



Refugee Council
of Australia

June 19, 2009

UNHCR FIGURES HIGHLIGHT NEED TO SUPPORT REFUGEE HOST COUNTRIES

While Australia's contribution to protecting refugees is significant, the largest numbers of the world's refugees are being hosted by countries much poorer than our own, the Refugee Council of Australia says.

Speaking on the eve of World Refugee Day (Saturday, June 20), Refugee Council CEO Paul Power said new statistics released by UNHCR highlighted that the great majority of the world's refugees seek protection in countries immediately next to their own.

UNHCR's "2008 Global Trends" shows that the countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees include Pakistan (1.78 million), Syria (1.1 million), Iran (980,000), Jordan (500,000), Chad (330,000) and Tanzania (322,000), with Germany (583,000) and the UK (292,000) the only OECD countries in the top ten. Australia is ranked 51st, with 20,919 refugees (0.2% of the global total). In per capita terms for hosting refugees, UNHCR ranks Australia 69th.

The UNHCR figures also reveal that, at the end of 2008, Australia had just 0.3% of the world's asylum seekers, 2,159 out of a global total of 827,323. Of the 535,950 asylum seekers recognised as refugees around the world during 2008, just 1,845 (0.3%) were in Australia.

However, Australia's involvement in refugee resettlement is much more significant. Australia welcomed 11,006 (12.4%) of the 88,800 refugees resettled during 2008, second to the United States which alone conducted 68% of the world's refugee resettlement (60,192 people).

In per capita terms, Australia was first for refugee resettlement and 39th for recognition of asylum seekers as refugees. When refugee recognition and resettlement figures for 2008 are combined, Australia was 12th numerically (12,851 out of 624,750 worldwide) and 17th in per capita terms.

"Australia's geography and its restrictive visa policies mean that the numbers of asylum seekers reaching this country are small in global terms," Mr Power said.

"Given that the great majority of the world's refugees seek asylum in countries within their immediate neighbourhood, a strong commitment by Australia to refugee resettlement is highly appropriate.

"There is a strong need for Australia to continue to advocate for other nations to increase their commitment to refugee resettlement. In 2008, just 0.8% of the world's refugees were resettled.

"These figures put recent debates about asylum seekers arriving by boat in perspective, showing that people movements to Australia are tiny in global terms. They also draw attention to the need for Australia to do everything possible to support humanitarian programs and refugee protection in the nations under greatest pressure from refugee movements."

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The Refugee Council of Australia represents
non-government organisations and
individuals working with and for refugees
in Australia and around the world

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT OF REFUGEES

Statistics from UNHCR's 2008 Global Trends

Refugees and people in refugee-like conditions, 31 December 2008

Overall numbers

	Host country	Total
1	Pakistan	1,780,935
2	Syria	1,105,698
3	Iran	980,109
4	Germany	582,735
5	Jordan	500,413
6	Chad	330,510
7	Tanzania	321,909
8	Kenya	320,605
9	China	300,967
10	United Kingdom	292,097
51	Australia	20,919
	Global total	10,478,621

Australia's global share

0.2%

Refugees to 1000 inhabitants

	Host country	
1	Jordan	79.2
2	Syria	50.5
3	Montenegro	39.6
4	Chad	29.5
5	Iran	13.2
6	Kuwait	12.8
7	Lebanon	11.9
8	Djibouti	10.7
9	Malta	10.6
10	Pakistan	9.8
69	Australia	1.0

Refugees to GDP per capita

	Host country	
1	Pakistan	732.6
2	Dem. Rep. of Congo	496.3
3	Tanzania	262.1
4	Syria	256.6
5	Chad	229.8
6	Kenya	211.2
7	Uganda	143.7
8	Nepal	115.9
9	Jordan	101.6
10	Ethiopia	97.5
79	Australia	0.6

Refugees to 1000 per sq km

	Host country	
1	Malta	13,837.1
2	Syria	5,932.5
3	Jordan	5,553.5
4	Lebanon	4,881.8
5	Netherlands	2,210.6
6	Kuwait	2,209.4
7	Rwanda	2,174.8
8	Pakistan	2,031.0
9	Germany	1,636.9
10	Gambia	1,368.9
113	Australia	2.7

Asylum seeker cases pending, 31 December 2008

Rank	Country of asylum	Total
1	South Africa	227,125
2	United States	69,228
3	Canada	54,202
4	Greece	38,061
5	Austria	36,693
6	Ecuador	33,919
7	France	33,703
8	Germany	33,295
9	Sweden	24,099
10	Switzerland	17,163
44	Australia	2,159
	Global total	827,323

Australia's global share

0.3%

Refugees recognised, 2008

Overall numbers

	Country of asylum	Total
1	Syria	76,791
2	Kenya	68,037
3	Uganda	57,940
4	Yemen	31,853
5	Sudan	28,691
6	India	26,922
7	Cameroon	26,813
8	Chad	17,874
9	Ethiopia	16,935
10	United States	16,742
34	Australia	1,845
	Global total	535,950

Australia's global share

0.3%

Numbers per 1000 inhabitants

	Country of asylum	
1	Syria	3.51
2	Malta	3.46
3	Djibouti	2.60
4	Uganda	1.77
5	Kenya	1.71
6	Chad	1.60
7	Jordan	1.58
8	Cameroon	1.37
9	Yemen	1.35
10	Israel	1.18
39	Australia	0.09

Refugees resettled, 2008

Overall numbers

	Country of arrival	Total
1	United States	60,192
2	Australia	11,006
3	Canada	10,804
4	Sweden	2,209
5	Finland	749
6	New Zealand	741
7	Norway	741
8	United Kingdom	722
9	Netherlands	693
10	Denmark	552
11	Chile	161
12	Ireland	101
13	Argentina	42
14	France	37
15	Iceland	31
16	Brazil	19
	Total	88,800

Numbers per 1000 inhabitants

	Country of arrival	Total
1	Australia	0.52
2	Canada	0.32
3	Sweden	0.24
4	United States	0.19
5	New Zealand	0.17
6	Norway	0.15
7	Finland	0.14
8	Denmark	0.10
9	Iceland	0.10
10	Netherlands	0.04
11	Ireland	0.02
12	United Kingdom	0.01
13	Chile	0.01
14	Argentina	0.00
15	France	0.00
16	Brazil	0.00

Australia's global share 12.4%

Refugees recognised or resettled, 2008

Overall numbers

	Country of asylum or arrival	Total
1	United States	76,934
2	Syria	76,791
3	Kenya	68,037
4	Uganda	57,940
5	Yemen	31,853
6	Sudan	28,691
7	India	26,922
8	Cameroon	26,813
9	Canada	18,358
10	Chad	17,874
11	Ethiopia	16,935
12	Australia	12,851
13	France	11,478
14	Malaysia	11,367
15	Sweden	11,235
16	Italy	10,019
17	Jordan	9,991
18	Turkey	8,646
19	Israel	8,430
20	Germany	7,853
	Other countries	85,732
	Global total	624,750

Numbers per 1000 inhabitants

	Country of asylum or arrival	
1	Syria	3.51
2	Malta	3.46
3	Djibouti	2.60
4	Uganda	1.77
5	Kenya	1.71
6	Chad	1.60
7	Jordan	1.58
8	Cameroon	1.37
9	Yemen	1.35
10	Sweden	1.21
11	Israel	1.18
12	Norway	0.93
13	Switzerland	0.87
14	Luxembourg	0.85
15	Sudan	0.68
16	Austria	0.64
17	Australia	0.60
18	Canada	0.55
19	Libya	0.42
20	Lebanon	0.42

Australia's global share 2.1%