



\$924 MILLION URGENTLY

REQUIRED IN 2021

COVID-19 will not be defeated without a strong, global multilateral response. Faced with the largest emergency in its 70-year history, UNHCR has played a central role in combating the pandemic among refugee and forcibly displaced communities in 130 countries.

Financial support will help UNHCR stem and reverse the worst impacts of COVID-19 on refugee and displaced populations, and ensure they have access to critical protection and health services and global vaccine distribution. Some of the most urgent activities for support are outlined below. UNHCR also calls on governments and international financial institutions to include refugees, displaced people, and their vulnerable host communities in any and all plans to address COVID-19 and its secondary impacts.



49,204

COVID-19 cases reported among refugees and displaced people in 105 countries.



446

Refugees and displaced people known to have died from COVID-19.



144

States have closed their borders or otherwise restricted access to their territory by refugees and asylum-seekers.



94 of 130

Countries where UNHCR works that have committed to include forcibly displaced people in national vaccination plans.

COVID-19: A THREAT MULTIPLIER

DRIVING UNPRECEDENTED HUMANITARIAN NEED AND INSTABILITY AMONG REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE

Even before the compounding effects of COVID-19, persecution and conflict had forced over 80 million people from their homes at the beginning of 2020. COVID-19 containment measures have disproportionately impacted refugees and forcibly displaced people, 85% of whom are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, such as Jordan, Colombia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bangladesh, all of which are under severe economic strain. These populations face lost livelihoods, spiraling poverty, destitution, and insufficient aid and development.

Jordan

3.5%
GDP decline

Colombia

7.5%
GDP decline

Iraq

9.5%
GDP decline

Lebanon

19.2%
GDP decline

Bangladesh

6.2%
GDP decline

Source: World Bank estimate.

COVID-19's INFLUENCE AS A THREAT MULTIPLIER CAN BE SEEN ACROSS THE WORLD:

- Forcing already struggling refugees and displaced communities into deeper poverty, including in the Middle East and North Africa, where 1.1 million Syrian refugees and internally displaced Iraqis were pushed into poverty due to COVID-19.
- Reducing incomes and job opportunities for those in the informal economy, where incomes are projected to drop by 82% in countries where most forcibly displaced populations are located.
- Putting refugee and displaced women and girls at risk of increased violence.
- Reducing access to education for 90% of refugee children, with older girls particularly at risk of dropping out of school permanently.
- Driving refugees to take dangerous sea crossings, such as those from Lebanon, Libya, Venezuela, and Bangladesh, and putting them in the dangerous hands of smugglers and traffickers.
- Forcing tens of thousands of refugees and IDPs to return home prematurely to places like Syria and Venezuela, in many cases back to conflict and danger.
- Preventing those fleeing conflict and persecution from accessing safe haven due to border closures in 144 countries, over 60 of which have made no exemptions for those seeking asylum.



UNHCR's COVID-19

RESPONSE IN 2020

As the crisis progressed, and the scale of additional needs became clearer and were articulated in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, UNHCR did everything possible to mobilize resources from its donors who responded generously, with funds available reaching \$492 million in 2020, of which \$171.1 million was softly earmarked, allowing UNHCR to quickly kickstart life-saving activities.

With these funds UNHCR was able to decongest camps and strengthen physical distancing measures, build up health, water and sanitation infrastructure and supplies, support government health systems, maintain schooling or help mitigate closures, protect women and girls from violence, safeguard livelihoods, communicate with affected communities, and provide life-saving cash assistance.

39.4 million

Refugees and IDPs assisted with critical protection and assistance.

33 million

Masks distributed.

\$700 million*

In cash assistance distributed to some 8.5 million people.

* Provisional figure for total cash distributed in 2020, pending final closure of accounts.

2 million

Women and girls assisted with 24/7 survivor hotlines for victims of gender-based violence.

9.4 million

Forcibly displaced people assisted with health care.

1.2 million

People assisted with livelihood support like business loans or training

900,000

Children supported with their education and 1.3 million with re-enrollment

606,000

People helped to withstand the pressures of the pandemic with mental health support and psychosocial support.

WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDING

UNHCR's RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AREAS:



\$274 million for cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees and displaced people

Cash is the safest, most flexible and cost-effective way to assist refugees with their basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare, and also enables them to contribute to local economies. In line with physical distancing measures, UNHCR is increasing contactless payments, such as mobile banking and contactless payment.



\$111 million is urgently needed to restore education

With the schooling of 90% of refugee children profoundly affected, UNHCR will support continuity of learning; prepare schools by installing or repairing water and hygiene facilities; and engage with teachers and parents to ensure children are enrolled and, where possible, supported to make up for their learning loss.



\$67 million will go to protect refugees' incomes and livelihoods or employment opportunities

According to the World Bank, 115 million people are predicted to fall into extreme poverty, disproportionately affecting refugees. UNHCR will help protect assets, restructure debt, provide training, and advocate inclusion of forcibly displaced people into government economic relief plans and services.



\$55 million will help prevent and respond to gender-based violence

With UNFPA warning that 15 million more cases of gender-based violence are expected for every three months of global lockdown, UNHCR needs support to expand prevention activities, strengthen partnerships with women-led organizations and groups, and strengthen risk mitigation.



\$50 million to support governments administer vaccines for refugees, and to maintain a global medical stockpile

With WHO estimating it will cost \$10 per person to deliver vaccines, excluding the cost of the vaccine itself, UNHCR supports the COVAX initiative, and advocates the equitable inclusion of forcibly displaced people in national plans. Activities will also include supporting cold chains, transportation, PPE for vaccinators, training staff and preparing facilities where vaccinations will be administered, and supporting communication with communities.



\$29 million will help provide mental health and psychosocial support services

Mental health support was critical before the pandemic and is historically a severely under-resourced issue. UNHCR integrates this within its health, protection and education work, however, exceptional support will sustain and boost programmes such as helplines given increased needs.