

## CHAPTER III

# DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND NEW DISPLACEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Despite the considerable progress achieved in recent years to reduce the number of refugees globally, millions still remain in need of durable solutions. It is UNHCR's role to both protect and assist refugees as well as to find permanent solutions for them. These solutions can take three different forms: (i) voluntarily repatriation to the home country; (ii) resettlement to another country or; (iii) finding appropriate permanent integration mechanisms in the host country. Efforts and progress towards achieving durable solutions and, therefore, to reduce the number of refugees are however partly hampered by new outflows of refugees. Each year, thousands of refugees flee their home country and are recognized either on an individual basis or through group determination (*prima facie*). This chapter looks at both developments: durable solutions found and new displacement occurred during 2005. It contains three parts.

The first part analyses progress towards achieving durable solutions for refugees during 2005. Among the three durable solutions, voluntary repatriation is generally the preferred option benefiting the largest number of refugees. Resettlement of refugees is a key protection tool and a significant burden and responsibility sharing mechanism. UNHCR is currently pursuing its efforts to expand the use of resettlement, *inter alia*, by further diversifying the nationalities of refugees being resettled and the number of countries receiving resettled refugees. Local integration, the third durable solution, is a legal, socio-economic and political process by which refugees progressively become part of the host society. With local integration of refugees generally being difficult to quantify in numerical terms, the analysis is limited to the local integration through naturalization, whereby the full range of protection is extended to refugees by the host country.

The second part of this chapter deals with new arrivals, focusing primarily on mass or *prima facie* refugee outflows, while the third part addresses major changes to the refugee population in 2005 that are not explained by durable solutions or new arrivals.

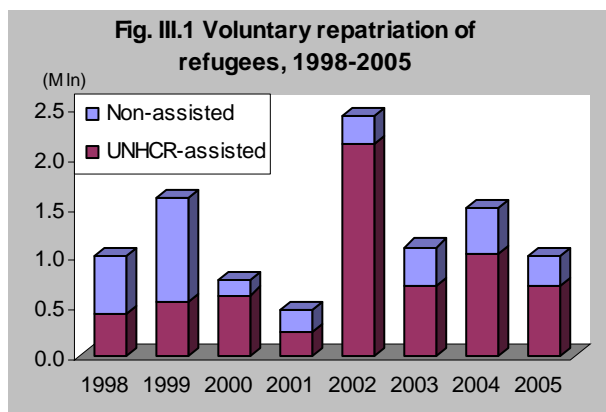
### DURABLE SOLUTIONS

#### VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Voluntary repatriation statistics are generally based on consolidated information from both the country of asylum and the country of origin. Based on the available information, it is estimated that some 1.1 million refugees repatriated voluntarily to their country of origin during 2005, a 27 per cent decrease compared to 2004 (1.5 million), and virtually the same number as in 2003. In all, there were a total of 15 voluntary repatriation movements involving more than 1,000 refugees during 2005. The main countries of origin to which refugees returned during the year included Afghanistan (752,100), Liberia (70,300), Burundi (68,200), Iraq (56,200), and Angola (53,800).

Similar to previous years, the majority of voluntary repatriation departures of refugees were reported by Pakistan (461,000) and the Islamic Rep. of Iran (345,000). In addition, a significant number of refugees departed from the United Rep. of Tanzania (82,000), the Dem. Rep. of the Congo (47,000), and Côte d'Ivoire (33,000).

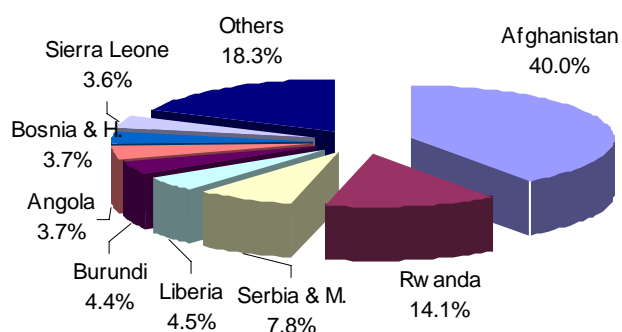
For statistical purposes, only refugees who have repatriated during the calendar year are included in the population of concern to UNHCR. In practice, however, operations may assist returnees for shorter or longer periods. The latter is for instance the case for Angola where, since the signing of the peace accord in 2002, more than 364,000 Angolan refugees have returned home, many of them benefiting from UNHCR reintegration activities.



The past four years saw an almost unprecedented level of voluntary repatriation, mainly due to the return of more than 4.2 million Afghans, primarily from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Globally, more than six million refugees were able to return home during 2002-2005, of which 4.6 million with UNHCR assistance.

During the decade 1996-2005, an estimated 12.9 million refugees found a durable solution by repatriating to their home country, primarily to Afghanistan (5.2 million), Rwanda (1.8 million), Serbia and Montenegro (1.0 million), Liberia (576,000), and Burundi (564,000) (see Table B.6).

**Fig. III.2 Refugee returns by origin, 1996-2005**  
(Total = 12.9 million)



In any operation, the promotion of return comes only after minimum conditions are met and when refugees can return in safety and dignity. But even when peace and security are restored in a country, voluntary return presents enormous challenges, not the least in terms of sustainability.

Sometimes, the infrastructure is not in place for returning refugees to rebuild their lives. They might thus decide to return to the refugee camp in the country of asylum they have been living in, in some cases for years. As a result, refugees might move between their country of origin and country of asylum multiple times and thus get counted several times in UNHCR statistics which tend to capture the movement and not the individual per se. As such, voluntary repatriation statistics might in some cases be larger than the actual number of individual sustainable returns.

Adding to the complexity of counting refugee returnees, voluntary repatriation departures are often underreported, because many refugees return on their own initiative, without informing the authorities of the host country or requesting UNHCR for assistance. In contrast, the number of returnees in the country of origin may be overestimated, because nationals who stay behind may also register for returnee assistance. As mentioned earlier, in order to present the picture as accurate as possible, the voluntary repatriation figures provided in the 2005 Yearbook result from

a consolidation process of estimates from both the country of asylum and the country of origin.

## RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement constitutes a durable solution for refugees who can neither repatriate to their country of origin nor remain in the first country of asylum. Sometimes, because refugees' life and liberty are at risk in their first country of asylum, resettlement serves as a protection tool, as durable solution and as responsibility and burden sharing mechanism.

In accordance with its mandate, UNHCR's role in resettlement ranges from identifying resettlement needs to screening and selecting potential resettlement cases and arranging transportation in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or NGOs. UNHCR uses a number of criteria to identify potential resettlement candidates. These include (a) legal and physical protection needs, (b) lack of local integration prospects, (c) family reunification, (d) and specific needs categories such as women-at-risk and refugees with disabilities or serious medical conditions.

Despite the fact that the quantitative contribution of resettlement to finding durable solutions is limited, it nevertheless plays an important role in the sharing of refugee burden by the industrialized countries, most notably Australia, Canada and the United States. During the decade 1996-2005, some 268,200 refugees were resettled from asylum countries under UNHCR auspices, compared to 12.9 million refugees who were able to repatriate. Thus, for every refugee who has been resettled since 1996, about 50 have repatriated.

In Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, resettlement is part of the national immigration programme. In these countries, resettlement candidates are either refugees selected by UNHCR as part of an agreed quota, or persons selected directly by the immigration authorities on the basis of national criteria. Sometimes, these countries admit persons for resettlement who do not qualify for Convention refugee status, but for whom there may be other compelling reasons for resettlement. UNHCR has agreed resettlement quotas with other, mostly European, countries. In line with the Agenda for Protection<sup>1</sup>, UNHCR has advocated in recent years for States, in particular in Latin America, to establish regular resettlement programmes, and as a result, Argentina became a new resettlement country in June 2005.

Resettlement statistics presented in the 2005 Yearbook are based on two sources. First, UNHCR records from asylum countries indicate the number of refugees who have departed under UNHCR auspices. Second, government statistics from receiving countries are used to analyse the total inflow of resettled refugees, whether or not facilitated by UNHCR.

### (a) Resettlement under UNHCR auspices

In 2005, some 30,500 refugees were resettled from their first asylum countries with UNHCR assistance, virtually the same level as during 2004 (29,600). The main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement during the year were refugees from Somalia (5,900), Liberia (4,700), Sudan (3,200), Afghanistan (3,200), and Myanmar (2,900).

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3e637b194.pdf> for more information.











