

Fact Sheet 3 Humanitarian Entrants Background Information

Proportion of people assisted under the Humanitarian program by nationality

Nationality	Assisted 2007-2008	Assisted 2006-2007	Assisted 2005-2006	Assisted 2004-2005
Myanmar (Burma)	25.7%	13.3%	4.0%	-
Stateless	10.1%	5.6%	-	-
Other Southern and Eastern Africa	8.0%	8.3%	8.6%	5.2%
Other Central and Western Africa	7.3%	12.1%	23.2%	15.7%
Thailand	7.2%	-	-	-
Iraq	7.1%	12.0%	13.3%	6.5%
Sudan	7.0%	12.2%	14.1%	29.3%
Tanzania	5.4%	5.1%	6.1%	
Iran	4.8%	4.8%	5.0%	9.3%
Afghanistan	4.3%	5.5%	4.8%	3.8%
Sierra Leone	-	-	7.6%	5.7%
Ethiopia	-	-	2.2%	5.8%
Former Yugoslavia	-	-	-	3.9%
Somalia	-	-	-	3.1%
Others	13.0%	17.1%	11.1%	11.8%

Sudan

Why are there refugees from Sudan?

- Ongoing civil war, drought famine , war damage and limited infrastructure in the south of Sudan have hindered the return of an estimated 500,00 Sudanese refugees who fled to neighbouring countries following years of civil war
- In 2003 fighting broke out in Darfur. To date this conflict has resulted in more than 200,000 deaths and the displacement of nearly 2 million people

Background

- Sudan is located in the northeast of Africa
- It is the continent's largest country
- In 2006 the population was estimated to be 41 million
- Of the 6-7 million people living in the greater Khartoum, 2 million were internally displaced people from the civil war in the south

- Sudan is a country of considerable ethnic diversity. Concepts of ethnicity are flexible, often being based upon cultural affiliations rather than ethnic characteristics
- Ethnic identities have frequently been subject to manipulation for political purposes

In Australia

- Since 2001, the large increase in the Sudan-born population in Australia has principally occurred through the Humanitarian Program , with more than 98% of Sudan-born arrivals entering Australia as part of this program
- The 2001 census indicated significant settlement of Sudan-born arrivals had in Victoria, NSW and to a lesser extent Queensland

Myanmar

Why are there refugees from Myanmar (Burma)?

- Most of the refugees from Myanmar belong to the Karen ethnic group.
- The second largest cultural group in Myanmar, the Karen have been fighting for their autonomy since the country gained independence in 1948.
- Since the 1970s various governments have attempted to isolate the movement by cutting off food, information and financial support.
- Since the military junta came to power in 1988 violations of their human rights have intensified.
- Over 140 000 Burmese refugees are accommodated in nine main refugee camps along the Thailand/Myanmar border.

Background

- Burma is ethnically diverse (about 135 different ethnic groups)
- Population of approximately 55 million
- Its political system remains under tight control from the military

In Australia

- Only in the last two years has Australia accepted significant numbers of refugees from Myanmar
- Most Karen arriving in Australia come with their families, which are typically larger than Australian families
- Education is a big issue for both parents and children. Almost all the Karen in Australia want more education.
- Many have been in refugee camps for over 20 years
- It is estimated that in 2007-08 2,600 refugees from Burma, mostly Karen, will resettle in Australia, the largest number thus far. Their arrival represents a significant increase in the Karen population in Australia and more than doubles the total number of humanitarian arrivals from Burma in the last five years.

Eritrea

Why are there refugees from Eritrea?

- In 1962, the Emperor of Ethiopia declared an end to Eritrean autonomy and proclaimed Eritrea to be a province of Ethiopia. Eritreans have fought for independence since that time.

- They were awarded formal independence in 1993, but constant conflict over border disputes, frequent drought conditions, reliance on subsistence agriculture and widespread landmines have caused much of the population to seek refuge in neighbouring countries Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya.

Background

- Eritrea is a hot, dry desert strip along the Red Sea Coast
- Population: 4.5 million (2005)
- There are nine different ethnic groups, the largest being Tigrinya and Tigre.
- The economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture. Eritrea is one of the world's poorest countries.

In Australia

- There is a very small community of Eritreans in Australia (approx. 2000).
- Most are settled in Victoria.
- Most (72%) have 'Poor' or 'Nil' English skills
- It can be difficult for the older generation to get accustomed to Australian culture and they may not easily adjust to the lifestyle. Children may feel caught between two cultures which may cause conflict within the family.

Ethiopia

Why are there refugees from Ethiopia?

- Ethiopia is a country which has seen decades of natural disasters, political unrest, war, drought and famine.
- The 1970s saw Ethiopia face drought, the Ogaden War with Somalia and an oppressive military regime.
- A prolonged drought and consequent famine in the 1980s drove another 410 000 refugees out of the country.
- Unceasing drought and famine in the 1990s, along with insurgent activity in the Tigray region and Eritrean border incited another refugee exodus into Kenya and Sudan.

Background

- Estimated population of 73 million (2005)
- Average life expectancy 45.5 years
- Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world (ranked 170 out of 177 nations).

In Australia

- At the 2001 census, 3600 Ethiopian born people lived in Australia, with approximately 3000 more settling here (between 2000 to 2005).
- 60% entrants have no or limited English skills
- The majority of Ethiopian-born arrivals have been young adults and children
- Most settle in the urban, capital cities, which may be unfamiliar as most come from rural areas or refugee camps

Togo

Why are there refugees from Togo?

- Togo (a small country in West Africa) gained independence from the French in 1960. After this, they endured seven years of political turmoil culminating in a military coup, which brought Gnassingbe Eyadema to rule.
- Clashes in 1992 and 1993 between security forces and opponents of Eyadema's rule displaced approximately 300 000 Togolese refugees, many escaping to Ghana and Benin.
- The 2005 election also sent approximately 40 000 more people fleeing across Togo's borders.

Background

- The population of Togo is approximately 5.5 million (2006).
- More than 30 ethnic groups are present in Togo. The largest is the Ewe (21%) who predominate the south.
- French is the official language of Togo.
- The average Togolese family has approximately five children.

In Australia

- DIAC records show that in the ten years before 2007, there were only 20 Togolese migrants to Australia (9 of which were humanitarian entrants).

Burundi

Why are there refugees from Burundi?

- From independence in 1962 to 1993, Burundi was controlled by a series of military dictators.
- These years saw extensive violence between two main ethnic groups – the Tutsi and the Hutu.
- Mass killings and genocides have occurred – in 1972 the Tutsi killed 10 000 Hutu and moderate Tutsi. The first democratically elected leader was assassinated by the Tutsi in 1993, which led to 50 000 – 100 000 deaths between the two groups in that year.
- Many developments in the peace process occurred in 2005.

Background

- Estimated population of 8,098,068 (2006) with half the population aged 14 or less.
- There are two main ethnic groups, the Hutu (85%) and Tutsi (15%).
- The official languages are Kirundi and French. Swahili is spoken along the eastern border.
- Burundi is the poorest country in the world.
- Burundi's largest industry is agriculture – with coffee being the nation's biggest revenue earner.

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References

DIAC www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia

RCA www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/submissions/2008-09_intakesub.pdf

Note: as the numbers/nationalities of humanitarian entrants to Australia continue to change, it is recommended to visit these websites for updated community profile information.