

Uprooted People

A Newsletter of the World Council of Churches in solidarity with people compelled by severe political, economic and social conditions to leave their land and culture.

1. A note from the editor

Uprooted People is a publication of the International Relations team of the World Council of Churches and is intended to provide information on current developments to churches and related organizations in support of their work.

Uprooted People is distributed four times a year by e-mail. If you would like to receive the publication or to contribute news affecting uprooted people in your region, please contact Elizabeth Ferris (eqf@wcc-coe.org)

2. Annual Refugee Meetings

In the coming weeks, a number of refugee-related meetings will be held in Geneva:

- 21-23 September: the Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People. This annual gathering brings together representatives from churches and ecumenical organizations working with refugees in all regions. Particular emphasis will be focused on the issues of trafficking and on engaging the churches in advocacy on behalf of uprooted people. The next issue of *Uprooted People* will report on the deliberations and conclusions of this meeting.
 - 24-26 September: the UNHCR-NGO PreExecutive Committee Consultations. The consultations will include plenary discussions on major thematic issues, such as protection and migration, smaller group discussions on regional issues, and workshops and lunch-time meetings on issues such as capacity-building and detention.
 - 26 September: UNHCR's Standing Committee.
 - 27-28 September. UNHCR's Global Consultations on International Protection. The particular focus of this third meeting of the "third track" of the consultations will focus on protection in the context of individual asylum applications (*see below for an overview of the Global Consultations.*)
 - 1-5 October. UNHCR's Annual Executive Committee meeting. This year's meeting does not have a theme, but rather will offer governments the opportunity to comment on the remarks of the new High Commissioner for Refugees.
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3. Network News

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) organized a Strategic Workshop on Refugees and Asian Churches' Response from 21-26 July in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The workshop, which brought together participants from throughout Asia, included a visit to camps for displaced people in Vavuniya. In their conclusions, participants noted the work done by CCA, churches and related NGOs in the region and the work

carried out by certain local communities, churches and related agencies to help ameliorate the plight of refugees and IDPs. However, they also expressed alarm, that despite having held a number of meetings, not much headway has been made on the implementation of recommendations. Moreover, donors seem to favor “popular” projects and to date most Asian governments are not signatories of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Even states which have signed the Convention are not serious about its implementation. Participants recommended that CCA initiate action on previous recommendations, particularly the 1993 recommendations (Conference on Migrant Workers, Refugees and Internally Displaced Communities) to establish “an Asian ecumenical action and Asian working group.” They also urged national councils and member constituents of CCA to establish refugee desks; to vigorously pursue networking with CCA as the focal point; to urge all national governments to accept and adopt the Guiding Principles with regard to IDPs; and to promote interfaith relationships. (For further information, contact Prawate Khid-arm at CCA (prawate@cca.org.hk)).

The Ecumenical Network for Refugees, Migrants and Displaced in Latin America brought together representatives from 7 Latin American ecumenical organizations in Barranquilla, Colombia from 21-24 August. Participants in the meeting analyzed the situation of uprooted people in their countries and in the region as a whole. In their final statement, the Declaration of Barranquilla, participants recognized the impact of globalization, the economic situation in Latin America, violence, political instability and the lack of dialogue and tolerance as the principal causes of forced displacement in their region. They urged their governments to adhere to international norms and in particular to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families. They expressed support for inter-governmental bodies working with refugees and migrants, particularly UNHCR and IOM and expressed appreciation to WCC for its continued support of the network for more than 10 years. Participants understand that their work with uprooted people is part of the larger of the churches within the Decade to Overcome Violence. They reaffirmed their alliance with the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) and their support for the proposal to create a specific mechanism within CLAI regarding uprooted people. The network further rejected the implementation of the Plan Colombia which has increased the displacement of people and contributed to the militarization of the region. Finally, participants expressed their commitment to continue to work with and for uprooted people in defense of their rights through assistance, national work with governmental and non-governmental organizations and at the international level. For more information, contact Guillermo Kerber (guillermo.kerber@wcc-coe.org).

The annual meeting of the Middle East Council of Churches/World Council of Churches Working Group on Refugees, Internally Displaced and Migrants took place in Beirut from 3-7 September. The Working Group, composed of 13 representatives of churches in the Middle East, reviewed the situation of uprooted people in the region and formulated recommendations to ensure that ministry to the uprooted affirms Christian presence in the Middle East, provides respect for human rights and human dignity and supports advocacy to address the causes of uprootedness. Participants spent a day in field visits, with one group traveling to the North to visit a Palestinian refugee camp while a second group visited the liberated area of Southern Lebanon and the infamous Kham prison. The UNHCR representative in Damascus provided an overview of the refugee situation in the region, noting that it is characterized by: the lack of legal frameworks and national legislation in most countries, the lack of repatriation opportunities, the presence of large numbers of Palestinian refugees, the absence of local integration possibilities, the lack of refugee access to employment or permanent residence, the fragile presence of NGOs and

the hundreds of thousands of stateless people in the region. For further information, contact meccls@cyberia.net.lb.

The National Council of Churches of Australia held their triennial Forum in Melbourne, Australia from 4-10 July. This Forum brings together church leaders from throughout the country to set priorities for the Council and to review its programmes. This year's Forum included a Keynote presentation by Elizabeth Ferris on refugees and asylum – a hot political issue in Australia. The 15 member churches of the NCCA endorsed a comprehensive set of policies put forward by the National Program on Refugees and Displaced People.

The Uniting Church of Australia has released a briefing paper for the elections with a "Vision for Refugees and a Multicultural Society." The document calls for an end to the mandatory detention of asylum-seekers and refugees and calls for a comprehensive community education programme aimed at countering xenophobia and nurturing respect for cultural diversity. On 27 July the Anglican Synod expressed its grave concern about the plight of asylum seekers in Australia and asked that Refugee Sunday be observed in the Anglican Church throughout Australia. It further called for the establishment of a working group to advise the Standing Committee and ensure action is taken in every diocese and parish throughout Australia.

NCCA commemorated Refugee Sunday on 26 August at which time churches throughout the country offered prayer for the 500+ refugee children held in Australian detention centres. The emphasis on refugee children came amidst an outpouring of emotion from the Australian public over the physical and emotional well-being of a six-year old detained Iranian boy who stopped eating and drinking after seeing blood pour from the wrists of a detainee who tried to commit suicide. Since then he has not spoken and remains in a near-catatonic state, severely depressed and withdrawn. The boy's parents' asylum claim has been rejected and the family faces deportation back to Iran.

The Southern African Churches in Ministry with Uprooted People has appealed to the churches in Southern Africa to study the 1990 UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, to bring it to the attention of justice and human rights groups in their countries, to find out their governments' stance with regard to the Convention and to give it the full support of the churches. The coordinating office of SACMUP has distributed the full text of the convention in the region, noting that none of the governments in southern Africa has yet signed the convention.

In June, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden issued a statement regarding the Schengen treaty and politics on refugees. The statement notes that while the Schengen Treaty is supposed to facilitate free movement within the Schengen area, of the 44 paragraphs in the treaty, only four deal with free movement. The rest deal with the fight against illegal immigration and international crime. The common market countries have imposed a visa requirement on the nationals of 134 countries which is a barrier for anyone on the run. The statement says "We strongly protest the common market countries closing their borders and urge members to participate in the efforts to achieve a radically different refugee policy in accordance with the United Nation's declaration on human rights. The statement further calls on the government to strive for a change of the Schengen Treaty to stop protecting ourselves and instead help refugees who need protection and asylum. Finally the statement appeals to members of Parliament to say 'no' to the introduction of fines for the transporting companies. (www.smf.se)

The Ecumenical Christian Centre of Bangalore, India organized a national seminar on the “Political Economy of Migration” from 17-21 August. The seminar examined patterns of migration and the widespread violation of fundamental human rights of migrants. The seminar urged the Indian government to ratify the UN’s International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of their Families.’ The seminar included 40 participants, including sociologists, NGO representatives, university professors, representatives of people’s movements, church leaders and media representatives from various states. The participants expressed their view that globalization, liberalization, modernization and the international laws of migration are all products of western debates and experiences. Migration is seen as a ‘spiritual challenge’ and churches and other religious organizations have a role in upholding social security and monitoring to spread this message of concern.

The Romanian Orthodox Church and IOM Bucarest are currently developing joint activities to combat trafficking, including dissemination of counter-trafficking information in Orthodox religious schools and awareness-raising seminars for priests. Romania is one of the most important countries of origin for the victims of trafficking to and through the Balkans. Romania is also a country of transit and destination for victims of trafficking. (IOM Press Briefing notes, 14 Aug 01)

The Catholic bishop of Jaffna, Thomas Soundranayagam visited Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the camps of Tamil Nadu, southern India. The bishop celebrated Mass in three camps and exhorted the refugees to live a life of holiness despite their ‘desert experience.’ Dr. Soundranayagam also shared first-hand information about the ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka with the Bishops’ Conference of Tamil Nadu. A recent consultation called by the Migration and Refugee Desk of the Indian Bishops’ Conference led to the drawing up of a concrete action plan for assistance by the local church to Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu.

The Southern Africa Bishops’ Conference issued a pastoral letter on World Refugee Day (20 June) calling for support for refugees and urging parishes to invite refugees and to welcome them. The bishops expressed sadness at the abuse refugees suffer in South Africa. “Some [refugees] have had acid poured on their faces and bodies, others have been thrown out of moving trains. They have been refused the scope to use their skills to develop our country and its people. The treatment they have received shows that we do not accept them as fellow human beings.”

Zambia’s Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter to mark World Refugee Day which commended Zambia’s continued hospitality towards refugees but noted worrying trends. “Reading the newspapers, one easily detects a campaign that intends to identify refugees and asylum seekers as criminals, blaming them for many of the difficulties our society is suffering.” The letter also notes that the lack of legal rights for refugees who have lived in Zambia for years prevents them from rebuilding normal lives.

Paraguay’s Comité de Iglesias Para Ayudas de Emergencia (CIPAE) celebrated its 25th anniversary in late June. In June of 1976 representatives of three churches: Catholic, Disciples of Christ and the Protestant Church of Rio de la Plata came together to offer concrete expressions of solidarity to numerous people suffering persecution under the Stroessner dictatorship. Presently CIPAE continues its vocation of service to the neediest working in the areas of human rights and rural and urban mission, including work with refugees and repatriates.

JRS Zambia reports that the average stay in prison for refugees and asylum-seekers who do not face criminal charges has dropped to one month from five. This was revealed in an evaluation of a joint programme by JRS and the Archdiocese of Lusaka begun in May 2000 called "Christian Initiative for Refugees in Prison." One of the objectives of the programme is to speed up the process to release refugees and asylum-seekers who are detained but who do not face criminal charges. (JRS Dispatches no. 97)

4. International News In Brief

UNHCR's budget cuts, estimated at 14%, have had a particular impact on Africa with projected office closures in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Kuwait, Mali, Niger, Swaziland and Togo. While UNHCR will continue to work with internally displaced people in countries where it is requested to do so and where funds are made available, it will reduce or eliminate programmes for IDPs in other countries such as Angola. The budget cuts have also affected UNHCR staff with the projected elimination of almost 600 posts. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, has launched an intensive effort to secure more stable, long-term funding for governments with a focus on upholding UNHCR's core activities.

The UN Secretary-General endorsed recommendations made by the Special Coordinator of the Network on Internal Displacement to establish a small, non-operational Internal Displacement Unit within the office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to help ensure an effective inter-agency response to the assistance and protection needs of IDPs. The office will be directed by Mr. Kofi Asomani, formerly director of UNHCR's New York Liaison office. The report of the Special Coordinator highlights the continuing serious needs of the world's 50 million internally displaced people and the inadequacy of the international community's response to their assistance and protection needs. The report recommended a strengthened inter-agency response in the field, at headquarters and on the part of governments. Many NGOs expressed serious reservations about the recommendations, feeling that the small non-operational unit on IDPs within OCHA will not provide the needed coordination of international efforts on behalf of IDPs.

The US General Accounting Office has conducted a study into the adequacy of protection afforded internally displaced people by UN agencies and the US government. The study concludes that international organizations are unable to secure effective protection for IDPs and are cautious in challenging governments. There are gaps in field presence and protection coverage. There are no country-level coordination activities for IDP protection. Protection considerations are not incorporated into assistance programs. In spite of the fact that the UNHCR was tasked with developing a training module for protection, no training has in fact occurred. Although immediate assistance needs are reportedly being met, longer-term needs remain a challenge and there are gaps in assistance programming. The US government lacks an overall policy and a lead office for IDPs. The study concludes that despite the overall poor state of protection for IDPs, protection interventions can have a positive impact.

It now seems likely that the United Nations will abandon a longstanding proposal for an international conference on migration and development because it lacks support from member states. The proposed conference's agenda would likely include issues deemed sensitive by many countries, including xenophobia, sweatshops, sexual and other violence against female workers, the right to family reunion and minimum

wages. Only 78 of the UN's 289 member states have responded at all to three appeals made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan since 1995 soliciting support for the conference. Of the 78 responses, 47 were generally in favor of convening the proposed conference while 28 were opposed to it. Another 5 countries have expressed partial support. (IPS, 14 August 2001)

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children has launched a 10-Year Review of UNHCR's Programmes for Refugee Women. The review is designed to assess and make recommendations with regard to protection and programming in UNHCR and to consider the process by which gender is incorporated in administration and field operations. The results are expected to inform staff in protection and programme activities. Research teams will visit (or have visited) Ethiopia, Eritrea, Pakistan, Turkey and Zambia and will complete desk studies of initiatives in Central America as well as of the Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo Women's Initiatives. Preliminary findings indicate that gender mainstreaming remains more an objective than a reality; the involvement of refugee women in decision-making is lacking in many places; assistance and protection are intimately linked (as evident in the violence directed toward women while collecting firewood); UNHCR presence in the field is linked to protection of refugee women; and the trend to reduce UNHCR community services staff is having an impact on protection. The assessment will continue throughout the year. (Women's Commission, Statement to the UNHCR Standing Committee, June 2001, www.theirc.org/wcrwc)

Angelina Jolie has been named UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador for Refugees in recognition of her commitment to refugees. Since March, Ms. Jolie has made field visits to refugee camps in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Cambodia and Pakistan. The journal of her mission to Africa can be found on the website www.usaforunhcr.org.

UNHCR is soliciting information on good practices in refugee children's programming for the purpose of producing a practical guide for field staff. The aim is to share knowledge and experience of successful initiatives and lessons learned in order to help staff working with refugee children on the ground. NGOs are requested to provide suggestions of good practice examples of projects, strategies and situations involving refugee children; names of contacts in international, national or local organizations who may have suggestions or more information, and any frequently asked questions which should be addressed in such a guide. Contact Asmita Naik at UNHCR: Naik@unhcr.ch.

UNHCR has announced the appointment of Kamel Morjane of Tunisia as Assistant High Commissioner, UNHCR's third highest-ranking position. Ambassador Morjane, formerly Tunisia's representative to the United Nations in Geneva, has spent nearly 20 years with UNHCR. Most recently, he was the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Mojane replaces Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen of Denmark who has worked for UNHCR since 1973.

5. UNHCR's Global Consultations on International Protection

UNHCR's Global Consultations on International Protection consist of a series of meetings organized along three tracks, each of which involves different participants.

The first track will culminate in a Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Geneva on 12 December, at the invitation of the Swiss government. An advisory group of states parties has been set up to plan this Ministerial Meeting. All 140 States Parties to the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol have been invited to participate; other UN member states, UN, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have been invited as observers. The purpose of this high-level meeting will be:

- ◆ To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1951 convention
- ◆ To reaffirm, in a declaration to be adopted, the collective commitment of states parties to the full and effective implementation of the convention and protocol and the values they embody
- ◆ To encourage States to withdraw any reservations they may have in place regarding the convention and its protocol and to encourage states which have not yet acceded to the convention to do so
- ◆ To enable them to present their vision and to agree on a provisional Agenda for Protection, drawn up as a result of the Consultations

All participants in the Global Consultations agree that the Ministerial meeting should be substantive – that is, more than just a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Convention. Some NGOs had hoped that the Ministerial meeting might be the occasion to develop a mechanism by which states would regularly report on their adherence to the Convention to either a new independent body or to a regular review mechanism within UNHCR. However, governments have not been enthusiastic about this idea, balking at additional reporting requirements. As it now stands, while the question of a new supervisory mechanism has been discussed within the context of the 2nd track of the consultations (discussed below), this will not be on the agenda of the Ministerial meeting in December. Rather the Ministerial meeting is expected to endorse an “Agenda for Protection” which will guide UNHCR’s work in the coming years. This agenda will be based on the findings to date of the Consultation process.

The second track of the Consultations was intended to provide a forum to take stock of developments in refugee law and discuss issues of interpretation of the Convention. Four expert Roundtables were scheduled, each with about 30 participants drawn from governments of states parties to the convention, NGOs, academics, the judiciary, and the legal profession. The Roundtables and their subject matter are listed below.

May 2001	Lisbon	Exclusion and cessation clauses
July 2001	Cambridge	non-refoulement and supervision
September 2001	San Remo	Membership of a particular social group and questions around internal protection/relocation/flight alternative
November 2001	Geneva	illegal entry and family unity

Space precludes a description of the substantive discussions in the track 2 Roundtables, but the process has produced some excellent papers (such as the one on non-refoulement) and some far-ranging discussions (as in discussions about possible supervisory mechanisms.) NGO representatives have participated in all of the Roundtables. The background papers and reports of the Roundtables are all available on the UNHCR website.

The third track of the Global Consultations was intended to deal with the so-called “gaps” – protection policy issues not adequately covered by the 1951 Convention. It

was intended to provide concrete outcomes, which could include: identification of new and practical cooperative arrangements, tools to implement guidelines, guidance to States or to the UNHCR, Executive Committee conclusions and more formal standard setting. This third track follows the format of the UNHCR Executive Committee which means that states members of ExComm debate the issues at the Palais des Nations and where NGOs are present as observers.

Three meetings of the third track were scheduled for Geneva during 2001, with two additional meetings planned in 2002 (on the search for protection-based solutions and protection of refugee women and refugee children.)

The March 2001 meeting focused on “protection of refugees in mass influx situations,” with substantive discussions on the overall protection framework in situations of mass influx, the civilian character of asylum: separating armed elements from refugees, the practical aspects of physical and legal protection with regard to registration, and the mechanisms of international cooperation to share responsibilities and burdens in mass influx situations. The June 2001 meeting looked at the protection of refugees in the context of individual asylum systems, with particular emphasis on the asylum/migration nexus and fair procedures.

The September 2001 meeting will continue to examine asylum processes, focusing on issues relating to the reception of asylum-seekers, including standards of treatment as well as complementary forms of protection. An additional topic will be how to strengthen the protection capacity in host countries.

6. National News in Brief

- ***Africa***

Jesuit Refugee Service reports that the threat of forced repatriation again hangs over Burundian refugees in Tanzania. After receiving assurances in early June from the Tanzanian government that there would be no forced repatriation, the Burundian refugees learned in late June that the government decided to repatriate the refugees after receiving assurances from the Burundian government that their security would be assured. Meanwhile continual attacks are taking place throughout the country. (JRS Dispatches, no. 95)

The situation in Sudan is becoming more difficult due to reports of fighting in western Bahr el Ghazal between government forces and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) which has caused massive displacement. An estimated 30,000-50,000 people have fled the fighting and are in need of emergency relief. Adding to the difficult situation is the food shortage caused by three years of severe drought. According to the World Food Programme, 600,000 Sudanese are affected by the drought. (ACT, 22 June 2001).

The Kenyan government has deployed a contingent of security personnel along the border with Tanzania after Tanzanian refugees started streaming into the country to escape inter-clan fighting. Hundreds of people are said to have crossed into Kenya. (BBC Nairobi, 14 August 01)

A recent report by Human Rights Watch, Refugees Still at Risk: Continuing Refugee Protection Concerns in Guinea, outlines the serious risks to security experienced by refugees in Guinea. The report details harassment of refugees near camps,

checkpoints, cases of refugees who were tortured or beaten to death in detention, the lack of information, and arbitrary arrests. The report notes that many Guineans blame the refugees for the conflict at the border and are often hostile towards them. While Human Rights Watch welcomed the process of relocating camps away from the border, they urged UNHCR to pay closer attention to abuses being committed against the refugees by the Guinean authorities and civilians hostile to the refugee presence. (Full report available from www.hrw.org/reports/2001/guinea/).

Refugees International reports that staff working on sexual and gender-based violence in Tanzania face threats, intimidation, and attacks. "Despite the official stance by UNHCR and NGOs to promote women's human rights and fight violence against women, on-the-ground support for staff or for survivors of violence is limited and at times not accessible." The report further states that "the lack of understanding of the most basic lessons of domestic violence and women's human rights by many refugee staff and local supervisors, coupled with inadequate protection of staff working to promote women's human rights, indicates minimal commitment and support by the UNHCR and their partner NGOs to ending gender-based violence and promoting the status of women." (the report is available from ri@refintl.org).

Zambia reports a steady stream of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in spite of the fact that a ceasefire has generally held in the DRC. Zambia shelters more than 250,000 refugees, mostly from the DRC and Angola.

The government of Zimbabwe has refused permission to the International Committee of the Red cross to set up refugee camps for black farm labourers forced off their land in the looting and occupations by militant supporters of Robert Mugabe. The fleeing workers initially camped outside police stations and government offices but armed police moved families on.

- *Asia*

In late July, UNHCR announced that 72 Vietnamese hilltribe people seeking asylum in Cambodia did not qualify for protection and would be returned to Vietnam. These individuals were part of a group of nearly 400 asylum-seekers living in makeshift refugee camps in remote northeastern Cambodia after fleeing a government crackdown in Vietnam's central highlands earlier this year. UNHCR announced that Vietnam has tentatively agreed to a repatriation plan for these individuals. Human rights groups have protested the return of these people.

According to *Le Monde*, the recent decision that the North Korean family who took refuge in the offices of the UNHCR in Beijing were finally allowed to leave China for South Korea is indicative of a much larger problem of North Koreans in China. Aid organizations believe that up to 300,000 North Koreans cross into China. Many of these migrants cross back into North Korea regularly although about 100,000 live secretly in the border area. Last year 312 North Koreans were granted asylum in South Korea and another 140 have been given asylum this year. While the North Koreans who flee to China are certainly migrants from hunger, the fate that awaits them in North Korea if they are caught turns them into persecutees. (The Guardian Weekly, 12 July 2001)

Another 2,300 Afghans returned to their homeland in mid-August as part of an ongoing voluntary repatriation programme. This brings the total number of people repatriated between 1 July and mid-August to 11,000. More than 200,000 Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan returned to western and central Afghanistan last year under a voluntary repatriation programme monitored by UNHCR.

In August, ACT members in Afghanistan, Christian Aid, Church World Service and Norwegian Church Aid have expressed strong concerns about the deteriorating situation in the country. The current drought, the worst since 1971/72 affects almost half the country with the north and northwest being particularly hard-hit. The World Food Programme estimates that 4-5 million of the country's 21 million people need food assistance at present and up to 8 million will need assistance this winter. Among the most needy are the 800,000 drought and war displaced. Afghans already make up one of the largest refugee populations in the world (2 million in Pakistan, 1.5 million in Iran) but in the last year, a further 1 million people have been displaced as a result of the drought and on-going conflict in Afghanistan. 700,000 of those remain within Afghanistan. (ACT Alert, 10.8.01)

- **Europe**

The International Secretariat of the World Organization of Torture reports that in July more than 205 Africans, including refugees were arrested in Turkey. The arrested Africans were detained in inhumane conditions and were allegedly forced to sign a paper in Turkish stating that they came from Greece and wanted to return to that country. After seven days in detention, most were deported to the border zone between Turkey and Greece and forced to go to Greece. They were left in a swamp area without assistance. The Africans were then arrested at the Greek border where they were detained for one night before being sent back to Turkey again, from when they were again sent back to Greece. The Greek authorities decided to cooperate with UNHCR to conduct a search for immigrants and refugees who still might be trapped at the border zone. For more information, see www.omct.org.

A newly-created Center for Voluntary Returns and Development has been established in Belgium by agreement of the government and the IOM. The main purpose of the center is to promote the voluntary return of illegal residents coming from non-EU member states and of asylum-seekers. The Centre will provide minimal cash assistance for voluntary returnees towards their rehabilitation and development in their country of origin or in a third country. NGOs have serious concerns about the scheme, particularly about the degree of "voluntariness" of the returns and the monitoring.

A British court has ruled that the government's Home Office breached the rights of thousands of asylum-seekers at the Oakington detention centre near Cambridge. Around 7,500 asylum-seekers have been forced to stay at Oakington since the centre opened last March. All could expect to win several thousand pounds in damages.

IOM has conducted research on trafficking in women from Armenia to the United Arab Emirates. The study, based on interviews with 59 Armenian women who recently returned from the UAE and Turkey shows that almost half had been engaged in prostitution. The interviews concluded that the main factor pushing women to fall into the hands of traffickers is the lack of job opportunities although 25% of those interviewed are university graduates and 57% had a secondary education. With almost 90% of the respondents coming from three cities in southern Armenia, trafficking is more an urban than a rural phenomenon. Children in state residential institutions, such as orphanages are a high-risk group for prostitution at home and abroad.

Human Rights Watch reported in July that trafficking of women into Greece for forced prostitution is a serious human rights problem. Human Rights Watch's specific

concerns include: the absence in Greece of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation; few persecutions for trafficking under existing criminal laws; the lack of witness protection programs for trafficking victims to facilitate their participation in prosecutions; the absence of government-sponsored services for all trafficked women; the on-going detention and prosecution of trafficking victims; and the continuing complicity of police officers in the trafficking of women. In May the Greek government established a working group to develop a national action plan on trafficking. HRW's 40 page memorandum on trafficking in Greece is available from www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/greece/index.htm.

- **Latin America**

The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants will visit Mexico in mid-September, beginning with a visit to the US-Mexico border. Given the fact that Mexico is a country of origin and transit as well as a host country for migrants, NGOs have asked the Special Rapporteur to visit other regions as well. The Special Rapporteur will meet with migrants, NGOs, academics and activists. For information on the visit, contact sinfronteras@laneta.apc.org.

7. Upcoming Meetings

UNHCR will hold a Refugee Forum from 14-16 September in Rouen, France entitled 'The Refugee Perspective? Which will feed into the Global Consultations process that UNHCR launched this year in the hope of re-invigorating the 1951 Refugee Convention. For more information, contact Deborah Curtis, International Protection Project manager at deborah.curtis@refugeecouncil.org.uk.

ELENA, the European Legal Network on Asylum is offering an International Introductory Course on Refugee and Asylum Law from 13-16 September in Sarajevo. The course is aimed at legal counsellors and lawyers from across Europe who are involved in refugee and asylum cases and will include lectures by James Hathaway and Walter Kalin. (For more information, contact Geri Mckenna at gmckenna@ecre.org.)

The Europe-wide Consultation of Organizations of Filipinos (ECOFIL) will meet in the Hague from 14-16 September with representatives of Filipino organizations from throughout Europe. With the theme "Strengthening the Filipino Community in Europe," the consultation hopes to identify specific campaigns and issues and areas of advocacy and networking among the participating organizations. For further information, contact MIGRANTE-Europe@zonnet.nl.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Reliefweb are organizing a Symposium on Best Practices in Humanitarian Information Exchange to be held in Geneva from 17-18 September (invitation only) and 19-20 September (open registration.) The Symposium will review lessons learned from past and current humanitarian information activities and promote best practices to improve the dissemination of information used in the coordination of emergency relief programmes. The first 2 days of the meeting are for professional practitioners who will work in small working groups on particular issues. The larger plenary meeting will be open to professionals working for international organizations, governments, NGOs, research groups, the media and the private sector. Additional information available from www.reliefweb.int/symposium.

An International Conference on Transfers and Use of Remittances: Productive and Saving Projects will be held in Mexico from 3-5 October. The meeting is organized by Sin Fronteras, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the University of Zacatecas. More information is available from www.laneta.apc.org/sinfronteras/.

The Council of Europe is organizing a conference on "Irregular Migration and the Dignity of Migrants, Cooperation in the Mediterranean" to be held from 3-4 October in Athens. This meeting is organized for governments. The church-based Amman process may have had an impact on these meeting, in particular in the choice of wording and the theme. Rather than "illegal migrants," the term is "irregular migrants." The conference will focus not only on border control and fighting criminal trafficking, but also on the "dignity of migrants."

The Center for Research and Special Projects of the Universidad Externado de Colombia and the Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies will organize an International Congress on "International Migrations: a world in Motion" from 29-30 October 2000 in Bogotá, Colombia. For further information, contact africa@uexternado.edu.col.

The World Evangelical Fellowship will convene a Consultation on the "Refugee Highway" in Izmir, Turkey from 15-20 November. The consultation will bring together representatives of evangelical groups to look at new ways of working with refugees. The consultation is seen as the first step in the formation of an international network of refugee ministries.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is organizing a series of four thematic and practice-oriented seminars on the topic of protection of the civilian population between mid-November 2001 and May 2002. These seminars, known as the Ecogia Protection Seminars, are intended for professionals from middle or upper management with experience in conflict situations and are intended to help the participants to understand the conceptual framework of protection activities in conflict situations; to identify the responsibilities of humanitarian and human rights organizations with regard to protecting civilians; to review possible strategies for dealing with protection issues; and to consider how the various organizations involved can implement these strategies in a complementary manner. Further information is available on their website: www.icrc.org/ecogiaprotesem.

An International Migrant Conference on Labor-Export and Forced Migration amidst Globalization will be convened from 4-9 November in the Philippines. Organized by Migrante International, the meeting is intended to be a constructive dialogue between im/migrant organizations and migrant-serving institutions and agencies, advocate churches and individuals. The conference will also include a Roundtable Discussion on Migrant Advocacy. (for further information, contact migranteintl@pacific.net.ph.)

The University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia is organizing an international conference from 6-9 December on the 50th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention. The aim of the conference is to stimulate vigorous debate among experts in the refugee arena. The three themes of the conference will be: resettlement and settlement in developed countries, the concept of asylum and the treatment of asylum-seekers and the protection of refugees and IDPs in camps, repatriation and settlement in developing countries. For further information, see the website at www.crr.unsw.edu.au/Conference.html, or contact cenrefre@unsw.edu.au.

The European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) will hold its Biannual General Meeting in Brussels on 8-9 December in Brussels. ECRE will also hold a Public Meeting “Europe for Refugees” on 10 December which will precede the EU Laeken Summit in Brussels on 14-16 December.

8. Past Meetings

The World Conference against Racism and associated NGO meeting took place amidst considerable controversy in Durban, South Africa. The final Programme of Action (which is not yet available for distribution) includes more than 30 paragraphs about refugees and migrants. The World Council of Churches in its submission called for the World Conference to respond to the growing xenophobia against migrants and refugees and to uphold international standards for protection of their rights. Early reports from the WCAR indicate that the issue of the Palestine-Israel conflict and the question of reparations for damages resulting from slavery dominated the meeting. A fuller report on the World Conference will be included in the next issue of *Uprooted People*.

From 20-23 June, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Women’s Commission on Refugee Women and Children, organized a consultation with Refugee Women under the theme “Respect Our Rights: Partnership for Equality.” The meeting, which brought together 50 refugee women from all regions was the culmination of a process of some 25 meetings with refugee women carried out in many field offices from March-May. The women, many of whom came directly from refugee camps, spent two days together discussing common concerns around safety and security and livelihoods. The third day of the meeting consisted of a dialogue between the women and senior staff of UNHCR. The consultation revealed that the needs of refugee women are far from met but also demonstrated that refugee women in all regions are taking many concrete actions to address these needs.

The International Organization for Migration organized a special meeting on “Some Legal Aspects of Migration” at the Annual Ministerial Session of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization, held in New Delhi between 20 and 25 June. The 160 delegates, ministers and government officials from the 56 member and observer states initiated a dialogue on aspects of migration such as labour migration, the rights of migrant workers and trafficking of women and children. A resolution adopted by the AALCO Member States urges members to adopt a suitable legal framework for the protection of the legal rights of migrant workers and to consider ratifying the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The legal protection of migrant workers was approved as an agenda item at the next AALCO session.

The Reach-out Project organized a training workshop in Belgrade from 1-3 August with the support of ICVA and Catholic Relief Services for 33 participants from 21 agencies. About a decade following the eruption of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia, about 483,000 refugees remain in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The overwhelming majority of the refugees, some 451,980 or 95%, reside in Serbia. In addition there are several hundred thousand internally displaced persons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The workshop included an overview of the global migration context, the interrelationship between population movements and refugees situations, the basic principles of the international regime to protect refugees, and a

historical overview of national asylum policies and UNHCR's protection activities in FRY was presented. Presentations on voluntary repatriation safeguards and local settlement guidelines were included as well as work in small groups on particular cases. Another Reach-out training workshop was organized in Nairobi from 28-30 August and the next workshop will take place in Cotonou, Benin from 12-14 September

The Swiss government has launched what is referred to as the "Berne Initiative" or the International Symposium on Migration which is a process of dialogue and analyses on international migration policy. This initiative brings together representatives from countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as international organizations, experts and representatives of civil society. Meeting in June 2001, the meeting discussed global migration challenges; common interests, present instruments and institutions and their gaps; implications of migration for social and economic development in receiving and sending countries; and the fundamental cooperation principles needed.

A workshop on Combating Irregular Migration, Trafficking and Smuggling was held in Beijing which was organized jointly by the Government of China and IOM. This workshop brought together government officials from 15 countries in Asia and Oceania and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. The seminar discussed numerous issues of irregular migration and considered the risk management framework as a tool for identifying problems in the management of migration issues.

An Expert Round Table on Migration, Refugees and Xenophobia in Africa was held in Pretoria in July to analyze and identify remedies to xenophobia and discrimination against migrants and refugees on the African continent. The Round Table was co-convened by the Africa Institute of South Africa, IOM and the South African Human Rights Commission to contribute an African perspective on this issue to the World Conference against Racism. Among the recommendations of the roundtable was that a distinction needs to be made between xenophobia and other forms of articulation of social difference. Not all social difference or contestation for space is necessarily driven by xenophobia. The differential interconnection of racism and xenophobia should be understood and not all manifestations of xenophobia are racially structured. However, the particular and pernicious nature of racism and racial discrimination should be highlighted. Participants also agreed that the sponsoring organizations should form a continuation team to organize further consultations and widely disseminate the results.

8. Resources

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has announced the formation of a new Migration Policy Institute, the only independent policy institution in North America dedicated to the study of migration and refugee trends and policies worldwide, and their consequences. This new Washington-based think tank is an outgrowth of the Carnegie Endowment's Migration Policy Programme. Former Carnegie associates Kathleen Newland and Demetrios Papademetriou will serve as executive directors of the new institution. For further information, contact the Institute at info@migrationpolicy.org.

The Refugee Studies Centre of Oxford University in collaboration with the Asian Research Centre for Migration is offering a Southeast Asia Regional School in Forced Migration from 3-13 December 2001. The school will include sections on the nature, consequences and responses to forced migration. It is intended for senior and middle managers involved with decision-making in Southeast Asia. Contact sea.school@geh.ox.ac.uk or ratchada.i@chula.ac.th.

The University "La Sapienza" in Rome will start a new Master's program in Migrant and Refugee Issues: Training, Communication and Social Integration which will last one year and consist of 1500 hours of classes. Some scholarships will be available for migrants and refugees. Applicants must have a university degree and fluency in Italian, French or English. For further information, contact the secretariat at macioti@mail.uniroma1.it.

Several books have recently been co-published by UNHCR, the InterAmerican Institute for Human Rights and groups in specific Central American countries. Reports of three meetings held in July 1998, November 1999 and September 2000 called Encuentros Centroamericanos de Movilidad Humana: Migrante y Refugiado are now available. The report of a July 1998 regional seminar on Protección de las Personas Refugadas en la nueva realidad centramericana was published by UNHCR, the InterAmerican Institute of Human Rights and the Foreign Ministry of El Salvador in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has published Strengthening Protection in War: A Search for Professional Standards which summarizes the highlights of deliberations in a series of four workshops on protecting civilians in armed conflict and situations of internal violence. The book includes a discussion of the framework of protection, operational themes on issues such as impunity, reconciliation and withdrawal, and dealing with the environment (i.e. media, military and donors). Available from ICRC, Central Tracing Agency and Protection Division, 19, av. de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland, icrc@icrc.org or see the website at www.icrc.org.

ECRE, in collaboration with Asylum Coordination Austria is conducting a project to examine the situation of elderly refugees in the European Union and European countries aspiring for EU membership and promoting the reception and integration of elderly refugees. Presently the project is collecting information on the actual situation of further refugees. For further information, contact asylkoordination@t0.or.at.

Minority Rights Group International has published Indonesia: Regional Conflicts and State Terror by Mieke Kooistra which provides an overview of the historical background to the current conflicts and focuses in detail on two of the main regional conflicts, in Aceh and Maluku as well as the nature of conflicts in other parts of Indonesia, such as West Papua, Sulawesi and West Kalimantan. Available from www.minorityrights.org.

Canada's periodical Refuge has published "New Directions for Refugee Policy in an Era of Globalization" which includes articles on UNHCR's Global Consultations, Trafficking, expedited removal in the US, access, asylum and atrocities. Its most recent issue focuses on "UNHCR: the First Fifty Years" and includes articles on a range of issues related to UNHR and the 1951 convention. Available from Refuge, Centre for Refugee Studies, Suite 322 York Lanes, York University, 4700 Keele Street Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3 or by e-mail refuge@yorku.ca www.yorku.ca/crs/refuge.htm.

Save the Children has published Child Trafficking in Albania by Daniel Renton. Based on over 100 interviews in Albania, the study concludes that trafficking has been and continues to be widespread in the country and the majority of victims are children. The study notes that the situation is complicated as there is a steady rise in emigration for voluntary prostitution abroad to escape poverty and bleak futures in Albania and the line between voluntary and forced prostitution is sometimes difficult to determine. In Italy and Greece where there are estimated to be 15,000 and 6,000 Albanian prostitutes respectively, Albanian girls are subjected to extreme levels of danger, violence and sexual exploitation. Last year, the Italian Ministry of Interior reported that 168 foreign prostitutes had been killed and the majority of them were Albanians or Nigerians murdered by their pimps. Those who do return to Albania (many are deported from Italy daily) receive little assistance. There is not a single official shelter or welfare programme available to them and the state provides no security or protection. An alarming consequence of the fear of trafficking in Albania is a dramatic decrease in the number of girls over the age of 14 attending high school. The publication is available online at www.savethechildren.org.

Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy is a 28 minute video produced by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights with Sasha Khokha, Ulla Nilsen, Jon Fromer and Francisco Herrera. For a complete summary and ordering information see www.nnirr.org/get/get_video.html.

The US State department's first annual Report on Trafficking in Persons looks at all countries where a "significant number" of victims have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and slavery. The report evaluates 82 countries and places them in one of three tiers. The first tier is for countries which fully comply with the minimum standards set out in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act which was passed in the United States in 2000. The second tier is for countries that do not comply with the Act's minimum standards but are making serious efforts to do so. The third tier is for countries which do not meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance. A total of 23 countries were placed in the third tier: Albania, Bahrain, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sudan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. If these or other countries are still in tier three when the 2003 report is issued, they may be subject to certain sanctions, including the termination of non-humanitarian, non-trade related assistance. The US may also oppose loans from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Human rights organizations have questioned some of the country designations. The report is available online at www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/tiprpt/2001 and Human Rights Watch's response to the report is also available at www.hrw.org/press/2001/07/traffick-0712.htm.

The website for 18 December (International Migrants' Day) includes a number of useful materials, including the Campaigners' Handbook for the Migrants' Rights Convention (in English, Spanish and French); a paper on the Inter-American Human Rights System: Protection of the Rights of Migrants (in Spanish and English); sections on regional initiatives and country legislation; an international calendar of migrant issues; news and NGO press releases; urgent actions and other news and papers of interest. See www.december18.net.

Hidden in the Home: Abuse of Domestic Workers with Special Visas in the United States, looks at the exploitation and vulnerability of domestic workers who come to

the United States on special visas. These visas legally tie the workers to their employers; if they leave, they lose their immigration status and can face deportation. There is no US government department or agency monitoring the migrant domestic worker visa programs. Some 10 percent of the cases reviewed by Human Rights Watch were trafficking victims. (www.hrw.org/reports/2001/usadom/)

Jesuit Refugee Service commissioned research on The Current Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya where at least 2,500 people were killed in the Rift Valley and the Eastern Provinces between 1992 and 1998. 90 percent of respondents displaced by land-related ethnic violence that was politically instigated said they feared to return to their home due to ongoing hostility and severe tension between communities. The study found a lack of political will to resolve land disputes and an “official blindness” to the needs of the internally displaced population. Access to information on internally displaced people is restricted. (see www.jesref.org)

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has set up a website at www.w-alliance.ch which contains all the basic documents of the Alliance (in Spanish, French, English and German) as well as the Update, 2000 Annual Report, List of Participants and other materials. The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance was established in December 2000 to enable more effective advocacy on global issues by the broad ecumenical family. Priority areas for advocacy for the next few years are HIV/AIDS and global trade.

The Women’s Commission on Refugee Women and Children has published Innocents in Jail: INS Moves Refugee Women from Krome to Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center, Miami. The report assesses conditions for women asylum seekers at Turner Guilford Knight, a Miami-Dade county jail to which the INS moved all female detainees in the Miami district, following widespread allegations of sexual abuse at the Krone Service Center. The study found that the women at TGK are treated as criminals and locked up in cells with limited access to lawyers, family members and translation services. They are subjected to frequent head counts, solitary confinement, handcuffing and strip searches. This report is one in an ongoing series of reports by the Women’s Commission documenting the treatment received by women and children asylum seekers in the United States. (see www.womenscommission.org).

In Search of Sunlight: Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand is an assessment of the situation of Burmese migrant workers who come to Thailand in search of work and to “see sunlight.” The report includes the stories of Burmese people – about their flight, conditions along the Thai-Burma border and in immigrant communities close to Bangkok. (Available for US\$17 plus 15% shipping from Friends without Borders, PO Box 180, Chiang Mai University P.O., Chiang Mai 50202, Thailand. Aurora@kse.th.com).

Both current and back issues of the Forced Migration Review editions are now available online from www.fmreview.org/mags1.html. The hard copy of the publication is distributed free of charge to refugees, IDPs, students and all residents of countries of the south not receiving northern-level salaries. Subscriptions for subscribers in northern countries are US\$43. For further information, fmr@queen-elizabeth-house.oxford.ac.uk.

PICUM, the Platform on Undocumented Migrants, has opened a new website at www.picum.org.

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR released a new CD entitled “Refugee Voices: Building Bridges” which includes 14 songs by African refugee

musicians. The songs are moving and focus on both the causes of refugee movements and about the feelings of refugees.

Migraciones is the first periodical published in Spain which specializes on studies on migratory movements and their consequences. It is edited by the Instituto Universitario de Estudios sobre Migraciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid. The periodical includes reports of research studies, chronologies, experiences, news and references. Available for 3.700 pts per year from the university (info.migraciones@iem.upco.es)

The Center for Immigration Studies operates two free e-mail information services on immigration news. CISNEWS is a daily list of full-text items. "This Week in Immigration" is a less-comprehensive weekly roundup of links to immigration news, delivered Friday afternoons. The list also includes the same occasional postings on new publications and upcoming events as go to CISNEWS. To subscribe to either list, go to: www.cis.org/mail_login.html. For questions, contact center@cis.org.
