

Children in the World Refugee Crisis Fact Sheet



Woman and child squeeze under a razor wire barrier as they enter Hungary at the border with Serbia. Photo by Reuters.

We are in the midst of the worst refugee emergency the world has seen since World War II.

Fast Facts

- 60 million people are displaced around the world, a staggering all-time high.
- If the 60 million forcibly uprooted were a country, it would be the world's 24th largest nation.
- 1 in 122 humans is either a refugee, internally displaced or seeking asylum.
- 1 in 5 refugees entering the European Union are children.

Where Are They From? – 77% of refugees come from these 10 counties (based on end of 2014 figures).

- Syria
- Afghanistan
- Somalia
- Sudan
- South Sudan
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Central Africa Republic
- Iraq
- Eritrea

Why Are They Fleeing?

- War, persecution and violence (ex: Syria civil war, Darfur conflict, etc.)
- Gangs and non-state actor influence (ex: gangs in Honduras, ISIS)
- Natural disasters (ex: fire, earthquakes, typhoons)

Who

- **Refugee** (19.5 million) – A person with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion who is outside his/her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling, because of that fear, to return.
 - 51% of refugees are children, under the age of 18.
 - 46% of refugees are 18-59-years-old
 - 3% of refugees are 60 and over
- **Internally Displaced Person** (38.2 million) – A person who has not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but has remained inside his/her home country.
- **Asylum-Seeker** (1.8 million) – A person trying to be recognized as a refugee or seeking protection.
- **Migrant** – Broad term for a person who moves to a foreign country for a certain length of time, for a variety of reasons, in order to improve their lives. They are fundamentally different from refugees and are treated very differently under international law. Sometimes “migrant” includes refugees when used as an umbrella term for a mixed group of people.

All statistics are from HRW and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Global Trends 2014 Report.

International Humanitarian Laws and Standards Protecting Refugees

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 14 (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries as asylum from persecution.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 22 (1) State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights.

(2) For this purpose, State Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations... to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment.

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol to the Convention

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.

*In July 2001, UNHCR published a special edition of its [Refugees Magazine dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the Convention](#). It discussed: ***“Why is the Convention important?”****

“It was the first truly international agreement covering the most fundamental aspects of a refugee’s life. It spelled out a set of basic human rights which should be at least equivalent to freedoms enjoyed by foreign nationals living legally in a given country and in many cases those of citizens of that state. It recognized the international scope of refugee crises and the necessity of international cooperation, including burden-sharing among states, in tackling the problem.”