



Supporting the most vulnerable

“The team is extremely supportive. They don’t just do their job – they support us and care for us the way parents care for their children.”,
refugee child attending the Kypseli self-reliance programme

In Kypseli project, unaccompanied refugee youth acquire the necessary skills to transition smoothly to adulthood. © Paris Tavitian/LIFO



170,000

refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless. **54%** are women & children

Source: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, UNHCR; February 2026



1,520

are unaccompanied children. Mostly from Egypt, Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria and Somalia

Source: GSVPIP, as of April 2026



25%

of refugees or their families live with one or more specific vulnerabilities

Source: UNHCR, November 2025

CONTEXT

People fleeing war or persecution often undertake dangerous journeys, but those with specific vulnerabilities—such as children, older persons, single women, people with disabilities, survivors of violence against women and children, or those with serious health and mental health conditions—face disproportionately higher risks. They may experience violence, exploitation, and abuse, often leaving them traumatized, especially when protection systems may not be able to address immediate needs and humanitarian resources are overstretched.

Vulnerability is not static; it evolves over time and is shaped by factors such as social and environmental barriers, personal characteristics, and individual resilience. EU and national legislation recognize these compounding challenges by providing for specific safeguards for vulnerable asylum-seekers during both reception and legal procedures.

UNHCR’s added value lies in its field presence and partnerships with authorities, civil society, and refugee communities, enabling early identification of vulnerabilities and tailored, rights-based responses. UNHCR ensures timely identification during reception procedures and adapts assistance to individual needs to safeguard well-being and uphold fair and dignified treatment that prevents further harm.

Severe funding constraints from mid-2025 resulted in the suspension of critical protection activities, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. Case management and emergency accommodation for survivors of violence against women and children, youth protection and self-reliance interventions were scaled back, and a vital mental health and psychosocial support programme ended.




A total of **\$8.3 million** is needed in 2026 to sustain priority responses and scale up critical interventions across all UNHCR programmatic areas.

UNHCR'S VULNERABLES PROTECTION PROGRAMME 2026

 <p>130 refugee children supported to achieve self-reliance, 60 government staff trained and other interventions strengthening the legislative framework</p>	 <p>\$400K prioritized financial requirements for 2026 for the child protection programme</p>	 <p>Working with one protection partner</p>
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UNHCR supports the National Strategy for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons by strengthening the institutional and legislative framework—including in the context of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum—building the capacity of State and protection actors, and piloting best practices with a view to their eventual handover to the State.

Working closely with national authorities, NGO partners, and affected communities, UNHCR aims to ensure the timely identification of vulnerabilities and the provision of tailored support to those most at risk. Currently, UNHCR implements – even if within a constrained financial environment - the following targeted activities:

 <p>Support refugee children to stay safe</p>	<p>Protects refugee children in Greece, with a focus on unaccompanied minors, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ providing expert technical support to the State (TSI project funded by DG Reform) to advance institutional reforms for refugee youth self-reliance and mental health ■ offering a specialized transition-to-adulthood project, helping refugee youth acquire the necessary skills to achieve self-reliance ■ advancing the harmonization and institutionalization of Best Interests Procedures through capacity-building and technical support to national authorities.
 <p>Help other vulnerable individuals to find specialized support</p>	<p>Enables other vulnerable groups, to access the specialized assistance they need by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identifying, through monitoring and field presence, vulnerable individuals and referring them to competent authorities and relevant actors for prioritized access to services and procedures, thereby strengthening screening and response mechanisms ■ engaging with and capacitating refugee community structures, promoting, peer-led support mechanisms that uphold Age, Gender and Diversity principles.
 <p>Strengthen the national protection system</p>	<p>Helps strengthen the national protection system and build expertise by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ working closely with competent national authorities—including the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, and the Police—to support policy reforms and enhance State-led programmes and interventions for vulnerable people ■ delivering specialized capacity-building, such as in-depth seminars and trainings on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Child Protection, to capacitate State staff and frontline actors involved in the reception and asylum procedures.

UNMET NEEDS & POTENTIAL TO SCALE UP

<p>In 2024 UNHCR supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 350 survivors of violence against women and children – 430 people with psychosocial aid – 150 youth to reach self-reliance 	<p>In 2025, due to funding cuts of more than 50%, UNHCR supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 190 survivors of violence against women and children - 490 people with psychosocial aid - 105 youth to reach self-reliance 	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$420K more to support an additional 150 refugee children to achieve self-reliance and train 100 government staff on vulnerable persons' protection</p>
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