

SRI LANKA – Cyclone Ditwah Response

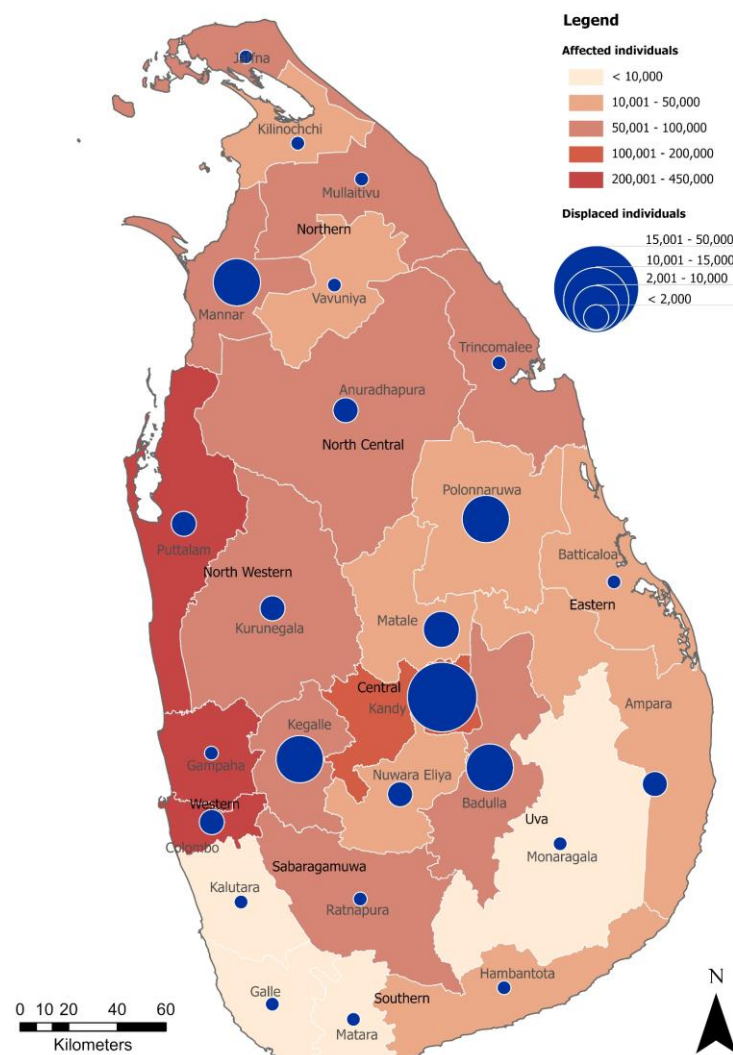
SUMMARY OF DISPLACEMENT

DISPLACEMENT SNAPSHOT: #1

DATE OF DATA COLLECTION: 05–07 December 2025

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 09 December 2025

Map 1. Overview of the Affected and Displaced Individuals



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

KEY FIGURES



2,181,516
Individuals affected¹



286,377
Individuals displaced²
(35% in safety centres³; 65%
with host communities)



990
Safety centres*



75,192
Homes partially/
fully damaged*



618
Dead*



209
Missing*

* Data from DMC (as of 06 December 2025)

METHODOLOGY

The [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) (DTM) is IOM's largest primary data-collection programme on internal displacement and human mobility. Between 05 and 07 December 2025, DTM teams initiated a mobility tracking assessment in Sri Lanka to understand the impact of Cyclone Ditwah on population displacement. The objective was to gather indicative estimates of the number of people displaced and key information on the emerging humanitarian situation. DTM interviewed 30 Key Informants (KIs) across all 25 districts, including government agents and officials from the district disaster management centre units and the National Disaster Relief Services Center. Government data contributed to the analysis. Figures provided in this report should be understood as best estimates and could be subject to underreporting due to the fluidity of the situation. For further information on DTM methodologies, see the [DTM Methodological Framework](#).

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- The tropical cyclone Ditwah made landfall on Sri Lanka on 28 November, causing **severe flooding, landslides and mudslides**. Over the following days, the country faced 150–500 mm of continuous heavy rainfall and winds reaching 70–90 km/h, triggering some of the most devastating flooding since the 2000s.
- As of 07 December 2025, DTM identified a total of **2,181,516 affected individuals**, representing about **10 per cent of the total population**. Of those affected, **286,377 were internally displaced**. The Disaster Management Center (DMC) reported 990 safety centres.
- DMC reported **618 deaths and 209 missing individuals**.
- Despite government efforts to restore several primary road networks, **transportation, markets and information networks remain disrupted**. The health system is under pressure, with several district hospitals flooded and limited medical supplies.

DISPLACEMENT DYNAMICS AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

As of 07 December 2025, DTM identified a total of **2,181,516 affected individuals**, representing about **10 per cent** of the **total population**. Of these, 32 per cent (698,314) were reportedly in Western Province and 24 per cent in North Western Province (519,199). **Puttalam District reported the largest figure of affected individuals (433,036; 20%), followed by Gampaha (362,664; 17%) and Colombo (328,557; 15%).**

An estimated **286,377 individuals were displaced** due to the cyclone, with **43 per cent displaced in the Central Province (124,053)**. **Kandy District reported 35 per cent of displaced individuals (101,482), followed by Kegalle (44,341; 15%) and Badulla (32,602; 11%).** Reported figures could be subject to underreporting as some locations (ie, Kurunegala) remain hard-to-reach. In Puttalam, monitoring population dynamics is a priority as the district already reported high population dynamics prior to the current crisis due to coastal hazards, chronic inland drought, and livelihood pressure.

The scale of destruction varies by location: in districts such as Trincomalee and Mullaitivu, the affected population has partially or completely returned, while in Vavuniya, damage makes return impossible, and temporary and long-term shelter assistance is needed.

SHELTER, CCCM & NFIs

Across the nine provinces, displaced individuals were accommodated by relatives or resided in shelters such as schools, religious sites, and community centres. In **Kandy, Kegalle, and Ratnapura, most displaced individuals were hosted by relatives** (respectively 80%, 74%, and 77%). This high percentage living with host communities could be partially attributed to the stigma around shelters, highlighted by Key Informants (KIs) in Anuradhapura.

Shelters in Matale **lacked facilities and were overcrowded**. Colombo's dense population, limited evacuation space, and pre-existing drainage vulnerabilities also faced heightened pressure on short-term shelters and Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) systems. The majority of non-food item (NFI) needs in the capital's district arise from water damage and loss of essential household items, requiring a rapid, WASH-focused response.

The **government plans to remove shelters in some districts and allocate instead a monthly monetary compensation** per family whose house has been damaged. Those displaced will be requested to move into a rented house in the coming two weeks. The conversion of schools as shelters in Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Trincomalee, Anuradhapura, Mannar, Kurunegala, Badulla and Colombo could have an impact on learning and education.

IOM RESPONSE

Since the impact of Cyclone Ditwah, IOM has been working in close **coordination with the Government of Sri Lanka's disaster response mechanisms** and is **leading the humanitarian cluster** on Shelter, NFIs and CCCM alongside other United Nations agencies and international partners.

IOM deployed emergency response teams from the outset, **delivering core relief items** to 578 households in Kandy and **expanding distributions to priority districts** such as Gampaha, Nuwara Eliya and Badulla. IOM has also provided basic first aid in Kandy and delivered clean drinking water, including 1,200 bottles, to some of the hardest-to-reach communities in the north-east. This has included sleep mats, mosquito nets, kitchen sets and full NFI kits.

¹ Affected persons refer in this report to persons or groups of persons who have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by the cyclone.

² Displaced persons refer in this report to persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence to avoid the effects of the cyclone.

³ Safety centres refer to evacuation centres.

Table 1. # of affected and displaced individuals, by district

| Province | District | Affected individuals per district | Displaced individuals per district |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Central | Kandy | 164,517 | 101,482 |
| | Matale | 25,744 | 14,189 |
| | Nuwara Eliya | 42,886 | 8,382 |
| Eastern | Ampara | 23,610 | 2,202 |
| | Batticaloa | 37,389 | 44 |
| | Trincomalee | 86,328 | 77 |
| North Central | Anuradhapura | 72,359 | 7,246 |
| | Polonnaruwa | 41,086 | 26,856 |
| North Western | Kurunegala | 86,163 | 4,274 |
| | Puttalam | 433,036 | 7,609 |
| Northern | Jaffna | 53,828 | 1,500 |
| | Kilinochchi | 28,093 | 8 |
| | Mannar | 77,451 | 26,601 |
| | Mullaitivu | 67,340 | 14 |
| Sabaragamuwa | Vavuniya | 20,785 | 383 |
| | Kegalle | 73,002 | 44,341 |
| | Ratnapura | 72,771 | 1,123 |
| Southern | Galle | 1,795 | 0 |
| | Hambantota | 11,733 | 16 |
| | Matara | 1,671 | 4 |
| Uva | Badulla | 56,748 | 32,602 |
| | Monaragala | 4,867 | 142 |
| Western | Colombo | 328,557 | 6,019 |
| | Gampaha | 362,664 | 1,259 |
| | Kalutara | 7,093 | 4 |
| Total | | 2,181,516 | 286,377 |