

CHAPTER III

DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND NEW DISPLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

One key aspect of UNHCR's work is to provide assistance to refugees and other populations of concern in finding durable solutions, i.e. the mechanism to transform a precarious situation to a better, more stable and more permanent one. For the population of concern it means (i) voluntarily repatriation to the home country; (ii) resettlement to another country or; (iii) finding appropriate permanent integration mechanisms in the host country. 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 basis or through group determination (*prima facie*). This chapter presents the situation regarding durable solutions and new displacement. It has three parts.

The first part tracks progress towards achieving durable solutions for refugees during 2004. Voluntary repatriation movements are generally considered the preferred and the most important one numerically, generally accounting for the largest proportion among the three durable solutions.

Resettlement of refugees is a significant contribution towards international responsibility and burden sharing. This chapter considers refugee resettlement both from the perspective of UNHCR in the country of first asylum as well as from the perspective of the resettlement country.

Local integration, the third durable solution, may take many shapes, ranging from access to land, employment, health and education, to freedom of movement. This chapter is limited to the local integration of refugees through naturalization, whereby the full range of protection is extended to refugees by the host country.

The second part of this chapter deals with new arrivals, focusing primarily on mass or *prima facie* refugee outflows, while asylum applications and refugee status determination are reviewed in detail in Chapter IV.

Most changes in the size of refugee populations are explained by new arrivals and voluntary repatriation. In addition, the number of refugees is determined by natural factors (births and deaths) as well as legal and administrative changes. The third part of this chapter addresses major changes to the refugee population in 2004 that are not explained by durable solutions or new arrivals.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

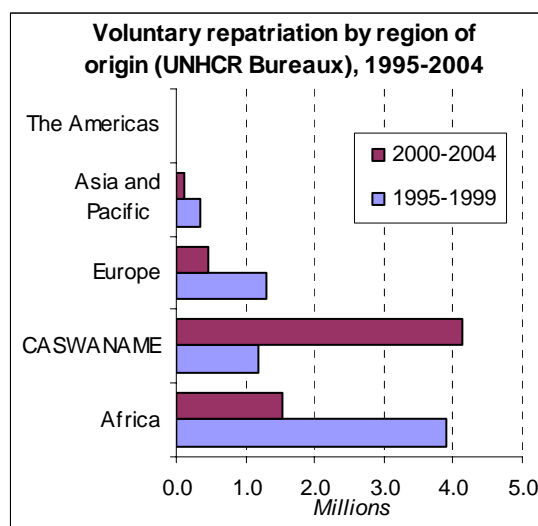
Voluntary repatriation statistics are generally based on information from both the country of first asylum as well as the country of return. In 2004, 1.5 million refugees returned to their home country, a 37 per cent increase compared to 2003 (1.1 million), but still 38 per cent lower than in 2002 when voluntary repatriation was at the

highest level since 1995 (2.4 million). During the decade 1995-2004, an estimated 13.0 million refugees found a durable solution by repatriating to their home country (see *Table B.6*).

Voluntary repatriation departures are however often underreported, because many refugees return on their own initiative, without informing the authorities of the host country or requesting UNHCR for assistance. In contrast, the number of returnees in the country of origin may be overestimated, because nationals may register for returnee assistance. As mentioned earlier, in order to present an accurate picture, the voluntary repatriation figures provided in the 2004 Yearbook result from a consolidation process of estimates from both the country of asylum and the country of origin.

During 2004, 11 asylum countries reported voluntary repatriation departures exceeding 10,000 refugees, including the Islamic Rep. of Iran (572,000), Pakistan (424,000), the United Rep. of Tanzania (89,000), and Zambia (46,000). In total, voluntary repatriation departures involving 50 or more refugees were reported by 59 asylum countries (see *Table II.1*).

Ten countries of origin reported the return of more than 10,000 refugees in 2004, including Afghanistan (940,000), Iraq (194,000), Burundi (90,000), Angola (90,000), Liberia (57,000), and Sierra Leone (26,000). Afghans constituted 63 per cent of all refugees who repatriated during 2004. In total, 35 countries of origin reported the return of refugees among which 28 reported the return of 50 or more. (See *Table II.2*).



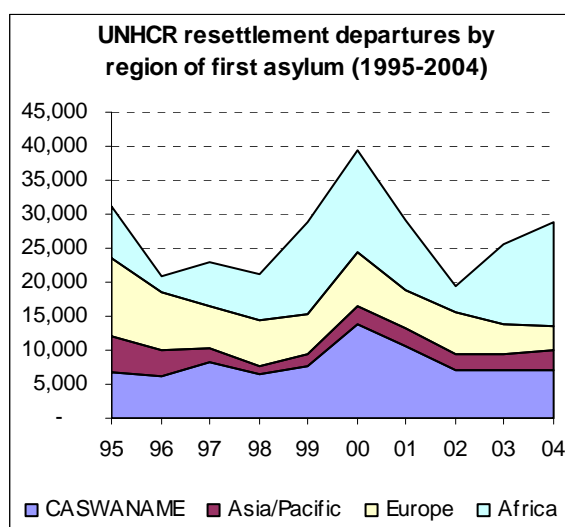
RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement concerns the organized transfer from countries of first asylum to third countries for the purpose of permanent settlement for refugees who can neither repatriate nor integrate in their country of first asylum. It serves as a protection tool, as durable solution and as responsibility and burden sharing mechanism for refugees whose life and liberty are at risk in their country of first asylum. The role of UNHCR in resettlement ranges from identifying resettlement needs to screening and selecting potential resettlement cases and arranging transportation in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Resettlement is a durable solution for only a limited number of the world's refugees. During the decade 1995-2004, 269,000 refugees were resettled from first asylum countries under UNHCR auspices, compared to 13 million refugees who were able to repatriate. Thus, for every refugee who has been resettled since 1995, about 50 have repatriated.

In Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, resettlement is part of the national immigration programme. In these countries, resettlement candidates are either refugees selected by UNHCR as part of an agreed quota or persons selected by the immigration authorities on the basis of national criteria. Sometimes, these countries admit persons for resettlement who do not qualify for Convention refugee

status but for whom there may be other compelling reasons for resettlement. UNHCR has agreed resettlement quotas with other, mostly European, countries. In recent years, some countries in South America have created resettlement programmes in cooperation with UNHCR.



The 2004 Yearbook uses two sources for resettlement statistics. First, UNHCR records from first asylum countries indicate the number of refugees who have been resettled under UNHCR auspices. Second, official statistics from receiving countries are used to analyse the total inflow of resettled refugees, whether or not facilitated by UNHCR.

(a) UNHCR departures

Most UNHCR offices are engaged in resettlement. In 2004, 68 UNHCR country offices reported at least one resettlement departure under UNHCR auspices. In total, UNHCR resettled 29,600 refugees in 2004, 14 per cent more than in 2003 (25,900) and 10 per cent above the average annual resettlement level during the period 1995-2004 (26,900) (see *Table B.9*).

Only a few UNHCR offices process the bulk of the resettlement cases. In 2004, five offices resettled more than 1,000 refugees, namely Kenya (5,600), Côte d'Ivoire (4,500), Egypt (4,100), Turkey (2,300), and Thailand (1,600). These five offices resettled 61 per cent of all refugees resettled by UNHCR during 2004.

Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of UNHCR offices have become engaged in resettlement activities. The number of offices resettling more than 100 refugees increased from 16 in 1995-1997 to some 25 in 1998-2000 and further to 30 or more since 2001 (see *Table B.10*). Resettlement levels fluctuate substantially from one year to the next. In 2004, 30 offices resettled more than 100 cases. In 13 of these offices, the annual number of departing refugees changed by more than 50 per cent compared with 2003.

While many UNHCR offices are engaged in resettlement activities, the number of nationalities being resettled is much more limited. In 2004, there were only 17 refugee nationalities involving more than 100 departures. Refugees from Liberia constituted the largest group resettled under UNHCR auspices (5,610), followed by refugees from Sudan (5,050), Somalia (4,870), Afghanistan (2,710), and the Islamic Rep. of Iran (2,190). These five main refugee nationalities accounted for 69 per cent of all resettlement departures during 2004 (see *Table II.2*).

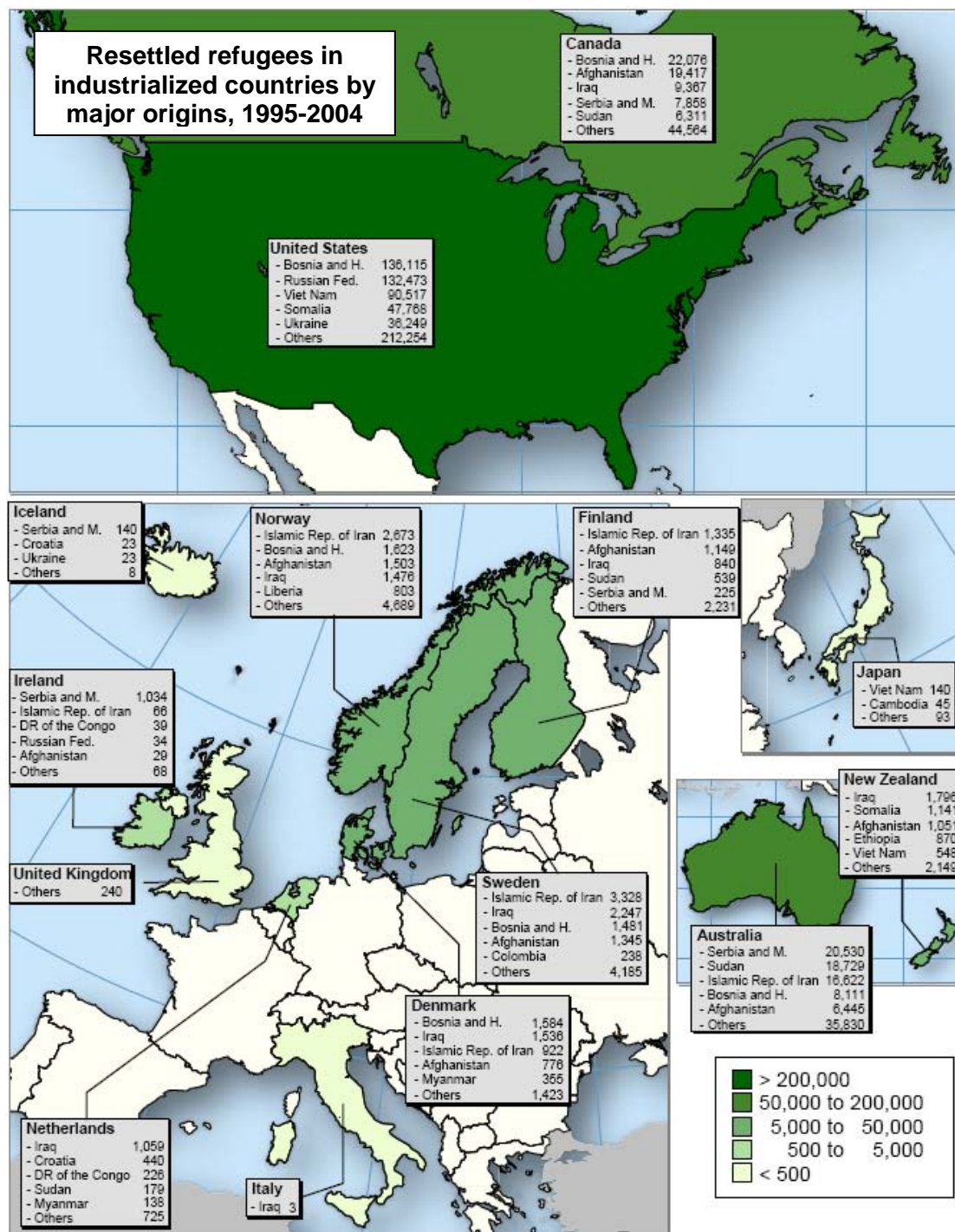
In 2004, a significant increase of UNHCR-assisted resettlements was recorded in refugees originating from Myanmar (181%), Liberia (163%), the Dem. Rep. of the Congo (99%), Burundi (99%), Eritrea (75%), and Somalia (47%).

The need for resettlement is closely associated with conditions in the countries of origin and first asylum. While only a few years ago resettlement from the former Yugoslavia was significant, these numbers have plummeted recently. Similarly, the number of Iraqi refugees resettled by UNHCR in 2004 dropped by 55 per cent, of

Ethiopian and Afghan refugees by 51 and 24 per cent respectively (see Table B.12).

(b) Government arrivals

In 2004, 11 countries reported the resettlement of 85,000 refugees, an increase of 52 per cent compared to 2003 (56,000). This constitutes however only 63 per cent of total resettlement arrivals in 1995 in the same countries. During the decade 1995-2004, some 923,000 refugees were resettled by the 11 main receiving countries.



The United States resettled 53,000 refugees, including family members, during its 2004 Fiscal Year (FY), an increase of 86 per cent compared to FY 2003 (28,000). In

Sweden, resettlement arrivals increased by 91 per cent to 950. The Netherlands increased by 87 per cent to 323 and Australia by 35 per cent to 16,000.

Albeit at a much lower level, annual resettlement arrivals in 2004 also increased in Finland (31%), New Zealand (26%) and Ireland (17%), but fell in Norway (-48%) and was stable in Canada (-2%). The United Kingdom resettled 150 persons during 2004, which were the first resettlement arrivals to the country during at least the last 10 years (see *Table B.14*).

The industrialized countries resettled 100 or more refugees from 32 different nationalities during 2004. The main countries of origin whose citizens benefited from resettlement in 2004 included Somalia (14,000), Sudan (12,000), Liberia (8,600), Lao People's Dem. Rep. (6,100), Afghanistan (5,200), and Ethiopia (4,000).



Resettled refugees normally have access to long-term residence status, a range of social, economic and legal rights and, eventually, to naturalization. Resettled refugees thus require little, if any, international protection. From a national statistical perspective, however, the arrival of resettled refugees constitutes an increase in the refugee population. However, once refugees have obtained the citizenship of the host country, they are no longer counted as refugees in UNHCR's statistics.

LOCAL INTEGRATION

Local integration is a multi-faceted process by which refugees progressively become part of the host society. This integration includes primarily legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Through **legal integration**, refugees are provided with a range of rights and entitlements by the host country which are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by citizens. Naturalization allows refugees to enjoy the full legal protection of the host country.

Economic integration concerns access to the social and economic rights provided for by the 1951 Convention. This includes the right to pursue sustainable livelihoods and to engage in income-generating activities, such as farming, trading and paid labour. Including refugees in national development plans and income-generating projects may enhance self-sufficiency and economic integration.

Social and cultural integration allows refugees to live amongst or alongside the host population without discrimination or exploitation and to contribute actively to the social life of the country of asylum.

While economic and social integration is difficult to measure, legal integration is easier to measure because some countries provide data on the number of refugees being naturalized. During 2004, UNHCR was informed about the naturalization of some 83,000 refugees in 17 asylum countries. The largest numbers of refugees were granted citizenship in the United States (69,700), the Russian Federation (8,400) and Armenia (4,100). Naturalization data for the USA has only recently become available,

indicating that some 600,000 refugees acquired US citizenship during 1998-2004.

These data provide only anecdotal evidence of the number of refugees being granted the citizenship of the host countries each year. In industrialized countries, local integration is the predominant durable solution for refugees. Each year, thousands of refugees are being naturalized. However, few countries distinguish refugees separately in their naturalization data.

Because of the importance of naturalization for local integration and the paucity of data in industrialized countries, UNHCR estimates the refugee naturalization rate for those countries. In the traditional immigration countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States), it is assumed that refugees have naturalized after five years, whereas refugees in Europe are considered fully integrated after 10 years (see *Table I.1*).

NEW ARRIVALS

Refugees flee their country because they have a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Individual asylum applications are determined on a case-by-case basis. Situations of mass influx are often triggered by conflict in the country of origin. Asylum countries may accord protection on a group basis or *prima facie* in mass inflow situations, when individual refugee status determination is not feasible or practical. Responding to situations of mass influx, a number of industrialized countries have designed temporary protection schemes.

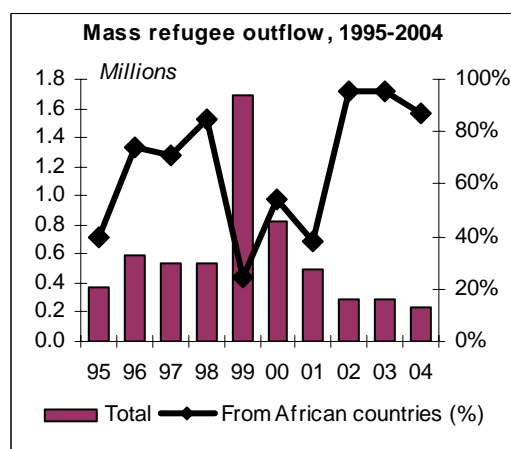
MASS REFUGEE MOVEMENTS

During 2004, some 232,000 refugees became displaced as part of a mass outflow; this was a decrease of 20 per cent compared to 2003 (290,000). The level of new displacement in 2004 was the lowest in the last decade 1995-2004 (see *Table B.1*).

During 2003 and 2004, almost all mass refugee displacement occurred in Africa. In the last two years, Africa recorded 96 per cent and 87 per cent respectively of the total global *prima facie* refugee arrivals.

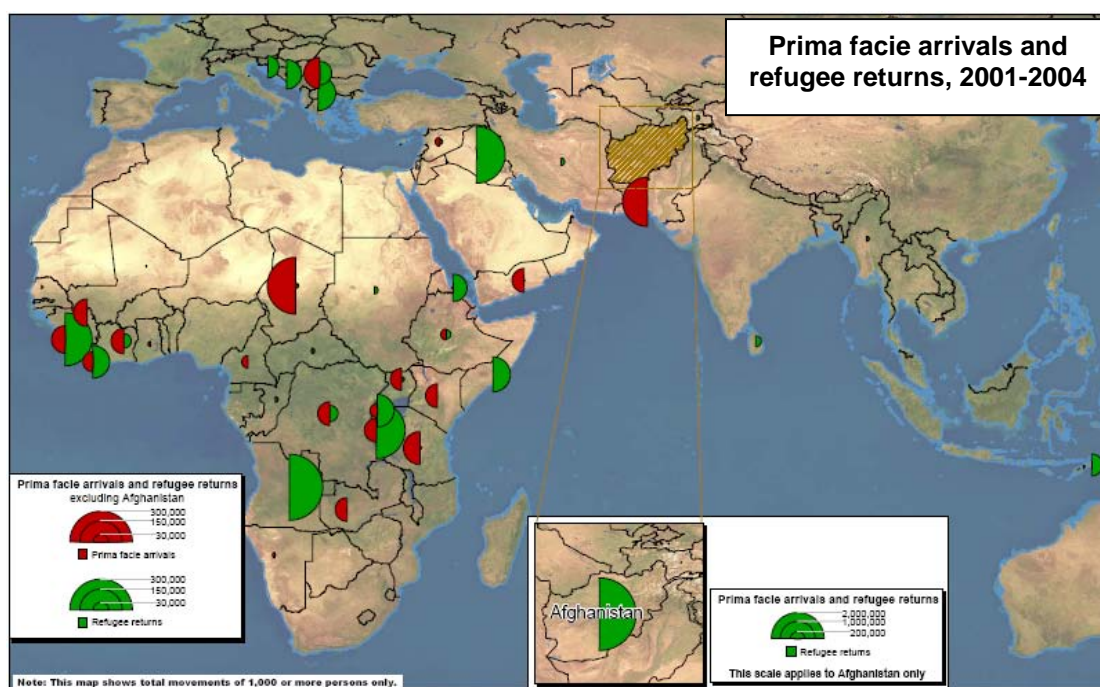
During 2004, Asia recorded 29,000 new *prima facie* refugee arrivals, while Europe reported no mass refugee movements at all. In 2004, mass outflows involving more than 1,000 refugees were reported by only seven countries of origin, down from up to 20 in the 1990s.

As in 2003, Sudan was the main source of new refugee displacement in 2004 with 147,000 refugees fleeing the country. Other countries producing new refugee outflows in 2004 included the Dem. Rep. of the Congo (38,100), Somalia (19,100), Iraq (12,000), Côte d'Ivoire (5,900), Burundi (4,200), and Liberia (3,700) (see *Table B.3*).



The reduction in refugee outflows is reflected in fewer asylum countries reporting new arrivals. In 2004, the largest new arrivals of refugees were reported by Chad (131,000), Burundi (21,000), Yemen (17,000), Uganda (16,000), Rwanda (14,000), and the Syrian Arab Republic (12,000) (see *Table B.2*).

As the map below shows, the recent years have witnessed the emergence of only few new mass refugee situations but high level of refugee returns. As noted earlier, low levels of new international displacement in combination with sustained durable solutions are the main reason for the recent decline in the global refugee population.



INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION

In 2004, an estimated 188,000 asylum-seekers were granted Convention refugee status or a complementary form of protection (humanitarian status, subsidiary protection etc.), four per cent fewer than in 2003, when 196,000 asylum-seekers were accepted. Countries recognizing the largest number of asylum-seekers on an individual basis in 2004 were the United States (25,000), the United Kingdom (21,000), Malaysia (18,000), Canada (16,000), France (16,000), and Switzerland (12,000) (see *Table II.1*). Main countries of origin having each more than 10,000 asylum-seekers recognized on an individual basis include Indonesia, Somalia, Eritrea, the Russian Federation, and Colombia. Trends in asylum and refugee status determination are discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

OTHER SOURCES OF POPULATION CHANGES

It was noted that the size of the refugee population is influenced by a complex set of demographic, legal and administrative factors. These factors include the mass arrivals or repatriations, recognition rates of individual applicants, registration, births and deaths. In the above, the main numerical changes, new arrivals and durable solutions have been discussed. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of other, specific factors affecting the size of the refugee population in some countries.

One important reason for a sudden change in the refugee population is registration. The presence of refugees is verified periodically to ensure that the administrative records are in line with the actual situation on the ground. As a result of registration, refugee statistics in camps can either increase (mainly because of births or new arrivals not previously registered) or drop (mainly because of deaths or non-registered departures).

A particular difficulty in accounting for all changes in the refugee population is voluntary repatriation. UNHCR statistics provide one figure for each voluntary repatriation movement, based on information from both sides of the border (see for instance Table II.1). However, if there are many refugees returning spontaneously who were not registered in the asylum countries, discrepancies occur in the number of departures and arrivals, affecting in particular the credibility of the data reported by asylum countries.

Differences in statistics between the country of arrival and departure are by no means limited to refugees only. In the industrialized countries, where borders are less porous than in developing countries, immigration and emigration statistics tend to differ significantly for the same migration flow.