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Icon for global developments in asylum

To set the broader context within which asylum-related trends in Europe emerged, this section provides an overview of key themes in forced displacement at the global level.

Protection needs continued to rise in 2023, while no single development was a catalyst in the same way that the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan or the COVID-19 pandemic impacted previous years.1
Nonetheless, these crises continued to influence developments in 2023 amid new and ongoing conflicts, climate shocks, geopolitical unrest, violence and persecution which led millions of people to flee their homes.

Millions of people around the world are affected by forced displacement due to violent conflict, persecution, human rights violations, natural disasters and degrading ecosystems. Recurrent cycles of displacement are frequently explained by the intricate interaction of several underlying causes, embedded in deficient political, economic, social, cultural and natural ecologies. People who are forcibly displaced may seek refuge for themselves and their families within their home country (internally displaced persons) or by crossing international borders (refugees). The majority of forcibly displaced people do not cross international borders but remain within the territory of their countries.

Box 1.1. Definitions of displaced persons

Definitions of displaced persons

Refugee: An individual who has fled their country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.2

Internally displaced persons (IDPs): Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of

or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally-recognised state border.[3]

- [1]Migration Policy Institute. (January 2024). *Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023*.
- [2]UN Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).
- [3]United Nations, Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (September 2004). *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*.

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