

## **CHAPTER V**

# **CAPACITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOST COUNTRIES**

### INTRODUCTION

An important aspect of international refugee protection is the sharing of responsibilities among countries. The contribution to international refugee protection is expressed by providing asylum and durable solutions as well as by assisting poorer countries in hosting refugees.

For developing countries which, due to their proximity to conflict zones, host large groups of refugees, caring for refugees implies a significant additional burden to an already fragile economy. To alleviate these pressures, high-income countries provide assistance through UNHCR, other international agencies or bilaterally. They also admit refugees, either through planned resettlement programmes or by accepting asylum-seekers.

Refugees do not only present a burden to host countries. When allowed to integrate locally, refugees contribute actively to the host economy and society as workers and as consumers.

This chapter quantifies the capacities and contributions of host countries in providing refugee protection. On the basis of selected indicators, a measure is provided to compare and rank countries according to their respective "refugee burden".

Ideally, the impact of refugees should be quantified both in terms of the national and international assistance they receive as well as the contributions they make to the host country society and economy. However, comprehensive and comparable data on these issues are not available. Therefore, this report uses both the volume and the duration of stay of refugees in asylum countries as a proxy for the refugee burden on host countries.

Resource-rich countries are more able to host refugees than those which have fewer resources. To determine the ability or capacity to host refugees, this report applies three parameters: the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, the size of the national population and total land area.

The GDP per capita is the most widely used measure of a country's wealth. By comparing the refugee population with the GDP per capita of a country, a measure is obtained of the relative burden of providing protection. If the number of refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita is high, the burden can be considered high. However, if there are few refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita, the burden is small. Similarly, it may be argued that the capacity to absorb refugees is higher for larger countries, both in terms of national population size and surface area, than for smaller ones.

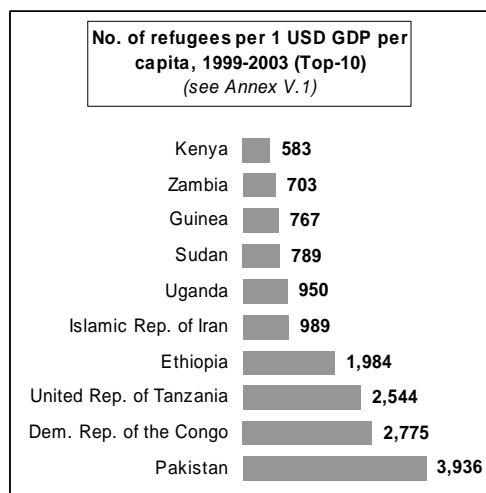
While widely available, these parameters have considerable limitations. In most countries, refugees are not evenly distributed over the national territory, but are often concentrated in border areas or cities. Applying nation-wide indicators provide therefore a very simplified picture. Similarly, the national surface area does not take into account that large areas of a country may not be available for productive use. The GDP,

although the most widely available and used indicator for development, may not adequately take into account the informal economy, which tends to be sizeable in developing countries.

#### GDP PER CAPITA

In relation to its GDP per capita, Pakistan shouldered the largest refugee burden in 2003. During the five-year period 1999-2003, the country provided, on average, asylum to some 3,900 refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was the country with the second highest refugee burden compared to its economic resources (2,800 refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita), whereas the United Republic of Tanzania ranked third (2,500 refugees per 1 USD GDP per capita).

Seven of the 10 countries with the highest refugee burden measured in relation to their GDP per capita are Least Developed Countries (LDCs), mostly located in sub-Saharan Africa (see Map 3).

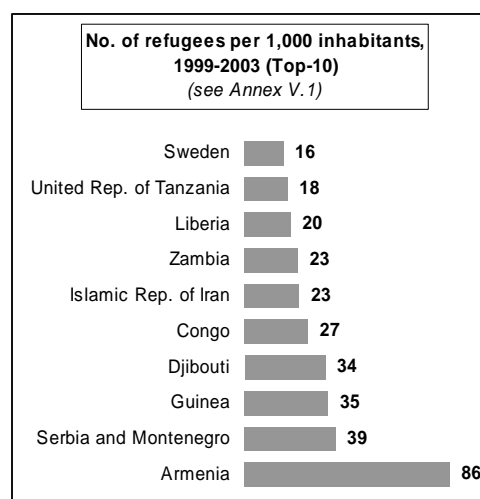


Between the 10 major recipient countries, the burden differs significantly. In Pakistan, the highest ranking country, the burden is seven times higher than in Kenya, which ranked 10th.

As can be expected, the refugee burden in industrialized countries in relation to their GDP per capita is relatively small. The highest ranking industrialized country is Germany occupying the 38th position, followed by the United States (51st) and the United Kingdom (61st) (see Table V.1).

#### POPULATION SIZE

Although less important than GDP per capita, the size of the national population nevertheless provides a useful indication of the capacity of countries to host refugees. Countries with larger populations can be assumed to absorb refugees more easily than countries with smaller populations.



When the capacity of host countries is expressed in relation to the size of their national population, the country with the highest refugee burden is Armenia. On average, Armenia hosted 86 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants during the period 1999-2003. Serbia and Montenegro ranked second, hosting 39 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by Guinea (35).

As noted earlier, Palestinian refugees falling under the mandate of UNRWA are not included in the 2003 Yearbook. However, in relation to their population size, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied

Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Arab Republic all rank among the top refugee-hosting countries or territories.

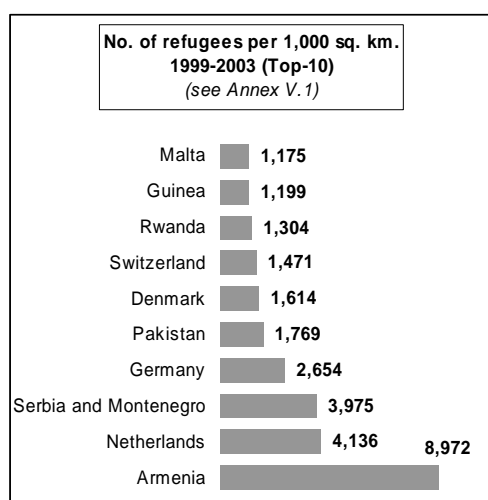
#### LAND AREA

As noted above, measuring the capacity to host refugees in relation to the size of the national territory is a very crude indicator. First, this measure does not take into account tracks of land which cannot be used for productive purposes. Second, access to land is essential in developing economies where most refugees have a farming background. In more developed countries, however, asylum-seekers and refugees often come from urban areas. Due to the economic structure, industrialized economies can sustain much denser populations than agricultural societies.

Based on a comparison of the average annual refugee population during 1999-2003 and the size of the country, Armenia carried the largest refugee burden. On average, the country hosted almost 9,000 refugees per 1,000 square kilometres. The Netherlands ranked second (4,100 refugees per 1,000 square km.), followed by Serbia and Montenegro (4,000) (see Table V.1).

Saharan Africa as well as in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The demographic impact of refugees is relatively important in some African countries, but also in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in a few countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Finally, in relation to the size of the national territory, it was found that seven out of 10 countries with the lowest capacity to host refugees were located in Europe. However, it was also noted that access to land is of limited relevance in determining the capacity of industrialized countries to host refugees.



The above analysis has indicated that the economic effects of hosting refugees are particularly felt in sub-

<b>V.1 Indicators of host country capacity and contributions, 1999-2003</b>						
A zero indicates that the value is zero or rounded to zero. Two dots (..) indicate that the value is not available.						
Country or territory of asylum (residence)	Ratio			Rank		
	Refugees '99-'03 to GDP per capita	Refugees '99-'03 to 1,000 inhabitants	Refugees '99-'03 to 1,000 km2	Refugees '99-'03 to GDP per capita	Refugees '99-'03 to 1,000 inhabitants	Refugees '99-'03 to 1,000 km2
Afghanistan	..	0	0	..	154	154
Albania	1	0	33	94	89	75
Algeria	94	5	73	27	31	58
Angola	15	1	10	49	71	95
Argentina	1	0	1	89	114	131
Armenia	345	86	8,972	14	1	1
Australia	3	3	8	73	46	101
Austria	1	4	340	84	42	27
Azerbaijan	61	5	518	31	32	22
Bahamas*	0	0	3	143	106	121
Bahrain	0	0	1	150	152	130
Bangladesh	65	0	158	30	103	43
Belarus	0	0	2	105	119	123
Belgium	1	1	478	95	61	23
Belize	0	6	64	100	29	59
Benin	11	1	39	56	78	69
Bolivia	0	0	0	101	120	138
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28	9	731	43	19	18
Botswana	1	2	5	88	60	109
Brazil	1	0	0	86	134	140
Bulgaria	1	0	23	80	88	82
Burkina Faso	2	0	2	75	121	126
Burundi	291	5	1,172	16	36	11
Cambodia	0	0	0	111	141	137
Cameroon	87	3	107	28	44	51
Canada	6	4	13	62	37	91
Cape Verde	-	0	0	151	156	155
Central African Rep.	182	13	80	19	12	55
Chad	195	6	37	18	30	74
Chile	0	0	1	122	130	134
China	303	0	32	15	92	76
Colombia	0	0	0	118	142	145
Comoros	0	0	4	136	138	116
Congo	116	27	281	24	5	35
Costa Rica	3	3	243	72	47	36
Côte d'Ivoire	142	6	313	22	27	30
Croatia	3	4	303	69	39	31
Cuba	..	0	9	..	108	98
Cyprus	0	0	17	139	96	87
Czech Rep.	0	0	16	114	107	88
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	2,775	6	132	2	28	46
Denmark	2	13	1,614	76	11	6
Djibouti	27	34	1,088	44	4	12
Dominican Rep.	0	0	5	123	126	111
Ecuador	1	0	10	79	95	94
Egypt	30	1	39	41	82	70
El Salvador	0	0	5	127	135	114
Equatorial Guinea	-	0	0	151	156	155
Eritrea	18	1	24	48	76	81
Estonia	0	0	0	146	140	147
Ethiopia	1,984	3	154	4	50	44
Finland	0	2	37	97	51	73
France	5	2	240	64	53	37
FYR Macedonia	4	4	297	66	41	32
Gabon	4	12	57	67	13	63
Gambia	44	8	1,051	34	23	13
Georgia	9	1	82	59	68	54
Germany	39	11	2,654	38	14	4
Ghana	77	1	96	29	67	53
Greece	0	0	38	102	85	72
Guatemala	0	0	7	104	117	106
Guinea	767	35	1,199	8	3	9
Guinea-Bissau	53	5	218	33	35	38

**V.1 Indicators of host country capacity and contributions, 1999-2003 (cont.)**

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Haiti	-	0	0	151	156	155
Honduras	0	0	0	137	147	146
Hong Kong SAR, China	0	0	..	125	98	..
Hungary	1	1	60	91	81	60
Iceland	0	1	2	140	75	124
India	351	0	54	13	99	64
Indonesia	97	0	41	26	87	68
Iraq	..	5	295	..	33	33
Ireland	0	1	58	117	70	62
Islamic Rep. of Iran	989	23	969	5	6	14
Israel	0	1	161	113	83	41
Italy	0	0	29	99	101	78
Jamaica	0	0	1	141	139	129
Japan	0	0	9	120	129	97
Jordan	1	0	12	92	93	93
Kazakhstan	11	1	7	54	66	105
Kenya	583	7	390	10	24	25
Kuwait	0	1	132	115	73	47
Kyrgyzstan	28	2	44	42	58	67
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	-	0	0	151	156	155
Latvia	0	0	0	144	145	148
Lebanon	1	1	290	93	74	34
Lesotho	0	0	0	135	143	143
Liberia	368	20	663	12	8	20
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	3	2	7	71	55	103
Liechtenstein	..	3	646	..	48	21
Lithuania	0	0	4	126	111	118
Luxembourg	0	2	388	134	52	26
Madagascar	0	0	0	124	149	153
Malawi	21	0	29	45	90	79
Malaysia	11	2	127	57	57	49
Mali	33	1	7	40	77	104
Malta	0	1	1,175	128	72	10
Mauritania	1	0	0	87	105	139
Mauritius	0	0	6	142	137	107
Mexico	2	0	8	74	102	100
Morocco	2	0	5	78	116	113
Mozambique	1	0	0	81	136	142
Myanmar	..	0	0	..	156	155
Namibia	14	11	26	50	15	80
Nepal	571	5	875	11	34	17
Netherlands	6	9	4,136	63	20	2
New Zealand	0	1	20	107	62	84
Nicaragua	0	0	3	98	112	122
Niger	1	0	0	82	133	144
Nigeria	21	0	8	46	115	99
Norway	1	11	149	85	16	45
Occupied Palestinian Territory	-	0	..	151	156	..
Oman	-	0	0	151	156	155
Pakistan	3,936	10	1,769	1	17	5
Panama	0	0	19	106	84	86
Papua New Guinea	12	1	13	53	69	92
Paraguay	0	0	0	133	146	151
Peru	0	0	1	108	128	133
Philippines	0	0	0	116	148	136
Poland	0	0	4	109	125	115
Portugal	0	0	5	129	123	112
Qatar	0	0	3	147	113	119
Rep. of Korea	0	0	0	148	155	149
Rep. of Moldova	0	0	3	110	132	120
Romania	1	0	7	90	110	102
Russian Federation	12	0	2	52	94	127
Rwanda	158	4	1,304	21	38	8

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Sao Tome and Principe	-	0	0	151	156	155
Saudi Arabia	19	6	76	47	25	57
Senegal	41	2	106	37	54	52
Serbia and Montenegro	273	39	3,975	17	2	3
Sierra Leone	181	6	408	20	26	24
Singapore	0	0	2	149	153	125
Slovakia	0	0	9	121	109	96
Slovenia	0	1	119	112	65	50
Somalia	..	0	1	..	124	132
South Africa	8	0	16	60	86	89
Spain	0	0	13	103	100	90
Sri Lanka	0	0	0	131	150	141
Sudan	789	10	129	7	18	48
Suriname	-	0	0	151	156	155
Swaziland	1	1	39	96	79	71
Sweden	5	16	321	65	10	29
Switzerland	2	8	1,471	77	22	7
Syrian Arab Rep.	3	0	21	70	91	83
Tajikistan	43	1	59	35	63	61
Thailand	54	2	212	32	56	40
Timor-Leste	0	0	0	145	151	152
Togo	43	3	214	36	49	39
Tunisia	0	0	2	119	131	128
Turkey	1	0	4	83	122	117
Turkmenistan	9	3	30	58	45	77
Uganda	950	9	910	6	21	15
Ukraine	3	0	5	68	118	110
United Arab Emirates	0	0	5	138	104	108
United Kingdom	8	4	907	61	40	16
United Rep. of Tanzania	2,544	18	696	3	9	19
United States	14	2	53	51	59	65
Uruguay	0	0	1	132	127	135
Uzbekistan	109	1	79	25	64	56
Venezuela	0	0	0	130	144	150
Viet Nam	36	0	48	39	97	66
Yemen	130	3	159	23	43	42
Zambia	703	23	322	9	7	28
Zimbabwe	11	1	19	55	80	85

**Notes and sources**Source for GDP per capita: Worldbank, "World Development Indicators Database", accessed at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) on 3 September 2004.

Source for national population: United Nations, Population Division, "World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision", New York, 2003.

\* GDP figure for Bahamas refers to 2000.