

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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WORLD REFUGEE DAY

20 June 2009

Around the world, millions of people have been uprooted by violence, persecution and conflict. The majority of these individuals and their families come from the developing world and are also especially vulnerable to the harsh fallout of the unfolding global economic crisis.

The theme of this year's observance of World Refugee Day, "real people, real needs", underscores how much refugees have lost -- even their countries -- and how much the humanitarian community must do to help them.

There are gaps in meeting the basics: shelter, health services, education, food, clean water, sanitation and protection from violence and abuse.

Malnutrition levels are frequently higher in displaced populations, as are mortality rates.

Single women and girls are especially prone to exploitation. Experience shows that staying in school reduces exposure to such abuse. More resources are needed to build and maintain education facilities for refugees.

Addressing these and many other gaps takes commitment and action. Solidarity must be the foundation of our response. This is especially so at a time when the economic crisis is putting pressure on humanitarian and development budgets.

On this World Refugee Day, let us ensure that people displaced by conflict, persecution and upheaval get the support and services they need to build a better life.