

Introduction

Each year, thousands of refugees flee their home country and are recognized either on an individual basis or through group determination. At the same time, some persons are able to find a solution and put an end to sometimes years of prolonged displacement. As progress in achieving durable solutions is partly offset by new outflows of refugees, this chapter looks at both durable solutions which were found and new displacement which occurred, during 2009.

Of the three solutions (return, resettlement and local integration), more refugees have benefited from voluntary repatriation than from the other two solutions. Resettlement is a responsibility-sharing mechanism and key protection tool. It often is used to protect the most vulnerable groups of refugees (see end of this chapter). Local integration is a complex and gradual process with legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Local integration is difficult to quantify and measure due to the variety of forms it takes; the analysis of local integration data in the Yearbook is limited to statistics available on the naturalization of refugees by host countries.

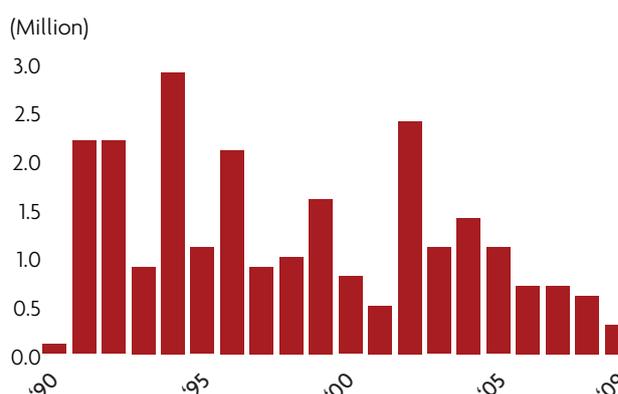
Durable solutions

The need for durable solutions is not limited to refugees; IDPs and stateless persons also require lasting resolution to their legal and physical protection needs. However, due to the lack of reliable data on solutions for other groups, the analysis in this section is about durable solutions accorded to refugees only.

Voluntary repatriation: lowest level in 20 years⁴⁵

Consolidating reports from countries of asylum (departure) and origin (return), UNHCR estimated that 251,500 refugees repatriated voluntarily during 2009. This is less than half (-58%) the 2008 number (604,000). Repatriation figures have continuously decreased since 2004, and the year 2009 was the lowest since 1990 when 139,000 refugees returned (see Figure III.1). The large-scale repatriation movements observed in the past continued to decline. Globally, an estimated 24.7 million refugees returned home over the past 20 years, most with UNHCR assistance.

Fig. III.1 Refugee returns, 1990-2009



The main countries of return in 2009 were Afghanistan (57,600), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (44,300), Iraq (38,000), Sudan (33,100), Burundi (32,400), and Rwanda (20,600). The largest numbers of refugee departures were reported by Uganda (61,800), Pakistan (51,300), the United Republic of Tanzania (30,600), and Zambia (19,300).

Afghanistan continued to be the main country of return with 57,600 registered returns during the year. The returns to Afghanistan in 2009 account for less than one quarter of the global refugee returns. This contrasts with earlier years when Afghans constituted at least half of the global refugee returns. The 2009 levels were the lowest since the start of large-scale refugee return in 2002, when two million Afghans returned on a voluntary basis. Overall, more than 5.3 million Afghan refugees – or roughly one-fifth of Afghanistan's population – have returned since 2002. Unfortunately, some people who recently returned to Afghanistan were unable to go back to their villages of origin due to insecurity and/or a lack of land, shelter, basic services or job opportunities.

February 2009 marked the return of the 300,000th Sudanese refugee from exile since the end of the civil war and the start of UNHCR's repatriation operation in Southern Sudan in December 2005. Of the 300,000 who have returned, 180,000 went back with UNHCR's assistance, while tens of thousands returned home on their own. During 2009, UNHCR and the administration in Southern Sudan continued joint efforts to provide basic facilities such as wells, health centres and schools for returnees, while returnees worked on rebuilding their lives, constructing houses and cultivating land.

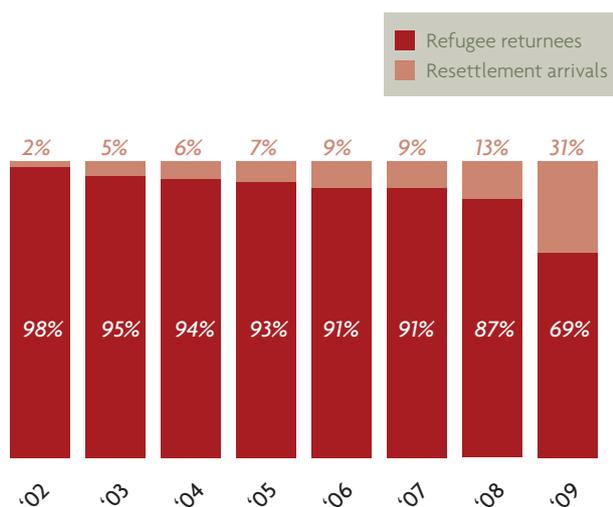
⁴⁵ For statistical purposes, only refugees who actually returned during the calendar year under examination are included. However, UNHCR may assist returnees to reintegrate into their country for longer periods of time, exceeding the calendar year in which they returned.

Resettlement

Resettlement is not only an international responsibility-sharing mechanism and a key element in comprehensive solution strategies, but it is also a vital protection tool. It provides protection to refugees who cannot go home or who are unwilling to do so because they fear continued persecution, and whose lives, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental human rights are at risk in their country of asylum.

During 2009, 112,400 refugees were resettled. UNHCR has steadily increased its identification and submissions of people in need of resettlement and over the last three years submitted more individuals for resettlement annually than the number of places made available by resettlement States (some 80,000 for UNHCR submissions). The challenges faced by States and UNHCR to bridge the gap in resettlement delivery have been formidable. UNHCR's response to this gap has been to encourage new countries to establish resettlement programmes, work with established resettlement countries to increase resettlement intakes, and prioritize responses to resettlement needs and submissions given the limited places available.

Fig. III.2 Distribution of resettlement arrivals and refugee returnees



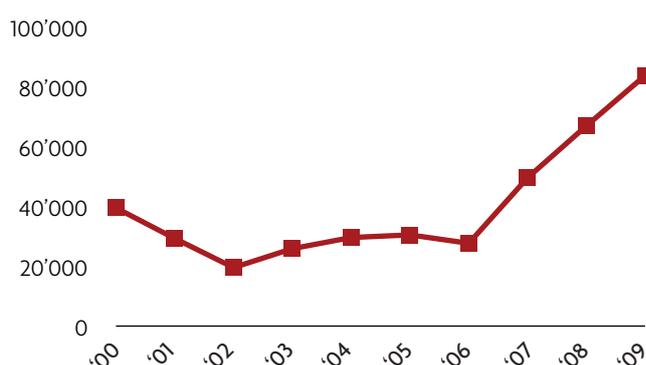
Comparatively, resettlement benefits a small number of refugees; in 2009, only one per cent of the world's refugees directly benefited from resettlement. During the past 10 years, some 810,000 refugees were resettled, compared to 9.6 million refugees who repatriated. For every refugee resettled since 2000, 12 repatriated. Nevertheless, resettlement was vital in resolving certain protracted refugee situations,

creating protection space, and opening up solutions that may have otherwise remained closed (see Figure III.2).

The 2009 Yearbook uses two sources for resettlement statistics: a) UNHCR records from countries of asylum indicate the number of refugees who have been resettled under its auspices, and b) official statistics from resettlement countries are used to analyse the total inflow of resettled refugees, whether or not they were facilitated by UNHCR.

(a) Resettlement under UNHCR auspices

Fig. III.3 UNHCR-assisted resettlement departures of refugees



Individuals supported for resettlement by UNHCR are (i) recognized as refugees under the Office's mandate; and (ii) deemed eligible according to UNHCR's resettlement guidelines and criteria.⁴⁶ These criteria include specific protection needs, such as when the physical or legal security of a refugee is at stake (e.g. women-at-risk or individuals faced with *refoulement*) or when specialized services (e.g. psychosocial or medical) are required which are not available in the country of asylum. Resettlement is also used to reunite refugee families.

In 2009, UNHCR submitted more than 128,000 individual refugees for resettlement consideration by States, the highest number in 16 years and 6 per cent above the 2008 level (121,000). This was a major achievement and reflected UNHCR's increased efforts to promote resettlement since 2002. The progressive increase in submissions by UNHCR for resettlement corresponds to improvements in the identification of people in need of this solution, group resettlement in Nepal, Thailand and Malaysia, continued streamlining of

⁴⁶ See Resettlement Handbook, UNHCR, Geneva, 2004 at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a2ccba76.html>

procedures for Iraqi refugees in the Middle East, as well as on-going staff training.

During the year, more than 84,000 individuals departed for resettlement with UNHCR assistance, 18,000 more than in 2008. By nationality, the main beneficiaries of the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes in 2009 were refugees from Myanmar (24,800), Iraq (23,000), Bhutan (17,500), Somalia (5,500), Eritrea (2,500), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,500).⁴⁷

Altogether 94 UNHCR country offices facilitated resettlement during 2009. The largest number of refugees resettled with UNHCR assistance departed from Nepal (17,500), Thailand (16,800), the Syrian Arab Republic (10,400), Malaysia (7,500) and Turkey (6,000). The five UNHCR offices in these countries together accounted for 7.5 out of every 10 resettlement departures assisted by the Office in 2009.

(b) Resettlement arrivals (including those who were not assisted by UNHCR)

A number of resettlement States (e.g. Australia, Canada and the United States of America) have humanitarian programmes, including family reunion or sponsorship programmes, which address the specific needs of refugees and people in refugee-like situations. While these programmes generally had limited direct UNHCR involvement, a significant portion of persons benefiting from these programmes were refugees. This explains the difference between overall resettlement figures and those resettled with UNHCR's assistance.

During 2009, a total of 112,400 refugees were admitted by 19 resettlement countries, including the United States of America (79,900),⁴⁸ Canada (12,500), Australia (11,100), Germany (2,100), Sweden (1,900), and Norway (1,400). Overall, this was one quarter above the total for 2008 (88,800) and the highest level since 1995 (134,100).

For purposes of comparison, the 19 countries resettling refugees during 2009 accepted more than 90 different nationalities, with the largest groups being refugees from Iraq (29,000),



An Iraqi boy arriving under UNHCR's resettlement programme in Germany.

Myanmar (24,200), Bhutan (17,300), Somalia (6,300) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (6,100).

UNHCR has been working closely with States to enlarge the number of resettlement places to respond to these challenges. Since 2007, the Czech Republic, France, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, and Uruguay have established or re-established resettlement programmes. Japan also announced that it will embark on a pilot resettlement project in 2010.

Local integration

The success of local integration programmes remained difficult to quantify. In instances where refugees acquired citizenship through naturalization, statistical data was very limited as the countries concerned generally did not distinguish between the naturalization of refugees and others. Furthermore, national laws in many countries do not permit refugees to be naturalized. Therefore the naturalization of refugees is both under-reported and restricted.

Nevertheless, the limited data available to UNHCR on the naturalization of refugees showed that during the past decade more than 1.3 million refugees were granted citizenship by their country of asylum. The United States of America alone accounted for more than half of this figure. During 2009, the United Republic of Tanzania granted citizenship to 155,100 Burundian refugees, a major breakthrough for

⁴⁷ 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 the refugee to travel. In many cases, a decision by a resettlement State is made several months after receiving a submission; hence the travel of refugees submitted for resettlement in 2009 might occur the following calendar year, particularly for those cases submitted in the last quarter of 2009.

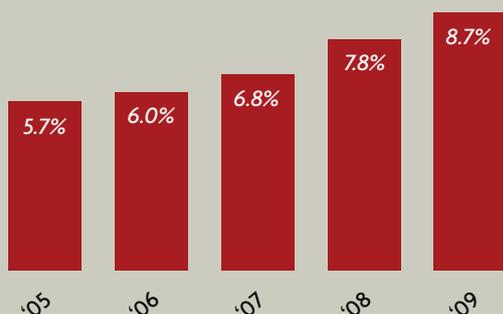
⁴⁸ During US Fiscal Year 2009, close to 74,700 refugees were resettled by the United States of America.

Box 6. New developments in UNHCR's resettlement activities

Women-at-risk

Refugee women and girls who have particular protection challenges due to their gender may be submitted for resettlement under the women-at-risk criterion, whether they are single heads of families, unaccompanied girls, or remain together with their male (or female) family members. Refugees who are submitted under this criterion have often faced past persecution and/or trauma, and may face severe hardships in their countries of asylum. They may be at risk of exploitation and abuse and may lack access to traditionally available support and protection mechanisms.

Women-at-risk cases as a % of total UNHCR resettlement submissions



In 2006, UNHCR's Executive Committee recommended the use of resettlement as a tool for protection and durable solution for refugee women and girls at risk. Through training and the streamlining of resettlement procedures for this population, UNHCR has increased the number of resettlement submissions under the women-at-risk criterion. The Office submitted 3,329 cases under the women-at-risk resettlement criterion, which represents 8.7 per cent of all resettlement submissions in 2009. Among the 94 operations where resettlement took place in 2009 and where resettlement statistics are available, 34 operations exceeded 10 per cent of resettlement submissions assigned to women-at-risk cases and 26 operations exceeded 15 per cent. Refugee women from Iraq accounted for a third of all women-at-risk submissions, followed by refugees from Somalia (16%) and Myanmar (11%).

Evacuation Transit Facilities

As part of the Office's efforts to improve protection against refoulement and ensure the urgent resettlement of people in perilous situations, UNHCR has operationalized in 2008 the concept of evacuation transit facilities through the establishment of the Emergency Transit Center (ETC) in Timisoara, Romania. The ETC provides a temporary safe haven for refugees pending resettlement to a third country. In 2009, 466 refugees were evacuated to the centre and 302 departed for resettlement. A similar evacuation mechanism was established in 2009 in the Slovak Republic (ad hoc arrangement) and the Philippines, where a total of 41 refugees have departed from both locations.

Projected resettlement needs and State / UNHCR capacity

UNHCR estimates the global resettlement needs to be about 805,500 people, including populations for whom resettlement is envisioned over a period of several years. This represents a further increase on estimates reported in 2008 (560,000 persons) and 2009 (747,000 persons), which is partly explained by UNHCR's focus on the strengthened role of resettlement in comprehensive solutions strategies. For 2010 alone, UNHCR estimates that 203,000 persons are in need of resettlement.

The number of refugees identified to be in need of resettlement has been increasing, yet the available resettlement places have remained static despite five countries having formally announced the establishment of resettlement programmes in 2008 and 2009 (the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Portugal and Romania). In 2009, some 80,000 places were made available, representing only about 40 per cent of the identified needs for 2010 (203,000 persons). The situation in the next two years suggests a widening of this gap, despite efforts made by States to initiate or expand resettlement programmes. UNHCR will continue to encourage more countries to establish or increase their resettlement programmes and to prioritize responses to resettlement needs and submissions, in light of the limited resettlement places available.

this refugee population living in exile since 1972 (see below). The United States of America also granted citizenship to a significant number of refugees in 2009 (55,300). In addition, UNHCR was informed of refugees being granted citizenship in Belgium (2,200), Ireland (730), Armenia (400), and the Russian Federation (370), during 2009.

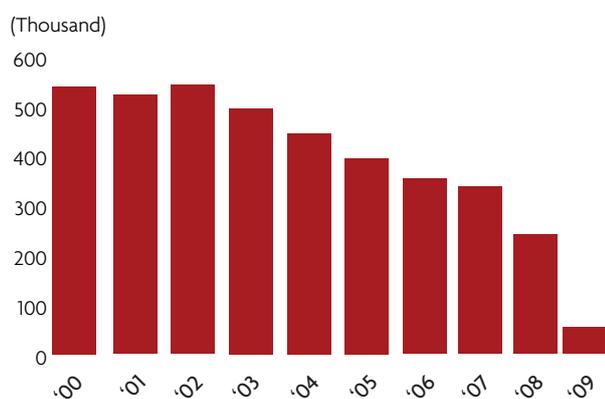
In focus: the Tanzania Comprehensive Solutions Strategy (TANCOSS)

For decades, the United Republic of Tanzania has been hosting hundreds of thousands of Burundian refugees (Figure III.4). By the end of 2009, the number had dropped to 53,800 for reasons outlined below.

The Tanzanian Government established three agriculture-based settlements – Ulyankulu in Tabora Region and Katumba and Mishamo in Rukwa Region – for tens of thousands of Burundian refugees who fled their country in 1972 owing to civil unrest. Upon arrival, each household was allocated a few hectares of land for cultivation. UNHCR and its partners assisted with the installation of housing and communal infrastructure and helped them meet basic needs. These settlements, known as the “old settlements”, rapidly achieved agricultural and economic self-sufficiency, and by 1979 UNHCR began phasing out its operations. The refugees stopped receiving international assistance in 1985.

The United Republic of Tanzania administered the old settlements as designated areas under the Refugee Act of 1998, through the Ministry of Home Affairs. District authorities provided services, including health and education, and children began following the Tanzanian national curriculum

Fig. III.4 Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania



in Swahili and English. The refugees have been self-sufficient and productive; the old settlements today yield a significant agricultural surplus that the settlement population markets, and contribute to the regional economy and food security. The people are now linguistically and, to a large degree, culturally well-integrated.

In June 2007, the Tripartite Commission including the Governments of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania, and UNHCR, established an old settlements task force to find a permanent solution to this protracted refugee situation. The Government also indicated its intention to eventually close the old settlements which hosted over 218,000 refugees.

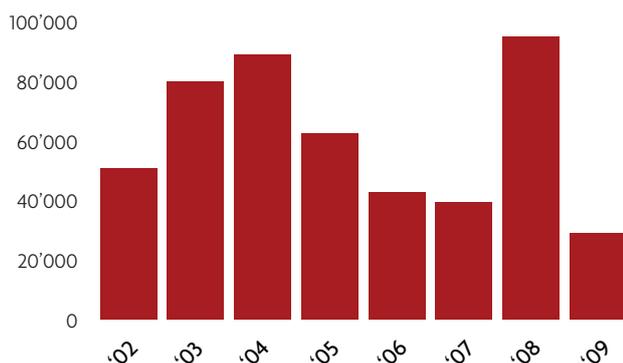
Subsequently, UNHCR and the Tanzanian Government organized a census and individual registration through which the intentions of the refugees were recorded. A detailed study was made of the social, demographic and economic situation. UNHCR and its partners thereafter launched a comprehensive solutions strategy for the old settlements in the United Republic of Tanzania (TANCOSS), with a special appeal to support its implementation, launched in February 2008. The foundation of the strategy was based on the three-pillar approach of voluntary repatriation, naturalization and local integration (including relocation).

The degree of their assimilation in the country notwithstanding, 20 per cent of the refugees from the old settlements indicated their wish to repatriate to Burundi. During 2008, in both Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania, UNHCR put in place the infrastructure, logistical and human support needed to assist these refugees to return in safety and dignity. During 2008 and 2009, the absorption capacity in Burundi, particularly in terms of access to land, was challenged by the simultaneous voluntary repatriation of a further 70,000 refugees from the camps in the northwest of the United Republic of Tanzania (who fled Burundi in the 1990s). UNHCR and the authorities made efforts to provide temporary shelter to returnees whose land was occupied, and supported the mediation of land conflicts. Despite these challenges, by the end of 2009, 53,600 Burundian refugees from the old settlements had repatriated, exceeding the 46,000 who had indicated in the survey their intention to repatriate.

The second component of TANCOSS was the processing of naturalization applications. A logistically challenging operation, it involved the digitization of application forms, setting up naturalization processing centres, and deploying registration and office equipment in remote locations. It assisted 164,000 Burundian refugees in the completion of

Fig. III.5 Total returns of Burundian refugees from the United Republic of Tanzania*

* Including spontaneous returns



electronic citizenship application forms; in the identification of witnesses for declarations about residence; in the renunciation of previous citizenship and in the taking of oath of allegiance to the United Republic of Tanzania before commissioners of oath; in the review and approval of applications by immigration officials; in the gathering of fingerprints for cross-checking in police archives in Dar es Salaam to screen criminal records; and in the screening of applicants by District and Regional Defence and Security Committees.

Completed forms were brought to Dar es Salaam for data entry by the Citizenship Processing Unit (CPU) within the Immigration Department. After entering additional information in the database, each case was submitted to the Principal Commissioner of Immigration Services who made the final recommendation to the Honorary Minister of Home Affairs for endorsement. By the end of 2009, close to 155,100 refugees were naturalized as Tanzanians. This number rose to almost 162,300 (or approximately 98 per cent of the total number of applicants) by early 2010.

The final step of the process was the distribution of citizenship certificates to the newly-naturalized Tanzanians once they leave the old settlements which, as per Government policy, will eventually close. In order to prepare the grounds for their eventual relocation and to strengthen the absorption capacity of the receiving communities, a number of community-based interventions aimed at boosting the capacity of key regions in key sectors such as education, health and environment were initiated. The National Strategy for Community Integration Programme was launched laying out the relocation and local integration modalities for the 162,300 newly-naturalized Tanzanians who will leave the settlements. It consists of two components: an individual assistance package (including transport, start-up capital and land access), and a community-based component, expanding

the activities already undertaken in the regions and districts which will host the newly-naturalized Tanzanians.

New large-scale refugee movements

The analysis in this section is limited to individuals who have been recognized as refugees on a group or *prima facie* basis. Those who sought asylum on an individual basis, by requesting refugee or complementary protection status through an individual asylum claim, will be discussed in Chapter IV.⁴⁹

The Democratic Republic of the Congo was a major source country for new displacements during 2009, with 145,000 individuals fleeing the country primarily to the Republic of the Congo (94,100), the Central African Republic (19,200), Uganda (16,400), and Sudan (14,900). Somalia was another source of new refugee displacements in 2009, with more than 132,000 individuals fleeing the country, primarily to Kenya (72,500), Yemen (32,000), and Ethiopia (23,600).

Although the total number of people who fled Iraq during the year is not available, approximately 39,000 Iraqis were newly registered by UNHCR in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and other countries in the region in 2009. Excluding Iraqi refugees registered by UNHCR throughout the Middle East, some 338,000 people were newly displaced across an international border during the year, 97 per cent of them originating from Africa.

The largest number of new arrivals of refugees was reported by the Republic of Congo (94,100), followed by Kenya (72,500), Chad (33,400), and Yemen (32,000).

⁴⁹ Some 923,400 individual asylum claims were submitted worldwide in 2009. An estimated 275,000 people received a positive decision on their asylum claim in the course of the year.