



With you

Stand
#WithRefugees

What's Inside?

- *World Refugee Day in the Philippines*
- *Global Trends Report 2017*



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This June, UNHCR released the *Global Trends Report* which stated that 68.5 million people have been forced to flee from their homes due to violence, persecution, and war last year. That's one person displaced every two seconds.

Behind these statistics are faces—real people who have undergone such hardship. The past year, we shared with you heartbreaking stories of displacement. There is Fatima who lost four of her children because of the fighting in Marawi, little Mohamed a seven-year-old boy who lives in a refugee camp and does not know a Syria without the war, and 75-year-old Mabia who had to be carried by her sons across the border of Myanmar because of the violence that broke out last year.

“No one becomes a refugee by choice; but the rest of us can have a choice about how we help,” said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi.

Now more than ever, we are thankful to have you stand with us and the millions who have lost their home including Fatima, Mohamed, and Mabia. We take pride in having compassionate supporters like you by our side.

As we mark World Refugee Day, a time to remember that we are all able to do our part to help the millions of displaced people across the globe. We are grateful to have your support. It is not easy as war and persecution continue across the globe. However, together we can make a real difference to the families who were affected by such tragedies.

Your help has enabled us to save lives, safeguard the rights, and build better futures for families here in the Philippines and around the world. You are the hope-givers to those who have lost so much.

Thank you for standing #WithRefugees.

— UNHCR Philippines

“To those who continue to show compassion and empathy and embody the true values of humanity: I am moved by your solidarity, generosity and hospitality. Together, we are powerful beyond measure.”

-Filippo Grandi

Families in Marawi receive aid



This year, UNHCR Philippines brings the commemoration of World Refugee Day closer to families forced to flee from the fighting in Marawi City more than a year ago.

On June 20, UNHCR provided core relief items such as blankets and plastic sheets to some 300 families hosted at the Sarimanok site in Poblacion, Marawi City. Global partner UNIQLO also distributed clothes as part of its commitment to work with UNHCR in responding to the needs of displaced people throughout the world.

“It’s a very critical time for all of us. All over the world there are millions upon millions of refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons) who were forced to flee due to conflict, persecution, and violence,” said UNHCR Philippines High Profile Supporter Atom Araullo, who joined the distribution. At the height of the conflict, more than 360,000 families were forced to flee from Marawi City.



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A year since then, displaced families face significant challenges such as a lack of access to basic services and insufficient livelihood opportunities. The core relief item distribution intends to provide assistance to these families while they are still living in temporary shelters.

“They are just like you and me: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers. They never imagined this kind of situation is something they would face,” said Atom.

UNHCR continues to monitor their situation on the ground and support the Government-led response in addressing humanitarian gaps. In Marawi City, UNHCR has partnered with PhilHealth to assist displaced individuals in obtaining identification documents to address the restriction on their mobility. UNHCR has also rolled out a profiling project targeted to assist government programming in the recovery and rehabilitation of the city.

A new light on displacement



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“When it comes to building compassion and solidarity for forcibly displaced families here in the Philippines, we need not look far as forced displacement hits very close to home,” said Michel Huyghe, UNHCR’s Head of Field Office in Mindanao.

Liwanag ng Marawi (Light of Marawi) aimed to build solidarity and compassion for families forced to flee because of the fighting that broke out last year. On June 19, the eve of World Refugee Day, UNHCR Philippines launched the exhibit featuring the photos of displacement through the eyes of the those affected by the conflict.

“This exhibit reminds us that behind the numbers are real people whose lives have been uprooted by armed conflict. Families that have been torn apart at the height of the violence. Communities whose homes have been reduced to rubble. Parents who have lost their jobs and other sources of income. Boys and girls who have lost access to education,” described Huyghe.

World Refugee Day offers a renewed opportunity to bring light to the needs of some 40,000 families who remain displaced and in need of durable solutions more than a year since conflict first broke out in Marawi City.

Leaders of the IDP communities, partners, and humanitarian actors joined UNHCR in marking the week-long commemoration of World Refugee Day. The exhibit was in Robinsons Place Iligan from 19 to 22 June 2018.



One person is forced to flee every two seconds, according to the 2017 *Global Trends Report*

Imagine hearing gunshots and screaming from your home. You panic. Maybe you would take your children, maybe you are able to take a few belongings, maybe you were not able to take anything. One thing is for sure: you want to be away from danger. This is a scenario that plays out for millions of people forced to flee their homes.

There are 68.5 million people who fled from their homes last year due to war, conflict, violence, and persecution according to UNHCR's **Global Trends Report**. For the fifth year in a row, global displacement hits a record high.

Among this number, a total of 28.5 million are considered as refugees and asylum seekers, families who are seeking safety in nearby countries. Two-thirds of the world's refugees are from Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia.

Last year, more than 40 million people were considered internally displaced persons or IDPs. These are individuals who are seeking safety within their own home country.

In the Philippines, more than 350,000 persons fled their home because of the fighting in Marawi that erupted in May 2017. It's been a year since the conflict, yet 17,000 Filipino families remain displaced.

For those who are forced to flee their nations due to persecution and conflict, seeking asylum in neighboring countries becomes their hope. Last year, there were 3.1 million people applying for asylum. The United States, whose major applicants are Salvadorans, received the most claims at 331,700. Globally, 10 million people are still at risk of statelessness.

The 68.5 million displaced population across the world are not just figures. These are lives—fathers, mothers, children who lost their homes, their livelihoods, their schooling, maybe even their loved ones.

It is through your help that we are able to respond with emergency aid to help save the lives of these families. Through your help, we are able to stand #WithRefugees in a time of unprecedented global displacement. Here are some of the people that you have stood with in their time of greatest need.



PHILIPPINES

The family of Rohaima lost their home and their belongings when conflict erupted in Marawi City last year. In the midst of displacement, the 55-year-old grandmother struck a friendship with UNHCR High Profile Supporter and broadcast journalist Atom Araullo, whom she met at an evacuation center in Iligan in December 2017. At the time, Rohaima was selling vegetables and cooked meals to make ends meet.

On World Refugee Day, Rohaima and Atom met again at the Sarimanok Evacuation Camp, albeit unexpectedly. She continues to set up shop at the camp to rise from adversity. Rohaima was one of the recipients of blankets, plastic sheets, and UNIQLO items last June 20.



BANGLADESH

Hasina was feeding her ten-day old baby when she heard a loud noise. After two days of torrential rain, large parts of the hillside collapsed. A part of their bamboo and tarpaulin shelter was devastated and some soil got into her baby's crib.

Hasina and her family were among those relocated to safer ground. She is one of 13,000 Rohingya refugees in Chakarkul refugee site in Bangladesh, one of the areas most prone to flood and landslides.

For months, UNHCR has been upgrading shelter kits and setting up emergency hospitals to provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable Rohingya families.



SYRIA

Hussein and Fatima have fled from their home in Rural Aleppo twice because of the hostilities in Syria. When they returned to their village, they found that most of the infrastructure had been destroyed. Food was difficult to come by and the electricity was virtually non-existent. They are one of 13.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

Hussein and his family were able to receive items essential for day-to-day survival including blankets, mattresses, and much-needed solar lamps which help them see at night.



A Common Ground

Moros, Lumads, and Christians find water and hope

Noketh Nue, one of the residents of Barangay Elbebe, Datu Paglas performs a 'Thank You' ensemble to the community. (©UNHCR/A. Ongcal)

“Before, [we] could not walk there without having to pay some form of toll,” Lucrecia Filasol pointed to the fields beside the nipa hut in Barangay Elbebe, Datu Paglas. “If you were Moro, you could not go to Christian land. If you were Christian, you could not go to Moro land. You will be shot,” Lucrecia said.

For decades, the Moros, the Christians, and the Lumads of Barangay Elbebe in Colombio, Barangay Maybula in Tuluhan, and Barangay Elbebe in Datu Paglas lived in fear. Moros and Christians would avoid stepping into certain areas fearing that they would be killed by the other group. This terror stems from the long-standing land conflict between the tri-people in the area.

Water flowed with dialogue

“We also did not have water. Many of us would walk for hours just to get water,” Lucrecia said. To top it off, the three barangays had scarcity of basic services—a lack of access to water. The villagers would have to traverse thick shrubs and rough terrain just for a few gallons.

“Many [organizations] tried to give services, but it never worked because we were always fighting,” she said. Lucrecia remembered a time when people would not even talk to each other.

“This is was a difficult project,” confirmed Yasser Maulana of Community and Family Services International (CFSI), UNHCR’s implementing partner for the quick impact projects in the three barangays.

“We had three barangays that needed quick impact projects, but they were very hostile towards others,” Yasser recounts. “I remember when a leader told me that I was the first Moro to step into their land without being shot. I really thought I would die here.” he added.

“We had to make them understand the dialogue process,” he said. Through assessments, discussions, and consultations with the people, UNHCR provided a water system for two barangays and a multi-purpose hall for another. More than the quick impact projects, UNHCR and CFSI facilitated discourse among the people.

The road to peace

“They would make us (Moros, Christians, and Lumads) talk among ourselves,” Lucrecia mentioned. For months, Yasser visited the barangays, talked to the barangay leaders, called group meetings, and facilitated trainings. The people in the barangays were given the chance to air their grievances and discuss in a peaceful manner. “For that I am grateful. I am not sure if we would be here if it were not for that [intervention].” she added.

Yasser looks at the long lasting effects of the quick impact projects. “It’s not just the water, but it’s also about peace and dialogue. We hope that we have sown seeds of peace that will last a lifetime.” he said.

“I am thankful to UNHCR because not only do we have these projects, we also have peace. We haven’t had fighting amongst ourselves since the projects were completed. Now, we can walk in each other’s land without being killed.” Lucrecia said with a smile.



(FOLD)

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Important reminder: Please do not send cash by mail

Your donation will go a long way in helping families forced to flee from their homes. Thank you for standing #WithRefugees

You are standing #WithRefugees at a time of unprecedented global displacement



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