

made to Nicaragua or Honduras because of the small number of applications from these areas. El Salvador (and for a temporary period Guatemala)³ is not visited because of the possible risk to the personal security of any officer sent to that country. Periodic area visits are made to Panama, Costa Rica and Belize as required. Between these visits, part-time immigration services are available in Guatemala and San Jose, Costa Rica through the respective Canadian Embassies under supervision from Mexico City. Communications, however, are not reliable nor is it an easy thing for clients from other countries in the region to obtain permission to enter Mexico for the purpose of consulting with our office there. Delays in executing routine transactions for non-refugee applicants are extensive.

Belize

One neglected area in the region is Belize, concerning which there is very little hard information. One group of Salvadorans in Belize has recently appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees requesting resettlement in Canada. Simply from the point of view of availability of land in a similar climatic zone, it would seem that Belize is a prime area for resettlement of subsistence farmers from Salvador. If any Canadian involvement is required, it is probably aid rather than resettlement which would be the appropriate vehicle.

The U.S.A.

Salvadorans

The issue of Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the U.S.A. is bound up in a long tradition of illegal economic immigration from that area of the southern United States. This flow has increased in intensity since the outbreak of civil unrest in both El Salvador and Guatemala. Estimates of a quarter million or more Salvadorans in the U.S.A. were quoted by several different sources.

The U.S.A. is the only country on the North

³Visits to Guatemala were resumed in May, 1982.

American continent which officially reports to El Salvador. Far more significant than deportations is the U.S. program of assisted voluntary departure which has the same effect as deportation in respect of the long-term prohibition against return. Voluntary departure is effected without hearing or appeal.

Among Salvadorans in the U.S.A. there is little spontaneous interest in resettlement in Canada except when the alternative is expulsion from the United States.

The Canadian Presence

The operation of our programs in the United States or anywhere else must be neutral. Canadian immigration services in the U.S.A. are available to all applicants regardless of their legal status vis à vis U.S. Immigration law. The fact that we interview on occasion in U.S. detention centres is indicative of tacit consent by the U.S. authorities to the operation of Canadian programs as well as to the policy of the U.S. government to allow deportees to proceed to destinations other than the country from which they came or of which they are citizens.

Because our limited program for Latin American refugees focuses on refugees who do not have protection or are likely to be returned, the greatest potential demand exists in the United States. Groups organized to provide legal aid and community services to Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the U.S. are only just becoming aware of the Canadian program and the growth in referrals of cases from these groups is inevitable. The magnitude is difficult to predict at this time because the number of cases they refer to us will depend on the success of other legal remedies.

Groups of volunteers who came out to meet us in Texas and Los Angeles proved to be loose coalitions of church, human rights and ethnic groups. They seem to have emerged onto the scene fairly recently and did not give the appearance of yet having

been able to coordinate respective roles one to another. In some cases, our visit had proven to be the catalyst for them to come together and discuss common problems.

Considerable differences were noted between the situation in Texas as compared to Los Angeles. In Southern California, local groups had succeeded in raising bail bonds for detained Salvadorans. Once released on bail, their priority in the refugee claims procedure drops well down the list. It is unlikely that these claims will be heard in the foreseeable future. This latter group has de facto asylum in the U.S.A. In Texas, on the other hand, bonding has not been readily obtainable with the result that deportation after adjudication of the refugee claim to the U.S. authorities is a more likely eventuality. Referrals from this area will likely be heavier. The capacity of Los Fresnos detention centre is under 250, but the turnover rate is high. As a result, there is potential for significant growth in our program from that area.

It was evident that while good contacts had been made between our Consulates and groups serving Los Fresnos detention centre in Harlingen, Texas and El Centro in California, no contact had yet been made with groups aiding detainees at Laredo and El Paso centres in Texas, the latter of which is the largest centre in the area. Efforts to make our program known to groups in this area are underway.

The Canadian program is necessarily small-scale and therefore applicable to those who are genuine Convention refugees and who fit the profile we have developed to describe those in most need. Media publicity (which had been suggested by some interlocutors) would serve to clog the system with ineligible; would raise false hopes among many and could be construed as criticism of U.S. policy. We also indicated that the place to make a referral was to any of the 11 Canadian Consulates in the U.S.A. with full-time immigration facilities.

World News

Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, Secretary-General of Thailand's National Security Council, announced that his country would push Indochinese refugees back across its borders unless Western countries honoured pledges to accept them for resettlement.

The Asia Record, Vol. 3, No. 7, October 1982.

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ICM (Intergovernmental Committee for Migration) have borrowed a Belgian expert in physical rehabilitation and a Scandinavian expert in social rehabilitation (compliments of the Belgian government and the Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils) to strengthen

their Medical Services in Southeast Asia to identify and prepare dossiers on physically and mentally disabled refugees so these people may be considered by a country for final resettlement.

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There are 175,000 Indochinese refugees and 200,000 displaced Kampuchians in Thailand. On present estimates, 40,000 are expected to be resettled in 1982. In 1981 the figure was 102,561.

The Asia Record, Vol. 3, No. 7, October 1982.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced the allocation of an additional US\$2,000,000 from his Emergency Fund for assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR in Lebanon

and Syria. Beneficiaries will include Lebanese displaced persons within Lebanon, as well as Lebanese citizens who find themselves in a refugee-like situation in neighbouring Syria.

This brings the total of UNHCR's assistance to US\$5,540,000.

UNHCR Press Release REF/1512.

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According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 11,209 Poles had sought asylum in Austria as of August. Between January and June of 1982, UNHCR reports 9,711 Poles were resettled out of Austria; of those, 3,110 went to the U.S., 2,558 to Australia, and 1,120 to Canada.

From Refugee Reports, Nov. 5, 1982.

