



Commitment to Others – Valuing Displaced People

EXPLORE

The number of displaced people worldwide was estimated to be 60 million at the end of 2015. This figure includes:

15 million refugees registered under UNHCR's mandate

5.1 million Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency)

Where do the World's Refugees come from?

- The Syrian Arab Republic is the largest source country of refugees with a total refugee population of 4.2 million as of mid-2015. Syrians remained the main group of asylum-seekers worldwide, with 114,500 new asylum applications registered during the first six months of 2015.
- Afghanistan (2.6 million) has remained the second-largest source country for refugees with Somalia (1.1 million) placing both as the third largest source country worldwide and as the largest refugee producing country in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- South Sudan is the fourth-largest source country of refugees worldwide (744,100 by the end of June 2015).

Who Hosts the World's Refugees?

- As of mid-2015, Turkey hosts 1.84 million refugees in its territory. As such, Turkey has

overtaken Pakistan as the country which hosts the largest refugee population within its territory in the world. Pakistan currently hosts 1.5 million refugees, nearly all of whom are from Afghanistan.

- Lebanon remains the third-largest refugee hosting country in the world with 1.2 million refugees falling within the mandate of UNHCR. As of mid-2015, there are 209 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants in Lebanon.

Asylum Seekers

- Almost one million individual asylum applications were registered in 155 countries or territories during the first half of 2015, with the figure for the corresponding period of 2014 standing at 558,000.
- During the first 6 months of 2015, the United States of America was the third largest single recipient of new asylum claims (78,200). Half of all asylum claims in the U.S. were lodged by nationals of 4 countries (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico), a figure which reflects the ongoing and deteriorating situation as a result of violence generated by organized crime, gang activity and the activities of drug cartels in certain parts of the region.



*I have
come to
being
life: life
to the
full.*

*(John
10:10)*

Seeking Asylum in Europe

- 173,100 asylum applications were registered by the German authorities for the whole of 2014. During the first 6 months of 2015, Germany received a total of 159,900, the highest number of new asylum applications worldwide during that period.
- On average, one out of every five asylum claims in Germany was made by a Syrian national.
- As of June 2015, Germany (311,600) and Sweden (56,100) have the largest backlog of registered asylum applications within the EU.
- The Russian Federation was the third largest single recipient of new asylum claims during the first 6 months of 2015 worldwide with 100,000 asylum applications.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

- As of mid-2015, the number of IDPs worldwide is an estimated 34 million.
- During the first six months of 2014, 4.1 million individuals were displaced by violence and conflict within their own countries. This figure has since increased in the corresponding period of 2015 to 4.2 million.
- Yemen reported the largest number of newly displaced persons (933,500), followed by Ukraine (559,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (558,000), Nigeria (378,500), Iraq (366,500), and Pakistan (309,200).
- Although figures on newly displaced persons for the first 6 months of 2015 are not available, with 7.6 million IDPs, the Syrian Arab Republic remained the country with the highest number of IDPs worldwide.
- Between the end of 2013 to mid-2015, the number of IDPs in Colombia registered by the government has increased from 5.4 million to 6.5 million.
- It is estimated that 1.4 million IDPs returned to their countries of origin during the first half of 2015. Unfortunately, this is almost 200,000 fewer people than the corresponding period in 2014.



REFLECTION

Pope Francis on Refugees and Migrants

"I will also pray in a special way for our brothers and sisters, men, women and children who have died of thirst, hunger or from the exhaustion on the journey to find a better life. In recent days we have seen those terrible images of the desert in the newspapers. Let us all pray in silence for these brothers and sisters of ours." Angelus, November 1, 2013

"Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more." Message for the 2014 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 24, 2013

"I would also like to draw attention to the tens of thousands of children who migrate alone, unaccompanied, to escape poverty and violence: This is a category of migrants from Central America and Mexico itself, who cross the border with the United States under extreme conditions and in pursuit of a hope that in most cases turns out to be in vain. They are increasing day by day. This humanitarian emergency

requires, as a first urgent measure, these children be welcomed and protected." Papal Message on the occasion of Mexico Holy See colloquium on human migration and development, July 14, 2014

A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world. The communications media are themselves called to embrace this "conversion of attitudes" and to promote this change in the way migrants and refugees are treated.

Discussion questions

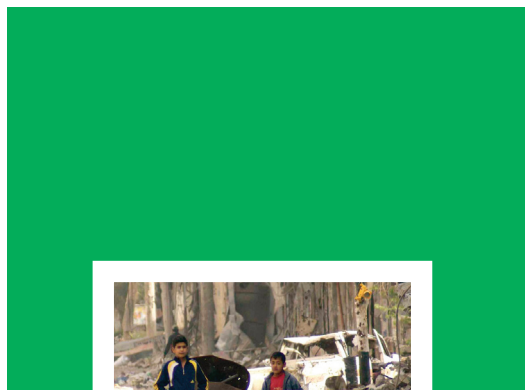
- *How do you react to these quotes? Agree or disagree?*
- *What do you think change of attitudes might mean in relation to displaced people?*
- *How is caring for people seeking refuge a faith commitment?*



BIBLICAL REFLECTION

One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, 'He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that [he] answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Mark 12: 28-34)

- What does it mean to 'love your neighbour as yourself'?
How can this Gospel value be expressed in life?
- What type of lives is the Bible asking people to live?
- Are there more quotes from the Bible or other inspirational texts that speaks to this topic?



Prayer for Refugees

Lost in the tempests out on the open seas,
our small boats drift.
We seek for land during endless days and endless nights.

We are the foam,
floating on the vast ocean.
We are the dust,
wandering in endless space.
Our cries are lost in the howling wind.

Without food, without water,
our children lie exhausted
until they cry no more.
We thirst for our land,
but are turned back from every shore.

Our distress signals rise and rise again,
but the passing ships do not stop.
How many boats have perished?
How many families lie beneath the waves?

Lord Jesus, do you hear the prayer of our flesh?
Lord, do you hear our voice from the abyss of death?

O solid shore, we long for you!
We pray for humankind to be present today!
We pray that hope be given us today, from any land.
Amen.

Jesuit Refugee Trust



Deciding our Action

Reflect – our own experience within your peer group.

Voicing our opinions –

Sharing information on displaced people.

Solidarity – Advocating for displaced people and call for others to join your action.



Things we (I) can do...	When we (I) have seen others do this...	How could we (or I) do this for ourselves (myself)...
 See for ourselves (myself)– <i>Gain experience of the life of displaced people.</i> <i>e.g. Internet research / Request Agencies for information / What's happening in your school, neighbourhood ...</i>		
 Ask why? – <i>Analyse the causes of what continues to cause people to flee their homes. Develop a group discussion with informed input.</i>		
 Go against the tide... <i>Distancing yourself from actions that create barriers to people fleeing from war and violence in our world.</i>		
 Ask why that way? <i>Propose alternative solutions that get to the root of the problem.</i>		