

Education & Refugee Students in Washington State

2008

Refugees arrive in the United States and in Washington State from a number of countries. They are forced to leave their homes due to persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The total number of refugees in the world was an estimated 9.9 million in 2007.¹ Of those, the number of refugees that arrived in Washington State was 2,216. The chart below indicates the numbers of and the countries of origin for refugee arrivals in Washington State in 2007.²

Numbers of Refugee Arrivals in Washington State 2007

	Country of Origin	Number	Percent		Country of Origin	Number	Percent
	Afghanistan	13	1%		Iraq	19	1%
1	Burma	181	8%		Jordan	1	0%
2	Burundi	117	5%		N Korea	1	0%
	China	1	0%	6	Liberia	7	0%
	Columbia	7	0%		Malaysia	1	0%
	Costa Rica	1	0%		Rwanda	12	1%
	Cuba	23	1%		Sierra Leone	3	0%
	DR Congo	8	0%	7	Somalia	400	18%
3	Eritrea	41	2%	8	Sudan	34	2%
4	Ethiopia	61	3%		Thailand	72	3%
	Ghana	1	0%	9	Former USSR	1047	47%
5	Iran	105	5%	10	Vietnam	60	3%

Grand total: 2216

The refugee profiles contained in this packet are designed to inform and educate readers regarding the culture, history, geo-political context, situation of displacement, and common education/literacy levels of refugees from the numbered countries above. These profiles are not designed to represent refugees as a whole, stereotype their culture or experiences, nor assume to adequately capture their complex lives and experiences. The purpose of these tools is to document common experiences based on country of origin. We provide these generalizations in order that the first steps may be taken toward understanding and enlightenment. By helping to inform, we hope that the tools included in this packet provide educators with instructional approaches and strategies that will maximize student learning as well as respond to the needs of refugee students.

¹ United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org/>

² Data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office for Refugee Resettlement. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/>

When working with refugee youth, it is important to consider the implications the refugee experience has on their lives. Though refugees come from widely varied countries and cultures, the experience of conflict, displacement and loss are shared across refugee groups. These factors will have contributed to the interruption or inaccessibility of a formal education among many youth. Transitioning from the life they are accustomed to, to a life in the United States, is no small feat!

The implications of such a transition may be tremendous. Building trust and relationships with your students will help create a safe learning environment, establish a baseline regarding your students experience with school, as well as prepare you for any potential disclosure of traumatic events in the classroom.

Depending on the degree to which refugee youth were faced with traumatic events, they will have varying levels of anxiety, fear, re-traumatization, and ability to trust others. In situations where traumatic experiences have disrupted cognitive, emotional, and/or social functioning, it would be important to work with health and social service providers to better meet your students' needs.

It is important to not only engage refugee youth in activities that will help build on and ensure academic success, but that also incorporates a sense of pride and self-confidence. Challenges educators may face in the classroom include:

1. **Communication.** Students may or may not have English language skills when they arrive in the United States, and translators/interpreters may not always be available. Verbal and non-verbal communication and cues may also differ.
2. **Cultural norms & expectations.** Students will likely arrive in the U.S. with different cultural norms and expectations around education. They may also arrive with survival skills that helped them navigate life in refugee camps but that are inappropriate in school.
3. **Community & systems support.** Families and youth may have other pressing needs that interfere with students' education. It is important that they receive the support they need outside of the school environment.

These challenges, though often a barrier to students' academic success, may also prove to be a benefit for the classroom. Each of these challenges provides learning opportunities as well regarding another language, another culture, and community engagement. Activities that bridge different cultures with different learning styles will benefit refugee and non-refugee students alike.

Strategies for working with refugee youth include:

1. **Communication.**
 - Use visual aids to help students learn vocabulary as well as cultural norms and expectations. Include all languages represented in the class.
 - Engage students by asking them to participate in the classroom or submit their work in a visual way.
 - Demonstrate new concepts, activities, and expectations physically (such as through skit) or by providing examples.
 - Alternatively, have students role play as the teacher to demonstrate that they understood the assignment or expectation.

2. Cultural norms & expectations.

- Match more established refugee students with newly arrived refugee students for mentorship and cultural bridging.
- Use visual or audio cues to quiet the classroom, such as dimming the lights or asking students to clap their hands if they can hear the instructor's voice.
- Incorporate cultural awareness in the classroom by having students draw murals of their home and/or community. Students may also write a poem, sing a song, or develop a skit about a favorite aspect of their culture (holidays, traditions, folk stories, etc.).
- Anticipate events that may cause concern or anxiety, such as fire drills, playgrounds, or classroom parties.

3. Community & systems support.

- Set realistic and achievable goals, focus on the positive, and reward students for their successes no matter how big or small.
- Encourage positive coping skills through reward or modeling and provide flexibility in the classroom for participation.
- Empower students to communicate alternatives or solutions to barriers they may face in the classroom.
- Invite family members to be active participants in the classroom and provide students with community support, such as having a tutor available that speaks the student's language.
- Build a referral list and establish relationships with mutual assistance associations, community-based organizations that serve refugees, and other resettlement organizations.
- Coordinate systems to help touch base with students, their families, and/or other community organizations that may be working with them.

We hope that this information will help you and your students learn more about each other and find ways to work together to ensure your students' future success.

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Additional Resources:

Foundation House, "Classroom Kaleidoscope: A program to facilitate connectedness and well-being in the culturally diverse classroom" and "School's In for Refugees: Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness."

The Spring Institute, "Refugee Children with Low Literacy Skills or Interrupted Education: Identifying Challenges and Strategies." By Dr. Dina Birman.

Additional Key Web Resources

UNHCR Global Report. <http://www.unhcr.org/gr07/index.html>
Migration Policy Institute. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>
United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. <http://www.refugees.org/>
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. <http://www.springinstitute.org/publications.html>

Cultural Information

Center for Applied Linguistics
4646 40th Street NW
Washington DC 20016-1859
Main number 202-362-0700
Fax number 202-362-3740
<http://www.cal.org>

Ethno Med Resource
Haborview Medical Center
<http://www.ethnomed.org>

Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP)
<http://www.xculture.org/resource/library/index.cfm>

Center for Cross-Cultural Health.
265 Oneida Street, St. Paul MN 55102
<http://www.crosshealth.com>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Cultural Profiles Project
<http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Management Sciences for Health
784 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
United States
Telephone: 617.250.9500
Fax: 617.250.9090
<http://erc.msh.org>

Education Resources

UNHCR Teaching Tools
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Case Postale 2500
CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt
Suisse
Telephone: 41 22 739 8111
<http://www.unhcr.ch> >Publications>Teaching Tools

You Can Talk to Your Child's School (Video – Available in English and Somali)

You Can Help Your Child in School (Video – Available in English and Somali)

Minnesota's Bookstore

660 Olive Street

St Paul, MN 55155

Telephone: 800-357-3757

<http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/>

Mental Health of Refugee Children: A Guide for the ESL Teacher;

The Bantu in Our Midst: A Resource for ELT Classrooms;

Somali Youth Report

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

1610 Emerson St, Denver, CO 80218

Telephone: (303) 863-0188

<http://www.springinstitute.com>

A Child Becomes a Reader

National Institute for Literacy

1775 I Street, NW; Suite 730

Washington, DC 20006-2401

Telephone: (202) 233-2025

<http://www.nifl.gov/> >Publications>A Child Becomes a Reader

Tolerance.org

<http://www.tolerance.org>

National Parent Teacher Association

330 N. Wabash Avenue Suite 2100 Chicago, IL 60611

Telephone: 800-307-4PTA

<http://www.pta.org/>

Bhutan is a country in South Asia, bordered by the Himalayas on the east, India on the south, east and west, and China to the north. Its capitol city is Thimphu, and the country is transitioning to a constitutional monarchy where they also retain a treaty relationship with India.

Languages: Dzongkha (official), Tibetan, and Nepalese

Religions: Vajrayana Buddhism 75%, Indian- and Nepalese-influenced Hinduism 25%

Population: Bhote 50%, ethnic Nepalese 35% (includes Lhotsampas, one of several Nepalese ethnic groups), indigenous or migrant tribes 15%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): Although there were none in 2007, as of June of 2008, 1,453 Ethnic Nepali Bhutanese have been admitted (but may not be processed yet) for resettlement.



Culture

Bhutan is made up of different ethnic groups including the Bhote, Drukpas, Nepalese (which includes Lhotsampas), and indigenous or migrant tribes. The most widespread language is Dzongkha, followed by various Tibetan dialects and Nepali. Bhutan's state religion is the Drukpa Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism.

Historical, geographic, and ethnic differences between the north and south, between the Drukpas and ethnic Nepali, were limited throughout the early 19th century. Relations between the two groups were without conflict, and during the years of the Nationality Law, Nepali Bhutanese enjoyed citizenship entitlements. However, the ethnic diversity of Bhutan has historically resulted in harsh policies by Bhutan's monarchy towards its ethnic Nepali minority.

The politically and culturally dominant Ngalongs are of Tibetan descent and inhabit the central and western regions of Bhutan. Ngalong ancestors arrived in Bhutan in the eighth and ninth centuries. The

Sharchhops live in eastern Bhutan and are descendants of its earliest migrants. They are of Indo-Burmese origin. Together the Ngalongs and Sharchhops are known as Drukpas.

The third major group, ethnic Nepalis, differ greatly from the Drukpas in terms of culture, language, and religion. Nepalis reside predominately in southern Bhutan and are predominantly Hindu. Almost 97% of Bhutan's refugees are ethnic Nepali. Most refugees speak Nepalese as a first or second language. UNHCR estimates that about 35% of the population has a functional knowledge of English. Of the refugee population, 60% are Hindu, 27% are Buddhists, and about 10% are Kirat, an indigenous religion similar to animism. The percentage of Christians in each camp varies from 1% to 7%.

Nepali refugees practice a caste system originating from religious beliefs in which different people are placed into different social levels. The caste system influences important decisions like marriage, education, and occupation. The average household size is eight and consists of elders, parents, children and married sons. Polygamy is practiced but is not common. Traditional gender roles are practiced, and in certain situations widowed women may have a lower social status. Many practice traditional forms of medicine which may include animal sacrifice at significant Hindu ceremonies.

History

In 1865, Britain and Bhutan signed the Treaty of Sinchulu, under which Bhutan would receive an annual subsidy in exchange for ceding border lands to British India. A monarchy was established in 1907, and Bhutan allowed Britain to direct its foreign affairs. This role was assumed by India after 1947. A formal Indo-Bhutanese accord returned the areas of Bhutan annexed by the British, formalized the annual subsidies the country received, and defined India's responsibilities in defense and foreign relations.

In March 2005, King Wangchuck drafted a government constitution that included major democratic reforms. In December 2006, the King abdicated the throne to his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. In early 2007, India and Bhutan renegotiated their treaty to allow Bhutan greater autonomy in conducting its foreign policy. In July 2007, seven ministers of Bhutan's ten-member cabinet resigned to join in a democratic political process. They left the remaining cabinet to act as a caretaker regime until a new government can assume power following parliamentary elections. Bhutan hosted its first fully democratic elections and a concomitant referendum on the draft constitution in March of 2008. Many believe that these efforts will aid the country in transitioning to a full democracy.

Geo-political context

In the 1980's the King of Bhutan and the ruling majority became worried about a growing Lhotsampa population. They adopted a series of policies known as *Bhutanization*, which aimed to unify the country under a shared Drukpa culture. This resulted in oppressive policies and deprived ethnic Nepali and other ethnic groups of their citizenship and civil rights. The Lhotsampas organized politically in opposition to these policies and called for democratization. In 1990 protests lead to violence and massive arrests. Ethnic Nepalis were targeted by Bhutanese authorities. Many experienced torture and were forced to leave the country. During this time tens of thousands fled to neighboring Nepal and West Bengal.

In 2007, issues regarding the Bhutanese in Nepal remained unresolved. The refugees are almost all ethnic Nepalis from southern Bhutan and have been encamped in eastern Nepal since they were expelled from their homes in Bhutan more than 16 years ago. They are unable to return to Bhutan or to

settle permanently in Nepal. Of the more than 100,000 refugees in Nepali camps, the United States will consider 60,000 refugees for resettlement in 2008.

Situation of Displacement

There are several Bhutanese refugee camps in the eastern lowlands of Nepal, where the population has grown from 80,000 in 1992 to 105,000 in 2007. According to UNHCR, 40 percent of the population is under the age of 17 and have spent most of their lives living as refugees. Settlements have experienced cut backs in international relief supplies (like fuel), and some female refugees are vulnerable to gender based violence or domestic violence due to confined conditions.

Over the last 16 years, the governments of Nepal and Bhutan have worked to resolve the refugee situation. Local integration of Bhutanese refugees into Nepali society has not been possible, and the Nepali government has denied refugees the right to freedom of movement and the right to work. Furthermore, after 15 years of forced eviction, ethnic Nepalis who remained in Bhutan continue to suffer discrimination, including barred access to education, employment, land ownership, and the right to carry on their language, customs and culture.

Education and Literacy

After unrest in southern Bhutan, all schools in the southern districts were closed. A number of schools have reopened, but only in places where Drukpas have resettled on land formerly owned by refugees. Drukpa students are given priority for the limited number of slots available in these schools, leaving many ethnic Nepali children to compete for the remaining places. There is no instruction in the Nepali language, even in schools in the southern districts. Only Dzongkha and English are taught in schools.

The traditional education system in Bhutan is monastic; however, efforts to modernize their education with Western systems have been underway since the 1960's. Today, the overall literacy rate in Bhutan is 47%, and the government expenditure on education is close to 5% of the countries gross domestic product. The government places a strong emphasis on providing educational opportunities and subsidizes up to nine years of education for Bhutanese citizens.

For the ethnic Nepali refugees residing in camps in Nepal, youth typically receive an education up to grade 10. Curriculum in the schools is conducted in Nepali and English. Some students are able to attend local Nepali schools beyond grade 10. The percentage of refugees without a formal education does not vary according to caste. In general, higher caste individuals are more likely to have post-secondary education than members of lower castes.

Sources:

- Bhutanese Refugees. <http://www.bhutanese-refugees.com>
- CIA World Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bt.html>
- Cultural Orientation Center. Refugee Backgrounder No.4: Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal. www.cal.org/topics/ri/backgrounders.html
- Human Rights Watch. Last Hope: The Need for Durable Solutions for Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal and India. <http://hrw.org/reports/2007/bhutan0507/>
- National Literacy Policies: Bhutan. <http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/policy/btn/index.htm>
- Refugee Processing Center. <http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/AdmissionsArrivals/tabid/211/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Burma, also known as Myanmar, is located in Southeastern Asia. Its capital city is Rangoon, and the country is controlled by a military junta.

Languages: Burmese, minority ethnic languages

Religions: Buddhist 89%, Christian 4%, Muslim 4%, Other 2%, Animist 1%

Population: Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2%, Mon 2%, other 5%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 9,776 Burmese



Culture

Burma is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. There are eight main ethnic groups, but there are more than 130 distinctive subgroups. The largest ethnic group is the Burmans (or Bamar) who encompass about 68% of the total population. The other main groups consist of the Chin, Karen, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan. Some of these ethnic groups have organized into their own “states”, as seen on the map above. The Burmans, Karen, and Chin have been among the largest groups to be resettled in the United States. The majority of Burmans practice Buddhism, whereas the Karen and Chin practice Christianity, Islam, and/or indigenous beliefs.

Refugees from Burma share many cultural values regarding the respect for elders/ancestors and the importance of the family/community unit. Generally speaking, Burmans are literate while the Chin and Karen are largely nonliterate. The Burmans grant various rights to women, such as inheritance rights, while the Chin do not. Often men and women work together in farm work, with women taking a heavier share of the burden by also maintaining the home.

The Karen may be geographically divided into three broad groups and further divided into ethnic subgroups. Most Karen live in rural areas and farm, typically rice, or hunt. Smaller portions of Karen lives in towns or cities and are usually employed as small traders, teachers, medics or traditional healers, and religious leaders.

The Chin are composed of ethnically related people who also speak 20 to 25 different languages. They are divided into four groups based on shared language. Chin people engage in farming full or part time. Those that farm part time do so in order to provide for their families while also working other part time jobs.

History

The first inhabitants of Burma were the Mons, who made their way to Burma from central Asia several centuries B.C. They spoke a dialect of the Mon-Khmer family of languages. They were followed by the Pyu (Tibet) and Bamars, and the Bamars later established the first Burmese empire. There was little or no interference from Europeans until the 15th century. By the 17th century, the British, French, and Dutch had colonies in Burma. By 1886, the British annexed the entire country and ruled Burma as a province of India until 1937. A pro-independence movement led to Burma's independence in 1948, at which time civil war broke out. Insurgency broke out among various ethnic groups and is ongoing even today.

Geo-Political Context

Between 1962 and 1988, the government was controlled by General Ne Win, who went from military ruler to self-appointed president. Widespread demonstrations began in 1988, demanding democracy, and ended in the deaths of some 3,000 Burmese people when the regime tried to squash these protests. Then in 1990, Burma held its first multiparty legislative elections wherein Win's main political opponent, the National League for Democracy (NLD), won by a landslide. Despite this victory, the ruling junta refused to hand over power. The ruling regime continues to raid homes and monasteries and arrests all those suspected of being part of any type of prodemocracy movement. Human rights abuses continue against people of all ethnicities and many flee to neighboring refugee camps.

Situation of Displacement

Many Karen are displaced in refuge camps along the Thai-Burma border. A small number of Karen refugees live in Thailand's capital city, Bangkok. Most Chin refugees live in refugee camps in Malaysia. Although both are traditionally rural peoples, many Chin refugees are notably more modernized than their Karen counterparts. Many may have access to more educational resources than the Karen in their respective camp environments. In addition to living without legal status, refugees from Burma have suffered from traumatic and stressful events, including prolonged separation from or death of family members, repression of political actions, and other conditions of permanent exile. Refugees that have been political prisoners along the Thai-Burmese border may have experienced torture, forced labor, and inadequate access to food and health services.

According to Refugees International, the largest concentration of internally displaced people in Burma is found near the border with Thailand, with estimates suggesting that 500,000 are either in hiding or in relocation sites as a result of human rights abuses committed mostly by the Burmese army and its allies.

Education and Literacy

In 1962, the military implemented the “Burmese Way to Socialism” program, which outlawed private schools. The government also restricted the use of minority languages, and Burmese is the only language taught in public schools. Government expenditure on education remains very low at estimates of 1% to 2% of Burma’s total gross domestic product. Despite this, Burma has a rich history in Buddhist monastic education which has acclaimed the country to have a relatively high literacy rate.

The Karen continued operation of their school system until the mid-1980s but were shut down when the Burmese army took control. Teacher training and classroom programs became extremely difficult to run due to the fact that displaced communities must hide from military troops. There is also a shortage of teachers in the Chin State. Chin refugees from rural areas may not have had any type of formal education. Some may have been educated up to middle school, and a handful may have graduated from high school and college. Some refugee camps offer educational provisions. Many internally displaced refugees may have to pay fees to attend education programs in public schools throughout Burma.

Sources:

- Burmese Refugee Project. <http://www.burmeserefugeeproject.org/description.htm>
- CIA World Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>
- Cultural Orientation Center. Refugees from Burma: Their Backgrounds and Refugee Experiences. www.culturalorientation.net
- Cultural Orientation Center. Trainers Exchange Report. <http://www.cal.org/co/coexchange/>
- Geographia. <http://www.geographia.com/myanmar/>
- Refugees International. <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/country/detail/2922/>

Burundi is located in Central Africa. The capital is Bujumbura, and the country is operated by a republic form of government.

Languages: Kirundi (official), French (official), Swahili

Religions: Christian 67%, Indigenous beliefs 23%, Muslim 10%

Population: Hutu (Bantu) 85%, Tutsi (Hamitic) 14%, Twa (Pygmy) 1%, Europeans 3,000, South Asians 2,000

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 4,525 Burundians



Culture

There are two main ethnic groups in Burundi. The Hutu make up 85% and the Tutsi make up 14% of the total population. The most widely spoken language is Kirundi, followed by French and Kiswahili. Though they are two separate ethnic groups, they speak the same language, share many cultural characteristics, and have a history of intermarriage. Dissimilar occupations distinguish the two ethnic groups. The Hutu most often work in agriculture, and the Tutsi are the cattle-owning elite. Importance is assigned to cattle and indicates a higher social standing. Parenthood is also highly regarded, and family and clan ties are important to both Hutu and Tutsi. Homes often cluster around small compounds with dedicated lands for farming or livestock. Visual arts, storytelling, and folklore have been important sources of artistic and cultural expression.

There are also very similar gender roles between the ethnic groups. Women are traditionally seen as dependents or subordinate to men in general. Many women have received little or no education and have not been employed outside the home. In regards to family, husbands make all the decisions and are responsible for building the home, providing the income, and deciding how the income will be used. Women are responsible for child care and activities of the home.

History

The Hutu people settled in Burundi in the early centuries AD, followed later by the Tutsis. Differences between ethnic groups were fluid until colonization by Germany and Belgium in the latter 19th century. By the 1890s, the Tutsi kingdom of Burundi and Rwanda were part of German East Africa. The Belgians began to occupy this area in the early 1900s. Tensions between ethnic groups became exacerbated during this time, when preference was given to the Tutsi minority. Nearly 50 years later, Burundi was granted independence from Belgium and became a Tutsi-controlled constitutional monarchy.

Geo-Political Context

Despite the fact that the Hutus make up the majority of the population, Tutsis have historically been politically and economically dominant. Under Belgian rule, citizens were required to carry identity cards indicating the ethnicity of the person. Dissension and resentment between the two groups increased when Tutsi were later granted political power. Hutus have since revolted against the Tutsi dominated government, ending in bloody conflicts.

In 1972 and in 1988, hundreds of thousands of Hutu were slaughtered in “ethnic cleansing” conflicts. Assassination of Hutu political figures resulted in massacres of Tutsi by Hutu gangs, which in turn resulted in retaliation from the Tutsi-controlled army. Prime targets included teachers and intellectuals viewed as a threat to the Tutsi elite. Some in the countryside were slaughtered *en masse* while many others were picked up and never seen again. As a result, Hutu parents were reluctant to send their children to school. After 1973, Hutu children attended school in neighboring countries.

Over the decades ethnic clashes increased in frequency, leading to civil war. In 1996, neighboring nations devised a proposal to supply troops and maintain peace in Burundi. Distrust within the Tutsi army led to yet another military coup in the nation’s history. By 2001, a peace plan that included a government sharing agreement was laid out and has been so far successful. Renewed peace agreements between the government and rebel leaders have helped bring an end to Burundi’s long-standing civil war.

Situation of Displacement

Many Burundians have experienced long term encampment in Tanzania and neighboring countries. The “1972 Burundians” reside in three different refugee camps in Tanzania. Access to modern amenities, education, and employment resources is severely limited. Encamped Burundians maintain a rural way of life whereby they build mud homes, collect firewood for cooking, keep small gardens, raise ducks and other small animals, and practice their traditional customs. Burundian refugees subsist on United Nations food rations and other relief assistance. Rape is also a concern for some female camp inhabitants. Due to conflict and war, many children remain internally displaced, living in temporary homes or camps. Some may also exhibit clinical symptoms of trauma due to their experiences.

Education and Literacy

There are a myriad of issues in regards to education in Burundi. The country experienced an appreciable loss of trained Hutu teachers that were killed or fled the country. Remaining teachers felt insecure working in rural areas and were transferred. In 1994 alone, nearly 500 teachers requested transfers. Access to education is further compounded by limited teaching facilities, textbooks, and resources.

Approximately half of all Burundians are literate. It is estimated that only 20% of the 1972 Burundian adult displaced population are literate. For those that are literate, the average educational attainment

includes primary and secondary education levels. Disproportionate numbers of students are not admitted to secondary school levels, and even fewer receive higher education. According to the CIA World Factbook, one in every two children attends school.

Sources:

- CIA World Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html>
- Cultural Orientation Center. Refugee Backgrounder No.2: The 1972 Burundians. http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/backgrounder_burudians.pdf
- Encyclopedia Britannica: Burundi. <http://www.britannica.com/>
- Human Rights Watch. Seeking Protection: Addressing Sexual and Domestic Violence in Tanzania's Refugee Camps. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/tanzania/Duhweb-05.htm>
- Info please. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107374.html>
- Jackson, Tony. Equal Access to Education: A Peace Imperative for Burundi. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/17/0f/e4.pdf
- Skonhoft, C. G. 2000. 'Why should I send my child to school?' A study of Burundian Hutu refugees' experiences of exclusion from education and how this motivates education in Tanzanian exile. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift—Norwegian Journal of Geography* Vol. 54, 116–121. Oslo. ISSN 0029-1951.
- U.S. Department of State. Bureau of African Affairs. February 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2821.htm>

Cuba, is located in Central America in the Caribbean sea, south of Key West Florida. Its capital city is Havana, and the country is ruled by a communist state.

Languages: Spanish

Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jehovah's Witness, Jewish, and Santeria

Population: Mixed heritage 51%, White 37%, Black 11%, Chinese 1%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 2923 Cubans



Culture

Cuba's population is composed of a tapestry of indigenous peoples, Spanish descendants, Afro-Cubans, and mixed race people. Cuba was a former Spanish colony for several centuries. During this time many indigenous Amer-Indian populations began to decline. When Havana became a central point for Spanish fleets, large numbers of African slaves were sent to Cuba to work the coffee and sugar plantations. Haitian slaves, together with French settlers, entered Cuba during the years of the Haitian Revolution. Another ethnic group in Cuba includes the descendants of Chinese workers who immigrated to Cuba during the latter half of the 19th century. Racial and ethnic tensions have often been very tense in Cuba.

Spanish is the official language of Cuba. A significant number of Afro-Cubans speak Haitian Creole as well. Many indigenous *Taino* words and customs have been incorporated into Cuban culture. Cuban communism is an important fabric of social and cultural life. The Castro revolution helped improve racial tensions by offering most ethnic groups access to health and education programs. Large numbers of blacks and women have achieved skilled, professional, and managerial positions, and blacks have found advancement in military careers and in Cuba's successful sports programs. Cubans retain a very strong sense of *Cubanidad*, cultural identity. This sense of cultural identity comes partially from a sense of place and partially from the homogeneity of language and shared culture. It is a major factor in the relative stability of the revolutionary government in Cuba and in the stability of the Cuban community in the U.S.

History

Spanish rule was repressive and provoked an independence movement and rebellion. The Spanish-American War in 1898 brought an end to Spain's governance. The 1902 Treaty of Paris established Cuban independence after a three-year transition period. U.S. involvement at this time included the Platt Amendment, which restricted Cuba's ability to enter into treaties. This gave the U.S. power to intervene in Cuban affairs and allowed the U.S. to purchase or lease land for naval stations. The Platt Amendment guaranteed the right to lease property "in perpetuity" at Guantánamo Bay.

During the mid 1930's the U.S. owned 50% of the sugar industry, had capital acquisitions in public utilities, and purchased 75% of Cuban exports. In revolt to the U.S. backed Morales government, the Batista revolution altered some provisions in the Platt Amendment. Batista, a commander in the Cuban armed forces, dominated Cuban politics, and he was elected president in 1940. When presidential elections challenged his position, the Batista government became more repressive and corrupt. The political landscape changed again when Fidel Castro led a rebel army to victory in 1959 and proceeded to rule the communist state of Cuba for nearly five decades. The Cuban revolution included a massive education and literacy campaign. Many resources were poured into the health care system resulting in many other social improvements as well. In 1961, U.S. President Kennedy invaded Cuba and launched military force from Playa Giron (also known as "bay of pigs"). Castro's army crushed the invasion, taking surviving Cuban-Americans prisoner. He ransomed the prisoners for \$62 million in needed goods and medical supplies.

Cuba's Communist revolution, with Soviet support, was exported throughout Latin America and Africa during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Due to failing health, Fidel Castro recently stepped down as president in 2008 in favor of his younger brother Raul Castro. Presently, Cuba is recovering from a severe economic downturn in 1990, following the withdrawal of former Soviet subsidies. Cuba also experiences economic difficulties as a result of a U.S. embargo that has been in place since 1961.

Geo-political Context

In 1980 the U.S. created the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program under Title V of the Refugee Education Assistance Act. This program granted Cuban and Haitian entrants access to refugee cash and medical assistance. Soon after implementation of this program, the number of asylum seekers to the U.S. arose. The first recipients of the new program were the approximately 125,000 Cubans who fled the Castro regime in the Mariel boatlift of 1980. Castro opened the port of Mariel to what is referred to as "freedom flotilla"; thus allowing refugees to flee to Miami, Florida. After their arrival, it was discovered that some were prisoners, mental patients, homosexuals, and others that experienced persecution by the Cuban government. Many of these Cuban refugees are referred to as *Marielitos*. Many Americans and Cuban-Americans feared these refugees to be "undesirables" when in fact less than 1% had criminal accounts warranting deportation.

Today, under the terms of a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Cuba, up to 20,000 Cuban immigrants are allowed to enter the U.S. directly from Cuba each year. Cuban exile is a term applied to the first wave of Cubans that entered the country after the 1959 revolution. The term refugee is applied to Cubans who have been given refugee status. Collectively, Cuban refugees are refugees, asylees, entrants, Havana parolees, or victims of human trafficking. Generally, a Cuban entrant is a Cuban national who is (a) paroled into the U.S., (b) subject to exclusion or deportation proceedings, or (c) an applicant for asylum.

Situation of Displacement

Increasing numbers of Cuban migrants are apprehended in the Caribbean waters each year as they attempt migration to the U.S. Each year the U.S. Coast Guard apprehends several Cuban refugees. Migration to the U.S. includes using homemade rafts, alien smugglers, air flights, or via the southwest border.

As documented by the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) in 2003, 28,200 Cubans sought refuge abroad, mostly in the United States. Those arriving in the U.S. were paroled in, rendering them eligible to apply for permanent residence under the Cuban Adjustment Act. Others sought refuge in Costa Rica, Canada, Argentina, and Brazil. In more recent years, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has strengthened ties between his country and Cuba. The number of Cuban exiles in Venezuela is estimated to be 25,000 to 50,000.

Education and Literacy

Cuba boasts one of the best education systems in Latin America with over 98 percent literacy. Literacy is defined as those age 15 and older that can read and write. Prior the revolution only half the population was literate.

Cuban children are normally required to attend school between the ages of 6 and 15. Afterwards, they receive a Secondary School Completion Diploma and may choose to leave school. Some students choose to go to a pre-collegiate school, technical school, or none at all. Around 7% of the population has graduated from college and 4% have degrees. In addition, there are 1.3 million graduates of technical schools in Cuba.

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Eritrea is a small country in East Africa, bordering the Red Sea. Its capital city is Asmara, and the country is run by a transitional government led by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

Languages: Afar, Arabic, Tigre and Kunama, Tigrinya, other Cushitic languages

Religions: Muslim, Coptic Christian, Roman Catholic, Protestant

Population: Tigrinya 50%, Tigre and Kunama 40%, Afar 4%, Saho 3%, other 3%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 945 Eritreans



Culture

Eritrea contains several different ethnic groups with varied languages, religions, and cultural traditions. Its strategic port locations on the Red Sea have contributed to the exchange and movement of culture and ideas from other countries in the region. Despite the varied ethnic groups in Eritrea, years of war have helped shape unity, solidarity, and a shared national consciousness. Group delineations typically occur according to language and religion rather than by ethnic group. The Tigrinya and Tigre languages are the more predominant languages in Eritrea, descended from an ancient Semitic language. Arabic and other native languages are also common. The use of native languages in school is encouraged at the local level, and English is often taught in secondary schools.

The majority of laborers in Eritrea work in agriculture, and the remainder works in various other industries. Agricultural development has suffered in Eritrea due to drought, famine, and war. Women's roles in agriculture are important though men hold specific responsibilities, such as plowing and sowing. Women tend to the household, where young girls assist in such tasks as fetching water and young boys assist in such tasks as herding animals. The status of women has gradually improved over time due in part to a fostered sense of nationalism.

History

During the early 11th century BC, Semitic-speaking people from Southern Arabia migrated across the Red Sea, intermingling with Eritreans on the coast and in the highlands. The Semitic invaders established their own kingdom, which grew in size and established important trade routes through much of Eritrea. The kingdom extended as far as modern Egypt and Yemen, but began to fade in the 6th century AD. Control of Eritrea was contested over the centuries until the 19th century when it was first colonized by Italy and then conquered by Great Britain in 1941. Intervention from the United Nations annexed Eritrea and granted them autonomy from Britain. This autonomy was short lived, and Eritrea came under the rule of Ethiopia in 1962. In the years prior and following Ethiopian rule, Eritreans fought for independence and finally gained it in 1993 after many long years of war.

Geo-Political Context

The longest civil war in African history took place between 1961 and 1991 between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Continued interference and suppression of Eritrea's independence movement by Ethiopia, succeeded in uniting Eritreans to a common cause regardless of ethnicity, language, or religion. Trade unions, political parties, and autonomous forms of government were banned by Ethiopia. Native languages were also banned until Amharic, Ethiopia's official language, was instituted as the official language of Eritrea. It was then that students began to band together for the cause.

By the 1970's, independence appeared close at hand until Ethiopia reorganized their forces, aided by the Former Soviet Union. War raged on for another twenty years during which time many Eritreans fled the country either to escape the war or to find employment due to Eritrea's deteriorating economy. It is currently estimated that 1 in 5 Eritreans live abroad. Finally in 1991, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) defeated Ethiopian forces. Independence was gained in 1993. Fighting between countries broke out during late 1998 resulting in more waves of Eritrean refugees.

Despite decades of struggle, Eritrea continued to face clashes with neighboring countries, more recently with Ethiopia in a struggle over territory. United Nations peacekeepers currently maintain a twenty-five kilometer Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) on the Eritrea-Ethiopian border. Ethiopian forces occupy several disputed areas within the TSZ, which Eritrea considers to be its territory.

Situation of Displacement

According to Relief Web, during the 1998-2000 border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, more than 650,000 were displaced, and 70,000 individuals were deported. At the end of 2000, more than 355,000 Eritreans were displaced in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Yemen. Asylum-seekers in Sudan look for sanctuary from recurring conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. According to a UN News source, over 22,000 Eritreans have sought refuge in 2003, long after the two countries signed a peace treaty in 2000 ending hostilities. An estimated 98,000 Eritreans returned home under a UNHCR voluntary repatriation program.

Education and Literacy

Primary school education is a critical concern for Eritrean schools. Over fifty percent of children drop out before completing eight years. A majority of these children are from poorer areas where schools typically have few teachers, fewer classrooms, and no toilets or drinking water. Most schools are in the same state as they were at the start of war with Ethiopia thirty years ago. The government has tried to improve the quality and efficiency of the educational system, but drop-out rates and low enrollment rates are still significant. Teachers in Eritrea often teach classrooms of forty to seventy children, and

unlike many business and industry positions, there is no financial incentive for teachers and other school staff. Official statistics put the literacy rate in Eritrea at around forty percent. For refugee youth residing in encampments in neighboring countries, access to education is a continuing struggle. However, some urban Eritrean refugees in countries such as Kenya may have greater access to primary and secondary education.

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Ethiopia is located in Eastern Africa. The capital, Addis Ababa, is home to a federal republic form of government.

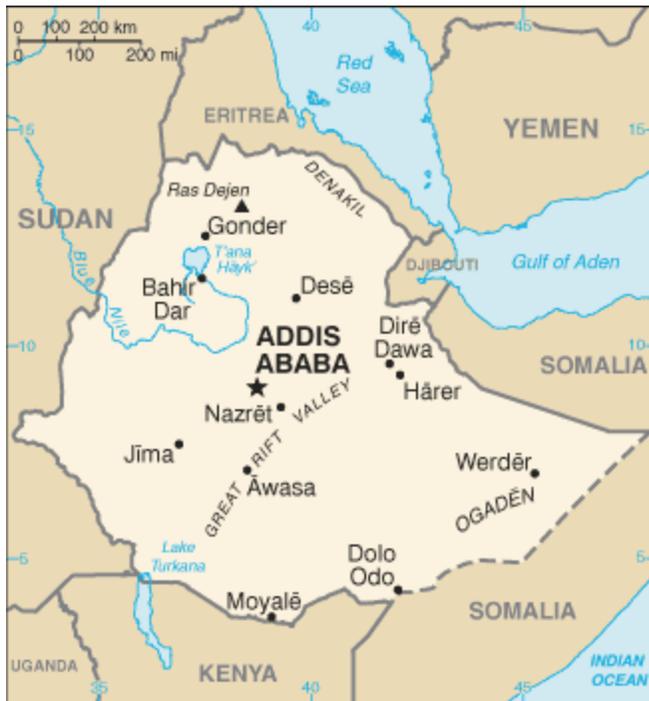
Languages: Amarigna 32.7%, Oromigna 31.6%, Tigrigna 6.1%, Somaligna 6%, Guaragigna 3.5%, Sidamigna 3.5%, Hadiyigna 1.7%

Religions: Christian 60.8%, Muslim 32.8%, Traditional 4.6%

Population: Oromo 32.1%, Amara 30.1%, Tigraway 6.2%, Somalie 5.9%, Guragie 4.3%, Sidama 3.5%, Welaita 2.4%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 1,043 Ethiopians



Culture

Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa. Its people are culturally and linguistically diverse, with a number of religions represented as well. There are about 100 different languages, but Oromo and Amharic are the two most common. Christianity is the predominant religion and has had considerable influence on Ethiopian politics and culture since its introduction in the 4th century. In the eastern lowlands, Islam is widely practiced, and many in the western lowlands worship African deities.

Most Ethiopians engage in subsistence farming and raise cattle. Agriculture accounts for nearly half of the country's economy. As such, many reside in rural areas, and whole families are expected to engage in heavy physical labor. Cultural life resides predominately in language, religion, and family. Ethiopians place considerable value in social practices as well. Hospitality is an example of grace in social relations, as is respect for others and respect for elders. Women have traditionally held inferior positions in society and have not had equal access to education, employment, and land ownership, particularly in rural areas. Some improvements have been made, and enrollment of girls in primary and secondary schools has increased since the 1970's.

History

In the late 19th century, Ethiopia had a long established monarchy. Conflicts in previous decades with Italian and British forces led to eventual reforms and a treaty with the Italians. Separate interpretations of this treaty led to conflict between the two countries. Arms support from France helped Ethiopia defeat Italy and establish new allies. Allies were found in the Former Soviet Union and this carried over into the twentieth century.

Prior to World War II, Italy found cause to invade Ethiopia and occupied, for a short time, what was renamed Italian East Africa. This area included Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland. A war with Italy ensued and ended with a peace treaty establishing Italian Somaliland and Eritrea as a federation and autonomous unit within the Ethiopian kingdom. In 1975, the monarchy was abolished and replaced by a federal republic.

Geo-Political Context

After the transition to a republic, there was a broad based call for a civilian led democratic government. However, the military regime rooted out resistors, and thousands were murdered or disappeared. Continued human rights violations, including forced displacement and genocide, an ongoing war with Eritrea, and a series of severe droughts further destabilized the nation in the 1980's and 1990's. Government repression, drought, famine, interference with food relief efforts, and large-scale conflicts led many to flee the country to neighboring countries and refugee camps.

Since 1980, refugees entering the United States are usually young, single, males from urban or semi-urban areas. They are relatively well-educated and have some English skills. However, this does not reflect the reality of Ethiopia. Most Ethiopian refugees in Africa are rural, poor, and illiterate. Regardless of social standing, refugees may have experienced severe psychological stress, and as with many other groups, close friendship ties that they depended on in Ethiopia are often compromised in the U.S.

Situation of Displacement

Ethiopian refugees live displaced in several different countries including Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen and countries throughout Europe. According to data from Relief Web, in early 2001, close to 300,000 Ethiopians were displaced. Many Ethiopian families that are internally displaced within Ethiopia have been able to access the United States' refugee family reunification program. Conditions of displacement vary for Ethiopian refugees.

In neighboring Kenya, the 2001 Children's Act made primary education free in refugee camps but created entitlement fees for urban refugees attending primary and secondary schools. Therefore, educational achievement for Ethiopian refugees will vary greatly among the population as well.

Education and Literacy

Ethiopia has one of the lowest childhood school enrollment rates in the world. It is important to note that a new, modern educational system was initiated after the liberation of Ethiopia in 1941. A ten-year plan was formulated in 1953 for the controlled expansion of education, in addition to a modern salary scale, increased numbers of trained personnel, and access to machinery for school publications. However, there continued to be many struggles in Ethiopia in regards to education.

The probability of attending school currently is very low if the child is female or young, if their father is a farmer, or if the household lives in certain rural areas. After 1994, educational fees were abolished,

which increased school enrollment, but there were still parents who distrusted teachers and refused to send their children to school. Parents may also have felt that keeping their children home is better than letting them go to a sub-standard school. Ethiopia's literacy rate is approximately 43%.

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Iran is located in the Middle East, between Iraq and Pakistan. Its capital is Tehran, and its form of government is a theocratic republic.

Languages: Persian 58%, Turkic 26%, Kurdish 9%, Luri 2%, Balochi 1%, Arabic 1%, Turkish 1%
Religions: Muslim (Shi'a and Sunni) 98%, Other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i) 2%
Population: Persian 51%, Azeri 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 5,474 Iranians



Culture

Iran is made up of numerous religious and ethnic groups. The Shi'ite are the dominant Muslim group, and native speakers of Persian (Farsi) make up just over half the population in Iran. In the early 20th century, Iranians were stratified into a small ruling elite, middle, and lower classes. Industrialization and urbanization created a new middle class of professionals and laborers, and in turn challenged traditional cultural values. Growing secularism also challenged many of these values, which are rooted in Islamic and pre-Islamic ethics regarding the importance of family, hospitality, and morality. A 1979 revolution to return to these values included requiring modest dress and gender segregation in some public facilities. The new urban lifestyle did benefit women by providing increased access to education and opportunities to employment and helped to expand the middle class.

History

The name "Iran" comes from Aryan tribes who controlled Persia around the 17th century B.C. Islamic Arabs, who established Islam in the region, conquered Persia around 640 AD. Over the centuries, Persia exchanged hands among the Turks and Mongols. Iran was then consumed by violent conflict and

disorder in the 15th century. By the end of the 18th century, the Qajars dynasty came under threat of Russia and Great Britain. Fearing corruption and manipulation by foreign powers, the people of Iran began a constitutional movement in the early 1900's. A coup in 1925 led to a shift in power as well as modernization of Iran. By World War II, Iran's oil and transportation resources were highly coveted by outside forces. After the establishment of a new constitutional monarch, the occupying countries, the U.S. and Soviet Union, agreed to withdraw. The delayed withdrawal of the Soviet Union led to tensions and what became known as the Azerbaijan Crisis.

In the later part of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, many Iranian intellectuals were forced to leave the country as a result of their demand for reform during the period leading up to Iran's Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. Further, the events of the Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979, resulted in the ousting of the Pahlavi dynasty and the monarch, in favor of an Islamic theocracy.

Geo-Political Context

In 1979, Saddam Hussein declared himself President of Iraq. The following year he declared war on Iran. The Iran-Iraq war, also known as the Gulf War, lasted for 8 years. War displaced much of Iraq's Kurdish population, and the Iraqi Anfal policy attempted to further wipe them out. Hussein, feeling threatened by collaboration between Iran and Kurdish forces, attempted to reclaim territory conceded to Iran in a 1975 border agreement. He implemented the use of chemical weapons killing thousands of Iranian military and civilians. As a result of the Iran-Iraq war, 1.5 million people were killed and over half a million people were displaced or detained in Iraqi camps. In 1980 and 1981, Hussein also expelled hundreds of thousands of Iranians despite their Iraqi citizenship (some had lived in Iraq for centuries) and lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge of Iran. Other refugees and immigrants from Iran include members of religious minorities, particularly Jews and Baha'is, and political opponents of the government in Tehran.

Situation of Displacement

Following the end of the Gulf war, Iranian Kurdish refugees fled to neighboring Turkey and Iraq. According to the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrant, estimates from 2007 indicate that as many as 12,500 Iranian refugees live displaced in Iraq. UNHCR helped Iranian Kurdish refugees who moved to the Kawa camp in Erbil with vocational training. For more than 20 years, many of these refugees have lived in the al-Tash camp. In Iraq, the Government and UNHCR allow refugee children to attend local schools.

Education and Literacy

In Iran, primary education lasts for five years after which secondary education covers three years of lower secondary and upper secondary education and a one-year pre-university program. An estimated 75% of children are enrolled in primary school and less than 50% are enrolled in secondary school. Approximately 77% of Iranians age fifteen and over can read and write. The majority of refugees is literate in Persian and may have some familiarity with English or French, both of which were taught in the schools as a second language.

Persian and English are used in higher education instruction. After the revolution, university students considered not sufficiently Islamic were expelled. University admissions have since dropped considerably, and most notably among female students. Among the middle and upper classes, foreign education is considered superior to an Iranian education, and many will seek higher education abroad.

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Iraq is a country in the Middle East that shares borders with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the south, Jordan to the west, Syria to the northwest, Turkey to the north, and Iran to the east. Its capital city is Baghdad, and the country is run by a parliamentary democracy.

Languages: Arabic, Kurdish, Turkoman, Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic), Armenian

Religions: Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%

Population: Arab 75%, Kurdish 15%, Turkoman, Assyrian, or other (including Turkmens, Assyrians, and Armenians) 5%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 1,608 Iraqis



Culture

Iraq is composed of a number of ethnic groups. Iraqi Arabs share most of the values and practices of other Arabs, with their way of life heavily dominated by the Shi'ite religion. The Ma'dan (or Marsh Arabs) is a distinct sub-group of Iraqi Arabs that live in marshy areas. They primarily depend on fishing and raise water buffalo. Kurds live in northeast Iraq, where some of the most valuable oil fields are located. The Kurds are an Iranian ethnic group with their own Indo-European language. Many Iraqi Kurds also speak Arabic. Assyrians are another minority group in Iraq, and some Assyrians speak Syriac. They are referred to as Christian Assyrians and are often called "the first Iraqis" because their presence in the area predated the Muslim Arabs. Assyrians have a long history of persecution, and as a result, their numbers are few. They constitute a disproportionate percentage of Iraqi refugees.

Traditional ways of life across the ethnic groups have included farming along river areas, and nomadic grazing in the western plains and deserts. Kurdish farmers are often herdsman in mountain areas. In general, extended families are common in Iraqi Arab families, and loyalty to one's family and tribe are esteemed values. Children are adored, and marriage among first cousins is a common practice.

With the discovery and processing of oil, increased migration to urban centers has risen. In addition, the U.S. war in Iraq has contributed to changes in demographics, politics, economics and culture. Tensions existed for centuries between Sunnis and Shi'ites due to the fact that Shi'ites have been considered a minority within the Islamic world. However, the Shi'ite sect comprises most of Iraq and neighboring Iran. Throughout modern history, the ruling elites have tended to be Sunni, and this has been a source of antagonism and conflict.

History

Formerly part of Mesopotamia and then the Ottoman Empire, Iraq is rich in history dating back over 8,000 years. During the time of the Islamic Empire, Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid caliphs. When Mongols invaded in the 13th century, Mesopotamia became fractured resulting in power holding by tribal sheikhs. The Ottomans were Sunnis, whereby the Ottomans and Persians contested over the Shi'ite areas of Iran and Iraq. During this time, there existed frequent uprisings by the northern Kurds as well. Iraq was then occupied by Britain throughout the course of World War I. Iraq attained its independence in 1932.

Although Iraq became a kingdom in 1932 and a republic in 1958, militarism ruled the country until 2003. The rise of the Ba'ath Party occurred shortly after World War II, and military factions continued to vie for power. The Ba'ath party eventually went underground with the assistance of Saddam Hussein. The Ba'ath regime instituted a number of social developments including the nationalization of oil production. In 1979 Saddam Hussein became president.

Territorial disputes with Iran led to an Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). In August 1990, Iraq seized Kuwait but was expelled by U.S.-led, U.N. coalition forces during the Gulf War. Through the Desert Storm and Desert Shield actions, the United States placed sanctions on the country as did the United Nations. In early 1991 Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait. Following Kuwait's liberation, the UN Security Council required Iraq to eradicate all weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles and to allow UN verification inspections. Continued noncompliance with UN Security Council resolutions over a period of 12 years contributed to the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the ousting of Saddam Hussein. Coalition forces remain in Iraq, helping to provide security and to support the elected government.

After 2005 elections, an Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) assumed office. The 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA) was charged with drafting Iraq's permanent constitution, which was approved in October 2005.

Geo-political context

Prior the ousting of Saddam Hussein, around one million Iraqis were displaced to different parts of the Middle East. The attack by the United States in 2003 and the removal of the Iraqi government has led to several years of intense violence, ethnic and communal cleansing, and suffering. Many Iraqi professionals fled the country to escape the general threat of sectarian violence and kidnapping, which has become a common practice conducted by insurgents and organized gangs. The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 led to the return of more than 300,000 Iraqis. However, by mid 2007, over 2.2 million Iraqis were living outside Iraq with declining numbers returning. Some that have returned have found safety in Northern Iraq, while others are internally displaced. In 2007, there was an estimated 2.2 million internally displaced Iraqis.

Situation of Displacement

According to the U.N. Refugee Agency and the International Organization for Migration, nearly 5 million Iraqis have been displaced by violence. The vast majority of Iraqis have fled the country since 2003. Since the upsurge of violence following the bombing of a Shi'ite holy site in Samarra, the refugee flight has been large and constant. UNHCR estimates that up to 50,000 people flee the country each month.

The status of Iraqi refugees in neighboring states is difficult to discern. At present, there are not encampments resembling camp structures. While Iraqi refugees are far from being assimilated into the countries they are hosted, many have been able to blend into urban areas, settling into cities like Amman and Damascus. Up to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees have been living in Syria, and over 1 million refugees have been living in Jordan, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey and Gulf States. These receiving countries are met with huge numbers of refugees with limited resources to support them. Many have started implementing stricter visa processes.

Education and Literacy

Iraq's educational system was established in the second half of the last century, beginning with the introduction of universities, such as the University of Baghdad. The development of higher education in Iraq has been characterized by the establishment of technical institutes, reflecting the considerable demand for qualified technicians brought on by the oil industry. After the recent invasion of Iraq by U.S. coalition forces, 84% of Iraq's higher education infrastructure had been burnt, looted or severely destroyed. Academics have been assassinated, and many are under daily threat. Despite these severe challenges, the enrollment rate for primary education remained at 74% in 2006. The adult literacy rate for 2000-2005 was 74%.

While living displaced in Iran, Iraqi refugees are normally allowed to attend primary and secondary schools. However, the Iran government denies foreigners access to schools and universities unless they met average grade requirements. Enrollment of refugee children in schools was contingent on their parents paying municipal taxes targeting refugees.

U.N. agencies have been working to support the Syrian government with educational provisions for Iraqi refugees. Syria allows refugee children to attend public schools for free or for minimal fees. It is estimated only 1 in 7 Iraqi children attend school. UNHCR gave uniforms to Iraqi students, funded schools, and helped the education ministry refurbish school buildings.

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Liberia is located in Western Africa on the North Atlantic Ocean. Its capital is Monrovia, and it is led by a republic form of government.

Languages: English 20% (official), some 20 ethnic group languages

Religions: Christian 40%, Muslim 20%, indigenous beliefs 40%

Population: Indigenous African 95%, Americo-Liberians 2.5%, Congo People 2.5%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 1,576 Liberians



Culture

Liberia is home to a number of different indigenous ethnic groups, including the Kran, Kpelle, Via, Bassa, Grebo, Kru, Gola, and Kisi peoples. Americo-Liberians, whose ancestry is made up of freed black American slaves, make up the rest of Liberia's population. Most Liberians practice traditional African religions, though Christians and Muslims are also significant religious groups. English is Liberians official language, though the majority speak ethnic languages.

Approximately 45 percent of people in Liberia live in cities and towns, Monrovia being the largest and most developed. Unfortunately, much of the city was destroyed during fighting between local political powers from 1989 to 2003. Many of the country's oldest homes, modeled after the grand mansions of the Southern United States, did not survive the conflict.

Liberia is an impoverished country, with more than two thirds of the population working in agriculture. The area came to be known as the Grain Coast as a result of the valuable Melegueta pepper, whose seeds were the principal item of trade. Farmers also raise livestock for themselves and their families. Liberia's government is one of the country's leading employers.

History

In the 19th century, as the U.S. worked to abolish slavery, Liberia was suggested as a suitable home for freed slaves. The U.S. government negotiated an agreement with leaders of local tribes for the ownership of Cape Mesurado and founded a settlement there. This main settlement became what is today Monrovia. During this time of transition, tensions existed between indigenous Africans and freed slaves. The Liberian Commonwealth grew and the Americo-Liberian rule enforced certain social status measures, such as colorism.

The longest serving Liberian President, William V. S. Tubman, led from 1944 to 1971. He helped to create an Open Door Policy to foreign investors, which helped unify Liberian and Americo-Liberian populations, and a Unification policy that allowed Liberians to take pride in their varied cultural identities and practices. Despite these advances, President Tubman suppressed political opposition and multiparty politics. He was replaced by President William R. Tolbert who led the country until a 1980 coup led by Samuel K. Doe. Despite improvements made by President Tolbert, social inequities between average and upper middle Liberians grew. These inequities helped spur a military coup d'état, resulting in his assassination.

Geo-Political Context

In 1980, a military coup established authoritarian rule and the first fully indigenous head of state, Samuel K. Doe. His rule lasted for almost ten years and is marked by severe human rights abuses. Charles Taylor helped lead a rebellion against Doe's regime that led to a prolonged civil war. Taylor's invasion from the Ivory Coast effectively increased the violence in neighboring countries as well.

In 1997, Taylor obtained legitimate power through political elections though largely through fear and intimidation. Intense fighting resumed in 2000. In 2003, an indictment of war crimes and crimes against humanity forced Taylor's resignation. After two years of leadership by a transitional government, Liberia had its first democratic elections. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president. Despite this democratic progress, the security situation in Liberia is still very fragile.

Situation of Displacement

When fighting broke out in 2001, many Liberian refugees fled to neighboring countries of Ghana, Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. Reports in 2004 estimated the number of internally displaced to be between 350,000 and 500,000, while the number of refugees living abroad came to around 300,000. In Ghana alone, close to 40,000 Liberian refugees remain in the Buduburam refugee settlement camp. In 2007, UNHCR provided free primary school education for almost all refugees, and some continued on to secondary school. The UN and the newly formed democratic government of Liberia has been working to repatriate both internally displaced refugees and those living encamped in neighboring countries to help rebuild the country.

Education and Literacy

Since 1939, education has been required for children between seven and sixteen years of age, and is free at both primary and secondary levels. Liberia offers students a number of higher education institutions and vocational schools.

The years of war and conflict beginning in 1980 brought education to a halt. Students and their families were forced to flee to avoid the fighting, and many of the educational facilities and most of the equipment were destroyed. Educated and skilled Liberians were among the first to flee the violence and

few have returned to the country. Since the peace accord of 2003, Liberia has been rebuilding the country's educational system. Liberia has a 57.5% literacy rate. Some Liberian refugees may speak both English and French depending on their conditions of displacement and pre-existing literacy skills.

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Somalia is located in Eastern Africa in what is frequently referred to as the Horn of Africa. The capital, Mogadishu, houses a transitional, parliamentary government.

Languages: Somali (official), Arabic, Bantu, Italian, English

Religions: Muslim, Christian, Sufi, Animist

Population: Somali, Bantu and other non-Somali ethnic groups make up 15% of the total population.

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 6,958 Somali



Culture

The Somali people have a long established culture of nomadic agriculture and Islamic faith. They are one of the most homogenous of the African countries, with few ethnic minorities, such as the Bantu. Somalis, organized into different clan groups, are able to trace their heritage back to one ancestor. Despite regional differences in dialect, the Somali language (Cushitic in origin) is shared and understood by all. Arabic, English, and Italian are also spoken by many due to a history of colonialism and/or a tradition of living and working abroad. The primary source of income for families is agriculture and livestock. The nomadic way of life, the love of freedom and open spaces, is a common theme in Somali storytelling and folklore. The remainder of the population dwells in urban centers where the culture gives way to more modern amenities such as television and cinema.

Kinship and family relationships are very important in Somali culture. Living with large and extended families is often the norm. Under Islamic law, men are permitted up to four wives, though not all will participate in this custom. As in many Muslim cultures, men and women are typically separated in social settings. Almost all Somali are Sunni Muslim and religion will play a role in all spheres of life.

History

Somalis descend from an Arabian family that migrated to Somalia over 1,000 years ago. In the early 10th century the country benefited from trade with Egypt, Greek, Roman, and Chinese merchants.

Between 1891 and 1960, Somalia was separated into 5 colonial divisions among Britain, France, Italy, Ethiopia, and Kenya. In 1960, Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland combined to create the Somali Republic. The remaining borders, where thousands of Somali still reside, continue to be in conflict. For nine years following, the country operated under a democracy, with a high level of political participation from all citizens. During that time, relationships with China and the Former Soviet Union led to isolation from the United States and Ethiopia, who was closely aligned with the U.S.

By the late 1960's, inefficiencies and government corruption contributed to overall instability. The Somali Republic was overthrown in 1969 by a military coup and led to the installation of Major General Maxamed Sivaad Barre. Barre led the country through internal strife where clan was pitted against clan and many suffered human rights abuses. After years of civil war, Barre's regime gave way to a fragmented and de facto government in 1991.

Geo-Political Context

Mohamed Siad Barre was the Head of State of Somalia from 1969 – 1991. He was overthrown by rebels in January 1991, and civil war broke out. Different clans, including the Bantu, competed for governmental power. Many Somali fled the country to escape war and widespread hunger, poverty, violence, and death. Between 1991 and 1992, approximately half the country was displaced. However, many refugees were turned away from neighboring countries and still others were unable to find permanent refuge. Many Somali are unable to return to Somalia. Many more have qualified for the United States' family reunification program.

Situation of Displacement

Many Somali have sought refuge in neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Djibouti, and Yemen. According to the United Nations, more than half the population in 2007 was living as refugees outside the country with 194,000 living in Kenya, 95,000 in Yemen, 16,000 in Ethiopia, and 9,000 in Djibouti. The journey to Yemen requires a dangerous passage across the Red Sea, and thousands continue to make that trek to camps where fighting between local tribes and the government further complicates an already vulnerable displacement situation.

Education and Literacy

Before the collapse of the government in 1991, education was free and compulsory for children up to age 13. In 1996, enrollment dropped to 8% primary and 5% secondary school aged children. Some private schools still operate, but are predominately religious schools. These schools provide a religious education in Islamic law and do not provide a secular education found in public schools. The education system in Somali has largely collapsed, including the loss of secondary vocational, agricultural, and teacher-training schools and universities.

Refugees preparing for resettlement in the U.S. learn English and about modern American life in cultural orientation classes in the camps. Many school age children have learned to read and write, particularly young men. The United Nations estimated that the literacy rate in Somalia is 24% (an increase from 5% in the 1970s). According to the CIA World Factbook, 37.8% of Somali age 15 and over can read and write.

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Somalia is located in Eastern Africa in what is frequently referred to as the Horn of Africa. The capital, Mogadishu, houses a transitional, parliamentary government.

Languages: Somali (official), Arabic, Bantu, Italian, English

Religions: Muslim, Christian, Sufi, Animist

Population: Somali, Bantu and other non-Somali ethnic groups make up 15% of the total population.

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 6,958 Somali



Culture

The people of Somalia and the Somali Bantu differ in terms of their history, culture, physical appearance, and linguistics. The Somali Bantu have many different tribal and linguistic practices despite centuries of slavery and persecution. Broadly speaking, the Bantu are multilingual, some speaking four or five languages.

There are a great number of Bantu-speaking Africans in every country south of the Sahara. Currently, there are about 150,000 Somali's living in the U.S. Approximately 40,000 of these are from a dominant Somali group and about 300 are Bantu.

The Somali Bantu can be divided into distinct groups. These include those who are (1) indigenous to Somalia, (2) those who were brought to Somalia as slaves from Bantu-speaking tribes but integrated into Somali society, and (3) those who were brought to Somalia as slaves but maintained, to varying degrees, their ancestral culture, Bantu languages, and sense of identity. This last group is continually discriminated against for rejecting complete assimilation into Somali culture.

The Somali Bantu come from a community based society, meaning they are accustomed to working with each other in order to complete a task instead of doing it on one's own. Men usually work on private farms or at wage earning jobs. Women usually play the role of head of household, taking care of food preparations and farming tasks. Children will help on the farm. Appointed elders and leaders conduct ceremonies and negotiate conflict among community members.

Bantu families tend to be large as children are revered and seen as a blessing. Women are usually married as teenagers and begin having children early. Polygamy was traditionally practiced and many families are made up of single female households with one male head for several different families.

Most Somali Bantu are Sufi and/or Muslim, having converted upon entering Somalia centuries ago. They are not as strictly observant as some of the dominant Somali. The Bantu use traditional healing methods, spirituality, and modern medicine to cure medical and social disturbances. Several of the healing methods leave scars, so it is not uncommon to see children and adults with unusual scars on their faces or bodies. Many women have undergone the procedure of ritual female genital surgery. Music, especially drumming and dancing, is an integral part of community gatherings. Since they come from a culture with a strong oral tradition, music and storytelling have been important tools in recording Bantu history and stories. Many can recite their family history several generations back.

History

The Somali Bantu are made up of six East African tribes who were sold as slaves in Somalia in the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of the Bantu were originally from Tanzania but some were taken from Mozambique and Malawi as well. In addition to sales in the U.S., Africans purchased slaves to work on plantations in the Shabelle River valley and near the Indian Ocean. Agents carried out the slave trade by raiding villages and taking prisoners of war. There are written records of traders marching African slaves 400 miles from the interior of the country to the Tanzanian coastal city of Kilwa Kivinje. This written history corresponds with the oral history of Somali Bantu elders with origins in Mozambique. Bantu refugees with ancestral origins in northeast Tanzania similarly describe how their ancestors were transported by sea from the Tanzanian port city of Bagamoyo to southern Somalia.

From 1800 to 1890 there were 25,000 – 50,000 slaves who moved into Somali riverine areas, such as the Shabelle River valley. By the 1840s, fugitive slaves had settled in the Juba River valley, which was a remote, forested, and fairly uninhabited area. In order to retain their culture, many of the Bantu settled in villages according to their East African tribe.

Geo-Political Context

Mohamed Siad Barre was the Head of State of Somalia from 1969 – 1991. He was overthrown by rebels in January 1991, and civil war broke out. Different clans, including the Bantu, competed for governmental power. Even after the end of slavery in the 1930's, the Somali Bantu continued to endure marginalization and discrimination. During the war, Bantus were raped, murdered, and their farms raided by rival clans and militia. Most then fled to Kenya and some to Tanzania. However, with an upsurge of refugees fleeing to these countries, many were turned away and still others were unable to find permanent refuge. Many Somali Bantu seek third-country resettlement because they are unable to return to Somalia. Many more have qualified for the United States' family reunification program.

Situation of Displacement

Some scholars have pointed to situations such as the Somali Bantu encamped in Kenyan camps as “refugee warehousing” due to the long duration of encampment. In Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Northeastern Kenya, Somali Bantus retain a second class status to a variety of Somali clan groups. They live in harsh conditions with limited resources. Despite arid conditions, they are able to engage in small farming and/or may have received some vocational training or participated in activities in an informal service economy. Those residing in refugee camps are also still vulnerable to attacks and rape.

Education and Literacy

Due to their low status, many Somali Bantu were denied formal education and were excluded from jobs that required literacy. Most Somali Bantu were farmers and some worked in cities in construction and other manual labor trades. Many adults are pre-literate and have little exposure to Western culture and urban life. Refugees preparing for resettlement in the U.S. learn English and about modern American life in cultural orientation classes in the camps. Many school age children have learned to read and write, particularly young men. Education and learning is highly valued in Bantu culture.

The United Nations estimated that the literacy rate in Somalia is 24%. According to the CIA World Factbook, 37.8% of Somali age 15 and over can read and write.

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Sudan is located in northeastern Africa, and borders the Red Sea. Its capitol is Khartoum, and a power sharing agreement was reached in 2005 with the Government of National Unity (GNU), the National Congress Party (NCP), and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Languages: Arabic, Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages

Religions: Sunni Muslim 70%, Christian 5%, indigenous beliefs 25%

Population: Black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, other 3%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 698 Sudanese



Culture

Sudan's population is one of the most diverse on the African continent. There are two distinct cultures, "Arab" and black African, with hundreds of ethnic and tribal subdivisions and language groups. Most Sudanese are Sunni Muslims, however some practice indigenous religions, and others are Christian.

There are several different types of refugees from Sudan. The largest group found in the United States is composed of refugees from the south of Sudan. These refugees are made up of various minority ethnic groups that have fled religious and political persecution, warfare, and starvation. Additionally, there are political dissenters from the north of the country who escaped from the Muslim fundamentalist regime in Khartoum. The northern states cover most of the Sudan and include most of the urban centers. The 22 million Sudanese who live in this region are Arabic-speaking Muslims, though the majority also speak non-Arabic languages.

One ethnic group from the south of Sudan is the Nuer. The Nuer ethnic group is widespread and divided into several subgroups or clans, resulting in several dialects of the Nuer language; but many also speak Arabic. Two other ethnic groups originating from the Upper Nile region are the Anuak, and the Shilluk.

The second largest Sudanese ethnic group is the Dinka. The Dinka represent the majority group in southern Sudan. They originated primarily from the Bahr-el Ghazal region of southwestern Sudan, where they were pastoralists and agriculturalists. They speak Dinka, Arabic, and English. Like the Nuer, there is much diversity within the Dinka, with at least two dozen recognized subgroups. Some other groups coming from this region include the Balandia and the Ndogo. There are also Sudanese refugees who originally lived in the Equatoria region in southernmost Sudan, the Azande, the Moru, and the Madi.

Eighty percent of the Sudanese population works in agriculture, the rest working in a variety of services and industries. The involvement of women in agriculture varies by region. In Northern, central, and eastern regions, the percentage of economically active women is low due to their primary role home caretaker. However, in western and southern Sudan, women contribute as much as 80-90% of labor for household production and roughly 70% of labor for agriculture

History

Sudan has been greatly influenced by Egypt. Ancient Cush, which is located in present-day Sudan, was incorporated into Egypt's kingdom from 1570 B.C. until 1100 B.C. In 1820, the Egyptian army invaded all of Sudan and maintained control for 64 years. Egypt continues to influence Sudan's developments. Since 1999 international attention has been focused on evidence that slavery is widespread throughout Sudan. Arab raiders from the north of the country have enslaved thousands of southerners.

Geo-Political Context

Military regimes favoring Islamic-oriented governments have dominated national politics since independence from the UK in 1956. Sudan was involved in two prolonged civil wars during most of the remainder of the 20th century. These conflicts were rooted in economic, political, and social domination of largely non-Muslim, non-Arab Sudanese between the north and the south. The first civil war ended in 1972 but broke out again in 1983. Many refugees fled to neighboring countries, especially to Ethiopia, to escape forced conscription or religious persecution. The second war, compounded by famine, resulted in more than four million people displaced and more than two million deaths over two decades. Peace talks in 2002 led to the North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005. The CPA granted southern rebels autonomy for the next six years.

A separate conflict broke out in the western region of Darfur in 2003, displaced nearly two million people, and caused an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 deaths. The UN took command of the Darfur peacekeeping operation from the African Union in 2007. Sudan continues to face large refugee influxes from neighboring countries, primarily Ethiopia and Chad. Armed conflict, poor transportation infrastructure, and a lack of government support continue to impede humanitarian assistance. The U.S. officially considers Sudan a terrorist state.

Situation of Displacement

The first and second wars caused enormous refugee flows to neighboring Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Chad and Egypt. In Egypt many Sudanese live in substandard housing in urban areas, often because there are no refugee camp settlements. Existing camps in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Chad leave many refugees vulnerable to attacks by rebel groups. Children may be forced to commute long distances to evade forced military recruitment. Female refugees are vulnerable to gender based violence. Many of

the Sudanese refugees that have arrived in the United States through the refugee program are refugees from these two earlier conflicts.

Sudanese refugees who fled to Chad due to the Darfur conflict number in the 200,000 to 300,000s. Relief and aid workers are vulnerable to armed groups who loot supplies and disrupt efforts to distribute food.

Education and Literacy

Education in Sudan followed the British tradition, where primary and intermediate schools led to secondary training. Secondary training prepared students for higher education. In the 1970s, educational reform required students to attend a six-year elementary school program. This new system emphasized the importance of technical and vocational education as well. Currently all school curriculum in Sudan follow a strict Islamic model, and students are instructed in Arabic. In southern Sudan, education was formerly offered in English. In the past, boys might have been sent into towns for education, while girls in rural areas were taught domestic responsibilities in preparation for a good marriage and childbearing. Presently, due to several wars, government neglect, a lack of supplies, and a lack of trained teachers, very few schools remain open. According to the United States Commission on Refugees and Immigrants, two generations of southern Sudanese children have not received education.

According to the United States Commission on Refugees and Immigrants, 85% of the refugee children in eastern Chad are enrolled in primary schools. It is also noted that children in camp schools often drop out due to trauma, forced recruitment, and household responsibilities. Refugees in Uganda and Kenya may access free education from relief organizations, but camps have limited resources. Furthermore, Sudanese refugees that reside in urban areas such as Kampala or Cairo, encounter numerous challenges in accessing education. Many refugees cannot afford the cost of tuition, classes are taught in different languages, and they may experience harassment, prejudice and intimidation.

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The Former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), a socialist state from 1922 to 1991, is located in northern Asia. It now consists of 15 separate states including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Languages: Roma, Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Estonian, Georgian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Latvian, Lithuanian, Meskhetian Turks, Moldovan, Tajik, Turkmen, Ukrainian, and Uzbek

Religions: Varies (Catholic, Christian, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim)

Population: Varies

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 4,583 Former USSR



Culture

The Former Soviet Union was made up of what are now 15 separate states, the largest of which is Russia. Its borders extended to various islands and inland seas. In 1945, it covered nearly one-sixth of the entire earth's land surface.

Russia itself is an ethnically diverse country with over 120 ethnic groups and some 100 languages, although more than four-fifths of the total population is comprised of ethnic Russians. Within the Russian Federation there are 21 minority republics, 10 autonomous districts, and autonomous regions contained within them. Certain groups have been denied complete independence and are divided into various territories (*kraya*) and regions (*oblasti*). Because few of the languages spoken by indigenous minorities are taught in school, it is highly likely that some may disappear within the next generation.

History

The Soviet Union's historical roots are chiefly those of the East Slavs, who became the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian peoples. The major pre-Soviet political formations of these people were the

Medieval Kievan Rus', the Muscovy, and the Russian Empire. Poland, Lithuania, and the Mongol empire also played critical roles in the Soviet Union's history and development.

The first of these East Slavic states, the Kievan Rus', controlled the trade route between Scandinavia and the Byzantine Empire. It created a synthesis of Byzantine and Slavic cultures by adopting Christianity. After they were conquered by the Mongols, Kievan Rus' dissolved and a number of smaller states claimed to be the heirs of the empire. One of these, Muscovy, populated primarily by Russians, slowly dominated its neighbors in northeastern Russia and expanded itself into the Russian Empire.

The historical ideals and characteristics that emerged out of Muscovy affected both Russia and the Soviet Union. In Muscovy, the state dominated over the individual, and the state's needs trumped individual needs. Mongol, Byzantine, and native Russian ideals contributed to what is called Russian autocracy, the idea that the ruler, or tsar, has unlimited power. All of the public institutions, including the Russian Orthodox Church, were controlled by the state and the autocrat, an idea that survived until the last tsar fell.

Geo-Political Context

In the early 17th century, a Romanov Dynasty continued territorial expansion across Siberia and to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The Russian Empire made many more territorial acquisitions during the 19th century, including parts of Europe and Asia. After their defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, revolution broke out, leading to the formation of a parliament and other government reforms. Repeated defeats of the Russian army in World War I and widespread rioting in major cities contributed to the overthrow of the imperial household. Vladimir Lenin, the leader of Russia's first communist party, seized power soon thereafter and established the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic). Lenin strengthened communist rule and the dominance of Russia over the Soviet Union but at the cost of millions of lives. The Soviet economy and society remained stagnant in following decades, until General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev (who ruled from 1985 to 1991) attempted to create a modern Communist state. His attempts led to the splintering of the USSR in December 1991 into Russia and fourteen other independent states. The largest groups of Former Soviet Union refugees in the State of Washington include Russian, Moldovan, and Ukrainian.

Situation of Displacement

Ongoing resettlement of Former USSR refugees has declined; however, there are many families being reunited through the United States refugee family reunification program. The Former USSR refugees' context of displacement ranges from living in urban or rural environments with varying means of access to education, employment, and other resources. Depending on the cultural and religious context of the refugee, some may have experienced extreme forms of discrimination and political oppression. As the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants documented, over 9,000 persons expelled by the Russian Federation Government were potential asylum seekers. As many as a quarter of these left the country to avoid detention or illegal status. Nationals of other Commonwealth of Independent States countries—including refugees from Georgia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Moldova – left the Russian Federation in the first half of the year in response to vigorous enforcement of new restrictions on foreign labor.

Education and Literacy

The state owned and operated nearly all schools in the Soviet Union. Education was highly centralized, the curriculum was rigid, and the system aimed to indoctrinate students in the communist system.

Schools operated in crowded facilities and with limited resources. In 1992, legislation passed by the federal government gave regions dominated by ethnic minorities the choice to exercise some degree of autonomy in education. However, the federal government continued to have the upper hand in designing and distributing textbooks, licensing teachers, and setting the requirements for instruction.

The 1993 Russian Federation Constitution guaranteed free education to all (including refugees residing in the Federation) from pre-school to college. The 1997 Law on Refugees assured refugee children access to state and municipal schools. A 2002 Decree by Moscow area authorities required only indication of the place of residence for access to primary education. In other regions of the Russian Federation, however, registration rules and lack of documentation still effectively bar asylum seeker children from education.

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Vietnam is located in Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, alongside China, Laos, and Cambodia. The capital, Hanoi, houses a communist government.

Languages: Vietnamese, English, French, Chinese, Khmer, and mountain area languages

Religions: Buddhist 9.3%, Catholic 6.7%, Hoa Hao 1.5%, Cao Dai 1.1%, Protestant 0.5%, Muslim 0.1%, None 80.8%

Population: Kinh (Viet) 86.2%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.7%, Muong 1.5%, Khome 1.4%, Hoa 1.1%, Nun 1.1%, Hmong 1%, other 4.1%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2007): 1,550 Vietnamese



Culture

The majority of the population in Vietnam is ethnic Vietnamese, and they reside predominately in the country's lowlands. The remainder of the population is made up of minority peoples, thirty or more tribes, from the highlands of Vietnam. The highlands cover two-thirds of the national territory. The highland people of Vietnam are divided by language and ethnic origins. Those in the northern highlands speak Tai languages and have close ties to southern China, Thailand, and Laos. There are also those who speak Sino-Tibetan languages with ties to Hmong and Mien groups. Those in the southern highlands speak Mon-Khmer languages and have close ties to Cambodia, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia. About half of all Vietnamese work in agriculture.

Generally, Vietnamese society is based on Confucian principles. Gender roles are outlined by these principles as well. Men often have higher status than women. However, during the Vietnam War men were absent from the home, and women became more independent as a result. This trend continued with migration to the United States and has helped change traditional gender roles.

History

By 1757, Vietnam had reached its current land size, and included Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) in its territory. After a history of conflict between north and south Vietnam, a 30-year civil war, the country reached a period of relative peace in the early 19th century. Emperor Nguyen Anh, with the help of the French, gained control of and reunited Vietnam. Nguyen Anh then expelled French officials and executed French missionaries. These events, coupled by France's desire to expand their markets, led to an invasion beginning in 1858 and ending in 1884. Vietnam became part of French Indochina in 1887. Under French Colonial Rule, Vietnamese were considered second class citizens. Ho Chi Minh Communist forces defeated the French in 1954. Though Vietnam claimed their independence, the Geneva Accords of 1954 divided Vietnam into the Communist North and the anti-Communist South.

Geo-Political Context

Vietnamese refugees are those that fled after the Fall of Saigon (South Vietnam's capital) in 1975. The first group was called the "boat people" due to the fact they left on boats seeking any kind of refuge. These people fled to countries such as Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. There they waited to be resettled in the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, Iceland, or Bermuda. These people were forced to leave because of the high level of poverty and due to the scarcity of resources. After the war, the government implemented re-education camps that were meant to re-educate those (many of whom were in the military) that directly and indirectly collaborated with Western imperialists. Not many had the endurance to live in these re-education camp conditions.

In 1976, the Vietnam Communist Party adopted a Five-Year Development Plan that focused on agriculture and light industry. This involved relocating people from overcrowded areas into the highlands and the Mekong Delta to perform manual labor. Many were unfamiliar with manual labor, and some regarded this relocation plan as a death sentence. Some or all of these factors pushed large numbers of Vietnamese refugees out of their homeland.

Situation of Displacement

After large numbers of Vietnamese fled their country, many sought refuge in neighboring countries in camps with limited resources to education, healthcare, and formal employment. By the end of the 1980s, there were Vietnamese still leaving their homeland for fear of persecution. They were also motivated by the promise of prosperity in the United States and Canada. Unfortunately, not all boat people received refugee status. However, many Vietnamese families that were displaced have been able to access family reunification through the United States refugee program. Additionally, in 1988 Congress passed the Amerasian Homecoming Act and since then over 65,000 Amerasians have arrived in the United States. Amerasians accounted for a quarter of the refugee total, with some 4,000 of them being Afro-Amerasian.

In 2000, a camp in Hong Kong officially closed their refugee camp after 25 years of operation. Many Vietnamese that resided in Hong Kong were often held in detention facilities. In more recent years, the vulnerable hill tribe peoples encountered discrimination and persecution by Vietnamese and sought

refuge in neighboring Cambodia. Independent observers continue to be restricted from hill tribe areas. Asylum seekers and refugees who have recently fled Vietnam report extensive presence of secret police, deaths due to beatings and torture, and intensified pressure on those who profess to be Christian.

Education and Literacy

The literacy rate in Vietnam is approximately 90% according to the CIA World Fact Book. There are a number of different kinds of public and private schools in Vietnam. Public education is not free. Though parents are charged a sizable fee, they continue to send their children to public schools. There are also semi-public schools, where the state provides the equipment, facilities and curriculum, while teacher salaries, maintenance and other operating expenditures are funded by student fees. Since the 2002-2003 school year, the government has developed educational reforms. Though the literacy rate is high there are still children who are unable to attend school due to various factors.

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Afghanistan is a country in Southern Asia, north and west of Pakistan and east of Iran. It also shares borders with Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its capital is Kabul and the government is composed of an Islamic republic.

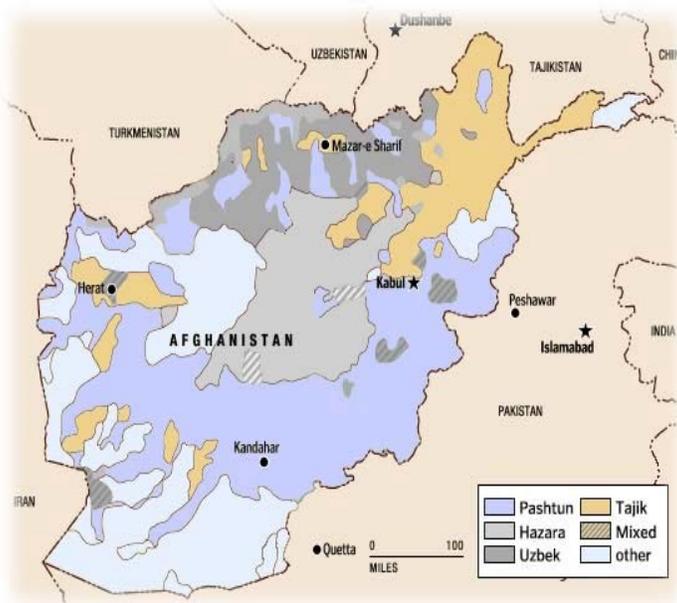
Languages: Afghan Persian or Dari and Pashto (official), Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkmen), 30 other languages (e.g. Balochi, Pashai)

Religions: Sunni Muslim 80%, Shia Muslim 19%, other 1%

Population: Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, Baloch 2%, other 4%

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2008): 576 Afghans



Culture

Afghanistan is made up various ethnic and tribal groups. Its boundaries have largely been determined by foreigners, resulting in land divisions by various ethnic groups. During the 13th century, Genghis Khan cut divisions across central Asia, from Afghanistan–Kirghizstan, Tajikstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—and westward into what is now Turkey. When Britain and Russia decided the northern border between Afghanistan and Russia, the Kirghiz, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen on the southern side became Afghans. Except for the Tajiks, these peoples speak Altaic languages. These languages are very similar to Turkish. Some of these are the Beluchis, who speak an Iranian language and live in the southwestern part of the country and in areas of Pakistan; the Nuristanis in east Afghanistan, a culturally and linguistically distinct people who are the descendents of the Afghan Kafirs.

The Pashtuns, (Pushtuns), constitute the majority ethnic population. The Pashtuns are small farmers and they are semi nomadic. The historical influence of Persia, (present day Iran), can be seen throughout Afghanistan. It is most evident by the number of ethnic groups who speak Dari, the name given to the various dialects of Afghan Persian. The Tajiks are the largest of the Dari speaking groups. The majority of Tajiks are Suni Muslim. Hazaras make up another Dari speaking group. Hazaras originate from Mongolia. They arrived in Afghanistan during the 13th and 14th centuries. They are nomadic peoples making up

about 19 percent of the country's population. Farsiwan (also referred to as Parsiwan or Parsiban) compose another group. The Farsiwan are ethnically and linguistically indistinguishable from the Iranians that reside across the border.

Mental health is a concern impacting many Afghan refugees. Because mental health issues are stigmatized and not often recognized in equivalent Western definitions it is typical for Afghans to somatize their mental health. Common symptoms include back pain, other body aches, asthma or breathing problems, headaches, and stomach problems. Mental problems among the educated may also cause a fall in social status.

Tribal affiliation is very important for Afghan society. Tribal units have strong patrilineal organizations. The cultural pattern is one of competition between equivalent units but uniting with these competitors against outsiders. This begins at the level of competition between male first cousins and works its way up through lineages, subtribes, tribes, to ethnic group rivalries. For example, among the Pashtun, the *jirga*, is a governing assembly of all the adult males who decides important matters. Arranged marriages are commonly practiced in Afghanistan. Women are generally less educated than men and they have less access and ability to receive an education.

History

In 500 BCE, the Zoroastrian Achaemenid Empire reached as far east as the Kabul-Jalabad-Peshawar area. Following this, Alexander the Great expanded into Afghanistan in 329 BCE, extending his empire. In the 1st century BCE the Kushans (a confederation of central Asian nomadic tribes) took Afghanistan from the Greeks and held power over the area for several centuries. Many of the Silk Road routes ran through the Afghan area during this time. One of the greatest cultural achievements of the Kushans was the carving in the third and fourth centuries CE of the world's largest Buddha figures—in the sandstone cliffs close to present-day Bamiyan (a now destroyed ruin due to Taliban fighting). Genghis Khan conquered Afghanistan in 1220. After his death, local Afghan chiefs established independent principalities, while others remained under Mongol rule. This continued until the end of the 14th century, when Tamerlane conquered a large part of the country and established Herat as his capital. Afghanistan later served as a cushion between the British and Russian empires until it won independence from British in 1919.

Geo-Political Context

In 1973, a coup occurred followed by the 1978 Communist counter-coup. In 1979, The Soviet Union arrived to support the Afghan Communist regime, resulting in a long war. The USSR withdrew in 1989 due to international pressure. Following this was a series of civil wars, eventually led to the fall of the capital to the Taliban in 1996. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, a US led with Allied forces and the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance forced military action on the Taliban for harboring Osama Bin Laden. The UN-sponsored Bonn Conference in 2001 established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections were held in 2005. Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan and the National Assembly was inaugurated the following December. Despite gains toward building a stable Islamic central government, the security of the nation remains a serious challenge for the Afghan Government.

Situation of Displacement

Between the years 1979 and 1992, more than a fifth of Afghanistan's population - over six million people were driven from the country. Most sought refuge in neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan. Today,

approximately 5 million Afghans are thought to be in refugee camps along the country's borders and in neighboring nations. Over the years, Pakistan has given refuge to 3 million Afghan refugees. Border camps remain vulnerable to Taliban infiltration. The camps have been used as a base when attacking NATO and Afghan forces in Afghanistan. Pakistan officials have periodically conducted searches for unregistered refugees. They have also threatened to expel large numbers of unregistered migrants, and placed pressure on refugees to repatriate by closing camps. Authorities claimed that 20,000 repatriated Afghans reentered in May 2008. In June of 2008, the States and Frontier Regions Secretary acknowledged that Afghan security situation made returns insecure.

Education and Literacy

In 1969 the Afghan government made education mandatory for children between the ages 7-15. The implementation of schools, hiring and training teachers, and having the infrastructure in place lagged far behind the National legislation. It is estimated that only 1/3rd of Afghan children ever attended school during the 1980s. Before 1969, schools existed, but children did not often attend due to family situations. Some families thought it was important and took great efforts to get their children educated, including sending them away to relatives if local schooling wasn't available. According to UNICEF, in 2007, the literacy rate was roughly 49 percent for the ages 15-24. The literacy rate for women and girls was 18 percent.

Throughout Afghanistan, there were secondary schools in urban areas and a university in Kabul. All education above the primary level was conducted in the National language, Dari. Most educated Afghans are fluent in Dari. During the Soviet occupation there was interest in building up the education system by extending education into rural areas. After the Soviets withdrew, the education system fell apart in the civil war and the Kabul University closed. Children then received their education at home, in the local mosque, or not at all. Under the Taliban, secular education did not exist. Some families provided education through Islamic religious training. Boys received Islamic education, but girls were forbidden to participate. Parents who wanted their children educated had to arrange for private tutoring in informal groups at home.

Many Afghan women and elders have had little or no formal education. According to researchers at Cultural Orientation Resource Center, parents are concerned that schools may teach non-traditional values which may clash with cultural beliefs in family interdependence and obedience to elder family members, particularly to the father's authority. Families are worried that children will pick up negative behavior from their non-Muslim classmates. Parents are concerned that the American school system may expose youth to new ideas such as sex education, being served pork, and issues such as teen drinking.

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Congo-Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) is located in central Africa. It is distinguished from the Republic of the Congo (Congo Brazzaville). It shares borders with Sudan, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and the Republic of the Congo. The capital is Kinshasa. The DRC's government is a transitional democratic republic.

Languages: French, Lingala, Kingwana (a dialect of Kiswahili), Kikongo, Tshiluba

Religions: Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%, other (includes other sects and indigenous beliefs) 10%

Population: Bantu tribes including: Mongo, Luba, Kongo (all Bantu), and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) make up about 45% of the population

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2008): 727 Congolese



Culture

There are over 200 ethnic groups in Congo. The Luba, Mongo, Kongo, and Mangebetu-Azande compose some of the larger groupings of tribes. The country is regionally and economically aligned to Southern Africa. The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) place a high value in family. Large extended families are very common in Congolese culture. Marriage to cousins is common and arranged marriages are a widespread practice as well.

History

Congo-Kinshasa was established as a Belgian colony in 1908. In 1960 the DRC gained its independence. During this time the DRC suffered from numerous wars, political unrest, economic challenges, and corruption. In a coup during 1965, Joseph Mobutu seized power and declared himself president. He changed his name to Mobutu Sese Seko and the country became known as Zaire. For 32 years Mobutu remained president. In 1997, Mobutu was overthrown resulting in Congo's first war. Tutsis had formed a

militia and had targeted their rebellion against Mobutu. This militia was supported by various opposition groups from several countries, including Rwanda and Uganda. Laurent-Desire Kabila headed the collation. In May 1997 Kabila marched into Kinshasa, forcing Mobutu into exile. He named himself president and declared the country to be called the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2001, he was assassinated and presidential leadership went to his son, Joseph Kabila.

Geo-political context

Ethnic conflict and an ongoing civil war, combined with large Rwandan and Burundian refugee flows in 1994 severely impacted the stability of the country. Over these five years, the DRC, with support from Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, fought Ugandan and Rwandan rebels. The civil conflict has pitted ethnic Tutsis, supported by Rwanda, against Congo-backed Hutus. Despite peace negotiations and the creation of a transitional government in 2003, fighting continues in the DRC. This ongoing conflict is often referred to as *Africa's World War* and more than 2.5 million people are estimated to have died.

The ongoing war has had a toll on the population. For example, the DRC is often known as one of the worst countries in the world for sexual violence. According to a study, 1,100 documented rape cases of women and girls are reported each month. Children have been recruited and served as child soldiers. In a report by the International Rescue Committee an estimated 45,000 people die each month in the Congo as a result of starvation and disease.

The transitional government implemented a successful constitutional referendum in 2005. Presidential, National Assembly, and provincial legislature elections were held in 2006. Joseph Kabila was inaugurated president in 2006 and the National Assembly followed soon thereafter. Its president, Vital Kamahre, was chosen that year. Provincial assemblies were hosted in early 2007, with governor and senatorial elections that followed later that year.

The DRC continues to host refugee and asylum seekers from Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, and the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville).

Situation of Displacement

During the years of continued armed conflict in the DRC and Burundi, refugee flows continued into neighboring Tanzania and Rwanda. Thousands of ethnic Tutsi Congolese fled the war in eastern DRC during the mid-1990s and sought refuge in Rwanda. Ongoing fighting during 2007, led over 375,000 Congolese from the Northern part of the province to be forced from their homes into neighboring Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania.

Refugees from the DRC have lived displaced in several neighboring countries throughout Central and Eastern Africa. Ugandan authorities describe the ongoing influx of Congolese refugees as a humanitarian crisis. Congolese refugees frequently arrive in resource-depleted areas in the neighboring countries. Northwestern Tanzania is currently hosting over 148,000 refugees primarily from Burundi and Rwanda.

Education and Literacy

Today in the DRC the education system has largely been severely impacted. Historically, various religious groups offered primary education, and secondary and higher education was often underdeveloped. The literacy rate in the DRC is currently 68 percent and it is estimated that 40 percent of Congolese have no formal schooling at all. The majority of persons with little to no formal education in

the DRC are female. From estimates dating back to the year 2000, only 15.4 percent of adults received secondary school education and less than 1 percent attended university. Currently, only 29 percent of children in the DRC complete their primary education. There is an estimated 4.7million primary-age children living in the DRC. This includes 2.5 million girls who are not attending school. Amnesty International found that at least 6 million adolescents receive no formal education in the DRC.

In Uganda, Congolese refugee children are able to access primary education the same as Ugandan nationals, but many cannot afford to pay school tuition. They frequently suffered harassment from peers and teachers due to their identity as foreigners. Nonetheless, many refugee families send their children to border towns along the Ugandan/DRC border because they do not want the schooling interrupted for their children. UNHCR and other relief organizations have implemented educational programs for refugees in camp areas.

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The Republic of Moldova is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, situated between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east and south. Moldova is approximately the size of the state of Maryland and its capital, and largest city, is Chisinau. The country is comprised of thirty-two districts among three municipalities (Balti, Chisinau, Bender) and two autonomous regions (Gagauzia and Transnistria).

Moldova is a parliamentary democracy with a president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government. The parliament elects the president, currently Vladimir Voronin, who has served as president since 2001. The Constitution of Moldova was ratified in 1994; it replaced the 1979 Soviet Constitution.

Languages: *Moldovan (virtually identical to Romanian language), Russian, Gagauz (Turkish dialect)*

Religions: *Eastern Orthodox 98%, Jewish 1.5%, Baptist and other 0.5% (2000)*

Population: *4,320,748 (July 2009 estimate); Moldovan/Romanian 78.2%, Russian 5.8%; Gagauz 4.4%, Bulgarian 1.9%, other 1.3% (2004 census)*

U.S Refugee Arrivals (2008): *487 Moldovans*

Map of Republic of Moldova



**Map of Transnistria
Disputed Region**



Culture

Moldovan culture is an amalgamation of Latin, Slavic and other cultures that has evolved by retaining its own traditions, as well as adopting and integrating those of its neighboring countries. The architecture and cultural heritage of Moldova is clearly reflected by the churches and monasteries built by the 15th century Moldovan ruler, Stephen the Great. Moldova has produced great composers, artists, poets, sculptors and architects.

The issue of language and national identity is hotly contested in Moldova. The crux of the issue is the distinction between Romanian and Moldovan languages which, linguistically, are almost identical. The indigenous ethnic majority language is defined as Moldovan by article 12 of the Constitution. From a linguistic perspective, Moldovan is considered to be a political term to distinguish the Romanian language. However, several recent legislative acts have asserted that the national Moldovan identity excludes a “Romanian” identity, further arguing that the Moldovan identity historically preceded modern Romania. The result of this conflict is that many Moldovans hold dual or triple citizenship and the potential for internal strife further undermines Moldova’s efficacy and statehood.

History

Before 1800, most of the present territory of Moldova was part of the Principality of Moldavia. In 1812, it was annexed by the Russian Empire, and became known as Bessarabia. Between 1856 and 1878, the southern part was returned to Moldavia. In 1859, it united with Wallachia to form modern Romania. After changing hands in 1941 and 1944 during World War II, the territory of the modern country was appropriated by the Soviet Union. Moldova declared independence on August 27, 1991, and was admitted to the UN in March 1992.

Geo-Political Context

Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe with 25% of the population living on less than US\$ 2 per day. It has a favorable climate and good farmland but has no major mineral deposits. As a result, the economy depends heavily on agriculture from: fruits, vegetables, wine, and tobacco.

Moldova must import almost all of its energy, a situation which caused a conflict with the separatist region of Transnistria in 2005. A Russian owned electrical station, based in Transnistria, cut off natural gas to Russian and Moldovan homes and businesses due to pricing disputes. After a similar dispute in 2009, Russia placed a ban on the import of Moldovan wine and other agricultural products. Russia has since partially lifted this ban and the struggling Moldovan economy has improved.

Transnistria is a disputed region in Eastern Moldova (see map above). Transnistria declared independence in 1990, which preceded the War of Transnistria in 1992. It is currently governed by the unrecognized Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR). The modern Republic of Moldova does not recognize the secession and considers PMR-controlled territories to be a part of Moldova's sovereign territory. The territory's political status remains unresolved. It is organized as a presidential republic, with its own government, parliament, military, police, postal system, and currency.

Moldova became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist, Vladimir Voronin, as its president in 2001.

Situation of Displacement

Moldova has experienced high levels of unemployment, extreme poverty and violence against women have made the Republic of Moldova a major point of origin and transit for trafficking in women and children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Moldovan women and girls are trafficked to the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Western Europe; girls and young women are trafficked from rural areas to Chisinau, and children are trafficked to neighboring countries for forced labor.

From January 2000 to June 2004, 1,302 victims of trafficking from the Republic of Moldova have been officially identified and assisted by different organizations; 30% were below the age of 18 at the time they were trafficked.

In the early 2000's the country also saw an increase in the rate of Moldovans emigrating (often illegally) to surrounding countries for work. It is estimated that 25% of working-age Moldovans work outside the country and remittances from those working abroad account for approximately 30% of Moldova's GDP.

Education and Literacy

Moldova ranks 16th in the world with a literacy rate of 99.1% among the total population. Primary education is free and compulsory for all school aged children in Moldova. At the university level, roughly half of students major in economics, law or social science, 18% study engineering and 16% study education. Of the approximately 125,000 students in higher education approximately 80% of students have to pay for their education. However, since 2001, the state has gradually increased the number of subsidized slots and 15% of these subsidized placements are reserved for candidates from low-income families.

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Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Russia to the east; Belarus to the north; Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the west; Romania and Moldova to the southwest; and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south. The city of Kiev (*Kyiv*) is both the capital and the largest city in Ukraine. Ukraine is a republic that is under semi-presidential rule. It is a unitary state, meaning that it has separate legislative, executive and judicial branches. It is the second largest county in Europe, after Russia. Ukraine is composed of 24 *oblasts* (provinces) and two cities with special status; Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, and Sevastopol which is where the Russian Black Sea Fleet is located through a leasing agreement.

Languages: Ukrainian (67.5%), Russian (29.6%),
Additional Indigenous languages spoken: Crimean, Krymchak, Karaim, Urum

Religions: Orthodox Christianity, Eastern Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism

Population: 46 million; 77.8% ethnic Ukrainians, minority groups of Russians, Romanians and Belarusians

U.S. Refugee

Arrivals (2008): 1022 Ukrainians



Culture

Ukrainian culture has been shaped by Eastern and Western influences over the last millennia. Over all, culture in the Ukraine is heavily influenced by Christianity, Russia and other Eastern European cultures. As well, there are strong culturally-identified ethnic groups throughout Ukraine.

Ukrainian culture is rich with color and tradition. Their unique form of dance is called *Kalyna* and incorporates folkloric storytelling, beautifully embroidered costumes of blue, green, red and black and ornate head pieces.

Pysanka is the Ukrainian word for the prized bees-wax painted Easter eggs, for which the country is famous. It is often taken to mean any type of decorated egg, but it specifically refers to an egg created by the written-wax batik method. Several types of decorated eggs are seen in Ukrainian tradition, and these vary throughout the regions of Ukraine.

History

Human settlement in Ukraine has been documented into distant prehistory. The late Neolithic Trypillian culture flourished from about 4500 BC to 3000 BC.^[1] Between 250 CE and 375 CE, the Goths arrived and settled in present day Ukraine, calling it Oium.

In the 7th century, the territory of modern Ukraine was the core of the state of the Bulgars, sometimes referred to as Old Great Bulgaria. At the end of the 7th century, most Bulgar tribes migrated in several directions and the remains of their state were absorbed by the Khazars, a semi-nomadic people from Central Asia. The Khazars founded the Khazar kingdom in the southeastern part of today's Europe, near the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus. The kingdom included western Kazakhstan, and parts of eastern Ukraine, Azerbaijan, southern Russia, and Crimea.

In the 11th century, Kievan Rus' was geographically, the largest state in Europe, becoming known in the rest of Europe as Ruthenia. The name *Ukraine*, meaning *border-land*, first appears in recorded history on maps of the period. At the time Ukraine was *bordered* by Poland and Lithuania. During the 14th century, Poland and Lithuania fought wars against the Mongol invaders, and eventually most of Ukraine was absorbed and passed to the rule of Poland and Lithuania.

During the latter part of the 18th century, most Ukrainian ethnographic territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire. Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to bring about a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was re-conquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two artificial famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died. In World War II, German and Soviet armies were responsible for some 7 to 8 million more deaths. Although final independence for Ukraine was achieved with the dissolution of the USSR, democracy remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties. Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, with the breakup of the former Soviet Union. All of Russia's former republics then formed the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS), with headquarters in Minsk, Belarus.

Geo-Political Context

The nationalization of Ukraine perpetuated during the inter-war years and was even spread to a large territory with traditionally mixed population in the east and south that became part of the Ukrainian Soviet republic. Until the 1930's Ukrainians enjoyed a cultural and linguistic revival due to Bolshevik influences in the early Soviet years. During this time an impressive *Ukrainization* program was implemented throughout the republic. The rapidly developed Ukrainian language based education system dramatically raised the literacy of the rural population. Simultaneously, the newly-literate ethnic Ukrainians migrated to the cities, which rapidly responded to the nationalization policies—in both population and in education. The massive influx of the rural population to the industrial centers increased the urban population from 19 to 34 percent. Similarly expansive was an increase in Ukrainian language publishing and overall eruption of Ukrainian cultural life.

However, this industrialization came at a high price for the rural and indigenous people who were the demographic and economic backbone of the republic. To satisfy the state's need for increased food supplies and finance industrialization, Stalin instituted a program of collectivization of agriculture. Often referred to as the *breadbasket of the USSR*, Ukraine was profoundly affected by these policies. In the late 1920s and early 1930s the state combined the lands and livestock of rural Ukrainians into collective

farms. Starting in 1929, enforcement policies used military troops and secret police to confiscate lands and material where necessary.

During the Soviet era, the economy of the Ukraine was the second largest in the Soviet Union which made it an important industrial and agricultural stronghold. After the collapse of the USSR, the transition was difficult and resulted in a spike in poverty as the Ukrainian economy declined substantially. The 1990's were marked with widespread inflation and subsequent system and legislative reforms and market privatization. Prices finally stabilized only after the introduction of a new national currency in 1996, the hryvnia.

Ukraine depends largely on Russia for its energy needs with only 25 percent of its natural gas consumption being supplied from internal sources. 85 percent of the gas that flows to Western Europe from Russia must pass through the Ukraine.

Situation of Displacement

One reason for displacement from Ukraine is religious persecution, primarily of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). After the fall of the Soviet Union, and with the formation of a new Ukrainian nation, many Ukrainians felt the need for an indigenous, autonomous (autocephalous) Orthodox Church, free from Russian influence. The church regained state recognition in Ukraine in 1990; this is known as the *third resurrection* of the UAOC. Today, the UAOC is still not recognized by other traditional churches.

Another reason for displacement from the Ukraine is human trafficking. Ukraine is a source, transit and, to a lesser extent, destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Ukrainian victims are trafficked to Russia, Poland, Turkey, Italy, Austria, Spain, Germany, Portugal, the Czech Republic, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Israel, Greece, Lebanon, Benin, Tunisia, Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovakia, Syria, Switzerland, the United States, Canada and Belarus. Women were forced into the sex industry, or forced to work as housekeepers, in service industries, or in textile or light manufacturing.

Education and Literacy

Ukraine ranks 11th in the world with a 99.4 percent literacy rate among their total population. Ukraine's educational system consists of four tiers: primary, secondary, higher and postgraduate education. Ukrainian children begin school at the age of six. At the age of fourteen, young Ukrainians may choose to take technical training in a trade at one or more than 700 vocational colleges, or go to secondary school to prepare for university. Because Ukraine is heavily industrialized, many Ukrainians train as engineers and technicians.

Higher education is either state or privately funded and students who are able to pay for their education often do not have to pass the entrance examination. Ukrainian universities confer two degrees at the university level: the Bachelor's degree (four years) and the Master's Degree (five to six years). At the postgraduate level Ukrainian students can earn a Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences), which is roughly equivalent to the Ph.D. in the United States.

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