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Student Officer: Aileen Aylin Hillhouse

Issue: Strengthening strategies to manage internal displacement and climate-driven migration

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Turkish International Model United Nations





Committee: African Union (AU)

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I. Introduction

In the past years, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants has increased significantly due to climate change. According to the UNCHR, “Over the past 10 years, weather-related disasters have caused some 250 million internal displacements – equivalent to around 70,000 displacements per day.” (United Nations) The increasing number of natural disasters is creating unsafe environments for people to live in, forcing many to leave everything behind and seek a new place to reside.

Climate change is quickly evolving and changing the lives of many. It is also unpredictable; many end up uprooting their lives without any preparedness. Some can migrate, and some end up being internally displaced. Migrants are those who choose to leave the area they are in. On the other hand, IDPs are the ones who typically don't have the chance to leave the nations they are in and are forced to leave the area where they were residing for a new location within the same borders.

Typically, migrants are protected by international treaties and conventions. Even though there are plenty of documents that, in theory, are there to ensure the migrants' safety, they aren't always foolproof. As mentioned before, Climate change is constant and unpredictable. The drastic changes happening have led to a large number of migrants. It gets harder for nations to accommodate a higher number of migrants, which leads to a number of migrants without a place to go. Many people do what they must to survive, which could lead them to become trafficked, killed, etc. In addition, some migrants, like climate-migrants, aren't protected by some big universally accepted treaties and conventions. This further leaves them vulnerable to harsh treatment and in a void of not knowing what exactly is going to happen to them.

Internal displacement occurs within the same nation, so the treatment IDPs face around the world is solely up to the government. The lack of a universally standard practice of assisting IDPs leads to a large number of IDPs' well-being being disregarded. The way the IDPs are handled is related to different things, such as a nation's economic capacity, resources, etc. If a nation is lacking in these areas, the help it could provide decreases, possibly leaving many in dire situations.



II. Key Vocabulary

Displacement: “the situation in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live:” (Cambridge Dictionary). The groups of people this report is focusing on are the ones who had no choice but to leave the area where they resided. The key phrase here is that they were forced. Being displaced is not a choice.

Internally Displaced Persons: “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border.” Basically, people who had to leave their homes and relocate within the borders they were already in. (United Nations, “OHCHR | about Internally Displaced Persons”)

Migrant: “Migration is the movement of people away from their usual place of residence to a new place of residence, either across an international border or within a State.” (International Organization for Migration) Migration can be a choice or forced. When one is forced to migrate, it becomes displacement. (Shamsuddoha et al.)

Human Trafficking: “Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, to exploit them for profit.” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

National Sovereignty: “National sovereignty is a core principle of international law governing international relations, which affirms States' independence and authority to govern their domestic jurisdiction, subject to their international law obligations by virtue of customary international law and the treaties they have ratified.” (United Nations, “National Sovereignty”) It is when a nation has total jurisdiction over its own territory, basically no other nation can interfere in its decision or have a say in national matters.

III. Involved Countries and Organizations

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC):

The IDMC was founded as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998. The IDMC provides confirmed data on the number of IDPs and gives an estimate of the number of people who could become internally displaced. According to the IDMC's Grid 2025 report, there were 5.7 million IDPs due to disasters (earthquakes, storms, rains, droughts, etc.) in 2024 in the Sub-Saharan African region. The report displayed



that the number of IDPs due to disasters in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) Region was 203,000 by the end of 2024. (IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

“UNHCR is working to increase the understanding of international protection entitlements arising for people displaced in the context of climate change and disasters, and to increase the technical capacity of state institutions and other partners to respond to asylum claims of people displaced in these contexts. UNHCR is assisting States to protect and support their citizens in situations of internal displacement and supporting the development of laws and policies relevant to internal displacement in the context of climate change.” (UNHCR). The UNHCR is working towards helping the IDPs and migrants with their transition, trying to make proper shelters, food and drinking water available for all.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR):

The UNDRR aims to create early warning systems. The early warning systems could help with residents' readiness. When residents are aware of certain disasters beforehand, they can take the necessary precautions to prevent a lot of damage, i.e. ensuring their home will be stable enough to withstand the incoming danger.

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR):

“Established in 2006, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) is a global partnership that helps low- and middle-income countries better understand and reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change.” (GFDRR). The GFDRR assists countries before a disaster occurs and after the fact. They aim to ensure the nations and residents in the affected area are safe and ready for disasters, whether through preparedness or economic measures.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):

The IFRC works towards assisting governments in implementing new tactics and laws for them to be able to tackle the issue of IDPs and migration due to climate-related issues. There are national Red Cross societies within the African continent. For instance, the Mozambique Red Cross Society assists the nation by “Reducing risk from recurrent hazards [through] flexible, forecast-based financing” (IFRC). The Namibia Red Cross Society provides “Humanitarian assistance for people moving across borders” (IFRC) within the nation.



Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):

ECOWAS was created in 1975. Its current members are Gambia, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde, Benin, Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, "The aim of the Community is to promote cooperation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations-among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent." (Inaju-Challydoff)

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):

"The founding leaders of IGAD were motivated by a vision where the people of the region would develop a regional identity, live in peace and enjoy a safe environment alleviating poverty through appropriate and effective sustainable development programmes. The IGAD Secretariat as the executive body of the Authority was given the mandate to achieve this goal." (IGAD). The IGAD has worked to develop solutions to the issue of forced displacement.

International Organization for Migration (IOM):

The IOM, which has offices in 171 nations, 175 members, and 8 governments with observer status, is committed to ensuring orderly and humanitarian migration for all. The IOM offers support to all by offering guidance and coming up with practical solutions for the constantly changing situations of migrants. The IOM works with both governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

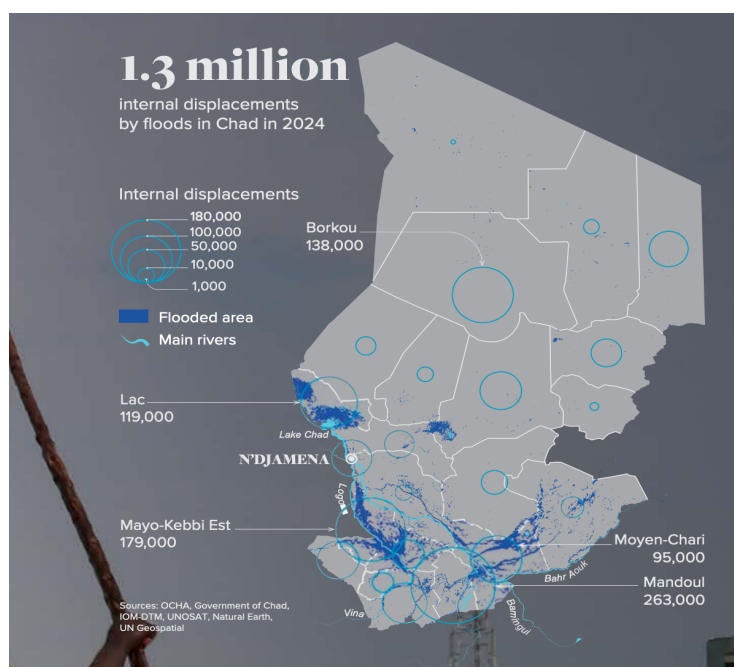
Nigeria:

After the big floods hit Nigeria in 2024, many became internally displaced. Camps were created to accommodate those who were displaced in the region of Borno. However, the camps weren't up to standard. Even after the IDPs' land was safe to live in after the flood water had receded, many couldn't go back or opted to stay in the camp as they had lost their source of income. Some of the places affected by the floods were agricultural areas, which were then ruined. Without a proper source of income, the inhabitants of the area would've had a hard time getting back on their feet after resettling. The ongoing conflict in Nigeria put many of the IDPs in danger. Some residing in the camps got hurt during the conflict.



Chad:

The IDMC has noted that “Chad is the world’s most vulnerable country to climate change, and internal displacement is becoming one of its most visible impacts.” (IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement). The big floods that have hit Chad in 2022 and 2024 have resulted in an estimated 1.3 million internal displacements. Chad has always faced internal displacement problems due to its geographical location being prone to flooding. Chad has received humanitarian aid throughout the years and has tried to take preventive measures. However, they have evidently fallen short.



(An image of the internal displacements within Chad due to floods in 2024)

Somalia:

Somalia has had many IDPs due to various climate issues. In 2020, Somalia was faced with floods, which caused an estimated 900,00 IDPs. Later on in 2022, Somalia faced droughts. By the middle of 2022, about 700,000 people had become displaced. The fickle conditions, in addition to Somalia’s issues with conflict, led to a lot of displacement. “The World Bank indicates that if the growing cities in Somalia are managed well, they can be centers of innovation and economic development. However, if they are poorly managed Somalia’s fragile stability could be affected. The increasing rural migration to cities and towns is putting pressure on the limited services and infrastructure. Competition over limited social services and opportunities in urban areas could create tensions between the host communities and new arrivals.” (IOM Somalia) By the end of it, many could not go back to their homes, meaning their temporary shelters turned out to be unfit residences.



Ethiopia:

“According to DTM Ethiopia’s National Displacement Report, as of September 2023, more than 3.45 million IDPs were identified in the country, of which 18 per cent were displaced in sites where the majority is displaced due to drought and seven per cent in sites where the majority is displaced due to other climate factors.” (IOM). Sudden floods and droughts are negatively affecting the lives of many Ethiopians. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) helps fund, etc., to get the nation back on track. In addition, Ethiopia itself is also conducting community-based initiatives. “IOM Ethiopia implements community-based green interventions across Ethiopia, focusing on various aspects of climate adaptation. These initiatives encompass natural resource management, the establishment of climate resilient infrastructure such as irrigation systems and flood diversion structures,” (IOM).

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):

Large rainfall in the DRC led to rivers overflowing and causing floods in different parts of the country, like the capital city. Many became displaced and had to be moved. However, the ongoing conflict within the nation made it hard for the IDPs to find a safe and constant shelter to reside. As the floods continued, the conflicts did as well, making many more displaced and in need of shelter. The ongoing conflict and disaster made the citizens in dire need of humanitarian aid.

Internally displaced people (IDPs)

34.8m
at the end of 2023

46%
Share of the
global total

32.5m
IDPs by conflict
and violence

2.3m
IDPs by
disasters

Countries with the most IDPs

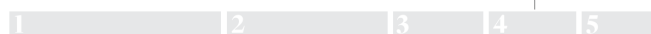
Sudan
9,053,000

Dem. Rep. Congo
6,734,000 | 147,000

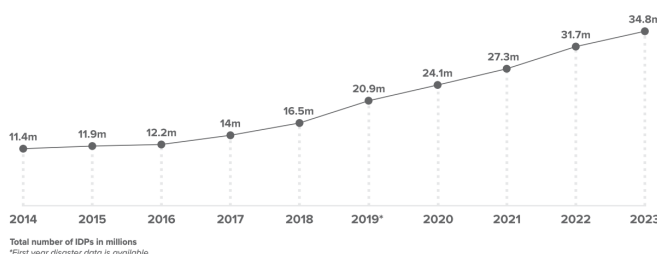
Somalia
3,862,000

Ethiopia
2,852,000 | 881,000

Nigeria
3,340,000 | 81,000



Number of IDPs (2014-2023)



(Total Number of Internally Displaced People by the End of 2023)



Internally displaced people (IDPs)

38.8m
at the end of 2024

47%
Share of the
global total

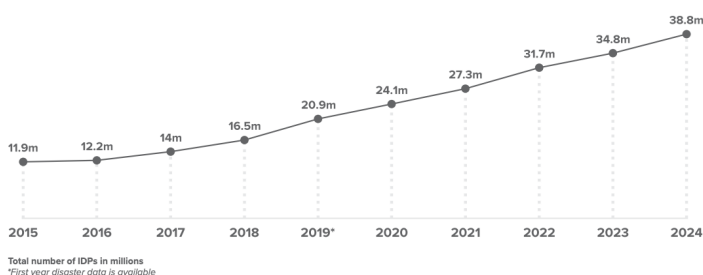
33.1m
IDPs by conflict
and violence

5.7m
IDPs by
disasters

Countries with the most IDPs



Number of IDPs (2015-2024)



(Number of IDPs at the End of 2024)

IV. Focused Overview of the Issue

1. Lack of International Protection and Recognition:

The term 'climate refugee' gained recognition in 1985. This leads to many conventions and treaties not recognizing those who migrated due to climate-related issues. The 1951 Convention on Refugees is one of the conventions that doesn't acknowledge climate refugees. This makes people who are in search of a new and safer place to live unprotected and left out in the open. In addition, the care of IDPs is solely based on the nation they are in. The treatment IDPs get can change from nation to nation based on the legal systems. The absence of a binding international convention and treaty leaves the Human Rights Declaration to fall on. Even though the Declaration is clear on the necessities people must have, this is not enough to ensure the protection of the IDPs and migrants.

2. Insufficient Disaster Risk Reduction Systems:

"Disaster risk reduction [DRR] is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development." (UNDRR, "Disaster Risk Reduction"). The 'Midterm Review Report' states that 125 countries of 195 have some sort of DRR systems in place. Even though this seems like a lot, the lack of DRR strategies in 70 nations is alarming. Also, the systems in place don't always perform as they should. Some nations invest more time and money and importance in developing and upgrading their systems,



while some countries don't. For instance, in a Turkish 2023 Hatay earthquake survivor named Mustafa Kemal Kiling stated that, "I am here today because our building did not collapse. This is because our contractor had applied high standards to make our building earthquake resistant," ... "We cannot predict natural hazards. But, we can certainly be prepared whenever and wherever they happen," ... "I hope that as a result of your [UNDRR] work, there will be fewer disaster victims like myself around the world." (United Nations, "'Weak and Insufficient' Progress Made towards Disaster Risk Reduction | UN News") The lack of a set standardized DRR system within Turkey led to many deaths.

The lack of properly planned out evacuation routes and shelters is a big risk as well. For instance, many designated shelters aren't safe for different types of climate/natural disasters. The planned earthquake shelters in Padang City clash with red tsunami zones. Seemingly small clashes could ultimately lead to larger catastrophes. Padang City, located on the West coast of Sumatra Island, has a high probability of a tsunami occurring after an earthquake. If the earthquake refugees take shelter in the designated locations, they could lose their lives in a tsunami not long after they take cover. These types of cases show the importance of proper planning and strong DRR strategies.

3. Sovereignty Issues:

National Sovereignty is when a nation has sole jurisdiction over its own borders. Throughout history and ongoing issues, many governments have used their right to national sovereignty to inhibit others from meddling in their government affairs, borders, etc. However, playing the sovereignty card cannot be accepted when it comes to climate issues, as natural disasters like floods don't recognize country borders. "For example, transboundary droughts in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda are directly related to flooding across Southeast Asia, as seen in 1997, 2015–2016, and 2023." (Labh) As sea levels continue to rise, one nation's water border could technically take over another nation's land border. As borders slowly disappear, the problem of who has territory over a certain piece of land occurs. This shift could lead to bigger problems, such as the citizenship one holds, who the changing border now belongs to, etc. When nations don't work together, the issue of where and how IDPs and migrants will take shelter will arise.

If a piece of land that is near another country's border is deemed uninhabitable, many might choose or may have to migrate to the neighbouring nation. Nations might not support the idea of having a large group of foreign migrants and refugees entering their borders. Even though these people are in a dire situation, governments don't exactly know who they are and what their ill intentions might be. Thus, governments can become reluctant when it comes to helping others.



4. Sustainability Issues:

The amount of time IDPs and migrants spend in a shelter is hard to estimate. In some cases, the damage done to the homes of the IDPs and migrants is close to irreversible, or it takes a long time for the community to rebuild. This leads to overcrowding in the shelters, which puts everybody's life at risk. The overcrowding leads to conflicts within the community sheltering together, as well as those who were already residing in the area. According to the Gird 2024 report, many people from the Rutshuru and Masisi territories in the DRC became internally displaced and sought shelter in and around the capital Goma. The overcrowding led to disputes regarding food scarcity and land, which then led to more displacement in the neighbouring territory of Ituri. As many continued to move around to find safe shelter, various areas around the country started to face problems concerning hygiene, food, education, etc.

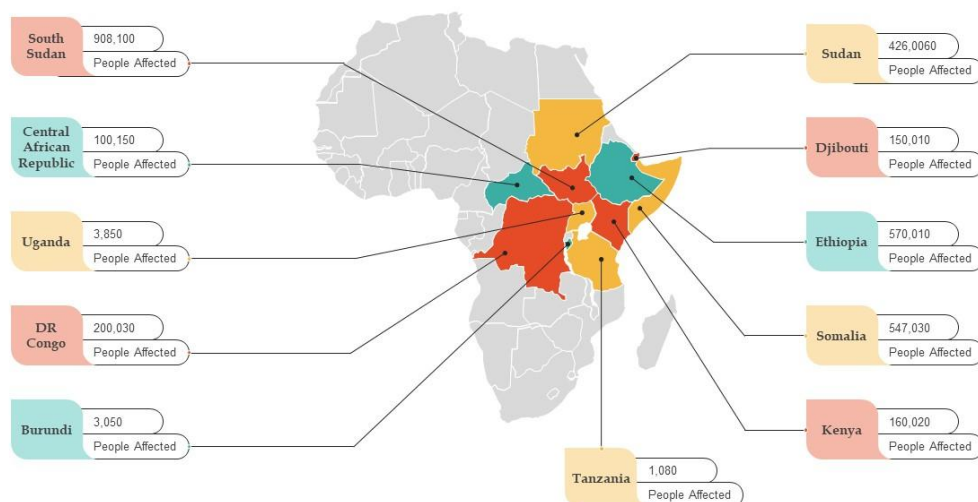
5. Lack of Durable Infrastructure and City Planning:

As the population increases, the number of houses increases. For everyone within a localized center, unplanned urbanization occurs. In order to create more housing, developers end up constructing on land that is not appropriate for living conditions. Oftentimes, land that easily pools water, and soil that is too soft to handle the weight of infrastructure are used. Sometimes developers cut trees in order to create more space as well. Cutting trees leads to deforestation, which could lead to droughts. When trees are cut in areas that are already prone to going through droughts, the urban planners and the government that approves of the operation are creating a pathway for many deaths and displacements.

Likewise, when land that can easily pool water or areas that are in danger of flash floods are inhabited, disasters are waiting to happen. Flash floods are “rapid flooding of low-lying areas in less than six hours, which can be caused by intense rainfall” (Napa County California). When these types of areas are covered with pavement and have no natural way to filter water out, the inappropriate housing can easily and suddenly be wiped away alongside the inhabitants. The lucky ones who survive end up being displaced, usually with nothing left.



Map Showing Floods Impact on East African Countries



This slide is 100% editable. Adapt it to your needs and capture your audience's attention.

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(Map Showing The Impact Floods Have on East African Countries)

6. Lack of Sufficient Healthcare Services:

The African continent is typically underfunded in healthcare. The healthcare systems aren't usually enough for everyone and cannot accommodate every illness's needs. The situation becomes even harder when displacement occurs. When people are forced to leave an area, they take what's needed and what they can carry. Unfortunately, that's not always enough to ensure proper healthcare. The occurrence of one becoming displaced and seeking shelter in a new, unknown area takes a huge toll on the body. The will to survive the disaster they have been through puts the migrants and IDPs in a state of survival mode. According to the London Psychiatry Centre, "Survival mode is an informal term to describe when a person is affected by a prolonged stress response. It is actually an ancient, ingenious setting your body has to protect you from danger (fight/flight/freeze/fawn). But too much time spent in survival mode can create a host of unwanted effects, both physically and mentally." (London Psychiatry Centre)

While someone is trying their best to survive the situation they are in, they could disregard physical and mental signs of their health degrading. By the time their symptoms come to a point where they can no longer be put off, finding adequate assistance might be challenging. The shelters aren't always well-equipped to save people from different types of situations. So, many people typically don't survive. Also, since these camps are typically really crowded, people who have different types of underlying illnesses could spread them to others. This creates a pool of various types of infections that could evolve and damage many in different ways.



V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
22/04/1954	The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, held on April 28th, 1951, was put into motion in 1954. This convention defines the term refugee and aims to protect their rights. (Freemovement)
1998	Endorsement of the Internal Displacement Guiding Principles. The Global IDP Project was established. In 2005, it changed its name to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).
May 2011	One of the first papers on how climate-related issues lead to displacement and how this issue has gained notoriety within today's world. To effectively manage climate-induced human movement, the study highlights the significance of incorporating humanitarian viewpoints into climate policy and promotes proactive planning, resource allocation and international cooperation.
November 2013	The Warsaw International Mechanisms for Loss and Damage was formed by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to address loss and damage related to climate change impacts, including extreme events and slow-onset events, in developing nations that are especially susceptible to the negative consequences of climate change.
2015	The Paris Agreement's Article 8 acknowledged the role of sustainable development in lowering the risk of damage and loss, as well as the significance of addressing, preventing and limiting the damage and loss related to climate change.
May 2020	The International Displacement in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change highlights the necessity of improving readiness, prevention and resons to disaster-related internal displacement. In order to lower risks and promote long-lasting solutions, it promotes creative strategies like the Memorandums of Understanding.



VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

Paris Agreement:

In order to tackle climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) implemented the Paris Agreement in 2015. Its main objective is to navigate the world towards climate neutrality by ensuring global temperatures don't go above 2 degrees Celsius. The Agreement acknowledges that different types of displacement and migration are affected by climate change. Thus, the agreement places a significant value on assisting vulnerable places and people.

General Assembly Resolution 46/182:

The Resolution focuses on the aid and protection of IDPs. The resolution states that individual governments are responsible for the care of the IDPs within their borders. The resolution highlights that there needs to be more preventative measures taken and assistance after the fact should increase to help all citizens, with a focus on groups like the disabled, children and women.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees:

The convention defines the term refugee and defines their universal rights and a standard form of treatment. However, the convention wasn't exactly perfect as it "was limited to protecting those who became refugees due to events occurring before 1 January 1951." (Freemovement). Leaving many unprotected and safeguarded.

Shelters Turning into Residences:

In some nations, like Nigeria and Somalia, the natural disasters that led many to become displaced weren't tackled sufficiently due to different issues like a lack of funding, resources, etc. This led to many not being able to go back to their homes, which turned into the IDPs having to reside in the temporary shelters.

VIII. Possible Solutions

Develop Binding protocols and standards for the care of IDPs. Create a minimum requirement on the standards of shelters, beds, food, care, and evacuation standards. Strengthen regional cooperation and assistance.



Create planned relocation plans. The designation of specific shelters and evacuation processes. Start evacuation procedures as quickly as possible. Help the IDPs get new jobs, education, healthcare, and ensure some sort of stability. Provide necessary housing grants.

Develop new systems for prevention and risk reduction. Strengthen Early warning systems, make the infrastructure strong enough to withstand disasters. Educate the general public on the dangers of climate change, how they could protect themselves from these types of disasters.

IX. Useful Links

https://www.climatecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/RCCC-Country-profiles-Chad_2024_final.pdf

This link gives a more detailed explanation of the climate crisis within Chad. Chad is located in the center of the continent and has one of the largest nations on the continent. Learning about other countries is a key factor in understanding how this crisis affects all.

https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/idmc-grid-2025-global-report-on-internal-displacement.pdf?_gl=1*_I9wn7k*_ga*MjEzNzY5MDk5Ny4xNzYyOTc2Nzk4*_ga_PKVS5L6N8V*_czE3Njl5NzY3OTckbzEkZzEkdDE3Njl5NzcyNjlkajQ3JGwwJGgw#page=19

Grid 2025 has a lot of information on internal displacement and details on the reasons some African nations had internal displacement, and how the issues were tackled.

<https://api.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/IDMC-GRID-2024-Global-Report-on-Internal-Displacement.pdf>

Likewise, Grid 2024 has similar information to Grid 2025.

<https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11411/files/documents/2023-11/10996.pdf>

Helps to get a deeper understanding of the issue of internal displacement.

<https://www.internal-displacement.org/search/>

The IDMC's search engine allows you to conduct research on a specific place and gives direct information on the internal displacement.

<https://reliefweb.int/search/results?search=Housing+Reconstruction+Framework>.

The website rendered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs gives up-to-date information on global humanitarian issues, including migration and internal displacement.



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