



New developments of the refugee issue. World Refugee Day, 20 June 2014

Contents

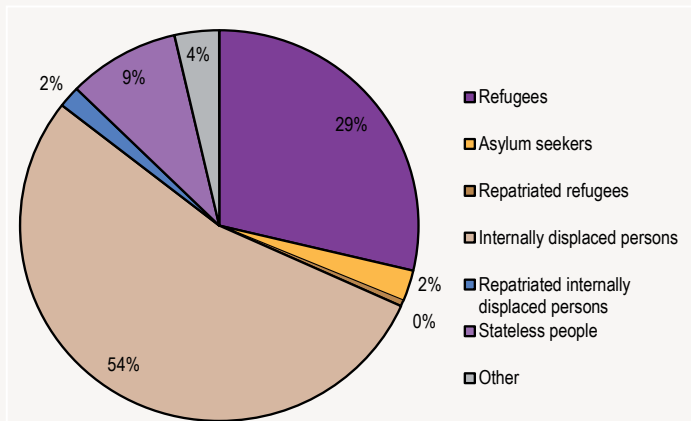
[Refugees](#) 1
[Asylum seekers](#) 2
[Situation in Hungary](#) 3

The United Nations (UN) Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted in 1951, which, with the 1967 Protocol, is the only international refugee protection document. The Convention set out the conditions under which the signatory states recognize the applicant as a refugee, laid down the prohibition of refoulement, and determined the scope of fundamental social rights and benefits provided for the refugees. The United Nations celebrated the first World Refugee Day in 2001, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of signing the Convention.

The first half of 2013 can be considered as the worst of all time regarding the refugee affairs based on the preliminary data of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The number of needy recipients within the scope of UNHCR – the highest ever recorded – was 38.7 million in the middle of 2013, nearly 3 million more than half a year earlier.

Figure 1

Distribution of needy recipients within the scope of UNHCR, mid-2013



Source: UNHCR.

More than half of those in need, almost 21 million people were internally displaced within national borders. Of these, about four million people were forced to leave their homes in the first half of 2013; the vast majority of them, 2.2 million, in Syria, but a significant number were in Sudan (390 thousand), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (360 thousand) and Pakistan (264 thousand) as well. There is a civil war in all the listed countries. In addition to the internally displaced, the other large group of refugees was represented by those leaving their country, in June 2013 there were 11.1 million such people worldwide. The number of stateless persons (3.5 million) was also significant as well. In the

middle of last year, nearly 988 thousand asylum seekers were worldwide, 46% of them submitted request in the first half of 2013. More than three quarters of the 878 thousand repatriated people moved back to their homes within national borders, the UNHCR organized integration programs for them. According to the statistics, an additional 1.4 million people were recipients of the UN Refugee Office in some other way.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees was established in 1950 to help the European refugees of the Second World War. Then, its responsibilities and the locations of assistance gradually expanded. Its scope of activities includes, inter alia, ensuring the protection of rights, the promotion of integration and the protection of disadvantaged people.

UNHCR statistics relate to the following groups:

- **Refugee:** a person recognized as a refugee under the 1951 UN Convention. In UNHCR statistics, people receiving supplementary and temporary international protection also belong to this group.
- **Asylum seekers:** those persons whose application is still under consideration, and thus have not been granted refugee status.
- **Internally displaced people:** persons who have been forced to flee their homes because of an armed conflict or other violence, but did not cross the borders.
- **Repatriated refugees:** refugees who have returned to their homes.
- **Stateless people:** those who do not have the nationality of any country, e.g. because of the annexation of areas, discrimination, lack of birth registration.
- **Others:** those who do not fall within any of the categories listed above, while benefit from the humanitarian services of the UNHCR.

Refugees

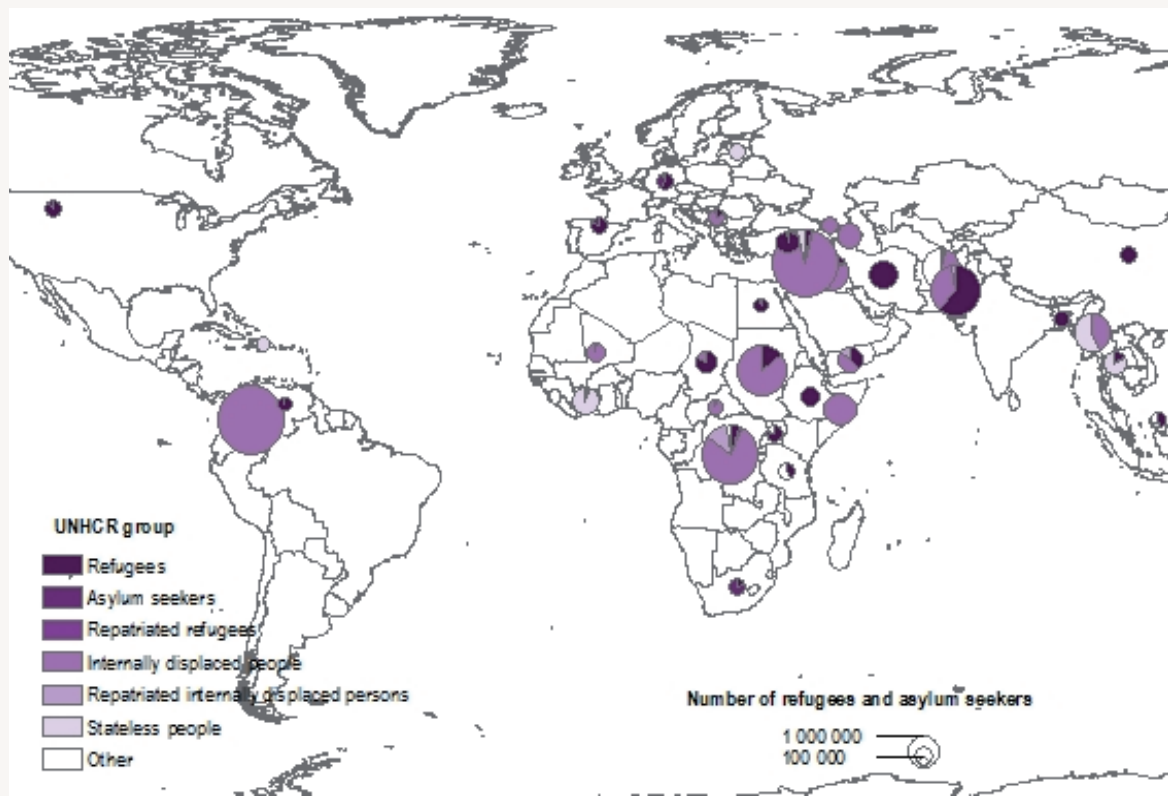
Because of military conflicts an outstanding number of 1.5 million people have been forced to flee in mass in the first half of 2013 according to UNHCR data. This is the highest number since 1999, but since these data are only for the first six months, it is likely that 2013 will be the year of the highest number of refugees after the year of the Rwandan massacre of 1994. **In the first half of 2013, most new refugees (flow data)** left Syria (1.3 million), they mainly went to Lebanon (445 thousand), Jordan (394 thousand), and Turkey (294 thousand).

In addition to Syria, the African countries are the major places of origin: 65 thousand people fled from Sudan, 55 thousand from the Central African Republic, 40 thousand from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 37 thousand from Mali, and 27 thousand from Somalia mainly to neighbouring countries.

The number of refugees in mid-year 2013 (stock-type data) was 11.1 million. 1.6 million people resided in Pakistan and 860 thousand people in Iran. Almost all of the refugees came to these countries from Afghanistan. Proportionately, the biggest change has been in Lebanon since the beginning of the year, where the number of refugees tripled (to 577 thousand), but the number of refugees to Jordan and Turkey also doubled (to 613 and 512 thousand respectively), mainly due to the Syrian refugee wave in all three cases. Other important receiving countries are Kenya (550 thousand), Chad (about 420 thousand) and Ethiopia

Figure 2

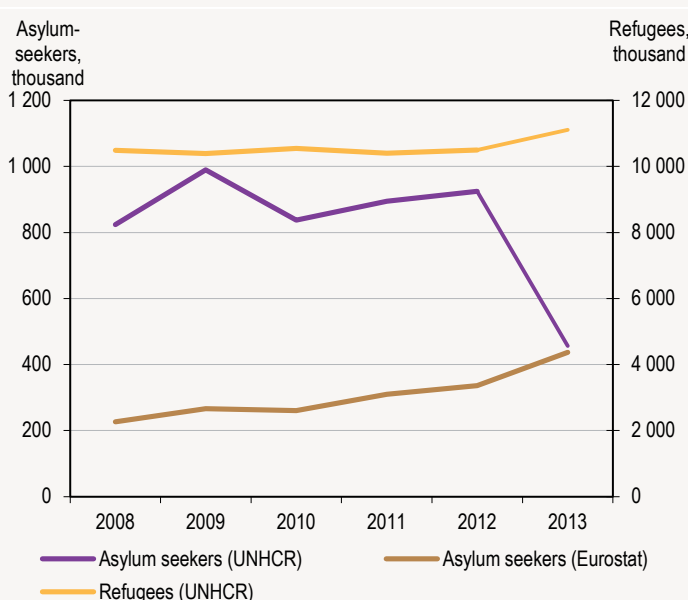
Refugee situation in some of the major countries, 2013



(407 thousand, the highest figure since 1992). Another 300 thousand refugees live in China, but their numbers remained virtually unchanged since the 1980s.

Figure 3

Number of asylum seekers and refugees



Note: UNHCR data only refer to the first half of the year in 2013.
Source: UNHCR, Eurostat.

Among the countries of origin, because of the recent war conflicts, the number of Afghan people plays a dominant role; a total of more than 2.5 million have fled the country. For similar reasons, the number of those who have left Syria (1.9 million) is also significant, in a half year period it increased by 38% compared to the end of 2012. The vast majority of Syrian

refugees had taken refuge in the neighbouring countries, Lebanon (571 thousand), Jordan (552 thousand), Turkey (490 thousand) and Iraq (152 thousand). In 2014, due to the protracted war, the number of Syrian refugees is expected to catch up with that of the Afghans. In addition to the two main countries of origin, primarily the inhabitants of African states left en masse: 1.1 million Somali (this figure is virtually unchanged since the end of 2012), 632 thousand Sudanese and 490 thousand Congolese live in other countries for humanitarian reasons. The number of Iraqi refugees fell from 746 thousand at year-end 2012 to 409 thousand, which, according to the authorities, is the result of moving back.

Asylum seekers

At world level, 456 thousand individual asylum applications have been submitted in the first half of 2013, which underestimates the phenomenon as South Africa is not included in the data, where most of the new applications were submitted in the past five years according to the UNHCR.

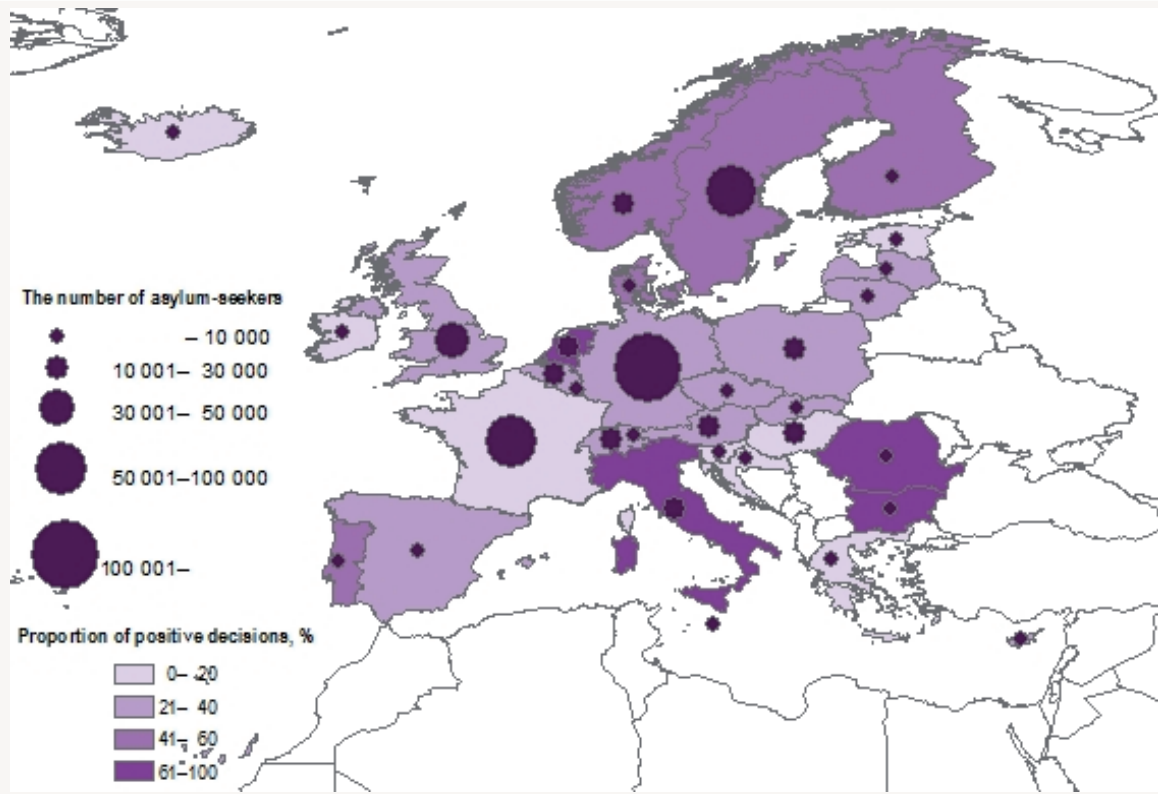
Most (43 thousand people) claimed asylum in Germany, here a quarter of the applicants were from Russia. Another important countries of destination are the United States of America (38 thousand application, mainly from China and Mexico), and France (close to 30 thousand people, mostly from Serbia and Kosovo), but a large number of applications were submitted to the authorities of Uganda, Sweden and Australia as well.

Concerning the 28 member states of the European Union, Eurostat has already published new data on asylum seekers for the full year of 2013. During the year, their number significantly increased by nearly 100 thousand compared to 2012, with this more than 435 thousand asylum seekers lived in the EU countries by the end of 2013.

The most important host country, according to data on the full year, was Germany; about 127 thousand people arrived here. Also important European destination countries were France (66 thousand), Sweden (54 thousand), the United Kingdom (30 thousand) and Italy (28 thousand). Most asylum seekers were Syrian citizens (50 thousand), but many came from Russia (41 thousand), Afghanistan (26 thousand), Serbia (22 thousand), Pakistan (21 thousand) and Kosovo (20 thousand) as well.

Figure 4

Refugees in Europe, 2013



Acceptance of the applications is highly influenced by both the rules of the host country and the nationality of asylum seekers. In the EU-28 Member States, on average, slightly more than one-third of the applicants received some status on the basis of first instance decisions. However, there are significant differences between countries. In Bulgaria and Malta more than 80% of the small number of applicants received a positive treatment, but their share in Romania and Italy was also over 60%. The other extreme is Greece, where more than 96% of applications were refused in the first instance.

By nationality there is a big difference in the assessment of applications. Among the more significant countries of origin (recording at least 100 requests), the Syrians can expect the best treatment, 83.5% of the applicants received a positive decision in the first instance. But the majority of the Somali, Iraqi and Iranian citizens can expect a positive treatment as well. In contrast, less than half of the Afghans (45.1%) received international protection on the basis of the 2013 decisions. Even worse was the case for a large number of Russian applicants, as nearly three-quarters of them were rejected.

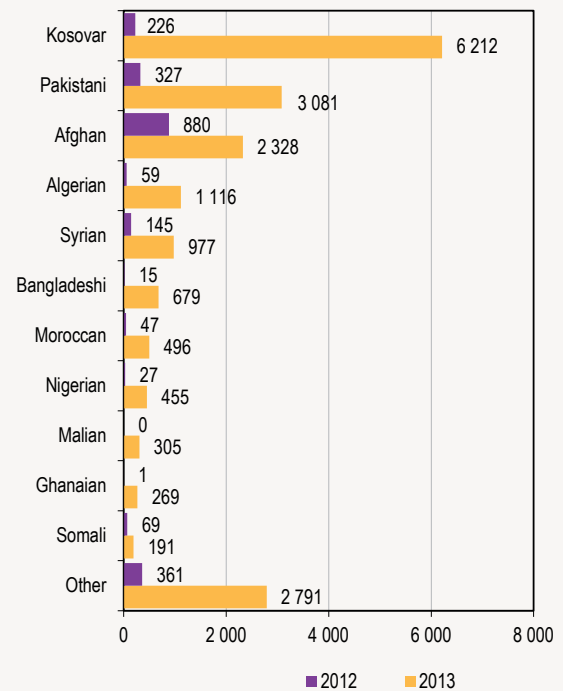
Situation in Hungary

In Hungary, there was a slight rise in the number of those people who have been granted refugee status in the past decade. In 2003, 1,565 were included in the records, while nearly ten years later 2,400.

According to the data of the Office of Immigration and Nationality, in 2013, there was a significant, nearly nine-fold increase in the number of applicants compared to 2012. Almost a third of the 18,900 applications were submitted by Kosovar citizens, but the number of Pakistani (3,081) and Afghan (2,328 people) asylum seekers was also significant. The majority of applications (about 12 thousand) were administered in the first half of 2013; this is due to the fact that it was not possible to take the asylum seekers into detention as aliens in the first half of the year. However, in the second half of the year, under a legal amendment detention became possible again resulting in a decline in the number of applications.

Figure 5

The number of asylum seekers by nationality in Hungary



Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality.

The vast majority of asylum seekers in Hungary do not receive refugee status: the applicant was recognized as a refugee only in 173 cases, and 183 were given protected status in 2013. Their total number does not even reach 2% of the applicants.

Further information, data (links):[Methodology](#)

Tables (stadat): Infra-annual data – [Population, vital events: 1.2](#)

Time series of annual data – [Population, vital events: 1.7](#)

Time series of annual data – [Population, vital events: 1.8](#)

Contact details:

kommunikacio@ksh.hu

[Information services](#)

Telephone: +36 1 345-6789

www.ksh.hu