

UNHCR's Global Survey Shows Continuing Increase in Displaced

A new global survey released in mid-June by UNHCR indicated that there were 11.4 million refugees outside their countries and 26 million others displaced internally by conflict or persecution at the end of 2007, contributing to an unprecedented number of uprooted people under the care of the refugee agency.

"After a five-year decline in the number of refugees between 2001 and 2005,

we have now seen two years of increases, and that's a concern," said UNHCR's António Guterres as he kicked off a week of activities to mark World Refugee Day on June 20. "We are now faced with a complex mix of global challenges that could threaten even more forced displacement in the future. They range from multiple new conflict-related emergencies in world hotspots to bad governance,

climate-induced environmental degradation that increases competition for scarce resources, and extreme price hikes that have hit the poor the hardest and are generating instability in many places."

The number of refugees under UNHCR's responsibility rose from 9.9 to 11.4 million by the end of 2007. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, the global number of people affected by conflict-induced internal displacement increased from 24.4 million to 26 million. UNHCR currently provides protection or assistance directly or indirectly to 13.7 million of them, up from 12.8 million in 2006. The number of refugees and internally displaced people under UNHCR's care rose by 2.5 million in 2007, reaching an unprecedented 25.1 million by year's end. The statistics come from more than 150 countries.

The report also lists other categories of concern to UNHCR, including stateless people, asylum seekers, returned refugees, returned internally displaced, and 'others.' In all, it lists 31.7 million people entitled to UNHCR support, excluding 4.6 million Palestinian refugees helped by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The Global Trends report distinguishes between refugees—those who flee across international borders to escape persecution and conflict—and internally displaced people who are forced from their homes but remain uprooted within their

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International Criminal Court Charges Sudan's Omar al-Bashir With War Crimes in Darfur

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in mid-July accused Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir of genocide and war crimes arising out of the war in Darfur, requesting that an arrest warrant be issued by a pre-trial chamber of the court. After a three-year investigation, Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo said "there are reasonable grounds to believe that... [al-Bashir] bears criminal responsibility in relation to 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," according to an ICC press release.

He charged that al-Bashir "masterminded and implemented a plan to destroy in substantial part the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups, on account of their ethnicity." When the groups, which were resisting the marginalization of Darfur, rebelled and the government failed to defeat them, the Sudanese president "went after the people."

The ICC quoted Moreno-Ocampo as saying of al-Bashir: "His motives were largely political. His alibi was a 'counterinsurgency.' His intent was genocide."

The prosecution said the Sudanese armed forces and the Janjaweed militia were acting on al-Bashir's orders in their five-year-long campaign of attacking and destroying villages.

"By preventing the truth about the crimes from being revealed; concealing his crimes under the guise of a

'counterinsurgency strategy', or 'inter tribal clashes', or the 'actions of lawless autonomous militia', al-Bashir made possible the commission of further crimes," said Moreno-Ocampo. "He promoted and provided impunity to his subordinates in order to secure their willingness to commit genocide."

The Sudanese government promptly rejected the charges, reported the France 24 news service, citing an interview with Foreign Minister Sammani al-Wassila.

"There is no mass murder in Darfur," al-Wassila said, dismissing the arrest call as a politically motivated move.

Despite the charges, analysts in Africa and Europe said there is very little prospect of al-Bashir facing trial in The Hague since Sudan doesn't acknowledge the legitimacy of the ICC. There are also concerns that an arrest of Bashir could complicate humanitarian efforts to help the millions affected by the conflict or imperil UN-African Union peacekeepers in Darfur.



Omar al-Bashir
Guardian Photo

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*In My Opinion...****The Rewards of Resettlement***

For caseworkers engaged in helping refugee newcomers deal with the challenges of adjusting to a new culture, few rewards are more meaningful than a reunion with a client who has benefitted from such support and who is well down a path of achievement and fulfillment. Members of our staff experienced such a reward recently when a still-young former client from Uganda stopped by our offices, so changed in physical characteristics that he would have been hardly recognizable, except for the engaging smile that so captivated us when he first arrived in 1999. Omot Jacob was then only five years of age, arriving with his father from a refugee camp in Ethiopia where he was born. His mother died shortly before he and his father came to America.



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.

Actually the smile emerged only after he overcame an initial period of anxiety and fear bred by so much loneliness and loss, captured in a photo sequence illustrating a section of our Annual Report that year. After spending a few months in our transitional housing facilities for newly-arriving refugees and attending a nearby kindergarten, he was embraced by an expanding community of caregivers, including most notably the Mountain Mission School in Grundy, Virginia, a private Christian boarding school with a defined mission “to stand as a refuge, resource and relief for the child in need.”

Members of our staff contacted the school, which was established in 1921 and has since provided caring support for more than 20,000 children in pre-kindergarten through high school, with an average enrollment of about 230 students. Over the past several years, 90 percent of its graduates have enrolled in colleges.

Now a strapping 14-year-old eighth grader, Omot exemplifies the challenges and rewards that confront the nation’s refugee resettlement program. His visit came just as I was reviewing reports from the recent Geneva consultation on resettlement. I was encouraged by the expanding number of referrals from UNHCR, but dismayed that so many approved slots in the U.S. admissions ceilings remain unused each year.

Participating in that consultation was Rose Mapendo, another “success story” from the American resettlement program who also exemplifies the path taken by so many of her predecessors in a role reversal that converts them from receivers of aid and assistance to givers to those who follow. Nearly all of our affiliates in the African Resource Network, for example, were established by former refugees.

A UNHCR report on the consultation describes how Rose came to the U.S. after the murder of her husband, received initial assistance from ORR, overcame enormous challenges in caring for her ten children, learning a new language, becoming an American citizen and then helping to establish a humanitarian agency that assists vulnerable refugees in Africa. For those attending the consultation, Rose Mapendo must surely have personalized in a very meaningful way the significance of resettlement as a durable solution for the most vulnerable refugees, as Omot’s visit did for us. They were much in my mind when I read the article mentioned on page 7 about the growing population of refugees being resettled in the Dallas area. It included a mention about how several church groups are committed to sending “aid to Africa,” with one Burundian affirming how easy it is to sometimes ignore the needs in our own neighborhoods. “Africa?” exclaimed the refugee. “It’s right here.”

From that awareness do caseworkers—and all who devote their time and talents to serving refugees—reap the rewards of personal satisfaction and fulfillment that accompany an association with people like Omot Jacob and Rose Mapendo.

UNHCR Global Survey Reports Continuing Boost in Displacements

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their own countries. When it began work in 1951, UNHCR’s mandate was limited to finding solutions for the world’s refugees. In recent decades, however, it has also been tasked to work with other U.N. agencies to help the growing numbers of conflict-generated internally displaced.

Among refugees, the new report notes that Afghans (around 3 million, mainly in Pakistan and Iran) and Iraqis (around 2 million, mainly in Syria and Jordan) accounted for nearly half of all refugees under UNHCR’s care worldwide in 2007. Other large concentrations of affected populations included Colombians (552,000) in a refugee-like situation, Sudanese (523,000) and Somalis (457,000).

The report indicates that much of the increase in refugees in 2007 was a result of the volatile situation in Iraq. The top refugee-hosting countries in 2007 included Pakistan, Syria, Iran, Germany and Jordan.

Among the internally displaced, the report cites up to 3 million people in Colombia; 2.4 million in Iraq; 1.3 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 1.2 million in Uganda; and 1 million in Somalia. In all, it covers 13.7 million IDPs in 23 countries.

Despite the increases in refugees and internally displaced people, it wasn’t all bad news. Some 731,000 refugees were able to go home under voluntary repatriation programs in 2007, including to Afghanistan (374,000), Southern Sudan (130,700), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (60,000), Iraq (45,400) and Liberia (44,400). In addition, an estimated 2.1 million internally displaced people went home during the year.

The year also saw a decline of some 3 million people who had been considered stateless, primarily as a result of new legislation in Nepal providing citizenship to approximately 2.6 million people, as well as changes in Bangladesh. It is estimated that there are some 12 million stateless people worldwide.

The full report is available at: www.unhcr.org.

Worldwide Observances Celebrate Refugee Contributions

As millions of people marked World Refugee Day across the world on June 20, UNHCR António Guterres highlighted the “humanitarian disaster” in Somalia and said he was very concerned about the rise in the number of refugees in 2007. Marking the observance in Kenya, he noted that the patterns of forced displacement in the world were changing and said UNHCR and the international community would face major challenges in determining who exactly needed protection.

Guterres said crises such as Somalia were among the reasons for that increase. “Somalia is for us a situation of extraordinary concern. It is probably the most dramatic humanitarian disaster in today’s world.” There are an estimated 300,000 displaced people along a 20-mile stretch of road between the capital Mogadishu and the town of Afgooye. There has, moreover, been a 450 percent increase in food prices since the begin-

ning of the year and this is hitting these people hard.

Despite the massive problems in Somalia, some people celebrated World Refugee Day in Mogadishu, which hosts refugees from Zanzibar, and elsewhere in the country. Speeches and a drama were scheduled in the capital.

With “Protection” as this year’s global theme, UNHCR and its partners, including governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, Goodwill Ambassadors and refugees themselves, participated in a wide range of activities, including light shows, photography exhibitions, film festivals, lectures, panel discussions, food bazaars, fashion



Rome’s fabled Coliseum is illuminated with the UNHCR logo and the message: “Protecting refugees is a duty. Being protected is a right.” UNHCR photo by F. Scicchitano

shows, concerts and sports competitions.

In Washington, D.C., Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees L. Craig Johnstone met First Lady Laura Bush in

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San Diego’s AAA Conducts Event Focused on Protection of Children

By Emily Moberly

Rarely is a crowd as diverse as the one that turned out for the seventh annual World Refugee Day observance June 19, at the La Jolla Presbyterian Church. From skin color and language to cultural customs and economic status, the breakfast celebrated the shared aims of dozens of different worlds.

Hosted by the Alliance for African Assistance (AAA) a San Diego resettlement affiliate of ECDC, the event was among similar observances conducted

around the world in an annual salute to the courage, resilience and strength of refugees. This year’s theme was refugee protection, adapted by AAA to focus on “protection of children.”

“We are there for you,” Walter Lam, president of the Alliance, told the refugee children in the audience. “We will do whatever it takes to protect you ... and your job description is education, education, education.”

Following Lam’s welcome speech, the audience shared a sumptuous feast and enjoyed various exhibitions of young international talent. Girls dressed in flowing white gowns and colorful ribbons performed a traditional song and dance from Burma and the Jean Pierre Family singers treated the crowd to songs from Burundi.

Refugees from Burundi, Uganda, Iraq and Burma shared their stories of how they came to live in the United States. Although from different

countries, the stories revealed commonalities: gratitude for the assistance they had received in San Diego and a sense of new found hope.

“Refugee life is just about existence,” said Gerald Womaniala, a refugee from Uganda who came to the U.S. seven months ago. Womaniala told the crowd about his family’s life in a refugee camp in Kenya, a place which he called “one of the worst places for human habitation.”

Womaniala said that in the refugee camp he told himself, “I better move forth and look for better fortune.” He told the crowd that is what he has found in San Diego.

“I am so grateful,” he said.

More than 250 people attended the breakfast in La Jolla including more than 100 refugees. Nearly \$4,000 was raised to support the Alliance’s work in San Diego.



Walter Lam



Colorful attire and traditional dances demonstrated the diversity of the San Diego area’s refugee community.

Geneva Consultation Explores Expanding Resettlements

Representatives from 34 countries attended the annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in Geneva in early July to coordinate international efforts to help the hundreds of thousands of refugees who continue to be at risk in the countries where they have sought asylum.

“A lot has been said and written on the responsibility to protect, but we would like to seize this opportunity to encourage states to think of resettlement as a practical form of sharing this responsibility,” said UNHCR Deputy Director for International Protection Vincent Cochetel.

Fleeing persecution or conflict in their own country does not always result in refugees being out of harm’s way, participants noted, recognizing that often the threats that caused them to flee in the first place are also present in the country where they seek asylum. In other cases, new dangers arise for individuals with special needs or for those who find themselves in a particularly vulnerable situation. In these instances, UNHCR attempts to find a safe third country to take them in, or resettle them.

Despite efforts to expand the number of places available, only a small proportion of the world’s refugees—usually the most vulnerable—are resettled, according to a report on the meeting by UNHCR’s William Spindler. Resettlement countries take an average of 70,000

people every year, but UNHCR estimates that the total number of people in need of resettlement is around 560,000, or less than 5 percent of the world’s refugee population.

UNHCR promotes resettlement in the context of broader policies that strive to address the causes of flight and to strengthen the principle and practice of asylum. The ability to resettle refugees in need remains an effective way of offering refugees both protection and a lasting solution to their plight.

Last year, UNHCR submitted 99,000 cases for resettlement, 83 percent more than in 2006. Some 75,300 refugees were admitted by 14 resettlement countries in 2007. The main resettlement countries were the United States (48,300 cases, including family reunions), Canada (11,200), Australia (9,600), Sweden (1,800) and Norway (1,100).

The main countries of origin of resettled refugees last year were Myanmar (20,200), Burundi (6,300), Somalia (5,900), Iraq (3,800) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,500).



Expanding resettlement options for such refugees as this Ethiopian family playing on a beach in Brighton in the United Kingdom was a focus of Geneva conference.

UNHCR photo by H. Davies

“Resettlement is a protection tool, a durable solution and an instrument of international solidarity all in one. It is, in this sense, very precious but we must make it accessible to a larger number of refugees, particularly those coming from protracted refugee situations,” said Cochetel.

Resettled refugees receive legal protection, residency and, eventually, citizenship from the governments that agree to receive them. UNHCR works closely with central and local authorities to find solutions to these cases.

World Refugee Day Observances Celebrate Courage of Displaced People

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the White House before attending a public ceremony and a film screening at the National Geographic Museum.

The global observances started in the Asia-Pacific region, where Australia held its annual World Refugee Day Breakfast in a Sydney hotel. In Japan, the big WRD event of the day was the launch of the third Tokyo Refugee Film Festival.

Further west, in Thailand, urban refugees from many countries gathered at the Bangkok Refugee Centre to celebrate WRD with song and dance.

Many countries in Africa celebrated WFD with national ceremonies and a

host of events in refugee camps. In the Burundi capital of Bujumbura, urban refugees gave food to vulnerable fellow refugees and Burundians in local hospitals.

In neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNHCR Regional Representative Eusebe Hounsokou was given the rare honor of addressing the parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He discussed the role and work of UNHCR in DRC during a session on humanitarian and social affairs and stressed the need for peace and stability in the east of the country.

In eastern Tanzania, the government

marked the day by giving naturalization certificates to 202 Somali Bantu refugees in Chogo settlement. The government has given these refugees land and welcomed them to apply for naturalization based on the historical links they have to Tanzania. Cultural and sports events were held in camps and settlements.

Meanwhile in Europe, the Swiss city of Geneva continued the annual tradition of illuminating its famous fountain, the Jet d’Eau, in United Nations blue. A UNHCR lightweight family tent was assembled on the square facing the Palais des Nations, the U.N.’s European headquarters.

For Sierra Leone Refugee...

Jamaican Music Provides Healing for Wounds of War

By Grainne O'Hara
UNHCR, Jamaica

Jamaica is renowned for its music and the chance to study at a visual and performing arts college in the island nation's capital, Kingston, has been a lifeline back to normality for one West African refugee.

Alie Marrah fled his native Sierra Leone at the height of the civil war in the 1990s and chartered a course for the Caribbean as a stowaway aboard a commercial vessel. He weathered that perilous journey and overcame rejection and detention in Trinidad before his refugee status was recognized by UNHCR.

Alie picked up his love of music from his grandmother. He recalls childhood experiences singing in the church choir and a home full of musical instruments. The war, which started in 1991, ended his aspirations to become a musician; his hopes were shattered by the brutal conflict that engulfed his country.

But no amount of suffering could extinguish his dedication to music. Performing as an amateur in Trinidad, he learned about the Edna Manley College in Jamaica and was determined to study there.

Alie's determination, talent and the encouragement of friends led him to Kingston where he recently completed his second year of studies at the Edna Manley College School of Music, which is one of many arts programs offered by the college.

Named in honor of the famous sculptor and wife of Jamaica's independence era leader, Norman Manley, the college attracts students from all over the Caribbean and other corners of the world. Alie's studies are supported by a UNHCR scholarship which is conditional on his maintaining high grades.

Together with fellow students, Alie has formed a group called Jamafrique. The band draws upon the rhythms of his native Africa and the musical traditions of Jamaica.

They have performed at college concerts and at various venues in Kingston and hope to make a name for the group on the local music scene as a stepping stone to greater success. Inspired by his example, another refugee in Jamaica, a young Haitian with a passion for rap, is currently applying for admission to the college.



Sierra Leonean refugee Alie Marrah, left, is shown with UNHCR's Clover Graham at the Edna Manley College in Kingston. UNHCR photo by G. O'Hara

In recognition of the supportive environment offered by Edna Manley College, UNHCR's Washington office marked World Refugee Day on June 20 with a small cash donation towards the purchase of musical instruments and the presentation of a set of refugee-related music videos for the college's library.

Among the donations presented by UNHCR's honorary liaison officer in Jamaica, Clover Graham, was a copy of "Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars," a documentary featuring a band formed in the refugee camps in Guinea. The band, which has toured the world, maintains close ties with UNHCR.

"It is so encouraging after all he has been through to see Alie enjoying his music so much. I've been to a few of his concerts and seen what he and his fellow students can do," Clover said on Alie's accomplishments.

Like his compatriots in the Refugee All Stars, Alie has embraced music as a path towards healing the wounds of his country. Music has brought hope back into his life but he has not forgotten his experiences, which echo through his music. The lyrics of his song "Mama Meh Chant Fi Yuh" recall the pain of war and exile:

*Dingoley Mama meh chant for you
Dingoley wipe your tears doh cry Mama Dingoley
Mama meh chant for you*

*Mama Africa dem have your joy turn sorrow Mama Dingoley
Mama meh chant for you gwan do your ting wipe your tears
doh cry Mama Dingoley.*

Up to 2 million of the country's 6 million citizens were displaced during the height of the conflict in Sierra Leone, with some 490,000 fleeing to Liberia and Guinea. Significant improvements in the consolidation of peace and security in Sierra Leone have led many Sierra Leoneans to return home and more will follow throughout 2008.

Alie, too, looks forward to going home and making his mark on the music scene, but he plans to do so with a music degree under his belt.

Ethiopian Church Musician Wins High Honor

Moges Seyoum, a musician in Alexandria, Virginia, recognized and revered as an expert in the distinctive song and chant music of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church, has won a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Seyoum, 59, is one of 11 award recipients this year and the first Ethiopian American to receive the honor, which includes a \$20,000 award. They will be feted at a ceremony and banquet in Washington, D.C., in September. A profile in the Washington Post by Sandhya Somashekhar said that he has memorized hundreds of hours of songs, is an authority on the church's method of musical notation and has a rare level of mastery in a style of sacred dance.

NEWS BRIEFS

UNHCR Interviews Asylum Seekers Detained in Egypt

In early July, staff from UNHCR completed interviewing 179 detained Eritrean and Ethiopian asylum seekers in the southern Egypt town of Aswan to assess their claims for refugee status.

Among those interviewed were 48 women and 20 children, including two boys suffering from trauma after their mother was killed in a car accident while they were on their way to Egypt. UNHCR had earlier appealed to the Egyptian government to urgently provide information on the location of Eritreans and other persons of concern to UNHCR, expressing dismay about what it called "credible reports" of forcible returns of Eritrean asylum seekers from Egypt. The U.N. refugee agency gave the names and detention details of some 1,400 Eritreans to the Egyptian authorities and continues to seek prompt and unhindered access to all asylum seekers who are believed to be still in detention.

Guterres Applauds NGOs At Annual Geneva Event

Applauding the contributions non-governmental organizations make to UNHCR's programs of refugee protection and assistance during the agency's annual consultation with NGOs in Geneva in late June, High Commissioner António Guterres said he was particularly concerned about increasing their capacities.

He also addressed the issue of urban refugees, adding that this problem "will be our key priority in the near future."

The UN refugee agency works with more than 600 NGOs worldwide.

Ethiopian Selected to Lead International Aid Groups

Bekele Geleta, a former high official with the Canadian Red Cross, has been named Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). He replaces Markku Niskala, who is retiring after a long career with the humanitarian agencies.

From 1984 to 1988, during one of the most challenging times in recent African history, the Ethiopian economist served as Secretary General of the Ethiopian Red Cross. From 1996 to 2007, Geleta was head of the Africa department at the IFRC secretariat in Geneva, deputy head of the IFRC delegation to the United Nations in New York and head of the IFRC's regional delegation in Bangkok, Thailand.

He has worked as general manager of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company; as urban development officer for Irish Concern International; and as a program manager for Kenya and Somalia for Care Canada. He was Ethiopia's ambassador to Japan, and its vice-minister of transport and communications.

James Ziglar Will Become Senior Fellow at MPI

James W. Ziglar, who served under the Bush Administration as the last Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service before its functions were assumed by the Department of Homeland Security, has been named a senior fellow at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

With more than 40 years experience in management, finance, law, and public policy, he will join MPI's longtime Senior Fellow and U.S. Immigration Policy Program Director Doris Meissner, who

was Ziglar's predecessor as INS Commissioner during the Clinton administration and has been a frequent program participant at ECDC's annual national conferences on African refugees.

"Ziglar will focus on the design and promotion of analytically-driven policy research that emphasizes good governance and pragmatic responses to the serious deficiencies of our immigration system," said MPI President Demetrios Papademetriou.

South Africa Curbs Flow Of Zimbabwean Refugees

As increasing numbers of Zimbabweans seek refuge in South Africa from the political violence in their country, UNHCR expressed concerns in mid-July they were not being properly screened, raising concerns that people with a genuine fear of persecution could be deported.

Since the general and presidential elections in March, South Africa has sent back more than 17,000 Zimbabweans, despite earlier calls from UNHCR to suspend all deportations.

UNHCR, refugee advocacy groups and rights organizations say Zimbabweans who come to South Africa face an uphill struggle in their bid to obtain asylum. Of the 35,000 Zimbabweans who applied for asylum in South Africa in 2006 and 2007, only 500 were granted refugee status, according to official figures.

FY 2008 African Refugee Admissions

As of July 31, 2008 • Ceiling for FY 2008 is 16,000

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	2,514	Mauritania	20
Cameroon	2	Nigeria	56
Chad	2	Rwanda	55
Congo	44	Sierra Leone	77
Dem. Rep. Congo	399	Somalia	1,632
Eritrea	184	Sudan	324
Ethiopia	222	Tanzania	1
Gambia	6	Togo	143
Guinea	2	Uganda	17
Ivory Coast	30	Zimbabwe	2
Liberia	933	TOTAL	6,665

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

American Ambassador William Swing Elected to Fill Top IOM Position

William L. Swing, 74, a veteran American diplomat with extensive experience in Africa, was elected in mid-June as the next Director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and will assume his new duties in October.

Speaking after his election, Swing said: "My vision for IOM is for a collaborative organization of professionals built on trust and one that listens to Member States and which efficiently and cost-effectively helps them manage migration to the benefit of all."

Upon his nomination as the official U.S. candidate for the post last year, the

Department of State said he "brings to the 125-member Organization a breadth of international experience, a proven ability to manage complex multilateral operations and to collaborate productively

with foreign governments, United Nations agencies and other inter-governmental institutions." As United



William L. Swing

Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo from May 2003 till January 2008, Swing successfully led all facets of the largest U.N. peacekeeping operation in history.

Among the six ambassadorships filled during his diplomatic career were assignments to Congo-Brazzaville (1979-81); Liberia (1981-85); South Africa (1989-92); Nigeria (1992-93); and Congo-Kinshasa (1998-2001). He also served in Haiti (1993-98). He also served as U.N. Special Representative to Western Sahara (2001-03). He speaks fluent French and German.

African Refugees in the News

Amid Diversity, African Newcomers Seek Unity Through Community Activities

African Refugees Reshape Dallas' Foreign Population is the headline on a June 24 feature story in the Dallas Morning News by Jessica Meyers, describing how the recent influx of more than 750 Burundians and 400 Sudanese is helping to quietly redefine the area's immigrant community.

They have swelled the African community to more than 150,000, with large numbers also from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Kenya, Uganda and Congo. Meyers reports, noting that Texas accepted more Burundians than any other state last year, with an additional 4,000 expected to arrive soon.

Efforts are underway to create a greater sense of unity amid the vast diversity represented among the newcomers, the report says, quoting an emerging leader from Sierra Leone.

"We need Africans to come together," said Amadu Massally, 45, an accountant from Sierra Leone who came to the U.S. 24 years ago. He's helping his friend plan an African Banquet and Cultural Center in the Dallas area. They intend it to draw Africans for multicultural celebrations like weddings and birthdays."

A recent African Unity Festival drew about 5,000 participants for soccer tournaments and cultural festivities featuring Eritrean dance and West African storytelling, the report says.

The report is available at: www.dallasnews.com.

A June 30 report in the Washington Post under the headline *Gearing up for the Fans* affirmed how a shared interest and heritage can create bonds of unity and celebration. The article by staff writers Alejandro Lazo and Christopher Twarowski described how Ethiopian businesses in the Washington, D.C.-area were preparing to host some 20,000 soccer fans for an annual competition that draws the largest gathering of Ethiopians

outside their homeland."

The week-long contest among Ethiopian soccer teams from the United States and Canada becomes a festival of fun and fellowship in what organizer Solomon Abdella describes as "our city outside of Addis Ababa." About one-fifth of all Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. live in the area, the article says. It is available at: www.washingtonpost.com.

African Refugee NETWORK

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At Las Vegas Traveling Exhibit...

Children Learn About Life as a Refugee

A new traveling exhibition offering schoolchildren and other visitors a hands-on learning experience into the lives of young refugees and their families opened in mid-June at the Lied Discovery Children's Museum in Las Vegas.

The interactive exhibit, "Torn from Home: My Life as a Refugee," recreates refugee camp settings and takes young visitors through exhibit areas where they learn about the shelter, food, medical care, schooling, and play activities of children in refugee camps.

It was developed with the help of leading international aid organizations, including the UNHCR, the World Food Program, and Save the Children.

At the opening event, refugee children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),

Iraq and Afghanistan, whose ages ranged from six to 16, engaged in peer-to-peer learning activities with young visitors in the exhibit areas and shared their extraordinary life stories.

"I'm so glad to be here to teach American kids about what it is like to live in a refugee camp," said a 13-year-old Congolese refugee whose family was forcibly displaced twice due to mass



This is a section of the *Torn from Home: My Life as a Refugee* exhibit at the Lied Discovery Children's Museum in Las Vegas.

atrocities committed in their region of DRC.

Addressing an estimated 350 museum visitors gathered for the opening event, Michel Gabaudan, UNHCR's regional representative in the United States, said the exhibit would help to increase awareness about "what it means to be a refugee" and the plight of millions of refugee children around the globe."

USCIS Extends Refugee Work Permits to Two Years

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced in mid-July that it would extend the validity of initial work authorization documents for refugees to two years after arrival in the United States. Previous policy required renewal of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) after one year.

The new policy will reduce the financial burden on refugees by eliminating the need for many refugees to apply for renewal of work documents before they are able to adjust status to permanent residency, USCIS said. While there is no fee for the initial application for a refugee EAD, applicants incur a \$340 fee for renewals.

USCIS estimated that a refugee would request, at minimum, one EAD renewal prior to adjustment of status if the EAD validity period was not extended to two years.

By extending the validity period of the work authorization, the agency said it would improve efficiency by reallocating resources from adjudication of refugee EAD renewals to other immigration benefit services. The policy change ensures consistency in the validity periods for initial EADs issued to both refugees and asylees (USCIS began issuing two-year initial EADs to asylees in 2006).

CALENDAR

August 31 — On this date, the Global Nike+ Human Race 10K fundraising event will be conducted in New York and other major cities around the world, with UNHCR's Ninemillion Campaign one of the benefiting charities of a \$3 million Nike donation. Visit: <http://nikeplus.nike.com>.

September 18-20 — *Crossing Borders, Connecting Families-International Social Work in the 21st Century* is the theme for a conference in Baltimore sponsored by the Arthur C. Helton Institute for the Study of International Social Work at the University of Maryland. For information, visit: www.iss-usa.org.

September 25-26 — The 2008 National Refugee and Immigrant Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Chicago-Mart Plaza Hotel in Chicago. The conference will address issues of concern to refugee and immigrant children and their families, schools and organizations engaged in cultural adjustment. For information, visit the website at: www.thecentweb.org.

RESOURCES

Hometown Associations: An Untapped Resource for Immigrant Integration? is a new report from the Migration Policy Institute analyzing how such organizations can strengthen social, economic development and political empowerment. It is available at: www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Insight-HTAs-July08.pdf.

The Crisis in Zimbabwe and Prospects for Resolution is the title of testimony given by Michelle D. Gavin of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) before a Senate subcommittee on African affairs on July 15. CFR's adjunct fellow for Africa, Gavin says, "Zimbabwe today is a country held hostage by an illegitimate government facing a man-made catastrophe."

The prepared testimony is available at: www.cfr.org.