

UNHCR Note
14th Coordination meeting on International Migration, New York
25-26 February 2016

Global Context

Conflict, persecution, generalised violence and violations of human rights continue to cause forced displacement around the world, resulting in millions of individuals being forced to flee either within or outside their country. By mid-2015, the total population of concern to UNHCR stood at an unprecedented 58.0 million persons.

During the first half of 2015, UNHCR offices reported that at least five million individuals were newly displaced while protracted displacement situations remain unresolved. It is estimated that over 86% of the world's refugees live close to their country of origin. By the end of 2014, developing countries hosted 12.4 million refugees, or 86 per cent of the global refugee population, the highest such figure in more than two decades. Of these, Least Developed Countries (LDC) provided asylum to 25 per cent of the total.

While the vast majority of refugees continue to avail themselves of the protection offered by host countries in their region of origin, their inability to return home and the absence of local integration possibilities where they reside may result in a search for protection and durable solutions elsewhere. Hazardous and irregular movements are prompted by the dearth of adequate safe complementary pathways to protection and solutions. This increasing phenomenon of complex movement of refugees and migrants in irregular mixed flows presents a number of challenges for refugees and for states.

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they use the same smuggling networks and precarious modes of travel, and face

Safe legal pathways to admission are essential for reducing risks for refugees who may otherwise feel compelled to turn to traffickers or smugglers or embark on dangerous journeys. These entail

- Increasing access to protection and assistance where people are, including livelihood opportunities, access to basic services, and education
- Significant increase in 'traditional' pathways to admission in third countries (resettlement and humanitarian admission) is required to meet the needs of the most vulnerable
- Targeted complementary pathways for refugees and asylum seekers, such as humanitarian visas, educational scholarship

approaches in the Americas in response to the children and women violence⁹ UNHCR has also worked with maritime stakeholders to develop a Search and Rescue Guide, which is now available in five UN languages among others¹⁰ All of these regional and global initiatives aim to support practical responses that enhance the protection of refugee and stateless men, women, boys and girls by supporting states to develop protection sensitive approaches to mixed migration. The impact of these initiatives are positive and manifold, although more needs to be done to address the root causes that lead to such desperate search for asylum and protection.

Responses upon arrival – Well-designed protection sensitive processes for identifying asylum seekers, refugees and others with particular needs are imperative to ensure that such people are not at risk of refoulement and can access asylum systems wherever they arrive, be it a country of 'first-asylum', 'transit' or 'destination'. Given the risk of detention by state authorities or by non-state actors, progress has been made exploring and implementing alternatives to detention. In this regard UNHCR is working with states and with other stakeholders implementing its Global Strategy Beyond Detention.¹¹

Engagement in Multilateral Processes

UNHCR works closely with global and regional forums and processes on migration and development. Some of the prominent developments in 2015 include:

1. Global Migration Group (GMG) UNHCR has supported the engagement of the GMG in the complex crisis of mixed migration and has provided clarifications on terminology and the complementarities of the refugee and stateless protection regimes as they relate to mixed migratory flows. UNHCR participates and plays a collaborative role in the key working groups of the GMG. Following the recommendation of the 45(h)21(a)-12(s)-2()-445(pr)-14(o)21(vi)-4(de)9(d)21()-445(c)9(l)n

Route initiative or 'Khartoum Process', the Valetta Summit and the Euro African Dialogue on Migration and Development 'Rabat Process'. With respect to Valetta in particular, UNHCR has worked closely to support the AU and EU on the development of the Valetta Action Plan.

6. Coordination of information and responses to mixed migration movements. UNHCR has worked closely with its key partners in the Horn/ East Africa and in North Africa, through the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) and the inter-agency initiative of MHub, in these regions. UNHCR has also participated in the Mixed Migration Task Forces (MMTF) across the Horn and Africa mixed migratory route.

7. UNHCR has coordinated several advocacy initiatives including Joint Statements with UN agencies and IOM on Protection at Sea, through 2015.

8. Through 2015 UNHCR served as Chair of the UN General Assembly mandated Agency Coordination Against Trafficking (ICAT).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UNHCR has welcomed the universal application of the SDGs and has worked alongside other stakeholders in the development of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs. The commitment to leave no one behind is encouraging as are the explicit references to refugees and other displaced people as being amongst the most vulnerable, and duly included under the SDG Framework. Also directly relevant to UNHCR's mandate is the universal applicability of the framework, regardless of Member States' levels of development, and reference to strengthening 'the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries'

UNHCR views disaggregated data as a vehicle for determining who is and who is not left behind, and is working with the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators to ensure that statistics are designed to bring out the needs and progress of specific groups, including refugees. UNHCR is in the process of identifying a number of countries where refugees constitute a statistically significant portion of the population, and working with national authorities and donors to meet the SDGs in a way that includes all population groups

Advocacy by UNHCR also urges the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons, returning refugees and returning IDPs, asylum seekers and stateless persons in the various national

admission of Syrian refugees on 30 March 2016 in Geneva.¹² This meeting is convened at a ministerial level by UNHCR and opened by the United Nations Secretary-General. The meeting will spotlight good practices and innovative initiatives which have come from what is currently the large refugee situation, the Syria refugee crisis as a concrete example of international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility sharing through the provision of pathways to admission.

A key opportunity to address the challenges of mixed migratory movements will be the *High Level Summit Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants*, convened by the President of the General Assembly on 19 September 2016. With support from UNHCR and other actors, the Summit will consider the development of a new international cooperation framework on predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing on large-scale refugee movements. The framework could create a mechanism for early consultation with all relevant countries and other stakeholders in the event of mass movement of refugees, addressing resourcing for host countries and, as necessary, expedited pathways for admission in third countries.

While mixed movements are a global challenge, regional approaches and sub-regional mechanisms and processes will remain the key drivers of a coordinated response. UNHCR will continue to support these processes, assisting states to distinguish and to differentiate between refugees and migrants and to provide appropriate responses for refugees in keeping with State obligations. Political will and protection-sensitive border management measures are critical components to the success of these efforts.

Additional initiatives that UNHCR is currently developing to respond to refugee and stateless protection in mixed migratory movements include

- Reviewing and mapping the variety of recent interventions that have enabled refugee protection in complex mixed movement contexts. This includes reviewing examples from government and agency perspectives for inclusion in an updated 10 Point Plan in Action: Refugee Protection in International Migration, 2016, 75 DPI/13.9.8 75 ton ehulr t
- In partnership with IOM, UNHCR is revising the Joint IOM UNHCR Framework Document on Developing Standard Operating Procedures to Facilitate the Protection of Trafficked Persons (2009). The revision is intended to