



Refugee Council  
of Australia

23 June 2010

## **UNHCR STATISTICS REVEAL EMPTINESS OF POLITICAL SPIN ABOUT REFUGEES**

Statistics released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) highlight that political scaremongering about asylum seekers entering Australia has little to do with the facts, the Refugee Council of Australia says.

An analysis of UNHCR's 2009 *Global Trends* reveals that just 0.5% of the 1.18 million new asylum applications in 2009 were lodged in Australia.

South Africa received 222,324 people seeking asylum in 2009, with other leading countries for asylum applications being Republic of Congo (95,945), Kenya (87,879), Ethiopia (45,763), France (42,118), Malaysia (40,063), Uganda (36,878), Ecuador (35,514), Yemen (34,471) and Canada (33,970). Australia was ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> for total asylum applications with 6206 new applications in 2009 – 41<sup>st</sup> on a per capita basis and 71<sup>st</sup> relative to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

During 2009, 631,905 asylum seekers were recognised as refugees, with just 3441 (or 0.5%) in Australia. The leading countries for refugee recognition were Republic of Congo (94,126), Kenya (76,133), Ethiopia (42,693), Malaysia (35,524), Yemen (33,541), Chad (33,366), Syria (30,696), Uganda (29,558), Sudan (26,496) and Ecuador (26,342).

The UNHCR report highlights that most of the world's refugees are being protected in countries much poorer than Australia. Of the 10.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, the largest numbers were being hosted by Pakistan (1,740,711), Iran (1,070,488), Syria (1,054,466), Germany (593,799), Jordan (450,756), Kenya (358,928), Chad (338,495) and China (300,989). By contrast, Australia was ranked 47<sup>th</sup>, hosting 22,548 refugees (0.2% of the global total). Australia was 68<sup>th</sup> on a per capita basis and 91<sup>st</sup> relative to national wealth.

Australia continued to perform creditably in refugee resettlement, with the 11,080 refugees resettled from other nations making up 9.9% of the global total of 112,442. The United States alone received 71% of all refugees resettled in 2009 (79,937).

Refugee Council CEO Paul Power said the UNHCR statistics emphasised the myopic and self-serving nature of much of the political debate about asylum seekers in Australia.

"It's disappointing that Australians' natural scepticism of political spin is not being applied to politicians who are trying to create fear and misunderstanding about the numbers of people seeking asylum in this country," Mr Power said.

"Australians must look beyond the hype and scaremongering and understand that just 3441 asylum seekers were given refugee in Australia last year, roughly 1% of total migration to Australia during the year. Every one of those refugees underwent a detailed assessment of their need for protection from persecution, as well as rigorous health and security checks."

UNHCR's report reveals that, at the end of 2009, there were 43.3 million people forcibly displaced by persecution and conflict. Of these, 15.2 million were classified as refugees; 10.4 million were refugees under UNHCR's mandate and 4.8 million were Palestinian refugees under the care of the UN Relief and Works Agency. Another 26 million people were displaced within the boundaries of their own country, while nearly one million people were seeking asylum.

Mr Power said that the UNHCR report highlighted the need for more effective international action to address the needs of refugees in seriously protracted situations. Last year, just 251,000 of the world's 15.2 million refugees had the opportunity to go home and just 112,000 were resettled.

"Unfortunately, refugee resettlement is all too rare around the world, despite the popular myth in Australia that resettlement is the only 'proper' way for refugees to be admitted to a country such as Australia," Mr Power said. "If this mythical global queue for resettlement did actually exist for all of the world's refugees, people joining the back of the queue today would – at current rates of resettlement – have to wait 135 years for a positive outcome.

"UNHCR estimates that 5.5 million refugees are in what it describes as protracted refugee situations, where the period of displacement, often in camps with no freedom of movement, averages close to 20 years.

"The constant political argument about asylum seekers entering Australia, people who haven't been able to find genuine protection elsewhere, is, in the long run, going to undermine international refugee protection efforts. Why should Thailand, with 3.6 million refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people within its borders, treat displaced people properly when Australia, with all its wealth and resources and its annual immigration program of well over 200,000 people a year, cannot graciously accept its role in providing permanent protection to around 3000 or 4000 asylum seekers per year?

"Australians should be asking their political representatives to outline productive responses to the needs of displaced people within the Asia-Pacific region. We need to hear far more from both Government and Opposition about their plans to support development and peace-building programs in countries from which refugees are fleeing, to work with UNHCR and countries of asylum within Asia to improve conditions for asylum seekers and refugees and to support the development of improved refugee determination processes and to outline how Australia can contribute to the expansion of refugee resettlement options."

### 2009 statistics at a glance

#### 43.3 million people displaced, as at 31 December 2009

- **Refugees** **15.2 million**  
(10.4 million under UNHCR mandate, 4.8 million Palestinians under UNRWA mandate)
- **Asylum seekers** **983,420**
- **Internally displaced persons** **27.1 million**

	Global total	Australian total	Australia's share
Refugees under UNHCR mandate	10,396,540	22,548	0.2%
Asylum applications, 2009	1,181,215	6,206	0.5%
Asylum seekers recognised as refugees, 2009	631,905	3,441	0.5%
Refugees resettled from other countries, 2009	112,442	11,080	9.9%
Refugees recognised or resettled, 2009	744,347	14,521	2.0%

**Media enquiries: Kate Gauthier 0414 876 139**

## Refugees and people in refugee-like situations, 2009

Rank	Country of asylum	Total	Per 1000 popn	Rank	Per \$b GDP	Rank	Per 1000 sq k m	Rank
1	Pakistan	1,740,711	9.63	10	4,121.08	16	1,985.1	7
2	Iran	1,070,488	14.43	7	1,329.20	29	659.5	18
3	Syria	1,054,466	48.14	2	11,150.94	4	5,657.6	2
4	Germany	593,799	7.23	18	203.46	54	1,668.0	9
5	Jordan	450,756	71.36	1	13,905.36	3	5,002.5	3
6	Kenya	358,928	9.02	11	5,946.36	11	613.8	19
7	Chad	338,495	30.21	5	20,920.58	2	265.6	32
8	China	300,989	0.22	91	37.97	83	32.1	73
9	United States of America	275,461	0.88	73	19.07	96	29.6	74
10	United Kingdom	269,363	4.38	34	120.90	65	1,104.4	12
11	Bangladesh	228,586	1.41	60	1,010.53	35	1,670.9	8
12	Venezuela	201,313	7.04	19	560.43	40	220.0	36
13	France	196,364	3.15	41	92.18	72	358.8	29
14	Sudan	186,292	4.41	32	2,116.06	25	74.1	56
15	Democratic Republic of Congo	185,809	2.81	43	8,959.83	6	79.5	53
16	India	185,323	0.15	99	56.20	78	58.6	62
17	Yemen	170,854	7.25	17	3,084.40	21	405.8	27
18	Canada	169,434	5.05	27	130.29	62	17.2	82
19	Uganda	127,345	3.89	36	3,465.64	17	525.4	22
20	Ethiopia	121,886	1.47	57	1,714.02	26	107.7	50
21	Tanzania	118,731	2.71	44	2,207.31	23	125.5	45
22	Ecuador	116,557	8.55	14	1,075.36	32	452.9	26
23	Congo, Republic of	111,411	30.25	4	7,788.26	9	324.6	30
24	Nepal	108,461	3.70	38	3,428.62	19	736.5	17
25	Thailand	105,297	1.55	54	192.48	56	203.7	38
26	Cameroon	99,957	5.12	26	2,410.52	22	213.4	37
27	Egypt	94,406	1.14	67	212.90	52	95.9	51
28	Algeria	94,137	2.70	45	403.19	46	40.6	69
29	Serbia	86,351	8.77	13	1,082.12	31	844.8	16
30	Sweden	81,356	8.80	12	237.41	50	182.2	41
31	Netherlands	76,008	4.58	31	112.19	68	2,165.3	5
32	Malaysia	66,137	2.41	48	172.06	58	199.7	39
33	Zambia	56,785	4.39	33	3,261.82	20	75.3	55
34	Italy	54,965	0.92	72	30.24	88	182.5	40
35	Rwanda	54,016	5.40	25	5,399.44	12	2,133.5	6
36	Lebanon	50,413	11.94	9	1,017.93	33	4,881.2	4
37	South Africa	47,974	0.96	70	97.21	71	39.3	70
38	Switzerland	46,203	6.11	22	146.32	60	1,122.7	11
39	Austria	38,906	4.65	30	117.66	66	464.8	24
40	Norway	37,826	7.86	16	147.04	59	118.5	48
41	Iraq	35,218	1.15	66	333.07	49	79.6	52
42	Central African Republic	27,047	6.12	21	8,394.48	7	43.4	68
43	Mauritania	26,795	8.14	15	4,299.58	15	25.7	76
44	Burundi	24,967	3.01	42	8,056.47	8	922.4	14
45	Côte d'Ivoire	24,604	1.17	65	721.44	38	76.1	54
46	Montenegro	24,019	38.48	3	3,453.49	18	..	..
<b>47</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>22,548</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>28.22</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>111</b>
48	Senegal	22,151	1.77	51	1,017.36	34	112.2	49
49	Denmark	20,355	3.72	37	99.65	70	460.4	25
50	Costa Rica	19,116	4.17	35	392.82	48	371.7	28
	Other countries	377,161						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,396,540</b>						

Australia's share 0.22%

Source: 2009 Global Trends, UNHCR

**Asylum applications, 2009 (individual applications and group recognition) [excluding appeals]**

Rank	Country of asylum	Total	Per 1000 popn	Rank	Per \$b GDP	Rank	Per 1000 sq km	Rank
1	South Africa	222,324	4.44	5	450.51	11	181.91	12
2	Congo, Republic of	95,945	26.05	1	6,707.10	2	279.53	8
3	Kenya	87,879	2.21	12	1,455.89	6	150.28	15
4	Ethiopia	45,763	0.55	34	643.54	9	40.45	31
5	France	42,118	0.68	30	19.77	46	76.95	26
6	Malaysia	40,063	1.46	18	104.23	22	120.97	20
7	Uganda	36,878	1.13	22	1,003.62	8	152.16	14
8	Ecuador	35,514	2.61	11	327.65	15	137.99	17
9	Yemen	34,471	1.46	17	622.30	10	81.88	23
10	Canada	33,970	1.01	24	26.12	40	3.46	60
11	Chad	33,503	2.99	9	2,070.64	5	26.29	37
12	Syria	31,761	1.45	19	335.87	14	170.41	13
13	United Kingdom	29,845	0.48	35	13.40	56	122.37	19
14	Germany	27,649	0.34	39	9.47	63	77.66	25
15	Sudan	26,616	0.63	31	302.33	16	10.59	47
16	United States of America	24,550	0.08	67	1.70	112	2.64	72
17	Sweden	24,194	2.62	10	70.60	24	54.17	28
18	Central African Republic	19,476	4.40	6	6,044.69	3	31.27	36
19	Cameroon	17,617	0.90	26	424.84	12	37.62	34
20	Italy	17,603	0.29	40	9.69	62	58.46	27
21	Norway	17,226	3.58	8	66.96	25	53.97	29
22	Belgium	17,186	1.61	16	44.09	33	562.39	3
23	Switzerland	16,005	2.11	13	50.69	29	388.92	5
24	Greece	15,928	1.43	20	46.62	31	120.36	21
25	Austria	15,821	1.89	14	47.85	30	189.02	10
26	Somalia	15,574	1.71	15			24.48	38
27	Netherlands	14,905	0.90	27	22.00	45	424.61	4
28	Poland	10,587	0.28	42	15.84	54	34.06	35
29	Turkey	7,834	0.10	59	8.56	67	10.03	48
30	India	7,274	0.01	126	2.21	103	2.30	77
31	Jordan	7,144	1.13	21	220.38	18	79.28	24
32	Thailand	6,521	0.10	62	11.92	58	12.62	45
<b>33</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>6,206</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>98</b>
34	Finland	5,910	1.11	23	30.88	36	17.66	42
35	Russian Federation	5,701	0.04	78	2.52	99	0.34	118
36	Hungary	4,672	0.47	37	23.79	44	50.32	30
37	Djibouti	4,513	5.22	4	2,400.53	4	207.39	9
38	Burundi	3,950	0.48	36	1,274.60	7	145.93	16
39	Libya	3,918	0.61	32	44.46	32	2.42	75
40	Denmark	3,819	0.70	29	18.70	48	86.38	22
41	Iraq	3,551	0.12	53	33.58	35	8.02	51
42	Indonesia	3,230	0.01	106	3.55	85	1.70	83
43	Egypt	3,204	0.04	81	7.23	73	3.26	65
44	Cyprus	3,201	3.67	7	140.88	20	345.20	6
45	Lebanon	3,155	0.75	28	63.71	28	305.48	7
46	Spain	3,007	0.07	70	2.15	105	5.95	54
47	Venezuela	2,873	0.10	60	8.00	70	3.14	66
48	Ireland	2,689	0.60	33	14.44	55	38.67	33
49	Tajikistan	2,591	0.37	38	198.36	19	18.25	41
50	Malta	2,389	5.85	3	241.48	17	7632.59	1
	Other countries	32,892						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,181,215</b>						

**Australia's share 0.53%**

Source: 2009 Global Trends, UNHCR

## Asylum seekers recognised as refugees, 2009 (group and individual recognition)

Rank	Country of asylum	Total	Per 1000 popn	Rank	Per \$1b GDP	Rank	Per 1000 sq km	Rank
1	Congo, Republic of	94,126	25.56	1	6,579.94	1	274.23	2
2	Kenya	76,133	1.91	7	1,261.29	6	130.19	10
3	Ethiopia	42,693	0.52	21	600.37	10	37.73	21
4	Malaysia	35,524	1.29	11	92.42	17	107.27	12
5	Yemen	33,541	1.42	9	605.51	9	79.67	16
6	Chad	33,366	2.98	5	2,062.18	5	26.18	26
7	Syrian Arab Republic	30,696	1.40	10	324.61	12	164.70	6
8	Uganda	29,558	0.90	15	804.41	8	121.96	11
9	Sudan	26,496	0.63	19	300.96	13	10.54	32
10	Ecuador	26,342	1.93	6	243.03	14	102.35	13
11	United States of America	19,800	0.06	44	1.37	68	2.13	46
12	Central African Republic	19,652	4.44	3	6,099.32	2	31.55	24
13	Cameroon	16,470	0.84	17	397.18	11	35.17	22
14	United Kingdom	12,503	0.20	29	5.61	44	51.26	19
15	Canada	11,154	0.33	24	8.58	39	1.14	56
16	Germany	9,726	0.12	34	3.33	56	27.32	25
17	Italy	9,573	0.16	31	5.27	45	31.79	23
18	Sweden	9,369	1.01	14	27.34	25	20.98	27
19	Netherlands	7,904	0.48	22	11.67	33	225.17	4
20	Thailand	7,265	0.11	36	13.28	32	14.05	30
21	Jordan	6,882	1.09	12	212.30	15	76.38	17
22	Switzerland	6,675	0.88	16	21.14	27	162.20	7
23	Turkey	6,074	0.08	40	6.64	42	7.78	35
24	Norway	4,938	1.03	13	19.20	28	15.47	29
25	Austria	4,783	0.57	20	14.46	31	57.15	18
26	South Africa	4,567	0.09	38	9.25	37	3.74	41
27	Djibouti	3,934	4.55	2	2,092.55	4	180.78	5
<b>28</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>3,441</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>73</b>
29	India	3,297	0.00	99	1.00	76	1.04	58
30	Belgium	2,912	0.27	26	7.47	40	95.29	15
31	Lebanon	2,711	0.64	18	54.74	21	262.49	3
32	Libya	2,645	0.41	23	30.01	24	1.63	50
33	Burundi	2,638	0.32	25	851.24	7	97.46	14
34	Poland	2,591	0.07	41	3.88	52	8.34	34
35	Russian Federation	2,466	0.02	60	1.09	72	0.15	94
36	Egypt	1,876	0.02	56	4.23	47	1.91	48
37	Malta	1,696	4.15	4	171.43	16	5,418.53	1
38	Cyprus	1,428	1.64	8	62.85	20	154.00	8
39	Finland	1,348	0.25	27	7.04	41	4.03	40
40	Iraq	936	0.03	53	8.85	38	2.11	47
41	Tajikistan	912	0.13	33	69.82	19	6.43	36
42	Denmark	828	0.15	32	4.05	48	18.73	28
43	Indonesia	755	0.00	92	0.83	82	0.40	77
44	Malawi	538	0.04	51	47.14	22	4.54	38
45	Japan	531	0.00	87	0.12	118	1.42	53
46	Zimbabwe	522	0.04	47	5,494.74	3	1.33	54
47	Mozambique	508	0.02	57	27.11	26	0.64	66
48	Pakistan	488	0.00	101	1.16	70	0.56	68
49	Costa Rica	455	0.10	37	9.35	36	8.85	33
50	Ireland	394	0.09	39	2.12	63	5.67	37
51	Other countries	6,245						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>631,905</b>						

Australia's share 0.54%

Source: 2009 Global Trends, UNHCR

## Refugee resettlement, 2009

Rank	Country of arrival	Total	Per 1,000 popn		GDP (per \$b)		Per 1000 sq km	
1	United States	79,937	0.254	4	5.54	5	8.59	4
2	Canada	12,457	0.371	2	9.58	2	1.27	14
<b>3</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>11,080</b>	<b>0.520</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13.87</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>13</b>
4	Germany	2,069	0.025	11	0.71	10	5.81	5
5	Sweden	1,936	0.209	5	5.65	4	4.33	7
6	Norway	1,391	0.289	3	5.41	6	4.36	6
7	United Kingdom	955	0.016	13	0.43	13	3.92	8
8	New Zealand	727	0.170	6	6.28	3	2.69	10
9	Finland	724	0.136	7	3.78	7	2.16	11
10	Denmark	433	0.079	8	2.12	8	9.79	3
11	Netherlands	369	0.022	12	0.54	12	10.51	2
12	Ireland	192	0.043	10	1.03	9	2.76	9
13	Belgium	47	0.004	14	0.12	16	1.54	12
14	Brazil	33	0.000	19	0.02	19	0.00	19
15	Argentina	30	0.001	17	0.05	18	0.01	18
16	Luxembourg	28	0.058	9	0.70	11	10.72	1
17	Czech Rep.	17	0.002	16	0.06	17	0.22	15
18	Uruguay	14	0.004	15	0.33	14	0.08	16
19	Nicaragua	3	0.001	18	0.18	15	0.02	17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112,442</b>						

**Australia's share 9.85%**

Source: 2009 Global Trends, UNHCR

## Refugee recognition and resettlement, 2009

Rank	Country of asylum	Recognised	Resettled	Recognised + resettled	Per capita	Rank	Per \$b GDP	Rank	Per 1000 sq km	Rank
1	United States of America	19,800	79,937	99,737	0.32	28	6.91	44	10.7	32
2	Congo, Republic of	94,126		94,126	25.56	1	6579.94	1	274.2	2
3	Kenya	76,133		76,133	1.91	7	1261.29	6	130.2	10
4	Ethiopia	42,693		42,693	0.52	23	600.37	10	37.7	21
5	Malaysia	35,524		35,524	1.29	12	92.42	17	107.3	12
6	Yemen	33,541		33,541	1.42	9	605.51	9	79.7	16
7	Chad	33,366		33,366	2.98	5	2062.18	5	26.2	27
8	Syrian Arab Republic	30,696		30,696	1.40	10	324.61	12	164.7	6
9	Uganda	29,558		29,558	0.90	15	804.41	8	122.0	11
10	Sudan	26,496		26,496	0.63	21	300.96	13	10.5	33
11	Ecuador	26,342		26,342	1.93	6	243.03	14	102.4	13
12	Canada	11,154	12,457	23,611	0.70	18	18.16	30	2.4	46
13	Central African Republic	19,652		19,652	4.44	3	6099.32	2	31.6	25
14	Cameroon	16,470		16,470	0.84	17	397.18	11	35.2	22
<b>15</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>3,441</b>	<b>11,080</b>	<b>14,521</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18.17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>51</b>
16	United Kingdom	12,503	955	13,458	0.22	32	6.04	48	55.2	20
17	Germany	9,726	2,069	11,795	0.14	35	4.04	52	33.1	23
18	Sweden	9,369	1,936	11,305	1.22	13	32.99	23	25.3	28
19	Italy	9,573		9,573	0.16	34	5.27	49	31.8	24
20	Netherlands	7,904	369	8,273	0.50	24	12.21	35	235.7	4
21	Thailand	7,265		7,265	0.11	39	13.28	34	14.1	30
22	Jordan	6,882		6,882	1.09	14	212.30	15	76.4	17
23	Switzerland	6,675		6,675	0.88	16	21.14	28	162.2	7
24	Norway	4,938	1,391	6,329	1.32	11	24.60	27	19.8	29
25	Turkey	6,074		6,074	0.08	42	6.64	45	7.8	37
26	Austria	4,783		4,783	0.57	22	14.46	33	57.1	18
27	South Africa	4,567		4,567	0.09	41	9.25	40	3.7	42
28	Djibouti	3,934		3,934	4.55	2	2092.55	4	180.8	5
29	India	3,297		3,297	0.00	99	1.00	76	1.0	60
30	Belgium	2,912	47	2,959	0.28	30	7.59	42	96.8	15
31	Lebanon	2,711		2,711	0.64	20	54.74	21	262.5	3
32	Libya	2,645		2,645	0.41	25	30.01	25	1.6	53
33	Burundi	2,638		2,638	0.32	27	851.24	7	97.5	14
34	Poland	2,591		2,591	0.07	43	3.88	55	8.3	36
35	Russian Federation	2,466		2,466	0.02	60	1.09	73	0.1	95
36	Finland	1,348	724	2,072	0.39	26	10.83	37	6.2	39
37	Egypt	1,876		1,876	0.02	56	4.23	50	1.9	50
38	Malta	1,696		1,696	4.15	4	171.43	16	5418.5	1
39	Cyprus	1,428		1,428	1.64	8	62.85	20	154.0	8
40	Denmark	828	433	1,261	0.23	31	6.17	47	28.5	26
41	Iraq	936		936	0.03	54	8.85	41	2.1	49
42	Tajikistan	912		912	0.13	36	69.82	19	6.4	38
43	New Zealand	116	727	843	0.20	33	7.28	43	3.1	43
44	Indonesia	755		755	0.00	93	0.83	82	0.4	77
45	Ireland	394	192	586	0.13	37	3.15	60	8.4	35
46	Malawi	538		538	0.04	52	47.14	22	4.5	40
47	Japan	531		531	0.00	87	0.12	118	1.4	56
48	Zimbabwe	522		522	0.04	48	5494.74	3	1.3	57
49	Mozambique	508		508	0.02	57	27.11	26	0.6	68
50	Pakistan	488		488	0.00	101	1.16	71	0.6	70
	Other countries	6,584	125	6,709						
	<b>Total</b>	<b>631,905</b>	<b>112,442</b>	<b>744,347</b>						
	<b>Australia's share</b>	<b>0.54%</b>	<b>9.85%</b>	<b>1.95%</b>						