

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
**U.S. REFUGEE PROGRAM NEWS**

## U.S.-Europe Humanitarian Cooperation

In their recent trips to Europe, President Bush and Secretary Rice stressed that the United States and Europe must work together to address common challenges. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration cooperates with European institutions in ensuring protection for refugees around the world.



*President George W. Bush meets with European Union President Jean-Claude Juncker while at the NATO Summit in Brussels Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2005. White House photo by Paul Morse.*

***President Bush: “Our strong friendship is essential to peace and prosperity across the globe -- and no temporary debate, no passing disagreement of governments, no power on earth will ever divide us.”***

In February 2005, Assistant Secretary of State Arthur E. “Gene” Dewey led a U.S. delegation to participate in a conference on Afghan refugee issues organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union Directorate General for Development. Working together through UNHCR

and other humanitarian organizations, the U.S. and EU are facilitating refugee returns and supporting their reintegration. Over 3.6 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since March 2002, the largest refugee repatriation in history. Large-scale refugee returns are expected to continue throughout 2005. Assistant Secretary Dewey stressed the need for donors to provide development assistance to help meet the needs of returned refugees.

Humanitarian cooperation is also strong in Africa. In April 2004, the United States and the European Union undertook a joint monitoring mission to assess conditions for the return of displaced Burundians. A similar mission in February 2005 to Liberia and Guinea evaluated the international effort under way to create conditions to make it possible for Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes and reintegrate. The U.S. and the Euro-

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## ‘Lost Boys’ Book Published

Mark Bixler, a reporter with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, is the author of [The Lost Boys of Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience](#) (University of Georgia Press, 2005). Bixler spoke with the Newsletter Editor about his book.

Editor: How did you first become aware of, or interested in, the Lost Boys?

Bixler: One day in 2001, a woman called to ask if the newspaper would write about a unique group of refugees in need of mentors. She intrigued me with a story of young men who had been forced from their parents as boys. They endured suffering and came of age in desolate African refugee camps with a desire to learn. The caller, who volunteers with refugees, introduced me to “Lost Boys” in Atlanta. I wrote about them for the newspaper.



*Journalist and author Mark Bixler*

the U.S. So I met young men as they stepped off the plane and chronicled their adjustment for four months. The result was a story that showed them learning to ride a bus, finding work and struggling to receive an education. The University of Georgia Press contacted me to ask about a book.

Editor: And this led you to write the book?

Bixler: Right. More than 100 people who read a news story about the Lost Boys donated time or money to help them out. My editors and I decided to tell a more complete story by following four “Lost Boys” for their first few months in

Editor: The Lost Boys have been featured on television specials in popular magazines, and now in books. Why do you think the Lost Boys have captured the public’s interest in a way that other refugee groups have not?

Bixler: My belief is that the story resonates because at its core are certain universal emotions. In other words, the story of being forced from home by war, wandering through wilderness and coming of age

*“...the story resonates because at its core are certain universal emotions.”*

with a desire to learn is about grief, survival, resilience and the yearning to improve oneself. These are universal themes played out on a dramatic stage. Yet many refugees have dramatic stories that do not receive as much attention. One reason may be that the Lost Boys can tell their story in their own words. They speak a formal, British version of English that somehow has the effect of charming some American listeners. Another reason the story resonates is that these young men were torn from their mothers and fathers when they were roughly 6, 7 or 8 years old. They were raised outside a traditional family structure. That strikes a chord with people, particularly women. Everyone can empathize with a child forced away from his family.

Editor: Your book covers U.S. refugee policy more generally. What, briefly, do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the system we now use to bring refugees to the U.S. and provide for their needs?

Bixler: As a journalist and author who has written about refugees, I can attest that the program does indeed give new opportunities to those few of the

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world's refugees who are resettled in the U.S. It also can help improve conditions in their native countries. Refugees resettled in the U.S. can raise awareness of conditions in their native countries and share money and experience acquired in the U.S. with people at home. One thing that surprised me is that different refugees receive different levels of assistance. Refugees participating in the federal Matching Grant program receive levels of assistance different than those receiving federal Refugee Cash Assistance. In the best of all worlds, refugees would receive the same amounts of assistance. As for refugee-resettlement agencies, they work best in my view when they cultivate and welcome volunteers.

**Editor:** Do you plan to keep following the Lost Boys? Do you hope to write another book?

**Bixler:** Several young men from southern Sudan allowed me into their lives over the last few years, maintaining a good-natured patience as I asked question after question. As a gesture of gratitude, I gave driving lessons to a few and donated a spare microwave oven and desk to others. I wrote a college recommendation for one and picked another up after he took a GED exam. It was the least I could do for young men who were so generous with their time. I'm sure I'll stay in touch with several of the young men I know best, but my hope for the future is that I'll be able to help through a fund I've created with the Atlanta office of the International Rescue Committee. The IRC Sudanese Assistance Fund will help Sudanese refugees meet educational and other costs. I'm donating a portion of my proceeds to the fund; the publisher is donating a portion of its proceeds, too. There's more information online at [www.lostboysbook.com](http://www.lostboysbook.com).



*The four Lost Boys who arrived in Atlanta on United Airlines flight 1905 on July 18, 2001, were guided into everyday life in the United States by Mathew Kon, a fellow southern Sudanese who worked as a caseworker at the Atlanta office of the International Rescue Committee, a nonprofit refugee-resettlement agency. Seen here (from left) are Kon, Marko Ayii, Daniel Khoch, Jacob Magot, and Peter Anyang. Photograph courtesy of Jacob Magot.*

*Jacob Magot was so dedicated to his education that he often would fall asleep studying a GED guide after working overnight. He received his high-school diploma in July 2003, at the end of his second year in the United States. A few hours after graduation, he reported for duty at a security-guard job, worked overnight, and arose the next morning to attend class at a community college near his home. Photograph courtesy of Jacob Magot.*



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pean Union are the largest international donors to return and repatriation efforts in Liberia.

Also in February, PRM Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Richard Greene and USAID Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Deputy Assistant Administrator Len Rogers led a delegation to participate in the U.S.-EU humanitarian “strategic dialogue” in Brussels. The meeting with the European Commission Director General for Humanitarian Aid and his team covered prospects for humanitarian crises and priorities for refugee assistance in 2005, the “Good Humanitarian Donorship” initiative, civil-military cooperation, protection of humanitarian workers, and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) issues.

For more information on U.S.-European relations, including recent travel by the President and the Secretary as well as cooperation in a range of global themes and geographic areas, visit [www.state.gov/p/eur](http://www.state.gov/p/eur).



Secretary Rice deplanes in London, February 4, 2005, at the start of a trip to Europe. Photo courtesy American Embassy London.

## U.S. Contributes \$125 Million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

On January 31, the Department of State announced an initial \$125 million contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its 2005 Annual Programs. This contribution will help UNHCR — the lead UN agency responsible for providing protection and assistance to the world’s refugees — to address the needs of the more than 17 million refugees and other persons of concern and to provide assistance to the following regions:

- Africa \$50.0 million
- Near East \$ 2.9 million
- Europe \$14.1 million
- South Asia \$20.3 million
- East Asia \$ 5.2 million
- Western Hemisphere \$ 4.6 million
- Global Operations/  
Headquarters/Operational  
Reserves \$27.9 million

UNHCR is a key partner in critical humanitarian endeavors in Afghanistan, Iraq, Chad, Liberia, Colombia, and elsewhere throughout the world. U.S. support helps ensure refugees’ lives and rights are adequately protected; their basic food, shelter, health, and education needs are met; and that they are able to return home once it is safe, or otherwise find a permanent solution to their plight.

## Assistance to IDPs in Colombia

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration funds approximately 27% of the budget of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Colombia. More than 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are registered with the government of Colombia, and NGOs estimate that the total number of IDPs is over 2 million and may approach 3 million. Most of the displacements have been caused by the ongoing internal conflict in Colombia, and many individuals have been uprooted for more than a decade.

In February 2005, the UN, with UNHCR taking a lead role, opened an office in Altos de Cazuca in order to provide protection to IDPs living in this neighborhood in south Bogotá. The office will focus on ensuring the protection of the human rights of these individuals, support Colombian national and local institutions that work with and provide services for IDPs, and seek durable solutions for those displaced. The Refugee Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá will monitor the performance of the new UNHCR office.



*This young boy's family has lived in the south Bogotá neighborhood of Altos de Cazuca for 9 years, since being displaced from their village home.*

## Fiscal Year 2005 Admissions Statistics

Region	FY 2005 Regional Ceiling	February 2005 Arrivals	Arrivals in FY 2005 as of 2/28/2005
Africa	20,000	1,384	7,039
East Asia	13,000	192	4,111
Europe & Central Asia	9,500	617	2,926
Latin America & Caribbean	5,000	574	2,132
Near East & South Asia	2,500	357	989
Unallocated	20,000		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>3,124</b>	<b>17,197</b>

President Bush has authorized the admission of up to 70,000 refugees for fiscal year 2005, 50,000 regionally allocated and an additional 20,000 unallocated.