



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# GLOBAL TRENDS

FORCED  
DISPLACEMENT  
IN 2018



# 2018 IN REVIEW

# Trends at a Glance

The global population of forcibly displaced increased by 2.3 million people in 2018. By the end of the year, almost 70.8 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. As a result, the world's forcibly displaced population remained yet again at a record high.

**70.8** MILLION FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations at end-2018

- 25.9 million refugees
  - 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate
  - 5.5 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate
- 41.3 million internally displaced people<sup>1</sup>
- 3.5 million asylum-seekers

**13.6**  
MILLION  
NEWLY DISPLACED

An estimated 13.6 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2018. This included 10.8 million individuals displaced<sup>2</sup> within the borders of their own country and 2.8 million new refugees and new asylum-seekers.

**16%**

Countries in developed regions hosted 16 per cent of refugees, while one third of the global refugee population (6.7 million people) were in the Least Developed Countries.

**37,000**

NEW DISPLACEMENTS  
EVERY DAY

The number of new displacements was equivalent to an average of 37,000 people being forced to flee their homes every day in 2018.

**3.5**  
MILLION  
ASYLUM-SEEKERS

By the end of 2018, about 3.5 million people were awaiting a decision on their application for asylum.



**4** IN **5**

Nearly 4 out of every 5 refugees lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin.

- <sup>1</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> The number of new individual asylum applications for Turkey does not include Syrian nationals who receive protection under the Temporary Protection Regulation and relates to applications submitted to UNCHR until 10 September 2018, when the government assumed full responsibility for registration and refugee status determination.
- <sup>4</sup> This number includes both refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela worldwide as of February 2019. See: [www.unhcr.org/5c6fb2d04](http://www.unhcr.org/5c6fb2d04)
- <sup>5</sup> These figures refer only to refugees under UNHCR's mandate. In addition, Lebanon hosted 475,100 and Jordan 2,242,600 Palestine refugees under the mandate of UNRWA.



# 2.9

## MILLION DISPLACED PEOPLE RETURNED

During 2018, 2.9 million displaced people returned to their areas or countries of origin, including 2.3 million IDPs and nearly 600,000 refugees. Returns have not kept pace with the rate of new displacements.

# 67%

Altogether, more than two thirds (67 per cent) of all refugees worldwide came from just five countries:

<b>Syrian Arab Republic</b>	6.7 million
<b>Afghanistan</b>	2.7 million
<b>South Sudan</b>	2.3 million
<b>Myanmar</b>	1.1 million
<b>Somalia</b>	0.9 million

# 1.7

## MILLION NEW CLAIMS

Asylum-seekers submitted 1.7 million new claims. With 254,300 such claims, the United States of America was the world's largest recipient of new individual applications, followed by Peru (192,500) Germany (161,900), France (114,500) and Turkey (83,800).<sup>3</sup>

# 3.7

## MILLION PEOPLE

For the fifth consecutive year, Turkey hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, with 3.7 million people. The main countries of asylum for refugees were:

<b>Turkey</b>	3.7 million
<b>Pakistan</b>	1.4 million
<b>Uganda</b>	1.2 million
<b>Sudan</b>	1.1 million
<b>Germany</b>	1.1 million

# 81,300

## REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT

In 2018, UNHCR submitted 81,300 refugees to States for resettlement. According to government statistics, 25 countries admitted 92,400 refugees for resettlement during the year, with or without UNHCR's assistance.

# 138,600

## UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN

Some 27,600 unaccompanied and separated children sought asylum on an individual basis and a total of 111,000 unaccompanied and separated child refugees were reported in 2018. Both numbers are considered significant underestimates.

 **1/2**  
CHILDREN

Children below 18 years of age constituted about half of the refugee population in 2018, up from 41 per cent in 2009 but similar to the previous few years

## Venezuela

Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers grew in number. The broader movement of Venezuelans across the region and beyond increasingly took on the characteristics of a refugee situation, with some 3.4 million outside the country by the end of 2018.<sup>4</sup>

## Lebanon

Lebanon continued to host the largest number of refugees relative to its national population, where 1 in 6 people was a refugee. Jordan (1 in 14) and Turkey (1 in 22) ranked second and third, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

# Introduction



*“What we are seeing in these figures is further confirmation of a longer-term rising trend in the number of people needing safety from war, conflict and persecution.”*

**Filippo Grandi**  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## The world now has a population of 70.8 million forcibly displaced people

Over the past decade, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew substantially from 43.3 million in 2009 to 70.8 million in 2018, reaching a record high [Figure 1].<sup>6</sup> Most of this increase was between 2012 and 2015, driven mainly by the Syrian conflict. But conflicts in other areas also contributed to this rise, including in the Middle East such as in Iraq and Yemen, parts of sub-Saharan Africa such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, as well as the massive flow of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh at the end of 2017.

Of particular note in 2018 was the increase in the number of displaced people due to internal displacement in Ethiopia and new asylum claims from

people fleeing the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The proportion of the world’s population who were displaced also continued to rise as the increase in the world’s forcibly displaced population outstripped global population growth. In 2017 this figure was 1 out of every 110 people but in 2018 it stood at 1 out of every 108 people.<sup>7</sup> A decade ago, by comparison, this stood at about 1 in 160 people [Figure 2]. Overall, the refugee population under UNHCR’s mandate has nearly doubled since 2012.

<sup>6</sup> These included 25.9 million refugees: 20.4 million under UNHCR’s mandate and 5.5 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The global figure also included 41.3 million internally displaced persons (source: IDMC) and 3.5 million individuals whose asylum applications had not yet been adjudicated by the end of the reporting period.

<sup>7</sup> 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/](https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/)