

U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES

nomie migrants submitting fraudulent asylum claims. Legitimate asylum seekers, meanwhile, often had to resort to bribes to push their applications through an unresponsive governmental system.

Parliament approved a new Immigration Act in May that would potentially affect the process of adjudicating asylum appeals. However, the new law, as well as its administrative regulations, faced court challenges at year's end. The new law was scheduled to take effect in March 2003.

Protection and Assistance Recognized refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa lived in urban areas rather than designated refugee camps. Only 2,000 of the neediest refugees received humanitarian assistance.

The overwhelming majority struggled to support themselves, a task made more difficult because they typically lacked proper identity cards due to the government's failure, in most cases, to distribute identity documents as planned. Even refugees with official documentation issued by the national government faced harassment and discrimination because many local officials refused to recognize the validity of refugee documents.

"It is dangerous being a foreigner in South Africa," concluded the director of a local university's Refugee Research Program, which conducted a study of the refugee system. "...Immigrants, whether asylum seekers, illegal entrants, or legal workers, are faced with rampant xenophobia and a general atmosphere of hostility from citizens, police, and government officials."

Many refugees and asylum seekers blamed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for their plight. They complained that UNHCR failed to provide adequate shelter, health care, or education subsidies. UNHCR officials acknowledged that assistance was meager, but asserted that many refugees had unrealistic expectations.

Sudan

Nearly 4.5 million Sudanese were uprooted at the end of 2002, including an estimated 4 million internally displaced persons and some 475,000 Sudanese who lived as refugees and asylum seekers.

Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers included about 170,000 in Uganda, some 90,000 in Ethiopia, 70,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, 70,000 in Kenya, 35,000 in Central African Republic (CAR), 20,000 in Egypt, 15,000 in Chad, 1,000 in Eritrea, and 5,000 Sudanese asylum seekers in Western industrialized countries. A quarter-million to a half-million Sudanese became newly uprooted during 2002, according to various estimates.

More than 285,000 refugees from other countries lived in Sudan at year's end, including some 280,000 from Eritrea, 5,000 from Uganda, and about 2,000 from Ethiopia. An additional 10,000 Ethiopians lived in Sudan

in refugee-like circumstances although they lacked official refugee status.

Pre-2002 Events Civil war has raged in Sudan for 19 years. Rebel armies in southern Sudan have continued to fight against government forces and pro-government militia in a bid for political autonomy or independence for southern Sudan and its estimated 5 million population.

Ethnic and military divisions among southerners have complicated the civil war and produced additional bloodshed. Rivalries have also surfaced in the north, where some groups opposed to the government have formed a military alliance with southern rebels. The long war has taken on religious and cultural overtones, including disagreements over efforts to impose Islamic law on non-Muslims. Most southern Sudanese are black Christians or adherents of local traditional religions, while northern Sudanese are predominantly Arab Muslims.

The civil war has left an estimated 2 million or more persons dead in southern and central Sudan since 1983. The combination of war and drought has produced chronic food shortages in many areas of the south, resulting in famines in 1988, 1992, and 1998.

Combatants have regularly manipulated the massive amounts of humanitarian relief sent to Sudan. Government officials have imposed tight controls on aid deliveries, often blocking food shipments to needy populations, while many rebel commanders regularly have confiscated a percentage of food relief distributed in the south.

Sudan has ranked as one of the world's leading producers of uprooted people since the mid-1980s.

War and Negotiations in 2002 Warfare and human rights violations continued during most of 2002 despite progress in peace negotiations.

Rebel forces known as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) captured two key southern towns during the year, Kapoeta and Torit. Rebel forces in the northeast, known as the National Democratic Alliance, which includes the SPLA, also seized two towns in Kassala State. A rebel faction that had split with the SPLA in 1991 announced in January 2002 that it would reunite with the SPLA, strengthening rebel forces.

Government troops and pro-government militias launched several military offensives in southern Sudan during 2002, particularly in heavily populated areas of Bahr el-Ghazal Province and the oil-rich Western Upper Nile Province. Government soldiers recaptured the town of Torit in Eastern Equatoria Province in October.

Both sides killed civilians and violated basic human rights. SPLA combatants reportedly massacred 25 civilians in March and abducted more than 40 persons in September. As in previous years, government forces bombed civilian sites and regularly unleashed deadly helicopter gunships against villages. One aerial bombing in September

killed 13 civilians, including 4 children. Raids by pro-government militias destroyed crops and villages in a deliberate effort to uproot local populations.

Despite the ongoing violence, peace negotiations appeared to gain momentum during 2002, due in part to pressure exerted by the international community, including the United States.

In early 2002, government and rebel negotiators agreed to a cease-fire in the Nuba Mountains region of central Sudan, pledged to end attacks against civilians throughout southern Sudan, and consented to "zones of tranquility" where health workers could safely vaccinate local populations against diseases. In July, both sides signed a general framework for eventual peace, known as the Machakos Protocol, which acknowledged the southern population's right of self-determination.

Sudanese President Omar el-Beshir and rebel leader John Garang met for the first time in July and issued a joint statement citing "the need to reinforce the peace process by rallying popular support behind it and building national consensus on a comprehensive political settlement."

After recapturing the town of Torit in October, the government immediately agreed to a cessation of hostilities and promised to grant unimpeded access to humanitarian agencies operating in the south. Although military activities appeared to decline during the final two months of the year, violence persisted in some areas, and the outcome of peace negotiations remained in doubt.

Uprooted Sudanese An estimated 250,000 to 500,000 Sudanese fled their homes during 2002, including many people who were already displaced because of violence in previous years. Nearly 20,000 new Sudanese refugees fled to Uganda, Ethiopia, and CAR. The U.S. government continued to grant Temporary Protected Status to about 500 Sudanese. In addition, there were some 2,000 Sudanese asylum seekers in the United States.

The worst violence occurred in the lucrative oil fields of Western Upper Nile Province, where 150,000 to 300,000 people fled in the first four months of the year, according to estimates by relief agencies. An additional 70,000 residents of Western Upper Nile became uprooted later in the year. According to some estimates, up to half of the population in Western Upper Nile suffered displacement by year's end. Many fled westward to neighboring Bahr el-Ghazal Province, where local residents were already struggling to cope with food shortages.

A government military offensive and militia raids against the local population in Bahr el-Ghazal pushed tens of thousands from their homes. Up to 120,000 new and long-term displaced persons congregated near the government-held town of Wau. Bahr el-Ghazal Province contained more than 650,000 displaced persons by year's end, according to estimates by UN humanitarian workers.

Battles for the town of Torit in Eastern Equatoria

Province forced more than 10,000 people to leave their homes; some trekked 60 miles (100 km) to the large government-held town of Juba. In eastern Sudan, near the border with Eritrea, heavy warfare produced at least 10,000 new displaced persons, some of whom walked nearly 120 miles (200 km) to find safety. About 100,000 people remained uprooted near the northeastern town of Kassala.

Sudan's civil war was not the only cause of displacement. A Ugandan rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), supported by the Sudanese government, roamed through southern Sudan looting villages and massacring civilians. At least 20,000 residents fled LRA attacks during 2002. Ethnic conflict reportedly struck about 15 villages in western Sudan's Northern and Southern Darfur Provinces, causing tens of thousands to flee. Nearly 300,000 people were internally displaced in western Sudan at year's end, according to estimates by UN humanitarian officials.

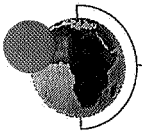
The new population movements during 2002, though massive, did not substantially alter the general pattern of displacement in Sudan. Between 1.5 million and 2 million persons were believed to be internally displaced in the south, including about 300,000 in government-held towns. Some 1.5 million to 2 million remained displaced in and around Khartoum, the capital, most of them southerners who had fled or migrated northward because of the war. Other areas of Sudan contained an additional 500,000 uprooted people.

Some UN and government officials estimated that the country's total displaced population numbered as high as 4.3 million. The country's massive size and remote locations, as well as the long duration of the war, made precise estimates impossible.

In what many aid workers hoped would become the first tentative sign that peace might eventually yield wholesale population reintegration, some 15,000 uprooted people took advantage of a cease-fire in the Nuba Mountains area of central Sudan and returned to their homes there.

Humanitarian Conditions International policymakers and aid officials generally agreed that humanitarian conditions in Sudan were among the worst in the world. Decades of war and government neglect have destroyed most of southern Sudan's health clinics, schools, roads, and markets. Many displaced families in the south have fled from place to place during the course of the war. Most uprooted people lived in destitute conditions that were often indistinguishable from those of other impoverished residents.

More than 600,000 children died of treatable illnesses during the year, UN humanitarian officials estimated. Health surveys conducted in early 2002 found child malnutrition rates as high as 40 percent at some locations in the south. Nearly one-third of children living in government-controlled towns in the oil region of Western Upper Nile suffered malnutrition, according to health assessments.



Three-quarters of all guinea-worm infections worldwide occurred in Sudan, health specialists stated.

A consortium of relief agencies known as Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) delivered tens of thousands of tons of food to needy populations year-round, much of it by air because of poor or nonexistent roads.

Relief distributions were often dangerous for beneficiaries as well as relief organizations. An attack by a government helicopter gunship killed 24 villagers in Western Upper Nile in February when World Food Program (WFP) aid workers visited the town to distribute food. A government plane bombed a food distribution to 18,000 people in Bahr el-Ghazal Province in February. A local health worker and four other civilians died that same month during a government aerial bombing of their town in Western Upper Nile.

Pro-government militia often attacked villages immediately after food distributions to steal relief supplies, relief officials noted. Combatants supporting the government in Upper Nile Province killed one aid worker and temporarily abducted three others (see "In Memoriam... Fallen Refugee Workers"). SPLA soldiers detained and beat 14 health workers during a polio vaccination campaign in March.

As in previous years, Sudanese authorities barred relief flights to many locations needing emergency assistance. The government prohibited flights to more than 40 locations early in the year and increased the number of restricted sites to 60 by October—"the most restrictive monthly flight clearance...in many years," the U.S. Agency for International Development noted. Sudanese officials effectively banned all humanitarian flights in southern Sudan for nine days in late September and early October, temporarily halting deliveries to 500,000 beneficiaries.

Restrictions on aid flights diminished during the final two months of the year as government officials pledged, during peace negotiations, that they would allow freer access to OLS. Despite the pledge, the Sudanese government continued to hamper access to numerous sites in Western Upper Nile, according to relief workers.

Refugees from Eritrea Eritrean refugees fled to Sudan as early as 1967 during Eritrea's war for independence from Ethiopia. Additional hundreds of thousands arrived during the 1970s and 1980s as the independence war continued until 1991. Thousands more fled to Sudan in the late 1990s to escape a border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

About 30,000 refugees repatriated from Sudan to Eritrea during 2001. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced in February 2002 that conditions that originally caused refugees to flee Eritrea had largely disappeared. UNHCR stated that, effective December 31, 2002, Eritreans living in Sudan would no longer receive *prima facie* refugee status and would either have to repatriate, file individualized asylum claims to remain in Sudan as refugees, or take steps to become permanent legal residents of Sudan.

UNHCR and Eritrean government officials mounted an information campaign in Sudan to inform refugees about improved humanitarian and political conditions in Eritrea and their legal options for departing or remaining in Sudan. Some 60 refugee leaders traveled to Eritrea for several days in February to assess prospects for repatriation first hand.

About 20,000 refugees repatriated with UNHCR assistance during the first half of the year, transported home in trucks and buses with their possessions. Some 50,000 have departed Sudan in repatriation convoys during the past two years. The annual rainy season halted the organized repatriation program in July. Political tensions between Sudan and Eritrea prompted Sudanese officials to close their border in October, effectively blocking repatriation convoys for the rest of the year. Some 30,000 Eritrean refugees who had registered to go home were unable to do so because of the border closure.

About 20,000 refugee families chose to apply for continued refugee status in Sudan. Many claimed that Eritrean authorities would persecute them because of their political or religious beliefs, or because they were married to Ethiopians. The Sudanese government was preparing to review the individualized refugee claims as the year ended. UNHCR continued to negotiate with government officials in an effort to gain itself a larger role in the government's refugee status determination process.

The estimated 280,000 Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers remaining at year's end lived in about 20 camps and settlements in northeastern Sudan, as well as in urban areas such as Khartoum, Kassala, Gedaref, and Port Sudan. Aid workers hoped to launch programs to help refugees support themselves and become fully integrated with local communities, but Sudanese officials opposed integration projects and insisted that the refugee population living in camps should continue to receive food and other regular assistance.

As a result, WFP continued to deliver regular food shipments to refugee sites, and relief organizations operated supplementary feeding programs for 4,000 malnourished refugee children. WFP announced in September that the Eritrean refugee population faced a 10,000-ton food shortfall.

Health clinics offered medicines, reproductive health services, and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. Nearly 14,000 refugee children attended 28 schools in camps, and aid organizations provided adult literacy and vocational training. The most impoverished refugees in urban areas, including single women and elderly, received housing stipends and specialized training to begin small businesses.

As in previous years, UNHCR funded projects to alleviate the environmental impact of refugee camps, which have caused "substantial environmental degradation" in northeast Sudan, according to UNHCR. UNHCR and government officials identified nearly 5,000 acres (2,000 hect-

