An Afghan returnee in his village in Nahreshahi district, Balkh province, Afghanistan. UNHCR has provided shelter to tens of thousands of Afghan returnees.
Durable Solutions and New Displacement

While UNHCR’s primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, the organization’s ultimate goal is to help find durable solutions that will allow them to rebuild their lives in dignity. There are three durable solutions pursued by UNHCR for refugees: voluntary repatriation; local integration; or resettlement to a third country. There is no hierarchy among the three durable solutions.

Despite the efforts of the international community and UNHCR, for millions of refugees such solutions are nowhere in sight. Of the three durable solutions, voluntary repatriation has benefited the largest number of refugees over the years. While this remains the preferred solution among most of the world’s refugees, persistent conflict, fear of persecution or lack of basic services in the areas of return often prevent them from returning to their countries of origin. For some refugees, resettlement to a third country is the only way to find permanent safety and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Local integration is a complex and gradual process, involving legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. In many cases, acquiring the nationality of the country of asylum is the culmination of this process. Local integration as a process is difficult to measure in numerical terms, given the variety of legal and practical forms it can take. The analysis of local integration data is therefore limited, and subject to the availability of statistics on the naturalization of refugees in host countries.

Efforts and progress towards achieving durable solutions are, however, partly hampered by new outflows of refugees. Each year, thousands of refugees flee their home country and are recognized either on an individual or prima facie basis. This chapter looks at both durable solutions achieved, and at new displacements that occurred in 2011.

**DURABLE SOLUTIONS**

1. **Voluntary repatriation**

   The number of refugees returning home voluntarily has fallen steadily since 2004. This trend was reversed in 2011, with an estimated 532,000 refugees repatriating during the year. This was more than double the figure (+169%) in 2010 (197,600), and the highest since 2008, when 604,000 refugees repatriated. Despite this sharp increase, the number of repatriating refugees in 2011 was the third lowest in a decade. Globally, more than 91 million refugees have returned home over the past 10 years, three-quarters of them with UNHCR assistance.

   For 2011, the main countries of return included Libya (149,000), Côte d’Ivoire (135,200), Afghanistan (71,100), Iraq (67,100), Sudan (50,100), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (21,100). The largest number of refugee departures was reported by Tunisia (149,000), followed by Liberia (135,100), Pakistan (52,100),...
some refugees benefited from this durable protection tool, and an international solutions. It also constituted an important comprehensive frameworks for durable solutions. Resettlement continued to play a vital role in the protracted refugee situations, to create protection space, and to open up solutions that might otherwise have remained closed.

Worldwide, the resettlement base expanded to 26 countries in 2011. The adoption of the Joint European Union (EU) Resettlement Scheme is expected to enhance the number of resettlement places available in EU Member States. However, the number of resettlement places offered by States has not significantly increased over the years, and has remained at around 80,000. Global resettlement placement needs, assessed at some 800,000, thus exceeded the number of places available by a ratio of 1:10.

In 2011, UNHCR submitted some 92,000 refugees for resettlement. Ten per cent of all submissions were for women and girls at risk, the highest percentage of the last six years. Overall, submission levels declined, due to the time involved in processing complex cases and to UNHCR’s decision to contain submission levels to avoid the accumulation of pending cases for certain refugee populations which are unable to depart.

During the year, a total of 79,800 refugees were admitted by 22 resettlement countries, including the United States of America (51,500), Canada (12,900), Australia (9,200), Sweden (1,900), and Norway (1,300). Overall, this was almost 20,000 people less than in 2010 (98,800). The United States of America and Canada together admitted four-fifths of all resettled refugees in 2011.

For purposes of comparison, the 22 countries resettling refugees during 2011 accepted more than 100 different nationalities. The largest groups were refugees from Myanmar (18,000), Bhutan (18,000), Iraq (13,700), Somalia (5,500), and Eritrea (3,700).

Of those resettled in 2011, almost 62,000 individuals departed with UNHCR’s assistance—14 per cent less than in 2010. This sharp decrease was due to tightened security screening affecting Iraqi and Somali refugees in particular, and to a lack of access by resettlement selection missions to major processing countries (Syrian Arab Republic, Kenya) for security and safety reasons.

By nationality, the main beneficiaries of the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement

![Graph](image-url)
In February 2011, in response to political unrest in Libya and the subsequent mass movement of people into Tunisia and Egypt, UNHCR established a presence in Ras Djjir at the Tunisian-Libyan border and in Salloum at the Egyptian-Libyan border. By the end of March, an estimated 200,000 people had crossed into Tunisia and Egypt. This population consisted of Egyptian and Libyan nationals, as well as migrant workers from third countries who were employed in Libya before the unrest. Also among the arrivals were persons of concern to UNHCR, such as those who had already been granted refugee status in Libya prior to crossing the border as well as other individuals seeking international protection.

In response to the crisis, in April 2011 UNHCR launched the global resettlement solidarity initiative in Tunisia and Egypt to garner support for resettlement solutions for non-Libyan refugees reaching the borders of Egypt and Tunisia. Under the initiative, UNHCR resettlement teams were deployed to both countries to screen and process cases from among those present at the border for resettlement. UNHCR also asked resettlement countries to increase the number of resettlement spaces offered, or to allocate spaces for the Libya situation within existing quotas. A number of resettlement countries subsequently allocated spaces from within their existing quotas to the Libya unrest. Those included Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Germany signalled that it would also consider cases.

The use of UNHCR’s emergency transit centres (ETCs) in Romania and Slovakia has proven to be critical in facilitating and expediting resettlement from the border areas. Throughout the crisis, the United States of America, Canada, and the Nordic countries used the ETCs as transit points while the resettlement process was completed. In 2011, 159 persons were evacuated from Shousha and Salloum to the ETC in Romania for onward resettlement to third countries.

By the end of 2011, UNHCR had submitted 3,000 individuals for resettlement from Tunisia and 1,300 from Salloum, Egypt, of which by the end of 2011 over 700 had departed to their new resettlement country or the ETC for onward processing. Refugees from Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia made up the majority of submissions.  

53 The United States of America ceased issuing statistics on the number of naturalized refugees. The latest available information dates back to 2009: where 35,130 refugees were naturalized between January and September of that year.

54 Some 850,200 individual asylum claims were submitted worldwide in 2011. An estimated 222,000 people received a positive decision on their asylum claims in the course of the year.