



# Women's Refugee Commission

## TOP 10 CRITICAL NEEDS FACING REFUGEES AND THOSE DISPLACED IN EMERGENCIES

During the initial stages of a conflict or natural disaster, those who are forced to flee are particularly at risk—women, children and young people most of all.

The Women's Refugee Commission has identified 10 pressing needs that must be met during the first weeks and months of an emergency to ensure the safety and well-being of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs)\*. Some 45 million people are currently uprooted from their homes by armed conflict and persecution.

1. **Keep refugees and IDPs safe.** Ensure that they are settled in a secure location away from borders and ongoing conflict.
2. **Provide safe access to basic needs,** including food, safe and appropriate cooking fuel, potable water, sanitation and shelter.
3. **Communicate with the people most affected and ensure their safety whether or not they have legal status or official documents.** Ensure every adult is provided with individual documentation that allows him or her to access key services.
4. **Provide life-saving health care, including reproductive health care.** Ensure there are enough health workers and all necessary medicines and supplies to prevent and respond to infectious diseases and other health needs. Establish priority reproductive health services for women and girls.
5. **Prevent and respond to sexual violence.** Protect women and children from sexual violence by ensuring safe access to food, cooking fuel, water, latrines and other basic necessities. Offer medical services and psychosocial support to survivors of sexual violence.
6. **Reduce the transmission of HIV.** Enforce use of infection control measures by health workers; make condoms freely available; and ensure blood for transfusion is safe by screening it for HIV and other blood-borne diseases.
7. **Prevent excess maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.** Provide skilled birth attendants for normal births; manage obstetric complications at health facilities; establish 24-hour emergency referral system; provide contraceptives to meet demands; provide clean delivery kits to all visibly pregnant women.
8. **Identify vulnerable individuals with specific needs,** such as unaccompanied minors, child- or women-headed households, pregnant women, victims of trafficking and persons with disabilities. Secure their care and physical security. Monitor, report and respond to violations against children.
9. **Provide education to children and young people.** Offer structure for children and restore hope and a sense of normalcy in a safe, adult-supervised space. Teach basic literacy and numeracy skills, and provide vocational training for young people.
10. **Provide economic opportunities and preserve existing economic assets.** Build on refugees' skills, taking into account local market needs, to provide the best chance for a sustainable income. Protect women and girls from sexual exploitation by providing them with economic opportunities.

\* A refugee has crossed an international border; an internally displaced person (IDP) has fled from his or her home but is still in his or her own country.