

These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.

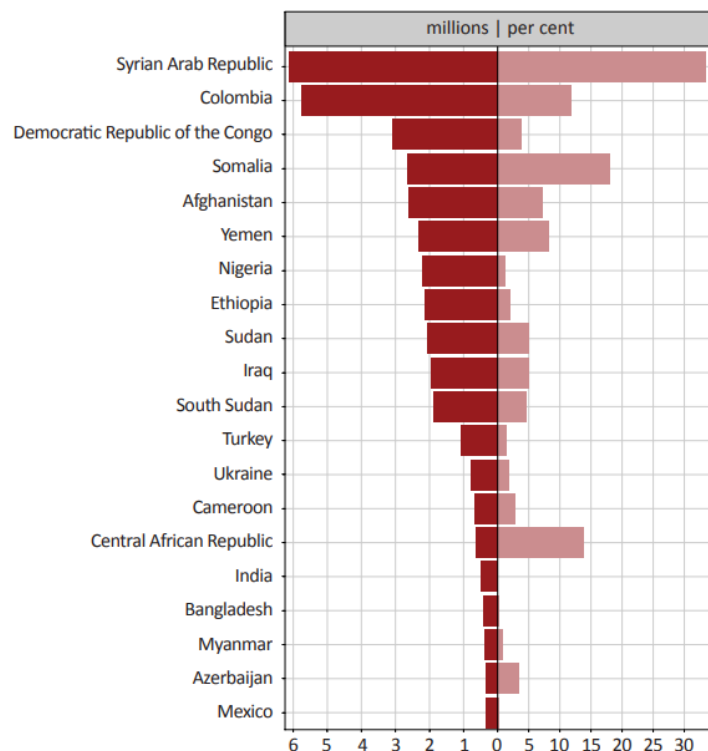
There were nearly [70 million forcibly displaced people](#) in 2018 globally, including more than [41.3 million Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#) and [25.9 million refugees](#). The spread of COVID-19 threatens to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of those who are displaced, many of whom live in challenging environments.

Developing regions host most displaced people

A significant number of displaced people live in developing countries, many of which already faced significant challenges to their healthcare systems even before COVID-19. Of the more than 40 million IDPs displaced by conflict and violence at the end of 2018, most were in developing countries. Further, an estimated [85 per cent of refugees](#) are hosted in developing regions.

With healthcare systems that are overwhelmed, under-funded and [some battered by on-going conflict](#), displaced populations in these regions risk being further excluded and not getting the healthcare support that is needed.

Top 20 countries with the largest stock of internally displaced persons by conflict and violence, 2018



Source: IDMC 2019 in the [World Migration Report](#)



Crowded conditions

Many IDPs and refugees continue to live in [overcrowded conditions](#), where social isolation, which has become standard advice all around the world, [is nearly impossible](#); a large number live in congested settlements, camps and shelters and there are [growing fears](#) that should COVID-19 enter camps, it could spread quickly and be difficult to contain. Some camps, including the Ritsona open accommodation site in Greece, have already reported infections and IOM is [working to help decongest the camps on Greek islands](#).

Poor living conditions

The environments in which many displaced people live are without easy access to water, sanitation and healthcare services, conditions that make it difficult to control the spread of COVID-19. As part of its [strategic response](#) to the crisis, IOM is enhancing access to water and hygiene measures across its operations. In camps such as those in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, IOM has already [ramped up](#) its Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) responses, ensuring the provision of hand washing stations and hygiene kits including disinfectants and extra soap.

Impact on humanitarian funding

As governments are focused on COVID-19, there are fears that humanitarian funding, which is already limited, [may be further impacted](#). Some donor states are under pressure to divert humanitarian funding toward COVID-19, and there is concern that some may halt funding altogether as their economies struggle. IOM and UNHCR, for example, recently [called for attention](#) to the escalating needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, as their conditions have worsened during the COVID-19 crisis. There are [concerns](#) that some of the most serious human catastrophes such as the situation in Yemen could worsen.



COVID-19-related travel restrictions

COVID-19-related travel restrictions are already having wide-ranging impacts, including on displaced populations. The delivery of [critical humanitarian assistance is threatened](#), refugee resettlement efforts have been [halted](#) while some asylum seekers have been left stranded. IOM has also [raised concerns](#) that these restrictions will not only curtail its humanitarian work, but could also hinder the ability of populations in camps to work and provide for themselves and their families.



Inclusion of displaced persons in pandemic plans

Some countries, including host states, are not [sufficiently including](#) displaced persons in their pandemic plans, which could undermine their overall efforts to stem the spread of the disease. Should there be widespread outbreaks in camps, [it is feared that IDPs and refugees may escape again to safety](#), which could trigger backlash from local populations and authorities and potentially result in violence.

Guidance: camps and camp-like settings

To ensure that its staff are well-prepared to respond to COVID-19 in camps and camp-like settings, IOM has issued the [Camp Management Operational Guidance](#), which includes several frequently asked questions. IOM has also jointly with UNHCR, IFRC and WHO released [interim guidance](#), outlining COVID-19 readiness and response considerations for refugee camps and camp-like settings.

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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