

**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES****PROGRAMME UNIT ON JUSTICE AND SERVICE**

Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service

**REFUGEE REPORT: SOUTHERN AFRICA APPEAL**

The Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS) of the World Council of Churches has launched an appeal to assist the victims of racial oppression in Southern Africa. This appeal, which was announced in March 1979, is for US\$ 5 million over and above the programmes of assistance already operated in the area by various churches, church-related agencies and non-church groups.

The appeal is in the first instance a reaffirmation by the churches that the racial oppression and systematic violations of human rights in Southern Africa are an affront to God and humans alike and that therefore these abhorrent practices must be brought to an end. In a deeper sense, this appeal provides a way for the entire World Council of Churches constituency -- the ecumenical fellowship -- to achieve a clearer understanding of the situation in Southern Africa and to react in awareness through service and witness.

Displaced people in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, released prisoners in South Africa, the dependents of detainees in Namibia, refugee camp dwellers in Zambia and Botswana -- these are examples of the hundreds of thousands of people who as a result of flagrant racial injustices have become the victims of war and social upheaval in Southern Africa and who will be helped through the appeal. These are men, women and children whose misery and degradation tragically embody the grossest violations of human rights and whose plight stands as one of the major humanitarian challenges in the world today.

Yet this appeal is intended to go beyond the mobilization of monetary and material resources for relief. Churches and Christians all over the world are also being called upon again to side with the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa, to demonstrate to them and their oppressors a unity that will bring not only comfort to the sufferers but also demand of those in power that they listen to their consciences and change their ways.

Thus, in addition to contributing money with which basics like food, clothing, shelter, medical care and education can be provided, those receiving the CICARWS appeal may also respond by sharing information with the church and secular press, by writing letters of support to churches and councils of churches in Southern Africa, by publicizing the appeal, and by organizing prayers of intercession.

The National Christian Councils of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia will be among the recipients under the Southern Africa Appeal.





Following is a summary of the programmes of each of these councils:

Botswana -- The Botswana Christian Council helps refugees in cooperation with the Botswana Council for Refugees, the Botswana government and other international and national organizations. Throughout 1978 the BCC provided refugee services in the forms of education, settlement, counselling and general assistance to nearly 3,600 South Africans, Zimbabweans and Namibians. Most of these were young people in the capital city of Gaborone. The most urgent problem facing refugees in the towns of Botswana is that of finding accommodation. Those living in refugee transit camps are estimated to number about 20,000, and here too the BCC is involved through distribution of material aid.

Lesotho -- Surrounded as it is by South Africa, Lesotho is in a difficult position. Despite handicaps, however, the Christian Council of Lesotho operates a refugee programme for a caseload consisting almost exclusively of South Africans. Throughout 1978 a total of 302 refugees received assistance in education, settlement, counselling and general assistance. Programme expansion is anticipated.

Swaziland -- The Christian Council of Swaziland operates under governmental restrictions that hamper refugee assistance programmes, but nevertheless during 1978 it met the needs of 55 refugee students from South Africa who received help in the form of counselling, general assistance and pastoral care.

Tanzania -- The Christian Council of Tanzania has a refugee department whose main activities centre around scholarship assistance, settlement, pastoral care and general assistance. A caseload of 615 refugees was carried in 1978. About 14% of these refugees came from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The CCT has plans for employing an education officer as well as a projects officer for settlement. It also expects to intensify the pastoral care programme, especially in rural refugee settlements.

Zambia -- The refugee population of Zambia exceeds 60,000 Zimbabweans, Namibians, Angolans and South Africans. In addition to distributing material aid, the Christian Council of Zambia together with other agencies helps refugees through the Zambian Refugee Service. Assistance through counselling, settlement loans, rural settlement and general assistance reached 526 refugees in 1978. Deterioration of the political situation throughout Southern Africa will inevitably lead ZRS to an extension of its services.

Further particulars about these programmes as well as full information about other aspects of the Southern Africa Appeal can be obtained for the asking by contacting the following address:

World Council of Churches  
CICARWS - Africa Desk  
150, Route de Ferney  
1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland



OTHER REFUGEE DEVELOPMENTS

Indochina -- The number of new refugee arrivals from Indochina in various Southeast Asian countries continues to exceed by far the number leaving for resettlement elsewhere in the world. This trend makes ever more urgent the necessity for governments to introduce or to enlarge already existing permanent resettlement opportunities for these people. Significantly, Japan announced in early April its acceptance of 500 Indochinese refugees provided they received assurances of steady employment. This marked the first time that Japan had committed itself to a quota of these refugees; heretofore its participation had been limited to monetary support through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The main receiving countries for Indochinese refugees continue to be the USA, France, Australia and Canada in that order, with smaller numbers being taken by a score of other countries. Brazil announced in February that for the first time it would accept a small number of Indochinese refugees.

France -- France admits between 14,000 and 16,000 refugees each year for permanent resettlement. The great majority of them -- up to 1,200 per month -- are from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the countries that made up France's former colony. France has accepted more Indochinese refugees than any other country except the United States, and on a per capita basis her Indochinese refugee programme is roughly equivalent to that of the U.S. Since 1975 France has accepted approximately 60,000 refugees from East Asia, and in addition to this programme it receives about 1,000 refugees per year from Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Burma/Bangladesh -- In a major repatriation effort under UNHCR auspices, more than 100,000 persons are reported to have returned to their homes in the Arakan province of Burma from refugee camps in Bangladesh. Repatriation continues at a rate of about 600 per day. The figure of 100,000 returnees represents approximately one-half the number of Arakan people who fled Burma for Bangladesh in the summer of 1978.

Sudan -- The number of refugees in the Sudan now exceeds 250,000. Political developments in Ethiopia and Uganda continually add to this total, which places major burdens on the Sudanese government, UNHCR and voluntary agencies.

Uganda -- At the date of writing it is too early to say what the full refugee consequences of Tanzania's successful invasion of Uganda will be. Limited numbers of Moslems and Sudanese -- groups favored by President Amin's regime -- are reported to have fled Uganda for Kenya, but the major movement of people is likely to be a repatriation of exiled Ugandans to their home-land. According to the All Africa Conference of Churches, the immediate need in Uganda is for supplies of relief goods. The AACC plans to purchase large quantities of food, blankets, clothing and medicine to be sent to Uganda pending restoration of stability there.



Zaire/Angola -- The UNHCR reports progress in the repatriation of Zairian refugees from Angola and other neighbouring countries to Zaire. An estimated 150,000 refugees have already been returned under this operation, and in addition sizable quantities of food and medicine have been supplied to alleviate suffering, especially in Shaba province of Zaire. The World Council of Churches' partner, the Church of Christ in Zaire, plays an active role in assistance to refugees, and works in close cooperation with UNHCR, the government and voluntary agencies.

Nicaragua/Honduras -- Renewed fighting recently between the Sandinista forces and the National Guard in Nicaragua has resulted in new refugee movements into neighbouring Honduras. Reports are sparse and the precise number of new Nicaraguan refugees is unknown. CICARWS has informed its Honduran partner, the CEDEN agency, that it stands ready to give additional support as necessary to CEDEN's programme of assistance to refugees.

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CFN/April 1979

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Refugee Service, CICARWS  
World Council of Churches  
150, Route de Ferney  
1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland



1. Correct my address as follows:

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2. Delete my name from your mailing list.

3. Add the following name(s) and address(es) to your mailing list:

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Signed: ..... Date: .....