

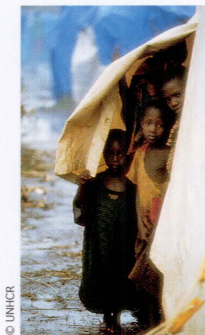
Refugees ISSUES



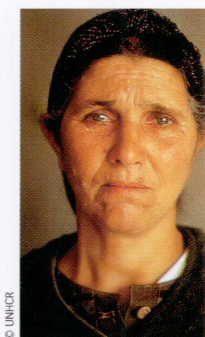
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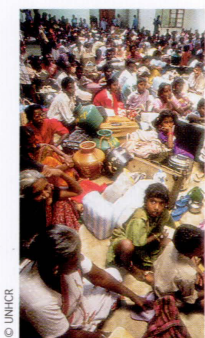




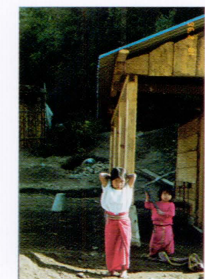
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There are few regions in the world which have remained untouched in the 1990s by the plight of refugees and displaced persons. Even those of us in Europe who believed that we lived in one of the world's most stable regions have seen hundreds of thousands of persons in our own continent driven by civil conflict from the place where they lived and worked to find refuge elsewhere.

Over the last few years the countries of the European Union have absorbed many who have been forced to leave their homes in former Yugoslavia, Africa or the Middle East, and have given them support and shelter. Even those of us not directly affected have seen on our television screens unforgettable images of men, women and children uprooted from their homes in southern Europe or central Africa - and may have responded with financial and material help.

There are now an estimated 30 million refugees and displaced persons worldwide. Refugees are those who have been forced to seek asylum in another country because of persecution or danger to their lives in their home country; internally displaced persons are those who have been driven from their homes and obliged to seek refuge elsewhere in their own land. Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have seen the most massive migration of uprooted persons, but refugee crises can be found in many other parts of the world.

The European Community has been strengthening its capacity to deal with these situations. Working closely with UN agencies such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), international bodies like the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Oxfam and Medecins sans Frontieres, the Community has played a vital role in mobilising support both for short term humanitarian aid and for the longer term purposes of rehabilitation and development.

During 1995 ECU 725 million was allocated from the EC budget to help deal with refugee crises.

A coordinated APPROACH

A consistent theme of Community policy is the need for a coherent and holistic approach towards refugees and displaced persons. Each emergency is different and the European Commission, which is responsible for implementing policy, tries to ensure a fully coordinated approach that takes into account the particular requirements of each situation, ranging from immediate human needs to the long-term environmental impact of a refugee crisis.

Media coverage has a heavy influence on public perception of a refugee emergency. The natural reflex to television images of hungry and homeless families uprooted from their own homes and forced to seek refuge elsewhere in their own land or in neighbouring countries is to provide emergency help - tents, blankets, food and medicines.

Such aid is often desperately needed and will save lives, but is only the beginning of the story; it must fit in to a wider policy framework, which takes account not just of the immediate disaster but also, when the television cameras and journalists have gone away, the future of all those concerned, including the local inhabitants in the area where the displaced persons settle. The refugees are themselves victims; their hosts, whether willing or unwilling, may become victims too.

Every refugee crisis is different. The Community is acutely conscious of the need for a continuum of support, a range of actions which responds to the real situation on the ground. This will often comprise immediate emergency relief, but usually accompanied by longer term programmes. Sometimes the displaced persons will have no choice but to settle in their new host country or region, involving long-term social and economic integration and resources for development. In other cases the refugees may be able to return to their original homes. Transport and repatriation schemes will then be needed, perhaps coupled with technical measures such as mine clearance.

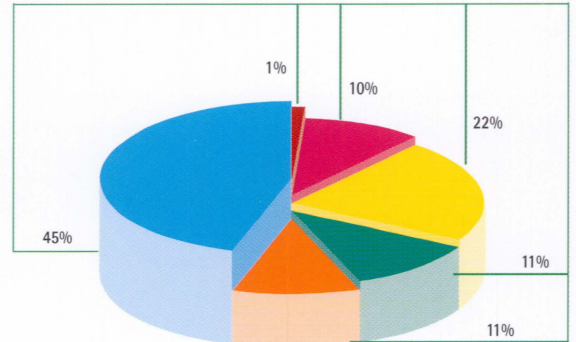


The linkage of relief and development instruments now forms part of general Community policy.

Any organisation providing assistance must consider the impact of its actions on the longer term fortunes of the victims, on the local economy and on local administration. The choices are never easy. For example:

- provision of support for large refugee camps will save lives, but may act as a magnet for other persons, increasing the risks of epidemics and making repatriation more difficult.
- food aid must be introduced with care; it can be used to boost local production, but if it is provided free it can undermine the prices of locally produced supplies and jeopardise next year's crop plantings;
- the setting up of an emergency infrastructure to administer assistance in an area can weaken and supplant the local administration - the aim must be to strengthen the local network by making use of local officials.

Long-term development aid instruments must also seek to the largest extent possible to reduce local vulnerability to crisis and the various factors that cause uprooted populations.



*Community Contributions Breakdown
Placement on Continuum, in 1995*



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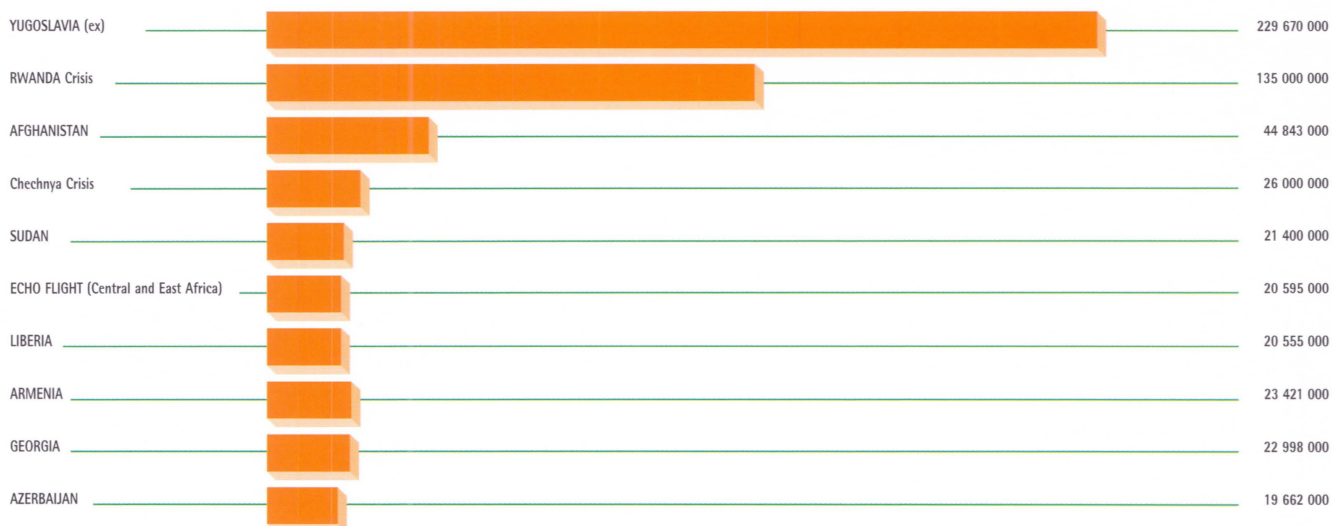
Community RESOURCES

The European Commission's responsibilities are undertaken by various different policy units which relate to the area of the world concerned and the nature of the assistance needed. A network of EU delegates based in the countries which are facing refugee problems helps to coordinate Community assistance.

The Commission can call on a range of resources in response to a refugee crisis:

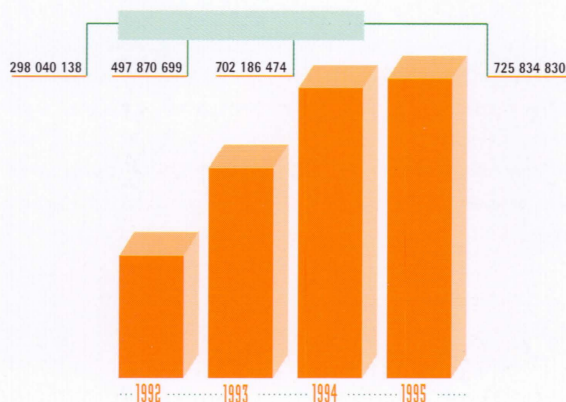
- humanitarian aid for meeting emergency needs of shelter, food and medicine; this is normally provided for up to six months, but it can be extended;
- food aid, which often consists of local purchase of foodstuffs for distribution among the refugees, or provision of seeds and tools to encourage self-sufficiency; it is also an essential part of the Community's strategy for long-term food security;
- aid for rehabilitation to help with the transition from emergency to longer term development, supporting the establishment of local administration, better water supply, food production and economic activity;
- development aid to secure the medium and long term future of refugees and displaced persons, their repatriation if they can return to their place of origin or integration into their host community if they cannot.

*Ranking of ten first
Recipient Countries (amount in ECU), in 1995*



Community FUNDS

The Community is the world's biggest provider of funds in response to refugee crises. Its contributions over the last four years were as follows:



*EC Funds towards
Refugees, Displaced Persons
and Returnees*

Various policy areas with appropriate budget lines are used relating to the nature of the action needed and the region of the world concerned:

- Humanitarian aid, including resources allocated to relieve the plight of refugees and displaced persons in many parts of the world, amounted to ECU 764 million in 1994 and ECU 692 million in 1995. A high proportion was allocated to relieve the plight of refugees, with 30 per cent in 1994 and 25 per cent in 1995 going to programmes administered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Some of this funding was from the EC budget, while some was provided under the Lome Treaty with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Humanitarian aid programmes are administered by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).
- Longer term aid to help the resettlement of refugees, displaced persons and returnees in Latin America amounted to just over ECU 18,8 million in 1995; for Asia the figure was ECU 45 million. A similar combined amount, of about ECU 60 million, has been allocated for 1996. This aid is administered by Directorate General IB of the Commission.
- The Lome Convention, which enshrines the relationship between the European Community and 70 associated African, Caribbean and Pacific states, makes special provision for assistance to ACP countries to help them with the costs of taking in refugees or returnees and has allocated ECU 120 million from the European Development Fund over the five years up to 2000. A further ECU 140 million is allocated for dealing with emergencies. ACP assistance is administered by DGVIII of the Commission and by ECHO.
- Food aid provision for refugees and displaced persons amounted to ECU 35 million in 1995. This is administered by a special division in DGVIII of the Commission
- EC contributions towards the UN programme for Palestinian refugees under the 1993-95 Convention between the Community and UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency) totalled ECU 40 million in 1995, which was 10 per cent of total operating costs. These are administered by Directorate IB of the Commission.

Evolution of EUROPEAN POLICY

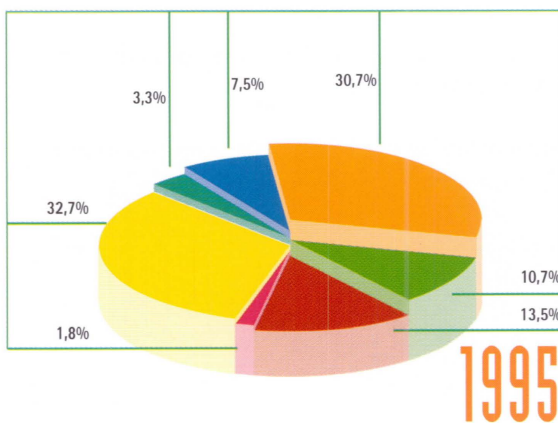
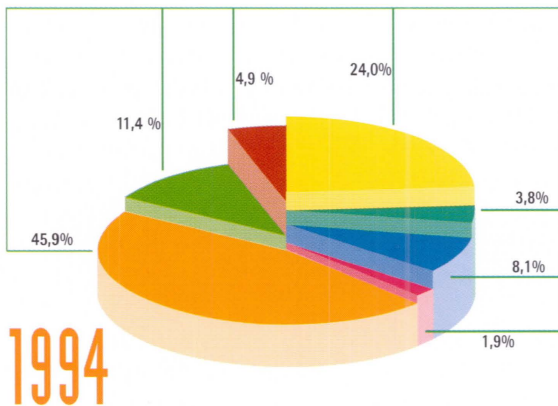
The 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees defined the refugee as any person who is outside his own country «owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion» and is unable to return home owing to that fear.

Community policy goes wider, to include people who have been forced to flee within their own country. It sometimes uses the term «uprooted» people to describe refugees and displaced persons and also «returnees», who are going back home after the disaster or conflict which drove them away has receded and relative calm has returned to their home region.

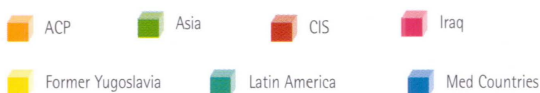
European public opinion and the governments of the European Union accept a responsibility to help and protect such people wherever possible. It derives naturally from the UN Charter and the protection of human rights, which are fundamental elements in the Treaty on European Union, which took effect in 1993. As part of this Treaty, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) provides for common positions and joint actions to be agreed by the Council. The Treaty states that one of the the main objectives of the CFSP is «to develop and consolidate democracy and rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms». In practice this may include measures to help tackle or alleviate the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

The Community's approach has been evolving in recent years:

- increasing budgetary resources have been allocated to deal with refugee crises, partly because EU member states see Community action as more effective than bilateral measures and are cutting down on their national spending;
- new European Community legislation on humanitarian aid, food aid and aid operations for uprooted people will focus directly on the refugee problem; the Lomé Convention with the ACP countries already does so;



EC Assistance towards Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees



- the European Commission has set up an internal coordination group, the Permanent Inter-Service Group (PISG) to ensure a coherent policy for handling refugee aid;
- the establishment of a European Union area for justice and home affairs requires development of a policy for refugees seeking asylum within the EU.

Humanitarian aid

Among the objectives of a European Community policy for humanitarian aid discussed in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament is the need «to cope with the consequences of population movements caused by natural and man-made disasters and carry out schemes to assist repatriation to the country of origin and resettlement there when the conditions laid down in current international agreements are in place».

The Council regulation, adopted on the 20th June 1996, recognises that humanitarian assistance may be a prerequisite for development or reconstruction work. It can therefore include an element of short-term rehabilitation which will help those affected to regain a minimum of self-sufficiency.

In view of the mounting humanitarian crises, especially in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Horn of Africa and the former Soviet Union, in 1992 the European Commission set up the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) to coordinate its emergency aid effort, and to provide rapid and appropriate support during the first six months of an emergency.

A high proportion of ECHO activity has targeted refugee problems. In 1994, 50 per cent of ECHO funds was mobilised for refugee crises, of which more than half was allocated for Burundi and Rwanda as well as for the victims of the conflict in the Balkans. In 1995 this share raised to 60 per cent. The necessary resources were found from the Community's operating budget and also from the European Development Fund.

Food aid

The European Community, together with direct contributions from Member States, now provides just over half of all international food aid. It is an integral part of the Community's development policy, directed both to immediate food needs in crisis situations and to the establishment of greater food security in regions of the world which have inadequate or unpredictable supplies of food.

The policy has undergone fundamental changes over the years. In its early stages EC food aid policy was linked with production of Europe's agricultural surpluses, but food aid is now a highly sophisticated tool and a key part of the overall development policy of the Community. It has a special role to play in tackling problems of refugees or displaced persons, and can be used as means of encouraging resettlement and development as well as meeting emergency needs. It plays an essential part in the international response to refugee crises, both for humanitarian short term aid and for longer term food security.

The Council of Ministers has recently agreed on a new regulation confirming food security as a key objective of European Community food aid policy and confirming these evolving policy objectives.

The reform is based on the following principles.

- Integration of food aid and food security operations with other development policy instruments.
- Integration of food aid and food security operations in a sectoral food security policy.
- Priority support to be given to structural operations for development.



The Commission, the Council and the European Parliament have accepted guidelines reinforcing the role of food aid as a key component of long-term food security. Among the aims are to:

- strengthen development strategies for local production, pricing and marketing of food;
- provide for purchase of products on the recipient country's market or in another developing country;
- provide products in tune with local eating habits;
- integrate food aid as much as possible into other development policies;
- encourage food security through purchase of food products, seed, agricultural implements and other inputs, and through storage programmes, early warning systems, training and technical assistance;
- avoid disruption of local foodstuffs markets.

About ECU 35 million was allocated for food aid for refugees and displaced persons in 1995, of which nearly 60 per cent was used in Africa, 28 per cent in Asia and the balance in Latin America. Food aid programmes for refugees were run through the World Food Programme (WFP) and also with NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNHCR. As administrator of Community food aid policy, the European Commission is encouraging greater coordination between the different aid agencies in terms both of general policy and in the field.

As with all aspects of refugee policy, food aid must be incorporated into a wider context, one of whose aims is to allow victims to escape from the trap of refugee status to rehabilitation, resettlement and development. To give one example: in a country like Angola, where fighters are giving up their arms and returning to their homes they must have the opportunity to integrate into society again. Being able to produce their own food is a vital first step.

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The Lome Convention

The Lome Convention, which is the agreement governing trade, aid and political relations between 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Community, provides for emergency assistance to ACP states faced with exceptional difficulties following natural disaster or «exceptional circumstances» (Article 254). A total of ECU 140 million is allocated for this purpose in the European Development Fund five-year programme. The EC Humanitarian Office is responsible for administering this budget.

The Convention has a further provision of financial help for ACP states taking in refugees or returnees, to implement longer term projects and action programmes «aimed at self-sufficiency and the integration or reintegration of such people» (Article 255), administered by DG VIII. The budget provision is ECU 120 million over the five years.

A joint declaration by the Lome signatories stresses that priority should be given to projects for voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees, as well as protecting the cultural identity of refugees or displaced persons and the needs of women and children, the aged and the handicapped. The declaration also calls for greater awareness of the role that the Article 255 funding could play in meeting longer-term development needs of refugees.

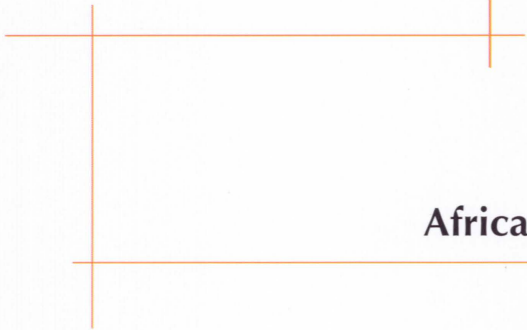
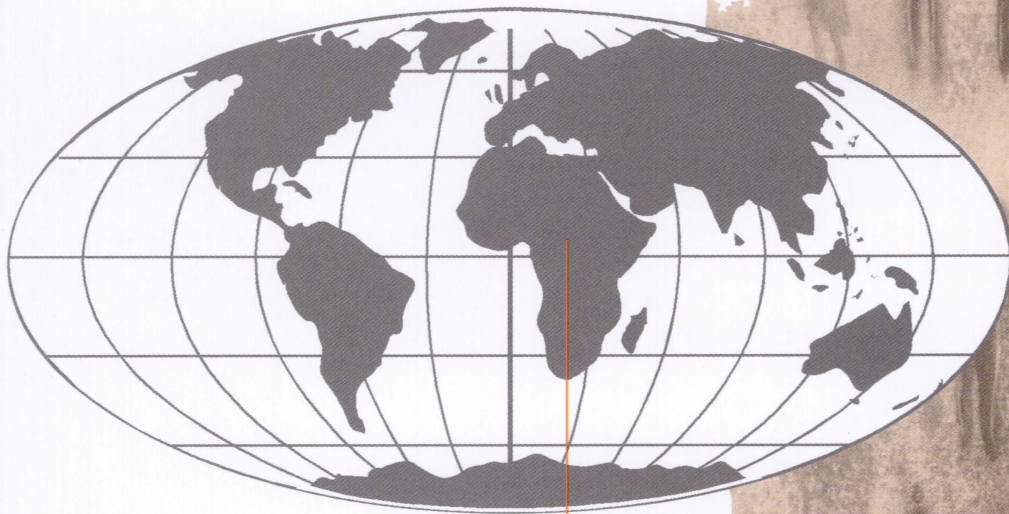
The European Commission stresses that refugee integration, where politically appropriate, must continue to be seen in the context of development in the host country. Assistance should be provided not just for the refugees, but for the local population too. It is usually most effective when integrated with development programmes in the refugee affected areas.

Article 257 of the Convention allows expenditure for social and physical rehabilitation following disaster. Funding for this purpose would be drawn from other budget resources. This Article provides a valuable additional policy instrument for the resettlement and reintegration of refugees, allowing for leadership training, infrastructure development and agriculture.

In 1995 a total of ECU 14 million was spent under Article 255, tackling refugee crises in many parts of Africa.







Africa

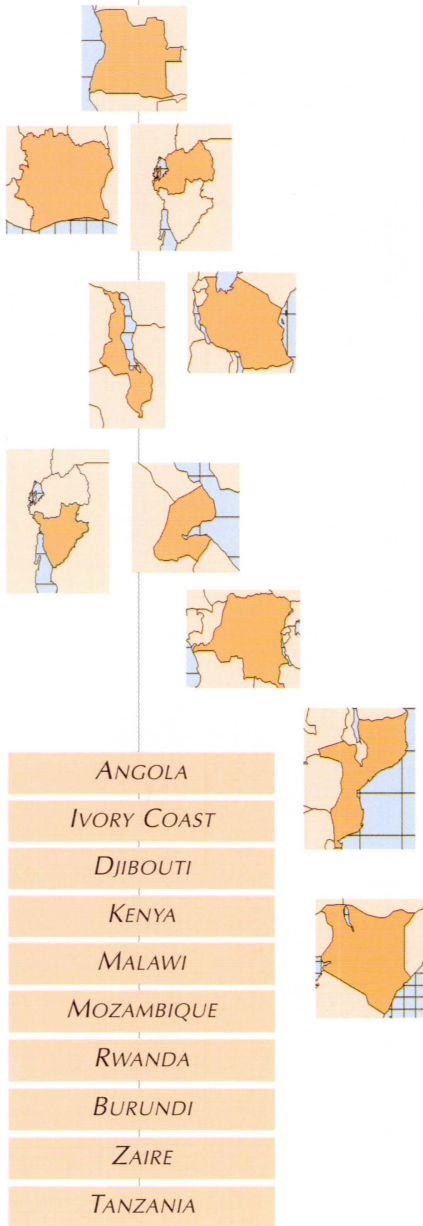


Africa

Each of the Community's aid instruments has been actively used in Africa over recent years - humanitarian aid, food aid and the resources of the European Development Fund (EDF) provided under the Lome Convention. Civil conflicts in many parts of the Continent have forced millions of people from their homes, often to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and imposing heavy burdens on the host population.

Rwanda, Burundi and the adjoining countries have suffered the most terrible and dramatic ethnic conflict which has called for a massive injection of humanitarian aid, but the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa have also had their share of man-made disaster and famine which is now, in some instances, giving way to hope.

A total of 68 projects has been undertaken with EDF funding in Africa over the last four years under Article 255 of Lome, with total contributions of ECU 81.6 million. In 1995 there were nine such actions, in Angola, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda. Schemes run by non-governmental organisations accounted for three quarters of the spending.



The Great Lakes region

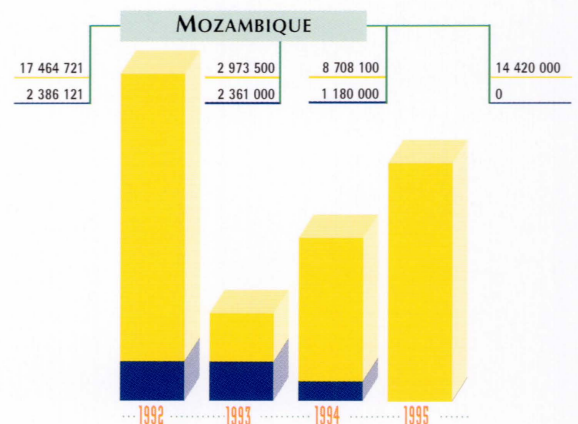
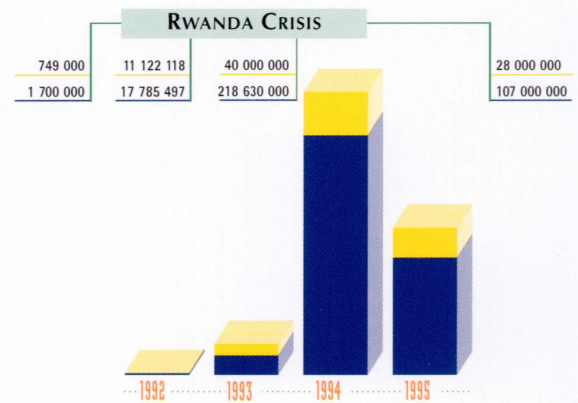
Between 2 and 3 million people fled their homes in Rwanda and Burundi during the civil conflict and genocide which began in October 1993 in Burundi and in Rwanda in April 1994. Some refugees later returned home and have needed resettling, but nearly 2 million (of Hutu majority) from Rwanda and more than two hundreds from Burundi are still refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania. Their presence inevitably constitutes a considerable strain on the resources of host countries.

The immediate need after the crisis erupted was for humanitarian aid, which was provided through ECHO, partly funded from Lome Convention resources (Article 254 - emergency aid). The Commission asked the UNHCR to assess needs and to implement relief operations and coordinate with the International Federation of the Red Cross, World Food Programme and NGOs. Continuing tensions in Rwanda and Burundi and the fears of the refugees themselves have hampered attempts at resettlement. The situation in Burundi is becoming increasingly tense with attacks on relief workers recently leading to an ICRC decision to recall all expatriate staff. Some ECU 135 million were spent in the region on refugee relief in 1995, compared with ECU 268,6 million in 1994.

The Commission believes that progressive repatriation and resettlement in the country of origin remains the only practical long-term solution and is supporting the UNHCR, the Red Cross and NGOs in their efforts, but the refugees themselves remain for the moment reluctant to return home.



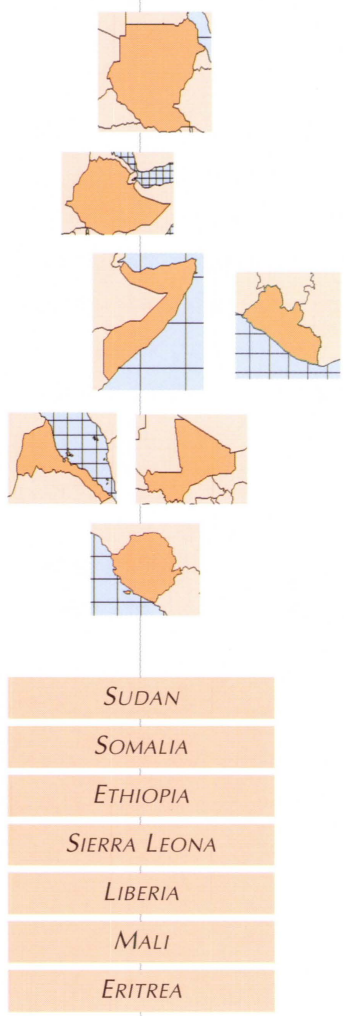
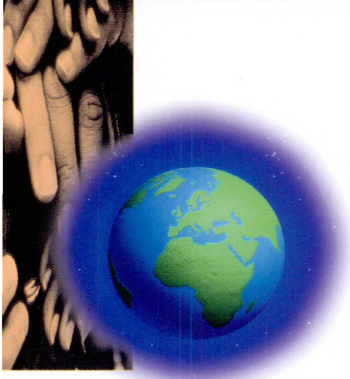
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EC Assistance in favour of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees

■ Humanitarian Aid ■ Food Aid





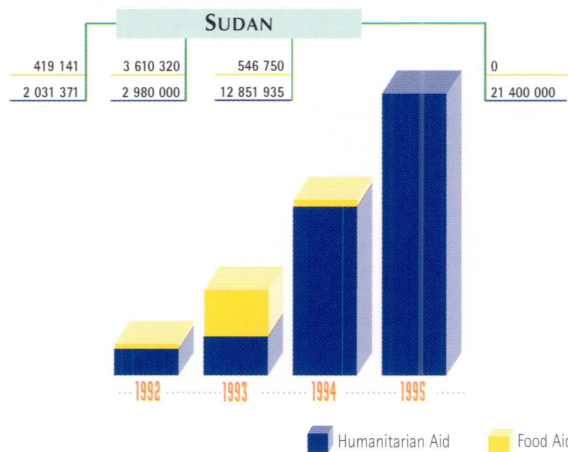
Horn of Africa

Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia all face refugee problems as a result of civil wars and famine in the region. In the south of Sudan and northern Uganda there are an estimated 2 million displaced persons. During 1995 ECU 21 million in humanitarian aid was provided to international organisations and NGOs working in Sudan and northern Uganda to sustain these people, many of whom have settled in inaccessible areas. A further ECU 3.86 million was provided to Uganda under the EC's food aid programme to help with the resettlement of Sudanese refugees in conjunction with the World Food Programme and ECU 750,000 for a care and maintenance operation with Oxfam.

Aid activity is severely limited in Somalia because of the breakdown of law and order, but some aid has been given for programmes of nutrition, health care, seeds distribution and emergency food aid in Mogadishu and in the centre and south of Somalia, targeted partly at displaced people. Nearly ECU 1 million has been provided in northern Kenya to help care for Somali refugees there.

A major programme has been undertaken in Ethiopia, with spending of more than ECU 9 million since 1992 from the EDF for reintegration of returnees and provision of medical support. This was combined with food aid amounting to ECU 20 million.

A special fleet of aircraft operated and financed by ECHO has provided air transport services in some of the most inaccessible parts of Africa such as Somalia and Southern Sudan where overland transport is often too hazardous. ECHO works with nine aircraft, based in Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and Somalia.



Southern and West Africa

In Mozambique the Community provided ECU 14.4 million under EDF and food aid funding in 1995 alone for a series of actions including a specific programme mounted by UNHCR to help more than 1,200,000 refugees and displaced persons settle down and develop their local economy after years of civil war. The programme assisted local authorities and NGOs to build up health facilities and integrate people into social and economic life as the country entered a more peaceful phase. It was the latest phase in a project which has already helped almost a million people.

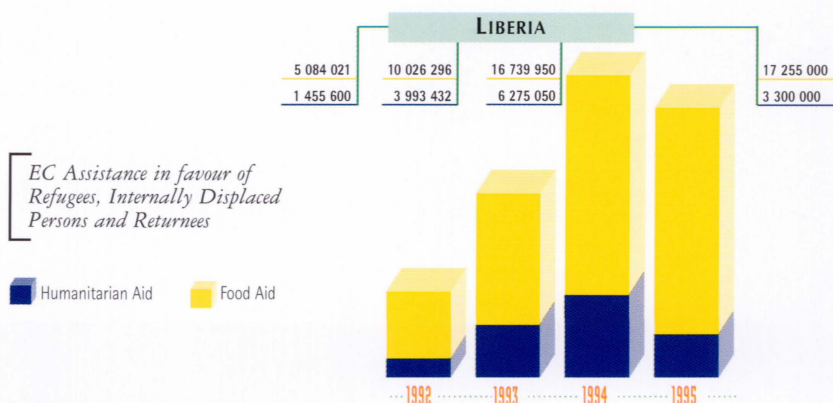
A similar action is being undertaken in Angola, where a combined effort by ECHO and DGVIII, the Development Directorate General, has been under way for several years to help more than a million people, many of whom had been fighting in the civil war and have now laid down their arms, to improve infrastructure, develop farming and clear mines in areas which are becoming accessible for the first time in many years.

In Malawi, early assistance was provided for construction of refugee camps. Subsequently funds were devoted to improving health, infrastructure and water supply. Again, more than a million people have benefited.

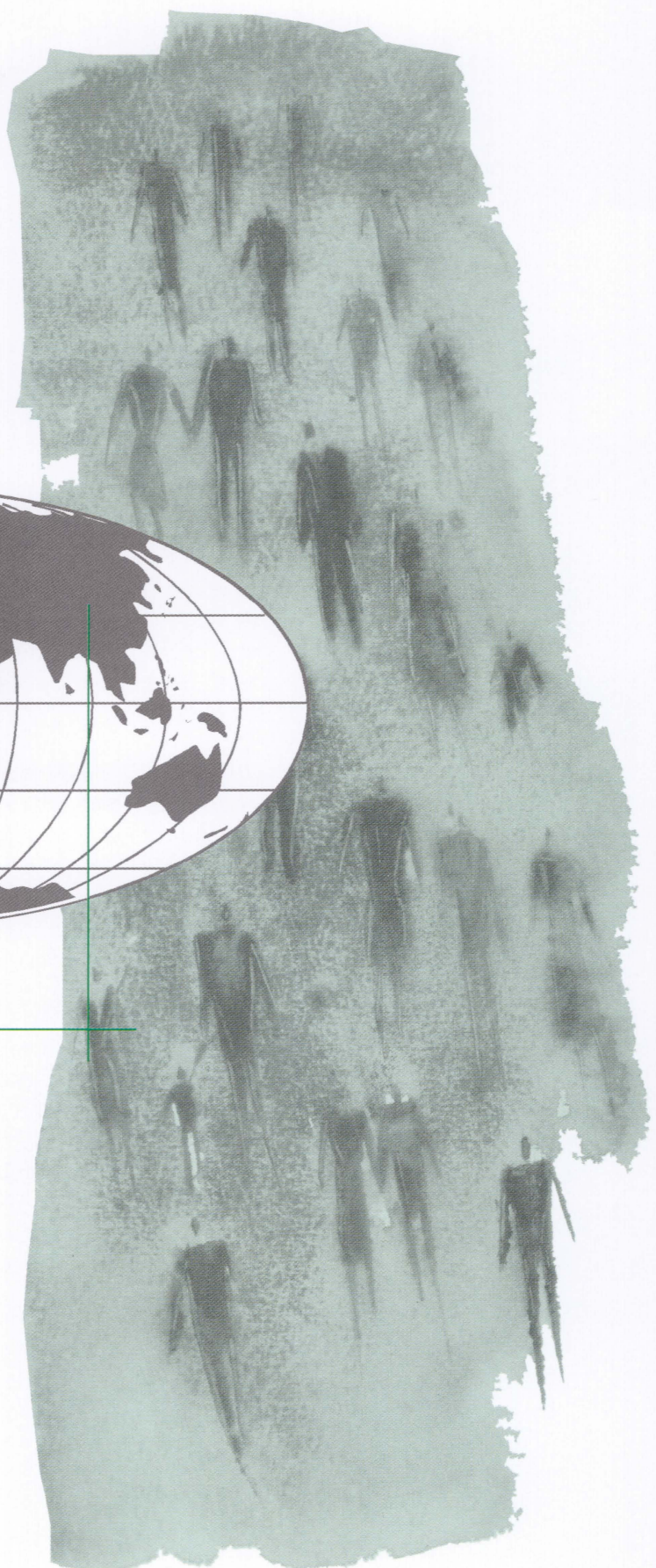
In Liberia, since the beginning of an especially horrible civil war, in December 1989 one third of the 2,5 million population has fled into the neighbouring countries while another third has been internally displaced.

Despite the difficult environment, the Community has been able to provide continuous support to affected populations in an efficient manner. This has been achieved through excellent partnership with a core group of quality implementing partners. The effective combination of Commission relief and rehabilitation instruments, and close cooperation between major donors. Accurate design and effective impact of these operations have been made possible thanks to the presence and work of an EC Aid Coordination Office in Monrovia.

Humanitarian aid, food aid and EDF funding have been provided in many other areas of Africa, including Sierra Leone and Mali.







**Latin America
and Asia**



Latin America and Asia

Refugee problems in the countries of South East Asia and Latin America have been created by insurrection and civil war, which have forced people from their homes to find shelter in neighbouring countries or elsewhere in their own country. Many of the conflicts which were so widespread in these regions in the 1980s and early '90s have now been resolved or the situation stabilised. The large migratory flows seem to be diminishing. European Community policy towards these areas is also changing.

In the Community's view the ideal solution to refugee crises is for the victims to return to their region of origin once the danger has passed.

In this instance, European aid is designed to provide a bridge. It is not to deal with new emergencies, but to cope with the consequences of earlier ones, helping uprooted people to move out of a crisis state and towards rehabilitation, reintegrating people into the economic tissue of their societies.

Although their plight may no longer constitute an emergency, the refugees' position still calls for a rapid deployment of human and material resources to help them in their resettlement and to support the host communities, which can find themselves swamped by an influx of refugees.

Other EC resources, such as food aid and humanitarian aid, may need to be mobilised as well.

A specific budget line has been put in place designed to bring about the best possible conditions for the integration and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and returnees in Asia and Latin America. The total sum allocated was about ECU 60 million in 1995 and a similar amount in 1996, of which about ECU 20 million is for operations in Latin America and ECU 40 million in Asia. A new policy instrument soon to be agreed by the Council of Ministers lays down the EC approach and makes provisions for financial assistance.

COSTA RICA

MEXICO

EL SALVADOR

GUATEMALA

NICARAGUA

PERU

HONDURAS



Latin America

After 30 years of war, repression and loss of human rights, peace and human dignity are returning to several affected countries of Central America. But the years of conflict have left 2 million people as refugees or displaced people. The Community is working to help these people establish their roots once again in the regions that they came from, and become self-sufficient. The target countries for Community action are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

In the Chiapas region of Mexico, for instance, more than ECU 2.5 million was spent in 1995 to help refugees who had fled from Guatemala 12 years ago to escape civil war. These people are being trained in forestry skills so that they can support themselves when they return and contribute to the local economy in Guatemala. Some humanitarian relief has been provided to them by ECHO, while funds to increase their level of self-sufficiency have come from the Asia/Latin America budget line.

In Guatemala itself there has been heavy emphasis on repatriation and self-sufficiency. Food aid, emergency aid and the special aid for Latin America have all contributed, to a total value of ECU 8.82 million in 1995.



On the Rio Coco between Nicaragua and Honduras another series of projects is being supported by EC funds, including assistance from the food aid budget. Mesquito indians driven from their homes in the mid '80s by the war between the Contras and the Sandanistas are settling once again in their old regions and learning to cultivate the land to make themselves self-sufficient. Elsewhere in Nicaragua former guerillas are being rehabilitated with EC help, learning new skills and making themselves self-sufficient.

Several of the Commission services have also been active in Peru, where the activities of the Shining Path guerillas forced thousands of people from their homes. Humanitarian relief and maintenance have been provided worth ECU 3.4 million to increase self-sufficiency.

Deciding on priorities is never easy. The European Commission has two special aid consultants working in Central America who are able to identify the areas of greatest need and provide a contact point for the NGOs which are active in the region.

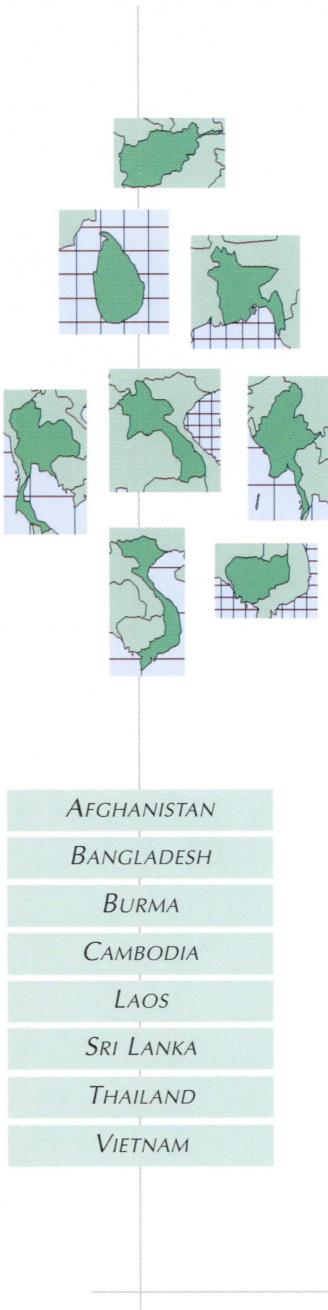


Asia

The Community provides assistance to refugees and displaced persons in several Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In some of these countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, conflict still continues, so EC assistance ranges from short term emergency aid to longer term rehabilitation. The aim is always to work towards the settlement of refugees and their reintegration into their communities.

Afghanistan has been riven by war since the Soviet invasion of 1979. This invasion provoked one of the largest refugee displacements in recent history. After the Soviets had withdrawn, civil war broke out causing further destruction and constituting an important impediment for the long awaited voluntary refugee return. The war has affected many areas throughout the country, both urban and rural. Basic infrastructure has suffered large-scale damage. 10 million land mines constitute a permanent threat and an obstacle for the resumption of normal life. More than 15 years of instability have exacerbated widespread poverty and hardship. Afghanistan is now amongst the poorest countries in the world with a very high infant mortality and low literacy rates.

Despite competing interests elsewhere in the world, the Community maintained its assistance programme for the Afghans, through allocations amounting to million ECU 44,8 in 1995 alone. ECHO provided 5,3 million ECU for emergency actions in 1994 and 12,3 million in 1995. To confront the enormous need for assistance a variety of actions have been undertaken involving emergency aid in areas where fighting continues, as well as food aid in favour of the internally displaced and refugee resettlement in areas of relative peace and stability.



Deciding the appropriate form of aid amidst such a complex ethnic and political environment has proven to be particularly challenging. For instance, in response to the emergency situation created by the massive exodus which followed the upsurge in fighting in Kabul in January 1994, much needed assistance had been provided to displaced persons in newly established camps near Jalalabad. However, distribution centres also attracted large numbers of destitute families from the surrounding villages, which highlights that emergency actions targeting refugees and uprooted people should be combined with efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of the local resident population.

Today war is essentially concentrated in and around Kabul and several regions are relatively peaceful. This has allowed more than 3 million refugees to return to their home villages from Pakistan and Iran since 1992. The Community has supported this repatriation movement by providing a package of assistance to resettling households. This included mine clearance, provision of water and shelter, and the repair and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure such as schools, irrigation systems and health facilities. Moreover, projects were designed to reduce donor dependency and to increase income: agricultural inputs were provided to increase local production, while a variety of training and apprenticeship schemes were initiated.

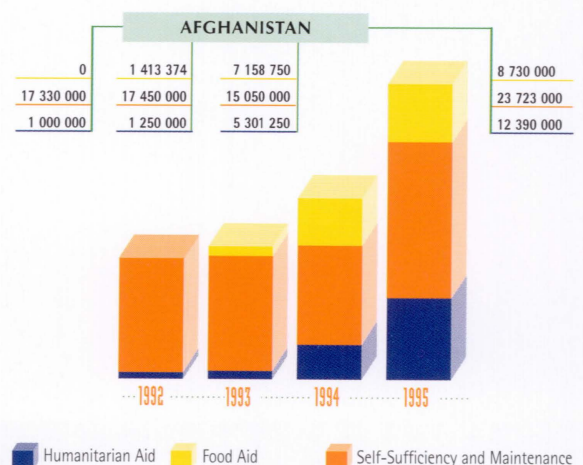
In 1995 funding for refugee resettlement projects in Asia amounted to 23 million ECU.

In Cambodia the Community spent about ECU 9 million in 1995, for a combination of relief measures, including emergency provisions to be used partly for people fleeing violent actions of the Khmer Rouge, together with food aid and funds for repatriation and improved self sufficiency.



Within the framework of the internationally agreed Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indochinese refugees, the Community committed funds for care and maintenance of refugees from Vietnam and Laos residing in Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. In addition to its support through UNHCR for refugees in these countries of first asylum, the Community continued to finance its own bilateral reintegration programmes for returnees in Laos and Vietnam. These major interventions have made a durable contribution to the refugee reintegration process by improving socio-economic conditions for both returning asylum seekers and local population.

On the Burmese-Thai border, and in Bangladesh, Community funds have been used to assist refugees from the Rakhine State in Myanmar (Burma) improving their ability to care for themselves and to return home. Assistance was also given to the more than 90,000 refugees from Bhutan living in 8 camps in Eastern Nepal.



*EC Assistance in favour of Refugees,
Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees*







**Central and Eastern Europe
and the CIS**



Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS

Former Yugoslavia

Since the war in former Yugoslavia began in 1991, the European Union has contributed more than ECU 1,000 million to humanitarian assistance in the region. It has been the main contributor to the biggest aid operation ever mounted anywhere in the world. The complex ethnic tensions which lie at the heart of the conflict have led to a massive displacement of populations. An estimated 2 million left their home regions; food and medical supplies collapsed.

The refugee crisis in former Yugoslavia comes close to home for the European Union. An estimated 800,000 refugees from Bosnia have had to seek shelter within the EU.

The Dayton Peace Agreement has brought new hope to the region, but a major exercise in resettlement and rehabilitation will now be needed, side by side with provision of emergency aid, which can still mean life or death in a country ravaged by war.

The humanitarian aid has been provided by ECHO, which has had to strike a balance between a vast general programme covering all essential sectors and targeted projects designed to meet the needs of women, children and other vulnerable people among the displaced communities. Emergency relief for refugees has been an immediate priority and accounted for ECU 229 million from EC funds in 1995, ECU 142 million in 1994 and ECU 203 million in 1993.

A high proportion of the general funding has been disbursed through the UNHCR and the World Food Programme, but other agencies such as the Red Cross have been active too and a whole range of actions has been undertaken directly by the European Commission. In spite of delivery problems during the Balkan winters, the EU has managed to cover most essential needs.

- CROATIA
- GEORGIA
- BOSNIA - HERZEGOVINA
- FYRO MACEDONIA
- ARMENIA
- AZERBAIJAN
- RUSSIA
- SLOVENIA



Humanitarian Aid



Former Soviet Union

The civil wars associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially in the Caucasus, continued to force millions from their homes.

In early 1995, several hundred thousand people were affected by the storming of the Chechen capital, Grozny, and other major population centres. After a relatively stable summer, the end of 1995 witnessed renewed conflicts in the east and south of Chechnya, coinciding with the run-up to the Russian parliamentary elections, which the Chechens opposed. This led to further population movements as the winter arrived.

The spring of 1996 witnessed a dramatic escalation of the conflict.

In many cases, Russian troops bombarded the very same places they had bombarded and «captured» in 1995. Thousands of non-combatants have been killed or wounded, while tens of thousands have been forced to flee their homes and are reluctant to go back until they are convinced the war is over.

In 1995, ECU 26 million was allocated by the Community for the refugee relief undertaken by range of voluntary organisations and the ICRC.



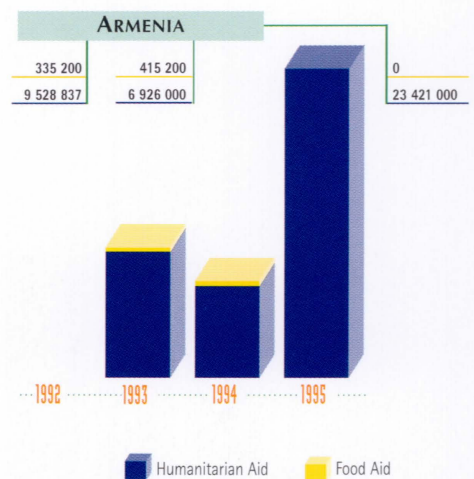
© UNHCR

Caucasus

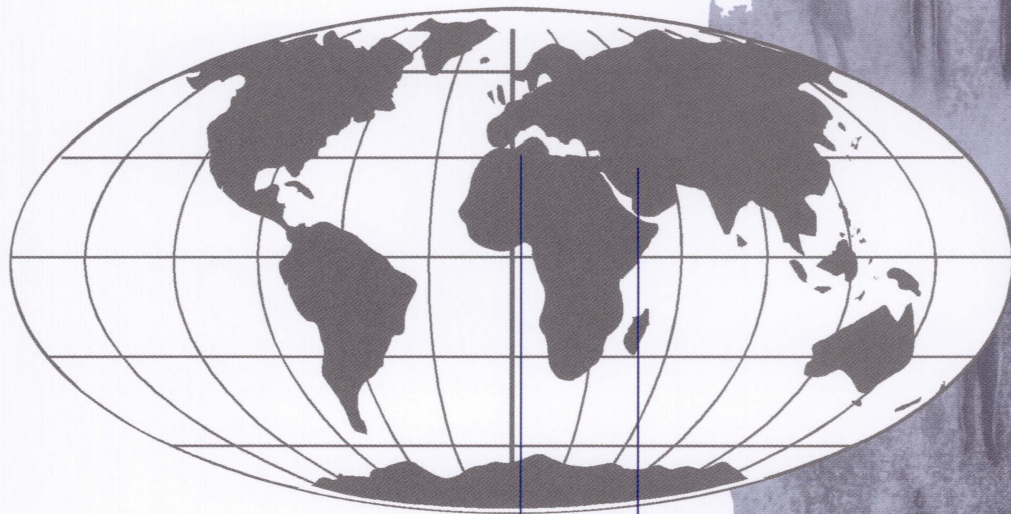
The refugee problems in Georgia following the civil war between Abkhazia separatists and the central government have called for substantial help. In 1994 humanitarian aid of ECU 8.5 million was granted by the Community; in 1995 spending was stepped up to ECU 23 million. A further ECU 23,4 million went as emergency relief to Armenia in 1995 and ECU 19,6 million to Azerbaijan.

In Azerbaijan, several hundred thousand people remain in refugee camps after fleeing from the contested zone of Nagorno-Karabagh. Open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in this enclave has ceased but a durable peace is not in sight.

EC Assistance in favour of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees







**The Middle East
and North of Africa**



The Middle East and North of Africa

Palestinians refugees

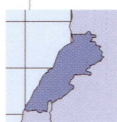
UNRWA received its mandate in 1951, to provide education, health and relief and social services to Palestinians refugees throughout the Middle East. UNRWA has worked in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Lebanon and Syria and, since 1967 when refugees then living in the West Bank fled to the East Bank, in Jordan. The Community has been supporting the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees in the Near East since 1971 under a series of triannual conventions.

A new Convention between the EC and UNRWA is due to be signed in 1996, covering the Community contribution to UNRWA for 1996-98. Under this Convention it is intended that the Community will contribute ECU 34 million in 1996 towards the costs of the Agency's education and health programmes.

The Community also makes an annual contribution to UNRWA's food aid programme for Palestinians, designed to provide food aid assistance to the poorest of the registered refugees. This amounted to ECU 8 million in 1995 and ECU 10 million in 1996.

The Community therefore contributes between 10-15% of UNRWA's total operating costs, making it the second largest donor (If the bilateral contributions of the members states are counted as well, then the European Union is by far and away the largest donor to UNRWA).

The Community has also funded projects under UNRWA's «Peace Implementation Programme», a portfolio of projects designed to bring tangible benefit to the refugees following the signature of the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and Israel in 1993.



PALESTINE

JORDAN

ISRAEL

LEBANON

IRAQ

SYRIA





Iraq

The Community has funded the construction and equipping of UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (ECU 8million), construction of the 232-bed European Gaza Hospital at Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip (more than ECU 20million) and the rehabilitation of the sewage systems in several camps in Lebanon (ECU 5million to date).

UNRWA will continue to provide services to the Palestine refugees until a permanent solution to the refugee problem has been negotiated under the Middle East Peace Process.

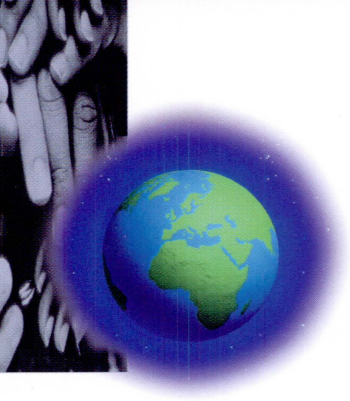
The Community is also prepared to react to emergency situations in the Middle East as and when they arise. Some ECU 1,875,000 was allocated in emergency assistance in favour of Palestine refugees living in camps in Lebanon in 1995. This aid consisted mainly of medical assistance to the sanitary infrastructures managed by both the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Lebanon and UNRWA. In the spring of 1996, ECU 750,000 were allocated through UNRWA and WFP to alleviate the temporary food shortages occasioned by the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel in the wake of a series of suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf War led to the displacement of approximately 2 million people from their place of origin. Since 1992 the European Community has contributed ECU 47,3 million to victims of this conflict, refugees and displaced populations out of a total ECU 96,9 million given in humanitarian aid.

Since ECHO's creation in 1992, aid to vulnerable groups in Iraq has become more and more important and oriented more specifically towards sectors such as food aid, health, rehabilitation, de-mining, education, water programmes, etc. The principle objectives of ECHO's humanitarian aid are the following :

- To enable vulnerable populations to lead the most normal life possible with a view to re-establishing their economic potential
- To prevent rural inhabitants leaving their villages and encouraging those who have left to return and take their up their original activity/place.

According to this criteria, ECU 11,2 million and ECU 12,4 million have been directed towards refugees and displaced persons in 1994 and 1995 respectively. In 1996, it is estimated that ECU 11,5 million will be directed towards this region.



Algeria- Sahrawi refugees

The Community has financed several humanitarian aid projects in favour of Sahrawi refugees who are in Algeria (Tindouf region) for more than twenty years. The situation of this vulnerable population, almost wholly dependent on international aid, remains unstable, in particular, due to the delay in holding the referendum on self-determination .

In 1993 and 1994, ECU 2.16 million were allocated for emergency food aid projects and medical and logistics assistance. In 1995, humanitarian aid amounted to ECU 10.9 million.

This increase in humanitarian aid allocations was due to the transfer of emergency food aid management from DG VIII (Development) to ECHO, that entered into force in January 1995.

In 1995, an evaluation mission was carried out by a team of independent experts with the aim of providing the most appropriate means so as better to meet the needs of these people. In 1996, a new emergency food aid operation (ECU 5 million) is being implemented by partner NGOs.

Furthermore, several other medical-sanitary and logistics projects have been selected and adopted in the framework of the new budget line B7-644 (ECU 2 million) approved by the European Parliament and administered by ECHO.



ALGERIA



Partnerships

The EU Council of Ministers is responsible, jointly with the European Parliament, for determining overall EC budget allocations. National governments are represented on the committees responsible for overseeing the funding of Community refugee programmes and Member States are formally notified of all actions undertaken by the Community, but they do not become directly involved in administration of aid programmes. This is the European Commission's responsibility.

The Community uses a wide range of partners in its actions on behalf of refugees and displaced persons. United Nations agencies are most important collaborators, particularly the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. A high proportion of UNHCR funding comes from the EC budget, amounting to ECU 146 million in 1995. The UN World Food Programme received ECU 85 million and the Red Cross ECU 64 million, much of it for refugee programmes.

In former Yugoslavia the Community supported UNHCR's role as lead agency for overall guidance of the international humanitarian effort. It has built up a solid working relationship with the organisation and works together with it in many parts of the world. In December 1993 a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the European Commission and the UN High Commission for Refugees, was signed by EC Commissioner Manuel Marin and Mrs Sadako Ogata of UNHCR.

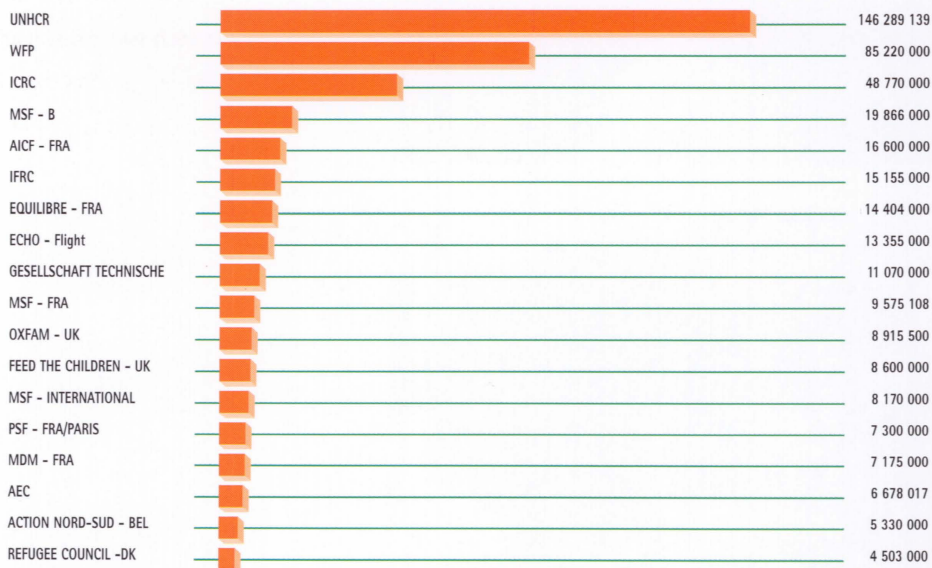
This FPA has also been concluded with other UN agencies such as : the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The NGOs are vitally important to almost all Community programmes. Their independence makes them particularly valuable because they can see problems at first hand, can respond to the needs and requests of communities on the ground, can involve local people and can often operate in areas where official institutions find it difficult to intervene. They are also highly committed. They are key partners in almost all EC initiatives for refugees.

About 50 per cent of EU humanitarian aid is implemented through NGOs. Framework Partnership Contracts define a clear working relationship between ECHO and the agencies carrying out humanitarian aid operations, whether they be international organisations or NGOs. The contracts streamline relations and ensure that the funds are used efficiently. They have been signed with more than 150 bodies, most of them voluntary.

In some of the actions of the European Union, such as in former Yugoslavia, the Member States may make bilateral contributions to the relief effort in addition to the resources provided by the Community.

Ranking of first Recipient Partners (amounts in ECU) in 1995



Implication of refugee

PROBLEMS FOR THE EU

Refugee crises have an increasing impact on the European Union. They can no longer be regarded as distant events without any consequences for Europe. There are several reasons for this:

- the rising level of migration of people worldwide, some as refugees escaping natural disaster or man-made conflict and some as economic migrants;
- the fact that many people are travelling from regions on the EU's doorstep, in central or eastern Europe; for instance, nearly 800,000 refugees from Bosnia have sought shelter in the European Union;
- extension of freedom of movement for people throughout the European Union;
- increasing ease of travel.

Wherever possible the Community will seek to provide assistance to refugees as close as possible to their original home, helping them to return when this becomes a realistic aim, but it may also have to cope with asylum seekers within the European Union. A policy is therefore being developed by the European Union to ensure that persons asking for asylum receive fair and equitable treatment, while at the same time avoiding an abuse of the system.



© ICRC



The Treaty on European Union introduced provisions on Justice and Home Affairs (Title VI). These invite member states to develop common policies which cover:

- asylum policy;
- the crossing of the external borders of Member States and exercise of controls;
- immigration policy for third country nationals.

The Treaty specifically states that these policies should take account of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees.

Some important steps were taken well before the negotiation of the Treaty on European Union. The Dublin Convention, signed in 1990 by the then twelve EC Members States, determines which State is responsible for examining asylum applications. This Convention awaits ratification by the signatory State before it can enter into force, which is expected by the beginning of 1997.

On November 30 1992 the Ministers responsible for immigration adopted three resolutions which, though not legally binding, set out guidelines for Member States. These resolutions are the Resolution on manifestly unfounded applications for asylum, the Resolution on a harmonised approach to questions concerning host third countries and the Conclusion on countries in which there is generally no serious risk of persecution.



© UNHCR



© UNHCR



The Dublin Convention and the London resolution were negotiated on an inter-governmental basis between the member states. The decision-making process laid down in the Maastricht Treaty for Justice and Home Affairs still depends essentially on unanimous agreement between the governments of the member states. The possibility of using qualified majority voting is foreseen on a case-by-case basis for procedural matters and implementing measures.

Since the Treaty on European Union was ratified, further steps have been taken by the EU Council of Ministers:

- a Resolution on minimum guarantees for asylum procedures was adopted on June 20 1995. This specifies that no asylum seeker will be expelled as long as no decision has been taken on the asylum application and states that recognition of refugee status is not dependent on the production of formal evidence;
- a Joint Position on the harmonized application of the term «refugee» according to Article 1A of the Geneva Convention was adopted on March 4 1996. Accordingly, the responsible administrative bodies in the Member States are expected to apply the guidelines set out in this Joint Position, though without prejudice to Member States caselaw on asylum matters and their relevant constitutional positions.
- a resolution was adopted on burden sharing on September 25 1995. This sets out «an effective arrangement for future sharing of the burden of humanitarian assistance». The resolution emphasises the importance of trying to resolve refugee problems in the region where they arise, while acknowledging that there may be a need for temporary refuge. It is designed to avoid too much of the burden of a refugee crisis bearing down on a single member state.



Future policy initiatives

The European Commission believes that procedures for action within the Union should be improved.

It would like to see a more effective policy-making mechanism for issues relating to the movement of people, with the Commission given a right of initiative in proposing policy, and an extension of qualified majority voting. It has advocated this in its submission to the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference which has been called to revise the Maastricht treaty. There are several areas where it would like to see clearer policy measures, relating to temporary residence permits, for instance, and on general rules governing immigration into the European Union.

Policy on refugees and displaced persons no longer relates just to disasters in distant continents, but touches the whole of Europe as well. Evolution of a coherent and effective policy which makes it possible for uprooted people to return their homes and resume their normal lives will relieve the pressure on countries of refuge, including the European Union, as well as reinforcing stability in the regions concerned in the after-math of disaster.



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EC Contributions Towards Refugees,
Displaced Persons and Returnees

(*) Projects concerning this country are included under
«Former Soviet Union» for years 1992 and 1993
(**) See each actual republic of the CIS

Recipient Country	1992	1993	1994	1995
Afghanistan	18 330 000	20 113 374	27 510 000	44 843 000
Algeria	3 741 623	5 707 945	4 335 900	10 900 000
Angola	10 044 000	575 000	1 860 000	10 000 000
Armenia	(*)	(*)	7 341 200	23 421 000
Azerbaijan	(*)	(*)	7 497 657	19 662 000
Bangladesh	7 665 295	6 158 505	15 310 250	131 000
Belize	0	0	1 265 000	0
Benin	0	1 347 010	0	0
Botswana	0	231 679	0	0
Burma	0	0	2 600 000	6 478 000
Buthan	0	0	0	3 100 000
Former Yugoslavia	71 421 930	203 208 057	142 598 120	229 670 000
Former Soviet Union	1 300 000	44 903 775	(**)	(**)
Cambodia	14 175 000	11 240 000	4 437 550	8 905 000
Cayman Islands	0	0	0	95 000
Central Africa Republic	0	0	1 062 500	0
Congo	0	0	265 900	0
Costa Rica	170 000	0	0	1 000 000
Cote d'Ivoire	0	0	0	2 410 983
Djibouti	340 000	25 800	0	0
Ecuador	0	0	0	450 000
El Salvador	10 000 000	6 160 000	3 035 000	1 820 000
Eritrea	0	0	4 545 290	0
Ethiopia	8 581 121	10 452 372	11 893 450	236 100
Georgia	(*)	(*)	8 526 348	22 998 000
Ghana	0	887 234	1 079 200	0
Guatemala	1 250 000	5 900 000	6 690 000	8 825 000
Guinea	119 505	740 000	0	540 000
Guinea Bissau	0	192 400	0	0
Guinea Conarky	749 600	530 000	0	0
Honduras	0	0	1 000 000	0
Hong-Kong	2 520 000	520 000	1 730 000	0
Indonesia	700 000	0	0	0
Iran	2 000 000	4 400 000	2 500 000	0
Iraq	1 500 000	10 700 000	11 200 000	12 400 000
Kenya	8 340 177	7 807 739	2 634 163	979 000
Laos	0	0	4 500 000	2 000 000
Lebanon	0	500 000	0	1 875 000
Liberia	6 539 621	14 019 728	23 015 000	20 555 000
Malawi	14 722 495	9 547 067	15 779 900	617 747
Malaysia	1 500 000	0	410 375	0
Mali	0	735 000	75 250	0
Mauritania	1 520 362	1 491 348	3 989 500	0
Mexico	1 420 000	2 910 000	1 022 000	2 505 000
Mozambique	19 850 842	5 334 500	9 888 100	14 420 000
Nepal	800 000	762 000	3 690 125	950 000
Nicaragua	5 900 000	4 700 000	10 500 000	4 880 000
Niger	0	95 000	0	0
Nigeria	58 778	0	340 250	400 000
Pakistan	19 073 121	1 730 000	3 545 000	0
Palestinian Refugees	45 150 000	51 620 000	43 890 000	40 010 000
Papua New Guinea	0	0	427 465	0
Peru	0	0	110 000	3 420 000
Philippines	800 000	7 500	200 000	0
Russia (Chechnya Crisis)	0	0	0	26 000 000
Rwanda/Burundi crisis	2 449 000	28 907 615	258 630 000	135 000 000
Senegal	43 121	2 248 642	0	0
Sierra Leone	146 300	1 740 580	1 749 200	6 420 000
Somalia	444 521	0	0	0
Sri Lanka	1 200 000	100 000	1 737 500	2 363 000
Sudan	2 450 512	6 590 320	13 398 685	21 400 000
Surinam	500 000	0	0	0
Swaziland	121 421	810 000	0	0
Tajikistan	(*)	(*)	5 650 000	2 550 000
Tanzania	111 521	6 969 201	3 434 672	0
Thailand	6 534 988	4 887 904	1 460 000	3 100 000
Togo	0	300 000	150 000	0
Uganda	1 013 421	3 500 000	5 615 700	4 610 000
Viet Nam	0	0	0	3 300 000
Yemen	735 775	0	720 000	0
Zaire	61 121	5 549 024	8 609 218	0
Zambia	0	231 000	3 322 550	0
Zimbabwe	1 426 621	783 380	2 738 135	0
ECHO FLIGHT	0	0	2 670 321	20 595 000
Regional	1 054 000	4 150 000	160 000	0
TOTAL	299 164 138	497 870 699	702 186 474	725 834 830

**Members of the European
Commission Permanent
Inter-Service (PISC)**

ECHO

European Community
Humanitarian Office.

Directorate General VIII

External Relations with
African, Caribbean and
Pacific countries (ACP) and
South Africa, Lome
Convention.

Directorate General IA

External Relations with the
countries of Central &
Eastern Europe (CEECs), the
former Soviet Union,
Mongolia, Turkey, Cyprus,
Malta and other European
countries. Common
Foreign and Security Policy
(CFSP) and Human Rights
(in agreement with the
President). External
Diplomatic missions.

Directorate General IB

External Relations with
Southern Mediterranean
countries, the Middle East,
Latin America and Asia,
(except Japan, China,
Korea, Hong-Kong, Macao
and Taiwan).

Secretariat General

Title VI Treaty European
Union Task Force
(cooperation on justice and
home affairs).



Principle Refugee sites in the World

War in Ex-Yugoslavia

Asylum-seekers in Europe

Palestinian question

West African Refugees

Repatriation in Guatemala

Saharan Refugees

Reintegration in Mozambique

Conflict in the Caucasus

Reconstruction in Afghanistan

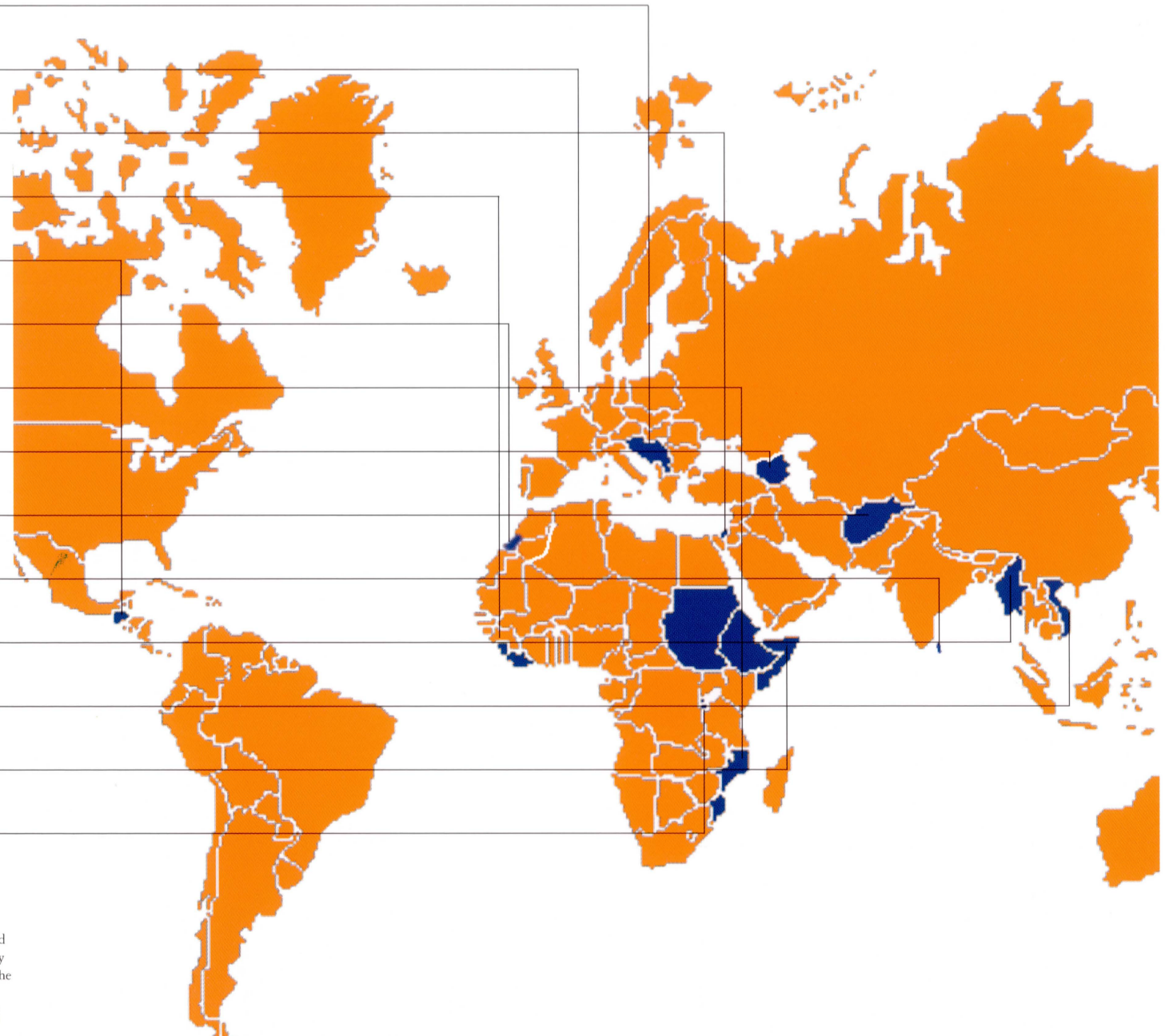
Displaced people in Sri-Lanka

Repatriation in Myanmar

Vietnamese boat people

Aid and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa

Emergency situation in Ruanda and Burundi



Source: UNHCR «The State of the World's Refugees»
The maps featured in this publication should not be considered to be exact representation of reality. The indicators which they carry and their presentation do not reflect any judgement on the part of the United Nations as to the legal status of each countries, region or territory, nor any judgement as to the marking of borders.



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