

A resettled refugee from Iraq surveys the rooftops of Nuremberg, Germany, his new home.



Finding Durable Solutions

COMPREHENSIVE DURABLE SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

THE DYNAMICS OF displacement are changing. Almost half of the world's refugees now live outside camp settings. At the same time, political resistance to asylum is growing in many countries. Yet UNHCR maintains that the traditional options of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement remain the most vital components of the comprehensive solutions needed to resolve protracted refugee situations.

An example of such a comprehensive approach was discussed at the March 2010 Belgrade Regional Conference on Durable Solutions, with the aim of ending the displacement generated by the 1991-1995 conflicts in the Balkans. UNHCR, Governments and partners from the region came to agreement on measures to assist refugees to repatriate voluntarily or integrate locally in their countries of asylum.

In Africa, comprehensive solutions have been integrated into the strategies for declaring the cessation of refugee status for Angolan, Liberian and Rwandan refugees. In Azerbaijan, UNHCR conducted a socio-economic profiling exercise and intentions survey with urban refugees. The exercises revealed refugees' intentions relating to solutions as well as their professional capacities. This has allowed UNHCR to launch targeted self-reliance projects and capacity-building programmes. The Office also identified several

refugee families from Chechnya who are willing to repatriate should conditions allow for reintegration.

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION AND REINTEGRATION

In line with previous years' trends, the number of refugees who repatriated voluntarily in 2010 was 197,600 globally, the lowest number since 1990. By the end of the year, few repatriation operations had resumed on the African continent. The exceptions were programmes for Mauritians living in Senegal, Burundians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Congolese from the DRC in Burundi.

Several groups of refugees, such as Angolans who had fled their country and Congolese from the DRC living in the Republic of the Congo, were still waiting to return. In October, the voluntary repatriation of DRC Congolese refugees from Burundi to the DRC's South Kivu province resumed after a two-year break, owing to insecure conditions in areas of return.

Some 7,100 refugees returned to Southern Sudan, including 3,100 with UNHCR's assistance. While the repatriation of Sudanese refugees had reached a peak in a previous year, the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the north picked up in November 2010, in anticipation of the referendum scheduled for January 2011. In 2010, 143,000 IDPs returned home in Sudan, where UNHCR was engaged in assisting the return and reintegration of IDPs under the cluster approach.

Similarly, in Iraq, 78 per cent (some 92,500 people) of the returnee population were IDPs. Some 118,000 Afghan refugees returned home in 2010, twice the number of the previous year. This brings the number of Afghans who have returned since 2002 to more than 5.4 million. Globally, over 2.9 million IDPs returned to their homes in 2010.

Supporting local efforts to foster peace and good relations between communities is an important element in the sustainable reintegration of returnees. UNHCR's reintegration projects are community-based and cover host populations and returnees. A number of projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund were initiated in Chad, the Central African Republic, the DRC and Somalia. Projects in Liberia provided returnees with access to legal aid and the tools to resolve conflicts peacefully.

To make reintegration sustainable, UNHCR advocated for the inclusion of displacement issues in broader development agendas, and continued to participate in UNDAF processes. In Afghanistan, UNHCR has been working closely with the Government and development actors to make the Refugee, Returnee and IDP Sector Strategy of the Afghan National Development Strategy launched in 2008 operational. In 2010, UNHCR worked to identify the development needs of refugee- and IDP-hosting areas and to incorporate them into development plans.

LOCAL INTEGRATION

Local integration is the preferred option of many refugees who have developed social or economic ties with their host communities. In 2010, UNHCR assisted many refugees in different countries to prepare for local integration, including through education and self-reliance projects and by providing them with legal assistance.

In West Africa, efforts were pursued to regularize the presence of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees who have stayed in their respective countries of asylum for more than 15 years. Former Sierra Leonean refugees were provided with national passports, and countries of asylum agreed to regularize their stay with long-term residence permits, in accordance with the legal framework established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Integrated refugees who were provided with land for shelter construction were also given a legal title confirming their possession of the land or their right to use it.

In October 2010, a meeting in Ecuador of representatives of the Cities of Solidarity forum discussed the challenges of integrating refugees and migrants in urban settings.

In Europe, the Government of Belarus continued to develop its capacity to design and implement local-integration strategies with assistance from the European Commission and UNHCR.

PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS

Protracted refugee situations remain an important challenge for UNHCR, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. At the end of 2010, more than 50 per cent of the refugees assisted by the Office lived in protracted situations. These people have all been in exile for at least five years; many for decades. UNHCR worked in more than 30 protracted refugee situations, and, together with other UN agencies, advocated to include these groups and their hosting areas in long-term national development programmes.

AT THE END OF 2010, UNHCR ASSISTED 95,000 IDPS TO RETURN FROM THE NORTH TO SOUTHERN SUDAN, WHERE UNHCR WAS ENGAGED IN ASSISTING THEIR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION UNDER THE CLUSTER APPROACH

To facilitate local integration in the remote borderlands of northern Ecuador and Colombia, UNHCR supported an enhanced registration programme undertaken by the Government of Ecuador in 2010. This resulted in the recognition of more than 27,700 people as refugees, enabling them to gain access to employment and eventually integrate into their new communities. The information drawn from the registration process will also help with the planning and designing of integration programmes in the region.

In Latin America, where 70 per cent of refugees live in urban settings, local integration measures often entail legal and socio-economic support in deprived and difficult environments.

To address the plight of these long-term refugees, UNHCR expanded or adapted its operations with development-oriented approaches, particularly in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Republic of Tanzania. In Nepal, UNHCR cooperated with other agencies to initiate a community-development strategy in areas hosting refugees and those affected by them in the western part of the country.

As part of the follow-up to the High Commissioner's Initiative on Protracted Refugee Situations, launched in 2008, operations in Serbia and in Tanzania were evaluated in 2010. Preliminary findings indicate that the Initiative has brought positive developments,



A convoy of Burundian returnees from the DRC approaching the Mutumbizi transit centre.

including the strengthening of political resolve to secure sustainable solutions, besides highlighting UNHCR's capacity to serve as a catalyst in engaging development partners.

In Tanzania, the National Strategy for Community Integration Programme was launched in August 2010 to accompany the naturalization of some 162,000 Burundians who had taken refuge in Tanzania since 1972. Focusing on hosting regions, this programme is designed to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen education and health services. However, it requires additional financial support.

To provide better care for Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan, UNHCR presented a multi-year self-reliance project at an international donors conference in Kuwait in December 2010. The project aims to reinforce collaboration with development actors to support programmes for vocational training, entrepreneurship and access for refugees to financial services.

RESETTLEMENT

A comparatively small number of refugees—less than 1 per cent of the 10.5 million who fall under UNHCR's mandate—benefit from resettlement. However, with the number of returning refugees declining in recent years, resettlement is being increasingly used as a solution. It has proved vital in resolving protracted refugee situations, creating protection space for remaining refugee populations and new arrivals, and generally providing possibilities for solutions that might otherwise have remained closed. UNHCR has continued its efforts to expand resettlement opportunities for vulnerable refugees and to incorporate resettlement into all protection and comprehensive solutions strategies.

Besides being a vital protection tool and a durable solution, resettlement is an important means of responsibility sharing. Twenty-five countries now regularly offer resettlement places, with Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain

being the most recent new resettlement States, and Japan starting to implement its pilot resettlement programme in 2010. Considering that in 2005, only 14 countries offered resettlement places, it is clear that the pool of resettlement States has been significantly broadened in the last five years.

Despite these positive developments, the number of resettlement places offered did not increase significantly. The figure stood at approximately 80,000 in 2010, while UNHCR currently estimates global resettlement needs at approximately 800,000 places (this includes populations who would be resettled over a period of several years). So resettlement needs now outpace available resettlement places by a factor of 10 to 1.

In 2010, UNHCR submitted some 108,000 refugees for resettlement. By nationality, the main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement were refugees from Iraq (26,700), Myanmar (24,400) and Bhutan (14,800), representing in total 66 per cent of all submissions. In 2010, the landmark figure of 100,000 Iraqi refugees submitted for resettlement since 2007 was reached.

UNHCR continued to rely on its partners to support submissions. The UNHCR-ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme was particularly instrumental in this regard, with 124 deployments in 48 duty stations. However, the total number of UNHCR submissions was only a little more than half (54 per cent) of the 200,000 resettlement places identified as needed for 2010 alone.

Some 3,100 of approximately 34,400 refugee cases, or 9 per cent of all submissions for resettlement in 2010, were for women and girls at risk. This is the highest percentage achieved in the last five years and a tangible demonstration of the effective implementation of UNHCR's

Executive Committee Conclusion No. 105, just short of the 10 per cent target.

The threefold increase in resettlement submissions witnessed over the last six years could not be maintained, and a drop of 18 per cent was noted in 2010. This shift was expected, not least because the pace of resettlement submissions carried over from 2008 and 2009 outweighed resettlement countries' capacity to process cases.

In 2010, some 73,000 refugees departed with UNHCR's assistance for 28 resettlement countries (including States participating in the resettlement programme on an *ad hoc* basis). The largest number (14,800) departed from Nepal, followed by Thailand (11,400) and Malaysia (8,000). The year 2010 marked the departure of 40,000 Bhutanese refugees for resettlement from Nepal since the inception of the programme.

The number of Emergency Transit Facilities (ETFs) for people with acute protection needs pending their onward resettlement grew to three in 2010. In addition to the Emergency Transit Centre in Timisoara (Romania), which was established in 2008; the Emergency Transit Mechanism in Manila (Philippines); and the Emergency Transit Centre in Humenne (Slovakia) were opened.

Since the ETFs began to operate, some 1,000 refugees have passed through them for resettlement processing. Of these, some 800 have departed for resettlement countries. Nine resettlement countries have utilized the ETFs so far. The strategic use of resettlement continued to be promoted in a number of priority refugee situations, where it has brought protection dividends.

Resettlement was considered part of comprehensive durable solutions strategies in a number of refugee operations, with particular emphasis

on finding solutions for protracted situations. For instance, a Contact Group was established to increase the resettlement of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As resettlement activities expand globally, UNHCR is conscious of the need to ensure the integrity of its operations. Anti-fraud courses are an integral component of training in resettlement for UNHCR staff and partners. The 4th Meeting of the Expert Group on Resettlement Fraud, held in September 2010, focused on the use of biometrics to enhance the integrity and security of resettlement systems.

To improve processing, UNHCR provided regular training and policy guidance to its resettlement staff, including those of its partners. The Resettlement Learning Programme was successfully implemented in 2009-2010, targeting many UNHCR operations. As part of its efforts to enhance the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, UNHCR issued the second edition of the Heightened Risk Identification Tool in 2010, incorporating a number of improvements to improve its utility.

UNHCR also developed the Consolidated Online Resettlement Tracking System, a new resettlement data management tool that allows the automated exporting of data from the *proGres* database in field offices to Regional Resettlement Hubs or Regional Offices.

Recognizing that successful integration is critical in achieving a truly durable solution, UNHCR and its resettlement partners will continue to strengthen links between pre-departure and post-arrival activities. These efforts include the development of a tool to measure outcomes of resettlement and encourage the exchange of analysis and good practices. ■

GLOBAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	
TARGET 2010-2011	PROGRESS IN 2010
VOLUNTARY RETURN	
In 5 of 12 targeted countries , the potential for voluntary return is reached for more IDPs.	In 4 of the countries targeted the potential for voluntary return was reached for more IDPs.
In at least 8 of 11 targeted countries , the durable solution strategy is strengthened.	In 4 of the countries targeted the durable solution strategy for IDPs was strengthened.
REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION SUPPORT	
In at least 6 of 21 targeted countries of return , the national rights of returnees are sufficiently re-established.	In 1 of the countries of return targeted the national rights of returnees were sufficiently re-established.
In at least 4 of 22 targeted countries , access to effective mechanisms for housing, land and property restitution improved.	In 3 of the countries targeted , access to effective mechanisms for housing, land and property restitution improved.
In at least 7 of 15 targeted countries , reintegration efforts for IDPs improved to be sustainable.	In 4 of the countries targeted reintegration efforts were improved to be more sustainable.
RESETTLEMENT	
The number of resettlement places offered by resettlement countries increased by 10 per cent.	The number of regular resettlement places offered increased by 2.9% with the establishment of 4 new country programmes; however the overall number of resettlement places decreased by 2%, as <i>ad-hoc</i> places available in 2009 were not extended in 2010.
The number of individuals identified for urgent and emergency resettlement that are resettled increased to 60%.	30% of individuals identified for urgent and emergency resettlement (or 2,500 people) were resettled, representing 10% of all departures.
LOCAL INTEGRATION SUPPORT	
In at least 10 of 78 targeted countries , refugees are treated favourably in naturalization procedures.	In 3 of the countries targeted refugees were treated favourably in naturalization procedures.