

## UNHCR COVID-19 Response

### Highlights

- In the beginning of November, UNHCR, IOM and WHO launched an [open letter](#) to the G20 leaders asking them to ensure access to vaccines for refugees and migrants and to support low- and middle-income countries to combat COVID-19;
- An [interactive report](#) recently released by UNHCR highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Venezuelan refugees and migrants facing homelessness and eviction as a result of lockdowns and the worsening socio-economic situation and loss of livelihood opportunities;
- One of the first COVAX delivery from the humanitarian buffer will take place to the Islamic Republic of Iran, covering also Afghan refugees. The application was facilitated by UNHCR, working in close coordination with GAVI and partners within the IASC.



In **128** host countries, persons of concern are already receiving vaccinations.



**61** countries have reported that almost **1,133,589** persons of concern have received a vaccine since the roll out of the vaccine.



Almost **113,708** cases of COVID-19 have been reported among forcibly displaced people.

*(numbers as of 17 November 2021)*



It is back to school for Salka, Daboula and Mira in Sahrawi refugee camps. (04 October 2021). © UNHCR/Eunice Ohanusi

The closure of schools in 2020 and 2021 to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 disrupted the education of over 1.5 billion children and university students worldwide, including refugee children and youth. Around the globe UNHCR sought to minimize the effect on refugees' educational lives and to support a safe return to face-to-face learning. UNHCR's [Global COVID-19 Education Response](#) portrays a variety of initiatives to enable half a million refugee learners to continue learning remotely. For example, UNHCR distributed **printed learning materials** to **223,000 learners**, provided **data bundles to 60,057 persons** and made **10,208 tablets** available for learners in connected learning programmes.

### Middle East and North Africa

Despite indications of a forth wave, many countries in MENA region observed a stable downward trend in COVID-19 infections among refugees and asylum-seekers during October, believed to be in large part due to increasing rates of vaccination.

In **Jordan**, close to 50 % of the eligible camp-based refugee population aged 12+ (some 33,000 individuals) have received at least one vaccine dose. As part of the Government's effort to increase vaccination among refugees, a mobile vaccine station at UNHCR's Registration Center in Amman was launched on 31 October to encourage vaccination and spread awareness. Additionally, over the past year, 70,000 vulnerable families received [COVID-19 cash assistance](#) from UNHCR.

A data collection system was rolled out in **Algeria** to better monitor local epidemiological trends among camp-based refugees, including chains of transmission.

In **Egypt**, UNHCR delivered [200 laptops to the Ministry of Health](#) to support efforts in health digitalization. The laptops will support the Ministry to ensure the implementation of the national vaccination plan against COVID-19.

UNHCR in **Lebanon** deployed [mobile vaccination teams](#) in refugee settings, leading to 7,438 vaccinations administered since the launch in September.

### Asia and the Pacific

In **Iran**, close to 500,000 foreign nationals – including refugees and undocumented Afghans – have already been vaccinated. In addition, the Ministry of Health and COVAX signed an agreement for the supply of 1.6 million doses of Sinopharm vaccine from the Humanitarian Buffer.

In **Afghanistan**, nearly a quarter of refugee and asylum-seekers families received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. In October, however, no new refugees and asylum-seekers were vaccinated due to the lack of availability of the COVID-19 vaccine in the country.

Vaccination for migrants and refugees have continued in all states across **Malaysia**. While large vaccination centers are expected to close

down by the end of October, access to vaccinations remain available via government primary care clinics and selected private general practitioners. UNHCR, through its partner, has commenced the provision of vaccinations to 12-17 year-olds at their primary care clinic.

### West and Central Africa

Vaccination campaigns are being implemented across all 21 countries in West and Central Africa and the vaccine is freely available in public health facilities. A slight increase of persons of concern vaccinated was observed.

In **Ghana**, vaccination centres were established in some refugee camps. In **Cameroon** and **Nigeria**, UNHCR is supporting the deployment of mobile vaccination teams in remote areas and settlements.

In **Niger**, two cases of COVID-19 vaccination side effects among refugees were reported, among which one fatality and one case under treatment. Investigations are ongoing by national health authorities.

### East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes

Overall, over 26,488 refugees have received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in the region. Of these, some 10,183 refugees are fully vaccinated.

The ministry of Health in **Burundi** launched the National vaccination campaign, which identifies refugees and healthcare workers as priority targets. The Minister of Interior and UNHCR Representative opened the first national COVID-19 treatment center funded by UNHCR.

In **Tanzania**, the Government granted permission for the COVID-19 vaccination exercise to be rolled out in the refugee camps. Initial preparatory activities are ongoing.

**Djibouti** started vaccinating camp-based refugees using single dose J&J and Sinovac vaccines. Refugees are free to choose between the available vaccines.

In **Ethiopia**, health authorities confirmed cases of the highly infectious Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. While vaccinations continue to be administered to priority groups, albeit at a

very slow rate. UNHCR, the Government's Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), partners and Regional Health Bureaus continue to reinforce prevention measures in the refugee camps and sites hosting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

### Southern Africa

The rate of infection continued to drop across the region in October. Some 1,023 cases of COVID-19 have been reported among persons of concern to UNHCR since reporting began in 2020. The low rate is in part due to lack of testing facilities and reliance on voluntary reporting.

Vaccination rollout continues across the region. In October, the numbers of those vaccinated increased by 30 per cent compared to the previous month, which is significant in the context of widespread vaccine hesitancy in the region.

To combat hesitancy and dispel misinformation, UNHCR is running awareness programmes in camps and host communities across the region, notably in the north-western provinces of the **Democratic Republic on the Congo** that are sheltering refugees from the Central African Republic, and in **South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe**, where low uptake and vaccine hesitance remains high, despite the widespread availability of the vaccine.

In **Angola**, a group of undocumented refugees received the COVID-19 vaccination in October, through a platform set up by the Ministry of Health specifically to facilitate the vaccination of undocumented people. The platform was made possible in part due to advocacy by UNHCR and partners, who are at present engaged in sensitizing the undocumented refugee population to this new opportunity available to them. In **Zambia**, UNHCR distributed 12,000 rapid diagnostic testing kits to address the issue of limited access to testing.

### Europe

According to WHO, regional COVID-19 infection and death rates increased sharply throughout October (daily infection rate doubled within the month). Testing and quarantine measures are in place in all countries registering significant numbers of sea arrivals.

In **Italy**, with the exception of unaccompanied and separated children and some persons with specific needs, all arrivals in Lampedusa and Sicily observe quarantine on offshort ferries. Among 5,344 arrivals in **Spain**, at least 22 tested positive for COVID-19 and were isolated.

Vaccinations progressed in reception centers in **Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania, Serbia** as well as in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, where a monthly vaccination days were established to ensure best outreach to reception and asylum center residents. In **Greece**, vaccination among persons of concern has unofficially been estimated to be as high as 48 %, a positive development given the alarmingly low vaccination rate of the previous months.

In **Austria**, the Constitutional Court ruled that a district decree limiting freedom of movement for residents of the Traiskirchen reception center in spring 2020 lacked legal basis and proportionality.

### Americas

The Americas saw over 800,000 new COVID infections and 18,000 COVID-related deaths – the lowest COVID figures in over a year, as reported by [PAHO/WHO](#).

Around 44% of people across Latin America have been fully vaccinated, which is twice as many than in August of this year. However, more than half of the people in the region remain unprotected. In **Guatemala, Jamaica, Haiti, Nicaragua**, and **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, less than 20% of people have been fully vaccinated.

UNHCR supported **Ecuador's** Ministry of Health to organize vaccination brigades in remote areas and worked with the health authorities for the '[Vacunatonos](#)', which helped facilitate the vaccination of thousands of refugees and migrants in the country.

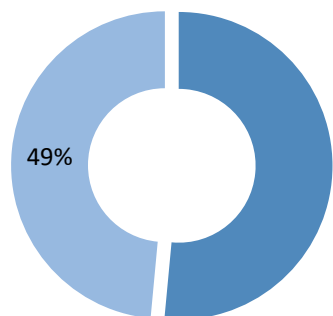
In **Venezuela**, health authorities assembled 19 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) donated by UNHCR to serve as outpatient/vaccination areas. In addition, UNHCR donated six RHUs and six solar-powered fans to different actors that are providing rapid response to COVID-19 emergencies.

## Financial Information

(as of 9 November 2021)

### USD 924M

UNHCR's total financial requirements for 2021 Coronavirus Emergency



■ Financial requirements ■ Total funded

### Total contributions:

### USD 454M

Including:

USA	\$214.7M
Germany	\$30.1M
African Development Bank Group	\$11.9M
European Union	\$11.6M
Canada	\$7.9M
Unilever (UK)	\$4.4M
Austria	\$3.6M
Private donors	\$2.7M
China	\$2.0M
Education Cannot Wait	\$1.3M
Japan	\$1.3M
France	\$1.2M
USA for UNHCR	\$1.1M

### Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR's 2021 programme:

Norway 80M | Sweden 75.4M | Private donors Spain 69.3M | United Kingdom 40.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Private donors Republic of Korea 35.3M | Denmark 34.6M | Private donors Japan 27.7M | Germany 26M | Japan 23.4M | France 20.2M | Private donors Italy 17.6M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors Sweden 14.4M | Ireland 12.5M | Belgium 11.9M | Italy 10.7M

*Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.*

### More information:



[UNHCR COVID-19 Supplementary Appeal 2021](#)  
(launched 18 December 2020)



[Global Focus COVID-19 Situation page](#)  
(including UNHCR's COVID emergency appeal and sitreps)

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