



Refugee Council
of Australia

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AUSTRALIA MAKES MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO PROTECTING VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION

Last night's release by UNHCR of 2009 statistics on asylum applications in industrialised countries emphasises that Australia's share of global asylum applications remains very small, the Refugee Council of Australia says.

"In 2009, Australia received 6170 asylum applications, just 1.6% of the 377,160 applications received across 44 industrialised nations," Refugee Council CEO, Paul Power, said. "Of the 44 nations, Australia was ranked 16th overall and was 21st on a per capita basis.

"No doubt some politicians will try to make political capital out of an increase in asylum applications in Australia of 1400 on the previous year. However, the applications received in Australia must be viewed in light of the numbers of the 286,680 applications received in Europe and the 82,270 applications received in North America.

"The industrialised countries with the largest number of asylum applications in 2009 were the United States (49,020), France (41,980), Canada (33,250), United Kingdom (29,840), Germany (27,650) and Sweden (24,190).

"Afghanistan was the single largest source country of people making asylum applications in industrialised countries. The 940 applications lodged in Australia by Afghans made up only 3.5% of the international total of 26,803. Afghans were four times more likely to lodge an application in Norway than in Australia.

"These figures should put to rest any claims that Australia is being 'flooded' by asylum seekers. The only flood we are seeing is of self-serving political rhetoric.

"It is clear that refugees continue to seek protection in stable democracies which respect international law and human rights. Even though Australia's share of asylum seekers is small, Australia should still be proud to be included among those receiving countries.

"Our country is making a modest but valuable contribution to protecting people from persecution, a practical demonstration of Australians' strong opposition to oppression."

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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

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN 44 INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES 2009

1.	United States	49,020	11.	Austria	15,830
2.	France	41,980	12.	Netherlands	14,910
3.	Canada	33,250	13.	Switzerland	14,490
4.	United Kingdom	29,840	14.	Poland	10,590
5.	Germany	27,650	15.	Turkey	7,830
6.	Sweden	24,190	16.	Australia	6,170
7.	Italy	17,600	17.	Finland	5,910
8.	Norway	17,230	18.	Hungary	4,670
9.	Belgium	17,190	19.	Denmark	3,750
10.	Greece	15,930	20.	Cyprus	3,200

SOURCE COUNTRIES OF PEOPLE MAKING ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES, 2009

1.	Afghanistan	26,803	11.	Eritrea	10,164
2.	Iraq	24,341	12.	Mexico	9,987
3.	Somalia	22,558	13.	Sri Lanka	9,979
4.	Russian Federation	20,367	14.	Zimbabwe	8,527
5.	China	20,100	15.	Bangladesh	6,189
6.	Serbia	18,597	16.	Armenia	6,226
7.	Nigeria	13,310	17.	Bangladesh	6,189
8.	Iran	11,479	18.	Dem. Rep. of Congo	5,189
9.	Pakistan	11,184	19.	Syria	5,029
10.	Georgia	10,994	20.	Guinea	4,969

WHERE AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS SOUGHT PROTECTION IN 2009

1.	Norway	3,871
2.	United Kingdom	3,535
3.	Germany	3,302
4.	Austria	2,233
5.	Sweden	1,694
6.	Belgium	1,659
7.	Greece	1,510
8.	Netherlands	1,281
9.	Hungary	1,194
10.	Turkey	1,009
11.	Australia	940

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN AUSTRALIA IN 2009

1.	China	1,186
2.	Afghanistan	940
3.	Sri Lanka	553
4.	Zimbabwe	344
5.	Iran	303
6.	Iraq	288
7.	Pakistan	256

Figures drawn from "Asylum Levels in Industrialized Countries 2009", UNHCR, March 2010