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## Asylees, Fiscal Year 1997

**A potential asylee is any person who is in the United States or applying for admission at a port of entry and is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.**

The annual number of asylum applications filed with the INS has fluctuated greatly since the effective date of the Refugee Act of 1980, as shown in Chart 1. In fiscal year 1997, 85,866 asylum cases were filed or reopened. This represents a 33 percent decrease from the 128,190 cases filed in 1996 (Table 1). The sharp decline in 1997 was due largely to a significant decrease in claims filed or reopened under the terms of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) v. Thornburgh settlement (see discussion below) because of the termination of the ABC filing period. As a result, Central Americans accounted for about 16 percent of the new claims and 25 percent of total applications compared with about 67 percent of both categories in 1996. The trend in claims from Central America is shown in Table A.

Approximately 13,700 new claims were filed by Mexicans and nearly 4,700 by Salvadorans during 1997. Haiti, with 4,310 new claims, ranked third, followed by India (3,776), Guatemala (2,386), the People's Republic of China (2,377), and Iraq (2,328) (Table 2). Excluding about 3,100 claims filed or reopened under the terms of the ABC

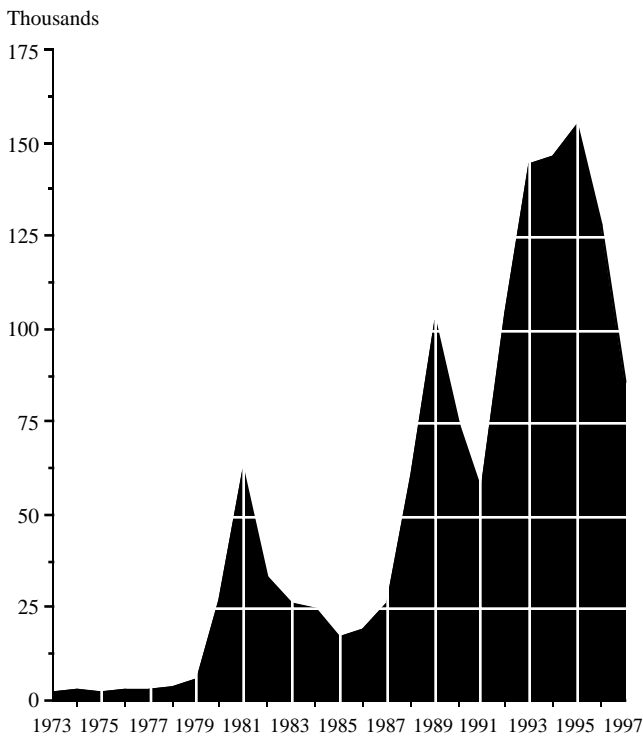
### At A Glance —

- ❖ In fiscal year 1997, 85,866 asylum cases were filed or reopened with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This represents a 33% decrease from the 128,190 cases filed in 1996.
- ❖ Mexicans, Salvadorans, Haitians, Indians, Guatemalans, Chinese (People's Republic of China), and Iraqis accounted for more than 64% of new asylum claims filed in fiscal year 1997.
- ❖ Approximately 33,649 asylum cases were reopened in fiscal year 1997, which accounted for about 39% of the applications received and represents a 60% increase over the number of cases reopened in 1996.
- ❖ During fiscal year 1997, the Asylum Officer Corps completed work on 129,716 claims, an increase of more than 4% from the 123,706 cases completed in 1996.

settlement from the 1997 figures, 82,738 applications were received, an increase of almost 17 percent from fiscal year 1996.

In the past few years, the trend in asylum claims filed by persons from Central America has been driven in large part by ABC settlement. Under the

**Chart 1. Asylum Applications Filed with the INS: Fiscal Years 1973-97**



terms of this 1991 class action lawsuit settlement, many nationals of El Salvador and Guatemala were allowed to file or renew their claims for asylum. Nationals of Guatemala had a filing deadline of March 31, 1992, which was the peak year for claims from this country. The 187,000 nationals of El Salvador who had registered for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 1991 became eligible to file for asylum at the expiration of their TPS period in 1992. They were later granted additional time under deferred enforced departure periods which extended until December 1994, and they ultimately had until January 31, 1996 to apply for asylum under the ABC agreement. The number of ABC claims filed by nationals of El Salvador surged during fiscal year 1996 before the filing deadline. These claims are heard under pre-reform regulations (see U.S. Asylum Program section). Applications filed after the ABC filing deadline were processed as reform filings, except those ABC

cases that were closed by the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) or federal courts and were not previously filed with the INS. Under the settlement, once the latter cases are identified by the INS, they are treated as ABC filings instead of reform filings. During 1997, 3,128 cases were identified as either filed or reopened ABC cases.

Approximately 33,649 asylum cases were reopened in 1997, which accounted for about 39 percent of the applications received and represents a 60 percent increase over the number of cases reopened in 1996. The number of reopened cases has increased significantly since May 1995. This is due to an automatic function which triggers the reopening of cases that were administratively closed when aliens apply for renewal of their employment authorization. Those cases were administratively closed due to a failure to appear for the asylum interview or for an invalid mailing address. This function also automatically reschedules an interview. Under the new regulation, those who do not appear for the scheduled interview can be placed in removal proceedings immediately. Some of these reopened cases may qualify for ABC treatment.

During fiscal year 1997, the Asylum Officer Corps completed work on 129,716 claims, an increase of more than 4 percent from the 123,706 cases completed in fiscal year 1996. As of April 1, 1997, a procedural change occurred which affected asylum case completions. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) requires that a case cannot be granted until identity and record checks have been completed. Applicants can be recommended for approval; however, the final decision cannot be issued until FBI fingerprint clearance has been received. Under previous procedures, these cases went directly to final approval and were, therefore, included as case completions. As a result of the procedural change, case completions declined while interviewed cases moved through the

**Table A. Asylum Applications Filed with the INS by Central Americans: Fiscal Years 1991-97**

Area of citizenship	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>Central America .....</b>	<b>28,114</b>	<b>53,966</b>	<b>54,898</b>	<b>62,310</b>	<b>104,228</b>	<b>83,410</b>	<b>21,599</b>
Nicaragua .....	2,219	2,075	3,180	4,682	1,908	2,034	1,674
El Salvador .....	10,244	6,781	14,616	18,600	75,860	65,588	8,156
Guatemala .....	14,774	43,915	34,198	34,433	23,202	13,892	9,811
Honduras .....	808	1,127	2,805	4,385	3,163	1,836	1,851
Other .....	69	68	99	209	95	60	107

processing pipeline to final decision. However, late in 1997 final approvals increased and have continued to increase in fiscal year 1998. The number of cases granted was 10,129, representing 19 percent of the cases adjudicated. These cases encompassed 15,896 persons given asylum. In fiscal year 1996, 13,532 asylum cases were granted, which was 22 percent of the adjudicated cases.

Section 601 of the IIRIRA stipulates that a person qualifies as a refugee or asylee persecuted for political opinion if forced to undergo, has a well founded fear of being compelled to undergo, or resists a coercive population-control procedure. It sets a combined annual ceiling of 1,000 persons who may be granted refugee or asylee status under this provision. In fiscal year 1997, the INS and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) granted asylum status to 606 aliens based on coercive population control methods. The INS AOC made 147 grants, Immigration Judges made 340 grants, and the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) made 119 grants. China was the country of origin of all grants. No one was granted refugee status in fiscal year 1997 based on coercive population control measures.

The Asylum Program undertook a project to identify active cases from the pre-reform non-ABC backlog in fiscal year 1997. Notices were sent to about 90,000 applicants in the backlog to determine their continued interest in pursuing their asylum

requests. Applicants no longer interested in pursuing asylum claims could request withdrawal of the application; cases without good addresses were administratively closed; and the remaining cases were scheduled for interview as slots became available. Largely due to this project, about 62,900 cases were closed, a 24 percent increase over 1996.

### **U.S. Asylum Program**

Any alien physically present in the United States or at a port of entry may request asylum in the United States. According to the Refugee Act, current immigration status, whether legal or illegal, is not relevant to an applicant's asylum claim. An alien may apply for asylum in one of two ways: with an INS asylum officer; or, if apprehended, with an immigration judge as part of a deportation or exclusion hearing. Traditionally, aliens who appear at ports of entry without proper documents and request asylum were referred for exclusion hearings; however, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) made major revisions to the procedures that were effective on April 1, 1997.

Under the new law, such aliens are referred to an asylum officer for credible fear interviews. The purpose of the interviews is to determine whether aliens might have credible fear of persecution and thus be eligible to apply for asylum before an immigration judge. Those who fail to demonstrate that they have a significant possibility for

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## A potential asylee —

is any person who is in the United States or applying for admission at a port of entry and is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Claims of persecution must be based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The Refugee Act of 1980 regulates U.S. asylum policy as well as governing refugee procedures. The Act, for the first time, established a statutory basis for granting asylum in the United States consistent with the 1967 United Nations Protocol on Refugees.

establishing eligibility for asylum will be placed in expedited removal proceedings. However, upon the alien's request, an immigration judge may review outcomes of the interview. The data reported in this section pertain only to asylum cases filed with INS asylum officers. An alien denied asylum by the INS may renew the asylum claim with an immigration judge.

No limits are set on the number of individuals who may be granted asylum in the United States. Under immigration law, approved asylees must reside in the United States for 1 year following their approval in order to be eligible to apply for adjustment to lawful permanent resident status. One year of the asylee's residence prior to adjustment is counted toward the naturalization residency requirement. Although asylee adjustments are exempt from the worldwide annual limitation on immigrants, the law places a ceiling on the number of asylees who may adjust each year. The Immigration Act of 1990 increased the ceiling from 5,000 to 10,000 per year, effective for fiscal year 1991. It also waived the annual ceiling beginning in fiscal year 1991 for those asylees who had met the required 1-year waiting period and filed for adjustment of status on or before June 1, 1990.

The Asylum Officer Corps (AOC) assumed responsibility within INS for the adjudication of asylum claims on April 2, 1991. Before that date asylum claims had been heard by examiners in INS district offices. During fiscal year 1997, asylum officers worked from eight sites in the United States—Arlington (Virginia), Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Newark, and San Francisco. Applicants who did not live near these locations were interviewed by asylum officers who traveled to other INS offices.

Beginning in 1997, the AOC also began conducting credible fear interviews as required by IIRIRA, and interviewing applicants for refugee status at the INS overseas locations. During fiscal year 1997, asylum officers interviewed refugee applicants at seven overseas locations—Croatia, Cuba, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam.

In March 1994, the INS published proposed regulations designed to streamline the asylum decision process, discourage the filing of frivolous claims, and integrate the work of asylum officers with the work of immigration judges in the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR, an independent Justice Department agency) in the case of claims that do not appear to meet the standards for granting asylum. The final asylum reform regulations were published in December 1994 and took effect on January 4, 1995. Under asylum reform the INS standard is to conduct the asylum interview within 60 days after the claim is filed, and to identify and grant in a timely fashion those cases that have merit. If the INS asylum officer does not find the claim to be grantable at the interview, the applicant is referred immediately for deportation proceedings before EOIR (unless a nonimmigrant status is still valid). The immigration judge may grant the claim or may issue a denial and an order of deportation. Under this system INS asylum officers issue relatively few denials, but an interview followed by a referral to EOIR represents the asylum officer's judgment that the application is not readily grantable. An

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applicant who fails without good cause to keep a scheduled appointment for an asylum interview is referred immediately to EOIR for deportation; this is considered to be one type of case closure.

### **Understanding the Data**

Prior to April 1, 1991, data on asylum applicants reflect cases filed with INS district directors and, subsequently, cases filed with INS asylum officers on Form I-589 (Request for Asylum in the United States). A centralized, automated data system (Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System—RAPS) has been developed to support the processing of the existing caseload and new asylum applications. The system is designed to support case tracking, schedule and control interviews, and generate management and statistical reports. The system is capable of reporting asylum casework by nationality and other characteristics of asylum applicants. Data can be reported by case or by the number of persons covered, since a case may include more than one person. Data on asylum applicants have been collected by the INS for selected nationalities since July 1980, and for all nationalities since June 1983.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service collects data on asylees adjusting to lawful permanent resident status in the Computer Linked Application Information Management Systems (CLAIMS). Adjustment to immigrant status has been the only point at which detailed characteristics of asylees were collected in past years. The RAPS system is now able to provide data on selected characteristics of asylees at an earlier time.

### **Limitations of Data**

The figures shown here for fiscal year 1997 differ slightly from preliminary statistics that were released by the Asylum Division in November 1997. The data presented here were tabulated from the RAPS system three months after the close of the fiscal year and incorporate late additions and

corrections to the database. Cases that were entered into the RAPS system during fiscal year 1997 showing filing dates in previous fiscal years were treated as new cases in these tabulations. Other corrections resulted in a drop from 453,580 to 452,246 in the pending caseload as reported in the 1996 *Statistical Yearbook* and at the beginning of fiscal year 1997 in this report. Another change between 1996 and 1997 concerns the identification of applicants from the former Soviet Union whose records are being recoded to one of the succeeding republics. Therefore, the pending number of cases from “unknown republic” decreased, and the numbers for Armenia, Russia, Ukraine, and other republics increased.

It is possible for an asylum case to have more than one action during a year, particularly if the claimant fails to pursue a claim and later reopens it. Therefore, some claims may be double-counted as received and reopened, or closed and denied or granted. For this reason, and due to recent growth in the number of reopened claims, the pending caseload at the end of the year can no longer be calculated by taking the pending caseload at the beginning of the year, adding claims filed, and subtracting claims completed.

Tables 2 and 3 contain a column showing the number of applications that were reopened during the year. Most of these are cases that had been closed earlier without a decision. The number of asylum applications filed is defined here as the sum of new applications received and applications reopened during the year. The tabulations also contain columns showing the number of cases referred to immigration judges, with and without an interview. A referral due to failure to keep an appointment for an interview without good cause is considered comparable, for statistical purposes, to a closed case. The approval rate is calculated as the number of cases approved divided by the number of cases adjudicated, which is defined as the cases approved, denied, and referred to EOIR following an interview.

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Data on applicants for asylum collected by the Immigration and Naturalization Service historically have covered only cases filed with the INS. Information has not been available on cases filed by apprehended aliens or cases denied or referred by the INS and renewed with immigration judges in the Executive Office for Immigration Review. The two agencies are working to integrate their data systems to provide these data in the future. Principal applicants whose asylum applications are

successful can apply for their spouses and minor children who are either already in the United States or to join them from abroad, and these relatives also receive status as asylees. The RAPS collects information on the spouses and children of asylum applicants only if they are included on the principal's application. Information regarding relatives whose principals petition for them after receiving asylum is collected through CLAIMS and is not included in any calculation in this report.

**Table 1. Asylum Cases Filed with INS District Directors and Asylum Officers  
Fiscal Years 1973-97**

Year	Cases received <sup>1</sup>	Cases completed <sup>2</sup>	Cases approved	Cases denied	Cases adjudicated <sup>3</sup>	Percent approved <sup>4</sup>
<b>1973-97 .....</b>	<b>1,311,582</b>	<b>938,642</b>	<b>110,740</b>	<b>236,686</b>	<b>469,373</b>	<b>23.6</b>
1973 .....	1,913	1,510	380	1,130	1,510	25.2
1974 .....	2,716	2,769	294	2,475	2,769	10.6
1975 .....	2,432	1,664	562	1,102	1,664	33.8
<b>1976-80.....</b>	<b>42,173</b>	<b>10,847</b>	<b>4,990</b>	<b>5,857</b>	<b>10,847</b>	<b>46.0</b>
1976 .....	2,733	1,914	590	1,324	1,914	30.8
1976, TQ .....	896	370	97	273	370	26.2
1977 .....	2,529	1,939	754	1,185	1,939	38.9
1978 .....	3,702	2,312	1,218	1,094	2,312	52.7
1979 .....	5,801	2,312	1,227	1,085	2,312	53.1
1980 .....	26,512	2,000	1,104	896	2,000	55.2
<b>1981-85 .....</b>	<b>161,872</b>	<b>124,142</b>	<b>25,162</b>	<b>73,928</b>	<b>99,090</b>	<b>25.4</b>
1981 .....	61,568	4,521	1,175	3,346	4,521	26.0
1982 .....	33,296	11,326	3,909	7,255	11,164	35.0
1983 .....	26,091	25,447	7,215	16,811	24,026	30.0
1984 .....	24,295	54,320	8,278	32,344	40,622	20.4
1985 .....	16,622	28,528	4,585	14,172	18,757	24.4
<b>1986-90 .....</b>	<b>281,048</b>	<b>310,071</b>	<b>24,067</b>	<b>75,621</b>	<b>99,688</b>	<b>24.1</b>
1986 .....	18,889	45,792	3,359	7,882	11,241	29.9
1987 .....	26,107	44,785	4,062	3,454	7,516	54.0
1988 .....	60,736	68,357	5,531	8,582	14,113	39.2
1989 .....	101,679	102,795	6,942	31,547	38,489	18.0
1990 .....	73,637	48,342	4,173	24,156	28,329	14.7
<b>1991-95 .....</b>	<b>605,372</b>	<b>234,217</b>	<b>31,624</b>	<b>71,635</b>	<b>138,891</b>	<b>22.8</b>
1991 .....	56,310	16,552	2,108	4,167	6,275	33.6
1992 .....	103,964	21,996	3,919	6,506	10,425	37.6
1993 .....	144,166	34,228	5,012	17,979	22,991	21.8
1994 .....	146,468	53,399	8,131	28,892	37,023	22.0
1995 .....	154,464	108,042	12,454	14,091	62,177	20.0
1996 .....	128,190	123,706	13,532	2,504	61,983	21.8
1997 .....	85,866	129,716	10,129	2,434	52,931	19.1

<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1992, includes cases newly filed and cases reopened. <sup>2</sup> Includes approvals, denials, and cases otherwise closed. Beginning in 1995, also includes cases referred to an immigration judge (interviewed and not interviewed). Cases otherwise closed are those in which the applicant withdrew the case from consideration, never acknowledged the request for an interview with the INS, or died. <sup>3</sup> Includes approvals and denials. Beginning in 1995, includes cases referred to an immigration judge following an interview. <sup>4</sup> Cases approved divided by cases adjudicated.

NOTE: The Refugee Act of 1980 went into effect April 1, 1980. Data for fiscal years 1982 and 1983 have been estimated due to changes in the reporting procedures during those two periods. Since April 1, 1991, authority to decide most asylum claims has resided with the INS Asylum Officer Corps.

**Table 2. Asylum Cases Filed with INS Asylum Officers by Selected Nationality  
Fiscal Year 1997**

Nationality	Cases pending beginning of year <sup>1</sup>	Cases filed during year	Cases reopened during year	Cases granted during year	Percent approved <sup>2</sup>	Individuals granted asylum during year
<b>All nationalities</b> .....	<b>452,246</b>	<b>52,217</b>	<b>33,649</b>	<b>10,129</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>15,896</b>
Afghanistan .....	491	219	33	151	72.9	262
Albania .....	316	952	55	262	42.5	378
Algeria .....	286	139	40	59	51.3	81
Bangladesh .....	4,686	260	902	73	6.9	118
Brazil .....	1,382	71	69	4	5.6	4
Bulgaria .....	992	145	74	46	20.8	64
Burma .....	239	300	47	159	62.1	176
Cameroon .....	236	219	45	67	47.2	77
China, People's Rep. ....	15,068	2,377	3,276	404	5.8	497
Colombia .....	2,132	251	285	27	11.9	48
Congo, Democratic Republic <sup>3</sup>	193	346	29	103	41.7	141
Cote d'Ivoire .....	433	41	100	9	8.7	15
Cuba .....	4,791	481	157	245	52.8	312
Ecuador .....	1,662	255	401	-	Z	-
Egypt .....	596	180	101	73	33.5	126
El Salvador .....	190,428	4,706	3,450	131	3.5	172
Ethiopia .....	1,752	961	126	390	50.5	444
Fiji .....	831	53	7	6	9.8	8
Gambia .....	402	164	167	44	21.1	56
Ghana .....	1,597	43	211	15	4.6	19
Guatemala .....	118,232	2,386	7,425	280	6.9	344
Guinea .....	281	105	29	13	12.3	13
Haiti .....	17,736	4,310	1,068	586	15.3	694
Honduras .....	3,475	473	1,378	39	4.6	52
India .....	6,801	3,776	1,150	790	26.0	886
Iran .....	1,172	811	155	282	50.5	408
Iraq .....	256	2,328	23	2,180	94.7	5,540
Jamaica .....	790	75	97	3	2.8	7
Jordan .....	517	68	68	8	7.8	19
Laos .....	1,310	29	36	9	12.7	15
Lebanon .....	1,006	70	131	26	14.9	37
Liberia .....	3,526	707	191	388	44.4	471
Mauritania .....	254	1,355	55	101	9.2	101
Mexico .....	5,005	13,663	5,157	20	.3	34
Nicaragua .....	20,946	658	1,016	72	6.5	129
Niger .....	537	123	51	57	55.9	88
Nigeria .....	2,223	288	244	76	14.9	101
Pakistan .....	5,428	548	893	174	20.0	264
Peru .....	3,074	416	559	119	18.8	243
Philippines .....	3,047	437	952	10	2.5	15
Poland .....	1,979	30	236	1	.6	1
Romania .....	2,906	111	212	40	10.0	55
Senegal .....	406	43	92	7	8.2	7
Sierra Leone .....	284	122	72	15	21.4	25
Somalia .....	713	1,861	58	664	50.6	708
Soviet Union, former <sup>4</sup> .....	8,783	1,817	914	740	27.5	1,108
Armenia .....	300	420	254	150	40.0	241
Russia .....	3,320	554	322	251	23.1	371
Ukraine .....	1,250	366	124	141	21.7	190
Other republics .....	576	475	88	186	33.1	256
Unknown republic .....	3,337	2	126	12	70.6	50
Sri Lanka .....	282	73	42	28	31.1	45
Sudan .....	312	533	51	207	59.8	266
Syria .....	376	31	116	24	38.7	35
Yemen .....	489	78	59	19	17.9	28
Yugoslavia, former .....	2,773	707	195	462	42.9	629
Bosnia-Herzegovina .....	87	57	4	27	46.6	40
Other & unknown .....	2,686	650	191	435	42.7	589
Stateless .....	816	99	67	41	25.8	53
Other .....	7,998	1,923	1,282	380	18.8	477

See footnotes at end of table.



**Table 2. Asylum Cases Filed with INS Asylum Officers by Selected Nationality  
Fiscal Year 1997—Continued**

Nationality	Cases denied during year	Individuals denied asylum during year	Cases otherwise closed during year	Cases to immigration judge, not interviewed	Cases to immigration judge, interviewed	Cases pending end of year
<b>All nationalities</b> .....	<b>2,434</b>	<b>3,202</b>	<b>62,857</b>	<b>13,928</b>	<b>40,368</b>	<b>399,826</b>
Afghanistan .....	8	13	110	5	48	409
Albania .....	22	30	100	16	332	568
Algeria .....	7	9	87	13	49	232
Bangladesh .....	45	53	1,976	49	947	2,432
Brazil .....	2	2	389	17	66	1,020
Bulgaria .....	38	43	272	4	137	700
Burma .....	7	9	45	4	90	262
Cameroon .....	8	10	64	2	67	278
China, People's Rep. ....	156	186	5,509	328	6,449	6,681
Colombia .....	9	17	848	161	191	1,339
Congo, Democratic Republic <sup>3</sup>	15	29	51	11	129	242
Cote d'Ivoire .....	6	7	206	12	89	233
Cuba .....	7	8	976	40	212	3,891
Ecuador .....	1	1	1,022	283	147	733
Egypt .....	10	19	177	12	135	449
El Salvador .....	407	508	5,861	2,081	3,210	185,914
Ethiopia .....	44	50	269	32	339	1,731
Fiji .....	19	32	27	6	36	796
Gambia .....	5	7	196	20	160	278
Ghana .....	8	8	713	21	303	751
Guatemala .....	284	329	9,607	1,475	3,475	111,957
Guinea .....	5	5	106	8	88	189
Haiti .....	368	419	3,134	388	2,867	15,270
Honduras .....	10	12	1,562	225	792	2,546
India .....	67	83	2,407	616	2,182	5,358
Iran .....	24	38	278	30	252	1,237
Iraq .....	4	7	55	1	117	242
Jamaica .....	1	3	418	12	104	395
Jordan .....	8	12	192	8	86	341
Laos .....	11	14	77	4	51	1,218
Lebanon .....	17	23	369	8	132	635
Liberia .....	53	70	951	23	432	2,491
Mauritania .....	2	2	30	55	995	437
Mexico .....	21	50	3,363	6,781	7,330	4,731
Nicaragua .....	230	351	4,689	97	804	16,534
Niger .....	5	5	242	7	40	343
Nigeria .....	13	19	973	20	422	1,166
Pakistan .....	42	46	2,603	87	654	3,103
Peru .....	20	47	931	86	493	2,329
Philippines .....	13	26	1,227	326	371	2,352
Poland .....	35	43	1,160	12	137	832
Romania .....	54	81	888	10	306	1,875
Senegal .....	4	4	172	13	74	252
Sierra Leone .....	1	1	119	3	54	280
Somalia .....	4	4	94	77	643	1,106
Soviet Union, former <sup>4</sup> .....	142	212	3,154	82	1,808	5,283
Armenia .....	22	33	195	19	203	354
Russia .....	53	71	1,165	35	781	1,786
Ukraine .....	34	55	384	16	476	641
Other republics .....	33	52	140	12	343	384
Unknown republic .....	-	1	1,270	-	5	2,118
Sri Lanka .....	5	12	96	4	57	191
Sudan .....	17	24	90	14	122	426
Syria .....	4	4	181	-	34	230
Yemen .....	7	7	166	9	80	324
Yugoslavia, former .....	47	71	916	30	567	1,575
Bosnia-Herzegovina .....	7	8	20	5	24	62
Other & unknown .....	40	63	896	25	543	1,513
Stateless .....	2	3	406	3	116	383
Other .....	90	134	3,303	297	1,547	5,256

<sup>1</sup> The total number of cases pending at the beginning of fiscal year 1997 is lower than the 453,580 reported at the end of fiscal year 1996 because of corrections to the data base.

<sup>2</sup> The number of cases granted divided by the sum of: cases granted; denied; and referred to an immigration judge following an interview. See Asylum section of text. <sup>3</sup> In May 1997 Zaire was formally recognized as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. <sup>4</sup> Some pending cases filed by persons from the former Soviet Union were recoded under the new Soviet republics.

- Represents zero. Z Rounds to less than .05 percent.

**Table 3. Asylum Cases Filed with INS Asylum Officers by Asylum Office and State of Residence: Fiscal Year 1997**

Asylum office and state of residence	Cases pending beginning of year <sup>1</sup>	Cases filed during year	Cases reopened during year	Cases granted during year	Percent approved <sup>2</sup>	Individuals granted asylum during year
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>452,246</b>	<b>52,217</b>	<b>33,649</b>	<b>10,129</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>15,896</b>
Asylum office:						
Arlington .....	45,897	4,434	3,030	933	33.1	1,172
Chicago .....	13,387	2,232	844	421	20.7	592
Houston .....	21,734	2,245	538	356	16.2	446
Los Angeles .....	160,573	16,612	13,768	1,283	10.3	1,742
Miami .....	61,748	6,908	4,409	938	17.9	1,244
New York .....	57,751	6,121	5,281	1,821	17.9	2,424
Newark .....	57,405	3,630	5,192	801	7.7	1,051
San Francisco .....	33,751	10,035	587	3,576	46.5	7,225
State:						
Alabama .....	946	55	79	16	8.7	36
Alaska .....	358	16	14	2	25.0	2
Arizona .....	1,811	458	184	143	Z	309
Arkansas .....	1,073	57	44	-	30.2	-
California .....	182,145	22,610	13,709	2,555	15.6	3,504
Colorado .....	1,486	295	85	114	35.4	217
Connecticut .....	1,853	174	135	83	21.4	150
Delaware .....	1,327	27	192	7	57.1	10
District of Columbia .....	6,408	522	226	190	4.3	350
Florida .....	60,898	6,767	4,262	971	18.9	1,327
Georgia .....	6,953	919	704	247	32.9	552
Hawaii .....	256	13	6	6	33.3	9
Idaho .....	192	43	11	15	16.4	35
Illinois .....	2,383	677	211	240	55.6	419
Indiana .....	427	92	51	39	33.2	51
Iowa .....	988	85	44	12	40.2	19
Kansas .....	1,131	86	56	16	47.1	32
Kentucky .....	469	170	27	48	44.9	91
Louisiana .....	237	73	13	26	28.6	66
Maine .....	144	26	9	-	22.0	-
Maryland .....	12,289	1,232	641	291	36.6	383
Massachusetts .....	12,962	551	237	111	Z	177
Michigan .....	2,242	467	214	168	25.7	329
Minnesota .....	1,523	313	71	72	43.4	100
Mississippi .....	80	8	9	2	80.2	2
Missouri .....	537	150	30	105	10.0	267
Montana .....	10	3	1	-	Z	-
Nebraska .....	2,440	165	108	44	25.9	109
Nevada .....	3,144	676	205	34	98.1	39
New Hampshire .....	145	33	8	25	30.6	88
New Jersey .....	15,464	840	1,259	206	4.8	322
New Mexico .....	111	19	-	9	71.4	25
New York .....	77,558	7,876	8,368	2,192	10.8	2,937
North Carolina .....	2,925	361	550	51	50.0	95
North Dakota .....	6	51	2	52	13.0	134
Ohio .....	1,332	342	83	51	23.3	86
Oklahoma .....	278	42	12	13	32.5	21
Oregon .....	2,924	239	46	133	56.6	191
Pennsylvania .....	2,549	328	198	173	25.1	304
Rhode Island .....	3,158	122	44	21	26.9	29
South Carolina .....	367	68	37	16	30.2	51
South Dakota .....	148	11	7	6	42.9	25
Tennessee .....	871	634	96	257	40.5	540
Texas .....	17,410	1,660	280	460	30.8	927
Utah .....	642	109	33	69	45.4	172
Vermont .....	71	7	7	3	48.5	10
Virginia .....	16,659	1,668	868	528	42.9	823
Washington .....	2,402	582	64	241	62.3	414
West Virginia .....	28	3	3	2	28.3	2
Wisconsin .....	193	98	18	30	100.0	51
Wyoming .....	16	1	3	1	25.0	2
Unknown .....	2	-	-	-	Z	-
Guam .....	94	217	1	26	48.1	53
Puerto Rico .....	80	32	18	4	19.0	4
Virgin Islands .....	101	144	66	3	2.3	5

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 3. Asylum Cases Filed with INS Asylum Officers by Asylum Office and State of Residence: Fiscal Year 1997—Continued**

Asylum office and state of residence	Cases denied during year	Individuals denied asylum during year	Cases otherwise closed during year	Cases to immigration judge, not interviewed	Cases to immigration judge, interviewed	Cases pending end of year
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>2,434</b>	<b>3,202</b>	<b>62,857</b>	<b>13,928</b>	<b>40,368</b>	<b>399,826</b>
Asylum office:						
Arlington .....	108	151	3,448	1,156	1,775	45,423
Chicago .....	254	335	1,831	129	1,357	12,182
Houston .....	132	207	586	404	1,711	21,188
Los Angeles .....	662	906	14,112	7,204	10,475	155,032
Miami .....	415	505	11,704	2,010	3,876	52,836
New York .....	199	256	16,968	1,300	8,142	38,361
Newark .....	502	603	13,572	639	9,079	40,049
San Francisco .....	162	239	636	1,086	3,953	34,755
State:						
Alabama .....	1	1	59	42	47	898
Alaska .....	1	1	10	3	20	351
Arizona .....	7	7	87	62	324	1,753
Arkansas .....	3	6	23	15	84	1,044
California .....	783	1,093	14,359	8,063	13,056	177,436
Colorado .....	4	4	79	13	204	1,435
Connecticut .....	22	22	389	19	283	1,326
Delaware .....	25	27	290	12	129	1,034
District of Columbia .....	5	5	340	83	138	6,355
Florida .....	417	510	11,576	1,960	3,742	52,000
Georgia .....	14	22	636	403	490	6,644
Hawaii .....	1	1	10	3	11	241
Idaho .....	2	2	13	2	10	201
Illinois .....	119	151	338	37	363	2,088
Indiana .....	13	15	52	9	45	401
Iowa .....	5	10	44	2	56	987
Kansas .....	1	1	42	16	17	1,172
Kentucky .....	3	3	45	2	56	503
Louisiana .....	8	17	25	5	57	200
Maine .....	-	-	5	2	4	166
Maryland .....	38	43	893	192	466	12,152
Massachusetts .....	13	17	896	78	380	12,189
Michigan .....	55	75	917	19	431	1,264
Minnesota .....	13	19	158	9	81	1,549
Mississippi .....	1	1	21	2	17	54
Missouri .....	5	5	29	6	21	541
Montana .....	-	-	4	-	1	9
Nebraska .....	6	7	104	19	94	2,423
Nevada .....	20	26	152	79	659	3,026
New Hampshire .....	2	2	19	-	8	127
New Jersey .....	149	184	3,614	293	1,549	11,436
New Mexico .....	-	-	1	1	9	110
New York .....	444	552	24,528	1,511	14,250	47,505
North Carolina .....	8	18	430	194	138	2,961
North Dakota .....	1	1	2	-	-	4
Ohio .....	18	26	158	23	150	1,324
Oklahoma .....	3	4	12	-	24	279
Oregon .....	4	6	54	14	98	2,898
Pennsylvania .....	36	46	607	32	481	1,684
Rhode Island .....	2	2	109	6	55	3,115
South Carolina .....	2	3	46	32	35	336
South Dakota .....	-	-	10	2	8	138
Tennessee .....	5	12	70	37	372	844
Texas .....	111	163	340	330	923	17,091
Utah .....	2	5	39	4	81	583
Vermont .....	-	-	8	-	4	69
Virginia .....	39	52	1,093	220	521	16,654
Washington .....	13	16	33	34	133	2,581
West Virginia .....	-	-	3	-	-	29
Wisconsin .....	7	16	23	3	69	167
Wyoming .....	-	-	2	-	3	13
Unknown .....	-	-	-	-	-	2
Guam .....	-	-	2	-	28	255
Puerto Rico .....	3	3	31	6	14	69
Virgin Islands .....	-	-	27	29	129	110

<sup>1</sup> The total number of cases pending at the beginning of fiscal year 1997 is lower than the 453,580 reported at the end of fiscal year 1996 because of corrections to the data base.

<sup>2</sup> The number of cases granted divided by the sum of: cases granted; denied; and referred to an immigration judge following an interview. See Asylum section of text.

- Represents zero. Z Rounds to less than .05 percent.