



REFUGEE CHILDREN IN AFRICA

TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN THE REFUGEE POPULATION
IN AFRICA BELOW THE AGE OF 18 YEARS, 2000

**POPULATION DATA UNIT
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INTRODUCTION

1. The information contained in this note is based on the annual statistical survey on asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern, carried out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the end of 2000. The survey uses both Government and UNHCR sources. In Africa, where UNHCR carries out many of its assistance programmes, the Office is generally closely associated with the refugee data collection process.
2. Refugees are persons who are recognized under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa or in accordance with the UNHCR Statute. It should be stressed, however, that refugee registration and data collection practices vary significantly between and within countries, populations and locations. This note also covers selected groups, which are not refugees, but considered of concern to UNHCR.
3. At the end of 2000, the total refugee population in Africa was estimated at some 3.6 million refugees¹. Statistical information on the demographic composition of the refugee population is available for some 2.5 million refugees or 70 per cent of African refugee population. As this note analyzes the available data on the gender and age of refugees, the total refugee population in asylum countries as reported in this note may not necessarily reflect the official refugee population in these countries.
4. The provision and targeting of protection and (or) assistance activities to refugee individuals and households requires detailed registration, including information on gender and age. Therefore, most of the refugee populations covered in this note are assisted by or through UNHCR on a regular basis.
5. In accordance with the provisions of 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, this note defines children as persons below the age of 18 years.

MAIN OBSERVATIONS

6. Refugee children under the age of 18 constitute 56 per cent of all refugees in Africa (Table 1). The percentage of refugees under the age of 18 varies little between the main geographical regions. In Western Africa, refugees appear to be slightly younger (60%) than in other regions of the continent. Conversely, Southern Africa hosts the smallest proportion of refugee children (37%), mainly as a result of the small proportion of refugee children reported for South Africa (20%).

¹ See: UNHCR, *2000 Global Refugee Trends*, May 2001, page 7. This report is available at <<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>>

7. Countries of asylum where the proportion of refugee children exceeds 60 per cent include Angola (69%), Togo (64%), Guinea (63%), Burundi (62%), Rwanda (61%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (61%) and Sudan (60%).

8. In Benin, Cameroon, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia and South Africa, children constitute less than 30 per cent of the refugee population. In these countries, the refugee population (for which demographic information was available) tends to live in urban areas. As opposed to refugees living in camps (see Table 3), urban asylum-seekers and refugees tend to live in relatively small households with few children.

9. Half (49.6%) of all refugee children in Africa are female. In three out of every four country listed in Table 1, the proportion of female refugees under the age of 18 varies between 45 and 55 per cent. These findings reflect the gender composition of refugee populations of all age groups, which was found to 50.5 per cent in 40 main asylum countries located in all world regions².

10. Refugees originating from Western Africa tend to have the highest proportion of children (60%). The proportion of children is 60 percent or more among refugees from Eritrea (60%), Ghana (64%), Mauritania (66%) and Sierra Leone (61%) (see Table 2).

11. Some 57 per cent of the refugees living in the 30 main camps and centers are aged below 18. There is very little variation in the proportion of refugee children who live in camps. Indeed, the percentage children was more than 50 per cent in all major locations considered here, covering almost 2 million refugees. The proportion of refugee children exceeded 60 per cent in five locations in Guinea, Sudan and Zambia.

12. In 28 of the 30 locations listed in Table 3, female refugee children constituted between 45 to 55 per cent of all refugee children.

² See: UNHCR, *2000 Global Refugee Trends*, page 12.

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN AFRICA
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES , GENEVA , JUNE 2001

Table 1. Refugee population aged under 18 by country of asylum, end-2000

Including selected groups which are not refugees, but considered of concern to UNHCR.

Excluding refugees for which no demographic information is available.

*Demographic breakdown available for less than 10 per cent of the population.

UN region/ country of asylum	Population under the age of 18				Total population	% under 18 in total population
	Female	Male	Total	% female		
Burundi	8,700	8,090	16,790	51.8	27,100	62.0
Djibouti	6,170	5,240	11,410	54.1	21,100	54.1
Eritrea	480	580	1,060	45.3	1,980	53.5
Ethiopia	50,700	52,800	103,500	49.0	191,600	54.0
Kenya	48,600	58,800	107,400	45.3	206,100	52.1
Malawi	860	1,060	1,920	44.8	3,900	49.2
Mozambique	130	120	250	52.0	830	30.1
Rwanda	9,620	8,720	18,340	52.5	30,100	60.9
Somalia	40	60	100	40.0	180	55.6
Uganda	58,700	64,000	122,700	47.8	219,000	56.0
United Rep. of Tanzania	139,700	142,900	282,600	49.4	511,000	55.3
Zambia	35,700	35,500	71,200	50.1	129,400	55.0
Zimbabwe	460	570	1,030	44.7	4,130	24.9
Eastern Africa	359,860	378,440	738,300	48.7	1,346,420	54.8
Angola	4,300	4,080	8,380	51.3	12,100	69.3
Cameroon*	350	380	730	47.9	4,030	18.1
Central African Rep.	14,300	16,100	30,400	47.0	55,700	54.6
Chad	3,290	6,150	9,440	34.9	17,700	53.3
Congo*	850	1,050	1,900	44.7	3,630	52.3
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	20,600	22,100	42,700	48.2	70,600	60.5
Gabon	4,330	4,070	8,400	51.5	21,000	40.0
Middle Africa	48,020	53,930	101,950	47.1	184,760	55.2
Algeria	42,300	44,700	87,000	48.6	155,400	56.0
Egypt	1,100	1,230	2,330	47.2	6,840	34.1
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	450	330	780	57.7	2,020	38.6
Morocco	-	..	60	..
Sudan	47,100	48,400	95,500	49.3	158,700	60.2
Tunisia	20	20	40	50.0	180	22.2
Northern Africa	90,970	94,680	185,650	49.0	323,200	57.4
Botswana	650	700	1,350	48.1	3,540	38.1
Namibia	4,770	5,030	9,800	48.7	17,700	55.4
South Africa	1,760	2,020	3,780	46.6	18,700	20.2
Swaziland	200	200	400	50.0	1,010	39.6
Southern Africa	7,380	7,950	15,330	48.1	40,950	37.4
Benin	230	250	480	47.9	1,890	25.4
Burkina Faso	60	180	240	25.0	700	34.3
Côte d'Ivoire	39,900	31,200	71,100	56.1	122,900	57.9
Gambia	2,510	2,370	4,880	51.4	12,000	40.7
Ghana	2,660	2,630	5,290	50.3	12,700	41.7
Guinea	135,900	131,500	267,400	50.8	426,100	62.8
Guinea-Bissau	1,760	1,870	3,630	48.5	7,590	47.8
Liberia	8,430	8,350	16,780	50.2	33,800	49.6
Mali	620	590	1,210	51.2	3,220	37.6
Mauritania	40	30	70	57.1	350	20.0
Niger	60	60	120	50.0	500	24.0
Nigeria	420	520	940	44.7	4,320	21.8
Senegal	7,990	5,390	13,380	59.7	22,700	58.9
Sierra Leone	-	..	-	..
Togo	4,280	3,320	7,600	56.3	11,900	63.9
Western Africa	204,860	188,260	393,120	52.1	660,670	59.5
Total Africa	711,090	723,260	1,434,350	49.6	2,556,000	56.1

Notes

Data are provisional and subject to change.

Two dots (..) indicate that no data are available.

Source: UNHCR, Population Statistics 2000 (Provisional), Geneva, 11 April 2001 (<http://www.unhcr.org>).

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN AFRICA
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES , GENEVA, JUNE 2001

Table 2. Refugee population aged under 18 by origin, end-2000

Including selected groups which are not refugees, but considered of concern to UNHCR.
 Excluding selected groups of refugees for which no demographic information is available.
 Excluding countries of origin with demographic information on less than 50 refugees.

UN region/ origin	Population under the age of 18				Total population	% under 18 in total population
	Female	Male	Total	% female		
Burundi	100,500	102,100	202,600	49.6	374,700	54.1
Eritrea	44,200	45,300	89,500	49.4	148,400	60.3
Ethiopia	4,190	4,490	8,680	48.3	19,100	45.5
Kenya	20	40	60	33.3	330	18.3
Rwanda	13,400	14,100	27,500	48.7	55,200	49.8
Somalia	85,600	89,100	174,700	49.0	340,500	51.3
Uganda	1,430	1,400	2,830	50.5	6,520	43.4
Eastern Africa	249,340	256,530	505,870	49.3	944,750	53.5
Angola	21,500	21,700	43,200	49.8	74,500	58.0
Cameroon	40	30	70	57.1	410	17.2
Central African Rep.	10	10	20	50.0	60	33.9
Chad	1,320	1,430	2,750	48.0	5,570	49.3
Congo	4,880	4,700	9,580	50.9	23,500	40.8
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	72,600	72,600	145,200	50.0	251,500	57.7
Equatorial Guinea	30	20	50	60.0	160	32.3
Middle Africa	100,380	100,490	200,870	50.0	355,700	56.5
Algeria	20	20	40	50.0	220	17.9
Sudan	99,200	116,300	215,500	46.0	392,100	55.0
Western Sahara	42,300	44,800	87,100	48.6	156,200	55.8
Northern Africa	141,520	161,120	302,640	46.8	548,520	55.2
Namibia	370	400	770	48.1	2,300	33.6
Southern Africa	370	400	770	48.1	2,300	33.6
Ghana	4,100	3,140	7,240	56.6	11,300	64.0
Guinea-Bissau	-	20	20	-	590	3.4
Liberia	77,800	69,200	147,000	52.9	248,500	59.2
Mauritania	7,900	5,260	13,160	60.0	20,000	65.7
Nigeria	50	80	130	38.5	610	21.4
Senegal	2,810	2,610	5,420	51.8	10,800	50.1
Sierra Leone	110,500	106,200	216,700	51.0	358,400	60.5
Togo	200	210	410	48.8	1,400	29.4
Western Africa	203,360	186,720	390,080	52.1	651,600	59.9
Total Africa	694,970	705,260	1,400,230	49.6	2,502,870	55.9

Notes

Data are provisional and subject to change.

Two dots (..) indicate that no data are available.

Source: UNHCR, Population Statistics 2000 (Provisional), Geneva, 11 April 2001 (<http://www.unhcr.org>).

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN AFRICA
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Table 3. Refugee population aged under 18 by main refugee camp/center, end-2000*

Including selected groups which are not refugees, but considered of concern to UNHCR.

Excluding camps/centers for which no demographic information is available.

Name of camp/center*	Country of asylum	Population under the age of 18				Total population	% < 18 in total population
		Female	Male	Total	% female		
Gueckedou	Guinea	115,400	110,800	226,200	51.0	359,100	63.0
Tindouf	Algeria	42,300	44,700	87,000	48.6	155,400	56.0
Jijiga	Ethiopia	32,500	31,700	64,200	50.6	120,900	53.1
Danane/Tabou	Côte d'Ivoire	38,600	30,000	68,600	56.3	117,700	58.3
Lukole-1	United Rep. of Tanzania	28,700	29,300	58,000	49.5	108,100	53.6
Adjumani	Uganda	19,000	20,300	39,300	48.3	73,500	53.5
Kakuma	Kenya	14,600	20,600	35,200	41.5	69,700	50.4
Mtambira	United Rep. of Tanzania	16,500	17,100	33,600	49.1	57,700	58.3
Lugufu	United Rep. of Tanzania	16,300	17,200	33,500	48.7	57,400	58.2
Nyarugusu	United Rep. of Tanzania	15,500	15,900	31,400	49.4	53,000	59.3
Gambela	Ethiopia	13,100	15,600	28,700	45.6	51,800	55.4
Nzerekore	Guinea	15,200	15,800	31,000	49.0	50,000	62.0
Meheba	Zambia	13,200	13,300	26,500	49.8	49,800	53.2
Karago	United Rep. of Tanzania	12,900	13,000	25,900	49.8	49,500	52.4
Nduta	United Rep. of Tanzania	13,600	13,200	26,800	50.7	49,000	54.6
Ifo (Dadaab)	Kenya	11,400	13,200	24,600	46.3	47,100	52.3
Hagadera (Dadaab)	Kenya	12,000	13,000	25,000	48.0	46,300	54.1
Mtendeli	United Rep. of Tanzania	11,100	11,200	22,300	49.8	42,200	52.9
Wad Sherife	Sudan	12,900	11,800	24,700	52.2	40,300	61.2
Muyovosi	United Rep. of Tanzania	9,790	9,760	19,550	50.1	35,800	54.7
Mboki	Central African Rep.	8,460	10,300	18,760	45.1	35,500	53.0
Dagahaley (Dadaab)	Kenya	9,020	10,200	19,220	46.9	34,600	55.5
Shagrab	Sudan	10,200	10,600	20,800	49.0	34,200	60.8
Rhino camp	Uganda	9,130	10,300	19,430	47.0	33,100	58.5
Moyo	Uganda	8,310	8,890	17,200	48.3	31,200	55.2
Kitgum	Uganda	7,540	8,670	16,210	46.5	25,700	63.1
Lukole-2	United Rep. of Tanzania	6,200	6,520	12,720	48.7	24,400	52.2
Mwange	Zambia	6,730	6,780	13,510	49.8	22,000	61.5
Montserrado	Liberia	5,060	4,810	9,870	51.3	18,500	53.5
Kane Mbwa	United Rep. of Tanzania	5,110	5,130	10,240	49.9	18,300	56.0
Total		540,350	549,660	1,090,010	49.6	1,911,800	57.0

Notes

All data are provisional and subject to change.

* As provided by UNHCR field offices.

Source: UNHCR, Population Statistics 2000 (Provisional), Geneva, 11 April 2001 (<http://www.unhcr.org>).

Chart 1. Distribution of the refugee population in Africa under the age of 18 by country of asylum, end-2000
(Total = 1,4 mln.)

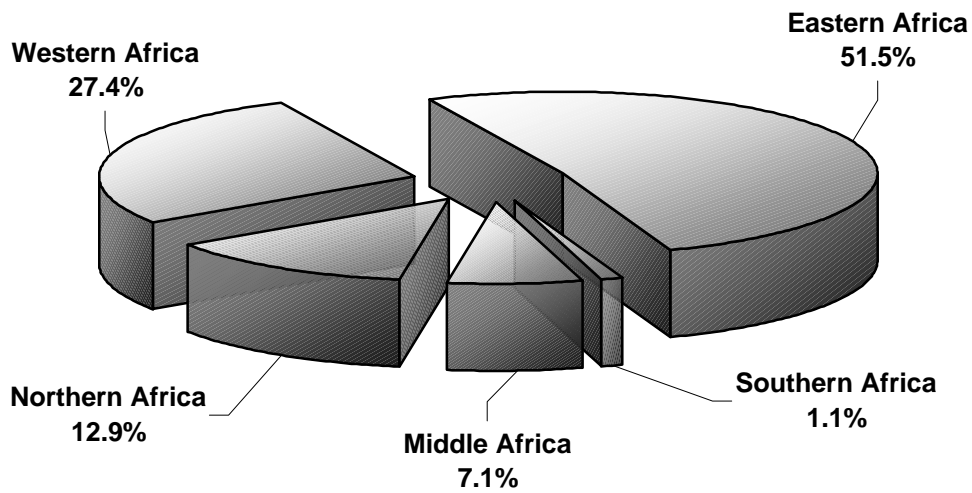


Chart 2. Percentage of the refugee population in Africa under the age of 18 by country of asylum, end-2000

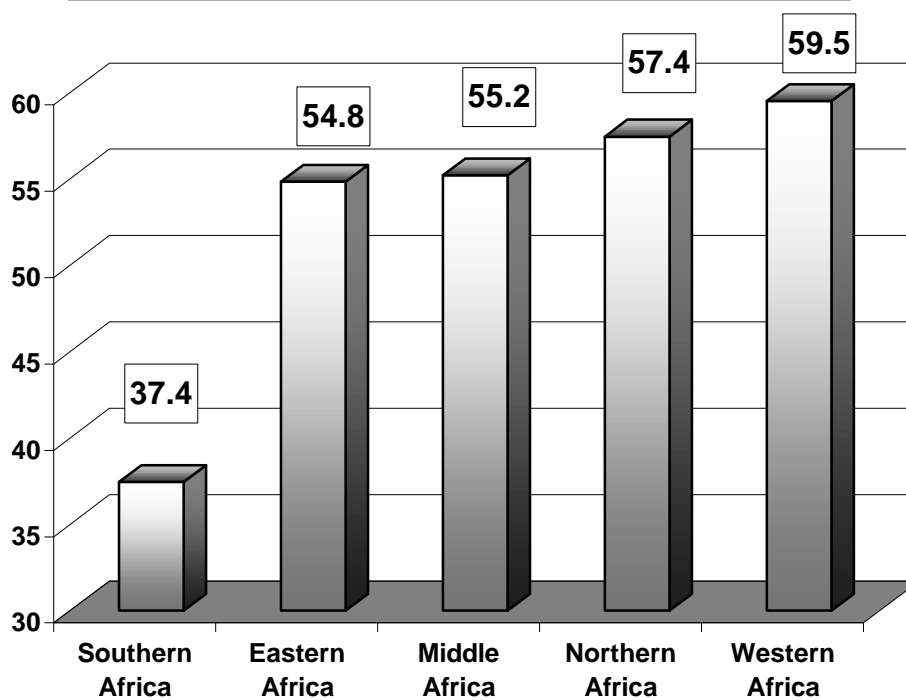


Chart 3. Distribution of the refugee population in Africa under the age of 18 by origin, end-2000
(Total = 1,4 mln.)

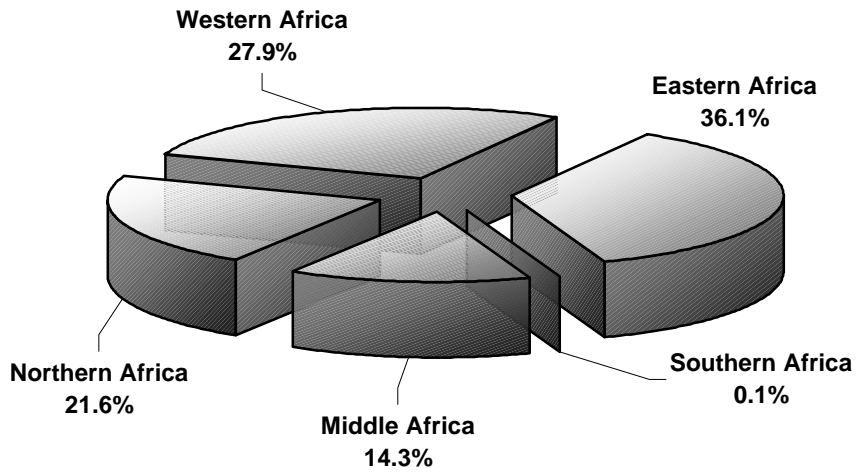
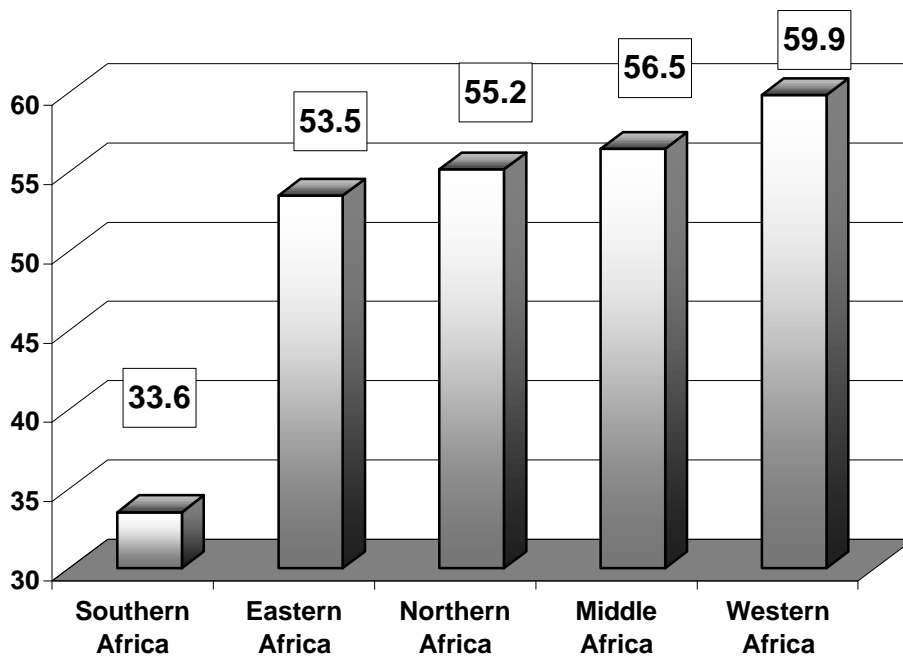


Chart 4. Percentage of the refugee population in Africa under the age of 18 by origin, end-2000



by country of asylum

