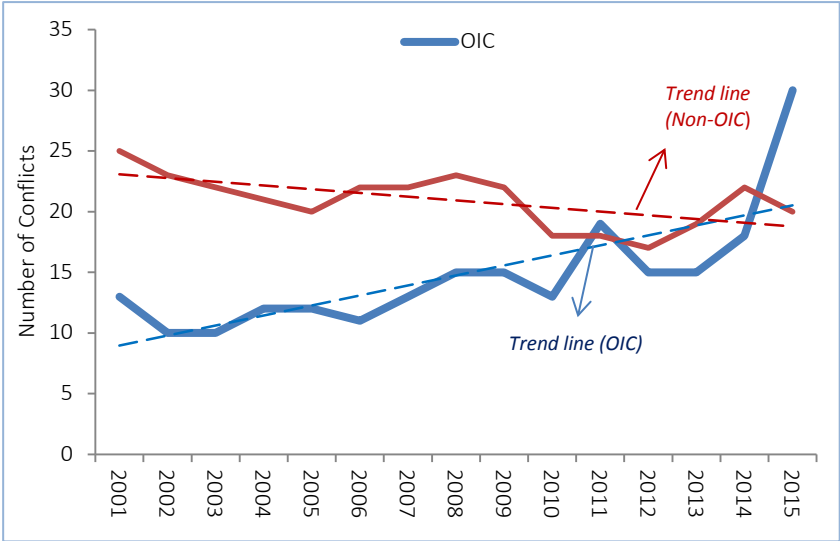


Muslim countries struggle with high burden of humanitarian crises

While global figures on the number of people suffering from natural disasters and conflicts are constantly rising, Muslim countries are affected more so than any other parts of the world by large-scale humanitarian crises and disasters, and this trend is unfortunately on the rise, says a recent report published by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).

In 2015, 30 of 50 armed conflicts recorded worldwide occurred in OIC countries, resulting in severe humanitarian crises and displacement across the Muslim world (Figure 1). As a direct outcome, today OIC countries account for 61.5% of all displaced population in the world with more than 25 million displaced people.

Figure 1: Conflict Trends

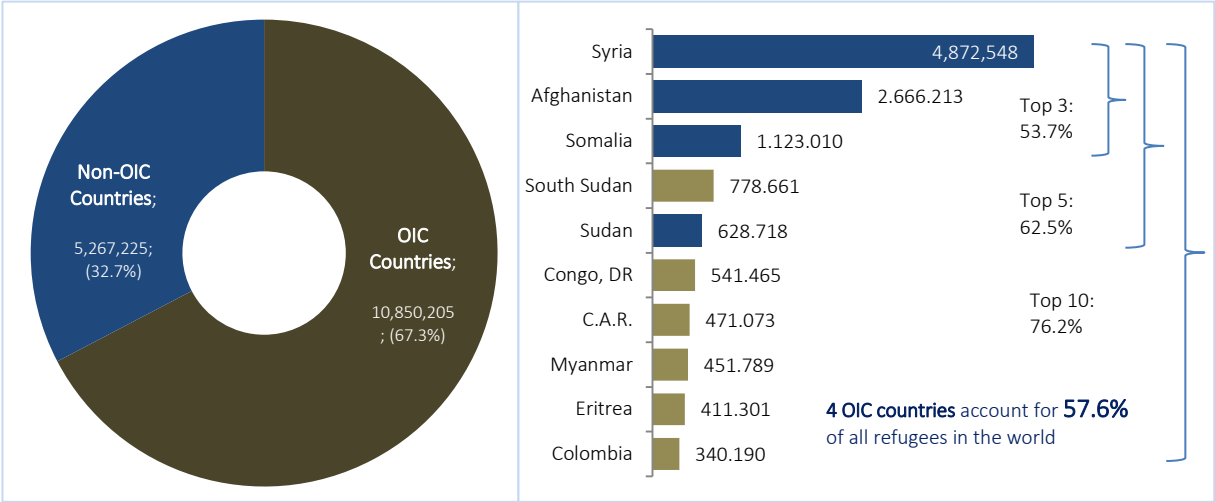


Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on the Uppsala Conflict Database.

More alarmingly, around 80% of all new internal displacement in the world during 2014-15 took place in OIC countries. Moreover, 71% (around 89 million) of people who globally require humanitarian assistance reside in OIC countries.

Yet again, as of 2015 more than 10 million refugees (or 67% of all refugees) had originated from OIC countries (Figure 2). It is also important to note that the top

Figure: Total Refugees from OIC and Non-OIC Countries (left) and Major Source Countries of Refugees (2015)



Source: UNHCR.



three countries are OIC member countries and they are collectively a source for 53.7% of all refugees in the world.

Similarly, natural disasters are also a major source of human deprivation in OIC countries, which experience increasingly more number of disasters due to natural hazards (Table 1). In this context, the current drought in Somalia poses a major challenge for all humanitarian actors as millions of people face starvation.

According to the report, more than 800 million people in OIC countries were affected from natural disasters since 1970, with more than 50 million in just last three years. High vulnerability to natural hazards shows the need for investing into building resilience and avoiding protracted aid dependency in OIC countries.

Widespread extremism and instability across the OIC region is also reflected in the number of terror incidents. In 2015, 75% of all terrorist attacks and more than 90% of fatalities have been recorded in OIC countries.

Table 1: Natural Disaster Trends

	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-16
OIC	199	420	681	1,747
Rest of the World	704	1,404	2,290	5,295
World	903	1,824	2,971	7,043
OIC % of World	22.0%	23.0%	22.9%	24.8%

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database.

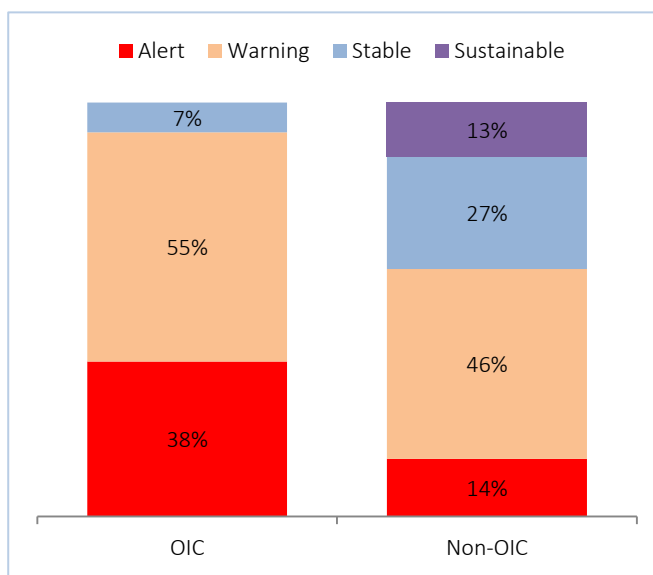
The current level of vulnerability of OIC countries to conflicts is also extremely high (Figure 3). This clearly shows that OIC countries need greater emphasis on building resilience to shocks and reducing vulnerability through more effective and inclusive governance systems, which will help prevent and mitigate the impact of violent conflict.

According to the report, natural disasters and conflicts usually have adverse impacts on the welfare of communities by increasing their vulnerabilities and worsening poverty, inequality and access to basic services. This also intensifies the risk of

humanitarian crises, which in turn requires Muslim countries to develop their own mechanisms to reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their resilience to various crises, including utilization of Islamic social finance.

Although the current humanitarian crises in OIC countries requires urgent action, the report prefers to focus on addressing the root causes of the crises from a broader and longer-term perspective and accordingly identifies five dimensions of interventions for reducing vulnerability and building resilience.

Figure 3: Conflict Vulnerability Index, Levels of Fragility (2016)

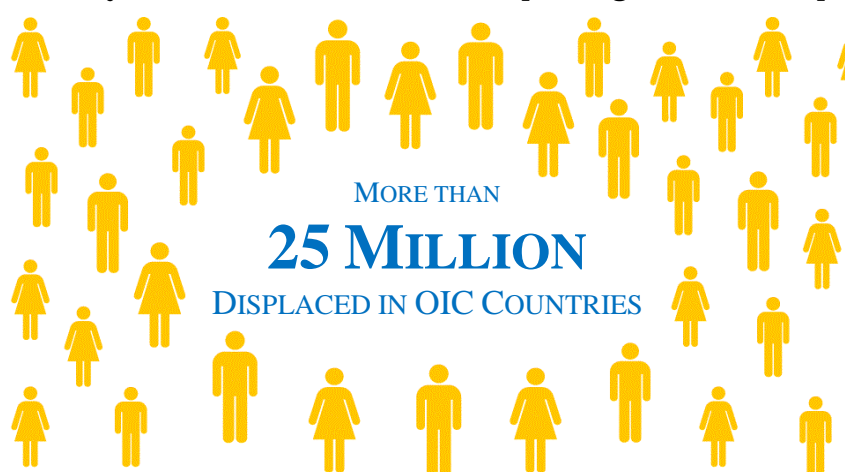


Source: SESRIC staff calculation based on The Fund for Peace FSI Index.

In this connection, it suggests Muslim countries to promote inclusive societies and inclusive development; strengthen social capital, mediation and partnership; invest in human capital and facilitate social mobility; intensify disaster risk reduction and management practices; and mobilize innovative financing mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and development.

As the report puts forward, many of the proposed actions require long term commitment and perspective for effective implementation. However, requirements for resilience building at individual country level are highly diverse, mainly due to differences in the level of exposure, vulnerability and coping capacities of communities across the OIC region.

In order to succeed, the report suggests that a resilience framework, plan and roadmap should be developed for concerned countries, regions as well as whole OIC family based on a new win-win paradigm of interdependent and accompaniment



relationships with robust and predictable resourcing mechanisms and exit strategies to prevent protraction of humanitarian aid dependency.

On the other hand, the report also calls for an immediate action to alleviate human

deprivation any further. It states that there are already a number of humanitarian crises in OIC countries with severe humanitarian impact, which require more serious involvement with affected people to prevent further aggravation and escalation of current situations in these countries. Some other OIC countries are currently lacking capacity to tackle the developmental and humanitarian challenges and they need urgent support to reduce their vulnerabilities.

According to the report, to address this challenge, effective partnership and solidarity across the OIC region should be established where whole Muslim community feels responsibility to collectively act to alleviate the otherwise preventable human sufferings. It then proclaims that embarking on own potential to solve own problems could be highly effective in resolving the long-lasting challenges.

In alleviating the human deprivation and building more resilient societies across the Muslim world, the report stresses that everyone has a role to play, from governments to NGOs, private sector to individuals. It is indeed high time for accelerating actions for stronger and more resilient communities.

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The full report, which is titled as “Humanitarian Crises in OIC Countries: Drivers, Impacts, Current Challenges and Potential Remedies”, can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.sesric.org/activities-announcements-detail.php?id=412>