

Brussels, 21 January 2026  
(OR. en)

5599/26

COHAFA 5  
RELEX 82  
INTER-REP 4

**NOTE**

---

From: General Secretariat of the Council  
On: 21 January 2026  
To: Delegations

---

Subject: Humanitarian Outlook 2026: needs and prioritisation  
- presentation by IRC

---

Following the meeting of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) on 21 January 2026, delegations will find in Annex the presentation made by IRC<sup>12</sup>

---

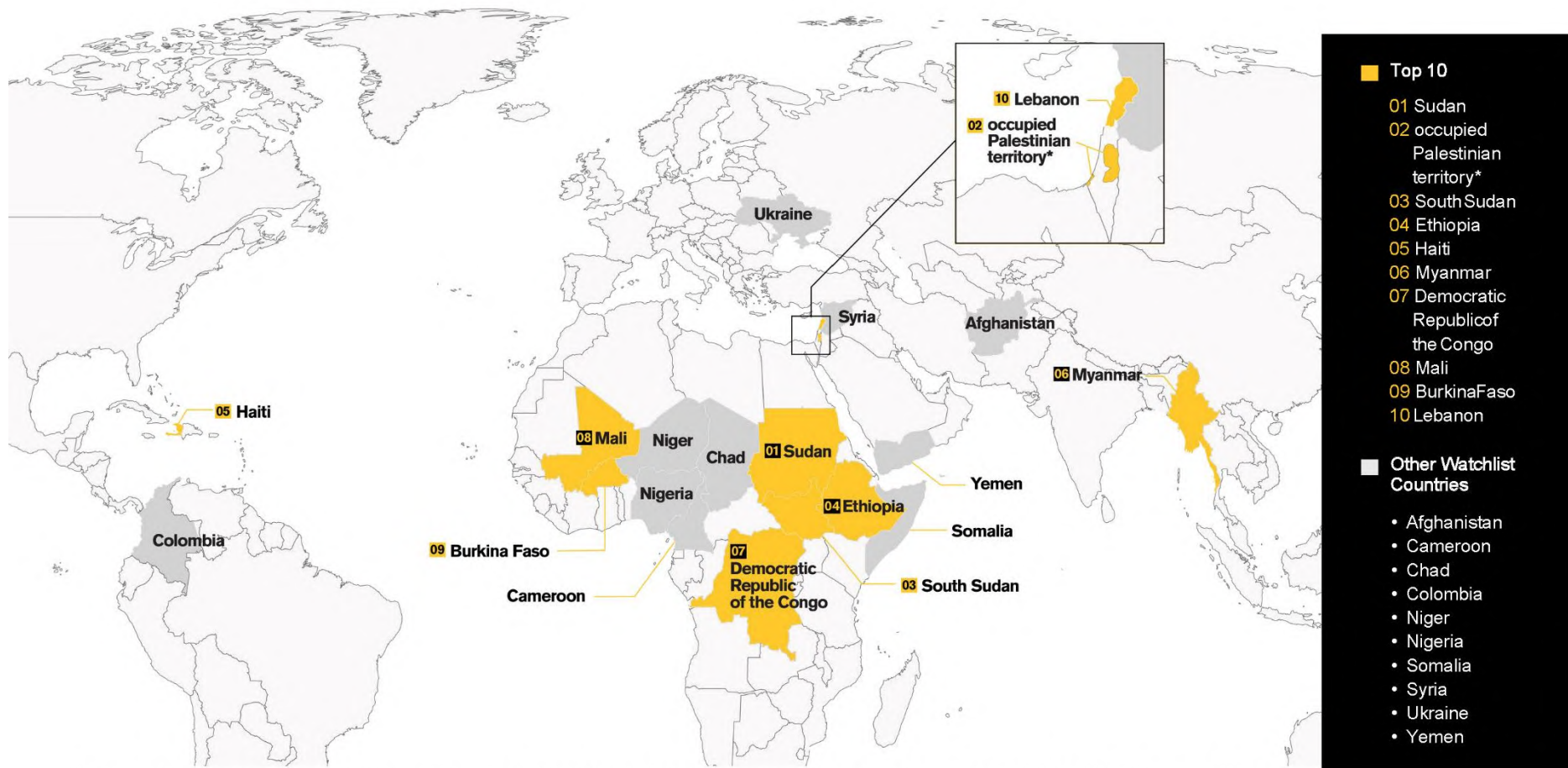
<sup>1</sup> International Rescue Committee Inc, identification number in the EU Transparency Register: 336765244362-96.

<sup>2</sup> This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.



# 2026 Emergency Watchlist





\*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.

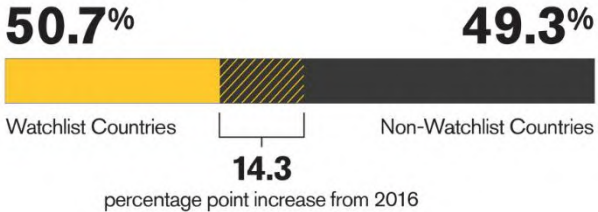
# The 20 Watchlist countries will be home to the majority of people living in extreme poverty by 2030

Source: World Data Lab

Percentage of People Living in Extreme Poverty in 2016

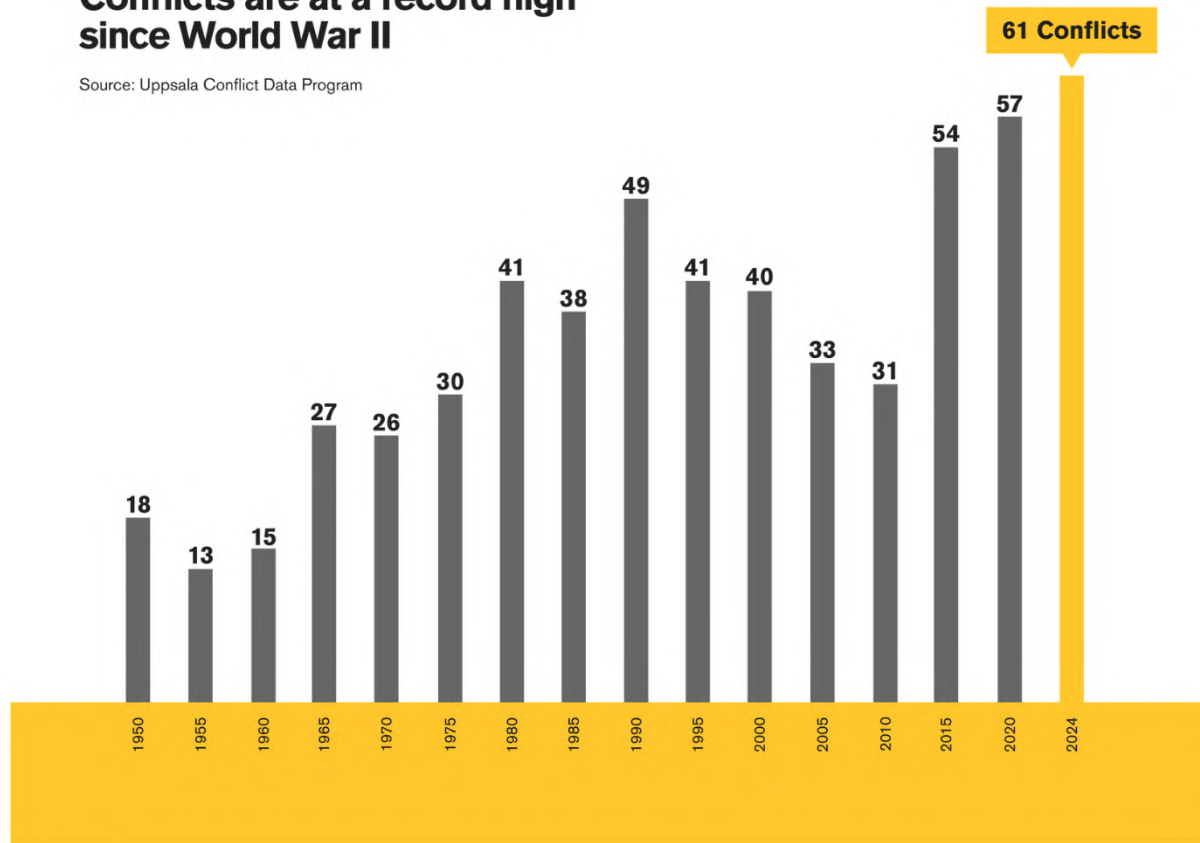


Percentage of People Living in Extreme Poverty in 2030



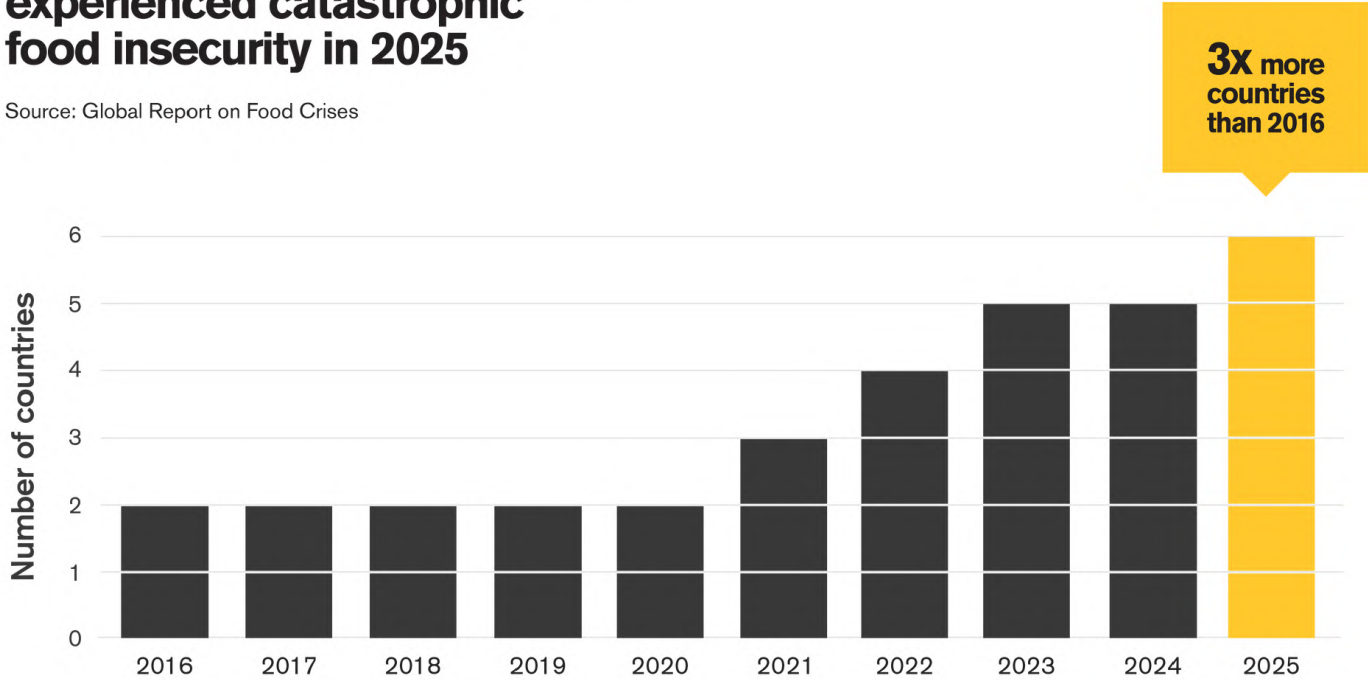
## Conflicts are at a record high since World War II

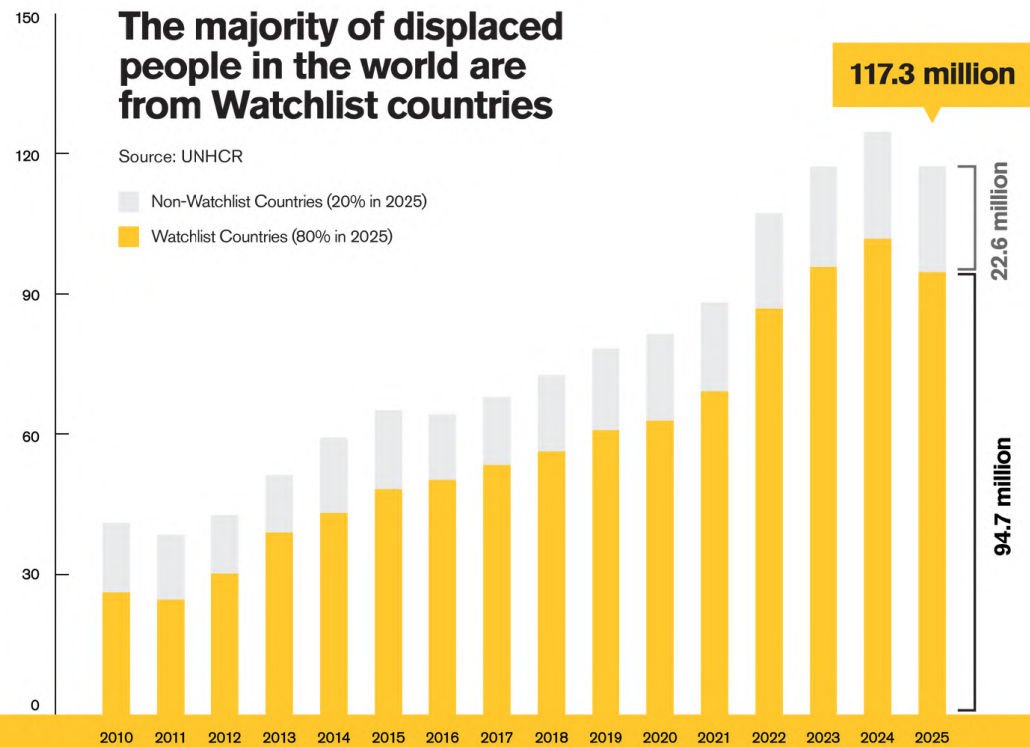
Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program



# A record number of countries experienced catastrophic food insecurity in 2025

Source: Global Report on Food Crises





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

**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

**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

2026 Emergency Watchlist: New World Disorder

# The Path Forward – Recommendations for the EU and Member States

## 1. Reinvest in diplomacy and peacemaking

including by investing further in understanding the influence of emerging powers in today's conflicts, and by engaging with them effectively to build broader, more creative coalitions for peace, including if they support conflict parties.

## 2. Restore respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and guarantee safe access for humanitarian aid

by increasing coordination between EU humanitarian and diplomatic arms, as well as between country and headquarter levels, and by ensuring structured NGO engagement.

## 3. Protect people who face the greatest risks in conflict

by ensuring that protection issues are systematically placed at the center of regional strategies, supported by dedicated and predictable, flexible, multi-year funding.

## 4. Defend the rights of refugees and displaced people

by recommitting to international refugee protections, expanding safe pathways, and rejecting aid conditionality.

## 5. Prioritise aid funding to maximise impact and sustainability

by increasing significantly the share of EU ODA going to FCAS – including by maintaining the proposed €200bn for the EU's external action budget, with €25bn ringfenced for humanitarian action, under the next MFF - and by reinforcing the connections between humanitarian and development interventions.

## 6. Invest in proven, high -impact solutions

including by scaling up cash assistance, preventing health risks to children through immunisation, treating malnutrition, and investing further in innovative approaches to anticipatory action.

## 7. Transform partnerships to unlock impact

by protecting and strengthening the EU's partnerships with INGOs, NNGOs and local actors – including by partnering with NGOs for delivery in settings with de facto authorities to maximise the EU's ability to provide aid even when budget support is not an option.

## 8. Build resilience against climate shocks

by directing more climate adaptation finance to FCAS and by allocating a minimum of 5% of the EU humanitarian budget to anticipatory action (AA), ensuring AA funding is accessible to local and national NGOs.



Thank you.

