

Safeguarding fundamental rights

Rohingya refugees crossing the border near Anzuman Para village, Palong Khali, Bangladesh.

Many factors combine to force families into having to flee their homes. These factors include conflict, underdevelopment and poverty, natural disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. They also include inequality, social and economic exclusion, human rights violations, weak or absent government, resulting in the absence of the rule of law, violent extremism, and the activities of organized crime or gangs.

Protecting the rights of people of concern to UNHCR is considered fundamental to creating sustainable solutions to

displacement. While evidence suggests the overall commitment to providing all people of concern with protection resonates today and is deeply embedded in cultures and religions, translating these traditions of welcome into meaningful outcomes for them requires all parts of society to work together to ensure more predictable and coordinated responses to displacement. It involves the reinforcement of national protection systems, and the strengthening of the capacity and resilience of host communities and people of concern to UNHCR.

Guided by its mandate, and by its 2017–2021 Strategic Directions, UNHCR continued in 2017 to seek to shape the global response to forced displacement and statelessness. The Office did so by supporting States to address protection challenges and develop national protection systems, by placing people of concern at the centre of its work, and by working across the entire spectrum of displacement, including with IDPs. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) continued

to rank as important milestones for global solidarity and international protection. At a time when the principles and standards of refugee protection were being called into question by some, the Declaration marks an important reaffirmation of the international protection regime, founded on cooperation and responsibility.

This chapter outlines UNHCR’s work in 2017 to strengthen national systems and respond to the protection needs of asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons.

Many host countries maintained open borders during 2017, showing remarkable commitment and generosity towards those in need of international protection. However, protection space shrank in some places, and persistent challenges remained in responses to more complex, irregular and mixed movements of people. A growing focus on border control, together with damaging narratives around people on the move, had a direct impact on refugees. Serious concerns emerged during 2017 regarding the approach of a number of States towards asylum matters, including narrowed eligibility for refugee status, limited or no access to fair and efficient asylum procedures and rights, and the wide-spread use of detention, including of children, for immigration-related reasons.

Detention monitoring activities increased by 22 per cent during the reporting period, and there was a 14 per cent decrease in the number of children in detention in the focus countries during the same period.

Many asylum systems faced growing challenges, either due to the sheer volume of applications or in situations where people seeking legal residence resorted to the asylum process because no other legal pathways were available. The Office supported States to increase the efficiency of their asylum procedures while maintaining fair systems. It also supported States that had either started refugee status determination (RSD) processing or significantly increased the volume of RSD they were undertaking. In addition, UNHCR engaged in quality assurance initiatives, together with relevant authorities, to strengthen RSD systems. This included work in the Americas and Eastern Europe (see regional summaries). To assist RSD decision-making, the Office worked with partners on country of origin information products, and issued country-specific and legal guidance. Separate to States assuming responsibility for RSD, in 2017, UNHCR also received around 263,400 direct RSD requests, an increase compared to 2016. The Office also provided technical advice on addressing security concerns without undermining refugee protection within asylum procedures.

In recent years, UNHCR has been deepening its systems approach—working with rule of law and governance experts and adopting practices consistent with the New York Declaration and the CRRF to achieve greater inclusion, and to support the development of national plans.

In 2017, a total of 20 operations worked towards ending child detention and the implementation of alternatives to detention.

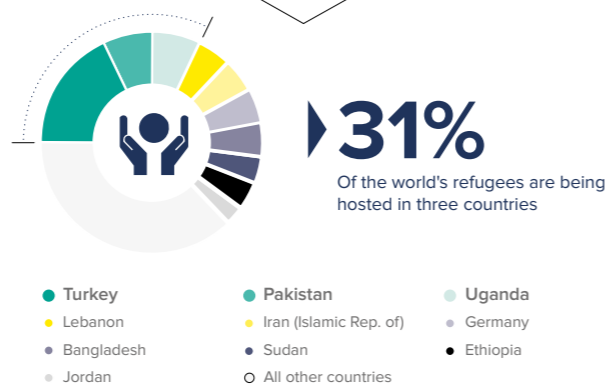
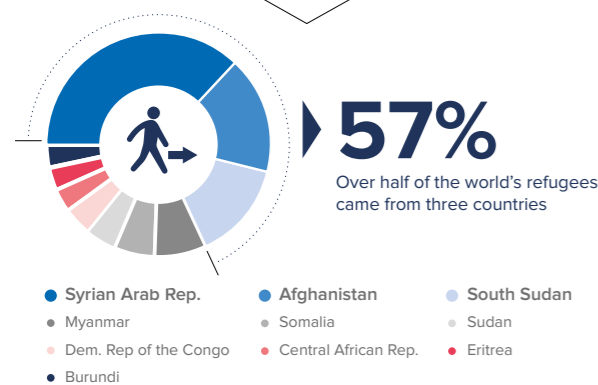
1.9 million
In 2017, there were an estimated 1.9 million claims for asylum lodged with States or UNHCR in 162 countries or territories.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SYSTEMS

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN | 2017



TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM | 2017



As of the end of 2017, close to 140 countries had national asylum laws in place, implementing relevant international conventions for the protection of refugees.

UNHCR’s unique mandate and responsibility continued to make it a leading authority on legal matters related to forced displacement in 2017. In exercising its responsibility for supervising international instruments for the protection of refugees, particularly the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol—the Office maintained its critical role in developing

international law and standards in the area of forced displacement, including in the context of mixed movements of people and displacement as a result of climate change and disasters. By continuing its strong advocacy work, UNHCR worked to ensure protection policies and standards had a positive impact on the lives of people of concern.

The 2030 Agenda provides compelling support for the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons in national development planning. UNHCR maintained its advocacy with States as well as with development actors for the inclusion of people of concern in national development plans and all other activities related to the SDGs.

Furthermore, UNHCR sought to strengthen national legal frameworks, for the benefit of all people of concern, by providing governments, international organizations and legal communities with guidance on protection issues, policies and practices. Achieving positive outcomes for people of concern requires strengthening cooperation with a diverse range of actors, including rule of law and judicial authorities. Collaboration on these issues with other UN offices and agencies, such as DPKO, UNDP, UNICEF,

UN Police, UN Women and other national and international rule of law actors, is also key to wider support the strengthening of national systems through humanitarian interventions that are better coordinated with the work of development actors.

The Office continued to advocate States' adherence to protection standards by offering guidance and practical support and solutions, including in the development of comprehensive responses. Following the application of the CRRF, positive legal developments were seen in countries rolling it out. This included legislative reforms in Djibouti, Kenya and Zambia that will help ensure more refugees are able to access education and employment opportunities and to enjoy greater freedom of movement (see the chapter on *Expanding partnerships*).

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FAVOURABLE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

WORK TO DEVELOP OR STRENGTHEN LAW AND POLICY. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Advocate and enhance the protection and security of people of concern

Jointly worked with ICRC on maintaining a civilian and humanitarian character to sites and settlements and contributed to the "Aide-mémoire: operational guidance on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of sites and settlements".

Organized, with the ICRC, a webinar on humanitarian evacuations.

Advocate law and policy to protect and respect the rights of people of concern

Built capacity of its staff and partners on legal and policy issues, including in the area of human rights and mixed movements; and engaged with regional and national legislative and judicial processes, as well as actors.

Provided blank convention travel documents to States as a transitional measure, using its existing stock, until States could issue their own. A total of 13 non-State parties established practices to provide travel documents to refugees and stateless persons. Of them, 6 States issued such documents in line with international aviation standards.

Made 33 country submissions to the universal periodic review (UPR), 113 to the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, and 25 oral briefings to these bodies.

Organized 12 webinars for staff on how to engage with the UPR and the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

Prepared 104 country-specific feedback reports on human rights mechanisms' processes in support of UNHCR's advocacy.

Advocate the adoption or revision of laws consistent with international standards

Supported 80 legislative processes pertaining to refugee protection, the conclusion of an Arab League convention on refugees and the ongoing revision of legal instruments on asylum in the EU.

Filled 19 formal court interventions on the interpretation and application of legal standards for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in 9 jurisdictions.

Develop, publish and disseminate guidance on international refugee protection

Issued legal guidance on the applicability of article 1D of the 1951 Convention to Palestinian refugees, the meaning of migrants in vulnerable situations and people in need of international protection, search-and-rescue operations involving refugees and migrants at sea, the seizure and search of electronic devices of asylum-seekers, and the treatment of refugees recognized under the 1969 OAU Convention.

Work towards ending the detention of asylum-seeking and stateless children, monitoring detention conditions and promoting alternatives to detention

Supported 20 focus countries to look at alternatives to detention in line with UNHCR's strategy to move beyond detention.

Developed an e-learning package on immigration detention and 2 blended learning programmes on monitoring immigration detention and reception, care arrangements, and alternatives to detention for children and families.

Delivered 3 regional workshops for staff and partners in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Europe on immigration detention.

FAIR PROTECTION PROCESSES AND DOCUMENTATION

IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF STATUS DETERMINATION PROCEDURES. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Further develop and oversee the implementation of policies, guidance, standards and procedures relating to RSD

Piloted a project in Malawi to assess the capacities of institutions engaged in that country's asylum system.

Updated key guidance in UNHCR's manual "Procedural Standards for RSD under UNHCR's mandate" and issued new guidance on RSD processing.

Provided legal, procedural and operational guidance to governments, staff and partners on RSD eligibility standards and procedures, including in the areas of exclusion, cancellation, extradition and matters relating to the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum.

Strengthen the capacity of UNHCR RSD staff and operations, including through deployments

Developed a new e-learning programme to serve as induction for new RSD staff.

Conducted RSD-specific training, including 2 sessions of the RSD learning programme, which benefitted 60 staff.

Deployed 9 RSD experts to operations.

Rolled out a new interview learning programme in 6 operations, benefiting 126 staff involved in interviewing people for RSD and resettlement purposes.

Provide decision-makers on asylum claims access to up-to-date country-of-origin information and country-specific policy guidance

Published country-specific guidance on Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), and other legal and policy documents, as well as, together with partners, country of origin information products. Updated country of origin information collection on Refworld.

Launched the RSD Practitioners' Platform, a new internal electronic community aimed at facilitating private cooperation and exchange between RSD staff.

ADDRESSING AND RESPONDING TO MIXED MOVEMENTS



An Italian Coast Guard officer stands on the front of a boat after rescuing sub-Saharan African asylum-seekers during a night operation in the Mediterranean Sea, some 50 nautical miles off the coast of Libya.

175,500
Refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via sea routes from Africa in 2017.

Human mobility has become increasingly complex in recent years. In 2017, mixed movements occurred in several regions, including across the Mediterranean; from the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa towards Southern Africa; across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to Yemen; across the North of Central America; and across Asia and the Pacific. Refugees and migrants faced many of the same risks when undertaking journeys in search of better opportunities. The routes they used were fraught with danger, including travel on unseaworthy boats and through scorching

deserts. Smuggling and trafficking were significant challenges facing not only refugees and migrants themselves, but also States and societies in 2017.

The New York Declaration, which was adopted in 2016, envisaged relevant stakeholders, including UNHCR, would contribute to developing the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as to the elaboration of non-binding principles on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations. As a result, UNHCR has continued working with the Office of the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and other partners on the complementary of the two compacts, despite being elaborated by distinct and independent processes. Furthermore, the New York Declaration included commitments that apply to both refugees and migrants, including one to intensify international cooperation on the strengthening of search-and-rescue mechanisms. In 2017, UNHCR issued general legal considerations on search-and-rescue missions involving refugees and migrants at sea.

To support States and other actors in addressing mixed movements, UNHCR updated its “10-point plan of action on refugee protection and mixed migration”, which provides tools and practical guidance to help identify and respond to the needs of people on the move who are at risk, or have international protection and/or special needs. This guidance includes best practices from Europe, and countries such as Morocco, Sudan and Thailand

on responding to the needs of victims of trafficking, as well as guidance on the identification and protection of victims. In the framework of the negotiations related to the global compact for migration, the Office issued guidance related to people in need of international protection as well as on migrants in vulnerable situations. In addition, in early 2017 UNHCR launched a campaign to raise awareness of the risks of crossing the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea from Africa to Yemen, highlighting the danger of the journey and insecurity upon arrival (see *Middle East and North Africa* regional summary).

UNHCR, together with UNICEF and other partners, continued to provide support at special “Blue Dots” hubs to refugees and migrants families along the most frequented routes to Europe. These hubs provided access to safe, child-friendly spaces, as well as private rooms for psychological and social support, and also offered legal counselling, services to restore family links and an information desk.

Some 45,000 asylum applications from unaccompanied and separated children on the move, mainly Afghans and Syrians, were lodged in 67 countries in 2017.

Responding to the international protection needs of people in mixed movements along the central Mediterranean route

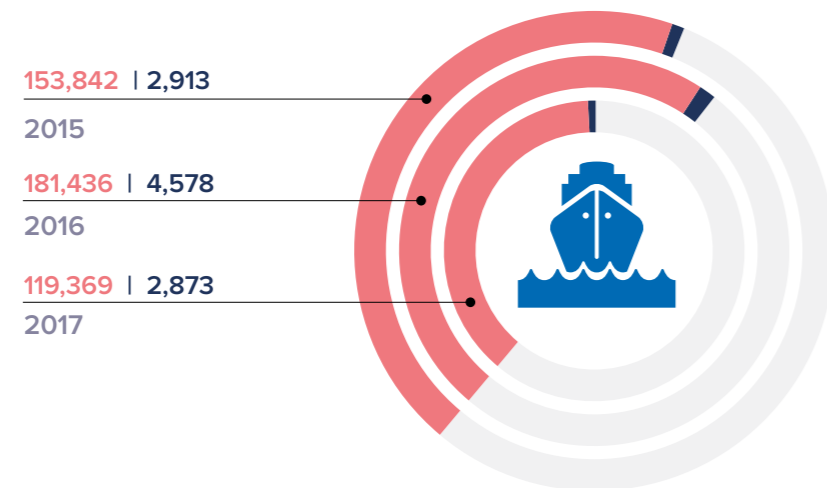
The majority of refugees and migrants arriving in Italy by sea are from sub-Saharan Africa. In 2017, 11 per cent of the total arrivals were from East and Horn of Africa, while approximately 41 per cent were from West Africa and 10 per cent from North Africa.

Of all mixed-movement situations, the central Mediterranean route from sub-Saharan Africa to Italy was one of the most active and dangerous for refugees

and migrants seeking to reach Europe. It accounted for the largest number of people crossing to Europe by sea, with Libya the main point of departure.

ARRIVALS TO ITALY BY SEA-DEAD OR MISSING IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN | 2017

● Arrivals ● Dead or missing



Communicating with communities

Stepping up its efforts to address protection risks along mixed migration routes, UNHCR invested in information campaigns and communication with community initiatives, such as the Telling the Real Story project.



Given the scale and complexity of these movements, the High Commissioner appointed a Special Envoy to enhance coordination and cooperation mechanisms, and to support joined-up approaches to solutions, including through the CRRF.

The Special Envoy's risk mitigation strategy, launched in October 2017, has three broad objectives and targeted activities in countries of origin, transit and destination in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Europe. These are:

- Addressing protection risks along migration routes in the region.
- Enhancing the protection space in transit countries to provide meaningful alternatives to a dangerous journeys.
- Identifying lasting solutions in cooperation and coordination with concerned authorities and partners.

Seeking to encourage meaningful discussions between countries of origin and destination on key protection issues, UNHCR initiated a dialogue with countries in West Africa and Europe to address issues such as civil registration and documentation, transnational programming for victims of trafficking, missing people along the routes, measures for unaccompanied or separated children on the move, and diaspora engagement.

The last quarter of the year saw progress as countries of origin increased efforts to provide their citizens abroad with documentation. Anti-trafficking advocacy was also central to UNHCR's efforts to reduce risks. UNHCR's specific recommendations on anti-trafficking and assistance to victims of trafficking influenced decisions taken by States and led to increased remedial actions in Egypt, Niger and Sudan, but extensive work remains to be done.

EVACUATIONS FROM LIBYA | 2017



Particularly in Niger, UNHCR increased reception capacity and improved service provision to asylum-seekers. Also in Niger, efforts to find lasting solutions for people of concern on the move included the establishment of an emergency transit mechanism (ETM), to facilitate the evacuation of extremely vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees from Libya for onward resettlement. Libya also made progress, with the authorities allowing the opening of a transit and departure centre

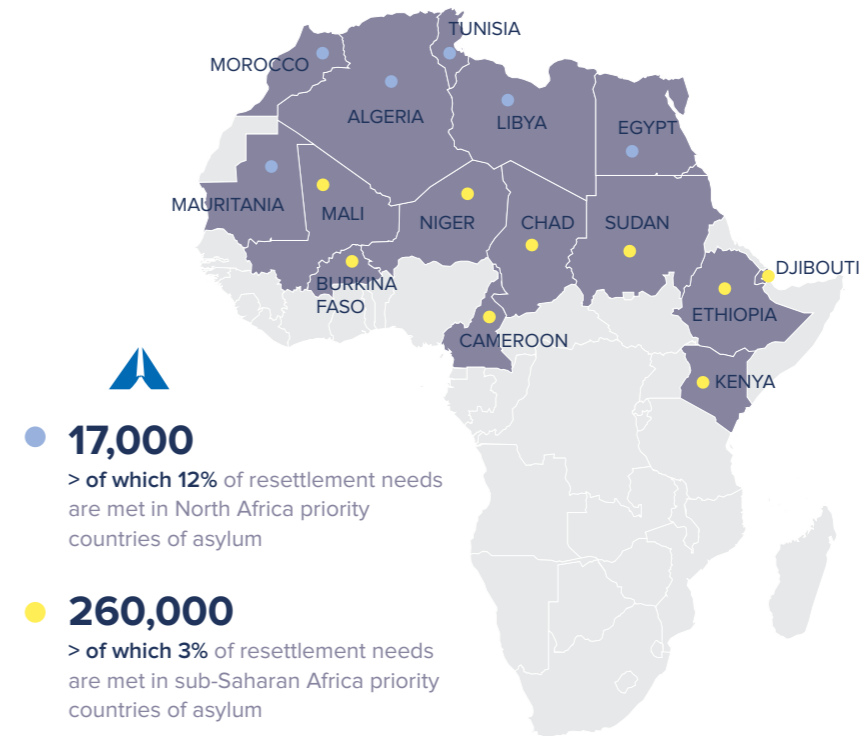
for refugees in Tripoli, increasing UNHCR’s protection and solutions outreach. Refugees and asylum-seekers stranded in Libya were either evacuated through the ETM in Niger through humanitarian evacuations sponsored by the Italian Government, or directly out of Libya for resettlement. IDP response in Libya was also enhanced, with significant progress made in implementing quick impact projects for Libyan IDPs and returnees.

“Refugee evacuations can only be part of broader asylum-building and migration-management efforts to address the complex movement of migrants and refugees who embark on perilous journeys across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. There is a clear need to create more regular and safe ways for refugees to find safety and international protection, and to address the root causes and drivers of forced displacement.”

—Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR Special Envoy for the central Mediterranean route situation

RESETTLEMENT NEEDS | 2017

277,000 PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN NEED OF RESETTLEMENT IN 15 PRIORITY COUNTRIES



From a cross-regional perspective, UNHCR stepped up efforts to better identify and document mixed-movement issues, including protection incidents along routes. In August 2017, a Central Mediterranean Core Group for enhanced resettlement and complementary pathways was established, becoming an important forum for UNHCR advocacy for meaningful alternatives to dangerous journeys. Nearly 17,000 resettlement pledges were received for the 15 priority countries of asylum for the central Mediterranean situation (see the chapter on *Building better futures*).

Overall, despite some success, in many countries of origin few, if any, of the drivers for mixed movements were resolved. This means there was little chance for sustainable returns and a high chance of continued outflows. For those with the option of repatriation, a lack of reintegration assistance was a challenge. For those unable to return, solutions beyond voluntary repatriation, including resettlement and complementary legal pathways such as family reunification, were insufficient.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE OF CONCERN



Biometric data is collected during registration with UNHCR in Jakarta, Indonesia.

During flight, some people face heightened protection risks and barriers to accessing rights. Among the most vulnerable are women and children, unaccompanied and separated children, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), people with disabilities, people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and minority groups. Protection responses must consider the specific needs and capacities of people. To achieve this, in 2017, UNHCR improved its information and data management to support protection analysis, longer-term protection and solutions planning, as well as prioritized the protection of people most at risk and promoted gender equality in different regions worldwide.

Identity management and registration

Access to accurate and up-to-date information on people of concern to UNHCR is crucial to responding efficiently with targeted humanitarian assistance. In line with its 2017–2021 Strategic Directions, the Office strengthened its position as an authority on identity management standards and systems to improve humanitarian and development responses to forced displacement.

Registration

UNHCR harmonized data activities and enhanced interoperable systems for identity and case management. As of the end of 2017, UNHCR had rolled out its web-based case management database, proGres in Partnership (proGres v4), in 37 countries. More than 4.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers have been biometrically enrolled in 48 countries using UNHCR's biometric systems, such as the biometric identity management system (BIMS) or IrisGuard. By doing so, UNHCR helped partners and host governments to standardize registration and case management practices. The Office is currently on track to achieve its Grand Bargain commitment of 75 countries benefiting from biometric identity management systems by 2020. UNHCR also continued discussions with resettlement States, IOM, and WFP on registration data-sharing and the technical interoperability of systems, for greater efficiencies and integrity in processing. (For more information on comprehensive solutions, see the chapter on *Building better futures*).



Innovative cash technologies

In Jordan, UNHCR and its partners worked with private sector service providers to support 32,000 vulnerable refugee families, using the latest technology to ensure that registered refugees targeted through vulnerability assessments get the right amount of money at the right time. UNHCR employed iris scanning during the registration of refugees to verify and authenticate identities and instantly enrol them in digital banking. Refugees were then able to access funds without a cash card, meeting their needs with dignity through actions that support the local economy.

UNHCR implemented a mobile data collection tool that yielded invaluable identity and needs data for the Rohingya refugee emergency response (see the chapter on *Responding with lifesaving support*). The registration exercise enabled UNHCR and partners to better understand the size and breakdown of the population, where people were located, and their protection needs from the onset of the emergency. Such information was key to getting the right aid to the right people. The data collected was also used to streamline and verify refugee identities for the distribution of emergency relief items. Aggregated data from the exercise was also shared with partners to improve evidence-based planning and programming and ensure timely protection interventions.

Identity management

UNHCR established itself as a critical player in identity management and in leveraging digital systems. The Office developed and fostered new strategic partnerships—including with international development actors, States, civil society and private sector service providers. These partnerships promoted a shared understanding of identity and the benefits of identity-related technology in empowering refugees, displaced people and stateless persons.

UNHCR joined several World Bank and ID2020-convened workshops in Africa, including ones focused on identification systems and digital identity systems. The Office also convened its first workshop on digital identity to explore how using digital systems can achieve inclusion and empowerment, as well as contribute towards achieving SDG 16.9 on providing a legal status for all by 2030.

760,000
Mobile technology allowed data collection with the GPS tagging of family shelters for over 760,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This resulted in more coordinated, targeted responses for the delivery of protection and lifesaving assistance.

With almost 85 per cent of refugees living in the developing world and more than half displaced for over four years, humanitarian interventions need to be complemented by a longer-term development response, including in the area of data management. The World Bank and UNHCR have joined forces to establish a joint data centre on forced displacement to improve statistics on displaced people, stateless persons

and host communities. The centre is intended to build a better informed and more sustainable response to forced displacement, underpinning a coordinated humanitarian-development approach. It builds on UNHCR's role as the reference institution for refugee data and incorporates the World Bank's analytical expertise and experience helping national governments improve statistical capacity.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FAVOURABLE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN QUALITY OF REGISTRATION AND PROFILING. IN 2017, UNHCR:

<p>Improve registration and case management software</p>	<p>Deployed its latest registration and case management software, proGres in Partnership (proGres v4), to 25 operations in 2017, through regional workshops for Western Europe and the Americas.</p>
<p>Improve identity management</p>	<p>Deployed BIMS to 17 operations, further supporting the implementation of a unique identity for people of concern.</p> <p>Rolled out the global distribution tool in Burundi, Djibouti and Kenya, which verifies a beneficiary's biometric identity against entitlement documents before WFP partners distribute assistance.</p> <p>With WFP, worked on a global data-sharing addendum to explore the sharing of biographical and biometric data, as well as seek interoperability between UNHCR's PRIMES and WFP's SCOPE systems.</p> <p>Supported Rwanda and Uganda in strengthening identity management systems at registration and assistance distribution by using UNHCR tools and processes.</p> <p>Initiated discussions on e-submissions with several resettlement States and started consultations on the development of a standard data transfer system from UNHCR's central database to allow automated and controlled transfer of data to States in the context of resettlement submissions.</p> <p>Provided access to biometric verification of refugees to IOM in Kenya at the point of resettlement processing for departures.</p>
<p>Provide support to registration activities in the field</p>	<p>Invested heavily in emergency registration preparedness, capacity-building and response, by facilitating its third training session on emergency registration.</p> <p>Facilitated institutional training on emergency registration and deployed 7 graduates to Angola, Bangladesh and Uganda to support registration activities.</p> <p>Provided registration materials from its stockpile to support emergencies and conducted verification activities in the field.</p> <p>Facilitated a pilot workshop on strategic approaches to registration with 11 operations in the Asia and the Pacific, to strengthen access to and delivery of registration and identity management for people of concern.</p> <p>Drafted a policy and guidance on identity management and registration.</p> <p>Established a toolkit of templates and sample resources, and planning and implementation tools for verification exercises. This included a comprehensive reporting and monitoring tool to analyse the effectiveness of verification activities on data quality and use.</p>

Identifying the needs of people of concern



UNHCR staff counsel separated refugee children among the new arrivals in Nayapara camp in Bangladesh.

UNHCR applies a community-based approach to protecting people of concern, such as those with specific needs, and emphasizes clear communication and transparency, participation and inclusion, feedback and response, and organizational learning and adaptation as core components. Community-based protection empowers communities to exercise their rights with dignity and safety. For example, in 2017, UNHCR's community-based initiatives included support to community centres meeting the needs of diverse groups and delivery, with partners, of outreach volunteer programmes.

UNHCR developed and implemented a range of community-based initiatives with a focus on enhancing the protection of people with disabilities. Initiatives included work to build the capacity of service providers, strengthening their ability to deliver inclusive services. This work has helped reduce barriers for

people with disabilities and older people in accessing services, and has also improved their ability to participate in community activities. In other settings, the Office worked in partnership with local disability organizations on rehabilitation and development projects for children with disabilities.

Children constitute more than 50 per cent of the world's refugees, compared to 31 per cent of the general global population, and are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. In 2017, UNHCR strengthened its protection programme for children, adolescents and youth by focusing on their inclusion in national protection systems, continuing to apply the "best interests of the child" principle, and improving community-based approaches to child protection and youth programming, as well as adolescent and youth programming in forced displacement contexts.

Implementing the best interests principle was also a global strategic priority for UNHCR. After consultation with stakeholders, the Office revised its “Guidelines on determining the best interests of the child”.

Building on the outcomes of the 2016 global refugee youth consultations, UNHCR strengthened its focus on adolescents and youth programming. In 2017, the Office established a global youth advisory made up of 15 youth delegates aged between 18 and 25. These delegates

presented recommendations related to the development of the global compact on refugees at the High Commissioner’s Protection Dialogue in December 2017. Reflecting the fact that young people are the future leaders of global responses to displacement, the Office invested in youth-focused capacity-building efforts. This included providing selected youth with access to specialist training programmes and encouraging their involvement in community outreach initiatives.



Give us a chance to build a brighter future, young refugees say

More than a dozen youth delegates from countries as diverse as the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and South Sudan took part in a high-level meeting in Geneva in December 2017.

Some 500 representatives from governments, local authorities, civil society, private companies, academics, international organizations and financial institutions gathered for the tenth annual High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2017. The two-day forum gave young refugees the opportunity to address policymakers and share their views and experiences, in particular on the importance of access to education for young refugees.

Some delegates stressed the importance of giving young refugees the chance to participate in the decisions that will affect their lives. One of them was Safia Ibrahimkhel, 25, an Afghan refugee born and raised in Pakistan. “I don’t just speak as a youth, but as a female refugee,” she said. “Young refugees and women ... should have the opportunity to take part in the decision making ... we have the capacity, we have the potential ... we are intelligent, and we have the power to make a positive change in the world.”



Safia Ibrahimkhel, 25, an Afghan refugee born in Pakistan, participated as a youth delegate at the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

© UNHCR/Jean-Marie Ferré



Forcibly displaced lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people are another group at heightened risk of discrimination and violence. UNHCR continued to develop guidance to ensure LGBTI people of concern have safe, dignified and equitable access to protection, assistance and solutions. In 2017, the Office strengthened efforts

to protect LGBTI people of concern by delivering training to raise awareness among staff of their specific needs. The Office also delivered an intensive LGBTI learning programme in three locations, reaching a total of 62 staff members from 37 countries and resulting in action plans to strengthen LGBTI protection in each of these respective office locations.

Action plans included improving reception conditions for LGBTI people through sensitization work with staff, partners and interpreters; creation of safe spaces, awareness raising and advocacy with displaced communities and local authorities for the rights of LGBTI people; and establishing referral mechanisms and networks to exchange protection practices and tools.

Given the sensitivity of dealing with LGBTI issues in some countries of asylum, UNHCR focused on mainstreaming protection response to LGBTI people within existing services. Countries also created networks and focal point systems of trained staff to

respond to the specific needs of LGBTI people, including safe identification and referral of at-risk cases. In some countries, partnerships with local LGBTI organizations were expanded, and training on sexual orientation and gender identity were also developed to include partners. In other countries, UNHCR worked with LGBTI groups to share best practices on supporting LGBTI people. The Office also published a report on promising practices related to gender in its work with Syrian refugees in the Middle East and North Africa. This report included a section exploring good practices in working with LGBTI people in this context.



AREAS OF INTERVENTION

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE

STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Strengthen capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate protection and assistance programmes, in close collaboration with people of concern

Rolled out community-based protection learning programmes targeting, in particular, West Africa and Eastern and Southern Europe. Equipped 46 staff with the knowledge, skills and practical resources needed to apply an effective, community-based approach to protection in their operations.

Strengthen UNHCR’s participatory approach and mechanism for accountability to affected population

Piloted the accountability to affected population (AAP) framework and operational guidance and integrated it into several learning programmes, as well as in the updated AGD policy that will be issued in 2018. Supported 11 countries with the development and implementation of accountability mechanisms. Developed AAP training resources and incorporated them into new and existing protection training programmes.

BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

STRENGTHEN SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Strengthen capacity to address specific protection needs of LGBTI people of concern

Organized a “training of trainers” programme on LGBTI protection with 12 staff from 5 regions and headquarters.

Delivered nearly 350 training sessions on working with LGBTI people of concern in countries. Training was provided by 22 UNHCR staff members who were certified LGBTI trainers.

Helped foster good practices in responding to the needs of LGBTI people through the delivery to 3 cohorts of a specialized training programme and the establishment of an online community of practice. This community of practice helped facilitate peer learning through the exchange of ideas between humanitarian and protection workers around the world.

Shared good practices from the field, such as: safe approaches to identification of LGBTI people of concern; creation of safe places; establishment of referral pathways; inclusion and participation of LGBTI people in assessments; and provision of appropriate medical and psycho-social support.

Strengthen capacity to address specific protection needs of people with disabilities

Developed an e-learning programme for staff working with people with disabilities in situations of forced displacement to: strengthen understanding of, and promote a rights-based approach to, working with people with disabilities; and to improve their accessibility to, and full participation and inclusion in, the services provided by the Office.

SECURITY FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

STRENGTHEN PROTECTION OF CHILDREN. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Strengthen programming for adolescents and youth

Supported 31 youth-initiated projects, through UNHCR’s youth initiative fund.

Implemented projects in 22 countries, of which 14 were explicitly designed with a focus on promoting gender equality or preventing and responding to SGBV.

Strengthen child protection response in emergencies

Deployed child protection staff to 14 operations worldwide, with those staff providing a combined total of 108 months of expertise.

Trained over 300 staff and partners, government officials and refugee volunteers on child rights and child protection prevention and response.

Supported the implementation of best interests procedures, including in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Uganda and to rapidly scale-up the child protection response in Bangladesh.

Strengthen capacity for the protection of children

Developed and disseminated operational tools, including thematic issue briefs on child protection and organized 2 regional workshops on child protection learning programmes, which were attended by 43 UNHCR staff in the Americas and West Africa.

Organized training events at global, regional and country level, including a joint training session by UNHCR and Save the Children on child protection and education in refugee settings, held in Kenya.

Promoting gender equality

As part of its age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach, UNHCR made progress in promoting and advancing gender equality in its work. In 2017, UNHCR finalized core actions targeting women and girls of concern, to be included in the updated age, gender and diversity policy that will be released in 2018. The Office also started developing and strengthening its gender focal points system, in line with the UN system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN-SWAP). This was done through the development and delivery of a gender equality learning programme, and the initiation of an e-learning programme on gender equality, as well as development of guidance to support the roll-out of an updated age, gender and diversity policy.

In addition, UNHCR continued to strengthen its community-based approach to encourage female participation in decision-making activities. As part of this work, the Office regularly held community meetings in the field with women and girls to improve communication and to conduct participatory needs assessments. UNHCR continued to mainstream the inclusion of women and girls in decision-making processes; ensure individual registration for females; and worked to prevent and respond to SGBV (see the chapter on *Responding with lifesaving support*). Despite important progress made in 2017, challenges and barriers to achieving equality remained, primarily due to societal attitudes that are often difficult to change. Progress towards overcoming this challenge is slow, as beliefs and engrained societal expectations often require incremental change.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE

SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY AND KNOWLEDGE ON GENDER EQUALITY. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Develop and implement gender equality policy

Consolidated work on updating UNHCR’s Commitments to Women, and included it in updating UNHCR’s age, gender and diversity policy.

Develop and implement gender equality guidance and good practices

Started working on the development of gender equality guidance to support the implementation of an updated age, gender and diversity policy that will be released in 2018.

Released the 2016 age, gender and diversity accountability report.

Conducted research, documented and published promising practices on gender equality in the Middle East and North Africa.

Undertook a promising practices review on gender equality in Asia and the Pacific.

Provide gender equality capacity-building to UNHCR staff

Carried out surveys and identified learning needs to identify gender focal points.

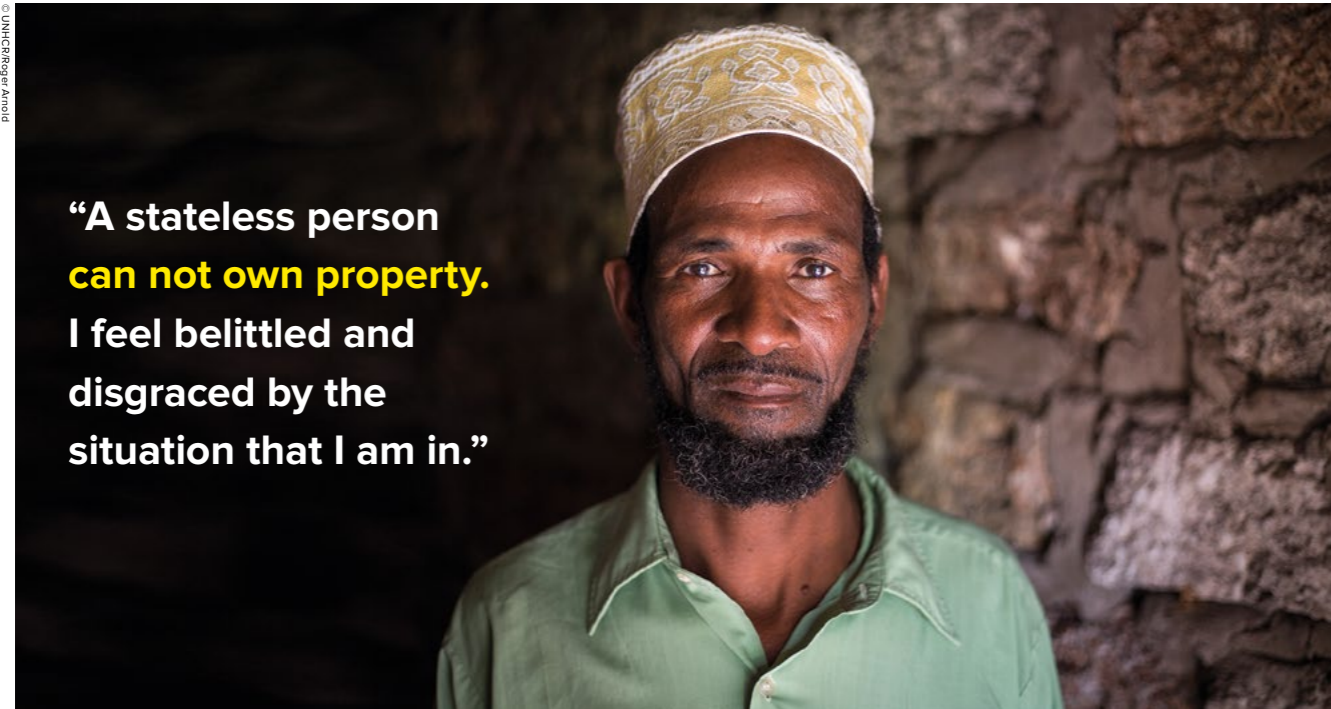
Launched a pilot gender equality learning programme for gender focal points in October 2017.

Continued to work and develop the gender equality e-learning programme that will be launched in 2018.

Provide gender equality technical expertise

Supported a number of countries to strengthen their gender equality efforts through gender focal points from the first gender equality learning programme global cohort. Gender focal points from diverse countries, such as Afghanistan, Morocco, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, were included and worked on strengthening gender equality programming in their countries.

ENDING STATELESSNESS



“A stateless person can not own property. I feel belittled and disgraced by the situation that I am in.”

Shaame Hamisi, 55 years old, Pemba community, Kenya.

Statelessness is a human-made problem with devastating consequences, as recently demonstrated by the violence and abuse that drove hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to seek refuge in Bangladesh. With sufficient political will and support by States, millions of people around the world could acquire a nationality and prevent their children from being born stateless. By obtaining nationality, stateless persons worldwide would gain full access to their human rights and enjoy a sense of belonging. UNHCR’s #IBelong Campaign to end statelessness by 2024 sets out concrete steps for States to help resolve this problem.

Achieving solutions

During the past three years, several States and regional organizations increased their resolve to end statelessness by acceding to the statelessness conventions, adopting

laws and procedures to facilitate the acquisition of nationality, or implementing statelessness determination procedures to identify and protect stateless persons. In 2017, Burkina Faso and Luxembourg acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, bringing to 70 the number of States parties to this Convention, and Chile and Haiti took steps towards acceding to the same convention during the year.

With technical support from UNHCR, a significant number of States strengthened their nationality laws to help prevent or reduce statelessness. Madagascar and Sierra Leone amended their nationality laws to allow mothers to confer nationality to their children on an equal basis to fathers. Four additional States—Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and Togo—are also in the process of reviewing their legislation in this regard.

UNHCR supported some 56,500 stateless persons to acquire or confirm nationality in 29 countries in 2017.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, 25 countries worldwide still maintain this form of gender discrimination in their nationality laws.

UNHCR’s partnership with ECOWAS led to the adoption of a legally binding plan of action on the eradication of statelessness, the “Banjul Plan of Action of the ECOWAS on the Eradication of Statelessness 2017–2024”. With the Office’s support,

the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) adopted a ministerial declaration and plan of action, which will pave the way for significant reforms in ICGLR’s Member States. Building on existing collaboration, UNHCR and the Arab League achieved the adoption of a declaration on women’s equal nationality rights.



© UNHCR/Robert Anand



Julieta Metambili Rashid is one of several thousand Makonde people who received Kenyan nationality after years of statelessness.

Stateless minorities: the Makonde of Kenya receive nationality, ending a stateless existence

The Makonde, originating from Mozambique, have lived in Kenya since the 1930s. But although many Makonde families have been in Kenya since before independence in 1963, they have not been recognized as citizens. Without national IDs, they have often struggled to earn a living, have been unable to travel, own property, or obtain birth and marriage certificates. Their statelessness has been passed from one generation to the next, and Makonde children have been unable to graduate from school or be considered for scholarships. However, after decades of lobbying, the future of the Makonde and other stateless minority groups in Kenya became brighter when, in 2017, the President issued a directive recognizing them as the 43rd Kenyan tribe, leading to their registration as Kenyan citizens.

“My life has changed since I got an ID card,” says Julieta, one of several thousand Makonde people being issued identity papers and Kenyan nationality after years of statelessness.

The Government’s recognition of the Makonde offers hope that change may be coming for other minority ethnic groups in Kenya who remain stateless and for other millions around the world without nationality. Many of these stateless persons belong to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in countries where many have often lived for generations.

UNHCR released a report on stateless minorities, “This is our home: Stateless Minorities and their Search for Citizenship”, to mark the third anniversary of the #IBelong campaign. Its findings underscore the critical need for minorities to enjoy the right to a nationality.



Deepening partnerships to end statelessness

In 2017, data on stateless persons was available from 75 countries.

A number of States, engaged as “Friends of the #IBelong Campaign”, have taken action to address statelessness, by advocating or by adopting Human Rights Council resolutions related to nationality and statelessness. After the launch of a joint UNHCR-UNICEF campaign on every child’s right to a nationality in December 2016, which aimed to raise awareness about and combat the hidden problem of childhood statelessness, a dozen countries adopted joint statelessness strategies in 2017. Under the ID4D Initiative, UNHCR worked with the World Bank on principles for identifying stateless persons. These principles were

designed to support the implementation of SDG 16.9, which calls for a legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030.

These, and other strategic partnerships, will be crucial in rallying support for a high-level event to be held on statelessness in 2019—the midpoint of the 10-year #IBelong Campaign. At this event it is expected that progress to date will be reviewed and new pledges encouraged to further prevent and reduce statelessness by 2024.

UNHCR also worked to improve data collection on statelessness globally. In 2017, four new studies were concluded. Another 30 were commissioned to improve qualitative information on stateless persons.



Goodwill Ambassador support

Goodwill Ambassadors helped to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding fundamental rights, by lending their voices to UNHCR’s campaigns. Poet and activist Emi Mahmoud, a high profile UNHCR supporter, drew attention to the #IBelong campaign by performing a slam poem to commemorate the campaign’s third anniversary and the launch of a new report on statelessness by UNHCR.

“What makes a person? Is it the things we lose, the way we crumble, the way we fall as if each time is the first and last time?”

—Emi Mahmoud, a UNHCR high profile supporter



UNHCR high profile supporter Emi Mahmoud performing at the third anniversary of the #IBelong Campaign event in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

© UNHCR/Nikos Vamvakis

FAVOURABLE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOP OR STRENGTHEN LAW AND POLICY. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Advocate reform of nationality laws, policies and procedures to close gaps that may lead to statelessness and to ensure that stateless persons can acquire nationality, also providing technical advice to governments on doing so	Provided technical advice and guidance on nationality laws to 47 countries, to support the legal reforms needed to prevent and reduce statelessness. Welcomed the adoption of procedures providing facilitated naturalization to stateless persons by Brazil, Costa Rica and Ecuador.
Advocate the introduction or improvement of statelessness determination procedures and provide technical advice to governments on doing so	Supported Brazil and Bulgaria as they established statelessness determination procedures.
Advocate the elimination of gender discrimination in nationality laws and provide technical advice to governments on doing so	Provided technical advice to Madagascar and Sierra Leone to introduce law reforms to eliminate gender discrimination from nationality laws. Supported the outcome statement from the First Arab Conference on Good Practices and Regional Opportunities to Strengthen Women’s Nationality Rights, October 2017.

ACCESS TO, RATIFY OR STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Promote accession to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	Supported Burkina Faso and Luxembourg in acceding to the 1961 Convention. Worked with ECOWAS Member States which adopted the Banjul Plan of Action on the eradication of statelessness. The plan includes steps for States that are yet to become party to the statelessness conventions, to accede by 2024. Supported Member States of the ICGLR who adopted an “Action Plan of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region On the Eradication of Statelessness 2017-2019” in October 2017. The plan of action includes steps for States that are yet to become party to the statelessness conventions, to accede.
--	--

FAIR PROTECTION PROCESSES AND DOCUMENTATION

IMPROVE IDENTIFICATION OF STATELESSNESS. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Support identification/registration exercises and surveys to increase knowledge of the number of stateless persons, their situation and possible solutions	Conducted 4 country studies in Austria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Zambia, with partners, to collect qualitative information on stateless populations. Supported 30 States and 2 regions—East and Horn of Africa, and Western Europe—in undertaking qualitative studies on statelessness, with a number of them including a quantitative component.
Advocate and provide technical advice for improved statistics on stateless persons	Made available statistical data on 75 countries.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

ACHIEVE GREATER REDUCTION OF STATELESSNESS. IN 2017, UNHCR:

Assist stateless persons and those with undetermined nationality to acquire or confirm nationality	Supported 56,500 stateless persons to acquire nationality or have it confirmed.
Develop and implement strategies to address protected situations of statelessness	Guided operations to have statelessness reflected in 18 multi-year solution strategies to address protracted situations of statelessness.
Provide training and technical advice to government officials on statelessness reduction measures, including acquisition or confirmation of nationality by stateless persons and those with undetermined nationality	Conducted 2 dedicated courses on statelessness at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy, one in English and one in Arabic, and supported a dedicated course at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. Conducted 6 training sessions on the prevention of statelessness in Southern Africa, West Africa (Portuguese) and French-speaking African countries, as well as in the Americas and Europe. Trained members of parliaments in Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

ENGAGING IN SITUATIONS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT



Faiza (centre, in purple), 31, from Manono village in Tanganyika province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sits among a group of Congolese women who established a site for IDPs at EP Moni primary school in Kalemie.

In 2017, two additional States acceded to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa—known as the Kampala Convention—bringing the number of States Parties to 27 of the AU’s 55 Member States.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, an estimated 40 million people were displaced within their countries at the end of 2017, decreasing from 40.3 million in 2016. As the global lead or co-lead for three clusters—protection, shelter, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM)—UNHCR plays a significant role in responding to internal displacement. Responding to this continued high level of displacement, and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, including its commitment to “leave no one behind”, the Office promoted and supported national, regional and global action towards reducing displacement and empowering IDPs to achieve solutions.

UNHCR’s engagement in situations of internal displacement has become more predictable through the implementation of new guidelines agreed in 2016. In

2017, 90 per cent of UNHCR’s operational interventions were aligned with the “IDP Footprint” set out in the guidelines. UNHCR showed protection leadership in States affected by active conflict, such as the Central African Republic, Iraq and Syria. Throughout the year, the Office and partners took stock of its operational experiences in active conflict zones through roundtable discussions, including a roundtable jointly organized by UNHCR and ICRC on the civilian and humanitarian character of sites and settlements, and a second roundtable on civil-military coordination for protection that provided a set of agreed good practices for field operations.

UNHCR worked with national governments to help them develop and implement law and policies to safeguard the rights of, and find solutions for, those displaced within national borders. Working with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, the

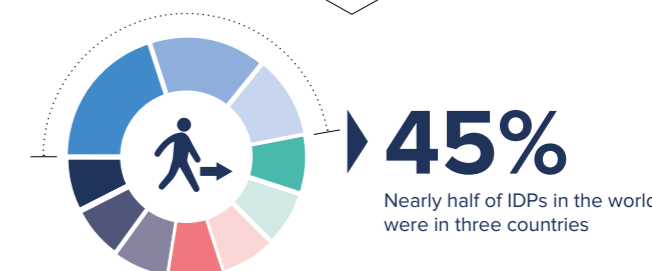
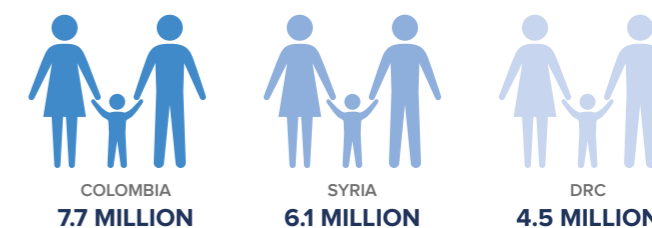
Office provided capacity-building and technical guidance to States, as well as advocated alignment of national laws and policy with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. These efforts helped lead to positive developments in national IDP law and policy in ten different operations, in particular in Afghanistan, Georgia, Honduras, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Ukraine.

To help meet the Grand Bargain commitments, UNHCR focused on helping reduce protracted displacement in a safe and dignified manner. In 2017, 4.2 million IDPs returned to their areas of origin—this number was lower than in 2016 (6.5 million), but considerably higher than 2015 (2.3 million). However, many of these returns took place to hazardous security situations, and did not constitute a durable solution as defined by UNHCR. In such circumstances, UNHCR operations provided protection monitoring and information to communities at risk, including during returns to Mosul in Iraq.

Solutions require a strong evidence base. UNHCR supported the implementation in 2017 of an IASC framework on durable solutions for IDPs.

The Office also encouraged the involvement of diverse stakeholders in

TOP 10 LARGEST IDP OPERATIONS | 2017



- Colombia
- Syria
- DRC
- Iraq
- Somalia
- Yemen
- Sudan
- South Sudan
- Afghanistan
- Ukraine

data collection through work on a technical report on IDP statistics for national statistical commissions. An example of UNHCR’s work on IDP solutions was in Honduras, where UNHCR supported that government to register homes abandoned by IDPs and eventually provide restitution for the property through capacity-building on data systems for land ownership.

Strengthening UNHCR’s engagement in internal displacement situations

In its 2017-2021 Strategic Directions, UNHCR committed to working more systematically across the entire spectrum of displacement, including through a more decisive and predictable engagement in situations of internal displacement. In September 2017, the Office completed an operational review of its engagement in situations of internal displacement, following which the High Commissioner appointed a Special Adviser on Internal Displacement. The role of the Special Adviser was to coordinate the implementation of the review’s recommendations, supported by a dedicated team at Headquarters.

The review recommended transformations in UNHCR’s work with IDPs from preparedness and emergency response through to disengagement and solutions. It also called for fundamental changes to internal processes, practices, capacities and institutional culture across UNHCR, with a strong focus on strengthening delivery in the field.

In October 2017, the Special Adviser worked with the UNHCR operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to ensure a more automatic and robust response to the declaration of the most serious level of emergency situation (system-wide Level-3 emergency declaration). This included piloting new approaches to IDP population data management together with IOM. During a mission to the Philippines in December 2017, the Special Adviser highlighted the need for UNHCR to develop its operational strategy and work with national institutions and local actors in a way that will facilitate responsible engagement in the future.

Global Protection Cluster

The GPC and its task teams undertook 15 field missions in support of nine countries in 2017, including to IASC system-wide Level-3 and UNHCR Level 2 emergencies.

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC), led by UNHCR, worked within the established coordination arrangements at the global and field levels. In 2017, UNHCR led 25 of the 35 activated, country-level protection clusters and other inter-agency protection coordination mechanisms worldwide. Five national protection clusters were co-led with a government counterpart or a United Nations organization, with nine more co-facilitated by international NGOs—including the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and IRC. The GPC worked closely with UNFPA, UNICEF, UNMAS, and the NRC as the lead organizations responsible for, respectively, child protection; gender-based violence; mine action; and housing, land and property.

Guided by its 2016-2019 strategic framework, the GPC strengthened innovative approaches to protection, such as cash-based interventions, protection information management and social media. Echoing the recommendations of the “Independent whole of system review of protection in the context of humanitarian action”, the GPC launched a scoping study for a protection innovation lab. The study’s findings recommended establishing a GPC protection lab. The protection innovation lab is expected to be established in 2018 and will assist in identifying and scaling-up innovative processes to protection challenges.

Guided by its revised operations cell, the GPC built the capacity of national clusters, in particular through coordination and advocacy support, the development of protection strategies, providing advice on the design and implementation of programmes, and training. Throughout the year, the GPC drew attention to the causes and consequences of violations of international humanitarian law in situations of hunger. The cluster also highlighted the humanitarian response’s narrow focus on food security and nutrition in the DRC (focusing on the Kasai situation), Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

As part of efforts to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach to protection, the GPC produced an annual review of action that promoted the centrality of protection. The report, published in February 2017, set out good practices from six operations and detailed recommendations for humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams. The task team launched an e-learning on protection mainstreaming.

The GPC also improved information management to support evidence-based responses through surge capacity deployments, including information provided on the GPC website.



Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster

The Global CCCM Cluster is led by UNHCR in conflict situations and by IOM in natural disasters. It supported 15 country-level clusters and cluster-like structures worldwide in 2017, with UNHCR leading or co-leading 10 of them.

The Global CCCM Cluster continued to set global standards and policies, build preparedness and response capacity, and provide operational support to country-level CCCM coordination platforms to enable them to fulfil their core functions. Cluster representatives travelled to specific countries to gather lessons learned from the implementation of the CCCM urban displacement and out-of-camp initiative, while cluster members developed guidance on how

to adapt camp management approaches to various operational contexts. The strategic advisory group of the Global CCCM Cluster was renewed; ACTED, the Danish Refugee Council, NRC and LWF remained members.

The Global CCCM cluster partner agencies responded to major emergencies called upon by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, and where the scale of the crisis was beyond the response capacity of national authorities. It also developed a new five-year strategy for 2017-2021 focusing on people-centred camp management and coordination, information- and feedback-driven responses, strategic and inclusive support, collaboration with other clusters and partners, and responses that were fit-for-purpose.



In 2017, UNHCR completed nine CCCM field missions in support of six countries, totalling 385 days, including to co-activate the CCCM cluster in Somalia.

Global Shelter Cluster

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) is co-led by UNHCR during conflict-related emergencies and by the IFRC during natural disasters. In 2017, UNHCR led 12 and co-led one of the 28 activated country-level shelter clusters. UNHCR supported the coordination of 417 partners providing shelter and NFI support to more than 8 million people.

To facilitate sector coordination within countries and on a global scale, UNHCR hosted the annual GSC coordination workshop—bringing together 122 participants from 38 different organizations—and a GSC meeting, providing a forum for shelter cluster coordination teams and GSC partners to share best practices and develop tools and methodologies.

To improve field coordination capacities UNHCR, in partnership with IFRC through the GSC, co-led two humanitarian shelter coordination training sessions.

The GSC reviewed its previous five-year strategy ahead of its conclusion in 2017 in order to inform its new strategy developed for the 2018–2022 period. This new cluster strategy guides cluster partners’ actions to support crisis-affected people, and to assist them to live in safe, dignified and appropriate shelter and settlements through coordination, advocacy and support to increased response capacity. One of the most important undertakings during the final months of 2017 for GSC and UNHCR was to engage in the revision of SPHERE standards.



The GSC supported national clusters with 306 days of mission support and 313 days of remote support to 12 UNHCR-led country level clusters.

ENGAGING IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER DISPLACEMENT



Maryama Yassin Mohamed, an IDP woman in Somaliland, was forced to move to Wajaale district with her family due to the severe drought.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimated more than 18.8 million new internal displacements associated with disasters were recorded in 135 countries and territories in 2017. The effects of climate change and disasters continued to exacerbate already fragile situations and fuelled conflicts over depleted resources.



In 2017, UNHCR's priority was advancing normative solutions, promoting policy coherence and developing tools to support national responses, including in the areas of climate change, disaster risk reduction, human rights and planned relocation. In a UNHCR report on climate change, disasters and displacement, the Office emphasized the need for an agency-wide approach to addressing climate change and disaster related displacement. In April 2017, UNHCR issued specific legal advice entitled "Legal considerations on refugee protection for people fleeing conflict and famine affected countries". This advice reaffirmed the relevance, and analyses the applicability, of refugee definitions under international

and regional instruments such as the 1969 OAU convention. The Office also supported the preparation of a Human Rights Council resolution on human rights, climate change, migrants and people displaced across international borders, which was adopted in June 2017.

UNHCR continued to support the coordination entities established in 2016, such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement, including through developing a guide with NRC and IOM

to implement the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction provisions on disaster displacement. The Office also provided technical and policy support to the UNFCCC in its capacity as a member of the Task Force on Displacement of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, which was created by COP21 in Paris 2016 to develop recommendations for approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement associated with climate change.