WORLD REFUGEE DAY
20 June 2023

"A refugee is a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there".

Amnesty International

In 2022, at least 103 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes.

Among them are nearly 32.5 million refugees.

Why are people refugees?

War
The conflicts push the inhabitants to take refuge: 6.6 million Ukrainian refugees, 13 million for Syria, and 6 million Afghans are among recent refugees.

Environmental Factors
Projections show an increase from 260 million climate refugees in 2030 to 1.2 billion in 2050. Unfortunately, the inhabitants of today’s host countries could become the refugees of tomorrow.

Persecution
In 2023, 53.2 million refugees are internally displaced persons who risked human rights abuses in their own countries.

Economic Hardship
It can be an autonomous reason, but it is usually an additional factor that pushes people to migrate.

What are the main risks faced by refugees?

Risks of aggression, harassment and racism: refugees often face the racism of some of the inhabitants of their host country who are hostile to them. Moreover, there has been an increase in fascist and nationalist policies in recent years, particularly in developed and rich countries.

Risks during migration: the migration of refugees and often long, exhausting, complex, onerous and risky: theft, abuse, violence. Some do not make it to the end of their journey: the 20,000 drowned migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea were passed in 2020, and have been steadily increasing since then.

Trauma and Coping Challenges
In addition to the potential trauma in their home countries, more than one in five refugees have mild to moderate forms of mental illness, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Special impact on women and child refugees

Women represent almost half of all refugees worldwide. In addition to the elements already mentioned, they face additional risks: 60% of preventable maternal deaths take place within the framework of humanitarian aid, and gender violence are numerous. It is estimated that at least one in five displaced women or refugees has experienced sexual violence. Unaccompanied, pregnant, head of household, disabled or elderly women are even more vulnerable.

There are 13.7 million refugee and asylum-seeking children and nearly 22.8 million internally displaced children. Refugee and migrant children are extremely vulnerable to violence and abuse. They are victims of smugglers and even treated as slaves by traffickers. In addition, just over 55 per cent of refugee children have access to primary school, compared to 90 per cent of non-refugee children. This gap only widens when we talk about secondary school, about 23%, or access to higher education.

GWI thanks intern, Paloma MARTIAL, for her contributions to this infographic.

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Break the clichés!

There are unfortunately many unfounded clichés about refugees, which are spreading increasingly with the enhancement of racism and nationalist policies of States. However, after some research, most are completely false and unfounded, and promote hostile behavior of the inhabitants of the host countries towards refugees.

83% of refugees are welcomed in low- and middle-income countries. The 6 richest countries in the world only receive 9% of refugees. For several years now, the United Nations has been denouncing the lack of solidarity of the most developed countries, both with regard to refugees and less developed countries, which are forced to accept a large number of refugees.

The journey to a secure location is very expensive, several hundred or thousands of dollars. Few can afford it, and certainly not the poorest, who do not have sufficient means to finance their perilous journey and the various smugglers. Refugees often had a satisfactory economic situation in their country of origin, and qualifications.

Procedures to have the status of refugee recognized are long and complex, several months or even years depending on the host country, and do not always succeed. Meanwhile, refugees are in precarious situations, legally unable to work, study or find housing. When status is granted, financial aid does not represent more than the minimum necessary to live in the host country.

Immigration tends to strengthen the economic growth of developed countries, notably by supporting the activity of key sectors and significantly increasing the level of employment. Following an increase in a given migration flow, GDP per capita will increase significantly over four years, while the unemployment rate will fall. They also contribute to economy by paying taxes, and they also help aging population.

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How can we help refugees?

- Support financially the activities of OHCHR and NGOs that support refugees and promote their reception.
- Engage as a volunteer or support local and international NGOs that help refugees, such as giving language classes.
- Communicate with friends, co-workers, community, and social media to break down negative cliches on refugees.
- If your situation permits, offer temporary accommodation for refugees nearby.
- Give your clothes that are no longer used or not your size to associations for refugees, who often arrive in the host country with the minimum vital.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

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Sources: UNHCR, OCDE, World Bank, Amnesty International, Plan International