



## New WFP Report Finds Food Insecurity Accelerates Global Migration

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ROME – At a time when a record-high number of people have been forced to flee their homes across the world, a new study by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) clearly establishes that high levels of food insecurity lead to higher levels of migration across borders.

The report determined that each one percentage increase in food insecurity in a population compels 1.9 percent more people to migrate per 1000 population. Further, 0.4 percent more people per 1000 population flee a country for each additional year of conflict. This means that a country with rising levels of food insecurity and conflict will experience greater outward migration, or movement of people away from their homes.

WFP also found that food insecurity is a significant cause for the incidence – and intensity – of armed conflict. Once a migrant’s journey has begun, lack of employment combined with little or no access to food and other humanitarian assistance are significant push factors that compel people to continue to move. Further, as people seek to reduce their food insecurity through migration, the act of migration itself can cause food insecurity, given the costs and often hazardous conditions along the journey.

“At WFP, we are doing everything we can to care for refugees who are hungry or starving across the world,” said David Beasley, WFP Executive Director. “With millions of our brothers and sisters having fled their homes and facing so much hardship, it is our duty to shed light on their tragic situation.”

“By understanding the dynamics that compel people to move, we can better address what lies at the heart of forced migration and what must be done to end their

suffering,” said Beasley.

The report recommends that the international community must invest in food security and livelihoods at or near people’s place of origin. Doing so may prevent further displacement, reduce forced onward migration, result in more cost-effective humanitarian interventions and yield greater socioeconomic benefits now and in the long term.

Entitled “At the Root of Exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration,” the report explores the role that food security and other factors play in compelling cross-border migration. It is the first time such comprehensive analysis has been carried out. Drawn from quantitative and qualitative research, the study features often dramatic accounts of people forced to take extreme measures when left with nothing at all.

In one such account, a woman who fled Syria to Jordan with her family said, “We had to eat grass to survive. My kids stayed up all night crying because they were hungry.”

A man from Deir Ezzor explained the suffering he had witnessed in Syria: “They made people hungry, stole our produce, closed schools, and prevented people from working.”

The report determined that people who are displaced often do not want to move from their homes, and try to stay as close to their place of origin as possible. Nearly eight in ten Syrian refugee families interviewed had been internally displaced inside Syria at least once, and 65 percent twice or more. Almost every single Syrian participant in the study strongly affirmed a desire to return to Syria if the situation stabilized and security prevailed.

The report is launched at a moment when multiple protracted crises and a period of political transition challenge the levels of international food and humanitarian assistance provided for refugees and people who have been forcibly displaced.

### **Overview of WFP Global Refugee Operations**

In 2016, WFP supported 6.9 million refugees in 32 countries through cash-based transfers and in-kind food assistance. WFP is working to prevent and treat malnutrition by providing refugee children with specialized nutritious food. In areas where food is available and markets are functioning, WFP increasingly provides refugees with cash-based transfers, allowing people to buy the food that they need, and at the same time injecting money into the local economy. In its largest refugee-focused operation, WFP supports almost 2.2 million of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees sheltering in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq.

WFP requires US\$600 million to continue to provide and maintain assistance to nearly seven million refugees from April through September 2017.

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[Link](#) to the report

Video News Release and shotlist are available [here](#)

Photos are available [here](#)

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries.