

New Attack on Baha'i Faith in Iran

September 19, 1983 (Toronto, Ontario)
Iranian authorities have launched a new attack on the Baha'i Faith in Iran by officially banning all its worship and administrative activities.

Baha'is may practice their beliefs as private individuals. Any communal activity, however, has now been defined as a criminal act.

Douglas Martin, General Secretary of the Baha'is of Canada, stated that the authorities' suggestion that Baha'is may "practice their faith as individuals" is meaningless in a country where 156 Baha'is, including women and youths were judicially murdered when they refused to recant rather than accept an offer of freedom if they did so, where Iran's Baha'i children cannot attend schools if they do not deny their Baha'i beliefs, and where Baha'is cannot bury their dead or even receive the bodies of their slain fathers, mothers, husbands, wives or children.

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ICM News

The September movement programme included 8,630 Indochinese from the asylum countries of Southeast Asia, 990 Africans, 350 Iranians from Spain, 647 Afghans from India and Pakistan, 166 Polish ex-detainees and their families from the Bad Soden facility, 3,050 refugees and migrants from Europe, and 210 Latin Americans (Return of Talent and other returnees). Among the Indochinese were 2,206 Vietnamese nationals who travelled from Ho-Chi-Minh Ville via Bangkok to 20 different immigration countries.

The emigration of Soviet Jews remained at a relatively low level with 136 arrivals in Vienna. Of these, 44 proceeded to Israel and 82 were transferred to Italy for resettlement processing to other countries.

Apart from the above, 4,345 Indochinese were transferred from the asylum countries of Southeast Asia to the Refugee Processing Centres in Bataan, Philippines (4,241) and Galang, Indonesia (104).

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Repatriation of Eritreans and Ethiopians

The controversial repatriation of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti began in mid-August. The U.N. emphasizes the voluntary nature of the repatriation.

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Unaccompanied Minors

A seminar on Unaccompanied Minors is being planned by the European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles. It is to take place in Frankfurt from 13-15 March 1984.

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Seminar on Integration of Refugees in Europe

Representatives of governments and voluntary agencies from 19 European countries have completed a four-day seminar on the integration of refugees in Europe, held in Geneva under the auspices of UNHCR, from 12 to 15 September 1983.

Participants stressed that the numbers of asylum-seekers arriving in European countries and the numbers of refugees already residing in European countries did not represent, either in absolute figures or as a proportion of the total population, a problem of any significance. While the average proportion of refugees as a percentage of the total population is 0.14%, in 11 countries it is less than 0.1%.

It was, however, recognized that problems arose in the admission and integration of refugees from the fact that a number of European countries have ad-

mitted large numbers of aliens, particularly in the last 20 years, and that asylum-seekers and refugees are often perceived by the public at large as part of the overall aliens problem.

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Nansen Medal for 1983 Awarded to President Nyerere of Tanzania

Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, is to receive the Nansen Medal for 1983.

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Palestinian Refugees — Latest Reports

Food: The general distribution of food-stuffs to some 800,000 refugees was suspended in September 1982 except in Lebanon where special arrangements were made for those affected by the crisis.

Housing: UNRWA has provided assistance to more than 13,000 families in repairing or rebuilding their homes (in Lebanon).

Registration: UNRWA has initiated a new registration system to provide one card for each person rather than one card per family to be completed by mid-1984.

Protection: As of June 1983, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Olof Rydbeck, considered the prospects bleak for increased civilian security in Lebanon.

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CHANGE OF DATE ICARA II

ICARA II, the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, will take place in Geneva from 9 to 11 July, 1984.



Reports Received

Canada

- CEIC Report on CEIC/DSOS Consultation with Provincial Officials and Voluntary Sector Representatives on Immigrant Settlement and Integration. April 25-May 17, 1983.

U.S.

- The Congressional Record of May 18, 1983 which includes the (S-6907-6987) debates and proposed amendments to the U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act dealing primarily with illegal immigration.
- Brief Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Refugee Resettlement and Asylum, Refugee Policy Group, Washington.
- Testimony (June 1983) before the Senate and House Committees dealing with Immigration, Refugees and International Law by Dennis Gallagher and Julia Taft on behalf of the Refugee Policy Group re reauthorization of the Refugee Act of 1980 and program reforms.
- The Refugee Health Care System, A Background Paper on Policies, Programs and Concerns by the Refugee Policy Group, Washington.
- "Refugees and Migrants: Problems and Program Responses." The Ford foundation has written this 64-page report, which includes an overview of the global situation and description of the Ford Foundation's work around the world as part of its response to the world-wide refugee crisis.

U.N.

- "Refugee Aid and Development".
- Note on Procedures for the Determination of Refugee Status Under International Instruments".
- "Action Taken on Decisions by the Executive Committee". Outlines decisions made regarding problems related to asylum-seekers at sea, military attacks on refugee camps and settlements, assistance in Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Southwest Asia..
- "Report of the United Nations board of Auditors to the Audit of the Accounts of Voluntary Funds Administered by UNHCR for the Year 1982". (Addendum)
- "Report on UNHCR Assistance Activities in 1982-1983 and Proposed Voluntary Funds Programme and Budget for 1984".

The Canadian Input

The 34th Executive Committee UNHCR Geneva, Oct. 14, 1983

Ambassador J. Alan Beesley, in the opening address to the UNHCR Executive Committee, genuflected appropriately to support the High Commissioner's efforts with respect to the fundamental issue of protection and the need to address the root causes of refugee situations as outlined in the Aga Khan's report. Canada focussed on four issues, and it is not clear whether the ordering is significant: repatriation, local integration in countries of asylum, resettlement in third countries, and utilization of traditional settlement assistance to lessen both the likelihood and the impact of refugee situations.

Through the work of the subcommittee on protection, Canada assisted in developing a set of principles for the review of manifestly unfounded claims to refugee status, concurred in an agreement on a trial project for rescue at sea to which Canada makes a contribution, and urged continuing effort to develop a policy on preventing military attacks on refugee camps (on which there was no consensus). Canada also supported the promotion of existing legal instruments for the protection of refugees and urged the development of new, flexible and imaginative protection techniques.

The review of specific refugee situations around the world was supportive and diplomatic; it was neither analytic nor critical.

The address given by Canada's Permanent Mission in Geneva follows:

The Canadian delegation would like to add its voice to the numerous tributes to Director Moussali and Ambassador Kharma for their respective reports.

Given the difficulties and complexity of the issues discussed in the Committee, we categorically reject the suggestion of Ambassador Kharma that he failed in any way.

The subcommittee has achieved a number of positive results:

1. We have a set of principles for the review of manifestly unfounded claims to refugee status.

2. The subcommittee has agreement on a trial project for rescue at sea to supplement DISERO (which works well and to which, Canada makes a contribution).

3. On military attacks on refugee camps there was, it is true, no consensus but in our view, precision is more important than haste. As our Ambassador remarked during the general debate, even if it takes a year or two to gain consensus, it will be worth the effort.

On balance therefore we can take some satisfaction in the advancement of these issues which are vital to protection of refugees in various situations.

Mr. Chairman, the Note A/AC 96/623 on International Protection is a very useful document which highlights in a global perspective many of the problems member countries have been grappling with individually. We are encouraged by the paper, despite the gravity of problems it discusses in the field of international protection, and while there are ominous signs of deterioration in the standards of protection afforded refugees in some parts of the world, there is an essential belief expressed that the problems are not beyond our collective ability to solve. Despite some setbacks, the level of generosity displayed toward refugees particularly in the developing world, has been commendable.

It is evident in the paper submitted by the High Commissioner that there are two kinds of problems - that of *structure* of the system of international legal protections and equally important, of *application* of the principles toward people in need. Progress is needed in both areas if we are to meet today's challenges.

There is a thesis put forward in the paper that protection is being eroded because of the non availability of durable solutions. To some extent this is valid. But it must be borne in mind that in an historical perspective the current level of assistance to refugees and the number of refugees being resettled is ex-