Neglected Displacement Crises Report - methodology

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2017, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has produced an annual report on the world's most neglected displacement crises. The report is published in June each year and is designed to raise awareness and advocate about the ten most neglected displacement crises. The list of ten countries is compiled using a methodology based on the key characteristics of neglect, namely: funding coverage, media attention and political will. The methodology has evolved over the years, and in 2024, NRC commissioned an external review with a view to making the methodology more statistically robust and enhancing the advocacy that NRC carries out related to the report. This document provides a detailed overview of this revised methodology, which will be used for the 2024 report and going forward.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In line with NRC's mandate, the overall purpose of the report is to focus international attention and engagement on displacement crises. As a key product of NRC's advocacy, media and communications work, the specific objectives of the report include:

i. *Raise public awareness* – NRC undertakes public advocacy through its media work around the publication of the report. The aim is to raise public awareness about the ten neglected displacement crises listed in the report and garner public support for them to be resolved and to receive an increased humanitarian response.

ii. *Advocate with key policy and decision-makers* – NRC uses the analysis in the report to engage in advocacy with global, regional and national level policy- and decision-makers, so that they take the actions required to bring an end to the conflicts and crises and address key humanitarian challenges.

3. APPROACH, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

There is no common measure of a neglected displacement crisis. The NRC methodology is based on an analysis of three key characteristics of such situations and associated metrics, including:

a. **_Funding coverage_** – The degree to which humanitarian needs are met is measured by the amount of money raised for each crisis as a percentage of the amount required by the UN-led humanitarian appeal, for both internal displacement and refugee crises.

b. **_Media attention_** – The level of media attention is measured by the potential reach of online articles mentioning specific countries and displacement-related terms for a given crisis. This figure is relative to the number of people displaced by that crisis.

c. **_Political will_** – This refers to the level of political engagement and attention of the international community towards a particular crisis, and the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of that engagement. This includes political processes or diplomatic efforts to find solutions, international or regional engagement, and the ability to ensure an adequate humanitarian response.

The following diagram describes the conceptual framework upon which the methodology is based.
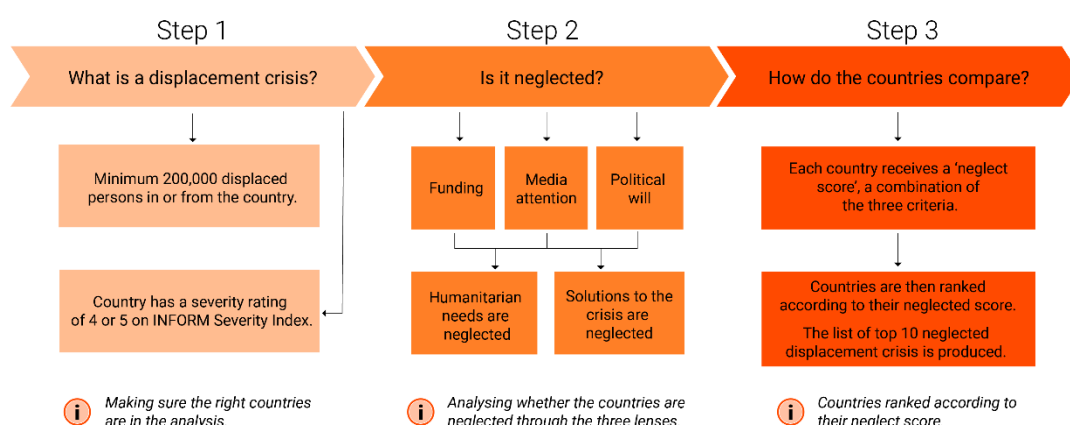
The following definitions of key terms are linked to the methodology and the assessment of different crises:

Neglected displacement crisis – a humanitarian crisis with significant internal displacement or refugee flows that has not received adequate international attention and engagement in terms of humanitarian funding, media coverage and political will.

Crisis – the unit of analysis for the methodology is a humanitarian crisis occurring in an individual country rather than a group of countries that might be experiencing a regional crisis. Such crisis situations include countries in which there is internal displacement as well as countries receiving refugees from another country.

4. METHODOLOGY

The following section outlines the different steps that are taken to analyse displacement crises and arrive at the final list of 10 countries that make up the annual report.
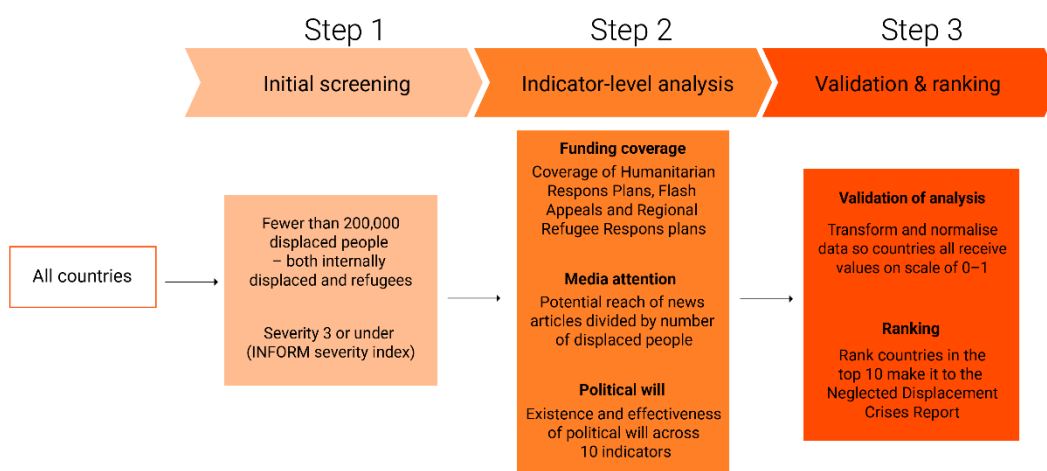
Step 1: Initial screening

NRC is concerned about the most severe displacement crises, where humanitarian needs are highest and the countries affected are unable to respond to them without international support. The first step in the methodology is, therefore, for NRC staff to conduct an initial screening of all countries in which displacement of the population has been recorded, excluding those without significant levels of displacement and severe humanitarian needs. The following two criteria are used to conduct this initial screening:

a. *Displacement*

Based on figures for the year being analysed, all countries with fewer than 200,000 displaced people in total are excluded, including both people displaced *from* the country and displaced people hosted *in* the country. For internal displacement, data is sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). For displacement across borders, data is sourced from UNHCR's Refugee Data Finder, which provides the number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate, asylum-seekers, other people in need of international protection, and Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate. People do not need to be newly displaced; rather, the total figure should be used, which includes people living in protracted displacement. If there are any countries of concern for which there is no data, this is noted.

b. *Severity of humanitarian needs*

The severity of humanitarian crises for a given country is provided by the INFORM Severity Index. The index ranks crises from 1 to 5, with 1 being minimal severity and 5 being extreme severity. The formula used is as follows:

Severity = Impact x Conditions of Affected People + Complexity

This report uses the INFORM Severity Index results for December of the year being analysed. All countries that do not register a severity score of 4 or 5 are excluded.

> ➤ **The result of step 1 is a combined longlist of countries that have produced or host at least 200,000 displaced people, and have a severity score of humanitarian needs of 4 or 5 according to the INFORM Severity Index.**

Step 2: Indicator-level analysis

The second step is to conduct an indicator-level analysis for all the longlisted countries based on the following three criteria and specific assessment and calculations.

a. *Funding coverage*

The funding coverage of UN-led humanitarian appeals is considered an important proxy indicator for the extent to which donors are providing humanitarian funding impartially based on humanitarian needs and not prioritising some crises more than others based on political and other factors.

- The UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service is used to record the funding coverage (in percentage terms) for Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) in countries that are experiencing internal displacement in ongoing crises and/or are refugee source countries. It also records Flash Appeals for new crises.
- The UNHCR Refugee Funding Tracker is used to record the funding coverage against Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRRP) in refugee-receiving countries.

The funding received for all eligible plans is then divided by the total funding requirement for all eligible plans for a given country.

Each country will then have a value representing the percentage coverage of all eligible plans in that country. After this, the data is transformed using min-max normalisation (see Step 3 below).

b. *Media attention*

The degree of media attention, measured by the potential media reach of online articles related to a displacement crisis, is considered an important proxy indicator for the level of public awareness and engagement about a humanitarian crisis. Meltwater's media monitoring platform is used to analyse online articles about displacement crises on the longlist. English, French, Spanish and Arabic coverage is analysed.

If all displacement crises were considered equally, and thus none were neglected, the expected media attention would be proportional to the size of the displacement crisis. However, in reality, this is not the case, and the difference between crises allows us to consider the extent to which crises are neglected. To compare different contexts, it is therefore necessary to divide the number of online articles by the number of displaced people.

The following search in Meltwater is used to find the media attention towards the different displacement crises, adding the name of the different countries as well as the French, Spanish and Arabic translations:

(country*) and (displaced OR displacement OR refuge* OR IDP OR returnee OR asylum)

The media reach is then divided by the number of people displaced due to the crisis to calculate the "media reach per displaced" figure.

Finally, the data is transformed using min-max normalisation (see Step 3 below).

c. ***Political will***

Unlike funding coverage and media attention, there is no single metric that can be used to measure political will. Our methodology strives to capture both the existence of political initiatives (or the absence thereof), and the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of this engagement. We use 10 indicators related to different dimensions of political will, summarised in the table below and further explained in Annex 1.

Political will

Category	Indicator	Statement
Political process	Ongoing political process	1. Ongoing formal political process with the active involvement of the relevant parties to resolve the crisis
	Quiet diplomacy	2. Quiet diplomacy efforts to bring the parties to the conflict together
Security Council	Security Council engagement	3. The UN Security Council has discussed and registered its concern about the crisis
	Security Council Actions	4. The UN Security Council has taken action to address the humanitarian crisis
Regional engagement	Regional engagement and actions	5. Regional bodies have taken actions to address the humanitarian crisis
International engagement	Dedicated envoy	6. A dedicated UN or other Special Envoy with a mandate to engage the parties in finding a solution to the crisis
	High-level visits	7. A high-level visit by a senior international or government official in the last 12 months, including to affected areas outside the capital.
	Donor pledging	8. A donor pledging conference, summit or similar has been organised to mobilise financial support to address the humanitarian crisis
Broader engagement	Access engagement	9. The existence of a designated process to improve humanitarian access through external facilitation
	Accountability mechanisms	10. There is the establishment or renewal of an international accountability mechanism to address ongoing atrocity crimes and human rights violations

Through expert analysis and a scoring system, each of the countries on the longlist is assigned a score according to the following process:

- NRC staff (country and regional advocacy managers) that are working on and therefore focal points for different contexts provide a preliminary answer to whether the above indicators have been satisfied (or not) for the longlist of countries. This takes the form of a "yes" or "no" to each statement in the political will framework (see Annex 1 for a full definition of each statement and the potential source of information used to analyse whether it has been satisfied).

- The "yes" and "no" answers are transposed to values where yes = 1 and no = 0, which will be factored into the overall score alongside a value for the effectiveness of any political engagement.

The other component of the political will score is then provided by an analysis of the effectiveness of this political engagement. NRC country office advocacy managers (and where they do not exist, regional heads of advocacy; or where NRC does not have operations, relevant expert staff) provide their assessment of whether they think the 10 different types of political engagement are making the country context less neglected and/or contributing to the resolution of the crisis. For each statement, the country office and/or nominated person(s) filling out the survey is required to rank the specific indicator in terms of effectiveness, where 0 = not at all effective, 1 = little effect, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = very effective. If the answer to the previous question is "no" then the option "n/a" (not applicable) should be selected, noting that a value of 0 will automatically be allocated for the purposes of calculations. For each question, there is also the opportunity to provide additional written details and qualitative analysis.

- To calculate the scoring, the "yes" and "no" answers are first transposed to values where yes = 1 and no = 0. This score is then multiplied by the effectiveness score (between 0 and 3), giving a final score between 0 and 3 for each indicator.

- The 10 indicator scores are then added together, resulting in a total score between 0 and 30 for each country.

- This final score for each country on political will should then be validated in a focus group discussion with global and regional NRC staff to agree upon the scoring given. This step enables a comparative perspective of different countries in the same region.

- After this, the data is transformed using a min-max normalisation (see Step 3 below).

c. **The result of step 2 is the ranking of the longlist of countries based on the values for the three different criteria of funding coverage, media attention and political will.**

Step 3: Weighting and finalisation of the list

After each country analysed on the longlist has been given a score for each of the criteria based on the value of that criterion, this is then **transformed and normalised** for each indicator to allow for aggregation between the different scales used for each indicator.

Normalisation is a process of transforming data in such a way that all values are within a specified range, in this case, 0 to 1. Min-max normalisation is used for funding and political will, whilst square root transformation and then min-max normalisation is used for media reach due to the skewed distribution (some contexts have significantly larger values than others). For political will, see above.

For reference, the **formula used for min-max normalisation** is:

$$x_{normalised} = \frac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}}$$

After this step, each country will have a value on a scale of 0 to 1 for each indicator.

The arithmetic mean of the values for each country is then calculated to get a final value for each country and the ranking of the 10 most neglected displacement crises.

This means that each of the indicators are weighted equally in the final calculation as each criterion is considered equally in terms of neglect. Where there is one data point missing out of three for a specific country, the arithmetic mean should still be taken for the two remaining criteria and results considered in the final analysis, although the missing data point should be acknowledged. Where there are two data points missing out of three, the country will not be dropped from the analysis, but the final report will acknowledge that there was not enough data to justify inclusion in the analysis or final list.

> ➢ **The result of step 3 is that this final value (the average of the data points) represents a complete view of "neglect" as per the three-indicator framework used by NRC. Countries are then sorted by the final value calculated previously in order to produce a final ranking of the top 10 neglected displacement crises.**

ANNEX 1 - POLITICAL WILL INDICATORS

    A. **POLITICAL PROCESS**

    1. **Ongoing formal political process with the active involvement of the relevant parties to resolve the crisis**

Description: A political process can include a formal peace process facilitated by external member states or the UN, in which the parties to a conflict are actively participating on a regular basis. For refugee-receiving contexts this could also mean a tripartite agreement process that could lead to the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

Main data source: Crisis Group watchlist, UN reports, media coverage, etc.

    2. **Quiet diplomacy efforts to bring the parties to the conflict together**

Description: This includes informal diplomatic efforts either by member states or non-state peace groups that are aiming to facilitate dialogue between the parties to a conflict. For refugee-receiving contexts this would relate to the source country.

Main data source: Crisis Group watchlist, expert focal point knowledge of non-public diplomatic efforts, dialogue tracks, etc.

    B. **SECURITY COUNCIL**

    3. **The UN Security Council has discussed and registered its concern about the crisis**

Description: The Security Council should have discussed the humanitarian situation in either a private or public meeting and have adopted at least a press statement, presidential statement or resolution as a demonstration of its concerns and the need for addressing the issue. For refugee-receiving contexts this would relate the source country.

Main data source: Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) database

    4. **The UN Security Council has taken action to address the crisis**

Description: The Security Council has not only discussed the crisis but has also taken specific actions through the adoption of a resolution that has led to the establishment or renewal of a UN peace operation (peacekeeping mission/special political mission), the continuation and/or designation of a sanctions regime, an arms embargo, referral to the ICC, etc. Actions taken should be of relevance to the humanitarian crisis (e.g. political sanctions against Iran would not count). For refugee-receiving contexts this would relate to the source country.

Main data source: Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) database

    C. **REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

    5. **Regional bodies have taken actions to address the humanitarian crisis**

Description: This could include regional bodies (EU, OAS, ASEAN and AU), their respective sub-bodies (e.g. the RECs, in the case of the AU), and regional mechanisms

that have taken specific actions to address the crisis. For refugee-receiving contexts these actions should include addressing specific refugee issues.

Main data source: Websites of regional bodies, expert focal point knowledge of regional initiatives.

D. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

6. **A dedicated UN or other Special Envoy with a mandate to engage the parties in finding a solution to the crisis**

Description: This includes Special Envoys from the UN, regional bodies or designated country who are actively engaging with the parties to the conflict in finding a solution to the problem. This does not include visits of senior UN officials such as the head of specific agencies or HRC-mandated Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts. For refugee-receiving countries, the Special Envoy or Representative should have addressed refugee issues.

Main data source: Various (UN, EU, AU, ASEAN, etc) and expert focal point knowledge.

7. **There has been a high-level visit by a senior international or government official in the last 12 months, including to affected areas outside the capital**

Description: This includes visits to affected areas by senior UN officials at USG level or above, including the Secretary-General or his deputy or the head of a UN entity or agency (e.g. ERC, UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.), or a senior political figure from a donor or concerned government (e.g. foreign or development minister). It does not include more junior visits than the above.

Main data source: NRC country office

8. **A donor pledging conference, summit or similar has been organised to mobilise financial support to address the humanitarian crisis**

Description: The organisation of a dedicated donor pledging conference has been organised by OCHA and hosting member states to mobilise [more] resources for the humanitarian response. This should not include incidental donor briefings at the country or global level, but has to be a recognised public donor pledging conference in the last year. For refugee receiving situations this could relate to the source or receiving countries as long as refugee response plans are included.

Main data source: OCHA, member states, and expert focal point knowledge of pledging conferences.

E. BROADER ENGAGEMENT

9. **The existence of a designated process to improve humanitarian access through external facilitation**

Description: There are not only national/domestic efforts to improve humanitarian access but also an explicit effort to improve humanitarian access at the international level, either by a specific mechanism or a process.

Main data source: OCHA, and NRC expert focal point knowledge of access initiatives.

10. **There is the establishment or renewal of an international accountability mechanism to address ongoing atrocity crimes and human rights violations**

Description: This could include an International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation or actual cases, ad hoc tribunals, international ad hoc investigation mechanism (e.g. as created for Syria and Myanmar), as well as commissions of inquiry and/or fact-finding missions mandated by the Human Rights Council. For refugee-receiving contexts, this would relate to the source country and address violations towards refugees.

Main data source: Various (e.g. OHCHR, ICC cases, etc.).

Additional open-ended question to be included:

11. **Finally, is there anything else that you would like to mention as part of the political will analysis for this year's report?**

Description: anything not covered in the questions above! For example: trends in donor support for your country, significant bills/acts/resolutions passed by Congress/Parliament, the effectiveness of the Humanitarian Coordinator (where present), other types of high-level engagement, etc.