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New Somali refugee arrivals wait to be registered at Hagadera camp, Dadaab, Kenya.

## STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 2009

*Trends in displacement,  
protection and solutions*



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Unless specified otherwise, the 2009 Statistical Yearbook does not refer to events occurring after 31 December 2009. The designations employed and the presentation of country or area names, including in maps and country listings, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>MAIN FINDINGS</b>	7
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	10

## GLOBAL ANALYSIS

### **CHAPTER I. Sources, Methods and Data Considerations**

<b>Introduction</b>	13
<b>Definitions and scope</b>	13
<b>Sources for refugee data</b>	14
<b>Data collection methods</b>	15
<b>Key characteristics presented in the 2009 Yearbook</b>	16
<b>Other data considerations</b>	17

### **CHAPTER II. Population Levels and Trends**

<b>Introduction</b>	19
<b>Overview of global trends</b>	19
<b>Refugees</b>	20
<i>By region and country of asylum</i>	20
<i>Capacities and contributions of host countries</i>	22
<i>By origin</i>	23
<b>Asylum-seekers</b>	24
<b>Internally displaced persons</b>	25
<b>Stateless persons</b>	26
<b>Returnees (refugees and IDPs)</b>	27
<b>Other groups or people of concern</b>	27

### **CHAPTER III. Durable Solutions and New Displacement**

<b>Introduction</b>	29
<b>Durable solutions</b>	29
<i>Voluntary repatriation</i>	29
<i>Resettlement</i>	30
<i>Local integration</i>	33
<i>In focus: the Tanzania Comprehensive Solutions Strategy</i>	33
<b>New large-scale refugee movements</b>	34

### **CHAPTER IV. Asylum and Refugee Status Determination**

<b>Introduction</b>	35
<i>Responsibility for refugee status determination</i>	35
<b>Global trends</b>	36
<i>Applications</i>	36
<i>New individual asylum applications received</i>	36
<i>Decisions</i>	38
<i>Asia-Pacific: doubling of new asylum claims</i>	39
<i>In focus: South Africa's asylum system</i>	40

**CHAPTER V. Demographic Characteristics and Location**

<b>Introduction</b>	45
<b>Sex and age</b>	45
<b>Location</b>	46

**CHAPTER VI. Use of Data Collection Methodologies to Inform Protection Activities : Case Studies**

<b>Introduction</b>	49
<b>A. Somalis on the move : a profile of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers</b>	49
<i>Background</i>	49
<i>Situation in countries neighbouring Somalia</i>	50
<i>Movement towards Europe, the Middle East, Southern Africa and other regions</i>	50
<i>Secondary movement drivers</i>	51
<i>Reduction of asylum space</i>	52
<i>Solutions</i>	52
<i>Conclusion</i>	52
<b>B. Use of registration and profiling surveys to inform IDP protection activities in Yemen</b>	52
<i>Background</i>	52
<i>Objectives and methodology</i>	53
<i>Challenges during profiling</i>	53
<i>Preliminary findings and uses of data collected through profiling</i>	54
<i>Recent milestones</i>	54

**BOXES**

1. Comparative advantage of IDP profiling	16
2. Registration of asylum-seekers in urban areas: the case of India	17
3. Most refugees remain within their region of origin	21
4. Protracted refugee situations	22
5. The 10-Point-Plan of Action	28
6. New developments in UNHCR's resettlement activities	32
7. Who is an asylum-seeker?	35
8. Recognition rates	38
9. Unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum	42
10. What does the data tell us about adult refugees?	48
11. Registration of IDPs in Yemen	55

**MAPS**

1. Total population of concern to UNHCR by category, end-2009	20
2. Major source countries of refugees, end-2009	24
3. IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR, end-2009	25
4. Country of origin of new asylum-seekers in 2009	37

## ANNEX

1. Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by country/territory of asylum/residence, end-2009	57
2. Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by origin, end-2009	61
3. Refugee population and people in refugee-like situations, excluding asylum-seekers, and changes by country/territory of asylum, 2009	66
4. Refugee population and people in refugee-like situations, excluding asylum-seekers, and changes by origin, 2009	70
5. Refugee population and people in refugee-like situations, excluding asylum-seekers, and changes by major origin and country/territory of asylum, 2009	75
6. Internally displaced persons protected/assisted by UNHCR, 2009	80
7. Stateless persons, 2009	81
8. Other groups or people of concern to UNHCR, 2009	83
9. Asylum applications and refugee status determination by country/territory of asylum, 2009	84
10. Asylum applications and refugee status determination by country of asylum and level in the procedure, 2009	88
11. Asylum applications and refugee status determination by origin, 2009	93
12. Asylum applications and refugee status determination by origin and country/territory of asylum, 2009	97
13. Demographic composition of populations of concern to UNHCR, end-2009	113
14. Demographic composition of refugees and people in refugee-like situations, end-2009	117
15. Major locations and demographic composition of populations of concern to UNHCR, end-2009	121
16. Population of concern to UNHCR by type of location, end-2009	140
17. Refugees including people in a refugee-like situation by type of location, end-2009	143
18. Major mass inflows, 2009	146
19. Major voluntary repatriation/returnee movements, 2009	147
20. Resettlement departures of refugees from first asylum countries, 2009	148
21. Resettlement arrivals of refugees, 2009	150
22. Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, others of concern to UNHCR by region, 2008-2009	151
23. Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR, 2000-2009	152
24. Sources and methods of data collection, 2009	153
25. Indicators of host country capacity and contributions, 2009	156

**REGIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS AND COUNTRY/TERRITORY CODES**

26. United Nations major areas	158
27. UNHCR Regional Bureaux/Operations	159
28. UNHCR country/territory codes	160

**T**his section provides an overview of the major statistical developments in 2009. Key findings are summarized; for greater analysis of these developments, including the definitions used and limitations in the data, please see Chapters I to VI.

### Total population of concern

- The 2009 Statistical Yearbook identifies seven population categories: refugees; asylum-seekers; internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR; stateless persons; returned refugees; returned IDPs; and others of concern. These categories are collectively referred to as “total population of concern” or “persons of concern”.<sup>1</sup>
- By end 2009, the total population of concern to UNHCR was estimated at 36.5 million people, broken down as follows: 10.4 million refugees;<sup>2</sup> 984,000 asylum-seekers; 251,000 refugees who had repatriated during 2009; 15.6 million IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR; 2.2 million IDPs who had returned to their place of origin in 2009; 6.6 million stateless persons; and 412,000 others of concern.

### Refugees

- The number of refugees at end 2009 was 10.4 million, including 1.6 million people considered by UNHCR to be in a refugee-like situation. The previous year, the figure was 10.5 million.
- By end 2009, developing countries hosted 8.3 million refugees, or 80 per cent of the global refugee population. Asia hosted over half of the global refugee population (54%), followed by Africa (22%), Europe (16%), North America (4%), Latin America and the Caribbean (4%), and Oceania (0.3%).<sup>3</sup>
- Pakistan, with 1.7 million refugees, hosted the highest number of refugees at end 2009. Other major countries of asylum

included the Islamic Republic of Iran (1.1 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (1.05 million; Government estimate), Germany (594,000), Jordan (451,000; Government estimate), and Kenya (359,000).

- By end 2009, according to UNHCR’s global estimates, there were 2.9 million Afghan refugees, including one million in a refugee-like situation, accounting for one quarter of the global refugee population under UNHCR’s responsibility. Iraq was the second largest country of origin of refugees (1.8 million)<sup>4</sup>, followed by Somalia (678,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (456,000), and Myanmar (407,000).

### Internally displaced persons

- The number of internally displaced persons, including those in IDP-like situations, benefiting from UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities was 15.6 million at end 2009. The highest figure on record, this is an increase of 1.2 million persons over 2008 (14.4 million), and more than double the figure of 2005 (6.6 million).<sup>5</sup>
- UNHCR statistics included IDP populations in 22 countries.
- UNHCR offices reported at least 4 million IDPs who were newly displaced in 2009, while at least 2.2 million IDPs were able to return home during the same period.

### Stateless persons

- By end 2009, UNHCR identified some 6.6 million stateless persons in 61 countries. However, UNHCR estimated the actual number of stateless persons worldwide was far higher, at about 12 million people.

### Durable solutions

- In 2009, 251,500 refugees repatriated voluntarily to their home country, less than half of the 2008 number (604,000). Afghans constituted nearly one quarter (57,600) of all returnees during 2009. Other major countries of return in 2009 were the Democratic Republic of the Congo (44,300), Iraq (38,000), Sudan (33,100), Burundi (32,400), and Rwanda (20,600). Twelve countries of origin reported the return of more than 1,000 refugees each.

1 For a definition of the different population categories, see pp. 13-14.

2 The 4.8 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 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>).

4 This includes Government estimates for Iraqi refugees in Jordan (450,000) and the Syrian Arab Republic (1.05 million).

5 UNHCR’s work with IDPs is guided by the cluster approach, see footnote 23, which was adopted in 2005.

- According to government statistics provided to UNHCR, 19 industrialized countries reported the admission of 112,400 resettled refugees during 2009, one quarter more than in 2008 (88,800). The countries resettling most refugees during 2009 were the United States of America (79,900),<sup>6</sup> Canada (12,500), Australia (11,100), Germany (2,100), Sweden (1,900), and Norway (1,400).
- In 2009, UNHCR submitted to States more than 128,000 individual cases for resettlement consideration, the highest number of the past 16 years and 6 per cent above the 2008 level (121,000). During the year, 84,700 refugees departed for resettlement countries with UNHCR assistance. The highest numbers 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).
- By nationality, the main beneficiaries of the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes were refugees from Myanmar (24,800), Iraq (23,000), and Bhutan (17,500). These three groups accounted for three quarters of all resettled refugees.

### Refugee status determination

- During 2009, at least 923,400 individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to governments and UNHCR offices in 159 countries or territories. This is a 5 per cent increase compared to the previous year (875,300 claims) and the third consecutive annual rise. UNHCR offices registered some 119,100 applications, equivalent to 13 per cent of all applications.
- An estimated 837,000 were initial applications lodged in first instance procedures, while 86,400 claims were submitted on appeal, including to courts.<sup>7</sup>
- With 359,400 asylum claims registered during the year, Europe remained the primary destination for people applying for asylum on an individual basis, followed closely by Africa (336,400). The Americas and Asia recorded 125,000 and 93,700 applications respectively, while Oceania received 9,000.
- South Africa was an important destination for asylum-seekers with more than 222,000 new asylum claims registered in 2009, nearly one quarter of individual applications globally. The United States of America was the second most sought-after destination for new asylum-seekers in 2009 with an estimated 47,900 asylum applications, followed by France (42,100), Malaysia (40,100), Ecuador (35,500), Canada (34,000), and the United Kingdom (30,700).
- Zimbabwe was the largest single country of origin of asylum-seekers in 2009, with 158,400 new applications submitted by Zimbabwean nationals during the year. Myanmar was the second largest country of origin of asylum-seekers (48,600) in 2009, followed by Eritrea (43,400), Ethiopia (42,500), Colombia (39,200), Afghanistan (38,900), and Somalia (37,900).
- Some 274,500 asylum-seekers were either recognized as refugees (225,100) or given a complementary form of protection (49,400) during 2009. This number includes an estimated 15,800 individuals who initially received a negative decision that was subsequently overturned at the appeal or review stage.
- In 41 per cent of first instance decisions made in 2009, 1951 Convention refugee status was granted. This was significantly higher than the year before (30%). Including complementary forms of protection, 50 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken at the first instance in 2009 were positive.
- Based on available data, 25 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken on appeal during 2009 resulted in either the granting of refugee status (19%) or a complementary form of protection (6%).
- By the end of the year, some 984,000 individuals were reported to be awaiting a decision on their asylum claim.

### Sex and age

- For the 36.5 million people of concern to UNHCR, data on sex are available for 21.8 million people (60%), while data on age are available for 14 million (38%).
- Out of the 21.8 million people of concern for whom disaggregated information by sex is available, 49 per cent are female.
- Children and adolescents represent the majority of people of concern in Africa and Asia. In Central Africa, in the Great Lakes region, and in the East and Horn of Africa regions, children and adolescents constitute 56 per cent of people of concern to UNHCR.
- The lowest proportion of children is found in countries falling under the responsibility of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Europe (25%), whereas older people of concern constitute 12 per cent of the total population in the same region, and two times more than in any other region for which data is available.

<sup>6</sup> During US Fiscal Year 2009, close to 74,700 refugees were resettled by the United States of America.

<sup>7</sup> Statistical information on outcomes of asylum appeals and court proceedings is under-reported in UNHCR statistics, as this type of data is often either not collected by States or not published separately.



## Locations

- In 2009, the type of location was reported for some 15 million persons of concern residing mainly in non-industrialized countries.<sup>8</sup>
- Some 24 per cent of persons of concern live in camp-type locations, 51 per cent in urban settings, and 25 per cent in rural/dispersed locations.<sup>9</sup>
- For refugees, 4.8 million (46%) were living in urban areas, 2.5 million (24%) lived in camps, and 931,000 (9%) lived in rural areas dispersed among the local population. Detailed location information was unclear or unknown for 2.2 million (22%) of the world's refugees.
- The largest refugee camp in the world was Dagahaley camp in Dadaab, Kenya, with 93,000 inhabitants at the end of 2009. The Dagahaley camp, along with the Hagadera camp and the Ifo camp, are part of the Dadaab complex of camps with a total population of more than 256,000 refugees by end 2009.

## Host country capacities

- Pakistan had the largest number of refugees in relation to its economic capacity, hosting 745 refugees per 1 USD Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PPP)<sup>10</sup> 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 (592 refugees), followed by Zimbabwe (527 refugees), and the Syrian Arab Republic (244 refugees). The largest refugee-hosting developed country was Germany in 26<sup>th</sup> place with 17 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita.



*Iraqi refugees in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic*

8 Although UNHCR offices reported information on location for a total of 29 million persons of concern, the location or settlement type for 14 million persons (mostly IDPs) was either unclear or involved a mixture of types.

9 These figures exclude locations which are unclear or unknown.

10 This refers to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP per capita. Source for Gross Domestic Product (PPP): International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2009 (accessed 14 May 2010). Source for national population: United Nations, Population Division, "World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision", New York, 2009.

Persecution, conflict and other critical events continue to uproot millions of women, men, girls and boys on all continents. They also hinder the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Knowing the numbers and characteristics of persons of concern to UNHCR is fundamental for bringing an efficient protection response and solutions to their plight. The Statistical Yearbook is UNHCR's official statistical publication and reflects the Office's compliance with international reporting requirements. It summarizes in quantitative terms the humanitarian impact of some of the major developments that have occurred between January and December 2009. It provides the Office and its partners, including governments, donors, international organizations and NGOs, with a solid basis for taking informed decisions. The Yearbook combines an assessment and analysis of numbers, composition and observed trends of the statistical information available for persons of concern to UNHCR. It helps in monitoring emerging patterns and in tracking the progress made by the Office and its partners on achieving durable solutions.

The focus of the Yearbook is primarily on figures and trends, although the report also points to the quality of protection and well-being of persons of concern, on a case study basis. The Yearbook looks at new displacement, whether the result of massive movements of people or of individuals who sought international protection.

At the end of 2009, some 43.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to conflict and persecution, the highest number since the mid-1990s and 1.3 million more than the previous year. This included 15.2 million refugees,<sup>11</sup>

27.1 million IDPs<sup>12</sup> and close to 1 million individuals whose asylum applications had not yet been adjudicated by the end of the year. The number of returning refugees has continuously decreased since 2004, with 2009 being the lowest level (251,000) in two decades. In contrast, the number of returned IDPs (2.2 million) was the highest in more than a decade. In addition, UNHCR estimated that some 12 million people were stateless, with the Office having reliable statistics for 6.6 million of them.

Information on the demographic composition and location of populations falling under UNHCR's responsibility, which is crucial for planning and monitoring, is another important feature of this document. For instance, this type of information allows the Office to closely monitor the growing number of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) seeking international protection, especially in Europe. With 18,700 UASC having filed an asylum application in 2009, the number is at its highest since 2006<sup>13</sup>. The European Commission's *Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014)* is a crucial step towards addressing this important protection issue.<sup>14</sup>

The number of refugees residing in urban areas continued to grow, representing more than half of the world's refugees. The challenges faced by refugees living in urban locations received wide attention during the third meeting of the *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges*, which took place in December 2009.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to conflict-generated displacement, UNHCR responded to several humanitarian crises caused by natural

Global forced displacement, 2008-2009 \*

Category of displaced population	2008 (in million)		2009 (in million)	
	Total	Protected/assisted by UNHCR	Total	Protected/assisted by UNHCR
Refugees under UNHCR mandate	10.5	10.5	10.4	10.4
Refugees under UNRWA mandate	4.7	-	4.8	-
<b>Total number of refugees</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>10.4</b>
Asylum-seekers (pending cases)	0.8	0.2	1.0	0.2
Conflict-generated IDPs	26.0	14.4	27.1	15.6
<b>Total number of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>26.2</b>

\* Does not include natural disaster-related displacement.

<sup>11</sup> This figure includes 4.8 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

<sup>12</sup> Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

<sup>13</sup> In 2006, UNHCR began collecting data in a systematic way on unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum.

<sup>14</sup> See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0213:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>15</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4al2a4a26.html>

disasters. Although displacement resulting from natural disasters is becoming more frequent and the response more complex, it is beyond the scope of this Yearbook.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, despite the fact that global migration is a challenging context within which to uphold the fundamental principle of asylum, the Yearbook does not address mixed migration flows due to the lack of reliable and precise statistical data on this phenomenon. Nevertheless, a case study has been included to illustrate UNHCR's efforts in addressing the issue.

Statistics reflected in this Yearbook have, for the most part, been reported by UNHCR country offices and were derived either from the Office's own data or from that of the government. Use of estimates is clearly indicated.

The 2009 Statistical Yearbook consists of two main components: the **Global Analysis** and the **Annex** tables. The Global Analysis section includes 6 chapters, 11 thematic or regional boxes and 4 maps. It provides a detailed insight into global trends, levels and patterns in populations falling under UNHCR's mandate. **Chapter I** describes data sources and methodological issues. Its purpose is to present the meta-data necessary for understanding and interpreting UNHCR's published data, focusing on basic concepts and definitions, data collection and estimation methods, and issues pertaining to data quality. **Chapter II** presents a global overview of the size, main origin and destinations of the populations of concern to UNHCR in 2009. **Chapter III** focuses on the main population movements during 2009, with particular emphasis on durable solutions and new refugee outflows. **Chapter IV** provides an overview of asylum applications and components of the refugee status determination process. Demographic (sex and age) characteristics are discussed in **Chapter V**, which also provides information on the types of locations of populations. The objective of **Chapter VI** is to illustrate the potential use of available data for evidence-based decision-making. In addition, the chapter contains case studies on the specific situation of people displaced from Somalia and on the use of data collection methods in Yemen.

The 11 boxes provide a brief overview over a variety of topics ranging from registration of asylum-seekers in India to the demographic profile of adult refugees or unaccompanied and separated children who have sought asylum in 2009. In addition, some of the latest statistics are presented in the form of four world maps.

The second component of the Yearbook contains the annex tables, providing detailed data on 2009. Statistical data on historical trends, allowing for an easy comparison of trends globally, by region and by country for all major subject matters can be found on UNHCR's statistical website ([www.unhcr.org/statistics](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics)) and downloaded from UNHCR's Statistical Online Population Database at [www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase).

Some data contained in this publication may differ from statistics published previously due to retroactive changes or the inclusion of previously unavailable data. Similarly, it is expected that the data contained in the 2009 Yearbook will be subject to minor changes in the future.

<sup>16</sup> The findings of a study by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the IDMC, indicate that at least 36 million people were displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters in 2008. Of those, over 20 million were displaced by sudden-onset climate-related disasters. See: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CFA06/%28httpPublications%29/451D224B41C04246C12576390031FF63?OpenDocument>