



## Forced displacement: refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

### Facts & Figures

- **65.6** million people are forcibly displaced worldwide:
  - 22.5** million refugees,
  - 40.3** million internally displaced by conflict
  - 2.8** million seeking asylum.
- Largest sources of displaced people: Syria, Palestine, Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan
- Sources: UNHCR 2016 Global Trends Report; IDMC 2016 Global Overview Report
- **EU (DG ECHO) funding of €1972 million** to help forcibly displaced populations in 2016.
- A new **development-led approach** to forced displacement



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### Key messages:

- Each year millions of people are forced to leave their homes and seek refuge from conflicts, violence, human rights violations, persecution or natural disasters. The number of **forcibly displaced persons** (refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons) **has continued to rise in 2016**, calling for increased humanitarian assistance worldwide. The majority of today's refugees live in the developing world, which means that they flee to countries already struggling with poverty and hardship.
- The EU is a leading international donor in forced displacement situations. **In 2016 it gave over €1972 million** for humanitarian assistance dedicated to refugees and IDPs. This funding covers projects that help the forcibly displaced access shelter, protection, food and other basic services such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation and education.
- **In April 2016, the European Commission 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. The new approach stipulates that political, economic, development and humanitarian actors should engage from the outset of a displacement crisis, and work with third countries towards the gradual socio-economic inclusion of the forcibly displaced. The objective is to make people's lives more dignified during displacement; and ultimately, to end forced displacement.

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## Major needs of the forcibly displaced

Each year millions of people are forced to leave their homes and seek refuge from conflicts, violence, human rights violations, persecution and natural disasters. The number of forcibly displaced persons has continued to rise throughout 2015 and 2016, calling for increased humanitarian assistance worldwide. Up to **84%** of the forcibly displaced find refuge among people who already struggle with poverty in low- and middle-income countries. Their survival depends on the availability of assistance provided by local communities and international organisations.

Over **65.6 million** people worldwide are in need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement. Forcibly displaced populations include **refugees**<sup>1</sup>, **internally displaced persons (IDPs)**<sup>2</sup> and **asylum-seekers**<sup>3</sup>. Globally in 2017, over **40.3 million** people are internally displaced as a result of conflict (source: IDMC 2016 Global Overview Report), while **22.5 million** are refugees and **2.8 million** are asylum-seekers (source: UNHCR 2016 Global Trends Report). An estimated **31.1 million** people were internally displaced in 2016 alone due to conflicts and natural disasters; this is the equivalent of **one displaced person every second**. 51% of the global refugee population are children under 18 - the highest proportion in a decade.

Finding **durable solutions** for the forcibly displaced is a challenge. **Voluntary repatriation** to their home countries is the preferred long-term outcome for refugees; but the lack of political solutions to conflicts prevents many from doing so. Forced displacement is no longer a temporary phenomenon; it lasts on average 20 years for refugees and more than 10 years for 90% of IDPs. Those who are **internally displaced (IDPs)** also face **challenges in terms of protection, access to shelter, food and other basic services**. Both refugees and IDPs in urban areas struggle with poverty, lack of psycho-social support and difficulties in normalising their status. Violence, abuse and exploitation against them often peak in the aftermath of new emergencies.

Each year on **20 June**, the world focuses on the plight of all people who are forced to flee their homes. **World Refugee Day** has been a significant event 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.

## A development-led approach to forced displacement

In April 2016, the European Commission 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 EU's 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 of displacement crises. Its focus is on working with host governments, at the national and local level, towards the gradual socio-economic inclusion of refugees and IDPs. The new approach, applied in practice through joint analysis and programming, aims to harness the productive capacities of refugees and IDPs by helping them to access education, housing, land, livelihoods and services.

**Forced displacement: from aid-dependence to self-reliance**

**More than 60 million** people are forcibly displaced worldwide for many years – refugees for an average of **25 years**

The displaced can contribute to the economy and society of their hosts by:

- Skills and assets
- Expanding markets
- Increasing demand for food and services

The European Union outlines a new, development-led comprehensive approach including:

- all relevant political, economic, humanitarian and development actors
- better socio-economic evidence and specific vulnerabilities and capacities of the displaced
- improved access to services for both displaced and host communities
- predictable and flexible funding

The aim is to foster self-reliance through access to economic opportunities, education and social protection

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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]

## The European Union's humanitarian response

In 2016, EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid gave more than **€1972 million<sup>4</sup>**, or some **87% of its annual budget**, to projects helping the forcibly displaced and their host communities in **56 countries** (Turkey, Greece, Syria, Iraq and South Sudan being the top 5). This helps to:

- meet the most pressing needs of these extremely vulnerable populations;
- protect and support displaced people during their displacement and when returning to their homes;
- increase the self-reliance of displaced people and reduce their dependency on aid.

The Commission's assistance to the forcibly displaced is making a difference in the lives of many: **Syrian refugees** in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Greece; **Afghan refugees** in Iran and Pakistan; **Somali refugees** in Kenya; **Congolese refugees** in the Great Lakes region; **Palestinian refugees**; **Myanmar refugees** in Thailand; **Rohingya** refugees in Bangladesh; and **Sahrawi refugees** in Algeria. Vulnerable **internally displaced persons** are equally targeted by Commission assistance, particularly in **Syria, Colombia, South Sudan, Iraq and Yemen**.

The Commission channels its financial support to forced displacement situations through organisations dealing with refugees, IDPs, 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 movement** and **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**.

Finally, the European Commission has an important role in advocating for and enabling **durable solutions for refugees and IDPs**, especially with regards to fulfilling their **right of return** to their countries of origin. The EU recognises that meeting the needs of refugees and IDPs requires targeted humanitarian aid combined with sustainable development assistance. Together with its partners, the EU also advocates for the full recognition of the new opportunities and benefits for national and local economies which forcibly displaced people can create.

## Examples of crises - and how the EU contributes:



Entering its seventh year, the [Syrian conflict](#) has triggered the world's largest humanitarian and displacement crisis since World War II. Population displacement within Syria is widespread (with over **6.3 million IDPs**), and the number of refugees has passed the **5.5 million** mark. The European Union and its Member States are collectively the leading providers of international aid to this crisis. To date more than **€ 9.4 billion** has been mobilised for humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance to support Syrians inside the country, and in neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. A further **€ 3.7 billion** has been pledged together by the EU and its Member States for 2017. (The Commission has pledged **€ 445 million** in humanitarian assistance to the Syria crisis for 2016, and **€ 280 million for 2017**.)

This funding provides medical relief, protection, food and nutritional assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, health, and logistics services to the most vulnerable. Beyond the Syrian border, EU funding ensures that people fleeing the country will receive life-saving assistance such as health, food, shelter, hygiene kits, water and sanitation services, and protection. The EU's funding to the victims of the Syrian crisis is channelled through UN agencies and international partner organisations.

[Afghanistan](#) is still the country of origin of the second largest number of refugees in the world after Syria. Almost four decades of violence have led to large-scale displacement within the country, and to neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. Intensified conflict continues to force people out of their homes: in 2016 alone, more than **623 000 people** became internally displaced. **Pakistan** continues to host the largest number of Afghan refugees (around **1.6 million**), while **Iran** hosts over **850 000**. Conversely, over **200 000** Pakistani refugees live in Afghanistan. The European Commission has been funding humanitarian operations in Afghanistan since 1994, reaching a total amount of over **€ 751 million**. The Commission's support provides food, shelter, water and sanitation, health and protection services to forcibly displaced persons. It also supports the reintegration of Afghan refugees into their new homes, or other long-term solutions where the conditions for safe return are not met.

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