

## CHAPTER II

# POPULATION LEVELS AND TRENDS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter depicts some of the major humanitarian trends and developments which have occurred between January and December 2007. It reviews the changes in the size, origin and flows in 2007 for the populations for whom UNHCR has a responsibility. These include refugees, returnees, stateless and IDPs, collectively referred to as “persons of concern” or “total population of concern”. The analysis is limited to populations for whom UNHCR has a mandate, and therefore does not pretend to provide a comprehensive picture of global forced displacement. For example, some 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of UNRWA are not included in the analysis. Likewise, this chapter only covers IDPs generated by conflict and who benefited directly or indirectly from UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities.

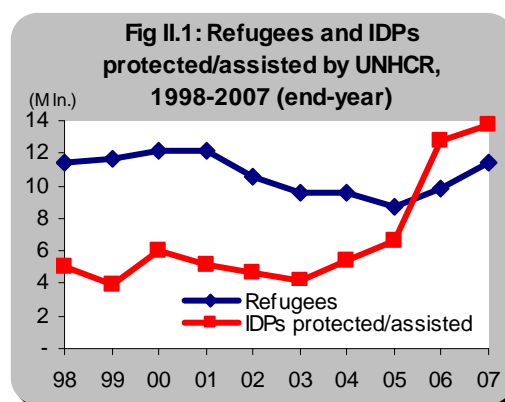
As already highlighted in the introduction, there have been changes in the way in which UNHCR statistics have been reported in 2007. As a consequence, some of the refugee and IDP figures below are not fully comparable with previous years. Table II.2 on page 32 summarizes the main changes in 2007 which are a combination of population movements and statistical adjustments.

This chapter also focuses on the demographic composition of the population falling under UNHCR’s responsibility as this is of crucial importance for all planning and programming activities. Moreover, given the growing number of urban refugees, in particular in the Middle East, a special box sheds light into challenges faced by Iraqi refugees living in urban areas in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

### OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL TRENDS

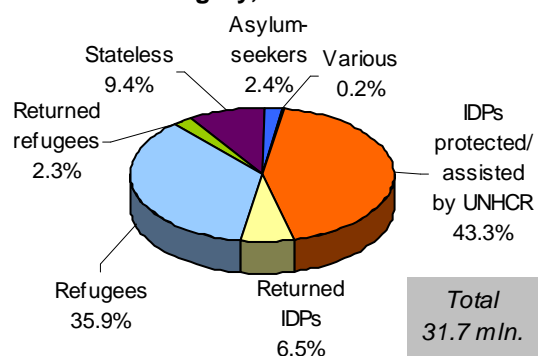
Despite efforts to find durable solutions, the number of refugees and IDPs under UNHCR’s care rose by 2.5 million in the course of year, reaching an unprecedented 25.1 million by the end of the reporting period. The number of refugees under the Office’s responsibility rose from 9.9 to 11.4 million by the end of 2007. The global number of people affected by conflict-induced internal displacement increased from 24.4 to 26 million<sup>22</sup>, with UNHCR providing protection or assistance either directly or indirectly to 13.7 million of them.

By the end of 2007, the total population under UNHCR’s responsibility had dropped from 32.9 million in 2006 to 31.7 million, representing a decrease of 1.2 million people (-3%). While the global refugee population and the number of IDPs protected and/or assisted by UNHCR have increased, the number of stateless persons for whom UNHCR had reliable country-level data has decreased significantly compared to 2006. The number of IDPs who



<sup>22</sup> Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

**Fig II.2. Total population by category, end-2007**

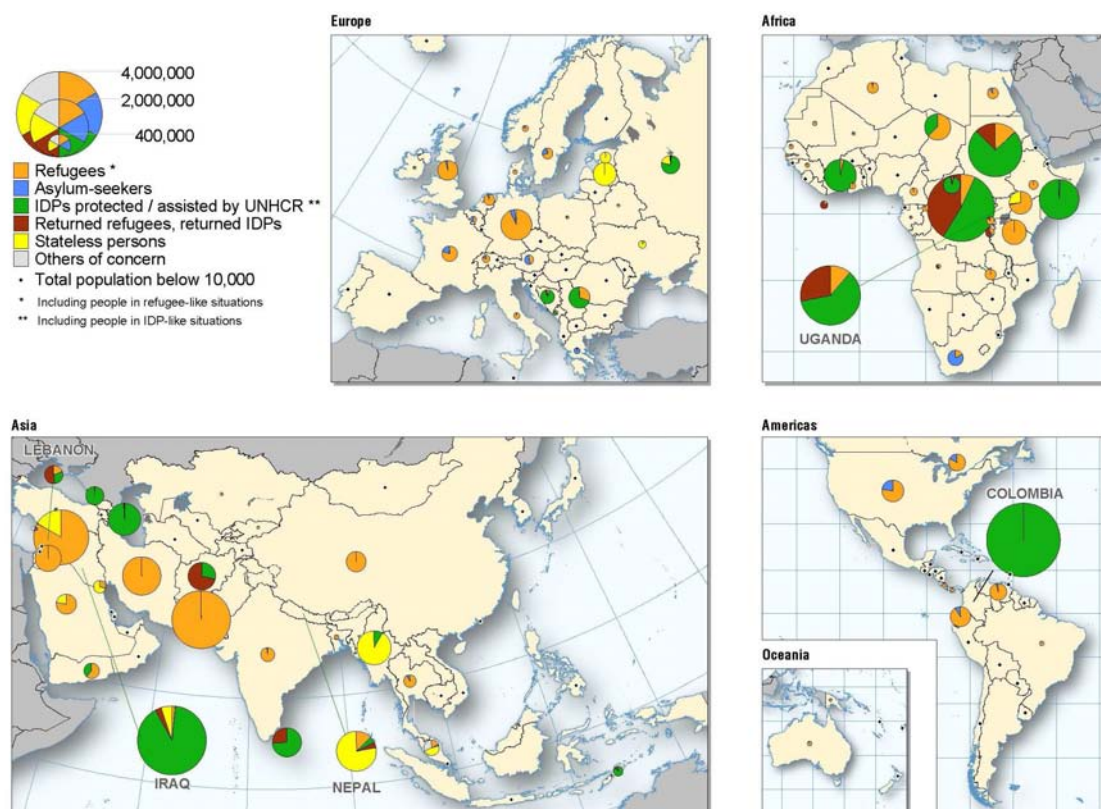


were able to return during the year was the highest in more than a decade.

By the end of 2007, there were an estimated 11.4 million refugees under UNHCR's responsibility, including some 1.7 million people in refugee-like situations. Refugees continued to be the population of concern with whom UNHCR was systematically engaged in extending the full range of its core protection and assistance activities. At the same time, UNHCR, as a committed partner in the

framework of shared responsibility established under the inter-agency cluster approach, continued to extend its protection, assistance and solutions' services in benefit of IDPs. As of the end of the year, a total of 13.7 million IDPs, including 146,000 people in IDP-like situations, were receiving humanitarian assistance under both the cluster approach and other arrangements in which UNHCR was either the lead agency or a partner.

**Map 1: Total population by category, end-2007**



At close to 3 million, the number of stateless persons had almost halved in 2007 compared with 5.8 million in 2006. These figures, however, do not capture the full magnitude of the phenomenon of statelessness for the reporting period. A significant number of stateless persons have not been identified and statistical data on statelessness are not yet available in many cases.

## Refugees

### BY REGION AND COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

The steady decline in refugee numbers witnessed since 2002 was reversed in 2006 when numbers started going up again. By the end of 2006, there were an estimated 9.9 million refugees. One year later, the global figure of refugees stood at 11.4 million.<sup>23</sup> In view of the changes introduced in the methodology for estimating refugee populations in a number of countries (see *Chapter I*), the 2007 figure is not comparable with those of previous years. If applying the pre-2007 methodology for computing and classifying the global refugee population, i.e. including resettled refugees in industrialized countries and excluding people in refugee-like situations, the figure would have been 10.3 million. This would have constituted a net increase of 422,000 refugees compared to the end of 2006.

As of the end of 2007, roughly one third of all refugees were residing in countries covered by UNHCR's Asia and Pacific region, with 80 per cent of them being Afghans. The Middle East and North Africa region was host to a quarter of all refugees, primarily from Iraq, while Africa (excluding North Africa) and Europe hosted respectively 20 and 14 per cent of the world's refugees. The Americas region had the smallest share of refugees (9%), with Colombians constituting the largest number (see Table II.1).

UNHCR regions	Refugees	People in refugee-like situations	Total refugees end-2007
- Central Africa and Great Lakes	1,100,100	-	1,100,100
- East and Horn of Africa	815,200	-	815,200
- Southern Africa	181,200	-	181,200
- West Africa	174,700	-	174,700
Total Africa*	2,271,200	-	2,271,200
Americas	499,900	487,600	987,500
Asia and Pacific	2,674,200	1,151,000	3,825,200
Europe	1,580,500	5,100	1,585,600
Middle East and North Africa	2,654,000	67,600	2,721,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,679,800</b>	<b>1,711,300</b>	<b>11,391,100</b>

\* Excluding North Africa.

The number of refugees in the Middle East and North Africa region increased as a result of the volatile situation in Iraq. According to Government estimates, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic together hosted some 2 million Iraqis. Conversely, in Africa<sup>24</sup>, the number of refugees decreased by 6 per cent during the year, primarily due to the successful voluntary

repatriation operations to Sudan (131,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (60,000), Liberia (44,000), and Burundi (40,000). This notwithstanding, renewed armed conflict and human rights violations in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Sudan also led to refugee outflows of almost 120,000 people, primarily to Kenya (25,000 arrivals), Cameroon (25,000), Sudan (22,500), and Uganda (9,400).

The methodological changes had a significant impact on the refugee estimates in the Americas and the Asia and Pacific regions. In the latter, the total refugee population increased by 1 million due to the inclusion of 1.1 million Afghans in a refugee-like

<sup>23</sup> Some 4.6 million Palestinian refugees falling under the responsibility of UNRWA are not included in UNHCR statistics.

<sup>24</sup> In the absence of refugee-like situations identified in Africa, the 2006 and 2007 refugee figures are fully comparable.

situation in Pakistan who are living outside refugee villages.<sup>25</sup> In the Americas, about half a million Colombians in Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are now included in the region's refugee estimates as people in a refugee-like situation (after having previously been reported under the Others of concern group). Moreover, by excluding resettled refugees from the refugee population in the United States of America, the figure dropped from 844,000 to 281,000.

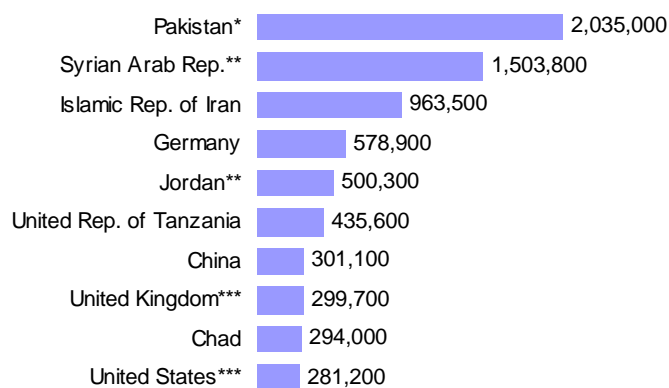
In Europe, a census conducted in Armenia, among Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, established that the majority of them had either been naturalized or left the country. The refugee figure in Armenia thus dropped from 113,700 at the beginning of the year to 4,600 at the end of 2007.

The 10 major refugee hosting countries in 2006 were the same as in 2007, but in a different order. Pakistan<sup>26</sup> continued to be the country with the single largest number of refugees (2 million), principally, because of the inclusion of registered Afghans living outside refugee villages. According to Government estimates, the Syrian Arab Republic was host to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees, thus making it the second largest refugee hosting country at the end of the year. The Islamic Republic of Iran hosted close to 964,000 refugees, almost all Afghans. Germany reported some 579,000 refugees, a reduction of almost 26,000 compared to last year due to an improved Government registration system that yielded more accurate statistics.<sup>27</sup> Whereas the refugee figure for Jordan remained virtually unchanged (500,000)<sup>28</sup>, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the refugee population dropped to below 436,000 due to the voluntary repatriation of some 40,000 Burundian and 28,000 Congolese refugees. Bearing in mind the change in the methodology for computing the refugee population, the United States



Afghan refugee in Pakistan receiving Proof of Registration Card. UNHCR/ V. Tan

**Fig II.3. Major refugee hosting countries, end-2007**



\* Includes Afghans in a refugee-like situation.

\*\* Government estimate.

\*\*\* UNHCR estimate based on 10 years of individual recognition of asylum-seekers. Figure excludes resettled refugees.

<sup>25</sup> Refugee figures for Pakistan include recognized Afghan refugees (1,700), registered Afghans in refugee villages who are assisted by UNHCR (886,700), and registered Afghans outside refugee villages who are living in a "refugee-like" situation (1,147,800). Individuals in all categories have been issued a Proof of Registration Card by the Government of Pakistan. Following the completion of the registration exercise in 2007, those living outside refugee villages are now in the "refugee-like" category. They do not receive direct UNHCR material assistance but they benefit from advocacy and, upon return, reintegration support.

<sup>26</sup> See preceding footnote.

<sup>27</sup> With introduction of the 2005 Immigration Act, the Central Aliens Register now encompasses new residence categories and simultaneously refines previous ones, allowing for a better differentiation of the figures.

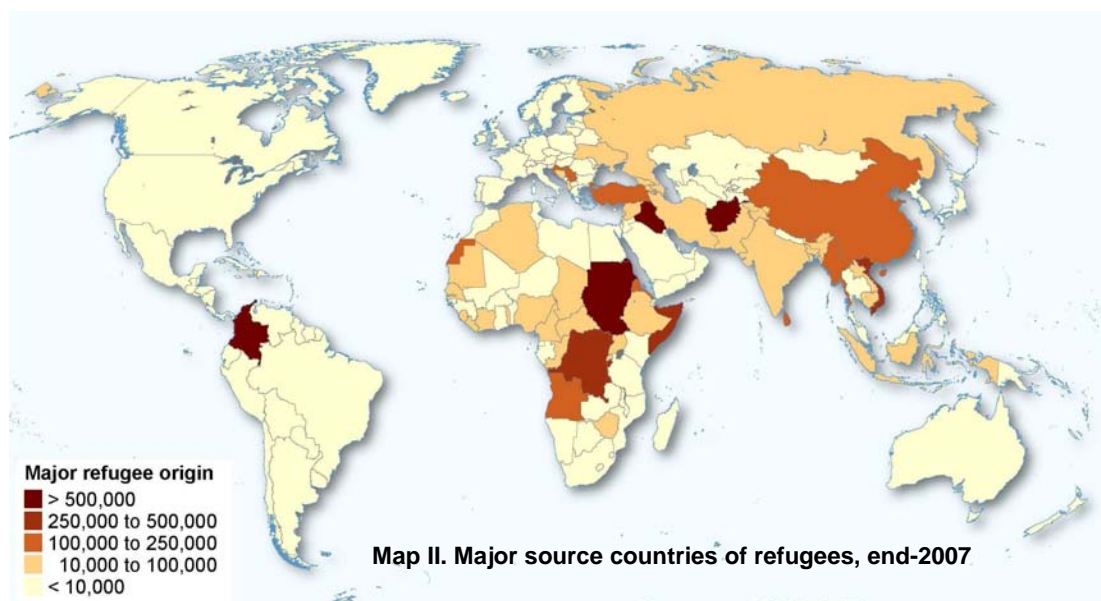
<sup>28</sup> Number of Iraqis estimated by the Government.



of America was estimated to have some 281,000 refugees. Overall, the top five asylum countries hosted half of all refugees falling under UNHCR’s responsibility.

BY ORIGIN

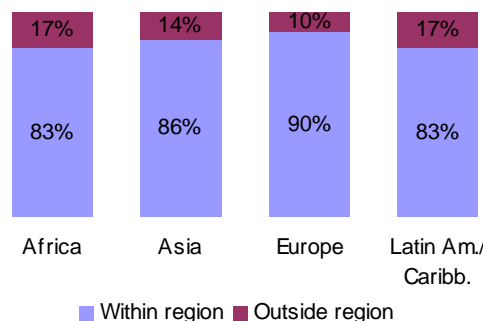
Afghanistan continued to be the leading country of origin. As of the end of 2007, there were almost 3.1 million Afghan refugees, or 27 per cent of the global refugee population. Even though Afghan refugees were to be found in 72 asylum countries worldwide, 96 per cent of them were located in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran alone. Iraqis were the second largest group, with 2.3 million having sought refuge mainly in neighbouring countries. Afghan and Iraqi refugees account for almost half of all refugees under UNHCR’s responsibility worldwide, followed by Colombians (552,000). Following successful repatriation operation to Southern Sudan, the number of Sudanese refugees globally decreased from 635,000 to 523,000. Other main source countries were Somalia (457,000), Burundi (376,000), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (370,000) (see Map II).



REFUGEES ARE ‘FLOODING’ AND ‘BURDENING’ THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD – A MYTH?

Contrary to the widespread perception that industrialized countries are hosting the bulk of the world’s refugees, the available statistical evidence demonstrates that most refugees remain in their region of origin and flee to neighbouring countries. Indeed, the major refugee-generating regions hosted on average between 83 and 90 per cent of ‘their’ refugees. UNHCR estimates that some 1.6 million refugees (14% out the total of 11.4 million) live outside their region of origin.

**Fig II.4. Percentage of refugees remaining within or outside their region of asylum, end-2007**



It is generally understood that countries with strong economies are more likely to be capable of absorbing refugees. By comparing the refugee population with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PPP)<sup>29</sup> per capita of a country, a measure can be obtained of the relative impact of hosting refugees. If the number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP)

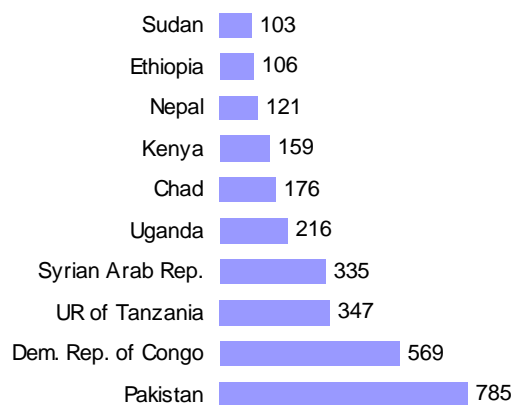
<sup>29</sup> In order to compare countries, the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP is considered (Source: International Monetary Fund; accessed 5 November 2008 at www.imf.org).

per capita is high, the relative contribution and thus effort made by countries compared to the national economy can be considered as high. In contrast, if there are few refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita, it is considered as small.

Among the 25 countries with the highest number of refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita, all are developing countries, including 14 Least Developed Countries (LDC).

At the end of 2007, Pakistan was hosting the highest number of refugees compared to its national economy. As such, it hosted 785 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was second with 569 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita, followed by the United Republic of Tanzania (347), the Syrian Arab Republic (335), and Uganda (216).

**Fig II.5. Number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita, 2007**



### ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Asylum-seekers are people who have requested international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. It is important to note, that a person is a refugee from the moment he or she fulfils the criteria set out in the refugee definition. The formal recognition, for instance through individual refugee status determination, does not establish refugee status, but confirms it.

The asylum-seekers included in the total population of concern to UNHCR are people whose applications for asylum or refugee status are pending a final decision. Those covered in this chapter refer to claimants whose applications were pending as of the end of 2007, irrespective of when they were may have been lodged (the so-called "backlog" of undecided or "pending cases").<sup>30</sup> The number of undecided or 'pending' cases is considered as an important indicator of the efficiency of asylum procedures. An increase in pending cases indicates that new applications outweigh the number of asylum decisions, which is likely to extend the waiting period for asylum-seekers. Despite improved reporting over the past few years, the global number of undecided cases presented in the Statistical Yearbook is underestimated as some countries, particularly in the industrialized world, were not able to report these figures.

By the end of the year, some 740,000 individuals were still awaiting a final decision on their asylum claim at the global level. This figure includes people at any stage in the asylum procedure. Based on the information available to UNHCR, the number of asylum-seekers awaiting a decision globally has gone down by one third since 2002. This could be an indication that asylum procedures have become more efficient, but may also coincide with a decrease in the number of new asylum applications submitted in the past few years.

The largest number of undecided cases at the first instance and on appeal was reported by South Africa (171,000). This figure includes 89,000 undecided cases at the first instance at the end of 2007 and close to 82,000 cases which were pending decision at the end of 2006. A Ministerial Initiative with special measures to clear the

<sup>30</sup> For details on the number of new asylum claims submitted as well as decisions taken, see Chapter IV.

backlog was implemented in 2006. Official figures on the outcome of this Initiative, however, are not yet available. In the United States of America, the number of pending cases at the end of (its fiscal) year totalled 84,000. Other countries with high numbers of pending cases included Austria (38,400), Canada (37,500), and Germany (34,100).

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

UNHCR does not have a global mandate to protect or assist all conflict-generated IDPs, estimated at some 26 million.<sup>31</sup> The number of internally displaced persons, including people in IDP-like situations<sup>32</sup> who receive protection and assistance from UNHCR under the inter-agency mechanisms or bilateral arrangements with the relevant Government stood at 13.7 million at the end of 2007. This constitutes an increase of almost 1 million compared to the previous year (12.8 million) and more

### **Box 2. IDP Profiling – the future for counting IDPs?**

In contrast to refugees, who are often individually registered, obtaining the number of IDPs poses a major challenge due to a combination of factors, including the lack of appropriate data collection tools, guidelines and methodologies to estimate their numbers. The lack of access to IDPs because of insecurity is often another reason why reliable IDP figures are difficult to obtain.

UNHCR and its partners are increasingly using surveys to profile the IDP population and collect data that cannot be obtained otherwise. IDP profiling is not only an important collaborative process but also a cost-effective way of improving the availability and quality of timely and reliable information on this population. It allows, among other, to obtain information on numbers, sex and age distribution, location, specific needs and other key protection related data which is useful to support country operations.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in collaboration with UNHCR, have developed the IDP Profiling Guidance\* (First release, November 2007). It was finalized in the framework of the Global Protection Cluster Working Group and proposes different methodologies and provides advice on choosing the most suitable enumeration method for a given country context.

\* See [www.humanitarianreform.org](http://www.humanitarianreform.org)

than double the figure before the activation of the cluster approach (6.6 million in 2005). UNHCR offices reported close to 2.2 million newly displaced people in 2007, while 2.1 million IDPs were able to return home during the same period. In all, UNHCR statistics include IDP populations in 23 countries.

With millions of displaced people, Colombia has one of the largest IDP populations in the world.<sup>33</sup> In Iraq, with a sectarian conflict and the lack of a comprehensive political solution, the number of IDPs rose from 1.8 million at the start of the year to close to 2.4 million by the end of 2007. It is estimated that more than 1.2 million Iraqis became displaced within their country in the past two years alone. Renewed armed conflict in Somalia displaced an estimated 600,000 people within the country and as a consequence, the number of IDPs increased to 1 million by the end of the year.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo also witnessed extensive new internal displacement in the course of

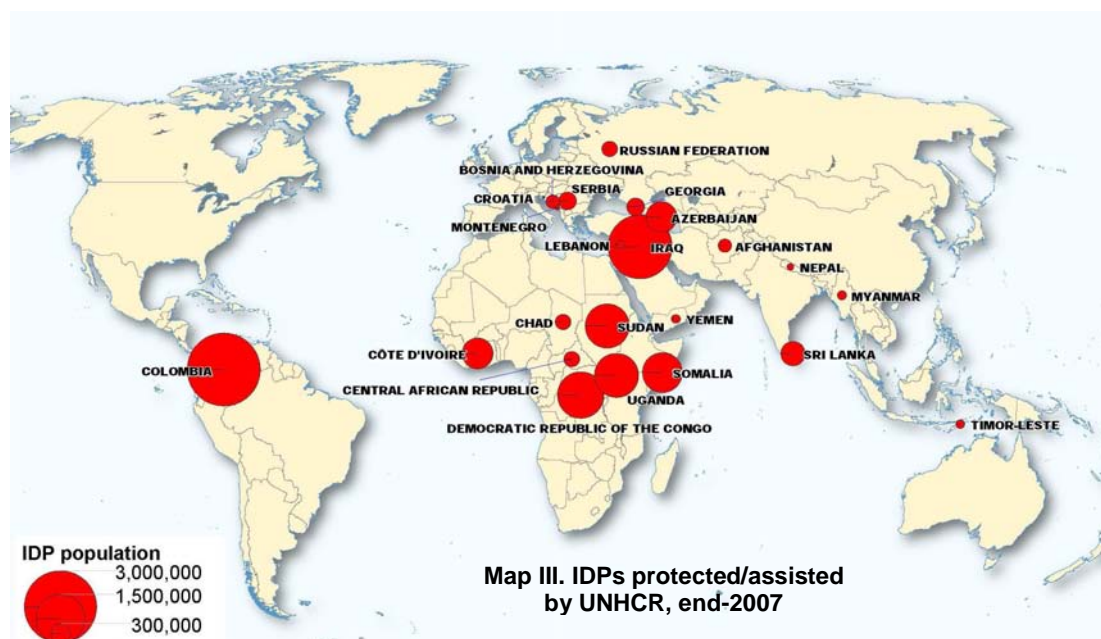
the year with the total number of IDPs estimated at 1.3 million. An estimated

<sup>31</sup> For detailed statistics on global internal displacement, see the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) website of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

<sup>32</sup> The IDP-like situations refer to Georgia (61,000) and the Russian Federation (85,200).

<sup>33</sup> The difficulties associated with accuracy in IDP statistics in Colombia have been highlighted in a landmark judgment by the Constitutional Court of that country, which pointed to serious discrepancies between the real magnitude of the situation and the figures of the national registration system. In its Order of Compliance to the Landmark Judgment on Displacement, the Court cites the Director of the *Agencia Presidencial de Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional* as having acknowledged in public statements that IDP figures in Colombia are close to 3 million (Order of Compliance 218, dated 11 August 2006, related to the Landmark Judgment T-025).

565,000<sup>34</sup> Congolese were forced to flee their homes as result of renewed fighting between the Government armed forces and militia groups, as well as widespread human rights violations. This notwithstanding, almost 1 million IDPs were able to return in 2007.



Out of the 1.8 million IDPs<sup>35</sup> in Uganda, some 579,000 returned to their villages in the course of the year, reducing the IDP population remaining in camps and transit sites to 1.2 million. Both IDPs and IDP returnees, however, continue to benefit from UNHCR's protection and assistance activities under the cluster approach. In Sudan, the number of IDPs reported by UNHCR was around 1.25 million by the end of the year. Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sri Lanka, and Yemen were among those countries reporting either new situations of internal displacement or significant increases in the IDP population during 2007. In Lebanon and Nepal, however, significant progress has been made in finding durable solutions for IDPs. In Lebanon, 130,000 people returned to their places of habitual residence, while in Nepal an estimated 50,000 individuals went home.



*Distribution of non-food items among IDPs in Afgooye, Somalia. UNHCR/ I. Taxte*

### STATELESS PERSONS

UNHCR has been tasked by the United Nations General Assembly and the Executive Committee, through various resolutions, to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to ensure the protection of stateless persons, as well as to inform the international community on the magnitude of this problem. The identification of stateless persons is a key step for addressing the problem and is fundamental to the discharge of the responsibility entrusted to UNHCR.

<sup>34</sup> This figure includes 435,000 newly displaced persons in North Kivu (displaced during December 2006 and December 2007), 100,000 in South Kivu (2007 only) and 30,000 in Ituri (2007 only).

<sup>35</sup> Revised estimate, previously reported figure was 1.6 million IDPs.



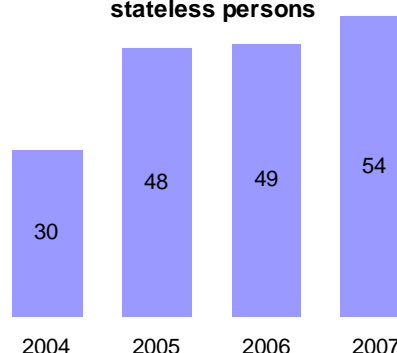
Statelessness is not always well understood and its scope in specific countries is often ignored. Measuring the magnitude of statelessness is complicated by the very nature of the phenomenon. Stateless persons often live in a precarious situation on the margins of society and are subject to discrimination. They frequently lack identity documentation and/or may not have legally recognised residence in the country in which they live. Nonetheless, some countries have procedures in place for the identification and documentation of stateless persons which facilitates gathering more precise data.

The Yearbook only includes data on countries for which reliable official statistics or estimates of stateless populations are available. Annex table 7 also includes some countries (marked with an asterisk) that have significant stateless populations but for which no reliable figures could be provided, including Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, and Thailand.

Available data on statelessness in 2007 and previous years reflect two major trends. First, they show a gradual expansion in coverage. Statistics on statelessness were available for 54 countries in 2007; an increase from 49 countries in 2006, 48 in 2005 and 30 in 2004. The increase in data coverage reflects the efforts of UNHCR to gather better data on statelessness in recent years. These efforts were likely bolstered by an increasing awareness of statelessness in a number of countries around the world. It is clear, however, that UNHCR needs to redouble efforts to identify stateless populations.

The second trend is the dramatic reduction in UNHCR's figures for stateless persons in 2007, as compared to 2006. The total number of stateless persons reported in UNHCR statistics dropped by roughly 3 million as a result of the major breakthroughs achieved in Nepal and Bangladesh. In Nepal, new legislation adopted in the context of the peace process was followed by a massive campaign in early 2007 to issue citizenship certificates. These were issued to approximately 2.6 million people who were confirmed as nationals of Nepal. In Bangladesh, to prepare for elections in 2008, the Government was registering adults of the Bihari/Urdu-speaking communities which have a total population estimated at 250,000 to 300,000 people. The rights of the Bihari/Urdu-speakers as Bangladeshi citizens had not been recognized following the separation of what is now Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. They are also being issued national identity cards, a further confirmation that they are indeed considered as nationals of Bangladesh. As a consequence of these two developments, the number of stateless persons in UNHCR statistics dropped from 5.8 million in 2006 to slightly under 3 million people by the end of 2007.

**Fig II.6. Number of countries reporting statistics on stateless persons**



UNHCR is not in a position to provide definitive statistics on the number of stateless persons in all countries around the world. As a result, there is a discrepancy between reliable country-level data reported by UNHCR and the total estimated number of stateless worldwide, some 12 million people. However, the increase in data coverage means that there will be a gradual narrowing of this gap.

## OTHER GROUPS OR PEOPLE OF CONCERN

UNHCR also extends its protection or assistance activities to individuals whom it considers "of concern", but who do not fall into any of the above population categories. These activities are based on humanitarian or other special grounds and might, for instance, include asylum-seekers who have been rejected by States, but who are deemed by UNHCR to be in need of international protection. Populations who were included under this group up to 2006 have been reclassified as being either in a refugee-like or IDP-like situation and thus been merged with the refugee or IDP categories. As a consequence, figures related to the Others of concern to UNHCR group are not comparable with the ones previously reported. The number of individuals reported among this population has drastically declined as a result of the reclassification and included 68,600 people at the end of 2007.

Table II.2 Explanation of main changes in UNHCR's population of concern from end-2006 to end-2007

Source of main changes	Country	Population category	Change 2006-2007	Main reason for change/inclusion in UNHCR statistics
<b>1. Population movements (new displacement, repatriation)</b>				
	Central African Rep.	IDPs	+50,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Chad	IDPs	+66,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Dem. Rep. of	IDPs	+243,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Iraq	IDPs	+551,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	Lebanon	IDPs/ Returned IDPs	-130,000 IDPs	Return of IDPs
	Nepal	IDPs/ Returned IDPs	-50,000 IDPs	Return of IDPs
	Pakistan	Refugees (excl. ref.-like situations)	-156,000 refugees	Repatriation of Afghans, but excluding unregistered Afghans in the country who were assisted by UNHCR to return to Afghanistan.
	Somalia	IDPs	+600,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
	South Africa	Asylum-seekers	+40,000 asylum-seekers	Newly registered asylum-seekers in 2007 pending refugee status determination.
	Timor-Leste	IDPs	-92,000 IDPs	Combination of returned IDPs and revised Government estimate for remaining IDP population.
	Uganda	IDPs/ Returned IDPs	-579,000 IDPs	Start-2007 figure revised upwards from 1.6 mln to more than 1.8 mln as a result of IASC Protection Cluster Working Group agreement. IDP figure decreased to 1.24 million as a result of 590,000 IDPs returning to their villages.
	Uganda	Refugees	-43,000 refugees	Repatriation of Sudanese refugees.
	United Republic of Tanzania	Refugees	-50,000 refugees	Repatriation of Burundian and Congolese refugees.
	Yemen	IDPs	+77,000 IDPs	New displacement during the year
<b>2. New methodology, change in source or new data available</b>				
	Armenia	Refugees	-110,000	Census in Armenia found that most refugees had left the country or had been naturalized in Armenia.
	Australia	Refugees	-47,000	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals.
	Bangladesh	Stateless persons	-300,000	Government confirmed that the 300,000 Biharis in Bangladesh are citizens of the country.
	Canada	Refugees	+24,000	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals.
	Georgia	People in IDP-like situations	61,000 (no change in number)	61,000 persons originating from Abkhazia and South Ossetia formerly reported as Others of concern are now included under "people in IDP-like situation".
	Kazakhstan	Stateless persons	-40,500	As a result of changes in the citizenship law, ethnic Kazakhs previously listed as stateless persons are no longer included.
	Lebanon	Refugees	+30,000	Survey estimated that number of Iraqis was higher than initially estimated (20,000).
	Nepal	Stateless persons	-2.6 million	Certificates issued to 2.6 million stateless persons in Nepal bringing the previous estimate of 3.4 million down to 800,000.
	New Zealand	Refugees	-1,800	In the absence of Government estimate, UNHCR estimated the figure based on 10 years of asylum-seeker recognition. Previously 5 years was used. The 2007 figure excludes resettlement arrivals.
	Pakistan	People in refugee-like situations	+1.15 million	Inclusion of registered Afghans in Pakistan living outside refugee villages and who are in a refugee-like situation.
	Russian Federation	People in refugee-like situations	-100,000	100,000 Afghans in a refugee-like situation were excluded from the statistics since no reliable source was found to confirm the figure.
	Russian Federation	People in IDP-like situations	-47,000	Number of Involuntarily Relocating Persons (IRP) registered in the country decreased by 47,000.
	Selected European countries	Refugees	-45,000 (total for all countries)	UNHCR's refugee estimate in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and UK excludes resettled refugees as of 2007.
	Syrian Arab Republic	Refugees	+800,000	Revised Government estimate for Iraqi refugees in the country.
	United States of America	Refugees	-553,000	Refugee estimate now excludes resettled refugees.

## AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS

Although sex- and age-disaggregated data on its population of concern is critical for planning, implementing and evaluating UNHCR's activities, such information is not always available. It tends to be more available in countries where UNHCR is operationally active and less in developed countries where States are responsible for data collection. UNHCR's efforts in improving the availability of demographic data has yielded significant results in recent years as reflected in Figure II.7. Between 2004 and 2007, the number of people of concern for whom sex or age data was available has almost tripled, from 7 to 20 million.

Availability of demographic data varies, depending on the type of population. Demographic data are available on 70 per cent of the refugees and on 89 per cent of the returnees, but there is less information on returned IDPs (7%), Others of concern (10%), and stateless persons (28%). The availability also differs by region. In Asia, the availability of sex-

and age-disaggregated data for refugees, asylum-seekers, returned refugees and IDPs was above 75 per cent. In the Americas, demographic data was available for about three quarters of the population falling under UNHCR's responsibility, primarily because of the availability of estimates for Colombian IDPs. Data for all other categories is below 20 per cent. In Africa, demographic information was reported for about half (54%) of the population. However, excluding returned IDPs for which little demographic data are available in most of the regions, the average demographic coverage in Africa remains at a relatively high 70 per cent. In Europe, demographic data were available for about one quarter (see Table II.3).

In 2007, demographic data were reported to UNHCR for roughly 20 million people of concern to the Office in 135 countries. The breakdown by sex was available for 63 per cent of the

population falling under UNHCR's responsibility and age breakdown for 42 per cent (13.4 million). These are the highest absolute and relative values recorded in years. This significant better data coverage is the result of several factors. First, UNHCR's registration software *proGres* continues to yield positive results. By the end of 2007, the software has been deployed to 57 countries and includes more than 2.9 million active individual records. Second, UNHCR's refugee estimates now exclude some 820,000 resettled refugees in industrialized countries whose demographic characteristics were mostly unknown. Third, as part of its responsibilities under the cluster approach, UNHCR and its partners have successfully conducted a number of

Fig II.7. Availability of demographic data for persons of concern to UNHCR

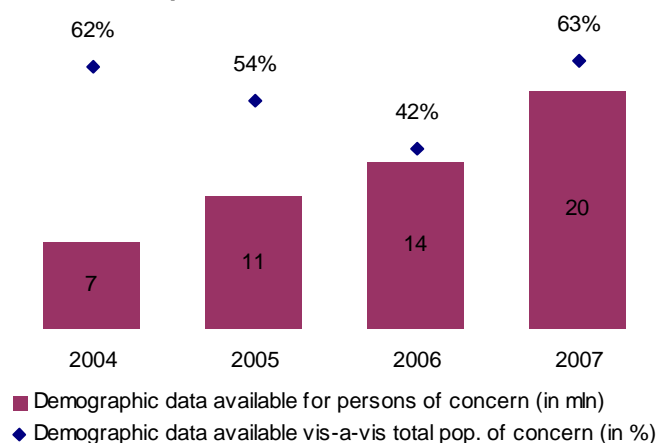


Table II.3: Availability of demographic data, end-2007 (in %)

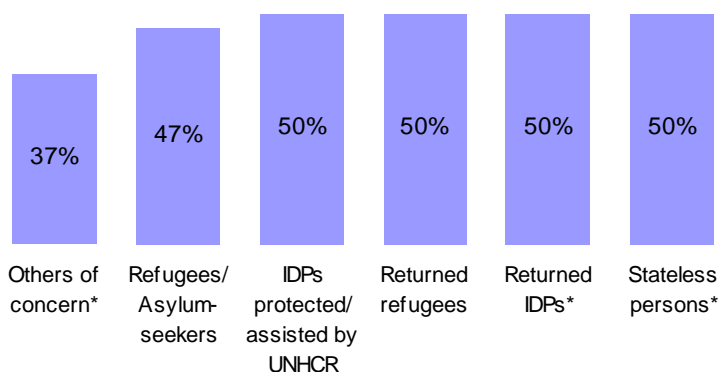
Population	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Total
Refugees*/ Asylum-seekers	85%	15%	89%	18%	7%	70%
IDPs**	54%	100%	77%	67%	..	71%
Returnees (refugees)	77%	7%	97%	95%	..	89%
Returnees (IDPs)	5%	..	11%	85%	..	7%
Stateless persons	0%	15%	38%	0%	..	28%
Others of concern	0%	..	1%	100%	..	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>63%</b>

\* Including people in refugee-like situations. \*\* Including people in IDP-like situations.

IDP profiling exercises leading to more accurate IDP estimates in several countries, including Chad and the Central African Republic. Demographic information is now available for some 9.8 million IDPs, as compared to 5.9 million the year earlier. Fourth, following the registration of more than 2 million Afghans in Pakistan, detailed demographic data is now available for this population.

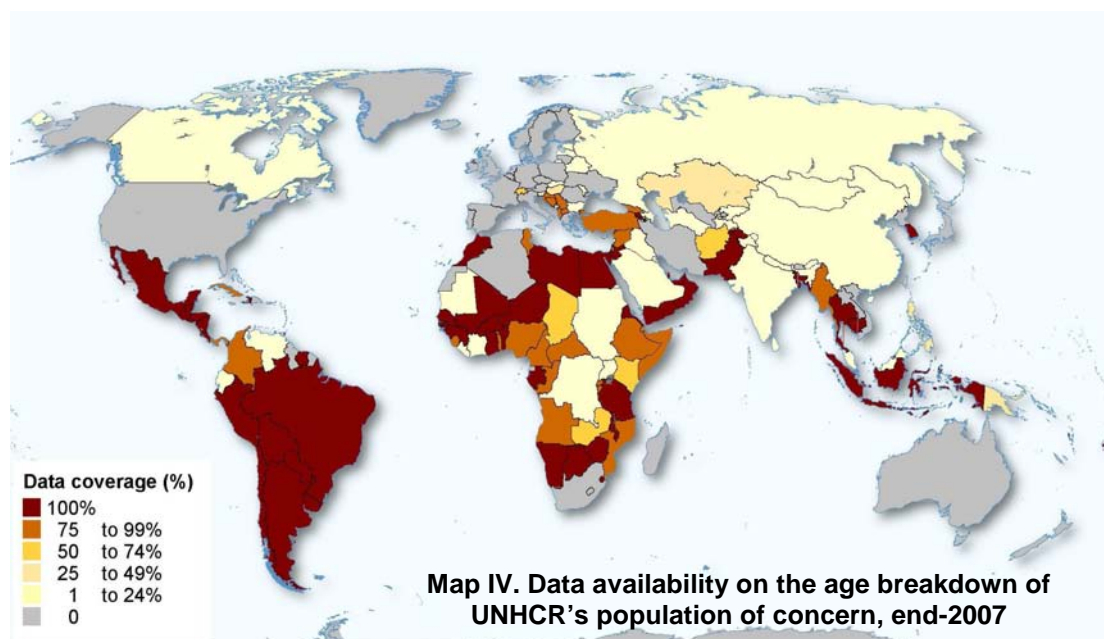
The available data by sex indicate that women represent half of most populations falling under UNHCR's responsibility (see Figure II.8 below). They represent less than half (47%) of refugees and asylum-seekers. The lowest proportion of women is to be found among the category Others of concern to UNHCR (37%). These average figures, however, tend to hide extreme values. In the Ethiopian refugee camp of Shimelba, for instance, women represent only 23 per cent of the 16,000 inhabitants, while in the Chadian camp of Amnabak they represent 61 per cent of the 16,700 residents.

**Fig II.8. Percentage of women by population category, end-2007**



\* Demographic data is available for less than one third of all people falling into these categories. The percentages are thus not necessarily representative.

Information on the age breakdown was available for 42 per cent of the 31.7 million people of concern to UNHCR (see Map IV below). Some 44 per cent of them are children under the age of 18; 10 per cent being under the age of five. Half of the population is between the ages of 18 and 59 years, whereas 5 per cent are 60 years or older. Among refugees and people in refugee-like situations, children constitute 46 per cent of the population. Their proportion is significantly higher among those refugees who were able to return home in 2007 (60 per cent). In contrast, children constitute only 27 per cent of asylum-seekers, a population traditionally dominated by single men, particularly in the industrialized world.





### **Box 3. More urban refugees than ever: the case of Iraqi refugees**

UNHCR's statistics indicate that more refugees than ever now live in urban areas with data on refugee's location being available for 8.7 million out of the 11.4 million refugees at the end of 2007. The data show that half of the 8.7 million reside in urban areas and one third in refugee camps. This is primarily the result of large numbers of Iraqis having sought refuge in urban centres in the neighbouring countries of Iraq, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Their total number is estimated at more than two million.

After the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra in 2006, which triggered a new exodus, UNHCR adopted a *prima facie* approach towards displaced Iraqis. While neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Jordan nor Lebanon are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, many Iraqis are welcomed in those countries. In early 2007, UNHCR established specific protection mechanisms, including registering those who approached its offices and providing assistance in the form of food, cash grants, education, and health care. The registration data, in turn, provide UNHCR valuable information on the profile of Iraqi refugees. During 2007, UNHCR registered 147,000 Iraqis in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. By the end of 2007, some 182,000 Iraqis had active records in UNHCR's database<sup>1</sup>, the majority of them in the Syrian Arab Republic (150,000).

The demographic breakdown of Iraqis in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic is fairly similar. In Lebanon, however, the Iraqi male population aged 18 to 59 years is significantly higher, constituting more than 50 per cent of the entire population (compared to less than 30 per cent in the other two countries). This statistical 'anomaly' is primarily due to male Iraqis entering Lebanon in the hope of finding jobs. As most of the male Iraqi refugees work without legal status, arrests and detention are their major concern.

At least 46,000 people of those registered in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic fall under one or more categories of special needs, including women/children/elderly at risk, and people who are disabled or have a critical medical condition. The majority of registered refugees, especially those who are vulnerable, rely on UNHCR's assistance.

Over 70 per cent of the registered Iraqi population in the three countries come from Baghdad. Out of the ten major professions recorded for Iraqi heads of households in the Syrian Arab Republic, teachers, office clerks, sales persons, accountants and former military personnel accounted for 60 per cent of them. The educational level of Iraqis is high. Data on heads of households and their spouses indicate that over 80 per cent have secondary level education or above and over 35 per cent had completed a technical college, university or post-graduate education. The evidence thus supports the perception that Iraqi refugees are a predominantly urban population.

Due to a number of factors including their educational and occupational background, most Iraqi refugees remain in the capital or other major cities offering more facilities, including accommodation, education, health services, and better employment possibilities. The convenience of urban areas is, however, coupled with drawbacks. The cost of living is generally high which put a strain on the refugees' coping mechanisms. Iraqis do not have the right to work in any of those countries, unless they are able to obtain a work permit. For a majority of them, this is a complicated and costly procedure and hence, unattainable. Many fail to regularize their residence and stay illegally. In this context, most have relied on their savings or support from their relatives in Iraq or abroad. However, as their exile continues, their savings have dwindled and support provided by family members abroad has started to dry up. Some, under these circumstances, resort to working illegally, making them susceptible to exploitation. People in certain groups such as female-headed households are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including prostitution.

Iraqi refugees in urban settings are in many ways invisible. There are no refugee camps with tents. Instead, Iraqis live in rented accommodation, rooms or flats in crowded areas, scattered throughout the city. The fear of detention often makes Iraqis, including children, reluctant to go out, and in some cases to register with UNHCR. Many refugees suffer from a sense of isolation and a lack of social participation. Unlike in more traditional refugee camp situations, basic needs for shelter, food, water and sanitation, for example, have to be addressed in a different manner. More recently, UNHCR has been looking at providing particular guidance on refugees in urban settings, addressing their specific needs and situation. During 2007, the Office provided over 15,000 people with basic assistance, including food, non-food items and cash grants, helping at least some 70 per cent of the registered Iraqi population in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

<sup>1</sup> By the end of 2008, some 225,000 Iraqis had active registration records with UNHCR.