

Refugees and Displaced People: How Japan can Help

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The humanitarian community is under exceptional pressure. Recent years have witnessed a series of major new emergencies, including those triggered by the conflicts in countries such as the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. At the same time, long-standing crises in countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Somalia have remained unresolved.

A disturbing outcome of these developments has been a rapid increase in the number of refugees and displaced people around the world. According to UNHCR, around 65 million people have now been uprooted by violence and human rights violations, the largest number since the organization was established in 1951.

While humanitarian agencies have done everything they can to respond to these events, they are struggling to do so. The funding available to them is well below what is needed. They lack the capacity to cope with so many simultaneous emergencies. And in a number of situations, ongoing violence and the restrictions imposed by the parties to armed conflicts make it impossible for aid organizations to gain access to the people who are most vulnerable.

Urgent action is needed to address this troubling situation, and Japan has an important role to play in that process.

First, as one of the world's leading humanitarian do-



nors, the country can continue to provide the emergency funding that is needed to ensure that the immediate needs of refugees and displaced people are properly met.

Second, Japan should support the introduction of longer-term and developmental approaches in situations where large numbers of people have been uprooted, so as to support the economy, infrastructure and environment of areas that have experienced mass influxes. In this respect, JICA's experience will be of particular value.

Third, Japan can make use of its unrivalled skills in design and innovation to promote the use of new approaches and more effective technologies in the response to humanitarian emergencies.

Fourth, and in the spirit of international cooperation and responsibility-sharing, Japan should explore the possibility of providing a greater number of refugee resettlement places, thereby relieving the pressure placed on the world's less prosperous states, where the vast majority of refugees are to be found.

Finally, Japan has a continuing role to play in the realm of preventive diplomacy, helping to avert, mitigate and resolve the armed conflicts and human rights violations that force people to flee. In pursuing these objectives, every effort must be made to build upon Japan's proud record of promoting human security, peaceful co-existence and humanitarian norms in the most troubled parts of the world.

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A South Sudanese refugee hanging
the laundry in Bidibidi Settlement,
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Photo on pages 2-3:
Syrian refugee children living in Zaatari
refugee camp, Jordan ©Kyo Shimizu



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is one of the world's largest bilateral development organization, operating in some 150 countries to help some of the globe's most vulnerable people.