

# 2007 Global Trends:

## Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons



*Displaced children in Elasha camps in the outskirts of Mogadishu, Somalia.  
UNHCR/I. Taxe*

June 2008

## I. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The past year witnessed significant humanitarian developments. On the one hand, armed conflicts resulted in the movement of millions of people within and outside their countries; on the other hand, millions of displaced were able to return home or found another durable solution. However, the net result of these developments was that the number of people uprooted by armed conflict continued to rise for the second consecutive year.

Despite UNHCR's efforts to find durable solutions, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) under its care rose by 2.5 million in the course of year, reaching an unprecedented 25.1 million by the end of the reporting period. The number of refugees under UNHCR's responsibility rose from 9.9 to 11.4 million by the end of 2007. The global number of people affected by conflict-induced internal displacement increased from 24.4 to 26 million<sup>2</sup>, with UNHCR currently providing protection or assistance either directly or indirectly to 13.7 million of them.

Analysis of refugee data reveals two major patterns. First, the vast majority of refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries with over 80 per cent remaining within their region of origin. Second, available information indicates that the number of urban refugees continues to grow. It is estimated that half of the refugee population was residing in urban areas at the end of 2007.<sup>3</sup>

While the number of refugees and IDPs falling under UNHCR's responsibility was estimated at 25.1 million, available information suggests that a total of 67 million people had been forcibly displaced at the end of 2007 (see box). This includes 16 million refugees, of whom 11.4 million fall under UNHCR's mandate and some 4.6 million Palestinian refugees under the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The number of IDPs is estimated at 51 million worldwide; some 26 million were displaced as a result of armed conflict and another 25 million were displaced by natural disasters<sup>4</sup>. In addition, while often not considered as being displaced *per se*, it is estimated that there are some 12 million stateless people worldwide.

Category of forced displacement	Total (in mln)
Refugees under UNHCR mandate	11.4
Refugees under UNRWA mandate	4.6
<b>Total number of refugees</b>	<b>16.0</b>
Conflict-generated IDPs	26.0
Natural disaster IDPs	25.0
<b>Total number of IDPs</b>	<b>51.0</b>
<b>Total number of refugees and IDPs</b>	<b>67.0</b>

With forced displacement having grown in complexity and size in recent years, the *2007 Global Trends* report depicts some of the major humanitarian trends and developments which have occurred during the reporting period, that is, between January and December 2007. In particular, it reviews the statistical trends and changes in 2007 in the global populations for whom UNHCR has been entrusted with a responsibility by the United Nations General Assembly. These include refugees, returnees, stateless persons and certain groups of IDPs, collectively referred to in the report as "persons of concern".

This document presents an overview of global levels and trends for each of the seven categories constituting the total population of concern to UNHCR. It also analyses trends related to new displacement, either in the form of massive outflows or of people having sought international

<sup>1</sup> This report has been prepared by the Field Information and Coordination Support Section (FICSS), Division of Operational Services at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. Any questions concerning the report should be addressed to FICSS at stats@unhcr.org. Visit also UNHCR's Statistical Online Population Database at <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

<sup>3</sup> Information on the location is available for 8.8 million out of the 11.4 million refugees (77%) at the end of 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

protection on an individual basis. Finding durable solutions for those who have sought international protection is central to UNHCR's mandate and therefore integral to this report. Information on the demographic composition of the population falling under UNHCR's responsibility, crucial for all planning and programming activities, also features in this document.

This report is limited to populations for whom UNHCR has a mandate, and therefore does not pretend to provide a comprehensive picture of global forced displacement. For example, some 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of UNRWA are not included in the analysis. Likewise, the report only covers IDPs generated by conflict and who benefited directly or indirectly from UNHCR's protection and assistance activities, in particular as part of the collective response to help IDPs through the Cluster Approach.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that UNHCR's internal review of statistical classifications and definitions, which started in 2006, continued throughout 2007. One of the main goals of this review was to look at the statistical instruments and processes the Office applies with the purpose of harmonizing its approach, thus rendering UNHCR statistics more consistent across countries and categories. Based on the conclusions of this review, two major changes were introduced to the 2007 statistics. First, the methodology for estimating refugees in industrialized countries was revised. And second, certain groups or categories of populations previously included under Others of concern to UNHCR were reclassified.

Some industrialized countries lack a dedicated refugee register. To ensure that the refugee population in these countries is nevertheless reflected in the global refugee statistics, UNHCR made estimates based on refugee arrivals through resettlement programmes, as well as the recognition of refugees on an individual basis. For statistical purposes and based on the estimated average time it would take for a refugee to become naturalized, a 10-year period was applied for Europe and a 5-year period for Australia, Canada, and New Zealand under the previous methodology. Following the internal review, two changes were introduced that affected the 2007 statistics. First, refugees arriving through resettlement programmes are no longer included as they have found a durable solution. As such, some 820,000 resettled refugees have been excluded from the 2007 statistics. Second, to ensure consistency, a cut-off period of 10 years will be systematically applied to all industrialized countries where refugee figures are based on UNHCR estimates. This change has no influence on the estimates for Europe, but it does affect the estimates for Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In the case of the United States of America, the period had already been changed in 2006 from 5 to 10 years based on new statistical evidence.

The second major change relates to the category Others of concern to UNHCR. A reclassification of UNHCR statistics led to a significant reduction of individuals included in this group. People who are considered to be in a refugee-like situation or an IDP-like situation were removed from the Others of concern group.<sup>6</sup> They are now included in the respective sub-groups under Refugee population and IDP population. The global refugee figure is obtained by adding up refugees and people in refugee-like situations. Likewise, the global number of IDPs who are protected and/or assisted by the Office is derived by adding up IDPs and people in IDP-like situations. Because of these major changes, the 2007 refugee and IDP figures are not fully comparable with previous years. The total population of concern, however, has remained unaffected despite these adjustments.

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<sup>5</sup> In December 2005, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed the *Cluster Approach* for situations of internal displacement. Under this arrangement, UNHCR assumes leadership responsibility and accountability for three of the nine "clusters", namely: protection; emergency shelter; and camp coordination and camp management.

<sup>6</sup> The definition of "refugee-like situation" and "IDP-like situation" is provided on page 4.

Even though global migration poses a challenge for asylum and refugee management, this report does not address mixed migration flows. The main reason is the lack of reliable and precise statistical data that would be required for an evidence-based analysis of this phenomenon.<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the report does not refer to events occurring after 31 December 2007.

The statistics in this report have for the most part been reported by UNHCR country offices, based on Government sources, non-governmental organizations and UNHCR's registration programmes. The numbers have been rounded up to the closest hundredth or thousandth, as the case may be, for the purposes of this report. As some adjustments may need to be made for the publication of the *2007 Statistical Yearbook*, to be published later this year, they should be considered as provisional and may be subject to change.

### Who are included in the statistics?

The persons of concern included in this report comprise seven different groups, namely: (a) refugees; (b) asylum-seekers; (c) internally displaced persons (IDPs); (d) refugees who have returned home (returnees); (e) IDPs who have returned home; (f) stateless persons; and (g) other people who do not fall under any of the above categories but to whom the Office extends its protection and/or assistance activities. Two additional sub-categories have been added: (i) people in refugee-like situations (included under refugees); and (ii) people in IDP-like situations (included under IDPs).

**Refugees** include individuals recognized under the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*; its 1967 Protocol; the *1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*; those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute; individuals granted complementary forms of protection<sup>8</sup>; or, those enjoying "temporary protection"<sup>9</sup>.

The 2007 refugee population category includes people in a refugee-like situation, most of who were previously included in the Others of concern group. This sub-category is descriptive in nature and includes groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees, but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained.

**Asylum-seekers** are individuals whose applications for asylum or refugee status are pending a final decision. Those covered in this report refer particularly to claimants whose individual applications were pending as of the end of 2007, irrespective of when they may have been lodged (the so-called "backlog" of undecided or "pending cases").

**Internally displaced persons** are people or groups of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural- or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border.<sup>10</sup> For

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<sup>7</sup> As part of UNHCR's strategy to address the phenomenon of mixed migration flows, UNHCR has developed the "10-Point-Plan of Action" which aims at ensuring that protection space continues to be available for people in need of international protection. See <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/4742a30b4.pdf> for further information.

<sup>8</sup> Complementary protection refers to formal permission, under national law, provided on humanitarian ground to persons who are in need of international protection to reside in a country, even though they might not qualify for refugee status under conventional refugee criteria.

<sup>9</sup> Temporary protection refers to arrangements developed by States to offer protection of a temporary nature to persons arriving en masse from situations of conflict or generalized violence without the necessity for formal or individual status determination.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (provisional release), p.6, Global Protection Cluster Working Group, December 2007 ([www.humanitarianreform.org](http://www.humanitarianreform.org)).

purposes of UNHCR’s statistics, this population only includes conflict-generated IDPs to whom the Office extends protection and/or assistance.

The 2007 IDP population category includes people in IDP-like situations. This sub-category is descriptive in nature and includes groups of persons who are inside their country of nationality or habitual residence and who face protection risks similar to those of IDPs but who, for practical or other reasons, could not be reported as such.

**Returned refugees (returnees)** refer to refugees who have returned voluntarily to their country of origin or place of habitual residence. For purposes of this report, only refugees who returned between January and December 2007 are included.

**Returned IDPs**, for purposes of this report, refer to those internally displaced persons who were beneficiaries of UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities and who returned to their areas of origin or habitual residence between January and December 2007.

**Stateless persons** are individuals not considered as nationals by any State under relevant national laws. The statistics in this report on statelessness also include people with undetermined nationality. UNHCR has been called upon by the General Assembly to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to report regularly on the magnitude of the phenomenon. The Office has been tasked to fulfil the functions under Article 11 of the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* and to act as an intermediary between States and stateless persons.

**Other groups or persons of concern** refers to individuals who do not necessarily fall directly into any of the groups above but to whom UNHCR has extended its protection and/or assistance services, based on humanitarian or other special grounds.

## II. Overview of global trends

By the end of 2007, the total population under UNHCR’s responsibility had dropped from 32.9 million in 2006 to 31.7 million, representing a decrease of 1.2 million people (-3%). While the global refugee population and the number of IDPs protected and/or assisted by UNHCR has increased, the number of stateless persons has almost halved compared to 2006. The number of IDPs who were able to return during the year was the highest in more than a decade.

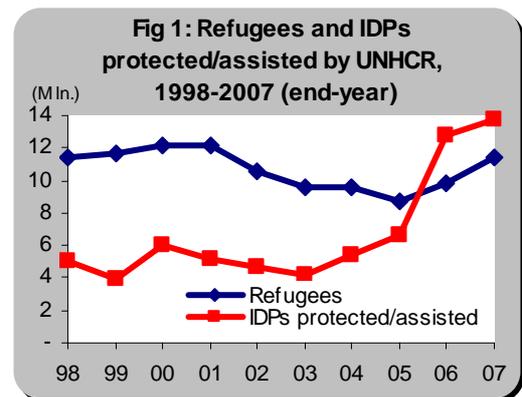
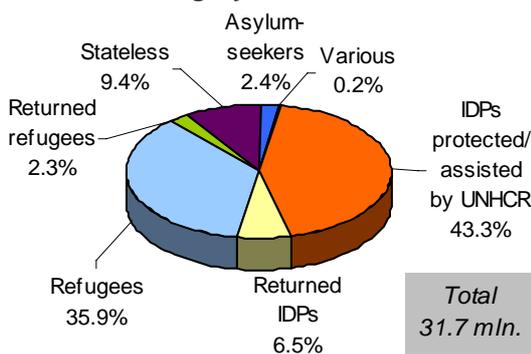


Fig 2: Total population by category, end-2007



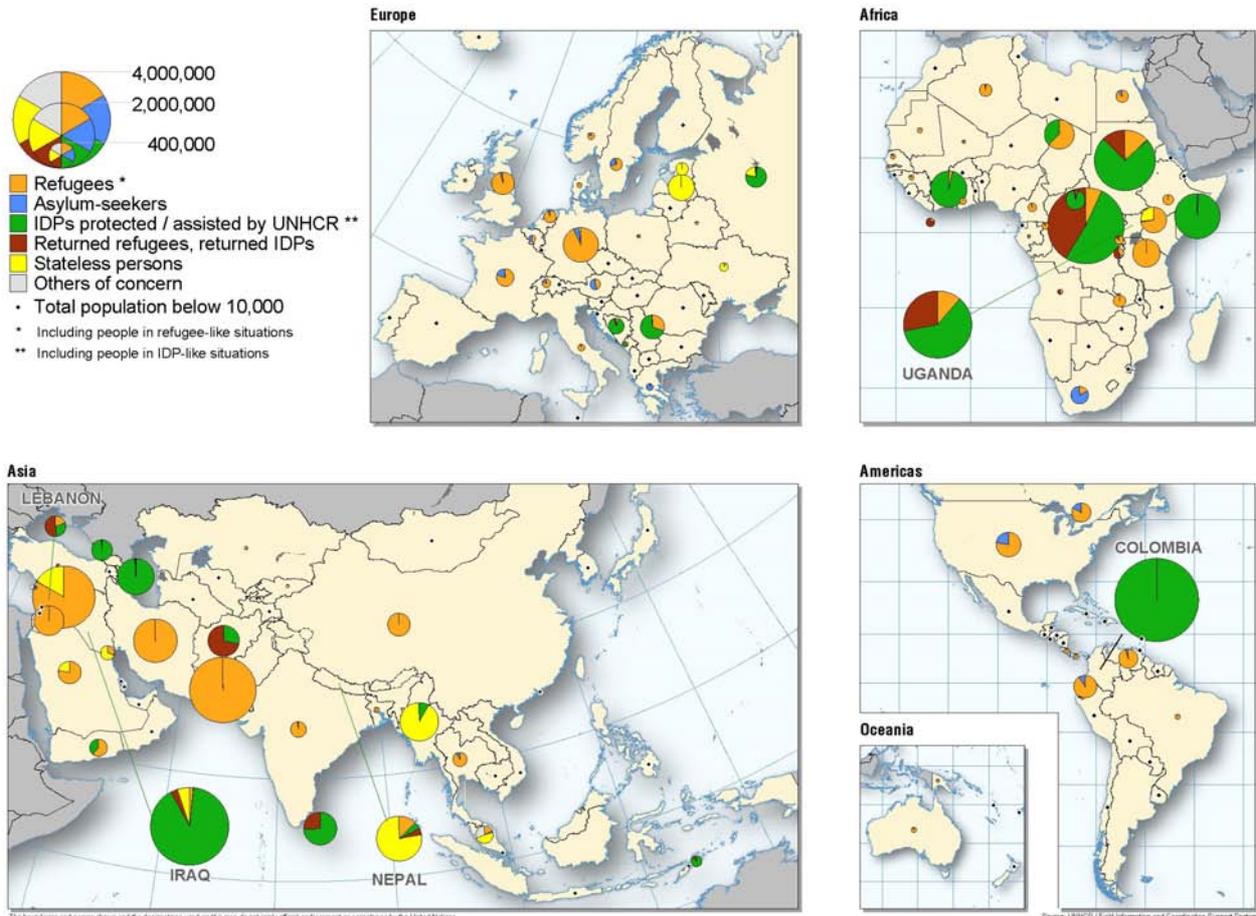
By the close of 2007, there were an estimated 11.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s responsibility, including some 1.7 million people in refugee-like situations. Refugees continued to be the persons of concern with whom UNHCR was systematically engaged in extending the core and full range of its protection and assistance activities. At the same time, UNHCR, as a committed partner in the framework of shared responsibility established under the Cluster Approach, continued to extend its services in respect of protection, assistance and solutions for the benefit of IDPs. As of the end of

the year, a total of 13.7 million IDPs, including 146,000 people in IDP-like situations, were receiving humanitarian assistance under both the Cluster Approach and other arrangements in which UNHCR was either the lead agency or a partner.

At close to 3 million, the number of stateless persons<sup>11</sup> had almost halved in 2007 compared with 5.8 million in 2006. These figures, however, do not capture the full scale or magnitude of the phenomenon of statelessness for the reporting period. A significant number of stateless people have not been systematically identified and the statistical data on statelessness is not yet available in many cases.

**Map 1: Total population by category, end-2007**

(See Annex table 7 for details on stateless persons)



The sections below present an overview of major trends and levels for each of the population categories, including demographic characteristics. They also make reference to the revised methodology, where applicable.

### III. Refugee population

The steady decline in refugee numbers witnessed since 2002 was reversed in 2006 when numbers started going up again. By the end of 2006, there were an estimated 9.9 million refugees. One year later, the global figure of refugees stood at 11.4 million<sup>12</sup>, including 1.7 million people considered by UNHCR to be in a refugee-like situation. In view of the changes introduced in the methodology and the scope referred to earlier for estimating refugee

<sup>11</sup> Refugees and asylum-seekers who are at the same time also stateless persons are not included in this figure. They are reflected in the figures relating to the refugee and asylum-seeker groups concerned.

<sup>12</sup> As indicated already, this figure does not include 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the responsibility of UNRWA.

populations in a number of countries, the 2007 figure is not fully comparable with those of previous years. If applying the pre-2007 methodology for computing and classifying the global refugee population, i.e. including resettled refugees in industrialized countries and excluding people in refugee-like situations, the figure would have been 10.3 million. This would have constituted a net increase of 422,000 refugees compared to the end of 2006.

As of the end of 2007, roughly one third of all refugees were residing in countries in the Asia and Pacific region, with 80 per cent of them being Afghans. The Middle East and North Africa region was host to a quarter of all refugees, primarily from Iraq, while Africa and Europe hosted respectively 20 and 14 per cent of the world’s refugees. The Americas region had the smallest share of refugees (9%), with Colombians constituting the largest number.

**Table 1: Refugee population by UNHCR regions, end-2007**

UNHCR regions	Refugees	People in refugee-like situations	Total refugees end-2007
- Central Africa and Great Lakes	1,100,100	-	1,100,100
- East and Horn of Africa	815,200	-	815,200
- Southern Africa	181,200	-	181,200
- West Africa	174,700	-	174,700
<b>Total Africa*</b>	<b>2,271,200</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,271,200</b>
Americas	499,900	487,600	987,500
Asia and Pacific	2,675,900	1,149,100	3,825,000
Europe	1,580,200	5,100	1,585,300
Middle East and North Africa	2,654,000	67,600	2,721,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,681,200</b>	<b>1,709,400</b>	<b>11,390,600</b>

\* Excluding North Africa.

The number of refugees in the Middle East and North Africa region increased as a result of the volatile situation in Iraq. According to Government estimates, Jordan and the Syrian Arab

Republic together host some 2 million Iraqis. Conversely, in Africa<sup>13</sup>, the number of refugees decreased by 6 per cent during the year, primarily due to the successful voluntary repatriation operations to Sudan (130,700), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (59,800), Liberia (44,400), and Burundi (39,800). This notwithstanding, renewed armed conflict and gross human rights violations in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Sudan also led to refugee outflows of almost 120,000 people, primarily to Kenya (25,000 arrivals), Cameroon (25,000), Sudan (22,500), and Uganda (9,400).

**Refugees are “flooding” industrialized countries – a myth?**

The available statistical evidence confirms that most refugees flee to neighbouring countries and that they, thus, remain within their region of origin. Indeed, the major refugee-generating regions hosted on average between 83 and 90 per cent of ‘their’ refugees. UNHCR estimates that some 1.6 million refugees (14% out the total of 11.4 million) live outside their region of origin.

Region	Within region	Outside region
Africa	83%	17%
Asia	86%	14%
Europe	90%	10%
Latin Am/Caribb.	83%	17%

The methodological changes mentioned earlier had a significant impact on the refugee estimates in the Americas and the Asia and Pacific regions. In the latter, the total refugee population increased by 1 million due to the inclusion of 1.1 million Afghans in a refugee-like situation in Pakistan who are living outside refugee villages.<sup>14</sup> In the Americas, Colombians in Ecuador (250,000) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (200,000) are now included in the region’s refugee estimates as people in a refugee-like situation (after

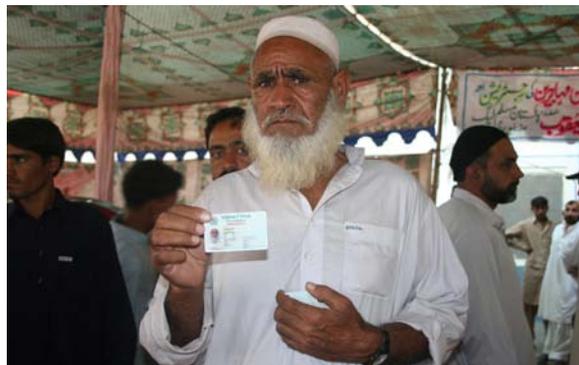
<sup>13</sup> In the absence of refugee-like situations identified in Africa, the 2006 and 2007 refugee figures are fully comparable.

<sup>14</sup> Refugee figures for Pakistan include recognized Afghan refugees (1,700), registered Afghans in refugee villages who are assisted by UNHCR (886,700), and registered Afghans outside refugee villages who are living in a “refugee-like” situation (1,145,800). Individuals in all categories have been issued a Proof of Registration Card by the Government of Pakistan. Following the completion of the registration exercise in 2007, those living outside refugee villages are now in the “refugee-like” category. They do not receive direct UNHCR material assistance but they benefit from advocacy and upon return reintegration support.

having previously been reported under the Others of concern group). Moreover, by excluding resettled refugees from the refugee population in the United States of America, the figures dropped from 844,000 to 281,000.

In Europe, a census conducted in Armenia, among Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, established that the majority of them had either been naturalized or left the country. The refugee figure thus dropped from 113,700 at the beginning of the year to 4,600 at the end of 2007.

The 10 major refugee hosting countries in 2006 were the same as in 2007, but in a different order. Pakistan<sup>15</sup> continued to be the asylum country with the single largest number of refugees (2 million), principally, because of the inclusion of registered Afghans living outside refugee villages.

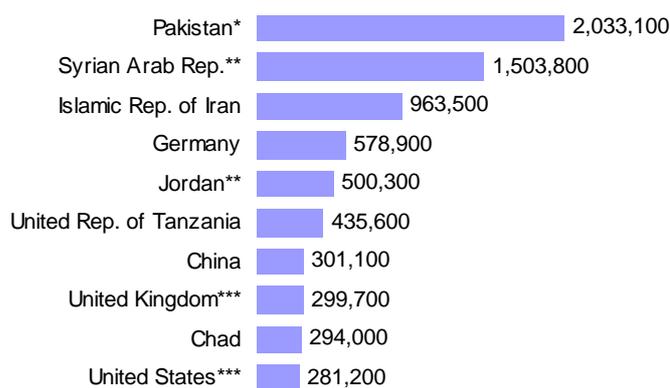


Afghan refugee in Pakistan receiving Proof of Registration Card. UNHCR/ V. Tan

According to Government estimates, the Syrian Arab Republic was host to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees, making it thus the second largest refugee hosting country at the end of the year. The Islamic Republic of Iran hosted close to 964,000 refugees, almost all Afghans. Germany reported some 579,000 refugees, a reduction of almost 26,000 compared to last year due to an improved Government registration system that yielded more accurate statistics.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the refugee figure for Jordan remained virtually unchanged (500,300)<sup>17</sup>, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the refugee population dropped to 435,600 due to the voluntary repatriation of 39,500 Burundian and 28,400 Congolese refugees. Bearing in mind the change in the methodology for computing the refugee population, the United States of America was estimated to have some 281,000 refugees.

Afghanistan continued to be the leading country of origin. As of the end of 2007, there were almost 3.1 million Afghan refugees, or 27 per cent of the global refugee population. Even though Afghan refugees were to be found in 72 asylum countries worldwide, 96 per cent of them was located in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran alone. Iraqis were the second largest group, with 2.3 million having sought refuge mainly in neighbouring countries. Afghan and Iraqi refugees account for almost half of all refugees under UNHCR's responsibility worldwide, followed by Colombians (552,000). Following successful repatriation operation to Southern Sudan, the number of Sudanese refugees globally decreased from 635,000 to 523,000. Other main source countries were Somalia (457,000), Burundi (376,000), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (370,000) (see Map 2 below).

Fig 3: Major refugee hosting countries, end-2007



\* Includes Afghans in a refugee-like situation.

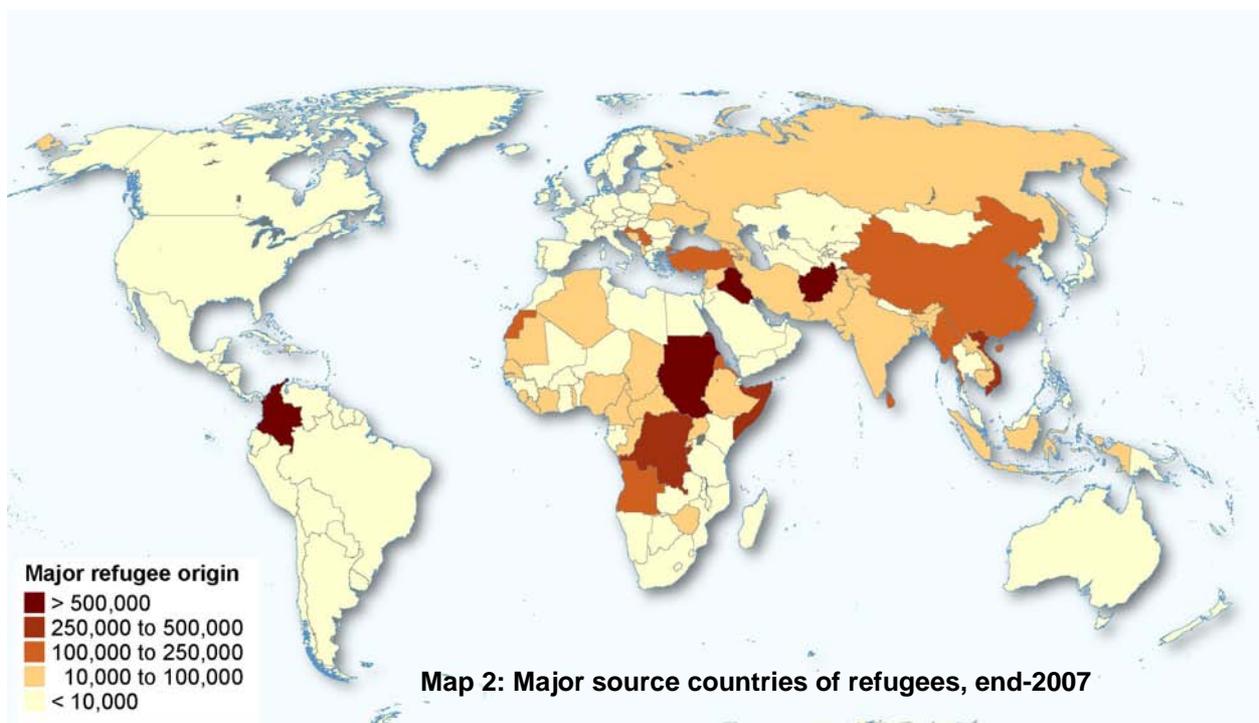
\*\* Government estimate.

\*\*\* UNHCR estimate based on 10 years of individual recognition of asylum-seekers. Figure excludes resettled refugees.

<sup>15</sup> See preceding footnote.

<sup>16</sup> With introduction of the 2005 Immigration Act, the Central Aliens Register now encompasses new residence categories and simultaneously refines previous ones, allowing for a better differentiation of the figures.

<sup>17</sup> Number of Iraqis estimated by the Government.

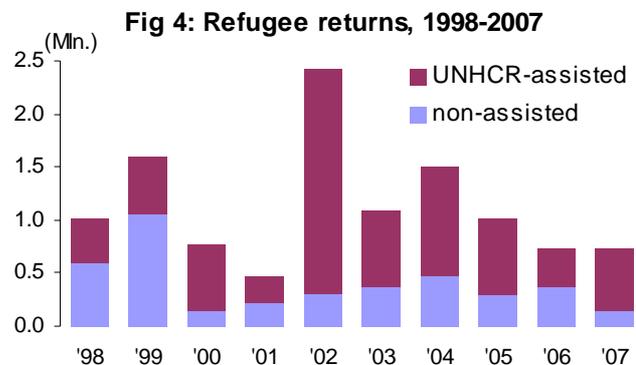


#### IV. Durable solutions

Securing durable solutions for refugees is core element of international protection and part of UNHCR’s mandate. These solutions can take three different forms: (i) voluntary repatriation to the home country; (ii) resettlement in another country; or (iii) finding appropriate permanent integration mechanisms in the country of asylum. Voluntary repatriation is the durable solution which generally benefits the largest number of refugees. Resettlement is a key protection tool and a significant burden and responsibility-sharing mechanism. Local integration, the third durable solution, is a legal, socio-economic and political process by which refugees progressively become part of the host society. It is, however, difficult to quantify in numerical terms given the large variety of forms it can take. The analysis of the data in this document is limited to local integration through naturalization, whereby the full range of protection is extended to refugees by the host country.

##### Voluntary repatriation

Based on consolidated reports from countries of asylum (departure) and origin (arrival), it is estimated that close to 731,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily during 2007, virtually the same number as in 2006 (734,000). The main countries of return included Afghanistan (374,000)<sup>18</sup>, Sudan (130,700), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (60,000), Iraq (45,400), and Liberia (44,400). The largest number of refugee departures



<sup>18</sup> All Afghans registered in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran who avail themselves of voluntary repatriation are reflected as returnees because they receive transportation and reintegration assistance. In 2007, at the request of the Government of Pakistan, a grace period was provided to unregistered Afghans residing in Pakistan who wished to return and they were also assisted. The figure includes 206,000 unregistered Afghans, who returned during that period and benefited from repatriation assistance.

was reported by Pakistan (365,700), Uganda (76,700), the United Republic of Tanzania (67,900), and the Syrian Arab Republic (45,000).

Whereas the past decade has seen large-scale return movements of refugees, mainly due to the return of millions of Afghans, the total numbers of refugees who have returned during 2006 and 2007 were the second- and third-lowest of the past 15 years. Only in 2001 was the number of returns lower (462,000). Globally, an estimated 11.4 million refugees have returned home over the past 10 years, 7.3 million, or 65 per cent, of them with UNHCR assistance.

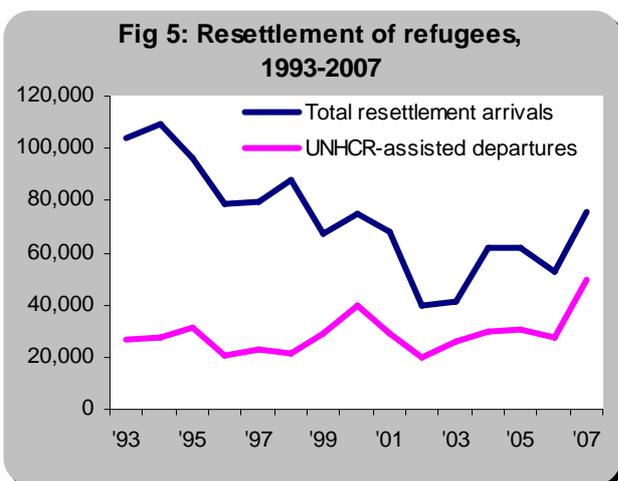


55,000 Sudanese refugees returned home with UNHCR's assistance in 2007. UNHCR/ E. Denholm

### Resettlement

Resettlement is used as a vital protection tool, a durable solution and an international responsibility sharing mechanism. It aims to provide protection to refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in their country of asylum. It is normally only promoted by UNHCR when the other durable solutions are not viable or feasible.

Currently, resettlement benefits only a small number of refugees. In 2007, less than 1 per cent of the world's refugees directly benefited from resettlement. During 1998-2007, some 821,000 refugees were accepted by third asylum countries through resettlement programmes, compared to 11.4 million refugees who were able to repatriate. Thus, for every refugee who has been resettled since 1998, about 14 have repatriated.



In 2007, UNHCR submitted 99,000 individuals for resettlement consideration by States, the highest number of the past 15 years and 83 per cent above the 2006 level (54,200). The significant increase in the number of submissions over previous years reflects the improving ability of UNHCR to identify refugees in need of this solution, and a more conscious and strategic use of resettlement for durable solutions' and protection purposes. During the year, some 49,900 individuals, including 49,600 refugees, departed with UNHCR assistance<sup>19</sup>, almost 20,400 more than the year before. By nationality, the main beneficiaries of the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes were refugees from Myanmar (20,200), Burundi (6,300), Somalia (5,900), Iraq (3,800), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,500), and Afghanistan (2,300).

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<sup>19</sup> The disparity between submissions and departures is partly explained by the time delay between a submission by UNHCR and the decision by a resettlement State to allow for the refugee to travel. In many cases, a decision by a resettlement State is made several months after a UNHCR submission; hence the travel of refugees submitted for resettlement in 2007 might occur the following calendar year, particularly for those cases submitted in the last quarter of 2007.

UNHCR assistance departed from Thailand (14,600), Kenya (6,500), the United Republic of Tanzania (6,200), Malaysia (5,600), and Turkey (2,700). These five UNHCR offices together accounted for 7 out of every 10 UNHCR-assisted resettlement departures in 2007.

A total of 75,300 refugees were admitted by 14 resettlement countries, including the United States of America (48,300)<sup>20</sup>, Canada (11,200), Australia (9,600), Sweden (1,800), Norway (1,100), and New Zealand (740). Overall, this was 5 per cent above the total for 2006 (71,700). Over the last few years, States in Latin America have emerged as new resettlement countries, albeit at a lower scale, offering a durable solution for refugees primarily from Colombia.



*A US-bound refugee from Bhutan bids her friends and relatives goodbye in eastern Nepal's Sanischare camp. UNHCR/ V. Tan*

### Local integration

While the degree and nature of local integration is difficult to measure in quantitative terms, some countries document the acquisition of nationality, the final and crucial step towards obtaining the full protection of the asylum country. Even in those cases where refugees acquire the citizenship through naturalization, statistical data is usually very limited as the countries concerned generally do not distinguish between refugees and others who have been naturalized. Moreover, national laws in many countries do not permit refugees to become naturalized. The naturalization of refugees is both restricted and under-reported.

The limited data on naturalization of refugees available to UNHCR show that during the past decade, more than 1 million refugees were granted citizenship by their asylum country. The United States of America alone accounted for more than half of them, even though their 2007 numbers are not yet available. Azerbaijan and Armenia also granted citizenship to a significant number of refugees during the same period (188,400 and 65,000 respectively). UNHCR was informed of refugees being granted citizenship in Belgium (12,000), the United Republic of Tanzania (730), Armenia (700), Finland (570), and Ireland (370).

## **V. Age and sex characteristics**

Women, men, girls and boys have common, but also specific, protection needs. Collecting sex- and age-disaggregated information on the population falling under UNHCR's responsibility is therefore critical for planning, monitoring and evaluating humanitarian interventions and programmes. Demographic information on displaced populations, however, is not always available for all countries. It tends to be more available in countries where UNHCR is operationally active and less in developed countries where States are responsible for data collection.

Availability of demographic data also varies, depending on the type of population. It is high for refugees (available for 70%) and returnees (89%) and low for returned IDPs (7%), Others of concern (10%), and stateless persons (28%). The availability also differs by region. In Asia and the Americas, demographic data are available for about three quarters of the population falling under UNHCR's responsibility. In Africa, demographic information was reported for about half of the population, in Europe for one quarter (see Table 2 below).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Resettlement statistics for the United States of America may also include persons resettled for the purpose of family reunification.

<sup>21</sup> The geographical regions used are those of the UN Statistics Division (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>).

In 2007, demographic data were reported to UNHCR for roughly 20 million people of concern to the Office in 135 countries. As such, the breakdown by sex was available for 63 per cent of the population falling under UNHCR’s responsibility and age breakdown for 42 per cent. These are the highest absolute and relative values recorded in years. This significant better data coverage is the result of several factors. First, UNHCR’s new registration software *proGres* continues to yield positive results. By the end of 2007, the software has been deployed to 57 countries and includes more than 2.9 million active individual records. Second, UNHCR’s refugee estimates now exclude some 820,000 resettled refugees in industrialized countries whose demographic characteristics were mostly unknown. Third, as part of its responsibilities under the Cluster Approach, UNHCR and its partners have successfully conducted a number of IDP profiling exercises leading to more accurate IDP estimates in a few countries, including Chad and the Central African Republic. Demographic information is now available for some 9.8 million IDPs as compared to 5.9 million the year earlier. Fourth, following the registration of more than 2 million Afghans in Pakistan, detailed demographic data is now available for this population.

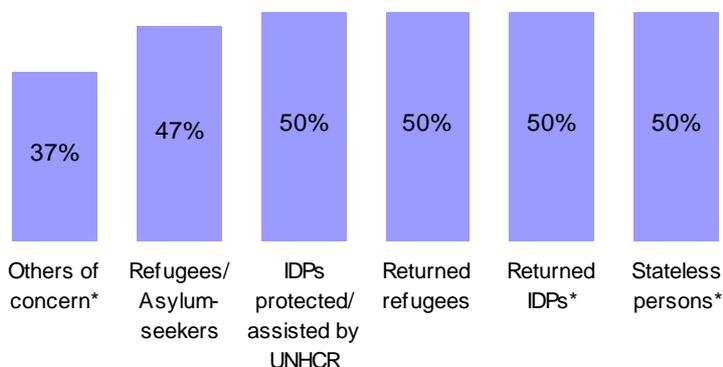
**Table 2: Availability of demographic data, end-2007 (in %)**

Population	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Total
Refugees*/Asylum-seekers	85%	15%	89%	18%	7%	70%
IDPs**	54%	100%	77%	67%	..	71%
Returnees (refugees)	77%	7%	97%	95%	..	89%
Returnees (IDPs)	5%	..	11%	85%	..	7%
Stateless persons	0%	15%	38%	0%	..	28%
Others of concern	0%	..	1%	100%	..	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>63%</b>

\* Including people in refugee-like situations. \*\* Including people in IDP-like situations.

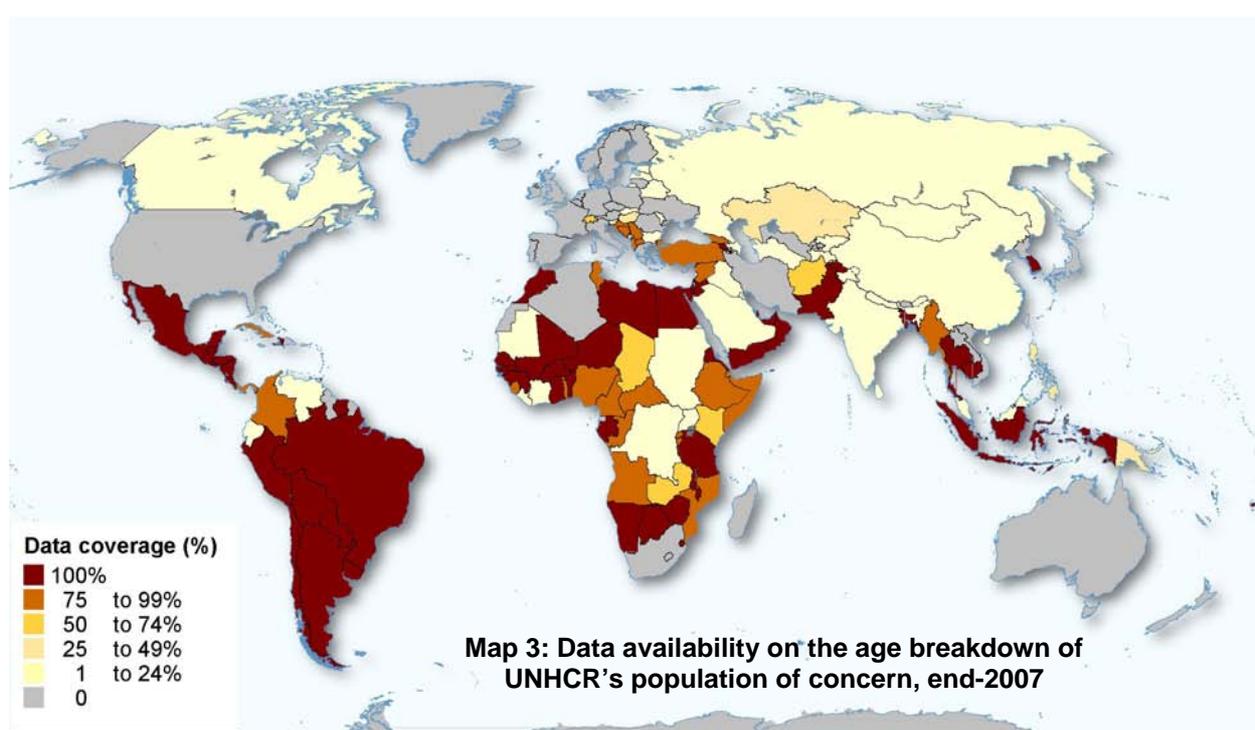
The available data by sex (20 million people) indicates that women represent half of most populations falling under UNHCR’s responsibility (see Figure 6). They represent less than half (47%) of the refugees and asylum-seekers. The lowest proportion of women is to be found among the category Others of concern to UNHCR (37%). The average figures, however, tend to hide extreme values. In the Ethiopian refugee camp of Shimelba, for instance, women represent only 23 per cent of the 16,000 inhabitants while in the Chadian camp of Annabak they represent 61 per cent of the 16,700 residents.

**Fig 6: Percentage of women by population category, end-2007**



\* Demographic data is available for less than one third of all people falling into these categories. The percentages are thus not necessarily representative.

Information on the age breakdown was available for 42 per cent of the 31.7 million people of concern to UNHCR (see Map 3 below). Some 44 per cent of these are children under the age of 18; 10 per cent being under the age of five. Half of the population is between the ages of 18 and 59 years, whereas 5 per cent are 60 years or older. Among refugees and people in refugee-like situations, children constitute 46 per cent of the population. Their proportion is significantly higher among those refugees who were able to return home in 2007 (60 per cent). This poses considerable challenges for reintegration programmes, in particular with respect to education facilities, in places that face high level of destruction caused by armed conflict. In contrast, children constitute only 27 per cent of asylum-seekers, a population which traditionally has been dominated by single men, particularly in the industrialized world.



It is important to bear in mind that the availability of information on the age breakdown is particularly limited for developed countries in Europe, North America and Oceania. Thus, the figures just summarized are not fully representative for the entire population under the Office's mandate.

## VI. Asylum-seekers

Asylum-seekers are people who have requested international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. It is important to note, that a person is a refugee from the moment he or she fulfils the criteria set out in the refugee definition. The formal recognition, for instance through individual refugee status determination, does not establish refugee status, but confirms it. The following sections present some of the main trends related to asylum applications which have been lodged on an individual basis. Neither does it include mass refugee inflows nor does it make reference to people who have been accorded refugee status on a group or *prima facie* basis.

During 2007, a total of 647,200 individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to Governments and UNHCR offices in 154 countries. This constitutes a 5 per cent increase compared to the previous year (614,300 claims) and the first raise in four years. This can primarily be attributed to the large number of Iraqis seeking international protection in Europe. An estimated 548,000 were initial asylum applications, i.e. lodged by new asylum-seekers, whereas the remaining 99,200 claims were submitted on appeal or with courts.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 3: New and appeal applications received**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Government*	791,400	615,200	586,500	499,000	541,400
UNHCR	61,800	75,500	89,300	91,500	79,800
Jointly**	4,900	1,800	7,900	23,800	26,000
% UNHCR	7%	11%	13%	15%	12%

\* Includes revised estimates. 2007 figure is incomplete.

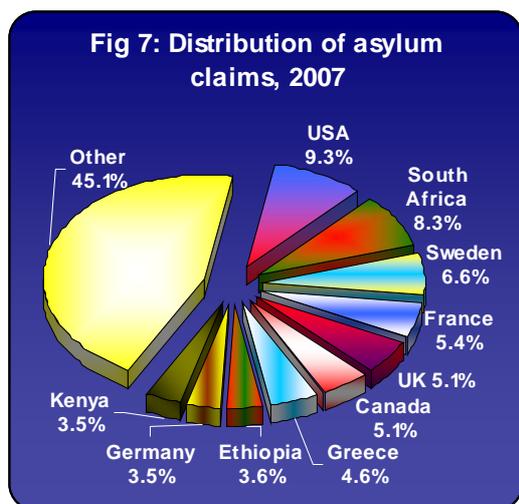
\*\* Refers to refugee status determination conducted jointly between UNHCR and the Government.

<sup>22</sup> Statistical information on outcomes of asylum appeals and court proceedings is under-reported in UNHCR statistics, particularly in developed countries, because this type of data is often either not collected by States or not published separately.

UNHCR offices registered some 79,800 applications out of the total of 647,200 claims in 2007. The Office’s share has increased in recent years and peaked in 2006 when UNHCR registered 15 per cent of all asylum applications globally. In 2007, UNHCR’s share, however, dropped to 12 per cent, primarily due to the exclusion of Somali asylum-seekers in Kenya who are recognized by UNHCR as refugees on a *prima facie* basis upon registration.

With 332,400 asylum claims registered during the year, Europe remained the primary destination for people applying for asylum on an individual basis, followed by Africa (147,100). The Americas and Asia recorded 100,300 and 60,700 respectively while Oceania received 6,700 asylum-seekers.<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that these figures include applicants who have been unsuccessful at first instance and subsequently filed an appeal.

**New individual asylum applications received**



After having been the second most important destination for new asylum-seekers in 2005 and 2006 (48,900 and 50,800 claims respectively), the United States of America became the main receiving country in 2007. Out of the 548,000 new asylum claims lodged in 2007 worldwide, an estimated 50,700<sup>24</sup>, or about 10 per cent, were submitted in the United States of America. However, rather than reflecting an increase in new asylum-seekers, the United States of America’s top position comes as a result of South Africa receiving fewer new asylum-seekers in 2007. South Africa, the top destination in 2006 with 53,400 asylum requests, was in second position in terms of new claims (45,600). With a cumulative total of more

than 251,000 individual asylum applications since 2002, this country is one of the largest recipients in the world. Sweden was the third largest recipient during 2007 (36,400 claims), mostly due to the arrival of Iraqi asylum-seekers. The 2007 level was also the third highest ever witnessed in the country since 1992 (84,000 claims)<sup>25</sup> and 1993 (37,600 claims). Other important destination countries for asylum-seekers were France (29,400), the United Kingdom (27,900), Canada (27,900), and Greece (25,100).

In 2007, UNHCR offices received 75,100 new applications for refugee status and close to 4,800 on appeal or for review. The office in Kenya received by and large the largest number of new requests (19,000). Malaysia was the second most important operation in 2007 (13,800 claims), followed by Turkey (7,600), Somalia (6,500; number of cases), Egypt (3,500), and Yemen (3,000). The top-5 receiving UNHCR offices together registered roughly 7 out of 10 applications in 2007. Moreover, over 90 per cent of UNHCR’s refugee status determination work (in terms of applications received and decisions rendered) was concentrated in 12 countries.

Kenya	19,000
Malaysia	13,800
Turkey	7,600
Somalia**	6,500
Egypt	3,500
Yemen	3,000
Cameroon	2,800
India	2,700
Libyan Arab Jam.	2,600
Pakistan	2,200

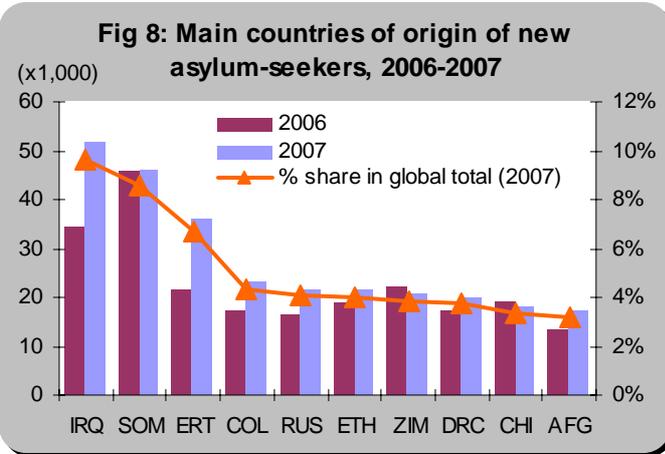
\* Excludes appeal/review claims.  
 \*\* Number of cases.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed analysis of asylum trends in industrialized countries, see *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries, 2007*, UNHCR Geneva, March 2008, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>.

<sup>24</sup> Estimated number of individuals based on the number of new cases (25,700) and multiplied by 1.4 to reflect the average number of individuals per case (Source: Department of Homeland Security); and number of new “defensive” asylum requests lodged with the Executive Office of Immigration Review (14,800, reported by individuals).

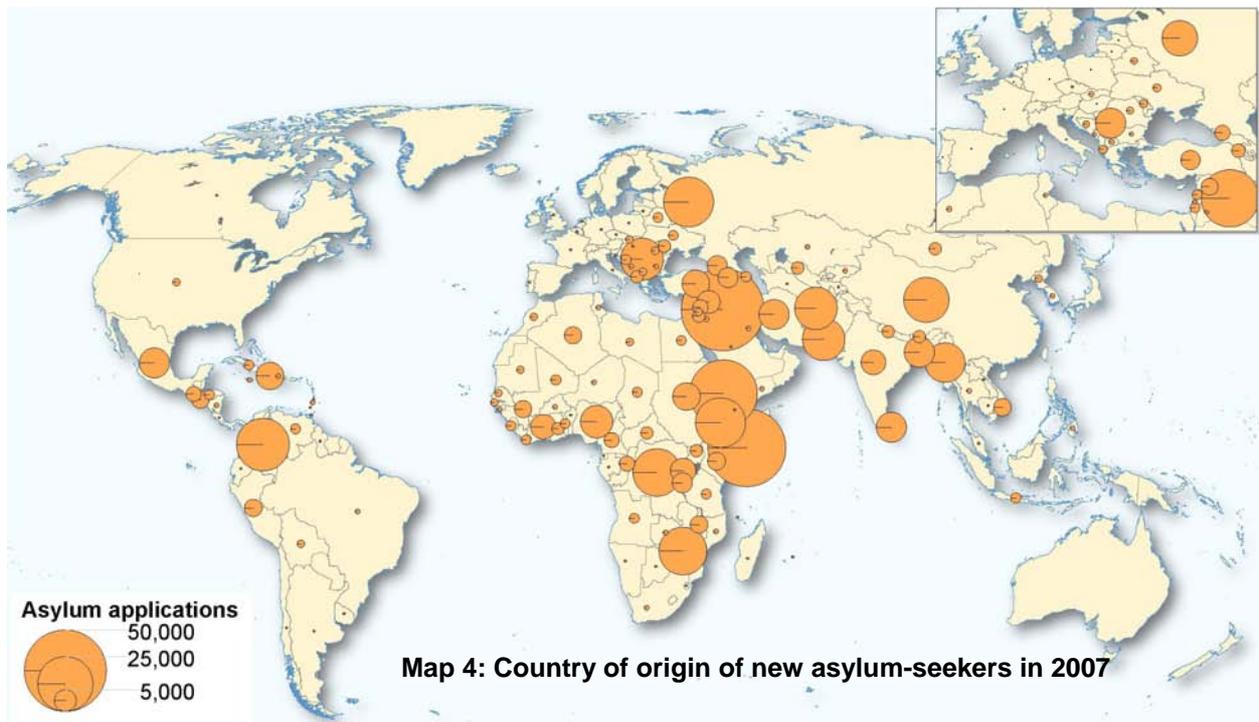
<sup>25</sup> Out of the 84,000 requests submitted in 1992, more than 69,000 were lodged by citizens of the former Yugoslavia.

By nationality, the highest number of new asylum claims was filed by individuals originating from Iraq (52,000), Somalia (46,100), Eritrea (36,000), Colombia (23,200), the Russian Federation (21,800), Ethiopia (21,600), and Zimbabwe (20,700) (see Map 4). Whereas Iraqi citizens claimed asylum in 89 countries worldwide during 2007, almost half of those claims were



lodged in Sweden (18,600) and Greece (5,500). Similarly, half of all Somali asylum requests were submitted in Kenya (14,200), where UNHCR conducts refugee status determination, and Ethiopia (9,300). The highest concentration of Eritrean asylum-seekers was in Sudan (14,100 new claims) and Ethiopia (7,800) while Colombians primarily sought asylum in Ecuador (11,600) and Canada (2,600). The majority of new asylum-seekers from the Russian Federation applied for refugee status in Poland (9,200) and France

(3,300). The highest number of Ethiopian asylum-seekers was to be found in Somalia (6,500 new claims) and South Africa (3,400), whereas 85 per cent of all Zimbabwean asylum requests in 2007 were lodged in South Africa (17,700 applications).



Provisional figures indicate that an estimated 468,600 decisions on individual asylum applications were rendered during 2007, a 6 per cent decrease as compared to the 500,800 decisions taken in 2006 and a 17 per cent decrease compared to 2005 (567,100 decisions). These figures exclude cases which were closed for administrative reasons<sup>26</sup>, without taking a decision on the substance. In 2007, more than 171,000 cases were closed without a substantive decision issued to the applicant. It is important to note that the 2007 data is still incomplete owing to the fact that a few States have not yet released all their official statistics. As a consequence, the 2007 decision data quoted in this document are not fully comparable with previous years. Out of the 468,600 substantive decisions in 2007, UNHCR staff adjudicated more than 51,000, or 11 per

<sup>26</sup> Also labeled as "non-substantive" decisions which might result from, among others, the death of the applicant, no-show for interview, withdrawal of the application, or abandonment of the claim.

cent, the same relative share as in previous years. In five countries, including Ethiopia and Israel, more than 20,000 substantive decisions were taken jointly by UNHCR and the Government concerned.

Some 209,000 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees or given a complementary form of protection in the course of 2007. This number includes an estimated 27,800 individuals who initially received a negative decision, but that outcome was subsequently overturned at the appeal or review stage, indicating possible deficiencies of the asylum procedure in some countries. In Europe, 44,100 asylum-seekers were granted individual refugee status under the 1951 Convention and another 49,200 a complementary form of protection (including subsidiary protection and humanitarian status). Both figures were significantly higher than in 2006, with the former having increased by 33 per cent and the latter by a striking 45 per cent. One fourth of all positive decisions in Europe in 2007 were issued to Iraqi asylum-seekers. Other nationalities receiving international protection in Europe were asylum-seekers originating from the Russian Federation (9,600 positive decisions), Somalia (7,300), Eritrea (6,100), and Serbia (5,500).

With more than 51,000 positive decisions in 2007, Africa was the second largest region in terms of recognizing asylum-seekers. Here, in particular Eritrean and Somali asylum-seekers were accorded international protection on an individual basis (17,900 and 14,600 positive decisions respectively). In Asia, close to 35,000 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees or granted a complementary form of protection (including 16,700 asylum-seekers from Myanmar). In the Americas, more than 28,000 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees, mostly in the United States of America (18,000) and Canada (5,900).

In addition to the 209,000 people who received a positive decision on their asylum application during 2007, more than 259,500 claims were rejected on substantive grounds, 49,300 less than the year before. This number includes negative decisions at the first instance which might be appealed. Asylum-seekers who appealed a negative decision at first instance may have been counted twice in this figure.

At the global level, the Refugee Recognition Rate (RRR) amounted to an estimated 32 per cent of all decisions taken during 2007 while the Total Recognition Rate (TRR) was 45 per cent.<sup>27</sup> Both values were above the corresponding rates in 2006 (28 per cent for RRR and 38 per cent for TRR). It is important to bear in mind that recognition rates at the global level are purely indicative given that some States have not yet reported their asylum data. Moreover, in reality the proportion of positive decisions is higher, because people rejected on appeal are counted twice.

Table 5: Substantive decisions taken

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Government	676,100	579,400	501,900	427,600	396,800
UNHCR	39,900	45,400	60,100	56,400	51,200
Jointly**	2,500	500	5,200	16,800	20,600
% UNHCR	6%	7%	11%	11%	11%

\* 2007 figure is incomplete.

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



An asylum-seeker stands amid the crowd gathered outside a South African government office processing applications for asylum. UNHCR/ J. Redden

<sup>27</sup> 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.

By the end of the year, close to 740,000 individuals were still awaiting a decision on their asylum claim at the global level. This figure includes people at any level of the asylum procedure and the real magnitude of undecided asylum cases is unknown because a sizeable number of countries were not able to report this type of information. Based on the information available to UNHCR, the number of asylum-seekers awaiting a decision globally has gone down by one third since 2002. This could be an indication that asylum procedures have become more efficient, but may also coincide with a decrease in the number of new asylum applications submitted in the past few years.

At the end of 2007, the largest number of undecided cases at the first instance and on appeal was reported by South Africa (171,000). This figure includes 89,000 undecided cases at the first instance and close to 82,000 cases which were pending decision at the end of 2006. A Ministerial Initiative with special measures to clear the backlog was implemented in 2006. Official figures on the outcome of this Initiative, however, were not yet available. In the United States of America, the number of pending cases at the end of (its fiscal) year totalled 84,000. Other countries with high numbers of pending cases included Austria (38,400), Canada (37,500), and Germany (34,100).

**Different recognition rates – different practices?**

Significant differences in recognition rates between countries may point to different standards of treatment for asylum-seekers. The example of Iraqi asylum-seekers below might point into this direction. For instance, the recognition rate for Iraqi asylum-seekers in Greece shows zero while in Germany roughly two thirds of Iraqis were recognized as refugees. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, only 15 per cent of all substantive decisions related to Iraqi asylum claims resulted in refugee status. In Sweden, out of a total of 9,876 positive decisions on Iraqi claims, 98 per cent were granted a complementary form of protection.

**Recognition rate for Iraqi asylum-seekers, 2007\***

Country	Conv- ention status	Non- Conv- ention status**	Reje- cted	% Conv ention status ***	RRR	TRR
Austria	215	143	96	60.1%	47.4%	78.9%
Belgium	206	238	241	46.4%	30.1%	64.8%
Germany	1,766	22	996	98.8%	63.4%	64.2%
Greece	0	0	3,948	..	0.0%	0.0%
Netherlands	231	1,263	474	15.5%	11.7%	75.9%
Norway	54	471	387	10.3%	5.9%	57.6%
Sweden	168	9,708	2,380	1.7%	1.4%	80.6%
UK	210	135	1,095	60.9%	14.6%	24.0%

\* Figures refer to first instance procedure. Non-substantive decisions are excluded.

\*\* Complementary form of protection, subsidiary protection, humanitarian status etc.

\*\*\* Percentage of Convention status granted out of total positive decisions (Convention + non-Convention).

**VII. Internally Displaced Persons**

UNHCR does not have a global mandate to protect or assist all conflict-generated IDPs, estimated at some 26 million.<sup>28</sup> Since the introduction of the Cluster Approach, however, UNHCR has become increasingly involved with IDPs as part of a broader engagement by the United Nations and other agencies. The Office has also continued its programmes for IDPs to whom it was already providing protection and assistance prior to the Cluster Approach. Therefore, the IDPs included in this report refer only to people benefiting either directly or indirectly from UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities. Indirect benefit could range from individual or community-based humanitarian assistance to capacity building to enhance authorities’ capacity for providing protection and other responses.



*Distribution of non-food items among IDPs in Afgooye, Somalia. UNHCR/ I. Taxte*

<sup>28</sup> For detailed statistics on global internal displacement, see the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) website of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

The number of internally displaced persons, including people in IDP-like situations<sup>29</sup> who receive protection and assistance from UNHCR under the inter-agency mechanisms or bilateral arrangements with the relevant Government stood at 13.7 million at the end of 2007. This constitutes an increase of almost 1 million compared to the previous year (12.8 million) and more than double the figure before the activation of the Cluster Approach (6.6 million in 2005). UNHCR offices reported close to 2.2 million newly displaced people in 2007, and 2.1 million IDPs were able to return home during the same period. In all, UNHCR statistics include IDP populations in 23 countries.

#### **IDP Profiling – the future for counting IDPs?**

Obtaining the number of IDPs poses a major challenge due to a combination of factors, including the lack of appropriate data collection tools, guidelines and methodologies to estimate their numbers. The lack of access to IDPs because of insecurity is often another reason why reliable IDP estimates are difficult to obtain.

UNHCR and its partners are increasingly using surveys to profile the IDP population and collect data that cannot be obtained otherwise. IDP profiling is not only an important collaborative process but also a cost-effective way of improving the availability and quality of timely and reliable information on this population. It allows, among other, to obtain information on numbers, sex and age distribution, location, specific needs and other key protection related data which is useful to support country operations.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in collaboration with UNHCR, have developed the IDP Profiling Guidance\* (First release, November 2007). It was finalized in the framework of the Global Protection Cluster Working Group and proposes different methodologies and provides advice on choosing the most suitable enumeration method for a given country context.

\* See [www.humanitarianreform.org](http://www.humanitarianreform.org)

With millions of displaced people, Colombia has one of the largest IDP populations in the world.<sup>30</sup> In Iraq, with the sectarian divide and the lack of a comprehensive political solution, the number of IDPs rose from 1.8 million at the start of the year to close to 2.4 million by the end of 2007. It is estimated that more than 1.2 million Iraqis became displaced within their country in the past two years alone. Renewed armed conflict in Somalia displaced an estimated 600,000 people within the country and as a consequence, the number of IDPs increased to 1 million by the end of the year. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also witnessed extensive new internal displacement in the course of the year with the number of IDPs estimated at 1.3 million. An estimated 565,000<sup>31</sup> Congolese were forced to flee their homes as result of renewed fighting between the Government armed forces and militia groups, as well as widespread human rights violations. This notwithstanding, almost 1 million IDPs were able to return by the end of 2007.

Out of the 1.8 million IDPs<sup>32</sup> in Uganda, some 579,000 returned to their villages in the course of the year, reducing the IDP population remaining in camps and transit sites to 1.2 million. Both IDPs and IDP returnees, however,

continue to benefit from UNHCR's protection and assistance activities under the Cluster Approach. In Sudan, the number of IDPs reported by UNHCR was around 1.25 million by the end of the year. Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sri Lanka, and Yemen were among those countries reporting either new situations of internal displacement or significant increases in the IDP population during 2007. In Lebanon and Nepal, however, significant progress has been made in finding durable solutions for IDPs. In Lebanon, 130,000 people

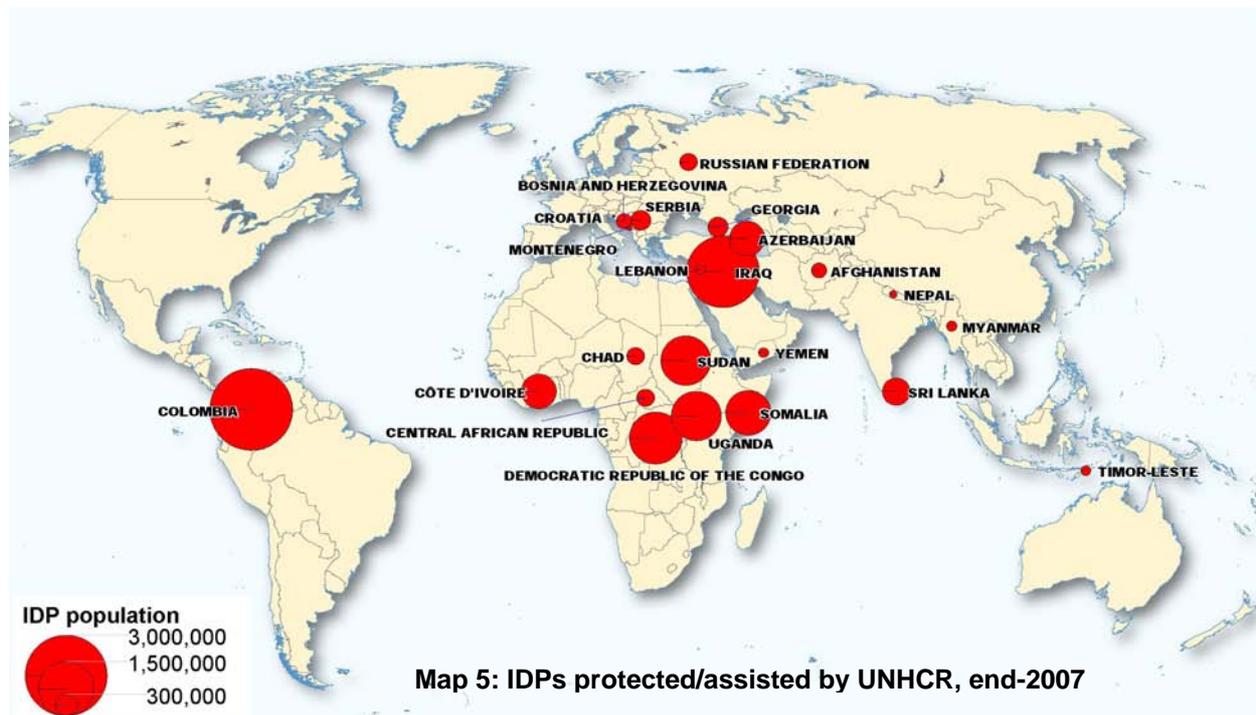
<sup>29</sup> The IDP-like situations refer to Georgia (61,000) and the Russian Federation (85,200).

<sup>30</sup> The difficulties associated with accuracy in IDP statistics in Colombia have been highlighted in a landmark judgment by the Constitutional Court of that country, which pointed to serious discrepancies between the real magnitude of the situation and the figures of the national registration system. In its Order of Compliance to the Landmark Judgment on Displacement, the Court cites the Director of the *Agencia Presidencial de Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional* as having acknowledged in public statements that IDP figures in Colombia are close to 3 million (Order of Compliance 218, dated 11 August 2006, related to the Landmark Judgment T-025).

<sup>31</sup> This figure includes 435,000 newly displaced persons in North Kivu (displaced during December 2006 and December 2007), 100,000 in South Kivu (2007 only) and 30,000 in Ituri (2007 only).

<sup>32</sup> Revised estimate. Previously reported figure was 1.6 million IDPs.

returned to their places of habitual residence while in Nepal an estimated 50,000 individuals went home.



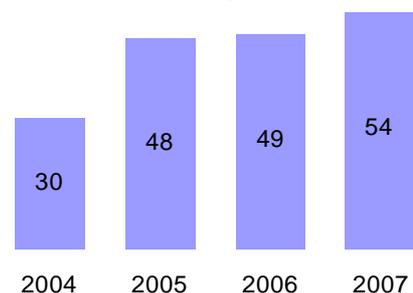
### VIII. Stateless persons

UNHCR has been tasked by the United Nations General Assembly and the Executive Committee, through various resolutions, to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to ensure the protection of stateless persons as well as to inform the international community on the magnitude of this problem. The identification of stateless persons is a key step for addressing the problem and is fundamental to the discharge of the responsibility entrusted to UNHCR.

Statelessness is not always well understood and the scope of the phenomenon in specific countries is often ignored. Measuring the magnitude of statelessness is complicated by the very nature of the phenomenon. Stateless people often live in a precarious situation on the margins of society, because they lack identity documentation, are illegally in the territory and/or are subject to discrimination. Nonetheless some countries have procedures in place for the identification and documentation of stateless people which facilitates gathering more precise data.

This report only includes data on countries for which reliable official statistics or estimates of stateless populations are available. Annex table 7 also includes some countries (marked with an asterisk) that have significant stateless populations but for which no reliable figures could be provided, including Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, and Thailand.

**Fig 9: Number of countries reporting statistics on stateless persons**



Available data on statelessness in 2007 and previous years reflect two major trends. First, they show a continuing gradual expansion in coverage. Statistics on statelessness were available for 54 countries in 2007; an increase from 49 countries in 2006, 48 in 2005 and 30 in 2004. The increase in data coverage reflects the efforts of UNHCR field offices to

gather better data on statelessness in recent years. These efforts were likely bolstered by an increasing awareness of statelessness in a number of countries around the world. It is clear, however, that UNHCR needs to redouble efforts to identify stateless populations.

The second trend is the dramatic reduction in UNHCR's figures for stateless persons in 2007, as compared to 2006. The total number of stateless persons reported in UNHCR statistics dropped by roughly 3 million as a result of the major breakthroughs achieved in Nepal and Bangladesh. In Nepal, new legislation adopted in the context of the peace process was followed by a massive campaign in early 2007 to issue citizenship certificates. These were issued to approximately 2.6 million people who were confirmed as nationals of Nepal. In Bangladesh, to prepare for elections later this year the Government has been registering adults of the Bihari/Urdu-speaking communities which have a total population estimated at 250,000 to 300,000 people. The rights of the Bihari/Urdu-speakers as Bangladeshi citizens had not been recognized following the separation of what is now Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. They are also being issued national identity cards. As a consequence, the number of stateless persons in UNHCR statistics dropped from 5.8 million in 2006 to slightly under 3 million people by the end of 2007.

UNHCR is not yet in a position to provide definitive statistics on the number of stateless persons in all countries around the world. As a result, there is a discrepancy between reliable country-level data reported by UNHCR and the total estimated number of stateless worldwide, some 12 million people. The increase in data coverage means that there will also be a gradual narrowing of this gap.

### **IX. Other groups or persons of concern**

UNHCR also extends its protection or assistance activities to individuals whom it considers "of concern", but who do not fall into any of the above population categories. These activities are based on humanitarian or other special grounds and might, for instance, include asylum-seekers who have been rejected, but who are deemed by UNHCR to be in need of international protection. As indicated before, populations who were included under this group up to 2006 have been reclassified as being either in a refugee-like or IDP-like situation and thus been merged with the refugee or IDP categories. As a consequence, figures related to the Others of concern to UNHCR group are not comparable with the ones previously reported. Moreover, the number of individuals reported among this population has drastically gone down following the reclassification and included 68,600 people at the end of 2007.

## 2007 Global Trends

**Table 6: Explanation of main changes in UNHCR's population of concern from end-2006 to end-2007**

Source of main changes	Country	Population category	Change 2006-2007	Main reason for change/inclusion in UNHCR statistics
<b>1. Population movements (new displacement, repatriation)</b>				
	Central African Rep.	IDPs	+50,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Chad	IDPs	+66,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	IDPs	+243,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Iraq	IDPs	+551,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Lebanon	IDPs and Returned IDPs (during 2007)	-130,000 IDPs	Return of IDPs
	Nepal	IDPs and Returned IDPs (during 2007)	-50,000 IDPs	Return of IDPs
	Pakistan	Refugees (excluding refugee-like situations)	-156,000 refugees	Repatriation of Afghans, but excluding unregistered Afghans in the country who nevertheless were assisted by UNHCR to return to Afghanistan.
	Somalia	IDPs	+600,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	South Africa	Asylum-seekers	+40,000 asylum-seekers	Newly registered asylum-seekers in 2007 pending refugee status determination.
	Timor-Leste	IDPs	-92,000 IDPs	Combination of returned IDPs and revised Government estimate for remaining IDP population
	Uganda	IDPs and Returned IDPs (during 2007)	-579,000 IDPs	Start-2007 figure revised upwards from 1.6 mln to more than 1.8 mln as a result of IASC Protection Cluster Working Group agreement. IDP figure decreased to 1.24 million as a result of 590,000 IDPs returning to their villages.
	Uganda	Refugees	-43,000 refugees	Repatriation of Sudanese refugees.
	United Republic of Tanzania	Refugees	-50,000 refugees	Repatriation of Burundian and Congolese refugees.
	Yemen	IDPs	+77,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
<b>2. New methodology, change in source or new data available</b>				
	Armenia	Refugees	-110,000	Census in Armenia found that most refugees had left the country or naturalized in Armenia.
	Australia	Refugees	-47,000	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals of refugees.
	Bangladesh	Stateless persons	-300,000	Government confirmed that the 300,000 Biharis in Bangladesh are citizens of the country.
	Canada	Refugees	+24,000	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals of refugees.
	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK	Refugees	-45,000 (total for all countries)	UNHCR's refugee estimate in these countries excludes resettled refugees as of 2007.
	Georgia	People in IDP-like situations	61,000 (no change in number)	61,000 persons originating from Abkhazia and South Ossetia formerly reported as Others of concern are now included under "people in IDP-like situation".
	Kazakhstan	Stateless persons	-40,500	As a result of changes in the citizenship law, ethnic Kazakhs previously listed as stateless persons are no longer included.
	Lebanon	Refugees	+30,000	Survey estimated that number of Iraqis was higher than initially estimated (20,000)
	Nepal	Stateless persons	-2.6 million	Certificates issued to 2.6 million stateless persons in Nepal bringing the previous estimate of 3.4 million down to 800,000.
	New Zealand	Refugees	-1,800	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals of refugees.
	Pakistan	People in refugee-like situations	+1.15 million	Inclusion of registered Afghans in Pakistan living outside refugee villages and who are in a refugee-like situation.
	Russian Federation	People in refugee-like situations	-100,000	100,000 Afghans in a refugee-like situation were taken out of the statistics since no reliable source was found to confirm the figure.
	Russian Federation	People in IDP-like situations	-47,000	Number of Involuntarily Relocating Persons (IRP) registered in the country decreased by 47,000.
	Syrian Arab Republic	Refugees	+800,000	Revised Government estimate for Iraqi refugees in the country.
	United States of America	Refugees	-553,000	UNHCR's refugee estimate now excludes resettled refugees.