

Hello, again! I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Today we examine the human side of war, not from a soldier's point of view, but from that of civilians who are forced from their homes by conflict. Also, some important art objects are being returned to Cambodia from the United States. Then we'll hear about a special movie event, a famous actor, and travel back in time to the "big band" era ...on this edition of "As It Is."

The number of people displaced within their own countries by armed conflict, other violence and rights violations almost reached 29 million in 2012. Many of the people who had to leave their homes were in Syria and the eastern Congo.

Clare Spurrell of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center said that last year, a record number of people were forced to move within their own countries.

"This year we saw 28.8 million people who are now internally displaced as a consequence of conflict. This is an increase of two-point-four-million compared to the previous year. And much of this dramatic increase is due to the number of people who were newly displaced during the year. So here we saw six-point-five-million people newly displaced, which is an increase of almost 50-percent as compared to 2011, the previous year."

Ms. Spurrell says there were differing reasons for people being newly displaced in 2011 compared to 2012.

“In 2012, it was very much of the Arab Spring uprising and the post-election violence in Cote d’Ivoire. This last year we’ve seen the new displacement caused by the escalating violence in eastern DRC and of course the ongoing conflict in Syria, which caused really the majority of new displacement. ”

She described Syria as, in her words, “the fastest evolving internal displacement crisis in the world.” She said the growing intensity of the crisis results partly from the clear lack of front lines of battle.

In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, there were one-million IDP’s in 2012. But there are many people in the area who have been displaced for some time. Overall, there are almost three-million internally displaced people there. They include some who have been displaced several times by a number of armed groups.

Africa below the Sahara Desert has 10-point-four million IDPs. That is almost one-third of the world total. Clare Spurrell blames the many armed conflicts in the area. Still, she says, the country with the most IDPs is not in the Middle East or Sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, she says it is really in South America. Colombia has between five and five and one half million internally displaced people due to high levels of crime-related violence and armed conflict.

She says Colombia, DRC and now, Syria, are all situations with long-lasting conflicts. And millions of people are trapped in this extended displacement that depends on aid ... often for many years.

Hello. I'm Katy Weaver in Washington. The United Nations refugee agency reports that more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees have now fled to other countries. The agency expects three times this many people to leave by the end of 2013, if the violence in Syria does not end.

At least 8,000 people leave Syria every day because of the conflict in that country. They are going to Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. Panos Moutzis is the Syria Regional Refugee Coordinator. He says the number of refugees has grown rapidly.

“This is a significant increase if you think that today one year ago, 12 months ago, the actual figure was 30,000. So in 12 months, we have gone from 30,000 Syrian refugees to 1.3 million. Three quarters of the refugees who have fled continue to be women and children.”

But the money to help has not kept up with the flow of people. The UN Refugee Agency says it has received only one third of the \$1 billion it needs to care for Syrian refugees until June. Mr. Moutzis says western nations have given the amount they promised. But the UN is waiting for money promised by Gulf states in the Middle East. He also says the UN aid

organizations are still trying to provide more health and education services, food, water and shelter.

“While we have put in place relief services and relief operations on a 24/7 basis, we have relief workers going to work at night as well as the day because the refugees cross borders every day. We fear that we may not be able to continue the operations unless funding comes urgently. We are at a breaking point.”

Mr. Moutzis says refugee camps are overcrowded and new camps must be built. I’m Katy Weaver.

New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art has announced that it will return two 10th Century statues to Cambodia. The two stone sculptures are called “Kneeling Attendants.” They were donated to the museum in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Steve Ember has been following the story.

The museum’s director, Thomas Campbell, says officials recently found new information about the statues’ ownership. He says they did not have that information 20 years ago.

The decision for the return reportedly took place after months of private communication between the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Cambodian officials. Reports say the Cambodians showed proof that the statues had

been removed from a temple complex about 314 kilometers from Phnom Penh.

Mr. Campbell said the museum promises to learn as much as possible about the ownership of its collection. I'm Steve Ember.

And I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Thank you for spending some time with us on this Thursday, the 16th day of May. On this date in 1929, a very important tradition was begun in the United States at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, California. It was the first ever Academy Awards to honor the motion picture industry. A silent film named "Wings" was the first ever selected as "best picture."

And while we are on the subject of movies, today is also the birthdate of American actor Henry Fonda. He was the star of such great films as "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Mr. Roberts." The first, based upon the book by John Steinbeck, tells the story of a poor family's struggle to survive during the American depression. After seeing "The Grapes of Wrath" you will probably need a laugh. So get your hands on a copy of "Mr. Roberts." It stars a more mature Henry Fonda as a sailor during World War 2.

And finally, today is the 100th birthdate of Woodrow Charles Herman, better known as "Woody." Long before rock and roll came into being, Americans looked forward to dressing in their best clothes, going out to eat, and then listening to and dancing to the music of the "big bands." Woody Herman,



who played the clarinet, and his band "The Herd" were popular entertainers for over 50 years. The song you are hearing is "Woodchopper's Ball," Woody Herman's first hit.

That's all for us today. We hope to see you tomorrow at this same time. If you would like to find out what else is going on in the world, listen for world news at the beginning of every hour on VOA.