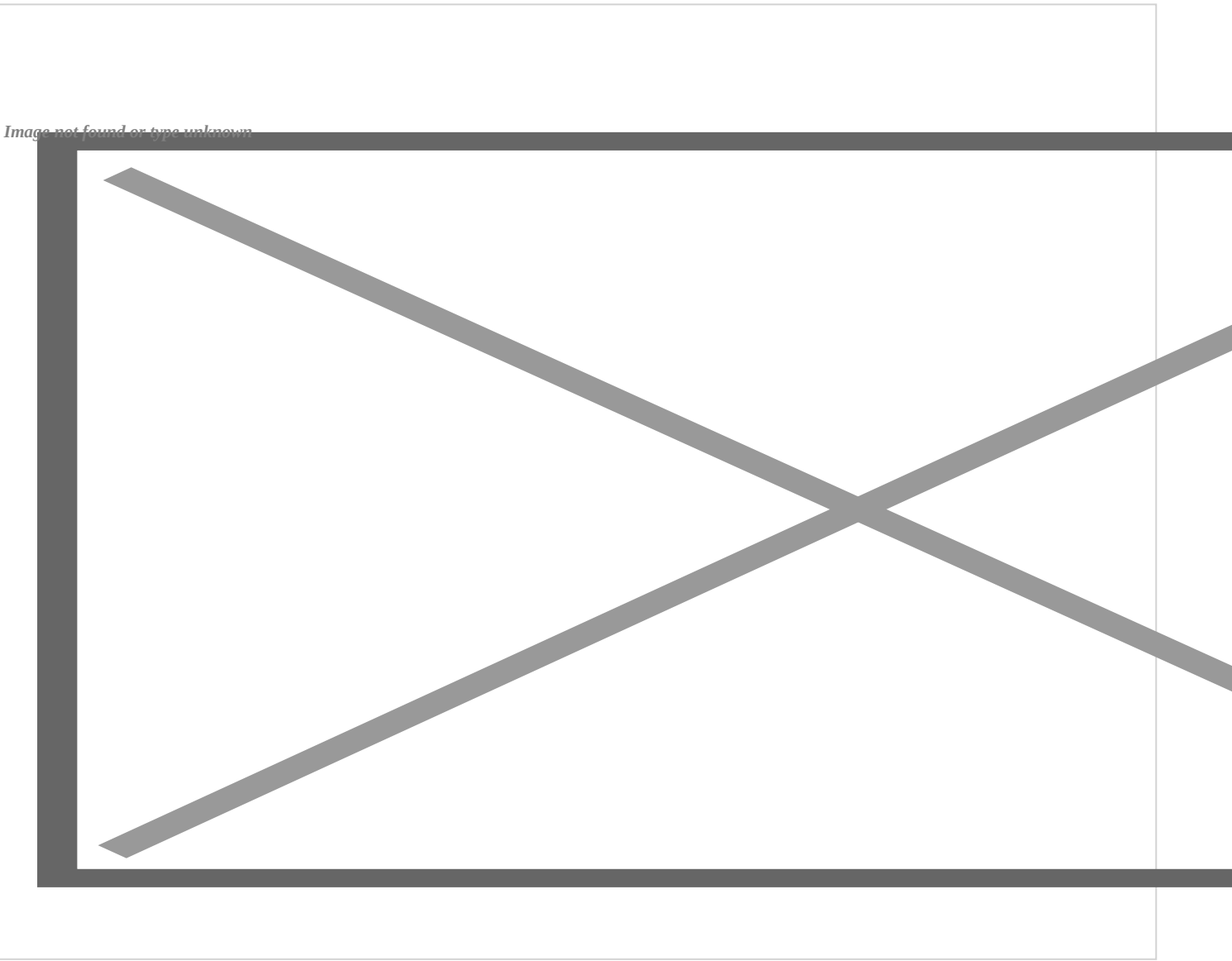
War and disasters internally displace a record 71 million people



Geneva, July 26 (RHC)-- The number of people internally displaced by conflicts and natural disasters hit a record high of 71.1 million last year. That figure represented a 20 percent increase since 2021 with an unprecedented number of people fleeing in search of safety and shelter, the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) said in a report.

A “perfect storm” of war and disasters in 2022 led to “displacement on a scale never seen before”, said Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, which oversees the IDMC.

By the end of 2022, 5.9 million people were forced to move inside Ukraine because of Russia's invasion, bringing the global total of people internally displaced by conflict and violence to more than 62 million – an increase of 17 percent since 2021. Syria had 6.8 million displaced by conflict after more than a decade of civil war.

The number of people displaced inside their country at the end of the year because of disasters such as floods and famine reached 8.7 million, up 45 percent from 2021. Internal displacement refers to people forced to move inside their own borders, and the Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's report did not take into account those who left for different countries.

Following a year when conflict raged in Ukraine, Syria, Ethiopia and elsewhere, there has been no respite in 2023. The United Nations migration agency said this week that 700,000 people have already been internally displaced in a matter of weeks by the conflict in Sudan between the army and a rival paramilitary group.

The IDMC cited the La Nina weather phenomenon, which continued for a third consecutive year in 2022, as a major factor in disaster displacements. It contributed to record levels of flood displacements in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil and the worst drought on record in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, the report said.

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