

Mapping the European Migrant Crisis

Humans have been migrating to new areas since the beginning of historical record. One of the earliest human migration movements is thought to have taken place over 20,000 years ago, when humans trekked across a land bridge over the Bering Strait and dispersed across the Americas. Numerous human migrations have occurred since then, and their reasons for movement have varied. Even though we are now in a modern age of history, where humans can modify or adapt their surroundings to suit their needs, there are still unavoidable factors that cause someone to leave their home.

As of 2014, **59.5 million** people had been forcibly displaced from their homes:

$$\begin{array}{r} \mathbf{38.2\ million} \\ \textit{internally} \\ \textit{displaced people} \end{array} + \begin{array}{r} \mathbf{19.5\ million} \\ \textit{refugees} \end{array} + \begin{array}{r} \mathbf{1.8\ million} \\ \textit{asylum seekers} \end{array} = \begin{array}{r} \mathbf{1\ out\ of\ 122} \\ \textit{people} \\ \textit{worldwide} \end{array}$$

There are more displaced people today than at any time since World War II.

Refugees

Top (5) Countries of Origin for Refugees

- Syria 3.88 million refugees
- Afghanistan 2.59 million
- Somalia 1.11 million
- Sudan 648,900
- South Sudan 616,200

Imagine being forced to flee your country in order to escape to safety. If you were lucky you had time to pack a bag. If not, you simply dropped everything and ran. Refugees are people who cannot return to their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances in their country of origin that makes it impossible for them to go home. Their situation is often so dangerous that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries.

Many people have the tendency to confuse or equate refugees with migrants, which can have serious consequences for the safety of people fleeing persecution or conflict. While migrants may or may not have any other choice but to leave their homes, the risk of being met with violence should they return is what sets refugees apart from migrants. Refugees are a specifically defined group protected under international law. The protection of refugees has many aspects. These include safety from being returned to danger, access to fair and efficient asylum procedures, and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected while they secure a longer-term solution.

Top (5) Host Countries for Refugees

- Turkey 1.59 million refugees
- Pakistan 1.51 million
- Lebanon 1.15 million
- Iran 982,000
- Ethiopia 659,500

ON YOUR MAP: Choose a color, and shade in "Top Countries of Origin" on the key for Map A. Choose a second color and shade in "Top Host Countries" on the same map. Use the data in the reading above to identify these countries and shade them on the map.

Asylum-Seeker

Received Most Asylum Applications (since 2011)

- Germany 547,034 applicants
- France 255,800
- Sweden 228,601
- Turkey 209,019
- Italy 155,536

Asylum is the permission to remain in a host nation that is granted to those who are fleeing persecution, potential harm exercised by their home government, or any other reasons defined by international law. An asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. Every year, around one million people seek asylum. Asylum systems are in place to determine who qualifies for international protection. However, during mass movements of refugees, usually as a result of conflict or

violence, it is not always possible or necessary to conduct individual interviews with every asylum seeker who crosses a border.

ON YOUR MAP: Choose a third color, and shade in "Most Asylum Applications" on the key for Map A. Use the data sheet to identify these five countries, and shade them on the map.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

Internally displaced people (IDPs) have not crossed a border to find safety. Unlike refugees, they are on the run at home. IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. Examples of IDPs can include, but are not limited to:

- families caught between warring parties and having to flee their homes under relentless attacks,
- residents of poor neighborhoods considered unsafe and uninhabitable because of weather-related, geophysical or technological hazards
- Indigenous communities forced from their ancestral lands to make way for the construction of dams and other infrastructure projects

Countries with Most IDPs

• Syria	7,600,000 IDPs
• Colombia	6,044,200
• Iraq	3,376,000
• Sudan	3,100,000
• Democratic Republic of the Congo	2,756,600

IDPs are entitled to enjoy the same rights and freedoms under international and national laws as do other people in their country. Some of the typical needs and protection risks that arise in internal displacement include family separation, loss of documentation, freedom of movement in and out of camps, loss of property, and further exposure to the risk of secondary or onward displacement.

ON YOUR MAP: Choose a pattern, and shade in "Most IDPs" on the map key. Use the data sheet to identify these five countries, and shade them on the map.

European Migrant Crisis

The European Migrant Crisis, also known as the Refugee Crisis, began in 2015 with high numbers of people arriving in the European Union (EU) from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through Southeast Europe. It is part of a pattern of increased immigration to Europe from other continents which began in the mid-20th century and which has encountered resistance in many European countries. Most of the migrants have come from Muslim-majority countries, specifically Syria, which has been engulfed in a civil war between various factions, including its government, ISIS, and Sunni and Shi'a Muslims since 2011.

Spotlight: The Syrian Civil War

Since 2011, of Syria's population of 22 million:



ON YOUR MAP: After reading each story, map each refugee's journey on Map B. Label the names of the refugee's country of origin, host country, and other countries that he or she describes passing through (if any). Shade the refugee's country of origin in one color, the refugee's host country in a second color, and fill in your key accordingly. Draw a line to show the approximate route that the refugee traveled.

Shookrullah: Afghanistan to Sweden

"I want to tell you about when I fled from Afghanistan to Sweden. The trip took almost four months, and it is three years ago now. First, I came to Iran. It took 20 days and a lot of walking. Then Turkey, but that trip was easier since we took buses and cars and only walked for five hours across Turkey's border. Next, we arrived in Istanbul. The three weeks I spent in that big, modern and beautiful city were the best, but the smugglers decided we'd go to Greece. This time it was a dangerous trip; we had to cross the border to Greece in a rubber boat.

We got to the sea at midnight but the police tried to catch us. We ran because we didn't want them to send us back to Afghanistan. Finally we got to Greece; exhausted, hungry and thirsty. In Greece, the police took us to a refugee camp where we got checked, registered and sent to Athens. They dropped us on a big square and we called the smuggler, who would help us, get to Italy by boat. We tried to reach the sea several times the next month. On the third try we were put in jail for over a week. On the fourth try, we managed! We were so happy! But there was a huge problem awaiting us.

We did not have any food and water and the trip from Greece to Italy took three days and two nights. We drank sea water to survive. Then, in the middle of the sea the boat's GPS broke down. We were sad and worried but an Iraqi boy who knew how to navigate a boat became captain and steered the boat to Italy. But my journey wasn't over. After several more car trips and train rides, I got off the train in Malmö. It was so cold! I didn't have any warm clothes, Italy was warm and I had no idea that it was so cold in Sweden..."

Yasser: Syria to Bulgaria

"When the problems started in Damascus our neighborhood was among the first to see fighting. One night during a protest, bombs killed 400 people. By six in the morning our whole street was gone and we left our family home in ruins after it was struck by an explosion.

I could no longer go to college where I studied tourism. My options were to join one of the armies or leave the country. I left for Lebanon with only 180 USD in my pocket and from there to Istanbul, Turkey. Those first weeks were very difficult and lonely. I joined five of my friends and started working in a factory making cardboard boxes. It paid enough to eat, but nothing more. I was working over twelve hours each day. So, the six of us decided that we have to seek asylum in the European Union. We had no money so we tried on our own without a smuggler.

On December 2, 2013, we left with printed maps, a GPS, food and flashlights. We walked along the Rezovo river until we crossed into Bulgaria. It took us three days on foot. In Bulgaria we were taken to a dilapidated building for single men in the rundown Harmanli camp. It was horrible. There were no proper bathrooms or showers, people were heating themselves with bonfires, and there was very little food. Then day by day things got better and now it is actually decent.

If the war stops I will immediately go back to Syria. But I can see it's not going to stop. I can see that it will not end even in ten years."

Hosein: Iran to France

Hosein, an Afghan civil engineering student, was born in Iran. Along with his mother and sister, they sailed from the Turkish coast heading for Samos Island in Greece. Their boat sank on July 11, 2014, and his mother and sister are missing. Hosein and his three other sisters, two in France and one in Germany, have left no stone unturned in trying desperately to find a clue that would lead them to their beloved ones.

"The past ten days were the most agonizing days of my life. On 10 July, along with my mother Fatme and my sister Shokoufeh, we sailed off after having paid 9,000 Euro for the three of us. It was overcrowded as the smugglers had crammed around 40 men, women and children on that little boat. After several hours at sea, the boat suddenly started taking in water. Among terrified screams, I tried to elbow myself to reach the small cabin where my mother and sister were, but I was hurled overboard by panicking passengers. In the sea, the currents were so strong that I could hardly swim. It was only until several hours later that I along was spotted by an Italian sailing boat and transferred to Chios Island, Greece. Fifteen Syrians and Afghans have been rescued. So far, six people who were found by the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards have been confirmed dead, while the rest are still missing.

I am currently in France with my two sisters and their families. I traveled legally on a visa issued by the French Embassy in Athens. All the families of missing people are appealing that the search and rescue operations of the authorities continue unabated. We urge the Greek authorities to bring up the boat as there were women and small children in the cabin who may have been trapped. As for my mother and sister, another passenger who left the boat after me told me that they were not trapped in the cabin. Since they had very good life jackets, they must have survived. I am sure they are alive. I will not abandon the search. I expect and hope for good news. But even if the news were bad I still want to know!"