

**PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2011**

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
SECTION 207(d)(1) and (e)(1-7)
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 2011: Report to the Congress* is submitted in compliance with Sections 207(d)(1) and (e)(1-7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The Act 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.

¹ 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) continues to be a visible and extremely important component of the United States' overall effort in support of refugees. On the occasion of World Refugee Day on June 18, President Obama stated:

“Some refugees face bleak prospects of returning to their native soil, and they must find security in peaceful areas. Many uprooted people have found safe haven in America, bringing with them determination and optimism to contribute to our cultural, economic, and intellectual fabric. Welcoming more refugee men, women, and children than any other country, the United States has provided a home to some of the world's most vulnerable individuals, enriching our own country and advancing our leadership in the world.”

And Secretary of State Clinton said:

“Whenever possible, we work to return refugees to their homes in safety and dignity. But when returning home is not an option, we are committed to helping resettle refugees who face the most difficult circumstances. Americans have done that time and again, welcoming more than 2.5 million refugees into our communities since the Refugee Act became law. It goes to the core of who we are as a people and a country.”

While third country resettlement cannot be the durable solution for the vast majority of the world's refugees, it must remain a possibility for those refugees who are most vulnerable and for whom repatriation or local integration in countries of refuge are not viable options. U.S. resettlement should always contribute to durable solutions for such refugees, regardless of their location, national origin, health status, occupational skills, or level of educational attainment. In the early years of the program, large numbers of relatively few nationalities located in a limited number of countries dominated the program. Many of the resettled refugees had family members already in the United States. Over the past decade, however, the United States has worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to make third country resettlement a viable, durable solution for increasing numbers from a broader representation of the world's refugee population, which currently stands at over 10 million. While we have again resettled large numbers of Iraqis, Burmese, and Bhutanese this year, the

USRAP has admitted refugees from over 60 nationalities who were processed in some 90 countries. Over 80 percent of these applicants were referred to us by UNHCR either individually or in groups. Relatively few have family members resident in the United States.

The Administration has worked closely with the Congress to invest the resources necessary to reach smaller numbers of the most desperate populations who find themselves in seemingly forgotten locations. For example, after years of trying to reach the most vulnerable Darfuri refugees to offer them hope for a way out of their situation through resettlement, staff from the Departments of State and Homeland Security – with the invaluable support of our processing partners – overcame formidable security, logistical, and other challenges to process and admit a small number of UNHCR-referred Darfuris in Chad. We are also exploring the possibility of launching a larger scale program in Chad. We regard this and similar efforts as important signs of progress as we seek to ensure that the USRAP is consistent with our humanitarian mandate.

The United States has been pleased to support UNHCR in its creative efforts to expand the community of nations involved in the resettlement of refugees. In recent years, several countries without a history of resettling refugees have stepped forward and established programs, including France, the Czech Republic, and Portugal. Twenty-four countries resettled UNHCR-referred refugees in 2009. In addition, four countries have offered their territory to UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration to host Evacuation Transit Centers. This provides a valuable opportunity for vulnerable refugees to be moved out of insecure or otherwise challenging circumstances to safe locations where they can undergo interviews, medical screening, and other required processing in a more stable setting.

We also recognize that our third country resettlement program complements significant efforts by many developing countries, especially in Africa, at local integration of refugee populations they have hosted. In the case of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, U.S. resettlement has been a critical component of an overall strategy that includes voluntary repatriation to Burundi as well as a decision by the Tanzanian government to grant permanent legal status to more than 150,000 1972-era Burundi refugees to date.

For the last several years, the USRAP has sought to maintain the longstanding American tradition of offering resettlement to vulnerable refugees while incorporating numerous additional security modifications required after the

events of September 11, 2001. In FY 2009, the United States admitted close to 75,000 refugees – more than in any year since 1999. This year's admissions total is estimated to be similar.

This achievement has required a substantial investment of additional federal resources by the Departments of State and Homeland Security in the identification, processing, transportation, and initial resettlement of refugees. An important additional benefit of these efforts (and resources) has been the development of a sizeable approved caseload earlier in the fiscal year, which has allowed the more even distribution of refugee arrivals throughout the year. This has reduced the end of fiscal year stress on resettlement agencies and improved the quality of services received by arriving refugees.

While there have been many positive developments in the overseas aspects of the USRAP, refugees as well as persons and entities assisting them continue to face significant challenges in addressing the needs of refugees after their arrival in the United States. Consequently, the White House has led an interagency process to develop solutions to these issues, which has also involved consultations with stakeholders from outside the federal government.

One substantial change made as a result of this process was a dramatic increase in the one-time per capita Reception and Placement grant administered by the Department of State for the initial weeks after a refugee's arrival. This grant had declined in real terms by more than 50 percent since its inception in 1975. In light of our critical obligations to newly arrived refugees, and thanks to the generous support from the Congress, we were able to increase the Reception and Placement per capita grant from \$900 to \$1,800, effective January 1, 2010. This is intended to address challenges refugees face in their first 30 to 90 days in the United States, and will ensure that, in the first weeks after their arrival, refugees have a solid roof over their heads, a clean bed in which to sleep, and basic assistance. This is also an expression of solidarity with state and local officials and with the local communities that bear the greatest burden in meeting the initial needs of new arrivals.

In addition, the Administration has requested an extra \$25 million in its FY 2011 budget request for the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services to enhance case management services for refugees and address their emergency housing needs. Furthermore, the administration has adopted a number of other changes to the program, including regular interagency meetings led by National Security staff, more frequent consultations with external

stakeholders, the provision to local agencies of more complete information about cases before they arrive, and greater attention to the health care needs of refugees after arrival. The overall goal is for all parties involved – be they at the federal, state, or local level, and from both the public and private sectors – to more effectively meet the needs of resettled refugees. Such enhanced coordination and communication is particularly needed in light of the changed – and more diverse – character of the program. The Administration will continue to explore ways of ensuring that refugees are able to integrate successfully in the United States after their arrival.

Overseas, we will also seek to enhance our efforts at the strategic use of U.S. resettlement, by using that option to promote more generous policies among countries of origin and refugee hosting countries toward repatriation and local integration, respectively, and to leverage greater support for third country resettlement among governments with the capacity to do more in this area. The goal of this process will be to ensure that all refugees' needs are being met through the most efficient use of resources possible.

We have also made substantial progress over the past year in addressing obstacles to the admission of refugees who are affected by the broad definitions of “terrorist activity” and “terrorist organization” under U.S. law. To address this problem, National Security staff led an interagency process that reached agreement on a more effective and efficient set of procedures for using the expanded exemption authority in Section 691 of Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2008. These procedures aim to take careful account of both humanitarian and national security concerns.

As is the case for most countries with large scale immigration and 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, however. On a case-by-case basis, individual applicants in need of expedited handling are processed on an accelerated schedule. In addition, the United States has contributed generously to allow UNHCR to establish and operate Evacuation Transit Centers where emergency cases can be moved from insecure locations during the case processing period.

During the past year, the USRAP has contributed substantially to the international community's efforts to provide durable solutions to some of the world's most vulnerable refugees, including survivors of torture or gender based

violence, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) individuals. Many vulnerable refugees have lived in protracted situations for years, uncertain about their fate and severely limited in their capacity to develop their potential. While starting life anew in the United States presents considerable challenges, it also creates hope and opportunity for tens of thousands of persons each year. The support and assistance that average Americans provide to these newcomers makes a significant difference in hastening their integration into our country, where they add to our vitality and diversity by making substantial contributions to our economic and cultural life.

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I. OVERVIEW OF U.S. REFUGEE POLICY

At the end of 2009, the estimated refugee population worldwide stood at 15.2 million, with 10.5 million receiving protection or assistance from UNHCR. The United States actively supports efforts to provide protection, assistance, and durable solutions to refugees, as these measures meet both our humanitarian objectives and our foreign policy and national security interests. Combined with humanitarian diplomacy, U.S. financial contributions to international and non-governmental organizations are vital to achieving these goals. Under the authority in 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 (ICRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 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 address the legal and physical protection needs of refugees as well as their basic assistance needs for 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.

During FY 2010, the United States continued to support the achievement of durable solutions for refugees through voluntary repatriation programs around the world. In seeking durable solutions for refugees, the United States and UNHCR recognize that – for most refugees – safe voluntary return to their homelands is their preferred solution. Refugee repatriation operations to countries including Mauritania, Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan proceeded during FY 2010, representing significant progress in the protection of refugees, as well as in their home countries’ stabilization, reconstruction, and development.

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 works diplomatically to encourage host governments to protect refugees through local integration and provides assistance to help meet integration needs through programs that promote refugee self-sufficiency and community-based social services. Afghans in India, Burundi in Tanzania, Liberians and

Sierra Leoneans in seven countries across West Africa, and Colombians in Ecuador and Costa Rica are among those populations for whom opportunities for local integration have recently become possible.

UNHCR identifies some 6.6 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 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 achieve solutions for stateless persons, including addressing gaps in citizenship laws and promoting fair application of those laws. The United States is by far the largest single donor to UNHCR, providing over \$641 million to UNHCR in FY 2009. These contributions to UNHCR's core budget support efforts to address statelessness in Burma, the Dominican Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, the Balkans, Ukraine, Kenya, Nepal, and elsewhere. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, UNHCR and NGOs conducted a survey that identified 10,000 stateless persons previously unknown to the authorities.

In addition, the Department of State seeks to use the USRAP strategically, as a means of providing a durable solution to stateless individuals as well as groups in need of resettlement. This is reflected in the current resettlement programs for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Malaysia, as well as in past resettlement of Meskhetian Turks. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) also employs diplomacy to mobilize other governments to prevent and resolve situations of statelessness. For example, PRM conducted field missions and monitoring of situations of statelessness in the Dominican Republic, Thailand, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. In the UN Human Rights Council, PRM used multilateral diplomacy to successfully introduce language on statelessness into a recent resolution on migrant children.

The United States and UNHCR also recognize resettlement in third countries as a vital tool for providing refugees protection and/or durable solutions, particularly for those for whom other durable solutions are not feasible. For some refugees, resettlement is the best, or perhaps only, alternative. The United States also encourages UNHCR to refer for

resettlement stateless refugees, either as individuals or groups, for whom other durable solutions are not possible, even if they are located in their country of habitual residence.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring UNHCR's capacity to identify and refer refugees in need of resettlement, the U.S. government has for more than a decade provided financial support to expand and improve the organization's resettlement infrastructure. As a result of this initiative, UNHCR has substantially increased referrals to the United States and other resettlement countries. We will continue to work with UNHCR and consult with host governments on group referrals. We will continue to assess resettlement needs and allow qualified non-governmental organizations (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 and engaged bilaterally on the issue. In 2009, UNHCR referred refugees to 27 countries for resettlement consideration. About 90 percent were referred to the United States, Canada, and Australia. Smaller numbers of referrals were made to Germany, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Chile, Portugal, Japan, Romania, Argentina, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Uruguay, Luxembourg, Ireland, the Czech Republic, and Spain.

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 provide resettlement consideration to at least 50 percent of all refugees referred by UNHCR worldwide, depending on availability of funds. In 2009, some 73 percent of UNHCR-referred refugees were resettled in the United States (see Table IX). We have encouraged UNHCR to make further strategic use of resettlement and to continue to develop resettlement as a durable solution for vulnerable refugees.

The foreign policy and humanitarian interests of the United States are often advanced by our willingness to work with first asylum and resettlement countries to address refugee issues. 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. 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; local integration solutions are offered; and third country resettlement is accorded to those in need of that solution. In certain locations, the prompt resettlement of politically sensitive cases has helped defuse regional tensions. In the case of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, the U.S. offer of resettlement helped garner similar pledges from other countries, while the international community is still pressing for the right of refugees to return voluntarily to Bhutan or for their ability to seek local integration opportunities in Nepal.

During its history, the USRAP has responded to changing refugee circumstances. Even before the events of September 11, 2001, the end of the Cold War had dramatically altered the context in which the USRAP operates worldwide. Having shifted its focus away from large groups concentrated in a few locations, primarily refugees from Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia, the program began to offer resettlement to refugees of over 50 nationalities per year. Interviews are often conducted in remote locations and are geared toward populations in greatest need of third country resettlement opportunities. The Department of Homeland Security's creation of the Refugee Corps within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in 2005 has been a key factor in increasing the scope and flexibility of the USRAP.

Refugees resettled in the United States contribute positively to the diversity and enrichment of our country. The USRAP emphasizes the principle 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 they are able to provide services according to established standards. Department of Health and Human Services-funded programs administered in individual states and the District of Columbia provide cash and medical assistance, training programs, employment, and other support services to arriving refugees.

An increasing proportion of arriving refugees do not have close family members already living in the United States to help with their adjustment and integration. The refugee population is increasingly diverse

linguistically, with wide-ranging educational and employment histories. The shortage of available affordable housing, particularly in urban areas, continues. All of these factors create significant challenges for the resettlement agencies in meeting the needs of refugees in the program. The Department of State is working closely with the resettlement agencies on adjustments that will enhance capacities to provide effective services.

II. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM FOR FY 2011

PROPOSED CEILINGS

TABLE I
REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2009 AND FY 2010,
PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS BY REGION FOR FY 2011

REGION	FY 2009 ACTUAL ARRIVALS	FY 2010 CEILING	FY 2010 REVISED CEILING	FY 2010 PROJECTED ARRIVALS	PROPOSED FY2011 CEILING
Africa	9,670	15,500		13,500	15,000
East Asia	19,850	17,000	18,000*	17,500	19,000
Europe and Central Asia	1,997	2,500		1,500	2,000
Latin America/Caribbean	4,857	5,000	5,500*	5,000	5,500
Near East/South Asia	38,280	35,000	38,000*	37,000	35,500
Regional Subtotal	74,654	75,000	79,500	74,500	77,000
Unallocated Reserve		5,000	500		3,000
Total	74,654	80,000	80,000	74,500	80,000

**3,000 admissions numbers from the Unallocated Reserve were allocated to the Near East/South Asia ceiling, 1,000 to the East Asia ceiling, and 500 to the Latin America/Caribbean ceiling in the fourth quarter of FY 2010, because refugee arrivals were projected to exceed the original ceilings.*

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 2011 proposal recommends continuing such in-country processing for specified groups in

Iraq, Cuba, and the countries of the former Soviet Union, and stateless individuals referred by UNHCR. 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.

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

The Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (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 the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (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 that have access to the USRAP:

- 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 eligible 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 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 Visas 93 below.)

Access to the program under one of the above-listed processing priorities does not mean an applicant meets the U.S. statutory “refugee” definition or is admissible to the United States. 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. 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 assignment to 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 allows consideration of refugee claims from persons of any nationality², in any location, often 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. NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in locations where there are large concentrations of refugees may also undergo training by PRM and DHS/USCIS in order to be eligible to provide Priority 1 referrals.

² Referrals of North Koreans and Palestinians require State Department and DHS/USCIS concurrence before they may be granted access to the USRAP.

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 them to the appropriate Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) 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, an alternative vehicle, "Significant Public Benefit Parole" (SPBP, a program administered by the Department of Homeland Security) may be a more appropriate option.

PRIORITY 2 – GROUP REFERRALS

Priority 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.

Priority 2 group referrals are typically developed with the involvement of UNHCR, Refugee Coordinators, NGOs, PRM program officers, or other State Department officials. PRM plays the coordinating role for all group referrals to the USRAP. There is no minimum or maximum number of applicants required for a group referral.

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 possess the required characteristic(s) to establish eligibility for inclusion.

The open-access model has functioned well in the in-country programs, including the long-standing programs in the former Soviet Union, Cuba, and Vietnam. It was also used successfully for Bosnian refugees during the 1990s, and is now in use for Iranian religious minorities and Iraqis with links to the United States.

The OPE(s) 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 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 biodata 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, or counterproductive. Often predefined groups are composed of persons with similar persecution claims. The predefined group referral process is a step-saver 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 2011 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 2011:

Former Soviet Union

This Priority 2 designation applies to Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious activists 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.

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, and U.S. media and 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 2011. (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 existing Priority 2 designation, Iranian members of certain religious minorities are eligible for processing and benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution, pursuant to the 2004 enactment of P.L. 108-199.

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, and U.S. media and 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.

Eritreans in Shimelba

Under this Priority 2 designation, Eritrean refugees (except those Kunama who previously went through refugee processing) who were registered with

UNHCR in the Shimelba Camp prior to August 7, 2008, or who were registered in the former Wa'ala Nhibi Camp and re-registered or re-validated in the Shimelba Camp in November 2004, are eligible for processing.

Darfuri in Chad

We have established a Priority 2 for vulnerable Darfuri in Chad who are registered with UNHCR and identified as being in need of resettlement.

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 list may be modified by the PRM Assistant Secretary, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, during the year, but additions or deletions are generally made to coincide with the fiscal year.

Fundamentally, 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 (RAVU).

The following relatives of the U.S.-based anchor have traditionally been eligible 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, 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; AND
- 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 Primary 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 obtained through pilot DNA testing. Further, in October 2008, PRM suspended the acceptance of AORs of all nationalities while PRM and DHS/USCIS examined how additional procedures may be incorporated into P-3 processing on a more regular basis so that the family reunification component of the program can resume, while at the same time safeguarding the integrity of the program. In this regard, we are also in the final stages of revising the AOR. Revisions to the P-3 program and AOR are undergoing final review as we approach the end of FY 2010. PRM and DHS/USCIS will update the Congress when the revisions are complete, and we are prepared to resume P-3 processing, likely with a DNA relationship testing requirement for certain claimed biological relationships.

FY 2011 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
Iran
Iraq
Republic of Congo (ROC)
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

Chad and the Republic of Congo are additions to this list for FY 2011.

VISAS 93 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOLLOWING-TO-JOIN PETITIONS

Under 8 CFR Section 207, a 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 Petition³ for each eligible family member with DHS/USCIS. If the Form I-730 is approved by DHS/USCIS

³ This petition is used to file for the relatives of refugees and asylees, known as Visas 93 and Visas 92 cases respectively. The Refugee Admissions Program handles only Visas 93 cases, which are counted within the annual refugee admissions ceiling. Visas 92 cases are not considered to be refugee admissions cases and are not counted in the number of refugees admitted annually.

(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. (Note: In locations where the USRAP has a significant processing operation, these cases are often forwarded to the OPE for initial processing and presentation to DHS/USCIS rather than the consular section within the embassy.)

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 a persecution claim, 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. As the wait for processing of I-730 petitions has been substantial in some countries, USCIS, in conjunction with the Department of State, has launched a review of the procedures for handling these petitions with the goal of developing a more efficient and effective process.

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 does the P-3 process.

DHS/USCIS REFUGEE ADJUDICATIONS

Section 207(c) of the INA grants the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security authority to admit, at 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 DHS/USCIS. Beginning in FY 2006, DHS/USCIS restructured the Refugee Affairs Division and established the Refugee Corps. The Refugee Corps is staffed by DHS/USCIS 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 anti-fraud, training, and policy-setting 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 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 they may be exempted.

A DHS/USCIS officer conducts a non-adversarial, face-to-face interview of each 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 consist of biographic name checks for all refugee applicants and biometric (fingerprint) checks for refugee applicants aged 14 to 79. PRM, through its overseas processing entities, initiates background name checks, and name check adjudicators of the PRM-contracted Refugee Processing Center (RPC) conduct initial vetting. DHS/USCIS reviews and analyzes the results of biographic and biometric background check results to

determine whether the data have an impact on the refugee eligibility determination. DHS/USCIS has established enhanced security vetting procedures in partnership with the national security and intelligence communities.

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 Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) that assists in the processing of refugees for admission to the United States. OPE 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 OPEs assist applicants in completing documentary requirements and schedule DHS/USCIS refugee interviews. If an applicant is approved for resettlement, OPE staff guide the refugee through post-adjudication steps, including obtaining medical screening exams and attending cultural orientation programs. The OPE obtains sponsorship assurances and, once all required steps are completed, refers the case to IOM for transportation to the United States.

In FY 2010, NGOs (Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and International Rescue Committee) worked under cooperative agreements with PRM as OPEs at locations in Austria, Ghana (covering West and Central Africa until June 2010), Kenya (covering East and Southern Africa until June 2010, and then all of sub-Saharan Africa for the remainder of the fiscal year), and Thailand (covering East Asia). International organizations and NGOs (IOM and the International Catholic Migration Commission [ICMC]) support refugee processing activities based in Jordan, Russia, Nepal, and Turkey covering the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Europe. The admissions program operates at a U.S. government installation in 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 significant 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 view of what their new lives will be like, what services are 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 17 languages: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Karen, Karenni, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, 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 17 languages: Af-Maay, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Hmong, Karen, Karenni, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese. In addition, the Department of State enters into cooperative agreements for one-to-three 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 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.

Reception and Placement (R&P)

In FY 2010, PRM funded cooperative agreements with 10 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, food, medical, employment, and social service referrals) to arriving refugees. These services are provided according to standards of care developed jointly by the NGO community and U.S. government agencies. The 10 organizations maintain a nationwide network of some 350 affiliated offices to provide services. Two of the organizations also maintain a network of 20 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 R&P agreement obligates the participating agencies to provide the following services:

- Sponsorship;
- Pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement;
- Reception on arrival;
- Basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days;
- Community orientation;
- Referrals to health, employment, education, and other services as needed; and
- Development and implementation of an initial resettlement plan for each refugee for 90-180 days.

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.

III. REGIONAL PROGRAMS

TABLE II

PROPOSED FY 2011 REGIONAL CEILINGS BY PRIORITY

<u>AFRICA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2010	4,500
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	7,500
Priority 2 Groups	2,500
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	500
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>15,000</u>
<u>EAST ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2010	6,600
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	300
Priority 2 Groups	12,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>19,000</u>
<u>EUROPE / CENTRAL ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2010	850
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	140
Priority 2 Groups	1,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	10
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>2,000</u>
<u>LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2010	2,850
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	300
Priority 2 Groups	2,300
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	50
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>5,500</u>
<u>NEAR EAST / SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2010	25,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	5,000
Priority 2 Groups	5,400
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>35,500</u>
<u>UNALLOCATED RESERVE</u>	<u>3,000</u>
<u>TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING:</u>	<u>80,000</u>

AFRICA

There are currently some 2.4 million refugees across the African continent, comprising roughly 20 percent of the global refugee population. This represents a significant reduction in the African refugee population in recent years, and in 2010, progress toward resolution of outstanding issues concerning major refugee populations in Africa continues. UN-organized repatriations were underway for refugees from Sudan, Burundi, the DRC, and Mauritania in 2009. Organized repatriations to Liberia and Angola were largely completed in 2007, as was Mauritania's in 2009; efforts continue to integrate locally residual refugee populations before the cessation clause of the Refugee Convention is invoked.

At the same time, ongoing violence in Somalia as well as in western and eastern DRC has generated new refugee flows. Eritreans continue to seek asylum in neighboring countries due to political tensions and increasing political repression. In Zimbabwe, economic collapse and political instability generate continued outflows of migrants and asylum seekers.

The principle of first asylum is honored by most African countries. 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 granted citizenship to 162,000 Burundi refugees in early 2010.

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 the most severe religious freedom abuses in Africa. In recent years it has engaged in serious religious repression by harassing, arresting, and detaining members of independent evangelical groups, including Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses (who lost certain rights of citizenship for not participating in the 1993 national

referendum), and a reform movement within the Eritrean Orthodox Church. It has also sought greater control over the four 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, including facilities administered by the military and police stations inside Asmara and other cities. Often detainees have not been formally charged, accorded due process, or allowed access to their families. While many were ostensibly jailed for evasion of military conscription, significant numbers were being held solely for their religious beliefs. As of April 2010, the Jehovah's Witness International Office reports that 58 known Jehovah's Witnesses are in detention without access to legal representation, and many have not yet been charged with a crime.

In Sudan, distinctions in the constitution negotiated as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have resulted in disparities in the treatment of religious minorities in the north and south. Whereas the Government of Southern Sudan generally respects the rights of Christians and Muslims in the 10 states of the south as provided for in its separate 2005 Constitution of Southern Sudan, the Government of National Unity (GNU) continues to place restrictions on Christians in the North. The Constitution preserves sharia as a source of legislation in the north, while the Constitution of Southern Sudan establishes "the traditional laws, religious beliefs, values, and customary practices of the people" as a source of legislation in the south. Although there is no penalty for converting from another religion to Islam, converting from Islam is punishable by death in the north. This penalty has never been imposed by the current government, 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.

On January 16, 2009, the Secretary of State re-designated both Eritrea and Sudan as "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC) for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The USRAP continues to be available to Sudanese, Eritrean, and other refugees who are victims of religious intolerance through Priority 1 referrals. Refugees from Eritrea and

Sudan with refugee or asylee family members in the United States also have access to the program through Priority 3, subject to its resumption, and certain Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia have access through Priority 2.

In Somalia, although the Transitional Federal Charter provides for religious freedom, there are limits on the extent to which this right is respected in practice. The Transitional Federal Government generally does not enforce legal protections of religious freedom. Respect for religious freedom has continued to decline, primarily as a result of extremist militias taking control over significant territory in the country. Militia groups, particularly those associated with the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization al-Shabaab, often imposed through violence a strict interpretation of Islam on communities under their control. There were also reports that individuals who do not practice Islam experienced discrimination, violence, and detention because of their religious beliefs.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the government generally respects religious freedom in practice, and there have been no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. However, there continue to be credible reports that families abandon or abuse persons, including children, accused of witchcraft. In Ethiopia, localized tensions between Muslim and Christian communities have been known to result in violent episodes. Several civic and government programs have attempted to address sectarian violence. The government generally respected religious freedom in practice although, on occasion, local authorities infringed on this right.

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 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 15 years, refugee numbers have reduced by more than 60 percent (from six to fewer than three million) even in the face of new outflows.

In West Africa, UNHCR's Liberian repatriation program officially ended in June 2007, with some 650,000 Liberians having returned home either spontaneously or with UNHCR assistance. The focus now is on local

integration as a durable solution for some 60,000 Liberians who remain outside their country in various West African countries. UNHCR launched its Mauritania repatriation operation in January 2008 and, despite the coup d'état in August of that year, succeeded in repatriating over 19,000 of the 24,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal by December 2009, when the organized return program ended.

In East Africa, even larger numbers have returned home. Repatriation to southern Sudan started in 2005 and has continued apace with over 350,000 – over 75 percent of the original refugee population – having returned from neighboring countries as of May 2010. No return initiatives are currently anticipated for the Darfur region of Sudan or Somalia, where conflict continues to produce more than 5,000 new refugees per month. Over 550,000 Somalis have now sought asylum in neighboring countries.

In Central Africa, repatriation to Burundi continues with over 500,000 returns since 2002. Another 10,000 are expected to return in 2010, while most of the remaining 230,000 have been granted citizenship or are in the process of formalizing their permanent status in Tanzania. Although the majority of Rwandan refugees returned home in the late 1990s, some 50,000 Rwandans remained in exile. UNHCR expects to repatriate 10,000 Rwandans in 2010. Repatriation to relatively stable areas of the DRC continues with over 200,000 returns by May 2010. Ongoing movements, primarily from Zambia and Tanzania to the Katanga Province, continue in 2010. The North Kivu and Orientale Provinces remain too insecure for large-scale refugee return. Ethnic violence that erupted in late 2009 in Equateur Province forced some 200,000 Congolese to flee to the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo and, by May 2010, refugees still remained fearful of return.

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. The program provides 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 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 estimated 200,000 1972-era Burundi refugees who desire it; some 162,000 accepted the offer and were granted citizenship as of April 2010, and the balance have returned to Burundi.

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 2010 U.S. Admissions

We project some 13,500 African refugee arrivals in FY 2010. Three countries of origin (Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea) presently account for the vast majority of U.S. admissions from the region. In East Africa, we continue to work toward completing processing of the residual, already-identified Congolese and Burundian caseload in Tanzania. In Kenya, a surge in UNHCR referrals from the Dadaab camps will lead to close to 3,000 P-1 Somali admissions this year. Processing of P-1 Darfuri and Central African Republic refugees in eastern and southern Chad, which began in FY2009 and continues into FY 2010, will result in over 200 arrivals during the course of the year. We have largely completed the processing of the residual P-3 Liberian caseload in West Africa, and with the civil wars having ended some seven years ago, we no longer receive resettlement referrals in any significant number for this population. Some 1,000 refugee admissions of various nationalities from West Africa are expected this year. In all, we expect to admit refugees of more than 20 African nationalities, processed in nearly thirty countries during FY 2010.

We anticipate that U.S. refugee admissions from Africa in FY 2010 will exceed FY 2009 levels by 30-35 percent due to the identification of new caseloads and an increase in referrals by UNHCR.

FY 2011 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose up to 15,000 resettlement numbers for African refugees in FY 2011. PRM has actively engaged relevant offices within the Department of State, UNHCR, the voluntary agency 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 2011.

From East and Southern Africa, we expect 12-13,000 admissions, primarily Somalis in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and South Africa; Congolese in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa; Eritreans in Shiselba Camp (Ethiopia) who are eligible for P-2 processing; and additional small numbers of P-1 referrals of various nationalities in the countries above, plus Burundi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

From West and Central Africa, we expect approximately 1,000 admissions. We anticipate that the largest numbers will be Darfuri and Central African Republic refugees processed in Chad. In addition, we anticipate smaller numbers of P-1 referrals processed in Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, and Ghana.

Outside of sub-Saharan Africa, we anticipate Sudanese, Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean and other African refugees to be processed in Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt.

Proposed FY 2011 Africa program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>4,500</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>7,500</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>2,500</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>500</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>15,000</i></u>

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 promote a genuine democratic transition in Burma. Unfortunately, with no sign that the Burmese government will respond positively to calls for democratic reform in advance of the planned 2010 elections, and continued attacks against ethnic minority populations, prospects for refugees to return to safe and stable conditions appear distant.

As of April 2010, more than 107,000 registered refugees from Burma are recognized by UNHCR and live 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, births and arrivals of refugees fleeing continued conflict in Burma have precluded reduction of the camps' total population.

Since 2006, UNHCR Malaysia has operated the second largest refugee status determination program in the world. As of May 2010, there were 87,699 persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Malaysia of which 81,219, or 93 percent, are from Burma (39,068 Chin, 18,750 stateless Rohingya from Burma's Northern Rakhine State, and 23,401 other ethnic minorities). In addition, some 6,480 asylum-seekers and refugees from 46 countries – primarily Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Sri Lanka – are registered with UNHCR. 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 a significant number of 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 Rakhine State to Bangladesh. During the 1990s, over 230,000 Rohingya refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Bangladesh, leaving behind approximately 28,000, who remain in two UNHCR camps in southern Bangladesh. An additional 13,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in an unofficial settlement in Leda. In addition to those who have remained in the camps, 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 Bazar 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. UNHCR continues to refer Rohingya for U.S. resettlement consideration and we expect some 1,000 referrals by the end of FY 2010. We expect ongoing UNHCR referrals of Rohingya from Bangladesh as well as urban Burmese in India.

As reflected in the North Korean Human Rights Act, the United States is deeply concerned about the human rights situation of North Koreans both inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) 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 permit religious freedom, religious believers face serious persecution in several countries. 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.

The situation in countries such as China, Burma and, to a certain extent, Vietnam, is complex. While the constitutions of these countries ostensibly provide for freedom of religion, in practice these governments restrict or repress activities of some religious organizations. Some independent religious activities may be either prohibited or restricted, and dissenters may face physical mistreatment or imprisonment.

Despite dramatic increases in religious observance in China, the 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), and Buddhists loyal to the Dalai Lama. There are many cases of arrest, imprisonment, and alleged torture of religious believers in China. Practitioners of the banned spiritual

movement Falun Gong have also been subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and alleged torture.

In Burma, the government maintains a pervasive internal security apparatus that generally infiltrates or monitors the activities of all organizations, including religious groups. The government actively promotes Buddhism over other religions as a means of boosting its own legitimacy and continues harsh discrimination against religious minorities. The DPRK, China, and Burma are designated by the Department of State as CPCs under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRF Act) for serious violations of religious freedom.

Over the past few years, Vietnam and Laos have made progress on many religious freedom issues. The Government of Vietnam and the United States signed a binding agreement on religious freedom (as allowed by the IRF Act) in May 2005, under which Vietnam committed to implementing fully its new legal framework on religion. The U.S. government removed Vietnam from the CPC list in November 2006, on the basis of significant progress. Over the past three years, the religious freedom record in Vietnam has been mixed. There is continued, albeit slow, progress with regard to registration/recognition of religious groups and congregations and more freedom to organize religious meetings – even on a large-scale – without government interference. However, there are also reports of harassment at the local level, including excessive use of force by local officials against Roman Catholics in high-profile property disputes. Several Protestant congregations in rural areas continue to report harassment, including beatings and forced renunciations in some cases. Buddhist monks and nuns of the Plum Village order were violently evicted from Bat Nha pagoda in September.

In Laos, we have seen modest improvements in religious freedom, with the central government easing restrictions on religious practice and often intervening to resolve religion-related disputes at the local level. Despite this progress, all religious groups operate in an environment in which implementation of the law is often arbitrary and minority groups, in particular the growing evangelical Protestant community, face varying degrees of discrimination and harassment, especially in rural areas.

Nationals of the DPRK, Vietnam, China, and Burma have access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through Priority 1 individual referrals. A significant number of Burmese will be processed in FY 2010 and FY 2011 under Priority 2. North Korean and Burmese refugees will also have access to family reunification processing through Priority 3, subject to its resumption.

Voluntary Repatriation

Given the continued, systematic persecution within Burma of ethnic minorities, including the de jure statelessness of Rohingya refugees, 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 temporary 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 the local integration prospects for those refugees who will not be resettled. The United States and other donor governments continue to engage in a strategic dialogue with the Government of Thailand 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 new refugees 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 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 2010, the United States processed UNHCR-referred

refugee cases in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Micronesia, Mongolia, Palau, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

FY 2010 U.S. Admissions

We expect to admit more than 17,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2010. This will include some 10,000 Burmese Karen and Karenni living in camps along the Thai-Burma border, some 6,000 Burmese Chin in Malaysia, some 800 Vietnamese processed under the former Humanitarian Resettlement Initiative in Vietnam, and a small number of urban refugees of various nationalities in the region. As of May 31, 2010, over 6,200 Burmese refugee applicants have benefitted from exemptions from terrorism related inadmissibilities.

USRAP operations reached a peak in Thailand during the year with processing in all nine camps. Working in close consultation with UNHCR and the Royal Thai government, we began processing in the last two camps Mae La Oon (Site 3) and Mae Ra Ma (Site 4) in Mae Hong Son Province. We have not accepted resettlement applications from eligible Burmese refugees in Tham Hin camp since June 2009, although applications received before the respective application closing dates are still being processed. We anticipate announcing the closure of resettlement registration in two additional camps in Thailand by the end of the fiscal year. Eligible refugees will have 120 days to submit their resettlement applications following the announcement.

FY 2011 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose the admission of 19,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2011. This will include more than 5,000 individuals already approved and pending departure at the beginning of the year. We will interview Burmese refugees living in six camps located in three provinces in Thailand and will continue processing in Malaysia, leading to the admission of up to 18,500 refugees from Burma in FY 2011. We also expect the admission of small numbers of Vietnamese, North Koreans, Sri Lankans, Chinese, and other nationalities from this region.

Proposed FY 2011 East Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>6,600</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>12,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>19,000</i></u>

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Europe continues to host large populations of refugees and other persons whom conflicts over the past two decades or more have left in protracted displacement, often in dire conditions. In its 2010-2011 Global Appeal, UNHCR reported that there were nearly 4.2 million asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs, 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 comprise persons claiming persecution within the countries of the former Soviet Union.

All Eurasian countries except Uzbekistan have acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Nonetheless, in some former Soviet Republics and in Russia, the governments provide scant protection to refugees and asylum seekers, and public intolerance, including attacks against non-Slavic foreigners, are common. Even those nations that are pursuing democratic governance have been slow or reluctant to recognize, protect, and integrate refugees and other at-risk individuals. UNHCR has been working with many of these governments to establish asylum procedures and refugee protection laws. Modest progress has been made.

According to UNHCR, at the end of 2009 there were approximately 461,000 refugees and IDPs in the Balkans, almost all of whom have been displaced for a decade or longer. An estimated 225,000 persons of this population are minorities from Kosovo, most of whom are displaced in Serbia. After several years of steady decline in returns to Kosovo, the number of returnees doubled from 2008 to 2009. Finding durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs in the Balkans continues to be problematic, but it is noteworthy that, in late 2009, representatives of the Balkan states convened a series of meetings leading to a March 2010 ministerial to explore means to resolving issues confronting vulnerable, displaced persons affected by the conflict of the 1990s.

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 benefit from 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. In addition to those eligible under the Lautenberg Amendment, individuals of all nationalities throughout the region may be referred for Priority 1 processing.

Religious Freedom

Freedom of religion varies widely in Europe and Central Asia. Most states regulate religious groups and activities to some degree, by granting so-called “traditional” religious privileges sometimes denied to other, newer religious groups. In Eastern Europe, majority religions such as the Orthodox Church are often provided with such special treatment and privileges. These states sometimes view other religious groups as “dangerous sects and cults.” Some states have enacted restrictive legislation to govern the activities of foreign missionaries, especially those from Protestant or “nontraditional” denominations. In many cases, registration with state bodies has been required, not only to establish a group as a legal entity able to rent or own space but also to hold religious services, a practice which is not in keeping with international covenants on freedom of religion. In some eastern European countries, onerous membership and legal requirements restrict new religions from enjoying the privileges of traditional ones, such as the right to appoint military and prison chaplains and receive state subsidies. Restitution of religious properties seized by Communist regimes and the

Nazis is an issue yet to be fully resolved, and, in some countries, progress on this issue has been slow and uneven.

Manifestations of anti-Semitism continue throughout the region, including demonstrations by extremist groups and vandalism of cemeteries and monuments. Most incidents have been in former communist bloc countries but a number of western European countries have faced a disturbing increase in anti-Semitic acts. Attacks on synagogues and other places where religious groups gather have been reported in Russia. The Russian government has condemned such acts. In the Caucasus and Central Asian states, the remaining small Jewish communities enjoy reasonably amicable relations with their Muslim compatriots. Jewish communities from Azerbaijan in the Caucasus to Bukhara and Tashkent in Uzbekistan report societal and governmental support for their security.

The Russian government has recently been asserting greater control over certain minority religious groups. Of great concern are government applications of “anti-extremism” laws designed to counter terrorism against peaceful religious communities. The Jehovah’s Witnesses have had one of their local religious organizations dissolved and 52 titles of their religious literature banned as “extremist.” In April, the Russian government banned the distribution of all issues of their primary publications *Awake!* and *The Watchtower*, which have been distributed internationally for many years. Jehovah’s Witnesses have been subject to police raids, searches, detentions, confiscation of literature, and fines, and have been denied access to legal counsel. Similar government tactics are being used against Muslim and Scientology groups. Additionally, there have been reports of numerous attacks on Jehovah’s Witnesses from private citizens. These attacks include assaults with knives and guns, beatings, shoving Jehovah’s Witnesses down the stairs, and other violent acts. The government has also conducted raids on Lutheran and Baptist congregations.

In Turkmenistan, Jehovah’s Witnesses have been subject to increasing harassment by authorities in the last two years, including detention, confiscation of literature, and, in some cases, police beatings. In Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, conscientious objectors to mandatory military service have been convicted of criminal activity.

In Belarus, government officials have raided and fined unregistered religious groups including Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, and other Protestants. Two Catholic priests were banned from further religious activity. Government officials continue to arrest and prosecute conscientious objectors. There are reports that government officials are preventing religious groups from renting space to hold worship services.

Observant Muslims across Europe and Central Asia have been treated as potential Islamists and accused of membership in banned groups. In some countries, there are legal prohibitions against wearing the hijab in certain public contexts, such as universities. In others, wearing the hijab or wearing beards marks one as an observant Muslim and leads to frequent requests for identification documents by the authorities. Muslims in some cities are subject to harassment and societal violence. Islamic cemeteries have also been desecrated. Followers of theologian Said Nursi have been subject to particular scrutiny. NGOs have reported their detention and the confiscation of literature in Azerbaijan and Russia.

Observant Muslims in the former Soviet Union region have experienced mosque closures, detention, prison terms, and the possibility of torture, especially in Uzbekistan. Particularly in the case of Central Asia, restrictive religion laws have allowed governments to control virtually all aspects of religious life, and government officials actively monitor religious groups, institutions, and figures. As a result of government abuses, as well as arrests and harassment of members of religious groups under Uzbekistan's restrictive religion law, the Secretary of State re-designated Uzbekistan a Country of Particular Concern for particularly severe violations of religious freedom on January 16, 2009. Since August 2008, Uzbekistan has cracked down on the Nur movement associated with Turkish scholar Fethullah Gulen, arresting dozens of alleged members, many of whom have since been sentenced to six- to 12- year prison terms.

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 seeks 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.

Following the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence, the pace of returns to Kosovo doubled in 2009 and has continued into 2010. If the political and economic situation stabilizes further, returns should increasingly become a viable and desirable option for many displaced minorities from Kosovo. In March 2010 ministerial discussions, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia agreed to work together to identify solutions to resolve the problems that continue to confront the region's vulnerable, displaced victims of the Balkans war of the early 1990s. In Croatia, recent progress in providing housing for returnees may encourage some of the more than 60,000 refugees in Serbia to return to their homes.

Local Integration

UNHCR has led efforts to create viable asylum systems and effective legal protections for refugees in the Balkans and in the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union. However, ineffective implementation of these laws, combined with the history of national animosities and xenophobia throughout the region, make effective local integration of ethnic minorities difficult for 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 effectively stateless. In Montenegro, the path to citizenship has been particularly slow for those displaced from Kosovo, whom the government considers neither refugees nor IDPs. 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 emigration to Israel continues, with 6,214 individuals from states of the former Soviet Union availing themselves of this opportunity in 2009 under the United Israel Appeal Program.

FY 2010 U.S. Admissions

In FY 2010, we estimate 1,500-2,000 admissions from Europe and Central Asia. Religious minorities processed under the Lautenberg Amendment from countries of the former Soviet Union constitute a significant portion of the caseload. During FY 2010, applicants were processed in Almaty, Baku, Bishkek, Chisinau, Kyiv, Valletta, Moscow, Timisoara, and Tashkent.

FY 2011 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed FY 2011 ceiling for refugees from Europe and Central Asia is 2,500. This includes some 650 who will be in the final stage of admissions processing at the end of FY 2010, as well as new cases approved in FY 2011. 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 2011 Europe & Central Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>850</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>10</i>
<i><u>Total Proposed Ceiling</u></i>	<i><u>2,000</u></i>

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In 2009, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean totaled over 4 million. The ongoing conflict in Colombia generated the most significant numbers of refugees and IDPs in the region. Estimates of the number of IDPs in Colombia vary between 3.3 million

(government figure) and 4.9 million (NGO figure). Expanded state presence and improved security in cities and towns throughout Colombia have led to a decline in internal displacement in the past year, but the cumulative total of IDPs continues to grow. The Government of Colombia registered over 110,000 new IDPs between January and December 2009 – a 47 percent decline in the number of new displacements registered over the same period in 2008. In surrounding countries, there are approximately 400,000 asylum seekers and persons in refugee-like situations. More than 55,000 Colombians have been recognized as refugees in Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Costa Rica, according to UNHCR. Ecuador, the country with the largest population of Colombian refugees, has an effective asylum process in which UNHCR participates. Several other countries in the region such as Costa Rica, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Panama have established asylum procedures. However, the registration and determination procedures are often implemented ineffectively. UNHCR is working with these countries to improve their asylum processes.

The number of Colombian asylum seekers and persons of concern in neighboring countries continues to rise. As of December 2009, there were approximately 45,000 Colombian refugees recognized in Ecuador and UNHCR estimates there could be another 100,000 people in the country who may be in need of international protection. The Government of Ecuador launched a 12-month enhanced registration program in March 2009 under which mobile teams from the Office of the Directorate General for Refugees expeditiously completed the refugee registration, determination, and documentation processes for Colombian refugees along the northern border. Over 27,000 persons were issued refugee visas during the year-long program, which ended in March 2010. This number constitutes approximately 50 percent of the refugees recognized in the country since 2000. The Government of Ecuador is also working with UNHCR to improve the normal asylum registration process.

In Panama, there are approximately 1,300 recognized refugees (mainly Colombians) and 500 persons with official temporary protected status. In Costa Rica, there are approximately 12,000 recognized refugees. Costa Rica is working to revise its asylum system, and re-established its Refugee Department in March 2010. There are approximately 1,245 recognized refugees and 12,000 asylum seekers in Venezuela. 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 in the country, the largest numbers from Angola and Colombia.

In 2002, the United States began a Priority 1 resettlement program to resettle vulnerable Colombian refugees located in Ecuador and Costa Rica. Most Colombian refugees have fled the 45-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 under duress provided “material support” to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, National Liberation Army of Colombia, and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia have been resolved with the issuance of exemptions for these inadmissibilities in 2007 and 2008.

In Haiti, the devastating earthquake that hit the country on January 12 created a humanitarian disaster that continues to be addressed. Elections for the presidency, the senate, national assembly, and other regional posts have yet to be scheduled. The United States continues to support UNHCR’s efforts to help governments in the Caribbean address the needs of Haitians and asylum seekers.

Religious Freedom

In Latin America, religious freedom is widely recognized and enjoyed. An exception is Cuba. The Cuban constitution recognizes the right of citizens to profess and practice any religious belief within the framework of respect for the law. However, the government continues to place restrictions on freedom of religion. The Ministry of Interior, through its state security apparatus, engages in active surveillance of religious institutions. The USRAP is a component of the U.S.-Cuba Migration Agreement that allows for the acceptance of Cubans for permanent residence in the United States under the Priority 2 category that includes religious persecution.

Voluntary Repatriation

Given the threats and violence in Colombia from illegally 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 Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela have maintained policies that allow Colombians in need of protection to obtain asylum and integrate locally. Despite such policies, their capacity to review applications and confer refugee status remains limited. As mentioned above, the Government of Ecuador conducted a mobile program to register and document 27,000 Colombian refugees in the northern border area of the country. The regular asylum process in Ecuador, however, remained slow with limited accessibility. 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 has shown improvement in recent years, but delays in recognition and documentation still exist in some cases. 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.

PRM 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. UNHCR has established a new field office in the Dominican Republic which opened in mid-2010. The principal priorities of the field office during the first year of operation will be to support the government in re-establishing a functioning domestic asylum procedure, to address gaps in refugee documentation and to clear the existing backlog of undecided asylum claims.

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 in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Panama. 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.

The referral of refugees for resettlement out of the Caribbean (other than Cuba) historically has been very limited. In FY2009, UNHCR referred a group of refugees with mixed nationalities located in Trinidad as well as individual cases in Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, who arrived in the United States during FY2010.

The United States also facilitates the resettlement in third countries of persons interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard or who enter Guantanamo Naval Station illegally and are found by DHS/USCIS to have a well-founded fear of persecution or who would likely face torture if repatriated. From 1996 through 2010, more than 300 such protected persons have been resettled to eighteen countries in Latin America, Europe, Australia, and Canada. Twelve have been resettled in FY 2010 as of July 31.

The U.S. government continues to operate an in-country refugee resettlement program in Cuba. We have taken steps to ensure that all Cubans eligible for consideration have access to the program and that approved refugees travel as soon as possible. A substantial backlog of cases pending review remains, an unknown number of which are likely ineligible for the program. Additional resources are being applied to a review of the backlogged cases which will provide greater clarity regarding the size of the eligible applicant pool by the end of FY 2011. Upgrades to the refugee office in Havana are planned for FY2011 which should support an expanded Cultural Orientation program for approved refugees. 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 2010 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate admitting slightly more than 5,000 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean during FY 2010. Cubans comprise the overwhelming majority of refugees resettled from the region. Historically, most Cuban admissions were former political prisoners and forced labor conscripts who served sentences in the 1960s and 1970s. 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. In addition, we expect some 200 Colombian refugees to be admitted to the United States during FY 2010.

FY 2011 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed 5,500 ceiling for Latin America and the Caribbean for FY 2011 comprises Cuban refugees eligible for the in-country Priority 2 program; a small number of UNHCR-referred Priority 1 Colombians; and refugees of diverse nationalities located in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in the Caribbean, as well as a small number of Priority 3 family reunion cases.

Proposed FY 2011 program for Latin America and the Caribbean:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>2,850</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Priority 2 In-Country Cubans</i>	<i>2,300</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>50</i>
<i><u>Total Proposed Ceiling</u></i>	<i><u>5,500</u></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, and Bhutanese. 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 (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 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, mainly to Palestinians, Afghans, and some Africans. Other countries in the region have provided long-term asylum for Tibetan, Bhutanese, and Sri Lankan refugees. 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; Iranians in Turkey; and Burmese in India.

There is no internationally agreed-upon definitive number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people due to the fact that they are often not registered with UNHCR and are dispersed throughout the region. There are some 229,000 Iraqi refugees currently registered with UNHCR in neighboring countries and an unknown number of unregistered refugees. UNHCR reports that 1.5 million Iraqis displaced by sectarian violence following the Samarra Mosque bombing of February 2006 remain internally displaced in Iraq. Approximately 35,000 third-country refugees (including Palestinians and Iranian Kurds) and 3,800 asylum seekers remain in Iraq.

Despite the voluntary repatriation of over 5.6 million Afghan refugees since 2002, Pakistan continues to host approximately 1.7 million and Iran approximately 935,000 registered Afghan refugees, many of whom have been resident in these countries for decades. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans, mostly unaccompanied men, are believed to live and work in Pakistan and Iran without documentation. Over 10,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers are registered with UNHCR in India. Identifying durable solutions remains an important component of UNHCR's strategy in India. Integration of long-staying ethnic Afghan refugees, many of whom have

lived in India from 15 to 27 years, is a key element of this strategy. Local integration remains a difficult option due to opposition from host countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India.

Thousands of ethnic Nepalis long resident 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 ethnic Nepalis with legal residency in Bhutan, to date none have been permitted to return. Due to concerted resettlement efforts commenced in 2008 by the United States and other resettlement countries, a third of the original population of 108,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have departed after spending two decades in seven camps in eastern Nepal.

Religious Freedom

Persecution of religious minorities 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 minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, are often inadequate. In Afghanistan, religious freedom is limited due to constitutional contradictions, legislative ambiguity, and deference to Shia interpretations of sharia law.

In Iran, all non-Shia religious groups including Sunni Muslims, Bahais, Sufis, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians, continue to face discrimination, harassment, and arrest.

In some countries in the region, most notably Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, those accused of apostasy are subject to severe governmental repression and societal violence. Under these governments' interpretations of sharia, apostates may be denied their civil rights if any member of society files an apostasy complaint against the convert. In cases decided by a sharia court, judges have annulled the convert's marriage, transferred child custody, conveyed property rights to Muslim family members, deprived them of civil rights, and declared them wards of the state without any religious identity.

Sectarian violence in Iraq has resulted in what UNHCR considers the largest dislocation in the Middle East since the Palestinian exodus following the creation of the State of Israel. The greatest impact has been on Iraq's small religious minority communities. These minorities, including Christians, Yezidis, Sabeen-Mandaeans, and others, have experienced wide-scale displacement – some by as much as 90 percent of their population over the past seven years. Some 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees are members of religious minorities, a figure significantly 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 forever.

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. The Specter Amendment, first enacted as sec. 213, Division E, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-199), provides that Iranian religious minorities designated as category members benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution. They are eligible to apply under Priority 2. 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 5.6 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 only 278,000

Afghans returning in 2008 and about 54,000 returning in 2009. The massive repatriation represents roughly a 20 percent increase in Afghanistan's total population and has taxed the country's capacity to absorb further refugee returns.

In spite of the fact that the tripartite agreement on voluntary repatriation has been extended through 2012, it is unlikely that all of the remaining 1.7 million registered Afghans will repatriate. Voluntary repatriation from Pakistan this year began on March 22, 2010, and as of June 30, 2010, about 67,000 have been processed for return. UNHCR has projected that up to 150,000 will return in 2010. 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 who are 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 security conditions and the absorptive capacity for returnees to Afghanistan improves. UNHCR is working with the Government of Pakistan and the international community to develop policies and programs to encourage voluntary returns and to manage the population of Afghans that may remain in Pakistan for the longer term. IOM is seeking a greater role in border management and in developing regional mechanisms for economic migration that would bolster protection for Afghans.

The return prospects of the Afghan population in India have been assessed as extremely limited given the profile of the cases. Generally, they have no family/social links in their country of origin, which is fundamental to their security upon return. Many of the refugees have now married Indians, whose integration capacity in Afghanistan is seen as remote given the cultural and religious differences between the two countries. For some refugees there are heightened security risks and problems for return precisely because of their protracted exile in India. Children, particularly girls and young women, who have grown up in India in a more liberal environment, may be unable to adjust. Thus far in 2010, only 10 Afghans have repatriated from non-neighboring countries such as India.

Since early 2008, 464,000 IDPs and refugees have returned to Iraq. IDPs comprise the vast majority of these returns. Over 85 percent of all returns have been to Baghdad and Diyala. 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. Therefore, UNHCR is working with Iraqis in neighboring countries on an individual basis to facilitate voluntary returns to Iraq. In 2009, some 29,000 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq and registered for assistance through the Iraqi government or UNHCR.

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, UNHCR anticipates that there may be some growth in demand for repatriation by Tamils currently residing in India. Although formal returns are not expected to reach significant levels in 2010, we may see an increase in 2011. Confirmation of citizenship is one of the key conditions for the voluntary return of both Bhutanese refugees and some Tamils in India, and UNHCR is working toward this end in both cases.

Local Integration

Few countries in the region offer local integration to refugees. The Tripartite Agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and Iran expired on March 19, 2008, but an ad hoc agreement remains in place. The Tripartite Agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan provides for the orderly, voluntary return of Afghan refugees. On March 24, 2010, the Government of Pakistan approved the extension of the Afghan Management Strategy, which officially permits Afghan Proof of Registration (POR) cardholders to remain in Pakistan through 2012. Children born in Pakistan to Afghan POR cardholders will also be able to register on their parent's card if under five years old and with their own POR card if five or older. In partnership with the Government of Pakistan and UNDP, UNHCR launched the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas 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. UNHCR has already commenced work on over 22 projects under the initiative, which will

eventually be implemented in 21 districts and six urban areas of Baluchistan, NWFP/KPk, Sindh, and Punjab Provinces, benefiting some 2.5 million Pakistanis and Afghans and strengthening the Government of Pakistan's governance and public service delivery.

The key to the successful transition from short-term humanitarian maintenance to longer-term development is acceptance by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan that they are best served by a system of managed migration across their border. Progress has been made in this area; some within the government of Pakistan have publicly acknowledged that some Afghans in Pakistan are likely to stay. The majority of Afghans who repatriated in the last few years had fled Taliban rule relatively recently. Many of the Afghans remaining in Iran and Pakistan left Afghanistan in the early years of the Soviet occupation. More than half were born in exile, and 74 percent are under age 28. Many of these refugees are unlikely to return without strong economic and social incentives.

Iraqis are still able to obtain visas at the border between Iraq and Syria. Visas are routinely valid for three months and renewable by exiting and reentering the country. In February 2008, Jordan began requiring Iraqis to apply for Jordanian visas in advance of entry. This visa policy substantially reduced the number of Iraqis seeking refuge in Jordan.

Although both governments have permitted Iraqis to remain on a temporary basis, local integration of Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan is not an option. Iraqis in Syria and Jordan are not legally defined as refugees, but rather as visitors. 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. Iraqi refugees have also been granted some access to the public health care systems. There are significant barriers to procuring legal employment in all host countries.

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 37 settlements for

Tibetans 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 had intensified its efforts to ensure that all eligible refugees had submitted applications for Indian citizenship by December 31, 2009. 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 Iranians during FY 2011. 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, Damascus, Cairo, Istanbul, and Beirut. UNHCR has referred over 11,000 individuals to the U.S. program in FY 2010 and will continue making referrals in coming months. We project the admission of approximately 17,000 Iraqi refugees during FY2010.

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 some processing locations. 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 or MNF-I in 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 an OPE unit in Baghdad in FY 2008. Given the security and logistical challenges associated with operating an OPE in Iraq, it is likely that in-country processing capacity will remain more limited than in neighboring countries. Nonetheless, refugee processing in Iraq is a high priority for the United States and we believe it has significant potential, particularly to benefit Iraqis associated with U.S. efforts in Iraq. The Departments of State and Homeland Security continue to devote substantial resources to Iraqi refugee processing. In addition to maintaining a robust interview schedule, DHS has developed enhanced security screening to ensure the integrity and security of the program.

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 (Bahais, Zoroastrians, Jews, Mandaeans, and Christians) may be processed for U.S. resettlement using special procedures authorized by the Government of Austria. U.S. law provides a reduced evidentiary standard for Iran's religious minorities, and more than 99 percent of eligible applicants are approved for admission to the United States. After nearly a ten-fold increase in departures from FY2004 to FY2008, OPE Vienna has experienced a significant decrease in new applications. Projected FY 2010 departures represent nearly a 35 percent decrease from FY 2008, while the total OPE Vienna pipeline has decreased 53 percent over the same time period. The

United States also processes Iranian religious minorities (primarily Bahai) and other Iranians in Turkey through special procedures involving fast-track refugee status determination and referral by UNHCR. PRM has recently provided funding to UNHCR to increase significantly its capacity to refer refugees in Turkey for resettlement to the United States and other countries.

Resettlement processing of ethnic Nepali Bhutanese refugees in Nepal is continuing smoothly and the United States remains committed to considering for resettlement as many refugees as express interest. By the end of FY 2010, it is estimated that more than 36,000 Bhutanese refugees will 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 operations. UNHCR has referred for third-country resettlement all of the protracted ethnic Afghan refugees in India who cannot naturalize or repatriate. 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. We continue to explore modalities for processing vulnerable Tibetan refugees in the region.

FY 2010 U.S. Admissions

We estimate the admission of approximately 37,000 refugees from the region in FY 2010. These will include over 17,000 Iraqis, over 13,000 Bhutanese, some 4,000 Iranians, and some 1,000 Afghans. Over 2,700 exemptions have been issued to Iraqi individuals in the refugee context, including both exemptions for material support provided under duress and to the groups eligible for group exemptions.

FY 2011 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed regional ceiling for refugees from the Near East and South Asia for FY 2010 is 35,000, including vulnerable Iraqis, Bhutanese, Iranians, 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 in Libya are also scheduled for processing.

Proposed FY 2011 Near East/South Asia program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>25,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>5,400</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>35,500</i></u>

TABLE III
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**RESETTLEMENT ACCESS FOR REFUGEES FROM COUNTRIES DESIGNATED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE AS COUNTRIES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN***

COUNTRY OF PARTICULAR CONCERN	PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3
Eritrea	X	X	X
Sudan	X		X
China	X		
Burma	X	X	X
DPRK	X		X
Iran	X	X	X
Saudi Arabia	X		
Uzbekistan	X		X

** Countries currently designated under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, as amended. Section 402(b)(1)(A) defines a country of “particular concern” as a country that “has engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom in that country during the preceding 12 months or since the date of the last review of that country”.*

IV. *DOMESTIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS*

In FY 2009, the USRAP admitted 74,654 refugees from 54 countries. More than half were originally from either the countries of Iraq or Burma. (See Table IV.)

The demographic characteristics of refugee arrivals from the 20 largest source countries (representing 100 percent of total arrivals) in FY 2009 illustrate the variation among refugee groups. The median age of all FY 2009 arrivals was 26 years and ranged from 18 years for arrivals from Central African Republic to 39 years of age for arrivals from Vietnam. In FY 2009, 48.4 percent of all arriving refugees were female and 51.6 percent of all arriving refugees were male. Males predominated among refugees from Sudan (65.9 percent), Eritrea (54.9 percent), and Burma (54.4 percent). (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 17.9 percent among Pakistan arrivals to a low of 2.1 percent of those from Vietnam. The number of school-aged children (from five to 17 years of age) varied from a high of over 49.0 percent of arrivals from Central African Republic to a low of 11.8 percent of those from Iran. The number of working-aged refugees (16 to 64 years of age) varied from a high of 74.8 percent of those from Iran to a low of 50.9 percent of individuals from Burundi. Retirement-aged refugees (65 years or older) ranged from a high of 17.1 percent of arrivals from Vietnam to a low of less than one percent of those from Pakistan, Palestine, and Rwanda. Of the total arrivals in FY 2009, some 9.1 percent were under the age of five, 24.7 percent were of school age, 65.9 percent were of working age, and 4.2 percent were of retirement age. (See Table VI.)

During FY 2009, 67.8 percent of all arriving refugees resettled in 12 states. The majority were placed in California (15.11 percent), followed by Texas (11.00 percent), New York (5.91 percent), Arizona (5.79 percent), Florida (5.62 percent), Michigan (4.69 percent), and Georgia (4.38). The states of Washington (3.46 percent), Illinois (3.43 percent), North Carolina (3.01 percent), Pennsylvania (2.89 percent,) and Virginia (2.47 percent) each resettled significant percentages of the total of newly arrived refugees. (See Table VII.)

TABLE IV Refugee Arrivals By Country of Origin Fiscal Year 2009		
Country of Origin	Arrivals	
	Number	% of Total
Afghanistan	349	0.47%
Angola	8	0.01%
Bhutan	13,452	18.02%
Burma	18,202	24.38%
Burundi	762	1.02%
Cambodia	15	0.02%
Cameroon	4	0.01%
Central African Republic	59	0.08%
Chad	6	0.01%
China	54	0.07%
Colombia	57	0.08%
Congo	293	0.39%
Cuba	4,800	6.43%
Dem. Rep. Congo	1,135	1.52%
Djibouti	3	0.00%
Egypt	7	0.01%
Equatorial Guinea	9	0.01%
Eritrea	1,571	2.10%
Ethiopia	321	0.43%
Former Soviet Union*	1,995	2.67%
Former Yugoslavia**	2	0.00%
Gabon	1	0.00%
Gambia	10	0.01%
Ghana	1	0.00%
Guinea	3	0.00%
Iran	5,381	7.21%
Iraq	18,838	25.23%
Ivory Coast	9	0.01%
Kenya	1	0.00%

Korea, North	25	0.03%
Kuwait	7	0.01%
Laos	14	0.02%
Lebanon	1	0.00%
Liberia	385	0.52%
Madagascar (Malagasy Republic)	3	0.00%
Mauritania	16	0.02%
Morocco	1	0.00%
Nepal	7	0.01%
Nigeria	3	0.00%
Pakistan	67	0.09%
Palestine	65	0.09%
Rwanda	111	0.15%
Sierra Leone	51	0.07%
Somalia	4,189	5.61%
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	33	0.04%
Sudan	683	0.91%
Syria	25	0.03%
Thailand	2	0.00%
Togo	14	0.02%
Uganda	8	0.01%
Vietnam	1,538	2.06%
Yemen	47	0.06%
Zambia	1	0.00%
Zimbabwe	10	0.01%
TOTAL	74,654	100.0%

*Former Soviet Union includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

**Former Yugoslavia includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Yugoslavia.

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

TABLE V**Median Age and Gender of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2009**

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Refugees Admitted	Median Age	% Females	% Males
1	Iraq	18,838	27	49.3%	50.7%
2	Burma	18,202	22	45.6%	54.4%
3	Bhutan	13,452	28	49.0%	51.0%
4	Iran	5,381	38	51.6%	48.4%
5	Cuba	4,800	32	49.7%	50.3%
6	Somalia	4,189	20	50.8%	49.2%
7	Former Soviet Union*	1,995	30	50.2%	49.8%
8	Eritrea	1,571	20	45.1%	54.9%
9	Vietnam	1,538	39	49.9%	50.1%
10	Dem. Rep. Congo	1,135	19	49.0%	51.0%
11	Burundi	762	21	49.5%	50.5%
12	Sudan	683	26	34.1%	65.9%
13	Liberia	385	25	51.7%	48.3%
14	Afghanistan	349	24	49.3%	50.7%
15	Ethiopia	321	24	45.8%	54.2%
16	Congo	293	21	49.8%	50.2%
17	Rwanda	111	23	46.8%	53.2%
18	Pakistan	67	21	50.7%	49.3%
19	Palestine	65	24	49.2%	50.8%
20	Central African Republic	59	18	45.8%	54.2%
	All Other Countries	458	24	48.3%	51.7%
TOTAL		74,654	26	48.4%	51.6%

*Former Soviet Union includes countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

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

TABLE VI
Select Age Categories of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2009

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Under 5 Yrs	School Age (5-17)	Working Age (16-64)	Retirement Age (=or > 65)
1	Iraq	9.9%	23.9%	65.9%	3.8%
2	Burma	12.4%	28.4%	62.5%	1.2%
3	Bhutan	5.8%	22.3%	71.1%	4.8%
4	Iran	2.3%	11.8%	74.8%	13.6%
5	Cuba	4.9%	20.4%	72.3%	5.4%
6	Somalia	13.4%	32.9%	56.5%	1.2%
7	Former Soviet Union*	7.6%	27.0%	61.0%	9.0%
8	Eritrea	16.5%	23.2%	62.3%	0.5%
9	Vietnam	2.1%	18.7%	65.5%	17.1%
10	Dem. Rep. Congo	13.0%	41.4%	51.6%	1.0%
11	Burundi	14.7%	38.2%	50.9%	2.0%
12	Sudan	9.1%	25.0%	67.9%	0.9%
13	Liberia	6.2%	34.3%	61.8%	4.4%
14	Afghanistan	7.4%	29.8%	67.9%	0.6%
15	Ethiopia	7.8%	24.3%	70.7%	1.6%
16	Congo	11.3%	35.5%	58.4%	0.7%
17	Rwanda	5.4%	34.2%	65.8%	0.0%
18	Pakistan	17.9%	29.9%	55.2%	0.0%
19	Palestine	15.4%	21.5%	66.2%	0.0%
20	Central African Republic	13.6%	49.2%	40.7%	1.7%
	All Other Countries	9.2%	24.5%	67.0%	2.0%
TOTAL		9.1%	24.7%	65.9%	4.2%

*Former Soviet Union includes countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

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 VII
Refugee Arrivals By State of Initial Resettlement, Fiscal Year 2009

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
Alabama	187	0	187	0.25%
Alaska	116	0	116	0.16%
Arizona	4,317	3	4,320	5.79%
Arkansas	18	0	18	0.02%
California	11,274	4	11,278	15.11%
Colorado	1,735	0	1,735	2.32%
Connecticut	349	0	349	0.47%
Delaware	4	0	4	0.01%
District of Columbia	58	0	58	0.08%
Florida	4,193	0	4,193	5.62%
Georgia	3,270	2	3,272	4.38%
Hawaii	8	0	8	0.01%
Idaho	1,183	0	1,183	1.58%
Illinois	2,560	0	2,560	3.43%
Indiana	1,249	0	1,249	1.67%
Iowa	901	0	901	1.21%
Kansas	361	0	361	0.48%
Kentucky	1,722	0	1,722	2.31%
Louisiana	372	13	385	0.52%
Maine	259	0	259	0.35%
Maryland	899	0	899	1.20%
Massachusetts	1,679	0	1,679	2.25%
Michigan	3,500	0	3,500	4.69%
Minnesota	994	0	994	1.33%
Mississippi	23	0	23	0.03%
Missouri	1,334	0	1,334	1.79%
Montana	7	0	7	0.01%
Nebraska	816	0	816	1.09%
Nevada	589	0	589	0.79%
New Hampshire	558	0	558	0.75%
New Jersey	1,108	0	1,108	1.48%
New Mexico	163	0	163	0.22%

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
New York	4,411	1	4,412	5.91%
North Carolina	2,235	12	2,247	3.01%
North Dakota	447	0	447	0.60%
Ohio	1,589	0	1,589	2.13%
Oklahoma	175	0	175	0.23%
Oregon	704	0	704	0.94%
Pennsylvania	2,155	0	2,155	2.89%
Rhode Island	166	0	166	0.22%
South Carolina	127	0	127	0.17%
South Dakota	536	0	536	0.72%
Tennessee	1,492	0	1,492	2.00%
Texas	8,195	17	8,212	11.00%
Utah	1,265	0	1,265	1.69%
Vermont	332	0	332	0.44%
Virginia	1,842	0	1,842	2.47%
Washington	2,581	0	2,581	3.46%
West Virginia	21	0	21	0.03%
Wisconsin	523	0	523	0.70%
Total	74,602	52	74,654	100.0%

Note: Arrival figures do not reflect secondary migration.

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

TABLE VIII
ESTIMATED COSTS OF REFUGEE PROCESSING, MOVEMENT, AND RESETTLEMENT
FY 2010 AND FY 2011 (\$ MILLIONS)

AGENCY	ESTIMATED FY 2010 (BY DEPARTMENT)	ESTIMATED FY 2011 (BY DEPARTMENT)
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY <i>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</i>		
Refugee Processing	\$22.9	\$23.1
DEPARTMENT OF STATE <i>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</i>		
Refugee Admissions	\$394.4*	\$416**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES <i>Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement</i>		
Refugee Resettlement	\$582.0 ***	\$670.0 ***
TOTAL	\$998.2	\$1,109.1

The estimated FY 2011 figures above reflect the President's FY 2011 Budget request and do not include carryover funds from FY 2010 which will be determined at the end of FY 2010.

* Includes FY 2010 MRA appropriation of \$324 million, \$21.3 million in carry-forward from FY 2009, \$45.6 million projected IOM loan collections/carry-forward, and approximately \$3.5 million in FY 2009 recoveries.

** Includes FY 2011 MRA budget request of \$377 million, \$32 million in IOM loan collections/carry-forward, and projected \$7 million in recoveries during FY2011.

*** 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 does not include costs associated with the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program, Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or Supplemental Security Income programs.

TABLE IX

UNHCR Resettlement Statistics by Resettlement Country
CY 2009 Admissions

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL RESETTLED
United States*	61,832	73.49%
Australia	6,720	7.99%
Canada	6,518	7.75%
Germany	2,064	2.45%
Sweden	1,787	2.12%
Norway	1,276	1.52%
United Kingdom	938	1.11%
Finland	706	0.84%
New Zealand	675	0.80%
Denmark	463	0.55%
Netherlands	341	0.41%
Italy	191	0.23%
Ireland	186	0.22%
France	158	0.19%
Chile	66	0.08%
Belgium	54	0.06%
Other**	160	0.19%
TOTAL	84,135	100.00

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

**Departures to all other resettlement countries.