



2024 EMERGENCY WATCHLIST AT A GLANCE

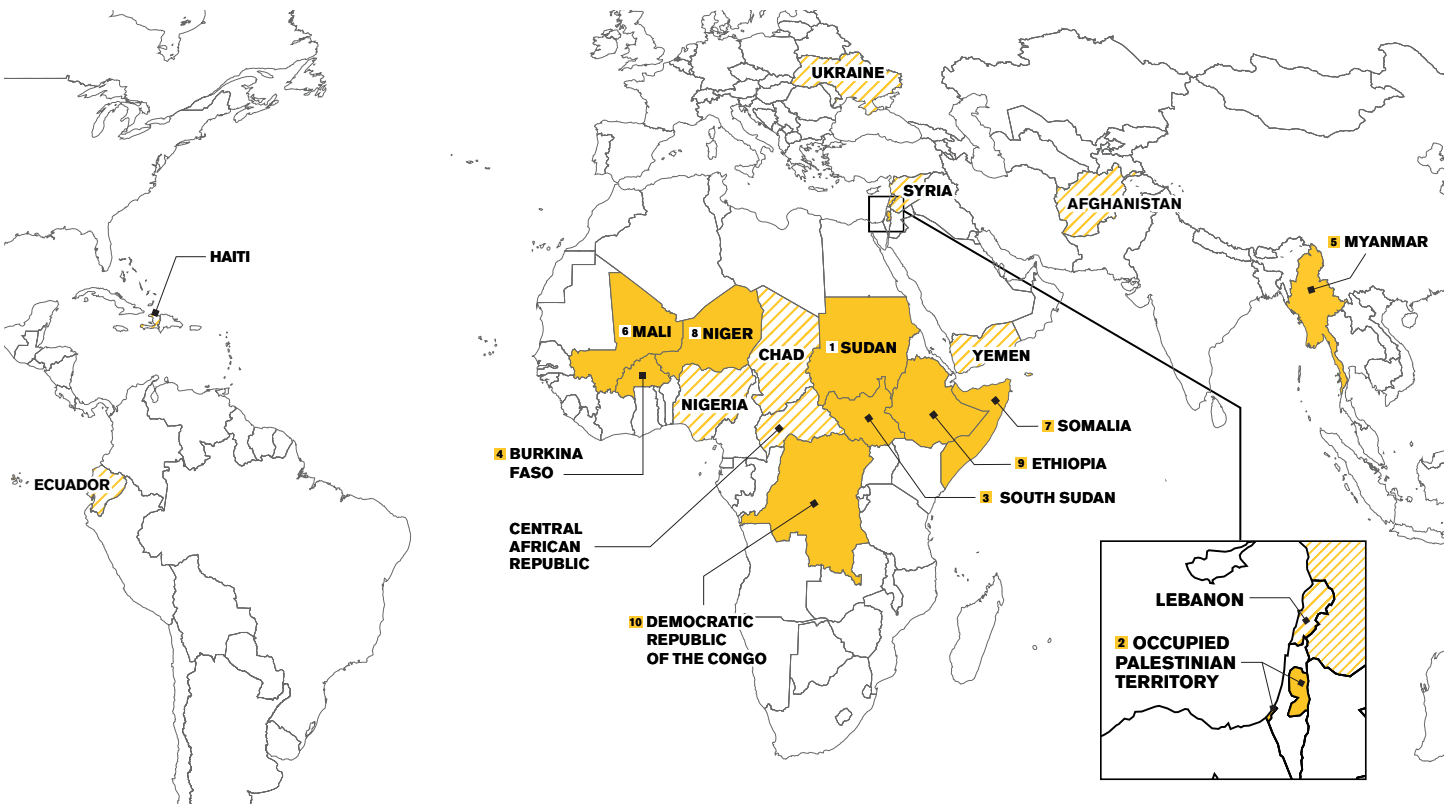
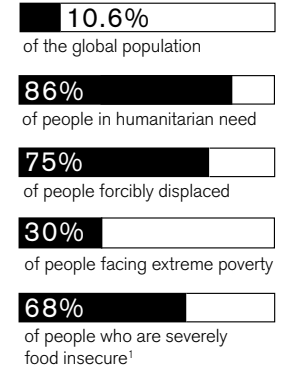
NO MYTHS JUST FACTS



The **Emergency Watchlist report** is the International Rescue Committee (IRC)'s assessment of the 20 countries at greatest risk of new humanitarian emergencies each year. It is based on an analytically rigorous process that deploys 65 quantitative and qualitative variables, as well as qualitative insights from the IRC's experience of working in more than 50 countries around the world to identify which countries to include on the list and where to rank them.

For the past decade, this report has helped the IRC determine where to focus our emergency preparedness efforts, successfully predicting on average 85-95% of the 20 countries facing the worst deteriorations. It is also where we share our analysis of how global humanitarian crisis is evolving, why, and what can be done to reduce the impact on affected communities.

The 20 Watchlist countries account for:



¹ Severely food insecure refers to **IPC 3** or worse levels of food insecurity.

EIGHT FACTS EXPLAINING THE EXTREME LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The overwhelming concentration of global humanitarian crisis in Emergency Watchlist countries allows us to use these countries as a lens through which to understand what is happening globally—and why. While the crises in each country on the Watchlist are shaped by local political, economic and security dynamics, there are eight facts we observe across the 20 countries that explain the growth and spread of crisis:

FACT 1

Armed conflict and climate change are increasingly converging in the same places at the same time. Fourteen Watchlist countries are among the 16 countries globally where armed conflict and vulnerability to climate change intersect.

FACT 2

Civilians are caught between states and the growing influence of armed groups—whether organized along political, communal, criminal or any other lines. Weak state capacity and legitimacy creates space for nonstate armed groups to gain influence, triggering new conflicts, intensifying old ones and driving up needs, displacement and food insecurity.

FACT 3

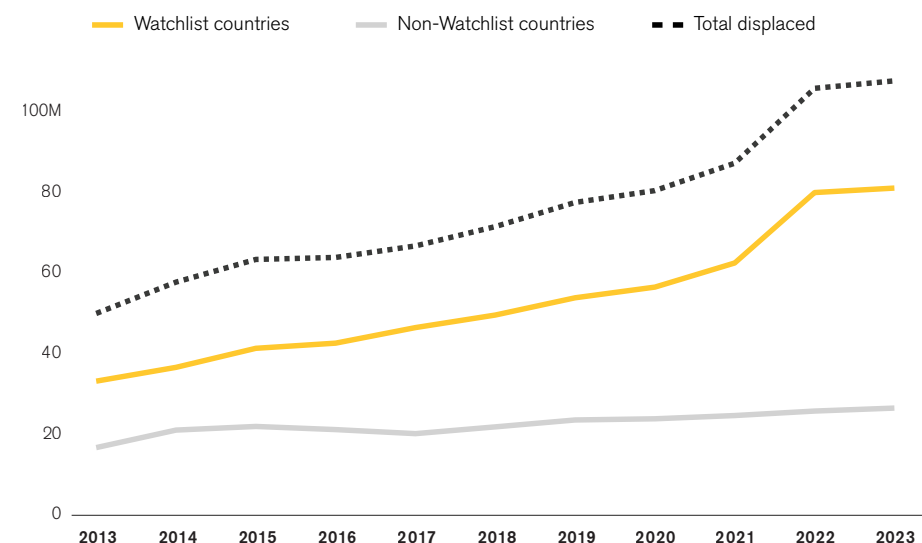
Regional and global powers are intervening to drive and intensify conflicts, not calm them. And even when they try to mediate conflict, their efforts are proving ineffective. Sudan is a case study in how **external intervention** can drive escalation, with multiple countries supplying weapons to parties to the conflict rather than pushing for peace.

FACT 4

Violent and unconstitutional leadership transitions are increasing the risk of crisis. Five of the top 10 countries—Mali, Sudan, Niger, Burkina Faso and Myanmar—have experienced coups in the last three years. The **resurgence** in military coups—particularly in Africa—leads to **insecurity** and, in turn, humanitarian crisis.



Watchlist countries make up the majority of the rise in global displacement since 2013



Source: UNHCR

FACT 5

Civilians and the infrastructure they depend on are increasingly unsafe as parties to conflicts disregard their obligations under international law. International Humanitarian Law obliges warring parties to mitigate the impacts of war on civilians, but this is happening neither consistently nor reliably. IRC teams around the world see this **Age of Impunity** in the crises affecting the communities we serve.

FACT 6

Parties to conflict are failing to uphold their responsibility to protect humanitarian access. Instead, they are restricting humanitarian access and targeting humanitarian personnel without facing diplomatic or legal consequences. Across Watchlist countries, humanitarian organizations and affected communities face high constraints accessing each other—in addition to physical, environmental and security barriers that hinder aid delivery.

FACT 7

Heightened exposure to climate risks is threatening lives and livelihoods—and El Niño could exacerbate these risks in some Watchlist countries. Communities in Watchlist countries contribute the least to climate change—only **1.7%** of global carbon emissions. Yet, they are facing a disproportionate burden of the climate crisis. In 2021, people in Watchlist countries were **2.75** times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than those in non-Watchlist countries.

FACT 8

The global increase in public debt is preventing some governments from investing in the systems and services to prevent and address humanitarian crisis. **Twelve** out of 20 countries on the Emergency Watchlist are either in debt distress already or are at moderate to high risk of falling into it, meaning that they **lack** the resources to meet their financial obligations.

THE MYTHS OBSCURING REAL AND PROVEN SOLUTIONS

The international community should know how to respond effectively to the human impact of the crises in Watchlist countries by now, even if it cannot resolve the root causes. However, a set of myths has taken hold of the policy and media discourse about these crises. As a result, decision makers in these bodies are turning to the wrong solutions. Busting these myths and replacing them with facts opens the doorway to better solutions that respond more effectively and break the cycle of crisis.

MYTH 1

Humanitarian access can be measured in truckloads of supplies alone.

Fact: Meaningful humanitarian access is about communities having ongoing access to the services they require to survive, recover and rebuild their lives. When reporting focuses purely on the number of trucks on the move, not what they are delivering or the feasibility of effective humanitarian action at the other end, it becomes harder to make the case for meaningful access.

MYTH 2

If you don't work with governments, you can't get anything done.

Fact: Governments are an important partner for promoting development but it is critical to have other options when governments are unable or unwilling to play this role. Otherwise, whole communities—even some countries—are denied access to critical development opportunities.

MYTH 3

The United States and Europe are already hosting more than their "fair share" of displaced people and shouldn't be expected to receive any more.

Fact: Watchlist countries and their neighbors are home to **79%** of non-Ukrainian refugees and displaced people globally; the U.S. and Europe host just **8%**—yet they are setting a tone that normalizes closing borders.

MYTH 4

Cutting emissions and restricting the rise of global temperatures is so important that we can't afford to spend money on adapting to climate change.

Fact: Even if the world achieves its most ambitious goals of curbing global warming to 1.5°C and emissions to net zero, people in Watchlist countries will still have to live with the current climate crisis—particularly flooding and droughts. But this myth means that inadequate resources are being invested in supporting countries like those on the Emergency Watchlist to adapt to climate change.

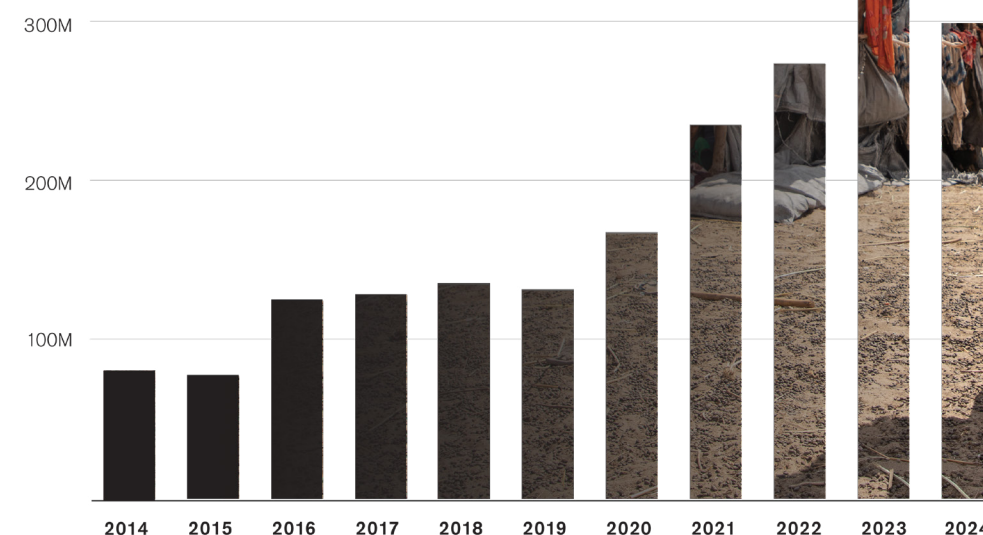
MYTH 5

Gender inequality is not a matter of life and death.

Fact: Gender inequality is life threatening to women and girls. This inequality blocks effective feminist humanitarian action, particularly to meet the needs of women and girls.



The number of people in need increased more than fourfold between 2014 and 2023



Source: Global Humanitarian Overview



Nadia Mohammed Fadhl and her family, including her son Abdullah, fled violence in Taiz, Yemen. They now live in a temporary shelter outside of Aden.

IRC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION



1 Save lives in fragile and conflict-affected states by investing in climate adaptation, resilience and anticipatory action

- **Increase funding for climate adaptation.** **50%** of all public climate finance to developing countries should be allocated to adaptation by 2025; 25% of adaptation finance should go toward conflict and climate-impacted countries, and 20% of funding to these contexts should flow to nongovernmental partners.
- **Support anticipatory action for climate-vulnerable communities.** Commit a minimum of 5% of humanitarian budgets to anticipatory action with a strategy to expand by 2030.
- **Make climate funding accessible and equitable.** Fulfill the **\$100 billion-per-year climate pledge** for climate action in developing countries and ensure funding is accessible to a diverse range of partners.

2 Tackle extreme poverty and economic drivers of rising humanitarian needs

- **Increase the World Bank's ability to work in complex emergencies by institutionalizing new funding and delivery partnerships** with a wider range of actors, including the U.N., I/NGOs and women-led organizations (WLOs).
- **States, donors and development banks should increase investment in inclusive social safety nets and cash responses**, with a particular focus on Africa.
- **U.N. member states should establish a new mechanism to forecast the humanitarian impacts of economic shocks**, housed in the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

3 Prioritize gender equality in crisis response and shift power and resources to women-led organizations

- **Increase funding available to women-led organizations.** Accelerate reforms to pooled funds and levels of funding channeled through feminist funds that are able to offer smaller, more flexible grants to local organizations, while holding Humanitarian Teams accountable for involving WLOs in response design and delivery.
- **Bilateral donors and U.N. agencies should rethink approaches to compliance and capacity sharing** to increase the ability of WLOs to compete for humanitarian funding.

4 Promote shared prosperity by increasing aid and tackling the debt crisis

- **Development Assistance Committee donors must commit half of all bilateral official development assistance (ODA) to fragile and conflict-affected states.** G7 donors should fulfill commitments to spend 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) on ODA—a step that would create an additional \$168 billion in ODA.
- **Expand World Bank resources to drive action against extreme poverty.** Donors should commit to triple International Development Association (IDA) funding by 2030.
- **Creditors should explore current and new approaches to free financing** to support humanitarian response, climate adaptation and social protection.

5 Support and protect forcibly displaced people

- **Governments should systematically apply a protection-centered approach to reception processes** to allow asylum seekers to find protection and access services, and reduce pressure on asylum systems.
- **Multilateral development banks (MDBs) should support initiatives that offer displaced people real opportunities for self-reliance** by supporting state-led regularization and integration plans—and accessible inclusive services.
- **Donors should provide multi-year funding to meet the humanitarian and development needs of refugee and host communities**, recognizing the specific needs of women and girls.

6 Stem impunity and reinforce International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

- **U.N. member states committed to IHL should bring forward response mechanisms applied in Ukraine for new crises as part of a new “Accountability Menu,”** for example by gathering evidence on violations of IHL and documenting and analyzing atrocities.
- **Support the France-Mexico proposal to suspend Permanent Members' use of the veto at the Security Council in cases of mass atrocities.**
- **Establish a new Independent Access Organization (IAO)** to improve understanding of access barriers and denial, and catalyze action by global, regional and national-level policy makers.



To read the IRC's full 2024
Emergency Watchlist, please visit:
[Rescue.org/Watchlist2024](https://www.rescue.org/watchlist2024)