

People fleeing war more likely to find shelter in poorer countries, says UN refugee agency

28 February 2017 – Most of the 3.2 million people driven forcibly from their homes in early 2016 found shelter in low- and middle-income countries, according to a new study by the United Nations refugee agency.

“The biggest contributors providing a safe haven to the world’s uprooted people are poorer communities,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in a news release yesterday.

More than half the new refugees in the first half of 2016 fled Syria’s conflict, with most staying in the immediate region – Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, according to the UN Refugee Agency’s (UNHCR) Mid-Year Trends 2016 report.

Other sizable groups fled Iraq, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, the UN agency reported.

For example, relative to the sizes of their populations, Lebanon and Jordan host the largest number of refugees, while in terms of economic performance the biggest burdens are carried by South Sudan and Chad.

“Today we face not so much a crisis of numbers but of cooperation and solidarity,” Mr. Grandi said.

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Of all countries, Turkey sheltered the greatest number of refugees, hosting 2.8 million by mid-2016. It was followed by Pakistan (1.6 million), Lebanon (one million), Iran (978,000), Ethiopia (742,700), Jordan (691,800), Kenya (523,500), Uganda (512,600), Germany (478,600) and Chad (386,100).

Speaking earlier this month, he criticized the politicizing of refugees in Europe, the United States, and other industrialized countries and regional blocks.

“These are people that flee from danger, they’re not dangerous themselves,” he had said.