



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

GLOBAL REPORT

2019



FINANCIAL | OPERATIONAL | STATISTICAL

GLOBAL
REPORT
2019

The Global Report presents the work carried out by UNHCR in 2019 to protect and improve the lives of tens of millions of people of concern—refugees, returnees, internally displaced people, stateless persons, and others of concern. It highlights the year’s achievements, as well as challenges faced by the organization and its partners, in attempting to respond to multiple life-threatening crises and ever-growing humanitarian needs.

OVERVIEW OF 2019



OVERVIEW OF 2019

- 4 UNHCR in 2020**
UNHCR’s mission with key data and achievements
- 8 Foreword by the High Commissioner**
- 12 The Special Envoy**



REGIONAL SUMMARIES



THEMATIC CHAPTERS



REGIONAL SUMMARIES

- 68 Africa**
- 96 The Americas**
- 108 Asia and the Pacific**
- 122 Europe**
- 136 Middle East and North Africa**



The **Global Focus website** is UNHCR’s main operational reporting platform for donors. Regularly updated, it complements and augments information in the Global Report with greater detail on UNHCR operations, data on key operational themes and objectives, and in-depth information on UNHCR’s budgets, funding and expenditure. It contains also a glossary of technical terms used throughout this publication.



THEMATIC CHAPTERS

- 154 Safeguarding fundamental rights**
- 156 Legal protection frameworks
- 158 Identifying international protection needs and national asylum systems
- 160 Promoting and protecting human rights
- 162 Addressing and responding to mixed movements
- 164 Alternatives to detention
- 166 Preventing and responding to statelessness



- 169 Registration, documentation and identity management
- 172 Age, gender and diversity-inclusive programming
- 174 Community-based protection
- 176 Gender equality
- 178 Child protection, youth engagement and empowerment
- 181 Protecting persons with disabilities and older persons
- 184 Protecting LGBTI persons in forced displacement

186 Responding with lifesaving support



- 189 Emergency preparedness and response
- 192 Global supply management
- 194 Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence
- 197 Cash assistance
- 200 Public health
- 203 Nutrition and food security
- 206 Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 209 Shelter and settlement



212 Building better futures



- 214 Delivering through partnerships
- 216 Voluntary return and local integration
- 220 Resettlement and complementary pathways
- 224 Access to quality education
- 227 Livelihoods and economic inclusion
- 230 Strengthening city networks and supporting the urban displaced
- 233 Energy and environmental protection
- 236 Public campaigns and Goodwill Ambassador support**

ANNEXES

- 240 Member States of UNHCR’s Executive Committee and Parties to the Refugee and Statelessness Conventions
- 242 Acronyms

497,280
page views
in 2019

21,910
visits
per month (+12%)

175,230
documents
downloaded

14,600
documents
downloaded
per month (+22%)

UNHCR IN 2019

Mission

The High Commissioner for Refugees is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems. As of November 2019, 149 States are parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or to its 1967 Protocol.

UNHCR's primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. In its efforts to achieve this objective, the Office strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, and to return home voluntarily. By assisting refugees to return to their own country or to settle permanently in another country, UNHCR also seeks lasting solutions to their plight.

UNHCR's Executive Committee (106 Member States as of October 2019) and the UN General Assembly have authorized involvement with other groups. These include former refugees who have returned to their homeland, internally displaced people, and persons who are stateless or whose nationality is disputed.

As of December 2019, 94 States are parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 74 to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The Office seeks to reduce situations of forced displacement by encouraging States and other institutions to create conditions which are conducive to the protection of human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes. In all of its activities, it pays particular attention to the needs of children and seeks to promote the equal rights of women and girls.

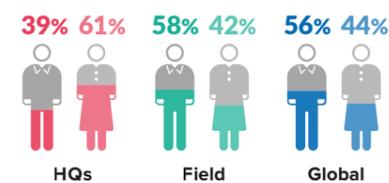
The Office carries out its work in collaboration with many partners, including governments, regional organizations, and international and non-governmental organizations. It is committed to the principle of participation, believing that refugees and others who benefit from the Office's activities should be consulted over decisions which affect their lives.

Global presence

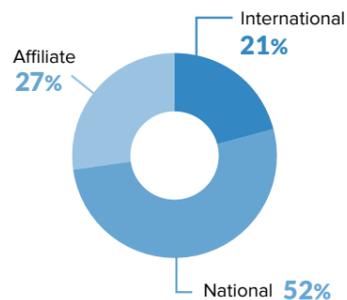
UNHCR is present in **130 countries and territories** with offices in **507 locations**



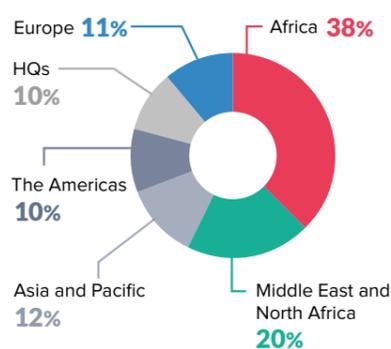
Gender breakdowns of UNHCR workforce



Global workforce by category



Global presence by region



* UNVs, individual contractors and consultants hired through UNOPS or directly, deployees, secondees and interns.

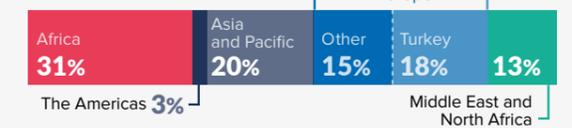
86.5M People of concern to UNHCR worldwide

4.1M Asylum-seekers pending cases

The largest numbers of pending cases were in — The Americas: 1.9 million
Europe: 1.2 million
Africa: 529,600

20.4M Refugees

Refugee populations by region of asylum



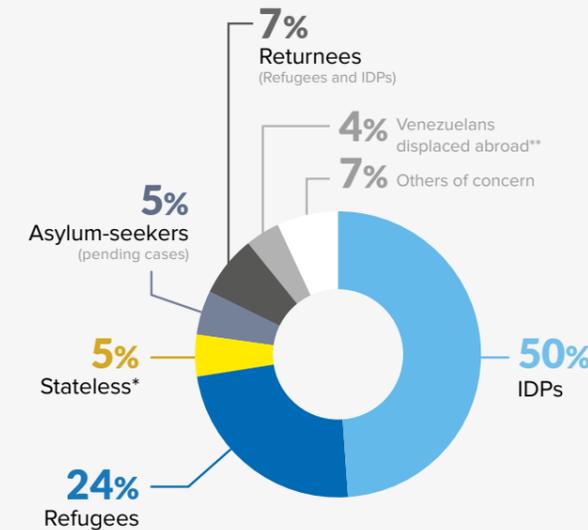
57% coming from three countries



3.6M Venezuelans displaced abroad**

6.1M Others of concern

**See footnote (6) in map of global populations of concern



4.2M Stateless persons*

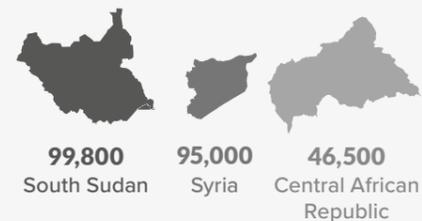
81,100 formerly stateless individuals acquired a nationality or had their nationality confirmed in 26 countries

* Includes 1,113,315 stateless persons of Rohingya ethnicity who are also counted as refugees, asylum-seekers or others of concern in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand or as IDPs in Myanmar.

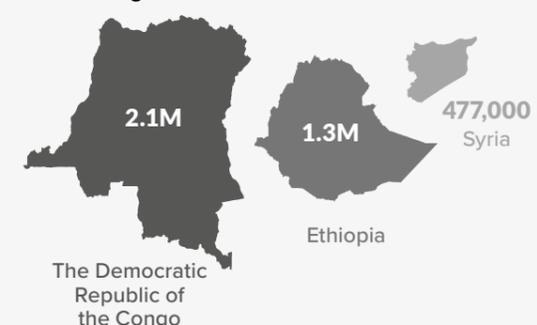
5.7M Returnees (Refugees and IDPs)

Unresolved conflicts and insecurity in countries of origin presented major constraints for returns and their sustainability.

Largest refugee returns



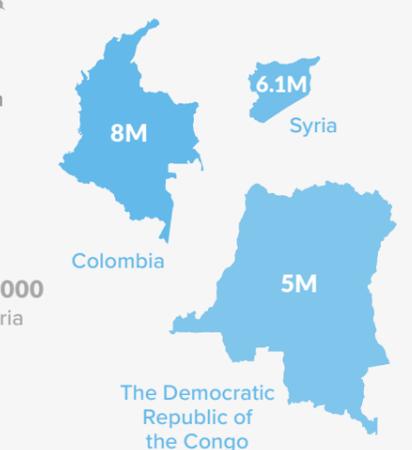
Largest IDP returns



43.5M IDPs

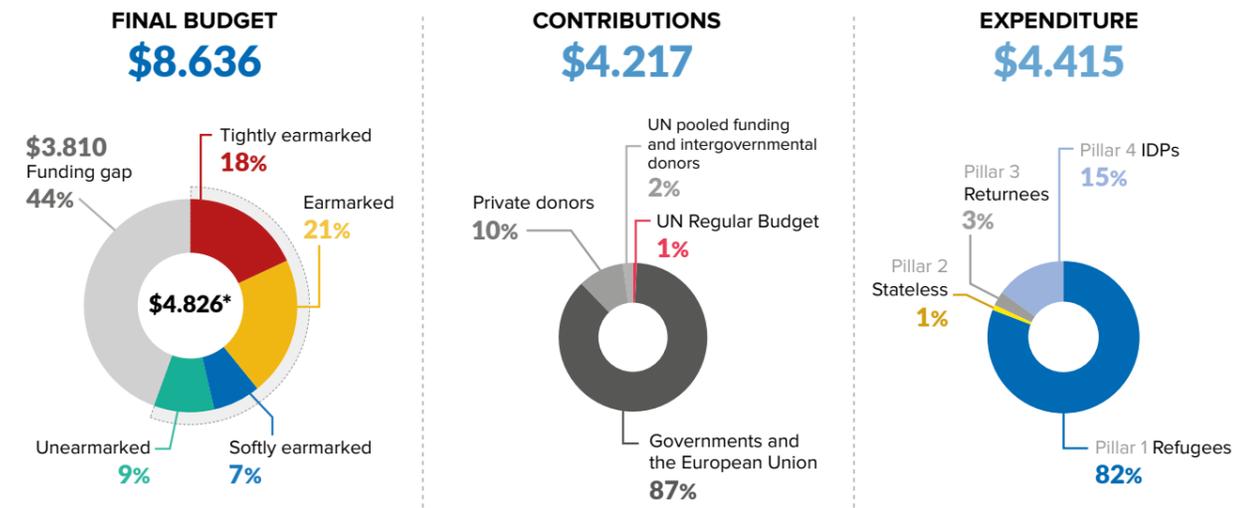
Many IDPs were in protracted situations characterized by critical protection and humanitarian challenges.

44% were in three countries



Key data and achievements in 2019

Unit: billion



*Funds available: contributions (voluntary contributions and UN Regular Budget); carry-over; other income and adjustments

PARTNERSHIPS



Safeguarding fundamental rights

- Legal protection frameworks**
16 States adopted laws and legislative changes improving refugee rights
- Refugee status determination**
2.3M new and appeal asylum applications were registered globally, including 120,400 registered by UNHCR (5% of the total)
- Statelessness**
81,074 individuals who were formerly stateless acquired a nationality or had their nationality confirmed
- Registration**
8.8M individual records biometrically registered in UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System across 69 countries

Responding with lifesaving support

Emergencies

6 new emergencies

- 3 IDP emergencies: Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cyclone Idai (Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe)
- 3 refugee emergencies: Costa Rica, Iraq, Niger

Emergency deployments

- 167 UNHCR emergency staff deployed
- 102 emergency standby partner staff deployed

Core relief items

7 global stockpiles used to deliver \$30 million-worth of CRIs to 23 emergency-affected countries

8 emergency airlifts, fulfilling 122 requests

Cash assistance

\$650M distributed, 13% increase on 2018

100 operations implemented cash assistance

80% of cash assistance disbursed electronically

Shelter

15,198 Refugee housing units deployed to 15 operations

86,426 Households received cash grants for rental accommodation

116,527 People of concern received emergency shelter

Building better futures

Resettlement

1.4M refugees in need of resettlement

81,671 resettlement submissions to 29 countries

63,726 UNHCR-facilitated resettlement departures

Education

- 63% of refugee children attend Primary school
- 24% of refugee children attend Secondary school
- 3% of refugee youth attend University

Energy and environmental protection

1M refugees accessed a sustainable source of cooking fuel

838,220 tons of CO₂ emissions reduced by using cleaner sources of energy

100 UNHCR offices conducted an environmental inventory

A decade of crisis, a decade of opportunity



In the course of the last ten years, UNHCR has become in many respects a different organization, working in a quite different world.

As 2019 drew to a close, we reached the end of a decade in which forced displacement climbed to a record high. The number of people of concern to the Office rose from 36.4 million people in 2009 to over 86.5 million people at the end of 2019. The number of refugees under UNHCR's responsibility almost doubled, from 10.4 to 20.4 million, and internal displacement grew by more than 60% from 27.1 million people to 43.5 million.

Two of the biggest and most complex crises currently facing us did not exist in 2009. Then, the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) hosted over one million refugees, the third highest number worldwide, most of whom were from Iraq. By the end of 2019, however, it had become the epicentre of the largest displacement crisis in decades, with nearly 15 million of its people—well over half of its pre-war population—displaced inside the country or abroad.

In December 2009, more than 300,000 refugees had recently returned home to southern Sudan as hopes for a peaceful and prosperous future grew after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. A decade later, more than 2.2 million refugees have fled a brutal civil war, and some 1.67 million people are displaced within the world's newest country.

Crises persisted in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Having fled Afghanistan 40 years ago, Abdul Rashid is a refugee in Pakistan. Now in his 70s, he sells qabli—an Afghan dish his family makes with rice, chicken, raisins and cumin—on the streets of Quetta.

and Somalia, and new or recurring crises in many other countries required large-scale emergency responses.

While the vast majority of refugees remained in regions of origin, responses to mixed movements, consisting of refugees and migrants on the move for different reasons, became more complex and politically charged, as was the case of the influx of more than a million refugees and migrants into Europe in 2015. The complexity of population flows deepened as climate change, weak governance, inequitable development, urban violence, organized crime and transnational extremist networks wreaked havoc and despair across communities and regions. As these fault-lines widened, the number of refugees continued to grow.

With few political solutions reached, voluntary repatriation benefited an average of just under 400,000 refugees per year. Resettlement as a solution declined. There was a net drop in refugees departing for resettlement, with some 86,200 refugees resettled in 2009, but only 63,726 in 2019, and this over a period during which the number of refugees doubled.

As the decade drew to a close, UNHCR was also stepping up its engagement with the over 43.5 million internally displaced people around the world. A new policy on internal displacement was issued in 2019, placing particular emphasis on protection leadership, solutions and aligning interventions with those of partners. Major IDP operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of

the Congo, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and the Lake Chad Basin remained among the Office's most politically and operationally complex, and represented important priorities.

The situation of stateless people also took on greater prominence, as UNHCR's ten-year #IBelong Campaign reached the half-way mark in 2019. UNHCR accelerated its work with States and other partners to eradicate statelessness, including through the High-Level Segment in October 2019, which resulted in some 360 pledges from 66 States, as well as from international and regional entities and civil society organizations.

Last but not least, by the end of the decade the climate emergency had taken on considerable prominence, and climate-related causes had become a growing driver of displacement. UNHCR stepped up its work to highlight in particular the protection gaps resulting from climate-driven cross-border displacement and helped steer the policy and normative debate. It also continued to work to help governments deliver an operational response to disaster-related displacement, guided by protection considerations. Further, in Bangladesh and elsewhere, UNHCR reduced the environmental impact of refugee crises through renewable energy options, reforestation, and the provision of clean fuels. Conscious of its own environmental impact, UNHCR worked to measure and reduce its carbon footprint.

In the course of the decade, it became clear that tackling the challenge of refugee crises and their complex root causes, called for a bigger and broader ambition than had been evident in the past. This vision shaped the Global Compact on Refugees, grounded in more equitable and

predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing by the international community, and led to the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

Through its burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements, the Compact built on and accelerated many of the trends that had been emerging in the course of the decade—the growing involvement of the private sector; the drive for practical instruments to bridge the humanitarian-development divide, recognizing the impact of large refugee flows for development outcomes in hosting States; and a shift from camp-based assistance models that entrenched exclusion towards a more inclusive one based on building the resilience of both refugees and their hosts. The Compact is notable for its comprehensive approach that preserves the humanitarian imperative, but brings in peacebuilding, development action and private sector investment, seeks to leverage the Sustainable Development Goals, and draws on synergies with UN reforms.

In the East and Horn of Africa, for example, the regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response model by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development is helping strengthen asylum, access to rights, and refugee inclusion in health, education and national economies. In Latin America, too, a regional application has helped build a coherent response in a context of high mobility. Expertise and financing from the World Bank and other international financial institutions, bilateral development support and private sector investments are helping drive these achievements and so transforming the lives of refugees and refugee-hosting communities and providing models for the Compact's application elsewhere.



In Nyarugusu camp, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi talks with an elderly Congolese refugee.

This decade of crisis and opportunity also called for changes in how UNHCR equipped itself to respond, with consequences for its budget, its presence around the world, and its staff and organizational culture.

It saw our needs-based budget increase from \$2.3 billion to \$8.6 billion. UNHCR received strong and steadfast support from its donors throughout the decade, and accelerated efforts to diversify its funding base in the spirit of responsibility-sharing and ensuring a stable platform for its work. Nowhere was this more notable than in the success of UNHCR's private sector fundraising, growing from \$50.7 million in 2009 to \$421.7 million in 2019. Overall funds available to UNHCR in 2019 reached \$4.8 billion; however, the gap between requirements and available resources remained at around 42% throughout the decade.

The number of regular staff increased from 6,000 to over 12,800, and by the end of 2019 the entire workforce exceeded 17,460, of whom 44% were female, and 90% of which was in the field. The number of countries and territories where UNHCR was present increased from 126 to 130. UNHCR's regionalization and decentralization process, undertaken in the course of 2019, brought

for innovation, and increasing efficiency, in line with its Grand Bargain commitments and as an active participant in broader UN reforms. A Joint Data Centre was established together with the World Bank and a new data transformation strategy was issued in 2019 to help inform and drive these efforts.

As the decade drew to a close, the Global Refugee Forum marked a pivotal moment. It was the largest-ever gathering on refugee matters, building on many months of consultations and bringing together over 3,000 participants from diverse backgrounds. It helped showcase what had been achieved through the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response model and generated some 1,400 pledges across a broad range of areas. Some are already being operationalized, or will be very shortly, while others will take more time, requiring legislative changes, new instruments, or resources to support their implementation.

Looking ahead to the decade to come, I believe that in the Global Compact we have a powerful tool, born of a narrative of possibility and charting a measurable, practical way forward. I hope that the Compact, and the Global Refugee Forum,

The Special Envoy



“A generation of Rohingya children are still without access to the education they deserve.”
The Special Envoy talks to refugees in Chakmarkul camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

UNHCR's Special Envoy, Angelina Jolie, continued her focus on major displacement situations and advocacy work for UNHCR throughout the year, carrying out field visits and other activities. Since joining in 2001, the Special Envoy has now conducted more than 65 field missions on behalf of UNHCR.

In early 2019, the Special Envoy visited Bangladesh for a three-day mission to assess the humanitarian needs of Rohingya refugees and some of the more critical challenges faced in Cox's Bazar, observing as well the humanitarian response led jointly by the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR. This was not the Special Envoy's first mission to this crisis, having met with forcibly displaced Rohingya people during prior visits to Myanmar in 2015, and India in 2006.

She heard humbling testimony from Rohingya women, children and men who had endured lifetimes of persecution and discrimination, and urged continued support for those who have been displaced until such a time as refugees may return voluntarily, in safety and in dignity.

Focusing also on education, the Special Envoy appealed strongly for access to formal education for refugee children during her visit with the Prime Minister in Dhaka, subsequently raising the matter through an exchange of letters with the Government. Nearly a year later, Bangladesh announced steps to improve education programmes for Rohingya refugee children in the camps.

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