



Statistical Data on Iranian Asylum Seekers and Refugees in 2003

At the start of 2004 the number of people 'of concern' to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) was 17.1 million. These include about 9.7 million refugees, 985,500 asylum seekers, 1.1 million returned refugees, and 4.4 million internally displaced persons. In addition, more than 4 million Palestinians were cared for by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Based on data received or estimated by UNHCR the number of **Iranian refugees** at the end of 2003 was estimated to be 132,491 of which 1,934 were assisted by the UNHCR. Another 18,250 **Iranian asylum seekers** applied for asylum during 2003. The three countries that **received the largest numbers** of Iranian asylum seekers in 2003 were Turkey (3,092), United Kingdom (2,875), and Germany (2,049). The number of Iranians seeking asylum in previous years were 19,560 (1999), 37,747 (2000), 23,600 (2001), and 17,929 (2002).

Of the **24,174 asylum decisions taken** on Iranian asylum applications in 2003, including cases from previous years, some 5,658 resulted in refugee status, 688 decisions resulted in humanitarian status, 14,521 cases were rejected, and 3,307 cases were closed on other grounds. At the end of 2003, some 11,657 Iranian asylum cases were pending in the procedures.

When cases closed on other non-substantive grounds are excluded, the **global Convention recognition percentage** for Iranian asylum applicants during 2003 amounted to **27.1%**, whereas the total recognition percentage, including grants of **humanitarian status**, amounted to **30.4%**. The Convention recognition percentage for Iranian asylum applicants in previous years amounted to 36% (1999), 38% (2000), 29% (2001), and 28% (2002). The total recognition percentage, including grants of humanitarian status, amounted to 41% (1999), 42% (2000), 34% (2001), and 33% (2002).

Some examples of **first instance total recognition** rates (refugee & humanitarian) for Iranian applications in 2003 are: Canada (67.1%), France (16.6%), Germany (11.2%), Netherlands (24.5%), Sweden (9.6%), UK (8.6%), and USA-INS (48%).

Globally, a total number of 807,000 first instance or appeal applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to Governments or UNHCR offices in 141 countries in 2003. Eight industrialized countries receiving most of the asylum applications were France (59,800), Germany (50,600), the United Kingdom (49,400), the United States (43,300), South Africa (35,900), Austria (32,400), Canada (31,900) and Sweden (31,300). In total, the **global refugee recognition rate** amounted to **21.4%**. When asylum-seekers allowed to remain on **humanitarian grounds** are included, the recognition rate increases to **27.3%**. These rates were 24% and 36% in 2001 and 22% and 30% in 2002.

The ten largest number of asylum claims (new and appeal) in 2003 were filed by nationals from Russian Federation (38,900), China (37,100), Serbia and Montenegro (36,700), Democratic Republic of the Congo (35,800), Turkey (33,800), Iraq (32,100), Colombia (29,400), Afghanistan (22,400) and Nigeria (21,300). Somalia (19,932). **Iranian asylum seekers** (18,250) ranked **thirteen**.

Of the 26,000 refugees who were resettled from first asylum countries in 2003 with UNHCR's assistance, 2,670 were **Iranian refugees**. As many as 3,800 Iranians were reported to have voluntarily returned to Iran from Iraq during this year.

SOURCES: UNHCR, refugees by numbers (2004 edition) & 2003 Global Refugee Trends, 15, June 2004. For 1999-2002 figures see our 2001 and 2002 statistics sheet.

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