

## UNHCR COVID-19 Response

### Highlights

- Increased gender-based violence has been reported in numerous countries throughout the pandemic. In internal displacement situations, 29 humanitarian coordination platforms monitored by UNHCR reported a moderate to extreme risk in May, with 76 per cent describing the risk as severe or extreme.
- In a joint statement, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, and WHO along with a number of NGOs and private sector leaders, have called for [Six actions to End Violence Against Children](#), which has increased during COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, violence prevention and response services have been disrupted for 1.8 billion children in more than 100 countries.
- Good progress with regard to vaccination of refugees was recorded in West and Central Africa. As of 9 August, almost 19,000 refugees in the region had been fully vaccinated, up from only 3,000 in June.



As of 5 August, **47** countries have reported that over **62,000** persons of concern received a vaccine.



In **107** out of 123 countries, persons of concern are already receiving vaccinations.

### UNHCR Response



Kenya. Providing vital maternity care in the middle of a global pandemic. © UNHCR/Samuel Otieno

The pandemic has had a damaging impact on the lives of millions of refugees and internally displaced people, but the consequences for displaced women and children have been particularly devastating – from a heightened risk of domestic and sexual violence to an increase in child marriages.

A new data visualization – [‘COVID-19 deepens threats for displaced women and children’](#) – examines how the COVID-19 crisis has worsened conditions for them. It presents data from humanitarian operations around the world that shows how deteriorating socio-economic conditions, lockdowns and school closures have threatened the safety and well-being of displaced communities.

UNHCR is working globally to respond to this urgent situation and to support women and children affected by the secondary impacts of COVID-19. In Mexico, together with UNICEF and IOM, UNHCR developed child-friendly information materials on COVID-19 and supported recreational activities for children during the lockdown. In Lebanon, while urgent and high-risk cases of gender-based violence continued to receive in-person support and access to services, UNHCR also provided emergency cash assistance, and psychosocial counselling over the phone.

## COVID-19 update



**92** countries have reported that persons of concern have been infected



Over **99,000** cases of COVID-19 have been reported among forcibly displaced people

*(as of 05 August)*

### Middle East and North Africa

Many countries in the MENA region have entered a third wave of COVID-19 infections, with Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia recording the highest number of daily cases in July since the beginning of the pandemic. However, refugees in 16 out of the 19 countries in the MENA region have already started receiving COVID-19 vaccinations.

In **Jordan**, nearly 3 million people have been vaccinated as part of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme since it began in January 2021. In refugee camps, the number of vaccinated refugees continues to increase, reaching over 24,000 refugees in total, with close to 40,000 registered to receive the vaccine. In **Lebanon**, the government approved the use of mobile vaccination units in refugee informal settlements and collective shelters following UNHCR discussions with the Ministry of Public Health. UNHCR also trained and mobilized more than 3,000 community members for the COVID-19 response, including on vaccination.

### Asia and the Pacific

Several countries in the region have seen a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. In **Myanmar**, for example, the number of cases has increased rapidly since June. The political situation following the 1 February military takeover has disrupted the national COVID-19 response - diminishing testing and quarantine capacities, limiting essential health services, and pushing the health system to a point of near-collapse.

The government of **Bangladesh** has approved the provision of COVID-19 vaccines for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar from 10 August. Over 65,000 refugees are targeted to be vaccinated in the first cohort. In **Afghanistan**, in response to the devastating impact of the pandemic, UNHCR continues to provide multisectoral assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, Afghan refugee returnees, and vulnerable host community households. This includes cash assistance for shelter and protection, and the distribution of sanitary materials. Over 17,000 individuals received cash for protection in June alone.

### West and Central Africa

The resurgence of COVID-19 continues throughout West and Central Africa due to the impact of highly transmissible variants, the limited scope of vaccination campaigns, and a reported lack of compliance with prevention measures. While this new wave continues to pose a serious threat to vulnerable displaced populations, reported infection rates among refugee populations remain relatively low across the region, and all recorded cases in 2021 have been asymptomatic.

National vaccine campaigns in the region have been slowed in general by limited vaccine availability and widespread vaccine hesitancy. However, good progress has been made regarding the coverage of refugees in national vaccine campaigns, such as in Chad for example. With this development, all 21 countries in West and Central Africa are now deploying national vaccination campaigns, and refugees in all countries have the same access rights as nationals.

## East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes

The COVID-19 vaccination campaigns continue in the region. In **Ethiopia**, over 2 million people have been vaccinated so far, with frontline health workers, individuals with severe underlying medical conditions and elderly people being prioritized. Refugees meeting these criteria continue to have access to the vaccines.

UNHCR **Burundi** has updated its contingency plan to respond effectively to the highly contagious Delta variant, including through the construction of additional handwashing points and the rehabilitation of facilities. In **Ethiopia**, nearly 2,500 trained health and community outreach workers are actively engaged in prevention activities, awareness raising, and case management. Refugee representatives and Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) have also been trained and actively engaged to ensure that basic preventive measures are observed in their communities.

## Southern Africa

Most countries in the region are rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations, and UNHCR has engaged with governments to ensure all forcibly displaced people are included. To date, 13 countries in the Southern Africa region have started vaccinating eligible persons of concern. However, misinformation and rumors about vaccines have had a negative impact on the willingness of displaced people and host communities to get vaccinated. UNHCR and partners are addressing vaccine hesitancy through new and engaging approaches to raise awareness, share accurate information and instill confidence.

In **Malawi**, for instance, an awareness-raising campaign has been launched in Dzaleka refugee camp through radio talk shows on Yetu Community Radio, featuring representatives from UNHCR and the Ministry of Health. Awareness-raising on COVID-19 prevention also continued, reaching almost 78,000 displaced people and residents of host communities in **DRC** through focus group

discussions and messaging by community mobilizers.

## Europe

According to the WHO, regional COVID-19 infection rates continued rising through mid-July, mainly due to the spread of the more infectious Delta variant, before levelling off toward the end of the month. At the same time, COVID-19 vaccinations progressed across the region, reaching more persons of concern alongside the general population. Group vaccination of people living in collective shelters continued in **Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania** and **Serbia**, among other countries. The one-shot Janssen vaccine has proven favourable for rapid immunization of certain population groups, such as asylum-seekers with high rates of onward movement.

Advocacy for inclusion of all persons of concern in vaccination plans and roll-out continues, in particular for those lacking the documentation required to register for vaccination. Following UNHCR advocacy in **Greece**, asylum-seekers whose applications have been definitively rejected are now being given a temporary registration number with which they can be vaccinated. However, undocumented persons remain outside the national vaccination plan.

## Americas

According to WHO/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the pandemic has proven "worse this year than last" in the Americas. COVID-19 remains entrenched in many countries within the region, particularly in those with low vaccination coverage. So far, only 16 percent of people have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and several countries have yet to reach even one per cent.

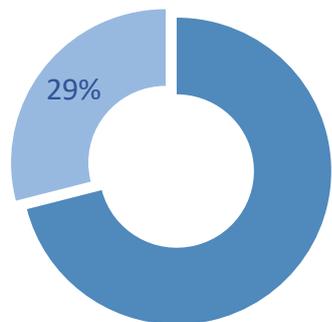
**Colombia, Ecuador** and **Costa Rica** have also opened the vaccination process for people on the move, included those lacking legal stay permits. In many countries, UNHCR provides support for vaccination campaigns. In **Ecuador**, for instance, UNHCR provided coolers to transport vaccines and worked with the government to implement vaccination brigades in rural communities.

## Financial Information

(as of 27 July 2021)

### USD 924M

UNHCR's total financial requirements for 2021 Coronavirus Emergency



■ Financial requirements ■ Total funded

### Total contributions:

### USD 269M

Including:

USA	\$210.3M
African Development Bank Group	\$11.9M
European Union	\$9.3M
Canada	\$7.9M
Unilever (UK)	\$4.4M
Austria	\$3.6M
China	\$2.0M
Education Cannot Wait	\$1.3M
France	\$1.2M
USA for UNHCR	\$1.0M

### Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR's 2021 programme:

Norway 80M | Sweden 66.9M | Private donors Spain 42.6M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | Germany 26M | Private donors Republic of Korea 21.5M | France 20M | Private donors Japan 17.6M | Switzerland 16.4M | Ireland 12.5M | Belgium 11.9M | Italy 10.7M | Private donors Sweden 10.6M | Private donors Italy 10.4M

*Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.*

### More information:



[UNHCR COVID-19 Supplementary Appeal 2021](#)

(launched 18 December 2020)



[Global Focus COVID-19 Situation page](#)

(including UNHCR's COVID emergency appeal and sitreps)

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