



# FAR FROM HOME

# The 13 worst refugee crises for GIRLS

**Refugees are uniquely vulnerable. But refugees girls doubly so.** When extreme violence, hunger or climate drives them from their homes, they are the first to be trafficked for sex or child labor; the first to be exploited as tools of war; and the first to lose their childhoods. Meanwhile, they are the last to be fed, the last to be enrolled in school and, too often, the last to be valued.

The United Nations created the first **International Day of the Girl** in 2012 to highlight challenges for girls globally and to promote girls' empowerment. The official theme for this Oct. 11 — **empowering girls in crisis — comes amid an epidemic of human displacement that has forced 68.5 million people from their homes, including more than 17 million girls.** So here we list the 13 worst refugee crises for girls that have mushroomed during that period, ranked in order of total girls displaced, both across national borders as refugees and within their own countries.

But while far from home, **displaced girls are far from helpless.** They are strong, smart, resilient, courageous and determined to break through the barriers holding them back, despite staring down some of most difficult circumstances on Earth. **READ** the full "Far from Home" report and meet some of the girls who are defying the odds. Then **SIGN OUR PETITION** urging your lawmakers to protect U.S. foreign assistance, which helps girl refugees survive and, despite a deck stacked heavily against them, even thrive.

## #1 SYRIA

2,831,122 girls displaced

The path to a girl's future runs through the classroom, but nearly **3 million Syrian children**, particularly girls, are missing out on their education. Syrian girls often are married off early as parents seek to protect them, but child marriage abruptly removes girls from the classroom. And, struggling to make ends meet far from home, displaced families often pull their daughters out of school to earn money for food and rent. **WATCH** how **Walaa** and **Marwa** have overcome these barriers.



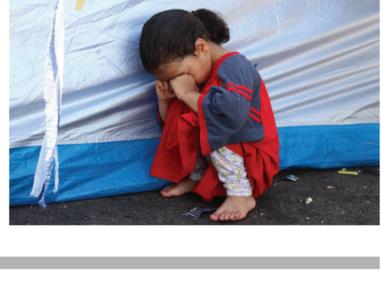
## #2 HORN OF AFRICA Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia

1,331,633 girls displaced

## #3 AFGHANISTAN

1,100,000 girls displaced

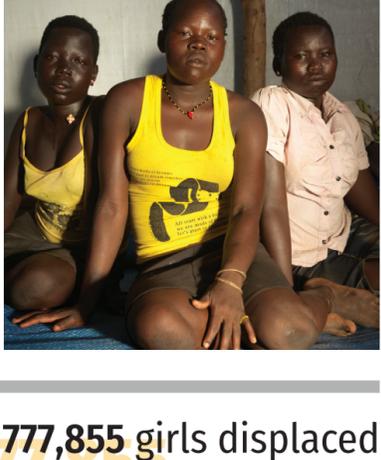
Girls have long been a target in Afghanistan, brutalized by acid attacks, poisoned water and other forms of violence. Abductions and harassment on the way to school instill fear in families who may often keep their daughters home to protect them — all amid severe poverty and in a culture that promotes child marriage and prioritizes boys' education over girls'.



## #4 SOUTH SUDAN

819,241 girls displaced

A CARE study indicates that in the conflict-ravaged areas of South Sudan, as many as two-thirds of women and girls have suffered physical or sexual violence — among the highest rates in the world. When armed forces killed her parents and brother in South Sudan, Jane and her three sisters trudged for nearly a week before reaching Uganda's Imvepi refugee camp. In the dark of night, a group of 15 men attacked Jane and her sisters. Today, from the relative safety of a new shelter near the camp police station, Jane works to ensure other girls don't suffer the same fate. **READ** her story.



## #5 LAKE CHAD BASIN

777,855 girls displaced

In this volatile area of West Africa, girls aren't just forced to flee home to escape war. They are inhumanely turned into the very weapons of war. Boko Haram straps bombs to the wrists, backs and waists of girls before sending them off to blow themselves up in crowds. Boko Haram has deployed more female bombers than any **other terrorist group in history** and is four times more likely to deploy girl bombers than boys.



## #6 SUDAN

672,256 girls displaced

## #7 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

618,461 girls displaced

Thousands of children in the DRC have been recruited into armed militias. Many of them girls. Had they resisted, they may well have been killed. Pema stayed but was raped and impregnated at 14, then was forced to marry her rapist. Her husband repeatedly raped her, and the forced pregnancies multiplied. Now Pema is fighting back. **READ** her story here.



## #8 IRAQ

573,036 girls displaced

Decades of fighting, years of economic sanctions and a battered infrastructure have left many Iraqi girls with little or no access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. At school, that compromises menstruating girls' privacy and their ability to practice proper hygiene with safety and dignity. Consequently, many leave — or don't attend — school during their menstruation period.



## #9 YEMEN

551,104 girls displaced

Child marriage rates in Yemen have soared since the war began. More than two-thirds of Yemeni girls are married off before they turn 18, compared with 50 percent before the war, **according to UNICEF.**



## #10 UKRAINE

500,000 girls displaced

## #11 VENEZUELA

343,000 girls displaced

Like many Venezuelan girls, 7-year-old Salma fled a country where a near-worthless currency, an inflation rate that could reach **1,000,000 percent** before year's end and a poverty rate approaching 90 percent have pushed food, medicine and other necessities out of reach. She is fortunate to have made it beyond those most crucial young years. But it hasn't been easy. Before fleeing Venezuela for Colombia, she survived for months on a single daily meal of rice and, if she was lucky, plantains. **MEET** Salma here.



## #12 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

330,686 girls displaced

## #13 MYANMAR

312,120 girls displaced

To escape the violence back home, girls walked for with little or no food along the way and not much more when they arrived. Once in the camp, many are kept out of school; some are married and get pregnant early; and they are often confined to sweltering tents the size of a closet where temperatures can soar above 100 degrees. Surviving these impossible conditions is a feat unto itself, which makes the strength and resilience of girls like 12-year-old Noor Kajol all the more inspiring. Unlike many of her peers, she goes to school with dreams of becoming a pharmacist. **READ** her story.



### Ranking methodology

Our ranking is based on the number of displaced girls under age 18 in each crisis, both as refugees across national borders and as internally displaced people, or IDPs. It does not account for protracted, decades-long displacement in places like Colombia and Palestine and instead focuses on those crises that have provoked mass, active displacement since the first International Day of the Girl six years ago. We derived the majority of the IDP data with support from the **International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix**, which determined figures for displaced girls as recently at August 2018. Where there were gaps we sourced data from the UN Refugee Agency (**UNHCR**), which also was the source for refugee data. Where specific age or gender data was unavailable, we consulted UNHCR's **2017 Global Trends report**, which tracks overall displacement figures. In some instances, we were able to identify a percentage of children displaced in a particular crisis, then halved that figure to arrive at the number of girls. In cases where a percentage of refugee children was not reported, we conservatively calculated 25 percent of the total to arrive at the number of girls.

## Tell Congress: Stand Up for Girls in Emergencies.

Sign the petition at [careaction.org/standupforgirls](http://careaction.org/standupforgirls)

