



20 June 2014 – While the world gathers to support their teams in Brazil, eight people a minute are forced to leave everything behind them and flee. For every match played, every 90 minutes of game time, 720 people have lost all that they knew.

A [report released today](#) by [UNHCR](#) shows that the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide has, for the first time in the post-World War II era, exceeded 50 million people. “We are seeing here the immense costs of not ending wars, of failing to resolve or prevent conflict,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

Forced migration has many names and categories. Whether speaking of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees or IDP’s (Internally Displaced Persons), the United Nations does its utmost to tackle the root causes of this global phenomenon. “Peace is today dangerously in deficit. Humanitarians can help as a palliative, but political solutions are vitally needed. Without this, the alarming levels of conflict and the mass suffering that is reflected in these figures will continue”, says Guterres.

“For over two years, the world has witnessed millions of Syrians fleeing their homes, escaping from violence in search of a safe haven. Syrians are not alone in feeling the devastation of displacement, whether within their own country or across borders. In Rwanda, refugees from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have given up everything to escape ongoing clashes. In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees from Myanmar seek safe haven from communal violence. Ecuador hosts the largest number of refugees in the Western hemisphere, and more pour in

from Colombia every month. Kenya continues to host large populations of Somalis. All still unable to return home”, [reminds](#) Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the World Food Program.

Afghans, Syrians and Somalis together account for more than half of the global refugee total.

In the Mediterranean migration has also reached [unprecedented proportions](#) . According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), more than 170 migrants have died since the beginning of 2014 trying to reach Europe by sea. Over 50,000 migrants and asylum seekers have reached Italy from North Africa in the first six months of 2014, compared to a total of 40,304 migrants in for the entire year of 2013.

By region, Asia and the Pacific has the largest refugee population overall at 3.5 million people. Sub-Saharan Africa has 2.9 million people, while the Middle East and North Africa have 2.6 million.

On today’s [World Refugee Day](#) , the UNHCR and its partners will focus the attention on the millions of people in the world who had to flee war, violence or persecution. The [Fair Play for Refugees](#) will host a mini-football competition in Brussels as the World Cup is in full swing half a world away. Learn more about Fairplay For Refugees and find them on Facebook [here](#)

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his [address today](#) reminds us, "Most of the world’s refugees – 86 per cent -- live in the developing world, compared to 70 per cent 10 years ago. Most of these countries have kept their doors open to people in search of safety, and have shown a generosity that is often well beyond their means. I appeal to all Member States and our partners in civil society to do their utmost to support the nations and communities that have welcomed the forcibly displaced into their midst."

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