Strengthening
Emerg

I n a reflection of a global trend affecting international humanitarian agencies, UNHCR's three biggest emergency deployments in 2009–to Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen–were related to internal displacement. However, the agency's emergency teams continued to fulfil their traditional mandate to protect and assist refugees, with major deployments to Chad and Ethiopia. UNHCR also deployed a rapid response team to a natural disaster situation following violent storms and flooding in the Philippines in late September 2009.

UNHCR's capacity to respond rapidly to a wide variety of displacement situations has been strengthened by its new Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS). This seeks to increase coordination between those working in the areas of emergency preparedness and response, the security of staff and persons of concern, and supply and logistics.

An extensive review of UNHCR's emergency management in late 2009 highlighted the importance of making protection an integral part of preparedness and response activities. It also called for the recruitment of staff members with the appropriate profiles and skills; the continued development of strategic partnerships; and improvements in emergency management policies and operational strategies.

STAFFING AND STANDBY CAPACITY
In 2009, UNHCR was consistently able to mobilize up to 300 trained

ency Response

professionals and deploy them within 72 hours to different parts of the world. The ability to meet emergency staffing requirements was supported by the permanent internal mechanism of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Section; the Emergency Response Team (ERT) roster; and external standby capacity, mostly among NGO partners.

UNHCR reinforced existing partnerships by reviewing formal agreements with emergency standby partners and others to improve the recruitment, deployment and use of

technical expertise and other operational assets. New areas for collaboration were explored and consolidated.

There were 248 deployments (composed of both UNHCR and standby partner staff) to 37 countries in 2009. Almost half the deployments were to operations on the African continent. Despite some progress in this regard, UNHCR recognizes that more Spanish-, French- and Arabic-speaking staff are needed to strengthen the ERT roster.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

UNHCR's emergency training team made a successful move to the Global Learning Centre (GLC) in Budapest. Three sessions of the Workshop on Emergency Management (WEM) were held in 2009, in Germany, Norway and Sweden, training some 125 people. One Situational Emergency Training (SET) module was delivered to staff in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNHCR also conducted two sessions of the Emergency Team Leadership Programme (ETLP) on

Workers carry NFIs from a truck to a whale-boat in RoC, to transport them to Betou for distribution to newly arrived refugees from the DRC.

behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In addition, it conducted the first regional Workshop on Emergency Management (WEM) in Ecuador. This led to the development of a roster for the Latin America region to complement the global emergency roster.

eCENTRE

The Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response in Japan (eCentre), established in 2000 with the collaboration of the Government of Japan, seeks to improve emergency response capacities in the Asia-Pacific region through targeted training and other forms of capacity building. In 2009, the eCentre organized training events covering emergency response topics such as emergency management, contingency planning and coordination, humanitarian negotiation, dealing with natural disasters, security risk management and safety in the Field.

● Emergency Support for the Pakistan Operation

The year 2009 saw 17 UNHCR staff deployed in Pakistan. They were selected from the ERT roster and from governments and other partner organizations, including UN Volunteers and various NGOs. Following the death of UN staff members in a bombing in Peshawar in June, deployments to that city were suspended. Some deployed staff remained in Islamabad.

The Pakistan emergency operation also received support through the creation of a strong, sustainable supply chain. In recognition of the positive effect of local procurement on affected economies and its contribution to development in affected areas, agreements were established for the purchase of non-food relief items in areas of operation.

Rapid response and critical-incident management support from Headquarters was crucial in securing the release of an international staff member who was held hostage for more than two months in Quetta, Pakistan.

The eCentre also piloted regional capacity-building events in two new regions, namely Central Asia and the Pacific Islands. Both focused on assessing and responding to the needs of vulnerable groups in an emergency. A distance learning self-study module on Security Risk Management was completed in 2009 and is available on the eCentre website.

GLOBAL STOCK MANAGEMENT

The rapid provision of humanitarian relief and life-saving assistance is often the most critical need in emergencies, and is a vital component of UNHCR's emergency management policy and response strategy. The establishment of a global system to consolidate the management of the Central Emergency Stockpile (CES) and its regional equivalents has improved efficiency, increased cost savings and strengthened delivery to UNHCR operations.

The CES, stored in Dubai and Copenhagen, covers the emergency needs of up to 500,000 beneficiaries. The standard non-food item kit for a family now includes blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, jerry cans, water buckets and, if required, family tents. The minimum stock of tents in the CES covers up to 250,000 persons, a target achieved in 2009. An improved type of family tent was field-tested in 2009; should it prove satisfactory, it will gradually replace the lightweight emergency tent currently in use.

UNHCR also continues to coordinate and harmonize its stocks of non-food and relief items with those of its key partners, including sister UN agencies, the IFRC and the ICRC. Agreements with suppliers have been augmented to allow for the rapid replenishment of the CES and faster delivery to operations.

EARLY WARNING AND PREPAREDNESS

UNHCR's management policy emphasizes support for the Field in contingency planning and situational analysis. The Office has also worked to ensure the implementation of a more systematic methodology in contingency planning and preparedness activities both in the Field and at Headquarters. This seeks to link all aspects of the preparedness process, including supply chain management and staff and beneficiary security.

Participation in inter-agency efforts is a crucial element in UNHCR's

approach to preparedness. The Office contributed to the development of the Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS II) that will form the basis for real-time and online forecasting of needs. The system will be tested in the second half of 2010 by the agencies involved in its development. Together with other members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Preparedness, UNHCR promoted the use of the Contingency Planning Guidelines and the supporting online training modules. These are now well accepted and used by field operations. Furthermore, collaborative links have been established with the early warning and preparedness mechanisms of the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the African Union.

IMPROVING SECURITY FOR STAFF AND PEOPLE OF CONCERN

From the security standpoint, 2009 was a challenging year for UNHCR. Many operations were affected by general lawlessness, if not actual conflict, making it difficult to reach persons of concern. The most critical of the security incidents suffered by the organization during the year was a series of attacks in Pakistan, resulting in the death of three colleagues and the abduction of a fourth. These tragic events took place against a backdrop of increased threats to the United Nations and humanitarian workers in general.

In 2009, UNHCR took several steps to strengthen security governance and move from a "when-to-leave" to a "how-to-stay" approach to operations in insecure areas, in line with the new orientation of the UN Security Management System. The Office was active in inter-agency efforts to develop policies that balance the importance of staff security with the need to deploy and operate in environments where residual risks remain even after all reasonable mitigation measures have been taken.

Measures initiated at Headquarters to enhance security management included the creation of a high-level Security Steering Committee, chaired by the High Commissioner or the Assistant High Commissioner (Operations), to review operations in which staff and beneficiaries are judged to be at high risk. More training for staff at all levels is an important part of the

effort to improve security, as is an emphasis on information gathering and analysis and monitoring of relevant trends. These aspects were incorporated in the terms of reference for security staff and will be complemented by additional changes to be set in place in 2010.

In addition, the first audit of security governance at UNHCR was carried out in 2009. The recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) underlined the importance of devoting resources to security management, reinforcing the rationale behind the measures already undertaken as a result of internal evaluations.

SUPPORT, ANALYSIS AND ADVICE

Throughout the year, UNHCR provided field operations with expert missions, training and advice on how to negotiate with various stakeholders as well as rapid response and critical-incident management in several situations.

An intranet-based incident reporting system was created in late 2009 that allows the reporting of security incidents, tracks developments and analyses emerging trends. Reporting requirements for Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS) for field offices were adapted to focus on problematic locations. At the end of 2009, some 87 per cent of UNHCR's 328 offices were compliant with MOSS. A database that will allow UNHCR to track, review and increase compliance will be introduced in early 2010.

Following building and operational security assessments, USD 9 million was made available from the Operational Reserve for urgent needs in 17 operations. Separate budget codes that were established for security-related expenditures will allow UNHCR to track, monitor and analyse spending on safety measures beginning in 2010. Guidelines were formulated on a number of technical security issues and procurement standards, including for personal protective equipment and armoured vehicles.

SECURITY TRAINING

UNHCR conducted several training sessions designed to improve the range of skills among Field Safety Advisers in complex humanitarian environments. A first workshop on Security Risk Assessment involved the Threat and Risk Unit of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). In addition, UNHCR and UNDSS co-hosted a Hostage Incident Management course that was conducted by Scotland Yard.

In 2009, UNHCR moved the Security Management Learning Programmes to regional locations from the single site they had used since 2005. Three sessions were conducted for senior staff, a number that will be increased to five in 2010. UNHCR will also conduct adapted security training sessions for international staff deployed or assigned to high-risk operations. Safety and security training will continue to be a part of the WEM, which is recognized by UNDSS as the equivalent of its course on Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments.

Refugee Security Liaison Officers continued to be deployed to refugee- and IDP-hosting areas in Chad, and a dedicated capacity at Headquarters was added in late 2009 to work on issues related to the safety and security of people of concern. The focus is on the development of practical guidance for field staff, particularly Field Safety Advisers and Protection Officers, to help them address the range of security threats in camps and urban settings.

SECURITY POLICY AND PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR continued to play an active role in the Operational Working Group constituted by the Steering Committee on Safety and Security of the High-Level Committee on Management. The Working Group's brief is to review key components of the UN Security Management System, as recommended by the Report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security following the December 2007 attack on UN premises in Algiers. One of the tangible results delivered by the group in 2009 was the development of a new Security Level System, a more objective way of measuring threats and risk in a given location, which will replace the existing security phase system by January 2011. UNHCR participated in the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the training of new UNDSS staff. ■

Emergency deployments

In 2009, UNHCR managed and deployed a total of 248 staff to 37 countries affected by emergencies, namely Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philipppines, Russian Federation, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

2009 Emergency staff deployments

by region

MENA 14%
Asia and Pacific 24%
Europe 14%
Americas 3%
Africa 45%
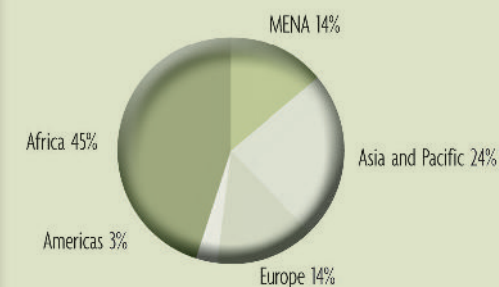
by area of expertise

Admin/Finance/HR	12
Clusted Lead	14
CS/Gen/Educ.	15
Ext./PI/Reporting	11
Field Officer	11
IT/Telecom	2
Programme	10
Protection	56
Snr. Emergency TL	21
Supply/Logistics	20
Technical	25
Gov. Package/Tech.	51
TOTAL	**248**

by organization

ICRU 2
Canadem 4
Action Aid/RedR 8
Irish Aid 10
Procap Tier 1
EPRS/ERTs 75
MSB Gov. Pack 51
MSB 3
SDC 17
DRC 38
NRC 32