



DID YOU KNOW?

For many forcibly displaced people, mobile connectivity is a **lifeline**, not a luxury.

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Why it matters

For refugees and displaced people, mobile connectivity is essential. When connectivity is lost or disrupted during conflict or crises, the stakes can be very high. A mobile phone can be the main way to contact family, receive trusted information, access assistance, navigate unfamiliar places, and use education, health or financial services. **This is why connectivity cannot be treated as optional: when access is unreliable, unaffordable or legally restricted, displaced people may be cut off from essential services.**

At the end of June 2025, 117.3 million people remained forcibly displaced worldwide. Yet affordable, legal connectivity is still not guaranteed. Refugees are 50% less likely than the general population to have an Internet-enabled phone.

Reports show that access often depends on borrowing phones, sharing devices or using multiple SIM cards, creating risks for data privacy. Other evidence shows that legal identification requirements can also create barriers: by 2021, 157 countries had introduced mandatory SIM registration regulations, and refugees without recognised identity documents may struggle to access SIM cards, mobile money and other digital services in their own name.

Practical responses include accessible SIM registration often impeded by administration procedures and legal documents not available to refugees; tailored refugee data bundles responding to their specific needs; connectivity subsidies for the most vulnerable; and connected schools or community hubs that act as anchors for wider digital inclusion.



References

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