

With you

Giving Hope

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YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED **TODAY,** MORE THAN EVER



Through determined action, we can truly share responsibility in addressing the plight of the uprooted - and offer them the prospect of a better future.

– Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

As part of our community of givers, you are making a difference every day in the lives of families who have been forced to flee conflict, violence, and persecution in their time of greatest need.

Thanks to you, we made sure that they received shelter, essential supplies such as blankets and kitchen supplies, food, clean water, and access to vital services.

Together, we also helped to protect their rights and give them a safe place to call home.

None of this would be possible without the support of generous, caring donors like you.

This newsletter showcases the lasting impact that you have made on the lives of women, men and children who have lost so much.

From all of us here at UNHCR, thank you for all you do.

- UNHCR Philippines



UNHCR Delivers Aid Amidst Fighting in Eastern Ghouta

Last March 5, UNHCR Syria Representative Sajjad Malik accompanied a humanitarian aid convoy that entered Eastern Ghouta, an area besieged by brutal and unrelenting bloodshed that UN Secretary General António Guterres described as hell on earth. The convoy was to deliver critically-needed food and medical supplies to 393,000 Syrians but was cut short after nine hours as fighting intensified.



"We delivered as much as we could amidst shelling," Malik said. "Civilians are caught in a tragic situation." UNHCR was able to finish offloading supplies on March 9, but more aid and supplies are needed due to the dire conditions.

In February, the UN Security Council voted unanimously in favor of a resolution demanding a 30-day ceasefire in Eastern Ghouta to enable humanitarian teams to deliver aid to devastated areas and evacuate hundreds of injured people urgently in need of treatment. But after a night of relative calm, shelling continued, bringing the death toll from a week of aerial attacks and artillery fire to more than 500 civilians.

The war in Syria has now dragged longer than World War II, and yet there is still no end in sight. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has been on the ground, providing aid and protection since the crisis started in 2011.

Reducing statelessness: Berbina's story

Berbina Pudinaung was 33 years old when she received her birth certificate. When she was younger, her parents did not think they could afford securing birth certificates for her and her siblings. As the years went by, Berbina, married to an Indonesian and now with children of her own, postponed securing her birth certificate and those of her children because she was worried she did not have enough money for the process and other relevant fees.

Berbina is just one of 8,745 Persons of Indonesian Descent (PID) registered in the Southern Philippines. Some 3,000 of them, including the Pudinaungs, hail from Glan, Sarangani, where people have traditionally migrated to and from Indonesia. Like her children, Berbina is of mixed parentage, with her father being an Indonesian.

PIDs are among the five groups identified to be at risk of statelessness in the Philippine context. Without a clear nationality, PIDs are unable to enjoy their rights, including the rights to freedom of movement, education, protection, and access to basic services. For Berbina, this translated to difficulties in finding a job, availing of healthcare services, and sending her children to school.

She was assisted by UNHCR in the process of having her nationality confirmed. In November 2017, she and her two children received their birth certificates, confirming their nationality and keeping them from falling into legal limbo.



Berbina and her two school age children patiently wait for their birth certificates.

When Berbina and her children finally received their birth certificates free of charge, she was elated. "I am thankful to the government and to UNHCR for all the help, from the very start until now that we already have our birth certificates," she said. "This is really a big help for us, especially for my children."

By December 2017, some 77% of registered PIDs have been provided assistance towards acquiring solutions. UNHCR has the global mandate to work with states to reduce statelessness worldwide and remains committed to its global campaign that aims to end statelessness by 2024. Since 2011, UNHCR has been working together with the Philippine and Indonesian Governments in bringing legal protection to PIDs in the Southern Philippines.

10 Reasons Why Your Support Matters



1. MARAWI FAMILIES NEED SUSTAINED ASSISTANCE.

The battle to liberate Marawi from pro-ISIS groups ended 10 months ago but today, thousands of families are still living in displacement. Your continued assistance enables them to rebuild their lives in safety and in dignity.



2. HEIGHTENED VULNERABILITIES FOR MARAWI FAMILIES STILL LIVING IN DISPLACEMENT.

As displacement continues, so do the vulnerabilities that come in the form of not having access to basic social services. Your gift helps those living in displacement by providing them with access to trainings, education, and healthcare.



3. ACROSS MINDANAO, FORCED DISPLACEMENT CONTINUES.

Marawi may have been the crisis that grabbed headlines in 2017, but tens of thousands remain displaced because of armed conflict, violence, and natural hazards in various parts of Mindanao. By the end of 2017, more than 400,000 were estimated to be living in displacement and in need of protection. Your donation helps safeguard their rights and protect their wellbeing.



4. LONG-TERM, DURABLE SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR MINDANAO'S DISPLACED.

Many of the displaced are starting from nothing after having lost their homes, livelihood, schooling, and belongings. Your gift supports quick-impact projects and community empowerment programs which will help displaced families rebuild their lives.



5. NO END IN SIGHT AS SYRIAN WAR RAGES ON.

The civil war in Syria is now longer than World War 2 in Europe. More than half of the Syrian population have been forced to flee from their homes due to war. Your help enables the UNHCR to work with partners to offer a lifeline to those affected by this terrible chaos.



6. SYRIAN REFUGEES LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

Most Syrian refugees have exhausted any savings they had. The vast majority of them already live on less than three dollars a day. Through your support, UNHCR is able to provide life-saving aid to help these families survive.



7. ROHINGYA REFUGEES BECOME MORE AT RISK.

As monsoon season begins, key services installed by UNHCR and partners are at risk of being washed away or contaminated leading to health problems. To help prepare, UNHCR is prepositioning medical supplies and training mobile medical teams to respond to the needs of the community.



8. SHELTER SUPPORT NEEDED FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES.

The world's largest refugee settlement shelters more than 596,000 Rohingya refugees. More than 100,000 of them could lose their shelters due to flooding and landslides. Through your contributions, UNHCR has begun upgrading shelter kits to help anchor their homes and protect them from heavy rainfall.



9. HELPING ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RECOVER FROM TRAUMA.

They have suffered persecution as stateless refugees. As they heal from their wounds, UNHCR's team of psychosocial specialists help them recover from trauma.



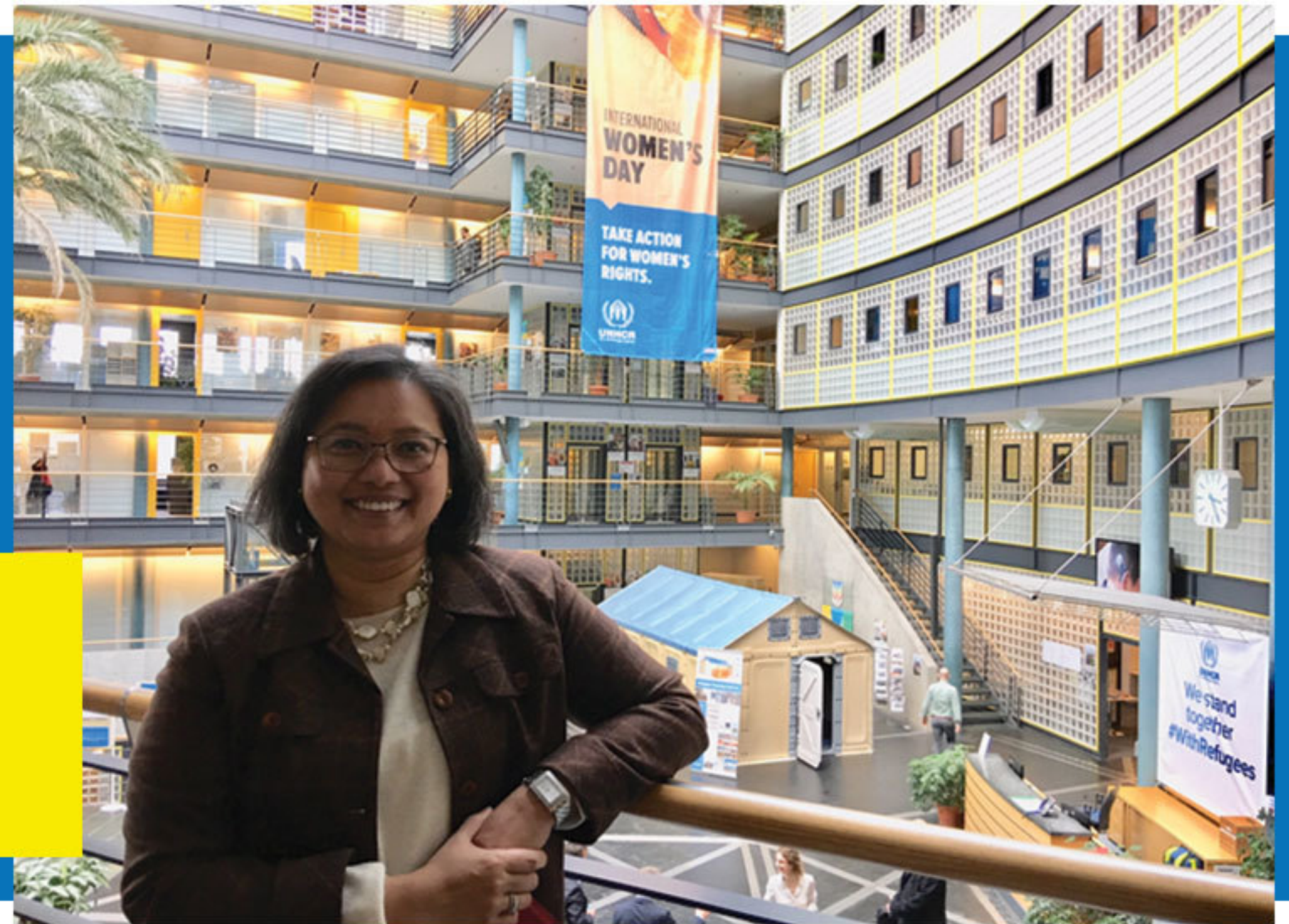
10. SILENT EMERGENCIES PERSIST ACROSS THE WORLD.

There are several underreported emergencies taking place right this very moment: in Yemen, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and many others. Your support helps the UNHCR protect the rights of families forced to flee from their homes.

These are only 10 reasons that provide a picture of how your support is very critical to protecting families fleeing from their homes. As you read this, a person has already been forced to escape conflict, violence, and persecution. Your support is crucial to ensuring their survival, safeguarding their rights, and helping them rebuild their lives in safety and in dignity.

2018 marks the 25th year of Maria Aurora Mendoza-Goudstikker's engagement with UNHCR - a relationship that she describes as "fulfilling." She served in the field and in headquarters to make sure that the organization can respond to the needs of the families forced to flee from their homes. Get to know her story.

Maria Aurora Mendoza-Goudstikker,
*Deputy Head (Resource Management) of the
Programme Budget Section, Division of Financial
Administrative Management*



Please introduce yourself briefly.

I am Maria Aurora Mendoza-Goudstikker, serving at UNHCR Headquarters as the Deputy Head (Resource Management) of Programme Budget Section, Division of Financial and Administrative Management.

How long have you been with UNHCR? Please take us through your journey towards your assignment?

In July 1993, one week after obtaining my graduate degree from France, my parents relayed by fax that UNHCR was soliciting my interest in joining a training programme in Geneva. Two weeks later, I signed my first contract. I was given my first assignment in Mozambique. Subsequently, I was assigned to Headquarters. When a portion of Headquarters was outposted to Budapest, I went there to head the Financial Control Section. In 2012, I was assigned in Bangkok. After four years in Asia, I was appointed to my current post. I went on two emergency deployments in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) for the influx from the Rwanda genocide in 1995 and in the Philippines for typhoon Yolanda in 2013.

What is an average day like in your office?

A large part of my day is devoted to responding to questions on resource allocation and management from colleagues at headquarters and in the field. I am usually called to provide advice to Senior Managers. I allot time to help the team I supervise whether to guide them with work-related queries or to talk about personal concerns.

What are the major challenges in your role?

The needs of displaced populations are growing in a world where, increasingly, doors are being shut and the size of the humanitarian aid pie is not keeping up with the requirements. This translates to a balancing act between corporate issues and finding solutions for the organization's people of concern. The gauge of whether I've done my job properly is when field operations have been provided adequate resources to be able to effectively respond to the people of concern.

Why is it important for Filipinos to extend their concern and compassion to refugees and displaced families outside the Philippines?

We, Filipinos, are not strangers to human suffering caused by conflict or natural disaster. We are not strangers to displacement, whether within our country or beyond its boundaries. We have empathy and can relate to what refugees and displaced families experience.

"We, Filipinos, have been on numerous occasions at the receiving end of other nations' concern and compassion. As caring citizens of the world, we are a people who believe in sharing and in giving back."

What has been your most memorable experience working at UNHCR?

There isn't one most memorable experience from my 25 years in UNHCR. There are experiences that I would rather forget, like when we were woken up early in the morning and given ten minutes to pack as we were going to a military base following a bombing, or a man who lay down on the busy road in front of the office, hoping to be run over so that UNHCR would pay him attention.

But there are many seemingly small but touching instances that have made working with UNHCR a constantly renewed experience. Like the old man who had taken the wooden door of his family home when he fled the conflict in his country and carried it on his back when he walked home to his village after several years as a refugee. Or the "thank you" signs put up along the road between Tacloban and Guiuan by people whose lives were changed by a super typhoon. The dedication and selflessness shown by colleagues, the acts of kindness in the midst of hardship. It's been a privilege.

A Spotlight on Syria

Seven Years of War: A Colossal Human Tragedy

“This seven-year war has left a colossal human tragedy in its wake. For the sake of the living, it is high time to end this devastating conflict. There are no clear winners in this senseless pursuit of a military solution. But the losers are plain to see – they are the people of Syria.”

– Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

This March, we mark the seventh year of the war in Syria, which has cost hundreds of thousands of lives, driven 6.1 million people from their homes inside Syria, and forced 5.6 million refugees to seek safety in neighbouring countries in the region.

The relentless suffering of Syrian civilians marks a shameful failure of political will and a new low in Syria’s long-running conflict, said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

The conditions faced by civilians inside Syria are worse than ever, with 69% languishing in extreme poverty. Some 5.6 million people endure life-threatening conditions in terms of their security, basic rights or living standards, and require urgent humanitarian assistance.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and humanitarian partners are making every effort to bring relief to those in dire need inside the country, but access to populations in besieged and hard-to-reach areas remains woefully inadequate.



Mohammad, a young Syrian refugee from the ancient desert city of Palmyra, stands in a row during a break at the Father Andeweg Institute for the Deaf (FAID) on the outskirts of Beirut in Lebanon.

“Even in war, there are rules that all sides must respect. In Syria, even the option to flee conflict areas for safety in other parts of the country is diminishing. Humanitarian access to those in need must be guaranteed. People must be allowed to leave to seek refuge and civilians and civilian infrastructure including hospitals and schools must be protected at all costs,” Grandi said.

Meanwhile, the conditions for millions of Syrians in exile grow more desperate, with the vast majority living below the poverty line. More than three quarters of refugees in urban areas of Jordan and Lebanon are unable to meet their basic food, shelter, health or education needs.

Over the years, donor support—including yours—has been generous, but much more is needed.

In December last year, UN agencies and some 270 NGO partners appealed for USD 4.4 billion from the global community to support both refugees and the communities hosting them. But the gap between the needs and available resources remains wide. In 2017, the international response received only half of required funding.



Syria. In the shadow of destruction, life resumes in Aleppo. A returnee makes his way through piles of bricks in a heavily damaged part of Aleppo’s Old City.

Thank you for standing together

#WithRefugees

If you were forced to flee your home to escape war or persecution, wouldn't you hope someone would extend a helping hand? As part of our community of givers, you did just that.

By donating to UNHCR, you have helped save lives, protect rights, and build better futures for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people.

Much more needs to be done to respond to the refugee crisis around the world and forced displacement here in the Philippines. Please donate to continue standing #WithRefugees and making a lasting impact on the lives of men, women, and children forced to flee from the place they call 'home.'

donate.unhcr.ph



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