

**PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS
FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2012**

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
COMMITTEES ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
AND
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
SECTION 207(d)(1) and (e)(1-7)
OF THE
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



INTRODUCTION

This *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2012: Report to the Congress* is submitted in compliance with Sections 207(d)(1) and (e)(1-7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The Act requires that before the start of the fiscal year and, to the extent possible, at least two weeks prior to consultations on refugee admissions, members of the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives be provided with the following information:

- (1) A description of the nature of the refugee situation;
- (2) A description of the number and allocation of the refugees to be admitted and an analysis of conditions within the countries from which they came;
- (3) A description of the plans for their movement and resettlement and the estimated cost of their movement and resettlement;
- (4) An analysis of the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of their admission to the United States;¹
- (5) A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees;
- (6) An analysis of the impact of the participation of the United States in the resettlement of such refugees on the foreign policy interests of the United States; and
- (7) Such additional information as may be appropriate or requested by such members.

In addition, this report contains information as required by Section 602(d) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292, October 27, 1998, 112 Stat. 2787) (IRFA) about religious persecution of refugee populations eligible for consideration for admission to the United States. This report meets the reporting requirements of Section 305(b) of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-333, October 18, 2004, 118 Stat. 1287) by providing information about specific measures taken to facilitate access to the United States refugee program for individuals who have fled “countries of particular concern” for violations of religious freedoms, identified pursuant to Section 402(b) of the IRFA.

¹ Detailed discussion of the anticipated social and economic impact, including secondary migration, of the admission of refugees to the United States is being provided in the *Report to the Congress of the Refugee Resettlement Program*, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services.

FOREWORD

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) continues to be a visible and extremely important component of the United States' overall effort in support of refugees. On the occasion of World Refugee Day on June 20, President Obama stated:

“As we mark World Refugee Day, I join with people around the globe in highlighting the plight of the 15 million refugees in the world today, and we reaffirm our commitment to support them as they seek a safe place to call home again. In particular, we honor the courage of those who have been forcibly displaced from their homes, including men, women and children in Libya, Syria, Cote d'Ivoire who remind us that somewhere in the world, refugees are forced to flee their homes virtually every day.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees – a landmark achievement of international law that sets forth certain rights of refugees and legal obligations of States relating to refugees. Hundreds of thousands – and probably millions – of people around the world are alive today thanks to the help and protection they received from the international community when they were forced to flee their countries to escape violence, oppression, abuse, and other forms of persecution.”

And Secretary of State Clinton said:

“The United States has a history of upholding human rights and humanitarian principles. For decades we have led the world in overseas support for humanitarian protection and assistance, and we have provided asylum and refugee resettlement for millions. In doing so, we show through example our dedication to basic human decency, to our responsibilities under international law, and - along with the rest of the international community - to ensuring refuge when innocent lives hang in the balance. We do this because our country's values must be a critical component of our foreign policy.”

While third country resettlement cannot be the durable solution for the vast majority of the world's refugees, it must remain a possibility for those refugees who are most vulnerable and for whom repatriation or local integration in countries of refuge are not viable options. U.S. resettlement should always contribute to durable solutions for such refugees, regardless of their location, national origin,

health status, occupational skills, or level of educational attainment. In the early years of the program, large numbers of relatively few nationalities located in a limited number of countries dominated the program. Many of the resettled refugees had family members already in the United States. Over the past decade, however, the United States has worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to make third country resettlement a viable, durable solution for increasing numbers from a broader representation of the world's refugee population, which currently stands at 15.1 million. While we have again resettled large numbers of Burmese, Bhutanese, and Iraqis this year, the USRAP has admitted refugees from over 70 nationalities who were processed in some 100 countries. Over 75 percent of these applicants were referred to us by UNHCR either individually or in groups.

The Administration has worked closely with the Congress to invest the resources necessary to reach smaller numbers of the most desperate populations who find themselves in seemingly forgotten locations. This year, for example, for the first time in 20 years, staff representing the Departments of State and Homeland Security began processing Eritrean refugees inside Sudan residing in a remote camp along the eastern border. This initiative is designed to bring hope to individuals who can neither return to Eritrea nor locally integrate in Sudan. This and similar efforts are important signs of progress to ensure that the USRAP is consistent with U.S. humanitarian principles and mandate.

The United States has been pleased to support UNHCR in its efforts to expand the community of nations involved in the resettlement of refugees. In recent years, countries without a history of resettling refugees have stepped forward and established programs, including Japan, Paraguay, Romania, Uruguay, the Czech Republic, and Portugal. Twenty-eight countries resettled UNHCR-referred refugees in 2010. This past year the State Department served as the Chair of the UNHCR-sponsored Working Group on Resettlement and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement. Under our chairmanship we worked throughout the year to improve the quality of resettlement throughout the world, bolster international response to emergency situations, and expand the number of resettlement slots worldwide. We worked in close partnership with UNHCR and Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), the U.S. non-governmental organization (NGO) focal point, to promote international support for refugee resettlement, including refugees fleeing Libya, as well as Iraqi and Afghan refugees. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services also hosted the fourth meeting of the Expert Group on Resettlement Fraud, a three-day meeting of resettlement countries and UNHCR, which focused on the use of biometrics as a tool to enhance the integrity and security of resettlement programs.

For several years the U.S. Government has provided financial support to emerging resettlement countries in Latin America to support their efforts to build sustainable resettlement programs. This effort focuses largely on the resettlement of Colombian refugees and is building resettlement structures in countries that have not traditionally been engaged in the resettlement of refugees.

Our worldwide approach to resettlement also includes efforts to enhance capacity to assist people in urgent need. In support of this objective, this year the USRAP began to process refugees at a new Emergency Transit Center (ETC) established by UNHCR in Slovakia. This is the third UNHCR ETC, augmenting the capacity of those already established in Romania and the Philippines. These centers are an important protection tool, allowing vulnerable refugees to be moved from insecure or otherwise challenging circumstances to safe locations, and allowing resettlement countries to access resettlement applicants for interviews, medical screening, and other required processing. The U.S. Government continues to provide both financial and policy support for these centers, which are also used by other resettlement countries as part of U.S. efforts to promote greater responsibility sharing for resettlement among other nations.

For the last several years, the USRAP has maintained the longstanding American tradition of offering resettlement to vulnerable refugees while also incorporating additional security enhancements to safeguard the resettlement program from fraud and national security risks. In FY 2010, the United States admitted more than 73,000 refugees – similar to resettlement admissions in FY 2009. This year’s admissions total will be lower, however, due largely to the introduction of additional security checks during the year, including pre-departure checks shortly before refugees travel to the U.S., instituted mid-year, that enhance the vetting of applicants against intelligence and law enforcement information. While these checks caused a slowdown in refugee arrivals, the checks reflect the Administration’s commitment to conduct the most thorough checks possible to prevent dangerous individuals from gaining access to the United States through the refugee program. Arrival numbers began to rebound in June and July and we expect arrivals in FY 2012 approaching the proposed ceiling.

While there have been many positive developments in the overseas aspects of the USRAP, refugees as well as persons and organizations assisting them continue to face significant challenges in addressing the needs of refugees after their arrival in the United States. Consequently, the National Security Staff (NSS) led a stakeholder engagement process to identify issues and develop interagency solutions. The NSS issued a report summarizing the work of this group in May 2011.

In FY 2010 a substantial change made as a result of this process was a dramatic increase in the one-time per capita Reception and Placement grant administered by the Department of State for the initial weeks after a refugee's arrival. In light of our critical obligations to newly arrived refugees, and thanks to the generous support from the Congress, the Department of State was able to increase the Reception and Placement per capita grant from \$900 to \$1,800. In FY 2011, we enhanced the sharing of refugee medical information with domestic agencies and local officials to improve initial placement decisions and medical service delivery for arriving refugees. As a result of the NSS led interagency process, the Department of State/PRM and the Department of Health and Human Services/ORR instituted quarterly consultations and information exchanges with resettlement stakeholders so they have timely information on refugee arrivals and can better manage their work. The Departments of State/PRM and Health and Human Services/ORR will continue to co-lead this effort. The overall goal is for all parties involved – be they at the federal, state, or local level, and from both the public and private sectors – to more effectively meet the needs of resettled refugees. Such enhanced coordination and communication is particularly needed in light of the changed – and more diverse – character of the program. The Administration will continue to explore ways of ensuring that refugees are able to integrate successfully in the United States after their arrival.

Overseas, we continue to enhance our efforts at the strategic use of U.S. resettlement by using that option to promote more generous policies among countries of origin and refugee hosting countries toward repatriation and local integration, respectively, and to leverage greater support for third country resettlement among governments with the capacity to do more in this area. In Ethiopia, the government has established an “out of camp” policy for Eritreans which enables many to move to urban areas to seek work and/or educational opportunities. Our work with UNHCR resettling Eritrean refugees from Eastern Sudan is expected to bring further dividends as UNHCR pursues an agreement with the Sudanese Government to allow other refugees among this group to locally integrate. And we continue to build the capacity of new resettlement countries, and thus create more resettlement slots for vulnerable refugees. A recent agreement between the USRAP and both Uruguay and Bulgaria to provide needed technical and programmatic support, both from Executive branch agencies as well as resettlement NGOs, will help these two countries establish and build nascent programs.

The Administration continued to make progress over the past year in addressing the admission of refugees who are affected by the broad definitions of “terrorist activity” and “terrorist organization” under U.S. law but whose admission to the United States would not compromise our national security and

would be consistent with U.S. foreign policy interests. The National Security Staff led interagency consultations on the exercise of the statutory exemption authority to allow certain refugees and other categories of immigrants to receive immigration benefits. After interagency consultation and agreement, new exercises of the exemption authority were signed by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano that authorized U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to exempt individuals on a case-by-case basis for the receipt of military-type training and the solicitation of funds and/or individuals under duress. In addition, two new group-based exercises of the exemption authority were signed by Secretary Napolitano during the year that authorized USCIS to exempt certain individuals having activities and associations with the All India Sikh Students Federation-Bittu faction (AISSF-Bittu) and the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF).

As is the case for most countries with large scale refugee programs, U.S. law requires completion of several processing “steps” before an applicant can be admitted as a refugee. This does not exclude the United States from participation in the resettlement of urgent cases, however. On a case-by-case basis, individual applicants in need of expedited handling are processed on an accelerated schedule. As noted earlier, the United States has contributed generously to allow UNHCR to establish and operate ETCs, where emergency cases can be moved during the processing period.

During the past year, the USRAP has contributed substantially to the international community’s efforts to provide durable solutions to some of the world’s most vulnerable refugees, including survivors of torture or gender based violence, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) individuals. Many vulnerable refugees have lived in protracted situations for years, uncertain about their fate and severely limited in their capacity to develop their potential. While starting life anew in the United States presents considerable challenges, it also creates hope and opportunity for tens of thousands of persons each year. The support and assistance that average Americans provide to these newcomers makes a significant difference in hastening their integration into our country, where they add to our vitality and diversity by making substantial contributions to our economic and cultural life.

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I. OVERVIEW OF U.S. REFUGEE POLICY

At the end of 2010, the estimated refugee population worldwide stood at 15.1 million, with 10.5 million receiving protection or assistance from UNHCR. The United States actively supports efforts to provide protection, assistance, and durable solutions to refugees, as these measures meet both our humanitarian objectives and our foreign policy and national security interests. Combined with humanitarian diplomacy, U.S. financial contributions to international and non-governmental organizations are vital to achieving these goals. Under the authority in the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, the United States contributes to the programs of UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and other international and non-governmental organizations that provide protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), victims of conflict, and other vulnerable migrants. These contributions address the legal and physical protection needs of refugees as well as their basic assistance needs for water, sanitation, food, health care, shelter, education, and other services. The United States monitors these programs to ensure the most effective use of resources, maximizing humanitarian impact for the beneficiaries.

During FY 2011, the United States continued to support the achievement of durable solutions for refugees through voluntary repatriation programs around the world. In seeking durable solutions for refugees, the United States and UNHCR recognize that – for most refugees – safe voluntary return to their homelands is their preferred solution. Refugee repatriation operations to countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Sri Lanka proceeded during FY 2011, representing significant progress in the protection of refugees, as well as in their home countries’ stabilization, reconstruction, and development.

Where opportunities for return remain elusive, the United States and partners pursue self-sufficiency and temporary, indefinite, or permanent local integration in countries of asylum. The Department of State works diplomatically to encourage host governments to protect refugees through local integration and provides assistance to help meet integration needs through programs that promote refugee self-sufficiency and community-based social services. Afghans in India, Burundi in Tanzania, Eritreans in Sudan, Liberians and Sierra Leoneans in seven countries across West Africa, and Colombians in Ecuador and Costa Rica are among those populations for whom opportunities for local integration have recently become possible.

UNHCR estimates that there are 12 million people worldwide who are not recognized nationals of any state and are, therefore, legally or *de facto* stateless. Without recognized citizenship in any country, many stateless persons exist in refugee-like situations, unable to claim rights and denied even the most basic protections of law. The United States has supported UNHCR's efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness, including addressing gaps in citizenship laws and promoting fair application of those laws. The United States is by far the largest single donor to UNHCR, providing over \$700 million to UNHCR in FY 2010. These contributions to UNHCR's core budget support efforts to address statelessness in the Balkans, Burma, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Nepal, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

In addition, the Department of State seeks to use the USRAP strategically, as a means of providing a durable solution to stateless individuals as well as groups in need of resettlement. This is reflected in the current resettlement of Rohingya refugees from Burma, as well as in past resettlement of Meskhetian Turks. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) also employs diplomacy to mobilize other governments to prevent and resolve situations of statelessness. For example, over the past year PRM has conducted field missions and monitoring of situations of statelessness in the Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, and Nepal. As a member of the Organization of American States, the United States successfully co-sponsored a resolution on statelessness in the region.

The United States and UNHCR also recognize resettlement in third countries as a vital tool for providing refugees protection and/or durable solutions, particularly for those for whom other durable solutions are not feasible. For some refugees, resettlement is the best, and perhaps only, alternative. The United States encourages UNHCR to refer for resettlement stateless refugees, either as individuals or groups, for whom other durable solutions are not possible, even if they are located in their country of habitual residence.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring UNHCR's capacity to identify and refer refugees in need of resettlement, the U.S. Government has for more than a decade provided financial support to expand and improve the organization's resettlement infrastructure. As a result of this initiative, UNHCR has substantially increased referrals to the United States and other resettlement countries. We will continue to work with UNHCR and consult with host governments on group referrals. We will continue to assess resettlement needs and allow qualified non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to refer refugee applicants to the program.

The United States has also supported UNHCR's efforts to expand the number of countries active in resettlement and engaged bilaterally on the issue. In 2010, UNHCR referred refugees to 28 countries for resettlement consideration. Over 91 percent were referred to the United States, Canada, and Australia. Smaller numbers of referrals were made to Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and the United Kingdom. Bulgaria and Hungary also plan to implement regular resettlement programs beginning in 2012.

While the overall number of refugees referred by UNHCR and the percentage resettled by various countries fluctuate from year to year, the United States aims to provide resettlement consideration to at least 50 percent of all refugees referred by UNHCR worldwide, depending on availability of funds. Some 74 percent of UNHCR-referred refugees who were resettled in 2010 were resettled in the United States (see Table VIII). We have encouraged UNHCR to make further strategic use of resettlement and to continue to develop resettlement as a durable solution for vulnerable refugees.

The foreign policy and humanitarian interests of the United States are often advanced by our willingness to work with first asylum and resettlement countries to address refugee issues. In some cases, the United States has been able to use its leadership position in resettlement to promote and secure other durable solutions for refugees or advance other human rights or foreign policy objectives. During the past few years, U.S. resettlement efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia have helped energize efforts by UNHCR and other countries to ensure that: first asylum is maintained for larger refugee populations; local integration solutions are offered; and third country resettlement is accorded to those in need of that solution. In certain locations, the prompt resettlement of politically sensitive cases has helped defuse regional tensions. In the case of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, the U.S. offer of resettlement helped garner similar pledges from other countries, while the international community is still pressing for the right of refugees to return voluntarily to Bhutan or for their ability to seek local integration opportunities in Nepal.

During its history, the USRAP has responded to changing refugee circumstances. Even before the events of September 11, 2001, the end of the Cold War had dramatically altered the context in which the USRAP operates. Having shifted its focus away from large groups concentrated in a few locations, primarily refugees from Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia, the

program began to offer resettlement to refugees of over 50 nationalities per year. Interviews are often conducted in remote locations and are geared toward populations in greatest need of third country resettlement opportunities.

Refugees resettled in the United States contribute positively to the diversity and enrichment of our country. The USRAP emphasizes the principle that refugees should become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible. The Department of State works domestically with agencies participating in the Reception and Placement (R&P) program to ensure that they are able to provide services according to established standards. Department of Health and Human Services/ORR-funded programs administered in individual states, the District of Columbia, and through a network of nonprofit organizations provide cash and medical assistance, training programs, employment, and other support services to arriving refugees.

An increasing proportion of arriving refugees do not have close family members already living in the United States to help with their adjustment and integration. The refugee population is increasingly diverse linguistically, with wide-ranging educational and employment histories. To better prepare refugees for arrival in the United States, the USRAP continues to improve overseas cultural orientations, including through curricula review and teacher training. In FY 2011 we began piloting English as a Second Language classes for some refugees, which are intended to provide basic English competency and promote continued language learning after arrival to the United States. The shortage of available affordable housing, particularly in urban areas, continues. All of these factors create significant challenges for resettlement agencies in meeting the needs of refugees in the program. The Departments of State and Health and Human Services are working closely with resettlement agencies on further adjustments that will enhance capacities to provide effective services.

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM FOR FY 2012

PROPOSED CEILINGS

TABLE I

**REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2010 AND FY 2011,
PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS BY REGION FOR FY 2012**

REGION	FY 2010 ACTUAL ARRIVALS	FY 2011 CEILING	FY 2011 PROJECTED ARRIVALS	PROPOSED FY2012 CEILING
Africa	13,305	15,000	6,000	12,000
East Asia	17,716	19,000	17,000	18,000
Europe and Central Asia	1,526	2,000	1,000	2,000
Latin America/Caribbean	4,982	5,500	4,000	5,500
Near East/South Asia	35,782	35,500	26,000	35,500
Regional Subtotal	73,311	77,000	54,000	73,000
Unallocated Reserve		3,000		3,000
Total	73,311	80,000	54,000	76,000

Some refugees are considered for resettlement through in-country refugee programs. Generally, to be considered a refugee, a person must be outside his or her country of nationality or, if stateless, outside his or her country of last habitual residence. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 101(a)(42)(B), however, the President may specify circumstances under which individuals who are within their countries of nationality or last habitual residence may be considered a refugee for purposes of admission to the United States. The FY 2012 proposal recommends continuing such in-country processing for specified groups in Iraq, Cuba, and Eurasia and the Baltics, and stateless individuals referred by UNHCR. Persons for whom resettlement is requested by a U.S. ambassador in any location in the world may also be considered, with the understanding that they will only be referred to the USRAP following Department of State consultation with DHS/USCIS.

Unallocated Reserve

This proposal includes 3,000 unallocated admissions numbers to be used if needed for additional refugee admissions from any region. The unallocated numbers would only be used following notification to Congress.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Eligibility Criteria

The Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is responsible for coordinating and managing the USRAP. A critical part of this responsibility is determining which individuals or groups from among the millions of refugees worldwide will have access to U.S. resettlement consideration. PRM coordinates within the Department of State, as well as with the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (DHS/USCIS) and other agencies, in carrying out this responsibility.

Section 207(a)(3) of the INA states that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program shall allocate admissions among refugees “of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after appropriate consultation.” Which individuals are “of special humanitarian concern” to the United States for the purpose of refugee resettlement consideration is determined through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program priority system. There are currently three priorities or categories of cases that have access to the USRAP:

- Priority 1 – Individual cases referred to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
- Priority 2 – Groups of cases designated as having access to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
- Priority 3 – Individual cases from designated nationalities granted access for purposes of reunification with anchor family members already in the United States.

(Note: Refugees resettled in the United States may also seek the admission of spouses and unmarried children under 21 still abroad by filing a “Following to Join” petition, which obviates the need for a separate refugee claim adjudication. This option is described in more detail in the discussion of Visa 93 below.)

Access to the program under one of the above-listed processing priorities does not mean an applicant meets the U.S. statutory “refugee” definition or is admissible to the United States. The ultimate determination as to whether an applicant can be admitted as a refugee is made by DHS/USCIS in accordance with criteria set forth in the INA and various security protocols. Applicants who are eligible for access within the established priorities are presented to DHS/USCIS officers for interview.

Although the access categories to the USRAP are referred to as “processing priorities,” it is important to note that assignment to a certain priority does not establish precedence in the order in which cases will be processed. Once cases are established as eligible for access under one of the three processing priorities, they all undergo the same processing steps.

PRIORITY 1 – INDIVIDUAL REFERRALS

Priority 1 allows consideration of refugee claims from persons of any nationality², in any location, usually with compelling protection needs, for whom resettlement appears to be the appropriate durable solution. Priority 1 cases are identified and referred to the program by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy, or a designated NGO. UNHCR, which has the international mandate worldwide to provide protection to refugees, has historically referred the vast majority of cases under this priority. Some NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in locations where there are large concentrations of refugees have also undergone training by PRM and DHS/USCIS and were designated eligible to provide Priority 1 referrals.

Process for Priority 1 Individual Referral Applications

Priority 1 referrals from UNHCR and NGOs are generally submitted to the appropriate Regional Refugee Coordinator, who forwards them to the appropriate Resettlement Support Center (RSC³) for case processing and scheduling of the DHS/USCIS interview. PRM’s Office of Admissions reviews embassy referrals for completeness and may consult with DHS in considering these referrals.

A U.S. ambassador may make a Priority 1 referral for persons still in their country of origin if the ambassador determines that such cases are in need of exceptional treatment and the Departments of State (PRM) and Homeland Security

² Referrals of North Koreans and Palestinians require State Department and DHS/USCIS concurrence before they may be granted access to the USRAP.

³ Formerly known as Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs)

(USCIS) concur. In some cases, a Department of State referral to the Department of Homeland Security for “Significant Public Benefit Parole” (SPBP) may be a more appropriate option.

PRIORITY 2 – GROUP REFERRALS

Priority 2 includes specific groups (within certain nationalities, clans or ethnic groups, sometimes in specified locations) identified by the Department of State in consultation with DHS/USCIS, NGOs, UNHCR, and other experts as being in need of resettlement. Some Priority 2 groups are processed in their country of origin. The process of identifying the group and its characteristics includes consideration of whether the group is of special humanitarian concern to the United States and whether members of the group will likely be able to qualify for admission as refugees under U.S. law. Groups may be designated as Priority 2 during the course of the year as circumstances dictate and the need for resettlement arises.

Priority 2 group referrals are typically developed with the involvement of UNHCR, Refugee Coordinators, NGOs, PRM program officers, and other State Department officials. PRM plays the coordinating role for all group referrals to the USRAP.

There are two distinct models of Priority 2 access to the program: open access and predefined group access, normally upon the recommendation of UNHCR. Under both models, Priority 2 designations are made based on shared characteristics that define the group. In general, the possession of these characteristics is the reason the group has been persecuted in the past or faces persecution in the future.

The open-access model for Priority 2 group referrals allows individuals to seek access to the program on the basis of meeting designated criteria. To establish an open-access Priority 2 group, PRM, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, and (as appropriate) with UNHCR and others, defines the specific criteria for access. Once the designation is in place, applicants may approach the program at any of the processing locations specified as available for the group to begin the application process. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet specified criteria to establish eligibility for inclusion.

The open-access model has functioned well in the in-country programs, including the long-standing programs in Eurasia and the Baltics, Cuba, and Vietnam. It was also used successfully for Bosnian refugees during the 1990s, and is now in use for Iranian religious minorities and Iraqis with links to the United States.

The RSC(s) responsible for handling open-access Priority 2 applications, working under the direction of PRM, make a preliminary determination as to whether the applicants qualify for access and should be presented to DHS/USCIS for interview. Applicants who clearly do not meet the access requirements are “screened out” prior to DHS/USCIS interview.

In contrast to an open-access group, a group designation is normally based on a UNHCR recommendation that lays out eligibility criteria that should apply to individuals in a specific location. Once PRM has established the access eligibility criteria for the group, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, the referring entity (usually UNHCR) provides the biodata of eligible refugee applicants for processing. This type of group referral is advantageous in situations in which the intensive labor required to generate individual referrals would be impracticable, potentially harmful to applicants due to delays, or counterproductive. Often predefined groups are composed of persons with similar persecution claims. The predefined group referral process is a step-saver and can conserve scarce resources, particularly for UNHCR. Predefined group referrals with clear, well-defined eligibility criteria and several methods for cross-checking group membership can serve as a fraud deterrent as well, preventing non-group members from gaining access to the USRAP by falsely claiming group membership. It can also speed the resettlement process in cases where immediate protection concerns are present.

FY 2011 Priority 2 Designations

In-country processing programs

The following ongoing programs that process individuals still in their country of origin under Priority 2 group designations will continue in FY 2012:

Eurasia and the Baltics

This Priority 2 designation applies to Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious adherents identified in the Lautenberg Amendment, Public Law No. 101-167, § 599D, 103 Stat. 1261 (1989), as amended (“Lautenberg Amendment”), with close family in the United States. Although the

Lautenberg Amendment expired on May 31, 2011, we will continue to process applications received by that date against Lautenberg standards throughout FY 2012.

Cuba

Included in this Priority 2 program are human rights activists, members of persecuted religious minorities, former political prisoners, forced-labor conscripts (1965-68), persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatment resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs or activities, and persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship – family or social – to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

Iraqis Associated with the United States

Under various Priority 2 designations, including those set forth in the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, employees of the U.S. government, a U.S. government-funded contractor or grantee, and U.S. media and NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130 (immigrant visa) petitions, are eligible for refugee processing in Iraq.

Groups of Humanitarian Concern outside the Country of Origin

The following Priority 2 groups are already designated and, in most cases, undergoing processing with significant arrivals anticipated during FY 2012. (Additional Priority 2 groups may be designated over the course of the year.)

Ethnic Minorities and others from Burma in camps in Thailand

Under this existing Priority 2 designation, individuals who have fled Burma and who are registered in nine refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border and who are identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Ethnic Minorities from Burma in Malaysia

Under this Priority 2 designation, ethnic minorities from Burma who are recognized by UNHCR as refugees in Malaysia and identified as being in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Bhutanese in Nepal

Under this existing Priority 2 designation, Bhutanese refugees registered by UNHCR in camps in Nepal and identified as in need of resettlement are eligible for processing.

Iranian Religious Minorities

Under this Priority 2 designation, Iranian members of certain religious minorities are eligible for processing and benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution, pursuant to the 2004 enactment of P.L. 108-199. Although the Lautenberg/Specter Amendment expired on May 31, 2011, we will continue to process applications received by that date against Lautenberg standards throughout FY 2012.

Iraqis Associated with the United States

Under various Priority 2 designations, including those set forth in the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, employees of the U.S. government, a U.S. government-funded contractor or grantee, and U.S. media and NGOs working in Iraq, and certain family members of such employees, as well as beneficiaries of approved I-130 (immigrant visa) petitions, are eligible for refugee processing. This program is operating in Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt.

PRIORITY 3 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The Priority 3(P-3) category affords USRAP access to members of designated nationalities who have immediate family members in the United States who initially entered as refugees or were granted asylum. At the beginning of each fiscal year, PRM, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, establishes the list of nationalities eligible for processing under this priority. The list may be modified by the PRM Assistant Secretary, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, during the year, but additions or deletions are generally made to coincide with the fiscal year.

Fundamentally, inclusion on the P-3 list represents a finding by PRM that the nationality is of special humanitarian concern to the United States for the purpose of family-reunification refugee processing. Eligible nationalities are selected following careful review of several factors. UNHCR's annual assessment of refugees in need of resettlement provides insight into ongoing refugee situations which could create the need for family-reunification processing. In addition, prospective or ongoing repatriation efforts and U.S. foreign policy interests must be weighed in determining which nationalities should be eligible.

Previously, in order to qualify for access under P-3 procedures, an applicant must have been outside of his or her country of origin, have had an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) filed on his or her behalf by an eligible "anchor" relative in the United States during a period in which the nationality was included on the eligibility list, and have been cleared for onward processing by the DHS/USCIS Refugee Access Verification Unit (RAVU).

The following relatives of the U.S.-based anchor have traditionally been eligible for inclusion on the case: spouses, unmarried children under 21, and/or parents. Qualifying anchors are persons who were admitted to the United States as refugees or were granted asylum, including persons who are lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens who initially were admitted to the United States as refugees or were granted asylum.

In addition, on a case-by-case basis, an individual may be added on to a P-3 case if that individual:

- 1) lived in the same household as the Qualifying Family Member in the country of nationality or, if stateless, last habitual residence; AND
- 2) was part of the same economic unit as the Qualifying Family Member in the country of nationality or, if stateless, last habitual residence; AND
- 3) demonstrates exceptional and compelling humanitarian circumstances that justify inclusion on the Qualifying Family Member's case.

These individuals “are not spouses or children, under INA 207(c)(2)(A)” and thus cannot derive their refugee status from the Principal Applicant. They must, therefore, independently establish that they qualify as a refugee, as do all other P-3 applicants.

In March 2008, in consultation with DHS/USCIS, PRM suspended P-3 processing and issued a moratorium on P-3 arrivals from certain processing locations due to indications of extremely high rates of fraud obtained through pilot DNA testing. Further, in October 2008, PRM suspended the acceptance of AORs of all nationalities while PRM and DHS/USCIS examined how additional procedures may be incorporated into P-3 processing on a more regular basis so that the family reunification component of the program can resume, while at the same time safeguarding the integrity of the program. Revisions to the P-3 program and AOR are undergoing final review as we approach the end of FY 2011. PRM and DHS/USCIS will update the Congress when the revisions are complete, and we are prepared to resume P-3 processing, likely with a DNA relationship testing component for certain claimed biological relationships.

FY 2012 Priority 3 Nationalities

Upon resumption, P-3 processing will be available to individuals of the following nationalities:

Afghanistan
Bhutan

Burma
Burundi
Central African Republic
Chad
Colombia
Cuba
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Iran
Iraq
Republic of Congo (ROC)
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

VISA 93 – FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOLLOWING-TO-JOIN PETITIONS

Under 8 CFR Section 207, a refugee admitted to the United States may request following-to-join benefits for his or her spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 if the family has become separated. Once in the United States, and within two years of admission, the refugee may file a Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition⁴ for each eligible family member with DHS/USCIS. If the Form I-730 is approved by DHS/USCIS (signifying adequate proof of a qualifying family relationship), the National Visa Center then forwards the petition for processing to the embassy or consulate nearest to the location of the beneficiaries of the petition.

(Note: In locations where the USRAP has a significant processing operation, these cases are often forwarded to the RSC for initial processing and presentation to DHS/USCIS rather than the consular section within the embassy.)

Cases gaining access to the USRAP through an approved I-730 petition are interviewed by DHS/USCIS or consular officers to verify the relationships claimed in the petition, as well as to examine any applicable bars to status and admissibility

⁴ This petition is used to file for the relatives of refugees and asylees, known as Visa 93 and Visa 92 cases respectively. The Refugee Admissions Program handles only Visa 93 cases, which are counted within the annual refugee admissions ceiling. Visa 92 cases are not considered to be refugee admissions cases and are not counted in the number of refugees admitted annually.

to the United States. These interviews are not refugee adjudications. The beneficiaries are not required to demonstrate a persecution claim, as they derive their status from the refugee relative in the United States who filed the petition. Beneficiaries of I-730 petitions may be processed within their country of origin or in other locations. As the wait for processing of I-730 petitions has been substantial in some countries, USCIS and the Department of State have developed new procedures to increase the efficiency, consistency, and security of overseas processing of I-730 Refugee/Asylee Petitions, and have launched a pilot program to test them prior to worldwide implementation.

Anchor relatives in the United States may file an I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition and seek Priority 3 access (if eligible) simultaneously. In some cases, the I-730 will be the only option as the family members are still in their country of origin. It is also important to note that the I-730 or “follow-to-join” process does not allow the relative in the United States to petition for parents as does the P-3 process.

DHS/USCIS REFUGEE ADJUDICATIONS

Section 207(c) of the INA grants the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security authority to admit, at his/her discretion, any refugee who is not firmly resettled in a third country, who is determined to be of special humanitarian concern, and who is admissible to the United States. The authority to determine eligibility for refugee status has been delegated to DHS/USCIS. Beginning in FY 2006, DHS/USCIS restructured the Refugee Affairs Division and established the Refugee Corps. The Refugee Corps is staffed by DHS/USCIS officers dedicated to adjudicating applications for refugee status. The Refugee Corps provides DHS/USCIS with the necessary resources and flexibility to respond to an increasingly diversified refugee admissions program. DHS/USCIS has also substantially enhanced its security vetting, anti-fraud, training, and policy-setting capacity related to refugee processing.

The Eligibility Determination

In order to be approved as a refugee, an applicant must meet the refugee definition contained in § 101(a)(42) of the INA. That section provides that a refugee is a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. As mentioned above, the President may specify special circumstances under which a person can meet the refugee definition when he or she is still within the country of

origin. The definition excludes a person who has ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Further, an applicant who has been “firmly resettled” in a third country may not be admitted under INA § 207. Applicants are also subject to various statutory grounds of inadmissibility, including criminal, security, and public health grounds, some of which may be waived or from which they may be exempted.

A DHS/USCIS officer conducts a non-adversarial, face-to-face interview of each applicant designed to elicit information about the applicant’s claim for refugee status and any grounds of ineligibility. The officer asks questions about the applicant’s experiences in the country of origin, including problems and fears about returning (or remaining), as well as questions concerning the applicant’s activities, background, and criminal history. The officer also considers evidence about conditions in the country of origin and assesses the applicant’s credibility and claim.

Background Checks

All refugee applicants are required to undergo background security checks. Security checks consist of biographic name checks for all refugee applicants and biometric (fingerprint) checks for refugee applicants aged 14 to 79. PRM, through its overseas Resettlement Support Centers, initiates background name checks, and name check adjudicators of the PRM-contracted Refugee Processing Center (RPC) conduct initial vetting. DHS/USCIS reviews and analyzes the results of biographic and biometric background check results to determine whether the data have an impact on the refugee eligibility determination. DHS/USCIS has established enhanced security vetting procedures in partnership with the national security and intelligence communities.

PROCESSING ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Overseas Processing Services

In most processing locations, PRM engages an NGO, an international organization (IO), or U.S. embassy contractors to manage a Resettlement Support Center (RSC) that assists in the processing of refugees for admission to the United States. RSC staff pre-screen applicants to determine preliminarily if they qualify for one of the applicable processing priorities and to prepare cases for DHS/USCIS adjudication. The RSCs assist applicants in completing documentary requirements and schedule DHS/USCIS refugee interviews. If an applicant is approved for resettlement, RSC staff guide the refugee through post-adjudication steps,

including obtaining medical screening exams and attending cultural orientation programs. The RSC obtains sponsorship assurances and, once all required steps are completed, refers the case to IOM for transportation to the United States.

In FY 2011, NGOs (Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and International Rescue Committee) worked under cooperative agreements with PRM as RSCs at locations in Austria, Kenya (covering sub-Saharan Africa), and Thailand (covering East Asia). International organizations and NGOs (IOM and the International Catholic Migration Commission [ICMC]) support refugee processing activities based in Jordan, Russia, Nepal, and Turkey covering the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Europe. The admissions program operates at a U.S. government facility in Havana, Cuba.

Cultural Orientation

The Department of State strives to ensure that refugees who are accepted for admission to the United States are prepared for the significant life changes they will experience by providing cultural orientation programs prior to departure for the United States. It is critical that refugees arrive with a realistic idea of what their new lives will be like, what services will be available to them, and what their responsibilities will be.

Every refugee family receives *Welcome to the United States*, a resettlement guidebook developed with contributions from refugee resettlement workers, resettled refugees, and state government officials. *Welcome to the United States* is produced in 16 languages: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Karen, Karenni, Kirundi, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese. Through this book, refugees have access to accurate information about the initial resettlement period before they arrive. The *Welcome to the United States* refugee orientation video is available in 16 languages: Af-Maay, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Hmong, Karen, Karenni, Kirundi, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese. In addition, the Department of State funds one- to three-day pre-departure orientation classes for eligible refugees at sites throughout the world. In an effort to further bridge the information gap, for certain groups, brief video presentations featuring the experience of recently resettled refugees of the same ethnic group are made available to refugee applicants overseas.

Transportation

The Department of State funds the transportation of refugees resettled in the United States through a program administered by IOM. The cost of transportation is provided to refugees in the form of a loan. Refugees are responsible for repaying these loans over time, beginning six months after their arrival.

Reception and Placement (R&P)

In FY 2011, PRM funded cooperative agreements with ten private voluntary agencies to provide initial resettlement services to arriving refugees. The R&P agencies agree to provide initial reception and core services (including housing, furnishings, clothing and food, as well as assistance with access to medical, employment, educational, and social services) to arriving refugees. These services are provided according to standards of care within a framework of outcomes and indicators developed jointly by the NGO community, state refugee coordinators, and U.S. government agencies. The ten organizations maintain a nationwide network of some 350 affiliated offices to provide services. Two of the organizations also maintain a network of 23 affiliated offices through which unaccompanied refugee minors are placed into foster care funded by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Using R&P funds from PRM supplemented by cash and in-kind contributions from private and other sources, the participating agencies provide the following services, consistent with the terms of the R&P cooperative agreement:

- Sponsorship;
- Pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement;
- Reception on arrival;
- Basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days;
- Community orientation;
- Assistance with access to health, employment, education, and other services as needed; and
- Development and implementation of an initial resettlement plan for each refugee for 30-90 days.

Refugees are eligible for lawful employment upon arrival in the United States. After one year, a refugee is required to apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident. Five years after admission, a refugee who has been granted lawful permanent resident status is eligible to apply for citizenship.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

TABLE II

PROPOSED FY 2012 REGIONAL CEILINGS BY PRIORITY

<u>AFRICA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2011	8,500
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	3,000
Priority 2 Groups	
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	500
	<u>Total Proposed: 12,000</u>
<u>EAST ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2011	11,600
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	300
Priority 2 Groups	6,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	100
	<u>Total Proposed: 18,000</u>
<u>EUROPE / CENTRAL ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2011	600
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	750
Priority 2 Groups	650
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	
	<u>Total Proposed: 2,000</u>
<u>LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2011	2,850
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	300
Priority 2 Groups	2,300
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	50
	<u>Total Proposed: 5,500</u>
<u>NEAR EAST / SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Approved pipeline from FY 2011	25,000
Priority 1 Individual Referrals	5,000
Priority 2 Groups	5,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification Refugees	500
	<u>Total Proposed: 35,500</u>
<u>UNALLOCATED RESERVE</u>	3,000
<u>TOTAL PROPOSED CEILING:</u>	<u>76,000</u>

AFRICA

There are currently some 2.4 million refugees across the African continent, comprising roughly 20 percent of the global refugee population. This represents a significant reduction in the African refugee population over the past decade and continued progress in 2011 toward resolution of outstanding issues concerning major refugee populations in Africa continues. UN-organized repatriations were still underway for refugees from Sudan, Burundi, and the DRC. Organized repatriations to Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, and Mauritania were largely completed between 2007 and 2010. UNHCR plans to invoke the cessation clause for refugees from Angola, Burundi, Liberia, and Rwanda by December 2011, and efforts continue to locally integrate residual refugee populations who do not wish to return.

At the same time, new and ongoing violence produced additional refugees in 2011. Nearly 200,000 refugees from Cote d'Ivoire fled to Liberia following an election-related conflict that erupted in late 2010, although many began returning in mid-2011. Continued fighting in Somalia forced another 100,000 Somalis to flee during the first half of 2011, bringing total Somali refugee numbers to over 800,000. Eritreans continue to seek asylum in neighboring countries due to political tensions and increasing political repression; many are attempting dangerous onward migration to Europe and the Middle East in search of better economic opportunities. Finally, conflict that erupted in Libya in early 2011 has forced hundreds of thousands to flee, including many third country nationals returning to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The principle of first asylum is honored by most African countries. Traditionally, refugees in Africa have been allowed to remain – and in many cases to effectively integrate locally – until voluntary repatriation is possible. In most cases, local integration is de facto, and does not include granting of legal permanent residence or voting rights. However, countries such as Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have initiated programs legalizing the status (de jure local integration) of long-staying refugee populations interested in remaining on their territories. Tanzania granted citizenship to some 165,000 Burundi refugees in 2010 and 2011.

Religious Freedom

In Sub-Saharan Africa, people are generally free to practice their chosen religions. Governments regularly provide for and respect freedom of religion, although in some countries, such as Eritrea and Sudan, religious freedom is limited, particularly in the midst of ethnic and other conflicts.

The Government of Eritrea is responsible for the most severe religious freedom abuses in Africa. In recent years the country has engaged in serious religious repression by harassing, arresting, and detaining members of a reform movement within the Eritrean Orthodox Church and of independent evangelical groups, including Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses (who lost certain rights of citizenship for not participating in the 1993 national referendum). Detainees are held in harsh conditions and some have died in custody. The government has also sought greater control over the four State-approved religious groups: the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, and the Islamic community. The government reportedly holds individuals who are jailed for their religious affiliation at various locations. Often detainees have not been formally charged, accorded due process, or allowed access to their families. While many were ostensibly jailed for evasion of military conscription, significant numbers were being held solely for their religious beliefs. As of June 2011, the Jehovah's Witness International Office reports that 51 known Jehovah's Witnesses are in detention without access to legal representation, and many have not yet been charged with a crime. At least three Jehovah's Witnesses have been detained for 15 years, reportedly for evading compulsory military service, a term far beyond the maximum legal penalty of two years for refusing to perform national service.

In Sudan and South Sudan, distinctions in the constitution negotiated as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have resulted in disparities in the treatment of religious minorities in the north and south. Whereas the Government of South Sudan generally respects the rights of Christians and Muslims in the 10 states of the south as provided for in its separate 2005 Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan, the Government of Sudan (North) continues to place restrictions on Christians in the North. The Constitution preserves sharia law as a source of legislation in the north, while the Interim Constitution of South Sudan establishes "the traditional laws, religious beliefs, values, and customary practices of the people" as a source of legislation in the south. Although there is no penalty for converting from another religion to Islam, converting from Islam is punishable by death in the north. Although there is no evidence that this penalty has ever been imposed by the current government, authorities express their strong prejudice against conversion by occasionally subjecting converts to intense scrutiny, ostracism, and intimidation, or by encouraging converts to leave the country.

Both Eritrea and Sudan are currently designated as "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC) for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The USRAP continues to be available through Priority 1 referrals to Sudanese, Eritrean, and other refugees who are victims of religious intolerance. Refugees from Eritrea

and Sudan with refugee or asylee family members in the United States also may have access to the USRAP through Priority 3, subject to its resumption. Certain Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia may have access to the USRAP through Priority 2.

In Somalia, the Transitional Federal Charter provides for religious freedom although in practice there have been limits on the government's respect for this right and the legal protections of religious freedom are generally not enforced. Respect for religious freedom has continued to decline, primarily as a result of extremist militias taking control over significant territory in the country. Militia groups, particularly those associated with the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization al-Shabaab, have often imposed through violence a strict interpretation of Islam on communities under their control. There have also been reports that individuals who do not practice Islam experience discrimination, violence, and detention because of their religious beliefs.

Voluntary Repatriation

Despite the continued existence of protracted refugee situations, voluntary repatriation to improved conditions in the home country remains the most common and desirable durable solution. With the conclusion of peace agreements and the support of the U.S. Government and other donors, UNHCR has made great progress in promoting and supporting refugee repatriation and reintegration in Africa. Over the past 20 years, refugee numbers have reduced by more than 60 percent (from six to fewer than three million) even in the face of new outflows.

In West Africa, UNHCR launched its Mauritania repatriation operation in January 2008 and, despite the coup d'état in August of that year, succeeded in repatriating over 19,000 of the 24,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal by December 2009, when the organized return program ended. UNHCR's Liberian repatriation program officially ended in June 2007, with some 650,000 Liberians having returned home either spontaneously or with UNHCR assistance. UNHCR continues to focus on local integration as a durable solution for some 60,000 Liberians who remain outside their country in various West African countries. Local integration of the 24,000 Liberians remaining in Cote d'Ivoire became more challenging following the eruption of conflict there in late 2010, but with the establishment in mid-2011 of the democratically elected President and progress towards peace and stability, local integration efforts should resume in late 2011.

In East Africa, repatriation to South Sudan started in 2005 and has continued with more than 351,000 – over 75 percent of the original refugee population – having returned from neighboring countries as of May 2011. However, due to instability in South Sudan, the pace of returns has slowed significantly as of late,

with less than 3,000 returns in the 2010-2011 period. Approximately 100,000 South Sudanese refugees remain in neighboring countries. No return initiatives are currently anticipated for the Darfur region of Sudan or Somalia, where conflict continues to prevent safe return. Over 800,000 Somalis have sought asylum in neighboring countries, without the prospect of return to war-torn Somalia.

In Central Africa, repatriation to Burundi continues with over 500,000 returns since 2002. Over 162,000 have been granted citizenship and much of the residual caseload is in the process of formalizing its permanent status in Tanzania or expected to repatriate in 2011. Although the majority of Rwandan refugees returned home in the late 1990s, some remain in exile. UNHCR has repatriated over 2,600 Rwandans thus far in 2011. Repatriation to relatively stable areas of the DRC wound down in 2010 with the conclusion of returns from Zambia and Tanzania to the Katanga Province. The North Kivu and Orientale Provinces remain too insecure for large-scale refugee return, and sporadic internal displacement and small-scale refugee flows are continuing. Ethnic violence that erupted in late 2009 in Equateur Province forced some 200,000 Congolese to flee to the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo, and refugees still remained fearful of return. Additionally, the persistent threat of attack posed by the Lord's Resistance Army in northeastern DRC, southeastern CAR, and South Sudan has contributed to instability in the region, causing some 40,000 new displacements in 2011.

Local Integration

In a number of protracted refugee situations, refugees have been able to become self-sufficient, and their camps and settlements have been effectively integrated into the host communities. This integration dynamic has occurred particularly for refugees who fled during the 1960s through the early 1980s to countries that had arable land available, allowing many refugees to move out of camps. Despite such de facto local integration, however, refugees residing among the local population did not necessarily enjoy the rights, entitlements, or economic opportunities available to legal residents. As a result, local integration was often an interim, rather than a durable, solution for many African refugees.

More recently, however, a number of African countries have offered more formal integration as a durable solution for residual refugee populations who will not or cannot repatriate. In conjunction with UNHCR, the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone launched a regional local integration program for Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in 2007. The program provides refugees opportunities for economic self-reliance; activities to enhance the quality of their social integration; and legal rights and

documentation, including access to citizenship in some countries and freedom of movement in all countries under the protocols of the Economic Community of West African States.

Senegal offered Mauritanian refugees who wished to remain in Senegal the option of becoming Senegalese citizens in 2007 but has not yet established procedures for refugees to take advantage of this option. The Governments of Uganda and Zambia have previously stated their intention to provide refugees with local integration opportunities and citizenship, but have not yet passed the required legislation. As mentioned above, the Government of Tanzania agreed to provide permanent settlement and citizenship to the estimated 200,000 1972-era Burundi refugees who desire it; some 162,000 accepted the offer and were granted citizenship as of April 2010, and the balance have returned to Burundi. While not a formal integration program, Ethiopia introduced an out-of-camp policy for Eritrean refugees in August 2010. This policy allows Eritreans to live outside camps if they are able to support themselves or if they have someone to sponsor them financially. While it does not give Eritrean refugees the right to work, it does offer them additional educational opportunities, including tertiary education, and is a positive step towards a local integration policy.

Third-Country Resettlement

Given the political and economic volatility in many parts of Africa, resettlement to third countries outside the region is an essential durable solution and element of protection for certain refugees. With limited opportunities for permanent integration in many countries of asylum and the protracted nature of some refugee situations, the need for third-country resettlement of African refugees is expected to continue despite the overall decrease in the refugee population on the continent. In recent years, UNHCR has increasingly viewed resettlement as an important tool of protection for refugees in Africa and has shown an increase in resettlement referrals this past year. Several resettlement countries – including Canada and Australia – accept significant numbers of African refugees, but the United States resettles far more than any other country.

FY 2011 U.S. Admissions

We project some 6,000 African refugee arrivals in FY 2011 – far lower than the 15,000 anticipated at the beginning of the year – due to a number of factors. These include challenges related to finalizing individual security clearances; our inability to launch a significantly larger resettlement program for Darfur refugees in Chad due to host government opposition; concerns regarding several thousand

individuals (mostly Somalis) undergoing processing in Kenya (a number of whom may hold Kenyan identity cards); and a decrease in UNHCR referrals. Each of these factors has contributed to the lower number of arrivals from Africa this year.

Three countries of origin (Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea) presently account for the vast majority of U.S. admissions from the region. In East Africa, we continue to process P-1 Somalis in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. We are coming closer to completing P-2 processing of Eritreans in Shimelba camp in Ethiopia, but will continue to process P-1 UNHCR referrals after the P-2 group is completed. We were able to conduct the first DHS circuit ride to Sudan in over twenty years to process the first group of a protracted caseload of Eritrean refugees there. Processing of P-1 Darfuri in eastern Chad, which began in FY2009, was suspended due to objections by the Government of Chad. Processing of Central African Republic refugees in Chad has proceeded and will continue in the next fiscal year. We saw an increase in processing of Congolese refugees in Rwanda, and anticipate an increasing number of referrals over the next three to four years.

We have largely completed the processing of the residual P-3 Liberian and Sierra Leonean caseloads in West Africa, and with the civil wars having ended some seven years ago, we no longer receive resettlement referrals in any significant number for these populations. Close to 400 refugee admissions from West Africa, mostly processed in Chad, are expected this year. In all, we expect to admit refugees of more than 20 African nationalities, processed in nearly thirty countries during FY 2011.

FY 2012 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose up to 12,000 resettlement numbers for African refugees in FY 2012. PRM has actively engaged relevant offices within the Department of State, UNHCR, the voluntary agency community, and DHS/USCIS to identify caseloads appropriate for resettlement consideration. As a result of these discussions, PRM has identified a number of nationalities and groups for priority processing during FY 2012.

From East and Southern Africa, we expect 10,000 admissions, primarily Somalis in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and South Africa; Congolese in Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa; Eritreans in Sudan and Ethiopia; and additional small numbers of P-1 referrals of various nationalities in the countries above, plus Burundi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

From West and Central Africa, we expect approximately 1,000 admissions. While we hope the Government of Chad will allow us to resume P-1 processing of Darfuris in Chad, we anticipate increased referrals of Central African Republic refugees in Southern Chad – a caseload that has not generated opposition from the host government – which could result in close to 1,000 admissions.

Outside of sub-Saharan Africa, we anticipate Sudanese, Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean and other African refugees to be processed in Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. We will also process individuals who were forced to leave Libya as a result of the conflict there, some of whom will be interviewed at the UNHCR Evacuation Transit Center in Romania. We project as many as 1,300 individuals will be referred to the USRAP from the Tunisia/Libya border, and as many as 500 individuals will be referred to the USRAP from the Egypt/Libya border, during calendar year 2011.

Proposed FY 2012 Africa program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2011</i>	<i>8,500</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>3,500</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>500</i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>12,000</i>

EAST ASIA

Several East Asian countries host large and diverse refugee populations. Recent years have seen important developments for these groups, particularly involving the strategic use of resettlement as a durable solution. Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India continue to host large numbers of Burmese refugees and asylum-seekers. The U.S. Government continues to press for meaningful political and democratic reform in Burma. With ongoing conflict and the continual influx of Burmese fleeing fighting, prospects for refugees to return to safe and stable conditions appear distant.

As of April 2011, more than 93,000 registered refugees from Burma were recognized by UNHCR and the Thai Ministry of the Interior and lived in nine Royal Thai Government-administered refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The Thai government continues to support the international community's efforts to resettle large numbers of refugees from these camps. Despite ongoing

resettlement, the combination of long-staying Burmese in Thailand moving into the camps when space becomes available and newly arrived Burmese refugees fleeing continued conflict in Burma have precluded a significant reduction of the camps' total population.

Since 2006, UNHCR Malaysia has operated the second largest refugee status determination program in the world. As of March 2011, there were 93,500 persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Malaysia of which 86,000, or 91 percent, are from Burma (36,300 Chin, 20,400 stateless Rohingya from Burma's Northern Rakhine State, 9,400 Myanmar Muslims, 3,900 Mon, 3,400 Kachins and other ethnic minorities). In addition, some 7,500 asylum-seekers and refugees from various countries – primarily Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Sri Lanka – are registered with UNHCR. Malaysia is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. We support UNHCR's efforts to use resettlement as a strategic tool to assist a significant number of refugees in Malaysia.

In 1992, more than 250,000 Burmese Rohingya suffering de jure statelessness and oppression due to their Muslim faith and ethnicity migrated from northern Rakhine State to Bangladesh. During the 1990s, over 230,000 Rohingya refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Bangladesh, leaving behind over 29,000, who remain in two official refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh. An additional 9,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in an unofficial settlement in Leda and approximately 20,000 unregistered Rohingya reside in the makeshift Kutupalong camp. In addition, an unknown number who had previously repatriated, have again returned to Bangladesh and are now living without UNHCR protection. In all, there are approximately 200,000-500,000 unregistered Rohingya living outside of the two official UNHCR refugee camps in the Cox's Bazaar district. UNHCR continues to work to enhance protection and address security concerns caused by growing tensions between both registered refugees and unregistered Rohingya and local Bangladeshis living outside of the camps.

The cases of more than 500 individual Rohingyas, including 281 individuals approved for resettlement, have been on hold since October 2010 when the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) halted resettlement activities pending a review of their refugee policy. We are hopeful the GOB will reach a positive decision on continued resettlement of Rohingya and we are prepared to resume resettlement activity immediately following a GOB decision. In addition, we expect ongoing UNHCR referrals of urban Burmese in India.

As reflected in the North Korean Human Rights Act, the United States is deeply concerned about the human rights situation of North Koreans both inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and in various countries in the region. The United States began resettling interested, eligible North Korean refugees in 2006 and remains committed to continuing this program.

Religious Freedom

Although many governments in East Asia do not restrict religious freedom, religious believers face serious persecution in several countries. The DPRK severely restricts religious freedom, including organized religious activity, except that which is supervised tightly by officially recognized groups linked to the government. Although the DPRK constitution provides for "freedom of religious belief," genuine religious freedom does not exist. Little is known about the day-to-day life of religious persons in the country. Religious and human rights groups outside of the country have provided numerous reports that members of underground churches have been beaten, arrested, tortured, or killed because of their religious beliefs.

The situation in countries such as China, Burma and, Vietnam, is complex. While the constitutions of these countries ostensibly provide for freedom of religion, in practice these governments restrict or repress activities of some religious organizations. Select independent religious activities may be either prohibited or restricted, and dissenters may face physical mistreatment or imprisonment.

Despite dramatic increases in religious observance in China, the government continues to harass and interfere with unregistered religious groups, most notably the unofficial Catholic churches loyal to the Holy See, Protestant "house churches," some Muslim groups (especially Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region), and Buddhists loyal to the Dalai Lama. There are many cases of arrest, imprisonment, and alleged torture of religious believers in China. Practitioners of the banned spiritual movement Falun Gong have also been subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and alleged torture.

In Burma, the government maintains a pervasive internal security apparatus that generally infiltrates or monitors the activities of all organizations, including religious groups. The government actively promotes Buddhism over other religions as a means of boosting its own legitimacy and continues harsh discrimination against religious minorities. The DPRK, China, and Burma are designated by the Department of State as CPCs under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRF Act) for serious violations of religious freedom.

Over the past few years, Vietnam and Laos have made progress on many religious freedom issues. The Government of Vietnam and the United States signed a binding agreement on religious freedom (as allowed by the IRF Act) in May 2005, under which Vietnam committed to implementing fully its new legal framework on religion. The U.S. Government removed Vietnam from the CPC list in November 2006, on the basis of significant progress. Over the past three years, the religious freedom record in Vietnam has been mixed. There is continued, albeit slow, progress with regard to registration/recognition of religious groups and congregations and more freedom to organize religious meetings – even on a large-scale – without government interference. However, there are also reports of harassment at the local level, including excessive use of force by local officials against Roman Catholics in high-profile property disputes. Several Protestant congregations in rural areas continue to report harassment, including beatings and forced renunciations in some cases. Buddhist monks and nuns of the Plum Village order were violently evicted from Bat Nha pagoda in September 2009.

In Laos, the overall status of respect for religious freedom continued to be mixed. Officials in urban areas tended to show more acceptance of minority religious practice, with difficulties more frequently encountered in rural areas. In most areas officials typically respected the constitutionally guaranteed rights of members of most religious groups to worship, albeit within strict constraints imposed by the government. All religious groups operate in an environment in which implementation of the law is often arbitrary and minority groups, in particular the growing evangelical Protestant community, face varying degrees of discrimination and harassment, especially in rural areas.

Nationals of the DPRK, Vietnam, China, Laos, and Burma have access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through Priority 1 individual referrals. A significant number of Burmese will be processed in FY 2012 under Priority 2. North Korean and Burmese refugees will also have access to family reunification processing through Priority 3, subject to its resumption.

Voluntary Repatriation

Given the continued, systematic persecution within Burma of ethnic minorities, including the de jure statelessness of Rohingya refugees, the repatriation of most Burmese refugees in Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, India and elsewhere is not currently a viable solution.

Local Integration

Due to fears of a “pull factor,” countries in the region have traditionally been reluctant to integrate refugees or to grant temporary asylum. We hope that U.S. efforts to resettle large numbers of refugees from the camps along the Thai-Burma border will encourage the Thai government to improve livelihood opportunities for those refugees who will not be resettled. The United States and other donor governments continue to engage in a strategic dialogue with the Government of Thailand concerning the future of the nine camps on the Thai-Burma border. We recognize that the Thai government remains concerned that resettlement has not dramatically reduced the camp population as new refugees are taking the place of those who are departing for third countries. Local integration remains a difficult option, due to opposition from host countries, such as Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India. UNHCR and the international community continue to advocate for these governments to make policy changes relating to refugees, and to expand humanitarian protection and assistance space for refugees and other persons of concern.

Third-Country Resettlement

The United States continues to lead third country resettlement efforts in the region. Other resettlement countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Nordic countries, resettle refugees referred by UNHCR. In FY 2011, the United States processed UNHCR-referred refugee cases in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Palau, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

FY 2011 U.S. Admissions

We expect to admit more than 17,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2011. This will include some 9,500 Burmese ethnic minorities (mostly Karen, Karenni, and Kachin) living in camps along the Thai-Burma border, some 8,000 Burmese in Malaysia, and a small number of urban refugees of various nationalities in the region.

FY 2012 U.S. Resettlement Program

We propose the admission of 18,000 refugees from East Asia in FY 2012. This will include more than 11,000 individuals already approved and pending departure at the beginning of the year. We will interview Burmese refugees living

in six camps located in three provinces in Thailand and will continue processing in Malaysia, leading to the admission of up to 18,000 refugees from Burma in FY 2012.

Proposed FY 2012 East Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2011</i>	<i>11,600</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>6,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>100</i>
<i><u>Total Proposed Ceiling</u></i>	<i><u>18,000</u></i>

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Europe continues to host large refugee populations, as well as other persons affected by conflict, who, over the last two decades, have been left in situations of protracted displacement – often in dire conditions. In its 2010-2011 Global Appeal, UNHCR reported that there were nearly 4.2 million asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless individuals, or other persons “of concern” throughout Europe and Central Asia. Many had fled conflicts outside the region, such as in Afghanistan, but the estimates also comprise persons claiming persecution within Eurasia.

All Eurasian countries except Uzbekistan have acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. However, compliance with these instruments remains problematic. Despite sustained efforts by UNHCR and other stakeholders to build protection capacity and help strengthen asylum systems and protection laws in Central Asia, results have so far been modest. The protection provided by some Eurasian governments to refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants is limited, and public intolerance, including attacks against non-Slavic foreigners, is common. Many of these countries have been slow or reluctant to recognize, protect, and integrate refugees and other at-risk individuals. UNHCR has been working with many of these governments to establish asylum procedures and refugee protection laws. Modest progress has been made.

According to UNHCR, at the end of 2010 there were approximately 427,000 refugees and IDPs in the Balkans, almost all of whom have been displaced for a decade or longer. An estimated 204,000 persons of this population are minorities

from Kosovo, most of whom are displaced in Serbia. After several years of steady decline in returns to Kosovo, the number of returnees doubled from 2008 to 2009. In 2010 and 2011, the countries of the region – with the assistance of the international community – made progress toward resolving the refugee situation. A March 2010 ministerial meeting in Belgrade revived an effort to find durable solutions for the remaining vulnerable refugees and IDPs, and led to the appointment of a Personal Envoy of the High Commissioner for Refugees for Resolution of the Protracted Displacement in the Western Balkans. The Envoy is coordinating a process intended to resolve outstanding displacement issues and conclude with an international donor conference to assist the remaining, vulnerable refugees in the region.

Since 1989, the USRAP has offered resettlement consideration to individuals from certain religious minorities in the nations that made up the former Soviet Union who also have close family ties to the United States. Under the Lautenberg Amendment, Jews, Evangelical Christians, and certain members of the Ukrainian Catholic or Ukrainian Orthodox Churches benefited from a reduced evidentiary standard when being considered for refugee status. In recent years, fewer new applications and low approval rates have resulted in fewer departures to the United States. The Lautenberg Amendment, and its reduced evidentiary standard, expired on May 31, 2011; however, the Department will continue to process applications received by that date against Lautenberg standards throughout FY 2012. Individuals of all nationalities throughout the region may be referred for Priority 1 processing.

Religious Freedom

Freedom of religion varies widely in Europe and Central Asia. Most states regulate religious groups and activities to some degree, by granting so-called “traditional” religious privileges sometimes denied to other, newer religious groups. In Eastern Europe, majority religions such as the Orthodox Church are often provided with special treatment and privileges. These states sometimes view other religious groups as “dangerous sects and cults.” Some states have enacted restrictive legislation to govern the activities of foreign missionaries, especially those from Protestant or “nontraditional” denominations. In many cases, registration with state bodies has been required, not only to establish a group as a legal entity able to rent or own space but also to hold religious services, a practice which is not in keeping with international covenants on freedom of religion. In some eastern European and Central Asian countries, onerous membership and legal requirements restrict new religions from enjoying the privileges of traditional ones, such as the right to appoint military and prison chaplains and receive state

subsidies. Restitution of religious properties seized by Communist regimes and the Nazis is an issue yet to be fully resolved, and, in some countries, progress on this issue has been slow and uneven.

Manifestations of anti-Semitism continue throughout the region, including demonstrations by extremist groups and vandalism of cemeteries and monuments. Most incidents have been in former communist bloc countries but a number of western European countries have faced a disturbing increase in anti-Semitic acts. In the Caucasus and Central Asian states, the remaining small Jewish communities enjoy reasonably amicable relations with their Muslim compatriots. Jewish communities from Azerbaijan in the Caucasus to Bukhara and Tashkent in Uzbekistan report societal and governmental support for their security.

In Armenia, 71 Jehovah's Witnesses are in prison as conscientious objectors. The media and some of the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church have spread negative and false information about the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Russian Government has recently been asserting greater control over certain minority religious groups. Of great concern are government applications of "anti-extremism" laws designed to counter terrorism against peaceful religious communities. The Jehovah's Witnesses have had one of their local religious organizations dissolved and 52 titles of their religious literature banned as "extremist." In April 2010, the Russian Government banned the distribution of all issues of their primary publications *Awake!* and *The Watchtower*, which have been distributed internationally for many years. Jehovah's Witnesses have been subject to police raids, searches, detentions, confiscation of literature, and fines, and have been denied access to legal counsel. Since fall 2010, the government has subjected 11 Witnesses to criminal charges under the overbroad anti-extremism law. Similar government tactics are being used against Muslim and, to a lesser extent, Scientology groups. Additionally, there have been reports of numerous attacks on Jehovah's Witnesses from private citizens. These attacks include assaults with knives and guns, beatings, shoving Jehovah's Witnesses down the stairs, and other violent acts. The government has also conducted raids on Lutheran and Baptist congregations.

In Turkmenistan, Jehovah's Witnesses have been subject to harassment by authorities, including detention and confiscation of literature. In Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, conscientious objectors to mandatory military service due to their faith have been convicted and jailed. In Armenia, individuals who have been granted conscientious objector status continue to be jailed for their refusal, on religious grounds, to complete required alternative national service managed under Ministry of Defense auspices.

In Belarus, government officials have raided and fined unregistered religious groups including Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, and other Protestants. Government officials have threatened to dissolve Jehovah's Witnesses congregations and have denied registration to new congregations. Government officials continue to arrest and prosecute conscientious objectors. There are reports that government officials are preventing religious groups from renting space to hold worship services.

Observant Muslims across Europe and Central Asia have been treated as potential Islamists and accused of membership in banned groups. In some countries, there are legal prohibitions against wearing the hijab in certain public contexts, such as universities. In others, wearing the hijab or wearing beards marks one as an observant Muslim and leads to frequent requests for identification documents by the authorities. In November 2010, Azerbaijan's Minister of Education directed that students should not be allowed to wear the hijab while in school, although the implementation of this restriction has been inconsistent. While most religious groups in Azerbaijan met without government interference, the government also raided some religious communities, and confiscated religious literature, often targeting Jehovah's Witnesses and unsanctioned Muslim religious organizations, which the government claims politicize Islam. NGOs have reported on the detention of followers of Islamist theologian Said Nursi and the confiscation of literature in Azerbaijan and Russia.

Observant Muslims in Eurasia have experienced mosque closures, detention, prison terms, and the possibility of torture, especially in Uzbekistan. Particularly in the case of Central Asia, restrictive religion laws have allowed governments to control virtually all aspects of religious life, and government officials actively monitor religious groups, institutions, and figures. As a result of government abuses, as well as arrests and harassment of members of religious groups under Uzbekistan's restrictive religion law, the Secretary of State re-designated Uzbekistan a Country of Particular Concern for particularly severe violations of religious freedom on January 16, 2009. Since August 2008, Uzbekistan has cracked down on the Nur movement associated with Turkish scholar Fethullah Gulen, arresting dozens of alleged members, many of whom have since been sentenced to six- to 12- year prison terms.

Voluntary Repatriation

The international community continues to support efforts to create favorable conditions for the return of ethnic minorities to their homes in the Balkans. In June 2006, Serbian, Kosovar, and UN authorities signed the Protocol on Voluntary and

Sustainable Return to Kosovo, which seeks to improve the conditions for return by focusing on three elements: ensuring the safety of returnees, returning property to the displaced and rebuilding their houses, and creating an overall environment that sustains returns. Following the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence, the pace of returns to Kosovo doubled in 2009 and continued into 2010. If the political and economic situation stabilizes further, returns should increasingly become a viable and desirable option for many displaced minorities from Kosovo. In March 2010 ministerial discussions, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia agreed to work together to identify solutions to resolve the problems that continue to confront the region's vulnerable, displaced victims of the Balkans war of the early 1990s. In Croatia, recent progress in providing housing for returnees may encourage some of the more than 60,000 refugees in Serbia to return to their homes.

Local Integration

UNHCR has led efforts to create viable asylum systems and effective legal protections for refugees in the Balkans and Eurasia. However, ineffective implementation of these laws, combined with the history of national animosities and xenophobia throughout the region, makes effective local integration difficult for ethnic minority refugees. In Russia, difficulties in acquiring citizenship remain for some former Soviet citizens who resided in Russia before 1992 and are, under Russian law, entitled to Russian citizenship. Groups such as the Meskhetian Turks have been unable to obtain Russian citizenship and thus remain de facto stateless. In Montenegro, the path to citizenship has been particularly slow for those displaced from Kosovo. The Government of Serbia is implementing integration programs for some displaced persons from Kosovo.

Third-Country Resettlement

The United States and other resettlement countries continue to accept refugees from the region. UNHCR has referred and will continue to refer to the United States, Canada, and other resettlement countries a number of at-risk individuals fleeing various forms of persecution within the region. Jewish emigration to Israel continues, with 6,810 individuals from states of the former Soviet Union availing themselves of this opportunity in 2010 under the United Israel Appeal Program.

FY 2011 U.S. Admissions

In FY 2011 we estimate 1,000 admissions from Europe and Central Asia. Religious minorities processed under the Lautenberg Amendment from countries of the former Soviet Union constitute a significant portion of the caseload. During FY 2011, applicants were processed in Almaty, Baku, Bishkek, Chisinau, Kyiv, Valletta, Moscow, Timisoara, Tashkent and Slovakia.

FY 2012 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed FY 2012 ceiling for refugees from Europe and Central Asia is 2,000. This includes some 600 who will be in the final stage of admissions processing at the end of FY 2011, as well as new cases approved in FY 2012. Priority 2 includes individuals who will be processed under Lautenberg guidelines in the states of the former Soviet Union. Low approval rates for this Priority 2 program and a reduced rate of new applications serve to limit the number of admissions.

Proposed FY 2012 Europe & Central Asia Program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2011</i>	<i>600</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>750</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>650</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i>	<i>2,000</i>

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In 2010, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and other people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean totaled over 4 million. The ongoing conflict in Colombia generated the most significant numbers of refugees and IDPs in the region. Estimates of the number of IDPs in Colombia vary between 3.6 million (government figure) and 5.2 million (NGO figure). Expanded state presence and improved security in cities and towns throughout Colombia have led to a decline in internal displacement in the past several years, but the cumulative total of IDPs continues to grow. The Government of Colombia registered over 100,000 new IDPs between January and December 2010. In surrounding countries, there are approximately 400,000 asylum seekers and persons in refugee-like situations. More than 55,000 Colombians have been recognized as refugees in Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Costa Rica, according to UNHCR. Ecuador, the

country with the largest population of Colombian refugees, has an effective asylum process in which UNHCR participates. Several other countries in the region such as Costa Rica, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Panama also have established asylum procedures. However, the registration and determination procedures are often implemented ineffectively. UNHCR is working with these countries to improve their asylum processes.

The number of Colombian asylum seekers and persons of concern in neighboring countries continues to rise. As of December 2010, there were approximately 45,000 Colombian refugees recognized in Ecuador and UNHCR estimates there could be another 100,000 people in the country who may be in need of international protection. The Government of Ecuador continues to work with UNHCR to improve its asylum registration process.

In Panama, there are approximately 1,300 recognized refugees (mainly Colombians) and 500 persons with official temporary protected status. In Costa Rica, there are approximately 12,000 recognized refugees. Costa Rica is working to revise its asylum system, and re-established its Refugee Department in March 2010. There are approximately 1,245 recognized refugees and 12,000 asylum seekers in Venezuela. UNHCR estimates there are another 200,000 persons living in a refugee-like situation in the country. In Brazil, there are over 4,000 recognized refugees from 75 different countries in the country, the largest numbers from Angola and Colombia.

In 2002, the United States began a Priority 1 resettlement program to resettle vulnerable Colombian refugees located in Ecuador and Costa Rica. Most Colombian refugees have fled the 45-year armed conflict as a result of persecution for political opinion by either left-wing guerilla or right-wing paramilitary groups. Processing delays that confronted individuals who had under duress provided “material support” to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, National Liberation Army of Colombia, and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia have been resolved with the issuance of exemptions for inadmissibilities in Section 212(a)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 2007 and 2008.

In Haiti, the devastating earthquake that hit the country of January 2010 created a humanitarian disaster that continues to be addressed. The United States continues to support UNHCR’s efforts to help governments in the Caribbean address the needs of Haitians and asylum seekers.

Religious Freedom

In Latin America, religious freedom is widely recognized and enjoyed; however, significant restrictions remain in place in Cuba. Although the Cuban constitution recognizes the right of citizens to profess and practice any religious belief within the framework of respect for the law, the government continued to engage in active surveillance of religious institutions. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program offers the opportunity for legal migration to the United States for Cubans who have been persecuted on a number of grounds, including because of their religious beliefs.

Voluntary Repatriation

Given the threats and violence in Colombia from illegal armed groups (non-state actors) and the lack of state presence to provide full protection in some areas, UNHCR does not actively promote repatriation of Colombian refugees.

Local Integration

The Governments of Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela have maintained policies that theoretically allow Colombians in need of protection to obtain asylum and integrate locally, though the processes involved are usually slow and cumbersome. The governments' capacity to review applications and confer refugee status remains limited. Additionally, some Colombian persons of concern (including refugees and asylum seekers) in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Venezuela continue to experience harassment by persons associated with armed Colombian groups operating in these countries. The refugee status determination process in Costa Rica showed some improvement in recent years, but delays in recognition and documentation still exist. For asylum seekers in Panama, the situation is complicated, as the government continues to be reluctant to receive Colombian refugees or confer even minimal protection.

PRM is currently supporting UNHCR's efforts to assist the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean countries in developing systems for conducting refugee status determinations for asylum seekers, including Haitians. UNHCR has established a new field office in the Dominican Republic, which opened in mid-2010. The principal priorities of the field office during the first year of operation have been to support the government in re-establishing a functioning domestic asylum procedure, to address gaps in refugee documentation and to clear the existing backlog of undecided asylum claims.

Third and In-Country Resettlement

In the past, local integration had been the solution best suited to regional refugee problems in Latin America. In recent years, however, third-country resettlement has become an important alternative for those who face physical risks and have urgent protection needs. Canada and the United States offer resettlement to at-risk Colombian refugees. Currently, the United States accepts referrals from UNHCR and embassies in the region and processes these cases principally in Ecuador and Costa Rica, with occasional cases in Panama and other countries throughout the region. Under the “Solidarity Resettlement Program,” a component of the Mexico Plan of Action which sought regional solutions to the Colombian refugee issue, countries in the region including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are working with UNHCR to resettle limited numbers of Colombian refugees.

The United States also facilitates the resettlement in third countries of persons interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard or who enter Guantanamo Naval Station directly and are found by DHS/USCIS to have a [well-founded fear of persecution] or who would likely face torture if repatriated. From 1996 to 2011, 331 such protected persons have been resettled to 21 countries worldwide. Fourteen have been resettled in FY2011 (as of May 31).

The U.S. Government continues to operate an in-country refugee resettlement program in Cuba. We have taken steps to ensure that all Cubans eligible for consideration have access to the program and that approved refugees travel as soon as possible. A substantial backlog of cases pending review remains, an unknown number of which are likely ineligible for the program. Additional resources are being applied to a review of the backlogged cases, and we expect the size of the backlog to continue to decrease by the end of FY2012. In spite of difficulty obtaining building materials in Havana, upgrades to the Refugee Annex are underway, which will enable the Mission to expand the Cultural Orientation program for approved applicants. Unfortunately, the Cuban Government interferes with USRAP’s communications with some individuals, causing delays, misunderstandings, or misinformation. Some approved refugees do not have sufficient funds to pay for the medical exams, passports, and exit permits needed to depart Cuba. Others are refused exit permission by the Cuban Government.

Cubans currently eligible to apply for admission to the United States through the in-country program include the following:

1. Former political prisoners;
2. Members of persecuted religious minorities;

3. Human rights activists;
4. Forced labor conscripts (1965-68);
5. Persons deprived of their professional credentials or subjected to other disproportionately harsh or discriminatory treatment resulting from their perceived or actual political or religious beliefs; and
6. Persons who have experienced or fear harm because of their relationship – family or social – to someone who falls under one of the preceding categories.

FY 2011 U.S. Admissions

We anticipate admitting slightly more than 4,000 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean during FY 2011. Cubans comprise the overwhelming majority of refugees resettled from the region. Historically, most Cuban admissions were former political prisoners and forced labor conscripts who served sentences in the 1960s and 1970s. The program was expanded in 1991 to include human rights activists, displaced professionals, and others with claims of persecution, which currently comprise the majority of admissions. In addition, we expect some 70 Colombian refugees to be admitted to the United States during FY 2011.

FY 2012 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed 5,500 ceiling for Latin America and the Caribbean for FY 2012 comprises Cuban refugees eligible for the in-country Priority 2 program; a small number of UNHCR-referred Priority 1 Colombians; as well as a small number of Priority 3 family reunification cases.

Proposed FY 2012 program for Latin America and the Caribbean:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2010</i>	<i>2,850</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Priority 2 In-Country Cubans</i>	<i>2,300</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>50</i>
<u><i>Total Proposed Ceiling</i></u>	<u><i>5,500</i></u>

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Near East/South Asia region remains host to millions of refugees, primarily Iraqis, Palestinians, Afghans, Iranians, Tibetans, Sri Lankans, and Bhutanese. Few countries in the region are party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol. Nonetheless, many host governments tolerate the presence of refugees within their borders.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Program, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and other humanitarian organizations work with refugees in the region. Some countries have provided long-term protection and/or asylum, mainly to Tibetans, Bhutanese, Sri Lankans, Palestinians, Afghans, Somalis, and a handful of other nationalities. Refugees identified by UNHCR for third-country resettlement include Iraqis in Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and the Gulf States; Bhutanese in Nepal; Afghans in Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and India; and Iranians in Turkey.

As of April 30, 202,408 Iraqi refugees were registered with UNHCR. There is no internationally agreed-upon definitive number of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons due to the fact that not all are registered with UNHCR and they are dispersed throughout the region. UNHCR reports that approximately 1.3 million Iraqis displaced by sectarian violence following the Samarra Mosque bombing of February 2006 remain internally displaced. Approximately 35,600 refugees (including Palestinians and Iranian Kurds) and 3,600 asylum seekers remain in Iraq.

Despite the voluntary repatriation of over 5.6 million Afghan refugees since 2002, Pakistan and Iran continue to host approximately 1.9 million and approximately one million registered Afghans, respectively, many of whom have resided in these countries for decades. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans, mostly unaccompanied men, are believed to live and work in Pakistan and Iran without documentation. Over 10,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers are registered with UNHCR in India. Identifying durable solutions remains an important component of UNHCR's strategy in India. Integration of long-staying ethnic Afghan refugees, many of whom have lived in India for 15 to 27 years, is a key element of this strategy. Local integration remains a difficult option due to opposition from host countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India.

Thousands of ethnic Nepalis in Bhutan were forced out of Bhutan in the early 1990s as a result of the Bhutanese government's policy of "one nation and one people" (also referred to as "Bhutanization"). Despite 15 rounds of formal negotiations between Bhutan and Nepal, and pressure from the United States and other governments to resolve the issue and secure the right of return for genuine Bhutanese refugees, to date none have been permitted to return. Due to concerted resettlement efforts commenced in 2008 by the United States and other resettlement countries, some 40,000 of the original population of 108,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have departed after spending two decades in camps in eastern Nepal.

Religious Freedom

Persecution of religious minorities is common in certain countries in the Middle East and South Asia that are countries of origin for refugee populations entering the United States. State and local government responses to violence against religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, are often inadequate. In Afghanistan, religious freedom is limited due to constitutional contradictions, legislative ambiguity, and deference to Shia interpretations of sharia law.

In Iran, all non-Shia religious groups including Sunni Muslims, Bahais, Sufis, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians, continue to face discrimination, harassment, and arrest.

In some countries in the region, most notably Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Egypt, those accused of apostasy can be legally subject to severe governmental repression and societal violence. Under these governments' interpretations of sharia, apostates may be denied their civil rights if any member of society files an apostasy complaint against the convert. In cases decided by a sharia court in Iran, judges have annulled the convert's marriage, transferred child custody, conveyed property rights to Muslim family members, deprived them of civil rights, and declared them wards of the state without any religious identity.

One of the greatest impacts of violence in Iraq has been on Iraq's small religious minority communities. These minorities, including Christians, Yezidis, Sabean-Mandaeans, and others, have experienced wide-scale displacement – in some cases affecting as much as 90 percent of their population over the past eight years. Some 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees are members of religious minorities, a figure significantly larger than their percentage of the overall Iraqi population. As a result, some of these religious communities, along with their ancient languages and customs, are on the verge of disappearing.

In Bhutan, Buddhism is the state's "spiritual heritage," although in the southern areas many citizens openly practice Hinduism. While subtle pressure on non-Buddhists to observe the traditional Buddhist values and some limitations on constructing non-Buddhist religious buildings remain, the government has taken steps to improve religious freedom in the country. Some societal pressures toward non-Buddhists are reflected in official and unofficial efforts to uphold the "spiritual heritage" (Buddhism) of the country.

The USRAP provides resettlement access in various ways to refugees who suffer religious persecution. The Specter Amendment, first enacted as sec. 213, Division E, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-199), provided that Iranian religious minorities designated as category members would benefit from a reduced evidentiary standard for establishing a well-founded fear of persecution. The Specter Amendment expired on May 31, 2011, but the Department will continue to process applications received by that date against Lautenberg standards throughout FY 2012. Iranian refugees have also gained access to the program through Priority 3. In addition, the USRAP accepts UNHCR and embassy referrals of religious minorities of various nationalities in the region. Nationals of any country, including CPCs, may be referred to the U.S. program by UNHCR or a U.S. embassy for reasons of religious persecution.

Voluntary Repatriation

After the fall of the Taliban, voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan proceeded on a massive scale for several years, both with and without UNHCR assistance. Since 2002, over 5.6 million Afghan refugees have returned, mostly from Pakistan and Iran. Over 4.4 million were assisted by UNHCR in the largest repatriation operation in UNHCR's history. However, the era of mass returns has largely ended, with only 54,000 Afghans returning in 2009 and about 112,000 returning in 2010. The massive repatriation represents roughly a 20 percent increase in Afghanistan's total population and has taxed the country's capacity to absorb additional refugee returns.

It is unlikely that all of the remaining 2.9 million registered Afghans in Pakistan and Iran will repatriate. As of May 31, UNHCR reports that only 20,137 Afghans have repatriated thus far in 2011, compared to the 150,000 that UNHCR projected would return in 2011. UNHCR and IOM's assessment is that the continuing migration of Afghans in both directions across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is part of a larger process of economic and social migration that has been occurring for centuries. Many of the Afghans choosing to stay in Pakistan are no longer seeking refuge from violence or persecution. They are, rather, seeking economic opportunities, fleeing poverty, visiting family, or

remaining in place until security conditions and the absorptive capacity for returnees to Afghanistan improves. UNHCR is working with the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the international community to develop policies and programs to sustain voluntary returns, while also better managing the residual Afghan population in Pakistan by working towards longer-term protection and migration solutions. IOM is seeking a greater role in border management and in developing regional mechanisms for economic migration that would bolster protection for Afghans.

The return prospects of the Afghan population in India have been assessed as extremely limited given the profile of the cases. Generally, they have no family or social links in their country of origin, which is fundamental to their security upon return. Many of the refugees have now married Indians, whose integration capacity in Afghanistan is seen as remote given the cultural and religious differences between the two countries. For some refugees, there are heightened security risks and problems for return precisely because of their protracted exile in India. Children, particularly girls and young women, who have grown up in India in a more liberal environment, may be unable to adjust. Thus far in 2011, only 35 Afghans have repatriated with UNHCR assistance from non-neighboring countries such as India.

Since 2008, nearly 580,000 IDPs and refugees have returned to their homes in Iraq, with IDPs comprising the vast majority of these returns. Over 85 percent of all returns have been to Baghdad and Diyala, a province northeast of Baghdad. This trend generally matches displacement patterns as over 80 percent of all IDPs and 70 percent of all refugees were displaced from those locations. UNHCR assesses that the conditions for promoting large-scale return of refugees to Iraq in conditions of safety and dignity are not yet in place. UNHCR is working, however, with some Iraqis in neighboring countries on an individual basis to facilitate voluntary returns to Iraq. In 2010, some 26,400 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq and registered for assistance through the Iraqi Government or UNHCR.

The United States continues to work with other interested governments in urging the Government of Bhutan to allow for the voluntary repatriation of Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan under acceptable terms and conditions. With the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka, the number of Tamils seeking to return has grown. Over 2,000 Tamils returned to Sri Lanka in 2010 and UNHCR is planning for higher numbers in 2011. Confirmation of citizenship is one of the key conditions for the voluntary return of both Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and some Tamils in India, and UNHCR is working toward this end in both cases.

Local Integration

Few countries in the region offer local integration to refugees. The Tripartite Agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and Iran expired on March 19, 2008, but an ad hoc agreement remains in place. The Tripartite Agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan provides for the orderly, voluntary return of Afghan refugees. On March 24, 2010, the Government of Pakistan approved the extension of the Afghan Management Strategy, which officially permits Afghan Proof of Registration (POR) cardholders to remain in Pakistan through 2012. Children born in Pakistan to Afghan POR cardholders will also be able to register on their parent's card if under five years old and with their own POR card if five or older. In partnership with the Government of Pakistan and UNDP, UNHCR launched the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas initiative in 2009. This five-year program aims to address Afghan refugee and Pakistani host community needs by rehabilitating areas that have been adversely affected by the presence of Afghan refugee communities over the past 30 years. UNHCR has already commenced work on over 22 projects under the initiative, which will eventually be implemented in 21 districts and six urban areas of Baluchistan, NWFP/KPk, Sindh, and Punjab Provinces, benefiting some 2.5 million Pakistanis and Afghans and strengthening the Government of Pakistan's governance and public service delivery.

The key to the successful transition from short-term humanitarian maintenance to longer-term development is acceptance by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan that they are best served by a system of managed migration across their border. Progress has been made in this area; some within the government of Pakistan have publicly acknowledged that some Afghans in Pakistan are likely to stay. The majority of Afghans who repatriated in the last few years had fled Taliban rule relatively recently. Many of the Afghans remaining in Iran and Pakistan left Afghanistan in the early years of the Soviet occupation. More than half were born in exile, and 74 percent are under age 28. Many of these refugees are unlikely to return without strong economic and social incentives.

Iraqis are still able to obtain visas at the border between Iraq and Syria. Visas are routinely valid for three months and renewable by exiting and reentering the country. In February 2008, Jordan began requiring Iraqis to apply for Jordanian visas in advance of entry. This visa policy substantially reduced the number of Iraqis seeking refuge in Jordan.

Iraqis in Syria and Jordan are not legally defined as refugees, but rather as guests. Both governments allow UNHCR to register Iraqis. With help from the international community, the Governments of Syria and Jordan have allowed Iraqi

students to enroll in public schools. However, enrollments in both countries have been lower than anticipated. Iraqi refugees have also been granted access to the public health care systems. In March, the Government of Jordan granted access to several legal labor sectors to all Iraqis present in the Kingdom as of February, 2011. Iraqis do not have access to the legal labor market in Syria.

Despite the steadily increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees, India does not have a clear national policy for the treatment of refugees, and UNHCR has no formal status in the country. In New Delhi, urban refugees face difficult conditions, including discrimination and harassment by the local population, limiting their local integration prospects. India recognizes and aids certain groups, including Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans in the 115 settlements for Sri Lankans and 39 settlements for Tibetans throughout the country. Many Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils in India are permitted some work opportunities within the informal economy and receive some social benefits. India also permits UNHCR to assist other so-called urban refugees in New Delhi, primarily Burmese, Afghans, and Somalis.

UNHCR has negotiated an agreement with the Government of India whereby India would facilitate access to citizenship for Hindu and Sikh Afghan refugees who meet the standard criteria to acquire Indian citizenship, while UNHCR would pursue resettlement opportunities for other long-staying ethnic Afghan refugees. Naturalization clinics were established to support the citizenship process for Hindu and Sikh Afghans, and UNHCR had intensified its efforts to ensure that all eligible refugees had submitted applications for Indian citizenship by December 31, 2009. Some 600 Afghans have naturalized, with another 2,000-3,000 currently in the process.

Third-Country Resettlement

The USRAP anticipates the continued large-scale processing of Iraqis, Bhutanese, and Iranians during FY 2012. The United States recognizes that the possibility of third-country resettlement must be available to the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees, and has processing facilities in Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul. UNHCR has referred over 15,500 Iraqi individuals to the U.S. program in FY 2011 and will continue making referrals in coming months.

While most Iraqis gain access to the USRAP via a referral from UNHCR, we are also facilitating direct access to the USRAP for Iraqis with close U.S. affiliations in some processing locations. The passage of the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, enacted January 28, 2008, created new categories of Iraqis who are eligible

for direct access (P-2) to the USRAP, both inside and outside Iraq. Currently, beneficiaries of P-2 categories who may seek access to the USRAP in Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq include:

1. Iraqis who work/worked on a full-time basis as interpreters/translators for the U.S. Government, MNF-I in Iraq, or U.S. Forces-Iraq;
2. Iraqis who are/were employed by the U.S. Government in Iraq;
3. Iraqis who are/were employees of an organization or entity closely associated with the U.S. mission in Iraq that has received U.S. Government funding through an official and documented contract, award, grant or cooperative agreement;
4. Iraqis who are/were employed in Iraq by a U.S.-based media organization or non-governmental organization;
5. Spouses, sons, daughters, parents, and siblings of individuals described in the four categories above, or of an individual eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa as a result of his/her employment by or on behalf of the U.S. Government in Iraq, including if the individual is no longer alive, provided that the relationship is verified; and
6. Iraqis who are the spouses, sons, daughters, parents, brothers, or sisters of a citizen of the United States, or who are the spouses or unmarried sons or daughters of a Permanent Resident Alien of the United States, as established by their being or becoming beneficiaries of approved family-based I-130 Immigrant Visa Petitions.

The United States has increased its in-country processing capacity nearly 200 percent since establishing a Resettlement Support Center (RSC) unit in Baghdad in FY 2008. Although security and logistical challenges associated with operating an RSC in Iraq limit in-country processing capacity, it is likely that refugee admissions from Iraq will soon exceed those from some neighboring countries. Refugee processing in Iraq is a high priority for the United States with significant potential, particularly to benefit Iraqis associated with U.S. efforts in Iraq. The Departments of State and Homeland Security (DHS) continue to devote substantial resources to Iraqi refugee processing. In addition to maintaining a robust interview schedule, DHS has developed enhanced security screening to ensure the integrity and security of the program.

Middle Eastern and South Asian refugees in most of Europe avail themselves of the asylum systems of the countries in which they are located. In Vienna, however, certain Iranian religious minorities (Bahais, Zoroastrians, Jews, Mandaeans, and Christians) may be processed for U.S. resettlement using special procedures authorized by the Government of Austria if their applications were received prior to the expiration of the Specter Amendment on May 31, 2011. After

nearly a ten-fold increase in departures from FY2004 to FY2008, RSC Vienna has experienced a significant decrease in new applications. Projected FY 2012 departures represent nearly a 35 percent decrease from FY 2008, while the total RSC Vienna pipeline has decreased 53 percent over the same time period. The United States also processes Iranian religious minorities (primarily Bahai) and other Iranians in Turkey through special procedures involving fast-track refugee status determination and referral by UNHCR. PRM has recently provided funding to UNHCR to significantly increase its capacity to refer refugees in Turkey for resettlement to the United States and other countries.

Resettlement processing of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal is continuing smoothly and the United States remains committed to considering for resettlement as many refugees as express interest. By the end of 2011, it is estimated that more than 53,000 Bhutanese refugees will have been resettled to the United States and other countries since 2008.

Although U.S. resettlement processing in Pakistan resumed in 2009, the number of Afghan refugees referred by UNHCR remains low due to the impact of the uncertain security situation on UNHCR and U.S. Government operations. UNHCR has referred for third-country resettlement all of the protracted ethnic Afghan refugees in India who cannot naturalize. UNHCR currently refers some 400 individuals per year from India, with priority given to those they deem most vulnerable. The majority of referrals are Burmese. UNHCR also refers a small number of refugees out of Sri Lanka. We continue to explore modalities for processing vulnerable Tibetan refugees in the region.

FY 2011 U.S. Admissions

We estimate the admission of approximately 26,000 refugees from the region in FY 2011. These will include some 15,000 Bhutanese, 8,000 Iraqis, and 3,000 Iranians and several hundred Afghans, including a small group of women who had been living in Iran processed through the UNHCR Emergency Transit Center in Slovakia.

FY 2012 U.S. Resettlement Program

The proposed regional ceiling for refugees from the Near East and South Asia for FY 2012 is 35,500, including vulnerable Iraqis, Bhutanese, Iranians, Pakistanis, and Afghans. We expect individual UNHCR referrals of various religious and ethnic groups in the region, including Assyrians, Mandeans, and Iranian Kurds. In addition, Ahmadi Muslims in many locations and Afghans in the

former Soviet Union, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere will be included. Small numbers of Iraqi and other refugee groups in Libya are also scheduled for processing.

Proposed FY 2012 Near East/South Asia program:

<i>Approved pipeline from FY 2011</i>	<i>25,000</i>
<i>Priority 1 Individual Referrals</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Priority 2 Groups</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Priority 3 Family Reunification</i>	<i>500</i>
<i><u>Total Proposed Ceiling</u></i>	<i><u>35,500</u></i>

DOMESTIC IMPACT OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

In FY 2010, the USRAP admitted 73,311 refugees from 60 countries. More than half were originally from either the countries of Iraq or Burma. (See Table III.)

The demographic characteristics of refugee arrivals from the 20 largest source countries (representing 100 percent of total arrivals) in FY 2010 illustrate the variation among refugee groups. The median age of all FY 2010 arrivals was 25 years and ranged from 19 years for arrivals from Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi to 37 years of age for arrivals from Iran. In FY 2010, 47.3 percent of all arriving refugees were female and 52.7 percent of all arriving refugees were male. Males predominated among refugees from Sri Lanka (70.3 percent), Eritrea (69.7 percent), and Sudan (58.6 percent). (See Table IV.)

Considerable variation among refugee groups can be seen among specific age categories. Refugees under the age of five ranged from a high of 15.7 percent among Burundi arrivals to a low of 2.1 percent of those from Iran. The number of school-aged children (from five to 17 years of age) varied from a high of over 39.0 percent of arrivals from Congo to a low of 12.3 percent of those from Iran. The number of working-aged refugees (16 to 64 years of age) varied from a high of 83.9 percent of those from Sri Lanka to a low of 50.8 percent of individuals from Burundi. Retirement-aged refugees (65 years or older) ranged from a high of 13.5 percent of arrivals from Vietnam to a low of less than one percent of those from Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Of the total arrivals in FY 2010, some 9.6 percent were under the age of five, 25.1 percent were of school age, 65.7 percent were of working age, and 3.5 percent were of retirement age. (See Table V.)

During FY 2010, 65.2 percent of all arriving refugees resettled in 12 states. The majority were placed in California (11.7 percent), followed by Texas (10.8 percent), New York (6.2 percent), Florida (5.8 percent), Arizona (4.6 percent), Georgia (4.4 percent), and Michigan (4.4). The states of Washington (4.1 percent), Pennsylvania (3.6 percent), Illinois (3.5 percent), North Carolina (3.2 percent,) and Minnesota (2.9 percent) each resettled significant percentages of the total of newly arrived refugees. (See Table VI.)

TABLE III
Refugee Arrivals By Country of Origin
Fiscal Year 2010

Country of Origin	Arrivals	
	Number	% of Total
Afghanistan	515	0.70%
Algeria	2	0.00%
Armenia	1	0.00%
Azerbaijan	18	0.02%
Bangladesh	2	0.00%
Belarus	103	0.14%
Benin	1	0.00%
Bhutan	12,363	16.86%
Burkina Faso (U Volta)	1	0.00%
Burma	16,693	22.77%
Burundi	530	0.72%
Cambodia	9	0.01%
Cameroon	6	0.01%
Central African Republic	45	0.06%
Chad	28	0.04%
China	72	0.10%
Colombia	123	0.17%
Congo	154	0.21%
Cuba	4,818	6.57%
Dem. Rep. Congo	3,174	4.33%
Egypt	15	0.02%
Equatorial Guinea	9	0.01%
Eritrea	2,570	3.51%
Ethiopia	668	0.91%
Gabon	2	0.00%
Gambia	10	0.01%
Georgia	4	0.01%
Guinea	9	0.01%
Haiti	18	0.02%

Honduras	20	0.03%
Iran	3,543	4.83%
Iraq	18,016	24.57%
Ivory Coast	4	0.01%
Jordan	7	0.01%
Kazakhstan	46	0.06%
Kuwait	40	0.05%
Kyrgyzstan	27	0.04%
Laos	36	0.05%
Lebanon	2	0.00%
Liberia	244	0.33%
Libya	1	0.00%
Lithuania	4	0.01%
Malaysia	2	0.00%
Mauritania	74	0.10%
Moldova	356	0.49%
Morocco	1	0.00%
Nigeria	2	0.00%
North Korea	8	0.01%
Pakistan	59	0.08%
Palestine	1,053	1.44%
Russia	326	0.44%
Rwanda	230	0.31%
Senegal	2	0.00%
Sierra Leone	54	0.07%
Somalia	4,884	6.66%
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	118	0.16%
Sudan	558	0.76%
Syria	25	0.03%
Tajikistan	3	0.00%
Thailand	5	0.01%
Togo	9	0.01%
Tunisia	1	0.00%
Turkey	3	0.00%
Turkmenistan	4	0.01%

Uganda	30	0.04%
Ukraine	449	0.61%
United Arab Emirates	1	0.00%
Uzbekistan	185	0.25%
Venezuela	3	0.00%
Vietnam	891	1.22%
Yemen	15	0.02%
Zimbabwe	7	0.01%
TOTAL	73,311	100.00%

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE IV

Median Age and Gender of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2010

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Refugees Admitted	Median Age	% Females	% Males
1	Iraq	18,016	27	47.04%	52.96%
2	Burma	16,693	21	46.18%	53.82%
3	Bhutan	12,363	28	49.79%	50.21%
4	Somalia	4,884	20	48.42%	51.58%
5	Cuba	4,818	32	49.77%	50.23%
6	Iran	3,543	37	48.86%	51.14%
7	Dem. Rep. Congo	3,174	19	49.18%	50.82%
8	Eritrea	2,570	25	30.27%	69.73%
9	Palestine	1,053	24	46.06%	53.94%
10	Vietnam	891	35	49.94%	50.06%
11	Ethiopia	668	24	41.77%	58.23%
12	Sudan	558	22	41.40%	58.60%
13	Burundi	530	19	53.02%	46.98%
14	Afghanistan	515	23	44.85%	55.15%
15	Ukraine	449	33	51.67%	48.33%
16	Moldova	356	32	52.53%	47.47%
17	Russia	326	33	50.31%	49.69%
18	Liberia	244	25	56.97%	43.03%
19	Rwanda	230	22	53.91%	46.09%
20	Uzbekistan	185	24	55.68%	44.32%
21	All Other Countries	1,245	27	48.59%	51.41%
TOTAL		73,311	25	47.30%	52.70%

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE V

Select Age Categories of Refugee Arrivals, Fiscal Year 2010

Rank (# of Arrivals)	Country of Origin	Under 5 Yrs	School Age (5-17)	Working Age (16-64)	Retirement Age (=or > 65)
1	Iraq	9.38%	23.15%	67.11%	3.82%
2	Burma	13.17%	28.58%	61.83%	1.02%
3	Bhutan	6.82%	22.19%	69.04%	5.49%
4	Somalia	12.92%	33.15%	57.08%	1.00%
5	Cuba	5.04%	21.13%	72.10%	4.84%
6	Iran	2.09%	12.31%	77.45%	11.04%
7	Dem. Rep. Congo	13.83%	38.63%	52.87%	0.28%
8	Eritrea	8.02%	14.67%	78.87%	0.43%
9	Palestine	14.34%	23.74%	62.39%	2.94%
10	Vietnam	3.25%	24.58%	64.20%	13.47%
11	Ethiopia	11.83%	25.45%	65.72%	0.60%
12	Sudan	10.93%	30.11%	60.93%	1.25%
13	Burundi	15.66%	38.11%	50.75%	1.32%
14	Afghanistan	7.38%	31.84%	65.24%	1.17%
15	Ukraine	7.80%	21.60%	60.36%	12.47%
16	Moldova	8.15%	20.22%	68.54%	7.30%
17	Russia	7.06%	26.99%	54.60%	15.03%
18	Liberia	6.15%	32.38%	63.93%	3.69%
19	Rwanda	10.87%	36.09%	58.70%	1.30%
20	Uzbekistan	9.73%	35.68%	54.59%	3.24%
21	All Other Countries	8.59%	27.79%	66.35%	2.17%
TOTAL		9.57%	25.05%	65.72%	3.52%

NOTE: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to overlapping age categories.

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE VI**Refugee Arrivals By State of Initial Resettlement, Fiscal Year 2010**

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
Alabama	159	0	159	0.22%
Alaska	112	0	112	0.15%
Arizona	3,400	0	3,400	4.64%
Arkansas	34	0	34	0.05%
California	8,577	0	8,577	11.70%
Colorado	1,969	0	1,969	2.69%
Connecticut	506	0	506	0.69%
Delaware	6	0	6	0.01%
District of Columbia	25	0	25	0.03%
Florida	4,216	0	4,216	5.75%
Georgia	3,224	0	3,224	4.40%
Hawaii	1	0	1	0.00%
Idaho	1,092	0	1,092	1.49%
Illinois	2,529	0	2,529	3.45%
Indiana	1,250	0	1,250	1.71%
Iowa	359	0	359	0.49%
Kansas	297	0	297	0.41%
Kentucky	1,974	0	1,974	2.69%
Louisiana	321	0	321	0.44%
Maine	303	0	303	0.41%
Maryland	1,084	0	1,084	1.48%
Massachusetts	1,931	0	1,931	2.63%
Michigan	3,188	4	3,192	4.35%
Minnesota	2,103	0	2,103	2.87%
Mississippi	8	0	8	0.01%
Missouri	1,276	0	1,276	1.74%
Nebraska	818	0	818	1.12%
Nevada	562	0	562	0.77%
New Hampshire	546	0	546	0.74%
New Jersey	795	0	795	1.08%
New Mexico	214	0	214	0.29%

STATE	Refugee Arrivals	Amerasian Arrivals	Total Arrivals	% of Total Arrivals to U.S.
New York	4,559	0	4,559	6.22%
North Carolina	2,342	0	2,342	3.19%
North Dakota	473	0	473	0.65%
Ohio	1,966	0	1,966	2.68%
Oklahoma	153	5	158	0.22%
Oregon	1,045	0	1,045	1.43%
Pennsylvania	2,632	0	2,632	3.59%
Puerto Rico	5	0	5	0.01%
Rhode Island	243	0	243	0.33%
South Carolina	132	0	132	0.18%
South Dakota	555	0	555	0.76%
Tennessee	1,605	0	1,605	2.19%
Texas	7,918	2	7,920	10.80%
Utah	1,108	0	1,108	1.51%
Vermont	301	0	301	0.41%
Virginia	1,535	0	1,535	2.09%
Washington	3,004	0	3,004	4.10%
West Virginia	13	0	13	0.02%
Wisconsin	825	7	832	1.13%
Total	73,293	18	73,311	100.00%

Note: Arrival figures do not reflect secondary migration.

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center

TABLE VII
ESTIMATED FUNDING FOR REFUGEE PROCESSING, MOVEMENT, AND RESETTLEMENT
FY 2011 AND FY 2012 (\$ MILLIONS)

AGENCY	ESTIMATED FY 2011 (BY DEPARTMENT)	ESTIMATED FY 2012 (BY DEPARTMENT)
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY <i>United States Citizenship and Immigration Services</i>		
Refugee Processing	\$22.9	\$23.0
DEPARTMENT OF STATE <i>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</i>		
Refugee Admissions	\$429.5*	\$415.1**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES <i>Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement</i>		
Refugee Resettlement	\$609.6***	\$626.6***
TOTAL	\$1,062.0	\$1,064.7

The estimated FY 2012 figures above reflect the President's FY 2012 Budget request and do not include carryover funds from FY 2011 which will be determined at the end of FY 2011.

* Includes FY 2011 MRA appropriation of \$357 million, \$15.6 million in carryover from FY 2010, \$51.9 million projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and \$5 million in prior FY recoveries. A portion of these funds will be carried forward into FY 2012.

** Includes FY 2012 MRA budget request of \$367.3 million, \$41.8 million in projected IOM loan collections/carryover, and an estimate of \$6 million in prior year MRA recoveries during FY 2012. Funds carried forward from FY 2011 will also be available in FY 2012.

*** HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) refugee benefits and services are also provided to asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam, victims of a severe form of trafficking who have received certification or eligibility letters from ORR, and certain family members who are accompanying or following to join victims of severe forms of trafficking, and some victims of torture, as well as Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants and their spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21. None of these additional groups is included in the refugee admissions ceiling except Amerasians. This category includes approximately \$50M of carryover funding available in FY 2011; it does not include costs associated with the Unaccompanied Alien Children's Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or Supplemental Security Income programs.

TABLE VIII
UNHCR Resettlement Statistics by Resettlement Country
CY 2010 Admissions

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL RESETTLED
United States*	54,077	74.17%
Canada	6,706	9.20%
Australia	5,636	7.73%
Sweden	1,789	2.45%
Norway	1,088	1.50%
United Kingdom	695	0.95%
Finland	543	0.74%
New Zealand	535	0.73%
Germany	457	0.63%
Netherlands	430	0.59%
Denmark	386	0.53%
France	217	0.30%
Italy	58	0.08%
Czech Republic	48	0.06%
Romania	38	0.05%
Brazil	28	0.04%
Other**	183	0.25%
TOTAL	72,914	100.00%

*Includes departures to the U.S. of individuals referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by UNHCR.

**Departures to all other resettlement countries.