



**7 January 2015 – Worldwide, an estimated 5.5 million people have been forcibly uprooted by war during the first six months of 2014, according to [UNHCR](#) 's new ' [Mid-Year Trends 2014](#) report. The number of people being helped by [UNHCR](#) stood at 46.3 million as of mid-2014 – a record high and some 3.4 million more than at the end of 2013.**

The ' [Mid-Year Trends 2014](#) ' report notes that of the of the 5.5 million newly displaced people, 1.4 million fled across international borders becoming refugees, while the rest were displaced within their own countries.

**Syrians largest refugee population under UNHCR care**

Among its main findings are that Syrians, for the first time, have become the largest refugee population under [UNHCR](#)'s mandate (Palestinians in the Middle East fall under the care of the UN Relief and Works Agency), overtaking Afghans, who had held that position for more than three decades. At more than 3 million as of June 2014, Syrian refugees now account for 23 per cent of all refugees being helped by UNHCR worldwide.

However, the 2.7 million Afghan refugees worldwide remain the largest protracted (at least five years) refugee population under UNHCR care. After Syria and Afghanistan, the leading countries of origin of refugees are Somalia (1.1 million), Sudan (670,000), South Sudan (509,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (493,000), Myanmar (480,000), and Iraq (426,000).

In all, the number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate reached 13 million by mid-year, the highest since 1996, while the total number of internally displaced people protected or assisted by the agency reached a new high of 26 million .

"In 2014 we have seen the number of people under our care grow to unprecedented levels. As long as the international community continues to fail to find political solutions to existing conflicts and to prevent new ones from starting, we will continue to have to deal with the dramatic humanitarian consequences", says UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

### **A shift in regional distribution of refugees**

Another major finding in the report is the shift in the regional distribution of refugee populations. Until last year, the region hosting the largest refugee population was Asia and the Pacific. As a result of the crisis in Syria, the Middle East and North Africa have now become the regions hosting the largest number of refugees.

Pakistan, which hosts 1.6 million Afghan refugees, remains the biggest host country in absolute terms. Other countries with large refugee populations are Lebanon (1.1 million), Iran (982,000), Turkey (824,000), Jordan (737,000), Ethiopia (588,000), Kenya (537,000) and Chad (455,000).

By comparing the number of refugees to the size of a country's population or economy, [UNHCR's report](#)

puts the contribution made by host nations into context: relative to the sizes of their populations Lebanon and Jordan host the largest number of refugees, while relative to the sizes of their economies the burdens carried by Ethiopia and Pakistan are greatest.

"The economic, social and human cost of caring for refugees and the internally displaced is being borne mostly by poor communities, those who are least able to afford it. Enhanced international solidarity is a must if we want to avoid the risk of more and more vulnerable people being left without proper support."

Source: [UNHCR](#)

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