

POPULATION MOVEMENT BULLETIN

The *Population Movement Bulletin*, published by the UN in Afghanistan, highlights issues of population movement as it relates to Afghanistan and is designed to consolidate the large amount of media coverage and many statistics into one place. The *Bulletin* includes trends in internal displacement, population movement to and from neighbouring countries and Europe, and policy developments and programme responses, drawing upon public sources as well as information gathered by the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, particularly those working on issues related to population movement – nationally and internationally – and the challenges faced by these groups of people.

Commentary

The one news item which has dominated the media over the past 12 months has been the issue of populations on the move. These have run from the stories of people risking their lives – and often losing them – in the Mediterranean, to the international responses to this, evolving from an initial welcome in the countries of refuge, to the more recent efforts to restrict and block these movements, with little consideration for the underlying reasons for flight, and the potentially devastating consequences of forced return.

The importance attached to this pattern is reflected in the attention which has been devoted to it by governments and international bodies. Whilst we cannot forecast the continuing changes in the patterns of population movement, we can be sure that they will be the subject of high-level discussions in 2016. Whether in the context of the World Humanitarian Summit taking place in Istanbul on 23-24 May, or the high-level meeting on 19 September in New York, or discussions at the time of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in Brussels on 4-5 October, population movement, its causal factors, and how it may

be managed will figure prominently in these international events.



Refugees and migrants arrive in Europe by boat. Photo: UNHCR

Such attention is appropriate; this is a huge challenge and one that needs to be examined in perspective. Without a concerted international effort to address the reasons why people choose, or may be forced, to leave their homes, these trends will persist.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has underlined, the burden of this has fallen on relatively few countries, with as few as eight countries hosting more than half of the

world's refugees, and only ten countries contributing 75 per cent of the UN's budget to support their plight. At the same time, there is minimal international support for vulnerable non-refugee migrants, who often share similar vulnerabilities.

In addition to the appropriate visibility that attached to populations crossing international borders, Afghanistan faces a long-enduring burden of internal displacement. In the first 4 months of 2016 alone, 37,294 families were displaced. These recent displacements add to the long-term internally displaced – some dating back nearly 20 years, as noted in the article on Herat in this Bulletin.

It is easy to gloss over complicated issues, but such simplification overlooks complex causal factors. Not only is it important that decision-makers keep sight of these issues, as well as the human consequences, but they should also take account of national commitments to address these challenges. We touch on some examples in this Bulletin. Hopefully, the international deliberations taking place this year will focus on durable solutions, rather than seeing solutions in walls and fences.

Latest News Headlines

European rights watchdog complains about Greek migrant camps conditions

May 11 - Urgent measures are needed to address overcrowding and poor living conditions in refugee and migrant camps in Greece, Europe's top rights watchdog warned on Wednesday.

More at Reuters <http://reut.rs/1TF03ty>

Italy breaks up people-smuggling ring that imprisoned migrants

May 11 - Italian police arrested seven people on Wednesday for running a people-smuggling ring in which Somali boat migrants who reached Italy by boat were held prisoner until their families paid their passage further north, a statement said.

The investigation, dubbed "Somalia Express", raided nine apartments in and around Catania used by the group to hold migrants in lieu of payment. Thirty-seven Somalis were freed from the apartments when the arrests were made, including three minors, the police statement said.

More at Reuters <http://reut.rs/1T6OEGX>

Deciding to leave Afghanistan: Motives for migration

May 8 - AAN has done a series of twelve in-depth interviews with families of Afghans

who recently travelled to Europe. The conversations provided a fascinating insight into the practicalities of both the decision making processes and the journey, the complex interplay between economic and security considerations.

More at AAN <http://bit.ly/1Ygwhze>

Afghan refugees spend decades longing for home

May 5 - Mohammed Sakhi was from the village of Imam Shaib in northern Afghanistan, near the border with Tajikistan.

He fled to Pakistan 35 years ago with his mother and siblings during the Soviet invasion.

More at The New Arab <http://bit.ly/1T6pQ0B>

Khyber officials tell Afghan refugees to pack up and leave or face stern action

May 5 - Security forces and civil administration officials on Wednesday asked the Khyber Agency tribesmen to expel Afghan citizens from their areas, warning that Afghan refugees should return to their country by May 19. More at Pakistan Today <http://bit.ly/1rJ7GIR>

German ambassador: Many Afghan returnees are 'disappointed'

May 3 - Germany's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Markus Potzel, talks to DW about the

success of a campaign launched by the German government last year to raise awareness among Afghans embarking on perilous journeys to reach Europe.

More at Deutsche Welle <http://bit.ly/1QW552X>

Deadline for Afghan nationals extended

May 2 - Afghan nationals have until May 21 to secure legitimate travel documents. After the deadline, they will not be allowed to cross over Torkham Border unless they have passports and other paperwork.

More at The Express Tribune <http://bit.ly/1TyDk2a>

Time right for return of Afghan refugees: Pakistan

May 2 - Despite challenges, there is growing cordiality in relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which has contributed to increased engagement between the two countries, including on the issue of refugees, which saw the Afghan Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Sayed Hussain Alemi Balkhi, in Islamabad recently.

More at The News International <http://bit.ly/1Zvzag6>

Relief Web provides the latest humanitarian and development information on Afghanistan. <http://reliefweb.int/country/afg>

Population Movements

UNHCR report documents unprecedented levels of internal displacement in 2015

UNHCR released its end-of year report on conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan, which provides an overview of key trends and population figures by region in 2015. During 2015, some 384,480 individuals/ 63,432 families were forcibly displaced. Thirty one out of 34 Afghan provinces were affected by conflict, either generating displacement or hosting large populations of IDPs, with 10 provinces hosting more than 10,000 IDPs and new provinces emerging as conflict hotspots. The overall figure represents an increase of 96 per cent compared with 2014. However, if the 87,000 people who were displaced following the September 2015 attack on Kunduz and who swiftly returned after the restoration of government authority in October, are included in the total, the cumulative figure would exceed 470,000 individuals. It is estimated that by the end of 2015, Afghanistan hosted some 1.2 million IDPs, in emergency and in protracted situations.

Causes of forced displacement in 2015 were varied and included, inter-alia: recurrent offensives and counter-offensives between non-State Armed Groups and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF); military operations often conducted in total disregard for basic principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, as highlighted by UNAMA in its 2015 annual report on the situation of Protection of Civilians; conflict between non-State Armed Groups, particularly among Taliban and emergent groups affiliated with ISIS in the Eastern Region; inter-tribal clashes, often as proxy to the traditional parties to the conflict; and an increasing trend of targeted acts

of violence, harassment, and intimidation by non-State armed groups against individuals and families.

IDP families often fled areas of origin leaving the majority of their possessions and assets behind, exacerbating humanitarian needs. IDP families were generally hosted by extended families or acquaintances, with tribal affinities and community bonds supporting the displaced population in the first phases post-flight. Conflict-induced displacement continued to have a significant impact on individuals with specific needs such as children, who constituted more than 61 per cent of the population displaced in 2015, as well as women, older persons and persons with disabilities. These segments of the population continued to be the most vulnerable to the deprivations of forced displacement, including over-crowded and sub-standard accommodation, and precarious water and sanitation facilities. Aside from material hardships, the psychological impact of the conflict and subsequent flight has been only superficially assessed due to the weak capacity of the national health-care system, particularly in remote areas.

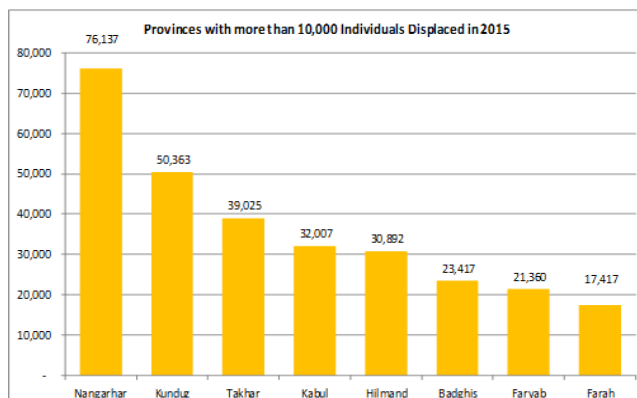
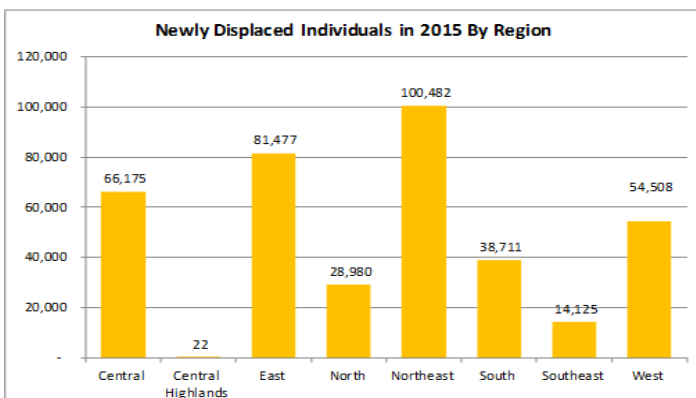
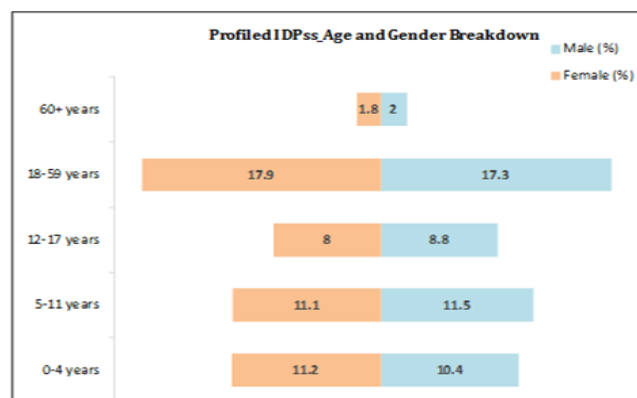
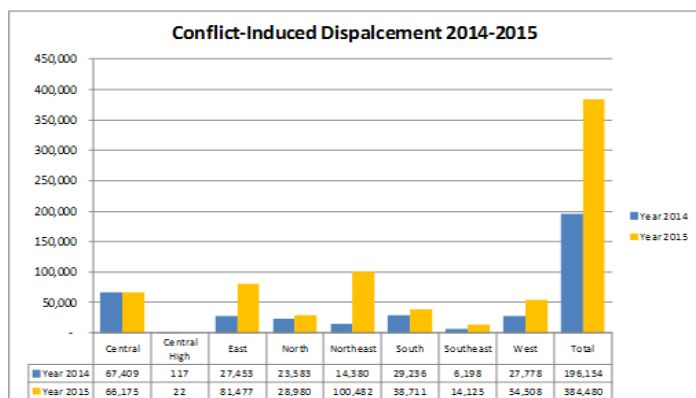
Access to education in displacement has been severely hindered by the destitute conditions of the displaced families, which are often obliged to engage children in household livelihood activities. The lack of proper civil documentation, as well as the limited absorption capacity of schools, also emerged as serious barriers to access to education in displacement. A particular concern during the course of 2015 has been the rise in intimidations and threats against education facilities and teach-

ers, including the closure of an increasing number of schools, particularly in the eastern region, where ISIS-affiliated groups exercised growing authority. Recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups remained a concern in the context of a surge in conflict and a multiplication of non-State armed groups, with different levels of interest in compliance with International Humanitarian Law and child-protection principles. Poverty and lack of coping mechanisms, including during the more prolonged phases of displacement, are also thought to be a factor that contributed to recruitment as a subtle form of coercion.

Risks posed by anti-personnel landmines, anti-tank mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war to civilians, in particular to children, continued to be extremely high. IEDs remained the leading cause of civilian casualties attributed to anti-Government elements and caused the second highest number of civilian casualties (21 per cent), according to the UNAMA 2015 Protection of Civilians Report.

The report has been produced as a coda to UNHCR's role as coordinator of the overall response to conflict IDPs, which was handed over to OCHA in early 2016. UNHCR will continue to engage in internal displacement as Protection and ES/NFI Cluster Lead Agency. Future statistical reports on IDPs will be compiled by OCHA as the overall coordinator. The full text of the report can be found on <http://bit.ly/1OseRzF>

For queries, please contact Elisabetta Brumat (brumat@unhcr.org)



Population Movements

Consequences of forced eviction from the Pacha Mena community in Pakistan

There are wide spread reports of forced evictions of undocumented Afghans from the Pacha Mena community of Pakistan, which is located approximately two kilometers from the border-crossing point with Afghanistan at Torkham. Given the proximity to the border, Pacha Mena has long hosted a significant number of undocumented Afghans. Between 7th and 20th April 2016, IOM has recorded 280 undocumented returnee families crossing back into Afghanistan at Torkham.

Below are some reflections from Dawoud, one of those returnees.

“Because of life-threatening ups and down, civil war in Afghanistan and unforgettable grief at the death of my father, we left our beloved country and took refuge in neighbouring Pakistan near Torkham border (Pacha Mena)

“My name is Dawoud, son of Attiq the permanent resident of the Nangarhar province of Lalpur district. During time civil war amongst many of the Mujaheedin groups there was no security in the country, we lost our dear father during the said civil as well. Finally we decided to leave our country and fled to Pakistan. We settled alongside the Pakistan-Afghan Torkham border in Pacha Mena for many years.”

“Since my father was died and our economic condition was poor, I had to turn to different types of employment. Sometimes I collected scrap metals, sometime I worked for a daily wage, sometimes I worked in brick kilns, and sometimes I worked pulling push cart in the country of asylum so that I could sustain my family. In short, we endured unforgettable difficulties through our life in Pakistan

As the situation in the country of exile got harder for migrants, one day we received an official notification from the Government of Pakistan to evacuate the area and the police authorities further informed us that it would



A family with humanitarian aid. Photo: IOM

be our first and final announcement and there would not be any option left if we did not leave, other than to destroy our home with bulldozers. We ignored this notification and after some months we once again faced the same fate. However, this was not like before, it was quite different; the authorities rushed the area with forces and bulldozers and attempted to destroy all of the homes as people were trying to remove their belongings and children out of their homes. Unfortunately, I lost some of my luggage under the debris and it was burned. I spent the whole day very busy and full of agony and exhausted.

Finally, we crossed the border and entered Afghanistan. Here we were received by IOM who interviewed us about the entire situation and problems. As result, we were provided with a humanitarian assistance package including medical care, food, and NFI. We heartily offer our gratitude to IOM.”

Afghans discuss migration online

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Many Afghans are talking about migration issues on social media. UNHCR conducted a review of the Dari and Pashto language discussion in online communities between 13 and 19 April 2016. Highlights:

Fake Taliban threat letters

Smugglers are selling fake Taliban threat letters to potential asylum-seekers for up to \$1,000. The Taliban say that they no longer send threatening letters.

Afghan asylum-seekers disillusioned by Europe

More Afghans decided to return voluntarily to Afghanistan after they found life in Europe much more difficult than promised by smugglers.

Afghan migrants continue to complain about abuse from Bulgarian police and vigilantes.

Smugglers continue to use the UNHCR logo on their Facebook pages to add credibility to their offers, notably for cruise ship travel between Turkey and Italy.

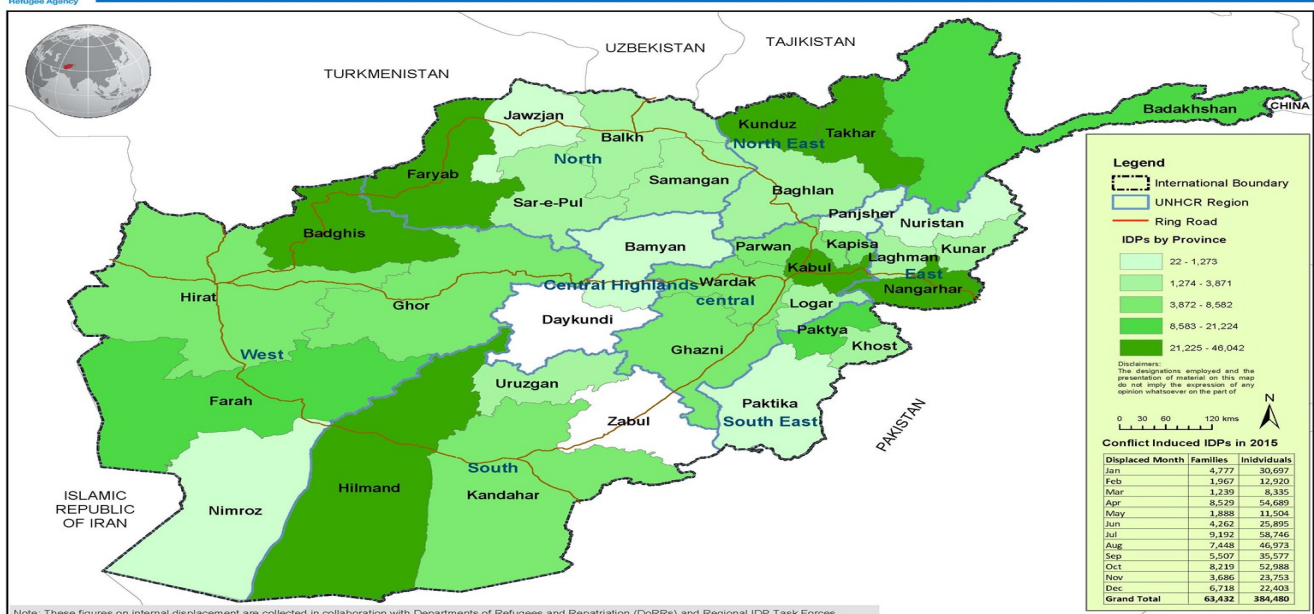
Afghans warn each other on Facebook not to be provoked into violent reactions by the circulation of insensitive information.

Anger over murder in Iran

Worldwide, Afghan communities are angered about the rape and murder of six-year-old Afghan refugee girl Setayesh in Tehran allegedly by an Iranian neighbor. Many Afghans share online the slogan “I am Setayesh”. Wide-ranging responses have extended to anger about abuses and indignities some Afghans have faced in Iran. Iranian authorities have strongly expressed condolences over the murder and pledged rapid judicial action.



Afghanistan conflict-induced IDPs by province of displacement displaced from January to December 2015

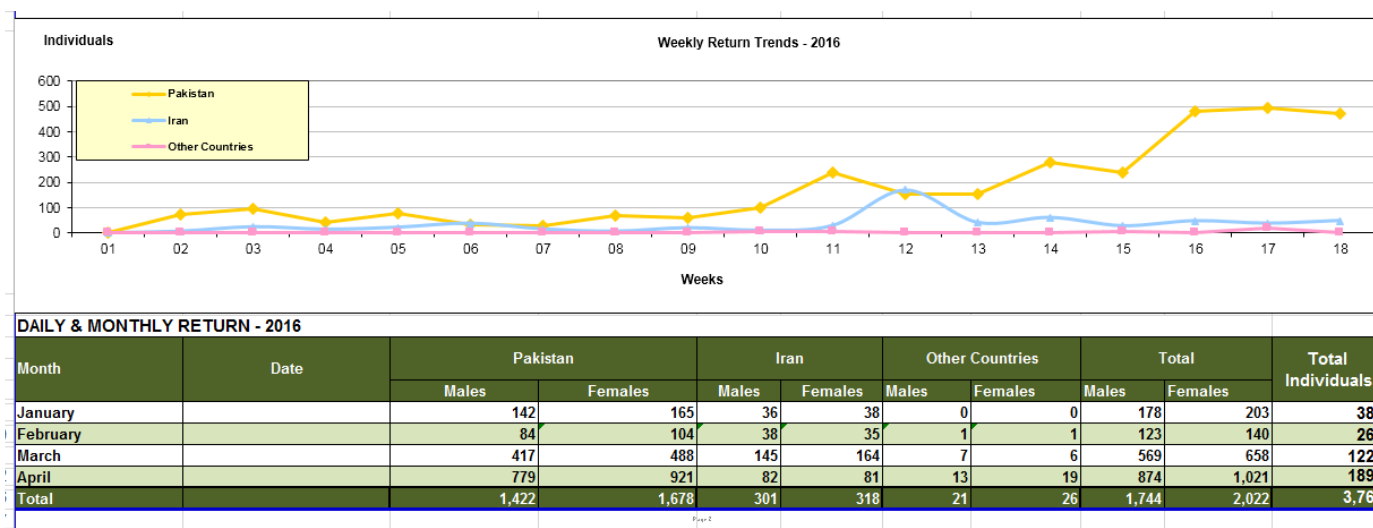
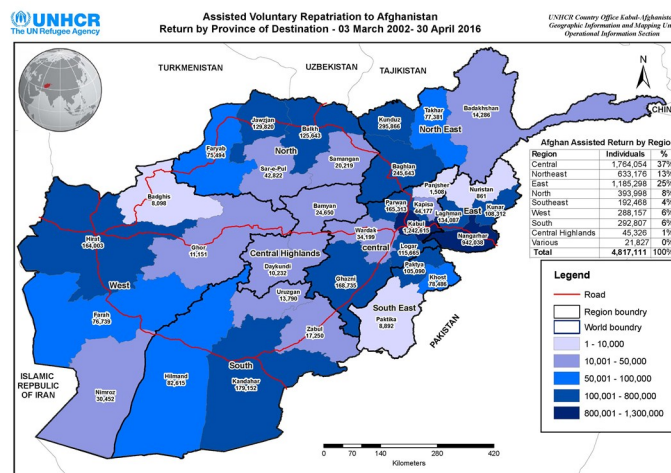


Voluntary Repatriation

Cross border return and reintegration January – March 2016

Providing life-saving humanitarian post-arrival assistance to vulnerable undocumented Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan

In the first three months of 2016 the number of undocumented Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran crossing into Nangarhar, Herat and Nimroz provinces that were recorded by the provincial Directorates of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRRs) was 40.7% lower than the same period in 2015. While some of this drop can be explained by the continuing deterioration of the economic and security situation in Afghanistan, the most significant factor is the subsidence of the significant spike in returns from Pakistan in late 2014 and early 2015 due to backlash against the Peshawar school attack and on-going fight in Northwest Waziristan Agency (NWA).



Directorate of refugees and repatriation figures on undocumented returns from Iran and Pakistan January – March 2015 & 2016

Border Crossing	Jan-Mar 2015			Jan-Mar 2016			15-16 Difference
	Spontaneous	Deportee	Total	Spontaneous	Deportee	Total	
Nangarhar	53,064	4,519	57,583	3,390	4,233	7,623	-87.0%
Herat	45,400	22,294	67,694	36,854	24,961	61,815	-8.7%
Nimroz	13,674	26,247	39,921	9,662	18,841	28,503	-28.6%
Grand Total	112,138	53,060	165,198	49,906	48,035	97,941	-40.7%

Of the 97,941 undocumented Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan recorded by DoRR crossing into Herat, Nimroz and Nangarhar provinces in the first three months of 2016, IOM was able to provide post-arrival humanitarian assistance to 9,172 or nine per cent, of the most vulnerable returnees. IOM treats deported families and Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) as vulnerable persons in need of assistance.

Within these categories, it is interesting to disaggregate beneficiaries by country of return. As shown in the table below, of the PSN beneficiaries, the vast majority of vulnerable returnees from Pakistan that cross at Torkham border crossing point are Poor Families (62%), with most of the rest being Single Parents (18%) or Special Cases (20%). While returnees crossing from Iran are more broadly spread across the vulnerability criteria, the high number of Unaccompanied Minors (1,398), Medical Cases (361), and Drug Addicted (103) is worthy of note.

IOM CBRR beneficiaries by BCP and PSN category January – March 2016

PSN Categories	Nangarhar	Herat	Nimroz	Total	%
UAM	2	848	560	1,410	21.2%
MC	1	210	151	362	5.4%
DA	-	78	25	103	1.5%
UE	-	66	69	135	2.0%
SC	663	281	620	1,564	23.5%
PD	-	31	28	59	0.9%
SF	-	17	2	19	0.3%
CI	-	-	29	29	0.4%
MI	1	6	8	15	0.2%
SP	601	-	17	618	9.3%
PF	2,049	113	188	2,350	35.3%
Total	3,317	1,650	1,697	6,664	100%

Policy Development

Refugees and migrants: A crisis of solidarity

This September, the United Nations General Assembly will bring together world leaders to address one of the leading challenges of our time: responding to large movements of refugees and migrants.

War, human rights violations, underdevelopment, climate change and natural disasters are leading more people to leave their homes than at any time since we have had reliable data. More than 60 million people -- half of them children -- have fled violence or persecution and are now refugees and internally displaced persons. An additional 225 million are migrants who have left their countries in search of better opportunities or simply for survival.

But this is not a crisis of numbers; it is a crisis of solidarity. Almost 90 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries. Eight countries host more than half the world's refugees. Just ten countries provide 75 per cent of the UN's budget to ease and resolve their plight.

With equitable responsibility sharing, there would be no crisis for host countries. We can afford to help, and we know what we need to do to handle large movements of refugees and migrants. Yet too often, we let fear and ignorance get in the way. Human needs end up overshadowed, and xenophobia speaks louder than reason.

Countries on the front lines of this crisis are struggling every day to meet the challenge. On September 19, the General Assembly will hold a high-level meeting to strengthen our efforts for the longer term. To help the international community seize this opportunity, I have just issued a report, "In Safety and Dignity", with recommendations on how the world can take more effective collective action.

We need to begin by recognizing our common humanity. Millions of people on the move have been exposed to extreme suffering. Thousands have died in the Mediterranean, on the Andaman Sea, in the Sahel and in Central America. Refugees and migrants are not "others"; they are as diverse as the human

family itself. Movements of people are a quintessentially global phenomenon that demands a global sharing of responsibility.

Second, far from being a threat, refugees and migrants contribute to the growth and development of host countries as well as their countries of origin. The better new arrivals are integrated, the greater their contribution to



Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General. Photo: UN

society will be. We need more measures to promote the social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants.

Third, political and community leaders have a responsibility to speak out against discrimination and intolerance, and to counter those who seek to win votes through fearmongering and divisiveness. This is a time to build bridges, not walls, between people.

Fourth, we have to give greater attention to addressing the drivers of forced displacement. The United Nations continues to strengthen its work to prevent conflict, resolve disputes peacefully and address violations of human rights before they escalate. One powerful new tool is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a blueprint agreed last year by all 193 members of the United Nations that includes a strong focus on justice, institutions and peaceful societies.

Fifth, we need to strengthen the international systems that manage large movements of people so that they uphold human rights norms and provide the necessary protections. States must honour their international legal obligations, including the 1951 Refugee Con-

vention. Countries where refugees arrive first should not be left to shoulder the demands alone. My report proposes a "global compact on responsibility sharing for refugees".

There is a pressing need to do more to combat smugglers and traffickers, to rescue and protect people en route, and to ensure their safety and dignity at borders. More orderly and legal pathways for migrants and refugees will be crucial, so that desperate people are not forced to turn to criminal networks in their search for safety.

The number of migrants is expected to continue to grow as a result of trade, labour and skill shortages, the ease of travel and communications, rising inequality and climate change. My report proposes important measures to improve global governance in this area, including through a "global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration".

Refugee and migrant crises are far from insurmountable, but they cannot be addressed by states acting alone. Today, millions of refugees and migrants are being deprived of their basic rights, and the world is depriving itself of the full benefits of what refugees and migrants have to offer.

The World Humanitarian Summit I am convening in Istanbul May 23 and 24 will seek new commitments from States and others to work together to protect people and build resilience. I expect the September 19 meeting of the General Assembly to point the way toward solutions to the most immediate refugee and migration challenges, and commit world leaders to greater global cooperation on these issues.

Human beings have moved from place to place across the millennia, by choice and under duress, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Only by upholding our duty to protect those fleeing persecution and violence, and by embracing the opportunities that refugees and migrants offer to their new societies, will we be able to achieve a more prosperous and fairer future for all.

Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General
<http://bit.ly/1q8CYHY>

Iran and EU working together on refugees, migrants and asylum seeker issue

Iran and the European Union have undertaken to cooperate more closely on the issue of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. In a continuing series of high-level exchanges following implementation of the nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)), European Union High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, visited Tehran on 16 April together with seven commissioners. Amongst the wide-ranging commitments in a joint statement

with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, it was agreed to launch a "comprehensive migration dialogue" which would "exchange information on migration management and flows as well as on policy and legislative approaches and priorities in relation to regular and irregular migration, asylum seekers and refugees, both at national and regional levels". The EU expressed "appreciation for Iran's recent decision to include all registered Afghan refugees in the national health insurance scheme on the same

basis as its own citizens and to allow all foreign children irrespective of their legal status to be enrolled in the national education system." Immediate provision was made "to meet the needs of a growing number of Afghans in Iran", through EUR 6.5 million of additional humanitarian assistance, EUR 1.5 million of this to help integrate 10,000 children in the school system. Both the EU and Iran recognized the importance of working closely with the Government of Afghanistan on durable solutions.

Programmatic Responses

UN working to support Internally Displaced Persons in Herat

Located about 15km from Herat city centre, an IDP settlement was established in the Maslakh area of Injeel district in 1998. The settlement totals 1,746 households, comprising 19,350 people, the majority of whom are from provinces in the north and west of Afghanistan (largely Faryab and Badghis) and have resided in the settlement for 10-15 years. Although the population size is not comparable to the initial years, when Maslakh hosted more than 200,000 IDPs, the population profile is mixed, Maslakh is currently still one of the largest IDP settlements in Afghanistan.

Living conditions for the IDPs in Maslakh are generally poor, despite the settlement being long-established. Most of shelters consists of self-built mud and straw huts. Less than half of the population have access to the city power line, or other sources of energy. People living in the settlement have very poor access to basic services on site, such as education or health services. Humanitarian assistance was largely halted at the time of the official closure of the camp in 2005. Since then, assistance to those remaining households has largely been restricted, for fear of encouraging permanency. Families in Maslakh will not return to their places of origin, due to the lack of access to land or adequate shelter, and without that, the only durable solution for them is local integration.

UN Habitat and partners are supporting the people living in the Maslakh IDP settlement in

their efforts to progress towards integration, thus contributing to the end of one of the most protracted displacement situations in Afghanistan. The underlying premise is that the Maslakh IDP settlement is suitable for local integration as it is close to the city of Herat. This brings opportunities for employment, access to basic services,



and improvement of the quality of land, as there is also suitable underground water at the settlement. In addition, there is adequate space on site for Maslakh to absorb more of the protracted caseload of IDPs from other areas of the Herat municipality, where protracted IDPs currently lack security of tenure and are under threat of eviction (e.g. Shaydayee and Minaret protracted settlements). There is scope for the area to ultimately be integrated into Herat Municipality.

A key step to that has been the community forming a Gozar Assembly, (a sub-district council)

and Community Development Councils.

These elected bodies coordinate activities in the settlement, as well as acting as a link between the community and local authorities. They have also helped to facilitate the community's involvement in a planning process, identifying priority needs. These include a water scheme, road gravelling and improvements to public spaces in the settlement – to note the activities currently being implemented. Not only do these activities improve the living conditions in this settlement, but they also underline that when given the opportunity, internally-displaced people will take a part in the governance of their own community, and are keen to become productive, active citizens of Herat.

The example of Maslakh demonstrates both the challenges that long-term displacement creates in Afghanistan, as well as emphasizes the opportunity for durable solutions. Local integration in urban areas appears to be the most preferred solution for displaced groups enduring protracted displacement, with the prospect of their return to rural areas seeming neither realistic nor attractive to them. Developments in Maslakh show that integration is possible, creating local institutions and giving the community a voice in their own futures. If adequately supported, with Government ownership and contributions from the international community, Maslakh can become a concrete example of how the National IDP Policy can be practically implemented.

UNHCR releases 2016 eligibility guidelines for assessing international protection needs of asylum-seekers from Afghanistan

In the context of a precipitous decline in the overall security environment within Afghanistan and a significant exodus of Afghans seeking international protection, UNHCR released updated Eligibility Guidelines to assist countries of asylum in the adjudication of applications for international protection by asylum-seekers. UNHCR's Representative in Afghanistan, Maya Ameratunga, stressed the protection-related aspects of the current population movements, noting "it is imperative that the significant numbers of Afghans fleeing violence and/or persecution receive timely and equal access to individual refugee status determination procedures. We hope that the revised Guidelines will help potential countries of asylum fulfill their international obligations to uphold basic protection principles and prevent the forced return of those with credible physical security or persecution fears. In current mixed migration contexts such as Afghanistan, it is essential to individually distinguish between refugees and migrants through fair asylum processes, in order to ensure that states abide by their obligation to protect refugees. The most fundamental obligation is 'non-refoulement' (no forced return of refugees) – a customary international law principle binding on all states, regardless of whether or not they are party to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees."

The Guidelines stress both the significant impact of the worsening conflict on civilian populations and the paramount importance of individually assessing all claims based on their

own merits according to fair and efficient status determination procedures and up-to-date country of origin information. This applies whether the claims are analysed on the basis of the refugee criteria contained in the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, UNHCR's mandate, regional refugee instruments, or on the basis of broader international protection criteria, including complementary forms of protection.

The Guidelines highlight fifteen profiles of individuals who, depending on individual circumstances, may be at risk and in need of international protection. These include:

Individuals associated with, or perceived as supportive of, the Government and the international community, including the international military forces;

Journalists and media professionals;

Men of fighting age, and children in the context of underage and forced recruitment;

Civilians suspected of supporting anti-government elements (AGEs)

Members of minority religious groups, and persons perceived as contravening Sharia Law;

Individuals perceived as contravening AGEs' interpretation of Islamic principles, norms and values;

Women with certain profiles or in specific circumstances;

Women and men who are perceived as contravening social mores;

Individuals with disabilities, including in particular mental disabilities, and persons suffering from mental illnesses;

Children with certain profiles or in specific circumstances;

Survivors of trafficking or bonded labour and persons at risk of being trafficked or of bonded labour;

Individuals of diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities;

Members of (minority) ethnic groups;

Individuals involved in blood feuds; and
(Family members of) business people and other people of means.

The revised Guidelines also provide specific guidance on assessing whether it is possible and reasonable for Afghans to safely relocate within Afghanistan before seeking international protection abroad. UNHCR considers that alternatives for internal flight/relocation are not available in the increasing areas affected by armed conflict or under the effective control of AGEs. Whether internal flight/relocation can be considered reasonable must be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking fully into account the security, human rights and humanitarian environment in the prospective area of relocation. Furthermore, UNHCR concludes that a proposed internal relocation is reasonable only where the individual has access to shelter, essential services such as sanitation, health care and education, prospects for livelihoods, and access to a traditional support network of extended family or members of his/her larger ethnic community. The complete Guidelines are available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/570f96564.html>

Distinguishing ‘refugees’ from ‘migrants’: why terminology matters

Recognizing the complexities associated with the current population outflows from many countries, including Afghanistan, to Europe and elsewhere, UNHCR’s Division of International Protection prepared a fact sheet of Frequently Asked Questions to address basic misconceptions, clarify terminology, and distinguish the different challenges and potential violations of basic rights faced by refugees and migrants. The following is an excerpt of a larger document: if you would like to receive the complete document, please contact Alex Mundt in the UNHCR Kabul Office:

mundt@unhcr.org

Are the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’ interchangeable?

No. Although it is sometimes common to see the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’ used interchangeably in media and public discussions, there is a crucial legal difference between the two. Confusing them can lead to problems for refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as misunderstandings in discussions of asylum and migration.

What is unique about refugees?

Refugees are specifically defined and protected in international law. Refugees are people outside their country of origin because of feared persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and who, as a result, require ‘international protection’. Their

situation is often so perilous and intolerable, that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as ‘refugees’ with access to assistance from states, UNHCR, and relevant organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they therefore need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

Can ‘migrant’ be used as a generic term to also cover refugees?

A uniform legal definition of the term ‘migrant’ does not exist at the international level. Some policy makers, international organizations, and media outlets understand and use the word ‘migrant’ as an umbrella term to cover both migrants and refugees. For instance, global statistics on international migration typically use a definition of ‘international migration’ that would include many asylum-seeker and refugee movements.

In public discussion, however, this practice can easily lead to confusion and can also have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. ‘Migration’ is often understood to imply a voluntary process, for example, someone who crosses a border in search of better economic opportunities.

This is not the case for refugees who cannot return home safely, and accordingly are owed specific protections under international law.

Blurring the terms ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’ takes attention away from the specific legal protections refugees require, such as protection from *refoulement* (*forced return*) and from being penalized for crossing borders without authorization in order to seek safety. There is nothing illegal about seeking asylum – on the contrary, it is a universal human right. Conflating ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’ can undermine public support for refugees and the institution of asylum at a time when more refugees need such protection than ever before.

We need to treat all human beings with respect and dignity. We need to ensure that the human rights of migrants are respected. At the same time, we also need to provide an appropriate legal and operational response for refugees, because of their particular predicament, and to avoid diluting state responsibilities towards them. For this reason, UNHCR always refers to ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’ separately, to maintain clarity about the causes and character of refugee movements and not to lose sight of the specific obligations owed to refugees under international law.

Do all migrants really always ‘choose’ to migrate?

The factors leading people to move can be complex. Often the causes are multi-faceted. Migrants may move to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. They may also move to alleviate significant hardships that arise from natural disasters, famine, or extreme poverty. People who leave their countries for these reasons would not usually be considered refugees under international law.

Don’t migrants also deserve protection?

The reasons why a migrant may leave their countries are often compelling, and finding ways to meet their needs and protect their human rights is important. Migrants are protected by international human rights law. This protection derives from their fundamental dignity as human beings. For some, failure to accord them human rights protection can have serious consequences. It may result in human rights violations, such as serious discrimination; arbitrary arrest or detention; or forced labour, servitude, or highly exploitative working conditions.

In addition, some migrants, such as victims of trafficking or unaccompanied or separated migrant children, may have particular needs for protection and assistance, and have the right to have those needs met. UNHCR fully supports approaches to migration management that respect the human rights of all people on the move.

Are refugees ‘forced migrants’?

The term ‘forced migration’ is sometimes used by social scientists and others as a general, open-ended term that covers many kinds of displacement or involuntary movement—both across international borders and inside a single country. For example, the term has been used to refer to people who have been displaced by environmental disasters, conflict, famine, or large-scale development projects.

‘Forced migration’ is not a legal concept, and similar to the concept of ‘migration’, there is no universally accepted definition. It covers a wide range of phenomena. Refugees, on the other hand, are clearly defined under international and regional refugee law, and states have agreed to a well-defined and specific set of legal obligations towards them. Referring to refugees as ‘forced migrants’ shifts attention away from the specific needs of refugees and from the legal obligations the international community has agreed upon to address them. To prevent confusion, UNHCR avoids using the term ‘forced migration’ to refer to refugee movements and other forms of displacement.

So what is the best way to refer to mixed groups of people on the move that include both refugees and migrants?

UNHCR’s preferred practice is to refer to groups of people travelling in mixed movements as ‘refugees and migrants’. This is the best way to allow for acknowledgement that all people on the move have human rights which should be respected, protected, and fulfilled; and that refugees and asylum seekers have specific needs and rights which are protected by a particular legal framework.

Sometimes in policy discussions, the term ‘mixed migration’, and related terms such as ‘mixed flows’ or ‘mixed movements’, can be useful ways of referring to the *phenomenon* of refugees and migrants (including victims of trafficking or other vulnerable migrants) travelling side-by-side along the same routes, using the same facilitators.

On the other hand, the term ‘mixed migrant’, which is used by some as a shorthand way of referring to a person travelling in a mixed migratory flow whose individual status is unknown or who may have multiple, overlapping reasons for moving, is unclear. It can cause confusion and mask the specific needs of refugees and migrants within the movement. It is *not* recommended.

Note: The distinction between refugees and migrants is by no means universally accepted. The view put forward in this article is UNHCR’s rather than the definitive answer.

In future issues ...

- Information and communication dissemination methodology
- Refugee Law and MoU with European countries on return