

STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 2007

TRENDS IN DISPLACEMENT, PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS



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

DECEMBER 2008



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MAIN FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the major statistical developments occurring in 2007. Key events are summarized, highlighting the main findings. For an in-depth analysis of these developments, including the definitions applied and data limitations, please consult Chapters I to V.

TOTAL POPULATION OF CONCERN

- *The 2007 Statistical Yearbook identifies seven population categories, i.e. refugees; asylum-seekers; internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR; stateless persons; returned refugees; returned IDPs; and Others of concern. They are collectively referred to as “total population of concern” or “persons of concern”.¹*

- *By the end of 2007, the total population of concern to UNHCR was estimated at 31.7 million people, including 11.4 million refugees²; 740,000 asylum-seekers; 731,000 refugees who had repatriated during 2007; 13.7 million IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR; 2.1 million IDPs who had returned to their place of origin in 2007; some 2.9 million stateless persons; and some 69,000 Others of concern. The total population of concern to UNHCR decreased by 3 per cent during 2007.*

- *The number of refugees increased for the second consecutive year as a result of new displacement and changes in the statistical calculation methodology.³ The category of IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR increased by 7 per cent, while the number of stateless persons almost halved, primarily due to major breakthroughs achieved in Bangladesh and Nepal.*

- *The number of returned IDPs (2.1 million) was the highest in more than a decade. The asylum-seeker population, that is people whose asylum applications have not yet been adjudicated by the end of the reporting period, remained stable at 740,000. Close to 731,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily during 2007, virtually the same number as in 2006.*

Refugees

- *The number of refugees at the end of 2007 stood at 11.4 million, including 1.7 million people considered by UNHCR to be in a refugee-like situation. The previous year, that figure was 9.9 million. In view of changes introduced in the methodology and scope for estimating refugee populations in a number of countries, the 2007 figure is not fully comparable with those of previous years.*

- *By the end of 2007, developing countries hosted 9.3 million refugees, 82 per cent of the global refugee population. The 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) provided asylum to 18 per cent of the world’s refugees.*

- *By the end of 2007, Asia hosted the largest number of refugees (55%), followed by Africa (22%), Europe (14%), Latin America and the Caribbean (5%), North*

¹ For a definition of the different population categories, see pp. 16-17.

² The 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are not included in UNHCR statistics.

³ See the introduction for more details.

America (4%), and Oceania (0.3%).⁴

- Pakistan (some 2.0 million; UNHCR estimate)⁵ and the Syrian Arab Republic (1.5 million; Government estimate) hosted the largest number of refugees at the end of 2007. Other major countries of asylum included the Islamic Republic of Iran (964,000), Germany (579,000), Jordan (500,000; Government estimate), and the United Republic of Tanzania (436,000).

- By the end of 2007, there were more than 3 million Afghan refugees according to UNHCR estimates, including 1.1 million in a refugee-like situation. Afghan refugees accounted for one quarter of the global refugee population under UNHCR's responsibility. Iraq was the second largest country of origin of refugees (2.3 million)⁶, followed by Sudan (523,000), Somalia (457,000), Burundi (376,000), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (370,000).

Durable solutions

- In 2007, 731,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily to their home country, virtually the same number as in 2006 (734,000). Afghans constituted half (374,000) of all returnees during 2007. Other countries of origin to which many refugees repatriated during 2007 were Sudan (131,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (60,000), Iraq (45,000), and Liberia (44,000). In total, 13 countries of origin reported the return of more than 1,000 refugees each.

- According to government statistics, 14 industrialized countries reported the admission of 75,300 resettled refugees during 2007, 5 per cent more than in 2006 (71,700). The countries resettling most refugees during 2007 were the United States of America (48,300; during its Fiscal Year⁷), Canada (11,300), Australia (9,600), and Sweden (1,800).

- In 2007, UNHCR submitted close to 100,000 people for resettlement consideration by States, the highest number of the past 15 years and 83 per cent above the 2006 level (54,200). During the year, some 50,000 individuals departed with UNHCR assistance. The largest number of refugees resettled with UNHCR assistance departed from Thailand (14,600), Kenya (6,500), the United Republic of Tanzania (6,100), Malaysia (5,600), and Turkey (2,700). By nationality, the main beneficiaries of the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes were refugees from Myanmar (20,300), Burundi (6,200), Somalia (5,900), Iraq (3,800), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,500), and Afghanistan (2,300).

- At the end of 2007, there were 31 protracted refugee situations in 25 developing countries affecting 6.2 million refugees and people in refugee-like situations.

⁴ 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>).

⁵ 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 (1,147,800). 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.

⁶ This includes Government estimates for Iraqi refugees in Jordan (500,000) and the Syrian Arab Republic (1.5 million).

⁷ The US Fiscal Year covers the period 1 October to 30 September.

Refugee status determination

- During 2007, more than 653,000 individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to Governments and UNHCR offices in 154 countries. This constitutes a 6 per cent increase compared to the previous year (614,300 claims) and the first rise in four years. An estimated 548,000 were first instance asylum applications whereas the remaining 105,400 claims were submitted on appeal or with courts. UNHCR offices registered some 79,800 applications out of the total of 653,000 claims in 2007, accounting for 12 per cent of all applications.

- With 338,600 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.

- With an estimated 50,700 asylum applications received in 2007, the United States of America was the main recipient of new asylum-seekers. South Africa was second most important destination with 45,600 registered asylum claims in 2007, followed by Sweden (36,400), France (29,400), the United Kingdom (27,900), Canada (27,900), and Greece (25,100).

- Iraq was the main country of origin of asylum-seekers: 52,000 new claims were lodged by its citizens in 2007 in more than 80 countries. Somalia was the second leading country of origin of asylum-seekers (46,100), followed by Eritrea (36,000), Colombia (23,200), and the Russian Federation (21,800).

- Close to 210,000 asylum-seekers were recognized as refugees (149,500) or given a complementary form of protection (60,200) in the course of 2007. This number includes an estimated 29,500 individuals who initially received a negative decision that was subsequently overturned at the appeal or review stage.

- Convention refugee status was granted in 33 per cent of first instance decisions taken in 2007, slightly higher than the year before (31%). Including complementary forms of protection and humanitarian status, 47 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken at the first instance in 2007 were positive.

- Some 35 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken on appeal during 2007 resulted in the granting of refugee status (25%) or a complementary form of protection (10%).

- By the end of the year, close to 740,000 individuals around the world were still awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The number of asylum-seekers awaiting a decision globally has gone down by one third since 2002.

Sex and age

- For the 31.7 million people of concern to UNHCR, data on sex are available for 20 million people (63%), while data on age are available for 13.4 million (42%).

- Out of the 20 million people of concern for whom disaggregated information by sex is available, these data indicate that 49 per cent are female.

- Children and adolescents represent the majority of people of concern in Africa and Asia. In the Central Africa and the Great Lakes as well as in the East and Horn

of Africa regions, they constitute 55 and 54 per cent respectively of UNHCR's people of concern. The lowest proportion of children is found in countries covered by the Regional Bureau for Europe (18%). Here, elderly people of concern (18%) constitute at least three times more than in any other region for which data is available.

Locations

- Although the precise number of refugee locations is difficult to establish, in 2007, UNHCR identified over 1,100 different locations. These included some 370 camps or centres, 480 urban locations, and close to 300 locations where refugees and other persons of concern were living in rural areas dispersed among the local population. An estimated 13.7 million people were living in these three locations, accounting for 43 per cent of the 31.7 million people under the Office's competency.

- In 2007, UNHCR received detailed data on some 370 individual camps or collective centers. On average, the population of a camp was some 10,400 people and approximately one quarter (26%) of the camps hosted more than 10,000 residents. The largest individual camp was Mtabila in the United Republic of Tanzania with some 91,000 inhabitants.

- UNHCR had registered or was otherwise involved with refugees in some 400 urban locations in 2007. The average number of refugees at these locations was 8,000. Some 85 per cent of urban locations hosted fewer than 1,000 people.

- The number of refugees in urban areas continues to grow. Based on the available information, it is estimated that half of the refugee population was residing in urban areas, and one third in camps at the end of 2007.⁸

Host country capacities

- Pakistan hosted the largest number of refugees in relation to its economic capacity. At the end of 2007, the country hosted 785 refugees per 1 USD Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PPP)⁹ per capita. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was the country with the second largest number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita (569 refugees), followed by the United Republic of Tanzania (347 refugees), and the Syrian Arab Republic (335 refugees).

⁸ Information on the location is available for 8.8 million out of the 11.4 million refugees (77%) at the end of 2007.

⁹ This refers to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP per capita.

INTRODUCTION

Responding to internal and external requests for information on the number and well-being of refugees and other persons of concern is an essential part of UNHCR's work.¹⁰ Knowing how many people are of concern and what their characteristics and protection needs are, is fundamental to respond efficiently to their needs. It is also essential for public information, advocacy and fundraising purposes. By summarizing in quantitative terms the humanitarian impact of some major developments which have occurred between January and December 2007, this document aims at contributing to the Office's efforts towards evidence-based decision making. The 2007 Statistical Yearbook focuses on three major issues.

First, the yearbook analyses recent levels, composition and trends in the number of people considered to be of concern to UNHCR. It includes information on new displacement; protracted situations; the demographic composition; or on the type of settlement in which they live. These parameters are crucial for all planning and programming activities. Second, because finding durable solutions for those who have sought international protection is central to UNHCR's mandate, progress made by the Office and its partners towards achieving such solutions is assessed in the 2007 Yearbook. Third, it also provides insight into the well-being and living conditions of refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern to UNHCR by assessing selected protection gaps, as well as the quality of international protection and assistance on a case-study basis.

In 2007, armed conflicts have resulted in the movement of millions of people within and outside their countries. In contrast, 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.

In addition to population movements (new arrivals and repatriation), UNHCR's internal review of statistical classification and definitions was another source of changes in the statistics. This review started in 2006 and continued throughout 2007. One of its main goals 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. The methodology for estimating refugees in industrialized countries was revised, and certain groups or categories of populations previously included under Others of concern to UNHCR were reclassified.

To ensure that the refugee population in industrialized countries that lack a dedicated refugee register is nevertheless reflected in the global refugee statistics, UNHCR made estimates based on refugee arrivals through resettlement programmes and on 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

¹⁰ Both the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refer to the responsibility of countries to provide statistical data to the High Commissioner.

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 and the United States of America, but it does affect the estimates for Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

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.¹¹ 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 comparable with previous years. The total population of concern, however, has remained unaffected despite these adjustments.

In addition to providing an overview of global population trends, this year's edition of the Statistical Yearbook includes a selection of relevant protection and assistance themes focusing on the regional rather than the global perspective. Using additional boxes analysing a given topic within a region more closely, the 2007 Yearbook aims at being more analytical and as such facilitating the use statistics for decision making. Examples for the increased usage of data within UNHCR in recent years include the development of UNHCR's results-based management software FOCUS¹², the publication of the document *Measuring Protection by Numbers*¹³ and the extensive use of Standards and Indicators (S&I) baseline data to elaborate the annual country operation plans.

The statistics in the 2007 Yearbook have for the most part been reported by UNHCR country offices, based on Government sources, non-governmental organizations and UNHCR's registration programmes. Even though global migration poses a challenge for asylum and refugee management, this document does not address mixed migration flows. The main reason is the lack of reliable statistical data that would be required for an evidence-based analysis of this phenomenon.¹⁴ Unless otherwise specified, the Yearbook does not refer to events occurring after 31 December 2007.

Since this publication is limited to populations for whom UNHCR has a mandate, it does not provide a comprehensive picture of global forced displacement. For example, the 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are not included in the Yearbook. 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 known as the cluster approach.¹⁵

The 2007 Statistical Yearbook consists of five chapters. **Chapter I** describes data sources and methodological issues. This chapter is essential for understanding and

¹¹ The definition of "refugee-like situation" and "IDP-like situation" is provided on page 16.

¹² The software will be rolled out in the course of 2009.

¹³ <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/4579701b2.pdf>

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

using the data contained in the 2007 Yearbook. The main purpose is to present information that will assist in interpreting UNHCR's data, with a special focus on the basic concepts, key variables and classifications, the underlying estimation methods and issues pertaining to data quality. It also comprises a box on good practices in data collection in Ecuador.

Chapter II presents a global overview of the size, main origin and destination of first the total population of concern to UNHCR in 2007 and then by its individual population categories. It is central for understanding the changes in comparison to 2006 and previous years. It also includes age and sex characteristics of UNHCR's population of concern and provides an overview of protection challenges faced by Iraqi refugees living in urban areas across the Middle East.

Chapter III focuses on the main population movements during 2007, with particular emphasis on durable solutions and new refugee outflows. Besides providing an insight into resettlement activities undertaken by UNHCR's Regional Representation in Bangkok, Thailand, this chapter also discusses definitional and measurement issues in relation to protracted situations.

Chapter IV provides a quantitative overview of individual asylum applications and the various components of the refugee status determination process. This also includes UNHCR's role in the asylum process. Given the specific protection needs by unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum, a dedicated box sheds more light on this phenomenon.

Based on case studies, **Chapter V** attempts to illustrate selected protection and assistance gaps in the humanitarian field, primarily based on UNHCR's Standards and Indicators initiative and Health Information System. Three topics have been selected: the access to and quality of education in refugee settings; the sustainability of refugee returns in selected countries in the East and Horn of Africa; and food distribution and nutrition levels among refugees in 2007.

The last part of the Yearbook contains the annex tables, providing detailed statistical data. Data on historical trends, allowing for an easy comparison of trends globally, by region as well as by country for all major subject matters can be found at UNHCR's statistical website (www.unhcr.org/statistics) and downloaded at www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase, UNHCR's *Statistical Online Population Database*. For easy access to the 2007 statistics, it is recommended to consult UNHCR's newly launched *Interactive RefScout* at www.unhcr.org/statistics/RefScout.