

What is causing the present exodus?

The simple causes are war and/or oppression and/or a failed state and/or religious extremism and/or the inability to survive with adequate food, shelter & medicine. People are fleeing for their lives to find safety and protection.

Refugees have been struggling to get to Europe for many years. However, it is in the last eighteen months that the numbers have mushroomed. Well over a million refugees arrived into the EU in 2015, but only 292540 were given official refugee status.. The majority of refugees coming into Europe in 2015 were from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Nigeria and Somalia.

In 2016, with restrictions blocking refugees from travelling from Turkey to Greece, the numbers of refugees in Turkey has risen to at least 2.2 million. Also, the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy has become more important. In the first half of 2016, the top nationalities for this route are Eritrea, Nigeria, Gambia, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sudan, Mali, Senegal, Morocco, Egypt and Syria.

Politicians will argue over the reasons people risk their lives to come to Europe but the following are all likely to be contributing.

1. The underfunding in the UNHCR camps in the Middle East which make survival almost impossible.
2. The spread of barbarism and the intensification of fighting in Syria and elsewhere.
3. People smugglers being well-organised.
4. Social media giving advice and encouragement on how to get to Europe.
5. A perception that it is possible to succeed in relocating and that some countries will welcome you.
6. Poverty and family encouragement to make the journey for economic reasons.
7. A sense that there really is no other choice but to leave everything and everyone and take the perilous journey to Europe

Where do the refugees wish to go? They want to go to a place of peace, safety and freedom and where they perceive that the nation will welcome them and help them to settle. If given a choice, many seek to go to a country where they have contacts. Many will choose a country whose economy is strong enough to cope with new people and where they can find work and/or education.

Nearly two-thirds of asylum applications have been received by Germany and Hungary, with Sweden, Italy and Austria also receiving large numbers. In 2015, Germany received more than 476000 asylum applications but more than a million people in total. Hungary received 177130 applications

Sources: [UNHCR, Global Trends 2014 EU, Migration and Home Affairs](#)

[IAFR, Refugee Realities 2015](#)