

Food insecurity increases global migration: UN

5 May 2017



The UN has warned that the risk of mass deaths from starvation was growing among people in conflict and drought-hit areas of the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Nigeria

At a time of a record-high number of people fleeing their homes due to violent conflicts, the UN food agency said Friday a global crisis in food supplies is causing even more migrants to cross borders.

"Each one percentage increase in [food](#) insecurity in a population compels 1.9 percent more people to migrate," a new report by the World Food Programme (WFP) said.

In addition, 0.4 percent more people flee a country for each additional year of conflict, it said.

Little or no access to food and other humanitarian assistance compel people to keep moving. and then they also often find due to the hardship of their journey that migration itself can cause [food insecurity](#).

"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.

"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," he said.

The WFP report includes some accounts that give a sense of the food crisis facing migrants.

A woman who fled Syria to Jordan with her family told the UN: "We had to eat grass to survive. My kids stayed up all night crying because they were hungry."

A man from Deir Ezzor in war-torn eastern Syria told of the suffering he had witnessed: "They made people hungry, stole our produce, closed schools, and prevented people from working."

The total number of migrants worldwide reached 244 million in 2015, and among them a record 63 million were forced to leave their homes, including refugees, displaced people within their countries and asylum seekers, the Rome-based UN agency.

The WFP study also found that armed conflict was what triggered [migrants](#) to cross borders, and to a lesser extent natural catastrophes and economic factors.

The report also said that displaced people don't want to move away and try to stay close to their place of origin.

"Nearly eight in ten Syrian refugee families interviewed had been internally displaced inside Syria at least once, and 65 percent twice or more," the WFP said.

The [report](#) recommended that the international community invest in [food supplies](#) and livelihoods as close as possible to the displaced peoples homes to reduce further displacement and further

migration.

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