25 YEARS OF GLOBAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

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By end-2013, 51.2 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. Some 16.7 million persons were refugees: 11.7 million under UNHCR’s mandate and 5.0 million Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA.

An estimated 10.7 million individuals were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2013. This includes 8.2 million persons newly displaced within the borders of their own country, the highest figure on record.\(^1\) The other 2.5 million individuals were new refugees – the highest number of new arrivals since 1994.

During 2013, conflict and persecution forced an average of 32,200 individuals per day to leave their home and seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their own country or in other countries. This compares to 23,400 in 2012 and 14,200 in 2011.

The 2013 Statistical Yearbook identifies seven population categories:

1. refugees
2. asylum-seekers
3. internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected and assisted by UNHCR
4. stateless persons
5. returned refugees
6. returned IDPs
7. others of concern

These categories are collectively referred to as the ‘total population of concern’ or as ‘persons of concern’.\(^2\)

By the end of 2013, the total population of concern to UNHCR was estimated at 42.9 million people, broken down as follows:

- 11.7 million refugees\(^3\)
- 1.2 million asylum-seekers
- 414,600 refugees who had repatriated during 2013
- 23.9 million IDPs protected and assisted by UNHCR
- 1.4 million IDPs who had returned to their place of origin in 2013
- 3.5 million stateless persons
- 836,600 others of concern

The global figure included 33.3 million internally displaced persons and close to 1.2 million asylum-seekers. This was the highest recorded level in the post–World War II era. If these 51.2 million persons were a nation, they would make up the 26\(^{th}\) largest in the world.

1 The highest figure since 1989, when record keeping began.
2 For definitions of the various population categories, see Chapter I.
3 The 5.0 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) are not included in UNHCR’s statistics.
The number of refugees at end-2013 was **11.7 million**, including 700,000 individuals considered by UNHCR to be in a refugee-like situation. The previous year, this figure was 10.5 million.

By the end of 2013, developing countries hosted **10.1 million refugees**, or 86 per cent of the global refugee population, the highest value for the past 22 years. The Least Developed Countries provided asylum to 2.8 million refugees, or 24 per cent of the total.

The Asia and Pacific region hosted slightly less than one third of the global refugee population (30%). This was followed by sub-Saharan Africa (25%), the Middle East and North Africa (23%), Europe (15%), and the Americas (7%).

Pakistan, with **1.6 million refugees**, hosted the highest number of refugees at the end of 2013. Other major countries of asylum included the Islamic Republic of Iran (857,400), Lebanon (856,500), Jordan (641,900), and Turkey (609,900).

More than half (53%) of all refugees worldwide came from just three countries: Afghanistan (2.56 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (2.47 million), and Somalia (1.12 million).

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4 The geographical regions used are those of UNHCR. See Annex, Table 27 for country breakdown.
The number of internally displaced persons benefiting from UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities, including 267,500 in IDP-like situations, stood at 23.9 million at the end of 2013. This was the highest figure on record, and 6.2 million more than at the start of the year (17.7 million).

In 2013, UNHCR was responsible for leading, coordinating, and supporting assessment and response for 19 protection, eight shelter, and seven camp coordination and camp management clusters or other coordination mechanisms. These actions took place in a total of 19 operations worldwide.

UNHCR’s statistics included IDP populations in 24 countries. Its offices reported some 7.6 million IDPs who were newly displaced in 2013, while 1.4 million IDPs were able to return home during the same period.

Close to 1.1 million individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to governments and UNHCR offices in 167 countries or territories in 2013. This not only constituted a 16 per cent increase compared to the previous year (929,700 claims) but was also the highest level of the past 10 years. UNHCR offices registered a record high of 203,200 or 19 per cent of these claims.

Some 286,500 asylum-seekers were either recognized as refugees (213,700) or granted a complementary form of protection (72,800) during 2013. This number includes an estimated 20,000 individuals who initially received negative decisions on their asylum claims but which were subsequently overturned at the appeal or review stage.

With 109,600 asylum claims, Germany was for the first time since 1999 the world’s largest recipient of new individual applications.

Refugee status based on the 1951 Convention was granted in 32 per cent of decisions in 2013. With the addition of complementary forms of protection, 43 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken in 2013 were positive. Both values are significantly higher than the rates in 2012 (30% and 37%, respectively), reflecting a continued increasing demand for international protection throughout the year.

By the end of the year, close to 1.2 million individuals were reported to be awaiting a decision on their asylum claims, the highest number in many years.

The Syrian Arab Republic was the single largest country of origin for asylum-seekers in 2013, with 64,300 new applications submitted by its nationals during the year – on average, every 14th claim.

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5 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.
Comparing the number of refugees to the national population of its host country shows that Lebanon topped the list with 178 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants. This was the highest relative burden a country had been exposed to since 1980. Jordan (88) and Chad (34) ranked second and third, respectively.

Out of 11.7 million refugees, the type of accommodation was known for 9.5 million (81%). More than half of this number was living in individual or private accommodation (58%), while a third (33%) was reportedly living in planned/managed refugee camps.

Statelessness is estimated to have affected at least 10 million people in 2013. However, data captured by governments and communicated to UNHCR were limited to 3.5 million stateless individuals in 75 countries.

During the year, UNHCR submitted 93,200 refugees to States for resettlement, and some 71,600 departed with UNHCR's assistance. According to government statistics, 21 countries admitted 98,400 refugees for resettlement during 2013 (with or without UNHCR's assistance). The United States of America received the highest number (66,200).

Newly arrived Syrian refugees in the Turkish refugee camp of Midyat-Mardin are living in tents and facing harsh winter conditions.
Introduction

The collection and dissemination of refugee statistics are mandated by both the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). While the former obliges States to report on refugee statistics to UNHCR, the latter mandates the agency to disseminate this information. The dissemination of refugee statistics allows stakeholders and users to make effective decisions at all levels in order to improve response on forced displacement.

UNHCR has had a long tradition of compiling, analysing, and disseminating data on forced displacement, in particular on refugees and asylum-seekers. The collection of this data has evolved over time to encompass other populations who have been forcibly displaced. As a consequence, besides information on refugees and asylum-seekers, the Office collects data on returned refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned IDPs, and stateless persons. Over the years, governments, UNHCR, and partners have each played an essential role in collecting statistics, and today data on refugees and other persons of concern to the Office are available throughout the year. In view of the legal backing for and obligation of data collection, the agency ensures that the various data-collection methods are of scientific standard.

Since UNHCR’s creation in 1951, there has not been a single year in which individuals did not have to flee due to armed conflict, war, or persecution. UNHCR’s statistics are a sad testimony to these developments. In 2013 alone, the world witnessed continuous conflicts and violence that resulted in the massive displacement of individuals, either within or outside their own borders. During the year, 10.7 million individuals were newly displaced, including 8.2 million persons within their own borders, the highest figure recorded in a given year. The remaining 2.5 million individuals were newly displaced refugees.

This Yearbook has seven main chapters. Chapter I provides detailed description of the sources and methods used to collect and compile these data. It reveals that registration is the major method of data collection for refugees. This chapter also finds that governments
and UNHCR remain the key agents of data collection in the refugee context. Chapter I concludes with a contribution by the Swedish Migration Board, focusing on the prognosis of asylum flows. This section provides a step-by-step approach for forecasting asylum flows in Sweden by tracing the migrant journey through the various channels, based on Sweden’s experience. The article measures how asylum flows can be statistically predicted based on certain scenarios, and suggests that the prognosis of asylum flows requires constant revisions given that unexpected events can cause wide variations in forecasted estimates. This contribution constitutes an important milestone in the 13-year history of UNHCR’s Statistical Yearbook, as it is the first time that a government has contributed to the publication.

The recorded figure of 51.2 million individuals by the end of 2013 requires further examination of the various population categories. Chapter II therefore analyses the overall trends and levels of forcibly displaced persons worldwide, with particular emphasis on the reporting period. In addition, this chapter examines the origins and main destinations of forcibly displaced persons. In 2013, Syrians became the second largest source country of refugees, next only to Afghans, which have topped this list for the past three decades. Within just five years, the Syrian Arab Republic has moved from being the second largest refugee-hosting country to being the second largest refugee source country. As a result, this chapter has a dedicated section analysing the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey, tracing the influx of Syrian refugees through to their registration, documentation, and protection.

Chapter III examines trends and levels of persons falling under UNHCR’s statelessness mandate. It focuses on the magnitude of the global stateless population around the world, as well as on the challenges in obtaining reliable and accurate data on this population. This chapter also includes a contribution from the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, offering an academic analysis of the challenges of identifying stateless person who have not been comprehensively accounted for. The authors’ views reflect on the difficulties in identifying and thus enumerating this population, while also providing recommendations on overcoming these challenges.

In Chapter IV, the various options for durable solutions open to refugees are presented, including discussion on the general patterns of voluntary repatriation of refugees. This chapter concludes that voluntary repatriation remains the largest durable solution, in numerical terms. In addition, Chapter IV examines the origins and destinations of resettled refugees in the context of durable solutions. This section includes a brief overview of humanitarian admissions, a simplified and expedited system of resettlement. This chapter concludes with a discussion on moving towards a more qualitative rather than quantitative approach to measuring location integration.

Chapter V provides a statistical analysis of both asylum applications and the components of the process of refugee status determination. Data show that the number of individual asylum applications registered with governments or UNHCR during the year surpassed the one million mark, reflecting a continued increasing demand for international protection. This chapter also includes a brief overview of asylum applications lodged by unaccompanied and separated children.

Chapter VI examines the demographic and location characteristics of persons of concern. The analysis centres on age, sex, and locations of refugees by the end of 2013. Nowadays, more refugees reside in urban locations than rural areas, this chapter finds, and one in every two refugees is a child. The chapter concludes with an article from an external contributor examining the historical trends in location and accommodation of refugee shelter from 2001 through 2013.

Finally, Chapter VII focuses on ‘open statistics’, an increasingly popular term and idea today, including in the humanitarian context. This chapter examines how modern technology has forced a change in the mindset of many international organizations and actors working in humanitarian emergencies. It also explores the potential of
open statistics, by providing examples of how such initiatives can support refugee emergencies.

The tables appearing in the Annex provide additional detailed data for 2013. Statistical data on historical trends, allowing for easy global comparison by region and by country for all major themes, can be found on UNHCR’s statistical website (www.unhcr.org/statistics). These data can also be downloaded from UNHCR’s Statistical Online Population Database, at http://popstats.unhcr.org.

Statistics reflected in this Yearbook are, for the most part, those reported by UNHCR country offices, drawn either from their own data or those of the government. The use of estimates is clearly indicated. Some data contained in this publication may differ from those published earlier, due to retroactive adjustments or the inclusion of previously unavailable data. It is expected that the data contained in the 2013 Yearbook will likewise be subject to minor future adjustments.