



## **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : ERITREA**

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Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project  
Chemin Moïse Duboule, 59  
1209 Geneva - Switzerland  
Tel: + 41 22 788 80 85  
Fax: + 41 22 788 80 86  
E-mail : [idpsurvey@nrc.ch](mailto:idpsurvey@nrc.ch)

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

### Summary

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#### Summary

A border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia escalated into a major military confrontation in May 1998, causing the displacement of an estimated 100,000 Eritreans from the border areas (USCR 1999, p.64). Renewed fighting in February 1999 caused a new wave of displacement (RI 25 June 1999, SCF August 1999), bringing the total number of IDPs to 266,200 by the end of 1999. On 12 May 2000, Ethiopia initiated a major military offensive deep into Eritrea that led to a flow of people fleeing artillery and aerial bombardments, and forced the original IDP population to flee even further from the border. It has been claimed that the new wave of displacement made the total number of IDPs exceed 1 million in June (UNHCR July 2000, p.5). During the second half of 2000 there was a substantial return movement, and available figures suggest a total IDP population of 308,000 by the end of the year, including 208,000 in camps and an estimated 100,000 IDPs with host communities (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 17; UN January 2001, p.26). There has been some confusion about the exact number of IDPs and returnees. For example, it was reported in September 2000 that some 600,000 IDPs had returned, while the joint Government/UN needs assessment refers to a return figure of 400,000 by end-2000 (ICC 25 September 2000; GOE/UN January 2001, p.8).

The return process started after Eritrea and Ethiopia signed an "Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities" on 18 June 2000, and the subsequent withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops to positions close to the border. Already by the beginning of August 2000 it was estimated that over 350,000 IDPs had returned to their home communities in the Gash-Barka and Debub areas (ICC 12 August 2000). This was also reflected by a decrease in the number of IDPs in camps amounting to 180,000 by the beginning of September 2000 (USAID 21 July 2000, ICC 9 September 2000). At the same time however, displacement continued from border areas still held by Ethiopian troops (WFP 18 August 2000, ICC 26 August 2000).

The cease-fire agreement committed Ethiopia to fully withdraw from Eritrean territory after a UN peacekeeping mission is in place (UN SC 30 June 2000, para.5). This was later reiterated when the two countries signed a permanent peace agreement on 12 December 2000, implying that military hostilities should be permanently terminated and providing for a neutral commission to assess claims for war damages (UN SC 12 January 2001, para. 4). The Security Council authorized on 15 September the deployment of 4,200 troops for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) with a mandate to monitor the cease-fire (UN DPI 15 September 2000). 3,433 military personnel had been deployed to UNMEE by January 2001 (ICC 22 January 2001). Further return of

IDPs is expected when UNMEE effectively guards the planned 25-kilometer deep Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) along the border with Ethiopia (UN January 2001).

Since the beginning of the border dispute conditions have been difficult for the internally displaced. The dramatic increase in the number of IDPs between May and June 2000 created a major humanitarian emergency with urgent needs for food aid, shelter, water supply, health services and sanitation facilities. By the beginning of July 2000 only one-third of the IDPs had found adequate shelter. The situation was exacerbated by the arrival of rains in July-August (UNHCR 4 July 2000). However, by the end of 2000 it was reported that most urgent shelter needs had been met (GOE/UN January 2001). The large number of IDPs outside camps has also caused a heavy burden on host communities (RI 27 July 2000). The response by humanitarian agencies and the Government to provide humanitarian assistance appears to have been successful in avoiding serious malnutrition and health problems (RI 7 November 2000; GOE/UN January 2001, p. 20).

Women and children constitute about 90 percent of the displaced (UN July 2000, p.6). A survey undertaken in September 2000 showed that the basic subsistence needs of children in IDP camps were covered, and that adult caregivers and social workers had been able to provide an adequate level of protection (MLHF/UNICEF/SCF, September 2000). However, there is a need to give attention towards psychosocial needs as traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been stretched to the limit. It remains to be systematically assessed, but women and adolescent girls from occupied territories might have become victims of physical and psychological violence (UN January 2001).

People returning to their homes require substantial assistance to reestablish themselves. The war has had a severe detrimental impact on local food production capacity and it has been suggested that a large share of the affected population may require food aid until the harvest period in November 2001 (UN July 2000, p.19). A needs assessment undertaken by the end of 2000 expected that only half of the war-displaced farmers to return to their farms in time to be fully productive in the 2001 cropping year (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 18). The dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance in the future Temporary Security Zone constraints both agricultural activities and the further return of IDPs to the border areas (UN January 2001)

In terms of property, the Ethiopian offensive caused substantial damage to public property such as public buildings and health facilities in towns like Barentu, Tessenei and Ali Gidir. A large number of private houses have also been completely looted and destroyed (EDF 29 June 2000; GOE/UN January 2001; WHO 31 July 2000).

The Government has played a large role in the coordination of the international response through the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC). The UN coordination capacity has been reinforced by additional OCHA staff and through the establishment of a joint Government/UN Information and Coordination Centre (ICC 11 January 2001). In addition to responding to the refugee flow in, and later out of, Sudan, UNHCR has provided assistance to IDPs and the return of all categories of displaced people in the western Gash Barka zone (UNHCR 11 August 2000; UN November 2000, p.7). To

facilitate return the UN has launched a mine clearance programme (UN SC 18 September 2000). Several NGOs arrived in Eritrea to respond to the worsened emergency after May 2000, and the number of international NGOs increased during 2000 from approximately 10 to over 30 (UN January 2001, pp.34-35).

*(Updated in March 2001)*

## CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

### Main causes for displacement

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#### Major new displacements caused by renewed fighting (May-June 2000)

- Reported that the Ethiopian advance into western Eritrea in May 2000 immediately triggered a flow half a million people fleeing the hostilities
- People were evacuated from the conflict areas or fled when artillery and aerial bombardments started

"[In July 2000, the UN stated that the] situation in Eritrea has changed dramatically since the January 2000 United Nations Country Team Appeal (UNCTA) was launched. The renewed border war from 12 May to 18 June between Eritrea and Ethiopia was fierce. Violent military clashes resulted in a rapid mass exodus of populations away from the war zone. The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) reported that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other war-affected persons rose from 371,910 in January to an estimated figure of more than 1.1 million in June 2000." (UN July 2000, pp.1, 6-8)

"The affected civilian populations either were evacuated from the conflict areas or fled from artillery and aerial bombardments. The displaced populations (IDPs), scattered in various locations, continue to look for safer areas to take refuge." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

"The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Committee said [18 May] half a million people were fleeing the Ethiopian advance, west of the country, creating a new humanitarian crisis. Eritrean state radio accused Ethiopia of "intentionally bombing and shelling civilian targets" in its massive offensive. The Eritrean government has asked local UN officials to secure emergency international aid for the civilians fleeing the Ethiopian advance.

Humanitarian sources said people affected by the advance included war-affected displaced Eritreans living in temporary camps and Eritreans expelled by the Ethiopian government from northern Ethiopia over the past two years. Save the Children Fund (SCF) said the fighting threatened 15,000 children among the 80,000 inhabitants of camps for the displaced in the Gash Barka region, west of Asmara, AFP reported." (IRIN 18 May 2000)



Map source: BBC 23 May 2000

"The local administration has assisted evacuees with trucks. Displaced local administration officials have arrived in centres with their village populations. Some people who fled areas under attack told IRIN that the military and local administration told them to leave and organised transport for them; others left areas on their own initiative as they witnessed Eritrean troops pulling back." (IRIN 29 May 2000)

*See the "population-" and the "return" sections for information about how the IDP situation has changed since the large influx in May/June.*

#### **Displacement of civilians caused by armed border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998-1999)**

- Areas up to 50 kilometers along the length of the border closed military zones by May 1999
- 50,000 people re-location from the border area in May 1998

"The war has [by August 1999] displaced 200,000 Eritreans, including 44,000 children under 5 years old. Displacement occurred in two waves. When the war began in May 1998, the Eritrean government moved 50,000 people away from the border area. The re-location was orderly, and most people stayed with local families. In February 1999 heavy fighting forced a further 150,000 people to flee without warning. Initially it was hoped that people could again stay with host families, but it was soon clear that needs were too great and 20 refugee camps were set up. The Eritrean government estimates that there are 69,000 displaced people in camps in Debub, and 118,000 in Gash Barka; 22 per cent are younger than 5 years and 85 per cent of families are headed by women. Many families have been organised according to their communities, and local structures and services – such as schools – re-established." (SCF August 1999)

"Once allies as well as neighbors, Eritrea and Ethiopia are waging a fierce war along their 625-mile border. As with all conflicts, the people who are suffering silently are the innocent civilians. Some 250,000 Eritreans have been displaced from the rural areas along the battle fronts.

[...]

The war, now in its fourteenth month, has triggered successive waves of displacement. An escalation of the fighting last February [1999] caused the flight of 150,000 people who dispersed in several directions to escape artillery fire and aerial bombing." (RI 25 June 1999)

"Up to 600,000 people, mainly small farmers and nomads have been displaced on both sides of the border as a result of the fighting and areas up to 50 kilometres along the length of the border becoming closed military zones. Ethiopia has alleged that civilians have been tortured and forced to flee from their homes in the Badme area since Eritrea took control of the area in May 1998 and that Eritrea systematically destroyed property and looted churches in the disputed areas[...]. UN agencies estimate that over 300,000 people have been displaced in Tigray province as a result of the conflict and 245,000 people have been displaced inside Eritrea." (AI 21 May 1999, sect. 2.2)

## **Background of the conflict**

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### **Background to the border dispute (1999)**

- Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia never clearly demarcated
- Claims by Eritrea in 1997 that Ethiopian troops occupied an area within eastern Eritrea

"Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1991. This followed the overthrow of the regime of Mengistu Haile-Mariam in 1991 by an alliance of the two liberation movements, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), who formed new provisional governments in Eritrea and Ethiopia respectively [...]. Eritrea officially became a separate internationally recognized state in 1993, following a referendum in which more than 95% of Eritreans voted for independence from Ethiopia.

Eritrea's *de facto* border in 1991 was that of the Italian colony of Eritrea established in 1890. In line with the OAU principles on the integrity of colonial borders, this border was agreed to be a starting point, but both sides agreed that it was inconclusive and that some details needed to be clarified. The border had never been clearly demarcated and Italy had made several claims on Ethiopian territory prior to its full-scale invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 and five year occupation. There was no border demarcation throughout the subsequent British military administration in Eritrea, the 1952 federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, or after the removal of Eritrea's federal status in 1962, which set off the Eritrean liberation struggle. In 1991 both Ethiopia and Eritrea accepted that there were inconsistencies in the border but full demarcation was not regarded as a high priority. After an incident in July 1997, in which Eritrea claims that Ethiopian troops occupied Adi Murang, in Bada, eastern Eritrea, a bilateral border commission was set up to address problems as they arose.

[...]

Generally, relations between the two countries were good. There were large numbers of each other's citizens working in each country, who were treated the same as nationals and there was almost free movement of people across the borders. Special arrangements were in place for the use of Assab port, now on Eritrean soil, by Ethiopia (now land-locked) through which most of Ethiopia's imports and exports came. Both countries used the Ethiopian *birr* as a common currency, until 1997 when Eritrea introduced the *nakfa*. The introduction of the *nakfa* and subsequent switch to hard currency transactions between the two countries brought other economic policy differences to the fore and strained relations.

[...]

Ethiopia has a sizeable minority of people of Eritrean origin who, while voting for the independence of Eritrea in the referendum, retained their Ethiopian citizenship and considered themselves Ethiopian[...]. Many people of Eritrean origin worked in the Ethiopian civil service, in sensitive jobs in the telecommunications and aviation sectors, and were also prominent in business, particularly in Addis Ababa." (AI 21 May 1999, sect.1.2)

### **Military confrontations in border areas between Eritrea and Ethiopia (May 1998 – February 2000)**

- Border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia in the Badame area escalated into a major military confrontation in May 1998
- In February 1999 waves of people were driven from their homes because of renewed aerial and artillery attacks in the border areas
- Significant clashes on the Zelambessa frontline area in early September 1999, and armed skirmish between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces took place on the border near Bure on 23 February 2000

"In May 1998 a border dispute in the Badame area escalated into a major military confrontation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. By early June 1998, the conflict had grown worse and spread into the ZalaAmbesa and Alitena areas in the Debub Region and into the Bure area, west of Assab, in the Southern Red Sea Region. The international airport in Eritrea's capital, Asmara, was bombed, causing the international community to evacuate and the government to briefly close the airport. This conflict caused the first wave of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to flee their homes in search of safety.

Intense fighting started up again in February 1999 along the Mereb-Setit front (Badame area) and quickly expanded to the Tsorona area, then spread again to the ZalaAmbesa and Alitena border areas. Aerial and artillery attacks upon civilians living nearby drove additional waves of people from their homes, to both rural and urban centers of the country, including the capital, Asmara, in greater numbers. The displaced people continue to stretch the capacity of existing public services, facilities, and infrastructure.

Adding to the humanitarian crisis, Ethiopia started, and is continuing, to deport people of Eritrean heritage. Over 67,000 deportees have been registered since the eruption of the conflict in May 1998 of whom over 28,000 are Rural Deportees." (UN January 2000, p.1)

"In the aftermath of the heavy fighting that took place in the Badme area during February, the month of March [1999] began relatively quietly amid calls for a ceasefire and an end to the hostilities. Hopes for a quick settlement were raised for a while following the announcement by Eritrea at the end of February that it had accepted the OAU Framework Agreement. Ethiopia later made clear it would not agree to any ceasefire nor engage in negotiations regarding the implementation of the OAU framework until Eritrea agreed to withdraw its troops from border areas around Egala and Zelambessa-Aiga, on the so-called central front, and Bada-Bure along the eastern border.

The relative lull ended on March 14 with reports that new fighting had erupted on the front line a little to the south of the strategically important town of Tsorona. According to international media reports, following an initial period of shelling using heavy artillery, fighting escalated quickly over a two-day period with the deployment of ground troops, armoured vehicles and warplanes. Given the apparent intensity and limited geographical focus of the fighting, there are concerns that heavy casualties were suffered. The focus later switched back to the western front close to the Mereb river where a series of skirmishes or clashes were reported by the media in the vicinity of the Eritrean town of Shembeko. This latest period of fighting appeared to come to a close with the Ethiopian government saying that it had successfully countered an Eritrean attempt to recapture territory it had lost around Badme during the earlier fighting in February. There have been no reports regarding the situation in the Bure border area, which is adjacent to the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab." (UN CTE 14 April 1999, p.1)

"On February 23 [2000] an armed skirmish between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces took place on the border near Bure, some 70 kms from the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab. The fighting was first reported by the Eritrean official media and later confirmed by the Office of the Ethiopian Spokesperson. The Ethiopian statement said that by attacking first and then blaming Ethiopia for initiating the engagement, the Eritrean government was attempting to deceive the international community. Eritrea claimed that Ethiopia was continuing a pattern of attacking whenever a peace envoy comes to the region.

The reports of fighting came after several months of quiet along the common border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The last significant clashes came on the Zelambessa frontline area in early September last year, and, according to Ethiopian radio reports, near the Jerbet river on the left flank of the Badme front in October. Even though there has been relative quiet along the border, the war of words between the two countries has continued unabated with Ethiopia pressing for the redeployment of Eritrean troops away from the remaining contested border areas and Eritrea accusing Ethiopia of preparing for yet another round of fighting. The enmity between the two governments became very evident during the UN General Assembly in October when the Foreign Ministers of the two countries made impassioned speeches condemning the other side and accusing the UN and international community of not doing enough to end the conflict." (UN CTE 10 March 2000)

***See also the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation (EPCPT), "Ethiopia/Eritrea: End in sight to a devastating war?" (December 2000)***

*or Amnesty International "Ethiopia and Eritrea. Human Rights Issues in a Year of Armed Conflict " (21 May 1999) for more detailed information about the dynamics of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.*

### **Ethiopia's offensive ended as an agreement on Cessation of Hostilities was signed on 18 June 2000**

- Agreement included immediate cessation of hostilities
- Decision to deploy UN peacekeeping force in a buffer zone extending 26 km into Eritrea
- Ethiopian troops to fully withdrawal from occupied areas when peacekeeping mission has been deployed

"After two years of sporadic fighting followed by months of stalemate, Ethiopia launched a major assault against Eritrea on 12 May 2000. During this offensive, Ethiopia entered through the western flank and moved deep into Eritrea capturing Barentu, the strategic regional capital of Gash-Barka. A number of other towns in south and west of the country, including Shambiko and Tokombiya were also captured. Fighting then shifted to the central border town of Zalem Bessa. Although Eritrea has announced the withdrawal of its troops from this contested city as part of its acceptance of the OAU Peace Accord, fighting continues in areas around Senafe, another city to the north of Zalem Bessa." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

### **"ETHIOPIA-ERITREA: Peace deal signed**

Ethiopia and Eritrea on Sunday signed a peace agreement, raising hopes that the two year-old border dispute may be at an end. The 15-point plan, brokered by the OAU in Algiers, provides for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in a buffer zone extending 26 km into Eritrea, and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from areas occupied inside Eritrea since 6 February 1999. Demarcation of the border will follow later. The accord was signed by the foreign ministers of the two countries. Eritrean Foreign Minister Haile Woldetensae said the agreement was the 'first step, but not the end of the process', Eritrean radio reported. He said the road to sustainable peace would be full of obstacles and complications, but stressed his government's commitment to the agreement. His comments were echoed by his Ethiopian counterpart, Seyoum Mesfin. Quoted by Tigray radio in Mekele, Seyoum however said the agreement had created a 'conducive environment for the next round of talks', and described it as a 'political victory' for Ethiopia.

[...]

### **ETHIOPIA: Troops pull out of Tesseney**

Ethiopia said on Monday it had withdrawn troops from the western Eritrean town of Tesseney, which it captured last week. Speaking the day after Addis Ababa signed the peace deal with Asmara, the Ethiopian government spokeswoman Selome Tadesse said the troops had 'successfully completed their mission' and had withdrawn 'to positions from which they can defend themselves and liberated Ethiopian territories on the western front.'" (IRIN-CEA 19 June 2000)

"In my report dated 30 June 2000 (S/2000/643), I informed the Security Council that Ethiopia and Eritrea had signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities on 18 June 2000. On 28 July 2000, the Secretary General of OAU reported that OAU, in its decision on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea made at the thirty-sixth ordinary session of OAU heads of State and Government, held in Lomé from 10 to 12 July 2000, *inter alia*, encouraged the two parties to pursue negotiations on the outstanding issues under the auspices of OAU in order to achieve a lasting peace. The Heads of State and Government also requested the Security Council to take the necessary steps for the speedy deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission provided for in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

Efforts to reach an agreement on the outstanding issues are continuing, and during the latest round of proximity talks held in Washington, D.C., on 3, 5 and 6 July 2000, the parties discussed modalities for the delimitation and demarcation of the border and the issue of compensation. The talks were adjourned without a formal statement on the outcome of the deliberations." (SC 9 August 2000, paras. 3-4)

***Provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities:***

"2. Under the Agreement, which was circulated on 19 June 2000 as a document of the Security Council (S/2000/601), the parties have committed themselves to:

(a) Resolving the present crisis and any other dispute between them through peaceful and legal means in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charters of OAU and the United Nations; (b) Rejecting the use of force as a means of (c) Respecting the borders existing at independence, as stated in OAU resolution AHG/Res 16 (1), adopted in Cairo in 1964, and in this regard determining them on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law, making use, to that end, of technical means to demarcate the borders and, in case of controversy, to resort to the appropriate means of arbitration.

3. The Agreement commits the parties to an immediate cessation of hostilities and stipulates that, starting from the signature of the Agreement, all air and land attacks are to cease. The parties have also reaffirmed their acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and the modalities for its implementation.

4. Under the Agreement, the parties called upon the United Nations, in cooperation with OAU, to establish a peacekeeping operation to assist in the implementation of the Agreement and guaranteed to ensure free movement and access for the peacekeeping mission and its supplies, as required, through their territories and to respect its members, installations and equipment.

5. Under the Agreement, Ethiopia shall submit to the peacekeeping mission redeployment plans for its troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998. This redeployment is to take place within two weeks after the deployment of the peacekeeping mission and is to be verified by it. For its part, Eritrea is to maintain its forces at a distance of 25 kilometres (artillery range)

from positions to which the Ethiopian forces are to redeploy. This zone of separation is to be referred to as the 'temporary security zone'." (SC 30 June 2000, paras. 2-5)

### **The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)**

- Security Council authorizing on 15 September 2000 deployment of 4,200 troops for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) mandated to monitor the cease-fire
- 3,433 military and 125 civilian personnel deployed by January 2001

"The Security Council today [15 September 2000] authorized the deployment of 4,200 troops for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), with an initial six-month mandate to carry out a range of verification tasks, including monitoring the ceasefire between the two countries.

Unanimously adopting [resolution 1320 \(2000\)](#), the Council expanded not only the size but also the mandate of UNMEE, which was originally established at the end of July with a strength of 100 military observers.

The newly authorized troops will be responsible for helping to ensure that the parties adhere to their security commitments. In a simultaneous effort, the Mission will monitor the redeployment of troops from both sides. Ethiopian troops will be redeployed from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998, while Eritrean forces will redeploy in order to remain a distance of 25 kilometres from the position of the redeployed Ethiopian troops.

Also as part of its mandate, the Mission will monitor the temporary security zone, and provide technical assistance to mine action activities there and in adjacent areas. In addition, it will coordinate with the humanitarian and human rights work of others in the zone and adjacent areas." (UN DPI 15 September 2000)

"UNMEE has now deployed more than three-quarters of its planned 4,200 peace keeping force in Eritrea. As of 10 January 2001, 71 countries have contributed 3,433 military and 125 civilian personnel to the mission. These comprise contingents from Canada, Denmark, Italy, Jordan, the Netherlands and Slovakia, all of which are now fully deployed in UNMEE's area of operation. The Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) and adjacent areas are divided into three sectors by UNMEE namely West, Central and East and will be manned by the Jordanians, the Dutch and Canadians, and the Kenyans respectively. There are also 154 military observers in the mission area (Eritrea and Ethiopia); most of whom are positioned in 15-observer team sites conducting patrols. A further 60 military observers are expected to arrive before the end of January." (ICC 22 January 2001)

*The UNMEE [Internet Site](#) provides updated information about the operation.*

## **Peace agreement signed on 12 December 2000**

- Agreement provides that the two parties shall permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves
- Provision for a neutral commission to decide on all claims for loss, damage or injury from either side

"[O]n 12 December 2000, I witnessed the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (A/55/686-S/2000/1183), at a ceremony hosted by President Bouteflika in Algiers. Also in attendance were the United States Secretary of State, Mrs. Madeleine Albright, the Secretary-General of the OAU, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Representative of the President of the United States of America, Mr. Anthony Lake, and the Personal Envoy of the President of the European Union, Mr. Rino Serri. [...] The Agreement provides that the two parties shall permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves, shall refrain from the threat or use of force against each other, and shall respect and fully implement the provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 (S/2000/601, annex). The 12 December Agreement also provides for the early release and repatriation of prisoners of war and all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict. At the same time, the text calls for an investigation to be conducted by an independent and impartial body to determine the origins of the conflict. The Agreement further envisages the establishment, [...] of a neutral boundary commission which is mandated to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law. In addition, the Agreement further provides for the establishment of a neutral commission to decide on all claims for loss, damage or injury from either side." (UN SC 12 January 2001, para. 4)

# POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

## Total national figures

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**Available figures suggest that 308,000 remained internally displaced by end-2000**

- Reported in January 2001 that 208,000 IDPs were remaining in camps
- Estimated that 100,000 IDPs were living outside camps by November 2000
- Reported in January 2001 that there were no major IDP movements

Target Population Description	Target Population Number	Type of Assistance
Drought-Affected	738,450*	Food Aid: 1.76 Million
IDPs in Camps (including Deportees in Camps)	208,163	
Rural War-Affected, including:	708,241	Non-Food Aid: Smaller sub-sets of the 1.76 Million in need of food.
• IDPs Outside Camps		
• Host Community Population		
• Returnee IDPs/Refugees		
• Eritreans under occupation (43,00 to 50,000)		
• Rural Deportees not in camps		
Returnees from Sudan**	62,000	
Deportees/Expellees**	45,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,761,854</b>	
Urban Vulnerable Population	154,510***	Non-Food Aid

\*Figure includes drought-affected in the following regions: 269,835 in Anseba; 255,642 in Northern Red Sea; 134,133 in Southern Red Sea; and 76,640 in Maekel.

\*\*Provisional planning figures. Regarding returnees from Sudan, the planning figure used by WFP and UNHCR is 62,000. The Government uses 65,000.

\*\*\* A higher Government figure (296,312) includes food and non-food beneficiaries.

(Source: GOE/UN February 2001, p. 17)

"[A]n estimated 100,000 IDPs are still hosted within various communities in rural and urban areas. They typically share the host's meagre resources, including their homes and household items. As a result, many host families have expressed that their household items have sustained considerable wear and tear. Many host community families have also lent household items to their displaced guests with no means of replacing them. Clearly, these communities will continue to require considerable support in the coming year." (UN February 2001, p.26)

"Recent months [end-2000] have seen the situation in Eritrea stabilising. Population movements are much fewer than during and immediately after the third offensive of May 2000 and in the majority of cases are returns, which can be viewed in a positive light." (ICC 18 December 2000)

"In general, IDPs are leaving camps to return to their homes or seeking educational opportunities for their children. Conversely, there are increases in some camps such as

Guluj sub-zone due to returnees from Sudan or in Zula and Harena due to people fleeing the occupied area of Senafe.

In addition to the 202,000 IDPs in 24 recognised camps, there are an estimated 100,000 IDPs living outside camps." (ICC 6 November 2000)

"According to the latest Government estimates, approximately 600,000 people have returned to their areas of origin since 18 June 2000. However, more than 200,000 people remain accommodated in camps. These Eritreans currently can not return to their original home areas due to security concerns, the presence of landmines or their inability to re-establish their lives in areas where destruction to personal assets and communal services has been substantial. In addition, it is estimated that there are currently still over 100,000 IDPs outside camps, the majority of whom are accommodated in host communities. Furthermore, there are approximately 76,000, mostly rural, deportees who are not likely to be able to return to their home areas in the near future." (UN November 2000, p.1)

"There are currently 24 organized camps in the three zobas of Debub, Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea. The 208,163 camp residents are living in tents or under plastic sheeting and are almost completely dependent on ERREC and the humanitarian community for emergency relief. Some 80% have lived in camps for more than two years [...]." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 14)

"There have been no major IDP movements during recent weeks [mid-January 2001]. As noted in previous Updates, 8,000 rural refugees in Jejah have moved to Shelab and Dembe Doran has emptied with its 4,000 residents relocating to Jejah. Therefore there are a total of 24 camps in Eritrea presently." (ICC 22 January 2001)

#### **Figures by Government agency suggested a remaining IDP population numbering 500,000 by end of September 2000**

- 600,000 IDPs returned home
- Number of IDPs in camps reported to be 217,223 IDPs (end-September)

" Currently, there are 25\* populated IDP camps accommodating 217,223 IDPs in Eritrea. [\*In early September, updated IDP figures in camps were given stating there were 22 camps. Since that time, one camp has emptied (Maleboor) and there have been returnees to four camps abandoned after May 2000 and since reopened in Gash-Barka]

[...]

With the exception of small numbers of people who continue to leave the occupied area of Senafe sub-zone, and the establishment of Buya camp at the end of August due to new displacements from the Alitiena area, the trend has shifted from one of new displacements to one of returns. Returns include IDPs within Eritrea and those who fled to Sudan after 12 May 2000. During 24 July – 4 August 2000, Italiana Co-operazione and UNDP visited 12 of the 20 sub-zones affected by the conflict in Gash-Barka and Debub. The assessment estimated that some 75 percent of people who had fled the 12

sub-zones had returned – some 350,000 persons. It is now estimated by ERREC that some 600,000 IDPs have returned home. (The total IDP population from Gash-Barka and Debub was estimated at 1.1 million following an inter-agency rapid assessment 30 June – 2 July 2000.)" (ICC 25 September 2000)

<b>DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAMPS</b>			
<b>23 September 2000</b>			
Zone	Sub-Zone	Camp	Population
Debub	Adi Keih	Birhinet	3,769
Debub	Adi Keih	Halai	10,600
Debub	Adi Keih	Soyra	20,302
Debub	Adi Keih	Zula	7,832
Debub	Adi Quala	Agraa	5,500
Debub	Adi Quala	Mai Sagla	7,703
Debub	Dibarwa	Salina	200
Debub	Mai Aini	Adi Nebri	1,750
Debub	Mai Aini	Deda	3,471
Debub	Mai Aini	Medfa Walta	1,729
Debub	Tsorono	Alba	19,314
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>82,170</b>
Deda was previously known as Tekelabi			
Medfa Walta was previously known as Adi Shekano			
Salina is very small and barely considered a camp			
Gash-Barka	Dige	Dige	-
Gash-Barka	Forto	Girmaika	-
Gash-Barka	Forto	Meleboor	-
Gash-Barka	Gogne	Adi Keshi	36,812
Gash-Barka	Guluj	Gergef *	2,387
Gash-Barka	Guluj	Guluj *	2,026
Gash-Barka	Guluj	Sabunait *	206
Gash-Barka	Guluj	Tebeldia *	1,488
Gash-Barka	Molki	Dembe Doran	4,022
Gash-Barka	Molki	Jejah	9,440
Gash-Barka	Shambuko	Korokon	9,862
Gash-Barka	Shambuko	Koytobia	15,000
Gash-Barka	Shambuko	Tologamja	2,141
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>83,384</b>
* Camps re-recognised in recent weeks			
Northern Red Sea	Foro	Buya	420
Northern Red Sea	Ghinda	Ghinda	2,794
Northern Red Sea	Ghinda	Harena	25,000
Northern Red Sea	Afabet	Mekete	23,455
		<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>51,669</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>DPS in camps</b>	<b>217,223</b>
Figures by ERREC			
Prepared by ICC			

### **Approximately 900,000 Eritreans internally displaced by end of July 2000**

- Number of IDPs in camps reported to be 390,000 by beginning of July
- Estimated in July that up to 600,000 IDPs had sought refugee other places than the camps
- Claimed that IDP population exceeded one million by July 2000

"Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans fled their homes during May [2000] and early June when Ethiopia launched a military offensive that defeated Eritrean troops and forced an apparent end to a bloody two-year border war between the two countries.

[...]

The war left tens of thousands of soldiers dead on both sides and pushed an estimated 1.5 million Eritreans and Ethiopians from their homes. At the end of July, approximately 900,000 Eritreans were internally displaced and about 90,000 were new refugees in neighboring countries." (USCR August 2000)

"As of July 12, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) reported that an estimated 390,000 Eritrean internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently residing in camps and temporary settlements. According to government and UN estimates, up to 600,000 IDPs are either living with host communities or grouped informally in areas close to streams or bushes with no access to basic necessities." (USAID 21 July 2000)

### ***Fast increase in estimated IDP Figures from initially 500,000 to more than 1 million between May and June:***

"Nearly 750,000 Eritreans have been displaced by the war with neighboring Ethiopia, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said Tuesday [6 June 2000], three weeks into renewed fighting between the Horn of Africa neighbors.

'Our first estimates were that 500,000 Eritreans had been displaced, but the ongoing fighting has forced us to reevaluate the figure to nearly 750,000 people,' Trevor Rowe, WFP spokesman told AFP here." (AFP 6 June 2000)

"The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has generated over one million IDPs in Eritrea. They are, for the most part, located in areas that are expected to receive the majority of returnees in the anticipated large-scale repatriation movement. Many of the current IDPs were, at some point, refugees in Sudan." (UNHCR July 2000, p. 5)

### ***Geographical distribution of new IDPs by end-May:***

"After the western city of Barentu fell and the city of Agordat was abandoned, hundreds of thousands of Eritreans reportedly have fled in eastwards to the city of Keren and towards the Sudanese border in the West. There are 17,000 refugees in and around the Sudanese border town of Kassala. MSF teams are present to assess the situation, which is not urgent so far.

In Eritrea itself, MSF is trying to get an overview of the stream of refugees in the West. According to unconfirmed reports, there are up to 100,000 refugees located around Teseney and Guluj. They are without shelter and access to healthcare. An MSF team is travelling to the area and will supply them with jerrycans, plastic sheeting and medicine." (MSF 30 May 2000)

***Geographical distribution by June:***

"The areas where most IDPs originate include Shambuko, Tokombiya, Molki, Hayakota, Lalay Gash and Barentu, Senafe, Adi Keyh and Adi Quala. One camp at Debaat, some 30 kilometres from Karen, hosts 35,000 displaced people and numbers have been increasing day by day. Other displaced populations are sheltering in the valleys of the Barka river around Akrodat and surrounding areas, and in the south in Dubarwa and Maihabar. IDP population areas also include Akrodat, Tessney and Gulluj. There are reports of about 25,000 displaced people have crossed over to Sudan. About 70 per cent of the IDPs are children, 25 per cent women and 5 per cent elderly men. This conflict has wiped out the next harvest in Eritrea's main food producing areas and the effects of the food shortage will be felt well beyond the battle zone." (UNICEF 20 June 2000)

**The IDP population estimated to amount to 266,200 by the end of 1999**

- 127,850 living in 30 camps while 138,350 stay with host communities
- 28,000 Eritreans deported from Ethiopia treated as IDPs (January 2000)

"There are currently a total of 266,200 IDPs, of which 127,850 are living in 30 camps while 138,350 are living with Host Communities outside camps. The IDPs are almost equally divided between Gash-Barka Region, close to the Badame area in the southwest lowlands, and Debub Region, south of Asmara in the highlands. There are also some 7,000 IDPs in the Assab area of the Southern Red Sea Region." (UN January 2000, pp.2-3)

Categories of War-affected Populations	Individuals
IDPs in camps	
Gash-Barka	47,530
Debub	80,320
Sub-total	127,850
IDPs outside camps	
Gash-Barka	42,110
Debub	89,240
Southern Red Sea	7,000
Sub-total	138,350

TOTAL IDPs	266,200
Rural Deportees in camps	
Gash-Barka	15,820
Sub-total	15,820
Rural Deportees outside camps	
Gash-Barka	1,520
Debub	11,010
Sub-total	12,530
<b>TOTAL RURAL DEPORTEES</b>	<b>28,350</b>

(UN January 2000, table 2)

"Of the 67,000 people of Eritrean heritage who have been deported from Ethiopia, some 39,000 urban deportees have been left to fend for themselves, after token initial support from the Government. On the other hand, about 28,000 Rural Deportees are treated the same as IDPs. More than half of the latter, 15,820, are sheltered in camps while the rest are staying in Host Communities." (UN January 2000, pp.2-3)

#### **A total of 100,000 IDPs reported by the end of 1998**

"The war forced an estimated 100,000 or more Eritreans to flee their homes near the border. Most were farmers and herders.

Local communities provided shelter, but "the disruption and displacement...due to the conflict have put the displaced and receiving communities at very serious risk," UN relief officials stated in September. "There is little chance that the displaced will be able to return to their homes in the immediate future."

In addition to the displaced populations, the war affected 150,000 people, hampering their ability to farm, closing school and health facilities, and forcing impoverished communities to share their limited resources with displaced families. UN agencies reported that they needed nearly \$9 million to provide humanitarian assistance to areas of Eritrea affected by the war." (USCR 1999, p.64)

## **Geographical distribution**

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#### **Selected geographical information about IDP populations by end-2000**

- Estimated in November 2000 that 1,359 IDP households remained outside camps in the Anseba region
- About 80,000 IDPs in camps in Debub region by end-2000
- Approximately 3,000 separated children remain in the Debub IDP camps

- About 86,000 IDPs in camps in Gash-Barka region by end-2000
- About 17,900 IDPs living outside camps in Maakel region by end-2000
- A total of 47,541 IDPs in camps in Northern Red Sea region by end-2000

"Anseba is a semi-arid region in the north-central part of Eritrea.

[...]

Thousands of IDPs have sought refuge with relatives in various parts of Anseba. Many having been displaced from the highly war-affected regions of Gash Barka and Debub. Since the beginning of the crisis, ERREC, assisted by its humanitarian partners, has provided food and shelter to groups of these IDPs and their host communities. However, due to the difficulties related to identifying all IDPs outside of camps the exact number is not known (there are no IDP camps in Anseba and most are living with host communities). ERREC had initially registered 1,129 households and started distributing tents in October 2000. This figure was revised in November 2000 and now stands at 1,359 households. Most of these IDPs are living in Keren, Elabered and Hagaz." (GOE/UN February 2001, p.30)

"There are 10 camps in Debub with a total population of about 80,000 (16,000 households). The number of separated children in the IDP camps is approximately 3,000. The IDPs are originally from Tsorona and Senafe - areas that are still under Ethiopian occupation. Most of this population group have been displaced for more than two and a half years and have moved numerous times. For the majority of these IDPs, it is no longer a short-term emergency situation. Some IDPs, like those from Tsorona, had time to take some of their belonging with them in 1998 when they first fled. As a result, they have not been provided with the same bundle of household items. Most assessed families stated that the household items and clothing they had are now worn out or were lost during the last offensive. They are not currently in a financial position to acquire any new goods. (GOE/UN February 2001, p.38)

"The IDPs in [Gash Barka] camps (mainly at Adi Keshi, Korokon, Tologanya, Kotobia, and Jehah camps) were displaced due to the military offensives in February 1999 and May 2000. Most are displaced from the villages either under Ethiopian occupation or very near to the front lines. The IDP population in camps is estimated to be 85,898 (17,179 households). 59% of this IDP population are women; children under 5 are estimated at 18%. Women head a total of 56% of the IDP households. (GOE/UN February 2001, p.44)

"The problems of crop failure and livestock loss, due to drought, was compounded by the war as many household breadwinners involved in national service were unable to work on the land or unable to do casual labor. This impacts IDPs living outside camps (ca. 17,900 persons) [in the Maakel region.]" (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 51)

"The approximately 7,000 IDPs residing outside of camps in Northern Red Sea are mainly located in Bada Administrative area in Ghelalo sub-zone. Bada Administrative zone is comprised of 4 villages located near the Ethiopian border. Laimbada and Bolali villages with a total IDP population of 4,000 persons are under Eritrean control while Adimurug and Erimile with 2,900 IDPs are in the occupied areas. The population of Bada

comprises about 60% farmers, 30% pastoralist and 10% traders. The Rigale river, the main source of irrigation, is located on the frontline, with roughly half of the population of Bada on either riverbank. Farming activities using the river's flood waters have largely halted due to the war, affecting the local sorghum and maize crops. ERREC has distributed food aid to the population on the Eritrean side. The health center moved from Bada to Ghelalo which is at a 115 km distance and mobile health workers visit the area regularly.

[...]

There are three IDP camps in the Northern Red Sea zone area: Harena, Mekete, and Denden. They accommodate a total of 47,541 displaced persons." (GOE/UN February 2001, pp. 59-60)

### **New displacement from areas close to Ethiopian border despite cease-fire (July-August 2000)**

- Alba camp reportedly receiving up to 500 additional IDPs per day from the Senafe subregion by mid-July
- New displacements reported from the Lalai Gash (Auguro) area of Gash-Barka by end-July
- reports by mid-August of 1,500 new IDPs from Layla Gash arriving in the Adikeshi IDP camp
- New displacements reported by end-August in the Endeli and Alha administrative environs in the sub-region of Gelalo

#### ***New displacement reported during July:***

"[T]he population of Zula is 14,560 and increasing. Most of the people in the camp come from villages around Senafe and Adi Keih. Approximately ten families are arriving each day from the Senafe area. Some are going to Mai Ha bar. People live in the caves, with host families in the villages in the canyon and in the camp at the bottom. Additionally there are over 7,000 people living in caves in the area of the camp who are not receiving supplies or food rations." (EDF 5 July 2000)

"There is continued displacement from around the Senafe sub-zone through the mountainous Forto area. Others are coming through the Soyra area to Qohaito to avoid the trenches and front lines. Significant numbers are arriving in Alba every day through Mai Wurai. IDPs from this area report human rights abuses and lack of food as the main reasons for their leaving." (ICC 10 July 2000)

"IDPs continue to leave occupied areas of Senafe subregion through Mai Wurai and up into Alba, with Alba camp reportedly receiving up to 500 additional IDPs per day. In addition to the current figure of 17,000, reports suggest an additional 15,000 IDPs in host communities around Qohaitit.

Though a "trickling out" has been noticed in Harena, there has been no significant reduction in camp numbers with none expected. On the contrary, ERREC officials are expecting an increase in the numbers as IDPs continue to filter out of the Senafe area.

[...]

Several figures have been used for this camp, which has led to some confusion. The immediate camp has been listed as hosting 25,000 IDPs, while generally acknowledged that, with the addition of IDPs outside the camp, either living in smaller concentrations or in the surroundings, the number jumps to approximately 44,000. The immediate camp, however, is currently experiencing a substantial increase through the addition of large numbers of internal expellees from the Upper Gash region. The immediate camp, now hosting 30,000 IDPs, is becoming increasingly congested and may require the setting up of a satellite camp in the very near future to relieve this potentially dangerous congestion.

It is reported that up to 300 internal expellees are arriving in Adi Keshi daily. In addition, 155 expellees arrived in Mendefera from Addis Ababa earlier this week. There have as yet been no public reports from human rights groups or inter-national organizations on these two categories of expellees." (ICC 15 July 2000)

"New displacement continues to be reported from the Lalai Gash (Auguro) area of Gash-Barka, leading to the ongoing growth of Adi Keshi camp in that region. A steady outward flow of IDPs continues to be marked from the Senafe sub-zone of Dehub. Plans are underway between local administration in the Adi Keih and Tserona sub-zones, ICRC and MSF-France to set up a reception center in Deki Leifai (near Quatit/Alba) to receive these new IDPs and supply them with immediate relief supplies before settlement in Alba camp." (ICC 29 July 2000)

"There is still concern about persons isolated in the Ethiopian occupied area of Senafe and the sub-zone of Lalai Gash where there is a shortage of relief assistance. Eritreans continue to leave Senafe and approximately 1,000 IDPs are reported to have arrived in Alba from Senafe during the past week. ERREC has transported some 300 vacated tents from Salina to Alba. It is also reported that four Eritrean women expelled from Addis Ababa arrived in Senafe having passed through military front lines." (ICC 22 July 2000)

***New displacement reported during August:***

"A total of 1,500 new IDPs from Layla Gash, which is reportedly still under control of Ethiopian forces, arrived to Adikeshi IDP camp. The IDPs reported to WFP insecurity and hunger as the main causes of their departure from the area." (WFP 18 August)

"ERREC reports people are fleeing the **Endeli** and **Alha** administrative environs in the sub-region of **Gelalo**, where there are reports of the burning and destruction of houses. A new camp has been established in the Northern Red Sea zone to accommodate an estimated 3,000 IDPs now on the move from areas near the Ethiopian border. The new camp is tentatively called **Boya** (south of **Foro**) and is currently hosting approximately 400 IDPs. At the moment, the remaining IDPs are believed to be scattered in the mountains. Shelter, food and household items have been delivered to the new camp, but requirements remain in the sectors of health and WatSan." (ICC 26 August 2000)

***New displacement reported during September:***

"[S]mall numbers of IDPs continue to arrive in southern camps in Dehub from the Senafe sub-region, including unaccompanied children who are sent away from occupied areas by

their parents. New arrivals during the last four – six weeks include Alba (50 people) and Medfa Walta (200 people)." (ICC 25 September 2000)

# **PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT**

## **General**

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### **IDPs outside camps try to stay close to their homes and continue their agricultural activities (2000)**

- Some IDPs have left camps to be closer to their villages, but remain in an IDPs situation in the Debub region

"[IDPs outside Camps] lives in rural host communities, in towns or in areas close to their own homes or villages (many displaced have chosen to remain as close as possible to their homes in order to continue their agricultural activities). They either rent rooms or a home with relatives or friends scattered across Eritrea. Generally, it is very difficult to identify member of this group as they are inevitably linked to their host communities and share the same resources, services and economic hardships. Their return to their home areas is dependent on the establishment of the TSZ, progress made in peace process, and the marking/clearance of landmines and UXOs in the TSZ." (GOE/UN February 2001, pp.14-15)

"In most cases, IDPs outside camps [in the Debub region] were previously, at one point, resident in camps and left those camps to be closer to their villages. One motive frequently sighted was the desire to be closer to their home communities in order to take advantage of facilities such as schools for their children. These IDPs are now sharing scarce resources with their host communities. There is no separate census or calculation as to the numbers in this group as they are included with the returnee population figures, but they nonetheless share many of the same needs. The most urgent needs of this group are to be found in the food sector (supplementary feeding) and the shelter and household items sector." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 36)

"The dire situation that prevailed in May and June of 2000 has been largely stabilised due to the combined efforts of the humanitarian community. The majority of the IDPs have now returned to their home communities, though many have not yet been able to return to their actual homes. Insecurity, the presence of landmines, lack of access, a severely disrupted economy and very weak social services are deterrents to return for many others and impede the resumption of normal, income-producing activities such as agriculture and small businesses." (UN February 2001, pp. 8-9)

### **People seeking refugee in secure locations outside the reach of Ethiopian forces (May-June 2000)**

- Concern that over-stretching of host communities may cause new IDP flow toward camps (August 2000)

- IDPs from eight sub-regions in Dehub being hosted by four that remain "safe"

"ERREC note a number of IDPs from the hosting communities in the Quatit and Tserona sub-regions moving to Alba camp. Alba camp currently has approximately 14,000 residents. It has a capacity for 20,000, however, there are concerns about the provision of shelter and blankets for the new arrivals. Given the number of IDPs living in host communities and the overstretching of host community resources, there is concern that this sort of movement may develop into a trend." (ICC 19 August 2000)

"With the outbreak of conflict 12 May 2000 (third offensive) there were large-scale population movements. Once again IDPs were mainly from the Gash-Barka and Dehub Zones as these were the areas most affected by the conflict. Initially, IDPs were from the areas close to the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, from insecure areas and those occupied by Ethiopian forces. As Ethiopian forces pushed further inland new displacements occurred as far north as Tessenai and Barantu. For many, they were displaced for the second time, leaving one camp for a new one in a safer location, generally further north. New camps were established in Gash-Barka and Dehub Zones and for the first time the Northern Red Sea Zone. In addition to the camps officially established by the Eritrean Government, a number of temporary settlements sprung up where people congregated close to water sources in secure locations. Over recent months, these have either been relocated to official camps or have become official camps in their own right. People also fled to remote areas and an estimated 50,000 fled the border to Sudan to the safety of three refugee camps there (Lafa, Gulusa and Shegreb)." (ICC 25 September 2000)

***Movement patterns immediately before the cease-fire started on 18 June 2000:***

**"Dehub:**

[...]

Almost the entire population of Adi Keih has left the town, and the population of Halai village has doubled (to between 4,000 - 6,000 est.) as people from the Adi Keih area have been absorbed. Host communities are overwhelmed and their already meager resources inadequate to meet the crisis confronting them. Eight of the zone's twelve sub-regions are affected, leaving 4 to host the entire population. Setimi is reported to be hosting over 30,000 IDPs from the Tserona area alone.

Hailai serves as the distribution site for a group of twenty two villages in the area which house an estimated 14,000 IDPs. A five day supply of food has been distributed and the next distribution is expected in the coming days.

**Gash Barka:**

Recent reoccupation of the Tessenei and Guluj areas by Ethiopian forces has again caused large IDP movement towards Adi Gebrai, Telata Asher and the Sudanese border. IDPs have also been reported moving to larger urban areas in the Anseba and Maekel regions of the country, such as Adi Tekelezan, Halhal, Asmat and cities such as Keren and Asmara, thus putting further strain on already overstressed host communities.

Approx-imately 150,000 people had previously been in the 'hovering zone' along the border between Ghirmaika, Tessenei and Omhajer." (ICC 17 June 2000)

### **Inhabitants of Ghirmaika town sought refuge in nearby mountains and valleys (June 2000)**

- Residents returning to the town during day time for work

"IDPs from Tessenei and areas farther south had previously flooded Ghirmaika, but had recently begun to move to other areas -- some of them back home. However, the number of displaced still reached 3,935, according to the sub-zonal administrator. Most of those were IDPs from the town of Ghirmaika itself who were afraid of Ethiopian bombing and shelling inside the town and so had taken to living in nomad-like shelters on the periphery or in the surrounding mountains and valleys. Approximately 500 were living 2-3 kilometers outside town, while the rest were somewhat farther away.

Food had been delivered to the area, but had been intended for the IDPs from Tessenei and its surrounding areas. Little to none had been allotted for the Ghirmaika IDPs who had thus received only very minimal supplies, which had quickly run out.

The administrator and the people themselves complained long and loudly about the state of their food supplies, claiming nothing had been delivered for over a month, and that had been only emergency supplies for a few days. It was stated that the residents returned to Ghirmaika town every day for manual labor when it was available. With the little earned from such labor, small amounts of food could be purchased and shared with the others.

It was obvious from our visit that the IDPs in this area were living under very harsh conditions, did not have adequate food supplies in any way, shape or form and were in need of immediate medical attention for some of the residents, particularly the elderly." (EDF 29 June 2000)

### **Civilians fleeing border areas to seek safety from armed fighting (1999)**

- Civilians in the border areas dispersed in several directions to escape artillery fire and aerial bombing when fighting resumed in February 1999
- Most displaced fled with few or no possessions
- Some had to leave immediately at the onset of battle and walk non-stop for 40 miles

"The war, now in its fourteenth month, has triggered successive waves of displacement. An escalation of the fighting last February [1999] caused the flight of 150,000 people who dispersed in several directions to escape artillery fire and aerial bombing. Some sought refuge in deep valleys where they shared muddy waterholes with their livestock, risking cholera and other waterborne diseases. Some stayed within the vicinity of their

homes and returned at night to fetch food from the fields. Tens of thousands of others, mostly women and children, simply headed north away from the border.

The hallmark of all these displaced is flight with few or no possessions. Initially, local communities afforded shelter. But the abrupt influx of nearly a quarter million people has depleted the resources of villagers. Now thousands of farmers, traders and their families have been forced to seek refuge under trees, in dry river beds or simply by the roadside.

Some said that with the noisy onset of battle they had left instantly, walking non-stop for 40 miles. Others said that local authorities moved them in trucks after reconnaissance planes circled overhead prior to bombing raids on villages and towns that are up to 44 miles from the front line.

[...]

Many people have been displaced twice. In the wake of the initial round of fighting that ended in June last year, some 10,000 farming families of Eritrean origin, who had lived most - if not all - of their lives in the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia, were deported. They were given two hours by Ethiopian authorities to gather what few possessions they could carry and trek across the border to Eritrea. These deportees were initially allotted two hectares per family to farm. They were forced to abandon this land during renewed fighting last February." (RI 25 June 1999)

## PROTECTION CONCERNS

### Exposure of civilians to the armed conflict and protection during displacement

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#### **Inter-agency missions concludes that physical protection of IDPs is not a major concern (October 2000)**

"Physical protection of internally displaced persons was found not to be a major concern. However, information was received on instances of relocation of camps undertaken without prior notification of assistance partners. There was some concern for the well-being of an estimated 3,000 unaccompanied minors currently in displacement camps. (UNICEF and Save the Children are undertaking activities to address this issue). Concerns were also raised for the well-being of returnees.

Partners in the field (both NGOs and UN) are encouraged to apply a "protection lens" to their observations of conditions of return, as outlined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, especially concerning the basic welfare of women and children." (OCHA 25 October 2000, p.6)

#### **Survey finds that separated children in IDP camps receive adequate protection (2000)**

- Survey included 25% of the total IDP population
- Found that separated children are given professional care in the camps in addition to adult caregivers

"A sample of six camps (out of a total of 31) in the regions of Gash Barka, Debub and Northern Red Sea were selected to provide geographical and situational comparison. The population in the selected six camps represent 25% of the total IDP population.

[...]

The findings reveal that separated children are identified at the point of general registration, and followed up by the local administrators in the camps, who ensure they have access to shelter and basic assistance, and where possible identify neighbors or other adults to help look after them. The assessment team observed that these officials have a real sense of, and commitment to, social work which ensures that separated children are monitored closely and professionally. They were able to easily identify the most vulnerable children by name and they could locate their tents.

[...]

The vast majority of the children interviewed stated that basic services such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation are provided in the camps. They also stated that food and shelter were adequate. Some of the young children, particularly boys, living on their own were not able to cook and had started selling the food rations in order to buy bread and

other ready to eat food stuffs. Consequently, many of these children ran out of food before the next monthly food distribution. A significant number of children also complained about the lack of clothing.

[...]

Virtually all children stated they trusted their adult caregivers, and that the security arrangements at the camps were adequate and that they personally felt safe. However, several children expressed serious concern about the safety of their parents and siblings that were left behind in the Ethiopian occupied territories.

[...]

During the testing of the assessment tools it soon became clear that even the concept of an “unaccompanied child” was alien to people, since any child would automatically be taken in by someone. Once the discussion continued and it was explained that the team wanted to gain an understanding of children separated from their usual care-givers, it transpired that there were, in some camps, a considerable number of cases.

In the IDP sites people described how everyone would help each other while fleeing their villages. One woman in Salina camp looking after her own baby plus two of her relatives’ children walked for two weeks to reach the site. She talked of how people would offer food to her and the children on their journey.

In Dighe camp, during a focus group discussion with five older women, one woman said: “when we find children on their own we take care of them until they find their parents because we feel that they are all our children”.

[...]

Although this study has focused on separated children, the team was also requested to highlight wider child protection issues in the IDP sites. In the various one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions, a number of clear protection issues arose, particularly affecting separated children but also relevant to the wider child population.

Virtually all children stated that they trusted their adult caregivers, that the security arrangements at the camps were adequate and that they personally felt safe. However, some interviews indicated that some girls had experienced or were fearful of sexual exploitation and abuse.

[...]

There are certain areas, particularly in the occupied territories of Dehub where the assessment team noticed an increase of very young children who are forced to leave their homes by their families who fear for the safety of their children should they remain with them. There is concern that in some camps hosting IDPs from the occupied areas, the numbers will increase over the next several months. Therefore, special attention should be afforded to carefully monitor these children and ensure that their basic physical and psychosocial needs are met, including food, shelter, education and access to healthcare as well as recreational activities. To the extent possible, these children should be united with their immediate family/ parents. Additional support should be provided to host families." (MLHF/UNICEF/SCF September 2000, pp. 4, 5, 26, 30, 33)

### **Landmines a main danger in border areas (2001)**

- Thousands of new mines laid during the 1998-2000 war

"Eritrea's mine problem is substantial. According to Government estimates, between 500,000 and 1,000,000 mines were laid in Eritrea during the war for independence and the subsequent border conflict with Ethiopia. The already serious mine-related problems are exacerbated by the presence of a further 3 million UXOs resulting from the wars of the past decades.

Efforts made by the Government to clear mines following independence in 1993 were aggravated by the use of thousands of new mines during the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia. During the latter period, the displacement of populations within Eritrea exposed large groups to the immediate threat of mines, especially as they attempted to return to their homes following the signing Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in June 2000. Although information on areas that remain under Ethiopian occupation is generally scarce, and little is known about the condition of groups that remained in these areas, it is safe to say that many have indeed been exposed to the highly mined areas adjacent to the border." (GOE/UN February 2001, p. 23)

### **Lack of information about conditions of Eritreans behind front lines (July-September 2000)**

- Reports that expulsion of Eritreans from border areas continued by July 2000
- Reported that eight IDP camps were inside areas occupied by Ethiopia by September 2000

"A very disturbing development is not only the continuing expulsion of "ethnic" Eritreans from Ethiopia but also the large-scale expulsion of Eritreans from uncontested Eritrean territory, such as the Upper Gash region and parts of Dehub zone. Conservative estimates run around 15,000, with about 150 arriving at Adi Keshi camp per day. In 2000, a total of 500 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean descent have been expelled from Ethiopia, including 150 this week from Addis Ababa.

**Eritreans behind front lines** are an additional serious concern, particularly in the Senafe sub-region. Exact numbers are unknown, but are estimated well in the thousands. The condition of these people is unknown though IDPs who have escaped and are now located in Zula camp report food shortages and acts of torture and rape. Although Ethiopia has said that any interested aid organizations are welcome to check on these people, to date no one has done this." (ICC 1July 2000)

"It should be noted that IDP camps may still exist in the Senafe sub-region. However, since Senafe is an occupied area that the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) does not have access to, the existence of camps, number of inhabitants and conditions are unknown. ERREC estimate that eight camps in existence prior to 12 May 2000 fall into this situation." (ICC 25 September 2000)

*Table prepared by ICC (25 September 2000) indicating IDP camps located within Debub areas occupied by Ethiopia:*

Zone	Sub-zone	Camp	Population January	Current Status	Population 23.09.00
Debub	Senafe	Weratele (Erob)	9,820	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Rokhoyto/Anbeset Geleba	2,139	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Rokhoyto/Meshel Akran	1,687	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Rokhoyto/Lahayo	3,555	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Ziqfet(Menekseyto)	3,075	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Tisha (Maitera)	4,410	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Tisha (Ruba-Natsa)	4,248	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Keskese (Bihat)	2,023	IDP's fled to Soyra & Hala	
Debub	Senafe	Aloma (Nedve)	2,219	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Senafe	Giaseha (Mezba)	1,883	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Adi Keih	Emba-Sease (Forto)	1,676	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Tsorona	Siviraso (Shekat)	5,684	IDP's fled to Soyra & Hala	
Debub	Tsorona	Mai Wuray	5,772	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Tsorona	Mai Chena	6,590	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Mai Aini	Fulho	1,614	Occupied	Unknown
Debub	Mai Aini	Deda	3,471	In existence	3,471
Debub	Mai Aini	Adi Gulgo (Ouna Watota)	1,491	In existence as Adi Nebri	
Debub	Adi Kala	Midfae-Walta	1,517	In existence	1,729
Debub	Adi Kala	Agra 1 (Enda-Gergish)	13,107	In existence as one camp,	
Debub	Adi Kala	Agra 2 (Adi Burkut)	5,500	moved Aug due to malaria	
Debub	Mai Mine	Mai Saqia	2,203	In existence	7,703
Debub	Mai Mine	Adi Katina	4,717	Emptied all IDPs returned	
		Total 22	88,401		

Figures by ERREC  
Prepared by ICC

**Concerns raised that the fighting parties have not taken sufficient precautions to protect civilians (1998-1999)**

- Claims and counterclaims that both Eritrea and Ethiopia have deliberately targeted civilians
- Independent accounts of civilian losses caused by bombing absent

"Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have accused each other of either deliberately or indiscriminately targeting civilians during the conflict, in violation of international humanitarian law. Ethiopia has claimed that Eritrea indiscriminately bombed civilians in Mekele and Adigrat towns, in northern Tigray [...]. Eritrea has claimed that Ethiopia has deliberately targeted civilians through the use of air strikes against populated areas, in and around the front lines[...]. The numbers of those killed on both sides are not known or independently reported but may total in the hundreds.

On 5 June 1998, Ethiopian planes bombed military targets at Asmara Airport. During the raid, one civilian was killed. The same day, Eritrean planes bombed Mekele Airport and a few other targets in the area. During these raids, an elementary school was hit, causing some injuries. The Ethiopian government said that an Eritrean plane returned 40 minutes later and bombed the school again. According to foreign press reports, 47 children,

women and men, were killed and scores wounded as a result of this bombing of the school[...].

The government of Eritrea has accepted that during air strikes on Mekele, a school was hit and civilians killed, although they have not acknowledged any particular number of casualties. Eritrea claims that the bombing of the school was a mistake and has apologised for this:

*"We were successful in attacking military installations. People in Mekele and Adigrat have witnessed it. Unfortunately civilians were killed... It was not intentional, sometimes you can miss your target. We are sorry for that." [...]*

The bombing of the school was a major incident during the first few weeks of the fighting. Ethiopia does not accept that the bombing was a mistake and claims that by returning to the school a second time, Eritrea deliberately intended to target civilians. While the precise details are difficult to confirm, diplomatic sources do refer to two bombing raids on Mekele on 5 June. Although Eritrea says it has apologised, it has not made any detailed or formal statement or indicated that an independent inquiry into the circumstances around the bombing will be held.

In a new outbreak of fighting on 9 February 1999, the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying that a family of five had been killed by an Ethiopian air raid on the village of Lali Deda, a village in the Badme triangle. This attack was witnessed by foreign journalists. The civilians were living in tents with UN markings, and had apparently been expelled from Ethiopia. Eritrea at the same time condemned the shelling of its border town of Adiquala in which it claimed eight civilians were killed and dozens wounded by Ethiopian artillery.

Ethiopia has denied targeting civilians deliberately and on 11 February issued a statement saying that the government 'sincerely regrets these civilian deaths' (referring to the Lali Deda incident) but argued that the village was near to military front lines and that Eritrea had placed civilians at risk by settling deportees there[...].

On 15 April, Ethiopian air forces attacked two Eritrean towns, Adi Kaieh, about 60kms north of Zalembezza and Mendefera, about 55kms south of Asmara. Ethiopia also claimed to have attacked an Eritrean military training centre in Sawa, in the west of the country, but Eritrea denied this. Eritrea announced that 10 school children and an elderly man were injured in the attack on Adi Kaieh and that a church had been destroyed. Eritrea claimed that the high altitude bombing was indiscriminate[...]. Ethiopia denied targeting civilians and claimed that the bombings were against 'carefully selected and strategic military targets.' [...]

[...]

Amnesty International considers that Eritrea's killing of civilians in the air attack on Mekele on 5 June 1998 was a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Amnesty International is calling on the Eritrean government to establish an independent and impartial public inquiry into the killings. The inquiry should especially review the Eritrean air force's rules of engagement and operational guidelines for implementing the

principle of distinction between military targets and civilians and should make recommendations to prevent unlawful killings.

Other killings of civilians on both sides of the border can not be so clearly seen as violations of the Geneva Conventions, since independent monitoring has been particularly difficult. It is reasonably clear that the government of Ethiopia did not intentionally bomb civilians in Lali Deda. However, Amnesty International is concerned that both sides have not taken all necessary and required precautions to ensure that civilians are not attacked through the use of air attacks and indiscriminate shelling." (AI 21 May 1999, sect. 2.1)

## **SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)**

### **General**

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#### **People returning to areas inside Temporary Security Zone have particular humanitarian needs (2001)**

"While the security arrangements and administrative details relating to the 25-kilometer deep Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) to be established along the border with Ethiopia, have yet to be formally agreed upon at the time of writing of this document, the humanitarian community has begun the process of determining the modalities for humanitarian operations to be carried out in the zone as and when conditions permit. All indications point to the need for assistance to be given to IDPs and refugees returning to areas in and around the TSZ. As these areas have been severely impacted by the fighting, returnees will need help to rebuild their lives and to reestablish themselves in their home communities. Populations that remained in occupied areas, currently inaccessible to humanitarian agencies from the Eritrean side, will also require wide-ranging assistance."(UN February 2001, p.9)

#### **Relief operation considered successful in fighting life-threatening emergency (2000)**

- Most camp residents have access to food, clean water and basic health care
- 47,541 IDPs in camps in Northern Red Sea zone have covered their basic humanitarian needs, but survey reveals poor health conditions in Buya IDP camp (November 2000)

"The life-threatening emergency that characterized conditions for Eritrean civilians immediately following the Ethiopian invasion of May 12 has largely subsided. The Eritrean government, with the assistance of donors and NGOs, has successfully mounted a comprehensive relief operation. In fact, most camp residents receive regular distributions of food and have ready access to clean water and basic health care.

Despite the success of the Eritrean relief operation, there are still groups of people whose needs are not being met: drought-affected, rural deportees, and traumatized women and children." (RI 7 November 2000)

"There are three IDP camps in the Northern Red Sea zone area: Harena, Mekete, and Denden. They accommodate a total of 47,541 displaced persons.

Due to the proximity of Mai-habar camp to Asmara, its population is receiving regular and adequate food and non-food assistance. The water and sanitation situation has been fragile in this camp (resulting, amongst others, in an outbreak of Shiggelosis) but has

much improved in recent months due to enhanced watsan interventions by, *inter alia*, OXFAM.

Denden camp has a population of approximately 1,300 persons. It is recommended that the return of camp residents to Assab is facilitated as soon as possible through the provision of specific returnee assistance. Currently, the IDPs are not willing to return to Assab fearing that assistance will be discontinued.

Generally, diarrhea is still common in the camps due to poor sanitary practices. Hygiene campaigns and related training should therefore be stepped up in all camps. Environmental sanitation committees should be established in camps in order to facilitate the maintenance of latrines.

Although basic humanitarian needs have been provided to the IDPs in camps, many are forced to sell portions of their food rations and non-food items in order to buy other necessities. A full survey should therefore be undertaken to identify gaps in the distribution of non-food items to camp populations, particularly at Denden, Harena and Makete." (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 60)

"Buya camp was established in August 2000 following looting and destruction by Ethiopian forces in Endeli, Alha and Badha environs. The camp was prepared to accommodate up to 3,000 persons. A total of 452 IDPs arrived in the camp where they received a three-month food ration. Italian NGO GVC provided water and sanitation support to the camp but there limited medical facilities. The camp is rather isolated and with the upcoming rains in the Northern Red Sea zone, there is fear that it will become inaccessible in December. On 20 November, MSF-F visited the camp, responding to rumours that the health situation of IDPs was poor. Twelve children, along with seven relatives were immediately transferred to Harena Camp, to MSF's therapeutic feeding centre and clinic for treatment (three patients are suspected of having TB). A survey of 60 under five year olds in Buya camp revealed an additional 14 children at risk. Common diseases among the IDP population include bloody diarrhoea, acute respiratory problems, anaemia and suspected TB. Given the conditions and difficulty of access, 340 camp residents decided to relocate to Ghinda camp where their needs can be accommodated. Relocation took place today, 27 November with MSF-F assisting in the transportation." (ICC 27 November 2000)

*See also:*

*[Most urgent shelter needs met by the end of 2000 and Status of IDP camps by September 2000](#)*

## **Health**

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### **Overall health status of war affected population by end-2000**

- Diarrhea and acute respiratory tract and eye infections are common
- Improvements in the health sector offset by the 1998-2000 war
- Common diseases such as malaria, and diarrhea can be controlled in IDP camps through distribution of mosquito nets, proper hygiene and environmental sanitation practice

" As in other social sectors, progress made towards developing the health sector in Eritrea during the years following the war of independence was severely offset by the destruction caused during the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia. Illnesses such as diarrhea and acute respiratory tract and eye infections are common, while malaria and various skin conditions continue to affect large portions of the population. These conditions are exacerbated by the prevailing high malnutrition rate among displaced children (10-11%) and among drought-affected children (16- 30%). These health and nutritional problems are compounded by limited access to both curative and preventive health services. While Eritrea has a relatively low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the threat of an epidemic remains a major concern.

[...]

In the year to come, it will be of crucial importance to continue many of these programs, in particular, the immunization of women and children in IDP camps and selected high risk areas (75,000 infants and 200,000 children under five) and the supplementary feeding of vulnerable groups among the displaced and drought- affected (approximately 200,000 IDP and drought-affected children and women). It will also be important to restore basic health care services in Debeba, Gash Barka, and drought-affected areas such as Anseba, and the Northern and Southern Red Sea regions by repairing damaged facilities and providing essential drugs and basic equipment.

By continuing the distribution of mosquito nets, and ensuring proper hygiene and environmental sanitation practices, especially in IDP camps, a contribution can be made to the control and prevention of common diseases such as malaria, and diarrhea. Finally, it will be essential to complement the Ministry of Health by supporting reproductive health care services and providing diagnostic and clinical services for HIV/AIDS patients."(GOE/UN January 2001, pp. 20-21)

### **Need to give attention towards psychosocial needs of women and adolescent girls (2001)**

- Women and children constitute an average of 26% and 67% respectively of the total number of war-affected populations
- Traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been stretched to the limit
- Women and adolescent girls from occupied territories might have become victims of physical and psychological violence

"Women and children, especially adolescent girls are among the most affected victims of the recent war in Eritrea. Women and children constitute an average of 26% and 67% respectively of the total number of war-affected populations. Traditionally, Eritrean women and girls from an early age assume the responsibilities of caring for their families

and fulfilling domestic duties. During times of hardship and during emergencies their obligations and responsibilities increase. At the same time, the disruption of normal life, through displacement, deportation, family separation and the loss of property, home and land has severely affected these target groups psychologically, economically, socially and emotionally. Moreover, traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been stretched to the limit, making it increasingly difficult for the majority of the women and girl-headed households to adequately provide for the protection and care of their families without external assistance. With little capacity to support each other and little or no income of their own, women and girl-headed households will most likely continue to be dependent on specific assistance (e.g. income generating activities) well into 2001.

In the past, emergency assessments and appeals have been primarily concerned with the psychosocial care of vulnerable and traumatised children affected by the war. Assistance to women was largely confined to capacity development and provision of income generating activities. However, according to recent reports, some women and adolescent girls from occupied territories might have become victims of physical and psychological violence and trauma. Some of these women and girl children may require medical treatment for complications during pregnancies and STDs contracted through unprotected sex. Moreover, they may be suffering from psychological problems and possible discrimination or stigmatisation by members within their community. As the main national organisation responsible for issues regarding women, NUEW should be supported to increase its technical capacity to effectively assist these women and adolescent girls." (UN February 2001, p.27)

#### **Dire health situation of internally displaced after renewed war (July 2000)**

- 32 health facilities, including hospitals in Senafe, Barentu and Tesseny, destroyed and/or looted
- Women and under-five year old children most severely affected by the current emergency
- Health problems of IDPs worsened by protracted stay in poor shelters, poor environmental and sanitary conditions, and the lack of adequate amounts of potable water and food

"Difficult or non-existing road access to the affected communities, lack of communication facilities and a limited transportation network, make the existing health services inadequate to meet the health needs of the war-affected population. To further exacerbate the situation, in recent weeks, the hospitals in Senafe, Barentu and Tesseny as well as all health centers and health stations in affected areas totaling 32 have all been destroyed and/or looted.

Diarrhoeal diseases, vaccine preventable diseases (most commonly measles), acute respiratory infections, eye diseases, and malaria have been the most common health problems. In a situation of increasing demand, access to both curative and preventive health services is hampered by the lack of trained human resources and essential drugs. The protracted stay in poor shelters, poor environmental and sanitary conditions, and the lack of adequate amounts of potable water and food has further added to the health problems. The supplementary feeding of children and women has been effective as

indicated by a relatively low prevalence of wasting (about 11 percent children in the 30 camps/sites). To maintain this nutritional status, supplementary feeding of displaced children and women in and outside of camps has to be sustained.

General morbidity and mortality due to complications of pregnancy, poor health services, infections such as STD and HIV/AIDS, malaria and anaemia, threaten the well being of war-affected women. Essential drugs, vaccines, vaccination equipment and supplies, supplementary health kits, emergency and MCH/health equipment, medical supplies and reproductive health kits are required to meet these needs.

Additionally, women and under-five year old children are the two groups most severely affected by the current emergency. Due to a lack of food, insufficient clean water, poor shelter and the inadequacy of health services, they become vulnerable to malnutrition, diarrhoea and other common communicable diseases. Health officials in the war-affected areas report that morbidity due to displacement has increased. Various infections, notably diarrhoea, respiratory diseases, measles, malaria, intestinal parasites and HIV/AIDS have a major impact on nutritional status. The interaction of infection and inadequate food consumption causing growth retardation in children leads to a vicious cycle: the so-called malnutrition-infection complex." (UN July 2000, p.34)

#### **Displaced children exposed to considerable psychosocial distress (July 2000)**

- About 70 percent of the displaced are children
- Several children separated from their families

"The recent resumption of conflict with Ethiopia has resulted in the separation of several children from their families. Although the magnitude of separation is not yet known, reports emanating from the IDP camps speak of many parents reporting their children missing. Likewise, quite a number of internally displaced children cannot trace the whereabouts of their parents. Most separations occurred during artillery bombardments and air raids. This latest crisis is in addition to over 70,000 people of Eritrean heritage who were deported since the outbreak of the war in 1998 and earlier displacements. Of the approximately 1.1 million displaced population, about 70 percent are children. The majority of these children are known to manifest considerable psychosocial distress. While a more comprehensive assessment of the current situation of children has yet to be done, the results of the earlier psychosocial needs assessment conducted in 1999 revealed that children subjected to this kind of situation experience pervasive fear, psychosomatic responses, headaches, night terrors, "flashbacks", difficulty in concentration, and inability to envision a peaceful future.

Deportee children, for example, were subjected to violence from people who were known to them, causing tremendous stress. Some were imprisoned under humiliating and frightening conditions. Moreover, they lost friends and all their possessions. They saw their parents abused and threatened by the very people they thought of as friends. The displaced children witnessed bombing and shelling of their homes. All have been moved

more than once and have lost the secure structure of their home villages. Many have lost the opportunity for education.

Regardless of where they came from, the children still recall that people known to them turned guns upon them and their families. Many of these children have been separated from their families and imprisoned, or have witnessed the destruction of their homes and livestock. In addition, husbands and wives were separated from one another and imprisoned before their deportation. These families arrived in Eritrea without any belongings and efforts to accommodate them have over-stretched their relatives' capacity.

Apart from the disruption of normal life and suffering associated with the conflict, displaced and deported persons, children and their families have been traumatized by this experience. This continues to be manifested in several ways. Children do not eat well and are moody. The parents are lethargic and depressed. Children are also fearful and experience nightmares and difficulty in concentration at school; they miss friends and old school activities, they worry about their future as well as that of their parents." (UN July 2000, p.45)

#### **IDPs already over-stretching capacity of the health system by end of 1999**

- conflict has exacerbated the health situation in many border communities
- most common health problems include diarrhoea diseases, acute respiratory infections, eye diseases and malaria
- supplementary feeding of displaced children and women in and outside of camps has to be sustained to maintain this nutritional status

"Eritrea emerged from the 30-year liberation war with the one of the poorest economies in Africa. Basic health indicators such as under-five mortality rate (136/1000 live births), maternal mortality rate (998/100,000 live births), child malnutrition rate (44 percent), and access to potable water (16.4 percent of the population), all portray the critical health situation in the country. The conflict has further exacerbated the health situation in many border communities. Besides the immense human suffering resulting from displacement and/or expulsion, a heavy demand has been placed on the health and other social services in the communities, over-stretching the already limited response capacity of the social infrastructure. Difficult road access to the affected communities, lack of communication facilities and a limited transportation network, make the existing health services inadequate to meet the health needs of the war-affected population.

Diarrheal diseases, acute respiratory infections, eye diseases, and malaria have been the most common health problems. In a situation of increasing demand, access to both curative and preventive health services is hampered by the lack of trained manpower and essential drugs. The protracted stay in poor shelters, poor environmental and sanitary conditions and the lack of adequate amounts of potable water and food have further added to the health problems. The supplementary feeding of children and women has been effective as indicated by a relatively low prevalence of wasting of about 11 percent

children in the 30 camps. To maintain this nutritional status, supplementary feeding of displaced children and women in and outside of camps has to be sustained.

The Needs Assessment in Gash-Barka and Debub Regions indicates that access to quality health care needs to be improved by strengthening basic health services in camps and improving access to referral health services at the regional hospitals. Six regional hospitals, six health centers and eight health stations need essential drugs, referral transportation, communication and medical equipment, and supplies, allowing the treatment of common endemic diseases. Tents are also needed to upgrade the health services in some of the camps.

General morbidity and mortality due to complications of pregnancy, poor health services, infections such as STD and HIV/AIDS, malaria and anemia, threaten the well-being of the war-affected women. Essential drugs, vaccines, vaccination equipment and supplies, supplementary health kits, emergency and MCH/health equipment, medical supplies and reproductive health kits are required to meet these needs." (UN January 2000, p.45)

## **Nutrition and food**

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### **Decline in global malnutrition rates but still high rate among displaced children (January 2001)**

"Malnutrition among the war affected has significantly reduced as a result of regular monthly general food distributions. Nutritional surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Save the Children Fund-United Kingdom (SCF-UK) revealed a significant decline in global malnutrition rates among war affected persons from 11.2 per cent in November 1999 to nearly 7.7 per cent in July 2000, and 6.5 per cent in September 2000;" (UN November 2000, p.5)

" As in other social sectors, progress made towards developing the health sector in Eritrea during the years following the war of independence was severely offset by the destruction caused during the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia. Illnesses such as diarrhea and acute respiratory tract and eye infections are common, while malaria and various skin conditions continue to affect large portions of the population. These conditions are exacerbated by the prevailing high malnutrition rate among displaced children (10-11%) and among drought-affected children (16- 30%). These health and nutritional problems are compounded by limited access to both curative and preventive health services. While Eritrea has a relatively low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the threat of an epidemic remains a major concern."(GOE/UN January 2001, p. 20)

### **Studies indicate same level of malnutrition among IDPs as general population (July 2000)**

- By July the Government encouraged relief organisations to provide dry feeding as displaced have the means to cook themselves
- MSF considers the displaced's state of health as "pretty good"
- Infectious diseases appear to have been kept under control in the camps
- All children in IDP camps under 15 have been vaccinated against measles

"The Ministry of health has asked agencies involved in supplementary feeding to shift their approach from giving all children extra rations to targeting only those who measure under 80% of 'normal'.

Agencies should also move from wet to dry feeding.

The Ministry has asked the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission to ensure adequate supplementary food is given as part of the general family rations, said ministry director Dr Mismay at the weekly health co-ordination meeting. Enabling families to cook and feed themselves, now most have the means to do so, reduces risk of contamination, he added.

To balance this however, he said therapeutic feeding stations for the severely malnourished would be needed in health centres in the camps, since normal feeding centres would cease this activity.

However Médecins sans Frontières France questioned whether enough food had been earmarked to allow adequate supplementary feeding in general family rations. and warned the Ministry that in some areas ERREC distribution had been irregular and insufficient for vulnerable groups particularly for pregnant and lactating women.

### **Nutrition better than expected**

Nutritional surveys carried out by Médecins sans Frontières Holland in collaboration with the Ministry of Health have found children are bearing up surprisingly well to the difficult conditions.

Reporting findings of 9.9% moderate and 1.1% global malnutrition from the survey which encompassed several displacement areas, acting head of mission for MSF-Holland Jacqui Ryan said: "Given the number of people who have been displaced and the state of the camps, people's state of health is pretty good.

'We expected far more malnutrition than we found. In fact, the rate in the camps is no more than the rate in the general public.'

[...]

Infectious diseases appear to have been kept at bay in the camps so far, according to WHO's disease prevention and control officer Dr Debrezion Berhe.

"When the population started moving we were really worried that if things went wrong there could be big outbreaks of disease. In the first few weeks of the fighting, there was an epidemic of diarrhoea because the water supply was poor. But now generally water is

being disinfected and chlorinated, new camps have been opened reducing the overcrowding a bit, and the ministry has been able to get health activities going immediately so we are less concerned about communicable diseases."

Mass vaccination against measles has also been done in the camps covering all children under 15, and health workers will start polio vaccination days this week, especially targeting those who have come from Ethiopia because of the poor coverage there, they say. " (WHO 31 July 2000)

### **Nutritional survey indicate a malnutrition rate of 11.2 percent among IDPs in camps (January 2000)**

- Nutritional status among the IDPs in camps has generally improved because of the steady supply of food aid
- Nutritional status and physical condition of the IDPs would deteriorate rapidly if relief food is stopped

"A recent Ministry of Health/SCF-UK/UNICEF nutritional survey of 30 camps and Host Communities indicated a malnutrition rate of 11.2 percent among IDPs in camps and of over 40 percent among the war-affected Host Population. The report further indicated that, even though the nutritional status among the IDPs in camps has generally improved because of the steady supply of food aid (both general distribution and supplementary), their nutrition status will rapidly deteriorate if no further assistance is given. This is because, without a productive base, the IDPs are completely dependent on humanitarian assistance. The high rate of malnutrition in the Host Community points to the need to address the problem of malnutrition on a long-term basis. The nutritional status and physical condition of the IDPs would deteriorate rapidly if relief food is stopped. This means that, despite the improved nutritional situation in IDP camps, over 300,000 IDPs and vulnerable persons in the Host Communities, who have little opportunity to get enough food, will require relief food until the next harvest in late 2000." (UN January 2000, p.15)

## **Water and sanitation**

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### **Estimated that only 44% of the urban and 16 % of the rural population have access to safe water**

- Average water consumption in Debub camps below generally accepted standard
- Defecation in open areas by most population groups remains a major problem
- Major rehabilitation of water supply sources and the sanitation facilities required to facilitate the return of IDP populations

"In addition to the drought, the devastating war with Ethiopia, that displaced more than a million people, has caused considerable pressure to be placed on already limited water resources in host communities. The water supply problem has been further aggravated by the lack of management, maintenance of structures, and trained personnel at many water installations. It is estimated that only 44% of the urban and 16 % of the rural population have access to safe water.

Priority areas for 2001 should include ensuring that access to safe water is improved in drought-affected regions and in areas of return for IDPs and refugees. Further, sustainable management systems should be established for water supply facilities constructed or rehabilitated in 2001. Finally, clean water should be extended to a minimum of 150,000 people living in IDP camps.

[...]

Regarding sanitation, the lack of access to, or limited use of, latrines and the indiscriminate defecation in open areas by most population groups remains a major problem. It is estimated that only 52% of the urban population have access to sanitation facilities; the corresponding figure in rural areas is 1%.

In 2001, agencies should prioritize improving access to sanitation facilities in all IDP camps. It is also of central importance to increase awareness of proper hygiene and sanitation procedures, and to train at least 200 health/social awareness workers to serve IDP camps. "(GOE/UN January 2001, pp. 21, 22)

"In all of the [Dehub] camps visited, average water consumption is ten litres per person per day. This is below the generally accepted standard of 15 litres per person per day. In most cases the reason is not the lack of an adequate water supply at the camps, but the inadequate supply of water containers. In Alba camp, there are three covered hand-dug wells in use. As much as 100,000 litres of water is drawn from the three wells, one of which supplies 45,000 litres per day. However, the water level of this well is fluctuating from five metres to seven metres and there appears to be concern that this well is operating at or beyond its capacity. The people reported that while some chlorine is added to the well and reservoir, it does not appear that there is proper chlorination.

Even where there are latrines available, the majority of the IDPs still use the open spaces for human waste. Latrines currently exist at health centres in all of the camps." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.39)

"In many areas in the country and in all IDP camps, particularly during the dry season, large numbers of women and children (especially girls) have to spend a disproportionate amount of their time and energy fetching water from distant sources, sometimes walking as long as 2-3 hours to obtain water;

[...]

Water trucking to IDP camps continues to be an elaborate and expensive operation to maintain. However, due to the increasing and continuous demand for water and absence of other options to deliver water to the IDP camps such operations will have to continue on a case-by-case basis;

Water supply sources and the sanitation facilities in areas affected by the conflict will require major rehabilitation in order to facilitate the return of IDP populations;" (UN February 2001, pp.24-25)

### **100 hygiene promoters trained and working in IDP camps (October 2000)**

- Education focused on the use of latrines both for general hygiene and to reduce the incidence of diarrhoea in IDP camps

"Some 100 hygiene promoters have been trained by a variety of NGOs and agencies under the auspices of the MoH. The hygiene promoters are working in IDP camps and are themselves IDP residents in camps. The issue of payment of the hygiene promoters has arisen. Traditionally in Eritrea, community based services are paid for by the community and not by the government. However, displacement and the establishment of IDP camps have disrupted this and payment of the hygiene promoters is therefore an issue. In some cases hygiene promoters have been paid by agencies that trained them in others there is no payment at all. The SWG has therefore requested the MoH to prepare guidelines for the hygiene promoters with standardised rates of pay.

One of the main areas of education has been in the use of latrines both for general hygiene and to reduce the incidence of diarrhoea in IDP camps. There continue to be new latrines built in IDP camps.

One new case of Shigellosis has been confirmed in Adi Keshi camp. Up until now Shigellosis was confined to Harena and Alba. Despite this new case, the MoH believes the outbreak is under control and September saw a dramatic reduction in the number of diarrhoea cases in Alba. Reports in September that there was Shigellosis in Deda camp were incorrect. There were 40 cases of bloody diarrhoea among children but these tested negative for Shigellosis. The diarrhoea was linked to the local water supply, which has been severely overstretched due to the IDP camp (see ICC Update 14 September). In response, MSF-Holland began delivering 21,000 litres of clean water daily on 3 October. This is a short-term emergency response whilst a more permanent solution is found. In general the average amount of clean water provided per person per day in the IDP camps is 6-7 litres. This reflects the basic minimum but still falls below the humanitarian standards of 15 lt. for drinking, cooking and cleaning." (ICC 7 October 2000)

### **Escalation of conflict cause dire water supply situation (May-July 2000)**

- Destruction of almost all water supply systems require immediate rehabilitation or reconstruction
- Lack of adequate sanitation facilities and scarce water supply cause deterioration in the health status of children and other vulnerable groups
- UN only capacity to assist 200,000 IDPs with improved wat-san facilities
- Inadequate local supply of tankers for transport limits water supplies

"As a result of the recent war, 200,000 IDPs in the regions of Anseba, Northern Red Sea, Debub and Gash Barka are in need of urgent safe drinking water and sanitation. Even though the war-affected population is over one million, only 200,000 IDPs can be assisted with the provision of safe water and sanitary facilities over the next six months. Even if these new IDPs return soon to their former original villages, the total destruction of almost all of their water supply systems require immediate rehabilitation or reconstruction of new water supply systems. Unless immediate remedial action in adequate magnitude takes place soon, the people needing emergency assistance will increase dramatically.

The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and practices as well as the scarce water supply is bound to cause a rapid deterioration in the health status of children and other vulnerable groups due to outbreaks of water-borne and hygiene-related diseases. This is particularly evident since the seasonal rains, however erratic, have started to fall and water points are in danger of being contaminated. Many of the existing water points are not properly protected and the few that are protected are not managed appropriately." (UN July 2000)

"While IDPs have some access to water, increased quantities are needed. An inadequate local supply of tankers for transport limits water supplies. Despite the low levels of consumption and use of water in the camps, the overall health situation within the camps is not being affected.

Water and sanitation experts from donor governments, IOs, and NGOs indicate that additional supplies of chlorine and appropriate water chlorination training is needed. However, ERREC has indicated that it does not need assistance in the water sector." (USAID 10 July 2000)

## **Shelter**

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### **Most urgent shelter needs met by the end of 2000**

- 24 camps in the Debub, Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea areas by end -2000
- 70% of IDPs in camps are sheltered in tents; the rest relying on plastic sheeting
- Tents in camps established in 1998 seriously worn
- Severe shortage of firewood

"There are currently 24 organized camps in the three zobas of Debub, Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea. The 208,163 camp residents are living in tents or under plastic sheeting and are almost completely dependent on ERREC and the humanitarian community for emergency relief. Some 80% have lived in camps for more than two years and many of the non-food items they received or brought with them have been worn out or broken. Many fled from areas close to the border, in the future Temporary Security

Zone (TSZ). Their quick return to their homes is contingent upon the smooth establishment of the TSZ and marking/de-mining efforts in their home areas. Their living conditions are basic, and many are concerned about not being able to contribute to their own livelihood, as there are very few economic opportunities in the IDP camps (which are often situated on marginal and infertile land)." (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 14)

"[T]he third round of hostilities in May 2000, resulted in the displacement of some 1.1 million people. During the course of 2000, the Government of Eritrea, UN agencies, and NGOs provided support to meet the emergency shelter needs of the war-affected and displaced populations through the provision of shelter and household items. By the end of 2000, the most urgent shelter needs of these populations were met and the desperate situation of May-August 2000, had been stabilised.

Much, however, remains to be done in 2001. While plastic sheets, tents, and kitchen utensils are in relatively good supply, an acute need of blankets, clothing, bed sheets, and kerosene remains. Of the total population that fled the war, over 208,000 are still living in makeshift camps. Some 70% of these are sheltered in tents; the rest are still relying on plastic sheeting. As the plastic sheets, which provided urgently needed protection in the height of the emergency, are not a viable solution in the longer term, they should be replaced with tents in the coming year. Additionally, an estimated 20% of the tents are not expected to last to the end of 2001, and therefore need to be replaced. Household items, especially those with shorter life spans will also need replacement." (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 20)

"There are 10 camps in Dehub with a total population of about 80,000 (16,000 households).

[...]

In some camps, the tents that were given out in 1998 are now seriously worn, while, in other cases, families of one and two are still living under plastic sheeting and have never received tents. Apart from blankets, soap and mosquito nets, items like jerrycans and cooking utensils have not been uniformly distributed. Many households have to borrow kettles and other items from those who have them. There is an acute shortage of firewood in all camps. In Alba camp, women and children may spend 6-8 hours in search of firewood. Families do not have adequate supplies of clothing, particularly the adults." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.38)

"70 – 80% [of IDPs in Gash-Barka camps] reside in temporary shelter (i.e. tents or under plastic sheeting). 50% of the households require replacement tents [9,927 units] while those [3,971 households] currently using plastic sheeting should be provided tents." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.44)

"There is a severe shortage of firewood supply among all target groups. The majority cook on open fires using firewood and any other fuel that can be obtained. The price of firewood has risen sharply since the beginning of the conflict. In the drought areas, some women and children spend almost an entire day (every three days) in search of firewood." (UN February 2001, p.26)

## **Status of IDP camps by September 2000**

- Major return from Dehub camps
- Three camps emptied in Gash-Barka area by September 2000
- Four camps established in the Northern Red Sea Zone after May 2000 conflict escalation
- Debat camp in the Northern Red Sea Zone dismantled in August 2000 due to flooding and the prevalence of malaria

### **"Dehub**

There are currently 11 IDP camps in Dehub. In recent weeks Adi Ketina (Mai Mine sub-zone) emptied as the 5,000 occupants spontaneously returned to their villages in Adi Azida and Adi Abaqat. Although these areas are near the border, a general sense of confidence in the current cease fire has enabled people to take advantage of better access to their homes and land, and agricultural opportunities (with the end of the rains) to return home and resume their lives. Over half the residents of Adi Nebri (Mai Aine sub-zone) have also returned to their homes. The majority of the remaining camp populations have remained stable during the last four – six weeks. Nonetheless, small numbers of IDPs continue to arrive in southern camps in Dehub from the Senafe sub-region, including unaccompanied children who are sent away from occupied areas by their parents[...]. New arrivals during the last four – six weeks include Alba (50 people) and Medfa Walta (200 people).

Of the 11 camps in Dehub, six existed prior to May 2000.

1. Adi Nebri (Mai Aini – relocated from Adi Golgol with IDP residents from Ouna Watota displaced early in 1999);
2. Alba (Tsorono sub-zone – a continuation and relocation of Mai Wuray and Fulho camps);
3. Agra (Adi Kala sub-zone – a combination of Agra 1 and 2);
4. Deda (Mai Aini sub-zone);
5. Mai Sagla (Adi Quala sub-zone), and
6. Medfa Walta (Mai Aini sub-zone - previously known as Adi Shekano).

The remaining five camps in Dehub were established after 12 May 2000. Birhinet, Halai, Soyra and Zula (all in Adi Keih sub-zone) and Salina (Dirbarwa sub-zone).

The largest camp is Soyra (Adi Keih sub-zone) with 20,000 IDPs. The camp is easily accessible and is close to Adi Keih town. Due to the amenities and conditions, Soyra has been identified to receive IDPs from Zula camp. Zula camp (also in Adi Keih sub-zone) sprung up unofficially when almost 8,000 IDPs settled in the area. Many of the camp residents actually live in caves and as a result of its location in a mountainous area, accessibility is limited. Furthermore, children need to return to school, there are incidents of respiratory infections and the area is not considered secure. There were plans to move

the camp both in August and September. However, the residents prefer to stay and therefore they are not being forced to move.

### **Gash-Barka**

There are currently ten IDP camps in Gash-Barka. There were an additional three camps which have since emptied. In August 2000, Dige camp (Dige sub-zone) emptied as people returned to Haikota, Gogne and Barantu environs, and Girmaika camp (Forto sub-zone) also emptied as its 4,000 occupants spontaneously returned to their villages in the Tessenai area. Maleboor camp began to empty in August and by mid September 2000, all residents had returned to their homes in Haikota, Gogne and Barantu environs.

[...]

In Gash-Barka, all of the currently existing ten camps existed previously. As noted above, there were an additional three camps (Dige, Girmaika and Maleboor), which have now emptied. Dige and Girmaika were new camps established after May 2000. Maleboor camp was the relocation of Keru camp.

Of the ten camps, six camps have been in existence throughout the current crisis and four were vacated and have subsequently been re-established. All ten were established in 1999. The six that have constantly been in existence are; Adi Keshi (Gogne sub-zone), Dembe Doran and Jejah (both Molki sub-zone), Korokon, Koytobia and Tologamja (all Shambuko sub-zone). Again it should be noted that many camp inhabitants at this time had already been displaced more than once. Jejah camp is one of the oldest camps still existing in Eritrea and is a continuation of Faulina and Sefra Genet camps for rural deportees (10,000) from Tigray. Given the fact that rural deportees are unlikely to be able to return to the Tigray area, permanent solutions were being assessed by the Eritrean Government in early 2000. Previously agricultural assistance had been provided through UNDP. Additional agricultural assistance (UNDP and German Agro Action) and actual resettlement was planned for mid 2000 in Gernefit and Adi Teclehaimanot. However, this could not be implemented due to the eruption of hostilities in May 2000.

Adi Keshi is the largest camp in Eritrea with a population of over 36,000. The camp is well supported with humanitarian support, however, in late August torrential rains and strong winds destroyed much of the shelter and caused some minor casualties.

The four vacated and re-established camps are all in the Guluj sub-zone: Gergef, Guluj, Sabunait and Tebeldia. Guluj is one of the two most southerly sub-zones in Gash-Barka and was one of the first affected by the outbreak of hostilities in May 2000. In recent weeks, people from this sub-zone have begun to return from more northerly parts of Eritrea and from Sudan. Those originally from the area have returned to their homes (many of which have been destroyed or looted). Those who were from IDP camps in the area have returned to those campsites. However, as many of the IDPs in these camps are from Omhajer, from which Ethiopian forces have recently withdrawn, there is the potential for returns in upcoming weeks. Needs assessments and mine/unexploded ordnance surveying are a priority.

### **Northern Red Sea Zone**

Prior to the 12 May hostilities, there were no camps in the Northern Red Sea Zone, now there are four. Three Ghinda (Ghinda sub-zone), Harena (Ghinda sub-zone) and Mekete (Afabet) were established almost immediately. Ghinda camp, close to Asmara is situated in a climatic area and accommodates almost 3,000 IDPs originally from Asseb. As the situation remains tense in Asseb, there does not appear to be any likelihood of their immediate return.

Mekete camp is one of the largest camps in Eritrea with a population of 22,000 and is considered overcrowded. The IDPs are mainly from Debat camp originally from Badme, Shambuko and Lali Gash areas. Debat camp was dismantled in August 2000 due to flooding and the prevalence of malaria. Half of its 50,000 population returned to their homes in Gash-Barka the remainder went to Mekete. The camp is well supported with humanitarian assistance but water supplies remain problematic. At the end of August, the population in Mekete has reduced with the voluntary return of some 1,600 IDPs to Barantu.

Harena camp is also a crowded camp with a population of 25,000, displaced from 92 villages in the Senafe sub-zone. The camp is divided into four zones. Some 3,000 families were living in the Harena Technical School buildings. Since the School is about to reopen for the new academic year, the IDPs have moved out into tents. Harena camp is well organised, in part due to the fact that the local administration was displaced with the local population and is active in the camp. However, water and sanitation remains problematic and there are cases of shigellosis (bloody diarrhoea – often resistant to antibiotics).

The fourth camp is Buya, which was established at the end of August 2000 in response to the movement of some 2,000 people from areas close to the Ethiopia Eritrean border. Currently the camp hosts 420 IDPs. However, according to local ERREC officials, some 1,500 IDPs are en route to the camp. Traditionally pastoralists, the people are taking advantage of grazing land. The camp can accommodate up to 3,000 people, tents and other shelter items have been sent from Masawa. However, the camp is somewhat isolated and remains lacking in medical facilities.

Although all the camps in the Northern Red Sea Zone were established in the last five months, the occupants are not all new IDPs. Many from the Senafe area were already hosted in camps having fled their homes in the border regions in 1999." (ICC 25 September 2000)

### **Serious lack of shelters for new IDPs (July 2000)**

- The shelter needs of IDPs cause heavy burden on host communities- some households hosting up to five displaced families
- Host families receiving insufficient food assistance
- Only one-third of needed shelter units (family tents and plastic sheets) were available by end-July 2000

- Cold and wet weather exacerbate existing problems in some of the high-altitude camps
- Many have no shelter at all and are sleeping in caves or under trees
- Heavy rains by the beginning of July worsening the shelter situation
- Improved coordination led to better targeting and distribution of shelter and NFI items

"The Eritrean people are not waiting passively for the international community to mobilize. One of the most moving aspects of the emergency is the extraordinary generosity of people hosting displaced people in their own homes. In Halai, RI [refugees International] observed many local families sharing all their resources with IDPs from other regions of Eritrea. Some households are hosting up to five displaced families.

The sacrifice of host communities has yet to be fully recognized and supported. In terms of food distribution, host families are allocated only 60 percent of a full ration, but many have received little assistance to date. In some cases, host families have been forced to consume their seed stock in order to survive. Humanitarian organizations working with the ERREC will need to target their assistance to these war-affected communities. To deliver assistance effectively, an immediate assessment of the host community capabilities should be undertaken." (RI 27 July 2000)

"The SWG [Shelter Working Group] prepared detailed information on prioritised needs and gaps in the Gash-Barka Zone. Key requirement needs are shelter kits (5,500), blankets (76,500), clothing, household items and mosquito nets (50,000). This follows a similar exercise conducted by ERREC and UNHCR in Debub in August and which has led to improved targeting and distribution of shelter and NFI items. (The detailed plan of requirements by sub-zones is available from UNHCR and the ICC.)

In Harena camp, some 500 families are currently accommodated in the Technical School compound. The school is due to resume in October and alternative accommodation (500 family tents) is required." (ICC 9 September 2000)

"In fleeing the sudden aerial and artillery bombardments, most people carried almost nothing besides their children with them. To quote from one assessment report, 'When asked what the people were able to bring with them from their homes, one woman replied, 'When the only choice you have is to bring your children on your shoulders or your belongings, the choice is clear....' Very few belongings were in evidence among any of the IDPs in the area.'

Out of an estimated need for 120,000 units of shelter (family tents and plastic sheets) only 39,700 (or 33%) were available as of 30 June, thus leaving well over two-thirds of the IDP population without adequate shelter. With the rainy season already well under way (it started in fourth week of June), thousands of families are facing harsh conditions without any kind of shelter to protect them. Some of the families who do not have shelter are forced to share with others, often sleeping 15-20 per tent to avoid the rain and cold of the season. Still many more have no shelter at all and are sleeping in caves or under trees.

Household items, particularly kitchen utensils and jerry cans for water collection are also urgently needed." (UN July 2000, p.28)

"Only one third of Eritrea's displaced population have adequate shelter, the Eritrean government estimates[...].

Heavy rains have [by beginning of July] started across Eritrea, leaving some normally parched regions awash, and soaking the internally displaced people (IDPs) who lack sufficient shelter. A UNHCR team last week [end June] visited people at the Zula IDP site near Karibosa, where people are living in caves and under ledges, often exposed to the elements. The cold and wet will exacerbate existing problems in some of the high-altitude camps.

[...]

The situation in Eritrea is a race against time in every way, as the rains and cool season, the lack of adequate shelter and aid in many areas, and most importantly, the water and sanitation situation in the camps could rapidly worsen the health situation among the internally displaced. A host of aid agencies are now working in Eritrea, where UNHCR's actions are closely co-ordinated with the government, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF and our other partner agencies such as Oxfam, MSF, etc." (UNHCR 4 July 2000)

"Out of an estimated need for 120,000 pieces of shelter (tents and plastic sheets), only 39,700 were available as of June 29th , thus leaving well over two-thirds of the IDP population without adequate shelter.

Families who do not have shelter are forced to share with others, often sleeping 15-20 per cent to avoid the rain and cold of the season. Still many more have no shelter at all and are sleeping in caves or under trees." (ICC 1 July 2000)

*See also "International response to shelter needs (July 2000)" and field reports from field visits by the Eritrean Development Foundation (29 June and 5 July)*

#### **IDPs in camps lack cooking facilities (June 2000)**

"Mercy Corps International has purchased kerosene stoves, fuel cans and a one-month's supply of kerosene for immediate distribution to approximately 1,500 IDP (internally displaced person) families. The families are among the latest victims of the two-year-old episodic war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

[...]

According to Rachel Lieber, Mercy Corps' Senior Program Officer for Africa, even those individuals who managed to reach camps found themselves in a desperate situation. "The camps were hastily set up and overwhelmed by the sheer number of people arriving in them. There is not enough food, water, shelter or medical assistance to go around. Even when food is distributed, many people do not have the means to cook it, which is why Mercy Corps decided to provide stoves." The stoves and necessary accessories were made possible through donations from the Charis Foundation, the Varitz Family Foundation and generous contributions from individual supporters of Mercy Corps." (MCI 28 June 2000)

## **ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

### **General**

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#### **Summary of educational needs of children in Gash Barka IDP camps by end-2000**

"In all IDP camps, pupils lack benches and desks. It is recommended that these be provided. For the Adi Keshi, Tologanya, and Korokon IDP camps a total of 2,790 desks with chairs are required;

In Korokon camp, classrooms are being held out of doors, under trees; 60 to 75 pupils per class. It is recommended that 25 classrooms be built in Korokon camp;

Due to a general lack of space, class sizes have increased from 60 to 80 in Adi Keshi camp. It is therefore recommended that 6 makeshift classrooms be built in Adi Keshi;

Tologanya camp has a population of around 25,000. No school facility is currently available. Students that have enrolled so far have to walk as far as 8 kilometers in order to reach the school facility in the neighboring IDP camp (Kotobya). It is recommended that a school with 25 classrooms be built in Tologanya camp. Alternatively, a bus should be provided to transport pupils from Tologanya to the Kotobya school;

The Ministry of Education is distributing school stationery to the pupils in camps. However, there is a need for additional assistance in the form of 136,944 exercise books, 365,184 pens and 365,184 pencils, 7,608 rulers, erasers, and mathematical instruments per school year;

As poor performance and poor motivation in the classroom is an immediate result of hunger, school feeding should be provided for 7,608 pupils in camps;

Schools in the IDP camps should be linked to existing water distribution systems and taps set up for the pupils. Also, 254 VIP latrines are required for a total of 7,608 students in the camps. Staff should also be trained in their proper maintenance;

Displaced people in general are in severe need of clothes. It is found out that 85% of the respondents possess only one worn out garment. The situation among schoolchildren is even worse. Clothes should be provided to pupils 7,608 pieces of clothes are needed for the same number of pupils;

Jejah camp is currently being transferred to a new site, i.e. Shelab Camp. In the new camp although other infrastructures have been pre-prepared, no school facility has been put in place. A school with a capacity of accommodating 300 students or minimum 6 classrooms with 120 desks with chairs are necessary; and

Adi Keshi is the only camp where a sports field has been established, however sport equipment is lacking. Other camps have no sports field or equipment. Football and volleyball fields with the necessary equipment should be set up." (GOE/UN January 2001, pp.45-46)

### **Displacement of populations has led to dramatic increase in pupil/teacher ratio (2000)**

- Need to construct makeshift schools and repair damaged ones
- Rapid education assessment revealed that 150 schools had been damaged in 8 sub-regions serving 83,240 children

"During the past year, war and drought have had a profoundly negative effect on the educational system in Eritrea. Rapid development made in the educational sector since independence was negated in war-affected parts of the country as a large number of school facilities were either destroyed or vandalised. The displacement of populations and the economic effects of the drought left many households destitute, forcing children to stay at home in order to support their families. Many who have attempted to stay in school have record poor attendance and low achievement due to distractions at home.

Further, the displacement of populations has led to the pupil/teacher ratio increasing dramatically in host communities. The situation is aggravated by a general shortage of trained teachers (especially among the Afar, Tigre and Saho speaking communities) and basic learning materials. Other factors, such as the distance to schools, the shortage of boarding facilities, and the lack of feeding programs have also affected enrolment, particularly that of girls.

In terms of priority needs, it is clear that providing technical and material support to emergency education for the war- and drought affected populations will remain essential during 2001. It will be especially important to increase access to education by constructing makeshift schools and repairing damaged ones, and to continue providing support for school-feeding programs. It will also be necessary to provide material support in the form of learning materials and furniture to schools currently lacking these basic necessities. Training of new teachers will help to bring down the high student/teacher ratio; upgrading the skills of those currently serving will improve the quality of teaching." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.22)

"A rapid education assessment, conducted in July-August, revealed the extent of damage to educational facilities in the conflict-affected areas, including 150 schools in 8 sub-regions serving 83,240 children." (UNICEF 7 December 2000)

### **138,037 IDP children without access to primary education (July 2000)**

- 30% of the 249 schools, educational facilities, school supplies, textbooks and furniture destroyed after renewed war in May 2000

- Pupil/teacher ratio increased from an average of 50 to 70
- Loss of school documents creating serious difficulties in academic assessment of students

"Among the IDPs there are 138,937 children of school age (83,184 in Dehub and 55,753 in Gash Barka) without access to primary education. In the regions of Gash Barka and Dehub, it is estimated that 30% of the 249 schools, educational facilities, school supplies, textbooks and furniture were recently destroyed when the war broke out in May. There are serious shortages of teachers, school space, furniture and teaching/learning materials. The lack of access to potable water and sanitation facilities renders the children vulnerable to communicable diseases.

The border conflict has resulted in a mass displacement of people and disruption of their economic assets and social service centers. It has also created unbearable pressure on nearby Host Communities and services such as schools and health stations. The influx of displaced children in host communities has significantly increased the pupil/teacher ratio from an average of 50 to 70. It is estimated that an additional 15,750 primary school children in host communities have been negatively affected due to the influx of displaced persons." (UN July 2000, p.42)

"The Ministry of Education has released its "Rapid Education Needs Assessment in War-Affected Regions of Gash-Barka and Dehub" for July 2000. The main findings of the report include the need for:

- 306 temporary classrooms in 250 host communities
- 150 teachers' quarters and 200 classroom tents for IDP camps
- school supplies, teaching aids and recreational supplies
- clean water and latrines

In addition, the assessment recommends training for 500 teachers to address psycho-social trauma amongst school children.

[...]

The SWG stressed that a total of 15 sub-regions in Dehub and Gash-Barka have been directly affected by the war, disrupting 140,000 pupils. It was noted that the loss of school documents such as certificates, rosters and activity notes for continuous assessments has created serious difficulties in academic assessment of students. [...]" (ICC 12 August 2000)

"The Ministry of Education has announced that middle and secondary schools will begin classes next week in some areas of the country. School will be delayed in those areas still under Ethiopian occupation, where schools have been seriously damaged or destroyed, where school buildings are being used as relief storage and where security guarantees cannot be given. In areas where schools have been looted, assistance will certainly be required in supplying school supplies and furniture. There are many challenges involved in opening schools in IDP camps." (ICC 1 July 2000)

### **Government not relying on international assistance to provide displaced children with education (March 2000)**

- Influx of displaced children has significantly increased the pupil/teacher ratio from an average of 50 to 70
- Makeshift schools held in tents the open under trees
- Priority need include decent shelter for classrooms, recreational supplies and school supplies

"Among the IDPs and Rural Deportees there are 27,300 children of school age without access to primary education. The influx of displaced children has significantly increased the pupil/teacher ratio from an average of 50 to 70. There are serious shortages of teachers, school space and teaching/learning materials. Space in tents and makeshift units, some of which are made of wooden poles and locally made straw mats, are not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The lack of access to potable water and sanitation facilities renders the children vulnerable to communicable diseases.

The border conflict has resulted in a mass displacement of people and disruption of their economic assets and social service centers, created unbearable pressure on nearby Host Communities and services such as schools and health stations." (UN January 2000, p.54)

***The description above is somehow contrasted by a later NGO assessment which underscores the positive achievements reached by the Eritreans to maintain education through makeshift schools:***

"Altogether, I saw several thousand children during school hours, and, without exception, what I saw was inspiring, not depressing. A school was generally nothing more than a large clearing, often a dry river bed, with a few big trees, rocks, and dirt. We arrived at each school unannounced. Nothing was staged and no special preparations were made to influence our impressions. Between six and eight classes of about 70 students each sat attentively on stones or small stools under shade trees. Teachers stood at blackboards propped against the trees and gave their lessons.

[...]

We always met with a school's director, and in most cases, with teachers. They were young, energetic, and clearly motivated. Many female teachers were in their early twenties and doing their national service obligation with MoE. The teachers work a brutal schedule – double shifts six days a week.

To say that the teachers and students work and study under difficult conditions is an extreme understatement. Sitting in the open under trees means coping with biting sand fleas, blowing dust and wind, diminishing shade as the trees lose their leaves at this time of year, and no water except what they carry from home. The students are constantly distracted by grazing goats, people walking by, and visitors like us. Some students walk several kilometers to school. In one camp, 150 students walk 13 kilometers *each way* to and from school, every day. Teachers live four and six to a tent, have virtually no spare time, few, if any, resource books or teaching aids, are always chronically short of supplies, and have almost no recreational supplies.

Despite these hardships, education is taking place. In most cases, the school's director reported scores equal to or better than what the students achieved in their home school. One elementary school had the best graduation rate in the entire sub-zone. Another elementary school, the newest and smallest, was at the bottom. These temporary, makeshift schools are based on the "Revolution schools" conducted by the EPLF during their war for liberation. It is organized and disciplined, uses the standard curriculum, and it works. Most students will be able to move back to regular schools some day and pick up where they left off.

In general, there are three top priorities:

1. Decent shelter for classrooms.
2. Recreational supplies.
3. School supplies.

Other needs the teachers identified were water for the students, latrines, library books, supplies to support extra-curricular activities, furniture and storage, and more tents for teacher accommodation.

There are many, many other problems as well. Sugar water and a few dry biscuits is not my idea of a school lunch. Sitting in the sand and being bitten by ticks and sand fleas is a health hazard. Cutting scraps of cardboard from discarded boxes for use as teaching aids is less than optimal. The drop-out rate and absenteeism among girls is high, especially among the Saho ethnic group. Cultural pressures to marry early have pulled many girls out of school. Since most men of fighting age are at the front, female-headed households keep girls at home to meet the added chores of cooking, washing, hauling water and firewood. Many students live communally. Their parents stayed in their home village to keep their business going or tend livestock. These students usually walk home on weekends, but are frequently late or absent from school the following week. They live together in the camps and take care of themselves without adult supervision.

When war broke out, the government did not wait for international assistance before tackling the problem of educating over 26,000 displaced children. There has been some international support, e.g., funds, tents, and supplies. The World Bank, for example, is funding the construction of metal, makeshift classrooms [...]" (SCF 9 March 2000)

## ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### Disruption of coping mechanisms

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#### **Displacement from highly fertile Gash Barka and Debub regions led to major disruptions in food production (2000)**

- Regional drought exacerbated war-related emergency in Eritrea
- Not be expected that more than 50% of the war-displaced farmers will have returned to their farms in time to be fully productive in the 2001 cropping year
- War caused depletion of livestock assets
- IDP host community areas in Debub and Gash Barka also affected by drought
- Fears of unexploded mines in the most productive farming areas

"Even under normal conditions, Eritrea is a food deficit area with Eritrea's food grain requirements being consistently higher than its net domestic supply of food-grains. Drought and war have contributed to a substantial increase in grain prices that in most cases are beyond the reach of many households. Among the pastoralist communities, increases of grain prices has resulted in a reduction in the numbers of their livestock as they were forced to sell at lower prices to get food. Livestock being the main asset of this population, they are now dangerously exposed to starvation that could easily degenerate into famine." (ACT 5 December 2000)

"Of the estimated 1 million Eritreans displaced by the fighting, 90% were women, children, and the elderly. As much of the fighting took place in the highly fertile Gash Barka and Debub regions, where 70% of the national agricultural output is produced, displacement from these areas led to major disruptions to food production, resulting in shortages in the entire country.

Secondly, the protracted drought that affected much of the Horn of Africa impacted an estimated 335,000 people in Eritrea. Two (currently three) consecutive years of inadequate rainfall forced many agro-pastoralists, particularly in the Anseba, Northern Red Sea, and Southern Red Sea zones, to increasingly rely on traditional coping mechanisms, such as wage labor and remittances, for survival. Also, with rising cereal prices, households were gradually forced to sell livestock, often seen as a last coping mechanism, in order to purchase necessary quantities of grain. With the shortage of food, safe drinking water, and inadequate health services, the worst affected became highly vulnerable to malnutrition and related diseases. As with the war-affected displaced, the most susceptible population segment consisted of young children and women, especially nursing mothers.

Clearly the war-related emergency in Eritrea was further exacerbated by the region-wide drought. During the course of the year, it became increasingly difficult to differentiate

between the effects of the two emergencies and the groups affected by each. Many households suffered the impact of both war, drought, and poverty; distinguishing between the groups became all the more difficult and, in some cases, irrelevant [...]" (GOE/UN February 2001, p.7)

"Despite favorable rains in September and October in some regions of the country, mainly Dehub and Gash Barka, prospects for 2000 main season cereal and pulse crops for harvest from November are bleak, due mainly to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of farmers by war with neighboring Ethiopia. In addition, official government meteorological sources indicated that there was a decrease in the spatial distribution of the rainfall throughout the country during the rainy season. This was aggravated by the unseasonable rainfall during early November, which has had a potential negative effect on the current harvest. Gash Barka and Dehub administrative zones (Zobas), which are the country's main grain producing areas, normally supplying more than 75 percent of Eritrea's cereal production, have been at the centre of the recent clashes and may have little or no harvest in 2000. As the next harvest is only expected in November/December 2001, these regions known as "the bread basket of Eritrea", together with other parts will depend on emergency relief food for at least the next 18 months." (FAO/FIEWS 6 November 2000)

"The war and protracted drought conditions have also directly affected the livestock sector. Inaccessibility to a significant part of the preferential dry season grazing areas located along the border with Ethiopia, reduced the availability of alternative pastures. This development impacted negatively on food security due to a reduction in the production of livestock products, such as milk and butter. Further depletion of livestock assets was caused by selling of livestock including draught and breeding animals at lower than average market prices in order to cover grain shortfalls.

Whereas in the past people from drought-affected deficit areas could compensate for a lack of income and food by working as wage laborers in the grain producing, surplus areas, this option was, as mentioned previously, hardly available in 2000 due to limited agricultural activities in the surplus areas as a result of the conflict. IDPs who moved from the insecure areas into infertile parts of the country and drought-affected regions could not produce their own food and therefore placed an additional strain on the meager resources of their host communities.

The 2001 scenario for food production is primarily contingent on the timely implementation of the Peace Agreement and the gradual return of displaced farmers to their farms. For farmers displaced from highly productive farming areas, return to their farms should begin as soon as February 2001, in good time to make preparations for the cropping season in the summer. However, some farmers will not be able to return until homes are rebuilt and mines cleared. The same applies to those displaced from the 25 km wide strip bordering Ethiopia – the Temporary Security Zone. While it is difficult to predict with any accuracy, it cannot be expected that more than 50% of the war-displaced farmers will have returned to their farms in time to be fully productive in the 2001 cropping year. The challenge for the Ministry of Agriculture and the international

community is thus to ensure that those farmers who do return to their farms are provided, in a timely manner, with the means to be fully productive in next cropping season." (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 18)

"The number of drought-affected zones is not confined to Northern Red Sea, Southern Red Sea and Anseba Zobas but is engulfing more parts of Eritrea. The impact of drought is also apparent in two subzobas in Debub Zoba, Segheneiti and Adi Keih, and another three subzobas in Gash Barka Zoba, Mensura, Forto and Hykota. The majority of the resident population of the three subzobas in Gash Barka is agro-pastoralists and the drought is seriously affecting livestock, their main source of livelihood.

Moreover, because of their proximity to the war affected areas, these subzobas in Gash Barka and Debub have been hosting most of the internally displaced people (IDPs) from the Ethiopian-occupied subzobas of Tesenei, Guluji, Barentu, Lalay Gash, Mulki, Gogne, Senafe and Tsorena. The presence of these IDPs is placing additional strains on limited water and other natural resources.

[...]

In December some landmine incidents were reported in western Eritrea. It is believed that there are huge number of landmines and unexploded ordnance in Eritrea, especially in the areas that have been occupied by Ethiopian army. Fears of unexploded mines in the most productive farming areas of the country could cause a reduction in land preparation and areas cultivated as farmers are busy with land preparations between January and May." (FEWS 15 January 2001)

### **War has added a heavy burden on women and young girls (2000)**

"The most clearly affected victims of the recent war in Eritrea are the women and children, especially adolescent girls. Since the start of the conflict, women and children have constituted a large number (on average 26% and 67%, respectively) of the total number of war-affected. In some areas, they make up almost 90% among both war and drought-affected populations. During times of emergency, the obligations and responsibilities that women and girls assume in their homes and communities increase dramatically. Meanwhile, traditional coping mechanisms and safety nets have been stretched to the limit, making it difficult for a majority of the women and girl-headed households to adequately provide for the protection and care of their families without external assistance." (GOE/UN January 2001, p.22)

# ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

## General

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### **Strong family bonds ensure that separated children get adequate care (2000)**

- Strong tradition of mutual help
- IDP camps organized according to home village structures
- Care of the unaccompanied children facilitated by neighbors nearby and other family members

"A sample of six camps (out of a total of 31) in the regions of Gash Barka, Debub and Northern Red Sea were selected to provide geographical and situational comparison. The population in the selected six camps represent 25% of the total IDP population.

[...]

In the camps people were organized according to their home village structure, and the village administrator would also be the administrator in the camp. This meant that the administrators knew all details of the families in their group. Many informal messages would be sent to and from the home villages, and even across the border into Sudan.

Even if children were living in groups alone in the camp, for instance sharing a tent, there would always be neighbors nearby and in some cases also family members. This facilitated care of the children in the camp, and also helped links with their parents if the parents had remained at home.

In the villages there is a strong tradition of mutual help, with the richer families helping the poorer ones. In the camps, however, this traditional coping mechanism is stretched since there are few spare resources available. Therefore neighbors may watch over separated children, but may not be able to provide material assistance.

[...]

The problem of separated children in Eritrea as a result of more than two years of war is being kept to a minimum largely due to the strong family bond and sense of responsibility and response that exists in Eritrean communities. Moreover, during Eritrea's struggle for liberation, an effective system to deal with the situation of vulnerable children, mostly orphaned and unaccompanied children were developed, building a solid foundation for knowledgeable and capable social workers within the most prominent actors for child welfare in Eritrea, namely MLHW and ERREC. However, the ongoing movements of population and subsequent social and economic disruption and the shortage of human resources caused by the war, have increased workload and over-stretched the workload of both the MLHW and ERREC." (MLHF/UNICEF/SCF September 2000, pp. 4, 26, 27)

## PROPERTY ISSUES

### General

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#### **Ethiopian occupation caused substantial damage to health facilities (2000)**

- Barentu Hospital emptied of equipment
- Only 10 of the 58 health facilities Gash Barka region intact

"'This was our operating theatre,' says Dr Fitsumu Gebremichael, directing his visitors into a completely bare room, where sunlight streams through the ragged hole in the wall where the air-conditioner used to be.

Most of the rooms in Barentu Hospital look the same as this one. During the three weeks of occupation by Ethiopian forces, beds, mattresses, fridges, microscopes, operating lamps, drip stands, drug supplies, prescription pads were all loaded onto civilian trucks and driven across the disputed border.

The once 70-bedded centre now has 10, five with springs only. It has one microscope saved by a technician who grabbed it as he fled and all six fridges that made up the region's central cold chain for immunisation have also gone.

[...]

In the Gash Barka region alone only 10 of the 58 health facilities are still functioning, either due to looting or destruction. In Dehub, says WHO officer Dr Debrezion Berhe, south of Asmara, the latter is more prevalent. " (WHO 31 July 2000)

#### **People find substantial damage on public and private property as Ethiopian troops withdraw (June 2000)**

- Substantial damage on private and public buildings reported in Barentu, Tessenei and Ali Gidir
- Reports of private houses having been completely looted
- Government offices deliberately targeted by the Ethiopian forces

"Overall, few people have been able to return home and there are increased risks due to land mines and the oncoming rains. Additionally, returnees are finding their homes devastated, livestock stolen, machinery destroyed, and shops looted. The items destroyed or stolen include agricultural equipment, food stocks, seeds and livestock feed.

In Areza and Mai Dima (Dehub) some people are returning but finding property stolen and their houses destroyed from shelling. The homes in Adi Nefas and Debre Sahli have been re-reported completely razed, leaving the previous inhabitants with little choice but to remain in IDP camps for the time being.

[...]

### **Tessenei and Surroundings**

Approximately 4,000 people have returned to Tessenei and the local government has been reinstated; however much of the town has been destroyed. Several government offices, the hospital and the housing bank have been looted and burned and/or vandalized.

It is unclear whether returnees are moving back permanently or simply to assess damage done to the town and their own houses or properties.

A significant percentage of the commercial district was looted and set on fire. Gas stations and an animal feed storage depot have been vandalized. A significant percentage of the residential area has also been destroyed.

Livestock has been killed, eaten or looted.

The town has been left without basic necessities such as adequate shelter, food, water, and health services with electricity also having been cut." (ICC 24 June 2000)

### **"Barentu**

Entering the town of Barentu was a shock. The normally tidy main road was littered with papers, damaged goods and carried the air of complete disarray.

[...]

Nearly all the private houses of Barentu were completely looted of all personal effects and belongings. Nine houses were completely destroyed, with 10 partially destroyed and requiring major reconstruction. The main water supply generator was taken by the Ethiopian army, but marginal water supply had been reinitiated with tanker trucks. Water remained at a premium.

The targeting of private houses was not so random as in other areas. The poorer inhabitants' huts and small houses were mostly spared while the better off areas of Barentu were subject to almost malicious destruction. Stripped bare, the houses were then dynamited and/or burnt.

The local open air market had been looted with approximately one-third of the private stalls set on fire and destroyed.

A bakery run by 6 war-disabled fighters was looted and dynamited with maximum structural damage, while another bakery had one wall blasted out in order to remove the oven.

While the main electrical generator of the town remained intact, electrical wires throughout the town had been cut in many areas. Some electrical supply had, however, been returned.

The sub-zonal administrator estimated that approximately 7,500 of the 26,000 residents had returned, mostly from Deb'at camp, though he stressed that many hadn't yet

committed to a permanent return and were coming to assess what was left of their homes, their businesses and their previous lives.

Bombing raids, through direct hits and near misses, had knocked off tin roofing throughout the town, with jagged remains still lying along the roads.

The town mosque had sustained minor damage to the roof, while the health center had had all medical supplies looted by the Ethiopian army. The school library had its books destroyed with some destruction to the desks and school furniture inside the classrooms.

Most all government offices had been deliberately targeted by the Ethiopian forces with the new administration building, police station, and high court destroyed. They seem to have been laced with dynamite in addition to close range heavy artillery fire. All buildings had been looted before being destroyed.

[...]

### **Tessenei**

The basic infrastructure of Tessenei has suffered far more than Barentu, with a speedy and concerted effort on the part of the Ethiopian forces to loot and destroy vast swathes of the town, its government structure and its private sector. The only bridge leading into the town was destroyed during the first Ethiopian occupation and further damaged during the second occupation (which ended only about one week ago).

[...]

The Catholic Church compound of Tessenei was said to have been used as the base of operations for the Ethiopian occupying forces in the town. Goods were looted from governmental offices, schools, clinics, private businesses, restaurants, snack bars and homes and brought to the church compound where they were then loaded onto trucks and reportedly transported into Ethiopia.

[...]

Within the town itself, the looting was extensive leaving little of any value in either public or private buildings. Buildings were set on fire or dynamited. The clinic was looted and sustained minor structural damage. The secondary school was burnt and suffered rather major structural damage.

The damage throughout Tessenei, with the exception of all government offices, seemed extraordinarily random with approximately every 5th building burnt, dynamited or hit at close range with heavy gunfire. The destruction was extensive. Private houses were indeed targeted, but the concentration was more on economic targets: banks, restaurants, snack bars, bars, hotels and shops.

[...]

### **Ali Gidir**

The road leading to the village of Ali Gidir was lined with the rotting corpses of various types of livestock -- cattle, goats and sheep -- apparently shot and set on fire by the Ethiopian forces. The village itself was a horrendous sight.

Ali Gidir has, by far, suffered far worse than any of the other occupied towns/villages so far visited (this is *not* including villages farther south or along the front lines) with massive destruction of exclusively civilian housing and small businesses.

Burnt black circles mark the previous sites of now non-existent mud huts. Personal items not looted and transported away, sit broken and charred amidst the rubble of family homes. Residents sift through the ash and stone remains of their homes in search of what few personal items can be salvaged. Little remains to be salvaged.

Following the typical pattern of other towns and villages occupied by the Ethiopian troops, the village was thoroughly looted, then set on fire or dynamited on a massive scale. Government and public buildings were particularly singled out, but the difference in this case was the purposeful, malicious destruction of civilian houses and property. Though certainly carried out in other towns and villages, Ali Gidir marks a turning point in the destruction. These are not and cannot be explained away as accidental destruction by crossfire. This was a purposeful, spiteful and vindictive destruction of civilian targets.

[...]

The Ali Gidir Cotton Factory was singled out for massive and near total destruction. The cotton gin was dynamited, as was the generator and a machine for converting cotton waste products into animal feed. Tractors and other heavy machinery left behind were burnt and blasted. Cotton stores were burnt and the warehouses destroyed. Unusually, the irrigation system inside the compound seems to have been left undamaged, though an older irrigation system just outside Tessenei town was dynamited.

[...]

The school of Ali Gidir suffered extensive fire and explosive damage, while the clinic was looted and lightly damaged. The extent of landmines, if there are indeed any, is unknown.

[...]

Ali Gidir will require massive intervention in many forms: immediate emergency assistance in the form of food, shelter and medical treatment; medium-term assistance in the form of start-up capital and building materials; and longer-term assistance in the form of large-scale reconstruction and rehabilitation." (EDF 29 June 2000)

***See also BBC 21 June 2000: "Destruction greets returning Eritreans"***

# PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

## General

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### **Substantial assistance needed to facilitate return towards border areas (2001)**

- Landmines and unexploded ordnance in the future Temporary Security Zone a threat for IDPs returning to border areas (January 2001)
- Substantial non-food relief assistance to returnees will remain necessary during the first phase after return

"The presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance in the future Temporary Security Zone and areas adjacent to it is a threat not only to UNMEE personnel but also to the populations concerned. The Mission frequently receives reports of land mine explosions on both sides of the border.

[...]

The signing of the 12 December Agreement has created great expectations among internally displaced persons. The possibility of spontaneous movements of internally displaced persons anxious to return to their homes and lands, before demining can be undertaken and the Mine Action Coordination Centre is able to declare those areas safe, is a source of major concern. UNMEE and the Humanitarian Coordinator have begun discussions with the Eritrean authorities regarding the planned return of their administration to the future Temporary Security Zone and the need to inform internally displaced persons about the dangers of premature returns to some of their villages, especially those located close to former frontlines. There is also an urgent need to sensitize internally displaced persons and returnees to mine awareness, through a public education programme supported by the United Nations Children's Fund and the Mine Action Coordination Centre." (UN SC 12 January 2001, paras. 24, 26)

"Assuming that the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) will be established during the first months of the year [2001], the challenge will be to ensure that these measures are put in place in an expedient manner, so as to enhance the possibility of return movements of IDPs and refugees to the most productive agricultural areas of Eritrea in the southern parts of the Gash Barka and Debub Zones prior to the planting season in April/May 2001. At the end of 2000, the Government of Eritrea (the Commission for Coordination with the UN Peacekeeping Mission/CCPM and ERREC), UNMEE and the resident UN Agencies have initiated discussions aimed at integrated forward planning in relation to return movements to and future humanitarian interventions in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it. This takes into account such issues as initial assessments to determine the needs of populations that remained in occupied territories, mine action, security concerns, prior allocation of tasks among humanitarian organisations, return of civil and administrative structures and coordinated return of civilian populations, and the need for adequate humanitarian coordination mechanisms that include all concerned.

Return of Eritreans currently accommodated in camps, other (unofficial) settlements, host communities and from abroad would facilitate a further transition from emergency relief towards recovery and rehabilitation. However, substantial non-food relief assistance to returnees will remain necessary during the first phase after return due to the disruption of agriculture, economic activities and the destruction inflicted on capital assets and livelihood systems in general. [...], substantial food assistance will also remain necessary under this scenario well into 2001, since the resumption of large-scale productive and agricultural activities will take time and not immediately generate sufficient outputs to significantly enhance household food security. However, it is expected that the need for substantial food aid will decrease in the medium-term, if affected populations can return to their home areas in time to resume farming activities, after demining has taken place and agricultural inputs have been provided.

In addition, it is expected that, as the emergency phase draws to a close and most of the immediate and basic material humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations have been met, it will become apparent that a full range of other, complex needs and challenges remain, including the psycho-social needs of certain groups, in particular those of women and children. Thus, in 2001, efforts will be stepped up to further address the specific protection and psycho-social needs of groups such as: widows, female heads of households, orphans and unaccompanied minors, populations from previously occupied territories, and demobilised soldiers." (UN February 2001, pp. 14-15)

#### **The displaced from the Dehub region return to destroyed homes and farms (January 2001)**

- IDPs who remain outside camps have often left camps to be closer to their villages

"The war-affected returnees and IDPs outside camps [in the Dehub region] amount to nearly 262,000. During the May 2000 offensive, over 500,000 people were displaced from 8 of the 12 sub-zobas. The returnees are those IDPs who have gone back to their villages after the Ethiopian army withdrew from Eritrean territory. This population is about 261,824 and includes the sub-zobas of Areza, Mai Mne, and Adi Quala. Many returnees had their homes and grain stores looted, farms destroyed, livestock stolen or slaughtered, and water resources polluted, thus leaving them without any means of survival. An assessment on post-war damages conducted by the University of Asmara estimated that the total cost of destroyed and looted schools, health clinics, and government offices at over 132 million Nakfa. The war-affected returnees' immediate needs include the following:

- Reconstruction of the destroyed and damaged houses;
- Solution to the water shortage including the supply of water containers;
- Relocation of the scattered graves in the villages to a suitable place; • Provision of agricultural tools, seeds and oxen; and
- Support for the aged and the disabled populations including the provision of transportation to and from health facilities.

[...]

In most cases, IDPs outside camps were previously, at one point, resident in camps and left those camps to be closer to their villages. One motive frequently sighted was the desire to be closer to their home communities in order to take advantage of facilities such as schools for their children. These IDPs are now sharing scarce resources with their host communities. There is no separate census or calculation as to the numbers in this group as they are included with the returnee population figures, but they nonetheless share many of the same needs. The most urgent needs of this group are to be found in the food sector (supplementary feeding) and the shelter and household items sector." (GOE/UN January 2001, pp.34, 36)

### **Increased IDP return as security situation improved (June 2000 – January 2001)**

- IDPs had by the beginning of July started to return to areas no longer occupied by Ethiopian troops
- Assessments in 8 of 12 war affected sub-zones in Gash-Barka and Debub found that over 350,000 IDPs had returned to their home communities by end of July 2000
- Estimated by government agency that some 600,000 IDPs had returned by end-September
- Reports of some IDP camps being emptied by beginning of September
- UN/Government report issued in January 2001 reducing return estimate to only 400,000
- Deployment of the UN peace-keeping force drastically improving the prospects for return movements as of January 2001

"IDPs are starting to go home to unoccupied areas of Debub and Gash-Barka, particularly in and around Adi Keih, Mai Aini, Adi Quala, Enda Gergis (also the Agraa camp near Enda Gergis), Tessenei, Talata'asher, Ali Gidir, Guluj and others. Though awaiting formal meetings on repatriation proceedings scheduled later this week, significant numbers of Eritrean refugees are returning from Sudan. Recent figures are 980 individuals from Shagarab to Guluj, bringing the total to around 3,000; approximately 200 every day from Lafa to Talata'asher; 8,000 to Tessenei; and unspecified numbers to Alaboo and Haikota.

There is also movement away from the overcrowded Salina camp. Approximately 50% of the IDPs have returned to Imni Haili and Adi Quala sub-regions.

[...]

People from Zula camp have been asked to return to Adi Keih, but the response has as yet been poor since many IDPs feel more secure in the mountainous area of the camp." (ICC 10 July 2000)

"A joint assessment was carried out by UNDP, ERREC and Cooperazione Italiana from July 24 - August 4 in Gash-Barka and Debub zones [...].

Their findings show that over 350,000 IDPs had returned to their home communities. This represents 75% of all the IDPs from those sub-zones. The total IDP population in

Eritrea was estimated at 1.1 million, according to the Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment to Gash-Barka and Debub, June 30 - July 2, 2000." (ICC 12 August 2000)

"Dige (Gash-Barka) camp emptied in August and the last two weeks have seen the emptying of Girmaika (Gash-Barka) and Adi Ketina (Debub). In all three cases, IDPs have spontaneously returned home. A further 1,500 IDPs returned to their homes in the Barentu area from Mekete Camp (Afabet sub-zone) during the past two weeks. ERREC provided transportation.

[...]

IDP returns reflect a confidence in the status quo relating to the security situation and the need for families to return to their land and salvage agricultural activities. Although it is a positive development many of those returning home are in need of reconstruction assistance and household items. Furthermore, food aid needs are continuing." (ICC 9 September 2000)

"Similar to the situation in Debub, people are returning home spontaneously from IDP camps in Gash Barka. This reflects a level of confidence in the current status quo relating to the cease fire and planned arrival of UN peacekeepers, combined with the need to resume agricultural activity as the rainy season comes to an end (September). Although people are returning home, it should be remembered, that not all are able to go back to their homes which were destroyed and many are without household items which were abandoned in flight. Consequently, although people are no longer in camps, relief needs remain.

[...]

At present, the situation remains stable with regards the creation and movement of camps and their populations. With the exception of small numbers of people who continue to leave the occupied area of Senafe sub-zone, and the establishment of Buya camp at the end of August due to new displacements from the Alitiena area, the trend has shifted from one of new displacements to one of returns.

[...]

It is now estimated by ERREC that some 600,000 IDPs have returned home." (ICC 25 September 2000)

***In January 2001 figures presented in a joint UN/Government report indicated that the initial estimates of returnees had been exaggerated:***

"The signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement on 18 June 2000 resulted in a more secure environment and the gradual return of over 400,000 IDPs and refugees (25,000 refugees have returned in an organized manner; many others spontaneously) during the fall. Accordingly, the humanitarian community began implementing return and reintegration initiatives in support of these groups. Emergency assistance (in particular food distributions) was provided to these returned groups, where necessary, in their home communities.

[...]

On 12 December 2000 the Algiers Peace Agreement was signed, ending the two-and-a-half-year border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. This positive development together with the deployment of the 4,200 strong United Nations peace-keeping force and 200 United Nations Military Observers, expected to be completed by the end of January, has

drastically improved the prospects for return movements by both IDPs and refugees displaced from the border areas. The formal end to the war has also meant that the socio-economic situation in Eritrea can slowly start to improve as demobilization begins and the thousands currently serving in the military return to the civilian workforce. Nonetheless, it is clear that the normalization of life within Eritrea will require a considerable amount of time, to be reckoned in years not months." (GOE/UN January 2001, pp.8, 10)

### **Substantial assistance needed to facilitate reintegration (2000)**

- Suggestions that most returnees may require food aid until end 2001
- Lack of adequate shelter, health and education facilities, and risk of landmines reported as factors impacting on the return
- Shelter materials and household items are needed in view of the destruction of homes and household assets
- Agricultural sector is in critical need of inputs such as wells, micro-dams, tractors and fuel, draught animals and tools

"A complex humanitarian situation has existed for two and half years, and forecasts indicate that it could continue for more than a year in several areas for some population groups and in certain sectors. For example, if IDPs and refugees cannot return to their home areas by April [2001], they will not be able to plant and will continue their dependency on food aid and other relief assistance. Basic assistance in the food and non-food sectors for the IDPs in camps will need to continue until they are able to safely return to their home areas. The IDPs who can return to their villages will also need relief and rehabilitation assistance (including agricultural inputs and shelter materials). Moreover, the severely drought-affected people (particularly in the regions of Anseba, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea) and the war-affected (especially in Gash Barka and Debub) will require various forms of emergency food and non-food assistance in 2001.

[...] Of over one million people displaced during the third round of fighting, over 400,000 IDPs and refugees have returned or are preparing to return to their homes and villages (25,000 refugees have returned in an organized manner; many others spontaneously). They face the challenge of reconstructing their homes and village infrastructure and restarting their lives, businesses and agricultural activities. The key to sustainable recovery is agriculture - increased local production of food contributes to food security. However, the agricultural sector is in critical need of inputs such as wells, micro-dams, tractors and fuel, draught animals and tools. The war-affected areas desperately need programs to replace or replenish seeds, tools, goats, sheep, and poultry. In addition, more could be done to help IDPs in camps become more self-reliant by starting income generating programs to building fuel efficient cooking stoves, making sleeping mats, raising poultry, etc." (GOE/UN January 2001, p. 11)

"The cease-fire does not necessarily mean that war-affected people can safely return to their homes. Ethiopian troops destroyed almost everything in their path, including grain reserves, livestock, homes, equipment, and infrastructure. In addition, both Eritrean and Ethiopian troops laid landmines in areas of conflict, further compromising the safety of returning populations. Eritreans who fled the hostilities have been left with few productive assets and will almost certainly depend on international humanitarian aid for as much as eighteen months (through the end of the next crop cycle in November/December 2001)." (RI 21 June 2000)

"Emergency assistance has largely focused on populations in camps since May 12. As many people prefer to leave camps, humanitarian organizations will have to gear up to provide services at the community level. Returnees will require food for the next 18 months, having missed the main planting season in the Debub and Gash Barka regions. They will also need materials to reconstruct their homes. 720 homes in the area around Tessenai alone were destroyed by invading Ethiopian forces. In most towns that were bombed or occupied, schools and hospitals were looted and destroyed. Regional governments need assistance to repair and restock these buildings. Returnees will require household items in addition to seeds and tools. Portable small warehouses are needed to store emergency and reconstruction materials at the local level." (RI 27 July 2000)

"Returnees are receiving some assistance in the forms of food and shelter, but the quantities remain insufficient in those items as well as supplemental food for vulnerable parts of the needy population in virtually all areas of the country.

[...]

Other challenges faced by the returnees are the lack of adequate shelter, health and education facilities, in addition to the ongoing risk of landmines. Information remains uncertain as to the extent of mining, but the demining efforts of the Eritrean Defense Forces continue. UN assistance is expected shortly." (ICC 29 July 2000)

### **Return to Agordet easier than elsewhere as town escaped war damage (June 2000)**

- Returnees given rations for 15 days to help them get restarted

"Agordet managed to avoid the worst of the recent Ethiopian offensive deep into Eritrean territory since the bombing raids in that area fell outside the town and it escaped occupation by Ethiopian forces. The residents had scattered throughout the area, in the nearby forest, in dry riverbeds and out of the province altogether. By the time our assessment team reached them, the residents had already started returning. People walked the streets, shops were open, goods were available on the market and life seemed to have returned to something approaching normalcy.

People who'd taken refuge in Deb'at camp near Keren had also started returning and had been given rations for 15 days to help them get restarted. Those who'd taken refuge outside the town in the forest and the surroundings had been encouraged to return to town

and ERREC officials reported that their final allotment of aid had been distributed the previous week." (EDF 29 June 2000)

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

### General

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#### **Up to 50,000 Eritreans residing in the occupied Senafe territory out of reach for humanitarian agencies (January 2001)**

"Senafe and the surrounding 114 villages were occupied by the Ethiopian armed forces in May and June 2000. An estimated 43,000 to 50,000 Eritreans are currently residing in the occupied territory.

This area has been seriously impacted by the war since the onset of the conflict in 1998. People have faced continuous, and often repeated, displacement. The population was largely dependent on relief assistance even before the recent occupation. Since the occupation, the area has been inaccessible to assistance from Eritrea and it is believed that the stranded population is facing severe hardship. The little information that reaches Asmara indicates that much destruction of the economic infrastructure has taken place. " (GOE/UN January 2001, p.33)

#### **Response impeded by poor road conditions and lack of transport means (July 2000)**

- Damaged Tessenei bridge repaired by mid-July
- Reported in August that rains have made many roads inaccessible
- Insufficient storage and handling facilities for food and non-food items near the IDPs locations

"A high level meeting including ERREC, UN agencies, NGOs and donors took place on August 10th to discuss concerns in the food sector. Issues included the need to bolster food stocks and the need to distribute food to beneficiaries. It was agreed that the focus should be on the latter. The SWG [Sectoral Working Group] voiced concern over the limited donor pool and hope additional donors will come forward. Transportation problems remain troublesome. The problem lies not with the number of trucks available, rather roads being rendered nearly inaccessible due to the rains in many areas." (ICC 12 August 2000)

"Returning to the Tessenei/ Guluj area had previously been hampered by lack of access due to the main bridge near Tessenei having been destroyed. Supplies and ready access were thus severely limited. However, the Tessenei bridge has now been completed and transportation of supplies was to begin 13-14 July. Returnees continue to be reported to Tessenei, Guluj and Talata'asher." (ICC 15 July 2000)

"It has become extremely difficult to reach some of the areas where the IDPs are located. The roads are difficult to pass and almost all available serviceable trucks are used for

national duties during the war leaving insufficient capacity to support transportation of relief food. The government's implementing agency for relief and rehabilitation activities, ERREC, has been overwhelmed by the scale of relief assistance required. It has been unable to transport food already available in the port of Massawa to warehouses in Asmara and Dekhamare in a timely manner.

[...]

There is insufficient storage and handling facilities for food and non-food items near the IDPs locations. The number of IDPs far outstrip the available storage and handling facilities hampering the efficiency of any eventual dry food deliveries to the IDPs." (UN July 2000, p.18)

**Government states that there are no restrictions on new NGOs entering Eritrea (July 2000)**

"Teclmichael (Rosso) Woldegiorgis, Deputy Commissioner of ERREC has just returned from a working visit to the US where he met with NGOs. In response to a question about the Eritrean government's openness to NGOs, he commented that several NGOs are already operating in Eritrea and there are no restrictions on other NGOs entering; they simply need to apply and identify programs to implement. The government's self-reliance policy had earlier led it to distance itself from NGOs though, clearly, it is no longer able to meet all the emergency needs of its people at this time. There is, thus, a greater role for NGOs to play in the rehabilitation effort. Within ERREC a division that supervises NGOs has been created. Additionally it was announced that Assistant Secretary of State Julia Taft would be visiting Eritrea while in the region next week." (ICC 29 July 2000)

## **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES**

### **National response**

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#### **The Eritrean Government to issue its own appeal (January 2001)**

"There will be two appeals for humanitarian assistance in Eritrea for 2001, the consolidated UN appeal and one by the Government of Eritrea (GoE). The GoE will appeal for a larger beneficiary caseload (over 2 million) while the UN will appeal for 1.76 million. Like last year, the UN appeal is a sub set of the GoE appeal. Both appeals are due to be launched by the end of January and beginning of February." (ICC 22 January 2001)

#### **National coordination of humanitarian assistance to the IDPs (2000)**

- The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) is in charge of coordinating both national and international assistance
- ERREC have a presence in each of the IDP camps
- Sectoral working groups (SWG) are chaired by the ERREC or a line ministry and co-facilitated by an appropriate UN agency
- Child Protection Working Group set up after May 2000
- SWG for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery (3R) established by end-2000

"In Eritrea, ERREC [Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission], representing the Government, is by far the largest implementor of assistance and is in charge of coordinating both national and international assistance. Specific line ministries are responsible for sectoral coordination and the implementation of programmes and for reporting regularly to ERREC on the beneficiaries reached, new developments, needs and constraints. At the local level, the regional and sub-regional administrations cooperate with ERREC in assisting the IDPs and Rural Deportees." (UN January 2000, p.11)

" ERREC have offices in each of the six Administrative Zones and almost all sub-zones in Eritrea and have a presence in each of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps which are run by ERREC and a Camp Administrator from the Ministry of Local Government. UN agencies and the Red Cross Movement are expected to work closely with ERREC within their humanitarian plan of action for the country. International and national NGOs are required to register with ERREC and provide regular reporting. Although ERREC has the overall responsibility for co-ordination of humanitarian operations, within the specialised sectors humanitarian actors are required to work with the relevant line ministry, i.e. Ministry of Health or Education. Co-ordination within this framework is facilitated centrally at the Asmara level through five Sectoral Working Groups (SWG). Each SWG is chaired by the relevant GoE representative and facilitated

by a UN agency. There is also a mine action group and an informal group, which meets to brainstorm on issues relating to micro-finance/credit. All these groups meet every fortnight and there is a general humanitarian meeting each month. In addition to meetings in Asmara, inter-agency co-ordination meetings are being established at the zonal level. Two meetings have been held in Gash-Barka and the first meeting was held in December in the Northern Red Sea Zone." (ICC 11 January 2001)

"At present [July 2000] approximately 48 humanitarian agencies are active in Eritrea [...]. ERREC is the principal body responsible for the coordination of all humanitarian activities on behalf of the Government. In addition, ERREC is the largest direct implementing entity of humanitarian assistance. ERREC has sole responsibility for the coordination of non-governmental and international organisations. [...]

Sectoral working groups (SWG) are chaired by the ERREC or a line ministry and co-facilitated by an appropriate UN agency with participation of local and international NGOs and international organisations. The main functions of the SWGs are four-fold: to exchange technical information and set uniform standards for humanitarian responses; to work towards adequate coverage of needs; and to coordinate operations; and to facilitate resource mobilisation that includes planning for mid- to longer-term requirements. The SWG are responsible for identifying humanitarian needs by sector and location, identifying gaps in assistance, and coordinating interventions based on priority needs. Each SWG compiles a weekly report outlining humanitarian needs and actions to be taken. These reports are shared among all relevant actors and orally presented at the weekly general coordination meeting, co-chaired by the ERREC Commissioner and the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. Below is an overview of the sectoral working group structure.

<b>Sectoral Group</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Co-chair/Facilitator</b>
Food	ERREC	WFP
Health and Nutrition	Ministry of Health	WHO
Water and Sanitation	Ministry of Water, Land and Environment	UNICEF
Shelter and Household Items	ERREC	UNHCR
Education	Ministry of Education	UNICEF
Return and Rehabilitation	ERREC	UNHCR and UNDP

(UN July 2000, p.9)

"Recently a decision was taken to also establish a SWG for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery (3R).

[...]

It needs to be noted that a desperately needed coordination mechanism for emergency and recovery programmes in the agricultural sector still needs to be established.

General Coordination Meeting: the now monthly General Coordination Meeting is called by ERREC, chaired by the UN RC/HC and facilitated by OCHA and the ICC. The main aim of the meeting is to brief all humanitarian actors on the overall humanitarian situation and to exchange sectoral information." (UN November 2000, p.19)

"Following the resumption of the conflict in May 2000, an Inter-Agency Child Protection Working Group, set up to exchange information on war-affected children in Eritrea, identified a need to assess and address the situation of separated children in IDP camps. [The Inter-Agency Child Protection Working Group in Asmara consists of the MLHW, UNICEF, UNHCR, SCF (UK), the Eritrean Red Cross (also representing ICRC) and Citizens for Peace in Eritrea. The CPWG has recently been expanded to include NUEYS and DANIDA.]" (MLHF/UNICEF/SCF (UK) September 2000, p. 4)

"In response to the arrival of UN peacekeepers, the government established the Commission for Co-ordination with the UN Peacekeeping Mission (CCPM). The CCPM is the interface between UNMEE and the Government of Eritrea (GoE) and comprises five functions each headed by an Associate Commissioner: Demining, Administrative Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Military and Security Affairs, and General Services." (ICC 11 January 2001)

*See also "UN Resident Coordinator supported by OCHA to coordinate UN response (2000)"*

#### **Government taking a lead in improving sanitation situation in IDP camps (August 2000)**

- Funds and equipment made available by ECHO and Norwegian Church Aid to improve water supply in camps

"The Environmental Health Unit in the Primary Health Care Division at the Ministry of Health headquarters has taken the lead role in the provision of sanitation and hygiene promotion strategies in IDP camps. NGOs involved in this process will meet with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF next week to map out sanitation and hygiene promotion strategies. The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has earmarked a total amount of 280,000 Euro to improve water supply in camps. They will be working through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Furthermore, Norwegian Church Aid donated a large quantity of water equipment and supplies to ERREC for use by agencies working in various areas. This equipment includes generators of various capacities, submersible pumps, reservoirs and water bladders." (ICC 8 August 2000)

#### **Eritrean health staff present in most IDP camps (July 2000)**

- National health staff with long experience from health response in an emergency context

"Almost every camp of displaced people in the country now has some form of health clinic staffed by Eritrean health staff, many of whom arrived with their communities. But basics for giving health care are still lacking in many places.

Unlike displacement camps in so many countries, in Eritrea it is not the international organizations who provide healthcare. Experienced from long years of holding health clinics under trees and in caves, the Eritrean Ministry of Health and its staff are, in most instances, outstandingly well organised. All the camp clinics visited by WHO observers last week had clean compounds, organised registers, a pharmacy and motivated staff who were in the main working with their communities which are encouraged to settle in discreet areas of the camps and maintain their society.

What most of these clinical compounds do lack, however, says Dr Woldemichael, health of the social services for the Gash Barka Region, are adequate shelter and instruments . 'The health staff are there and where there are not enough, we can bring people from elsewhere. But many have no tents to work in and no tools.'

Most clinicians were unable to transport their equipment during evacuation and it is unlikely much of it is left to collect now, says Dr Woldemichael." (WHO 31 July 2000)

## **International coordination mechanisms**

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### **UN Resident Coordinator supported by OCHA to coordinate UN response (2000)**

- Office of the Resident Coordinator is responsible for coordination within the UN System (2000)
- Support for the Resident Coordinator provided by the UN Country Team and OCHA
- OCHA coordination unit staffed by 5-6 persons by the end of 2000
- Information and Coordination Centre (ICC) established in June 2000 to support coordination of the humanitarian response
- A Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) overseeing the UN peace keeping operation (UNMEE)

"Relief and humanitarian assistance by UN Agencies is coordinated by the UN Resident Coordinator, supported by the Country Team, which is composed of all resident agencies. The Country Team meets regularly to ensure maximum integration of programmes and to avoid duplication." (UN January 2000, p.11)

"At the onset of the crisis in May 2000, OCHA began to facilitate a rapid response by recruiting additional professional staff members and sending in short-term professionals to cover staffing gaps in the meantime. OCHA, under the auspice of the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, focused on the facilitation of a rapid, coherent and effective response to the increasingly large and complex emergency. By the end of June, a rapid assessment of humanitarian needs was carried out in the most affected areas of Gash Barka and Debub regions. This assessment helped to determine humanitarian priorities in the revised UNCTA.

[...]

The OCHA-supported coordination framework is organised under the authority of the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator who has ultimate responsibility for the coordination

of UN Agencies. In direct support of the Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA's role is to take the lead in creating and sustaining a unified operation that is based on the full participation of all humanitarian partners. In particular, OCHA is responsible for ensuring that: a) needs are identified; b) planning is cross-sectoral; c) information is shared; and d) programmes are coordinated. A key aim of OCHA is to establish a platform, in conjunction with the ICC that allows ERREC, UN Agencies and NGOs to work collectively to address humanitarian needs by agreeing on a clear division of labour and sharing assets and expertise.

[...]

Monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the humanitarian strategy will be a key function undertaken by the Office of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in collaboration with the UNCT in Asmara and the sectoral working groups encompassing all humanitarian partners under the leadership of ERREC. The UNCT will have collective responsibility for monitoring the internal and external contexts that impact on the implementation of humanitarian interventions. At any time during the period of implementation, adjustments to the action plan may be necessary in view of changes in the political, security and humanitarian situation." (UN July 2000, pp.4, 10, 11)

"During the past 6 months [second half of 2000], OCHA has increased its presence in Eritrea from a one-person team to a four-person team in order to respond to the increased need for adequate coordination of humanitarian affairs and assistance. By the end of 2000, OCHA will have established a full-fledged coordination unit staffed by 5-6 persons;

OCHA has continued its support to the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and the UNCT in the domains of humanitarian coordination, policy development, information management and advocacy. Specific activities in this respect included: organisation of and participation in inter-agency assessments; preparation of briefings and briefing materials for visiting delegations and (UN) entities abroad, facilitation of UN, donor and other missions to Eritrea; compilation of Appeal documents; and resource mobilisation for and financial tracking of donor responses to Appeals for Eritrea;

In its efforts to enhance coordination, OCHA, under the auspices of the RC/HC, collaborated closely with the principal Governmental body responsible for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC). Within this framework, the following has been accomplished:

Under the auspices of the ERREC Commissioner and the RC/HC, a joint Information and Coordination Centre (ICC) was established in the early stages of the recent emergency with support from UNDAC (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination). The ICC is managed on a day-to-day basis by OCHA in close collaboration with ERREC. Other human and material resources come from UNICEF, UNDP, Norwegian Church Aid, and ERREC. The main function of the ICC is to facilitate the joint relief effort through the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on population movements, humanitarian operations and changes and trends in the overall humanitarian situation; the publication of theme papers (e.g. on IDP camps); and briefings for newly

arrived agencies. Since October 2000, the ICC also has a Field Liaison Unit (FLU), which comprises a Field Coordinator and three UNICEF-funded national Field Liaison Officers. The main function of the FLU is to strengthen ongoing information collection at the field-level in collaboration with the Government and other partners. In order to facilitate the Annual Needs Assessment exercise, the ICC produced a Reference CD-ROM that contains over 400 reports, updates and other documents relating to the humanitarian situation in Eritrea;

OCHA has supported the establishment of Sectoral Working Groups (SWG), which are chaired by ERREC or a line-ministry and co-facilitated by an appropriate UN Agency with participation of local and international NGOs and international organisations. At present, there are SWGs for the following sectors: Food; Health & Nutrition; Water & Sanitation; Shelter and Household Items; and Education. Recently a decision was taken to also establish a SWG for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery (3R).

In the early stages of the crisis General Coordination Meetings were held once or twice a week. The now monthly General Coordination Meeting is called by ERREC, chaired by the RC/HC and facilitated by OCHA and the ICC. The main aim of the meeting is to brief all humanitarian actors on the overall humanitarian situation and to exchange sectoral information." (UN November 2000, pp. 9-10)

"The previous year saw the number of international NGOs increasing from approximately 10 to over 30. Many of the organisations which were already present in Eritrea (e.g. the resident UN humanitarian organisations) increased their operations considerably in order to assist the Government in responding to the crisis that unfolded in 2000. For example, OCHA, the principle entity responsible for humanitarian coordination within the UN system, went from a one-person presence to a five-person office. In addition, a completely new type of partner arrived on the scene, in the form of UNMEE, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission. These developments and the increasing scope and complexity of the emergency that unfolded in 2000, necessitated the establishment of more elaborate, inclusive and comprehensive coordination structures and mechanisms," (UN February 2001, pp.34-35)

"Within the UN in terms of co-ordination, there is a UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) who is also the Designated Official for security (DO) supported by the Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The HC provides guidance, co-ordinates and is the spokesperson for the UN Country Team (UNCT) in terms of agencies' operations and security. This role, or parts of it, is extendable to the wider humanitarian community (most likely NGOs) where applicable and if requested. UNMEE whose operations are focused on the TSZ, is headed up by a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) who is the most senior UN representative in Eritrea[...] The SRSG is DO in the TSZ and is responsible for overall co-ordination of UN activities in the TSZ. Also within UNMEE, there is a Force Commander, a military person who is responsible for military decisions concerning deployment and management of the peacekeepers. Within the military setup there is a Civil Military Affairs branch (CMA) one of whose function is the establishment of a Civil Military Co-operation centre

(CIMIC). CIMIC is responsible for providing liaison facilities and two-way information sharing between the humanitarian community and UNMEE peacekeepers. CMA and CIMIC as a component of it, report to the Force Commander." (ICC 11 January 2001)

*For further details on Coordination Arrangements in Eritrea, see Annex 1 in the UN Consolidated Appeal for 2001*

#### **Division of focal areas between UN agencies (July 2000)**

"The roles and responsibilities of UN agencies by sectoral division will be as follows:

Food, Logistics and Food Security: WFP will provide immediate food assistance and transport of food where appropriate. FAO will provide agricultural inputs and technical assistance to implementing agencies and partners.

Shelter and Household Items: UNDP and UNHCR will provide assistance in this sector, with UNHCR focussing on the Gash Barka region. The SWG for this sector operates with the participation of NGOs, bilateral agencies, UN agencies and ERREC. On the basis of updates on activities and information provided by each participating agency, the SWG continually updates a matrix that clearly identifies needs, stocks available and in the pipeline and the shortfalls.

Water and Sanitation: UNICEF, WHO, and NGOs will work closely to coordinate necessary interventions. UNICEF will support provision of water supply equipment, such as generators, pumps and pipes to rehabilitate or construct bore holes, hand-dug wells and other water systems. Sanitation tools will also be provided where possible. Capacity building support for institutions and support to water supply and sanitation programmes are among priority concerns of UNICEF. WHO and NGOs will help to control outbreaks of water borne diseases due to unsafe water and poor sanitation.

Health and Nutrition: WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF will work closely in coordinating health interventions. WHO will support training, assessment and control of epidemics as well as strengthening the health information system. UNFPA will extend reproductive health services and education. UNICEF will support emergency actions involving immunisation, provision of basic health supplies, rehabilitation of basic health infrastructure and nutrition surveillance.

Education: UNICEF will provide professional and financial support to the Government. UNICEF will also collaborate with the Government in monitoring project implementation through joint field visits, quarterly and annual progress reviews and reports. UNICEF will continue to co-chair with the Ministry of Education the donor/partners' coordination meeting. It will ensure that emergency education data and information is accessible to all users through the ICC. UNICEF will also continue to advocate for inter-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration and participate in experience sharing and knowledge development for quality assurances.

Psychosocial Care and Protection of Children: UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare will ensure that the rights of all children are protected during the emergency, particularly those affected by the conflict. The situation of unaccompanied children will receive priority attention through assessment, family

reunification and provision of services targeting them. Psychosocial support services will be promoted to mitigate the impact of war on children and women.

Communication and Crosscutting Issues: This initiative will be implemented through a collaborative venture with the Ministry of Health (lead agency) and partners including SCF-UK, OXFAM, MSF and UNHCR. UNICEF will support awareness programmes about: the threat of landmines; violence against women; hygiene promotion; and HIV/AIDS prevention and control in an emergency. UNICEF will collaborate closely with UNFPA in peer education among young people.

Coordination: OCHA will continue to facilitate coordination efforts, providing access to information and resource mobilisation on behalf of humanitarian agencies and organisations.

Return and Rehabilitation: The Return and Rehabilitation Sectoral Working Group will be established at the appropriate time and most likely be introduced in the 2001 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal Process."

(UN July 2000, pp.10-11)

### **Confusion regarding organizational responsibility for providing shelter (2000)**

- Problems with the distribution of tents that were already in the country
- Several actors involved in the sector

"Within Sudan, UNHCR encountered serious problems with the distribution of tents that were already in the country. Available stocks languished for long periods in COR warehouses and, even upon delivery to the camps, were subject to further delays before they could be distributed. In Laffa camp, for example, piles of undistributed tents were left lying on the ground, while registered refugees were obliged to sleep in the open.

At the beginning of the emergency in Eritrea, there was considerable confusion regarding organizational responsibility for providing shelter. Originally the responsibility of UNDP, a number of other agencies, including the ICRC, UNICEF and various NGOs, also made shelter available. When responsibility passed to UNHCR, staff were hard-pressed to find solutions to the issue of shelter in the absence of tents or poles with which to support the plastic sheeting. One creative approach was suggested: the use of a combined plastic sheeting/wooden frame that could be used initially as emergency shelter and subsequently as the basis for a roof on a more permanent dwelling." (UNHCR February 2001, p.27)

## **International operational activities in 1999**

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### **UN Agencies received about 46 percent of the resources requested in 1999**

- Significant response from donors only in the food sector and in assistance for psychosocial care/child protection

"In January 1999 ERREC issued an appeal requesting US\$ 58.9 million covering the needs for 1999 of those directly affected by the conflict. Following the resumption of hostilities in February of 1999 which displaced an additional 100,000 persons, ERREC issued an "Urgent Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance" requesting another US\$ 31.4 million.

Following a rapid assessment, a review of the ERREC appeal and discussions with other partners in Eritrea, the UN Country Team launched an appeal requesting US\$ 31.4 million to cover the most urgent needs for the period April-September 1999.

UN Agencies received US\$ 14.4 million during 1999, equivalent to about 46 percent of the Appeal. Only in the food sector and in assistance for psychosocial care/child protection was the response significant, at 70 and 75 percent respectively. The table below shows the response to the UN Country Team appeal as of 31 December 1999.

**Table 4: Response to UN Country Team Appeal of March 1999**

Sector	Funds Requested	Funds Received	Shortfall	Percent of Needs Covered
Food Supply	15,979,000	11,185,300	4,793,700	70.0
Health Care	1,465,140	385,472	1,079,668	26.0
Nutrition	3,786,200	1,427,682	2,358,518	37.7
Shelter, Clothing and Household Items	4,695,710	883,196	3,812,514	25.2
Water and Sanitation	1,744,000	154,700	1,589,300	16.1
Education	3,187,580	197,157	2,990,423	6.2
Psycho-Social Care and Child Protection	172,000	130,000	42,000	75.6
Capacity Building	391,500	-	391,500	
Total	31,421,130	14,363,507	17,057,623	45.7

Contributions towards this appeal through the UN system have been received from Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

[...]

While contributions to food assistance were fairly good, the late arrival of the funds had a negative impact on the programme. Delivery through the end of 1999 was almost exclusively in staple foods, without vegetable oil and with very few pulses. As a result, an unbalanced food basket has been distributed. However, the supply of supplementary foods helped to stabilize the nutritional status of IDPs." (UN January 2000, pp.5-6)

#### **International organisations operational in Eritrea during 1999**

"The international organizations are all complementary to ERREC and the relevant line ministries, through which the greatest share of humanitarian assistance is delivered. UN Agencies involved in humanitarian activities in Eritrea during 1999 were UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, FAO and OCHA. The ICRC and a number of NGOs (such as Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Peoples Aid and Development Fund,

Lutheran World Federation, Dutch Interchurch Aid, ACORD, Africare, Save the Children Fund – UK, Oxfam International, Caritas Germany, Caritas Denmark, Eritrean Red Cross Society and the Inter-religious Emergency Committee) have also been active in the past year. The Italian Cooperation, Netherlands Government, Government of Norway, Royal Danish Government, Swiss Disaster Relief, SIDA, and USAID are important bilateral actors together with the European Union (EU)." (UN January 2000, p.5)

## **International operational activities in 2000**

### **2000 Appeal fully funded with regard to food but non-food needs remains unmet (January 2000)**

- Non-food sector received only 40% of the funds sought by end-2000
- UN unable to successfully intervene in a holistic manner

"There was solid response to the Original Appeal launched in January, which received more than 51% funding coverage. However, the Revised Appeal [issued in July 2000], which received an overall response of 66.5%, was well-funded in the food sector, but met with much less enthusiasm in the non-food sectors. By the end of December, while the food sector had been fully funded, the non-food sector had received contributions that totaled only 40% of the funds sought.

[...]

The inability of the UN Appeals to find broad, cross-sectoral support among the donor community meant that there was a reduced capacity to respond to the needs of war and drought-affected people, especially in terms of non-food assistance. While the strong food response was important, the ability of the UN to successfully intervene in a holistic manner on behalf of affected populations was reduced.

The interplay of interventions in the food and non-food sectors is important and delicate, and the lack of funding in one area undercuts the strength and ultimate effectiveness of funding in other sectors. The inability of the UN Country Team to respond fully in all sectors undermines the overall impact of the humanitarian relief effort. This invariably leads to increased rates of morbidity and mortality among vulnerable groups." (UN February 2001, pp. 5)

"The continued poor funding of non-food sectors and items in the UN appeals, including in particular the provision of health assistance, such as reproductive health assistance, agricultural inputs, basic shelter material, emergency education and clothing, is a cause for serious concern for displaced populations in camps and returnees.

Internally displaced persons visited and agencies expressed the need for clothing, particularly in view of the oncoming winter. This urgent need was supported by Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) and international staff working with displaced in other parts of the country." (OCHA 25 October 2000, p.5)

### **Assessment mission by new UN network on IDPs (October 2000)**

- Need for donor support for the return and reintegration process emphasised
- Appeal for access by the UN and other humanitarian actors to IDPs trapped in security zone
- Urgent need for humanitarian demining in the areas of return

"The Senior Inter-Agency Network on internal displacement undertook a mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea from 16 to 21 October 2000. The mission, led by the UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement, was composed of representatives of FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO as well as an NGO representative. The main objectives of the mission were to obtain a broad overview of the situation of persons displaced by the recent conflict in both countries; to assess the operational capacity of UN agencies and other humanitarian actors to respond to such needs, with a view to identifying and assessing any gaps; to review existing institutional arrangements, and to assess whether they adequately address the needs of displaced persons, in particular women and children; to evaluate any directly related issues that might affect the international response to the needs of displaced persons, and to make recommendations to concerned agencies, organisations and governments for future action.

### **Overall recommendations**

Following the cessation of hostilities, there is a need to plan beyond the provision of relief assistance to war-affected populations to the longer-term return, rehabilitation and reintegration phase.

Timely donor support for the return and reintegration of displaced populations will be critical to reinforce the process of peace building and peace consolidation.

The current humanitarian response as well as future longer-term assistance for displaced populations needs to take into account the special needs of women and children, who constitute up to 90% of these populations.

A large number of the displaced have settled in host communities in both countries. Assistance and protection activities should also take into account the needs of these populations, including local capacity-building.

The deployment of UN peacekeeping forces will clearly encourage the return of displaced populations. In view of this there is an urgent need to ensure early humanitarian demining in the areas of return.

A number of war-affected civilians remain inaccessible to the United Nations. The Mission appeals to all parties to allow early access to the United Nations organisations and other humanitarian actors to the temporary security zone.

The Mission remains concerned for the situation of internees in both countries, who are also displaced. It strongly appeals, on humanitarian grounds, to both countries to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian and Eritrean nationals, with ICRC's assistance." (OCHA 25 October 2000)

*The mission report contains further country-specific findings.*

#### **Great variety of IDP activities implemented by UNICEF (2000)**

- Routine immunisation and measles supplementary immunisation of children between 9 – 12 years undertaken in all IDP camps
- Learning materials distributed to about 97,000 IDP children
- 32 social workers trained for psychosocial support interventions in the IDP camps

"The combination of internal displacement and drought has placed the health and nutritional status of women and children at great risk. To address the deteriorating condition of this group, UNICEF has taken a number of measures—including the provision of 400,000 doses of measles vaccines, 850,000 auto-disabled syringes for immunisation and 8,000 incinerator boxes to dispose of used syringes. Routine immunisation and measles supplementary immunisation have been conducted in all IDP camps. More than 100,000 children have been vaccinated and given vitamin A since March. To prevent the outbreak of preventable diseases and similar incidences of common diseases, an assortment of essential drugs has also been provided. About 900 tons of 'Dura Milk and Kerkebe' (DMK, a locally manufactured version of UNIMIX) was provided to meet the immediate nutritional needs of both drought- and conflict-affected children and women. In addition, micronutrient deficiency was addressed through the provision of Glucose, Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) and a combination of multivitamin tablets and syrup. UNICEF, through the Ministry of Health (MOH) and in collaboration with SCF-UK, resumed the monitoring of nutritional status of children in IDP camps and drought-affected areas that was temporarily disrupted during the war. Three ambulances (valued US\$ 100,000) were provided to health centres in the drought affected areas to support hospital referral of women and children." (UNICEF 7 December 2000)

"Provided learning materials for about 97,000 out of the 205,000 displaced children, along with the fabrication of 40 makeshift classrooms and procurement of 100 classroom tents, which will serve approximately 9,800 children in the camps;

Supported campaigns for HIV/AIDS prevention among IDPs in collaboration with the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) through camp based peer education and sensitisation on the dangers of HIV/AIDS in Gash Barka and Debub Zones. This involved training of camp leaders (youth, women and men), promotion of the use of condoms and peer education;

Provided to the IDP camps, through ERREC, 50 sets of 5,000-liter collapsible water bladders and 6 kits of modular rigid water tanks of 10,000-litre capacity each designed to serve approximately 6,000 IDPs. In collaboration with organisations such as OXFAM and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF supported improvement of water sources in several IDP camps. In addition, nearly 5,000 packets (50 tablets per pack) of water purification tablets and chlorine were supplied to ensure safety of water provided in the camps. Submersible pumps and generators were also supplied to ensure fast and adequate supply of water;

Participated in an assessment of the situation of separated children in the IDP camps. The assessment was carried out to:

Determine the magnitude and circumstances of the separation;  
Identify the major protection issues facing separated children;  
Determine mechanisms that will have to be put in place for their identification and family reunification.

The assessment sampled five camps with a total population of 96,000 IDPs and found a total of 3,092 separated children, 1,243 of them being girls;

UNICEF supported the training by the University of Asmara of 32 social workers identified by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (MLHW) for psychosocial support interventions in the IDP camps. These social workers are to be deployed at the end of October in all the camps to conduct basic counselling or referral for IDP children who may exhibit traumatic related signs as a result of experiences they have gone through during the war;

UNICEF procured recreational items and tents for recreational purposes, which were delivered to all IDP camps as well as to hosting communities in the Gash Barka and Debub Zones in collaboration with the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students;

UNICEF started a landmine awareness campaign for returning IDPs and refugees from Sudan in collaboration with UNHCR, the Eritrean Demining Programme (EDP) and the Ministry of Health." (UN November 2000, pp.5-6)

### **Special attention given to IDP children in camps (2000)**

- Inter-agency Child Protection Working Group - CPWG)s formed to monitor the situation of children affected by the conflict
- Project for the establishment of “child-friendly” centers in two IDP camps
- Recreational supplies for children distributed to IDP camps

"In response to the immediate crisis in May 2000, an inter-agency Sectoral Working Group (the Child Protection Working Group - CPWG) was formed in order to monitor the situation of children affected by the conflict. Following reports in June 2000 of the

existence of unaccompanied children in the IDP camps, the CPWG initiated an assessment to determine the magnitude of the problem and to identify mechanisms available for reunification of these children with their families. SCF-UK provided technical assistance and support to this assessment team with a view to finding durable solutions to the problems of separated and unaccompanied children.

Based on the recommendations of this joint UNICEF, SCF-UK, and Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (MLHW) assessment report, the MLHW developed a project for the establishment of “child-friendly” centers in two IDP camps which were identified as having the largest number of unaccompanied children. Community caregivers are employed to assist separated children in meeting their basic needs by preparing meals, washing clothes, and ensuring that the most vulnerable receive proper care. In addition, peer counselors assigned to these children arrange social activities and entertainment to encourage the children to interact with each other and to express their feelings.

UNICEF provided recreational supplies for children which were distributed to IDP camps and host communities by MLHW, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS). Each beneficiary community designated a person responsible for the maintenance and care of the equipment or facilities. Also, 32 social workers were trained and then deployed to IDP camps in October 2000 to provide basic counseling services and to serve as focal points for separated and other vulnerable children, including child headed households." (UN February 2001, p.9)

#### **UNHCR focusing its assistance on IDPs in the Gash Barka Zone (July - December 2000)**

- UNHCR was about to repatriate refugees from Sudan when new conflict broke out in May 2000
- Initial phase focused on international protection and provision of immediate assistance to IDPs in and from western Eritrea
- Emergency relief assistance aimed at facilitating return of both refugees and IDPs
- UNHCR active in provision of shelter and non-food items to IDPs and returning populations

" Towards the end of 1999, a breakthrough in negotiations between UNHCR and the Government of Eritrea, created prospects for the resumption of a large-scale repatriation operation. The planned return and reintegration of these “old caseload” refugees from Sudan and Yemen, was scheduled to take place over a period of three years, starting in May 2000. A Tripartite Agreement was signed to this effect between UNHCR and the Governments of Eritrea and Sudan on 7 April 2000, outlining the modalities of the operation. With preparations and information campaigns well underway, and with many refugees eager to return to Eritrea, the operation was ready to start within days, when fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia flared up again, imposing an interruption of activities

Instead of assisting people to return and reintegrate, UNHCR had to change gear and cope with a new influx of Eritrean refugees into the neighbouring countries. The Office, in collaboration with the respective Governments and other players in the region, has, thus, started to meet the immediate needs of refugees in Sudan, Djibouti and Yemen, while providing life-saving emergency relief assistance to IDPs in Eritrea." (UNHCR July 2000, p. 1)

"The programme of emergency relief assistance to IDPs in Eritrea is taking place within an inter-agency framework, whereby UN agencies have taken on different responsibilities, mainly according to sectors and geographical areas. The UNHCR programme in Eritrea focuses on populations, which have been internally displaced within the Gash Barka Zone or from the Gash Barka Zone to other areas of Eritrea. UNHCR's involvement is based on the following rationale:

- The IDP population in and from the Gash Barka Zone includes former refugees who had returned from Sudan in earlier years and who are now, newly, internally or externally displaced;
- The returnee and IDP population in these zones, if not assisted, might be compelled to cross the international border with Sudan thereby becoming refugees;
- The Gash Barka Zone is the most important area of expected future return of some 250,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan (160,000 "old" and 94,000 "new" refugees);
- The provision of emergency relief to IDPs in the Gash Barka Zone will lay the foundations for the return not only of IDPs but also of refugees.." (UN July 2000, p.52)

"Emergency relief assistance: UNHCR procured and facilitated the delivery and distribution, within the Gash Barka, Anseba and Debub Zones, of the following to IDPs and returning populations:

5,418 tents  
53,098 plastic sheets  
18,500 sets of wooden poles, planks, other materials for shelter construction  
174,410 blankets  
29,950 jerrycans  
13,792 kitchen sets  
25,008 kerosene stoves  
1.5 Million litres of kerosene  
32,000 griddles  
600 buckets  
46,564 items of clothing  
631,400 pieces of soap  
945,440 sanitary napkins  
100,000 local mats  
525 bed sheets  
74,913 hygienic parcels

Coordination function: As a co-chair of the Sectoral Working Group for Shelter and Household items, UNHCR played an active coordination role concerning the provision of shelter and non-food items to IDPs and returning populations throughout the war-affected areas of Eritrea. This helped to direct available resources to beneficiaries most in need and to fine-tune the emergency response so that the most critical needs were addressed in a coordinated manner;

Mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) awareness campaign: Initiated a mine awareness campaign in collaboration with UNICEF and the Government of Eritrea, which has since been handed over to UNICEF, to mitigate the threat posed by landmines and UXO to returning populations in Gash-Barka;

Sectoral inputs: UNHCR addressed, in cooperation with other actors and as an active member of the Government/Inter-agency coordination effort, urgent needs in the health and water/sanitation sectors. In the health sector, UNHCR strengthened the Government's capacity through the provision of medicine and equipment, including the provision of pedagogical materials and training in reproductive health, initiated an HIV/AIDS/STDs awareness campaign, which is currently being implemented by a national youth grass-roots organisation. In addition, UNHCR imported water and sanitation equipment that has been put at the disposal of NGOs and the Government for use in the IDP programme;

Child protection: As a member of the Inter-agency child protection working group, UNHCR provided technical advice and support to the assessment on the situation of separated and un-accompanied children in Eritrea with a view of finding durable solutions for the affected children;" (UN November 2000, p.7)

#### **Evaluation concludes that actual resource commitments did not match UNHCR's high ambition for IDP support in Eritrea (2000)**

- Eritrea provided UNHCR with an opportunity to test its new IDP policy
- 16 international staff on the ground by end-June 2000
- People frustrated at the ambiguity of UNHCR's approach to the IDP problem in Eritrea

"UNHCR initially adopted a high profile with regard to the problem of internal displacement in Eritrea, a position that was subsequently belied by the low resource commitments made in relation to the operation. Moreover, the extent to which the organization's involvement in Eritrea was guided by the organization's recent policy paper on IDP operations was not apparent. UNHCR has nonetheless shown a commitment towards orienting its approach in a sustainable direction.

The Eritrea/Sudan emergency, as well as UNHCR's reestablishment in Eritrea after a two-year absence from the country, occurred at a critical juncture in the international debate concerning IDPs. In January 2000, Richard Holbrooke, US ambassador to the United Nations, expressed his reservations about the distinction traditionally made

between refugees and IDPs, underlined the international community's inadequate response to the problem of internal displacement and called on UNHCR to assume a leading role in this domain.

Partly in response to this intervention, UNHCR re-examined its existing IDP policy and issued a new policy statement, asserting that the organization was 'predisposed' to an involvement with IDPs, as long as certain conditions could be met. These included the authorization of the UN and consent of the state concerned, access to the affected population, the security of UNHCR staff, as well as adequate resources and organizational capacity [...].

### **Eritrea and the IDP policy**

Eritrea provided UNHCR with a timely case in which to test this new policy, as the IDP situation in that country met most if not all of the specified criteria for UNHCR involvement. Unlike other countries affected by the problem of internal displacement, people left their homes in Eritrea as a result of a war with a neighbouring state, and not as a result of civil war or persecution by their government. Indeed, the Eritrean government recognized its responsibility to meet the needs of citizens displaced by the border war.

In other respects, UNHCR's conditions for involvement were also met. The government granted UNHCR access to IDPs, except those located in front-line areas near Ethiopian positions, and it sought to guarantee the security of humanitarian personnel. The presence of IDPs and returning refugees in the same areas of Eritrea provided another rationale for UNHCR's involvement.

For the reasons cited above, UNHCR initially mounted a relatively vigorous and visible response to the IDP situation in Eritrea. A memorandum issued by the High Commissioner on 6 June 2000, for example, committed UNHCR to '[fully participating] in the inter-agency effort on behalf of internally displaced people, in line with its position outlined in the position paper on IDPs of 6 March 2000' [...] Similarly, in its June 2000 strategic plan of operations, the UNHCR office in Asmara made a strong case for the organization's involvement with the internally displaced.

Demonstrating UNHCR's commitment to the Eritrea programme, by 27 June 2000 some 16 international staff were on the ground. Significantly, one of the early deployments was a Public Information Officer, who helped raise international awareness of the IDP situation. UNHCR also made its presence and interest felt in meetings with government officials and other humanitarian agencies, thereby raising further expectations with regard to its role with IDPs.

Despite such expressions of intent, UNHCR's resource commitments to the IDP programme were initially low, and the organization soon appeared to retreat from the more expansive role which it had originally envisaged. This development exemplified what one staff member described as UNHCR's 'deep ambivalence at the policy level' regarding its role in Eritrea. By July, an appeal for \$23 million (\$13.3 million of this sum

targeted for Eritrea) had been issued, and predictions that 50 per cent of the appeal would be met were considered realistic[...].

In parallel with the reduction of resource commitments for the IDP programme, there was an apparent downward reassessment of beneficiary numbers. In the early days of the emergency, on 2 June 2000, the UNHCR office in Asmara spoke of some 550,000 IDPs in Gash Barka province, and another 200,000 in Debub, as being potentially in need of the organization's assistance[...]. By the following month, however, UNHCR's appeal for Eritrea and Sudan stated that only 125,000 IDPs and 90,000 returnees, were to be targeted for UNHCR assistance.

A number of people interviewed in the course of this evaluation expressed frustration at the ambiguity of UNHCR's approach to the IDP problem in Eritrea, as well as the organization's apparent inability to translate its generic IDP policy into operational practice. As one staff member argued, 'at present there is no guidance and it is just a matter of contingencies. The UNHCR IDP operation in Eritrea could just as well have been half the size it is – or double. The only limiting condition seems to have been someone's judgement as to what was fundable'.

The question of an 'expectations gap' in respect of UNHCR's approach to IDPs is perhaps endemic to it, but still needs to be firmly addressed. With refugees, UNHCR's mandate is clear, and it does not have the choice of standing by. With IDPs, the case is different, and UNHCR does not intervene in all, or even most IDP situations. However, in the spirit of the new IDP policy, UNHCR must make its intentions clear, and then follow through. The danger is that, if it raises expectations as it did in Eritrea, but then does not follow through to the extent originally indicated, it loses credibility, and a group of needy persons risks falling between the gaps of the international system." (UNHCR February 2001, pp. 17-19)

#### **Donors provided nearly all funding required to provide emergency food aid to war affected population between June and December 2000**

- Mobile and unsettled IDPs to be provided with dry, ready-to-eat meals
- IDPs in camps receiving food rations consisting of milled wheat flour or grains, lentils, vegetable oil, iodised salt and blended food for therapeutic feeding
- UNICEF support to strengthen the local supplementary food production capacity
- Malnutrition among the war affected has significantly reduced as a result of regular monthly general food distributions
- Strengthened food monitoring and reporting capacity

"WFP resumed operations in Eritrea in September 1999 after a lapse of about four years, starting up operations from scratch under the supervision of an Emergency Coordinator. This included establishing sub-offices, communications, recruitment and training of staff. It also involved restoration of links with Government entities, UN, NGO and donor missions. In July 2000, a WFP Representative/Country Director was appointed and

assumed duties on 17 October 2000 to strengthen the country office programming and administrative functions.

Presently, WFP has four sub-offices (Decamhare, Keren, Akordat and Massawa) with two more planned to become operational by early 2001. International staff assisted by national field assistants heads all sub-offices. WFP food monitors track food aid deliveries, monitor actual food distributions, assess the impact of food aid, and report on all activities. The monitors closely collaborate with ERREC, local authorities and community leaders during food distributions and monitoring." (UN February 2001, p. 21)

"The World Food Programme's (WFP) Emergency Operation (EMOP) was designed to provide 151,080 metric tones (MTs) of emergency food aid to 750,000 war-affected people during the period 1 May 2000 to 30 April 2001. A total 137,153 MTs arrived in the country and 84,000 MTs had already been distributed by the end of December 2000. A number of unanticipated logistical difficulties made it unfeasible for WFP and ERREC to distribute any more of the food that had arrived in country. These difficulties led WFP to institute a Special Operation designed to augment the domestic logistical capacity. Blockages were identified in the handling capacity of the primary port at Massawa and in the number of trucks that were available for hire by WFP. Additionally, funding was made available to augment the management, reporting, and accountability functions of ERREC, the primary Government counterpart.

Under a separate EMOP for drought-affected Eritreans, WFP received commitments for 20,824 MTs of food valued at US\$ 8,573,783 to benefit the 211,750 victims of crop failure and drought. 15,318 MTs arrived in the country and more than 14,000 MTs was distributed between August and December 2000.

A joint MoH, SCF-UK and UNICEF survey in November 1999 indicated a global malnutrition rate of 11.2% among IDPs residing in camps. However, once regular food distributions began in June 2000, the global malnutrition rate dropped to 7.7% in July 2000 and then to 6.6% in war-affected areas by October 2000.

In 2000, FAO continued to play a key role in support of the Ministry of Agriculture. In response to the crisis, FAO deployed an Emergency Coordinator who was critical in harmonising the interventions of the various entities in this sector. In the Revised Appeal, FAO received funding necessary to provide vegetable seeds and hand tools to 40,000 IDP families in the Gash Barka and Debub zones. FAO also enabled 1,660 women to resume small-scale poultry production. These interventions are expected to contribute to increased food security in Eritrea.

In order to define the UN response to long-term food security, the UN Secretary-General established in April 2000 the *Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa*, comprising 10 UN agencies. The Task Force, chaired by the Director-General of FAO, defined a strategy and framework for action comprised of three main pillars: a)

broadening opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, b) protecting the most needy, and c) creating an enabling environment." (UN February 2001, pp. 7-8)

"A total of 85,000 MTs of WFP supplied food arrived for the benefit of 962,000 war and drought affected people. To date, a total of nearly 51,000 MTs has been distributed to some 480,000 war and drought affected persons who receive monthly relief food aid;

Food monitoring and reporting capacity has been strengthened with the establishment of four additional sub-offices (Keren, Akordat, Massawa and Decamhare) which have E-mail, HF/VHF radio connectivity and by increasing the number of food monitors (national and international staff) from 3 to 17;" (UN November 2000, p.5)

***In July 2000, the following food distribution strategy was outlined:***

"

Emergency food aid to mobile and unsettled IDPs: Several thousand IDPs in Gash Barka, Debub, Northern Red Sea and Anseba regions have been displaced or re-displaced and forced to walk for days before reaching secure locations. These IDPs left hurriedly and were not able to take food, livestock or cooking utensils along. For the initial period, WFP will assist them with dry, ready-to-eat meals. These high-energy products will provide 2,100 Kcal per day on arrival in camps or in transit to designated locations.

Emergency Food aid to settled IDPs in camps or in villages: These IDPs will receive food rations consisting of milled wheat flour or grains, lentils, vegetable oil, iodised salt and blended food for therapeutic feeding when necessary. These rations will cover 100 percent of their needs for 12 months. Vulnerable groups among the host communities will receive the same rations. Due to the disruption of the agricultural cycle by the war, the assumption under the original EMOP phase that IDPs outside camps and host community residents could cover 50 percent of their food needs by their own means, is no longer valid. It is therefore proposed to meet 100 percent of their food requirements under this budget revision.

The enhanced scale and complexity of WFP emergency relief operations in Eritrea will require implementation at the earliest possible time of the COMPAS system for tracking all relief commodity movements. This system will be installed and shared with WFP's government counterpart, the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (ERREC).

A comprehensive system will be put in place for monitoring and on-going evaluation of the distributions of the food. This will require the establishment of six sub-offices and the recruitment of professional food aid monitors, of United Nations Volunteers and of additional national support staff. Likewise, the logistics and the administration and finance units will be strengthened. The Country Office staff will be reinforced with the addition of four professional staff under fixed-term contracts, eighteen international consultants for food aid monitoring, security and telecommunications, three U.N. Volunteers and twenty-six general service staff." (UN July 2000, pp.20-21)

"UNICEF will continue to support emergency nutrition activities by strengthening the local supplementary food production capacity and by providing 3,500 MT of the supplementary food, DMK. DMK is locally produced high protein wheat flour, legumes

and vitamin/mineral premix. A nutritional surveillance system will be established through training of nutrition field monitors and by providing surveillance equipment. The system will be expanded to areas, such as the drought-affected regions, where nutrition monitoring is necessary to determine the nutritional status of children and women. In collaboration with other partners/NGOs nutrition surveys will be conducted in IDP camps to establish the nutritional status baseline data for the purpose of monitoring the impact of nutrition interventions." (UN July 2000, p.37)

### **International response to shelter needs (July – December 2000)**

- Major efforts by UNHCR to fly in shelter materials
- UNDP distributed 2,000 tents, 10,000 pieces of plastic sheeting, 50,000 blankets and 20,000 kitchen utensils
- UNHCR delivered of more than 5,400 tents and tens of thousands of plastic sheets, wooden poles and planks

"Only one third of Eritrea's displaced population have adequate shelter, the Eritrean government estimates. A UNHCR plane carrying plastic tarpaulins is scheduled to arrive in Asmara tomorrow (Wednesday, 5 July) and we've already sent additional supplies of plastic sheeting and tents from stockpiles in Europe. UNHCR staff have been instructing carpenters on making the most efficient use of wood that we have airlifted from Copenhagen to frame 500 shelters, and we are also buying additional timber from local Eritrean importers so that the IDPs can construct thousands of additional shelters. ." (UNHCR 4 July 2000)

"There is general concern about the extreme lack of shelter items in Eritrea especially with the spontaneous return of refugees from Sudan. A USAID contribution of US\$ 1 million for emergency shelter and household items this week was therefore much welcomed. In addition, almost 9,000 plastic sheets arrived on a UNHCR chartered plane, 15 July; in a joint venture UNHCR and MCI procured 1,000 plastic sheets locally; and 1,200 family tents donated by NCA arrived in Massawa earlier this week. There are ongoing discussions about the relocation of vacated tents in Salina and Ghinda camps to areas of need. ICRC has offered assistance in transportation of the tents." (ICC 22 July 2000)

"With recent developments, the Shelter SWG is expanding its focus to include returnees as well as IDPs within their purview. There remain extreme shortfalls in terms of shelter and household items, but some actions are being taken.

UNHCR is bringing in tents, soap and clothes from Kosovo and delivering 2000 fully equipped shelter items (plastic sheeting with wooden frames) to Adi Keshi; MSF-France delivered 50 tents to a reception center for IDPs coming from Senafe; ICRC's distribution plan for the week of July 24-30th reflected that they will deliver 500 tents, 20,000 bars of soap and 1,200 kitchen sets in Debub plus 565 tents, 185 kitchen sets and 2,220 bars of soap in Gash-Barka. As many people return home, there is an

increasing need for an assessment of home communities and prioritization of their household and shelter needs." (ICC 29 July 2000)

"UNDP's primary programming activity was to provide shelter and household items to internally displaced Eritreans. Specifically, UNDP was able to distribute 2,000 tents, 10,000 pieces of plastic sheeting, 50,000 blankets and 20,000 kitchen utensils during the period from June to September 2000.

UNHCR, focusing on the voluntary repatriation of Eritrean refugees from Sudan and displaced persons in Gash Barka, Debub and Anseba zones, procured and facilitated delivery of more than 5,400 tents and tens of thousands of plastic sheets, wooden poles and planks, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans, kerosene stoves and kerosene, clothing, hygienic parcels and other items to displaced. The consequence of these interventions was that, in the initial phase, over 50% of those in need were provided with tents, while the rest were provided with shelter through the use of plastic sheeting and construction materials.

While these interventions helped to address the most acute needs for shelter of the displaced, it was also clear that underfunding in this sector, as in most of the non-food sectors, inhibited the ability to respond more comprehensively. The onset of the colder winter season also underscored the urgency of the need to provide more blankets, clothing, bedsheets and kerosene as well as to replace some of the worn out items. Further distributions of tents to those families who had to make do with plastic sheeting were also deemed a priority.

UNDP undertook a rapid assessment mission to war-affected areas to study the state of returnees in their home areas. This mission formed the initial basis of the longer-term recovery and rehabilitation programme. This programme, known as the Post-War Emergency Rehabilitation Programme (POWER), focuses, *inter alia*, on the rebuilding of damaged homes in war-affected areas as a longer-term solution to the shelter needs of Eritreans displaced by the war." (UN February 2001, pp. 6-7)

#### **WHO spent most of its regular budget responding to the emergency (July 2000)**

"Just six months into its two year financial cycle, over 95% of WHO Eritrea's regular budget has already been spent on supporting emergency needs, says the organization's representative in Asmara, Dr Nsue Milang.

"Unless we get some funds from headquarters, or from the regional office, or other donors soon, we will be able to do very little over the next 18 months," he says, adding that the hardest hit programmes will be those aimed at building skills among health workers since most of the funds for the emergency have been redirected from these areas.

Disease surveillance and reproductive health training projects are two programmes immediately at risk.

Given that Eritrea has a total of 96 medical doctors and 32 specialists - around one doctor per 35,000 people compared to 1 to 500 people in the US - any reduction in training programmes will set back the health service's ability to cope both now and in the future." (WHO 31 July 2000)

## **Response by Non Governmental Organisations**

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### **Major response by Save the Children to the worsened displacement situation (2000)**

- SCF left Eritrea in March 1998, but recommenced activities in 1999 as a response to the new displacement situation
- SCF cargo flight bringing new emergency supplies by mid-June 2000

"Save the Children Fund, along with many other international NGOs, left Eritrea in March 1998 because of government restrictions on the work of aid agencies. In the early stages of the war the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) took responsibility for providing relief to affected communities. However, ERREC's capacity was limited: it was set up to assist the repatriation of refugees from Sudan, and as that process is almost complete, ERREC was being wound down when the war with Ethiopia began.

Consequently, ERREC called on a limited number of agencies to assist its relief effort when fighting escalated in February 1999. In April-May, SCF and Oxfam carried out a joint assessment mission. SCF then agreed a six-month emergency programme with ERREC and the Eritrean Ministry of Health. It focuses on health support and nutritional surveillance, sectors that SCF has experience of in Eritrea. Children, female-headed households and breastfeeding mothers will be the main targets of assistance." (SCF August 1999)

### **"Save the Children's response [as of June 2000]**

Providing emergency feeding for over 4,000 children under five in displaced camps

Pre-positioning medicines, nutritional monitoring equipment and supplementary food

Assessing the situation of children separated from their families

In previous months: monitoring nutrition among displaced and host communities, supporting basic health services and distributing 25,000 mosquito nets to prevent malaria

[...]

#### **Nutrition**

Save the Children's immediate response has concentrated on providing emergency feeding to all children under five and to pregnant or lactating women. Feeding stations have been established in three camps, one in Keren and two near Asmara. A total of 5,700 women and children are currently being fed twice a day, and this figure will rise as further stations are opened. To support this response, Save the Children's logistics capacity has been boosted, with vehicles and supplies air freighted from the UK and additional staff, including nutritionists and a logistician, recruited. Secure warehousing

has been rented and a distribution system set up so that the feeding centres have a reliable supply chain.

As access becomes available, Save the Children will set up rapid and ongoing systems to assess the nutritional status of displaced children and allow supplementary feeding to be targeted at children who are below 80% weight for height. Severely malnourished children will be given intensive feeding and medical care. At the same time, nutritional surveillance workers will be identified and trained so that more children can be reached.

Save the Children has extensive experience of nutritional surveillance in Eritrea. Over the last 6 months a Save the Children Nutritionist worked with the Ministry of Health to set up a nutritional surveillance programme that covered the displaced camps and host families. Work included training of 90 nutrition workers to carry out nutritional monitoring, and the provision of equipment (for example, height boards, scales etc). Every month, each camp carries out a surveillance of its entire population. Data is then passed on to senior health personnel in the Ministry of Health for analysis and dissemination to donors, the government and other organisations. This work has been temporarily suspended by the current fighting, but will be resumed as soon as possible.

### **Separated children**

Save the Children will be working with the Government of Eritrea and other agencies to assess the situation of children within the displaced population to determine the extent and type of family separation and identify any major protection issues facing children.

### **Health**

Save the Children's health response will be linked to our nutrition work and is likely to focus on the re-equipping of health centres, training health workers and the supply of medicines.

In the past, Save the Children distributed 25,000 permethrin-impregnated mosquito nets to displaced people. In addition, malaria treatment drugs, permethrin so that further nets could be dipped, insecticides to eradicate mosquitoes, and training materials on how to avoid malaria have been provided. Malaria is endemic in the camps.

### **Education**

Save the Children had been planning to begin emergency education work in the camps when the current round of fighting erupted. This was to focus on strengthening the education already provided by the government and developing curricula on specific health and conflict-related issues, such as HIV/AIDS, sanitation and mines awareness (much of the area along the border is mined). These plans have now been put on hold, and will be re-evaluated when access to the camps again becomes possible. It is likely that if camp schools re-open, they will be swelled with local children and thus need extra resources. " (SCF June 2000)

"Save the Children this week [mid-June 2000] chartered a cargo flight to Eritrea to take out much needed emergency supplies including vehicles to transport relief aid. Save the Children, who have been working in Eritrea for the past 18 months, are engaged in

emergency relief work with people displaced by the current round of conflict with Ethiopia, this includes supplementary feeding, provision of non-food essential items and basic health provision.

It is estimated that in the region of 500,000 Eritreans have been displaced either from their homes or previous camps by the latest round of fighting. Currently Save the Children is feeding around 2,000 children a day in temporary camps. We are also working over the border in Sudan where some Eritreans have sought refuge; we have been distributing blankets and mosquito nets to these people.

The cargo flight includes essential items to establish feeding and food distribution centres and emergency supplies of high nutrition foods as well as the vehicles which are needed to ensure a reliable supply of essentials to the displacement camps as government trucks are now all bound up in the conflict. It is imperative that supplies begin flowing reliably as soon as possible in order to prevent increasing signs of malnutrition amongst those currently displaced by the conflict.

Trucks and relief supplies will provide temporary relief for the displaced of Eritrea but only a lasting peace settlement will provide long term relief, enabling people to return to their homes and enabling children to pick up the fragments of their lives such as education and recreation. However the nature of this bitter war has been such that clearing up and disposing of unexploded ordinance will take many years before areas will be safe for children." (SCF 20 June 2000)

#### **Mobile MSF teams reaching IDPs in remote communities (August 2000)**

"MSF-F have mobile teams operating in the valleys between **Adi Keih** and through south of **Zula camp**, providing health care to isolated and remote communities hosting IDPs. In these areas MSF-F note that the health situation is deteriorating, particularly with an increased incidence rate of diarrhea and dysentery, as well as acute respiratory infections in higher regions and malaria in lower regions. Due to problems of accessibility, only limited humanitarian assistance is reaching these communities.

Diarrhea has become the number one source of morbidity in **Alba camp**. MSF-H is working on reducing the rate of incidence, but additional resources are always welcome. Due to population densities, the same situation is feared in **Harena** (which has already reported significant increases in incident rates, with reported incidences of shigelosis), **Adi Keshi** and **Mekete**." (ICC 26 August 2000)

#### **Oxfam's emergency work in Eritrea (2000)**

"Oxfam has been implementing emergency programmes for people displaced by the border war with Ethiopia since July 1999. Renewed fighting in the west, south and east of the country during May and June 2000 led to thousands more people being displaced from their homes, perhaps as many as one million in all.

Oxfam is working with the newly displaced people at camps in Debaat, near Keren, and in Mai Haber, to the south east of Asmara. Each site accommodates about 40,000 people. Oxfam is providing access to clean water and sanitation, undertaking health promotion work and distributing items including children's clothes, blankets and hygiene kits.

The signing of the peace agreement between the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments has resulted in access to previously insecure areas becoming possible. It is now likely that Oxfam will be asked to take on further work, possibly in Gash Barka and Debub, where we have worked in the past. Whilst peace will enable some people to return to their homes, many others who come from the border areas are likely to be displaced for many months or even years." (OXFAM 21 June 2000)

### **Assistance to IDPs by NGOs within the InterAction coalition (September 2000)**

#### **"Details of InterAction Member Assistance in Eritrea:**

##### **Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)**

(August 3, 00)

ADRA is erecting 300 tents for 2,100 Eritreans from families with no male support in refugee camps around Kassala, Sudan. The families will be able to take the tents with them when they return to Eritrea, as many of their homes have been destroyed. ADRA is also providing support to a sanitation project in the Laffa camp.

##### **Africare**

(May 23, 00)

Until recently, Africare had been assisting the Eritrean Government for nearly a year to provide medical, shelter, and supplementary food assistance to displaced Eritreans temporarily camped in Gash-Barka Region as a result of the war. They are now shifting their focus to the recently displaced people and are focusing mainly on emergency food needs.

##### **Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB)**

(June 30, 00)

CMMB) has responded with an airlift of medicines and medical supplies valued at more than \$940,000. The airlift contained items requested by CMMB's on-site partner - including analgesics, antibiotics, multivitamins, and first aid and surgical supplies. Contents of the airlift will be distributed to approximately 28 facilities around Eritrea.

##### **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**

(August 14, 2000)

In June, the Emergency Response Support Team, made up of CRS and Caritas Internationalis members, traveled to Eritrea to carry out an initial needs assessment. At the request of the Eritrean Catholic Church, \$150,000 was committed to the purchase of three trucks to be used for carrying relief supplies. A second team traveled to Eritrea in early July to work out the terms of reference for a Caritas Internationalis Solidarity Team (CIST) that will assist the Eritrean Catholic Church in building its emergency relief

operations. The CIST is planning to arrive in Eritrea and begin coordination operations in late August.

### **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)**

(May 26, 00)

CRWRC is financially supporting a shipment destined for Eritrea by one of their partners.

### **Concern Worldwide**

(May 26, 00)

Concern Worldwide is working with German Agro Action to provide emergency food rations to 10,000 displaced people in the Mensura camp (45 km south of Keren). They are also providing high protein biscuits and medical supplies in Asmara.

### **Direct Relief International**

(May 26, 00)

Direct Relief International is currently working with Interaction partner agencies to provide emergency medical assistance in the form of commodities to more than 500,000 displaced people.

### **Grassroots International (GRI)**

(August 4, 00)

GRI is providing support to humanitarian efforts led by the Eritrean government's Relief and Refugee Commission. GRI is also supporting locally implemented efforts aimed at displaced civilians, including vocational training and literacy instruction for teens; skills training and support for displaced workers; and agriculture and income-generating programs for women.

### **International Medical Corps (IMC)**

(June 28, 00)

IMC is operating mobile health clinics in the Dehub and Gash-Barka zones in Eritrea, where more than 330,000 internally displaced persons are living both in traditional IDP camps and scattered among the region's hills and valleys. IMC is providing emergency medical care and supplementary feeding for children under 5 and lactating and pregnant women.

### **International Rescue Committee**

(June 15, 00)

IRC is providing assistance for the Eritrean refugees in the Kassala area of Sudan. Their activities include health programs for mothers and children under five years of age, improving the nutritional status of children under five, providing sanitation services, and providing water for approximately 30, 000 people.

### **Latter-day Saint Charities**

(May 23, 00)

Two 40-foot containers of wool blankets, quilts, powdered milk, vitamins, and first aid supplies have arrived for internally displaced persons. Donations are valued at \$151,561.

### **Lutheran World Relief**

(June 30, 00)

LWR, through their partner Lutheran World Federation, is assisting in the transport and distribution of commodities to the internally displaced people and to provide potable water, food, shelter, and blankets to the most vulnerable. LWR has sent a cash grant of \$41,826, and is accepting financial contributions to aid in the purchase of 45 metric tons of high energy biscuits and powdered milk for up to 100,000 people, 50 water storage bladders, 40,000 blankets, and 10,000 family size tents in Keren, Eritrea. LWR is a member of Action by Churches Together (ACT).

### **Mercy Corps International**

(July 19, 2000)

Mercy Corps' shipment of 50,000 packets of oral rehydration salts arrived in Eritrea on July 9 and is being distributed by the Eritrean government to war-affected individuals. Additional shipments of oral rehydration salts are scheduled in the near future. Kerosene stoves, fuel cans, and a one month supply of kerosene were recently distributed to 1,500 IDP families. Mercy Corps is currently working with UNHCR to provide temporary shelters to 1,000 IDP families. Mercy Corps' Field Coordinator, based in Asmara, continues to conduct field assessments.

### **Operation USA**

(June 12, 00)

Operation USA has worked in East Africa since 1980 and in the Eritrea region in 1984-86. They are assessing needs for medical, nutritional, and shelter supplies for eventual sea and air shipment to Eritrea. They work through partner agencies in the field and are privately funded.

### **Oxfam America**

(July 26, 00)

Oxfam's response focuses in three areas: water, sanitation, and hygiene. Specifically: provide water pumping and distribution networks to ensure easy access to clean water; dig trench latrines and use latrines plates which can be moved when necessary; employ latrine attendants who will maintain the cleanliness of the latrines; promote and conduct hygiene campaigns to assist in the prevention of diseases and encourage good hygiene practice in the target community.

### **Save the Children**

(July 18, 00)

Save the Children is planning program interventions that will include provision of non-food items as well as a variety of services (water, sanitation, shelter, fuel, medicines, etc.). They will continue to coordinate response activities with Sudanese government officials and other humanitarian agencies.

### **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)**

(June 30, 00)

UMCOR is responding to the drought in Eritrea by providing assistance for food and other supplies through partners that include the Eritrean Development Fund and ACT International

**USA for UNHCR**

(July 27, 00)

UNHCR has started the voluntary repatriation of the new Eritrean refugees from Sudan. UNHCR is intervening in the Gash Barka region to support IDPs and returnees.

**US Fund for UNICEF**

(May 24, 00)

UNICEF has mobilised US\$ 4.4 million in response to the emergency with relief measures in nutrition, preventive health, water and sanitation, and education." (InterAction September 2000)

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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ARI	Acute Respiratory Infection
ARTI	Acute Respiratory Tract Infections
CHW	Community Health Worker
CSB	Corn-Soya Blend
DMK	Locally produced high protein flour
EPI	Expanded Immunization Programme
ERREC	Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IDA	Iron Deficiency Anemia
IDD	Iodine Deficiency Disorder
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ICRC	International Committee of the Red-Cross
Kcal	Kilo calories
LTSH	Landsite Transport, Storage, Handling
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
MOLHW	Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare
MT	Metric Tons
NFIS	National Food Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TSZ	Temporary Security Zone
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMEE	UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAD	Vitamin A Deficiency
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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