

**PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2010**

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(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 2010: Report to the Congress* is submitted in compliance with Section 207(e) 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) is an important component of the United States' overall effort in support of refugees. On the occasion of World Refugee Day on June 20, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton described the commitment of the United States to provide assistance and protection to the world's most vulnerable populations:

“The United States is committed to supporting refugees and displaced people worldwide. We are proud to support the heroic efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, and many other non-governmental organizations that work on behalf of refugees worldwide, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. Last year, we gave more than \$1.4 billion to support this work, making us the world's largest donor for refugee relief. And we're honored to welcome the many refugees who have resettled in our nation; since 1975, nearly 3 million refugees have made new homes in the United States, more than any other nation in the world.”

U.S. resettlement should always be available to refugees in greatest need, regardless of their location, national origin, health status, 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 refugees resettled had family members already in the United States. Over the past decade, however, the U.S. has worked closely with 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 15 million. While we will resettle large numbers of Iraqis, Burmese, and Bhutanese this year, the USRAP will admit refugees from over 60 nationalities who were processed in some 65 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 the hope of a way out of their situation through resettlement, staff of the Departments of State and Homeland Security - with the invaluable support of our processing partners - overcame formidable security, logistical, and other challenges to launch a pilot program for Darfuris 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. Countries resettling refugees now total 25. In addition, four countries have offered their territory to UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration for use as transit locations. 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.

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. Barring unforeseen disruptions in the movement of refugees to the United States in the coming weeks, we expect to admit some 75,000 refugees in FY 2009 – more than in any year since the terrorist attacks on our country.

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 this year in the overseas aspects of the USRAP, the downturn in the U.S. economy has posed substantial challenges to resettlement and integration activities here at home. Refugees and resettlement staff assisting refugees have found that

entry level jobs are increasingly difficult to find in receiving communities. Thus, the relatively high cost of housing has become a particular concern. To provide some relief, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) identified and programmed \$5 million from the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriation to enable resettlement agencies to assist recently-arrived refugees with acute housing needs. Notwithstanding these difficulties, history has demonstrated that the vast majority of refugees – who have arrived over the years during periods of economic growth and economic challenges – will succeed in their new lives in the United States.

Earlier this year, PRM initiated a review of its Reception and Placement (R&P) Program, which provides assistance to refugees in their first weeks in the United States. In cooperation with R&P Program implementers, Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR) staff, and representative state refugee coordinators, PRM explored the purpose and guiding principles of the R&P Program, program outcomes and measurements of success. After a series of productive meetings, the group articulated a set of principles for the program and agreed on a series of recommendations, the implementation of which will begin in FY 2010.

The R&P Program is an important but relatively small component in the extensive network of integration services available to refugees at the state, county, and local levels. Thus, the Administration plans to conduct a more comprehensive review of existing programs. We will seek to ensure that the Administration, in cooperation with local partners, is most effectively meeting the needs of resettled refugees in light of the changed – and more diverse – character of the program. We will also seek to enhance our efforts at the strategic use of resettlement – by using that option to promote more generous policies among countries of origin and refugee hosting countries toward repatriation and 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 utilization of resources possible.

We continue to address obstacles to the admission of legitimate refugees who are covered by the definitions of “terrorist activity” and “terrorist organization” under U.S. law. Although we have made progress in using the exemption authority over the last few years, vulnerable refugees

continue to be affected by the broad scope of the law. The Administration is working to put in place an effective and efficient interagency process to further use the expanded exemption authority in Section 691 of Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2008. We will undertake this effort in a manner that carefully addresses both humanitarian and national security concerns.

During the past year the USRAP has contributed substantially to the international community's efforts to provide concrete durable solutions to some of the world's most vulnerable refugees. Many of them have lived in refugee camps for years where the possibility of a normal life is impossible. While starting life anew in the United States is not without its own challenges, the assistance provided to these newcomers by average Americans makes a significant difference in hastening their integration into a new society. Once on their feet, refugees add to the vitality and diversity of this country 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 2008, 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 UN 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 benefit of refugees and IDPs.

During FY 2009, the United States has 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, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan have proceeded during FY 2009, 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 uphold their responsibilities to protect refugees through local integration and provides assistance to help meet these humanitarian needs. Afghans in India, Burundi in Tanzania, Liberians and Sierra Leoneans in seven countries across West

Africa, Mauritians in Senegal, 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. For example, in 2008, PRM advocacy and engagement was instrumental in improving the lives of stateless Rohingya in Burma. UNHCR successfully negotiated the provision of government-issued temporary residency certificates for Rohingya in Burma, thus advancing their legal standing, reducing travel restrictions and increasing their access to health services and schools. Also in 2008, the Government of Bangladesh agreed to issue national identity cards to formerly stateless Biharis. In addition, to focus greater attention on this "hidden" population in need of protection, the Department of State began devoting a distinct sub-section on the issue of statelessness in its annual country Human Rights Reports.

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 U.S. 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 2008, UNHCR referred refugees to 25 countries for resettlement consideration. Some 90 percent were referred to the United States, Canada, and Australia. Smaller numbers of referrals were accepted by Sweden, New Zealand, Norway, Great Britain, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Ireland, Argentina, the Czech Republic, Chile, and Italy. In addition, Iceland, the Republic of Korea, Austria, Brazil, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, and Greece each accepted some refugees for resettlement.

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 2008, some 74 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 expand the number of referrals it makes annually.

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 U.S. 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; that local integration solutions are offered; and that third country resettlement is accorded to those in need of that option. 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 for refugees to voluntarily return to Bhutan or seek local integration opportunities in Nepal. 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 local integration in neighboring countries of more than 150,000 1972-era Burundi refugees to date.

During its 29 year 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, guided in large measure toward populations in greatest need of third country resettlement opportunities.

Refugees resettled in the United States contribute positively to the diversity and enrichment of our country. The U.S. program emphasizes the goal that refugees become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Department of Health and Human Services-funded programs administered by individual states and the District of Columbia provide cash and medical assistance, training programs, employment, and other support services to arriving refugees. A variety of institutional providers perform these services, including the voluntary agencies that provide initial reception and placement services under cooperative agreements with the Department of State.

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. 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. Refugees are 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 these agencies on adjustments that will enhance capacities to provide effective services.

II. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM FOR FY 2010

PROPOSED CEILINGS

TABLE I
REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2008 AND FY 2009,
PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS BY REGION FOR FY 2010

REGION	FY 2008 ACTUAL ARRIVALS	FY 2009 CEILING	FY 2009 REVISED CEILING	FY 2009 PROJECTED ARRIVALS	PROPOSED FY2010 CEILING
Africa	8,935	12,000		9,000	15,500
East Asia	19,489	19,000	20,500*	19,500	17,000
Europe and Central Asia	2,343	2,500		2,500	2,500
Latin America/Caribbean	4,277	4,500	5,500*	5,000	5,000
Near East/South Asia	25,148	37,000	39,500*	39,000	35,000
Regional Subtotal	60,192	75,000	80,000*	75,000	75,000
Unallocated Reserve		5,000			5,000
Total	60,192	80,000	80,000	75,000	80,000

**2,500 admissions numbers from the Unallocated Reserve were allocated to the Near East/South Asia ceiling, 1,500 to the East Asia ceiling, and 1,000 to the Latin America/Caribbean ceiling in the fourth quarter of FY 2009, 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 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 U.S.. The FY 2010 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 PRM consultation with DHS/USCIS.

Unallocated Reserve

This proposal includes 5,000 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 USCIS in order to be eligible to provide Priority 1 referrals.

Process for Priority 1 Individual Referral Applications

Priority 1 referrals from UNHCR and NGOs are generally submitted to the appropriate Regional Refugee Coordinator, who forwards them to the appropriate Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) for case processing and scheduling of the DHS/USCIS interview. PRM’s Office of Admissions

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

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 meet established referral criteria. 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. 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 U.S.

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 predefined group is clearly identified both in number and location and linked to a specific list of eligible refugee applicants. Once PRM has established the access eligibility criteria for the group, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, the referring entity (usually UNHCR) provides a list 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 crosschecking 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 2010 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 2010:

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 USG, a USG-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 2010. (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 and others from Burma in Malaysia

Under this existing Priority 2 designation, individuals who have fled Burma and 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 USG, a USG-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.

PRIORITY 3 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The Priority 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 during the year, but additions or deletions are generally made to coincide with the fiscal year.

Fundamentally, inclusion on the Priority 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.

In March 2008, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, PRM suspended P-3 processing and issued a moratorium on P-3 arrivals of certain nationalities due to indications of extremely high rates of fraud obtained through pilot DNA testing. Further, in October 2008, PRM suspended the acceptance of Affidavits of Relationship (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. We are also in the process of revising the AOR to make it an official Department of State (DS) form. Revisions to the P-3 program and AOR were still under review in the final months of FY 2009. PRM and DHS/USCIS will update the Congress when the revisions are complete and we are prepared to resume P-3 processing.

In order to qualify for access under Priority 3 procedures, an applicant must have been outside of his or her country of origin, have had an 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.

FY 2010 Priority 3 Nationalities

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

- Afghanistan
- Bhutan
- Burma
- Burundi

Central African Republic
Colombia
Cuba
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Iran
Iraq
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

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 (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 applicants are not required to demonstrate a persecution claim, as they derive their status from the refugee (or asylee) relative in the United States who filed the petition. Beneficiaries of I-730

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.

petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations.

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 is more limited than Priority 3 in that it does not allow the relative in the United States to petition for parents.

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 a non-governmental organization (NGO), an international organization (IO), or U.S. embassy contractors to manage an 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 2009, NGOs (Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee) worked under cooperative agreements with PRM as OPEs at locations in Austria, Ghana (covering West and Central Africa), Kenya (covering East and Southern Africa), 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 (USG) 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 15 languages: Af-Maay, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Hmong, Karen, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, 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)

PRM currently funds cooperative agreements with ten entities – nine private voluntary agencies and one state government agency – 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, and 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 ten 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 2010 REGIONAL CEILINGS BY PRIORITY**

<u>AFRICA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2009	5,500
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	5,500
Priority 2 Groups	3,500
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	1,000
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>15,500</u>
<u>EAST ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2009	2,700
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	600
Priority 2 Groups	13,600
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>17,000</u>
<u>EUROPE / CENTRAL ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2009	540
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	720
Priority 2 Groups	1,230
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	10
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>2,500</u>
<u>LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2009	2,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	200
Priority 2 Groups	2,750
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	50
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>5,000</u>
<u>NEAR EAST / SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2009	18,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	8,900
Priority 2 Groups	8,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
<u>Total Proposed:</u>	<u>35,000</u>
<u>UNALLOCATED RESERVE</u>	<u>5,000</u>
<u>TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING:</u>	<u>80,000</u>

In the following regional program overviews, we provide a description of refugee conditions and religious freedom in each region. In addition, we discuss prospects for voluntary repatriation, resettlement within the region, and third-country resettlement.

AFRICA

There are currently approximately 2.5 million refugees across the African continent, making up roughly 20 per cent of the global refugee population. Thus far in 2009, we have seen continued progress on several fronts for major refugee populations in Africa. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan in 2005 and successful elections and new governments formed in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Liberia over the past four years laid the groundwork for large-scale refugee returns. In 2009, UN-organized repatriations were underway for refugees from Sudan, Burundi, the DRC, and Mauritania. Organized repatriations to Liberia and Angola were largely completed in 2007 but efforts continued in 2009 to find solutions for residual refugee populations.

At the same time, ongoing violence in Somalia, the Central African Republic (CAR), and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) generated new refugee flows. Eritreans continued to seek asylum in neighboring countries due to political tensions and increasing political repression. In Zimbabwe, economic collapse combined with government-sponsored political repression generated migrant and some refugee outflows in 2009.

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 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 Tanzania, Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Senegal have announced intentions to consider legalizing the status (de jure local integration) of long-staying refugee populations interested in remaining on their territories.

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, such 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, harassing, arresting, and detaining members of independent evangelical groups, including Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses (who lost certain basic 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.

In Sudan, distinctions in the constitution negotiated as part of the CPA have resulted in disparities in the treatment of religious minorities in the north and south. Whereas the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) generally respects the rights of Christians and Muslims in the ten 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 Shari'a 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" 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 U.S. will also have access to the program through Priority 3, subject to its resumption, and certain Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia have access through P-2.

Voluntary Repatriation

Despite the continued existence of protracted refugee situations throughout Africa, 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 fifteen years, refugee numbers have been reduced by more than 60% (from six to less 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 150,000 Liberians having returned home either spontaneously or with UNHCR assistance. However, in 2008 repatriation was reopened to accommodate some of the residual Liberian refugees. As many as 500,000 Liberian refugees returned in several waves prior to 2004. The focus now is on local integration as a durable solution for some 60,000 Liberians remaining in West Africa. UNHCR launched its Mauritania repatriation operation in January 2008 and, despite the coup d'état in August of that year, succeeded in repatriating over 10,000 of the 24,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal by June 2009.

In East and Central Africa, even larger numbers returned home in 2009. Repatriation to South Sudan started in 2005 and has continued apace with over 320,000 – well over half the original refugee population – having returned from neighboring countries by June 2009. No return initiatives are anticipated for the Darfur region of Sudan or Somalia, where conflict continues. Repatriation to relatively stable areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues with nearly 200,000 returns by June 2009 and ongoing movements of many of the remaining 300,000 planned for 2009-2010. Most are currently returning to eastern DRC's South Kivu and Katanga provinces; North Kivu and Orientale Provinces remain too insecure for large-scale refugee return. Returns to Burundi have increased in FY 2009, with nearly 500,000 returns since 2002. Another 50,000 are expected

to return in 2009-2010, while most of the remaining 200,000 are in the process of formalizing their permanent status in Tanzania. Although the majority of Rwandan refugees returned home in the late 1990s, some 60,000 Rwandans remained in exile. Nearly 10,000 have repatriated from Uganda and the DRC thus far in 2009 to date with another 10,000 expected by year's end.

Local Integration

In a number of protracted refugee situations, refugees were able to become self-sufficient and their camps and settlements were effectively integrated into the host communities. This integration dynamic 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 considered more formal integration as a durable solution for residual refugee populations that have chosen not to repatriate when it was possible to do so. In 2005, Guinea stated its willingness to offer local integration to residual populations of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees who were unwilling or unable to go home. In 2007, under an agreement with UNHCR, the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria offered local integration and legal residency to Liberians and Sierra Leoneans. UNHCR hopes that all West African states might offer similar opportunities to refugees on their territories in the context of free movement of peoples under the ECOWAS procedures, and is collaborating with host governments throughout the region to make this arrangement a reality.

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 has agreed to provide permanent settlement and

citizenship to the estimated 200,000 1972 era Burundi refugees who desire it; 80% of whom have already accepted the offer.

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. However, the number of referrals, particularly in West Africa, continues to fall below projections. Several resettlement countries – including Canada and Australia – accept African refugees, but the United States resettles far more than any other country.

FY 2009 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate some 9,000 African refugee arrivals in FY 2009. Five countries of origin (Somalia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Burundi) account for the vast majority of U.S. admissions from Africa. In East Africa, we will largely complete processing of the residual Congolese and Burundian caseload in Tanzania. In Kenya, a surge in UNHCR referrals in Dadaab will lead to more than 2,000 P-1 Somali departures. From West Africa, we expect close to 1,000 refugee admissions. In November 2008, PRM, UNHCR, IOM and OPE Accra were able to undertake a long-planned joint mission to southern and eastern Chad to launch processing. We received and processed individual UNHCR P-1 referrals in N'djamena (urban refugees), Gore (CAR refugees) and in Abeche (Darfuri refugees). We anticipate at least 100 departures from Chad in FY 2009. In all, we expect to admit refugees of approximately 23 African nationalities, processed in 23 countries during FY 2009.

Overall, U.S. refugee admissions from Africa in FY 2009 will continue at FY 2008 levels due in part to the compelling indications of systemic fraud discovered last year in the P-3 family reunification program.

FY 2010 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose up to 15,500 resettlement numbers for African refugees in FY 2010. PRM has actively engaged relevant offices within the Department of State, the voluntary agency community, UNHCR, 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 2010.

From East and Southern Africa, we expect approximately 12-13,000 admissions, primarily Somalis in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Africa, as well as the continued resettlement of Eritreans in Shimelba Camp (Ethiopia) who are eligible for P-2 processing. We also expect to receive additional P-1 referrals of Congolese and Burundians in Tanzania and Zambia, and possibly Rwanda.

From West and Central Africa, we expect approximately 2,000 admissions. It is anticipated that the largest numbers will be processed in Chad, Cameroon, CAR, Gabon and Ghana. Ghana's referrals are expected to include several hundred Darfuri in the Krisan refugee camp. We expect to complete the processing of the residual Liberian P-3 caseload in FY2009. Due to improved country conditions in Liberia, very few Liberians in asylum countries are now being referred for U.S. resettlement consideration.

Outside of sub-Saharan Africa, we anticipate small numbers of Sudanese, Somali, and other African refugees to be processed in Egypt. Small numbers of Sudanese, Somali, Eritrean and other African refugees will be processed in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia.

Proposed FY 2010 Africa program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2009</i>	<i>5,500</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>5,500</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>3,500</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>15,500</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 few signs of change from Burmese authorities and continued attacks against ethnic minority populations, prospects for refugees to return to safe and stable conditions appear distant.

As of April 2009, more than 117,000 refugees from Burma, mostly ethnic minorities, were recognized by UNHCR and lived in nine Royal Thai Government (RTG)-administered refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The RTG continues to support the international community's efforts to resettle large numbers of refugees from these camps. Despite ongoing resettlement, births and new arrivals fleeing continued conflict in Burma maintain the camps' total population at current levels.

Developments in Thailand involving Lao-Hmong asylum seekers are being monitored closely by the international community as the RTG increases the rate of returns to Laos of the remaining 4,800 Hmong residing in a Thai military facility in Petchabun. As of April, 2,500 Lao-Hmong of the original population of some 7,300 have been returned to Laos. The United States has consistently urged the RTG to share the details of its screening procedures to ensure that Lao-Hmong with a well-founded fear of persecution are not returned to Laos. We have also expressed our concern about the status of the 158 Lao-Hmong confined in an immigration detention center in Nong Khai who have been recognized as refugees by UNHCR and referred to third countries - including the United States - for resettlement. The United States and other resettlement countries are prepared to consider the Lao-Hmong group detained in Nong Khai and their close family members living in Lopburi Province, Thailand who were also recognized by UNHCR for third-country resettlement once the RTG allows access to the group. The RTG has initiated discussions with UNHCR, the USG and other resettlement countries to explore options for this.

Since 2006, UNHCR Malaysia has operated the second largest refugee status determination program in the world. As of June, there were 49,852 persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Malaysia - 15,603 Rohingya from Burma's Northern Rakhine State, 16,904 Chin, and 11,714 other ethnic minorities from Burma, as well as some 7,142 asylum-seekers and refugees from other countries. Malaysia is not a party to the 1951 UN 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 May 2007, the Department of State announced that, while the United States would continue to accept referrals of refugees in Cambodia from UNHCR, we would expect those not found by UNHCR to be refugees to return home. The number of ethnic minorities from the Central Highlands of Vietnam crossing into Cambodia has dramatically decreased since that time; only one individual has arrived to the UNHCR site in CY 2009. As of May, 140 individuals remained under UNHCR protection in Phnom Penh; a 24% decrease from one year ago.

In 1992, more than 250,000 Burmese Rohingya suffering oppression due to their Muslim faith and ethnicity migrated from Northern Rakhine State to Bangladesh. During the 1990s, over 230,000 Rohingya refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Bangladesh, leaving behind approximately 28,000 in two UNHCR camps in southern Bangladesh at present. A further 10,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in an unofficial settlement in Leda, located 3 kilometers from one of the two UNHCR camps. In addition to those who have remained in the camps, some who have previously repatriated have again returned to Bangladesh and are living without UNHCR protection, further increasing their vulnerability. Up to 200,000 unregistered Rohingya live outside of the two official UNHCR refugee camps. UNHCR continues to work to improve the protection and address security concerns caused by growing tensions between the registered refugees living inside the camps and the unregistered Rohingya and local Bangladeshis living outside of the camps. UNHCR referred a small number of Rohingya Women-At-Risk cases for U.S. resettlement consideration who were approved and arrived in the U.S. this fiscal year. We expect additional referrals of Rohingya in the future.

As reflected in the North Korean Human Rights Act (NKHRA), the United States is deeply concerned about the human rights situation of North Koreans both inside the Democratic Peoples 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 freedom of worship, 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, Vietnam, Burma, and Laos 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. Many independent religious activities may be either prohibited or severely 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 province), 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. On January 16, 2009, the DPRK, China, and Burma were re-designated by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom as “Countries of Particular Concern” for serious violations of religious freedom.

Vietnam has made significant progress on many religious freedom issues since it was designated a “country of particular concern” in 2004. The USG and Government of Vietnam signed a Religious Freedom Agreement in May 2005, under which Vietnam committed to implementing fully its new legal framework on religion. Vietnam has officially banned the practice of forced or coerced renunciations of faith, released all prisoners of conscience held for practicing their religious beliefs, and reopened over 1,000 churches that had previously been closed and encouraged them to register. Recognizing this significant progress, the USG removed Vietnam from the “countries of particular concern” list in November 2006. Uprisings by ethnic minorities as recently as 2004 contribute to Vietnam's added emphasis on public security in the region, including tighter controls on all gatherings and heightened suspicions toward organizations that previously had connections with separatist groups. In Laos, we have seen modest improvements in religious freedom; however, problems remain in some remote 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 2009 and FY 2010 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 systematic persecution of ethnic minorities, the repatriation of most Burmese refugees, including the Rohingya remaining in camps in Thailand and Bangladesh, and other UNHCR-recognized Burmese persons of concern in Malaysia, India and elsewhere is not currently a viable solution. However, Vietnamese Montagnards in Cambodia do continue to return to the Central Highlands in Vietnam. International access to the Central Highlands continued to increase throughout the year. UNHCR international staff, U.S. Embassy and Consulate General officials, and other Western diplomats have been able to visit with returned members of ethnic minorities who have repatriated from Cambodia and found no systemic problems.

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 RTG to take steps to improve the local integration prospects for those refugees who will not be resettled. The U.S. and other donor governments continue to seek a strategic dialogue with the RTG concerning the future of the nine camps on the Thai-Burma border. We recognize that the RTG 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. Elsewhere, the Government of Malaysia has not yet honored an earlier pledge to issue work permits to the Rohingya population, rendering local integration elusive for this group.

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, consider refugees referred by UNHCR. In FY 2009, the United States processed UNHCR-referred refugee cases in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

FY 2009 U.S. Admissions

We expect to admit over 19,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2009. This will include some 17,500 Burmese – Karen and Karenni living in camps along the Thai-Burma border and Burmese Chin in Malaysia – and 1,500 Vietnamese through the Humanitarian Resettlement (HR) process.

The United States continued processing in six Burmese camps in Thailand throughout FY 2009. Working in close consultation with UNHCR and the RTG, we also began processing in Ban Mai Na Soi (Site 1) camp in Mae Hong Son province, which is the third and most remote of the three provinces hosting Burmese refugees. We expect to admit some 6,000 of these refugees by the end of the fiscal year.

The HR program continued to process the applications submitted by Vietnamese citizens by June 25, 2008 who might have been eligible under

one of three categories of the former Orderly Departure Program (ODP). This process was open only to those who were unable to complete the application process before the ODP closed on September 30, 1994. As of May 2009, the U.S. Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City had evaluated almost 63,600 completed applications and found some 4,100 eligible for further consideration. Under the Lautenberg Amendment, certain categories of Vietnamese refugee applicants benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard when seeking eligibility for refugee status. The HR program is now essentially completed. As of October 1, the Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) in Bangkok will assume processing responsibility for the small number of approved cases that will not depart Vietnam prior to the end of the fiscal year and for any future cases referred for USRAP consideration.

FY 2010 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose the admission of 17,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2010. This will include some 2,700 individuals already approved and pending departure at the beginning of the year. We will interview Burmese refugees living in nine camps located in three provinces in Thailand and will continue processing in Malaysia, leading to the admission of some 16,500 refugees from Burma in FY 2010. We also expect the admission of small numbers of Vietnamese, North Koreans, Sri Lankans, Chinese and other nationalities from this region.

Proposed FY 2010 East Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2009</i>	<i>2,700</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>600</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>13,600</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>17,000</i></u>

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

The nations that once comprised the Soviet Union have for over a decade demonstrated a wide range of political progress and economic growth. Important steps have been taken by many of these independent states in Eastern Europe and some in Central Asia, in the direction of democratization, rule of law, civil rights, and tolerance. For example,

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are vibrant free-market democracies, members of NATO and the European Union. Each of these governments generally respects the human rights of its citizens, including freedom of speech, press, and religion. Many Eurasian countries have made significant progress in consolidating democratic institutions and instituting the rule of law. All Eurasian countries except Uzbekistan have acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. In some former Soviet Republics and in Russia, the governments provide scant protection of refugees and asylum seekers; public intolerance and even attacks against non-Slavic foreigners are common.

In its 2008-2009 Global Appeal, UNHCR reported that there were some 4.6 million asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs, or other persons “of concern” throughout Europe and Central Asia. Most had fled conflicts outside the region, such as in Afghanistan, but persons claiming persecution within the countries of the former Soviet Union were also included. Furthermore, even those nations that are abandoning totalitarianism and 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 on asylum procedures and refugee protection laws. Modest progress has been made.

According to UNHCR, at the end of 2008 there were approximately 486,000 refugees and IDPs in the Balkans, almost all of whom have been displaced for nine years or longer. An estimated 244,000 persons within this population are minorities from Kosovo, many of whom are in Serbia. Finding durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs in the Balkans continues to be problematic, particularly following Kosovo’s declaration of independence in February 2008.

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. These so-called “multi-tiered” religion laws exist in Romania, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. 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 west 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.

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; in others, doing so or wearing beards marks one as an observant Muslim and leads to frequent requests for identification documents by the authorities. Muslims in some Russian cities are subject to harassment and societal violence. Islamic cemeteries have also been

desecrated.

Observant Muslims in Russia and Central Asia have experienced mosque closures, detention, prison terms, and the possibility of torture, especially in Uzbekistan. As a result of concerns over this treatment, as well as arrests and harassment of members of Christian 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 6-12 year prison terms.

Religion and ethnicity are closely intertwined in the Balkans, so it is often difficult to identify threatening acts as primarily religious or primarily ethnic in origin. The USRAP has provided protection for persecuted Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians, as well as individuals of other religious minorities and mixed marriages. We will continue to work with UNHCR, NGOs, human rights groups, and U.S. missions to identify victims of religious persecution for whom resettlement is appropriate.

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. Nonetheless, the rate of ethnic minority returns to Kosovo has steadily decreased, in part due to poor economic opportunities for returnees and in part because of Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence. Despite their long displacement, many of these displaced persons still express a strong desire to return home. If the political and economic situation stabilizes, returns will increasingly become a viable and desirable option for many displaced minorities from Kosovo. In Croatia, recent progress in providing housing for returnees may encourage some of the more than 70,000 refugees in Serbia to return to their homes, although the fact that certain categories of returnees do not have the same tenancy rights they held before the war may limit their interest.

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 local integration and acquisition of citizenship remain for some former Soviet citizens who entered Russia before 1992 and are, therefore, entitled to become citizens under Russian law. Like the Meskhetian Turks, they have been unable to obtain recognition of their 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 has recently begun 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 5,400 individuals from states of the former Soviet Union availing themselves of this opportunity in 2008 under the United Israel Appeal Program.

FY 2009 U.S. Admissions

In FY 2009, we estimate close to 2,500 admissions from Europe and Central Asia. In addition to UNHCR-referred cases, religious minorities processed under the Lautenberg Amendment from countries of the former Soviet Union constitute a significant portion of the caseload. During FY 2009, OPE and DHS personnel processed applicants in Almaty, Ashgabat, Baku, Bishkek, Chisinau, Kyiv, and Tashkent.

FY 2010 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed FY 2010 ceiling for refugees from Europe and Central Asia is 2,500. This includes some 540 who will be in the final stage of

admissions processing at the end of FY 2009, as well as new cases approved in FY 2010. 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 fewer applications limit the number of admissions. We anticipate processing some Uzbek P-3 beneficiaries during FY 2010 as well.

Proposed FY 2010 Europe & Central Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2009</i>	<i>540</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>720</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>1,230</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>10</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>2,500</i></u>

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

According to UNHCR, in 2008 the number of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and other people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean totaled over 4 million. The ongoing conflict in Colombia generated the most significant numbers of refugees and IDPs in the region. Estimates for the number of IDPs in Colombia varies between 2.8 (government figure) and 4.3 (NGO figure) million, representing between 6 to 10 percent of the population. The Government of Colombia (GOC) registered over 389,000 IDPs in 2008. In surrounding countries, nearly 500,000 Colombians live in refugee-like situations, but only some 50,000 have been recognized as refugees, 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 with significant refugee populations, 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 in Ecuador continues to rise. As of December 2008, there were approximately 50,000 Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in Ecuador, of whom just over 20,000 were

recognized as refugees. The situation in Ecuador is UNHCR's major concern in the region, where there may be an additional 135,000 "persons of concern." The Government of Ecuador launched an enhanced registration program in March under which mobile teams from the Office of the Directorate General for Refugees (DGR) complete the refugee registration, determination, and documentation processes in a single day. Within the first two months of the program, the DGR issued more than 5,000 refugee visas—which constitutes 20 percent of the total number of refugees recognized in the country since 2000. The goal is to register up to 50,000 Colombian refugees along the northern border during the 12 month program. The GOE is also working with UNHCR to improve the regular asylum registration process.

In Panama, there are approximately 1,250 recognized refugees (mainly Colombians) and 900 persons with official temporary protected status. In Costa Rica, there are approximately 14,000 recognized refugees. Costa Rica is working to revise its asylum system and to re-establish a Refugee Department. There are some 5,000 recognized refugees and asylum seekers in Brazil as well as approximately 10,000 in Venezuela.

The United States began a Priority 1 resettlement program in 2002 to resettle Colombians referred by the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá. As instability in Colombia continued, we expanded the program and began to interview Colombians referred for resettlement consideration by UNHCR in Ecuador and Costa Rica. For several years, UNHCR limited its referral of Colombians to the U.S. program due to the possible applicability of broad material support inadmissibility provisions added to our immigration laws under the USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001 and the REAL ID Act of 2005. Since the implementation of an exemption benefiting individuals who provided material support under duress to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN) and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, the number of Colombian refugees eligible for refugee admission to the United States has increased and UNHCR has increased the number of referrals to USRAP in FY 2009.

In Haiti, political and economic conditions continue to create pressures. Riots over rising food prices led to the resignation of the Prime Minister in April 2008. A new government took office in September 2008 just as devastating storms hit the country. Recent steps by the government to crack down on gang-related crime and violence have led to some improvements in the security situation. At the donor's conference for Haiti

in April 2009, the U.S. pledged \$302 million in assistance. The current mandate of the UN MINUSTAH mission runs through October 2009. The United States continues to support UNHCR's efforts to help governments in the Caribbean address the needs of Haitian and other asylum seekers and welcomes referrals to the USRAP.

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, continues to monitor the country's religious institutions, including through surveillance, infiltration, harassment of clergy and church members, evictions from and confiscation of places of worship, and preventive detention of religious activists. Some prisoners report that they are denied visits by clergy. In punishment cells, prisoners were denied access to reading materials, including bibles. 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 violence in Colombia from illegally armed groups (non-state actors) and the Government of Colombia's inability to provide full protection in many areas, UNHCR does not actively promote repatriation of Colombian refugees. UNHCR has provided some assistance to Haitians in Jamaica and Cuba who have chosen to return home voluntarily.

Local Integration

The Governments of Ecuador, Costa Rica, 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, processing is slow, and these countries maintain documentation requirements that are difficult for many applicants to fulfill. Further, as more refugees have fled to these countries, living conditions for Colombians have deteriorated as asylum seekers wait longer for status determinations and are not given the right to

work. Additionally, some Colombian asylum seekers in Ecuador and Venezuela continue to experience harassment by illegally armed Colombian groups operating in these countries. Some Colombian refugees in Costa Rica experience harassment by people with ties to these groups. For asylum seekers in Panama, the situation is more complicated, as the government continues to be reluctant to receive Colombian refugees or confer even minimal protection. Many Colombians in need of protection who enter these countries irregularly must hide in remote border areas or in the shantytowns of larger cities. Some are moving to more secure communities further inland.

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.

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. Canada operates an in-country humanitarian program in Colombia, through which as many as 1,000 Colombians are resettled each year. Currently, the United States accepts referrals from the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá or from UNHCR and processes these cases in Ecuador or Costa Rica. Limited resettlement processing out of Panama will start by the end of FY2009. We are also exploring options for reaching Colombians who do not have access to UNHCR in other locations. 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, Mexico, Paraguay 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. The United States remains committed to considering for resettlement refugees in the Caribbean.

The United States also facilitates the resettlement to other countries of persons, mostly from Cuba and Haiti, who are 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 more likely than not face torture if repatriated. From 1996 through 2009, more than 300 such protected persons have been resettled to seventeen countries in Latin America, Europe, Australia and Canada.

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. Unfortunately, communications with refugees are sometimes intercepted by the Cuban government, causing delays, misunderstandings, or misinformation. Also, some approved refugees are not granted exit permits by the Cuban government. Others do not have sufficient funds to pay for the medical exams, passports and exit permits needed to travel.

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); and
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.
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 2009 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate admitting over 4,500 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean during FY 2009. 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 75 Colombian refugees to be admitted to the United States during FY 2009.

FY 2010 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed 5,000 ceiling for Latin America and the Caribbean for FY 2010 comprises Cuban refugees eligible for the in-country Priority 2 program, a small number of UNHCR-referred Priority 1 Colombians, as well as a small number of Priority 3 family reunion cases.

Proposed FY 2010 program for Latin America and the Caribbean:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2009</i>	<i>2,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Priority 2 In-Country Cubans</i>	<i>2,750</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>50</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>5,000</i></u>

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, to their credit, many host governments allow for the presence of refugees within their borders.

UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IOM, World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 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, the Gulf States, and India; Bhutanese in Nepal; Afghans in Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and India; and Iranians in Turkey and Syria.

Millions of Iraqis are displaced. While exact figures are unavailable, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees are believed to be living in neighboring countries, primarily Syria and Jordan, with smaller numbers in Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey and Iran. As of March 2009, UNHCR registration rolls included over 300,000 Iraqis. The Iraqi government and IOM estimate that 2.8 million Iraqis are internally displaced, 1.6 million of whom fled their homes in the period following the February 2006 Samara mosque bombing. More than 40,000 third-country refugees (including Palestinians and Iranian Kurds) remain in Iraq.

Despite the voluntary repatriation of over 5.3 million Afghan refugees since 2002, Pakistan continues to host approximately 1.7 million documented Afghans, and Iran continues to host approximately 900,000 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 proper documentation. The number of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in India registered with UNHCR is over 9,600. 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.

Approximately 108,000 Bhutanese refugees of ethnic Nepali origin have lived in seven camps in eastern Nepal since the early 1990s. The population of the camps has been reduced to about 93,000 refugees with the advent of third country resettlement programs in 2008. This population fled Bhutan due to the Royal Government of Bhutan's (RGOB) policy of "one nation and one people" (also referred to as "Bhutanization"). Aimed at forcing cultural integration of ethnic minorities and strengthening national integration, this policy has resulted in the denial of basic rights of ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan. Despite fifteen rounds of formal negotiations between Bhutan and Nepal to resolve the issue and secure the right of return for ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan, to date, none have been permitted to return to Bhutan.

Religious Freedom

Persecution of religious minorities is common in certain countries in the Middle East and South Asia. In Pakistan, blasphemy laws, anti-Ahmadi laws, and other discriminatory legislation have been used to target religious minorities, including Shi'as, Christians, Hindus, and Ahmadis. Sectarian

violence between majority Sunnis and minority Shi'as has claimed hundreds of lives in recent years. In India, enactment of "anti-conversion" legislation in some states has resulted in harassment of minorities. State and local government responses to extremist 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 Shi'a interpretations of shari'a law.

In Saudi Arabia, Muslims who do not adhere to the officially sanctioned version of Sunni Islam can face severe repercussions, and the minority Shi'a Muslim and Ismaili communities are subject to discrimination. Public non-Muslim worship is prohibited. In several countries in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, the conversion by a Muslim to another religion is a criminal act punishable by death. It is also illegal for a Saudi woman to marry a non-Muslim man. In Iran, certain minority religions (Bahais, Sufis, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians) continue to face arrest, harassment and discrimination. In Egypt, converts to Christianity from Islam are viewed as apostates and are subject to severe violations of religious freedom by both the government and society. In some countries in the region, most notably Egypt, those accused of apostasy are subject to severe governmental repression and societal violence. 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. Small religious minority communities in particular, such as the Christians and Sabeen-Mandaeans, have experienced wide-scale displacements.

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 "countries of particular concern" such as Saudi Arabia, 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. More than 5.3 million Afghan refugees, the majority from Pakistan and Iran, have returned to Afghanistan since 2002. Over 3.6 million were assisted by UNHCR in the largest refugee repatriation in UNHCR's history. However, this massive repatriation has taxed the capacity of Afghanistan to absorb further refugee returns.

In 2008, Pakistan agreed to drop its unilateral deadline of the end of 2009 for all Afghan refugees to depart Pakistan. In 2009 Pakistan agreed to work with UNHCR to extend refugee proof- of- registration cards until the end of 2012. Still, it is unlikely that all of the remaining 1.7 million registered Afghans will repatriate by the end of 2012. About 278,000 Afghan refugees volunteered for assisted repatriation in 2008, and UNHCR has projected that perhaps 150,000 will do so in 2009. UNHCR's and the International Organization for Migration's assessment is that the continuing migration of Afghans in both directions across the Afghan-Pakistani 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 to the extent possible 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 not be able to adjust. In 2008, UNHCR only assisted three cases comprising four persons to voluntarily repatriate from the urban caseload. Thus far in 2009, one refugee has repatriated while another one is currently being processed for repatriation.

In the middle of 2008, displaced Iraqis began returning in larger numbers. Reports indicate that recent improvements in security were the overwhelming impetus for these increased returns. Returns remain slow, neighborhood-specific, and concentrated in Baghdad and its environs. Reports of total 2008 returns range from 220,000 to almost 300,000 persons; of which about 11 percent were returning refugees. UNHCR maintains that the basic conditions for sustainable, large-scale return of refugees to Iraq, in conditions of safety and dignity, are not yet in place. In October 2008, UNHCR began to facilitate voluntary returns to Iraq through individual case management protocols and assisted the return of 3,751 Iraqis by the end of the calendar year. The long term U.S. strategy for Iraq's displaced is to help Iraq develop the capacity to reintegrate returning Iraqis into stable neighborhoods, while maintaining resettlement for the most vulnerable. The international community continues to provide protection and assistance to Iraqis living in neighboring countries.

The United States has worked multilaterally with other interested governments in urging the Royal Government of Bhutan to allow for the voluntary repatriation of Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan under acceptable terms and conditions and preclude further refugee outflows in the future. With the recent developments in Sri Lanka, UNHCR anticipates that there may be an increased demand for repatriation by Tamils currently residing in India.

Local Integration

Few countries in the region offer local integration to refugees. UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan have a Tripartite Agreement that provides for the orderly, voluntary return of Afghan refugees. The Tripartite Agreement with Iran expired on March 19, 2008, but an ad hoc agreement remains in place. As mentioned above, the agreement with Pakistan allows Afghan refugees who hold a "Proof of Registration" (POR) card to extend their POR cards and reside in Pakistan through 2012. Children born in Pakistan to Afghan POR holders will also be able to register, on their head-of-household 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 is shifting its focus away from assistance to Afghan refugees in South Asia in favor of a more broad-based development plan for the region, addressing both refugee and host community needs. These are referred to as the Refugee-Hosting Areas and Refugee-Affected Areas (RAHA/RAA) initiatives.

The key to the successful transition from short-term humanitarian maintenance to long-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.

Reports indicate that 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.

Local integration of Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan is not an option, although both governments have permitted Iraqis to remain on a temporary basis. Iraqis in Syria and Jordan are not legally defined as refugees, but rather as visitors. However, 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.

Despite the steadily increasing number of asylum seekers, India does not have a clear national policy for the treatment of refugees, and UNHCR has no formal status in the country. India recognizes and aids certain groups, including Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans in the 117 settlements for Sri Lankans and 37 settlements for Tibetans throughout the country. Many Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils in India are permitted limited 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 Afghans, Burmese, Somalis, Iraqis, Palestinians, Iranians, and Sudanese.

UNHCR earlier 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 third country 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 has intensified its efforts to ensure that all eligible refugees submit applications for Indian citizenship by December 31, 2009. These concrete efforts are aimed at bringing to an end one of the world's longest-standing urban refugee situations.

Third-Country Resettlement

The USRAP anticipates large-scale processing of Iraqis, Bhutanese, and Iranians during FY 2010. The U.S. Government recognizes that the possibility of third-country resettlement must be available to the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees. We have processing facilities in Amman, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Istanbul, and Beirut. UNHCR has referred over 20,000 individuals to the U.S. program this fiscal year and will continue making referrals in coming months. We project the admission of at least 17,000 Iraqi refugees during FY2009.

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 USG or MNF-I in Iraq;
2. Iraqis who are/were employed by the USG 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 USG 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 USG in Iraq, including if the individual is no longer alive, provided that the relationship is verified;
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.

We established an OPE unit in Baghdad in FY 2008, but given the security and logistical challenges associated with operating an OPE in Iraq, we expect our processing capacity to remain greater in neighboring countries. Nonetheless, refugee processing in Iraq is a high priority for the USG and we believe it has significant potential, particularly to benefit Iraqis associated with U.S. efforts in Iraq.

Middle Eastern and South Asian refugees in most of Europe avail themselves of the asylum systems of the countries in which they are located. In Vienna, however, certain Iranian religious minorities (Baha'is, Zoroastrians, Jews, 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 U.S. In FY 2009, the Austrian Government made more transit visas available to applicants to the program at its Embassy in Tehran, enabling the U.S. to process higher numbers. During the same timeframe however, fewer Iranian religious minorities applied to the program. The United States also processes Iranian religious minorities (primarily Baha'i) in Turkey through special procedures involving fast-track refugee status determination and referral by UNHCR.

The Government of Nepal publicly announced in November 2007 its support for third-country resettlement as a durable solution for ethnic Nepali Bhutanese refugees. Resettlement processing of these refugees is now fully underway and the United States is committed to considering for resettlement

as many refugees as express interest. As of May 31, 2009, more than 15,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled to the U.S. and other countries.

U.S. resettlement processing resumed in Pakistan in 2009 with the first large-scale refugee adjudications since mid -2007. UNHCR has begun to refer larger numbers of vulnerable Afghan refugees in Pakistan for whom repatriation is not an option. UNHCR continues to give priority to the remaining protracted ethnic Afghan refugees in India for resettlement and has already referred several hundred Afghans in India who cannot naturalize or repatriate. We are currently exploring modalities for processing vulnerable Tibetan refugees in the region.

FY 2009 U.S. Admissions

We estimate the admission of more than 39,000 refugees from the region in FY 2009. These will include about 5,500 Iranians processed in Vienna and Istanbul, over 17,000 Iraqis, over 13,000 Bhutanese, as well as some 1,000 Afghans and others.

FY 2010 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, as well as Iranian Kurds and Iranian Arabs (Ahwazis). In addition, Ahmadi Muslims in many locations and Afghans in the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere will be included. Small refugee populations in Libya, Algeria, and elsewhere are also under consideration for individual referrals.

Proposed FY 2010 Near East/South Asia program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2009</i>	<i>18,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>8,900</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>8,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>100</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>35,000</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 2008, the USRAP admitted 60,191 refugees from 51 countries. Over half were originally from either the countries of Burma or Iraq. (See Table IV.)

The demographic characteristics of refugee arrivals from the 20 largest source countries (representing 100 percent of total arrivals) in FY 2008 illustrate the variation among refugee groups. The median age of all FY 2008 arrivals was 26 years and ranged from 19 years for arrivals from Burundi to 36 years of age for arrivals from Iran. In FY 2008, 48.5 percent of all arriving refugees were female and 51.5 percent of all arriving refugees were male. Males predominated among refugees from Pakistan (58.7 percent), Sierra Leone (56.6 percent), and Rwanda (55.6 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 Eritrean arrivals to a low of 2.4 percent of those from Iran. The number of school-aged children (from five to 17 years of age) varied from a high of over 40.0 percent of arrivals from Burundi to a low of 15.2 percent of those from Iran. The number of working-aged refugees (18 to 64 years of age) varied from a high of 75.4 percent of those from Iran to a low of 48.2 percent of individuals from Burundi. Retirement-aged refugees (65 years or older) ranged from a high of 14.6 percent of arrivals from Vietnam to a low of less than one percent of those from Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda. Of the total arrivals in FY 2008, some 8.9 percent were under the age of five, 27.1 percent were of school age, 64.6 percent were of working age, and 3.8 percent were of retirement age. (See Table VI.)

During FY 2008, 67.8 percent of all arriving refugees resettled in 12 states. The majority were placed in California (15.75 percent), followed by Texas (8.52 percent), Florida (6.18 percent), New York (6.03 percent), Michigan (5.48 percent), Arizona (4.99 percent), and Illinois (4.04). The state of Georgia (3.86 percent), North Carolina (3.78 percent), Washington (3.74 percent), Pennsylvania (2.89 percent) and Indiana (2.53 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 2008**

Country of Origin	Arrivals	
	Number	% of Total
Afghanistan	576	0.96%
Bhutan	5,320	8.84%
Burma	18,139	30.14%
Burundi	2,889	4.80%
Cambodia	8	0.01%
Cameroon	2	0.00%
Central African Republic	56	0.09%
Chad	23	0.04%
China	43	0.07%
Colombia	94	0.16%
Congo	197	0.33%
Cuba	4,177	6.94%
Dem. Rep. Congo	727	1.21%
Ecuador	3	0.00%
Egypt	5	0.01%
Eritrea	251	0.42%
Ethiopia	299	0.50%
Former Soviet Union*	2,342	3.89%
Former Yugoslavia**	1	0.00%
Gambia	6	0.01%
Guinea	3	0.00%
Guinea-Bissau	2	0.00%
Iran	5,270	8.76%
Iraq	13,822	22.96%
Ivory Coast	30	0.05%
Korea, North	37	0.06%
Kuwait	1	0.00%

Country of Origin	Arrivals	
	Number	% of Total
Laos	59	0.10%
Lebanon	2	0.00%
Liberia	992	1.65%
Mauritania	26	0.04%
Morocco	3	0.00%
Nepal	4	0.01%
Nigeria	76	0.13%
Pakistan	104	0.17%
Palestinian Territories	9	0.01%
Rwanda	108	0.18%
Senegal	1	0.00%
Sierra Leone	99	0.16%
Somalia	2,523	4.19%
Sri Lanka	1	0.00%
Sudan	375	0.62%
Syria	24	0.04%
Tanzania	1	0.00%
Tibet	7	0.01%
Togo	204	0.34%
Turkey	6	0.01%
Uganda	42	0.07%
Venezuela	3	0.00%
Vietnam	1,196	1.99%
Zimbabwe	3	0.00%
TOTAL	60,191	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 2008**

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Refugees Admitted	Median Age	% Females	% Males
1	Burma	18,139	22	44.7%	55.3%
2	Iraq	13,822	27	51.6%	48.4%
3	Bhutan	5,320	28	48.0%	52.0%
4	Iran	5,270	36	50.3%	49.7%
5	Cuba	4,177	33	49.0%	51.0%
6	Burundi	2,889	19	49.2%	50.8%
7	Somalia	2,523	22	48.7%	51.3%
8	Former Soviet Union*	2,342	29	51.9%	48.1%
9	Vietnam	1,196	35	50.6%	49.4%
10	Liberia	992	23	54.9%	45.1%
11	Dem. Rep. Congo	727	20	46.6%	53.4%
12	Afghanistan	576	25	48.1%	51.9%
13	Sudan	375	21	48.0%	52.0%
14	Ethiopia	299	24	47.8%	52.2%
15	Eritrea	251	22	47.8%	52.2%
16	Togo	204	24	50.0%	50.0%
17	Congo	197	22	54.3%	45.7%
18	Rwanda	108	20	44.4%	55.6%
19	Pakistan	104	25	41.3%	58.7%
20	Sierra Leone	99	27	43.4%	56.6%
	All Other Countries	581	26	49.9%	50.1%
TOTAL		60,191	26	48.5%	51.5%

*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 2008

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Under 5 Yrs	School Age (5-17)	Working Age (18-64)	Retirement Age (=or > 65)
1	Burma	12.0%	28.3%	62.7%	1.4%
2	Iraq	9.1%	27.1%	64.6%	3.3%
3	Bhutan	4.7%	22.5%	73.7%	3.9%
4	Iran	2.4%	15.2%	75.4%	10.0%
5	Cuba	4.1%	20.8%	71.6%	6.4%
6	Burundi	15.4%	40.0%	48.2%	1.6%
7	Somalia	10.2%	33.5%	61.0%	2.0%
8	Former Soviet Union*	8.7%	29.3%	58.7%	8.5%
9	Vietnam	4.4%	26.0%	58.9%	14.6%
10	Liberia	8.0%	38.1%	55.6%	4.1%
11	Dem. Rep. Congo	12.0%	38.1%	55.3%	0.7%
12	Afghanistan	4.7%	34.7%	65.8%	1.0%
13	Sudan	12.5%	32.8%	58.9%	1.1%
14	Ethiopia	5.7%	30.4%	70.6%	1.3%
15	Eritrea	17.9%	23.5%	58.6%	2.0%
16	Togo	13.7%	28.4%	57.8%	2.0%
17	Congo	9.6%	39.6%	54.8%	0.5%
18	Rwanda	13.0%	32.4%	56.5%	0.9%
19	Pakistan	10.6%	24.0%	67.3%	1.0%
20	Sierra Leone	4.0%	29.3%	68.7%	7.1%
	Other Countries	9.8%	33.7%	58.7%	2.2%
TOTAL		8.9%	27.1%	64.6%	3.8%

*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% 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 2008**

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
Alabama	177	0	177	0.29%
Alaska	52	0	52	0.09%
Arizona	3,005	0	3,005	4.99%
Arkansas	9	3	12	0.02%
California	9,472	8	9,480	15.75%
Colorado	1,264	0	1,264	2.10%
Connecticut	381	0	381	0.63%
Delaware	1	0	1	0.00%
District of Columbia	34	0	34	0.06%
Florida	3,715	7	3,722	6.18%
Georgia	2,325	0	2,325	3.86%
Hawaii	15	0	15	0.02%
Idaho	1,024	0	1,024	1.70%
Illinois	2,429	0	2,429	4.04%
Indiana	1,525	0	1,525	2.53%
Iowa	593	4	597	0.99%
Kansas	329	0	329	0.55%
Kentucky	1,215	0	1,215	2.02%
Louisiana	148	3	151	0.25%
Maine	60	0	60	0.10%
Maryland	865	0	865	1.44%
Massachusetts	1,110	3	1,113	1.85%
Michigan	3,292	6	3,298	5.48%
Minnesota	1,329	0	1,329	2.21%
Mississippi	9	0	9	0.01%
Missouri	996	0	996	1.65%
Nebraska	645	3	648	1.08%
Nevada	461	0	461	0.77%
New Hampshire	521	0	521	0.87%
New Jersey	741	0	741	1.23%
New Mexico	174	0	174	0.29%

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
New York	3,628	3	3,631	6.03%
North Carolina	2,274	4	2,278	3.78%
North Dakota	407	0	407	0.68%
Ohio	1,348	4	1,352	2.25%
Oklahoma	207	4	211	0.35%
Oregon	687	0	687	1.14%
Pennsylvania	1,729	10	1,739	2.89%
Puerto Rico	9	0	9	0.01%
Rhode Island	134	0	134	0.22%
South Carolina	111	0	111	0.18%
South Dakota	317	0	317	0.53%
Tennessee	847	0	847	1.41%
Texas	5,113	17	5,130	8.52%
Utah	914	0	914	1.52%
Vermont	329	0	329	0.55%
Virginia	1,467	5	1,472	2.45%
Washington	2,254	0	2,254	3.74%
West Virginia	5	0	5	0.01%
Wisconsin	411	0	411	0.68%
Total	60,107	84	60,191	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 2009 AND FY 2010 (\$ MILLIONS)

AGENCY	ESTIMATED FY 2009 (BY DEPARTMENT)	ESTIMATED FY 2010 (BY DEPARTMENT)
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY		
<i>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</i>		
Refugee Processing	\$21.8	\$22.9
DEPARTMENT OF STATE		
<i>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</i>		
Refugee Admissions	\$345.7*	\$358.9**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES		
<i>Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement</i>		
Refugee Resettlement	\$523.0 ***	\$510.0 ***
TOTAL	\$890.5	\$891.8

* Includes FY 2009 MRA appropriation of \$282.7 million, \$29.3 million in carry-forward from FY 2008, \$28.6 million projected IOM loan collections/carry-forward, and approximately \$5.1 million in FY 2009 recoveries.

** Includes FY 2010 MRA budget request of \$305.4 million, \$16.3 million in projected carry-forward from FY 2009, \$30 million projected IOM loan collections/carry-forward, and projected \$7.25 million in FY 2010 recoveries.

*** 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 2008 Departures

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL RESETTLED
United States*	48,793	74.43%
Canada	5,542	8.45%
Australia	5,133	7.83%
Sweden	1,541	2.35%
New Zealand	775	1.18%
Norway	720	1.09%
United Kingdom	697	1.06%
Finland	674	1.02%
Netherlands	575	0.87%
Denmark	407	0.62%
France	276	0.42%
Ireland	87	0.13%
Argentina	78	0.11%
Czech Rep.	46	0.07%
Chile	45	0.06%
Italy	30	0.04%
Other**	129	0.19%
TOTAL	65,548	

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

**Departures from all other countries