

Responding to Emergencies



Burundian
refugees being
transferred to
Kigoma, United
Republic of
Tanzania.



Fifteen new conflicts have broken out or reignited in the past five years, and the numbers of protracted emergencies – conflicts that have lasted for over five years – are also growing.

People fleeing conflict or persecution and their family members are often forced to leave with only the few necessities they can carry, embarking on long and arduous journeys in search of safety.

Together with its partners, UNHCR mobilizes its networks of experts in emergency response and essential supplies to provide life-saving protection and assistance to people of concern. At the onset of an emergency, UNHCR's priority is to initiate the delivery of core relief items from its global stockpiles, which are pre-positioned in readiness for delivery to up to 600,000 people within 72 hours. ●●●

UNHCR's Emergency Handbook

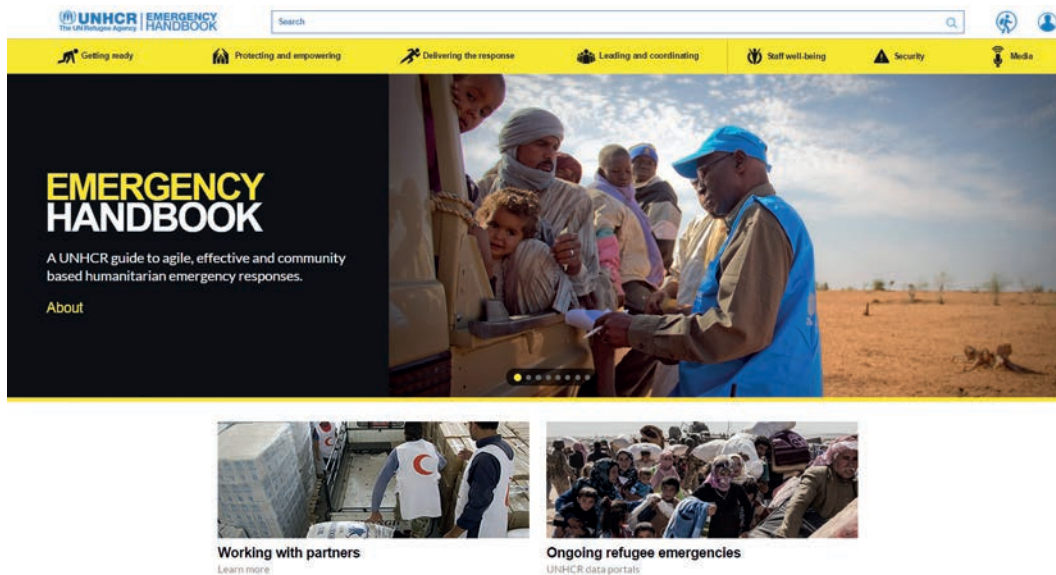
Since 1982, UNHCR's Emergency Handbook has provided a comprehensive toolkit to support the implementation of agile, effective and community-based responses in emergency settings.

The fourth edition of the Handbook, which was launched in 2015, is digitalized (available at <https://emergency.unhcr.org>) and will be updated on an ongoing basis.

It will become even more accessible in 2016 with the development of both an offline version and a mobile version for smartphone and tablet devices.

The contents and format of the Emergency Handbook are designed to provide flexible and adaptable guidance in evolving humanitarian emergency operations and coordination arrangements. It draws on the shared expertise

and knowledge of partners and UNHCR staff. The topics covered include: preparedness and emergency deployment; age, gender and diversity considerations; child protection and community-based protection in emergencies; and leadership, coordination and delivery in refugee settings. This handbook also provides guidance on ensuring staff well-being in emergencies and on security risk management for both emergency responders and people of concern.



Improving readiness to respond to simultaneous emergencies

In 2015, UNHCR responded to five new or ongoing system-wide, Level 3 emergencies (in the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen), and activated internal emergency response measures to the situations in Burundi and Nigeria, as well as for countries affected by the refugee crisis in Europe, including Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Serbia,

and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Several of the current complex emergencies are likely to continue into 2016 and beyond, and, as always, new situations may arise. UNHCR's emergency response will accordingly continue to be strengthened in 2016 and 2017, including through a three-year strategic preparedness plan of

action to provide planning support to UNHCR operations in countries where capacity is limited, and where the risk of an emergency developing is assessed to be high.

The Office will also seek to increase emergency preparedness through the development of a range of tools, including the preparedness package for refugee emergencies and the high alert list for emergency preparedness, which will assist UNHCR to define its preparedness priorities in at-risk operations. Operations will be further supported through the provision of practical and up-to-date guidance on security issues, as well as monitoring of security risk mitigation strategies and critical incident management assistance.

Having the right staff in the right place is crucial for a timely and effective emergency response. UNHCR will continue to take measures to strengthen the leadership, coordination, delivery and accountability to people of concern of its emergency response. When an emergency is declared, UNHCR emergency standby teams, including senior staff, are deployed within 72 hours to manage and coordinate the response, and to address the most urgent needs of those displaced. Teams are supported by the deployment of security staff and other specialists, and are led by staff from the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster, as well as staff who have participated in the Senior Emergency Learning Programme. A new training programme on leadership of emergency preparedness and response for Representatives has been developed further to enhance the organization's operational capacity.

UNHCR and partner rosters remain essential tools in ensuring the deployment of staff with protection and technical expertise to emergencies. One hundred and sixty staff participate

annually in the workshop on emergency management (WEM), which prepares participants psychologically and practically for deployment through emergency simulations. Given the anticipated need for emergency teams and experts in 2016, the organization will expand its internal rosters for technical staff, including in the areas of shelter, supply, registration, information management, and human resources management.

The Office will also strengthen its global supply network to ensure the timely delivery of core relief items to the forcibly displaced, including blankets, mattresses, tents, kitchen sets and plastic sheets. UNHCR's global stockpiles consist of relief items pre-positioned in warehouses in Accra, Amman, Copenhagen, Douala, Dubai, Isaka and Nairobi. This will be complemented by the introduction of regional warehouses to ensure emergency supplies are available closest to the areas where needs have been assessed as most likely to arise. In 2016 and 2017, UNHCR will also enhance its supply tracking systems, work to reduce shipping costs, and strengthen local sourcing strategies for key items to reduce delivery times where possible.



● Innovation in communicating with communities

UNHCR has long-standing expertise and a strong commitment to ensuring that the rights, capacities and aspirations of refugees and other people of concern are at the centre of its operations. In emergencies, this requires the rapid establishment of effective two-way communication mechanisms to allow dialogue with communities, with a view to providing refugees and affected communities with the information they need in order to make informed decisions about their lives. This dialogue, which also informs UNHCR about the range of protection risks affecting people of concern, their needs and priorities, is a central element of UNHCR's community-based protection approach and a core component of all emergency operations.

Communicating effectively with all affected populations requires a range of approaches. Through its "Emergency Lab", UNHCR is constantly seeking new means of fostering this communication. The Lab in 2016-17 will continue to pioneer methodologies across and beyond the humanitarian sector, including through the development of practical guidance, resources and tools, using digital and information technology, and by documenting good practices. UNHCR will also continue to strengthen mobile communication in emergencies and design innovative approaches to communicating with communities that can be adapted to a wide range of contexts.

● Standby partners: experts in emergencies

UNHCR maintains standby agreements with a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations (see list of standby partners), allowing the organization to enhance its response capacity in emergencies. Through such arrangements, the Office is able to benefit from timely technical and managerial expertise, increasing its flexibility and capacity in key areas such as child protection, education, resettlement, refugee

status determination, registration, public health, logistics, site planning, engineering, water and sanitation, shelter and construction. Some standby partners also provide equipment or service modules for health, sanitation, office and accommodation facilities. In 2016 and 2017, UNHCR will strengthen its partnership arrangements, including by increasing consultations with respect to its partnership strategy.

UNHCR's standby partners

Canada's Civilian Reserve (CANADEM)	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States	Norwegian Refugee Council
Danish Refugee Council	RedR Australia
Department for International Development, United Kingdom	Save the Children Norway
Emergency.lu/Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
German Federal Agency for Technical Relief	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
International Humanitarian Partnership	Veolia Environment Foundation
Irish Aid	White Helmets Commission, Argentina

AREAS OF INTERVENTION ANTICIPATED IN 2016

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TARGETED

Emergency response, security and supply

Capacities, skills and knowledge fostered and developed

Enhance preparedness and contingency planning

- The three-year strategic preparedness plan of action will assist operations in countries where capacity is limited and where the risk of an emergency situation arising is assessed to be high.
- The preparedness package for refugee emergencies will be implemented and reviewed; it will be complemented by the high alert list for emergency preparedness.
- Relief items will be pre-positioned where possible, integrating country preparedness planning into global supply chain planning.

Provide thematic training for emergencies

- More than 160 staff will be trained for emergency deployment at 4 WEMs, including one in Africa.
- Training sessions on managing information in emergencies will be conducted for over 50 staff.
- Senior staff will be trained through the Senior Emergency Learning Programme and/or a training programme on preparedness and response for Representatives in countries at high risk of emergency.
- Situational emergency training courses focusing on specific countries/regions will be conducted to enhance their emergency response capacity.

Regional Centre for Emergency Preparedness ("eCentre") in Bangkok, Thailand

- Up to 14 workshops and training events will be conducted for UNHCR and partners on emergency preparedness, with a focus on protection of and accountability to affected populations.
- Continuous support will be provided to the inter-agency Asia-Pacific Emergency Management Platform.

Update and develop new tools and handbooks to support emergency operations

- The revised Emergency Handbook (fourth edition) will continue to be updated, and key entries will be translated into French.
- The Emergency Lab will test innovative approaches to providing assistance and protection to crisis affected populations.
- Practical guidance and tools will be developed to communicate more effectively with, and be accountable to, affected communities. Guidance containing best practices and lessons learned from emergencies will be issued.

Increase security awareness and skills by UNHCR and partner staff

- Field security advisors will provide tailored security training to staff and partners, particularly in high-risk environments. A Security Management Learning Programme will be conducted in 2016, with more specific security management exercises being undertaken in various locations.
- UNHCR will further incorporate security training into the WEM, the security training for senior managers and training conducted by the eCentre.
- In addition to English, a selection of online security training courses will be made available in Arabic and French.

**AREAS OF INTERVENTION
ANTICIPATED IN 2016**

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TARGETED

Emergency response capacity and effectiveness reinforced

Support emergencies through the deployment of staff

- Standby partnerships and UNHCR's emergency response roster will be maintained and strengthened.
- UNHCR's standby team of 17 staff will be maintained under the leadership of senior emergency coordinators, for deployment to level-2 and level-3 emergencies.
- Additional specialized internal rosters for functions such as human resources and supply will be developed.

Optimize delivery of core relief items in emergencies

- The capacity to dispatch core relief items to some 600,000 people of concern within 72 hours in multiple and simultaneous emergencies will be maintained through the supply chain system.

Global supply management optimized for efficient delivery

Global fleet management

- UNHCR's vehicle rental scheme will provide 800 new vehicles to various operations.
- A comprehensive fleet training and maintenance programme will be rolled out globally, targeting 5 country operations in 2016.

Enhance supply chain support to emergencies and ongoing operations

- Global stockpiles of relief items will be moved closer to delivery points to increase capacity and cost-efficiency.
- A new emergency supply unit will act as a 'one-stop-shop' for emergency supply support requests.
- A supply chain learning programme will be launched in 2016 to improve supply chain management skills.
- Procurement capacity, including that of partners, will be strengthened through a combination of internal and external training sessions.
- Emergency supply training will be provided to partners.

Inter-agency and strategic partnerships strengthened

Inter-agency coordination

- UNHCR will continue to participate in the IASC Task Teams on preparedness resilience and principled humanitarian action.
- UNHCR will continue to implement the Transformative Agenda and apply its Refugee Coordination Model and the joint UNHCR-OCHA note in emergency settings.
- UNHCR will continue to actively engage in IASC emergency-related work and the Emergency Directors Group.

Strengthen partnerships for emergency preparedness and response

- Consultations will be undertaken with international and national NGOs to develop an emergency partnership strategy.
- Refugee emergency response agreements with partners will be piloted in emergency situations where there are critical gaps.
- 16 stand-by partnership agreements will be continued.

Policy development strengthened

Strengthen policy development for supply chain management and procurement

- Up-to-date policies, guidance and standard operating procedures will be issued to better support field supply chain operations.

Emergency policy framework

- The 2015 policy on emergency response activation, leadership and accountabilities will be implemented and reviewed.

Security policy

- In addition to the revision of the security management policy, security considerations will be incorporated into other new policies and administrative instructions, particularly those of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS).

Security management reinforced as an organizational culture

Implement the Plan of Action to Strengthen a Culture of Security within UNHCR

- Operations will be continually assessed to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.
- UNHCR will continue to maintain a stockpile of security equipment that can be rapidly deployed to support high-risk operations, including armoured vehicles, personal protective equipment, and shatter-resistant film. The organization will deploy a structural engineer to provide technical security support to locations where there is a risk of targeted attacks on UN premises.
- UNHCR will maintain a security workforce which can be deployed to support operations in a timely manner; security staff will have appropriate humanitarian awareness, in addition to professional security qualifications.

UNHCR delivers relief to 56,000 people in Yemen in May and June

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story

3 JULY 2015

GENEVA, July 2015 |

The UN refugee agency said on Friday (3 July) that it had managed to continue to deliver humanitarian aid to displaced people in Yemen in May and June despite severe restrictions on access.



Distribution of relief items, including mattresses and blankets, to displaced people in Yemen

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“We were able to get basic relief to 56,369 people and plastic sheeting for emergency shelters to a further 7,000 families who have been staying in collective centres,” UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards told a press briefing in Geneva.

Aid has been going out across eight governorates: Abyan, Aden, Amanat Alasimah, Amran, Hajjah, Hodeida, Sana’a and Taiz.

As part of the Office’s larger aid efforts to assist 250,000 people in the war-ravaged country, six UNHCR airlifts in May brought urgently needed aid supplies from its stockpiles in Dubai. Together, the six flights delivered 150 metric tons of relief supplies including blankets, kitchen utensils and sleeping mats, while more aid made its way to the country via Djibouti by sea.

In all, 84,166 displaced people have received non-food aid since the start of April, about 70 per cent of this coming directly from

UNHCR and the rest from partners.

“The distributions have come amid a worsening situation in many governorates. Al Hazm, the capital of Al Jawf governorate in the country’s north, was hit by airstrikes for three consecutive days in late June, causing the evacuation of an estimated 900 families,” he said.

UNHCR stressed that the humanitarian response for these populations has been severely restricted due to ongoing fighting and the consequent problems with access.

“We are seeking to connect with UNHCR’s main operational partners who have networks in Al Jawf, to provide additional help,” Edwards added.

UNHCR repeated its call for unfettered movements of humanitarian workers and supplies so that vital assistance can reach those in need. Currently there are over 1 million internally displaced people in Yemen, plus some 244,000 refugees. ○