



European
Commission



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European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Forced displacement: refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

What is it?

Every year, millions of people are forced to leave their homes due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, persecution, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. The number of forcibly displaced persons continued to rise in 2021, calling for increased humanitarian assistance.

At the end of 2021, 89.3 million people were displaced worldwide. This number reached the 100 million mark in the first half of 2022 due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine – the highest number ever recorded.

Over 2/3 of refugees are from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. Most live in urban areas, followed by camps and rural areas.

The EU is the leading international donor in situations of forced displacement.

Why is this important?

Up to 83% of the forcibly displaced are hosted in low- or middle-income countries, which puts a strain on host communities and resources. Their survival depends on the availability of assistance provided by the authorities, local communities and humanitarian organisations.

Both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) often face protection challenges and lack access to shelter, food and other basic services.

In urban areas, they struggle with poverty, lack of psychosocial support and various challenges in normalising their legal status. Violence, abuse and exploitation against them often peak in the aftermath of new emergencies.

Finding durable solutions for the forcibly displaced is a challenge. Voluntary repatriation to their home countries is the preferred long-term outcome for refugees, but the lack of political solutions to conflicts, recurrent violence and instability prevent many from doing so.

Forced displacement is no longer a temporary phenomenon as it has become increasingly protracted. Displacement lasts 20 years on average for refugees and more than 10 years for most IDPs.

How are we helping?

The EU is a leading international donor in situations of forced displacement. In 2021, the European Commission allocated most of its humanitarian budget of €1.4 billion to projects that address the needs of forcibly displaced and local communities.

This funding helped meet the most urgent needs of extremely vulnerable populations including women, children, and people with disabilities, protecting and supporting them during displacement and when returning to their homes.

Projects implemented on the ground helped the forcibly displaced access shelter, protection, food and basic services such as health care, nutritional assistance, safe water, sanitation and education.

About 35% of the humanitarian aid reached refugees and IDPs in the form of cash transfers (debit cards, mobile transfers, and cash in hand). Cash provides refugees and IDPs with a sense of dignity and independence and serves to tighten links with local communities, as aid money is spent in small local businesses.

In education in emergencies, more than half of the projects supported targeted refugee and internally displaced children.

The EU assistance to the forcibly displaced is making a difference in the lives of many:

- Syrian refugees in Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan
- Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan
- Somali refugees in Kenya
- Congolese refugees in the Great Lakes region
- Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region
- Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh
- more recently, Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Romania and Moldova.

EU humanitarian aid also targets IDPs in Syria, Colombia, South Sudan, Iraq, Myanmar and Yemen, among others.

In April 2016, the European Commission adopted the Communication 'Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance. Forced Displacement and Development', presenting a development-led approach to forced displacement.

The objective is to strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of both the displaced and their host communities, working with host governments and local actors to support the gradual socio-economic inclusion of refugees and IDPs.

The approach aims to harness the productive capacities of refugees and IDPs by helping them access education, health care, housing, land, livelihood support, and other basic services.

The Commission channels its financial support to forced displacement situations through organisations dealing with refugees, IDPs, migrants and host communities on the ground. Its main humanitarian partners include the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and non-governmental organisations.

To ensure a more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing among states, the EU supports the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Adopted in 2018, the Global Compact builds on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which in 2017 and 2018 was rolled out in several countries for greater support to refugees and host countries.

The EU strongly supports the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and systematically promotes the inclusion of these principles in international and national law.

In addition, the EU supported the work of the United Nations Secretary-General's (UNSG) High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which submitted its recommendations in September 2021. It will soon lead to the launch of a UNSG Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

On 1st July 2022, the EU took over the Presidency of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. This is a state-led initiative working towards better protection for people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change.

As part of its 18-month presidency, the EU will seek to strengthen coordinated actions in this area, as well as to increase global advocacy on this topic.

Facts & figures

89.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide:

- **27.1 million** refugees
- **53.2 million** internally displaced
- **4.6 million** asylum seekers
- **4.4 million** Venezuelan refugees and migrants

Almost **1 million** children were born as refugees between 2018-2020

Around **2/3** of refugees live in poverty

83% of refugees are hosted in low- and middle-income countries

Top 3 refugee hosting countries: Türkiye (**3.8 million**), Colombia (**1.8 million**), Uganda (**1.5 million**)

European Commission humanitarian funding:

Most of the humanitarian budget of **€1.4 billion** spent to help forcibly displaced populations and their host communities in 2021