

Chapter XVIII

Assistance to refugees**Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued in 1976 to provide international protection and material assistance to refugees. The Office also continued or undertook a number of special humanitarian assignments concerning such matters as the settlement of displaced persons of Indo-China, assisting refugees in Mozambique and co-ordinating United Nations humanitarian assistance for Cyprus. Special attention was given during the year to protecting the basic rights of refugees, notably the right to asylum. Efforts were also made to counter the increasing prevalence of *refoulement* (expulsion of or refusing entry to aliens).

Activities in 1976**International protection**

As at 31 December 1976, the number of parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees rose to 68. The number of parties to the 1967 Protocol, which extended the coverage of the 1951 Convention to new groups of refugees, rose to 63. Co-operation with Governments proceeded in order to determine the status of refugees in accordance with the definition contained in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol.

The number of States acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons increased to 31, and the number of ratifications of the 1973 Protocol to the 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen rose to 11. The number of accessions to the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa drawn up by the Organization of African Unity remained at 18 during the year.

The Office of the High Commissioner in 1976 pursued its efforts to secure the reunion of refugee families. Reunion was achieved by voluntary repatriation, by helping relatives of refugees to receive authorization to leave their country of origin, and by helping relatives of refugees to leave the country of asylum and gain admission to a country of resettlement.

During the year, lasting solutions to problems of

refugees were aided by legislative and administrative changes facilitating refugee settlement in various countries, particularly in Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Kenya.

In Europe, at least 5,000 refugees acquired the nationality of their country of residence during 1976, and significant results in promoting naturalization were also obtained in Africa.

Material assistance programmes

During 1976, more than 350,000 refugees benefited from the UNHCR regular assistance programme, the majority of them in Africa. Assistance continued to focus on solutions through voluntary repatriation, integration within host countries, or resettlement through migration. Emergency relief was provided to new refugees.

Nearly \$14 million was committed under the UNHCR assistance programme in 1976, supplemented by allocations of more than \$1.8 million under the High Commissioner's Emergency Fund. In addition, \$12.7 million was committed from special trust funds, including allocations from the Refugee Education Account. Governments also made substantial supporting contributions.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA

At the end of 1976, the number of refugees of concern to UNHCR in Africa was estimated at 1.2 million.

Special measures were taken to provide relief assistance to meet the needs of large influxes of refugees from Namibia, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) into Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. Programmes for refugees continued in Burundi, Ethiopia, Senegal, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire and Zambia. A programme of humanitarian assistance was launched in 1976 for some 20,000 Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, and UNHCR pursued its efforts to assist the Governments of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique with the return and resettlement of former refugees and persons displaced inside those countries.

Local, mainly rural, settlement programmes con-

tinued to provide a solution for the majority of refugees in Africa, helping refugees to achieve a level of self-sufficiency comparable to that of the local population. In 1976, one rural settlement was completed; other settlements, which had been established for several years, received assistance in agriculture, health and education.

The severe shortage of employment and resettlement opportunities continued to pose serious problems for individual refugees in urban centres who required assistance. Counselling services in African cities with refugee populations were strengthened to provide professional guidance and assistance regarding education, employment and resettlement.

More than \$20.7 million was committed for assistance to refugees in Africa, of which \$4.4 million was allocated to local settlement and \$6.9 million to special operations. Trust funds, including the Education Account, made \$6.6 million available for refugee assistance.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN ASIA AND WESTERN ASIA

Large groups of displaced persons received UNHCR assistance in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Thailand and in Lebanon. Under the 1976 programme, Hong Kong, India, Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates received limited assistance related to health, vocational training and counselling needs. Temporary care and maintenance were also provided in a small number of cases.

The assistance programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic helped rehabilitate about 350,000 persons, mainly through resettlement. Another 70,000 families were awaiting resettlement at the end of the year; it was hoped that the programme would be completed in 1977. Total UNHCR expenditures under this programme in 1976 amounted to \$3.7 million.

At the request of the Government of Lebanon, UNHCR assisted in dealing with problems of displaced and needy persons in that country, whose number was estimated to exceed 2 million. Acting within the over-all framework established by the Secretary-General in February for special humanitarian assistance for Lebanon, UNHCR's programme of emergency assistance continued as and when availability of funds, transport and security conditions permitted.

Under the United Nations emergency assistance programme, UNHCR provided emergency shelter material, food, medical supplies and transport. Blankets and clothing were contributed by a voluntary agency. By the end of 1976, nearly \$1 million had been expended for assistance in Lebanon.

Assistance programmes in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam continued during the year, focusing on

basic individual needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and restoring food production. Agricultural assistance accounted for the major part of the total UNHCR expenditure of \$7.4 million. Contributions from Governments amounted to \$7.8 million and donations in cash and kind of \$2.7 million were received to provide supplementary food supplies.

In Thailand, authorities registered 115,000 Indo-Chinese displaced persons during 1976, of whom 37,000 were resettled in third countries. At the request of the Government of Thailand, UNHCR undertook a programme of assistance, to be implemented by Thai authorities, to meet such emergency needs as food, shelter, clothing, medical care and transportation for refugees accepted for resettlement in other countries: \$2.27 million was used to cover resettlement costs. In addition, \$8 million was expended by UNHCR in Thailand in 1976, \$6.7 million of which was made available to the Government for the care and maintenance of displaced persons.

A major concern during the year were the large numbers of Indo-Chinese refugees arriving in small boats in countries bordering the South China Sea or rescued on the high seas by passing ships. Assistance was provided by UNHCR for their basic needs until admission to a country for temporary or permanent settlement could be secured.

In 1976, more than \$24 million was expended by UNHCR for these humanitarian operations. Of this, about \$11.8 million was spent in Indo-China, \$7.9 million in Thailand, and nearly \$1 million in Lebanon. A further \$3.9 million was allocated for care and maintenance of refugees in other South-East Asian countries and for Indo-Chinese displaced persons awaiting settlement in third countries.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN EUROPE

The number of refugees of concern to UNHCR in Europe at the end of 1976 was estimated at 566,000; most had been fully integrated for many years and benefited from national welfare facilities. Complementary assistance was therefore limited to groups requiring special care, particularly the old, the handicapped, and newly arrived refugees in countries of first asylum. Refugees from Argentina and Chile and considerable numbers of displaced persons from Indo-China continued to be admitted to several European countries for permanent settlement. An essential element of assistance was counselling, particularly relating to employment and resettlement through migration. Refugees also benefited in most European countries from integration facilities in the fields of education, professional training and employment. Total UNHCR commitments under the 1976 programme in Europe amounted to \$1.6 million.

The Office of the High Commissioner continued to co-ordinate United Nations humanitarian assist-

ance in Cyprus. Activities were carried out in co-operation with the World Health Organization, which continued to provide medical supplies and equipment, and the World Food Programme, which assisted in procuring food and made available local staff experts for counselling services. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus supported these efforts by delivering food supplies to various areas of the island and providing logistical assistance.

Assistance to approximately 200,000 displaced persons included temporary accommodation and shelter materials, food purchases, medical supplies, health care facilities and supplies to meet supplementary needs, such as handicraft materials, youth and community facilities, infant care, cash grants to the needy and immediate provision of clothing and foot-wear.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN LATIN AMERICA

A total of 112,000 refugees in Latin America included 82,000 of European origin, for whom comparatively little assistance was required, and about 29,000 of Latin American origin, mainly persons from Chile. Large-scale assistance and resettlement programmes for the refugees from Chile continued during the year, providing care and maintenance and covering resettlement costs. Other forms of aid included legal counselling and education assistance. Over 4,000 Latin American refugees were resettled in other countries with UNHCR assistance, mainly in Europe. About the same number of refugees were awaiting resettlement opportunities at the end of 1976.

Commitments under the 1976 programme in Latin America totalled \$4.7 million, of which over \$1 million was allocated for resettlement and \$2.9 million for supplementary assistance.

Legislative action

On 2 August 1976, having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2011(LXI), by which it recognized the importance of the essential humanitarian tasks undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner in the context of man-made disasters, in addition to its original functions, and commended the High Commissioner for his efforts on behalf of refugees and displaced persons requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. The Economic and Social Council also requested the High Commissioner to continue his activities in co-operation with Governments, United Nations bodies, intergovernmental organizations and voluntary agencies, called upon the international community to continue and strengthen its support for the activities of the High Commissioner, and transmitted his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-first (1976) session.

Resolution 2011(LXI) was adopted by the Economic and Social Council without a vote and was sponsored by the following 31 members: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, France, Gabon, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iran, the Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zaire. (For text of resolution, see DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES below.)

On 30 November, with the adoption of resolution 31/35, the General Assembly recognized the need for further strengthening the international protection of refugees and endorsed the Economic and Social Council's resolution of 2 August 1976. The Assembly commended the High Commissioner and his staff for the efficient manner in which they continued to discharge their activities on behalf of refugees and displaced persons and asked the High Commissioner to intensify his efforts to promote permanent and speedy solutions through voluntary repatriation and assistance in rehabilitation of returnees, integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in other countries. It asked him to continue humanitarian aid to refugees in Africa and called for the full co-operation of all concerned. The Assembly also urged Governments to strengthen their support for the humanitarian activities of the High Commissioner by acceding to the instruments relating to refugees, co-operating in the field of international protection and in the promotion of permanent solutions, and by providing the necessary financial support for his assistance programmes.

Resolution 31/35 was adopted by consensus on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee. The Third Committee had approved the text by consensus on 17 November, as sponsored by 44 Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia. (For text of resolution, see DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES below.)

Another resolution adopted on 30 November was concerned with the question of the establishment, in accordance with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, of a body to which persons claiming the benefit of the Convention might apply. The General Assembly, having considered the High Commissioner's report on that

question, noted that he was carrying out the functions required under the Convention without any financial implications for the United Nations and requested him to continue to perform these functions.

These decisions were set forth in resolution 31/36, adopted by 117 votes to 9, with 8 absten-

tions, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, which had approved the text on 17 November by 100 votes to 9, with 14 abstentions, on the basis of a proposal sponsored by Australia, Austria, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. (For text of resolution, see DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES below.)

**GOVERNMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS PAID OR PLEDGED TO
THE UNHCR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR 1977**
(as at 31 May 1977; in US dollars)

Country	Amount	Country	Amount	Country	Amount
Algeria	20,000	Iran	10,000	Pakistan	2,505
Argentina	27,500	Israel	11,236	Panama	500
Australia	547,641	Italy	37,572	Peru	1,284
Austria	45,882	Ivory Coast	3,400	Philippines	2,000
Belgium	273,973	Jamaica	550	Republic of Korea	5,000
Botswana	1,038	Lao People's Democratic Republic	2,000	Saudi Arabia	8,000
Canada	833,333	Liberia	5,000	Senegal	6,000
Chile	10,000	Libyan Arab Republic	20,000	Sudan	7,545
Colombia	4,514	Madagascar	1,000	Sweden	1,404,386
Denmark	867,936	Malaysia	1,500	Switzerland	509,804
Egypt	7,667	Malta	972	Syrian Arab Republic	1,000
Finland	250,000	Mauritania	4,000	Thailand	8,000
France	519,015	Mauritius	15,000	Trinidad and Tobago	1,250
Germany, Federal Republic of	1,175,882	Monaco	200	Turkey	7,000
Ghana	5,311	Morocco	9,851	United Kingdom	591,216
Greece	30,000	Nepal	2,367	United States	750,000
Guinea	506	Netherlands	1,785,317	Yugoslavia	20,000
Holy See	2,500	New Zealand	70,093	Zambia	248,756
Iceland	10,000	Niger	1,000	Zaire	3,500
Indonesia	2,000	Norway	1,211,532		
		Oman	6,000	Total	11,411,134

Documentary references

Economic and Social Council—61st session
Plenary meetings 2007, 2027, 2028.

E/5853 and Corr.1. Report of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/31/12 and Add.1.2).

E/L.1730 and Corr.1. Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Congo, Denmark, Egypt, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Iran, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire: draft resolution.

Resolution 2011(LXI), as recommended by 32 powers, E/L.1730 and Corr.1, adopted without vote by Council on 2 August 1976, meeting 2028.

The Economic and Social Council,
Recalling General Assembly resolution 3454(XXX) of 9 December 1975 and earlier resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly relating to the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Reaffirming the eminently humanitarian character of the activities of the High Commissioner for the benefit of refugees and displaced persons,

Recognizing the importance of the essential humanitarian tasks undertaken by his Office in the context of man-made disasters, in addition to its original functions,

Noting the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the oral statement made by him to the Council at its sixty-first session on various aspects of his humanitarian activities,

1. Commends the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for his efforts on behalf of refugees and displaced persons, victims of man-made disasters, requiring urgent humanitarian assistance;

2. Requests the High Commissioner to continue his activities, in co-operation with Governments, United Nations bodies, appropriate intergovernmental organizations and voluntary agencies, for alleviating the suffering of all those of concern to his Office and for promoting permanent and speedy solutions to their problems through the provision of urgently required relief assistance, voluntary repatriation and assistance in their rehabilitation, integration or resettlement;

3. Calls upon the international community to continue and to strengthen further its support for the humanitarian activities of the High Commissioner;

4. Transmits the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session.

General Assembly—31st session
Ad Hoc Committee of General Assembly for Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to Programme of UNHCR, meeting of 19 November 1976 (A/AC.185/SR.1 and Corr.1). Third Committee, meetings 49-53.
Plenary meeting 83.

A/31/1. Report of Secretary-General on work of Organization, 16 June 1975-15 June 1976, Part Three, Chapter XI A.
A/31/3. Report of Economic and Social Council on work of its organizational session for 1976 and of its 60th and 61st sessions, Chapter III L.
A/31/12 and Add.1. Report of UNHCR.

A/C.3/31/9. Letter of 10 November from Morocco.

A/C.3/31/L.30. Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia: draft resolution, approved by consensus by Third Committee on 17 November 1976, meeting 53.

A/31/342. Report of Third Committee, draft resolution I.

Resolution 31/35, as recommended by Third Committee, A/31/342, adopted by consensus by Assembly on 30 November 1976, meeting 83.

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, transmitted by the Economic and Social Council under its resolution 2011(LXI) of 2 August 1976, and having heard his statement,

Recalling its resolutions 3454(XXX) and 3455(XXX) of 9 December 1975 relating to the activities of the High Commissioner for the benefit of refugees and displaced persons,

Recognizing the importance of the essential humanitarian tasks which the High Commissioner is called upon to perform and for which his Office has acquired particular expertise and experience,

Bearing in mind the increasingly useful co-operation between the High Commissioner and other members of the United Nations system, resulting in better co-ordination of action and greater efficiency,

Recognizing the need for further strengthening the international protection of refugees,

1. Endorses Economic and Social Council resolution 2011(LXI) on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

2. Commends the High Commissioner and his staff for the efficient manner in which they continue to discharge their manifold activities on behalf of refugees and displaced persons;

3. Requests the High Commissioner to intensify his efforts, in co-operation with Governments, United Nations bodies and voluntary agencies, to promote permanent and speedy solutions to the problems facing his Office through voluntary repatriation and assistance in rehabilitation of returnees, integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in other countries as needed;

4. Further requests the High Commissioner to continue his humanitarian assistance on behalf of refugees and displaced

persons in Africa and urges the fullest co-operation of all concerned for this purpose;

5. Urges Governments to strengthen further their support for the humanitarian activities which the High Commissioner is carrying out in accordance with pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by:

(a) Facilitating his efforts in the field of international protection by means of accession to international instruments relating to refugees and respect for the rights of refugees;

(b) Co-operating in the promotion of permanent and speedy solutions to the problems faced by his Office;

(c) Providing the necessary financial means to attain the objectives of his humanitarian assistance programmes.

A/31/12/Add.2. Addendum to report of UNHCR (on question of establishment, in accordance with Convention on Reduction of Statelessness, of a body to which persons claiming benefit of Convention may apply).

A/C.3/31/L.31. Australia, Austria, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom: draft resolution, approved by Third Committee on 17 November 1976, meeting 53, by 100 votes to 9, with 14 abstentions.

A/31/342. Report of Third Committee, draft resolution II.

Resolution 31/36, as recommended by Third Committee, A/31/342, adopted by Assembly on 30 November 1976, meeting 83, by 117 votes to 9, with 8 abstentions.

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3274(XXIX) of 10 December 1974,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the question of the establishment, in accordance with the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, of a body to which persons claiming the benefit of the Convention may apply,

Noting that the High Commissioner is carrying out the functions required under the Convention without any financial implications for the United Nations,

Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue to perform these functions.

Other documents

UNHCR. Nos. 1-6 (February, April, June, July, September, December 1976) and Supplement 76/77 (December 1976).

UNHCR Report. Habitat: Refugees in Human Settlements.

UNHCR publication, Geneva, Autumn 1976.

A/31/7/Add.5. Voluntary funds administered by UNHCR.

Accounts for year ended 31 December 1975 and report of Board of Auditors.

A/31/140, A/31/351. Financial reports and accounts, and reports of Board of Auditors, Reports of ACABQ and Fifth Committee.