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**THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMES TO THE AID
OF THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN REFUGEES**

The European Community has launched a vast relief effort to come to the aid of the hundreds of thousands of South East Asian refugees. The EC aid made available through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) involves both financial and food assistance to the countries of the troubled region.

Three groups of refugees are now benefitting from the EC help:

- 1) About 200,000 refugees from Vietnam now living in Malaysia, Hong-Kong, Indonesia, Macao, Thailand and the Philippines.
- 2) An equivalent number of Laotian and Cambodian citizens provisionally settled mostly in Thailand.
- 3) About 30,000 Cambodian nationals, mostly women and children, who took refuge in Vietnam, for the most part in Ho-Chi-Minh City.

FINANCIAL AID

The financial aid granted by the EC and channeled through the UNHCR as of July 27, 1979 totals \$12.25 million, including aid to Palestinians. The EC now stands second only to the U.S. as a contributor to the South East Asian Refugee relief program of the UNHCR.

A provisional appropriation of four million European Units of Account* (EUA) (\$5,520,000.00) for Cambodian displaced persons in both Cambodia itself and Thailand was also approved on July 21 by the Council of Ministers of the EC. These funds will be made available if and when adequate channeling can be arranged through international organizations.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

The food allocated by the EC to the relief effort in South East Asia amounts to a total value of \$12.72 million for the first seven months of 1979 and includes the following:

- 28,000 metric tons of rice to cover 50% of the needs of refugees in South East Asia up to February 1980.
- 3,000 metric tons of vitaminized milk powder.
- 2,700 metric tons of rice for Cambodian refugees in Vietnam.

As of July 4, 1979, the food assistance granted to Vietnam by the EC for 1979 has been suspended except for the allowance earmarked for Cambodian refugees in Vietnam. The other supplies intended for Vietnam have been provisionally allocated to the other countries of the region hosting refugees.

EC POLICY TOWARD THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

The EC campaign to help the South East Asian refugees follows the policy outlined on July 20 at the Geneva meeting on Indochinese refugees by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Community and Foreign Minister of Ireland, Michael O'Kennedy, who called for "a special effort by the international community to relieve the material and moral distress involved and to spread more evenly the very heavy burden which the influx of refugees has placed on the countries of the region."

Aid to the South East Asian refugees is part of a broader EC commitment to assist all refugees and displaced persons. The EC conducts, for instance, aid programs to refugees in the Middle East and Africa. Since 1976, the EC has spent a total of \$42 million in aid to refugees throughout the world.

All the EC countries have admitted or agreed to accept refugees for resettlement. Additionally, all of the Nine have contributed to the funds of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. This increase in Community aid will contribute to the material needs of the refugees in the framework of a more rational and systematic organization of their departure, transit and reception. Vietnam also agreed to do its part in creating a system of orderly departures, a pledge which would include the provision of transit camps on the Vietnamese side.

By the end of September, a three-month emergency plan had been devised whereby intermediaries such as the Red Cross and UNICEF have and will continue to airlift emergency food and medical supplies provided by the EC to the estimated 2.5 million Cambodians facing catastrophic conditions.

* On October 16, 1979, one European Unit of Account was worth approximately \$1.38