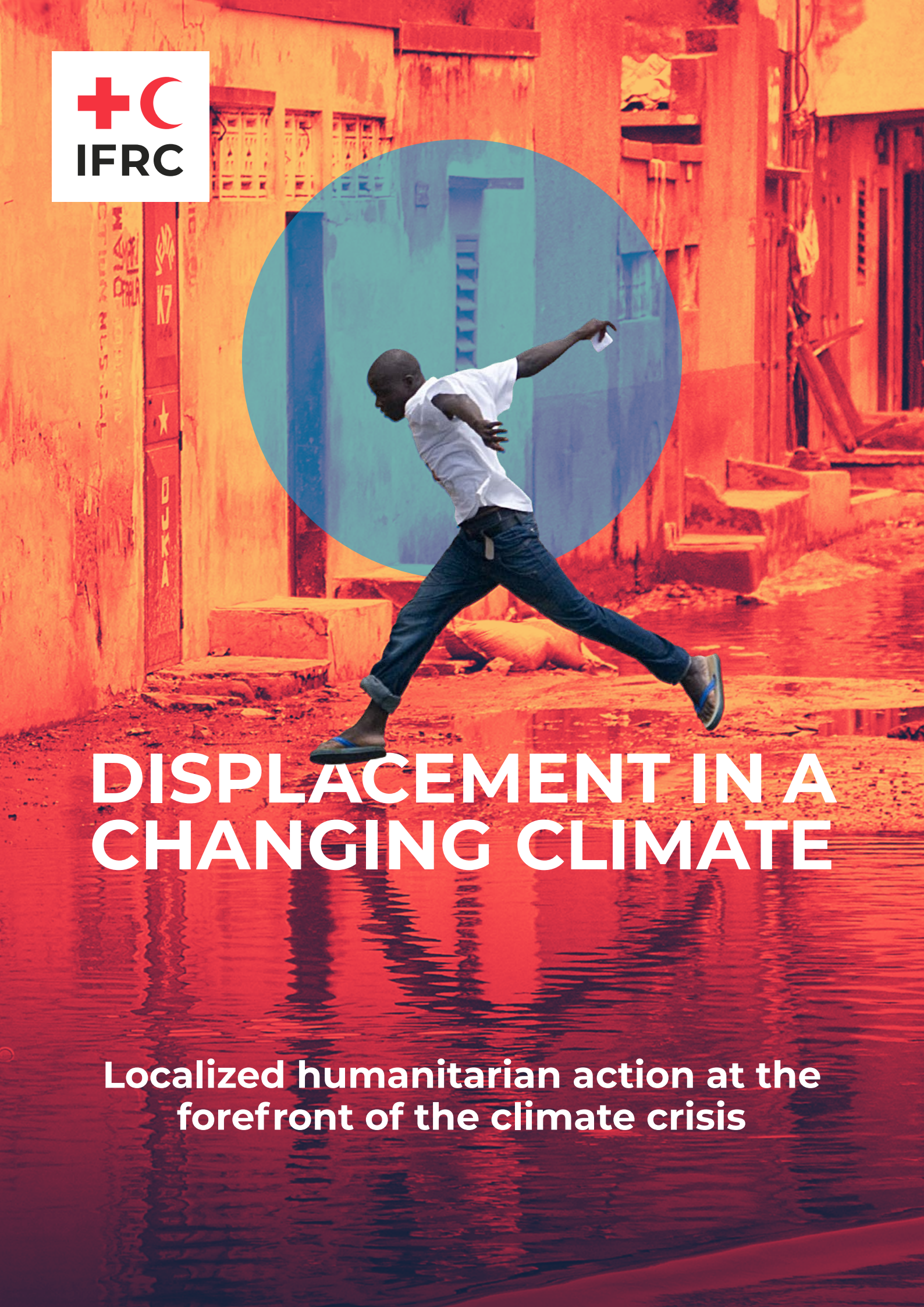

DISPLACEMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Localized humanitarian action at the forefront of the climate crisis

Report in partnership with and supported by

British Red Cross

Cover photo: Heavy rains in Senegal caused severe floods in almost all suburbs of the capital Dakar.
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ACRONYMS

COP	Conference of the Parties
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
EAP	Early Action Protocol
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PPE	Personal protective equipment
RWH	Rainwater harvesting
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

FOREWORD

Millions of people around the world are displaced and moving in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. In 2020, 30.7 million people were internally displaced by disasters, over three times more than by conflict and violence. The vast majority (98 per cent) of all disaster-related displacement was in the context of weather and climate hazards – mostly floods and storms, but also wildfires, landslides, extreme temperatures and drought.

As climate change increases the intensity and frequency of sudden- and slow-onset hazards across the world, it is expected that the number of people forced to leave their homes and communities will only increase. There are also major risks of compounded crisis – with floods, storms, hurricanes, droughts, heat waves and wildfires overlapping with disease outbreaks, conflict and violence, areas under weak governance, socio-economic crises and contexts of extreme marginalization.

While climate change affects everyone, it has a disproportionate impact on the world's poorest people, those who are contributing the least to climate change. This is also true of climate-related displacement – the most vulnerable communities in low and middle-income countries are the most at risk.

We, collectively, have a duty to address the humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement. But we also do not need to wait until communities are displaced, we can and must take action now to protect them. To do this, we need to invest in local communities and local organizations. We need to ensure that funding for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is directed to the countries and the communities with the highest risks and the lowest capacities.

For the IFRC, addressing the needs of communities at risk of and impacted by climate-related displacement is a major global strategic priority. This is expressed in our Strategy 2030 and in our Movement Ambitions to Address the Climate Crisis. This commitment reflects the reality that already, all across the globe, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are at the forefront of this humanitarian challenge.

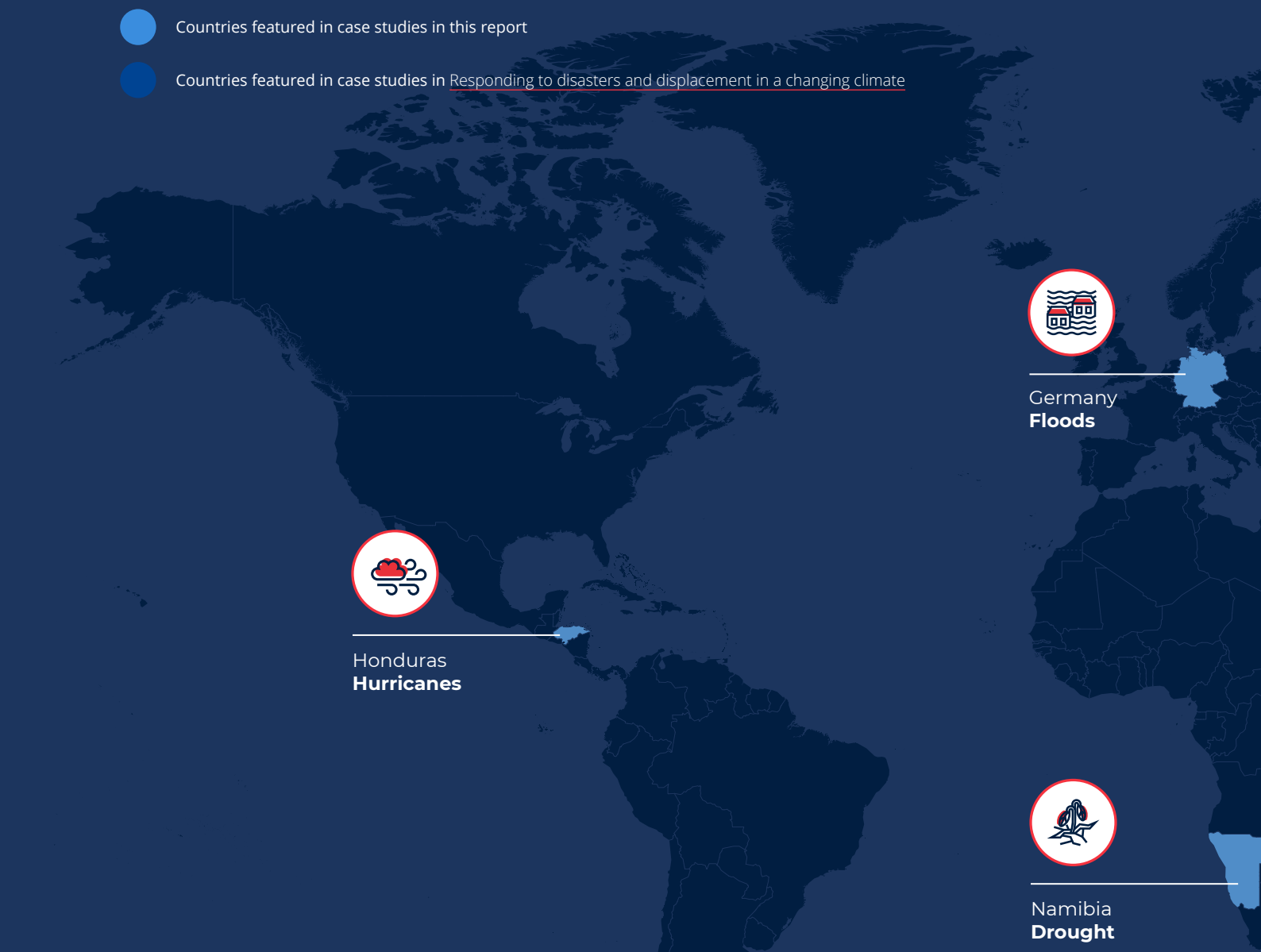
We are pleased to share this collection of case studies, which highlight a selection of the critical work National Societies are doing to help protect and assist communities in the context of climate-related displacement. This work spans resilience and disaster risk reduction, preparedness and anticipatory action, humanitarian response and recovery, and the important role of the IFRC in supporting governments to develop legal frameworks that are fit for purpose.

I hope that these case studies are not only an opportunity to reflect on the devastating impact of climate-related displacement on communities across the globe, but also – and more importantly – to call for more ambitious climate action and investment in local communities and local organizations to address this urgent humanitarian challenge.

Jagan Chapagain
IFRC Secretary General

CONTENTS

CLIMATE-RELATED DISPLACEMENT
A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL ACTION



98%

of disaster displacement in 2020 was due to weather and climate hazards*

**Source: IDMC GRID 2021* https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/

In 2020, 30.7 million people were internally displaced by disasters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The adverse impacts of climate change are already affecting the lives and the livelihoods of many communities in all parts of the world. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are at the forefront of the climate emergency: they help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from climate-related disasters.

This report contains case studies of 11 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in these countries: Australia, Fiji, Germany, Honduras, Iraq, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Samoa, Tuvalu and Yemen. It highlights their role in preventing, adapting to and responding to the adverse impacts of climate-related displacement. It complements other reports on human mobility and displacement in the context of disasters and climate change produced by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

These 11 cases studies show that the climate crisis is already happening now. Communities across the world are already experiencing the devastating humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement. These impacts are being experienced due to sea level rise, drought, extreme heat, floods and storms. It is also clear that the most vulnerable and the most marginalized people are being hit the hardest.

This is vividly illustrated by the case study of the Tuvalu Red Cross Society. People living in low-lying small island states in the Pacific such as Tuvalu are often mentioned in discussions on the long-term impacts of climate change. Such countries may be rendered uninhabitable – if not entirely submerged – by the end of the century without a rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades. This underscores the urgency to enhance mitigation efforts. However, the case study of the Tuvalu Red Cross Society illustrates the need to also focus on the here and now – including the immediate drought conditions in the country.

In 2020, 30.7 million people were internally displaced by disasters, over three times more than conflict and violence (9.8 million people). Of those displaced by disasters, 98 percent faced weather and climate hazards.[1]

At present, the vast majority of people who are moving because of the impacts of climate change are displaced within their own country. People and communities moving across borders due to the effects of climate change are smaller in numbers, but face a critical legal protection gap. Since December 2020, Angolan citizens started crossing the border into Namibia in search of food, water, healthcare and employment because of the drought in their country. At the request of the Namibian government, the Namibia Red Cross Society has been providing Angolan citizens with food, shelter, blankets, mattresses, clothing, and healthcare, irrespective of their legal status. In November 2020, Honduras was hit by two consecutive hurricanes – Eta and Iota – which caused massive displacement and significant damage and destruction to crops and harvests. Families already facing economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and endemic poverty saw their livelihoods undermined. Some 937,000 people in the country were newly displaced by disasters in 2020 and over 3 million people are now suffering from food insecurity. These adverse impacts of climate change have contributed to people's decisions to leave their homes and join the 'migrant caravans' headed towards the North of the continent, crossing countries such as Guatemala and Mexico. In response to the 'migrant caravan' formed in January 2021, the Honduran Red Cross Society provided migrants with water, face masks, healthcare, information about safety, security and COVID-19 prevention measures, as well as a means of communication to keep in touch with family members – at key points along their migratory journey.

Many communities worldwide are affected by concurrent and consecutive disasters and displacement, leaving them with little time to recover before the next catastrophe strikes. In March 2019, Tropical Cyclone Idai made landfall in Mozambique with devastating impacts: some 1.5 million people were affected, with 140,000 people displaced to evacuation centres or makeshift shelters and 230,000 houses damaged. Six weeks later, Cyclone Kenneth hit the country. Combined, the two cyclones killed at least 648 people, injured nearly 1,700 people and damaged more than 270,000 homes and more than 4,200 classrooms. The Mozambique Red Cross Society provided humanitarian assistance to both internally displaced people and host communities.

1 IDMC. GRID 2020 (2021) At: www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID.pdf

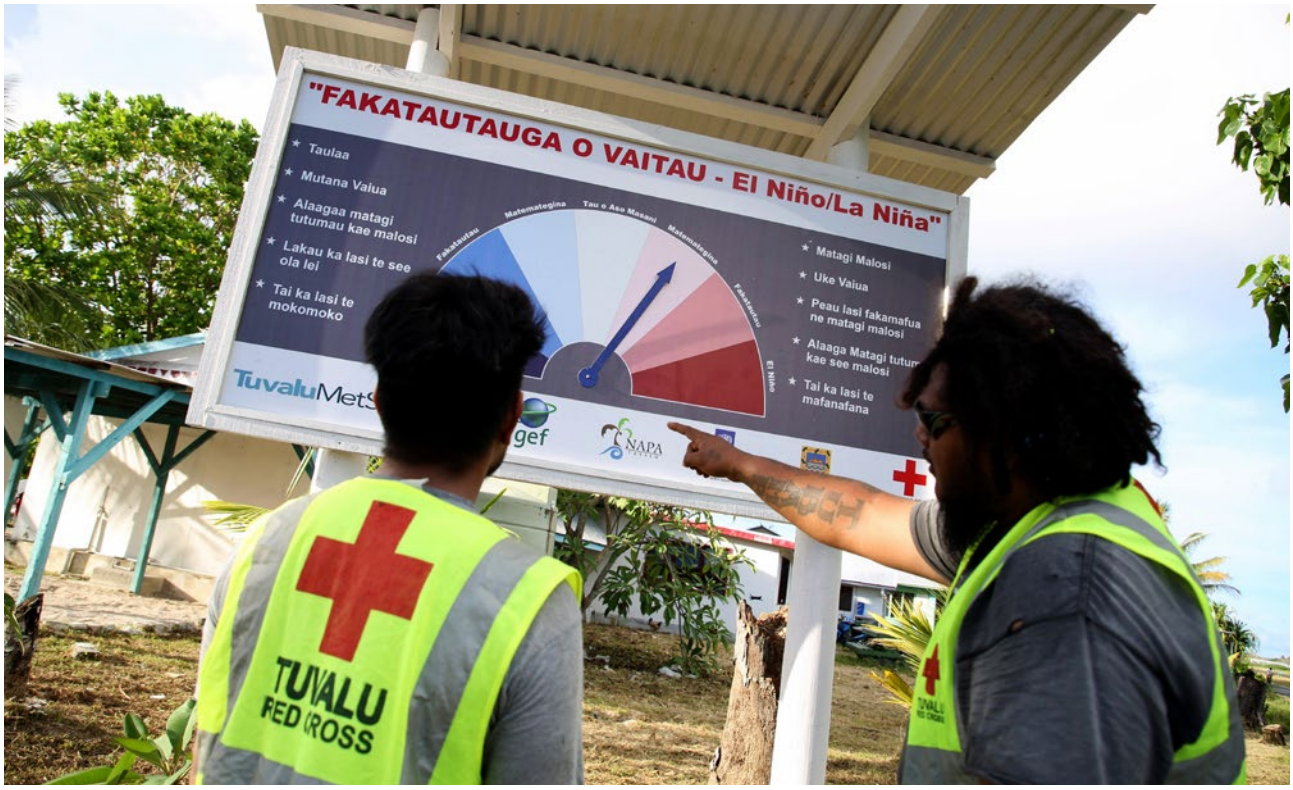
Climate change exacerbates existing challenges and underlying vulnerabilities, forcing communities to face compounding crises. Iraq is currently experiencing water shortages and drought; the effects of climate change collide with geopolitical tensions, the legacy of sanctions and conflict, and chronic water mismanagement. Local communities are at risk of being displaced because of the worsening drought, as well as water and food insecurity. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society is providing food and cash assistance to around 36,000 people, as well as access to healthcare and water and sanitation to more than 40,000 people. In Yemen, the protracted armed conflict intensified in 2020, bringing the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to 4 million. The already dire humanitarian situation was further compounded in 2020 by extreme flooding, which devastated entire communities and fuelled the spread of diseases, such as cholera, dengue, malaria and diphtheria. More than 300,000 people were affected, most of them IDPs who had previously fled conflict areas, leading to secondary displacement. Yemen Red Crescent Society volunteers provided health and psychosocial support, and distributed food, personal hygiene items, shelter kits and other essential items to affected people.

The climate crisis is already happening now in all parts of the world, including in high-income countries. For example, Australia was devastated by bushfires which threatened lives and livelihoods in 2019 and 2020. Thousands of people had to leave their homes in many parts of the country. The Australian Red Cross supported the evacuation of around 50,000 people and provided them with grant support. In Germany, a series of storms in summer 2021 caused rivers to burst their banks, destroying entire villages and killing 180 people. Over 30,000 people were displaced. The German Red Cross provided support to affected communities, including drinking water, food, accommodation, electricity, mobile healthcare and psychological help.

These examples demonstrate that climate-related displacement can have devastating impacts. In some contexts though, the adverse impacts of climate-related events can be avoided or mitigated, thanks to adaptation measures. Samoa, for example, is prone to tropical cyclones and has a long history of climate-related displacement. With approximately 70 per cent of the country's population and infrastructure located in low-lying coastal areas and projected sea level rises, vulnerable families in coastal areas have decided to voluntarily relocate to inland sites. Using an inclusive and anticipatory approach, the Samoa Red Cross Society supports vulnerable families who have relocated to these sites. Recognizing the importance of local ownership of humanitarian action, it involves family members in site preparation and promotes sustainable local adaptation, by providing training in cleaning and maintaining rainwater harvesting systems.

An important but often overlooked component of disaster risk management is legal preparedness. In the aftermath of a disaster, time is critical. Laws can help in addressing the complex issues raised by climate-related displacement. Legal preparedness is particularly important when planned relocation is being contemplated to reduce the risk of further displacement due to climate-related events, or as a durable solution to existing displacement. In Fiji, after Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated the country in 2016, the need to strengthen and update Fiji's disaster law became clear. The Government of Fiji requested the Fiji Red Cross Society and the IFRC to assist in the review of the existing disaster law. Fiji's National Disaster Management Office is now working towards an integrated approach that also addresses displacement and planned relocation. Malawi is exposed to multiple climate-related hazards, such as floods, droughts, landslides and extreme heat. At the government's request, the Malawi Red Cross Society supported the revision of the existing disaster risk management legislation. A bill was drafted, which reflected local issues, risks and needs and promoted the agency of local communities in disaster response to better address their needs in a timely way.

The case studies included in this report make clear that local communities and local organizations must be at the centre of addressing climate-related displacement. Governments and donors need to ensure that funding for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is directed to the countries and the communities with the highest risks and the lowest capacities. Immediate and substantial investments are needed to enable communities to anticipate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and reduce the risks of climate-related displacement.



Tuvalu 2019 *Posters in the local language in the capital, Funafuti. Early warning information provided in the right language can help communities prepare for disasters. © Sean Gallagher*

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

For governments

- **Scale up action to avert, minimize and address climate-related displacement.**
- **Promote action before communities are displaced – including climate change adaptation and early action.**
- **Address the protection and assistance needs of people displaced in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. Strengthen durable solutions, especially for people in protracted displacement.**
- **Integrate climate-related displacement into national laws, policies and strategies, including disaster law, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans.**

For donors

- **Mobilize flexible and accessible climate finance to reduce the humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement in climate-vulnerable countries.**
- **Scale up climate adaptation finance for local organizations and promote local leadership.**
- **Ensure that climate finance is integrated with humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and development finance.**
- **Support the work of local communities and local organizations, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to address climate-related displacement.**

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This report focuses on one of the most devastating impacts of the climate crisis – the displacement of people and communities from their homes, their lands, and in some cases, their countries because of the adverse impacts of climate change.

The case studies included in this report demonstrate the devastating humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement, including:

- **Health** The case studies of the **Samoa Red Cross Society**, **Yemen Red Crescent Society** and the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society** illustrate how weather-related extremes have exposed communities to new health risks from vector-borne and communicable diseases such as cholera. The case study of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society** illustrates how climate-related disasters exacerbate the risk to already vulnerable people in terms of health, such as persons living with HIV and AIDS. The case studies of the **German Red Cross** and the **Mozambique Red Cross Society** illustrate how displacement can cause existing health conditions to worsen and new risks to health – both physical and psychological – to emerge. At the same time. the disaster's destruction of critical health infrastructure reduces access to essential health treatment and services.
- **Children** The case study of the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society** demonstrates how children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which increases the risks to their health, nutrition and cognitive development. This case study, and that of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society**, also illustrate how the future livelihoods of children are imperilled though degradation or destruction of education infrastructure, including schools.
- **Indigenous communities and their cultural heritage** The case study of the **Australian Red Cross** starkly illustrates the risk climate change poses to indigenous communities. This transcends the loss of homes and livelihoods assets to include the very real risk of loss of cultural heritage grounded in a visceral sense of place attached to ancestral lands where the environment itself resonates with culturally symbolic meaning. While place-based programming can reduce the trauma associated with being displaced from land, the destruction of sacred spaces, flora and fauna represent an irreplaceable loss.[2]

The report shows that there are other ways in which communities are moving in response to the climate crisis, including planned relocation.[3] The case study of the **Samoa Red Cross Society** illustrates how one National Society has been supporting what amounts to a whole-of-society approach to reducing the risk of future climate-change related displacement. It has worked closely with the government and leveraged its unique auxiliary-to-government status to programme climate-smart and sustainable disaster risk reduction measures in support of families who have made voluntary choices to relocate away from coastal areas.

These case studies show that for many communities, the impacts of disasters and the climate crisis are not a one-off event but are devastating communities through concurrent and consecutive disasters, leaving displaced people with little time to recover before the next catastrophe strikes. In March 2019, Tropical Cyclone Idai made landfall in Mozambique with devastating impacts: some 1.5 million people were affected, with 140,000 people displaced to evacuation centres or makeshift shelters and 230,000 houses damaged. Six weeks later, Cyclone Kenneth hit the country. Combined, the two cyclones killed at least 648 people, injured nearly 1,700 people, and damaged more than 270,000 homes and more than 4,200 classrooms. The case study details the critical humanitarian assistance provided by **Mozambique Red Cross Society** to displaced people and to host communities.

These case studies also show that the climate crisis exacerbates existing challenges and underlying vulnerabilities, and in many contexts leads to compounding crises. This sense of there being a 'new normal' of overlapping crises is reflected in the case studies of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society**, the **Yemen Red Crescent Society** and the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society**. When Tropical Cyclone Kenneth struck Mozambique in 2019, it impacted on the lives and safety of 170,000 people whose resilience had already been eroded due to worsening conflict. The case study of the Yemen Red Crescent Society is particularly notable in illustrating how disasters have caused the secondary displacement of persons already internally displaced due to protracted conflict. Iraq is currently experiencing water

2 For a discussion of place-based programming in the context of planned relocation, see IFRC. Planned Relocation in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: A guide for Asia Pacific National Societies (2021).
3 IFRC. *Planned Relocation in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: A guide for Asia Pacific National Societies* (2021); Bower E and Weerasinghe S. *Leaving Place, Restoring Home: Enhancing the evidence base on planned relocation cases in the context of hazards, disasters and climate change* (2021). Platform on Disaster Displacement. At: https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/leaving-place-restoring-home

shortages and drought; the effects of climate change collide with geopolitical tensions, the legacy of sanctions and conflict, and chronic water mismanagement. Local communities are at risk of being displaced because of the worsening drought, as well as water and food insecurity. The case study details the work of the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society** to provide food and cash assistance to around 36,000 people, as well as access to healthcare and water and sanitation to more than 40,000 people. In Yemen, the protracted armed conflict intensified in 2020, bringing the number of IDPs to 4 million. The already dire humanitarian situation was further compounded in 2020 by extreme flooding, which devastated entire communities and fuelled the spread of diseases such as cholera, dengue, malaria and diphtheria. More than 300,000 people were affected, most of them IDPs who had previously fled conflict areas, leading to secondary displacement. **Yemen Red Crescent Society** volunteers provided health and psychosocial support, and distributed food, personal hygiene items, shelter kits and other essential items to affected people.

The reality of the overlapping COVID-19 and climate crises is illustrated by the case study of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society**, which documents how early action was taken for an approaching severe tropical storm, even though the specified threshold had not then been formally reached. Early activation was agreed due to the likelihood that the storm could strengthen when the existing windspeeds were estimated to already cause significant destruction, and to the heightened levels of vulnerability of the communities, which were already experiencing compromised livelihoods and severe socio-economic impacts because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Climate-related displacement is not limited to lower- and middle-income countries, but is occurring across the globe including in high-income countries. Australia was devastated by bushfires in 2019 and 2020, which threatened lives and livelihoods. Thousands of people had to leave their homes in many parts of the country. The case study in this report details the work of the **Australian Red Cross** to support the evacuation of around 50,000 people and provide them with grant support. In Germany, a series of storms in summer 2021 caused rivers to burst their banks, destroying entire villages and killing 180 people. More than 30,000 people were displaced. The case study details the work of the **German Red Cross** to provide support to affected communities, including drinking water, food, accommodation, electricity, mobile healthcare and psychological help.

Forecast-based financing is an increasingly vital and important way to support communities before displacement occurs. Based on forecast information and a detailed risk analysis using a large network of renowned scientists generating a huge body of reliable data, forecast-based financing ensures funding is automatically made available to National Societies in advance of a disaster. This enables them to quickly and efficiently take critical anticipatory action once a specific threshold – or trigger – is reached.[4] In development since 2007, and first piloted in 2013, forecasts have used the forecast-based financing approach to successfully trigger early action by National Societies in a range of countries, including Bangladesh, Mongolia, Mozambique, Peru, the Philippines and Vietnam.[5] The benefits of moving from response-focused humanitarian action to anticipatory action through forecast-based financing is demonstrated in the case studies of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society** and the **Tuvalu Red Cross Society**. These illustrate how forecast-based financing has been used to allow early action to be taken to save lives and otherwise reduce the anticipated impacts of both a sudden-onset (Mozambique, cyclone) and slow-onset (Tuvalu, drought conditions) climate-related hazard. Forecast-based financing has also been adapted to enable anticipatory action to be taken to meet the needs of people who have been compelled to migrate due to the worsening impacts of climate change and other factors. The case study of the **Honduran Red Cross** illustrates how the modalities of previous 'migrant caravans' have been used to identify suitable thresholds to trigger early action in subsequent caravans.

Legal and policy frameworks – including disaster laws – can help in addressing the complex issues raised by climate-related displacement. In Fiji, after Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated the country in 2016, the need to strengthen and update the country's disaster law became clear. The government requested the **Fiji Red Cross Society** and the IFRC to assist in the review of existing disaster law. Fiji's National Disaster Management Office is now working towards an integrated approach that also addresses displacement and planned relocation.

4 IFRC and German Red Cross. *Forecast-based Financing: A new era for the humanitarian system* (2019). At: www.forecast-based-financing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/DRK_Broschuere_2019_new_era.pdf
5 Ibid.

Mozambique 2019 *The village of Buzi was one of the worst-affected areas in the region. Cyclone Idai and the flood that followed swept away people and caused major damage to houses and infrastructure. The village was cut off and only accessible by boat or helicopter. © Benjamin Suomela / Finnish Red Cross*

Meanwhile Malawi is exposed to multiple climate-related hazards, such as floods, droughts, landslides and extreme heat. At the government's request, the **Malawi Red Cross Society** supported the revision of the existing disaster risk management legislation. A bill was drafted, which reflected local issues, risks and needs and promoted the agency of local communities in disaster response to better address their needs in a timely way.

Climate-related displacement can cause tensions to emerge with host communities, particularly where host communities suffer from additional factors, including the adverse effects of climate change-related hazards. The case studies of the **Namibia Red Cross Society** and the **Mozambique Red Cross Society** illustrate how, unless properly managed, these tensions can spill over into conflict, becoming a secondary trigger for displacement and giving rise to new humanitarian needs. The effective management of these tensions places a premium on community engagement. Local organizations with an established presence in the host community will be best placed to understand the factors giving rise to the tensions and able to work with community leaders to resolve them.

Localization of humanitarian assistance is essential to address climate-related displacement. Having properly resourced and locally-trained organizations is important to ensure a continuity of targeted assistance and protection to displaced people over time and across distance. One of the strengths of the IFRC is its networked structure. As the case study of the **Honduran Red Cross** illustrates, this has allowed National Societies from different countries to coordinate activities and establish an integrated network of Humanitarian Service Points along the main Central American migration routes. This has ensured a continuity of humanitarian support to large numbers of people on the move, including many people whose resilience to ongoing drought conditions has been gradually eroded.

Enhanced local action can help close data gaps by providing a means to record the impacts of smaller scale, localized disasters which lead to displacement and create a need for humanitarian assistance, but which would otherwise not be recorded. National Societies with a permanent local presence are better able to track the situation of evacuees and monitor the length of displacement. However, many National Societies, like other local organizations, face capacity constraints. Scaling up investment will allow National Societies to increase capacity, for example by training more volunteers and staff to collect relevant data during the emergency phase and at regular intervals thereafter throughout the displacement cycle. This data, in turn, will help inform better assessments and early warning systems, as well as preparedness and recovery plans and policies at the local and national level, while supporting climate mitigation and adaptation.[6]

6 UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and Platform on Disaster Displacement. *Addressing Disaster Displacement in Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice: A Checklist (2020),* p3. At: www.undrr.org/sites/default/files/2021–02/WiA_Displacement_Checklist_En_0.pdf

Honduras 2020 *The Red Cross provided humanitarian assistance to migrants departing Honduras for Guatemala as part of a 'migrant caravan'.*
© Johannes Chinchilla / IFRC

Localization is the foundation of the IFRC and has been critical to meeting the humanitarian needs of displaced populations and other people on the move in the context of disasters and climate change. A branch-level, volunteer structure – the building block of all Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies – provides a country-wide permanent presence and trusted community access in places across the globe where people live at risk of displacement from climate-related (and other) hazards. Indeed, as the case study of **Tuvalu Red Cross Society** illustrates, the National Society may be the only humanitarian organization with a nationwide presence. The case studies of the **Australian Red Cross**, **Fiji Red Cross Society**, **Malawi Red Cross Society** and **Samoa Red Cross Society** also illustrate how the unique role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities is being effectively used. This special status provides a means to engage in humanitarian diplomacy and has been successfully undertaken to strengthen laws, regulations and policies relating to climate change adaptation at the national level.

A country-wide, localized permanent presence which is grounded in communities and supported by a network that it collectively owns and governs allows the IFRC to promptly deliver nimble and locally responsive humanitarian action in an efficient manner from the beginning to the end of the displacement cycle. For example, this has enabled:

- the **Namibia Red Cross Society** to urgently meet the needs of a large group of Angolans, including many children and lactating or pregnant women, who unexpectedly crossed an international border to avoid worsening drought conditions.
- the **Yemen Red Crescent Society** to reach disaster-affected people in active and, in some instances, intensifying conflict zones.
- the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society** to undertake humanitarian intervention and provide food security assistance to people in rural and hard-to-reach areas which are currently not otherwise covered by any other organizations.

The case studies included in this report make clear that, to save lives, investments in local communities and local organizations are needed. These are at the forefront of the climate emergency. Yet they rarely receive support and funding to prevent and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, including climate-related displacement. Governments and donors need to ensure that funding for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is directed to the countries and the communities with the highest risks and the lowest capacities. Immediate and substantial investments are needed to enable communities to anticipate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and reduce the risks of climate-related displacement. Support to communities must also go beyond humanitarian assistance and be available for the recovery phases of disasters and climate hazards, including to attain durable solutions for people in protracted displacement after disasters.

It is critical that communities are empowered to be part of strategies and plans to reduce the risks of climate-related displacement. Through community engagement and accountability activities, National Societies ensure community voices and perspectives are heard in the planning and implementation of humanitarian programmes. The **Samoa Red Cross Society** was able to quickly determine that the criterion chosen by the national authorities to identify affected people for a significant climate change adaptation programme failed to capture the most vulnerable families. The National Society developed a multi-dimensional vulnerability and capacity assessment, organized around locally relevant indicators, to better identify households most vulnerable to water stress for prioritization of programme activities. This case study and those of the **Mozambique Red Cross Society** and **Tuvalu Red Cross Society** illustrate how communities themselves are empowered to be part of the solution, increasing their resilience to climate hazards through skills training. The case study of the **Samoa Red Cross Society** also shows how a local organization has identified traditional knowledge and practice and integrated this into preparedness activities to meet the challenges posed to households impacted by overlapping crises – in this instance adapting to climate change and responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fiji 2020 *Tropical Cyclone Yasa hit Fiji as a Category 5 cyclone. The main impact was seen in communities on the second largest island of Vanua Levu, as well as a number of small remote islands. Fiji Red Cross assessment teams, with support from IFRC, reached some of the more remote affected communities in the north.*
© Fiji Red Cross Society

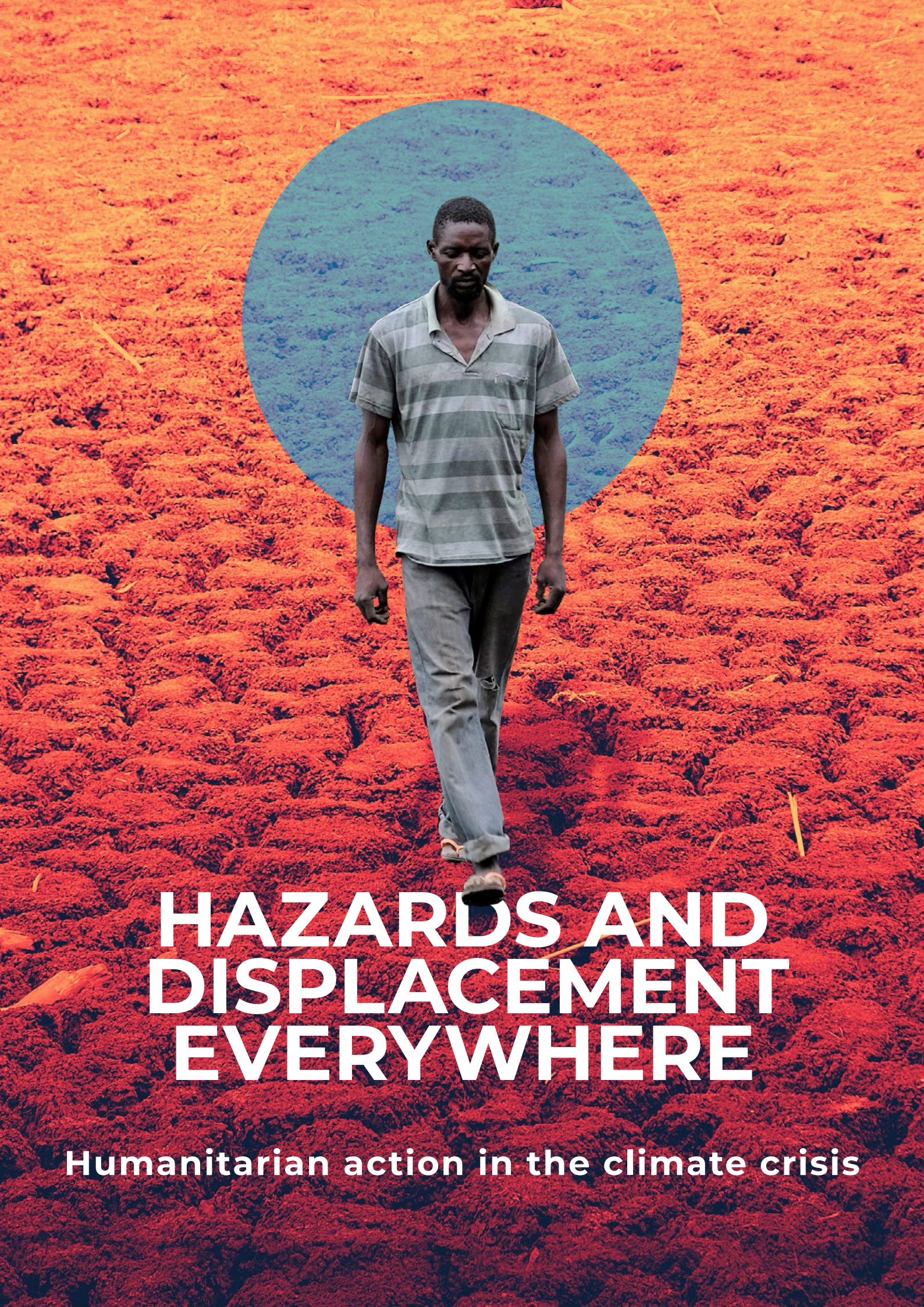
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR GOVERNMENTS

- **Scale up action to avert, minimize and address climate-related displacement. Prioritize implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage** for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change, including by:
  - enhancing research and data collection to close data gaps and share information.
  - reducing disaster risk by conducting regular, integrated risk assessments to better anticipate and manage how climate-related hazards overlap with other hazards – including conflict and outbreaks of violence – and their impacts, including displacement.
- **Promote action before communities are displaced – including climate change adaptation and early action.** This can range from long-term climate-smart adaptation to preparedness activities including early warning systems and anticipatory action. This is critical to protect communities against climate-related displacement.
- **Integrate climate-related displacement into national laws, policies and strategies,** including disaster law, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans. Policies to reduce risks or address displacement should be evidence-based and inclusive of local communities. Review existing laws and regulations against best practice standards, and review disaster risk management structures to ensure they are adequately responsive to multi-hazard risks and adequately promote and support localization efforts under *the Grand Bargain 2.0.*

FOR DONORS

- **Mobilize flexible and accessible climate finance to address climate-related displacement in climate-vulnerable countries** to reduce the humanitarian impacts of climate change. This should include innovative finance, such as forecast-based financing to enable early action, risk reduction and avoid more costly response, recovery and reconstruction.
- **Scale up climate adaptation finance for local organizations and promote local leadership in humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of climate displaced populations and enhance disaster preparedness.**
- **Ensure that climate finance is integrated with humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and development finance.** Optimize synergies between humanitarian assistance, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development assistance.
- **Support the important work of local communities and local organizations, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to address climate-related displacement.** This includes support to National Societies to scale up local action spanning disaster risk reduction, resilience building, preparedness and anticipatory action, humanitarian response and support for durable solutions.



HAZARDS AND DISPLACEMENT EVERYWHERE

Humanitarian action in the climate crisis

BACKGROUND

HAZARDS EVERYWHERE

The IFRC's *World Disasters Report 2020: Come Heat or High Water outlines how the number of disasters has increased over time, and how* climate- and weather-related disasters have increased in number and as a percentage of all disasters.[7] Of the 2,850 disasters triggered by natural hazards in the past decade, the overwhelming majority (2,355) were related to climate and extreme weather events, with floods (1,298) and storms (589) being the most frequent.[8] The human toll of climate- and weather-related disasters has been significant: they have killed 410,000 people and affected many millions more.[9]

The climate crisis is already here, as demonstrated by the heatwaves and floods which have dominated the news in 2021. A rapid attribution analysis carried out by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, in collaboration with a team of leading international climate scientists, has demonstrated that the heatwave affecting North America in 2021 was 150 times more likely to happen due to greenhouse gas emissions.[10] The 2019 and 2020 bushfires in Australia and the 2020 heatwave in Siberia have been similarly attributed to the effects of climate change.[11] Another attribution study has been carried out on the flooding in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands in July 2021 which caused at least 184 fatalities in Germany, 38 in Belgium, and caused substantial damage to homes, infrastructure and livelihoods. This found that the likelihood of one- and two-day events occurring today in the region had increased due to human-induced climate change by a factor between 1.2 and 9 compared to a 1.2°C cooler climate, and that the intensity of such events had increased by about 3 to 19 per cent.[12]

The climate- and weather-related disasters of 2021 are not anomalies but the latest worrying examples of a worsening trend.

The recent *Sixth Assessment Report* by Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) could not be clearer: human activity has unequivocally caused the Earth's climate to change. No part of the Earth has been spared the impacts of human-induced climate change, with widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere.[13] Both the scale of change across the climate system and its current state are unprecedented for timescales stretching back many thousands of years.[14]Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe, and in the eight years since the last IPCC assessment report, evidence of both the range of weather- and climate-related extremes, and their attribution to human influence, has strengthened.[15]

Further cause for concern is the finding that human-induced climate change has likely increased the frequency of compound extreme events. Across the globe, concurrent heatwaves and droughts, as well as fire weather – a combination of hot, dry, and windy conditions – are more common now, as is compound flooding – a storm surge in combination with extreme rainfall or river flow or both – in some locations.[16]

7 IFRC. *World Disasters Report 2020: Come Heat or High Water* (2021), Chapter 2. At: www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021–05/20201116_WorldDisasters_Full.pdf
8 Ibid, pp38–39, 50.
9 Ibid, p50.
10 World Weather Attribution.*Rapid attribution analysis of the extraordinary heat wave on the Pacific Coast of the US and Canada June 2021* (2021). At: www.worldweatherattribution.org/wp-content/uploads/NW-US-extreme-heat-2021-scientific-report-WWA.pdf
11 World Weather Attribution. *Heatwave.* www.worldweatherattribution.org/analysis/heatwave
12 World Weather Attribution. *Rapid attribution of heavy rainfall events leading to the severe flooding in Western Europe during July 2021* (2021). At: www.worldweatherattribution.org/wp-content/uploads/Scientific-report-Western-Europe-floods-2021-attribution.pdf
13 IPCC. '*Summary for Policymakers' (SPM). In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (2021) (6AR). SPM5 at A.1. At: www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1
14 Ibid, SPM9, at A.2.
15 Ibid, SPM10 at A.3.
16 Ibid, SMP11 at A.3.5.

In addition to the compounding of extreme events, the global COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the reality that increasingly frequent climate- and weather-related hazards often do not occur in isolation. Rather, their impacts are compounded by those of other hazards – in this instance, biological in nature – placing even greater strain on the capacity of governments, civil society and the humanitarian sector to respond. For example, in May 2020, community coping mechanisms and disaster management capacities in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda were stretched by the combined impacts of flooding, locust infestation and the COVID-19 pandemic.[17]

DISASTER DISPLACEMENT EVERYWHERE

Disasters are often the drivers of new displacement. In 2020, disasters led to over 3 times as much displacement – some 30.7 million people – as conflict and violence, which displaced 9.8 million people. Of those people displaced by disasters, climate-related weather hazards such as storms, cyclones, floods, drought and extreme heat were responsible for almost all new displacement in 2020 – some 30 million people, 98 per cent of the total.[18]

Weather-related hazards accounting, by far, for most new displacement in 2020 is by no means unusual. Year on year for the past decade, displacement in the context of disasters has far exceeded that of conflict and violence.

Almost everyone newly displaced by disasters in the past five years has had their displacement triggered by weather and climate-related hazards: 23.9 million of 24.9 million people in 2019,[19] 16.1 million of 17.2 million people in 2018,[20] 18 million of 18.8 million people in 2017[21] and 23.5 million of 24.2 million people in 2016.[22]

There can be significant fluctuation in the annual level of new displacement because of relatively infrequent but large-scale mega events which can displace millions of people at a time and drive up the numbers of newly displaced people in any year. Also, a small number of large events may cause a disproportionate number of displacement in any year. For example, in 2020 over half of new displacement was caused by just ten events, mostly weather-related events in South Asia and east Asia.[23]

It is important to note that these figures do not only represent levels of ongoing displacement, but also include people who were evacuated but were later able to return home once the danger had passed. Disaster displacement under imminent threat to life sits at one extreme of the human mobility spectrum. Evacuation is a type of short-term displacement, motivated by a high degree of compulsion. While many people are able to return home in the days or weeks after a disaster and begin to rebuild their lives, it is a mistake to assume that all displacement due to disasters is of a short-term nature. This is well illustrated in the case study of the Mozambique Red Cross Society. In fact, disaster-related displacement can last many months or even years, particularly in cases where it is not possible for displaced people to return home (for example, in cases of riverbank erosion caused by swollen rivers due to increased precipitation), meaning they must be relocated elsewhere.

There is a significant data gap around the length of displacement. Little data on displacement is collected after the emergency phase. Evacuees are not tracked to monitor if or when they are able to return home.[24] Furthermore, where the climate-related hazard is of a slow-onset nature such as desertification or sea level rise, there is an even larger gap in the data. In part, this is due to the longer time frames over which the hazard manifests. This means that, until the hazard reaches a critical level of intensity, it can be hard to isolate displacement as the relevant form of mobility as distinct from a more voluntary adaptive migration. In reality, there is no clearly defined boundary between the two, but rather a period of time in which mobility gradually transitions from being voluntary to forced.[25]

17 IFRC. *World Disasters Report 2020*, p103.
18 Ibid, p12.
19 Ibid, p10.
20 IDMC. *GRID 2019* (2020), p7. At: www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID.pdf
21 IDMC. *GRID 2018* (2019), p7. At: www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201805-final-GRID-2018_0.pdf
22 IDMC. *GRID 2017* (2018), pp31–32. At: www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/20170522-GRID.pdf
23 IDMC. *GRID 2020* (2021), pp9–10, 83. At: www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/grid2021_idmc.pdf
24 Ibid, p78.
25 Hugo, G. 'Environmental Concerns and International Migration' in: *International Migration Review* 30, pp105–331, 1996.

Mozambique 2019 *Beira's secondary school serves as an emergency shelter for 1,321 people from Beira and the nearby region of Buzi. Buzi was one of the area most affected by Tropical Cyclone Idai. © Benjamin Suomela / Finnish Red Cross*

CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

MOZAMBIQUE RED CROSS SOCIETY

Reducing risk from recurrent hazards though flexible, forecast-based financing

Mozambique lies downstream of nine major river basins and more than 70 per cent of its population is concentrated along one of the country's many rivers.[26] Water is essential to people's livelihoods and economic activities – including agriculture, rearing livestock and fishing. However, due to its geographical location, Mozambique has high vulnerability to climate shocks such as flooding after prolonged rains during the rainy season, and torrential rains associated with cyclones.[27] An analysis of climate data for 1981 to 2017 has indicated a warming of 0.1 to 0.25°C per decade, particularly in southern Mozambique. The resulting hotter and drier conditions mean cyclical droughts regularly occur, negatively impacting on already vulnerable communities who rely on rain-fed agriculture for their food.[28]

Mozambique's population is generally highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The country is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped in the world. It scores one of the lowest human development index rankings, at 180 of 189 countries and territories. More than 62 per cent of the population of nearly 30 million people live below the international poverty line;[29] More than 70 per cent of people live in rural areas. The compound impacts of climatic shocks, armed conflict, recurrent disease outbreaks and deep-rooted poverty have left many people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection.[30]

In 2019, for the first recorded time, Mozambique experienced two major cyclones – Idai and Kenneth – in one cyclone season, with Idai making landfall in March 2019 and Kenneth striking about six weeks later. Combined, the two tropical cyclones and subsequent rains killed at least 648 people, injured nearly 1,700 people, damaged or destroyed more than 277,700 homes and fully or partially destroyed more than 4,200 classrooms.[31]

Tropical Cyclone Idai was particularly devastating. Some 1.5 million people were affected including more than 140,000 people displaced to evacuation centres, spontaneous settings or makeshift shelters. More than 230,000 houses were damaged and destroyed. It struck immediately before the harvest season, and the damage caused to standing crops as well as loss of seeds and tools has affected food security and livelihoods over the long term. The situation of already health-vulnerable people, such as persons living with HIV, deteriorated as the lack of food meant they were unable to sustain their treatment.[32]

Displaced populations in Mozambique are vulnerable to repeat climate shocks and have needed ongoing support long after their initial displacement. When Tropical Storm Chalane struck at the end of 2020, more than 270 families displaced to settlements following Tropical Cyclone Idai over 18 months earlier lost their shelter. A further 500 people living in resettlement sites needed shelter support after heavy rainfall and strong winds destroyed their homes.[33]

26 IFRC Mozambique: Floods Early Action Protocol Summary (November 2020).
27 Ibid.
28 World Food Programme (WFP). *Food security and climate change, the pressing reality of Mozambique.* At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000129988.pdf
29 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) *Country Profile: Mozambique* (1 June 2021). At: www.unocha.org/southern-and-eastern-africa-rosea/mozambique
30 OCHA. *Mozambique Situation Report* (31 December 2020).
31 IFRC. *Operations Update Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Idai & Kenneth* (28 May 2020).
32 OCHA. *Florinda's story: how the climate crisis is affecting people living with HIV* (29 November 2019). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/florinda-s-story-how-climate-crisis-affecting-people-living-hiv
33 OCHA. *Mozambique Situation Report* (31 December 2020).

Overlapping crises, overlapping risk

The northern province of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique also experiences armed conflict.[34] When Tropical Cyclone Kenneth struck that region, it impacted on the lives and safety of another 170,000 people whose resilience had already been eroded due to the worsening conflict in the region.[35] Amid the two cyclones, Mozambique also recorded its first cases of COVID-19 and a state of emergency came into force on 1 April 2020. This required operational modalities of the Mozambique Red Cross Society to be adjusted to meet new restrictions on movement and keep staff and volunteers safe. The Emergency Plan of Action prepared by the Mozambique Red Cross Society was revised to ensure commitments were delivered and to assimilate the impact of COVID-19 on families already affected by multiple shocks.[36]

The response

Following Tropical Cyclone Idai, an allocation was made from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and an emergency appeal was also launched to fund operations. In the three months leading up to June 2019, the Mozambique Red Cross Society provided 114,055 people with emergency shelter kits – almost twice the target number – and raised awareness in safe emergency shelter design. Essential household items to meet basic needs were also provided. A further 28,712 IDPs in camps were supported with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities.

Community engagement and accountability and protection, gender and inclusion components were planned and implemented, improving communication with the communities, and responding to questions and complaints.[37]The Mozambique Red Cross Society ensured comprehensive humanitarian assistance was provided to both host and IDP families, prioritizing the protection and inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. This approach was critical to mediating and de-escalating tensions between the IDPs and host communities also affected by the disaster.[38]

The cyclones damaged or completely destroyed critical health infrastructure in some areas and a Red Cross field hospital was deployed to provide vital health services. Red Cross doctors and nurses also worked with local health providers to strengthen the capacity of the district hospital, providing clean water and generators, supporting the emergency room, bringing equipment to rehabilitate the operating room and maternal and newborn wards, as well as assisting in surgeries.[39]

Cholera and malaria outbreaks increased amid Tropical Cyclones Idai and Kenneth and the government officially declared an outbreak of cholera on 27 March 2019. As of 18 April that year, official reports recorded at least 6,382 cholera cases and 8 deaths in the country.[40] Many water sources were damaged, destroyed and contaminated, putting affected communities at great risk that outbreaks would spread. The Mozambique Red Cross Society, supported by Movement partners, helped to prevent and contain potential health outbreaks in high-risk areas, ensuring that communities enjoyed access to safe WASH facilities. It provided clean portable water, treated water sources, repaired existing hand pumps, built latrines and ensured that volunteers in high-risk areas promoted good hygiene. At the height of the cholera outbreak, the society erected a 36-bed cholera treatment unit to treat the people most severely affected by the disease.[41]

34 The number of people displaced by the conflict in Cabo Delgado increased by 650 per cent in 2020 alone. OCHA. *The Cost of Inaction* (18 June 2021).
35 Mozambique Red Cross Society. *Cyclone Idai and Kenneth: Responding as a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*. At: www.redcross.org.mz/operacoes-humanitarias
36 IFRC. *Operations Update Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Idai & Kenneth* (28 May 2020).
37 IFRC. *Operation Update no. 2 Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Idai* (24 June 2019).
38 Mozambique Red Cross Society. Communication (16 September 2021).
39 Mozambique Red Cross Society. *Cyclone Idai and Kenneth: Responding as a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.* At: www.redcross.org.mz/operacoes-humanitarias
40 IFRC. *Operations Update Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Idai & Kenneth* (28 May 2020).
41 Mozambique Red Cross Society. *Cyclone Idai and Kenneth: Responding as a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*. At: www.redcross.org.mz/operacoes-humanitarias

Using forecast-based financing mechanisms to improve preparedness

In the last 20 years, around 1 million people in Mozambique have been affected by flooding. In this period, the IFRC's DREF fund has been launched on eight occasions to help the Mozambique Red Cross Society meet the basic needs of the people most affected by the impact of flooding.[42] Considering Mozambique's high vulnerability to hazards, in November 2020 DREF funding was allocated using its Forecast-based Action mechanism. This funding was split between an allocation for readiness and pre-positioning and one to implement specified early actions once the pre-agreed crisis 'triggers' were met.

To operationalize the allocation, an EAP of five year's duration was developed by the Mozambique Red Cross Society for flood events which might occur anywhere in the country during the rainy/cyclone season. The actions are activated on the basis of hydro-meteorological warnings indicating that the nominated trigger level will be reached within 72 hours. This is the lead time within which Mozambique Red Cross Society could act in advance before a flood event reaches the districts and communities potentially at risk.[43]

The early actions identified in the EAP will reduce the impacts of floods, benefitting up to 7,500 people in vulnerable communities. These include:

- preparatory administrative and preparedness activities, including verification of established communication systems, training and pre-positioning arrangements (non-food items), identification of safe evacuation routes, pre-agreements with petrol stations and owners of different means of transport in case evacuation is necessary.
- awareness messages via radio, TV and megaphone to reduce the risk of loss of life caused by water flooding.
- activation of volunteers, communication lines.
- distribution of mosquito nets, chlorine, mugs and other items at transit centres to reduce the risk of outbreak of endemic diseases.
- distribution of means for protection of important documents.[44]

In fact, the EAP was triggered in December 2020 in relation to Severe Tropical Storm Chalane even though the EAP trigger had not been formally reached. However, the National Society, in consultation with other Movement stakeholders and the National Hydro-meteorological Institute, deemed that activation of the EAP was necessary due to the likelihood that the storm could strengthen, when the existing windspeeds were already estimated to destroy 30 per cent of vulnerable housing structures in at-risk communities. Also relevant to the decision to activate was the heightened levels of vulnerability of these communities which were already experiencing compromised livelihoods and severe socio-economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[45]

42 IFRC. *Mozambique: Floods Early Action Protocol, Summary* (November 2020).
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 IFRC. *Forecast based early action triggered in Mozambique* (27 December 2020).

NAMIBIA RED CROSS SOCIETY

Humanitarian assistance for people moving across borders

Since December 2020, the Cuanza Sul, Benguela, Huambo, Namibe and Huíla provinces in Angola have experienced episodes of drought with below average rainfall. At the beginning of March 2021, nearly 900 Angolan citizens – mostly children, lactating mothers and older people – crossed into the Omusati and Kunene regions of Namibia in search of food, water, medical services and employment opportunities.[46]

At the request of the Namibian government, the Namibia Red Cross Society has provided services to the Angolan migrants irrespective of their visa status in Namibia. It is the only humanitarian organization that has given support to the migrants. A DREF operation was established, which ran from April to the end of July 2021. While targeting 894 registered migrants (308 households), the Namibia Red Cross Society has, in fact, supported 2,857 migrants in the Kunene and Omusati regions.[47]

In Omusati, the migrants are in a designated camp, while in Kunene the migrants are accommodated in sites adjacent to the community leader's house or that of their family members. Some migrants are also being housed in the local community and provided with shelter in return for services to the host family. Although the Namibian government is engaging with the Angolan government to seek return as a durable solution to the migrants' situation, if and when this may occur remains uncertain given the ongoing drought conditions in Angola. In the meantime, the Namibia Red Cross Society activated its regional teams to monitor the situation and volunteers promptly began working with the Ministry of Health and Social Services to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the migrants, providing short-term assistance focusing on saving lives and reducing suffering.[48]

A strong working relationship with the local authorities has been critical to the Namibia Red Cross Society response. The councillor's office for the Ruacana constituency – where 485 migrant households, including lactating mothers and some 223 children, settled[49] – provided all relevant reports and information on the migrants' needs. The Omusati Governor's office also supported Namibia Red Cross Society operations by providing a truck to transport the relief items to the campsite. The Omusati Governor attended all handovers, and has complimented the Namibia Red Cross Society's assistance to the migrants.[50]

Initially, the migrants were living in the open in poor quality shelters and many were suffering from diarrhoea, scabies and malnutrition. The Namibia Red Cross Society provided tarpaulins and poles for shelter purposes while the Namibian government donated food. Household items such as blankets, mattresses and clothing were also provided. WASH activities have included the distribution of over 20,000 water purification tablets, as well as jerry cans and hygiene kits. Health education on tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, COVID-19 and other communicable diseases has also been provided to the migrants. And 17 handwashing stations have been set up and hand sanitizer and masks supplied to the migrants.[51]

Community engagement and accountability strategies were used throughout the operation. To promote transparency and accountability, all recipients were registered on distribution lists. Accountability was further strengthened by establishing feedback mechanisms to promote two-way communication between volunteers and the migrant and host communities. The migrants were consulted to better understand their needs, in particular, the needs of older people and people with disabilities to ensure their equitable access to assistance. People living with tuberculosis and HIV, pregnant and lactating women, children under five years old, unaccompanied children, adolescent girls, female-headed households, people with disabilities and older people have been prioritized for special attention, as have migrants with comorbidities due to their vulnerabilities to COVID-19 and other health

46 IFRC. *Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Namibia: Angolan Migrants* (6 April 2021).
47 Namibia Red Cross Society. Communication (18 August 2021).
48 IFRC. *EPoA Namibia: Angolan Migrants* (6 April 2021).
49 Osumati Regional Council, Ruacana Constituency Office. *Drought Assessment Findings* (5 May 2021).
50 Namibia Red Cross Society. Communication (18 August 2021).
51 IFRC. *EPoA Namibia: Angolan Migrants* (6 April 2021); Namibia Red Cross Society. Communication (18 August 2021).

Namibia 2013 *Women use jerry cans immediately after they are distributed in a relocation camp for people displaced by flooding in the Caprivi region of Namibia. Flooding affected 20,000 people, destroyed crops and inundated communities. The Namibia Red Cross provided relief and support to people living in the camps. © Hanna Butler / IFRC*

risks.[52] A significant proportion of the people who have been assisted are children: of the 4,027 people assisted in the Etunda and Opuwo areas of Kunene region, 2,478 are aged between 1 and 16, while a further 401 are lactating or pregnant women.[53]

The specific protection needs of vulnerable migrants were further addressed by establishing a sensitive complaints mechanism to mitigate risks of sexual exploitation and abuse going unaddressed.[54] Ongoing communication with the migrants has established that they believe the assistance and support provided by the Namibia Red Cross Society was tailor-made to their needs and has enhanced their resilience.[55]

Community engagement has been fundamental to managing tensions in circumstances where both host and migrant populations are in situations of acute humanitarian need. The regions in Namibia hosting the Angolan migrants are also prone to drought and food insecurity as result of climate change. During the cropping seasons of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, the area experienced chronic food insecurity. This mostly affecting rural communities and was due to abnormally low rainfall patterns.[56] Namibia continued to be affected by prolonged dry weather in the 2018/2019 cropping season leading to below average production, severe water shortage and poor pasture conditions. In response, the Namibian government declared a state of drought emergency in May 2019. Among the most affected regions are Kunene and Omusati – each classified as being in 'food crisis' (Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3).[57]

The Namibia Red Cross Society has not directly provided support to the host community, focusing instead on supporting the Angolan migrants as requested by the government. However, to manage the perception that the response is prioritizing the needs of the migrants over the host communities, and given the food security impacts of the drought are the same, the Namibia Red Cross Society has coordinated closely with the government, which is supporting 1,220 members of the host population with food items and seed stock.[58] To further manage this tension, the Namibia Red Cross Society has also undertaken community engagement with the host population, explaining its role is to assist vulnerable people according to need and irrespective of their nationality.[59]

52 Ibid.
53 Namibia Red Cross Society. Communication (13 September 2021).
54 Ibid (18 August 2021).
55 Ibid (6 September 2021).
56 IFRC. *Emergency Plan of Action Final Report Namibia: Food Insecurity* (30 July 2018).
57 IFRC. *Operation Update Report Southern Africa: Drought (Food Insecurity)* (12 July 2020).
58 Osumati Regional Council, Ruacana Constituency Office. *Drought Assessment Findings* (5 May 2021).
59 Namibia Red Cross Society. Communication (18 August 2021).

Yemen 2021 *After the torrential rains and flooding started in July and intensified in August, Yemen Red Crescent Society has been responding to the flash floods around the country. Yemen Red Crescent Society is providing much-needed relief assistance, including blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and jerrycans, for the families affected. © Yemen Red Crescent*

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

YEMEN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

Supporting IDPs affected by conflicts and disasters in the world's largest humanitarian crisis

The situation in Yemen is the world's largest humanitarian crisis.[60] An already protracted armed conflict which has killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians intensified in 2020, displacing a further 172,000 people and bringing the number of IDPs to at least 4 million. The situation was exacerbated by the global COVID-19 economic turndown which led to a sharp drop in remittances – a lifeline for many families in Yemen, where 80 per cent of people live below the poverty line. As a result, millions more people cannot afford to meet their basic needs.[61]

This already dire humanitarian situation was further compounded in 2020 by extreme flooding which devastated communities and fuelled the spread of diseases like cholera, dengue, malaria and diphtheria.[62] The reported dislodgement of landmines posed further and extreme risk to life in some disaster-affected areas.[63] More than 300,000 people were affected, most of them IDPs who had fled conflict areas who now lost their shelters, incomes and any form of livelihoods.[64] Of the total number of people affected, new displacements in Yemen in 2020 due to disasters – some 223,000 people and including the secondary displacement of thousands of IDPs – exceeded that caused by the intensifying conflict.[65]

In mid-July 2021, storms and heavy rains again caused devastating flooding in many parts of Yemen causing fatalities, destroying homes, and damaging farms and roads. By early August 2021, over 174,000 people were affected across the country, with at least 30 deaths. More than 5,400 houses had by then been destroyed, and another 5,100 damaged.[66]

As with 2020, conflict-displaced persons living in IDP camps were again hit particularly hard, with most shelters in IDP camps either partially damaged or destroyed, particularly in Al Bayda governorate.[67] In July, 44 of165 IDP families in the Tarbeya camp in Dhamar governorate had their shelter destroyed while in the Al-Asha camp in Al-Jawf governorate, the tents and property of a further 75 IDP families were destroyed. Again, this has led to the secondary displacement of men, women and children.[68] IDPs and host communities have continued to experience the most impact as the rains continued. During the first week of August 2021, 6 IDP hosting sites in Dhamar governorate were severely damaged affecting 4,396 people, while a further 4,676 people – a mix of IDPs and host communities – were affected in 4 sites in the Amran governorate. Two of these, the Almahm and Altahseen IDP sites, needed to be relocated. In Sana'a, 12,999 people in 10 IDP hosting sites were affected by floods.[69]

60 OCHA. *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (February 2021), p6. At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen_HNO_2021_Final.pdf
61 Ibid, p6.
62 Ibid, p17.
63 IDMC. *GRID* (2021), p41.
64 OCHA *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (February 2021), p17.
65 IDMC. *GRID* (2021), p41.
66 IFRC. *EPoA Yemen: Floods 2021* (16 August 2021). At: https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/5435#reports
67 Ibid.
68 IFRC. *Heavy rains in Yemen led to death and damage: Update 2* (1 August 2021). At: https://go.ifrc.org/reports/14584
69 IFRC. ***EPoA Yemen: Floods 2021*** (16 August 2021).

The response of the Yemen Red Crescent Society

Yemen Red Crescent Society has a nationwide presence, with more than 8,000 volunteers in 22 branches across the country's governorates. This means the Yemen Red Crescent Society is able to reach most of the territory and engage in first response actions such as evacuations, first aid and supporting the distribution of essential items.[70] This nationwide reach was quickly mobilized in response to the 2021 rains and floods, with volunteers distributing food, non-food items including shelter kits, and personal hygiene items to those people affected, including IDP families. Volunteers also provided first aid, evacuation, an ambulance service and psychosocial support.[71]

Needs assessments conducted by local branches in early August 2021 identified ongoing needs due to continued rain and flooding. Also, a weather forecast at that time predicted further heavy rains and flooding in the Amran, Al Mahwit, Dhamar and Ibb governates. By then, the Yemen Red Crescent Society had already distributed much of its pre-positioned stock and the estimated number of households expected to need assistance exceeded the capacity of standing stock. To address this, DREF funding has been allocated to facilitate the urgent replenishment of stocks, as well as further distributions.[72]

The DREF funding will enable the Yemen Red Crescent Society to continue to provide support over an estimated 6-month time frame, targeting – depending on the actual impact of the forecasted rainfalls – the immediate needs of 1,000 households (up to 7,000 people) in the Dhamar, Amran, Al Mahwit and Ibb governorates by distributing household items including hygiene kits. Priority will be given to IDPs and host communities, from which female-headed households, heads of households with disabilities, minor-headed households and large families will be prioritized in the response. The relief items will include replenishing 4,000 mattresses and blankets (4 of each per household), 1,000 kitchen sets (1 per household), 1,000 hygiene kits (1 per household) and 2,000 jerry cans (2 per household).[73]

The Yemen Red Crescent Society will ensure affected communities and community leaders participate throughout the operation. This will include integrating community perceptions and views into needs assessment to support the design of the intervention, the participant selection process, feedback collected during the distribution and the post-distribution monitoring activities. The participant selection process will be clearly communicated to all affected populations and the assistance items and quantities will be presented in vouchers individually signed by participants s during the distribution.[74]

Supporting displaced populations in a multi-risk environment

Having an established nationwide local presence means the Yemen Red Crescent Society is accepted in the affected communities and faces fewer impediments to reaching disaster-affected areas which are also impacted by the ongoing conflict, even in those areas where the conflict is escalating. All required movement clearances of staff and goods under the DREF will be coordinated in advance by the Yemen Red Crescent Society with involved authorities, supported by the ICRC which is the lead agency on security matters.[75]

Given Yemen also remains impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Yemen Red Crescent Society volunteers will be equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) and briefed before going into communities. In recognition of the overlapping nature of the crisis, COVID-19 safety measures will be maintained during the distribution to ensure the affected population and volunteers are protected. Also, food parcels, hygiene kits and complementary messaging funded by the global IFRC COVID-19 operation are being integrated with the flood response.[76]

70 Ibid.
71 IFRC. *Heavy rains in Yemen led to death and damage: Update 2* (1 August 2021). At: https://go.ifrc.org/reports/14584
72 IFRC. *EPoA Yemen: Floods 2021* (16 August 2021).
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.

IRAQI RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

Using permanent local presence to address displacement linked to water scarcity

Iraq is facing a situation of acute water crisis as the effects of climate change collide with regional geopolitical tensions, the legacy of years of sanctions and conflict,[77] and chronic water mismanagement.

The Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which supply more than 90 per cent of Iraq's freshwater, are at historically low levels due to unseasonably low levels of rainfall across the eastern region of the Mediterranean Basin, and of snowmelt in the mountains of southern Turkey, which feeds into the rivers. More than half of Iraq's water relies on precipitation falling outside its borders, making it vulnerable to climate change impacts and storage projects in neighbouring countries. Iraq is frequently at odds with regional neighbours over water issues, notably the upstream damning of the rivers. With summer approaching, upstream water sources have impacted the Tigris tributaries, cutting off river flow of one and decreasing the flow of another by 70 per cent.[78] This is already having significant impacts for farmers in the Diyala, Ninewa and Basra governorates.[79] In Diyala the inhabitants of 13 to 15 villages are at imminent risk of becoming displaced due to the worsening drought conditions and water insecurity.[80]

Climate change exacerbates these problems. It is expected to increase Iraq's mean annual temperature by 2°C and decrease its mean annual average rainfall by 9 per cent by 2050, leading to frequent heatwaves and droughts. Prolonged droughts have already taken a toll on rain-fed crops, while decreased flow of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers in Iraq has deteriorated water quality and further increased salinity in irrigated areas, leading to substantial decline in crop productivity as well as the net growing area.[81] In the south, Basra governorate has been adversely affected by increased water salinity, largely bringing crop production to a halt.[82] Increasing temperatures simultaneously increase household demand for water. Millions of Iraqis face increasingly harsh summer temperatures, causing alarm and creating major water shortages in the country.[83]

About 31 per cent of Iraq's surface is desert. Inappropriate farming practices and mismanagement of water resources have exacerbated the effects of an already dry climate and contributed to increasing rates of desertification. The Government of Iraq reports that 28 per cent of the country's land is arable, but 39 per cent of the country's surface has been affected by desertification, with an additional 54 per cent under threat.[84] In response to increasing water scarcity, the Iraqi Agriculture Ministry has prohibited summer planting of rice, corn and vegetables, allowing water to reach only palm trees and fruit orchards.[85]

Poverty remains high in Iraq and around two million Iraqis are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, with IDPs living in camps in the governorates of Ninewa, Duhok, Erbil and Salah Al Din experiencing severe food insecurity conditions.[86] An estimated 22.5 per cent of Iraqis live below the national poverty line with the proportion reaching 40 per cent in some areas. Another 30 per cent of the population is extremely vulnerable with a high risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity.[87] Nearly 60 per cent of children in Iraq have no access to safely managed water services and less than half of all schools have access to basic water, risking children's health, nutrition, cognitive development and future livelihoods.[88]

77 ICRC. *Iraq's perfect storm – a climate and environmental crisis amid the scars of war* (19 July 2021). At: www.icrc.org/en/document/iraqs-perfect-storm-climate-and-environmental-crisis-amid-scars-war
78 IFRC. *EPoA Iraq: Droughts* (2 September 2021).
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 WFP. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq* (October 2018), p24. At: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102716/download/
82 IFRC. *EPoA Iraq: Droughts* (2 September 2021).
83 Ibid.
84 WFP. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq (2018),* p27.
85 IFRC. *EPoA Iraq: Droughts* (2 September 2021).
86 Ibid.
87 WFP. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq* (2018), p9. At: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102716/download
88 UNICEF. *Running Dry: water scarcity threatens lives and development in Iraq* (29 August 2021). At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Water%20scarcity%20PR_29%20Aug_Eng.pdf

Many farmers spent their savings and have gone into debt to keep their animals alive. But, in the words of Amid Ali from Baaj, one of the worst affected districts in Ninewa: "Because of the drought I was unable to harvest any wheat . . . . Now I am overwhelmed with debt." [89]

The response of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society

On 2 September 2021, a DREF operation of six months' duration was approved to target 43,116 people (7,186 households) in the Ninewa, Diyala and Basra governates. These were selected as the target areas as the latest information established that they had recorded the vast majority of population movements associated with water shortages due to the current drought impact on natural water resources. The drought and the related loss of income had forced many households to move from rural to urban areas with improved water availability such as cities, contributing to the abandonment of rural areas and the worsening of living conditions in urban areas.[90]

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society has nationwide coverage through branches in all 18 governorates and a national network of volunteers. The localized presence of staff and volunteers in Ninewa, Diyala and Basra governates will enable the Iraqi Red Crescent Society to undertake humanitarian interventions and provide assistance to people in rural and hard-to-reach areas which are not covered by any other organizations, in the areas of food security, health, and water and sanitation.[91]

In this DREF operation, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society will fill the humanitarian gap by providing livelihoods assistance in the form of food parcels (4,500 households) and cash assistance (1,500 households) reaching an estimated 36,000 people. As priority, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society will deploy mobile health teams providing a targeted vulnerable population of 40,780 people with essential medical supplies as well as hygiene promotion and health education through community communication channels to prevent the further spread of disease .WASH interventions to ensure access to clean water and basic sanitation, and improved hygiene will be provided to 7,186 households – 43,116 people including returnees and persons living in IDP camps.[92]

The planned humanitarian food security activities will be implemented in two phases. The initial phase will provide life-saving assistance to address the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable households affected by the drought. Using a community-based approach to targeting and with an emphasis on ensuring minimum food and income security, the poorest households and poor households with rain-fed lands and whose primary livelihoods means are being significantly impacted by the current drought will be prioritized, as will other highly vulnerable persons such as landless labourers.[93]

During the initial phase, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society will also conduct a multi-sectoral needs assessment in the drought-affected governorates as part of a wider assessment of the seven governorates most impacted by the dry conditions, to ascertain a clearer understanding of the impacts on agriculture, livelihood conditions and food security on the most vulnerable people. The findings will inform a full emergency appeal that the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, in collaboration with the IFRC Iraq delegation, is intending to launch to provide funding to implement activities supporting the most vulnerable households to strengthen their resilience and cope with the impacts of drought/dry conditions.[94]

89 Reliefweb. *Water crisis and drought threaten more than 12 million in Syria and Iraq* (23 August 2021). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/water-crisis-and-drought-threaten-more-12-million-syria-and-iraq
90 IFRC. *EPoA Iraq: Droughts* (2 September 2021).
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.

Iraq 2013 *Children playing in the camp of Domiz, in Dohuk province in the autonomous region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq. 56,000 Syrian refugees, who are mainly Kurdish, found shelter in the camp.*
© Ibrahim Malla / IFRC

Samoa 2009 *After the tsunami of 2009, thousands of people in Samoa were evacuated to higher ground, leaving towns and cities behind. Approximately 3,000 people were left homeless.*
© Rob Few / IFRC

SAMOA RED CROSS SOCIETY

Samoa Red Cross Society

A National Society supporting whole-of society preparedness for climate change

Samoa features rugged mountains of volcanic origin, surrounded by flat and rolling coastal plains. The country's climate is characterized by high rainfall and humidity, with slight seasonal variation in temperature. Samoa has two seasons, marked by significant differences in rainfall and about 75 per cent of the precipitation occurs in the wet season between November and February.

Samoa is prone to tropical cyclones. Past tropical cyclones such as Ofa (1990), Val (1991) and Evan (2012) have resulted in significant levels of displacement: Tropical Cyclone Ofa alone left 25,000 people homeless and around 3,000 houses damaged.[95] Samoa is also vulnerable to long dry spells that coincide with the El Niño Southern Oscillation. Climate change impacts exacerbate problems of inadequate fresh water sources and poor infrastructure, leaving some communities without enough water to meet basic needs for sanitation, washing, cooking and drinking.[96]

With about 70 per cent of Samoa's population and infrastructure located in low-lying coastal areas, projected sea level rise could exacerbate coastal erosion, loss of land and property, and displacement.[97] Anecdotal evidence indicates that, while economic, social and cultural concerns remain primary factors in people's decisions to move – whether internally or abroad – climate change-related concerns were also being factored into decision-making, including decisions at the household level to voluntarily relocate from coastal areas to inland customary lands.[98]

In Samoa, most land is held under customary title, which means that people living in coastal villages have customary rights of access to inland sites that provide a means of livelihoods. Although the Samoan government does not have a formal policy of relocating coastal communities, it provides information to communities on disaster risk and has improved access to inland sites by tar-sealing roads connecting the coastal and inland sites. This has meant some households in vulnerable coastal areas have decided to relocate to the inland sites where their plantations are located.

During the relief and recovery phases following a devastating tsunami in 2009, which resulted in the relocation of affected coastal communities, the Samoa Red Cross Society provided 1,000 jerry cans and containers, 69 communal water tanks and 350 household rainwater harvesting (RWH) tanks as well as distributing 1.8 million litres of safe drinking water.[99] As a result, the Samoa Red Cross Society emerged as an important WASH provider, although it had little experience in this sector.

In the aftermath of the tsunami, the Samoa Red Cross Society was asked by the government to supply RWH systems to 1,200 households living more than 500 metres from the reticulated water supply. When it became apparent from household vulnerability and capacity assessment surveys that the most vulnerable households

95 UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. *Cyclone 'Ofa' – Western Samoa UNDRO Situation Report No. 1* (6 February 1990). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/samoa/samoa-cyclone-ofa-feb-1990-undro-situation-reports-1-8
96 Wilson C. *Struggling to Find Water in the Vast Pacific* (1 September 2014). Inter Press Service. At: https://reliefweb.int/report/samoa/struggling-find-water-vast-pacific
97 IFRC. *Helping Communities Adapt To Climate Change In Samoa* (7 November 2013). At: www.preventionweb.net/news/helping-communities-adapt-climate-change-samoa
98 Flores-Palacios, X. 'Climate-induced migration in Lotofaga village in Samoa'. In Klöck C and Fink M (eds.) *Dealing with climate change on small islands: Towards effective and sustainable adaptation?* (2019). Göttingen University Press, pp313–337.
99 IFRC. *Final report: Samoa: Earthquake and Tsunami.* (13 October 2011).

were in fact living closer to the reticulated water supply, the Samoa Red Cross Society successfully advocated to have the participant criteria expanded. Its staff developed an integrated risk, household vulnerability and capacity assessment to identify the people most vulnerable to the impacts of water stress. This was adapted to the local environment, and captured factors such as housing type, water supply, lighting, household income and composition (e.g., whether households included older people and people living with chronic illness, disability or HIV and AIDS).

The learnings and expertise gained from operations in the wake of the tsunami have been transferred into climate change adaptation and preparedness programming at the national level. The Samoa Red Cross Society has become the RWH lead implementing agency in the national WASH sector and each year is requested by the Samoan government to install RWH and ventilated improved pit latrines systems in a set number of households. Capturing maximum rainfall is vital to reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience to climate change by promoting long-term water security where 65 per cent of the country's supply comes from surface water and only 35 per cent from groundwater.[100]

Using a proactive, inclusive and anticipatory approach, the Samoa Red Cross Society supports vulnerable households in new settlements mostly formed by households from the coastal areas who have relocated to inland sites, including some who relocated due to the destruction caused by tropical cyclones Ofa and Val.[101] As Samoan fales (houses) are constructed with thatched roofs, it is necessary to construct a standalone, iron-roofed structure to attach the guttering and piping. Recognizing the importance of local ownership of humanitarian action, the Samoa Red Cross Society involves household members in site preparation and promotes sustainable local adaptation by providing household training in cleaning and maintenance of the RWH systems. By engaging with community leaders and working within community structures, the Samoa Red Cross Society identifies vulnerable households unable to maintain their RWH systems and ensures that the appropriate members of the community provide them with the necessary support. It further enhances community resilience by using community-based builders where possible and has successfully advocated for the skills gained in these projects to be specifically recognized within the overall licencing framework of the national building trade.

Through ongoing project activities over the past decade, the Samoa Red Cross Society has learned that RWH systems are highly effective in Samoa, where communities feature mostly iron-roofing houses, large churches, community halls and school buildings. The aggregate surface area, combined with high average annual rainfall, means sufficient water can be collected to meet the demands of community members facing water stress. Furthermore, the simplicity of the RWH technology and the low overall installation costs make it a particularly suitable system for use in water-stressed areas of the country.[102] The Samoa Red Cross Society has used this knowledge to successfully advocate for the national building code to be amended to mandate the installation of a RWH system on all new structures.

The Samoa Red Cross Society enhances community preparedness by installing large capacity RWH systems on communal structures – usually the village school or church – which the community has identified as the most suitable to use as an evacuation shelter. Even when not in use as such, households facing water shortages using their own RWH tanks can use the water in these tanks to meet their needs. Community preparedness is also supported by conducting training workshops on climate and disaster risk management. These workshops cover a range of matters including: improving awareness of weather and climate hazards, planning safe evacuation routes, managing shelters, protecting vulnerable persons, developing a clear and simple disaster risk management plan and establishing a village disaster coordination committee and response teams.[103]

100 Pacific Community. *Country Information: Samoa – Status of Water Resources.* At: www.pacificwater.org/pages.cfm/country-information/samoa.html
101 Samoa Red Cross Society. *Community Climate and Disaster Resilience Planning Workshop Report Lefagaoalii Village, Savaii, Samoa* (23–26 March 2015).
102 Samoa Red Cross Society. *Rainwater Harvesting Project Report – 2017/2018.*
103 Samoa Red Cross Society. *Community Climate and Disaster Resilience Planning Workshop Report Lefagaoalii Village, Savaii, Samoa* (23–26 March 2015); *Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management Training Program, Aopo Village, Gagaifomauga-3 District* (5–9 October 2020).

Samoa 2009 *In Samoa on Manono island, resident and community leaders work with the Samoa Red Cross Society to map out disaster and health risks. Manono island has a population of 5,000 people and 36 families were affected in the 2009 tsunami. © Rob Few*

Empowering the use of traditional knowledge to respond to multi-hazard risks

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Samoan government embarked on a public health campaign promoting handwashing as an important tool to prevent the spread of the virus. Household surveys conducted by the Samoa Red Cross Society revealed that households vulnerable to water stress were reluctant to use the water captured by their RWH system for non-food purposes. The Samoa Red Cross Society, through its community engagement and accountability programming, held community consultations at which older members of the community revealed how traditional handwashing practices, such as the use of coconut husk, had been successfully used in the past to manage risks to health. The Samoa Red Cross Society raised awareness of this as a practice and encouraged its adoption by households reluctant to use their RWH supply for this purpose.

Protecting communities from health risks linked to climate-related hazards

Between 2016 and 2019, the Samoa Red Cross Society also supported a joint World Health Organization/Samoa Ministry of Health programme aimed at reducing exposure to vector-borne diseases such as filariasis. Increased precipitation associated with climate change results in stagnant water collecting in more places allowing more malaria-carrying mosquito larvae to breed. To reduce the risk, volunteers from the Samoa Red Cross Society captured mosquitos, and removed potential breeding sites from around communities by removing litter and coconut shells, and filling in potholes. Volunteers were also trained in how to collect blood samples through a "finger prick" and making microscopy smears to confirm presence of "microfilaria" in people.

TUVALU RED CROSS SOCIETY

A nationwide permanent local presence addressing humanitarian impacts though forecast-based financing and action

Tuvalu consists of nine atoll islands situated in the South Pacific Ocean with a combined land area of 26 km2 but which are surrounded by 1.3 million km2 of ocean, including an Exclusive Economic Zone of 719,174 km2. It has a total population of 10,782 people, with more than half residing in the capital of Funafuti. The average height above sea level is less than 3 metres, and the maximum 4.6 metres. Tuvalu has a tropical climate and it is characterized by two distinct wet and dry seasons. Subsistence agriculture and fisheries are the predominant livelihoods activities.[104]

Of the nine islands, six are atolls with enclosed lagoons and three are raised limestone coral reef islands. Only two of the islands, Funafuti and Nukufetau, have natural harbours for oceangoing ships.[105]

Tuvalu is prone to a range of climate-related hazards including sea level rise, droughts and cyclones and associated cyclone-generated winds, storm surges and swells. Climate modelling suggests that, while tropical cyclones are expected to decrease in number by the late 21st century, the most extreme storms will have increased intensity and frequency. Tuvalu has recently been devastated by one such extreme storm – Tropical Cyclone Pam – in March 2015, which severely damaged houses, infrastructure, food gardens, graves and coastlines. Nearly half of the country's population was temporarily displaced. Perhaps even more concerning, several islets in Funafuti disappeared because of the cyclone.[106] The sea level near Tuvalu has risen by about 5mm per year since 1999, and under a high emissions scenario, a 4–14 cm rise is expected before 2030 and 19–58 cm before 2090. The combination of rising sea level and intensifying tropical storms is expected to aggravate the social, environmental and developmental challenges already being felt in Tuvalu.[107]

Tuvalu has no rivers and rainwater is the primary water source. Groundwater resources are very limited and, if available, are brackish and exposed to saltwater intrusion from wave overtopping events during king tides and rising sea levels. Groundwater is also exposed to contamination from human and animal waste. Population growth places additional strain on already scarce water resources. Rainwater management is a climate change adaptation priority action and, between 2009 and 2013, the Tuvalu government distributed 10,000 litre capacity rainwater tanks to households and improved communal water infrastructure as a drought mitigation measure. [108]

Innovative use of forecast-based financing for early action on drought

Like many places in the Pacific, Tuvalu is also prone to drought. In 2010 and 2011, the country was hit by a prolonged dry period attributed to the La Nina weather pattern where the country surpassed 'drought watch' and 'drought warning' phases, to full meteorological drought, triggering the government to declare a state of emergency. It was the second driest period in the 78 years Funafuti has been keeping records. Some 330 people on Nukalaelae and 5,200 people on Funafuti were severely affected by the water shortage.[109]

Tuvalu has again begun to experience conditions of drought in 2020 and 2021. On 24 August 2021, and, for the first time in the Pacific region, imminent DREF funding was approved to help the Tuvalu Red Cross Society undertake anticipatory actions over a three-month period in relation to a forecast of impending drought. Information from the Tuvalu Meteorological Service had indicated a deteriorating drought situation on a number of islands since January 2021, including the capital island Funafuti. By July 2021, Funafuti, along with Nanumea and Niulakita, were at

104 Government of Tuvalu. *Second National Communication of Tuvalu to the United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change* (December 2015), p1. At: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Tuvalu%20%20SNC%20Final%20Report.pdf
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid, p3
107 Government of Tuvalu *Green Climate Fund Funding Proposal FP015: Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project* (8 June 2016) para 14. At: www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp015-undp-tuvalu.pdf
108 Government of Tuvalu. *Second National Communication,* pp31-32.
109 *IFRC. Red Cross responds to water crisis in drought-stricken Tuvalu* (16 October 2011). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/tuvalu/red-cross-responds-water-crisis-drought-stricken-tuvalu

drought level, while Nui and Niulakita were at 'drought watch'. Information from the New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research predicted that, as of 3 August 2021, there was a 91 per cent chance of below average rainfall continuing for the next three months, which is forecast with a high confidence rating. This forecast, along with outlooks from the national Early Action Rainfall Watch and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's Regional Early Action Rainfall Watch became the trigger for the activation of plans to conduct early warning and early action activities. These assess the extent of water scarcity in communities on seven islands and the current and likely impacts of the forecasted dry periods on health and livelihoods.[110]

The Tuvalu Red Cross Society is uniquely placed to support the government in responding to the current drought conditions. The number of civil society organizations is limited in Tuvalu and the society is the only local organization with a presence in all of the country's outer islands.[111] This nationwide local reach means the Tuvalu Red Cross Society is able to undertake early actions targeting some 1,755 households in the northern and central islands, reaching an estimated combined total population of 10,204 people – almost all of Tuvalu's estimated population.[112] Localization of humanitarian assistance is critical in Tuvalu due to transportation constraints. Movement from Funafuti to the outer islands is difficult as transport options are limited. Therefore, having volunteers and branches on the islands ensures a continuity of preparedness and response support to households.

Understanding current water availability at the household level across the affected islands is critical to ensure water needs are understood both during currently existing and forecasted drought conditions as well as in anticipation of future ones. To both act on the existing drought conditions, and prepare for the inevitable future ones, the Tuvalu Red Cross Society will teach households water sounding techniques to enable them to accurately monitor water levels in their rainwater tanks. It will also launch drought awareness messaging via information, education and communication materials, as well as use local media – radio, TV and social media – to share key messages.[113]

Recognizing the cross-sectoral impacts of drought events, the Tuvalu Red Cross Society will also strengthen institutional capacity in disaster management by assisting island disaster councils to develop their standard operating procedures for drought management.[114]

A multi-risk approach to humanitarian action

Given the current drought has arisen while Tuvalu is still dealing with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in planning its activities the Tuvalu Red Cross Society factored in the lessons learned during the 2011 drought, which resulted in widespread sickness due to a decrease in handwashing, low household water reserves that increased pathogen concentrations, and an increase in use of untreated or less hygienic water sources. Tuvalu Red Cross Society volunteers at the branch level on the islands have been trained in epidemic control and volunteers travelled to the outer island to distribute WASH posters and assisted local partner non-governmental organizations in distributing soap, buckets and taps. As part of drought awareness, Tuvalu Red Cross Society volunteers remind people that when dealing with less water, hygiene must still be maintained and promoting handwashing alternatives, given the water challenges communities are often facing.[115]

The case study of the Tuvalu Red Cross Society makes clear that, while the long-term risk of sea level rise to the safety and well-being of people living in Tuvalu are more widely known internationally, Tuvaluan communities are today already vulnerable to climate change. The impacts of drought, along with the impacts of saltwater inundation and major storms, means the safety and well-being of Tuvaluan communities are already threatened by climate change-related hazards. Long before countries in the Pacific like Tuvalu may become uninhabitable due to climate change, lives will be lost due to current risks to livelihoods and health which are already being exacerbated by changing rainfall patterns and water scarcity challenges. The innovative use of the Tuvalu Red Cross Society of forecast-based financing to support early action is critical to minimizing these risks.

110 IFRC. *EPoA Tuvalu: Impending Drought* (24 August 2021).
111 Government of Tuvalu. *Green Climate Fund Funding Proposal FP015: Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation* Project (8 June 2016), para 182. At: www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp015-undp-tuvalu.pdf
112 IFRC. *EPoA Tuvalu: Impending Drought* (24 August 2021).
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 IFRC. *Red Cross responds to water crisis in drought-stricken Tuvalu* (16 October 2011).

Australia 2019 *Australia Red Cross staff member Jai O'Toole standing in a burnt landscape on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. Extreme temperatures, dry conditions and winds combined to cause or escalate hundreds of bushfires across five Australian states. More than 10 million hectares of land burned. More than 2,800 Red Cross personnel supported communities across Australia.*
© Aysha Leo / Australian Red Cross


AUSTRALIAN
RED CROSS

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Humanitarian support for communities torn apart by bushfires

Between September 2019 and March 2020 – in what became known as the 'Black Summer' – parts of Australia were devastated by bushfires which decimated 10 million hectares of land, threatening lives and livelihoods. The bushfires were one of three overlapping crises to hit Australia during this period. The fires were bookended by drought conditions in almost all of New South Wales and over half of Queensland since August 2018 and by the entry into force of the first restrictions on social gatherings in Australia five days after the declaration of the COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020.[116]

An attribution analysis carried out by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, in collaboration with a team of leading international climate scientists, has found that some but not all drivers of the bushfires were linked to human-induced climate change. Climate change had, however, increased temperature extremes which resulted in a higher risk of such an extreme fire season. The study concluded that heat extremes have become more likely by at least a factor of 2 due to the long-term warming trend, and that the true change in the likelihood of extreme heat could be even larger.[117]

The bushfires triggered substantial new displacement: 64,579 people who had to leave their homes registered with the Australian Red Cross Society's 'Register.Find.Reunite' system, but the true number of people displaced is likely to have been much higher. However, the true number of people displaced is likely to have been much higher. While most of the displacements were pre-emptive life-saving evacuations, it has been estimated that the widespread destruction of homes has, potentially, led to longer-term displacement for more than 8,000 people. Based on previous post-disaster recoveries, it can take anywhere between one and four years for destroyed homes to be rebuilt.[118] Even people who were only displaced temporarily, for a few days, felt effects on their livelihoods.[119]

The bushfires had a devastating impact on Australia's indigenous population. More than 84,000 First Nations peoples and 22 discrete communities were affected, whose losses transcended the physical loss of homes and assets to include spiritual/cultural loss with the destruction of "songlines, sacred places, totems, traditional food and medicines, memories and histories going back millennia."[120] 80 per cent of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area in New South Wales was burned. Members of between 50 and 120 local Aboriginal land councils in New South Wales were displaced by bushfires, many of whom struggled to find adequate accommodation for a prolonged period.[121]

Response activities of the Australian Red Cross

By the time the bushfires ceased in March 2020, more than 3,300 emergency response volunteers and staff from the Australian Red Cross had been involved in supporting affected communities.[122]

Bushfire cash grant payments began on 6 January 2020, and within a short period the Australian Red Cross Society was soon providing more than a million dollars a day in grants to people who lost homes and become displaced.[123] Six months into the grants and recovery programme, nearly 49,718 people had been supported though evacuations, in relief centres and in affected communities, while 4,380 people had received grant support. Of the 113 million Australian dollars (AUD) disbursed to June 2020, AUD 56 million was emergency grant funding to

116 Australian Red Cross. ***Australian Bushfires Report January – June 2020*** (2020), p1. At: www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/9fe279c7-94af-48e5-b10a-2c3b15f812e5/Report-6mth-FINAL-200708-WEB_4.pdf.aspx
117 van Oldenborgh GJ et al. 'Attribution of the Australian bushfire risk to anthropogenic climate change' in *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences,* pp941–960, 2021. At: https://nhess.copernicus.org/articles/21/941/2021/nhess-21-941-2021.pdf
118 IDMC. *The 2019–2020 Australian Bushfires: From Temporary Evacuation to Longer-Term Displacement* (2020), p14. At: www.internal-displacement.org/publications/the-2019-2020-australian-bushfires-from-temporary-evacuation-to-longer-term
119 Ibid, pp5, 12.
120 Australian Red Cross. *Australian Bushfires Report January – June 2020* (2020), p4.
121 IDMC. *Bushfires and Displacement*, p11.
122 Australian Red Cross Australian *Bushfires Report January – June 2020* (2020), p4.
123 Ibid.

people whose primary place of residence had been completely destroyed.[124] By June 2021, 2,459 re-establishment grants totalling AUD 76.6 million had been paid to an estimated 50,000 people who had lost their primary place of residence to re-establish a safe place to live.[125]

Australian Red Cross Recovery Teams were present in bushfire-affected communities from the very beginning. Its recovery staff and volunteers live in affected communities and some were impacted by the fires themselves. Having staff and volunteers able to engage with neighbours and their local community enabled the Australian Red Cross to understand both individual trauma and wider community trends, and help resolve or advocate for people's most pressing needs. In recognition of the particular impacts on indigenous households and communities, the Australian Red Cross had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recovery officers in every affected state.[126]

Recognizing that recovery would be a long-term process, the Australian Red Cross has planned activities over a three-year timeframe. Also recognizing that communities need to be empowered to be agents of their own recovery, the Australian Red Cross activated its Disaster Recovery Advisors and Mentors Australia programme, which allows affected communities to receive advice and support from someone with personal experience of the post-disaster recovery journey.[127]

This approach to recovery adopted by the National Society was influenced by the impacts of the 2009 bushfires in Victoria – one of Australia's worst major disasters. These resulted in 173 fatalities, the damage or destruction of 3,500 buildings and over 2,000 homes, the complete destruction of two townships, as well as significant impacts to both the natural environment and community infrastructure. A recent study – funded in part by the Australian Red Cross – has illustrated the mental health impacts on affected communities which experienced post-disaster relocation of some of the community. The people who decided to relocate reported feeling guilty about leaving their community while those who stayed reported feeling abandoned when their friends and neighbours relocated, and it impacted on their sense of community. Both groups reported that their well-being was still impacted three to four years after the disaster, with depression risk higher among those who stayed but connected to people who had relocated.[128]

The Australian Red Cross programme is focused on minimizing the disruption to people's lives after they have survived the emergency. Its household guidance on disaster preparedness is integrated into its guidance on emergency preparedness generally, called 'Rediplan'. This contains specific guidance on how to prepare for displacement, such as evacuations, including taking into account the all-too-common trauma that results when families are split apart in order to stay safe.[129] Since 2013, Red Cross has been working with asylum seekers and refugees to build awareness and resilience to disasters for people who have newly arrived in Australia. The approach involves capacity building within communities to develop preparedness champions, people who can adapt messages for diverse communities and contexts.[130]

Humanitarian diplomacy to prepare for climate change

Drawing on its experiences during the bushfires and recognizing the need to better prepare for climate change, the Australian Red Cross has engaged in humanitarian diplomacy, recommending changes to improve outcomes for people affected by disasters to a Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, as well as federal and state or territory reviews. The recommended improvements included sharing data to improve ease of access to support, amplifying the recovery efforts of local communities, engaging more with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteers to build more meaningful and respectful partnerships with First Nations communities, further embedding recovery into disaster management and developing national standards for emergency response and recovery.[131]

124 Ibid, p7.
125 Australian Red Cross *Australian. Bushfires Report January 2020 to June 2021 (2021).* At: www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/56608f2b-b6f9-4b2f-b83e-e6e6ec6c62b7/18-Month-Bushfire-Report.pdf.aspx
126 Ibid, p11.
127 Ibid, pp10-12.
128 Gibbs L et al. *10 Years Beyond Bushfires Report 2020* (March 2021), University of Melbourne, pp7, 18. At: https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/3645090/BB-10-years-report_spread.pdf
129 Australia Red Cross. *Emergencies Happen: Protect What Matters Most (2017),* p34. At: www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/eb80a653-73ff-4d87-9034-ea1d874c54c5/2017-03-06-RediPlan-Comprehensive-Guide.pdf.aspx
130 Richardson,J, Sivalingum, C, Mau, V, and Van Son, J (2016) A land of flooding rains building the disaster resilience of asylum seekers at high risk. In *Migrants in Disaster Risk Reduction: Practices for Inclusion*
131 Australia Red Cross. *Australian Bushfires Report January – June 2020* (2020), p14.

Honduras 2020 *In Honduras, more than 2.7 million people were directly affected by Hurricane Eta. More than 57,000 people were evacuated while 11,000 people were in 170 shelters. Access to clean water and sanitation was an immediate need.*
© Honduran Red Cross

HONDURAN RED CROSS

Cruz Roja Hondureña

Using Humanitarian Service Points to support people on the move in the context of climate change

The 'Dry Corridor' situated in Central America's Northern Triangle – made up of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras – is the area of greatest disaster risk in the region. The impacts of recurrent climate-related hazards such as prolonged dry spells, drought and extreme rainfall and winds from hurricanes have compounded the impacts of endemic poverty and high rates of violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children. This has put the lives, safety and well-being of millions of people at risk. As of July 2021, it is estimated that 8.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in these countries, a 60 per cent increase since the beginning of the year.[132]

Starkly illustrating the worsening climate crisis, 2020 witnessed the region's busiest recorded hurricane season – 30 named hurricanes in total – the majority of which set new formation and intensity benchmarks relative to previous seasons, and the only season ever to see two major hurricanes in November: Hurricanes Eta and Iota.[133] Hurricane Iota was a Category 4 storm by the time it made landfall over northern Nicaragua, and the strongest Atlantic hurricane in 2020. Its driving rains and high winds affected many of the same areas in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala that were still struggling with Eta's devastating impacts on shelter, food security, WASH, health and protection.[134] These two hurricanes led to massive levels of displacement: combined, 86,000 people were displaced to shelters in Honduras while, in Guatemala, 21,000 people were displaced to official shelters and a further 220,000 people displaced in unofficial shelters. In both countries, official shelters often lacked sufficient water, hygiene, cleaning and other necessary humanitarian supplies.[135]

Hurricanes Eta and Iota caused significant damage and destruction to crops and harvests, further undermining the livelihoods of many families already facing economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Guatemala lost more than 119,000 hectares of crops, affecting the livelihoods and food security of 267,000 families. Honduras, where 18 per cent of the population was already food insecure, lost 318,000 hectares.[136] While the impacts of these hurricanes were relatively less in El Salvador, extensive damage from Tropical Storm Amanda left a further 336,300 people food insecure.[137]

These hurricanes also struck in a region already impacted by slow-onset climate change hazards. In 2018, drought in the region's Dry Corridor caused severe crop losses for subsistence farmers ranging between 75 and 100 per cent, prompting El Salvador and Honduras to announce a state of emergency.[138]

132 OCHA. *Humanitarian Needs Overview: El Salvador, Guatemala & Honduras* (July 2021), p11. At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HNO%20CENTROAMERICA%202021%20ING.pdf
133 OCHA. *Latin America & The Caribbean 2020 Hurricane Season – Situation Report No. 4* (20 November 2020). At:https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/sitreps/4889/OCHA_ETAIOTA_SitRep4_20201120.pdf
134 Ibid.
135 OCHA. *Central America & Mexico 2020 Hurricane Season – Situation Report No. 5* (26 November 2020). At: https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/sitreps/4889/20201126_OCHA_Eta_SitRep_5_ENG.pdf
136 Ibid.
137 WFP. *El Salvador Situation Report #2 – Tropical Storm Amanda* (17 June 2020). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/el-salvador/wfp-el-salvador-situation-report-2-tropical-storm-amanda-17-june-2020
138 Aguirre JC. 'In Central America, Climate Change Is Driving Families North'. *The Magazine of the Sierra Club* (2020). At: www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2020-5-september-october/feature/in-central-america-guatemala-climate-change-driving-families-north-climate-migration

In Guatemala, seasonal improvements in food availability and access are projected to be insufficient to prevent acute food insecurity. Food prices remain high. Irregular rainfall has delayed crop planting in some areas, while strong winds may reduce yields in others. The poorest rural households will likely experience 'food crisis' outcomes, meaning many will need to resort to crisis strategies, including migration, to obtain their food.[139]

In Honduras, 937,000 people were newly displaced by disasters in 2020 and in excess of 3 million people are suffering from food insecurity due to the effects of COVID-19 restrictions and climate change. It is estimated that, as of the end of July 2021, 2.8 million people – nearly one-third of the country's population – are in need of humanitarian assistance, over double the previous estimate issued in early 2020.[140]

Humanitarian Service Points: meeting the needs of people on the move

Central America is home to one of the world's foremost migration corridors with the USA being the primary destination. It has been estimated that more than half of the 30 million international migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean come from Mexico and northern Central America countries.[141] While this migration is multi-causal in nature, people exposed to higher levels of food insecurity are more likely to be compelled to migrate in search of better conditions.[142] There is no doubt that the vulnerability of people to climate-change-related factors not only drives displacement in the region but also contributes to migration, with the hurricanes being the final 'trigger'.[143]

National Societies in Central America from Panama to Guatemala have been providing humanitarian assistance to the many thousands of irregular extra-continental migrants transiting their countries for a number of years. Migrants are exposed during their journey to a range of hazardous conditions including lack of water and shelter, exposure to vector-borne diseases as well as predatory attacks by criminal gangs resulting in robberies and sexual violence against women and girls.[144] More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has further undermined the safety and well-being of those migrating.

In recent years, 'caravans' have become a new migration modality for people in Central America impacted by climate change. The caravan which formed in January 2021 in Honduras was composed of people who reported that, due to the impacts of Hurricanes Eta and Iota, they had lost their livelihoods, assets, sources of employment and cultivated land. They were forced to close their businesses and decided to leave.[145] This caravan had a population of 6,000 and included families, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups such as old people, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ people and illiterate people. Along the way, the population swelled to around 9,000 people.[146]

The concept of a Humanitarian Service Point has been developed by the IFRC to provide a neutral space along migratory routes which is welcoming and a safe environment for migrants to access essential services during their journeys – irrespective of their immigration status – without fear of arrest or being reported to the authorities. The key objective is to contribute to the safety, dignity and protection of vulnerable migrants at all stages of their journey and to promote resilience. A Humanitarian Service Point may include fixed or mobile initiatives and vary in operation: in certain locations Humanitarian Service Points may simply provide critical information; in others, healthcare might be provided.[147]

139 Famine Early Warning System Network. *Guatemala Food Security Outlook, June 2021 to January 2022* (29 April 2021). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/guatemala-food-security-outlook-june-2021-january-2022.
140 OCHA. *Honduras: Humanitarian Response Plan Summary 2021 – Humanitarian Programme Cycle August 2021-December 2022* (2021). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-response-plan-summary-2021
141 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. *Comprehensive Development Plan El Salvador-Guatemala-Honduras-México* p39, cited in OCHA. *Humanitarian Needs Overview,* p26.
142 International Organization for Migration and WFP. *Hunger Without Borders: The hidden links between Food Insecurity, Violence and Migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America* (2015). At: https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/hunger-without-borders-hidden-links-between-food-insecurity-violence-and-migration-northern-triangle
143 IFRC. Communication (16 September 2021); OCHA. *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, p16; WFP. *Honduras: Climate change, coronavirus and caravans* (12 April 2021).
144 See for example IFRC. *Information Bulletin Central America: Population Movement* (17 September 2016). At: www.ifrc.org/docs/Appeals/16/IB16092016.pdf
145 IFRC. *Information Bulletin Central America: Population Movement* (19 January 2021). At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IB19012021.pdf
146 Ibid.
147 IFRC. *Humanitarian Service Points For Vulnerable Migrants: Summary Brief* (2018). At: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-service-points-vulnerable-migrants-summary-brief

Honduras 2020 *The Honduran Red Cross provided humanitarian assistance to migrants departing Honduras as part of a 'migrant caravan'. The Honduran Red Cross supported up to 6,000 migrants departing from the northern and southern zones of the country. Humanitarian Service Points were created at the point of departure in the city centre of San Pedro Sula, as well as along the migration route. These spaces provided access to essential services, such as water, face masks, pre-hospital care, information about safety, security and COVID-19 prevention, as well as means of communication. © Johannes Chinchilla / IFRC*

In response to the January 2021 caravan, the Honduran Red Cross activated Humanitarian Service Points at the point of departure as well as along the migration route. These provided the migrants with water, face masks, pre-hospital care, information about safety, security and COVID-19 prevention, as well as means of communication for migrants to keep in touch with their families. At the Guatemalan side of the border, a further ten Humanitarian Service Points were set up along the border and the migration route by the Guatemala Red Cross.[148]

In July 2021, the Honduran Red Cross received information that another migrant caravan was forming, with social media networks indicating a minimum of 12,000 Honduran migrants and 2,000 persons of other nationalities in transit. Although those numbers have not yet been reached, in anticipation of the caravan's formation the Honduran Red Cross was allocated imminent DREF funds to cover activities from July to the end of October 2021. Factored into planning was that, based on experiences from the January 2021 caravan, an almost immediate return of more than 6,000 people could be expected, either through a voluntary return or deportation, and that these returnees would be particularly vulnerable to the lingering impacts of Hurricanes Eta and Iota on shelter, infrastructure and livelihoods.[149]

With information establishing the imminent departure of the caravan, a Humanitarian Service Point was set up at the caravan's starting point, with further ones to be set up at specified places once the migration route became clear. The Honduran Red Cross agreed trigger points at which to act and readiness and response activities that would be initiated. Readiness activities included the pre-positioning of hygiene kits for both adults and children, first aid and PPE kits, children's psychosocial support kits and material, as well as training for volunteers. Response activities, including distributing pre-positioned supplies and providing critical information and advice on immigration requirements and COVID-19 prevention, would be initiated once data indicated a sufficiently large number of migrants had congregated at the departure point.[150]

148 IFRC. *Red Cross: Providing services and protection to migrants in Central America is a humanitarian imperative* (15 January 2021). At: www.ifrc.org/press-release/red-cross-providing-services-and-protection-migrants-central-america-humanitarian-imperative
149 IFRC. *EPoA Honduras: Population movement* (29 July 2021).
150 Ibid.

Germany 2021 *German Red Cross mission after heavy rains caused severe flooding in the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate: GRC volunteers on a muddy street, strewn with litter and debris in Ahrweiler.*
© Philipp Köhler / German Red Cross

RESPONDING TO FLOODS IN GERMANY

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz

"The tide goes, we stay"[151]

A series of storms in Germany throughout June and July 2021 saturated the ground in many areas. On 14 and 15 July 2021, torrential rains swept across western Germany, with devastating impacts in the states of Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia. Small rivers and streams in many of the region's steep valleys became torrential currents, causing rivers to burst their banks, destroying entire villages, while others were cut-off by the destruction of communication and transport infrastructure. Dams across the region reached their capacities and threatened to overflow amid the massive rainfall.[152]

A recent study has demonstrated the role climate change played in causing these floods. It found that the likelihood of one- and two-day events occurring today in the affected region has increased by a factor between 1.2 and 9 due to climate change, compared to a 1.2°C cooler climate, and that the intensity of such events has increased by about 3 to 19 per cent.[153]

The link between climate change and this disaster has been explicitly acknowledged by the German President in a memorial to the victims, as has the reality that this disaster struck while Germany, like the rest of the world, was having to deal with a biological hazard in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. He cautioned: "We must learn lessons from this double disaster experience and better prepare ourselves for future crises."[154]

During the height of the flooding, some 1,300 people were reported missing in the Ahr valley (Ahrweiler) alone. Over 180 people lost their lives. The flood's damage and death toll made it one of the deadliest disasters to hit the country for over half a century.[155] Insured losses were estimated to reach as much as 5 billion euros. By June, heavy rain and hail had already caused an estimated insured loss of 1.7 billion euros and, with the damage caused by the July flooding, 2021 had already become the most damaging year since 2002.[156]

Based on satellite images, it is estimated that in Rhineland-Palatinate 680 houses were destroyed and a further 4,992 damaged, while in North Rhine-Westphalia 70 houses were destroyed and 4,795 damaged.[157] The German Red Cross estimate that around 18,000 people became displaced in Rhineland-Palatinate and a further 13,000 to 18,000 people were displaced in North Rhine-Westphalia. Many people sheltered with friends and family while the remainder were provided with emergency shelter by the German Red Cross and other organizations. While the majority of displaced people were able to return home after a few days, other people's homes were completely destroyed; these people have been provided with temporary housing by the German government.

151 German Red Cross. *Internal briefing* (21 July 2021).
152 Deutsche Welle. *German leaders join memorial service for flood victims* (28 August 2021). At: www.dw.com/en/german-leaders-join-memorial-service-for-flood-victims/a-59011579
153 World Weather Attribution. *Rapid attribution of heavy rainfall events leading to the severe flooding in Western Europe during July 2021 (2021).* At: www.worldweatherattribution.org/wp-content/uploads/Scientific-report-Western-Europe-floods-2021-attribution.pdf
154 Deutsche Welle. *German leaders join memorial service for flood victims* (28 August 2021). At: www.dw.com/en/german-leaders-join-memorial-service-for-flood-victims/a-59011579
155 Ibid.
156 Floodlist. *Only 46 Percent of German Households Have Flood Insurance* (28 July 2021). At: https://floodlist.com/europe/only-46-percent-of-german-households-have-flood-insurance
157 Herfort B and Reinmuth M. *GIS Flood Analysis.* Heidelberg Institute for Geoinformation Technology, p9.

The role of the German Red Cross in the response

Operating under the rallying call "the tide goes, we stay" of the President of the German Red Cross, the entire German Red Cross, comprised of local, state and federal-level branches, have become engaged in providing a range of support to people who were suddenly left with nothing. This includes providing drinking water, food, accommodation, electricity, mobile health care and psychological help. In Rhineland-Palatinate alone, over 40,000 people urgently needed basic help.[158] As people were traumatized by the unexpected and rapid destruction caused by the floods, special emphasis has been placed by the German Red Cross on psychosocial emergency care.[159] As all operations were carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Red Cross closely cooperated with the health authorities to ensure that when providing food and public health support, volunteers, staff and affected people were protected from COVID-19.[160]

Everywhere in Germany, including the areas affected by the flooding, is covered by a local branch of the German Red Cross. At the local level, German Red Cross volunteers provided humanitarian assistance to the affected populations from the very beginning of the disaster, with over 3,000 volunteers at times involved during the emergency phase. An established local presence enabled the German Red Cross to quickly communicate with the mayors of affected villages to conduct rapid needs assessments and thereafter to remain in close communication with the local administration during the rest of the response.

In Germany, disaster management and response is a state – not federal – responsibility and the state branches of the German Red Cross are integrated into the state-level disaster management structures. This enabled the German Red Cross in the affected states to have their capacities and resources quickly integrated into response planning. As the scale of the disaster became increasingly clear from the reports received by local branches, other humanitarian agencies and the state authorities, the Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia state branches received supplies and human resource support from the federal German Red Cross. They also coordinated bilaterally with other state branches to scale up the overall German Red Cross response to meet the humanitarian needs of affected populations, particularly those who remained displaced due to the total destruction of their homes.

The overall focus of the German Red Cross has been on long-term recovery programming with the immediate cash needs of affected households being covered by the government. But in recognition of the particular impacts on families with young children, the Rhineland-Palatinate branch of the German Red Cross also started an emergency aid funding programme that enabled families to receive immediate aid and for children and to apply for an additional household allowance. [161]

The disaster resulted in the highest level of donations of goods and money to the German Red Cross for any disaster in Germany since the Second World War. To promote the efficient collection of donated goods and their transparent distribution to the people most in need, the state branches for Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia of the German Red Cross established a donation management facility. This receives, sorts and ultimately sends donations from all over Germany to the affected regions. They also reactivated an online portal developed for a previous disaster to similarly manage the large volume of cash donations being received. Critical to the success of this has been the networked structure of the German Red Cross which enabled local branches to provide information on needs across all localities directly to German Red Cross colleagues managing the donation facility throughout the response.

While the federal branch of the German Red Cross usually has only a coordinating and support role for the state-level branches in disaster management, it has some federal-level capacities for national disasters and the sheer scale of the destruction caused by the flooding meant it too became engaged in the response by providing critical infrastructure support in the affected areas. In Mayschoss, in the heavily affected district of Ahrweiler, the wastewater infrastructure was completely destroyed, and it has been estimated that it will take up to two years to be fully rebuilt. As the poor sanitary conditions and the lack of waste disposal at high temperatures increased the risk of epidemics and vermin infestation, the federal branch of the German Red Cross deployed an emergency

158 German Red Cross. *Flood disaster: DRK aid mission in Germany.* At:www.drk.de/hilfe-in-deutschland/flutkatastrophe-drk-hilfseinsatz-in-deutschland/#c68419
159 German Red Cross. *Internal briefing* (21 July 2021).
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.

Germany 2021 *German Red Cross support people affected by heavy flooding. © Philipp Köhler / German Red Cross*

wastewater treatment facility originally designed and constructed for use in overseas operations in Bangladesh. Also deployed by the federal branch were the non-shelter components of a modular facility specifically designed to provide shelter, electricity, WASH, communications and other essential support for up to 5,000 people in an emergency.

The federal branch also supplied four mobile medical units in areas where the floods had destroyed health infrastructure. These provide a fully equipped emergency practice comprised of two treatment rooms, a waiting room, laboratory and sonography, with capacity to treat approximately 100 patients per day.[162]

In the Ahr valley, the German Red Cross was also the ambulance service provider, but its base of operations and ambulances were destroyed in the flooding. To restore the service, the federal branch of the German Red Cross deployed a multifunction unit to serve as the administration site for the replacement ambulances. It also re-established the internet and communication network for the valley. Originally established to enable a local hospital to restore online access to patient files and data, this network proved so effective that it was extended along the Ahr valley –around 54 km now but will stretch for 65 km – to restore internet and communications to affected communities.

This case study of the role the German Red Cross in responding to the devastating floods of July 2021 shows how the structure of a National Society – a network of internally connected branches operating at all levels of the national disaster governance structure – has been harnessed to meet humanitarian needs, at scale, and on an ongoing basis. This structure has allowed the rapid transmission of relevant information about localized impacts and humanitarian need, enabling necessary assistance to be quickly directed to the people most in need.

162 German Red Cross. *Flood disaster: DRK aid mission in Germany*. At: www.drk.de/hilfe-in-deutschland/flutkatastrophe-drk-hilfseinsatz-in-deutschland/#c68419

Fiji 2020 *Unaisi Dikau sits in front of what's left of her house in Nakorovou after Tropical Cyclone Yasa roared through. Yasa hit Fiji as a category 5 storm with winds gusting up to 345 km/h and 3 metre storm surges devastating communities in the north of the country. Red Cross volunteers were mobilised early to help people prepare, and reached affected communities with essential relief items and assessment teams.*
© Ponipate / IFRC

THEMATIC PROFILE
IFRC DISASTER LAW WITH A FOCUS ON MALAWI AND FIJI

Strengthening legal preparedness for disasters in the context of climate change

An important but often overlooked component of disaster preparedness is legal preparedness. In the fast-moving environment following a disaster, time is critical. Whether disasters are caused by extreme weather events, geological hazards or public health emergencies, they often cut across the policy and operational areas of many national ministries and departments – from disaster management and civil defence, to housing and health. Authorities at the local, district, regional and national levels are also involved at various points in the disaster risk management cycle. Laws can serve to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different organizations involved, and establish coordination and information-sharing mechanisms, paving the way for an effective response.

Laws and regulations can also provide the starting point to address the complex issues raised by climate-related displacement. They can provide a legally sanctioned foundation from which to establish practical measures to meet the assistance and protection needs of displaced people, as well as the communities which receive them, at all phases of preparedness and response. These are: 1) protecting communities against displacement, 2) preparing for unavoidable displacement, 3) responding to displacement, and 4) supporting the realization of durable solutions.

Legal preparedness for disasters and for disaster displacement promotes both resilience and efficiency of response, ensuring that when people are displaced, unnecessary delays are avoided, and people can safely return home as soon as possible. Legal preparedness is particularly important where planned relocation is being contemplated, to reduce the risk of future displacement due to climate-related hazards, or as a durable solution to existing displacement. In this context, legal instruments can ensure that planned relocation is only undertaken as a last resort and with the consent of the people being relocated.[163]

Working with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments around the world, IFRC Disaster Law aims to promote strong domestic disaster laws that not only address all phases of the disaster risk management cycle, but also address important cross-cutting issues such as disaster displacement. Since 2012, IFRC Disaster Law has spearheaded efforts to examine how laws can support the reduction of disaster risk – including those caused by climate change – and, importantly, how laws can better engage at-risk communities and be better implemented at the community level.

IFRC Disaster Law's work has included a partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in developing *The Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction* (DRR Checklist) and its accompanying guide, *The Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction* (the Handbook). These were launched to provide practical guidance on this area of law to lawmakers, government officials and practitioners. They tools provide guidance on how to review and improve laws and regulations to ensure disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are prioritized in all sectors and at all levels, with clear mandates and accountability frameworks.[164] The Handbook and DRR Checklist may assist states to meet adaptation commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the latter of which recognizes the important role of law and regulation in reducing climate and disaster risks.[165]

163 IFRC. *Planned Relocation in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: A guide for Asia Pacific National Societies (2021), Discussion.*
164 *The Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction* and the Checklists on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction are available at: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org
165 UN. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,* UN Doc. A/RES/69/283 (23 June 2015), paras 27(a), (d), (f) and (i); 30(a) and 33(p). At: www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

In addition, in 2019 IFRC Disaster Law developed *The Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response* (DPR Checklist), which offers guidance on how laws can facilitate effective disaster preparedness and response. The DPR Checklist includes a section dedicated to how disaster laws can address disaster-related human mobility, including both displacement and planned relocation.[166] Both the DRR and DPR Checklists are tools that can enable states to identify the strengths and gaps in their existing domestic legal frameworks; if a greater focus is needed on implementation; and if drafting or revising legislation is needed.[167]

Disaster law in action: Malawi

Malawi is exposed to multiple climate-related hazards such as floods, droughts, landslides and extreme heat. It is also exposed to geo-physical hazards (namely earthquakes) and the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Weather-related disasters are the most common, with 40 weather-related disasters occurring between 1970 and 2006. Since 1990, 16 such disasters have occurred, and these have sharply increased in both geographical coverage and the number of people affected.[168] With half the population living below the poverty line, the impact of disasters on already vulnerable communities is significant.[169]

Malawi Red Cross Society staff and volunteers are called on to help in the wake of the frequent disasters experienced by Malawi, the impacts of which have underlined the need for a strengthened disaster risk management system to save lives and better facilitate the flow of international assistance. In 2013, Malawi Red Cross Society, through its auxiliary role with government, advocated to begin the process of reviewing the legal framework for international disaster response. Working alongside the Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs, extensive research as well as consultations were undertaken with over 70 stakeholders from across government, civil society and communities to contribute to the review and drafting process. The resulting report, *International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) in Malawi: A Study on Legal Preparedness for Regulatory Issues in International Disaster Response*, recommended that detailed provisions were included in the law to guide national authorities in requesting, vetting and accepting international humanitarian assistance, and for the role of the Malawi Red Cross Society in disaster risk management to be clearly outlined.[170]

At the government's request, the Malawi Red Cross Society supported the revision of the existing disaster risk management legislation in line with the recommendations made in the report. A Disaster Risk Management Bill (DRM Bill) was drafted alongside draft operational guidelines. The consultation process ensured that the DRM Bill 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. While the draft DRM Bill awaits parliamentary approval, the process to date has increased awareness of the role and importance of disaster law in Malawi.[171]

Disaster law in action: Fiji

Cyclone season brings destructive tropical storms to Fiji, and with climate change causing more frequent and intense weather-related events, communities are facing increasing risks to their lives and livelihoods. The Fiji Red Cross Society works to ensure communities know how to prepare and what to do when disasters strike.

After Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji in 2016, the need to strengthen and update Fiji's disaster law became clear. The Government of Fiji requested the Fiji Red Cross Society and the IFRC to assist in the review of Fiji's existing disaster law. From 2018, Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has been working closely with the Fiji Red Cross Society and IFRC to hold consultations with a range of stakeholders, including national and local governments, at-risk communities and NGOs such as civil society organizations, religious groups, the private sector and academia. Consultations have also included regional agencies, international organizations and other donor partners.

166 IFRC. *The Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response*, p27–28. At: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/1287
167 IFRC. The Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction, p13. At: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org
168 Malawi Red Cross Society. *International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) in Malawi: A study on legal preparedness for regulatory issues in international disaster response* (2015), p2. At: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MalawiIDRL%20Report%20Draft%20LR.pdf
169 IFRC. *Case Study Disaster law in Malawi (2021).* At: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2021–09/IFRC%20Disaster%20Law_Case%20Study_Malawi_v2_Web.pdf
170 Malawi Red Cross Society. *IDRL in Malawi*, pp29 and 34.
171 IFRC. *Disaster Law in Malawi: Saving lives and keeping communities safe through the development of national climate, disaster and emergency-related legislation, policies and procedures.* At: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/3299; Malawi Red Cross. *Disaster Law in Action – Case Study Leveraging the Auxiliary role to Effect Legislative changes* (2020). At: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2020–09/CaseStudy-_Malawi.pdf

Malawi 2019 *Malawi Red Cross volunteer Peterson Ephraim setting up a tent in Mwalija camp, that houses approximately 900 people evacuated from the nearby village that was submerged during the flooding in March 2019. © Saara Mansikkamäki / Finnish Red Cross*

Some of the overall recommendations identified during the consultation process were that Fiji's disaster risk management system needs to be proactive, inclusive, take an integrated, multi-risk/hazard approach and promote mainstreaming of risk reduction. Specific recommendations included the introduction of a central risk information management system, strengthened subnational and community risk governance through establishing subnational risk management committees down to community level, and an integrated multi-hazard approach that allows for impact-based forecasting to inform early action.

IFRC Disaster Law and disaster risk management specialists have been working closely in partnership with the Fiji Red Cross Society and Fijian government to provide technical inputs for a new disaster risk management bill which incorporates these recommendations, as well as supporting drafting workshops and bill consultations. The review and drafting process is due to be completed in 2021. The challenges that both the NDMO and the Fiji Red Cross Society have faced since the review began – of having to respond to numerous cyclones, weather-related events and the COVID-19 pandemic – have led to some delay, but have also confirmed the relevance of draft provisions in the Bill and provided field-tested recommendations on strengthening other provisions.

The review process has increased institutional capacity. Fiji's NDMO is now already working towards an integrated approach to gathering risk information to support a multi-risk/hazard informed approach that also addresses displacement and planned relocation. The review process has also had the effect of informing new staff and reminding existing staff in various sectors about their roles and responsibilities and about those of other sectors, in a disaster setting. It has meant that officials working in the various levels of government across the range of relevant sectors own and understand the concepts which underpin the new bill. An example of this is a workshop for frontline agencies who are involved in the clearance of humanitarian aid, but previously had not been part of disaster response planning and preparedness. The workshop strengthened their understanding of the disaster context, and formulated draft standard operating procedures on responding to disasters during the COVID-19 pandemic and a draft terms of reference for a frontline agency working group on expedited clearance of humanitarian aid consignments and deployed personnel.

With NDMO and the Fiji Red Cross Society leading the review, and IFRC supporting, local ownership of the review process has been crucial for its success. Through extensive consultation, international best practice has been localized to ensure it can be implemented in Fiji's current and future operational environment.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 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.