

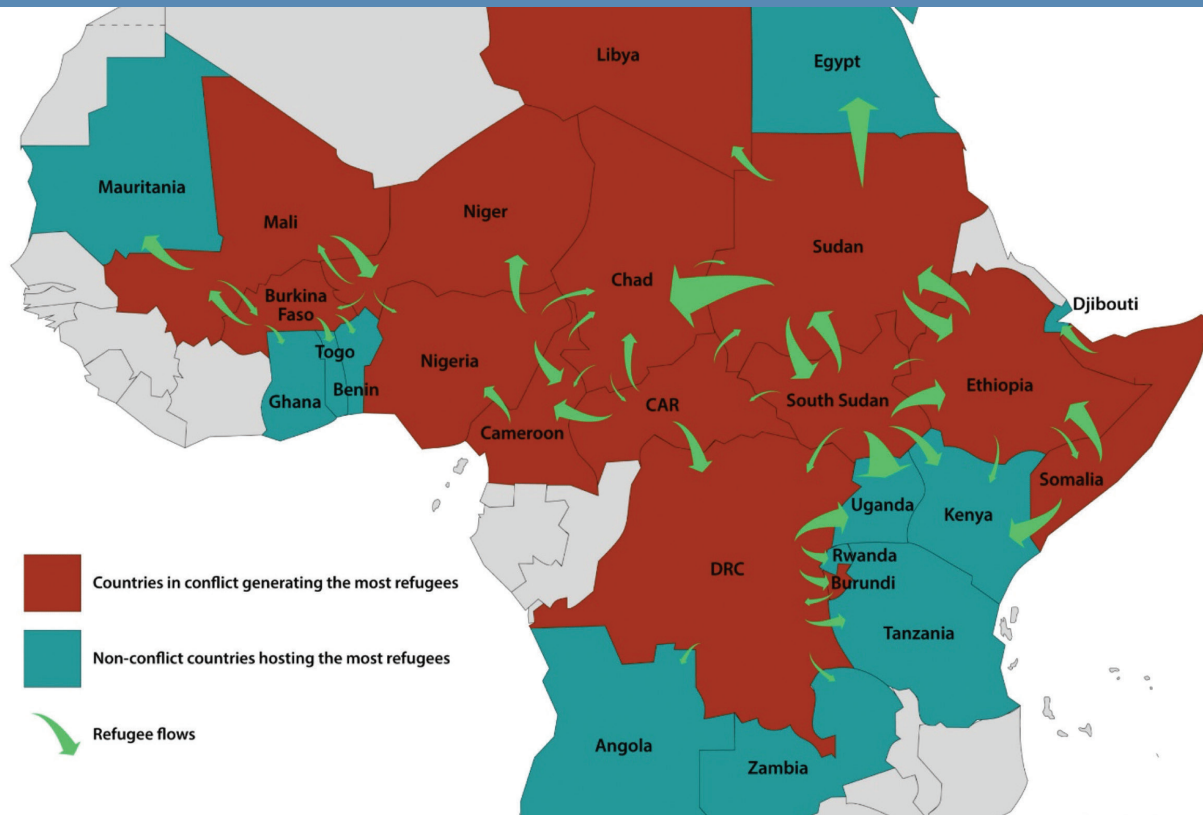
# Africa's Colliding Conflicts Compound Forced Displacement Crisis

By the Africa Center for Strategic Studies

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*As Africa's conflicts become more regionalized, forcibly displaced populations increasingly face the predicament of fleeing into neighboring countries also experiencing conflict.*

## REFUGEES FLEEING ONE CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRY FOR ANOTHER



Data source: UNHCR

## HIGHLIGHTS

- An estimated 45.7 million Africans are forcibly displaced—refugees, internally displaced, or asylum seekers—comprising 3 percent of the total African population.
- This continues a pattern of 15 years of steadily increasing numbers of forcibly displaced populations. Africa remains the continent with the largest number of people who are forcibly displaced accounting for 43 percent of the global total.
- 69 percent of the 45.7 million are displaced within their own countries (IDPs). However, the share of externally displaced has expanded significantly in the past year—largely due to increased refugee flows from Sudan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Mali.
- 97 percent of Africa's forcibly displaced population seek refuge on the continent.

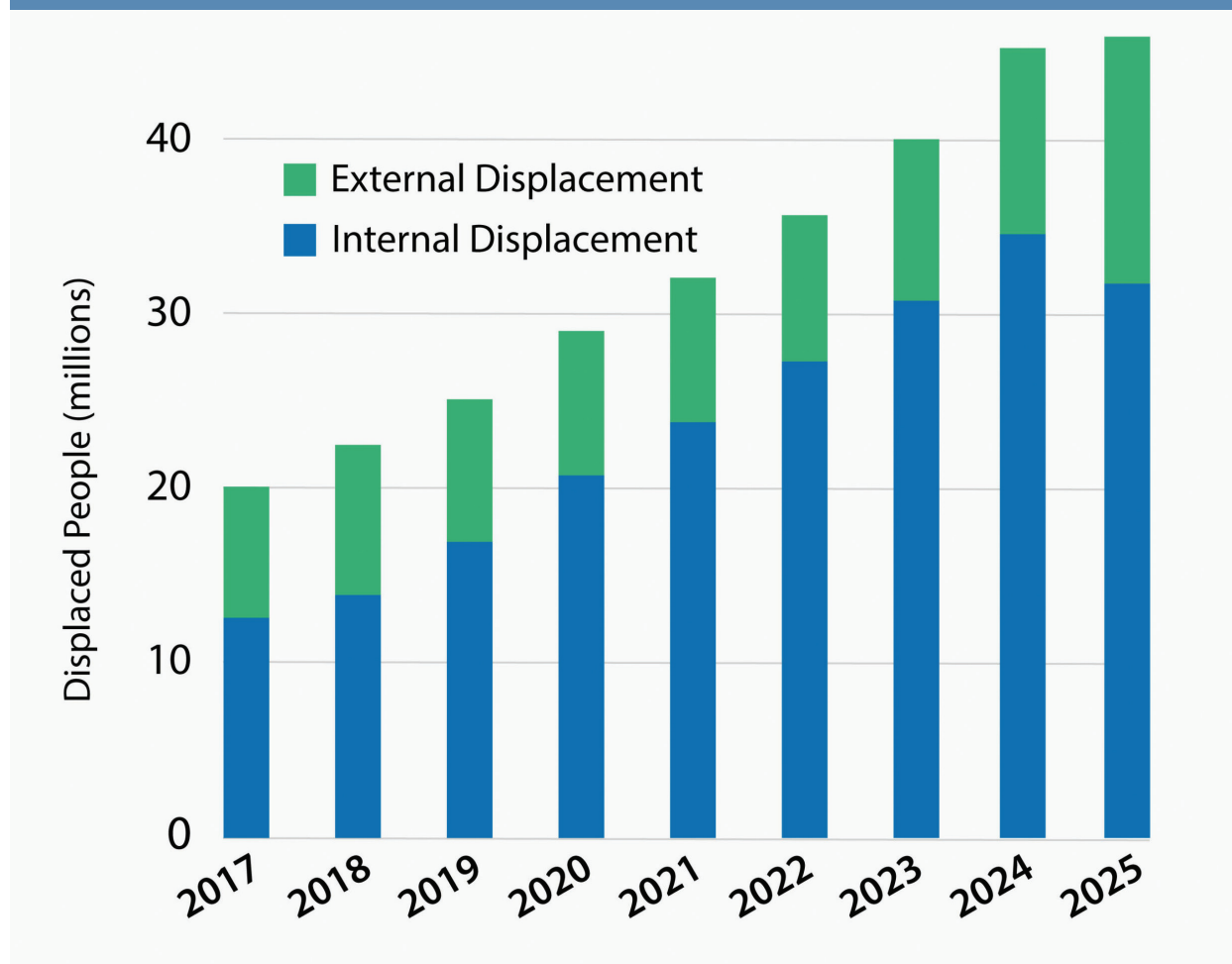
## *Conflict is the Primary Driver of Forced Displacement*

- 96 percent of forcibly displaced populations are from countries facing armed conflict, underscoring the centrality of war as a driver to population displacement.

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- 14 of the 15 African countries with the highest levels of forced displacement are facing conflict. The exception is Eritrea, which has seen an exodus of 19 percent of its population given the persistent levels of domestic repression.
- 9 African countries have reported more than 1 million displaced for each of the past 3 years, highlighting the persistent instability of Africa's conflicts—for the countries themselves and their regions.

## TRENDS IN FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA



Data sources: UNHCR, IDMC, IOM, interviews (mid-year totals)

## Compounding Crises

- This year saw a 13-percent growth of refugees and asylum seekers being hosted in another African country—11.44 million people—underscoring the intraregional implications of these persistent population flows.

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- 8 of the 11 countries hosting the greatest numbers of those displaced across borders are themselves experiencing conflict. This reflects the growing regionalization—and interregional linkages—of conflicts in the Greater Horn, the Sahel, and the Lake Chad Basin.
- The deteriorating security in the Sahel has resulted in growing numbers of refugees spilling into Mauritania and other coastal West African countries. Burkina Faso is the source of the bulk of the Sahel's forcibly displaced population—an estimated 4 million people—nearly a fifth of Burkinabe citizens. Precise figures are difficult to verify, however, given that the military junta stopped reporting IDP numbers in 2023.

Countries Most Contributing to Forced Displacement in Africa				
Country	IDPs	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Total Displaced	Percentage of Country's Population Displaced (%)
Sudan	10,065,329	4,346,222	14,411,551	29
DRC	5,160,000	1,389,887	6,549,887	6
Somalia	3,228,940	1,185,750	4,414,690	23
Nigeria	3,575,114	501,107	4,076,221	2
Burkina Faso	3,612,535	388,148	4,000,682*	17
South Sudan	944,900	2,397,965	3,342,865	28
Ethiopia	1,747,194	322,796	2,069,990	2
Cameroon	969,273	187,635	1,156,908	4
CAR	446,722	701,830	1,148,552	22
Mali	402,167	412,185	832,815*	3
Eritrea	0	663,058	663,058	19
Niger	459,585	54,710	514,295	2
Mozambique	461,237	9,058	470,295	1
Burundi	7,000	381,731	388,731	3
Chad	225,689	49,041	274,730	1
Total Forcibly Displaced in Africa: 45,737,653				

Data sources: IDMC, UNHCR, World Bank (mid-2025 data). \* Estimate.

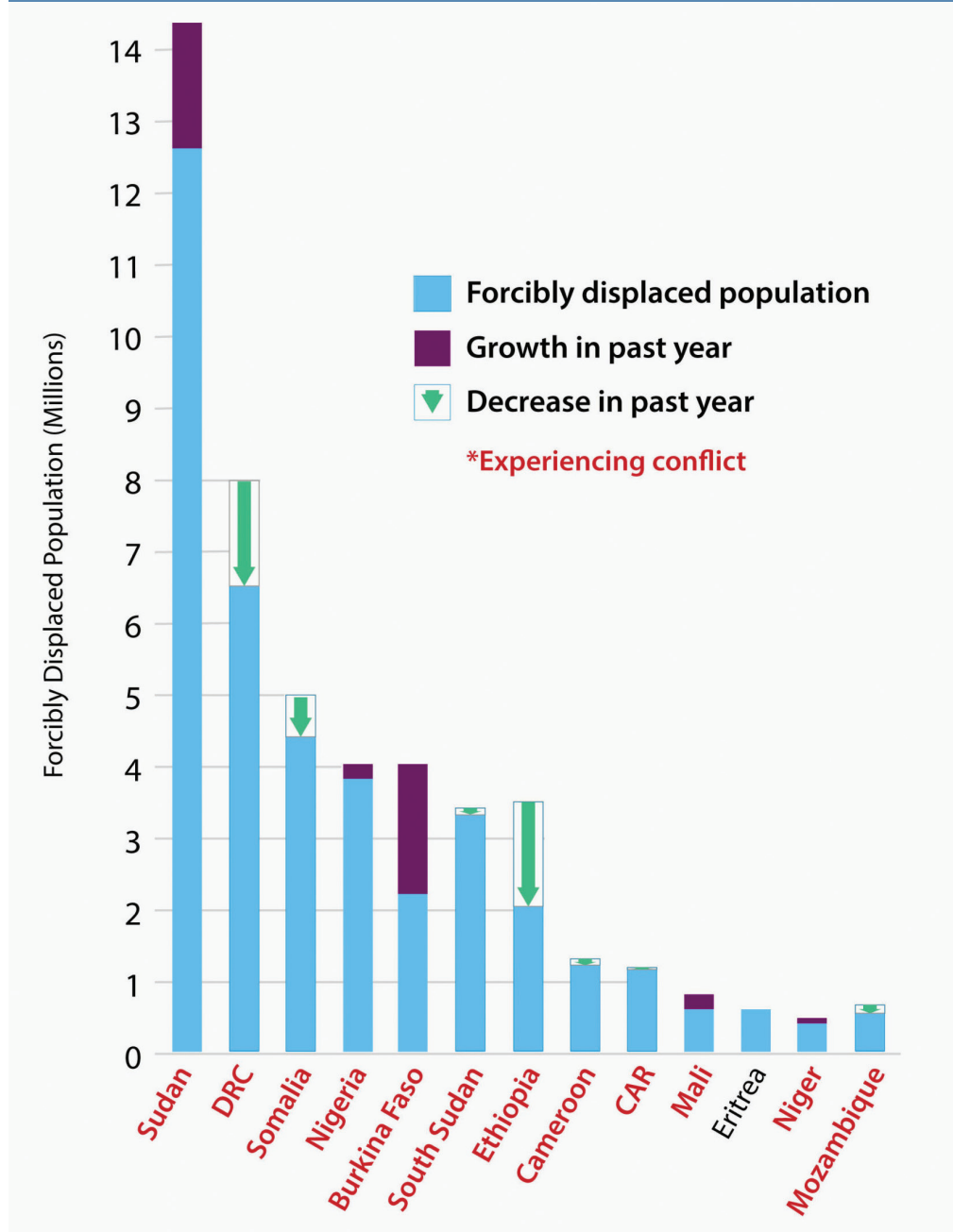
Countries in Conflict

# Africa's Colliding Conflicts Compound Forced Displacement Crisis

## *Sudan is the Locus of Africa's Forced Displacement Crisis*

- Sudan is the country with the largest number of forcibly displaced (14.4 million people)—a 14-percent increase from a year previously.
- Sudan's forcibly displaced population represents 32 percent of the continental total. This underscores the brutality of the Sudan conflict, which continues to expand since erupting in 2023.

**CHANGES IN FORCIBLY DISPLACED POPULATION IN AFRICA**



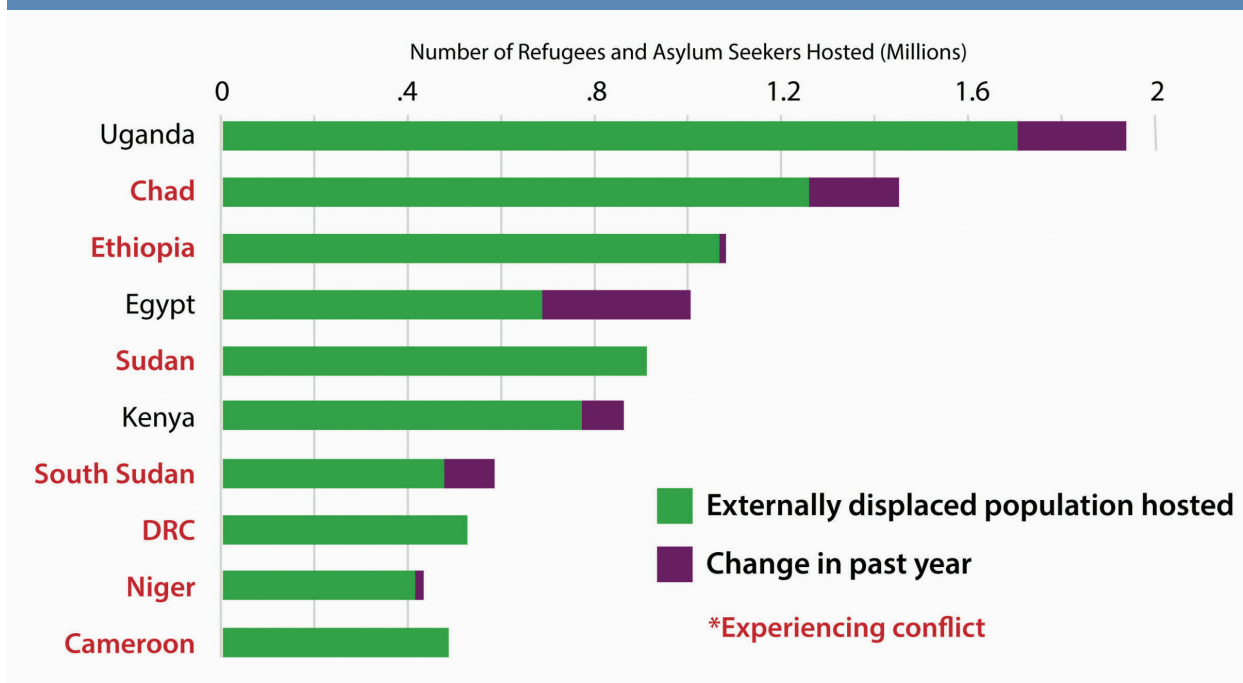
Data sources: UNHCR, IOM, IDMC (as of mid-2025)

- Sudan's 10.1 million IDPs represent the largest internal displacement of any country globally.
- Sudan is now the African country with the largest share of its population that is forcibly displaced (29 percent), surpassing South Sudan.
- Four of the countries with over 1 million people displaced are neighbors of Sudan, highlighting the compounding regional implications of ongoing conflicts.
- Illustratively, an estimated 800,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed back into South Sudan since 2023, escaping the spiraling violence in Sudan. Along with them are roughly 380,000 Sudanese refugees who are fleeing into a country that has been devastated by a civil war for more than a decade.

### Tenuous Gains in Selected Countries

- The overall numbers for forcibly displaced would be substantially higher except for an estimated 4.5 million drop in the number of internally displaced persons populations, primarily in Ethiopia and the DRC.
- These declines reflect the ongoing return of IDPs in Tigray and Amhara regions in Ethiopia and the resettlement of IDPs in eastern DRC who had been displaced by the M23 offensive. Heightened tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as ongoing active fighting in the DRC could cause a reversal in these gains, however.

## AFRICAN COUNTRIES HOSTING LARGEST EXTERNALLY DISPLACED POPULATIONS

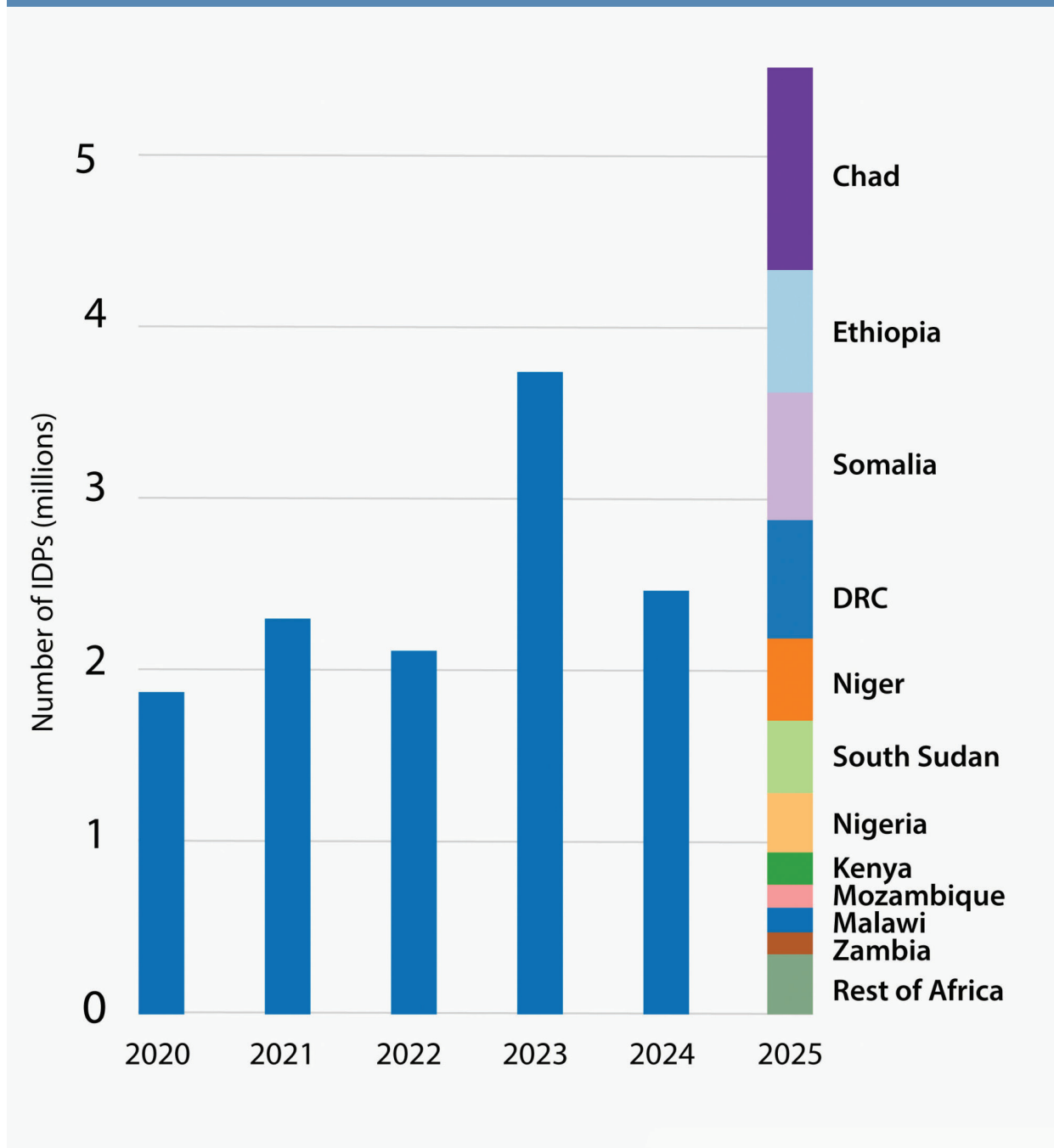


Data sources: UNHCR, IOM (as of mid-2025)

## SURGE IN NATURAL DISASTER DISPLACEMENT

- There was a 33-percent jump in forced displacement in Africa over the past year due to natural disasters (mostly flooding). This adds a further 5.6 million people to the 45.7 million conflict-related forcibly displaced. Africa, thus, also has the most reported natural disaster displacement in the world, with 57 percent of the global total.

### INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA FROM NATURAL DISASTERS



Data source: IMDC (beginning of year figures)

- 8 of the 12 countries with the greatest displacement caused by natural disasters were also experiencing conflict. This underscores the overlapping and often intertwined nature of fragility. Many people displaced by conflict and living in IDP camps are forced to move again due to threats caused by flooding or other natural disasters, prolonging their displacement and delaying their recovery.

