

# UN agency chief urges world to 'step up' as refugee numbers outpace resettlement spots

12 June 2017 – Against the backdrop of increasing refugee numbers around the globe, fuelled by crisis and insecurity, and an ever widening gap in places to resettle them, the top United Nations official dealing with refugee issues has called on governments to [step up](#) and deliver places for refugees in line with the commitments they have made.

[The fact is global resettlement needs today far outweigh the places made available by governments by a factor of 13 to one, despite more countries taking part in the programme and an increase in private sector and community involvement,](#) said Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, at the opening of the UN agency's annual resettlement consultations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Recalling the New York Declaration, adopted by the 193 UN Member States, in September last year save lives to protect rights and share responsibility on the global issue, Mr. Grandi added:

[The Declaration was a milestone in global solidarity with refugees and the mainly developing countries which host almost 9 in 10 of them. But true sharing of responsibility requires places for refugees in third countries on a scale in line with the needs.](#)

[We need urgent action to get there,](#) he underscored.

In the Declaration, and the annexed Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), governments committed [amongst other objectives](#) to work on increasing resettlement places and other legal pathways for admission of refugees on a scale that would match the annual resettlement needs identified by UNHCR.

According to estimates, close to 1.2 million refugees need resettling globally, but only 93,200 places in resettlement countries are expected to be available this year [43 per cent fewer than in 2016.](#)

Refugees in need of resettlement are those people identified by UNHCR as having particular problems in the countries where they have sought refuge because their life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk.

Last year, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) submitted more than 162,500 refugees for resettlement [the highest number in 20 years](#) and more than 125,800 started new lives in third countries.

Also last year, the number of third countries offering resettlement grew to

37, with some European governments setting up programmes for the first time and Argentina and Brazil, amongst others, making new commitments to resettle Syrian refugees.

Similarly, to assist the new resettlement states, UNHCR and [IOM](#) launched a support mechanism with support from donors. Community and private sponsorship programmes also increased.

Despite the rhetoric against refugees in some quarters we have also seen an outpouring of good will, with ordinary citizens sponsoring refugees to live in their countries, inviting them into their homes and helping them to find jobs," Mr. Grandi added, urging all partners to support ways to provide additional places for refugees.

Resettlement places not only help those refugees who face extreme difficulty in their first country of asylum, but are an important gesture of solidarity with countries hosting large numbers of refugees," he said.

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## [Angola: Funds urgently needed as Congolese refugee influx overwhelms services, warns UN agency](#)

12 June 2017 – As refugees fleeing violence and communal tensions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to arrive in neighbouring Angola, the United Nations refugee agency has appealed for more resources to cope with the influx and to provide those coming with the support they urgently need.

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), some 30,000 people have arrived in Angola's Lunda Norte province since April and there are fears that the number could reach 50,000, with about 300-500 people arriving daily.

Angola is providing a warm welcome, but reception centres accommodating refugees, are full beyond their capacity and basic services cannot be maintained without immediate donor support," said Valentin Tapsoba, the UNHCR's Africa Bureau Director, in a news release today.

He added that the refugees are traumatized and humanitarian agencies require urgent support to ensure that life-saving assistance and protection can be provided to those in need.

The arrivals have mostly been from the Kasai provinces in the DRC, where they were at risk of serious human rights violations and abuses, including physical mutilation, killing, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention

in inhumane conditions.

The Kasais were the location of the discovery of some 42 mass graves, in April by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)). The discoveries further underscored the gravity of the situation.

About 1.3 million people remain displaced internally in the DRC.

Those reaching Angola also expressed fear returning back unless the situation allows for safe and dignified return, noted UNHCR in the release.

### ***Sustaining life-saving assistance not possible without more funding &#8211 UNHCR***

In the news release, the UN refugee agency also said that Angola, a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, has historically hosted refugees from its neighbours &#8211 including DRC.

Prior to the recent influx, the country housed some 15,600 refugees &#8211 including more than 13,400 from the DRC.

However, with arrivals increasing and apprehensions that the situation could get much worse additional funding is urgently needed.

&#8220Sustaining life-saving assistance won't be possible without more funding,&#8221 said UNHCR, noting that together with its partners, some \$65 million are required &#8211 of which the UN agency needs \$35 million (until the end of the year) to reach refugees in remote parts of Angola, who are the most vulnerable.

Current humanitarian efforts are supported with \$10 million by the UN Central Emergency Fund, a limited pool of financial resources that provides funding to critical, life-saving humanitarian rapid response and underfunded operations around the globe.

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## **Protect children in conflicts and disasters from forced labour, underscores UN on World Day**

12 June 2017 – Children in areas affected by conflict and disasters are among the most vulnerable, the United Nations International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) in warning on the World Day Against Child Labour, making a strong call for an end to the scourge, especially as children trapped in crisis risk falling prey to trafficking or being forced into hazardous work.

&#8220All children have the [right to be protected](#) from child labour,&#8221 said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder in a statement on the [World Day](#).

Yet, around the world, there are still 168 million children in child labour. Eighty-five million of them are engaged in hazardous work.

A significant portion these children find themselves undertaking dangerous work, living in areas affected by conflict and disaster and they are the focus of the 2017 commemoration of the World Day, marked annually on 12 June.

As the world strives to achieve the elimination of child labour by 2025, the UN underlined that conflicts and disasters have a devastating impact on people's lives. They kill, maim, injure and force people to flee their homes; destroy livelihoods, push people into poverty and starvation, and trap many in situations without basic safeguard for their rights.

The first to suffer from human rights violations and abuses are often boys and girls. Their schools are destroyed and basic services are disrupted. Many children are internally displaced or become refugees in other countries, and are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and child labour.

Today, we are facing the greatest refugee crisis for decades, said Mr. Ryder, referring to one of the main drivers of child labour. Globally over 1.5 billion people live in countries that are affected by conflict, violence and fragility. At the same time, around 200 million people are affected by disasters every year.

While a huge part of the world's responsibility to provide sanctuary and support to children and their families is shouldered by neighbouring host countries, ILO's Director-General says much more needs to be done to share fairly the responsibility to protect refugees.

In his statement, he particularly urges support to those States on the front line in the affected regions, so that they can provide access to the labour market for adult refugees and access to education for their children.

Amid growing concern for the safety of migrants and children in particular the ILO also noted that the [Minimum Age Convention](#), 1973 (No. 138) and the Convention [Worst Forms of Child Labour](#), 1999 (No. 182) have now been ratified by 169 and 180 States respectively.

Tomorrow I will have the honour of receiving India's ratification of both Conventions, noted Mr Ryder, explaining that with this great step forward towards universal ratification, almost all the world's children will be covered by Convention 182; and that coverage of Convention 138 will leap from 60 per cent to 80 per cent.

Together with the near universal ratification of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), that sends a resounding message about our common cause and our common standards that protect children's human rights, he stated.

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# In Kyrgyzstan, UN chief Guterres highlights importance of governance for sustainable development

11 June 2017 – Underscoring the importance of accountable and inclusive governance and institutions for the successful implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today called for public services to be more responsive, efficient and collaborative.

[Public service is a critical component for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) [...] we need to pioneer new approaches, work differently, take risks and innovate,&#8221 Secretary-General Guterres said at the Taza Koom Conference on Public Service in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

&#8220We need governance that is capable of delivering results and earning public trust; governance that is coherent and accountable; governance that is inclusive and that listens to all the country's citizens; governance that upholds human rights and leaves no one behind.&#8221

The Taza Koom is a project that seeks to transform digital technologies and e-governance to improve not only the way the State and the administration function, but also the way the people can benefit from new technologies and the impact on their lives.

Further in his remarks, the UN chief also spoke of the need to fight corruption to ensure effective and accountable public services, and highlighted the need for mechanisms that not only support people but also includes the poorest and the most vulnerable, so that they are able to not only define their needs but also to be a part of the efforts in ways to address those challenges.

&#8220As the President said, it [is] clear that 'Taza Koom' can be a way to empower the poorest and the most vulnerable,&#8221 said Mr. Guterres, noting that the UN would continue to assist the country in these efforts.



Secretary-General António Guterres shakes hands with Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev during their meeting at the Ala-Archa state residence in Bishkek. UN Photo/Vyacheslav Oseledko

Earlier today, Secretary-General Guterres held a meeting with Almazbek Atambaev, the President of Kyrgyzstan.

Speaking to the media at a press conference, alongside the President, Mr. Guterres [hailed the country's efforts for democracy, rule of law and protection of human rights](#), as well as a vibrant and active civil society.

I am also sure that Kyrgyzstan will play a very important role in what I hope will be future developments in Central Asia for better cooperation, better integration among the different countries and peoples of [the region] to guarantee its prosperity and its development," he said.

Also today, Mr. Guterres took part in the commemoration of the June 2010 events in Osh, where he laid a wreath at the Mother's Tears monument and expressed his condolences to the families of the victims as well as solidarity with the people of Osh, of Jalal-abad and all other places where the violence broke out.

The Mother's Tears [monument] should remind all of us that societies in the world are becoming [multiethnic, multireligious, multicultural and that must be seen as a positive thing](#). It is a richness, not a threat," he said, underscoring: "Diversity needs to be cherished, not condemned."

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## [Catastrophe of Aral Sea shows 'men can destroy the planet', warns UN chief Guterres](#)

10 June 2017 – Continuing his visit to Central Asia, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today visited the Aral Sea – once the world's fourth largest inland sea, that has now shrunk to about a quarter of its original size due to human mismanagement – where he urged the world to take lesson from the catastrophe and to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated.

The Aral Sea's progressive disappearance was not because of climate change, it was [mismanagement by humankind of water resources](#)," said Secretary-General Guterres after visiting Muynak, the 'cemetery of ships' – once a port city but now devoid of all water.

It also shows that if in relation to climate change, we are not able to act forcefully to tame this phenomenon, we might see this kind of tragedy multiply around the world," he warned.

The environmental disaster was precipitated by diversion of the tributary river which drained into the Aral Sea for irrigation projects nearly half a century ago. Lack of fresh water feeding the sea slowly dried it up, increasing the salinity of the area, with serious impact on human health and agriculture.

Terming the catastrophe – probably the biggest ecological catastrophe of our time, – one that demonstrated that – men can destroy the

planet, the Secretary-General called on everyone to make the Aral Sea a lesson and to mobilize the whole international community to implement the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change and to make sure that such tragedies will not be repeated.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Guterres held a meeting with the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, where they discussed collaboration between the UN and the country in the context of Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and regional matters.

The UN chief also met with representatives of the civil society and visited Samarkand, one of the oldest inhabited cities in Central Asia.