

Natural hazards, evacuations & displacement

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Evacuations Research Hub

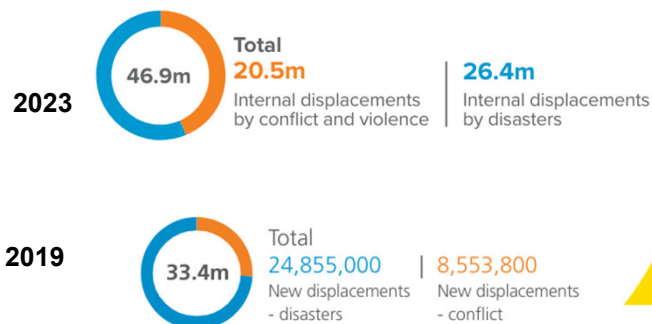
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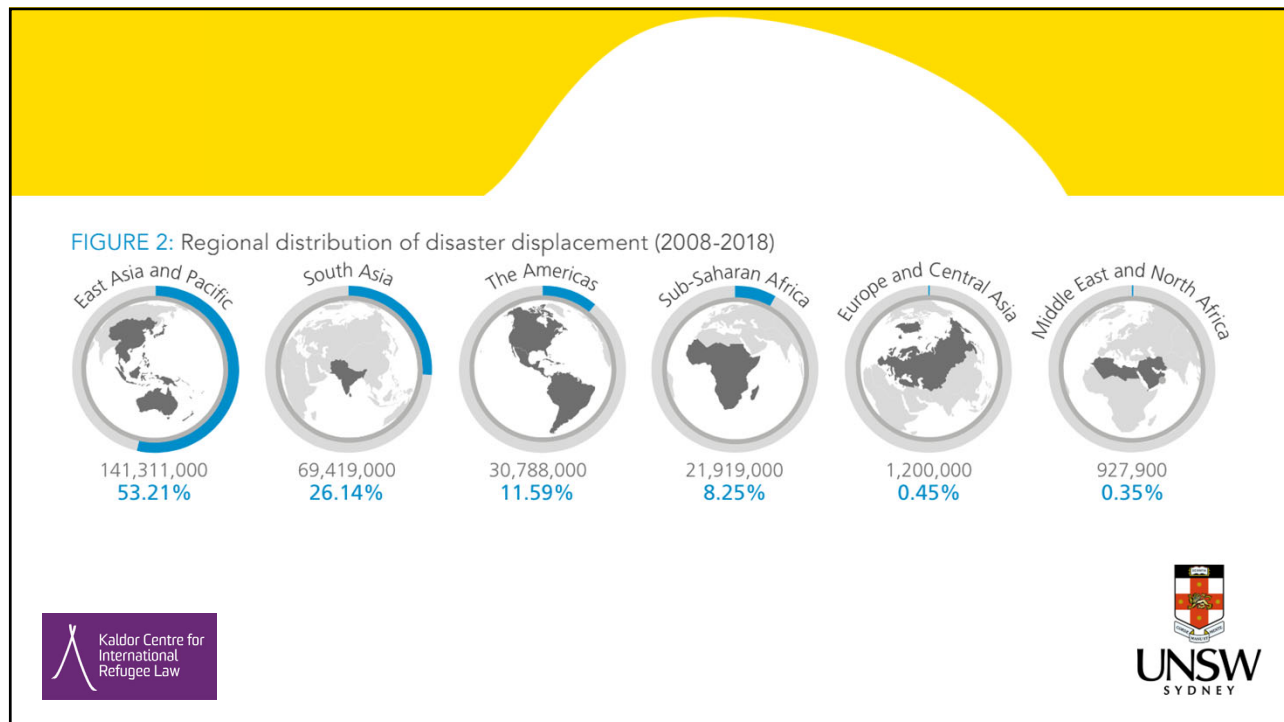


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Internal displacement



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- Stay in place
- Move internally
- Go abroad
- Move internally and then go abroad
- Trapped and cannot move

→ Resources, networks, capacity, personal circumstances, policy settings (including migration options)

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Evacuations are a key component of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies around the world, designed to move people away from immediate threat to a safer place, to save lives and minimize exposure to harm.

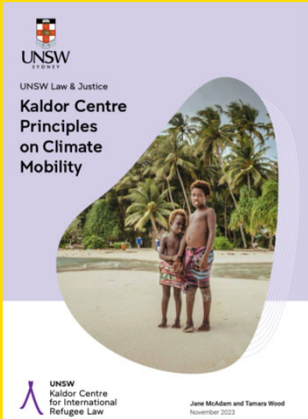


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Under human rights law, governments are obligated to protect people from threats to life, including the adverse impacts of disasters and climate change. At times, this may include an obligation to evacuate people at risk.



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1. Ensure that evacuations are well planned, provided for by law, necessary and proportionate, and for the shortest time possible
2. Ensure that people's basic needs are met and their fundamental human rights are respected before, during and after evacuations
3. Ensure that evacuations do not result in arbitrary or prolonged displacement

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We have a very incomplete understanding about how and why evacuations are used; what legal standards should govern their conduct; and when and how they come to an end.

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Because evacuations are commonly viewed as a 'rescue' tool – a life-saving measure – there is both a research and policy blind spot has emerged

- evacuations have 'successfully reduced the number of people killed in a number of large disasters' so 'highlight the fact that not all displacement is negative' (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre)



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Data

- when does a pre-emptive evacuation become arbitrary displacement?



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Return

- how viable in the face of climate change?
- does return mean that a durable solution has been found?



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Australian Research Council (ARC) Laureate Fellowship

- 'Evacuations in International Law: Disasters, Conflict & Humanitarian Crises'
- five years
- research team (me, postdoctoral fellows, PhDs)



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Aims

1. reorient the orthodox starting point for evacuations (the 'rescue' paradigm)
2. determine when States have a duty to evacuate, and how it is circumscribed by human rights law
3. generate comparative insights from a diverse range of factual and legal settings, jurisdictions, periods and actors
4. articulate principles to ensure that evacuees' rights are respected and protected before, during and after movement



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Relevant international guidance

- UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- *The MEND Guide: Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters*
- *Sphere Handbook*



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Specific treaties – examples

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



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Multi-jurisdictional fragmentation

- gaps, overlap and confusion between local, state/territory and federal actors
- use of different terminology
- problems with sharing data



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Data gaps

- numbers
- what happens after the emergency?
- longer-term recovery



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Implications

- economic costs
- significant consequences for livelihoods, health and well-being
- elevated rates of mental health issues



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- a. Develop and implement domestic evacuation laws that:
 - i. articulate who is authorised to order and carry out evacuations
 - ii. provide safeguards against arbitrary or long-term displacement
 - iii. establish clear and transparent accountability mechanisms
 - iv. protect people's fundamental human rights, including the right to family unity
 - v. prioritise people with urgent protection or medical needs



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- b. Establish detailed evacuation plans for communities, including plans relating to transport, communications, shelter, assistance and protection
- c. Incorporate long-term recovery into evacuation planning, including physical, social, economic, cultural and psychological recovery
- d. Incorporate contingency plans for alternative long-term solutions, such as local integration or planned relocation, if safe return is not possible
- e. Collaborate with affected communities in the development of evacuation plans to ensure that local knowledge is incorporated



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- f. Establish evacuation training and simulation programs in high-risk areas to support local responders and communities
- g. Establish early warning systems to alert people of a potential need to evacuate
- h. Disseminate information relating to evacuations in a timely manner and accessible format, taking into account the varied needs of different sectors of the community
- i. Incorporate recommendations from the *MEND Guide* into domestic evacuation laws, policies and plans
- j. Establish clear procedures for identifying who will be evacuated and why, so that those with urgent protection or medical needs are prioritised

