

THE TIMOR SITUATION

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Provide protection and assistance to refugees outside East Timor.
- Bring about lasting solutions for these refugees by facilitating their voluntary return to East Timor, or local settlement or relocation elsewhere in Indonesia should they so choose.
- Provide for the emergency needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in East Timor, help them to return to their home areas and support their initial reintegration.
- Ensure an effective transition from initial reintegration assistance to longer-term community rehabilitation, reconciliation and development.
- Prepare a longer-term strategy ensuring that an independent East Timor enacts appropriate refugee legislation and accedes to relevant international conventions.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CONSTRAINTS

East Timor

As of mid-August, over 168,000 refugees had repatriated to East Timor. Approximately 73 per cent returned in organised movements and 27 per cent returned on their own, often using IOM/UNHCR logistic arrangements for secondary transport. UNHCR has been playing a major role in co-ordinating various national and international partners at district, sub-district and village levels, to ensure that repatriation is carried out in safety and dignity. Such partners included the Peace-Keeping Force (PKF), Civilian Police (CivPol), the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) and NGOs. In addition, in collaboration with Civil-Military Affairs (CMA), PKF, CivPol, IOM and

UNTAET, UNHCR developed standard operational procedures for voluntary repatriation, outlining the respective roles and responsibilities of the concerned organisations.

To ensure adequate protection for returnees East Timor, UNHCR established a Working Group on Refugee Returns. The group discusses practical operational issues and ensures that repatriation policy, procedures and guidelines are implemented. The group also seeks to ensure security and stability while promoting reconciliation and the respect for the rights of the returnees.

UNHCR's main reintegration activity in East Timor is the shelter programme. At the time of writing, 18,000 shelter units had been delivered to East Timor, of which 13,100 had been distributed to the returnees through eight implementing partners. UNHCR plans to deliver a total of 35,000 units before the end of the year.

UNHCR's reintegration activities are designed to help bridge the gap between emergency humanitarian assistance, and longer-term development programmes. Discussions with UNTAET, the World Bank, UN agencies and other development agencies are in progress to ensure that one or several agencies assume responsibility over the shelter reconstruction programme, thus guaranteeing continuity once UNHCR's shelter-related activities have been completed. To date no firm engagement to this effect has been received from any of the development agencies.

Together with OCHA and UNTAET, a joint QIP programme was initiated during the first six months of the year. To date, 17 QIPs, targeting some 120,000 residents of returnee communities are ongoing or being completed. Sectors covered included shelter, community services and mass-information. Various community service activities, such as group discussions, painting and role-playing were carried

out to facilitate community reconciliation. A mass information campaign was conducted in both East and West Timor using radio, video, newspapers, leaflets and posters to promote return and reconciliation.

UNHCR supported the tracing and reunification of separated and unaccompanied children. By the end of June, some 521 children had been registered, 233 children reunited with their families and 75 letters exchanged between parents and children.

As part of its efforts to strengthen newly established national institutions, UNHCR provided training on women's and children's issues to the first 50 students of the newly established East Timorese Police College. UNHCR continued to promote and disseminate refugee law as well as eventual accession to international refugee law instruments. UNHCR supported training of officials, NGO staff and others, as well as a civic education campaign involving various sectors of civil society.

Indonesia – West Timor

In May, floods caused by heavy rains hit the southern part of Belu district, along the border with East Timor, affecting 16,000 refugees in 32 camps and 100,000 members of the local population. Of the 126 people killed, half were refugees. A total of 2,600 refugee families were obliged to move to 24 makeshift camps. UNHCR provided non-food items and transport. UNHCR proposed these refugees be relocated to other sites while the Government is identifying recovery and reconstruction measures.

It is estimated that some 120,000 East Timorese remain in West Timor. Of these, approximately 40,000 are still employed by the Government of Indonesia as civil servants, by the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) or by the police.

In March, the Indonesian Government announced a 31 March deadline for the suspension of assistance for refugees, as well as for refugees to decide whether to repatriate or inte-

grate locally. Following UNHCR's request, the Government agreed to extend the deadline to 1 July and to continue providing assistance. After the deadline, limited assistance has been provided to the refugees.

A fundamental concern is the mixed nature of the camps, which accommodate refugees, armed militia elements, as well as TNI and civil servants. Although the MOU signed between UNHCR and the Indonesian Government on 14 October 1999 holds the latter to maintain law and order in and around the camps and to separate refugees from non-refugees, little progress has been made. Insecurity and intimidation in and around the camps in West Timor continues. As a result since April, repatriation has practically come to a standstill, with only small groups of persons returning on a weekly basis. Local integration may be a durable solution for a portion of the refugee community. However, the security situation precludes such activities at this time. Indeed, the continuing insecurity and intimidation prevailing in and around the East Timorese refugee camps in West Timor forced the cancellation of a planned registration exercise and led to the closure of the UNHCR office in Betun in mid July.

This prompted UNHCR to request the Government of Indonesia to resolve the situation, failing which, UNHCR would be compelled to review whether activities in West Timor could continue. UNHCR set a deadline of October this year for the Indonesian Government to improve the situation in West Timor. Benchmarks for measuring improvements in West Timor are: separation of refugees and non-refugees in the camps; apprehension of perpetrators of violence against refugees and humanitarian personnel; a decrease in the security incidents; an increase in the pace of voluntary returns; and credible registration and verification of the refugees. In the interim, local settlement initiatives have been put on hold.

Prompted by the above situation and the killing of a UNPKF soldier in East Timor in late July, as well as by the statements by the UN Se-

curity Council after the killing, the Indonesian Government has made a new proposal to address the situation in West Timor. The proposal includes: closure of all refugee camps in West Timor beginning with those closest to the border with East Timor; establishment of transit camps in East Timor for those refugees who wish to return; relocation of those who wish to remain in West Timor to temporary transit camps away from the border before they are permanently settled in West Timor or in other part of Indonesia; freedom of choice and a quick group-based registration exercise. The Government estimates that approximately 60 per cent of the refugees remaining in West Timor would return to East Timor, and that those wishing to remain in West Timor would primarily include members of the police, civil servants, the military and pro-autonomy groups currently in the camps.

Contributions towards the Timor Operation were generous and fully covered the initial needs until June as reflected in the October 1999 UN Inter-Agency Appeal for the Timor Crisis. Following a revised needs assessment for the period until December, the overall requirements increased from USD 45.3 million to USD 66.2 million. The revised needs call for timely sustained funding if activities, including the shelter programme in East Timor, are to be completed by mid-2001.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY - DECEMBER

Recent events in West Timor have made it clear that both planning assumptions and the time frame for implementation of UNHCR's programme must be revised. Although the overall objectives remain unchanged, new approaches are now required. The recent an-

nouncement by the Indonesian Government is a positive initiative that may provide an opportunity to find a solution for the East Timorese refugee situation.

In the second half of the year UNHCR therefore plans to:

- Work closely with the Government of Indonesia to develop an operational plan, with inputs from all concerned parties including UNTAET and the East Timorese people. This plan will contain all of the benchmarks previously set by UNHCR (i.e. provision of security for refugees and humanitarian workers; implementation of the rule of law for perpetrators of violence against these populations; unimpeded access for UNHCR and operational partners to refugees; implementation of a credible registration and verification exercise and separation of refugees from non-refugees).
- Address the concerns of the local communities hosting returnees, as the refugee operation moves from an emergency to a reintegration phase in East Timor. Programmes for the second half of 2000 will thus include activities encompassing reconciliation, assistance to host communities, development of local NGOs and capacity building of provincial, district and sub-district authorities.
- Pursue discussions with UNTAET, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies aimed at ensuring an effective transition from initial reintegration activities to long-term community rehabilitation, reconciliation and development, after UNHCR's scheduled phase-out by mid-2001.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available*	Total Funds Obligated
SP	15,443,098	36,510,792	21,758,586	15,363,300

*Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the region/country, opening balance and adjustments.