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Global refugee crisis requires a paradigm shift on refugee protection

Amnesty International recommendations to UN Member States

The world is facing the worst global refugee crisis since World War II. The number of refugees is now close to 20 million. The large majority of refugees, 86 percent, are hosted in developing countries. This stark imbalance undermines the United Nations Refugee Convention¹'s core principle of responsibility and burden-sharing and poses serious challenges to the system of international protection.

Over four million women, men and children have fled Syria to neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey.² Only 2.6 percent have been offered resettlement places globally.³ The UN humanitarian appeal for Syrian refugees is only 37 percent funded, forcing the UN to drastically cut aid to refugees.

In Africa, people fleeing conflict and persecution in countries like South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Burundi, have added hundreds of thousands to the longstanding refugee populations from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kenya is home to Dadaab - the world's largest refugee camp, which was set up in 1991.

In the first eight months of 2015, more than 350,000 people have fled to the European Union in search of protection or a better life and over 2,800 people have lost their lives in their attempt to reach safety. In the next sailing season in October, refugees and migrants in South East Asia will again take to boats to leave their home countries and are likely to be at serious risk at sea⁴ unless adequate search and rescue systems and other necessary measures are put in place urgently.

