



INITIATIVE ON
National Policies
and Strategies

Crises and Response: Development & Humanitarian Aid in Middle East & North Africa

Bridging Evidence and Policy (BEP) Seminar Series

Cairo, Egypt

26 March 2024

Research on Crisis Response and Humanitarian Aid in MENA

Sikandra Kurdi

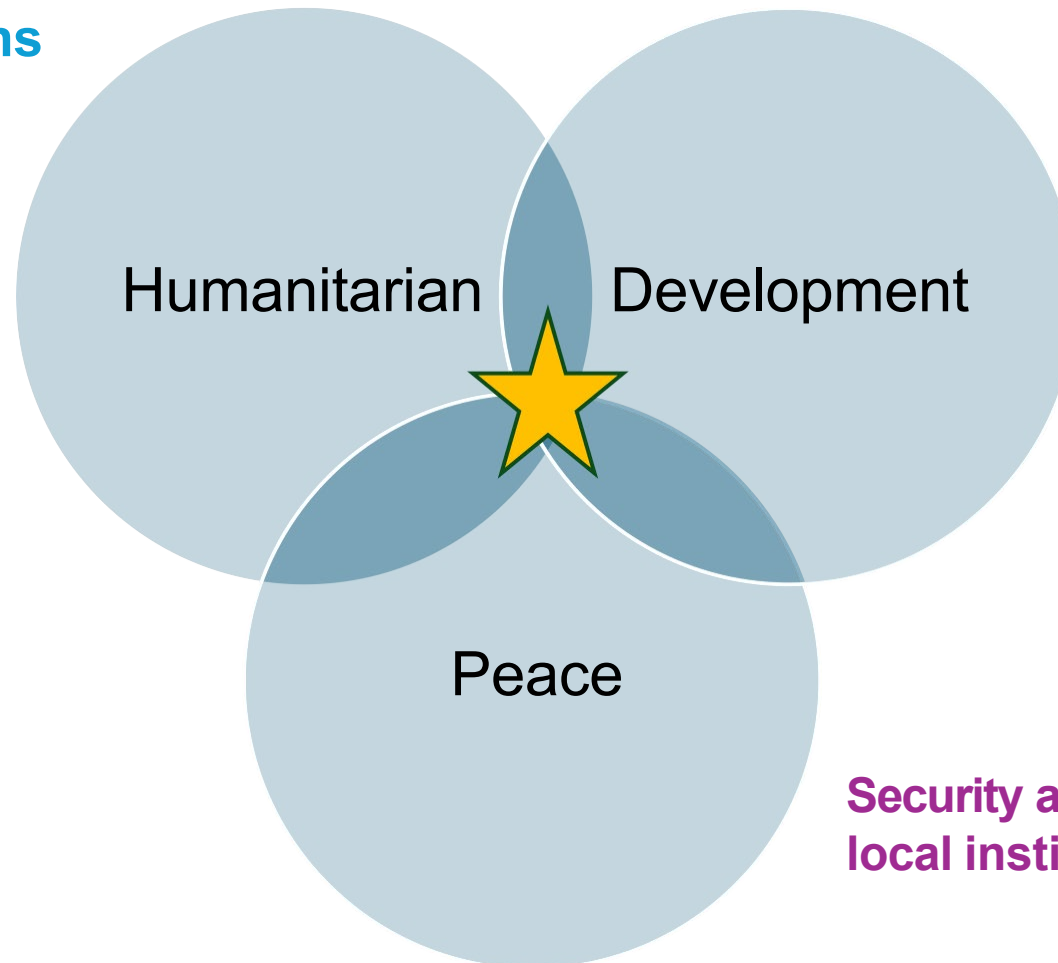
March 26, 2024

Why research in crisis contexts?

- **Crisis increasingly drives global poverty and hunger.** By 2030, World Bank estimates 59% of extreme poor will be in fragile and conflict affected states
- **Urgency of improving efficiency of humanitarian aid.** OCHA appeal for US\$46 billion for 2024, while in 2023 only 41% of needs funded
- **Humanitarian actors have a short-term focus, but protracted crises demand more attention to long-term.** Average duration of conflicts and length of humanitarian crisis is increasing over past decades.

HDP Nexus Approach

**Delivers lifesaving aid in
emergency situations**

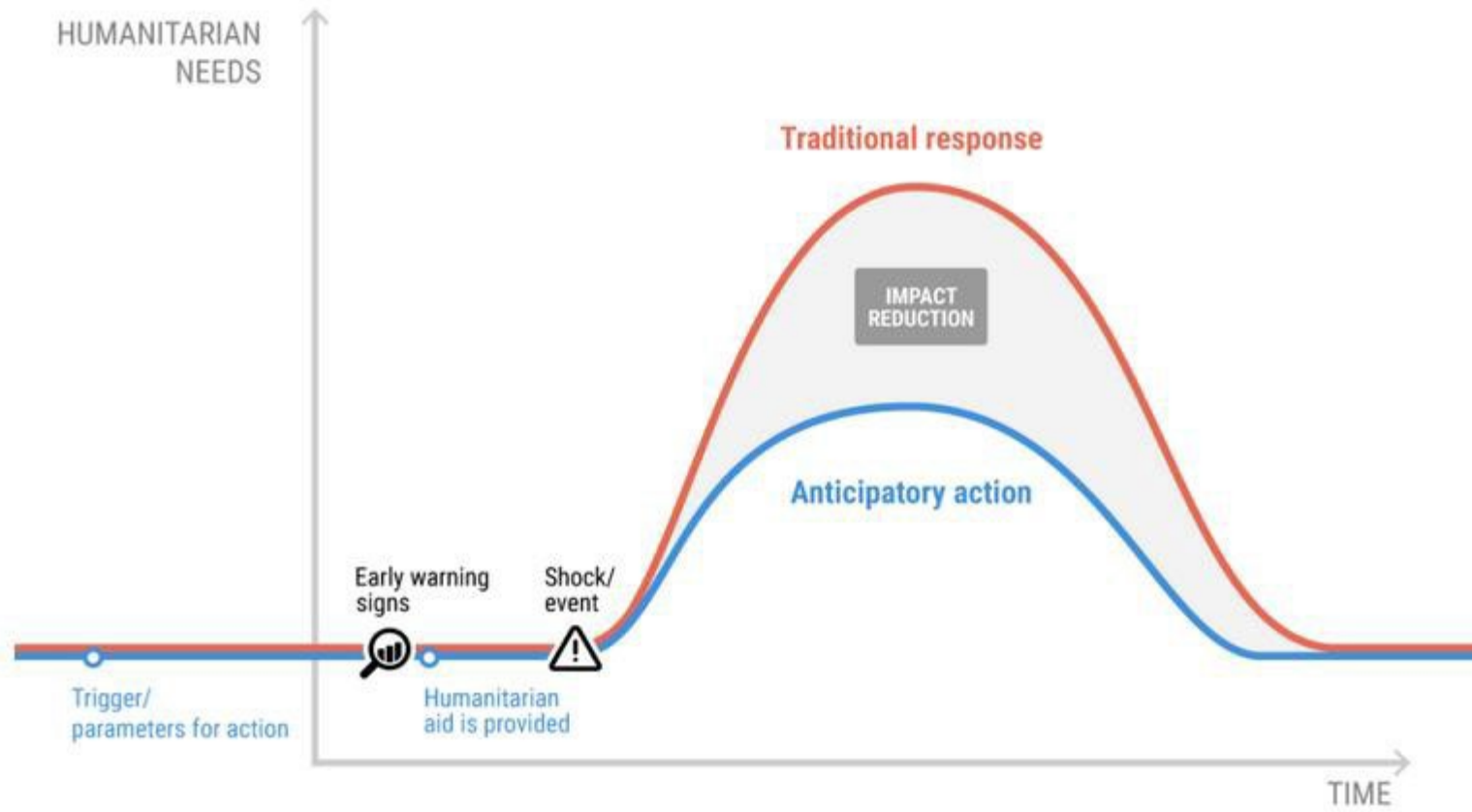


Longer term process:

- **Economic growth**
- **Human capital**
- **Sustainability**

**Security and support for
local institutions**

Anticipatory Action Approach



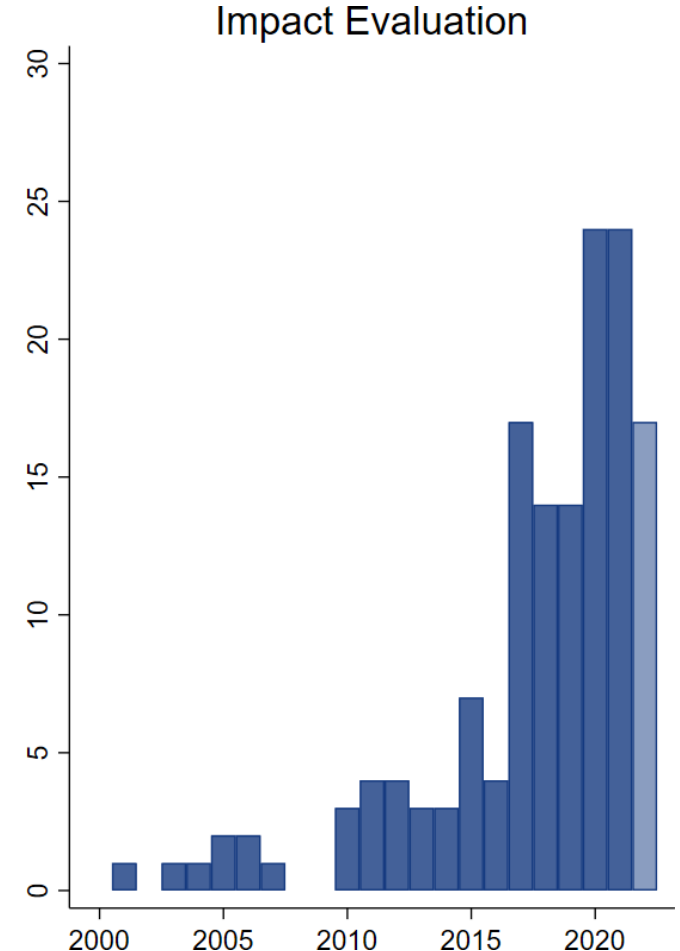
Some research questions to start...

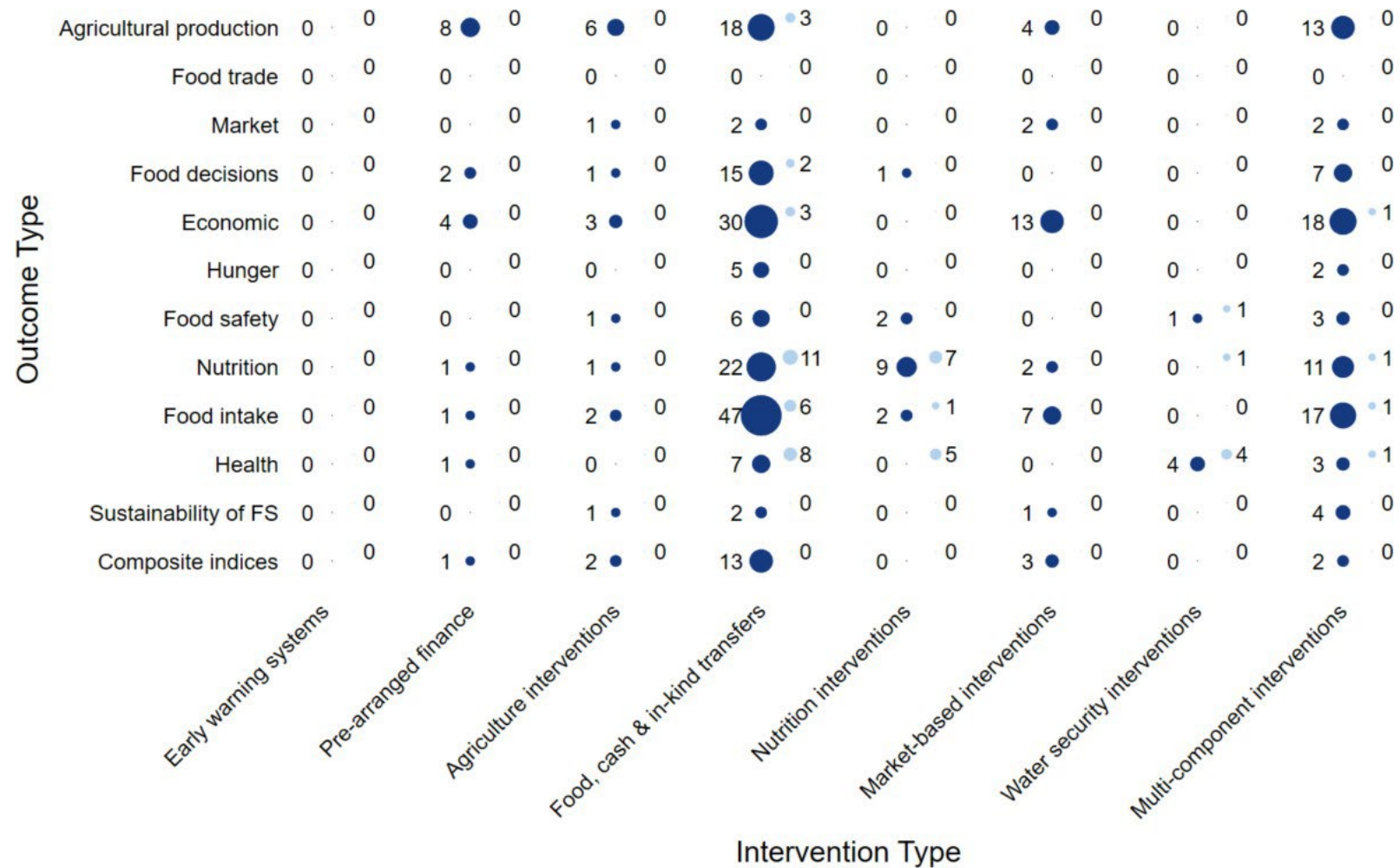
- How to monitor and define triggers to use for **anticipatory action**?
- How can food distribution be more **nutrition-sensitive**?
- Can cash and vouchers be more **cost-effective** alternatives to food distribution?
- How can existing social protection programs be made more **crisis responsive**?
- How effective is **targeting** at reaching the poorest?
- Can **linking aid programs with local private sector** generate benefits for post-crisis economic recovery?

State of evidence

- The volume of evidence on the effects of humanitarian interventions on food security outcomes tripled in 2017-2022
- Very little evidence globally on anticipatory action or early warning systems
- MENA has shortage of rigorous impact evaluations overall (279 vs. 4262 in SSA in 3ie review) which is compounded when looking at crisis response

Yavuz, C., Fenton Villar, P., Berretta, M., Nabi, A., Cooper, C., Shisler, S. (2022). Improving Food Security in Humanitarian Emergencies: An Evidence Gap Map. Working paper. Washington, DC: Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle Associate Award

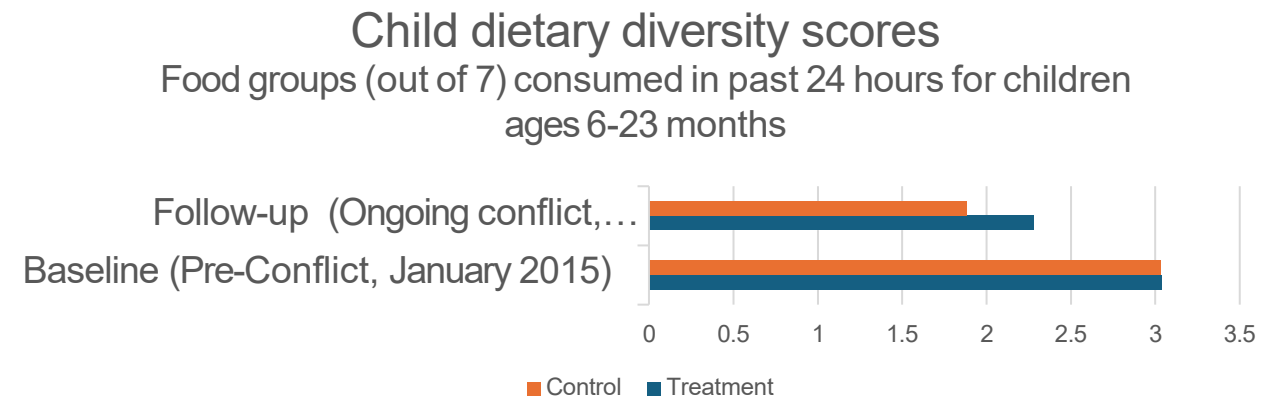




• Impact Evaluation • Systematic Review

Research in Crisis is Possible: Cash for Nutrition in Yemen

- RCT impact evaluation 2015-2017
 - Increased consumption of milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables
 - Improved child dietary diversity
 - Reduced incidence of acute malnutrition
 - Increased HAZ in poorest HHs
- Much less costly
 - 16-17% overhead vs. 77% for food distribution in Yemen
- Evidence allowed for nationwide expansion and large role in WB emergency financing for Yemen



Building Evidence in Crisis: What is Needed

- **Partnerships**- with humanitarian actors and other implementing agencies working in crisis-affected contexts
 - **Access to data on the ground**
 - **Develop the right research questions**
- **Institutional support**- from research institutions and donors to work in topics that are politically sensitive, involve logistical challenges
- **Experience sharing and community of practice**

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Bridging Evidence & Policy (BEP) Seminar Series

Crises and response: Development & Humanitarian Aid in Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

Risk-Informed Policy Making: The Arab Risk Monitor

Raffaele Bertini & Youssef Chaitani

Economic Affairs Officer

Cairo, Conrad Hotel- Nile Hall, 27th March 2024



UNITED NATIONS

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ESCWA

Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



Outline

- Context of conflict and its drivers in the Arab region
- What are the main drivers of risks and how they can be measured?
- Regional and national risk assessment (Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, etc.)?
- How to apply risk informed policy making?



Context Matters

Domestic Drivers of Conflict = High Risk Exposure to Conflict

Every conflict in the MENA region has deep domestic drivers over issues:

- Governance/ Institutions
- Political Identity
- Control of Resources (economic, renewable and not natural resources)

(Paul Salem, Escaping the Conflict Trap: Toward Ending Civil Wars in the Middle East, 2022)

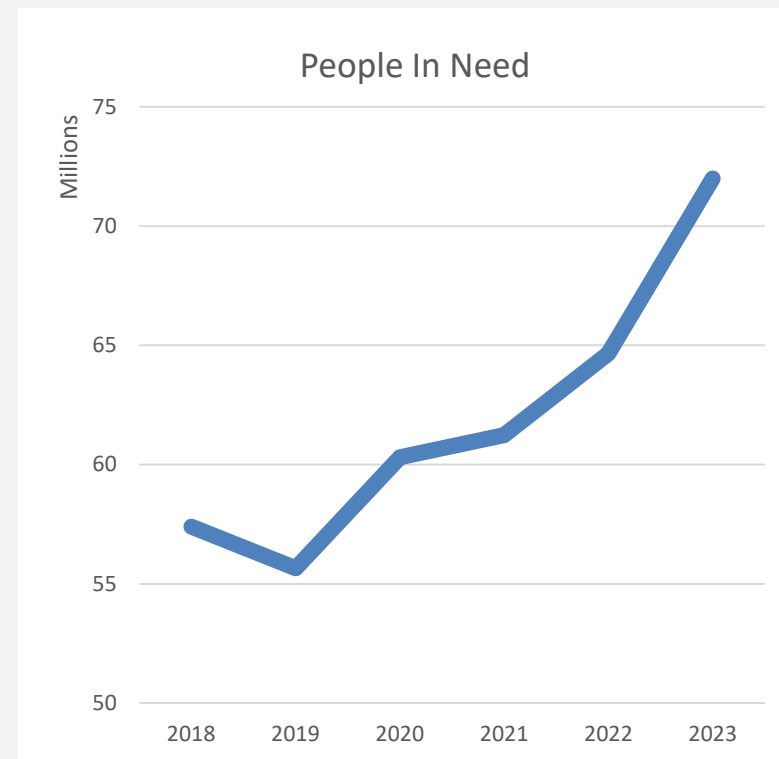
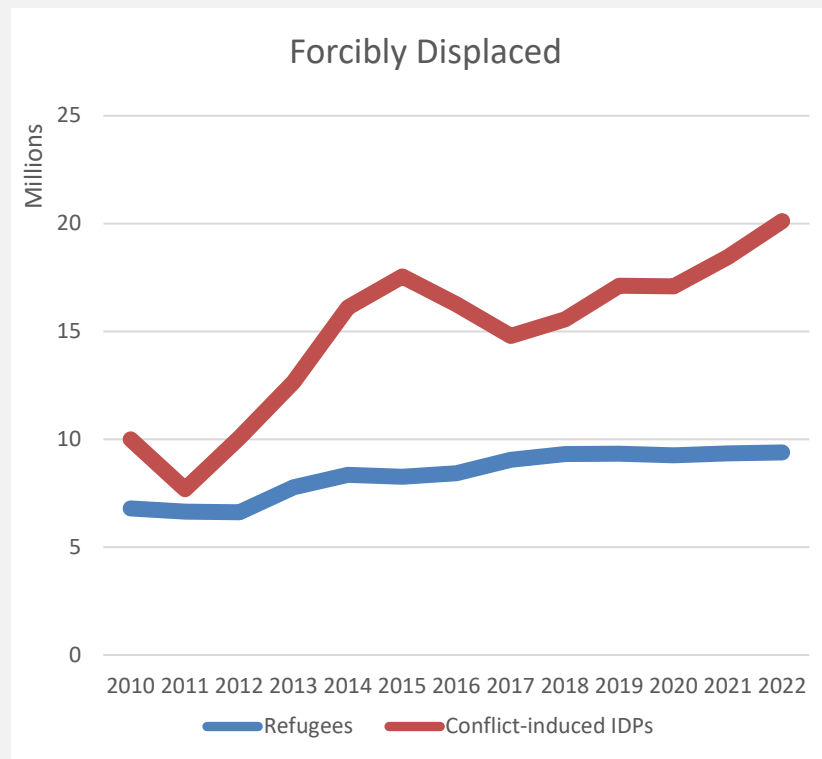
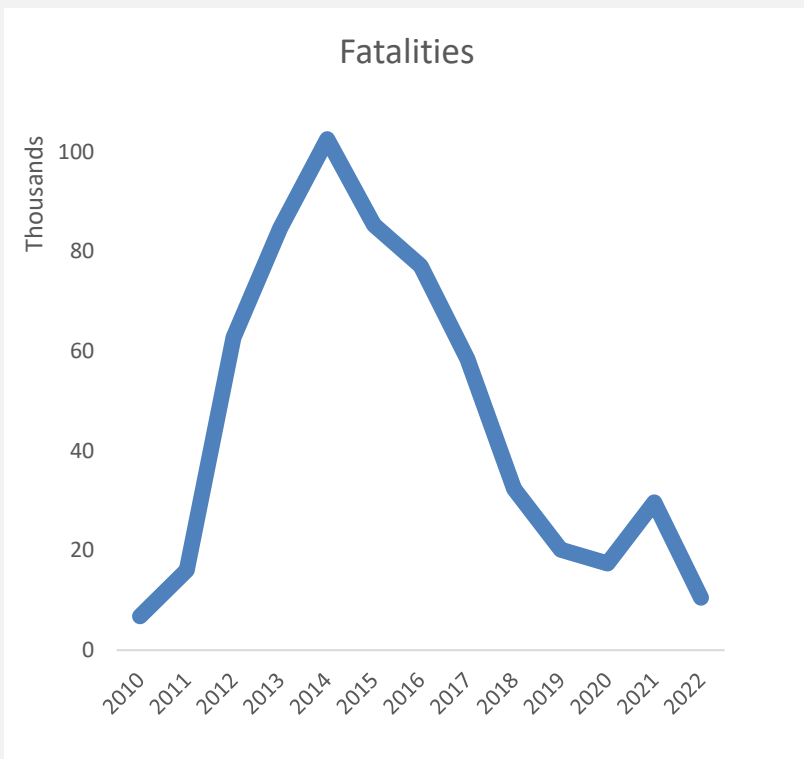
Regional-Global Drivers Increase Risk Exposure

Regional-Global Drivers (regional and global competition fire up conflicts?)

- Geopolitics
- Geoeconomics
- Competition over natural resources – oil and gas, mineral, water etc.- at different geographical level.
- Neighborhood effects

The case for data-driven, risk-informed policy making

Key conflict trends in the Arab region



Source: UCDP (left); UNHCR, UNRWA, IDMC (center); OCHA (right). Note: No data for Palestine (left); data for Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen (right)



The Arab Risk Monitor and Risk Assessment in the Arab region

(Drivers of High Vulnerability and Low Resilience)

Arab Risk Monitor: Framework



Arab Risk Monitor: Framework

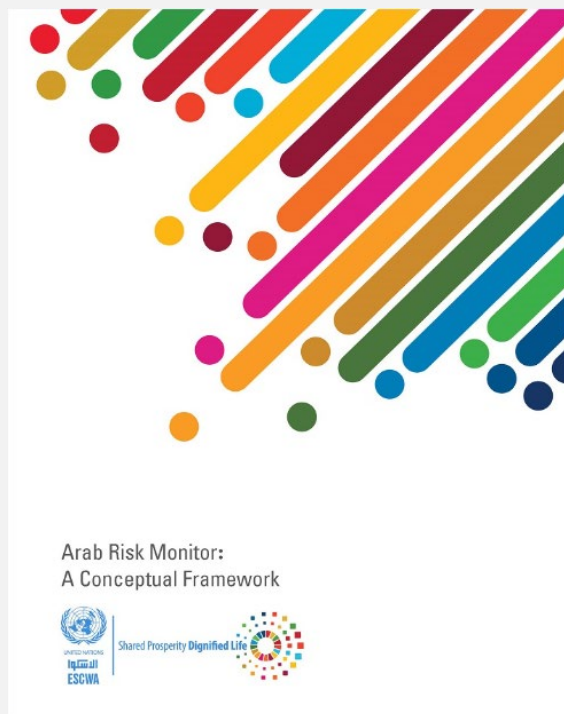
		Level of Resilience				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		0–0.20	0.21–0.40	0.41–0.60	0.61–0.80	0.81–1
Level of Vulnerability	Very High	Severe	Severe	Significant	Moderate	Moderate
	0.81–1					
	High	Severe	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Moderate
	0.61–0.80					
	Medium	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	0.41–0.60					
	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
	0.21–0.40					
	Very Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
	0–0.20					

Source: ESCWA elaboration.

Risks Are Interconnected



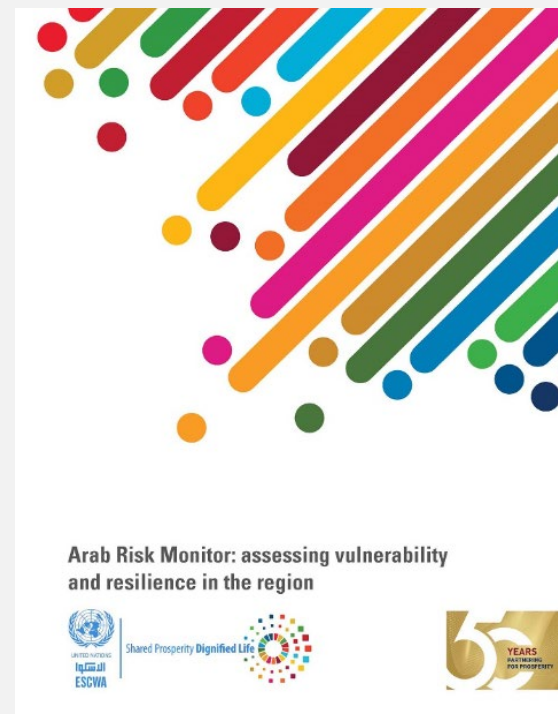
Arab Risk Monitor



Arab Risk Monitor: a conceptual framework



Arab Risk Monitor: quantifying the drivers of risk of conflict, version 1.0

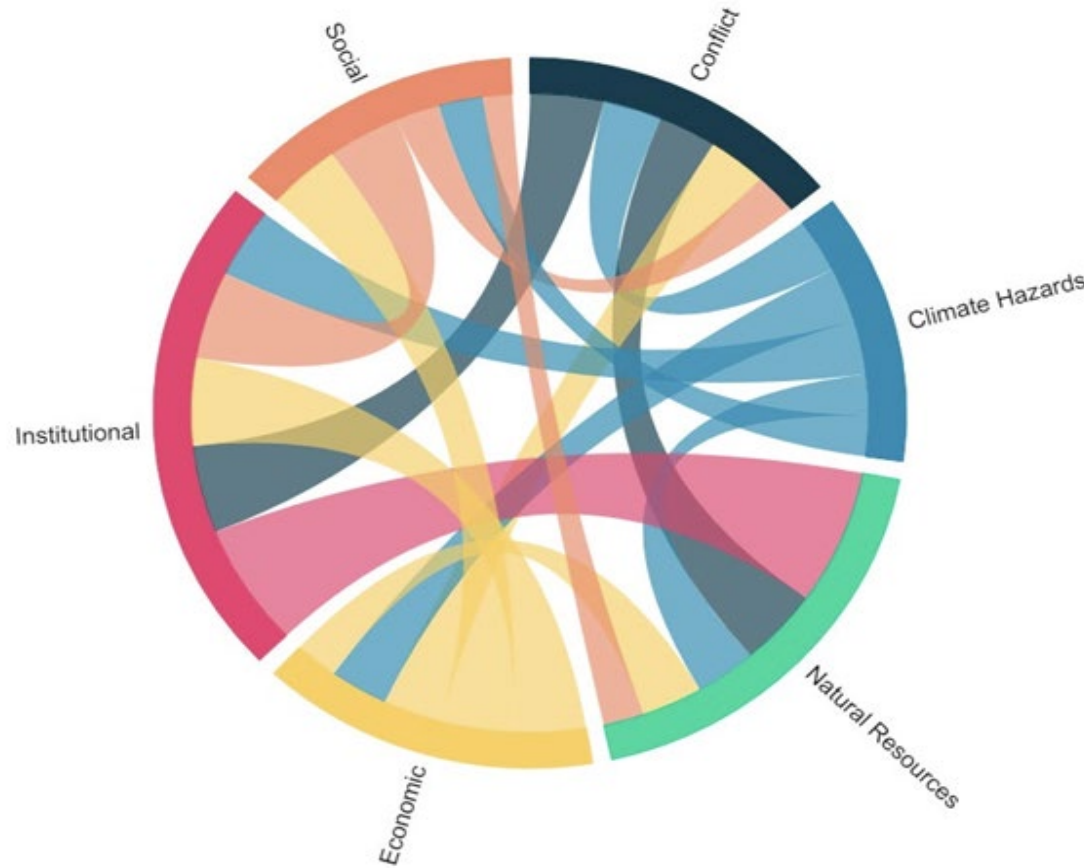


Arab Risk Monitor: assessing vulnerability and resilience in the region



Country risk analysis: Yemen

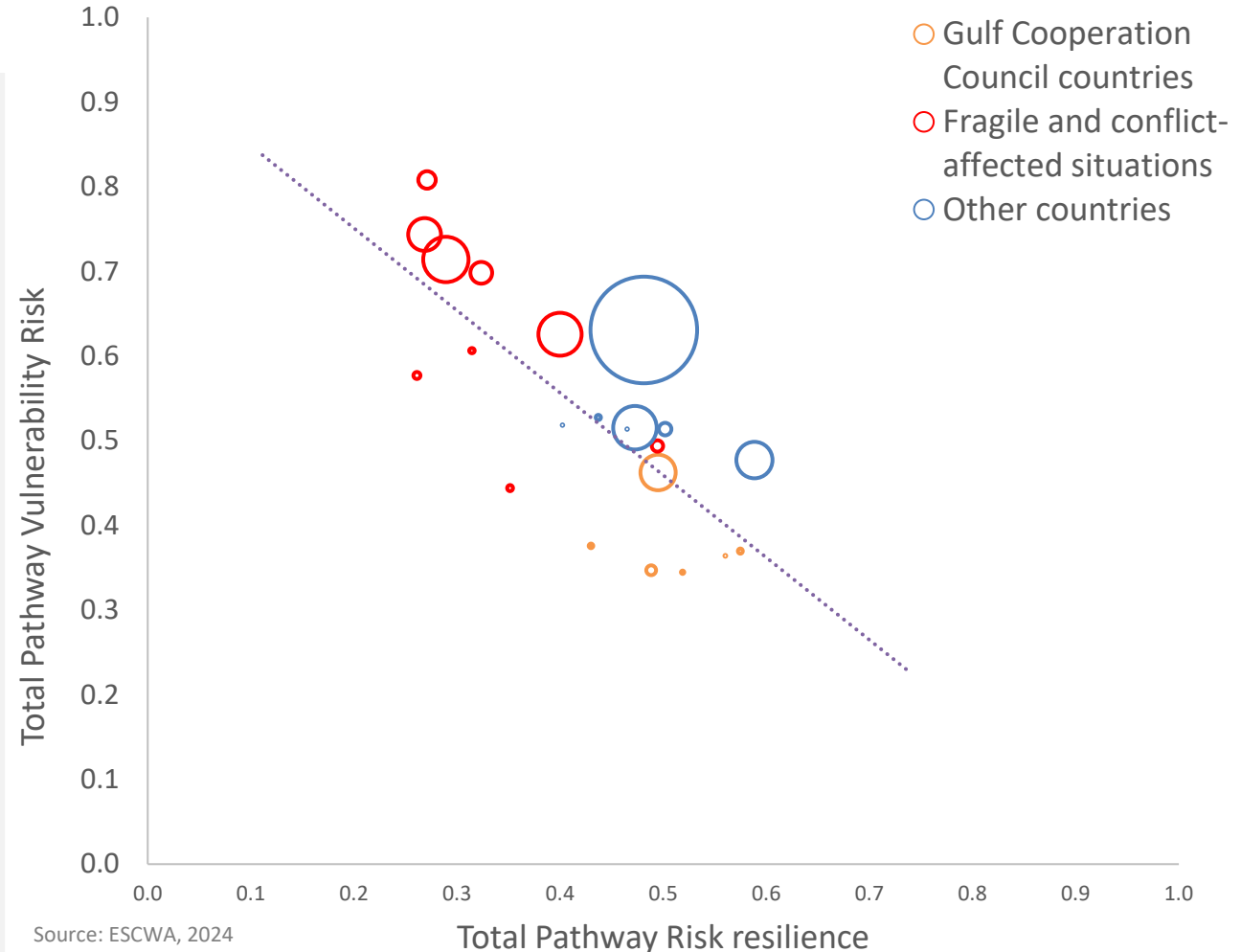
Risks Are Interconnected



Risks are interconnected . Conflict does not occur in isolation.

Higher vulnerability lower the resilience

- Vulnerability and resilience are highly correlated
- Higher the vulnerability lower the resilience – the higher the risk exposure to violence & and vice-versa



Assessing Risk in the Arab region

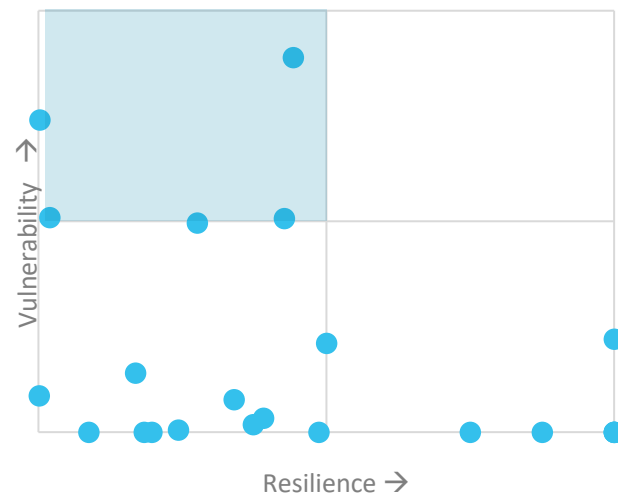
The overall level of conflict risk has deteriorated in the past decade

- Weak institutions and natural resource scarcity perpetuate exposure to instability and conflict.
- Water scarcity, food insecurity and corruption were identified as the primary drivers of high vulnerability
- Social protection, water stress, and lack of voice and accountability were the main drivers of low resilience

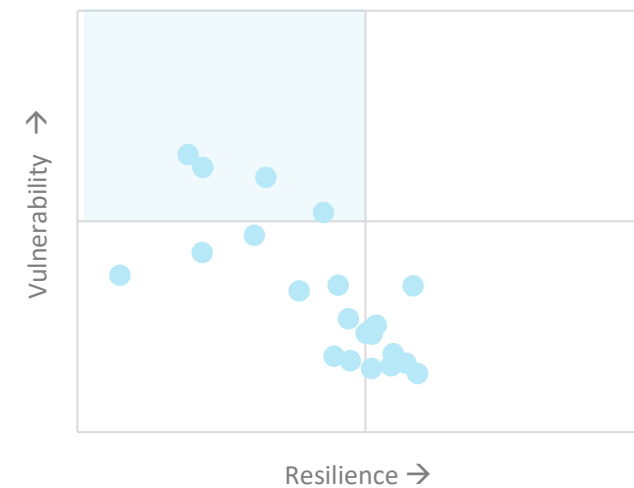
Natural Resources



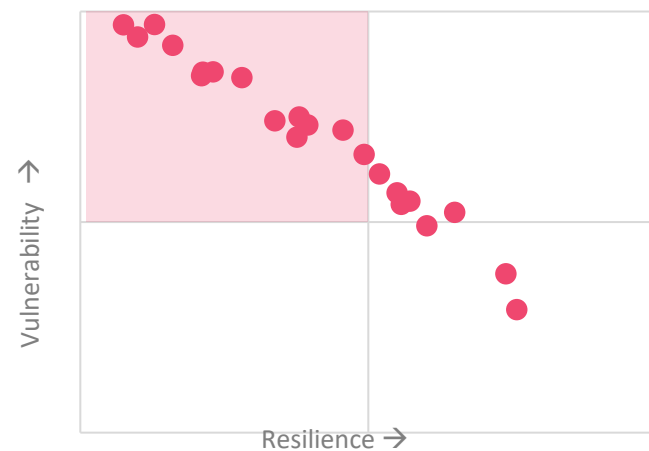
Climate Hazards



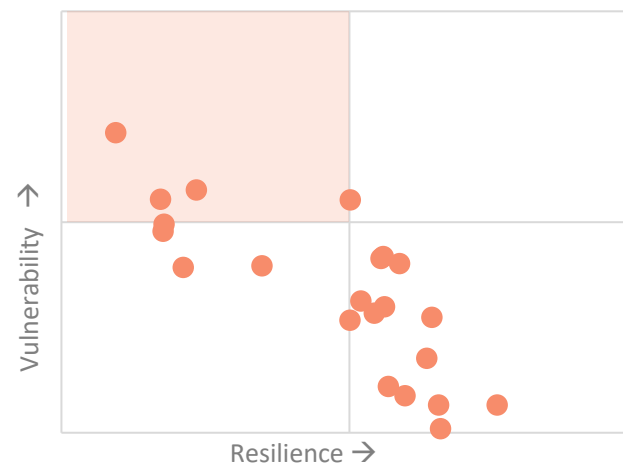
Conflict



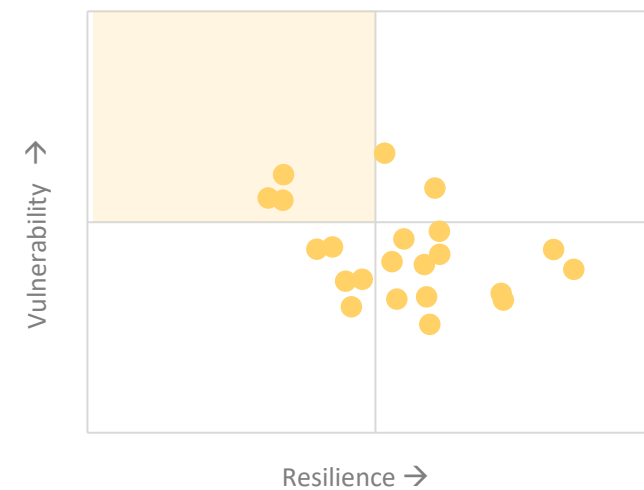
Institutions



Social



Economy

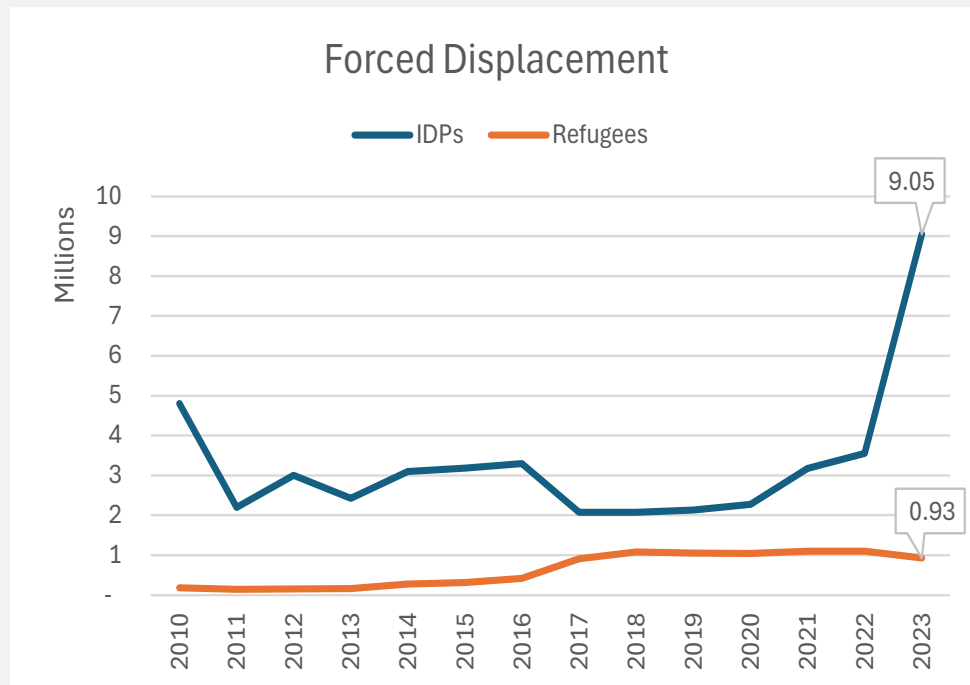




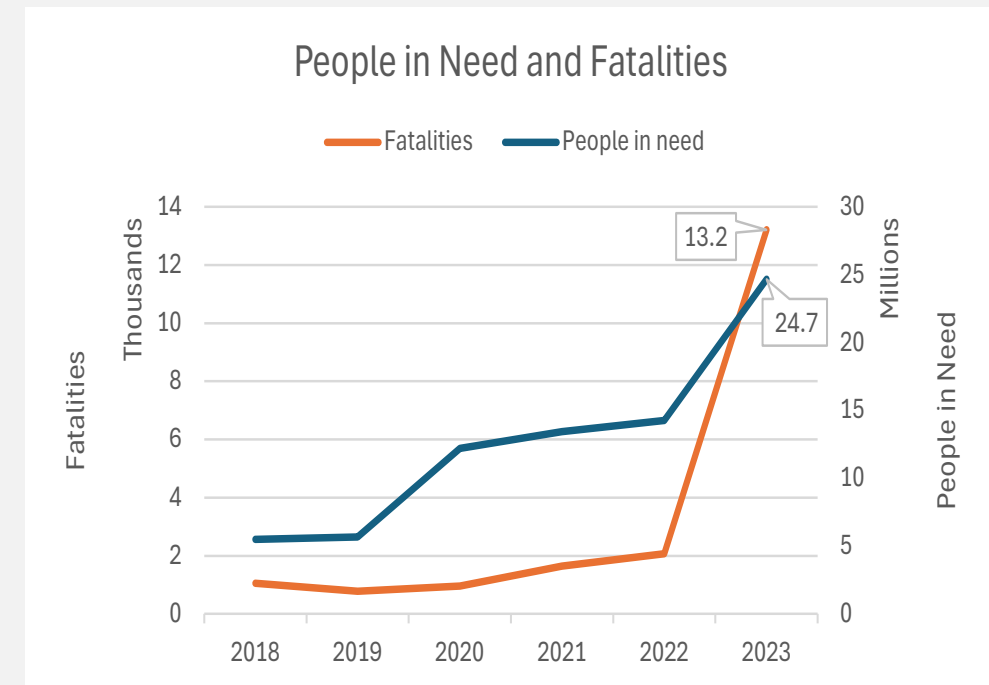
Risk Assessment in conflict affected countries

(Drivers of High Vulnerability and Low Resilience): the cases of Sudan, Libya, Palestine (Gaza) and Yemen

Conflict Begets more Conflict in Sudan: Domestic Drivers are Exacerbated



Source: IDP data retrieved from IDMC, data for 2023 (as of 15 April) are from Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Refugees data retrieved UNHCR, and data for 2023 is available till mid-year



Source: People in need data retrieved from Source: Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), 2023 data is until October. Fatalities data retrieved from ACLED.

Overview on Risk: Highly Exposed to conflict Sudan 2022

Pathway	Domain	Vulnerability	Resilience	Overall Score
<i>Conflict</i>	Conflict risk	High	Low	Significant
<i>Climate</i>	Natural resource risk	High	Low	Significant
	Climate Hazards	Medium	Medium	Moderate
<i>Development</i>	Economic risk	Medium	Low	Significant
	Social risk	High	Low	Significant
	Institutional risk	Very High	Low	Severe

Source: Authors

Decade of Risks Exposure to Violence

<i>Pathway</i>	<i>Risk domain</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2022</i>		<i>2022 vs. 2012</i>
Conflict	<i>Conflict risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.77	0.73	-6%	Slight Improvement
		Resilience	0.29	0.25	-16%	Deteriorated
Climate	<i>Natural resources</i>	Vulnerability	0.84	0.67	-20%	Improved
		Resilience	0.39	0.37	-4%	Minimal/ No Change
	<i>Climate hazards</i>	Vulnerability	0.54	0.60	12%	Deteriorated
		Resilience	0.41	0.51	24%	Improved
Development	<i>Economic risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.49	0.55	13%	Deteriorated
		Resilience	0.30	0.29	-1%	Minimal/ No Change
	<i>Social risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.75	0.72	-4%	Minimal/ No Change
		Resilience	0.21	0.25	19%	Improved
	<i>Institutional risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.90	0.88	-3%	Minimal/ No Change
		Resilience	0.25	0.21	-14%	Deteriorated

Source: Authors

Drivers of Vulnerability and low resilience – Lasting Challenges

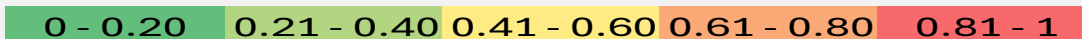
Vulnerability Drivers	2012	2022
<i>Water scarcity</i>	0.91	0.94
<i>Corruption</i>	0.90	0.88
<i>Conflict proximity</i>	0.86	0.86
<i>Unemployment</i>	0.77	0.78
<i>Political instability</i>	0.80	0.75
<i>Maternal Mortality</i>	0.78	0.75
<i>Youth bulge</i>	0.80	0.72
<i>Disaster Impact</i>	0.66	0.70
<i>Conflict intensity</i>	0.70	0.67
<i>Conflict history</i>	0.74	0.64
<i>Financial dependence</i>	0.49	0.63
<i>Infant mortality</i>	0.67	0.63
<i>Food insecurity</i>	0.53	0.56
<i>Income inequality</i>	0.44	0.45
<i>Reliance on agriculture</i>	0.77	0.41

Source: Authors

Resilience drivers	2012	2022
<i>Territorial integrity</i>	0.00	0.09
<i>Displacement resilience</i>	0.21	0.12
<i>Water and sanitation services</i>	0.07	0.12
<i>Government effectiveness</i>	0.21	0.15
<i>Fiscal space</i>	0.32	0.20
<i>E-governance</i>	0.25	0.21
<i>Education</i>	0.21	0.25
<i>Women's Participation</i>	0.26	0.28
<i>Rule of law</i>	0.29	0.28
<i>Economic development</i>	0.35	0.29
<i>Gender equality in education</i>	0.26	0.30
<i>Water resilience</i>	0.31	0.31
<i>Health coverage</i>	0.26	0.32
<i>Voice and accountability</i>	0.29	0.34
<i>Economic growth</i>	0.23	0.39
<i>Land resilience</i>	0.47	0.44
<i>Military Capacity</i>	0.68	0.45
<i>Adaptation Finance</i>	0.41	0.51

Source: Authors

Scale



Source: Authors

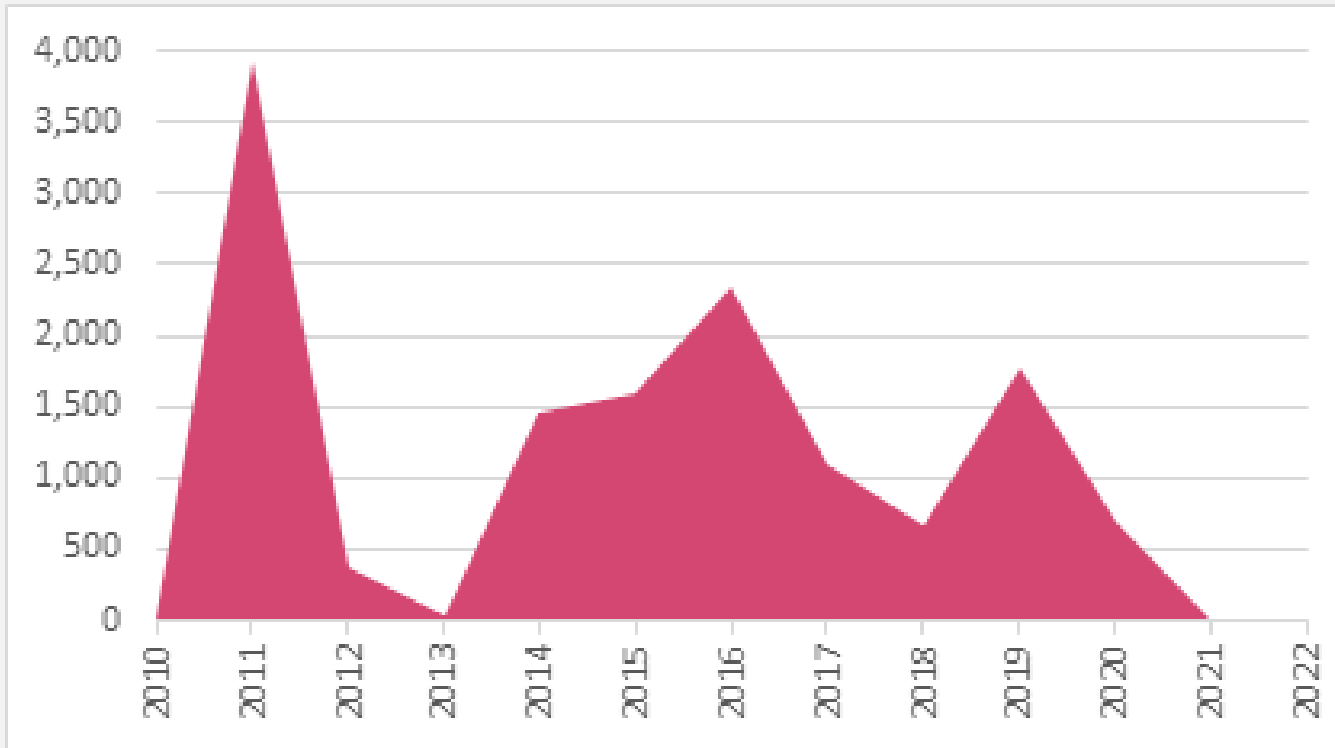
Libya ended up into a conflict trap since 2010

<i>Pathway</i>	<i>Risk domain</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>Trend</i>	<i>2022 vs. 2010</i>	
Conflict	<i>Conflict risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.13	0.86	0.51		286%	Deteriorated
		Resilience	0.50	0.19	0.19		-61%	Deteriorated
Climate	<i>Climate risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.60	0.65	0.60		0%	Same
		Resilience	0.29	0.29	0.29		0%	Same
Development	<i>Economic risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.20	0.37	0.39		91%	Deteriorated
		Resilience	0.53	0.25	0.50		-6%	Deteriorated
	<i>Social risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.59	0.56	0.56		-4%	Improved
		Resilience	0.52	0.53	0.55		5%	Deteriorated
	<i>Institutional risk</i>	Vulnerability	0.85	0.92	0.91		7%	Deteriorated
		Resilience	0.25	0.16	0.14		-46%	Deteriorated

Source: Authors

Libya an unresolved civil conflict since 2011

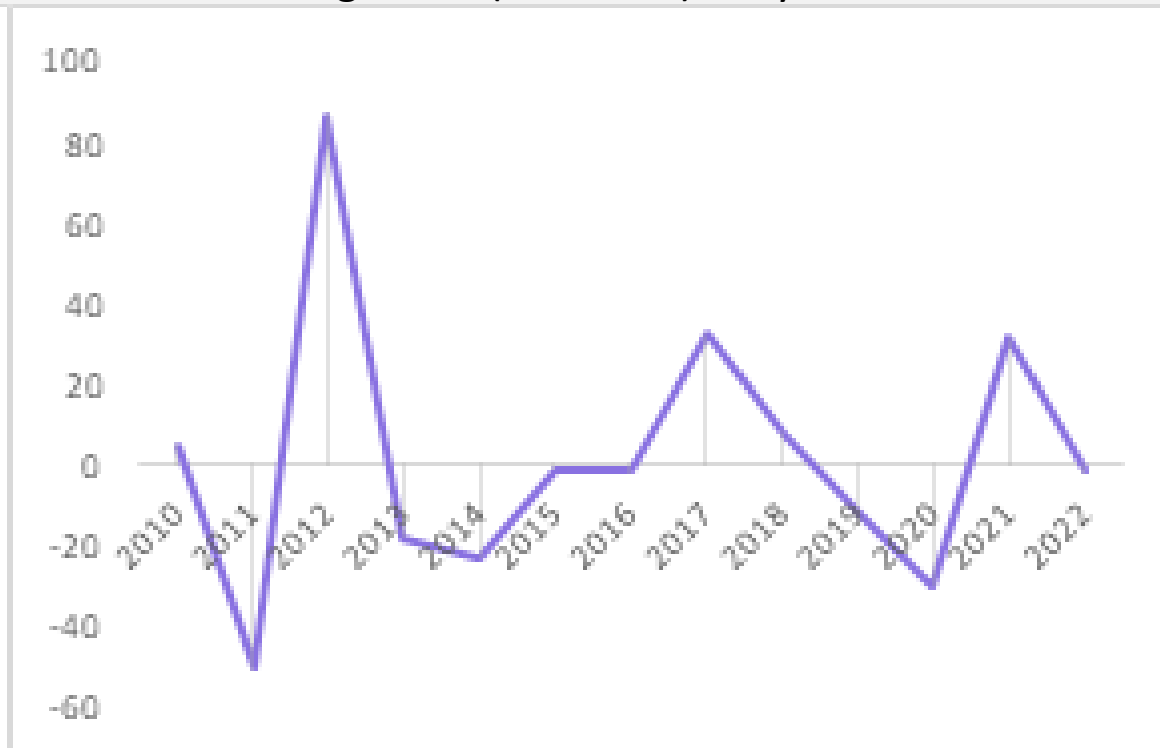
Battle-related deaths in Libya, 2010-2022



Source: Authors, based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset, Global Version 23.1.

Note: Includes three types of violence: State-based, non-State and one-sided violence.

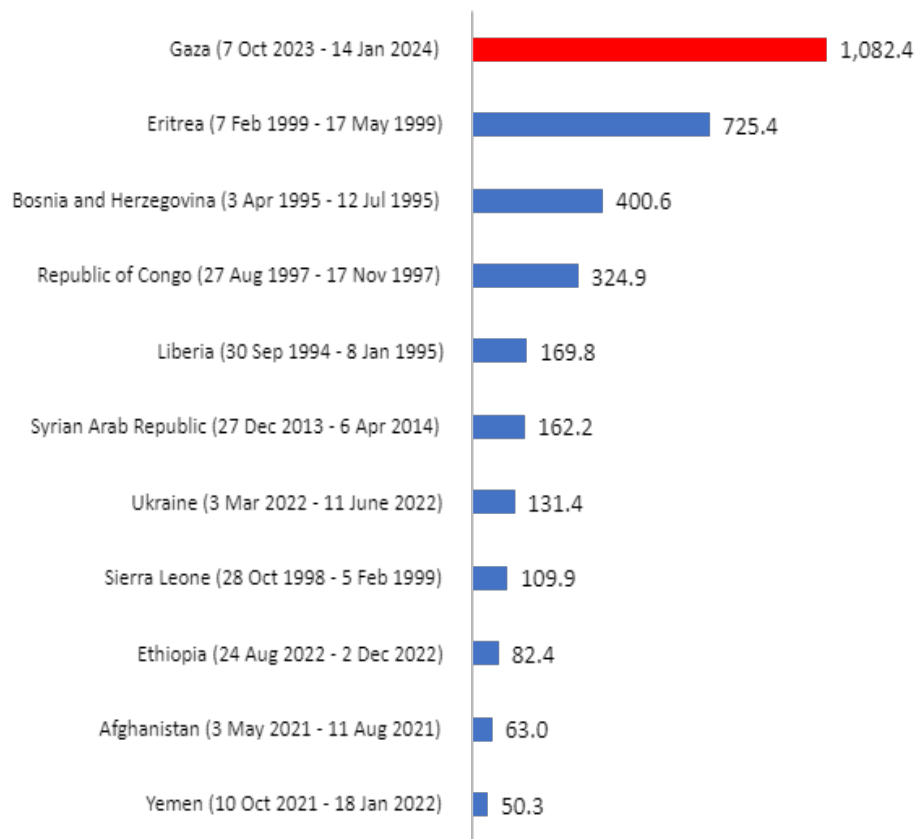
GDP growth (% annual), Libya



Source: Authors, based on data from the World Bank world development indicators databank.

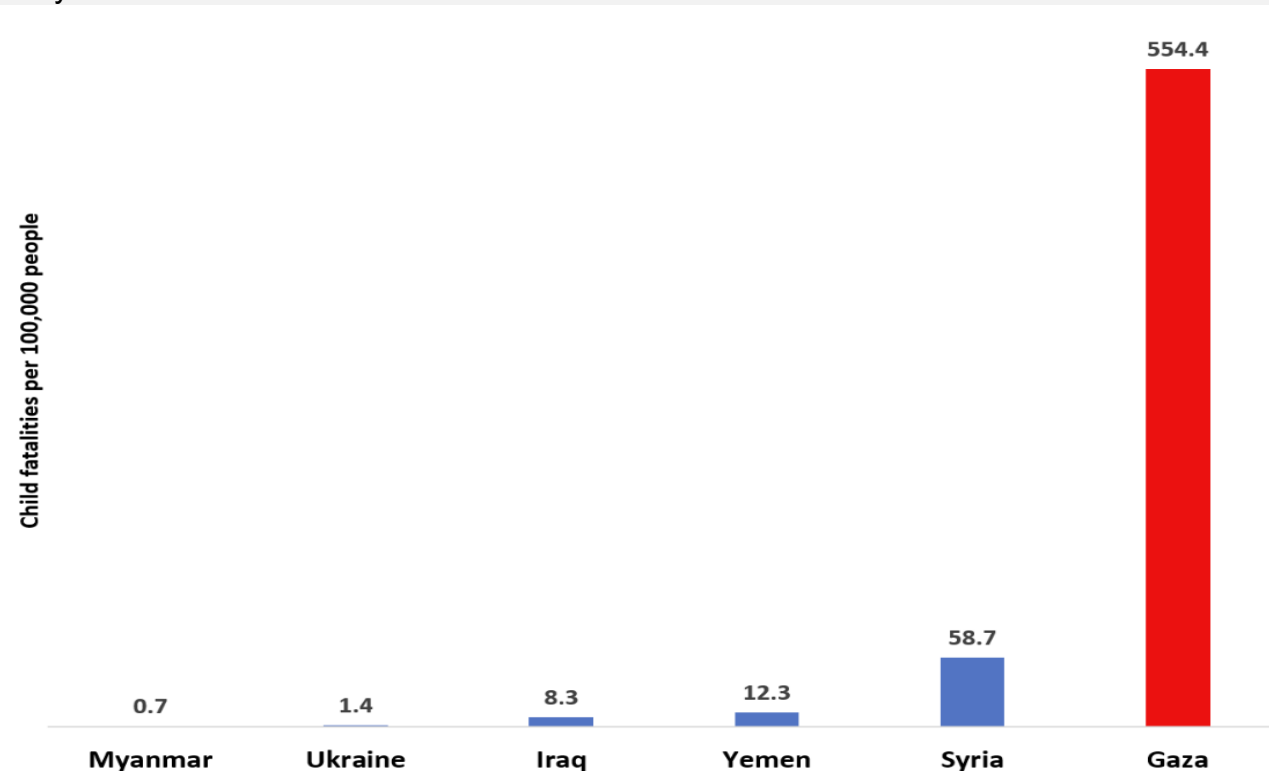
War on Gaza: most intense conflict since Rwanda 1994

Deadliest 100 days in major conflicts since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (deaths per 100,000 people)



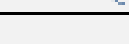
Source: ESCWA, 2024

One Gazan child in every 85 has been killed since 7 October 2023 and the following 100 days.



Source: ESCWA, 2024

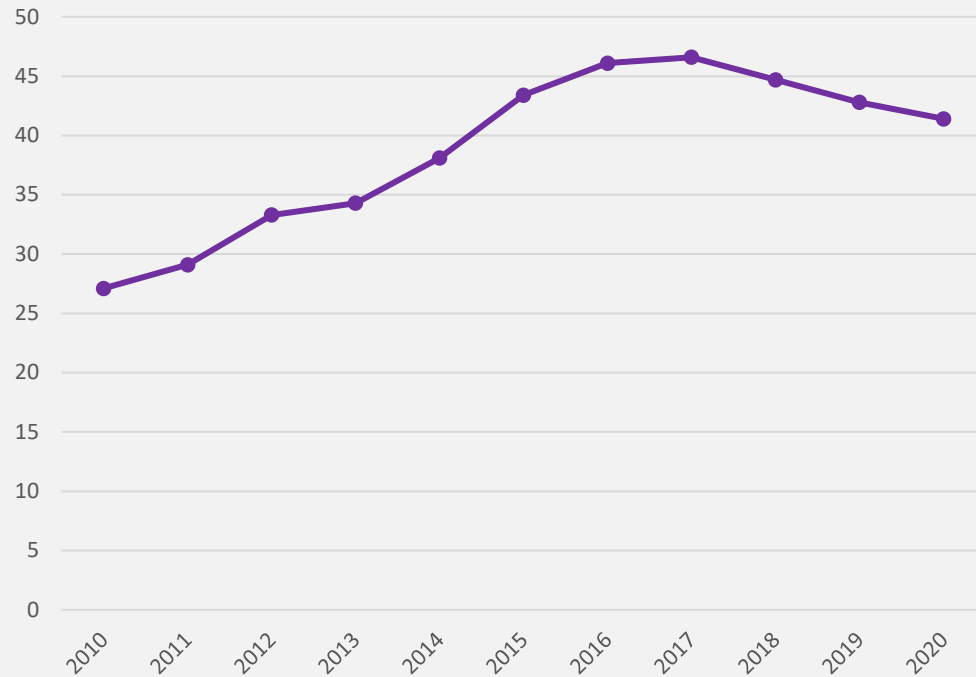
Conflict in Palestine does not happen in a vacuum

Risk domain	Component	1998	2010	2022	Trend	1998 vs. 2022	2010 vs. 2022
<i>Conflict</i>	Vulnerability	0.42	0.68	0.70		70% Deteriorated	4% Deteriorated
	Resilience	0.20	0.14	0.16		-22% Deteriorated	10% Improved
<i>Climate</i>	Vulnerability	0.60	0.59	0.57		-5% Improved	-3% Improved
	Resilience	0.43	0.36	0.40		-5% Deteriorated	11% Improved
<i>Economic</i>	Vulnerability	0.84	0.79	0.65		-22% Improved	-18% Improved
	Resilience	0.71	0.68	0.52		-27% Deteriorated	-23% Deteriorated
<i>Social</i>	Vulnerability	0.69	0.71	0.66		-3% Improved	-6% Improved
	Resilience	0.48	0.59	0.65		34% Improved	10% Improved
<i>Institutional</i>	Vulnerability	0.55	0.59	0.72		30% Deteriorated	23% Deteriorated
	Resilience	0.41	0.46	0.37		-8% Deteriorated	-19% Deteriorated

Source: Authors

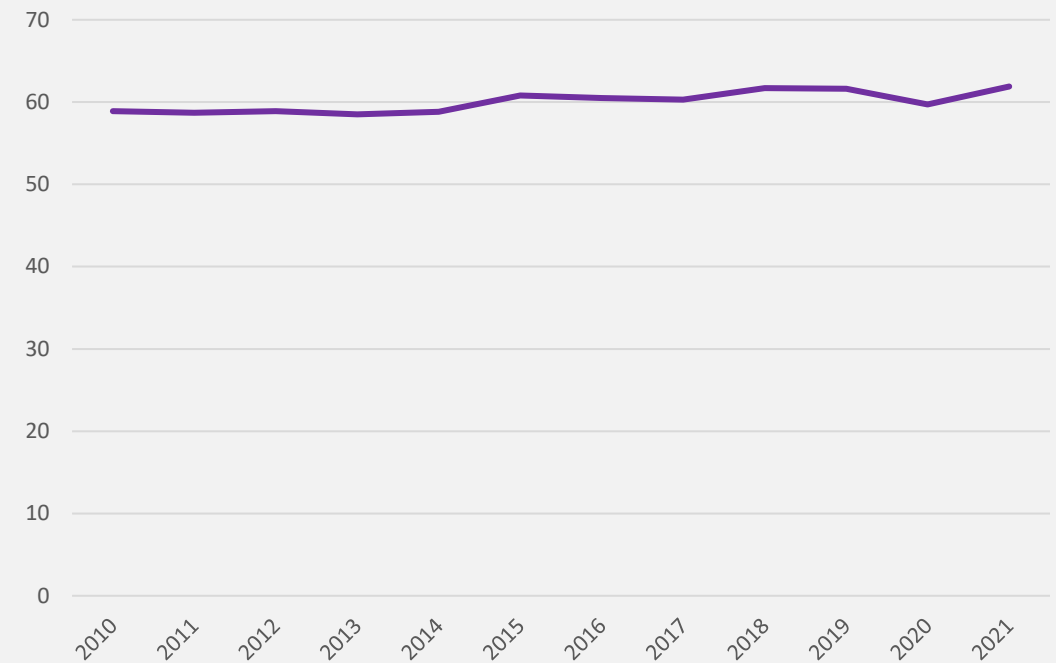
Yemen faces a wide spectrum of challenges

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)



Source: FAOSTAT, 2024

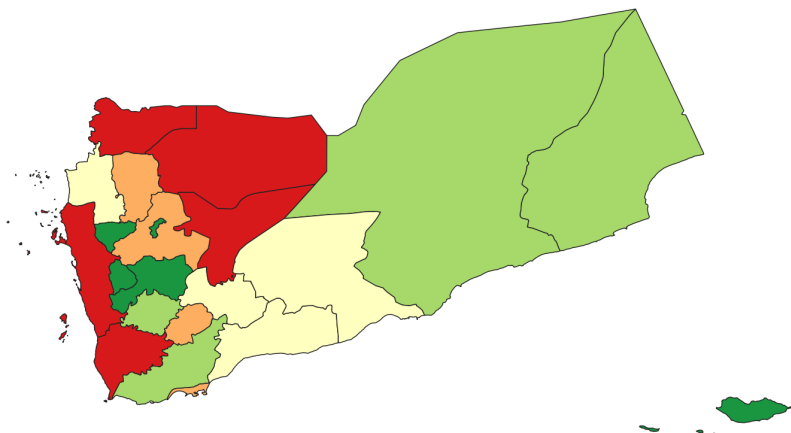
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)



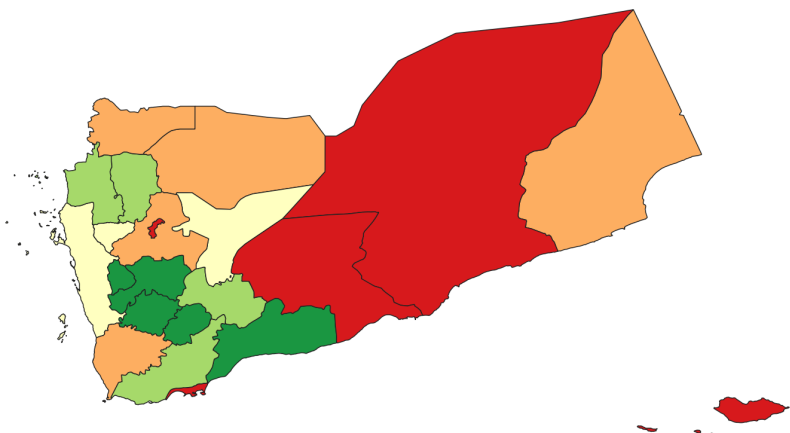
Source: World Development Indicators, 2024

Yemen Subnational Risk Assessment

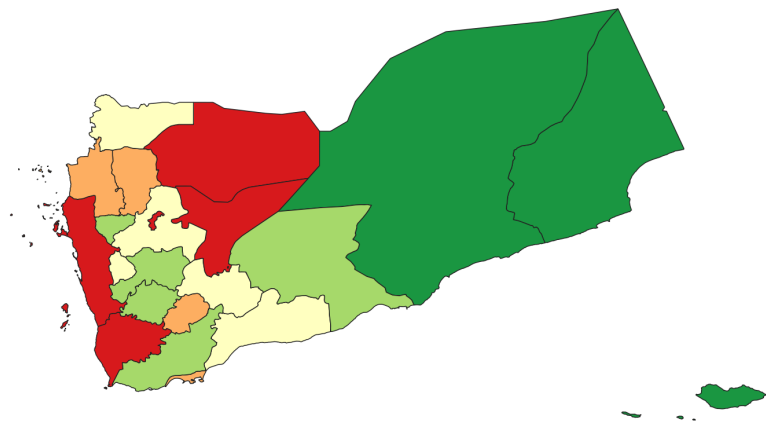
Conflict Resilience



Climate Resilience

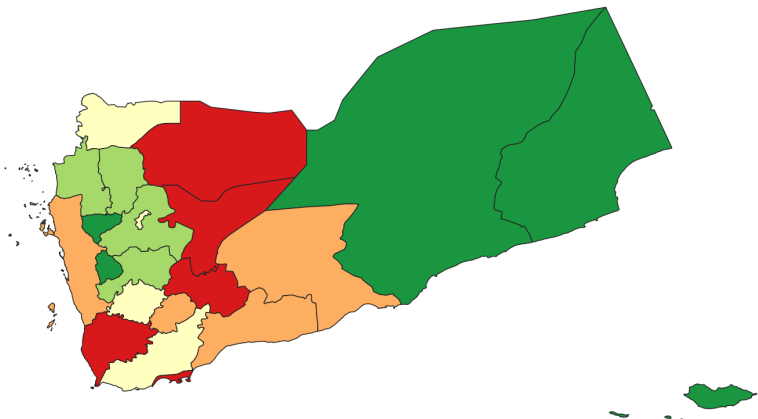


Development Resilience

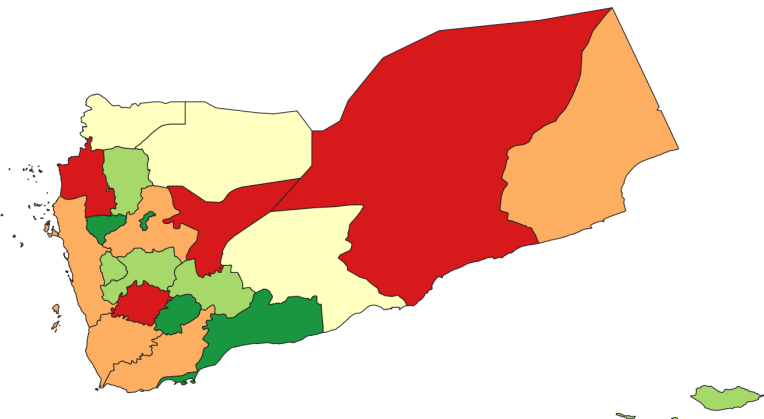


Source: Authors

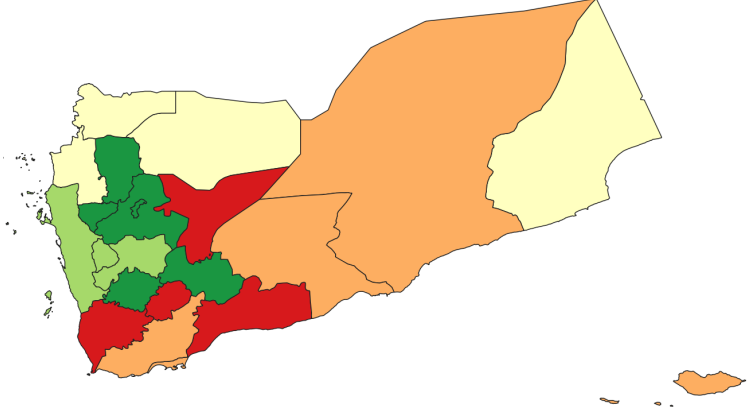
Conflict Vulnerability



Climate Vulnerability



Development Vulnerability

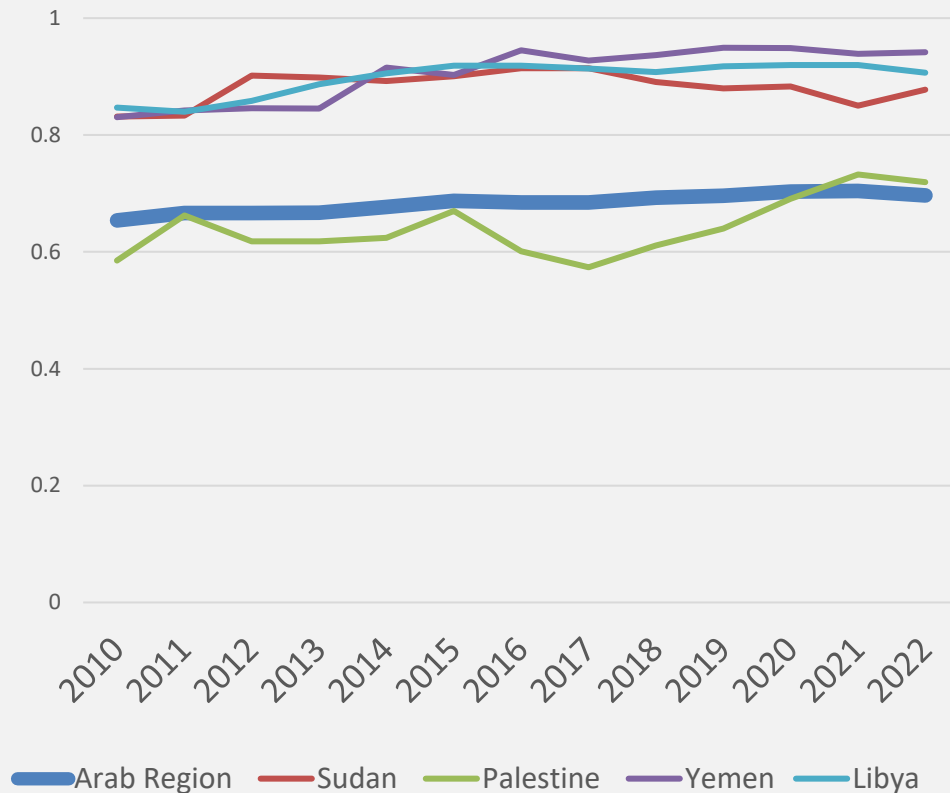




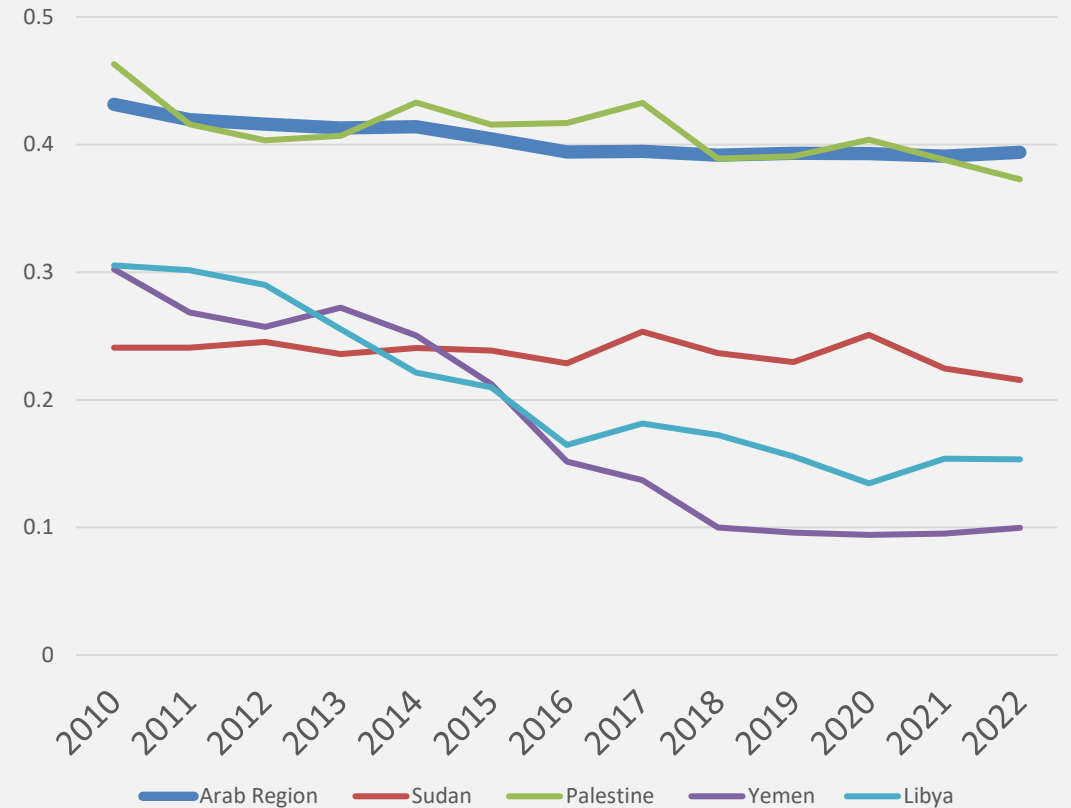
Where are these countries heading?

Institutions: Higher vulnerability and lower resilience since 2010

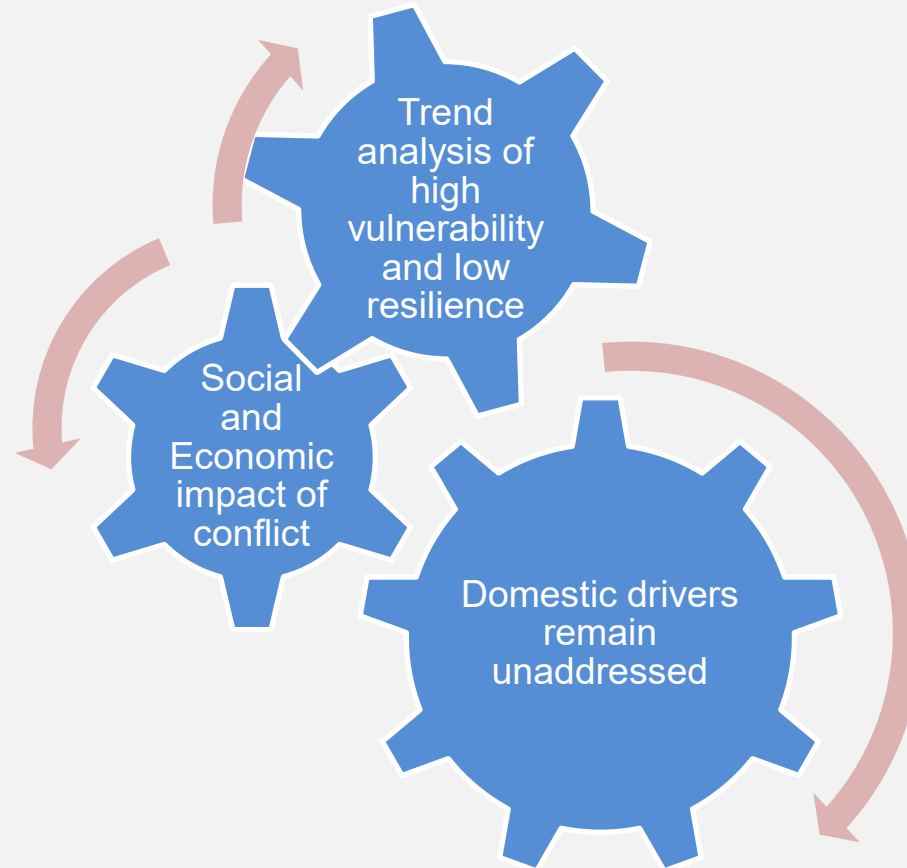
Institutional Vulnerability



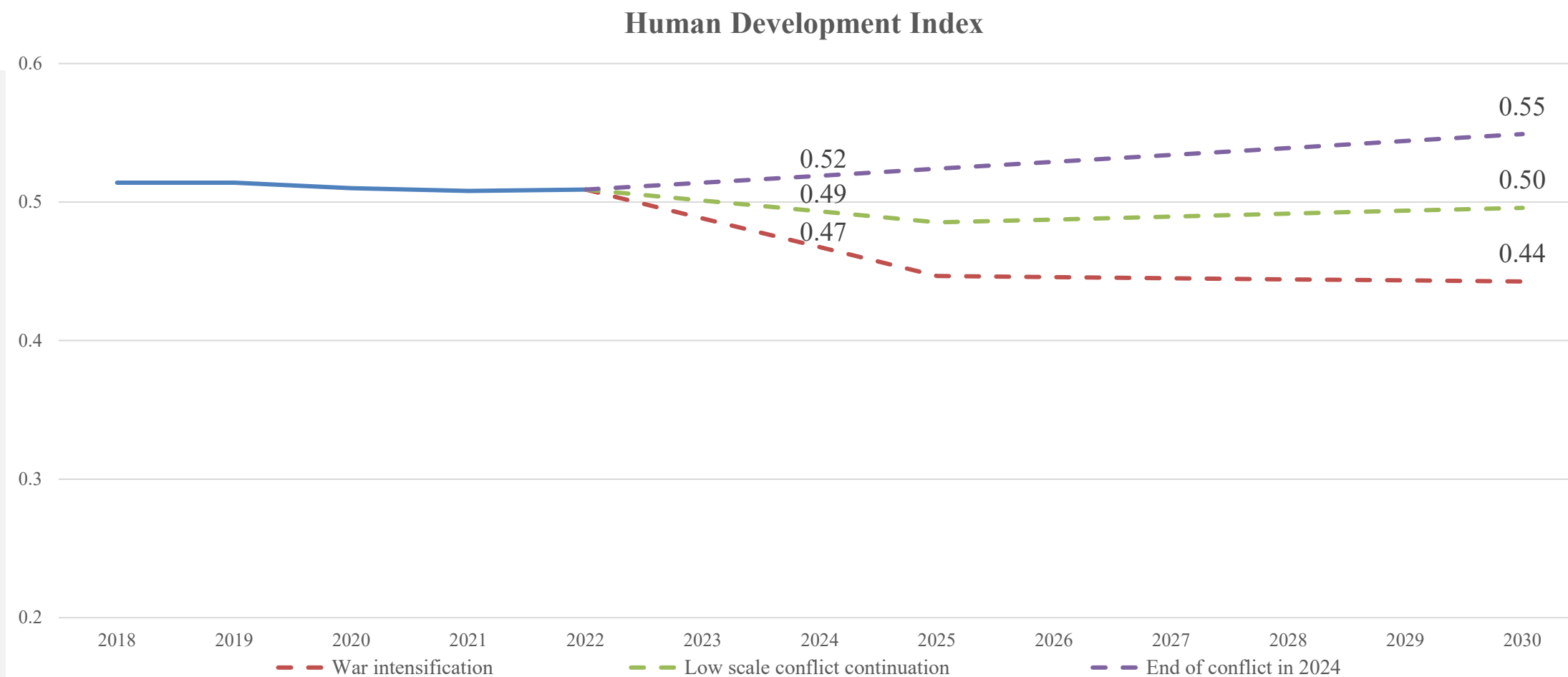
Institutional Resilience



Conflict Trap?



Continued War: HDI to Decline Further



Source: ESCWA's elaboration based on UNDP, 2023



What can be done?

What can be done?

- Strengthen drivers of resilience and reducing the magnitude of drivers of vulnerability
- Integrate risk assessment in recovery plans and development programs and implement risk informed policy making
- National/local interventions (Garner political will to strengthen resilience)
- Operationalize the nexus approach (Focusing on common shared priorities to strengthen peoples' resilience and strengthen peacebuilding assets)

Thank you!



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