

Migrant and refugee children need our actions now



Annel Ermic/AP

In a new report—*Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children*—released on Sept 7, UNICEF paints a grim picture. Worldwide, an estimated 50 million children are refugees or migrants, with the number of child migrants having doubled and the number of refugees having increased by 21% in the past 10 years. The most vulnerable of these children are unaccompanied, and have often fled war, insecurity, and poverty under harrowing circumstances. They might be alone or they might have lost or become separated from their family during their journey.

In one terrifying account, published on Sept 9 (*Why are you keeping me here?*) Human Rights Watch describes how unaccompanied migrant children are detained in police custody in Greece in unsanitary and degrading conditions. Germany's national investigative police agency, the Bundeskriminalamt, has admitted in new figures that by the end of August almost 9000 unaccompanied children who were registered entering the country are officially missing. And while some of these children may be safe with relatives somewhere, there is the very real danger

of exploitation and abuse. The UK has only managed to extricate 50 of 220 unaccompanied children stranded in the camp in Calais and who have a legal right to be reunited with families in the UK. This delay and inaction is unexplained and shameful.

We agree with Zulfiqar Bhutta and colleagues' strong plea in a Correspondence letter, published online on Sept 5, that it is now time "to take the strongest action possible to protect children". The UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health, announced in this week's issue, promises to tackle key issues that affect the health and wellbeing of migrants, including unaccompanied children. Children not only need safe environments and access to health care, they need education and special psychosocial attention to mitigate the atrocities of war and persecution, including experiences of being uprooted into different cultural environments. Outrage about the plight of migrant and refugee children is not enough. Childhood is a precious and important time that strongly influences what happens in the future. We must act now. ■ *The Lancet*

For the **UNICEF report** see <http://www.unicef.org/emergencies/childrenonthemove/uprooted/>

For the **Human Rights Watch report** see <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/09/08/why-are-you-keeping-me-here-unaccompanied-children-detained-greece>

For the **Correspondence letter** see [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31577-X/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)31577-X/fulltext)

Launching a plan for the Cancer Moonshot



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On Sept 7, the findings of the blue ribbon panel of a major presidential initiative to accelerate cancer research in the USA were presented to the country's National Cancer Institute. The panel's report laid out ten recommendations to double the rate of cancer progress—to achieve a decade of advances in cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care in 5 years. 8 months ago a *Lancet* Editorial worried that the aims of the Cancer Moonshot were nebulous and overly ambitious. Now, as the Moonshot plans unfold, we see opportunities for them to be more determined.

By definition moonshots are aspirational, radical, and ground breaking. While the blue ribbon panel's recommendations are a step in the right direction by bringing some focus to the programme, most are broad and non-specific. Establishing trials networks and encouraging data sharing already occupy researchers' time. Improving patients' symptom management and adverse events is self-evident. Reducing cancer risk and health disparities seem beyond the remit of a research community. Another limitation remains how to deliver on these promises—the billion dollar presidential pledge

has yet to be agreed by Congress, and puts an early dent in hopes to implement the recommendations.

Planned partnerships and collaborations can enliven the launch plans. Among these, *The Lancet Oncology* is beginning to plan a Commission in consultation with the White House to bring granularity to the new recommendations. Led by scientists and clinicians, with broad expertise, it will build on the panel's ten recommendations and identify specific, actionable research and investment priorities. Across multiple areas ranging from prevention and vaccine development to immunotherapy, genomics, big data, and paediatric cancer, the Commission aims to spell out specific scientific and clinical priorities to focus funding decisions and help accelerate Moonshot plans. The Commission plans to produce its bespoke report by summer 2017. It will complement other public and private Moonshot partnerships, including that of *The Lancet's* parent company, Elsevier, which is creating a benchmark of the current landscape of cancer research and collaboration in the USA. ■ *The Lancet*

For the **Lancet Editorial** see [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)00152-5/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)00152-5/fulltext)

For the **blue ribbon panel report** see <http://www.cancer.gov/research/key-initiatives/moonshot-cancer-initiative/blue-ribbon-panel>

For **past Lancet Oncology Commissions** see <http://thelancet.com/campaigns/cancer/past-commissions>