

# War drives number of forcibly displaced worldwide to 18-year high, says UN report

[UN news.un.org/en/story/2013/06/442712](http://news.un.org/en/story/2013/06/442712)

June 19, 2013



19 June 2013

A United Nations report released today says that more people are refugees or internally displaced than at any time since 1994, with the crisis in Syria having emerged as a major new factor in global displacement.

The annual Global Trends report, released by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), shows that as of the end of 2012, more than 45.2 million people were in situations of displacement compared to 42.5 million at the end of 2011.

This includes 15.4 million refugees, 937,000 asylum-seekers, and 28.8 million people forced to flee within the borders of their own countries. The report does not include the rise in those forced from their homes in Syria during the current year, UNHCR pointed out in a news release on the report, launched ahead of World Refugee Day, commemorated annually on 20 June.

War remains the major cause for the displacement, the agency noted, adding that 55 per cent of all refugees listed in the report come from just five war-affected countries: Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan.

The report also charts major new displacement from Mali, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and from Sudan into South Sudan and Ethiopia.

“These truly are alarming numbers. They reflect individual suffering on a huge scale and they reflect the difficulties of the international community in preventing conflicts and promoting timely solutions for them,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees António

Guterres.

The report notes that some 7.6 million people became newly displaced last year, 1.1 million as refugees and 6.5 million as internally displaced persons (IDPs). This translates to a new refugee or IDP every 4.1 seconds.

Also, there is a continuing gap between richer and poorer countries in hosting refugees. Of 10.5 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate [a further 4.9 million Palestinian refugees fall under the mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)], half are hosted by countries that have a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of less than \$5,000. Overall, developing nations host 81 per cent of the world's refugees, compared to 70 per cent a decade ago.

The report also shows that children below the age of 18 make up 46 per cent of all refugees. In addition, a record 21,300 asylum applications submitted last year were from children who were unaccompanied or separated from their parents. This is the highest number of unaccompanied or separated children that UNHCR has recorded.

The agency works to help people who are forcibly displaced, including through aid and immediate practical help, and by finding solutions to their plight. Last year saw an end to displacement for 2.7 million people, including 526,000 refugees and 2.1 million IDPs.

Last year saw little change from 2011 in the rankings of the world's major refugee-hosting countries, according to the report. Pakistan continued to host more refugees than any other nation (1.6 million), followed by Iran (868,200) and Germany (589,700).

Afghanistan remained the world's top 'producer' of refugees, a position it has held for 32 years. On average, one out of every four refugees worldwide is Afghan, with 95 per cent located in Pakistan or Iran. Somalia, another protracted conflict, was the world's second largest refugee-producing nation during 2012, however there the rate of refugee outflow slowed. Iraqis were the third largest refugee group (746,700 persons), followed by Syrians (471,400).

UNHCR

displaced