

# FORCED MIGRATION

incorporating the RPN

review

2

August 1998

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## People in camps



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Special feature on camps:  
Thai-Burma border, Sudan,  
IDPs in Rwanda, Saharawis  
in Algeria; plus literature  
review

[see pages 4-23](#)

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Guatemala: the value of  
memory

[see pages 24-26](#)

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The Middle East: wildlife  
conservation schemes and  
pastoral tribes

[see pages 27-30](#)

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Guiding Principles on Internal  
Displacement: need, content  
and application

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Stop press reports on Eritrea  
and Kosovo

[see pages 34-35](#)

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*Forced Migration Review* provides a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between researchers, refugees and internally displaced people, and those who work with them. It is published three times a year in English, Spanish and Arabic by the Refugee Studies Programme/University of Oxford in association with the Global IDP Survey/Norwegian Refugee Council. The Spanish translation, *Revista sobre Migraciones Forzadas*, is produced by HEGOA, Bilbao/Spain.

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*Forthcoming features:*

December 1998: urban issues  
April 1999: security

We encourage the submission of material in English, Spanish or Arabic, relating to the special feature of each issue or any aspect of forced migration.

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# from the editors

Thank you for the many compliments we have received about *Forced Migration Review*. In forthcoming issues we will be introducing additional innovations in response to readers' suggestions. With this issue we introduce a 'stop press' section highlighting certain news stories and analysing their potential significance; FMR 2's 'stop press' reports focus on Kosovo and Eritrea. FMR 3 will carry a new section giving details of useful websites.



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This issue has a special feature on refugee and IDP camps, introduced by an article by Dr Richard Black. FMR 3 (December 1998) will include a feature on urban issues; FMR 4 (April 1999) will focus on security.

We welcome articles (up to 3000 words), reports, letters and news items - in English, Spanish or Arabic - on any issue relating to forced migration. Deadline for submission of articles for FMR 4: 1 November 1998.

With best wishes  
Marion Couldrey & Sharon Ford,  
*Forced Migration Review* Editors

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# Putting refugees in camps

by Richard Black



Pa Yaw refugee camp, Kanchanaburi province, 1994

The articles presented in this issue of *Forced Migration Review* are useful in reminding us of what some academics and policy makers have been arguing for a long time - that 'camps' represent a poor solution for refugees.

Emerging research has demonstrated how, for social, economic, environmental and health reasons, the consequences of placing refugees in camps are often negative, not only for the refugees themselves but also frequently for the national populations and governments of receiving states. It is not the purpose of this article to reiterate these arguments. Rather, the aim is to take one step back from this debate and ask first: why have camps so often been preferred by both host governments and international assistance organisations? This would appear to be an essential step for those wishing to push policy in a different direction and translate our knowledge of the negative consequences of 'encampment' into practical action. A first essential point is to question what is meant by a 'camp'. There are

various elements that constitute a standard view of a 'camp', some of which might be regarded as more important than others in leading to adverse effects for refugees. For example, the most obvious example of 'camps' described in this issue is that of the Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria. These are, effectively, tented cities, supplied wholly from the outside. In contrast, a wider definition is used by Edith Bowles in her article about the Thai-Burma border. She uses the word 'camp' to describe both 'small, open settlements where the refugee communities have been able to maintain a village atmosphere' and 'larger, more crowded camps' where they are 'more dependent on assistance'. It is the latter that are more clearly recognisable as 'camps', distinguished from what might be regarded as 'settlements' or even

'villages' by their size, density, dependence on external aid, and the level of control exercised over inhabitants by national or international authorities.

Each of these features of the 'camp' has been cited in different reports as the main element that makes 'encampment' a bad idea for refugees. But these classic elements of camps are not the only aspects of settlement policy that are problematic. For example, Tarig Misbah Yousif (article pp15-17) describes what might more accurately be considered an 'agricultural settlement' rather than a camp. Yet, here too, there are clear practical and theoretical objections to this particular form of settlement policy. Such objections are backed up by Kibreab's review<sup>1</sup> of over 100 such agricultural settlements across Africa, which is hardly more inspiring than the growing literature on 'camps'. Indeed, agricultural settlements that purport to reduce dependence and increase self-reliance can in certain circumstances be just as constraining and 'overcrowded' (in relation to land resources) as camps. Nor are camps only used as a solution for refugees, as Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt's article (pp 8-11) on IDPs in Rwanda demonstrates.

In discussing the negative consequences of 'encampment' of refugees, it is both common and quite important to be specific about the elements of 'camp life' that are most problematic. For Bowles, it is the increased dependence of camp dwellers that is perhaps of most concern. For Yousif, while it is partly the association of 'camp-based settlements' with overcrowding, also important is an apparent link with the withdrawal of international aid. For scholars concerned with environmental issues, it is again population densities that are often seen as important<sup>2</sup>, although my own work has stressed social and organisational issues, especially the extent to which refugees are cut off from local populations<sup>3</sup>. But if this specificity is important in examining the consequences of encampment, it is no less important in

explaining its causes. At different times, and in different places, different elements of encampment may be more or less relevant in influencing settlement policy decisions. Indeed, justifications for a policy of encampment are rarely made in general terms by policy makers; rather, specific reasons are more often cited to justify its 'exceptional' use in

These two short contributions are characteristic of much of agency thinking on the problem of camps, and the detail of their arguments deserves to be dealt with, not least because both responses accept that, in principle, refugees should not be housed in camps. A first point concerns the perceived advantages of having refugees in camps from the point

the notion, as van der Borgh and Philips put it, that 'easy integration' is 'wishful thinking'. Yet in some respects, the conflation of 'settlement outside camps' with 'local integration' is perhaps at the root of this lack of certainty about non-camp solutions. For example, just because refugees are not housed in camps, it does not mean that they can or should be 'integrated' with local populations in every sense of the word. In the case of Guinea, cited by van Damme, there was an opportunity to integrate assistance to refugees and local populations where this was feasible and cost-effective - as in the case of health provision and joint use of educational facilities<sup>7</sup>. But, socio-economically and politically, the two populations maintained a clear and distinct identity. Nor is it right to conflate 'settlement outside camps' with 'unofficial' settlement that is uncontrolled or uncontrollable. In countries where dispersed settlement has been achieved, from Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire to Senegal, Uganda, Sudan and Malawi, this has seldom been 'spontaneous', involving at the very least negotiations between refugee and local leaders. More often than not, government and international agencies are involved too, with the latter especially adopting a facilitating and supportive role, helping to ensure that the refugees are not simply turned away.

This latter point is important, since it holds the key also to where any arguments against settlement in camps ought to be directed. To a certain extent, it is the international assistance agencies, and especially UNHCR, that have borne the brunt of criticism about the establishment of camps. These agencies are seen as favouring a policy that either helps them to carry out their mandate to assist refugees or, alternatively, strengthens their control of camp populations and accountability to donors, depending on one's point of view. As Barbara Harrell-Bond puts it, 'Refugee policy in the South [is] largely driven by the demands of donors and humanitarian organisations'. However, donors and international agencies can easily deflect this criticism by pointing out - quite rightly in a technical sense - that it is not their job to decide where refugees will settle. Either refugees settle 'spontaneously' outside official camps or they are settled in sites chosen or sanctioned by the government. In neither case do UNHCR or other agencies formally decide where they should go. The fact

## *...refugees were not placed in camps in Tanzania or Zaire in order to ensure their accessibility.*

particular circumstances. Awareness of this specificity is crucial if a case is to be launched in any particular place to influence policy, or indeed if a general case against camps is to be seen to be watertight.

Why, then, do governments and international agencies so often seem to prefer the option of encampment? Some interesting clues are provided by an exchange in the medical journal *The Lancet*, prompted by van Damme's observations of the negative consequences for human health of encampment policies in Zaire in 1994<sup>4</sup>. For example, writing from the medical charity *Médecins sans Frontières*, van der Borgh and Philips<sup>5</sup> agree that there is an 'all too common link between refugee ill-health and camps'. But they then go on to point out the 'practical advantages from the standpoints of service delivery, accountability, identification of individuals, physical access, cost effectiveness of the relief operations and monitoring of both the refugees' status and received assistance'. They argue that refugees outside camps may become excluded from assistance, while warning against 'wishful thinking of easy integration' outside the camp setting. Meanwhile, writing on behalf of the Programme and Technical Support Section of UNHCR, the section responsible for settlement planning, Dualeh<sup>6</sup> again agrees that 'refugees do not belong in camps'. Yet he then suggests that 'in Africa and elsewhere, huge influxes of refugees can completely overwhelm the capacity of the local population and the infrastructure, wreaking havoc on the environment and socio-economic system.' As a result, according to Dualeh, 'local authorities sometimes have no choice but to seek separate sites for the refugees'.

of view of efficiency and transparency of aid delivery. But the experience of camps set up for Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania from 1994-96 is hardly encouraging in terms of the ability of international agencies to identify individuals and ensure accountable distribution of aid. Some of the camps, at least, proved effectively to be 'no-go' areas for international agencies beyond the distribution points for food delivery. Indeed, according to some agency accounts, they tended to function as zones in which those responsible for the Rwandan genocide were able to continue to intimidate camp populations and divert aid to military and para-military personnel. Physical access was hardly maximised either, with serious problems caused in Zaire as a result of the terrain. Numerous agency reports talk of vehicles being unable to leave roads, for fear of becoming bogged down. While this might be seen as independent of the question of whether refugees were in camps or not, it could be argued that the separation of refugees from local populations exacerbates their marginalisation onto the poorest quality, and probably least accessible, land. What is certainly true is that refugees were not placed in camps in Tanzania or Zaire in order to ensure their accessibility.

A second point raised above concerns the perceived negative consequences of allowing refugees to settle outside camps. But concerns about refugees' 'exclusion' from international aid are again perhaps a little misplaced in this context since surely, if refugees were free to settle where they wished, this could include settlement in areas concentrated around points of aid delivery. More serious is the question of relations between refugees and host populations -

that camps appear in situations of internal displacement shows that it is not simply a problem of UNHCR. By shifting the responsibility to host government authorities, however, international agencies can and do side-step the 'political' issue of whether a policy of settlement in camps is a good one or not, and are able to confine their attention to more technical matters of camp layout, infrastructure and organisation.

against settlement in camps might be better put to governments, who have ultimate responsibility for settlement policy, rather than to international organisations. This in turn requires us to be aware of host governments' main reasons for preferring settlement in camps. For them, issues such as accessibility, efficiency and transparency of aid delivery are likely to be rather less important than potential conflict between refugees

sonable to expect governments to condone the use of their territories by military groups, allied to the refugees, for launching attacks on neighbouring countries - although obviously their attitude will depend much on higher level relations between the two states. Indeed, in both such cases, resettlement of refugees (whether in camps or not) may also be in the interest of refugee protection.

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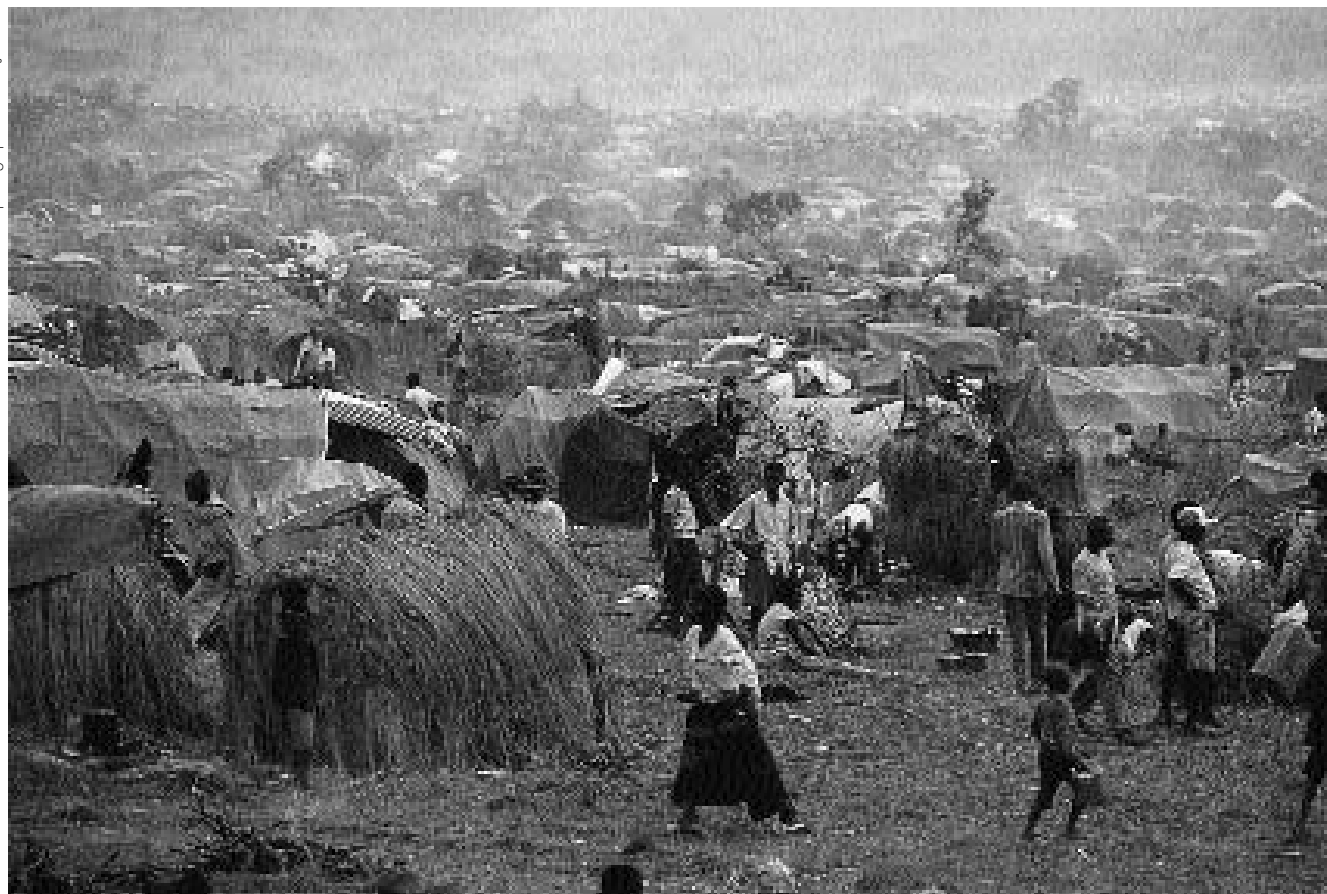
*...arguments against settlement in camps might be better put to governments, who have ultimate responsibility for settlement policy, rather than to international organisations.*

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Such a position is of course a caricature: many officers of UNHCR and other international agencies at both field and headquarters level would recognise their quasi-political role in encouraging governments to adopt certain policies. Some at least have used that role to argue against encampment. Nonetheless, it highlights how general arguments

and locals; but uppermost on their minds are likely to be the political and security implications of the pattern of refugee settlement. No government will be happy with the dispersed settlement of refugees in a border area if it makes that area vulnerable to attack by parties to the conflict from which the refugees have fled in the first place. Nor is it rea-

If the issue of settlement policy is put in this context, the immediate policy question becomes less one of what is best for the refugees and more one of what is in the interest of the security of both refugee and host populations. In turn, to avoid there being a trade-off between security (in camps) and refugee well-being (in the absence of camps), those opposing encampment would need to demonstrate that camps do not necessarily enhance the security situation or reduce conflict between refugees and locals. Importantly, it is possible to make an argument along these lines, even if not in an absolute or universally applicable manner. Clearly there will be circumstances in which the security threat posed by certain groups of refugees does require effective measures



Benaco camp for Rwandan refugees, Tanzania, 1994

of control. But it could be argued that, in normal circumstances, control - and especially undue restrictions on refugees' activities within camps - increases rather than decreases the security threat that is posed by refugees. For example, those working with refugees from Somalia have commonly portrayed Somalis as uncooperative and unruly populations, where the safety of humanitarian aid workers is often put into question. But, as Waldron and Hasci have pointed out<sup>8</sup>, this lack of co-operation has much to do with the way Somalis have been forced into camps.

The point is that, while it is entirely legitimate for governments to seek to exercise control over refugee populations, there is also good evidence that encampment does not provide a particularly effective means of control. Indeed, especially in conditions where the state has a limited capacity, such control may be much better exercised by local (traditional) authorities than by international organisations with little direct experience of the area. An example is the case of rules on access to natural resources such as firewood. Here, the difference is striking between frequent non-compliance with agency-generated rules, which are seen by refugees as lacking legitimacy, and general compliance with rules established by local custom, tradition or edict<sup>9</sup>. It is important not to romanticise about local capacity to control or regulate behaviour in conditions of forced displacement but, at the same time, it is reasonable to recognise that some capacity usually exists, and to seek to strengthen this, rather than impose a military-style camp regime.

Finally, to say that arguments against encampment might be better addressed to governments should not be seen as absolving international organisations or downplaying their role. In addition to the role that they can and do play in pressing governments to adopt strategies that ensure refugee protection, both implementing agencies and UNHCR continue to have a primary responsibility for a range of settlement issues, regardless of whether settlement is in camps or not. Some at least of the problematic aspects of camps highlighted by research are amenable to improvement through better planning. Site plans can limit settlement densities, while efficient provision of infrastructure such as water points, clinics and facilities for waste disposal can go a long way towards making

life more 'sustainable' at higher densities. Recent work by Tara Rao<sup>10</sup> has shown how better settlement design can reduce or eliminate features that have a negative impact on the situation of women.

Perhaps most importantly, whatever the settlement type, both governments and international agencies can promote policies that engage refugees and local populations in project design and implementation. Like the growing consensus against camps, such a participatory approach is increasingly part of the rhetoric of international agencies. In both cases, the task for research may be less to provide further evidence of the appropriateness of the policy but rather to help put that policy into practice.

**Dr Richard Black is Lecturer in Human Geography in the School of African and Asian Studies, and co-Director of the Sussex Centre for Migration Research, both at the University of Sussex.**

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- 4 Van Damme W 'Do refugees belong in camps? Experiences from Goma and Guinea', *The Lancet*, 346, pp 360-362, 1995
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- 8 Waldron S and Hasci N Somali *Refugees in the Horn of Africa State of the Art Literature Review*, Studies on emergencies and disaster relief, Report no 3, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 1995.
- 9 Examples can be found in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. A review is provided by Richard Black, forthcoming, *Refugees, Environment and Development*, Longman, Harlow, UK.
- 10 Rao T 'An unsettling settlement: the physical planning of refugee settlements: a gender perspective', MA thesis, 1997, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

## New MA in Migration Studies

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# The Kibeho crisis: towards a more effective system of international protection for IDPs

by Stephanie T E Kleine-Ahlbrandt

In Rwanda in April 1995, hundreds of IDPs, mostly women and children, were killed in a military operation to close camps for the internally displaced.

This tragedy, which occurred in Kibeho camp in southwest Rwanda, raises several key issues regarding internal displacement, particularly that of the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within camps and against forcible return, the screening of criminal elements and persons guilty of war crimes, and the coordination of international efforts to meet humanitarian and protection needs of IDPs.

## A. Development of the Kibeho crisis

In the wake of the April 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Security Council's decision to reduce the UNAMIR peacekeeping force to 270 persons left the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) as the only significant force capable of stopping the massacres, which in the span of three months had claimed the lives of 500,000 to 1 million persons. Massive displacement was caused by the widespread killings and fear of RPF reprisals.

By 4 July 1994, the French *Opération Turquoise* had created in the country's southwest corner a 'safe humanitarian zone' equivalent to roughly one-fifth of the national territory. By the time of the RPF's proclamation of a new government on 19 July, roughly 1.2 to 1.5 million IDPs had already fled to this zone, most of them having escaped the advance of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) in June and July. As the deadline for French withdrawal drew near, a collaborative effort between political, military and international humanitarian organisations successfully encouraged many of the displaced people in the southwest to remain in Rwanda rather than to contin-

ue their flight abroad. When *Opération Turquoise* ended on 21 August, some 390,000 IDPs remained in thirty-three camps<sup>1</sup>

## Events leading to the massacre

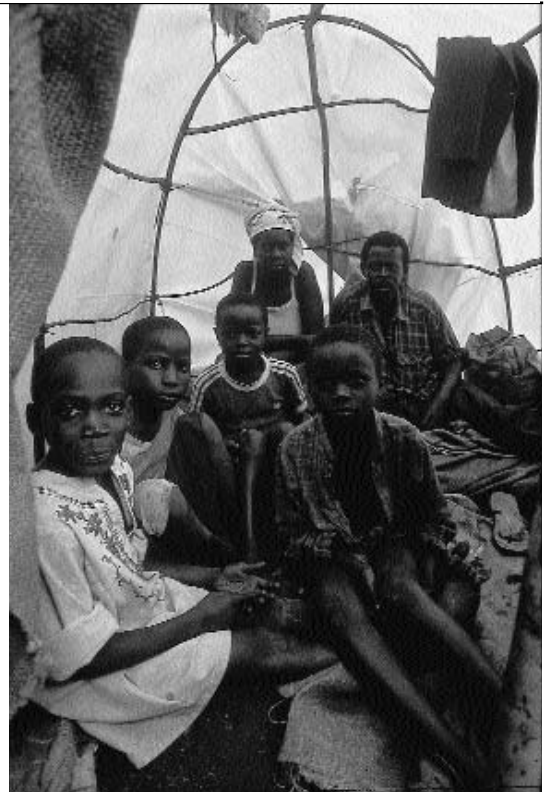
The new Rwandan government suspected that the IDP camps were providing sanctuary to persons implicated in the genocide and were being used for the formation of an anti-government militia. As neither the UN mandate for *Opération Turquoise* nor the objectives of the French government included disarming or arresting soldiers, criminal elements were able to consolidate in the camps. In addition, refugee populations surrounding Rwanda, which comprised both those responsible for the genocide as well as innocents under their authority, were re-arming and launching cross-border incursions, in spite of a UN arms embargo. Unable to diffuse this growing threat, the Government viewed the IDPs as compromising its territorial integrity.

## Institutional responses

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs' field presence in Rwanda, UNREO, was charged with the inter-agency coordination of actions on behalf of IDPs, centralised through the Integrated Operations Centre (IOC), consisting of representatives of UN agencies, NGOs, major donors and the Rwandan government. At the end of 1994, the IOC launched *Opération Retour* to facilitate

voluntary return. During the first six weeks an estimated 40,000 IDPs returned to their home communes but the number fell drastically by the end of February 1995. Meanwhile, camp populations increased due to reports of returnee arrests, overcrowded prisons, and the illegal occupation of homes, as well as a lack of confidence in local judicial procedures. In Kibeho Camp the population grew from 70,000 to 115,000 in a fortnight.<sup>2</sup> By late March, some 220,000 IDPs still remained in the camps.

The international community and the Rwandan government disagreed on the conditions under which IDPs should return. While international agencies believed that IDPs should not return until a certain level of security existed in the country, the Rwandan government believed that security could only be established when concentrations of dis-



Shelter in Kibeho camp

photograph: Adrian Abiby/Skill Pictures



placed populations had dispersed. The IOC developed a strategy to reconcile the Government's preoccupation with national security with the international community's concern for 'voluntary return in safety and dignity' [see C.i. below for discussion of use of this term]. Although the use of force was to be avoided, the strict meaning of 'voluntary return' was compromised: the camps were to be closed by ending food and relief distribution and transferring IDPs to home communes.

### Massacre at Kibeho

However, even before the implementation of this strategy, on 18 April the RPA moved to close the camp at Kibeho by surrounding it and cutting off its food and water supply. For the next three days, the concentration of 80,000 people on one hill and the rapid deterioration of humanitarian conditions resulted in panic and casualties when soldiers met stone-throwing with machine gun fire. On the fourth day, a large group of IDPs tried to break the cordon. The RPA opened fire on the crowd, killing several hundred people and causing a stampede which claimed more lives. The government put the death toll at 338 while the UN put the figure at 2,000. UNAMIR troops were present during the massacre but were ordered not to intervene despite their mandate to "contribute to the security and protection of displaced persons..." (Security Council Resolution 918 of 17 May 1994).

Over the next three weeks, the IDP camps in southwest Rwanda were evacuated. Thousands of IDPs returned to their home communes but several thousand others crossed into Zaire. Many returning IDPs refused to register with local authorities or to proceed to their communes of origin, and instead hid in rural areas. Some IDPs eventually mingled with Burundian refugees in camps in Rwanda.

### The International Commission of Inquiry

In an effort to restore its reputation, the Government of Rwanda established an Independent International Commission of Inquiry. The Commission's report, issued on 17 May 1995, indicated that the government could have taken steps to prevent the massacre. The Commission correctly faulted the RPA for its lack of communication, its inexperience and its

inappropriate training for what was basically a police operation.

### B. Analysis of the crisis

The Kibeho tragedy was avoidable. Signs of an impending disaster existed. The first involved the divergent priorities and perspectives of the Rwandan government and international agencies regarding IDPs. The IOC failed to appreciate the urgent concerns of the Rwandan government, thus heightening its suspicions about the international community's intentions. The IOC also lacked the flexibility and resources to implement projects in order to encourage voluntary IDP return or to devise an effective camp closure strategy in a time-frame which could have responded to the government's security concerns. Furthermore, the integrated concept of the IOC did not reflect the current reality. Not only did UN agencies not ensure consistent representation on a high enough level within the IOC but the Rwandan government's participation was sporadic and did not include the key ministries of Defence and Interior.

Monitoring of the camps fell within UNAMIR's mandate but the force did not ensure a sufficient presence in the camps prior to or during the crisis - only a single contingent of fewer than 100 soldiers (of a full strength of 5,529 soldiers) remained in the camp throughout the events. UNAMIR officers and Human Rights Field Officers could have played a more substantial monitoring role in the camps. A strategy for an increased UN presence in the camps, including Human Rights Field Officers, should have been included directly in the provisions of *Opération Retour*.

The divergence between the international community and the Rwandan government concerning internal displacement reflected a lack of political will on the part of the international community to develop a coherent approach to the post-genocide situation in Rwanda and in the larger Great Lakes region. The Rwandan Government pledged to respect human rights and refrain from reprisal killings but lacked the resources to rebuild its

devastated infrastructure, in particular its judicial system. At the same time, donors provided substantial resources for humanitarian assistance to refugee camps in neighbouring countries harbouring forces of the former regime, without supporting efforts to separate those who should have been excluded from refugee status.

The inability of the IOC to reconcile humanitarian with political and strategic interests, and its reluctance to recognise the fragility of the consensus between all parties, allowed the Kibeho tragedy to develop. The Rwanda experience indicates that solutions to the problems of internal displacement cannot ignore regional dynamics nor allow humanitarian action to substitute for military, political or diplomatic solutions.

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*The Kibeho tragedy underlined the necessity for agencies and governments to be able to refer to a body of guiding principles on internal displacement.*

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### C. Lessons learned for the future protection of IDPs

#### i. Legal issues

The Kibeho tragedy underlined the necessity for agencies and governments to be able to refer to a body of guiding principles on internal displacement. A set of minimum international guidelines applying to situations of internal displacement would have facilitated the channelling of political pressure on the government to encourage it to develop more appropriate ways to deal with the IDP issue. The IOC had to elaborate its own guidelines, which were more easily compromised because they were self-created.

*The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, submitted by the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs to the 54th session of the Commission on Human Rights and endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on 26 March 1998, should help to facilitate the work of organisations acting on behalf of IDPs as well as to provide a basis for the

development of more effective responses to internal displacement in the wake of complex humanitarian emergencies. Section V of the *Guiding Principles*, concerning return, resettlement and reintegration, could have been of particular use in the Rwandan context given the lack of clarity and consensus on principles on IDP issues. Such principles may also have encouraged a more serious investment of resources and energy in the first phase of the plan espousing voluntary return. In addition, these principles could have helped foster an international consensus after they were violated in Kibeho, by providing the Independent International Commission of Inquiry with objective principles upon which to base its evaluation and conclusions.

The Rwanda example shows that the *Guiding Principles* are useful where a general legal norm exists but a more specific right, that would ensure implementation of the norm in the case of IDPs, has not been articulated. The term 'voluntary return' was borrowed from refugee law. Since no international legal norm exists explicitly protecting people against individual or mass transfer from one region to another within their own country, the norm must be inferred from the right to freedom of residence and movement. However, the Rwandan government did not consider itself bound, through inference, by the right of its citizens not to be forcibly relocated.

Rwandan authorities repeatedly invoked their sovereign right to address the security threat presented by the camps.

Having no clear or specific basis upon which to insist upon the concept of "voluntary return in safety and with dignity" for IDPs (Principle 28 of the *Guiding Principles*), the international community could only negotiate with and exert pressure on the Government to resolve the problem through means consistent with a peaceful solution to the IDP problem. A humanitarian disaster ultimately precipitated the Kibeho massacres. Attempts by UN agencies and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to exercise their good offices to address the denial of camp access by humanitarian agencies during the RPA cordon were ineffective in addressing the extreme food and water deprivation which resulted in the escalation of the crisis. In this regard, Section IV of the *Guiding Principles* relating to Humanitarian Assistance could provide a future basis for coordinated UN intercession with governments, especially in humanitarian crisis situations involving IDPs.

#### ii. Institutional issues

Implementation of the *Guiding Principles* will depend on the existing institutional arrangements and political will in any given country. The case of Rwanda demonstrated that where the authorities' will to protect IDPs is weak, only strong institutional arrangements with substantial political weight and expertise can make a difference in IDP protection.

One means for improvement in the international institutional protection of IDPs thus lies in better coordinating and

supporting the efforts of institutions currently undertaking activities on behalf of IDPs. The UN Secretary-General's 1997 Programme of Reform reaffirms that the Emergency Relief Coordinator's (ERC) role is to ensure that issues of protection and assistance for internally displaced people are addressed. The IASC recommended that the ERC should help mobilise resources and identify gaps; assign responsibilities, including camp management; develop information systems; and provide support to the field. The ERC and its Working Group, which has recently been designated as the main inter-agency forum on IDPs, should be able to play a mobilising role with regard to the internally displaced by initiating a division of labour of agencies, by developing agreed strategies where necessary and by helping to ensure that humanitarian assistance is not substituted for political action. The participation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs in the IASC and its working group should help ensure the integration of a protection perspective in decisions involving IDPs. In appropriate contexts, one agency can assume primary responsibility for ensuring that protection and assistance are provided to IDPs by increasing awareness of their plight and mobilising support on their behalf. This lead agency model has been found to better meet the needs of IDPs than when no single agency is designated as such.<sup>3</sup>

Agreements between agencies are also a welcome form of coordination. For example, UNHCR and HRFOR (UN Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda) signed an agreement in Rwanda in September of 1995 which outlines the responsibilities of the two agencies regarding the protection of the security and physical integrity of returning refugees and IDPs and allows for joint intervention in specific cases.

The 52nd, 53rd and 54th sessions of the Commission on Human Rights called upon the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop technical cooperation projects to promote the human rights of IDPs. These may help alleviate the causes of internal displacement and encourage voluntary IDP return by heightening respect for legal procedures, harmonising national law

**18 April 1995, the day the RPA moved to close the camp at Kibeho. Family heads identify victims of an earlier crush incident.**



photograph: Mark Cuthbert/Brown

with international human rights standards, providing support to independent national human rights institutions and strengthening civil society and NGOs.

Human rights field officers play an integral role in the establishment of confidence necessary for voluntary return of displaced populations and act as a deterrent to human rights abuses. They should be sufficiently deployed in areas with large concentrations of IDPs and should make available information relative to the situation of IDPs and analyses of trends to, *inter alia*, host governments and the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs. Future human rights operations could include in their mission agreements specific provisions allowing access of human rights personnel to internally displaced populations, and should make reference to the *Guiding Principles*.

In line with the Secretary-General's 'Programme for Reform' which identified human rights as an issue which cuts across all areas of United Nations activities and set as a major task for the Organisation to fully integrate human rights in its broad range of activities, UN staff must be better trained in human rights norms and IDP concerns. This would allow them to raise protection issues on behalf of IDPs and to better integrate protection concerns with the provision of relief. Such training would also facilitate the development of common UN approaches in response to serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law that could lead to internal displacement.

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For a comprehensive analysis of the Kibeho crisis, see Kleine-Ahlbrandt S *The Protection Gap in the International Protection of Internally Displaced Persons: the case of Rwanda*, Geneva, Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, 1996, 172pp.

1 Adelman H and Suhrke A, *Early Warning and Conflict Management*, Study II of the DANIDA Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, March 1996, p 94.

2 In-Country Report, United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office, 9 February 1995.

# From village to camp: refugee camp life in transition on the Thailand-Burma Border

by Edith Bowles

The Karen, Mon and Karenni refugee camps along Thailand's border with Burma have traditionally been small, open settlements where the refugee communities have been able to maintain a village atmosphere, administering the camps and many aspects of assistance programmes themselves. Much of this, however, is changing.

Since 1995, the 110,000 ethnic minority refugees from Burma have faced new security threats and greater regulation by the Royal Thai Government (RTG). An increasing number of the refugees now live in larger, more crowded camps and are more dependent on assistance than ever before. At the beginning of 1994, 72,000 refugees lived in 30 camps, of which the largest housed 8,000 people; by mid 1998, 110,000 refugees lived in 19 camps, with the largest housing over 30,000 people.

## Background

Burma is home to one of the longest running civil wars in the world. Over the last 50 years, opposition organisations representing a variety of political agendas have taken up arms against the central government in Rangoon. Since 1962, the country has been run by a succession of military governments, including the current ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The primary victims in Burma's protracted

civil war have been ethnic minority people, like the Karen, Mon and Karenni, in Burma's rural areas. Although since 1989 most of the armed opposition groups have entered into cease-fire agreements with the Burmese government, there is still fighting along the Thailand-Burma border.

The Burmese government has one of the worst human rights records in the world. People flee to the refugee camps in Thailand from forced labour, forced relocations and military offensives. Each dry season (October-May) the Burmese military launches an offensive against the opposition armies, often displacing large numbers of refugees into Thailand. The military offensives are associated with widespread abuse of civilians, including summary execution, torture and rape, as well as looting and destruction of property. The Burmese army has also carried out massive forced relocations of rural villages, with the intention of eliminating civilian support for opposition groups or clearing ground for infrastructure projects. Furthermore, in the dry season, villagers are routinely forced to work without pay on building

roads, railways, irrigation ditches and other infrastructure projects.

## The camps

The first Karen camp was established in 1984, not far from the border town of Mae Sot in Thailand's Tak Province. By 1986, there were 12 Karen refugee camps with a collective population of 18,000 people in Tak and Mae Hong Son provinces. The first Karenni camp was established in Mae Hong Son province in 1989. Mon refugees came to Thailand in 1990, after the Mon and Karen opposition bases at Three Pagodas Pass were overrun by the Burmese army.

The border is over 2,000 km long, with thousands of potential crossing points. New camps have often been established close to wherever large groups of new refugees crossed, frequently in the wake of military offensives. Individual families and smaller groups arriving in Thailand separately have gone to established camps. While some camps are located on main roads and near Thai villages, many are in remote areas. The terrain along the border is mountainous and heavily forested in places.

The camps, particularly the smaller ones, have traditionally had a village-like atmosphere. Planned by the refugee communities, the layout of camps varies a good deal. In some camps, houses are built in rows facing a main road through the centre of the camp. In others, houses are built in clusters around a network of paths. Larger camps are sub-divided into sections but there are no barriers between sections. Communal buildings, like hospitals and schools, are located in the middle of the camp or, in the case of

large camps with more than one school, in the middle of sections. Most children need to walk for no more than 10 minutes to school.

Queuing for water is rare as the water supply is generally adequate and accessible, with water tanks or wells at frequent intervals. Most camps are located near streams, which are used for bathing and washing clothes. In some camps there is space for people to plant small vegetable gardens or even to rear animals next to their homes, although these activities vary depending on the quality of the soil and how strictly an RTG ban on refugee crop planting is enforced.

The size, location and openness of the camps allowed the refugees to gather building materials, firewood and food from the surrounding forests. House walls and floors are constructed out of split bamboo and roofs out of leaf thatch. (According to RTG regulations, no permanent buildings are allowed to be built.) Refugees gather edible forest vegetables, such as bamboo shoots, wild beans and leaves, to supplement their diets; they can also earn cash by selling forest vegetables, leaf thatch or charcoal.

Although RTG regulations technically forbid refugees to engage in economic activities, some refugees have been able to find work as daily labourers on nearby Thai farms or forest plantations. Other economic activities include weaving,

cooking food for sale, or running small shops. Most camps have at least a few small shops, located along the main

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## *Camp administrative systems maintained by the refugee communities themselves... have been integral to refugee autonomy and self-sufficiency.*

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road or scattered among the houses, and larger camps maintain significant markets.

### **Camp administration**

As each new refugee group came across the border, they established refugee committees, with offices in the nearest Thai towns, to seek and coordinate relief assistance. The camps are administered by camp committees with a camp leader and section leaders drawn from the camp community. The school head teacher and/or representatives of the women's or youth organisations may also serve on the committee. These committees are responsible for all aspects of camp administration, including the registration of the population in new camps or recording births, deaths, and new arrivals in established camps, maintenance and sanitation, resolution of disputes, transport and referral of medical emergencies, and camp security.

Ultimately, the responsibility for accountability and transparency in aid distribution, particularly food aid, also rests with them. Camp administrative systems maintained by the refugee communities themselves, rather than imposed by the Thai authorities or relief agencies, have been integral to refugee autonomy and self-sufficiency.

### **Assistance**

The original RTG mandate for NGO assistance covered only food, medicines, clothing and other essential items. A mandate for educational assistance was added at the end of 1996. The RTG has always insisted that NGO activities remain low-profile and that there be no permanent expatriate presence in the camps. The NGOs operating along the border have also sought to create non-intru-

**Karenni camp, Mae Hong Son province**



photograph: Edith Bowles



'Temporary site', Kanchanaburi province

camps also suited the RTG in the early years. In many areas, people on both sides of the border belong to the same ethnic group. Consequently the refugees were not only inconspicuous but attracted some local sympathy. More importantly, the refugees and the ethnic minority opposition along the border formed a convenient buffer between the Thai and Burmese armies. For NGOs, the organisation and comparative

sive programmes, promote refugee self-sufficiency and minimise aid dependency. Assistance to the camps is sent through the refugee committees which, in conjunction with the camp committees, oversee the distribution of supplies. Recognising the ability of the refugees to maximise their resources, whether from forest products, garden plots or income-generating opportunities, assistance originally included only rice, salt, fish paste, mosquito nets and blankets, with sleeping mats and cooking pots provided to new arrivals as needed. Yellow beans have also been provided where there is a large number of new arrivals or a demonstrated nutritional need for them, such as in a camp where soil or weather conditions are so poor that kitchen gardens are untenable. The system of assistance delivery works on trust and cooperation between the refugee populations and aid agencies. There are no outside enumeration systems, such as counting heads or marking people with paint, during registrations or food distribution.

An unusual aspect of the situation is that UNHCR has played no role in assistance or, until recently, protection. The RTG has always maintained that the people in camps on the Thailand-Burma border are not 'refugees' but 'displaced persons', to whom the RTG is offering 'temporary shelter'. As Thailand is not a signatory to the United Nations 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, UNHCR cannot officially recognise the

refugees without invitation from the RTG, which the RTG has consistently refused to grant.

### Advantages

For many years, the system of small, open camps spread out over hundreds of kilometres, many of them located in under-populated areas, had advantages for all parties and particularly for the refugees. Refugees could use water and forest products without placing a strain on local resources, at the same time maintaining their traditional foraging, cultivation and building skills, without needing to rely entirely on NGO assistance. Furthermore, the small size of the camps and the style of administration - with committee members chosen entirely from the refugee community - allowed each group to maintain their cultural traditions and social structure, despite displacement.

Overall, the camps provided a context where families were in part self-sufficient, the majority of children attended primary school, there were few social problems or conflicts, malnutrition was rare, and the communities could live according to their own traditions. Health was, on the whole, good, and community morale and pride were tangible: families planted flowers around their well-maintained houses, and ceremonies in schools, churches and monasteries were carefully planned and well-attended.

The establishment of small, unobtrusive

self-sufficiency of the refugees allowed for an extremely cost-effective programme. Until 1994, the food relief programme for the whole border was handled by two expatriate field staff.

### Camp consolidations, restrictions and 'temporary sites'

Since 1995, however, there has been a transition from small, open camps with high levels of refugee self-sufficiency to larger, closed camps and greater aid dependency, particularly in the Karen camps. The change is due in part to the drastic deterioration in security in the Karen camps.

Until 1995, *de facto* protection for the refugee camps was provided by the ethnic minority opposition armies based along the Burma side of the border. However, between 1995 and 1997, almost all the opposition-held territory along the border was captured by the Burmese army, leaving camps vulnerable to attack. More importantly, the Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army (DKBA), a splinter group from Karen National Union (KNU), formerly one of the largest opposition groups in Burma, has carried out dozens of attacks on refugee camps. Backed by the Burmese army, the DKBA appears intent on destroying the KNU and driving the Karen refugees back to Burma. Dozens of refugees and Thai villagers have been killed or kidnapped, five camps have



been completely burned down, and millions of Baht in cash or property belonging to refugees or Thai villagers have been stolen. With the emergence of the DKBA, protection has become the most important issue for the Karen refugees.

The RTG has responded to the DKBA incursions in a number of ways. Arguing that a few large camps are more easily defended than many small camps, the RTG has developed and partially carried out a policy of camp consolidation. In 1995, seven Karen camps were combined into two, then consolidated again in

and supplementary food, such as yellow beans and cooking oil, in addition to the regular rations. The moves themselves cause insecurity as refugees lose access to their gardens and opportunities to forage, while having to expend more energy in moving and re-building.

Other new restrictions seem to be aimed at further lowering living standards in the camps and/or deterring new refugees. For example, Tham Hin (8,000 residents) and Ban Don Yang (1,500), both established in 1997 in Kanchanaburi provinces, have been designated 'temporary shelters'. Almost one

result, the official caseload has shrunk while the number of refugees without protection and assistance has grown. As economic cooperation between the RTG and the Burmese government has grown, the Burmese opposition groups and refugees along the border have gone from being a convenient buffer for Thailand to an increasingly intolerable embarrassment to both countries. On one occasion during the 1997 dry season offensive, several hundred Karen men and boys were *refouled* by the Thai army into an area of active conflict. Since then, some other groups of new arrivals have also not been allowed to cross the border or enter camps, but have had to stay in the forest or in *ad hoc* camp sites. The RTG has made it plain that it would like to see the refugees repatriated as quickly as possible, leading to fears that the refugees may be coerced into repatriation before there is any solution to Burma's ongoing political crises.

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## *...the official caseload has shrunk while the number of refugees without protection and assistance has grown.*

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early 1998 into Mae La camp, with a population of some 30,800. In 1997, nine other camps were combined to form three camps of between 8,000 and 10,000 people each. In early 1998, another seven, relatively small Karen camps were consolidated into three camps with populations ranging from 4,000 to 7,000. In December 1993, 55,000 Karen refugees lived in 19 camps; by 1998, approximately 90,000 Karen refugees lived in 12 camps, seven of which had over 6,000 residents. It is possible that eventually all the Karen camps will be consolidated into a few large camps, although in some areas the consolidations have faced stiff refugee resistance. Additionally, the RTG has deployed Thai militia in the camps. In 1997, fences were erected around six of the largest Karen camps, including Mae La, and strict controls placed on the movement of people in and out. Furthermore, it is likely that the RTG will allow UNHCR to set up a number of permanent offices on the border.

While the new restrictions may serve to protect the refugees, they have also severely cut into refugee livelihoods and self-sufficiency. No longer able to go out of the camps to forage in the forest or earn a cash income, and living in camps too crowded for gardens or livestock, many Karen refugees are now more dependent on NGO assistance. Where refugees are not allowed to cut bamboo or gather firewood, NGOs have had to provide building materials, cooking fuel

year after the camps were set up, refugees have still not been allowed to build houses but only bamboo platforms with a roof of plastic sheeting - insufficient protection in both dry and rainy seasons. Queues for water are much longer than in other camps, space is considered inadequate, and overall conditions are far worse than in other camps on the border. The camps are completely closed: refugees are not allowed to go out of the camps and access is strictly limited. In older camps the once flourishing markets have been drastically scaled back; no 'luxury' can be sold, only small, inexpensive items.

The new restrictions and controls, while carried out in the name of refugee protection or creation of 'temporary' camps, also give the RTG more direct control over the refugee communities. Some fear that these measures may be aimed at facilitating an eventual repatriation. An obvious solution to the problems posed by the DKBA would have been to relocate the camps further inside Thailand, well away from the border. However, this solution was unacceptable to the RTG which feared that it would encourage the refugees to feel more settled in Thailand, rendering any repatriation effort logistically, and politically, more problematic. Finally, the consolidations reduce the number of refugees living in the camps. With each camp move, some refugees have dispersed into forested areas, gone into Thai towns, or even made their way back to Burma. As a

### **Conclusion**

In addition to creating new needs and deterring asylum seekers, the drastic changes, particularly in the Karen refugee camps, have had other, less tangible, social effects. The refugee and camp committees were able to manage the camps and maintain low levels of social conflict because the camps were small and disagreements could be resolved within the community itself. With the establishment of larger camps, social problems have become more significant. While increased rations can address food insecurity, there is also a clear loss of morale. Tensions rise as soon as there are rumours of impending camp moves. People stop tending flower beds and crops or repairing their homes when they learn they have to move. The education of children is disrupted, leading to higher drop-out and failure rates. The cultural and administrative autonomy, self-sufficiency and village atmosphere which had previously been integral to life in the camps are rapidly being lost.

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# Encampment at Abu Rakhm in Sudan: a personal account

by Tarig Misbah Yousif

This article explores camp policy as embodied in the rural settlement approach which has characterised the work of UNHCR and its implementing partners in their search for a durable solution to Eritrean/Ethiopian refugee issues in eastern Sudan.

<sup>3</sup> See Cohen R and Deng F *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced and Masses in Flight*, pp 172-174; see pp 37 of this FMR for details.

Sudan's hospitality towards those fleeing for their lives has long been recognised and appreciated, at least publicly, by the international community. The first influx of refugees was in 1963 from Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo); Eritreans followed in 1967, Ugandans in 1972, Ethiopians in 1974 and Chadians in 1982. The last large refugee influx was of Ethiopian military refugees who sought sanctuary at El Lafa area in eastern Sudan following the defeat of the Dergue's forces at the hands of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in Asmara in 1991. This article reflects mainly on the experience of the Ethiopian refugees who were transferred from the border reception centre of Demazine and re-encamped at Tenedba in central Sudan.

Since the 1960s, the Commissioner's Office for Refugees (COR) in Sudan has been responsible for making and implementing the Government's refugee policy. As most of the Eritrean/Ethiopian refugees were from rural areas with subsistence farming as their means of livelihood, a camp policy of organised rural land settlements was adopted, with agriculture proposed as a vehicle to self-sufficiency. Assistance would be provided for a short time until the refugees became self-supporting peasants. Since refugees can be a crucial asset for the development of an area, they have to be given the opportunity to pursue the skills they utilised prior to flight. The notion of establishing refugees in planned agricultural settlements appears

to be supported by the argument that when refugee influx is massive, repatriation unlikely to occur and beneficiaries and their hosts vulnerable, self-sufficiency projects are preferable to an interminable dependency in camps.

Before embarking on this joint refugee self-sufficiency venture, both UNHCR and COR seemed to share an identical vision. The former was eager to realise the wish of the donor community for an early phase-out by implementing one of its conventional solutions to refugee problems, while the latter was concerned to prevent refugees from becoming a drain on the country's meagre resources.

## Abu Rakhm Refugee Settlement

Abu Rakhm Refugee Settlement, established in 1979, comprises 3 camps: Abu Rakhm, Tenedba and Wad Awad, with a total caseload of 8,000 refugees, most of whom came from Eritrea. Their basic survival needs were met upon arrival in Sudan. The second phase was to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency by assigning them plots of land for cultivation.

However, self-sufficiency - the ability of refugees to produce enough sorghum from their plots for their own needs coupled with the cessation of external assistance - was never achieved. Apart from some slight improvements in the living conditions of a tiny number of refugees in some of these settlements, no settlement could be termed a success, despite the millions of dollars spent. Inadequate



photograph: Jon Bennett

international assistance and lack of clear government policy are the main reasons behind the failure. Given the smallness of the plots distributed to refugees (5-10 feddans<sup>1</sup> per family), soil depletion from continual cultivation resulted in poor productivity and the refugees could not practice the conventional system of leaving some land fallow to improve soil fertility. In addition, most settlements were located in marginalised barren lands where rainfall was inadequate, unevenly distributed and absolutely undependable.

For self-sufficiency, the refugees needed adequate plots of land and adequate assistance during the pre self-sufficiency period. All too often aid falls short of refugees' needs, sometimes governed by political factors. Until the mid 1980s, Sudan was the third largest recipient of US aid because of the crucial role played by the Government during the Cold War. However, Western donors' attitudes changed following the military coup of 1989 which brought the current regime to power. Retrenching humanitarian assistance resulted in appalling conditions in refugee camps; refugees' basic survival needs went unmet, leading

many refugees to opt for repatriation, not from an informed voluntary decision but from despair. Furthermore, the integration of refugees was never government policy; their presence was viewed by the Government as temporary as it was assumed that they would return as soon as the causes which precipitated their flight were eliminated. What can be

*Had the level of assistance in the camp been satisfactory, refugees would not have resorted to rioting at two o'clock in the morning.*

said with certainty is that, under such conditions of underfunded settlement infrastructures and dubious government policy, to ask refugees to become self-sufficient was to ask the impossible.

**Re-encampment as a pre-repatriation stage**

It was not until the 1990s that voluntary repatriation became UNHCR's 'most desirable solution to the problems of refugees'. There were two major reasons behind this. The first was the growing reluctance of donors to fund protracted refugee assistance programmes, particularly in Africa. The second was the spread of complex emergencies which the world witnessed in the wake of the Cold War's demise - Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda - all of which overshadowed UNHCR's ongoing open-ended programmes. However, voluntary repatriation is far from 'problem free', as the experience in Sudan showed.

In 1994, a group of about a thousand Ethiopian refugees were transferred from Demazine, a refugee reception centre bordering Ethiopia, to an existing settlement at Tenedba, part of the Abu Rakham Settlement in central Sudan. This was obviously a pragmatic decision by both UNHCR and the Sudanese Government. The former wanted to reduce its assistance programmes in Sudan, and the latter cited security reasons. Despite the inaccessibility of roads during the rainy season in that area, the transfer was carried out with remarkable success (credit goes to the dedicated staff of the two parties involved). Tenedba was chosen because it was both ethnically suitable and infrastructurally viable. At the time of the arrival of the first convoy, I was moved by the sponta-

neous reaction of the 'old settlers' of Tenedba refugee camp as I watched them carrying their traditional food, *angaira*, for their kinfolk on board the trucks. The incident confirmed the spirit of solidarity which refugees possess, despite the shock and trauma of having to abandon their homeland and turn to others for help. By taking this initiative,

the refugees emphasised the fact that good reception is extremely important for refugees. Having gone through the same harrowing experience themselves, the older refugees

of Tenedba, though materially poor, were concerned to do everything possible to comfort and alleviate the suffering of the new arrivals.

Although initial requests by the camp administration for urgent logistical support appeared to fall on deaf ears, eventually a UNHCR mission visited the camp and took prompt action to send cooking utensils and other essential relief items.

The majority of the transferred refugees had registered for repatriation prior to their transfer from Demazine and so were not prepared for a lengthy stay in Tenedba. Poor preparation by both UNHCR and COR was to blame for a lengthy delay in repatriation, which became intolerable for many refugees. Potential repatriates made their resentment known to the camp management but the decision to start repatriation was

beyond the camp management's jurisdiction. Despite the tremendous efforts made by the staff of the settlement, they were hampered by the lack of adequate resources. UNHCR insisted on applying its 'modular approach' by implementing the operation with the settlement's existing resources, no matter how meagre. The continuous reduction in programme budgets was clear evidence of UNHCR's intention to halt its programmes in Sudan by executing a fast and final phase-out. Not surprisingly, services rendered to refugees reached breaking point and the already fragile settlement infrastructure nearly collapsed, dashing refugees' hopes of leading an independent life and leaving them in uncertainty and despair.

Fed up with empty promises and procrastination in effecting the promised airlift, the transferred refugees eventually set fire to the grass and bamboo purchased for the construction of their *tukuls*. Had the camp administration not taken rapid action to diffuse the situation, the consequences could have been serious, with loss of life. Refugees resorted to rioting and violence in order to attract attention to their ordeal after they realised that it was not possible to get a definite answer regarding the date of their airlift. The incident did, however, send an unmistakable signal to aid agencies that refugees can and will stand up for their rights. Had the level of assistance in the camp been satisfactory, refugees would not have resorted to rioting at two o'clock in the morning. The incident was reported to the headquarters of the two offices who were urged to take immediate action to sur-



**A convoy of 1200 Ethiopian refugees return to Ethiopia.**

photograph: Howard J Davies

mount the obstacles delaying the airlift. In addition, given the difficult living conditions in the camp and since the arrival of the transferred refugees coincided with weeding time, I used my discretion as Project Manager to offer to all those interested the opportunity to work as casual labourers in the agricultural scheme in the vicinity of the camp.

In order to easily locate refugees in the event that repatriation would start soon, owners of the agricultural schemes agreed to cooperate with the camp's administration by lodging a list containing the names of all registered potential repatriants working with them.

This was not the end of the saga. When trucks were sent to Tenedba to transport

is the presence of more than half of the Ethiopian/Eritrean refugees hosted by Sudan outside of the assistance net and living spontaneously in major Sudanese towns. Lamentable conditions in camps have compelled many refugees to head for urban centres, despite the risks of being harassed by the authorities or exploited by their employers since their presence in cities is illegal. Inadequate funding has always been an insurmountable obstacle on the road to viable settlement infrastructure. The Government's reluctance to adopt a clear integration policy has been an additional factor in subduing refugees' willingness to expend energy on developing self-sufficiency when they discovered that they were isolated in barren areas known as 'planned settlements'. With the impending UNHCR

phase-out, Sudan is going to be left with shattered settlements and with no economic leverage to maintain, let alone ameliorate, the existing level of service for the

remaining refugees and the neighbouring Sudanese alike.

### Lessons

This article has attempted to highlight some of the problems encountered during the course of the implementation of camp-based settlement projects from the perspective of a practitioner. It must be said that the establishment of refugees in camp-based settlements in eastern and central Sudan was necessitated by the massiveness and suddenness of refugee flows. However, there are lessons to be drawn from the experience:

- The seclusion of refugees on the assumption that their presence is a temporary phenomenon, and the adoption of an anti-integration strategy, can hinder rather than help refugees to become self-supporting. Had donor funding been directed to zonal development and refugees given the chance to release their energies, they might have contributed positively and given an impetus to the country's development process. Despite the generosity displayed by donors at the beginning of the refugee crisis, nebulous government policy probably discouraged them from pumping more resources into settlements which

are perceived as transient structures. Most importantly, there was a miscalculation on the side of the Government which did not anticipate that a time would come when rapid donor response to humanitarian emergencies would turn to reluctance and, ultimately, to the termination of assistance.

- Humanitarian values should be viewed as an end in themselves, not purely as a means to the attainment of political ends.
- Re-encampment of refugees who have spent considerable time in urban surroundings can be counter-productive. Proper preparation for repatriation is vital and should always prevail over budgetary constraints.

- Constructive cooperation between COR/UNHCR is sorely needed since the welfare of refugees is their ultimate goal. Since the military coup of 1989, relations between the two agencies have been negatively affected as a result of the politicisation of COR. Inept and inappropriate handling of refugee affairs under the 'politicised COR' has been the direct consequence of sacking most of COR's competent staff. The recriminations and mistrust that have dominated the relations between the two agencies over the last few years must be improved, to foster mutual confidence and concerted effort, since the hardening of attitudes has proven deleterious both to cooperation between them and to the lives of the refugees.

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*mailbase@mailbase* (for JANET users in the UK) *mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk* (for overseas users)
2. In the text of the message (not in the subject field) write: *Join forced-migration [your first name] [your last name]* eg *Join forced-migration Marie Ferrez*

## Inadequate funding has always been an insurmountable obstacle on the road to viable settlement infrastructure.

the repatriants to Kassala airport when the airlift finally materialised, strategies such as 'family splitting' and 'go and see' were at work. A number of refugee families were reported to have sent only one or two members with the repatriants' convoy. Lack of border control made it easier for 'repatriants' to come back to Sudan without being stopped at any border point. Not surprisingly, some 'returnees' managed to collect the cash component of the UNHCR's repatriation package and later re-join their kinfolk who were left behind in Sudan. Refugees were clearly sceptical about the guarantees of their prospective reintegration when they returned home. The UNHCR reintegration package proved to be far from adequate in helping refugees to reintegrate. Given the thin literature on the subject, reintegration of returnees would be a fruitful area of research, provided that returnee areas were accessible to those wishing to conduct empirical studies.

### Conclusions

Encampment as embodied in the settlement policy implemented by COR (with UNHCR and NGO funding) has achieved little success, if any. The striking fact which stands in testimony to its failure

## Psychosocial responses to the refugee experience: a training module

Work has started on a two-year project, funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, to produce a psychosocial training module and associated resources to facilitate the training of humanitarian assistance workers in response to the psychosocial needs of forced migrants. The module is targeting the development of critical competences in the planning, implementation and evaluation of psychosocial programmes. The module will be 30 hours long and will feature a variety of teaching resources, adaptable to different settings and needs. Capitalising upon the current digitisation of the RSP Documentation Centre, the project will develop interactive teaching materials that can be used alongside the digitised materials through CD ROM and the Internet.

Institutions such as developing centres of refugee studies will be invited to suggest materials for inclusion in the module as well as provide critique of materials as they are developed. This should ensure that the module is relevant for different cultural settings and is sensitive to resources available in developing countries.

The module will be available for dissemination by December 1999.

### Project directors:

Maryanne Loughry  
(maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk,  
RSP, and Alastair Ager,  
Queen Margaret College,  
Edinburgh University.

# Saharawi refugees: life after the camps

by Natali Dukic and Alain Thierry

The prospect of the imminent - and long awaited - referendum on self-determination raises a number of issues which the Saharawis will have to confront.

The referendum on self-determination, due to be held in December 1998, should end the 20-year exile of the Saharawi people in the Tindouf refugee camps of Algeria. But how will these people, who have endured the hardships of refugee camps for 20 years, find the individual and collective will to embark on economic and social development and build a long-term future without international aid?

The Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, was ceded by treaty to Morocco and Mauritania in 1975. The Polisario Front<sup>1</sup> proclaimed the independence of the Independent Democratic Arab Republic of the Sahara and demanded full sovereignty. Mauritania renounced its territorial claims in 1979 and Morocco took over the whole of Western

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*Standards of nutrition, hygiene and medical care have been deteriorating steadily over the years, despite international aid.*

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Sahara. Thousands of Saharawis fled the fighting which then broke out between the Polisario and the Moroccan army, and took refuge in the Tindouf region in south-eastern Algeria.

Twenty years on, some 150,000 Saharawis live in the camps in Algeria. Many have known no other way of life. The prospect of the imminent - and long awaited - referendum raises a number of issues which the Saharawis will have to confront.



## 1. Dependency on international aid

Tindouf is an arid, rocky region where

*The high level of chronic malnutrition indicates that the long stay in the desert has affected a whole generation of Saharawis...*

living conditions are extremely difficult and survival comes at the price of total dependence on international aid. Since 1993 the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has been running annual aid programmes<sup>2</sup> which, because of the population's complete dependency on aid, are made up of emergency food aid (84%), medical/sanitation aid (9.4%) and rehabilitation/logistic aid (6.6%). To make aid as effective as possible and to avoid overlaps, there is close liaison with other international and bilateral aid sources: the Saharawi Red Crescent, WFP, UNHCR and various European NGOs that work in partnership with ECHO. These operations aim to deliver supplies of essential food products and maintain the living conditions and health of the refugees at an acceptable level. There will be a considerable period of adjustment for the returning Saharawis in moving from such dependency to relative self-sufficiency.

Under its global aid programmes for Saharawi refugees, ECHO has been financing large-scale operations to rehabilitate schools and hospitals but these repairs have been suspended in view of the possibility of the refugees' return.

## 2. Physical impact

The European Commission has been closely monitoring the living conditions of the Saharawi refugees in the Tindouf camps. Standards of nutrition, hygiene and medical care have been deteriorating steadily over the years, despite international aid. Obtaining drinking water is especially difficult and the effects of nutritional deficiencies are being increasingly felt.

### a. Child illnesses

The most common illnesses are diar-

rhoea in summer and respiratory infections in winter. In addition to the effects of malnutrition and poor quality drinking water, a large number of children are deaf or hard of hearing as a result of wind, sand, frequent bouts of untreated otitis, and childhood diseases such as meningitis. Although these con-

cerns are not as high a priority for the Saharawis as supplies of food and drinking water, some initiatives have been mounted, including a psychiatric hospital, day centres for children with disabilities, training of specialist teachers, and systematic checks on children's hearing.<sup>3</sup>

### b. Nutritional deficiencies

**46%** of children have low height for their age due to nutritional deficiencies.

**10%** of under-fives suffer from acute malnutrition, 46% from chronic malnutrition.

**71%** of children under five have moderate to severe anaemia.

**19%** of women have poor Vitamin C status.

*(The New Internationalist, No 297, December 1997)*

Malnutrition has become a major problem in the camps over the years. According to a study carried out by an Italian NGO, CISP,<sup>4</sup> and a German NGO, Medico International, nutritional deficiencies in the camps are caused by a combination of poor food, the harsh environment, bad quality water and an underdeveloped health system. A consequence of this combination is parasitic infections, which prevent the absorption of food thereby increasing food requirements. The choice of emergency food aid products and quantities takes account of annual requirements and what EC Member States contribute. To

counter nutritional deficiencies, some basic foods - above all, flour and milk - are enriched with vitamins and trace elements. A pilot project to reduce anaemia and growth problems in children will be launched this year.

The high level of chronic malnutrition indicates that the long stay in the desert has affected a whole generation of Saharawis; and the prevalence of malnutrition, childhood illness and hearing deficiencies will inevitably have a long-term impact on their development and the general health of their future society.

### c. Drinking water

UNHCR is aware that the water used in the Tindouf camps (for drinking and farming) has been of poor quality for at least 12 years. According to Daniel Mora-Castro, UNHCR administrator responsible for water, the water in the Saharawi refugee camps is either of borderline quality or unfit for human consumption (according to recognised chemical and bacteriological standards) and is also highly contaminated with faecal matter. Most water supply points in the camps suffer from design and construction faults and are in a poor state of repair. Most of them are dug manually. Apart from some wells that have been equipped with manual pumps, few are suitably protected at ground level and are either left open permanently or are equipped with ineffective covers that are not always put back in place. The water is thus polluted by sand and other impurities carried by the wind, by the

people who collect water, and by people and animals passing by. Since there are no latrines and people defecate outside near their homes - which are not far from the water supply points - the wells and the aquifer are easily contaminated by faecal matter.

The technical solution to the problem of bacteriological contamination of drinking water in the camps proposed in the Mora-Castro report is a centralised water-supply system for each camp. This would call for exploratory boring on several sites in the El Aaiun, Dajla, Smara and Awserd camps, the building

*'It was women who had to take primary responsibility for building the camps: in a sense we were at the front, but just a different front from the men and we had to take responsibility for health, education, water, sanitation, everything. We have not yet achieved our full rights and there is a lot of work to do - rights will never be given, they have to be taken - but we have come a long way. This society is run very much by women: the staff of the nurseries are 100-per-cent female, administration is 85-per-cent female and education 70-per-cent female.'*

Interview with Moma Sidi Abdehadi, President of the Union of Women and only female member of Polisario's National Secretariat,

***(The New Internationalist, No 297, December 1997)***

Santé Sud, has noted: "the basis of their identity, namely the clan and the tribe, has been eroded by the cause and the drive for national unity and self-determination". Social differences have been ironed out by the common cause and by life in the camps, where everyone receives the same quantity of food, lives in a tent and has a role in camp society. The traditional culture was oral but children's education has been given priority and now 90% of Saharawis have attended school and are literate: a spectacular development over a relatively short period of time. Women run the camps, the home, schools, administration and social services while the men are away fighting.

The absence of fathers, the deaths, the disappearances and the break-up of families make collective life a struggle. In addition to the understandable fatigue felt by the whole population, there is the problem of an entire generation which knows nothing but camp life and which does not necessarily share the ideals of its elders. One aspect of these hardships which has not received priority attention is that of psychological well-being. The lack of medical case histories and poor diagnosis of mental disabilities or other mental illnesses mean that it is difficult to establish whether illnesses are caused by exile and war or have pathological

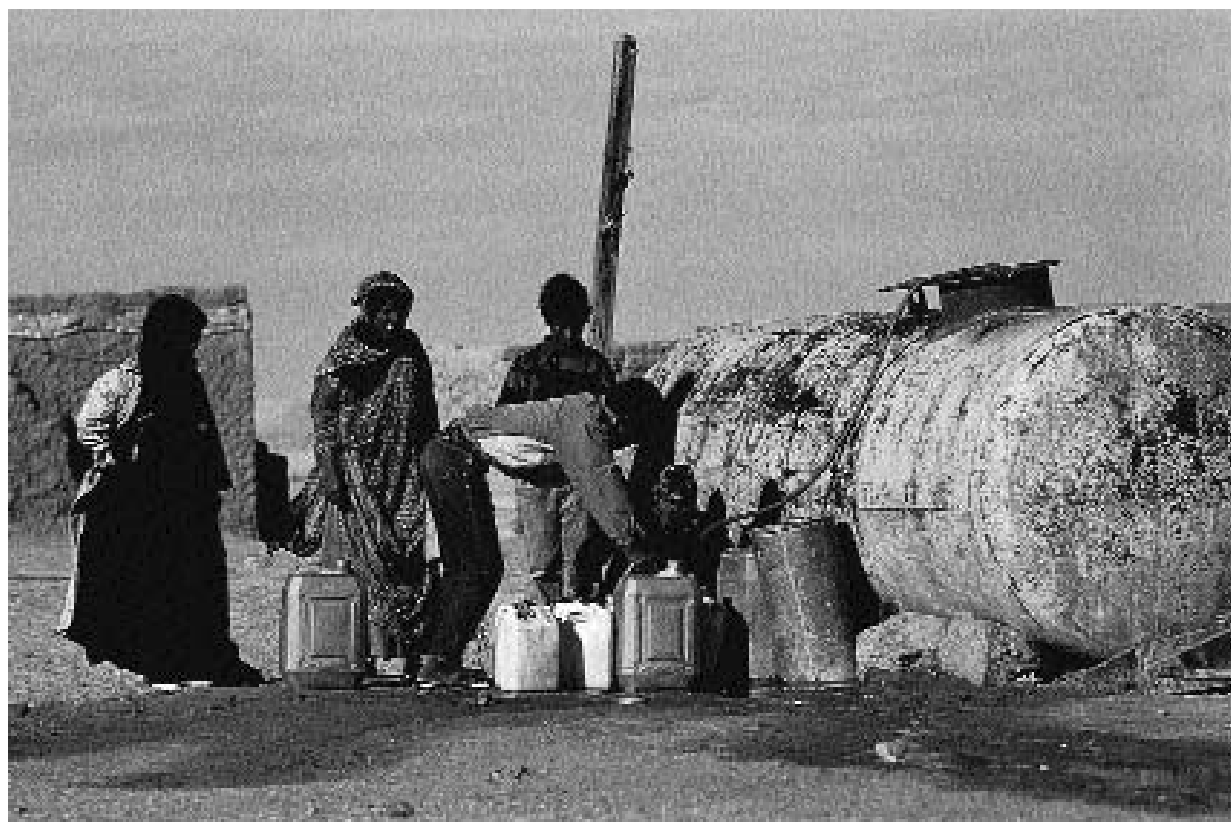
causes.

This is emphasised by the fact that this is a society which recognises the family or group, rather than the individual. It would be useful, however, to have more details in order to be able to develop mental health care and prevention strategies.

#### **4. Coping with independence**

The referendum in December offers the prospect of an end to the Saharawis' exile but with this prospect emerge certain paradoxes. Whereas the state is committed to removing tribal membership in order to achieve equality for all and avoid social divisions, registered voters must be acknowledged by two traditional tribal leaders. Social inequalities will perhaps emerge between those who still have property in Moroccan-controlled Sahara or in Mauritania, those who have an income (for example, retired servicemen from the Spanish army), those who have studied abroad, and those who have spent their whole lives in the camps. As Cecile Bizouerne remarks, the transition from a 'cashless' society, where everything is given and distributed by an authority, to a society of supply and demand and paid work where everything has a price could be very difficult.

**Queue to fetch water at community tank, Polisario Smara Camp**



photograph: Julio Etcharri/Still Pictures

Once the family reunions are over, the time will come to face up to the fact that

If independence comes, it will of course bring all kinds of problems. Saharawi society is at present one of the most homogeneous in the world. A traditional nomadic culture has been forced into the modern world with a war of liberation as the only midwife. As a result differences between people have not had a chance to emerge from beneath the powerful imperative of regaining their homeland. There is next to no crime: instances of theft or rape in the refugee camps are counted on the fingers of one hand, extraordinary events remembered for years afterwards. There is also no sign of religious zealotry: people all seem broadly to subscribe to the same mild, liberal form of Islam but there are not even any mosques, let alone any sign of fundamentalism.

In an independent Western Sahara people would diverge from each other; the current unanimity would fracture the people's long-postponed longings, not least perhaps for the trappings of consumerism, would come into play.

*(The New Internationalist,*

The Saharawi people will once again have to prove their adaptability in leaving the hard life of their camps and returning to a territory of uncertain status. The international community must stand by them, not only during their resettlement but also during what might be described as a return to life.

**Natali Dukic, consultant, and Alain Thierry, ECHO staff.**

1 Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, the two provinces making up the territory of the Western Sahara. This liberation movement was set up in 1973 to oust Spain, which had been the colonial power since the end of the last century.

2 These programmes have cost over ECU 34 million since 1993.

3 ECHO is financing operations to supply essential sanitary and hygiene products and medicines for various health centres and to look after children with mental or severe hearing disabilities.

4 Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, an ECHO partner running food projects and a pilot project to reduce incidence of anaemia and retarded growth in children.

5 *Qualité de l'Eau dans les Camps de Réfugiés Sahraouis, Tindouf, Algérie*, UNHCR, Geneva, April 1997.

6 French NGO which works with ECHO and carries out projects to aid disabled children and prevent hearing problems.

7 Letter to ECHO, April 1998.

8 Ibid.

## UNICEF and IDP children

"Internally displaced children and their families," according to a recent UNICEF report, "present the world community, and UNICEF, with an exceptional crisis, the magnitude and severity of which demand a creative, focused response." Developing that response has been a priority at UNICEF.

Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF's fundamental strategy is to "ensure that children displaced under emergency conditions have the same rights to survival, protection and development, without discrimination, as other children." In practical terms, this strategy leads to six programme approaches: advocacy, nationally and globally; activities to prevent displacement; steps to ensure physical survival; protection activities to halt abuse, especially abuses targeted at children; support for rehabilitation and recovery of displaced communities; and assistance in voluntary return and reintegration.

UNICEF has concentrated on three aspects of IDP work:

1. developing a firm conceptual foundation for its programme work;
2. collecting and disseminating sound programme practices; and
3. global advocacy to raise awareness about internal displacement. Key activities include a partnership with the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, to highlight gender issues in internal displacement; active promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; financial and technical support for a global IDP database; and efforts to link IDP emergency aid with durable solutions for displaced children and ongoing development work.

More information on UNICEF's work with IDPs can be found in the documents *Internally Displaced Children: The Role of UNICEF (11pp)*; *The Needs of Internally Displaced Women and Children: Principles and Considerations (23pp)*; and *Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting: UNICEF's Observations and Recommendations (9p)*. These are available free of charge.

**Contact:** The Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF,  
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Website: <http://www.unicef.org>

# Camps: literature review

by Barbara Harrell-Bond

<sup>1</sup> The military government changed the official name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989. As 'Myanmar' is therefore associated with the military government, it is not accepted or used by development or human rights organisations, or by Burmese opponents of the regime.

Refugee policy in the South has been largely driven by the demands of donors and humanitarian organisations (Karadawi 1984).

It requires rethinking, both in terms of the needs of refugees and their hosts (RSP 1991). Assistance policies have encouraged the confinement of large numbers of refugees in settlements or camps, rendering them dependent on relief (Kibreab 1989, 1991; Voutira and Harrell-Bond 1995; Hyndman 1997). Camps deprive refugees of access to networks of social and economic support and there is evidence that over the long term even those camps deemed self-sufficient become destitute (Clark and Stein 1985). Focusing assistance on refugees in camps ignores the needs of the majority of refugees who are self-settled (Chambers 1979; Hansen 1979, 1981, 1982, 1982a). Attracting money not only requires counting refugees for the purposes of assessing need but involves controlling their movement and representing them as helpless and dependent (Harrell-Bond *et al* 1992). Despite this being an inordinately expensive way of assisting refugees and, in practice, contravening most of their rights (African Rights 1997), host governments have acquiesced in order to become eligible for international aid. The popular media image of the refugee as a 'problem', rather than as 'persons with problems', has obscured the reality that refugees are ready to put their energies into productive work which could also benefit their hosts (Wilson 1992; Harrell-Bond 1986; Bulcha 1988; Kuhlman 1990).

Confinement to settlements/camps has been demonstrated to have a number of adverse effects on both refugees and hosts (Chambers 1985; Nieburg *et al* 1992). Establishing parallel services undermines local institutions by attracting the best staff to earn the higher salaries paid by humanitarian organisations (Goyen *et al* 1996). Targeting relief to camps, surrounded by people often as poor or poorer than refugees,



photograph: UNHCR/18062/04, 1988/A. Hollmann

is wasteful and generates hostility from local communities (Harrell-Bond 1986, Chap 4). Life in camps adversely affects the mental health of already traumatised people and inhabitants frequently exhibit despair and helplessness at their long-term prospects and the combination of confinement and dependency encouraging them to abandon social responsibilities (Clark 1985). Congregating refugees strains local resources, including the environment, more than does a dispersed population (Black 1994); it also represents a health risk by increasing exposure to disease (Toole and Bhatia 1992). There is a clear link between the size of camps and mortality rates (van Damme 1995). Camps

provide ideal breeding grounds for politicisation and for violence and terrorism (Harrell-Bond 1994).

There is a common fear that those who are able to achieve economic stability in the host country will never return but repatriation has proven to be destabilising to the country of origin (Harrell-Bond 1994). Nevertheless, the long-term goal of most governments (host and donor) is that refugees will repatriate, and common sense and experience suggest that people impoverished by an economy based on relief will be unable to return without enormous investment in their economic rehabilitation, while those able to acquire the resources in exile are likely to return voluntarily

when conditions are conducive (Sepulveda 1994). Where governments have been able to provide sufficient land to sustain a population and where they have not imposed restrictions on movement or their employment within the wider economy, refugees have proven to be an economic asset (Kuhlman 1989; Mollett 1991; Harrell-Bond 1996).

In cases where host governments have maintained control of refugee policy, using international aid to expand their economies as a whole, it has benefited both refugees and local populations (Zetter 1992). In the process, they have avoided the inevitable tensions which result from earmarking aid for certain beneficiaries (Harrell-Bond 1986, Chap 4; Chambers 1985).

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## Digital Library Project

The RSP's Documentation Centre is the largest in the world dedicated to the subject of forced migration. Its catalogued collection of unpublished 'grey' literature holds currently around 30,000 items and is growing at a rate of 3-4,000 documents (90-100,000 pages) per annum. The catalogue is accessible and searchable through keywords on the RSP website at <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/rspdoc.htm>.

The RSP's Digital Library Project began on 1 September 1997 with some \$500,000 funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, PHARE, the Eastern European Democracy Programme, and the Electronic Libraries Programme of the UK Higher Education Funding Councils. Over three years most of the collection will be digitised and a sustainable plan put in place for continued digitisation beyond that time for new acquisitions. The documents will be made available over the World Wide Web, with delivery in a variety of other electronic and non-electronic formats customised to the disparate technologies of users throughout the world. The Digital Library Project also plans to make available other kinds of materials in electronic form in the future. These will include distance learning packages related to the courses and summer schools taught by the RSP, as well as multimedia archives of images, film, video and sound.

For more details, contact: Marilyn Deegan, Project Manager, RSP Digital Library Project, RSP (address/fax below).  
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Tel: +44 (0)1865 270435.



# The value of memory

by Carlos Martín Beristain

*This two-part article presents a series of reflections on the experience of the Project for the Reconstruction of a Historical Memory in Guatemala (REMHI). This first part analyses the evolution and approach of the project. The second part of this two-part article, which deals with the contents and practical implications of the project report, will be published in the next issue.*

Zetter R (1992) 'Refugees and forced migrants as development resources: the Greek Cypriot refugees from 1974', *Cyprus Review*, Vol 4, No 1:7-38

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There are over 34,000 Guatemalan refugees and some 200,000 people internally displaced. The civil war in Guatemala, which began in the 1960s and reached its peak in the early 1980s, 'reportedly left more than 100,000 dead, an estimated 40,000 'disappeared' and presumed dead, 80,000 widowed, and 200,000 children orphaned.'<sup>1</sup> Human rights violations affected a vast proportion of the population: refugees, internally displaced and those who stayed in their communities.

In 1995, two years before the signing of the peace agreement between the Guatemalan Government and the URNG (Unión Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca), the Archbishop's Office for Human Rights initiated a project to collect testimonies of human rights violations in Guatemala. This project was based on the conviction that the political repression had wiped out the population's power of speech. For many years, survivors and their relatives had been unable to share their experience, come to an understanding about what had

happened, or denounce those responsible. The project - REMHI - was initially to provide material for the future Commission for the Clarification of History (Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico - CEH). However, with its underlying mandate to discover the truth and investigate those responsible, REMHI developed into an alternative

*Experience demonstrates that it is amnesia which makes history repeat itself over and over like a bad dream. A good memory allows us to learn from the past, because the only reason for recovering the past is to help us transform our present way of life.*

*Galeano E La Memoria Subversiva Tiempo: Reencuentro y Esperanza*

force complementing what the official commission (the CEH) was able to do. Various dioceses of the Catholic church took on the role of starting up REMHI and committed themselves to aiding and promoting its work in different districts. The involvement of important sectors of the church was a key aspect in being able to advance the project, given the church's credibility, its geographical extension and its ability to turn itself into a 'protected' space. In places where those people holding positions of responsibility in the church were not in

favour of the project, it was impossible to collect testimonies and was necessary to establish contact with other social organisations.

## Methodology

The research model for the project comprised categories traditionally used in human rights work in the field of collecting, analysing and understanding the experience of populations affected by war. However, these categories proved inadequate from the start. Which category covers being compelled to kill a brother? Which concept can be applied to public ceremonies where everyone was compelled to beat a victim on the head with a stick until s/he died? The more experiences were shared, experiences which had in many communities been kept secret, the more challenges emerged.

The first of the changes that the project team considered making was in the tools to be used in collecting the testimonies: how to break down into basic elements

those experiences - such as military harassment, assassination of specific individuals, massacre, escape to the mountains, and resistance in extreme conditions - which formed part of the daily reality of communities living in some regions; and the long process of displacement, first into the mountains, then from community to community, until finally into exile or displacement in one's own country.

Moreover, focusing on the injuries ran the risk of victimising the survivors.

Each account demonstrated an enormous will to survive and to resist, and the testimonies needed to be handled in a way that not only recognised the pain but also rescued the sense of dignity that the violence had tried to suppress.

We eventually arrived at seven questions to be used in collecting the testimonies:

- What happened?
- When?
- Where?
- Who were the people responsible?
- What effect did this event have on people's lives?
- What did they do to face up to the situation?
- Why did they think it happened?

These questions attempted to get to the heart of the experience, referring to the events, people's subjective experience, the consequences of the violence, the active stance taken by the survivors, the significance they placed on the events, and their hopes and demands.

The interviewers came from the same local communities. This gave people confidence but it also brought its own problems, and training<sup>2</sup> consequently became a key element, involving:

- 1) presentation and explanation of the project
- 2) reasons for a history
- 3) effects of the violence
- 4) facing up to fear
- 5) value of the testimonies
- 6) handling questions in the interview
- 7) problems involved in conducting the interview and

8) use of tools and processes of analysis.

The interview process itself took up an important part of the training, from the choice of interviewer to the use of instruments such as tape recorders; this was due not only to the complexity of the task at hand but also to the likelihood of the interview having a strong emotional impact on the victim or the possibility that there might be infiltrators intending to manipulate the interviewers. But the time for talking had arrived for everybody. Many workshops turned into collective spaces where the interviewers themselves could give their own testimonies, before concentrating on the business of listening to and collecting the testimonies of others.

From the outset the interviewers showed themselves to be aware of the significance of reconstructing history. When asked by individuals and communities why their history was important, they would answer: to understand the truth, to dignify the dead, to recover the power of speech and of social initiative, and to instil the value of memory in future generations. As others in turn expressed interest in how this historical memory could help social reconstruction, the collection of information based on testimonies became enriched by the search for a more communitarian aim in our work and in giving support to the survivors. It rapidly became clear that the direct involvement of the people affected and those social groups closest to them was important, both for their understanding of the situation and for their capabili-

ty of mobilising communities.

## The movement of memory

Memory moves in its own time and the forms of collective mobilisation that took place were different. In some places, people came forward immediately to give their testimonies; in others, months went by. Once started the process took between four and six months. In some places, it was individuals who testified; in others, whole groups presented a collective testimony. During the period of collecting testimonies, there were follow-up activities, such as workshops, meetings and celebrations, which were seen as an important means of complementing the process.

## Voices

The recording of testimonies was a crucial aspect of the following phase of analysis and documentation of the violations, despite the practical problem of engendering reluctance in communication and the possibility of individuals being put at risk. The recording and later transcription of the testimonies guaranteed the reliability of the analysis and constituted a treasure trove of people's voices, available for use in future investigations and as teaching material.

Based on a preliminary listening of fifty testimonies, the project team began to put together a thesaurus of the categories of effects, forms of confrontation, causes and interpretations which arose. This work involved its own complex dynamic in selecting and training a group of codifiers: people skilled at listening, transcribing and identifying the different aspects of the thesaurus that was being compiled. Experience showed that the work done by these codifiers in discussing and evaluating the cases was of the utmost importance and that they became an extremely valuable source of information for those responsible for the analysis.

Knowing the victims and the atrocities they had suffered had a big impact on many of those working on the testimonies, especially those who had also suffered traumatic experiences such as losing family members or being tortured. Promoting organisational changes and generating a dynamic of mutual support among members of the project group itself were crucial in helping them confront the problems of heavy workloads and emotional stress.

photograph: Carlos Puig



## Value and limitations of the testimonies

The value and limitations of using testimonies in constructing experience and history have been primarily investigated by those involved in oral history and social psychology.<sup>3</sup> Among those factors that were important for assessing the value of the testimonies were:

- 1) the time that had elapsed since the events had occurred,
- 2) the traumatic effect of the violence and its possible impact on the ability to focus the memory,
- 3) the possible evaluation of the violence by the interviewer or of political involvement (such as the difficulty of admitting any relationship to the guerrillas in a situation that was still unstable),
- 4) the memory's own processes (simplification; exaggeration of certain events; giving a conventional version according to present demands) leading to the possible use of stereotypes, and
- 5) the individual culture, especially the concept of time being circular (a chain of events, for example) or of particular forms of expression (such as 'the time of violence').

Given the implications of the above and the existence of some obvious limitations, the project team decided to complement its methodology with the use of: secondary sources, especially research based on newspapers and other forms of written material; an analysis of the local context of many of the communities; studies of specific cases related to particular events or periods; interviews with key informants; and testimonies from those associated with the violence.

## The significance of memory

One of the main motives for those victims and their relatives who came to give their testimonies was to reveal the truth. The implicit desire to restore their sense of dignity was intimately related to the recognition of the injustice of the events: "they treated us worse than animals."

Also among the frequent reasons for wanting to testify was the possibility of investigating the whereabouts of relatives and of exhumations. Mayan culture considers the dead as a part of the com-

munity in possession of another form of life. For this reason, the reinterments constituted for many people a possible way of re-establishing links which had been destroyed by the violence. For all of them, both Ladinos ('half-breed') and Mayas, knowing what had happened to their relatives and having a place where they could go and watch over them was related to being able to bring to a close the process of grief. Underlying many of their queries were not only psychological problems but also practical questions such as inheritance rights or land ownership. Many other people came to give their testimony in order to demand justice and to punish those responsible, who on many occasions were people well known in the community.

Also underlining both people's expectations and the commitment expressed by the REMHI project is the importance of returning the collective memory. Many people who gave their testimony felt that the search for truth should not end with the writing of a report but rather that it was necessary to aid the process of social reconstruction by producing materials, creating ceremonies and so on. For this reason, the REMHI project is preparing a process based on three premises: that the events should be recorded in a form that is shared by all and be expressed in rituals and shrines; that this 'return process' should be used to explain and clarify what happened as far as possible, with lessons learnt and conclusions extracted for the present; and that this should not involve recreating the horror or stigmatising the survivors but rather should emphasise the positive aspects related to the dignity of the victims and the collective identity.

The analysis of the rich and painful experience undergone by the people who gave their testimonies and the memory of the atrocities which together make up the REMHI Report constitute the foundation of this work to return the collective memory to communities torn apart by violence and displacement.

*Carlos Martin Beristain, a member of the REMHI project team, is a doctor specialising in mental health and in work with displaced populations in Guatemala and other Latin American countries. The REMHI Report has been prepared in collaboration with other Guatemalan writ-*

*This article is  
dedicated to the  
memory of Bishop  
Juan Gerardi Conedera.*



*ers and organisations.*

1 *World Refugee Survey 1997*, US Committee for Refugees, p234.

2 Materials used included the methodological design of the training workshops, a manual for interviewers, and a guide for running workshops. These are available from: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 6a calle 7-77 Zona 1, Guatemala City, Guatemala. Tel: 00 502 232 4604. Email: odhagua@pronet.net.gt Website: www.guateconnect.com/odhagua

3 Thompson P *The Voice of the Past* Oxford University Press, 1978; Halbwachs M *La Memoire Collective* Paris PUF, 1950

*Bishop Juan  
Gerardi Conedera,  
born 27 December 1922;  
died 26 April 1998.*

**Juan Gerardi was the coordinator of the Archbishop's Office for Human Rights and a driving force behind the Project for the Reconstruction of a Historical Memory in Guatemala (REMHI).**

**He was assassinated on the**

## Network on Forced Migration in Latin America

The first meeting of the Network on Forced Migration in Latin America was held on 16-19 March 1998 in Villeta, Colombia, hosted by Javeriana University. As the coordinating institution of the Network, the Refugee Studies Programme has received funds from the European Commission within its Latin America - Academic Training (ALFA) programme, to organise three meetings between representatives of each of the Network's member institutions. These meetings have two objectives; firstly, to establish a programme of mobility of postgraduate students between the European Union and Latin America, as well as between countries within Latin America; and secondly, to devise projects of multidisciplinary, collaborative research between network member institutions.

A draft version of a proposal for a programme of mobility was one of the outcomes of the second meeting, hosted by Intermediate Technology Development Group in Lima in July. The network also drafted a proposal for a programme of collaborative research, which will be finalised before the Network's final meeting scheduled for late 1998. This third meeting will be followed by a two-day workshop.

Members of the Network are: National University of Colombia (Colombia), Javeriana University (Colombia), San Carlos University (Guatemala), Federal University of Paraíba (Brazil), Intermediate Technology Development Group (Peru), Deusto University (Spain), University of the Basque Country (Spain), Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), Centre for Development Research (Denmark), Trinity College, University of Dublin (Ireland) and the RSP, University of Oxford (UK). Network representatives come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds including social anthropology, economics, health sciences, law, political science and sociology.

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# Enclosures and exclusions: wildlife conservation schemes and pastoral tribes in the Middle East

by Dawn Chatty

Conservation schemes in Arabia continue to regard local populations as obstacles to be overcome - instead of as partners in sustainable conservation and development.

**evening of Sunday 26 April 1998, two days after presiding over the launch of Guatemala: Never Again: the report of the REMHI project findings. At the launch, Bishop Gerardi acknowledged the risks of peace-building: "We want to contribute to the building of a new and different country. The building of the kingdom of the Lord is risky, and the builders of it are only those who have enough strength to confront the risks."**

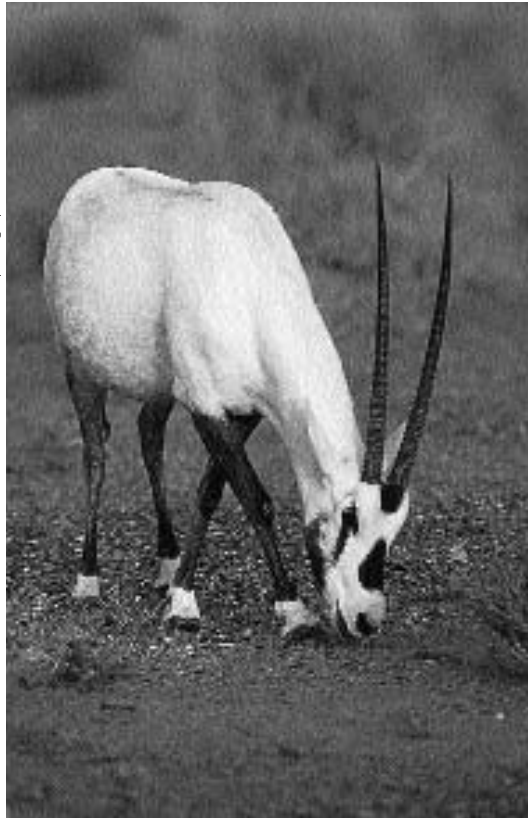
Wildlife conservation schemes, which aim to protect endangered fauna and flora, have a relatively recent history in northern Arabia. Their philosophical underpinnings, however, stem from a long African colonial and post-independence tradition. In East Africa and elsewhere, pastoral populations were long ago forced off their grazing lands in order to create parks for wildlife and tourists (Turton, 1987; Howell, 1987; McCabe *et al.*, 1992). Conservation meant the preservation of flora and fauna and the exclusion of people, and indigenous peoples were often regarded as impediments, not only to the state's conservation policy but also to its general desire to modernise and develop.

There are numerous examples of such displacement in Africa, including farmers and pastoralists in Chad, the Maasai who

were expelled from the Serengeti in Tanzania, and the Berber of the High Atlas region of Morocco. The study of the Ik, in perhaps the most grotesque example of the conservation process of forced removal and relocation, documented the consequences when a community was expelled from traditional hunting grounds in order to create the Kidepo National Park in Uganda. Obligated to adopt agricultural techniques for subsistence, the community suffered prolonged famine leading to a total collapse of the society (Turnbull, 1972).

### **Recent alternatives to the traditional conservation paradigm**

For several decades now, there has been a growing body of opinion that argues for a more pluralistic way of thinking about the world and how to change it (eg Vickers, 1981; Pretty, 1994). Ecosystems are now more clearly regarded as dynamic and continuously changing, and the importance of people in their development is being acknowledged. This concern is based upon a new understanding of human populations as nurturers and conservers rather than simply destroyers of their own environments. In conservation circles there is a growing recognition that without local involvement there is little real chance of protecting wildlife, and the concept of 'conservation with a human face' (Bell, 1987) and the need for community participation (IIED, 1994) are now at least



**Arabian oryx**

discussed. A few promising examples of African conservation efforts are now emerging where efforts are being made to integrate indigenous human populations into conservation and development projects (IIED, 1994).

Transposed to Arabia, Africa's new found conservation wisdom loses something in the translation. Using the internationally supported oryx reintroduction project in Oman<sup>1</sup> as a starting point, I aim to show that conservation schemes in Arabia continue to regard local populations as obstacles to be overcome - either by monetary compensation or by special terms of local employment - instead of as partners in sustainable conservation and development.

### **Omani case study**

The earliest expression of interest in conservation in Arabia emerged in the middle of this century as the alarming rate at which gazelle, oryx and other 'sporting' animals were being caught or killed became clear. By 1972, the oryx was extinct in Oman and the rest of Arabia. In 1977 and 1978 a consultant with the World Wildlife Fund toured extensively through the interior of Oman trying to locate an 'ideal' place for a

reintroduction project. He concluded that the ideal habitat for the oryx reintroduction would be in the Jiddat-il-Harasiis and that the whole of the Jiddat-il-Harasiis should be proclaimed a wildlife reserve or sanctuary. These recommendations were adopted, and in 1980 the first oryx from the World Herd were flown back into the country and released into the main oryx enclosure at Yalooni. Ten Harasiis tribesmen, out of an indigenous population of 3,000, were hired to serve as oryx rangers, tracking the animals and keeping daily records of their movements. For the first three years there were no conflicts between the indigenous population, the growing expatriate conservation management team, and other Omanis.

Thereafter, difficulties gradually appeared in terms of competition over grazing, during prolonged drought, between the herds of domestic goat and

camel and the reintroduced oryx (Stanley Price, 1989: 212-213), between the lineages of the Harasiis tribe over access to employment and special benefits, and between the Harasiis and rival tribes who had been completely ignored in this conservation effort. The appearance of poaching, first reported in 1986 and increasing yearly thereafter, by rival tribesmen and - some say - disaffected youth, point to the flaws in planning, design and implementation which top-down conservation projects all too often have. The animal reintroduction project was developed with near total disregard for the indigenous human population. The idea of setting up an oryx sanctuary in Harasiis traditional territory was never discussed with the Harasiis, nor were they consulted on the most suitable area to place such a sanctuary<sup>2</sup>. The aims of the project, its goals, the implied restrictions on infrastructural development, and even the importance of their cooperation were never put forward to the tribal community.

As long as the Harasiis had no aspirations of their own, no desire to see an improvement in their access to water, no desire to have regular road grading, or infrastructural development in their traditional homeland, relations with the oryx reintroduction project remained untroubled. A confrontation over grazing competition in the mid 1980s as a result of which the oryx reintroduction manager requested that the Harasiis move away - and some refused - should have raised the alarm with conservationists. The Harasiis eventually came to realise that conservation placed constraints on the development of the region. At the same time, the age old rivalry between the Harasiis tribe and their neighbours, the Jeneba, found new expression. Although the relationship cannot be proved, the fact that there has been a rapid rise in the rate of poaching (nearly 30 oryx were poached in 1996 alone - 10 per cent of the total herd)<sup>3</sup>, and that those caught have all been Jeneba tribesmen, suggests that inter-tribal rivalry is on the rise and that the project is not maintaining its popularity, or at least not with the youth of the tribe who grew up during the time when the oryx was extinct and therefore not really a part of their cultural tradition. To these disaffected, largely unemployed youths and rival tribesmen, the oryx sanctuary makes no sense. The opportunity to make some money by illegal poaching becomes a difficult temptation to resist when there is no sense of ownership or participation in the sanctuary.

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## *The animal reintroduction project was developed with near total disregard for the indigenous human population*

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### **Pastoralists and conservation in Syria**

Syria is now studying international conservation proposals to develop its own protected wildlife area in a part of the desert that provides crucial winter and spring grazing for the herds of a number of already marginalised Bedouin tribes. Establishment of the independent nation-state in the late 1940s and 1950s saw the culmination of several decades of sustained efforts to control and break

down pastoral tribal organisation. Since then the Bedouin land holdings, once held in common, have been increasingly registered in the names of tribal leaders of important families and converted into farms. Some Bedouin families settled on the fringes of this agriculture. Many combined some farming with pastoralism, moving their herds out into the *Badia*' in late winter and early summer. Others moved away from these fringe areas, and began settling seasonally in small hamlets in the *Badia*, keeping their herds on the move for much of the year in search of natural grazing and post-harvest stubble.

## *Pastoralists cannot be separated from their animals or from their common grazing land.*

The 1960s was a period of strenuous government land reform, including the complete seizure of all common tribal land and the confiscation of the large tracts of land owned by tribal leaders. Following a three-year-long drought in which over two million sheep died, the government instituted a programme to alleviate the problems caused by this ecological disaster. A UN project was set up to revitalise the pastoral sector of the Syrian economy with the primary goal of stabilising the livestock population. After a number of false starts, it launched a campaign to convince agencies concerned with rangeland of the importance of studying the human factor. It argued that the best means of repairing the damage overgrazing had caused in the desert, and improving the Bedouin economy, was by reviving the Bedouin tradition of *hema* (ie returning control over range conservation and management of grazing lands to the Bedouin).

These recommendations for a return to a system of communal ownership appealed to the Syrian government's socialist orientation and the proposal was accepted. After several years of trial and error, a programme of cooperatives was implemented whereby block applications by tribal units for control over their former traditional grazing lands were entertained by the government. Today,

perhaps two thirds of Syria's Bedouin population are member of *hema* cooperatives and associated schemes. As membership has never been mandatory but rather the individual choice of a tribesman within a lineage group, the majority of Syria's Bedouin are joining because they perceive a benefit from doing so. The benefit is both as an individual herd owner and as a tribesman in terms of access to managed grazing, preferential prices for feed, and some credit facilities. Despite numerous ups and downs caused by changing legislation, and inadequate restraint on the spread of agriculture into the *Badia*, the

current situation which allows Bedouin a participatory voice in the running of cooperatives is an improvement over the uncontrolled grazing of the 1950s and the rigid government regulatory schemes of the 1960s.

### **Conservation of wildlife in the *Badia***

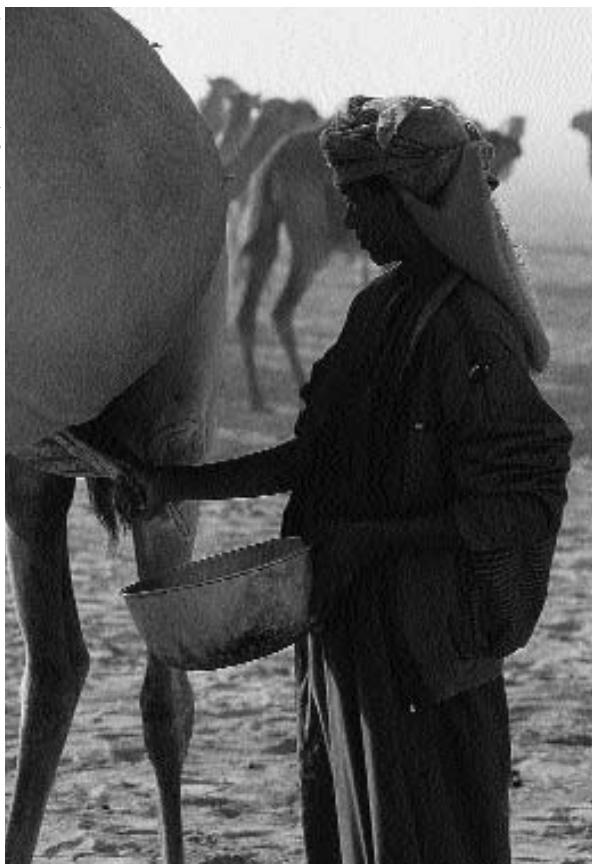
In 1992 Syria attended meetings of the

Commission for Natural Parks and Protected Areas of the World Conservation Union in Sicily, and negotiated funding for a project to rehabilitate rangeland and to establish a wildlife reserve in the Palmyra *Badia*. The project proposes to address three interrelated issues: diminishing grazing land, disappearing wildlife, and increasing requirements for supplemental feeding of domestic herds. It also proposes to incorporate some of the land holdings of three *hema* cooperatives into protected ranges, to set up restrictions on access by Bedouin and their domestic herds, and to run a programme to introduce new plant species. Within two years, it expects to have obtained "higher forage production from the Al Badia Rangelands to enable domesticated animals and wildlife to live in harmony on the land" (FAO, 1995:7). In the third and final year of this project, physical boundaries will be established and "the reserve will only be devoted to wildlife grazing" (FAO, 1995:7). In other words, at the close of the project, the Bedouin and their herds will be excluded from an important area of rehabilitated rangeland.

Although the project will need the cooperation of the Bedouin communities that have used these grazing lands for the past few decades, no visible effort is

made in the technical description of the project to incorporate them in its planning, development or implementation. What this project reveals is either the short memory of government or the difficulty of learning from past experience. The lessons that should have been learned in the 1960s after the Syrian government, with the assistance of a UN agency, attempted to revive nomadic sheep breeding without including people into its plans, have simply been forgotten. Pastoralists cannot be separated from their animals or from their common grazing land. Furthermore, the underlying assumption of this project seems to be the now stale assumption (see, for example, Behnke *et al*, 1993; Pimbert and Pretty, 1995:5) that it is pastoralists that are overgrazing, or overstocking, and that the solution is to reduce herd numbers and restrict their access to land in order to protect its carrying capacity. This assumption simply provides a

photograph: Dawn Chatty



scapegoat for a problem rather than looking for sustainable solutions. Such a search requires the inclusion of the affected population, not their exclusion and further displacement. The Bedouin need to be part of the project. Their perceptions of the problems, causes and possible solutions need to be taken into account. Their needs for their own herds - their access to graze, water and supplemental feed - need to be considered as well. For without accommodation of their needs, Bedouin will not support the conservation project.

## Conclusion

Sustainable conservation requires, above all else, the goodwill of indigenous populations and not their forced exclusion or displacement. As McCabe and others (1992:353-366) have demonstrated, linking conservation with human development offers the most promising course of action for long-term sustainability of nature and human life. Nature reserves and other protected areas must be placed in a regional context. If the economy of the human population is in a serious state of decline, the establishment of a wildlife reserve in their midst does not augur well for long-term sustainability. The population is unlikely to see any benefit from such a scheme and cooperation is unlikely. If, on the other hand, the problems of the human population are addressed and the community envisages benefit from a combined conservation/development scheme, then cooperation and long-term sustainability are possible.

**Dawn Chatty is a social anthropologist who has worked with Bedouin and other nomadic communities in the Middle East for over 20 years. She is a Senior Research Fellow and the Deputy Director of the Refugee Studies Programme.**

1 Similar oryx reintroduction schemes exist in Saudi Arabia and Jordan

2 One Harasiis tribesman was consulted This was a contact of the British expatriate adviser from his days as a liaison officer for the national oil company. But he was not part of the political leadership of the tribe, who were not consulted, in fact, until the handover of Yalooni was a *fait accompli* (see Chatty, 1996:136).

3 The estimated number of oryx poached in 1996 is drawn from a number of informants both on the Jiddat itself and in the capital, Muscat The former manager of the oryx project station at Yalooni, Roddy Jones, pointed out to me that the pattern of poaching in the Jiddat was suggestive of traditional tribal raiding. The Jenaba obviously see the oryx as 'belonging' to the Harasiis. So the act of poaching is an expression of economic and political rivalry.

4 *Badia* is the Arabic word for the semi-arid land which covers 80-85% of Syria and Jordan The term Bedouin refers to the people who inhabit the *Badia*.

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photograph: Dawn Chatty

## Nashrat Al-Hijra Al-Qasriya

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RPN 24 Children and youth  
RPN 23 The role of the military in humanitarian work  
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RPN 19 NGOs and host governments  
RPN 18 Burning issues (environmental concerns)



# The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: a new instrument for international organisations and NGOs

by Roberta Cohen

International organisations and NGOs have an important new document to turn to when they advocate on behalf of internally displaced populations: the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

international humanitarian and development organisations, had welcomed the *Guiding Principles* and encouraged its members to share them with their Executive Boards. The IASC's March 1998 decision had also encouraged its members to share the principles with their staff and to apply the principles in their activities on behalf of IDPs.

Reinforcing the IASC decision, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, ICRC and IOM made state-

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*An earlier study had found 17 areas of insufficient protection for IDPs and eight areas of clear gaps in the law.*

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ments before the Commission emphasizing the importance of the *Guiding Principles* to their work. UNICEF described the principles as "an excellent reference point which will serve as the international standard for the protection and assistance of IDPs." WFP observed that the principles would increase international awareness of the specific problems IDPs face as well as the legal norms relevant to addressing their needs. NGOs, in interventions to the Commission, urged effective action in

the field on the basis of the principles' provisions. Although the Commission was not asked or expected to adopt the principles, it took an important step toward advancing protection for IDPs by acknowledging the principles and their expected use in the field.

## **The need for principles**

The *Guiding Principles* consolidate into one document all the international norms relevant to IDPs, otherwise dispersed in many different instruments. Although not a legally binding document, the principles reflect and are consistent with existing international human rights and humanitarian law. In re-stating existing norms, they also seek to address grey areas and gaps. An earlier study had found 17 areas of insufficient protection for IDPs and

eight areas of clear gaps in the law.<sup>1</sup> No norm, for example, could be found explicitly prohibiting the forcible return of internally displaced persons to places of danger. Nor was there a right to restitution of property lost as a consequence of displacement during armed conflict or to com-

ensation for its loss. The law, moreover, was silent about internment of IDPs in camps. Special guarantees for women and children were needed.

The principles, developed by a team of international lawyers, do not create a new legal status for IDPs. Since IDPs are within their own country, they enjoy the same rights and freedoms as other persons in their country. They do, however, have special needs by virtue of their displacement which the principles seek to address.

As the first international standards developed for IDPs, the principles were presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 1998 by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. The 53-member Commission, in a resolution adopted unanimously, took note of the principles and acknowledged the Representative's stated intention to make use of them in his work. It requested him to report on these efforts and on the views expressed to him by governments, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs. The resolution further noted that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), composed of the heads of the major

They apply to both governments and insurgent forces since both frequently cause displacement and subject IDPs to abuse. They also deal with all phases of displacement. Most intergovernmental organisations and NGOs become involved only after displacement takes place, or during the phase of return and reintegration. But the principles also address the prevention of unlawful displacement. In the introduction to the principles, IDPs are described as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised frontier.” This is the broadest definition of IDPs in use at the international or regional level.

### The content of the principles

The first section of the principles deals with **protection against displacement** and explicitly states the grounds and conditions on which displacement is impermissible and the minimum procedural guarantees to be complied with, should displacement occur. The principles make clear, for example, that displacement is prohibited when it is based on policies of apartheid, ‘ethnic cleansing’,

or other practices “aimed at or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious or racial composition of the affected population.” They also consider as arbitrary displacement “cases of large-scale development projects, which are not justified by compelling and overriding public interests.” It is also made clear that displacement should not be carried out in a manner that violates the rights to life, dignity, liberty, or the security of those affected. States, moreover, have a particular obligation to provide protection against displacement to indigenous peoples and other groups with a special dependency on, and attachment to, their lands [see article by Chatty on page 27].

The section relating to **protection during displacement** covers a broad range of rights. In most instances, general norms are affirmed, followed by the specific rights needed by IDPs to give effect to these norms. For example, after the general norm prohibiting cruel and inhuman treatment is affirmed, it is specified that IDPs must not be forcibly returned or resettled to conditions where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk. Similarly, after the general norm on respect for family life, it is specified that families separated by displacement should be reunited as quickly as possible. And the general norm recognising a person before the law is given effect by specifying that IDPs shall be issued all documents necessary to enable them to enjoy their

legal rights and that authorities must facilitate the replacement of documents lost in the course of displacement.

Special attention is paid to **the needs of women and children**, including a prohibition against gender-specific violence and provisions calling for the full participation of women in the planning and distribution of food and basic supplies. Access by women to female health providers and to reproductive health care is also affirmed, and the equal rights of women to obtain documents and to have such documentation issued in their own names is provided. The forcible recruitment of children into armed forces is prohibited and special efforts are called for to reunite children with their families.

Of particular importance are the principles relating to **the provision of humanitarian assistance**, given the frequent efforts of governments and insurgent groups to obstruct relief and deliberately starve populations. The principles prohibit starvation as a method of combat. They affirm the right of IDPs to request humanitarian assistance, the right of international actors to offer such assistance and the duty of states to accept such offers. Indeed, consent on the part of governments and other authorities to receiving humanitarian assistance cannot be arbitrarily withheld. “Rapid and unimpeded access to the internally displaced” is insisted upon.

photograph: R. Jones/Panos Pictures



IDP children in their ‘classroom’: a converted goods container, Barda area, Azerbaijan

Another innovative provision concerns **the role of humanitarian organisations**. In providing assistance, these are asked to "give due regard to the protection needs and human rights of internally displaced persons," and to "take appropriate measures in this regard." Since many humanitarian and development organisations have provided assistance to IDPs without paying sufficient attention to their protection and human rights needs, the emphasis here on pro-

tection is a welcome change. Indeed, the futility of feeding people without attention to their protection needs has been demonstrated time and again, in Bosnia and in crises around the world. Acknowledging this, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for a more integrated approach in humanitarian emergencies so that protection and assistance are addressed comprehensively. The final section of the principles relating to **resettlement and reintegration** makes clear that IDPs have a right to return to their homes or places of habitual residence voluntarily and in safety and dignity, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. This is especially pertinent since IDPs are often forced to return to their homes whether or not the areas are safe and irrespective of their wishes to resettle in other parts of the country. Another necessary provision is the one providing for the recovery of property and possessions lost as a result of displacement and for compensation or reparation if recovery is not possible.

*While the principles alone cannot prevent displacement or the violation of the rights of IDPs, they do serve notice to governments and insurgent forces that their actions are being monitored...*

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### Application of the principles

The important next step is to give wide **dissemination** to the principles, so as to increase international awareness of the needs of IDPs and of the legal standards pertinent to their needs. While the principles alone cannot prevent displacement or the violation of the rights of IDPs, they do serve notice to governments and insurgent forces that their

actions are being monitored and that they bear responsibility not to create conditions causing displacement and to protect persons already displaced. UN agencies have begun to publish and circulate the principles and to translate them into languages other than English.<sup>2</sup> The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, who chairs the inter-agency process, has moved quickly to disseminate the principles and will

publish 10,000 copies for use in the field. The Global IDP Survey (Norwegian Refugee Council) is also circulating the principles. But reaching millions of IDPs and the organisations assisting them will require a sustained, global effort in which regional organisations and international and local NGOs should become involved.

**Training** will also be needed. Although the principles are set forth clearly and are easy to comprehend, training in their specific provisions needs to be made a part of the UN disaster management training programme and comparable NGO programmes. UN peacekeepers and police forces also need to be trained in protection and human rights of IDPs. NGOs have suggested a popularised handbook based on the principles to assist in the training of field workers and local authorities; one is currently being prepared under the auspices of the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement.

**Monitoring** application of the principles is critical to their effectiveness. Since there is no monitoring body to oversee the implementation of the principles, UN agencies, regional bodies and NGOs will have to perform this function.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States has already used the principles to evaluate the conditions of IDPs in Colombia. In addition, the

Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs used them in his discussions on a mission to Azerbaijan in May. But systematic monitoring will be needed to ensure that the principles are applied on a worldwide basis. The IDP database being developed by the UN in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Survey should prove an important means of monitoring their application. NGOs such as the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children could also perform a valuable service by monitoring the extent to which the principles are being implemented in the case of women and children. Local groups closest to IDPs need to be brought into the process, and affected populations themselves should be encouraged to monitor their own conditions in light of the principles.

**Advocacy and intercessions**, especially by the UN, with governments and insurgent groups will prove essential to increased protection. Even in cases where the combatants do not feel bound by accepted standards, the principles can serve notice that their conduct is open to scrutiny. In the case of governments interested in developing national law for IDPs, the principles should prove especially instructive. They should also help local authorities in dealing with problems of displacement.

But first, of course, the word has to get out. NRC's Global IDP Survey, the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement and the US Committee for Refugees will all be highlighting the **Guiding Principles** in regional gatherings they are planning in order to focus attention on IDPs. UN agencies will likewise be promoting increased attention to the principles in the field. Indeed, everyone working with IDPs should become acquainted with the principles and how best to apply them to enhance protection for the displaced.

*Roberta Cohen is Co-Director of the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement and co-author*

**Articles in Forced Migration Review can be accessed and downloaded from FMR pages at the RSP's website at <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/>**

E/CN.4/1996/52/Add.2, United Nations, December 1995. See also chapter on 'Legal Framework' by

# stop press

## The Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict

Walter Kaelin and Robert Kogod Goldman, in Roberta Cohen and Francis M Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*, Brookings, 1998.

2 For a copy in English or French of the *Guiding Principles*, contact: Allegra Baiocchi, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, DC 1-1568, 1 UN Plaza, 10017 NY, New York, USA. Fax: +1 212 963 1040.

Email: baiocchi@un.org. Also on [www.notes.reliefweb.int](http://www.notes.reliefweb.int).

For a copy in Spanish, Russian, Arabic or Chinese, contact: Erin Mooney, UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais des Nations, Geneva 10, 1211 Switzerland. Email: [emooney.hchr@unog.ch](mailto:emooney.hchr@unog.ch)

The course, duration and likely impact on displaced populations of the conflict that broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in June 1998 are (at time of writing on 10 June) impossible to predict. The boundary dispute which has ostensibly caused it is probably little more than a pretext: the boundary concerned, a straight line between the rivers Mareb and Takazze, is uncontentious, and the obvious problems of administering such a line through hilly country could readily have been resolved. This issue has served largely to enable the governments on either side to consolidate popular support. More plausibly, the conflict derives from Eritrea's ill-thought out introduction of its own currency, the *nakfa*, in place of the Ethiopian *birr*. The Eritreans evidently expected the *nakfa* to circulate at par with the *birr*, leaving cross-border trade undisturbed, but when it rapidly fell in value, the Ethiopians sought to protect the *birr* by insisting on exchange

at market rates, leaving Eritrea with a depreciated currency and making clear its continued economic dependence on Ethiopia. Eritrea retaliated by abrogating the 1991 agreement giving Ethiopia free access to the ports of Assab and Massawa, and the conflict escalated from there.

That such disputes could lead to armed confrontation, including Eritrean bombing of civilian populations in the northern Ethiopian city of Mekelle, is then explicable only in the context of the legacies of Eritrea's thirty-year war for independence. Coming to independence in 1993 with a large and effective army, a deeply etched memory of suffering, a profound suspicion of the outside world, and a boundless confidence in the capabilities of its own people, the Eritrean government has been both extremely sensitive to any apparent slight to its national sovereignty and prone to resort to military force. Following an undeclared war against Sudan, and clashes with both Djibouti and Yemen, Ethiopia was the only one of its neighbours with which it had remained on good terms.

The impact of the conflict on forced migration depends on the course of the conflict itself. Unlike previous conflicts in the Horn of Africa, this is a straightforward clash across state frontiers between two regimes, each of which generally enjoys the support of the populations in the affected areas. Any displacement is therefore likely to affect only populations directly threatened by war (including those under air attack), and its direction is likely to be back into the territory of their own state, which will have a commitment to care for them, rather than across state frontiers. Displaced persons should therefore be absorbed fairly readily into host populations, and return to their homes as soon

as it is safe for them to do so, assuming that the conflict is resolved reasonably quickly, and without major upheavals.

The main effects are therefore likely to be indirect, as a result of the impact of the clash on an extremely unstable region. Cross-border trade between Eritrea and Ethiopia will certainly be badly damaged. As Ethiopia has been landlocked since Eritrea became independent in 1993, and trade through the Eritrean ports has been blocked, it will need instead to conduct virtually all of its trade through Djibouti, placing considerable strain on transport links, especially to the drought-prone areas of northern Ethiopia. Eritrea is not only chronically food deficient but its economy depends heavily on trade with Ethiopia. Without such trade, the port of Assab has no viable function. Should the conflict escalate to a level at which Ethiopia attacks (or is able to blockade) the Eritrean ports, the effects would be disastrous.

There are likely also to be knock-on effects on the war in Sudan, where both Ethiopia and (more vocally) Eritrea have supported the SPLA/NDA opposition to the regime in Khartoum.

These include the transport of supplies across Eritrea and Ethiopia to refugee Sudanese populations along their western frontiers, and to opposition-held areas within Sudan. The impact on the future course of the Sudanese war of a conflict between two of the main opposition supporters is incalculable. So is the effect on the future stability of Eritrea and Ethiopia themselves and this all but inexplicable conflict can only have damaging consequences for displaced people and the welfare of the region as a whole.

by Christopher Clapham, Professor of

photograph: John Long

## Humanitarian crisis in Kosovo



*International Relations, Lancaster University*

in the crisis is that both sides to the conflict have now increased their use of force. This has followed a period of several years characterised by at least two features: the Kosovar Albanians (who constitute roughly 90% of the population in Serbia's province of Kosovo) have systematically been denied basic human rights, and they have openly expressed their intention not to abide by Yugoslav or Serbian laws. The result has been the creation of a parallel Albanian society (including government structures, education system, tax collection, etc) unofficially existing alongside the repressive rule from Belgrade. Indeed, Belgrade has used this challenge to national security and the constitutional order as justification for directly governing Kosovo and limiting the local autonomy that is reaffirmed in the Serbian Constitution of 1990 (articles 6, 108-112).

Two basic principles appear to be guiding the international community's response to the conflict: the right to self-determination and respect for the territorial integrity of states. Accordingly, the

European Union and United States have insisted that it is not possible for the Kosovar Albanians to unilaterally separate from Yugoslavia, although they should be granted an effective and enhanced form of local autonomy.

In the event that international preventive efforts do not succeed in attenuating the conflict and refugee flows begin destabilizing the region, UNHCR has been involved since 1993 in the discreet preparation of contingency plans. It is generally believed that tensions between the Albanian minority and Slav majority in the neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be dramatically aggravated by an inflow of Kosovar Albanian refugees, and that the relatively unstable and weak government would have difficulty in controlling the situation. Most speculation about the possibility of a wider Balkan war stems from this scenario because all regional states (Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey) could be implicated if FYR Macedonia were to be destabilized by a mass inflow of refugees from Kosovo. Likewise, the anarchy in neighbouring Albania that prompted an international military deployment in 1997 contributes to fears of destabilization that could be provoked by the arrival of refugees.

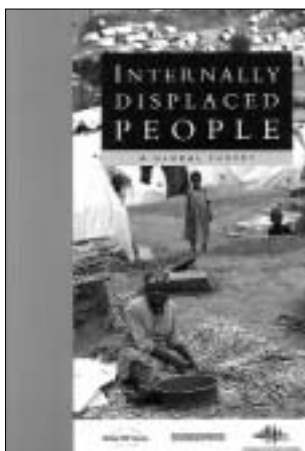
The contingency plans prepared by UNHCR involve three dimensions: containment and protection/assistance for up to 200,000 displaced persons within the borders of Yugoslavia, protection/assistance for up to 100,000 refugees in northern Albania, and 70,000 in north-western Macedonia. UNHCR's international NGO partners for this operation include: ICRC, IFRC, OXFAM, Médecins sans Frontières, International Rescue Committee, Swiss Disaster Relief and Medical Emergency Relief International.

*by Michael Barutciski, Research*

Recent violent events in Kosovo are part of a crisis related to an independence struggle that has existed for a number of years in both the old and the new Yugoslavia. The new factor

## **Fellow in International Law, Refugee Studies Programme**

On 18 May 1998, the RSP hosted a workshop entitled 'Preventing a humanitarian crisis in Kosovo'; participants included a mixture of practitioners



(UN, NGO, government) and academics from several dis-

- ciplines. The workshop provided a forum for
- a) the exchange of views,
  - b) the exploration of possible political arrangements and
  - c) the launch of an RSP research project to provide policy makers with analytical research that can contribute to attenuating the tensions in Kosovo and dealing with a potential refugee outflow.

For a report on the workshop, contact Michael Barutciski at RSP QEH, 21 St. Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK. Fax: +44 (0) 1865 270721  
Email michael.barutciski@qeh.ox.ac.uk.

### **Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey**

by Global IDP Survey/Norwegian Refugee Council. 240pp. ISBN 1-85383-521-8. £14.95.

[Free to FMR subscribers while stocks last]

**Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey** examines the plight of over 23 million IDPs, forced to leave their homes because of military conflict, human rights violations, natural disasters or 'development' projects. Despite high profile media coverage of crises in Bosnia and Rwanda, the vast majority of IDPs continue to survive, often in appalling conditions, with little security or legal protection from national and international bodies. Following an introduction by Francis Deng, the book is divided into two parts. Part 1 looks at Issues and Perspectives, with sections on Recent trends in protection and assistance for IDPs (by Roberta Cohen); Problems and opportunities of displacement (Jon Bennett); Internally displaced children (James Kunder); Comparative trends in



forced displacement 1964-1996 (Susanne Schmeidl); and Recent literature on IDPs (Louise Ludlum-Taylor). Part 2 presents 12 regional profiles (55 countries). It also contains the *Guiding Principles*, photographs, maps, figures and tables, and an extensive bibliography.

*Non-FMR subscribers wishing to order a copy should contact: Earthscan, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9BR, UK.*

**Helping Refugee Children in Schools** by The Refugee Council (London). 1998. 28pp. Free.

Forced by persecution to leave their own countries, refugees often arrive in Britain traumatised and disorientated. Education, in particular language support, is often the route to self-sufficiency and a new life. This A5 booklet describes some of the ways in which teachers and educationalists can help school-age refugee children. The different sections include: Induction (welcoming refugee children); Meeting refugee children's emotional and psychological needs; How to help a beginner learn English; Maintaining and developing home languages; Countering racism and xenophobia; The early years (ie pre-school); Working with 15-18s; and Resources. Most of the information contained in the booklet would be applicable in other refugee receiving countries.

*Contact: Jill Rutter, National Education Adviser, Refugee Council, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ, UK.*

*Tel: +44 (0)171 820 3000.*

*Fax: +44 (0)171 582 9929.*

*Email: refcounciluk@gn.apc.org*

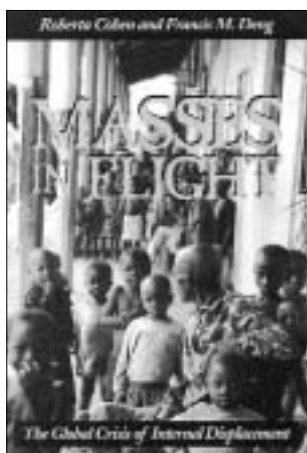
*Website: <http://www.gn.apc.org/refugeecounciluk>*

**Temporary Human Settlement Planning for Displaced Populations**

## in Emergencies

by Andrew Chalinder. RRN Good Practice Review, Overseas Development Institute. 1998. 132pp. ISBN 0-85003-372-1. £10 (excl p&p).

This Good Practice Review asks what is good, or at least better, practice in planning for (rather than 'of') temporary settlements for displaced populations. The author draws a distinction between the more technical aspects of site allocation and preparation, and decisions which take into account political, environmental and economic sustainability issues when planning settlements. He contends that the long term implications for emergency assistance programmes of the choice of area or region in which a displaced population is encouraged to settle are frequently overlooked in the



scramble to find a site, and that more attention needs to be directed at a managerial level within both development and humanitarian sectors towards finding a sustainable solution. The outcome of planning must have at its core a notion of community and sustainability for the different groups affected by displacement, including both the displaced and the host populations.

Contact: RRN Administrator, ODI, Portland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 3DP, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0)171 393 1674.  
Fax: +44 (0)171 393 1699.  
Email: [rrn@odi.org.uk](mailto:rrn@odi.org.uk)

### **Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement**

by Roberto Cohen and Francis M. Deng. Brookings Institution. 1998. 420pp. ISBN 0-8157-1511-0. \$22.95 (pb).

*Masses in Flight* begins with a global overview, which analyses the causes and consequences of internal displacement, seeks to arrive at an appropriate definition of the internally displaced, and discusses the geographic distribution, numbers and characteristics of the displaced. International legal standards applicable to the internally displaced are then analysed, and the recently-agreed *Guiding Principles* are included. Institutional arrangements at the international and regional levels are examined, as well as the role of NGOs, with recommendations for remedying gaps, especially in the area of protection. The final section presents strategies for preventing displacement, integrating protection and assistance, and addressing reintegration and development.

Contact: The Brookings Institution, Dept 029, Washington DC 20042-0029, USA.  
Tel: +1 800 275 1447.  
Fax: +1 202 797 6004  
(Attn Order Dept).

### **The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced**

edited by Cohen and Deng. Brookings Institution. 1998. 420pp. ISBN 0-8157-1513-7. \$22.95 (pb).

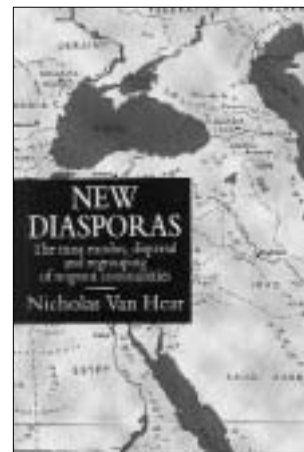
*The Forsaken People* comprises ten case studies of internal displacement: Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Sudan, former Yugoslavia, Caucasus, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Peru. Contributors: Thomas Greene, Randolph Kent, Jennifer McLean, Larry Minear, Liliana Obregon, Amir Pasic, Hiram Ruiz, Colin Scott, H L Seneviratne, Maria Stavropoulou, US Committee for Refugees, and Thomas Weiss.

Contact: as for *Masses in Flight*. Please note that these two books are also available as a set: ISBN 0-8157-1515-3. \$40.95.

### **Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women: A Synopsis of the UNHCR Guidelines**

by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. 1998. 4pp. Free.

This A4 leaflet, with field worker's checklist sheet enclosed, is designed to facilitate and encourage field workers to be aware of the specific protection issues facing refugee women, and to help improve the safety and well-being of refugee women. The full Guidelines, which have been endorsed by the international community, are available from



UNHCR offices around the world or from headquarters of international relief agencies.

For the Synopsis, contact: WCRWC, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168-1289, USA.  
Tel: +1 212 551 311.  
Fax: +1 212 551 3180.  
Email: [wcrwc@intrescom.org](mailto:wcrwc@intrescom.org)

### **New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities**

by Nicholas Van Hear. University College London Press. 1998. 298pp. ISBN 1-85728-838-6. £12.95 (pb).

Recent profound changes in the world political and economic order have generated large movements of people in almost every region. As migration has proliferated, so too has the formation of diaspora or transnational communities, leading to increasing numbers of people with allegiances straddling their places of origin and their new homes. At the same time, many expatriates have been forced to return home and other previously scattered populations have regrouped, leading to the weakening or un-doing of diasporas. Synthesising approaches to both economic and forced migration up to now largely insulated from one another, this book charts the connections between migration crises and transnational communities - their formation, their demise and their social, economic and political fall-out. It looks in detail at ten migration crises in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Central America and the Caribbean, examining the factors that are accelerating - and constraining - the growth of transnational communities in an ever

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# conferences

## Growth of forced migration: new directions in research policy and practice

*Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford, 25-27 March 1998*

This conference aimed to review and mark out the field of refugee studies; to review the role of the 'refugee regime' (institutions, law policy, and practice); and to examine how refugee studies and the refugee regime are related to and shape one another.

Presentations on the first day discussed the links between refugee studies and the social sciences; the way in which refugees construct visions of the future in the aftermath of genocidal violence; and the uses to which refugee studies could be put. The second day focused on issues of protection and assistance (the role of the refugee regime, the limits of protection and the task of NGOs). The last day's discussions included questions of norms and ethics, the future of the refugee regime, bridging the research-practice divide, and the scope of refugee studies.

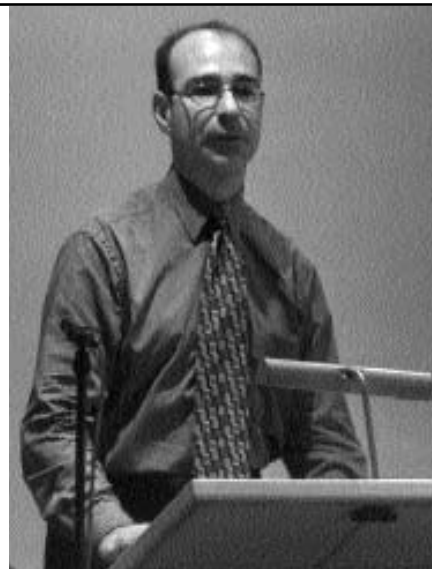
**Professor Robin Cohen** of Warwick University suggested that the social sciences were moving into a phase where inter- or multi-disciplinary approaches were being replaced by a uni-disciplinary one. This would involve a move from defending the boundaries of separate disciplines to using all available approaches to examine a single problem. In current academic discourse, two views of refugee studies can be distinguished. The first focuses on the continuing, if not increasing, centrality of the subject. The necessity of dealing with large numbers of refugees brought the field into being and will sustain it. For others, however, the very importance and relevance of the subject matter is itself the greatest threat to the credibility of refugee studies, as the emotional charge of the field pushes it into advocacy and thus threatens its scholarship and

academic integrity. Professor Cohen made three suggestions for resolving this identity crisis:

- 'nest' refugee studies within a wider set of concerns (such as forced migration; political demography);
- profit from the increasing homogeneity of social science and develop a uni-disciplinary strategy; or
- accept that the field has a limited 'shelf life'.

**Professor James Hathaway**, Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, Canada, argued that the existing discourse in refugee studies was actually militating against a solution to the problems confronting the refugee regime. He identified three central strands in current refugee studies. First, there is a widening of focus from refugees to the more nebulous concept of 'forced migrants' which would include, for example, the internally displaced. This approach can undermine refugees' rights to protection which is based on their unique and legally defined status.<sup>1</sup> Second, there is an assumption that addressing the root causes of conflicts which produce refugees is a better approach than focusing on palliative measures - an assumption which, he argued, has undermined the importance of protection. Finally, the assumption of a routine linkage between refugee status and permanent immigration in cases where states were attempting to restrict immigration, could again undermine refugees' access to even basic protection by allowing them to be excluded by states as part of a migratory policy.

Oxfam's Head of Emergencies, **Nick Stockton**, discussed how academic studies in the 1980s and 1990s have resulted in a 'piling up' of criticisms against humanitarianism, questioning not only



photograph: Corinne Owen

**Professor James Hathaway**

the delivery of assistance but whether assistance itself was desirable. A new schism has developed between a reformist agenda seeking to address the operational mistakes of NGOs/assistance agencies and an abolitionist agenda dismissing almost all aid as at best counter-productive and at worst a contributory factor to conflict. A responsible academic approach to complex emergencies must distinguish empirical analysis from ideological theory and political argument. Academics should challenge the existing 'developmental' evolutionary consensus on humanitarianism and recognise the persistence of violent conflict in human history, the persistence of compassion and solidarity, and the probable need for a permanent humanitarian system to allow this to be expressed.

*For a conference report, contact the RSP (address on p 2; email [rsp@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rsp@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).*

*Conference papers will be published in the Journal of Refugee Studies (Vol 11:4, December 1998); see p39 for details. Some of the papers will be posted on the RSP website for discussion: <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/>*

3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Email: K.Geuijlen@fsw.ruu.nl

**The Protection Mandate of IINHCR: 18 September 1998**

**The Hague**

UNHCR has extended its mandate significantly over the last decade. In the last few years it has been active in countries of origin and has become deeply involved in repatriation, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, and assistance to IDPs. It has also developed its own policies aimed at preventing forced migration. The question has arisen as to whether one UN organisation can and should cover this broad range of activities. Can these new responsibilities be fulfilled without jeopardising the traditional and vital task of giving international protection to refugees? The Working Group on International Refugee Policy has organised this international conference to evaluate UNHCR's - *de facto* extended - mandate and structure and the consequences. The organisers will formulate a framework of questions to be brought forward to the 49th Session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR in October 1998. This framework and the report of the conference will be published for distribution.

Speakers include Dennis McNamara (Director, Division for International Protection, UNHCR), Bill Frelick (Senior Policy Analyst, US Committee for Refugees), M Sahnoun (UN Special Envoy, Great Lakes region), Guy Goodwin-Gill (Oxford University/Amsterdam University) and Oliver Ramsbotham (Bradford University).

The Working Group, based in the Netherlands, comprises the following members: Amnesty International (Neth), Médecins sans Frontières (Neth), Dutch Red Cross, Refugee Foundation, Dutch Refugee Council, Mensen in Nood/Caritas (Neth), Dutch Interchurch Aid and Pharint Foundation.

Contact: **Frederiek de Vlaming**, Coodinator, Working Group International Refugee Policy, c/o Dutch Refugee Council, Postbox 2894, 1000 CW Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 20 346 7200. Fax: +31 20 617 8155.

**IRAP: 13-16 December 1998, Gaza Town**

I FMR 3 (December 1998) will include an article discussing this issue more fully.

This is the 6th conference of the International Research and Advisory Panel, organised by the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM). The local sponsor is the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme.

Three main themes will be discussed:

- current issues in forced migration:

- changes in the right to asylum and the right to remain
  - host responses: opportunities for participation and integration
  - social reconciliation and 're'patriation
- Persons willing to organise parallel workshops on a particular theme or wishing to present papers should write with abstracts to:

**Karin Geuijlen, Dept of Cultural Anthropology, PO Box 80.140,**

**Journal of Refugee Studies**

**Volume 11:2 (June 1998)**

- Vietnamese communities in Canada, France and Denmark** by Louis-Jacques Dorais
- 'Passing the buck': EU refugee policies towards Central and Eastern Europe** by Sandra Lavenex
- The importance of information in the resettlement of refugees in the UK** by Vaughan Robinson
- Nationalist discourses and the construction of difference: Bosnian Muslim refugees in Sweden** by Marita Eastmond
- Refugee voices: internal exile, exile, and return: a gendered view** by Helia Lopez Zarzosa

**Volume 11:3 (September 1998)**

- Community work and exile politics: Kurdish refugee associations in London** by Oesten Wahlbeck
- From relief to development: negotiating the continuum on the Thai-Burma border** by Kerry Demusz
- Asylum applications in the European Union** by Anita Boecker and Tety Havinga
- A woman without a man is a woman at risk: women at risk in Australia's humanitarian programmes** by Lenore Manderson, Margaret Kellaher, Milica Markovic, Kerrie McManus
- Trapped on the margins: social characteristics, economic conditions, and reproductive behaviour of internally displaced women in urban Mozambique** by Victor Agadjanian

**Volume 11: 4 (December 1998)**

Special Issue on **'The growth of forced migration: new directions in research, policy and practice'** (papers from March 1998 conference)

**Editors:** Roger Zetter, Richard Black  
**Book Reviews Editor:** Nicholas Van Hear

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**FREE** back issues of the JRS are available to appropriate organisations. Please contact: Margaret Okole, Assistant Editor, Journal of Refugee Studies, RSP, QEH, 21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA. Fax: 44 1865 270721  
E-mail: jrs@qeh.ox.ac.uk

**Abstracts from the JRS are now published on the RSP's home pages at <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/>**

# Research Research

## Research at the Refugee Studies Programme

In the coming few years, most RSP research will focus on four separate but interlocking thematic priorities:

Email: [FRED@vlw.antenna.nl](mailto:FRED@vlw.antenna.nl)

- **Asylum from an international legal and political perspective:** By bringing together legal and political perspectives (focusing on Northern as well as Southern countries), research on this theme will represent something of a new theoretical departure for the RSP.
- **Conflict and post-conflict reintegration:** Building on the RSP's strengths in this area, future topics of research are likely to include the effects of war on children and adolescents.
- **Diasporas and transnational communities:** Again, much of RSP's research has focused on this area which is a key issue for development studies because of the latter's growing preoccupation with processes of globalisation and 'anti-globalisation'.
- **Development-induced displacement and resettlement:** This process is said to affect around ten million people every year. The RSP has held two international conferences on the subject (1995 and 1996).

The following projects are in progress or have recently been funded:

### 1. Vulnerability and resilience of returnee unaccompanied minors in Vietnam

This study examines how unaccompanied minors from detention centres in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia have adapted to return to their native Vietnam. The study aims to determine how the repatriated children have adapted to their country and family following their exposure to stressful life events in the detention centres, and to identify predictors of different types of repatriation outcomes.

Principal researcher: Maryanne Loughry ([maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk)) in cooperation with the Women Studies Department, Ho Chi Minh City.

### 2. Policy issues in refugee health care and welfare in sub-Saharan Africa [Kenya/Uganda]

This is a three-year collaborative study coordinated by the Institute of Tropical Medicine, University of Antwerp, with the RSP, the Centre for Refugee Studies at Moi University (Kenya), and Makerere University (Uganda). RSP principal researcher: Barbara Harrell-Bond ([barbara.harrell-bond@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.harrell-bond@qeh.ox.ac.uk)). Also includes two separate studies:

- The rights of refugees in Kenya: a socio-legal study:*** examines the enforcement of international domestic legislation related to refugees, identifying any domestic laws requiring reform, and analysing the role of all actors involved in the processes related to securing the rights of refugees. Researcher: Guglielmo Verdirame ([guglielmo.verdirame.qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:guglielmo.verdirame.qeh.ox.ac.uk)).
- The delivery of rights to refugees in law and practice in Uganda:*** examines the extent to which the basic civil, political, social and economic rights of refugees are upheld in practice in Uganda, and the legal/institutional reforms required to ensure them. Researcher: Hannah Gary ([hrgarry@starcom.co.ug](mailto:hrgarry@starcom.co.ug)).

### 3. People who stay: migration, development and those left behind

This study investigates household migration strategies, how much choice households and individuals exercise in the decision to move or stay, the effects of out-migration on relations within and among communities and households,

and the impact of financial and other transfers between migrants and those who stay. Fieldwork: Ghana and Sri Lanka; library studies of other countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia. Directed by Nicholas Van Hear ([nicholas.van-hear@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nicholas.van-hear@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).

### 4. Rights and accountability in development

This study of social rights in public and private sector-financed development operations aims to draw up an options paper for a complaints mechanism concerning aid projects and programmes funded by the EC; examine the extension of the existing World Bank inspection mechanism to the Bank's private sector investment operations through the International Finance Corporation and its support for the risks of such investment through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; and assess the feasibility of a Bank-wide voluntary code for private sector investment from the perspective of social rights protection. Researcher: Patricia Feeney ([patricia.feeney@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.feeney@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).

### 5. A comparative study of reception and integration policies for refugees in France and the UK

This study compares the impact of the 'assimilationist' French approach with the 'multicultural' British approach, focusing on refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia. A further study entitled 'Refugee diasporas: Vietnamese and Sri Lankans in the UK and France' will commence in January 1999. Researcher: Didier Bertrand ([didier.bertrand@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:didier.bertrand@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).

### 6. Developing a methodology for research among refugee children

This project investigates the concerns of children and adolescents in refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank and how they can be helped to better manage their concerns. The principal purpose of the project is to develop a

procedure and instrumentation for examining the concerns of refugee children in various settings. Researcher: Maryanne Loughry (maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk) in collaboration with Colin MacMullin of Flinders University of South Australia.

**7. Mozambicans in South Africa: from refugees to 'illegals'**

A grant has recently been awarded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation for a collaborative research project, involving the Department of Community Health at Witwatersrand University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the RSP. The project will utilise existing demographic and health surveillance data to conduct a detailed exploration of the social, migratory and health patterns of a large population of self-settled refugees over time, and make a direct comparison with the host population from the standpoint of access to education and welfare. Principal researchers: Steve Tollman for Witwatersrand University and David Turton for the RSP.

**8. Development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR)**

The UK Department for International Development is funding four desk studies as the first stage of a programme of research into development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR). The research will look at: dam-induced displacement, mining and petroleum extraction-induced displacement and urban clearance, as well as parkland and conservation-induced displacement. The desk studies will focus on: the role of funders in the design and outcome of DIDR; legal frameworks and the rights of the displaced; conflict, resistance and identity formation in resettlement; and the significance of social variables, such as age and gender. The authors of the desk studies are (in order): Alan Rew, University of Wales at Swansea; Michael Barutciski, RSP; Dolores Koenig, American University, Washington; and Anthony Oliver-Smith, University of Florida.

**Proposals currently before funders include the following:**

- a sociological study of medical humanitarianism and human rights witnessing, focussing on two international NGOs which have played an influential part in linking international humanitarianism and human rights
- an assessment of primary health care delivery to pastoralists in Syria and Jordan
- developing an appropriate role for UNHCR in humanitarian crises: prevention and repatriation
- a study of conservation-induced displacement in

**Forced Migration Review** is funded mainly by grants from institutions and agencies involved in development and humanitarian work. We would like to thank the following organisations for their commitment to **Forced Migration Review** in 1998:

AUSTCARE/Australian Council for Overseas Aid  
 Danish Refugee Council  
 ECHO  
 European Commission  
 European Human Rights Foundation  
 International Planned Parenthood Federation  
 Lutheran World Federation  
 Norwegian Refugee Council  
 Save the Children Fund (UK)  
 The Ford Foundation, Cairo Office  
 World Vision (UK)

*We would like to thank ECHO for their generous sponsorship of this issue of Forced Migration Review.*

ECHO is the European Community Humanitarian Office, a service of the European Commission which is under the direct responsibility of Commissioner Emma Bonino. It manages humanitarian aid on behalf of the European Union. Part of its mission is to raise public awareness of the issues at stake.

**Working with partners in the field**

ECHO funds relief to victims of both natural and man-made crises outside the European Union. Aid is channelled impartially, straight to victims, regardless of race, religion or political beliefs. ECHO has over 180 partners, organisations which have signed a Framework Partnership Contract with the Commission. Its partners are the specialist agencies of the United Nations, the Red Cross family, other international organisations, and NGOs.

ECHO is the biggest single source of humanitarian aid in the world. In 1996, it donated funding of almost 442m ECU, not including aid that the EU's 15 Member States gave separately. ECHO funding supported projects in over 60 countries worldwide. ECHO funding is spent on goods and services such as food, clothing, shelter, medical aid, water supplies and sanitation facilities, emergency repair work to the infrastructure, transport and mine-clearing technical assistance. ECHO also funds disaster prevention, preparedness and migration projects in regions prone to natural catastrophes.

**Evaluation and training**

ECHO projects are evaluated by independent consultants with a view to improving quality in humanitarian aid. ECHO also supports the training of humanitarian aid workers in the field through a postgraduate programme available at seven European universities: the Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA).



Norwegian Refugee Council

# Global IDP Survey



Norwegian Refugee Council

The Global IDP Survey's first major publication, *Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey*, was published in June (see p36 for details). The book is essentially a reference tool for analysts and academics but will also be used for advocating a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to problems of internal displacement. Other Global IDP Survey news includes the following:

the Middle East

• a research project aimed at preventing a humanitarian crisis in Kosovo

In April 1998 Francis Deng, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on IDPs, had his mandate renewed for a further three years. Apart from continuing with his advocacy work and country visits, he is also charged with disseminating and putting into practice the recently published *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (see article by Cohen, p31). The Global IDP Survey is supporting Mr Deng's mandate in the following ways:

## Database

• A six month feasibility study to develop an electronic database on IDPs for the UN and the wider humanitarian community will soon be completed. It is expected that, once the final format is agreed, the Global IDP Survey/Norwegian Refugee Council will host the database for the foreseeable future.

## Best practice review

• Under the coordination of UNICEF, a review of 'Best Practice' in working with IDPs is underway. This will include a summary of literature, case studies and the publication in September/October of a handbook for field workers.

## Conferences

• A series of conferences is planned for Geneva (June and October), UK (July), Southern Africa and Canada (October), Horn of Africa (November, led by the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement) and Colombia (early 1999, led by the US Committee for Refugees). Additional workshops may be held in Thailand and elsewhere as interest develops. The conferences will be an opportunity to disseminate the various 1998 publications, to develop a network for the database and - most importantly - to focus the attention of field workers, governments and human rights organisations on the practical use of best practice materials, including the

Through *Forced Migration Review* and the above initiatives, the Global IDP Survey will continue to build an international advocacy network and an information centre on IDPs.

## The Directorate

The Global IDP Survey, as a project of the Norwegian Refugee Council, is administered through its Geneva office. It has an academic Advisory Board of 15 leading experts in the field of forced migration.

## Staff

Director: Jon Bennett  
Database Coordinator: Christophe Beau  
NRC Representative: Brita Sydhoff  
Administrator/Project Officer: Gry Sando

## Global IDP Survey donors

Department for International Development, UK; ECHO; Individuell Människahjälp, Sweden; International Development Research Centre, Canada; Ministries of Foreign Affairs - Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland; Norwegian Church Aid; Rädda Barnen, Sweden; Redd Barna, Norway;  
UNDP; UNHCR; UNICEF; WFP; World Vision International.

## Website

The Global IDP Survey website includes a full IDP bibliography and can be accessed on <http://www.nrc.no/idp.htm>

## For more information

If you would like more information about the project, or would like to receive Global IDP Survey publications and are not a subscriber to *Forced Migration Review*, please contact:

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# Prolonged stay in a refugee camp: some thoughts

A refugee described my camp as 'a boredom-filled milieu full of paranoia sufferers'.

Real or simulated dependency and an unavoidable behaviour pattern go hand-in-glove with a prolonged stay in a refugee camp. It is not only obvious in the attitude of those refugees who hang around the administrative complex in a camp, clamouring for non-food items - the hard currency in many camps - and jobs, but it also affects refugees with entrepreneurial skills: those who boast that they would manage well if the assistance programme came to an end but who can hardly hide their concern about their mini-enterprises when a certain food item is excluded from the weekly or monthly food distribution or when there is a general reduction in refugee rations. The refugee camp is a fertile ground for credulity and false expectations, preventing young refugees from genuine participation in human development programmes such as skills development projects and income-generating schemes.

After several years of life in a refugee camp, the refugee should ask him/herself some important questions:

Have I acquired new skills? Have I lost a skill?  
 Have I forgotten myself in the drudgery of camp?  
 Have I contributed to the development of my refugee community?

Many male heads of refugee families in our camp have justified their decision to raise their children in a refugee camp which has educational facilities but where cultural chaos is a springboard for child unruliness. One refugee father told me: "It is like choosing the lesser of two evils: close your eyes to the cultural chaos in the camp, letting your children grow up in a culture of dependency but learning in the camp school - or leave the camp and lead a life in a wartorn country where children, if not drawn into the culture of anarchy, will remain war-affected most of their lives." These are the choices that responsible refugees have to make about their life in a refugee camp.

Few refugees would regret their decision to stick to a camp life if refugees and those working with them cooperated in pursuit of a fundamental goal: arming refugees with experience, knowledge and skills.

by Liban Abdikarim Ahmad, a teacher at the Somali Refugees Primary School, Alghahim camp, Abyan, Yemen

