

# 45 Facts on Forced Displacement

## The Global Situation – 23 Facts on the Forced Displacement of Children

1. **No safe place:** At the end of 2025, 45.3 million children were forcibly displaced worldwide. They accounted for 38 per cent of the total 117.8 million forcibly displaced people. [Q0]
2. **Many returns:** At the end of 2025, 117.8 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, 5.4 million fewer than at the end of 2024. The 4 per cent decline was largely driven by high numbers of returns. [Q1]
3. **Displacement has many faces:** Of the 45.3 million displaced children, 26.9 million were internally displaced, 14 million were refugee children or children in need of other forms of international protection, 2.8 million were asylum-seeking children, and 1.7 million were Palestine refugee children under UNRWA's mandate. [Q0]
4. **Children bear the greatest burden:** At the end of 2025, children accounted for 38 per cent of all forcibly displaced people, while representing 29 per cent of the global population. [Q0; Q1]
5. **Growing up near the front line:** In 2025, more than one in five children worldwide lived within 50 kilometres of an armed conflict. [Q2]
6. **School remains out of reach:** In the Gaza Strip, all 658,760 school-aged children were deprived of access to formal education for the third consecutive year in 2025; 95.5 per cent of schools were damaged or destroyed. [Q5]
7. **Multiple crises affect the same children:** In Myanmar, 21.9 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2025, including 6.9 million children. More than 3.6 million people were displaced, around one third of them children. In addition, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake destroyed critical infrastructure. [Q2]
8. **The world's largest displacement crisis:** Since the outbreak of war in April 2023, more than 15 million people have been displaced in Sudan. At the end of 2025, more than 9.3 million people remained internally displaced within the country, including 5.6 million children. [Q2]
9. **Central Africa remains in crisis:** Nearly 10 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were affected by forced displacement at the end of 2025, including 5.7 million internally displaced people. [Q1]
10. **Return does not automatically mean safety:** In 2025, 14.7 million forcibly displaced people returned home, including nearly 4.4 million refugees and 10.3 million internally displaced people. Many of these returns took place under adverse conditions. [Q1]

11. **Returns at record levels:** The number of refugees returning to their country of origin increased from 1.6 million in 2024 to nearly 4.4 million in 2025. More than 90 per cent of these returns took place in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Sudan. [Q1]
12. **When displacement lasts an entire childhood:** In Eastern and Southern Africa, children registered before their fifth birthday are particularly likely to spend their entire childhood in displacement. [Q1]
13. **Born into exile:** Between 2018 and 2025, more than 2.4 million children were born as refugees. This corresponds to around 305,000 children each year. [Q1]
14. **Humanitarian aid under severe pressure:** In 2025, UNICEF appealed for US\$9.87 billion to support 171.8 million people affected by humanitarian crises, including 109 million children. By the end of 2025, US\$2.96 billion had been received, representing 31 per cent of the original funding requirement. [Q2]
15. **Less funding, greater need:** Funding for nutrition assistance, the treatment of malnutrition and emergency agricultural support fell back to 2016 levels in 2025. At the same time, the number of people facing acute hunger has doubled since then. [Q2]
16. **A generation without school:** All 658,760 school-aged children in the Gaza Strip have been unable to access formal education consistently since October 2023. A total of 95.5 per cent of schools have been damaged or destroyed. [Q13]
17. **Violence drives displacement:** Fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo forced an additional 500,000 people to flee within just a few days in December 2025. [Q13]
18. **Displacement fuels food insecurity:** More than 4.8 million people are internally displaced in Yemen. Around 17.1 million people face acute food insecurity, while approximately 500,000 children require treatment for severe acute malnutrition. [Q13]
19. **Childhood in wartime:** Since the start of the war, more than 2,700 children have been killed or injured in Ukraine. Millions more have been forced to leave their homes. At the end of 2025, 3.4 million people remained internally displaced. [Q13]
20. **Returning amid the threat of landmines:** Around 3.1 million people returned to the Syrian Arab Republic in 2025. At the same time, 15.4 million people live in areas contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war. In 2025 alone, these hazards killed 596 people, including 171 children. [Q13]

## Displacement in the Swiss Context

21. **Switzerland is also a child protection system:** A total of 25,781 asylum applications were registered in Switzerland in 2025, 7.1 per cent fewer than in the previous year. Around 40 per cent of all asylum applications were submitted by children and adolescents. [Q8]
22. **Children shape the asylum landscape:** Fifty-eight per cent of asylum-seeking children in Switzerland are younger than 11 years of age. Among asylum applicants from Afghanistan, 54 per cent were minors in 2025. [Q8]
23. **Unaccompanied children need special protection:** In 2025, approximately one in ten asylum applications in Switzerland was submitted by an unaccompanied minor. [Q8]

## UNICEF's Response – 24 Facts on Assistance, Protection and Funding. Funding gaps directly affect children

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26. **When funding cuts halt education:** In July 2025, thousands of learning activities in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar were forced to close due to severe funding cuts. Even after some services resumed, younger children remained without access to education. [Q3]

## UNICEF remains operational

27. **A year of continuous emergencies:** In 2025, UNICEF responded to 414 humanitarian emergencies across 101 countries and territories. [Q2]
28. **Humanitarian action at the core of UNICEF's mandate:** UNICEF spent US\$4.6 billion on humanitarian action in 2025. This represented 59 per cent of all UNICEF programme expenditures. [Q2]
29. **Reaching children on the move:** In 2025, UNICEF reached more than 7.8 million displaced children in 67 countries through humanitarian programmes and in refugee and internally displaced persons settings. [Q2]

## Preventable diseases, hunger and water

30. **Protection from a preventable threat:** In 2025, UNICEF vaccinated 38.7 million children against measles in humanitarian settings. [Q2]
31. **Nutrition support in a race against time:** In 2025, UNICEF reached 98.8 million children under five years of age with screening and treatment services for different forms of malnutrition in humanitarian settings. [Q2]
32. **Safe water saves lives:** In 2025, UNICEF provided 36.2 million people with access to drinking water services in humanitarian settings. [Q2]
33. **Delivering services despite system collapse:** In 2025, UNICEF admitted more than 612,000 children with severe acute malnutrition for treatment in Sudan, provided nearly 15 million people with safe drinking water, and supported emergency and outbreak-response services for 6.4 million people through 1,400 health facilities and mobile teams. [Q2]

34. **Every nutrition site matters:** In Somalia, 113 nutrition sites closed following an abrupt funding shortfall. At the same time, UNICEF maintained a recovery rate of 97.6 per cent for severe wasting through 600 treatment sites across 70 of the country's 74 accessible districts. [Q2]
35. **The danger remains after return:** In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF reached a total of 850,000 children and caregivers in 2025 with explosive ordnance risk education and support services for survivors. [Q2]

## Education, protection and mental health

36. **School as a place of protection:** In 2025, UNICEF enabled 9.1 million children to access education in humanitarian settings. [Q2]
37. **Invisible wounds need support:** In 2025, UNICEF reached 8.8 million children and family members with community-based mental health and psychosocial support services. [Q2]
38. **Protection from violence in unsafe environments:** In 2025, UNICEF reached 10.9 million women and children with gender-based violence prevention programmes and survivor support services. [Q2]
39. **Reuniting separated children with their families:** In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF supported 16,021 unaccompanied or separated children in 2025 through identification, interim care, family tracing and reunification. Forty-seven per cent of these children were girls. [Q2]
40. **Girls' education under pressure:** In 2025, 2.2 million girls in Afghanistan remained excluded from secondary education. Through more than 14,000 community-based education classes, UNICEF supported 442,000 out-of-school children, 65 per cent of whom were girls. [Q2]
41. **Humanitarian assistance for children in Afghanistan:** In 2025, UNICEF provided humanitarian assistance to nearly 21 million people in Afghanistan, including more than 11 million children. [Q2]
42. **Protection, learning and awareness in a state of emergency:** In the State of Palestine, 309,379 children gained access to formal or non-formal education. A total of 423,537 children and caregivers received psychosocial support, while 838,628 children and caregivers received education on the risks posed by explosive ordnance. [Q2]
43. **Reaching children in Myanmar:** In 2025, UNICEF and its partners provided humanitarian assistance to 4 million people in Myanmar, including 3.2 million children. A total of 747,375 children gained access to learning opportunities. [Q2]

## Local partners and humanitarian access

44. **Access determines protection:** In 2025, UNICEF continued to operate in hard-to-reach areas, including Ukraine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Eritrea, Mozambique, Myanmar and Sudan. In more than 20 countries, UNICEF supported monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children. [Q2]
45. **Funding gaps affect nutrition services:** In Mali, despite higher targets and increased funding, UNICEF admitted 17,000 fewer children for the treatment of severe wasting in 2025 than in 2024. The reasons included funding shortfalls at the beginning of the year, delayed disbursements and supply chain disruptions. [Q2]

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