

41,315 REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS ARE REGISTERED WITH UNHCR IN INDIA

MORE THAN HALF ARE CHILDREN AND 46 PER CENT ARE WOMEN

The second wave of COVID-19 in India has been devastating. The scarcity of medical supplies, hospital beds, and staff has gravely affected every section of the population.

While this situation is difficult for everyone, it is particularly challenging for vulnerable communities like refugees as the government's social security nets do not support them.

Together with local NGO partners, UNHCR is supporting in:

- *Repurposing and adapting refugee protection and assistance programme for the most vulnerable,*
- *Strengthening communication with communities,*
- *Prioritising food and non-food support for the most vulnerable, and*
- *Advocating for the inclusion of refugees into the national public health and vaccination plan.*

*statistics from April 2020-May 2021

3,044

individuals registered with UNHCR despite remote working



60,483

face masks distributed to prevent COVID-19 transmission

12,869

refugees, asylum-seekers, and members of host communities provided with WASH support



348

awareness sessions conducted on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

8,007

refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities women and girls provided with sanitary napkins



520

people assisted with livelihood support like micro grants, job placements, and trainings



20%

refugee students support with educational kit, mobile, and tablets.



1,208

refugees and asylum-seekers provided with outreach services on issues related to protection and unmet basic needs.

- 600,000 soap bars distributed among refugees and asylum-seekers to promote hygiene and sanitation.
- 8,812 families received food distribution.
- 1,764 households received support in the form of non-food items like mosquito nets, tarpaulin sheets, and blankets.
- 4,000 thermometer kits distributed
- 25 oxygen concentrators and 60 mattresses were procured and distributed in local hospitals across New Delhi.
- 20,426 individual phone calls and emails were responded to by UNHCR between March 2020 and May 2021.

UNHCR welcomes the **SOP issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** for COVID-19 vaccination of persons without prescribed identity cards.

VACCINATIONS

This will provide an opportunity for vulnerable groups, including **refugees and asylum-seekers, to access vaccines**. Equitable access is what will ultimately protect lives and stem the pandemic.



1491

refugees and asylum-seekers have been vaccinated as of May 2021

CHALLENGES TO RESPONSE

- Inability to scale up cash-based support due to lack of access to basic financial service for refugees and asylum-seekers
- Lack of connectivity, limited broadcast, and families not having access to the required hardware inhibits education programme.
- In view of resurgence and acceleration of COVID-19 transmission in India, UNHCR's ability to respond to growing needs is severely threatened by underfunding.



UNHCR India with its local NGO partners have quickly responded to the growing needs for food security within the refugees and local communities across India.

As COVID-19 is threatening the livelihood of thousands of people, UNHCR is working around the clock to provide food assistance which offers a lifeline to the most vulnerable communities in India. (©UNHCR/ Daniel Ginsianmung)



Due to the inclusive approach of the COVID-19 national vaccination plan, vaccines are now reaching some of the most vulnerable in the country. (©UNHCR/ Aparna Dewal)



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Marwa, a 25-year-old Afghan refugee nurse in Delhi, has been working tirelessly in the frontlines during the second wave of COVID-19.

"When our neighbours and friends started having trouble breathing, they went looking out for hospital bed in the COVID-19 wards. They couldn't find anything," said Marwa.

"This experience immediately prompted us to convert a part of our home to treat COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms."

To help others in need, both Marwa and her mother, Florance, carried out in-house treatment for both Afghan and Indian patients suffering from coronavirus.

"I used my training to treat around 20-25 refugees and fellow Indian patients who were unable to get hospital beds. On several occasions, I've gone to their homes at 1 am to check on their oxygen levels and provide medical support," she said.

Like many other refugees, she is joining the battle against COVID-19. Given the chance, people like Marwa will continue to contribute to a stronger, safer, and more vibrant world.

FUNDING THE RESPONSE IN 2021

The scope and success of such initiatives will depend on the amount of funding the operation receives. As of May 2021, UNHCR India is operating with a funding gap of USD 9.9 Million i.e. 88 per cent.

UNHCR published its funding needs for the COVID-19 response in its regional situation reports, to ensure the most vulnerable refugees are protected from the impacts of the coronavirus and its spread is prevented.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/covid-19>

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