



AFRICA

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Algeria

An estimated 100,000 to 200,000 people remained internally displaced in Algeria at the end of 2001. Some 10,000 Algerians applied for asylum in Europe during the year, joining tens of thousands of Algerians who sought refuge abroad during the 1990s. Hundreds of thousands more Algerians have reportedly fled to Europe without filing asylum claims during the past decade.

Algeria hosted approximately 85,000 refugees at the end of 2001, including some 80,000 from Western Sahara, and nearly 5,000 Palestinians.

Pre-2000 Violence Since 1992, a brutal insurgency has killed an estimated 100,000 or more Algerians, many of them civilians. Islamic extremists launched the insurgency after the Algerian military cancelled democratic elections to prevent an electoral victory by an Islamic political coalition.

Violence peaked in the mid-1990s as massacres intensified in the so-called "triangle of death" located south of the capital, Algiers. Insurgents typically slit the throats of their victims. The government's ruthless counterinsurgency tactics have added to the massive death toll.

Violence in 2001 Bloodshed continued during 2001, although the number of deaths and the scope of new population displacement remained unknown because the government blocked most journalists and international human rights experts from visiting the conflict area.

Up to 800 persons were killed during the first four months of 2001, according to one news report. As many as 1,500 people were killed during the entire year, Human Rights Watch estimated. As in previous years, attacks reportedly occurred at several locations within 40 miles (60 km) of the capital, Algiers. Violence also struck the country's northwest region, about 200 miles (nearly 300 km) from Algiers.

Political discontent unrelated to the insurgency mounted during the year, leading to anti-government demonstrations and violence. An earthquake and widespread floods killed some 700 people, adding to the misery.

Thousands of families uprooted by the decade of violence have fled to urban areas, where they live with friends and relatives, in public buildings, in makeshift shelters, and in shanty neighborhoods.

Refugees from Western Sahara Ethnic Sahrawi refugees from Western Sahara remained at four large camps in a harsh, remote corner of western Algeria during 2001. Most had fled civil war in Western Sahara in the mid-1970s.

Negotiations to resolve the dispute in Western Sahara remained stalemated during 2001, forcing the refugees to remain in the Tindouf area of Algeria. Virtually no Sahrawi refugees have repatriated during the past two decades. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted a seminar in May to explain the concept of individual voluntary repatriation to refugees and their leaders.

Conditions in the refugee camps deteriorated in the first half of 2001 because of inadequate food aid and a \$600,000 cut in international funding to humanitarian assistance programs for the Sahrawi refugee population. Shortages of clothes, blankets, and plastic sheeting were pervasive.

Some refugees departed the camps and migrated to neighboring Mauritania “as a result of the...harsh economic conditions prevailing in the camps,” UNHCR reported.

A report by the UN secretary general in June noted that the “overall situation of the refugees was very precarious and...the reduction of basic assistance...has had a deteriorating effect on the vulnerable refugees.”

Some Sahrawi refugees reportedly feared that the international community imposed aid cuts to compel the refugees’ premature return to Western Sahara. UNHCR launched a publicity campaign to reassure the refugee population, and persuaded international donors to provide improved food and funding in the second half of the year.

Inadequate water supplies and poor water quality in the refugee camps continued to pose problems in the desert environment. UNHCR improved the water systems in two camps during the year.

The geographic and economic isolation of the camps has long impeded the refugee population’s self-sufficiency. UNHCR encouraged refugee families to engage in vegetable gardening to supplement their diets, while some families owned small herds of sheep, goats, and camels. ■

Angola

Some 2.5 million to 3.5 million Angolans were uprooted at the end of 2001, including approximately 445,000 refugees and 2 million to 3 million internally displaced persons.

About 210,000 Angolan refugees were in Zambia, nearly 180,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, at least 30,000 in Namibia, some 15,000 in Congo-Brazzaville, and 4,000 in South Africa. More than 7,000 Angolans applied for asylum in Western countries during the year. Nearly 350,000 Angolans became newly uprooted during 2001, while approximately 15,000 refugees repatriated to Angola.

Angola hosted about 12,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa.

Political Background Angola’s civil war has raged for decades amid failed peace accords and fragile power-sharing agreements. More than a half-million Angolans have died of war-related causes, according to most estimates.

A government military offensive reclaimed significant territory from rebel forces in 2000. International sanctions weakened the rebels, known as the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The country’s rich natural resources, including oil and diamonds, helped sustain the conflict by supplying both sides with revenues for arms purchases.

By the end of 2000, the Angolan government claimed that it had pushed UNITA from the country’s lucrative diamond mining areas and offered amnesty to all rebels willing to surrender. UNITA remained militarily active, how-

ever, and vast rural areas were subject to increased banditry, ambushes, and violence.

Warfare in 2001 The war continued in southern, central, and northern regions during 2001.

UNITA rebels launched more than 300 attacks on population centers, commercial convoys, and sites for internally displaced persons. Some areas previously regarded as safe suffered attacks. The Angolan military pressed its advantage in many regions, and government troops from neighboring Namibia launched cross-border attacks into southern Angola against UNITA. By year’s end, the rebels controlled less than 5 percent of the country and reportedly had only 8,000 soldiers—one-fifth of their previous troop strength.

Combatants on both sides continued to commit human rights abuses. UNITA engaged in abductions, beatings, sexual abuse, and summary executions, while government troops killed civilians and burned villages during counterinsurgency operations. Angolan church leaders called for a cease-fire, without success.

Scope of Internal Displacement Twenty-six years of on-and-off civil war and numerous waves of population displacement—often into areas inaccessible to humanitarian workers—have produced widely divergent estimates regarding the number of internally displaced Angolans.

Hundreds of thousands of uprooted persons received no humanitarian assistance and did not place their names on official registration rolls. Hundreds of thousands of people were believed to be displaced in areas long controlled by UNITA. Humanitarian officials were unsure whether tens of thousands of Angolans displaced during the 1970s and 1980s should still be considered uprooted after two decades of settled life at new locations.

Adding to the confusion, thousands of Angolan refugees and displaced persons returned to their homes during peaceful lulls in the 1990s, only to flee a second or third time when warfare resumed.

Government authorities and aid workers have officially registered about 1.3 million displaced persons living in camps, transit centers, and urban areas in government-controlled territory. UN relief officials estimated that an additional half-million to 1 million uprooted Angolans remained unregistered and unassisted in government-held areas. Up to 1 million people were still displaced in UNITA zones, analysts estimated.

As a result, some sources claimed that up to 4 million Angolans were internally displaced at the end of 2001. The U.S. Committee for Refugees estimated that 2 million to 3 million people were displaced.

Newly Uprooted Angolans Approximately 350,000 Angolans fled their homes during 2001 to escape UNITA attacks and the government’s counterinsurgency tactics.



More than 40,000 new refugees fled to Zambia, Congo-Kinshasa, and Namibia, while 300,000 or more persons fled to different areas of Angola for durations ranging from a few weeks to many months.

Much new displacement occurred in eastern Angola's Moxico Province, where a government military offensive targeted villages believed to be sympathetic to UNITA. Government forces deliberately emptied entire villages in Moxico Province, forcing residents to move to new locations that were often dangerous and lacked shelter and water.

UNITA troops attacked central Angola's Bie Province early in the year, forcing an estimated 50,000 persons to flee. A rebel attack on the town of Caxito, about 40 miles (60 km) north of Luanda, the capital, killed about 150 people and pushed 50,000 or more from their homes in May. Rebel raids in May also caused nearly 5,000 persons to flee in Kwanza Norte Province, in northwest Angola.

UNITA struck 12 of the country's 18 provinces in September, leaving 60,000 persons newly displaced, according to aid officials. Smaller isolated attacks and population flight occurred throughout the year.

Humanitarian Assistance The Angolan government officially adopted "Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Persons," statutory standards for improved living conditions among the country's massive displaced population, in early 2001. The government based its new standards on the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" issued in the late 1990s by the UN secretary general's special representative on internally displaced persons.

A major government goal was to transfer up to a half-million uprooted people into resettlement sites where they could farm and benefit from reliable services without living in overcrowded, makeshift camps. About 300,000 displaced people had already moved into more than 100 resettlement locations prior to 2001, but conditions at the sites were often poor.

About 100,000 displaced persons officially transferred to about 20 designated resettlement locations during 2001. Only half of the new settlements, however, complied with the government's new standards for medical care, education, farmland, and drinking water, according to UN relief officials. Despite its flaws, the resettlement system enabled authorities to close more than 30 overcrowded transit centers during 2000-2001.

Most displaced Angolans continued to live on their own or in camps with assistance programs. Many local authorities relegated displaced populations to areas most vulnerable to rebel attack on the outskirts of towns. Some 30 percent of the displaced population lacked access to medical services, according to an internal UN report. Malaria, anemia, and respiratory illnesses were major causes of death. Many displacement sites lacked clean drinking water.

Although the UN World Food Program (WFP) distributed monthly food aid to 1 million persons and govern-

ment officials reportedly distributed about 615,000 acres (250,000 hectares) of farmland to uprooted populations during the year, malnutrition rates of up to 45 percent occurred at some locations. Therapeutic feeding centers for severely malnourished children in the central Angolan city of Kuito suffered nearly 25 percent mortality rates for part of the year. Displaced persons emerging from UNITA areas often were malnourished.

The more than 120 international and indigenous relief organizations that operated in Angola faced immense challenges. Soldiers and corrupt government officials routinely diverted a percentage of aid supplies or stole relief handouts from displaced persons leaving distribution centers.

Poor roads and pervasive security concerns forced relief groups to transport 60 percent of all aid items by air despite aviation fuel shortages and often badly maintained rural airstrips. Combatants fired at three WFP relief planes during the year, forcing a temporary suspension of relief flights nationwide. UNITA rebels killed and abducted some local aid workers.

"Overall humanitarian conditions deteriorated," UN relief agencies reported late in the year. Child mortality rates climbed to nearly 40 percent, according to the UN Population Fund. Angola's maternal mortality rates were reportedly ten times higher than in neighboring Namibia.

International donor nations provided less than half of the \$233 million that UN relief agencies requested in 2001 to assist Angolans.

Repatriation to Angola Nearly 15,000 Angolan refugees repatriated during 2001 despite the country's continued warfare. Most returned to northern areas of Angola, primarily to the provinces of Cabinda, Uige, and Zaire. About two-thirds of the returnees had lived in Congo-Kinshasa (also known as the Democratic Republic of Congo); about one-third had resided in Congo-Brazzaville.

Most returnees received assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other aid organizations, including transport and cash grants. Government authorities in Cabinda Province provided land to returning refugees to construct new houses. Many returnees also received a six-month food supply, as well as materials to build or repair their homes.

Refugees from Congo-Kinshasa About 12,000 Congolese refugees from the Katanga Province of Congo-Kinshasa remained in Angola at year's end. Most have lived in Angola 10 to 20 years.

Angola's war pushed many Congolese refugees toward the relative safety of Luanda in recent years. About 6,000 lived in or near Viana camp, on the periphery of the capital, where they were dependent on food aid. The camp offered health care, handicrafts training, and a primary school for 500 refugee students, but no secondary school.

Smaller numbers of Congolese refugees lived on their own in Luanda and in five provinces throughout the country. Authorities barred most refugee children in Luanda from attending local schools because they lacked a birth certificate. UNHCR opened a refugee community center in the capital in late 2000.

Several thousand Congolese refugees living elsewhere in Angola struggled to meet their own needs as violence spread to their locations. Rebel attacks in May destroyed integration projects supporting 500 Congolese refugees in Bengo Province, in western Angola. ■

Benin

Benin hosted approximately 5,000 refugees at the end of 2001, including about 1,000 from Togo, nearly 1,000 from Congo-Kinshasa, and some 3,000 from other countries.

Refugees from Togo Approximately 1,000 Togolese refugees lived in Benin at year's end. As many as 1,000 additional unregistered Togolese refugees remained in the country, according to various estimates.

Most Togolese refugees fled to Benin in 1993 amid an influx of up to 150,000 people who were trying to escape the Togolese government's violent crackdown against democratic reforms. Most Togolese repatriated in 1997.

A small number of prominent opponents of Togo's ruling party remained in Benin during 2001, unable to repatriate safely. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has helped about 550 of the dissidents gain permanent resettlement in the United States and other countries during the past two years, including 50 such international resettlements during 2001.

Some refugees lived in a camp near Cotonou, the capital, while others lived on their own in Cotonou.

Some Togolese refugees remained concerned for their safety, fearing infiltration into Benin by Togolese government agents. UNHCR reported that assailants attempted to kidnap one refugee during 2002.

Other Refugees About 600 new refugees arrived in Benin during the year from various African countries. Benin's largest refugee camp, Kpomasse, located 30 miles (50 km) from the capital, housed about 1,000 refugees of various nationalities. About half of the 5,000 refugees in the country received partial humanitarian assistance from UNHCR.

Refugees from Nigeria complained that UNHCR failed to give them adequate protection from alleged mistreatment by Nigerian government agents and Benin's police. UNHCR acknowledged that some Nigerian refugees have expressed safety concerns.

In June, Benin's government blocked a ship carrying some 150 Liberian passengers from docking in Cotonou. UNHCR reported that it was "very concerned" because "some

of the passengers may be refugees."

The Benin government continued to offer permanent integration in Benin to a modest number of refugees who were unable to repatriate safely or resettle in other countries. Authorities have granted permanent resettlement in Benin to at least 140 refugees during the past two years. ■

Burundi

More than 375,000 Burundians were refugees at the end of 2001, including more than 350,000 in Tanzania, an estimated 20,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, nearly 2,000 in Zambia, nearly 2,000 in Rwanda, some 1,000 in Zimbabwe, and about 2,000 in a half-dozen other countries. An estimated additional 470,000 Burundians lived without official refugee status in western Tanzania villages and settlements.

Approximately 600,000 or more Burundians were internally displaced, including more than 400,000 living in camps.

At least 100,000 Burundians were newly uprooted during 2001. Nearly 30,000 refugees repatriated to Burundi by year's end, primarily from Tanzania.

Burundi hosted nearly 28,000 refugees at year's end, including nearly 27,000 from Congo-Kinshasa and more than 1,000 from Rwanda.

Pre-2001 Events Burundi's majority ethnic Hutu and minority ethnic Tutsi populations have violently competed for power for 30 years. A relatively small number of Tutsi elite, primarily from the southwest province of Bururi, have dominated the country's politics and military since national independence in 1962.

Military crackdowns led to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Burundians during the 1970s and 1980s. The targeted victims were overwhelmingly Hutu.

In 1993, Burundi's first democratic elections produced a Hutu president. Tutsi soldiers assassinated the new president and other high-ranking Hutu officials several months later, triggering a wave of violence that killed approximately 50,000 people of both ethnic groups. The violence uprooted approximately 1.5 million Burundians, nearly half of whom fled to neighboring countries.

In early 1994, Burundi's newly appointed Hutu president died in a plane crash. In mid-1994, another Hutu was appointed president. Security concerns prevented a national election, however.

Hutu-initiated militia attacks on displaced Tutsi civilians prompted the Tutsi-dominated military to attack Hutu civilians indiscriminately during 1995. Thousands died in the retaliatory raids, which forced tens of thousands of both ethnic groups to flee their homes.

A military-led coup shifted power back to Tutsi elites in 1996 and installed former president Pierre Buyoya as Burundi's new leader.



As rebel military strength increased during the late 1990s, government authorities responded by forcing up to 800,000 Hutu civilians into designated "regroupment" camps to deprive rebels of support in rural areas. After closing most of the forced relocation camps in 1998, authorities responded to renewed rebel attacks in 1999 by re-establishing dozens of new regroupment camps and forcing more than 300,000 Hutu civilians to vacate their homes and occupy the new sites.

The civil war between Hutu rebels and the Tutsi-dominated military continued unabated, killing an additional 60,000 or more civilians during 1994-99. Despite continuing violence and bleak prospects for peace, some 200,000 refugees repatriated to Burundi during 1996-99. Many of the returnees, however, fled again when renewed violence struck their communities.

Violence worsened and spread during 2000, particularly in mountains surrounding the capital, Bujumbura, where rebels intensified their attacks. Civilians suffered beatings, rapes, and looting, and more than 1,000 were killed. Many atrocities went unreported as poor security and government restrictions impeded regular access to conflict zones.

Former South African president Nelson Mandela's vigorous mediation yielded a signed peace agreement in mid-2001 among 19 parties and factions, including the Burundian government. Known as the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, the settlement called for a power-sharing government, an ethnically mixed military, and judicial reform.

However, the peace accord had little, if any, positive effect. The agreement contained no cease-fire provision, and Burundi's two main rebel groups, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) and the National Liberation Forces (FNL), refused to sign the accord or engage in negotiations.

2001 Violence and Politics As in previous years, progress in Burundi's peace negotiations seemed to inflame violence rather than dampen it. Rebel forces, allegedly including Congolese combatants, Rwandan Hutu militia, and former Rwandan Hutu government soldiers, significantly increased their attacks, while Burundian government troops and civilian militia responded harshly.

In January, rebels ambushed three vehicles 20 miles (30 km) north-east of Bujumbura and executed more than 20 civilian passengers, including a British humanitarian worker.

In February, FNL rebel forces systematically killed more than 100 Rwanda Hutu combatants who had been fighting alongside them against the Burundian army. Rebels fleeing bases in Congo-Kinshasa crossed into Burundi and engaged in heavy fighting with the Burundian army in the southern provinces of Makamba and Rutana, killing 10 government soldiers.

In April, rebels attacked a World Food Program (WFP) convoy carrying 60 tons of relief food for 20,000 needy persons in southeastern Burundi, and four WFP workers suffered bullet wounds. An apparent coup attempt by 30 government soldiers failed during that same month.

Burundi



In July, signatories to the peace accords reportedly agreed to split a three-year transitional national government into two 18-month periods in which a Tutsi president and a Hutu vice-president would lead the government for the first term before switching roles in the second term. Numerous Tutsi and Hutu political leaders rejected the agreement, however, and FDD and FNL rebel leaders vowed to continue fighting.

"We don't see any significant change regarding the interests of the Burundian people, nor the return of peace and democracy," an FDD spokesman declared. Several African nations, including Nigeria and Senegal, offered to deploy peacekeeping troops if a cease-fire could be achieved.

In late July, a second attempted coup failed, leading to the arrest of 200 soldiers.

Increased movements of Rwandan Hutu combatants into Burundi from Congo-Kinshasa "further destabilized" the northwestern border provinces of Cibitoke and Bubanza, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in October. Larger numbers of armed opposition forces in southern provinces along the border with Tanzania "limited consistent humanitarian access to populations in need" and threatened the safety of innocent civilians and humanitarian workers, OCHA reported, concluding that overall security remained "volatile and precarious."

In November, Burundi's newly integrated transitional government took office. As stipulated in the peace accord, many opposition political leaders who returned to Burundi to occupy high-level government positions after years in exile received protection from a 679-member South African Special Protection Unit.

On two separate occasions in November, FDD rebels raided primary schools and abducted hundreds of students and their teachers. Rebels stormed a boarding school in the village of Musema, northern Kayanza Province, set several dormitories ablaze, and marched 200 students into the surrounding hills.

In Ruyigi Province, along Burundi's eastern border with Tanzania, rebels abducted as many as 100 students. As rebels rampaged through Ruyigi, 2,500 residents—the majority of them children—fled their homes, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported. While most of the students and teachers eventually escaped relatively unharmed after serving as porters and performing other menial tasks for the rebels, the whereabouts of some 30 children abducted in Ruyigi remained unknown.

The country's death toll since 1993 is believed to be approximately 150,000, though some estimates range far higher.

Uprooted Burundians More than 1 million Burundians remained uprooted at the end of 2001, including some 375,000 refugees in neighboring countries—mostly in Tanzania—and an estimated 600,000 internally displaced persons.

During 2001, outbreaks of violence displaced an estimated 100,000 civilians and destroyed health centers, schools, churches, livestock herds, and thousands of homes. Some 15,000 new Burundian refugees fled to western Tanzania. Despite widespread violence within Burundi, nearly 30,000 Burundian refugees repatriated, primarily from Tanzania to the western provinces of Muyinga, Ruyigi, and Rutana.

Burundi's massive, largely unassisted population of internally displaced persons continued to grow and struggle for survival during 2001. Women and children constituted more than half of the estimated 400,000 Hutu and Tutsi internally displaced persons who lived in some 210 camps scattered throughout the country. An estimated 150,000 to 200,000 additional displaced persons survived outside of camps in villages, mountainous regions, and forests, beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance programs.

Conditions for internally displaced Burundians remained deplorable, although humanitarian agencies provided limited food rations and health-care services to some accessible displaced populations. "The food and nutrition situation of the displaced remains unstable," the UN Food and Agriculture Organization reported in August.

HIV/AIDS rates in internally displaced camps were particularly high because of the increased prevalence of sexual violence. Education services for displaced children remained largely nonexistent.

Repeated clashes between government troops and rebels during February and March displaced thousands of civilians. A sustained FNL offensive in the village of Kinama, Bujumbura Rural Province, in February and early March killed several hundred combatants and civilians and displaced more than 50,000 persons. Rebel attacks on government troops in Rutana Province uprooted an estimated 10,000 civilians in March.

In April, fighting between government forces and rebels in central Burundi temporarily displaced thousands of civilians. Violence in Gitega Province killed more than 60 combatants and forced some 17,000 civilians to flee to neighboring Mwaro Province in April. Fighting spilled into neighboring Muramvya province and uprooted an additional 10,000 persons. Although poor security prohibited humanitarian workers from conducting assessment missions to the region, "the vast majority of those who fled their homes apparently returned to their areas of origin some days later to protect their belongings against looting," OCHA reported.

Heavy fighting between the Burundian army and FNL rebels in Bujumbura Rural Province during July and August killed some 20 civilians and uprooted nearly 10,000 others, including many who repeatedly fled intense shelling.

Fighting in northwestern Burundi's Bubanza Province between government loyalists and FNL supporters uprooted nearly 10,000 civilians in October. Most of the displaced population fled to a nearby government military base



for protection, joining an estimated 5,000 others who fled similar clashes in March.

"Conditions inside Burundi remained non-conducive to large-scale repatriation of refugees," the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) concluded.

Humanitarian Conditions Burundi ranked as the world's third poorest country, according to UN statistics. Civil war and massive population upheaval have exacerbated Burundi's economic downturn, provoked food shortages, and triggered outbreaks of infectious diseases such as malaria.

More than 15 percent of Burundi's population remained uprooted at year's end. Those who remained at home "suffered from insufficient access to adequate food, basic social services and economic opportunities," UN aid officials reported.

Maternal mortality has tripled over the course of the war: More than 1,000 pregnant Burundian women died for every 100,000 live births. Further, more than 50 percent of newborn Burundians were not expected to survive to age 40, according to health statistics. Only about half of the population had access to potable water. One in ten Burundians were infected with HIV/AIDS, and nearly 250,000 children have been orphaned because of the AIDS epidemic. Nearly ten years of war have left more than 25,000 additional orphans in Burundi and some 12,000 unaccompanied Burundian children living as refugees in Tanzania.

More than 90 percent of Burundians are subsistence farmers. With crop yields declining as farmers fled the country or became combatants, Burundi faced a cereal food deficit of more than 200,000 tons in 2001. WFP provided more than 700,000 Burundians with monthly "life-saving food aid" during the year.

Although a nutrition survey conducted in seven provinces during 2001 revealed a 10 percent rate of acute malnutrition among internally displaced populations, severe malnutrition rates declined. The number of persons, primarily women and children, visiting supplementary feeding centers fell from nearly 95,000 in April to less than 45,000 in August.

Armed conflict between government forces and rebel militias damaged education centers throughout the country during 2001, while a shortage of some 3,000 teachers contributed to Burundi's deteriorating education system. School attendance fell to a low of 48 percent, and an estimated 550,000 Burundian children did not attend school during the year.

UN humanitarian agencies appealed to international donors for \$107 million to assist Burundians during 2001, but had received only 45 percent of that amount by late in the year. The funding shortfall adversely affected education, child protection, landmine awareness, and HIV/AIDS programs. Child protection programs suffered the largest funding shortfall—78 percent—dramatically reducing

psychosocial support to some 10,000 children and training in income generation for 2,000 child heads of household.

UNHCR also suffered funding shortages and staff reductions, curtailing reintegration programs for nearly 30,000 Burundian refugees who returned home during 2001. "Funding cuts hampered provisions of UNHCR services, including planning needed for refugee return programs," Human Rights Watch reported in December.

UNHCR reintegration projects to help construct or repair Burundi's war-damaged education, health care, and water systems lacked financial support. Projects to help returning refugees and their home communities resume farming or establish small business also suffered budget constraints.

Refugees from Neighboring Countries About 25,000 refugees from Congo-Kinshasa lived in Burundi at the end of 2001, including some 2,000 new arrivals. More than 1,000 Congolese refugees spontaneously repatriated without international assistance during the year.

Nearly 4,000 Congolese lived in two UNHCR-administered refugee camps, including more than 3,000 in Rugombo camp in Cibitoke Province, just one mile (1.6 km) from the Congolese border. Fewer than 1,000 resided in Ngagara camp in Bujumbura. Congolese refugees in the camps received basic health care, water, and housing materials from UNHCR, and monthly food rations from WFP. An additional 20,000 Congolese refugees lived primarily in Bujumbura without humanitarian assistance.

More than 1,000 Rwandan refugees lived in Burundi at year's end. Many Rwandan refugees experienced difficulty renewing government-issued refugee documents because Burundi's refugee eligibility committee remained inoperable during 2001. ■

Cameroon

More than 30,000 refugees lived in Cameroon at the end of 2001, including nearly 30,000 from Chad and about 2,000 from various other countries.

About 5,000 refugees repatriated from Cameroon to Chad during the year.

More than 2,000 Cameroonians applied for asylum in Europe during 2001.

Refugees from Chad Civil war and insurrections in Chad pushed waves of Chadian refugees into Cameroon during the 1970s and 1980s. In recent years, safer conditions in Chad have prompted about 7,000 Chadian refugees to depart Cameroon and return home, including about 5,000 repatriations in 2001.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assisted the repatriation process by providing transportation on trucks and trains, primarily in July and

August. UNHCR declined to help repatriate about 3,000 Chadians who registered for repatriation but failed to convince UNHCR that they were genuine refugees during individual interviews.

Most Chadian refugees remaining in Cameroon appeared increasingly unlikely to repatriate because they had already integrated into local communities and were self-sufficient. Most of them are unlikely to be considered refugees in future years.

Refugees from Other Countries About 700 of the 2,000 refugees living in urban areas received food, health care, and personal-hygiene materials from UNHCR during 2001. UNHCR's budget constraints prevented the agency from providing small-business loans to 90 percent of the refugee applicants who requested loans to help support their families.

UNHCR closed its office in Cameroon at the end of 2001 because of budget problems. "It is fair to say that there are hard times ahead for refugees and asylum seekers in a country like Cameroon, where there are no reliable structures to deal with refugee matters outside of UNHCR," a UNHCR official in Cameroon asserted.

More than 90 Congolese ethnic Tutsi refugees formally departed Cameroon to resettle abroad during the year. ■

Central African Republic

Central African Republic was the source of about 22,000 refugees and approximately 5,000 internally displaced persons at the end of 2001. Some 20,000 refugees from Central African Republic lived in Congo-Kinshasa, while about 2,000 resided in Congo-Brazzaville. More than 70,000 people in Central African Republic fled their homes during the year.

Central African Republic hosted nearly 50,000 refugees at year's end, including some 35,000 from Sudan, about 10,000 from Congo-Kinshasa, nearly 2,000 from Chad, and some 2,000 from 19 other countries. More than 1,000 new refugees and asylum seekers arrived during 2001.

Political Violence Former president General Andre Kolingba launched a surprise coup attempt against democratically elected President Ange-Felix Patasse in May. Pro-government forces defeated the coup attempt and retaliated against Kolingba's Yakoma ethnic group.

The capital, Bangui, suffered heavy damage and hundreds of deaths in ten days of fighting. Atrocities and other human rights abuses continued for two months before subsiding. Armed crime increased after the coup because of the proliferation of weapons.

A UN report characterized the coup attempt as "wholly unexpected" despite the severe political and economic tensions that preceded it. Soldiers involved in the

coup fled to neighboring Congo-Kinshasa, where they posed a "legitimate concern" to security in the region, according to UN officials. The same report noted "sharp political tensions, further economic decline, simmering social tension, and a troubling lack of security" in the aftermath of the violence.

Uprooted Residents Approximately 70,000 residents of Bangui fled their homes during the coup attempt and the subsequent retaliations by government supporters.

Most fled to the outskirts of the capital, where they sought shelter in local homes and the surrounding forest. Approximately 25,000 crossed the Oubangui River into northwest Congo-Kinshasa, including hundreds of armed participants in the coup attempt. About 2,000 refugees went to Congo-Brazzaville.

Central African Republic authorities officially closed their border with Congo-Kinshasa and deployed military patrols along the Oubangui River in an effort to halt cross-border traffic, preventing many citizens of Central African Republic from bringing food to relatives who had fled Bangui's violence.

Many displaced families were exposed to heavy rains before finding shelter. Residents of nearby towns and neighborhoods struggled to supply food, drinking water, and medicines to displaced persons in their midst.

As many as half of the uprooted population returned home by July, while others trickled home later in the year, often finding their houses looted and destroyed. Most of those who remained refugees or internally displaced at year's end were ethnic Yakoma who feared retribution.

The government of Central African Republic requested \$95 million in aid for emergency relief, rehabilitation projects, and reintegration of uprooted people, but international donor countries responded with meager funding. The UN secretary general reported that government authorities in Central African Republic were "utterly incapable" of meeting their country's humanitarian needs and urged major nations to provide government management experts.

Refugees from Sudan Large numbers of Sudanese refugees entered Central African Republic in the early 1990s, fleeing civil war in their own country. Few have repatriated. About 2,000 new Sudanese refugees have arrived in recent years, including about 300 during 2001.

Nearly all 35,000 Sudanese refugees lived in a camp at Mboki, more than 700 miles (about 1,200 km) from the capital in the isolated southeast corner of the country, near the borders of Sudan and Congo-Kinshasa. Fewer than 200 lived in Kaga-Bandoro camp about 200 miles (340 km) north of Bangui, while about 500 resided in Bangui.

Daunting logistics have made regular delivery of humanitarian aid to the Sudanese refugees at Mboki unreliable for years, with aid convoys from the capital forced to



travel for four days over bad roads to reach the refugee population. Most Sudanese “have attained a high level of self-reliance” out of necessity, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in mid-2001.

UNHCR stopped food shipments to Mboki camp at the start of 2001 after a successful harvest the previous year. Refugee families each farmed about two-and-a-half acres (one hectare) of land, using seeds and equipment donated by UNHCR.

Mboki camp had primary and secondary schools for 4,000 refugee children, while a health clinic provided medical care for refugees and the local population.

Although Sudanese refugees have occasionally experienced security problems at Mboki camp because of its proximity to the Sudanese border, UNHCR reported no serious protection incidents during 2001.

Refugees from Congo-Kinshasa Some 10,000 refugees continued to live in Central African Republic at the end of 2001, having fled warfare in Congo-Kinshasa in previous years. More than 1,000 new refugees and asylum seekers arrived during 2001.

Congolese rebels crossed into Central African Republic in March and attacked a camp that housed 1,000 Congolese refugees. Government authorities and UNHCR immediately closed the camp, as well as a second Congolese camp, and transferred the refugee population to a new site, Molangue.

In May, domestic political violence in Bangui again endangered Congolese refugees. Congolese rebels reentered the country, killing two refugees and assaulting others. Refugees expressed alarm that Congolese government soldiers were also infiltrating Central African Republic to target specific refugees who were former government soldiers.

About 3,000 refugees repatriated to Congo-Kinshasa to escape mounting dangers in Central African Republic, and several hundred Congolese refugees belatedly moved to the new Molangue camp for safety.

By year's end, about 2,000 Congolese refugees lived at the Molangue site, and some 8,000 resided in Bangui. Refugees in the capital were eligible for education scholarships and medical assistance. Refugees at Molangue received food aid, seeds and tools to farm on about two-and-a-half acres (one hectare) of land per household, and assistance in raising livestock. More than 200 students attended primary and secondary school at the camp.

UNHCR reported that it considered former Congolese government soldiers among the refugee population to be candidates for international resettlement as a durable solution to their protection concerns.

Refugees from Chad Up to 18,000 Chadian refugees fled to Central African Republic in the 1990s because of abuses by government and rebel troops in their country. Most refugees have returned to Chad in recent years.

About 1,000 refugees have voluntarily repatriated during the past two years in UNHCR convoys. Returnees received a three-month supply of rice, oil, salt, and sugar before departing Central African Republic.

The 2,000 remaining refugees continued to live at a camp in the northwest, about 170 miles (about 270 km) from the capital. Assistance ended in 1998 because most refugees supported themselves as cotton farmers.

Asylum Seekers from Rwanda Rwandan asylum seekers in Central African Republic have attracted controversy in recent years because some of them were allegedly linked to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Most Rwandans in Central Africa Republic fled from Rwanda to Congo-Kinshasa in 1994, then fled to Central African Republic in 1997.

UNHCR officially recognized 400 Rwandan refugees in Central African Republic. Government officials classified the Rwandans as “asylum seekers in transit” and refused to provide aid to them. UNHCR offered medical assistance and education support, however. An unknown number of additional Rwandans probably lived in Central African Republic without registering with authorities.

Government officials have requested that UNHCR resettle Rwandan asylum seekers in a different country, and the refugee agency was processing individual cases for international resettlement as the year ended.

Officials accused some Rwandans of participating in the May 2001 coup attempt against the government of Central African Republic. Several Rwandan asylum seekers were killed in coup-related violence, and some Rwandans reportedly went into hiding. ■

Chad

Chad hosted approximately 15,000 refugees from Sudan at the end of 2001.

Approximately 35,000 Chadians were refugees at year's end, including some 30,000 in Cameroon, about 3,000 in Nigeria, and some 2,000 in Central African Republic. About 6,000 Chadian refugees repatriated during 2001.

Refugees from Sudan More than 20,000 refugees fleeing violence in western Sudan entered Chad in the late 1990s. Gradual repatriation reduced the size of the refugee population to about 15,000 by the end of 2001. Some 4,000 Sudanese repatriated from Chad during the year despite warnings from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) about continued dangers in western Sudan.

Refugees who remained in Chad lived at about 30 sites in the remote eastern part of the country, often among the local population. UNHCR stopped food distributions to the refugee population in 2001, judging the refugees to be economically self-sufficient. UNHCR provided farming tools and seeds, dug wells, built two medical clinics, do-

nated medicines, and constructed four classrooms for use by refugees and local residents alike.

About 200 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers lived in the Chadian capital, Ndjamena, where UNHCR provided a one-time subsistence allowance equivalent to \$40 for heads of families, \$20 for spouses, and about \$5 for children. Some urban refugees complained of harassment by Sudanese embassy officials based in Ndjamena.

Budged constraints caused UNHCR to close its office in Chad at the end of 2001. Responsibility for the protection of refugees in Chad was scheduled to shift to UNHCR staff based in neighboring Central African Republic in 2002.

Repatriation to Chad Decades of civil wars and armed insurrections have pushed tens of thousands of Chadians out of the country. Most of Chad has experienced several recent years of peace, however, enabling significant numbers of refugees to repatriate.

At least 10,000 refugees returned home during the mid-1990s, while about 2,500 repatriated in 2000. Nearly 6,000 repatriated during 2001, primarily from Cameroon and Central African Republic.

Returnees received five months of food assistance, farming tools and seeds, household items, and medical care. UNHCR also provided construction materials for homes, new water wells, help in purchasing cattle, and assistance in obtaining identity cards.

Although thousands of Chadian refugees still lived in neighboring countries, UNHCR's voluntary repatriation program ended in August after no more refugees requested help to return home. ■

Congo-Brazzaville

Approximately 30,000 citizens of Congo-Brazzaville were refugees or asylum seekers at the end of 2001, including some 17,000 in Gabon, 5,000 in South Africa, about 3,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, and nearly 5,000 new asylum applicants in Western industrialized countries.

An estimated 50,000 people in Congo-Brazzaville remained internally displaced. Up to 30,000 Congolese temporarily became displaced by violence during the year. Fewer than 1,000 refugees returned home to Congo-Brazzaville.

Congo-Brazzaville hosted more than 100,000 refugees at the end of 2001, including approximately 80,000 from Congo-Kinshasa, at least 15,000 from Angola, about 5,000 from Rwanda and Burundi, and nearly 2,000 from Central African Republic.

Political Background Ethnic-based political violence has destabilized Congo-Brazzaville for almost a decade, although a tenuous peace prevailed during 2000 and 2001.

Following disputed elections in 1993, the country suffered three rounds of armed combat in six years. In 1997,

President Sassou-Nguesso, a northerner, overthrew the country's democratically elected leader, Pascal Lissouba, a southerner. Local armed militia groups, as well as government and rebel troops from other African countries, joined in the fighting.

Violence claimed an estimated 20,000 lives by 1999 and displaced as many as 800,000 people—nearly one-third of the country's 2.7 million population. The capital, Brazzaville, was in ruins. However, warring factions signed cease-fire agreements in late 1999, and the peace accord held during 2000-2001 despite the slow pace of disarmament and an isolated eruption of violence in mid-2001.

Congo-Brazzaville adopted a new constitution in late 2001—reportedly the fourteenth constitution or fundamental legal act in the country's short history. Despite relative peace, "the political situation remains somewhat fragile," a UN humanitarian agency warned late in the year.

Displacement and Reintegration Congo-Brazzaville continued to make progress toward restoring stability during 2001.

It was unclear how many people remained internally displaced at the end of the year. Some UN humanitarian officials placed the number as high as 150,000, while other sources reported that only a few thousand people remained uprooted inside the country. Up to 30,000 people temporarily fled their homes mid-year because of brief violence in the Pool Region near the capital, but many of them began to return home by August.

Measuring the overall scope of population displacement was difficult because most uprooted families living in Brazzaville were virtually indistinguishable from other residents struggling to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. An estimated 70 percent of all residents of the country's two largest cities lived at or below the poverty line, the government reported.

The UN Development Program complained that international funding for reintegration and reconstruction in Congo-Brazzaville was poor. UN aid agencies received only \$12 million of the \$34 million requested from international donors.

Although humanitarian aid programs helped reconstruct 75 health centers and 40 schools, many schools still required rehabilitation or equipment, and 40 percent of the country's half-million school-age children did not attend school.

The country's health system remained in ruins, with 60 percent of all health centers closed, according to reports. An epidemic of the potentially fatal sleeping-sickness disease struck along the country's southern border, with infection rates as high as 25 percent at some locations. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported "lack of access to safe drinking water" and noted that "available water sources are often contaminated and are major causes of communicable diseases."



The World Food Program (WFP) provided food aid to 180,000 beneficiaries during the year, while aid projects distributed farming tools and seeds. Development agencies commonly used food-for-work projects to pay local laborers for work on reconstruction projects. "Malnutrition and mortality rates continue to improve," WFP reported late in the year.

Long-term development efforts received a boost when the European Community pledged more than \$40 million to promote human rights and democracy and to assist the country's neediest families.

Although an estimated 60,000 Congolese refugees repatriated during 1999-2000, only about 1,000 repatriated during 2001 because of the country's fragile political and economic situation. The governments of Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), signed a three-way agreement during the year to prepare for the voluntary repatriation of up to 17,000 Congolese refugees living in Gabon. Major rehabilitation of the main road connecting the two countries will be necessary before trucks and buses can transport refugees home, UNHCR reported.

UNHCR continued to help returnees from earlier years gain proper identity documents in Congo-Brazzaville to ensure their full access to services and citizenship rights.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Congo-Kinshasa Approximately 80,000 refugees fleeing warfare in Congo-Kinshasa entered Congo-Brazzaville during 1999-2000. Unknown numbers of new refugees arrived during 2001.

The vast majority of refugees lived scattered along a 300-mile (about 500 km) stretch of river in northern Congo-Brazzaville, where they remained vulnerable to violence in neighboring Congo-Kinshasa, which occasionally spilled across the border.

Humanitarian aid workers struggled to deliver regular relief supplies to the remote refugee locations. Roads in the refugee zone—primarily marshland and prone to flooding—were poor or nonexistent. UNHCR expanded its fleet of boats to increase aid shipments along the river, while some areas were reachable only by plane. The serious logistical challenges made aid deliveries expensive, and UNHCR suffered staffing shortages that further weakened relief efforts.

The combination of unreliable aid and poor security caused hundreds of refugees to board boats and canoes to migrate southward to safer, more accessible areas. Some managed to reach Brazzaville city. However, combatants from Congo-Kinshasa reportedly ambushed boats along the river, detaining refugee passengers and looting their few possessions. Security along the river reportedly improved late in the year, but a shortage of canoes prevented many refugees from journeying to locations offering better relief services, UNHCR reported.

Three UNHCR field offices in the north assisted the refugee population. The International Rescue Committee

also offered relief aid. Refugees accessible to aid workers received plastic sheeting for shelters, blankets, soap, mosquito nets, and utensils for cooking and carrying water. Aid programs also provided farming and fishing equipment, water systems, and some school supplies. However, local authorities restricted the refugees' access to farmland and fishing, undermining the refugee population's attempts to become more self-sufficient.

In a move protested by UNHCR, authorities in Congo-Brazzaville forced 19 asylum seekers back to Congo-Kinshasa in April.

Refugees from Angola Most of the estimated 15,000 Angolan refugees in Congo-Brazzaville fled at least eight years ago from the northern Angolan enclave of Cabinda, where sporadic political fighting has occurred.

At least two-thirds of the refugee population lived in the city of Pointe-Noire and supported themselves without direct assistance even though the country's damaged economy "renders local integration...difficult," UNHCR reported.

About 3,000 Angolans resided in three settlements outside Pointe-Noire, where aid projects attempted to bolster their ability to support themselves. Aid consisted of farmland, small loans, business training for women, and training in managing refugee-run health and education facilities. Poor roads hampered access to refugee sites during the rainy season.

As in previous years, UNHCR reported that the presence of Angolan soldiers near refugee sites in Congo-Brazzaville caused protection concerns among the refugee population. About 2,000 Angolan refugees repatriated during 2001.

Refugees from Rwanda and Burundi Approximately 5,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Rwanda and Burundi remained in Congo-Brazzaville at the end of 2001. Most were Rwandans who had fled their country in 1994 and arrived in Congo-Brazzaville in 1997 after living in Congo-Kinshasa for three years.

Nearly 3,000 Rwandans resided in a refugee camp in Kintele, 15 miles (25 km) north of Brazzaville, where they received medical care and help in farming. About 2,000 Rwandans lived in 16 villages in the Loukolela area, 300 miles (500 km) north of the capital, where they supported themselves without assistance.

An additional 1,500 other Rwandans were believed to still live in Congo-Brazzaville without refugee status. A UNHCR screening process in 1999 concluded that they were probably former Rwandan soldiers or militia members complicit in their country's 1994 genocide.

Refugees from Central African Republic Nearly 2,000 refugees fleeing political violence in Central African Republic crossed into Congo-Brazzaville during 2001 because of

political violence in their own country. The refugees congregated in Brazzaville city and in the Betou and Impfondo areas of the country's remote northern region. UNHCR provided emergency aid to the new arrivals. ■

Congo-Kinshasa

Congo-Kinshasa (also known as the Democratic Republic of Congo) was the source of more than 2.3 million uprooted people at the end of 2001, including some 2 million internally displaced persons and about 355,000 Congolese refugees and asylum seekers. Approximately a quarter-million Congolese newly fled their homes during the year.

Significant numbers of refugees from Congo-Kinshasa lived in at least a dozen countries, including 120,000 in Tanzania, 80,000 in Congo-Brazzaville, 50,000 in Zambia, 33,000 in Rwanda, 27,000 in Burundi, 12,000 in Angola, 10,000 in Central African Republic, 8,000 in Uganda, 4,000 in Zimbabwe, 3,000 in Mozambique, and 1,000 each in Namibia and Benin. Nearly 10,000 Congolese applied for asylum in Western industrialized countries during 2001.

About 305,000 refugees from seven neighboring countries were in Congo-Kinshasa at year's end, including 180,000 or more from Angola, some 70,000 from Sudan, about 20,000 from Burundi, at least 20,000 from Central African Republic, an estimated 10,000 from Uganda, about 3,000 from Congo-Brazzaville, and some 2,000 from Rwanda.

An estimated 30,000 Rwandan refugees lived in Congo-Kinshasa in refugee-like circumstances, their status undetermined because their individual asylum claims could not be assessed amid Congo's war.

Pre-2001 Events Congo-Kinshasa is often considered to be Africa's most strategically important country. It is geographically the second-largest country on the continent, borders nine nations, and contains immense deposits of gold, diamonds, cobalt, and other lucrative natural resources. President Mobutu Sese Seko brought Congo-Kinshasa (previously called Zaire) to virtual ruin during three decades of government corruption and mismanagement until he fell from power in 1997.

Two rounds of warfare have besieged the country since 1996. A rebel army backed by troops from neighboring Rwanda and Uganda raced across Congo during 1996-97, toppling Mobutu and installing rebel leader Laurent Kabila as president.

Warfare erupted again in 1998 when Rwandan and Ugandan government troops invaded Congo-Kinshasa in a bid to oust Kabila and exert control over the eastern third of the country. Congolese rebels opposed to Kabila joined the battle. The war rapidly degenerated into what some observers called "a continent-wide free-for-all," as troops

from eight countries and at least seven insurgent groups entered the conflict.

The war became even more complex in 1999 when rebel forces splintered and Rwandan and Ugandan troops—erstwhile allies—repeatedly clashed with each other. Several new rebel groups materialized. The war and proliferation of weapons inflamed local ethnic tensions in eastern Congo, triggering massacres between ethnic Hema and ethnic Lendu populations that left an estimated 7,000 people dead.

All sides signed a peace agreement in mid-1999, known as the Lusaka Accord, but warfare continued. Military offensives persisted on seven fronts during 2000 in what a UN report described as a "sporadic stalemate." The UN Security Council called on Rwanda and Uganda to remove their armies from Congo-Kinshasa during 2000, but the two countries ignored the directive.

Studies by the UN and other international observers generally agreed that combatants' exploitation of Congo's rich natural resources was a factor perpetuating the war.

Warfare and Politics in 2001 The assassination of President Kabila in January brought his son, Joseph, to power and led to modest progress in some aspects of the stalled peace process.

A cease-fire generally held along the military front lines throughout the year, and the new president agreed to wider deployment of UN military observers as called for in the Lusaka Accord. All sides withdrew their troops at least nine miles (15 km) from the front lines, and several thousand foreign troops exited the country, although far larger numbers remained.

Despite the official cease-fire, extensive violence persisted and even worsened in rebel-held areas of eastern Congo. Major battles occurred late in the year near the eastern Congolese towns of Fizi in South Kivu Province and Kindu in Maniema Province.

Infighting between previously allied rebel forces in northeastern Congo caused steady population displacement. Bloody clashes in the northeast between ethnic Hema and ethnic Lendu populations—reportedly fueled deliberately by Ugandan troops—killed several hundred people in January.

Human rights abuses by all sides were pervasive, particularly in eastern areas held by Congolese rebels and Rwandan and Ugandan troops. Massacres, assassinations, lynchings, disappearances, and rapes occurred regularly and with impunity as pro-government forces and anti-government combatants preyed on the local population. UN officials charged that many abuses were part of "deliberate strategies to induce flight."

"Terror reigns in the area occupied by [rebels] and Rwanda," a UN human rights investigation reported in August. The report contended that Rwandan troops occupied eastern Congo for "territorial conquest and exploitation of the country's wealth," and charged that "Ugandan troops



act with complete contempt for the Congolese population, and their presence is devastating.”

The same report noted that “Congolese throughout the country feel humiliated and abandoned, and those living under foreign occupation are living in terror and insecurity.”

A special UN investigation during 2001 accused many participants in the war—particularly Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe—of looting Congo’s rich natural resources.

Congolese of all political viewpoints convened in Ethiopia in October for a much-anticipated “inter-Congolese dialogue” to chart the country’s political future. Within days, the conference adjourned without progress.

Uprooted Congolese Three years of conflict left more than 2.3 million of Congo’s 50 million people uprooted at the end of 2001, according to most estimates. Some 2 million persons were believed to be internally displaced, while 350,000 or more were refugees in neighboring countries.

More precise estimates of Congo’s population upheaval were impossible to obtain, given the immense size of the country, its poor communication system and lack of roads, and the persistent dangers facing humanitarian workers. Some sources estimated that as many as 4 million Congolese might be internally displaced.

According to UN humanitarian estimates, nearly 90 percent of Congo’s displaced population were in the east, including about 750,000 in North Kivu Province, some 400,000 in Katanga Province, nearly 250,000 in Orientale Province, more than 200,000 in South Kivu Province, and at least 150,000 in Maniema Province.

About a quarter-million people were displaced in other areas of the country, including some 130,000 in central Congo’s two Kasai provinces, 80,000 in Equateur Province in the north, and about 40,000 in the capital, Kinshasa.

Three-quarters of the displaced population lived in areas occupied by Congolese rebels and their Rwandan and Ugandan allies. At least 1 million people uprooted within the country received no humanitarian assistance because aid agencies could not reach them. Many displaced people were village residents who lacked survival skills such as farming or foraging for food in the country’s remote areas.

In some regions, a majority of displaced families were female-headed households whose adult males were either dead or were involved—sometimes involuntarily—with the armies and militia that roamed the country. Four of every five families living in the eastern Kivu provinces have fled their homes at least once during the past five years, according to a 2001 report by Oxfam, Save the Children/United Kingdom, and Christian Aid.

New population upheaval continued in 2001. An estimated quarter-million or more Congolese fled their homes during the year as the war and human rights abuses continued, including some 30,000 Congolese who became new refugees in at least a half-dozen nearby countries.

Significant new population displacement occurred

in the two Kivu provinces in the east, including a “massive flight of civilians” when the key town of Fizi came under attack late in the year, according to UN aid officials. Thousands were newly uprooted in northeastern Congo’s Orientale Province, scene of bloody ethnic violence.

Families in parts of southeastern Congo’s Katanga Province fled their homes during 2001 to escape militia activity. Thousands of residents near the key north-central city of Kisangani reportedly fled intimidation and extortion by combatants.

Many Congolese remained in danger even after leaving their homes. “Refugee and internally displaced women are often preyed upon by armed elements and have been the victims of torture, sexual and other abuse, and ethnically motivated killings,” a report by the UN secretary general said in October.

Tens of thousands of displaced families descended on nearby rural villages that barely had enough food and services for themselves. Many small Congolese communities were “dragged into abject poverty” as they struggled to feed and shelter uprooted people in their midst, according to a report by relief agencies.

Humanitarian Conditions Approximately 2.5 million people in Congo-Kinshasa have died since 1998 of causes linked to the war, according to an updated study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) during 2001.

“The ongoing fighting has driven hundreds of thousands of people into forests, jungles, and other remote areas, where they have no food, medicine, or shelter. The death rate remains shockingly high,” the IRC report stated. IRC described the situation as “a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions.”

Although some relief officials and diplomats questioned the IRC death toll estimate, virtually all agreed that human misery in Congo-Kinshasa was massive and largely ignored by the outside world.

Three years of war in eastern Congo “have plunged large segments of the population into levels of psychological and physical trauma and destitution so deep that it is almost impossible to comprehend,” a consortium of UN humanitarian agencies reported late in the year.

With little or no medical care available in large areas of the country, malaria was the leading cause of death. Respiratory infections, diarrhea, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS were widespread and fatal. Measles was the leading cause of death among children. Cholera and meningitis outbreaks occurred in the east late in the year.

Even in areas with functioning health clinics, few Congolese could afford the fee of 15 cents for a doctor’s visit, and even fewer could afford to purchase prescribed medicines when available. Maternal mortality rates were three to four times higher in Congo-Kinshasa than in neighboring countries.

One-third of the population suffered serious food

shortages, according to the World Food Program (WFP). Local officials reported starvation deaths even in fertile agricultural areas in the east, and studies revealed 30 percent malnutrition rates among young children at some locations.

Widespread population flight combined with violence and theft by combatants to curb agricultural activity, and many farmers with successful crops were unable to reach local markets. The diet of most Congolese contained less than two-thirds of the caloric intake necessary for good health, a UN report concluded.

International humanitarian agencies began to reach larger numbers of needy populations, thanks to a general

cease-fire throughout the year and fewer restrictions on aid organizations by the Congolese government. Shipments of relief supplies by boat from the capital to the rebel-held city of Kisangani resumed in August.

Relief efforts remained extremely difficult and actually declined in some areas, however, because of restrictions and harassment in rebel-held territory and large areas of unpredictable violence.

Attackers ambushed and killed six staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross in northeastern Congo in April; subsequent investigations cast suspicions on local Hema militia who allegedly acted with the complicity of Ugandan troops. Several relief agencies reportedly received specific threats that forced them to curtail activities.

UN relief officials requested \$123 million from donor nations to fund humanitarian efforts in Congo-Kinshasa during 2001. Donors provided \$82 million—a shortfall of one-third.

“There is a huge gap between the level of humanitarian need and the current humanitarian response throughout [Congo-Kinshasa],” an assessment by several private aid organizations found. “A war of this magnitude warrants a much stronger and better coordinated response among agencies, donors, and international leaders.”

War's Effect on Refugee Protection Hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries continued to seek refuge in Congo-Kinshasa despite its war. Approximately 50,000 new refugees arrived in Congo-Kinshasa during 2001, compounding the already daunting challenges facing the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian agencies attempting to assist and protect the refugee population.

UNHCR had virtually no contact with about one-fourth of the refugees and managed only limited and sporadic access to tens of thousands of others. About 200,000 refugees received no regular assistance—in some cases because they were self-sufficient, but in many other cases because regular aid deliveries were impossible amid the war and overwhelming logistical problems caused by the country's vast distances and virtually nonexistent roads.

The country's dangers posed “a serious threat for refugees in [Congo-Kinshasa] for whom crossing the border is no longer enough to escape from persecution and find safety,” UNHCR reported. “Two years of rebellion in [Congo-Kinshasa] have...created a certain bias



An estimated 2 million persons remained displaced in Congo-Kinshasa. Up to 2.5 million Congolese have died from deprivation linked to warfare and human rights abuses, according to one estimate. Photo: USCR/E. Bedford



and intolerance toward some refugee groups.” UNHCR reported that refugees in the country were “often stigmatized and perceived by the public as contributing to the conflict.”

Even when modest amounts of relief supplies reached refugees, the result was somewhat mixed. UNHCR acknowledged that “the imbalance between the assistance provided to the refugees and more than 2 million internally displaced persons has had a negative impact on the perception of refugees” among local residents.

Refugees from Angola About 180,000 Angolan refugees were in Congo-Kinshasa at year’s end because of ongoing civil war in their country. Some 20,000 new refugees fled to Congo-Kinshasa during the year.

UNHCR attempted to transport new arrivals away from the border to designated locations, but poor road conditions forced some refugees to walk up to 30 miles (50 km) to reach safe aid sites. Many new arrivals reported that they had been displaced repeatedly within Angola during the past 20 years, but had never before fled to Congo-Kinshasa for protection.

Aid workers had stockpiled relief supplies for up to 10,000 new arrivals, but funding constraints hampered relief efforts as the influx surpassed expectations. A budget reduction forced on UNHCR by donor nations “has had a negative impact on UNHCR’s ability to assist the newly arrived refugees as planned,” the agency reported. “Funding constraints forced postponement of road improvements that would have improved UNHCR’s ability to assist new arrivals.”

About 80,000 refugees lived in Bas-Congo Province, in the western corner of the country, about 100 miles (160 km) from Kinshasa. Some 23,000 refugees occupied the province’s two camps, Kilueka and Nkondo. About 12,000 resided in seven special “integration villages” created by the government and aid agencies, while the province’s remaining 45,000 refugees lived in local villages.

Approximately 50,000 refugees resided in southern Congo’s Katanga Province, close to the Congo-Angola border. Three locations—Kisenge, Divuma, and Tshimbumbulu—each housed about 15,000 Angolans. The refugee zone was 700 miles (about 1,100 km) from Kinshasa by air.

The third area hosting Angolan refugees was southwestern Congo’s Bandundu Province, in villages near Kahemba town. About half of the province’s 22,000 refugees lived in three villages—Kulingji, Bindu, and Tshifwameso—while nearly 10,000 reportedly lived 100 miles (160 km) away in Tembo town, on the remote border. The Bandundu Province refugee zone was located some 350 miles (560 km) by air from the capital.

Some 30,000 Angolan refugees lived in Kinshasa.

About two-thirds of Congo’s Angolan refugee population received full or partial relief aid, including some 110,000 refugees who benefited from WFP food distributions between harvests. Many new arrivals received about

an acre (half-hectare) of land for farming, as well as seeds and agricultural tools. Despite assistance efforts, however, pockets of malnutrition remained.

Tensions between refugees and local residents simmered in Bandundu Province, an area of strategic military importance because of its proximity to the capital. Many Congolese suspected that refugees in the province supported Angola’s rebels, while refugees and UNHCR expressed concern that the presence of Angolan government troops posed a threat to the refugee population. UNHCR did not report specific protection incidents, however.

About 5,000 refugees repatriated from Congo-Kinshasa to Angola during the year.

Refugees from Sudan Some 70,000 Sudanese refugees lived in the northeast corner of Congo-Kinshasa, more than 1,100 miles (about 1,800 km) from the capital. Most fled to Congo during 1990-91 because of Sudan’s civil war, which continued during 2001. About 5,000 new Sudanese refugees arrived in Congo-Kinshasa during the year.

About half of the Sudanese refugees lived on their own without humanitarian assistance. About 25,000 resided in or near the town of Aba, some 15,000 reportedly lived near Biringi, and an estimated 10,000 lived at Dungu. Nearly 20,000 others lived at Doruma or other scattered locations.

No local government functioned in the area because of Congo’s war. UNHCR repaired about 25 miles (40 km) of roads and bridges to improve its access to the refugee population, and offered limited support for farming and fisheries projects. The refugee agency also constructed three additional health clinics and improved the supply of drinking water for refugees and the local population.

The health and nutrition of Sudanese refugees were comparable to that of local Congolese; malaria and respiratory infections were the main health problems. About 4,000 Sudanese refugee students attended schools.

As in previous years, armed rebels from Sudan entered refugee areas seeking deserters and new recruits, according to UNHCR.

Refugees from Central African Republic Some 25,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Central African Republic fled to northern Congo-Kinshasa in May when political violence erupted in the capital of their country.

The sudden influx into a remote corner of Congo’s Equateur Province caught humanitarian workers by surprise. Because of the region’s poor roads, UNHCR airlifted supplies to the refugee population, requiring improvements in the area’s primitive airstrip.

Most refugees initially sought shelter in schools and churches in the Congolese town of Zongo, while smaller numbers gravitated to the village of Libenge and to 20 villages strung along the Ubangi River that forms the border between Congo-Kinshasa and Central African Republic.

Relief workers and local officials gradually transferred refugees from public buildings into large communal shelters while awaiting construction of a new refugee camp 25 miles (40 km) from the border. The new camp remained unready and unoccupied by year's end.

The influx included about 1,000 soldiers who had allegedly participated in their country's failed coup attempt, prompting local Congolese officials to express alarm at the security threat posed by the soldiers. UNHCR and UN peacekeeping troops already stationed in Congo-Kinshasa transferred 2,500 soldiers and their family members to a separate site late in the year.

Several thousand refugees spontaneously repatriated to Central African Republic in the final weeks of the year, according to unconfirmed reports. An estimated 20,000 refugees remained in Congo-Kinshasa at the end of 2001.

Refugees from Burundi An estimated 20,000 Burundian refugees were in Congo-Kinshasa at the end of 2001, but their exact number and condition were impossible to ascertain. Most lived on their own in eastern Congo and sought to remain inconspicuous for their own protection. Virtually all were ethnic Hutu.

Most Burundian refugees were believed to live near the town of Uvira in South Kivu Province. Others lived in towns such as Mbuji-Mayi in East Kasai Province, Goma in North Kivu Province, Lubumbashi in Katanga Province, and Bukavu in South Kivu Province. UNHCR provided humanitarian assistance to about 1,000 Burundians.

Refugees from Uganda An estimated 10,000 Ugandan refugees remained in northeast Congo-Kinshasa, largely beyond the reach of humanitarian programs. UNHCR was able to deliver small amounts of aid to about 1,000 refugees in early 2001 for the first time in three years.

Some Ugandan refugees had fled their country during the 1980s, while others had fled more recently, crossing the border periodically to escape armed Ugandan guerrillas operating on both sides of the border. Significant numbers of Ugandan refugees are believed to have spontaneously repatriated during the year as security conditions improved in western Uganda.

Asylum Seekers from Rwanda More than 1 million Rwandan refugees—virtually all of them ethnic Hutu—fled to Congo-Kinshasa in 1994. The overwhelming majority have repatriated since 1996, including some 15,000 who returned to Rwanda with help from UNHCR during 2001. Aid workers in Congo-Kinshasa reunited 450 unaccompanied refugee children with their families in Rwanda during the year.

About 2,000 Rwandan refugees continued to receive regular UNHCR assistance, primarily in the city of Mbuji-Mayi in East Kasai Province, as well as three other urban areas. UNHCR renovated four schools and four health centers used

by refugees and local residents. The agency also repaired local roads and distributed seeds and farm equipment.

Tens of thousands of Rwandans, however, lived in inaccessible areas, and their refugee status remained uncertain. UNHCR and Congolese government officials were unable to conduct official interviews to determine which individuals had legitimate asylum claims, and which were disqualified from refugee status because of participation in Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees therefore lists an estimated 30,000 Rwandans in the country as people of undetermined status living in "refugee-like" conditions. UNHCR acknowledged in 1999 that uncertainty over many Rwandans' background made the agency's interaction with them politically "delicate." ■

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire hosted more than 100,000 refugees at the end of 2001, including about 100,000 from Liberia, some 2,000 from Sierra Leone, and at least 1,000 urban refugees from more than two dozen other countries.

Several thousand Liberian refugees repatriated during the year, while 10,000 or more new Liberian refugees arrived in Côte d'Ivoire.

At least 10,000 residents of Côte d'Ivoire—and perhaps far more—fled political and ethnic violence in their home areas, becoming internally displaced during the year. It was unclear how many remained displaced at year's end.

Refugees from Liberia Liberian refugees fled to Côte d'Ivoire in the early 1990s, escaping civil war in their own country. Their numbers in Côte d'Ivoire peaked at about 300,000 in the mid-1990s. Nearly 100,000 refugees formally repatriated to Liberia during 1996-2000 after the civil war ended, but persistent poor security in Liberia pushed about 15,000 new refugees into Côte d'Ivoire during 1999-2000. At the start of 2001, approximately 90,000 Liberian refugees were living in Côte d'Ivoire.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) originally expected 10,000 Liberians to depart Côte d'Ivoire and return home during 2001, but only 2,000 formally repatriated. Renewed violence in Liberia forced UNHCR to suspend its repatriation program and shift its limited funds to humanitarian assistance for thousands of new Liberian refugees arriving in Côte d'Ivoire.

Some 7,000 new refugees settled in Nicla camp in western Côte d'Ivoire, doubling the camp's size. However, refugees who were a different ethnicity than the camp's predominantly ethnic Krahn population chose to live elsewhere in Côte d'Ivoire, without assistance.

New arrivals at Nicla camp received food, construction materials, cooking supplies, blankets, sleeping mats, and land for farming. Funding problems, however, initially