



TOP STORIES

NEWS

UNICEF: Number of unaccompanied refugee children reaches 'record high'

The number of refugee children traveling alone has increased fivefold since 2010, UNICEF has said. The UN body warned that the alarming trend has forced many young refugees and migrants into prostitution and slavery.



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Record number of lone refugee children crossed international borders



© DW/f. Scoppa

After releasing a report on the latest totals of unaccompanied minor refugees on Wednesday, UNICEF called on world leaders to do more to protect children who are crossing borders alone.

In 2015 and 2016, [the United Nations Children's Fund](#) said there were 300,000 unaccompanied and separated migrant children worldwide. The figure is almost five times higher than the 66,000 children counted in 2010 and 2011.

Out of the 300,000 children, around 100,000 of them were caught trying to cross the border from Mexico to the United States, UNICEF said.

Around 170,000 young migrants and refugees sought asylum in Europe in 2015 to 2016 after surviving the [dangerous journey across the Mediterranean Sea](#). Last year, hundreds of children are believed to have drowned while attempting the journey.

The total number of unaccompanied children is believed to be much higher as the UNICEF counts only include solo-traveling children who were

REFUGEES BRAVE THE DEATH PASS INTO EUROPE

Into the woods

A small group of Afghan teenagers, fearful of being followed by police, set off on the roughly 12-kilometer (seven mile) hike along roads and the dangerous mountain tracks of the Death Pass to France.

registered as part of an asylum claim or registered at a border.

"The number is just the tip of the iceberg," UNICEF Eeputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth said in a statement.



 **UNICEF**
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Shocking. 5-fold increase in refugee & migrant children traveling alone since 2010 [uni.cf/2rgql2r](https://www.unicef.org/uni.cf/2rgql2r) #AChildIsAChild #ChildrenUprooted

4:30 PM - 17 May 2017

175 131

A vulnerable and growing group

Wednesday's report also states that from 2016 until February of this year, 92 percent of minors who reached Italy [by crossing the Mediterranean from Libya](#) were traveling alone - compared to 75 percent in 2015.

The UN body said that the growing numbers of unaccompanied minors are [particularly vulnerable human smugglers](#).

"Ruthless smugglers and traffickers are exploiting their vulnerability for personal gain, helping children to cross borders, only to sell them into slavery and forced prostitution," Forsyth said.

"It is unconscionable that we are not adequately defending children from these predators," he added.

Entries of unaccompanied minors in Germany



Source: BAMF

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Ahead of next week's G7 summit in Italy, UNICEF urged world leaders to adopt their six-point agenda improve protections for refugee and migrant children.

The agenda calls for countries to stop detaining children, improve efforts to keep families together and give children [access to education](#) and healthcare.

rs/sms (AP, dpa, Reuters)



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Refugee children: Alone in Germany

DW RECOMMENDS

Child refugees gamble with their lives on the Death Pass

On the Death Pass, child refugees risk everything in search of a better life. If they survive the crossing, they're likely to be caught and sent far away, to start again, Fernanda Pesce Blazquez reports. (16.05.2017)

UNHCR defends NGO charity groups over migrant rescues in Mediterranean

The UNHCR has defended charity groups rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean as they come under criticism in Italy. It also reported on a dire situation for children in South Sudan. (08.05.2017)

German schools face the challenge of integration

In Germany, when a foreigner drops out of school without a diploma, they have four times less of a chance to find work as a German would in the same situation. The influx of refugee children has exacerbated the problem. (27.04.2017)

New report highlights tragedy of migrant slave markets in Libya

A shocking report from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) tells of migrants who were sold in "slave markets" in Libya. DW spoke with a Mexican photographer who has seen these horrors with his own eyes. (18.04.2017)

Rescue NGOs in the Mediterranean call for more support

Nearly 9,000 refugees were rescued after they tried crossing the Mediterranean in unseaworthy boats over the weekend. NGOs played a big role in saving their lives, but want more support from governmental agencies. (19.04.2017)

Conflict forces millions of children in South Sudan to flee homes says UN

South Sudan's civil war has forced over 1 million children to flee the country while another million are internally displaced, UN agencies say. Officials have warned that the future of an entire generation is at risk. (08.05.2017)

Young refugees brave the Death Pass into Europe

"Passo della Morte," the Death Pass, is the last hurdle in Italy for many migrants and refugees venturing further north into Europe. Photojournalist Federico Scoppa accompanied several Afghans on the precarious crossing. (16.05.2017)

AUDIOS AND VIDEOS ON THE TOPIC

Record number of lone refugee children crossed international borders

Refugee children: Alone in Germany

Date 18.05.2017

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