

**PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2013**

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
COMMITTEES ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
AND
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
SECTIONS 207(d)(1) and (e)
OF THE
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



INTRODUCTION

This *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2013: Report to the Congress* is submitted in compliance with Sections 207(d)(1) and (e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The INA requires that before the start of the fiscal year and, to the extent possible, at least two weeks prior to consultations on refugee admissions, members of the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives be provided with the following information:

- (1) A description of the nature of the refugee situation;
- (2) A description of the number and allocation of the refugees to be admitted and an analysis of conditions within the countries from which they came;
- (3) A description of the plans for their movement and resettlement and the estimated cost of their movement and resettlement;
- (4) An analysis of the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of their admission to the United States;¹
- (5) A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees;
- (6) An analysis of the impact of the participation of the United States in the resettlement of such refugees on the foreign policy interests of the United States; and
- (7) Such additional information as may be appropriate or requested by such members.

In addition, this report contains information as required by Section 602(d) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292, October 27, 1998, 112 Stat. 2787) (IRFA) about religious persecution of refugee populations eligible for consideration for admission to the United States. This report meets the reporting requirements of Section 305(b) of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-333, October 18, 2004, 118 Stat. 1287) by providing information about specific measures taken to facilitate access to the United States refugee program for individuals who have fled “countries of particular concern” for violations of religious freedoms, identified pursuant to Section 402(b) of the IRFA.

ⁱ Detailed discussion of the anticipated social and economic impact, including secondary migration, of the admission of refugees to the United States is being provided in the *Report to the Congress* of the Refugee Resettlement Program, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services.

FOREWORD

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is a critical component of the United States' overall protection efforts around the globe. On the occasion of World Refugee Day on June 20, both President Obama and Secretary Clinton re-affirmed the U.S. commitment to helping refugees and the importance of providing safe haven in America. While starting life anew in the United States presents considerable challenges, it also creates hope and provides opportunity for tens of thousands of persons each year. The support and assistance that average American citizens provide to these newcomers greatly helps with their integration into our country. Refugees add to America's vitality and diversity by making substantial contributions to our economic and cultural life.

Resettlement in a third country is a lasting durable solution for refugees who are among the most vulnerable in the world and for whom the other two durable solutions (repatriation or local integration in the country of refuge) are not viable options. Traditionally, the USRAP offers resettlement to refugees regardless of their location, national origin, health status, occupational skills, or level of educational attainment.

Increased Diversity

In the early years, the program was characterized by large numbers of refugees from a limited number of countries. Many of the resettled refugees had family members already in the United States. Over the past decade, however, the nature of the program has changed. The United States has worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to make third country resettlement viable for increasing numbers from a broader representation of the world's 15.4 million refugees. The USRAP is more diverse than ever, admitting refugees of over 69 nationalities who began their journeys in some 92 countries. In FY 2012, the top three countries of origin are Bhutan, Burma and Iraq, and these are expected to be the top three in FY 2013.

Helping the Hard-to-Reach and the Especially Vulnerable

The Administration has worked closely with the Congress to invest the resources necessary to reach the most desperate populations who may be small in number yet are located in less accessible places. This year, for example, staff representing the Departments of State and Homeland Security began processing refugees who fled Libya during fighting in the 2011 revolution against Qadhafi and sought protection just across the Tunisian and Egyptian borders. Through efforts

such as this, the United States ensures that the USRAP is consistent with humanitarian principles.

During the past year, the USRAP has helped many of the world's most vulnerable refugees, who have lived in protracted situations for years, uncertain about their fate and unable to develop their potential. These include survivors of torture or gender based violence, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals.

Improvements to UNHCR's Global Program

In 2011 the United States, led by the Department of State, served as the chair of the UNHCR-sponsored Working Group on Resettlement and Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement. Under the U.S. chairmanship, we worked to expand the number of resettlement slots worldwide, improve the quality of resettlement throughout the world, and bolster international response to emergency situations.

Efforts to expand the number of nations involved in the resettlement of refugees have been successful. In recent years, countries without a history of resettling refugees have stepped forward and established programs. These countries include Japan, Paraguay, Romania, Uruguay, the Czech Republic, Portugal, and Belgium.

For several years the U.S. government has provided financial support to countries in Latin America to support their efforts to initiate and build sustainable resettlement programs. This effort focuses largely on the resettlement of Colombian refugees in countries that have not traditionally resettled refugees.

"On this World Refugee Day, the United States joins the international community in recognizing the nearly 15 million refugees worldwide, and millions more internally displaced people. We honor the dignity, courage, and determination of these men, women and children who have fled persecution and violence in their homelands and the commitment and generosity of the countries and organizations that provide them protection and assistance during this difficult time.

While we work to promote lasting peace and stability and human rights around the world, so that these refugees may one day return to their countries in safety and dignity, we know that for some voluntary return may not be possible. For these refugees social, economic, and legal integration in their country of asylum not only provides opportunities for them to begin rebuilding their lives, but also for the contribution of their knowledge, talents, and skills to be fully realized. Americans know the benefits of these valuable contributions firsthand. Since 1975, we have welcomed more than 3 million refugees from all over the world and continue to lead the world in refugee resettlement.

Together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the international community, we are committed to protecting the world's refugees, mitigating their suffering, and working to help find ways for them to live in dignity and peace."

President Barack Obama
June 20, 2012
World Refugee Day

UNHCR Emergency Transit Centers

As mentioned above, the U.S. approach to resettlement also includes measures to assist people in urgent need. In support of this objective, the USRAP has made greater use of Emergency Transit Centers (ETCs) established by UNHCR in Romania, Slovakia, and the Philippines to interview and screen applicants for resettlement. In FY 2011, the State Department moved 211 individuals to the United States via these ETCs, which are an important tool for protecting vulnerable refugees in insecure or otherwise challenging circumstances. As is the case for most countries with large-scale refugee programs, U.S. law requires completion of several processing “steps” before an applicant can be admitted as a refugee. This does not exclude the United States from participation in the resettlement of urgent cases. On a case-by-case basis, individual applicants in need of expedited handling are processed on an accelerated schedule. ETCs can be particularly useful for interviewing individuals in a protected environment.

The U.S. government continues to provide policy advice and diplomatic support for these centers. Because the centers are also used by other resettlement countries, they help promote greater responsibility sharing for resettlement among other nations.

Enhancing America’s Security while Welcoming Bona Fide Refugees

In the last several years, the USRAP has incorporated additional security enhancements to safeguard the resettlement program from fraud and national security risks. These changes led to delays in bringing refugees to the United States and the delays, in turn, resulted in a decreased number of refugee arrivals in FY 2011 and 2012. In FY 2010, the United States admitted over 73,000 refugees. That number dipped to just over 56,000 in FY 2011 and this year’s admissions total will be only slightly higher. Strides have been made throughout FY 2012 to improve interagency cooperation and streamline other parts of the process so that bona fide refugees gain entry to the United States. Because improvements to the security checks were not implemented until March 2012, refugee arrivals lagged in the early part of the fiscal year and began to increase in

“The United States joins the international community in commemorating the courage and determination of millions of refugees around the globe. The United States is strongly committed to protecting and assisting refugees and we offer resettlement to more refugees each year than all other countries in the world combined. Since 1975, more than three million refugees have made new homes in the United States, and nearly half of them have become U.S. citizens.

Refugees are contributing in ways large and small to business, academia, the arts, science and technology. Today we celebrate the success of refugees who have built new lives here and in other resettlement countries, but we also recognize the millions of refugees who remain displaced in camps, cities, and rural settlements around the world. We are proud to support the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the many other organizations that work on behalf of refugees worldwide, and recommit ourselves to provide protection and assistance to some of the world’s most vulnerable people.”

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
June 20, 2012
World Refugee Day

May 2012. Since then, arrivals have steadily risen. Increases are expected to continue in August and September and arrival numbers in FY 2013 should be closer to the proposed ceiling.

The Administration continued to work over the past year to address the admission of refugees who are affected by the broad definitions of “terrorist activity” and “terrorist organization” under U.S. immigration law but whose admission to the United States would not compromise our national security and would be consistent with U.S. foreign policy interests. After interagency consultations on the exercise of the statutory exemption authority to allow certain refugees and other categories of immigrants to receive immigration benefits, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano authorized U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to exempt individuals on a case-by-case basis for the provision of medical care under certain circumstances.

In addition, two new group-based exercises of the exemption authority were signed by Secretary Napolitano during the year that authorize USCIS to exempt certain individuals who a) had activities and associations with the Kosovo Liberation Army or b) were involved in the 1991 Iraqi uprisings against the Saddam Hussein regime. Most significantly, Secretary Napolitano also signed an exercise of her exemption authority for applicants with existing immigration benefits, such as asylees and refugees in the United States. (The exemption also applies to beneficiaries of I-730 relative petitions filed at any time.) Although the exemption does not apply to refugee and asylum applicants, and contains important carve outs for problematic groups and activities, it will allow USCIS to release up to an estimated 75 percent of the cases currently on hold and proceed with the adjudications of the underlying benefit applications. The majority of the affected applicants whose cases will be released for adjudication are asylees and refugees with pending applications for legal permanent resident status, or “green cards.” Those who are granted the exemption will be able to continue down the path to full U.S. citizenship.

Ensuring a Suitable Welcome

In FY 2010, the Department of State increased the per capita Reception and Placement grant from \$900 to \$1,800. This grant is intended to help cover the costs of a refugee’s initial arrival in the United States. This step recognized that the grant amount was insufficient and had not kept pace with rising costs. The doubling of this grant was undertaken with the approval of and support from Congress. In FY 2012 the per capita grant increased again to \$1,850 in line with realistic estimates of needs.

In FYs 2011 and 2012, the Department of State implemented a new policy that grants resettlement agencies a guaranteed minimum amount of funding so that they can manage their workforce and provide quality reception and placement services to arriving refugees even if a lower than expected number of refugees are admitted or if there are unavoidable delays in arrivals.

In addition to the Reception and Placement grant provided by the State Department, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funds longer-term programs that provide benefits and services. These programs assist refugees to find employment and thus reach economic self-sufficiency and social integration as soon as possible.

The State Department collaborated with resettlement agencies and state refugee health coordinators to promote partnership among state and local stakeholders regarding the pre- and post-arrival planning for refugees with complex medical conditions requiring immediate care upon arrival in the United States. The Administration will continue to explore ways of ensuring that refugees are able to integrate successfully in the United States after their arrival.

Resettlement as a Key Part of an Overall Approach

Overseas, we continue to use resettlement as one part of an overall approach that aims to demonstrate American commitment and leadership and promote more generous policies among (a) countries of origin, (b) refugee hosting countries and (c) other resettlement countries.

UNHCR has identified six priority situations where it believes third-country resettlement would be the key to unlocking other measures to help refugees stuck in protracted situations. The USRAP has resettled considerable numbers of these refugees, particularly Iraqis living in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon; Iraqis and Iranians in Turkey; Afghans in Iran; and Somalis in Dadaab, Kenya. We expect to play a role in two other priority situations, Colombians in Ecuador and Afghans in Pakistan, as UNHCR builds resettlement capacity. In addition, we continue to build the capacity of new resettlement countries and thus create more resettlement slots for vulnerable refugees.

The State Department reached agreement last year with both Uruguay and Bulgaria to provide needed technical and program support for their new resettlement programs. This support will come from Executive branch agencies as well as American NGOs. Uruguay recently announced a small expansion of its annual quota, a welcome step and a signal to other emerging resettlement countries in the region that even small countries can start and build up resettlement programs.

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I. OVERVIEW OF U.S. REFUGEE POLICY

At the end of 2011, the estimated refugee population worldwide stood at 15.4 million, with 10.4 million receiving protection or assistance from UNHCR. The United States actively supports efforts to provide protection, assistance, and durable solutions to these refugees, as these measures fulfill our humanitarian interests and further our foreign policy and national security interests. Under the authority of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, the United States contributes to the programs of UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and other international and non-governmental organizations that provide protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), victims of conflict, and other vulnerable migrants. These contributions are used to address the legal and physical protection needs of refugees and furnish basic assistance such as water, sanitation, food, health care, shelter, education, and other services. The United States monitors these programs to ensure the most effective use of resources, maximizing humanitarian impact for the beneficiaries.

The United States and UNHCR recognize that most refugees desire safe, voluntary return to their homeland as their preferred solution. During FY 2012, the United States continued to support voluntary repatriation programs around the world. Refugee repatriation operations brought refugees home to Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sri Lanka. These operations were carried out to protect returning refugees as well as to help them contribute to the stabilization, reconstruction, and development of their home countries.

Where opportunities for return remain elusive, the United States and partners pursue self-sufficiency and temporary, indefinite, or permanent local integration in countries of asylum. The Department of State encourages host governments to protect refugees by allowing them to integrate into local communities. The State Department further promotes local integration by funding programs to enhance refugee self-sufficiency and support community-based social services. Afghans in India, Burundians in Tanzania, Eritreans in Sudan, Liberians, and Sierra Leoneans in seven countries across West Africa, and Colombians in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela are all groups that may be able to integrate in the places where they are living now because opportunities for local integration have recently become possible.

UNHCR estimates that there are 12 million people worldwide who are not recognized nationals of any state and are, therefore, legally or de facto stateless. Without recognized citizenship in any country, many stateless persons exist in refugee-like situations, unable to claim rights and denied even the most basic protections of law. The United States has supported UNHCR's efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness, including addressing gaps in citizenship laws and promoting fair application of those laws. U.S. contributions to UNHCR's core budget support efforts to prevent and address statelessness in Burma, Kuwait, Nepal, South Africa, South Sudan, Turkmenistan, and elsewhere, among other programs.

In addition, the Department of State seeks to use the USRAP to demonstrate U.S. leadership while encouraging other countries to do more to help stateless people and refugees stuck in protracted situations. This approach is reflected in the current resettlement of Rohingya refugees from Burma, as well as in past resettlement of Meskhetian Turks. PRM also uses diplomacy to mobilize other governments to prevent and resolve situations of statelessness. For example, over the past year PRM has conducted field missions and monitored the situations confronting stateless people in Burma, Kuwait, and Nepal. Diplomatic efforts include U.S. sponsorship of the June 2012 UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR) resolution on women's and children's rights to nationality, as well as Secretary Clinton's Women's Nationality Initiative.

The United States and UNHCR also recognize resettlement in third countries is a vital tool for providing refugees protection and/or durable solutions in some particularly difficult cases. For some refugees, resettlement is the best, and perhaps only, alternative. For example, the United States encourages UNHCR to refer for resettlement refugees who are also stateless, even if they are located in their country of habitual residence, when other durable solutions are not possible.

The U.S. government has for more than a decade provided financial support to expand and improve UNHCR's resettlement capacity, principally through staffing complements and facility construction. As a result of this initiative, UNHCR has substantially increased referrals to the United States and other resettlement countries. We plan to continue to work with UNHCR and consult with host governments on group referrals. We will continue to assess resettlement needs and allow qualified NGOs to refer refugee applicants to the program.

The United States has also supported UNHCR's efforts to expand the number of countries active in resettlement. In 2011, UNHCR referred refugees to 25 countries for resettlement consideration. Over 90 percent were referred to the

United States, Canada, and Australia. Smaller numbers of referrals were made to Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, and the United Kingdom.

While the overall number of refugees referred by UNHCR and the percentage resettled by various countries fluctuate from year to year, the United States aims to ensure at least 50 percent of all refugees referred by UNHCR worldwide are considered for resettlement in the United States, depending on availability of funds. Some 70 percent of UNHCR-referred refugees who were resettled in 2011 were resettled in the United States. This was a decrease from 74 percent in 2010 (see Table VIII).

The foreign policy and humanitarian interests of the United States are often advanced by addressing refugee issues in first asylum and resettlement countries. In some cases, the United States has been able to use its leadership position in resettlement to promote and secure other durable solutions for refugees or advance other human rights or foreign policy objectives. The United States is by far the largest single donor to UNHCR, providing nearly \$700 million in FY 2011. During the past few years, U.S. resettlement efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia have helped energize efforts by UNHCR and other countries to ensure that first asylum is maintained for larger refugee populations or that local integration or third country resettlement are options offered to those in need. In certain locations, the prompt resettlement of politically sensitive cases has helped defuse regional tensions. In the case of refugees fleeing fighting in Libya, the United States was willing to resettle refugees who had fled to Tunisia and Egypt. This action helped keep borders open for refugees and helped relieve pressure on these two countries during their own periods of political change.

During its history, the USRAP has responded to changing circumstances. Even before the events of September 11, 2001, the end of the Cold War dramatically altered the context in which the USRAP operated. The program shifted its focus away from large groups concentrated in a few locations (primarily refugees from Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia) and began to admit refugees representing over 50 nationalities per year. Interviews of refugees by U.S. officials are often conducted in remote locations and are geared toward populations in greatest need of third country resettlement opportunities.

Refugees resettled in the United States enrich our nation. The USRAP is premised on the idea that refugees should become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible. The Department of State works domestically with agencies participating in the Reception and Placement (R&P) program to ensure that refugees receive services in the first thirty to ninety days after arrival in accordance with established standards. During and after the initial resettlement period, HHS/ORR provides leadership, technical assistance, and funding to states, the District of Columbia, and nonprofit organizations to assist refugees to become self-sufficient and integrated into U.S. society. ORR programs use formula and discretionary grants to provide cash and medical assistance, employment and training programs, and other services to newly arriving and recently arrived refugees.

A number of factors create challenges for resettlement agencies striving to meet the needs of refugees in the program. The refugee population is increasingly diverse linguistically, with wide-ranging educational and employment histories. To better prepare refugees for arrival in the United States, the USRAP continues to improve overseas cultural orientations, including through curricula review and teacher training. In FY 2011 we piloted English as a Second Language classes for some refugees in Kenya, Thailand, and Nepal. By introducing the study of English overseas, these classes are intended to provide basic English competency and promote continued language learning after arrival in the United States. In addition, there is a shortage of affordable housing available in many U.S. cities and towns. High U.S. unemployment rates are a challenge to the successful resettlement of refugees. The Departments of State and Health and Human Services are working closely with states, resettlement agencies, NGOs, and service providers on further adjustments to help refugees in the United States.

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM FOR FY 2013

PROPOSED CEILINGS

TABLE I
REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2011 AND FY 2012,
PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS BY REGION FOR FY 2013²

REGION	FY 2011 ACTUAL ARRIVALS	FY 2012 CEILING	FY 2012 PROJECTED ARRIVALS	PROPOSED FY2013 CEILING
Africa	7,685	12,000	9,500	12,000
East Asia	17,367	18,000	15,000	17,000
Europe and Central Asia	1,228	2,000	1,000	2,000
Latin America/Caribbean	2,976	5,500	2,500	5,000
Near East/South Asia	27,168	35,500	30,000	31,000
Regional Subtotal	56,424	73,000	58,000	67,000
Unallocated Reserve		3,000		3,000
Total	56,424	76,000	58,000	70,000

Some refugees are considered for resettlement through in-country refugee programs. Generally, to be considered a refugee, a person must be outside his or her country of nationality or, if stateless, outside his or her country of last habitual residence. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 101(a)(42)(B), however, the President may specify circumstances under which individuals who are within their countries of nationality or last habitual residence may be considered a refugee for purposes of admission to the United States. The FY 2013 proposal recommends continuing such in-country processing for specified groups in Iraq, Cuba, and Eurasia and the Baltics. Persons for whom resettlement is requested by a U.S. ambassador in any location in the world may also be considered, with the understanding that they will only be referred to the USRAP following Department of State consultation with DHS/USCIS.

² These proposed figures assume enactment by Congress of the President's Budget levels related to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program elements.

Unallocated Reserve

This proposal includes 3,000 unallocated admissions numbers to be used if needed for additional refugee admissions from any region. The unallocated numbers would only be used following notification to Congress.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Eligibility Criteria

PRM is responsible for coordinating and managing the USRAP. A critical part of this responsibility is determining which individuals or groups from among the millions of refugees worldwide will have access to U.S. resettlement consideration. PRM coordinates within the Department of State, as well as with DHS/USCIS and other agencies, in carrying out this responsibility.

Section 207(a)(3) of the INA states that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program shall allocate admissions among refugees “of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after appropriate consultation.” Which individuals are “of special humanitarian concern” to the United States for the purpose of refugee resettlement consideration is determined through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program priority system. There are currently three priorities or categories of cases:

- Priority 1 – Individual cases referred to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
- Priority 2 – Groups of cases designated as having access to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
- Priority 3 – Individual cases from designated nationalities granted access for purposes of reunification with anchor family members already in the United States.

(Note: Refugees resettled in the United States may also seek the admission of spouses and unmarried children under 21 who are still abroad by filing a “Following to Join” petition, which obviates the need for a separate refugee claim adjudication. This option is described in more detail in the discussion of Visa 93 below.)

Access to the program under one of the above-listed processing priorities does not mean an applicant meets the statutory definition of “refugee” or is admissible to the United States under the INA. The ultimate determination as to whether an applicant can be admitted as a refugee is made by DHS/USCIS in

accordance with criteria set forth in the INA and various security protocols. Applicants who are eligible for access within the established priorities are presented to DHS/USCIS officers for interview.

Although the access categories to the USRAP are referred to as “processing priorities,” it is important to note that entering the program under a certain priority does not establish precedence in the order in which cases will be processed. Once cases are established as eligible for access under one of the three processing priorities, they all undergo the same processing steps.

PRIORITY 1 – INDIVIDUAL REFERRALS

Priority 1 (P-1) allows consideration of refugee claims from persons of any nationality³, usually with compelling protection needs, for whom resettlement appears to be the appropriate durable solution. Priority 1 cases are identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. embassy, or a designated NGO. UNHCR, which has the international mandate worldwide to provide protection to refugees, has historically referred the vast majority of cases under this priority. Some NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in locations where there are large concentrations of refugees have also undergone training by PRM and DHS/USCIS and have been designated eligible to provide Priority 1 referrals.

Process for Priority 1 Individual Referral Applications

Priority 1 referrals from UNHCR and NGOs are generally submitted to the appropriate Regional Refugee Coordinator, who forwards the referrals to the appropriate Resettlement Support Center (RSC⁴) for case processing and scheduling of the DHS/USCIS interview. PRM’s Office of Admissions reviews embassy referrals for completeness and may consult with DHS in considering these referrals.

A U.S. ambassador may make a Priority 1 referral for persons still in their country of origin if the ambassador determines that such cases are in need of exceptional treatment and the Departments of State (PRM) and Homeland Security (USCIS) concur. In some cases, a Department of State referral to the Department of Homeland Security for “Significant Public Benefit Parole” (SPBP) may be a more appropriate option.

³ Referrals of North Koreans and Palestinians require State Department and DHS/USCIS concurrence before they may be granted access to the USRAP.

⁴ Formerly known as Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs)

PRIORITY 2 – GROUP REFERRALS

Priority 2 (P-2) includes specific groups (within certain nationalities, clans or ethnic groups, sometimes in specified locations) identified by the Department of State in consultation with DHS/USCIS, NGOs, UNHCR, and other experts as being in need of resettlement. Some Priority 2 groups are processed in their country of origin. The process of identifying the group and its characteristics includes consideration of whether the group is of special humanitarian concern to the United States and whether members of the group will likely be able to qualify for admission as refugees under U.S. law. Groups may be designated as Priority 2 during the course of the year as circumstances dictate and the need for resettlement arises. PRM plays the coordinating role for all group referrals to the USRAP.

There are two distinct models of Priority 2 access to the program: open access and predefined group access, normally upon the recommendation of UNHCR. Under both models, Priority 2 designations are made based on shared characteristics that define the group. In general, the possession of these characteristics is the reason the group has been persecuted in the past or faces persecution in the future.

The open-access model for Priority 2 group referrals allows individuals to seek access to the program on the basis of meeting designated criteria. To establish an open-access Priority 2 group, PRM, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, and (as appropriate) with UNHCR and others, defines the specific criteria for access. Once the designation is in place, applicants may approach the program at any of the processing locations specified as available for the group to begin the application process. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet specified criteria to establish eligibility for inclusion.

The open-access model has functioned well in the in-country programs, including the long-standing programs in Eurasia and the Baltics, and in Cuba. It was also used successfully for Vietnamese for nearly thirty years (1980-2009), Bosnian refugees during the 1990s, and is now in use for Iranian religious minorities and Iraqis with links to the United States.

The Resettlement Support Center (RSCs) responsible for handling open-access Priority 2 applications, working under the direction of PRM, make a preliminary determination as to whether the applicants qualify for access and should be presented to DHS/USCIS for interview. Applicants who clearly do not meet the access requirements are “screened out” prior to DHS/USCIS interview.

In contrast to an open-access group, a predefined group designation is normally based on a UNHCR recommendation that lays out eligibility criteria that should apply to individuals in a specific location. Once PRM has established the access eligibility criteria for the group, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, the referring entity (usually UNHCR) provides the bio data of eligible refugee applicants for processing. This type of group referral is advantageous in situations in which the intensive labor required to generate individual referrals would be impracticable, potentially harmful to applicants due to delays, or counterproductive. Often, predefined groups are composed of persons with similar persecution claims. The predefined group referral process saves steps and can conserve scarce resources, particularly for UNHCR. Predefined group referrals with clear, well-defined eligibility criteria and several methods for cross-checking group membership can serve as a fraud deterrent as well, preventing non-group members from gaining access to the USRAP by falsely claiming group membership. It can also speed the resettlement process in cases where immediate protection concerns are present.

FY 2013 Priority 2 Designations

In-country processing programs

The following ongoing programs that process individuals still in their country of origin under Priority 2 group designations will continue in FY 2013:

Eurasia and the Baltics

This Priority 2 designation applies to Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious adherents identified in the Lautenberg Amendment, Public Law No. 101-167, § 599D, 103 Stat. 1261 (1989), as amended (“Lautenberg Amendment”), with close family in the United States. With annual renewal of the Lautenberg Amendment these individuals are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution.

Cuba

Included in this Priority 2 program are human rights activists, members of persecuted religious minorities, former political prisoners, forced-labor conscripts (1965-68), persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatment resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs or activities, and persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship (family or social) to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

Iraqis Associated with the United States

Under various Priority 2 designations, including those set forth in the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, employees of the U.S. government, a U.S. government-funded contractor or grantee, U.S. media or U.S. NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130 (immigrant visa) petitions, are eligible for refugee processing in Iraq.

Groups of Humanitarian Concern outside the Country of Origin

The following Priority 2 groups are already designated and, in most cases, undergoing processing with significant arrivals anticipated during FY 2013. (Additional Priority 2 groups may be designated over the course of the year.)

Ethnic Minorities and others from Burma in camps in Thailand

Under this existing Priority 2 designation, individuals who have fled Burma and who are registered in nine refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border and who are identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Ethnic Minorities from Burma in Malaysia

Under this Priority 2 designation, ethnic minorities from Burma who are recognized by UNHCR as refugees in Malaysia and identified as being in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Bhutanese in Nepal

Under this existing Priority 2 designation, Bhutanese refugees registered by UNHCR in camps in Nepal and identified as in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Iranian Religious Minorities

Under this Priority 2 designation, Iranian members of certain religious minorities are eligible for processing and are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution, pursuant to annual renewal of the Lautenberg Amendment as amended in 2004 by Sec. 213, Division E, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, P.L. 108-199 (“the Specter Amendment”).

Iraqis Associated with the United States

Under various Priority 2 designations, including those set forth in the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, employees of the U.S. government, a U.S. government-funded contractor or grantee, U.S. media or U.S. NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130

(immigrant visa) petitions, are eligible for refugee processing. This program is operating in Jordan and Egypt, in addition to the in-country program in Iraq.

PRIORITY 3 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The Priority 3(P-3) category affords USRAP access to members of designated nationalities who have immediate family members in the United States who initially entered as refugees or were granted asylum. At the beginning of each fiscal year, PRM, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, establishes the list of nationalities eligible for processing under this priority. The PRM Assistant Secretary may modify the list during the year, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, but additions or deletions are generally made to coincide with the fiscal year.

Inclusion on the P-3 list represents a finding by PRM that the nationality is of special humanitarian concern to the United States for the purpose of family-reunification refugee processing. Eligible nationalities are selected following careful review of several factors. UNHCR's annual assessment of refugees in need of resettlement provides insight into ongoing refugee situations, which could create the need for family-reunification processing. In addition, prospective or ongoing repatriation efforts and U.S. foreign policy interests must be weighed in determining which nationalities should be eligible.

Previously, in order to qualify for access under P-3 procedures, an applicant must have been outside of his or her country of origin, have had an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) filed on his or her behalf by an eligible "anchor" relative in the United States during a period in which the nationality was included on the eligibility list, and have been cleared for onward processing by the DHS/USCIS Refugee Access Verification Unit.

The following family members of the U.S.-based anchor have traditionally qualified for inclusion on the case: spouses, unmarried children under 21, and/or parents. Qualifying anchors are persons who were admitted to the United States as refugees or were granted asylum, including persons who are lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens who initially were admitted to the United States as refugees or were granted asylum.

In addition to the qualifying family members of a U.S.-based anchor listed above, on a case-by-case basis, an individual may be added on to a P-3 case if that individual:

- 1) lived in the same household as the qualifying family member in the country of nationality or, if stateless, last habitual residence;
- 2) was part of the same economic unit as the Qualifying Family Member in the country of nationality or, if stateless, last habitual residence; and
- 3) demonstrates exceptional and compelling humanitarian circumstances that justify inclusion on the Qualifying Family Member's case.

These individuals "are not "spouses" or "children", under INA 207(c)(2)(A)" and thus cannot derive their refugee status from the Principal Applicant. They must, therefore, independently establish that they qualify as a refugee.

In March 2008, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, PRM suspended P-3 processing and issued a moratorium on P-3 arrivals from certain processing locations due to indications of extremely high rates of fraud identified through pilot DNA testing. Further, in October 2008, PRM suspended the acceptance of AORs of all nationalities while PRM and DHS/USCIS examined whether additional procedures could be incorporated into P-3 processing to detect and deter fraud in the future.

In FY 2013, we will resume P-3 processing with a newly approved AOR that is an official Department of State form (DS-7656); contains new language about penalties for committing fraud; and alerts filers that DNA evidence of certain claimed biological parent-child relationships will be required in order to gain access to a USCIS interview for refugee admission to the United States through the P-3 program. PRM and USCIS have worked closely with domestic resettlement agency partners to ensure they are aware of the changes to the form and the P-3 program, and have provided training so that they can educate their own affiliate staff on completion of the new AOR. Similarly, we have worked closely with our overseas RSCs to ensure that we will have rigorous DNA collection and chain of custody procedures in place. Given the high rate of claimed relationship fraud we saw in the past incarnation of the P-3 program, we will be monitoring the program closely in FY 2013 for any indication of new attempts at such fraud.

FY 2013 Priority 3 Nationalities

Upon resumption, P-3 processing will be available to individuals of the following nationalities:

Afghanistan
Bhutan
Burma
Burundi
Central African Republic
Chad
Colombia
Cuba
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Haiti
Iran
Iraq
Republic of Congo (ROC)
Somalia
South Sudan
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

VISA 93 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOLLOWING-TO-JOIN PETITIONS

Under 8 CFR Section 207, a principal refugee admitted to the United States may request following-to-join benefits for his or her spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 if the family has become separated. Once in the United States, and within two years of admission, the refugee may file a Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition⁵ with DHS/USCIS for each eligible family member. If the Form I-730 is approved by DHS/USCIS (signifying adequate proof of a qualifying family relationship), the National Visa Center then forwards the petition for processing to the embassy or consulate nearest to the location of the beneficiaries of the petition.

⁵ This petition is used to file for the relatives of refugees and asylees, known as Visa 93 and Visa 92 cases respectively. The Refugee Admissions Program handles only Visa 93 cases, which are counted within the annual refugee admissions ceiling. Visa 92 cases are not considered to be refugee admissions cases and are not counted in the number of refugees admitted annually.

Cases gaining access to the USRAP through an approved I-730 petition are interviewed by DHS/USCIS or consular officers to verify the relationships claimed in the petition, as well as to examine any applicable bars to status and admissibility to the United States. These interviews are not refugee adjudications. The beneficiaries are not required to demonstrate persecution claims, as they derive their status from the refugee relative in the United States who filed the petition. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations. In 2011, USCIS and the Department of State launched a pilot program to test new procedures to increase the efficiency, consistency, and security of overseas processing of I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petitions. The pilot is being further expanded in 2012 and will eventually be implemented worldwide.

Anchor relatives in the United States may file an I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition and seek Priority 3 access (if eligible) simultaneously. In some cases, the I-730 will be the only option as the family members are still in their country of origin. It is also important to note that the I-730 or “follow-to-join” process does not allow the relative in the United States to petition for parents as the P-3 process does.

DHS/USCIS REFUGEE ADJUDICATIONS

Section 207(c) of the INA grants the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security authority to admit, in his/her discretion, any refugee who is not firmly resettled in a third country, who is determined to be of special humanitarian concern, and who is admissible to the United States. The authority to determine eligibility for refugee status has been delegated to USCIS. Beginning in FY 2006, DHS/USCIS restructured the Refugee Affairs Division and established the Refugee Corps, a specially trained cadre of officers dedicated to adjudicating applications for refugee status. The Refugee Corps provides DHS/USCIS with the necessary resources and flexibility to respond to an increasingly diversified refugee admissions program. DHS/USCIS has also substantially enhanced its security vetting, anti-fraud, and training capacity related to refugee processing.

The Eligibility Determination

In order to be approved as a refugee, an applicant must meet the refugee definition contained in § 101(a)(42) of the INA. That section provides that a refugee is a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. As

mentioned above, the President may specify special circumstances under which a person can meet the refugee definition when he or she is still within the country of origin. The definition excludes a person who has ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Further, an applicant who has been “firmly resettled” in a third country may not be admitted as a refugee under INA § 207. Applicants are also subject to various statutory grounds of inadmissibility, including criminal, security, and public health grounds, some of which may be waived or from which applicants may be exempted.

A DHS/USCIS officer conducts a non-adversarial, face-to-face interview of each refugee applicant designed to elicit information about the applicant’s claim for refugee status and any grounds of ineligibility. The officer asks questions about the applicant’s experiences in the country of origin, including problems and fears about returning (or remaining), as well as questions concerning the applicant’s activities, background, and criminal history. The officer also considers evidence about conditions in the country of origin and assesses the applicant’s credibility and claim.

Background Checks

All refugee applicants are required to undergo background security checks. Security checks include biographic name checks for all refugee applicants and biometric (fingerprint) checks for refugee applicants aged 14 to 79. PRM, through its overseas Resettlement Support Centers, initiates required name checks, while USCIS is responsible for collecting fingerprint data for screening. Refugee applicants must clear all required security checks prior to final approval of their application.

Last fiscal year, the USRAP implemented an enhanced security check requirement for all refugee applicants. While implementing the enhanced check was critical to strengthening the integrity of the program, refugee admissions were disrupted, and admissions levels remained low until interagency coordination and processing procedures were improved. These improvements resulted in increased refugee admissions levels beginning in May 2012, and admissions levels are expected to continue at these higher levels in FY 2013.

PROCESSING ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Overseas Processing Services

In most processing locations, PRM engages an NGO, an international organization (IO), or U.S. embassy contractors to manage an RSC that assists in the processing of refugees for admission to the United States. RSC staff pre-screen applicants to determine preliminarily if they qualify for one of the applicable processing priorities and to prepare cases for DHS/USCIS adjudication. The RSCs assist applicants in completing documentary requirements and schedule DHS/USCIS refugee eligibility interviews. If an applicant is conditionally approved for resettlement, RSC staff guide the refugee through post-adjudication steps, including obtaining medical screening exams and attending cultural orientation programs. The RSC obtains sponsorship assurances and, once all required steps are completed, refers the case to IOM for transportation to the United States.

In FY 2012, NGOs (Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and International Rescue Committee) worked under cooperative agreements with PRM as RSCs at locations in Austria, Kenya (covering sub-Saharan Africa), and Thailand (covering East Asia). International organizations and NGOs (IOM and the International Catholic Migration Commission) support refugee processing activities based in Ecuador, Jordan, Russia, Nepal, and Turkey covering Latin America, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Europe. The U.S. Department of State supports refugee processing in Havana, Cuba.

Cultural Orientation

The Department of State strives to ensure that refugees who are accepted for admission to the United States are prepared for the profound life changes they will experience by providing cultural orientation programs prior to departure for the United States. It is critical that refugees arrive with a realistic idea of what their new lives will be like, what services will be available to them, and what their responsibilities will be.

Every refugee family receives *Welcome to the United States*, a resettlement guidebook developed with contributions from refugee resettlement workers, resettled refugees, and state government officials. *Welcome to the United States* is produced in 16 languages: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Karen, Kirundi, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese. Through this book, refugees have access to accurate information about the initial resettlement period before they arrive. The *Welcome*

to the United States refugee orientation video is available in 13 languages: Arabic, English, Farsi, Hmong, Karen, Karenni, Kirundi, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Tigrinya. In addition, the Department of State funds one- to five-day pre-departure orientation classes for eligible refugees at sites throughout the world. In an effort to further bridge the information gap, for certain groups, brief video presentations featuring the experience of recently resettled refugees of the same ethnic group are made available to refugee applicants overseas.

Transportation

The Department of State funds the international transportation of refugees resettled in the United States through a program administered by IOM. The cost of transportation is provided to refugees in the form of a loan. Refugees are responsible for repaying these loans over time, beginning six months after their arrival, although it is possible to request a deferral based on inability to begin paying at six months.

Reception and Placement

In FY 2012, PRM funded cooperative agreements with nine private voluntary agencies to provide initial resettlement services to arriving refugees. The R&P agencies agree to provide initial reception and core services (including housing, furnishings, clothing and food, as well as assistance with access to medical, employment, educational, and social services) to arriving refugees. These services are provided according to standards of care within a framework of outcomes and indicators developed jointly by the NGO community, state refugee coordinators, and U.S. government agencies. The nine organizations maintain a nationwide network of some 350 affiliated offices to provide services. Two of the organizations also maintain a network of 23 affiliated offices through which unaccompanied refugee minors are placed into foster care funded by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Using R&P funds from PRM supplemented by cash and in-kind contributions from private and other sources, the participating agencies provide the following services, consistent with the terms of the R&P cooperative agreement:

- Sponsorship;
- Pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement;
- Reception on arrival;
- Basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days;
- Cultural orientation;
- Assistance with access to health, employment, education, and other services as needed; and
- Development and implementation of an initial resettlement plan for each refugee for 30-90 days.

OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR)

During and after the initial resettlement period, ORR provides leadership, technical assistance, and funding to states, the District of Columbia, and a network of nonprofit organizations to assist refugees to become self sufficient and integrated into U.S. society. These ORR-funded programs use formula and discretionary grants to provide cash and medical assistance, training programs, employment, and other support services to newly-arriving and recently arrived refugees. Those refugees determined ineligible for Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Medicaid can access ORR-funded Refugee Cash and Refugee Medical Assistance for up to eight months after arrival. ORR-funded Refugee Social Services are available to refugees for up to five years after arrival. RSS includes employability services such as English language and vocational training to assist refugees to obtain employment and enhance their long-term career opportunities. The ORR Matching Grant Program provides services to enable refugees to become economically self-sufficient within 120 to 180 days of program eligibility without accessing public cash assistance. Services required under this program include case management, employment services, maintenance assistance and cash allowance, and administration.

Refugees are eligible for lawful employment upon arrival in the United States. After one year, a refugee is required to apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident. Five years after admission, a refugee who has been granted lawful permanent resident status is eligible to apply for citizenship.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

TABLE II

PROPOSED FY 2013 REGIONAL CEILINGS BY PRIORITY

<u>AFRICA</u>	
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	10,750
Priority 2 Groups	750
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	500
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>12,000</u>
<u>EAST ASIA</u>	
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	1,000
Priority 2 Groups	15,900
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>17,000</u>
<u>EUROPE / CENTRAL ASIA</u>	
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	
Priority 2 Groups	2,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<u>LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN</u>	
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	400
Priority 2 Groups	4,550
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	50
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>5,000</u>
<u>NEAR EAST / SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	13,500
Priority 2 Groups	17,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	500
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>31,000</u>
<u>UNALLOCATED RESERVE</u>	<u>3,000</u>
<u>TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING:</u>	<u>70,000</u>

AFRICA

There are currently over 3.3 million refugees across the African continent, comprising roughly 20 percent of the global refugee population. UN-organized repatriations were still underway in 2012 for refugees able to return to safe areas in Burundi, the DRC, and South Sudan. Organized repatriations to Angola, Liberia, and Rwanda have largely been completed but residual refugee populations remain. UNHCR recommended cessation of *prima facie* refugee status for refugees from Angola and Liberia effective June 30, 2012, and for pre-1998 caseload Rwandan refugees effective June 30, 2013. Efforts continue to repatriate those who still wish to return and to locally integrate residual populations who wish to remain in asylum countries.

While there has been a considerable reduction in the African refugee population over the past decade, conflict in the DRC, Mali, Somalia, and Sudan and political repression in Eritrea resulted in some 850,000 new refugees in 2011 and 2012. Sudanese attacks on contested border states starting in June 2011 have resulted in some 210,000 new Sudanese refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia. Continued fighting in Somalia forced another 400,000 Somalis to flee, bringing total Somali refugee numbers to nearly one million. Intensified conflict in eastern DRC led an additional 60,000 Congolese to seek asylum in Uganda and Rwanda. Fighting erupted in northern Mali in January 2012, so far generating over 290,000 refugees. Finally, Eritreans continue to seek asylum in neighboring countries due to political tensions and increasing political repression; over 2,000 per month are arriving in Ethiopia and Sudan, many attempting dangerous onward migration to Europe and the Middle East in search of refuge in countries with better economic opportunities.

Most African countries honor the principle of first asylum. Traditionally, refugees in Africa have been allowed to remain – and in many cases to effectively integrate locally – until voluntary repatriation is possible. In most cases, local integration is *de facto*, and does not include granting of legal permanent residence or voting rights. However, countries such as Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have initiated programs legalizing the status (*de jure* local integration) of long-staying refugee populations interested in remaining on their territories. Tanzania announced a plan to grant citizenship to Burundi refugees who fled their country in 1972. Some 165,000 have been naturalized but not all have official documentation of their new citizenship. Lack of international support for the installation of the “newly naturalized Tanzanians” in new communities could put full implementation in jeopardy.

Religious Freedom

In Sub-Saharan Africa, people are generally free to practice their chosen religions. Governments regularly provide for and respect freedom of religion, although in some countries, such as Eritrea and Sudan, religious freedom is limited, particularly in the midst of ethnic and other conflicts.

The government of Eritrea is responsible for severe religious freedom abuses in Africa. In recent years the country has engaged in serious religious repression by harassing, arresting, and detaining members of a reform movement within the Eritrean Orthodox Church and of independent evangelical groups, including Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses (who lost certain rights of citizenship for not participating in the 1993 national referendum). Detainees are held in harsh conditions and some have died in custody. The government has also sought greater control over the four State-approved religious groups: the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, and the Islamic community. The government reportedly holds individuals who are jailed for their religious affiliation at various locations. Often detainees are not formally charged, accorded due process, or allowed access to their families. While many are ostensibly jailed for evasion of military conscription, significant numbers were being held solely for their religious beliefs. As of June 2011, the Jehovah's Witness International Office reported that 51 known Jehovah's Witnesses were in detention without access to legal representation, and many had not been charged with a crime. At least three Jehovah's Witnesses had been detained for 15 years, reportedly for evading compulsory military service, a term far beyond the maximum legal penalty of two years for refusing to perform national service.

In Sudan, the government continues to place restrictions on Christians. Although there is no penalty for converting from another religion to Islam, converting from Islam is punishable by death. There is no evidence that the current government has ever imposed this penalty, but authorities express their strong prejudice against conversion by occasionally subjecting converts to intense scrutiny, ostracism, and intimidation, or by encouraging converts to leave the country.

Both Eritrea and Sudan are currently designated as "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC) for particularly severe violations of religious freedom by the Department of State under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. The USRAP continues to be available through Priority 1 referrals to Sudanese, Eritrean, and other refugees who are victims of religious intolerance. Refugees from Eritrea and Sudan with certain refugee or asylee family members in the United States also

may have access to the USRAP through Priority 3, when it resumes. Certain Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia may have access to the USRAP through Priority 2.

In Somalia, the Transitional Federal Charter provides for religious freedom although in practice there have been limits on the Transitional Federal Government's capacity to enforce this right and legal protections. Respect for religious freedom has continued to decline, primarily due to extremist militias and their control over significant territory in the country. Militia groups, particularly those associated with the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization al-Shabaab, have often violently imposed a strict interpretation of Islam on communities under their control. There have also been reports that non-Muslim individuals experience discrimination, violence, and detention because of their religious beliefs. Refugees from Somalia and with certain refugee or asylee family members in the United States will also have access to the USRAP through Priority 3 when it resumes.

Voluntary Repatriation

Despite the continued existence of protracted refugee situations, voluntary repatriation to improved conditions in the home country remains the most common and desirable durable solution. With the conclusion of various peace agreements and the support of the U.S. government and other donors, UNHCR has made great progress in promoting and supporting refugee repatriation and reintegration in Africa. Over the past 20 years, net global refugee numbers have fallen by nearly half (from six million at their height in the 1990s to 3.3 million today) even in the face of new outflows.

In West Africa, UNHCR launched its official repatriation program in February 2012 for some 67,000 remaining refugees from Cote d'Ivoire who had fled to Liberia in 2010 and 2011, returning 5,000 to date. Another 150,000 Ivoirian refugees spontaneously returned home starting in late 2011 following the cessation of post-election hostilities in Cote d'Ivoire. UNHCR's Liberian repatriation program officially ended in June 2007, with some 650,000 Liberians having returned home either spontaneously or with UNHCR assistance. UNHCR continues to focus on both repatriation and local integration as durable solutions for some 60,000 Liberians who remain outside their country in various West African countries.

In East Africa, the repatriation to South Sudan that started in 2005 was largely concluded in 2011 with the return of more than 370,000 refugees, over 80 percent of the original refugee population. However, due to instability in South Sudan, the pace of returns slowed considerably in 2012. Approximately 80,000

South Sudanese refugees are currently in neighboring countries, including 70,000 who fled the earlier civil war and 12,000 who fled recent fighting in 2012. No repatriation initiatives are currently anticipated for the Darfur region of Sudan or Somalia, where conflict continues to prevent safe return. Some 1,000,000 Somalis have sought asylum in neighboring countries, most without any near-term prospect of return to war-torn Somalia. Despite the efforts of some asylum countries to repatriate Eritrean refugees, UNHCR has strongly discouraged returns to Eritrea given ongoing political repression and harsh treatment of returnees.

In Central Africa, most organized repatriation to Burundi ended in 2010, with over 500,000 returns since 2002, including over 53,000 of the old-caseload refugees who chose not to accept the government of Tanzania's offer of naturalization. Repatriation of the last of the 1993-era Burundi refugees has recommenced. Although the majority of Rwandan refugees returned home in the late 1990s, some 50,000 remain in exile. With the invocation of the cessation clause for pre-1998 Rwandan refugees on June 30, 2013, remaining Rwandans will be required to either repatriate or seek other means of remaining in asylum countries. Repatriation to relatively stable areas of the DRC wound down in 2011 with the conclusion of returns from Zambia and Tanzania to the Katanga Province. North and South Kivu Provinces remain mostly too insecure for large-scale refugee return, with internal displacement and new refugee flows in 2012. Ethnic violence that erupted in late 2009 in Equateur Province forced some 200,000 Congolese to flee to the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Republic of Congo. A facilitated repatriation began in May, and UNHCR hopes to repatriate as many as 25,000 refugees by the end of 2012. Additionally, the persistent threat of attack posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northeastern DRC, southeastern CAR, and South Sudan has contributed to instability in the region, preventing the return of some 40,000 refugees displaced by the LRA in 2011.

Local Integration

In a number of protracted refugee situations, refugees have been able to become self-sufficient, and their camps and settlements have been effectively integrated into the host communities. This integration dynamic has occurred particularly for refugees who fled during the 1960s through the early 1980s to countries that had arable land available, allowing many refugees to move out of camps. Despite such de facto local integration, however, refugees residing among the local population did not necessarily enjoy the rights, entitlements, or economic opportunities available to legal residents. As a result, local integration was often an interim, rather than a durable, solution for many African refugees.

More recently, however, a number of African countries have offered more formal integration as a durable solution for residual refugee populations who will not or cannot repatriate. In conjunction with UNHCR, the governments of Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone launched a regional local integration program for Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in 2007. That program provided refugees opportunities for economic self-reliance; activities to enhance the quality of their social integration; and legal rights and documentation, including access to citizenship in some countries and freedom of movement in all countries under the protocols of the Economic Community of West African States.

Senegal offered Mauritanian refugees who wished to remain in Senegal the option of becoming Senegalese citizens in 2007 but has not yet established procedures for refugees to take advantage of this option. The governments of Uganda and Zambia have previously stated their intention to provide refugees with local integration opportunities and citizenship, but have not yet passed the required legislation. As mentioned above, the government of Tanzania agreed to provide permanent settlement and citizenship to the over 200,000 1972-era Burundi refugees who desire it; some 165,000 accepted the offer and were collectively naturalized, although not all have received documentation and the modalities of the integration process are still being negotiated. While not a formal integration program, Ethiopia introduced an out-of-camp policy for Eritrean refugees in August 2010. This policy allows Eritreans to live outside camps if they are able to support themselves or if they have someone to sponsor them financially. While it does not give Eritrean refugees the right to work, it does offer additional educational opportunities, including tertiary education, and can be seen as a positive step towards a local integration policy.

Third-Country Resettlement

Given the political and economic volatility in many parts of Africa, resettlement to third countries outside the region is an essential durable solution and element of protection for certain refugees. With limited opportunities for permanent integration in many countries of asylum and the protracted nature of some refugee situations, the need for third-country resettlement of African refugees is expected to continue despite the overall decrease in the refugee population on the continent. In recent years, UNHCR has increasingly viewed resettlement as an important tool of protection for refugees in Africa and has shown an increase in resettlement referrals this past year. Several resettlement countries – including Canada and Australia – accept significant numbers of African refugees, but the United States resettles far more than any other country.

FY 2012 U.S. Admissions

We project some 9,500 African refugee arrivals in FY 2012 –lower than the 11,000 anticipated at the beginning of the year – due to a number of factors. These include challenges related to finalizing individual security clearances; a decrease in UNHCR referrals; our inability to process in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya; and delayed or canceled circuit rides in Chad and other locations in Kenya due to security concerns. In addition, applicants at various stages of the pipeline continue to be withdrawn by UNHCR from the U.S. program due to their possession of Kenyan identity cards.

Three countries of origin (Somalia, Eritrea, and the DRC) currently account for the vast majority of U.S. admissions from the region. In East Africa, we continue to process P-1 Somalis in Kakuma refugee camp, however, processing in Dadaab has been suspended since December 2011 due to the worsening security situation. We are coming closer to completing P-2 processing of Eritreans in Shimelba camp in Ethiopia, but will continue to process P-1 UNHCR referrals after the P-2 group is completed. We were able to conduct two small circuit rides to Sudan to process the first referrals of a protracted caseload of Eritrean refugees there. Processing of CAR refugees in Chad has proceeded but DHS interviews were cancelled for security reasons in February 2012 and will continue in the next fiscal year. We saw an increase in processing of DRC refugees in Rwanda, and anticipate an increasing number of referrals of DRC refugees from Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Burundi over the next four to five years as part of a regional UNHCR approach to resettle as many as 50,000 DRC refugees.

We have largely completed the processing of the residual P-3 Liberian and Sierra Leonean caseloads in West Africa and will not take any new applications. Moreover, with the civil wars having ended nearly ten years ago, we no longer receive many resettlement referrals for these populations. Close to 500 refugee admissions from Central Africa, mostly processed in Chad, are expected this year. In all, we expect to admit refugees of more than 20 African nationalities, processed in nearly thirty countries during FY 2012.

FY 2013 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose up to 12,000 resettlement numbers for African refugees in FY 2013. PRM has actively engaged relevant offices within the Department of State, UNHCR, the NGO community, and DHS/USCIS to identify caseloads appropriate for resettlement consideration. As a result of these discussions, PRM has identified a number of nationalities and groups for priority processing during FY 2013.

From East and Southern Africa, we expect 9,000 admissions, primarily Somalis in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and South Africa; Eritreans in Ethiopia and in Sudan; and additional small numbers of P-1 referrals of various nationalities in the countries above, as well as in Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Consultations that PRM has had with UNHCR and host countries over the past several years have resulted in a regional plan to refer large numbers of Congolese refugees in Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Burundi to the USRAP over the next four to five years. From West and Central Africa, we expect fewer than 500 admissions. We anticipate a steady stream of referrals of Central African Republic refugees in Southern Chad, which would constitute the bulk of arrivals from this area.

Outside of sub-Saharan Africa, we anticipate up to 1,500 Sudanese, Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and other sub-Saharan African refugees to be processed in Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Russia. Although African refugees have been referred for U.S. consideration in Syria and Yemen, the security situation in these countries has not permitted us to process the referrals throughout FY 2012, with the exception of relatively small numbers transferred to one of UNHCR's Emergency Transit Centers in Europe. If the security situation improves in FY 2013, we will restart processing in these locations.

Proposed FY 2013 Africa program to include arrivals from the following categories:

<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>10,750</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>750</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i><u>500</u></i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>12,000</i>

EAST ASIA

Several East Asian countries host large and diverse refugee populations. Recent years have seen important developments for these groups, particularly involving the strategic use of resettlement as a durable solution. Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India continue to host large numbers of Burmese refugees and asylum-seekers. The U.S. government continues to press for meaningful political and democratic reform and national reconciliation with ethnic minority groups in Burma, while recognizing reforms made over the past year by easing financial and investment sanctions and naming the first U.S. ambassador to Burma in 22 years. The international community has also initiated discussions regarding the voluntary return of Burmese refugees, but acknowledges that

ongoing conflict and the long road towards peace, national reconciliation, and development make large scale return of refugees in safety and with dignity a longer-term goal.

As of mid-2012, more than 86, 000 registered refugees from Burma were recognized by UNHCR and the Thai Ministry of the Interior and were living in nine Royal Thai government-administered refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The Thai government continues to support the international community's efforts to resettle large numbers of refugees from these camps. Despite ongoing resettlement, the combination of long-staying Burmese in Thailand moving into the camps when space becomes available and newly arrived Burmese refugees fleeing continued conflict in Burma and seeking essential services such as health and education in Thailand have precluded a meaningful reduction of the camps' total population.

Since 2006, UNHCR Malaysia has operated the second largest refugee status determination program in the world. As of April 2012, there were 98,100 persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Malaysia of which 89,900, or 91 percent, are from Burma (34,340 Chin, 22,840 stateless Rohingya from Burma's Northern Rakhine State, 10,510 Rakhines, 10,480 Myanmar Muslims, 3,780 Mon, 3,250 Kachins and other ethnic minorities). In addition, some 8,200 asylum-seekers and refugees from various countries – primarily Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Sri Lanka – are registered with UNHCR in Malaysia. Malaysia is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. We support UNHCR's efforts to use resettlement as a strategic tool to assist refugees in Malaysia.

In 1992, more than 250,000 Burmese Rohingya suffering de jure statelessness and oppression due to their Muslim faith and ethnicity migrated from northern Rakhine State to Bangladesh. During the 1990s, over 230,000 Rohingya refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Bangladesh, leaving behind over 29,000 refugees, who remain in two official refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh. An additional 9,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in an unofficial settlement in Leda and approximately 20,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in the makeshift Kutupalong camp. In addition, an unknown number who had previously repatriated, have again returned to Bangladesh and are now living without UNHCR protection. In all, there are approximately 200,000-500,000 unregistered Rohingya living outside of the two official UNHCR refugee camps in the Cox's Bazaar district. UNHCR continues to work to enhance protection and address security concerns caused by growing tensions between both registered refugees and unregistered Rohingya and local Bangladeshis living outside of the camps.

The cases of more than 500 individual Rohingyas, including 281 individuals approved for resettlement to several countries, have been on hold since October 2010 when the government of Bangladesh halted resettlement activities pending a review of their refugee policy; Bangladesh has yet to issue a formal decision on a national refugee policy. We are prepared to resume resettlement activity immediately following a decision. In addition, we expect ongoing UNHCR referrals of urban Burmese in India.

As reflected in the North Korean Human Rights Act, the United States remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation of North Koreans both inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and in various countries in the region. The United States began resettling interested, eligible North Korean refugees in 2006 and remains committed to continuing this program.

Religious Freedom

Although many governments in East Asia do not restrict religious freedom, religious believers face serious persecution in several countries. The DPRK, China, and Burma are designated by the Department of State as CPCs under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom.

The DPRK severely restricts religious freedom, including organized religious activity, except that which is supervised tightly by officially recognized groups linked to the government. Although the DPRK constitution provides for "freedom of religious belief," genuine religious freedom does not exist. Little is known about the day-to-day life of religious persons in the country. Religious and human rights groups outside of the country have provided numerous reports that members of underground churches have been beaten, arrested, tortured, or killed because of their religious beliefs.

While the constitutions of China, Burma, and Vietnam provide for freedom of religion, in practice these governments restrict or repress activities of some religious communities.

The Chinese government continues to harass and interfere with unregistered religious groups, most notably the unofficial Catholic churches loyal to the Holy See, Protestant "house churches," some Muslim groups (especially Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region), members of the Falun Gong, and Buddhists loyal to the Dalai Lama. Religious believers are sometimes arrested, imprisoned, and there have been allegations of torture.

In Burma, the government actively promotes Buddhism over other religions and continues to discriminate against religious minorities, in particular stateless Rohingya Muslims. Coerced conversions continue to be of primary concern to Christian groups in Burma.

Vietnam and the United States signed an agreement on religious freedom in May 2005, under which Vietnam committed to improving the status of religious freedom in Vietnam. As a result of the progress Vietnam made after signing the agreement, the U.S. government removed Vietnam from the CPC list in November 2006. Over the past three years, Vietnam's religious freedom record has been mixed. Progress has been made with regard to the registration/recognition of religious groups and congregations. In addition, religious groups have experienced expanded freedom of assembly. However, there are also reports of harassment at the local level, including through the use of land laws. Moreover, the government has not made progress on its commitment to translate the Bible into modern H'mong and several Protestant congregations in rural areas continue to report harassment, including beatings and forced renunciations.

Nationals of the North Korea, Vietnam, China, Laos, and Burma have access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through Priority 1 individual referrals. Burmese will be processed in large numbers in FY 2012 under Priority 2. North Korean and Burmese refugees will also have access to family reunification processing through Priority 3, when it resumes.

Voluntary Repatriation

Although the Burmese government has taken steps to implement some democratic and political reforms, ongoing fighting continues between the Burma Army and ethnic minority groups and national peace and reconciliation efforts will take time; thus, the repatriation of most Burmese refugees in Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, and elsewhere is not currently a viable solution.

Local Integration

Due to fears of a "pull factor," countries in the region have traditionally been reluctant to integrate refugees or to grant asylum. We hope that U.S. efforts to resettle large numbers of refugees from the camps along the Thai-Burma border will encourage the Thai government to improve livelihood opportunities for those refugees who will not be resettled. The United States and other donor governments continue to engage in a strategic dialogue with the Royal Thai government concerning the future of the nine camps on the Thai-Burma border. We recognize that the Thai government remains concerned that resettlement has

not dramatically reduced the camp population as a mixture of new arrivals and Burmese who were living just outside of the camps are taking the place of those who are departing for third countries. Local integration remains a difficult option, due to opposition from host countries, such as Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India. UNHCR and the international community continue to advocate for these governments to make policy changes relating to refugees, and to expand humanitarian protection and assistance space for refugees and other persons of concern.

Third-Country Resettlement

The United States continues to lead third country resettlement efforts in the region. Other resettlement countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Nordic countries, resettle refugees referred by UNHCR. In FY 2012, the United States processed UNHCR-referred refugee cases in, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

FY 2012 U.S. Admissions

We expect to admit up to 15,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2012. This will include some 7,000 Burmese ethnic minorities (mostly Karen, Karenni, and Kachin) living in camps along the Thai-Burma border, some 8,000 Burmese (of various ethnic minorities) in Malaysia, and a small number of urban refugees of various nationalities in the region.

FY 2013 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose the admission of 17,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2013. We will interview Burmese refugees living in all nine camps located in three provinces in Thailand and will continue processing in Malaysia, with Burmese composing the vast majority of the proposed 17,000 refugee admissions from East Asia in FY 2013.

Proposed FY 2013 East Asia program to include arrivals from the following categories:

<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>15,900</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i><u>100</u></i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>17,000</i>

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Europe continues to host large refugee populations, as well as other persons affected by conflict, who, over the last two decades, have been left in situations of protracted displacement – often in dire conditions. In its 2011-2012 Global Appeal, UNHCR reported that there were nearly 4.4 million asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless individuals, or other persons “of concern” throughout Europe and Central Asia. Many had fled conflicts outside the region, such as in Afghanistan, but the estimates also include persons claiming persecution within Eurasia.

All countries of the South Caucasus, the Russian Federation, and Central Asia except Uzbekistan have acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. However, compliance with these instruments remains problematic. Despite sustained efforts by UNHCR and other stakeholders to build protection capacity and help strengthen asylum systems and protection laws in the region, results have so far been modest. Many of these countries have been slow or reluctant to recognize and integrate refugees and other at-risk individuals. The protection provided by some regional governments to refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants is limited, and public intolerance, including attacks against non-Slavic foreigners, is common. There are documented cases of refoulement. UNHCR has been working with many of these governments to establish and reform asylum procedures and refugee protection laws. Modest progress has been made.

The 1990’s break-up of the Soviet Union also created newly independent states with sizeable populations of stateless individuals due to gaps in nationality laws and inconsistent implementation of those laws. Difficulty in establishing citizenship at the time of succession has also created later problems for children born to an undocumented parent. The problem of statelessness remains in the region although some states, such as Turkmenistan, have taken steps to register stateless individuals and facilitate their acquisition of nationality.

According to UNHCR, at the end of 2011 there were approximately 440,000 refugees and IDPs in the Balkans, almost all of whom have been displaced for a decade or longer. An estimated 210,000 persons of this population are displaced from Kosovo, most in Serbia. Since 2000, the overall level of return to Kosovo from Serbia has been low. There have been over 23,000 voluntary returns of minorities to Kosovo since the conflict, of which 42 percent were ethnic Serbs.

From 2010 to 2012, the countries of the region, with the assistance of the international community, made significant progress toward resolving the refugee situation stemming from the breakup of Yugoslavia from 1991-1995. A November 2011 ministerial meeting in Belgrade brought together ministers of foreign affairs from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to sign a Joint Declaration expressing their collective will to resolve the protracted refugee situation, and they committed their countries to a Regional Housing Program (RHP) for refugees and IDPs supported by international donors. A donors' conference in April 2012 succeed in raising over \$340 million (€260 million) in international funds to support the RHP over five years.

Religious Freedom

The status of religious freedom varies widely across Europe and Central Asia. Among the various states in this region, some mandate the registration of religious groups. Nontraditional religious groups are sometimes labeled as “sects” or “cults” by their home governments and may be subject to special scrutiny and limited privileges. Registration typically carries the right to rent or own property, hold religious services, appoint military and prison chaplains, and receive state subsidies. Restitution of religious properties is an issue yet to be fully resolved. Uzbekistan is designated by the Department of State as a CPC under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom.

Manifestations of anti-Semitism continue throughout the region, including demonstrations by extremist groups, physical assaults, and vandalism of cemeteries, synagogues, and monuments. While most incidents have taken place in former communist bloc countries, a number of western European countries have faced a disturbing increase in anti-Semitism, in addition to anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobia.

The Russian government asserts control over “non-traditional” minority religious groups by using extremism laws to justify raids, arrests and bans on religious literature. Readers of Muslim theologian Said Nursi, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, Falun Gong followers, and some Protestant groups have

been particularly targeted.

Conscientious objectors on the basis of their faith are sometimes arrested and prosecuted for failing to comply with laws mandating military service, as has happened in Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Turkmenistan.

Muslims across Europe and Central Asia have sometimes been viewed as potential threats and accused of membership in internationally banned groups. In some countries, there are legal prohibitions against wearing the veil and other religious garb in public. There are also a growing number of western European countries trying to outlaw ritual slaughter of animals.

Restrictions on religious freedom in Central Asia are often justified in the name of maintaining stability and combating terrorism. Some governments believe that religious freedom will result in competing centers of power and influence or open the door to violent extremism, although research shows that government suppression often results in increased violence and loss of regime legitimacy. Non-violent, non-extremist religious minorities such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Nur, are often targets, as well as majorities from dominant religions that may include new streams of belief.

Since 1989, the USRAP has offered resettlement consideration to individuals from certain religious minorities in the nations that made up the former Soviet Union who also have close family ties to the United States. Under the Lautenberg Amendment, Jews, Evangelical Christians, and certain members of the Ukrainian Catholic or Ukrainian Orthodox Churches are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard when being considered for refugee status. In recent years, fewer new applications and low approval rates have resulted in fewer departures to the United States. Individuals of all nationalities throughout the region may be referred for Priority 1 processing.

Voluntary Repatriation

The international community continues to support efforts to create favorable conditions for the return of ethnic minorities to their homes in the Balkans. In June 2006, Serbian, Kosovar, and UN authorities signed the Protocol on Voluntary and Sustainable Return to Kosovo, which sought to improve the conditions for return by focusing on three elements: ensuring the safety of returnees, returning property to the displaced and rebuilding their houses, and creating an overall environment that sustains returns. International funding continues to facilitate and sustain the return and reintegration of displaced minorities from Kosovo. In 2011, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia agreed to work together to fund

and implement an internationally supported program to provide durable housing solutions to the neediest remaining refugees and IDPs from the Balkans war of the early 1990s. The program will encourage voluntary repatriation but also support local integration as a durable solution.

Local Integration

UNHCR has led efforts to create viable asylum systems and effective legal protections for refugees in the Balkans, the Russian Federation, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. However, ineffective implementation of these laws, combined with the history of national animosities and xenophobia throughout the region, often makes effective local integration difficult for ethnic minority refugees. In Russia, difficulties in acquiring citizenship remain for some former Soviet citizens who resided in Russia before 1992 and are, under Russian law, entitled to Russian citizenship. Groups such as the Meskhetian Turks have been unable to obtain Russian citizenship and thus remain de facto stateless. In Montenegro, the path to citizenship has been particularly slow for those displaced from Kosovo. The government of Serbia is implementing integration programs for some displaced persons from Kosovo.

Third-Country Resettlement

The United States and other resettlement countries continue to accept refugees from the region. UNHCR has referred and will continue to refer to the United States, Canada, and other resettlement countries a number of at-risk individuals fleeing various forms of persecution within the region. Jewish immigration to Israel continues, with 6,108 individuals from states of the former Soviet Union availing themselves of this opportunity in 2011 under the United Israel Appeal Program.

FY 2012 U.S. Admissions

In FY 2012 we estimate 1,000 admissions from Europe and Central Asia. Religious minorities processed under the Lautenberg Amendment from countries of the former Soviet Union constitute nearly the entire the caseload. During FY 2012, applicants were processed in Almaty, Baku, Bishkek, Chisinau, Kyiv, Valletta, Moscow, Timisoara, and Tashkent.

FY 2013 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed FY 2013 ceiling for refugees from Europe and Central Asia is 2,000. Priority 2 includes individuals who will be processed under Lautenberg

guidelines in the states of the former Soviet Union. Low approval rates for this Priority 2 program and a reduced rate of new applications serve to limit the number of admissions.

Proposed FY 2013 Europe and Central Asia program to include arrivals from the following categories:

<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>2,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i><u>0</u></i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>2,000</i>

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In 2011, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and other people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean totaled over 4 million. The ongoing conflict in Colombia generated the largest numbers of refugees and IDPs in the region. Estimates of the number of IDPs in Colombia vary between 3.6 million (government figure) and 5.2 million (NGO figure). Expanded state presence and improved security in cities and towns throughout Colombia led to a decline in internal displacement in 2009 and 2010. However, displacement increased in 2011 as a result of confrontations between the government of Colombia and illegal armed groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), paramilitaries, and criminal narco-trafficking networks. Colombia registered 143,116 IDPs in 2011 and with each year, the cumulative total of IDPs continues to grow. In surrounding countries, including Ecuador, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Panama, there are over 400,000 Colombian asylum seekers, refugees, and persons in refugee-like situations.

The number of Colombian asylum seekers, refugees, and persons of concern in neighboring countries continues to rise. Ecuador has the highest number of recognized Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in Latin America. The government of Ecuador has recognized 56,190 refugees, and there are currently 16,000 asylum claims pending. The asylum process in Ecuador is slow and difficult to access, and the refugee approval rate is around 30 percent. In 2011, the government of Ecuador added a pre-admissibility step to the refugee status determination (RSD) process, which has created additional delays. Asylum seekers pending RSD can wait up to a year for a decision and have no legal right to work in the interim. UNHCR participates in the asylum process but has highlighted a deteriorating protection environment in Ecuador for refugees, citing

labor exploitation, a more active presence of illegal armed groups and criminal gangs, forced recruitment of minors, and increasing xenophobia and discrimination. Other countries in the region, such as Costa Rica, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Panama, also have established asylum procedures, but the registration and determination procedures are often implemented ineffectively. UNHCR is working with these countries, including Ecuador, to improve their asylum processes. In Panama, there are approximately 1,400 recognized refugees (mainly Colombians). In 2011, the government of Panama passed Law 356 granting over 900 Colombian refugees living in the Darien Province with Temporary Humanitarian Protection status the ability to apply for permanent residency and work permits. In Costa Rica, there are approximately 13,000 recognized refugees. Under a new migration law, Costa Rica re-established its Refugee Department in March 2010. There are approximately 3,000 recognized refugees in Venezuela, and UNHCR estimates there are another 200,000 persons living in a refugee-like situation in the country. In Brazil, there are over 4,000 recognized refugees from 75 different countries; the largest numbers are from Angola and Colombia.

In 2002, the United States began a Priority 1 resettlement program for vulnerable Colombian refugees located in Ecuador and Costa Rica. Most Colombian refugees have fled the roughly 50-year armed conflict as a result of persecution for political opinion by either left-wing guerilla or right-wing paramilitary groups. Processing delays that confronted individuals who had provided “material support” under duress to the FARC, ELN, and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia have been resolved with the issuance of exemptions in 2007.

The United States continues to support UNHCR’s efforts to help governments in the Caribbean address the needs of Haitian refugees and asylum seekers.

Religious Freedom

In Latin America, religious freedom is widely recognized and enjoyed; however, significant restrictions remain in place in Cuba. Although the Cuban constitution recognizes the right of citizens to profess and practice any religious belief within the framework of respect for the law, the government continued to engage in active surveillance of religious institutions. Through an in-country program, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program offers the opportunity for legal migration to the United States for Cubans who have been persecuted on a number of grounds, including because of their religious beliefs.

Manifestations of anti-Semitism occur throughout Latin America – particularly in South America. In Venezuela, anti-Semitism is government-sponsored, widespread, and increasing. Manifestations of anti-Semitism in Venezuela include incitement by government media and government leaders including Hugo Chavez, an inability to import religiously required food items, and verbal and physical harassments. The Jewish community in Venezuela is a vestige of its former self with members fleeing Venezuela out of fear that the situation will worsen after the October elections.

Voluntary Repatriation

Given the threats and violence in Colombia from illegal armed groups (non-state actors) and the lack of state presence to provide full protection in some areas, UNHCR does not actively promote repatriation of Colombian refugees.

Local Integration

The governments of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela have maintained policies that theoretically allow Colombians in need of protection to obtain asylum and integrate locally, although the processes involved are usually slow and cumbersome. The governments' capacity to review applications and confer refugee status remains limited. Even registered refugees with the right to work in these countries struggle to find stable employment or income opportunities, competing with the large number of poor in host communities. Colombians seeking international protection face rising levels of discrimination and xenophobia, and the ability to locally integrate in some areas is becoming more difficult. Furthermore, refugees do not live in camps, but rather the large majority live in urban areas. Additionally, some Colombian persons of concern (including refugees and asylum seekers) in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Venezuela continue to experience harassment by persons associated with armed Colombian groups operating in these countries. The refugee status determination process in Costa Rica showed some improvement in recent years, but delays in recognition and documentation still exist. For asylum seekers in Panama, the situation is complicated, as the government continues to be reluctant to receive Colombian refugees or confer even minimal protection. Security remains a major concern for the government of Panama, and Panamanians often equate refugees with drug trafficking and crime.

The Department of State is currently supporting UNHCR's efforts to assist the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean countries in developing systems for conducting refugee status determinations for asylum seekers, including Haitians. The opening of a UNHCR office in the Dominican Republic in 2010 and the agency's continued presence in Haiti have contributed greatly to its ability to address the protection needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, and displaced and

stateless persons in mixed migration flows throughout the region. In FY2012, UNHCR undertook a refugee mapping initiative through which the organization identified 200 households with 860 asylum seekers and 49 refugee households in need of assistance in the Dominican Republic.

Third and In-Country Resettlement

In the past, local integration had been the solution best suited to regional refugee problems in Latin America. In recent years, however, third-country resettlement has become an important alternative for those who face physical risks and have urgent protection needs. Canada and the United States offer resettlement to at-risk Colombian refugees. Currently, the United States accepts referrals from UNHCR and embassies in the region and processes these cases principally in Ecuador and Costa Rica, with occasional cases in Panama and other countries throughout the region. Under the “Solidarity Resettlement Program,” a component of the Mexico Plan of Action which sought regional solutions to the Colombian refugee issue, countries in the region including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are working with UNHCR to resettle limited numbers of Colombian refugees. As noted earlier, the Department of State is providing technical support to bolster Uruguay’s resettlement program.

The United States also facilitates the resettlement to third countries of persons interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard or who enter Guantanamo Naval Station directly and who are found by DHS/USCIS to have a well-founded fear of persecution or to be more likely than not to face torture if repatriated to their country of origin. From 1996 to 2012, 358 such protected persons have been resettled to 20 countries worldwide. Twenty-seven have been resettled in FY2012 (as of May 31).

The U.S. government continues to operate an in-country refugee resettlement program in Cuba. We have taken steps to ensure all Cubans eligible for consideration have access to the program and that approved refugees travel as soon as possible. The number of persons seeking refugee resettlement remains high and there is a substantial backlog of cases pending review, an unknown number of which are likely ineligible for the program. Additional resources are being applied to address the backlogged cases, and we expect the backlog will continue to decrease by the end of FY 2013. Recent upgrades to the refugee annex have been completed, thus allowing the mission to expand the Cultural Orientation program for approved applicants. Unfortunately, the Cuban government interferes with USRAP’s communications with some individuals, causing delays, misunderstandings, or misinformation. Some approved refugees do not have sufficient funds to pay for the medical exams, passports, and exit permits needed to depart Cuba. Others are refused exit permission by the Cuban government.

Cubans currently eligible to apply for admission to the United States through the in-country program include the following:

1. Former political prisoners;
2. Members of persecuted religious minorities;
3. Human rights activists;
4. Forced labor conscripts (1965-68);
5. Persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatment resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs; and
6. Persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship – family or social – to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

FY 2012 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate admitting close to 2,500 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean during FY 2012. Cubans comprise the overwhelming majority of refugees resettled from the region. Historically, most Cuban admissions were former political prisoners and forced labor conscripts. The program was expanded in 1991 to include human rights activists, displaced professionals, and others with claims of persecution, which currently comprise the majority of admissions. We expect roughly 100 Colombian refugees to be admitted to the United States during FY 2012.

FY 2013 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed 5,000 ceiling for Latin America and the Caribbean for FY 2013 comprises Cuban refugees eligible for the in-country Priority 2 program; a small number of UNHCR-referred Priority 1 Colombians; as well as a small number of Priority 3 family reunification cases.

Proposed FY 2013 Latin America program to include arrivals from the following categories:

<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>400</i>
<i>Priority 2 (In-Country Cubans)</i>	<i>4,550</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i><u>50</u></i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>5,000</i>

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Near East/South Asia region remains host to millions of refugees, primarily Iraqis, Palestinians, Afghans, Iranians, Tibetans, Sri Lankans, Bhutanese, and now Syrians. Few countries in the region are party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol. Nonetheless, many host governments tolerate the presence of refugees within their borders.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Program, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and other humanitarian organizations work with refugees in the region. Some countries have provided long-term protection and/or asylum, mainly to Tibetans, Bhutanese, Sri Lankans, Palestinians, Afghans, Somalis, and a handful of other nationalities. Refugees identified by UNHCR for third-country resettlement include Iraqis in Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and the Gulf States; Bhutanese in Nepal; Afghans in Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and India; and Iranians in Turkey.

As of May 31, 2012, 150,766 Iraqi refugees were registered with UNHCR. There is no internationally agreed-upon definitive number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons due to the fact that not all are registered with UNHCR and they are dispersed throughout the region. UNHCR reports that approximately 1.3 million Iraqis displaced by sectarian violence following the Samarra Mosque bombing of February 2006 remain internally displaced. Approximately 35,300 refugees (including Palestinians and Iranian Kurds) and 4,300 asylum seekers remain in Iraq, as well as an additional 13,587 displaced Syrians and Syrian Kurds.

The situation in Syria remains fluid. As of August 9, 2012, there were approximately 140,000 displaced to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. The continued violence in Syria is causing continued displacement, both internally as well as to neighboring countries. The United States government is providing

assistance to displaced Syrians throughout the region through support to international organizations, such as UNHCR, the International Committee for the Red Cross, and the World Food Program, as well as through non-governmental organizations, which are providing critical assistance such as food, water shelter, and medical care. As of August 9, the United States government had provided over \$76 million in critical humanitarian assistance.

Despite the voluntary repatriation of over 5.7 million Afghan refugees since 2002, Pakistan and Iran continue to host, respectively, approximately 1.7 million and one million registered Afghans, many of whom have resided in these countries for decades. The maintenance of asylum and protection space for those refugees who cannot yet return to Afghanistan, while continuing to support voluntary repatriation is a top priority for the U.S. government and for UNHCR. In addition to Afghan refugees, some 2-3 million Afghans are believed to live and work in Pakistan and Iran as economic migrants without documentation. Over 10,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers are also registered with UNHCR in India. Identifying durable solutions remains an important component of UNHCR's strategy in India. Local integration remains a difficult option due to opposition from host countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India.

Thousands of ethnic Nepalis in Bhutan were forced out of Bhutan in the early 1990s as a result of the Bhutanese government's policy of "one nation and one people" (also referred to as "Bhutanization"). Despite 15 rounds of formal negotiations between Bhutan and Nepal, and pressure from the United States and other governments to resolve the issue and secure the right of return for genuine Bhutanese nationals, to date none have been permitted to return. Due to concerted resettlement efforts commenced in 2008 by the United States and other resettlement countries, more than 65,000 of the original population of 108,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have departed after spending two decades in camps in eastern Nepal.

Religious Freedom

Persecution of religious groups is common in certain countries in the Middle East and South Asia that are countries of origin for refugee populations entering the United States. State and local government responses to violence against religious groups, particularly Muslims and Christians, are often inadequate.

In Afghanistan, religious freedom is limited due to constitutional contradictions, legislative ambiguity, and interpretations of Islamic law that punish apostasy and blasphemy.

In India, five of the 28 state governments have anti-conversion laws that negatively affect religious minorities. Additionally, there have been instances where local police and enforcement agencies have not been swift to counter communal attacks against religious minorities.

In Pakistan, the penal code includes blasphemy laws that carry punishments ranging from imprisonment to the death penalty. Frequent abuses of these laws negatively affect religious minorities, both Muslims and non-Muslims. In early 2011, two senior government officials were killed after speaking out against the abuse of the blasphemy laws against minorities and others remain under threat from violent extremists.

In Maldives, religious freedom is severely restricted by the government. Citizens are prohibited from practicing any religion other than Islam. There has been an increase in the use of political rhetoric, including anti-Semitic statements by some political leaders, and there is concern over increasing religious extremism.

In Sri Lanka, religious tensions continue to be a problem, and Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities often distrust one another. Incidents such as sporadic attacks against the Christian community, and the destruction of a Muslim shrine by Buddhist monks in late 2011 exacerbate such tensions.

In Iran, all non-Shia religious groups including Sunni Muslims, Bahai's, Sufis, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians, continue to face discrimination, harassment, and arrest. Members of the Shia community who express religious views different from those of the government are also subject to harassment and intimidation.

In some countries in the region, most notably Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Egypt, blasphemy, apostasy, and defamation of religion laws have been used to restrict religious liberty, constrain the rights of religious minorities, and limit freedom of expression and those accused face threats of societal violence. Under these governments' interpretations of Islamic law, perpetrators may be denied their civil rights if any member of society files a complaint against them. Sharia courts decide personal status cases in most countries in the region. In Iran, judges in these courts often rule against converts and members of minority religious groups by annulling marriages, transferring child custody, conveying property rights to Muslim family members, depriving individuals of their civil rights, and declaring them wards of the state without any religious identity. Iran and Saudi Arabia are designated by the Department of State as CPCs under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom.

One of the greatest impacts of violence in Iraq has been on Iraq's small religious minority communities. These minorities, including Christians, Yazidis, Sabeen-Mandaeans, and others, have experienced wide-scale displacement – in some cases affecting as much as 90 percent of their population over the past eight years. Some 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees are members of religious minorities, a figure appreciably larger than their percentage of the overall Iraqi population. As a result, some of these religious communities, along with their ancient languages and customs, are on the verge of disappearing.

In Bhutan, Buddhism is the state's "spiritual heritage," although in the southern areas many citizens openly practice Hinduism. While subtle pressure on non-Buddhists to observe the traditional Buddhist values and some limitations on constructing non-Buddhist religious buildings remain, the government has taken steps to improve religious freedom in the country. Some societal pressures toward non-Buddhists are reflected in official and unofficial efforts to uphold the "spiritual heritage" (Buddhism) of the country.

The USRAP provides resettlement access in various ways to refugees who suffer religious persecution. Under the Specter Amendment, Iranian religious minorities designated as Priority 2 category members are considered under a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution. Iranian refugees have also gained access to the program through Priority 3. In addition, the USRAP accepts UNHCR and embassy referrals of religious minorities of various nationalities in the region. Nationals of any country, including CPCs, may be referred to the U.S. program by UNHCR or a U.S. embassy for reasons of religious persecution.

Voluntary Repatriation

After the fall of the Taliban, voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan proceeded on a massive scale for several years, both with and without UNHCR assistance. Since 2002, over 5.7 million Afghan refugees have returned, mostly from Pakistan and Iran. Over 4.4 million were assisted by UNHCR in the largest repatriation operation in UNHCR's history. However, the era of mass returns has largely ended, with about 112,000 returning in 2010 and 68,000 returning in 2011. The substantial repatriation represents roughly a 20 percent increase in Afghanistan's total population and has taxed the country's capacity to absorb additional refugee returns.

It is unlikely that all of the remaining 2.7 million registered Afghans in Pakistan and Iran will repatriate. As of May 31, 2012, UNHCR reports that only 13,295 Afghans have repatriated thus far this year. UNHCR and IOM's

assessment is that the continuing migration of Afghans in both directions across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is part of a larger process of economic and social migration that has been occurring for centuries. Many of the Afghans choosing to stay in Pakistan are no longer seeking refuge from violence or persecution. They are, rather, seeking economic opportunities, fleeing poverty, visiting family, or remaining in place until the absorptive capacity for returnees to Afghanistan improves. UNHCR is working with the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the international community to develop policies and programs to sustain voluntary returns, while also better managing the residual Afghan population in Pakistan by working towards longer-term protection and migration solutions. IOM is seeking a greater role in border management and in developing regional mechanisms for economic migration that would bolster protection for Afghans.

Since 2008, over 978,000 IDPs and refugees have returned to their homes in Iraq, with IDPs comprising the vast majority of these returns. Over 85 percent of all returns have been to Baghdad and Diyala, a province northeast of Baghdad. This trend generally matches displacement patterns as over 80 percent of all IDPs and 70 percent of all refugees were displaced from those locations. UNHCR assesses that the conditions for promoting large-scale return of refugees to Iraq in conditions of safety and dignity are not yet in place. UNHCR is working with some Iraqis in neighboring countries on an individual basis to facilitate voluntary returns to Iraq. In 2011, some 67,000 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq and registered for assistance through the Iraqi government or UNHCR. Through June 2012, 23,000 refugees have returned from Syria and 39,650 refugees have returned to Iraq from other locations.

The United States continues to work with other interested governments in urging the government of Bhutan to allow for the voluntary repatriation of Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan under acceptable terms and conditions. With the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka, the number of Tamils seeking to return has grown. In the first quarter of 2012, UNHCR assisted in the voluntary return of 408 Tamils to Sri Lanka.

Local Integration

Few countries in the region offer local integration to refugees. UNHCR, together with the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran agreed to a *Solutions Strategy for Afghan refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration, and Assistance to Host Countries* which provides for the orderly, voluntary return of Afghan refugees and emphasizes the need to fully reintegrate returned refugees into their communities. In March 2010, the government of Pakistan approved the Afghan Management Strategy, which

officially permits Afghan Proof of Registration (POR) cardholders to remain in Pakistan through 2012. Pakistan has not indicated what will happen when POR cards expire, but the U.S. will continue to seek opportunities to promote local integration options. In partnership with the government of Pakistan and UNDP, UNHCR launched the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative in 2009. This five-year program aims to address Afghan refugee and Pakistani host community needs by rehabilitating areas that have been adversely affected by the presence of Afghan refugee communities over the past 30 years. The RAHA initiative is widely regarded as a success and will be expanded into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in 2012.

Stabilizing the displaced Afghan population – e.g., reintegrating returning refugees and IDPs into the Afghan society, preserving asylum space for refugees in neighboring countries – is critical to regional stability, as well as addressing irregular migration. Through a unique quadripartite consultative process, the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and UNHCR have agreed on a multi-year regional strategy, endorsed by the international community in May 2012 to address assistance to Afghan refugees and returnees, emphasizing cross-border linkages.

Syria hosted nearly 90,000 UNHCR-registered Iraqi refugees as of May 31, 2012. Iraqis do not need a visa to enter Syria. They receive a stamp upon entry, which allows for six months of residence and should be renewed at the local government offices. Because of the continuing violence in Syria, many Iraqis have fled the country. The government of Jordan requires visas for Iraqis and has instituted an additional visa category for Iraqis coming to Jordan since unrest broke out in Syria in 2011. Few Iraqis are receiving these visas, but UNHCR nevertheless reports some Iraqi arrivals from Syria and the government of Jordan continues to preserve first asylum and protection space for Iraqi refugees and remains a generous host.

Iraqis in Syria and Jordan are not legally defined as refugees, but rather as guests. Both governments allow UNHCR to register Iraqis. With help from the international community, the governments of Syria and Jordan have allowed Iraqi students to enroll in public schools. However, enrollments in both countries have been lower than anticipated. Recently, Iraqi school children in Syria have become targets of harassment. In both Syria and Jordan, Iraqi refugees have access to the public health care systems. Although the government of Jordan has granted access to several legal labor sectors to Iraqis, few have obtained work permits. Iraqis do not have access to the legal labor market in Syria.

In an acknowledgement that many Iraqi IDPs will not be able to return to their home communities, and instead require support integrating into their areas of displacement, the government of Iraq recently announced the provision of a new 2.5 million dinar grant (\$2,100) for IDPs who choose local integration. UNHCR and other international partners are also seeking to support local integration as a viable option for IDPs, but they point out that, in addition to the integration grant, it will be important for displaced Iraqis to be able to access services in their areas of displacement.

While Turkey ratified the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and acceded to its 1967 Protocol, the Turkish government acceded to the Protocol with a geographic limitation acknowledging refugees only from Europe. While most asylum seekers are thus not considered refugees under Turkish law, the Turkish government grants temporary refuge and temporary local integration possibilities to refugees recognized by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), usually pending their referral to a potential resettlement country. As of February 2012, there were 25,220 persons registered with UNHCR Turkey, the majority from Iraq (10,863) and Iran (5,488). In addition to the Syrian influx into Turkey over the past year, Turkey has also seen substantial, increased arrivals of Iraqis and Iranians. UNHCR-recognized refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey are assigned to one of 51 satellite cities. Provincial governments are responsible for meeting their basic needs, including by providing access to employment, healthcare, and education although support varies from one location to another.

Despite the steadily increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees, India does not have a clear national policy for the treatment of refugees, and UNHCR has no formal status in the country. In New Delhi, urban refugees face difficult conditions, including discrimination and harassment by the local population, limiting their local integration prospects. India recognizes and aids certain groups, including Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans in the 115 settlements for Sri Lankans and 39 settlements for Tibetans located throughout the country. Many Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils in India are permitted some work opportunities within the informal economy and receive some social benefits. India also permits UNHCR to assist other so-called urban refugees in New Delhi, primarily Burmese, Afghans, and Somalis.

UNHCR has negotiated an agreement with the government of India whereby India would facilitate access to citizenship for Hindu and Sikh Afghan refugees who meet the standard criteria to acquire Indian citizenship, while UNHCR would pursue resettlement opportunities for other long-staying ethnic Afghan refugees. Naturalization clinics were established to support the citizenship process for Hindu and Sikh Afghans, and UNHCR intensified its efforts to ensure that all eligible

refugees had submitted applications for Indian citizenship by December 31, 2009. As a result, some 600 Afghans have naturalized, with another 2,000-3,000 currently in the process.

Third-Country Resettlement

The USRAP anticipates the continued large-scale processing of Iraqis, Bhutanese, and, to a lesser extent, Iranians, during FY 2013.

The United States recognizes that the possibility of third-country resettlement must be available to the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees, and has processing facilities in Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul. While most Iraqis gain access to the USRAP via a referral from UNHCR, we are also facilitating direct access to the USRAP for Iraqis with close U.S. affiliations in those processing locations where hosting governments permit. The passage of the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, enacted January 28, 2008, created new categories of Iraqis who are eligible for direct access (P-2) to the USRAP, both inside and outside Iraq. Currently, beneficiaries of P-2 categories who may seek access to the USRAP in Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq include:

1. Iraqis who work/worked on a full-time basis as interpreters/translators for the U.S. government, MNF-I in Iraq, or U.S. Forces-Iraq;
2. Iraqis who are/were employed by the U.S. government in Iraq;
3. Iraqis who are/were employees of an organization or entity closely associated with the U.S. mission in Iraq that has received U.S. government funding through an official and documented contract, award, grant or cooperative agreement;
4. Iraqis who are/were employed in Iraq by a U.S.-based media organization or non-governmental organization;
5. Spouses, sons, daughters, parents, and siblings of individuals described in the four categories above, or of an individual eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa as a result of his/her employment by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq, including if the individual is no longer alive, provided that the relationship is verified; and
6. Iraqis who are the spouses, sons, daughters, parents, brothers, or sisters of a citizen of the United States, or who are the spouses or unmarried sons or daughters of a Permanent Resident Alien of the United States, as established by their being or becoming beneficiaries of approved family-based I-130 Immigrant Visa Petitions.

The United States has increased its in-country processing capacity nearly 200 percent since establishing a Resettlement Support Center in Baghdad in FY 2008 and looks to continue to expand that capacity in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Although security and logistical challenges associated with operating an RSC in Iraq limit in-country processing capacity, it is likely that refugee admissions from Iraq will soon exceed those from some neighboring countries. Refugee processing in Iraq is a high priority for the United States as it directly benefits Iraqis associated with U.S. efforts in Iraq. DHS continues to devote substantial resources to Iraqi refugee processing and maintains a robust interview schedule in the region.

Middle Eastern and South Asian refugees in most of Europe avail themselves of the asylum systems of the countries in which they are located. In Vienna, however, certain Iranian religious minorities (Baha'is, Zoroastrians, Jews, Mandaean, and Christians) may be processed for U.S. resettlement using special procedures authorized by the government of Austria. Though RSC Vienna has experienced a marked decrease in new applications since FY 2008, FY2011 saw an increase in new applications with the expiration of Lautenberg legislation in May 2011. The Lautenberg legislation was subsequently re-authorized in December, 2011, allowing new applications to be filed and be adjudicated under Lautenberg guidelines. The United States also processes Iranian religious minorities (primarily Baha'i) and other Iranians in Turkey through special procedures involving fast-track refugee status determination and referral by UNHCR.

Resettlement processing for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal is continuing smoothly and the United States remains committed to considering for resettlement as many refugees as express interest. As of April 2012, UNHCR had referred over 90,000 Bhutanese refugees for resettlement to a host of countries and more than 65,000 of these Bhutanese refugees have been resettled to the United States and other countries since 2008.

Although U.S. resettlement processing in Pakistan resumed in 2009, the number of Afghan refugees referred by UNHCR remains low due to the impact of the uncertain security situation on UNHCR and U.S. government resettlement efforts. UNHCR currently refers some 400 individuals per year from India, with priority given to those they deem most vulnerable. The majority of referrals are Burmese. UNHCR also refers a small number of refugees out of Sri Lanka. We continue to explore modalities for processing vulnerable Tibetan refugees in the region.

FY 2012 U.S. Admissions

We estimate the admission of approximately 30,000 refugees from the region in FY 2012. These will include some 15,000 Bhutanese, 12,000 Iraqis, 3,000 Iranians and several hundred Afghans, including a small group of women who had been living in Iran processed through the UNHCR Emergency Transit Center in Slovakia.

FY 2013 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed regional ceiling for refugees from the Near East and South Asia for FY 2013 is 31,000, including vulnerable Iraqis, Bhutanese, Iranians, Pakistanis, and Afghans. We expect individual UNHCR referrals of various religious and ethnic groups in the region, including Assyrians, Mandeans, and Iranian Kurds. In addition, Ahmadi Muslims in many locations and Afghans in the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere will be included. Small numbers of Iraqi and other refugee groups who fled Libya are also scheduled for processing.

Proposed FY 2013 Near East/ South Asia program to include arrivals from the following categories:

<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>13,500</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>17,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>500</i>
<i><u>Total Proposed Ceiling</u></i>	<i><u>31,000</u></i>

DOMESTIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

In FY 2011, the USRAP admitted 56,424 refugees from 58 countries. More than half were originally from either Burma or Bhutan. (See Table III.)

The demographic characteristics of refugee arrivals from the 20 largest source countries (representing 100 percent of total arrivals) in FY 2011 illustrate the variation among refugee groups. The median age of all FY 2011 arrivals was 24 years and ranged from 17 years for arrivals from the Central African Republic to 36 years of age for arrivals from Iran. In FY 2011, 47.8 percent of all arriving refugees were female and 52.2 percent of all arriving refugees were male. Males predominated among refugees from Eritrea (73.8 percent), Sudan (60.8 percent), and Palestine (60.3 percent). (See Table IV.)

Of the total arrivals in FY 2011, some 9.4 percent were under the age of five, 24.8 percent were of school age, 66.3 percent were of working age, and 3.5 percent were of retirement age. (See Table V.) Considerable variation among refugee groups can be seen among specific age categories. Refugees under the age of five ranged from a high of 16.5 percent among Central African Republic arrivals to a low of 2.8 percent of those from Iran. The number of school-aged children (from five to 17 years of age) varied from a high of over 47.2 percent of arrivals from the Central African Republic to a low of 11.4 percent of those from Iran. The number of working-aged refugees (16 to 64 years of age) varied from a high of 84.3 percent of those from Eritrea to a low of 40.7 percent of individuals from the Central African Republic. Retirement-aged refugees (65 years or older) ranged from a high of 9.9 percent of arrivals from Iran to a low of less than one percent of those from Burundi and Rwanda.

During FY 2011, 63 percent of all arriving refugees resettled in 12 states. The majority were placed in Texas (10 percent), followed by California (8.8 percent), New York (6.3 percent), Pennsylvania (5.3 percent), Florida (5.2 percent), Georgia (4.7 percent), and Michigan (4.6 percent). The states of Arizona (3.8 percent), Washington (3.8 percent), North Carolina (3.8 percent), Illinois (3.4 percent,) and Minnesota (3.3 percent) also were in the top twelve states where refugees were resettled. (See Table VI.)

TABLE III
Refugee Arrivals By Country of Origin
Fiscal Year 2011

Country of Origin	Arrival Number	% of Total
Afghanistan	428	0.76%
Angola	2	0.00%
Bhutan	14,999	26.58%
Burma	16,972	30.08%
Burundi	110	0.19%
Cambodia	5	0.01%
Central African Republic	182	0.32%
Chad	25	0.04%
China	28	0.05%
Colombia	46	0.08%
Congo	27	0.05%
Cuba	2,920	5.18%
Dem. Rep. Congo	977	1.73%
Egypt	6	0.01%
Eritrea	2,032	3.60%
Ethiopia	560	0.99%
Former Soviet Union*	1,226	2.17%
Gabon	3	0.01%
Gambia	7	0.01%
Ghana	1	0.00%
Guatemala	5	0.01%
Guinea	1	0.00%
Guinea-Bissau	4	0.01%
Honduras	5	0.01%
India	5	0.01%
Indonesia	1	0.00%
Iran	2,032	3.60%
Iraq	9,388	16.64%
Ivory Coast	7	0.01%
Jordan	3	0.01%

Kenya	1	0.00%
Korea, North	23	0.04%
Kuwait	5	0.01%
Laos	211	0.37%
Lebanon	2	0.00%
Liberia	121	0.21%
Libya	1	0.00%
Malaysia	4	0.01%
Mauritania	3	0.01%
Nepal	10	0.02%
Netherlands	1	0.00%
Nigeria	1	0.00%
Pakistan	54	0.10%
Palestine	136	0.24%
Rwanda	74	0.13%
Senegal	1	0.00%
Sierra Leone	28	0.05%
Somalia	3,161	5.60%
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	69	0.12%
Sudan	334	0.59%
Sweden	1	0.00%
Syria	29	0.05%
Thailand	4	0.01%
Togo	5	0.01%
Tunisia	1	0.00%
Uganda	10	0.02%
Vietnam	119	0.21%
Zimbabwe	8	0.01%
TOTAL	56,424	100.00%

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE IV

Median Age and Gender of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2011

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Refugees Admitted	Median Age	% Females	% Males
1	Burma	16,972	22	46.64%	53.36%
2	Bhutan	14,999	28	49.58%	50.42%
3	Iraq	9,388	28	47.99%	52.01%
4	Somalia	3,161	21	54.35%	45.65%
5	Cuba	2,920	35	49.73%	50.27%
6	Eritrea	2,032	25	26.23%	73.77%
7	Iran	2,032	36	50.10%	49.90%
8	Former Soviet Union*	1,226	29	51.96%	48.04%
9	Dem. Rep. Congo	977	19	51.48%	48.52%
10	Ethiopia	560	24	46.61%	53.39%
11	Afghanistan	428	23	49.77%	50.23%
12	Sudan	334	22	39.22%	60.78%
13	Laos	211	20	45.02%	54.98%
14	Central African Republic	182	17	50.00%	50.00%
15	Palestine	136	26	39.71%	60.29%
16	Liberia	121	22	52.07%	47.93%
17	Vietnam	119	24	53.78%	46.22%
18	Burundi	110	21	45.45%	54.55%
19	Rwanda	74	22	47.30%	52.70%
20	Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	69	23	40.58%	59.42%
21	All Other Countries	373	27	44.50%	55.50%
TOTAL		56,424	24	47.80%	52.20%

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE V
Select Age Categories of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2011

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Under 5 Yrs	School Age (5-17)	Working Age (16-64)	Retirement Age (=or > 65)
1	Burma	13.29%	28.38%	60.89%	1.26%
2	Bhutan	7.59%	22.41%	69.25%	5.10%
3	Iraq	8.77%	21.70%	68.34%	4.43%
4	Somalia	9.90%	34.67%	59.70%	0.70%
5	Cuba	3.84%	20.03%	71.92%	6.92%
6	Eritrea	4.43%	12.99%	84.30%	0.64%
7	Iran	2.76%	11.42%	78.79%	9.89%
8	Former Soviet Union*	10.52%	24.88%	60.52%	8.40%
9	Dem. Rep. Congo	10.95%	40.23%	55.48%	0.20%
10	Ethiopia	10.89%	25.00%	67.68%	0.36%
11	Afghanistan	6.31%	33.64%	66.36%	0.93%
12	Sudan	13.17%	28.14%	59.58%	1.20%
13	Laos	9.00%	43.60%	50.24%	2.37%
14	Central African Republic	16.48%	47.25%	40.66%	0.55%
15	Palestine	10.29%	26.47%	66.18%	3.68%
16	Liberia	4.96%	42.15%	58.68%	4.13%
17	Vietnam	3.36%	38.66%	63.87%	0.84%
18	Burundi	11.82%	26.36%	67.27%	0.00%
19	Rwanda	9.46%	43.24%	54.05%	0.00%
20	Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	8.70%	26.09%	65.22%	1.45%
21	All Other Countries	5.90%	30.56%	68.90%	1.34%
TOTAL		9.35%	24.76%	66.32%	3.49%

NOTE: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to overlapping age categories.

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE VI**Refugee Arrivals By State of Initial Resettlement, Fiscal Year 2011**

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
Alabama	89	0	89	0.16%
Alaska	87	0	87	0.15%
Arizona	2,168	0	2,168	3.84%
Arkansas	3	0	3	0.01%
California	4,987	0	4,987	8.84%
Colorado	1,557	0	1,557	2.76%
Connecticut	447	0	447	0.79%
Delaware	16	0	16	0.03%
District of Columbia	33	0	33	0.06%
Florida	2,906	0	2,906	5.15%
Georgia	2,636	0	2,636	4.67%
Idaho	730	0	730	1.29%
Illinois	1,937	0	1,937	3.43%
Indiana	1,191	0	1,191	2.11%
Iowa	331	0	331	0.59%
Kansas	327	0	327	0.58%
Kentucky	1,363	5	1,368	2.42%
Louisiana	271	0	271	0.48%
Maine	197	0	197	0.35%
Maryland	1,283	0	1,283	2.27%
Massachusetts	1,544	4	1,548	2.74%
Michigan	2,588	0	2,588	4.59%
Minnesota	1,841	0	1,841	3.26%
Mississippi	2	0	2	0.00%
Missouri	941	0	941	1.67%
Nebraska	734	4	738	1.31%
Nevada	325	0	325	0.58%
New Hampshire	517	0	517	0.92%
New Jersey	378	5	383	0.68%
New Mexico	155	0	155	0.27%

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
New York	3,529	0	3,529	6.25%
North Carolina	2,120	8	2,128	3.77%
North Dakota	362	0	362	0.64%
Ohio	1,691	0	1,691	3.00%
Oklahoma	268	5	273	0.48%
Oregon	763	0	763	1.35%
Pennsylvania	2,972	0	2,972	5.27%
Rhode Island	157	0	157	0.28%
South Carolina	142	0	142	0.25%
South Dakota	490	0	490	0.87%
Tennessee	1,241	0	1,241	2.20%
Texas	5,627	9	5,636	9.99%
Utah	838	0	838	1.49%
Vermont	361	0	361	0.64%
Virginia	1,333	0	1,333	2.36%
Washington	2,137	0	2,137	3.79%
West Virginia	9	0	9	0.02%
Wisconsin	760	0	760	1.35%
Total	56,384	40	56,424	100.00%

Note: Arrival figures do not reflect secondary migration.

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE VII
ESTIMATED FUNDING FOR REFUGEE PROCESSING, MOVEMENT, AND RESETTLEMENT
FY 2012 AND FY 2013 (\$ MILLIONS)

AGENCY	ESTIMATED FY 2012 (BY DEPARTMENT)	ESTIMATED FY 2013 (BY DEPARTMENT)
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY <i>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</i>		
Refugee Processing	\$23.0	\$26.3*
DEPARTMENT OF STATE <i>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</i>		
Refugee Admissions	\$484.2**	\$367***
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES <i>Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement</i>		
Refugee Resettlement	\$508.4****	\$630.4****
TOTAL	\$1,062.0	\$1,064.7

The estimated FY 2013 figures above reflect the President's FY 2013 Budget request and do not include carryover funds from FY 2012, which will be determined at the end of FY 2012.

* Includes new cost factors to reflect Headquarters facilities rent related to the refugee resettlement program and following-to-join refugee processing, in addition to certain ICASS costs.

** Includes FY 2012 MRA appropriation of \$340 million, \$77.5 million in carryover from FY 2011, \$60.7 million projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and \$6 million in prior FY recoveries. A portion of these funds will be carried forward into FY 2013.

*** Includes FY 2013 MRA budget request of \$310 million, \$51 million in projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and an estimate of \$6 million in prior year MRA recoveries during FY 2013. Funds carried forward from FY 2012 will also be available in FY 2013.

**** HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) refugee benefits and services are also provided to asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam, victims of a severe form of trafficking who have received certification or eligibility letters from ORR, and certain family members who are accompanying or following to join victims of severe forms of trafficking, and some victims of torture, as well as Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants and their spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21. None of these additional groups is included in the refugee admissions ceiling except Amerasians. This category includes approximately \$16M of carryover funding obligated in FY 2012; it does not include costs associated with the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or Supplemental Security Income programs.

TABLE VIII
UNHCR Resettlement Statistics by Resettlement Country
CY 2011 Admissions

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL RESETTLED
United States*	43,215	70.10%
Canada	6,827	11.07%
Australia	5,597	9.08%
Sweden	1,896	3.08%
Norway	1,258	2.04%
Denmark	606	0.98%
Finland	573	0.93%
Netherlands	479	0.78%
New Zealand	477	0.77%
United Kingdom	424	0.69%
France	42	0.07%
Switzerland	39	0.06%
Ireland	36	0.06%
Portugal	28	0.05%
Argentina	24	0.04%
Brazil	23	0.04%
Chile	22	0.04%
Germany	22	0.04%
Belgium	19	0.03%
Japan	18	0.03%
Paraguay	13	0.02%
Rep. of Korea	11	0.02%
TOTAL	61,649	100.00%

*Includes departures to the U.S. of individuals referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by UNHCR.