

Addressing climate, conflict and migration risks in fragile contexts: cohesion of policy interventions

This note brings together ACT Alliance analysis and member insights on how climate change, conflict, and human mobility intersect in fragile contexts. It draws on contributions from ACT Alliance Latin America (Karol Arambula) and ACT Alliance EU (Ruth Watson), using Sudan and Latin America & the Caribbean as illustrative cases. The paper aims to inform ongoing EU and ACT advocacy on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus and ongoing discussions on the EU's fragility approach.

Countries and regions globally are facing a convergence of risks. Climate change is intensifying extreme weather events, droughts, wildfires and floods. Simultaneously, many areas continue to experience conflict zones, organized violence, and protection risks. These dynamics cause people to move within their country and across borders. Economic, environmental, and security factors all play a role in these often mixed flows. The result: growing humanitarian and development needs, rising pressure on host communities and public services, and increasing complexity for policymakers. Sudan and Latin America and the Caribbean are illustrative of realities across fragile contexts – with comparable trends in the Sahel and Middle East.

Cross-cutting Observations and key messages:

- ***Data and definitional frameworks remain insufficient***, particularly for climate-induced displacement. A significant share of mobility driven by environmental and climatic stressors remains undocumented or “hidden” — such as internal relocations or movements linked to slow-onset processes — and is therefore poorly integrated into existing migration, displacement, and disaster-risk governance systems.
- ***Preventive action yields returns***. Preventive and anticipatory action delivers tangible returns. Investing in sustainable development pathways—including water infrastructure, climate-smart agriculture, early-warning systems, and livelihood diversification—addresses the structural drivers of displacement and migration before crises erupt. Such investments not only reduce exposure to shocks and chronic vulnerabilities but also lessen dependence on humanitarian aid and curb the politicization or weaponization of assistance. The alternative—continued underinvestment in prevention—leads to escalating humanitarian needs and instability. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this reality is already visible: in 2025, an estimated 34.4 million people are in need (PIN) of humanitarian assistance, a figure that underscores the cost of inaction.

- ***Integration of migration protection and adaptation agendas is lagging.*** The integration of migration protection and climate adaptation agendas remains insufficient and fragmented. In many countries, migration continues to be addressed in isolation from climate change and disaster risk reduction frameworks, resulting in policy incoherence and missed opportunities for preventive action. In the Caribbean, for example, mobility patterns are complex and multidirectional—people may return, be in transit, or serve as hosts to others displaced by climate-related events. These dynamics must be systematically embedded into national climate adaptation, disaster management, and development policies to ensure that responses are comprehensive, inclusive, and reflective of the region's realities.
 - Increase the share of climate-specific finance directed to Fragile and conflict affected states: In 2022, only about 6% of the EU's adaptation financing to developing countries was committed to the 17 most climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected countries which include Yemen, Syria and Sudan. The EU should at least triple this figure to help prevent even worse climate-induced hunger crises in years to come and more effectively respond to climate-induced displacement.
- ***Regional cooperation is essential.*** Taking the example of LAC, climate impacts and migration flows transcend national borders. From the Andean highlands (shared ecosystems) to Central American routes (shared migratory flows) to the Southern Cone (ecosystems and cross-border wildfires), cooperation in data sharing, joint adaptation, and migration governance is key.
- ***Mobility is multi-causal and compounding*** shaped by overlapping drivers such as climate hazards, livelihood stress, and conflict or violence. These factors often compound one another: for instance, extreme weather events can destroy crops and livelihoods, prompting migration in search of safety or income, while insecurity and violence can trigger displacement, leaving affected populations even more exposed to subsequent climate risks. Yet, policy responses remain fragmented, with climate adaptation, protection of migrants and displaced populations often operating in isolation—undermining their collective effectiveness and the capacity to deliver coherent, rights-based solutions.

Context and Key Figures from the region

Addressing Climate, Conflict and Migration Risks in Latin America and the Caribbean (2025)

Country-Focus: based on ACT Alliance member presence and programmes

1. Guatemala & Honduras (Central America – Dry Corridor / Migration Route):

- Climate change: The Central American Dry Corridor (partially Honduras and Guatemala) is experiencing recurring droughts, crop failures, livelihood stress, and resultant migration.
- Migration/mobility: Return and stranded migrants in Guatemala (Jan.-Mar. 2025) as part of South American migration flows.
- Conflict/violence dynamics: Honduras continues to have internal displacement driven by organized crime, gang violence and extortion; these drivers compound climate/food stress.

2. Colombia:

- Conflict/violence dynamics: 2025 saw a fourfold increase in conflict impacts compared to 2024 Q1, with regular mass displacements and confinements.
- Climate change: floods in coastal zones, drought in La Guajira, and Amazon deforestation intensify mobility.

3. El Salvador:

- Conflict/violence dynamics: Decreasing homicide rates contrast with persistent structural violence, poverty, and drought-related migration. The state of exception at the national level remains.
- Migration/mobility: Environmental degradation and urban flooding in coastal zones displace families. There has been a significant emigration towards the U.S., often through irregular routes.

4. Cuba:

- Migration/mobility: The population dropped below 9.8 million (2024) due to mass emigration; a continued decline is projected in 2025.
- Conflict dynamics: Economic crises, hurricanes and coastal erosion fuel migration and internal relocation.
- Climate change: intensifying cyclones, saltwater intrusion, and rising sea levels threaten coastal settlements.

Sudan: addressing fragility, migration and climate

- **The context offers both requires and opportunities for sustained and cohesive support across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding:** Regions in Sudan are facing a constant flux of movements: with people internally displaced often multiple times and facing both severe humanitarian and protection needs

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and the need to rebuild basic livelihoods, climate-resilient agricultural production to escape dependence on provisions.

- There are acute challenges for protection of IDPs and refugees especially, with extreme rates of SGBV, detentions, siege and starvation. The level of trauma among civilian populations is high and psychosocial care is drastically underfunded for the scale of need. There are opportunities for longer-term resilience and prevention of SGBV: the conflict has brought greater awareness and openness to training on prevention and reporting of cases at community and national levels, as well as to mental health services.
- **Environmental damage and climate shocks** are compounding famine and food insecurity, and have resulted in heavy loss of life and livestock in where IDPs are in poor conditions.
- **Flexibility in the funding modalities:** The backbone of response in Sudan currently led by community-led and local civil society able to access the hardest to reach populations, integrates support across sectors – continuing long-term empowerment, climate-resilient agriculture and employment support alongside humanitarian activities.
- **Sustaining civil society:** development and humanitarian departments need to align to ensure continued institutional support for a strong and autonomous national civil society. This includes women-led organisations, youth networks, community and faith actors who will be key to inclusive dialogues and peace processes.