

UNHCR increases refugees' resilience amid unpredictability of COVID-19 pandemic



JAKARTA, 12 JUNE 2020 - In the past recent weeks, UNHCR office in Indonesia distributed masks and hand sanitizers to vulnerable refugees with the help of partners and refugee communities, as an effort to increase the refugees' resilience in the midst of the developing COVID-19 pandemic.

The distribution of the hygiene items was done by strictly following the COVID-19 hygiene and physical distancing protocol. Hygiene items were dropped in UNHCR's refugee learning centre in South Jakarta, that is under the management of our health partner, Church World Service. Meanwhile masks are distributed through 13 other refugee-led learning centres in Jakarta and Bogor area. Refugees will then collect the items at the centres in different scheduled times to avoid crowd gathering.

As the world continues the fight against COVID-19, UNHCR office in Indonesia carries on our efforts to provide protection to refugees. During these difficult times, everyone needs protection, including refugees, many of whom are at higher risk of getting infected due to the limitations related to their situation as refugees.

Refugees do not have the rights to work hence they have limited access to healthcare and sanitation facilities. Living in the urban setting like Jakarta, many refugees live in accommodations with limited space for self-isolation.

"The pandemic has severely impacted refugees' resilience and increased the vulnerabilities of the refugee community in Indonesia. UNHCR works closely with the Government of Indonesia and partners to ensure that no refugee is left behind in the response to the pandemic. The Government has since the onset of the pandemic taken an exemplary position, and we are grateful that refugees have full access to Indonesian health facilities and services in a non-discriminatory manner", said Ann Maymann, UNHCR Representative in Indonesia.



With thanks to donors, UNHCR in Indonesia has been able to expand its protection and assistance programmes, including through cash assistance to more refugees. The recent additional funding from donors that UNHCR in Indonesia received has allowed the office to provide additional cash allowance to some 1,000 refugees and to expand the cash assistance to some 5,000 refugees who live independently and have no access to livelihood.

“It is critical for UNHCR Indonesia and partners to receive sustained funding to be able to continue carrying out refugee protection and assistance activities, and also finding solutions as the pandemic has reduced the already limited traditional solutions such as resettlement in third countries”, Maymann added.

UNHCR applauds and is very grateful for partners such as Indonesia for Refugees that have supported refugees by delivering hygiene items and food to young and vulnerable refugees, as well as the Indonesian Post Offices in Jakarta and Bogor for facilitating services in cash distribution.

“In times like these, more than ever, it is of utmost importance that we show solidarity with refugees and we are hopeful that all - refugees and Indonesians - will, together, get through these challenging times”, said Maymann.

For further information, please contact:
Mitra Suryono
Associate External Relations/ Public Information Officer
suryono@unhcr.org