



# Forced displacement - refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs)

## Facts & Figures

- **65** million people are forcibly displaced worldwide:
  - 21.3** million refugees,
  - 40.8** million internally displaced
  - 1.8** million seeking asylum.
- Largest sources of refugees: Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2015

- **EU humanitarian aid funding\* of 1064 million** to help forcibly displaced populations in 2015.

\* From EU institutions, excluding funding from Member States

- This has assisted refugees and IDPs in **33 countries** in 2015.



80% of refugee populations are comprised of children, women and elderly people. They are the most vulnerable groups in any society and therefore at greater risk in times of civil unrest or natural disasters. UNHCR/F. Noy, Chad, 2011

## Humanitarian situation

### Key messages

- The number of **forcibly displaced people** (refugees and internally displaced people) has continued to rise alarmingly in 2015 and 2016, calling for increased humanitarian assistance worldwide.
- The EU is a leading international donor for refugees. It gave **€1.064 million** for humanitarian assistance dedicated to refugees and IDPs financial year 2015, as well as €200 million in ongoing projects from development assistance. The funding covers projects that help in access to shelter, protection, food and other basic services such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and education.
- Humanitarian aid aims at upholding basic **human rights** and protecting children and adults against violence, abuse and exploitation through protection and advocacy activities.
- **In April 2016, the European Commission, in association with the European External Action Service (EEAS), adopted a new development-led approach to forced displacement**, aimed at harnessing and strengthening the resilience and self-reliance of both the forcibly displaced and their host communities. Political, economic, development and humanitarian actors should be engaged from the outset and throughout displacement crises to work with third partner countries towards gradual socio-economic inclusion of the forcibly displaced. The objective is to end forced displacement and make people's lives better and more dignified during displacement.

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## Major needs and related problems

Conflicts, violence, human rights violations but also natural disasters are forcing millions of people to leave their homes and to flee from destruction and persecution. The majority of refugees and IDPs live in the developing world, which means that they find refuge in countries and among people who already struggle with poverty and hardship. Their survival usually depends on the availability of assistance which is provided by local communities and international organisations.

There are over **65.2 million** people in dire need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement. They include **refugees**<sup>1</sup>, **internally displaced persons (IDPs)**<sup>2</sup> and **asylum-seekers**<sup>3</sup>. Globally, over **40.8 million** people are internally displaced (source: IDMC 2015 Global Overview), compared to more than **21.2 million** refugees and **3.2 million** asylum-seekers (source: UNHCR Global Trends 2014). . An estimated 12.4 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2015 only.

According to the latest UNHCR data, 51% of the global refugee population are children, the highest proportion in over a decade.

According to the UN, **women and girls represent 50% of the entire refugee population**. In many societies, they face specific risks such as discrimination and are less likely than men and boys to have access to basic rights. In situations of displacement, these risks – particularly discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence – can be exacerbated. Unaccompanied women and girls, women heads of households and pregnant, disabled or older women may face particular challenges.

Finding **durable solutions** for refugees is a challenge and includes **voluntary repatriation** to their home countries, which is the preferred long-term outcome for the majority of refugees. While some of the displaced populations are able to return home, the lack of political solutions in their home country prevents many more from coming back and millions may stay in these protracted situations for several years and in some extreme cases for generations.

Other solutions are **local integration or resettlement** of refugees, either in the country where they live or in third countries where they can be permanently resettled. Sustainable solutions for IDPs can be: return to their place of origin, local integration in areas where they have taken refuge or integration in another part of the country.

At present, [Syria](#) and [Afghanistan](#) remain the largest source of refugees, followed by [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), [Sudan](#), and the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#). Around four-fifths of the world's refugees flee to neighbouring countries such as [Pakistan](#), Iran, Lebanon, Jordan and [Turkey](#). [Turkey remains the largest refugee-hosting country worldwide, with 2.5 million refugees. Turkey was followed by Pakistan \(1.6 million\), Lebanon \(1.1 million\), the Islamic Republic of Iran \(979 400\), Ethiopia \(736 100\) and Jordan \(664,100\)](#) (source: UNHCR Global Trends 2015).

The most IDPs currently live in Syria (6,6 million) and Columbia (6,3 million). Iraq and Sudan follow with 3,3 million and 3,2 million respectively, Yemen (2,5), Nigeria (2,1) South Sudan (1,7), Ukraine (1,7), DRC (1,5) and Pakistan (1,5) complete the list of the first 10 countries, which together account for 75% of the world's all IDPs (IDMC 2015 Global Overview, UNHCR Global Trends 2015).

In the absence of durable solutions, those who remain internally displaced (IDPs) or in refugee camps face **major challenges in terms of protection, access to shelter, food and other basic services such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and education**. Refugees and IDPs who live in urban areas may encounter poverty, lack of psycho-social support and difficulties in normalising their status. Violence, abuse and exploitation against the most vulnerable often peak in the aftermath of emergencies, which underlines the importance of effective protection mechanisms to be put in place immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> A **refugee** is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home country and is unable or unwilling to return due to fear of persecution. The 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees gives refugees legal protection under the international refugee law. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to respond to refugee needs.

<sup>2</sup> An **internally displaced person (IDP)** is someone who was forced to flee his/her home but who did not cross a state border. IDPs benefit from the legal protection of international human rights law and, in armed conflict, international humanitarian law.

<sup>3</sup> '**Asylum-seekers**' are those who have made a claim that they are refugees and are in the process of waiting for it to be accepted or rejected. 'Stateless' people are not considered as a national by any state ('de jure') or don't enjoy fundamental rights in their homeland ('de facto'). [source: UNHCR]

## A new development-led approach

In April 2016 the European Commission, in association with the EEAS, adopted the Communication 'Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance. Forced Displacement and Development', outlining a new development-led approach to forced displacement. The objective is to strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of both the displaced and their host communities, through a multi-actor approach from the outset and throughout displacement crises. The focus is on working with host governments, at the national and local level, towards gradual socio-economic inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons. The framework aims to harness the productive capacities of refugees and IDPs by helping them to access education, housing, land, productive assets, livelihoods and services, and by supporting interaction between them and their host communities. The Communication was adopted following [consultation](#) of a broad range of stakeholders.

## The European Union's Humanitarian Response

The European Commission gave more than **€1.064 million<sup>4</sup>** or some **72% of its annual humanitarian aid budget** in the financial year 2015 to projects helping refugees and IDPs.

Humanitarian aid for refugees delivered by the European Commission helps to:

- meet the most pressing needs of refugees;
- protect and support refugees during their displacement and when returning to their place of origin;
- increase the self-reliance of refugees and reduce their dependency on aid.

45% of the world's refugees and IDPs are currently trapped in protracted situations. The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection department (ECHO) invests heavily in assisting displaced people and is currently responding to crises such as: **Syrian refugees** in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Greece, **Afghan refugees** in Iran and Pakistan, **Somali refugees** in Kenya and Yemen, **Congolese refugees** in the Great Lake region, **Colombian refugees** in Ecuador and Venezuela, **Myanmar refugees** in Thailand, **Rohingya** refugees in Bangladesh and **Sahrawi refugees**.

The European Commission and its partner organisations, in particular UNHCR, have an important role in advocating for and enabling durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, especially with regard to fulfilling the right of return to their countries of origin or habitual residence. The European Commission recognises that refugees and IDPs require targeted humanitarian aid combined with sustainable development assistance for effectively responding to their needs, including economic aspects. In this regard, the presence of refugees and other forced migrants can result in new opportunities and benefits for the national and local economy as they bring human capital, labour skills, demand for goods and services. Measures to harness the potential of refugees to drive development can not only benefit host countries, but also contribute to enhancing the quality of refugees' protection in strengthening their self-reliance.

The Commission focuses its support on organisations dealing with refugees, IDPs, the most vulnerable migrants, and in some cases, host communities. Its main partners include **UNHCR**, the **International Organisation for Migration** (IOM), the **Red Cross and Red Crescent family** and **non-governmental organisations**. For humanitarian workers, helping the displaced is becoming more difficult, costly and dangerous. In countries such as Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen or Iraq, getting help to internally displaced populations means working in environments where access is difficult and conflict or criminality present deadly risks.

While supporting the victims of displacement, the European Commission is also working to decrease the number and scale of refugee crises: for instance, through its work on disaster preparedness and prevention, which aims to reduce the vulnerability of disadvantaged communities and prevent their displacement.

<sup>4</sup> Funding from EU institutions, excluding funding from Member States.

## World Refugee Day

Each year, on 20 June, the world focuses on the plight of people who are forced to flee their homes due to conflicts or natural disasters. This day has been significant since 2001, when the UN General Assembly designated it on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

In the lead up to World Refugee Day on 20 June 2016, the European Commission has launched its #SupportRefugees campaign. Two international football stars are ambassadors for the campaign: Belgium and Manchester United midfielder Marouane Fellaini and Anja Mittag, who plays for Germany and Paris Saint-Germain. Together with two refugee children, they feature in a series of print advertisements in mainstream publications and in a special video. See the campaign webpage [here](#).

## Examples of the Projects on Refugees and IDPs



The humanitarian consequences of the crisis in [Syria](#) have reached an unprecedented scale. Around 12.2 million Syrians are internally displaced or are living as refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and North Africa. Many of those who were able to reach the neighbouring countries are now living in hardship; struggling to find shelter and food for their families and schooling for their children. To support the Syrian refugees and their host-communities, the European Commission and its Member States have since the beginning of the crisis allocated over €3.6 million. EU humanitarian assistance channelled through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) primarily supports life-saving medical emergency responses, the provision of essential drugs, food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter, distribution of basic non-food items and protection programmes. This funding is channelled through UN agencies and accredited international humanitarian organisations to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people.

[Afghanistan](#) is still the country of origin for the second largest number of refugees in the world (after Syria). A major part of this population arrived in Iran and Pakistan during the communist, Mujahidin and Taliban times (1979 to 2001). Pakistan continues to host the largest number of Afghan refugees (around 1.6 million registered refugees), and Iran hosts over 850 000 Afghan refugees. In addition, 4 million refugees have returned from Pakistan and Iran between 1992 and 1997 and more than 5.7 million individuals have voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan in the last 10 years. The European Commission is providing funding to UNHCR and other partners to support the voluntary and sustainable repatriation of Afghan refugees and other durable solutions where conditions are not conducive to return. This is done through information dissemination, education, shelters, water and sanitation, health and protection services, livelihood initiatives via vocational training and cash-based programmes, and more broadly by sustaining the preservation of the protection and asylum space in hosting communities.



At the beginning of 2014, the small towns of Kentzou, Garoua-Boulai and Ngaoui in eastern [Cameroon](#) received a flow of people escaping the conflict. Tens of thousands have been left to fend for themselves. Following ECHO's assessment mission in early February 2014, the European Commission decided to support partners in order to improve the refugees support and organize their re-settlement to more appropriate sites. The refugees are therefore being provided with emergency shelter, non-food items, health care, food, water and education. Thousands of children who suffer from severe acute malnutrition, like Mainiba (in the picture), are receiving appropriate care in the five health districts of the Far North region covered by the International Medical

Corps (IMC), an ECHO supported project. However, access to the health facilities is still difficult for populations living far from the urban centres. To overcome this challenge, community volunteers have been trained to screen and refer undernourished children to the closest centres. The persons who care for children needing specialised healthcare are provided with money for both transportation and food during their stay at the hospital's stabilisation centre.

**Colombia** is the second country with more internally displaced people after Syria, with over 6 million. According to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, almost 397 000 Colombians are in need of international protection in neighbouring Ecuador and Venezuela. There are thousands of pending asylum cases awaiting resolution. The conflict continues to inflict forced recruitment, sexual violence, murder, disappearances, restriction of movements and lack of access to healthcare upon civilians. For 2015, the European Commission's contribution to people affected by the conflict and natural hazards totalled €13.4 million, with aid focused on providing protection, food aid, health care, water and sanitation. Funding also includes improving access to education and protection for children and adolescents affected by armed conflict in Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador and disaster preparedness activities. ECHO aid targets the areas most affected by the conflict, where there is limited government presence.



Refugees from **Myanmar** have lived for almost three decades in nine camps along the border with Thailand, making it one of the world's longest protracted crises. Currently the camp population is around 110,000. The European Union has been an important donor to these camps since 1995, channelling €118.4 million through ECHO. Its support has focused on basic humanitarian aid, i.e. food assistance, primary health care and protection. The EU promotes durable solutions; for instance, through a recent project with UNHCR, profiling of the camp population has been carried out in preparation of future voluntary return to Myanmar, when conditions allow it.

M'bera, amidst the arid plains of eastern **Mauritania**, is the largest Malian refugee camp in the Sahel region. Around 50 000 refugees who fled northern Mali during different stages of the conflict continue to rely on humanitarian assistance to satisfy their most basic needs such as shelter, food, water and nutrition care. ECHO supports the work of WFP and UNICEF in the food assistance and nutrition sectors and the NGO Action Contre la Faim in the water and sanitation area. Malnutrition rates in the camp have been brought down and a sufficient supply of water has been guaranteed. Given the camp's isolated location in an unsafe region, ECHO also funds the UN Humanitarian Air Service to transport humanitarian workers to and from the camp

