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

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Statement by Richard Boucher, Spokesman

**U.S. Welcomes the Appointment of New
U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees**

The United States welcomes the appointment by of former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Former Prime Minister Guterres' stature and experience make him eminently suitable for this important and demanding position. The United States looks forward to continuing its close and cooperative relationship with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees under Mr. Guterres' leadership.

The United States is the single largest donor country to UNHCR. We will work with Mr. Guterres to ensure the effective care and protection of more than 17 million refugees and other persons of concern throughout the world.



**Admissions Pipeline Development
in West Africa**

During the week of April 11-14, PRM Program Officer Jennifer Christenson joined Nate Bluhm, the Refugee Coordinator from the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana, for a pipeline development trip to Benin, Nigeria and Gabon. Their visit should result in a minimum of 1000 individuals gaining access to resettlement, from locations with little or no previous resettlement activity.

In Benin, Jennifer and Nate visited Kpomasse Camp, home to about 600 refugees. The two main refugee groups in Kpomasse are Togolese and Nigerian Ogoni, with smaller populations of other nationalities, mostly from the Great Lakes region. The focus for PRM was the Nigerian Ogoni population, as PRM successfully resettled a small group of Ogoni in 1999. PRM's visit was also important because it found other refugees who are also appropriate candidates for resettlement. Discussions with the U. N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Cotonou yielded agreement on a referral of the entire caseload of

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Relief for Iraqi Refugees

For some 300 refugees from Iraq living in Lebanon and other countries of the region, one consequence of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 was a long period of review. These individuals and families had been previously accepted for resettlement to the United States, but because of new security concerns, their cases were subject to reexamination by the Departments of State and Homeland Security. The earlier decision to allow these refugees into the United States has been reconfirmed, and refugees in this group have begun arriving in the United States.

Additional Iraqi refugees who may be eligible for resettlement in the United States are now being considered according to the procedures used for all other nationalities of refugees. The U.S. Government will consider cases referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and by U.S. Embassies or authorized non-governmental organizations.

Possible Iraqi claims for resettlement could be based on a number of factors:

- 1) Individuals who have faced serious human rights violations and may be at risk if returned to Iraq;
- 2) Blood feud and honor killing cases;
- 3) Vulnerable individuals, such as single females without male family members; and
- 4) Individuals who have suffered persecution due to a relationship with coalition forces.

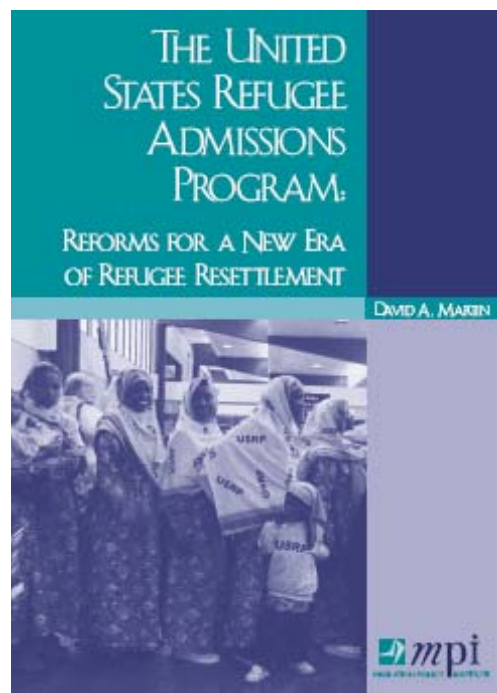
UNHCR suspended Refugee Status Determinations for Iraqi refugees when the Saddam Hussein regime fell. At the same time, UNHCR has asked refugee-hosting countries not to repatriate Iraqis at present.

Reforming the Refugee Admissions Program

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kelly Ryan represented the Bureau at a seminar held at the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, DC, on May 6. The Institute organized the event to publicize the publication of *The United States Refugee Admissions Program: Reforms for a New Era of Resettlement*, a report commissioned by the Bureau (available at www.state.gov/documents/organization/36495.pdf).

In her remarks, Deputy Assistant Secretary Ryan explained that the study was needed, in part, because 25 years after the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the Department wanted an outside assessment of how it was meeting the objectives of the Act. She also said that the report was intended to generate new ideas to sustain the vitality the admissions program enjoyed throughout much of the 1980s and 1990s.

Ms Ryan promised an open discussion of the recommendations in the report. For the text of her remarks, please see www.state.gov/g/prm.



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registered Ogoni (over 200 individuals) for possible resettlement. In addition, UNHCR also plans to refer Togolese and Congolese refugees who have been living in Benin without viable options for repatriation and who have not been able to integrate locally. An International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) employee is arriving in Cotonou to assist in preparing these referrals.

Jennifer and Nate continued to Oru camp, near Lagos, Nigeria. Over 5000 refugees live in difficult conditions in Oru. The refugees are mostly Liberian (about 3800) and Sierra Leonean (about 1000), but there are smaller numbers of several other nationalities. Though Liberian repatriation is the main focus of UNHCR Lagos, they are also interested in referring some vulnerable Liberian cases for resettlement. UNHCR has identified 145 cases, involving 450 individuals, who have two or more vulnerabilities, for example a single female with a medical condition, or a single parent who is a survivor of violence. Jennifer and Nate encouraged the UNHCR staff also to refer refugees of other nationalities who had similar vulnerabilities.

Jennifer and Nate traveled last to Gabon, to meet with UNHCR regarding individual cases currently being referred, and to encourage UNHCR to refer more cases to resettlement. UNHCR has already referred 40 cases (80 individuals) for resettlement, all vulnerable cases such as medical cases, protection cases, or single female heads of household. Jennifer and Nate also spoke with the refugees directly about each group's situation. Refugees from Equatorial Guinea, in particular, are in a precarious protection situation, so that caseload (81 individuals) also merits referral. Female refugees from the Great Lakes region are another focus for more individual cases. Further pipeline development activities will continue to address these smaller populations in need of a durable solution.

Violence in Togo following the flawed national election of April 24 has led more than 35,000 Togolese refugees to flee into Benin and Ghana. UNHCR is working with the hosting governments and the World Food Program to provide assistance to these refugees. The Bureau has made an initial contribution of \$190,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the needs of these refugees. The United States has also joined the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union in calling for the formation of a national reconciliation government in Togo, with the participation of the principal political forces in the country. The United States has called on Togolese President Gnassingbé to end the violence against opposition supporters that has led to these refugee outflows. Brutality by security forces and ruling party militia, and the rejection of dialogue by some opposition leaders, has further set back reconciliation.



Kpomasse Camp, Benin. Florence Fassasi, UNHCR's Community Services Assistant, with Togolese refugee children at the camp's kindergarten.

Framework for Cooperation With The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

The 2005 Framework for Cooperation between the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United States is now available on the Bureau website, www.state.gov/g/prm.

The agreement was signed on May 10 in Geneva by Acting High Commissioner for Refugees Wendy Chamberlin and on May 18 in Washington by Arthur E. “Gene” Dewey, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration.

This document sets out the basis for cooperation between the U.N.’s refugee agency -- which is responsible for assisting an estimated 17 million uprooted people around the world -- and its largest single donor, the United States. Negotiated annually, the framework emphasizes the United States’ support for UNHCR’s core mandate activities of ensuring protection of and durable solutions for refugees. It also focuses on mutually agreed priority areas requiring additional effort in 2005.

In the interest of transparency and consistent with the “Good Humanitarian Donorship” principles to which the United States and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees both subscribe, it was agreed that the full text of the 2005 Framework for Cooperation should be made available on the websites of both the Department of State and UNHCR.



Assistant Secretary Dewey signs the U.S.-UNHCR Framework for Cooperation.. UNHCR Washington Representative Kolude Doherty witnessed the signing on behalf of UNHCR.

Fiscal Year 2005 Admissions Statistics

Region	FY 2005 Regional Ceiling	May 2005 Arrivals	Arrivals in FY 2005 as of 5/31/2005
Africa	20,000	1,156	10,326
East Asia	13,000	669	5,714
Europe & Central Asia	9,500	951	5,542
Latin America & Caribbean	5,000	517	3,969
Near East & South Asia	2,500	200	1,688
Unallocated	20,000		
TOTAL	70,000	3,493	27,239

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.

Profile: Veda Dwyer

by Nancy Iris

Afghanistan, China, Poland, Austria, Ghana, Belgium, Tajikistan, Jordan, Namibia - no, she hasn't been to any of these places, but Veda Dwyer, budget analyst and travel coordinator for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), has dolls from all of them as part of her collection from around the world. When she retires from government service later this month, the dolls will remind Veda of the gratitude of the many colleagues she has worked with over the years.



The collection outgrew its case long ago, but PRM staff members continue to contribute to it when they have the chance. "I don't care if the dolls are prim and proper, big or small. Some, you can tell a child would have played with - I like them all," Veda notes. She started the collection herself with dolls she purchased in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia where she went on one of the very few overseas trips she has taken for PRM. A PRM colleague who has

contributed to the collection, Mary Lange, remarked, "Veda was the lynch pin for PRM travel." Before the new 'Travel Manager' software program was installed in the Bureau, Veda handled all the travel functions from initial request to reservations to voucher reimbursement. "Nobody knows more about travel regulations," reads an award nomination recognizing Veda's hard work. Her primary job these days is to help Bureau travelers by processing their authorizations and vouchers electronically.

Veda is one of the hundreds of civil servants who work behind the scenes, making the wheels of diplomacy turn. She works, literally, in a windowless office on the third floor of a State Department annex building down the street from the much grander Harry S Truman Building that houses most of the Department's offices. Her name is unlikely to appear in the Washington papers, but her work supports the U.S. Government's humanitarian assistance contributions to refugees, and our population and migration policy, just as surely as the work of her more visible colleagues.

A native Washingtonian whose mother, aunt, and uncle worked for the U.S. Government, Veda was recruited out of high school, and has spent 33 years at the Department of State. She worked her way up the career ladder, with 15 years in International Organization Affairs (IO) and 18 with PRM. She took one break of six years to pursue higher education.

When asked what characteristics have enabled her to successfully manage her career, to contribute to the Bureau's budget process, and to organize other people's travel, Veda answered, "It's important to pay attention to detail, to know how to prioritize, to be versatile and flexible." She concluded, "You can't be too rigid."

With no specific plans for her retirement, Veda does know she will carry on PRM's humanitarian values, noting: "There are always plenty of volunteer opportunities."