



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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MEDIA RELEASE

42 million *Real People* in latest UNHCR figures

A new UNHCR report released overnight has highlighted the real need for the international protection of refugees and other uprooted people around the world.

UNHCR's *2008 Global Trends Report* found that at the end of last year there were 42 million people forcibly uprooted by conflict and persecution worldwide, including 16 million refugees (10.5 million in the care of UNHCR and 4.7 million under UNWRA's care in Palestine) and asylum-seekers and 26 million internally displaced people.

The number of new asylum-seekers making individual claims worldwide rose for the second year in a row - by 28 per cent to 839,000.

"These figures reflect a growing instability in a number of parts of the world, from which our region is not immune," Regional Representative Richard Towle said today.

"This year we have also seen instability in Pakistan and Sri Lanka that has led to a significant displacement of people that is not yet reflected in the 2008 figures."

"The 4,500 asylum claims received by Australia and the 250 received by New Zealand in 2008 are relatively small compared to the 207,000 in South Africa, 49,600 in the United States, 35,400 in France, 34,800 in Canada, 30,500 in the United Kingdom, and 30,300 in Italy."

"Meanwhile, 80 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries - often those that can least afford to carry the burden." These include Pakistan (1.8 million), Syria (1.1 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (980,000) and Jordan (500,400)."

"The millions of displaced people being hosted in developing countries, as well as the relatively small number of asylum-seekers arriving in Australia and New Zealand, deserve equal respect, dignity and a fair assessment of their international protection needs."

"On 20 June - World Refugee Day - UNHCR is encouraging people to look at the stories behind the figures and to see the real people with real needs, aspirations and contributions to make."

"UNHCR urges people all around Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific to join in events being held in the region to mark this special day for refugees in our communities and to express support and solidarity for those millions of refugees living in difficult circumstances in other parts of the world."

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The *2008 Global Trends Report* is available at www.unhcr.org

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