



Survey of the Survey

Lavinia Limón is the Executive Director of Immigration and Refugee Services of America and the U.S. Committee for Refugees.

by Lavinia Limón

This 45th annual edition of the *World Refugee Survey* documents the sad state of refugee protection, human rights, and adherence to international law, even while celebrating the return home of millions. These were significant events for refugees, as the world remains preoccupied with homeland security, terrorism, and war.

Thirteen million refugees around the globe occupied a dangerous no man's land in 2002: unable either to move forward or to return home. Governments increasingly demanded that refugees prove if they are "with us or against us," and used security concerns as an excuse for not providing protection, decreasing assistance, and diminishing resettlement opportunities. Refugees were rejected, ignored, blamed, *refouled*, and violently attacked while their quests for freedom, safety, and dignity often went unfulfilled.

The *Survey* provides statistics that, in the best judgment of the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), are accurate and factual. We arrive at these figures after compiling all relevant information from governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and our own field visits. We stand by our numbers, but caution that some are educated guesses. Further, we wish to remind everyone that each number represents a human being with his or her own story of flight, danger, and despair.

We have dedicated the 2003 *Survey* to Mr. Charles (Carel) Sternberg, a former refugee who died January 16, 2003 and never forgot the individuals behind the numbers. He served as the executive director of the International Rescue Committee from 1965 to 1985: a time of tremendous growth and increasing complexity in the international response to refugee emergencies. Carel was a tireless defender of refugees and consistently demanded that refugee work-

ers, policymakers, and governments remember that refugees are human beings deserving of respect and assistance. We will miss him, as will refugees around the world.

As in past editions of the *Survey*, we are pleased to present several articles that expand upon the pressing issues facing refugees and refugee policy. We are particularly honored that UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers has contributed to our publication with "After September 11: New Challenges to Refugee Protection." As the foremost international spokesperson on behalf of refugees, High Commissioner Lubbers makes a passionate and compelling case that following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks the world community must preserve the fundamental rights of refugees and asylum seekers. He warns, "The introduction of any new restrictive measures based on security concerns should proceed from the assumption that refugees are themselves escaping persecution and violence, including terrorist acts. They must not be presumed to be the perpetrators of such acts." We agree and hope that all policymakers and shapers of public opinion will help to uphold the rights of refugees.

Senator Brownback (R-Kansas) is a long time supporter of refugee and human rights, and we are very pleased he chose the *Survey* to present "Mercy in Short Supply—The Plight of North Korean Refugees in China." As chair of the Senate Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs and with his past leadership of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Senator Brownback has fought tirelessly for vulnerable people around the world and consistently upheld the American tradition of providing safe haven for refugees.

Merrill Smith, editor of the *World Refugee Survey 2003*, recounts the significant events affecting refugees in "The Year in Review." He describes 2002—a dramatic year

which saw millions of refugees return to their countries, millions more continue their lives in limbo, and the uneven and inadequate international response to their plight. Merrill has extensive experience in assisting and advocating for refugees, and brings his unique and insightful perspective to this article.

Ahmed Jabri, USCR policy analyst, authored "A Refugee Is a Refugee, 50 Years of Excluding Palestinians from International Protection," in which he argues that Palestinian refugees are entitled to protection under the Refugee Convention. Also, our cover photo is of a Palestinian woman in Jenin refugee camp who, we feel, evokes the anguish of all those refugees who have suffered for over 50 years without hope for their future and who, this past year, have endured severe deterioration to their safety and well-being. Just as achieving peace and justice in the Middle East is a responsibility of the entire international community, so is the protection of refugees. We are aware that highlighting Palestinians might spark some controversy, but feel strongly that their plight and all the attendant complexities of their situation exemplify the reason all refugees must be afforded durable solutions within a reasonable time frame.

Working with refugees has become an increasing dangerous undertaking in the past several years. People who try to protect, feed, shelter, and care for refugees have been subjected to attack, harassment, and kidnapping despite their status as humanitarian workers. It is important we not forget those who lost their lives serving refugees, so we have instituted an "In Memoriam... Fallen Refugee

Workers" section. We sincerely hope this is a comprehensive listing, but if we missed someone we apologize profusely.

Publication of the *Survey* is a huge undertaking and not possible without the hard work, dedication, and support of many different people and organizations. Merrill Smith has worked tirelessly to bring this publication to fruition and we thank him for his dedication, enthusiasm, intelligence, judgment, and good humor. The contributions of our veteran policy analysts, Jeff Drumtra, Joel Frushone, and Jana Mason, and our Communication Director Hiram Ruiz are immeasurable. The combination of their hard work, knowledge, experience, and passion is both daunting and invaluable. Michelle Berg, Ahmed Jabri, and Michael Scott, who joined USCR in 2003 as policy analysts, also brought their considerable experience assisting refugees around the world to the *Survey*.

Alyson Springer made the confusing comprehensible through her insightful and attentive compilation of the daunting statistics. Koula Papanicolas, our graphic design and production manager, once again created a visually powerful publication that is both heart wrenching and hopeful. There are many more people to thank, not the least of whom include our sponsors listed on the back cover. However, limited space will not allow a complete listing of all the individuals and institutions, so please accept our gratitude.

Finally, we hope you find this publication helpful and informative, throughout the year, both as a reference and as a powerful reminder of our international obligation to protect refugees and ensure solutions to their plight.

In Memoriam...

Fallen Refugee Workers

Helping refugees can be dangerous work. Those who help displaced persons often face the perils of the uprooted themselves. Here, we commemorate several individuals who dedicated their lives to bringing a measure of relief to persons in danger. Last year, these persons were killed in action:

March 7	Kamal Abdel Rahman Salem	UNRWA*	West Bank
April 23(?)	Husni Amr	UNRWA	West Bank
August 29	Charles Kamau Kibe	World Vision International	Sudan
November 22	Ian Hook	UNRWA	West Bank
December 3	Maher Saqallah	UNRWA	West Bank
December 6	Osama Tahrawi	UNRWA	Gaza Strip

*UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.