

Africa Regional Update: Natural and Man-Made Disasters Causing Severe Displacement

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With the exception of on-going conflicts in Somalia, Darfur in Sudan, parts of Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo and Eritrea, the region has remained relatively calm since the WEA-RHP meetings in Entebbe, Uganda (2008). Generally there has been lesser displacement of people due to armed conflicts in the past two years.

However, what has been witnessed over the 2008-2010 period is the uprooting of poor and refugee communities due to the effects of natural disasters, including floods, landslides, famine and drought. Thousands of rural communities including refugees and internally displaced groups have been forced out of their homes because of these natural and man-made disasters.

Countries like Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and the Sahel sub-region where refugees and internally displaced people groups have lived or settled for many years have had their poor communities increasingly at high risk.

Read about the critical challenges facing the Africa Regional Chapter in the complete report on our website at www.refugeehighway.net. Learn more about the Africa Region's plan of action through 2012, and how you can pray!

In parts of Northern Uganda, the internally displaced camps that were common from 2001-2008 were finally dismantled towards the beginning of 2010. But on the whole, the affected groups (generally women and children) were more homeless and landless because they had nowhere to go after many years living in the camps. New issues related to these desperate groups emerged such as widespread land disputes and competition for scarce resources.

Religious, political and ethnically motivated armed conflicts in parts of Northern Nigeria, Southern and Darfur regions in Sudan, and Chad have likewise increased tension, forcing hundreds to flee their homes for safer zones. More Sudanese refugees can be seen on the highway to the State of Israel.

Stateless Somalia has rendered hundreds of the local population there to flee the country than ever before to neighboring countries like Kenya, Uganda, North Africa sub-region, and others to Europe, Middle-East, Australia & Asia as well as North America.

Somalis who are economically better off and are supported by richer relatives from abroad enter destinations of neighboring countries through airports, sea or by road. The conflict in Somalia has also given rise to a new form of terrorism commonly referred to as Somalia pirates, or ship hijackers. These are common within the waters of the Indian Ocean.

B. Critical Challenges and Issues Facing the Africa Regional Chapter & Refugee Community

- Natural disasters negatively impact refugees and internally displaced communities in parts of Africa (e.g. loss of land, floods, drought/famine, loss of property and crops, homelessness, diseases, deprivation, vulnerability and poverty).
- Land-related disputes in the conflict and post conflict zones abound, especially among the internally displaced and local population.
- High risk incidences among the refugee community (children, women and youths) in areas affected by all forms of disasters and climate.
- Health hazards of HIV-AIDS and malaria.

- Economic deprivation: lack of basic needs and entitlements such as food, health care, shelter and daily survival.
- Lack of coping mechanisms and capacity for refugees and internally displaced people groups, the local church and authority.
- Absence of working refugee and disaster preparedness plans or policies in most affected countries.
- Lack of available resources for growing needs.
- Lack of resources for Africa RHP Regional Chapter, which ministers to the refugees and internally displaced constrains coordination abilities.

C. WAY FORWARD AND IMMEDIATE ACTION PLANS FOR THE PERIOD 2010-2 - BY THE REGIONAL CHAPTER AND TEAMS:

The Africa RHP regional chapter is committed to helping the local church with the refugee and internally displaced communities on major highways in troubled or potential conflict areas within Africa. We are also committed to developing regional teams and a human resources team that will continue to support refugees mostly in the conflict and disaster prone areas of Africa.

The Africa RHP will seek to work with willing relief and development partners locally and globally to assist churches and communities in responding effectively to any future or current refugee crisis or disasters throughout Africa.

The regional chapter will continue to partner closely with the WEA-RHP global initiatives and also seeks to network with other regional chapters, particularly in Asia.

To fulfill our vision, mission and key objectives, Africa RHP region initiative will carry the following immediate plans over the period 2010/12:

- Documentation of refugee and internally displaced peoples' experiences in countries affected by past and post conflict situations since the 1990s to date.
- Organize disaster trainings and workshops with a view of developing policies or manuals for the church and refugee communities in Africa.
- Actively participate and facilitate events for the forthcoming VISION AFRICA CONFERENCE in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 2010-2011; and AEA 10th General Assembly in Mombasa, Kenya in August 2010 with the aim to build consensus and mobilize resources in support of refugees, the internally displaced, and those affected by the effects of climatic changes in Africa.
- Develop and strengthen the Africa RHP regional teams.
- Conduct and organize at least 3 sub-regional training forums with focus on peaceful resolution of conflicts, management, and sharing of scarce public and private resources such as land, water, oil, etc.
- Prayer and resource mobilization in support of refugee needs within the conflict and post conflict zones of Africa.
- Build local, national and regional alliances.

D. PRAY FOR:

- God's provision of human and financial resources needed to enable the Africa team implement its action plan over the 2010-2012 period.
- The Vision Africa Conference and AEA 10th General Assembly, where consensus will be built to helping refugees through the body of Christ- the local church.

- The Africa RHP regional facilitators and teams of volunteers: protection, good health, and personal and ministry support.
- Continued peace in the conflict and post-conflict areas (Sudan, Eritrea, Uganda, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D'Ivoire etc.).
- That peace and calm will result after the 2011 referendum in Sudan - A yes or no vote will have implications on the refugee communities worldwide, particularly in neighboring countries like Chad, Uganda and Kenya.
- The scattered refugee and internally displaced communities affected by the on-going effects of climatic changes in parts of Africa.