

- ♦ large-scale human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, have led to massive displacement of populations;
- ♦ extensive recruitment for compulsory labour is documented as one of the main reasons for mass exoduses; forced relocation, violations of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and starvation also contribute to mass population displacements; and
- ♦ internal displacement is also caused by deliberate policies to change the demography of given areas or regions.

Human rights situations affecting refugees in camps and other locations are noted as including a decline in nutritional status because of a general lack of food, an absence of nutritionally balanced diets, the need to sell and trade food items to buy other necessities and the practice among some refugees of sharing the already insufficient rations with new arrivals in camps. Other problems mentioned were, for example: lack of vocational training for women in camps; lack of equipment for blood screening; problems related to chronic diseases; interruptions or cessation of primary education for children; house searches and identification checks; arrest for such reasons as lack of a valid passport; and exposure of women and adolescents to risks of sexual exploitation, abuse and violence. Referring to the situation of internally displaced persons the report notes: the threat posed by land mines; feelings of fear and anxiety associated with loss of work, social role and home, price increases which make available food too expensive to buy for most people, and poor living conditions in facilities such as "regroupment camps", including lack of adequate sanitation facilities, inadequate food supplies and lack of medical care.

The problems impeding voluntary return home are identified as including: continued fighting between government and oppositional forces and inter-factional fighting; economic hardship; the absence of educational opportunities for children, particularly girls; administrative obstacles such as illegal requests for visas, customs duties and road taxes; excessive retroactive taxation of people who left their municipalities during war or conflict; legal regulations affecting occupancy rights and the right to private property as well as destruction of housing during the conflict and/or in the post-conflict period; and incidents in return areas entailing looting, harassment, discrimination and killings, sometimes by explosive devices.

On early warning and prevention, the report summarizes comments received from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and notes several points, including: that many mass exoduses result from actions which entail disproportionate harshness upon particular ethnic or national groups; key indicators in early warning are a lack of an adequate legislative basis for defining and criminalizing all forms of racial discrimination, including the lack of recourse procedures; a pattern of escalating racial hatred and violence, or racist propaganda; a significant pattern of racial discrimination evidenced in social

and economic indicators; and significant flows of refugees or displaced persons resulting from a pattern of racial discrimination or encroachment on the lands of minority communities.

The report notes various measures taken within the UN to operationalize early warning including three projects by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs — ReliefWeb, Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS) and the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRINs). The report also sketches out the work that has been done in the OHCHR to create an integrated human rights information network and the Human Rights Computerized Analysis Environment (HURICANE). The latter is intended, over time, to achieve efficient information management through: (a) improvement of horizontal and vertical communication; (b) provision of a more transparent and usable human rights information archive, complemented by a pool of relevant links to NGOs; (c) facilitation of the collection, verification and analysis of information, thereby enhancing research and promoting efficiency in the work within the OHCHR; (d) provision of the necessary factual and analytical information for decision-making; and (e) improvements in the system's capacity to process information more quickly in order to take the necessary action in a more timely manner.

On the question of prevention, reference is made to information provided by the UNHCR in which it is stated that internal displacements and cross-border refugee mass movements often have the same causes. Efforts by the UNHCR to minimize and eventually eliminate the causes have included, in collaboration with other offices and often with the OHCHR: training for government officials in human rights and humanitarian principles, promoting the development of strong civil and non-governmental institutions, encouraging governments to recognize human rights and minority rights in their legal systems and constitutional arrangements as well as to accede to the conventions on statelessness. The UNHCR emphasized that an essential condition for the prevention of involuntary mass movements is adequate political will on the part of the states directly concerned and by the international community as a whole. The UNHCR also referred to the need to create clearly formulated and agreed guidelines for humanitarian action, governed by the international rule of law and including principles of refugee law and human rights.

Commentary on "preparedness and response" notes, *inter alia*:

- ♦ the emphasis given by World Food Programme to integrated multi-sectoral contingency planning and preparedness activities, implementation of sustainable food security policies and programmes to meet the humanitarian needs of persons affected by complex emergencies;
- ♦ the priority given by United Nations Population Fund to the provision of reproductive health and family planning counselling and services, and funding for