

Europe cold front endangers 23,000 child migrants: UNICEF

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More than 23,000 child refugees and migrants could risk respiratory infections, "even death from hypothermia," due to sub-freezing temperatures across Europe, warned the UN children's fund UNICEF on Friday.

"With no sign of a let-up in the extreme cold weather and storms sweeping Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, refugee and migrant children are threatened by respiratory and other serious illnesses—and even death from hypothermia," UNICEF said in a statement.

An estimated 23,700 migrant and refugee children, including infants and newborns, remain stranded in Greece and the Balkans, where temperatures in some parts have plunged below minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus four degrees Fahrenheit).

In Greece, especially the islands where thousands of refugees shelter in flimsy tents, some regions have experienced heavy snowfall for the first time in years.

"Infants and the very young generally have less body fat to insulate them against the cold, making them more susceptible to [respiratory problems](#) and potentially fatal viral and bacterial infections such as pneumonia and influenza," said Basil Rodrigues, UNICEF Regional Health Advisor for Central and Eastern Europe, in a statement.

The total number of deaths across Europe from the frigid weather

jumped to over 60 adults in just a few days, with many of the victims being migrants or homeless people.

Greece, which has more than 60,000 mainly Syrian refugees on its territory, has moved many migrants to prefabricated houses and heated tents.

But many of these shelters "are ill-equipped for winter, even as temperatures fall below freezing," UNICEF said.

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