



Providing essential support and expertise wherever it is needed most

© ICMC/K. Urban
ICMC resettlement expert, Kevin Urban, interviewing refugees with UNHCR in Tanzania.

BEYOND NUMBERS AND QUOTAS

ICMC deployee, Viveka Bergh, reflects on the stories of so many Iraqi refugees hoping for resettlement and finds inspiration in seeing the most vulnerable among them finally depart for a new life in a third country.

I do not know the dynamics of violence, but feel certain what I see in her eyes are traces of it. What I see in his eyes, I do not know how to interpret - silence, fury, broken honour, or pure and simple pain? These are my thoughts as their story evolves.

'Could you please tell me in a chronological order about those threatening events you mentioned? As an interviewer, I desperately try to find a structure of the stories I am told, sorting events in a neat and timely manner. I have approximately two hours to take down the composition of the Iraqi family in front of me, as well as capture the reasons why they left Iraq and their current situation in Syria.

Haidar, the father and husband, looks kindly at me and seems dedicated to assist the time-pressured interviewer in front of him. The events escalate as their story unfolds. Their three children are pulled out of school due to their fear of

sectarian violence in the neighbourhood. They were subject to continuous verbal harassment by other students on the grounds of their religion. One morning, the family found a written death threat at their door.

'Why did we not leave Iraq immediately?', Haidar asks himself out loud. 'We knew we were at risk and were preparing for flight, selling our furniture and completing our applications for travel documents, when it happened.'

Their story comes to a quiet breakdown. Four eyes looking down, sudden tears dropping in her lap, tears on his face. No interviewer's timeframe and daily targets become relevant at this moment. Quiet sobbing, my fingers pulled back from the keyboard. I, too, look down now, aware of being an outsider threading into the most private corners of refugees' suffering. And the pitiful sole comfort I can provide is some tissue to wipe off tears. >>



VIVEKA BERGH
was deployed by ICMC to support the work of UNHCR in Damascus, Syria.

DEPLOYEES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“The most rewarding part of being a deployee is being able to have contact with the refugees. Their strength and courage in the face of incredible hardship is inspiring.”

--Inge Sturkenboom, ICMC deployee,
Congo Brazzaville

More refugees leave Malawi for resettlement in the United States

Xinhua News, 27 May 2010

“ICMC deployee, Kizitos Oskisai, has been instrumental in assessing and referring refugees for resettlement to the United States since first deployed to the field in 2009.”

Central Europe gets a new tool to measure refugee integration

UNHCR News stories, 15 February 2010

Sianni ARETI, ICMC Deployee at UNHCR's Regional Operation in Budapest supports research into European integration, contributes to development of UNHCR guidelines on refugee integration.

Congressional Human Rights Caucus debriefed on situation of Colombian refugees in Ecuador

Washington Weekly Update, 26 March 2009

Invited to testify alongside the Ecuadorian Ambassador to the US and the National Director of Jesuit Refugee and Migration Service in Ecuador, ICMC deployee, Aryah Somers, spoke about her experience working with refugees and other persons of concern in Ecuador during her deployment.

(cont'd from page 1) A few words from me break the silence, only to tell Haidar and Renda to take their time. 'I am sorry. I have to ask you these difficult questions. There is no need of going into details, which may hurt you more.' Renda looks at me, 'We live with these memories every day, we dream of them, we talk about them within the family. They cannot hurt more than they already have.' And so she starts telling me what happened that night, her husband still looking down and later filling in:

In mid December 2006, unknown, masked men dressed in black enter the house of the PRA and his family. The family is threatened at gun-point. The PRA, his wife, and 5-year old son are dragged out of the house. They are abducted by militia men for three days. During abduction, the PRA is subject to physical violence in the form of beatings. PRA's wife is subject to physical and sexual violence. She was three months pregnant at the time and subsequently lost her fetus. The PRA and his wife are exposed to forced conversion. Their 5-year old son is forcibly circumcised. The same evening, he dies from hemorrhage and/or infection as a result of the circumcision. The PRA and his wife are released upon the death of their son. They seek treatment at a local hospital

but choose to leave the hospital before the treatment is completed in fear of militias.

This dry account of the events tell nothing the eyes of Haidar and Renda in front of me express. My report will eventually reach migration officers of *resettlement* countries. Will they be able to read the agony between the lines? Will they understand the family's need to find a safe haven outside of Syria; where wounds may have a chance to heal, or at least the impact of passed violence decrease; where immediate survival is not the core issue of each and every day; where psycho-social support is available and childcare accessible?

Little more than two months later, I decide to look for updated information about Haidar and his family. Next to their names I read in bold: 'Accepted by Sweden'. I sit back and smile, this is the ultimate reward for caseworkers. ▀

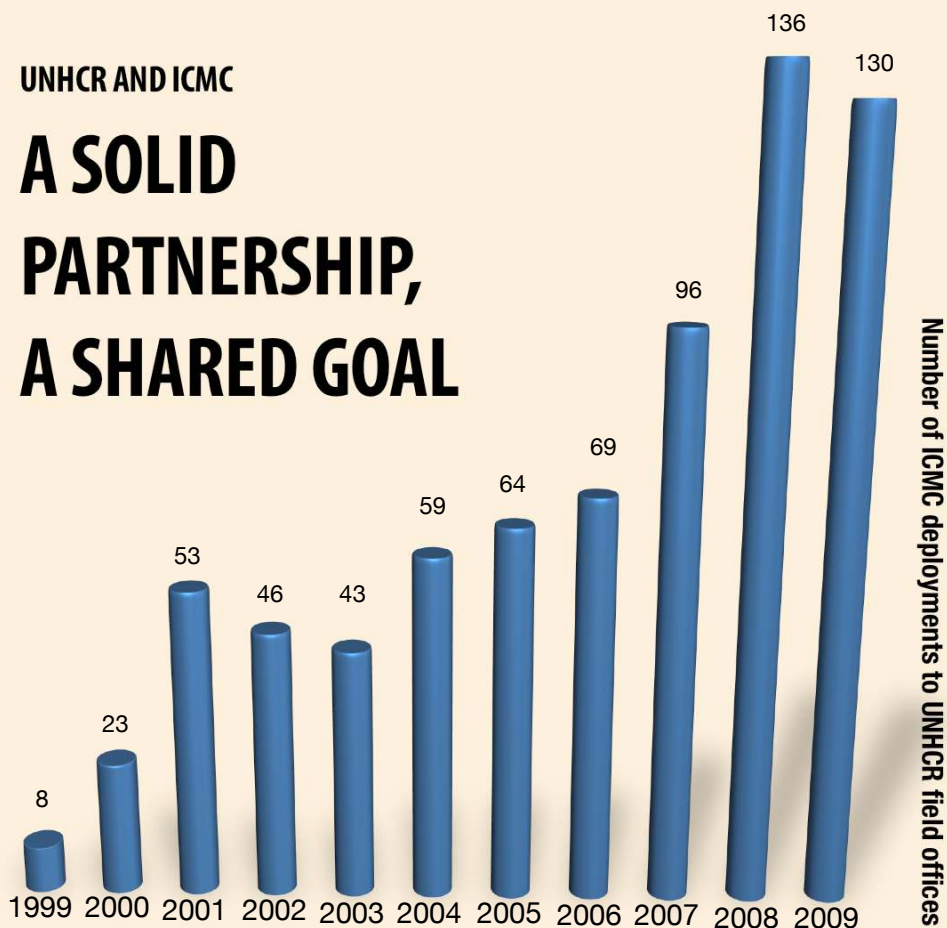
**Names have been changed.*



Refugees waiting at Wad Sherife camp, Sudan, hoping for a durable solution.

UNHCR AND ICMC

A SOLID PARTNERSHIP, A SHARED GOAL



© ICMC/K. O'Reilly
ICMC resettlement expert, Karen O'Reilly, together with a Darfuri refugee boy in Sam Ouandja, Central African Republic.

In 2009, ICMC employees interviewed and assessed more than **100,000** refugees,

55,000

of whom were subsequently referred for resettlement.

Since 1951, ICMC has identified and accompanied over one million refugees as they prepare to rebuild their lives in countries that have agreed to welcome them on a permanent basis.

As part of this work, ICMC continues to join with UNHCR to support activities related to refugee resettlement. With a roster of more than 250 skilled professionals, the UNHCR-ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme plays a vital role in tangibly increasing the number of refugees who are identified and referred for resettlement to third countries. The Scheme represents one of UNHCR's largest and oldest resettlement affiliated workforce partners.

Since 1997, ICMC resettlement experts in the field have supported UNHCR offices in countries throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. 2009 marked yet another successful year, as ICMC employees working in UNHCR offices

interviewed and assessed more than 100,000 refugees, nearly 55,000 of whom were subsequently referred for resettlement.

Demonstrating the importance of this work to UNHCR's capacity to resettle a maximum number of cases in need, UNHCR submitted a total of 128,000 refugees for resettlement in 2009.

While the majority of ICMC employees are engaged in casework, specialized ICMC employees also conduct Best Interest Assessments (BIDs) for children, advocate for the protection of refugee women and families, and provide psychosocial counseling. In addition, returning employees offer debriefing sessions that provide critical, first-hand information to the NGO and donor community, and UNHCR. ▀

One of UNHCR's largest and oldest resettlement affiliated workforce partners

DEPLOYMENT SCHEME	RESETTLEMENT CASEWORKERS	CHILD WELFARE EXPERTS	REFUGEE WOMEN AND GENDER SPECIALISTS	PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERTS
The UNHCR-ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme partnership enhances UNHCR's capacity to refer refugees for resettlement. Through the Scheme, skilled resettlement experts from a variety of NGO, government, and UN backgrounds are fielded to UNHCR offices where they interview and refer refugees for resettlement. Upon completion of their assignment, these experts return to their home communities or NGOs and are able to use their new experiences to increase awareness of the refugee caseloads and the partnerships that make resettlement possible.	Interview refugees, collect information on their cases and families and assess whether they are eligible for resettlement, based on pre-determined criteria.	Determine, in accordance with the UNHCR Best Interest Guidelines, the protection and durable solution needs of separated or unaccompanied children.	Advocate for the protection of refugee women and families, and work to ensure that UNHCR's age and gender mainstreaming strategy is streamlined into the Agency's work.	Provide counseling using techniques and therapies addressing their psychosocial affects of torture or other forms of violence and trauma.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

ICMC deployees provide essential support and expertise wherever it is needed most

Reaching out to the most vulnerable

"Eldon has made a remarkable contribution to the work of the Resettlement Unit throughout his deployment to Dadaab. Eldon's commitment to the operation in Dadaab and to the refugees we serve has been admirable, and his abilities and experience have made a lasting impact on the work of the unit. The successes we have seen in the past months would not have been possible without his valuable contributions."

--UNHCR Resettlement Officer

UNHCR Sub-Office, Dadaab, Kenya, 2010

Restoring hope

"It was very satisfying to know that what we do makes a positive difference in the lives of people who had given up hope on life.

Resettled refugees called or emailed me to update me on how they were doing in their new homes in resettlement countries and expressed gratitude...one refugee resettled in the Netherlands called and informed me that she had named her baby after me."

--Elias Ngugi, ICMC Deployee, Kasulu,

Tanzania, 2009

Facilitating European resettlement

"The ETC is now regarded by all concerned as a success, not least thanks to the invaluable input of (ICMC Deployee) Florentina Chiu.

UNHCR staff on the ground, our partners, IOM, resettlement countries and our governmental

counterparts greatly benefitted from the expertise that she brought with her. In her work providing training and capacity exercises as an ICMC deployee, and because of her many years' experience in resettlement and management functions, she made possible the establishment of the well-functioning structure that exists today, preparing the ground for a solid operation. Thanks to her, more than 450 refugees have transited through the centre."

--UNHCR Representative in Romania,


November 2009

Promoting protection

"The most rewarding aspect of the deployment was that detention and *refoulement* of persons with grave legal and physical protection needs were prevented through resettlement as a protection tool. Those included extradition, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and other acute types of cases."

--Gayrat Akhmadshoev, ICMC Deployee,

Kiev, 2009, currently deployed to Bangladesh



"What we do makes a positive difference in the lives of people who had given up hope on life."

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Refugees at a Cultural Orientation training session at the ICMC-managed Overseas Processing Entity in Istanbul

Strengthening the capacity of UNHCR

"The ICMC deployee who is supporting our office is playing a crucial role in further strengthening the resettlement capacity of our office and in pursuing our ambitious targets for the year. This, in turn, gives us increased leverage with the authorities in promoting progress in other important areas relating to the situation of persons of concern in Malta."

--UNHCR Representative in Malta, May 2008

The International Catholic Migration Commission

serves and protects uprooted people: refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

With staff and programmes in over 40 countries, ICMC responds to the challenges of people on the move and their communities, implementing and advocating for rights-based policies and durable solutions through its worldwide membership of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, and alongside government and non-governmental partners.


International Catholic
Migration Commission

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