



FACT SHEET

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the start of 2012 there has been a rise in the number of refugees fleeing war and persecution, particularly prompted by the conflicts such as those in Syria, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By mid-2013 the global number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate was estimated at 11.1 million, 600,000 higher than six months earlier.

KEY FACTS

A refugee is somebody who leaves their country and seeks safety in another country and who has a good reason to fear being badly treated just because of what they look like, what they think, what they believe or where they are from.

An asylum seeker is somebody who wants to find safety in another country and who has asked the Government of that country to allow him in as a refugee.

Persecution means to subject a person to prolonged ill-treatment because of who they are or what they think.

Figures

Up to mid-2013, the countries which the greatest number of people who were leaving were:

1. Afghanistan – 2.5 million
2. Syria - 1.9 million
3. Somalia – 1.1 million
4. Sudan - 632,000
5. Democratic Republic of Congo – 490,000

The countries receiving the most refugees were:

1. Pakistan – 1.6m
2. Iran – 862,800
3. Jordan – 613,100
4. Lebanon – 577,200
5. Kenya – 550,00

CRISIS IN SYRIA

By the end of 2013 2 million Syrians had left their country

- 5,000 are fleeing every day
- 52% are 17 or younger



There are also up to 4.25 million (end 2013) of internally displaced people who have had to leave their homes.

AMNESTY'S POSITION

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to seek refuge from persecution in another country. Amnesty International campaigns for refugee rights:

- protection from being forcibly returned to a country where they would be at risk of persecution,
- protection from discrimination,
- protection from penalties for illegal entry,
- the right to work, housing and education,
- the right to freedom of movement,
- the right to identity and travel documents.

FURTHER INFORMATION

See: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/refugee-asylum-seeker-migrant-human-rights>

Blog post on AI's Livewire featuring Inaam, a Syrian refugee living in Athens, 20 March 2014:

<http://livewire.amnesty.org/2014/03/20/calling-syria-to-check-my-family-is-alive/>

VIDEO: When You Don't Exist June 2012

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OUpsWCvE38]