

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Forced Displacement

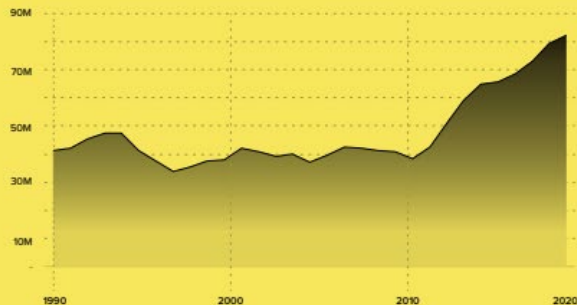
UNECE Online Meetings on Migration Statistics 2021

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Global trends on forced displacement | 2020

82.4 MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE
at the end of 2020 as a result of persecution, conflict,
violence, human rights violations or events seriously
disturbing public order.



26.4 million refugees

20.7 million refugees
under UNHCR's mandate

5.7 million Palestine refugees
under UNRWA's mandate

48.0 million internally displaced people¹

4.1 million asylum-seekers

3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad²

Source: [UNHCR Global Trends 2020](#)

New displacements | 2020

11.2 million
people became newly displaced
(including people displaced for the first
time as well as people displaced
repeatedly)

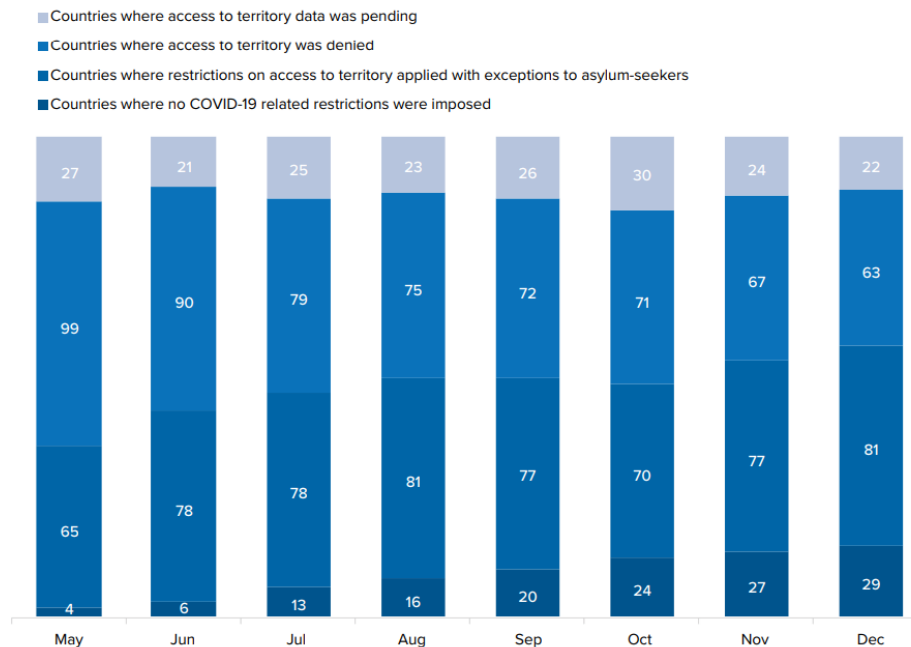


1.4 million
who sought protection outside their country

9.8 million
new displacements within countries

- While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on displacement globally is not yet clear, UNHCR data shows that arrivals of **new refugees and asylum-seekers** were sharply down in most regions – about **1.5 million fewer people** than would have been expected in non-COVID circumstances.
- Emerging evidence indicates that, in some cases, **COVID-19** may also have been a factor in **triggering new movement** of people in 2020. For instance, displaced people in Yemen have started to report the pandemic as a reason for displacement. At least 10,000 people surveyed between the end of March and mid-July 2020 reported the impact of COVID-19 on services and economy and/or fears of contracting the virus as a reason for moving from virus hotspots to less affected areas in Yemen ([IOM, 2020](#)).

Borders and admission of asylum-seekers | 2020



Source: [UNHCR Global Trends 2020](#)

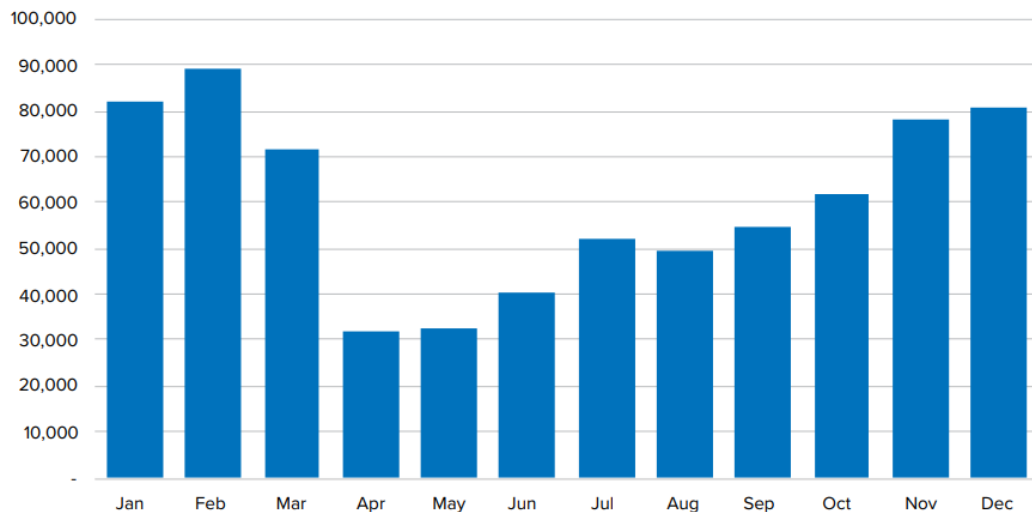
At the peak of the pandemic during 2020, some **164** countries had **closed their borders**, with **99** States making **no exception for people seeking asylum**.

The number of new asylum applications registered worldwide during 2020 was **45 per cent lower** than in 2019.

In 2020, approximately 485,000 applications for international protection were lodged **in EU+ countries**, a sharp **32% drop** compared to 2019 ([EASO, 2021](#))

UNHCR Refugee registration | 2020

- In 2020, UNHCR refugee registration numbers dropped to their lowest levels since 2012, and some **42 per cent lower** than in 2019.
- The East Africa and Middle East/North Africa regions experienced the most significant decreases in the number of refugee registrations during the year.



Source: [UNHCR Global Trends 2020](#)

Solutions | 2020

- **Returns**

- Some 251,000 refugees were able to return to their country of origin in 2020, either assisted by UNHCR or spontaneously. This figure is 21 per cent less than the 317,200 returns reported in the previous year.

- **Resettlement**

- In 2020, refugee resettlement plummeted to its **lowest level** in almost two decades. Only 34,400 people were resettled to 21 countries. This is just one-third of the number resettled in 2019 (107,700) and 2018 (92,400).



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Need for timely and quality data (I)

- **Assessing the socio-economic fallout of COVID-19 on displaced populations**
 - As of April 2021, the **World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center** has supported analyses of COVID-related phone survey data in **Bangladesh** and **Yemen**, and data collection and analyses **Djibouti**, **Ethiopia**, and **Iraq**. Similarly, **World Bank and UNHCR** teams came together in **Kenya** and **Uganda** to conduct the phone survey on refugee households that is comparable to the respective national phone surveys.

Income loss

Total income likely has decreased for large shares of displaced households in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Uganda and Yemen. But there is a wide range in the share of households affected.

Labour income

For nearly all countries analyzed, employment rates among displaced populations were lower than among host communities

Food security

Host households were typically more likely to be able to access food than displaced households in Djibouti, Iraq, Kenya, Uganda and Yemen.

Education

Pandemic lockdowns restricted participation in learning activities for both host and displaced children in Ethiopia, Iraq and Uganda

Health care

Displaced populations in all seven countries indicated significant challenges accessing health services when they needed it.

Need for timely and quality data (II)

- **UNHCR Microdata Library**

- The **MDL** contains microdata collected by UNHCR or its partners, including survey, administrative and census data, as well as data contributed by other entities. The MDL is continuously updated as new datasets become available, including several studies on the impacts of COVID-19 on forcibly displaced people during 2020 and 2021.

- **Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)**

- EGRIS is composed by representatives from 45 Member States and 25 regional and international organizations working in the area of forced displacement statistics. The Expert Group has developed two sets of **International Recommendations on Refugee and IDP Statistics (IRRS & IRIS)** which were endorsed by the UNSC.



Thank you!

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