

Withyou

What's Inside

MORE THAN 82 MILLION WORLDWIDE ARE FORCIBLY DISPLACED

In nearly a decade-long surge in forced displacement, one per cent of humanity is displaced.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2021: TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING

Be inspired by the stories that are testament to both the resilience of refugees, and the profound generosity of the Filipino people, including donors like you, who have welcomed and supported the forcibly displaced with open doors and open hearts.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS DISPLACED COMMUNITIES FACE CLIMATE CHANGE

You have given them livelihood opportunities to help mitigate the impact of climate change.

Climate change has exacerbated the challenges of forcibly displaced communities in Mindanao. Limited resources and worsening environmental conditions not only threaten their safety and security, but also their ability to earn a living. Through your support, boats and fishing equipment were distributed to the fisherfolk in Brgy. Butiren, Kabuntalan, Maguindanao, enabling them to continue sustainable fishing practices. © UNHCR/Jonathan Porras



UNHCR Philippines Goodwill Ambassador Atom Araullo takes part in the distribution of solar lamps to fisherfolk in Brgy. Butiren in the Municipality of Kabuntalan, Maguindanao, Philippines. The community has no access to electricity and is frequently affected by flash floods. They have faced multiple displacements in their lifetime, and have themselves been hosting other displaced families due to conflict. Your support ensures that they are given life-saving assistance in cyclical displacement caused by the double tragedy of conflict and climate change. © UNHCR/Martin San Diego

Dear valued donor,

You have stood together with the most vulnerable to ensure that we can all move forward to more reassuring days. Your steadfast support enables us to surmount the overlapping challenges of conflict, climate change, and COVID-19 together – with determination and hope.

In this newsletter, we share with you highlights from the latest Global Trends report, which reveal that despite the pandemic, over 82.4 million people across the globe have been displaced.

Yet in a very challenging year, you have also helped UNHCR stay and deliver – giving millions of forcibly displaced individuals life-saving protection and assistance. Around the world, host communities continued to demonstrate a remarkable welcome to those who are forced to flee, allowing them to find a place they can call home. In the Philippines, more than 150,000 people in Mindanao who were displaced by armed conflict and natural disasters have fled to neighboring barangays and are now working together with their hosts to build a vibrant, productive, and diverse community.

This is not possible without your support; your generosity has been a source of hope and renewed life for many, and we know that this long and hard battle of forced displacement is one that can only be resolved with our determination to put forth kindness, humanity, solidarity, and inclusion.

We also want to share with you how beyond borders and social limitations, we have found ways to come together, and celebrate our differences and diversity.

The recent World Refugee Day commemoration is a testament to how we all empower each other in achieving inclusion. **Donors and supporters like you have found creative ways to give back and show solidarity with the forcibly displaced.** Refugees and the internally displaced themselves have found ways to contribute to their communities.

We remain confronted by some challenges, like the imminent impacts of climate change. Millions are forced to flee due to climate emergencies, including the most vulnerable communities in the Philippines who are also affected by armed conflict. The demand for action and sustainable solutions is greater than ever.

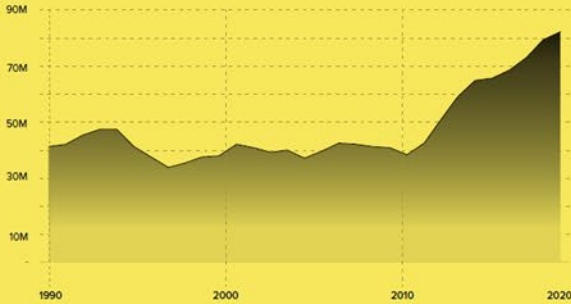
Despite all these, our collective action has power to effect change that will ensure that as we move forward, all is included, and no one is left behind. Our strength and kindness as a community attest that together, we can achieve anything.

Thank you for standing firm with the forcibly displaced.

***With our sincerest gratitude,
Your UNHCR Philippines family***

82.4 MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE
at the end of 2020 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



“ Behind each number is a person forced from their home and a story of displacement, dispossession and suffering. They merit our attention and support not just with humanitarian aid, but in finding solutions to their plight.

While the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Global Compact on Refugees provide the legal framework and tools to respond to displacement, we need much greater political will to address conflicts and persecution that force people to flee in the first place.

”

FILIPPO GRANDI
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

2020 is the ninth year of uninterrupted rise in forced displacement worldwide.

The number of people forced to flee due to conflict, war and persecution has reached a record-breaking 82.4 million in 2020 – a figure that has doubled over the last decade. **Today, one per cent of humanity is displaced.**

These numbers indicate that despite the pandemic and calls for a global ceasefire, conflict and several crises – some new, some resurfacing after years – forced people to flee within or beyond the borders of their country.

Total **internal displacement** due to conflict and violence increased in many places, intersecting with **disasters** and **the adverse effects of climate change**, as well as **displacement due to COVID-19**. By year-end, UNHCR was responding to situations of internal displacement in a total of **34 countries, including the Philippines.**

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2020

26.4 M

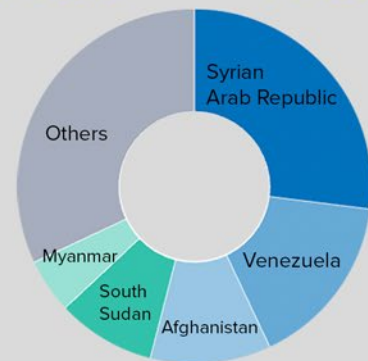
REFUGEES

48 M

INTERNALLY DISPLACED

68%

ORIGINATED FROM JUST FIVE COUNTRIES



8 M

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND VENEZUELAN DISPLACED ABROAD

1 M

CHILDREN BORN AS REFUGEES

86%

HOSTED IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

294,210

PERSONS OF CONCERN IN THE PHILIPPINES

(refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, and internally displaced people)

30.7 MILLION

DISPLACED BY DISASTERS

as reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

In 2020, millions of people were displaced in the Americas, South and East Asia, and the Pacific due natural disasters, weather-related events, flooding, and intense cyclone seasons.

Climate change and its adverse impact on poverty and food insecurity are driving more people to flee in search for safety and security, increasing their vulnerability. Many forcibly displaced and stateless people are on the frontlines of the climate emergency, with limited resources to adapt to an increasingly inhospitable environment.



Flavors of Home, Flavors of Hope:

Exploring the Filipino heritage of compassion through food, travel, and stories

As we continue to recover from the challenges we are currently faced with – **conflict, COVID-19, and climate crisis** – **WORLD REFUGEE DAY** honors the resilience and courage of the millions of people who have been forced to flee, and calls on individuals, communities and governments to demonstrate the power of inclusion, compassion, and humanity.

This year’s World Refugee Day commemoration takes viewers on a virtual tour of places and phases in the Philippines’ rich heritage of welcoming refugees. Hosted by **UNHCR Philippines Goodwill Ambassador Atom Arullo**, the stories are a testament to both the resilience of the forcibly displaced and the profound generosity and humanity of the Filipino people. Time and time again, Filipinos have shown the world that we can help each other heal, learn, and shine – without forgetting the most vulnerable among us.

TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.



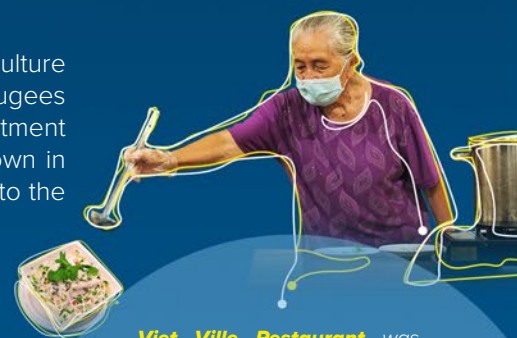
SCAN TO WATCH THE SHOW

Together we learn: Transcending borders, enriching cultures

Tran Minh Dung is one of the last remaining Vietnamese refugees in Viet Ville, Puerto Princesa, Palawan. He was one of the thousands fleeing from Vietnam in the 1970s to escape the Vietnam war.

“I spent almost five days on the sea, by boat. And then the first place I arrived at was Sta. Cruz, Zambales. And later, UNHCR processed some documents to transfer me to Palawan,” Tran recalls.

Today, Viet Ville is a tourist destination where Filipinos get to experience the culture and heritage that the Vietnamese shared with us. While most Vietnamese refugees have resettled to the USA and Canada, Tran has found security and contentment in the Philippines, where he has built his own family. He misses his hometown in Vietnam but now finds joy in learning from and sharing his story and culture to the community that has welcomed him.



Viet Ville Restaurant was built in the 90s in Palawan as a cooperative between locals and Vietnamese refugees. Head cook Pham Thi Anh has been sharing the flavor of Vietnamese culture in Viet Ville to tourists and locals for 15 years now. Through their food, they want to show the diligence of the Vietnamese people and the heart that they put in whatever they do.



The time I stayed in the Philippines is longer compared to the time I stayed in Vietnam. So I grew up here, I adapted to the life here... The kindness, hospitality of the Filipino, that’s why I feel at home here in the Philippines.”

TRAN MINH DUNG
Vietnamese refugee



Together we heal:
Building better futures one recipe at a time

Marla Moran started **The Café Mediterranean** in 1994 with the goal of making the cuisine more accessible to Filipinos. Through their special Syrian menu, Marla’s passion for food and West Asian cuisine quickly became an opportunity for her and the restaurant staff to give Syrian refugees a chance to rebuild. **“They’re really proud to be part of it... It makes them more aware of what’s happening outside the country.”**

Like all local establishments, they were badly affected by the lockdowns due to the pandemic. This did not stop Café Med from continuing to support UNHCR’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Marla hopes for things to get back to normal so the restaurant can give more to help out. **The menu is a symbol of hope that she wishes would inspire a chain of kindness.**



The Café Mediterranean began their “Peace Plates” when conflict unfolded in Tunisia and Algeria more than a decade ago. It was just the beginning of a mission to help refugees in war-torn areas in West Asia. In 2017, Café Med began donating proceeds from their special **Syrian menu** to UNHCR, to help those forcibly displaced by the ongoing Syrian conflict. The restaurant’s famous hummus bowls are now a mainstay.



To business owners, we go into business to make a profit, but along the way we need to see that we have to give back... We are not the richest country in the world, but there is a world outside the Philippines that needs our help as well. We have to help.

MARLA MORAN
UNHCR Donor
Owner of The Café Mediterranean



Abdulkarim, Sardesh, Shazia, and Hssan are among the refugees who sought protection and have now laid down roots in the Philippines. For decades, the Filipino people have warmly welcomed those forced to flee violence and persecution. This long history of inclusion and compassion has allowed refugees, past and present, to heal, learn, and build a new life here in the country.

With their food businesses, they hope to share a taste of home and make their customers feel welcome, in the same manner that their local communities have welcomed them with open arms. Their stories are proof that by cultivating an environment where the rights of the forcibly displaced are protected and supported, refugees can flourish and rebuild their lives as they integrate themselves to their new community. **Given the chance, refugees can contribute to a stronger, safer, and more vibrant society.**



[Shawarma Sham] is a special name for me. **“Sham”** is the other name for **Damascus**, the capital city in Syria. I’ve been away from my country almost 10 years, so with this name, I will always **remember** my city.

ABDULKARIM
Syrian refugee
Owner of Shawarma Sham



I would like to encourage all refugees here to **work hard** and **be happy** with what you have. If possible, start your own business. The government is providing you the **opportunity**, so go ahead... **Grow yourself**, grow your friends, your family, and be happy.

SARDESH & SHAZIA
Pakistani refugees
Owners of Maha Food Hub



Dati, kapag papasok ako ng school, hihingi sila ng documents. Dati wala ako nun, pero nung naging refugee ako, nasa akin na yung mga iyon. Pwede ako mag-survive kahit saan. Parang Pilipino na rin ako dito. Meron akong rights gaya ng mga Pilipino.

HSSAN
Syrian refugee
Bismilla Restaurant



Together we shine: Bringing out the best in one another

Brgy. Sambulawan in Midsayap is a remote community that has become home to many displaced families who are forced to flee because of recurring violence and clan feuds in surrounding areas.

“The first time we fled for safety, it was monsoon season. To reach Sambulawan, we had to swim all the way from our house and cross the river. I carried one child and asked my eldest child to hold on tight to my back. We brought nothing with us,” Noraida recalls.

As a community, Brgy. Sambulawan helps out every time there’s an emergency that causes displacement. With the leadership of their barangay council, they always check on what the displaced families need and see how they can help.

Noraida’s family is only one of the thousands of affected by decades-long armed conflict in Mindanao. Recurring conflict has prevented them from going back to their original home, and today they are part of the very fabric of the Sambulawan community.

With your help, UNHCR Philippines implemented a livelihood support project in 2020 for the women-led group that Noraida belongs to, giving equipment and sewing machines including *Habian*, an indigenous wooden sewing machine for traditional fabrics. This is part of the start-up capital they now use for their dressmaking and event rental business.

Quick impact projects like these foster confidence and self-reliance, as well as a peaceful co-existence between the host community and the forcibly displaced.

The Threat of Climate Change

Farming and fishing are the community’s main sources of livelihood, but the unpredictable climate has adversely affected the schedule of their corn production. **“We weren’t able to plant any corn this year because of the non-stop rains. Unlike before, we can no longer predict the climate situation. It’s all up to Allah now,”** said Zulaika, one of the community leaders.

Thanks to the project you helped fund, the women are now able to manage their livelihood with the tools given to them as alternative to farming. Zulaika continues, **“Praise be to Allah, the project was a big help to the SWC (Social Welfare Committee of the MILF) because before when we didn’t have this project, our committee had a difficult time. We are very thankful to all of you because we are now self-sufficient. It doesn’t mean we no longer have any problems but this is a very big help for all of us in the SWC.”**

For thousands of families in Mindanao, the journey to lasting peace and rebuilding their lives in safety and dignity can take many years. Climate change is a threat multiplier that makes them even more vulnerable.

Your committed support as a monthly donor equips internally displaced persons like Noraida and host communities like Brgy. Sambulawan with the tools, confidence, and hope that they need in order to recover and rebuild.

Together we heal, learn, and shine.

“

Malaki po yung naitulong ng project sa amin. Maliban po doon sa nagkakaroon kami ng close communication sa aming mga kababaihan, naranasan namin kung paano magpatakbo ng isang livelihood, kung paano kami makatulong sa kabuhayan ng pamilya.

NORAIDA

Internally Displaced Person
Brgy. Sambulawan, Midsayap, BARMM SGDA





“ I’m happy to be part of the distribution of solar lamps, which we hope will prove to be useful during these times because they don’t have electricity now.

Earlier, UNHCR gave fishing boats and bamboo fish traps which we hope will also help them in their livelihood and help bring confidence, self-reliance, and community empowerment to this place. It will also promote sustainable fishing practices and green solutions.

At the moment, we still have to see what will happen because of the continuing conflict in this area, but with the help of donors like you, it makes life a little bit easier.

”

ATOM ARAULLO

UNHCR Philippines Goodwill Ambassador

In his most recent visit to Maguindanao and North Cotabato, UNHCR Philippines Goodwill Ambassador Atom Araullo met with internally displaced persons (IDPs), community leaders, and local partners who, together, are navigating the challenges of the pandemic and are working together to mitigate the environmental impact of the climate crisis.

Climate change, conflict, and displacement have become increasingly interconnected and have reinforced life-threatening challenges to people who are in search for safety and security. These, in the middle of a global health crisis, have only made the vulnerability of the forcibly displaced more apparent and alarming.

As Atom reflected during his visit, the challenge of displacement has been long-standing, faced by generation after generation – **“the violence is cyclical and protracted. They need support because of the pandemic and because environment and climate-related threats and hazards are also worsening.”**

Traversing rivers, Atom visited a remote community in Brgy. Butiren, Kabuntalan, Maguindanao, that hosts families who fled from conflict in the surrounding areas. Despite the makeshift housing, lack of electricity, and the vulnerability of the area to environmental hazards such as flooding, the IDPs found a home in Brgy. Butiren. In his conversations

with the members of the community, Atom witnessed the overlapping complications of ongoing conflict and climate change, and how these have gravely affected the community’s battle for mere survival.

Fishing, their main source of livelihood, has been put to risk in many aspects. On one hand, the unpredictable rise of water levels and flooding have affected their catch and forced them to seek safer grounds. On the other, shots are fired at the sight of light when they attempt to fish in the dark.

Fearing violence, conflict, and persecution, forcibly displaced individuals and communities face the adverse effects of an unsafe environment and depleting resources that threaten their survival. Poverty and food insecurity are looming effects of climate change that increase the complexity of their difficult situation. Now, more than ever, the call for climate action and responsibility is greater. In many ways, the impact of this enduring crisis has challenged finding safer homes for the forcibly displaced.

Towards the end of his visit, Atom shared his hope to invite and inspire Filipinos towards a collective movement – **to ensure that we not only do our part as stewards to the environment, but also to take action in making sure that we protect the most vulnerable.**





Climate change is the defining crisis of our time.

Its impacts are disproportionately experienced by people in vulnerable situations. The **forcibly displaced** are among those in **greatest need of protection**. Climate change is posing a **new threat** in their search for safety and **survival**.

Disaster preparedness, access to resources, and opportunities to **rebuild sustainable livelihoods** can protect the most vulnerable in this critical time.

Climate change is not for the distant future; it is our present and reality.

Your kindness can help us ensure that the planet we live in is a **safe place for everyone**, including those who are forced to flee.

Act now. Together.

GIVE AN **ADDITIONAL ONE-TIME GIFT TODAY** TO **PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES** DURING CLIMATE EMERGENCIES.

Php 10,000

helps provide **boats and bamboo fish traps** to the fisherfolk, to protect their livelihood and to **support sustainable fishing practices**

Php 5,000





helps support the **disaster preparedness training** of forcibly displaced communities so they can respond to emergencies

Php 3,000

helps provide **emergency supply and core relief items** to ensure the availability of resources, especially during climate emergencies



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