FORCED MIGRATION review

9
December 2000

published by
the Refugee Studies Centre in association with the Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project

special feature on

Gender and displacement

plus

- Children in adversity
- UN role in the security of NGO staff
- Southern NGO's view of ExCom
- Accountability in the media

Updates on • Afghanistan • Malukas • Dams • Reangs • Detention of asylum seekers • Appointment of UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement

- *News* from the Refugee Studies Centre and the Global IDP Project

- Conferences and publications

Forced Migration Review
provides a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between researchers, refugees and internally displaced people, and those who work with them. It is published three times a year in English, Spanish and Arabic by the Refugee Studies Centre/University of Oxford in association with the Global IDP Project/Norwegian Refugee Council. The Spanish translation, *Revista de Migraciones Forzosas,* is produced by HEGOA in Bilbao, Spain.

Editors
Marion Couldrey & Dr Tim Morris
Subscriptions Assistant
Sharon Ellis

Forced Migration Review
Refugee Studies Centre,
Queen Elizabeth House,
21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK
Email: fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1865 280700
Fax: +44 (0)1865 270721

Global IDP Project
Chemin Moïse-Duboule 59
CH-1209 Geneva, Switzerland
Email: idpsurvey@nrc.ch
Tel: +41 22 788 8085
Fax: +41 22 788 8086

Subscription rates
Individuals £15/US$26 per annum
Institutions £25/US$43 per annum
FREE for: residents of developing countries, students/unwaged and refugees/IDPs
See page 43.

Forthcoming features
April 2001: UNHCR/50th Anniversary
August 2001: Return to Peace

Website
www.fmreview.org

printed by LDI Ltd on environmentally friendly paper

ISSN 1460-9819

Refugee Studies Centre

from the editors

from the editors

By the time you read this, David Turton will have retired as Director of the Refugee Studies Centre. David was a driving force behind this publication's transformation in 1998 from RPN newsletter to Forced Migration Review and we have greatly appreciated his input, both as Director and as a member of our Editorial Advisory Board. Stephen Castles starts as the new Director of the RSC on 1 February.

Corinne Owen

Judy El-Bushra, of the British NGO ACORD, has worked closely with us as Guest Editor in preparing the feature section of this issue with its focus on Gender and Displacement. If you would like to respond to any of the points raised or add new ones, please write (no more than 700 words) to us by mid February. Our contact details are given opposite.

We would like to express our thanks to UNICEF for their sponsorship of this issue of Forced Migration Review.

Our next issue (issue 10, due out April 2001) will include a feature on UNHCR and the 50th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention, guest-edited by Professor BS Chimni. Would you like to write a short piece for us? We would particularly welcome contributions from NGO and UN staff in the field, and from displaced people. How do the successes and limitations of both the Convention and UNHCR affect displaced people in the country in which you work? How do they affect you and your work? What do you feel about UNHCR – its mandate and its relationship to the other UN agencies, to governments, to NGOs and to displaced people? What is there to celebrate? What would you change? What should we learn from history and what developments would you like to see - or which do you predict - in the next 10, 20 or 50 years?

Maximum length of written contributions: 3,000 words. Short opinion pieces or pithy exhortations are also welcomed! Don't worry if English is not your first language – we are more than happy to edit contributions. Email us today with your ideas (fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or write to us at the address opposite.

The August 2001 issue will be on Return to Peace, looking at: peace and the restoration of confidence; justice; post-conflict power structures; reconciliation and promotion of historical and cultural understanding; and separation or integration of communities. Ideally, we would like to publish a mix of 'overview' articles and 'local' reports and examples, including information on appropriate models, good practice and recommendations for action/follow-up. Please contact us as soon as possible with your suggestions for contributions, contributors, reports and examples.

With our very best wishes for 2001.

Marion Couldrey and Tim Morris
Editors

Writing for FMR? Here are our submission deadlines:

Issue	*Articles by*	*Information items by*
10 (UNHCR)	1 February 2001	1 March 2001
11 (Return to Peace)	1 June 2001	1 July 2001

Front cover: *Rwandese refugees in Zaire wait for water distribution in Kibuma camp 1994.* UNHCR / B.Press

contents

Gender and forced migration: editorial

by Judy El-Bushra

This issue of *Forced Migration Review* comes at a time when Gender and Development as a body of theoretical and professional practice is at a critical point in its evolution.

Gender and Development (GAD) takes as its starting point the idea that the behaviour of men and women is conditioned by social and cultural expectations, rather than by innate or natural differences between the two sexes. These assumed differences result in injustice when they are reflected in differential access to decision-making power or when they carry with them discriminatory attitudes and values.

Assumptions and values about men's and women's roles and behaviours condition men's attitudes towards other men and women's towards other women, as well as the relations between women and men. Assumptions about gender differences operate not only between individuals but also within institutions, including the household, the community, the state, schools and places of employment, including development agencies themselves. It is these institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination, and it is these which must be challenged if gender injustice is to be transformed into equality of treatment, opportunity and rights.

Gender and Development at the crossroads

Gender and Development arose out of a concern that development policies and interventions were tending to take men as being the 'norm', ignoring women's own needs and aspirations and their capacity to act independently. In doing so they were also endangering patterns of food security, wealth creation, markets, socialization practices, cultural expression and political processes by devaluing women's critical contributions to them. The main aim of GAD policy has been to transform the position of women from one of subordination to one of equality, by recognizing the inessential and transitory nature of the assumptions which underpin that subordination.

Although this aim has been widely adopted by development and humanitarian agencies and by their donors over the last 10 to 15 years, the field of gender and development continues to be a contested one. It is currently under challenge from three separate, though linked, trends. These are: the debate on men and gender, the challenge of making women's rights a reality, and the broadening of focus away from a narrow, economistic view of development. The articles in this issue, though written from the specific perspective of gender and forced migration, reflect these debates and contribute to them.

i. Where do men fit?

The first challenge is a concern to articulate, more firmly and actively than in the past, the position of men within gender-analytical frameworks. This is a reaction to GAD's almost exclusive preoccupation over the last ten years or more with women's needs, interests and rights. If 'gender' implies a web of relationships between women and men, old and young, powerful and powerless, should men not figure, integrally and equally, in the analysis of these relationships? As Simon Turner and Cathrine Brun indicate in this issue, there may be negative consequences for both women and men if they are not. Giving preference to women in assistance programmes may contribute to eroding men's role (as protectors, providers and decision makers, for example) and hence their social position and self-esteem but still not challenge the dominant gender ideology in which men's and women's roles are both viewed as 'natural'. The situation of displacement is an opportunity for renegotiating gender relations (as well as relationships between generations): an opportunity which may be missed through prioritizing support to either women or men. To make the most of this opportunity, men and women must both 'participate as active partners' (in Brun's phrase) in this renegotiation.

Other related questions, currently reverberating through assistance-providing agencies, are also echoed in the articles in this issue. Does the stress on women prevent us from recognizing discrimination by men against men (older versus younger men, for example, or men from different classes or ethnicities), women against women (when women collude in promoting gender discrimination against each other) and women against men? Can women's rights be supported within a context of broader developmental and humanitarian goals or do men inevitably have to lose when women gain? In short, where do men fit within a gender approach to development?

ii. Has development promoted or undermined women's rights?

The second trend is a questioning of what GAD has indeed achieved for women. The 'mainstreaming' of gender approaches in development at the level of policy has often led to greater awareness

of women's needs, and a greater level of investment in supporting these. Yet the outcomes have often been palliative in nature, providing women with, for example, additional income, increased mobility or access to services while not confronting the ideological basis of discrimination against them. They have often failed to take into account the power relations in which women are enmeshed, or to give true recognition to women's strengths and capacity to act on their own account.

The attention women have received from development agencies and policy makers has often been too little, too late and too superficial to promote the exercise of their rights. A recent reflection of this state of affairs has been evidenced in the Beijing + 5 consultation process. The consultation (as Srilakshmi Gururaja points out) concluded that, five years since the landmark Beijing International Conference on Women took place, barriers still remain in implementing its provisions.

Assistance providers, both governmental and non-governmental or multilateral, have often been dilatory in approaching abuses of women's rights - indeed of human rights generally. Often (see, for example, Peter Mwangi Kangwaja's remarks on sexual abuse of Sudanese women in Kenya) these are dismissed as belonging in the realm of 'culture' and hence beyond the scope of assistance programmes. This may be true even where protection is part of the organization's mandate. The politics of agency survival within host countries can dampen the inclination to challenge discriminatory ideologies. However, the agencies concerned may thereby lay themselves open to charges of discrimination through neglect.

While assistance providers have often found it relatively easy to address women's needs as vulnerable victims of war, they have often baulked at supporting women in their capacity to be active shapers of their own lives ('seeing women as survivors not victims', in Gururaja's phrase). Why should this be so?

Like Kangwaja, Heaven Crawley (addressing the question from the perspective of asylum claims from women and how they are handled) implies that immigration officials, too, are influenced by their own ethnocentric understanding of gender when dealing with claims from Southern women whom they assume to be poor and badly educated, incapable of confronting actively the social constructions in which their lives are framed.

iii. A deeper and more inclusive gender analysis framework

The third trend is a growing appreciation that increasing women's access to economic security and to sources of income, long the focus of GAD projects, is too narrow a goal. Not only does it not take into account men's gendered roles, as suggested above, but it also fails to recognize the full range of women's contributions to society and of their needs and interests.

Understanding and promoting sustainable livelihoods involves recognizing and supporting women's roles in agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce and in the distribution and consumption of food and other benefits within the household and community. Despite decades of evidence of women's contribution to food production globally, development and humanitarian agencies still tend to focus their investment in crops and production systems managed by men. Similarly, the technical, social, economic and political skills which women apply when contributing to complex systems of food security are often overlooked. A relatively under-researched area in this context is women's contribution to the maintenance of genetic diversity of crops and production systems in post-disaster contexts (see Monica Trujillo's article).

conflict and disasters impact differently on men and women

More broadly, agencies have only relatively recently begun to acknowledge that the non-material aspects of people's lives play as great a part as their economic success. These non-material aspects include their personal and sexual relationships, their reproductive and mental health, their self-esteem and the respect they receive from others, and their capacity for political involvement and activism. Gururaja's overview describes a number of projects taking this broad perspective. The existence of such projects is evidence of progress away from a humanitarian model concerned mainly with shelter, food and income but still falls short of constituting a comprehensive model.

The gender dimensions of forced migration

Looking at forced migration from a gender perspective provides insight into a number of issues relating to the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance. As Gururaja suggests, conflict and disasters impact differently on men and women. It cannot be assumed that their needs and interests are the same, nor that those of women or of men are the same everywhere. A gender approach then requires project planning to be based on an understanding of the varied contexts in which interventions are implemented. An important conclusion emerging from this collection is the danger of taking a broad-brush approach to the design of assistance programmes and of deploying models and guidelines which are insensitive to local contexts or uninformed by research and analysis of these contexts.

The articles in this issue have relevance for four important questions in particular: the impact of interventions on processes of social change, the management of camps for refugees and displaced persons, sexual violence against women, and the implementation of international conventions and guidelines on the rights of (especially women) refugees and IDPs.

i. Assistance programmes and their impact on social change

How do gender roles and relationships shift under the pressure of rapid upheavals? Some general trends can be observed: there is a tendency for women to take on more and different roles as providers and protectors of families, to draw confidence and determination from these experiences, and to develop their political consciousness and agency. On the other hand, men often find themselves at a loose end, unable to re-establish their position as respected decision makers.

This tendency for women to take on new roles is often given conscious encouragement by aid providers, as demonstrated by the Burundi and Sri Lanka cases described here, in the hope that by doing so the opportunity can be taken to build more equitable power relations in future. Is such optimism justified? The cases quoted in this issue throw doubt on the capacity of the international community to influence gender

relations in a positive and lasting way. For example, advancing women's interests at a superficial, women-focused level which fails to challenge overall paradigms of gender difference leaves women with new roles to fulfil but no institutional leverage to fulfil them effectively, as both Turner and Brun show.

What is also clear from these accounts, however, is that post-crisis interventions are equally unlikely to be neutral in their impact on the changing position and condition of men and women, and may indeed reinforce patriarchal institutions (as Kagwanja describes) which constrain women's human rights for protection. To the extent that official technical assistance ignores production systems managed by women (as with the agricultural systems described by Trujillo) this may have long-term consequences for both food security and women's capacity to manage their own affairs. Gururaja points to an important conclusion: the necessity of social and gender research into displaced communities as a basis for planning and implementation of assistance programmes.

ii. Agency and participation and the challenge to management

Management of assistance programmes is influenced critically by the attitudes and values of the humanitarian profession. While protection of the vulnerable is a major factor in humanitarian policy and in the motivation of agency personnel, this needs at the same time to be balanced by a recognition that displaced people are individuals with their own histories, skills, strengths and capacities, and with sets of personal and social relations which crisis will not easily erode.

The notion of vulnerability has figured highly in humanitarian discourse for years. It has had particular implications for displaced women, children and the disabled, who are often categorized as 'vulnerable groups'. 'Victim' may well be an appropriate word for those women and men who have suffered rape, for example, and the attendant multiple crises of physical and psychological injury, and rejection by families, communities and legal systems. Yet the use of the word, denying as it does the resilience and determination of those who have undergone such experiences, predisposes assistance programmes towards offering palliative care rather than confronting underlying systemic injustices. Using it may lead to extending the notion of 'victimhood' to all women or to all displaced people, or all of a particular ethnicity or class. Such 'victims' are seen as being prone to the 'dependency syndrome' mentioned by Turner, addicted to assistance and an eternal charge on the international community.

Participation by the displaced (and especially women) in the management of camps is one approach which aims to break down 'victimhood'. However, questions must be asked (as Turner does) about who benefits most from this approach. Do the displaced gain dignity and self-esteem from it or is it a management tool? Over and above that, prioritizing women in camp management may serve neither women nor men well, since it both excludes men and, if carried out at a superficial level, fails to capitalize on women's capacities and agency.

Dinka refugee returning from Ethiopia to Sudan.

Panos Pictures / Martin Adler

iii. Sexual violence

Major assistance providers such as UNHCR have relatively recently recognized rape and other forms of sexual violence (such as forced marriage) as being a significant phenomenon affecting refugee and displaced communities, and one which needs to be addressed by assistance programmes in practical ways as part of the protection mandate. Attention has been paid to issues such as camp layout and lighting and the provision of services and support to raped women. Much of the impetus for this attention came from UNHCR-sponsored initiatives among Somali and Sudanese refugees in Kenya, referred to by Kagwanja.

Kagwanja's article seeks to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon by linking its high incidence in the Kenyan context to underlying gender and ethnic discrimination, both within the refugee communities and within the Kenyan state, and even echoed in the assistance community. However, the issue of sexual violence raises other fundamental questions.

is gender still a useful concept?

First, how can the apparent increase in sexual violence in situations of conflict be explained? What factors are inherent in conflict which trigger this response? Effective assistance measures depend on a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in general.

Secondly, there is a widespread assumption (reflected in the articles in this volume) that rape and sexual violence are inflicted by men on women, even though evidence shows male rape to be a significant feature of many conflicts. This too has implications for assistance programmes: if support for raped women has been insufficient, support for raped men is virtually non-existent.

Thirdly, why has it been so difficult for sexual violence to be recognized, in terms of global policy, as a push-factor in displacement and hence grounds for asylum? A particular aspect of this (and one rarely acknowledged) is the issue of homophobic discrimination, both as a push-factor in countries of refugee origin and in asylum countries. Homophobia is indeed rarely regarded as a 'gender issue' at all, even though it is a prime example of the 'socially and culturally constructed expectations' of men's and women's behaviour on which gender analysis is founded. The association of 'gender discrimination' with issues of women's rights (referred to above) has blinded many assistance providers to its deeper implications.

iv. International legal frameworks and standards

A number of international legal frameworks, drawn essentially from the UN Charter on Human Rights, have been developed to guide international responses to refugee and displaced people's rights (see Gururaja's article for references to key examples). These have been accompanied by codes of conduct, good practice guidelines and training programmes.

Implementation, however, lags behind, partly because interpretations of agreed policy vary in different cultural and political contexts and have to be remade in each context. Crawley and Kagwanja, examining this question from two different viewpoints, suggest that ethnic and gender ideologies of discrimination may underpin both the policy and the practice of asylum and protection. However, Nathalia Berkowitz' note on the UK gender guidelines suggests that constructive lobbying can bring about significant changes in both attitudes and practice.

Conclusion

The articles in this issue demonstrate some of the insights that a gender approach can offer to the planning and implementation of assistance programmes in support of displaced communities and individuals. Such an approach can ensure that women's practical needs, easy to overlook, become more visible, and that their own efforts to improve their social position can be supported. It can help assistance agencies to gain improved understanding of the social, economic and political impacts of their choices of action and investment. Mainstreaming gender analysis into international legal frameworks and agencies forms the basis of accountability by the international community towards the displaced, and can help identify biases which institutions must confront in their own attitudes and practice.

Yet, as the examples quoted here show, gaps and contradictions appear in practice, prompting the question: is gender still a useful concept? Has it been used so widely, and to represent so many differing perspectives, that its currency has become debased? Has the fundamental meaning of gender (as social constructions of masculinity and femininity) been swept aside in the search for policy prescriptions? And, in the process, is it in danger of failing both women and men?

If 'gender' is to be rescued as a useful project for development, it needs time and resources to be invested in research in order to understand how it works in different social, economic and political contexts. It needs to be re-politicized and understood as a factor of contested identities, both of women and of men. Most importantly, if gender is to continue to be a relevant concept, it needs to be understood as having meaning for both men and women, old and young, settled and displaced, North and South: in other words, as an expression of **human** identity and **human** aspirations.

Judy El-Bushra is Acting Director of the Research and Policy Programme at ACORD, a long-term development agency working in poor and isolated communities in Africa.
Email: judye@acord.org.uk

Research update

Refugee voices in Europe

Refugees from former Yugoslavia in Italy and the Netherlands – experiences of integration (with focus on role of gender)

April 1999 - May 2001
Researcher: Dr Maja Korac, Refugee Studies Centre

The main aim of this research is to analyse the social conditions of refugees and explore their experiences of integration in the process of refugee settlement, with a special focus on the role of gender. The project takes the form of a comparative study of exile communities from former Yugoslavia in Italy and the Netherlands. It addresses the following issues: i) the social conditions of refugees from former Yugoslavia in the two EU countries; ii) the nature of 'successful integration' as desired by the refugees themselves; iii) the policy contexts and their relation to the needs and expectations of refugees. Findings of the overall comparative study will be completed by the end of May 2001. (Funded by Lisa Gilad Initiative and ECRE)

For more information, contact Maja Korac at maja.korac@qeh.ox.ac.uk or visit the RSC website at www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsc/.

Vindicating masculinity: the fate of promoting gender equality

by Simon Turner

This article explores how attempts by UNHCR and others to empower women in refugee camps are reinterpreted and given new meaning by the refugees themselves.

Women's issues have become increasingly central in UNHCR's policies over the past 15 years. Often lumped together with children in surveys, they are perceived as vulnerable victims of war:

> *"Among the people hit hardest by the violence and uncertainty of displacement are girls, elderly widows, single mothers – women. As a rule of thumb, some 75 per cent of these destitute displaced people are women and their dependent children."*[1]

Evoking the picture of women and children, NGOs and UNHCR are able to appeal to our humanitarian sympathy. As Liisa Malkki[2] has pointed out, children and female refugees epitomize bare humanity. Women are construed as more 'true' refugees, being the victims rather than the perpetrators of war and violence. However, this picture also reduces a refugee woman to the level of an infant and leaves her without agency and responsibility.

UNHCR is very concerned with the question of agency, and empowering women and getting them to participate in camp activities have become central aspects in the policies of UNHCR and other relief agencies. In Lukole Refugee Camp in Tanzania where I did over a year's fieldwork[3], they were not only concerned with helping women – protection from rape, access to food and medical help, etc – but were also very concerned with helping women to help themselves. This 'help to self-help' or empowerment of refugees in general and of women in particular was not merely meant as a means for attaining certain (material) goals. Empowerment was also a means of combating apathy and dependency among refugees, and of giving them a certain amount of self-esteem. To quote UNHCR's guidelines on the protection of refugee women:

> *"Participation itself promotes protection. Internal protection problems are often due as much to people's feelings of isolation, frustration, lack of belonging to a structured society and lack of control over their own future... Refugee participation helps build the values and sense of community that contribute to reducing protection problems."*[4]

In other words, women refugees are to be given back the agency that they allegedly lost as victims of war. This whole idea of empowerment and participation is based on a modern ideal of (democratic) citizenship and (equal) rights.[5]

"Women find UNHCR a better husband."

Babies in UNHCR's arms

So how do refugees react to this ideal of equal rights? How do they interpret the changes in the camp and the ways in which relief agencies administer food and other resources?

When I asked Barundian refugees in Lukole Refugee Camp[6] about changes in gender relations after coming to the camp, men and women alike were all very keen to give their opinion. The general impression I received – from the many qualitative group interviews as well as a survey of 464 refugees – was that of moral decay. Things were no longer as they used to be, they would say. Women were becoming prostitutes, men were polygamists, divorce rates were going up and young men were marrying old women. A general theme in most interviews was that women no longer respected their husbands. If I enquired more about this, the answer was quite clear: "Women find UNHCR a better husband." By this they meant that men ideally should provide for their wives and children, while women and children should obey and respect the men. But in the camp, according to the refugees, UNHCR (or merely the white man) would provide food for everybody, irrespective of age, gender or status. So, according to this reasoning, the women only respect and obey UNHCR.

In a paradoxical manner, the ideal of everyone being equal before UNHCR has been reinterpreted in terms of UNHCR or the white man taking the place of the husband and the father. In other words, the men in the camp felt that their position as breadwinners and figures of authority was under pressure. UNHCR was taking their authority and their women from them. A consequence of this was to be reduced to becoming equal with helpless women or children, which was certainly not a desirable state. As a young man said upon being asked whether he could see any changes in the camp: "There is a change. People are not taking care of their own life. They are just like babies in UNHCR's arms."

The general feeling of loss and of social and moral decay that follow flight and arrival in a refugee camp is often interpreted in terms of gender relations, and men's feeling of powerlessness is projected onto UNHCR and its policy of empowering women. UNHCR has simply taken their women and their masculinity.

Reasserting masculinity

When I first went to Lukole, I was surprised to find that a large group of young men in the camp were extremely successful. The first surprise was the number of very young male street/village leaders in the camp. I interviewed leaders who were only 21 years old and who had been leaders for several years. This conflicted with my assumptions about Burundi society where age gives status and one is not considered a real man worth listening to until much older. The refugees themselves provide some plausible explanations for the phenomenon. They explained that one has to be very mobile to be a leader: constantly moving from the UNHCR office to the food distribution centre, to the police post and back to the village/street. Furthermore, a leader in the camp preferably has to know languages, with English and Swahili being more useful than French and Kirundi (the official languages in Burundi). Finally, one has to be adaptable and not 'be shy'. In other words, one must be able to learn the jargon of relief agencies and dare to approach them in the right way. These are all virtues where the youth have an advantage over the older men.

Similarly, I found that a large group of young men had found jobs with NGOs. They held many of the same qualifications as the leaders and held equally important posts in the camp. Being employed by an agency gave access to resources and power. Their position as intermediaries between NGOs (providing resources such as medical assistance, education, social services and security) and the beneficiary population enabled the individuals involved to build up horizontal networks with each other and vertical networks of patronage. Often these networks were intermeshed with the camp's formal leadership structure and strongly linked to the two clandestine political parties in the camp.

Although political activity is banned in refugee camps in Tanzania, it is common knowledge that two rival (Hutu) opposition parties were very active in recruiting members in Lukole. Being a member of the right party would often help a young man in getting a job with an agency. It could also strengthen his position as a leader. More importantly, however, being a party member gave a sense of identity. Party leaders showed strength and were respected – even

Simon Turner

feared – in the camp. They had a purpose in life and had taken their future in their own hands, instead of hanging around the camp playing cards and getting drunk like other young men. Party members were even defying UNHCR and Tanzanian law, playing instead by their own rules. One could say that they were taking back what UNHCR had allegedly taken from them. They were reasserting their masculinity.

Conclusion

UNHCR and other relief agencies strongly emphasized gender equality and women's participation in Lukole Refugee Camp. My findings in the camp show that, instead of empowering women, these policies had the paradoxical effect of providing upward mobility for a group of semi-educated young men. The ideology of gender equality was perceived as a threat to their masculinity with UNHCR taking their place as husbands and fathers, reducing them to siblings or helpless women. In their fight to regain their presumed lost place, they managed to out-manoeuvre the older generation of men, mainly due to their ability to adapt to the new surroundings and to approach relief agencies in the right manner. Thus, we see a change in relations between generations.

One might expect that the changes in the camp had also brought about new possibilities for a group of educated young women as well. However, men and women alike interpret changes in the camp according to a dominant gender ideology based on male superiority. Even young, educated women working for NGOs believe, on the whole, that men are supposed to be masters and that equality only creates problems; they may consequently give half of their wages to their husband in order not to antagonize him.

It has not been the purpose of this article to criticize UNHCR policy on gender in general, and I do not plead for a shift to a cultural relativist approach endorsing patriarchal or other oppressive structures in the name of cultural sensitivity. This article merely points out some of the unintended consequences at the local level of such general policies. These unintended consequences occur as a result of the refugees' reinterpretations of well-intended relief programmes in the camp, in this particular case creating some quite unexpected effects on age and gender relations.

Simon Turner is currently a Ph.D Candidate at the Graduate School for International Development Studies, Roskilde University, Denmark. He lived in Ngara, Tanzania, from 1996 to 1998. Email: turner@ruc.dk

1 UNHCR *Fundraising: The General Programmes – UNHCR's Core Activities*, p4. (www.unhcr.ch/fdrs/gpapp)
2 Liisa Malkki *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, 1995, Chicago University Press.
3 See Simon Turner *Angry young men in camps: gender, age and class relations among Burundian refugees in Tanzania*, Working Paper No 9, UNHCR. 1999. (www.unhcr.ch/refworld/pub/wpapers/wpno9.htm)
4 UNHCR *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, 10, 1991.
5 I argue in my PhD thesis, from a Foucauldian idea of bio-politics, that such ideals constitute a fine-tuned manner of governing the camp by creating self-governing subjects.
6 Lukole is located in North Western Tanzania. At the time of my fieldwork, 1997-1998, roughly 100,000 Burundians lived in the camp.

Making young displaced men visible

by Cathrine Brun

This article examines the importance of understanding the part of young men in the processes of displacement and resettlement and suggests that agencies need to take greater account of the role and position of young displaced men when formulating gender-sensitive policy and practice.[1]

Young men are among the most visible of all groups in Puttalam District of the North Western Province, Sri Lanka. Almost 40 per cent of the young male residents are internally displaced Muslims expelled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in October 1990, together with their families and friends.

The reasons for this 'ethnic cleansing' are complex but one reason was that the Muslims were not prepared to fully support the LTTE and were thus seen as a threat to LTTE domination in the north. 75,000 Muslims - almost the entire Muslim population of the Northern Province - were threatened at gunpoint and given from two hours to one week to quit the region. The majority of the northern Muslims came to Puttalam District, where there was a mixed population of Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils. Ten years have passed since the expulsion and the situation in Puttalam is about to become a forgotten case amidst Sri Lanka's new waves of displacement caused by the war in the north of the island.

Changes in practice and perception

The influx of so many people to Puttalam in 1990 has changed many aspects of the lives of both locals and IDPs, including changes in gender relations. People's understanding of gender focuses mainly on women as symbols of both stability and change. On the one hand, women are expected to uphold the culture of the community, by being mothers and wives. Living in a poor environment with small houses and little private space, they are supposed to maintain in one way or another the seclusion for Muslim women as well as to protect traditional family values. On the other hand, women are also at the forefront of change. Much of the employment available in the area is casual wage labour for women in agriculture: a new situation for women from the north. In the north, they cultivated their own land with their husbands. Today, they face a different situation, sometimes having to travel long distances to work as labourers for others. Consequently, women do not greatly appreciate having to go out to work, despite their increased mobility, as it in effect symbolizes the degradation of their culture. These changes directly affect the visibility of women as well and are used as a symbol of how displaced people have 'ruined' the local culture, by making local women also want to move around more freely.

Contact with NGOs

Many of the 20 or so agencies working in the district have paid special attention to women, recognizing that they face these contradictory expectations. For most NGOs, women are one of three main target groups of aid, together with children and the household. The gender perspective in aid has become fairly well articulated and quite sophisticated, and the achievements are encouraging. Activities for women include: awareness, health, self-employment and leadership training programmes and saving groups. Men are only targeted as heads of households, rather than as gendered actors. The young men lose out, being neither children, nor heads of households, nor recognized as gendered actors.

"We do not have much contact with NGOs, except for one organization that normally comes to our settlement but they are only interested in the women", a young man told me. He continued: "In my view, the organizations should have contact with our group [young men]. That would be better because normally men have more knowledge than women. … Men solve problems more easily. If a well needed to be constructed, for instance, we could more easily decide the suitable place and the needy person."

There are many messages in this statement, not least a skewed view of the abilities of women. One important point underlying what he says is that men's gender identities do not automatically change when women's identities and practices change. Changing women's practices does not necessarily change the dominating gender ideology and men's attitudes.

Men are still perceived as more knowledgeable, men are still in the leadership positions and men are still considered as the main breadwinners of a family. When agencies only focus on women, there is a danger of understanding men only as abstract representatives of a male-dominated society. To make young men, and men in general, visible as gendered actors is thus to recognize them as actively involved in the processes of change and stability during displacement and resettlement. This makes it important to understand young displaced men, the nature of their challenges, the outcomes desired by the young men themselves and the limitations they experience. It is also important to emphasize that young men do not represent one homogenous group.

Below, I focus on two types of gender relations involving the young men: first,

the young men and their households; second, the young men's networks, friendships and encounters with other young men.

Young men and gender relations within the household

Most of the young men discussed here are between 18 and 30 years old, have finished or dropped out of school and are still unmarried. Those who are married are still not necessarily heads of their own households as many live with their parents or parents-in-law for many years after getting married. Others are still working to get their sisters married, to find a suitable partner and raise a dowry, before their own marriages can be arranged.

many young men have taken over their father's role as breadwinner

Unlike Turner's findings in Lukole Refugee Camp for Burundian refugees in Tanzania,[2] few young displaced men in Puttalam have taken leadership positions and they are still 'subordinate' to their fathers and older men. Since most of the northern Muslims fled together and arrived together in Puttalam, the social structures from the north have in many cases been re-established in the camps and settlements. As many older men were not able to get employment in Puttalam, many young men have taken over their father's role as breadwinner earlier than they would have done in the north. Though this is expressed as a great loss for the older men, it has not challenged their position as heads of households and heads in the settlements. One reason for this might be the important role of the mosque in structuring the society, and the fact that the mosque trustee boards still consist of men only, and mainly elderly 'respectable' men. Also the percentage of female-headed households is relatively low: seven per cent compared to around 20 per cent among Sri Lankan IDPs located closer to the conflict areas.[3]

The most important way for men to become 'respectable' is to follow Islam and fulfil their responsibilities in the family, as breadwinners. In many young men's view, their father's responsibility will be their responsibility in the future. They worry only about the difficulty of getting permanent employment in Puttalam: lack of employment makes it harder to meet family expectations.

Though employment would probably have been a problem in the north as well, there are other challenges in being displaced. When they fled, they had to leave all their belongings and property losing the basis for providing dowry for their sisters. In addition, the dowry has increased after displacement, partly as a household's means to restore lost assets and property.

The difficulty of getting employment and the accompanying frustration are also related to their gender identity. The young men's understanding of their main responsibility as maintainer of their family and as the main breadwinner does not change despite the number of women who are today contributing on equal terms with their husbands to provide for their families. In their view, women are forced to work because men cannot fulfil their obligations. If the young men could afford it, they would not automatically approve of their wives going out to work. Changes in women's culture and practices have become symbolic of men's inadequacies.

Young men's networks and friendships

Making young men visible as gendered actors does not only involve their gender relations within the household. Relationships with other men outside their homes and families are equally important and equally gendered, and thus essential in building the young men's sense of identity. Young men play an important role in the integration process of locals and IDPs through establishing contacts between the two groups and providing a common ground where different parties can come together. However, this role is not appreciated nor used actively in order to improve relationships between locals and displaced.

Muhammad Ali Mubarak

IDPs in Puttalam District, Sri Lanka

Although the IDPs and locals live apart (IDPs in settlements and camps, local Muslims and Sinhalese in their own separate villages), the young men move freely between the different settlements, building networks and friendships with other young men. Relationships between the groups of locals and IDPs are friendly but potentially conflictual.

The networks of young men, locals and displaced, are based on work, previous school situations, religious activities and games. They meet in the mosque for prayers, in shops and eating places, outside each other's houses and on the sports grounds. IDP and local men have their own teams but sometimes also play together for the same teams. In many ways they represent the group that has created the greatest level of integration between locals and displaced. As one displaced man told me, "I studied with the Puttalam boys and stayed with the Puttalam boys. Most of my friends are Puttalam boys so they consider me as a Puttalam boy." Their identities as displaced young men also become ambiguous. Many of them grew up with the local young boys and do not feel much different from them.

Through their mobility, men have great opportunities to nurture networks which cross the IDP-local and Tamil-Sinhalese divides. The northern Muslims speak Tamil but many of the young men have also learnt Sinhala, the language of the majority in Sri Lanka. Knowing both languages, they can move more easily around.

Men's relationships to other men also work as important information channels, especially for possibilities for employment. When there is no work to be found, most of the days are spent together with other men in public places.

This creates a feeling of unity with other men and helps restore dignity and status in the eyes of their families, because they have somewhere to go instead of being in the house with their sisters and mothers during daytime.

While it is true that young men have been good at establishing relationships between locals and displaced, there is still a potential for conflictual relationships between young displaced men and young local men. Competition for work and discrimination against displaced men in work as well as in other spheres create frustration and separation, and sometimes end up in violent encounters. Today, these violent encounters are infrequent but are feared and a common topic of conversation.

Towards interventions that involve young men

Gender-sensitive policies and practices need to involve both practical needs and strategic interests.[4] Practical gender needs involve those arising from the concrete conditions that women and men experience. Strategic gender interests are those interests and needs arising from the analysis of existing gender relations and normally involve questioning these relations.

i. Practical needs

Practical needs identified by the young men themselves are secure employment and places to meet. One of the two international NGOs present in Puttalam has started to work with young men through a project run by the young men themselves. Here, both displaced and locals, Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils, work together. Their main activities are vocational training, self-employment and providing assistance to build sports grounds. The NGO considers unemployment and underemployment as the root causes of youth problems and violence in Puttalam, and highlights the importance of creating arenas, like sports grounds, where young men can meet and develop good relationships.

The young men's groups have the same objective as the women's groups where the main aim has been to meet practical needs by savings, employment and health programmes. A fieldworker recounts how difficult it was, in establishing the women's groups, to get women involved; today, however, these groups are running well in almost all the camps and settlements, and have managed to gain some influence in camp and settlement decision making. The achievements of the women's groups clearly show how meeting practical needs has led to the achievement of more strategic interests and there are hopes that the same process can take place for the young men's groups.

young men are used as active partners – to achieve strategic gender interests

ii. Strategic interests

An example of an organization working more explicitly with strategic interests is a local NGO whose main aim is gender equality. It works to achieve this through awareness programmes: programmes to get more women employed, more women involved in decision making, preventing early marriages as well as working for an acceptance of 'love-marriages' (which do not involve dowry). The NGO was too radical for the mosque trustee board in one of the camps and was shunned. However, the women's group talked with a group of young men, who then discussed the issue with the trustee board who eventually agreed that the NGO could resume its work. In this way, young men are used as active partners – and as mediators – to achieve strategic gender interests.

Conclusion

To change gender ideologies, both women and men have to participate as active partners. In Puttalam, women have managed to change their strategies and have moved the limits and understandings of what they can and cannot do as women. At the same time, young men have shown great ability as mediators, transmitting ideas between groups, and as innovators but this role is not consciously acknowledged, either by the young men themselves or by the agencies or other groups. There is no reason why young men should not participate mutually with young women in changing understandings of gender. However, active participation assumes awareness and it may be that there needs to be more provision of appropriate education for men to help them understand the consequences of changes in gender ideology.

Young men have great potential for helping to develop lives and livelihoods after displacement. Today the agencies working in Puttalam have very limited funding and, to a large extent, their external funders, decide the nature of the projects. There needs to be greater awareness among funders and agencies of the need to include both women and men in working with strategic gender interests and to regard men as gendered and active participants in gender relations.

They need also to recognize that, although young men are highly visible and manage their lives quite well, they experience great frustration at being unable to provide properly for their families. This frustration needs to be acknowledged and addressed. Furthermore, agencies should, through careful intervention, build more actively on the potential of these young men to act effectively as mediators between the displaced and local populations as well as in gender negotiations.

Cathrine Brun is a PhD fellow, Department of Geography, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
Email: cathrine.brun@svt.ntnu.no

1 Based on fieldwork by the author in 1998-2000.

2 Simon Turner *Angry young men in camps: gender, age and class relations among Burundian refugees in Tanzania* UNHCR, Working Paper no 9, 1999. (www.unhcr.ch/refworld/pub/wpapers/wpno9.htm)

3 World Food Programme 'Review of protracted relief and recovery operation, Sri Lanka 6152', 2000, WFP, Colombo.

4 Kate Young *Planning Development with Women: Making a World of Difference,* 1993, Macmillan Press, London. Caroline Moser *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice & Training,* 1993, Routledge, London.

Gender dimensions of displacement

by Srilakshmi Gururaja

This article focuses on how gender awareness is essential for addressing the protection and participation rights of displaced women and girls, with a discussion of the role and results of the Beijing conferences.

When displacement occurs, far more damage results than simply the loss and destruction of goods and property. People's lives and their social fabric are left in tatters; new, often unfamiliar, living environments affect the social roles and responsibilities of men and women; former support structures break down; and families may face poverty for the first time.

Both men and women are forced into restricted mobility, living with new regulations and entering new social relationships which may challenge old ties and kinships. With few or no opportunities for continuing their livelihoods and often in the absence of male family members, women have no access to remunerative work yet are expected to provide for their families. The lack of access to information about the situation of their family members adds to the trauma and overwhelming sense of uncertainty.

Displacement has different consequences for women and girls than for men and boys. There is often a dramatic increase in the number of women heads of households, and they bear additional responsibilities for meeting the needs of children and ageing relatives, since the male family members have either joined the warring groups or been captured. Women face new demands in providing for themselves and their children, with increased workloads and limited access to and control over the benefits of goods and services. Furthermore, as a result of conflict and the breakdown in law and order, women and girls face increased risks of sexual violence and abuse. In some situations, they become targets for deliberate attacks by the opposing factions for purposes of revenge.

Strategies for action

Although we know how war affects women and children and what to provide as emergency relief, we are only just beginning to understand how to address the gender dimension within the humanitarian principles framework. When we discuss the gender dimensions of displacement, we are including a vast range of different effects of armed conflict on women and men, inlcluding how it affects power relations between them, their rights and their differential access to and benefits from services. In 1999, UNICEF and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children organized an Expert Meeting on Gender Dimensions of Internal Displacement to develop strategies to address the gender dimension of internal displacement. Two areas were highlighted for action for women and girls: a) protection - safeguarding women and girls from rape, abduction, forced sexual slavery, torture and murder, and b) the realization of their rights to equal access and full participation in the management of the camps. In developing programmes to address these areas for action, UNICEF has a number of priorities, five of which are outlined below:

i. Breaking barriers

Entrenched discriminatory attitudes are evident where women and girls are denied their rights to survival, development, participation and protection. UNICEF's programmes for IDPs in Sudan have set clear goals for the enrolment and retention of girls in educational facilities. The social mobilization of communities in order to change attitudes is given importance in the setting up and management of such facilities. Human rights education, through translation of the appropriate legal instruments and awareness campaigns for both men and women, has focused on women's and children's rights, including public education on the elimination of female genital mutilation.

ii. Seeing women as survivors, not victims

In setting up humanitarian services, women's participation should be planned in a visible manner: firstly, by identifying women frontline workers - nurses, teachers, communicators - and, secondly, by actively involving them in the delivery of services. This mobilization can also be used to facilitate a systematic consultative process with women in the day-to-day management of the camps and membership in camp committees.

These first two priorities in approach can be seen in the context of UNICEF's work in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Men have traditionally run the 'popular committees' responsible for formulating local camp policy but UNICEF has encouraged them to accept female representation. Seminars were initially held with members of women's associations to plan a strategy to influence the popular committees to achieve this. One woman from each group was selected to act as their preferred representative and each group's members then lobbied for the appointment of this woman to the decision- making board of their popular committee. During the seminars, women also learned how an association functions, the principles of democratic cooperation, information skills and lobbying techniques. Meetings were also held with heads of the popular committees to discuss the importance of female representation. As a result, four popular committees now include women.

iii. Involving men and women from the beginning in peace building and conflict resolution activities

This was the main message of the recent Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, of October 2000. Experience of Mozambique,

UNICEF/HQ99-0048/Roger Lemoyne

Food distribution at refugee camp near Brazda, FYR Macedonia, 1999.

Guatemala, Burundi and Somalia indicates that, despite cultural restrictions and expectations, women are willing to cross boundaries to resolve conflict and live in harmony with people of opposing warring groups. In Somalia, UNICEF and UNIFEM jointly organized training workshops in 1997 on 'Women's Role in Conflict Resolution', enabling a group of Somali women to advocate for peace and act as social change agents in their communities. This laid the foundation for bringing women into the public sphere and has resulted in promoting women's participation in civil governance.

iv. Raising gender awareness for protection

Most protection efforts have focused on education programmes for women on how to seek recourse or how to secure access to rehabilitation services. While these are important, they may not be really effective in protecting women and preventing violence against women. Sensitization of camp leaders and workers to gender issues is essential. There is now a certain level of awareness of sexual violence against women and girls and, in many camps, precautions are being taken to provide lighting in secluded areas and along routes to water points and fuel wood collection. The Sphere project[1] has developed minimum standards in particular areas of disaster response and encourages the participation of women in identifying their special needs. It places emphasis on preventing gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, through improved lighting and security patrols in the camps. It also encourages the identification of persons and groups who present a threat to women (whether from the displaced themselves or from the host communities) and supports the displaced persons in taking action to protect themselves.

v. Reaching adolescents and youth

Boredom, absence of goals and loss of direction affect the self-confidence of young people in camps. However, although their lives may have been badly disrupted, they have energy and enthusiasm which can be channelled effectively. In November 2000, UNICEF organized a meeting in Entebbe with key NGOs and other UN agencies to exchange information on existing interventions and to develop strategies for this age group. The meeting's recommendations focused on assessment methods for use in emergencies and strategies emphasizing participation and close involvement of adolescents in planning and implementation of interventions. In the refugee camps in Kukes, Albania, for example, UNICEF initiated a 'peer-to-peer' approach which encouraged 15,000 young Kosovans (male and female between the ages of 15 and 30) to get engaged in conflict resolution.

The Beijing Conferences

The Fourth World Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing in 1995, sought to galvanize women's movements and international organizations to review progress made in achieving the goals of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies of Equality, Development and Peace and to identify the emerging areas for action in fulfilling the human rights of women. Its outcome was a 'Platform for Action' (PFA)

covering 12 critical areas of concern including the human rights of women, violence against women and girls, and women in armed conflict. It called on the international community to protect the rights and address the needs of refugees and IDPs in line with international covenants and treaties.

Since the adoption of the Beijing PFA in 1995, some progress has been made in protecting the rights of women and girls in conflict zones and in addressing their unique concerns. These achievements include:

- Initiatives to ratify and implement the Statute of the International Criminal Court which considers gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence. An achievement is the Statute itself, which includes under the definition of crimes against humanity: "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity"; and, under the definition of war crimes, "committing rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions".

- The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998).

- UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women and its African Women in Crisis programme - AFWIC.[2]

- International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia (ICTY) ruling that rape is a weapon of war and a crime against humanity (1996) and International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) subsequent ruling that rape can be legally interpreted as a weapon or tool or genocide.

- UN Security Council Resolution 1265 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict and Resolution 261 (1999) and resolution 1314 (2000) on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict and the deployment of UN Child Protection Advisors and Gender Advisors (1999).

The five year review (Beijing +5) of the implementation of the Beijing PFA, undertaken during a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, in June 2000, focused on Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century and gave special attention to the needs and rights of war-affected populations, particularly women. The resulting document, entitled 'Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', recognizes that some positive developments have taken place but also acknowledges that several barriers have prevented the full implementation of the Beijing goals and commitments.

The document calls upon governments to incorporate a gender perspective in budgetary processes to lessen the economic inequality between men and women. In an effort to overcome the effects of globalization, governments also agreed to take measures that would guarantee the equal participation of women in macroeconomic decision making. To achieve full participation of women at all levels of decision making, the document calls for the creation of 'favourable conditions' to encourage women's participation in politics. In addition, governments accepted that any type of violence against women is a human rights violation and agreed to take all steps necessary to ensure that women are protected and have access to justice.

The document recommended that actions need to be taken at both national and international levels to ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision making and implementation of development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peace making, peace keeping and peace building in line with existing principles and guidelines. In this regard, efforts should also be made to support the involvement of women's organizations, community-based organizations and NGOs, and to ensure the application of international conventions including CEDAW and CRC to these processes.

Areas for action

In the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the challenge for governments, the UN, NGOs and others is to understand and respond to gender issues through analysis and comprehensive programme initiatives. These initiatives should effectively build on the capacity of women affected by armed conflict, support internally displaced women and children as they push for return to their homes and reconstruction, and encourage women's participation and protection in building a life of peace and dignity.

Drawing upon recent international commitments and conference outcomes, as outlined above, the following emerge as areas for immediate actions for advancing the rights of displaced women and children:

- Effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions, ensuring the protection of children and women in armed conflict.

- More effective warning systems for preventing violence against women and girls, and in making the perpetrators accountable for violations. The ratification and implementation of the Statute on the International Criminal Court needs to be complemented by community-based reconciliation and judicial procedures. More efforts must be made to end sexual and gender-based violence through allocating more programme budget to education for prevention.

- Prioritization by humanitarian relief workers of HIV/AIDS activities, including awareness campaigns aimed at multi-sectoral protection, education, community services, health, nutrition and economic programmes, addressing prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, improving the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and implementing voluntary counselling and testing as appropriate for internally displaced women and adolescent girls.

- Implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Statement on the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance and the agreed conclusions of the Humanitarian Segment of UN Economic and Social Council of 1999. This would ensure that gender issues are brought into the mainstream of humanitarian assistance activities following a gender-impact analysis. This would also pave the way for measures to promote the

positive role that women can play in post-conflict peace building, reconstruction and reconciliation.

In addition, the recent progress report of the Graça Machel study, used as the background document at the September 2000 International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg, reiterated that the mandates of preventive peace missions, peace keeping operations and peace building need to include provisions for women's protection as well as to respond to gender issues. Such missions and operational activities should include appropriately staffed and integrated gender units and gender advisors, and give priority to the verification of gender-based violations and the protection of women's human rights. Field operations should protect and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance for affected women and girls, and in particular for refugee and displaced women from a gender perspective.

Conclusions

How do we make it happen? There are two overwhelming prerequisites:

Firstly, we need global application of international norms, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, using rights-based approaches based on equality, accountability, participation and protection.

Secondly, we need an informed understanding and analysis of the social structures of displaced populations that determine the relationships, behaviour, coping mechanisms and capacity for adjustment. Disaggregation and analysis of information by sex, age, ethnicity and religion are essential for the planning and implementation of effective humanitarian assistance services.

Srilakshmi Gururaja is the Senior Advisor for Gender and Development at the Programme Division, UNICEF. She wrote this article in her personal capacity; views expressed do not necessarily represent official UNICEF opinion.
Email: sgururaja@unicef.org

1 www.sphereproject.org
2 AFWIC (African Women in Crisis) enables UNIFEM to support quick responses and immediate assistance to women in crisis, and to place women at the centre of the search for solutions. AFWIC aims to build the capacity of selected women's rights organizations and relief organizations in East, West and Central Africa to expand their work to include advocacy on behalf of refugee, displaced and returnee women.

Resources: gender issues in armed conflict

1. Ongoing initiatives to improve response to IDPs:

- *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (Representative of the UN Secretary-General on IDPs /UNHCHR, 1998). See p45 for list of translations. Available at: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/idp_gp/idp.html.
- *Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement: Examples from UN Agencies and Partner Organisations of Field-based Initiatives Supporting IDPs* (IASC Policy Paper, 1999). Available at: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/IDPManual.pdf
- *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (The Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement, 1999). Available at: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/IDPprinciples.PDF

  Contact details for OCHA: *Geneva:* OCHA, UN, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 917 1234. Fax: +41 22 917 0023. Email: ochagva@un.org *New York:* OCHA, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 963 1234. Fax: +1 212 963 1312. Email: ochany@un.org

- Global Database on IDPs (Norwegian Refugee Council): www.idpproject.org

2. Documentation on post-conflict reintegration (UNDP, Brookings Institution , UNICEF, etc). For example, IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Reference Group process on this issue (disbanding end 2000) will produce a report on its findings; see www.reliefweb.int/iasc/

3. UNICEF: *Humanitarian Principles Training: A Child Rights Protection Approach to Complex Emergencies* (UNICEF). Available on CD-Rom and at: coe-dmha.org/unicef/unicef2fs.htm. French and Spanish versions available. Trilingual CD-Rom being printed. *The Gender Dimensions of Internal Displacement: Concept Paper and Annotated Bibliography,* Working Paper Series, Nov 1998, 73pp. Contact: Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF House, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 326 7000. Fax: +1 212 887 7465. Email: emops@unicef.org

4. Protection of IDPs - *Protection strategies for women, children and other vulnerable groups* (IASC Policy Paper 1999).

5. Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance (IASC/ECOSOC, May 1998). Available at: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/iasc/IASC%20gender%20policy.htm plus Background Paper 'Mainstreaming Gender in the Humanitarian Response to Emergencies' (March 1999). Available at: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/iasc/IASC%20gender.htm

6. NGOs resources such as the Sphere Project. See: www.sphereproject.org Contact: Sphere Project, PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 730 49 75. Fax: +41 22 730 49 05. Email: sphere@ifrc.org

7. *Training of Peacekeeping Forces* focusing on gender aspects produced by the Lester Pearson Peacekeeping Institute, Canada and UNICEF. Available on CD-Rom. Contact: Carmen Sorger, Peace-building and Human Security Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A OG2. Tel: +1 613 944 1171. Email: carmen.sorger@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

8. Refugee Studies Centre: *The Refugee Experience* psychosocial training module includes section on gender and forced migration. Contact Maryanne Loughry at the RSC (address p2). Email: refexp@qeh.ox.ac.uk. Doreen Indra *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice,* 1998, Berghahn Books (in association with the RSC). 390pp. ISBN 1 57181 134 6. Contact Berghahn Books at: 55 John Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038, USA or: 3 New Tec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 IRE, UK.

9. Guidance for policy implementation developed by UN agencies and specialized agencies: eg UNICEF's *Programmer's Guide to Gender Mainstreaming* (email: emops@unicef.org); UNHCR's *People Oriented Planning Guide* (email: hqrd00@unhcr.ch).

Gender, persecution and the concept of politics in the asylum determination process

by Heaven Crawley

The particular difficulties facing many women as asylum seekers stem not from the absence of 'gender' in the Refugee Convention's grounds but rather from the failure of decision makers to acknowledge and respond to the gendering of politics and of women's relationship to the state when applying that definition to individual cases.

Current interpretation of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the 'Refugee Convention') presents considerable difficulties for women when their fears of persecution arise out of forms of protest or ill treatment which are not considered 'political'.

The Refugee Convention does not specifically refer to gender as one of the grounds upon which an individual can be recognized as a refugee and given protection. It is this which has largely been seen as the basis of women's marginalization and which has led some to call for the refugee definition to be rewritten and for 'gender' to be added to the Convention's grounds alongside race, nationality, religion, social group and actual (or imputed) political opinion. It has also led to calls for women to be recognized as 'members of a particular social group' within the meaning of the Convention and offered protection on this basis.[1] This article questions, however, whether such approaches, in highlighting the specificity of women's experiences, have adequately reflected upon the role of gender, as opposed to sex, in shaping those experiences and the problems experienced in the determination process.

In many respects, the failure to incorporate the gender-related asylum claims of women is a product of the general failure of refugee law to recognize social and economic rights and its emphasis instead on individual targeting and specific deprivation of civil and political rights. This is despite the fact that social and economic rights may be violated for political reasons. However, it is also related to a larger criticism of human rights law and discourse: that it privileges male-dominated 'public' activities over the activities of women, which take place largely in the 'private' sphere.

Although international law is gender-neutral in theory, in practice the public/private distinction is used in such a way that what women do and what is done to them is often seen as irrelevant. Many of the existing analyses have sought to explain the differential treatment of women by reference to their status as women (ie their sex) rather than the construction of gender identity in specific geographical, historical, political and socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, the terms 'gender' and 'sex' have tended to be used interchangeably. Unlike 'sex' which is biologically defined and therefore innate, the term 'gender' refers to the social construction of power relations between women and men, and the implications of these relations for women's (and men's) identity, status, roles and responsibilities. Gender relations and gender differences are historically, geographically and culturally specific, so that what it is to be a 'woman' or 'man' varies through space and over time. Any analysis of the way in which gender (as opposed to biological sex) shapes the experiences of asylum-seeking women must therefore contextualize those experiences.

This distinction between gender and sex and the focus on the political context in which women's experiences take place are important because the continuing focus on women as opposed to gender in forced migration research and practice replicates and reinforces the marginalization of women's experiences. Equating 'gender' with women leads to a tendency to generalize about the experiences of women as asylum seekers and this is problematic for several reasons.

Firstly, it results in confusion about what is meant by the term 'gender-related persecution' and, in particular, a lack of understanding about the relationship between the form of harm suffered or feared and the relevant enumerated ground. Secondly, while there are often significant differences between the experiences of women and men, there are also critical differences between women within and between particular countries and contexts. The tendency of academics, practitioners and policy makers to treat 'women' as an homogeneous category in order to emphasize the ways in which the experiences of women generally have been marginalized means that these critical differences between women have often been ignored.

Male versus female models

The problem with many of the current approaches to women as asylum seekers therefore is that they often counter-pose the 'male experience' of persecution with

a 'female model'. This model generalizes about women's experiences of 'gender-related persecution' and overemphasizes sexual violence at the expense of other forms of resistance and repression that are experienced by women in their countries of origin. Differences between women, however, have significant implications for their experiences of both persecution and the process of asylum determination. For example, because nationalist agendas are more open to incorporating some groups of women than others, the apparatus and institutions of the state may establish differential policies towards them.

One unintended but very serious effect of merely adding 'women' to existing analyses without an understanding of the differences between women is that women appear only as victims: refugee women are presented as uniformly poor, powerless and vulnerable, while Western women are the reference point for modern, educated, sexually-liberated womanhood. This in turn leads to the depoliticization and decontextualization of women's experiences of persecution and their conceptualization as passive victims of, for example, 'male oppression' or 'oppressive cultures, religions or traditions'.

The concept of politics

The concept of 'politics' is critical to the process of determining whether an individual applicant should be recognized as a refugee within the meaning of the Refugee Convention. It has been suggested that because women are much less likely than men to be involved in politics, the concept of 'political opinion' is unlikely to be central in the claims of women seeking asylum.[2] However, this fails to take into account the context in which women's participation and resistance take place.

Gendered critiques of politics and political participation are particularly useful because they shed new light on the relationship between women and politics, both by pointing to the structural features of political life which have tended to exclude women from positions of power and by revealing the history of women's involvement in political action. In addition they have challenged the tendency to separate the public world of politics and employment from the private sphere of family and interpersonal relations.

Women are as vulnerable to political violence as their male counterparts even though their political participation often takes place at a so-called 'low level'. In many societies, indeed, the penalties for political participation and resistance are even more severe for women than for men because of cultural and social norms that preclude women's involvement. For example, women who are imprisoned by the authorities run the risk of 'double punishment'. They are punished not only because they oppose the regime in some way but also because they shun the traditional role of women by being politically active at all. As a result, they are often 'put back in their place' by prison guards or military men.

Women are as vulnerable to political violence as their male counterparts

Violence against those who oppose regimes is not confined to the public sphere because politics and political resistance are not exclusive to the public sphere. Political violence by the state aims to disable opposition or resistance by so intimidating a population as to forcibly 'depoliticize' it. Bringing violence into the 'private' sphere of the home and family appears to be a particularly effective means of achieving this aim. As a result, even where women do not participate in formal politics, a woman nonetheless may be harmed as a means of intimidating, coercing or harming other family members who hold dissenting political views or who engage in political activities which are disapproved of by the persecutor.

In addition, women who have had little or no involvement in formal political institutions often take up all sorts of practical and innovative ways to exert pressure on the political scene in times of conflict. These forms of political participation by women often grow out of and subvert their gender roles as providers and nurturers; because women are seen as political innocents, they are able to use this immunity to take initiatives and responsibilities of a covert political nature.

A gendered critique of politics suggests that the extent of women's political participation has been underestimated. In addition, however, it indicates a tendency to misrepresent gendered forms of persecution and resistance as personal rather than political. In the context of growing struggles over national identity, prevalent ideologies have articulated policies that have proved particularly detrimental to women because the role of gender in the construction of national identity becomes reflected in state policies.

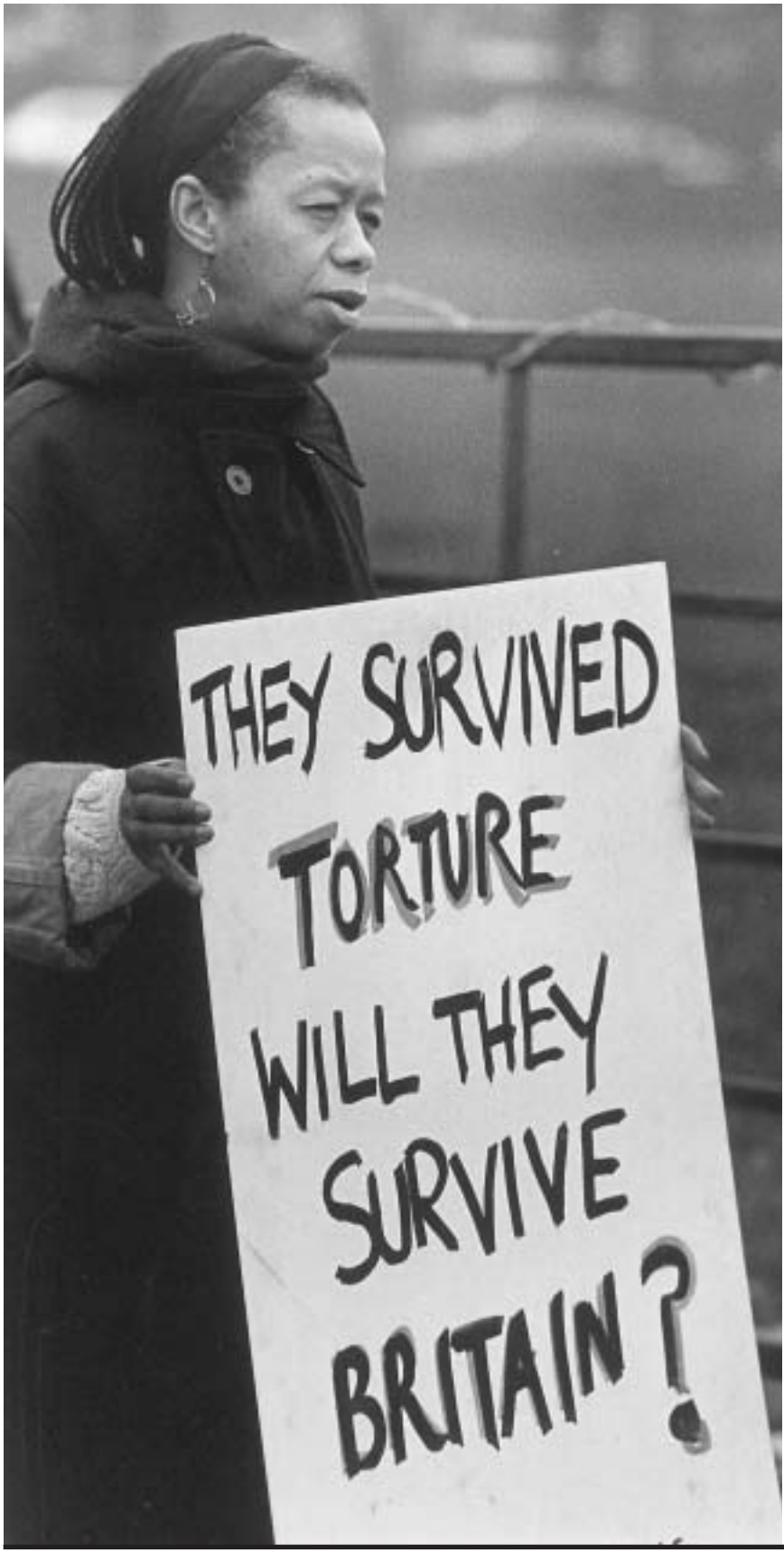
Many anti-colonial nationalist projects aim to recover or reinvent 'tradition' in order to develop a new nationalist consciousness. Within this process, national difference is often constructed in cultural terms against the West and, because this difference is often located in the private sphere, in family and sex roles, women have been constructed as the bearers of an authentic/authenticated culture. In many parts of the world, women who do not live up to the moral or ethical standards imposed on them by their societies are imputed with a political opinion and as a consequence suffer cruel or inhuman treatment. Refusing to marry, having sexual relations outside marriage, providing unsatisfactory dowry or even wearing certain dress can result in persecution.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of the way in which political participation and resistance is gendered can be seen in the politics of dress codes and, specifically, the veil. Women's opposition to the imposition of dress codes during the process of Islamization should be be seen in the context of the political symbolism of the veil. The concept of 'honour' has become strongly associated with women's sexual behaviour in many contexts. Any actual or perceived violation of what are deemed to be 'appropriate' gender relations is viewed as defiling the honour of the woman and, in turn, the honour of the nation itself. Protecting the honour of the woman and the nation therefore gains political significance and will be enforced either directly through the state – as seen in legislated discrimination and laws regulating women's behaviour – or through a woman's family and community.

The implications of these processes for women can be seen in the experiences of those seeking asylum under the Refugee Convention. Women may be subjected to discriminatory treatment which is

enforced through law or through the imposition of social or religious norms which restrict their opportunities and rights. The consequences for women of failure or refusal to comply with social norms and mores regarding their behaviour can vary enormously.

At one extreme, a woman may fear that she will be subjected to threats on her life if she is forced to return to her country of origin. Even where a woman does not fear threats on her life, she is often forced to submit to measures to retain or re-establish her honour. The harm experienced or feared in these cases will often be marriage-related including forced marriage, a form of abuse that is often not recognized. In many cases of women who refuse to agree to such arrangements, it will be the punishment inflicted as a refusal to abide by discriminatory social mores, rather than the marriage itself, which will rise to the level of 'serious harm'. The repercussions for women of divorcing their husbands or entering into mixed marriages may be equally devastating.



Howard Davies

Demonstrators outside Rochester prison in Kent protesting against detention of asylum seekers.

In other contexts, there may be pressure on women to have or not to have children; according to different national projects, under specific historical circumstances, some or all women of childbearing age groups would be called on, sometimes bribed and sometimes even forced to have more or fewer children. This can be seen, for example, in the experiences of some women from the People's Republic of China.

Content versus interpretation

This approach to the experiences of women seeking asylum suggests that the framework for asylum determination needs to be transformed to accommodate the inclusion of women not as a special case deviating from the norm but as one of many different groups whose experiences must be contextualized if they are to be properly understood. This approach suggests that the 'problem' is not so much the actual invisibility of women but rather how their experiences have been represented and analytically characterized.

Both actual (and imputed) political opinion and 'membership of a particular social group' within the meaning of Article 1(A) of the Convention can and should provide a legal basis for the recognition of women as Convention refugees. Political opinion in particular should be properly interpreted to include women's opposition to extreme, institutionalized forms of oppression; a woman who opposes legislated discrimination against women or expresses views of independence from the social or cultural dominance of men in her society may be found to have been persecuted or to fear persecution because of her actual political opinion or a political opinion that has been or will be

imputed to her. She is perceived within the established political/social structure as expressing politically antagonistic views through her actions or failure to act. If a woman resists gendered oppression, her resistance should be regarded as political activity.

In addition, there are cases where women do not directly or intentionally challenge institutionalized norms of behaviour but are nonetheless imputed with a political opinion as a consequence of their experiences. This can be seen, for example, in the characterization of a raped woman as adulterous, in the social ostracism of an unmarried, separated, divorced, widowed or lesbian woman, and in the politicization of (unintentional) violations of dress codes.

The development of this approach to the Refugee Convention is important to ensure that the asylum claims made by women are properly and consistently considered by decision makers and that the legal and theoretical arguments are coherent and able to stand the test of time. Looking at gender, as opposed to sex, enables an approach which can accommodate specificity, diversity and heterogeneity. It also ensures that the asylum claims of women are not routinely dismissed as culturally relative and therefore outside the mechanisms for protection available under the Refugee Convention.

a new awareness and willingness to take gender into account have emerged

Following years of neglect of the needs of refugee and asylum-seeking women, a new awareness and willingness to take gender into account in policy development and implementation have emerged and there have been many encouraging recent developments legitimizing the factual basis for women's asylum claims. Human rights groups in particular have increasingly focused their attention on gender-specific human rights. Meanwhile, UNHCR has also begun to turn its attention to gender-related persecution and Canada, the US and Australia have extended their interpretation of the Convention to women making claims on this basis.

In the UK, the Refugee Women's Legal Group has produced its own Gender Guidelines for the Determination of Asylum Claims in the UK, launched in 1998. Although these guidelines have not been accepted by the Home Office, they are clearly reflected in guidelines published in December 2000 by the Immigration Appellate Authorities for decision makers hearing appeals against the refusal of asylum.[3]

Conclusion

Gender guidelines can serve an important role in raising awareness of the specific difficulties facing women as asylum seekers and in addressing a range of substantive and procedural issues. They are also important in ensuring that a wide range of individuals and organizations – individual lawyers and practitioners, NGOs, women's groups, academics – challenge current policy and practice at a variety of levels: in the gathering of information, in the formulation of individual claims, at the initial decision-making stage and on appeal. However, it is important to recognize that the underlying problems experienced by women stem not simply from the fact that they are women *per se* but from the conceptualization of key elements of the Refugee Convention and, in particular, the concept of politics.

It is this conceptualization and the continuing tendency among decision makers to allow a public/private dichotomy to engender the determination process as a whole that most seriously undermines the protection available under the Refugee Convention. This problem cannot easily be addressed by the implementation of guidelines alone.

Dr Heaven Crawley is a founder member of the Refugee Women's Legal Group in the UK and author of Women as Asylum Seekers: A Legal Handbook (1997). A revised and updated second edition entitled Refugee Law and Process: Gendered Perspectives will be published by Jordans in January 2001.
Email: heaven@crawley30.freeserve.co.uk

For more information on the Refugee Women's Legal Group, the gender guidelines and Dr Crawley's new book, plus links to other sources of information and support, visit www.rwlg.org.uk

1 The use of the particular social group basis of the refugee definition to extend protection to women who face persecution for having transgressed religious or social mores finds strong support in the pronouncements of the UNHCR and governmental bodies and the administrative decisions of several countries.

2 This understanding is also implicit in those analyses which focus upon 'membership of a particular social group' as the most appropriate, or indeed only, basis on which women can be protected under the Refugee Convention.

3 See piece opposite by Nathalia Berkowitz.

EU women lobby for equal rights in seeking asylum

On 6 December 2000, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) launched a year-long campaign to highlight forms of persecution unique to women and to ensure that they are able to claim refugee status "in their own right" under future EU asylum procedures.

The EWL, a coalition of 2,700 member organizations in the EU, believes that the 1951 Geneva Convention and the follow-up Protocol of 1967, which together provide the legal basis for granting asylum worldwide, fail to explicitly address gender-specific acts of persecution, including sexual violence and other forms of human rights violations.

Throughout the year-long campaign, the EWL will monitor progress on a draft directive on minimum standards on procedures in EU member states for granting and withdrawing refugee status, now being considered by the European Parliament. As part of the campaign, the EWL is distributing tens of thousands of postcards throughout Europe, highlighting four different areas of concern – female genital mutilation, rape as a weapon of war, forced marriage and 'guilt by assocation' - and asserting that "persecution is not gender blind". On 6 December 2001, the postcards and electronic petition will be submitted to Belgium, which will then hold the rotating EU Presidency.

See: www.womenlobby.org/asylumcampaign/

Gender guidelines for the UK

by Nathalia Berkowitz

On 5 December 2000, the UK's Immigration Appellate Authority (the immigration and asylum tribunal) launched its *Asylum Gender Guidelines* for use in the determination of asylum appeals in the UK. The guidelines aim to assist judiciary at the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) in fully considering all aspects of asylum seekers' claims to international refugee protection and in ensuring that the gender of the asylum seeker does not prejudice their application.

Specifically, the guidelines note that the dominant view of what constitutes a 'real refugee' has been of a man and this has meant that women asylum seekers in the UK may not benefit equitably from the protection offered by the Refugee Convention. Two main reasons for this are suggested: firstly, because the case law has not fully considered the specific issues raised by women's needs for protection or has considered them from a framework of male experiences and, secondly, because procedural and evidential requirements of the asylum status determination procedures may not be equally accessible to women as men.

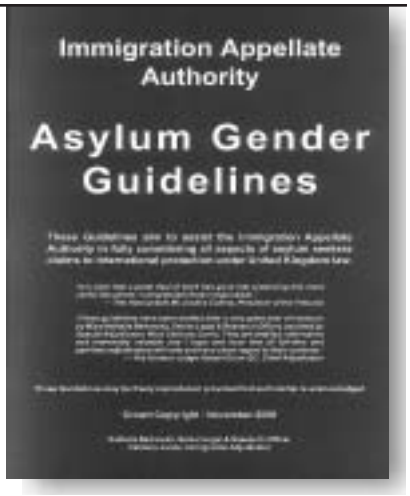
However, these guidelines are not solely of application to female asylum seekers: they are gender guidelines, not women's guidelines. This is made clear in the introduction to the guidelines which states: "Most of these guidelines are applicable to the asylum claims of both men and women. They address the role of gender in the asylum determination process rather than simply the position of women asylum seekers or the role of biological sex. In these guidelines, the terms 'women', 'woman', 'she' and 'her' apply equally to men."

In adopting the *Asylum Gender Guidelines*, the UK builds upon the guidelines in existence in a number of other countries. While earlier guidelines share many features, they do differ from each other and are addressed to different audiences. The UK's guidelines are specifically geared to the needs of judiciary as opposed to immigration officers and, as such, contain more law and legal analysis than previous guidelines and specifically address the need for gender-sensitive procedures to be adopted in the hearing room.

Earlier steps in the history of gender guidelines include UNHCR's adoption, in 1991, of *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women,* followed in 1995 by *Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response.* These guidelines deal with a range of issues of relevance to female refugees including safety and access to resources in refugee camps but also include useful sections of relevance to the determination of asylum claims such as the problems of female victims of sexual violence from military personnel and the need for gender-sensitive interviewing and procedural requirements.[1]

Canada was the first country to formally issue guidelines relating to women's asylum claims. Its *Guidelines on Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution* (1993, updated in 1996) have been hailed as 'ground-breaking'[2]. Addressed to decision makers at the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, they were developed after consultation with both governmental and non-governmental groups and individuals. They were the first national guidelines to formally recognize that women fleeing persecution because of their gender could be recognized as refugees.

In 1995, the American Immigration and Naturalization Service followed the Canadian example and adopted *Considerations for Asylum Officers Adjudicating Asylum Claims from Women.*[3] These guidelines aimed to assist asylum officers in interviewing women refugees and making asylum decisions. The Australian *Guidelines on Gender Issues for Decision Makers*, issued in 1996, are aimed at immigration officers and are very comprehensive in scope stressing both procedural and jurisprudencial issues affecting women's asylum claims.[4] At European Union level there are no gender guidelines but some steps have been taken to recognize the issue of gender in asylum claims, for example, in its *Minimum Guarantees on Asylum Procedures.*



The adoption of gender guidelines by the UK's IAA owes much to the guidelines previously issued by other countries, to the support for guidelines by the UN, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and to the campaigning work of groups such as the Refugee Women's Legal Group which, in 1998, issued its own gender guidelines, directed at asylum caseworkers in the Immigration and Nationality Division of the UK Home Office, and obtained support for the principle of gender guidelines by a large number of Members of Parliament. With the launch of the IAA's *Asylum Gender Guidelines* in December 2000, the immigration judiciary, asylum caseworkers, asylum applicants and their representatives will have a tool to assist in ensuring that gender aspects of asylum claims are fully considered in the UK.

The Immigration Appellate Authority's *Asylum Gender Guidelines* will be available on-line at www.ein.org.uk/iaa

Nathalia Berkowitz is Senior Legal & Research Officer at the Immigration Appellate Authority, London, UK. Email: n.berkowitz@mcr1.poptel.org.uk

1 UNHCR: www.unhcr.ch/
2 Canadian Guidelines: www.irb.gc.cahuman_rights/hrp_reports_mainhp.htm/
3 US guidelines: www.state.gov/global/
4 Australian guidelines: www.austlii.edu.au/

Ethnicity, gender and violence in Kenya

by Peter Mwangi Kagwanja

This article examines the ethnically-discriminatory nature of Kenya's refugee policy, its influence on the administration and practice of refugee affairs, especially by relief agencies, and its role in encouraging sexual violence against women refugees.[1]

The sexual violence against refugees in Kenya in the 1990s occurred against the backdrop of a huge increase in the refugee population, a shift in its ethnic composition and the rise of ethnicity as the dominant ideological force in Kenya's refugee administration.

Following the escalation of internal wars in the Horn and the Great Lakes region, Kenya's refugee population rose from nearly 15,000 in 1991 to over 427,000 refugees assisted by UNHCR and 55,000-100,000 'free-livers' in cities by mid 1992.[2] This number declined to less than 200,000 by March 1999 largely because of voluntary repatriation and third country resettlements. The Kenyan government claimed that the size of this population seriously compromised its security, greatly outstretched the infrastructure and medical services and undermined its tourist industry. In 1993, it asked UNHCR to repatriate all Somali, Ethiopian and Sudanese refugees.[3] UNHCR spent $40 million to establish the Dadaab camps of Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley in northeastern Kenya near the border with Somalia, and Kakuma near the Sudanese border; at the government's behest, UNHCR closed down the mainly Somali camps at the coast and relocated refugees to Kakuma camp, away from Kenya's economic centres.

Earlier analyses of Kenya's post-colonial refugee policy underscore the immense importance of class and ethnic concerns. In the 1970s and 80s, in order to meet its need for skilled labour and investors, the government allowed Ugandan refugee intellectuals, businessmen and professionals to participate in economic life. In the 1990s, it also permitted well-to-do and enterprising refugees to settle and establish businesses in Nairobi and Mombasa. However, it wielded a heavy stick against poor refugees residing in slums and peri-urban areas: many were arrested and detained; some were deported.

Kenya also used ethnicity as a key criterion to determine the eligibility of refugees, particularly from pariah regimes with which it was allied. For instance, in the aftermath of the Rwandese genocide in 1994 against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu, Kenya gave the conservative Hutu a red-carpet welcome because of its own close association with the regime of Juvenal Habyarimana. Hutu refugees "arrived by Mercedes, the men in polo shirts and silk ties, the women in flowing dresses and gold earrings…[to] rent houses and flats in Nairobi."[4]

By the same token, in 1989 the government promised Siad Barre of Somalia that refugees from the rival Ogaden clan would not be given sanctuary in Kenya. In the same year, it carried out nationwide screening of its own ethnic Somalis, ordering them to carry separate pink identity cards to prove their nationality, ostensibly to flush out illegal aliens. It not only permitted Siad Barre to reside temporarily in Kenya after his overthrow in 1991 but also allowed militias from his clan to use Kenyan territory for supplying arms for the fighting in Somalia.

Refugees from other Somali clans were lumped together with Kenya's ethnic Somalis who had experienced decades of entrenched institutional discrimination, economic neglect and colonial-style collective punitive expeditions by security forces. Kenya's discriminatory practices and repression of its Somali population are historically linked to its participation in the Somali-backed *Shifta* (bandit) war in the 1960s which sought to annex northeastern Kenya to 'Greater Somalia'.

The ethnic dimension of Kenya's policy towards refugees from Sudan sought to reduce the burden of refugees on its social and economic infrastructure and to enable its own impoverished Turkana population to gain access to development opportunities accruing from the international refugee support system. This approach and the tendency of the relief agencies to ignore the more repugnant customs and practices embedded in the patriarchal culture of the refugees and their 'councils of elders' in the camps severely compromised Sudanese women's right to physical safety.

Rape and violence

The 1992-93 orgy of sexual violence against refugee women affected the predominantly Somali camps of Dadaab. A human rights group that visited camps in northern Kenya in April to May 1993 reported that "beatings of refugees, as well as sexual assault and rape, were daily and nightly occurrences".[5] In 1993, when the violence was at its peak, 200 incidents of rape were reported in Dadaab, though, in the words of a rape counsellor, those reported "were just the tip of the iceberg". Introduction of security measures in camps brought down the number of reported rapes to an average of 90 cases per year in Dadaab in 1994 to 1998 but the physical insecurity of women has remained a fact of camp life.

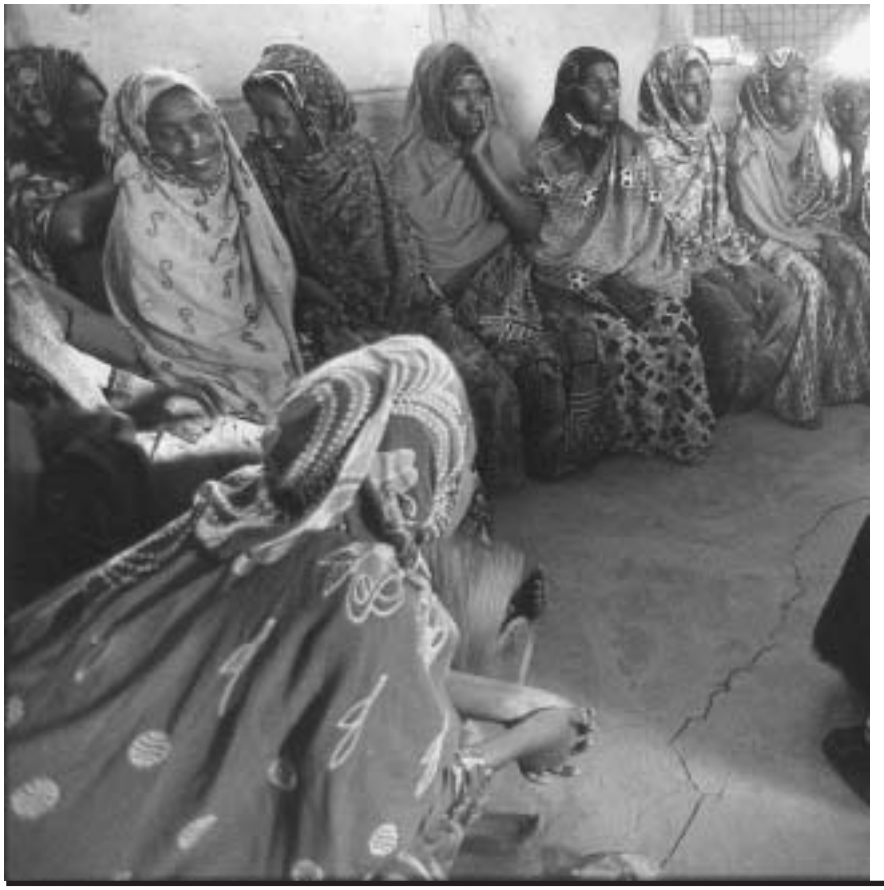
Although Somali refugees were the main casualties of the rapes in Dadaab, scores of non-Somali women were also affected.

An expatriate NGO nurse was reportedly raped, prompting Médicins sans Frontières (Belgium) to withdraw most of its female workers from Dadaab camps in May 1993. In January 1998, five Ethiopian women were part of 165 rape survivors in Ifo camp. Over 90 per cent of the 200 reported rape victims in 1996 to 1997 were attacked when foraging for firewood or herding livestock outside the camps, although female traders who refused to pay extortion money were also assaulted. The tasks of gathering firewood and grazing goats and sheep among the Somali are customarily reserved for women and girls. Women were reportedly against the idea of their husbands collecting firewood because, given the dynamics of inter-clan feuds, men are likely to be killed while women will "only be raped".[6]

In Kakuma, the ethnic dynamics underpinning violence against women were different and more complex than in Dadaab. Here, Sudanese male refugees and militia assaulted women, especially from the Dinka group. Sexual assault on Sudanese women revolved around the customary practices of child-marriage, forced marriage and remarriage. In the latter case, refugee women were kidnapped and remarried to men in Southern Sudan who were able to pay huge dowries to the family in the form of cattle. Men who raped, kidnapped or forced women into marriages in Kakuma were seldom prosecuted because UNHCR camp staff were wary of being seen to interfere when they were unsure as to what extent traditional cultural practices were involved. Indeed, as the National Council of Churches of Kenya's officer in charge of the Reproductive Health Programme informed us, there were few reported cases of rape among Sudanese because no steps would be taken against the aggressors and women feared reprisal by male refugees.

Most of the occurrences of rape that appeared in the Médicins sans Frontières (Belgium) medical records in Dadaab involved girls, some as young as 11 and 12 years. In February to March 1998, a total of 17 girls ranging between 15 and 18 years were sexually abused and treated at Ifo camp alone. Girls were more likely to be assaulted than older women as they were the ones mainly involved in collecting firewood and grazing livestock outside the camps.

UNHCR and its NGO partners provide counselling sessions for vulnerable women and children. Many feel the need to discuss the sexual or domestic violence they experienced in the camps, where rape continues to be a problem.



UNHCR/29216/07.1999/B Press

Women and girls in Dadaab were attacked by 'bandits' (a term that seems to have been applied generally to 'Somali speakers' including Kenyan nomads), male refugees, militias engaged in cross-border raids and Kenyan police and soldiers. The military activities of international forces in Somalia in Operation Restore Hope and its successor, UNOSOM, drove Somali militia and bandits into the border area where the camps were located. Most assailants moved in gangs, armed with guns, machetes and knives, and were responsible for many of the reported gang-rapes. While few women died from these attacks, some victims sustained serious injuries, contracted sexually transmitted diseases, conceived, and were generally traumatized and socially ostracized.

Rape as a weapon of war

The large-scale nature of these rapes points to a political/ethnic connection. Rape, especially of girls, has been a common weapon in inter-clan feuds in post-colonial Somali politics. In 1979, when Siad Barre trained his guns against the Majeerteen clan for allegedly staging a coup against his regime, "it was customary for the army to abduct 12 and 13-year old Majeerteen girls and hold them as 'temporary wives for the troops'".[7] Rape of girls, perhaps more than any other act of aggression, exposes the utter defencelessness of the entire community; it is the exercise of ultimate power and control of one group by another.

The government cast Somali refugees, like its own ethnic Somali population, as *Shifta* or bandits and targeted them for indiscriminate retribution, particularly when unknown gunmen attacked or killed its security officers. In March 1992, after bandits had killed four police officers, a unit of some 20 or so policemen fired into a crowd of about 1,000 refugees gathering for food distribution in Dadaab's Dagahaley camp, killing three and seriously injuring six. All human rights organizations that investigated the later rape of women in Dadaab blamed Kenyan police and soldiers for committing some of these atrocities. Government reaction to the rapes of Somali women was both dismissive and defensive. Speaking to parliament, an Assistant Minister in the Office of the President expressly denied that refugee women were raped. He claimed that such reports were meant to "attract

sympathy and give the government negative publicity" and advised that if allegations of rape were true, women should report them to the police.[8] Similarly, attributing the orgy of rape on intra-Somali conflict, a government official in Dadaab asserted that "it was not Kenya's responsibility to investigate what happened in the camps, it was for Somalis to sort out themselves".[9] Kenya declared itself a 'transit country', ceased to give refugees legal recognition and declared them a 'UNHCR problem' in open defiance of its obligations under the OAU Convention[10] and the 1951 Convention.

Security and prosecution

In response to mounting pressure, especially from human rights organizations, the government and UNHCR introduced measures to end violence and restore security in camps. The government increased the number of police officers and introduced helicopter patrols. UNHCR contributed towards the building of police stations in Kakuma and Dadaab, provided police with vehicles, spare parts and fuel, installed a radio network and subsidized police wages. In Kakuma, the agency recruited a 120-strong force of largely local Turkana guards equipped with bicycles and radio handsets for swift movement and communication. In Dadaab, refugees constructed more than 120 km of live thorn fence around the camps to prevent attackers from entering and abducting women from the camps, and a firewood project was launched to reduce cases of women raped while foraging for firewood in Dadaab.[11]

In support of sexually assaulted women, UNHCR established the Women Victims of Violence Programme, created the posts of Senior Coordinator and Regional Coordinator on Women Affairs plus a Rape Counsellor, and contracted the Kenyan chapter of the Federation of International Lawyers (FIDA) to provide legal services to women survivors of rape.

In March 1994, the government ordered a public inquiry into the incidences of rape in Dadaab but, despite the evidence, there were no prosecutions of police or other security officials. Scores of 'civilian' assailants were later arraigned, including a serial rapist who was successfully prosecuted in 1995. Many felt that the government had effectively used the inquiry as a ploy to conceal the involvement of its own forces. Police were not only reluctant to investigate rape allegations against their own members but also accused the victims of not filing reports quickly enough to enable them to pursue the aggressors. Refugees were reluctant to report abuses because of fear of reprisal, especially from security forces; moreover, they had little access to the legal system, primarily because there were no courts within the vicinity of the camps. The nearest courts to Dadaab and Kakuma were over 100 kilometres away and their schedules were often overburdened.

UNHCR was disturbingly averse to filing civil suits for damages against perpetrators of rape under the laws of Kenya or initiating private criminal prosecution on behalf of refugees. It failed to help those refugees attacked by security personnel to bring their complaints to the authorities or to pass on their claims to the Attorney General for prosecution. Perhaps UNHCR was wary of antagonizing an already hostile government and, in the process, jeopardizing its programmes in the country. Indeed, the agency and its international NGO partners enjoyed unprecedented autonomy from the state and even exercised considerable influence over its local authorities. Not only did UNHCR steer clear of policies that were likely to attract the government's ire but also tended to accept the state's ethnic rhetoric and stereotyping of refugees. The agency's staff cast Sudanese and Somali refugees as "uncooperative groups, a determination that had practical and political implications….".[12]

Conclusion

Women refugees in Kenya became particularly vulnerable to abuse, not only because they were refugees and women but, more importantly, because of the politicization of ethnic identities. Longstanding institutional discrimination against Somalis in Kenya created a fertile ground for sexual violence against refugees; the prevalence of an institutionalized patriarchal culture in camps enabled male refugees and militias to assault and rape Sudanese women with impunity. Policies to reverse the trend in the violation of refugee women should target both specific and broad reforms.

Specifically, the government should rededicate itself to protecting refugees irrespective of their ideological or ethnic affiliation. It needs to train its security personnel in the need to defend the rights of exiles; to contain bandits and militias and other sources of insecurity; to make the legal system accessible to refugees; and to prosecute refugees' assailants. Humanitarian agencies should be steadfast in defending women

UNHCR/24292/06.1994/B Press

Refugee camps need to be mapped out in a way that allows sing violence. Here, Somali refugee women re-build their huts after the

...le women and mothers to be more easily protected against ...ir transfer to Hagadera camp in Kenya.

refugees and confronting those discriminatory policies which undermine the physical safety of refugees. For instance, UNHCR should strengthen its capacity to offer legal assistance to refugees, including legal representation and initiation of private criminal prosecution of those violating their freedoms. While refugees should enjoy their full right to practise their cultural traditions, practices that endanger the physical safety and rights of women refugees and crimes arising from them should be tried in the court of law.

More broadly and fundamentally, efforts to create a policy environment that guarantees the safety and rights of women refugees should, of necessity, take into account the underlying ethnic or racial sensibilities that give impetus to other discriminative social relations, such as gender. As the case of Kenya shows, sexual violence against women occurred against a backdrop of ethnic discrimination, exacerbating discriminatory gender practices in the camps.

Peter Mwangi Kagwanja is currently a Fulbright fellow and doctoral candidate, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to that he was a researcher with the Center for Refugee Studies, Moi University, Kenya. Email : pkagwanja@hotmail.com

1 While earlier surveys tended to focus almost exclusively on the experiences of Somali refugees, the present study advances on these works by engaging the ethnic dynamics surrounding the events of 1990s and extending the analysis to the experiences of non-Somali communities, especially Sudanese and Ethiopians.

2 UNHCR Country Profile - Kenya, 1998. www.unhcr.ch/world/afri/kenya.html

3 *International Herald Tribune*, January 20, 1993

4 'Safe Haven in Kenya for Some: Rwandese Hutus', *Economist*, 18 November 1995, Vol 337, No 7941, p42.

5 Lawyers Committee for Human Rights *African Exodus: Refugee Crisis, Human Rights and the 1969 OAU Convention*, 1995, New York.

6 G Mwaura 'Bandits Terrorize Refugee Women in Dadaab Camps' *The East African*, July 27-August, 1998.

7 Kenya Human Rights Commission *Haven of Fear: The Plight of Refugees in Kenya,* 1999, Nairobi.

8 *Daily Nation*, 29 July 1993.

9 *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol 13, No 1, 1994: 53

10 Although the OAU Convention is not explicitly clear on the obligations of the state *vis-à-vis* refugees, it is possible to make claims based on Article II (1) on Asylum read together with Article IV on Non-Discrimination.

11 See 'The environment of refugee camps : a challenge for refugees, local populations and aid agencies' by Thomas Hoerz in *RPN* issue 18 (May 1995): www.fmreview.org (click on back issues)

12 Jennifer Hyndman *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, 2000, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

Integrating a gender perspective into humanitarian and peacekeeping operations

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000): October 2000

In October 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), calling on all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective to include the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. Such a gender perspective would also include measures supporting local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution and involving women in all the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements.

The Council urged Member States to increase the participation of women at decision-making levels and urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys. Furthermore, the Council urged the Secretary-General to expand the role of women in UN field-based operations, especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.

The Council called on all parties to armed conflict to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. It emphasized the responsibility of all States to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls.

In addition, paragraph 12 of the resolution "calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design".

For the full text of the resolution, visit www.un.org/Docs/scres/2000/res1325e.pdf

Rural farming systems, plant genetic resources and disasters

by Monica Trujillo

WFP / M Sayagues

Recognition of women as agricultural producers, including their role in the conservation of genetic diversity, is crucial for understanding the impact of disasters and disaster-induced displacement on the agricultural sector, for accurately assessing losses and hence for effective relief and rehabilitation programmes.

When Hurricane Mitch struck Central America in October 1998, it took the lives of nearly 10,000 people and left over 11,000 missing. It was a 'super disaster', causing severe and structural damage to homes, buildings, water and sanitation infrastructure, schools, clinics, hospitals, bridges and roads. The vast majority of those affected in the region, an estimated total of 6.5 million people, lost almost everything they possessed.

Missions representing almost every international humanitarian agency were sent to the region, particularly to the most devastated countries of Honduras and Nicaragua, to assess the damage and identify humanitarian needs. The FAO/WFP Special Report for Honduras[1] estimated that one-third of cereal and bean crops (considered the 'major food crops' in the country) had been lost and identified major losses in cash crops such as coffee, sugarcane and melons. Such assessments directly inform the programmes for agricultural relief and rehabilitation of the two lead UN food agencies and, by extension, those of national governments with which they closely cooperate. Eleven project proposals for a total amount of over US$8.5 million were prepared by FAO to support primarily the rehabilitation of basic grain production and the restoration of dairy livestock production in Honduras. Yet, while such efforts undoubtedly helped thousands of small farmers to recover their livelihoods, the response was only partial. Hurricane Mitch destroyed up to 50 per cent of all agricultural land and the destruction was indiscriminate. Flood waters swept away almost everything in its path, including **all** those food crops which form an intrinsic part of the complex farming systems that characterize rural livelihoods in the region.

Throughout Central America, communal plots and home gardens cultivate legumes, tubers, vegetables, fruits and herbs in combinations that vary by country or locality. The FAO/WFP Special Report had reported on losses in cattle but had not considered other livestock crucial to rural livelihoods, such as chickens, pigs, goats and other small animals. Why were losses in these crops and livestock not calculated as part of the assessment? Is it a coincidence that these forms of agricultural and livestock production are largely the responsibility of women? These questions are relevant for most disaster scenarios and for humanitarian and rehabilitation practices generally. Agricultural relief and rehabilitation policies are often guided by the assumption that humanity depends on a handful of commodity crops, most of which are defined as 'main' cereal and cash crops. Coincidentally, these are often associated with commercial farming, where production and income are often controlled by male farmers although women contribute their labour.

Most livelihoods of the poor are based on multiple activities and sources of food, income and security. Home gardens, communal plots, pastures, agro-forestry and cash crop production are some of the common features of small-scale, semi-subsistence agriculture which include the collection and cultivation of the roughly 3,000 wild and domesticated plant species regularly exploited for consumption and sale.[2] More specifically, about 30 crops actually 'feed the world', providing 95 per cent of people's dietary energy (calories) or protein.[3] Although women market their surplus to generate additional family income, their farming system is commonly defined as subsistence because it prioritizes production for family consumption, providing the food which is crucial for the nutritional well-being and health of rural families.

In many regions, including Central America, women are also responsible for the management and reproduction of small livestock. Chickens and pigs are a common sight in most rural homes, and may be reared for home consumption or for sale, or may be used as 'insurance' against times of stress, including disasters.

Wars and natural disasters, and subsequent displacement, are indiscriminate in their impact on rural livelihoods. Yet few, if any, calculations are made of losses in the host of 'female' crops. There is therefore little understanding of the impact such losses have on livelihoods, on income and food security. Agricultural recovery from disasters is a responsibility that women are left to shoulder largely on their own. Just how they are able to manage to restore their losses, over what period of time and at what cost, remain questions requiring research.

humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes continue to favour men

Three decades of knowledge

For 30 years the world has known that women play a critical and central role in world food production. In 1970, feminist economist Ester Boserup conducted a pioneering study that presented the first comprehensive, empirically-based analysis of women's participation in agriculture in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America.[4] Boserup unveiled to the world the extent of women's labour in agriculture and, in the process, deconstructed the widespread notion that farmers worldwide were men.

Three decades of research have largely supported Boserup's findings. FAO now estimates that, on average, women produce between 60 and 80 per cent of the food in the developing world, making up 51 per cent of the agricultural labour force worldwide and 63 per cent in developing countries. Yet, in spite of pioneering studies, available research and global statistics, humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes continue to favour men in their allocation of agricultural resources. The example of Hurricane Mitch reveals that women still find it more difficult than men to gain access to valuable resources such as land, credit and agricultural inputs, technology, training and services that would help them recover from disasters or enhance their production capacity.

The last few years have seen some positive changes with programmes paying greater attention to female farming systems. FAO's proposed emergency intervention (2000 to 2002) for internally displaced families in Colombia targets women for horticultural projects, primarily for the cultivation of vegetables and fruits, and the rearing of small animals such as chickens and pigs.[5] Such programmes are a welcome change indeed. Other agencies (particularly NGOs) are also introducing gender-sensitive agricultural projects, yet these remain marginal efforts in the greater scale of humanitarian and rehabilitation practice. In FAO's proposed programme for Colombia, roughly US$170,000 will be invested in seeds and animals for the women's projects, while over US$1,000,000 is directed at seed inputs for maize and bean production alone.[6]

Women, plant genetic resources and disasters

One critical element of female farming systems that requires research and analysis within the context of disasters and disaster-induced displacement relates to their role in the conservation and management of plant genetic resources. The vast majority of the available literature on women and plant biodiversity is found within 'development' discourse and the link with emergencies and displacement is still at a preliminary stage.

A key concern is loss of diversity of agricultural crops. Although the causes of genetic erosion are multiple, with the spread of commercial agriculture being the principal cause, studies are also beginning to assess the impact of disasters on genetic resources, including the potential loss of local crop variety, their resilience to crisis and how strengthening this can reduce the negative impact of disasters. Natural disasters in particular can have a devastating effect as flood waters, hurricanes, mudslides and volcanic eruptions wash away or bury gene banks. Farmer gene banks may also be lost as a result of displacement, especially when long in duration. The war in Zimbabwe during the 1970s disrupted local patterns of seed distribution and caused a substantial depletion of seed stocks and varieties, as farmers lost access and control over their crop varieties as a result of curfews or forced displacement into 'protected villages'. Restrictions on their movement meant that they were unable to guard their crops against pests and raids, and could not save their granaries and seed stocks during relocation.[7] More recently, displacements caused by intense conflict in the Uraba region of Colombia is eroding the rich biodiversity once found in communities along the Riosucio river. One study found losses in 48 varieties of rice, 17 of maize, 16 of beans and 15 of yucca (cassava).[8]

Among the richest remaining repositories of genetic diversity are home gardens. Over generations, women have been collecting, preserving and experimenting with indigenous seeds from staple and secondary crops, as well as with local wild plants that may have nutritional or medicinal value. One study in Thailand found a total of 230 different plant species growing in the gardens of one village alone, with individual garden diversity ranging from 15 to 60.[9] In Sub-Saharan Africa, women have been found to cultivate as many as 120 different plants alongside men's cash crops, while in the Andean countries of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, women develop and maintain the seed banks on which food production depends.[10]

Women manage the selection of wild genetic resources for home planting, of seeds for conservation into the next planting season, and of plant mixtures for inter-cropping in fields and gardens. These are sophisticated processes requiring extensive and detailed knowledge of genetic characteristics and traits. Continual *in situ* research and experimentation make possible the conservation, use and further development of local genetic diversity. Not surprisingly, home gardens are often referred to as 'informal experimental stations', providing a home to a large pool of biodiversity. FAO notes that in Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America women's home gardens represent "some of the most complex agricultural systems".

Recommendations

It is now recognized that the maintenance of genetic diversity is essential for local farming systems and the long-term sustainability of agricultural production in complex and changing environments. Knowledge of farming seed systems, including crop varieties, genetic resources, seed management and livelihood strategies under normal and stress conditions, is necessary to determine needs as well as effective forms of assistance.

- **Need for observance of the International Code of Conduct:** Given the rapid erosion of genetic resources and the grim prediction of more 'super disasters', it is critical to restore those which are lost by such crises. Losses threaten to wipe away crucial resources forever, and rehabilitation efforts need to move beyond the distribution of staple seeds and to attempt to promote greater diversification, as well as the restocking of local seed banks. FAO now considers that international NGOs should be under an obligation to abide by the International Code of Conduct on the Collection and Transfer of Plant Genetic Resources.

- **Need for full community involvement:** One notable initiative is the food security recovery programme of Swissaid in Colombia. The Riosucio area in the country's Uraba region is home to a wealth of biological diversity, yet it is also one of the most violent regions in the country, prone to intense conflict between warring factions. Increased violence during 1997 caused massive displacements, forcing peasant families to abandon their agricultural lands for up to 19 months. The loss of contact with their land and inability to cultivate during this period caused the loss of most of their traditional seed varieties. The recovery programme of Swissaid implemented during the return process was based on traditional practices of seed conservation and management, and therefore focused on the recovery of basic seeds through male farmers and of the home garden economy through women farmers. Recovery of seeds, however, was difficult given the losses and required research among the small population groups that managed to remain in the region during the conflict. Community seed banks enabled initial production, exchange among communities, and reproduction until sufficient supplies were available for each family unit. The home gardens became the main focus of the first recovery efforts and women were active in the process of exchange among communities. In all of the projects supported by Swissaid here, "the initiative of women in the recovery of cultivation and traditional medicinal plants has been extraordinary. The [home garden] becomes the symbol of the rehabilitation of the land and the beginning of life after the exodus."[11]

- **Need for gender-aware research:** Programmes such as Swissaid's are exemplary and similar strategies could easily be replicated. Unfortunately, examples are difficult to find. More research that draws together disasters and plant genetic resources from a gender perspective would go a long way to improving our understanding of the synergy between these, and would help in developing appropriate policies and practices for conservation and reproduction during the post-disaster phase.

Conclusion

The recent episode of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras reminds us that there is continued need to make women visible in spite of three decades of gender research and analysis. Disasters and disaster-induced displacement can have an devastating effect on agricultural production, on family health and on global genetic resources. Recognition of the role of women in these areas is crucial for understanding the impact of disasters and displacement on the agricultural sector, for accurately assessing losses and, hence, for effective relief and rehabilitation programmes

WFP/J Van Acker

Monica Trujillo is currently an independent researcher and consultant, specializing in humanitarian and social-gender concerns. Over the past 12 years she has worked in international cooperation and, more specifically, on humanitarian programmes in South Asia and Latin America. She is co-author of the Oxfam publication Risk-Mapping and Local Capacities: Lessons from Mexico and Central America (published 2000). Email: mptrujillo@yahoo.com

1 FAO/WFP 'Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Honduras', 29 January 1999.

2 Hope Shand *Human Nature: Agricultural Biodiversity and Farm-based Food Security,* 1997.

3 *State of the World on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,* 1997, FAO. This identifies gaps and constraints in national and international efforts to safeguard plant genetic resources and to use them to ensure food security and the sustainability of agriculture. It provides the basis for the Global Plan of Action adopted by the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, Leipzig, Germany, June 1996. It can be ordered from FAO´s website at www.fao.org

4 Ester Boserup *Women's Role in Economic Development,* 1970, New York: St. Martin's Press.

5 *Colombia: Emergency Interventions in Favour of the Internally Displaced Population: Assessment of Relief and Rehabilitation Needs,* March 2000, FAO.

6 Estimates exclude indirect inputs such as tools, fertilisers, feed or equipment. FAO's programme is still seeking financing/approval.

7 Catherine Longley & Paul Richards *Farmer seed systems and disasters,* 1999, Overseas Development Institute, London.

8 *Revista Semillas: Recuperando la Seguridad Alimentaria en Medio del Conflicto,* October 2000, Swissaid.

9 Sally Bunning *Farmer's Rights in the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources: a Gender Perspective,* 1996, FAO.

10 Mario Tapia & Ana de la Torre *La mujer campesina y las semillas andinas- género y el manejo de los recursos geneticos,* 1996. See FAO website www.fao.org

11 See 8 above.

A more proactive UN role in the security of NGO staff?

by Randolph Martin

The recent and very tragic deaths of UNHCR workers in West Timor and Guinea have once again focused attention on the precarious security circumstance under which humanitarian relief work is so often conducted.

At the UNHCR ExCom meetings in Geneva in 2000, opening remarks from High Commissioner Ogata, Secretary-General Annan and WFP Executive Director Bertini each highlighted concern over the security of humanitarian aid workers. Just a week earlier, directors and senior managers from 25 major American and European agencies met together for a two-day OFDA/InterAction-sponsored workshop on staff security. Indeed, security of aid workers has been a growing concern and priority over the past few years and is only punctuated when situations such as West Timor and Guinea bring to the forefront the sobering realities of the security environments in which the UN and NGOs work.

In recent years there have been notable inter-agency efforts to address security concerns. Working under funding from OFDA, in 1996 InterAction established an NGO Security Task Force comprized of representatives of a number of American and European NGOs. The Task Force and subsequent Security Working Group went on to design a comprehensive curriculum for training NGO workers on security. The curriculum has since been picked up by the British NGO RedR which, with funding from OFDA and Britain's Department for International Development, is offering the week-long course from regional centres around the world over the next two years.

The Humanitarian Practice Network at the Overseas Development Institute has recently published *Good Practice Review #8: Operational Security Management in Violent Environments,*[1] authored by Koenraad Van Brabant who has also been an active participant on the InterAction Task Force and Working Group. The book is an important reference for NGO security planners, bringing together input from scores of NGOs and establishing both a common language and conceptual framework for understanding security and strategies for protecting aid workers. Not only have NGO contributions to the book been impressive but major governmental donors have also come forward to support the effort: publication was supported by the governments of Britain, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the US.

VOICE's Humanitarian Safety and Protection Network (HSPN) has also made an impressive effort to establish a mechanism for tracking and analyzing security incidents. Prior to the HSPN project - with the notable exception of ICRC - our understanding of security incidents, qualitatively and quantitatively, has been largely rooted in anecdotal reporting.

The UN is also taking significant steps towards improving security for its field operations. The Secretary-General's recent report on 'Safety and Security of United National Personnel'[2] overviews the scope of the problem faced by the UN in the field and the shortcomings of a strategy developed for the situation as it appeared twenty years ago. The report sets forth a number of proposals to improve security. These would include: appointment of a Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level, establishment of a more reliable mechanism for funding Field Security Officers and increased resources for the office of

UNICEF/HQ99-0950/Jim Holmes

Football stadium in Dili, East Timor, designated a 'safe haven' in the weeks following the arrival of the INTERFET peacekeeping forces.

the UN Security Coordinator (UNSECORD) which would provide for enhanced staff training, security assessments, counseling and stress management.

Coordination with the NGO community

The Secretary-General's report outlines improvements that are a step – if not a leap – in the right direction toward enhancing the security of UN personnel. However, beyond recognizing that NGOs face the same challenging operating environment, the report makes no mention of the need to enhance coordination and joint security efforts with the NGO community upon which the UN is increasingly dependent. This is a significant oversight, not only for NGOs but for the security of UN field operations.

UNHCR, as a case in point, relies heavily on NGO implementing partners to achieve its mandate[3] yet has done little to clarify its role with NGOs in the realm of security. In the NGO-UNHCR meetings prior to this year's Executive Committee meetings in Geneva, UNHCR's Chief of Safety, Roland L'Allier, indicated that there is no formal relationship but rather *"ad hoc"* arrangements that vary from situation to situation. Mr L'Allier also indicated that the *ad hoc* arrangement is "flexible" and "works". Indeed there is flexibility. Talking to NGO field staff around the world about what role UNHCR plays in security issues, one gets replies evocative of the parable of the blind men and the elephant where each man describes the overall appearance of the animal based upon the one appendage that he is able to touch: security management in each situation is so dramatically different that it is difficult to grasp the overall vision. It is less clear whether or not this "works".

UNHCR is uniquely situated for playing a larger representational role on security

When UNHCR chooses to undertake a coordinating role in security, the results can be most impressive. Coordinating NGOs – often likened to herding cats – is notoriously difficult. Yet, when UNHCR calls a security coordination meeting for the NGO community, the NGOs come. When UNHCR establishes a common communications network or frequency, NGOs participate actively. When UNHCR offers technical advice or training to NGOs on anything from site security to convoy operations, NGOs are generally keen to tap that expertise. These are roles that UNHCR is uniquely positioned to offer. Individual NGOs rarely have the resources to hire their own security officers – and even if they had, NGOs can benefit enormously from a common UN/NGO forum to discuss and coordinate security matters. A common understanding of the security environment emerges, along with a common language and coordinated responses. Information is shared which benefits not only the NGOs but UNHCR as well. UNHCR is uniquely situated not only for creating this forum but also for playing a larger representational role on security matters. One of the pillars of good security derives from the diplomatic relations between the humanitarian community and the local or regional powers. Again, in most situations, UNHCR is far better positioned than most NGOs to approach national and regional authorities – or major donors – at the highest levels to advocate for humanitarian access and the security of aid workers.

Compromise and competition

If UNHCR is so ideally situated to play a central role in security for NGOs, why can this role not be made more formal? One problem is that UNHCR's effort is generally centred on the appointment of a Field Safety Advisor (FSA). The FSA is a security professional with the expertise and mandate to advise on matters of security. The appointment of this position is not automatic, even in the most precarious of security environments: only 60 out of 80 high-risk posts have assigned security officers.[4] For UNHCR, the decision to appoint an FSA rests solely with UNHCR's Resident Representative, for whom the decision is largely one of resources and priorities.

Panos Pictures / Howard Davies

Biaro camp, Kisangani, DRC

The UNHCR country office must be able and willing to fund the position out of the country budget using funds that might otherwise be used to support programme activities. In an atmosphere of diminishing funding, the decision can force difficult compromises. Yet, in the absence of an FSA, UNHCR's ability to play a coordinating role for its NGO implementing partners is all but eliminated.

Even when an FSA is appointed, there is no guarantee that UNHCR will actively take on a coordinating role with NGOs. In the absence of formal guidelines or policies spelling out the role of UNHCR vis-à-vis the NGOs, the relationship between the FSA and the NGOs is largely a product of personalities and competing demands on the FSA's time. As such, the relationship is indeed *ad hoc,* varying significantly from country to country and FSA to FSA. If the Secretary-General succeeds in his proposal to fund these positions out of general funds, then the job itself should be redesigned to include liaison and coordination with NGOs.

Even if UNHCR is not able to broaden the advisory services of its FSAs, it should be more forthright about what it can and cannot do for its implementing partners. Typically, UNHCR will offer vague verbal reassurances to NGO representatives. This tends to mask the fact – surprising to many NGO workers – that the UN has no formal responsibility whatsoever for NGO security. Such miscommunication of capacity and intent has left NGOs behind in more than one evacuation, and would no doubt alter NGO security planning if there were more clarity from the beginning.

UN/NGO Memorandum of Understanding

The UN has attempted a more formal security agreement with NGOs. In 1996, UNSECOORD drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in an effort to establish a framework for a security relationship between UN organizations and their NGO implementing partners ('implementing partners' are those NGOs with a contractual relationship with a UN agency for implementing a specific project under UN funding). Under the terms of the MoU, the general responsibilities of the UN include unspecified "protection of international staff", inclusion of "relevant information" about international staff in the UN's security plan, keeping the NGO informed about security developments and measures being implemented by the UN and, "to the extent possible", provision of travel assistance on a reimbursable basis in the case of emergency. "Where possible", the UN also agrees to represent the NGO's security concerns to the authorities of the host government.

In exchange, the MoU requires that signatory implementing partners "fully follow the instructions of [the UN] regarding security matters", yet the NGOs are to "assume all risks and liabilities related to the security of its staff" and "deal with all claims as may be brought against the UN arising from the extension under the Memorandum . . . to its international staff". This surrender of authority has been a central issue for the NGOs, particularly in view of the murky promises of protection in return. One wonders what organization would agree to surrender authority over security-related decisions yet retain responsibility for the consequences of those decisions. The MoU goes on to require that the NGO "ensure that the [UN] is at all times informed of the whereabouts and movements… of international staff…". The MoU also requires that the NGOs "lend, when possible and to the extent feasible, on a reimbursable basis, travel assistance to [UN personnel]".

In short, the MoU provides for the exchange of security-related information and – "to the extent possible" – the evacuation of international staff in exchange for the NGO's willingness to surrender its authority on security matters to the UN. The NGO also pays a fee to the UN, based upon the cost of the Security Provisions and the number of subscribers bearing those costs.

Questions

Above and beyond the overarching question of whether the vague provisions of the agreement are worth the costs, the MoU raises a number of questions requiring clarification. What exactly is an 'implementing partner': does the MoU pertain to NGO staff funded by other donors but working on UN-funded projects? Does the MoU extend to an implementing partner's staff who are working on complementary programmes not funded by the UN? Is the MoU in effect when NGOs are implementing projects in good faith during the often protracted periods of time when the UN is processing proposals and agreements and, in a strictly formal sense, there is no agreement between the NGO and the UN? Do the provisions of the MoU relating to evacuation pertain to national staff brought in for the purpose of implementing a UNHCR-funded project? What if an NGO does disobey the security instructions of UNHCR – is the entire MoU revoked or are the recalcitrant NGO staff simply omitted from the related portion of the security plan, such as an evacuation?

Despite these and many other questions raised by the NGOs, UNSECOORD has been resolutely unwilling to alter the MoU, even to add clarity and even though not a single NGO has signed on to the MoU as a global agreement. (IOM, which is not generally considered an NGO and has a very different set of security concerns vis-à-vis the UN, is the only organization that has signed globally.)

Why is it unreasonable for the UN to expect NGOs to "fully follow the instruction of the [UN] regarding security matters"? Part of the answer surely relates to the culture of independence under which most NGOs operate, for better or for worse. However, there are other concerns as well.

First, and perhaps most important, an NGO's response to a security environment must primarily be related to the NGO's global mandate and local mission. An NGO implementing agricultural extension services should have a lower risk tolerance than an NGO undertaking life-saving medical services. It is unrealistic to expect both organizations to respond to security situations in the same fashion.

Secondly, the UN's own response to security environments can be compromised by fiscal concerns that are unrelated to NGOs. For example, as noted above, if the Resident Representative is unwilling to prioritize funding from the country budget, there will be no Field Safety Advisor. In Uganda there is no UNHCR FSA and thus weak provisions for UNHCR staff working in the precarious environment in the North, where the Lord's Resistance Army continues to wreak havoc. UNHCR staff are reluctant to visit field sites and, citing security concerns, have spent little more than a few days in the Achol Pii refugee camp so far this year.

Nevertheless, UNHCR expects NGOs to carry out services in the camp on a daily basis. If NGOs were to follow UNHCR's lead on security, there would simply be no services for refugees.

Funding is also involved in the determination of the UN's security phases but not always as one might anticipate. According to the candid explanation of a senior UNHCR official in Hargesa, UNHCR in Somaliland remained at Phase 3 long after conditions had improved, simply because of concerns over the impact of the elimination of a phase-related security allowance on an already demoralized staff. Given these issues, among others, it would clearly be unwise for NGOs to hand over security decisions to the UN even in the best of circumstances.

As a global document outlining the relationship between the UN and the NGOs in the realm of security, the MoU is significantly flawed. It demands that NGOs surrender authority over their own security affairs in exchange for unspecified protection and support for evacuation. At the same time, the MoU does not address the many critical security coordination issues that are so important to NGOs. It should be no surprise that no NGO has signed the document on a global basis. Interestingly, there are some instances – 14 in all - where NGOs have signed at a country level. The countries include Liberia, Tajikistan and Sudan. One might surmise that the usefulness of the MoU is greatly increased in such places where NGOs are unlikely to have the capacity to handle the logistics of evacuation or the diplomatic connections of securing – at the highest levels - humanitarian access and the protection of aid workers.

Despite our criticism of the MoU document, IRC is among the signatories to the MoU in Sudan where we are working together with the UN in the government-held garrison towns of Southern Sudan. Evacuation options are limited and communications are highly restricted. The Government of Sudan unofficially (if not officially) views the humanitarian effort as aiding and abetting its enemies. It is under these challenging circumstances - where evacuation options are dramatically limited and expensive and where high-level diplomatic relations with governments and warring parties may enhance humanitarian access - that a formal MoU may be most appropriate.

Recommendations

While this article may appear critical of the UN, its recommendations are built upon situations in the field where the UN has in fact stepped forward and taken a leading role in security:

Firstly, security coordination improves dramatically when a UN Field Security Officer is appointed. The decision to appoint a Field Security Officer should be made solely on consideration of the security environment, not upon the fiscal concerns and conflicting priorities of the Resident Representative. Accordingly, these positions – costing some $100,000 each - should be funded from a separate centrally managed fund. This, in essence, is among the UN Secretary-General's proposals.

the MoU is significantly flawed

Secondly, NGO security coordination should be a **formal** responsibility of the UN Field Security Advisors. Included would be organization and facilitation of routine security coordination meetings, establishment of a shared security communications network, provision of threat assessments and exchange of pertinent security information. Participation in these activities would not (or could not) be required, nor would they imply a liability to UN. Nevertheless, experience shows that they would be well supported and valuable to NGO and UN staff alike.

Thirdly, the UN should make a concerted effort to embrace the language and conceptual framework that the NGOs have developed in recent years, as succinctly represented in ODI's latest *Good Practice Review* and the RedR-InterAction security training course. Various UN organizations and the NGOs are increasingly accepting common 'best practices' under many sectors of programme operations, up to and including the Sphere Project. This is an excellent opportunity for the UN to recognize and embrace the substantial achievements of its NGO partners in the field of security.

Finally, the UNSECOORD MoU should not be abandoned but re-worked to add clarity and focused functions within specific contexts. It should be invoked when evacuation options are limited and where high-level representation and coordination on security are pivotal to ensuring humanitarian access. Portions of its text should be context specific, specifying the sites it covers and the roles that can be expected from the parties working in those sites. In these limited circumstances, such a tight security regimen should be offered to UN implementing partners and might even be required of them. In short, for the MoU to be useful, it is imperative that UNSECOORD show some heretofore-undemonstrated flexibility in re-crafting the MoU on a more context-specific basis.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper has been on how the UN might play a more active and useful role in enhancing security for their NGO implementing partners in the field. This should not be construed to imply that the NGOs cannot do more to address their own security concerns. The hope that the UN can play a more active security coordination role largely reflects the failure of the NGO community to fill this role for ourselves. Moreover, few NGOs have designated security officers at HQ or in the field; few have adequate security policy structures; few are adequately addressing security orientation and training; and few are adequately addressing the resource needs for enhancing field security. Clearly, we all have a long way to go.

The purpose of this article is to urge the UN to clarify, if not formalize, its unique and central role in enhancing security for all humanitarian aid workers. At the very least, it may inspire new dialogue between concerned NGOs and UN agencies on how we might better work together to create a more secure working environment for our humanitarian mission.

Randolph Martin is Senior Director of Operations at the International Rescue Committee. Email: randy@intrescom.org/

1 Koenraad Van Brabant, *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments.* Good Practice Review 8. 2000. Overseas Development Institute. www.odihpn.org/

2 Kofi Annan, 'Safety and Security of UN Personnel: Report of the Secretary-General', UN General Assembly, Fifty-Fifth Session, 2000.

3 In 1999, UNHCR budgeted nearly US$300 million through its NGO implementing partners.

Children in adversity

by Jo de Berry and Jo Boyden

In September 2000, the Refugees Studies Centre and the Centre for Child-Focused Anthropological Research of Brunel University hosted an International Consultation on 'Children in Adversity' in Oxford.[1] The 110 participants were brought together to share their knowledge, research information and practitioner experience to promote a better understanding of children, their development, their capacities and vulnerabilities, and the risks they face in highly detrimental settings. The participants divided into five working groups: refugee and displaced children, children in armed conflict, working children, children and family incapacitation, and children in deleterious institutional settings.

The aim of the consultation was to increase understanding of the resilience and coping strategies of children exposed to highly stressful situations, as well as the risks they face. It was proposed that recognition and support of children's competencies and resourcefulness can encourage a move away from a focus on child pathology and towards the recognition of children as social actors with valid insights and skills. This in itself can lead to better child protection.[2]

Factors influencing children's resilience and coping

Much of the discussion focused on identifying factors that contribute to or undermine children's resilience and coping in situations of hardship. Five themes in particular arose in the armed conflict and forced migration working groups:

1. **The relevance of social definitions of childhood**

Approaches to and experiences of childhood vary widely across cultures and contexts. Childhood tends to end far earlier for girls than for boys, for example, with the transition to adulthood in women often being associated with puberty and marriage. In situations of adversity, notions of childhood, youth and adulthood can be highly fluid, and the boundaries between generational categories contested. How childhood is understood in any given setting can have a major impact on resilience and coping.

For example, the Children in Armed Conflict working group heard how many young Ethiopian boys have been conscripted as soldiers. Practitioners involved in programmes for their demobilization and reintegration noticed a distinct difference in the ability of the boys to come to terms with what they had done as active combatants. Those who had undergone initiation ceremonies prior to conscription showed better resilience to the conditions of war than boys of the same age who had not been initiated. These initiation ceremonies stress a transition to manhood, a status that would accommodate the activities of warfare, while boys who had not been initiated found it difficult to reconcile what they had done with their status as a 'child'. When humanitarian interventions introduce specific age distinctions which are not necessarily functional in the host society (for example, classing all those under 18 as children), such interventions can even change how the host society defines and responds to children.

Yet, alongside the relevance of social constructions of what it is to be a child, it was also recognized that both the risks of adversity and the attributes of resilience and coping do alter significantly with age. Young children are often seen as the most vulnerable, due to their dependence on others and their inability to comprehend many of the situations they confront. In one refugee settlement in Indonesia, for example, the high fences surrounding the school were perceived by younger children as the perimeter of a prison camp. The children thus saw school as a place of fear and restriction rather than of opportunity and freedom. Undoubtedly, infants face very specific risks. In Mozambique, for instance, the war in the Gorongosa region disrupted the elaborate social relations and cultural practices surrounding breast feeding and weaning. Women did not keep up traditional practices, which would have ensured a two-year spacing between children. Children were weaned more abruptly and infant mortality soared. Cases such

UNHCR/27217/06.1997/K Singhaseni

as these indicate that much more information is needed about age-related vulnerabilities and competencies.

2. The importance of a child's cultural learning

Research and practitioner experience highlight the importance of children's cultural inheritance and learning in confronting adversity. Children are heavily influenced by their cultural, material and social environment. Particular societies have their own ideas about the capacities and vulnerabilities of children, the ways in which they learn and develop, and those things that are good and bad for them. These ideas affect approaches to child socialization, learning, discipline and protection and, hence, to a significant degree circumscribe children's adaptation, resilience and coping during time of stress. Some societies actively train children in endurance to enhance resilience.

In Uganda, for example, suffering and hardship are construed very much as part of everyday experience. After a time of war, young people were able to use their cultural resources – joke telling, humour, companionship, religious faith – to cope with the many losses they had endured. In another example, pastoral nomads were found to encourage personal autonomy in herding boys, and to have very positive ideas about migration and an essentially spiritual view of family; these values and attitudes fostered resilience in boys separated from their families during conflict and forced to migrate overseas.

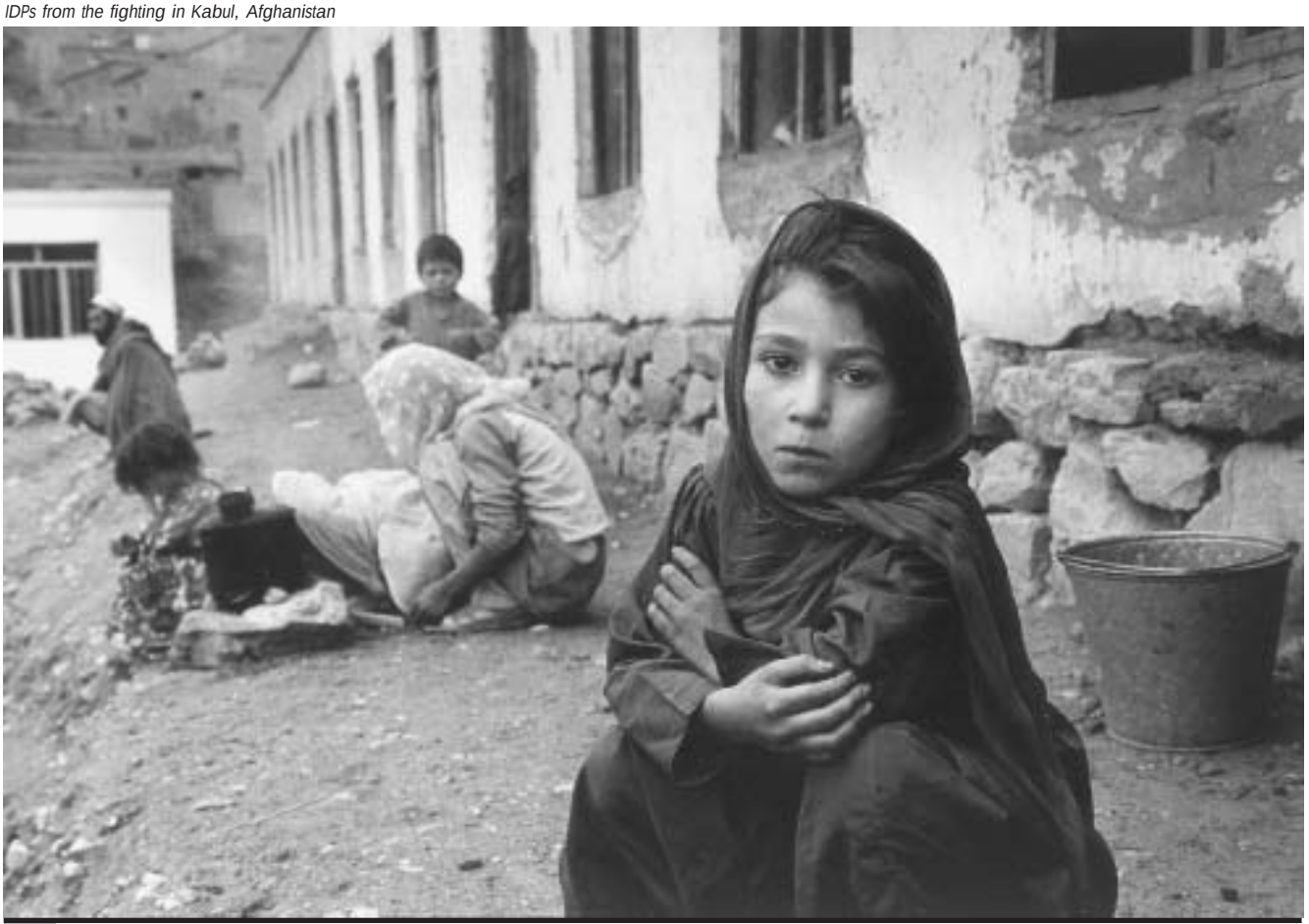
A child's cultural context not only provides the necessary resources for coping with hardship but also defines whether or not they are overwhelmed psychologically by their experiences. These are resources that differ between cultures and within cultures. In some contexts - in Palestinian refugee camps for instance - families exercise far greater control and restriction over girls than boys. This is justified in terms of girls' greater need for social protection; however, the constraints placed on girls may limit their ability to learn essential skills for dealing with adversity.

3. The adaptability of children

The Refugee and Displaced Children working group discussed an array of risks commonly faced by displaced children. These include poor physical health, disruption to and loss of family, separation, statelessness, lack of security, environmental degradation, social marginalization, lack of education and absence of power, choice and control over their lives. Personal safety emerged as a major concern, with displaced girls and women in some cases experiencing a marked increase in sexual abuse and children of both sexes being exposed to high levels of violence within and outside the home.

In certain circumstances, cultural identity can become a major risk factor. Young Serbs in Europe, for example, were acutely aware of the stigma of their nationality, seeking immediate abandonment of their past persona and integration with the host culture. Displaced children are often doubly disadvantaged in this respect in that they no longer belong to their community of origin and are rejected by the host community. In trying to integrate, children become acutely aware of the boundaries imposed upon them – the lack of familiar space, the many places they are prohibited from entering and opportunities denied them. These strictures can have emotional and psychological repercussions, with children losing self-esteem and restricting the horizons of what they hope to achieve.

IDPs from the fighting in Kabul, Afghanistan



Panos Pictures / Martin Adler

While the Working Group dwelt at some length on the challenges confronting refugee and displaced children, they also observed how children are often more adaptable than adults.

HAYS (Horn of Africa Youth Scheme), a group of young people who had come as unaccompanied refugees from Ethiopia to Britain, described the bewildering experience of arriving as young children in a foreign country, the frustrations they felt when people made assumptions about their background and the alienation of being labelled as a refugee rather than accepted as an individual person. Yet through regular meetings, organized by the young people themselves, the members of HAYS have offered each other space to share their reflections and to respect each other's needs for friendship and support.

Indeed, children often manipulate their dual identity by adopting those elements of the host culture that are useful for survival and acceptance in a new environment, while clinging to aspects of their original heritage that provide emotional security. Children learn the host language, cultural values and practices more quickly than adults and this can lead them to assume adult roles in the wider community, acting as intermediaries for parents (such as negotiating with authorities or doing the shopping). Such developments can be a cause of inter-generational conflict, however, especially when within the home children are expected to maintain a submissive role. This is especially the case with girls in patriarchical societies. In the longer term, therefore, the adaptiveness and agility of children is a potential threat to inter-generational relations and family stability.

4. Coping and resilience as sources of risk

In some situations of adversity, children have far more survival and coping options than adults. For example, children are often considered to present less of a security risk during conflict and displacement, enabling them to forage and scavenge in militarized areas from which adult civilians are barred. Often, however, conflict and displacement markedly increase children's economic and social responsibilities while at the same time severely limiting their choices and, under these circumstances, children's resourcefulness and coping strategies can entail severe risk. In Afghanistan, practitioners working on anti-mine education projects were dismayed when a boy who had recently attended classes on the dangers of landmines had to have his leg amputated after venturing into a minefield and stepping on a mine. He told them later that, although he was well aware of the danger, collecting scrap metal from the minefields for sale was the only way he could make a living.

"Now that we've finished the survey, can we tell you about our problems?"

Young Palestinians in refugee camps in Jordan experience many problems associated with long-term displacement in cramped conditions; their coping efforts focus on breaking away from an oppressive family environment either through early marriage or fleeing to take part in armed struggle. Engagement in combat can be a coping mechanism for boys in Sierra Leone also. In a climate of accusation and fear, all boys - including civilians - risk being identified as combatants and attacked by opposition groups. Joining the military provides physical protection, access to food and clothing, weapons and companionship. Clearly, while such strategies may resolve immediate problems, they also pose grave new threats, such as sexual abuse.

What children do in the name of survival and coping during adversity can have serious repercussions for their relationships and social integration later in life. Once the fighting ceases, for example, former child soldiers may be held to account by their communities and families for their actions during combat. The roles and responsibilities that children assume in wartime often seem inappropriate in times of peace, and the post-war context can involve societal judgements concerning children's activities that are far stricter than those made during war.

However, 'normal' child development indicators and measures have little validity during times of war. Practitioners who have worked with former child soldiers stress the importance, in terms of the children's well-being, of acknowledging and building on, rather than condemning or disregarding, the skills and strengths (such as leadership, teamwork, resourcefulness and courage) that these young people may have learnt in combat. Resilience is best supported through positive reinforcement rather than rehabilitation.

5. Role of children in their own protection

In Mozambique, practitioners conducted a survey to assess levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in a war-affected population with the intention of implementing a counselling programme. After completing the survey, some local children asked, "Now that we've finished the survey, can we tell you about our problems?" The investigators had clearly failed to address what the children saw as their main concerns which, it transpired, were to do with the loss of schooling and farmlands.[3] In another project, aimed at reuniting children with their parents in Tanzania, children did not understand the questions in a family-tracing questionnaire, disliked being asked directly about sensitive issues such as the loss of their parents and did not know what the information was to be used for. Yet they felt compelled to answer, simply to please the authorities.

Many people at the conference attested to the difference that can be made in terms of the quality and impact of child protection interventions when children play a meaningful role in programme design and implementation. At the very least, ignoring children's perspectives can undermine their ability to manage and adjust to adversity.

Additionally, children often have insights into their problems of which adults are unaware. Talking to children in war-affected communities in Sri Lanka, for example, revealed a major problem of alcohol abuse that had not been apparent from conversations with adults. Similarly, displaced children in several settings were found to be particularly preoccupied about their inability to fulfil social and economic obligations normally associated with childhood, such as the care of fields or animals, and the threat that this posed to their passage to adulthood. Children also often have sound ideas about possible solutions to their problems. In the

Sivantheevu region of Sri Lanka, field officers made a concerted effort to learn about children's worldview and perspectives, developing an understanding of children's needs as articulated by the children themselves. The children identified play, the reconstruction of their village and the re-establishment of trust as priorities and were subsequently involved in designing initiatives to strengthen these aspects of community life.

Findings from other child-focused interventions reaffirmed the tangible benefits of children's participation, including greater self-esteem and lesser risk of psychological distress. Indeed, there was a suggestion that, to promote resilience in children, practitioners should rid themselves of the 'problem solving' imperative that drives so much of their work. They should learn to step aside and recognize the capacity of children and their communities to address their own problems and take action on their own behalf using indigenous mechanisms and strategies rather than imported models.

Implications for child protection policy and practice

One of the tensions faced at the consultation was the question of how to move on from observations concerning what influences children's resilience and coping to the design of better policy and practice for children in hardship. There remain many unanswered questions. If we are to focus on children's own abilities and strengths, how do we then formulate the role of adult intervention? If we focus on children's collective responses, do we risk losing sight of individual children who are particularly vulnerable and isolated? If children's responses are so influenced by their historical and cultural setting, can we use global standards such as those set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child? If children's resilience and coping strategies - which may be beneficial in the short term - have negative repercussions in the long term, then should we not concentrate on the prevention rather than amelioration of situations of adversity?

One important step made at the consultation was the recognition that the ability to answer such questions demanded better knowledge and understanding of children's experiences of adversity. Yet it emerged that what practitioner experience already exists (of the relative success and failures of interventions with children) is not widely disseminated. More serious still, there has been very little research globally into the impacts of different protection measures and approaches on children's well-being and seldom are projects for children critically evaluated using culturally appropriate and child-focused criteria. Frequently, academic research into risk and resilience in children in adversity does not reach beyond the confines of a particular discipline and is not disseminated in an accessible and issue-orientated manner. Knowledge that is disseminated is often biased and incomplete; it was striking, for example, how little systematic attention was given in the armed conflict and forced migration working groups to the implications of gender and age in terms of exposure to adversity and patterns of vulnerability, resilience and coping.

For these reasons the Children in Adversity consultation can only be seen as a first step in a process of debate, research and action on child protection issues. The follow-up to the consultation will work to further this process at many levels.

It will, **firstly,** ensure that the essence of the event – recognition of children's strengths and creative coping ability - is advanced in influential international fora.[4]

Secondly, a report on the consultation will be disseminated before the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001; regional workshops on the topic, intended to bring together researchers and practitioners, are also proposed for 2001.

Thirdly, there will be advocacy of the need for further substantiation of knowledge about children's resilience and coping in adversity and for better understanding of the lives and circumstances of affected children, with a focus on age and gender differentiation. There will also be advocacy in regard to the need for systematic evaluation of the impact of protection interventions on the well-being of children.

And **finally,** a workshop planned for July 2001 will explore methods that can be developed in the acquisition of more effective information about children affected by adversity and the impacts of protection measures.

Dr Jo de Berry was until recently a Research Fellow at the Centre for Child-Focused Anthropological Research at Brunel University conducting research on Reconciliation and Reintegration: Issues for War-Affected Children in Uganda. She is currently a consultant for a war-affected children's project with UNICEF's Regional Office South Asia. Email: joannadeb@deberry17.freeserve.co.uk.

Dr Jo Boyden is a Senior Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre, conducting research on children affected by armed conflict and forced migration, especially in South East Asia. Email: jo.boyden@qeh.ox.ac.uk

1 The event was funded by: DFID, CIDA, UNICEF, The Bernard Van Leer Foundation and The Save the Children Alliance.

2 The conceptual frameworks that have long shaped understandings of children's experiences of adversity tend to be dominated by assumptions of medical and pathological relevance. The content of these concepts and their limitations are discussed in the conference background paper 'Children's Risk, Resilience and Coping in Extreme Situations' Boyden & Mann 2000: Refugees Studies Centre.

3 The inadequacy of the paradigm of 'trauma' to do full justice to children's experiences of adversity has been discussed at length elsewhere. See, for example, C Petty & P Bracken *Rethinking the trauma of War,* 1998, London: Save the Children.

4 The Consultation's website allows for the dissemination of insight, resources and critique on these issues: see www.childreninadversity.org

UNICEF/HQ00-0746/Bumheim

International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg, September 2000.

In this section, Howard Davies responds to issue 8's discussion on Accountability by highlighting questions facing media practitioners.

Accountability in the media

The discussion on accountability in issue 8 raised many interesting points, not least that many leading NGOs are developing strategies for assessing the efficacy of their programmes in terms of their advocacy and accountability. The paternalistic attitude adopted by some aid agencies towards their development and emergency work has for the most part been proven outmoded and inappropriate. Simon Harris's article describing the Listening surveys initiative, conducted by Oxfam GB and SCF UK with displaced people in Sri Lanka, is an indicator that innovative practices to assess accountability are being successfully and imaginatively employed.

This commitment has been simultaneously reflected in the attitudes of the communications departments in the larger NGOs. Photographers and writers are constantly encouraged to challenge the stereotypes that their images and words may support and, through interviews, to give a voice to people who in the past have often remained nameless faces in a photograph.

Aid agencies like SCF have published clear guidelines both for the photographers who take pictures for them and for those who use them, such as designers. These guidelines address a range of representational issues including the misuse of images by selective cropping or inaccurate captioning, techniques for too long employed to subvert the meaning of images. Even before the advent of digital manipulation, the old adage of the 'camera never lies' had become an evident falsehood with numerous examples of manipulation. Now with the technical ability to alter images convincingly so readily available it is more important than ever that media practitioners act responsibly.

Sadly this attitude is not always prevalent in the mainstream media where pressures, such as deadlines, result in unsatisfactory compromises. A UK broadsheet published a photograph I had taken of a Vietnamese refugee woman and child in a Hong Kong camp to accompany an article about the poor living conditions of Filipino maids in the former colony. Another picture editor, at the Daily Mirror, while viewing my pictures of Somalia asked me for a few prints for the 'famine file'.

It is not just the broadsheets who can have such a cavalier attitude to images. A refugee group used a photograph I had taken of an Assyrian Christian refugee girl in New Zealand to accompany the story of an Iranian Muslim girl in the UK. By altering the ethnicity, nationality, religion and country of exile, a disservice was done to the family. Only after long discussion had the family agreed to their children being photographed, in the hope that it might create a better awareness of their plight.

Oxfam encourages a responsible attitude in the photographers who document their development and emergency work. This includes an understanding that the gathering of background information and interviews takes time and will inevitably compromise to some degree the photographer's ability to produce images. That is preferable, however, to the photographer who speaks to no one, taking photographs which have no context or background.

Last year, following the initial exodus of refugees from Kosovo, I had the opportunity, through Oxfam, to document the lives of a refugee family where two of the three sons had been disabled with a degenerative illness. The children had previously attended a disability centre which Oxfam had supported for many years in Pristina, well known for its radical advocacy of disability rights. Through extensive interviews and over several days we were able to build up a picture (in a much fuller sense) of the family's life in the camp, and of some of the particular problems faced by people with disabilities in a refugee crisis.

Lack of accountability by photographers and journalists can have severe repercussions. On an assignment to Pakistan to cover the Afghan refugee camps, I was warned by the UNHCR press officer of the inappropriateness of photographing young Afghan girls. The previous year, despite having been similarly warned, a photojournalist snatched a picture of a young Afghan refugee girl while she was bathing by a river. The photo subsequently appeared on the cover of a major news magazine. The local Mujahideen became aware of the photograph and, with the name of the camp helpfully supplied in the caption, duly found the girl and reportedly executed her for the disgrace she had caused Islam.

Failure to address accountability may not always have such extreme consequences but the issues it raises, whether for the journalist or aid worker, remain the same: issues that cannot be ignored.

Howard Davies is a freelance photojournalist who has been documenting the lives of refugees and asylum seekers for more than twelve years. A website featuring many of his photographs can be found at www.exileimages.co.uk.

update

Malukus in crisis

According to the Indonesian Red Cross, the number of IDPs in Indonesia driven from their homes by ethnic and religious conflicts and separatist struggles has exceeded one million. Indonesia is now in the top five of the list of countries experiencing displacement crises. While there are IDPs in every province of the vast archipelago, the greatest single number comes not from East Timor but from the much less publicized crisis in the Malukus. Indonesia's National Board of Social Welfare estimates that some 220,000 people have been displaced within the Malukus. In a recent report, the US Committee for Refugees estimates that at least 350,000 have been displaced within the Malukus while a significant unknown number have sought refuge elsewhere in Indonesia.

Formerly known as the Spice Islands, the Malukus are a group of some 1,000 islands in the Indonesian provinces of Maluku and North Maluku. Prior to the outbreak of conflict in early 1999, the population of about two million was evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. Simmering conflict between the two communities has been exacerbated by the presence since April 2000 of 3,000 heavily armed Islamic militants of the Java-based Laskar Jihad. The inability of the Indonesian government to prevent what the Christian communities see as 'religious cleansing' points to the involvement of elements of the armed forces in fuelling the devastating communal conflict. Powerful civil, military and economic forces continue to use religion to sow distrust and fear between the two communities.

Catholic and Protestant leaders in the Malukus have pleaded for UN assistance. Indonesia's embattled President Wahid has acknowledged the severity of the crisis in the Malukus and accepted international aid but has adamantly rejected the possibility of a foreign peacekeeping force to quell the violence. The security situation in the Malukus has hindered efforts to get assistance to the displaced and has caused some international agencies to suspend operations. The outgoing UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata has said she is "very frightened" at the prospects of further massive destabilization and displacement in the Malukus and elsewhere in Indonesia.

For further information, see the report of the US Committee for Refugees at www.refugees.org/world/articles/indonesia_rr00_10.htm.

Damning report

The World Commission on Dams was established in 1997 after the World Bank convened a meeting of governments, the private sector, international financial institutions, environmentalists and representatives of dam-induced IDPs. The Commission's report, recently introduced by Nelson Mandela at a London conference, pulls no punches: most of the 45,000 large dams in the world have cost too much, were late, damaged the poor and have failed to provide all the electricity and water for irrigation claimed by their planners. While Western construction companies have gained billions of pounds worth of business paid for by aid agencies, construction of dams has greatly added to the debt of some of the poorest countries. The report debunks the argument that hydropower is necessarily 'green'; because of decaying vegetation, many dams produce as much greenhouse gas as generating electricity with fossil fuels.

While recognizing that many dams have produced benefits, the Commission found that "in too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms, by people displaced, by communities downstream, by taxpayers and by the natural environment".

The Commission estimates that the number of people displaced by dams is between 40 million and 80 million, most of them in China and India. The report urges export credit guarantee departments not to support any further dam projects before obtaining prior consent of those affected and reaching agreement on compensation schemes.

The full report (with summaries in several languages) is available at: www.damsreport.org. Further information on dams is at www.dams.org and www.irn.org

International community neglects unfolding emergency in Afghanistan

By the end of the 1980s, conflict in Afghanistan had produced the world's largest ever single refugee caseload, at times as high as 6.2 million persons. More than a decade after repatriation to Afghanistan began, there are still some 2.6 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. Huge numbers of people displaced by recent Taliban military successes and the unprecedented drought afflicting Afghanistan are trying to flee the country at a time when Afghanistan's neighbours are bitterly resentful at having to share the huge refugee burden without sufficient support from the international community.

UNHCR puts the total number of Afghan refugees in Iran at 1.4 million. Iranian public opinion, fuelled by media representations of Afghans as criminals and smugglers, is increasingly hostile to their presence. In September 1999, the Iranian parliament passed legislation ordering their complete removal from the country by March 2001. More than 150,000 Afghan refugees have been sent home from Iran since April 2000 under a 'voluntary repatriation programme' jointly implemented by the Iranian government and UNHCR. 70 per cent of them have been ethnic Tajiks.

UNIYA/Jesuit Refugee Service

Iran's repatriation programme is controversial. A desperate shortage of funds caused by donor neglect has forced UNHCR to cut the repatriation grant from US$40 to US$20 per family. Some refugee groups have condemned the programme as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'forcible deportations'. Young women who have been able to access education in Iran fear for their future in Afghanistan where female education has ceased under Taliban rule. Médecins sans Frontières has stated that "Afghan refugees cannot return home in safety and dignity" because of the drought, on-going fighting in Afghanistan, the massive level of internal displacement and outbreaks of disease.

UNHCR's estimate that there are 1.2 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan is disputed by the Pakistani government which cites a figure of 2 million. UNHCR's relations with Pakistan have been strained by Pakistan's decision in early November to close the Afghan-Pakistan border. The Pakistani move came in response to the arrival at its border of thousands of families from Afghanistan's non-Pashtun minorities fleeing recent fighting in north-eastern Afghanistan. Pakistan has denied charges that its actions are ethnically motivated and that it is surreptitiously allowing Pashtun speakers to continue to cross the border. UN Coordinator for Afghanistan Erick de Mul has expressed concern about the minorities who might be denied their right to asylum as a result of the closure.

Tajikistan, although a signatory (unlike Pakistan) to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, has also closed its border in order to block the entry of an estimated 200,000 IDPs either camped along its frontier or attempting to reach it.

UNHCR, the anti-Taliban alliance and Human Rights Watch are among those urging Pakistan and Tajikistan to reopen borders amidst concerns that the closures will exacerbate the suffering of the victims of the conflict in the midst of winter and the worst drought in memory.

On a visit to the region in October, outgoing UNHCR head Sadako Ogata sympathized with Iranian and Pakistani resentment at having to bear the consequences of hosting a refugee population increasingly neglected by the international community. Ogata could do little except commiserate as international donations to Afghan refugees have virtually dried up. Pakistani calls for UNHCR to resettle refugees in camps inside Afghanistan and Taliban demands for urgent UN assistance come against a backdrop of a niggardly international response to the crisis. The World Food Programme estimates that between half and three-quarters of the country's 22 million people are suffering the effects of drought and that up to one million Afghans could starve to death unless emergency steps are taken. UNHCR sought $43m for its year 2000 programmes in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran but has so far received only half the money. For every $200 donated for each refugee in the Balkans, just $20 is given for each Afghan refugee.

For online information, see our extensive set of Afghanistan links at www.fmreview.org/3links Displace.htm#afgh

Reangs

35,000 members of the Reang tribal group from the north-eastern Indian state of Mizoram have been languishing in miserable conditions in camps in the neighbouring state of Tripura since being displaced in October 1997. Supplies of food and medical assistance are inadequate. 500 Reang died of cholera in the Tripura camps in 1998.

Conflict came to a head when the Reangs, an indigenous and predominantly Hindu community of some 85,000 people, started campaigning for the creation of an Autonomous District Council (ADC). Leaders of the militant Bru National Union point out that smaller tribal groups in Mizoram have ADCs of their own and that the Reangs, by virtue of their status as a 'backward' tribal group, have a constitutional right to rule themselves.

Reang demands for autonomy are opposed by the Mizos, an educated and predominantly Christian community, who have ruled the state of Mizoram since its creation in 1986. The Mizos have sought to maintain their dominance of the small state they fought hard to establish and fear that allowing the Reangs an ADC would ultimately lead to the fragmentation of the state of Mizoram. Mizo authorities routinely brand Reang and other minority tribal groups as outsiders and delegitimize their claims by deletion of names from the voters' list and questioning of census records. Mizoram authorities deny supporting the Mizo student extremists whose violent retaliation after the death of a Mizo forest guard created the climate of fear which drove the Reangs from their homes in 1997.

For three years the Mizoram authorities have not acted upon demands by both the central government and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to allow the return of displaced Reangs to their homes. The NHRC, the state governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the central government have agreed a timetable for the complete repatriation of Reangs by the end of 2000. It remains to be seen whether there is sufficient political will to end the suffering of the Reangs.

UN adopts resolution on the detention of asylum seekers

by Bret Thiele

A number of States, particularly in North America, Western Europe and Australia, have imposed policies whereby persons seeking asylum are detained, often indefinitely. These policies are ostensibly for the purpose of controlling the movement of asylum seekers; however, they may also inhibit persons from lodging or pursuing their asylum claims, or induce them to abandon their claims, particularly if detention is prolonged and conditions poor. Furthermore, detention policies may actually be designed to discourage asylum seekers from seeking refuge in certain countries.

Regardless of the true purpose of such policies, the detention of asylum seekers raises a number of serious human rights concerns.

At its 52nd session, in August 2000, the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights expressed its concern that "certain detention practices and policies may violate international human rights principles, standards, and norms." In considering resolution 2000/21 on the detention of asylum seekers (UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/2000/21), which it later adopted, the Sub-Commission discussed the role of the UNHCR Guidelines on applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers which were adopted in 1999. The Guidelines offer a clear articulation of the minimum standards regarding the detention of asylum seekers that States must follow in order to comply with their respective international legal obligations. Fortunately, support for the Guidelines ultimately found its way into the resolution, in which the Sub-Commission "strenuously urged States that have not already done so to abide by the Guidelines" and other international standards.

As the UNHCR Guidelines state, under international law, detention of asylum seekers should be used only in exceptional and strictly limited circumstances, and even then only on a case-by-case basis. If detention is deemed appropriate and in accordance with the Guidelines and international law, it must be under humane conditions and separate from those facilities used to incarcerate persons convicted of criminal offences. Alternatives to detention are available and should be utilized. These include various monitoring mechanisms such as regular reporting, the provision of a guarantor or surety, release on reasonable bail, and the use of 'open centres' where asylum seekers are housed but allowed to leave during the day. These alternatives must be made part of any asylum process in order to ensure that detention complies with international law by being utilized only in exceptional and limited circumstances.

Furthermore, States must try to avoid detaining vulnerable persons such as children, torture victims, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. In the event that such persons must be detained, they should be held in circumstances in which their particular needs are respected. In addition, family members should not be separated during detention. If asylum seekers must be detained, they must be allowed adequate opportunities to communicate with and receive visits by legal counsel and family members, access to necessary legal and related forms and documents, and information in a language they understand.

The adoption of resolution 2000/21 by the Sub-Commission highlights the value and necessity of the UNHCR Guidelines on applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers. The text of the Guidelines can be viewed at: www.unhcr.ch/issues/asylum/guidasyl.htm

Bret Thiele is Legal Officer with the Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions and a human rights consultant. Email: Bret_Thiele@yahoo.com.

Appointment of the UN Special Coordinator of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed in 2000 that there should be increased efforts by all concerned agencies and governments to bring about concrete improvements in the delivery of assistance and protection to internally displaced populations at the field level. To this end, the IASC agreed that a Senior Inter-Agency Network would be established to carry out reviews of selected countries and to make proposals for an improved inter-agency response to their needs. Dennis McNamara has been appointed as UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement within OCHA in order to head this inter-agency review process for an initial period.

In addition to the involvement of UN humanitarian and human rights organizations and the special role within the Network of the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs (Francis Deng), the Special Coordinator will liaise closely with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and the large number of NGOs, both international and local, who are involved with this issue. He will undertake regular briefings of governments throughout the process; host States – and in some cases, non-State actors – will also be closely consulted, not least regarding their primary responsibility for the protection and assistance needs of displaced populations within their territories.

The main objectives of the country reviews are: firstly, to assess – with the UN country team – current efforts to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced populations and to identify any areas where the current response may not be adequate, what might be done to address such gaps, and who might do it; and, secondly, to make longer-term recommendations for follow-up arrangements, as well as proposals for revised inter-agency approaches to strengthen the future response.

Priority countries proposed to be reviewed include Angola, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Indonesia. The first of these missions, to Eritrea and Ethiopia, was undertaken in October 2000. A mission to Burundi is scheduled for late December 2000. The review missions will maintain a highly operational focus and will assess the situation within the overall framework provided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The protection of IDPs, including particular categories such as women and children, will receive as much attention as the provision of assistance.

For more details, Mr McNamara's office can be contacted at: +41 22 917 3111.

Refugee Studies Centre,
Queen Elizabeth House,
21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK.
Tel: +44 (0)1865 270722.
Fax: +44 (0)1865 270721.
Email: rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk

David Turton retires

David Turton retires as Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the end of December 2000. He will be returning to his anthropological research and writing on the Mursi of south western Ethiopia and spending more time with his family. In the immediate future (January and February 2001), he will be in Ethiopia to make a film on the Mursi, dealing, among other things, with the trade in small arms. The film will be shown in the UK's Channel 4 series 'True Stories' in May 2001.

International Summer School in Forced Migration 2001 2 - 20 July 2001

Fully funded scholarships are available for nationals from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

This three-week residential course provides a broad understanding of the issues of forced migration and humanitarian assistance; participants examine, discuss and review theory and practice. Designed for managers, administrators, field workers and policy makers in humanitarian fields. Involves lectures and seminars by international experts, small group work, case studies, exercises, simulations and individual study.

The course is held at Wadham College in the heart of Oxford. Course fees: £2,250 (incl B&B accommodation in Wadham College, weekday lunches, tuition fees, course materials, social activities). Closing date for applications for bursaries: 15 March 2001; closing date for applications for places: 1 May 2001.

Contact the ISS Administrator at the RSC. Tel: +44 (0)1865 270723. Email: summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk Address at top of page.

Forced Migration discussion list

The Forced Migration discussion list aims to encourage greater exchange of information and to promote discussion on issues surrounding refugees and internal displacement. It currently has 470 members, from some 40 different countries. The list is moderated by Elisa Mason, Information Officer for the Forced Migration Portal Project at the Refugee Studies Centre.

To subscribe, interested users can simply visit the list's homepage at www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/forced-migration.html and click on the 'join or leave' option. An archive of previous postings is also available through the homepage.

Latest RSC Working Paper

Refugees on Screen

by Terence Wright

See Publications section (p46) for details or visit www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/main_inhouse.html

The Law of Refugee Status

Weekend workshop: 19 – 20 May 2001

A comprehensive workshop on the scope of the refugee definition which gives participants the opportunity to grapple with difficult issues of application of the legal norms in the context of factual scenario based on actual refugee claims. Instructor: Professor James C Hathaway, Director of the Program in Refugee and Asylum Law at the University of Michigan Law School and author of *The Law of Refugee Status* (1991) and editor of *Reconceiving International Refugee Law* (1997). Solicitors attending the course can claim CPD hours.

Fee: £120 (including course materials and lunches)

Further information and application forms from: www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsc/ or contact Dominique Attala at: Refugee Studies Centre, QEH, 21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1865 270272. Fax: +44 (0)1865 270721. Email: rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Forced Migration Review is funded mainly by grants from institutions and agencies involved in development and humanitarian work. We would like to thank the following organizations for their commitment to *Forced Migration Review* in 2000 and 2001:

AUSTCARE
Danish Refugee Council
European Commission
Lutheran World Federation
Norwegian Refugee Council
Oxfam GB
SCF (UK)
The Ford Foundation, Cairo Office

Special thanks to UNICEF for their sponsorship of this issue on Gender and Displacement.

unicef
United Nations Children's Fund

ExCom:
a Southern view

UNHCR/ S Hopper

ExCom 2000

The Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) attended its first ExCom meetings in Geneva in September 2000. ExCom was a grand and formal affair, providing a global perspective on the refugee situation. It was helpful for an organization such as ours, from the South, to know what major players are doing and especially to hear their response to African refugee concerns. It also allowed us to undertake advocacy for refugees in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region, as well as to extend our network and linkage with other NGOs in similar work.

However, while we acknowledge that consultations such as these are necessary for raising international awareness of refugee situations and for mobilizing support both in financial and human resources/expertise, we also feel that more needs to be done in translating the goodwill expressed in such fora into practical solutions.

From a Southern NGO perspective, two issues stand out for us, namely: i) the lack of adequate representation of Southern interests at these consultations and ii) the inconsistency between pronouncements and actions.

i) Lack of representation of the South

Given that Africa produces and hosts significant numbers of refugees, there is a worrying lack of adequate representation of this part of the world at ExCom. When discussing major issues such as protection challenges currently facing UNHCR or when proposing recommendations to defend the rights of refugees within the context of increasingly violent situations, the Southern perspective is crucial. Challenges to asylum - questions both of access and quality - is also a serious issue affecting African refugees, and the constraints experienced by the South in giving asylum to those seeking refuge and protection must also be taken on board.

ExCom seeks to explore ways of increasing complementarities between NGOs and UNHCR in the field but this cannot be achieved without the involvement of those in the forefront. More needs to be done in concrete terms to secure the participation and involvement of the South. The annual ExCom meetings are not adequately advertised in the regions and in the field; Southern NGOs are not fully aware of the relevance of the ExCom and participation is therefore low. In addition, Southern NGOs find it difficult to attend such consultations, partly because of lack of funding. A more concerted effort must be made both to advertise ExCom more widely in the South and to assist Southern NGOs to attend by making appropriate funding available.

ii) Inconsistency between pronouncements and actions.

The theme of the ExCom Consultations in September 2000 was 'UNHCR at 50: From Response to Solutions'. A review of UNHCR since its inception indicates a mixed picture of successes and inadequacies. We are well aware that the challenges facing UNHCR are immense. Its budgetary allocations are insufficient; some governments do not cooperate; and their staff are increasingly targeted in strife-torn areas. As an NGO from the South, it also hardly escapes our knowledge, however, that assistance for refugees in the South is not comparable to that offered to refugees in Europe. The quality of refugee care, assistance and protection varies from the North to the South. In the South, access to shelter, basic rights, food, resettlement as a durable solution and protection is inadequate, and many refugees, especially those in designated protected areas (ie camps), face a daily regime of rape, abduction and murder, while we hear little denunciation by UNHCR of such acts.

Refugees the world over face the same problems of displacement, trauma and loss of livelihood, dignity and loved ones; why then is the suffering and pain of one particular group more deserving of attention and assistance than the other?

Over the years, ExCom discussions have always focused on how to further the protection of refugee rights. Results on the ground, however, do not favourably reflect the recommendations made. While we seem to be aware of the issues,

effective implementation of these recommendations is not readily evident.
The time has come for UNHCR and other relevant authorities to take action to correct these imbalances and to be seen to act on these issues and concerns, in order to make ExCom 2001 a more productive and fruitful experience.

Refugee Consortium of Kenya
Contact: RCK, PO Box 25340, Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel/Fax: +254 2 560418
Email: refcon@iconnect.co.ke

forthcoming

International Conference on Refugee Women Fleeing Gender-Based Persecution

4-6 May 2001: Montreal

The Canadian Council for Refugees will be hosting an international conference bringing together some 200 participants: refugee women, refugee rights groups, refugee decision makers, academics, government representatives, UNHCR and others interested in ensuring that women fleeing gender-based persecution receive protection. Special efforts will be made to ensure that there is participation from all regions of the world (and not just from Western countries). The goals of the conference will be to increase awareness about gender-based refugee claims, to develop strategies to promote recognition of gender-based refugee claims and to strengthen networking internationally among those working on these goals. In preparation for the conference, the CCR has created a network of over 120 individuals and organizations interested in the issue, communicating by email. To join the network, email Afsaneh Hojabri at ahojabri@total.net.

Registration fee: $150 for NGOs and $200 for government and intergovernmental organizations (Canadian dollars). Where the fee would present a barrier to participation, it can be reduced or waived. Some travel subsidies available.

For more information on the network and conference, visit www.web.net/~ccr/gendpers.html or contact Afsaneh Hojabri at: CCR, 6839 Drolet #302, Montréal, Québec, H2S 2T1, Canada. Tel: +514 277 7223. Fax: +514 277 1447. Email: ahojabri@total.net.

The Global IDP Project expands

by Tone Faret

The Global IDP Project can look back at a very busy and productive year during which internal displacement has featured high on the humanitarian agenda. The international debate which followed UN Ambassador Holbrooke's statement to the Security Council in January 2000 generated substantial interest in the plight of the internally displaced. As a result of the Project's longstanding role in promoting an improved international response, we were well placed to satisfy the subsequent increasing demand for information and training on internal displacement.

Since its launch in 1998, the Global IDP **Database** has become the world's central information source on internal displacement. By the beginning of 2001, the database will include 30 profiles of countries with ongoing internal displacement, and we aim to increase country coverage to 55 profiles by June 2001. The database will then be in a position to actively cover **all** conflict-induced displacement situations. The database is serving a large audience. It is also the official source of information for the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement at which NRC serves as ICVA's NGO focal point. Other services include training materials, thematic information and useful links, which we hope contribute to the usefulness of the website.

In 2001, NRC will expand its services to include an expanded **news page** on internal displacement and dissemination of information from the database in different formats for those without internet connection (ie CD Rom and hard copies of country profile summaries). The feedback we have received so far from various user groups such as the UN, NGOs, governments, research institutions and students, reflected in the growing number of visitors, confirms that the Global IDP Database is filling a crucial information gap. The database also functions as an important advocacy tool for improved assistance and protection to the internally displaced.

Besides making information about situations of internal displacement easily available, the Global IDP Project aims to carry out more **analytical work** in the future. While the information in the database will remain neutral, NRC will to a larger extent use the database to write special briefing papers, studies and evaluations. Such papers could, for example, address existing gaps in protection and assistance to IDPs in a given country.

NRC constantly aims at increasing the scope of information in the database. Today, the database counts over 90 international and national NGOs among its information sources. We will continue to prioritize **information-sharing** arrangements with other organizations working with IDPs and establish closer links with first-hand sources of information, particularly national NGOs and research institutions.

One particularly effective way of cooperating with national NGOs is through **training.** As an active field NGO, NRC recognizes that the main challenge today is to find practical ways of implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement at the national and local level. Under the Global IDP Project, NRC actively promotes the implementation of the Guiding Principles at country level through a programme of training workshops on the Guiding Principles. These aim to encourage dialogue between national NGOs, government representatives, international organizations and the internally displaced themselves. So far, five workshops have been held (Philippines, Uganda, Thailand, Angola and Georgia) and five more are planned for 2001.[1]

NRC's training workshops have been requested not only by countries facing internal displacement but also by donor governments. Depending on the availability of staff resources, NRC will therefore increase its training component next year. In addition, NRC will continue to collaborate with UN protection training initiatives related to internal displacement.

Finally, the Global IDP Project is publishing a **book on response mechanisms** among the internally displaced. We are cooperating with authors from 12 different countries and the book will be released later in 2001.

The Directorate

The Global IDP Project is a project of the Norwegian Refugee Council and is administered through its Geneva office.

Staff

Project Coordinator: Marc Vincent
Information Officers: Christophe Beau, Andreas Danevad, Bjorn Pettersson, Frederick Kok, Stacey White, Greta Zeender.
Donor Relations: Tone Faret

Major Donors

The following governmnets have contributed to the project: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden (SIDA), Switzerland, UK-DFID. Other donors: ECHO, Inernational Development and Research Centre (Canada), Norwegian Church Aid, OCHA, UNDP, WFP, World Vision International and private donors.

Website

Visit our database on internal displacement and get more information about the Global IDP Project on *www.idpproject.org*

Contact us

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at:

Global IDP Project
Chemin Moïse-Duboule 59
CH 1209 Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 788 8085
Fax: + 41 22 788 8086
Email: idpsurvey@nrc.ch

The Global IDP Project has achieved a great deal over the last two years and in 2001 will continue to improve what has become an essential information and training tool for a more coherent and efficient response to the needs of the internally displaced.

Tone Faret is Donor Relations Officer for the Global IDP Project.

1 Reports of workshops held to date and details of forthcoming workshops can be found on the Global IDP Project website at www.idpproject.org

Spreading the word: translation of the Guiding Principles

Over the past two years, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have gained significant standing at the international, regional, national and local levels as a useful tool for the protection of IDPs. A clear sign of their appeal and relevance in different parts of the world is their translation into an increasing number of languages.

Initially made available in all UN languages (**Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian** and **Spanish**) for their presentation to the Commission on Human Rights in 1998, the Principles have since been translated into a number of local languages relevant to particular situations of internal displacement: **Armenian; Azerbaijani; Georgian; Burmese, Sgaw Karen** and **Chin** (for Burma/Myanmar); **Dari** and **Pashtu** (Afghanistan); **Portuguese** (Angola); **Sinhala** and **Tamil** (Sri Lanka). **Abkhaz, Bahasa Indonesia, Filipino** and **Tetum** (East Timor) language versions of the Principles are underway. Notably, these efforts to translate and publish the Principles have been undertaken at the initiative of a variety of actors – the UN and its agencies, international and local NGOs and governments, often working in partnership. Additional such translations of the Principles into local languages are needed to make the Principles more accessible to IDPs as well as to the national and local authorities responsible for ensuring their protection and assistance. Indeed, doing so is very much in line with the Principles themselves, which affirm that IDPs have the right to communicate in a language that they understand and to education that respects their cultural identity and language.

Efforts to translate the Guiding Principles into the local languages of countries confronted with the problem of internal displacement may be eligible for support (including financial) within the framework of technical cooperation projects of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). OHCHR is posting the various language versions of the Guiding Principles on its website (www.unhcr.ch/html.menu2/7/bprinciples_lang.htm) in order to facilitate their dissemination.

Contact Erin Mooney, Special Assistant to the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs, at: OHCHR, Palais des Nations, 1211 10 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 917 9280. Fax: +41 22 917 9006. Email: emooney.hchr@ unog.ch

publications

Gender and Refugee Status

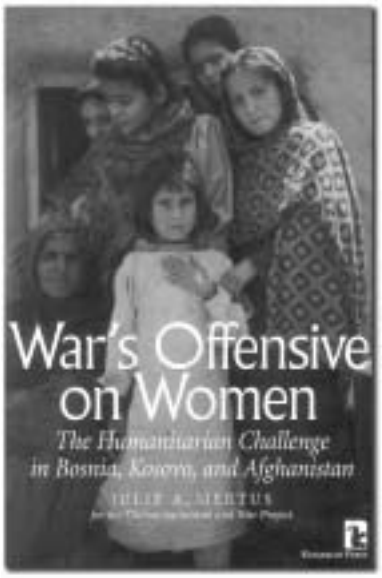
by Thomas Spijkerboer, Centre for Migration Law, Nijmegen, Netherlands. 2000. 255pp. ISBN 0 7546 2034 4.

A detailed analysis of refugee status determination and case law which shows that, at least in the North, women are now more likely than men to be recognized as refugees. This is an important overview of the position of women in refugee law.

Contact: Ashgate Publishing Limited, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR, UK. Website: www.ashgate.com

War's Offensive on Women: The Humanitarian Challenge in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan

by Julie A Mertus, Humanitarianism and War Project, Tufts University. September 2000. ISBN 1 56549 118 1 (hardback); 1 56549 117 3 (paperback). US$50 (hb); US$19.95 (pb).

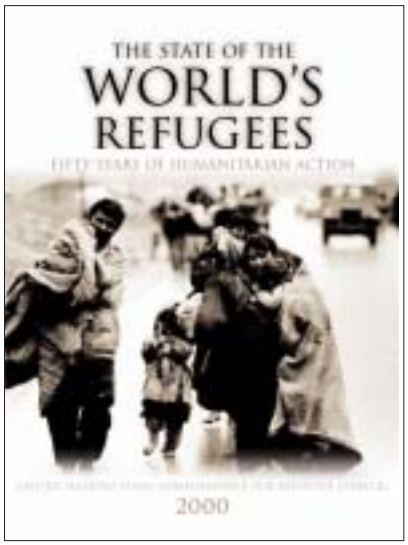


Using women's own voices and case studies, this book looks at the role played by women in war, humanitarian crises and post-war reconstruction. It details how humanitarian aid operations frequently manage to ignore the experiences and needs of women in war zones.

Contact: Kumarian Press, 1294 Blue Hills Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002, USA.
Tel: +1 860 233 5895.
Fax: +1 860 243 2867.
Order online at www.kpbooks.com.
Email: kpbooks@aol.com.

The State of the World's Refugees: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action

UNHCR. November 2000. 350pp. ISBN 0 19 829778 5 (hardback); 0 19 829779 3 (paperback). £40 (hb); £12.99 (pb).



A timely and important publication from UNHCR examining the major refugee crises of the last 50 years and the changing nature of international responses to the problems of forced displacement. A good encapsulation of 50 years of learning and guidelines for the future of the protection regime.

Email orders: (UK & Europe) book.orders@oup.co.uk; (USA) custserv@oup-usa.org.
Telephone orders: (UK & Europe) +44 1536 741519; (USA) +1 800 445 9714.
For other language editions contact: Centre for Documentation and Research, UNHCR, CP 2500, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Fax: +41 22 739 7367. Email: cdr@unhcr.ch.

Refugees on Screen

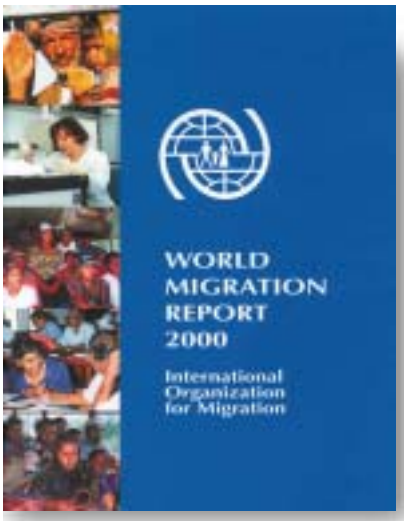
by Terence Wright, Refugee Studies Centre. November 2000. 28pp. £3.00/$4.80.

The latest RSC working paper looks at how visual representation of refugees creates stereotypes. Historical archetypes and contemporary images are analyzed along with recent technological and institutional changes in media practice. The author lays out guidelines for future research topics.

Contact: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK.
Email: rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk. Order online at: www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/main_inhouse.html

World Migration Report 2000

edited by Susan Forbes Martin, International Organisation for Migration. November 2000. 297pp. ISBN 92 9068 089 X. US$39.00.



An authoritative account of contemporary trends, issues and problems in the field of international migration, both voluntary and forced. There are regional overviews of trends, reports on the vast scale of displacement in Africa and details of "one of the most explosive branches of organized crime" – migrant smuggling and trafficking.

Contact: UN Publications, Room DC2-0853, Dept 1032, 2 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Fax: +1 212 963 3489. Email: publications@un.org. Order online: www.iom.int/iom/Publications/WMRENG2000.htm A summary of the book is available at: www.iom.int/iom/Publications/WMRPressKit.htm

'Welcome to Hell': Arbitrary Detention, Torture and Extortion in Chechnya

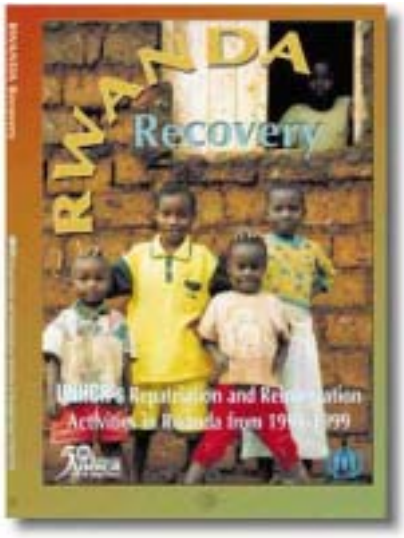
Human Rights Watch. October 2000. 99pp. ISBN 1 56432 253 X. US$10.00.

Chilling report detailing the cycle of torture and extortion faced by thousands of Chechens detained by Russian forces. Human Rights Watch urges the international community to more effective action.

Contact: Publications Department, Human Rights Watch, 350 Fifth Ave, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118-3299, USA. Tel: +1 212 216 1813. Email: genaos@hrw.org The full report is available online at www.hrw.org/reports/2000/russia_chechnya4/

Rwanda Recovery: UNHCR's Repatriation and Reintegration Activities in Rwanda from 1994 to 1999

UNHCR January 2001. 116pp. **Free.**

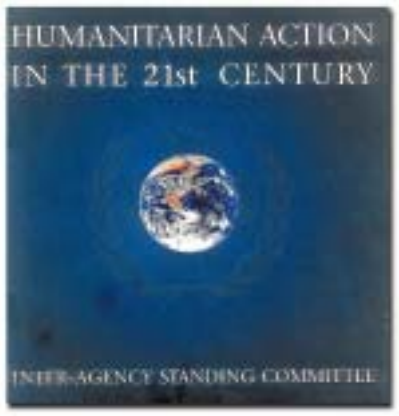


A full colour commemorative book chronicling UNHCR's role in the repatriation and reintegration of three million Rwandans in the five years following the genocide and devastating war of 1994.

For further details see www.unhcr-50.org/public/rwand.html. To order, email RWAKI@unhcr.ch (subject: Rwanda book request).

Humanitarian Action in the 21st Century

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2000. 80pp. ISBN 0 9701247 4 0. **Free**.



This publication presents a compilation of essays on the title subject by the Heads of IASC agencies and NGOs: OCHA, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, ICRC, ICVA, International Federation, InterAction, IOM, Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs, UNHCHR and the World Bank. Also includes mission statements by and contact information for these agencies.

For a free copy, contact: Ms Ute Kollies-Cummings, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Email: kollies-cummings@un.org

If you produce or know of publications which might be of interest to other FMR readers, please send details (and preferably a copy) to the Editors (address p2) with details of price and how to obtain a copy.

Nashra Al-Hijra Al-Qasriya and *Revista sobre Migraciones Forzosas*

Forced Migration Review is also printed in Spanish and Arabic.

All subscriptions to the Arabic and Spanish editions are free of charge.

If you would like to receive one or the other, or if you know of others who would like to receive copies, please send us the relevant contact details. Email the Editors at fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk or write to us at: FMR, Refugee Studies Centre, QEH, University of Oxford, 21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK.

World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Ruud Lubbers becomes the new High Commissioner for Refugees in January 2001. Will his period of office see action to put Africa's displacement crises at the forefront of international attention? The startling facts:

- *40% of all those displaced from their homes are Africans.*
- *Sixty per cent of Africa's uprooted people are from four countries: Sudan (4.4 million uprooted); Angola (2.5 million); Burundi (1.1 million); Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.6 million).*
- *Nearly one-third of all African refugees are seeking asylum in countries that are themselves experiencing armed conflict. 1.2 million African refugees have fled to potentially unsafe asylum countries.*
- *In 1999 donor governments gave $207 for every person in need in former Yugoslavia and $8 per head for those in need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*
- *One of every nine uprooted people worldwide is Sudanese.*
- *European Union emergency assistance to former Yugoslavia in 1999 was four times the amount given to the 70 ACP (Africa/Caribbean/Pacific) states.*

UNHCR/R Chalasani