

## Introduction

This chapter presents some of the main trends related to asylum applications lodged on an individual basis, and includes an overview of relevant decisions. It, however, does not include information on mass influxes of refugees or on people who were granted refugee status on a group or *prima facie* basis.<sup>50</sup>

As part of internationally recognized obligations to protect refugees on their territories, countries of asylum are responsible for determining whether an asylum-seeker is a refugee or not. This responsibility is often incorporated into national legislation and is derived from the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and other international human rights instruments.

Unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum have specific protection needs: this section sheds light on the major characteristics of this group. It also looks specifically into UNHCR's refugee status determination (RSD) activities in the Asia-Pacific region in light of the increase in the number of asylum applications registered by the Office in 2009. This chapter also analyses the reasons behind the dramatic number of new asylum-seekers in South Africa.

Although the concepts of asylum and refugee status are sometimes used interchangeably in the Yearbook, it is important to note that asylum can only be granted by States. While UNHCR may recognize refugee status under its mandate, it cannot provide asylum.

### Box 7. Who is an asylum-seeker?

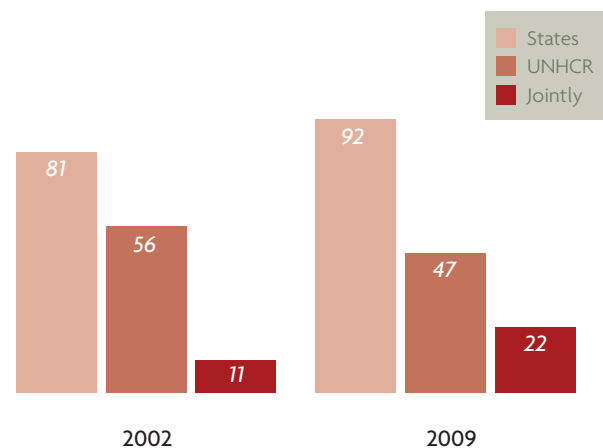
An asylum-seeker is an individual who has sought international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined.

<sup>50</sup> The decision not to record in asylum statistics people who were granted refugee status under UNHCR's mandate on a *prima facie* basis has been made to allow a direct comparison between State and UNHCR refugee status determination procedures. It should be noted, however, that UNHCR procedures that provide for refugee status recognition on a *prima facie* basis generally go beyond the mere registration of applicants and usually involve screening and interviewing to establish the nationality of the applicants, the absence of likely reasons for exclusion and the identification of specific protection needs.

## Responsibility for refugee status determination

The number of countries reporting RSD statistics to UNHCR has increased in recent years, mainly due to the inclusion of a number of Caribbean and Pacific islands. In 2009, 161 countries reported this type of statistics to UNHCR as opposed to 148 in 2002.

Fig. IV.1 Responsibility for refugee status determination



Of the 161 reporting countries, States were solely responsible for carrying out refugee status determination in 92 countries (57%). UNHCR was the only responsible body for RSD in 47 countries (29%). A shared responsibility was reported for 22 countries (14%).<sup>51</sup> This included RSD procedures implemented jointly by UNHCR and governments as well as parallel RSD procedures implemented by UNHCR.

Over the last few years UNHCR has handed over the responsibility for assessing asylum claims to a number of States. While in 2002 UNHCR was responsible for assessing asylum claims in 56 countries, this number had dropped to 47 in 2009.

<sup>51</sup> In countries where RSD is conducted either by the government or jointly by the government and UNHCR, the Office may occasionally carry out RSD under its mandate in parallel procedures for reasons related to protection and/or durable solutions.

## Global trends

### Applications

During 2009, at least 923,400 individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to governments or UNHCR offices in 161 countries or territories. This was a 5 per cent increase compared to 2008 (875,300 claims) and the third consecutive annual rise. In industrialized countries figures remained stable.<sup>52</sup> Two main reasons explain this trend. The first is the persistent high number of asylum applications in South Africa (222,000 claims in 2009 and 207,000 in 2008). The second is the continued high number of certain populations seeking international protection during the year, in particular those from Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Zimbabwe. Out of the total of 923,400 asylum claims, an estimated 837,000 were initial applications<sup>53</sup> lodged in first instance procedures, and 86,400 claims were submitted on appeal or with courts.<sup>54</sup>

UNHCR offices registered some 119,100 applications out of the total of 923,400 claims in 2009, a 62 per cent increase compared to 2008 (73,400 claims). The Office's share in the global number of applications registered in 2009 was 13 per cent compared to 8 per cent in 2008 and 12 per cent in 2007.<sup>55</sup> This was due to the higher number of applications registered with UNHCR offices in Malaysia<sup>56</sup>, Somalia and Kenya.

**Table IV.1** New and appeal applications received

	2007	2008	2009
State*	548'000	765'800	778'300
UNHCR	79'800	73'400	119'100
Jointly**	26'000	36'100	26'000
<b>Total</b>	<b>653'800</b>	<b>875'300</b>	<b>923'400</b>
% UNHCR only	12%	8%	13%

\* Includes revised estimates.

\*\* Refers to refugee status determination conducted jointly between UNHCR and the Government.

52 For a detailed analysis of asylum trends in industrialized countries, see *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries, 2009*, UNHCR Geneva, March 2010, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>.

53 Although reporting on new asylum applications has improved in recent years, in particular in Europe, data includes a significant number of repeat claims, i.e. the applicant submitted at least one previous application in the same or another country.

54 Statistical information on outcomes of asylum appeals and court proceedings is under-reported in UNHCR statistics, as this type of data is often either not collected by States or not published separately.

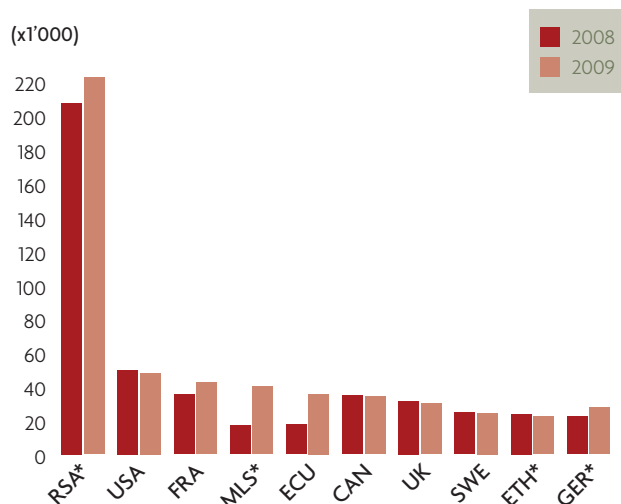
55 The 2007 figure included 14,200 Somali asylum-seekers who were granted refugee status on a *prima facie* basis.

56 This does not reflect a new influx into Malaysia; most asylum applicants have been in the country for a number of years.

Europe remained the primary destination for individual asylum-seekers with 359,400 asylum claims registered<sup>57</sup>. It was followed closely by Africa (336,400). These two regions accounted for 39 and 37 per cent respectively of all claims. The Americas and Asia recorded 125,000 and 93,700 claims respectively, and Oceania received 9,000 asylum-seekers. Figures include applicants who were unsuccessful at first instance and subsequently filed an appeal.

### New individual asylum applications received

**Fig. IV.2** Main destination countries of new asylum-seekers, 2008-2009



\* RSA=South Africa; MLS=Malaysia; ETH=Ethiopia; GER=Germany

South Africa was the main destination for new asylum-seekers worldwide. More than 222,000 asylum claims were registered in 2009, almost as many as lodged in the 27 Member States of the European Union combined and accounting for nearly one quarter of all individual applications globally. The number of applications more than quadrupled compared to 2007, when 45,600 individuals sought international protection in South Africa, and is 7 per cent higher than in 2008. Zimbabweans accounted for two-thirds of all claims submitted in 2009 (149,500 applications).

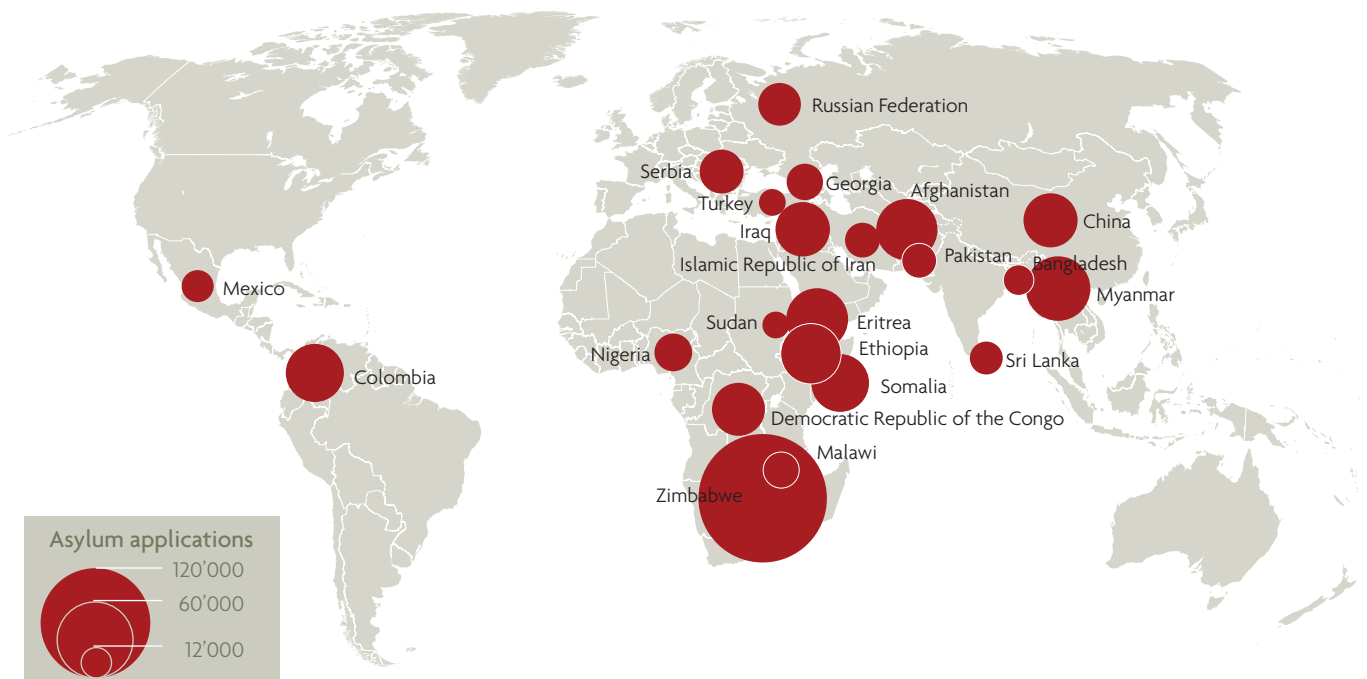
The United States of America, receiving roughly one-fifth of the number of claims in South Africa, was in second position with 47,900 applications.<sup>58</sup> The number of new asylum

57 The geographical regions used are those of the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>.

58 Estimated number of individuals based on the number of new cases (24,600) and multiplied by 1.4 to reflect the average number of individuals per case (Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security); and number of new "defensive" asylum requests lodged with the Executive Office of Immigration Review (13,500, reported by individuals).

**Map IV.** Country of origin of new asylum-seekers in 2009

Note: Data is shown if the total number of asylum applications lodged by nationals exceeded 10'000 during 2009.



**Table IV.2** New asylum claims lodged in 2009 in top 10 UNHCR offices\*

Malaysia	40'100
Somalia	15'600
Kenya	15'400
Turkey	7'800
India	6'000
Indonesia	3'200
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	3'000
Cameroon	2'900
Iraq	2'700
Egypt	2'600

\* Excludes appeal/review claims.

claims lodged in the United States of America remained stable in recent years. France was the third largest recipient during 2009 (42,100 claims), recording a 19 per cent increase compared to 2008 (35,400 claims) and the second consecutive annual rise. The increase in 2009 is partly attributed to a higher number of asylum-seekers from Serbia (+67%),<sup>59</sup> and Armenia (+50%). Malaysia was the fourth most important destination country for new asylum-seekers in 2009, with more than 40,000 asylum claims registered with the UNHCR office, mostly by people from Myanmar (94%). Other important destination countries for asylum-seekers were Ecuador

(35,500), Canada (34,000),<sup>60</sup> and the United Kingdom (30,700). In 2009, UNHCR offices received 114,000 new applications for refugee status and 5,100 applications for appeal or for review. The office in Malaysia received the largest number of new requests (40,000). The office in "Somaliland" (north-west Somalia) was the second largest receiver of new claims in 2009 (15,600 new claims<sup>61</sup>), followed by Kenya (15,400), Turkey (7,800), and India (6,000). UNHCR operations in India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia and Somalia witnessed an increase in applications, while offices in Cameroon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and Turkey saw a decrease in new applications. The top five receiving UNHCR offices together registered three-quarters of all new applications in 2009. Moreover, 90 per cent of UNHCR's refugee status determination work in terms of applications received was concentrated in 12 countries.

By nationality, the highest number of new asylum claims was filed by individuals originating from Zimbabwe (158,400), Myanmar (48,600), Eritrea (43,400), Ethiopia (42,500), Colombia (39,200), Afghanistan (38,900), and Somalia (37,900) (see Map IV). As observed in previous years, the overall figures mask patterns of certain nationalities tending to cluster in

59 Nine out of ten applications are lodged by Serb citizens from Kosovo.

60 Source: Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) Canada.

61 Virtually all of these claims were lodged by Ethiopian asylum-seekers.

a limited number of countries. For instance, nine out of ten Zimbabwean asylum claims were lodged in South Africa alone. Similarly, three-quarters of asylum claims lodged by citizens of Myanmar were registered in Malaysia. Two-thirds of all Eritrean requests were submitted in Ethiopia (17,300) and Sudan (10,200). In the case of Ethiopian asylum-seekers, Somalia (15,500 claims estimated by UNHCR), South Africa (10,700), and Kenya (9,500) were prime destination countries, accounting for 84 per cent of all new Ethiopian claims. Even though asylum-seekers from Colombia sought protection in more than 40 countries, eight out of ten applied for refugee status in Ecuador<sup>62</sup>.

## Decisions

Available data indicate that some 585,500 decisions on individual asylum applications were rendered during 2009, a 7 per cent increase compared to 2008. UNHCR staff adjudicated 69,200, or 12 per cent of global decisions rendered – a share similar to that of previous years. In 12 countries, including Ethiopia and Mauritania, close to 21,000 substantive decisions were taken jointly by UNHCR and the concerned State. These figures exclude cases which were closed for administrative reasons without taking a decision on the substance.<sup>63</sup> In 2009, some 158,300 cases were closed without a substantive decision issued to the applicant.

**Table IV.3** Substantive decisions taken

	2007	2008	2009
State	399'000	468'900	495'300
UNHCR	51'200	46'800	69'200
Jointly*	20'600	31'200	21'000
Total	470'800	546'900	585'500
% UNHCR only	11%	9%	12%

\* Refers to refugee status determination conducted jointly between UNHCR and the Government.

Some 274,500 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees (225,100) or given a complementary form of protection (49,400) in 2009. This number includes an estimated 15,800<sup>64</sup> individuals who initially received a negative decision that was overturned at the appeal or review stage. Instances where the percentage of decisions overturned at the appeal stage

was particularly high may be an indication of deficiencies in the asylum procedure in some countries.

In 2009, some 311,000 claims were rejected on substantive grounds, 16,000 less than the year before. This number includes negative decisions at the first instance as well as those on appeal. Asylum-seekers who appealed a negative decision at first instance which was upheld on appeal may have been counted twice in this figure.

### Box 8. Recognition rates

In the absence of an internationally agreed methodology for calculating recognition rates, UNHCR uses two rates to compute the proportion of refugee claims accepted during the year. The Refugee Recognition Rate divides the number of asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status by the total number of accepted (Convention and, where relevant, complementary protection) and rejected cases. The Total Recognition Rate divides the number of asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status and complementary form of protection by the total number of accepted (Convention and, where relevant, complementary protection) and rejected cases. Non-substantive decisions are, to the extent possible, excluded from both calculations. For the purpose of international comparability, UNHCR only uses these two recognition rates and does not report nationally calculated rates.

At the global level (UNHCR and State asylum procedures combined), the **Refugee Recognition Rate** (RRR) corresponds to 38 per cent of all decisions taken during 2009 while the **Total Recognition Rate** (TRR) was 47 per cent (see Box 8). Both values were above the 2008 rates (29 per cent for RRR and 40 per cent for TRR). Global recognition rates remain indicative as some States have not reported the relevant data, and the proportion of positive decisions may be higher in reality as decisions for persons rejected on appeal are often counted twice. Among the industrialized countries, Finland and Malta had the highest TRR at the first instance in 2009 (78% and 65%, respectively). Among the main countries of origin of asylum-seekers in 2009, those originating from Colombia, Eritrea, and Myanmar had TRRs of 80 to 90 per cent. Recognition rates were also high for asylum-seekers from Somalia (around 75%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (61%), Ethiopia (53%), Afghanistan (50%), and Iraq (50%).

62 Rather than reflecting a large influx of Colombian asylum-seekers in Ecuador in 2009, many Colombians submitted an asylum claim following the enhanced registration exercise conducted during the year.

63 Also labeled as “non-substantive” decisions are those which might result from, among others, the death of the applicant, no-show for interview, withdrawal of the application, abandonment of the claim, or the determination that another country is responsible for the claim (‘Dublin II’ procedure).

64 This figure is likely to be substantially higher but a significant number of decisions rendered by States at the appeal or review stage of the asylum procedure is not available.

Globally, 984,000 individuals were still awaiting a decision on their asylum claim by end 2009. This was 19 per cent more than in 2008, and was mainly due to the situation in South Africa. It included applications at any stage of the asylum procedure. The largest number of undecided cases at the first instance and on appeal was reported by South Africa (309,800). This figure included an estimated 171,700 undecided cases at the first instance and 138,100 cases which were pending decision at the end of 2008.<sup>65</sup>

### *Asia-Pacific region: doubling of new asylum claims*

In the Asia-Pacific region only a few of the countries and territories<sup>66</sup> have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and even fewer have a national framework for refugees and asylum-seekers. Therefore, in many countries in the region, UNHCR mandate RSD is a necessary basis for subsequent protection interventions, such as the prevention of *refoulement*, the provision of assistance, and the implementation of durable solutions.

In 2009, more than 60,000 new asylum applications were registered by both Governments and UNHCR operations in the region, a dramatic doubling of new applications over the previous year. The majority (52,200) were received by UNHCR, while the number of new arrivals remained relatively stable in most government RSD systems across the region. By the end of the year, UNHCR offices in the region had issued some 80 per cent of all RSD decisions, which can be compared with 2006 when government-conducted RSD accounted for 70 per cent of decisions.

Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Hong Kong SAR (China) ranked among the 15 largest UNHCR RSD operations in the world in terms of applications received and decisions rendered. Malaysia, UNHCR's largest mandate RSD operation, received more than 40,000 new asylum applications and issued 39,100 first instance decisions. In total, UNHCR mandate RSD operations in the region issued more than 48,100 first instance decisions during the year.

Onward movements of asylum-seekers were noticeable in some locations for instance from Indonesia to Australia.

<sup>65</sup> No information was available regarding the 138,100 individuals who were pending a decision at end 2008.

<sup>66</sup> For purposes of this overview, the Asia-Pacific region includes the following countries and territories: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China (including Macao SAR and Hong Kong SAR), India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

**Table IV.4** New asylum claims lodged in 2009 in top 10 mandate RSD operations in Asia-Pacific\*

Malaysia	40'060
India	6'010
Indonesia	3'230
Thailand	1'640
Hong Kong SAR, China	820
Sri Lanka	150
China	80
Cambodia	60
Nepal	60
Bangladesh	50

\* Excludes appeal/review claims.

Reasons for these movements vary but could be attributed to the lack of effective protection in first countries of asylum and/or aspirations of asylum-seekers to improve their living conditions and prospects for durable solutions. UNHCR's monitoring of the prevalence of such onward movements in the region indicated that only a fraction of the asylum-seekers in the region actually undertook such movements. The high number of decisions in UNHCR mandate RSD operations in 2009 correlated with the number of new applications suggesting that the majority of asylum-seekers completed procedures in the country where they first lodged their application for refugee status.

UNHCR offices in Malaysia and India experienced the largest increases in new asylum applications with respectively 23,000 and 3,000 more claims lodged during 2009 than in 2008. In both countries the increase was partly attributable to enhanced and improved registration resources and practices enabling previously unregistered asylum-seekers to register.<sup>67</sup>

In relative terms, however, the largest increase of new asylum applications occurred in Indonesia, which experienced an eightfold increase in 2009 compared with 2008 (3,230 claims in 2009). Some 80 per cent of applicants in Indonesia originated from Afghanistan.

Although asylum-seekers in the region originated from some 70 countries, 97 per cent came from six countries only: Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. The highest increase in new arrivals occurred with respect to applicants from Myanmar and Afghanistan where figures in 2009 more than doubled compared to 2008. Close to 43,000 asylum claims were lodged by citizens from Myanmar, with Malaysia receiving 88 per cent of those claims. Virtually all of them were accorded refugee status in Malaysia in 2009.

<sup>67</sup> See also Chapter I, Box 2 on registration in India.

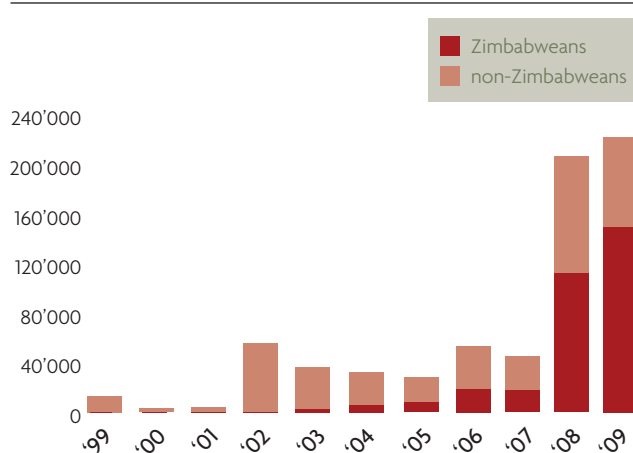
Excluding Malaysia, the average recognition rate for UNHCR operations in the region was 59 per cent in 2009. In contrast, the average recognition rate for government procedures was 39 per cent. The greatest divergence in recognition rates, both generally and in terms of specific groups, was observed in government procedures. For instance, while Australia recognized more than 80 per cent of asylum-seekers from Sri Lanka and Myanmar, Japan and the Republic of Korea only recognized a small minority of applicants originating from these two countries.

The increase in UNHCR mandate RSD operations in the Asia-Pacific region created challenges in managing/processing backlogs and preserving the quality, fairness and integrity of the RSD process. It was imperative that operations received swift and adequate support for clearing backlogs and streamlining procedures. Here the RSD Project deployment scheme, managed by the RSD Unit at UNHCR Headquarters, played an important role. In 2009, the Unit deployed several RSD experts under this scheme to UNHCR operations in Malaysia, Indonesia and India to provide hands-on RSD support.

### *In focus: South Africa's asylum system*

South Africa received more than 222,300 new asylum applications in 2009. This was more than four times the number received by the United States of America, the second leading country, and can be compared with approximately 377,200 asylum applications received in 2009 by all industrialized countries combined. The large number of individual claims follows the trend seen in 2008, when South Africa received 207,200 new asylum applications.

**Fig. IV.3** Asylum claims in South Africa, 1999-2009



The two main factors underlying the large number of asylum applications are the phenomenon of mixed movements from all parts of the globe to South Africa and the continuing influx of Zimbabwean nationals to the country.

### *Mixed movements*

South Africa's national refugee legislation is exemplary. Persons applying for refugee status are issued an asylum-seeker permit under section 22 of the 1998 Refugee Act, which gives them full freedom of movement within the country and a panoply of other rights. These include access to the right to work, to attend school and to be treated in public clinics and hospitals on essentially the same basis as South African citizens. However, high levels of unemployment and challenges with service delivery in South Africa can make it difficult for refugees and asylum-seekers to realize these rights in practice.

The asylum process in South Africa is considerably less cumbersome than the procedure for obtaining a work permit under immigration laws which require the applicant to possess a passport and other documentation. Migrants seeking economic opportunities in South Africa view an application for asylum as the easiest and most reliable way to regularize their stay and gain access to the employment market. As a result, South Africa's national asylum system has become clogged by thousands of people who are not eligible for refugee status, while those who do need international protection were faced with dramatic overcrowding at Department of Home Affairs Refugee Reception Offices and delays in receiving decisions. The mixed nature of the movements, however, should not obscure the fact that many people who seek asylum in South Africa need and deserve international protection as refugees. During 2009, more than 4,500 people were granted refugee status in South Africa.

### *The Zimbabwe situation*

Zimbabweans have been migrating to South Africa in significant numbers in search of employment, opportunities to study or to join family members already living in the country. The migratory flow increased progressively over the past several years, as the Zimbabwean economy declined and when people were uprooted by the implementation of fast-track land reform and slum clearance policies. These movements accelerated during the months preceding the disputed national elections in 2008 and afterward, reflecting both an increase in politically-motivated violence and a dramatic deterioration in the economic and humanitarian situation, including unprecedented hyperinflation and the

effective collapse of the public health care system in the face of a deadly cholera epidemic.

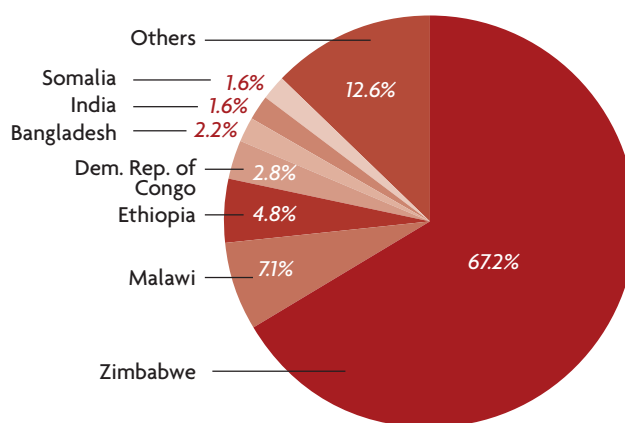
Zimbabweans accounted for 149,500 new asylum applications in South Africa in 2009, or two-thirds of the total (Figure IV.4). They include individuals who claim to fear or to have experienced human rights abuses and gross discrimination based upon their political views and activities. Very large numbers, however, left for South Africa because they simply were no longer able to provide for themselves or their families or obtain acutely needed services, such as medical care, in Zimbabwe.

The dynamics of the Zimbabwean movements to South Africa raised challenging questions of law and policy. Beyond those who may need and deserve international protection, many other Zimbabweans – arguably the majority – were crossing the border for reasons that would place them outside the scope of the refugee definition under international refugee law.

In April 2009, the South African Minister for Home Affairs at the time announced a “special dispensation” to respond to the continuing influx of Zimbabweans. The new measures included the suspension of deportations to Zimbabwe and allowed Zimbabwean nationals with a valid Zimbabwean travel document to enter the country and remain for 90 days, with the authorization to work. Most significant, however, was the proposed introduction of special temporary permits for Zimbabweans already living in South Africa under section 31(2) (b) of the Immigration Act. The special permits would have created an alternative to applying for asylum for those who were simply seeking to live and work in South Africa.

Following the Minister’s announcement, the Department of Home Affairs implemented the suspension of deportations and the issuance of temporary permits for holders of Zimbabwean travel documents. The Department reviewed options for rolling out the special temporary permits but ultimately the measure was never introduced. As a result, Zimbabweans continued to apply for asylum in large numbers, including those having a valid claim to refugee status and many others for whom obtaining an asylum-seeker permit under section 22 of the Refugee Act was simply a pragmatic measure to regularize their stay in South Africa.<sup>68</sup>

**Fig. IV.4** Main nationalities seeking asylum in South Africa, 2009



<sup>68</sup> In 2010, the South African Cabinet ended the special dispensation for Zimbabweans and announced that deportations to Zimbabweans would resume from 1 January 2011 for those having no legal right to remain in the country. The Department of Home Affairs has launched a process of issuing Zimbabweans present in the country with permits for business, study and work, in cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe, which has agreed to issue passports to Zimbabwean nationals living in South Africa. The South African Government has committed that the asylum door will remain open for Zimbabweans who wish to seek international protection as refugees.

### Box 9. Unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum

Since 2006, UNHCR has systematically collected data on unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) claiming asylum including their age, sex and country of origin (the latter since 2007). Despite these efforts, the global number of UASC who annually submit individual asylum claims remains unknown, largely because of the different registration mechanisms in place as well as the fact that certain countries, such as Canada, South Africa, and the United States of America, do not provide this information. Where data exists, it is often not disaggregated by sex and age. In addition, definitions, including age of majority, vary from country to country. All of these factors make the collection and comparison of data difficult.

It should be noted that the number of unaccompanied children applying for asylum are part of a much larger but totally undocumented group of 'children on the move' - a phenomenon that has gained increased international attention over the last years. These children either lack access to or awareness of asylum procedures or are not interested in seeking asylum - but the protection risks many of them face are quite alarming.

In 2009, more than 18,700 asylum applications were lodged by unaccompanied and separated children in 71 countries, constituting 4 per cent of all claims lodged in these countries. These figures were consistent with those observed in the previous year when 16,600 UASC sought asylum. Europe received 15,100 or 81 per cent of the 18,700 UASC claims. As in previous years, the United Kingdom registered the highest numbers for Europe with 3,000 UASC claims, followed by Norway (2,500), Sweden (2,250), and Germany (1,300). While the United Kingdom received 1,300 fewer UASC claims compared to 2008, in Norway and Sweden figures increased by 81 and 49 per cent respectively. Malaysia and Ecuador were important destination countries for

unaccompanied and separated children outside Europe, receiving 1,500 and 500 asylum claims respectively.

The available information indicated that 7,700 unaccompanied and separated children were recognized as refugees or granted a complementary form of protection in 2009. This figure was higher than in 2008 (6,000 grants). Europe accounted for 64 per cent of all positive decisions rendered.

Data also indicated that it is often unaccompanied or separated boys who seek asylum, in particular in industrialized countries where about two-thirds of all UASC are male, and that the number of UASC boys seeking asylum was on the rise as compared to only two or three years ago. In developing countries, however, the sex distribution was more balanced.

Altogether 66 countries provided detailed country of origin information on UASC in 2009 covering 15,700 asylum claims. Afghans and Somalis accounted for half of those claims. UASC from Afghanistan submitted 5,600 asylum claims in 27 countries, more than half in Norway (1,700) and in the United Kingdom (1,530). Sweden (780), Germany (450), Austria (430) and the Netherlands (320) were also important destination countries for Afghan UASC in 2009. In most countries where data is available, Afghan UASC claims increased significantly in 2009 compared to 2008. They doubled in Sweden and tripled in Norway, while in Germany they increased eight fold. In Indonesia, UNHCR registered 240 Afghan UASC claims as compared to fewer than 20 the previous year. More than 2,200 asylum claims were lodged by Somali UASC in 2009 with four out of ten being submitted in Sweden (910). In the case of UASC from Myanmar, virtually all of the 1,900 applications were registered with UNHCR offices in Malaysia (1,420) and India (460) while more than one quarter of the 840 Iraqi UASC claims were registered in Germany (220). The number of asylum claims

#### Selected UASC nationalities lodging asylum claims, 2009

An asterisk denotes a value between 1 and 4.

Selected countries of asylum	Main nationalities of UASC					% of total UASC asylum claims						Total recognition rates				
	AFG	SOM	IRQ	MYA	ERT	AFG	SOM	IRQ	MYA	ERT	Total	AFG	SOM	IRQ	MYA	ERT
Finland	85	201	151	0	0	15%	36%	27%	0%	0%	78%	100%	96%	100%	..	..
Germany	450	33	223	5	26	35%	3%	17%	0%	2%	57%	77%	91%	68%	100%	100%
Hungary	195	16	*	0	0	72%	6%	0%	0%	0%	78%	..	..	..	..	..
India	5	20	0	455	0	1%	4%	0%	95%	0%	100%	..	67%	..	92%	..
Indonesia	242	0	*	10	0	93%	0%	0%	4%	0%	98%	100%	..	100%	100%	..
Malaysia	*	25	0	1421	0	0%	2%	0%	98%	0%	100%	100%	100%	..	98%	..
Netherlands	322	357	67	0	39	31%	34%	6%	0%	4%	76%	..	..	..	..	..
Norway	1'719	246	84	*	144	69%	10%	3%	0%	6%	88%	99%	100%	52%	100%	100%
Sweden	780	913	110	*	49	35%	41%	5%	0%	2%	82%	90%	97%	31%	..	92%
Switzerland	32	39	17	0	14	9%	11%	5%	0%	4%	28%	53%	50%	33%	..	60%
Turkey	112	60	12	*	5	39%	21%	4%	0%	2%	67%	67%	85%	94%	..	100%
United Kingdom	1'525	115	155	0	230	48%	4%	5%	0%	7%	64%	73%	78%	48%	..	63%

AFG=Afghanistan; SOM=Somalia; IRQ=Iraq; MYA=Myanmar; ERT=Eritrea



lodged by UASC from Somalia and Myanmar went up in 2009 while Iraqi claims went down during the year. Eritrean claims remained stable. These developments were consistent with the overall number of asylum applications lodged by these groups. Among the five major groups of UASC seeking asylum in 2009, the percentage of children below 15 years of age varied between asylum destinations. For Eritrean UASC, it was one-third of all UASC seeking asylum in Germany and Sweden while for Afghan UASC it was up to one quarter in Switzerland, Germany and India. In Sweden, Somali UASC constituted 30 per cent of all UASC claims.

Average recognition rates for UASC in 2009 were high in those countries where data was available. For Afghans, Eritreans and Somalis, the total recognition rate was 90 per cent. For UASC from Myanmar the rate was even higher at 98 per cent, while for Iraqi UASC, the rate was lower at 62 per cent. Data suggested, however, that some countries are more likely to grant certain UASC refugee status under the 1951 Convention than others. In the case of Afghan UASC, only 8 per cent of all positive decisions resulted in Convention refugee status while for Iraqi UASC it was 22 per cent. Conversely, for UASC from Eritrea and Myanmar, rates were significantly higher with 62 and 98 per cent, respectively.



*Young Afghan boys and teenagers have to endure the cold in Calais, France. Some sleep under bridges at night while others find accommodation through an organization defending the rights of migrants.*



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*Internally displaced persons in Yemen*