

PREFACE

At the beginning of 2013, some 35.8 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced due to conflict and persecution.¹ Unable to turn to their own governments for protection, refugees depend on the compassion and humanity of foreign governments in seeking safety and freedom. It is this core humanitarian principle that underlies U.S. asylum law and its purpose of offering meaningful protection to bona fide refugees. Although protecting refugees may seem like an obvious concept, the human rights considerations involved in refugee and asylum law often collide with national self-interests, the challenges involved in maintaining the integrity of the application process, and the economic and political realities of the sheer scale of the world refugee crisis.² This collision has generated one of the most compelling, but also one of the most complex, areas of immigration law—U.S. asylum law. This book is meant to be a comprehensive guide for practitioners, advocates, asylum adjudicators, and students, as they navigate the substantive and procedural labyrinths of this incredibly complicated and constantly evolving area of the law.

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¹ This figure included about 10.5 million refugees, 23.8 million internally displaced and stateless persons, and 928,230 individuals with pending asylum applications. *See* United Nations High Comm'r for Refugees, UNHCR Global Appeal 2014–15, at 5, *available at* www.unhcr.org/528a0a0fe.html (last visited Oct. 12, 2014).

² *See generally*, STEPHEN H. LEGOMSKY, IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE LAW AND POLICY, at Ch. 11 (Foundation Press ed., 4th ed. 2005).

