

INSIDE:

Yemen six years on:
The world's worst
humanitarian crisis

Impact: COVID-19

Leading Women
Fund: Going from
strength to strength

The difference you
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◀ **ON THE COVER:**
Lujain Qasim, 11, looks through an opening in her family's tent at the Dharawan settlement in Yemen.



WELCOME

When I founded Australia for UNHCR 20 years ago, 21 million people were forcibly displaced and we could expect a major humanitarian emergency once every two years.

Today, almost 80 million people are displaced worldwide, and in 2020 we launched appeals for four separate emergencies.

Despite the challenges faced, however, Australian donors have stepped up again and again to support refugees forced to flee conflict and other crises. And amid so much adversity, hope is always there, and I see so many examples of individuals and groups making a real difference in the world.

In this edition of *With You*, we highlight some of the ways your support has made a difference. From helping keep refugees safe and warm during the coldest months through our Winterisation appeal, to the life-saving support your donations have made to refugees fleeing conflict in Ethiopia.

While COVID-19 continues to affect all our lives, it adds yet more pressure to refugees who struggle to maintain social distancing while living in close quarters together. As governments worldwide roll out their vaccine programs, it is vital that refugees are included as part of this health plan. Jordan was one of the first countries to include refugees in their vaccine program, which you can read more about on page 10.

Our cover story focuses on the Yemen crisis, which is now in its sixth year. Yemen remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis with more than 20 million people requiring assistance and tens of thousands of people facing severe food shortages. Read our feature to find out more about the needs and how UNHCR is supporting Yemenis.

In March this year we were delighted to launch our first International Women's Day event in partnership with *Vogue Australia*. We had a wonderful and inspiring panel of guests including UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements and former refugee, supermodel and UNHCR high-profile supporter Adut Akech. We also heard from supporters of our newest initiative the Leading Women Fund, which celebrates one year in June. You can read more about the Fund on page 14.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *With You*, which you may notice has a fresh new look. Thank you for your ongoing support and for continuing to stand with refugees.

Naomi Steer

Naomi Steer, National Director

THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE



UNHCR and partners on the ground helped provide shelter kits, plastic sheets and tens of thousands of relief items after the Beirut blasts. ▾

▲
Abu Mohammad, 45 and his daughter Amal, 7, talk about the challenges of winter with UNHCR field worker Ihab Shaban.



STANDING WITH LEBANON

RESPONDING TO THE BLASTS that severely damaged neighbourhoods in Beirut, UNHCR mobilised US\$35 million for its emergency response to the hardest-hit and most vulnerable households.

This package included US\$32.5 million for shelter interventions and US\$2.5 million for protection activities during the winter months.

UNHCR and partners also provided legal aid to recover lost documents and psychological support to help people heal from the trauma, as well as emergency cash assistance.

Over 6,500 shelter kits were provided to meet urgent needs, helping to restore a degree of privacy, dignity and safety for over 20,000 people still residing in the affected areas. UNHCR's overall support reached 100,000 affected people. ■

Winterisation

KEEPING REFUGEE FAMILIES SAFE AND WARM DURING THE COLDER MONTHS

As displaced families across the Middle East and North Africa braced for brutal winter conditions, we asked for your help to provide them with life-saving winter assistance. Without adequate protection from freezing temperatures, torrential rain and snowstorms, already vulnerable families face significant risks to their health and wellbeing.

Thanks to Australian donors, our Winter Survival Fund, which launched last November, raised \$1.26 million to help keep families safe and warm. With your generous support, UNHCR delivered winter assistance to 4 million refugees. This included core relief items such as thermal blankets, plastic sheets and winter clothes, shelter insulation and seasonal cash assistance to help families meet additional needs during the winter months.

Abu Mohammad, 45 (pictured above), is from Daraa, Syria. He came to Jordan in 2013 and lives with his family in Za'atari camp. He has three sons and three daughters. All of his children are attending school but he doesn't have a job so depends on UNHCR assistance to support his family.

Receiving seasonal cash assistance means he is able to buy warm winter clothes for his children. ■

In the News



^ The fire that swept through Kutupalong refugee camp has displaced more than 48,000 Rohingya refugees.

© UNHCR/ Louise Donovan

» MYANMAR

Rohingya refugees are facing yet another tragedy after a fire tore through Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar Bangladesh in March.

The blaze has destroyed thousands of shelters and displaced more than 48,000 refugees. Nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees have sought safety in Bangladesh after fleeing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State over the years.

This latest tragedy is also compounded by the recent outbreaks of violence in Myanmar, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of protestors demonstrating against a military coup. This conflict has in turn caused yet another refugee exodus into neighbouring countries.

The UN human rights office (OHCHR) together with Secretary-General António Guterres, strongly condemned the escalating violence and called for an immediate end to the use of force.

According to UNHCR, there are an estimated 1.9 million persons of concern to UNHCR from Myanmar. The vast majority – about 1.6 million – are Rohingya. UNHCR has registered almost one million Rohingya refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly in Bangladesh, Malaysia and India. Refugees have access to the basics, such as food and health care, but they are still extremely vulnerable, living in highly challenging circumstances and dependent on aid.

UNHCR and partners are advocating for peace between all communities in Rakhine State so Rohingya refugees can return home safely. UNHCR is also prioritising humanitarian assistance for Rohingya refugees in host countries and those internally displaced, expanding education and livelihood opportunities for Rohingya youth, and investing in host communities to help them mitigate the socioeconomic pressures of hosting refugees, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



© UNHCR/Nicolo Filippo Rosso

» COLOMBIA

Mayerlín Vergara Pérez – known as Maye – has been working on the ground for 20 years with the Fundación Renacer in Colombia, fighting to eradicate the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, commends Maye's important work:

“Maye's tireless efforts over decades to search out, rescue and gain the trust of young victims of exploitation have meant that hundreds are now safe and have the chance to become a child again.”

Sex tourism in Colombia has had a devastating impact on children and adolescents. This is compounded by the Venezuelan crisis which has brought hundreds of minors across the border putting them at risk of violence and harassment.

Since the beginning of the Venezuelan crisis, Maye has been working with communities in Uribia, Maicao and Riohacha, where she runs a home for young survivors. She has been rewarded with the 2020 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award, which honours everyday heroes going to extraordinary lengths to help forcibly displaced people.

“This award also belongs to the children and adolescents whose ability to dream inspires us to continue believing that it is possible to build a society free of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation,” said Maye, accepting the honour. ■

^ UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Award Laureate 2020, Mayerlín Vergara Pérez hugs a young girl at Fundación Renacer in Riohacha, La Guajira, Colombia.

» SYRIA

March 2021 marked the 10th year of conflict in Syria. More than half of Syria's population has been forcibly displaced since the start of the conflict in 2011. Many have lost loved ones and had their homes destroyed. Today, Syrians are the largest refugee population in the world. Neighbouring countries have provided protection and safety, however host communities remain in need of financing to enable them to continue to support millions of Syrian families.

Poverty is increasing and protection risks, including child labour and early marriage, are becoming more acute. Michelle Bachelet, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, fears the world has grown numb: "During the early years of this murderous conflict, when the casualties were in the tens, then hundreds, then thousands, the world showed considerable concern," she said.

"Now, airstrikes kill and maim significant numbers of civilians several times a week, and the response seems to be a collective shrug."

The desperate situation of refugees living in poverty and facing daily protection risks amounts to a new emergency. Long-term financial support from the international community would enable host communities to meet their own goals, while allowing refugees to have a meaningful and dignified future. ■



© UNHCR/David Azia



© UNHCR



Azraq refugee camp was built in 2014 by UNHCR and houses more than 35,000 Syrian refugees. The continuing unrest in Syria has displaced more than half the country's population.

» BURUNDI

This drawing (above), by Tumbwe, a 21-year-old Burundian refugee in Rwanda, illustrates the habits taken to protect against COVID-19. It demonstrates that refugees are also involved in the fight against the virus.

UNHCR's first-ever Youth with Refugees Art Contest was launched amid the COVID-19 pandemic, to encourage young people aged 12-25, to reflect creatively on the theme: "everyone counts in the fight against the virus, including refugees." Two thousand participants from 100 countries submitted drawings and comic strips. One in four participants were themselves refugees or asylum-seekers.

UNHCR awarded seven global winners whose drawings have been animated by Japanese studio SPEED Inc. – as well as five regional prizes, five prizes for cartoons and 20 special mentions.

Ahead of the Olympics and the Euro football cup, UNHCR will also engage young artists and refugee youth to celebrate the power of sports. The best designs will be turned into footballs stitched by refugees and host community members in Kenya, supported by a sport NGO and an ethical ball manufacturer – Alive and Kicking.

The winning balls will be sold online with all profits going to support sport activities and sporting opportunities for refugees. ■

» NIGERIA

Surging violence

in north-west Nigeria has fuelled displacement into neighbouring Niger's Maradi region, where violence is also on the rise.

Fearing armed groups and communal clashes, more than 7,660 refugees have fled Nigeria into Maradi this year and another 3,500 citizens of Niger have been displaced inside the country. Most of the refugees are women and children, displaced following recent attacks in Nigeria's Sokoto State.

The Maradi region, in southern Niger, now hosts nearly 100,000 displaced people, including 77,000 Nigerian refugees, who have fled attacks in Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States.

UNHCR teams in Niger have recorded a spike in violence inside Maradi itself. Refugees describe murders, kidnapping and looting. Many have also been caught up in clashes between farmers and herders as well as vigilantism, as self-defence groups are being set up in most villages.

People fleeing are in urgent need of water, food, shelter and health services. Most have fled empty-handed in the rush to save their lives. Niger continues to grant access to asylum seekers, despite border restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



© UNHCR/Selm Medeb Hamrouni

▲ Nigerian refugee Aisha* and her family are among thousands who have fled into Maradi, Niger, to escape extremist violence.

Yemen crisis: six years on



The world's largest humanitarian crisis continues unabated without adequate support from the international community.

Despite the fact that desperate Yemenis urgently need more aid to survive, the international response to the High-Level Pledging Event on Yemen in March has been described as “disappointing” by the UN chief. The UN appealed for US\$3.85 billion and only received half. Pledges totalled less than last year’s humanitarian response and a billion dollars less than the figure raised in 2019.

Yemen remains the world’s largest humanitarian crisis and its largest humanitarian response. More than 20 million people need humanitarian assistance across the country,

including more than 16 million who will go hungry this year. Tens of thousands are already living in famine-like conditions, with five million more just one step away from famine. The most urgent task in Yemen today is to prevent widespread famine on a scale we have not seen for 40 years.

These high levels of food insecurity persist, amidst deterioration of the economy, conflict, and the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Basic services are collapsing, with only 50 per cent of the country’s 4,966 health facilities fully functional, leaving malnourished

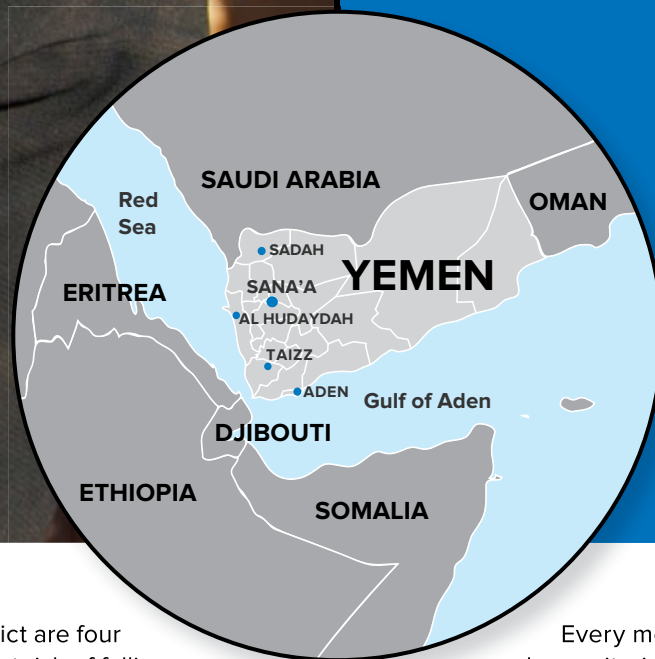


© UNHCR/H. Macleod

◀ A doctor performs a malnutrition check on a young Yemeni infant in Mazrak refugee camp.

FACT FILE

- **24.3 MILLION** people in need
- **4 MILLION** displaced since March 2015
- **OVER 80 PER CENT** have been displaced for more than a year
- **CHILDREN AND WOMEN** represent up to **79 PER CENT** of the total IDP population
- **166,914** refugees and **10,714** asylum-seekers



Yemenis more susceptible to communicable diseases.

UNHCR's Yemen representative in the field, Jean-Nicolas Beuze, said, "Families displaced by the conflict in Yemen have lost everything."

"The families I've just spoken to are telling me that they barely have enough to eat twice a day. They're concerned about most of their children being out of school. They have barely anything to survive on."

Six years of conflict have taken a brutal toll on civilians, pushing one in eight Yemenis into displacement. Yemenis forced to flee their homes

due to conflict are four times more at risk of falling into hunger than others. Sixty-seven per cent of the IDPs (2.6 million individuals) live in an emergency food insecure situation. Thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) are already facing severe food shortage and are resorting to negative coping strategies, such as begging, child labour, skipping meals, or cutting down on meal portions.

"Cutting aid is a death sentence", UN Secretary-General António Guterres said after the event concluded. "The best that can be said about today is that it represents a down payment."

Every month, humanitarian agencies, coordinated by the UN, help more than 10 million people. The aid operation is saving millions of lives. But aid agencies still face too many obstacles in their work. Many of these challenges are due to bureaucratic and other restrictions imposed by Houthi authorities in the north.

The Houthi rebel fighters renewed their offensive on Marib in February this year to retake the oil-rich province from the internationally recognised government. Amid intensified clashes, the UN Refugee



Internally displaced Yemeni, Hashim, and his family live in a hosting site in Sana'a. Many internally displaced people (IDPs) fled their homes without taking any belongings or identity documents. Without legal documentation, many are unable to enrol their children in school, or access basic and essential services.

Made in Sweden

“The families I’ve just spoken to are telling me that they barely have enough to eat twice a day. They’re concerned about most of their children being out of school. They have barely anything to survive on.”

Agency is calling for a safe passage for the fleeing civilians to lessen the impact of the conflict.

Insecurity is increasingly hindering the delivery of aid to civilians in Marib, with dire consequences for the most vulnerable among them. The latest clashes are just a few kilometres from Marib city and people had little choice but to flee to relative safety in the urban areas.

Over the past year, UNHCR and partners have worked together to push back against these restrictions and ensure aid operations can continue.

The conflict in Yemen is now in its seventh year. It is time for peace. Humanitarian agencies have successfully mitigated some of the worst consequences of the crisis for civilians. But only a political solution can end the crisis altogether.

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF MALNUTRITION

Through the worst of the fighting, UNHCR has stayed the course. Despite the many obstacles of working in a war-zone, our teams have remained on the ground, helping people displaced on both sides of the conflict. They are doing what they can with the resources they have, but those resources are running out, leaving them to make

impossible decisions as to who they can and cannot help.

Six years of war have pushed the country to the brink of famine. More than four million people have been displaced and a staggering 80 per cent of the population now depends on humanitarian aid for their daily survival.

“The statistics are shocking, but it’s the cries of hungry children that bring the full horror of the crisis home to me,” said Australia for UNHCR National Director Naomi Steer.

“Children like 14-month-old Fatima who I recently watched being weighed on a live-cross to a UNHCR-supported health clinic in Aden. ‘She’s not keeping any food down, not even milk,’ her father told the nurse. Fatima cried throughout the consultation, that thin plaintive cry of a starving child. As I watched, she tipped the scales at just five kilos – half the weight of a healthy baby of her age.”

This is Severe Acute Malnutrition, the most extreme and dangerous kind of malnourishment in children. Without urgent intervention, it can quickly lead to coma, organ failure and death.

“Children like Fatima with stick-thin limbs and protruding ribs are what we tend to think of when we hear the word ‘famine,’” Naomi said. “But much of the hunger and malnutrition in Yemen today is less visible and more insidious. In some parts of the country, one quarter of children under five are now acutely malnourished, requiring urgent supplementary and therapeutic feeding.”

Even moderate malnourishment can have dire consequences for children, stunting their growth and development. It also affects their immunity, increasing their risk of disease. Even before COVID-19 arrived in Yemen, children were dying of cholera, diphtheria, malaria and measles. ■

You can help families struggling to survive this catastrophe. Call 1300 361 288, visit [unrefugees.org.au/yemenresponse](https://www.unrefugees.org.au/yemenresponse) or scan this QR code to go directly to our website.



Central African families seek refuge in DRC

THE LATEST WAVE OF VIOLENCE CAUSES THOUSANDS TO FLEE

Insecurity and violence erupted in Central African Republic (CAR) after last December's presidential and parliamentary elections, forcing close to 250,000 people to flee. Most refugees – around 90,000 – are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), according to local authorities there. Others have fled to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, and the Republic of the Congo, while more than 130,000 people remain displaced inside CAR.

For many people forced to flee, it is the second time they've had to leave CAR. Paul Ouaki is just one of thousands of refugees living in Zongo, a town across the river from Bangui in the DRC. In early January, he woke to the sound of gunfire as rebels reached the capital, Bangui.

"It was happening again," said Paul, 28, who realised he would be forced

to flee CAR for the second time. He first left CAR in 2014, and lived for six years in a refugee camp in DRC. He and his family returned to CAR in February 2020, but the latest outbreak of violence meant moving again.

UNHCR is working with the government and partners to relocate thousands of refugees to safer, better equipped sites further from the border. The first site, which

can house up to 10,000 refugees in Modale village, near Yakoma in North Ubangi province, is already under construction. A similar site close to Zongo is being identified.

Paul helps other refugees build shelters and search for wood to earn a little money to buy food.

"What I believe in my heart is that peace should return, because if there is no peace, there is no way we will go back to our village." ■



CAR refugees collect supplies at a UNHCR distribution centre in Yakoma, northern DRC.

© UNHCR/Hélène Gaux



Credit: Simeon Bryan

5

MINUTES WITH... *Joelle Sanounou,* *Australia for UNHCR* *intern and Beddie* *Scholarship winner*

Joelle is a former refugee who fled to Lebanon from Syria with her family, and now lives in Australia. She is the recipient of our Australia for UNHCR Beddie Scholarship, created to support a refugee to study at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS).

What have you enjoyed about your internship at Australia for UNHCR?

The experience, the knowledge I gained, my supervisors and team members. However, what I enjoyed most was getting to know more about what Australia for UNHCR does, and how much they've done with the support of many generous Australians.

Can you talk about your experience as a former refugee?

Being a former refugee in Lebanon was really hard. I never felt at home or welcomed. After high school I was excited to go to university but had to work with my sister to support the family. At the time, there was a curfew for Syrians at 8pm, yet I worked long hours, sometimes past midnight. When I come home, I see all the building lights off except for one, my mom at the window waiting for me to come home safe.

What has been your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge was trying to find hope in my lowest moments;

sad, lonely and afraid of the unknown. My sister told me about a person in the city who helped people fill the refugee application to Australia for a small fee. I found that guy and filled that application with myself as the main candidate. Seven months later I got the best phone call of my life, that we got the visa. I just wish everyone else was as lucky as we were.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

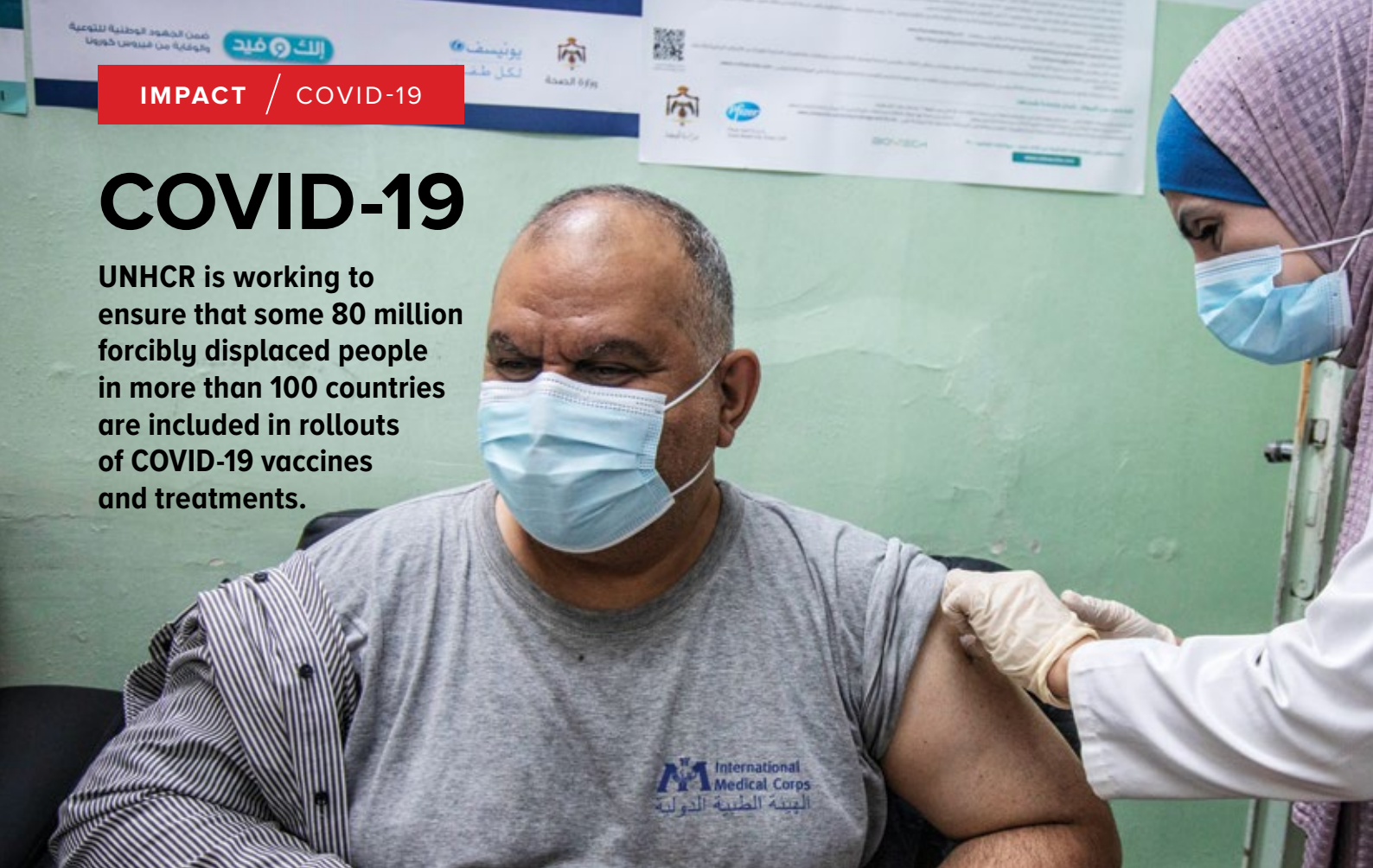
I invite friends over and we watch a film together. We are all film students, so we are brutal critics.

What's your favourite book, movie or TV show?

I have recently been watching *Euphoria*, a show that tells the story of multiple characters from one point of view. I aspire to have that level of empathy like the writer Sam Levinson to be able to write such relatable characters and dig deep into their lives. One of my dreams is to make a film or a show that creates a huge impact on people, a positive one. ■

COVID-19

UNHCR is working to ensure that some 80 million forcibly displaced people in more than 100 countries are included in rollouts of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.



Iraqi refugee Raia hopes life will be more relaxed now that she has received a COVID-19 vaccination. She and her husband Ziad – a trained doctor – were among the first UNHCR-registered refugees in the world to be vaccinated against the virus.

Originally from Baghdad, Raia and Ziad fled the Iraq conflict in 2006 and sought safety in Jordan. In January, they both received the Sinopharm vaccine developed in China after being prioritised due to Ziad’s chronic diseases which placed him in the high-risk category.

“We just want life to be back to normal,” Raia said after receiving the vaccination. “The vaccine is the right way of doing this.”

As part of Jordan’s national COVID-19 vaccination plan, anyone living in the country, including refugees and asylum seekers, is entitled to the vaccine free of charge.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, refugees have been generously included in the Government of Jordan’s national response plan, able to access health care and medical treatment on par with Jordanian citizens.

UNHCR has been supporting the government’s efforts by encouraging and helping refugees to sign up for the vaccine and providing transportation to health clinics where needed.

For Raia and other refugees across the country, the start of the vaccination campaign has brought with it hope that life will soon return to something close to normal.

“I just want to be able to give my friends a hug again,” Raia said.

In early March, Rwanda’s Ministry of Health also rolled out its countrywide COVID-19 vaccination campaign, beginning with high-risk groups such as health workers, teachers and older people. More than 230,000 people have so far received their first injection.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Since the beginning of the pandemic, UNHCR has rushed urgent supplies and core relief items to millions of refugees and displaced people, including water, medical care and hygiene materials.

As of January 2021, UNHCR has procured more than 2,000 oxygen concentrators, 41.2 million masks, 2.8 million gowns, 195 ventilators

and delivered 380 metric tons of personal protective equipment and medical items.

Meanwhile, more than 9.3 million refugees and internally displaced persons accessed protection services, including gender-based violence and child protection services, and 3.9 million refugees accessed essential health services.

As vaccinations roll out across the globe, UNHCR is continuously advocating at country, regional and global levels for refugees and other people to be included in international strategies.

To date, 51 out of the 90 countries currently developing national COVID-19 vaccination strategies have included refugees in their vaccination plans.

“We are engaged in discussions and decision-making processes with COVAX, the global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries,” said Mike Woodman, a UNHCR senior public health officer.

“We are working with international partners to ensure that ‘leaving no one behind’ and ‘equitable access to vaccines’ are not just phrases, but practice.” ■

◀ Iraqi refugee Ziad Alkabasi receives the COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic in Irbid, Jordan. He and his wife Raia were one of the first UNHCR-registered refugees in the world to receive the vaccine.

© UNHCR/Jose Cendon



I just want to be able to give my friends a hug again.

– Raia, Iraqi refugee



© UNHCR/Daial Harib

FACT FILE

HOW UNHCR HAS RESPONDED TO COVID-19



41.2 MILLION masks procured, 2.8 million gowns and 2000 oxygen concentrators.



380 METRIC TONS delivered of personal protective equipment and medical items.



US\$52 MILLION raised for UNHCR's COVID-19 appeal in 2020.

Join us for World Refugee Day in June

Our annual World Refugee Day event is one of the biggest events on our calendar, and this year will be no exception.

DATE: *Friday
18 June, 2021*

TIME: *12.00–2.00pm*

WHERE:
*Sheraton on the Park,
161 Elizabeth St, Sydney,
and streaming online*

IN 2021 WE ARE delighted to announce that we will be hosting an in-person lunchtime event that will also be livestreamed to allow supporters to join from anywhere in Australia and around the world.

We are looking forward to coming together in person to commemorate this special day and hope you will be able to join us.

If you are joining us virtually, we will send you a link to join our event online.

For more information and to buy your ticket visit <https://bit.ly/3rDOCKS> or scan the QR code.



✓ Refugee women at Kakuma camp in Kenya.



© Australia For UNHCR

Ethiopia crisis

Since November, violence and conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region has driven more than 61,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring Sudan.

Refugees continue to arrive across the border, many detailing they were without food and water during the conflict and were forced to leave the elderly and chronically ill behind.

Hundreds of thousands more, including almost 100,000 Eritrean refugees hosted in Tigray, are displaced within Ethiopia.

Our teams have been on the ground at the border in Sudan since the violence erupted, providing emergency shelter, potable water and health screening to the thousands who have fled. We are distributing relief items including blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting and hygiene kits. We are also distributing soap and tens of thousands of face masks at border points to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Tens of thousands of refugees have been relocated to camps and settlements in Sudan, and UNHCR and partners continue to establish community structures at all sites.

Many refugees, internally displaced people and host communities have endured more than three months of conflict with extremely limited assistance, leading to a significant rise in humanitarian needs.

After almost two months without access to the Tigray region, UNHCR and partners in January established a regular presence in two southern Eritrean refugee camps – Mai-Aini and Adi Harush.

Refugees were cut off from any supplies and services. Wells were

not functional without fuel for the pumps, leaving refugees to use water from a nearby creek for washing, cooking and drinking, resulting in diarrhoea-like illnesses.

General living and operating conditions inside Tigray are becoming more difficult with power outages and food and fuel supplies becoming extremely scarce. After several months of a communication blackout, basic services have gradually resumed in parts of Tigray, however, electricity and banking services remain intermittent.

Thankfully, teams found that in both Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps, buildings and structures remain intact, including refugee homes, schools and clinics, with little damage observed. But robberies have been common, especially at night, and refugees can hear sounds of the military conflict. Some people had their mobile phones stolen, which for many, were their only valuable items and the only way to communicate with family back in Eritrea or elsewhere.

"We live in fear every night that conflict will begin again. We fear thieves and looters taking advantage of the lack of law and order," said Amanuel, an Eritrean living in Adi Harush.

UNHCR's funding requirements of US\$107.9 million to respond to the Tigray emergency in Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti are only 44 per cent funded (US\$47 million), as of February 2021. ■

If you would like to help support refugees please go to: unrefugees.org.au/emergency-response/ethiopia-emergency or call 1300 361 288.



© UNHCR/Ariane Maxlendeau

A child is screened at a transit centre in Hamdayet border crossing near Sudan, after the family fled ongoing clashes in Ethiopia's Tigray region.



More than 61,000 people have sought refuge in Sudan following conflict in neighbouring Ethiopia. Some of the refugees share their stories here.



© UNHCR/Wil Swanson

The families I met have suffered terrible physical and psychological injuries but they remain determined to rebuild their lives.

Tekleberhane Giday, 32, was a school principal in Humera, Ethiopia, before fleeing to Sudan where he works as a volunteer teacher.



© UNHCR/Wil Swanson

It's hot here but we still play outside. I'm going to the school here and I love learning to read.

Ethiopian refugee, Legis Golu, 9, stands outside her shelter at Um Rakuba camp in Al Qadarif State, Sudan. She fled her home in Howsin with her family.



© UNHCR/Wil Swanson

We travelled in different directions to get to safety.

Ethiopian refugee, Sagata, 45, from Bakher in Tigray, waits at Hamdayet border reception centre in Sudan, to be relocated to Um Rakuba camp. She was reunited with her husband and children after crossing the border.



We live in fear every night that conflict will begin again. We fear thieves and looters taking advantage of the lack of law and order.

— Amanuel, an Eritrean living in Adi Harush.

The power of connection

Why the Leading Women Fund is the most life-changing network you'll ever join.

When we launched the Leading Women Fund in June 2020, our aim was to provide Australian donors with the chance to support and connect with refugee women from around the world.

Donations for the first project go directly to Syrian refugee women who are currently living in Jordan and in a position where they are the sole heads of their households, responsible for providing for their families.

Members of the fund donate \$230 every four weeks, which directly supports Syrian women in the form of cash assistance, empowering them to allocate funds according to their family's needs.

Only five per cent of refugee work permits in Jordan are given to women, making it very difficult for them to find work in order to support their families, pay rent and keep food on the table.

GET CONNECTED

The first trial of the Connecting Worlds app took place in October 2020 and offered the first intake

of donors the chance to communicate directly with Syrian refugee women. For one month, the women shared stories about their lives, swapped recipes and sent photos via the app.

"It was very humbling to understand what [my contact] was going through, I have no idea how she keeps going in the circumstances she was in. It was just amazing", said Marie, one of the Founding 50 donors who participated in the app trial.

"We are all in a position where we can give back, and I've committed to it. That \$230 a month is going until it's not needed."

The second phase of the app will be available to donors later in 2021.

Over the past nine months, the Leading Women Fund has also hosted a wide range of webinars, with guest panelists including UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements, former refugee, supermodel and UNHCR high profile supporter Adut Akech, UNHCR field workers on the ground in Jordan and inspiring refugee women.

GET INVOLVED

Members of the Leading Women Fund have the opportunity to connect with a network of dynamic Australian women who are passionate about empowering female refugees around the world, and there are plenty of opportunities to get involved.

GIVE: Your regular donation of \$230 every four weeks – or \$3,000 a year – helps a refugee woman to cover basic expenses such as rent, bills and food.

LEARN: You'll attend exclusive webinars and special events with inspiring refugee women, UNHCR women leaders and field experts. You'll also receive our regular curated newsletter with inside stories from the field and profiles of your fellow Leading Women Fund donors. Our LWF podcast is launching late 2021 and will be hosted by Australia for UNHCR National Director Naomi Steer.

CONNECT: You'll be invited to in-person and online networking events with other Fund donors, connect with one another via our invite-only

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Mariam, 44, and her daughter Wa'ed, 5, were forced to flee their home in Aleppo, Syria and now live in an apartment in Irbid, a city in northern Jordan. The family depends on monthly cash assistance from UNHCR to meet their basic needs including rent, food and other essentials.

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Design for a cause

CANVA PARTNERS WITH UNHCR TO SUPPORT REFUGEE EDUCATION

In late 2020 UNHCR announced a new partnership with Canva – the online platform empowering the world to design – to help tackle the educational challenges faced by refugee children.

At present, 48 per cent of school-age refugee children are not enrolled in formal education, due to challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, and a lack of resources.

Canva's Head of Social Impact, Robyn King, describes how supporting refugees through financial aid and campaigning for improved education, is one of the best ways the company can enact lasting, positive change.

"One of our guiding principles is to 'Be a Force for Good' and with the incredible work UNHCR does in supporting refugee education projects, we feel the missions of our two organisations are well aligned," she said.

DESIGNING A FUTURE

In October last year Australia for UNHCR and Canva launched a global drawing challenge – Design for a cause – to raise awareness of refugee education needs. Entrants were asked to draw 'one thing that makes you smile' and more than 1,600 drawings were submitted from all over the world.

Through their illustrations, people from around the world shared drawings of their pets, favourite foods and holiday destinations, but they also shared stories of hope and childhood memories that make them smile.

Between October and December, Canva selected 100 of the most smile-worthy drawings, transformed them into graphics, and added them to useful templates to be sold on their platform until the end of this year.

All proceeds are going to UNHCR education programs to ensure refugee children access primary school, safe learning environments, school readiness programs, quality teachers and tools so that they can build better futures for themselves, their families and their communities. ■

“One of our guiding principles is to ‘Be a Force for Good’ and with the incredible work UNHCR does in supporting refugee education projects, we feel the missions of our two organisations are well aligned...”

The Leading Women Fund currently has a limited number of places available in 2021.

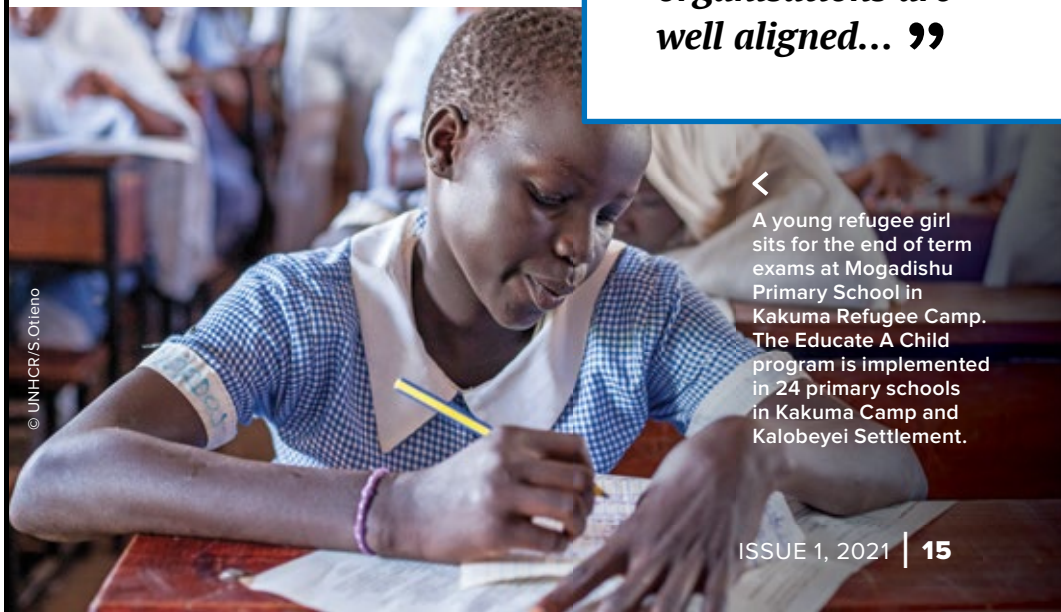
For more information visit unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/leading-women-fund/



LinkedIn group, and you will have the opportunity to connect directly with a refugee woman supported by the Fund using UNHCR's ground-breaking app Connecting Worlds.

CO-CREATE: Contributing your skills, knowledge and energy, you'll help shape future Leading Women Fund projects, co-creating the initiatives that will positively change refugee women's lives.

LEAD: Becoming part of this unique global movement will equip you with accurate information, and the tools to help you advocate for some of the most marginalised women in the world. ■



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A young refugee girl sits for the end of term exams at Mogadishu Primary School in Kakuma Refugee Camp. The Educate A Child program is implemented in 24 primary schools in Kakuma Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement.

“Why we want to give back to our fellow refugees”

Former refugees Esperance and Mutalemba are donors to Australia for UNHCR and want to leave a legacy so other refugees can have a brighter future

Esperance and Mutalemba Zagabe were born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but were forced to leave due to ongoing violence in the region, and ended up living in a refugee camp in Malawi.

“We lived in a refugee camp in Malawi for 13 years,” Mutalemba explained. “Through the help of UNHCR we overcame our challenges slowly and arrived in Australia in 2013.”

The couple now live in the Northern Territory with their four children, aged 22, 20, 18 and 13. “It is really nice here, everything is easy to get and there’s good education for the kids,” Mutalemba said.

The family are donors to Australia for UNHCR and are also considering leaving a bequest to Australia for UNHCR in their Will so they can give back and help others in need.

“I chose to donate because I was a refugee and I know what it’s like not to have food, medical supplies and a good education for your children. I want to support refugees and especially refugee children,” Mutalemba said.

“I am interested in becoming a bequestor because when I came to Australia I was very interested in Australia for UNHCR and found out all about their work and what they do. I always wanted to help my fellow refugee people find a good future.”



“

I always wanted to help my fellow refugee people find a good future. ”

While the family are happily settled in the Northern Territory, with all their children attending high school and university, they miss their home and everything they left behind.

“[Being] a refugee is not something you ask for or that you want in your life,” Mutalemba explained.

“People need to understand that I did not choose to be here; I had a home and family back in Congo, I lost everything and I miss everything and everyone that I lost. We have family back in Congo. We keep in touch with FaceTime but it’s hard – it’s a very long way away.

“I am very thankful for all the staff at UNHCR for the work they do and encourage them to continue to assist all the refugees in the world.” ■

To find out more about ‘How your Will can be their refuge’, please contact Aylin Salt, Planned Giving Manager on (02) 9276 6871.

← The Zagabe family feel safe in their new home in the Northern Territory.

