

Finding durable solutions

The protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) must include the search for durable solutions to their plight. But for millions of the displaced around the world, those solutions are nowhere in sight. Often socially excluded and poor, many refugees and IDPs are confined to camps where they find little freedom of movement and few hopes for self-sufficiency. In many circumstances, protection challenges are perpetuated in the absence of longer-term solutions to displacement.

Accordingly, a drive to implement comprehensive solutions in refugee situations, particularly protracted ones, will be the cornerstone of UNHCR's work in 2008-2009. New efforts to involve more national and international development actors should help avert protection gaps once UNHCR's presence in an area is reduced or phased out. These broad strategic objectives will be complemented by efforts to create conditions conducive to voluntary return and sustainable reintegration on the one hand and support for local integration as a durable solution on the other. Where applicable, resettlement will serve as a protection tool, durable solution and burden-sharing mechanism.

UNHCR's work to resolve protracted refugee situations will benefit from the establishment of core groups of interested donors and other partners in the field or at headquarters, targeted use of the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project, and comprehensive consultations with refugees. In 2008 and 2009 the Office will build on the progress achieved in a number of refugee situations, including those of Croatians in Serbia, Burundians in the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania), Afghans in Pakistan and Myanmar refugees in Thailand and Bangladesh, among others.

UNHCR and its partners in UN country teams will also be guided by the Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, developed by the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs. The framework will help country teams to identify lingering protection gaps, particularly in protracted IDP situations such as those in the Balkans or the Caucasus. By consulting with different groups within displaced communities, the Office will ensure that their varied needs are addressed. Standard procedures to determine the best interests of each separated or unaccompanied child will identify the most appropriate solutions for them.



UNHCR/J. Reuben

Mozambique. A refugee widow from Burundi has used funds provided by a UNHCR-backed microcredit scheme to become self-sufficient.



UNHCR/J. Rauniar

Nepal. For the first time in 16 years, there is progress towards durable solutions for refugees in Nepal, including the Government's approval for resettlement.

Assessments conducted with the participation of refugees and IDPs have shown clear links between livelihoods, protection and physical security. UNHCR will offer technical support to selected countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East to promote self-sufficiency as a protection tool, pending durable solutions. It will pursue self-reliance and livelihoods strategies in Southern Africa, the Maghreb countries, Latin America and the States affected by the Iraq crisis, among others. UNHCR will also build partnerships with ILO and FAO to increase opportunities for self-reliance and gainful employment.

The Women Leading for Livelihoods project, launched in 2007, will encourage entrepreneurship, skill-building and self-sufficiency, thereby reducing dependence on international aid. Roma women in Serbia and refugee women and children in Morocco could be the first beneficiaries of such projects, which will focus on vocational training, micro-finance and the development of small businesses.

The momentum achieved in local integration in 2007 will be sustained. To contribute to peace and stability in West Africa, UNHCR has launched a regional initiative to promote the local integration of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees remaining in seven countries: Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Between 2008 and 2010 UNHCR, in close consultation with UN country teams and other partners (especially ECOWAS), will implement projects to ensure the economic, social and legal integration of these refugees. The initiative, which will be community-based, will also benefit refugee-hosting areas. Youth employment will be a key part of this effort.

In Southern Africa, UNHCR is discussing the local integration of remaining refugee populations with the Governments of Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia. In Serbia, UNHCR will work with UNDP and the Danish Refugee Council to strengthen the livelihoods of IDPs

from Kosovo, pending durable solutions. In Latin America, UNHCR is employing microcredit, vocational training and housing schemes as critical elements in local integration.

Most refugees would prefer to return home as soon as circumstances permit, generally when a conflict has ended, a degree of stability has been restored and basic infrastructure is being rebuilt. In this context, voluntary repatriation and reintegration is usually the best solution for refugees, providing it is safe and reintegration is viable. In 2007, some 735,000 refugees returned home. In 2008 and 2009, it is expected that 1.1 million will return to their areas of origin, mainly in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mauritania and Southern Sudan. Some 660,000 IDPs are also expected to return to their home communities in 2008, particularly in Uganda, Nepal and a number of other countries.

UNHCR's new framework on reintegration builds on lessons learned from the 4Rs (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) approach. It has benefited from the inputs of major development partners (including ILO, UNDP and the World Bank) and is consistent with the overall UN policy on employment creation, income generation and reintegration in post-conflict situations. It recognizes refugees as agents of development and emphasizes livelihood creation and partnerships with development actors.

Reforms in the global humanitarian system to encourage system-wide coherence in aid projects, support UNHCR's post-conflict recovery efforts. The Office will promote a two-pronged approach to return and reintegration by facilitating returns on the one hand and providing basic needs and livelihoods support on the other. Since 2005, UNHCR has participated in the Humanitarian Reform process, including the cluster approach to improve its response to the plight of IDPs. As leader of the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Emergency Shelter clusters in complex emergencies, the Office plays an important role in UN efforts to support Governments in protecting and assisting IDPs and finding durable solutions for them.

UNHCR will reinforce its partnerships with a variety of humanitarian and development actors in order to promote durable solutions. This will allow it to better allay protection concerns, promote sustainable livelihoods and address basic social needs. The expertise of key partners such as ILO and FAO in vocational training, micro-finance, income generation and rural development is vital to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of UNHCR's work. UN agencies are working closely with local communities to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals. UNHCR will partner with UNDP to target programmes at refugee-hosting and returnee communities in Colombia, Ecuador, Serbia and Sri Lanka. The Office

will also deepen cooperation with governments and civil society groups in matters related to governance and the rule of law in post-conflict countries.

The World Bank's new policy framework for fragile States is of particular relevance for UNHCR, as it gives new impetus to collaborative work in post-conflict settings. UNHCR will strengthen strategic dialogue and operational partnerships with the World Bank and other international and regional financial institutions, for instance the African Development Bank.

Regional groupings such as the African Union (AU) will play an equally important role in UNHCR's durable-solutions efforts. Indeed, the AU has developed a *Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development* to formulate more effective reintegration initiatives, and UNHCR will help to make the framework operational. In the case of NGOs, an innovative durable solutions partnership with the Danish Refugee Council will be piloted in at least three countries from a group that includes Georgia, Liberia, Serbia and Uganda. Partnerships with CARE, the International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council and the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children will also be expanded.

Finally, UNHCR will strengthen its operational ties with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2007. With the expanded JICA (which will include the country's Bank for International Cooperation) Japan is expected to play a bigger role in linking relief and development and promoting peacebuilding and human security.

UNHCR has been able to position resettlement as a durable solution, as well as an important protection tool. Indeed, total resettlement submissions worldwide for 2006 increased by 17 per cent from the previous year. By mid-2007, the number of resettlement submissions already exceeded the submissions for the entire 2005. These higher numbers are due in part to large resettlement operations in Thailand, Malaysia and the Middle East. Nepal is also on the way to becoming a significant resettlement operation. To generate more commitment and predictability among resettlement partners, UNHCR has developed a Multilateral Framework of Understanding to cover Iraqi refugees in the Middle East, and another multilateral framework is being prepared for refugees in Nepal.



UNHCR/K.G. Egziabher

Ethiopia. UNHCR organized the return from Ethiopia to South Sudan of 21,000 refugees in 2006-2007. Some 102,000 Sudanese from neighbouring countries should be repatriated in 2008.

In 2007, field-friendly tools were developed to improve resettlement planning and delivery. These include a method for identifying people who are likely to suffer greater protection risks as well as standard operating procedures and selection-mission questionnaires. Furthermore, anti-fraud training has helped the Resettlement Service guard against abuse of its programmes.

In accordance with its global strategic objectives, UNHCR will expand and diversify its resettlement activities. By improving operational standards, it will seek to deliver a more coherent and predictable programme that addresses refugees' needs with diligence, integrity, transparency and accountability. The overriding objective is to raise the quantity and quality of resettlement submissions. The Office expects to increase the number of submissions to 60,000 in 2008. 10 per cent of submitted cases will be for women-at-risk, including those with specific protection problems, who are single heads of household, or are accompanied by an adult male who is unable to support the family.

UNHCR will use resettlement strategically to improve access to other durable solutions and to improve protection for refugees who cannot be resettled. In some cases, this may mean that the host government will consider local integration if part of a group is resettled; in other cases, a particular group within a refugee population requires resettlement for reasons of vulnerability or because of their political profile. The Office will try to get resettlement countries to agree to

multi-year plans to address needs in some asylum countries. Priority groups include refugees in Nepal, Myanmar refugees in Thailand and Malaysia, and Iraqi refugees in the Middle East and Turkey. Of equal importance are European Union-funded regional protection programmes in Tanzania and some of the Newly Independent States in Eastern Europe, designed to enhance cross-border cooperation among states.

The Resettlement Service will strengthen its capacity to respond to field operations, resettlement countries, NGOs and IOM. Through promotion and advocacy efforts it will ensure resettlement programmes follow UNHCR's guiding principles and respond to the needs of refugees. Planning tools will provide detailed information from the field on current and projected resettlement needs and on the local capacity to process applications. Strengthened management, monitoring and evaluation, along with performance indicators, will have a positive impact on the global resettlement programme.

UNHCR will increase refugee participation in protection profiling and risk identification to identify groups of refugees most in need of resettlement. NGO partners will also collaborate on tools to improve identification and processing. Meanwhile, UNHCR staff will be trained to see resettlement as a strategic protection tool and use the *proGres* registration software to enhance the overall quality, consistency and efficiency of procedures.

Ensuring the integrity of UNHCR's resettlement activities will be a priority in 2008-2009. Full implementation of the Office's Resettlement Anti-Fraud Plan of Action will improve field offices' capacity to eliminate abuse. At the same time, resettlement procedures will be made more systematic through the application of standard operating procedures.

Resettlement partnerships with States and NGOs will be strengthened and expanded by the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and the bi-annual meetings of the Working Group on Resettlement. The UNHCR-ICMC deployment scheme will play a vital role in forging closer relationships with other NGOs and supporting field operations.

As part of its efforts to guard against *refoulement*, the Resettlement Service has developed the concept of the temporary relocation of refugees to evacuation transit facilities (ETFs). This will allow the Office to submit cases for resettlement under calmer conditions and not in the acute context created by threats of *refoulement*, detention or threats to physical safety. UNHCR hopes to have at least one such facility functioning by the end of 2008.

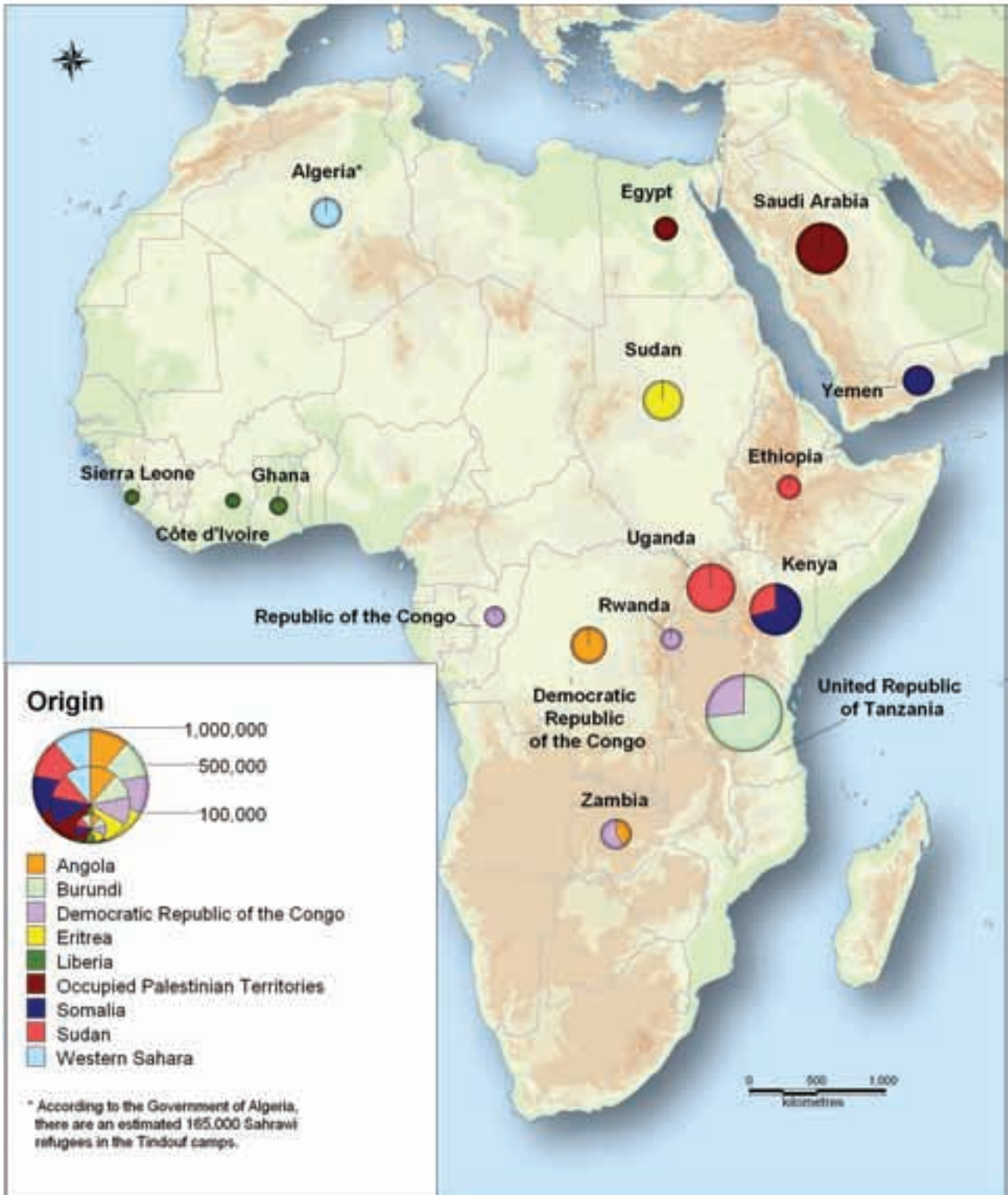


UNHCR/H. Davies

Resettlement can provide refugees with safety and security. This Ethiopian family has been resettled from Kenya to the U.K. under a programme implemented by UNHCR and the British Government.

Protracted refugee populations in countries of asylum, by origin

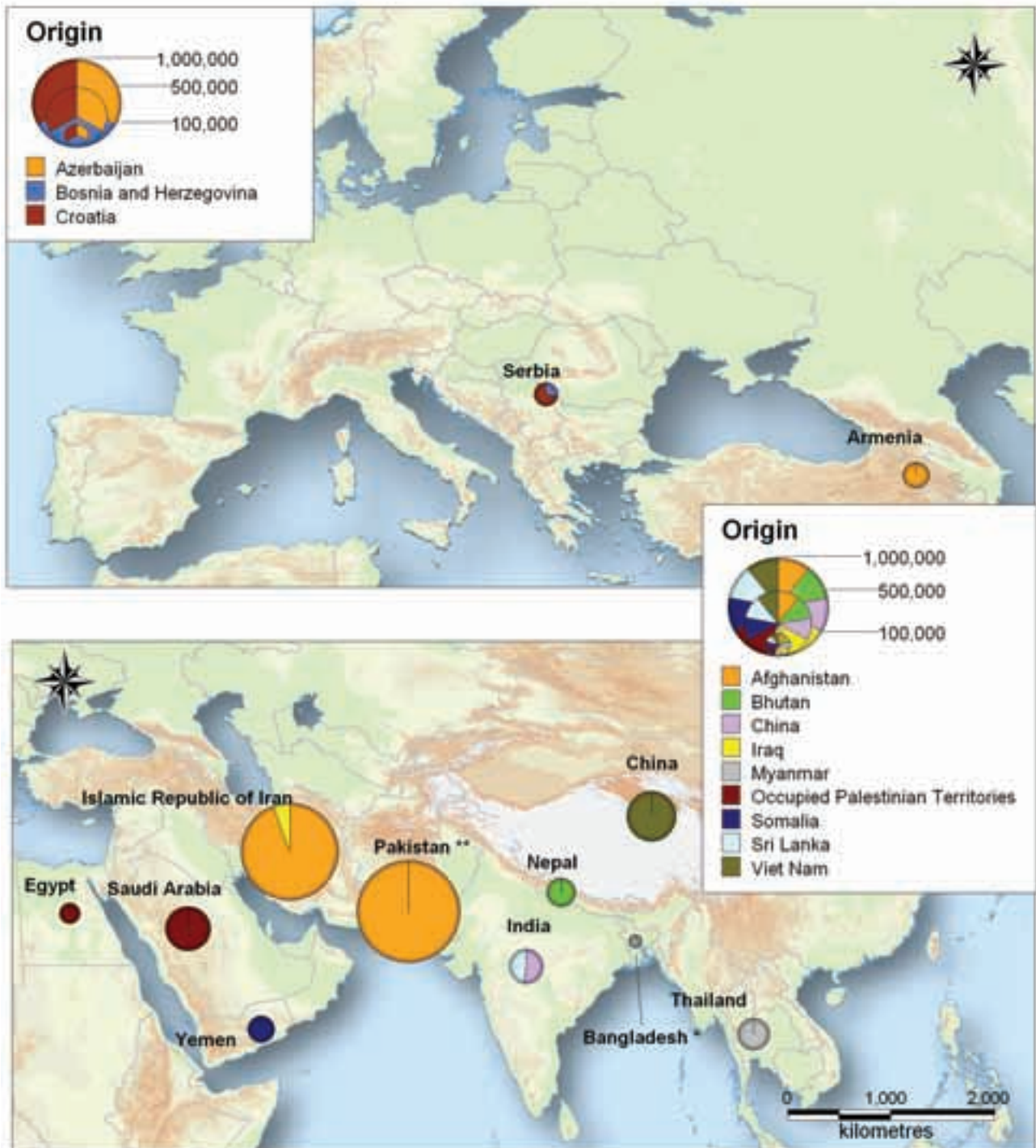
As at 1 January 2007



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Protracted refugee populations in countries of asylum, by origin

As at 1 January 2007



* Does not meet the statistical criteria of being protracted refugee situation

** Includes only Afghans living in camps who are assisted by UNHCR

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