

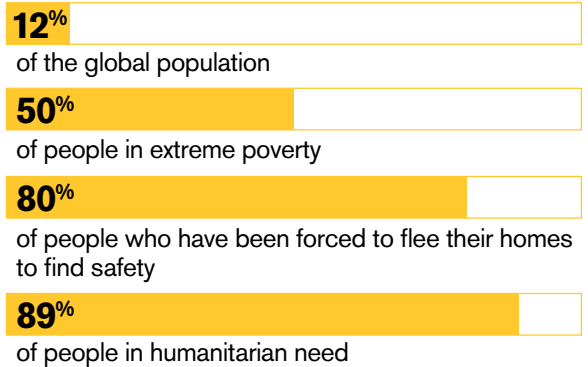


2026 Emergency Watchlist: At a Glance

NEW WORLD DISORDER

The **Emergency Watchlist** is the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) assessment of the 20 countries at greatest risk of new or worsening humanitarian emergencies each year. The report is based on an analytically rigorous process that deploys 74 quantitative and qualitative variables, as well as qualitative insights from the IRC's experience of working in more than 40 countries, to identify which countries to include on the list and how to rank them. Each year, this methodology allows the IRC to accurately identify 85-95% of the countries that see the worst humanitarian deterioration over the following year.

These 20 countries account for:

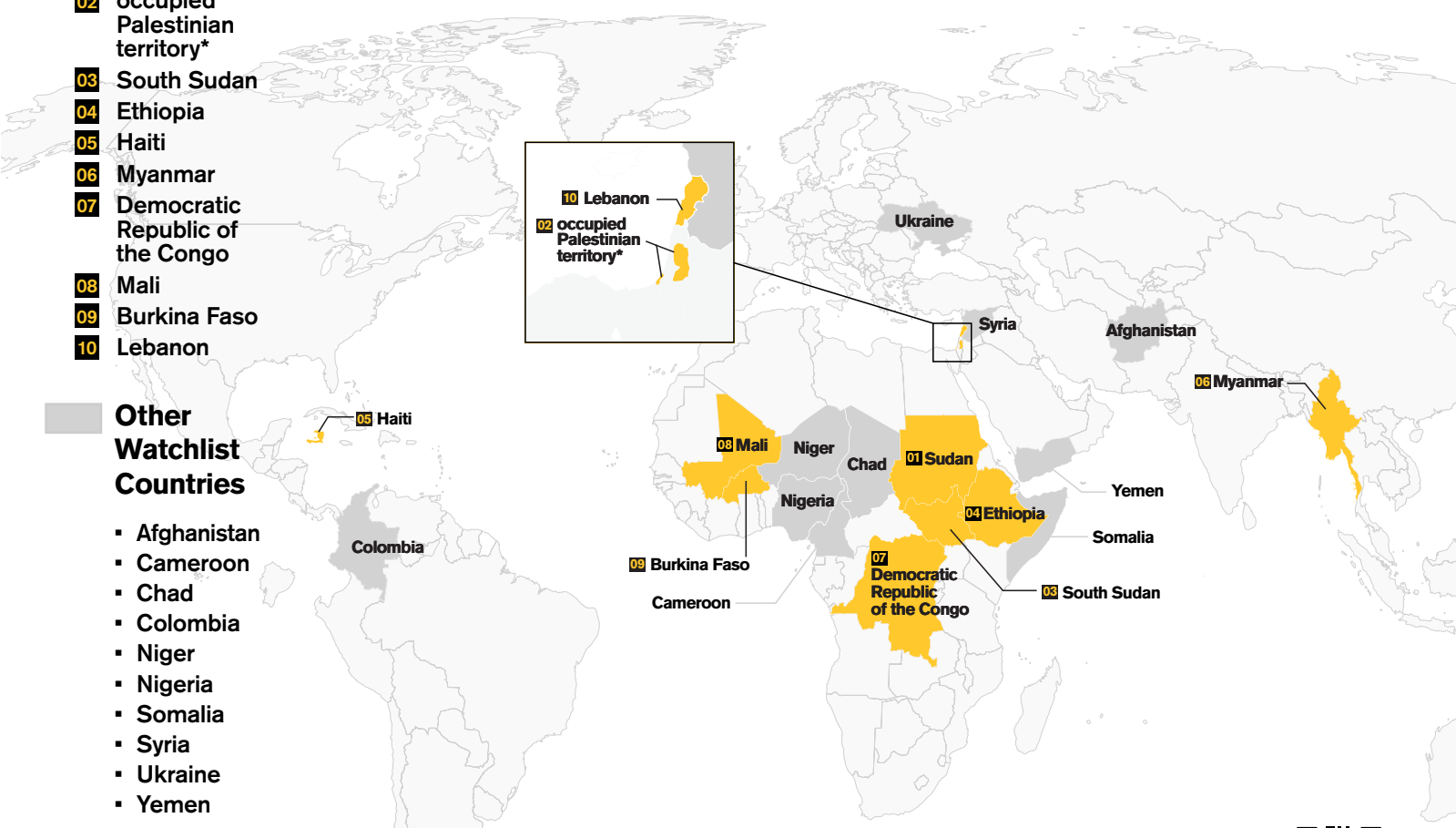


Top 10

- 01 Sudan
- 02 occupied Palestinian territory*
- 03 South Sudan
- 04 Ethiopia
- 05 Haiti
- 06 Myanmar
- 07 Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 08 Mali
- 09 Burkina Faso
- 10 Lebanon

Other Watchlist Countries

- Afghanistan
- Cameroon
- Chad
- Colombia
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Somalia
- Syria
- Ukraine
- Yemen



*The United Nations (U.N.) uses "State of Palestine" and "occupied Palestinian territory" interchangeably to refer to the West Bank and Gaza. We use occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) in this report for consistency with the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and many of our peer agencies.

To read the IRC's full 2026 Emergency Watchlist, please visit: [Rescue.org/Watchlist2026](https://www.rescue.org/watchlist2026)



The theme of this year's Emergency Watchlist, "New World Disorder," sounds the alarm on a dangerous divergence: As humanitarian crises are surging, the global support to address them is collapsing. The surging crises and shrinking support that the IRC's clients face every day are not just a humanitarian failure, but instead the direct consequence of the geopolitical trends redefining how countries interact with one another.

The New World Disorder described in this year's report illustrates what IRC teams witness every day as they help crisis-affected people in more than 40 countries around the world to survive, recover and rebuild their future. The facts on the ground reveal a humanitarian system overwhelmed when it is needed most. Conflict is escalating dramatically, compounded by climate change and entrenched poverty, while global aid funding has collapsed.

The rules-based system and international order built after the Second World War always had winners and losers, particularly in crisis-affected communities. Now it is disintegrating, and the devastating situations in the 20 countries on the Emergency Watchlist provide a clear warning that what is taking its place may be even more dangerous.

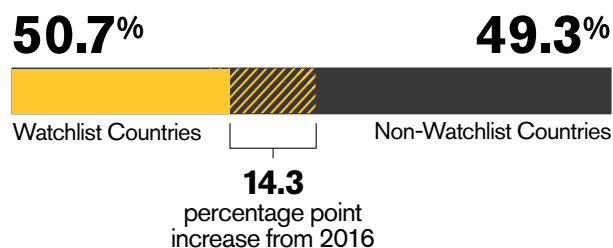
The 20 Watchlist countries will be home to the majority of people living in extreme poverty by 2030

Source: World Data Lab

Percentage of People Living in Extreme Poverty in 2016

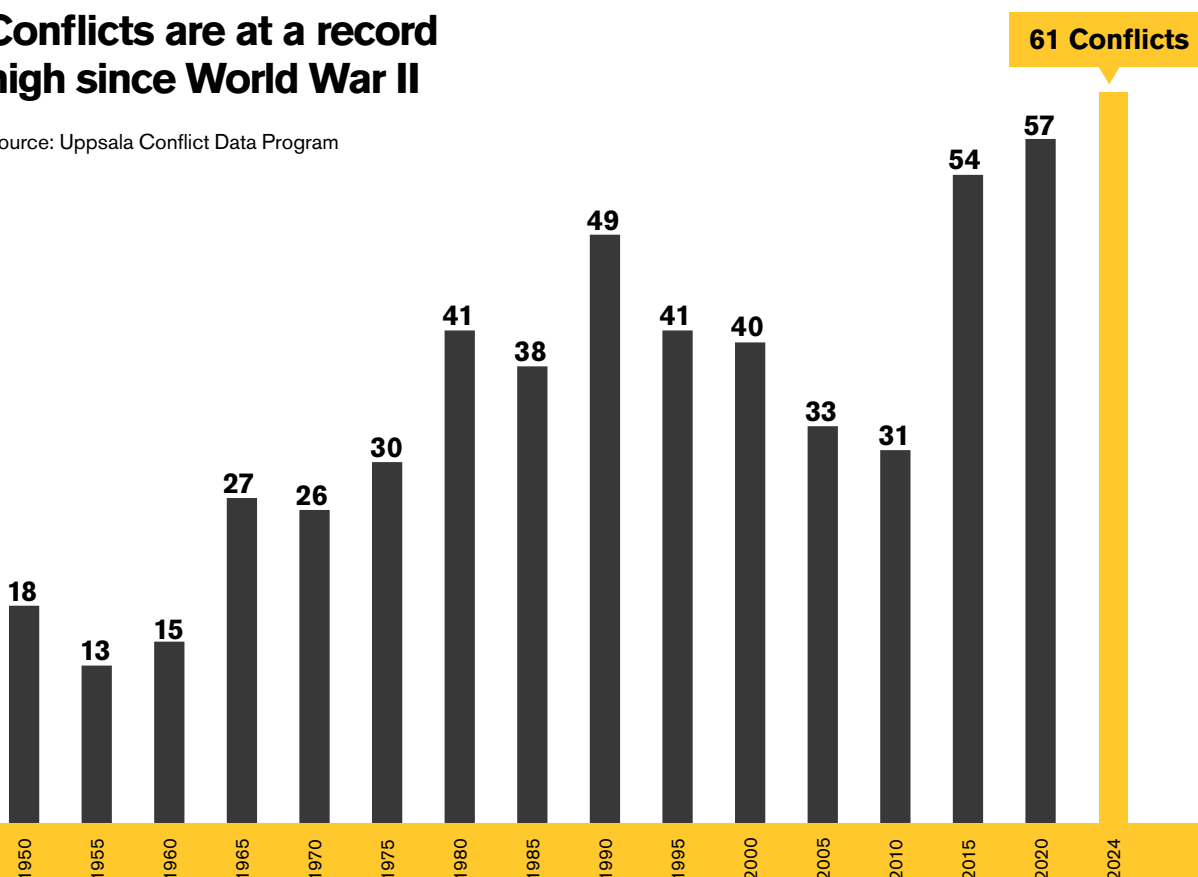


Percentage of People Living in Extreme Poverty in 2030



Conflicts are at a record high since World War II

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program



The New World Disorder is defined by **three key features** that are increasingly shaping the world.



More rivals, more risks:

A growing cast of ambitious global and regional powers are competing for influence, creating new points of tension across the international system.



Shifting alliances:

Constantly shifting short-term partnerships are replacing long-standing strategic alliances and multilateral institutions, creating greater unpredictability in global politics.



Transactional deal-making:

The principles driving international engagement have shifted away from long-term, rules-based cooperation towards short-term, power-based deal-making.

These three features create a cascade of **destructive consequences and dangerous incentives**, directly causing the surging crises and shrinking support that are devastating Watchlist countries.

1 Dismantling global cooperation on shared goals:

The New World Disorder has undermined cooperation on shared global issues like climate change, poverty alleviation and pandemic prevention.

2 Normalizing conflict for power and profit:

The New World Disorder is incentivizing more actors to use war to achieve territorial gain, political power and profit. This new landscape has transformed profit-making from conflict into a multibillion-dollar global industry, resulting in longer and more deadly wars and reducing the motivation to pursue peace.

3 Trampling individual rights and protections:

The New World Disorder is eroding the basic rights and protections that once shielded civilians from war and abuse. This is leading to more attacks on civilians, aid workers and refugees as deliberate strategies of war.

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather. In 2024, devastating floods in Niger caused significant damage to homes, livelihoods and infrastructure, including in the town of Filingué. The IRC provided cash transfers and shelter materials to over 2,000 flood-affected households.

The Path Forward

10 Recommendations for a Disordered World

From Profit to Protection

Equipping peacemakers to resolve conflicts

With conflicts multiplying and war economies thriving, diplomacy must evolve to address the transnational nature of profit-driven violence and create more inclusive peace efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Dismantle conflict economies

Governments and U.N. peacekeeping efforts must be informed by an analysis of who profits from conflict and should be combined with efforts to increase financial pressure on those actors.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Reinvigorate diplomacy and peace making

States committed to peace must shift toward building broader, more creative and more inclusive coalitions for peace and empower the U.N. through reforms such as suspending the veto in cases of mass atrocity.

From Danger to Dignity

Protecting people in crisis

The international community must respond to the New World Disorder's disregard for values-based cooperation and global rules by recommitting to the laws and norms that protect civilians in war, ensure access to aid and protect those who are forced to flee their homes.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Restore respect for international humanitarian law

States must impose costs on those who violate the laws of war, using all levers of accountability.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Guarantee safe access for humanitarian aid

States should strengthen the humanitarian access capabilities of frontline responders, firewall access from political and military negotiations and invest in their own humanitarian diplomatic capacity.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Protect people who face the greatest risks in conflict

Governments should protect civilians from war economy exploitation and direct funding to women-led organizations leading the response to violence against women and girls.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Defend the rights of refugees and displaced people

Governments should uphold international refugee law, particularly the right to asylum, and expand legal pathways for people to reach safety.

From Retreat to Recommitment

Redefining the future of aid

As crises surge and aid declines, donors must prioritize impactful investments that empower local responders and protect decades of progress.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Prioritize aid funding to maximize impact and sustainability

Donors should direct at least 60% of official development assistance to fragile and conflict-affected states, while delivering on commitments to flexible, multi-year funding.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Invest in proven, high-impact solutions

The aid system must scale up proven, cost-effective solutions like cash assistance, preventative health measures and simplified treatment of child malnutrition.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Transform partnerships to unlock impact

Donors, including multilateral development banks, must build and expand genuine partnerships with local and frontline responders, including women-led organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Build resilience against climate shocks

Donors must prioritize building climate resilience where it is most needed by ensuring fragile and conflict-affected states receive 19% of all climate adaptation finance committed to developing countries.

Halima carries her 2-year-old daughter, Zeinab, who became malnourished during her family's flight from violence in their village in Sudan. An IRC clinic in Al-Azaza, Sudan, helped put Zeinab back on the road to health.



Scan the QR code or visit [Rescue.org](https://www.rescue.org) to donate to the IRC

