



One of 60 newly-arrived migrants rests on the shore of the Canary Island of Tenerife.

We expected 2009 to be a challenging year and it was. It was also a tragic one. Within six months, in a single operation, three UNHCR colleagues were killed. Hashim Syed was shot and killed in Quetta, Pakistan, on 2 February, at the same time as John Solecki was abducted and held for 63 days before being released. Aleksandar Vorkapic, on mission in Peshawar, was killed in the bombing of the Pearl Continental Hotel on 9 June. Zill-E Usman, who was also head of UNHCR's staff council in Pakistan, was murdered by gunmen at an IDP camp near Peshawar on 16 July.

Enhancing staff security in response to the demonstrated shrinking of humanitarian space was –and remains– my top priority. Four principles underpin our efforts: to adhere rigorously to the humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality; to build the capacities of national and local actors in a spirit of partnership; to introduce communication initiatives to change adverse perceptions of humanitarian actors and take a new approach to security; and to enhance our information-gathering and analytical capabilities and develop closer linkages with the communities in which we operate.

Throughout 2009, we took significant steps to enhance the security of our staff. At Headquarters, a Security Steering Committee, chaired by myself, reviewed and made recommendations for improved security in our most challenging operations: Afghanistan, Chad, Pakistan, Sudan and Yemen. It also examined and made recommendations for the improvement of security in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iraq, Kenya, the Russian Federation, Somalia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Country-level security steering committees are developing the increased information-sharing, network-building and analytical



New Threats, New Challenges

UNHCR / A. RODRÍGUEZ

capabilities we need. And while the management of funds is necessarily tight, in light of the scope and diversity of needs, the Budget Committee has approved every request for additional allocations to enhance security in the Field.

Around the world, the interaction of the world's mega-trends—population growth, urbanization, migration, food/water/energy insecurity, and climate change—caused crises to multiply and deepen. Conflict and displacement have become more complex, and humanitarian and asylum space is more difficult to find. A spate of involuntary returns in 2009 in the

Mediterranean, the Horn of Africa and south-east Asia, confirmed the increasingly hostile environment for refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR operations in all regions responded impressively to these challenges. In Pakistan, UNHCR provided assistance to many of the estimated 2 million people displaced in the north of the country. In Sri Lanka, UNHCR's firm defence of the principles of safety and dignity led to a protection-sensitive approach to the return of the internally displaced. More than 21,000 Bhutanese were referred for resettlement from Nepal during the year, while in Central Asia national consultations and a regional conference

helped UNHCR reinforce States' willingness to address longstanding issues of statelessness.

In Africa, the historic assembly of Heads of State and Government in Kampala in October resulted in the adoption of the groundbreaking African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. From the outset, UNHCR provided technical expertise and financial support for the Convention and we were delighted to see it receive its first formal ratification, by Uganda, early in 2010. For the first time in several years, the overall number of refugees in Africa rose last year. Still, in many parts of the continent, favourable changes of

circumstances have taken place and UNHCR began establishing roadmaps for the cessation of status for refugees from Angola, Burundi, Liberia and Rwanda, while the generosity of the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania led to the naturalization of more than 155,000 of the 1972 Burundian refugees.

In the Middle East, UNHCR promoted a better understanding of the natural compatibility of concepts of protection in international refugee law and Islamic Shari'a. The momentum created by the book commissioned on this subject by UNHCR, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Prince Naif University, was reinforced by a range of activities

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organized under the Ramadan Solidarity Initiative. Donations from countries of the Gulf, particularly for our efforts in Pakistan, reached nearly USD 40 million. UNHCR scaled up quickly in response to the rapidly evolving and multi-faceted crisis in Yemen.

In the Americas, the registration and profiling in the northern border region of Ecuador brought to light 19,000 individuals who had previously been invisible to assistance efforts. In November, UNHCR adopted an operational strategy for responding to mixed migratory movements under the 10-Point Plan of Action. Colombia and Costa Rica both adopted new refugee legislation during the year. A new law is also expected shortly in Chile while draft legislation is well advanced in Mexico and Ecuador.

In Europe, which receives approximately 80 per cent of all asylum applications lodged in the industrialized world, the challenges to asylum space grew, although there were some encouraging developments. The new Greek Government has indicated its intention to review and improve its asylum and migration regime. The establishment of the European Asylum Support Office, to be located in Malta, will provide an EU framework for work to ensure the quality and consistency of asylum decision-making. UNHCR continued to help countries of the former Yugoslavia come together to resolve the situation of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in Serbia. In eastern Europe, we continued to implement major assistance programmes for internally displaced people, particularly in Georgia, and lent support to civil society groups reporting and denouncing hate crimes - an important countermeasure to the worrying increase of xenophobic sentiment.

With mature conflicts failing to resolve and new ones emerging, solutions overall were harder to come by in 2009. Hardest hit was voluntary repatriation, with just 251,500 returns - the lowest level in 20 years. Progress was made on local integration, mainly in Africa, and particularly, in Tanzania. Resettlement remained a bright spot. Nearly 128,000 refugees were submitted for resettlement in 2009, eclipsing the record of over 121,000 submissions in 2008. Refugees from Bhutan, Iraq, Myanmar and Somalia were the main nationalities submitted, with Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and Turkey the leading countries of asylum by submission. The United States, Australia and Canada remain the three most significant countries of resettlement by destination. Nascent programmes continued to develop in South America, new momentum was achieved for an EU-wide scheme in Europe and Japan announced the creation of resettlement programmes.

We made significant progress in 2009 on our commitment to address situations of statelessness more effectively. The capacity of staff and partners was enhanced through thematic learning programmes, and two accessions during

the year to each of the main statelessness instruments augur well for UNHCR's campaign on accession, in the run up to the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. With the emphasis in the new budget structure on statelessness reduction efforts as core activities, plans for the coming year show a marked increase in activities at field level. Strong demonstrations of political will nevertheless be required to resolve a number of longstanding situations.

International support for UNHCR's activities in 2009 was unprecedented, with income exceeding USD 1.7 billion including, for the first time, more than USD 50 million from the private sector. The year witnessed important strengthening of UNHCR's results-based approach to planning and budgeting. This will now allow us to budget systematically around populations of concern using standardized objectives, while reflecting the results achieved against the full scope of beneficiaries' needs. The full integration of key organizational software remains a major challenge but staff both at Headquarters and in the Field have demonstrated a steady resolve to meet it.

The global needs assessment (GNA), I believe, has been especially important. The GNA-based budget for 2010, UNHCR's highest ever at just over USD 3 billion, was approved by the Executive Committee due in part to the positive impression that the GNA made on its members. In light of the increasingly evident impact of the global financial and economic crisis on development and humanitarian budgets, UNHCR's ability to project the real needs of the people it serves through the GNA provides it with a means to maintain necessary funding levels. A key challenge will be to improve prioritization, an effort which will be led by the new Division of Programme Support and Management, within which programme management, analysis and support functions have been consolidated.

The internal reforms begun by UNHCR in 2006 continued to pay dividends. Regional offices have been strengthened and most of the recommendations of the European

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anti-fraud office for strengthening the Inspector General's Office have already been implemented. Through the recommendations of the field review and the recalibration of certain operations to enhance staff security and organizational performance, greater numbers of senior positions at the P-4 level and above are located in category D and E duty stations, closer to where most persons of concern reside. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of national professional officer positions, contributing to increased professionalization of the UNHCR workforce and broader career development opportunities for national staff.

The proportion of total expenditure dedicated to Headquarters dropped to about 10 per cent from more than 14 per cent three years earlier. Staffing in Geneva now stands at some 720 persons, representing a 30 per cent reduction from 2006. This allowed UNHCR to terminate the lease on a second building in Geneva resulting in savings to the organization in rent alone of nearly USD 3 million per year. When salaries and all other factors are taken into account, the savings achieved through relocation of various functions to Budapest are more than USD 15 million annually. Essentially, UNHCR has increased its activities by more than 50 per cent with roughly the same number of staff worldwide and about 30 per cent fewer in Geneva. I am both extremely grateful to and proud of our staff for the unprecedented increase in productivity this represents.

A few reforms remain to be accomplished. The full integration of the Focus and MSRP software remains a major challenge, as does the restructuring of the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications. Staff and

management continue to work on a range of human resources challenges, chief among them the elaboration of more professional and fair assignments and promotions procedures.

UNHCR's reforms were complemented in 2009 by a significant renewal of senior management. Ms. Janet Lim took over as Assistant High Commissioner for Operations in July. A new Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Alexander Aleinikoff, was announced in early December 2009 and took up his functions in February of this year. A further 10 of the 13 Bureau or Division Directors in the Senior Management Committee are either new or in new positions. A new Spokesperson and a new Inspector General were also appointed.

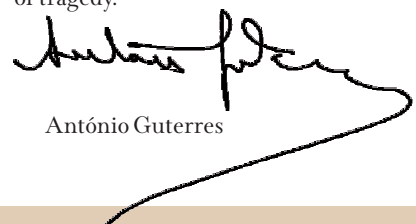
Looking forward, we have two main objectives: First, to increase our protection capacity in light of the needs of our new policy on urban refugees, the growing complexity of responding to the asylum-migration nexus and our expanded activities for internally displaced people; and second, to further increase our emergency preparedness and response capability by reinforcing and integrating our supply chain management and logistics with emergency response.

To do this, we will need to reinforce our partnerships with international and, particularly, national NGOs and other organizations. In 2009, UNHCR had almost 700 national partners and nearly 190 international partners accounting for approximately USD 290 million and USD 350 million respectively in expenditure. This represents approximately 35 per cent of UNHCR's total expenditure, up from 32 per cent in 2006. Just as UNHCR is committed to building on its productivity gains, we are committed to helping our partners do more.

While fully respecting the integrity of our mandate, we remained committed throughout 2009 to our partnerships within the international humanitarian response system, through the Cluster Approach and other important initiatives such as the Global Humanitarian Platform and the Peer Review on accountability to beneficiaries in disaster-affected populations undertaken by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response. We continued to be active in the United Nations' Delivering as One initiative, which provides a mechanism to ensure that development assistance benefits displaced populations and those who host them. Similarly, we remained engaged in the UN move towards integrated missions, recognizing the potential integration holds for increasing the efficiency and coherence of humanitarian action, particularly in situations where the transition from conflict to stability is well under way. UNHCR continued to urge the critical necessity in such missions of assuring the autonomy of humanitarian space.

The coming year will lead us to important anniversaries in 2011. For the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, we foresee a range of activities for the reinforcement of international protection for refugees, returnees, the internally displaced and, in particular, for the reduction and prevention of statelessness.

The year promises to be a challenging and interesting one – and, we hope, free of tragedy.



António Guterres