

Top Ten Critical Needs Facing Refugees and Those Displaced in Emergencies



The **Women's Refugee Commission** has identified 10 pressing needs that must be met during the first weeks and months of an emergency to ensure the safety and well-being of refugees and internally displaced people.* The following issues must be addressed until the situation stabilizes:

1. **Keep refugees and IDPs safe.** Ensure that they are settled in a secure location away from borders and ongoing conflict.
2. **Provide safe access to basic needs,** including food, safe and appropriate cooking fuel, potable water, sanitation and shelter.
3. **Communicate with the people most affected and ensure their safety whether or not they have legal status or official documents.** Ensure every adult is provided with individual documentation that allows him or her to access key services.
4. **Provide life-saving health care, including reproductive health care.** Ensure there are enough health workers and all necessary medicines and supplies to prevent and respond to infectious diseases and other health needs. Establish priority reproductive health services for women and girls.
5. **Prevent and respond to sexual violence.** Protect women and children from sexual violence by ensuring safe access to food, cooking fuel, water, latrines and other basic necessities. Offer medical services and psychosocial support to survivors of sexual violence.
6. **Reduce the transmission of HIV.** Enforce use of infection control measures by health workers; make condoms freely available; and ensure blood for transfusion is safe by screening it for HIV and other blood-borne diseases.
7. **Prevent excess maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.** Manage maternal and newborn emergencies by establishing a referral system to health facilities. Provide midwifery supplies to all health facilities and clean delivery packages to visibly pregnant women.
8. **Identify vulnerable individuals with specific needs,** such as unaccompanied minors, child- or women-headed households, pregnant women, victims of trafficking and persons with disabilities. Secure their care and physical security. Monitor, report and respond to violations against children.
9. **Provide education to children and young people.** Offer structure for children and restore hope and a sense of normalcy in a safe, adult-supervised space. Teach basic literacy and numeracy skills, and provide vocational training for young people.
10. **Provide economic opportunities and preserve existing economic assets.** Build on refugees' skills, taking into account local market needs, to provide the best chance for a sustainable income. Protect women and girls from sexual exploitation by providing them with economic opportunities.

About the Women's Refugee Commission

The Women's Refugee Commission advocates vigorously for laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and displaced women, children and young people—bringing about lasting, measurable change.

We are affiliated with and legally part of the International Rescue Committee, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and do not receive direct financial support from the IRC.

* *A refugee has crossed an international border; an internally displaced person (IDP) has fled from his or her home but is still in his or her own country.*