

## Press Release

### **UNHCR: Refugees in Indonesia need greater support and solutions**

**Jakarta, 29 January 2021** - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, today expressed its growing concern for refugees in Indonesia, following a year in which the challenges facing refugees were compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout 2020, UNHCR staff and partners observed heightened risks to the psychosocial and mental health of refugees in Indonesia. Many have been waiting for many years for a long-term solution, while simultaneously lacking opportunities for self-reliance and self-development in the present.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging on many fronts, for refugees and the local host community alike. UNHCR is grateful to Indonesia's Ministry of Health for issuing the 10 June 2020 Circular Note that ensures access to COVID-19-related services to registered refugees.

This laudable policy of the Indonesian Government to leave no one behind is also reflected in the continued support of public services to refugees: Puskesmas (local health clinics) are providing refugees with medical assistance, and post offices are facilitating the distribution of UNHCR's monthly allowance to refugees during these difficult times in coordination with our partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

However, the pandemic has unfortunately limited the opportunities for refugees to be engaged in self-reliance programmes such as vocational training and livelihood activities.

"With educational and livelihood opportunities currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, many refugees see resettlement as their only option for a meaningful future. In the absence of prospects to use and develop their capacities, refugees live their lives in limbo, hoping to be resettled to a third country," said Ann Maymann, Representative of UNHCR in Indonesia.

"But the reality is that resettlement places for refugees worldwide are extremely limited. We need to do more to improve refugees' situation while they are in Indonesia. We appeal for refugees to be given opportunities for education and empowerment. This would have a tremendous impact on the well-being of refugees as well as allow them to contribute to their host communities here in Indonesia."

UNHCR is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life of several refugees in recent years, which may have resulted from depression and mental health problems. This underscores the need for psychosocial care and support for all refugees.

UNHCR continues to work closely with the Government of Indonesia and partners to improve refugees' and asylum-seekers' well-being and mental health. This includes working with the communities through a dedicated task force, to ensure that those who need support can be identified as early as possible. Equally, greater advocacy for long-term solutions for refugees in Indonesia is needed in order to ensure dignity for all.

"Refugees are people who are able to contribute to the societies in which they live in, if only they are given the chance," Ms. Maymann added.

“We are hopeful that 2021 will bring better days and new hopes for refugees. We are thankful for the protection provided by the Government of Indonesia to refugees, and look forward to supporting the strengthening the protection of refugees in the country.”

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**About UNHCR:** UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting refugees, promoting rights and finding solutions for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. We work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war or disaster at home.

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