



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Refugees

SPEECH

Thursday, 20 June 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 20 June 2013
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Questioner
Speaker Broadbent, Russell, MP

Source House
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Responder
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Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (09:55): There were 1.1 million new refugees around the world in 2012, with a total of 45.2 million displaced and with Syria a new major source. So says Oliver Laughland and Nick Evershed in the *Guardian* from the UK:

There were 1.1 million new refugees around the world in 2012, the highest rise in new refugee numbers since 1999, statistics published by the United Nations on Wednesday show.

The annual UNHCR global trends in displacement report highlights that last year 7.6 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution, with a total of 45.2 million people around the world in situations of displacement, meaning that more people are refugees or internally displaced than at any point since 1994.

On an average day in 2012, 23,000 people were forced to flee their homes around the world, which is more than total number of people claiming asylum in Australia for the entire year.

In a statement to the press Rick Towle, the UNHCR regional representative in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, said: 'This reminds us that the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia remains relatively small by global standards.'

The remarks follow Towle's comments made on Monday that expressed serious concern at the 'sharp deterioration' of the way Australia protects asylum seekers who arrive by boat. In a statement delivered at the beginning of Refugee Week, Towle also condemned the "increasingly negative and, at times, mean-spirited" nature of the debate on irregular maritime arrivals to Australia.

The fresh statistics point to conflict in Syria as a 'major new factor in global displacement'. ...

They indicate an alarming number of unaccompanied or separated children claiming asylum, with a total of 21,300 asylum claims made last year. Europe received two-thirds of these, with Indonesia receiving 1,200.

The statistics reveal that Australia had 0.3% of the world's refugees at the end of 2012, or just over 30,000. Pakistan had the highest number of refugees with 1,638,456, which is 16.58% of the world's total.

Australia had 2.14% of the world's asylum seekers at the end of 2012, with just over 20,000, South Africa had the highest number with 230,442, constituting 24.6% of the total number of asylum seekers globally. In total there were 10 countries that housed more asylum seekers than Australia.

I make these points about the facts for this reason: I know that there is concern in my community and in every other community and even at my dinner table about the number of people coming to this country, their colour, who they are and their religion. I understand that. Quite often, some tend to take the high moral ground and say, 'How can we treat these people like this?' without reflecting on the genuine concerns within our community. I understand that people fear these situations. I am concerned about that. We can address that. But let us try to work through this new paradigm together, this new world that we live in, which is not the same as the 1950s, in the best interests of this nation and its people.