

STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 2006

TRENDS IN DISPLACEMENT, PROTECTION
AND SOLUTIONS

DECEMBER 2007



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For additional copies or further information, please contact:

The Senior Statistician
Field Information and Coordination Support Section
Division of Operational Services
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
PO Box 2500
1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
stats@unhcr.org

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MAIN FINDINGS

The following five pages provide a brief and concise overview of the major developments occurring in 2006. Main events are summarized in bullet-form highlighting the main findings. For an in-depth discussion and analysis of developments in 2006, including the definitions applied and data limitations, please consult Chapters I to VII.

TOTAL POPULATION OF CONCERN

- *The 2006 Yearbook identifies seven population categories, i.e. refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR, stateless persons, returned refugees, returned IDPs, and so-called Others of concern. They are collectively referred to as “persons of concern” or “total population of concern”.¹*

- *By the end of 2006, the total population of concern to UNHCR was estimated at 32.9 million persons, including 9.9 million refugees²; 744,000 asylum-seekers; 734,000 refugees who had repatriated during 2006; 12.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR; 1.9 million IDPs who had returned to their place of origin in 2006; some 5.8 million stateless persons; and some 1 million Others of concern.*

- *The total population of concern to UNHCR increased by 56 per cent during 2006. The number of refugees increased for the first time in five years (+14%). The category of IDPs protected/assisted by UNHCR increased by 93 per cent following the institutionalization of the “Cluster Approach”, while the number of stateless persons went up by 144 per cent, primarily due to better data availability. The number of returned IDPs more than doubled (+259%) compared to 2005. The largest drop occurred in the return of refugees (-34%). The asylum-seeker population, that is persons whose asylum applications have not yet been adjudicated, fell by 7 per cent during 2006.*

- *By the end of 2006, Asia hosted the largest population of concern to UNHCR (45%), followed by Africa (30%), Latin America and the Caribbean (11%), Europe (10%), North America (3%), and Oceania (0.3%).³*

- *In 2006, the population of concern to UNHCR increased in five out of the six regions of the world. The increase was highest in Africa (+89%), followed by Asia (+68%), North America (+59%), Latin America and the Caribbean (+41%), and Oceania (+4%). Europe (-7%) was the only continent recording a decrease in the population of concern.*

- *Out of the total population of concern of 32.9 million at the end of 2006, an estimated 11.1 million originated from Asia (34%). Africa was the second leading region of origin with 10.1 million (31%). While not considered as a source region per se, with an estimate of 5.8 million stateless persons identified at end-2006, this group constitutes the third largest population (18%), followed by persons originating from Latin America and the Caribbean (3.7 million or 11%) and Europe (1.6 million or 5%).*

¹ For a definition of the different population categories, see Chapter I, pp. 16-17.

² The 4.4 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are not included in the 2006 Statistical Yearbook.

³ See annex tables 22-25 for the regional classifications used in the Yearbook.

- *Excluding stateless persons, by the end of 2006, Colombians constituted the largest population with 3.6 million persons considered to be of concern to the Office (11% of the total). Iraqis were the second largest population with 3.5 million (11%), followed by Afghans (2.8 million or 8%) and Sudanese citizens (2.1 million or 6%).*
- *Only refugees and IDPs who returned during the 12 months preceding this report are included in the population of concern to UNHCR. Field operations may assist returnees for a longer period, however.*

Refugees

- *The number of refugees at the end of 2006 stood at 9.9 million, the highest in four years. This is primarily the result of Iraqis seeking refuge in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic (together 1.2 million) and, based on newly available data, a revised methodology for computing the refugee population in the United States of America.*
- *By the end of 2006, developing regions hosted 7.1 million refugees, 72 per cent of the global refugee population. The 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) provided asylum to 22 per cent of the world's refugees.*
- *In 2006, the refugee population increased by 1.2 million persons (+14%) with an increase being recorded in North America (+89%), Asia (+30%), Latin America and the Caribbean (+8%), and Oceania (+5%). Europe and Africa experienced a decline of 8 and 6 per cent respectively.*
- *By the end of 2006, Asia hosted the largest number of refugees (46%), followed by Africa (26%), Europe (16%), North America (10%), Oceania (1%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (0.4%).*
- *Pakistan (1.0 million, UNHCR estimate)⁴ and the Islamic Republic of Iran (968,000) hosted the largest number of refugees at the end of 2006. Other major countries of asylum included the United States of America (843,000), the Syrian Arab Republic (702,000), Germany (605,000), Jordan (500,000), and the United Republic of Tanzania (485,000).*
- *By the end of 2006, there were some 2.1 million Afghan refugees according to UNHCR estimates, accounting for one fifth of the global refugee population. Iraq was the second largest country of origin of refugees (1.5 million), followed by Sudan (686,000), Somalia (460,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (402,000), and Burundi (397,000).*

Durable solutions

- *In 2006, 734,000 refugees repatriated to their home country, one third less than in 2005, when some 1.1 million refugees returned. Afghans constituted some 53 per cent (388,000) of all returnees during 2006. Other countries of origin to which many refugees repatriated during 2005 were Liberia (108,000), Burundi (48,000), and Angola (47,000). In total, 15 countries of origin reported the return of more than 1,000 refugees.*

⁴ UNHCR figures for Pakistan only include Afghans living in camps who are assisted by UNHCR. There are an additional 1.3 million Afghans living outside the camps, some of whom may be refugees. They do not receive UNHCR material assistance, but may benefit from the Organization's programme for voluntary repatriation. As of the time of publication of this report, the number of Afghan citizens in Pakistan was under review as a result of a comprehensive registration exercise implemented between October 2006 and February 2007.

- UNHCR country offices in asylum countries resettled some 29,600 individuals during 2006. Among those, 27,700 were recognized refugees, 9 per cent less than in 2005 (30,500). The UNHCR office in Kenya recorded the highest number of assisted refugee departures (6,200), followed by Thailand (4,700), Egypt (2,000), Turkey (1,600), and the United Republic of Tanzania (1,600). The main refugee nationalities benefiting from UNHCR-facilitated resettlement during the year were refugees from Myanmar (5,700), Somalia (5,200), Sudan (2,900), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,000), and Afghanistan (1,900).

- According to government statistics, 14 industrialized countries reported the admission of 71,700 resettled refugees during 2006, 11 per cent below the 2005 level (80,800). The countries resettling most refugees during 2006 were the United States of America (41,300; during the US Fiscal Year), Australia (13,400), Canada (10,700), and Sweden (2,400).

Industrialized countries

- New asylum claims submitted in the 38 industrialized countries⁵ fell by 15 per cent, to 290,000 in 2006. Europe received 216,000 new asylum claims (-17%), North America received 64,000 new asylum applications (+7%), and Australia/New Zealand received 3,800 asylum-seekers (+6%).

- Some 200,000 asylum requests were lodged in the (then) 25 countries of the European Union (-14%). Excluding the 10 countries which acceded to the European Union (EU) in 2004, the number of asylum claims submitted in the EU-15 amounted to 181,000 (-15%).

- Iraq was the main country of origin of asylum-seekers in industrialized countries: 23,000 new claims were lodged by its citizens in 2006. China was the second leading country of origin of asylum-seekers (18,200), followed by the Russian Federation (15,900), Islamic Republic of Iran (10,800), and Turkey (9,000).

- During 2006, some 69,000 asylum-seekers were recognized as Convention refugees at the first instance (53,400) and on appeal (15,600) in the industrialized countries. Another 38,000 asylum-seekers were granted complementary forms of protection or allowed to remain for humanitarian reasons at the first instance (34,300) and on appeal (3,700).

- Convention refugee status was granted in 19 per cent of first instance decisions taken in 2006, the same level as the year before. Including complementary forms of protection and humanitarian status, 32 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken at the first instance in 2006 were positive, the highest level for the past five years.

- Some 25 per cent of all substantive asylum decisions taken on appeal during 2006 resulted in the granting of refugee (20%) or humanitarian status (5%).

- The number of undecided asylum cases at the first instance and on appeal in industrialized countries decreased by 11 per cent during 2006. By the end of 2006, 279,000 asylum-seekers were awaiting a decision at the first instance, while another 133,300 asylum claims were pending at the appeal level.

⁵ For the classification of industrialized countries used in the Yearbook, see annex table 24.

Non-industrialized countries

- During 2006, non-industrialized countries received 217,000 applications for asylum or refugee status, some 6 per cent less than the year before (230,000), but still 37 per cent more than during 2004 (158,000). South Africa was the largest asylum-seeker receiving country during 2006 (53,400 or 25 per cent of all claims), followed by Kenya (37,500 or 17%), Burundi (11,500 or 5%), Sudan (10,200 or 5%), and Uganda (9,300 or 4%).

- Somalia was the main country of origin of asylum-seekers in non-industrialized countries: 38,100 new claims were lodged by its citizens during 2006, primarily in Kenya. Zimbabwe was the second leading country of origin of asylum-seekers (19,000), followed by Rwanda (18,000), Ethiopia (15,500), Eritrea (13,200), Myanmar (12,900), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (11,600).

- Some 89,000 asylum-seekers in non-industrialized countries were granted refugee or humanitarian status in 2006, most notably in Kenya (22,900), Thailand (16,300), Sudan (9,800), and Malaysia (9,300).

Sex and age

- For the 32.9 million total population of concern to UNHCR, data on sex is available for 13.9 million persons while data on age for 5.8 million.

- Out of the 13.9 million persons of concern where disaggregated information by sex is available, the available data indicates that 49 per cent are female.

- Children and adolescents represent the majority of persons of concern in Africa. In Southern Africa and the Central Africa and the Great Lakes regions they constitute 54 per cent each of UNHCR's persons of concern while in East and Horn of Africa 49 per cent. The lowest proportion is found in the Americas region (26%). The largest proportion of elderly persons of concern (18%) is hosted by countries covered by the Regional Bureau for Europe, constituting at least three times more than the figures found in any other region.

Locations

- Although the precise number of locations is difficult to establish, in 2006, UNHCR offices identified over 1,100 different locations, including some 305 camps/centres and 460 urban locations, hosting an estimated 13.4 million persons of concern or 41 per cent out of the 32.9 million total population under the Office's competency.

- In 2006, UNHCR received detailed data on some 305 individual camps. On average, the population size of one camp was 8,800. About one quarter (25%) of the camps hosted more than 10,000 residents.⁶

- UNHCR had registered or was otherwise involved with refugees in some 460 urban locations in 2006. The average number of refugees at these locations was 4,800. Over three-quarters (78%) of urban locations hosted fewer than 1,000 persons.

⁶ These figures exclude camps in Pakistan.

Host country capacities

- *The United Republic of Tanzania hosted the highest number of refugees in relation to its economic capacity. During 2002-2006, the country hosted on average 740 refugees per 1 USD Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Pakistan was the country with the second highest number of refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP)⁷ per capita (421 refugees), followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (280 refugees), and Kenya (182 refugees).*

- *Despite witnessing a significant decrease in its refugee population during 2006 as a result of a census, Armenia hosted the largest number of refugees in relation to its national population size. During 2002-2006, it hosted on average 71 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants. Djibouti was the second main country affected by refugee displacement in relation to its national population (36 per 1,000 inhabitants), followed by Serbia and Montenegro (21), and the Republic of the Congo (21).*

- *Armenia also hosted the largest number of refugees in relation to the size of its national territory. During 2002-2006, it hosted on average 7,100 refugees per 1,000 square kilometer. Malta was the country with the second highest refugee population in relation to its surface area (4,500), followed by the Netherlands (3,600), and Germany (2,300).*

⁷ This refers to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP per capita.

INTRODUCTION

The Statistical Yearbook is UNHCR's official statistical publication and reflects the Office's compliance with international reporting requirements under its mandate. It provides the Office and its partners, including governments, donor agencies, international organizations and NGOs, with a solid basis for taking informed decisions. The Yearbook also targets a wider audience, from universities, journalists and the public at large - anyone, in fact, with a professional or personal interest in international forced displacement. Each year the Yearbook combines an assessment and analysis of recent levels, composition and trends in persons considered to be of concern with an evaluation of progress made by the Office and its partners towards achieving durable solutions.

The measurement of gaps in protection and living conditions is a rather difficult undertaking because many protection and assistance activities are of a qualitative nature, thus, not always easy to quantify. Over the past years, many initiatives focusing on improving data availability have provided UNHCR with a significant number of indicators allowing the Office to monitor protection and assistance gaps and needs in various settings, including refugee camps and urban locations. This systematic collection of data, which often goes beyond the numbers of and trends in persons of concern only, has improved UNHCR's understanding of refugee's well-being and living conditions as well as enhanced the Office's awareness of the linkages between protection and life-saving activities. Such information allows assessing the impact of assistance activities which concur to accountability and results-based management. Recently, the development of UNHCR's results-based management software FOCUS⁸, the issuing of the document *Measuring Protection by Numbers* and the increasing use of Standards and Indicators (S&I) baseline data to elaborate the annual country operation plans, are just a few examples that confirm the increasing use of protection and well-being statistics.

Since the 2005 Statistical Yearbook, the scope of the Yearbook has expanded. From being a purely descriptive report on the size and trends of UNHCR's persons of concern, it now also provides insights into the well-being and living conditions of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other populations of concern in selected countries and camps, using information generated by various UNHCR data collection and analysis activities. The scope of the 2006 Statistical Yearbook, however, differs from the previous one, primarily because of UNHCR's expanded involvement in the collective response to IDP situations. The IDPs included in the Yearbook are, however, limited to those generated by conflict (and not natural disasters) benefiting directly or indirectly from UNHCR's protection and assistance activities, including IDPs in countries where the Cluster Approach has been activated (see *Box 1 on page 23*). Since this publication is only limited to populations for which UNHCR has a mandate, it therefore does not provide a comprehensive picture of global forced displacement. For example, the 4.4 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are not included in the Yearbook.

In 2006, UNHCR launched the "10-Point Plan of Action", a framework aimed at responding to refugee protection needs in the context of international migration. This plan is based on the recognition that international migration is often mixed in character. States' responses to the challenges of international migration, especially if it is irregular, may intersect with the protection of refugees. However, the lack of

⁸ The software is expected to be rolled out in the course of 2008.

precise and comprehensive statistical data often does not allow an evidence-based analysis of the problem. The 10-Point Plan therefore includes a specific action point on data collection and analysis. It is expected that increased efforts in data collection on mixed migration will assist stakeholders in designing comprehensive migration strategies while duly taking into account protection concerns. It is important to highlight, however, that this Yearbook does not analyse mixed migration flows.

The statistics reflected in this Yearbook have for the most part been reported by UNHCR country offices and were derived either from the Office's own registration programmes or from Government, other United Nations agencies and selected non-governmental organizations sources. The instances where UNHCR has provided estimates have been clearly indicated.

The 2006 Statistical Yearbook consists of four sections. The first section, **Chapter I**, describes data sources and methodological issues. This chapter is essential for understanding and using the data contained in the 2006 Yearbook. The main purpose of this chapter is to present information that will assist in understanding and interpreting UNHCR's published data, with a special focus on the basic concepts, key variables and classifications, the underlying estimation methods and issues pertaining to data quality.

The second section provides a global analysis with regard to population numbers and trends as well as durable solutions. It consists of three chapters. **Chapter II** presents a global overview of the size, main origin and destination of the population of concern to UNHCR in 2006. It is central for understanding changes in comparison to 2005 and previous years. **Chapter III** focuses on the main population movements during 2006, with particular emphasis on durable solutions and new refugee outflows. **Chapter IV** provides a quantitative overview of asylum applications and the various components of the refugee status determination process.

The third section of the 2006 Yearbook analyses the population distribution as well as living conditions and well-being indicators. The need to address the specific situation of displaced women, elderly and children have led UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations to pay increased attention to demographic data over the past years. Sex and age characteristics, key variables in any refugee programme, are discussed in **Chapter V** which also provides information on refugee locations.

As initiated in the 2005 Statistical Yearbook, an attempt to quantify well-being and living conditions of refugees was included with a focus on some key priority areas using case studies. The main objective of **Chapter VI** is to illustrate the potential of available data for evidence-based decision-making in the humanitarian field. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), best interests determination for children, HIV/AIDS and nutrition are among the topics that have been selected to illustrate possible use of Standards and Indicators data as well as other data sources in refugee situations for planning and advocacy purposes. The issue of international responsibility sharing is addressed in **Chapter VII** which quantifies the capacities and contributions of host countries in providing refugee protection based on selected indicators.

The fourth and last section of the Yearbook contains the annex tables. They provide detailed data on 2006. Statistical data on historical trends, allowing for an easy comparison of trends globally, by region as well as by country for all major subject matters can be found at UNHCR's statistical website (www.unhcr.org/statistics) and downloaded at UNHCR's Statistical Online Population Database at www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase.