

## Fact Sheet: 42 Million People Uprooted by War

**Internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>1</sup>: 26 million** people are seeking safety from conflict within their own countries.

- Three countries are home to almost half the world's IDPs: **Sudan** (5.8 million), **Colombia** (up to 4 million), and **Iraq** (2.5 million). IDPs have fewer rights than refugees.
- In 2007, the largest new displacements took place in countries **where long-standing armed conflicts deteriorated**: in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, and the Darfur region of Sudan.
- Africa is home to **almost half of the IDP population**, with 12.7 million IDPs living in 19 countries.
- Almost half (11.3 million) IDPs **do not receive significant assistance from their governments**.
- 9.3 million IDPs in 10 countries face governments that are **indifferent or even hostile** toward their needs.

**Refugees and asylum seekers<sup>2</sup>: 16 million** people have fled to another country in search of safety from conflict. Asylum seekers are those who have applied for protection under international law and are waiting to hear the decision.

- The highest numbers of refugees and asylum seekers are from the **Palestinian Territories** (4.6 million), **Afghanistan** (3.1 million) and **Iraq** (2.5 million).
- A steady decline in refugee numbers since 2002 was **reversed in 2006 when numbers started increasing again**. In 2007, the number of refugees under the care of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees rose from 9.9 million to 11.4 million.
- Iraq accounts for **an increase in refugees in the Middle East**. Jordan and Syria host some 2 million Iraqi refugees. In Africa, renewed armed conflict in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and Sudan resulted in 120,000 new refugees.
- Developing countries with **per capita incomes of less than \$2,000 host more than two-thirds of all refugees**, while nations with **per capita incomes over \$10,000 host four percent** of the world's refugees. In many developing countries, refugees represent a large portion of the total population.
- Some refugees, including more than 400,000 Sudanese and 2 million Afghans, have stayed in camps and other temporary shelters **for more than 20 years**.

### Principal Health Concerns of Refugees and IDPs:

- Refugees and IDPs are at a high risk for disease, primarily **malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, measles, and cholera** (in areas where the disease is endemic).
- A child dies of malaria every thirty seconds.
- **Malnutrition**: children under the age of five are at greatest risk of malnutrition, but new **ready-to-use therapeutic foods** (RUFs) are offering new hope to aid agencies and governments for the treatment of this preventable disease. MSF estimates that only 3% of the 20 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition receive the treatment they need.

### **For media inquiries:**

Naomi Sutorius-Lavoie, Press Officer/ Attachée de presse  
Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)  
Direct: 1 (416)-642-3463  
Toll Free: 1 (800)-982-7903 x3463  
Cell: 416-312-3960  
[nsutorius@msf.ca](mailto:nsutorius@msf.ca)

###

<sup>1</sup> Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

<sup>2</sup> Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees