

EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



UNHCR's Office in [Belgium](#) developed an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the experiences of refugees from different backgrounds to show how, with their experience and skills, they contribute to the host society.

TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

Some 8,500 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via the three Mediterranean routes in June 2019. In the first six months of the year, the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe by these three routes dropped by 36% from 58,000 in 2018 to 37,100 in 2019. The primary reasons for the decrease include the changes in responses to rescue at sea off the Libyan coast such as limited access to European ports for disembarkation (which has also impacted rescues by merchant vessels), the removal of EUNAVFOR Med naval vessels from off the Libyan coast, and the restrictions placed on NGOs. These have contributed to an 81% reduction in the number of refugees and migrants arriving from Libya to Europe (from 11,500 to 2,100). In addition, changes to Spain's approach to search and rescue in the Western Mediterranean limited the areas of operations, resulting in a 26% reduction in the number of arrivals to Spain (from 17,900 to 13,300). As of the end of June, most refugees and migrants entering Europe via the Mediterranean routes did so via Greece.

Greece: Some 18,400 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece by land and sea in the first half of 2019, a 21% reduction compared to the first half of 2018. The number of people crossing the sea dropped by 6%, including due to an increase in the number of people being intercepted or rescued by the Turkish Coast Guard in the Aegean Sea, while the number of people entering by land dropped by 41% (from 9,400 to 5,500), including due to stricter enforcement on the other side of the border as well as continued push-backs from Greece at the land border. Some 35% of those who have arrived by sea in Greece so far in 2019 have been from Afghanistan, along with 16% from the Syrian Arab Republic and 12% from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many people have arrived in family groups and so far 39% of arrivals have been men, 25% women, and 36% children. In the Evros region, in response to increased difficulties in crossing the land

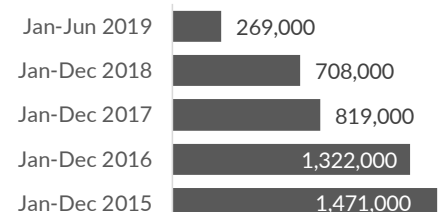
Mediterranean
37,100
arrivals in 2019 ¹

600
estimated dead/missing in 2019 ¹

Greece²			Italy		
18,400			2,800		
3,020	3,198	4,059	255	782	1,218
Apr	May	Jun	Apr	May	Jun

Spain²			Cyprus		
13,300			1,300		
1,539	1,928	2,823	433	1	466
Apr	May	Jun	Apr	May	Jun

New asylum applications in Europe ³



¹ data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 30 June 2019.

² Arrivals include Malta; Greece and Spain both include sea and land arrivals; Spain includes sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands.

³ Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only partial data for May and June 2019. All data is provisional and last updated 23 July 2019); UNHCR for Eastern Europe and Turkey (as of 31 December 2018) and South Eastern Europe (as of 30 June 2019).

border, more people began arriving by sea in June (72% of Evros arrivals in June, compared to 45% in May).

Spain: In the first half of 2019, some 13,300 refugees and migrants arrived by land and sea in Spain. While land arrivals at the enclaves remained generally consistent (a 3% decrease compared to 2018), arrivals by sea dropped by 30% following Spain's decision in February to limit rescues to Spain's Search and Rescue Region, as well as increased measures to prevent departures from North Africa. In the first half of 2019, most people arriving in Spain were from Morocco, Mali, and Guinea.

Italy: Some 2,800 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Italy in the first six months of 2019, an 83% decrease (from 16,600 in the first six months of 2018). In addition to the decrease in sea arrivals from Libya, the number of people crossing from Tunisia (mostly Tunisians) has also dropped by 77% to just under 800 from some 3,400 in the first half of 2018. While in previous years the vast majority of people arriving by sea to Italy had departed from Libya, in the first half of 2019 around 32% of people who reached Italy by sea departed from Libya, 28% from Tunisia, 24% from Turkey, 9% from Algeria and 7% from Greece. As a result, the primary nationalities were Tunisians (21%), Pakistanis (15%), and Algerians (10%). The primary nationalities arriving in Italy from Libya in this period were Bangladeshis (22%), Ivoirians (13%), and Sudanese (9%).

Malta: While the number of sea arrivals from Libya to Italy had decreased in the first half of 2019, those arriving to Malta had increased as more regular disembarkation of people rescued after departing from Libya only resumed in June 2018. So far this year, some 1,300 refugees and migrants have arrived in Malta by sea after departing from Libya (compared to 239 in the first half of 2018). Some 83% of sea arrivals to Malta in 2019 were rescued in the Maltese Search and Rescue Region, almost all by the Armed Forces of Malta. Most people who were disembarked in Malta after departing from Libya were from Sudan (39%), Eritrea (14%), and Nigeria (8%).

Western Balkans: In the Western Balkans, some 11,000 people have been recorded as having arrived in Bosnia

1,885

Returns EU-Turkey statement¹²

¹² Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 30 June 2019.

and Herzegovina irregularly this year, a 42% increase compared to the same period last year. Most people reported coming from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Similarly, some 10,300 newly-arrived people, including over 1,600 unaccompanied or separated children, have been observed by UNHCR and partners in Serbia where the primary nationalities have been Afghans and Pakistanis. Push-backs continue to be widely reported across the region, including the use of violence, while 13 people are known to have died along the route so far this year, including while trying to hide in vehicles to cross borders and drowning in border rivers.

Dead and missing: In the first half of 2019, 585 people are believed to have died or gone missing at sea. The majority of deaths took place in the Central Mediterranean where 341 people were believed to have died, including 22 in June after a boat with 95 people on board capsized off the coast of Libya near Garrabulli. A further 193 people are believed to have died at sea between North Africa and Spain including 33 in June. Of the deaths in June, 22 people died or went missing at sea in an incident off Morocco's Ras Taksefi peninsula. The 27 survivors were spotted by a ferry at the edge of Morocco's territorial waters almost 24 hours after an alert had been raised about the missing group.[1] In addition, 51 people have died at sea along the short route between Turkey and Greece, including 19 in two incidents in June. The ratio of deaths at sea compared to sea arrivals to Europe after the first half of 2019 was one death for every 48 arrivals to Europe compared to one death for every 35 arrivals in the first half of 2018.

OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey **4.0 million**

Refugees and asylum seekers⁵

Syrian Arab Republic	3,614,000
Afghanistan	172,000
Iraq	143,000
Other nationalities	57,000

⁵ Source: UNHCR as of 30 June 2019

Ukraine **1.5 million**

Internally Displaced Persons⁶ and **Conflict Affected Persons**⁷

Refugees:	2,620
Asylum seekers:	6,296
Stateless persons:	35,650

⁶ Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).
⁷ Estimated number of conflict-affected people living along the line of contact in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

⁸ UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 31/12/2018

⁹ UNHCR as of 12/07/2019

¹⁰ State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/01/2019

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The United Kingdom: The Home Office said that the UK would welcome between 5,000–6,000 refugees in 2020–2021 and plans to create a new process for emergency resettlement, allowing the UK to respond quickly when there is a heightened need for protection and where lives are at risk.

5

EU: UNHCR recommended that the Finnish Presidency focuses on two urgent priorities: building cooperation and solidarity with refugees and host communities and pushing for an effective way of sharing responsibility among EU Member States.

1

2

Germany: On 18 June 'The Other 1 Percent - Refugee Students in Higher Education' commenced, a conference on the world's largest higher education scholarship programme for refugees: the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative.

3

Ukraine: In 2019, UNHCR and Pro-liska launched a pilot project to voluntarily relocate families away from dangerous areas near the 'contact line'.

4

Includes Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)). The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Search and rescue in the central Mediterranean:

In June, over 2,300 people were disembarked after departing from Libya by sea, the highest number within a month in 2019 so far. Of them, 57% were disembarked in Libya following interventions by the Libyan Coast Guard as well as one merchant vessel. Over 900 others were disembarked in Malta and Italy (65% in Malta, 35% in Italy). All those disembarked in Malta were rescued in Malta's Search and Rescue Region while 52% of those disembarked in Italy were rescued in Italy or Malta's Search and Rescue Region or else arrived directly to Lampedusa. In addition, 100 people rescued by the Italian Navy some 90 miles south of Lampedusa in Libya's Search and Rescue Region were disembarked in Genoa while a group of 53 people rescued by the NGO Sea Watch were disembarked in Lampedusa after a wait of 17 days after the rescue with no port of safety being granted. On 29 June, nine days after UNHCR had [called](#) for the group to be allowed to disembark, the vessel's captain decided to dock in Lampedusa, thus facing arrest, citing concerns about the physical and mental health of those on board. Several EU Member States pledged to transfer members of the group once they were disembarked.

European Union: On 7 June, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and Antonio Vi-

torino, the IOM Director General, [appealed](#) to EU Ministers participating in the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg to discuss the challenges ahead on asylum and migration. Despite the substantive decrease in the arrival of asylum seekers and migrants to Europe since 2015-2016, a comprehensive approach to these issues remains lacking.

The High Commissioner and Director General reiterated that Libya is not a safe place for disembarkation given the current conditions which make this country a dangerous and unsuitable place for refugees and migrants. The High Commissioner and the Director General welcomed the progress made on temporary arrangements for disembarkation within the EU. However, once again they reiterated their proposal for a predictable mechanism noting that it was not yet in place. Every boat adrift in the Mediterranean is further evidence that this simply cannot go on.

While welcoming the fact that EU Member States have increased the number of resettlement arrivals in recent years, the High Commissioner and Director General pointed to the need for additional opportunities for resettlement and legal migration pathways.

1 On 11 June UNHCR released its recommendations for the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (for the period of 1 July-31 December 2019).

UNHCR recommended that the Finnish Presidency focuses on two urgent priorities: building cooperation and solidarity with refugees and host communities and pushing for an effective way of sharing responsibility among EU Member States. UNHCR remains ready to support the Finnish Presidency, the EU and its Member States as they work to enhance solidarity with refugees and the countries hosting them in the EU and globally. Read UNHCR's full [recommendations for the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#).

On 26 June 2019, the Finnish EU Presidency programme was published and debated in the Parliament. The programme emphasises 1) common values and the rule of law, 2) a more competitive and socially inclusive EU, 3) the EU's position as a global leader in climate action and 4) the comprehensive security of citizens. With regard to migration, the Programme mentioned 'the human rights-based asylum and migration policies are rooted in international treaties and conventions, cooperation between public authorities and effective control of the EU's external borders, as well as appropriate and swift asylum procedures that are of a high standard in terms of legal protection.' [Finland's Presidency aims to make progress in adopting a common European asylum system](#).

Belgium: UNHCR's office in Belgium developed an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the experiences of refugees from different backgrounds to show how, with their experience and skills, they contribute to the host society. Their portraits appeared on public transport in Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. Their stories were published in [Dutch](#) and [French](#) and shared on UNHCR Belgium social media platforms.

Michael, a refugee from Eritrea who is a qualified X-ray technician and now an interpreter in Belgium, said, "Sometimes we are perceived as uneducated people, whereas many of us have qualifications." The purpose of this campaign is precisely to help change this perception. It invites the general public to read their stories and discover that the generic term "refugees" covers diverse and complex realities and life trajectories, each with their own unique characteristics.

Cyrille, a refugee from Togo, who works as a chef and who participated in the campaign said: "I had the chance to participate in the Refugee Food Festival last year and my Togolese dishes were very successful. The Belgian public is open to the culinary tastes of Africa and elsewhere. And it also allowed the public to see what refugees are capable of when they are given the opportunity to develop their talent and skills."



Germany: At the invitation of the German Federal Foreign Office to speak at the [Berlin Climate and Security Conference](#), Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees undertook a one-day visit to Berlin on 4 June. He addressed more than 30 Members of Parliament or their staff. The High Commissioner also [visited an integration project](#), had a [‘rolling’ media encounter on a public bus driven by a Syrian refugee](#), and met with Katarina Witt, a potential celebrity supporter of UNHCR Germany.

On 18 June, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Heiko Maas, the German Foreign Minister opened the two-day conference [‘The Other 1 Percent - Refugee Students in Higher Education’](#) on the world’s largest higher education scholarship programme for refugees, called DAFI, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative. The German-sponsored UNHCR programme [DAFI](#) enables refugees to access higher education in their host countries.

One argument for letting refugees access education is that it enables them to qualify for higher paying jobs and makes them less likely to be economically dependent. In addition, highly educated refugees can make a greater contribution to their home societies once they return.

More than 20 refugees who have received DAFI scholarships attended the conference in Berlin. All of the DAFI scholars at the conference said that the opportunities that flowed from the scholarships had changed their lives.

Greece: Seven people lost their lives, of whom two were children in a tragic shipwreck off Lesvos on 11 June. This was the second shipwreck in Greece this year, after three people died near Samos on 6 March. It was a painful reminder of the importance of search and rescue operations and of the role of the Coast Guard in saving lives at sea. UNHCR [called](#) for States to redouble efforts for more safe and legal pathways to Europe.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted its decision on the supervision of the execution of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments *M.S.S. and Rahimi v. Greece* (No. 30696/09 and [8687/08](#)). The Court had found in these cases a violation of the ECtHR by Greece because of conditions of detention, living conditions of asylum-seekers in Greece, deficiencies in the asylum procedure and inadequate care and unlawful detention of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Greece. The Committee will continue its review on the asylum procedures and in particular of the appeal stage, and on the living conditions, while it decided to close its supervision on the availability of legal

remedies for the conditions of detention.

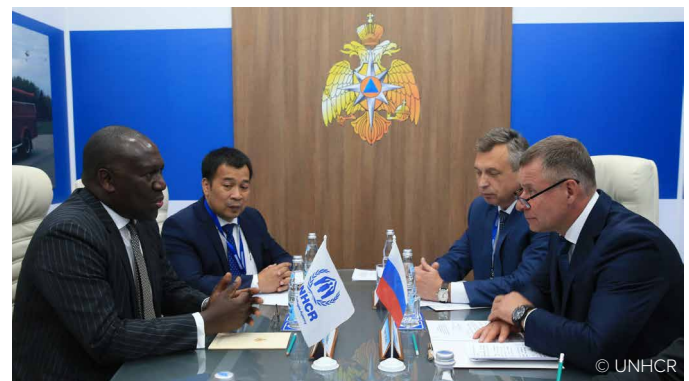
Italy: On 12 June UNHCR issued a [statement](#) expressing concerns at a recent decree from the Government of Italy that contains several provisions affecting refugees and migrants, including fines for NGO vessels engaged in saving lives at sea. UNHCR called on the Italian Government to reconsider the decree and for Parliament to amend it with a focus on refugee protection and saving lives at its core.

Sea rescue is a long-standing humanitarian imperative. It is also an obligation under international law. No vessel or shipmaster should be at risk of a fine for coming to the aid of boats in distress and where loss of life may be imminent.

Of further concern to UNHCR is that the decree may result in shipmasters being penalized for refusing to disembark rescued people in Libya. In light of the extremely volatile security situation, widespread reports of human rights violations and routine use of detention for people rescued or intercepted at sea, no one should be returned to Libya.

Netherlands: On 5 and 6 June, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited the municipality of Rotterdam, and together with Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb he visited the foundation [Nieuw Thuis Rotterdam](#).

Russian Federation: On 05 June 2019, on the sidelines of the International Safety and Security Exhibition 2019, organized by EMERCOM of Russia, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Mr. Okoth-Obbo met with Russian Minister for Emergency Response Mr. Yevgeny Zinichev, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation Framework for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance, so as to develop a strategic partnership between the two parties, and enhance collaboration in emergency response and humanitarian assistance.



Also on the 05 June 2019, on the sidelines of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2019, Mr. Daniel Endres – Director of Global Refugee Forum and Mr. Dmitry Kobitsky - Secretary-General of the

Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) Council signed an Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and IPA CIS. The MoU expects the organizations to provide mutual expert support, consultation on the development of model legislation and recommendations that meet the norms of international law for the protection of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons. IPA CIS' model laws include one on migration and refugees.

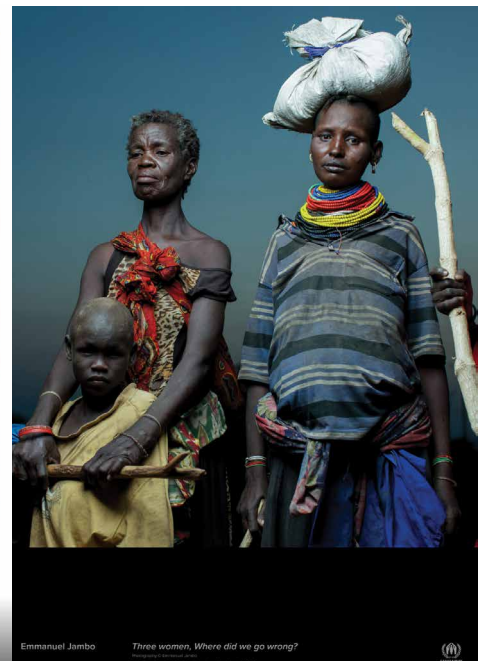
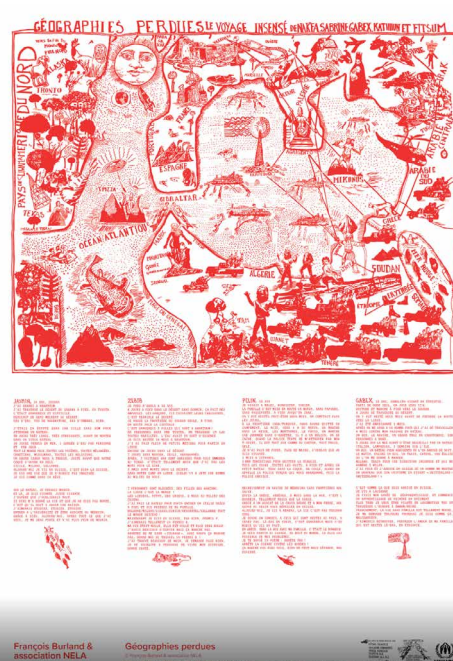
On 21 June, 2019, Interim Director of the UNHCR Division of Resilience and Solutions Mr. Ewen Macleod participated as a panellist in an expert discussion on Global trends in forced migration at the Valdai Discussion Club, held in the framework of World Refugee Day celebrations in Moscow. The discussion floor was shared with Mr. Albert Sitnikov, Deputy Director of Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Russia, and Mr. Sergey Andrianov, Head of the Office for the Protection of Social Rights of the Staff at the Office of the Federal Ombudsman of the Russian Federation.

Switzerland: UNHCR was present at the prestigious contemporary [Art Basel](#) art fair for the second year in a row to celebrate and raise awareness about refugee women. UNHCR curated its own exhibition, "Art Stands with Refugee Women", with the support of various artists – including Alfredo Jaar, Tania Bruquera, Bouchra Khalili, Miriam Cahn and François Burland – who each contributed a work to the project. The exhibition took place from 7 to 20 June, and the awareness-raising event on 12 June.

Ukraine: UNHCR and its NGO partner Proliska **4** launched a pilot project to voluntarily relocate families away from dangerous areas near the 'contact line'. The protection rationale for this project is to move families away from where they could be at harm and closer to where they can access services and where they will be safe. However, because of the limited number of places available, UNHCR prioritizes families with child protection and medical needs. By the end of 2019, 20 grantees will have been relocated in safe areas, allowing children to return to school, adults to find better jobs and the elderly to have access to medical care.

5 The United Kingdom: On 17 June UNHCR [warmly welcomed](#) the UK's pledge to resettle significant numbers of the world's refugees after its Syria focused programme expires next year. The Home Office said that the UK would welcome between 5,000–6,000 refugees in 2020–2021. The announcement increases the flexibility and geographical diversity of UK resettlement, which is needed to effectively respond to global resettlement needs.

UNHCR also welcomed UK plans to create a new process for emergency resettlement, allowing the UK to respond quickly when there is a heightened need for protection and where lives are at risk. A Community Sponsorship scheme, which currently enables community groups to directly support refugees in the UK, will continue. UNHCR judges the programme, still in an early phase, to be a success and encourages the UK to welcome more refugees via community sponsorship and in addition to the existing commitments.



To celebrate the strength, the economic empowerment and the social participation of refugee women and girls, the 2019 edition of the "Art Stands with Refugees" project in Basel, Switzerland was entirely dedicated to their cause.

World Refugee Day

From dance parties to food festivals and urban hikes, millions of people around the world took part in events to celebrate World Refugee Day.

The event, held on 20 June each year, honours the courage and determination of those who have been forced to flee their homes. This year, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, asked people from all walks of life to join the [#Step-WithRefugees](#) global challenge in solidarity with refugees who each year trek 1 billion miles to reach the nearest point of safety.

In his [address](#) to mark World Refugee Day, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi pledged to do all he could to help millions of forcibly displaced people “not just to get by, but also to thrive.”



A delegation of refugee students take part in the [#StepWithRefugees](#) challenge in Berlin ahead of World Refugee Day, contributing over 350,000 steps to the global campaign.

Annual Global Trends report

On 19 June the UN Refugee Agency released its annual Global Trends report. According to the [report](#) some 70.8 million children, women and men were forcibly displaced at the close of 2018, the highest number in the organization’s almost 70-year history.

This is twice as many people as 20 years ago, 2.3 million more than the previous year, and is greater than the population of Thailand.

Overall, an estimated 13.6 million people became newly displaced during the year due to wars or persecution, a number equivalent to the population of Tokyo, and greater than that of Moscow and Manila. The total included

10.8 million IDPs and 2.8 million new refugees and asylum-seekers.

The growth in displacement continued to outpace the rate at which solutions are being found for people who become displaced. With refugees, the best solution is being able to return home voluntarily, in safety and dignity.

The increased global figure gives further confirmation of a [longer-term rising trend](#) in the number of people around the world needing safety from war, conflict and persecution, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said.

70.8 MILLION FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations at end-2018

- 25.9 million refugees
- 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate
- 5.5 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA’s mandate
- 41.3 million internally displaced people
- 3.5 million asylum-seekers

13.6 MILLION NEWLY DISPLACED

An estimated 13.6 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2018. This included 10.8 million individuals displaced² within the borders of their own country and 2.8 million new refugees and new asylum-seekers.

37,000 NEW DISPLACEMENTS EVERY DAY

The number of new displacements was equivalent to an average of 37,000 people being forced to flee their homes every day in 2018.

4 IN 5

Nearly 4 out of every 5 refugees lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin.

1.7 MILLION NEW CLAIMS

Asylum-seekers submitted 1.7 million new claims. With 254,300 such claims, the United States of America was the world’s largest recipient of new individual applications, followed by Peru (192,500) Germany (161,900), France (114,500) and Turkey (83,800).

81,300 REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT

In 2018, UNHCR submitted 81,300 refugees to States for resettlement. According to government statistics, 25 countries admitted 92,400 refugees for resettlement during the year, with or without UNHCR’s assistance.

138,600 UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPARATED CHILDREN

Some 27,600 unaccompanied and separated children sought asylum on an individual basis and a total of 111,000 unaccompanied and separated child refugees were reported in 2018. Both numbers are considered significant underestimates.

67% FROM FIVE COUNTRIES

Altogether, more than two thirds (67 per cent) of all refugees worldwide came from just five countries:

- Syrian Arab Republic (6.7 million)
- Afghanistan (2.7 million)
- South Sudan (2.3 million)
- Myanmar (1.1 million)
- Somalia (0.9 million)

3.7 MILLION PEOPLE

For the fifth consecutive year, Turkey hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, with 3.7 million people. The main countries of asylum for refugees were:

- Turkey (3.7 million)
- Pakistan (1.4 million)
- Uganda (1.2 million)
- Sudan (1.1 million)
- Germany (1.1 million)

1/2 CHILDREN

Children below 18 years of age constituted about half of the refugee population in 2018, up from 41 per cent in 2009 but similar to the previous few years

Students can play a vital role in advocating for refugees – UNHCR chief



© UNHCR/Gordon Welters

Speaking to hundreds of students at Freie Universität in Berlin ahead of the World Refugee Day, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi encouraged them to volunteer for refugee causes. Students should volunteer and help refugees learn the language of their host country

because it is vital for integration, he said. At the same time, universities should apply rigorous analysis to the world's refugee crises to counter superficial narratives used in some countries to foster opposition to refugees.

“If we are to turn around this narrative of impossibility which leads to rejection...we have to continue to uphold values that today are very much threatened,” he said. “If young people like you cannot do that I cannot think of anybody else can help us respond effectively to this crisis,” he told the students, also warning of a dangerous “narrative of impossibility that has fueled a negative, toxic sometimes racist language – a language that could eventually undermine the foundations of the freedom of our societies.

The refugee crisis in Europe he described was a “crisis of solidarity,” a deficit of compassion for people in distress. To bring about a change of heart, he said, it is vital to show that there are policy answers to the question of how newly arrived refugees can be managed and integrated.

UN Secretary-General drops by on music workshop featuring refugees and cellist Yo-Yo Ma

Eighty people including 10 refugees with ages ranging from six to 60 participated in the workshop with world famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who has won 19 Grammy awards. As they played, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres – in Vienna for a visit – arrived and sat down in the front row to listen to the song. “This is a fantastic illustration of

how people from different parts of the world can come together in music, and peace,” he said afterwards. “Music is a universal language. Music brings us together. Music is a symbol of peace. But at the same time music represents diversity ... and that diversity is an enormous richness,” he said.



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