

CLIMATE CRISIS: AN ISSUE FOR ANTI-RACISTS

The global climate emergency is here and growing evidence says Earth's climate is changing at a rate that has exceeded most scientific forecasts.

More and more people will become displaced from more frequent and intense weather-related events, and through the erosion of already fragile livelihoods and ecosystems.

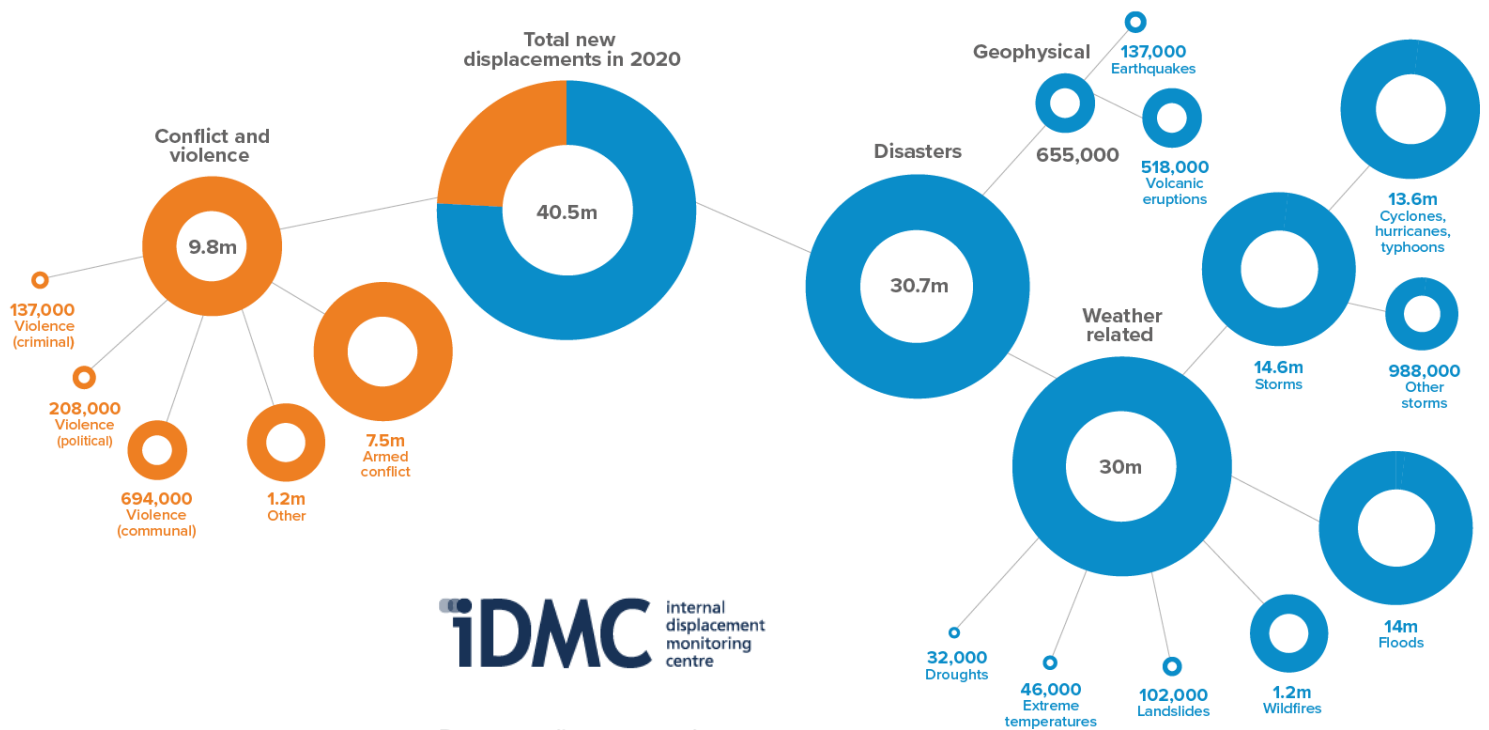
The climate crisis is going to affect human lives and humans will try to move to different places to build a new life. For hundreds of millions of people the consequences are happening now and in the immediate future.

Small island states are among the least responsible for climate change but they are likely to bear the brunt of its adverse effects and, in some cases, even become uninhabitable.

There are many complex reasons for migration but the climate crisis is increasingly a factor in these often interconnected issues leading to displacement of populations.

In 2019 almost 25 million new displacements across 140 countries and territories were recorded, three times the number of people displaced by conflict and violence. In 2020 it was 30 million.





World leaders resist calls to provide legal protections to displaced people, forced to flee increasingly inhospitable conditions. Instead of taking climate action they're looking at how to stop the flow of people, beef up border security and treat migrants and refugees even harsher than they are.

In better news, in October 2021, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council recognised access to a clean and healthy environment as a fundamental right. The resolution, first discussed in the 1990s, is shamefully still not legally binding but it is a small step forward.

August 2021 marked the 70th anniversary of the UN refugee convention but it doesn't enshrine the rights of 'climate refugees' or recognise the effects of the climate crisis. Campaigning for this to change would be a step forward but we have to address the cause not the symptom.

The same states fortifying their borders and fuelling racism against migrants and refugees are also those who have, for decades, failed to address climate change.

Governments that demonise migrants and refugees also assist the far right in stoking hatred with alarmist predictions of climate disaster and mass migration that 'threatens the white race'.

Increasingly, we're seeing not just attacks on refugees and migrants but attempts to criminalise solidarity with them. This is shown by the recent attacks on rescuing charity Royal National Lifeboat Institution, dismissed by racist Nigel Farage as a 'taxi service for migrants'.

We need to be the counter weight that mobilises the majority who want to see compassion at the heart of how we treat vulnerable people searching for a better life.

Communities are at the heart of that, as we witnessed with the global solidarity for the #BlackLivesMatter movement following the killing of George Floyd.

Or more recently, in Kenmure Street in Glasgow (May 2021) when over 1,000 people blocked a Home Office deportation in an inspiring challenge to Westminster's hostile environment.

We must continue to rail against the Home Office's new draconian immigration plans.

The global climate summit COP 26 is taking place in Glasgow in November. It is the most important yet: life on Earth literally depends on what agreements are struck there. Anti-racists must mobilise to pressure world leaders and demand climate justice is enshrined in any agreements struck.

People and their communities will be at the heart of solutions that can mitigate the worst impacts of wilder weather and rising temperatures or seas. Just as we saw at Kenmure Street the fusing of numerous networks for a shared humanitarian goal, so we have to foster the same links and unity towards the common goal of climate justice.

An approach that centres global justice, equality and solidarity can strengthen the movement for climate action and defeat the racists.