displacement in the context of disaster and climate change. Understanding the nature and dynamics of displacement and other forms of movement of people is essential for shaping effective programmes, emergency responses, laws and policies and humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy. This research provides valuable insights and evidence on areas where stronger investments are needed as reflected in the diagram below. By scaling up action in these areas, based on contexts and needs, with and through local leadership and the meaningful participation of affected people, we can help expand options for people and communities – enabling them to adapt and stay in their homes, move to safety, recover and remain resilient on their own terms.

### ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE AND DISASTER DISPLACEMENT



## National Society action in Africa

Sustained action at the local level is vital for addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. Through their extensive networks of staff and over two million volunteers, National Societies in Africa are already taking action as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, with strong local connections and global reach.<sup>12</sup>

The below box discusses the cross-cutting areas where National Societies take action across the displacement cycle, while the graphic on the next page provides descriptions of the actions taken across the different phases.

### Cross-cutting action and tools

National Societies are taking action in the following cross-cutting areas:

- Disaster risk governance supports public authorities in developing or strengthening comprehensive legal and policy frameworks to reduce risks of disasters and displacement and address the needs of displaced people.
- Humanitarian diplomacy influences policies, practices and public perceptions to better address the needs and resilience of at-risk and displaced people.
- Community engagement and accountability promotes inclusive participatory approaches that consider and are guided by the needs and priorities of people in vulnerable situations, including internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees, people at risk of displacement and host communities, as well as fostering their ability to influence programming and services.
- Protection, gender and inclusion analysis and programming adaptation minimizes and addresses harms, promotes access to protection services, and supports the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Cash and voucher assistance is a tool used for interventions to support ahead of disasters and during response and recovery. It enables people to use the autonomy they have to decide on how best to meet their needs and priorities with dignity.

# NATIONAL SOCIETY ACTION IN AFRICA

## Action to address climate and disaster displacement

### ADAPTATION & RISK REDUCTION:

Recognizing the intensifying impacts of climate change, investment in adaptation and risk reduction can expand choices for people to stay in their homes or move out of harm's way on their own terms. National Societies are reducing risks, promoting adaptation, and strengthening resilience by:



#### COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- **identifying at-risk communities** through community-led assessments, hazard mapping, and risk-informed planning and taking actions to reduce risks, including with a specific climate-risk lens
- strengthening access to **shock-responsive social protection** and existing social protection systems for people in situations of vulnerability
- strengthening access to health services and **climate-resilient health systems**, such as through community surveillance of climate-related diseases
- strengthening access to water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH), including better waste management, such as through **climate-resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene systems**
- strengthening the **resilience of homes and assets**
- investing in **nature-based solutions**
- promoting **livelihood diversification** and climate-resilient livelihoods and climate-smart agriculture
- **educating and raising awareness** on the impacts of disasters, including displacement and the need for risk reduction and preparedness

### PREPAREDNESS & EARLY ACTION:

Before hazards and disasters strike, National Societies work with and alongside communities, providing them with the information, tools and resources to prepare and act early to protect lives and livelihoods, move out of harm's way, or reduce the impacts of displacement by:



#### BEFORE DISPLACEMENT

- promoting and shaping **early warning systems and processes** to provide people with information about forecasted hazards and helping them understand their options
- taking **anticipatory action** in response to warnings, providing tools and resources for people to protect themselves, their homes, settlements and livelihoods, and cope and stay or move out of harm's way safely and with dignity
- supporting communities to establish and map **evacuation sites and safe routes** and develop contingency plans
- **pre-positioning goods** to provide efficient and appropriate support
- promoting preparedness and early action in **displacement camps and settlements** and reducing risks and exposure to disasters and climate impacts

### ASSISTANCE & PROTECTION:

When displacement cannot be avoided, National Societies provide essential services and protection to meet the needs of displaced and other affected people drawing on a long history of expertise and action by:



#### DISPLACEMENT

- supporting **shelter needs** by setting up evacuation centers, collective accommodations, planned settlements, supporting hosting arrangement or providing rental assistance
- supporting communities to move out of harm's way through **safe and dignified evacuations**.
- addressing **basic needs**, including food, water and household items
- delivering **health services**, including first aid, psychosocial support, risk communication, and community engagement to reduce health risks and promote empowerment
- providing **WASH interventions** to promote awareness of the risks of disease spread and have safe, dignified, and sustained access to water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- providing **protection services** to women, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and others in vulnerable situations, including information on rights, how to report and receive support for abuse or harm, action to restore family links, and other essential protection and specialized services, as well as referrals to other actors
- providing **cash and voucher assistance (CVA)**, including through multi-purpose cash assistance and sector-based cash assistance, to address immediate needs, protect assets, and to address a variety of needs, such as health, WASH, shelter, food and others

### RESILIENT RECOVERY & RISK REDUCTION:

National Societies remain present long after disasters end, supporting displaced people to recover, (re)integrate and remain resilient wherever they choose—in places of origin, in places of where they found safety or in new areas. They also work to reduce risks and provide support for people who remain in displacement camps and settlements or protracted situations by:



#### AFTER DISPLACEMENT

- promoting **inclusive recovery planning and action**, strengthening access to services, including health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and fostering social cohesion
- supporting people to **return to their homes and rebuild**
- contributing to the **informed and voluntary planned relocation** of displaced people, including shelter, livelihoods and other needs in places of settlement and strengthening the participation of displaced and affected people in such processes
- addressing the needs of **displaced people living in camps and settlements** or who remain in situations of protracted displacement and reducing their risks and exposure to disasters and climate impacts, including risks of further displacement
- strengthening access to social protection systems, climate-resilient health systems, climate-resilient WASH systems, strengthening the resilience of homes and productive assets, investing in nature-based solutions, and supporting livelihood diversification and climate-resilient livelihoods



## MALI

Reducing flood risks through flexible, forecast-based financing

- Defining and establishing early actions in flood-prone areas

Strengthening livelihoods for communities in the face of droughts

- Introducing climate-resilience systems that diversify and strengthen livelihoods

## BURKINA FASO

Early action to address recurring climate hazards

- Taking early action to help households better cope with increasingly severe hazards

Development of early warning systems

- Providing operational support for developing an early warning system in the country

## SENEGAL

Strengthening collaborative flood resilience

- Working alongside community-based organizations to reduce displacement risks and respond to displacement

Heat-health early warning system

- Enhancing preparedness and response capabilities by developing a heat-health early warning system

## THE GAMBIA

Strengthening urban resilience to floods

- Implementing climate-smart adaptive measures and nature-based solutions for communities

Supporting urban communities displaced by floods

- Providing critical support to urban flood-displaced households

## NIGERIA

Livelihood support for displaced people in the face of climate and conflict

- Targeting displaced households through multi-sectoral activities, including those facing the impacts of flooding and droughts

Anticipatory action ahead of floods

- Integrating shock responsive and anticipatory actions in high-flood risk areas

## NIGER

Early action protocol for drought

- Developing an early action protocol for droughts, including contingency planning

Humanitarian Service Points for people on the move

- Responding to the needs of people on the move due to many drivers

## SOUTH AFRICA

Supporting displaced people in repeated disasters

- Ensuring feedback mechanisms and engagement with volunteers in flood response

Innovative use of digital disaster management systems in flood responses

- Automating existing data collection processes in flood responses

## CHAD

Supporting communities experiencing cyclical flood displacement

- Supporting communities to build resilience to reduce displacement risks and strengthen opportunities to move out of harm's way

Health services and engagement for traditionally mobile communities

- Extending the reach of health service delivery to traditionally mobile and migratory communities

## SOUTH SUDAN

Advocacy and input for regulatory development

- Supporting government with policy developments to mitigate the impacts of floods and other disasters

Integration of displaced people in community resilience programmes

- Strengthening community resilience to climate shocks across vulnerable groups, including displaced and host communities

## ETHIOPIA

Responding to overlapping crises and overlapping risks

- Supporting displaced communities in the immediate aftermath of flooding through multisectoral response

Early action protocol for drought

- Distributing materials and prepositioning ahead of drought impacts

## KENYA

Early action to reduce and respond to flood displacement

- Taking early actions ahead of riverine flood impacts for communities at risk

Early actions to support and sustain pastoral livelihoods during drought

- Helping communities impacted by droughts through actions that build communities' resilience and adaptive capacity

## SOMALIA

Multi-purpose cash assistance for drought-displaced communities

- Providing ongoing humanitarian assistance through multi-purpose cash assistance, to communities displaced by drought and hosting communities

Supporting displaced people during droughts and floods

- Combining food security and livelihoods activities alongside a multisectoral response

## UGANDA

Supporting law and policy on disasters and displacement

- Advocating to strengthen disaster risk governance legal and policy frameworks

Flood research, early warning, and early action

- Building awareness of flood risks and community vulnerabilities in low-lying areas

## MALAWI

Legal preparedness for disasters

- Advocating for and supporting the process of reviewing the country's legal framework for disaster response

Early warning and early action for flooding

- Coordinating major actors for early warning systems and working on community-based flood preparedness

## MOZAMBIQUE

Systematic responses to protracted displacement

- Working to implement early warnings and actions across displacement settings ahead of hazard impacts

Scaling up anticipatory action across multiple hazards

- Advocating for a shift towards anticipatory finance ahead of hazards

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities



# INTRODUCTION

Addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change through locally led action has never been more important, especially as people in vulnerable situations bear disproportionate impacts. The effects of climate change are increasingly disrupting lives, livelihoods, health and protection, while limiting options for people to adapt and remain resilient within their homes and communities.

Across Africa, cyclical and flash flooding displaces millions of people year after year. Along the continent's coastlines, sea-level rise, inundation and storms force people to leave low-lying areas. Droughts, desertification, and extreme heat threaten livelihoods and traditionally mobile lifestyles, driving movements in search of opportunities elsewhere.

The continent also grapples with complex crises that lead to prolonged and repeated displacement. Floods, storms, droughts and heatwaves frequently overlap with conflict and violence, disease outbreaks, poverty, and food, water and resource scarcity, compounding needs and vulnerabilities.

In the face of these devastating and increasingly unavoidable impacts, the staff and over two million volunteers working in 49 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across Africa are at the forefront of efforts to reduce the risks of displacement and address the needs of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change. This report showcases 30 case studies from Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda to illustrate the breadth of National Society action taken before, during and after displacement. They provide valuable insights into locally led action, complementing a growing body of work on displacement in the context of disasters and climate change, as outlined in Annex one. Developed through a review of country plans and research and enriched by the experiences and insights of National Society staff and volunteers and IFRC staff, this report also serves as a practical resource for policymakers, practitioners and partners seeking to enhance their efforts in this critical space.

National Societies in Africa are already supporting people to adapt, better prepare for disasters and displacement, reduce the humanitarian needs from displacement and strengthen resilient recovery. Working with and alongside communities, their action spans the identification of people at risk, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, early warning and early action, preparedness, humanitarian response, recovery and resilience-strengthening. These efforts are complemented by commitments and efforts to strengthen disaster risk governance, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), community engagement and accountability (CEA) and humanitarian diplomacy. National Societies take an inclusive approach, supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and host communities, aiming to ensure no one is left behind or discriminated against.



Addressing the needs of people and communities at risk of or adversely impacted by displacement in the context of disasters and climate change is a strategic priority for the IFRC. This commitment is reflected in the [IFRC Strategy 2030](#) and the newly adopted [Movement Migration Strategy](#) (2024–2030). Through the [Global Climate Resilience Platform](#), IFRC is generating financial resources to scale-up locally-led climate action, focusing on meaningful participation and active leadership by marginalized groups, including people at risk of or affected by displacement. Climate resilience programming is already underway in at least 94 countries. These commitments reflect the reality that National Societies are already addressing this critical challenge and will continue to do so across the globe.

This report illustrates the vital work that National Societies in Africa are already taking at the local level to both reduce the risks of displacement and address the needs of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change. Through these examples, it underscores how expanding choices can enable individuals to adapt and stay in their homes, move out of harm's way and recover and rebuild on their own terms. This report is a call for scaling up relevant action.

**ABOVE: MALAWI, 2020** – In recent years, Malawi has experienced more frequent and intense floods, droughts and cyclones, including Cyclone Freddy in 2023, which devastated crops and displaced thousands of farming families. With temperatures expected to rise by at least 1.3°C by 2050, locally led adaptation is critical to help communities build resilience. *Anne Wanjiru / IFRC*



# DISPLACEMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

As Africa grapples with the many impacts of climate change, displacement has emerged as a key risk giving rise to pressing humanitarian concern.<sup>13</sup> This section looks at how disasters and climate change contributes to the displacement of people and communities in Africa, as well as the impacts of displacement, exploring complex and emerging trends that influence people's ability to stay in their homes, move out of harm's way and recover. Understanding displacement as a phenomenon is crucial for shaping effective programmes, emergency responses, laws and policies and humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy.

As climate change brings more intense and frequent disasters, more people are forced to leave their homes. Floods, cyclones, heatwaves, fires and droughts drive people from their homes. Concurrent and consecutive disasters are leaving communities with little time to recover before the next shock arrives. The most at-risk people are in danger of being left behind if their needs and capacities are not understood and their voices are not heard.

Climate change acts as a risk multiplier. It influences other drivers of displacement and disproportionately affects marginalized groups, including people living in poverty, women, children, older persons, people with disabilities, displaced people and others on the move.<sup>14</sup>

Across Africa, climate-related hazards interact with conditions of poverty, unresolved or renewed conflict and resource scarcity – the individual challenges of which are amplified when they occur at the same time and in the same place.<sup>15</sup> These impacts are particularly severe for people already displaced or on the move, without access to essential services or support systems to prepare for and cope with the impacts of climate change.<sup>16</sup>

Africa experiences some of the highest numbers of displacement in the context of disasters and climate change worldwide. In 2023, the number of disaster displacements in Africa reached six million, 23 per cent of the global total. In 2024, 7.8 million displacements were triggered.<sup>17</sup> If no action is taken, by 2050, up to five per cent of Africa's population of some two billion people could be on the move internally driven by climate impacts, up from 1.5 per cent today.<sup>18</sup>

## A note on terminology and scope

Many terms are used to describe the movement of people in the context of disasters and climate change. These terms account for different factors related to movement of people, including the level of agency and choice available to people, the drivers triggering or underpinning the movement and geographical characteristics such as whether the movement occurs within a country or crosses an international border.

In general, migration describes a more voluntary or choice-based movement of people from one place to another, whereas displacement describes forced or involuntary movement. Making this distinction is not always simple in practice, as movements often fall along a continuum between migration and displacement and between being voluntary and forced, as people have greater or lesser levels of choice at different times. In Africa, the disruption of traditionally mobile pastoralism further illustrates the problems associated with an overly categorical approach to definitions. In some cases, at-risk communities may also initiate or be supported to move out of harm's way before or after a disaster strikes and settle in a new location within a country. This is often called planned relocation.

This report discusses the movement of people in the context of disasters and climate change through a displacement lens, recognizing the acute and specific vulnerabilities faced by people forced to leave their homes. It considers evacuations within the lens of displacement, recognizing that while safe and dignified evacuations do save lives and reduce physical harm, being forced to flee your home to protect your life and health can contribute to adverse impacts on people. Displacement is often within a country, but some people may also be displaced across international borders. This report focuses primarily on the internal displacement of people in the context of disasters and climate change while acknowledging that often multiple, interconnected drivers make it difficult to attribute displacement to a single driver.

## The climate hazards

The main climate-related hazards that trigger the greatest number of displacement of people in Africa are outlined below.

**Floods** consistently trigger the highest number of disaster displacements across Africa.<sup>19</sup> Between 2013 to 2024, floods triggered 30 million, or 73 per cent of the total recorded disaster displacements in Africa.<sup>20</sup> As heavy rainfall events increase in frequency and intensity due to climate change, displacement triggered by floods is projected to increase significantly across the continent, particularly in low-lying urban areas.<sup>21</sup>

**Drought** affects Africa more than any other continent, accounting for 44 per cent of global drought events over the past century.<sup>22</sup> At least 5 million new displacements

linked to droughts occurred in Africa from 2013 to 2024.<sup>23</sup> However, it is difficult to paint a complete picture of displacement associated with drought, as this data is only reported for some countries. Globally, Africa has the second largest population of people living in drylands, and this is set to increase.<sup>24</sup> As droughts become more frequent, longer and more intense, making it hard to sustain agricultural livelihoods, more people are likely to move in search of food, water and livelihoods.<sup>25</sup>

**Storms** triggered 5.1 million disaster displacements in Africa, 12 per cent of all recorded disaster displacements between 2013 to 2024.<sup>26</sup> Slow-onset climate impacts – such as oceanic warming, sea-level rise, drought and desertification – aggravate the effects of storms across the continent, increasing risks of displacement and deepening conditions of vulnerability for millions of people, particularly those in already fragile and underserved communities.<sup>27</sup>

**Sea-level rise** poses multiple and compounding risks for people living in Africa's coastal areas. As sea levels rise, increased coastal flooding, erosion, loss of habitat and greater exposure to storms threaten communities, ecosystems and infrastructure.<sup>28</sup> However, data on displacement linked to sea-level rise, coastal erosion and salinization is lacking.<sup>29</sup> Africa's low-lying coastal population is expected to grow more than any other region from 2000 to 2060, increasing risks of displacement associated with sea-level rise, coastal flooding and coastal extreme events.<sup>30</sup>

**Rising temperatures and extreme heat** affect the health, lives and livelihoods of millions of people across Africa.<sup>31</sup> Extreme heat stress also limits the possibility of adapting in place. Such changes, especially in the long term, are likely to influence people's movement patterns in terms of their intention to move, where they move, risks when on the move, and consequences for IDPs and migrants in places of settlement, particularly in Africa's rapidly growing cities where the urban population's exposure to extreme heat is projected to increase dramatically.<sup>32</sup>

## The context

Across Africa, climate-related hazards and disasters are intensifying, exacerbated by and compounding gradual environmental shifts. Rising temperatures, extreme heat and heatwaves and heavy rainfall affect communities in every corner of the region. At the same time, communities in different subregions face unique challenges due to the distinct impacts of climate change across Africa.

In **West Africa**, rising temperatures, heat waves, unpredictable rainfall events, flooding, and coastal erosion exacerbated by storms and sea-level rise are affecting the lives and livelihoods of millions.<sup>33</sup> In 2024, floods triggered almost all of the 256,000 new disaster displacements recorded in West Africa.<sup>34</sup> This occurred in the context of protracted conflict, with over 7.9 million people living in displacement at the end of the year.<sup>35</sup> With a long history of trade, traditionally mobile pastoralism and migration for livelihood diversification, vast numbers of people are on the move in the region. Seasonal movement from inland areas to the coast is crucial in preserving livelihoods and adapting to changing climates.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, rapid urbanization in climate-

vulnerable coastal areas is putting pressure on already strained infrastructure.

**Central Africa** is considered one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world. Recurring cycles of droughts and floods and desertification are eroding communities' resilience, adding another layer to already complex conflicts and crises.<sup>37</sup> In 2024, 2.4 million new disaster displacements were recorded in Central Africa.<sup>38</sup> Seasonal rains and flooding triggered over 90 per cent of these displacements. This likely included many repeat displacements, given the regions' large refugee and IDP communities particularly exposed and vulnerable to climate-related hazards and disasters.<sup>39</sup>

In **East Africa**, climate change is shifting rainfall patterns, leading to prolonged drought and land degradation in some areas, as well as severe flooding in other areas.<sup>40</sup> In 2024, disasters triggered 2.8 million new displacements in East Africa.<sup>41</sup> Flooding was the major trigger of disaster displacement, representing almost 60 per cent of new displacements followed by storms and drought. In 2022, drought triggered 2.1 million new disaster displacements in East Africa, fueled by the compounding impacts of drought, conflict and food insecurity.<sup>42</sup> The changing climate is shifting pastoralist movements toward urban areas, many of which are highly vulnerable to sea-level rise.<sup>43</sup>

In **Southern Africa**, climate change is increasing exposure to cyclones and floods in coastal and island states, while the arid and semi-arid regions in the southwest are prone to longer droughts and the risk of flash floods.<sup>44</sup> In early 2023, Cyclone Freddy, the longest tropical cyclone on record, triggered 1.4 million internal displacements across six countries and territories.<sup>45</sup> Climate change, in addition to increasing water scarcity, acts as a stressor on food security in Southern Africa. It gradually threatens livelihoods and drives rural-urban movements across the region.<sup>46</sup>

## The challenges

### Displacement is increasingly an urban phenomenon

Africa is the most rapidly urbanizing region in the world. As climate change impacts rural livelihoods, more people are moving toward urban areas, which is projected to increase.<sup>47</sup> Settling in urban areas carries complex risk and vulnerability for displaced people, especially women, children and older persons. Approximately 59 per cent of Africa's urban population lives in informal settlements – in some cities, up to 80 per cent.<sup>48</sup> Informal settlements are often located in areas exposed to hazards such as floods, landslides, sea-level rise and storm surges in low-lying coastal areas or alongside rivers that frequently overflow.<sup>49</sup> Informal settlements are also often characterized by insecure housing tenure and limited access to services. Consequently, by moving to the city people replace one set of vulnerabilities with another set, leading to heightened vulnerability and increasing the risk of secondary or repeat displacement.<sup>50</sup>

### Displacement is lasting longer

As disasters and climate change overlap with conflict, poverty and food, water and resource insecurity, people are increasingly displaced for extended periods, sometimes

spanning decades.<sup>51</sup> With 38 million IDPs as of the end of 2024, Africa remains the continent most affected by displacement, hosting nearly half of the global total.<sup>52</sup> Although conflict and violence are still the primary triggers of displacement across the continent, climate change is exacerbating the protection needs and risks of displaced people and contributing to further displacement.<sup>53</sup>

### People are being displaced again and again

Year after year, people experience repeat displacement as seasonal flooding, drought, or storms force them to flee.<sup>54</sup> A large proportion of displacement in Africa is cyclical, linked to recurrent hazards such as flooding or droughts.<sup>55</sup> The number of people exposed to compounding disasters – such as concurrent heatwaves and droughts or droughts followed immediately by extreme rainfall – is also set to increase across the continent.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, the overlap of conflict and climate-related hazards means that displaced people remain exposed to both in some cases.<sup>57</sup>

### Climate change is disrupting pastoralist's movement patterns

Pastoralism is practiced on around 40 per cent of the continent's total landmass and is a unique source of employment for the 50 million people living on the arid and semi-arid lands of Africa, where other types of livelihoods are limited.<sup>58</sup> Pastoral lifestyles vary from traditionally mobile or nomadic communities to settled pastoralists who have houses and farms but move their herds between grazing areas.<sup>59</sup> As climate change and environmental degradation impact livelihoods, both traditionally mobile and settled pastoralists are forced to adopt new movement patterns in search of increasingly scarce resources - in some cases leading to movement into or around cities in search of alternative livelihoods or leading them to be unable to move at all.<sup>60</sup>

### Displacement is heightening exposure to health risks

People displaced in the context of disasters and climate change often face greater health risks and experience significant barriers to accessing essential health and social services. As the negative health impacts of climate change worsen, displacement will heighten people's exposure to health risks.<sup>61</sup> Where there is a lack of access to clean water, the effect of communicable diseases, overcrowding and food insecurity can be devastating on displaced populations. At the same time, disasters significantly strain health systems, simultaneously increasing demand for services whilst also impairing the system's ability to respond.<sup>62</sup> Recognizing impacts on mental health is also essential. When people are forced to leave their homes during disasters, or as climate change makes their lives and livelihoods unsustainable, the disruption and trauma they experience, including that associated with the loss of livelihoods, land and attachment to place and culture can have lasting impacts on their mental health.

### Displacement disproportionately affects marginalized groups

Vulnerability to the impacts of climate change intersects with and is often furthered by existing marginalization, including linked to poverty, gender, ethnicity, age, disability and other factors such as displacement and migration status. Africa has the youngest population in the world, with over 40 per cent under the age of 15.<sup>63</sup> Between 2016

and 2021, approximately 8.2 million children were displaced by disasters in Africa, some uprooted from their families, others separated, amplifying risks of exploitation, violence and abuse.<sup>64</sup> Longer-term displacement disrupts access to education and healthcare, endangering children's futures and undermining their resilience to future crises. Where livelihoods are disrupted by climate change, gendered impacts of paid and unpaid labor increase impacts on marginalized groups, particularly women.<sup>65</sup> In some cases, people in conditions of vulnerability may become trapped in place, lacking the resources to move to safety. Information about age, sex and gender in disaggregated data is underreported and is a critical need to better understand the specific impacts, risks and needs marginalized groups face when displaced in the context of disasters and climate change.<sup>66</sup>

## The legal and policy landscape

In Africa, the legal and policy landscape relevant to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change is diverse. The landscape includes a broad range of laws, policies, frameworks and agreements that address different types and stages of movement and the different needs of affected people. Legal and policy instruments play an important role in reducing risks, promoting adaptation and resilience, and ensuring those who choose to move or are compelled to do so can access safety, assistance and protection and meet their longer-term needs.<sup>67</sup>

A non-exhaustive summary of some of the key regional and global laws and policies for addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change can be found in Annex two.

**BELOW: CHAD, 2011** – Climate-driven disasters like severe annual flooding displace thousands and eroded resilience across Chad. The Red Cross of Chad supports affected communities with early warning systems, evacuation planning, and humanitarian aid to reduce the risks of displacement and protect vulnerable groups. *Red Cross Society of Chad*





# NATIONAL SOCIETY ACTION IN AFRICA

National Societies are uniquely placed to address displacement in the context of disasters and climate change in Africa, playing a vital role across the entire displacement cycle. From helping people adapt and reduce risks of displacement, to preparing for and mitigating the impacts of hazards, responding to immediate needs during displacement and supporting long-term recovery, National Societies take action at every stage.

Through extensive networks of dedicated staff and volunteers embedded within communities, National Societies build trust, draw on local knowledge, act as first responders during crises and remain present to support over the long term. Beyond working with and in support of communities, National Societies collaborate closely with local and national disaster management and governance systems through their auxiliary role in the humanitarian field. Through this role, National Societies are often integrated into legal and institutional frameworks relating to disaster risk management, providing them with a voice to help shape disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

National Societies also address cross-cutting areas. They support public authorities in developing and strengthening legal and policy frameworks to reduce risks of disasters and displacement and address the needs of displaced people. Through humanitarian diplomacy, National Societies influence policies, practices and public perceptions, advocating to address needs, strengthen resilience and support at-risk and displaced people. They promote CEA, championing inclusive participatory approaches, aiming to ensure the voices of people in conditions of vulnerability, including those at risk of displacement, displaced people and host communities are heard and are able to influence programming and services. National Societies undertake PGI analysis and programming adaptation to minimize and address harms, provide access to protection services and support the inclusion of diverse populations.

This section outlines National Society action in reducing risks of displacement, supporting displaced people, and strengthening resilience of at-risk and displaced communities. By showcasing these efforts, this report is a practical resource for policymakers, practitioners and partners seeking to enhance their approaches to addressing displacement. The stages of National Society action on addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change are described and summarized below.

- As the impacts of climate change intensify, National Societies help reduce risks of disasters and of displacement, strengthen resilience and promote adaptation.
- Ahead of likely displacement due to forecasted hazards, National Societies help reduce adverse impacts and humanitarian needs through preparedness and early action.<sup>69</sup>



- When displacement occurs or has occurred, National Societies respond to humanitarian needs.
- After displacement, National Societies support recovery, address longer-term needs and reduce risks of future displacement. They also address the needs of people living in camps and settlements or who remain in protracted displacement and reduce their risks and exposure to disasters and climate impacts.

**ABOVE: MOZAMBIQUE** – Mozambique is highly vulnerable to climate shocks, with extreme weather events like Cyclone Idai triggering displacement and threatening livelihoods. In the wake of disasters, strengthening resilience is key to reducing long-term impacts. The Mozambique Red Cross has been working to support communities through early action, recovery efforts, and preparedness measures to mitigate future displacement. *Corrie Butler / IFRC*



## Reducing risks, strengthening resilience, promoting adaptation

Recognizing the intensifying impacts of climate change, investment in adaptation and risk reduction can expand choices for people to stay in their homes or move out of harm's way on their own terms. National Societies are reducing risks, strengthening resilience and promoting adaptation in a variety of ways.

National Societies support communities to undertake community-led risk assessments using IFRC's Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (eVCA) methodology to identify key risks, including risks of displacement, and come up with community action plans to reduce these risks.

*The Mozambique Red Cross works with communities before disasters hit to identify hazard-prone areas and at-risk communities – including those still displaced due to previous disasters – to better provide appropriate assistance.*

### Participatory Approach for Safer Shelter

The Participatory Approach for Safer Shelter and Settlement Awareness (PASSA) aims to strengthen local capacity to reduce shelter-related risks, including shelter-related risks of displacement, by fostering community-led analysis and decision-making. The approach involves trained National Society volunteers supporting community members to identify hazards and vulnerabilities and mitigation and adaptation strategies. The PASSA has been carried out in nine countries in Africa. For instance, in flood-prone areas, communities have identified the need for improved drainage and elevated foundations for homes and social infrastructure, which can reduce risks of displacement.

A better understanding of community-level vulnerabilities and capacities allows National Societies in Africa to shape interventions that reduce risks and promote adaptation and options to stay in place. Drought-resilient seeds, drought water management systems and the introduction of grain reserve banks support income-generating activities despite climate impacts.

Some National Societies in Africa support nature-based solutions to protect and restore environments. Activities such as riverbank enhancements, planting mangroves and reforestation projects help to reduce risks of disasters and displacement.

National Societies in Africa promote adaptation and strengthen resilience for people at risk of displacement by supporting and enhancing access to national social protection systems and providing social safety nets. In rural communities in Africa, National Societies are strengthening grain reserve banks and cash grants for the provision of livestock when climate impacts have led to losses. National Societies are also supporting agro-recovery projects.

*The Somali Red Crescent branches implement micro-economic initiatives to support local markets in the face of ongoing droughts and food insecurity.*

*The Mali Red Cross works to diversify and strengthen livelihoods and income sources for climate-vulnerable communities – combining traditional agricultural practices with sustainable climate technologies.*

National Societies in Africa are providing sensitization and education to raise awareness on the impacts of disasters and the need for preparedness and risk reduction, which helps to reduce the scale and duration of displacement and associated needs.

*The Uganda Red Cross works to link essential household socio-economic information to existing scientific forecasting to improve the targeting, relevance and communication of flood warning and response.*

**BELOW: CHAD** – Climate shocks are increasingly triggering displacement in Chad, forcing vulnerable communities to flee their homes. Early warning systems and preparedness measures play a crucial role in helping people anticipate and respond before disasters strike. At-risk communities receive timely risk information on multiple hazards and risks of displacement, empowering them to take preventive action.  
Guillaume Binet / IFRC





## Preparedness and early action

Before hazards and disasters strike, National Societies work with and alongside communities, providing them with information, tools and resources to prepare and act early in response to warnings to protect lives and livelihoods, move out of harm's way, or reduce the adverse impacts of displacement.

National Societies in Africa work with communities to support their understanding of risks and prepare for needs stemming from disasters and displacement. Through volunteer-based, community-led initiatives, National Societies disseminate messaging, promote education and raise awareness, and hold hazard-specific training courses and strengthen context-specific contingency planning.

*In Kenya, early warning and early actions help pastoralists and smallholder farmers to manage the impacts of droughts and floods, reducing risks of displacement and enhancing the capacity of pastoralists to maintain traditional movement patterns.*

### National Society action in refugee and IDP settings

Refugees and IDPs previously displaced by conflict, violence or disaster live in areas that are exposed and vulnerable to disasters and climate impacts. In and around IDP and refugee camps and settlements, where the impacts of floods, droughts and storms are also felt, National Societies are supporting risk reduction and early actions to reduce humanitarian needs and risks of further displacement.

Understanding climate-related risks and vulnerabilities allows National Societies in Africa to promote and shape early warning and early action systems and processes. Widely disseminated, easy-to-understand information on disasters and risks and impacts of displacement can help people decide if, when and how to safely move out of harm's way and undertake other actions.

National Society activities can include delivering messaging on actions people should take in response to alerts, actively working to reach 'last mile' communities with timely alerts, organizing, training and testing community response teams, supporting the development and implementation of community early warning systems and creating Early Action Protocols (EAP) to strengthen National Societies' capacity for rapid response to alerts.

### Early Action Protocol

An Early Action Protocol (EAP) is a formal plan that enables the quick release of funding and outlines pre-defined actions before a hazard strikes, based on forecast information and risk analysis. It includes specific triggers for activation, defines roles and responsibilities, and aims to minimise potential impacts of predicted hazards by enabling early actions in the window between a forecast and the onset of a hazard.

*The Burkinabe Red Cross works with key institutions and technical agencies, leading consultations, strengthening partnerships and providing technical assistance to strengthen end-to-end early warning systems through a common alert protocol.*

*The Senegal Red Cross has worked with a local advisory group to provide technical feedback on a heat-health early warning system, which was developed to provide accessible information to improve awareness of heatwaves at the community level.*

Using early warning information, National Societies in Africa are acting ahead of disasters to reduce impacts on communities before they unfold. These anticipatory actions differ based on the community context and needs, and involve the identification of triggers, a plan to help communities protect themselves and a set of actions ahead of the worst impacts of disasters.

Through these approaches, National Societies are helping to save lives and support people to move out of harm's way, providing people with the resources to cope and stay and reducing adverse impacts people may experience once displaced. Common anticipatory actions in Africa include providing cash grants, distributing food and household items in areas prone to disasters and providing mosquito nets or shelter reinforcement materials.

*The Red Cross of Niger provided cash to at-risk communities ahead of droughts to build up food reserves and strengthen their ability to cope and recover.*

*As part of the United Nations Early Warnings for All initiative, 18 National Societies in Africa are supporting their governments to lead Pillar 4 on preparedness to respond to warnings and continuing to implement early warning and early action.*

When hazards and disasters are expected or forecasted, National Societies help communities establish and map evacuation sites and safe routes, so that people know where, when and how they can move to safety before disasters hit. National Societies also pre-position relief items to provide efficient and appropriate support to affected and displaced people.

*The Mozambique Red Cross activates early warning systems and actions before cyclones, helping previously displaced and other at-risk people move to safety, including through emergency alerts, preventive evacuations, and pre-positioning rescue boats.*

### Preparedness for Effective Response

National Societies are undertaking the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach to prepare to respond to disasters and crises and increase the effectiveness of their programming in the short and longer term. 29 National Societies in Africa are engaged along the different phases of the PER approach, including Orientation, Assessment, Prioritisation and Analysis, Work-plan, and Action and Accountability.

## Responding to humanitarian needs

When displacement cannot be avoided, National Societies provide essential services and protection to meet the needs of displaced and other affected people, drawing on a long history of action.

When storms, floods, or other extreme weather events hit, National Societies support people to move safely out of harm's way. They support safe, dignified and timely evacuations, including accompanying and assisting evacuations for hard-to-reach communities or people facing additional conditions of vulnerability. National Societies have provided people with boats, bikes and vehicles to leave flooded areas and have worked with government authorities to support aerial evacuations.

*The Mali Red Cross conducts information sessions on community risks associated with flooding, helping communities, particularly those near flood zones, identify safe evacuation routes, prepare and evacuate from at-risk areas.*

### Disaster Response Emergency Fund

Through the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (IFRC- DREF), National Societies can access funding quickly for early action through the Anticipatory Pillar and immediate disaster response through the Response Pillar. Predictable and accessible funding means that when an emergency outstretches the National Society's available capacity, before or after it occurs, they can anticipate and respond at scale and quickly with the financial, technical, and human resources they need. In Africa, between the period from January 2020 to April 2025, 252 DREF operations related to climate hazards were launched, with over a third of them responding to flooding.

When displacement is inevitable, National Societies in Africa are often the first to reach people and provide essential services. National Societies set up evacuation centers, collective accommodations, planned settlements, and support hosting arrangement or provide rental assistance, as well as provide food, water and household items.

*The Ethiopian Red Cross Society provided shelter support as an essential need for IDPs and returnee populations during internal movements attributed to droughts, conflict and other triggers of displacement.*

### Cash and voucher assistance

National Societies in Africa provide multi-purpose and sector-based cash assistance to people when they flee their homes in the context of disasters and climate change. CVA is humanitarian assistance provided through cash transfers or vouchers. It can be used before disaster strikes, during the response, or during recovery. National Societies are providing CVA to communities as it can allow people the flexibility and autonomy to decide on how best to use the funds based on their own needs and priorities, such as health, food, education and payment of debts, promoting their dignity and choice when displaced.

*The Gambia Red Cross provides cash for emergency shelter and shelter rehabilitation works for flood-displaced households in urban communities.*

National Societies in Africa support people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change who often face greater health risks and experience barriers to accessing essential health and social services. Through emergency centres, mobile clinics, or referrals to national health providers or other organizations, National Societies promote access to health services for displaced people, including first aid, medical care, mental health and psychosocial support and vaccinations. National Societies also strengthen risk communication and community engagement to empower communities and reduce and address health risks and needs.

*The Red Cross of Chad provides health services for traditionally mobile pastoralist communities whose practices have been impacted by climate change.*

To help prevent the spread of disease, National Societies in Africa are undertaking WASH interventions, targeting displaced communities, including people living in evacuation sites or IDP and refugee camps and settlements. National Societies also undertake WASH activities and messaging so displaced people are aware of the risks of disease spread and have safe, dignified and sustained access to water and sanitation services.

*The South African Red Cross Society helps to prevent and contain potential disease outbreaks in displacement and evacuation sites by distributing essential WASH items and interventions in the aftermath of floods.*

National Societies in Africa are providing protection services to people in conditions of vulnerability, including displaced women, children, older persons, people with disabilities, and others, such as by providing information on rights, how to report and receive support from violence, abuse and exploitation; connecting people and restoring family links; and making referrals to specialized services, including healthcare, education, legal and information services.

*The Red Cross of Chad established complaints mechanisms and worked with other NGOs to reduce and address protection risks when communities were evacuated due to flooding.*



### Support for cross-border displacement

When disasters strike, some people move across international borders in search of safety, often to a neighboring country. In these situations, National Societies support people displaced from neighboring countries and their hosting communities. In Africa, National Societies have supported people displaced across borders by floods and droughts.

### Support along migration routes

Climate change and disasters contribute to people's decisions to move across international borders and along longer journeys. As people move along migration routes, the impacts of climate change and disasters may also heighten the risks they face on their journeys. In Africa, National Societies are operating Humanitarian Service Points as part of the Global Route Based Migration Programme to address the needs of people on the move, providing them with accurate and timely information, health, and other essential services like food, water and connectivity, Restoring Family Links and safe referrals to other service providers.

### Support for traditionally mobile communities

National Societies in Africa are evolving their services to reach traditionally mobile communities – such as using mobile clinics to provide health services or integrating members of such communities into their volunteer networks to promote access to services while on the move. Drought, changes in rainfall patterns, land degradation and other impacts of climate change are forcing traditionally mobile communities to move to different areas such as urban locations or reducing their ability to move entirely.

## Addressing resilient recovery and longer-term needs

Embedded in the communities they serve, National Societies in Africa remain present long after disasters end and while the impacts of climate change continue to intensify. They support displaced people to recover, (re)integrate and remain resilient wherever they choose – whether in places of origin, in places of safety or in new areas. Effective recovery and resilience strengthening can be an opportunity to reduce risks, exposure and conditions of vulnerability and promote adaptation. National Societies also reduce risks and provide access to support for people who remain in IDP and refugee camps and settlements or in protracted situations.

National Societies in Africa promote inclusive recovery planning and action for displaced people whether they choose to return to their homes and communities, remain where they sought safety or move and settle in new locations within their countries. National Society action includes addressing needs and strengthening access to services such as health, education and water and sanitation, while also promoting social cohesion.

*The Nigerian Red Cross takes dedicated steps to include IDP communities, as well as hosting communities, refugees and returnees in planning, including through food security and livelihood support.*

In Africa, National Societies are strengthening access to social protection systems and the resilience of homes and productive assets. They also invest in nature-based solutions and promote livelihood diversification and climate-resilient livelihoods.

*The Gambia Red Cross in partnership with the national authorities and local communities, is implementing climate-smart measures, such as improving water management, clearing flood paths, adapting infrastructure, and restoring mangroves, to reduce urban flooding and risks of displacement in flood-prone areas.*

In some places, National Societies are contributing to the planned relocation of displaced communities, supporting shelter, livelihoods and other needs and strengthening the participation of displaced and affected people in such processes.

National Societies are working in IDP and refugee camps and settlements to reduce risks, needs and further displacement, and to strengthen resilience to future hazards and disasters.

*The Uganda Red Cross builds awareness of flood risks with and for at-risk communities in Kampala, where over 90 per cent of the city's informal settlements are situated within wetlands.*

National Societies also strengthen access to essential services and address the needs of displaced people living in camps and settlements or who remain in situations of protracted displacement.

*The Ethiopian Red Cross provides displaced households in camp settings, at risk of drought impacts with essential services, using mobile clinics for health services, and providing cash and voucher assistance, shelter support and livelihood opportunities.*

## Cross-cutting expertise

### Humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy

Leveraging their knowledge, expertise and experience of community-based risk informed actions, National Societies in Africa engage in humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy efforts at national, sub regional and continental levels. As auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field and anchored in the communities they serve, National Societies are well-placed to advocate for the needs of people at risk of displacement or already displaced in the context of disasters and climate change. Such efforts generally concern:

- Advocating for stronger legal and policy frameworks to address disasters and risks of displacement and the needs of displaced people.
- Elevating the voices of people at risk of displacement, displaced people, host communities, and local responders and promoting their participation in legal, policy and other processes such as the development of national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction strategies, and local plans and strategies.
- Advocating for and promoting operational activities that reduce risks of displacement, and address needs of displaced people, including through strengthening humanitarian access.

*The South Sudan Red Cross led multistakeholder engagement and advocacy throughout the Disaster Risk Management Bill consultation process. It promoted the role of local organizations in addressing the needs of communities and championed community perspectives and inclusive dialogue.*

*National Societies engaged substantively in shaping the outcome declaration of the 15th Extraordinary African Union Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference in 2022, which was translated into a ten-year Humanitarian Plan of Action that included priorities for addressing climate change, disasters and forced displacement in Africa.*

### Disaster risk governance

As auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies in Africa are uniquely mandated to support and work collaboratively with governments. Strengthening disaster risk governance and supporting well-designed, well-understood and well-implemented laws, policies and plans relating to disasters and related displacement is crucial to reducing related risks and addressing adverse impacts, including the immediate and longer-term needs of displaced people.

*The Malawi Red Cross has supported the review of Malawi's legal framework for disaster risk management.*

### Protection, gender and inclusion

Providing dignity, access, participation and safety for all people affected by disasters and crises is embedded in the work of National Societies in Africa. Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change does not impact everyone equally. Intersecting

factors such as power inequalities, migration status, socioeconomic status, health, age, ethnicity, disability status, gender and sex significantly influence how people cope and recover. Climate change also acts as a threat multiplier, heightening disparities already induced by poverty and other crises, elevating the potential risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as mental health concerns.

*National Societies in Africa are working to include PGI within climate change programming through women's leadership, inclusion of child protection and education, and mainstreaming PGI minimum standards throughout programmatic action.*

*The Red Cross of Niger has set up a Humanitarian Service Point where migrants and displaced people are transiting, to create a trusted, safe space for protection and assistance services for migrants and displaced people, as well as host communities, meeting PGI minimum standards in their activities.*

### Community engagement and accountability

Evidence and experience highlight that when people and communities are engaged and play an active role in designing and managing programmes and operations, the outcomes are more effective, sustainable and of higher quality. Meaningful CEA can and should contribute to nuanced and longer-term perspectives and understanding on addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. This means adapting action based on people's suggestions and solutions and strengthening systems to enable people to directly influence programming and services.

*The South African Red Cross gathered input and insight from people displaced and affected by disasters, ensuring their perspectives shaped response efforts, through continued feedback mechanisms and face-to-face engagements with communities.*

National Societies in Africa also, when necessary, take steps so that host community members facing similar conditions of vulnerability receive immediate relief and services that displaced people receive. In Africa, National Societies often leverage their relationships with host communities and displaced people to reduce tensions and promote appropriate modes of engagement and dialogue to enable host communities to understand National Societies interventions specifically for displaced communities.

*The Somali Red Crescent's distribution of water supplies and installation of community boreholes in areas hosting IDP settlements and rural communities provides critical interventions to support all.*





## CASE STUDIES IN AFRICA

This section showcases case studies of how National Societies in Africa are working with and for communities to reduce risks of displacement, address the needs of displaced people and strengthen resilience in the face of disasters and climate change. The case studies highlight National Societies' extensive reach and their critical role in bridging the gap between communities, governments and other actors. They show how scaling up action to address displacement is not only essential but also achievable when it is rooted in local and community leadership. More than just examples, the case studies also serve as a practical resource for policymakers, practitioners and partners seeking to enhance their approaches to addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.<sup>70</sup>

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**ABOVE: NIGERIA, 2018** – Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is highly vulnerable to climate risks, with floods, droughts and desert encroachment increasingly affecting overcrowded urban areas and displacement camps. Heavy rainfall led to the Niger and Benue rivers overflowing, resulting in devastating floods that displaced thousands. Community engagement, like this focus group discussion in Kogi State, is essential for understanding the needs of displaced communities and ensuring an effective response. *Corrie Butler / IFRC*





**BURKINA FASO** – In the Sahel region, pastoralists load food procured from local traders using Red Cross vouchers, a vital lifeline as erratic rains have led to poor harvests, dwindling pasture and soaring food prices. With the price of a bag of millet increasing, the Burkinabe Red Cross is supporting communities with cash and voucher assistance to help them meet their needs with dignity. *Sarah Oughton / IFRC*



## BURKINA FASO

In 2023, the Burkinabe Red Cross was represented across the country's 45 provinces which enabled it to reach 1.5 million people with disaster response and early recovery support and 1.7 million people with long-term services and development programmes.<sup>71</sup>



Flooding and droughts are some of the primary climate hazards faced by communities in Burkina Faso, with the risks of extreme heat, water insecurity, epidemics and locust outbreaks further exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.<sup>72</sup> Temperatures are projected to rise by at least 2°C by 2050 in addition to increased heavy rainfall and related flooding, as well as increased drought conditions.<sup>73</sup>

### Early action to address recurring climate hazards

Across Burkina Faso, cyclical flooding and extreme heat erode the resilience of thousands of people every year. A high reliance on small-scale subsistence farming coupled with low adaptive capacity makes the country's economy and livelihoods highly vulnerable to climate change, sometimes forcing communities to move in search of food and livelihoods.<sup>74</sup> This can place additional pressure on hosting communities struggling with diminishing natural resources and heat stress.

The Burkinabe Red Cross is taking early action to help households better cope with increasingly severe seasonal flooding and more common and deadly heatwaves.<sup>75</sup> Flood-related early actions have included protecting essential resources such as food, crops and livestock and supporting the evacuation of at-risk populations. Heat-related early actions include distributing WASH and dignity kits, food, solar kits and drinking water, helping affected communities access essential resources. In the city of Ouagadougou, for example, these early actions focus on people and communities in conditions of vulnerability, including those living in informal settlements.<sup>76</sup> Residents of informal urban settlements, including IDPs, are among the most vulnerable to heat stress.<sup>77</sup> These actions help people withstand extreme heat and enable people to have an element of choice of whether to stay or leave, rather than being forced to move out of necessity.

### Development of early warning systems

In the absence of a unified national multi-hazard early warning system, the Burkinabe Red Cross has, through the Common Alert Protocol process, provided operational support for developing an early warning process in the country. Fast, reliable, and consistent early warnings and emergency alerts are proven to reduce risks of displacement and losses.<sup>78</sup> When a disaster is coming, information about risks and impacts can help people decide if and how to seek safety. The Burkinabe Red Cross is working with key institutions and technical agencies, including the National Meteorological Agency, to strengthen end-to-end early warning systems and enable early action in the face of disasters to help people move out of harm's way with safety and dignity. The National Society's ongoing commitment has broadened dialogue on early warning and early actions in the country.





**CHAD** – Since 2020, Chad has faced severe annual flooding, displacing thousands and eroding communities' resilience. Consecutive floods have disrupted livelihoods, forcing many families, 40 per cent of whom are headed by women, to rely on humanitarian aid. As climate risks increase, early warning systems and community preparedness are essential to reducing risks and protecting lives. *Guillaume Binet / IFRC*



**Croix-Rouge du Tchad**

## CHAD



With more than 75,000 volunteers, the Red Cross of Chad is Chad's largest voluntary relief network. In each of the country's 23 provinces, the Red Cross of Chad is well-accepted by local communities and works closely with national and local authorities on disaster preparedness and response.<sup>79</sup>

Drought, heatwaves, flooding and epidemics are the main climate hazards across the country. Climate projections show an expected increase in temperature by at least 1.5°C by 2050, as well as more frequent droughts and increased risk of floods.<sup>80</sup>

### Supporting communities experiencing cyclical flood displacement

Since 2020, Chad has experienced severe annual flooding, which has disrupted livelihoods, displaced families, and gradually eroded people's resilience.<sup>81</sup> For those living in flood-affected areas the impacts of consecutive years of flooding have meant that traditional seasonal livelihoods are increasingly no longer an option, rendering many dependent on humanitarian assistance. On average 40 per cent of households impacted by flooding are headed by women.<sup>82</sup>

The Red Cross of Chad supports communities before, during and after flooding, working to strengthen resilience, reduce risks of displacement and strengthen opportunities to move out of harm's way with dignity. Early warning systems have been established in disaster-prone areas, and safe houses have been set up in flood-safe areas for displaced people. In addition, small motorized boats are pre-positioned to empower communities to evacuate flood-prone areas on their own terms.<sup>83</sup>

The National Society also addresses the humanitarian needs of flood-displaced communities through direct relief assistance in shelter, health and WASH, multipurpose cash assistance, food and protection. PGI components are also integrated into the Red Cross of Chad's response actions. Displacement heightens protection risks, especially for women and children, older persons, people living with disabilities, and people with specific needs. During response actions, volunteers and response teams are trained in relevant PGI policies to prevent and mitigate risks and strengthen inclusive and safe approaches to promote access to services.

### Health services and engagement for traditionally mobile communities

Traditionally mobile communities typically move cyclically along seasonal movement corridors in search of feed for their livestock, both within the country's boundaries and across borders. However, prolonged drought periods and less predictable rainy seasons in the region are threatening their livelihoods, disrupting traditional movement patterns.<sup>84</sup> These shifts are affecting access to essential services, including healthcare. At the same time, the absence of systems to facilitate service access for those on the move, both internally and across borders, means that in most cases, traditional movement patterns are not considered when planning mass vaccination campaigns and essential health service delivery.

In 2022, the Red Cross of Chad extended the reach of health service delivery to traditionally mobile communities.<sup>85</sup> The National Society identified and trained volunteers best fit to work directly with traditionally mobile communities. They provided an entry point through which to better understand the demographic characteristics, movement patterns, and needs of mobile communities and to identify service gaps and barriers to health services. This propelled local and national-level advocacy efforts, including with the Ministry of Health, to work toward addressing some of these barriers.

The strong partnerships established with traditionally mobile communities laid the foundation for ongoing engagement to address other essential service challenges. Connections such as these, at the community and household level, are fundamental to ensuring support reaches those who need it the most, particularly as the impacts of climate change increasingly threaten the livelihoods of traditionally mobile communities.





**ETHIOPIA** – On the road from Semera to Bidu Woreda in the Afar region, pastoralist communities experience the devastating impacts of prolonged drought. As water sources dry up and pastures disappear, many are forced to move in search of survival. The Ethiopian Red Cross is working with affected communities to implement early warning systems, provide cash assistance, and support sustainable water access to help families remain resilient in the face of worsening climate shocks. *Pierre Grandidier / IFRC*



## ETHIOPIA

In 2023, the over 250,000 Ethiopian Red Cross volunteers across the country, including over 5,000 Kebele (the smallest local governance structure in Ethiopia) Red Cross committees at the grassroots level, enabled the Ethiopian Red Cross to reach five million people with disaster response, early recovery and long-term services and development programmes.<sup>86</sup>



With a population of approximately 129 million people, Ethiopia ranks as the second most populous nation in Africa.<sup>87</sup> Droughts and floods are prevalent in Ethiopia, with expected temperature increase of 1.8°C by 2025, as well as an increase in extreme droughts and floods.<sup>88</sup>

### Responding to overlapping crises and overlapping risks

In Ethiopia, the compounding impacts of conflict and extreme flooding following years of drought have forced people to move multiple times, gradually eroding the resilience of those affected. Since 2020, four IFRC-DREF allocations have been made for floods.<sup>89</sup> The Ethiopian Red Cross supports displaced communities in the immediate aftermath of flooding, providing shelter support, essential needs support, multipurpose cash assistance and targeted WASH and health initiatives to reduce health risks from vector-borne and communicable diseases such as cholera. When communicable diseases are combined with a lack of access to clean water and food insecurity, the effect can be devastating on displaced populations. The availability of trained National

Society volunteers and staff helped to mitigate risk and increase operational capacity to respond, providing clean potable water and treated water sources to displaced households as well as repairing hand pumps, building latrines and promoting good hygiene within displacement and evacuation sites.

### Early action protocol for drought

Following five consecutive poor rainy seasons, Ethiopia endured its most severe and protracted drought in recent history. In 2023, over 24 million people lived in drought-affected areas.<sup>90</sup> Recurrent droughts are disrupting livelihoods in the country, especially in pastoral areas like the Somali, Afar and Oromia regions, where extreme weather events lead to failure of livestock production, water shortages and prolonged periods of food insecurity. Drought also affects displaced or returning populations, who face heightened vulnerabilities and have limited resources.

In 2023 and 2024, the Ethiopian Red Cross activated its EAP for drought.<sup>91</sup> Early actions included the distribution of information material in local languages and supporting contingency planning at the local and Kebele levels to help communities make informed decisions on drought risk management. Pre-positioning activities included the pre-positioning of WASH and disease prevention material, short maturing, drought-tolerant vegetables, seed distribution, water storage and improved storage equipment to reduce post-harvest loss. Early action activities included cash distributions to reduce deterioration in food security and livelihoods and the promotion of rangeland management and systematic livestock management to strengthen the capacity of targeted communities to manage overgrazing and limited resources. These actions supported at-risk communities to maintain livelihoods and livestock throughout the potentially prolonged drought conditions, expanding the choices and opportunities for people to adapt and stay in their homes.





**THE GAMBIA** – The Gambia is increasingly experiencing climate-driven disasters, including severe storms and flooding, which are displacing communities across the country. On 2 July 2021, a powerful storm destroyed homes across four regions, highlighting the urgent need for stronger preparedness and resilience measures. The Gambia Red Cross is working with communities to reduce risks and support those forced from their homes. *Gambia Red Cross*



## THE GAMBIA

The Gambia Red Cross is active across each of Gambia's seven administrative regions. With over 17,000 volunteers, the Gambia Red Cross reached approximately 13,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes in 2022.<sup>92</sup>

The Gambia is already experiencing higher temperatures and less rainfall, with annual temperatures expected to increase by at least 1.7°C by 2050, whilst rainfall is expected to further decrease.<sup>93</sup>

### Strengthening urban resilience to floods

Urban populations in The Gambia have expanded rapidly in recent years due largely to rural-urban movement of people due to desertification, drought and the impacts of climate change.<sup>94</sup> In 2022, heavy rains hit several regions of The Gambia, leading to widespread flooding and affected over 50,000 people.<sup>95</sup> The floods hit urban settlements, particularly the Greater Banjul area, the hardest.

Leveraging its role as an auxiliary to the government, The Gambia Red Cross works with the Department of Physical Planning and affected communities in the Banjul area to minimize the impact of urban flooding, particularly for those living in low-lying, flood-prone areas at risk of repeat displacement each rainy season. Climate-smart adaptive measures are being implemented to better manage water on the surface, clear flood paths, store excess water and adapt buildings and infrastructure to better cope

with floodwater. Mangrove restoration projects have also been initiated in areas close to the riverbanks to reduce the impacts of riverine flooding. These actions aim to reduce all forms of disaster risk, including the risk of displacement.

### Supporting urban communities displaced by floods

The Gambia Red Cross provides critical support to urban flood-displaced households, coordinating with local authorities to provide evacuation and shelter support, food and essential needs, WASH and health initiatives, and multipurpose cash support.

In 2022, The Gambia Red Cross provided multi-purpose cash assistance to over 600 flood-affected and displaced households.<sup>96</sup> This allowed households to rapidly access emergency assistance. It also allowed them the flexibility to choose the forms of aid best suited to their immediate needs, including cash support for emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation, household items and essential food items.

The Gambia Red Cross also plays a key role in protecting communities from health risks linked to protracted displacement in flood-affected urban areas. Overpopulation in urban spaces increases vulnerability to health risks for flood-displaced households. During the 2022 flood response, The Gambia Red Cross set up mobile clinics to support affected and displaced communities, providing medical services and mental health and psychosocial support. The Gambia Red Cross volunteers played a pivotal role in reaching and assisting displaced people with emergency WASH services to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.





**KENYA** – Prolonged droughts and rising temperatures in northern Kenya have worsened food insecurity and forced many to leave their homes in search of water and livelihoods. In Bubisa village, Marsabit province, women walk up to three miles to fetch clean drinking water for their families – an essential but increasingly difficult task as climate-driven displacement grows across the region. *Daniel Cima / American Red Cross*



## KENYA



With a network of over 200,000 volunteers, the Kenya Red Cross is present at the grassroots level in every corner of the country.<sup>97</sup> In 2023, five million people received disaster response and early recovery support, and three million more received support through long-term services and development programmes.<sup>98</sup>

Floods and droughts are the main climate hazards across the country.<sup>99</sup> Large swaths of the country – especially in the north and east – are either arid or semi-arid, and droughts and floods are particularly severe in these areas.<sup>100</sup> Climate projections show an expected increase

in temperature of at least 1°C by 2050, and the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall and flooding are also expected to increase.<sup>101</sup>

### Early action to reduce and respond to flood displacement

In 2023, the Kenya Red Cross activated its EAP for riverine floods, implementing a series of early actions supporting 150,000 people in the affected areas.<sup>102</sup> The EAP provides a clear framework guiding early actions such as early warning messaging, pre-positioning relief items and identifying safe evacuation routes. The Kenya Red Cross rolled out early warning text messages across 31 high-flood-risk counties. Using an innovative location-targeted SMS system, the texts contained flood and hazard warnings in English and Swahili languages for at-risk communities using clear, accessible language. The Kenya Red Cross also mobilized county-level Red Cross Action Teams and Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction Teams, preparing and mobilizing search and rescue teams, identifying safe evacuation routes and pre-positioning emergency shelter kits, health and WASH household items in pre-identified flood-risk areas.

In the immediate aftermath of the floods, the Kenya Red Cross supported flood-displaced households, coordinating with local authorities to provide evacuation and shelter support, food and essential needs, WASH and health initiatives. With more than 60,000 people displaced by the flooding across Kenya, the Kenya Red Cross also played a key role

documenting flood-displaced people, working closely with the government to leverage its unique auxiliary role for the collection of displacement data.<sup>103</sup>

Flooding severely compromised clean water sources across the country, and more than 58 health facilities were impacted by the floods, significantly reducing displaced households' access to essential healthcare and services. In flooded areas, specific concerns arose about the health risks from stagnant water, cramped living conditions and a lack of sanitation facilities in affected communities. The Kenya Red Cross, supported by Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, helped to prevent and contain potential disease outbreaks in displacement sites through the distribution of aqua tabs, the construction of toilet slabs across displacement sites and the chlorination of shallow wells to increase the availability of clean water sources for displaced and affected communities. Three cholera treatment centres were established in flood-affected areas. In addition, the Kenya Red Cross facilitated the distribution of cholera kits to displaced and affected households across over 20 affected counties, accompanied by health education and hygiene promotion.

### Early actions to support and sustain pastoral livelihoods during drought

The impacts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation acutely affect pastoralist communities across Kenya. More acute and longer-lasting droughts affect pastoralists' ability to sustain their herds and follow traditional movement patterns. Over the years, the Kenya Red Cross has implemented different practices to provide assistance to drought-affected pastoralist communities, including cash transfer programmes, food distributions and livelihood support activities, including animal offtake programmes.<sup>104</sup>

In late 2022, the Kenya Red Cross initiated an EAP for drought to help communities cope with the impacts of prolonged droughts and continued severe food insecurity across the country.<sup>105</sup> Early actions under the EAP included supporting water harvesting and storage, cash and voucher assistance to meet WASH needs, distributing drought-tolerant seeds, early maturing crops, expanding and protecting grazing areas, supporting access to markets and the dissemination of early-warning messages for target communities. Early actions to strengthen community resilience and adaptive capacity coupled with the dissemination of early warning information to pastoralists and smallholder farmers help to manage the impacts of drought, reducing risks of displacement and enhancing the capacity of pastoralists to maintain traditional movement patterns.





**MALAWI** – Chifuniro Siyamalo and her family were forced to flee their home in Nyongo village, Nsanje, Malawi, after severe flooding destroyed their house. As climate-related disasters like floods, droughts, and tropical cyclones continue to displace communities across Malawi, early warning and early action are critical to helping people stay safely in their homes. The Malawi Red Cross is working with at-risk communities to strengthen anticipatory action for flooding, supporting locally led solutions to enhance preparedness and resilience. *Saara Mansikkamäki / Finnish Red Cross*



## MALAWI

The Malawi Red Cross is active nationwide, with more than 85,000 volunteers and 33 National Society branches.<sup>106</sup> In 2023, 8.2 million people were reached by disaster response and early recovery programmes. A further 8.9 million people were reached by long term services and development programmes.



Malawi has experienced increased frequency of erratic rainfall, droughts, prolonged dry spells and strong winds, as well as unprecedented cyclones in the past few years.<sup>107</sup> By 2050, temperatures are expected to increase by at least 1.3 °C, with an expected increase of floods, droughts and strong winds.<sup>108</sup>

### Legal preparedness for disasters

Since 2013, the Malawi Red Cross – with the support of IFRC and through its auxiliary role with the government – has advocated for and supported the process of reviewing Malawi's legal framework for disaster response and was entrusted by the government to support revising the Disaster Preparedness Relief Act of 1991. In 2015, the IFRC report, *International Disaster Response Law in Malawi: A Study on Legal Preparedness for Regulatory Issues in International Disaster Response*, recommended the Disaster Risk Management Bill clearly outline the role of Malawi Red Cross in disaster management.<sup>109</sup> The Disaster Risk Management Bill passed into law in 2023, where the role of the National Society in disaster management is articulated. The law includes specific provisions on planned relocation and evacuations, and provides a legal base for the disaster risk management institutional framework and its implementation in Malawi. In conjunction with the passing of the Disaster Risk Management Bill, the Malawi Government also updated its disaster risk management

system plans, including specific measures to conduct multi-hazard risk assessments, pre-emptive evacuations and when necessary, relocate people to safer areas.<sup>110</sup>

The positioning and relationship that the Malawi Red Cross has with the government through its auxiliary role has been invaluable to its engagement in Malawi's disaster risk management legislative review process. The Malawi Red Cross played a coordinating role, supporting and facilitating dialogue with key partners, as well as supporting the reflection of local issues, risks and needs. The National Society also worked to promote the agency of local organizations in disaster response to better address the needs of communities in a timely way.

### Early warning and early action for flooding

Over the past years in Malawi, the impacts of severe floods, droughts and tropical cyclones, including Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019, Tropical Storms Ana and Gombe in 2022 and Tropical Cyclone Freddy in 2023, have repeatedly displaced communities, gradually eroding their resilience to impacts of climate change.

The Malawi Red Cross was instrumental in establishing the Malawi National Anticipatory Action Technical Working Group, which acts as a coordination mechanism, bringing together major actors for early warning systems. Early action for flooding and dry spells supports people to strengthen resilience and be able to act prior to being hit by disasters to remain safely in their homes for as long as possible. The National Society is also working closely with at-risk communities to support community-driven early measures. For example, the community-based flood preparedness programme, developed and implemented by the Malawi Red Cross, promotes the meaningful participation of affected communities in the development and implementation of early warning systems, ensuring information about disaster risk reduction and movement options is disseminated in accessible formats to affected communities.<sup>111</sup>





## MALI

With more than 9,000 volunteers and staff across the 11 regional capitals, in 2022, the Mali Red Cross reached over 450,000 people with development programmes, and almost 22,000 with emergency response and recovery support.<sup>112</sup> Of these, over 44,300 were IDPs, migrants and host communities.



Seasonal droughts and flooding are the main climate-hazards across the country, with mean temperatures expected to increase by at least 2°C by 2050. More intense heatwaves, as well as more heavy rainfall events leading to flooding are projected to increase.<sup>113</sup>

### Reducing flood risks through flexible, forecast-based financing

Every year, around 75,000 people are affected by floods in Mali.<sup>11</sup> In 2020, the Mali Red Cross and partners established an EAP for floods, defining early actions to reduce the impact of flooding on lives and livelihoods, supporting communities to stay safely in their homes for as long as possible, and supporting households to safely move out of harm's way.

Preparedness actions included mapping at-risk houses and public infrastructure (including a mosque and cattle market), training and pre-positioning arrangements, identifying and equipping emergency shelters with relief, WASH, and health items, and the identification of safe evacuation routes. Recognizing the importance of local ownership of humanitarian action, Mali Red Cross volunteers meet with local officials and village chiefs to explain the early warning messaging and how the early actions would be carried out.

In 2022, the Mali Red Cross activated the EAP for floods after weeks of heavy rain across much of West and Central Africa. Early warnings and information were disseminated

in local languages across a range of media channels, and evacuation measures were taken to relocate at-risk populations to safer areas, focusing on those close to flood zones, as well as socio-economically vulnerable households. Actions to reduce the risk of an outbreak of diseases in the aftermath of flooding were also initiated, including distributing mosquito nets, aqua tabs, bleach and other items for communities and at evacuation sites.

### Strengthening livelihoods for communities in the face of droughts

Slow-onset hazards, particularly droughts, exacerbate food and resource insecurity and threaten livelihoods across Mali. There is limited data on displacement or other movements in the context of droughts and climate-induced food insecurity in Mali. However, with about 80 per cent of the population living in rural areas and relying on rain-fed agriculture, it is evident environmental factors influence people's decisions and ability to move.<sup>115</sup> In some cases, vulnerable communities become trapped in place, without the resources to move and unable to escape the impacts of disasters.<sup>116</sup>

The Mali Red Cross, in coordination with the Malian Meteorological Service and the Malian Institute of Rural Economy, is working to diversify and strengthen livelihoods and income sources for climate-vulnerable communities - combining traditional agricultural practices with sustainable climate-resilient technologies. The Mali Red Cross works with local communities to introduce climate-resilience systems including off-season agriculture production, climate-adapted seeds, cereal reserves and the development of small-scale irrigation systems in areas with high climate risks. Efforts are also being made to increase the availability of water for production by establishing or rehabilitating micro-dams and ponds to enhance surface water retention in the face of increasing drought periods.

These actions help to strengthen and secure local livelihoods against climate impacts. In doing so, households are better able to strengthen their resources and capabilities to adapt to climate risks, or to move safely, with dignity and on their own terms. The rise in yield and income has also created livelihood opportunities for young men.<sup>117</sup>





**MOZAMBIQUE** – In Funhalouro district, Inhambane province, a woman and her child experience the impact of Mozambique's worst drought in three decades. In 2016, extreme drought left communities lacking food and water, forcing many to leave their homes in search of survival. The Mozambique Red Cross continues to support affected communities through early action and resilience-building efforts. *Victor Lacken / IFRC*



## MOZAMBIQUE

With a longstanding presence in all 11 provinces of the country, the Mozambique Red Cross Society has a network of over 6,800 volunteers.<sup>118</sup>



Droughts, floods and cyclones are the greatest climate hazards across the country.<sup>119</sup> In recent years, the intensity of these disasters has increased, with repeated cyclones and floods severely impacting coastal communities. Mean temperatures are expected to increase by at least 2°C by 2050, along with more intense and frequent cyclones, rainfall events and heatwaves.<sup>120</sup>

### Systematic responses to protracted displacement

Tropical Cyclone Freddy displaced nearly 640,000 people, many of whom had already been uprooted by conflict in Mozambique and neighbouring countries.<sup>121</sup>

Before landfall, the Mozambique Red Cross mobilized volunteers to protect at-risk communities from the impending cyclone and severe flooding. In coordination with the National Institute for Disaster Management, the National Society implemented early actions, including emergency alerts, preventive evacuations, and pre-positioning rescue boats. Through these efforts, 15,000 people benefited from early warnings and actions.<sup>122</sup>

After the cyclone hit, the Mozambique Red Cross activated an IFRC-DREF to support displaced and affected communities. Emergency response efforts included search and rescue, shelter support, distribution of essential necessities, mental health and psychosocial support, first aid, healthcare and WASH. The IFRC-DREF was later extended

to provide recovery assistance, particularly for people remaining in evacuation centres months after the disaster and hard-to-reach communities cut off by damaged roads and flooding.

### Scaling up anticipatory action across multiple hazards

Over the past 20 years, including 2024, the IFRC-DREF has been activated ten times to help the Mozambique Red Cross Society respond to flooding and seven additional times for population movement and cholera outbreaks.<sup>123</sup> The growing frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards and disasters in Mozambique underscore the need for stronger community preparedness.

To ensure the sustainability of anticipatory action, the Mozambique Red Cross Society has advocated for a shift toward anticipatory finance. In 2022, the government approved the National Disaster Financial Protection Plan, aimed at strengthening disaster response capacity and financial resilience.<sup>124</sup> The plan also encourages anticipatory action, risk reduction and resilience building efforts.

The Mozambique Red Cross has supported the development of four EAPs. Mozambique's EAP for cyclones, approved in 2019, was the first EAP approved in Africa.<sup>125</sup> Designed for all 43 coastal districts, it outlines a series of anticipatory actions that can be replicated and scaled up to help reduce displacement and other risks. Measures include distributing shelter kits to reinforce homes and community buildings, as well as chlorine tablets and buckets to ensure access to clean water and prevent disease outbreaks following a cyclone. In 2023, Mozambique's EAP for floods was approved, focusing on evacuating flood-prone communities before water levels become dangerous.<sup>126</sup> Anticipatory actions include mapping vulnerable households, identifying safe evacuation routes, securing agreements with transport providers and fuel stations, and pre-positioning supplies at evacuation sites. The National Society also raises awareness, encouraging early evacuation preparedness. EAPs for drought and cholera are also under development. These anticipatory actions are critical in reducing risks by enabling communities to take protective measures before disasters strike.





**NIGER** – As drought and land degradation intensify across Niger, communities are increasingly at risk of food insecurity and displacement. In Zakiré Zarma village, unreliable rainfall and water scarcity threaten livelihoods, forcing many to leave in search of sustenance. The Niger Red Cross is working to strengthen local resilience, supporting communities with water access and sustainable agriculture to reduce risks of displacement.  
*Mari A. Mortvedt / Norwegian Red Cross*



## NIGER

The Red Cross of Niger, supported by a network of over 10,000 volunteers, operates across the country through a range of humanitarian and development activities.<sup>127</sup>

Recurring flooding and droughts exacerbated by climate change profoundly impact livelihoods, health and food security. Mean annual temperatures have increased, as have more intense and frequent heatwaves, while climate projections estimate a minimum 2°C temperature increase by 2050, as well as more frequent and intense heavy rainfall events.<sup>128</sup>

### Early action protocol for drought

On average, four million people are affected by drought in Niger each year.<sup>129</sup> This number rises significantly when the droughts are severe, with extensive damage to crops and livestock also threatening food security.<sup>130</sup> Early warning and early action play a key role in strengthening community resilience to droughts, supporting households to stay at home or to move safely, with dignity and on their own terms in search of other livelihood opportunities. In 2021, the Red Cross of Niger developed an EAP for drought as part of a broader project to enhance community resilience to food insecurity across the country. The project, which started in 2019, also supports strengthening early warning systems, the National Disaster Response team capacity and the development of drought contingency plans.

The EAP for Niger outlines specific early actions targeting 4,000 households in the agropastoral livelihood zone of Zinder.<sup>131</sup> In times of floods or drought, people in the Zinder region often move in search of food and resources, disrupting access to education, healthcare and protection services. Early actions include distributing drought-resilient seeds, restocking cereal banks and providing multi-purpose cash assistance to vulnerable households. These early actions empower at-risk communities to foster drought-resilient livelihoods and build up food reserves. This, in turn, strengthens

households' ability to respond to and recover from droughts.

In 2022, the EAP was triggered following acute food insecurity driven by consecutive failed rainy seasons and decades of desertification across the Sahel. Given the extreme circumstances, the Red Cross of Niger focused on providing multi-purpose cash assistance to at-risk communities. While there remains a complex relationship between drought, food insecurity and the movement of people in Niger, the provision of cash support under Niger's EAP supported the coping capacity of vulnerable households, providing them with the resources to stay at home or to move safely, with dignity and on their own terms in search of other livelihood opportunities.

### Humanitarian Service Points for people on the move

Niger is simultaneously a point of origin, transit and destination for people on the move. This movement of people has many drivers, which may include conflict, violence, food insecurity, environmental degradation and other adverse effects of climate change.

Since 2018, the Red Cross of Niger has supported migrants and displaced people staying in or transiting through Arlit, Niger's northernmost town and a gateway to the Sahara Desert. An official partnership agreement was signed with Niger's Health Ministry for the Red Cross Society of Niger to provide healthcare support to people on the move. Over three years – and through regular needs assessments and feedback from migrants and displaced people – the Red Cross of Niger extended the scope of its work to develop a fully-fledged Humanitarian Service Point (HSP).

The HSPs are fixed and mobile, they support migrants and displaced people, including returnees, as well as the host population. The Red Cross of Niger has sought to foster trust, social cohesion and a high level of acceptance of the Red Cross among all who engage with its services. The network of well-trained community-based volunteers also contributes to trust among service users. While no targeted climate or disaster-related services are provided through HSPs yet, they provide a unique mechanism to further expand National Society support to address the humanitarian needs of people on the move.





NIGERIA, 2021 – Severe flooding devastated communities like Emmanuel Igweze's, leaving many cut off from aid. Floodwaters have receded, but the impact remains. Emmanuel lost 80 hectares of rice and chose to stay behind to protect what little remains of his cassava farm while his family moved to a displacement camp. His home is underwater, and food is scarce. "I'm not sure what I'll do," he says, as remote communities like his continue to face significant recovery challenges. Corrie Butler / IFRC



## NIGERIA



The Nigerian Red Cross is the largest national humanitarian organization in Nigeria. With an extensive network of over 800,000 volunteers across all 36 states and the federal capital territory, the Nigerian Red Cross is mandated to act as a leading organization in national preparedness and humanitarian response.<sup>132</sup> In 2022, the Nigerian Red Cross reached almost 2.3 million people with disaster response and early recovery activities.<sup>133</sup>

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with climate risks largely concentrated in overcrowded urban areas and IDP and refugee camps and settlements. Nigeria is prone to floods and droughts, including an encroachment of the Sahara Desert linked to the country's increasing temperatures and decreasing rainfall.<sup>134</sup> Temperatures are expected to increase at least 2.9°C by 2100, with heavy rainfall events projected to intensify and result in increased flooding.

### Livelihood support for displaced people in the face of climate and conflict

At the end of 2023, around 3.3 million people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence in Nigeria.<sup>135</sup> IDPs are hosted by local communities or reside in spontaneous settlements with no essential services. Recurrent floods and droughts further erode the resilience of both IDP and hosting communities, further increasing food insecurity and resulting in secondary or protracted displacement.

The Nigerian Red Cross is taking dedicated steps to include IDP communities, as well as host communities, refugees, and returnees in response programming. Through the Regional Emergency Appeal the Nigerian Red Cross targets internally displaced

households, reaching over 156,000 people in 2024 with a combination of food security and livelihood support alongside health and nutrition, WASH, PGI and CEA activities.<sup>136</sup> In 2023, the Nigerian Red Cross and partners engaged the services of seven doctors, six nutritionists, six mental health experts and six pharmacists to support the strengthening of 37 primary health centres in communities hosting refugees.<sup>137</sup>

### Anticipatory action ahead of floods

In 2022, Nigeria experienced the worst floods in a decade, affecting more than 2.8 million people and displacing more than 2.4 million people.<sup>138</sup> To reduce the humanitarian impacts of future floods, the Nigerian Red Cross began work to integrate shock responsiveness and anticipatory action into Nigeria's social security allowance programme.<sup>139</sup> This involved the development of a simplified EAP using identified forecast triggers to carry out readiness, pre-positioning and anticipatory action for vulnerable households in high-flood risk areas. Anticipatory actions carried out under the simplified EAP included community consultations on early warning systems, the dissemination of information, education and communication materials in multiple languages, training volunteers and staff in risk watch and trigger mechanisms, as well as multi-purpose cash assistance.

For people displaced by disasters or those at risk of displacement, the National Society's use of cash transfers as an anticipatory action response to the needs of vulnerable and affected communities enabled them to determine and address their priorities. The Nigerian Red Cross provided multi-purpose cash assistance, which allowed communities to better prepare for flooding by building stone barriers around their homes to help mitigate flood impacts. For others, it provided a means to temporarily move away from high-risk areas in anticipation of flood events.<sup>140</sup> Multi-purpose cash assistance also provided flood-affected households the means to access shelter, health services, water, food, and other necessary items. This helps to increase the resilience of the poorest households thereby lessening the humanitarian impacts of shocks in the aftermath of flooding.





**SENEGAL 2021** – Flooding and coastal erosion are among the biggest risks of displacement in Senegal, with urban and coastal communities facing increasing threats. In 2021, heavy rains flooded Dakar's suburbs, displacing thousands, including Aissata Diallo, whose home in Diamaguène Diaksao was completely submerged. The Senegalese Red Cross is working with communities to strengthen flood resilience, enhance early warning systems and support those displaced by climate-related disasters. *Ricci Shryock / IFRC*



## SENEGAL



The Senegalese Red Cross is active nationwide, supported by 30,000 volunteers and over 2,500 community disaster response team members. In 2021, it reached 2,010 people with long-term services and development programmes and 2,805 people with disaster response and early recovery efforts.<sup>141</sup>

Droughts, floods, sea-level rise and coastal erosion pose the greatest climate threats to the country.

### Strengthening collaborative flood resilience

In 2022, Senegal recorded its highest flood displacement figure in years, with over 12,000 displacements, most of which occurred in urban and coastal areas such as Dakar, Thiès and Matam.<sup>142</sup> The Senegal Red Cross is among the country's first responders to flood displacement. Working in close collaboration with government agencies, community-based organizations, and local disaster risk reduction actors, the Senegal Red Cross fosters a collaborative approach to strengthening the resilience of flood-prone communities and developing early warning systems across the country.<sup>143</sup>

In 2019, the Senegal Red Cross worked with partners to use drone-collected images to map urban areas, roads and population centres. This allowed the Senegal Red Cross to combine house-to-house survey data with the spatial data collected by the drones, enhancing flood response actions. This better equips local actors, in partnership with technical services and response actors, to deal with disaster situations before, during and after they occur.

In 2021, the Senegal Red Cross worked alongside community-based organizations in Dakar to reduce risks of displacement and support urban communities to respond more

quickly in the face of flooding. This included a wide range of activities, from the training of volunteers in the context of flooding to flood prevention and risk reduction activities such as the cleaning of gutters, pre-positioning of stocks of food and non-food items, and the improvement of sanitary conditions in emergency situations. Participatory and collaborative small-scale risk-reduction projects – like the projects described above – can help communities and response actors to better prepare for and respond to flood events through well-defined roles and responsibilities.

### Heat-health early warning system

The Senegal Red Cross is working with partners to enhance preparedness and response capabilities and mitigate the health threats of climate change by developing a heat-health early warning (HHEW) system in Senegal. Leveraging long-standing collaborations with national meteorological intuitions and deep-rooted community engagement, the Senegal Red Cross was invited to be part of the local advisory group to provide technical feedback on the HHEW design, playing a key role in ensuring the development of an actionable, locally relevant HHEW.

This led to the development of accessible information about the timing of expected heat waves, as well as practical and targeted advice on actions to reduce heat strain designed to be accessible to individuals, public officials and local community groups. As part of the pilot, a survey was conducted through National Society volunteers to better understand how forecasted information impacted people's behavior. The project was found to have improved awareness of heat waves at the local level. Local residents reported frequently modifying their behavior in response to the disseminated information and recommendations. For example, shepherds did not move their herds during the hottest periods to reduce the risk of animal dehydration and exhaustion. The active participation of Senegal Red Cross members and volunteers in the pilot meant existing outreach and response could be leveraged to communicate and prepare for additional heat-related risk.





SOMALIA, 2023 – In an IDP camp near Burao, Togdheer region, thousands of families displaced by drought and food insecurity seek safety and support. Consecutive failed rainy seasons have devastated agriculture and livestock. *Annalisa Ausilio / IFRC*



## SOMALIA

As an established and well-networked national organization with more than 4,000 active volunteers, the Somali Red Crescent plays a crucial role in reaching and delivering humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable populations throughout the country, including IDPs and remote and hard-to-reach communities. In 2022, the National Society reached 190,000 households with cash grants through disaster management activities and 18,000 individuals with agro-recovery projects to strengthen resilience to climate impacts and disasters.<sup>144</sup>



Mean annual temperatures have increased with more frequent and intense hot extremes, while climate projections estimate at least a 1°C increase by 2050, with more intense heatwaves and more intense and frequent heavy rainfall events.<sup>145</sup> Unpredictable rainy seasons, flash floods and worsened drought conditions are impacting communities across Somalia, with over half of all new displacements from 2022 to date attributed to climate events.<sup>146</sup>

### Multipurpose cash assistance for drought-displaced communities

The Horn of Africa has been impacted by extreme climate variations, unpredictable rainy seasons, flash floods and worsened drought conditions. At the beginning of 2023, drought triggered the displacement of more than 331,000 people in Somalia and eroded the resilience of communities.<sup>147</sup> The Somali Red Crescent provided ongoing humanitarian assistance to communities displaced by drought and hosting communities. Recognizing that displacement increases vulnerabilities, the Somali Red Crescent responds to situations of displacement through a two-pronged approach –

coupling the provision of ongoing humanitarian assistance with initiatives that promote greater self-sufficiency in the long term.

In 2022, the Somali Red Crescent provided life-saving multi-purpose cash assistance to more than 190,000 households severely hit by drought.<sup>148</sup> At the same time, the local branches implemented micro-economic initiatives in over 550 households and supported over 18,000 people with agricultural recovery projects. These actions supported vulnerable households to remain in place in the face of ongoing drought-induced food insecurity. The circular effect of multi-purpose cash assistance also supported the ongoing functioning of local markets, allowing communities to continue purchasing essential goods while at the same time sustaining livelihoods and income for vendors.

### Supporting internally displaced people during droughts and floods

In 2023, an estimated 8.3 million people were projected to face acute food insecurity by mid-2023.<sup>149</sup> Climate-related hazards are cited as one of the key drivers of acute food insecurity, with the transition from prolonged drought to extreme flooding exacerbating vulnerabilities and displacing over 1.7 million people.<sup>150</sup> In 2023, the Somali Red Crescent supported over 460,000 people, targeting internally displaced households, combining food security and livelihood support alongside health and nutrition, WASH and PGI activities through a regional emergency appeal.<sup>151</sup>

Response actions include multi-purpose cash assistance to support livelihood resilience and essential needs assistance, preventive health services, health and hygiene promotion and WASH services. These actions recognise the importance of ensuring access to essential needs including food, water, health services and livelihoods in reducing the risks of displacement linked to drought and other climate-related hazards. The National Society's distribution of water supplies and installation of community boreholes in areas hosting IDP settlements and rural communities provides critical support to these communities, improving sustained access to safe water.<sup>152</sup>





**SOUTH AFRICA, 2022** – Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in South Africa, with devastating consequences for vulnerable communities. In April 2022, severe flooding and landslides in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape displaced more than 30,000 people, many seeking safety in evacuation centers after losing their homes. *Moeletsi Mabe / IFRC*



## SOUTH AFRICA



The South African Red Cross has an active presence across all nine provinces of the country, with 10,700 volunteers and 272 staff members. In 2022, the South African Red Cross reached 117,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes, and more than 284,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.<sup>153</sup>

The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events are increasing across the country. At the same time, climate impacts on water security are particularly severe, with more frequent drought and water shortages resulting in water scarcity in parts of the country.<sup>154</sup> Mean monthly temperatures are projected to rise by 2°C by 2050, with

rising heat and extreme heat events and annual rainfall decline linked to high-risk severe droughts in parts of the country.<sup>155</sup>

### Supporting displaced people in repeated disasters

In South Africa, extreme flooding and storm surges in early 2024 triggered widespread displacement across Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>156</sup> A few months later, the same area was hit by unprecedented rainfall, storm surges, and at least two tornados. Many were living in flood-prone resettlement sites, triggering secondary displacements and severe food insecurity. In recent years, these communities have faced similar events, including extreme flooding in the same areas in April 2022, which displaced over 40,000 people.<sup>157</sup> The cyclical nature of floods, with extreme flooding taking place in the region nearly every year, has eroded the resilience of those affected, including people displaced repeatedly.

The South African Red Cross has actively responded to these events, providing humanitarian assistance to affected communities through IFRC-DREF allocations. In 2024, the IFRC-DREF fund supported affected and displaced communities through

shelter assistance, multi-purpose cash assistance, mental health and psychosocial services, health epidemic and disease prevention awareness messages, WASH services, and ongoing CEA awareness messaging through local radio and media channels.<sup>158</sup>

CEA was considered a central approach of the operation. Two feedback mechanisms were established with face-to-face engagement by volunteers, with affected communities' forming part of the community feedback mechanism. Through regular and ongoing support to affected communities, the South African Red Cross has built off the learning of previous flood responses in the region over successive years. Continuous refresher training programmes and regular disaster response drills for staff and volunteers focus on disaster response, community engagement, health care, specific intervention skills, disaster risk reduction initiatives, and building back better initiatives to support in the most vulnerable communities for a more competent and effective response team.

### Innovative use of digital disaster management systems in flood responses

In 2022, following devastating flooding that triggered the displacement of over 62,000 people, the South African Red Cross worked closely with national authorities, leading the provision of shelter assistance for flood-displaced households.<sup>159</sup> They also played a key role in collecting local data through emergency needs assessments. This data was then used to evaluate the priority needs of displaced communities and inform response actions.

During this response, the South African Red Cross worked with partners to automate their existing process of data collection. This showcased the potential for technology to transform National Societies' response to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change, and highlights the private sector's key role in preparedness – supplying funding, technical expertise, useful technologies and data, and as a source of solidarity. This allowed the South African Red Cross and its partners to better collect, manage, analyze and disseminate data and information to support decision-making. The automated system captured geographically based data, providing area-based needs assessments. It also presented data that was easy to access and share with partners. Having a streamlined system where coordinators can receive real-time feedback and data on displacement across geographical areas in one centralized platform is valuable to understanding risks of displacement.





**SOUTH SUDAN, 2020** – Severe flooding has displaced nearly one million people across South Sudan, with an estimated 800,000 affected along the Nile. In Bor, the South Sudan Red Cross is distributing essential household items to flood-affected families, including blankets, mosquito nets, and hygiene kits. As climate shocks intensify, communities face ongoing risks, making early action and preparedness critical. *South Sudan Red Cross*



**South Sudan  
Red Cross**



## SOUTH SUDAN

With over 19,500 volunteers, the South Sudan Red Cross is present nationwide.<sup>160</sup> In 2022, the South Sudan Red Cross assisted 76,000 people with emergency food and non-food items and 100,500 people with access to safe water.

Droughts, floods, epidemic outbreaks and food insecurity are key climate-driven risks in the country. Monthly temperatures are expected to increase by at least 2 °C by 2050, with more intense heatwaves and more intense and frequent heavy rainfall events.<sup>161</sup>

### Advocacy and input for policy development

From 2019 to 2022, South Sudan experienced four consecutive years of record-breaking floods.<sup>162</sup> These have sometimes covered two-thirds of the country, leaving people without homes, land, food or safe drinking water. In a country that is already recovering from decades of civil war, the effects of disasters are acutely felt. At the government's request, the South Sudan Red Cross supported the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management across three key policy developments to mitigate the impact of flooding and other disasters and contribute to reducing risks of displacement.<sup>163</sup> These included the finalisation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, the National Disaster Risk Management Policy and the development of the National Disaster Risk Management Bill.

Underlining the close working relationship between the South Sudan Red Cross and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, this collaborative approach sought to develop a strong legal basis to collectively support communities at risk or displaced by flooding and other disasters. The South Sudan Red Cross drove

multistakeholder engagement and advocacy throughout the Bill consultation process, working to ensure it reflected local issues, risks and needs, and promoted the agency of local organizations in disaster response to better address the needs of their communities in a timely way. The National Society's strong community engagement means they also play a role in raising awareness of, and advocating for, risk reduction strategies and the development of effective early warning systems at the grassroots level.<sup>164</sup> The Bill will establish an early warning technical working group that will be responsible for co-ordinating early warning and early action initiatives – this is a critical step in supporting communities to stay in place, or to move out of harm's way before disasters strike.

### Integration of displaced people in community resilience programmes

In 2021, the South Sudan Red Cross initiated the Integrated Community Resilience Project to enhance the ability of communities to withstand climate and conflict-related shocks.<sup>165</sup> Displaced community volunteers were integrated in programme implementation, enabling the South Sudan Red Cross to develop localized initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence among affected communities.

Integrating volunteers from vulnerable groups – including displaced, returning and refugee communities – facilitated contact between individuals, families and communities to rebuild social cohesion while at the same time helping to empower communities, thereby reducing aid dependency. Trained community-based volunteers, including those from displaced communities, often spoke multiple languages and had direct links to the communities they were supporting, generating trust and acceptance. Their community proximity also allowed them to contribute to developing community-led solutions by reporting back on vulnerabilities and needs. At the same time, the ties formed between volunteers ensured that they were welcomed into communities of trained volunteers different from their own. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of how displacement, return and reintegration are perceived and lived by those directly impacted by it.





**UGANDA, 2006** – Communities in Uganda have faced prolonged displacement due to climate shocks and conflict. As extreme weather events intensify, families are forced to adapt to an uncertain future. The Uganda Red Cross is working to strengthen resilience through early warning systems, preparedness measures, and long-term recovery efforts to help communities withstand the growing challenges of climate displacement. *Heine Pedersen / Danish Red Cross*



## UGANDA

The Uganda Red Cross has over 50 branches across the country, supported by 500,000 registered volunteers. In 2023, the National Society reached more than 462,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.<sup>166</sup>



Average temperatures have been rising, with increasing trends in hot days and nights and a decrease in annual and seasonal rainfall.<sup>167</sup> Average monthly temperatures are expected to increase by at least 1.8 °C by 2050, leading to increased aridity, longer and more severe dry seasons, and an increase in average rainfall and more intense rainfall events. The country is also host to the largest refugee population in Africa.<sup>168</sup>

### Supporting law and policy on disasters and displacement

In 2021, following years of advocacy efforts, the Uganda Red Cross Society Bill was finalized. It provides a legal foundation from which the National Society can establish practical measures to meet the assistance, and protection needs of people displaced by disasters or climate shocks, as well as the communities that receive them, through all phases of preparedness, response and recovery.<sup>169</sup> The National Society, alongside parliamentarians, is continuing to advocate for the Bill to be passed into law to strengthen its auxiliary role in the humanitarian field. The National Society is also recognized as an official partner in the government-led process to develop the Disaster Risk Management Bill.

The Uganda Red Cross supports the country's legislators with innovative approaches in disaster risk management, providing them with evidence-based information and technical support to inform their debates in the parliament, especially in relation to disaster risk financing. The National Policy for IDPs recognizes that the National Society has a special role to play in providing support services to IDPs and local communities. The Uganda Red Cross is one of only a few National Societies in Africa that have their role in migration and displacement formally identified in law. This provides a solid foundation for potential cross-sectoral integration linking climate, disasters, and displacement, with the Uganda Red Cross as a trusted, and experienced actor.

### Flood research, early warning, and early action

In 2023, Uganda reported over 50,000 people displaced due to disasters, more than half of which occurred during the rainy season in October.<sup>170</sup> This is a particular challenge for urban areas, with settlements often located in low-lying areas near rivers and coastlines. In Kampala, the capital of Uganda, more than 90 per cent of the city's informal settlements are situated within wetlands, adversely affecting livelihoods and heightening flood-induced risks of displacement.<sup>171</sup> Over the past decade, the Uganda Red Cross has engaged in several projects to build awareness of flood risk, risks of displacement and community vulnerabilities. Under the 2018 project National-Scale Impact Based Forecasting of Flood Risk in Uganda, the Uganda Red Cross-linked essential household socio-economic information to existing scientific forecasting skills to improve the targeting, relevance and communication of flood warning and response in Uganda.

Working in partnership with the Ugandan Ministry of Water and Environment and the Uganda National Meteorological Authority, the Uganda Red Cross has also taken steps to build operational forecasting capabilities and influenced national policymakers to strengthen early warning systems across the country. Through ongoing partnerships with national and local partners, the National Society continues to work toward strengthening institutional disaster preparedness and community-level epidemic preparedness in Uganda.



# ANNEXES

## I. IFRC reports

The following are some of the reports on displacement in the context of disasters and climate change produced by the IFRC. Specific National Societies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre have also produced relevant research and tools on displacement and other forms of movement in the context of disasters and climate change. The below list is not comprehensive of all case studies, relevant activities, or guidance documents that exist across the IFRC on this topic.

[Disaster Risk Governance Guidelines \(2024\)](#)

[Responding to Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate: Case Studies from Asia Pacific \(2022\)](#)

[Displacement in a Changing Climate \(2021\)](#)

[Advocating to Strengthen Disaster Laws and Policies to Protect Internally Displaced People in Africa: A Guide for National Societies \(2021\)](#)

[Planned Relocation in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: A Guide for Asia Pacific National Societies \(2021\)](#)

[Forecast-based financing and disaster displacement: acting early to reduce the humanitarian impacts if displacement \(2020\)](#)

[Climate and Disaster Displacement: The Importance of Disaster Law and Policy \(2020\)](#)

[Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate: Asia Pacific \(2018\)](#)

## II. Regional and global frameworks

Below are some of the key regional and global frameworks addressing displacement and migration in the context of disasters and climate change. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- The [African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa \(Kampala Convention\)](#) includes an obligation on States to enact legislation on the protection of IDPs and to take measures to protect and assist persons who have been internally displaced due to disasters, including climate change.

- The [African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa](#), a regional treaty adopted in 1969 to address refugee issues specific to Africa, including an expanded definition of a refugee which may be capable of extending refugee protection to those fleeing the impacts of disasters.
- The [African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan](#) recognizes the need to better support at risk and displaced populations, alongside the potential of migration as an adaptation strategy. It calls for the development of safety protection mechanisms to address loss and damage associated with climate change.
- The [Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change](#), calls for action to advert, minimize and address displacement. It also recognizes the need for states to strengthen the implementation of agreements relating to the free movement of people, labor mobility and transhumance in the context of climate change.
- The [Sendai Framework](#), which aims to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks through the implementation of multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive measures that strengthen resilience, recognizes displacement as an important concern and provides several avenues for policy and action to address displacement. In line with this, African Union heads of states and governments adopted a [Programme of Action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa 2015-2030](#).
- The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), under Objectives 2 and 5 recognizes the need for states to integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies and to promote cross border cooperation in disaster risk management activities.
- [Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action \(2018–2030\)](#), recognizes climate change as one of the major factors driving migration.
- [Declaration of the 15th Extraordinary African Union Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference](#), calls on Member States and other partners to work towards multi-sector and well-coordinated approaches that reinforce complementarity and inclusive planning from all partners in addressing the challenge of climate change disasters and forced displacement in Africa.
- [Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment](#), provides the groundwork for facilitated cross-border migration including for individuals displaced due to disasters.

At the 15th Extraordinary African Union Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference, African Union member states made a series of commitments to strengthen action on addressing “Climate Change, Disasters and Forced Displacement”, including establishing governance systems at national, regional and continental levels, such as through the establishment of relevant frameworks, policies, guidelines and tools.<sup>68</sup>

See also the reports of Special Rapporteurs, including on internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change (21 July 2020) ([A/75/207](#)), and on Providing legal options to protect the human rights of persons displaced across International borders due to climate change (18 April 2023) ([A/HRC/53/34](#)).



## Endnotes

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- 2 Ibid.
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- 4 IPCC, [Climate Change 2022: Africa](#). In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022). Pp. 1289 and 1360.
- 5 IPCC, [Climate Change 2022: Africa](#). In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022). Pp 1350.
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- 32 Ibid. Pp. 1292.
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## The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

### Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

### Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

### Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

### Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

### Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

### Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

### Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



