



Finding Durable Solutions



UNHCR / K. SHRESTHA

Refugees resettled from Nepal, awaiting the 4 Train in the Bronx, are learning their way around their new home in New York.

support for durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Where solutions are not available in the short term, it will seek to improve the quality of asylum. As part of this strategy, the Office will also work towards ensuring that durable solutions and displacement are addressed in the context of the broader development and peace-building agendas.

Of particular concern to UNHCR is the situation of some 5.7 million refugees worldwide who have been in exile for more than five years, including Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Bosnian and Croatian refugees in Serbia, Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan. UNHCR seeks to put in place comprehensive strategies to address these situations through the complementary use of all three durable solutions.

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Returning to their places of origin remains the most desirable durable solution for refugees and IDPs. UNHCR's principal protection concern in this regard is ensuring that return movements are based on the voluntary choices of individuals.

Throughout the world today, many refugees and IDPs are considering if and when they should return home. They base their decisions on security and the possibilities for reintegration in areas of prospective return. UNHCR estimates that more than 3 million people of concern will decide to return in 2010 and 2011. In 2010, almost 600,000

Far too many refugees remain without prospects for durable solutions for too long. If this is to change, sustained international cooperation and support are essential. For its part, UNHCR is working to integrate the three most commonly applied durable

solutions—voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement—into one comprehensive approach.

In line with the High Commissioner's initiative on protracted refugee situations, in 2010–2011, UNHCR will redouble efforts to mobilize international and national

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refugees are expected to return to their areas of origin, mainly to Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Southern Sudan. It also expects that more than 1.1 million IDPs will return to their areas of origin in Chad, DRC, Iraq, Kenya, Somalia, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. UNHCR will closely monitor conditions in Somalia to determine if there is potential for voluntary return.

Recent internal displacement in South Asia and Africa poses challenges to UNHCR's quest for durable solutions for IDPs. A particular concern is ensuring that returns are not prompted by protection or assistance gaps in areas of displacement, or by coercion. UNHCR will lead the preparation of new policies and guidelines for IDP returns in 2010-2011.

To improve planning and implementation in potential return operations, UNHCR will issue an updated edition of its *Voluntary Repatriation Handbook*. A primary goal of the publication is to assist field operations to meet protection standards within voluntary repatriation movements, and bring renewed attention to this durable solution.

UNHCR will continue to help field offices across the globe to fund the repatriation of refugees and asylum-seekers. This ensures that nobody wishing to return voluntarily will be denied this possibility because of a lack of resources.

RESETTLEMENT

The number of refugees in need of resettlement has grown in recent years, but the availability of resettlement places has not kept pace. The number of people for whom resettlement is the only foreseeable durable solution rose from 560,000 in 2009 to some 747,000 in 2010. Of these, some 203,000 are deemed at heightened risk from a protection standpoint and will need to be resettled in 2010. Yet only some 79,000 places are offered annually by resettlement countries.

The growing number of identified people in need of resettlement reflects UNHCR's focus on multi-year planning and the role of resettlement in finding comprehensive solutions.

Resettlement is a labour-intensive activity. For 2010, all resettlement needs have been incorporated into UNHCR's

Main destinations for expected voluntary returns in 2010 and 2011					
Region	Country	2010		2011	
		Refugees	IDPs	Refugees	IDPs
Africa	Angola	53,000			
	Burundi	10,000		2,000	
	Central African Rep.	200		1,000	50,000
	Chad		38,770		55,270
	DRC	45,850	246,000	34,700	163,000
	Côte d'Ivoire	3,000		3,000	
	Kenya		80,000		
	Rwanda	10,000		10,000	
	Somalia	2,000	93,140	3,000	93,140
	Sudan	32,000	50,000	10,000	10,000
Middle East	Iraq	250,000	500,000	350,000	450,000
	Yemen		20,000		10,000
Asia	Afghanistan	165,000	15,000	165,000	10,000
	Myanmar			30,000	20,000
	Sri Lanka	1,000	74,300	10,000	71,800
Europe	Bosnia and Herzegovina	500	5,000	400	5,000
	Russian Federation	700	4,000	1,200	5,000
	Turkey	2,000		3,000	
Total		575,250	1,126,710	623,300	943,210

budget. The Office will maintain the resettlement expert deployment scheme to cover surges in staffing demands or other newly identified needs.

In 2010-2011, UNHCR foresees the persistence of some key resettlement challenges: (i) addressing unmet resettlement needs due to limited capacity of UNHCR and resettlement countries; (ii) ensuring strategic use of resettlement, particularly in protracted refugee situations; and (iii) ensuring resettlement programmes are needs-based, non-discriminatory and achieve sustainable solutions.

(i) Addressing unmet needs

In the last two years, UNHCR has submitted more people for resettlement than the number of places made available by resettlement countries. In 2008, it submitted over 121,000 refugees for consideration by resettlement countries—the highest number in 15 years and 22 per cent more than in 2007. The Office is also placing more emphasis on resettling particularly vulnerable refugees, such as women and girls. In 2008, resettlement submissions for women grew by 42 per cent.

The increase in resettlement referrals is unsustainable without a

However, there are encouraging signs that more states in Latin America and Europe are interested in becoming resettlement countries. The Czech Republic, for example, accepted some people from Myanmar in 2008 and has plans to accept more in 2009. Japan hopes to begin a resettlement programme in 2010.

There are also encouraging steps towards the development of a common resettlement initiative by the European Union. A joint EU mission to the Middle East led to a recommendation that member states take up to 10,000 refugees. However, the global financial crisis may have an impact on resettlement places in the coming year.

The gap between resettlement needs in 2010 and UNHCR's expected capacity to meet them is significant. Based on its capacity in previous years, it may only assist some 42,000 people, leaving 161,000 people in need unassisted. UNHCR will try to reduce this gap through deployment schemes, simplified and faster processing procedures and by using resources more efficiently. It will also prioritize emergency cases, individuals with medical needs and women with protection risks.

TO MITIGATE THE RISK OF ONWARD AND IRREGULAR MOVEMENTS BY ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES, UNHCR WILL PROVIDE PROTECTION AND SEARCH FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS, SUCH AS RESETTLEMENT, AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE STAGE OF DISPLACEMENT, AND IN THE COUNTRY OF FIRST ASYLUM

corresponding increase from countries providing resettlement places. In 2010, more countries will need to establish or re-establish resettlement programmes, and increase their resettlement quotas. UNHCR is also concerned that many resettlement countries do not fill their quotas, as actual resettlement arrivals often fall short of programme targets.

(ii) Strategic use of resettlement in protracted refugee situations

The Office is encouraging countries to consider multi-year plans and other means to enhance flexibility and predictability in resettlement delivery. A multi-year approach is more cost-effective in protracted refugee

situations. Resettlement countries will also be encouraged to make a collective effort to maximize the benefits for others in need of protection beyond the refugees being resettled, such as by improving asylum conditions in the host country.

To mitigate the risk of onward and irregular movements by asylum-seekers and refugees, UNHCR will provide protection and search for durable solutions, such as resettlement, at the earliest possible stage of displacement, and in the country of first asylum. Such early action will address secondary movements in often dangerous circumstances, and forestall situations in which desperate refugees risk their lives in search for a better future.

(iii) Ensuring resettlement programmes are fair and needs-based

The success of resettlement lies not only in the number of resettled refugees, but also in the way they are selected,

received and supported in becoming full members of their new communities.

UNHCR will continue to raise its concern about some resettlement countries using discriminatory criteria such as family size, age, health status, ethnicity and religion in selecting refugees for resettlement. Such practices create inequalities and protection gaps while reducing access to resettlement for some refugees most at risk. If resettlement programmes are to be balanced according to genuine needs, it is imperative that states remove such restrictive criteria.

LOCAL INTEGRATION

A number of asylum countries have become increasingly supportive of local integration, offering a durable solution to large numbers of refugees in protracted exile. In Tanzania, the naturalization of some 160,000 Burundian refugees who arrived in 1972 and have been living in the so-called Old Settlements will be completed in 2010.



Somali refugees in Dadaab, Kenya, about to depart for Nairobi in order to be resettled in third countries.

It is hoped that UNHCR's initial infrastructure support to the newly naturalized citizens and to the communities to which they have been relocated will serve as a catalyst for full integration.

Namibia and Botswana are also considering the local integration of certain long-staying refugee groups, especially Angolans. UNHCR will help develop an integration plan for the two countries, while simultaneously advocating for the local integration of Angolan refugees in other countries in the region.

In West Africa, UNHCR works with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement a multi-year (2007-2010) regional local integration programme. The ECOWAS Treaty and national laws offer a range of secure legal-status possibilities for remaining refugees in the region. To develop socio-economic capacities, UNHCR and ECOWAS will implement community-based projects in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In Europe, some 95,000 refugees from former Yugoslavia have lived in Serbia for up to 17 years. UNHCR will accelerate efforts to identify durable solutions for them. It will implement projects to support the local integration of vulnerable refugees. In Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, UNHCR will also expand its efforts to promote local integration for refugees by helping them to improve their socio-economic situation.

In other countries, UNHCR will work with governments to support refugee self-reliance, forge peaceful relations between refugees and local citizens and to pave the way for durable

solutions. In Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan and eastern Sudan, UNHCR will work with international development agencies and national actors on community-based projects. The projects will support areas hosting refugees as well as improve refugees' self-reliance (see also the chapter *Encouraging self-reliance*).

REINTEGRATION

Communities emerging from war often face insecure conditions, a lack of infrastructure and slow socio-economic recovery. The dearth of mechanisms to address land and property issues can lead to conflict in many returnee situations. Limited access to basic services and employment is another problem.

Reintegration situations usually include mixed groups. Apart from religious and ethnic diversities, many communities include refugee returnees, IDP returnees, people who are still displaced, and those who have never been displaced. UNHCR advocates for the rights of returnees, promotes peaceful coexistence among ethnic and social groups, and implements community-based projects that benefit all. In Burundi, for instance, UNHCR will continue to support the Government's "Peace Villages" programme, which helps landless returnees, IDPs and other vulnerable citizens to live together amicably.

In recent years, UNHCR has witnessed a growing trend of displaced people returning to urban areas. In 2010, UNHCR will use the recommendations of a 2009 study on urban reintegration.

These guidelines will be used in Afghanistan, for example, where UNHCR will assist returnees in Kabul and other cities.

UNHCR's policy framework on reintegration, issued in 2008, identified the need to disengage from certain operations in a more responsible way. This is being done in Southern Sudan, where in 2009 UNHCR conducted surveys to gauge the impact of its reintegration projects on the well-being of the beneficiaries. In 2010, the Southern Sudan operation will coordinate with all stakeholders on the development of a disengagement plan.

To make local integration and reintegration sustainable, the Office works with development agencies and participates in UN joint programming processes such as UNDAF and the Delivering as One initiative. The Office will also work closer with the World Bank and UNDP.

UNHCR's work with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supports urban reintegration and areas hosting displaced people. UNHCR and JICA will organize a joint workshop on development and displacement in 2010. In addition, the Albert Einstein Academic Scholarship Programme for Refugees (DAFI) will continue to support higher education for returnees.

UNHCR also participates in the inter-agency early recovery cluster, within which it has helped to develop a reintegration information management system. This system will be handed over to UNDP in 2010 for joint field implementation. ■