

How about NGOs and local communities?

The Policy stresses the paramount importance of an inclusive approach involving local capacities and the civil society. To facilitate partnership engagement, special, simplified and decentralized conditions apply to agreements during the first six months of Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies.

Where large movements of refugees occur, a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) is to be applied in collaboration with Governments, UN agencies, NGO and business partners, development and financial institutions, as well as with local stakeholders. Collaboration should cover admission, reception and registration of new arrivals; support for immediate needs and assistance to institutions and communities that receive refugees.

With which resources?

The declaration of a Level 2 or Level 3 Emergency sets off emergency procedures, guidelines and tools to mobilize emergency resources from Headquarters and the region for the UNHCR operation(s) concerned. These measures range from accelerated recruitment both locally and from specialist rosters to the deployment of UNHCR's multi-functional Emergency Response Teams that are on stand-by for deployment within 72 hours at any point in time.

For any declared Emergency, UNHCR's regional Bureau Directors and the Assistant High Commissioner Operations may allocate up to USD 5 million and USD 10 million respectively from internal emergency reserves within 24 hours to cover immediate needs.

Emergency declarations also speed up the delivery of urgently needed Core Relief Items such as tents and blankets, which UNHCR has on stock in warehouses around the globe for 600,000 people. UNHCR will also promptly ship vehicles, security equipment and other materials as required.

Need help?

Contact Emergency Services in the Division of Emergencies, Security and Supply: hqemhand@unhcr.org



UNHCR'S NEW EMERGENCY POLICY

How to better prepare for and respond to the needs of displaced people

What?

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, rolls out its new policy on emergency preparedness and response as the framework for its engagement to better prepare for and respond to the needs of displaced people in emergencies.

The Policy is based on UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021 and on lessons learned from recent displacements around the globe. It reflects UNHCR's role with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

What for?

In order to save the lives of men, women and children forced to flee, the Policy seeks to ensure institutional capacities and efficient procedures for proactive preparations and a rapid humanitarian and field-based response.

What is an emergency?

UNHCR defines a humanitarian emergency as any situation in which the lives, rights or well-being of refugees, internally displaced people, asylum-seekers or stateless people are threatened unless immediate action is taken; and which demands extraordinary measures because current UNHCR capacities at country and regional level are insufficient. UNHCR declares an emergency to ensure that, together with its partners, appropriate attention and support are provided when they prepare for and respond to potential, unfolding or escalating emergencies.

What are UNHCR's key principles in emergencies?

UNHCR staff and partners should:

- Place people at the centre of any action
- Respect the overriding duty to 'Do no harm' and act on a 'No regrets' basis.
- Prioritize the duty of care.
- Accept State responsibility and humanitarian complementarity.
- Adopt a 'whole-of-UNHCR' approach and affirm the



Over 3000 Syrian refugees receive blankets & fuel in Aarsal, Lebanon on 15 December 2013. © UNHCR / A. MCCONNELL

pivotal role of country operations.

- Diversify partnerships.
- Find solutions and link them to development from the onset of a crisis.
- Innovate.

What does the Policy mean in practice?

As it is mandatory for all UNHCR staff dealing with emergencies, it sets out coordination arrangements and specific accountabilities of different regional Bureaux and Divisions at Headquarters and of country operations for risk monitoring, preparations and humanitarian response. It describes how to engage with government, civil society, corporate sector, development organizations and local communities early on. It sets out accelerated internal procedures for partnerships and for mobilizing and accessing resources. It describes different roles for preliminary planning, specific training and processes for reviewing operational capacities.

UNHCR Headquarters supports the country operations and partners with practical tools for risk analysis, dedicated training and a number of tools such as checklists or UNHCR's Emergency Handbook.

The Policy also defines mechanisms and for the activation and deactivation of different levels of emergencies.

Which levels of emergency are there?

Level 1: proactive preparedness – is activated to trigger preparations for a likely humanitarian emergency, including missions and initiatives to raise human, financial and material support.

Level 2: stepped-up Bureau support – is activated when a UNHCR operation requires additional support and resources, mainly from the relevant Regional Bureau, in order to respond in a timely and effective manner.

Level 3: whole-of-UNHCR response – is activated in exceptionally serious situations in which the scale, pace, complexity or consequences of the crisis exceed existing response capacities of both the relevant country operation(s) and Regional Bureau(x), and require a corporate, whole-of-UNHCR response.

How about coordination with other UN actors?

Coordination is key to save the lives, protect the rights and ensure the well-being of displaced people in an emergency.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), UN system-wide Level-3 emergencies are declared by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. In such emergencies, UNHCR usually:

- Leads the Protection, Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management clusters when displacement is conflict-related.
- Determines its interventions and cluster leadership on a case by case basis when displacement is due to a natural disaster.

UNHCR may initiate or maintain a emergency declaration along with an IASC Level 3 declaration. To determine coordination arrangements in 'mixed' situations affecting both refugees and internally displaced people a Joint Note is agreed upon by UNHCR and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).