



Malian refugees arrive in Mauritania, exhausted and anxious. They had to travel for several days, without taking a break and to sleep or even rest.

UNHCR / B. MALUM



Population Levels and Trends

IN 2012, THE POPULATIONS of concern to UNHCR witnessed dramatic changes. During the course of the year, changes in the sizes, trends, and flows of these populations were noticed in some countries more than others. This chapter focuses on the magnitude and general flows of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Unless otherwise indicated, the total numbers of IDPs covered in this chapter are those generated exclusively by conflict and who benefited from UNHCR's assistance and/or protection activities.

Crises in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic significantly contributed to the higher numbers of refugee and IDP populations during 2012. The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic in particular shifted the balance of origins of refugees for the entire past decade.

Protracted refugee situations

UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as one in which 25,000 or more refugees of the same nationality have been in exile for five years or longer in a given asylum country. Based on this definition, it is estimated that some 6.4 million refugees were in a protracted situation by the end of 2012. These refugees were living in 25 host countries, accounting for an overall total of 30 protracted situations. ●

Refugees

REGIONS OF ASYLUM

At the end of 2012, the global number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate was estimated at 10.5 million. Outflows of more than 1.1 million refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic, stretched global emergency response systems for the third year in a row. The 2012 increase, of a size not seen since the early 1990s, was partly offset by the voluntary return of some half a million refugees, primarily to Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Iraq. Further reductions in global refugee figures resulted from the application of the cessation clause to Angolan and Liberian refugees across sub-Saharan Africa,²² and from the revision of government estimates for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Despite the significant number of new arrivals, the global refugee population thus grew by less than 100,000 people compared to 2011.

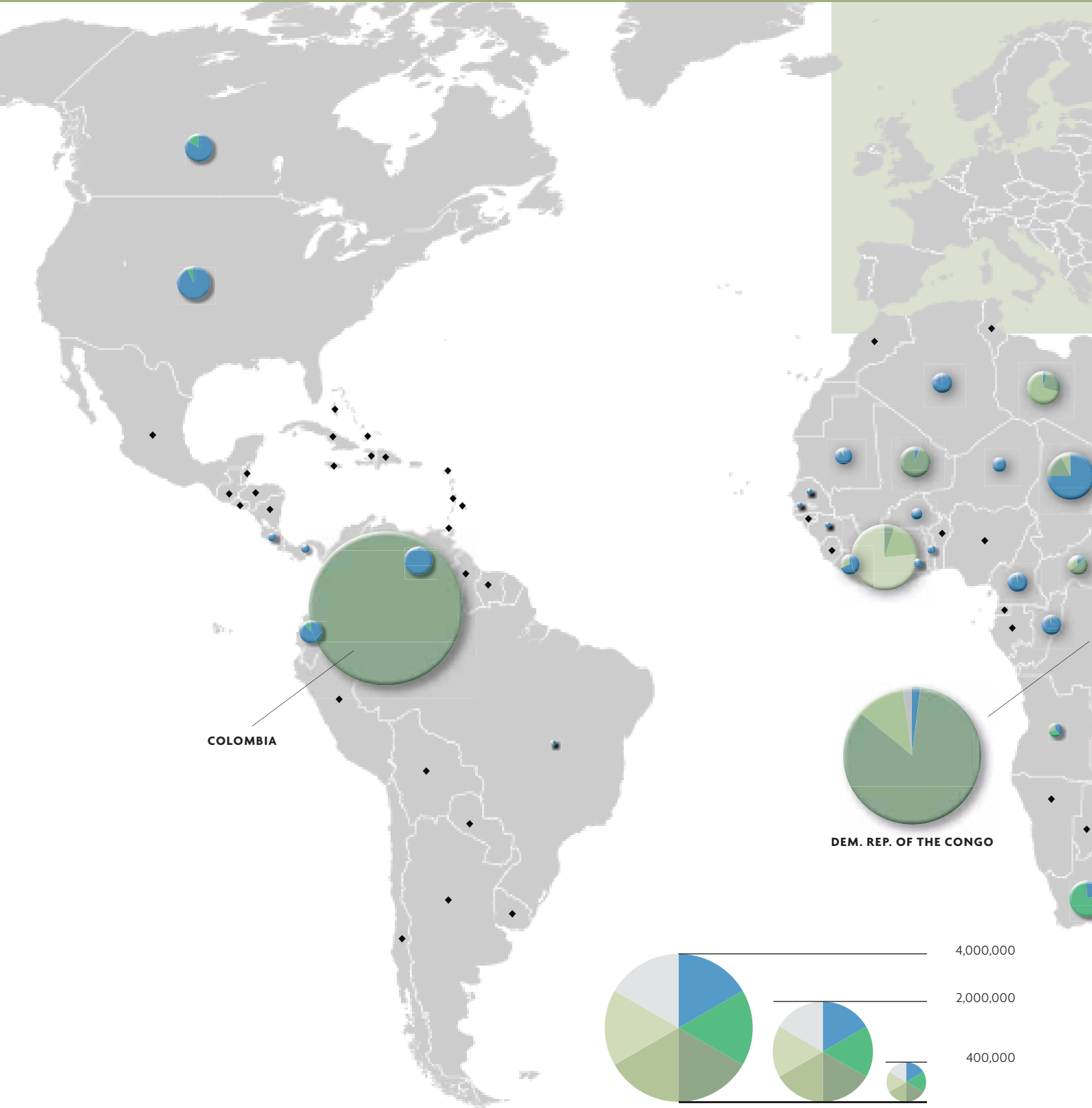
Table 2.1 shows that 3.5 million refugees, or one third (34%) of the total, were residing in countries covered by UNHCR's Asia and Pacific region. Of these, 2.5 million were Afghans (70%). In addition, sub-Saharan Africa was host to almost 2.8 million refugees, or one quarter of the total, primarily from Somalia (799,300), Sudan (527,800), and

the Democratic Republic of the Congo (476,500). The Middle East and North Africa region hosted some 1.6 million, or 15 per cent of the world's refugees, mainly from Iraq (554,500) and the Syrian Arab Republic (442,300), while Europe hosted another 1.8 million (17%). In Europe, refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic (284,400) and Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 [1999]) (155,400) were the largest groups. With 806,500 refugees, the Americas region hosted the smallest share of refugees (8%) globally. Here, Colombians (391,100) constituted the largest number.²³

Two major developments impacted refugee figures in the Middle East and North Africa region. First, conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic forced some 647,000 people to seek refuge in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and other countries in the region. Second, government estimates of Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan were revised downward to 534,400 at the end of 2012. This revision reflects that a number of Iraqis have returned

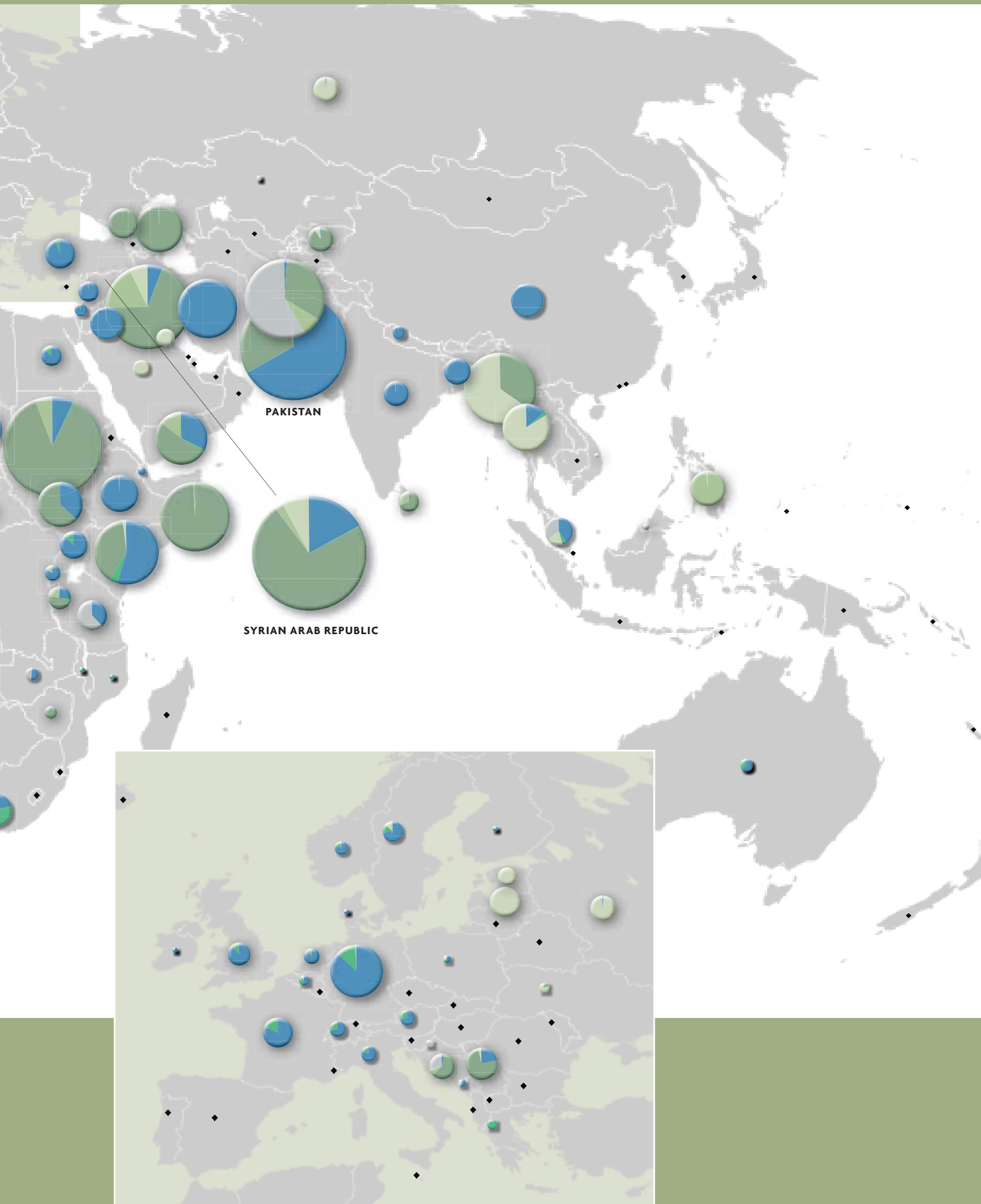
²² Some of these groups are now included in the population category 'Others of concern' while UNHCR assists them to integrate locally.

²³ This figure includes 282,300 Colombians in Ecuador, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Panama considered to be in refugee-like situations.



- Refugees^(a)
- Asylum-seekers (pending cases)
- IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR^(b)
- Returned refugees, returned IDPs
- Stateless persons
- Others of concern

- ◆ Total population below 10,000
- ^a Including people in refugee-like situation
- ^b Including people in IDP-like situation



PAKISTAN

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

TABLE 2.1 Refugee populations by UNHCR regions | 2012

UNHCR regions	Start-2012			End-2012			Change (total)	
	Refugees	People in refugee-like situations	Total refugees	Refugees	People in refugee-like situations	Total refugees	Absolute	%
- Central Africa and Great Lakes	635,100	-	635,100	479,300	-	479,300	-155,800	-24.5%
- East and Horn of Africa	1,606,900	26,000	1,632,900	1,866,700	26,000	1,892,700	259,800	15.9%
- Southern Africa	144,600	-	144,600	134,700	-	134,700	-9,900	-6.8%
- West Africa	280,600	-	280,600	267,800	-	267,800	-12,800	-4.6%
Total Africa*	2,667,200	26,000	2,693,200	2,748,500	26,000	2,774,500	81,300	3.0%
Americas	516,800	290,800	807,600	515,300	291,200	806,500	-1,100	-0.1%
Asia and Pacific	3,391,000	216,300	3,607,300	3,299,300	226,200	3,525,500	-81,800	-2.3%
Europe	1,553,300	900	1,554,200	1,797,100	500	1,797,600	243,400	15.7%
Middle East and North Africa	1,669,300	70,900	1,740,200	1,519,000	74,800	1,593,800	-146,400	-8.4%
Total	9,797,600	604,900	10,402,500	9,879,200	618,700	10,497,900	95,400	0.9%

Note

* Excluding North Africa.

to Iraq or moved onward to other countries since their arrival. In addition, some 54,000 Malian refugees fled to Mauritania in early 2012, while more than 22,000 Somali refugees arrived in Yemen.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of refugees increased for the third consecutive year. By the end of 2012, there were close to 2.8 million refugees in sub-Saharan Africa, 81,000 more than at the beginning of the year and more than half a million more than two years earlier. Nevertheless, the numbers remained below those in 2000, when more than 3.4 million people were refugees in sub-Saharan Africa.

Major refugee outflows in sub-Saharan Africa were reported from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, and Sudan. The outbreak of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo led to new internal displacement of more than one million people, as well as to outflows of tens of

thousands of Congolese into Uganda (40,200), Rwanda (17,000), and Burundi (8,200).²⁴ As observed in earlier years, ongoing violence and drought in southern and central Somalia continued to force large numbers to flee; in 2012, 75,000 Somalis sought refuge abroad, mainly in Ethiopia (35,800), Yemen (22,300), and Kenya (13,800). Overall, some 763,000 Somalis, or an estimated 8 per cent of the population, have left the country during the past six years.

The outbreak of war in Mali resulted in a large-scale refugee movement in 2012, when an estimated 143,000 people fled to Mauritania (54,000), Niger (50,200), and Burkina Faso (38,400). Conflict in Sudan led to an outflow of 112,500 refugees to South Sudan (100,000) and Ethiopia (12,500), while more than 35,000 refugees from South Sudan arrived in Ethiopia. Elsewhere in the region, a total of 272,800 refugees across sub-Saharan Africa were able to return home in safety and dignity, including to Côte d'Ivoire (72,800), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (71,900), Burundi (35,700),²⁵ Liberia (29,400), and Angola (19,700).

In the Americas, the refugee population remained virtually unchanged, at roughly 806,500. The United States of America accounted for one third of refugees in this region, according to

UNHCR estimates (262,000).²⁶ Some 1,500 Colombians were granted refugee status in Ecuador, bringing the total number of Colombian refugees (54,600) and persons in a refugee-like situation (68,300) to almost 123,000 at the end of 2012. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the estimated number of Colombian refugees and persons in a refugee-like situation remained unchanged, at 203,600.

In the Asia and Pacific region, the total number of refugees, including individuals in a refugee-like situation, was estimated at 3.5 million at the end of 2012, a decrease of 2 per cent during the year. This was largely due to the voluntary repatriation of almost 100,000 Afghan refugees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as UNHCR-facilitated departures for resettlement of more than 34,000 refugees out of Malaysia, Nepal, and Thailand.

In Europe, the refugee population increased by 243,400 people to 1.8 million at the end of 2012 (+16%), largely as a result of the arrival of 308,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey. Some 68,600 of these individuals returned spontaneously to their country over the course of the year. An additional 18,400 Syrian asylum-seekers were granted international protection on an individual basis across Europe. The increase in Syrian

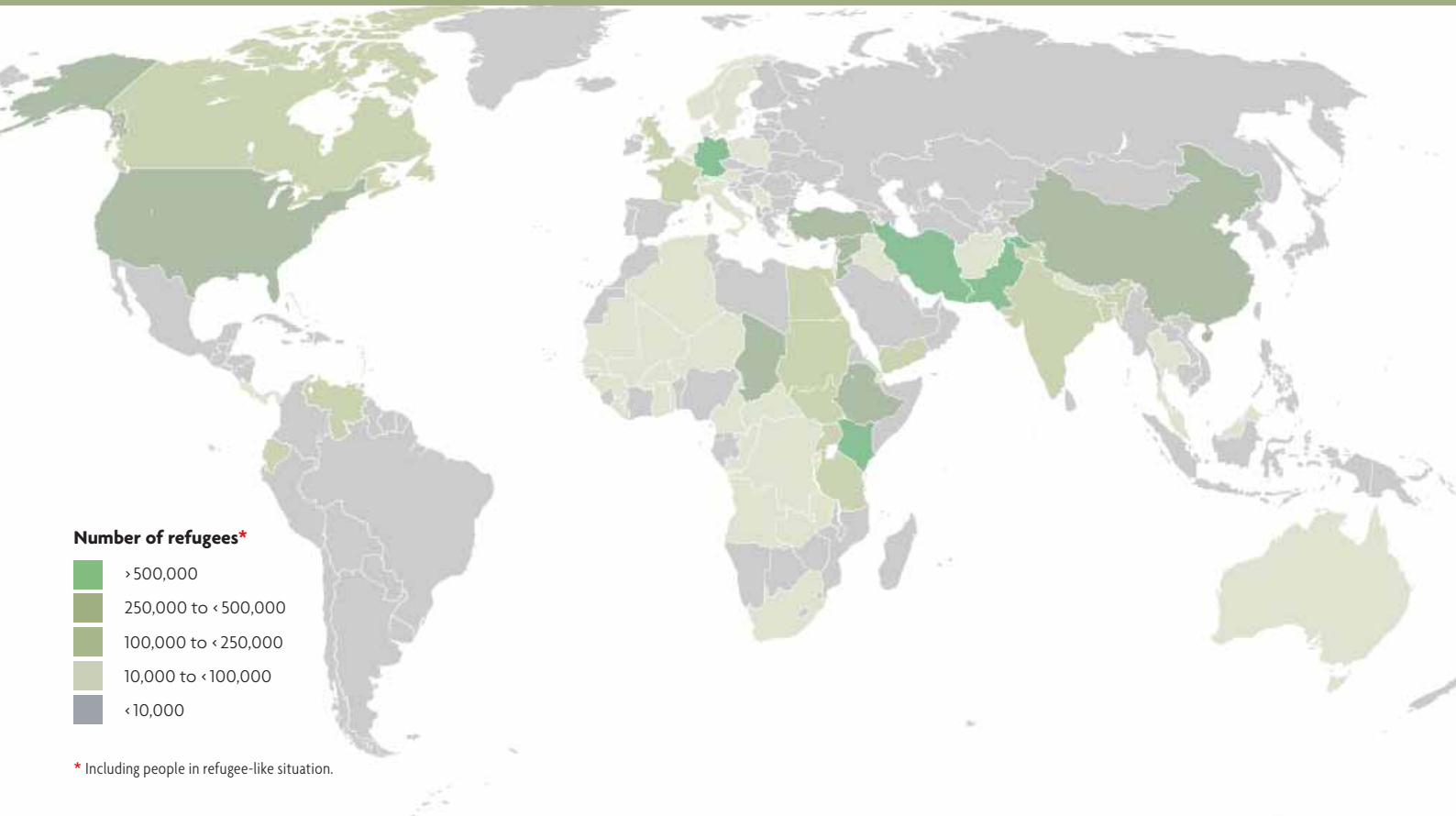
²⁴ Congolese arriving in Uganda were granted refugee status on a *prima facie* basis, whereas those arriving in Burundi and Rwanda went through individual refugee status determination.

²⁵ Some 33,800 returnees included former refugees living in Mtabila camp, United Republic of Tanzania. The cessation of refugee status of this group took place on 1 August 2012, and the orderly return operation to Burundi took place on 31 October 2012.

²⁶ In the absence of official refugee statistics, UNHCR is required to estimate refugee populations in 25 industrialized countries.

Resettled refugees in UNHCR's refugee statistics

Over the past 10 years, more than 836,000 refugees have arrived in industrialized countries through resettlement programmes. They are not included in UNHCR's refugee statistics because they have found a durable solution. However, they do remain of concern to UNHCR. ●



refugees across Europe was partly offset by a revision of UNHCR's refugee estimate for the United Kingdom, from 193,600 to 149,800.²⁷

COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM

With two exceptions, the 10 major refugee-hosting countries in 2012 were the same as in 2011. The United States of America dropped out of the list of the top 10, and Turkey moved in into 10th place [see **Figure 2.1**]. Together, these 10 countries hosted 5.8 million refugees, or 55 per cent of the total worldwide.

Pakistan continued to host the largest number of refugees in the world (1.64 million), nearly all from Afghanistan. This country's overall figure decreased by 64,000 people compared to the start of the year, mainly due to the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. The Islamic Republic of Iran hosted 868,200 refugees by year-end, almost all of which were Afghans. An overall drop of 18,200 refugees was observed, mainly due to repatriating Afghans.

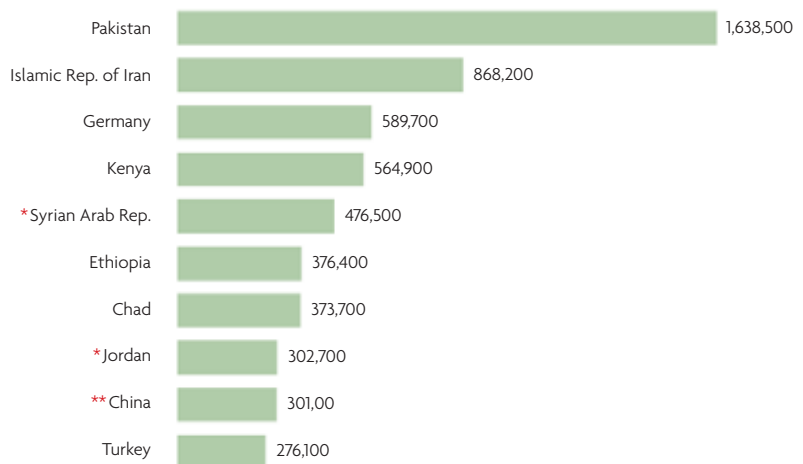
Germany reported 589,700 refugees at the end of 2012, an increase of 3 per

cent (+18,000 people), making it the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world.²⁸ Kenya ranked fourth with 564,900 refugees, virtually unchanged from the start of the year (566,500). In light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and escalating violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, the government estimate for Iraqi refugees in the country was revised from 750,000 to 471,400, assuming that a number of Ira-

qis had left the country. UNHCR continued to provide assistance to 62,700 registered Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic by end-2012. Including other groups, the total number of refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic was 476,500 at year-end, making it the fifth largest refugee-hosting country.

Ethiopia continued to receive new arrivals in 2012, with 94,000 people seeking refuge, mostly from Somalia

Fig. 2.1 **Major refugee-hosting countries** | end-2012



²⁷ Idem.

²⁸ The refugee estimate for Germany is currently under review, which may lead to an adjustment in future reports.

* Government estimate.

** The 300,000 Vietnamese refugees are well integrated and in practice receive protection from the Government of China.

2 Population Levels and Trends

(35,800) and South Sudan (35,200) but also Sudan (12,500) and Eritrea (10,700). Since 2008, when Ethiopia was host to 83,600 refugees, figures in that country have more than quadrupled. By the end of 2012, the refugee population had grown to 376,400 and Ethiopia was hosting the sixth largest refugee population in the world. The refugee population in Chad remained relatively stable at 373,700, compared to 366,500 at the end of 2011.

In Jordan, the government estimate of Iraqi refugees was revised down,

from 450,000 to 63,000. This reduction was partly offset by the arrival of more than 131,000 Syrian refugees. The total number of refugees in Jordan stood at 302,700 by year-end, making it the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world. In China, meanwhile, reported numbers of refugees have remained largely unchanged since the early 1980s, and the country featured as the ninth largest refugee-hosting country in 2012.

In Turkey, however, there were significant new arrivals in 2012. More than

307,700 Syrian refugees arrived over the course of the year and were granted temporary protection by the Government of Turkey. With the return of 68,600 people to the Syrian Arab Republic, the number was 248,500 at the end of 2012. Combined with other refugee populations, the total number of refugees in Turkey was 267,100, moving it from the 59th to the 10th most important refugee-hosting country in the space of just a single year. In no other country has the change been so dramatic.

Countries' contributions to international refugee protection can take many forms. These include providing asylum, offering refugees a durable solution, and providing funds for protection and assistance activities – including in other, usually less prosperous, countries. Developing countries can often host large groups of refugees, placing an extra burden on their communities. To assist these countries, the international community provides resources through UNHCR, other international agencies, non-governmental organizations, or bilaterally.

The ratio of the size of a country's hosted refugee population to its average income level – according to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Purchasing Power Parity, or PPP)²⁹ per capita³⁰ – provides a proxy measure of the burden of hosting refugees that also permits a better comparison between countries. When the number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita is high, the relative contribution and effort made by countries, in relation to their national economy, can also be considered

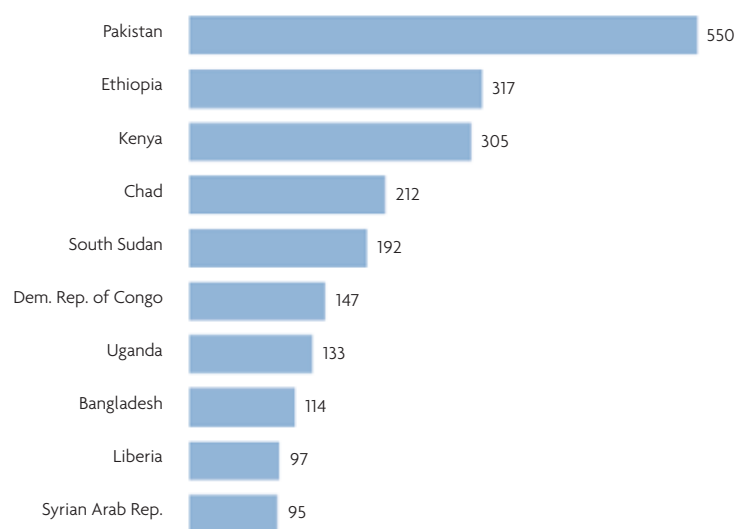
CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOST COUNTRIES

to be high. This indicator shows that in 2012, the 25 countries with the largest number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita were all developing countries, and included 17 Least Developed Countries. More than 5.1 million refugees, representing about half of the

world's refugees, resided in countries whose GDP (PPP) per capita was below USD 5,000.

In 2012, Pakistan had the highest number of refugees in relation to its national economy [see **Figure 2.2**], hosting 550 refugees per 1 USD GDP

Fig. 2.2 Number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita | 2012



²⁹ Source for Gross Domestic Product (Purchasing Power Parity): International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2013 (accessed 6 October 2013).

³⁰ Source for national populations: United Nations, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, New York, 2013.

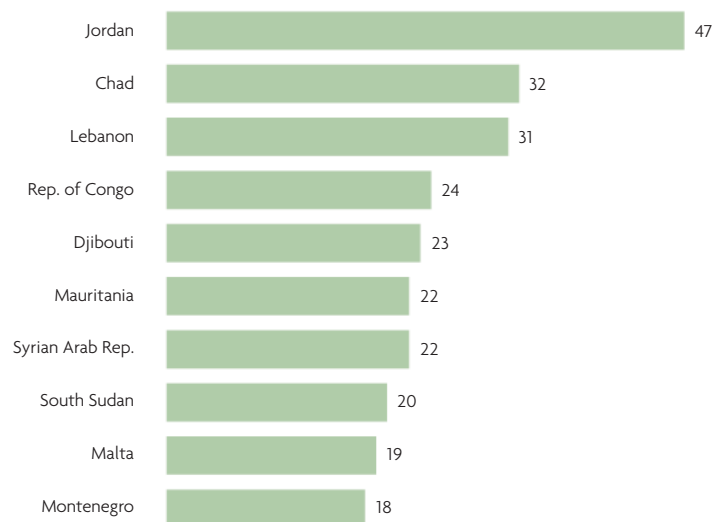


UNHCR staff answer questions for refugees at a help desk in the city of Zarqa, Jordan. With the majority of the refugee population in Jordan living in urban areas, help desks like this one provide critical advice to refugees on issues such as protection, health and registration.

(PPP) per capita. Ethiopia was second, with 317 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita, followed by Kenya (305), Chad (212), South Sudan (192), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (147). The first developed country in this regard was Germany, in 30th place, with 15 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita.

These rankings change when the number of refugees is compared to the national population of the host country. Here, Jordan tops the list with 47 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by Chad (32), Lebanon (31), Congo (24), and Djibouti (23) [see **Figure 2.3**]. Chad, South Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic are the only countries among the top 10 for both indicators.

Fig. 2.3 Number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants | 2012



2 Population Levels and Trends

ORIGINS

At the end of 2012, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Sudan were the top five source countries of refugees. With the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic, this was comparable to the end of 2011, when Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were the top-ranking source countries. For 2012, the top five source countries accounted for more than half (55%) of all refugees under UNHCR's responsibility worldwide [see **Figure 2.4**].

With close to 2.6 million refugees in 82 countries, Afghanistan remained the leading country of origin of refugees in 2012. Indeed, the country has remained at the top of this list for 32 consecutive years, with numbers varying from 500,000 refugees at the onset of the crisis in 1979 to more than 6.3 million at its peak in 1990. On average, one out of every four refugees in the world is from Afghanistan, with 95 per cent of these located in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Outside the immediate region, Germany hosted the largest number of Afghans, an estimated 31,700 people.

Somalis were the second largest refugee group under UNHCR's responsibility, with more than 1.1 million people at the end of 2012, some 60,000 more than at the start of the year. Between 2007 and 2011, more than half a million Somalis arrived in Ethiopia and Kenya as a result of conflict and violence combined with drought and famine. One positive sign during 2012 was that the refugee outflow slowed down, with 35,800 arriving in Ethiopia and 13,800 in Kenya. In addition, 3,200 Somalis fled to Djibouti while some 22,300 embarked on a perilous journey across the Gulf of Aden or the Red Sea to Yemen.

Despite significant revisions of figures, Iraqis were the third largest refugee group in 2012, with an estimated 746,200 persons, mainly in the Syrian Arab Republic (471,400) and Jordan (63,000). This is almost half of the figure reported in 2011 (1.4 million), as governments reduced their estimates in both countries on the assumption that many people had returned to Iraq or moved elsewhere. Other important host countries of Iraqi refugees were

Germany (49,800) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (44,100).

Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic forced 647,000 people to flee, mainly to neighbouring countries. This was the largest annual exodus by a single refugee group since 1999, when more than 867,000 people fled Kosovo (S/RES/1244 [1999]), primarily to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The total number of Syrian refugees at end-2012 was 729,000, making this the fourth largest refugee group in the world – a large jump from 36th place a year earlier.

Sudan was the fifth largest country of origin, with 569,000 refugees under UNHCR's mandate at the end of 2012, up from 387,100³¹ two years earlier. Fighting in the southern areas of Sudan drove 100,000 persons to seek refuge in South Sudan and another 12,500 in Ethiopia during the year. Since the outbreak of conflict in 2011, an estimated 218,000 Sudanese have fled the country.

³¹ This figure includes citizens of South Sudan, in the absence of separate statistics available for both countries until 2011.

Fig. 2.4 Top 10 source countries of refugees | 2008 - 2012
(ranking based on 2012 data)

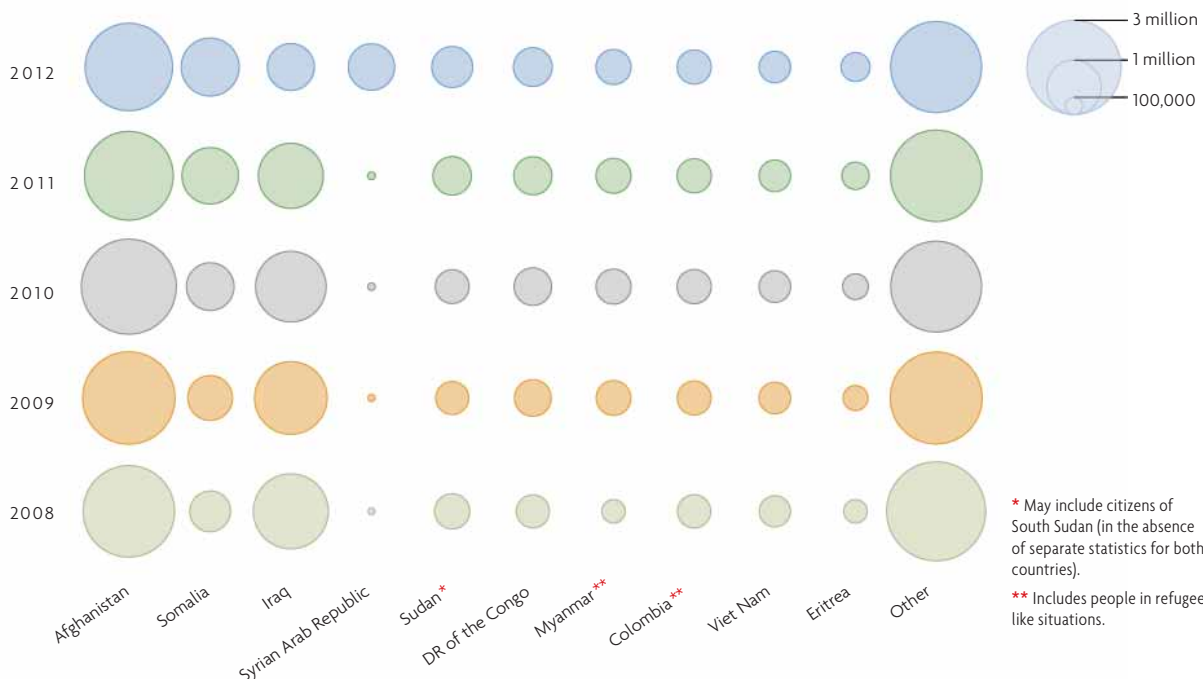
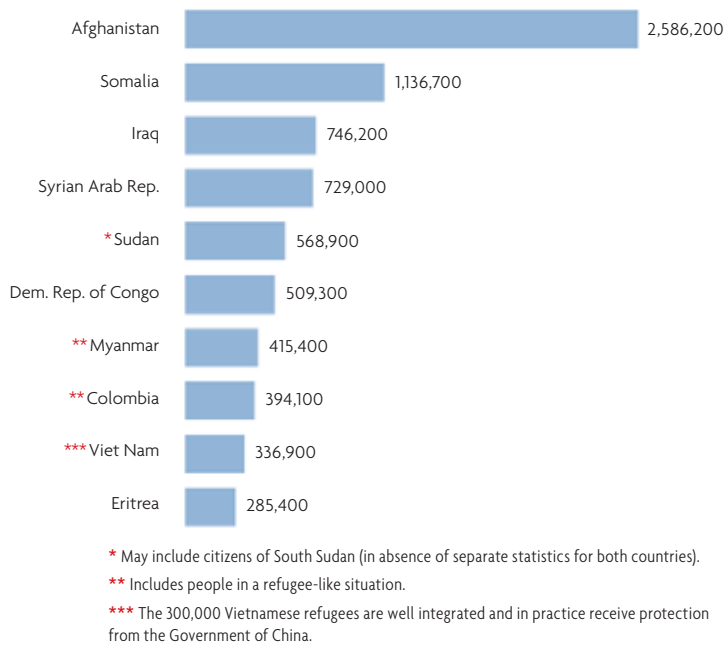


Fig. 2.5 Major source countries of refugees | end-2012


Other main source countries of refugees were the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Colombia. The number of Congolese refugees increased for the fifth consecutive year, reaching an all-time high by year-end (509,300). Some 40,000 Congolese were granted *prima facie* refugee status in Uganda, while an additional 25,300 Congolese were recognized on an individual basis, mainly in Rwanda (15,100) and Burundi (6,400). The numbers of refugees from Myanmar (415,400) and Colombia (394,100) remained relatively stable compared to 2011. The figure for Myanmar included an estimated 200,000 unregistered people in Bangladesh, while the figure for Colombians included refugees as well as individuals in refugee-like situations in Ecuador, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Panama.

Proportion of nationals as refugees of selected countries

This section briefly examines the proportion of nationals who are refugees, in order to determine their magnitude relative to their country of origin. This indicator implies that the higher this proportion, the greater the number of citizens who have fled their native country. Refugee movements in the last five years have had a significant impact on increases and declines in this indicator. One of the most striking outcomes of such a comparison is the dramatic jump in the percentage of Syrians who became refugees compared to the size of the resident population in the Syrian Arab Republic. The figure increased from 0.07 per cent in 2008 to 3.38 per cent in 2012. This was to be expected, however, in view of the deteriorating situation in that country over the past two years.

In 2008, Afghan refugees constituted 10.48 per cent when compared to Afghanistan's resident population. This proportion has since declined to 9.10 per cent in 2012, partly as a result of Afghan refugees returning to their country of origin. In the case of Somalia, on the other hand, the proportion of nationals who are refugees has almost doubled,

from 6.14 per cent in 2008 to 11.79 per cent in 2012, largely because of major Somali refugee arrivals in Kenya and Ethiopia in recent years. Other countries that continued to witness either steady or sudden increases in the proportion of their nationals being refugees

include Sudan, Eritrea, Mali, and the Central African Republic. In contrast, the proportion of refugees from Bhutan compared to its national population showed a dramatic decline over the years, mostly due to large-scale resettlement out of refugee camps in Nepal.

TABLE 2.2 Proportion of refugees to nationals of selected countries | 2008 - 2012 (in %)

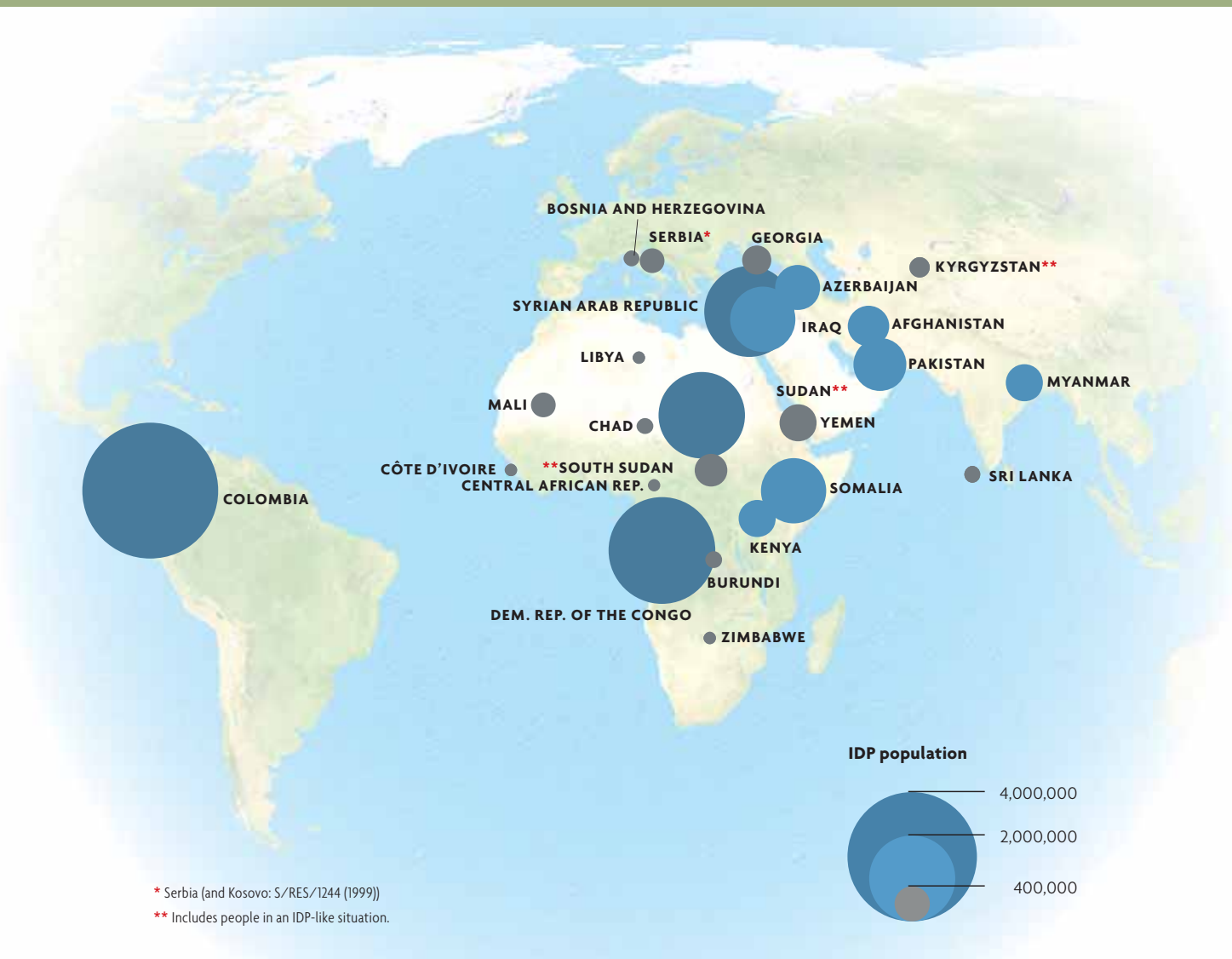
List of origins based on country exceeding 1% at least once during the period.

Origin	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Afghanistan	10.48%	10.42%	10.76%	9.38%	9.10%
Somalia	6.14%	7.23%	7.99%	11.18%	11.79%
Iraq	6.47%	5.92%	5.44%	4.61%	2.41%
Syrian Arab Rep.	0.07%	0.09%	0.09%	0.09%	3.38%
Sudan*	1.23%	1.06%	1.09%	1.40%	1.60%
Eritrea	3.46%	3.76%	3.88%	4.39%	4.97%
Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 [1999])	1.90%	2.02%	1.90%	1.68%	1.64%
Bhutan	15.16%	12.64%	10.47%	8.09%	5.80%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.93%	1.82%	1.64%	1.52%	1.35%
Central African Rep.	2.99%	3.74%	3.79%	3.74%	3.78%
Croatia	2.22%	1.76%	1.52%	1.44%	1.44%
Mali	0.01%	0.02%	0.03%	0.03%	1.07%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.69%	0.78%	0.87%	1.03%	1.20%
Burundi	3.27%	1.06%	0.91%	1.10%	0.80%

Note

Source for national population: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision.

* Includes South Sudan before declaration of independence of the Republic of South Sudan.



ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Those asylum-seekers that are included in the total population of concern to UNHCR are individuals who are awaiting a final decision on their applications for asylum or refugee status. The figures in this section refer to claimants whose applications were pending as of the end of 2012, irrespective of when they were lodged, and may include undecided or pending cases from previous years.³²

Worldwide, at least 928,200 individuals were still awaiting a decision on their asylum claims at the end of 2012, the highest number since 2009. This figure included those at all stages of the asylum process. Despite improved reporting in recent years, the global number of undecided cases presented here is incomplete, as some countries, particularly in the industrialized world, do not report these figures.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimated the global number of persons displaced by armed conflict, generalized violence, and human rights violations at the end of 2012 at some 28.8 million, the highest figure in more than two decades.³³ The number of IDPs, including individuals in IDP-like situations,³⁴ who benefited from UNHCR's protection and assistance activities stood at almost 17.7 million at the end of 2012. This was also the highest figure on record, and 2.2 million more than at the start of the year (15.5 million).

Where UNHCR was engaged with IDP populations, offices reported at least

five million newly displaced people in 2012, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic. Among those countries where UNHCR was operational, close to 1.6 million IDPs returned home during the reporting period, many with UNHCR's assistance.³⁵ UNHCR figures for end-2012 included IDP populations in a total of 26 countries.

With some four million internally displaced people registered by the government since 1997, Colombia continued to face a large displacement situation. Likewise, escalating conflict and violence in the Syrian Arab Republic

³² For details on the number of new asylum claims submitted, as well as on decisions taken, see Chapter IV.

³³ For detailed statistics on global internal displacement, see the IDMC website at www.internal-displacement.org.

³⁴ As in Kyrgyzstan (168,600), South Sudan (155,200), and Sudan (77,300).

³⁵ According to the IDMC, 2.1 million IDPs were reported to have returned to their place of residence in 2012 globally, the lowest figure since 2003.

Most refugees live in developing countries

The percentage of refugees residing in developing countries has increased over the past decade. Ten years ago, developing countries hosted on average 70 per cent of the world's refugees, while this figure now stands at 81 per cent.

By the end of 2012, developing countries hosted 8.5 million refugees. The 49 Least Developed Countries provided asylum to 2.5 million refugees, 24 per cent of the global total.

displaced an estimated two million within that country, and affected an estimated four million more by the end of the year. Despite experiencing access and security constraints, UNHCR was able to assist an estimated 700,000 individuals in 2012.

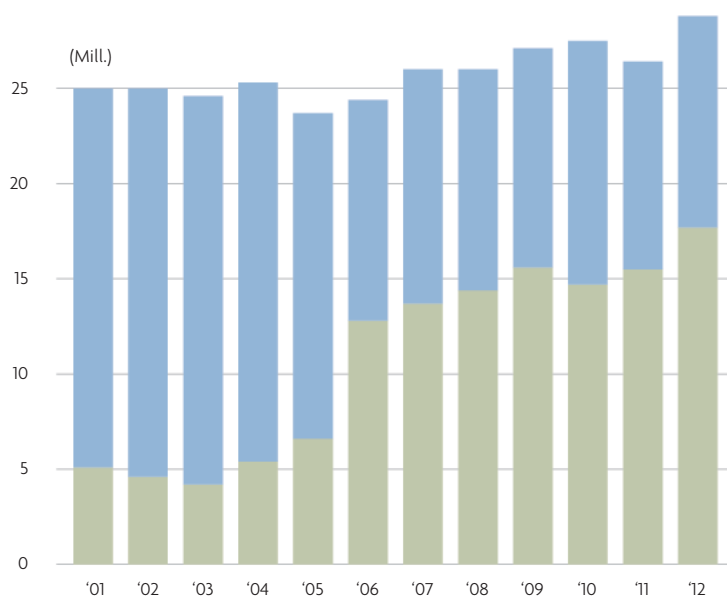
Elsewhere, renewed fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo displaced more than a million people during the year, bringing the total number of IDPs in the country to almost 2.7 million by the end of 2012. At the same time, 305,000 IDPs were able to return home, some soon after their displacement. War in Mali in 2012 displaced more than 227,000 people within the country. Inter-communal tensions in Rakhine state of Myanmar resulted in 115,000 people fleeing their homes, and the total number of IDPs in Myanmar was estimated at 430,000 by year-end. Renewed conflict and security concerns displaced 203,000 people in Afghanistan in 2012, and by the end of the year the number of IDPs in that country was estimated at almost half a million. Finally, significant numbers of new internal displacement caused by conflict or violence were also reported by Pakistan (362,000), South Sudan (190,500), the Philippines (178,000), Libya (143,000), and Sudan (104,000).

Although millions of people were newly displaced during the year, others were able to return to their places of habitual residence. In collaboration with the Yemeni authorities, UNHCR assisted tens of thousands of people in

making their ways back home. This was the first significant number of returns since May 2011, when fighting between government troops and militants erupted in southern Yemen. Overall, although some 107,000 IDPs in Yemen returned over the course of the year, the number of IDPs protected or assisted by UNHCR in Yemen remained high, at around 385,300.

Some 219,000 Iraqis returned to their homes in 2012, reducing the number of IDPs protected or assisted by UNHCR in the country to 1.1 million. Similarly, the number of people still displaced in Côte d'Ivoire dropped to 45,000 by year-end, as 96,000 people returned to their places of habitual residence. Although more than 100,000 people in Sudan headed home, the number of IDPs protected or assisted by UNHCR in that country remained high, at approximately 1.8 million³⁶ by the end of the year. In Somalia, the IDP figure was an estimated 1.1 million, including large numbers in Mogadishu and the Afgooye Corridor. Overall, the highest numbers of IDP returns were reported in the Philippines (336,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (305,000), Iraq (219,000), and Libya (177,500).

Fig. 2.6 Conflict-induced internal displacement | 2001 - 2012 (end-year)



Portion of IDPs protected / assisted by UNHCR

³⁶ According to IDMC estimates, the number of IDPs in Sudan is estimated to be at least 2.2 million.

STATELESS PERSONS

Identifying stateless persons remains key to addressing the difficulties they face, and to enabling UNHCR to fulfil its mandate to prevent and reduce statelessness and protect stateless individuals. Measuring statelessness is complicated by the nature of the phenomenon, given that stateless people often live in precarious situations on the margins of society. They frequently lack identity documentation and are subject to discrimination, and only a minority of countries have procedures

in place for their identification, registration, and documentation.

UNHCR's Executive Committee has called on the agency to undertake research "to promote an increased understanding of the nature and scope of the problem of statelessness". It has also encouraged States in possession of statistics on stateless persons or individuals with undetermined nationality to share them with UNHCR.³⁷ In 2012, UNHCR issued updated guidance to its field offices on the reporting of statistics for

populations that fall under the agency's statelessness mandate. This guidance reflects efforts undertaken to clarify the definition of a stateless person under Article I of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.³⁸ For 2012, UNHCR's statistics on persons under its statelessness mandate mainly comprise stateless persons – those who are not considered as nationals by any State under the operation of its law. Data from some countries also include persons of undetermined nationality.

³⁷ UNHCR, Conclusion on Identification, Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness and Protection of Stateless Persons, 6 October 2006, No. 106 (LVII) – 2006; available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/453497302.html>.

³⁸ UNHCR, Guidelines on Statelessness No. 1: The definition of "Stateless Person" in Article 1(I) of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 20 February 2012, HCR/GS/12/01 available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f4371b82.html>.

Improving statistics on stateless populations: Libya as a case study

In 2012, UNHCR engaged a research firm to assess the prevalence of statelessness among specific ethnic groups in southern Libya, identify causal factors, and formulate recommendations to enhance protection and access to identity documents. The research focused on four specific tribal populations (the Tebu, Tuareg, Mahamid, and Hassawna), identified through a literature review and field visits as having particular difficulty in obtaining nationality documentation and accessing public services. The legal and protection situation of these target groups were compared to a control group of Libyan nationals who report no difficulties in obtaining confirmation of nationality or enjoying associated rights.

The research methodology included both primary and

secondary research studies. Secondary research consisted of a desk study of the relevant historical episodes, decrees, legislative amendments, and policy changes that have affected the nationality status of the groups concerned. This research also examined the purpose and legal significance of specific forms of official identity documents issued in Libya, which provide evidence of nationality status. Primary research involved the administration of a randomized household survey over a period of three months covering 700 individuals in seven selected districts (Sabha, Ash Shati, Ghat, Murzuq, Wadi Al Hayat, Nalut, and Al Kufrah).

On the basis of the household survey, along with an analysis of Libyan nationality law, a detailed report on the legal and protection situation of

the populations under study was prepared. The project report noted that 77 per cent of survey respondents are Libyan nationals, but revealed that certain ethnic and regional populations within this subgroup face difficulties in securing a range of identity documents that confirm nationality status and are required to access various public services. The remaining 23 per cent were found to be of undetermined nationality. While there was conclusive evidence that individuals in this sub-group are not Libyan nationals (including having been formally rejected by the competent authorities for confirmation of Libyan citizenship), respondents within the group reported having significant links to other States, connections that could form the basis of possessing other nationalities. The report noted

the importance, therefore, of further inquiry into the laws and practices of neighbouring States to clarify whether these survey respondents and others in a similar category possess other nationalities – absent which, they would be stateless.

The household survey also confirmed that populations lacking nationality documentation face a wide range of protection issues. These include limited access to primary education (with 70 per cent of undocumented Tebu children in one district unable to attend public school), informal and precarious arrangements concerning land tenure and tenancy (with only half of the total survey population possessing deeds or leases to enforce their property rights), and limited access to political rights (with more than 80 per cent of two

tribal groups, the Mahamid and Hassawna, finding it impossible to vote in the 2012 elections due to their lack of nationality documents).

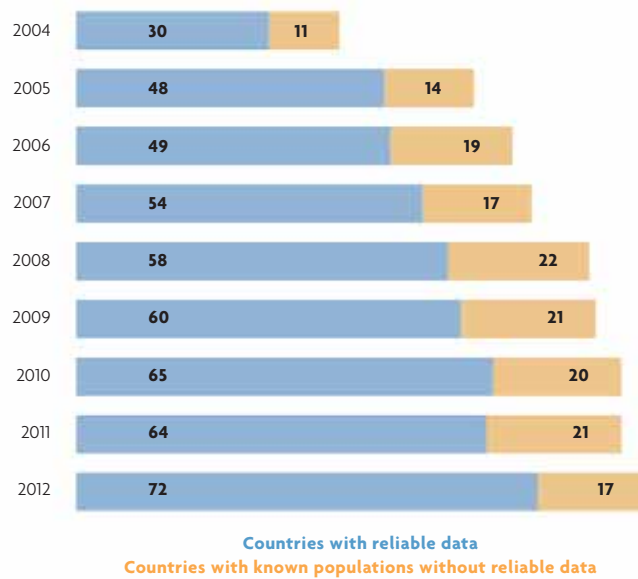
The project report also offered short- and long-term recommendations. Short-term interventions could include capacity-building for local administrative authorities, public awareness campaigns for undocumented and isolated tribal populations, and the provision of assistance to groups with limited access to public services. Long-term recommendations include advocating for law reforms to ensure greater harmony with international standards, improving the efficiency and comprehensiveness of nationality courts, and strengthening the civil registry to include all residents of the country. ●

Statistics on stateless persons can be gathered using several methods, through analyses of civil registration data, population censuses, or targeted surveys.³⁹ The United Nations recommendations on population censuses underscore the importance of including questions related to citizenship, including statelessness.⁴⁰ Census data for 10 countries are included in this year's statistics, compared to two just three years ago. With the *2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme*⁴¹ drawing to a close and as census results are gradually being released by national statistical offices, UNHCR expects further improvements in this data.

This report only includes data on countries for which reliable official statistics or estimates of stateless populations were available. Despite the increased number of countries reporting and the enhanced reliability of their figures, UNHCR was unable to provide comprehensive statistics on the number of stateless persons in all countries around the world. Annex **Table 7** includes some countries (marked with an asterisk) for which UNHCR has information about the existence of significant stateless populations but for which no reliable figures were available.

The data on statelessness in 2012 have shown a continuation of the trend observed in previous years of expanding coverage and knowledge of state-

Fig. 2.7 Numbers of countries reporting statistics on stateless persons | 2004 - 2012



less persons. By the end of 2012, statistics on persons falling under UNHCR's statelessness mandate were available for 72 countries, eight more than in 2011 [see **Figure 2.7**]. This compares to just 30 countries in 2004, when UNHCR started collecting statistics on stateless populations in a more systematic way. These efforts were not only bolstered by the release of national census data, but also by an increasing awareness of statelessness in a number of countries around the world. For 2012, UNHCR's

offices reported a figure of 3.34 million stateless persons, roughly comparable to that reported in 2011 (3.47 million).

Significant progress has continued to be made in obtaining statistics on the reduction of the number of stateless persons through acquisition or confirmation of nationality. Approximately 94,600 stateless persons in 24 countries acquired nationality during 2012, more than half of which resulted from steps taken to resolve the statelessness situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

OTHER GROUPS OR OTHERS OF CONCERN

UNHCR has also continued to extend its protection and assistance activities to those individuals it considers to be 'of concern' but who do not fall into any of the previously discussed population categories. These activities were based on humanitarian or other special grounds and included, among other, two groups: one, former refugees assisted to integrate locally, and two, asylum-seekers rejected by States but whom UNHCR deemed in

need of humanitarian assistance. There were 1.3 million people in this category by year-end. Two-thirds of those were Afghans, former refugees who had returned to Afghanistan prior to 2012 but who had been unable to reintegrate due to the difficult economic situation, the lack of comprehensive reintegration measures, and poor security. Many of these individuals thus continued to benefit from UNHCR's assistance. ■

39 UNHCR (2012), *The State of the World's Refugees: In Search of Solidarity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 108-09.
 40 United Nations (2008), *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*, New York, accessible at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/seriesm_67Rev2e.pdf.
 41 See: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/default.htm.