



UNHCR

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

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AIDE MEMOIRE

Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and UNHCR

1. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Sri Lanka and UNHCR dated 31 August 1987 under which inter alia the Government agreed to :

"grant facilities to the UNHCR to station such number of officials as may be agreed between the UNHCR and the Government of Sri Lanka, in Sri Lanka for the purpose of monitoring the expending of funds granted by the UNHCR to the Sri Lanka Government for the purpose of rehabilitation and reconstruction"

2. This agreement also provided that it would remain operative :

"until such times as it is terminated by mutual consent or by one party giving the other three months' written notice of termination"

3. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding, there was an exchange of correspondence which indicated the agreed number of UNHCR international staff members to be stationed in Sri Lanka and specified the privileges, immunities and facilities which both UNHCR and such of its staff members would enjoy as follows :

"UNHCR and its officials referred to above, will enjoy within Sri Lanka, the same jurisdictional immunities, exemption from taxation, exchange facilities, customs facilities including first arrival privileges as are accorded to the Office of the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Sri Lanka and officials of the UNDP office in Sri Lanka"

4. In 1988, there was a further exchange of correspondence referring to permitted staffing levels and privileges and immunities which extended to 30 September 1989.

5. Delays in programme implementation arising from the prevailing situation during most of the past year and the consequent need to extend the completion period for UNHCR reintegration projects were discussed with the Hon. Minister of State for Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, who kindly agreed to support the UNHCR request for the duration of its agreement in staffing levels etc. to be extended indefinitely in view of the uncertainty as to the rate of implementation and consequent need for UNHCR to continue its activities. The Hon. Minister proposed to take the matter up himself with the Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs. UNHCR understands that this matter has indeed been taken up accordingly.

UNHCR Special Programme for Returnees and Displaced Persons

6. It is to be emphasised, strongly, that the UNHCR programme objectives do not end on/shortly after the reception of returnees at the entry point into Sri Lanka. On the contrary, it is only then that the process of facilitating reintegration of the returnees can begin. Over 43,000 returnees have come to Sri Lanka and are eligible for assistance under the UNHCR programme. But the rate of programme implementation has been seriously delayed owing to problems of a logistical nature, mainly in the housing sector (interruption of basic supplies eg. cement, roofing tiles together with inadequate infrastructure to permit timely delivery of materials).

7. A summary of sectoral support benefitting internally displaced persons as well as returnees is attached as Annex.

