

ERITREA:

Uncertain future for thousands of returning IDPs

A profile of the internal displacement situation

13 June, 2006

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OVERVIEW

Eritrea: Uncertain future for thousands of returning IDPs

The vast majority of the 1.1 million people displaced by the 1998-2000 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea have long gone home. But Ethiopia's refusal to accept the decision of an international arbitration commission has left some 40,000 Eritrean internally displaced people (IDPs) still unable to return. Discussions between the two countries and the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission (EEBC) in May 2006 ended without result, apart from the UN Security Council's decision to further reduce the border monitoring presence of the UN Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE). Precise IDP figures are unavailable, but the total was expected to fall throughout 2006 from the 2005 total of 45,000. The Eritrean government gave a figure of 8,900 households as of March 2006.

In an attempt to boost self-reliance and to reduce its dependency on the international community which it feels to be too lenient towards Ethiopia's rejection of the EEBC's 2002 border ruling, the Eritrean government has since mid-2005 been curtailing the activities of international agencies active in the country. It blocked UNMEE's monitoring operations and expelled a large number of international NGOs. In a situation of great humanitarian need due to the drought affecting the entire Horn of Africa, the Eritrean government confiscated several tonnes of food supplies. It has so far not followed up on its declaration to integrate them into its new cash-for-work policy which was to replace free distribution of relief assistance. At the same time, the government has stepped up its efforts to resettle tens of thousands of IDPs to their home villages in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) along the disputed border with Ethiopia. In doing so, the government hopes to boost self-sufficiency because the areas of return are some of the most fertile in the country. However, there is no information on the living conditions awaiting the returnees, and on their physical safety in these mine-infested areas.

The interaction between the government and the remaining international agencies and NGOs has become very difficult. Improving this relationship and decreasing border tensions with Ethiopia are currently the two most important factors to be resolved in order to ensure safe return and sustainable livelihoods for Eritrea's displaced.

Background: Eritrean IDP crisis is a result of border conflict

Eritrea's formal annexation by Ethiopia in 1962 was followed by a 30-year armed struggle for independence. The end of Ethiopian rule in 1991 was followed by a referendum and Eritrea became an independent state in 1993. The border was that established by the Italian colonial power in the early 20th century. But Ethiopia and Eritrea differed over where the colonial frontier lay and in 1998-2000 fought a bloody war over the border demarcation (HRW, 30 January 2003).

Internal displacement in Eritrea started in May 1998, when fighting broke out between the two countries over a disputed border zone in Gash-Barka region. Out of a population of 3.8 million, some 19,000 fighters and an unknown number of civilians were killed during the ferocious conflict, while more than one million were forced to flee their homes.

A large number of the displaced quickly returned to their villages in the affected regions following a ceasefire in June 2000, the partial withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from border areas, and the Algiers Peace Agreement six months later. By the end of 2000, the total number of IDPs had

fallen from 1.1 million at the height of the crisis, to about 210,000 (USCR 2001, p.77). It continued to fall and by 2005 was estimated to be around 45,000.

A demilitarised Temporary Security Zone was established along the 1,000-km Eritrean-Ethiopian frontier in April 2001, and 4,200 peacekeeping troops were deployed under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to monitor the ceasefire. An independent Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC), mandated to delineate and demarcate the border between the two countries, released its legally-binding decision in April 2002. Ethiopia, however, promptly rejected it, contesting elements such as the decision to place the symbolic town of Badme – where the conflict originally flared up – in Eritrea. The physical demarcation, which was first due to start in May 2003, has repeatedly been postponed ever since.

In November 2004 Ethiopia put forward a new peace plan but Eritrea rejected it, demanding Ethiopia's immediate withdrawal from the territory awarded to it by the EEBC ruling. Tensions between the two countries increased towards the end of 2005, leading to almost tangible fears that the war would break out again. The Eritrean government, angered by the lack of progress in resolving the border dispute and believing that the international community was siding with Ethiopia, restricted UN peacekeepers patrolling the border and expelled Western members of the UNMEE staff (IRIN, 23 March 2006). In the wake of these border tensions, the EEBC, which had closed its field offices in May 2005 because of the stalemate in the physical border demarcation, has decided to reopen them (UN SG report, 6 March 2006). Meetings in London in May 2006 between the two countries and the EEBC over the border demarcation ended in deadlock, with no decision. The United Nations Security Council reacted on 31 May by extending UNMEE's mandate to the end of September 2006, but reducing the force from 3,373 to 2,300 troops. It demanded that both countries fully comply with a UN resolution calling on Ethiopia to accept the EEBC border ruling and on Eritrea to lift restrictions on UNMEE's movements (IRIN, 1 June 2006).

Figures of displacement

In 2005, roughly 45,400 persons remained displaced, out of whom 38,000 lived in 16 camps in Gash-Barka (12,850), Debub (24,250) and Northern Red Sea (600), and the rest (7,700) outside camps in Gash-Barka (ICC, May 2005). This figure corresponds roughly to the Eritrean government's estimate in March 2006 of almost 8,900 displaced households in Gash-Barka and Debub (State of Eritrea, March 2006). The number was expected to fall throughout 2006, due to a decision by the Eritrean government to return the large majority of IDPs to their villages or areas of origin. According to another source, as of the end of May 2006, about 960 IDP households had returned home in Zoba Gash-Barka and some 950 IDP families originating from Zoba Debub areas allocated to Ethiopia by the EEBC remained in camps until the government identified resettlement areas (OCHA, email correspondence, 31 May 2006).

Humanitarian situation: Eritrea chooses the path of self-reliance

On 11 May 2005, the Eritrean government announced new regulations governing the operation of non-governmental organisations. The proclamation required imported relief items – including food – to be taxed and NGOs to have at least \$2 million at their disposal in the country, while registering annually with the government (Gazette of Eritrean Law, 11 May 2005). Subsequently, supposedly in connection with unpaid taxes, the government blocked the distribution of some 540 tonnes of food relief for over a month between July and mid-August 2005 (IRIN, 16 August 2005).

This action is linked to a radical policy shift from free food distribution to food-for-work and later cash-for-work, in an attempt to make the country less dependent on international agencies and donors. In September 2005, Eritrea started drastically reducing food distribution to drought-

affected populations, while stepping up the construction of general and agricultural infrastructure, aimed at ensuring food security. Meanwhile, at the time of writing, it had not yet announced any replacement for free food distribution, except for a general announcement of a cash-for-work policy in early May 2006 (GoE, 3 May 2006; IFRC, 10 May 2006, p.3; IRIN, 24 October 2005). There are concerns that such a policy will fail in Eritrea because a large number of people conscripted into the military (300,000) and to government infrastructure projects would not be covered by it. Also, agencies fear that the policy could mean further diversion of food distribution, away from humanitarian programmes.

As of May 2006, several thousand tonnes of food – 90,000 metric tonnes according to OCHA – remained locked up and general food distribution suspended (OCHA, email, 5 June 2006). According to unofficial reports, some communities may start facing serious food shortage over the dry summer months. The Eritrean government had said in April 2006 that it would distribute the food through its own cash-for-work projects (Information meeting with UN Special Humanitarian Envoy, Geneva, 8 May 2006). In the meantime, agencies were afraid that the food would be rotting in warehouses (IFRC, 10 May 2006). There were unconfirmed reports of the stored food being sold in the streets of Asmara. Some targeted distribution by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Debub and South Red Sea Zone was to be carried out during 2006 (HoA Information Exchange Meeting, 25 January 2006).

The suspension of food distribution by the Eritrean government compounded a situation of widespread hunger, very weak household resilience and serious water and food shortages following five consecutive years of drought. Out of a population of 3.8 million, two-thirds – including IDPs, refugees, expellees and returnees – were threatened by hunger and extreme poverty in 2005 (Fews Net, 10 May 2005). With high to very high malnutrition rates in many parts of the country (including return areas), the overall vulnerability to environmental or conflict-related shocks is extremely high (NFIS, October 2005). In the past, scarcity of resources has prevented the government from meeting the enormous needs of its people and the country has for years been heavily dependent on food and non-food assistance. With the poverty level increasing, prospects for socio-economic improvement are receding (OCHA, December 2004, p.13; IRIN, 24 May 2005).

Due to the stalemate in the peace process, the military were not properly demobilised, which added to the marked shortage of workforce in public and private sectors (OCHA, 31 March 2005). Furthermore, the closed borders have cut off food supplies from Djibouti and Ethiopia, thus driving up prices and further endangering livelihoods (IRIN, 27 July 2005).

IDPs' humanitarian situation

The internally displaced depend completely on relief assistance. Their living conditions are critical, with many emergency needs unaddressed. They live in makeshift settlements in camps and with host communities. Serious water shortages and poor sanitary conditions and a lack of adequate schools and clothing are just some of the difficulties IDPs have to face. In order to rebuild their livelihoods, shelter is one of the basic needs, mainly for families headed by women and without any income support (OCHA, 5 May 2005, p.3; UNICEF, 27 May 2005).

In addition to IDPs, there are other categories of people to be reintegrated and whose livelihoods need to be reconstructed. Over one million former IDPs, expellees from Ethiopia and refugees who have returned to their home villages since the end of the fighting are unable to resume their livelihoods and remain dependent on humanitarian assistance. Host communities, equally affected by the ramifications of war and drought, are struggling to cope with the added burden of returns (OCHA, 5 May 2005, p.3).

Return and reintegration

In early 2005, the UN assisted the government in resettling over 14,000 IDPs and 4,600 expellees in 22 villages of origin within Gash-Barka. These returnees were provided with basic reintegration packages and each family was allotted one hectare of agricultural land. They received mine risk education and ICRC established water points around 12 of the return villages to benefit both communities and their livestock (UNMEE, 17 February 2005). Given the urgent need to rehabilitate water and housing infrastructures and to provide basic social services in war-destroyed villages in the Temporary Security Zone, organisations like ICRC have assisted the returning IDPs in rebuilding their livelihoods (ICRC, June 2005).

In 2006, the Eritrean government stepped up its return and resettlement efforts, with the goal of eventually returning all IDPs and expellees to their home or resettlement villages by the start of the planting season in May 2006. The government hoped thereby to improve food security and to reduce its dependency on international aid, as the IDPs were returning to Eritrea's most fertile areas in or near the Temporary Security Zone, and which had not been cultivated since the outbreak of the 1998-2000 border war (State of Eritrea, 3 March 2006). The UN agencies set up a joint return assessment team, which at the time of writing had not yet been able to carry out missions pending mine risk assessment and the government's approval (OCHA, Email, 31 May 2006). ICRC is involved in the return and resettlement, primarily by providing drinking water (ICRC, interview, 13 April 2006).

While the Eritrean government regularly publishes updates on the return of thousands of IDPs, so far there is no information available on the living conditions and livelihood opportunities of the returned, particularly in a situation where food distribution has been curtailed and the activities of international agencies reduced (AFP, 11 May 2006; GoE, 30 April 2006; IRIN, 26 January 2006). It is also unclear how far projects to build the necessary infrastructure and provide basic social services are successfully carried out (State of Eritrea, March 2006). According to Eritrean media, people were pleased to return to their villages (Haddas Eritrea, 4 April 2006, unofficial translation).

Obstacles to return

The political and military tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia in relation to the border demarcation have direct humanitarian implications for IDPs in Eritrea. As the border demarcation is supposed to involve de-mining and transfer of territory as well as movement of people, the demarcation deadlock has long blocked any incentive for the remaining IDPs to return home. The prevalence of landmines and poor security constituted the major threats to the displaced. Indeed, 20 per cent of IDPs' places of origin are impacted by landmines and 83 per cent of mine-impacted communities report blocked access to pastureland which severely affects food security (OCHA, December 2004, p.3). The worst-affected area is the Gash-Barka region in the southwest, particularly around Shilalo and Shambuko, Eritrea's "bread basket". The government's ban on UNMEE helicopter flights prompted UNMEE to suspend its mine-clearance activities in October 2005 (IRIN, 10 October 2005), although they were later resumed.

Constrained national and international response

On a national level, the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare replaced the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission in May 2005 as the main government institution responsible for coordinating national and international humanitarian operations, including those targeting IDPs (Gazette of Eritrean Law, 11 May 2005). According to humanitarian agencies in Eritrea, this change seriously disrupted their activities, as one year later the Ministry had still not established itself as a responsive counterpart to the humanitarian community. At the same time, a range of

administrative hurdles had emerged, making it very difficult for those agencies still in the country to carry out their work (OCHA, email correspondence, April and May 2006).

The Eritrean government is making a clear statement by refusing Western help and boosting its development activities with the aim of becoming less dependent on Western donors. At the same time, it is trying to forge new economic and possibly military ties with countries such as China (Reuters, 12 April 2006).

The operating environment for international agencies and NGOs became increasingly difficult after the government's 11 May 2005 proclamation on administering the activities of NGOs. Many national and international NGOs were forced to stop their activities, including USAID, Eritrea's largest donor of food aid. Within one year, the number of NGOs had dropped by almost two-thirds, from 37 in early 2005 to 13. This change in policy is seen as an expression both of Eritrea's perception that the international community favoured Ethiopia in the territorial conflict, and of its aim of becoming more self-reliant (IRIN, 23 March 2006).

Because of the Eritrean government's new approach to international aid, there was no Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for 2006. Only at the last minute did the government agree to participate in the Joint Revised CAP for the Horn of Africa, aimed particularly at drought relief. Seven Eritrean projects are now included in the second revision of the Joint CAP (CAP HoA, Projects, 24 May 2006).

According to a top UN representative, the lack of engagement between aid agencies and the Eritrean government is currently the biggest challenge to successful aid delivery and long-term food security (IRIN, 27 April 2006). Progress in the physical demarcation of the boundary is another crucial step towards these goals, and towards assuring the safe return and reintegration of Eritrea's displaced.

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Main causes for displacement

Armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia caused substantial internal displacement, May 1998 - June 2000

- 50,000 people relocated from the border area after war started in May 1998
- Areas up to 50 kilometres along the length of the border had become closed military zones by May 1999
- Reported that the Ethiopian advance into western Eritrea in May 2000 immediately forced half a million people on the move
- People were evacuated from the conflict areas in an organised manner or fled spontaneously after artillery and aerial bombardments

"The war has [by August 1999] displaced 200,000 Eritreans, including 44,000 children under 5 years old. Displacement occurred in two waves. When the war began in May 1998, the Eritrean government moved 50,000 people away from the border area. The re-location was orderly, and most people stayed with local families. In February 1999 heavy fighting forced a further 150,000 people to flee without warning. Initially it was hoped that people could again stay with host families, but it was soon clear that needs were too great and 20 refugee camps were set up." (SCF August 1999)

"Up to 600,000 people, mainly small farmers and nomads have been displaced on both sides of the border as a result of the fighting and areas up to 50 kilometres along the length of the border becoming closed military zones. Ethiopia has alleged that civilians have been tortured and forced to flee from their homes in the Badme area since Eritrea took control of the area in May 1998 and that Eritrea systematically destroyed property and looted churches in the disputed areas[...]. UN agencies estimate that over 300,000 people have been displaced in Tigray province as a result of the conflict and 245,000 people have been displaced inside Eritrea." (AI 21 May 1999, sect. 2.2)

"[In July 2000, the UN stated that the] situation in Eritrea has changed dramatically since the January 2000 United Nations Country Team Appeal (UNCTA) was launched. The renewed border war from 12 May to 18 June [2000] between Eritrea and Ethiopia was fierce. Violent military clashes resulted in a rapid mass exodus of populations away from the war zone. The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) reported that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other war-affected persons rose from 371,910 in January to an estimated figure of more than 1.1 million in June 2000." (UN July 2000, pp.1, 6-8)

"The affected civilian populations either were evacuated from the conflict areas or fled from artillery and aerial bombardments. The displaced populations (IDPs), scattered in various locations, continue to look for safer areas to take refuge." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

"Humanitarian sources said people affected by the advance included war-affected displaced Eritreans living in temporary camps and Eritreans expelled by the Ethiopian government from northern Ethiopia over the past two years. Save the Children Fund (SCF) said the fighting

threatened 15,000 children among the 80,000 inhabitants of camps for the displaced in the Gash Barka region, west of Asmara, AFP reported." (IRIN 18 May 2000)



Map source: BBC 23 May 2000

"The local administration has assisted evacuees with trucks. Displaced local administration officials have arrived in centres with their village populations. Some people who fled areas under attack told IRIN that the military and local administration told them to leave and organised transport for them; others left areas on their own initiative as they witnessed Eritrean troops pulling back." (IRIN 29 May 2000)

See the "population-" and the "return" sections for information about how the IDP situation has changed since the large influx in May/June 2000.

Drought is seriously worsening the situation of IDPs and may cause new displacements (June 2003)

- A continuation of status quo, and a worsening of the humanitarian situation
- Migration due to drought

"In 2002, below-average minor season rains (March through May) severely hindered land preparation for the main planting season (June through September). Additionally, main season rains, which are crucial to crop production in the drought-prone Anseba, Northern Red Sea, and Southern Red Sea zones, as well as the breadbasket zones of Gash Barka, Debub, and Maekel, were sporadic and insufficient. In response, the Government of the State of Eritrea's (GSE) Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) issued an appeal in August 2002 to the humanitarian community for a timely response to the drought situation. The GSE identified a food production deficit of nearly 300,000 metric tons (MT) and significant humanitarian needs in the health and water/sanitation sectors." (USAID, 30 April 2003)

"The most likely scenario for the remainder of 2003 would be a continuation of the status quo with the effects of the drought becoming more widespread and further displacement of population, old caseloads remaining in current sites and possible resumption of the repatriation programme. With regard to the response required to cover humanitarian needs, the Government and the UNCT remain hopeful that contributions to both food and non-food requirements will increase.

[...]

The outlook for 2004 does not seem favourable. If the coming rainy season is below normal, there will undoubtedly be a continued need for assistance. Continued food and water shortages will have a devastating impact on the people. Even if the rains are unexpectedly good, it is likely that emergency assistance will be needed, as asset bases have been drastically eroded and water resources are unlikely to recover within one short rainy season. This is in view of the impact to date of the drought on a) the asset base of most of the affected population; b) the nutritional status of children and women; c) lack of labour; and d) the number of IDPs who are unable to return to normal lives in their home villages and farming fields.

Delays in demarcation means IDPs will not be going home for another year. Prolonged displacement and the maintenance of IDPs, as they wait for their return, will become much more problematic for humanitarian agencies. Even if demarcation takes place soon, the emergency situation will still continue and there will be additional needs. However, consolidation of peace, following demarcation, is the best promise for rehabilitation of social services such as health, education, water and sanitation.

There is a risk that reconstruction, rehabilitation and development needs will be neglected because of the effects of the drought and limited resources. The expected rehabilitation of destroyed houses and other social infrastructure such as schools, clinics and water sources will be delayed. The devastation caused by the war is vast and the transition from emergency to recovery will consequently require a protracted response. Until such a transition has been achieved, the CAP will remain an important instrument. The actors and the stakeholders in the humanitarian community believe that the huge caseload of IDPs, the return of refugees and IDPs, the reintegration of expellees and widespread food insecurity due to the combined effects of war and drought necessitate the continuation of the CAP into 2004. Humanitarian programmes should therefore be linked to longer-term development initiatives as reflected in the Integrated Recovery Programme." (UN, 3 June 2003)

Migration due to drought

"[...] villagers in Gash Barka have begun to migrate to neighbouring areas in search of day labour in order to survive. ICC field officers in their mission from 24 March to 14 April 2003 to Dehub have also observed migration of households specifically from villages in Mai-Mine and Areza sub zone (70 households) to urban area such as to Mendefera and towns nearby in search of employment.

Similarly, villagers have noted that food security problems have been compounded in recent months by limited purchasing power. In Anseba region the price of available food has nearly doubled. It has been reported in the Dehub region, that coping mechanisms have stretched to collecting roots of the wild trees.

Water shortages continued to worsen in many parts of the country and severe water shortages are feared during the coming months. The lack of available fodder and water is having critical effects on livestock across the country.

As regards to livestock condition, ICC Field Officer on 14 April reported that Farmers in Mai-Mine sub zone are losing their livestock due to drought. In two villages of the sub zone alone villagers have lost 117 livestock. Similar incident had been reported from Anseba where 14,362 livestock died in five Local Administrations namely: Aget, Gulbub, Kelhamet, Camchewa and Naro in Afabet sub-zone. New reports are being received of sudden increases of deaths from nearly all areas of the country." (ICC, 18 April 2003)

Background of the conflict

Background to the 1998 border dispute

- In 1991 the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew Colonel Mengistu Haile Mairiam and took Addis Ababa and Asmara
- Eritrea nationhood was proclaimed in 1993 by 99percent votes in favour of independence and with Ethiopian approval
- Given the excellent relations between Eritrean-Ethiopian government in early 90s, contentious issues of border-delimitation, citizenship and commerce were left unsettled and became source of conflict
- Public resentment grew against people of Eritrean and Tigrean origin for their prominence in business and politics and the underrepresentation of ethnic Oromo, Amhara and Somali
- After Eritrea's independence in 1993, Ethiopia became landlocked and economic relations between the two countries were further strained by the adoption of Eritrea's own currency
- Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia never clearly demarcated
- Claims by Eritrea in 1997 that Ethiopian troops occupied an area within eastern Eritrea

"The political parties now in government in Ethiopia and Eritrea share a joint history of armed opposition to the former regime in Ethiopia: a brutal military dictatorship known as the Derg, led by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), an alliance of ethnically-based liberation fronts, which fought the Derg to obtain more autonomy for their respective regions.

[...]

The TPLF started in 1975 as a national liberation front, with the political goal of establishing a "Democratic Republic of Tigray." It naturally turned to Eritrean liberation fronts for assistance, and ultimately formed a close alliance with the EPLF. The relationship between the two fronts was marked from the onset by significant differences over ideology and military strategy, but pragmatism prevailed as both fronts confronted a ruthless common enemy in the Derg. As the TPLF gained increasing control over territory, it also forged the broader Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), an alliance with other Ethiopian liberation fronts based on Ethiopia's various "nationalities."

In May 1991, the anti-Derg alliance between the EPLF and the EPRDF finally gained control; first the EPRDF took Addis Ababa, then, a few days later, the EPLF won control of Asmara. Following the fall of the Derg, the EPRDF in July put in place a transitional government that was to have led Ethiopia towards democracy. [...] The EPLF in late May named a provisional Eritrean government to guide the newly liberated Eritrea to formal independence two years later.

Eritrean Independence and Cooperation Between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1991-1998)

The Ethiopian Transitional Government pledged to uphold the right of self-determination for all of Ethiopia's peoples.[...] In early July 1991, the new government approved the plan put forward by the Eritrean provisional government to hold a referendum to determine Eritrea's status.

[...]

Around the world, over one million people in more than forty countries took part in the referendum.[...] More than 99 percent of voters opted for Eritrea to separate from Ethiopia and become an independent state. [...] The vote was certified as free and fair by U.N. observers as well as by the Ethiopian government. [...] When Eritrea declared its independence, Ethiopia was among the first countries to recognize the new state.

[...]

The Short-lived Partnership

The newly-established Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and newly-independent Eritrea initially became close partners. A 1993 agreement between the ministries of internal affairs of the two countries confirmed an earlier agreement to exempt citizens of the other country from entry visa requirements. [...] This provision was intended “to promote and further consolidate the historical and cultural relationships long cherished by the peoples of the two countries, further strengthen the affinity and bonds of friendship between them.”

[...]

So close were relations between the two countries that in June 1996 President Issayas Afewerki of Eritrea told an Addis Ababa newspaper that the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia was becoming “meaningless.”

[...]

Tensions (1994-1998)

Perhaps because the new governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea came to power as allies against a common enemy and therefore felt a great deal of trust for each other, certain aspects of their bilateral relationship— including how to define the citizenship of people of Eritrean origin living in Ethiopia after Eritrea’s independence, and the delineation of their common border—were never resolved in formal agreements. These unresolved issues as well as economic issues gradually led to tensions and hostility between the two countries.

[...]

For many, the establishment of an Eritrean provisional government and the promulgation of new laws by both this de facto authority and the new Ethiopian government raised immediate questions over the status of people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia. Public resentment over the role of people of Eritrean origin in business and government after 1991 coincided with protests at the dominant role of Tigrean leaders in the new government. This criticism was fueled by protests that even as the new Ethiopian leaders restructured the state based on what it defined as its constituent nations and nationalities, the Oromo, Amhara, Somali, and others were underrepresented and marginalized, while the Tigrean nationality dominated. Indignation over the standing of those of Eritrean origin, however, was from Eritrea’s independence in 1993 readily transformed into a questioning of the loyalties—and ultimately the right to remain as citizens—of members of the Eritrean minority within the new Ethiopia.

[...]

Even as tentative steps were made to sort out the nationality issues in the two states, with due regard for the wishes of the people involved, a vocal minority in Ethiopia was voicing growing mistrust of people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia. This group complained that people of Eritrean origin in the country controlled important segments of the Ethiopian economy and were working against Ethiopia’s interests and on behalf of the Eritrean government. These critics did not deny that these people still had standing as Ethiopian citizens, but opposed this on strictly chauvinistic grounds. They complained that those of Eritrean origin had yet to be obliged to choose between the one or the other country, and they pressed for the Ethiopian government to declare people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia to be aliens under the law.[...] As the tensions grew in 1997, the rhetoric grew increasingly shrill. [...]

[...]

Controversy over the delineation of the 620-mile common border further exacerbated tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Upon becoming an independent nation in 1993, Eritrea succeeded to 1902 colonization treaty between Italy and Ethiopia, which defined the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. However, Eritrea’s annexation by Ethiopia in 1962 had muddied the demarcation of the border since the colonial boundaries between the two formerly separate states were replaced by administrative boundaries within Ethiopia, some of which had shifted slightly over time. After 1993, both Eritrea and Ethiopia claimed sovereignty over three areas where administrative

borders had changed: Badme, in the west of the border region, Tsorona-Zalambessa in the central border region, and Bure in the eastern border region.

[...]

In May 1998 the simmering border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia exploded in a military confrontation in the Badme area when Eritrea sent its army to expel Ethiopian troops stationed there and claimed the area as Eritrean. Weeks of skirmishes followed, and by early June the two former allies were at war." (HRW, 30 January 2003, pp.11-17)

"Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1991. This followed the overthrow of the regime of Mengistu Haile-Mariam in 1991 by an alliance of the two liberation movements, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), who formed new provisional governments in Eritrea and Ethiopia respectively [...]. Eritrea officially became a separate internationally recognized state in 1993, following a referendum in which more than 95% of Eritreans voted for independence from Ethiopia.

Eritrea's *de facto* border in 1991 was that of the Italian colony of Eritrea established in 1890. In line with the OAU principles on the integrity of colonial borders, this border was agreed to be a starting point, but both sides agreed that it was inconclusive and that some details needed to be clarified. The border had never been clearly demarcated and Italy had made several claims on Ethiopian territory prior to its full-scale invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 and five year occupation. There was no border demarcation throughout the subsequent British military administration in Eritrea, the 1952 federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, or after the removal of Eritrea's federal status in 1962, which set off the Eritrean liberation struggle. In 1991 both Ethiopia and Eritrea accepted that there were inconsistencies in the border but full demarcation was not regarded as a high priority. After an incident in July 1997, in which Eritrea claims that Ethiopian troops occupied Adi Murang, in Bada, eastern Eritrea, a bilateral border commission was set up to address problems as they arose.

[...]

Generally, relations between the two countries were good. There were large numbers of each other's citizens working in each country, who were treated the same as nationals and there was almost free movement of people across the borders. Special arrangements were in place for the use of Assab port, now on Eritrean soil, by Ethiopia (now land-locked) through which most of Ethiopia's imports and exports came. Both countries used the Ethiopian *birr* as a common currency, until 1997 when Eritrea introduced the *nakfa*. The introduction of the *nakfa* and subsequent switch to hard currency transactions between the two countries brought other economic policy differences to the fore and strained relations.

[...]

Ethiopia has a sizeable minority of people of Eritrean origin who, while voting for the independence of Eritrea in the referendum, retained their Ethiopian citizenship and considered themselves Ethiopian[...]. Many people of Eritrean origin worked in the Ethiopian civil service, in sensitive jobs in the telecommunications and aviation sectors, and were also prominent in business, particularly in Addis Ababa." (AI 21 May 1999, sect.1.2)

Both Eritrea and Ethiopia used mass deportations as a weapon of war, 1998-2002

- Ethiopia deported an estimated 75,000 people of Eritrean origin to Eritrea from June 1998
- Eritrea deported an estimated 70,000 people of Ethiopian origin back to Ethiopia during from August 2000
- People deported from Ethiopia on ethnic discriminatory grounds were denied return and often separated from their own children
- Many people from Eritrean origin were forced to leave Tigray rural areas

- Many were told by Ethiopian authorities they were being deported for having voted in the referendum for Eritrean independence
- Before 2000 Eritrea supported voluntary repatriation of people of Ethiopian origins assisted by ICRC, afterwards it did not inform ICRC prior to deportation
- Many deportees from Ethiopia of Eritrean origin were registered as refugees and attended by the ERREC
- Peace deal signed in December 2000 failed to solve the plight of the deportees

“Denied return to Ethiopia, families like that of B.H. were separated on the discriminatory grounds of ethnic or national origin. Children were either left behind with relatives without Eritrean heritage, or more commonly, even though Ethiopian-born, expelled with their parents and denied the Ethiopian nationality that was their birthright under Ethiopian law. Although the authorities of independent Eritrea extended the option of Eritrean nationality to those with ties to that country, most of the uprooted retained the hope that they could return to their homes and families in Ethiopia. Reduced to the status of refugees, they confronted the specter of statelessness.

[...]

In Eritrea, a campaign of roundups, detention, and ultimately expulsion of civilians based on ethnicity and nationality paralleled the concerted nation-wide campaign that began in June 1998 in Ethiopia, but began considerably later. Even before authorities began a program of arrest, detention, and expulsion, ordinary Ethiopians living and working in Eritrea’s towns and cities were attacked by mobs, sometimes with police participation, in apparent retaliation for Ethiopia’s air attacks and battlefield advances. Thousands were subsequently interned in harsh conditions prior to expulsion.

[...]

Hundreds of thousands were internally displaced and over one million became refugees in the course of the war. Many fled or were deported to other countries in the region as both countries used mass population transfers as a weapon of war. The negotiated end of the war, agreed on December 12, 2000, stopped the fighting—but it failed to resolve the plight of those uprooted from their homes and cut off from their livelihood in both countries, in particular those deported from their own country and stripped of their nationality.

While Ethiopia and Eritrea both now appear to be conforming with the requirements of the peace agreement, the settlement deals primarily with the formal separation of the belligerents’ forces, the demarcation of the border, and competing claims for compensation. The issue of the wartime expulsion of tens of thousands of people on grounds of their purported nationality or national origin garnered surprisingly little attention from the international community during the war and remains largely overlooked in the war’s aftermath.

The Deportations

The Ethiopian government is known to have forcibly expelled an estimated 75,000 people of Eritrean origin during the war. The Eritrean government forcibly expelled or took part in the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 70,000 Ethiopians, notwithstanding persistent Eritrean government claims that it had no expulsion policy comparable to Ethiopia’s.

Ethiopia’s Campaign of Deportations

Ethiopian authorities launched a vast campaign to round up and expel people of Eritrean origin from Ethiopia in June 1998. Most had been born in Ethiopia when Eritrea was still held to be a part of that country—and had no other recognized citizenship other than Ethiopian. Most adults had spent all or most of their working lives in Ethiopia, outside of Eritrea. Ethiopian authorities in June 1998 announced the planned expulsion of residents who posed a security risk to the state, to include members of Eritrean political and community organizations, and former or current members of the Eritrean liberation front.

The Ethiopian authorities moved almost immediately to carry out arrests and to expel Eritreans and those of Eritrean origin in a manner that became increasingly indiscriminate over time. No meaningful steps were made to determine “risk” on a case-by-case basis—or to distinguish between those who had formally assumed Eritrean nationality and Ethiopian nationals distinguished only by their Eritrean origin.

The first wave of arrests and deportations began on June 12, 1998, targeting people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia who were prominent in business, politics, or community organizations. In conjunction with this campaign, the Ethiopian government revoked business licenses and ordered the freezing of assets of thousands of individuals of Eritrean origin. Those with bank accounts were informed that their accounts had been frozen and were inaccessible. The government provided no avenue for affected individuals to challenge these actions. The main targets of the deportation campaign after June 1998 were tens of thousands of ordinary people who were deported and dispossessed on the sole basis of their national origin.

[...]

The expulsion of people from Ethiopia’s urban areas generally conformed to a common pattern, with almost all detained and interned prior to being deported—often under very harsh conditions. The majority of the deportees were held for days or weeks, although some were held for as long as several months. A “processing committee” of policemen, security agents, and political officials from the ruling party normally interrogated detainees on their identity, suspected links to Eritrean institutions—and their ownership of property. During the interrogation, the detainees were not given a meaningful opportunity to refute the allegation that they were Eritrean nationals (or security risks), and were denied access to the courts to challenge the legality of their detention or denationalization.

While the detainees were in custody at police stations, officials searched for and confiscated their Ethiopian identification documents, including identity cards, passports, work papers, and driving licenses.

[...]

Individuals of Eritrean origin who lived in rural areas of Ethiopia were also subject to summary deportation or expulsion. Individuals from those rural villages inhabited predominantly by people of Eritrean origins, mostly in the northern Tigray region, typically had to travel on foot from their villages into Eritrea. They were generally not allowed to take personal possessions with them and some were forced to abandon thousands of livestock.

The Ethiopian government arrested, detained, and deported approximately 75,000 people of Eritrean origin without due process of law. Most were told they being detained because they had voted in the referendum regarding Eritrea’s independence—with this cited as evidence they were “Eritreans.” Self-identity with others of the same national origin within Ethiopia’s multi-ethnic, multi-national state, the essential criterion for voting in the referendum, was reinterpreted as having been an affirmation of citizenship. Membership in Eritrean cultural, social, or political community organizations was also cited as evidence that people of Eritrean ethnicity had lost their Ethiopian nationality. Classification as “Eritrean” and decisions to deport appeared to have been determined by the processing committees even before most individuals were called in for questioning—with a space on forms identifying nationality routinely filled in as “Eritrean” in advance. The Ethiopian government also forced deportees to sign away their property rights—by demanding deportees sign powers of attorney under threat.

Eritrea’s Policy of Internment and Deportation

Eritrea pledged at the outbreak of war that Ethiopian residents would not be penalized for the war, and that they were welcome to stay in the country and to keep their jobs, while offering the option of voluntary repatriation to those wishing to depart. There was no evidence during the first phase of the conflict that Eritrea had a policy to expel Ethiopian residents, although Ethiopian residents suffered considerable abuse. As the conflict dragged on, Eritrea’s policy toward

Ethiopian residents became increasingly harsh. Thousands had left the country early in the conflict due to economic hardships related to the war and out of concern for their own safety. Increasingly, large numbers of residents were interned and expelled by the Eritrean authorities.

From August 1998 to January 1999, a period of relative calm on the war front, some 21,000 Ethiopian residents of Eritrea left for Ethiopia with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). While Eritrean authorities insisted that these departures were voluntary, a measure of coercion was involved in a number of cases. Indeed, many individuals in this first wave complained upon arrival to Ethiopia of beatings, rape, and the confiscation of their property.

[...]

Eritrean authorities started expelling larger numbers of Ethiopian residents in earnest in July and August 2000, in several instances without prior information to the ICRC to ensure the safety of deportees as they crossed front lines.

[...]

Overlooking these issues will have grave consequences for thousands of war refugees and displaced persons, many of whom are still living in makeshift settlements and relying for their survival on relief handouts. The peace process has ended the bitter conflict between the two nations. However, the issue of the resettlement or return and the compensation of deportees must be addressed squarely. In particular, the nationality status of those whose citizenship was revoked during the expulsion process must be resolved if lasting peace and reconciliation is to return to the Horn of Africa so that the international peacekeepers can return home.” (HRW, 30 January 2003, pp. 3-7)

“Eritrean government registered the deportees from Ethiopia with the ERREC Educated deportees from urban background were easily integrated while the fate of those of rural origin was less fortunate. Deportations from Ethiopia were reported as recently as March 2002 mainly from Tigray and Addis Ababa. “The Eritrean government mobilized quickly to assist the deportees. The government-run Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (ERREC) was put in charge of assisting the deportees and facilitating their resettlement in Eritrea. A month after the arrival of the first deportees, the ERREC had set up reception centers for them near the main border crossings with Ethiopia. In addition to offering the deportees emergency aid and counseling, the ERREC registered them as refugees.

[...]

The first waves of expellees from Ethiopia, largely made up of urban professionals and business people, resettled in Eritrea relatively quickly and easily. Jobs and government services were much harder to come by for those expelled from Ethiopia in later stages of the expulsion campaign because of the strain on Eritrea’s economy of both the war and the influx of newcomers.

Rural deportees, many of whom are poor and uneducated and have little employment experience beyond farming, have generally fared less well once in Eritrea. Their stay in the temporary resettlement camp was meant to be brief: refugees were required to relocate to areas of Eritrea they had ties, however distant.

[...]

Expulsions from Ethiopia After the December 2000 Peace Agreement

Expulsions from Ethiopia continued after its devastating May 2000 incursion in Eritrea, but gradually decreased over time. During 2000, 911 Eritrean nationals were returned to Eritrea under the auspices of the ICRC delegation in Eritrea. [...] The U.N. secretary-general and the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea strongly protested the forced expulsion in June 2001 of 704 longtime residents of Eritrean origin from Tigray region to Eritrea. Both expressed concerns about the circumstances in which the expulsions took place, and reminded the Ethiopian government that such actions should be carried out only in accordance with international humanitarian law.

[...]

Ethiopia deported another 312 people of Eritrean origin in November 2001. The group consisted of residents of Addis Ababa who sought “voluntary” deportation to join relatives deported in earlier groups. [...] A group of one hundred people of Eritrean origin were later deported on March 16, 2002, ninety-two of them from the region of Tigray, and eight from Addis Ababa and the surrounding area. [...] Members of the groups deported told human rights investigators of the U.N. peacekeeping mission that they were fleeing discrimination in access to employment and services or seeking to join relatives who had been deported before them. [...] (HRW, 30 June 2003, pp.28-9;35-6).

“In addition, as a result of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, an estimated 60,000 people deported from Eritrea to drought-affected Tigray still live in difficult circumstances.” (UNICEF, 14 March 2003)

“During 2001, an estimated 25,000 persons of Ethiopian descent voluntarily returned to Ethiopia from Eritrea. Most had lived for many years in and around Asmara, the Eritrean capital. Several thousand of the returnees received transportation and border-crossing assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Ethiopian government accepted “full responsibility for their transport and relocation within Ethiopia,” a UN report declared.

An estimated 20,000 new Ethiopian returnees, however, remained internally displaced in northern Ethiopia at year’s end. Nearly all of the displaced returnees struggled to survive on monthly WFP food rations.” (USCR, 1 June 2002)

To access full ‘Report on the Joint UNICEF/Women’s Association of Tigray Study of Ethiopian Deportees/Returnees from Eritrea Living in Tigray by Buffoni Laura and Tadesse Ehetemariam , 31 December 2001, click here [External Link]
<http://www.telecom.net.et/~undp-eue/reports/deportees.pdf>

Chronology of the military confrontations in border areas between Eritrea and Ethiopia, May 1998 – December 2000

- Border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia in the Badame area escalated into a major military confrontation in May 1998
- The first battle took place between May and June 1998 over the three disputed fronts of BAdme, Tsorona-Zalambessa and Bure
- The second battle took place between February 1999 and June 1999 and Ethiopia recaptured Badme from Eritrean troops
- In February 1999 waves of people were driven from their homes because of renewed aerial and artillery attacks in the border areas
- Significant clashes on the Zelambessa frontline area in early September 1999, and armed skirmish between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces took place on the border near Bure on 23 February 2000
- Ethiopia launched a major assault against Eritrea on 12 May 2000

“In May 1998 the simmering border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia exploded in a military confrontation in the Badme area when Eritrea sent its army to expel Ethiopian troops stationed there and claimed the area as Eritrean. Weeks of skirmishes followed, and by early June the two former allies were at war.

[...]

The two countries battled on three fronts over the three disputed areas of Badme, Tsorona-Zalambessa, and Bure. Fighting took place in cycles: short periods of pitched battle alternated with longer periods of relative lull in which only occasional skirmishes took place. The first period

of major battle took place from May through June 1998—followed by seven months of relative quiet during which both belligerents rushed to train hastily assembled recruits and conscripts. During this period both countries also engaged in a flurry of new arms purchases. Eager international weapons suppliers supplied arms and military instruction, in often cases to both countries simultaneously." (HRW, 30 June 2003, p.17)

"In May 1998 a border dispute in the Badame area escalated into a major military confrontation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. By early June 1998, the conflict had grown worse and spread into the ZalaAmbesa and Alitena areas in the Debub Region and into the Bure area, west of Assab, in the Southern Red Sea Region. The international airport in Eritrea's capital, Asmara, was bombed, causing the international community to evacuate and the government to briefly close the airport. This conflict caused the first wave of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to flee their homes in search of safety." (UN, January 2000, p.1)

"When the fighting resumed in late February 1999, Ethiopia overran Eritrea's defensive lines and recaptured the Badme area, the original flashpoint of the conflict. The Eritreans then repelled an Ethiopian offensive against the southern border town of Tsorona, in the central front, a battle that cost both armies thousands of casualties. This second cycle of fighting came to an end with the approach of the rainy season in late June 1999.

After repeated attempts by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to negotiate a truce failed, the fighting reignited with even greater intensity in mid-May 2000 when Ethiopia launched an attack that reached deep into Eritrean territory. Eritrea, apparently hoping to secure a quick cease-fire, withdrew its forces from all contested border territories and redeployed them within uncontested Eritrean territory. After another round of OAU-sponsored negotiations in Algiers, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a "cessation of hostilities" accord on June 18, 2000. Finally, the two parties signed a comprehensive peace agreement on December 12, 2000." (HRW, 30 June 2003, p.17-18).

"Intense fighting started up again in February 1999 along the Mereb-Setit front (Badame area) and quickly expanded to the Tsorona area, then spread again to the ZalaAmbesa and Alitena border areas. Aerial and artillery attacks upon civilians living nearby drove additional waves of people from their homes, to both rural and urban centers of the country, including the capital, Asmara, in greater numbers. The displaced people continue to stretch the capacity of existing public services, facilities, and infrastructure.

Adding to the humanitarian crisis, Ethiopia started, and is continuing, to deport people of Eritrean heritage. Over 67,000 deportees have been registered since the eruption of the conflict in May 1998 of whom over 28,000 are Rural Deportees." (UN January 2000, p.1)

"In the aftermath of the heavy fighting that took place in the Badme area during February, the month of March [1999] began relatively quietly amid calls for a ceasefire and an end to the hostilities. Hopes for a quick settlement were raised for a while following the announcement by Eritrea at the end of February that it had accepted the OAU Framework Agreement. Ethiopia later made clear it would not agree to any ceasefire nor engage in negotiations regarding the implementation of the OAU framework until Eritrea agreed to withdraw its troops from border areas around Egala and Zelambessa-Aiga, on the so-called central front, and Bada-Bure along the eastern border.

The relative lull ended on March 14 with reports that new fighting had erupted on the front line a little to the south of the strategically important town of Tsorona. According to international media reports, following an initial period of shelling using heavy artillery, fighting escalated quickly over a two-day period with the deployment of ground troops, armoured vehicles and warplanes. Given the apparent intensity and limited geographical focus of the fighting, there are concerns that heavy casualties were suffered. The focus later switched back to the western front close to the

Mereb river where a series of skirmishes or clashes were reported by the media in the vicinity of the Eritrean town of Shembeko. This latest period of fighting appeared to come to a close with the Ethiopian government saying that it had successfully countered an Eritrean attempt to recapture territory it had lost around Badme during the earlier fighting in February. There have been no reports regarding the situation in the Bure border area, which is adjacent to the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab." (UN CTE 14 April 1999, p.1)

"On February 23 [2000] an armed skirmish between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces took place on the border near Bure, some 70 kms from the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab. The fighting was first reported by the Eritrean official media and later confirmed by the Office of the Ethiopian Spokesperson. The Ethiopian statement said that by attacking first and then blaming Ethiopia for initiating the engagement, the Eritrean government was attempting to deceive the international community. Eritrea claimed that Ethiopia was continuing a pattern of attacking whenever a peace envoy comes to the region.

The reports of fighting came after several months of quiet along the common border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The last significant clashes came on the Zelambessa frontline area in early September last year, and, according to Ethiopian radio reports, near the Jerbet river on the left flank of the Badme front in October. Even though there has been relative quiet along the border, the war of words between the two countries has continued unabated with Ethiopia pressing for the redeployment of Eritrean troops away from the remaining contested border areas and Eritrea accusing Ethiopia of preparing for yet another round of fighting. The enmity between the two governments became very evident during the UN General Assembly in October when the Foreign Ministers of the two countries made impassioned speeches condemning the other side and accusing the UN and international community of not doing enough to end the conflict." (UN CTE 10 March 2000)

"After two years of sporadic fighting followed by months of stalemate, Ethiopia launched a major assault against Eritrea on 12 May 2000. During this offensive, Ethiopia entered through the western flank and moved deep into Eritrea capturing Barentu, the strategic regional capital of Gash-Barka. A number of other towns in south and west of the country, including Shambiko and Tokombiya were also captured. Fighting then shifted to the central border town of Zalem Bessa. Although Eritrea has announced the withdrawal of its troops from this contested city as part of its acceptance of the OAU Peace Accord, fighting continues in areas around Senafe, another city to the north of Zalem Bessa." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

See also the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation (EPCPT), "Ethiopia/Eritrea: End in sight to a devastating war?" (December 2000) or Amnesty International "Ethiopia and Eritrea. Human Rights Issues in a Year of Armed Conflict " (21 May 1999) for more detailed information about the dynamics of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Continuous grumbling tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea (March 2003)

"[...] The greatest threat to peace and security is the persistence of grumbling tensions with Ethiopia since the December 2000 Peace Agreement and the April 2002 decision of the independent Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC). The latter, though accepted in advance as binding by both sides, now seems to be challenged by Ethiopia.

[...]

In December [2002] the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) delivered its detailed 1:25,000 map on which the border demarcation will be recorded, and the two parties duly submitted technical comments in January [2003]. However, Ethiopia's response, according to the UN, went far beyond the technical and amounted threat to reverse its adherence to the EEBC delimitation decision, and to the peace process in general, especially if its proposed "refinement" of the delimited boundary is not accepted – particularly in relation to the politically sensitive town of Badme.

The Eritrean President claimed in February that Ethiopia was amassing troops and increasing military activities at the border, and organizing a form of siege of Eritrea in its collaboration with Sudan and Yemen – activities which were seen as "a dangerous precedent, which cannot be tolerated". Ethiopia denied the claims and the UN monitoring force indicated no unusual troop deployments in the area.

The EEBC demarcation, which was due to begin in May, has reportedly been delayed until later this year and will probably begin in the less contentious eastern sector. Tensions can be expected to remain high until the exercise is complete. However, while border incidents seem likely to continue there does not seem to be any clear prospect of a resumption of major hostilities between the two countries during the interim period, or of any credible threat by opposition groups to topple the PFDK leadership by force.

Relations with Sudan remain volatile. Although Eritrea continued to participate in IGAD-led negotiations on ending the Sudanese civil war, which resumed in January in Kenya, its role has been denounced by Khartoum and its commitment to peace questioned. Tensions escalated in October 2002 with clashes near the border reportedly involving Eritrean troops. The African Union visited Khartoum in January in a continuing mediation effort, but was told the time was not opportune to visit Asmara. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Eritrean refugees, from both the liberation war and the border dispute 1998-2000, remain in Sudan. The Eritrean Government suspects that, influenced by Islamicist thinking, they may be potential supporters of the rebel Eritrean Jihad movement.

[...]

Recent months have seen a spate of incidents in or near the UN-patrolled Temporary Security Zone. In December [2002] an Ethiopian herdsman was shot dead near Maichea in the central sector. The UN reports that between December and early February 9 civilians were killed and 34 injured by mines and unexploded ordnance. In February an Eritrean colonel and four militia members were killed when their jeep hit a mine. The UN voiced concern that some mines were newly laid, and reported increasing cross-border abductions.

Small opposition groups claimed to have engaged Eritrean military forces in clashes near the border. [...]

[...] Despite an increase of internal tensions and the severe repression the relations with Ethiopia are likely to remain the major threat to peace during the coming months." (Swisspeace, March 2003)

Peace Efforts

End of war after signing of cease-fire in June 2000 and peace agreement in December 2000

- The US, European Union and U.N. provided substantial support to OAU's mediation efforts
- Already in 1998 the OAU proposed an eleven-point framework agreement to settle Eritrean-Ethiopian war
- While Ethiopia accepted the agreement, Eritrea refused to withdraw troops from Badme and requested that the modalities of the framework agreement included compensation for the expellees
- The August 1999 modalities accepted by Eritrea and rejected by Ethiopia required parties to stop displacing and deporting people, to facilitate human rights monitoring and peace keeping mission to include grievance resolution mechanisms
- June 2000 parties signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities which required Ethiopia to withdraw to its pre-war position of control
- UN peace-keepers would be deployed under the auspices of the OAU
- 12 December 2000 both parties signed a Peace Agreement based on three issues: border demarcation, compensation and investigation on causes of the conflict
- The Agreement established a boundary commission and a claims commission

HRW, 30 January 2003, p.37

"Despite the mediators' increasing frustration, intense truce efforts continued unabated led by the OAU, the U.N., the United States and the E.U., as well as by several other bilateral mediators."

HRW, 30 January 2003, pp.39-43

"The OAU's Framework Agreement - November 1998

A high level delegation of African heads of state and government took over from the Rwandan-U.S. facilitators. [...] On November 8, 1998, the delegation proposed an eleven point framework agreement to Eritrea and Ethiopia for a peaceful settlement of their conflict. The OAU's framework agreement provided for the redeployment of "forces presently in Badme town and its environ" to be supervised by an OAU military observation mission supported by the U.N. It also offered general provisions to address the socioeconomic impact of the crisis on the civilian population.

Ethiopia accepted the OAU framework agreement shortly after it was tabled. Eritrea expressed a number of reservations and ultimately refused to withdraw its troops from Badme as called for under the agreement, saying that its withdrawal would be an acknowledgment of Ethiopia's sovereignty over Badme and other disputed territories. One of the main elements of the OAU document that Eritrea found contentious, according to Haile Woldensae, then Eritrea's foreign minister, was its position on the issue of human rights. The official said that the proposal must include a reference to the expulsion of citizens and specifically provide for the compensation of "illegally-expelled" Eritrean nationals.

[...]

Eritrea unexpectedly declared its acceptance of the OAU's framework agreement on February 27, 1999 after Ethiopia overran its defenses and recaptured the disputed Badme plains. However, differences of interpretation of the document kept the two countries at odds. Hostilities soon escalated, leading to a renewed escalation of the fighting in May and June 1999.

Modalities for the Implementation of the OAU's Framework Agreement - July 1999 [...]

While both countries declared their acceptance of the modalities, each continued to question the other's commitment to peace. The Eritrean insistence that people of Eritrean heritage expelled

from Ethiopia be compensated appeared to add a precondition to acceptance since the modalities didn't address the issue.

[...]

Technical Arrangements for the Implementation of the OAU's Framework Agreement and its Modalities - August 1999

The OAU presented the two countries with detailed "technical arrangements" for the implementation of the OAU's framework agreement and its modalities in August 1999. Worked out by experts from OAU, the U.N., and the governments of Algeria and the U.S., the technical arrangements were presented as an integral and final part of the OAU settlement plan. The document mandated a peacekeeping mission, established under the authority of the U.N. Security Council, to monitor and assist with the implementation of the OAU's peace package. Paragraph 9 required the parties inter alia to commit themselves to the prohibition of displacement and deportation of civilian populations and to facilitate human rights monitoring. It also addressed the security needs of local populations in and returning to areas where the civilian administration was restored, and empowered the peacekeeping mission to establish as necessary, and in consultation with the parties, local liaison and grievance resolution mechanisms accessible to the population.

[...]

Eritrea immediately accepted the technical arrangements. Ethiopia first signaled its dissatisfaction with some of the document's provisions, and ultimately rejected it altogether, citing its failure to ensure Ethiopia's sovereignty as main reason.

[...]

Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities - June 2000

Ethiopia's major offensive of May 2000 was clearly meant to consolidate its negotiating position. Not only did the offensive lead to Eritrea's withdrawal from all disputed border territories, but it placed Ethiopian troops in undisputed Eritrean territories well inside Eritrea. Ethiopia gained considerable leverage as a result of this military advantage and the pressures resulting from the flight of at least a million Eritrean civilians ahead of the fighting.

Following these shifts, the OAU negotiators presented in early June a "revised, consolidated" peace proposal to representatives of the two parties. In the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities they finally signed on June 18, 2000, the two parties reaffirm their "acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and the Modalities for its Implementation," signaling by omission that the technical arrangements were moot. The agreement required Ethiopia to withdraw to positions it controlled before the start of the war in 1998, but only after the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers in a 25 km wide buffer zone running along the border from which Eritrean troops would be withdrawn. The U.N. peacekeeping force would operate under the auspices of the OAU to monitor the parties' compliance with the agreement and allow the neutral demarcation of the border.

[...]

Comprehensive Peace Agreement - December 12, 2000

On December 12, 2000, the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a comprehensive peace agreement in Algiers in which they committed themselves to the full implementation of the provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, and to permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves. The agreement addressed the same three key issues as the OAU's Framework Agreement on which it was based: delimitation and demarcation of the border, compensation, and investigation of the origins of the conflict. The agreement provided for the establishment of a neutral boundary commission to "delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border"; established a neutral claims commission mandated to decide on all claims of loss, damage, or injury from either side; and set the ground for an independent and impartial investigation into the origin of the conflict. Article 2 of the December 12 agreement also provided for confidence building measures, such as the early release of prisoners of war and all other persons detained in connection to the conflict.

[...]

The claims commission

[...]

Immediately after signing the December agreement, Ethiopia invited any of its citizens and foreign residents who had suffered material loss or whose human rights have been violated as a result of the war to present their claims to a National Committee for Collecting Compensation Claims. [...]

On January 26, 2001, Ethiopia and Eritrea met the first deadline established by the December 12 agreement by announcing their respective appointments to the neutral Boundary Commission and neutral Claims Commission. [...] One month later, the four arbitrators appointed by the parties to the Claims Commission selected a chairman for the commission. [...] The Claims Commission was to commence its work in The Hague within fifteen days of this formation. This brisk pace hit a snag when by mid May each side had rejected arbitrators nominated by the other. A May 14-15 informal meeting of the commission broke the impasse by agreeing to replace the contested nominees. [...] The commission later provided general information on the progress of its work for inclusion in the secretary-general's June 2001 report to the Security Council. [...] However, the three subsequent quarterly reports of the secretary-general did not annex updates from the Claims Commission.

The international bureau of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which serves as the registry for the claims commission, announced that claims were submitted to the commission by the deadline of December 12, 2001. [...] Under the peace agreement, the commission is to endeavor to complete its work within three years of the deadline for filing claims."

IRIN-CEA 19 June 2000

"The 15-point plan, brokered by the OAU in Algiers, provides for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in a buffer zone extending 26 km into Eritrea, and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from areas occupied inside Eritrea since 6 February 1999. Demarcation of the border will follow later."

SC 30 June 2000, paras. 2-5

Provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities:

"2. Under the Agreement, which was circulated on 19 June 2000 as a document of the Security Council (S/2000/601), the parties have committed themselves to:

(a) Resolving the present crisis and any other dispute between them through peaceful and legal means in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charters of OAU and the United Nations; (b) Rejecting the use of force as a means of (c) Respecting the borders existing at independence, as stated in OAU resolution AHG/Res 16 (1), adopted in Cairo in 1964, and in this regard determining them on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law, making use, to that end, of technical means to demarcate the borders and, in case of controversy, to resort to the appropriate means of arbitration.

3. The Agreement commits the parties to an immediate cessation of hostilities and stipulates that, starting from the signature of the Agreement, all air and land attacks are to cease. The parties have also reaffirmed their acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for its implementation.

4. Under the Agreement, the parties called upon the United Nations, in cooperation with OAU, to establish a peacekeeping operation to assist in the implementation of the Agreement and guaranteed to ensure free movement and access for the peacekeeping mission and its supplies, as required, through their territories and to respect its members, installations and equipment.

5. Under the Agreement, Ethiopia shall submit to the peacekeeping mission redeployment plans for its troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998. This redeployment is to take place within two weeks after the deployment of the peacekeeping mission and is to be verified by it. For its part, Eritrea is to maintain its forces at a distance of 25 kilometres (artillery range) from positions to which the Ethiopian forces are to redeploy. This zone of separation is to be referred to as the 'temporary security zone'."

The Temporary Security Zone (April 2005)

- The TSZ is the controversial demilitarised area established in April 2001 between armed force of both countries
- Concerns raised over build-up of troops by Ethiopia south of the Temporary Security Zone
- Threat to military stability due to political stalemate

UN SC 5 September 2001, paras.1-2

"The parties agreed in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 (S/2000/601) to create a Temporary Security Zone, which would be a demilitarized area between the armed forces of both countries. The redeployment of Ethiopian forces from the future Temporary Security Zone was verified by UNMEE on 7 March 2001, and was followed by the rearrangement of the Eritrean forces, which was concluded on 16 April. This allowed my Special Representative, Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, to declare the formal establishment of the Temporary Security Zone on 18 April, which marked a milestone in the peace process. The declaration of the Zone gave an additional momentum to the peace process and has made possible the return of civilians seeking to resume their lives in their places of origin. (UN SC 19 June 2001, paras.2)

"On 21 and 22 June 2001, UNMEE presented its final map of the Temporary Security Zone to the Eritrean and Ethiopian authorities, respectively. My Special Representative, Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, urged the parties to accept the map despite their objections to some parts of the boundary of the Zone as established by UNMEE.

Following the establishment of the final map of the Temporary Security Zone, Ethiopia stated that the map was unacceptable because of two "errors". It asserted that an 8-kilometre-wide pocket at the eastern end of Sector East should be returned to Ethiopia; and that the Zone should be uniformly 25 kilometres wide, which is not the case in Sector Centre, north of the Irob area. For its part, Eritrea has indicated that it could not accept the map as it was a departure from the proposals originally presented to the parties on 30 January 2001. In particular, the Eritrean authorities have indicated that the Zone could not be considered as "fully established" until their concerns regarding the southern boundary of the Zone had been addressed. However, while neither party has formally accepted the map, so far they have in fact based their operations on it, and have cooperated with UNMEE on the ground in the management of the Zone, in accordance with the parameters established in the map."

SG Report, 7 March 2005, para. 2-4

"The situation in the Temporary Security Zone and in the adjacent areas remains generally calm and stable. Following the announcement of the five-point proposal by Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, on 25 November 2004 (see S/2004/973/Add.1), there has been a steady increase of troops of the Ethiopian armed forces south of the Temporary Security Zone. This development, which began on 16 December 2004, after advance notice by the Ethiopian Government, appears to be continuing. Ethiopia describes the build-up of troops as part of the reorganization of its armed forces intended to improve its defence capability. So far, UNMEE has

confirmed that Ethiopia has redeployed six to seven additional divisions at points ranging from 25 to 45 kilometres from the southern boundary of the Zone. This move has been characterized by Ethiopia as purely defensive. Eritrea considers the deployment provocative. At the same time and to the extent that UNMEE is able to monitor the situation, there has been no significant movement or redeployment of troops of the Eritrean Defence Forces, except for some adjustments in areas adjacent to the Zone to cover the main roads linking Eritrea with Ethiopia.

I am concerned about a possible rise in tensions along the border in view of the build-up described above, as well as the training of Ethiopian troops in the adjacent areas south of the Temporary Security Zone and Ethiopian troop movements in Sector West. I appeal to the Government of Ethiopia to redeploy its troops away from the vicinity of the southern boundary of the Zone, in order to reinstate the situation that pertained before 16 December 2004.

During the reporting period, both parties generally cooperated with UNMEE. However, as indicated in my previous report to the Security Council, the threat to military stability due to the lack of progress on the political front remains. This threat has increased with the recent military "reorganization" as well as the hostile rhetoric from both capitals. It should also be noted that the success of monitoring and verification of the military situation on the Eritrean side is somewhat qualified because of the serious measures described in paragraph 5 below. The present political stalemate notwithstanding, I am pleased to note that UNMEE has been able to maintain the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone".

IRIN, 5 April 2005

"In December [2004], more than 40,000 extra Ethiopian troops began to move up towards the border area for reasons that are still not altogether clear. Ethiopia described the move as "defensive"; Eritrea called it provocative."

[*Link to the full UN SC Progress Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, 7 March 2005*](#)

The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the Temporary Security Zone, 2000-2006 (May 2006)

- The Security Council authorised in September 2000 the deployment of an initial 4,200 troops for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)
- The Mission monitors the redeployment of troops from both sides and monitor the temporary security zone (TSZ)
- The core operations are observation, reporting, analysis, identification of potential flash points and preventive action
- Established within the UNMEE, the Mine Action Coordination Centre monitors threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance and gives mine action support
- As of March 2005 the Mission force reduced from 3 to 2 battalions of some 3,344 military personnel
- Until the second quarter of 2001 the UNMEE did not have a human rights component in its mandate
- UNMEE's mandate has continuously been extended, most recently until May 2006, in order to give border reconciliation talks another chance
- After border talks failed, the UN Security Council decided to halve the UNMEE contingent from 3000 to 2,300

"The Security Council today [15 September 2000] authorized the deployment of 4,200 troops for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), with an initial six-month mandate to carry out a range of verification tasks, including monitoring the ceasefire between the two countries. Unanimously adopting resolution 1320 (2000), the Council expanded not only the size but also the mandate of UNMEE, which was originally established at the end of July with a strength of 100 military observers. The newly authorized troops will be responsible for helping to ensure that the parties adhere to their security commitments. In a simultaneous effort, the Mission will monitor the redeployment of troops from both sides. Ethiopian troops will be redeployed from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998, while Eritrean forces will redeploy in order to remain a distance of 25 kilometres from the position of the redeployed Ethiopian troops. Also as part of its mandate, the Mission will monitor the temporary security zone, and provide technical assistance to mine action activities there and in adjacent areas. In addition, it will coordinate with the humanitarian and human rights work of others in the zone and adjacent areas." (UN DPI 15 September 2000)

"As at 18 February 2005, the total strength of the UNMEE military component stood at 3,344, comprising 3,049 troops, 87 headquarters staff officers and 208 military observers. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1560 (2004) of 14 September 2004, the adjustment of the Mission and streamlining of its operations commenced in December 2004 and was completed at the end of January 2005. As planned, the force has been reduced from three to two battalions. The former Sector East has now been reorganized into a subsector under the operational command of Sector Centre. Some 250 troops from the Indian battalion, with a standby reserve of 30 to 40 troops, are now deployed in the new Sub-Sector East.

The core operations under the revised concept, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1320 (2000), remain observation, reporting, analysis, identification of potential flash points and preventive action. The concept also includes selective aerial reconnaissance of particular areas." (UN SG, 7 March 2005, para. 9-11)

"Besides closely monitoring the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance in all Sectors, the UNMEE Mine Action Coordination Centre also continued to provide the necessary mine action support to the Mission in the Temporary Security Zone, ensuring that a consistent and well-coordinated UNMEE mine action response was maintained. During the period under review, the Force's small demining assets, together with the commercial contractors for route clearance and integrated demining operations, destroyed 81 mines and 79 items of unexploded ordnance, and cleared 148,291 square metres of land and 222 kilometres of road." (UN SG Report, 7 March 2005, para.18)

"[The Security Council decided] to extend the present mandate of UNMEE until 15 September 2005" (UNSC 14 March 2005, para.1)

"UNMEE's Human Rights Component

In a remarkable omission, the advance team dispatched by the U.N. in July 2000 to prepare for UNMEE did not include a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. Furthermore, UNMEE's mandate as Set forth in resolution 1320 (2000) also omitted the monitoring of ongoing human rights conditions. The persistence of reports of wide-scale human rights abuses by both parties, even after the cessation of hostilities, appeared to have led the U.N. secretary-general to announce, on September 18, 2000, that he intended to establish a "small" component within UNMEE to follow human rights issues. [...]

UNMEE's human rights component became operational during the second quarter of 2001. The mission's human rights officers were by then visiting the various sectors of the Temporary Security Zone and conducting investigations on the treatment of vulnerable groups of Ethiopians in Eritrea and of Eritreans in Ethiopia. The officers' assignment also included the monitoring of the return of displaced persons.[...] In particular, UNMEE's human rights workers interviewed

persons repatriated or deported to both countries and documented their treatment. Their reporting as of June 2001 was included in the human rights section of the secretary-general's quarterly reports to the Security Council on the progress of the implementation of the peace agreement, providing the Security Council with an effective tool for pressing the two parties to afford humane treatment to each other's nationals. One factor contributing to the scaling down of deportations from both countries would thus appear to have been the combination of UNMEE's field monitoring and the periodic opportunity for the secretary-general to publicly disclose reported abuses of these vulnerable groups.[...]. (HRW, 30 January 2003, pp.42-3)

"29. During the reporting period, UNMEE carried out regular visits and monitored the situation of Eritrean refugees in the Shimelba camp, near Shiraro in Ethiopia. [...] The living conditions of the most vulnerable groups, mainly women and children, are also of great concern. I therefore appeal to the donor community to generously assist humanitarian agencies in order to alleviate the critical situation facing the residents of Shimelba refugee camp as well as the Afar internally displaced persons living in extremely harsh and remote areas in Sub-Sector East.

30. UNMEE has also continued to monitor the human rights situation within the Temporary Security Zone and to investigate related issues, including cross-border incidents and the abduction of minors. In two such cases, involving 11 Ethiopian minors, from Mai Cha and Kafna in the Central Sector, the children were successfully returned to their families in Ethiopia after a few days of detention in Eritrea. I am pleased to note that the Eritrean authorities, on this occasion, acknowledged that such incidents should not reoccur. The Mission has also encouraged Ethiopia to develop standard procedures for processing cases of unaccompanied Eritrean minors who voluntarily cross into the country. The country also lacks adequate facilities for the temporary accommodation of these minors.

[...]

32. UNMEE also continued to conduct human rights promotional and training activities for the benefit of different target groups in the two countries. I am encouraged by the fact that during the celebration of Human Rights Day UNMEE successfully undertook various activities in both countries to promote awareness of human rights issues among disabled people." (SG Report, 7 March 2005, paras. 29, 30 32)

IRIN, 1 June 2006:

The United Nations Security Council has extended the mandate of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) for four months but reduced the force from 3,373 to 2,300 troops.

The 15-member council met on Wednesday to discuss the operations of the force keeping the peace on the disputed border between the two Horn of Africa neighbours. It demanded that both countries fully comply with a resolution calling on Ethiopia to accept the border recommended by an independent commission and on Eritrea to lift restrictions on UNMEE's movements.

The UNMEE Internet Site provides updated information about the operation.

The Boundary Commission, 2000-2006 (May 2006)

- The Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) was established at the Algiers peace agreement of December 2002

- The Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission drew an internationally recognized and legally binding border between the two countries on 13 April 2002
- Ethiopia accept in principle the April 2002 ruling of the Boundary Commission and both countries claim Badme belongs with their countries but refuse demarcation to continue
- After initial decision to close down its field offices due to lack of progress in the physical demarcation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, the Commission agreed to facilitate another round of talks in May 2006
- After the talks did not resolve the deadlock, UNMEE decided to halve their troops from 3,000 to 2,300

The Boundary Commission:

“In April 2002, an independent border commission issued its decision on boundary delimitation between the two countries following their destructive border war from 1998-2000. According to the Algiers peace accord of December 2000, which officially ended the war, the sides agreed that any border ruling would be "final and binding". Both countries claim to have been awarded the now-symbolic village of Badme, where the conflict erupted in May 1998. (IRIN, 14 March 2003)

SG Report, 7 March 2005, para.13-16:

“Demarcation Process

On November 11 2002, the EEBC told Ethiopia to comply with its July 17th 2002 ruling that Ethiopia removes its settlers from Eritrean territory who had encroached 400 metres into Dembe MenGul near Badme. The Commission reiterated that its April 13th 2002 decision is final and binding. The EEBC voiced concern in March 2003 that Ethiopia had constantly sought variations to the delimited borderline. The Commission submitted to the parties the completed map of the border map for technical comments in December 2002. Both parties continue to insist that the disputed town of Badme belong with their countries. In its eighth report, the EEBC cautioned that it appeared that Ethiopia was moving to reject the Commission’s April 2002 decision if variations sought would not be granted, and indicated that any such variations can only be done with the mutual consent of both parties and not by the Commission. A March 4 2003 Ethiopian Ministry of Information statement expressed grave concerns about the EEBC’s ruling on the government’s comments on the map and the April 2002 border ruling ...” (OCHA, 31 March 2003, p.28-9)

“The Boundary Commission has been unable to resume the demarcation process, despite continued efforts to do so. As described in the sixteenth report on the work of the Commission (see annex I), Eritrea insists on adherence to the April 2002 delimitation decision. The Commission also states that Eritrea is not prepared to accept the proposal made by Ethiopia some time ago for the completion of demarcation in the Eastern Sector unless there is at the same time a clear assurance from Ethiopia that the rest of the boundary will also be demarcated.

According to the Boundary Commission, Ethiopia is not prepared to allow demarcation to continue in the manner laid down in the demarcation directions and in accordance with the timeline set by the Commission. It now insists on prior dialogue, but has rejected the opportunity for such dialogue within the framework of the demarcation process. In the assessment of the Commission, this is the latest in a series of obstructive actions taken since the summer of 2002, which belies the frequently professed acceptance by Ethiopia of the delimitation decision.

In view of this situation, the Commission has indicated that it is taking immediate steps to close down its field offices for the time being. These can be reactivated (though subject to some months of lead time) when circumstances permit the resumption of demarcation work. As for the Commission, it remains ready to proceed with and complete the process of demarcation.

The Commission concludes its report by stating that the line of the boundary was legally and finally determined by its delimitation decision of 13 April 2002. Though undemarcated, the

Commission reports this line is binding upon both parties, subject only, unless the parties agree otherwise, to the minor qualifications expressed in the delimitation decision.”

OCHA, December 2004

“The Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process remains deadlocked despite a recent announcement by Ethiopia that it would, "in principle", accept the April 2002 Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission ruling. Ethiopia’s proposal for re-opening of dialogue between the two countries, with the view to normalizing relations, has been rebuffed by Eritrea. As a precondition, Eritrea demands Ethiopia’s withdrawal from territory along the 1000km border awarded to it by the ruling. Although the international community has welcomed this move forward, it remains to be seen whether they will apply sufficient pressure on either side to further implement the border agreement.”

AFP, 19 May 2006:

"The United Nations plans to halve its peacekeeping force on the tense border between Ethiopia and Eritrea after talks this week failed to break a deadlock between the arch-foes, diplomats said Friday. The move to reduce the number of troops in the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) from 3,000 to 1,500 comes after the two east African countries refused to back down at two days of discussions in London, they said. "

General deterioration of human rights in Eritrea (June 2006)

- Dissent, nongovernmental political, civic, social, and minority religious institutions largely forbidden, says HRW
- No national elections have been held since Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia in 1993
- Eritreans between the ages of eighteen and forty-five must perform two years of compulsory national service which in practice is repeatedly prolonged
- Prison visits by international human rights organisations prohibited
- The right to religious freedom is systematically being violated, as well as freedom of speech, says Amnesty International
- UNMEE national staff have repeatedly been held in custody without informing UNMEE about the reasons for the arrests

Human Rights Watch, 15 January 2005:

“Plagued by famine and heightened tensions with Ethiopia over their joint border, Eritrea has remained a highly repressive state in which dissent is suppressed and nongovernmental political, civic, social, and minority religious institutions are largely forbidden to function.

Suppression of Political Dissent and Opinion – Arbitrary Arrest and Illegal Detention

Eritrea is a one-party state. No political party other than the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is allowed to exist. No group larger than seven is allowed to assemble without government approval. No national elections have been held since Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia in 1993. Elections were canceled in 1997 because of a border war with Ethiopia. They were canceled again in 2001, two years after the war ended. They remain unscheduled. Regional non-partisan assembly elections were held in 2004 but the offices involved have little power.

[...]

In 2004, as part of its campaign to isolate its citizens and to prevent the flow of information, the government placed all Internet cafes under government supervision, thereby controlling access. The government claimed that it was acting to protect Internet users and to prevent access to

“pornographic” sites. The government also imposed travel restrictions on foreign diplomats, requiring government approval for travel outside Asmara. It prevented UNMEE from using the most accessible route to service its observers and troops in central and western Eritrea along the border with Ethiopia, a road that passes through urban centers and could bring Eritreans into contact with the outside world.

Suppression of Minority Religions

Members of Pentecostal Christian churches have been arrested for possession of bibles or for communal worship. The government closed all religious institutions in May 2002 except for those affiliated with the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Eritrean Evangelical (Lutheran) churches and Moslem mosques. At the end of 2004, there were reliable reports that over 300 members of unrecognized churches were incarcerated. Many of those arrested were beaten or otherwise tortured during their arrest or while in captivity. Jehovah’s Witnesses have been especially mistreated. Some have been detained for a decade for refusing to participate in national service even though the official penalty is incarceration for no more than three years. In September 2004, the United States designated Eritrea as a country of “particular concern” for its intolerance and mistreatment of adherents of minority religions. The Eritrean government defended its practices on the ground that the unrecognized churches had failed to register, but the United States State Department report noted that some of the religious groups had applied for registration in 2002 and that the government had issued no registration permits since the registration regime was imposed.

Compulsory Military Service

All Eritreans between the ages of eighteen and forty-five must perform two years of compulsory national service. In practice, however, the time for service is repeatedly prolonged. There are frequent sweeps to round up evaders. During a massive roundup in November 2004, security forces shot into hundreds of detainees being held in an overcrowded military prison camp (Adi Abeito) near Asmara, killing as many as twenty and injuring dozens more, after some detainees managed to collapse part of the compound wall. The government often uses national service as retribution for perceived criticism of government policies. Those accused of evading service are frequently tortured.

Prison Conditions and Torture

Due to the volume of arrests, prisoners are often held in improvised cargo containers. At Aderser, near Sawa, prisoners are held in underground cells. At least six high school students were also reported incarcerated in solitary confinement in underground cells at Sawa in 2003. In addition to psychological abuse, escapees report the use of physical torture at some prisons. Prisoners have been suspended from trees, arms tied behind their backs, a technique known as *almaz* (diamond). Prisoners have also been placed face down, hands tied to feet, a torture known as the “helicopter.” Prison visits by international human rights organizations are prohibited.”

Amnesty International, 7 December 2005:

"Amnesty International has received disturbing reports of increasing violations in Eritrea of the right to freedom of religion, belief and conscience. While Jehovah’s Witnesses have been subjected to severe persecution for the past decade on account of their religious beliefs, this report focuses on widespread detentions and other human rights violations of members of evangelical Christian churches in the past three years, intensifying in 2005. Since 2002, their churches have been shut down by the government and many members have been tortured in an attempt to force them to stop worshipping and to thereby abandon their faith. Members of new groups within the officially-permitted Orthodox Church and Islam have also been detained on account of their beliefs.

[...]

Human rights in Eritrea are systematically violated by President Issayas Afewerki’s government, which has been in power since the country’s independence from Ethiopia in 1991 after a 30-year

liberation war.(1) The detentions of individuals solely because of their religious beliefs is part of the general denial of the rights to freedom of expression and association in Eritrea, as well as other grave violations of basic human rights. These violations of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion are contrary to international law, as well as the Constitution of Eritrea (1997).

Torture has routinely been used as a punishment for critics of the government and members of minority faiths, as well as for offences committed by military conscripts. Arbitrary incommunicado detention "without charge or trial" is widespread and long-lasting - several prisoners of conscience have been held thus for over a decade - with many detainees are held in secret and their whereabouts not known.

Violations of the right to freedom of religion in Eritrea are indirectly linked to a far-reaching pattern of violations of the right to expression of non-violent political opinions and the right to association. Religious prisoners of conscience who have no connection with political opposition groups are subjected to the same torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, and the same arbitrary and incommunicado detention, as prisoners of conscience detained on account of their political opinions.

Any expression or suspicion of criticism of the government - impossible to express openly and publicly - is met with threats, arbitrary arrest and sometimes "disappearances", and indefinite, incommunicado detention, without any judicial oversight, and with a high risk of torture. The only permitted political party is President Issayas Afewerki's People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), formerly the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which won the independence war and formed the new government.

The rule of law in Eritrea is severely undermined by the lack of an effective or independent judiciary. Lawyers do not dare to challenge the government in the courts. A Special Court sentences people for corruption without the right to defence or appeal. A secret security committee sentences some political and religious prisoners to prison terms without defence representation or appeal. Organizations who might potentially monitor human rights and press for remedies for human rights violations do not and cannot function inside Eritrea on account of the comprehensive denial of the right to freedom of expression of opinion. Human rights violations by members of the security forces are committed with total impunity.(2)

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are heavily restricted. International human rights organisations such as Amnesty International are denied entry. International humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are restricted in their activities and travel, and the official US development agency, US-Agency for International Development, a major bilateral donor, was ordered to leave Eritrea in November 2005 without explanation. Under a new Proclamation in 2005(3), international NGOs, including faith-based agencies - of which only 14 are currently registered(4) - are limited to relief and rehabilitation activities and not permitted to work independently of the government with local communities.

Two thirds of the population are dependent on international emergency food aid since the 1998-2000 armed conflict with Ethiopia. This includes returnee refugees from Sudan and 70,000 internally displaced persons (IDP)(5)camp. Many donor governments have withdrawn development assistance on account of the government's failures in democratization and human rights."

UNMEE press briefing notes, 1 June 2006:

"Question [from Addis Ababa]: I know that another UNMEE employee was arrested recently bringing the number back to eleven. Are they still jailed without justification? What's going on with that?

OIC-UNMEE: Over the last three weeks, a certain number of national staff in Asmara, Eritrea have been arrested. They did not show up for their duties. Two of them were released and after that one or two were arrested. As far as I know, please correct me Musi, the figure stays at twelve.

DCPIO: Yes, the figure is twelve.

Question [from Addis Ababa]: Any information on charges or time line of release?

OIC-UNMEE: There hasn't been any written response to any of the letters on this subject.

Question [from Addis Ababa]: So you are just basically in limbo

OIC-UNMEE: We don't know what is going on. We were hoping to get some answers. Their absence affects our own activities.

[...]

Question [from Addis Ababa]: You said that only twelve people have been arrested, did you ask why...

OIC-UNMEE: I did not say "only", we wish that no one was arrested, but at the present time there are still twelve of them who have not come back to work, and who are suspected to be in custody.

Question [from Addis Ababa]: This is what I wanted to clarify. Are they arrested or...

OIC-UNMEE: I wish I had more specific information. We don't know their whereabouts at the present time. We haven't had any answers to our requests [from the Eritrean authorities].

Question [from Addis Ababa]: You have requested

OIC-UNMEE: Yes of course. We do it systematically.

Question [from Addis Ababa]: How long has passed since they disappeared?

OIC-UNMEE: One has been 4-5 days, a week I think, and the others have been gone now for almost 3 weeks.

DCPIO: I think we need to indicate that the first report we received on these current arrests was on the 4th of May, and the numbers have been fluctuating since then as the OIC mentioned.

OIC-UNMEE: But as you know, this has happened quite few times in the past since the Mission has existed."

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

Total national figures

Eritrean government seeks solutions for its remaining IDPs (March 2006)

- IDP figures at the beginning of 2005 are around 45,000

State of Eritrea, March 2006, p.2, 3:

"Most of the IDPs returned to their original homes or were resettled. However 8871 households are still in camps and host communities in Zoba Gash Barka and Zoba Debub and need to be returned to their original homes and supported to start sustainable livelihoods and resettled. The following is a proposal to assist them.

[...]

Currently all the IDPs in GashBarka are settled in the camps of Shambko and Korakun and some host communities in the area they will be moved to six kebab administrative (sixteen villages). New settlement areas will be selected for the expelled and those that could not return to their original villages.

IDPs in Zoba Debub have stayed in the camps of Metera, Hahayle, Afoma, Awlie and Mai Wuray and they will return to nine kebab administrative. Most IDPs will be able to return to Nari'a, Degelelo, Golo, Tisha, Lahiyo and Meshal Akran kebab administration. However, those IDPs from Ambesete Geleba and Yalambesa will remain in the camps."

ICC, May 2005:

There are 12,848 IDPs in Gash-Barka camps

There are 24,257 IDPs in Debub camps

There are 600 IDPs in Denden camp in Northern red sea

There are 7,688 IDPs living outside camps in Gash Barka

Total internally displaced people in Eritrea: 58,953 persons (May 2004)

- 50,777 IDPs reside in camps in Gash Barka, Debub and Northern Red Sea
- 8,176 IDPs located outside camps in Gash Barka and Southern Red Sea with host communities

"The number and locations of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has not changed. According to ICC's recent assessment, currently there are 50,777 IDPs in camps and 8,176 out side camps with host communities in Eritrea." (ICC, 29 February 2004)

"According to recent ICC Field Liaison assessment, there has been no movement of IDPs to and from the camps." (UN OCHA, 17 June 2004)

Source: UN OCHA, 31 May 2004, p. 12.

USCR: 75,000 remain displaced throughout the country (June 2003)

- Landmines, destruction of infrastructure, absence of basic services and food shortages among factors which impede return
- Two-thirds of IDPs in camps in urgent need of adequate shelter

"Approximately 75,000 war-uprooted Eritreans remained displaced throughout the country at year's end.

The prevalence of landmines, poor security, and the widespread destruction of businesses, homes, and water and transportation systems within the Temporary Security Zone prevented the return of tens of thousands of internally displaced Eritreans.

The absence of basic health care and education services in war-destroyed villages also impeded large-scale return.

Nearly 50,000 internally displaced persons continued to live in some 20 camps in western Eritrea's Gash Barka and Debub Zones. An additional 10,000 resided in makeshift camps and host communities.

Eritrea's displaced population also included some 15,000 people of Eritrean descent who were deported from Ethiopia during the war.

Severe drought, food shortages, and Eritrea's depressed economy compounded the already difficult lives of the country's displaced population. Most lacked alternative sources of income and relied exclusively on relief organizations for their daily needs, including WFP food rations.

The two-thirds of internally displaced Eritreans who resided in camps were in urgent need of adequate shelter, according to UN relief agencies. Displaced families living outside of camps struggled to survive on only 60 percent of the minimum daily food requirement, according to health workers. Insufficient rain caused near total crop failure for displaced persons who had access to farmland. The continued presence of UN peacekeepers along the border enabled more than 15,000 displaced Eritreans to return to their villages of origin during 2002." (USCR, 2003)

Deportees from Ethiopia of Eritrean origin resettled temporarily in IDP camps (June 2003)

"A total of 8,700 Eritreans expelled from Ethiopia in 1998, and who have been homeless ever since, have been given farmland by the Eritrean government. The 2,870 families, who have each been given one hectare of land, have been relocated in trucks from Shelab camp - shared by internally displaced people and expellees - in the northwestern region of Gash Barka to three other localities: Gherenfit East, Gherenfit West and Wedi Emmi.

Gherenfit was chosen for its suitability for farming, in an attempt to end the families' dependency on relief. They are being given seeds and farming implements by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), although experts say cultivation may not be possible this season due to an ongoing drought.

Nevertheless, Simon Nhongo, UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Eritrea, described the move as "a major breakthrough" for the families, after over four years of waiting. "The difference between them and the other camp occupants was that they had no original place to return to," he said.

He said the land had been cleared of bushes and obstacles to farming, roads had been opened to make the areas accessible, and water was being pumped to them from the Gash river. School facilities had also been moved from Shelab camp to Gherenfit. "One factor which has been critical in getting them accepted by the host communities are these additional benefits that come to the local communities - in the form of a water supply and schooling, which were nonexistent before," said Nhongo.

After between 75,000 and 80,000 Eritreans were expelled from Ethiopia in 1998, 16,000 rural expellees ended up living in camps, in the hope of being allocated farmland. The rest dispersed into Eritrean communities. The Eritrean government and UNDP hope to be in a position to resettle the remaining 7,300 who are still in camps, within the next two months. First, however, basic water and sanitation facilities, as well as schools, need to be provided on the site around Ugumu village, between Gherenfit and Awgaro.

Before that, however, funding has to be found to provide these facilities. "The timing is absolutely essential," said Nhongo. "We need to get them there in time for the schooling, also the beginning of the planting season is very critical."

If the facilities were not in place, the expellees would have to remain where they were for another year, Nhongo told IRIN. At the moment, they are only receiving 60 percent of normal food rations, due to a lack of funding for food aid. While some of them had livestock and cattle, and others small businesses, others were going hungry every day, he said." (IRIN, 16 June 2003)

"In addition to IDPs and returnees, almost 14,000 persons out of the 75,000 expellees from Ethiopia are in camps." (OCHA, August 2002, pp.11-13)

"The border with Ethiopia was closed in 1998 due to the outbreak of war, although Eritreans deported from Ethiopia crossed the border and were allowed to resettle in the country. As many as 75,000 Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were deported from Ethiopia. The deportees, if they wished, were placed in villages with friends or family. Those who no longer had connections in Eritrea were placed temporarily in camps with IDP's before being settled among the general population. To facilitate the deportees' integration into society, the Government provided them with documentation that was valid for 6 months and identified them as deportees. If, during that time, the deportees could find three Eritrean witnesses willing to testify to their Eritrean ties, the Government issued them documentation of Eritrean nationality and considered them to be permanent citizens. For the small minority of deportees who could not demonstrate Eritrean ties, the Government granted them identity documents that specified that they were Ethiopian but permitted them to stay in the country." (USDOS 4 March 2002)

Major decrease of IDP numbers during 2000: from 900,000 to 308,000 by end-2000 (November 2001)

- Claimed that IDP population exceeded one million by July 2000
- Number of IDPs in camps reported to be 390,000 by beginning of July 2000
- Estimated that 100,000 IDPs were living outside camps by November 2000
- Estimated in July 2000 that up to 600,000 IDPs had sought refugee other places than the camps
- Reported in January 2001 that 208,000 IDPs were remaining in camps

Target Population Description	Target Population Number	Type of Assistance
Drought-Affected	738,450 [^]	Food Aid: 1.76 Million
IDPs in Camps (including Deportees in Camps)	208,163	
Rural War-Affected, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDPs Outside Camps • Host Community Population • Returnee IDPs/Refugees • Eritreans under occupation (43,00 to 50,000) • Rural Deportees not in camps 	708,241	Non-Food Aid: Smaller sub-sets of the 1.76 Million in need of food.
Returnees from Sudan ^{**}	62,000	
Deportees/Expellees ^{**}	45,000	
Total	1,761,854	
Urban Vulnerable Population	154,510 ^{***}	Non-Food Aid

[^]Figure includes drought-affected in the following regions: 269,835 in Anseba; 255,642 in Northern Red Sea; 134,133 in Southern Red Sea; and 76,640 in Maakel.

^{**}Provisional planning figures. Regarding returnees from Sudan, the planning figure used by WFP and UNHCR is 62,000. The Government uses 65,000.

^{***}A higher Government figure (296,312) includes food and non-food beneficiaries.

(Source: GOE/UN February 2001, p. 17)

"The war left tens of thousands of soldiers dead on both sides and pushed an estimated 1.5 million Eritreans and Ethiopians from their homes. At the end of July, approximately 900,000 Eritreans were internally displaced and about 90,000 were new refugees in neighboring countries." (USCR August 2000)

"As of July 12, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) reported that an estimated 390,000 Eritrean internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently residing in camps and temporary settlements. According to government and UN estimates, up to 600,000 IDPs are either living with host communities or grouped informally in areas close to streams or bushes with no access to basic necessities." (USAID 21 July 2000)

The IDP population grew rapidly from initially 500,000 to more than 1 million between May and June 2000:

"Our first estimates were that 500,000 Eritreans had been displaced, but the ongoing fighting has forced us to reevaluate the figure to nearly 750,000 people,' Trevor Rowe, WFP spokesman told AFP here." (AFP 6 June 2000)

"The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has generated over one million IDPs in Eritrea. They are, for the most part, located in areas that are expected to receive the majority of returnees in the anticipated large-scale repatriation movement. Many of the current IDPs were, at some point, refugees in Sudan." (UNHCR July 2000, p. 5)

As fast as they fled people returned home:

"In addition to the 202,000 IDPs in 24 recognised camps, there are an estimated 100,000 IDPs living outside camps." (ICC 6 November 2000)

"According to the latest Government estimates, approximately 600,000 people have returned to their areas of origin since 18 June 2000. However, more than 200,000 people remain accommodated in camps. These Eritreans currently can not return to their original home areas due to security concerns, the presence of landmines or their inability to re-establish their lives in areas where destruction to personal assets and communal services has been substantial. In addition, it is estimated that there are currently still over 100,000 IDPs outside camps, the majority of whom are accommodated in host communities. Furthermore, there are approximately

76,000, mostly rural, deportees who are not likely to be able to return to their home areas in the near future." (UN November 2000, p.1)

"There are currently 24 organized camps in the three zobas of Debub, Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea. The 208,163 camp residents are living in tents or under plastic sheeting and are almost completely dependent on ERREC and the humanitarian community for emergency relief. Some 80% have lived in camps for more than two years [...]." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 14)

"There have been no major IDP movements during recent weeks [mid-January 2001]. As noted in previous Updates, 8,000 rural refugees in Jejah have moved to Shelab and Dembe Doran has emptied with its 4,000 residents relocating to Jejah. Therefore there are a total of 24 camps in Eritrea presently." (ICC 22 January 2001)

"The third round of fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia that raged in May and June 2000 led to large-scale displacement of the civilian population in Eritrea. More than one million persons fled from the fighting and disputed border areas and were displaced to locations both within and outside Eritrea. By December 2000, there were 208,163 IDPs in 24 camps inside Eritrea; an estimated 95,000 fled to Sudan. 708,241 persons were either IDPs outside camps, accommodated by host communities, civilians living in occupied territories, or deportees not living in camps. A total of 75,000 persons were expelled from Ethiopia. As most of the fighting took place in the fertile Gash-Barka and Debub regions, where 70% of the national grain output is produced, fighting in and displacement from these areas led to a major disruption of agriculture production, resulting in severe food shortages in the country. The protracted drought that affected much of the Horn of Africa also impacted four regions in Eritrea affecting an estimated 738,450 people." (UN November 2001, pp. 11)

Geographical distribution

Remaining IDPs unable to return two years after the cease-fire located in Gash Barka., Debub and Northern Red Sea (November 2002)

- Between 6000-7000 IDPs from Korokon camp relocated to Shambiko and Kotobia following acute water shortages (July 2002)

"UNMEE Military Observers have reported that on 29 and 30 June, the Deputy Administrator in Shambiko confirmed that between 6,000 and 7,000 of the 15,000 IDPs in Korokon IDP camp were relocated to Shambiko and Kotobia, because of the acute water shortages in Korokon." (UNMEE, 5 July 2002)

IDPs in camps and near village of origin

Zoba	Sub Zoba	Camp (Village)	No. ICC
Gash Barka		Adi Keshi*	16054
		Korokon	6442
		Shambuko	1744
		Dembedoran	2241
			26481
Debub	Senafe	Afoma	1021

		Auli'e Hahaile Metera	4143 5882
	Tsorona	Mai Wurrai	5003
		Endabastifanos**	909
		Tsorona	1101
		Gema'e	1120
	Adi Quala	Mai Alba	1002
	Mai Aini	Una Watot	380
			20561
Northern Red Sea Zone		Denden	450
			47492
*Camps			
**Settlement areas			

Gash Barka	Place of Origin	Settlement area	No of Individuals
	Omhajer	Guluj	8828
	Girme/Elala	Shambuko/Binbina	1372
Southern Red Sea	Musa Ali	Debai Sima	488
			10,688

Source: OCHA, November 2002

IDPs unable to return relocated in temporary/transitory camps (December 2001)

- Three previously unreported IDP camps in Gem'e, Endabastifanos and Adi-Nefas brings the total number of IDPs in camps to 48,877 (end 2001)
- IDPs in camps located in Gash-Barka and Debub while those outside camps are located in Guluj, Geref and Sabunaite (November 2001)
- Aproximately 50% of the pre-war populations resided in Senafe sub zone, in Monokiseito and Ruba-Natsa villages by May 2001
- In the TSZ the population of 6 out of 7 villages had not returned by May 2001
- Return movements slowed down by end-July 2001
- New camps established in Tsorona sub zone for IDPs unable to return

"There has been no reported IDP movement recently. Nevertheless, the ICC field unit in a recent field mission has reported three IDP camps which were not included in the previous ICC issues. These are: Gem'e (993 IDPs) and Endabastifanos (1,972 IDPs) in Debub zone, and Adi-Nefas (1,300 IDPs) in Northern Red Sea zone. This brings the total number of IDP in camps to 48,877." (ICC, 28 December 2001)

"An estimated 44,387 Eritrean internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in eight camps in Gash-Barka and Debub provinces, the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) said in a press briefing on 9 November. In addition to these, another 9,311 IDPs are living outside the camps, in locations around Guluj, Gergef, and Sabunaite in Gash-Barka Province, according to the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (ERREC), UNMEE said. These IDPs are mainly from the Om Hajer area and are awaiting the restoration of social services and the completion of the mine-clearance work in the area, said UNMEE." (IRIN 12 November 2001)

"The population of Senafe sub zone is currently estimated to be approximately 50% of its pre-war level. Only one of the villages visited in the sub zone, Serha, was completely empty. For the most part, the people presently residing in their home villages are those who remained there throughout the entire conflict. The Assessment Team noted exceptions, however, in Monokiseito and Ruba-Natsa, among others, where the entire village population was displaced and between 50% and 75% of the pre-war population have now returned." (ICC 2 May 2001b)

" The population of 6 villages out of 7 identified in the TSZ areas of Adi-quala and Mai-Aini sub-zones have not returned to their respective villages. Except Fiqechokomte Kebabi Adi (Adi Mekeda is one of village in this Kebabi Adi) located north of the TSZ the rest of the population are still living in IDP camps. However, since the announcement of peace between the two countries and subsequent withdrawal of troops, local residents in these villages are visiting their properties/homes and preparing for the return. The assessment team noted frequent movements between the camps and their home villages. Despite the risk of mines and UXOs, populations with livestock are grazing their traditional grazing areas near their villages." (ICC 2 May 2001)

"ICC field team visited three newly established camps in Tzorona sub zone from 31 July to 2 August 2001. The objective of the visit was to monitor population movement and prevailing humanitarian situation in the newly established camps. Major highlights from the report are as follows:

Tzorona Camp- accommodates 4,152 population originally from areas of Sarda, Maichena, and Gobele in Tzorona sub zone who where relocated from Alba camp. The reason they could not return to their original villages is due to landmine problem. In the camp basic services are provided except sanitation facilities.

Maiwuray Camp- is located approximately 8km north east of Tzorona town. The camp accommodates 4,812 originally from Hadish Adi, Knin and Sebo villages. The reason for not returning is because of security concerns. 107 new tents and 270 plastic sheets were distributed but shelter remains a major problem for the camp.

Aiba camp- is located about 15 km northwest of Tzorona town. It has 3545 people who are originally from village administrations of Dibi and Endabastifanos. The problem, which hindered them from returning to their villages, is the existence of landmine and UXOs." (ICC 16 August 2001)

"Return movement of IDPs to their home areas by ERREC has slowed down in the past weeks [end July 2001] as majority has returned home. Organized return brought back home some 170,000 IDPs.

IDPs in camps				
Zone	Sub-Zone	Camp	Village of origin	Population
Gash-barka	Laelay Gash	Adi-Keshi	Mai-Kokah	1106
			Shilalo	4552
			Sheshebit	2828
			Adi-Hakin	1565

			Mukuti	2183
			Adi-Tsetser	4368
			Adi-Maelel	143
	Shambiko	Korokon	Tsirha	3396
			Deda	4476
			Badime	4526
			Ambori	2734
	Molki	Dembe-Doran	Sifra-Genet	126
			Faulina	1275
	Mensura	Shelab	deportees	7766
	Sub-total			41044
Debub	Senafe	Metera	Ambesete	2217
			Geleba	
			Zalambesa	3914
			Lahio	509
		Auli'e La Haila	Dogogolo	205
			Golo	892
			Telha Ner'e	36
			Adi-Ageb	897
			Tisha	1161
			Endeli	52
		Afoma	MeshalAkran	917
	Tsorona	Mai-Wuray	Hadish Adi	2080
			Kinin	1424
			Sebo	1308
		Tsorona	Tsorona Town	5622

			Sarda	1409
			Maichena	981
			Gobebe	1762
		Aiba	Dibi	1480
			Indaba-estifanos	2065
	Sub-total			28,931
Grand total				69,975

However about 69,975 are still not able to return home and are staying in either existing or newly established camps (See the table above). In Gash Barka 41,044 IDPs are in the camps of Adi-Keshi, Korokon, Shelab and Dembe-Doran. In Debub 28,931 IDPs are in temporary camps in Senafe and Tsorona sub-zones." (ICC 30 July 2001)

Selected geographical information about IDP populations by end-2000 (February 2001)

- Estimated in November 2000 that 1,359 IDP households remained outside camps in the Anseba region
- About 80,000 IDPs in camps in Debub region by end-2000
- Approximately 3,000 separated children remain in the Debub IDP camps
- About 86,000 IDPs in camps in Gash-Barka region by end-2000
- About 17,900 IDPs living outside camps in Maakel region by end-2000
- A total of 47,541 IDPs in camps in Northern Red Sea region by end-2000

Geographical distribution of new IDPs by end-May 2000:

"After the western city of Barentu fell and the city of Agordat was abandoned, hundreds of thousands of Eritreans reportedly have fled in eastwards to the city of Keren and towards the Sudanese border in the West. There are 17,000 refugees in and around the Sudanese border town of Kassala. MSF teams are present to assess the situation, which is not urgent so far.

In Eritrea itself, MSF is trying to get an overview of the stream of refugees in the West. According to unconfirmed reports, there are up to 100,000 refugees located around Teseney and Guluj. They are without shelter and access to healthcare. An MSF team is travelling to the area and will supply them with jerrycans, plastic sheeting and medicine." (MSF 30 May 2000)

Geographical distribution by June 2000:

"The areas where most IDPs originate include Shambuko, Tokombiya, Molki, Hayakota, Lalay Gash and Barentu, Senafe, Adi Keyh and Adi Quala. One camp at Debaat, some 30 kilometres from Keren, hosts 35,000 displaced people and numbers have been increasing day by day. Other displaced populations are sheltering in the valleys of the Barka river around Akrodat and surrounding areas, and in the south in Dubarwa and Maihabar. IDP population areas also include Akrodat, Tessney and Gulluj. There are reports of about 25,000 displaced people have crossed over to Sudan. About 70 per cent of the IDPs are children, 25 per cent women and 5 per cent

elderly men. This conflict has wiped out the next harvest in Eritrea's main food producing areas and the effects of the food shortage will be felt well beyond the battle zone." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

"Anseba is a semi-arid region in the north-central part of Eritrea.

[...]

Thousands of IDPs have sought refuge with relatives in various parts of Anseba. Many having been displaced from the highly war-affected regions of Gash Barka and Debub. Since the beginning of the crisis, ERREC, assisted by its humanitarian partners, has provided food and shelter to groups of these IDPs and their host communities. However, due to the difficulties related to identifying all IDPs outside of camps the exact number is not known (there are no IDP camps in Anseba and most are living with host communities). ERREC had initially registered 1,129 households and started distributing tents in October 2000. This figure was revised in November 2000 and now stands at 1,359 households. Most of these IDPs are living in Keren, Elaber and Hagaz." (GOE/UN February 2001, p.30)

"There are 10 camps in Debub with a total population of about 80,000 (16,000 households). The number of separated children in the IDP camps is approximately 3,000. The IDPs are originally from Tsorona and Senafe - areas that are still under Ethiopian occupation. Most of this population group have been displaced for more than two and a half years and have moved numerous times. For the majority of these IDPs, it is no longer a short-term emergency situation. Some IDPs, like those from Tsorona, had time to take some of their belongings with them in 1998 when they first fled. As a result, they have not been provided with the same bundle of household items. Most assessed families stated that the household items and clothing they had are now worn out or were lost during the last offensive. They are not currently in a financial position to acquire any new goods. (GOE/UN February 2001, p.38)

"The IDPs in [Gash Barka] camps (mainly at Adi Keshi, Korokon, Tologanya, Kotobia, and Jejah camps) were displaced due to the military offensives in February 1999 and May 2000. Most are displaced from the villages either under Ethiopian occupation or very near to the front lines. The IDP population in camps is estimated to be 85,898 (17,179 households). 59% of this IDP population are women; children under 5 are estimated at 18%. Women head a total of 56% of the IDP households. (GOE/UN February 2001, p.44)

"The problems of crop failure and livestock loss, due to drought, was compounded by the war as many household breadwinners involved in national service were unable to work on the land or unable to do casual labor. This impacts IDPs living outside camps (ca. 17,900 persons) [in the Maakel region.]" (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 51)

"The approximately 7,000 IDPs residing outside of camps in Northern Red Sea are mainly located in Bada Administrative area in Ghelalo sub-zone. Bada Administrative zone is comprised of 4 villages located near the Ethiopian border. Laimbada and Bolali villages with a total IDP population of 4,000 persons are under Eritrean control while Adimurug and Erimile with 2,900 IDPs are in the occupied areas. The population of Bada comprises about 60% farmers, 30% pastoralist and 10% traders. The Rigale river, the main source of irrigation, is located on the frontline, with roughly half of the population of Bada on either riverbank. Farming activities using the river's flood waters have largely halted due to the war, affecting the local sorghum and maize crops. ERREC has distributed food aid to the population on the Eritrean side. The health center moved from Bada to Ghelalo which is at a 115 km distance and mobile health workers visit the area regularly.

[...]

There are three IDP camps in the Northern Red Sea zone area: Harena, Mekete, and Denden. They accommodate a total of 47,541 displaced persons." (GOE/UN February 2001, pp. 59-60)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

IDPs move out of camps and closer to home areas (February 2001)

- IDPs outside camps trying to stay close to their homes in order to carry agricultural activities
- Some IDPs have left camps to be closer to their villages, but remain in an IDPs situation in the Dehub region
- IDPs moving outside camps to progressively move closer to their home communities and access school facilities
- Patterns of movements closer to home areas observed rather to home areas further away from the Eritrean/Ethiopian border

"[IDPs outside Camps] lives in rural host communities, in towns or in areas close to their own homes or villages (many displaced have chosen to remain as close as possible to their homes in order to continue their agricultural activities). They either rent rooms or a home with relatives or friends scattered across Eritrea. Generally, it is very difficult to identify member of this group as they are inevitably linked to their host communities and share the same resources, services and economic hardships. Their return to their home areas is dependent on the establishment of the TSZ, progress made in peace process, and the marking/clearance of landmines and UXOs in the TSZ." (GOE/UN February 2001, pp.14-15)

"In most cases, IDPs outside camps [in the Dehub region] were previously, at one point, resident in camps and left those camps to be closer to their villages. One motive frequently sighted was the desire to be closer to their home communities in order to take advantage of facilities such as schools for their children. These IDPs are now sharing scarce resources with their host communities. There is no separate census or calculation as to the numbers in this group as they are included with the returnee population figures, but they nonetheless share many of the same needs. The most urgent needs of this group are to be found in the food sector (supplementary feeding) and the shelter and household items sector." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 36)

"The dire situation that prevailed in May and June of 2000 has been largely stabilised due to the combined efforts of the humanitarian community. The majority of the IDPs have now returned to their home communities, though many have not yet been able to return to their actual homes. Insecurity, the presence of landmines, lack of access, a severely disrupted economy and very weak social services are deterrents to return for many others and impede the resumption of normal, income-producing activities such as agriculture and small businesses." (UN February 2001, pp. 8-9)

"A clear relationship exists between the proximity of villages to the border and the levels of displacement and return movements. In Tsorona town itself, and villages close-by (including Mai Agam and Kudo Waida), the entire populations have been displaced and no return has taken place to date. North of the trench lines from the third offensive, some temporary return has taken place, mainly to assess the situation, to prepare for the planting season, and to graze cattle. Most of the IDPs from this area are currently residing in the camp at Alba.

Much work needs to be done to prepare for the return of IDPs to Tzorona and villages in the area. The reconstruction of Tzorona and restoration of basic infrastructure and services is the key to return to the southern cluster of villages. Both Mai Agam and Kudo Waida rely on Tzorona for most basic services (such as water, health, and education). Tzorona is also the centre of economic activity (market, shops, etc.).

A major obstacle to return in this area is the presence of large quantities of mines and UXOs. Mine/UXO clearance and marking must be completed for the entire sub-zone before any serious return movements can begin. This is due to the fact that a large portion of the population relies on livestock rearing and must move cattle throughout the area in search of pasture and water." (ICC 1 May 2001)

People seeking refugee in secure locations outside the reach of Ethiopian forces (September 2000)

- Concern that over-stretching of host communities may cause new IDP flow toward camps (August 2000)
- IDPs from eight sub-regions in Dehub being hosted by four that remain "safe"

"ERREC note a number of IDPs from the hosting communities in the Quatit and Tserona sub-regions moving to Alba camp. Alba camp currently has approximately 14,000 residents. It has a capacity for 20,000, however, there are concerns about the provision of shelter and blankets for the new arrivals. Given the number of IDPs living in host communities and the overstretching of host community resources, there is concern that this sort of movement may develop into a trend." (ICC 19 August 2000)

"With the outbreak of conflict 12 May 2000 (third offensive) there were large-scale population movements. Once again IDPs were mainly from the Gash-Barka and Dehub Zones as these were the areas most affected by the conflict. Initially, IDPs were from the areas close to the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, from insecure areas and those occupied by Ethiopian forces. As Ethiopian forces pushed further inland new displacements occurred as far north as Tessenai and Barantu. For many, they were displaced for the second time, leaving one camp for a new one in a safer location, generally further north. New camps were established in Gash-Barka and Dehub Zones and for the first time the Northern Red Sea Zone. In addition to the camps officially established by the Eritrean Government, a number of temporary settlements sprung up where people congregated close to water sources in secure locations. Over recent months, these have either been relocated to official camps or have become official camps in their own right. People also fled to remote areas and an estimated 50,000 fled the border to Sudan to the safety of three refugee camps there (Lafa, Gulusa and Shegreb)." (ICC 25 September 2000)

Movement patterns immediately before the cease-fire started on 18 June 2000:

"Dehub:

[...]

Almost the entire population of Adi Keih has left the town, and the population of Halai village has doubled (to between 4,000 - 6,000 est.) as people from the Adi Keih area have been absorbed. Host communities are overwhelmed and their already meager resources inadequate to meet the crisis confronting them. Eight of the zone's twelve sub-regions are affected, leaving 4 to host the entire population. Setimi is reported to be hosting over 30,000 IDPs from the Tserona area alone.

Hailai serves as the distribution site for a group of twenty two villages in the area which house an estimated 14,000 IDPs. A five day supply of food has been distributed and the next distribution is expected in the coming days.

Gash Barka:

Recent reoccupation of the Tessenei and Guluj areas by Ethiopian forces has again caused large IDP movement towards Adi Gebrai, Telata Asher and the Sudanese border. IDPs have also been reported moving to larger urban areas in the Anseba and Maekel regions of the country, such as Adi Tekelezan, Halhal, Asmat and cities such as Keren and Asmara, thus putting further strain on already overstressed host communities. Approx-imately 150,000 people had previously been in the 'hovering zone' along the border between Ghirmaika, Tessenei and Omhajer." (ICC 17 June 2000)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of movement

Boundary demarcation will entail exchange of people as well as land (October 2002)

- Local inhabitants must be given the choice to stay or leave their lands

Q: I think when you say there will be some demarcation according to the decision from the Border Commission, there will be an exchange of people, not only land. Some people to Eritrea and some other people to Ethiopia. So if there is any problem involving this issue, how are you making yourself ready to solve such problems?

A: Someone asked me that two weeks ago and I think I said that is something that has to be discussed with both Parties. This not something UNMEE undertakes on its own. The SRSG is certainly thinking about it very seriously as we are moving closer to that phase and I'm sure it will soon be taken up with the Parties. (As implied by Security Council resolution 1434 operative paragraph 2)" (UNMEE, 18 October 2002)

"The peace process is in good hands. Following the historic decision of the Boundary Commission, the process is moving forward. Often we feel it is too slow, but this is a complicated business, and we are moving forward. An important, and most likely difficult time lies ahead: implementing the decision of the Boundary Commission will entail both the demarcation of the final boundary, as well as those transfers of territory required under the decision. Local inhabitants must, pursuant to international human rights law, be given the choice to stay on their land, or move. The United Nations, which is already responsible for ensuring the continuance of the security commitments of the two parties, has also been tasked with facilitating the resolution of these kinds of problems, likely to affect individual lives.

I wish, in this regard, to make one final plea that local institutions need to be established to facilitate contact, communication, incident-response and incident management, problem-solving, and other key aspects of inter-community relations at the local level in the border areas. None of the arguments presented to date are strong enough to delay such meetings of concerned Eritrean and Ethiopian administrators, village elders, and security representatives any longer." (UNMEE, 31 October 2002)

Landmines remain the main danger for people in the Temporary Security Zone (June 2002)

- Mine accidents peaked in mid-2001 due to increased IDP return movements
- Efforts to clear mines following independence in 1993 ended as new war started in 1998
- Thousands of new mines laid during the 1998-2000 war

Question from Addis: Do the incidents and injuries that we have seen over the last few weeks represent an increase in the number of people injured in mine incidents? Is it a normal situation where each week a couple of people get injured in mines? Is there a sudden increase in this area?

Dave Edwards: It peaks and troughs, and there seems to be no rhyme or reason to it. There was last year, a definite peak in mid-year, and that was due to the IDP returns and a number of other issues." (UNMEE, 28 June 2002)

"Eritrea's mine problem is substantial. According to Government estimates, between 500,000 and 1,000,000 mines were laid in Eritrea during the war for independence and the subsequent border conflict with Ethiopia. The already serious mine-related problems are exacerbated by the presence of a further 3 million UXOs resulting from the wars of the past decades.

Efforts made by the Government to clear mines following independence in 1993 were aggravated by the use of thousands of new mines during the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia. During the latter period, the displacement of populations within Eritrea exposed large groups to the immediate threat of mines, especially as they attempted to return to their homes following the signing Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in June 2000. Although information on areas that remain under Ethiopian occupation is generally scarce, and little is known about the condition of groups that remained in these areas, it is safe to say that many have indeed been exposed to the highly mined areas adjacent to the border." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 23)

"Regarding displacement, a similar pattern is distinguishable. In villages south of the trench lines and close to the southern boundary of the TSZ, no permanent residents remain due to security and mine-related concerns (although a number of herders could be seen grazing livestock in the area). Although most villagers from locations north of the trench lines still reside in IDP camps such as Alba, many have been able to make trips to their largely intact villages in order to appraise the situation. A large number of such temporary returnees were encountered in Gensebo, Mai Wurai, and Beatshemati and it is assumed that large-scale return to these locations will commence shortly.

In terms of urgent needs observed, mine/UXO-related interventions are considered of the highest priority. Although the mine risk may be lower in areas north of the trench lines, it should be noted that as many villagers in the area rely on livestock-rearing, herds are moved throughout the area in search of pasture and water. Urgent mine awareness and clearance/marketing campaigns will be necessary to ensure the safety of returning populations. As large numbers of mines and UXOs remain in southern areas, interventions of this nature will also be necessary before work can be done to prepare abandoned villages for the return of populations." (ICC 1 May 2001)

"Even at this stage, however, it is clear that the mine/unexploded ordnance threat in the Temporary Security Zone, and in adjacent areas, is very real. It places UNMEE troops at risk, as evidenced by the two separate landmine strikes involving Canadian contingent armoured vehicles in March, as well as an earlier explosion affecting a HALO survey team vehicle on 20 February. The threat to the civilian population is far greater. Mine and unexploded ordnance accidents are increasing, currently being reported at the rate of about one per day within the Temporary Security Zone. The real figure, taking into account unreported accidents, may be significantly higher.

[...]

Although internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia, who have largely returned to their home areas, appear to recognize landmine and unexploded ordnance dangers, as mentioned above, the presence of mines still presents a significant threat to life and an obstacle to the full restoration of livelihoods along a significant portion of the border zone. Growing pressure to cultivate, collect firewood and graze animals is expected to result in a gradual increase in casualties. Realizing that the actual removal of mines in the former conflict zones is going to take many years — even with the significant World Bank loan being used for demining — the need for expanding and improving mine-awareness training among affected communities has become more urgent. Current constraints in Ethiopia include the lack of complete information on the

location and composition of minefields, insufficient funding for technical assistance/capacity-building and mine-awareness training." (UN SC 19 June 2001, paras. 25, 27)

"Landmines remain a major threat in the Temporary Security Zone and in areas adjacent to it. While the number of officially reported mine and unexploded ordnance incidents was lower than expected, particularly in view of the large number of internally displaced persons returning to the Zone in recent months, it still remains high. From 1 June to 31 August 2001, eight civilians were killed and 24 were injured in mine and unexploded ordnance incidents in the Zone and adjacent areas." (UN SC 5 September 2001, para.15)

Physical security

Eritrea forces UNMEE to suspend de-mining activities along the border (June 2006)

- Eritrea's restriction on UNMEE helicopter flights restricted de-mining activities in border areas which are also areas of return for IDPs

IRIN, 10 October 2005:

"The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) said on Friday that it had suspended its mine clearance activities in Eritrea after the government imposed a ban on the mission's helicopter flights. [...] 'We cannot carry out demining activities without a helicopter on standby because if there is an accident we would have no way of taking that person out'. [...] A 2004 survey of Eritrea indicated that 481 communities - totalling 655,000 people - were socially and economically affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO)."

As reported in the regular UNMEE press updates, demining has since resumed along parts of the border.

Bomb blast raises concern over security in Gash Barka (June 2004)

There are at least 35,887 IDPs leaving in Gash Barka that are in need of continuous protection.

"Due to the bomb blast incident in Barentu on the 25 May 2004, the issue of security has become of concern in Gash Barka. The Field Security Coordination Officer (FSCO)-Mr. Brian Drayner visited Barentu and met with the governor and other local government authorities. He later met with staffs of UN agencies on 27 May 2004 and briefed them on the official report from the governor's office on the number of deaths and injuries sustained as a result of the 25th bomb blast in Barentu. Consequently, emphasis was placed on MOSS compliances and Mine Awareness Training for each and every UN staff, in particular drivers. Agencies were also advised to use at least two vehicles for the routes leading to Shambuko and Gerenfit.

At the monthly humanitarian coordination meeting held under the auspices of OCHA on 2 June 2004, agencies reported the resumption of visits to project sites and the distribution of relief items." (UN OCHA, 17 June 2004)

12 years of independence, human rights organisations express concern (May 2003)

“Although the war [between Eritrea and Ethiopia 1998-2000] was ended by a peace agreement, signed by both sides in December 2000, Asmara has remained jittery and this has led to a tough government policy, which some say amounts to a crackdown on political dissent.

"The war has so deeply scarred Eritrea that it seems no longer able to define itself except in relation to its opposition to Ethiopia," said one political observer. But the Eritrean government rejects this view. It insists it is acting to preserve its territorial security and to keep its borders safe. To this end, it defends the arrest of 11 prominent politicians and the closure of the private press in 2001 on the grounds of "national security", and denies that people are arrested for expressing their views.

"People are free to write whatever they want, they are free to express their opinions," acting Information Minister Ali Abdu Ahmed told IRIN.

However, human rights organisations have expressed concern about the growing number of detainees in Eritrea's jails, saying that very often they are held incommunicado for long periods of time, without charge and with no recourse to an independent court. According to the US State Department, Eritrea's "poor" human rights record worsened still further last year." (IRIN, 16 July 2003)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Assistance to IDPs (June 2006)

An estimated 8,800 displaced households living in the drought-affected regions of Debub and Gash Barka will be provided basic non-food items (family kits with blankets, jerry cans, etc), psychosocial care and support, and mine risk education.

Deteriorating humanitarian situation (May 2005)

- Vulnerable groups facing food insecurity
- Reintegration package needed for IDPs, expellees and returnees from Sudan
- Basic social services and facilities needed to sustain the reintegration
- Temporary shelter for 8,000 IDP households need to be replaced

UN OCHA, 5 May 2005, p.3

“Over and above of the food insecurity, alarmingly high malnutrition, poor supply of water and return and reintegration challenges, the economy has been deteriorating. Currently, majority of households are already buying more of their food at higher prices and for a longer period this year, they are likely to have exhausted their asset bases or liquid cash rendering them highly food insecure. As a result, these households are resorting to extreme coping measures, such as skipping meals and selling off productive household assets. Enough food aid supply would halt the further erosion of household assets and protect overly stressed livelihoods.

Therefore, to supply vulnerable households with standard emergency relief assistance such as

- 221,000 MT of cereals, pulses and oil;
- 15,000 MT of supplementary and therapeutic food supply;
- Provision of water and sanitation to over 250,000 drought affected people;
- Provision of basic health service;
- Different level of reintegration package for 120,000 returnees from Sudan and 30,000 IDPs/expellees;
- Replacement of temporary shelter for 8,000 IDP households living in camps;
- Bridging of over 5000 MT seed deficit and farming tools for the current and upcoming agricultural activities for poor farmers;

Generally, to avert the worsening humanitarian situation from maturing to full-blown crises, donors need to respond immediately and adequately to the CAP 2005 and other appeals.

SG Report, 7 March 2005, p.4-5

“In Eritrea, the overall humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Successive years of drought, inadequate rains and existing economic policies have seriously undermined crop and livestock production. The food situation is expected to be exacerbated further in 2005 because of the poor crop harvest in September/October 2004. It is also expected that an estimated 2.3 million people, about two thirds of the population of the country, will require food assistance at varying levels throughout 2005. The World Food Programme (WFP) has reduced beneficiary

rations significantly in an attempt to stretch the food supplies into the second quarter of the year: only internally displaced persons in camps will continue to receive a food ration fully covering their daily caloric requirement, while the rations of all other categories of beneficiaries will be reduced.

21. In addition, Eritrea needs to combat infant and maternal malnutrition. The deficit of 24,000 metric tons in supplementary feeding has made it difficult for humanitarian agencies to reverse the prevailing high malnutrition rates. Despite the enormous strides made in lowering infant mortality, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea still pose a major threat to child survival in the country. While HIV prevalence appears to be stabilizing at 2.4 per cent, infection levels vary considerably, highlighting the need to intensify and refine the focus of prevention efforts. Meanwhile, water shortages and the deterioration of water quality are being reported in most parts of the country. Sanitation coverage in rural Eritrea is also very low, with only 3.6 per cent of the population having access to improved sanitation facilities. This poses additional health risks to children.

22. Some 19,000 internally displaced persons who recently returned to their places of origin inside the Temporary Security Zone in Sector West will require basic social services and facilities for sustainable reintegration.”

Returning refugees from Sudan in need of basic facilities for reintegration (May 2004)

- Since 2000, at least 119,000 Eritreans have returned home from Sudan

UNOCHA, 31 May 2004, p. 13

“Since the beginning of 2004, 7,779 Eritreans have returned home bringing the total of those that have returned since 2000 to a total of some 119,000 people. Although WFP is providing assistance to returnee households until they are able to obtain their first harvest, most of the refugees are returning to communities in Gash Barka, a region that is severely affected by the war and drought leaving the population in desperate need of basic facilities. At the same time, there is also a critical need to provide reintegration assistance to returnees and to support communities’ absorption capacities. The target number of Eritrean returnees from the Sudan for 2004 is 35,000.”

UN OCHA, 16 July 2004

“UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of 367 Eritrean refugees from Sudan on 2 and 10 July 2004, the last organised repatriation operations before the onset of the long rainy season. The total number of assisted Eritrean returnees for the first six months of 2004 stands at 8,275 people. Since 2000, UNHCR together with ERREC have assisted 119,903 people return to Eritrea in safety and dignity. The voluntary repatriation operation will resume in October 2004 once roads become accessible after the rains. Large-scale organised voluntary repatriation will phase out on 31 December 2004 as the process nears full term. From 2005 UNHCR, will continue to help those wishing to return on an individual basis.”

IDPs in need of relief assistance (April 2004)

- Among the vulnerable groups are 185, 569 IDPs returnees and 16,845 rural expellees in camps and other settlement areas
- Basic needs such as food, water, health, shelter and education are yet to be met to avoid deterioration of the situation
- Damaged infrastructure in areas of origin of IDPs need to be rehabilitated

- At Koronko camp 6,750 IDPs shelter under worn out tents, limited access to water with insufficient relief rations
- Failure in rain in 2003 and delays in pledges and receipt of funds worsen the humanitarian situation of the vulnerable groups

IRIN, 17 March 2004

“About two-thirds of the population live below the poverty line, and in some small rural towns the figure leaps up to 80 percent due to the dislocation of the population and the return of hundreds of thousands of Eritreans from Sudan. Most of them had been there for years, after they fled during Eritrea's 30-year liberation war which broke out in 196.”

ACT, January 2004

“The recent border war with Ethiopia and the tension that still exists between the two countries continues to perpetuate the presence of IDPs, and deportees from Ethiopia. The country also has many people who have returned from Sudan but are still living in IDP camps and are all in need of relief assistance.”

UNOCHA, 31 January 2004

“IDPs continue to suffer the consequences of war and drought. Some 58,953 internally displaced people still present in Eritrea, inside and outside camps, remain unable to return to their places of origin. Although much has been accomplished to assist these IDPs, many basic needs - food, water, health, shelter, and education - are not yet fully met. A continuous effort is required to avoid a deterioration of the situation. The UN and partners would welcome a return of IDPs to their home villages. However, this confronts reality on the ground where demarcation of the contested border is yet to take place, damaged infrastructure has to be rehabilitated, and the pace of demining has to be accelerated. With the launch of the 2004 Consolidated appeal in November 2003, this year will hopefully see the development of new projects/activities in areas affected by war. In addition to IDPs, there are still about 16,845 rural expellees in these camps and other settlement areas.

UN OCHA, 2 April 2004

“A recent assessment carried out by the OCHA Field Office at Koronko Camp in Gash Barka revealed dire conditions facing the 6,750 IDPs there. The population totalling 2001 households, fled their homes in Badme, Deda, Anbors and Tsebra and were now sheltering under worn out tents and surviving entirely on relief rations mainly wheat (15kg), oil (900mg) and beans (1200mg) per person per month. According to the OCHA report, the camp has limited access to water with four drills not working. The sanitary conditions were described as fairly poor with the camp possessing no functional latrines and people having to spend 4-5 hours a day to collect 10 litres of water. The IDPs also need kerosene, firewood and jerry cans. The report also examined the educational prospects within the camp, which has an Elementary and Junior High School. While there is little difference in enrolment for male and female in grades 1-3, the report noted a significant decrease in female enrolment from grade 4-8. There was also a decrease in male enrolment from grade 6-8. Both the Elementary School and the Junior High face shortages of textbooks. There is no school feeding programme and no teacher's residence. The report concludes that despite the support received over the years, the IDPs are caught in a cycle of insufficient relief rations, poor sanitary conditions, worn out tents and poor access to water. In order to meet basic humanitarian needs, these issues must be addressed says the report.”

IRIN, 22 January 2004

“About 1.9 million war-affected Eritreans, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their hosts, returning refugees and expellees, need humanitarian assistance this year, Simon Nhongo, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Eritrea said.

The main requirement, Nhongo added, was food assistance following the recent arrival of the delayed short rains which did not have a significant impact. Presently, only 22 percent of the country's annual 612,000 mt of cereal requirements was available.

"Due mainly to failure in rain in 2003, Eritrea [will be] heavily dependent on timely and adequate food aid in 2004," he said. "Unless responses come forth quickly and in adequate quantities, a difficult condition is anticipated to set in early in 2004."

[...]

...although a major famine crisis had been averted in Eritrea last year, the momentum needed to be maintained through a timely and increased response to the UN's 2004 consolidated appeal, some two-thirds of which was for basic food needs.

In 2003, Eritrea received 75.6 percent of the requested \$160 million. However, Nhongo said, delays in pledges and receipt of funds had had impact negatively on the timely delivery of aid.

At the Geneva meeting, the World Food Programme said its current in-country stocks would cover only three months of food needs and were expected to run out in March. It called for early commitment from donors, saying it took a minimum of two months to transport food stocks from Europe and three from North America.

Nhongo said several in-country efforts focusing on moving Eritrea out of its current emergency were being developed. These included an Integrated Recovery Programme based on medium- and long-term needs, which was awaiting government approval, a Food Security Strategy, an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and a proposal targeting IDPs and host countries affected by the Eritrea/Ethiopia border demarcation.”

UNOCHA, 31 January 2004

“Although the town of Adi Quala benefits from three water points, Mai Alba IDP camp continues to suffer from acute water shortages. IDPs walk long distances every day to fetch clean water. Others collect water from unprotected sources. The nearest clinic and hospital are in Adi Quala. Consequently, only very small children get carried to the health facilities while sick older children remain at home and make do with drugs obtained by their parents from pharmacies when they are able to get to the town. Access to education is also constrained by the long distance of the school from the camp. Children below 10 years are therefore not allowed to make the long journey to school.

[...]

Living conditions for these camp dwellers is as difficult as the road leading to their camp. The need for increased access to safe water, transportation for food distribution to save the IDPs the long journey to the town for their rations and access to milling centres cannot be overestimated.”

Health

Critical general health situation (June 2006)

UNICEF, 11 June 2006, p. 5, 9, 10:

"In Eritrea, infectious diseases including acute respiratory infections (30%) and diarrhoea (19%) are the leading causes of U5MR. Malnutrition underpins over 60% of U5MR. While in 2005 only one wild polio case was detected in Eritrea, infectious diseases such as meningococcal meningitis, polio and measles pose a risk and require a coordinated response among neighbouring countries. In 2006 there have been over 20 confirmed cases of meningococcal meningitis and a vaccination campaign was planned for early May. Unfortunately the campaign was postponed due to lack of vaccines on the global market. Taking into consideration that about 20% of children are not immunized against measles the risk of a measles outbreak is high, however there have been no confirmed cases as of mid May.

[...]

A nation-wide measles and Vitamin A campaign will begin in June, covering 580,000 under-five children (including recent/planned resettled IDP children). Distribution of Insecticide Treated Bed nets (ITNs) is-ongoing, with special focus on Gash Barka and Anseba where there is the highest malaria prevalence. An additional 10,000 will be ordered using the new funding from US Fund for UNICEF.

[...]

UNICEF assists a total of 42 therapeutic feeding centers catering for about 1,000 severely malnourished children. Supplementary and therapeutic feeding supplies have been ordered to cover the current case load and an increase of about 30% planned. The Ministry of Health has agreed to expand the therapeutic feeding to an additional 10 centers (up from 42 to 52) and requested UNICEF to facilitate the introduction of community-based management of severe malnutrition. Even with this increase, the coverage of TFC and SFC is below 50% and needs to be urgently expanded. High protein biscuits (BP5) for supplementary feeding will be provided to about 11,500 malnourished under-five children in Gash Barka and other drought affected regions for three months. Provided additional funds are available, another 50,000 under-five children in the worst affected regions of Gash Bark and Northern Red Sea will be protected against malaria by providing Insecticide Treated Nets. Due to departure of NGOs, there is an urgent need to expand the network of current TFCs and SFCs through capacity building of MoH and through rapid development of community based management of severe malnutrition. This will require additional technical assistance and resources for capacity development, training of staff and for supplies such as Plumpy Nut."

Health and nutrition situation seriously deteriorating (May 2006)

- Global acute malnutrition as high as 30%
- Malnutrition in Eritrea is 2-3 times higher than in countries with similar humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa
- Funding of the health and nutrition sector remains slow and delayed increasing morbidity and mortality

CAP Horn of Africa, Projects, Version 2, 24 May 2006, p.43, 44:

"The most recent nutrition surveys show GAM ranging from about 9% to 24%. The Vitamin A deficiency is still prevalent and infectious diseases including acute respiratory infections (30%) and diarrhoea (19%) are leading causes of U5MR. Reaching children 9-59 months of age with measles immunisation is planned as per the CCC using other resources. New formula of the low osmolarity, ORS, and essential drugs including antibiotics will be made available for diarrhoea and ARI case management."

[...]

The Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea zobas, are currently facing serious drought affecting about 350,000 people. Primary health care systems which were severely affected by the war are now affected by the continuing drought impact while health demands of returnees are

increasing. Diarrhoea is a main cause of morbidity among infants and children. Malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, along with malnutrition, are responsible for about 60% of outpatient and 40% of inpatient morbidity and 56% of all inpatient deaths. Lack of adequate coverage for high-risk pregnancies accounts for the unacceptable levels of maternal mortality. Measles coverage is too low to prevent outbreaks. This project is complementing and consolidating the CERF funds related life saving interventions to reduce avoidable mortality and suffering resulting from food insecurity."

UN, 3 June 2003

"The overall objective of the Health and Nutrition Sector is to reduce mortality and morbidity due to malnutrition and prevent deterioration in Health of drought-affected populations. This will be achieved by providing supplementary and therapeutic feeding, carrying out vaccination campaigns, provision of micronutrients, strengthening of health and nutrition surveillance, training of health workers, community mobilisation and programme monitoring and coordination. The UN will now strive to implement blanket supplementary feeding to all under five children (431,156) making up 13.5% of the population, and pregnant and lactating women (159,688) who comprise about 5% of the population. A total of 5,174 children under the age of five will be targeted for therapeutic feeding on a monthly basis. A total of 1.3million children aged between 9 months to 14 years will be targeted for measles and vitamin A campaigns in September 2003.

The nutrition situation among children under the age of five in Eritrea has seriously deteriorated since 2001. Global acute malnutrition reaching as high as 30% in the past months - but averaging at 15-20% of under five year old children, was recorded in some sub-zobas (regions). In urban areas where little or no attention is currently given, malnutrition rates of up to 14% have been recorded. Global Malnutrition in Eritrea is 2-3 times higher than in countries with similar humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa. Malnourished children are 56% more likely to die from common childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea, anaemia, Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), measles or malaria. There is therefore an urgent need to control especially malnutrition and the vaccine preventable diseases like measles.

25 Therapeutic Feeding Centres have been established in all regions, treating nearly 500 severely malnourished children per month. 700 MTs of DMK/BP5 have been mobilised for the supplementary feeding of children, pregnant and lactating women. 81% of under-five children have been given Vitamin A supplement. In the fight against malaria, 65,000 cases have been treated at health facilities and 49,000 bed nets provided. The Health and Nutrition sector has been constrained by limited resources, lack of effective screening programme for children and lack of highly skilled workers. The lack of a national nutrition information system and the understaffing of the MoH nutrition unit make it very difficult, however, to determine the overall nutrition situation in the country.

No contributions have been received to address the reproductive health needs of the target populations. Nevertheless, some activities planned within the framework of the CAP 2002, have continued in 2003. This has included renovation of 9 health facilities in Debub and Gash Barka as well as the construction of a temporary hospital in Senafe. All construction and renovation work is expected to be finalised during the first half year of 2003. Further, contracts for temporary health workers have been extended for 2003, refresher courses have been carried out for TBAs (Traditional Birth Attendant) and community health workers and sensitisation workshops on safe motherhood have been conducted in communities.

[...]

Funding of the health and nutrition sector remains slow and delayed, resulting in a precarious situation for drought victims, especially women and children - increased morbidity and mortality is

expected without immediate support. Due to lack of funding plans to set up emergency obstetric services and blood banks for anaemic drought affected women and children were not implemented. Surveillance systems responsible for the collection, analysis of health-related and nutritional data, and monitoring of health situations remain weak. Communicable diseases like TB, measles and diarrhoeal diseases are rising putting a greater burden on the already strained health system."

Increase in malnutrition rates in Debub, Anseba and Gash Barka zobas (June 2006)

- Nutritional surveys have been carried out in Debub, Anseba and Gash Barka zobas.
- Generally high to very high malnutrition rates are reported
- General decline in food security and great dependency on food aid
- Only a minority has access to sufficient amounts of clean water

UNICEF, 11 June 2006, p.3:

"In Eritrea, according to survey undertaken in February 2006, GAM prevalence rates is high in Gash-Barka at 21%, representing deterioration from July/August 2005 where GAM prevalence rates was at 17.2%. Similarly, with regards to SAM, the prevalence rate increased from 1.3% in July/August 2005 to 2.3% in February 2006. The difference cannot be explained by seasonality alone as the recent survey was undertaken before the medium period (February to May) before hunger-gap (which is ifrom June to September) for Gash Barka, which means that this could be a real deterioration warranting immediate attention.

The Nutrition Unit in collaboration with the Expert Committee has finalized reports on the Nutritional Surveillance System (NSS) surveys for the rural areas of three zobas: Debub, Anseba, and Gash Barka, executed in July and August of this year. The following information is a summary of the findings of these surveys. The detailed reports, presenting the results on nutritional status and probable causal factors has been prepared and is available from the Ministry of Health, Nutrition Unit."

NFIS, October 2005:

"NSS results for zoba Debub, June 25 – July1

The average prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) for the whole region of zoba Debub according to the survey findings comes to 10.9% (weighted average), high by WHO standards. Only one case of kwashiorkor was identified. Looking in detail, the prevalence of GAM was found to be high in the macro-strata of Senafe, Dbarwa, and Adi Keih (13.9 [95% CI: 9.9-18.6], 11.3% [95% CI: 7.8-15.6], and 10.7% [95% CI: 7.2-15.1] respectively) and medium in Emni Haili and Adi Quala macro strata (9.0 % [95% CI: 5.9-13.1] and 8.2 % [95% CI: 5.2-12.2] respectively). Comparison with the results of last year same season (June 2004) shows overall statistically significant increase in acute malnutrition for the zoba as a whole ($p < 0.01$). The Senafe macro-stratum is showing the most significant increase of malnutrition (GAM) ($p < 0.01$), and the increase in Dbarwa macro stratum should also be noted ($p < 0.05$). These two strata are the main cause for the deterioration in nutritional status in the zoba as a whole. In the other strata, much smaller, not significant, increase in GAM was observed.

Chronic malnutrition was found to be very high (45.7%, weighted average) in the zoba, and is the highest in Senafe macro-stratum (52.6% [CI: 46.4-58.8]). The findings showed significant increase of stunting in Senafe stratum compared to the previous survey, while there was no significant change in the other macro-strata. The prevalence of chronic energy deficiency (under-nutrition) among mothers/caretakers of reproductive age of the surveyed children was found to be

high (35.4%), with the highest prevalence in the Adi Keih macro-stratum (43.6% [CI: 36.3-51.2]). The nutritional status of female adults in Debub showed no significant change compared to previous NSS surveys. Three macro-strata: Adi Quala, Emni Haili and Adi Keih showed some increase while Dbarwa and Senafe showed some decrease, but, as already stated, this was not statistically significant.

NSS results for zoba Anseba, July 16 – 23

The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) in zoba Anseba was found to be very high by WHO standards (15%, population weighted average). Results showed a significant difference in mean weight for height z-scores among the macro strata except between Hagaz and Gheleb macro strata. As in all previous surveys Selea macro-stratum results showed the highest prevalence of GAM (32.6% [CI: 27.2-38.4]), with no case of oedema. The Asmat and Hagaz macrostrata were found to have a relatively better nutritional situation (than Selea), with prevalence of GAM respectively 15.2% [CI: 11.1-20.0] and 12.4% [CI: 8.8-16.8]. The rate of global acute malnutrition was lowest in Gheleb macro stratum (7.4% [CI: 4.6-11.0]), medium severe by international standard. Prevalence of chronic energy deficiency (under-nutrition) among mothers was found to be very high in Selea (57.7% [CI: 50.1-64.7]) and Asmat (54.3% [CI: 46.6-61.8]) macro-strata, whereas in Hagaz and Gheleb macro-strata 41.6% [CI: 34.4-49.2]) and 40.6% [CI: 33.5-48.1] of the surveyed women were assessed to be energy deficient, respectively.

As compared to the results of January 2005, nutritional status (looking at GAM) of the zone had been deteriorating significantly by a minimum change of 1.2%, mainly due the high increase in prevalence of under-nutrition in Selea macro stratum, from 17.2% in January to 32.6% in the current survey. However, this high increase in the prevalence of GAM in Selea should be looked and interpreted with caution, since quality control showed there seemed to be some problems in measurement accuracies. For the other macro strata, the prevalence of GAM was similar to January result with very minor fluctuations.

NSS results for zoba Gash Barka, July 27 – August 3

The average prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) for the whole region of zoba Gash Barka based on the survey results comes to 17.2%, very high by WHO standards. Only one case of kwashiorkor was identified. Looking in detail, the prevalence of GAM was found to be very high in the macrostrata of Gogne, Goluj, and Dighe (21.5% [95% CI: 16.6-26.9], 23.0% [95% CI: 18.3-28.3], and 17.1% [95% CI: 13.2-21.9] respectively) and high in Molqi and Logo Anseba macro stratum (10.2 % [95% CI: 6.8-14.5], 11.0 % [95% CI: 7.6-15.2] respectively). Comparison with the results of last year June shows overall a slight decrease in acute malnutrition, which is not statistically significant. Only, Goluj macro-strata showed an increase, but also not statistically significant. Chronic malnutrition was found to be very high (43.1%, weighted average), and showed hardly any change compared to previous surveys.

The prevalence of chronic energy deficiency (under-nutrition) among mothers and caretakers of the surveyed children was still found to be very high (42%), particularly in the Gogne macro-stratum (45.7% [CI: 38.1-53.4]). The nutritional status of female adults of reproductive age in Gash Barka showed not statistically significant change compared to previous NSS surveys. In two macro-strata a slight change could be noted: Gogne showed some decrease and Goluj showed some increase, but as already stated this was not statistically significant.

Follow-up

Since there seemed to be an increasing trend in malnutrition as compared to last year, and certainly not an improvement, it was decided between the MoH and WFP to do an intermediate rapid assessment in October/November. As the MoH was quite occupied with the Polio vaccination campaign, WFP offered to do most data collection. Fieldwork has been executed for zobas Gash Barka and Anseba, but analysis is still in process. The fieldwork for zoba Debub will be finalized soon. Causal factors Average Coping Strategy Index score had increased in all

regions zobas Anseba, Debub and Gash Barka, also the number of households applying coping strategies increased. Estimated food consumption in almost all surveyed macrostrata is below average minimum requirements of 2100 Kcal per person. These findings indicate a decrease in food security, resulting in high levels of dependency on food aid cereals and low variation in food. This is also reflected in a decline in nutritional status in most areas. The main problems in child feeding practices are late introduction of complementary food, and on the other hand early weaning (before reaching two years). Also low feeding frequency (less than three times a day) is a factor in malnutrition, affecting about 20% of the children, but up to 60% in the areas like Selae with the highest malnutrition prevalence. Coverage and regularity of supplementary feeding in most areas is low, except for Asmat-Habero, and leave room for improved interventions to tackle under-nutrition in children and adult women in reproductive age. Infections and child disease are aggravating factors for malnutrition. The incidence of disease in the two weeks prior to the survey in June/July was as high as 50% in Anseba and 40% and 35% in zobas Gash Barka and Debub, respectively. These are high rates of morbidity and it is hoped that the further promotion of IMCI will be able to deal with this important causal factor.

The water supply and accessibility is poor in both zobas Debub and Anseba, as well as in the highland areas of zoba Gash Barka. Only around 8% of the households has access to adequate amounts of safe water. In total only 30% to 40% of the households has access to protected water sources. The situation in zoba Gash Barka is relatively better. In total 60% of the surveyed population was using water from protected sources, but still only 24% had access to enough water. Water scarcity is an important causal factor for waterborne diseases and lack of hygiene, affecting eventually nutritional status through infection and disease.

Since the surveys were carried out during June-August which is the "Hungry Period", it is not surprising that the results of the surveys show such Global Acute malnutrition. It is therefore recommended that readers have to take into account when interpreting the prevalence of Global Acute malnutrition."

Large-scale population movements and war-related displacement are conducive to the spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs (November 2002)

- Potential rapid spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eritrea is cause of serious concern as neighbouring Ethiopia hosts 3d highest HIV population rate worldwide
- War-induced massive population movements between Eritrea and Ethiopia, family dislocation, uprooting and conscription in the armed forces are all factors conducive to the spread of HIV/AIDS
- HIV/AIDS cases in Eritrea rose from 8 in 1988 to over 13,500 cases in 2001
- Cultural and status considerations often prevent many women to initiate discussions on safer sex
- 90% of households in IDP camps are headed by women
- No maternal health facilities are available in temporary IDP camps

OCHA, 31 August 2002, p.14

"Neighbouring Ethiopia is host to the 3rd highest HIV population rate in the world. Contrasted with the 70% illiteracy rate in Eritrea, there is real danger of an easy spread across the border once relations between the two countries normalize. 3% of Eritrea's population is HIV-infected, including 22.8% of female sex workers and 4.6% of the armed forces. WFP is providing food to 10,000 HIV affected families in the country and Denmark has give a \$350,000 grant to UNFPA and the MOH to manage the spread of the disease in 2002."

UN, November 2002, p.25

"With increasing mobility of returnees, IDPs, and soon to be demobilised soldiers, threats in increasing STD and HIV infections will be high contributing to other opportunistic infections [...]. Although the HIV infection rate in Eritrea is still relatively low, the prevailing complex emergency threatens to accelerate the spread of the infection in the country."

UN November 2002, pp.10-11

"There are concerns about the increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS, which rose from 8 in 1988 to over 13,500 cases in 2001. It is estimated that approximately 60,000-70,000 Eritreans are currently infected with HIV, which could increase significantly [...] with demobilisation and increased cross border movement."

UN, November 2002, p.27

"The HIV/AIDS epidemic is perhaps the gravest health threat faced by Eritrea. The recent border conflict with Ethiopia (1998-2002) and the recurrent drought have resulted in large-scale population movements that included internal displacement, influx of deportees from Ethiopia and returnees from Sudan. Mobilisation of young men and women to the military has also contributed by creating a social and economic environment that is conducive for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Intertwined with this is violence against women, including rape and other physical trauma that can be experienced during conflict and displacement.

[...]

Social and cultural norms put girls and young women at greater risk to HIV infection than boys and men, as they lack control over economic resources and retain lower social and educational status. Fear of physical violence limits their control over sexual encounters. The threat of rape, domestic violence, and occasional abandonment create difficulties for women trying to initiate or sustain discussions on safe sex and condom use. In addition, many women, who are in monogamous relationship, do not suspect that they are at risk of infection and thus do not take the necessary precautions."

UN November 2001, p.63

"Women head an estimated 90% of households in IDP camps, and the majority of them had to leave their properties behind. Now, while returning to their places of origin, they have little, if any, incomes on which they can rely in order to re-establish themselves. Social services have become an all-important element in their lives. Their already poor health status is further compromised by insufficient health services and a low awareness of basic Reproductive Health (RH) information and issues such as danger signs during pregnancy and risks associated with poor hygiene and STI. Temporary camps have been established where there are no maternity services or trained staff. Some displaced families live in host communities, further straining the ability of a fragile health system to provide adequate RH services – especially maternal and emergency obstetric care."

Food

Cash-for-work is to replace free food distribution in this extremely food-insecure country (May 2006)

Government of Eritrea, 3 May 2006:

After food distribution effectively came to a halt in October 2005, the Eritrean government published an alternative to free food distribution with it considers detrimental to the development of Eritrea and its independence from the international community. In a 3May

2006 communication, the government introduced the concept of cash-for-work, replacing an earlier concept of food-for-work.

Reuters Foundation, 5 May 2006:

One of the world's poorest and most aid-dependent nations, Eritrea, hopes a new cash-for-work scheme will help end its reliance on international relief. But with strained ties between the isolationist Horn of Africa nation's government and the foreign aid community, relief workers are still anxious about the fate of food aid held up in warehouses. Some aid has appeared for sale on the street.

The U.N. estimated last year two-thirds of Eritrea's 3.6 million people needed aid. But President Isaias Afwerki's government is eager to become self-reliant, believing foreign powers have sometimes used food relief for political pressure.

State media were this week singing the praises of a drive to replace handouts with direct payments for useful labour to replace "creeping dependency" with "a good work ethic."

An official article, published this week on the Information Ministry's website shabait.com as well as other media, said aid was a "stop-gap measure" and "a transient instrument" while Eritrea's economy recovered from its 30-year independence war. Late last year, the government cut distribution of free food by more than 94 percent -- from 1.3 million people to 72,000.

Aid workers said a "food-for-work" scheme considered by the government last year has not been implemented. It appears to have been replaced by the so-called "cash-for-work" programme. This policy would, the article said, "maintain the incentive to work and would eliminate the tendency to be continually aid dependent."

Under the new policy, individuals would help with food production schemes such as irrigation, the article said. "The government of Eritrea hopes that all our partners will extend their support to this scheme," it said.

The article did not, however, say where the cash would come from or how Eritrea would cover short-term food needs.

Details of the new scheme began to trickle out last week when the U.N. Secretary General's Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Kjell Magne Bondevik, visited Asmara.

Touring drought-stricken countries in the Horn of Africa, Bondevik was unable to persuade Eritrea to release 100,000 tonnes of food locked in government warehouses.

Last month, aid workers feared the food aid might be rotting. Now they worry it is being milled or sold in breach of contract with the donors.

"We have no means of verifying that the cash will end up in the right hands," one said.

Five-litre containers of U.N. World Food Programme-refined canola oil -- a gift of Canada -- have been on sale for 300 nakfa (\$20) in at least one Asmara shop this week.

Aid workers say they respect the desire to be self-reliant, but worry they have no dialogue or information to organise a quick and appropriate response if a humanitarian crisis brews.

In the last nine years, Eritrea has only produced an average 30 percent of its cereal needs - though the figure has varied between eight and 70 percent each year - according to U.N. data."

IRIN, 24 October 2005:

Eritrea has stopped food aid distribution to more than one million people, in an apparent attempt by the government to reduce its reliance on foreign aid, according to aid officials in the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

After a poor harvest in 2004, Eritrea is one of the most food aid dependent countries in the world. The UN estimates that 2.3 million of the country's 3.6 million people require food aid this year. "General food distribution to drought affected victims has temporarily stopped for both UN and NGOs," a diplomat, who declined to be named, said.

In September, the UN and the US government received authorisation to distribute food to just 72,000 Eritreans, down from roughly 1.3 million in August, the diplomat said. Aid officials said the reason given for the sharp reduction in distribution of food aid was a government policy shift from free food distribution to food-for-work. Eritrea is keen to reduce its dependence on foreign aid. However, aid officials said the change in policy would take months to implement, if not more.

September and October are hungry months in Eritrea, because the previous harvest has run out and the harvest for 2006 is still in the fields. "We need to distribute the food while the policy change goes through," a UN official, who requested anonymity, said.

A better harvest is expected this year - possibly three times better than 2004 - after good seasonal rains and plans to cultivate 550,000 hectares - 23 percent more than in 2004. Aid officials said Eritrea would still remain heavily dependent on food aid.

Some aid officials said a food-for-work policy in Eritrea would fail. As many as 300,000 Eritreans are doing national service, and conscript labour is used in many economic sectors, including agriculture and infrastructure projects. However, distribution of food aid to the military would go against many humanitarian principles, aid officials said. ***(The food-for-work policy has in the meantime been replaced by a cash-for-work policy).***

IRIN, 27 July 2005:

The water table throughout the country has dropped by several metres, relief workers and government officials say, thanks to a drought that has dragged on for years. "We have had very, very little rain, especially in the past three or four years," Ali Abdu, Eritrea's information minister, told IRIN in May. "Almost one-third of our population was attacked by that."

Some 2.3 million people in Eritrea, almost two-thirds of the population, depend on varying levels of food aid. And although 80 percent of the population is rural, the country only produced 85,000 mt of cereals in 2004 - just 15 percent of its annual requirement and 47 percent of its average harvest over the last twelve years. One million Eritreans are likely to go hungry this year, unless donors can step up their food aid, a senior government official said.

While it would be easy to pin the blame on long-term drought and the exhaustion of coping strategies, relief workers in Eritrea say these are not the only reasons for the country's precarious food-security situation.

"Food security is more complicated than getting enough rain, or even producing enough food," said a relief worker who did not want to be named. He felt that the failure to produce adequate food crops since 1998 was also linked to Eritrea's conflict with Ethiopia and its preparations to strengthen defences on the border.

[...]

So, how has a border dispute affected Eritrea's rapidly declining food security? The most obvious impact is the redistribution of resources and manpower: An estimated 300,000 people are currently serving in Eritrea's military instead of contributing to the country's economy. In addition, government sources said, the dispute has forced Eritrea to put a lot of its scarce resources into military spending. Along with fuel shortages and rising prices of consumer goods, the already weak economy has declined.

"We are dealing with four years of consecutive drought," Yemane Gebremeskal, presidential advisor and chief government spokesman, told IRIN in an interview at his office in May. "This

[drought] has eroded coping mechanisms and is putting severe pressure on the government. The overall security situation has also [had] an impact."

Following an assessment visit to Eritrea at the end of 2004, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in a January 2005 report: "Due to continued critical shortage of labour, the wage rates this year have been observed to be very high. "Since farmers cannot afford to pay such high wages [...] critical field operations such as weeding have generally been neglected," the WFP/FAO report added.

A separate report issued in April by the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Net), said: "The absence of many young men for national mobilisation reduces the range of household income opportunities and coping strategies, such as livestock-raising and off-farm employment."

It is important to note that some of Eritrea's most fertile land is within the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), a 25-km wide demilitarised zone that runs along Eritrea's southern boundary and is still patrolled by UN peacekeepers.

The TSZ once accounted for a significant proportion of Eritrean food production. Currently, an estimated 50,000 internally displaced Eritreans live away from the TSZ, unable to return to their ruined villages until the last of the landmines planted there during the war are cleared.

Eritrea's borders with both Ethiopia and Sudan remain officially closed while tensions in the region persist. The border with Sudan was closed in late 2002, with both sides accusing each other of supporting armed opposition in the other's territory.

The border closures have affected the agricultural sector in two significant ways, by limiting grazing areas and by restricting access to markets. Pastoralists can no longer follow rains across national boundaries. Regional tensions have severely limited the coping strategies of pastoralists, who were once the powerhouse of Eritrean agriculture. The government has been encouraging pastoralists to settle, but adaptation has not been easy, sources say.

"We have not had a census for a long time, but pastoralism is still a very important sector," a source said. "Normally, if they move, they go in search of pasture. But now very few are moving because of the closed borders. So the pressure on forage is worse than ever before," he added.

The closed borders have also blocked a key supply of food, driving food prices higher. "The loss of access to Ethiopian and Sudanese food markets, on which Eritrea traditionally depended for about one-third of its primary food supply, may have contributed to the current escalation of food grains prices in Eritrea," said the FEWS Net report."

Main returnee areas Debub and Gash Barka traditionally generated more than 70 per cent of annual production (June 2003)

USCR, 2003:

"The government's actions effectively stopped the removal of tens of thousands of landmines from Eritrea's prime agricultural areas and adversely affected the return of thousands of refugees and internally displaced Eritreans. Recovery efforts were further stalled by Eritrea's limited skilled labor pool in returnee areas and the presence of relatively few local and international development agencies.

The main returnee areas of Debub and Gash Barka Zones had traditionally generated more than 70 percent of Eritrea's annual food production, but the aftermath of war, fear of landmines, and water shortages severely curtailed crop yields during the year.

Agricultural output during 2002 sank to its lowest level in a decade. Poor crop yields forced nearly half of the population to rely on humanitarian agencies for food. Approximately 60 percent of Eritreans were chronically malnourished, according to WFP. Nearly 100,000 livestock animals died during the last six months of the year because of drought, according to the government.

"The country faces a humanitarian crisis of serious proportions in terms of food supply and essential inputs for recovery for food protection," the UN reported in November."

Water and sanitation

Access to clean water is a significant problem (June 2006)

- Half a million people are acutely affected by water shortage
- UNICEF supports projects providing water to villages and schools
- In Senafe sub-zone six out of eight dams have dried up
- Water shortages have both health and hygiene risks

UNICEF, 11 June 2006, p.4, 7:

Access to safe water is a significant problem in Eritrea with approximately 54% of the rural population having access to water supply from protected sources even under the best of conditions. Due to recurrent droughts in the last 5 years many water sources have dried up and the water table has significantly dropped in most parts of the country. Although in 2005 slightly above average rainfall was recorded in most parts of the country, recharging the water table to pre-drought levels has not happened as replenishing depleted or dried up aquifers requires multiple seasons of consistent rainfall. Sanitation coverage in Eritrea is still very low, with only 3.6% of the rural population with access to improved sanitation facilities.

[...]

Currently, about 500,000 people living in villages acutely affected by the chronic water scarcity or current drought are provided with water trucking on subsidized basis supported by government under the management of regional authorities. Water trucking is ongoing for 66 primary schools serving total of 32,000 pupils in Anseba and NRS regions. Funds have also been made available to support temporary water trucking for eight acutely affected villages in Anseba and NRS covering around 18,000 people. UNICEF is constructing nine water systems, which will provide water for a total of 65,000 people. Besides that, with the first tranche of the CERF funds, drilling activities

are ongoing in 11 drought affected villages. A total of 27 boreholes have been drilled out of which only 9 wells have been successful. Preparation to install a total of 19 hand-pumps in these wells plus additional 10 wells previously drilled is ongoing. This would provide much needed water for 5,700 people. Furthermore, the Water Resource Department has identified a drilling company through competitive bidding to carry out borehole drilling and pump testing for 10 additional drought-affected villages, but this activity is awaiting funding. Provided additional funds are available an estimated 140,000 people affected by drought, resettling and other emergencies will be provided access to safe drinking water through urgent temporary water supply means as well as establishment of sustainable water supply systems managed by communities. 18,000 primary school children from 60 schools and 10 health facilities will also be provided with water supply and sanitation facilities in collaboration with UNDP and several INGOs, including Oxfam, IRC and CARE. Water, hygiene and sanitation promotion activities are also planned to ensure improved WASH practices for targeted communities. A total of 17,000 people are in urgent need of trucking water as an emergency response, while drilling and development of water sources for the most affected villages is a top priority.

UN OCHA, December 2004, p.14:

“Water shortages continue to be acute and in the north and eastern regions, water trucking still appears to be the only option. More than 80,000 people in these areas are dependant on accelerated water trucking, even though the price per drum has nearly doubled. In the Dehub zone, water sources are drying up and in Senafe sub-zone, six out of eight dams have dried up. In a recent National Nutrition Survey (July 2004) 45% of respondents in Gash Barka reported a reduction in water quality and that some water sources had dried up entirely.

In many of the winter rain regions of the Northern and Southern Red Sea zones, the water level has dropped up to 7 metres. Lack of substantive flow of streams from the highlands means that the water table in these regions has not been recharged. In light of the poor rainfall that has been received, it is predicted that serious difficulties in drinking water supplies will be encountered in 2005 and, as outlined in the recent Consolidated Appeal for 2005, unless positive rainfall performance occur in the near future, 60-80% of the rural population and livestock in the country areas will be adversely affected.

These water shortages have both health and hygiene risks. The drying of surface water is forcing livestock and humans to share water sources. Women in particular are suffering since they are generally responsible for fetching water and are having to travel greater distances. Such water shortages are unlikely to improve in 2005 and are placing additional strain on already vulnerable groups.”

IDP returnees and host communities face critical water and sanitation problem due to harsh drought (June 2004)

- Poor performance of rains in March-May limited the level of the ground water
- Though IDPs well supplied, returnees and host communities still need water provision

- 30,000 people are provided emergency water but additional 54,000 of people require water projects and trucking
- Mai-Alba and Kolet in Dehub are the regions mostly in need of an immediate and urgent interventions

“The ground water table did not replenish due to the poor performance of rains in March-May. Eritrea is therefore still under the grip of a harsh drought resulting in severe critical drinking water problems both for human and animals. The worst affected regions are Anseba, Southern Red Sea and Northern Red Sea.

The Water and Sanitation Sectoral Task Force in Eritrea has focused its activities to meet the urgent water and sanitation needs of the most affected communities impacted by war and drought, i.e. IDPs, Returnees, Expellees and host communities. Currently, around 30,000 people are provided emergency water by trucking. However, in terms of drought-affected communities, an estimated 54,000 of people require immediate support through accelerated water projects and water trucking. The needs of IDP's are mostly taken Dried up river bed- Monoxeito care of, except a few residual camps such as Denbedoran, Gash Barka and camps in Aromo, Mai-Alba and Kolet in Dehub region where immediate and urgent interventions are needed.

The water and sanitation programme has been striving to ensure inter-sector linkages through full provision of water and sanitation facilities to schools and health centres. The provision of safe water is achieved through water transportation to drought affected areas, repair and rehabilitation of existing schemes as well as construction of new schemes.

The Consolidated Appeal requested some USD 4 million for the water sector, of which only some USD 1.8 million has been received to date. The urgent funding needs in the sector for 2004 are US \$ 2.2 million through the Consolidated Appeal (CAP).” (UN OCHA, 17 June 2004)

“Access to clean water and basic sanitation remains low as assistance declines for this sector. A drop in groundwater levels was observed as early as November/ December 2003 and WFP field staff reported severe shortages in many areas in the Anseba region, forcing villagers to walk increasingly long distances in search of water. In Dehub and Northern and Southern Red Sea regions, more than 20 villages are currently dependant on trucked water.

The Water and Sanitation department has ensured water supply to drought victims, IDPs and returnees from Sudan. IDP camps have been well supplied and there have been no outbreaks of water-borne diseases from 2003 to date. Nevertheless, needs are likely to increase. Approximately 25% of returnee and host community settlement areas in Zoba Gash Barka will still require new water supply and distribution systems to ensure greater than 15L/person/day. The extreme water shortages have led to dependency on expensive water trucking mechanisms and makes water provision highly linked to aid provision. During the past five months, for example, *circa* 30,000 people have been assisted through water trucking.” (UN OCHA, 31 May 2004, p. 15)

“Approximately 25% of returnee and host community settlement areas in Zoba Gash Barka will still require new water supply and distribution systems to ensure greater than 15L/person/day. Another 30% of returnee and host community areas are estimated to require rehabilitation and/or extension of existing water storage and distribution systems. Many returnee/host community schools and health stations also require water provisions.” (UN OCHA, 23 April 2004)

Lack of funding for water and sanitation reduced access to drinking water (June 2003)

“A lack of adequate funding for water and sanitation has contributed to reduced access to drinking water, resulting in people walking as long as three to five hours in search of water, increased water contamination and resulting diseases, and eventual distress migration and internal displacement when coping is exhausted. This has also resulted in increased caloric

expenditure in children- responsible for gathering water - when they can least afford it. UN and NGOs however, continue with the rehabilitation and maintenance of water sources. The provision of safe water and sanitation facilities in IDP camps has become a problem with water being trucked several kilometres to some camps. Other IDPs have had to be relocated from areas without sufficient water.

The water and sanitation project submitted by UNICEF within the CAP 2003 framework has to a large degree been funded if looking only at the project proposal developed in September last year. However, as the severity of the situation became clearer UNICEF shifted its priorities to mainly short-term emergencies as well as expanded the emergency interventions to also include urban areas like Mendefera. For that reason there is a need for more funds for alleviation of the drought. The additional project proposals, currently under consideration, do not cover all the country needs as limited implementation capacity has been taken into account.

[...]

Some progress has been made - improved access to safe water for 23,000 drought affected and other vulnerable persons and 6,000 returnees from Sudan with the provision of 20 litres of safe water per day. Seven schools and some health facilities have already been provided with water and sanitation facilities. Fifty (50) boreholes and twelve (12) wells have been installed or rehabilitated. Campaigns on good hygiene and sanitation practices have been going on in rural areas and particularly in schools. However, the establishment of a surveillance system and the purchase of emergency supplies have been delayed.

Another major constraint for the timely fulfilment of the sectoral objectives has been the shortage of labour, especially skilled personnel. Furthermore, the relatively late allocation of funds from donors has to some degree delayed the response. **The preliminary figures for the population facing water shortages is 2.2 million of whom 1.7 million are facing water shortages due to the drought.** Provision of water supply and sanitation facilities remains a priority for the rest of the year. At the same time, facilities already installed need to be properly managed and maintained. Water trucking and similar measures will be required within the coming three months to alleviate some of the most urgent needs.

In recognition that the UN cannot meet all the needs in the water and sanitation sector, three new project proposals from NGOs active in the sector are being considered." (UN, 3 June 2003)

"USAID/OFDA's Water and Sanitation specialist reports that water shortages are becoming a serious problem as water tables have fallen more than 10 meters in some severely affected areas. Small villages with shallow, handdug wells are forced to travel longer distances to obtain water. As many small and remote villages are accustomed to chronic water shortages, they are already conserving water. In larger towns and cities, the impact of the drought is far more taxing as those populations are not as accustomed to water shortages. The reduced water availability could lead to deteriorating hygiene conditions in densely populated areas and, thus, elevate the potential for water related disease outbreaks." (USAID, 18 March 2003)

"The water problem in Eritrea has assumed a critical state of shortage. The effect of rains in late 2002 that served to recharge many wells and reservoirs has passed as the 2003 dry season sets in. Anseba, Northern Red Sea, Southern Red Sea and northern part of Gash Barka and Debub zones, which have received poor rainfall for the past four to five years are the worst affected areas, with the water table down to 10 metres and falling. Lack of water has and continues to aggravate the general problem with families walking an average of 4-5 kilometers in search of water in hostile conditions. In some areas, regular water points have dried up while in others the water tables are increasingly low, threatening the lives of both people and livestock, with a third of the latter at risk of death due to lack of water and fodder. Water prices have doubled in the first

two months of 2003 in urban areas. In the Northern Red Sea area, thousands of livestock have died as a result of lack of water, pasture and fodder and distress livestock sales have risen and prices drop." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

"Recent ICC field assessment to Dehub zone reveals that the water situation is seriously bad. For instance in Senafe sub zone out of eight micro dams six have dried up rendering acute water supply problem to the communities and small irrigation activities. In addition, the field visit showed that similar water problem exists in other four sub zones visited namely: Areza, Maimine, Segeneiti and Debarwa. The water situation remains depressed in other parts of the country including in some IDP camps such as Dembe-Doran." (ICC, 18 April 2003)

Challenging water supply and sanitation needs in an environment plagued by drought and mines (November 2002)

- More than 2/3 of the population in Red Sea, northern parts of Anseba and Gash Barka regions might face water shortages in 2003
- 2500 IDPs in Dembedoran camp rely on water trucking from Bushuka water source which was nearly depleted as of September 2002
- Auli'e La Haila IDP camp needs latrines, bathrooms, garbage pits and cleaning tools
- War and drought considerably depleted water sources as a result women and children may spend most of their day walking to fetch water
- Most populations are forced to use water from unprotected sources
- Livestock which is an essential economic and food resource require considerable quantities of water
- Lack of health and sanitation awareness campaigns have not enabled to yield the benefits added through improved sanitation facilities in IDP camps

"During 2002 Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) interventions focused on providing water and environmental sanitation facilities to returning IDPs, refugees from Sudan and the drought-affected population. However, many vulnerable people still do not have access to safe and adequate water and sanitation facilities, especially in locations served by water trucks.

An assessment carried out in August 2002 indicated that due to the decreased rainfall many shallow water sources, mostly hand dug wells and temporary traditional dug holes in riverbeds, were drying up. Also, surface dams for major urban settlements like Massawas and Mendefera were drying up. In particular, the population in the Red Sea regions (approximately 550,000 people) and in the northern parts of Anseba and Gash Barka regions (approximately 300,000 people) was affected by the lack of rain, including areas where the population already faced serious water shortages. As previous years saw less rainfall than normal, it is feared that the present drought will severely deplete the ground water resources in many areas. The assessment report concluded that more than two third of the population might be facing water shortages in 2003." (UN, November 2002, p.23)

"The 2,500 IDPs living in Dembedoran is still a cause of concern as the population still gets their water from water trucking.

OCHA Field Unit Support from Barentu confirmed on its report of 19 September 2002 that Dembe-Doran IDP camp was facing critical water problem. According to the report the ICRC had been trucking water but stopped it four months ago up on announcement to the local administration. As no measure was taken to address the water problem in camp ICRC re-directed

one shift of the Shambiko-Bushuka water truck to Dembe-Doran. According to the report the water in Bushuka was nearing depletion. On depletion of this water source would lead Dembe-Doran to a critical water problem." (ICC, 30 September 2002)

"UNMEE Military Observers have reported that on 29 and 30 June, the Deputy Administrator in Shambiko confirmed that between 6,000 and 7,000 of the 15,000 IDPs in Korokon IDP camp were relocated to Shambiko and Kotobia, because of the acute water shortages in Korokon." (UNMEE, 5 July 2002)

"Debug

ICC staff conducted a field mission to IDP camps in Senafe and Tsorona areas in Debug zone from 21 to 25 November 2001. The team discovered that Gema'e and Endabastifanos villages have acute water problems, which require urgent attention and intervention. Easy access to clean and safe water should be provided to IDPs in these villages before the situation deteriorates. The Auli'e La Haila IDP camp needs basic hygiene requirements such as latrines, bathrooms, garbage pits and cleaning tools. The health station of Genzebo, which serves the Mai Wurai camp, lacks electricity and this is a major setback for the IDPs. Shelter is also a problem as IDPs in Mai Wurai and Tsorona need to replace their old worn-out tents." (ICC 28 December 2001)

"The water supply and environmental sanitation situation in late 2001 can be further characterised as follows:

Due to the destroyed water supply facilities and the drying up of water sources in drought affected areas, a large part of the rural population has to fetch water from very far away. This places a heavy burden on vulnerable groups, especially women and children, who may have to walk several hours per day in search of water.

In some areas affected by the drought, and for many returned IDPs and those still remaining in camps, expensive and difficult water trucking is still the only option. Due to poor road conditions, water trucking is a very difficult task in the rainy season.

In many areas the population is forced to use water from unprotected sources containing little water, often subject to surface pollution. In areas with low water tables, typically drought-affected areas, the population is getting water from motorised boreholes. However, boreholes are expensive not only to construct but also to operate and maintain, thus putting an increased load on the already limited resources available for the IDPs and other vulnerable groups.

A large part of the population depends, either directly or indirectly, for some or all of their food and livelihood on livestock, which require considerable quantities of water. Animals often use the same sources used by humans for domestic purposes. In addition, irrigation consumes a large proportion of available water resources in many areas where crops require more water than is available from rain. This places a further strain on already limited water resources (particularly in drought-affected areas).

The following conditions and practices contribute to diarrhoea, especially among children: lack of access to, or limited use of, latrines; widely practised open space defecation; poor water supply and handling at household-level; and poor personal and domestic hygiene among all population groups.

During 2001, a large number of trenches and household/family latrines have been constructed in IDP camps, but the impact of these interventions is impeded by a lack of awareness of the proper utilisation of these facilities, and the long-term effect of the interventions remains still to be seen.

Some areas are still inaccessible either due to their proximity to the Ethiopian border or because of the presence of mines. In these areas it is assumed that most facilities no longer exist and substantial resources are needed to restore services." (UN, November 2001, pp. 27-28)

Estimated that only 44% of the urban and 16 % of the rural population have access to safe water (February 2001)

- Only and estimated 1% of the rural populations have access to sanitation facilities and 52% in urban settings (January 2001)
- 10 liters per person/per diem average water consumption in Dehub camps below generally accepted standard of 15 liters
- Defecation in open areas by most population groups remains a major problem
- Major rehabilitation of water supply sources and the sanitation facilities required to facilitate the return of IDP populations

GOE/UN January 2001, pp. 21, 22

"In addition to the drought, the devastating war with Ethiopia, that displaced more than a million people, has caused considerable pressure to be placed on already limited water resources in host communities. The water supply problem has been further aggravated by the lack of management, maintenance of structures, and trained personnel at many water installations. It is estimated that only 44% of the urban and 16 % of the rural population have access to safe water. [...]

Regarding sanitation, the lack of access to, or limited use of, latrines and the indiscriminate defecation in open areas by most population groups remains a major problem. It is estimated that only 52% of the urban population have access to sanitation facilities; the corresponding figure in rural areas is 1%. "

GOE/UN January 2001, p.39

"In all of the [Dehub] camps visited, average water consumption is ten litres per person per day. This is below the generally accepted standard of 15 litres per person per day. In most cases the reason is not the lack of an adequate water supply at the camps, but the inadequate supply of water containers. In Alba camp, there are three covered hand-dug wells in use. As much as 100,000 litres of water is drawn from the three wells, one of which supplies 45,000 litres per day. However, the water level of this well is fluctuating from five metres to seven metres and there appears to be concern that this well is operating at or beyond its capacity. The people reported that while some chlorine is added to the well and reservoir, it does not appear that there is proper chlorination.

Even where there are latrines available, the majority of the IDPs still use the open spaces for human waste. Latrines currently exist at health centres in all of the camps."

UN February 2001, pp.24-25

"In many areas in the country and in all IDP camps, particularly during the dry season, large numbers of women and children (especially girls) have to spend a disproportionate amount of their time and energy fetching water from distant sources, sometimes walking as long as 2-3 hours to obtain water;

[...]

Water trucking to IDP camps continues to be an elaborate and expensive operation to maintain. However, due to the increasing and continuous demand for water and absence of other options to deliver water to the IDP camps such operations will have to continue on a case-by-case basis;

Water supply sources and the sanitation facilities in areas affected by the conflict will require major rehabilitation in order to facilitate the return of IDP populations."

Shelter

ICRC assists IDPs with shelter and non-food items (June 2006)

ICRC, June 2006:

"As in past years, the ICRC was the main organization providing shelter, water and essential household items to IDPs living in 21 camps in or near the TSZ; the government and WFP were responsible for food distributions. The majority of IDPs were women and children who had been in the camps for three to six years. Many IDPs could not return home until the border was pegged out and mines cleared.

Based on its assessment of needs in the camps in late 2004, the ICRC began tailoring distributions more closely to the situation in each camp. This led to a decrease in the quantity of goods provided (blankets, kitchenware, jerrycans, mosquito nets and soap). Plans to introduce longer-lasting shelter materials were put on hold when the government announced in November that some 21,000 IDPs were scheduled to return home in early 2006."

Shelter situation of IDPs and Expellees in camps very critical (May 2005)

- Damaged tents due to fire, wear and tear or weather conditions urgently need replacement or repair

Email from OCHA to NRC, 25 May 2005:

"There is a plan to return about 5000 IDPs from Mai wuray camp and another similar number of expellees from Kotobia expellees' camp. All together about 11,000 people. There is critical shortage of funding. Currently there is a dire need of tents for about 8000 IDP families, school materials and clothing for 11,000 IDP children."

ACT, January 2004:

"[IDPs] have lived in camps for five years and their tents are worn out and urgently need to be replaced.

Shelter is a critical determinant of survival for IDPs providing protection from the environment and enhancing resistance to disease. It is also important for human dignity and sustains family and community life in difficult circumstances".

OCHA, 30 July 2004:

"ERREC reported that about 2000 IDP families living in Korokon camp, Gash Barka zone have lost their shelter (tents) to a windstorm on 29 July 2004. The heavy rain accompanied by windstorm has also damaged two months of food ration of the IDPs after blowing the rub-hall store. In addition, it has blown the roofing of the Health Station and rendered the only borehole in the camp as well as solar system of the health station out of use. The IDPs are in desperate situation and are trying to put their blown tents together. According to ERREC, unless the IDPs are provided with immediate shelter assistance the remaining shelter would not withstand the impact of more rainfall. There is also a pressing need for food ration and restocking of medical supplies, as they have been lost to the windstorm. The camp is home to around 6,700 IDPs, since 1998."

UN OCHA, 31 January 2004:

“The temporary shelter situation in IDP and Expellee camps is currently very critical. The tents, which are totally or partially damaged due to wear and tear or weather conditions, need to be urgently replaced or repaired. Out of a total of 19,699 households, 14,357 require urgent tent replacement, while 1,048 are in need of repair. In order to be able to respond quickly to other emergencies, a stockpile of about 2,500 tents would be needed. In addition, camps lack adequate sanitary facilities including latrines, forcing IDPs to use communal areas outside of camps as informal latrines. [...]

Focus on Mai Alba IDP camp: Nearly 1,000 internally displaced persons and displaced returnees from six villages live in tents in the Mai Alba IDP camp in Adi Quala. The camp has been in existence since 2001. The return to their home villages has not happened because of damaged homes, insecurity or mine infestation. With very few owning livestock, the majority depend on food aid. Because of the rough terrain not easily accessed by vehicles, the camp dwellers walk 6 hours to Adi Quala town to collect their food rations and mill their grain. LWF only once provided IDPs with clothes. ICRC provided tents and blankets. However, some of the tents are worn-out and need to be replaced.

UN OCHA, 17 June 2004:

Rain storm destroyed 642 tents in Mai-Wurai Camp

“The camp administrators of Mai-Wurai camp reported on 02 May 2004 that rain accompanied by windstorm destroyed 632 tents in the Camp.

Based on the report ICC Field Liaison Unit visited the camp on 28 May 04 and discussed with the Camp administrator and the dwellers about the incident. The administrators and dwellers said that the rain started in the afternoon around 16:00 hours and continued up to 17:30 with heavy wind dismantling 632 tents. Out of the above-mentioned number of tents blown up 174 tents could not be recovered. The owners of these damaged tents are now living with their neighbours. Similarly four tents were destroyed as fire broke out in Mai Alba IDP camp during the first week of May.

ERREC regional office is taking further investigation on the damaged tents.”

Key objective to assist in reintegration and recovery of IDPs (June 2003)

“Key objectives in the family shelter and household items sector are to assist in the reintegration and recovery of IDPs, settlement of deportees, while providing temporary shelter, household items, hygienic materials and kerosene. The assumption in CAP 2003 was that all the IDPs, in camps and outside of camps, would be returned to their places of origin. However, due to a number of reasons, including the lack of progress in demining the settlement areas (villages) and their respective farmlands and grazing areas, this is not likely to happen in 2003. ICRC is engaged in replacing worn-out tents in IDP camps although its stock is currently inadequate to meet the demand. UNDP under its PoWER project is currently finalising arrangements to resettle over 8,700 Eritreans who were expelled from Ethiopia. The expellees currently hosted in Shelab camp are expected to move to their final settlement in the Gerenfit area. In addition, some 1,250 expellees from Adi Keshi will be moved to Ugumu village. The expellees from Shelab and Adi Keshi (about 10,000) need assistance in emergency shelter.

[...]

Progress has been made in the shelter and household items sector. ICRC has distributed 1,502 tents to IDP households in Debub region. However, ICRC stocks need to be replenished to meet existing demand, particularly for families whose tents are already worn out. To reduce the dependency on scarce wood resources, ICRC has provided 10 litres of kerosene per house old to 8,341 households in Shelab and Adi Keshi camps and host communities for one month. To continue distribution, urgent additional funding is required. The only planned programme within

CAP 2003 in this sector – distribution of 12,500 tents and building materials to 7,500 households - has not been implemented completely due to lack of funding.” (UN, 3 June 2003)

Rainstorm destroyed 420 tents in Mai-Wurai IDP camp

“ICC field officers reported that on 31 March 2003 a stormy rainfall had destroyed 420 tents in Mai-Wurai IDP camp. Currently, ICRC is distributing tents and tarpaulins to families whose tents are worn out. The tents and tarpaulins available in ICRC stock are reported to be short to meet the existing demand in the IDP camps.” (ICC, 18 April 2003)

“The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has distributed 1,502 tents in Dehub zone and 9,678 tarpaulins and 20 meters of rope to each tarpaulin for IDPs residing in camps in Gash Barka. In addition, ICRC has provided 1,500 tents for the settlement of rural expellees from Shelab to Gerenfit and there is a plan to provide tarpaulins for the remaining.” (ICC, 30 May 2003)

“ICC Field Officers have recently visited Gash Barka and Dehub zones to update the IDP figures and monitor the general humanitarian situation. There has been no recent movement of IDPs. Regarding the humanitarian situation, ICC field officers reported that most of the IDPs were facing critical problem of fuel for cooking, soaps and for some shelter was critical as their tents are worn out.” (ICC, 30 May 2003)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Low general school enrolment (June 2006)

UNICEF, 11 June 2006, p. 6:

"The net enrolment rate stands at 52%, 48% female in Eritrea. Presently, severe drought is affecting an estimated 350,000 primary school students; mostly in five regions- gash Barka, Debub, Southern Red Sea, Anseba and Northern red Sea, where there is increasingly low attendance and high drop out rates in primary schools. These are caused by high cost of education, child participation in household chores, shortage of food at the household level and lack of basic amenities like drinking water supplies in schools and in the community. Other problems that plague the system include few schools and classrooms, lack of qualified teachers, especially female teachers and insufficient and inappropriate learning materials."

CAP for Horn of Africa, Projects, Version 2, 24 May 2006, p. 42

The net enrolment rate stands at 52%, 48% female³. Presently, severe drought is affecting an estimated 350,000 primary school pupils, mostly in five regions - Gash Barka, Debub, Southern Red Sea, Anseba and Northern Red Sea, where there is increasingly low attendance and high drop-out rates in primary schools. The causes of low attendance and drop-out rates at the primary school level include high cost of education, child participation in household chores, shortage of food at the household level and lack of basic amenities like drinking water supplies in schools and in the community. Other problems that plague the system include few schools and classrooms, lack of qualified teachers, especially female teachers and insufficient and inappropriate learning materials. This intervention aims to reach 350,000 primary school age children in severely drought-affected communities of Gash Barka, Debub, Southern Red Sea, Anseba and Northern Red Sea regions.

Often no educational facilities in place in villages of IDPs' return (March 2006)

State of Eritrea, March 2006, p.2, 3:

"The IDPs are often returning to villages that were completely destroyed and that have no access to safe water and sanitation. Low enrolment of children in primary schools [...] make the target population highly vulnerable."

[Activities to be provided for returning IDPs:] Provision of basic social services (education, health, food/nutrition, shelter and non-food items)...

Education projects for IDP children strained by limited resources (May 2005)

"As yet, no funding was received during 2005 for emergency education programmes for internally displaced children in camps. However, with UNICEF National Committees support UNICEF is supporting the construction of seven schools to support an increase in net school enrolment which is currently just over 50%, with growing disparity as there are now 6% more boys in school than girls. Under regular programme funds, in order to improve the quality of education and the coordination of intervening actors, UNICEF supported the Government to elaborate the Education Sectoral Development Plan (ESDP). The ESDP was discussed with partners and adopted by Government and Development Partners in April. It will provide the operational framework for developments in education. A series of two day seminars targeting over 230 teachers, school directors and local authorities was conducted to introduce and reinforce the implementation of the Five Year Strategic Plan of Action for Life Skills and integrate the education sector work within the national HIV/AIDS policy. Emergency activities such as support to IDP children who are returning to villages in the Temporary Security Zone are unfunded and UNICEF is concerned that this will render these children even more vulnerable." (UNICEF, 27 May 2005)

1998-2000 conflict eroded achievements made in the educational sector since independence (September 2001)

- Rapid education assessment by end-2000 revealed that 150 schools had been damaged in 8 sub-regions
- Call by the beginning of 2001 for technical and material support to emergency education
- Loss of school documents creating serious difficulties in academic assessment of students
- Estimated that 40,000 school children had returned to their home areas by end-August 2001

"During the past year, war and drought have had a profoundly negative effect on the educational system in Eritrea. Rapid development made in the educational sector since independence was negated in war-affected parts of the country as a large number of school facilities were either destroyed or vandalised. The displacement of populations and the economic effects of the drought left many households destitute, forcing children to stay at home in order to support their families. Many who have attempted to stay in school have record poor attendance and low achievement due to distractions at home.

Further, the displacement of populations has led to the pupil/teacher ratio increasing dramatically in host communities. The situation is aggravated by a general shortage of trained teachers (especially among the Afar, Tigre and Saho speaking communities) and basic learning materials. Other factors, such as the distance to schools, the shortage of boarding facilities, and the lack of feeding programs have also affected enrolment, particularly that of girls.

In terms of priority needs, it is clear that providing technical and material support to emergency education for the war- and drought affected populations will remain essential during 2001. It will be especially important to increase access to education by constructing makeshift schools and repairing damaged ones, and to continue providing support for school-feeding programs. It will also be necessary to provide material support in the form of learning materials and furniture to schools currently lacking these basic necessities. Training of new teachers will help to bring down the high student/teacher ratio; upgrading the skills of those currently serving will improve the quality of teaching." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.22)

"A rapid education assessment, conducted in July-August, revealed the extent of damage to educational facilities in the conflict-affected areas, including 150 schools in 8 sub-regions serving 83,240 children." (UNICEF 7 December 2000)

More detailed information was provided by assessments in formerly occupied areas undertaken in May 2001:

"There were no schools operating officially in any of the villages [in the Senafe sub zone] visited by the Assessment Teams. In Senafe town, there are unofficial classes being taught to 1st through 6th Grade students by secondary school students. These impromptu classes are being financially supported by the UN Military Observers. However, this project does not currently have the full approval of the local officials of the Ministry of Education.

Throughout the sub zone, school buildings were routinely targeted for destruction and looting. A major effort of reconstruction and refurbishment will be required in order to prepare for the new school year in September 2001." (ICC 2 May 2001b)

"There are only three villages with schools out of seven villages assessed [in the Adi-quala and Mai-Aini sub-zones of Debub region]. Their roofs are destroyed and doors and windows have been looted. Desks and blackboards have been taken as well. The remaining villages have no school and the children have to walk long distances to the nearest school. " (ICC 2 May 2001)

"No functioning/operating schools were observed in the areas visited [in the Tsorona sub-zone of Debub]. Although several schools in the area are undamaged, a general lack of teachers and material has meant that schools are currently not able to function.

The school buildings in Tsorona are partially destroyed (no roofs, doors, or windows) and need to be restored and equipped. The school building in Genzebo, which caters for neighboring villages, is usable. However it needs some repairs, school furniture and material as well as teachers. All the teachers are still in the Alba camp." (ICC 1 May 2001)

"In order to improve enrolment rates and the nutritional status of children in schools, WFP is making preparations to start school feeding programme in selected areas in the forthcoming academic year scheduled to begin in the second week of September. It is estimated that 40,000 school children returned to their home areas. Most of the schools in the TSZ are destroyed and looted and still not operational to give proper educational service. As such it is expected that classes will be overcrowded due to shortage of teachers and classrooms. Unless, immediate attention and action is taken to rehabilitate and equip the schools the whole pedagogic atmosphere of the teaching and learning process will be affected. Similar attention should be sought for the social service infrastructure of the schools such as provision of clean water and latrines. Out of 85 schools located in the TSZ only 48 were accessed and estimation has been made on the damages inflicted accordingly. Out of the assessed schools, through the assistance of UNICEF, UNDP/PoWER, CESVI, COSV, APS and the French government 37 schools have been rehabilitated." (ICC 31 August 2001)

"A qualitative study revealed, among other things, that displaced girls in the camps were adversely affected by the conflict. Other factors such as the distance to schools and the lack of feeding programmes have also affected enrolment of girls especially. The main constraint to the provision of emergency education was and continues to be the inadequate funding especially for human resources and lack of community involvement. In terms of priority needs, it is important to increase access by supporting renovation and construction of makeshift schools and to collaborate more closely with WFP in supporting school-feeding programmes. Support to the training of new teachers will assist to bring down high student-teacher ratio and upgrading of the skills of those in service will improve the quality of teaching. An assessment of the extent of damage to 85 schools in the TSZ has just been completed and the findings are being analysed and will provide the basis for a more effective rehabilitation support." (UNICEF 5 September 2001)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Disruption of coping mechanisms

Major obstacles to recovery and self-reliance remain unchanged (November 2002)

- 2002/2003 drought has serious consequences on agricultural and economic activity
- 80 per cent of Eritrea's population traditionally involved in farming and herding
- Eritrea facing the worst drought since its liberation in 1991 is heavily dependent on external assistance
- In Dehub and Gash Barka where most displaced and war affected concentrate, people will harvest only 15% of normal agricultural product in 2003
- Demobilisation and return of soldiers in order to enable agricultural recovery have barely started
- Presence of landmines and UXOs major impediment to agricultural recovery
- IDP return lagged behind and no advantage was taken of the 2001 rainfalls, as a result only 60% farming activity was restored in war-affected areas
- Failure of annual as well as spring rains have led to considerable grazing pastures shortages and livestock in Anseba and Northern Red Sea are dying (August 2002)

“USAID/OFDA's Food Security and Agriculture specialist reports that the condition of livestock has visibly deteriorated since December 2002. The drought has led to a substantial reduction in pasture availability and water for livestock. In turn, animals and herdsman have been forced to migrate much further this year than in the past in search of water and fodder, particularly to the eastern escarpment. The increased grazing pressures will likely lead to rapid exhaustion of the land. An estimated 75 percent of the population of Eritrea depends on livestock production as part of their livelihood.

Landmine threats and insecurity along the southern border with Ethiopia have hindered the mobility of people and livestock, thereby reducing agricultural and other economic activities. Large tracts of the most productive farmland and prosperous grazing grounds are still inaccessible. In January and February, the U.N. Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea reported that newly laid landmines were discovered in the western part of the 25 kilometer buffer zone separating Ethiopia and Eritrea. The mines are believed to be the work of local armed factions rather than that of the either side's army.” (USAID, 18 March 2003)

“Since independence, Eritrea has remained a desperately poor country. The Ethiopian-Eritrea war in 1998-2000 severely hurt Eritrea's economy. GDP growth in 1999 fell to less than 1 percent, and the GDP decreased by 8.2 percent in 2000. The conflict caused some \$600 million in property damage and loss, including losses of \$225 million in livestock and 55,000 homes. The economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with 80 percent of the population involved in farming and herding. Clashes prevented planting of crops in Eritrea's most productive region, causing food production to drop by 62 percent. Export crops include coffee, cotton, fruit, hides, and meat, but farmers are very dependent on rain-fed agriculture, so growth in this and other sectors is hampered by lack of a dependable water supply. Worker remittances from abroad currently contribute 40 percent of GDP. Eritrea's economic future remains mixed. The country is

dependent upon its ability to master fundamental social problems like illiteracy, unemployment, and low skills, and to convert the diaspora's money and expertise into economic growth.

[...]

According to the government of Eritrea, it is now a matter of few months time before all the rural farmers have consumed the negligible harvest and their livestock. Food and water shortage, diarrhea, respiratory, skin and other infectious diseases will take their toll. Without swift urgent international response, the lives of 2.3 million Eritreans, are at serious danger of death and starvation." (RI, March 2003)

"The chronic drought in the Horn of Africa over the last two decades has revisited the region, beginning mid 2002. The resulting food shortages in the region are peaking in the first five months of 2003, leaving millions of people exposed to hunger, starvation, malnutrition and possible death, some of which have already occurred in some parts of Eritrea. The effect of the drought is far much pronounced in Eritrea, where 70% of the country's 3.9 million people stare starvation in the face. Response to pleas for help in Ethiopia has been comparatively favourable, with half of the 1.44 million MT of food required forestall a humanitarian disaster in 2003 sourced. The general situation, particularly in Eritrea, however, remain dire and in urgent need of immediate and concerted domestic and international attention.

[...]

The humanitarian concern revolves around the sustainable and long-term recovery of both countries from both the war and the current drought. This will require the return of IDPs as well the demobilization of hundreds of thousands of soldiers in both countries, to free much needed labour for improved agricultural production.

The drought affecting in excess of 17 million people in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and that appears set to spread to regions of Somalia, demands a simultaneous emergency as well as long term development approach if its chronic character is to be broken. Land tenure and agricultural credit schemes in Ethiopia as well as the National Service policy in Eritrea may have to be reviewed if the situation is to be improved in the long term." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003) "Whilst efforts to respond to the humanitarian situation were ongoing, Eritrea was struck by severe drought affecting the primary agricultural areas of Gash Barka and Debub in addition to the traditionally drought-prone areas. Failure of both the winter and spring rains followed by delayed onset of the main summer rains have left Eritrea facing the worst drought since its liberation in 1991.

Traditional coping mechanisms of the affected households have been severely strained over the past years. An increasing number of affected households have few assets left and depend heavily on external assistance. The reoccurrence of the drought has reduced the resilience and self-reliance of the affected population to a minimal level and has not only caused food insecurity but also led to problems regarding livestock and in the health, water & sanitation, and education sectors." (UN, November 2002, p.6)

"This group [drought affected] of over 1.4 million people is scattered in various areas throughout Eritrea's six regions. In 2001, the most severely affected areas were located in the Anseba, Northern Red Sea, and the Southern Red Sea zones. The current drought has hit all regions severely. Particularly, by so seriously affecting the prime agricultural regions of Debub and Gash Barka, the current drought not only puts at risk the huge populations concentrated there, but it weakens the ability of those two regions to continue in their role as bread basket for the rest of the country. Many farmers on prime agricultural land are expected to harvest only 15% of normal harvest and rural families are at serious risk of the extreme effects of drought, including domestic water shortages, disease, malnutrition and starvation. Large numbers of agro-pastoralists who are already highly food insecure having suffered failed crops and the decimation of their herds during three consecutive years of poor and erratic rains, face the danger of losing even more

animals. About 80% of livestock are at risk and expected to be seriously affected. The level of malnutrition is reported to be higher among this group than any other group." (UN November 2002, p.13)

"In spite of the obstacles, it is generally believed that the peace process appears irreversible and that the presence of UNMEE will ensure there is no resumption of armed hostilities. The return of refugees and IDPs is expected to continue throughout 2002 and agreement is being reached to implement a demobilisation programme for 200,000 Eritrean soldiers which, although placing further strain on the coping mechanisms of villages, will at the same time return soldiers to productive activity and restore family structures to the TSZ and subsequent civilian influx into the bread-basket regions of Gash Barka and Debub is a favourable sign for increasing agricultural production. The cessation of war and the increased prospects of permanent peace have removed a major impediment to the resumption of farming in many parts of Gash Barka and Debub Zones, but the continued presence of land mines has rendered many areas inaccessible. Additionally, the return of many IDPs to their former villages was not early enough to take full advantage of the summer rains and it is estimated that only about 60% of farming activity was restored in 2001 in war-affected areas." (UN, November 2001, p.19)

" The livestock have been adversely affected by lack of graze, as the 'Azmera' or spring rains that support early regeneration of vegetation had failed and the main summer rains set on late. Everywhere livestock are emaciated, as the landscape is either completely barren or the vegetation has not grown to grazeable heights. Herders have started to migrate from the normally prospective pastoral areas in desperate search of graze. In some places in zobas of Anseba and Northern Red Sea livestock have started to die in big numbers." (ICC 28 August 2002)

Displacement from highly fertile Gash Barka and Debub regions led to major disruptions in food and livestock production (October 2001)

- The grain producing regions of Debub and Gash Barka normally provide approximately 70 percent of Eritrea's food requirements
- Many people have been displaced several times and lost all their livestock, possessions and food stocks
- War-related agricultural disruptions and inflated grain prices depleted pastoralists' valuable draught and breeding livestock assets
- Regional drought exacerbated war-related emergency in Eritrea
- Decreased access to dry season grazing along the border led to considerable livestock losses and decreasing economic endowments
- IDPs unable to take advantage of propitious cultivation conditions due to presence of landmines and lengthy de-mining operations (2001)

"Even under normal conditions, Eritrea is a food deficit area with Eritrea's food grain requirements being consistently higher than its net domestic supply of food-grains. Drought and war have contributed to a substantial increase in grain prices that in most cases are beyond the reach of many households. Among the pastoralist communities, increases of grain prices has resulted in a reduction in the numbers of their livestock as they were forced to sell at lower prices to get food. Livestock being the main asset of this population, they are now dangerously exposed to starvation that could easily degenerate into famine." (ACT 5 December 2000)

"The border hostilities that occurred between Ethiopia and Eritrea from May 1998 until June 2000 displaced hundreds of thousands of farmers from the grain producing regions of Dehub and Gash Barka which provide approximately 70 percent of the country's food requirements. The abandonment resulted in reduced acreage under cultivation and a subsequent significant shortfall in agricultural production. The effect of the war on the agricultural production has been exacerbated by pronounced damage to economic and social infrastructure, loss of cross border trade and three consecutive years of drought conditions. Crop production in 2000 was further hampered by a number of factors including the loss of draught animals, insufficient rains, pests, diseases and the enlisting of a large numbers of the working-age population into the National Service. The displaced people have placed an additional strain on the rural host communities. Women, children and the elderly represent approximately 90 percent of the estimated over 1 million war-displaced persons in Eritrea. In addition, 92,000 Eritreans are believed to have taken refuge in Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti.

Some of the women, men and children have been displaced several times and, as a result, have lost all their livestock, possessions and food stocks. To cope with the crisis, many households have resorted to supplementing their income through the sale of charcoal, firewood and building poles, resulting in serious environmental degradation in and around the camps of the internally displaced persons (IDP). These desperate coping strategies have exacerbated food insecurity in those areas.

The war has aggravated the chronic and transitory food insecurity, which has become endemic in several parts of the country over the past decade. Due to the war, farming has not been possible in the Hazemo plain of the Dehub region which is the breadbasket of Eritrea, contributing almost 30 percent of the national crop production. In the traditionally grain surplus areas of Gash Barka, the acreage under cultivation was reduced by approximately 50 percent and the 2000/2001 yield is expected to be four to five times lower than normal.

Decreased availability/accessibility of valuable dry season grazing areas located along the border with Ethiopia has resulted in significant losses of livestock and livestock products. Indiscriminate distress selling of livestock, including valuable draught and breeding animals, at lower than average market prices, in order to buy much needed grain, has resulted in a further depletion of livestock assets. Many households simply have no livestock left to sell. This has added to the numerous challenges faced by the growing number of female and child-headed households.

[...]

The Government of Eritrea has repeatedly reiterated its desire for self-reliance in terms of basic needs and food security and has been committed to providing assistance and protection to its civilian population suffering from the combined effects of drought and conflict. However, due to the size and complexity of the ongoing crisis, the government reports a food deficit of about 80 percent in 2001. Commercial food imports are expected to increase for several years given the current trends, and this will put additional strain on the war and drought-weakened foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, the Eritrean Grain Board (EGB) does not have sufficient carryover food stocks to meet commercial demands. Therefore the government is seeking food aid to cover the needs of the affected population." (WFP May 2001, paras. 1-4, 9)

"The main source of food for the population [in the Adi-quala and Mai-Aini sub-zones of Dehub region] is the food they get in the IDP camps. In the camps monthly food rations are provided by the World Food Programme and distributed by ERREC. The rations distributed at camps and other distribution points are brought over to the villages and town centers. The Pastoral communities also depend on these rations as well.

There is no farming for the last three years in the villages visited. Fear of proximity to border areas and landmines threat did not allow any form of cultivation. The returning population is presently not able to cultivate and there is urgent need to provide seeds and tools before the planting season in June [2001]." (ICC 2 May 2001)

"The onset of the main season *Kremti* rains started on time. Rainfall continued throughout the entire month of July [2001] and was reasonably well distributed.

[...]

The overall future food-security situation, especially the food availability and food access, will be influenced by events in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). The TSZ covers all the sub-zones of Debub and Gash Barka Zones, bordering Ethiopia [...]. These sub-zones are the major crop-producing areas of Eritrea. Guluji, Lalay Gash, and Mulki sub-zones in Gash Barka constitute the breadbasket of Eritrea but lie completely within the TSZ. Similarly in Debub, Senafe, Tsorena, Maiaini, and Adiquala sub-zones are major crop-producing areas that fall within the TSZ.

Agricultural activities in these sub-zones are hampered by the presence of land mines. Close to 70,000 IDPs are remain in camps because they were not able to return to their home villages due to landmine risks. In addition to those in camps, many IDPs continue to live with host families who are relatives or otherwise. Although mine clearing is underway, it appears that many areas will not be cleared in time for IDPs to return home to cultivate their fields and benefit from this year's good rainfall. This lost opportunity means that these IDPs will require continued support before they can resume their normal livelihoods." (FEWS NET 6 August 2001)

"A report from the section of Planning and Statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) stated this week that the crop production of this year is expected to be twice that of last year's produce. This summer 342,442 ha of farmland was tilled but since the rain has discontinued by the end of August the harvest would be less than what had been forecasted earlier. Due to uneven distribution of rainfall and delay of IDPs return to their home villages the Ministry has managed to till 87,800ha out of planned 93,000ha using integrated package. The report further stated that in the highland of Eritrea most of the dams have accumulated enough water, which would enrich the underground water reserve and would be helpful for farmers to run small irrigation farming. In addition, the report said the condition of livestock would improve as the grazing land has received enough rain." (ICC 23 October 2001)

War has added a heavy burden on women and young girls (January 2001)

"The most clearly affected victims of the recent war in Eritrea are the women and children, especially adolescent girls. Since the start of the conflict, women and children have constituted a large number (on average 26% and 67%, respectively) of the total number of war-affected. In some areas, they make up almost 90% among both war and drought-affected populations. During times of emergency, the obligations and responsibilities that women and girls assume in their homes and communities increase dramatically. Meanwhile, traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been stretched to the limit, making it difficult for a majority of the women and girl-headed households to adequately provide for the protection and care of their families without external assistance." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.22)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

Current drought compounds post-conflict requirements in social sector (May 2003)

- Coping mechanisms over-stretched and social safety nets eroded
- Nomadic pastoralists hindered by land restrictions and presence of landmines

"In the past two years more than 103,000 refugees have returned to Eritrea, and about 195,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their villages. However, more than 60,000 IDPs and 'expellees' still remain in very poor conditions in camps. UNICEF is urgently appealing for US\$ 350,000 needed to provide basic items to children living in these difficult environments.

Many of the challenges brought about by the current drought and the recent war interact with each other and increase the vulnerability of children to an extreme level. For example, nearly half of all households in the country are female-headed households, with many of the men away on military service, or killed in the war. Thus, coping mechanisms are severely over-stretched and social safety nets are eroded. Furthermore, the ability to cope with drought is strongly hindered due to land restrictions, such as in the temporary security zone (TSZ). Many of Eritrea's people are nomadic pastoralists, who must travel long distances during lean years in order to find food for their herds. The presence of landmines along the southern border further hinders the normal movements of people and livestock." (UNICEF, 28 May 2003)

Separated children received adequate care because of strong family bonds (September 2000)

- Strong tradition of mutual help
- IDP camps organized according to home village structures
- Care of the unaccompanied children facilitated by neighbors nearby and other family members

"A sample of six camps (out of a total of 31) in the regions of Gash Barka, Debub and Northern Red Sea were selected to provide geographical and situational comparison. The population in the selected six camps represent 25% of the total IDP population.

[...]

In the camps people were organized according to their home village structure, and the village administrator would also be the administrator in the camp. This meant that the administrators knew all details of the families in their group. Many informal messages would be sent to and from the home villages, and even across the border into Sudan.

Even if children were living in groups alone in the camp, for instance sharing a tent, there would always be neighbors nearby and in some cases also family members. This facilitated care of the children in the camp, and also helped links with their parents if the parents had remained at home.

In the villages there is a strong tradition of mutual help, with the richer families helping the poorer ones. In the camps, however, this traditional coping mechanism is stretched since there are few spare resources available. Therefore neighbors may watch over separated children, but may not be able to provide material assistance.

[...]

The problem of separated children in Eritrea as a result of more than two years of war is being kept to a minimum largely due to the strong family bond and sense of responsibility and response that exists in Eritrean communities. Moreover, during Eritrea's struggle for liberation, an effective system to deal with the situation of vulnerable children, mostly orphaned and unaccompanied children were developed, building a solid foundation for knowledgeable and capable social workers within the most prominent actors for child welfare in Eritrea, namely MLHW and ERREC. However, the ongoing movements of population and subsequent social and economic disruption and the shortage of human resources caused by the war, have increased workload and overstretched the workload of both the MLHW and ERREC." (MLHF/UNICEF/SCF September 2000, pp. 4, 26, 27)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

No recent information on property issues relating to IDPs (May 2006)

IDMC has no recent information on property issues relating to IDPs, either during displacement or upon return.

Most houses in border town Tsorona damaged during Ethiopian offensive (June 2001)

"Thousands of Eritrean civilians displaced by war three years ago are returning to their home town, Tsorona, only to find it completely demolished by Ethiopian forces during the two-year border war that ended last June.

Not a single house with a roof intact can be found in this town, situated just a few kilometres (miles) from the former trench lines.

Since the exodus home began 10 days ago, some 6,000 civilians have returned to Tsorona and the surrounding areas, according to figures provided by the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC).

Government officials say that an additional 6,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) are expected to return to the area over the next several weeks.

Unable to move back into their houses, returning families have pitched tents throughout the town and on hillsides overlooking fields still littered with land mines.

"We are very glad to be back home, but we have nothing -- no houses, no water, no medicines," said Saleh Nagash, a 70-year-old man who returned to Tsorona two days ago with his wife, seven children, and seven grandchildren." (AFP 8 June 2001)

Damage in formerly occupied areas targeted to public property and buildings (May 2001)

- Nearly 100 % of private homes and community buildings found to have been damaged and in need of extensive repair
- Destruction of Civil Administration buildings such as border post, police station, church and shops in the Dehub region
- Hospital in Senafe completely demolished beyond repair
- Barentu Hospital emptied of equipment
- Only 10 of the 58 health facilities Gash Barka region intact
- Substantial damage on private and public buildings reported in Barentu, Tessenei and Ali Gidir

"An assessment team, consisting of staff from ERREC, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP/Power, and UNMEE/CIMIC, accompanied by local civil administrators, visited villages and towns in Tzorona sub-zone of Debub on 1 May 2001. Initially, 16 villages were prioritized for assessment within the sub-zone. However, due to security concerns related to the presence of mines and UXOs, a total of 7 villages were finally visited.

[...]

As stated above, considerable damage has been inflicted to Tzorona town and the villages of Mai Agam and Kudo Waiba. In these three locations nearly 100 % of private homes and community buildings have been damaged and require extensive repair (mainly roofing, windows, doors). In Tzorona town, most modern structures are still standing although they lack roofing as the corrugated iron sheets have been removed. In Mai Agam and Kudo Waiba, housing, mainly of traditional type, has suffered extensive damage as a result of the war and lack of maintenance." (ICC 1 May 2001)

"A joint Government and UN agencies conducted a Rapid Village Assessment (RVA) of Temporary Security Zone areas from 23 - 24 April in Adi-quala and Mai-Aini sub-zones of Debub region. 12 persons from UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, ERREC, Local Administrators and UNMEE officers visited 6 of 7 villages planned to be assessed within the two sub-zones using Rapid Village Assessment form to collect information.

[...]

Severe damage and looting occurred in Ksad Eka village located about 5 km to the main border crossing point at Mereb River. Civil Administration buildings such as border post, police station, church and shops have been destroyed. It was evident that destruction and looting was targeted mainly at important economic facilities.

An estimated 90% of traditional huts (made of mud walls and thatch roofing) have deteriorated due to lack of up-keep and maintenance." (ICC 2 May 2001)

"Community buildings were a common target of looting and destruction throughout the sub-zone. Severe damage and looting to both community and private buildings (homes) occurred in Serha village and in Serha town. As a generalization, the level of damage to villages varies directly with their proximity to the disputed border. Serha (town) has barely a single building standing intact. In other villages, the destruction of homes is common, but not to the scale evidenced in Serha. More typically, community buildings were the targets. Civil administration buildings, schools, clinics, churches, police stations and shops have routinely suffered varying degrees of damage. The Assessment Team noted that it appeared that there was more damage to the houses where villages were evacuated, rather than to the houses of people who had never left.

[...]

The only hospital in the sub zone before the conflict was in Senafe. It is now completely demolished beyond repair. " (ICC 2 May 2001b)

"During the three weeks of occupation by Ethiopian forces, beds, mattresses, fridges, microscopes, operating lamps, drip stands, drug supplies, prescription pads were all loaded onto civilian trucks and driven across the disputed border.

The once 70-bedded centre now has 10, five with springs only. It has one microscope saved by a technician who grabbed it as he fled and all six fridges that made up the region's central cold chain for immunisation have also gone.

[...]

In the Gash Barka region alone only 10 of the 58 health facilities are still functioning, either due to looting or destruction. In Debub, says WHO officer Dr Debrezion Berhe, south of Asmara, the latter is more prevalent. " (WHO 31 July 2000)

"Overall, few people have been able to return home and there are increased risks due to land mines and the oncoming rains. Additionally, returnees are finding their homes devastated, livestock stolen, machinery destroyed, and shops looted. The items destroyed or stolen include agricultural equipment, food stocks, seeds and livestock feed.

In Areza and Mai Dima (Dehub) some people are returning but finding property stolen and their houses destroyed from shelling. The homes in Adi Nefas and Debre Sahli have been re-reported completely razed, leaving the previous inhabitants with little choice but to remain in IDP camps for the time being." (ICC 24 June 2000)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Government set on ending displacement, but future of returnees uncertain (May 2006)

- Government intends to return majority of IDPs in 2006
- No information is available on the situation the IDPs are returning to, but it is presumed that infrastructure and social services are lacking or insufficient

State of Eritrea, March 2006:

The Eritrean government has given the return of IDPs to the regions of Gash Barka and Debub highest priority. Their return should reduce Eritrea's dependency on international aid, as they are to return to fertile border regions to resume agricultural activities there. The government foresees provision of shelter, livelihood possibilities, health water and educational facilities, and mine awareness training. Costs for the undertaking are estimated at over \$14.5 million.

P.3: "IDPs in Zoba Debub have stayed in the camps of Metera, Hahayle, Afoma, Awlie and Mai Wuray and they will return to nine kebab administrative. Most IDPs will be able to return to Nari'a, Degelelo, Golo, Tisha, Lahiyo and Meshal Akran kebab administration. However, those IDPs from Ambesete Geleba and Yalambesa will remain in the camps."

OCHA, Regional CAP, 2006, p.46:

Due to the border conflict, many people have left their villages and are living in IDP camps, some of

these camps are located in drought-affected areas and families have to cope with double hardship.

This [UNICEF] project aims at supporting the re-settlement of 8,800 households displaced in Debub and Gash

Barka regions by providing basic non-food items, psychosocial care and support and mine risk education to avoid mine incidents in their communities.

OCHA, Humanitarian Update, 30 April 2006:

"5,000 IDPs who have been living in camps for eight years at Metera, Afoma and Awlie-Hahayle in Senafe sub-zone, returned to their villages. The IDPs are from 23 villages in Senafe sub-zone of Debub region and Endeli administrative area of Northern Red Sea region.

Over 90 km.-long road has been cleared to facilitate the return of the IDPs and health stations and schools have been renovated in the villages of return and are ready for use. Villages of return with no school and health stations would use rub halls and tents. So far about 10,000 IDPs including the recent returnees have returned to their villages.

The remaining 30,000 IDPs will be returning to their respective villages/settlement areas in the coming few weeks."

Haddad Eritrea, 4 April 2006:

"It has been stated that [approximately 6,000] residents of Akran, Debub Refgion, who have been living in temporary camps for the past eight years due to Weyane's offensive are to return to their villages in teh coming few days. [...] The citizens expressed thir appreciation towards the

government's support in the past eight years and were very pleased with the plan to go back to their villages."

Government of Eritrea, 26 January 2006:

A total of 2,208 war-displaced Eritrean families who used to live in makeshift camps in Mai-wurai and Senafe are making preparations to return to their respective villages.

Experts have already gone to the site so as to make the necessary facilities available for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Administrative areas of Hadish-Adi and Lahyo, as well as the villages located in the eastern escarpment, to which the IDPs would return.

The Administrator of the Southern region, Mr, Mustafa Nurhusein, said that the Government would extend all possible support to the nationals upon return to their respective villages in order to enable them plough their farms in the next rainy season and get access to health and educational services.

Discussions between IDMC and various sources in Eritrea highlight the fear that IDPs are returning to unsafe areas due to insufficient mine clearance following the Eritrean flight ban on UNMEE, and due to continuous instability along the border. Furthermore, it is not clear by what means the Eritrean government intends to provide the necessary basic facilities to allow the returnees to build up sustainable livelihoods.

19,000 IDPs/Expellees assisted to return to their villages of origin (March 2005)

- The return was organised by a UN Joint Programme for IDP return and the government
- The returnees who were from Adi Keshi Camp moved to 22 villages within Gash Barka
- All returnees have received Mine Risk Education but are in dire need of non-food items
- Preparations started to assist 10,000 people to return to their homes as planned for 2005
- Donors support needed to successfully complete the programme for IDP return

ICRC, June 2006:

"In February, some 5,000 families (around 19,500 people) living in Adi Keshi IDP camp in Gash Barka voluntarily returned to their villages of origin near the border with Ethiopia in a government-organized programme. In coordination with the authorities and UNDP, the ICRC ensured that the returning families had access to water and received soap, kitchenware, jerrycans, tarpaulins and rope. It also made an arrangement with the Eritrean Red Cross to build around 2,000 fuel-saving ovens in the Shilalo resettlement area. The ovens slowed down deforestation and reduced the amount of time and energy women had to spend collecting wood."

Email from OCHA to NRC, 25 May 2005:

"The return of these IDPs was done in a joint programming spirit between the Government and the UN (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP). About USD 11 million was mobilised from donors (including Norway) to return and provide basic reintegration packages. The returnee families have been allocated one ha of agricultural land and UNDP is providing costs of clearing, seeds and tractor service. In addition, as the returnees are still living in tents, planning for constructing permanent housing structure has been finalised but awaiting funding. WFP continues to support them with food aid.

Renovation of water system and health facilities are still going on. All interviewed were happy to return to their villages of origin but everything is starting from scratch. They are at disadvantage in

the food aid rationing as they are now treated with the non IDP category, they are getting 60% of the standard ration.”

UN OCHA, 31 March 2005

“Continuous efforts are required to assist and maintain provision of basic social services to the IDPs and expellees in and outside the camps, especially in non-food items such as tents, clothing, shoes, cooking fuel and hygienic items for those women and children who are yet to return to their homes.”

UN OCHA, 5 May 2005

“Planning has been going on under joint programming to return/settle additional 10,000 from the remaining 51,000 provided that funding is secured for the programme. Despite the fact that, there is still a need for additional funding, the return and on going establishment of sustainable livelihoods for the 139,000 returnees was a success story and exemplary that if funds are made available humanitarian agencies and partners could carry out programmes efficiently and effectively. Therefore, it goes without saying that there is a pressing need for funding to continue the re-integration programme of the recently returned IDPs/expellees and the 120,000 returnees from Sudan, and to return/settle the second phase of 10,000 IDPs/expellees. In addition, provisionally the IDPs/expellees living in camps need urgent replacement of tents to sustain the approaching rainy season and almost all IDP school children are in short supply of schooling materials such as exercise books, pencil and other basics.”

SG Report, 7 March 2005, para.22

“Some 19,000 internally displaced persons who recently returned to their places of origin inside the Temporary Security Zone in Sector West will require basic social services and facilities for sustainable reintegration. In 2004, the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Eritrea was less than 60 per cent funded, and the 2005 Consolidated Appeal remains largely unfunded. I appeal to the donor community to make timely and adequate contributions to address the humanitarian needs in the country.”

UNMEE, 17 February 2005

“In a commendable logistics operation that lasted eleven days, the Eritrean Government led by the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) successfully transferred the large number of people, personal effects and livestock with no casualties reported. Out of the 18,700 IDPs, some 4,600 were expellees (1,344 families) originally from disputed areas around Adi Gheshu and Adi Tsetser.

[...]

They were resettled in three settlements within the village of Ogumu in the greater Shilalo area. They will be granted the right to use one hectare of agricultural land and some 300 square meters of residential land per family. Three health posts and clinics have been established in the area to ensure that those returning receive adequate medical assistance. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has also established water points around the 12 villages to ensure a smooth transition to normal life of both people and livestock. The national de-mining organisation, the Eritrean Demining Organisation (the EDO), and UNICEF will continue the Mine Risk Education (MRE) Training of Trainers programme, targeting schoolteachers as potential trainers, as the greater area around the villages has not yet been swept of mines and explosive materials, and concern for potential casualties remains. The UNMEE Humanitarian Affairs Officer and UNDP representatives also witnessed activities to establish temporary schools, which will enable children to continue their education with the beginning of a new term on 15 February. UNMEE's intention is to assist the government and UN agencies in helping the returnees to rebuild their lives. The Mission will employ its Quick Impact Project resources as soon as concrete needs can be identified in collaboration with the local authorities.

With this move, the number of the internally displaced people in Eritrea has declined from 70,000 to 51,000 people. ERREC will now start the preparations for the return of another 10,000 displaced people to their homes, as planned for 2005.”

Returning refugees from Sudan need assistance for reintegration (July 2004)

- Since the beginning of 2004 some 7,779 Eritreans have returned to communities in Gash Barka
- Gash Barka is a war and drought affected region where there are huge needs of basic facilities
- Since 2000, at least 119,000 Eritreans have returned home from Sudan

UN OCHA, 31 May 2004, p. 13

“Since the beginning of 2004, 7,779 Eritreans have returned home bringing the total of those that have returned since 2000 to a total of some 119,000 people. Although WFP is providing assistance to returnee households until they are able to obtain their first harvest, most of the refugees are returning to communities in Gash Barka, a region that is severely affected by the war and drought leaving the population in desperate need of basic facilities. At the same time, there is also a critical need to provide reintegration assistance to returnees and to support communities’ absorption capacities. The target number of Eritrean returnees from the Sudan for 2004 is 35,000.”

UN OCHA, 16 July 2004

“UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of 367 Eritrean refugees from Sudan on 2 and 10 July 2004, the last organised repatriation operations before the onset of the long rainy season. The total number of assisted Eritrean returnees for the first six months of 2004 stands at 8,275 people. Since 2000, UNHCR together with ERREC have assisted 119,903 people return to Eritrea in safety and dignity. The voluntary repatriation operation will resume in October 2004 once roads become accessible after the rains. Large-scale organised voluntary repatriation will phase out on 31 December 2004 as the process nears full term. From 2005 UNHCR, will continue to help those wishing to return on an individual basis.”

2003/2004 Scenario: A continuation of status quo (June 2003)

- Effects of drought, delays in demarcation, continued threat of mines and UXOs will result in a continuation of status quo and possible new displacements
- Impediments to return remain as drought worsens

UN, 3 June 2003

“The implications of the delays in demarcation, the possible transfer of territories as well as the continued threat of Mines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) to those living and working in and around the TSZ, have implied that a significant number of those affected by demarcation including the current caseload of IDPs and expellees are unable to return. They will remain where they are currently, needing full support, particularly food assistance and replacement of worn-out shelter.

[...]

IDPs have not yet returned to the TSZ and will not be able to do so until mines have been removed and demarcation completed. The predicted influx of refugees from the Sudan has not happened. The demobilisation programme has been delayed, thus affecting the return to productive activity and restoration of family structures. However, progress towards peace is still

the most likely scenario. Unless the decision of the EEBC leads to negative developments in the coming months, the situation will continue to stabilise, with the necessary focus on areas such as the return of refugees and rehabilitation and demining of returnee areas.

The most likely scenario for the remainder of 2003 would be a continuation of the status quo with the effects of the drought becoming more widespread and further displacement of population, old caseloads remaining in current sites and possible resumption of the repatriation programme. With regard to the response required to cover humanitarian needs, the Government and the UNCT remain hopeful that contributions to both food and non-food requirements will increase.

[...]

The outlook for 2004 does not seem favourable. If the coming rainy season is below normal, there will undoubtedly be a continued need for assistance. Continued food and water shortages will have a devastating impact on the people. Even if the rains are unexpectedly good, it is likely that emergency assistance will be needed, as asset bases have been drastically eroded and water resources are unlikely to recover within one short rainy season. This is in view of the impact to date of the drought on a) the asset base of most of the affected population; b) the nutritional status of children and women; c) lack of labour; and d) the number of IDPs who are unable to return to normal lives in their home villages and farming fields.

Delays in demarcation means IDPs will not be going home for another year. Prolonged displacement and the maintenance of IDPs, as they wait for their return, will become much more problematic for humanitarian agencies. Even if demarcation takes place soon, the emergency situation will still continue and there will be additional needs. However, consolidation of peace, following demarcation, is the best promise for rehabilitation of social services such as health, education, water and sanitation.

There is a risk that reconstruction, rehabilitation and development needs will be neglected because of the effects of the drought and limited resources. The expected rehabilitation of destroyed houses and other social infrastructure such as schools, clinics and water sources will be delayed. The devastation caused by the war is vast and the transition from emergency to recovery will consequently require a protracted response. Until such a transition has been achieved, the CAP will remain an important instrument. The actors and the stakeholders in the humanitarian community believe that the huge caseload of IDPs, the return of refugees and IDPs, the reintegration of expellees and widespread food insecurity due to the combined effects of war and drought necessitate the continuation of the CAP into 2004. Humanitarian programmes should therefore be linked to longer-term development initiatives as reflected in the Integrated Recovery Programme.

Even if the situation were to develop in a positive manner, the humanitarian needs would remain so extensive that humanitarian action would be necessary for some time to come. Ensuring food security as a means of forestalling asset stripping, diseases and malnutrition as well as the return of refugees and resettlement of IDPs remain areas of key concern and will require concerted domestic and international attention. Resources are therefore needed as a matter of urgency not only to implement existing programmes that address overall priorities but also to build capacity to cope with further potential changes in the situation.”

UN OCHA, 31 March 2003

“Over 185,000 IDPs have returned home since the signing of the Algiers Agreement that ended the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000. Nevertheless, almost 60,000 IDPs remain displaced, many, as stated in our last report, because their home areas remain inaccessible due

to the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), or because they are under Ethiopian control or their houses have been completely destroyed and there is a lack of infrastructure generally. Many of the displaced people came from the Gash Barka and Debub regions in the south where most of the country's staple crops are traditionally grown. Increased mine explosion incidents in the country during the reporting period has done little to encourage return and resettlement. Many of the mine explosion incidents, it has been confirmed, have been caused by newly laid ones, likely to further undermine return of the displaced to their homes. Four Eritrean demining workers of the HALO Trust were killed in November 2002 and a boy killed in February 2003 in mine explosion incidents in Eritrea. Several injuries were reported as well.

Delay in the demarcation of the border, now slated for July 2003, has also ensured that a significant number of the displaced are unable to return. Return to areas that will change hands between the two countries is certain to remain on hold well into 2003, as the transfer is dependant on the demarcation process. In practice, this means that a large number of IDPs will remain where they are at present and will need full support, including food assistance in view of the prevailing chronic food shortages in most parts of the country."

Obstacle to return

Return constrained by landmines and absence of income-generating possibilities (June 2006)

- The resettlement of populations displaced by border conflict in Tigray and Afar hampered by mines
- IDPs around Adigrat advised not to return because their areas of origin are contaminated with landmines
- The Mine Action Coordination Centre provides mine-risk education to population living in dangerous areas
- 20 per cent of IDP areas of origin are mined
- While international agencies don't have the possibility to visit the returnees' areas, they suspect that the possibilities for building up sustainable livelihoods are minimal

"Eritrea's most fertile agricultural land is within the demilitarised temporary security zone, and landmines still impede the normal movement of more than 655,000 people" (IRIN, 6 April 2005)

"Landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to constitute a major threat in the Temporary Security Zone and adjacent areas, hindering the resettlement of the population of both countries. During the period from December 2004 through February 2005, there were five reports of incidents concerning mines and/or unexploded ordnance in the Temporary Security Zone, three in Sector Centre and two in Sector West, in which three people were killed and 11 injured.

Besides closely monitoring the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance in all Sectors, the UNMEE Mine Action Coordination Centre also continued to provide the necessary mine action support to the Mission in the Temporary Security Zone, ensuring that a consistent and well-coordinated UNMEE mine action response was maintained. During the period under review, the Force's small demining assets, together with the commercial contractors for route clearance and integrated demining operations, destroyed 81 mines and 79 items of unexploded ordnance, and cleared 148,291 square metres of land and 222 kilometres of road.

The Mine Risk Education field teams, established by the Mine Action Coordination Centre, continued to focus their outreach activities on populations in both Sectors, especially those living in areas suspected to be dangerous. During the reporting period, the teams provided mine-risk education, assistance and advice to almost 4,000 people." (SG Report, 7 March 2005, para.17-19)

"Ethiopia and Eritrea fought for two years over a border dispute that killed some 70,000 people from both sides, and left a nasty legacy of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). De-mining in Eritrea's 25,000 sq km temporary security zone (TSZ) along the border is coordinated by the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

Although just one percent of the TSZ is mined, said Phil Lewis, programme manager at UNMEE's Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC), the worst-affected areas are usually the most useful.

[...]

"Water points are affected, roads are affected. The problem is basically in the Gash Barka region in the southwest, particularly around Shilalo and Shambuko, which are the bread-basket areas of Eritrea."

The number of people killed or injured by landmines or UXOs in the border area in 2001 was 161. Some 60,000 people had returned to their homes during that year. Incidents had, however, since fallen to about two per month - divided equally between UXOs and mines. Casualty rates tended to increase when people returned home from temporary camps - when they were least aware of the situation, Lewis explained.

[...]

However, MRE is not always 100 percent effective, and mine and UXO incidents are not just limited to children, he noted. Moreover, mines have been laid on roads in the TSZ in recent years, so road clearance has become a large part of MACC's \$8.5 million annual budget. Outside the TSZ, Eritrea still contains mines and UXOs from other fighting: between Italy and Britain during the second world war; from Eritrea's 30-year struggle for independence from Ethiopia; and during the 1998 war with Ethiopia." (IRIN, 30 March 2005)

"The recently-completed Landmine Impact Survey has indicated that every region of Eritrea is seriously affected by landmines and UXOs. This report summarises important new baseline information which will be used to plan the Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) in 2005. Landmines currently affect at least 481 communities with the highest located in Semienawi Keih Bahri, Anseba, Gash Barka and Debub. In total, 650,000 people are affected by the fear of landmines and over 100,000 people currently live with disabilities. The prevalence of mines is also a constraint to the potential return of IDPs. 20% of IDP areas of origin are mined and 83% of mine-impacted communities report blocked access to pastureland, thus severely affecting food security. If the political momentum continues, demining activities will be crucial to facilitating the return of IDPs and returnees." (UN OCHA, December 2004, p.15-16)

Information received from various sources in Eritrea, May, June 2006:

While international agencies don't have the possibility to visit the returnees' areas, they suspect that the possibilities for building up sustainable livelihoods are minimal

For more information on de-mining activities see also the two reports to the UN Security Council from 3 January and 6 March 2006 (sources).

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Government restricts access of international agencies, coupled with efforts to reach self-reliance (May 2006)

- Eritrea's government seeks to reduce dependency from international aid, and to boost national self-reliance
- Aid agencies fear that warehoused food will not reach beneficiaries and that people will suffer in times of drought
- A large number of international NGOs have been expelled or left the country following a May 2005 government proclamation

Reuters, 5 May 2006:

"One of the world's poorest and most aid-dependent nations, Eritrea, hopes a new cash-for-work scheme will help end its reliance on international relief.

But with strained ties between the isolationist Horn of Africa nation's government and the foreign aid community, relief workers are still anxious about the fate of food aid held up in warehouses. Some aid has appeared for sale on the street.

The U.N. estimated last year two-thirds of Eritrea's 3.6 million people needed aid. But President Isaias Afwerki's government is eager to become self-reliant, believing foreign powers have sometimes used food relief for political pressure.

State media were this week singing the praises of a drive to replace handouts with direct payments for useful labour to replace "creeping dependency" with "a good work ethic."

An official article, published this week on the Information Ministry's website shabait.com as well as other media, said aid was a "stop-gap measure" and "a transient instrument" while Eritrea's economy recovered from its 30-year independence war.

Eritrea secured independence from neighbouring Ethiopia in 1993, becoming Africa's youngest nation. Reconstruction efforts by Isaias' guerrilla movement-turned-government were also hampered by a 1998-2000 border dispute with Ethiopia.

"Free distribution of food aid and food-for-work entail negative consequences that outweigh their positive utilities," said the article, citing "lethargy towards work", distortion of markets and corruption. "

IRIN, 23 March 2006:

"Eritrean authorities have asked three international nongovernmental organisations and one local NGO to stop operating in the country, saying they had failed to meet the requirements of a permit allowing them to work there, humanitarian sources said on Thursday.

In a letter dated 20 March, the ministry of labour and human welfare asked American charity Mercy Corps International, Concern World Wide of Ireland and Great Britain's ACORD, as well a local group known as Hansenians Eritrean Welfare Organisation, to terminate their operations in Eritrea.

'While thanking your organisation for the contribution it has made to relief and rehabilitation programs in Eritrea in the past years, the ministry kindly and regretfully informs you that the registration certificate is recalled and requests the termination of your activities,' the letter said. The charities were asked to close down their operations with effect from 28 February.

The agencies said they were hoping to discuss the issue with the government. In the recent past, Eritrea has gradually changed its relations with the aid community, emphasising the need for self-reliance. Since a proclamation on administering the activities of NGOs was put into effect in June 2005, the number of NGOs working in the country has dwindled from 37 to 13. In July 2005, Eritrea, one of the world's most food aid-dependent countries, asked USAID - its largest donor of food aid - to stop operations, saying it was uncomfortable with the agency's work.

Observers have interpreted the changes as an expression of anger over a perception in Asmara that the international community favours its larger neighbour, Ethiopia, with which the Eritrea fought a border war from 1998 to 2000. The two nations are still engaged in a tense standoff over the dispute. Since October 2005, Eritrea has restricted United Nations peacekeepers patrolling its border with Ethiopia by banning helicopter flights and the movement of other vehicles at night over its territory. Asmara also expelled Western members of staff of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea."



Reuters Foundation, 26 January 2006:

"In July, Eritrea - still one of the most food aid-dependent countries in the world - ordered the expulsion of the U.S. government's development agency, USAID, despite large food aid contributions from the Washington administration.

The government then slashed food aid distribution in September to 72,000 from 1.3 million recipients in August - reportedly citing a desire to cut reliance on foreign aid."

Gazette of Eritrean Law, 11 May 2005:

The Eritrean government rules by proclamation. The May 2005 proclamation imposes strict rules on foreign and national NGOs, including that they must own a minimum of \$2million in the country. The same proclamation introduced the replacement of the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (p.9).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

National response: striving for self-sufficiency

On a national level, the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare replaced the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission in May 2005 as the main government institution responsible for coordinating national and international humanitarian operations, including those targeting IDPs (Gazette of Eritrean Law, 11 May 2005). According to humanitarian agencies in Eritrea, this change seriously disrupted their activities, as one year later the Ministry had still not established itself as a responsive counterpart to the humanitarian community. At the same time, a range of administrative hurdles had emerged, making it very difficult for those agencies still in the country to carry out their work (OCHA, email correspondence, April and May 2006).

The Eritrean government is making a clear statement by refusing Western help and boosting its development activities with the aim of becoming less dependent on Western donors. At the same time, it is trying to forge new economic and possibly military ties with countries such as China (Reuters, 12 April 2006).

Eritrea has been actively resettling and returning its IDPs for several years. The government agency previously responsible for IDPs, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC), together with UN agencies, have resettled some 20,000 IDPs and returnees in early 2005. The return process should continue in 2006, as the government intends to increase Eritrea's self-sufficiency by starting to cultivate the fertile land along the Temporary Security Zone.

International response

International response seriously curtailed by government restrictions

The operating environment for international agencies and NGOs became increasingly difficult after the government's 11 May 2005 proclamation on administering the activities of NGOs. Many national and international NGOs were forced to stop their activities, including USAID, Eritrea's largest donor of food aid. Within one year, the number of NGOs had dropped by almost two-thirds, from 37 in early 2005 to 13. This change in policy is seen as an expression both of Eritrea's perception that the international community favoured Ethiopia in the territorial conflict, and of its aim of becoming more self-reliant (IRIN, 23 March 2006).

The recent developments restricting international humanitarian access are but a next step in the long list of actions by the Eritrean government which indicate to the international community that they are not really welcome. For example, the government has for years been hindering the de-mining process. After a re-structuring in 2002, de-mining already effectively came to a halt in many agricultural areas (USCR, 2003). The newly established Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) only authorised a couple of companies to continue de-mining (UN, November 2002, p.10; OCHA, 19 April 2002). The most recent flight ban on UNMEE helicopters further exacerbates this situation, potentially endangering the safety of thousands of returning returnees.

UNICEF has taken on cluster leadership for nutrition, water and sanitation. The UN agency provides clean water, mosquito nets and medical support to populations affected most by poverty and drought (UNICEF, 11 June 2006).

UNHCR's assistance programmes for IDPs were phased out at the end of 2001. The UN refugee agency now focuses on assisting returnees from Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti (OCHA, 22 May 2001).

ICRC has for years provided seeds and water to displaced people (ICRC, 1 June 2006; ICRC, 12 June 2003). It is also directly involved in facilitating the voluntary return of returnees and IDPs. According to its 2005 Annual Report, ICRC was the main organization providing water, shelter and essential household items to some 46,500 IDPs in 21 camps; provided a water supply and essential household items to some 19,500 IDPs who returned home, and helped another 2,000 returnees rebuild their homes; in former war zones, improved access to water for some 35,600 residents and helped over 4,000 households preserve their livelihoods by treating some 77,000 livestock against parasites and paying for tractor ploughing services; together with the Eritrean Red Cross, distributed around 11,700 RCMs on behalf of relatives still separated by the two-year international armed conflict, assisted in the voluntary repatriation of over 800 civilians to Ethiopia and reunited 34 children with family across the closed border; visited 51 detention facilities to monitor the treatment and living conditions of detainees of Ethiopian origin, including POWs who had declined repatriation, and provided funds to some 3,000 residents of the Ethiopian community to meet Eritrean administrative requirements; together with the Defence Ministry, trained 27 armed forces officers as IHL instructors." (ICRC, 1 June 2006)

Oxfam is still operational in Eritrea, it focuses on water, sanitation and livelihood projects related to drought relief. It is present in the sub-zones of Areza, De Barwa and Mai Mine, all in Dehub Zone (Oxfam, December 2005).

Coordination

Coordination between government and international community very difficult

In an attempt to find regional solutions to issues affecting the entire Horn of Africa, in particular the 2006 drought, the UN Secretary-General has appointed a new Special Envoy, the Norwegian Kjell Magne Bondevik. During a visit to the region in April/May 2006, Mr. Bondevik met with President Isaias Afwerki and discussed the return of IDPs, the warehousing of food stocks and the cooperation between the Eritrean government and international agencies (IRIN, 27 April 2006). According to Mr. Bondevik, President Isaias explained that the warehoused food stocks have already been incorporated into its cash-for-work programme, of which no details are available yet.

According to humanitarian agencies in Eritrea, this change seriously disrupted their activities, as one year later the Ministry had still not established itself as a responsive counterpart to the humanitarian community. At the same time, a range of administrative hurdles had emerged, making it very difficult for those agencies still in the country to carry out their work (OCHA, email correspondence, April and May 2006).

Because of the Eritrean government's new approach to international aid, there was no Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for 2006. Only at the last minute did the government agree to participate in the Joint Revised CAP for the Horn of Africa, aimed particularly at drought relief.

Seven Eritrean projects are now included in the second revision of the Joint CAP (CAP HoA, Projects, 24 May 2006).

ERREC used to collaborate with international community (2005)

The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) is the main government institution responsible to coordinate national and international humanitarian operations including those targeting IDPs. ERREC has offices in all administrative Zones in Eritrea and is present in each IDP camp. Specific line ministries are responsible for sectoral coordination and the implementation of programmes and for reporting regularly to ERREC on the beneficiaries reached, new developments, needs and constraints. At the local level, the regional and sub-regional administrations cooperate with ERREC in assisting the IDPs and Rural Deportees (UN January 2000, p.11).

The ERREC works in close collaboration with the UN agencies and international NGOs such as the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC) and [the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC). The UN activities have been coordinated by [OCHA](#), supported by a joint government/UN Information and Coordination Centre. The [United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea](#) coordinates and provides technical assistance for humanitarian mine-action activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it.

On 10 February 2005, the ERREC was assisted by a joint UN programme Supporting the Return of IDPs and Expellees to Communities of Origin and Resettlement to resettle 19,000 IDPs/Expellees to 22 villages of origin within Gash Barka. The resettled were provided with basic reintegration packages and each family have been allotted one ha of agricultural land for which [UNDP](#) is providing costs of clearing, seeds and tractor service. The resettled received Mine Risk Education (MRE) through either the Eritrean De-mining Operations supported by [UNICEF](#) or United Nations Mine Action Centre MRE teams. In addition, the ICRC has also established water points around 12 villages to ensure a smooth transition to normal life of both returnees and their livestock (UNMEE, 17 February 2005).

Nevertheless, the activities of the ERREC and international agencies are restricted by limited resources. Urgent funding is needed to continue the provision of reintegration assistance to returnees and support necessary to boost receiving communities' absorption capacity. Concern has been expressed at the low funding level in the non food sectors such as shelter, health, water and sanitation which implies that needs were not met. As the returnees are currently living in tents, planning for constructing permanent housing structure has been finalised but awaiting funding. Funds are required to implement the joint government/UN programme planning to return/settle additional 10,000 IDPs/expellees (UNMEE, 17 February 2005; UN OCHA, 31 March 2005; IRIN, 24 May 2005 OCHA, 5 May 2005, p.3).

Within the framework of the 2005 UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for Eritrea, UN agencies and participating NGOs in collaboration with the government requested \$ 157 million. As of June 2005, just over 12 per cent of the CAP had been covered. Consequently, the UN estimated that there has been little progress in addressing the priority needs for vulnerable groups in Eritrea, including IDPs and returnees. The more vulnerable are children since emergency activities targeting IDP children who are returning to villages in the Temporary Security Zone and education programmes for IDP children in camps are unfunded (UNICEF, 27 May 2005). Underfunding has also led to the reduction of food rations to vulnerable groups including IDPs living outside camps and returnees although malnutrition rates remain high. Only IDPs in camps continue to receive a food ration fully covering their daily caloric requirement (UN OCHA, 11 February 2005).

Underfunding may cause deeper long-term damage to the fabric of Eritrean society, as the return of IDPs and refugees is taking place in the context of serious poverty and lack of long-term commitment by the international community. By and large, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction programmes will depend on the progress made in the physical demarcation of the boundary and the level of food and non-food aid received to implement the different programmes conceived for the vulnerable groups, including returnees and IDPs.

Reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (as of August 2004)

- References to the Guiding Principles Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles

None

Availability of the Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are widely available in Arabic. Published by OCHA.
Source: OCHA; Mr Francis Deng, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons; Mr Sergio Vieira De Mello Assistant to the Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, To download the full document click here: [External Link]
Date: 11 April 2001

Training on the Guiding Principles

None

Eritrea signed IDP declaration at 2003 Khartum IGAD conference

- Eritrea signed the 2003 Khartoum Declaration

KHARTOUM DECLARATION (Appendix E of the document)

Ministerial Conference on Internally Displaced Persons in the IGAD Sub-Region

We, the Ministers representing the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) meeting in Khartoum,

Noting the conclusions and recommendations of the Experts Meeting from 30th August to 1st September, 2003;

Considering the situation of internally displaced persons, (IDPs) in the sub-region;

Recalling the decision taken by the IGAD Council of Ministers during the AU Summits in Durban and Maputo in 2002 and 2003 respectively, to convene an IGAD ministerial meeting on the issue of internal displacement caused by natural and man made disasters;

Cognizant of the fact that the aims and objectives of IGAD include promoting peace, stability and development in the sub-region, and determining that finding durable solutions to internal displacement is an indispensable step to realizing lasting peace stability and development;

Reaffirming the undertaking by the IGAD Member States to facilitate the voluntary return, reintegration or resettlement of displaced persons in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations in accordance with the existing national, regional and international instruments;

Recognizing that the problems of internal displacement affect all Member States in the sub-region and constitute a threat to socio-economic development, political stability, national security and the environment;

Noting with great concern that displaced women, children, elderly and disabled persons constitute the majority of the internally displaced and are often among the most vulnerable;

Noting with deep concern also that resources made available by the international donor community are still below the basic needs of the IDPs;

Reaffirming that the primary responsibility of protecting and assisting the internally displaced and finding durable solution lies with the national Governments and that the role of the international community is to complement the national effort ;

Taking note of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a useful tool for developing and evaluating appropriate national policies and legislation on internal displacement and noting also that the Principles compile the existing international law related to internal displacement;

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1. Express our concern over the persisting problem of internal displacement in the region, and the growing deterioration of the humanitarian situation of the IDPs, due to the recurrence of natural disasters and intra- and interstate conflicts;

2. Take note with appreciation of the efforts of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and commend him for promoting prevention of internal displacement, assistance to internally displaced persons, and durable solutions to their plight;

3. Commend the efforts of the Member States , UN agencies, other international agencies, donors as well as national and international NGO's which have continued to provide assistance to IDPs;

4. Call upon the international community to continue providing support for meeting the urgent needs of IDPs and in implementing rehabilitation, recovery and sustainable development programmes;

5. Call for the strengthening of co-operation between IGAD, AU, the UN and its agencies, particularly the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian organizations, with a view to coordinating their programmes and activities related to IDPs and streamlining their actions in the struggle to mitigate disasters in the sub-region;

6. Reiterate our commitment to continue to address the root causes of the problem of internal displacement and to continue creating conditions conducive for voluntary return and reintegration, local integration or resettlement of IDPs;

7. Agree to cooperate in encouraging the development of comprehensive national policies on internal displacement and in this regard,

- i. Acknowledge that such policies must be consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law;
- ii. Note that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement can serve as a useful tool for addressing IDP issues;
- iii. Commit ourselves to continue directing particular attention to the development of policies ensuring the protection of the internally displaced and to addressing the needs of especially vulnerable groups, such as women heads-of-household, children, disabled and elderly persons;
- iv. Reaffirm that such policies should take into account the needs and rights of internally displaced persons as well as the host communities;
- v. Call upon the international community to support Member States in developing such policies;

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8. Pledge and urge all concerned actors to provide humanitarian access to internally displaced persons for humanitarian organizations and to protect the safety and security of humanitarian workers;

9. Call upon the international community and member states to provide the necessary funds for the IGAD Executive Secretary to establish a unit on forced displacement within the IGAD Secretariat to, inter alia, collect data on displacement in the region, disseminate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, provide technical assistance to member states in developing and monitoring policies on internal displacement, and explore further means of sub-regional cooperation to address issues of forced displacement;

10. Endorse the proposal of the Current Chairman of IGAD Council of Ministers to declare the 2nd of September of each year as IGAD IDPs Day;

11. Reiterate the need for firm commitment of all authorities in the IGAD sub-region to intensify their efforts with a view to finding lasting and durable solutions to the problems of displacement in order to enhance the prospects for long-term peace, security and development;

12. Urge Member States and all authorities in the IGAD region to continue to ensure the full participation of all segments of the displaced populations, in particular women and children, in decision-making on issues which affect their rights and welfare, including voluntary return, reintegration, local integration, resettlement and peace building programmes;

13. Appeal to Member States and the International Community to provide support and resources for reconstruction, resettlement and rehabilitation efforts of countries emerging from conflicts;

14. Intensify efforts aimed at enhancing democracy, rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law in order to ensure stability and security in the sub-region;

15. Call on Member States to take the necessary steps to implement the relevant provisions in the Declaration and Recommendations adopted by the OAU Ministerial Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons held in Khartoum, Sudan from 13-14 December 1998;

16. Invite Member States to work out modalities to ensure the implementation of this Declaration and to report progress on implementation to the 23rd Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers.

Khartoum, Sudan
2 September 2003

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