

WOMEN AND GIRLS FACING FORCED DISPLACEMENT



WHO IS A REFUGEE?

1951 REFUGEE GENEVA CONVENTION is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.

A **refugee** is a **displaced person who has crossed national borders** and who cannot or is unwilling to return home due to well-founded fear of persecution (because of his/her *race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular group or political opinion*).

Such a person may be called an **asylum seeker** until granted **refugee status** by the contracting state (*In Spain: Law 12/2009 regulating the right to asylum and subsidiary protection*) or the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** if they formally make a claim for asylum.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) may have fled for similar reasons, but remain within their own territory and thus are still subject to the laws of that state.



REFUGEES versus MIGRANTS/IMMIGRANTS

- ✓ Migrants travel to another country, to have a better future
- ✓ Immigrants want to live permanently in another country



Global Trends of Forced Displacement



- 27.1 million refugees (26.4 million in 2020) including:
 - 5.8 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate (*United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*)
 - 53 million IDPs (48 million in 2020)
 - 4.6 million asylum-seekers (4.1 million in 2020)
 - 4.4 million Venezuelans displaced abroad (3.9 million in 2020)

With millions of Ukrainians displaced and further displacement elsewhere:

IN 2022 TOTAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT NOW EXCEEDS 100 MILLION PEOPLE

☞ This means that more than 1 % of the world population is a refugee.



83% of refugees originate from just ten countries:

- o Syria (6.8 million)
- o Venezuela (4.6 million)
- o Afghanistan (2.7 million)
- o South Sudan (2.4 million)
- o Myanmar (1.2 million)



Poorer countries are hosting refugees:

- 72% of refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries.
- 83% of refugees are hosted by low- and middle-income countries.
- ✓ **Turkey hosted the largest refugee population worldwide (3.8 million).** This is followed by **Colombia** (1.8 million, including Venezuelans displaced abroad), **Uganda** (1.5 million), **Pakistan** (1.4 million), and **Germany** (1.2 million).

(Note that Poland is currently home to 1.1 million refugees from Ukraine)

Climate Change and forced displacement:

95% of all internal conflict displacements in 2021 occurred in countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and 78% of new refugees and asylum seekers originate from these same countries.

UNHCR declared **40 new emergencies in 29 countries in 2021**, showing a lack of will to foster peace, stability and cooperation.

Without the political will to make peace, the prospect for large numbers of refugees returning home in the near future will remain out of reach.

↳ **Durable solutions** are only an option for fewer and fewer refugees and internally displaced people: We must work to increase **refugee self-reliance** and ease the pressure on host countries

- **RETURNS:** Most refugees want nothing more than to go home. Nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of refugee returns were to South Sudan. Unfortunately, that number represents only 2% of the world's refugees.
- **RESETTLEMENT:** Fewer and fewer refugees are offered resettlement as a lifesaving option as States have significantly reduced the number of places offered.
- **LOCAL INTEGRATION:** In 2021, an estimated 56,700 refugees from 161 different countries of origin naturalized in 23 host countries.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced, asylum-seekers.

The mandate of UNHCR is to provide, on a non-political and humanitarian basis, **international protection to refugees** and to seek **permanent solutions** for them.



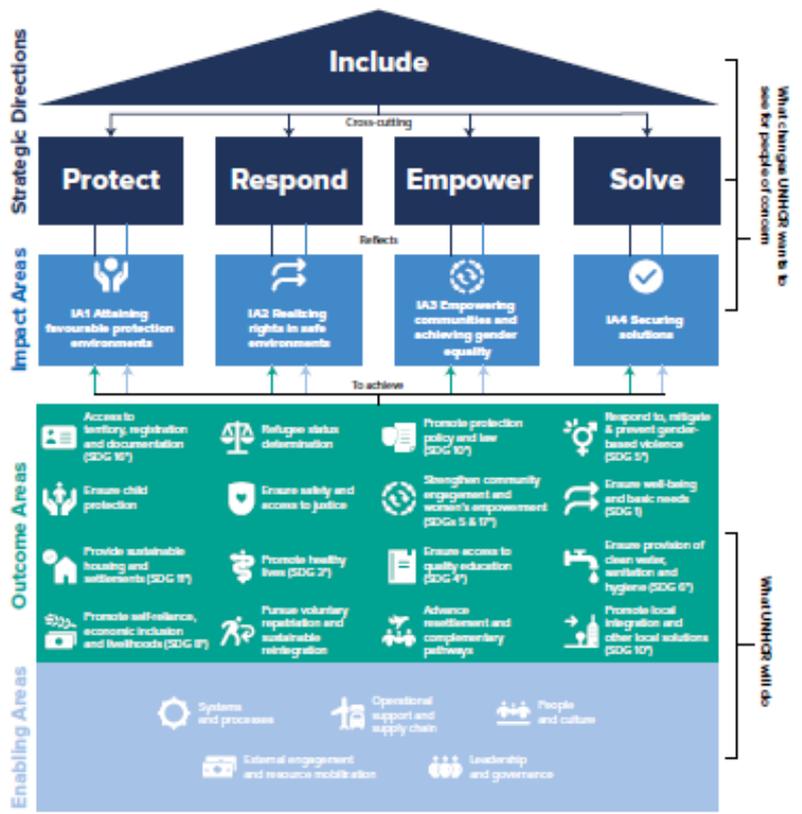
SHELTER



EDUCATION



NUTRITION



What change UNHCR wants to see for people of concern

What UNHCR will do



GENDER



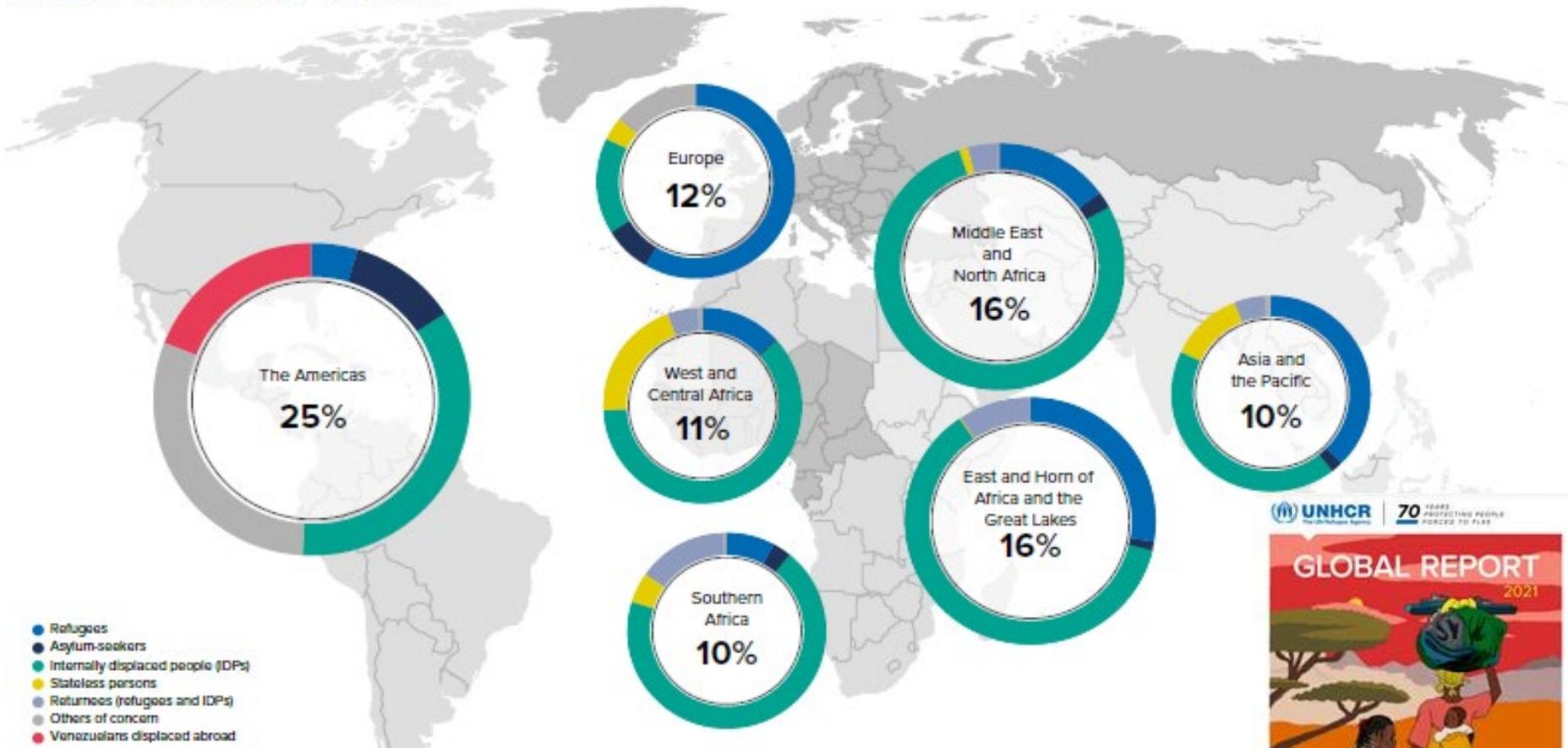
WASH



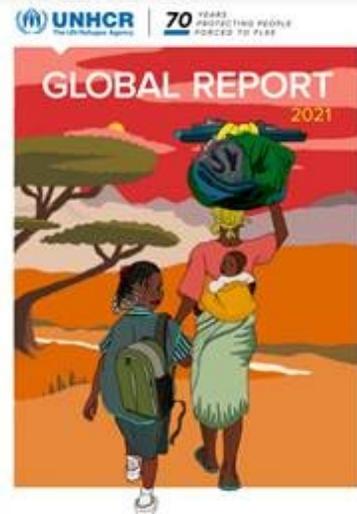
HEALTH

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

POPULATIONS OF CONCERN TO UNHCR 2022 PLANNING FIGURES¹



UNHCR works in **137 countries and territories** with a workforce of 18,879 persons (91% in the field).



Spanish Committee of the UNHCR

España con ACNUR (EcA)

The Association **"Spain with UNHCR" (EcA)** has signed an agreement since its constitution in **1993** that recognizes it as the **National Committee of UNHCR in Spain**. It has more than **500,000 members and regular donors**.



MISSION

Raising **awareness and mobilizing resources in Spain** to contribute to the financing of UNHCR humanitarian projects around the world.

VISION

Have the **support of the largest number of partners and private and public donors** committed to UNHCR's cause.

The legal text of the 1951 Convention does not include any reference to gender or unique ways of persecution specific to women.

The efforts made by feminist movements, non-governmental organizations and civil society, have led to the publication of guidelines by the UNHCR on [gender-related persecution](#) (UNHCR, 2002) and on [sexual orientation and gender identity](#) (UNHCR, 2012) providing further non-legally binding guidance for states on how to **assess asylum claims in a gender-sensitive way**.

☞ **Refugee status** is granted on the basis of the fear of persecution because of *membership in a particular group*.



REASONS FOR PERSECUTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

MOST RECURRENT REASONS:

- FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM): 200 million women and girls have now been victims of FGM in 30 countries around the world
- SEXUAL and GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV): 1/3 women in the world have suffered SGBV

OTHER GROUNDS FOR PERSECUTION:

- FORCED MARRIAGES
- HONOR KILLINGS: Middle East, India, Pakistan
- ABDUCTIONS
- TRAFFICKING
- SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
- SEXUAL DIVERSITY (LGTBI)



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN FORCED DISPLACEMENT

- Armed conflicts and the realities of generalized violence cause a **situation of extreme vulnerability** in the civilian population that suffers them. Girls, women and the elderly are subjected to all kinds of sexual assaults. They are used as a “**weapons of war**” by which to punish and humiliate the enemy.
- In situations of enormous vulnerability such as **migratory flows or border territories**, the possibilities for women and girls to suffer **sexual and gender-based violence** multiply. Irregular or unsafe migration routes increase the risks of gender-based violence, including human **trafficking and sexual violence**.
- **UNHCR** is committed to using the concept of "**surviving victims**". On the one hand, their status as victims of a serious form of violence is recognized, which makes them **worthy of protection**. On the other hand, their strength and **their capacity for resistance and resilience** are visible.



COVID-19 IMPACT ON REFUGEE WOMEN

- Extremely worrying increases in reports of **gender-based violence**, including domestic violence, forced marriages, child labour and teenage pregnancies.
- Many girls and young women are forced to **drop out of school and work**, are sold or married.
- An estimated 13 million more girls are now at risk of being **forced into marriage** as a result of the pandemic.
- Refugee women are forced to **redouble their contribution to the home**, resorting to precarious jobs in the underground economy or on the streets.
- Increasing household demands also **decrease their educational opportunities** while **increasing their exposure to the virus**.



POSITIVE GENDER IMPACT OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

We should not systematically categorize all women and girls as vulnerable, perpetuating the stereotype of weak, unable to make decisions.

DISPLACEMENT and REFUGEE CONTEXT

- ☞ Allow many women to take on new roles/roles
- ☞ Promote positive changes within their communities
- ☞ Promote Empowerment of Women
- ☞ Promote access to Education, Health, Livelihoods Programs



UNHCR GENDER APPROACH/RESPONSE

OBJECTIVES

1. Empowerment and Gender equality
2. Equal access to rights/resources
3. Prevention/response against SGBV

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- Develop comprehensive strategies to promote equality and respond to SGBV.
- Registration and personal documentation for women.
- 50% female representation in refugee committees.
- Direct participation of women in the processes of distribution of aid.
- Delivery of sanitary items.
- Empowerment and access to education.

UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that persons of concern (refugees, internally displaced persons, etc.) can enjoy their rights on an equal footing and participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities

EXAMPLE OF UNHCR PROGRAM FOR DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS

AFGHANISTAN

PROVIDING DISPLACED AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND PROTECTING THEM FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



- ❖ **Psychosocial support activities:** group counselling, individual counselling, awareness raising
- ❖ **Prevention, mitigation and response to sexual and gender-based violence:** training of partner staff, creation of safe spaces for women



EXAMPLE OF UNHCR PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

GUARANTEE THE RIGHT TO SECURITY, PHYSICAL INTEGRITY, EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS RESIDING IN NORD-UBANGI PROVINCE

- ❖ **Training of representatives of local protection committees** on assistance and promotion of fundamental rights
- ❖ **Access of "surviving victims"** to **Assistance and Protection services**
- ❖ **Socio-economic integration** of Central African refugees victims of discrimination and violation of fundamental rights
- ❖ **Awareness Campaigns:** Celebration of the "16 Days of Activism", International Women's Day, International Children's Day



EXAMPLE OF UNHCR PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE AND MIGRANT WOMEN

BRAZIL

REMOVING BARRIERS FOR VENEZUELAN REFUGEE AND MIGRANT WOMEN

- ❖ **Vocational training** in reference center in Pacaraima (Roraima)
- ❖ **Refugee Women's Empowerment Project** (joint initiative of UNHCR, the Global Compact Brazil Network and UN Women): to facilitate refugee women's access to vocational training and the Brazilian labour market
- ❖ **Vocational training** in Manaus, Boa Vista, Minas Gerais and São Paulo: UNHCR provide Portuguese classes and vocational training focused on technical skills to work in the automotive industry and its supply chain



TESTIMONIES

Nakout

Uganda → Finland



The case of Nakout is one of the most representative of the flight of women from their countries due to gender violence. Members of the so-called Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) broke into her village in Uganda one day, murdering her husband and kidnapping her, separating her from her children.

For 12 years she was imprisoned and subjected to extreme situations of sexual and gender violence by Josep Kony, the leader of this guerrilla group that sows terror in the villages of that African country.

She now lives in Finland hoping to be reunited with her children after so many years without seeing them.

More about her story: <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/historia/2020/1/5e288ce14/a-pesar-de-haber-encontrado-la-seguridad-en-finlandia-una-madre-secuestrada.html>

TESTIMONIES

Maya Ghazal

Syria



England



In 2015, Maya Ghazal fled Damascus and, at the age of 16, started a new life in the UK under the family reunification scheme. Maya learned English on her own and overcame several obstacles to resume her studies. Thanks to his dedication and tenacity, he is pursuing an academic degree in Aviation Studies and Engineering in London.

At the age of 21, she managed to fulfill her dream of becoming the first refugee pilot. He is already licensed as a private pilot, but now his intention is to become a commercial airline pilot. Maya advocates for the inclusion of refugees and for access to educational and employment opportunities. It also combats negative stereotypes about refugee populations. To do this, he shares his own story.

More about her story: <https://www.acnur.org/maya-ghazal.html>

TESTIMONIES

Stephanie

Colombia → Venezuela → Ecuador



Stephanie, a 34-year-old mother of two, lost her right arm in a traffic accident more than a decade ago. From that moment on, he learned to use his left hand to make jewelry. With seed capital given by HIAS, an NGO partner of UNHCR, he created Manex, an artisanal jewellery company whose name means 'Foreign Hands'.

Born in Colombia, she was forced to flee the country's armed conflict when she was only seven years old. Together with his family, he found a safe place in neighboring Venezuela, where he ended up obtaining citizenship. In 2016 he had to flee again, this time to Ecuador.

For her, the experience of running away from home as a person with a disability represented a double challenge, something very similar to what she experienced after the accident.

More about her story: <https://www.acnur.org/es-es/noticias/historia/2020/12/5fc9210d4/refugiada-venezolana-experta-en-bisuteria-desafia-la-discapacidad-para.html>

TESTIMONIES

Honduras → Spain

Maritza

Maritza is a sexual orientation refugee from Honduras. When he was 17, he went to the United States, where he found work. When she returned to Honduras in 2004, she already knew she was a lesbian.

Shortly after police found the body of her partner, who had been raped and killed after revealing she was a lesbian, Maritza heard that she would be next.

Now, a decade later, Maritza has finally found safety and love as a refugee in Barcelona, along with her partner Jenny.



More about her story: <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/historia/2019/5/5cde2bc84/el-poder-del-amor.html>

TESTIMONIES

Florence



Florence refers to the group *Femme Debout* (Women Standing), a group made up mostly of widows and war orphans who face the traumatic effects of the protracted fighting in the Central African Republic. They are survivors of the 2013 sectarian conflict between Muslim and Christian armed groups.

At that time Florence took her children, her brother's three children and her elderly mother and fled to the settlement for internally displaced persons near Bangui International Airport. Most of the displaced people there had witnessed horrific violence, murder of family members and cases of horrific sexual violence committed against women.

More about her story:
<https://www.acnur.org/noticias/historia/2019/11/5dd710c94/mujeres-hacen-frente-a-los-estragos-de-la-guerra-en-africa-central.html>

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!
THANK YOU!
MERCI!

