

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT REFUGEES

1. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE REFUGEES?

There are 14 million refugees worldwide, according to the World Refugee Survey 2000, published by the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR).

2. IS THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES DECLINING?

No. The number of refugees increased by 600,000 during 1999. This is the first significant increase in seven years.

3. FROM WHAT COUNTRIES HAVE REFUGEES FLED?

Violence and persecution that cause refugees to flee are widespread. Forty-six countries and territories have produced significant numbers of refugees (10,000 or more refugees each).

Nearly two-thirds of the world's refugees are in the Middle East and Africa. Although refugee flows are widespread, a handful of countries are the primary source.

4. WHAT COUNTRIES HAVE PRODUCED THE MOST REFUGEES?

Seventy percent of all refugees come from 10 countries/territories. More than one-fourth of the world's refugees are Palestinians.

Half of all refugees come from three sources: Palestinians, as well as from Afghanistan and Iraq. Completing the list of the ten leading sources of refugees are Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Yugoslavia, Angola, Croatia, and Eritrea.

Five of the ten leading refugee-producing countries are in Africa.

5. TO WHERE ARE REFUGEES FLEEING?

Thirty countries currently are hosting at least 100,000 refugees collectively. Sixteen countries are each hosting a quarter-million or more refugees. Nearly half of all refugees worldwide have fled to five countries/territories: Iran, Jordan, Gaza/West Bank, Pakistan, and the United States.

6. DO REFUGEES EVER RETURN HOME?

Yes, in large numbers. Some 1.1 million refugees voluntarily repatriated during 1999.

More than 4 million refugees have voluntarily returned home in the past five years; more than 13 million refugees repatriated during the decade of the 1990s.

Last year alone, more than 650,000 repatriated to Kosovo. More than 150,000 returned voluntarily to Afghanistan (another 100,000 were forcibly returned from Iran). An estimated 80,000 went back home to Liberia.

Ten thousand or more refugees repatriated to each other 13 countries last year.