



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR is mandated by the United Nations to protect and safeguard the rights of refugees and seek permanent solutions that allow them to rebuild their lives. It supports refugees who return to their country, people displaced within their country, as well as stateless people.

Governance

UNHCR is governed by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Standing Committee meetings are held three times a year and serve to prepare the annual Executive Committee meeting, which consists of 110 members and approves the agency's budget.

Strategic Objectives

UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2022-2026 commit UNHCR to:

- Respond rapidly and effectively in emergencies and beyond;
- Promote the inclusion of refugees, displaced and stateless people in economic growth and poverty reduction efforts;
- Empower the people to determine and build their futures;
- Pursue solutions to address the consequences of displacement and problems of statelessness.

UNHCR's support to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) directly contributes to UNHCR's strategic objective towards enhancing refugees' self-reliance and pursuing durable solutions.

Added Value and Challenges

As the custodian of the Refugee Conventions, UNHCR has the specific mandate from the United Nations to protect the rights of refugees worldwide. It also has specialised staff with a vast experience as well as the capacity to respond rapidly to forceful displacement in emergencies.

The challenges of forced displacement have grown in scope, scale and complexity due to intractable conflicts, and the climate crisis. The protection space has diminished, inequalities have increased. Displacements have become more complex, including mixed movements of refugees, internally displaced people and migrants. Funding has decreased considerably down from USD 5 billion to 3.5 in 2025.

Key results in 2025

16.5 million people, including 1.4 million children, received protection services. 4.8 million people received cash assistance and 6.8 million non-food items to address their basic needs. 12.9 million people received essential health services, and 1.6 million people benefited from specialised GBV programmes. 2.1 million people received shelter and housing assistance.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Type of organisation

Subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly

Head of organisation

Barham Salih (IRQ), High Commissioner

Headquarters

Geneva (CH)

Country offices

122

Total Personnel

13,200

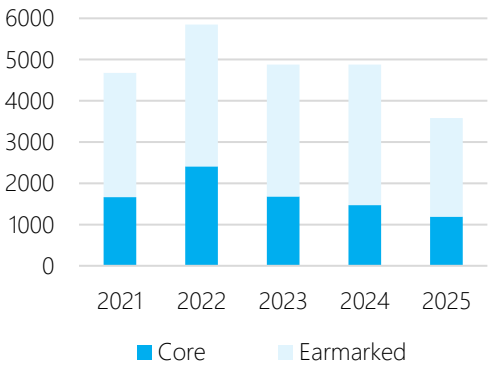
Established in

1951

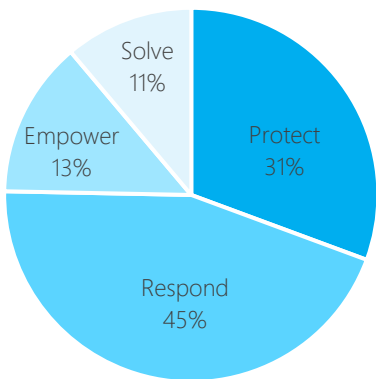
Steering

Executive and Standing Committee

Total Revenues UNHCR 2021-2025,
in million USD



UNHCR Expenditures 2025,
by Impact Areas (%), Total: USD 3,830 million





Woman breast-feeds her baby shortly after arriving at the Batanga Transit Centre.
©UNHCR/L. Baumann

Switzerland's partnership with UNHCR

Switzerland's strategic priorities

- Centrality of protection: Switzerland wants UNHCR to improve protection environments for refugees and other people of concern.
- Locally led action: Switzerland encourages UNHCR to reinforce its localisation efforts, with focus on the engagement and inclusion of refugees and other people of concern in response planning and implementation.
- Climate-related migration: Switzerland wants UNHCR to mitigate climate-related displacement.
- Durable solutions: Switzerland supports UNHCR to provide durable solutions for refugees and other people of concern to address the effects of displacement.
- Governance and quality funding: Switzerland holds UNHCR accountable and supports its qualitative resource mobilisation efforts.

Cooperation at country level

Switzerland provides country of regionally earmarked contributions to implement UNHCR's programmes and, in case of emergencies, contributions from SDC's emergency relief fund. Through the secondment of Swiss experts (e.g. protection, shelter, water and sanitation, cash) UNHCR increases its protection emergency response capacity and its ability to facilitate durable solutions. Switzerland also supports the work on durable solutions through the IDP Solutions Fund. Swiss Cooperation Teams exchange regularly with UNHCR country offices on the challenges they face at country level and cooperate in their policy dialogue with national or subnational authorities.

Cooperation at global level

Switzerland supports the Global Protection Cluster as well as activities against Gender-Based Violence and for Education in Emergencies. The Geneva Technical Hub promotes environmental sustainability of refugee camps and settlements. The Digital Hub on Treasury Solutions works on efficient financial transactions including a more rapid and targeted cash assistance. Switzerland co-hosts the Global Refugee Forum and co-sponsors the Nansen Award to support resource mobilisation. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) supports resettlement activities and FDFA's Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD) is engaged against human trafficking. At policy level, Switzerland is part of the UNHCR Standing and Executive Committee.

SWITZERLAND and UNHCR

Contributions (2025)

Total: USD 79 million (14th largest gov. donor, 2.2% of total budget)

Core: USD 20 million (7th)

Earmarked: USD 59 million

Number of Swiss staff

33 primary, 39 secondary nationality

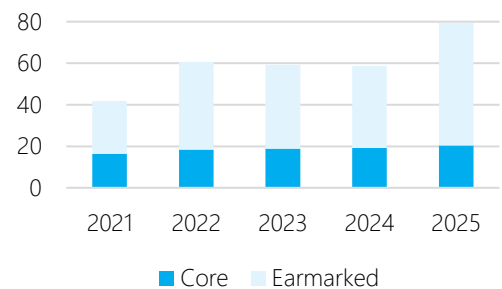
Number of Swiss secondments

14

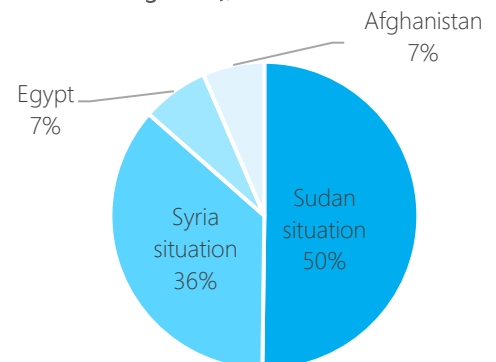
Involved Swiss government entities

SDC, PHDR, SEM

Swiss Contributions 2025, in million USD



Earmarked Swiss Contributions 2025 (country emergencies), Total CHF 17.3 million



Geneva Technical Hub (GTH)

Thanks to the GTH, an initiative co-funded by Switzerland, UNHCR dedicated additional resources to technical sectors, particularly in water and sanitation. The hub contributed to the document "Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy". Based on the good results so far, the GTH shall serve also other interested multilateral organisations, as pledged at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

Contact:

Multilateral Humanitarian Affairs Section

Multilateral Affairs and NGOs Division

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Email: sdc.multi-ngo@eda.admin.ch

Website: <https://www.sdc-multilateral.ch>