Plight of Refugees

- Flight from violence underlies most refugee population movements
- Refugees’ need for assistance is greater than needs of victims of natural disasters
- People fleeing conflict need assistance longer than if fleeing natural disasters
- Return to normality is more difficult after conflict than after natural disasters
Humanitarian Response

- Increasing difficulty in gaining access to people displaced by conflict.
- No guarantee of neutrality for humanitarian actors.
Humanitarian Response

- Humanitarian imperative to assist emergency affected population
- Humanitarian aid used as an alternative to difficult political decisions
Causes of Conflict

- Usually man-made or man-inspired, as a result of political actions
- Conflicts may have underlying natural roots, such as famines or floods
Defining Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

- Multiple contributing factors
- Conflict often present with collapse of civil order
- Excess mortality and threats to life
- Population lacks access to basic needs—food, water, health care, protection
Definition of Asylum

- *Asylum*—protection, refuge, security
- Concept at least 3,500 years old
- Found in many cultures
- Enshrined in Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Continued*
Definition of Asylum

- Strict interpretation of persecution
- Bureaucratic hurdles to granting asylum
History of Refugee Policy

♦ League of Nations (1921)
  - Helped persons in danger return to homeland

♦ United Nations (1951)
  - UNHCR established with protection mandate
  - Convention on refugees ratified
  - Defined refugees
UN Definition of a Refugee

- A person who has left country of origin because of “well-founded fear of persecution” due to
  - Race, religion, nationality, political opinion, membership of a social group
- A person who is unwilling to return to country of origin due to fear
UN Definition of a Refugee

- A person of no nationality
- No forcible return to country where persecution may occur: *Nonrefoulment*
OAU Convention (1969)

- Expanded UN definition of refugees to include those fleeing conflict from
  - External aggression
  - Collapse of civil order
- Assured asylum and repatriation without prejudice
Cartagena Declaration (1984)

- Basis for asylum includes those fleeing widespread human rights abuses
“Persons of Concern”

- Persons not covered by existing definitions
- Given UN protection by Security Council or Secretary General
  - Kurds in Iraq
  - Civilians in Bosnia
Internally Displaced Persons

- Flee for same reasons as refugees
- Do not cross an international border—outside UN mandate
- Limited access for assistance because of sovereignty issues
- At increased risk of continued abuse
Economic Migrants

- Late 20th century phenomenon
- 120 million persons live outside country of birth or citizenship
Economic Migrants

- 100 countries classified as having major inward or outward population movement
- U.S. and Europe spend $9 billion on asylum management annually
  - May have between 10 and 30 million illegal immigrants

Source: ICRC
Distinguishing Refugees from Economic Migrants

- Increasingly difficult as reasons for flight are multifactorial
  - Many push ↔ pull factors
- Evidence of persecution may be unavailable
- Industrialized states may not recognize
  - Generalized violence
  - Breakdown of civil order
  - Internal conflicts
Persons Not Covered by UN Refugee Mandate

- Criminal elements
- “Subversive elements”
- “Hostages”
- Victims of natural disasters
Persons Not Covered by UN Refugee Mandate

- Economic migrants fleeing economic privation
- “Eco-refugees”
Who Looks after Refugees

- State—responsible for its own citizens
- Host country—poor, resources limited
- UN—not an implementing agency
- Non-governmental organizations are implementing partners of UN
  - For example, CRS, CARE, IRC, ADRA, MSF
Who Looks after Refugees

- Members of the Red Cross Movement
Who Looks after Refugees

- **Members of the Red Cross Movement**
  - National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies
  - International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Society coordinates all national societies
  - International Committee of Red Cross assists wounded in conflict situations
What Happens to Refugees

- *Repatriation*—return to home of origin
  - Must be preceded by political change
- *Integration*—less common unless similar culture or language
- *Resettlement* in a third country—no longer an option after Cold War
Consequences of International Migration

- Asylum has become more difficult
  - Persons with legitimate claims rejected
  - Or returned to transit country

- Search for new approaches in “migration management”
  - Visa requirements, interdiction at sea, “fast track procedures”
Refugee Numbers

- Counting of refugees is difficult because
  - Refugees don’t want to be counted
  - Host governments don’t want international attention to internal problems
  - Humanitarian community may not want to intervene
- Difficult to assist without denominator since cannot make estimations
Final Underlying Principle

- Everything about refugee situations is political
- Politics determine origin, maintenance, and resolution
Where Refugees Are in 2002

- Americas & Caribbean: 2,188,600
- Middle East: 756,500
- Europe: 3,029,000
- Africa: 875,900
- E. Asia & Pacific: 859,900
- S. Asia & C. Asia: 5,289,400

Data from: World Refugee Survey 2003, U.S. Committee for Refugees
Internally Displaced Persons in 2002

Data from: World Refugee Survey 2003, U.S. Committee for Refugees
## Voluntary Repatriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Iran &amp; Pakistan</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Congo-Kinshasa,</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zambia &amp; Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Bangladesh &amp; Thailand</td>
<td>1,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African</td>
<td>Congo-Kinshasa</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Yugoslavia &amp; Bosnia</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Uzbekistan &amp; Others</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from: World Refugee Survey 2003, U.S. Committee for Refugees
### Ratio of Refugee to Host Country Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Country</th>
<th>Ratio of Refugee Pop. to Total Pop.</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>1:2</td>
<td>879,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>2,209,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>607,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1:11</td>
<td>409,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1:46</td>
<td>182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>353,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1:51</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1:181</td>
<td>132,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1:40</td>
<td>247,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1:114</td>
<td>287,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1:72</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1:95</td>
<td>1,518,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1:112</td>
<td>221,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1:19,538</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1:25,500</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<td>Cote D’Ivoire &amp; Sierra Leone</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>C-Kin, Tanzania, Burundi</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>Guinea, Liberia &amp; Others</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, others</td>
<td>1,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Germany, Switzerland</td>
<td>3,100</td>
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