

ensuring access to essential services, such as health care and education, and promoting livelihoods and self-reliance.

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In 2015, the world again witnessed record levels of forced displacement, with 65.3 million people uprooted by war, conflict, persecution or human rights abuses by year's end, 12.4 million of whom were newly displaced. The war in the Syrian Arab Republic was again the single largest driver of displacement in 2015, with more than 4 million Syrians living in exile in neighbouring countries and 6.5 million people internally displaced by the end of the year. The year 2015 also saw the global refugee crisis reaching Europe. More than 1 million refugees and migrants from refugee-producing countries, including Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia, with the Burundi and Yemen situations causing the newest displacements on the continent.

As persisting situations of violence prevented the resolution of many displacement situations, with only small numbers of people returning home, the unhcr programmes began shifting from immediate relief activities to education, livelihoods, cash-based assistance, and other longer-term strategies, in order to foster the refugees' self-reliance and dignity. Returns from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire were restarted after the Ebola outbreak ended in the second half of 2015. In the Americas, unhcr worked to address multiple challenges, focusing on finding solutions in the region through the Brazil Plan of Action and on resolving statelessness in several countries; supporting efforts to consolidate a peace agreement in Colombia; and responding to the needs of increasing numbers of displaced people who were fleeing violence and criminal activities in Central America's Northern Triangle.

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the Office focused its interventions on undertaking community outreach, strengthening relations with urban refugees,

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At its sixty-sixth session (Geneva, 5–9 October) [A/70/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee of the unhr Programme held a high-level segment on the Afghan refugee situation, at the end of which the Executive Committee adopted a statement. e Executive Committee approved the proposed 2016–2017 biennial budget, amounting to \$6,546,288,297 and \$6,408,521,723 for 2016 and 2017 respectively; decided to convene three formal meetings of the Standing Committee in 2016, to be held in March, June and September; and approved applications by Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Panama and

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In 2015, unhcr declared 11 emergency situations affecting operations in 30 countries and deployed 460 emergency missions, involving unhcr and partner states, to support the response mainly in Africa and Europe. During the year, unhcr assisted 12.3 million refugees and 37.4 million internally displaced persons (idps), helped 49,100 stateless people acquire nationality or had it confirmed, and assisted 115,800 returned refugees to reintegrate.

**Report of the High Commissioner.** In his annual report covering 2015 [A/71/12], the High Commissioner described the challenges presented by growing forced displacement and mixed movements. He noted that the number of people displaced by conflict and persecution continued to soar, reaching 65.3 million, 12.4 million of which were newly displaced. New emergencies, ongoing conflict and protracted crises in many parts of the world uprooted civilians, sometimes multiple times, and generated new waves of displacement of a complexity rarely seen before. Although host countries generally maintained open borders, they also bore significant political and socio-economic consequences. Destitution in first countries of asylum, limited education and livelihood opportunities, and diminishing hope for political solutions led millions of people risk their lives in search of international protection through dangerous and irregular means—often facilitated by smugglers.

The arrival of large numbers of refugees and migrants reaching countries in Europe by boat drew sympathy for the tragedy unfolding on Europe's shores; however, the situation quickly gave rise to anti-foreigner rhetoric and xenophobic attitudes in many countries, resulting in exclusionary politics undermining the cooperation necessary to mitigate the crisis. The refugee and mixed migration challenges were too onerous and complex for individual countries to address alone. These developments underlined the need for greater and sustained support for countries of first asylum and intensified efforts to ensure that protection and timely solutions were available for all who needed them. That included strengthening financial support for countries hosting large numbers of refugees and creating additional pathways for admission as concrete expressions of responsibility sharing. While many focused on Europe, 86 per cent of refugees continued to live in the developing world.

In a July note [A/AC.96/1145 & Corr.1] on international protection, the High Commissioner focused on the rule of law and its significance for the unhcr work and for international protection and solutions. He discussed the rule of law at the international, as well as at the national level and protection systems, focusing on legislative and policy frameworks; access to asylum

**Dialogue on protection challenges.** The eighth annual High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges (Geneva, 16–17 December) focused on the theme: "Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement". The Dialogue analysed the triggers of conflict-related displacement and promoted collaboration between political, humanitarian and development actors to address the obstacles to return. Two side events took place, one on the importance of oral histories and gathering refugees' narratives, the other on the impact of criminal violence on displacement in Central America. The Dialogue brought together delegations from 90 countries, 68 NGOs and 28 intergovernmental organizations, as well as academics and experts.

**Populations of concern**

Populations of concern to unhcr included different categories: refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (idps), returnees (refugees and idps), stateless persons, and others of concern to unhcr. According to the High Commissioner's annual report [A/71/12], by the end of 2015 the total population of concern to unhcr stood at an unprecedented 63.9 million persons, including over 16.1 million refugees; 3.2 million asylum seekers; 37.5 million idps; 3.7 million people under unhcr statelessness mandate; and 871,000 other persons of concern.

**Work with States**

In 2015, unhcr continued to work with States in the framework of its global strategy, Beyond Detention (2014–2019), to promote alternatives to detention, particularly for children and families. While sharing the legitimate concern of States regarding the need to respond to possible security threats, unhcr maintained that security and protection were not mutually exclusive. In December, the Agency issued a "Note on addressing security concerns without undermining refugee protection". The note called for an integrated approach to ensure that both goals were met, including through the proper application of those provisions in the 1951 Convention and other instruments that enabled States to manage security concerns while maintaining refugee protection standards.

**Mixed movements**

Large-scale mixed movements, including asylum-seekers and refugees, continued to affect all regions of the world. In South-East Asia, some 33,600 refugees and migrants placed their lives in the hands of smugglers and embarked on journeys in search of safety and a better life. An estimated 370 people lost their lives, mainly from starvation, dehydration, disease and abuse at the hand of people smugglers. Cou-

by 2 per cent. During the year, unhcr processed more than 134,000 submissions, an increase from close to 104,000 the previous year.

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According to country-level data available in 78 countries, some 3.7 million persons were recorded as being stateless in 2015. Unhcr, however, estimated the global stateless population to be at least 10 million people. Collecting comprehensive data on stateless populations remained a challenge. To address this, unhcr

ple of concern, while in West Africa \$122.9 million were spent on some 3.8 million people of concern. In Southern Africa, unhcr expended \$40.0 million on approximately 1.7 million people of concern.

**Report of Secretar -General.** In response to Assembly resolution 69/154 [YUN 2014, p. 1330], the Secretary-General submitted a report [A/70/337] on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa provided by unhcr and other UN entities, including the World Food Programme (wfp), the United Nations Children’s Fund (unicef) and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. The report, which updated information contained in the Secretary-General’s 2014 report on the topic [YUN 2014, p. 1329]



generously hosted Afghan refugees for more than three decades. The Office focused its interventions on



community-based paralegals and some 450 applicants acquired Malaysian nationality.

In 2015, unhcr spent \$256.4 million on some 9.8 million people of concern in Asia and the Pacific.

## M E N A

The Middle East and North Africa region continued to face high levels of displacement throughout 2015. With three system-wide, Level-3 emergencies in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, the region accounted for more than 30 per cent of global displacement.

Protection remained the unhcr main priority in the Middle East and North Africa. The Office worked closely with governments and partners to enhance protection space, focusing on: advocating access to safety and protection from refoulement; reinforcing registration and refugee status determination; promoting legislative frameworks; addressing the risk of statelessness; ensuring security from violence and exploitation; and working towards durable solutions,

Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Agai* : Israel.

*Ab ai i g*: Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, United States, Vanuatu.

## E

In 2015, an unprecedented refugee crisis in Europe unfolded as an increasing number of people risked their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of safety and protection. More than 1 million people arrived in Southern Europe by boat, with 84 per cent coming from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries including Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The majority of the new arrivals crossed the Aegean Sea from Turkey and arrived in Greece. Some 3,770 people died or were reported missing in the Mediterranean. The crisis challenged the effective functioning of the Common European Asylum System. Numerous European countries responded to the crisis by unilaterally imposing greater restrictions on access to their territories. Unhcr was concerned by States violating their legal obligations towards refugees and asylum-seekers, which resulted in large numbers of people forcibly returned, across border points, outside of legal channel.

Turkey, the host to the largest number of refugees in the world, registered more than 2.5 million Syrians by year's end. Under the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, the inter-agency response to the Syria crisis, unhcr supported Turkey's implementation of the temporary protection regulation, and Syrian refugees' access to rights and entitlements.

Greece experienced an unprecedented increase in new arrivals by sea with more than 850,000 arrivals, the vast majority of whom moved onwards through the Western Balkans to Northern and Western Europe. In response to that situation, unhcr declared an internal level 2 emergency in July and significantly scaled up its presence and activities not only in Greece, but also in the north, 3-5.4 (l)0.8 (d)-0aps tpuvuh

loudspeaker, and individual counselling. Unhcr, together with unicef, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other partners, developed and instituted the Child and Family Support Hubs (“Blue Dot” hubs), to ensure that basic services and  
and, in addition, in 2017, the United Nations (p)ro5 (l)-v8.8952hagp

the auspices of iasc, as well as the management groups for the inter-agency evaluations of the Central African Republic and South Sudan level-3 emergencies.

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At its sixty-sixth session, the Executive Committee had before it a report [A/AC.96/1149] of the High Commissioner on the activities of the Inspector General's Office from July 2014 to June 2015. During that period, the Office conducted four inspections of unhcr

\$3.06 billion, with a deficit of \$304.8 million compared with a surplus of \$460.4 million in 2013.

Key findings of the Board of Auditors covered issues relating to financial matters; management of physical assets; internal control and fraud risk assessment; Managing Systems, Resources and People (msrp) project systems upgrade; cost of service delivery; and financial management within the education programme.

The Board of Auditors recommended, among other things, that unhcr work with donors to improve the profiling of resources during the year to facilitate better budget forecasting, which would enable smoother budget implementation and procurement; make better use of data analytics to assure management of compliance with key controls and finalize and embed the fraud risk assessments and mitigation plans emerging from the fraud prevention project; and ensure that the key priorities for the msrp upgrade were used to draw up a clear statement of benefits, against which the success of the project could be measured and enhance the msrp project risk process by regular review of the risks and mitigation measures.

In September [A/AC.96/1146/Add.1], the High Commissioner reported on measures taken in response

