



Business has begun to pick up again in the local market in Zinjibar, Yemen, as IDP families return and begin rebuilding their lives.



Durable Solutions and New Displacement

UNHCR'S PRIMARY responsibility is to provide international protection to refugees and to ensure that their rights and well-being are protected. It is also the agency's mandate to collaborate with host governments to find acceptable durable solutions in order to ensure that refugees can continue to rebuild their lives in an environment of dignity and safety. Three durable solutions have traditionally been used: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement to a third country. The three durable solutions are complementary in nature

and, when applied together, can form a viable and comprehensive strategy for resolving a refugee situation.

This chapter provides a global analysis of durable solutions progress. First, the global trends and patterns of voluntary repatriation are analysed, including highlighting those countries that pursued major repatriation exercises. Resettlement is discussed in the second section, focusing on key statistical developments and challenges. The third section discusses the solution of local integration, analysing host countries that opened their doors for local integration. From a statistical point of view,

the number of refugees using repatriation as a solution is much higher than the other two durable solutions.

Each year, thousands of refugees flee their home country and are recognized either on an individual or prima facie basis. This chapter highlights the major countries affected by mass outflows of people in 2012, a year that witnessed important steps in achieving long-lasting solutions for a number of protracted refugee situations, notably by applying the cessation clause. The impact of cessation on specific refugee groups is discussed towards the end of this chapter.

Durable Solutions

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Voluntary repatriation is the return of refugees to their country of origin, based upon a free and informed decision, in and to conditions of safety and dignity, and with the full restoration of national protection as the end product. Voluntary repatriation may take the form of an ongoing programme or a single operation, and may range from the return of a few individuals to the movement of thousands of persons together with their belongings. The return may be organized or spontaneously initiated by the refugees themselves, and by preference is to the refugee's place of residence in the country of origin.

In practice, UNHCR, in cooperation with governments, NGOs, and other partners, promotes and facilitates voluntary repatriation through various means. These include the negotiation of repatriation agreements, registration for return, organizing and assisting with transport, negotiation for the full recognition of skills obtained in exile, and safe and dignified reception in the country of origin, among other activities.

Throughout the repatriation process, particular attention is given to the specific needs of returning refugees – including women, children, older people, and other persons with special

concerns – in order to ensure that they receive adequate protection, assistance, and care. In 2012, a total of 17 countries received returning refugees from 30 asylum countries or territories. In total, 525,900 refugees returned voluntarily, of whom UNHCR directly assisted 320,100. Comparatively, the total number of voluntary repatriations dropped slightly from the 2011 figure of 532,000. Over the past 10 years, more than 7.2 million refugees have returned home, 4.9 million of them with the assistance of UNHCR.

In 2012, Afghanistan topped the list of countries of return with a total of

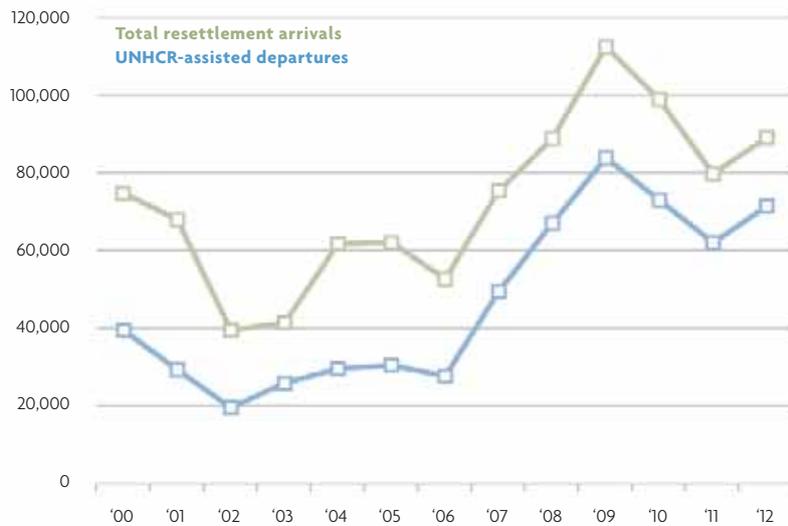
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98,600 refugee returns, representing 19 per cent of the total for that year. This predominance has held true for the past decade, as Afghanistan has seen more refugees return in the last 10 years than any other country, with UNHCR supporting the voluntary repatriation of millions of Afghan refugees during that period. This huge exercise has involved the coordination and facilitation of government authorities and many implementing partners in both Afghanistan and the various countries of asylum. The overwhelming majority of Afghan returnees are from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and are often returning home after having been in exile for many years.

The other countries that saw refugees return in 2012 included Iraq (82,300), Côte d'Ivoire (72,900), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (71,900). In 2012, refugees returning to Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sudan were assisted by UNHCR. For both Angolan and Liberian refugees during 2012, the cessation of refugee status contributed to the total number of voluntary repatriations.

The countries that reported the largest number of refugee departures included Pakistan, with a total of 83,400, Liberia (72,000), Turkey (68,800), and the Syrian Arab Republic (56,900). The

Fig. 3.2 Resettlement of refugees | 2000 - 2012



overwhelming majority (96%) of refugee departures from Pakistan were assisted by UNHCR, as were all refugee departures from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad. In contrast, the 68,800 Syrian refugees who returned to their country from Turkey did so spontaneously. **Figure 3.1** shows the trend of voluntary returns of refugees from 2000 through 2012.

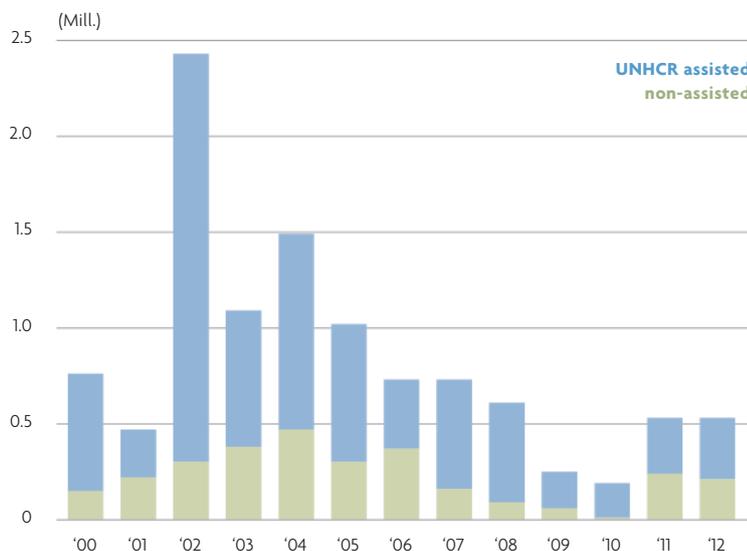
Additionally, UNHCR often assists internally displaced persons to voluntarily return to their communities and villages of origin when conditions are right, and has assisted a significant

number of IDPs to return in the past five years. Between 2011 and 2012, the total number of UNHCR-protected/assisted IDPs who returned to their communities of origin sharply declined, from 3.2 million to 1.5 million. Among those countries where UNHCR was engaged with the internally displaced, the largest number of IDP returns took place in the Philippines (336,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (304,600), Iraq (218,800), Libya (177,000), and Yemen (106,900). A particular challenge for IDP populations is determining when return has resulted in a durable solution.⁴² In this regard, UNHCR has been working closely with governments and protection partners to establish agreed and measurable criteria for assessing the sustainability of returns.

RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement under UNHCR auspices is an invaluable protection tool to meet the specific needs of refugees as well as a durable solution, and a key component of comprehensive solutions strategies. Ongoing resettlement of tens of thousands of refugees to States that voluntarily offer them a durable solution brings new hopes and new lives to many in the midst of refugee crises. Not only does resettlement play a vital role in protecting refugees at risk, including in response to emergency refugee situations, but it also plays an important role in alleviating the burdens placed on host governments, as well as in strate-

Fig. 3.1 Refugee returns | 2000 - 2012



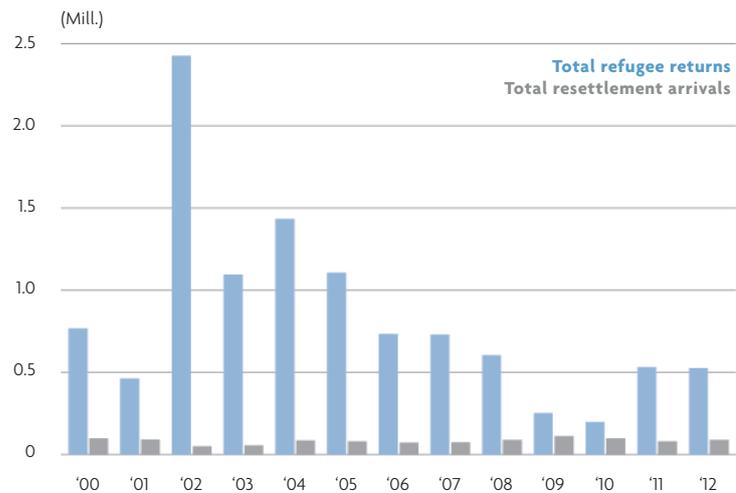
42 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, <http://www.unhcr.org/50f94cd49.html>.

gically supporting the search for other durable solutions for those refugees not able to benefit from resettlement.

In 2012, UNHCR offices in 80 countries presented over 74,800 refugees to States for resettlement consideration. The main beneficiaries were refugees from Myanmar (22,100), Iraq (10,800), Bhutan (9,900), Somalia (7,200), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6,500). These refugee groups have been the top five since 2008, although the order has shifted. Women and girls at risk represented more than 11 per cent of submissions, surpassing for a second consecutive year the 10 per cent target set to implement Executive Committee Conclusion No. 105 (2006). Over four-fifths of submissions were made under three submission categories: Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs (42%), Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions (25%), and Survivors of Violence and/or Torture (16%).

UNHCR offices in 85 countries of asylum were involved in facilitating resettlement departures of some 71,400 individuals, 15 per cent more than in 2011. Increased departures can be attributed to a number of factors. Successful efforts were made by States to expedite security clearances and to interview refugees in inaccessible areas through videoconferencing. As a result, more than 13,500 Iraqi refugees departed for

Fig. 3.3 Return and resettlement of refugees | 2000 - 2012



resettlement, including 3,300 from the Syrian Arab Republic. Overall, departures of refugees from Iraq increased by 56 per cent over 2011. The departure rate of Somali refugees slowly recovered from the low levels in 2011, with 6,600 resettlement departures in 2012. Nevertheless, there remains an overwhelming number of pending Somali cases in the resettlement-processing pipeline, as there has been for a prolonged period of time.

According to government statistics from 23 countries, a total of 89,000 refugees benefited from resettlement in 2012, with or without UNHCR's assistance. The countries that admitted

the largest number of refugees in 2012 included the United States of America (66,300),⁴³ Canada (9,600), Australia (5,900), Sweden (1,900), Norway (1,200), and the United Kingdom (1,000). The United States of America and Canada together admitted 85 per cent of the total number of resettled refugees.

Comparing the total number of refugee returns to the total number of resettled refugees since 2000 shows a sharp contrast. The former has consistently and overwhelmingly exceeded the latter. **Figure 3.3** compares the two durable solutions.

⁴³ During US fiscal year 2012, some 58,200 refugees were resettled to the United States of America.

LOCAL INTEGRATION

Local integration is a complex and gradual process by which refugees legally, economically, and socially and culturally integrate as fully included members of the host society. As a legal process, refugees are granted a range of entitlements and rights that are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by citizens. Over time, the process should lead to permanent residence rights and, in some cases, the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum.

As an economic process, refugees attain a growing degree of self-reliance, becoming able to pursue sustainable livelihoods and thus contributing to the economic life of the host country. As a social and cultural process, refugees are able both to live among or alongside the

host population without discrimination or exploitation and to contribute actively to the social life of their country of asylum. Local integration requires efforts by all parties concerned, including preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity. This process also requires a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Local integration requires commitments from both refugees and host governments. Refugees, for instance, must commit to complying with a host country's laws. Host governments, on the other hand, have a responsibility

to accept the diverse cultures and values of the refugees who are being integrated. In addition, host governments must ensure that refugees who locally integrate are not discriminated against or exploited by the local population. For each of these reasons, the processes of ensuring local integration typically require participation by UNHCR, government authorities, and refugees.

Measuring the degree of local integration in quantitative terms remains a challenge, as statistics on refugees who have locally integrated remain partial and uneven across the world. Collecting data on the number of refugees who have naturalized remains one of the most viable options, despite severe limitations in data coverage. This is



A 99-year-old refugee from Bhutan in Beldangi refugee camp in eastern Nepal has made the difficult decision to accept resettlement over repatriation. Along with her eight family members, she will begin a new life in the United States of America, the largest destination country for refugees from Bhutan opting for third country resettlement.

mainly because most countries do not distinguish between refugees and non-refugees who naturalized. Therefore, statistics on refugees who have naturalized and ultimately integrated into the host country are often not made available for UNHCR records.

Over the past decade, however, reliable information available to UNHCR indicates that at least 800,000 refugees have been granted citizenship by their asylum countries. The United States of America alone accounted for two-thirds of this figure.⁴⁴ For 2012, UNHCR was informed of refugees becoming citizens in 27 countries, including Belgium (1,200), Ireland (1,100), Viet Nam (990), Montenegro (230), and Armenia (215).

⁴⁴ The United States of America has ceased issuing statistics on the number of naturalized refugees. The latest available information dates back to 2009, when 55,300 refugees were naturalized between January and September of that year.

New displacement

This section focuses only on refugees who have been recognized either on a group or prima facie basis. For the past several decades there has not been a single year without significant new displacement of refugees, particularly due to civil conflicts and violence. In the majority of cases, most newly displaced refugees flee to neighbours of their countries of origin.

In 2012, more than 1.1 million people were newly displaced across international borders, with the overwhelming majority originating from the Syrian Arab Republic. This is the largest recorded new refugee displacement in a single year since 2002. Comparatively, there were 300,000 more new displaced refugees in 2012 than in 2011, when an estimated 800,000 people became displaced. Besides the Syrian Arab Republic,

other major source countries of new refugee displacement in 2012 included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, and Sudan. More than 647,000 Syrians fled to mostly neighbouring countries, including Turkey (307,700), Jordan (131,200), and Lebanon (131,900). From Mali, more than 142,000 fled to Mauritania (54,000), Niger (50,200), and Burkina Faso (38,400).

Of the total number of new refugee displacements during 2012, the largest numbers of new refugee arrivals were reported by Turkey (307,700), Jordan (133,500), Lebanon (132,800), South Sudan (101,400), Iraq (63,300), Mauritania (54,000), Niger (50,200), and Uganda (40,200). It is remarkable to note that there was no large-scale outflow of refugees from the same country in the past two consecutive years.

Comprehensive solutions strategies for refugees

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees recognizes that refugee status ends under certain clearly defined conditions. This means that once an individual is determined to be a refugee, this status is maintained unless either he or she falls within the terms of the cessation clause or this status is cancelled or revoked. Under Article 1C of the 1951 Convention, refugee status may cease either through the actions of the refugee (contained in sub-paragraphs 1 to 4), such as by re-establishment in his or her country of origin, or through fundamental changes in the objective circumstances in the country of origin upon which refugee status was based (sub-paragraphs 5 and 6). The latter are commonly referred to as the 'ceased circumstances' or 'general cessation' clauses. Even in these circumstances, however, the specific situation of individual cases may continue to warrant international protection.

Cessation of refugee status on a group basis, on the other hand, may be invoked via a formal declaration (or decision) on cessation by either States (for Convention refugees) or UNHCR (for mandate refugees). As a general rule, if it is not possible to notify the individual concerned, cessation of refugee status in individual cases would not be appropriate. A graph listing some recent cessation situations is shown in **Figure 3.4**.

At the end of 2011, UNHCR recommended that States cease the refugee status of Angolans who had fled as a result of the war for independence and the civil war between 1961 and 2001. The agency made a similar recommendation regarding Liberians who had escaped the civil wars between 1989 and 2003. Both recommendations were to be implemented as of 30 June 2012. UNHCR also recommended that States cease the refugee status, as of 30 June 2013, of Rwandans who had fled their country before 1999.

With the end of refugee status, individuals cease being reported as refugees in global statistics. By the end of 2012,

for instance, this was the case for some 97,000 Angolan refugees and more than 15,000 Liberian refugees. While their local integration in host countries continues to be monitored, they may continue to be reported as 'Others of concern' in the agency's statistics.

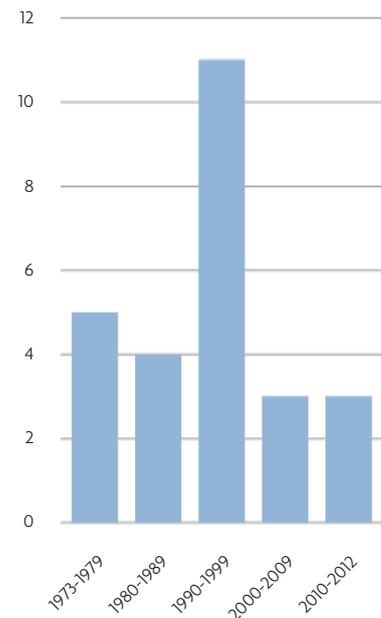
In 2011, UNHCR and the Government of Angola launched a return programme for Angolan refugees in neighbouring countries. Under this, nearly 23,000 Angolans returned to their country, including more than 17,000 who repatriated to Angola's Uige and Zaire provinces from the west and southeast of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Logistical challenges, funding gaps, and poor weather prevented the movement of an additional 23,000 Angolan refugees in 2012, though UNHCR assistance for returns continues in 2013. Some 70,000 Angolans opted for local integration, primarily in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. At an inter-governmental ministerial meeting on the issue,⁴⁵ the Government of Zambia pledged to support the local integration of up to 10,000 Angolan refugees with strong ties to their host communities.

Liberia has also seen strong continuing returns. Between 2004 and 2012, more than 155,000 Liberian refugees returned to their country of origin, with 29,400 doing so in 2012. Throughout 2012, support also continued for the local integration of an estimated 10,800 other Liberian refugees in their countries of residence. Local integration has been greatly facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, which allowed former Liberian refugees to reside and work in any ECOWAS member State.

Meanwhile, progress on the implementation of the comprehensive solutions strategy for Rwandan refugees continues. More than 9,000 refugees have returned home, primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

and several countries of asylum have expressed their willingness to regularize the status of Rwandan refugees. The 2012 launch of a three-year programme for the return and reintegration of over 70,000 Rwandan refugees by the Government of Rwanda and the United Nations is also expected to have a significant impact. With the cessation clause for Rwandan refugees coming into force, UNHCR continues to work with concerned governments to facilitate the return of those who wish to do so, while also securing local integration opportunities.

Fig. 3.4 Cessation situations | 1973 - 2012



A regional strategy to enhance the search for comprehensive solutions for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was also developed in 2012. While repatriation and local integration opportunities were being pursued in some asylum countries, some 7,000 Congolese refugees were submitted for resettlement in 2012 as part of a multi-year resettlement plan, targeting over 50,000 submissions between 2012 and 2015/16. ■

45 See: <http://www.unhcr.org/commemorations/Pledges2011-preview-compilation-analysis.pdf>.