

A photograph of a woman and two children standing in a narrow alleyway between bamboo shacks. The woman in the center is wearing a purple hijab and a purple top, smiling. To her left is a young girl in a floral dress, and to her right is a young boy in a red shirt. The background shows other people and the structure of the shacks.

2019 IMPACT REPORT

A look at what you,
our valued supporters,
helped achieve

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VISION

A world where every person forced to flee can build a better future.

MISSION

UNHCR is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

FOCUS

Everything we do helps protect people forced to flee their homes.

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of people are forced to flee their homes each day, to escape war, persecution and conflict.

Each one of them has their own, unique story. And in this report, you'll find some of these stories – stories of people your support has helped last year.

Confronted with the suffering of children, women and men, you acted with **empathy, kindness and understanding**. By generously giving to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, you helped save lives, protect fundamental human rights and build a better future for refugees, displaced and stateless people around the world.

They might not have a chance to thank you, but we'd like to take this opportunity to do so. **Thank you** for your compassion and most of all, for choosing to help people forced to flee.

In the face of rising fear, xenophobia and negative stereotyping, your action – every action – counts. **We all have a part to play. And together, we are showing that things can change.**

Meet some of the people whose lives were transformed last year – thanks to donors like you.



“Here I am not afraid of falling asleep at night.”

After fleeing Venezuela, Darlys and her children found safety in a UNHCR shelter in Colombia.



“I feel happy.”

Florence, a mother of five, built a house for her family thanks to cash assistance received from UNHCR.



“I will have peace of mind.”

With help from UNHCR, Dee Noe, 96, finally returned home – after 30 years as a refugee in Thailand.

“I want to thank you for your support because it makes a concrete difference in the lives of people who have had to leave everything behind – homes, family, jobs, and places that are known to them, in order to go into the unknown as they seek refuge and safety. Your support brings some relief to the suffering of these people, and sends an important message to them: that they are not alone. I thank you very much for your generosity and your solidarity with the millions of refugees and displaced people around the world.”

Filippo Grandi,
UN High Commissioner for Refugees



365 DAYS TOGETHER

By donating to UNHCR, you help protect some of the world's most vulnerable people. Thanks to your support, our teams are on the ground in 134 countries worldwide, 365 days a year. We look back at some of 2019's biggest moments and crises, and how we responded, together.



© UNHCR/Alissa Everett

January The deadliest sea crossing

In 2018, six refugees and migrants died each day, on average, trying to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. This route remains the world's deadliest sea crossing. And this continues in January 2019, as two shipwrecks claim an estimated 170 lives. "We can put an end to these tragedies by having the courage and vision to look beyond the next boat, and adopt a long-term approach based on regional cooperation, that places human life and dignity at its core," says Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

February Resettlement falls short

Although forced displacement is at a record high, only a small percentage of refugee resettlement needs are being met. New data released by UNHCR highlights that, of the estimated 1.2 million refugees in need of resettlement in 2018, only 55,692 were actually relocated, despite more than half of the requests being for children and vulnerable people. UNHCR is working with States and partners to help increase the pool of resettlement places, encourage more countries to take part, and improve access to complementary pathways for refugees, like special humanitarian visas, family reunification or academic scholarships.

March Cyclone Idai strikes

Cyclone Idai hits the east coast of southern Africa. In Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, the devastating cyclone destroys towns and villages, claims hundreds of lives and leaves hundreds of thousands in need of life-saving assistance and protection – including many refugees hosted in Zimbabwe. Thanks to your support, UNHCR deploys emergency teams and airlifts basic aid items (such as family tents, sleeping mats, cooking sets, and jerry cans), to assist 80,000 survivors in the hardest hit locations.



© UNHCR/Vincent Teneau

April Refugees evacuated from Libya

Amid rising tensions and heavy clashes in Libya, UNHCR works quickly to relocate hundreds of refugees and migrants being held in detention centres to safer areas. We also evacuate over 300 of the most vulnerable refugees out of Libya. Yet, more than 3,000 refugees and migrants remain trapped in detention centres dangerously close to the fighting, as of late April. Besides trying to protect refugees and migrants, UNHCR also moves life-saving aid to support Libyan civilians in the worst affected areas.

May Death threats and disease drive more Venezuelans to flee

As the security and humanitarian situation in Venezuela worsens, UNHCR urges countries to continue to allow Venezuelans safe access to their territory – as most of those fleeing are now considered to be in need of refugee protection. Many arrive in neighbouring countries dehydrated, sick and exhausted. With your help, UNHCR works with partners to protect Venezuelan refugees and migrants, help meet their basic needs and prevent them from being deported or forcibly sent home. By the end of 2019, over 4.8 million people had left their homes to escape the crisis in Venezuela.

June Tragedy and record displacement

Days after marking World Refugee Day, we are confronted with a heartbreaking image. The photo of the drowned bodies of Oscar, from El Salvador, and his little daughter Valeria, washed up on the banks of the Rio Grande, shocks us all. It's a powerful reminder of how far people in desperate situations will go to reach safety – at a time of record global displacement. The number of people fleeing conflict and persecution exceeded 70 million in 2018 – the highest level seen by UNHCR in its almost 70 years. With your support, we continue to work hard to find solutions and protect the millions under our mandate.



August
Rohingya crisis
two years on

August marks two years since the latest outburst of violence forced an estimated 740,000 Rohingya refugees to flee their homes in Myanmar. As desperate families crossed into Bangladesh, UNHCR teams were there to help. And we have been working hard to provide vital support ever since – all thanks to donors like you. Together, we have done so much, from providing immediate life-saving aid to shifting to a wider response and working with Bangladeshi authorities to register all refugees. By August 2019, over half a million Rohingya refugees had received identity documents, most for the first time ever.

July
Keeping millions
healthy

A new report shows that some 10.5 million refugees in 51 countries received public health services, such as vaccinations and maternal care, through UNHCR and partners in 2018. But much still needs to be done. UNHCR continues to work harder than ever to reach our goal of ensuring that all refugees are able to access essential public health services.

September
Drought and violence
force Somalis to flee

As a global Climate Action Summit kicks off in New York, UNHCR calls for urgent action to prevent and mitigate climate-induced displacement. In countries like Somalia, the effects of climate change are increasingly forcing people to flee their homes. Suffering from an already fragile security situation, Somalia is now facing its worst harvest since the 2011 famine. From January to September 2019, insecurity and worsening drought forced over 5,000 Somalis to seek safety in neighbouring Ethiopia – about four times the number that crossed the border in 2018. With your support, UNHCR and partners are providing shelter and life-saving assistance to people forced to flee.

October
Conflict in north-east
Syria escalates

The conflict in Syria takes a turn for the worse. The escalation of violence in northern Syria forces over 200,000 people to flee their homes this month. Most are displaced inside Syria – but thousands of families also cross into neighbouring Iraq, desperate to escape the fighting. UNHCR is on the ground in both countries, protecting and delivering life-saving aid to those in need. Thanks to generous donors, we have been able to provide shelter, food, blankets and other critical supplies and support to people forced to flee.

November
Silent crises – Somalia
and South Sudan

Unprecedented flooding devastates vast areas of South Sudan and Somalia, affecting over 700,000 people and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee. Many families from both refugee and host communities are displaced, forcing them to live in makeshift shelters and unsafe living conditions. The two countries, long affected by conflict and increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, struggle to provide assistance to those in need. With support from donors like you, UNHCR flies in relief items such as blankets, mosquito nets and kitchen sets to refugees and displaced people in both countries.

Aya Mohammed Abdullah, a former Iraqi refugee, addresses delegates at the Global Refugee Forum.

“Believe in us. Invest in us and you will see – we will all be stronger for it.”



December
Global Refugee
Forum – finding
new solutions

Co-hosted by UNHCR, the first-ever Global Refugee Forum brings together global leaders, refugee representatives, civil society and business leaders, to boost support for refugees and the communities they live in. Attended by some 3,000 participants, the Forum wraps up with over 770 pledges promising job and education opportunities for refugees, new government policies, access to clean energy, and better infrastructure and support for host communities. This includes more than \$250 million pledged by the private sector and initiatives to make at least 15,000 jobs available to refugees.

THE SYRIA CRISIS, EXPLAINED

Here's what you need to know about the latest developments in the world's largest refugee crisis – and how your support is helping people affected by it.

WHEN DID THE CRISIS IN SYRIA BEGIN?

The crisis began in 2011. After nine years of conflict, Syria is still the largest refugee crisis in the world. **More than 5.5 million** Syrian refugees are living in the region's major host countries - Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Over six million people remain displaced inside Syria. Most live in extreme poverty, struggling to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Thanks to donors like you, UNHCR has been on the ground since the start of the conflict – assisting the millions who have fled to other countries or been displaced inside Syria. Despite difficult and often dangerous conditions, our teams continue to work tirelessly to provide life-saving supplies, shelter, healthcare, protection services and secure cash transfers to help families buy exactly what they need, when they need it. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors.

WHY HAVE MORE PEOPLE RECENTLY BEEN FORCED TO FLEE?

A new escalation of violence hit **north-east Syria** in October 2019, forcing thousands of families from their homes. Many fled with only the clothes on their backs, desperate to escape intense fighting and shelling. Meanwhile, in **north-west Syria's Idlib and Aleppo Governorates**, the humanitarian crisis is becoming increasingly desperate, with massive numbers of people on the move. Your support helps show them they are not forgotten.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THESE LATEST WAVES OF VIOLENCE?

Close to a million people have been displaced in **north-west Syria** since last December. The majority are women and children. They urgently

need shelter and essential aid items. Harsh winter weather and rising fuel prices have added to the difficulties and suffering. In **north-east Syria**, the situation remains extremely uncertain and displaced people need our help. Across the border in Iraq, over **20,000** refugees from **north-east Syria** are still wondering if or when they will be able to go home.

HOW HAVE YOUR DONATIONS HELPED UNHCR RESPOND?


Thanks to caring people like you, UNHCR has been able to give safe shelter, clean water, hot meals, medical care and other assistance to families forced to flee their homes, leaving everything behind. We've also delivered warm clothes, thermal blankets, stoves and other winter essentials to protect children, women and men from the cold, as temperatures dropped during the winter.


Figures as of 10 March 2020.


NORTH-EAST SYRIA RESPONSE

When families were forced to flee escalating violence in northern Syria last October, UNHCR was there.

Thanks to generous donors like you, we've provided:

 Basic aid and vital winter supplies to over **234,000** displaced people and locals hosting them in north-east Syria

 Core relief and essential winter items to over **20,000** newly arrived Syrian refugees in Iraq

 Over **3,000** new tents to shelter refugees in two sites in Iraq.

DID YOU KNOW?

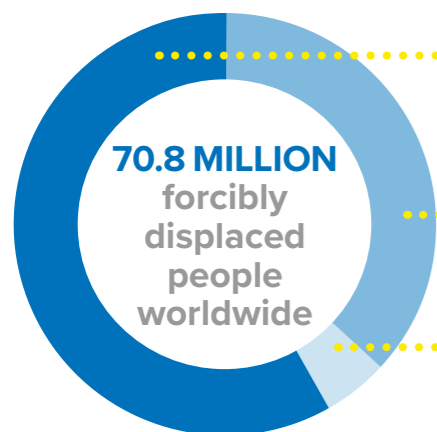
More than half of Syria's estimated pre-war population has been forced to flee their homes.

"It was at night around 8 PM. I was at home with my children and suddenly we heard an explosion. A rocket had landed."

Nadira, a single mother who found safety in Iraq, where UNHCR and partners are supporting families like hers.

KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE

THE CHALLENGE



41.3 MILLION people displaced within their own countries

25.9 MILLION refugees

3.5 MILLION asylum-seekers



80% OF REFUGEES

live in countries bordering their homelands – including some of the world's poorest countries, which host a **third of all refugees**



2/3 OF ALL REFUGEES

come from just five countries (Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia)



OVER 50% OF WORLD'S REFUGEES ARE CHILDREN

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 60% of the world's refugees live in urban areas, not camps.

OUR RESPONSE



134 COUNTRIES

in which UNHCR works worldwide, from bustling cities to remote areas



NEARLY 90%

of our staff are based in the field, in direct contact with people in need



269 TRAINED AID WORKERS

deployed by UNHCR to emergencies in 2019, with many more specialist short-term staff also sent in to assist.



WITHIN 72 HOURS

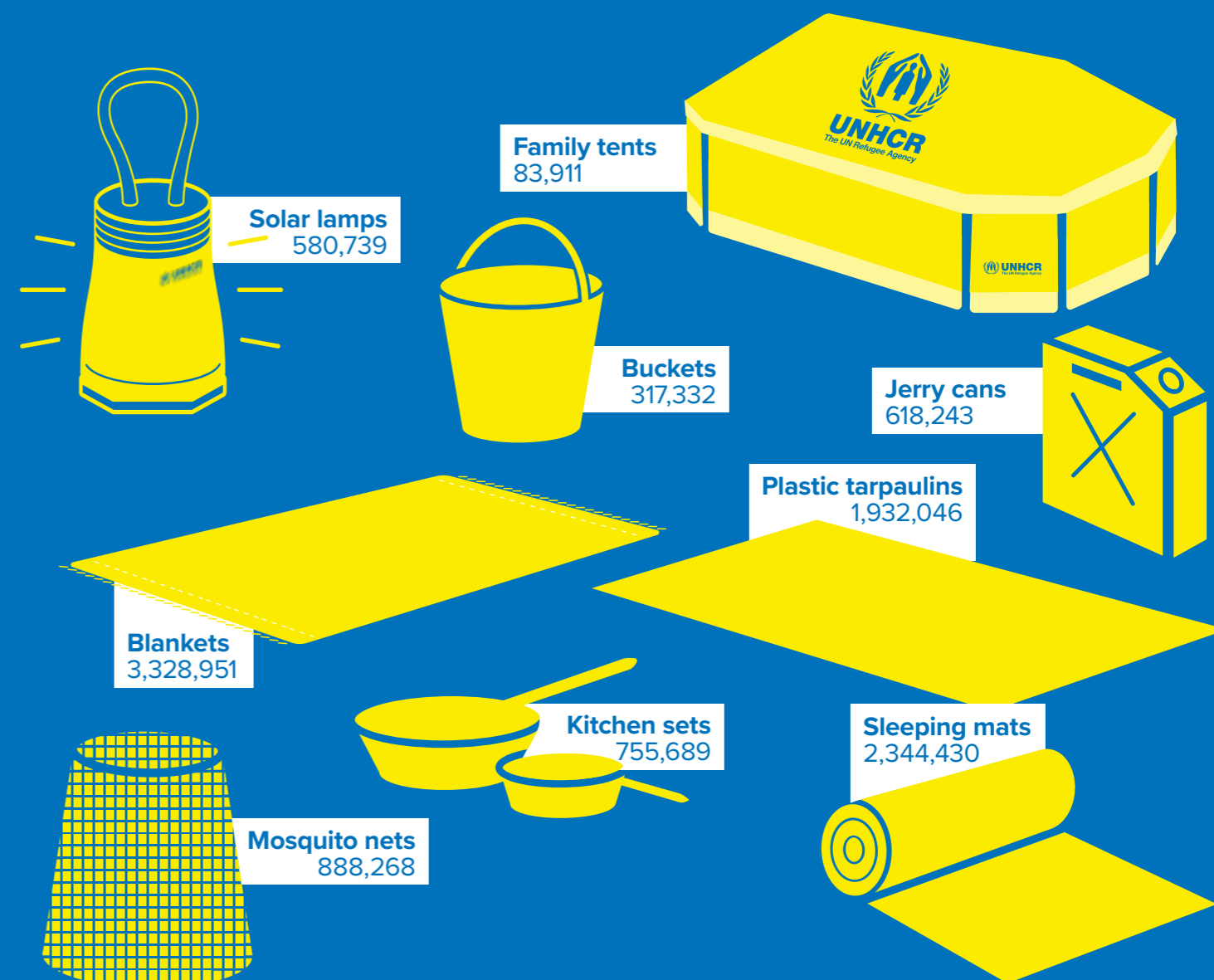
UNHCR can deploy emergency staff and deliver basic aid – by air, land or sea – for up to 600,000 displaced people.

DELIVERING VITAL SUPPLIES AROUND THE WORLD

If you had to leave your house in a matter of minutes, what would you take with you?

People who are forced to flee their homes often have little to no time to grab their belongings. That means that when they finally reach safety, they need basic supplies like blankets to keep their children warm or jerry cans to store water in. And that's where UNHCR comes in. With caring donors like you by our side, we are able to act fast and rush in life-saving assistance including shelter, food, water and medical care.

In 2019, our teams shipped millions of vital supplies from our global warehouses or through our suppliers to new emergencies and on-going operations around the world. Items such as:



KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE



AN UPDATE ON OUR CAMPAIGNS

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING SHELTER FOR REFUGEES

2019 marked the final year of UNHCR's global fundraising campaign to provide shelter – a basic human right – to people forced to flee their homes. Thanks to your support, we have raised over \$25 million since May 2016.

Donations from people like you have given tens of thousands of refugee families in 14 countries a safe place to live. But shelter is so much more than that. Shelter means comfort and privacy. It means dignity and security. Shelter is a place where refugees can start building better futures for their families. Your support means the world to displaced families – and for this, we want to thank you.

Our global shelter campaign may have come to an end – but with your support, we will keep providing shelter and safety to people forced to flee their homes.



YOUR FUNDS IN ACTION

UNHCR was created 70 years ago, in 1950, to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes during World War II. Today, with your support, we continue to work tirelessly to assist refugees, displaced and stateless people all around the world.

In 2019, generous donors like you helped make a difference in the lives of people who've been forced to flee conflict or persecution. **By joining our global community of supporters and donors**, you have helped save lives, protect rights and build better futures for displaced families across the world.

UNHCR is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions. As we continue to face record levels of displacement, your support is more important than ever before. And it **means the world to people forced to flee their homes.**

On behalf of our staff worldwide and those we serve, thank you for choosing to help. Your kindness and enduring support never cease to amaze us.

In 2019, some \$422 million was raised from individual donors, foundations, corporate and philanthropist partners in more than 75 countries worldwide.

TAKE A STEP WITH REFUGEES

Every year, refugees endure long, dangerous and difficult journeys to reach safety. In January 2019, UNHCR launched the 1 Billion Miles/ 2 Billion Kilometers to Safety campaign to encourage people to show their support for refugees. The goal is to achieve a global total of two billion kilometers, by running, walking or cycling – the same distance refugees cover each year to reach safety.

And people around the world have accepted the challenge! Since the launch of the campaign, over 110,000 people in 188 countries have signed up.

Together, they've covered over 30 million kilometers in solidarity with refugees.

Campaign supporters have also taken the extra step of raising funds for refugees through

sponsorships or special contributions. Goodwill Ambassadors such as Ben Stiller, Yusra Mardini and Khaled Hosseini have also donated their time and effort, helping us reach even more people.

If you haven't already, you can join in too. Sign up today on stepwithrefugees.org and add your kilometers to the global total!



"Thank you for choosing to step with refugees." Ben Stiller, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador

unhcr.org

