

- (b) the announcement of a general amnesty to all those alleged to have committed offences during the disturbances, accompanied by a release of prisoners; the amnesty extends to refugees in India but not to Sheikh Mujib and certain other leading political figures in East Pakistan;
- (c) the announcement of by-elections to fill 78 out of the 167 Awami League National Assembly seats - seats that had been declared vacant because of the incumbents' alleged activities in the secessionist movement;
- (d) the acceptance of representatives of the United Nations to supervise the return of refugees and coordinate relief and rehabilitation operations.

While the Pakistan Government's moves are certainly in the right direction, there is no evidence yet that the flow of refugees has slackened significantly. A major impediment to halting the flow is the guerilla warfare between the so-called "Mukti Bahini" an irregular force operating in East Pakistan and the Pakistan Army. This irregular force appears to be receiving material support and safe haven outside Pakistan, assistance that the Pakistan Government claims thwarts its efforts to restore normal conditions and for which they hold India largely responsible.

A second factor influencing the possible return of refugees to East Pakistan is the food situation. Our most recent information suggests that there may be a food shortage in certain areas but not amounting to a large-scale famine. The Pakistan Government has requested international assistance in meeting the immediate food needs of the affected areas. So far, Canada has channelled \$7 million in Food Aid to East Pakistan through the World Food Programme of the United Nations and contributed \$500,000 to the United Nations to help defray the administrative and other costs of its relief programme. United Nations personnel are now in East Pakistan and more will be despatched, including some Canadians, to ensure proper distribution of food aid and relief material.

The United Nations is giving urgent attention to the repair of port and transportation facilities damaged in earlier disturbances and now the target of guerilla operations. Canada will be supplying material to help in this work. There are reports that the "Mukti Bahini" have threatened to sabotage the