



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 purpose⁴⁷ 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. While voluntary repatriation has been pursued in many situations, resettlement or local integration is the only durable solution in some.

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

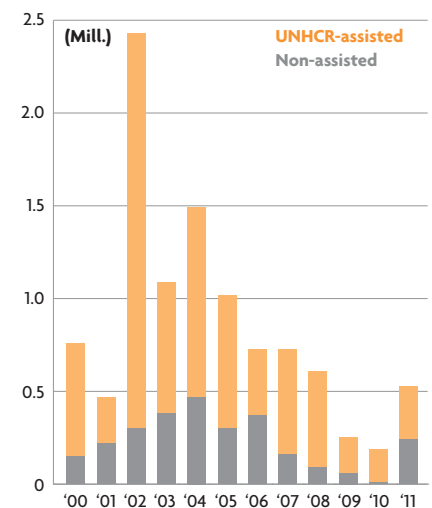
○ Voluntary repatriation⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ 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 9.1 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),

Fig. III.1 Refugee returns | 2000-2011



⁴⁷ The need for durable solutions is not limited to refugees; IDPs and stateless persons also require lasting resolution to their legal and physical protection needs. However, due to the lack of reliable data on solutions for these groups, the analysis in this section is confined to durable solutions for refugees only.

⁴⁸ For statistical purposes, only refugees who actually returned during the calendar year under examination are included. However, UNHCR's assistance towards reintegration within the country of origin covers longer periods of time, exceeding the calendar year in which the return takes place.

⁴⁹ Based on consolidated reports from countries of asylum (departure) and origin (return).

Chad (37,400), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (36,900). In the case of Libya and Côte d'Ivoire, the return took place less than a year after the flight.

For the first time since 2009, Afghanistan was not the country with the highest number of returning refugees. Overall, more than 5.5 million afghan refugees—or roughly one-fifth of Afghanistan's population—have returned home since 2002, most of them with UNHCR's assistance. With 71,100 registered returns during the year, levels in 2011 were the second lowest since large-scale returns began in 2002.

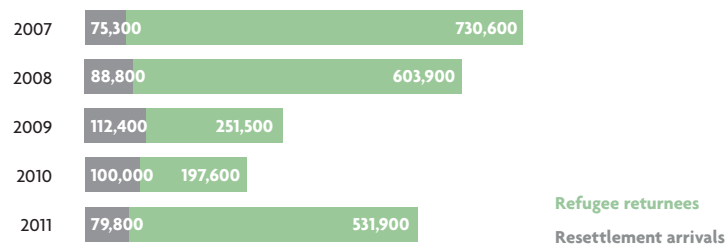
Iraq reported the highest number of refugee returns since 2004, when 194,000 persons returned. In 2011, figures reached 67,100, more than double those of 2010 (28,900). This increase could be the result of a government decision to increase the amount of funds allocated to returnees, an improvement in security and a reduction in sectarian violence. Overall, more than half a million iraqis returned home between 2003 and 2011.

Resettlement

Resettlement continued to play a vital role as an essential component of comprehensive frameworks for durable solutions. It also constituted an important protection tool, and an international responsibility-sharing mechanism.

Resettlement benefits a comparatively small number of refugees: in 2011, less than 1 per cent of the world's refugees benefited from this durable solution. Over the past five years, some 455,000 refugees were resettled compared to 2.3 million refugees

Fig. III.2 Resettlement arrivals and refugee returns | 2007-2011



who repatriated. For every refugee resettled since 2007, approximately five have repatriated. In recent years, UNHCR and States have worked to increase the use of resettlement as a strategic durable solution – serving to resolve some protracted refugees 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 Scheme⁵⁰ 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 process-

ing 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.

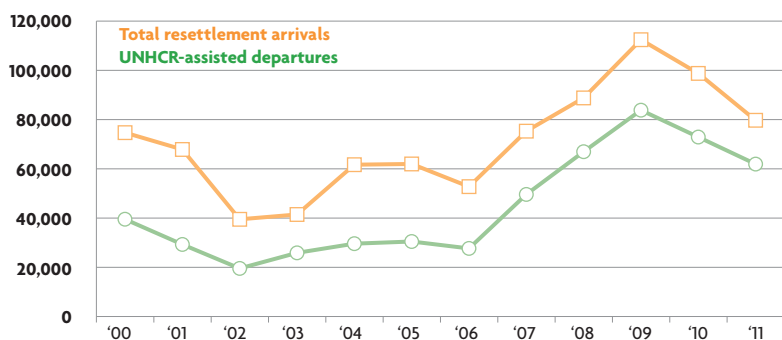
During the year, a total of 79,800 refugees were admitted by 22 resettlement countries, including the United States of America (51,500),⁵¹ Canada (12,900), Australia (9,200), Sweden (1,900), and Norway (1,300). Overall, this was almost 20,000 people less than in 2010 (98,800). The United States of America 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.⁵²

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

Fig. III.3 Resettlement of refugees | 2000-2011



⁵⁰ See <http://www.unhcr.org/4f7589ef9.html>.

⁵¹ During US Fiscal Year 2011, some 56,400 refugees were resettled to the United States of America.

⁵² The disparity between submissions and departures is partly explained by the time delay between a submission by UNHCR and the decision by a resettlement State to allow the refugee to travel. In many cases, a decision by a resettlement State is made several months after receiving a submission; hence refugees submitted for resettlement in 2011, may travel in 2012, particularly cases submitted in the last quarter of 2011.

programmes in 2011 were refugees from Bhutan (18,000), Myanmar (17,900), Iraq (8,900), and Somalia (4,800).

UNHCR offices in 83 countries of asylum were involved in facilitating resettlement processing during 2011. The largest number of refugees resettled with UNHCR's assistance departed from Nepal (18,100), Thailand (9,600), Malaysia (8,400), the Syrian Arab Republic (4,700), and Turkey (4,400). Combined, these five UNHCR offices accounted for 7 out of every 10 resettlement departure assisted by the organization in 2011.

Local integration

Measuring the degree and nature of local integration in quantitative terms has remained a challenge. In instances where refugees acquired citizenship through naturalization, statistics are often limited by the fact that many of the countries concerned make no distinction between the naturalization of refugees and that of others. National laws in many countries do not permit refugees to be naturalized. Hence, the naturalization

of refugees tends to be restricted and, where feasible, under-reported.

Nevertheless, the limited data on the naturalization of refugees available to UNHCR show that during the past decade at least 900,000 refugees have been granted citizenship by their asylum country. The united states of america alone accounted for two-thirds of this figure.⁵³ In 2011, UNHCR was informed of refugees being granted citizenship in 25 countries, including Belgium (1,200), Ireland (1,100), Viet Nam (940), Armenia (420), and Georgia (230).

NEW DISPLACEMENT

This section is limited to individuals who have been recognized as refugees on a group or prima facie basis. Those who have sought asylum on an individual basis, by requesting refugee or complementary protection status through an individual asylum claim, will be discussed in Chapter IV.⁵⁴

More than 800,000 refugees became displaced as part of a mass outflow in 2011; the highest number in more than a decade. Somalia,

Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Sudan were the principal source countries of new displacements. From Somalia, nearly 300,000 individuals fled the country primarily to Kenya (163,100) and Ethiopia (101,000). Côte d'Ivoire witnessed a large-scale outflow of refugees in 2011, when an estimated 207,000 people fled mostly to Liberia (about 200,000), with smaller numbers arriving in Ghana and Guinea. Some 150,000 libyan refugees sought safety in Tunisia during the year whereas the majority of the 101,000 newly displaced Sudanese refugees fled to South Sudan (76,800) and Ethiopia (19,200).

Although the total number of people who left Iraq during the year is not available, approximately 34,600 newly registered Iraqis were recorded by UNHCR in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and other countries in the region in 2011.

Overall, the largest numbers of new refugee arrivals were reported by Liberia (200,000), Kenya (163,100), Tunisia (150,000), Ethiopia (131,200), and South Sudan (76,800).

IN FOCUS: EMERGENCY RESETTLEMENT INITIATIVE FOR THE CRISIS IN LIBYA

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 Djir 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 from among those present at the border cases 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, when 55,300 refugees were naturalized between January and September of that year.

⁵⁴ Some 850,200 individual asylum claims were submitted worldwide in 2011. An estimated 223,000 people received a positive decision on their asylum claim in the course of the year.