



FORCED TO FLEE

INSIDE THE 21ST LARGEST COUNTRY



Save the Children®

THE WORLD'S 21ST LARGEST COUNTRY

ONE YEAR AGO, in September 2015, a 3-year-old boy named Alan Kurdi drowned in the Mediterranean Sea as he and his family fled war-ravaged Syria. Images of his lifeless body facedown on the shore unleashed an international firestorm, galvanizing public outrage over the growing numbers of refugees worldwide and how they are being treated.¹

Every day, conflict and persecution force nearly 34,000 people – 24 people per minute – to flee their homes in search of safety, according to the UN Refugee Agency.²

Today, there are more than 65 million forcibly displaced people globally. If they all resettled in one place, it would be the 21st largest country in the world³ – larger in population than the United Kingdom, and nearly three times as large as Australia.

Like the citizens of many real countries, the world's displaced are a diverse population – people from different cultures who practice different faiths and speak different languages. In the same vein as the International Olympic Committee creating a new team to allow refugees to compete, imagining all displaced people as citizens of one “country” recognizes their value as equal members of a global society and brings attention to the magnitude of their collective plight.

More than that, it allows for comparison of various population data with country-level averages across the world – such as, the percentage of school-aged children attending school.⁴ To place this “country” in context, Save the Children examined the indicators most relevant to the well-being of

WHO LIVES IN THE 21ST LARGEST COUNTRY?

The population of 65.3 million forcibly displaced people includes:

21.3 million refugees

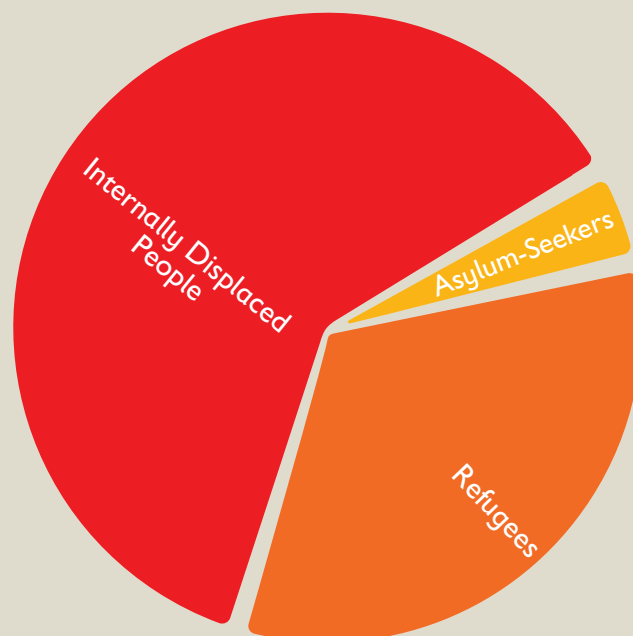
Refugees have been forced to flee their country in order to escape danger, war or persecution.

40.8 million internally displaced people

Internally displaced people (IDP) have been forced to flee their homes, but remain within their own country.

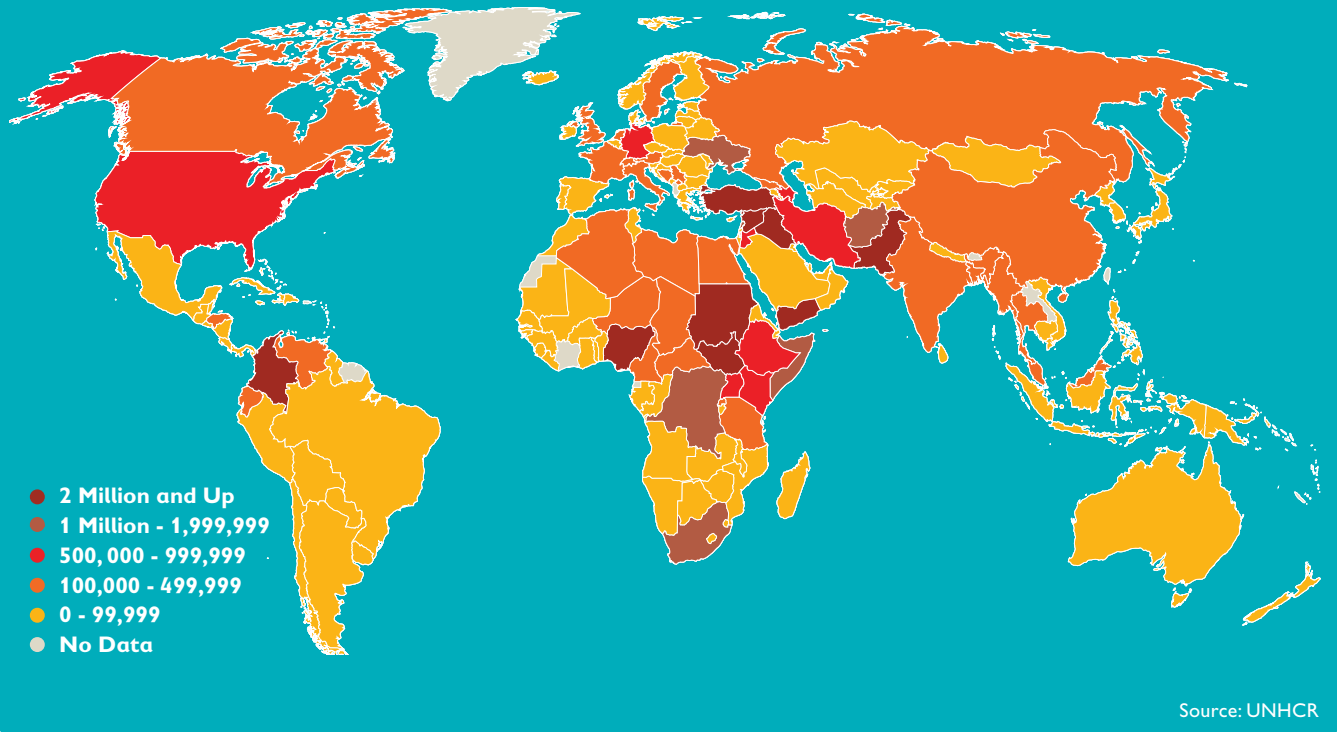
3.2 million asylum-seekers

An asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary in another country is still being processed.



Source: UNHCR

WHERE DO FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE LIVE?



children, and found the following. *The 21st Largest Country:*

- has the fastest-growing population in the world
- has one of the youngest populations in the world
- ranks close to last in the world on school attendance
- is among the most dangerous places for harmful practices like early marriage
- is in the top half of the most urbanized countries in the world
- loses too many children to preventable health conditions
- would have a middle-income economy, if its people had adequate access to employment.

This comparison makes clear that forcibly displaced families, and even more so their children, are being left far behind, both in terms of their immediate circumstances and investments in their future. It also underscores the

urgency of reaching them with help. Many of the problems they face are ones for which there are already known solutions.

Citizens of this country probably will not be able to return home for many years. In that time, its population will continue to grow at a rapid pace and, without concerted action, fall farther behind. Should that happen, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would likely be out of reach. The question before us now is whether we have the political will to include forcibly displaced people in our shared vision, and action, for a better world in 2030.

Save the Children is calling on all countries to step up and commit to a **New Deal for every forcibly displaced child** – one in which we ensure children's right to health, education and freedom from exploitation, and share responsibility for doing so. The challenges facing displaced people are formidable, but if governments work together, along with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, those challenges can be overcome.

The Fastest-Growing Population in the World

EVEN MORE CONCERNING than the population size of *The 21st Largest Country* – 65.3 million people – is how quickly this population is growing.

In 2014, the total number of forcibly displaced people was estimated at 59.5 million⁵ and by 2015 had grown to 65.3 million,⁶ an annual increase of 9.75 percent; no other country's population is expanding as quickly.

This surge is the result of new people being displaced, failure to resolve the conditions – like ongoing fighting and sustained droughts – that prevent people from returning home, and limited opportunities for refugee resettlement.

In 2015, only 73,000 people were formally resettled in new countries.⁷

The rapid expansion of a displaced population susceptible to infectious diseases and with limited access to education should be of significant concern to world leaders, especially as it jeopardizes progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

If the population of *The 21st Largest Country* continues to grow at its current rate, it will be the 5th largest country in the world by 2030. If it grows at even half its current rate, it will become the 9th largest country by 2030.⁸

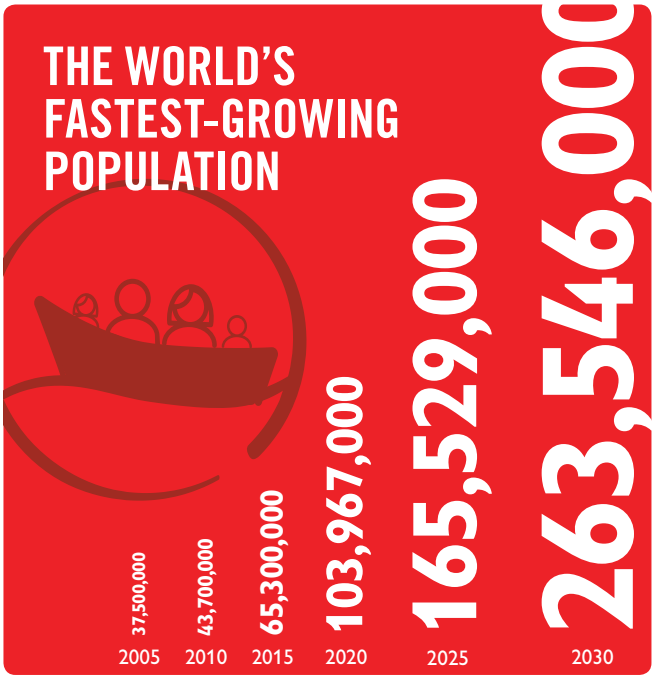
CASE STUDY

GERMANY

In 2015, Germany took in 1.1 million refugees, including approximately 400,000 children – 42,300 of those children arrived alone. The country welcomed more people than any other in Europe, and more than it ever had in its post-war history. One year prior, in 2014, more than 200,000 people sought asylum in Germany, up from fewer than 50,000 in 2010.

This rapid growth poses a serious challenge to Germany's asylum system and legislation, including shelter, health, education and integration into society. Tightened border controls and a more stringent asylum policy cut down on the number of new refugees arriving in Germany in 2016. The government can now focus on improving the conditions for child refugees, and standards and services for all refugees. Germany will also continue to play a pivotal role in shaping European Union asylum policy and global migration and refugee issues.





Projection based on UNHCR data and 9.75% growth rate.

If the population of *The 21st Largest Country* continues to rise at this rate, by 2030 it will become the 5th largest country in the world.



Photo: Bastian Strauch/Save the Children

Among the Youngest Countries in World, with Half of its Population Under 18

NEARLY 250 MILLION CHILDREN live in regions affected by conflict, and half of the world's refugees are under 18. That means millions of children in *The 21st Largest Country* have grown up with the uncertainty and fear that come with being forced to leave home. *The 21st Largest Country* is the 19th youngest in the world, with a younger population than Australia, every country in North America, South America and Europe, and all countries in Asia other than Afghanistan.⁹

Children in humanitarian crises and those who have been displaced for years are often denied many of their basic rights, including the right to survive, the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, the right to health care and education, and the right to be heard.¹⁰

What's more, children are increasingly being forced to flee their homes alone – and even to apply for asylum by themselves – which makes them even more vulnerable to exploitation, forced labor and trafficking. In 2014, 68,600 children tried to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, many in search of sanctuary from violence,¹¹ and since 2008, nearly 200,000 unaccompanied minors have applied for asylum in Europe – including 96,000 in 2015 alone, according to Eurostat. Afghan children, who must make a 3,000-mile journey from home, make up nearly 40 percent of unaccompanied minors traveling to Europe, more than from any other country in the world.¹²



Photo: Andrea Núñez-Flores/Save the Children

CASE STUDY

COLOMBIA

Colombia has the second largest population of internally displaced people in the world, following Syria. Nearly seven decades of conflict have left millions of people internally displaced, including more than 2 million children.¹

In more than half of all cases, children and adolescents are forced to flee their homes because of direct threats to their lives and safety. Children like Lince, 15, who live in remote rural areas, have been hit hardest by the conflict.

"My village is only accessible by river, and there is no running water or electricity. About 1,000 people live here, mostly young people. This used to be a cheerful village, but many people have been forced to leave because of violence.

We were forced to leave two years ago because of shootouts between armed groups – bullets were hitting our homes and school, and the only thing we could do was hide under our mattresses for protection.

My school was shut for nearly a month. My family and I had nothing to eat, and there was no one out on the streets because people were scared.

My family and I moved to another town, but we had nothing there, so we came back. School is very lonely as so many children haven't come back."

Majority of Population Lives in Urban Environments

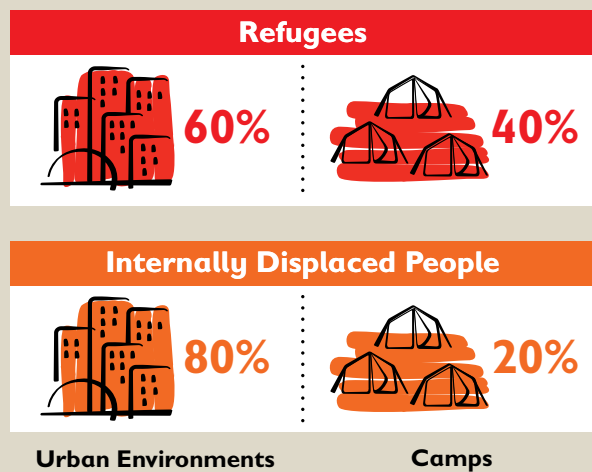
ONE OF THE IMAGES that comes to mind when thinking about refugees and displaced people is that of a large camp with endless rows of tents or trailers. For most refugees, however, this is not the reality. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that at the end of 2015, 60 percent of refugees and 80 percent of internally displaced people were living in urban settings.¹⁴

Lebanon has a population of roughly 4.5 million, of which more than 1 million are refugees. It is host to the largest number of refugees as a proportion of its national population, and there is not any formal camp system.¹⁵

While living outside of a camp can provide greater flexibility and normalcy, it can also make it harder to access services, such as doctors and schools, and increases one's risk of exploitation. With 86 percent of the world's refugees hosted by countries in developing regions, up from 70 percent a decade ago, displaced people living in urban areas add to demand for municipal services and further stress water and sanitation systems already incapable of meeting residents' needs.¹⁶

Camps for displaced people are not always the solution. But as *The 21st Largest Country* continues to grow in size, host countries and international donors know that large urban populations will pose unique challenges for decades to come.

WHERE DO FORCIBLY DISPLACED FAMILIES LIVE?



Source: UNHCR



Photo: Christine Roehrs/Save the Children

CASE STUDY

AFGHANISTAN

Noor Mohammad is living in an informal settlement in Kabul. He fled to Kabul four years ago with his wife and seven children to escape the fighting in Helmand, in southern Afghanistan.

"Life here makes me happy because there is no bombing, no shooting, no fighting. But we feel hungry and we are in need of help.

The first winter we came here was the first time the children saw snow. They thought it was sugar falling from the sky. But the winters are getting worse, and we have not seen this severe weather before. We try to heat the house with charcoal and wood, but we don't have enough money to keep the house warm."

Noor Mohammad lost his youngest daughter Laila to hypothermia when she was just 12 days old. "It was a cold night with snowfall. Laila wasn't sick — she had no illness and wasn't crying. She died here, in this room, during the night."

Nearly Last in School Attendance

OVER THE LAST 15 years, the world has made tremendous progress in keeping children in school. There are now 112 million fewer out-of-school children than there were in 2000.¹⁷ Yet in 2010, that progress stalled, and more recently those gains have started to reverse.¹⁸

During conflict, families often keep children out of school because they fear for their safety. In the Central African Republic, for example, experts estimate that almost a third of the country's schools were attacked during its civil war – and more than 8 percent were used by armed groups as bases of operation.¹⁹

Families interviewed by Save the Children cited children's education needs as one of their strongest motivations to flee conflict, but sadly, it often takes months, if not years, to enroll their children in school, and many never find high quality educational resources.²⁰ At present, almost 1 million

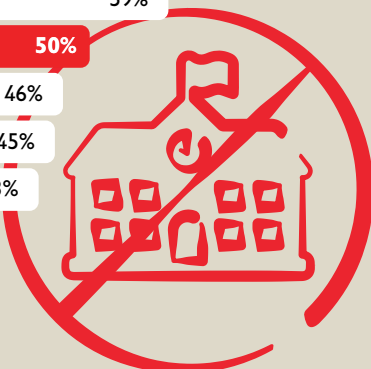
Syrian refugee children are out of school, and many of those in school are at risk of dropping out.²¹

Although it's difficult to track populations of displaced people, and there's little quantitative data on education quality available for this group,²² the United Nations estimates that half of primary school-aged children who are refugees, and 75 percent of adolescent refugees at the secondary education level, are missing out on an education.²³

In comparison to *The 21st Largest Country*, only three real countries have a higher percentage of primary school-aged children out of school.²⁴ And although secondary school attendance rates are difficult to compare across countries, it appears that *The 21st Largest Country* would rank last in lower secondary school attendance and close to last for higher secondary school attendance.

MOST CHILDREN OUT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liberia	62%
South Sudan	59%
Eritrea	59%
The 21st Largest Country	50%
Afghanistan	46%
Sudan	45%
Djibouti	43%
Equatorial Guinea	42%
Niger	38%
Mali	36%



Source: UNICEF

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CASE STUDY

TURKEY

Masa's father, Abu Ahmad,* comes from a poor Syrian family, and has been working since the age of 6 to provide for his mother and younger siblings. When he had his own children, he worked even harder to make sure the same thing wouldn't happen to them. He worked for years to buy a house and to be able to afford the expenses of their education, but when the war in Syria started, everything changed. He lost his business and his house, and he became a refugee. The hardest thing for Abu Ahmad has been losing his hopes of seeing his children graduate from university, ensuring that they would not have to endure what he did.

More than half of the 2.5 million refugees living in Turkey are children, and of the school-aged among them, more than 450,000 lack access to education. Many children have not set foot in a classroom for more than four consecutive years, and face the grim prospect of early marriage and child labor.

"Masa* was only a year old when we left our home. Syria is her country, and she has the right to live and grow up under its sky. But now she is just like all the other Syrian children who will grow up as refugees in other countries, deprived of their childhood, their rights, their dreams and ambitions. Now, when I ask her about what she wants to be when she grows up, she says 'a factory worker.' Her view of the world is shaped by the misery of her surroundings. I sometimes wish I didn't have any children, so that I wouldn't feel guilty for the position I've put them in. If we aren't able to return to our country, this will be their fate."

*All names have been changed to protect identities.



Photo: Ahmad Baroudi/Save the Children

Preventable Causes Among the Top Killers of Forcibly Displaced Children

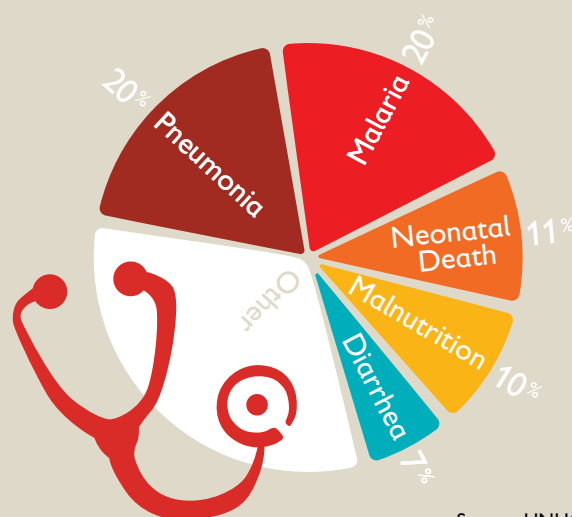
TOO MANY CHILDREN in *The 21st Largest Country* are dying from preventable infectious diseases and newborn health conditions. Worldwide, half as many children under age 5 are dying from preventable causes compared to the year 2000, thanks to global action that has improved the quality of maternal and newborn health care, immunization, treatment of pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and other deadly diseases, improved nutrition, and increased access to voluntary family planning services and information.²⁵

Yet refugees and displaced people are especially vulnerable to all of these conditions and more.

The overcrowding and poor housing conditions experienced by many refugees contribute to health disparities for refugee children, who are at a disproportionately high risk of acquiring infections.²⁶ According to the UN Refugee Agency, since 2010, pneumonia and malaria have been the leading causes of death among refugee children under age 5 in Asia and Africa, respectively.

Birth complications also factor heavily in child deaths in *The 21st Largest Country*. A survey of pregnancy outcomes among Burundian refugees, for example, found that newborn and maternal deaths accounted for 16 percent of all deaths during the study period.²⁷

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR REFUGEES UNDER 5



Source: UNHCR

CASE STUDY: DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

FROM BIRTH TO MOTHERHOOD – 22 YEARS IN DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

For more than two decades, Dadaab camp has been home to refugees fleeing war and conflict in Somalia. Today, nearly 350,000 refugees live in the camp, with some families now spanning three generations. The Government of Kenya recently announced it will close the camp, with refugees expected to voluntarily return to Somalia.

Some Somalis, like Istarlin, are afraid of going to a country they've never set foot in before.

Istarlin was born in Dadaab in 1994, a year after her parents and five siblings fled Somalia. She fondly remembers her

childhood, finishing high school, finding a job, getting married and becoming a mother – all of which happened in Dadaab.

“My mom sold firewood and my dad worked at the World Food Program food distribution center. My parents made sure I got an education, and I’m grateful. I don’t know Somalia, and what I’ve heard about it is scary and horrible.

I’ve started the resettlement process, but I’m still hopeful that I’ll be resettled in a more secure and well-off country. I’m concerned about the safety and the future for my daughters.”

CASE STUDY

RWANDA

Large-scale civil unrest, increasing political instability and frequent violence in Burundi has led to the death of at least 400 people since the country's conflict began in April of last year. Beyond Burundi's borders, more than 225,000 people, including an estimated 6,000 unaccompanied or separated children, have fled into neighboring countries. The UN Refugee Agency expects this number to rise to 330,000 by the end of 2016.

Devine and her 3-year-old daughter Leice fled to safety in the Mahama Refugee Camp in Rwanda, where they have both been treated for typhoid fever at Save the Children's

health center. While Devine was given medicine and recovered quickly, Leice had to be admitted to the inpatient ward for further observation, and remained there for a week.

"We were both very sick. It happened very quickly. One day we felt fine and the next we had high temperatures and bad diarrhea. At first we thought it was malaria as that is a common problem here, but when we were taken to see a doctor we found out we had typhoid fever. My daughter Leice was very weak. After five days of treatment, she was slowly beginning to get better, and my fears began to fade. The doctors take good care of us and take time to talk to us."



Photo: Mark Kaye/Save the Children

Potential to Have the 54th Largest Economy

FOR MANY OF THE WORLD'S displaced, fleeing home means leaving a job behind as well. Forcibly displaced people often have a hard time finding work where they resettle, either due to government regulation or lack of opportunity. When adults cannot find work, children are frequently removed from school to help earn money or save the cost of schooling. They also eat less nutritious food, receive less health care and become more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Precise unemployment figures are difficult to pin down for refugees and internally displaced people; many refugees are not allowed to work, though some, including children, work illegally in the informal sector. In Jordan, an International Labor Organization study found that 90 percent of Syrian refugees

working outside refugee camps did not hold work permits.²⁸

However, refugees and other displaced people can contribute to economic growth for those who take them in – if they are allowed to do so. The economic indicators for *The 21st Largest Country* are, in fact, relatively strong. Using estimates from the UN Refugee Agency and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, we multiplied the number of refugees and displaced people per country by the GDP per capita in their country of origin to calculate the collective value of their foregone production. If each person could transfer that same value to the new country, the resulting GDP would make it the 54th largest economy in the world, with a projected GDP of roughly \$145 billion.

Refugees and other displaced people can contribute to economic growth for those who take them in – if they are allowed to do so.

RANKING THE GDP* OF THE 21ST LARGEST COUNTRY

New Zealand	\$173,754,075,211
Iraq	\$168,606,686,711
Qatar	\$166,907,692,308
Algeria	\$166,838,617,797
The 21st Largest Country	\$145,371,851,756
Hungary	\$120,687,138,088
Kuwait	\$112,811,565,304
Angola	\$102,643,104,696
Ecuador	\$100,871,770,000

*GDP- An estimate of the collective value of forcibly displaced peoples' foregone production.



Sources: UNHCR, IDMC, World Bank

CASE STUDY

PHILIPPINES

Lilang, 35, lives with her husband and six of her children in a small, dilapidated shack raised three feet above the waters of a marsh in the Province of Maguindanao, in the Philippines.

Lilang's family has already been displaced three times because of armed conflict – in 2000, 2008 and 2014. At the height of the fighting, Lilang and her family were forced to relocate, and in the process lost all their property, including their house, crops and farm animals. This situation has robbed her family of the chance to earn a decent income, and her children of their right to grow up in a safe environment. It has also made life extremely difficult for Lilang because they do not have any capital to invest for a sustainable income.

In order to feed her family and keep her children in school,

her husband drives a rented tricycle as a taxi, while Lilang weaves mats made of pandan leaves to sell.

“We do not earn a lot to buy enough food. My husband can only work when the weather is good, and not when it floods here due to heavy rains. When he cannot work, I weave mats just so we can buy rice.”

Lilang often borrows money from her neighbors and, at times, even food from a nearby store just to provide for her children. Although she knows her children's diet is not nutritious enough, she says she would rather give them a little than hear them cry from hunger.

“My dream is for my children to finish their studies. For as long as I can, I will help my children succeed. Also, I hope that someone will help us rebuild our lives, should we get back to our own home.”



Alarming Rates of Child Marriage

TOO MANY GIRLS under the age of 18 are getting married in *The 21st Largest Country*, but comparatively little time and attention is spent quantifying, understanding and combating the practice.

In addition to the physical and emotional harm to the girls, child marriage further undermines society at large: girls who marry often drop out of school, struggle with poor health, and are at greater risk of falling into poverty.²⁹

Child marriage tends to be most common in communities facing crisis, because parents often see it as a way to shield their children against poverty and exploitation.³⁰ However, we found almost no quantitative data around child marriage for refugee or displaced populations, with one exception: a study among Syrian refugees in Jordan found early marriage among

refugee girls rose from 12 percent in 2011 to 32 percent in 2014³¹ – an alarming 167 percent increase over three years.

Many countries invest in understanding the prevalence of child marriage among their populations in order to reduce the practice. UNICEF collects data on early marriage rates from more than 100 countries, and although anecdotal evidence suggests *The 21st Largest Country* may have rates among the highest in the world, no one is tracking them.

In most countries, child marriage rates appear to be slowly dropping. Countries that continue to see increases are typically experiencing conflict and/or are themselves home to significant numbers of displaced people.³² Fragile states accounted for nine of the top 10 countries with the highest incidence of child marriage.³³

JORDAN

Nadia,* 16, and her sister Sama,* 18, fled from their home in Damascus, Syria, and were married when they were 15 and 17 years old. Sama recently gave birth to her first child.



Photo: Rosie Thompson/Save the Children

WHAT'S NEXT?

HELPING *The 21st Largest Country* requires nothing less than a concerted global effort to reach the increasing number of displaced children who have less access to education, quality health care, protection from exploitation, and opportunities than children in other contexts.

In order to secure a better future for these children, Save the Children is calling on all world leaders to embrace an ambitious action plan, a New Deal for every forcibly displaced child, which should include:³⁴

- **Committing to have no refugee child out of school for more than 30 days after crossing an international border**
- **Ensuring all refugee children have access to a quality education by 2018**
- **Convening a High-Level Dialogue on Internally Displaced Persons in 2017, with education and protection as a critical part of that agenda**
- **Increasing job opportunities for refugee and displaced families to promote self-reliance and address the role that poverty plays in perpetuating harmful practices such as early marriage**
- **Educating communities about existing laws and policies on refugee and child rights – and strengthening national law and policies to bring them in line**

with the guarantees made in international refugee and child rights conventions

- **Making stronger commitments to honor the principle of equitable responsibility-sharing – wealthy states in particular should offer increased, longer-term and more flexible funding, increase refugee resettlement, and expand other legal routes of relocation for the displaced**
- **Pledging increased humanitarian funding and ensuring that development funding can also be used to proactively and explicitly address the education, health, livelihoods and protection needs of displaced populations, including those in urban, non-camp settings**
- **Including displaced populations in national development planning and programming – for example, including refugees in national health sector plans, and ensuring they can gain the legal status needed to access public health services.**

Displaced families, although enough in number to form *The 21st Largest Country* in the world, do not have a single government that represents them. It falls on all governments to come together and deliver this New Deal for children; to ensure that every last child's rights are fulfilled, especially their right to survive, learn and live free from violence and exploitation.

This report provides illustrative comparisons between actual countries and the population of forcibly displaced people. The most widely available recent data was used for each indicator, however due to incomplete information as a result of conflict or other factors, best available data or extrapolations were used when necessary.

Our thanks to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UNICEF and UNESCO for their high-quality data.



Photo: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

ENDNOTES

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- 2-3 "Figures at a Glance." UNHCR News. Accessed July 19, 2016. <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>.
- 4 Limited data often meant that quantitative figures were available for subsections of displaced children only. In general, there was more data on refugees than others. Where anecdotal and qualitative information indicated it was appropriate to do so for illustrative purposes, we extrapolated available data for subsections to cover the entire population of the 21st Largest Country.
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Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In the United States and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

ON THE COVER: A dinghy arrives in Lesvos, Greece, with more than 60 Syrian refugees, most of them children.

Photo: Pedro Armestre/Save the Children

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