

# 10

## FACTS ABOUT REFUGEES

Refugees, asylum-seekers and global displacement have in recent years become a hot topic in the political and public debate. Nevertheless, the topic is surrounded by myths and, too often, lack of facts. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, provides you with 10 important facts on refugees – for a fact-based discussion.



### 1 1% of humanity is displaced

Global displacement is at a record high with conflicts becoming more protracted and root causes more complex. At the end of 2019, 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations. This figure has almost doubled in the past decade, meaning that today 1 in 97 people on earth has been forced from their homes.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



### 2 2/3 of all refugees come from only five countries

Altogether, more than two-thirds of all refugees worldwide, 68%, come from just five countries. Syrian refugees continue to account for the largest refugee population in the world with 6.6 million. This is followed by Venezuela (3.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million).

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



### 3 3 in 4 refugees are in countries bordering their homelands

73% of refugees are hosted by countries neighboring their countries of origin. These include some of the world's poorest and least developed countries. In addition, the majority of forcibly displaced (80%) are living in countries affected by acute food insecurity and malnutrition, many also facing risks due to climate change. Only 17% of the world's refugees are hosted in high-income countries.

Sources: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



### 4 Millions are displaced within their own countries

While 26 million refugees have fled their countries, there are 45.7 million internally displaced people who have fled within their own countries. Even if they have not crossed a border, their protection and humanitarian needs are often similar to those of refugees. The countries with the largest populations of internally displaced people are Colombia, Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



## 5 Arrivals to Europe have dropped significantly

The number of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean and arriving in Europe has decreased substantially. In 2019, a total of 123,700 people arrived in Europe, compared to approximately 1 million in 2015. The most common nationalities were Afghan, Syrian and Moroccan. An estimated 1,336 people lost their lives in 2019 in attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

Source: UNHCR factsheet 'Refugee and migrant Arrivals to Europe'



## 6 3 in 4 refugees are caught up in protracted crises

77% of the world's refugees, almost 16 million, are estimated to be in situations of long-term forced displacement. At the end of 2019, a total of 51 protracted refugee situations were registered, characterized by at least 25,000 refugees hosted for five consecutive years in the same host country. One example is the Afghan refugee situation, now in its fifth decade.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



## 7 More than 95% of resettlement needs are unmet

As the number of vulnerable refugees is growing, the need for places for resettlement is urgent. In 2020, UNHCR estimates that 1.4 million refugees are in need of resettlement because they cannot receive adequate protection in their current host country. However, only 107,800 refugees were resettled in 26 countries in 2019.

Sources: UNHCR Global Trends 2019, UNHCR Global Resettlement Needs 2020



## 8 40% of the world's forcibly displaced are children

Worldwide, 30-34 million children and youth below the age of 18 have been forced from their homes. In some displacement crises, e.g. Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burkina Faso, children constitute up to 60% of the displaced population. In 2019, at least 153,300 children were registered as unaccompanied or separated from their families, putting them in severe risk of abuse.

Sources: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



## 9 Most refugees live in urban areas, not camps

More than half of the world's forcibly displaced live in cities and urban areas. For example, 90% of the Syrian refugees and most Venezuelans are hosted in urban settings, often struggling to make ends meet. While camps are only intended as temporary solutions in emergencies, many refugees still end up spending decades in temporary shelters around the world due to the lack of alternative solutions.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2019



## 10 It is never a crime to seek asylum

The right to seek asylum in another country for those who have lost the protection of their own country, is enshrined in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Refugee Convention is the first treaty which turned the ideals of the Declaration into legally binding obligations. It is therefore not a crime to seek asylum, even if the person has entered the country irregularly.

Source: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights