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# Refugees in Southern Africa\*

## Destabilization and Refuges in Southern Africa

by Diana Cammack

"When there is war you don't have time to plough. You are running here and there, in the mountains, under the rocks and so forth". This was the lesson learned by thousands of Zimbabweans during their war of independence and is the lesson being learned all across the subcontinent today by millions of people, victims of P.W. Botha's war of destabilization.

South Africa -- incapable of fighting a convention war on all fronts -- began in the late 1970s, after P.W. Botha's election, to devise other ways of obtaining its regional goals. The result can be labelled "low intensity" or "proxy" warfare, or, in other words, destabilization. The situation in southern Africa fits the definition of destabilization put forward by Bjorn Hettne in *Development and Peace* in the Spring of 1985: destabilization is "all kinds of efforts on the part of a powerful actor, short of open warfare and invasion, to weaken and eliminate another actor that for ideological, military-strategic, economic and political reasons is unacceptable, even if not constituting a real direct threat in any other way than providing a dangerous example or model that could be followed by others." This definition includes clandestine and indirect military activities, as well as activities in the economic, political and cultural field.

South Africa's policy of destabilization has as its goal the continued domination of the region by the white population of South Africa. It is, in effect, the culmination of the colonial era and an attempt to halt the decolonization process. This has both economic and political implications. It means, for instance, ensuring the maintenance of economic domination established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries -- in terms of transport network, trade patterns, ownership structures and labour recruitment. It also means the continued political domination by whites by making sure that the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), which is orchestrating the struggle against apartheid, is given no shelter, logistical support or bases in neighbouring states.

South Africa's aggressive policy is also meant to undermine the initiatives of the regional grouping of nine independent states -- the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) -- so as to make it more difficult for its member states (Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique and Malawi) to gain their economic independence and therefore be in a position to advocate sanctions.

Destabilization takes several forms: the destruction of economic infrastructure, such as blowing fuel depots, pipelines, and electricity pylons; disrupting transport by destroying bridges, roads, rail lines, locomotives, buses and trucks. The psychological and social well-being of both local and refugee populations are severely disturbed by raids carried out against neighbouring states by the South African Defence Force.

Surrogate dissident forces are given training, arms and logistical support by South Africa; they have been active in five neighbouring states: UNITA in Angola, "Super Zupu" in Zimbabwe, the Lesotho Liberation Army, the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR) and the remnants of the Mushala gang in Zambia. The targets of these dissidents include political leaders, government facilities, and projects funded by international donors and staffed by expatriate workers. Sometimes, as in Zimbabwe, white farmers and tourists are targets because their deaths create international news. In Mozambique and Angola the peasantry which supports their respective governments are the main targets of the MNR "armos bandidos".

Since 1978 there have been five different phases of South African destabilization. The first ran from 1978 to mid-1980 and included attempts by Pretoria to undermine the political and economic independence of neighbouring countries through the promotion of South Africa's "Constellation of States". A second phase, from mid-1980 until the end of 1981, was more aggressive, with South African sponsorship of dissident groups increasing, as were terrorist activities of South African commandos. The war in Angola was reopened and attempts to undermine the economic infrastructure which links Zimbabwe through Mozambique to the outside world were made.

More selectivity of targets was evident in the third phase, indicating that Pretoria had begun to differentiate between its neighbours and to fine-tune its policy. The conservative states of Swaziland and Malawi, potential collaborators, were offered incentives (land and loans) to conform to Pretoria's dictates, while Mozambique and Angola came under more ruthless attack. In Lesotho, where Chief Leabua Jonathon took an increasingly hard line against Pretoria, the capital city was raided and forty-two people were killed, twelve of whom were locals.

In early 1984 President Samora Machel of Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord with South Africa, thus initiating a fourth phase. The embattled Mozambican government decided that after two decades of war and seven years of bad weather it needed peace in order to gain the breathing-space necessary to regenerate its economy. A period of "Pax Pretoria" followed, with the Angolans and South Africans also signing a ceasefire agreement and a previously negotiated non-aggression pact between Swaziland and South Africa made public.

On the surface, then, the signing of the Nkomati Accord marked the beginning of a period of regional peace and co-operation. But evidence subsequently brought to light confirms the view expressed by many a cynic at the time of the signing: Pretoria will never abide by the Nkomati Accord.

While Machel expelled members of the ANC from Maputo as promised in the Accord, South Africans extended the MNR's airstrip inside Mozambique. They continued to provide the "bandits" with communications equipment, medical supplies and arms. MNR leaders were brought to South Africa by submarine, car and airplane, and on at least three different occasions the South African deputy minister of Foreign Affairs flew into MNR headquarters inside Mozambique for talks with its leaders. A new transmission network for the MNR was set up by the South Africans, and a South African team went into the central province of Zambezia to train recruits. Also, some of the MNR were shifted from their bases inside South Africa's Transvaal province to Malawi to "take the heat off South Africa" and to enable the "bandits" to step up activity in the productive regions of northern and central Mozambique.

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The fifth phase of destabilization began late in 1984, not coincidentally about the same time Ronald Reagan was re-elected to the presidency of the United States. New incursions of "Super ZAPU" were recorded in Zimbabwe's southwest provinces, and the LLA, which has been inactive for months, re-emerged. The façade of "good neighbourliness", which characterized the earlier phase, suffered a fatal blow when Captain Wynand Du Toit, a South African commando, was captured by the Angolans in Cabinda, where he and his men had been on a mission to destroy an oil storage complex. Once more refugees became a target of Pretoria when in June 1984 the SADF raided the Botswana capital and killed a dozen civilians.

Meanwhile, Botha continued to press neighbouring states to sign agreements such as the Nkomati Accord or the Swaziland agreement. If he had had his way, the whole region would have expelled South African refugees and have allowed the South African army to patrol areas where the ANC were suspected to pass. The leaders on the Frontline refused to comply and in May 1986 the South African air force and SADF commandos raided three capitals -- Harare, Lusaka and Gaborone -- where homes and offices were destroyed and civilians killed. The target in Lusaka was the UNHCR-supported transit centre at Makeni, where eighty-six people were housed. While no one at the centre was killed by the cluster bombs or machine gun fire, a house some 300 metres away was damaged, killing two people (a Zambian and a Namibian) and injuring ten others.

The situation continued to deteriorate and in mid-October 1986 there were widespread warnings that South Africa was intent upon killing Samora Machel. On October 19th his plane was drawn off course by a bogus beacon and crash-landed in eastern South Africa near the Mozambican border, killing Machel and several of his close aids. Questions regarding South Africa's and the MNR's role remain, though South Africa has refused to continue with the international enquiry. Machel had been on his way home from one of several meetings with leaders in southern Africa, meetings aimed at reopening the Benguela railway line through Zaire and Angola to the sea and halting Malawian support for MNR bandits operating from that country. In December an agreement was reached between Mozambique and Malawi; since then, Malawi's support for the "bandits" has declined, and joint Mozambican-Tanzanian-Zimbabwean army operations in the northern and central provinces have begun to re-take MNR-controlled areas.

The cost of Botha's destabilization of SADCC states was upwards of US \$10 billion for the

years 1980-84. This amount exceeded that granted in foreign aid and loans to all nine SADCC states in the same period. According to the January 1987 report for UNICEF, "Children on the Front Line", another US \$15 billion in war damage, output losses, additional defence expenditures, and lost economic growth, was added to the total in 1985-86. The total amount -- now upwards of US \$25 billion -- is equivalent to the region's production in 1975. Put another way, the 1980-86 cost of destabilization is of the same order of magnitude as a whole year's production in the region.

The human cost is also staggering. Throughout the region peasant communities suffer as South African-backed dissidents sweep through areas, burning, raping, looting, murdering, and maiming suspected government supporters. In northern Namibia and southern Angola there is a full-scale war and descriptions of life there tell the tale.

Allister Sparks recently toured Angola and reported that in this war there are "few set pieces". Instead, it is a "hit-and-run affair that rages in farming villages and on peasant allotments". In the highlands, he explained, landmines are planted in fields and along footpaths. The result: last year there were at least 10,000 people mutilated. The Red Cross factory in Huambo manufactures limbs at the rate of sixty per week but is "still failing to keep pace with the highest per-capita rate of amputees in the world". In Angola there are at least 600,000 people displaced by war and dependent on assistance for survival. With an infant mortality rate of between 325 and 375 per 1,000, Angola ranks with Afghanistan (and Mozambique) as having the worst child mortality rate in the world. UNICEF estimated that in 1985, some 55,000 Angolan children under the age of five died because of war and destabilization.

In Namibia, one Angolan told his story to another reporter: "The South African soldiers forced us here. They say we were giving food to SWAPO (Namibian liberation forces) and they burnt our kraals and corn and threatened to kill us unless we moved to Ovamboland (northern Namibia). Later on UNITA came along and drove away our cattle." Another reporter wrote of northern Namibia in late 1985: "We drove . . . through a landscape that bore the scars of full-scale war. The countryside had been defoliated and depopulated by the . . . SADF . . . about a year ago in an effort to "pacify" the area. Only scattered remains of peasant communities were left. The South Africans have methods of dealing with rural inhabitants who refuse to leave voluntarily. First they destroy a village's water pump, a lifeline in Namibia's often arid

climate, giving villagers the choice of leaving or dying. As a last resort, there is a crude but effective technique of levelling the entire area with bulldozers."

The result of South Africa's regional aggression is that there are some 70,000 Namibians and 9,000 South Africans in Angola. There are nearly 20,000 South Africans in Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana. In Lesotho and Swaziland political refugees are encouraged to move on as the security situation in both countries is unstable. Recently, for instance, South African refugees were abducted from Swaziland by South African agents and taken back across the border. In Zambia there are over 120,000 refugees, about 90,000 of whom are Angolans fleeing from the war there. There are some 3,000 South Africans but according to the UNHCR only four to five hundred of these are affiliated with the ANC. There are also in Zambia some 10,000 Zairians, 5,000 Namibians and upwards of 20,000 Mozambicans. The vast majority of the refugee population in Zambia is self-settled in Zambian villages, where problems of food supply and malnutrition are already rife.

Zimbabwe is refuge for at least 60,000 Mozambican refugees and has a population of a few hundred South Africans. In Botswana there are about 4,500 refugees, most in Dukwe camp. Three quarters of these are from Zimbabwe, many from the southwestern provinces of Zimbabwe where the government has taken stern action against dissidents. In the last year negotiations between the governments of Botswana and Zimbabwe led to the voluntary repatriation of several hundred Zimbabweans, and more should follow.

There is an intimate relationship between apartheid, the State of Emergency in South Africa, acts of destabilization and the generation of refugees. In an effort to retain power over a black majority population and influence over the political and economic affairs of the region, the white-minority regime has struck out at both its own people and its neighbours. Cloaked in the rhetoric of a struggle against a total onslaught of communists and their African agents, Pretoria's policy is to destroy any individuals or society which supports simple democracy in South Africa. It is expected by residents on the Frontline that the white regime will continue to resort to desperate acts to stay in power. Dr. Chiepe, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Botswana, put it most eloquently "The whole source of tension is apartheid policy [and] . . . until apartheid is dismantled, lock, stock and barrel, the confusion which this vile system generates inside South Africa will continue to spill over across the borders and threaten the peace and stability of the region."

# The Displaced People of Mozambique

by Diana Cammack



Mozambican "displaced persons" meet to discuss shortages, 1986. JENNY MATTHEWS/ICFAM (UK)

The crisis in Mozambique which has recently captured the world's attention is the result of a number of factors, some of long duration. Mozambique, a country about half again as big as California with a population of about fourteen million and a GNP per capita (1984) of US \$210, was left by its Portuguese masters with only US \$1 million in foreign reserves and gold, an annual GNP per capita of not much more than US \$100 and a population with an illiteracy rate approaching 98% and largely unskilled. All but 15,000 colonialists fled, many to South Africa, and in their bitterness they destroyed and paralyzed machinery. As they left they often simply removed a vital mechanical part; other times they destroyed repair manuals and business records in an effort to sabotage the Mozambican economy.

Mozambique tried to man its important industries and service sectors with local "dynamizing groups" and in the mid-1970s it was not uncommon to find people with only elementary school education running whole provincial health programmes or serving as bookkeepers for factories. In an effort to raise food production levels quickly by building

upon the abandoned plantations, the government decided to create and fund state farms. The peasant farming sector, on the other hand, was ignored.

Scarce foreign exchange was spent on importing large farm equipment, but the expertise necessary to run such farms was missing. Hence, yields necessary to make the projects cost-effective were not realized. Not only were state farms expensive, but they also diverted scarce resources away from other sectors of the economy. Consumer goods were not produced and so the peasantry, without such items as bicycles, radios, cloth or processed foods to buy, were unwilling to produce for the market. When they did generate a surplus, much of it was bartered directly for food and other scarce items. In this way, much of Mozambique's excess production crossed into Zimbabwe and Malawi where items were available for purchase.

By 1983 the government had realized its mistake. Since then it has tried to boost peasant production by making inputs more available and by increasing production of consumer goods. Currently the government is

negotiating loans with the World Bank and the IMF which will be used specifically to foster peasant production.

But it is two other factors which have seriously worsened Mozambique's already difficult situation. One is drought and the other is war. Rainfall in Mozambique, as elsewhere on the continent, has been abnormal since 1977, with years of flooding (such as 1978) and of serious drought, such as 1981-84, continuing in some places into 1987.

Drought victims began leaving in 1981, but it was not until 1983 that masses of displaced people began entering neighbouring states. They came by the thousands, arriving with dysentery, cholera, typhoid, malaria, bilharzia, leprosy and a host of other diseases. The journey through the dry bush was often fatal. A Zimbabwean aid worker said of the Mozambicans:

Some said they left their children on the way, dying of hunger and thirst . . . They could carry them, but they didn't have anything to give them. So the children died in their arms. [Then] they just [went] near the river [bed] where there is this sand that is thrown off by the rain. So they just do this with their hands [indicating a digging position] and they bury their children there then go away. And when a baby dies on a dry place where there is no river, the mother just goes behind a tree and puts the child down.

In Zimbabwe these people found shelter under trees, around mission hospitals, at bus stations, on farms and along roads. Initially they were fed by local communities and indigenous aid agencies. The food situation in Zimbabwe itself was already critical due to the drought, but still the government felt it had a duty to help the people who had sheltered Zimbabweans during their war against Ian Smith. By mid-1984 the government decided to move the people into government-run and internationally assisted camps. Today there are four camps in Zimbabwe and discussions are underway about a fifth. These shelter some 30,000 people, though at least that many live outside, on farms, in the bush, villages and towns of Zimbabwe.

Had the Mozambicans only to contend with the drought, it is likely that they, like others in

similar circumstances in Africa, could have done so with the assistance of outside aid. But the Mozambican situation is seriously complicated by war. This is the result of South Africa's regional policy, implemented by the MNR.

The MNR (also known as "Renamo" or "armos bandidos"), was created in the mid-1970s by the Rhodesians in an effort to combat the liberation forces of the now-ruling party in Zimbabwe, who had their rear base in Mozambique. It originated when the Rhodesians, with the approval of the Portuguese, brought together several reactionary elements. In 1978, following orders from Salisbury, it set up bases deep inside Mozambique and began to attack the country's infrastructure of roads and bridges as well as its railway.

By 1980, when Zimbabwe achieved independence, the Mozambican army had routed the bulk of the MNR. What saved it from collapse was the transfer of responsibility for it from Rhodesia to South Africa. Planes were sent to pick up personnel and equipment, which were ferried to a new base in the Transvaal. Its new orders were basically the same: to attack the Mozambican infrastructure so as to cripple the Zimbabwean economy by destroying its lifeline (the "Beira corridor"), through Mozambique to the sea. SADCC was also a target. South Africa did not want to see the nine states gain enough economic independence, especially transport and trade independence, to be able to survive sanctions against South Africa. The MNR leadership sought to undermine the Maputo government, force it into a coalition where several key ministries and provincial posts were held by MNR leaders and post-colonial legislation and policy decisions overturned. To undermine the Maputo government the population had to be alienated, the economy ruined and the will to fight destroyed.

To accomplish this the MNR adopted a policy of destruction and fear. For instance, mutilation -- cutting off noses, ears and breasts of opponents -- became official policy and is still practiced to a large extent today. People are abducted from their villages to serve in bandit units as fighters, porters, farmers and prostitutes. There has never been a real attempt by the MNR to "win the hearts and minds" of the peasantry or to build an alternative socio-economic or political structure. The goal, instead, is to destroy.

And destroy they have done. For instance, in

1982 alone, nearly 500 schools were closed, turning out nearly 100,000 students. One hundred health posts were destroyed along with 140 villages, which affected over 100,000 people. By the end of 1985, one quarter of Mozambique's health facilities had been ruined and 40% of the primary schools abandoned or destroyed, putting 20% of the pupils out of school. In 1982-83, some 900 rural stores were closed, which disrupted the supply of goods to over four million people. Between 1980 and 1985 the national cattle herd, half of which belongs to the peasantry, was reduced by 40%. Special targets are health workers (hundreds have been killed or maimed), teachers, priests and party officials. Overseas volunteers (*cooperantes*) are also targeted, as are their aid and development projects: between 1981 and March 1986 over one hundred of these people have been kidnapped, wounded, killed, or all three. The situation has continued to deteriorate since, especially in the central and northern provinces.

Naturally the Mozambican army and the militia try to protect the people, but this sometimes has mixed results. A Canadian volunteer working in Mozambique explained that: "... what was happening in terms of the peasants was that in rural areas, the bandidos would be coming into the villages in the night, holding meetings and saying to the villagers: 'you have to stop being involved in any kind of structures attached to FRELIMO [the ruling party] and then we don't want to see you selling things, we don't want you going to health posts, or attending party meetings or things like that' and telling the villagers that 'if you stay in these villages [which are FRELIMO inspired] we are going to come in, burn them down and kill you. We want you to go and disperse yourselves in the bush, and live like you used to, before FRELIMO came'. But, said the *cooperante*, what happens to these people is that when FRELIMO comes back into the area, FRELIMO would say: 'We want you to go back into the villages and if you go to work on your *mashambas* [plots], you go out and work only in the day, and at night, as far as we are concerned, people walking in the bush are bandits.'"

He then provided an example of a village in the north where the MNR came in, burnt down three or four huts, killed a half-dozen people and left. The rest of the villagers fled into the bush. Not long afterwards the army swept through the area, rounded up the people and put them back into the village and stationed a militia there to protect them. Things went

well for several weeks and so the militia was removed and the bandits returned, killed a lot more people, burnt some more huts, and sent the people back into the bush. In a situation such as this, people are likely to leave in search of security.

A Mozambican woman seeking refuge in South Africa explained why she had left: "Ten Renamo men came to our village and left with all our food. At night five returned and locked forty of us in one building while they stole everything else in the settlement. Later they handcuffed our husbands and forced them to lie face down on the ground. They crushed their heads with mealie grinders while we and the children watched. Nineteen people were killed. We were not allowed to bury our dead, but were told we must leave them to rot."

It is a war such as this that has forced an estimated quarter-million Mozambicans to flee into neighbouring states while nearly four million more remain, displaced and facing starvation. In Zimbabwe, the Mozambicans are welcomed, as they are in Zambia, where at least 20,000 have joined the 90,000 Angolans. Mozambicans are less welcome in Swaziland, Malawi and South Africa.

The trip into South Africa is fraught with dangers. Many people must walk across Kruger National Park, a wild game park known for its predators. Near the border they face off mines and then an electrified fence. Skeletons litter the border and farmers on the South African side report hearing mines going off day and night.

Once inside the country they are considered illegal aliens and only when they reach one of the "homelands" are they safe. There -- in Gazankulu, kaNgwane or KwaZulu -- they are provided with food, blankets and medical aid at reception centres, and land is allocated to them by local headmen. If caught outside the homelands they are liable to be repatriated: some 1,500 are sent back each month. Yet some 50,000 have managed to reach one of the homelands to be registered, while another 20,000 await registration. An estimated 150,000 others are living illegally outside the homelands (in the "white areas"), and because they are considered illegal work seekers, they can be repatriated when caught.

But not everyone arrested by the immigration squads is sent back. Some, like Sam Ngomane,

# On Repatriation: Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

by Barbara E. Harrell-Bond

are taken to prison and from there sent to work on white farms. Sam Ngomane, for instance, was arrested in October 1983 and, after several days detention, was turned over to white farmers, for whom he worked for a year for an average salary of R 30 (about US \$15) per month.

Refugees who find their way to Swaziland are, upon arrival, screened to determine that they are political refugees and not just seeking work. About half are turned back. The rest are sent to Ndzevane, where today there are about 5,000 Mozambicans. Naturally, some try to settle in villages with members of their extended family, but because the government is opposed to their integration into Swazi society, they are generally rounded up and sent to reception centres. Some others have found work and housing on the large sugar estates that dot Swaziland's countryside.

The war shifted north in 1986 after the bulk of the MNR moved into Malawi and the MNR headquarters at Gorongoso were captured by a joint Mozambican-Zimbabwean army operation. This accounts for the decline in the number of refugees reaching Swaziland recently and the massive influx of Mozambicans into Malawi and Zambia.

Permanent settlement of Mozambicans inside Malawi is discouraged by the government there. Already overcrowded and with one of the highest child malnutrition rates in the world, Malawi does not wish to play host to refugees created by a war which it has fostered by supporting the MNR. By the end of 1986 some 200,000 Mozambicans had had to take refuge there, but most returned as soon as possible, complaining of inadequate food rations and high child mortality rates.

While the situation facing Mozambicans in each of the neighbouring states is difficult, the millions who remain and who have been displaced by the war face death, torture and starvation. Here crops are burnt or stolen, transport of goods and relief supplies disrupted, hospitals and orphanages poorly supplied. But the Mozambican, Zimbabwean and the Tanzanian armies are on the offensive, clearing areas of bandits. International aid agencies have begun a major relief effort and grain, abundant in Zimbabwe, is being purchased by international donors for delivery in Mozambique. Agricultural implements and inputs, along with fuel, clothes and household necessities are needed. But most of all, it is peace that is in short supply and until Mozambique gets this much-deserved peace, refugees will continue to pour across the borders.

In October, I visited Uganda and spoke with Banyarwanda refugees who have been there since 1959. Uganda is considering offering citizenship to these people, and one of my interests was to ask people I met just how they might respond to such an offer. As one put it, "Even if I can never go home, why should I deprive my children and my grandchildren of their homeland. I will never become a Ugandan." While it may not be "pragmatic" or "practical", every refugee I know longs for all of those symbols which are bound up in the notion of home.

It is interesting how strong is the tendency for Europeans to forget their own recent history. Today, however, there are not only differences in scale and locality, but also in the attitude of the wealthier host and donor nations. Then, countries outside of Europe were willing to receive large numbers of refugees, and vast amounts of capital were poured into Europe to promote its rapid recovery. Another, and very important, difference between post-war Europe and many refugee-producing parts of the world today, was that the promise of political stability encouraged investment and the rebuilding of Europe.

Humanitarian refugee agencies often lament their own lack of a "institutional memory" and their tendency to re-invent the wheel each time they are called to respond to a new refugee crisis. It is only through the publication of independent research that such a memory will be developed. It is through an analysis of past mistakes and successes that progress can be made.

We believe that historians have an important role to play. As Howard Adelman has noted, "... historical research into past attempts to solve refugee problems is invaluable if mistakes are not to be repeated. In that sense, refugee research shares a kinship with the refugees themselves. For it operates, if it does so at all, with little sense of its own history. Milan Kundera, the famous Czech exile writer, ... describes the function of forgetting or repressing one's history. It allows the past to be invented and old solutions to be 'reinvented'. In all the invention and artifice, culture is destroyed. We live in a fabricated world, rootless in time and in space, floating in a dream world of fantasy and not reality."

Let us think a bit more about the role of independent academic study of refugees and why up to now there has been no accountability for the work undertaken by the humanitarian community -- and, why the incredible resistance to inde-

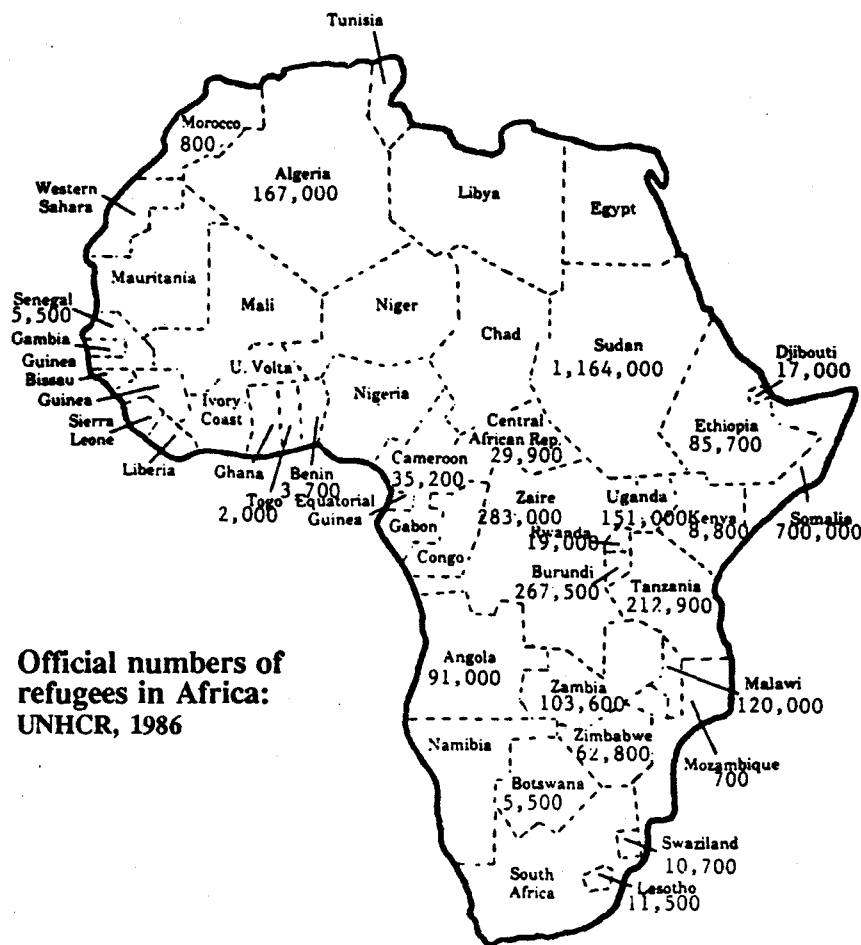
pendent research. During your meetings you will be talking about forced repatriation after the Second World War. You will be discussing events in which many of the actors are long dead if not forgotten. For your data you have relied upon interviews with survivors and upon archives which contain materials which would not have been available to you at the time these events were taking place. You will be exposing actions and events which will reveal enormous injustices and breaches of basic human rights which happened some forty years ago. You will be seeing the results of actions which were designed to serve political "interests" rather than the needs of people. Some of these actions were taken by those who were called humanitarians as well as by the politicians.

What if you had written your papers at the time these crimes against humanity were being committed? What were scholars doing at that time? What are they doing today? Very few people are aware that the same practices continue today. How many of you are aware that even while we talk in this open forum about the past, secret meetings are taking place at which much more ambitious plans are afoot to "solve" today's refugee problem? The strategy, once again, and which is already being implemented in Africa, is repatriation. It is called voluntary, but one of the incentives for people to agree to go home, is that ration cards have been taken away from the refugees.

I believe that you will find that contemporary approaches to repatriation differ very little from the period you are studying at this conference which you have so bravely labelled "forced", not voluntary repatriation. The challenge I would like to put to you as historians is to ask you to point your readers towards the contemporary situation and to make your findings accessible to aid practitioners in the field. Refugee research must be rooted in history. The historical material exists to provide those roots and your work during this conference will belie the claims that the material is lacking. Though no two refugee situations are comparable, there are lessons we can learn from the past.

*The above are excerpts from Barbara E. Harrell-Bond's address, "Forcible Repatriation: The Continuing Relevance of the Subject" which opened the Canadian-funded symposium "Forcible Repatriation After WWII" held at the Oxford University Examination Schools, Oxford, England, March 20-22, 1987.*

# How Many Refugees in Africa?



Official numbers of refugees in Africa: UNHCR, 1986

No-one really knows how many people have been forcibly uprooted by political instability and war, but the estimated numbers of refugees hosted by African countries are shown on the map. These do not include the possibly additional thousands labelled "illegal aliens" and hounded by unfriendly hosts, or the millions of people who have been uprooted within their own national boundaries by the same causes. Most alarming, the numbers of uprooted people in Africa are increasing.

## Why Are There So Many Refugees in Africa?

The majority of refugees in Africa are the result of the continuing struggle for self-determination and independence. The efforts of South Africa to destabilize the southern African region are producing even more refugees. The oppressive policies of so many African governments and their consequent political instability which produce refugees are directly linked with their extreme poverty and economic dependence. The escalation of arms sales to Africa exacerbates all of these problems.

## Who Assists These Refugees?

Most -- at least 60% -- do not receive any direct help from refugee assistance programmes. They live by dint of their own determination to survive, with the help of their hosts who are often themselves desperately poor. There are indigenous non-governmental agencies and religious bodies which do their best to mitigate the suffering of refugees. The host governments which give asylum to refugees bear the greatest economic burden for assisting them, by giving them access to services, providing land, and by permitting the agents of international humanitarian assistance to utilize their resources to help refugees. International humanitarian assistance is paid for by a few governments (the US is the largest donor) and private contributors who support the work of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and international voluntary agencies. As one refugee put it, "This is a great contradiction. We are fed by the same governments which make great profits from selling the arms which made us refugees."

## What Are African Refugees' Main Problems?

They are powerless. Decisions about their fate are taken by governments and international agencies without consultation. Many thousands are highly skilled, yet assistance to refugees in Africa is limited largely to helping them become self-sufficient in agriculture. In addition to the psychological sufferings associated with the trauma of being uprooted and the insecurity associated with their status, they share all the other problems of grinding poverty which affect the majority of the members of the host society. Money for assisting refugees is not even-handedly available for all. Rather the amount of humanitarian assistance is heavily influenced by the political interests of the "club" of donors which support refugee agencies.

## What Are the Solutions to the Refugee Problem?

The prevention of forced migration requires political will and radical changes in the world of economic order. The "solutions" which the UN High Commissioner promotes are voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of first asylum, and resettlement in a third country. Neither refugees nor most governments in Africa are enthusiastic about the idea of integration as a permanent solution. Europe and North America, which had a tradition of welcoming refugees, are fast closing their doors to people who seek asylum. At the moment, the greatest emphasis is on repatriation, but refugees are unwilling to return home until the political conditions in their countries have changed and security can be guaranteed.

## Why Is So Little Known about Some African Refugees?

The foreign policy interests of the donor governments have an enormous influence on the extent of information available about refugees everywhere. This is nowhere more true than on the African continent. Few people in the West know much about the Sahrawi refugees in Algeria. Why? Because their war for self-determination is being fought against Morocco. When Ugandans were fleeing Obote's regime in 1982-83, information about this emergency was actively suppressed. Refugees are usually located in areas which are the most inaccessible. Furthermore transport and communication to these areas is often controlled by international agencies. Academics have neglected studying refugee issues, and when they do, they often fail to disseminate information to the general public.

## Refugee Policy Legislation, May 5, 1987

On May 5, 1987, the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Minister of State (Immigration) presented a bill to Parliament to establish a new set of procedures for refugee determination in Canada. The following are the highlights of the Bill:

1 **Initial hearing:** Every arrival in Canada who claims to be a refugee will be seen within a few days by a panel of two people: one, a member of a newly created Refugee Board; the other, an immigration adjudicator to listen to the (oral) claim.

1a The main function of this hearing is to screen out several types of claimants. The following types will be rejected:

1a1 Those who arrived from a "safe third country" (as determined by the Cabinet) who had a reasonable opportunity to lodge a claim there.

1a2 Those judged to have "no arguable basis for their claims" would be returned.

1a3 Those recognized as refugees of another country.

1a4 Those who previously had been rejected as a refugee claimant, except where the claimant has been out of Canada for more than 90 days.

1a5 Those who are already subject to orders for removal from Canada.

The above decisions require the unanimous decision of the two-member panel.

1b The above negative decisions imply removal of the claimant within seventy-two hours.

1c There is right of appeal of the (negative) decision if given leave by the Federal Court to make such a claim on points of law.

1d If one or both members of the two-person panel decides that the claim is arguable, the claimant will be referred to the Refugee Board for an oral hearing.

2 The oral hearing for the claimant will be in the presence of two members of the Board. If the claim is accepted by one or both Board members, the claimant is officially accepted and may apply for landing (the official status for all immigrants) in Canada. If both Board members decide negatively, the claimant is deported. There is right of appeal of a negative decision if given leave by the Federal Court to make such a claim on points of law. Persons will be removed from Canada while their appeal to the Federal Court is being considered. They would be represented by legal counsel.

3 If granted an appeal, the claim will either be accepted or rejected. Those accepted for landing will return to Canada at government expense.

These steps represent three levels to "protect the new refugee determination system against abuse". In contrast with the present system, only three steps, instead of a maximum of eight, are available in the claim process. The system is designed to prevent claimants from prolonging their stay in Canada by exercising appeals.

After initial examination, the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees has severely criticized the legislative proposal on three grounds:

First, **inaccessibility:** The legislation "seeks ways to return (claimants) before a full evaluation can be made. Secondly, **non-independence of decision-makers:** As a whole, the decision-makers are not specialized in Canada on refugee determination or related international matters. They are part of an overall immigration control procedure. Thirdly, **no meaningful appeal:** The Federal Court is not an independent appeal body. Its role would be unworkable because leave must be granted for an appeal and only then on matters of legal procedure, not on the merits of the case.

Citing a short-cutting of human rights practices and standards of justice in Canada, the Committee calls for the withdrawal of the legislation and its replacement with means to "uphold humanitarian tradition as a symbol of hope in a dark world".

### Refugee and Humanitarian Programmes, December 31, 1986

	Government Sponsored Refugee Admissions	Announced Allocations	Privately Funded* Refugee Admissions	Special Programme Landings	Claims in Canada RSAC	Total
Eastern Europe	3,404	3,100	1,952	-	20	5,376
Indochina	3,931	3,200	2,059	-	11	6,001
Africa	846	1,000	318	-	83	1,247
Middle East	305	900	342	1,636	418	2,701
Latin America	3,422	3,200	232	704	377	4,735
Others	238	300	164	262	503	1,167
Reserve	-	300	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,146</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>5,067</b>	<b>2,602</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>21,227</b>

\* Includes those arriving at ports during the calendar year with immigrant visas, and where known, those processed abroad on an emergency basis who enter on the strength of a Minister's Permit pending landing after full compliance with the Act and regulations is demonstrated. (Data from *Refugee Affairs*, Immigration CEIC, March 4, 1987)

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## The Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford University

The Refugee Studies Programme was established in 1982 at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, out of the need for fresh directions and practice. An independent forum has been created where experience is shared by academics, practitioners, refugees, agency workers, and representatives from host governments. Through project design, training, research, public debates, publications and seminars, the RSP seeks to help host countries and refugees break the present cycle of growing dependence on international agencies.

A major objective of RSP is to stimulate the development of parallel programmes in other parts of the world, in particular in countries hosting large populations of refugees. The Refugee Studies Programme at Juba University in the Sudan was established in 1985. Similar initiatives have begun at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, the University of Zambia, Makerere University, Uganda and the Colegio de México. The RSP is also a member of the International Refugee Documentation Network, which aims to widen the availability of information and academic literature in this field. The Refugee Documentation Project at York University and the RSP have been in contact since 1982 and formalized their collaboration in 1985 through the co-

sponsorship of the international symposium, "Twentieth Century Refugees in Europe and the Middle East". Together with Lund University, Sweden, they were the co-founders of the Inter-University Consortium for Refugee Research (ICRR), which was joined by the Center for Migration Studies. The first product of the ICRR is the *Directory of Current Research*, which will be updated annually. The RSP actively encourages links and co-operates with the many other centres in Europe and North America, such as the Department of Sociology, Carleton University, where refugee research is being conducted.

An independent evaluation of the impact of emergency aid policies was undertaken by Barbara E. Harrell-Bond in *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (Oxford University Press, 1986). In a recent study for WFP in the border camps in Thailand, Josephine Reynell pin-pointed some disturbing facts about security and the psychological abuse of children. A study in Uganda was undertaken in October for the EEC by the RSP jointly with a Ugandan academic. *Refugee Issues*, a series of working papers published in conjunction with the British Refugee Council, is now in its third volume.

Since 1985 thirty-one visiting fellows, both academics and practitioners (many refugees), have been attached to the RSP, representing twenty-one nationalities. Fellows have access to all the resources of the University, and are expected to share research and experience and to participate in the RSP seminars and special lectures.

The RSP is committed to contributing to the resolution of conflict through public debate, bringing together as many sides of a dispute as possible. In the past year there has been a conference on the Western Sahara at which both the Sahrawis and Moroccans participated; another, titled "The Dilemma of Incompatible Priorities" concerned resettlement policies in Ethiopia; and more recently a meeting was called in conjunction with the Middle East Centre and Medical Aid to Palestinians to draw attention to the urgent situation in the refugee camps in Lebanon.

Most recently an international symposium was held in Afghanistan which brought together 189 refugees, scholars, government officials from both Pakistan and Iran, representatives of agencies working on the borders, and nationals from within Afghanistan itself.

A highlight in Autumn 1986 was a major speech by the UN High Commissioner on the need for political will to resolve today's refugee problem.

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I wish to become a friend of the Refugee Documentation Project for the 1987-1988 academic year. I understand that all friends receive *Refugee* as well as information on the research activities of the RDP. My cheque for \$25 (or ) made payable to the Refugee Documentation Project is enclosed.

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