

# COVID-19 and Asylum

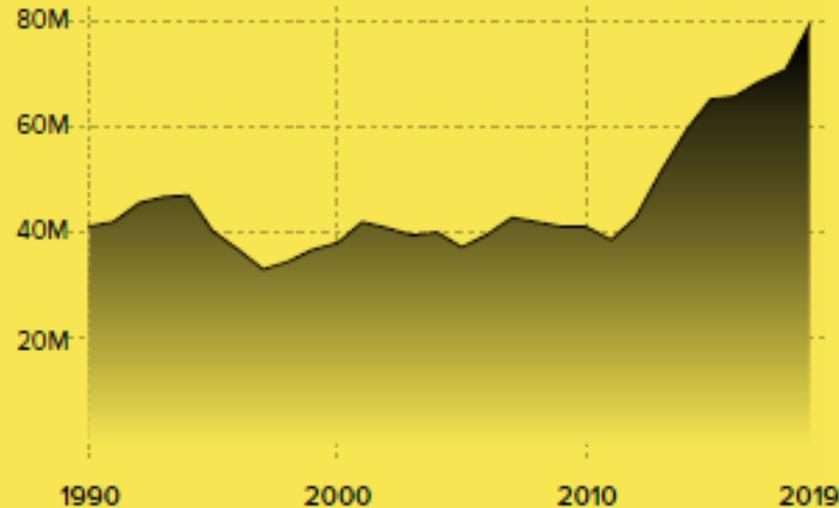
17 November 2020

# Trends at a Glance

## 79.5 MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

at the end of 2019 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



**26.0** million refugees

**20.4** million refugees  
under UNHCR's mandate

**5.6** million Palestine refugees  
under UNRWA's mandate

**45.7** million internally displaced people<sup>1</sup>

**4.2** million asylum-seekers

**3.6** million Venezuelans displaced abroad

# 40% CHILDREN

An estimated 30 – 34 million of the 79.5 million forcibly displaced persons were children below 18 years of age.

# 85% HOSTED IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Developing countries hosted 85 per cent of the world's refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad. The Least Developed Countries provided asylum to 27 per cent of the total.

# 2.0 MILLION NEW CLAIMS

Asylum-seekers submitted 2.0 million new claims. The United States of America was the world's largest recipient of new individual applications (301,000), followed by Peru (259,800), Germany (142,500), France (123,900) and Spain (118,300).

# 73% HOSTED IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

73 per cent of refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin.

# 5.6 MILLION DISPLACED PEOPLE RETURNED

5.6 million displaced people returned to their areas or countries of origin, including 5.3 million internally displaced persons and 317,200 refugees.

# 107,800 REFUGEES RESETTLED

UNHCR submitted 81,600 refugees to States for resettlement. According to government statistics, 26 countries admitted 107,800 refugees for resettlement during the year, with or without UNHCR's assistance.

# 68% ORIGINATED FROM JUST FIVE COUNTRIES

More than two thirds (68 per cent) of all refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad came from just five countries.

**Syrian Arab Republic**  
6.6 million

**Venezuela**  
3.7 million

**Afghanistan**  
2.7 million

**South Sudan**  
2.2 million

**Myanmar**  
1.1 million

# 3.6 MILLION REFUGEES HOSTED IN TURKEY

Turkey hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, with 3.6 million people. Colombia was second with 1.8 million, including Venezuelans displaced abroad.

**Turkey**  
3.6 million

**Colombia**  
1.8 million

**Pakistan**  
1.4 million

**Uganda**  
1.4 million

**Germany**  
1.1 million

# 1 IN 6 ARE DISPLACED

Relative to their national populations, the island of Aruba hosted the largest number of Venezuelans displaced abroad (1 in 6) while Lebanon<sup>2</sup> hosted the largest number of refugees (1 in 7).

**Aruba**  
1 in 6

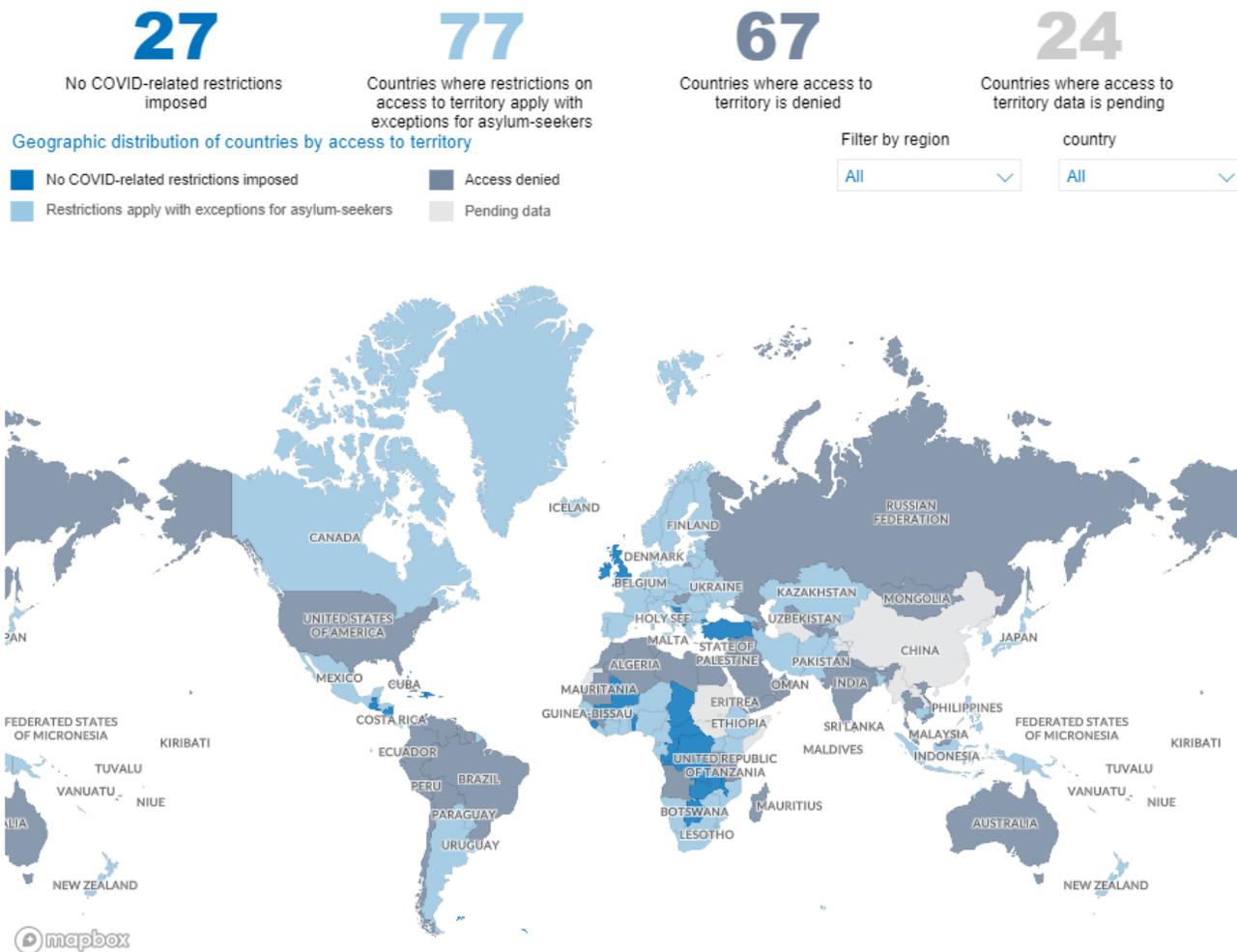
**Lebanon**  
1 in 7

**Curaçao**  
1 in 10

**Jordan**  
1 in 15

**Turkey**  
1 in 23

# Current international situation



# Challenges in the field

## Vulnerable host countries

Of all those who had be forced to fled their homes, **9 of 10** live in a developing country.

In many cases, the health and sanitary systems of host countries are **already weak and in urgent need of support.**

If **medical equipment shortages** hit the wealthiest countries, some host countries could face dramatic situations.



# UNHCR actions during COVID-19

**On March 31, a series of measures were announced to fight the COVID-19 pandemic**

I. Distribution of shelter materials, basic necessities and sanitary and hygienic products.

II. Increased financial assistance to refugees to mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

III. Support to governments in infection prevention and health response, including the provision of medical supplies and equipment.

IV. Advice and practical information concerning preventive measures for refugees.



**V.** Strengthening health systems and services, as well as infrastructure related to water, sanitation and hygiene, including through the distribution of soap and improved access to water.

**VI.** Strengthening monitoring and measures to guarantee respect for the rights of uprooted people.



# COVID-19 and UNHCR

Among the key items procured or delivered by UNHCR



**23.9 million**  
masks procured



**1.4 million**  
gowns procured



**2,000**  
oxygen concentrators  
procured



**3,200**  
of refugee housing units procured  
and delivered



**12**  
metric tons of hospital tents  
delivered

**250 metric tons**  
of PPE and medical items  
delivered



**\$50 million** COVID-19 related  
cash assistance  
distributed in **65**  
countries, reaching

**1 million individuals**



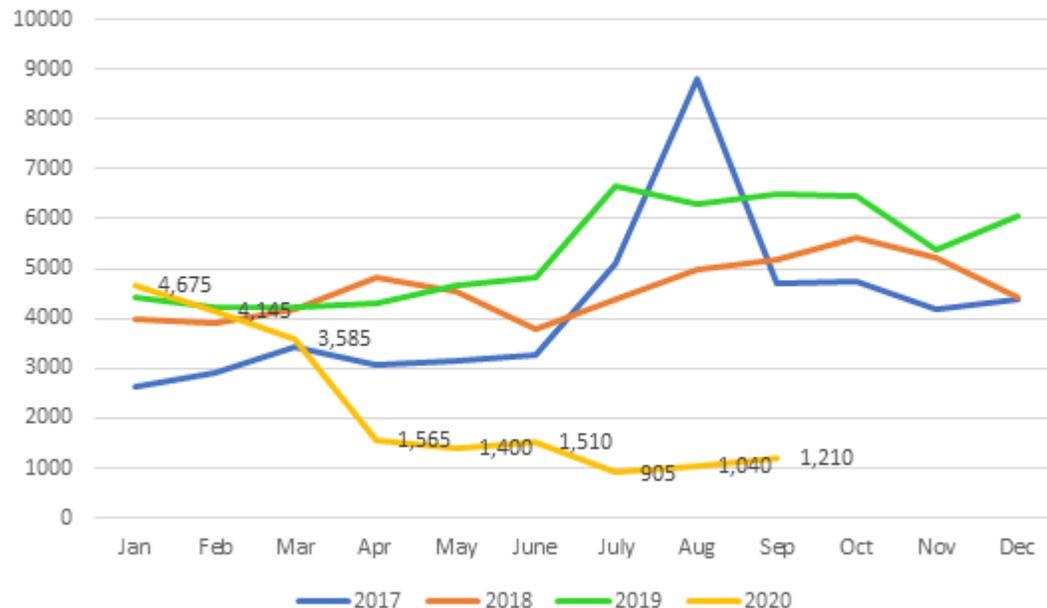
# Canada, asylum and Covid-19

- Three situations along the border:
  - 1. Early March: some closures and limitations but did not impact asylum claims and access to territory
  - 2. March 21<sup>st</sup>: border closure and agreement with the U.S.
  - 3. April 21<sup>st</sup>: new order-in-council to allow for claims from those who qualify for an STCA exception.
- Inland claims still possible
- Detention numbers have decreased significantly

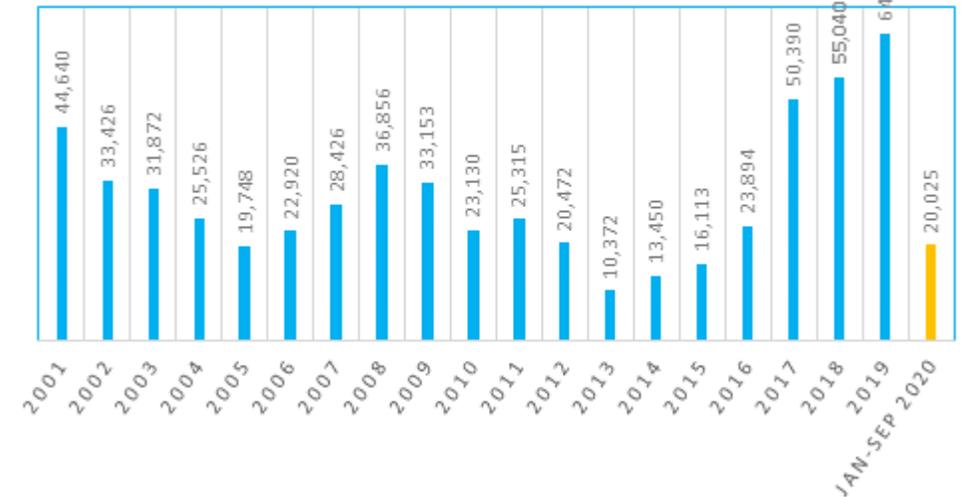
# Current statistics: Canada

- **Overall asylum claims:**
- **Slight increase** of asylum claims in September (170 more than in August – mainly due to inland claims) but still about **five times less** than in August of last year (6,500 in 2019 compared to 1,210 in 2020).
- Total of **20,025** asylum claims in the first 9 months of 2020 – which represents a **57% decrease** compared to the same period last year (46,160 claims).
- If we look specifically at the six-month period of **April-September** (first full months when the border was closed to non-essential travel), there was a **decrease of 77%** compared to the same period last year (33,260 in 2019 compared to 7,630 in 2020)

ASYLUM CLAIM IN CANADA  
2017-2020



ASYLUM CLAIMS IN CANADA  
2001 - 2020



# Irregular arrivals

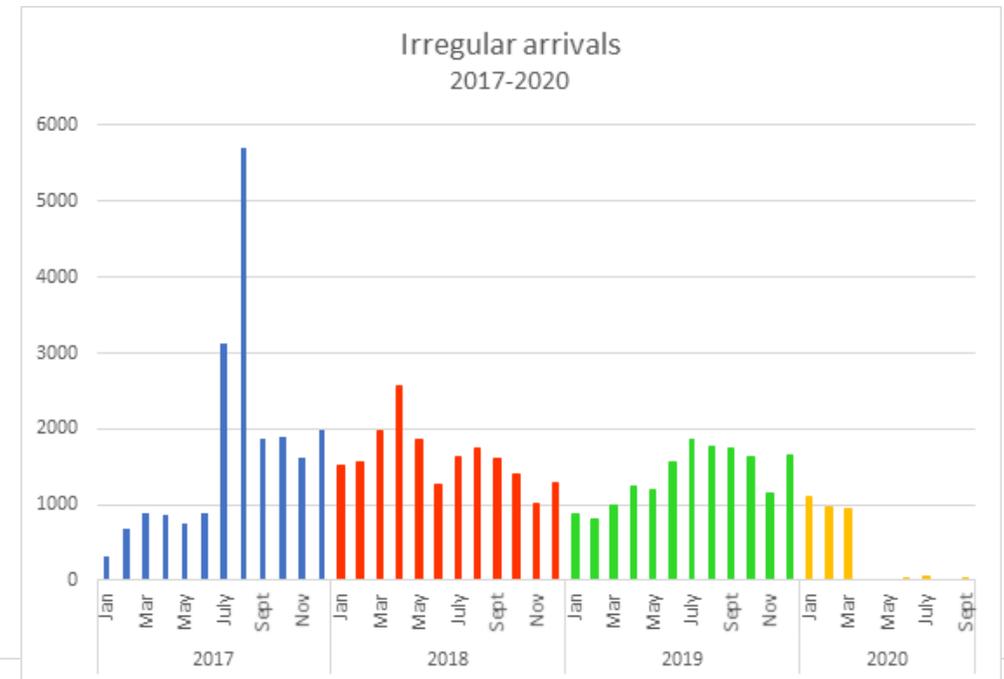
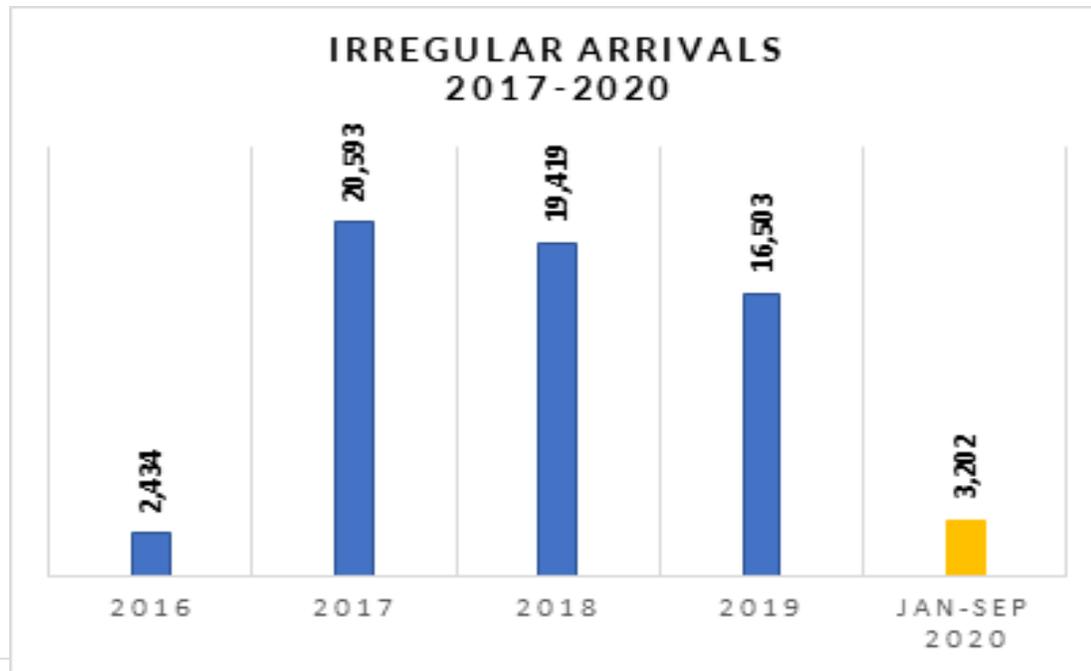
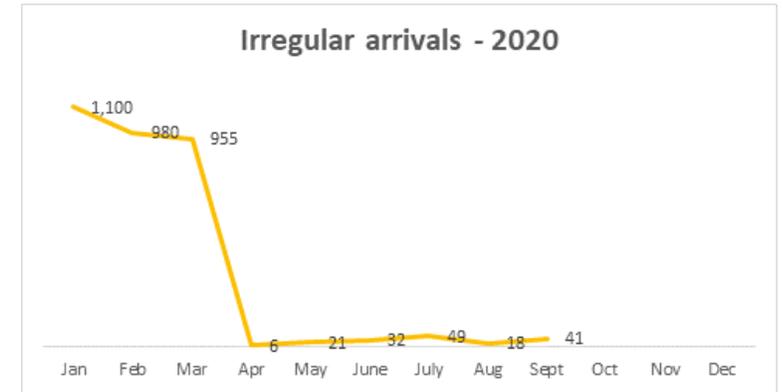
- Irregular arrivals:**

- Total of **3,202** irregular arrivals in the first 9 months of 2020 – which represents a **decrease of 73%** compared to the same period last year (12,080 in 2019).

- If we look specifically at the six-month period of **April-September**, there was a **decrease of 98%** compared to the same period last year (9,382 in 2019 compared to 167 in 2020)

- While the number of irregular arrivals represented more than a **quarter (29%)** of all claims made in Canada in 2019, they accounted for only **2% of all claims** in April-Sep 2020.

- As in previous years, the vast majority of irregular arrivals (**97%**) entered through Quebec.



# Social supports for asylum-seekers

- **Employment insurance (EI):** up to \$573/week for up to 45 weeks.
  - Apply if you lost your job because you're sick, you paid into EI, and worked 400-700 hours.
  - [Apply online](#).
- **EI Sickness Benefit:** up to \$573/week for up to 15 weeks.
  - Apply if in quarantine or sick with COVID-19, lost 40% pay, and worked at least 600 hours.
  - [Apply online](#).
- **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB):** \$2,000 per month for up to 4 months.
  - Apply if you are 15 or older, don't get paid due to COVID-19, have a SIN, and earned \$5,000 or more in 2019 (or past 12 months).
  - Apply [online](#) or over the phone: 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-204
- **Canada Child Benefit:** extra \$300 per child.
  - Apply if you have a child, and you lived in Canada for last 18 months, and you have valid immigration documents.
  - Apply [online](#).

# Thank you!

UNHCR Canada:  
[www.unhcr.org/](http://www.unhcr.org/)

UNHCR Canada:  
[www.unhcr.ca](http://www.unhcr.ca)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/UNHCRCanada](https://facebook.com/UNHCRCanada)

Twitter:  
[twitter.com/UNHCRCanada](https://twitter.com/UNHCRCanada)