

Finding durable solutions

The protection of refugees and others who are displaced must include the search for durable solutions to their plight. But for some 5.2 million refugees and a great number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world today, 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 cases, the absence of longer-term solutions aggravates protection problems.

Accordingly, a drive to implement comprehensive solutions in refugee situations, particularly protracted ones (see maps on pages 38-39), will be the cornerstone of UNHCR's operations in 2009. The High Commissioner's initiative on protracted

situations, launched in 2008, will seek to improve conditions and find solutions for refugees still trapped in protracted exile. It will target five protracted situations, involving Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan, Burundian refugees (from 1972) in the United Republic of Tanzania, Croatian and Bosnian refugees in Serbia, and Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

National and international development actors will play a crucial role in this initiative, which seeks to identify durable solutions or, where these are unlikely to be found in the near future, boost livelihood and self-reliance opportunities for refugees. The plan includes the creation of conditions conducive to voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, as well



Burundian refugees returning home from the United Republic of Tanzania.

as support for local integration. Where applicable, resettlement will serve as a protection tool, durable solution and burden-sharing mechanism.

UNHCR and its partners in UN country teams are guided by the *Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. The framework helps country teams to identify lingering protection gaps, particularly in protracted situations of internal displacement, such as in the Balkans or the Caucasus. The Office seeks to ensure that the varied needs of different groups within displaced communities are addressed. In the case of children, standard procedures to determine the best interests of each separated or unaccompanied child will identify the most appropriate solutions.

In 2009, UNHCR will strengthen its inter-agency efforts for promoting durable solutions.

It will continue to participate in the UN Country Team, UN Development Group and the early recovery cluster in order to link humanitarian work with development programmes. The Office will also strengthen bilateral partnerships with development organizations. These efforts will allow it to better allay protection concerns, promote sustainable livelihoods and address basic social needs. The Office will also deepen cooperation with governments and civil society actors in matters related to governance and rule of law in post-conflict countries.

The World Bank's policy framework for fragile States is of particular relevance, as it gives impetus to collaborative work in post-conflict settings. The Office will also strengthen partnerships with other international and regional financial institutions. Regional institutions play an important role in finding durable solutions for displaced people. The African Union 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. Cooperation with the European Commission is of crucial importance for local integration initiatives in Europe.

Local integration

UNHCR is hopeful that refugee-hosting countries will continue to support local integration in 2009. In West Africa, the Office implements, in close consultation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UN country teams and other partners, two-year projects to ensure the economic, social and legal integration of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees remaining in seven countries in the region.

West African leaders have reaffirmed the applicability of the ECOWAS treaty and its protocols to refugees in the region. Refugees who opt for local integration will thus enjoy all the rights of



A computer centre in Tham Hin camp in Thailand has been equipped with funds from the *ninemillion.org* campaign and benefits some 850 teenagers.

UNHCR / K. McKinsey

establishment, residence and freedom of movement afforded to ECOWAS citizens. In Southern Africa, UNHCR is discussing the local integration of refugees with the Governments of Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

In Europe, local integration is an emerging durable solution. The Office works with the governments of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in implementing local integration plans that were drawn from a study commissioned in 2007. The Office is also discussing local integration opportunities in Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Serbia,

UNHCR will work with UNDP on integrating refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. In Latin America, UNHCR is employing micro-credit, vocational training and housing schemes to aid local integration.

UNHCR is an active member of the early recovery cluster and other inter-agency efforts to reduce the gap between humanitarian aid and development. These efforts will be supported by a global programme for durable solutions, livelihoods and partnerships. The programme will enable UNHCR to provide technical support to the field and implement its revised reintegration policy, as well as promote the

Livelihoods strategies: critical measures to promote self-reliance and durable solutions

UNHCR provides livelihoods support to displaced people in more than 70 per cent of the countries where it operates. Assessments conducted with the participation of displaced people have shown clear links between livelihoods, protection and physical security. Ensuring livelihoods is an essential protection tool that is critical in return or resettlement, facilitating local integration, and in alleviating the negative consequences of protracted refugee situations.

UNHCR aims to improve economic opportunities for both displaced people and their host communities to strengthen social cohesion in refugee-hosting areas. Activities are mainly carried out through local implementing partners, and cover a broad range of sectors including vocational training; agriculture, livestock and natural resource management; microfinance and business development; and employment services. Livelihoods support is informed by socio-economic assessments, and involves partners from local businesses and development agencies.

Since 2008, UNHCR has improved its capacity in self-reliance activities by acquiring expertise in livelihoods programming at Headquarters and by developing strategic approaches at the field level. Expert staff are posted in regional offices to support operations in the Americas and West Africa to develop comprehensive self-reliance strategies, conduct livelihoods assessments, and design livelihood programmes. UNHCR's new roster of external livelihoods experts will be fully operational in 2009.

For 2009 and beyond, additional capacity is required in eastern Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East. Specialized staff are needed

at the field level to oversee the implementation of self-reliance strategies, manage programmes, and strengthen collaboration with other actors. New posts will be required in countries with protracted refugee situations and in large operations where livelihoods programmes are expected to grow significantly in response to the global food crisis.

UNHCR will conduct two regional workshops in 2009 to share information and train staff and implementing partners. These events will focus on microfinance and alternative livelihoods for urban and protracted settings.

Some of the protection challenges for women and youth are addressed through UNHCR's Women Leading for Livelihoods programme, which connects women leaders with displaced women worldwide to develop skills, encourage entrepreneurship and stimulate women's empowerment. UNHCR is already implementing projects under this initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Georgia, Kenya, Morocco and Serbia. The Office expects to implement some 30 new projects in the coming year.

In 2008, technical partnerships with the ILO and international NGOs provided expert deployments to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt and Yemen to address livelihoods needs. Partnerships with FAO and other international NGOs will strengthen UNHCR's work in microfinance and livelihoods assessments and its response to the global food crisis. UNHCR also supports the development of guidelines, methodologies and assessment tools in cooperation with other UN agencies. In 2009, new partnerships will be explored with development actors and the private sector.

High Commissioner's initiative for protracted situations.

The programme will also assist field operations in conducting assessments, devising strategies and implementing livelihoods schemes, besides developing the capacity of UNHCR and partner staff. Handbooks and guidelines will be revised to reflect new challenges. Furthermore, it will allow the deployment of technical experts to the field, and the organization of workshops and training sessions.

Repatriation and reintegration

Many refugees repatriate home even when situations are not yet conducive for return, as when a conflict has not completely ended, or security has been restored but economic and social infrastructure is lacking. In this context, UNHCR believes that voluntary repatriation should be based on individual choice and that the Office should play a part in the initial stage of reintegration.

Some 512,000 refugees and 618,000 IDPs were expected to return home in 2008. In 2009, it is foreseen that almost 600,000 refugees will return to their areas of origin, mainly to Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mauritania and Southern Sudan. Some 445,000 IDPs are also expected to return, particularly in Nepal and Uganda, but also in a number of other countries.

UNHCR's new framework on reintegration, presented to the Executive Committee in March 2008, reaffirms its readiness to play a prominent role in the return and reintegration of displaced people. It reasserts UNHCR's engagement in seeking durable solutions for IDPs and the involvement of development actors and governments at an early stage in reintegration activities. The reintegration framework also reflects key findings from UNHCR's evaluations in Southern Sudan and Angola in May 2008.

Reforms in the global humanitarian system that 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 livelihood 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, as well as the emergency shelter cluster, the Office plays an important role in UN efforts to support governments in protecting and assisting IDPs and finding durable solutions for them. As a member of the early recovery cluster, the Office is committed to bringing development partners to post-conflict situations in the early recovery phase.

In 2009, the Voluntary Repatriation Project will continue to fund field offices to help them provide transport and repatriation grants to refugee individuals and families. The funds are tapped by field offices that do not have other resources due to the small size of a country operation or face an unexpected hike in demand for voluntary repatriation. The project allows UNHCR to assist any individual who approaches the Office with a voluntary request to repatriate.

Resettlement

Since 2006, UNHCR has seen a large increase in the number of referrals for resettlement. Resettlement referrals worldwide almost doubled from 2006 to 2007. In 2008, UNHCR is on course to refer about 90,000 refugees. It estimates that in 2009 there will be some 560,000 people around the world in need of this durable solution. The Office is concerned that the number of refugees in need of resettlement is growing without a corresponding increase in the number of places that States make available.

In 2009, resettlement will be viewed as a durable solutions option for a number of refugees in protracted situations; including some of the 260,000 Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and some 90,000 people in protracted situations in Ethiopia, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. The identification of these groups reflects a more strategic use of resettlement by UNHCR. In Nepal, resettlement has proved to be the primary durable solution for long-staying refugees; for others, such as Eritreans in Eastern Sudan, the main durable solution of local integration will be complemented by a small resettlement component. Besides its strategic use in protracted situations, resettlement will be used as a tool to open opportunities for other durable solutions.

Planning figures for resettlement in 2009

Region	Number of people in need of resettlement	Of which, UNHCR expects to refer for resettlement
Asia	330,949	66,117
Middle East and North Africa	104,995	27,576
Africa	116,464	26,236
Americas	1,252	1,000
Europe	7,477	6,077
Total	561,137	127,006

In 2009, UNHCR will encourage more countries to establish resettlement programmes, and work with existing resettlement countries to increase their quotas. European countries, for example, provide only 9 per cent of overall resettlement places.

UNHCR has established an anti-fraud working group with resettlement countries. In 2009, the Office will continue implementing its Anti-Fraud Plan of Action, elements of which are the improved use of registration, enhanced data integrity and risk mitigation.

The Office will continue its dialogue with States through the annual tri-partite consultations on resettlement and the biannual working groups on resettlement. Participation in these events has increased significantly, particularly with the rise of new resettlement countries in Europe and Latin America. The Office is also

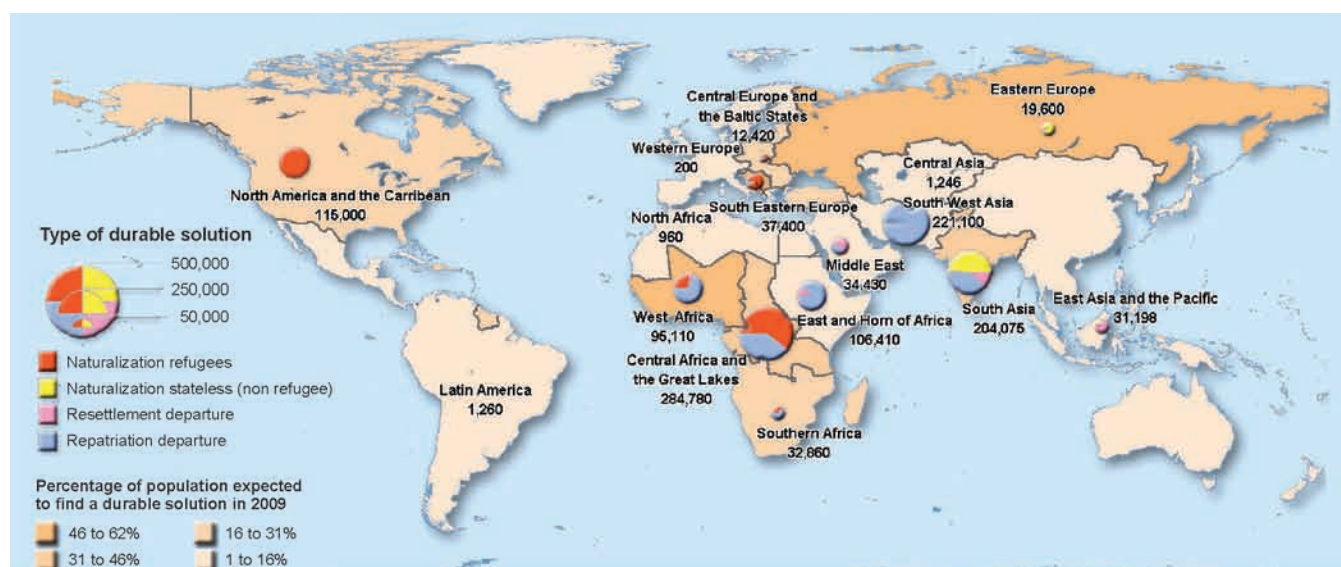
planning, with the support of resettlement countries and NGOs, for a conference on the integration of resettled refugees.

UNHCR will also strengthen and develop new identification tools, such as the Heightened Risk Identification Tool. It will boost its partnerships with NGOs as they are working directly with refugees and thus in a good position to identify those most at risk for medical or social reasons.

UNHCR will continue to work with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) to deploy resettlement experts to operations that need additional staffing. Almost 100 people were deployed between January and September 2008, primarily to process cases for referral to resettlement countries. It is envisaged that demands for deployments will increase, so the limited resources of the ICMC will have to be used judiciously, focusing on those countries where the disparity between resources available and resettlement needs are greatest. In 2009, UNHCR anticipates deploying some 100 resettlement experts to Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. These deployments improve the Office's response to resettlement needs, and provide an opportunity for government and NGO personnel to understand the living conditions of refugees.

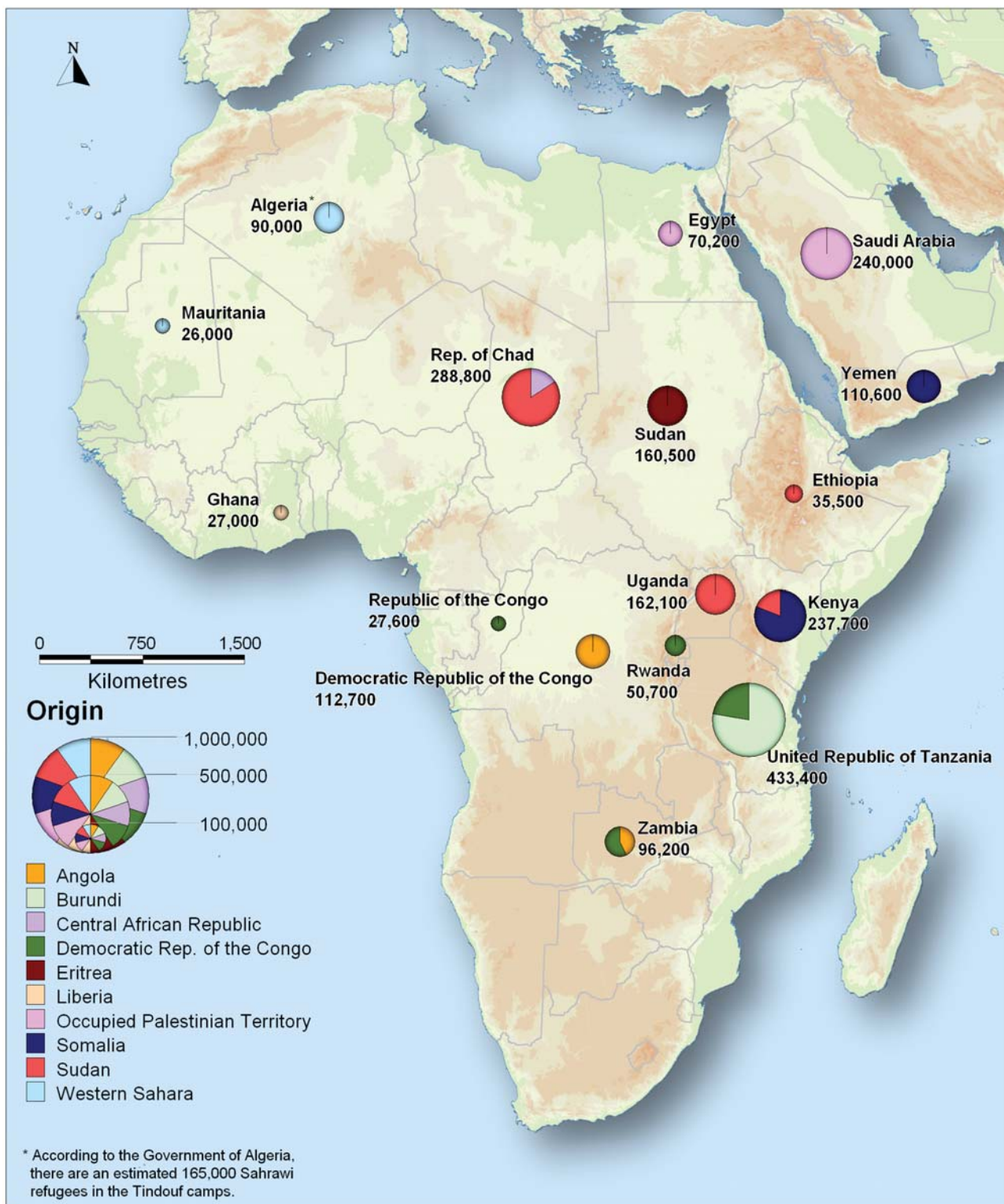
UNHCR works with IOM to fund the travel of some refugees, including children moving to join their resettled families. This project is restricted to situations where neither the resettlement country nor the family is able to meet such costs.

Expected durable solutions for refugees and stateless people in 2009



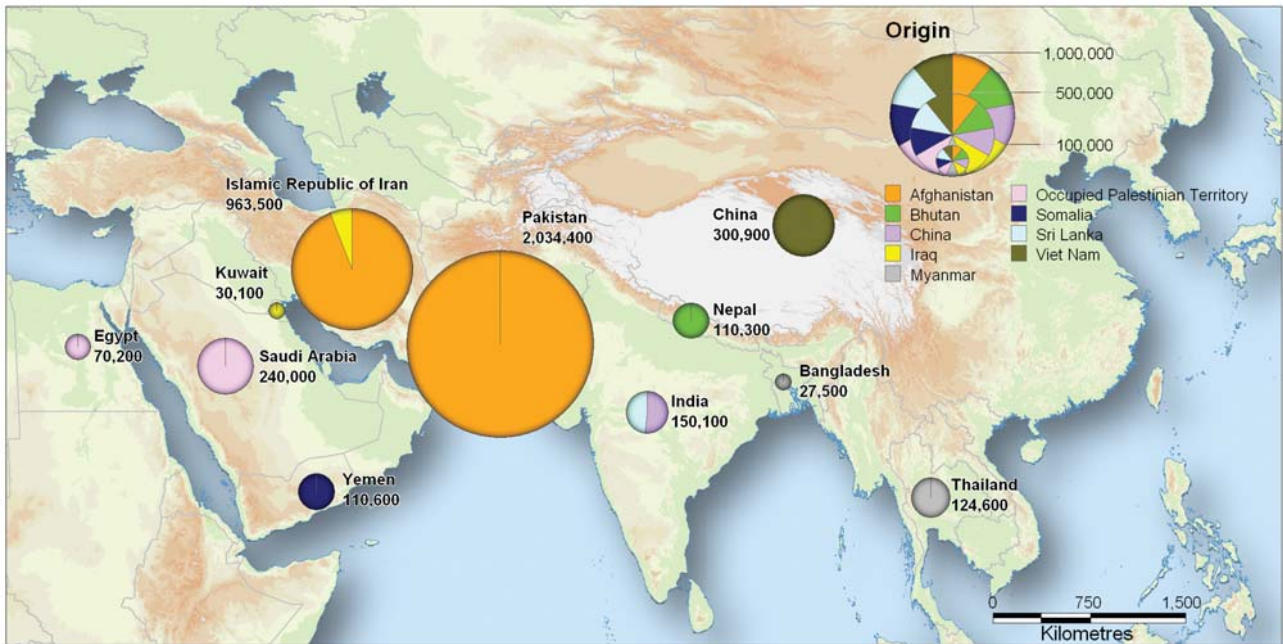
Protracted refugee populations in countries of asylum

As at 1 January 2008



Protracted refugee populations in countries of asylum

As at 1 January 2008



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