

# Snapshot on IDP and Refugee Trends in Africa: Are Democratic Governance Deficits to Blame?



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# Structural Outline

- **A. Definition of Key Concepts**
  - Forced migration
  - Refugee
  - IDP
  - Violent conflicts
- **B. Discuss Trends of forced Displacement in Africa within Global context**
  - Forced Displacement Trends Globally
  - Forced Displacement Trends in Africa
- **C. Brief discussion on Key drivers of forced displacement in Africa**
  - Conflicts and governance deficits
  - Natural disasters / climate change

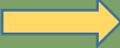
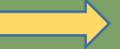


# A. Conceptual Definitions

- ❑ Refugees by definition have crossed international borders to seek a safe haven, most often they are fleeing conflict, and have suffered violations of their human rights.
- ❑ Refugees are eligible for international protection and assistance under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- ❑ IDPs may suffer systematic violations of their human rights, conflict, ethnic or religious oppression, but remain within the borders of their own country and have no institutional or legal mechanism for receiving international assistance.
- ❑ They remain under the jurisdiction, and responsibility, of their governments. The system responsible for upholding the rights of IDPs may also be the system responsible for their displacement and the violations against their rights.
- ❑ The International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) conceives of forced migration as “a general term that refers to movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine and development projects”
- ❑ ‘Violent conflict’ is taken to mean ‘deliberate violent acts perpetrated by a government or organized or semi-organized group against state forces, other organized or semi-organized groups or civilians’, Mobjörk et al. (note 1), p. 16.

- ❑ Green Refugees: A may descriptive term that really has no strong legal teeth to bite. Refers to those forcibly displaced by climatic conditions.
- The Example of the Lake Chad Region—Climate-related security risk assessment, see report from Expert Working Group on “Climate-related Security Risks” (2018, July) by Janani Vivekananda and Camilla Born
- Most climate change displacement is internal, without borders crossed.
- Even when people are displaced solely by the effects of climate-related disasters and natural hazards and cross international borders, they do not generally become refugees under the [definition](#) of the 1951 Refugee Convention: someone who has crossed an international border “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”.
- The term “climate refugee”/ “Green Refugee” -- something of a misnomer, as it has no basis in international law and does not accurately reflect the complex ways in which climate and human mobility interact. But, as the UNHCR chief has pointed out, “the image it conveys — of people driven from their homes as an outcome of the climate emergency — has rightly captured public attention.”
- In particular, where people are displaced as a result of disasters or climate-related factors that are interlinked with conflict or persecution, the 1951 Convention is likely to apply. Some people displaced across borders in the context of climate change or natural disasters may fall within the definition of “refugee” under regional instruments if and when flight is a result of a serious disturbance to public order

# General reflections on democracy in Africa:

-  Progress has been made towards democratic consolidation on the continent, and since post-Cold War transition from single to multiparty politics, elections have been held by most countries as the means of choice for transfer of political power (Sanusi and Nassuna, 2017).
-  Independent Elections Management Bodies (EMBs) have taken root, even though their independence from political intrusion of incumbents remains questionable across most countries.
-  Holding of free and fair periodic elections not sufficient for existence of democracy, but certainly necessary (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2006). True democratization means more than just regular elections (UNDP, 2002).
-  Increasingly low voter turnout in emerging democracies might signal rising democratic apathy and herald a negative shift in the citizenry's perception of elections as a central part of national political life (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; Van Reybrouck, 2018).
-  Voter turnout is declining across all the regions of the world. Nevertheless, Africa has on average recorded the lowest turnout compared to all other regions, over the entire period since the 1950s (International IDEA, 2016).
-  AU and REC norm-setting have helped accelerate the process of electoral reforms in Africa (ECOWAS Protocol on democracy and Good Governance – 2001; ECCAS Brazzaville Declaration on Electoral support – 2005; SADC Principles & Guidelines on Democratic Elections- 2004, ACDEG etc)

# Contextualizing Africa's Democratic Governance Deficits



- **Substantive democracy is getting entrenched across Africa:** Ghana, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Mauritius etc.
- **Increasing regularity of electoral turnover** – in 2018 alone, about 21+ national elections convened across Africa.
- **Yet Paradox of Democratization without full democracy :**

Lynch and Crawford (2011:275) encapsulate the paradox of democratization without full democracy in African accordingly:

“... increasingly illegitimate, [though]... regular elections and occasional transfers of power, but realities of democratic rollback and hybrid regimes; democratic institutionalization, but ongoing presidentialism and endemic corruption; the institutionalization of political parties, but widespread ethnic voting and the rise of an exclusionary (and often violent) politics of belonging; increasingly dense civil societies, but local realities of incivility, violence and insecurity; new political freedoms and ...[prospects for]... economic growth, but extensive political controls and uneven development; and the donor community's mixed commitment to, and at times perverse impact on, democracy”.

- Olukoshi and Laaka (1996); and Ayittey (1998), have termed a crisis of governance where hypercentralisation of political power, personalization of power and malfeasance lead to enfeebling of political institutions and depoliticization of civil society agency. Regime security overrides human security.
- Amstrong has warned that “There is often magnanimity in retirement when power is still an option, and there is the stench of authoritarianism when Presidents refuse to recognize that their time has passed” What needs to be done to internalize democratic norms in stalling countries?
- Bruce Baker’s (1999) democratic audit schema and Stefan Lindhburg’s (2001) conceptual framework on forms of governance and regimes suggest that:

By assessing the nature and performance of key benchmarks such as electoral processes, government accountability, authority of courts, civil and political rights, social behaviour, national identity and public trust in government, one can establish the extent to which regimes’ ambitions for self-preservation affect the strength of state institutions, good governance and effective democratic processes .
- Bottom-up propulsion for change crucial. But what form to take, if not populist action, in dispensations defined by constricted political space?

1982 - 2012



**CAMEROON'S  
DEMOCRACY.**  
(1982 - 2012)



**UNITED STATES**  
(1982 - 2012)



**FRANCE.**  
(1982 - 2012)



**GHANA**  
(1982 - 2012)



## B. General Backdrop of discussions on forced displacement crisis in Africa

- The crisis of IDPs and refugees has reached an unprecedented level on the continent of Africa. It is in recognition of the urgency of the displacement crisis in Africa that the Summit of the AU declared 2019 as “The Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally IDPs and Refugees: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa”
- The Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness recognizes that, besides natural disasters, a majority of Africa’s IDPs and Refugees are largely (80%) induced by democratic governance deficits that generally manifest as socio-political or elections-related violence.
- UNHCR (2018, June) about 21.5 million Africans – almost a third of the global estimate – are forcibly displaced
- 6.3 million refugees and asylum seekers,
- 712, 000 stateless persons, and 14.5 million Internally Displaced Persons
- African countries over-represented in world’s top ten most neglected displacement crisis: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Burundi, Ukraine, Venezuela, Mali, Libya, Ethiopia and Palestine. Norwegian Refugee Council (2019)
- Concealed in the IDP and refugee crisis statistic in Africa is the frequently unengaged and under-evaluated crisis of political disenfranchisement.
- Roughly 65% of the IDPs and Refugees in Africa are also eligible voters and potential candidates. This imposes new layers of complexity to the conduct of inclusive elections, which should be carefully managed
- Children comprise 59% of Africa’s [refugees](#) and 50% of its internally displaced people



# Global regional comparison on displacements attributable to conflict and disasters (2018)

## EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

**12,000**  
for conflict

**41,000**  
for disasters



A total of 53,000 new displacements were recorded across this region in 2018. In addition, almost 2.9 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year, the result of old and unresolved conflicts and territorial disputes in several countries.

## THE AMERICAS

**404,000**  
for conflict

**1.7M**  
for disasters



Weather-related disasters once again impacted several countries in the Americas in 2018. In addition, unresolved conflict, criminal violence and social and economic crises continued to push people to flee.

## SOUTH ASIA

**544,000**  
for conflict

**3.3M**  
for disasters



Large-scale displacement in South Asia was once again triggered by a series of floods, storms and droughts, as well as unresolved conflicts and violence. Nearly 14 per cent of global internal displacement was recorded in this region.

## EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

**236,000**  
for conflict

**9.3M**  
for disasters



Over a third of the global total new displacements were recorded in the region, most of which were triggered by disasters. From highly exposed countries such as the Philippines, China, Indonesia and Japan, to small island states and territories such as Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and Vanuatu, the impacts varied significantly across the vast region.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

**2.1M**  
for conflict

**214,000**  
for disasters



Conflict and violence continued to drive internal displacement in the region, with more than 2.1 million new displacements in 2018. Almost 11 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of the year, accounting for more than a quarter of the global total.

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

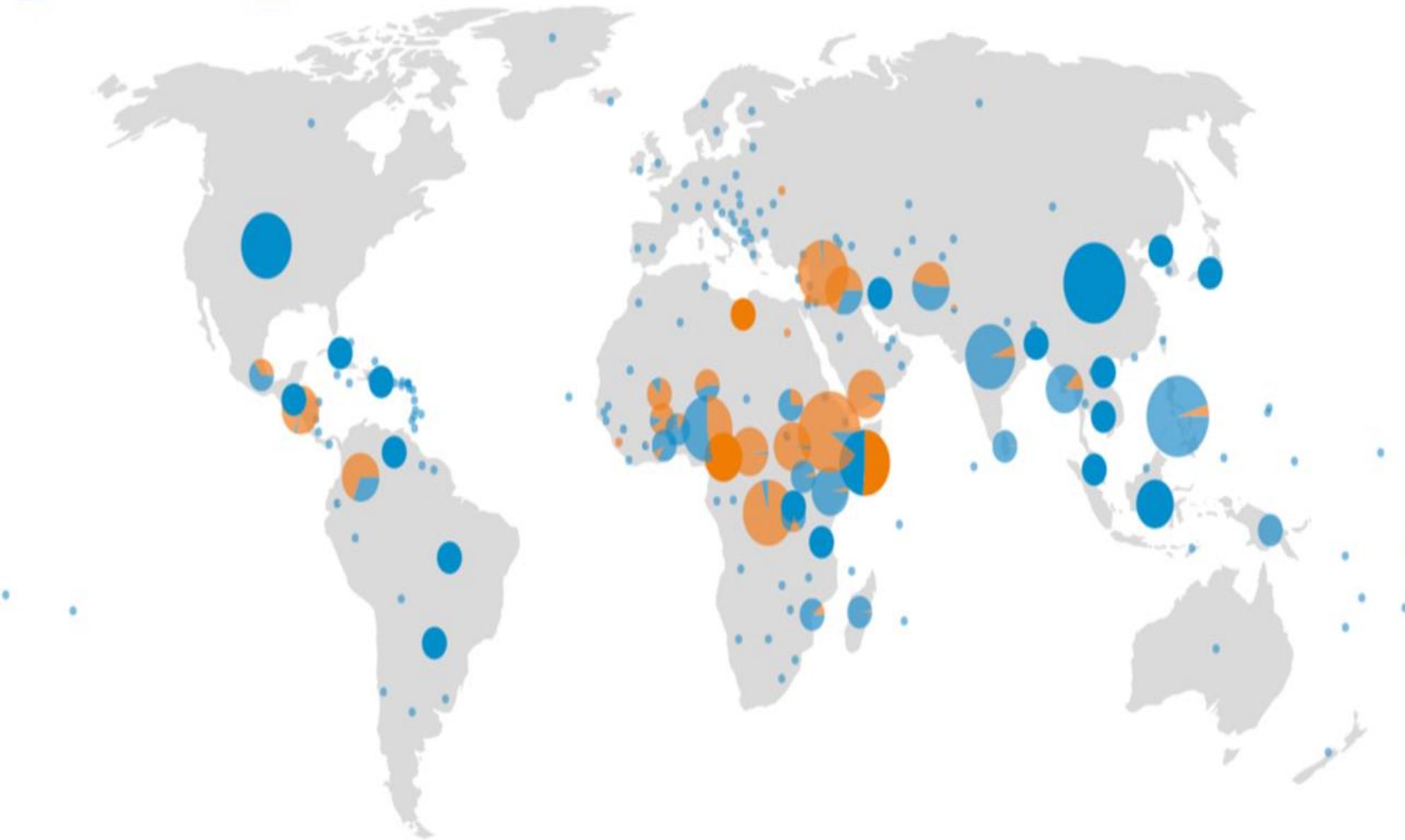
**7.4M**  
for conflict

**2.6M**  
for disasters



Millions of people were forced to flee their homes as a consequence of ongoing and new conflict and violence, as well as droughts, floods and storms. Internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa was higher than in any other region.

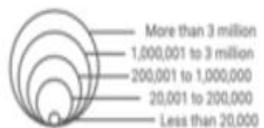
Conflict Disasters



### KEY POINTS

→ 28 million new displacements driven by conflicts and natural disasters in 2018

→ Incidences spread across 148 countries and territories in 2018



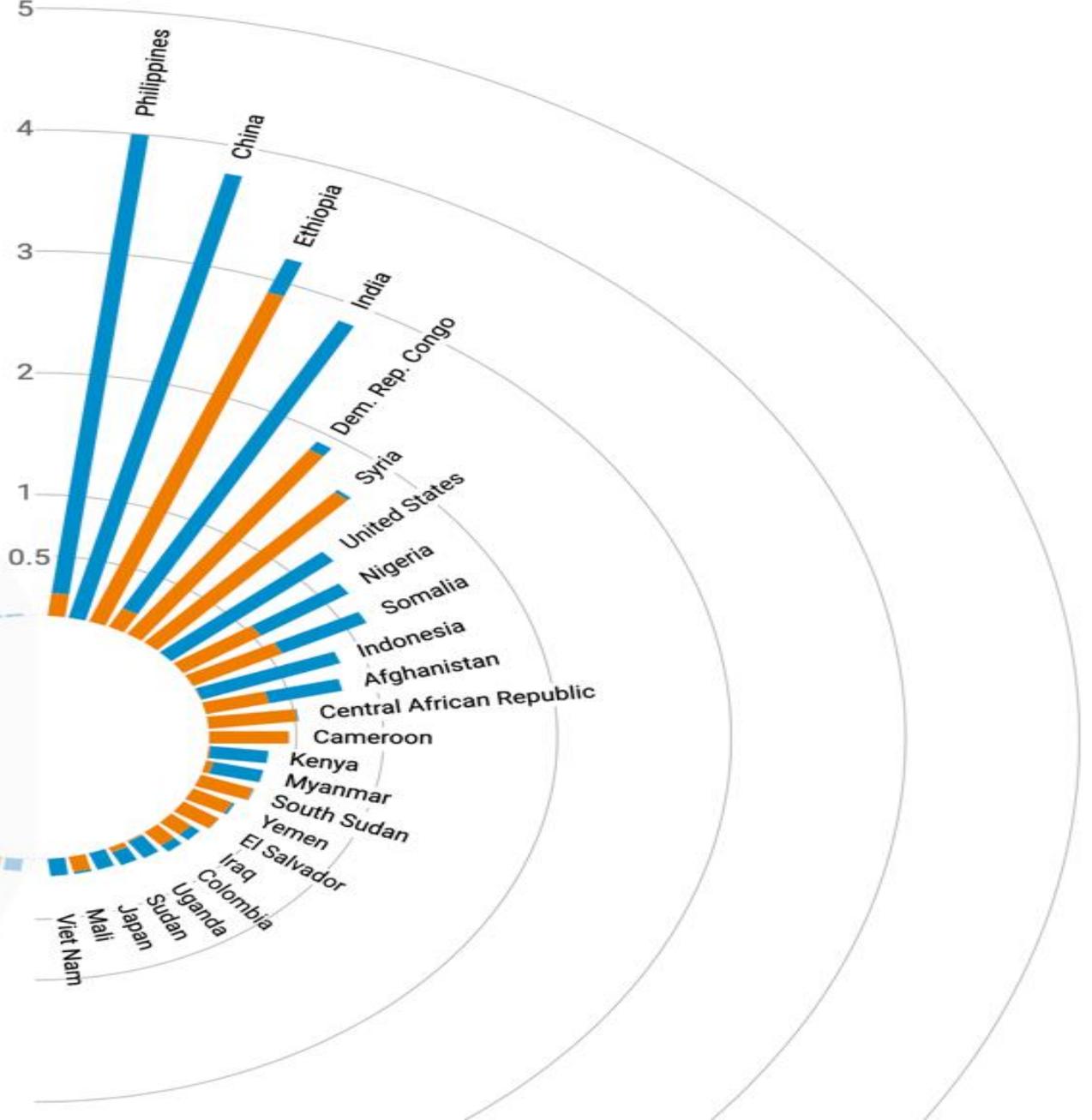
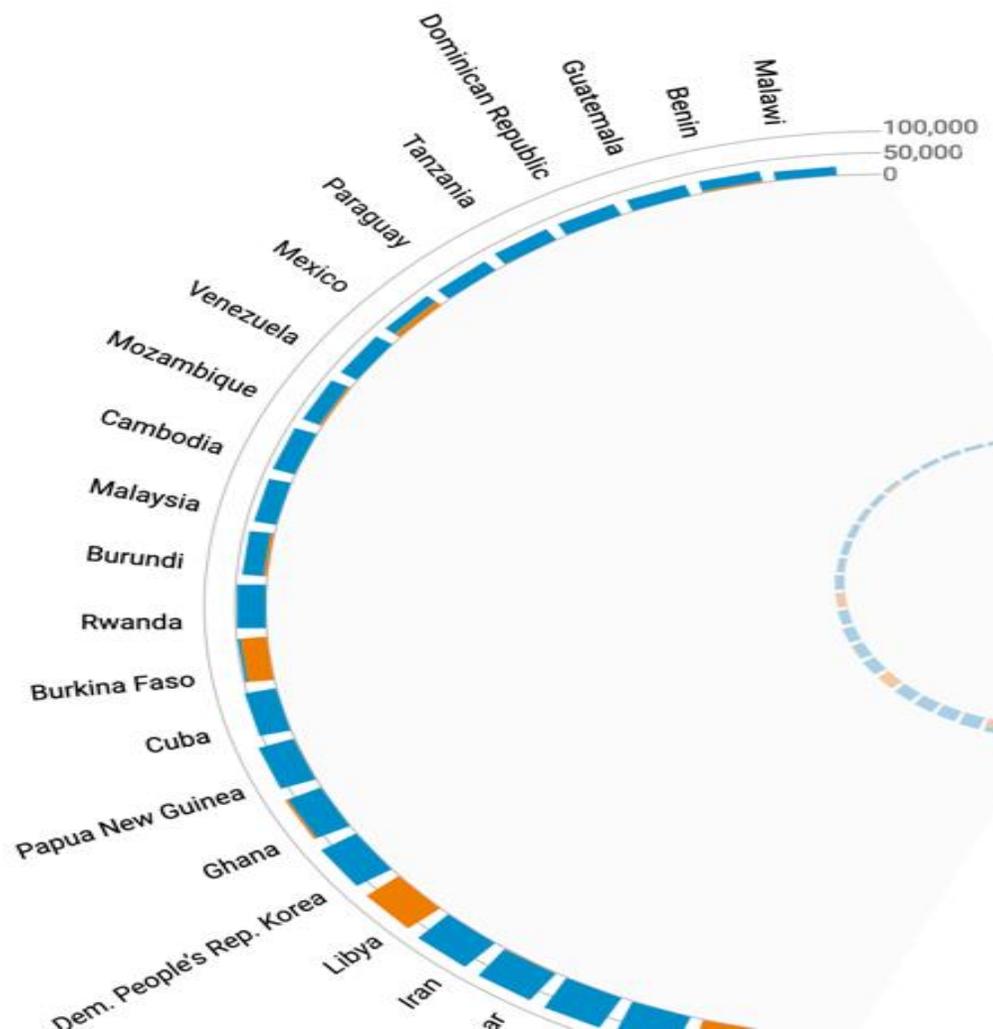
The country names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures. The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Highest number of new displacements in 2018 (50 countries and territories)

**Conflict**  
 Total new displacements:  
 10.8 million

**Disasters**  
 Total new displacements:  
 17.2 million

New displacements in millions



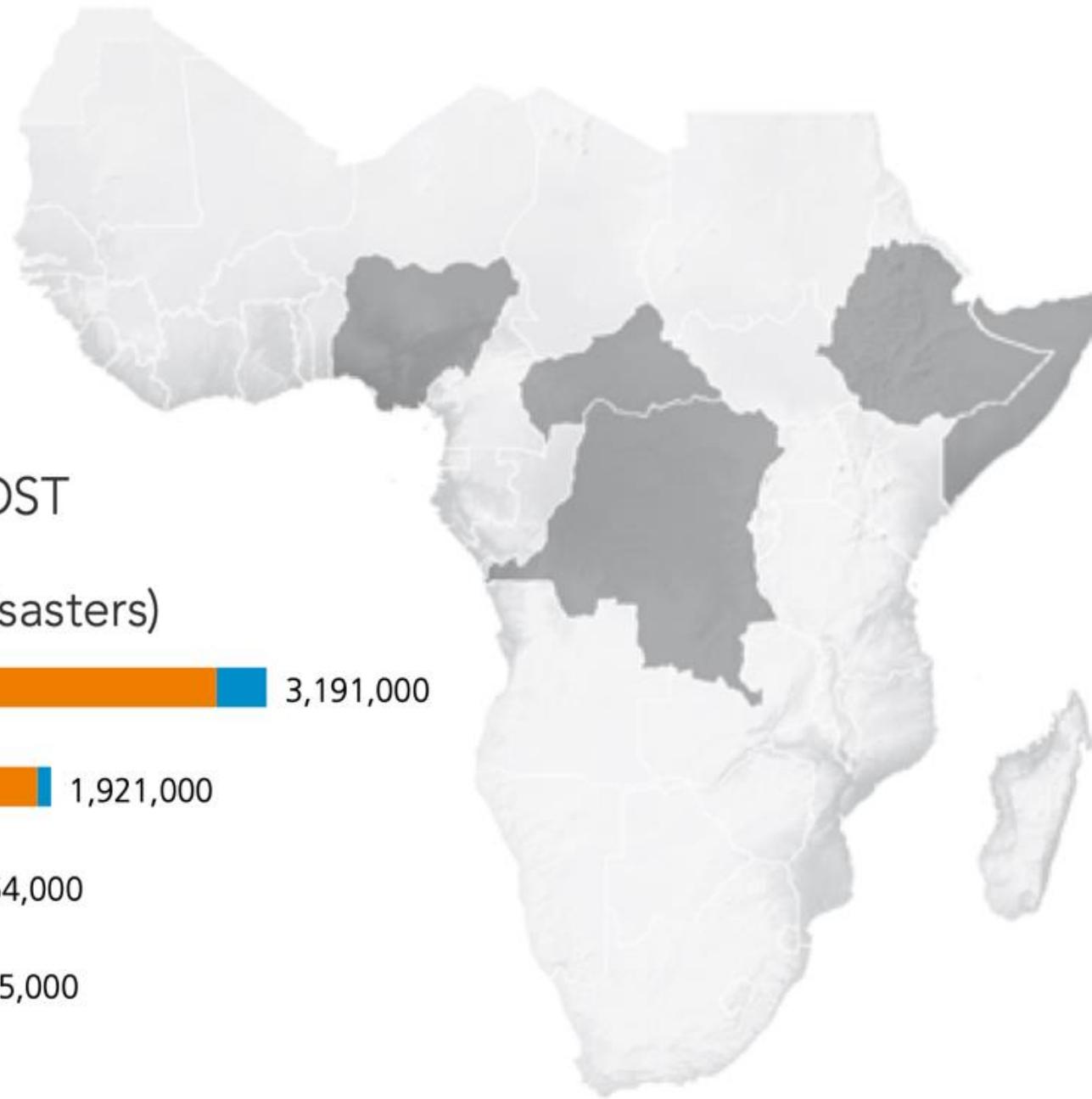
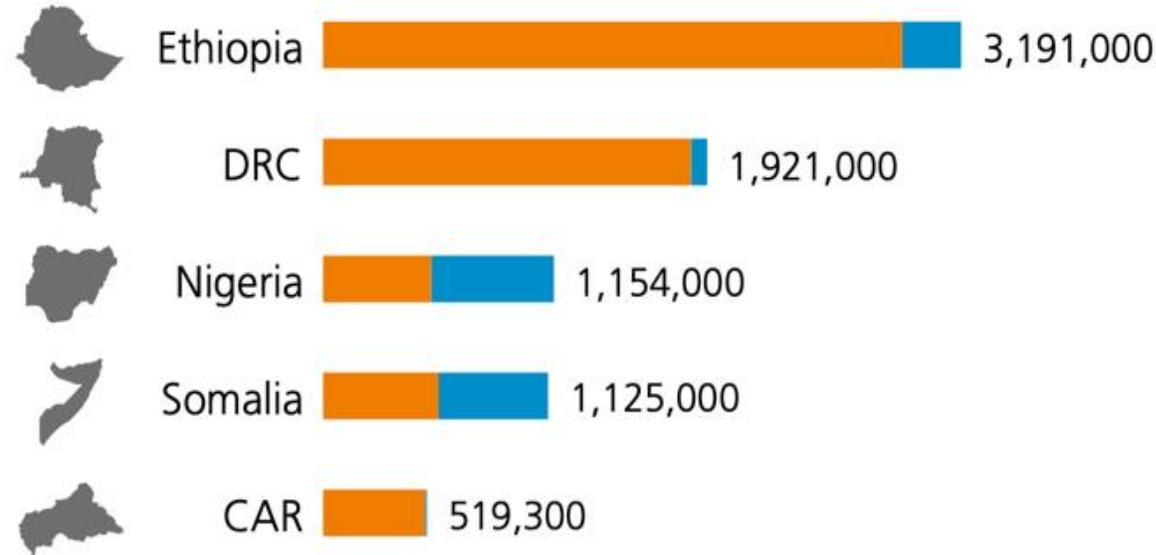
# SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



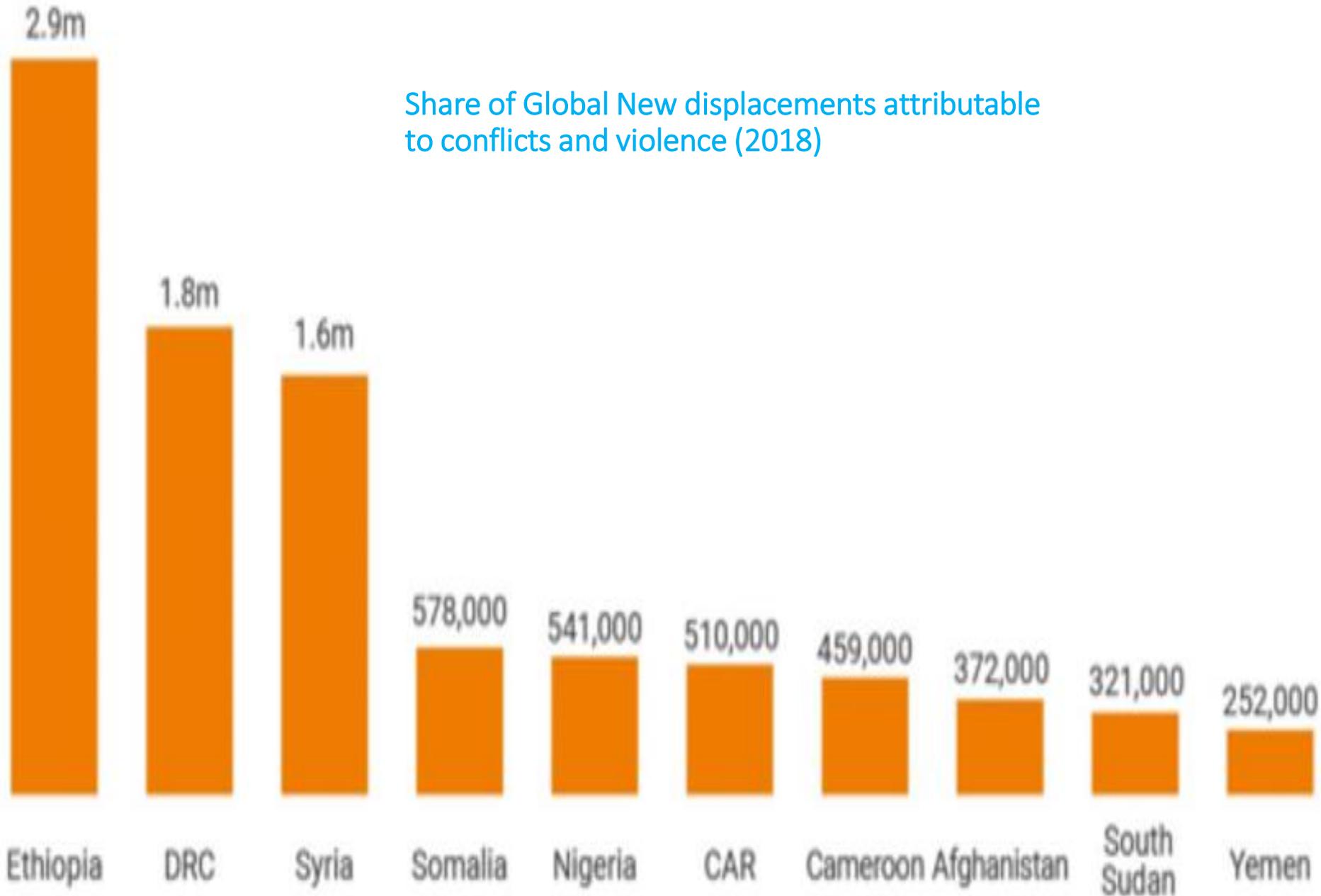
Conflict 7,446,000  
Disasters 2,611,000

36% of the global total

## 5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict, violence and disasters)



Share of Global New displacements attributable to conflicts and violence (2018)



**KEY POINTS**

➔ Recrudescence in communal violence and unresolved conflicts significantly over-represented in data of more than 10.8 million new displacements that have been linked with violence and conflict in 2018

➔ Ethiopia, DR Congo and Syria accounted for more than half of global trends

Conflict-related displacement

# Internal Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa (2018)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

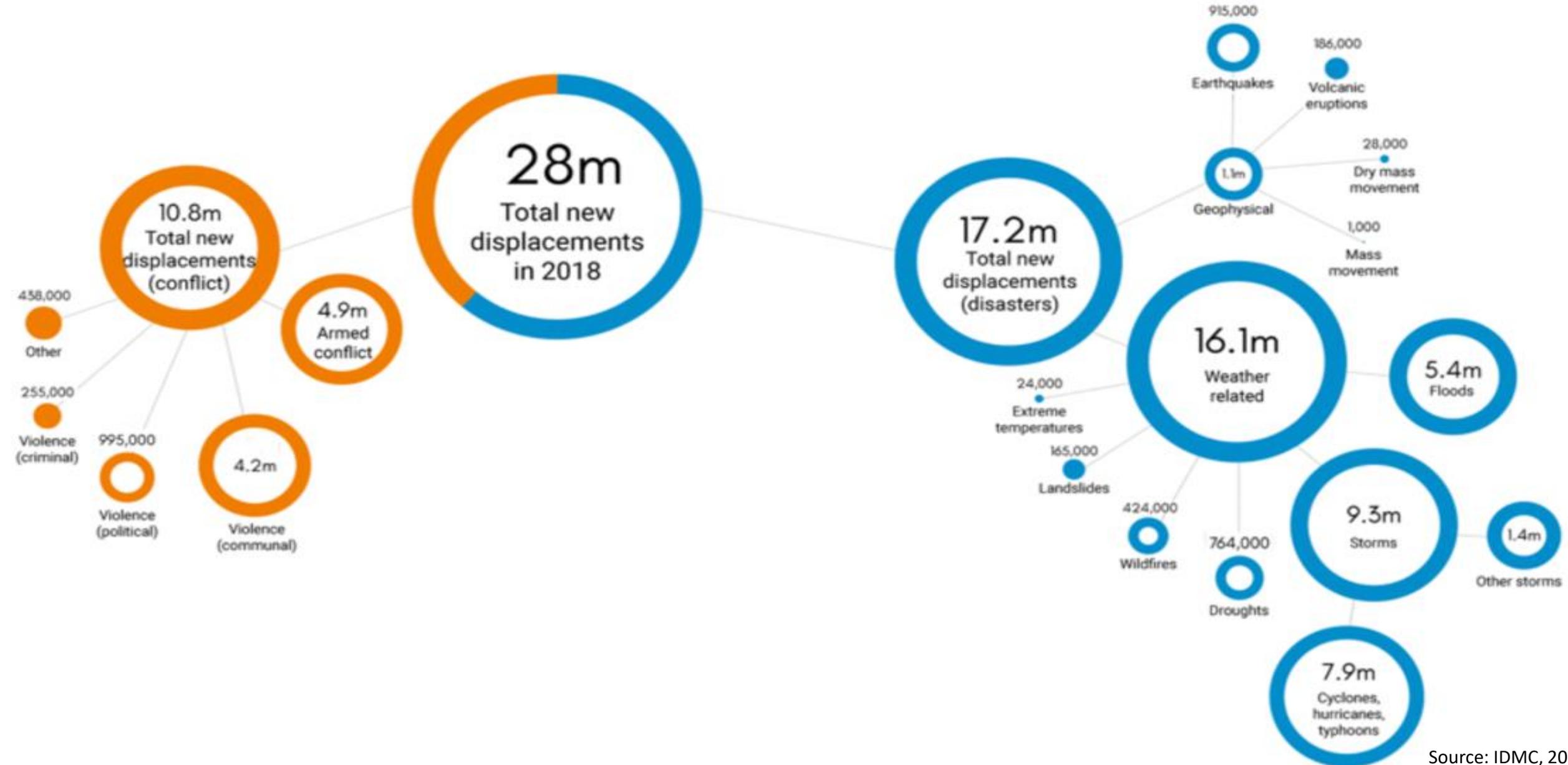
**7.4M**  
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Millions of people were forced to flee their homes as a consequence of ongoing and new conflict and violence, as well as droughts, floods and storms. Internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa was higher than in any other region.

# Disaggregation of new displacements in 2018 by conflicts, violence and disasters



# IDPs in Cameroon



**60%** are women



**43%** are children

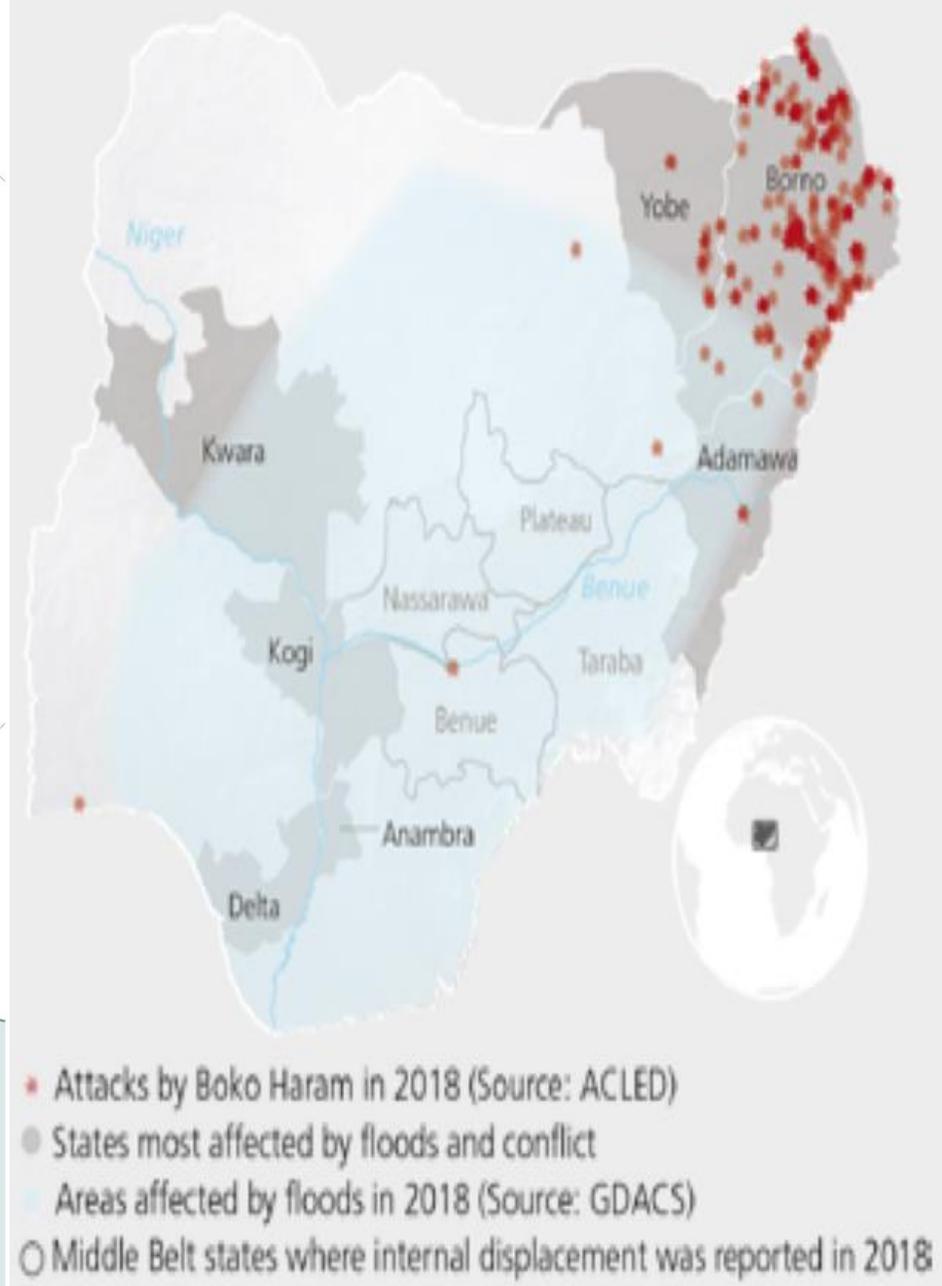
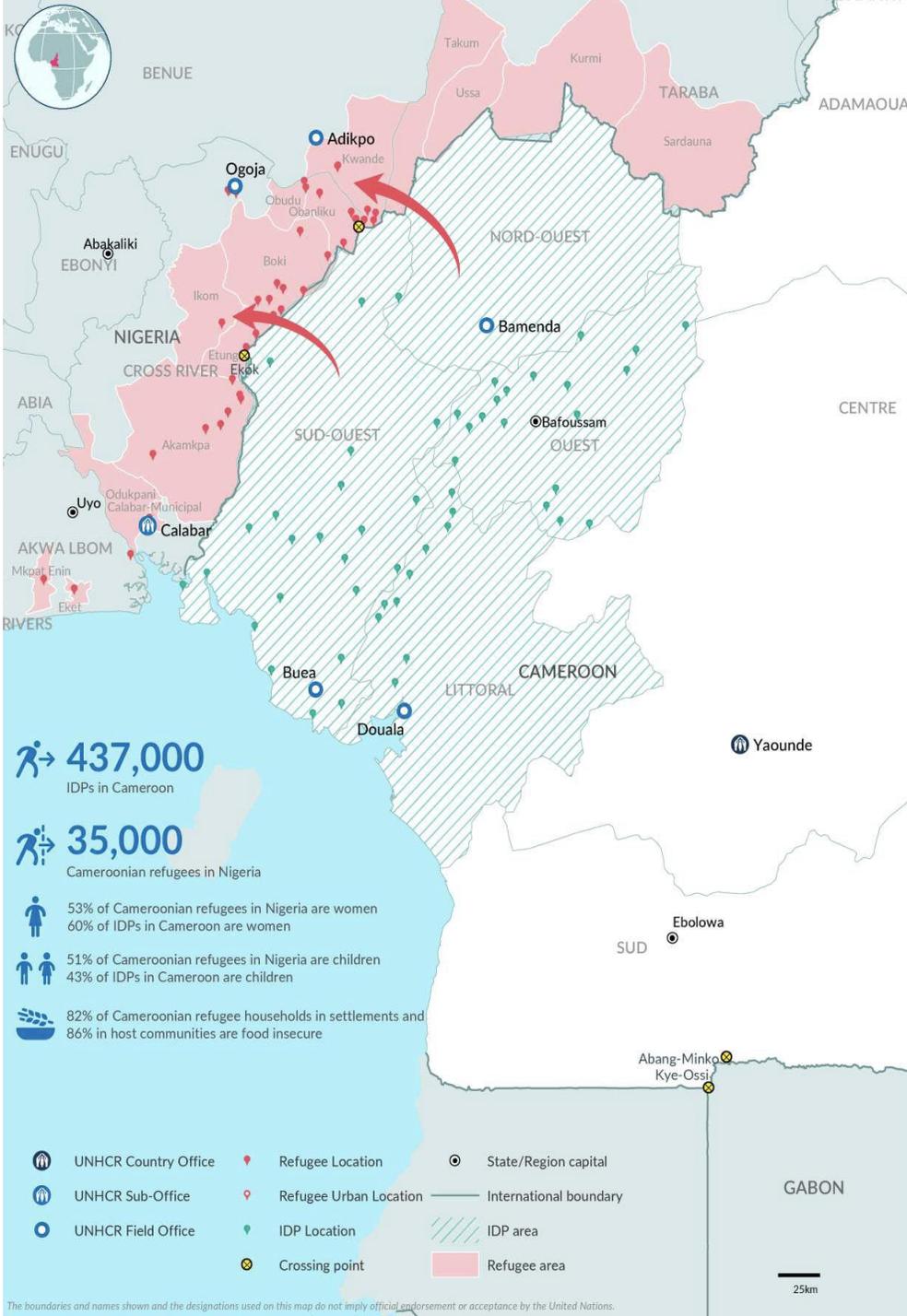
# Refugees in Nigeria



**53%** are women



**51%** are children



# Key drivers of forced displacement

- ❑ Conflict and bad governance: Some of conflicts in Africa are triggered by poorly organized and poorly managed elections.

As of 2017, [half](#) of world's 20 violent conflicts were in Africa. Affected countries and regions included the CAR, the DRC, Lake Chad Basin (Boko Haram-driven), Ethiopia (inter-ethnic rivalry), Somalia and Kenya (al-Shabaab), South Sudan and Sudan.

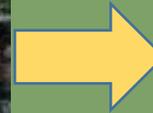
- Drivers include poverty, economic hardship, poor governance, youth socio-economic disenfranchisement, and election-related violence.
- ❑ Majority of displaced people are found in places experiencing violent conflicts. South Sudan has led to 2.4 million refugees and two million IDPs, over 800 000 refugees have fled the DRC and 4.5 million have become internally displaced.
- From Somalia, one million refugees have fled and 2.6 million are internally displaced.
- ❑ Natural disasters/ Climate change – lake Chad and Horn of Africa Somalia
  - Once mighty Lake Chad, a source of water and livelihoods for millions of people, has shrunk by 90 per cent since the 1960s.
  - Because of climate change, population growth and unregulated irrigation, the surrounding area suffers from desertification, deforestation and drought.
  - Recent floods in Mozambique, Zimbabwe floods etc.

The vicious cycle : If citizens lack trust in the credibility of option A, they often resort to option B, and bad African governments respond with option C, leading to Option D, E, and and outcome F

Option A



Option B



Option C



Outcome F



Option E



Option D

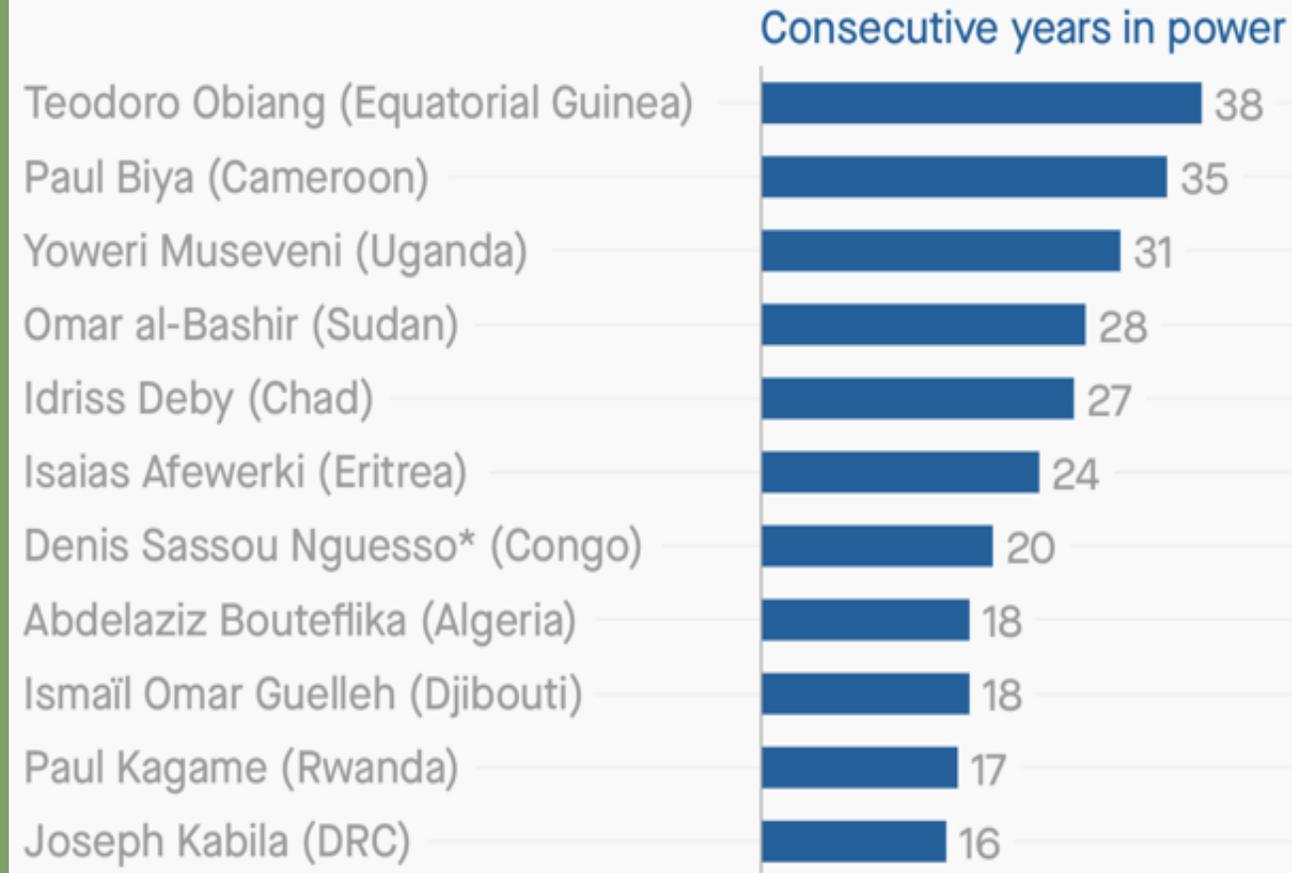


## The Youth factor in African elections

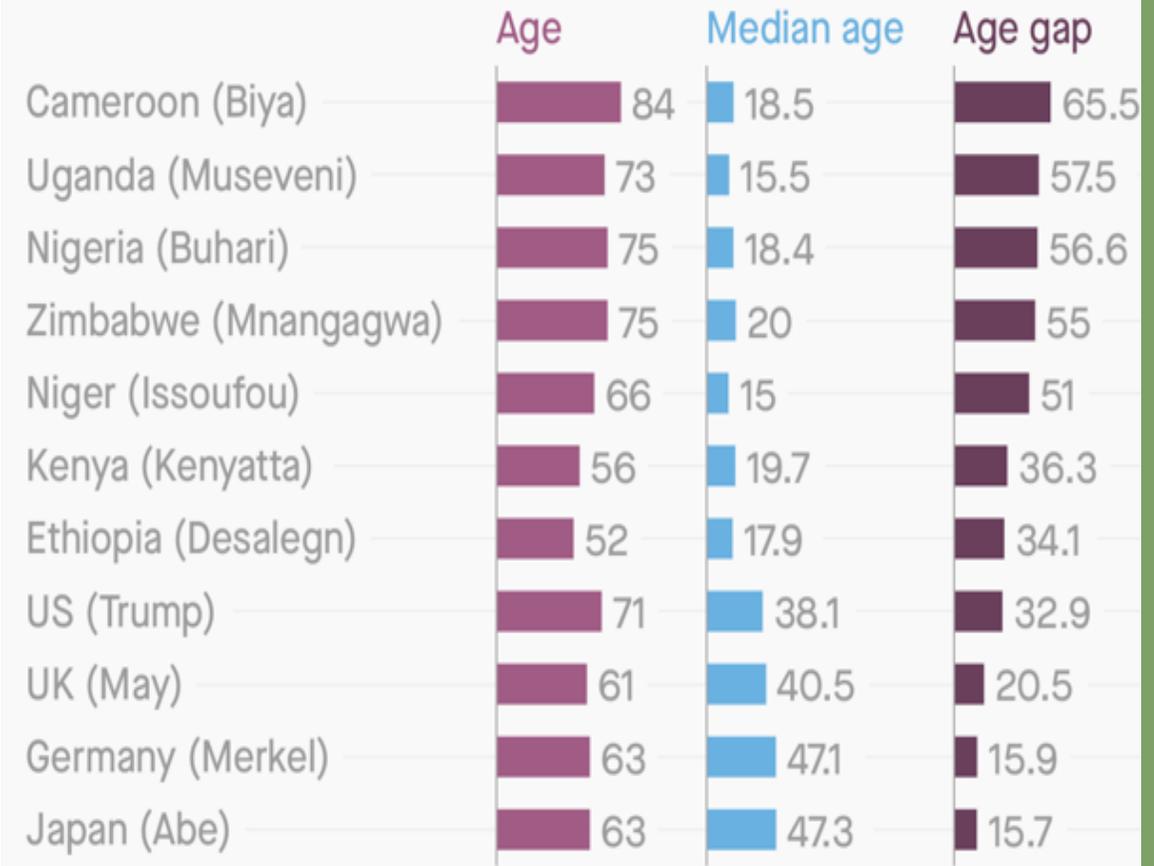
- Over half the world's 7.4 billion population currently aged between 20 and 44.
- In Africa: confluence of high fertility rates and low life expectancy has resulted in a “youth bulge”. UNDESA estimates that 70% of Africa's population is under the age of 30.
- World Bank (2014) : “each year between 2015 and 2035, there will be half a million more 15-year-olds than the year before” while population structure of the rest of the world is expected to further cascade towards the aging or soon-to-be aging demographic.
- Lethargic levels of youth engagement in formal /competitive politics – dominated by the older generation.
- Risk of undermining positive dividends of youth bulge in area of engagement in formal politics and governance.
- Youth bulge leading to an emerging crisis of representation.



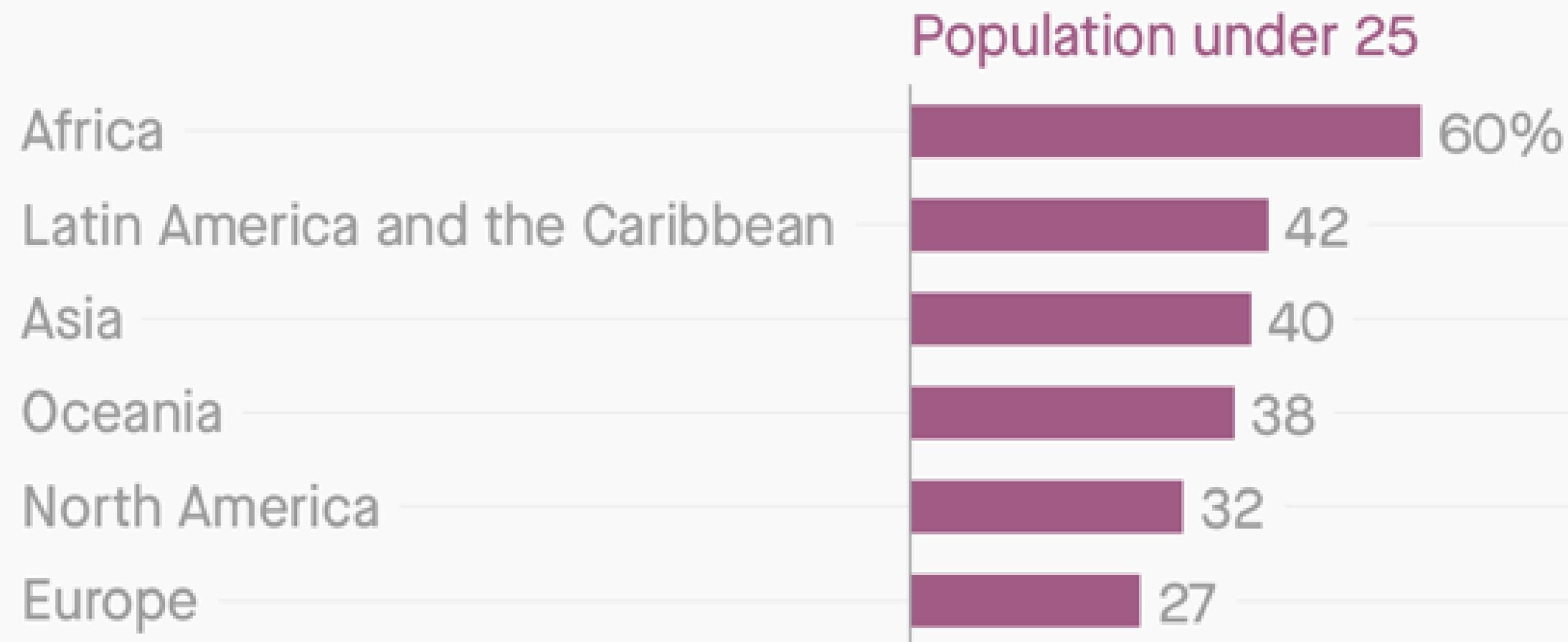
## Africa's current longest serving leaders



## Africa's older presidents lead young countries



## Africa is the youngest continent in the world (2017)



## Conclusion: the election-governance-displacement nexus and the central role of EMBs and other electoral actors

- Credibly organized elections are the cornerstone of democratic governance in any society, even so in Africa
- Poorly organized elections and entrenched regimes combine dangerously to drive up forced displacements across Africa
- The nexus between credibly organized elections and democratic governance is crucial in preventing and resolving the crisis of forced displacement in Africa.
- EMBs and other electoral stakeholders therefore play an invaluable role in the quest for durable solutions to Africa's refugee and displacement crisis.
- Africa's forced displacement problem is first and foremost an issue of governance which manifests itself in the form of humanitarian emergencies