



ORR Director Eskinder Negash visits ECDC's World Refugee Day photo exhibit at the Ethiopic Restaurant in Washington D.C. on June 18. For a report on other worldwide observances, see page 4.

UNHCR's Global Trends Report Cites 2011 As Record Year for Displacements

Fueled by an eruption of major humanitarian crises in the Ivory Coast, Somalia, Sudan, Libya and elsewhere, more than 800,000 new refugees fled their homelands in 2011. It was the greatest flow of displaced persons since 2000, according to UNHCR's annual Global Trends report released in mid-June.

Worldwide, 42.5 million people ended 2011 either as refugees (15.2 million), internally displaced (26.4 million) or in the process of seeking asylum (895,000).

Despite the high number of new refugees, the overall figure was lower than the 2010 total of 43.7 million people, due mainly to the offsetting effect of 3.2 million IDPs returning home, the highest rate of returns in more than a decade.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of refugees had declined for nine consecutive years from 2001 to 2009. In 2010, the trend reversed as the number of refugees rose, and has continued into 2011. By the end of 2011, there were close to 2.7 million refugees in sub-Saharan Af-

rica, roughly half a million more than at the beginning of the year. However, the numbers remained below those of 2000 when more than 3.4 million people were refugees in sub-Saharan Africa.

Among refugees, and notwithstanding an increase in voluntary repatriation over 2010 levels, 2011 was the third lowest year for returns (532,000) in a decade.

"For so many lives to have been thrown into turmoil over so short a space of time means enormous personal cost for all who were affected," said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres. "We can be grateful only that the international system for protecting such people held firm for the most part and that borders stayed open. These are testing times."

Citing what it described as several "worrying trends" over the past decade, the report notes that forced displacement is affecting larger numbers of people globally, with the annual level exceeding

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African Refugee Conference Examines Conflict Causes, Impacts

Drawing on his extensive involvement in several African countries over the past two decades, United Nations Diplomat David Bassiouni used his keynote address at ECDC's 18th national conference in early May to urge that UNHCR and other international agencies strengthen post-conflict cooperation as an essential element in economic development.



David Bassiouni

The former agricultural minister of Sudan and UNICEF official reprised a theme that dominated his illustrious career, stressing that all redevelopment efforts give priority focus to vulnerable

women and children. The conference, which this year was conducted along with the national affiliate training, was titled *African Refugee and Immigrant Lives: Conflict, Consequences and Contributions*.

A pre-conference panel explored the possibility of strengthening links and creating networks between ethnic community-based organizations and federal partners. A broad range of participants, including officials from the White House, ORR, PRM, HHS and DOE, provided informational presentations on the types of resources available for leaders and members of community-based organizations.

Eskinder Negash, director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, joined ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra in welcoming participants to the conference.

Unable to attend the event because of international travel, Assistant Secretary of State for PRM Anne C. Richard delivered a taped message of welcome, commending ECDC and its resettlement network for resettling more than 28,000 refugees since its founding in 1991, providing them "the tools they need to succeed and to build new lives in America."

Noting that Dr. Teferra was recently honored by the White House as a "Champion of Change" who has made significant contributions to his local community and his home country, she said he was one of the first NGO leaders she asked to meet with after she was confirmed by the Senate for her new position in early April.

"As one of nine national resettlement agencies, ECDC plays a crucial

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*In My Opinion...***“The Right Thing to Do”**

At about the same time UNHCR was releasing its annual Global Trends report describing 2011 as a record year for forced displacement of people fleeing conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations, President Obama announced that the United States would stop forcibly displacing a group of young people who were uprooted for other reasons. They are people under the age of 30 who were brought to America by their parents before the age of 16, have been living here for at least five years and pose no criminal or security threat. As children of illegal immigrants, they had no choice about their displacement. They know little about their native country. Few probably can even speak its language.

As President Obama noted, “they study in our schools, play in our neighborhoods, befriend our kids, pledge allegiance to our flag. It makes no sense to expel talented young people who are, for all intents and purposes, Americans.” (I’m reminded of the Biblical teaching about visiting the sins of fathers on their children.) The new policy is intended, Obama said, to make the nation’s immigration policy more fair, more efficient and more just.

Instead of blindly enforcing deportation decrees without considering individual circumstances in each case, the new policy will allow U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers to apply some discretion while encouraging enforcement “in a strong and sensible manner,” explained Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano in an implementation memorandum. It will also allow ICE to focus its limited resources on higher priority cases, she said.

The policy and moral principles embraced in the new policy are the same as those that have drawn previous generations of refugees, immigrants and forcibly displaced people to this nation, and which are still honored in the refugee resettlement program that admits newcomers each year. They go through an extensive screening and processing system conducted by UNHCR and its resettlement partners.

Anticipating that the new policy would be labeled by some as merely an election year political decision, the President said: “This is not amnesty. This is not immunity. This is not a path to citizenship. It’s not a permanent fix. This is a temporary stopgap measure.” It will defer further deportation action for two years and may be renewed.

The President was right about the anticipated response, of course, acknowledging the reality that partisanship has become so intense that Congress has refused in recent years to consider broad immigration reform proposals from presidents of both major political parties.

The new policy embraces key elements of The DREAM Act, introduced in Congress as a bipartisan measure in August 2001 by Senators Dick Durbin and Orrin Hatch. Amended versions of the Act have been introduced, debated, filibustered and tabled in almost every legislative session since. Many members who once voted for the bills have since voted no. Some decried Obama’s action because it is a “stopgap” measure, arguing that it should await a more thorough reform. (Ignoring, also of course, the apparent inability of Congress to even approach consensus on fixing what is commonly acknowledged as the nation’s “broken immigration system.”)

Granting that political goals surely influenced the timing of President Obama’s action, I accept and admire his insistence that the policy change was “the right thing to do.” Let us hope that test will soon resume its place as the essential criteria for all political and legislative decisions.

Global Trends Report Cites 2011 As Record Year for Displacements

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42 million people for each of the last five years.

Another such trend is the likelihood that a person who becomes a refugee will probably remain as one for many years, often confined in a camp or living precariously in an urban location. Of the 10.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, almost three quarters (7.1 million) have been in exile for at least five years awaiting a solution.

Afghanistan remains the biggest producer of refugees (2.7 million) followed by Iraq (1.4 million), Somalia (1.1 million), Sudan (500,000) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (491,000).

Around four-fifths of the world’s refugees flee to their neighboring countries, reflected in the large refugee populations seen, for example, in Pakistan (1.7 million people), Iran (886,500), Kenya (566,500) and Chad (366,500).

Among industrialized countries, Germany ranks as the largest hosting country with 571,700 refugees. South Africa, meanwhile, was the largest recipient of individual asylum applications (107,000), a status it has held for the past four years.

While UNHCR’s original mandate was to help refugees, over the past six decades since the agency was established in 1950, its work has grown to include helping many of the world’s internally displaced people and those who are stateless.

The Global Trends 2011 report notes that only 64 governments provided data on stateless people, meaning that UNHCR was able to capture numbers for only around a quarter of the estimated 12 million stateless people worldwide.

Not all persons forced into displacement fall under UNHCR’s care, with some 4.8 million refugees, registered with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. Among the 26.4 million internally displaced, 15.5 million receive UNHCR assistance and protection. Overall, UNHCR’s refugee and IDP caseload of 25.9 million people grew by 700,000 people in 2011.

(The report is available at: www.unhcr.org.)



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.
President, ECDC

Annual Conference Examines Causes, Impacts of Conflicts



Richard Roth
Bureau of African Affairs



Elizabeth Ferris
Brookings Institution



Emira Woods
Institute for Policy Studies

Annual Banquet Honors Refugee Leaders

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role in helping resettled refugees move quickly toward becoming independent, productive members of their new communities. Refugees and immigrants themselves go on to serve others, making up much of ECDC's network of community based organizations."

Describing third-country resettlement as a crucial component for meeting refugee needs, she reported that in February, the United States passed a significant milestone by admitting its three millionth refugee since 1975.

"Of importance for your discussions at the conference," she said, "this has included more than 260,000 African refugees. We have resettled over 4,000 African refugees so far this fiscal year and we hope to resettle nearly 9,000 by the end of the fiscal year. We remain committed to the resettlement needs of African refugees and we expect to increase the number of resettled African refugees in the coming years."

Conference plenary sessions addressed both global and local concerns and provided insights on current African refugee issues from humanitarian, policy and resettlement perspectives. Speakers included Elizabeth Ferris, Brookings Institution; Richard A. Roth, Bureau of African Affairs; Thomas Debass, DOS Office of Global Partnership Initiatives; and Alie Kabba, United African Organization. Session moderators included Kathleen Newland, Migration Policy Institute; Mark Hetfield, Hebrew Immigration Aid Society; and Deborah Stein, Episcopal Migration Ministries.

Concurrent workshop sessions addressed such issues as resettlement and protection for unaccompanied minors; refugee youth leadership; appropriate integration of highly-skilled immigrants; the new Affordable Care Act and its impact on refugee community health; the Board of Immigration Appeals recognition; and cultural orientation. Representatives of ECDC's federal partners—ORR, PRM and USCIS—provided updates on refugee identification and processing and the development and provision of services.

Following a screening of the film *Entrepreneurship in the Camp: How We Live*, shot in the Kakuma Refugee Camp by FilmAid International, a conference attendee who was once confined there, expressed surprise at seeing many of his former friends and was moved enough to share reminiscences of his own life in the camp.

Under the theme *Making the Grade: Giving Back*, the annual Conference Banquet featured an address by Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, and special recognition of three leaders and organizations that have shown exemplary commitment to African refugees and immigrant causes. The honorees were Dan Kosten, Senior Vice President of U.S. Programs, World Relief; Jennifer Gueddiche, Director, ECDC's African Community Center in Denver; and Kassahun Bisrat, former Executive Director, Alliance for Multicultural Community Services, Houston.



Joined by friends and supporters, Kassahun Bisrat, former Executive Director of the Alliance for Multicultural Community Service in Houston, accepts award from ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra.



Receiving award from Sara Tompkins is Jennifer Gueddiche, Director of ECDC's African Community Center in Denver.



World Relief Vice President Dan Kosten receives award from Tsehaye Teferra.

World Refugee Day Observances Celebrate Courage, Contributions

Joining UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations around the world, ECDC observed World Refugee on June 20 with a series of events honoring those forced from their homelands by war, persecution and other causes. Observances began the week of June 11 when ECDC staff members visited the offices of nearly 20 members of Congress to discuss the needs and concerns of vulnerable African refugee populations and to celebrate the contributions resettled refugees make to host countries.

On June 18, ECDC designed and sponsored a photographic exhibition titled “African Journeys” at the Ethiopic Restaurant in Washington, D.C. The restaurant is a beneficiary of ECDC’s Enterprise Development Group business loan program and provided refreshments for the event. Among those attending were



The Coliseum in Rome was one of many worldwide landmarks bearing a “UN blue” illumination on World Refugee Day.

ORR Director Eskinder Negash; Buti Kale, UNHCR’s Deputy Regional Representative; and Erin Jeffery, legislative assistant to Senator Mike Johanns of Nebraska.

On June 21, PRM’s Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard joined with leaders of USCIS, DHS and UNHCR to host a naturalization ceremony for 19 people who came to the United States as refugees.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set the tone for the day in a special message, noting that the annual observance “is an appropriate time to remember all those affected, and a time to intensify our support.”

“Despite budget constraints everywhere, we must not turn away from those in need,” he said. “Refugees leave because they have no choice. We must choose to help.”

UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie marked the observance with a special message and a donation of \$100,000 for UNHCR’s work helping Syrian refugees.

This year, UNHCR and its partners, including governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, goodwill ambassadors and refugees themselves, took part in awareness-raising, cultural, educational, environmental and sport activities.

At the heart of many UNHCR activities, events and messages from celebrity supporters and goodwill ambassadors, is



Also participating in the “landmark lighting” observance was the Empire State Building in New York City.

the refugee agency’s “Dilemmas” campaign, according to a report from UNHCR’s Leo Dobbs in London. It builds on last year’s “1” campaign and depicts some of the tough choices facing refugees, helping the public to understand their dilemma.

As in past years, landmarks around the world were illuminated in UN blue, including the Coliseum in Rome, the Empire State Building in New York and the CN Tower in Toronto.

The day’s commemorations started in the east, after the first rays of the June 20 sun woke the people of the Asia-Pacific region. As the day lengthened in Asia, Africa and Europe, countries in the Americas began stirring for their own celebrations.

A special event at the Kennedy Center in Washington was the staging of “No Place Called Home,” a play written and performed by Kim Schultz. Based on an artistic exchange visit to Iraq, the play illuminated socio-cultural challenges and human triumphs amid despair.

FY 2011 African Refugee Admissions

As of May 31, 2012 • Ceiling for FY 2012 is 12,000

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	126	Nigeria	2
Cameroon	1	Rwanda	132
Central African Republic	135	Senegal	2
Chad	12	Sierra Leone	1
Congo	93	Somalia	3,002
Dem. Rep. Congo	1,310	South Africa	1
Eritrea	766	Sudan	575
Ethiopia	379	Tanzania	2
Gabon	1	Togo	22
Gambia	2	Uganda	14
Ivory Coast	28	Zimbabwe	1
Kenya	13	TOTAL	6,672
Liberia	52		

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

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African Refugee NETWORK

901 S. Highland St • Arlington, VA 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 Fax: (703) 685-0529

Email: info@ecdc-cari.org

Website: www.ecdc-cari.org