

IRAQ. Syrian refugee Ronia lives with her five daughters in Domiz refugee camp, northern Iraq. Ronia's husband died two years ago, leaving her to raise her children alone.
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CHAPTER 2

Refugees

The number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate is almost double that of 2012 and two thirds come from 5 countries

The global refugee population stood at 25.9 million at the end of 2018, including 5.5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate, and is now at the highest level ever recorded. The focus of this report is the 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate¹⁶ and, unless otherwise stated, all references to refugees in this document refer to this population.

The refugee population under UNHCR's mandate has nearly doubled since 2012 when it stood at 10.5 million. Over the course of 2018, this population increased by about 417,100 or 2 per cent. While this represents the seventh year in a row that the refugee population has increased, it is the smallest rise since 2013. The many new arrivals and registrations of refugees were partially offset by returns and adjustments following verification exercises, with the result being a small increase in the overall population size.

While there was only a small increase of 1 per cent in the refugee population in sub-Saharan Africa, this disguised wide sub-regional variations such as a small decrease in Central Africa and the Great Lakes and an increase of 13.7 per cent in West Africa [Table 1]. The new registrations of Syrian refugees in Turkey meant that the proportion of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate hosted in Turkey alone increased to 18 per cent while the rest of Europe hosted an additional 14 per cent. The situation in Asia and the Pacific remained relatively stable in 2018 after the large flows seen in 2017, and there was a small decrease in the refugee population in the Middle East and North Africa. There was also a small decline in the registered refugee population in the Americas, caused mainly by the departure of Colombian refugees from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

¹⁶ This figure includes some 243,000 individuals in refugee-like situations, with about 58,800 in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 48,900 in Thailand and 50,000 in Ecuador.

Table 1 | Refugee populations by UNHCR regions | 2018

UNHCR regions	Refugees (including persons in a refugee-like situation)		Change		% of total, end-2018
	Start-2018	End-2018	Absolute	%	
- Central Africa and Great Lakes	1,475,700	1,449,400	-26,300	-1.8	7
- East and Horn of Africa	4,307,800	4,348,800	41,000	1.0	21
- Southern Africa	197,700	211,000	13,300	6.7	1
- West Africa	286,900	326,300	39,400	13.7	2
Total Africa*	6,268,200	6,335,400	67,200	1.1	31
Americas	646,100	643,300	-2,800	-0.4	3
Asia and Pacific	4,209,700	4,214,600	4,900	0.1	21
Europe	6,114,200	6,474,600	360,300	5.9	32
thereof: Turkey	3,480,300	3,681,700	201,400	5.8	18
Middle East and North Africa	2,705,400	2,692,700	-12,700	-0.5	13
Total	19,943,600	20,360,600	417,000	2.1	100

* Excluding North Africa.

By origin

Altogether, refugees from the top 10 countries of origin accounted for 82 per cent of refugees (16.6 million) in 2018, similar to 2017. As in 2017, over two thirds of the world's refugees come from just five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.

As has been the case since 2014, the main country of origin for refugees in 2018 was Syria, with 6.7 million at the end of the year, an increase over the 6.3 million from a year earlier.¹⁷ While these refugees were hosted by 127 countries on six continents, the vast majority (85 per cent) remained in countries in the region. Turkey continued to host the largest population of Syrian refugees, increasing throughout 2018 through both new registrations and births to reach 3,622,400 by the end of the year.

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa with significant numbers of Syrian refugees included Lebanon (944,200), Jordan (676,300), Iraq (252,500) and Egypt (132,900). Outside the region, countries with large Syrian refugee populations included Germany (532,100), Sweden (109,300), Sudan (93,500), Austria (49,200), the Netherlands (32,100), Greece (23,900), Denmark (19,700), Bulgaria (17,200), Switzerland (16,600), France (15,800), Armenia (14,700), Norway (13,900) and Spain (13,800).

Refugees from Afghanistan were the second largest group by country of origin, in what has remained a

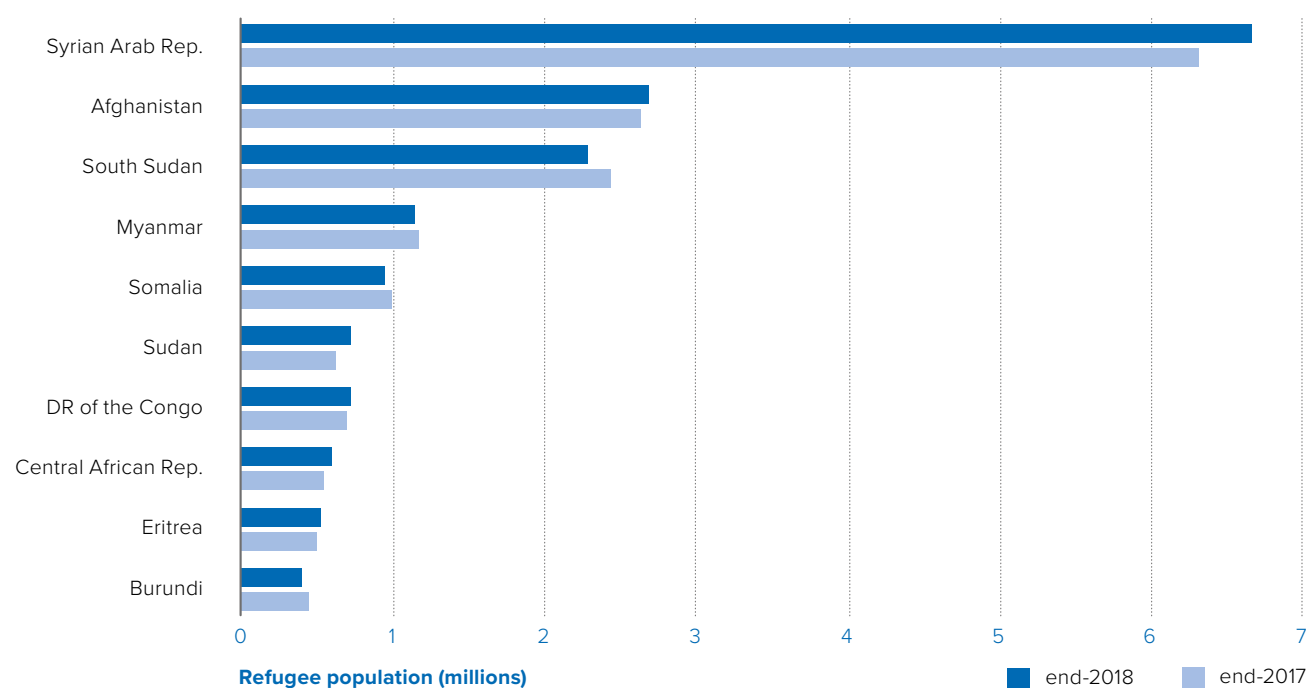
significant population since the 1980s. At the end of 2018, there were 2.7 million Afghan refugees, compared with 2.6 million a year earlier, mainly due to births during the year. Pakistan continued to host the largest Afghan refugee population with 1,403,500 people at the end of 2018. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported hosting 951,100 Afghan refugees.¹⁸ In Germany, the number grew to 126,000 by the end of 2018, with other Afghan refugee populations hosted in Austria (33,100), Sweden (28,200), France (18,500), Italy (16,900), Switzerland (12,300) and Australia (11,900). In 2018, over 88 per cent of Afghan refugees were hosted by neighbouring Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

While the South Sudanese refugee population declined in 2018 from 2.4 million to 2.3 million people, it remained the third most common country of origin. Much of this decline was accounted for by the adjustment of the figures in Uganda following verification (which reduced the population by 300,000); overall in 2018, there were 179,200 new refugee registrations. Following the reduction in the number of refugees hosted in Uganda to 788,800 at the end of 2018, Sudan became the country hosting the largest population of South Sudanese with 852,100 people. This was followed by Ethiopia (422,100), Kenya (115,200) and DRC (95,700).

¹⁷ Much of this increase was due to newly registered refugees, many of whom had arrived prior to 2018.

¹⁸ The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran registers all refugees in the country. With the exception of refugees in settlements, UNHCR has most recently received only the aggregate number of refugees from the Government in May 2015.

Figure 5 | Major source countries of refugees | end-2017 to end-2018



Altogether, neighbouring countries hosted nearly all refugees from South Sudan.

Refugees originating from Myanmar represented the fourth largest population group by country of origin. By the end of 2018, this population stood at 1.1 million, about the same as in 2017. Most refugees from Myanmar were hosted by Bangladesh (906,600) at the end of the year, a slight decline from the end of 2017 (932,200) due to improvements in registration methods. Other countries with sizable populations of refugees from Myanmar were Malaysia (114,200), Thailand (97,600) and India (18,800). Most of the refugee population from Myanmar was hosted in Bangladesh and nearly the entirety of refugees from Myanmar were hosted by countries in the region.

The number of Somali refugees worldwide continued to decline slowly, mainly as a result of verification exercises in and returns from Kenya and – to a lesser extent – from Yemen. At the end of 2017, there were 986,400 Somali refugees, a number that decreased to 949,700 by the end of 2018. As a result of the decline in Kenya, Ethiopia became the largest host of Somali refugees with 257,200 at the end of 2018. This was followed by Kenya (252,500), Yemen (249,000), South Africa (27,100), Germany (23,600), Sweden (21,000), Uganda (18,800), the Netherlands

(14,000), Italy (13,400) and Djibouti (12,700). Over 80 per cent of Somali refugees have remained in countries close to Somalia.

The number of registered refugees originating from Sudan reached 724,800 by the end of 2018, up from 694,600 the previous year. Chad continued to host the largest Sudanese refugee population with 336,700, while 269,900 Sudanese refugees were living in South Sudan. Other countries hosting a significant Sudanese refugee population at end-2018 included Ethiopia (44,000), Egypt (19,500) and France (14,700). Neighbouring countries hosted some 93 per cent of Sudanese refugees in 2018.

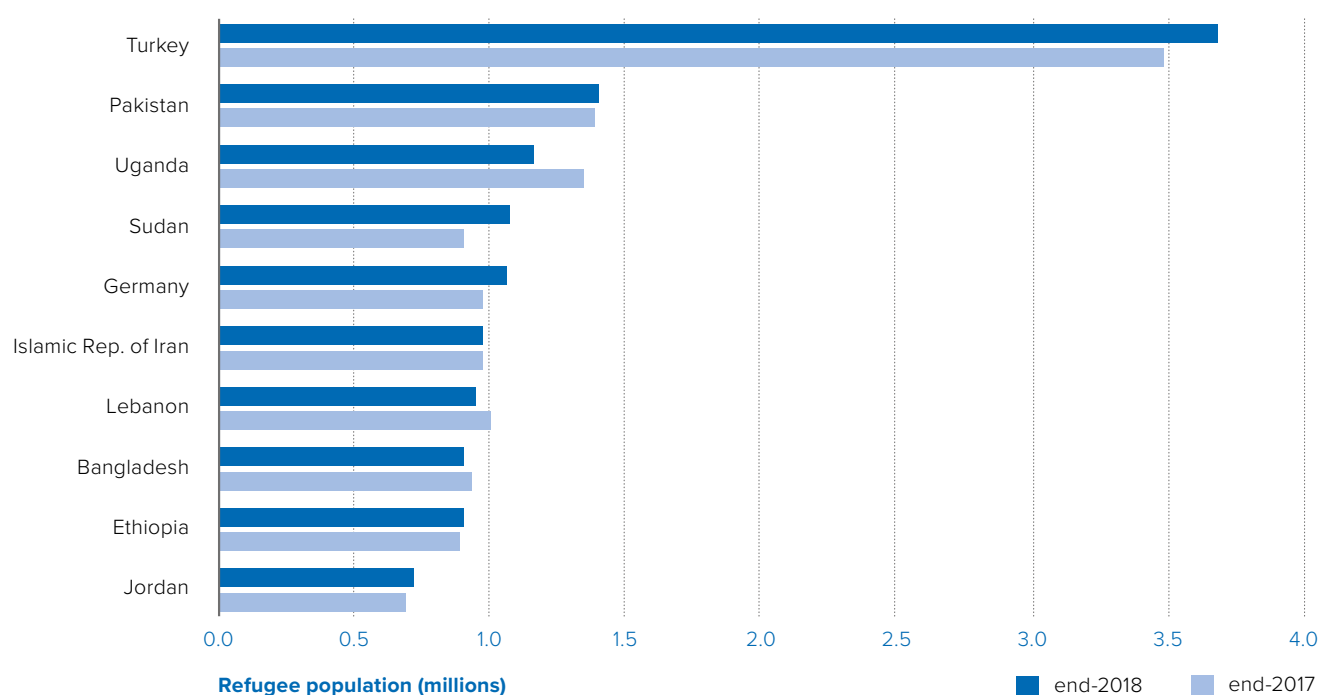
At the year's end, DRC was the seventh largest country of origin of refugees, with 720,300 refugees. The majority from DRC (85 per cent) were hosted by neighbouring countries including Uganda with a population of 303,100, Rwanda (77,000), Burundi (70,900), the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) (56,600), Zambia (41,500), Angola (37,100), South Sudan (15,600) and the Republic of the Congo (Congo) (11,300). Substantial refugee populations were also hosted by South Africa (26,300), Kenya (24,600) and France (16,500). Nearly all refugees from DRC (94 per cent) remained in sub-Saharan African countries.



NIGERIA. Thousands of Cameroonians seek safety across the border, including this elderly Cameroonian refugee in south-eastern Nigeria.

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Figure 6 | Major host countries of refugees | end-2017 to end-2018



As in 2017, CAR remained the country of origin of the eighth largest refugee population. Violence continued to force people to flee, with refugee numbers increasing from 545,500 to 590,900 during 2018. Virtually all CAR refugees found asylum in neighbouring countries. Cameroon hosted about half with 274,700 at the end of 2018, followed by DRC (172,000), Chad (102,100), Congo (24,700) and Sudan (7,000).

Eritrea remained the ninth largest country of origin with 507,300 refugees at the end of 2018, an increase from end-2017 when this population stood at 486,200. Most Eritrean refugees (57 per cent) were hosted by Ethiopia (174,000) and Sudan (114,500), but many also found protection farther away, such as in Germany (55,300), Switzerland (34,100), Sweden (27,700), Norway (15,200), the Netherlands (14,900), Israel (14,500) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) (13,000).

The number of refugees from Burundi, the tenth largest refugee-producing country, decreased during 2018 from 439,300 at the start of the year to 387,900 at the end. The decrease was mainly due to returns (45,500) and as a result of verification exercises that often reflect spontaneous departures. Nearly all of these refugees (98 per cent) were located in

countries in the region, with Tanzania hosting 221,400 Burundian refugees, followed by Rwanda (68,300), DRC (43,000), Uganda (32,500), Kenya (4,900) and Zambia (4,500).

Other major countries or territories of origin for refugees in 2018 were Iraq (372,300), Viet Nam (334,500),¹⁹ Nigeria (276,900), Rwanda (247,500), China (212,100), Mali (158,300), Colombia (138,600), Pakistan (132,300), the Islamic Republic of Iran (130,000) and Sri Lanka (114,000).

By country of asylum

Developing regions continued to shoulder a disproportionately large responsibility for hosting refugees. The Least Developed Countries,²⁰ such as Bangladesh, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen, hosted 6.7 million refugees, 33 per cent of the global total, while being home to 13 per cent of the world population and accounting for a combined

¹⁹ Nearly all Vietnamese refugees are hosted by China and are considered to be well integrated into Chinese society.

²⁰ See: unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/ for a list of Least Developed Countries.

1.25 per cent of the global gross domestic product.²¹ These nations already face severe structural barriers to sustainable development, and usually have the least resources to respond to the needs of people seeking refuge.²² Altogether, nine of the top ten refugee-hosting countries were in developing regions (according to the United Nations Statistics Division classification) and 84 per cent of refugees lived in these countries.²³

As has been the case since 2014, Turkey was the country hosting the largest refugee population, with 3.7 million at the end of 2018, up from 3.5 million in December 2017 [Figure 6]. The vast majority of refugees in Turkey were from Syria with 3,622,400 making up more than 98 per cent of the entire refugee population. In 2018, there were 397,600 newly registered Syrian refugees and 113,100 newborns in Turkey. In addition, there were 39,100 refugees from Iraq, as well as smaller numbers from the Islamic Republic of Iran (8,700) and Afghanistan (6,600).²⁴

At the end of 2018, Pakistan hosted the second largest refugee population with 1.4 million refugees. This population is similar in size to that reported at the end of 2017 with the addition of newborns balanced out by reductions mainly due to returns. The refugee population in Pakistan continued to be almost exclusively from Afghanistan.²⁵

Uganda continued to host a large refugee population, numbering 1,165,700 at the end of 2018, a decline from the 1,350,500 reported at the end of 2017. While Uganda continued to receive new refugee arrivals throughout the year, this decline was mainly due to a verification exercise undertaken between March and October 2018. Uganda was host to refugee populations from several countries, the largest being from South Sudan (with 788,800 at the end of 2018), followed by DRC (303,100). There were also sizeable populations of refugees from Burundi (32,500), Somalia (18,800) and Rwanda (14,000).

The refugee population in Sudan increased by about 19 per cent over the course of 2018 to just

over 1 million, with Sudan becoming the country with the fourth largest refugee population. Most refugees were from South Sudan (852,100), followed by Eritrea (114,500), Syria (93,500), CAR (7,000) and Ethiopia (6,000).

During 2018, the refugee population in Germany continued to increase, numbering 1,063,800 at the end of the year. More than half were from Syria (532,100), while other countries of origin included Iraq (136,500), Afghanistan (126,000), Eritrea (55,300), the Islamic Republic of Iran (41,200), Turkey (24,000), Somalia (23,600), Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) (9,200), the Russian Federation (8,100), Pakistan (7,500) and Nigeria (6,400).

The registered refugee population in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the sixth largest refugee-hosting country, remained unchanged at 979,400 at the end of 2018.²⁶ The vast majority were from Afghanistan (951,100), with a smaller number from Iraq (28,300).

The refugee population in Lebanon also declined slightly, mainly due to data reconciliation, deregistration, and departures for resettlement. However, Lebanon still hosted nearly 1 million refugees at the end of 2018 (949,700), compared with 998,900 at the end of 2017. Most refugees in Lebanon were from Syria (944,200), with an additional 4,500 from Iraq.

²¹ International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2019. 2018 estimates for current prices nominal GDP. imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/index.aspx

²² See: unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/ for a list of Least Developed Countries.

²³ See: unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/ for a list of countries included under each region.

²⁴ The numbers reported on nationalities other than Syrian relate to numbers from UNHCR as of 10 September 2018. As of this date, UNHCR Turkey phased out its role in registering foreigners wishing to apply for international protection and the Government of Turkey moved to a fully decentralized procedure for all individuals seeking international protection. The numbers of new arrivals and births among Syrians were reported by the Government of Turkey.

²⁵ Pakistan hosted large numbers of undocumented Afghans.

²⁶ The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran registers all refugees in the country. With the exception of refugees in settlements, UNHCR has most recently received only the aggregate number of refugees from the Government in May 2015.



SOUTH SUDAN. Refugees from Sudan gather to collect water from a water point in the Doro refugee camp in Bunj, South Sudan. While the local host community population stands at around 53,000, the area around Bunj is now home to 144,000 refugees from Sudan's Blue Nile State.

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BANGLADESH. *Mohammad, 31, and his daughter Kismat, 3 are among almost 700,000 Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar in 2017, seeking safety in neighbouring Bangladesh. Four generations of their family are living in the camps near Cox's Bazaar. The living conditions in the camps are difficult, but the Rohingya feel safe.*

© UNHCR/ROGER ARNOLD

Bangladesh continued to host a large refugee population at the end of 2018, almost entirely comprising refugees from Myanmar, many of whom arrived during 2017. The number stood at 906,600 at the end of the year, a decline from 932,200 the previous year, mostly due to statistical adjustments following family count exercises. Still, there were 16,300 new registrations during the year.

The refugee population in Ethiopia – the ninth largest refugee host country – increased during 2018, reaching 903,200. Nearly half of the population came from South Sudan, bringing the total number of South Sudanese refugees in the country to 422,100. There were 257,200 refugees from Somalia, while significant numbers from Eritrea (174,000) and Sudan (44,000) remained in Ethiopia at the end of 2018.

Jordan experienced a slight increase in its refugee population, providing protection to 715,300 people by the end of 2018, up from 691,000 in 2017 and making it the tenth largest refugee-hosting country in the world. The vast majority of these refugees were from Syria (676,300), while 34,600 were from Iraq.

Other countries hosting significant refugee populations of more than 200,000 people at the end of 2018 included DRC (529,100), Chad (451,200), Kenya (421,200), Cameroon (380,300), France (368,400), China (321,800), the United States of America (313,200), South Sudan (291,800), Iraq (283,000), Tanzania (278,300), Yemen (264,400), Sweden (248,200) and Egypt (246,700).

New refugees

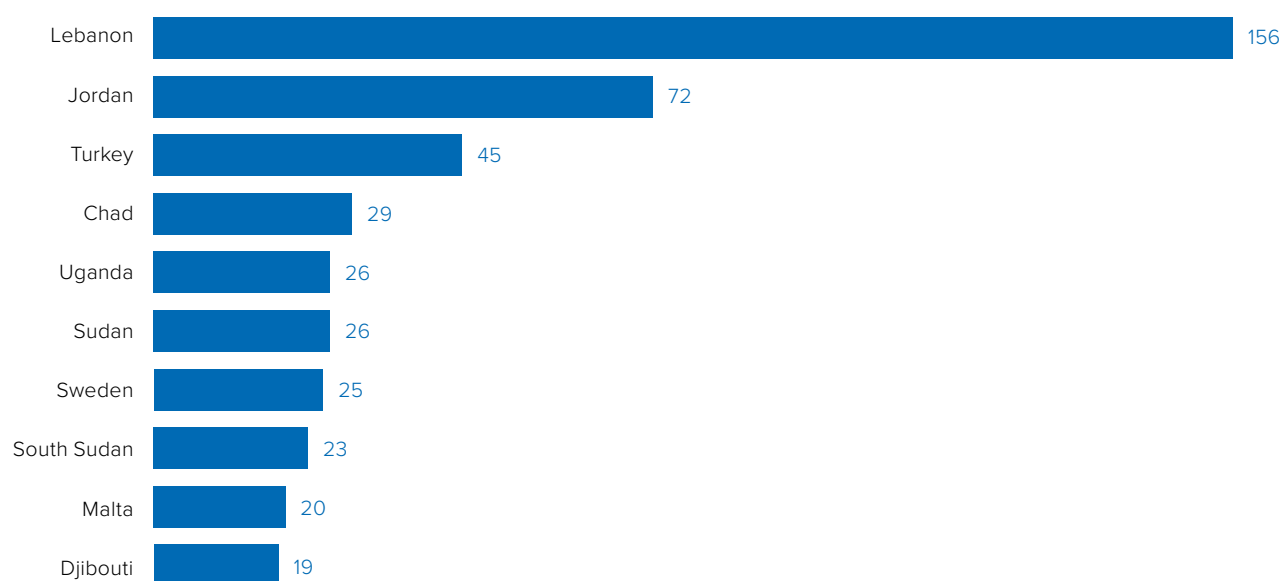
During 2018, 1.1 million people were reported as new refugees, down from the 2.7 million reported in 2017. This figure comprised 599,300 refugees who were recognized on a group or prima facie basis, as well as the 461,200 who were granted some form of temporary protection.

Syrians were the largest group of new refugees registered on a group or prima facie basis, accounting for more than half of new registrations with 526,500 new refugees. Most of these were in Turkey, where 397,600 were registered in 2018 (although many would have arrived earlier), followed by 81,700 in Sudan, 15,600 in Iraq, 13,300 in Jordan, 11,800 in Greece and 5,300 in Egypt.

The conflict in South Sudan continued to displace many, with 179,200 new refugees registered in 2018. Still, this was a lower rate of displacement than was seen in the previous year when over 1 million new refugees were recorded. More than half of these new South Sudanese refugee movements (99,400) were to Sudan, but there were also large numbers of South Sudanese in Uganda (40,700), Ethiopia (25,400), Kenya (7,300) and DRC (5,900).

Refugees from DRC constituted the third largest group of new refugees with 123,400 people forcibly displaced across its borders in 2018. Nearly all of these new refugees fled to Uganda (119,900), while

Figure 7 | Number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants | end-2018



smaller numbers of new refugees were registered in Rwanda (2,600) and South Sudan (800).

Other countries of origin of new refugees included CAR (53,100, mainly to Chad and Cameroon), Nigeria (41,000, mainly to Cameroon), Cameroon (32,600, all to Nigeria), Sudan (19,700, mainly to South Sudan), Myanmar (16,300, all to Bangladesh), Eritrea (14,900, mostly to Ethiopia), Afghanistan (10,500, mostly to Greece) and Burundi (10,100, mostly to Rwanda and DRC).

Turkey was the country of asylum that registered the most new refugees in 2018 with 397,600 Syrians registered under the Government's Temporary Protection Regulation.²⁷ This was followed by Sudan which reported new refugees from South Sudan (99,400), Syria (81,700), CAR (4,700) and Yemen (700). Uganda also registered 160,600 new refugees in 2018, mainly from DRC (119,900) and South Sudan (40,700). In addition, Cameroon reported 52,800 new refugees, from Nigeria (31,800) and CAR (20,900); Ethiopia reported 42,100 new refugees, mainly from South Sudan (25,400), Eritrea (14,600), Sudan (1,200) and Somalia (800); and Nigeria reported 32,600 new arrivals, all from Cameroon.

Comparing host country situations

Comparing the size of a refugee population with that of a host country can help measure the impact of

hosting that population. Figure 7 shows that Lebanon, while hosting the seventh largest refugee population, had the highest refugee population relative to national population with 156 refugees per 1,000 national population.²⁸ Similarly Jordan hosted the tenth largest refugee population but the second largest relative to national population with 72 refugees per 1,000. These figures relate only to the refugee population under UNHCR's mandate, and Lebanon and Jordan respectively hosted an additional half a million and 2.2 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

Turkey hosted the third largest refugee population relative to its national population with 45 refugees per 1,000. Half of the ten countries with the highest refugee population relative to national population were in sub-Saharan Africa.

In high-income countries, there were, on average, 2.7 refugees per 1,000 national population, but this figure is more than doubled in middle- and low-income countries, with 5.8 refugees per 1,000.²⁹ ■

²⁷ Many of the newly registered refugees were present in Turkey prior to 2018.

²⁸ National population data are from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "World population prospects: The 2017 revision", New York, 2017. For the purpose of this analysis, the 2018 medium fertility variant population projections have been used. See: esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/

²⁹ Income groupings are from the World Bank: databank.worldbank.org/data/download/site-content/CLASS.xls

PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS

Traditionally, UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given host country.³⁰ This criterion clearly has limitations, as the refugee population in each situation changes due to new arrivals and returns that are not captured under this definition. For example, the situation of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh is classified as a protracted situation because the refugee population has exceeded 25,000 every year since 2006 although the vast majority of the current refugee population from Myanmar arrived there in 2017. Thus, out of the 906,600 refugees from Myanmar present in Bangladesh at the end of 2018, about two thirds have been in the country for less than five years. The same applies to the Burundian refugees in Tanzania, the majority of whom arrived in or after 2015. Furthermore, smaller refugee situations might not be included even if the displacement is prolonged, especially if refugees from one nationality are in various countries of asylum.

The characteristics of a protracted situation will be the result of multiple factors. These include conditions in the refugees' country of origin, policy responses of and socioeconomic conditions in the host countries, availability of durable solutions and level of engagement by the international community, with some situations receiving far more attention and support than others. Protracted situations may include both camp-based and urban refugee populations.

Based on the existing definition, 15.9 million refugees were in protracted situations at the end of 2018. This represented 78 per cent of all refugees, compared with 66 per cent the previous year [Figure 8]. Of this number, 5.8 million were in a situation lasting 20 years or more, dominated especially by the 2.4 million Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan where the displacement situation has lasted for 40 years. As indicated above, this does not mean that individuals have necessarily been displaced for 40 years as there may have been departures, new arrivals, births and deaths. In addition, there were 10.1 million refugees in protracted situations of less than 20 years, more than half represented by the displacement situation of Syrians in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

In 2018, nine additional situations become protracted, where the displacement of more than 25,000 refugees extended beyond five years. These included South Sudanese refugees in Kenya, Sudan and Uganda; Nigerians in Cameroon and Niger; refugees from DRC and Somalia in South Africa; Pakistani refugees in Afghanistan; and Ukrainian refugees in the Russian Federation. Unfortunately, no protracted situations were resolved during 2018. ■

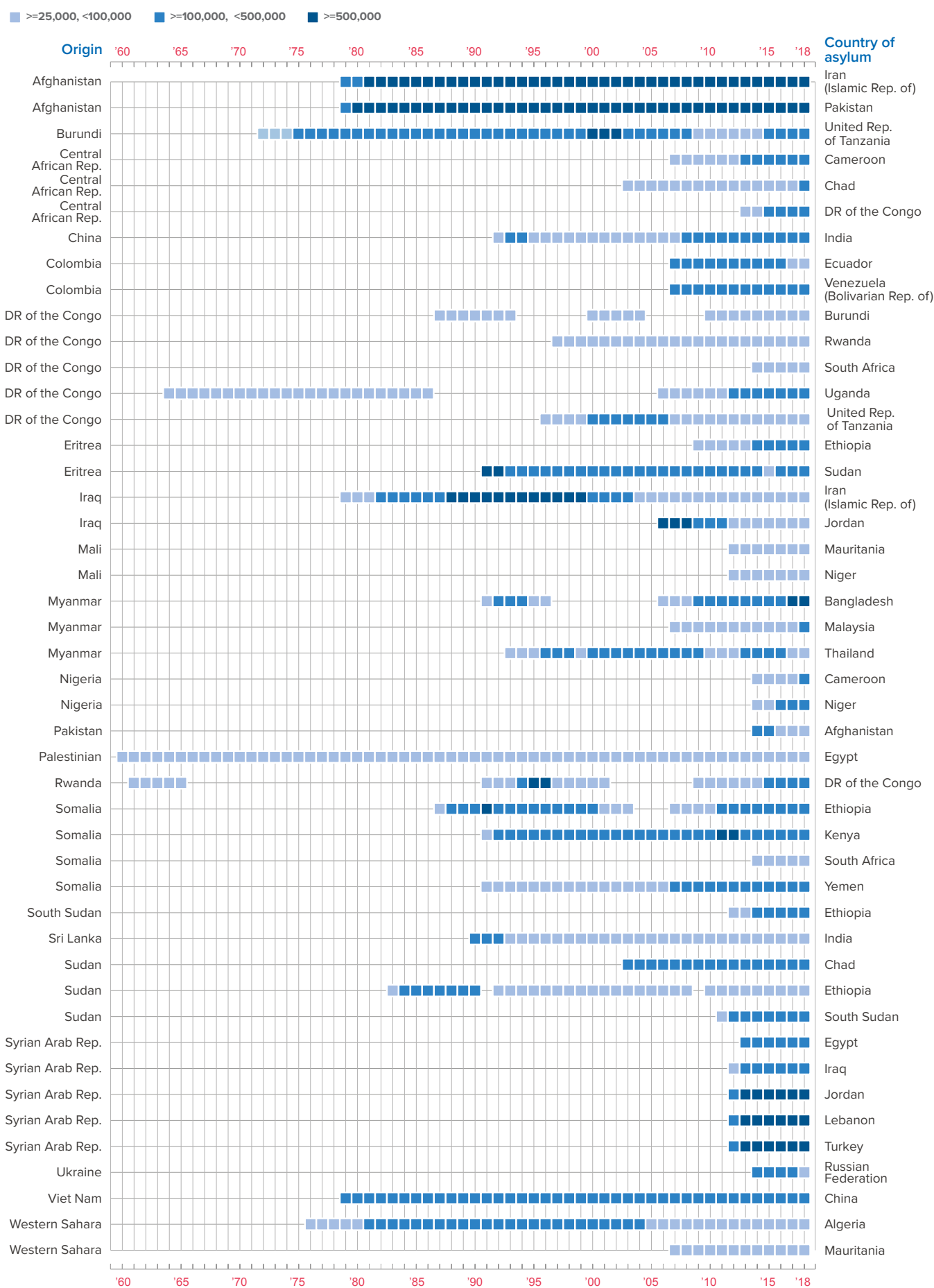
³⁰ Only refugees under UNHCR's mandate are considered in this analysis, which includes Palestine refugees in Egypt but not Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine or Syria who are under UNRWA's mandate.

SUDAN. Eritrean refugee Sherifa, 35, participates in UNHCR's campaign against human trafficking at Shagarab refugee camp in Sudan. Sherifa, whose husband went missing, holds up a sign saying: "I need freedom and peace".

© UNHCR/HUSSEIN ERI



Figure 8 | Protracted refugee situations characterized by size | end-2018



ECUADOR. César and Yoheglith fled Venezuela with their three kids in October 2018. Living in Ibarra, Ecuador, they all sleep in one room. It's cramped and cold at night, but they feel safe now and are integrating into work and school.

© UNHCR/SANTIAGO ESCOBAR-JARAMILLO



CASE STUDY:

THE VENEZUELA SITUATION

People are leaving Venezuela for many reasons: violence, insecurity, fear of being targeted for their political opinions (whether real or perceived), shortages of food and medicine, lack of access to social services, and being unable to support themselves and their families.

By the end of 2018, more than 3 million Venezuelans had left their homes, travelling mainly towards Latin America and the Caribbean. It is the biggest exodus in the region's recent history and one of the biggest displacement crises in the world.

More than 460,000 Venezuelans have sought asylum, including about 350,000 in 2018 alone [Figure 9]. But asylum procedures in the region are overwhelmed, and to date only 21,000 Venezuelans have been recognized as refugees.

In addition, Latin American countries have granted an estimated 1 million residence permits and other forms of legal stay to Venezuelans by the end of 2018, which allow them access to some basic services. In most countries, however, a considerable number of Venezuelans might be in an irregular situation, which exposed them to exploitation and abuse. With an unabated average of up to 5,000 people leaving Venezuela every day, it is estimated that 5 million people could leave the country by the end of 2019. Thousands cross daily into Colombia, while others head towards Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Peru. Still others take dangerous boat journeys to Caribbean islands.

Various interconnected factors are causing Venezuelans to leave, but given the deteriorating political, socioeconomic and human rights conditions, it is clear that international protection considerations, according to the refugee criteria



Map 2 | Venezuelans of concern to UNHCR in Latin America and the Caribbean | end-2018



“We didn’t feel safe anymore. We were scared to be in the house and we couldn’t leave the children alone. They threatened to kill my brother.”

– Angelica, a Venezuelan asylum-seeker in Panama, fled her country when armed groups tried to forcibly recruit her 12 year old son.



“When my nine-month-old daughter died because of the lack of medicines, doctors or treatment, I decided to take my family out of Venezuela before another one of my children died. Diseases were getting stronger than us. I told myself, either we leave or we die.”

– Eulirio Baes, a 33-year-old indigenous Warao from Delta Amacuro in Venezuela. He abandoned the Warao’s ancestral lands and took his entire family to Brazil after three relatives died.

in the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, are applicable to the majority of Venezuelans.

In a recent statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated that “Countries in the region have been confronted with the massive arrival of people who often have urgent humanitarian and human rights protection needs.”³¹

Host countries have shown commendable solidarity towards Venezuelans arriving on their territory, giving them protection and assistance. Through the Quito process, they have cooperated to harmonize their protection responses for Venezuelan nationals and facilitate their legal, social and economic inclusion.

But faced with intermittent border restrictions, Venezuelans fleeing to neighbouring countries are also increasingly relying on irregular and dangerous routes to cross borders. People taking such routes are exposed to risks such as sexual exploitation, abuse and kidnapping, including in areas where illegal armed groups and guerrillas operate.

As the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants continues to rise, so do their needs and those of the communities hosting them. Given the magnitude of the outflow of Venezuelans, only a coordinated and comprehensive approach by governments, humanitarian and development actors, supported by a well-funded international response, will enable the region to cope with the full scale of the crisis.

With the objective of ensuring a coherent and coordinated operational response, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) established the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform in September 2018. The two organizations also appointed a UNHCR-IOM Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants and designed a Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan involving 95 partners and for the benefit of 2.2 million individuals.

³¹ Oral update on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, 40th session of the Human Rights Council, 20 March 2019. See: www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24374

Figure 9 | New asylum applications by Venezuelans | 2014-2018

