

Strengthening emergency response

One of the principal commitments made by the High Commissioner on taking office in 2005 was to ensure that UNHCR would be better equipped to respond to emergencies. Accordingly, UNHCR developed a plan of action to strengthen its capacity to respond to emergencies affecting up to 500,000 people. The plan reflects UNHCR's new inter-agency commitments and responsibilities vis-à-vis internally displaced people. It also calls for more staff to work on emergency preparedness and response and highlights the need for improvements in early warning systems, information-technology services and logistics, as well as internal changes to make UNHCR's emergency response more flexible.

UNHCR took numerous steps to achieve those goals in 2007. The number of staff on standby was increased and the Central Emergency Stockpile augmented. Field office capacities were boosted by emergency staff deployments, staff and partner training, and the provision of relief goods and equipment. The Office also improved strategic coordination with UN agencies and other partners.

Early warning systems and preparedness

UNHCR's Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS) made significant progress in 2007 in setting up and testing new alert mechanisms. In July, it began a crisis-scanning project, aided by the secondment of a staff member from the Danish Refugee Council. The objective was to improve UNHCR's awareness of potential crisis situations, leading to better decision making and more anticipatory and timely preparedness measures.

Work on the crisis-scanning project involved close collaboration with other UN and humanitarian agencies and the European Union. UNHCR also boosted its cooperation with WFP, UNICEF and OCHA through the Early Warning and Early Action sub-working group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Meanwhile, simulation exercises helped regional bureaux test emergency responses.

As parts of its efforts to obtain and share information on potential crises in a timely manner, UNHCR commissioned situation reports on emergency hot spots as well as incipient or actual emergencies. The reports

were prepared by an external contractor, and made available to staff via the intranet.

The 2007 mid-year Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) compliance exercise saw 95 per cent of all operations fulfilling requirements. Field security advisers spent more than 216 weeks on missions to field operations, where they paid special attention to security and camp procedures in situations involving internally displaced persons (IDPs).

EPRS's rapid emergency response budget makes quick action possible at the onset of an emergency. In DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, the office has used this flexible funding mechanism to deploy staff and supplies and arrange airlifts to respond to new displacement crises before standard administrative procedures or operational budgets could be activated.

In 2007, UNHCR published and distributed the third edition of the *Handbook for Emergencies*, of which a French translation is now also available.

Staff deployment and training

In 2007, UNHCR met the staffing and supply requirements of the action plan for emergencies. The number of staff that could be called upon if the High Commissioner declared an "exceptional state of mobilization for a large-scale emergency" rose to a high of 300, of whom about 175 were UNHCR employees. UNHCR also reinforced its emergency training curriculum. In the area of IDP support, the Office participated in the cluster approach, with UNHCR staff acting as cluster leads in several internal displacement situations.

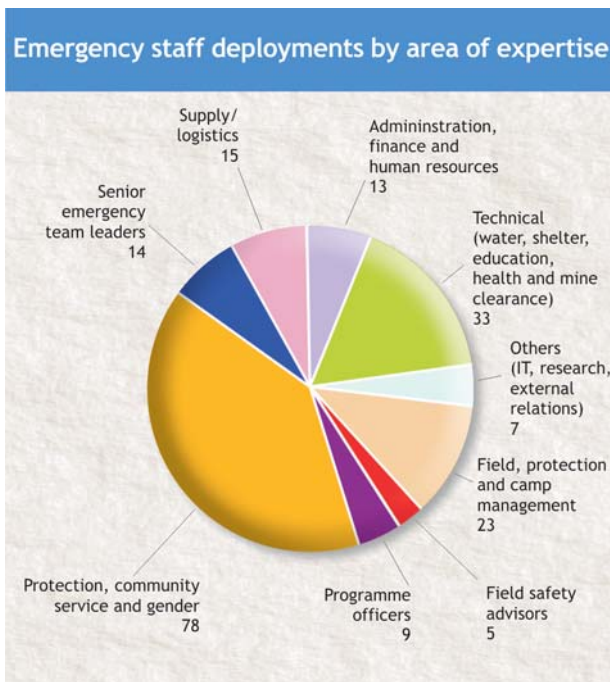
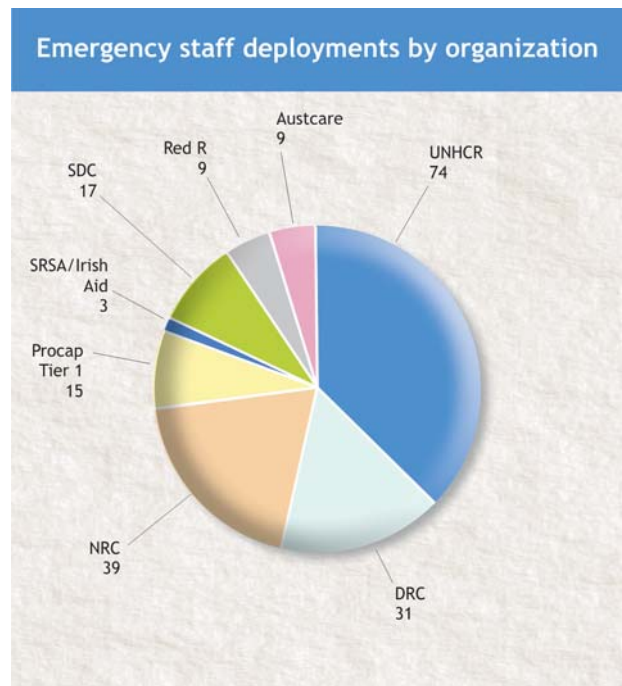
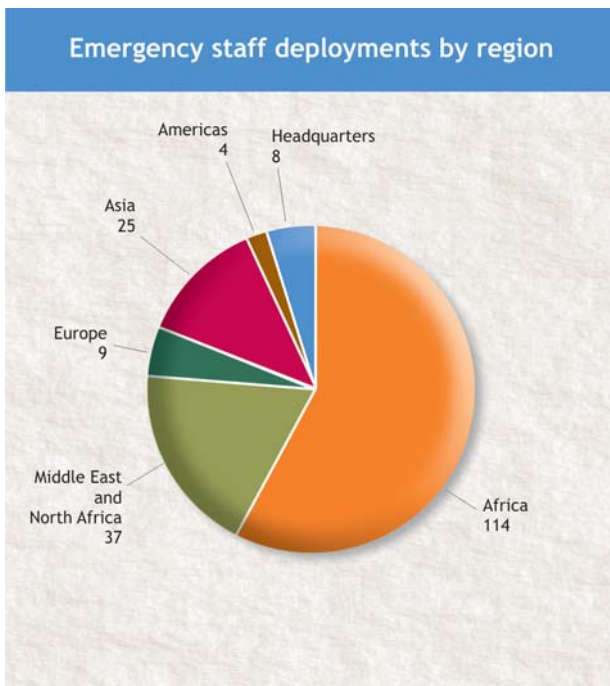
Since 2006, UNHCR has established three Emergency Response Team rosters of staff – its own as well as those of partner agencies – available for deployment within 72 hours. In 2007, EPRS organized four sessions of the Workshop on Emergency Management. Successful participants were added to the roster. UNHCR also conducted two rounds of the Emergency Team Leadership Programme in 2007, while two staff members attended a Workshop on Emergency Management organized by WFP. All these efforts have strengthened leadership in humanitarian operations, improved inter-agency coordination and fostered best practices in emergency management.

Emergency deployments in 2007 assisted operations that needed additional staff for unexpected contingencies or to help in specific areas such as protection or logistics. EPRS deployed a total of 197 staff to 30 countries affected by emergencies during the year. The charts below provide breakdowns of these staff deployments.

UNHCR's largest deployments were in Africa, covering Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Staff were also deployed in Iraq and to Israel. Asia saw deployments in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the Americas, staff were deployed in Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, and in Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Serbia.

To broaden its base for deployments, UNHCR signed four new agreements with partners: Irish Aid, Oxfam, the Association des Casques Rouges and Norwegian Church Aid. Existing accords with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Norway's Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning were revised and updated. Extensions of the agreements with Swedish Rescue Services Agency and the Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disaster were signed in 2007. In September 2007, EPRS organized a meeting of all standby partners to discuss common concerns and coordinate a strategic plan.

As shown in the chart below, 63 per cent of deployed staff came from standby partners:



Security management training

Training remains a mainstay of UNHCR's security-management programme, and several global workshops for field managers have helped strengthen staff and beneficiary safety. Over a three-year period ending in 2007, some 60 per cent of managers in high-risk situations had been trained to integrate security requirements into their operations.

In 2007, UNHCR conducted the following security training activities:

- Two Security Management Learning Programme workshops on staff security and risk management for a total of 44 middle- and senior-level field managers.
- A workshop for 32 Field Safety Advisers to strengthen country and regional capacities to address MOSS and other security issues.



UNHCR/S. Abdulle

A Somali refugee receives blankets, cooking utensils and tents from a UNHCR distribution centre in Lafole, 21 km south of the capital Mogadishu.

- A similar workshop for 31 Assistant Field Safety Advisers.
- Training sessions conducted by Field Safety Advisers in country operations. These benefited more than 4,500 participants, including UNHCR staff and beneficiaries, NGO workers and government personnel.

Central emergency stockpile

In 2007, UNHCR's central emergency stockpile stood ready to respond to almost all the needs of up to 500,000 beneficiaries. Funds were mobilized and supplies procured to ensure that the stockpile was replenished in a systematic manner. The stockpile target was met with the exception of a small shortfall for lightweight emergency tents, an item which was not foreseen for all beneficiaries but only for extremely vulnerable individuals. During 2007, 13 operations were served from the central emergency stockpile. The average time lag of deployment was between five and seven days total: 24-48 hours for mobilization, loading, flight plan, administrative issues and shipment; four to five days upon arrival for customs clearance and transport to the beneficiaries.

A review of the stockpile to improve its management that was begun in 2007 should be completed in the first quarter of 2008.

Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response

UNHCR continued to work closely with the Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response (eCentre) in Japan. It cooperated with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ASEAN's Committee on Disaster Management, India's National Institute for Disaster Management, the Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center and OCHA to organize 12 emergency management training workshops in nine countries.

The eCentre also contributed to six events organized by its partners, including the Japanese Red Cross, RedR Australia, UNDP and UNHCR. These events covered a range of subjects related to emergency management, including the basics of humanitarian response, essentials of negotiation skills, the safety and security of humanitarian staff, contingency planning, security risk management, coordination in the field and disaster management. In total, 795 participants were trained, strengthening emergency preparedness in the region.

In addition to the work with EPRS, in 2007 the eCentre and JICA conducted two Safety in the Field Workshops for 60 participants. These workshops are designed to present the basic elements of personal security for staff working in dangerous environments. Participants came from NGOs, governments, UN agencies and other partners.

Lives may depend on the deal you negotiate!

Source: Case study presented at an eCentre workshop

You are driving in an area affected by conflict, trying to reach people who need your assistance. But your vehicle has been turned back at a checkpoint. You have arranged a meeting with the Zone Commander to persuade him to grant you access. As you prepare for the appointment, you reflect on the fact that lives may depend on the results of your meeting.

In July 2007, the eCentre conducted a pilot workshop designed to address the needs of aid workers facing these and similar situations. The Essentials of Humanitarian Negotiation Workshop, with 29 participants from NGOs, government organizations and the UN, focused on the application of negotiation skills and techniques by humanitarian personnel. These skills could be used in negotiating with government interlocutors, non-state and irregular actors (including armed elements),

partner agencies, fellow staff members and, sometimes, beneficiaries.

The workshop emphasized techniques to aid the search for mutually beneficial solutions, such as correctly analyzing one's own and the other's negotiation position, active listening, inventing options for mutual gain and reducing anger and hostility. The workshop was highly interactive, with most of its time spent in actual practice negotiations, and used video replay to examine and critique results.

Participants in the workshop said it gave them a better understanding of the principles of effective negotiation and greater confidence in their ability to apply those principles in their work. The ultimate goal is to develop humanitarian workers who are better able to advocate and defend positions on behalf of their agencies and beneficiaries.



MONU/CM. Frechon

DRC, North Kivu. New arrivals at camp Bulengo. Logistics were provided by UNHCR.



UNHCR/Abdelkarim Ghoul

Algiers, Algeria - On 11 December 2007, UN premises in Algiers were the target of bomb attacks which killed 37 persons, including 18 UN staff members. Two UNHCR members lost their lives and three others were seriously wounded.

Items distributed from the Central Emergency Stockpile in 2007

Country	Blankets	Plastic sheeting	Plastic rolls	Kitchen sets	Jerry cans	Tents	Mosquito nets	Vehicles	Generators	Rub halls	Trucks
Chad	48,310										
Djibouti				5,500		200	6,500				
DRC						190		8	1		
Ethiopia								2			
Iraq Operation	120,000	10,800		30,000	80,000	1,000			3	8	
Mauritania						500					
Nigeria								3			
Pakistan		40,000									
Serbia	27,270	500	500	200				5			4
Somalia	49,380	9,875		9,872	19,700			3	2		
Sri Lanka		19,100	900	19,992		6,000	10,000				
Sudan											10
Tanzania	100,000										
Total	344,960	80,275	1,400	65,564	99,700	7,890	16,500	21	6	8	14

Central Emergency Stockpile capacity in Copenhagen and Dubai at the end of 2007

Item	Items needed per person in emergency	Target stock		Stock at end of 2007 (including pipeline)	
		Quantity of items	People covered	Quantity of Items	People covered
Armoured vehicles	0.00001	5	500,000	5	500,000
Blankets	1	500,000	500,000	559,980	559,980
Buckets	0.2	100,000	500,000	122,500	612,500
Communal tents	0.00006	30	500,000	30	500,000
Generators	0.00005	24	500,000	24	500,000
Jerry cans	0.4	200,000	500,000	254,700	636,750
Kitchen sets	0.2	100,000	500,000	119,364	596,820
Mosquito nets	0.4	200,000	500,000	244,750	611,875
Plastic rolls	0.02	10,000	500,000	10,066	503,300
Plastic sheetings	0.2	100,000	500,000	144,615	723,075
Prefabricated warehouses	0.00004	22	500,000	25	625,000
Solar torches	0.04	20,000	500,000	20,000	500,000
Tents	0.2	50,000	250,000	45,659	228,295
Trucks 4x4	0.0001	50	500,000	50	500,000
Vehicles (with security equipment)	0.0001	43	500,000	62	500,000