



The United Nations presents

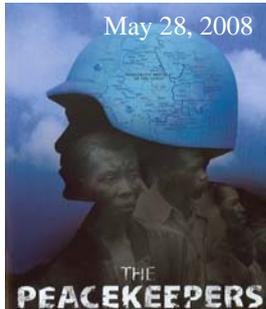
# The Forgotten Refugees



## CINE-ONU

CINE-ONU is a monthly UNRIC event which started in July 2007. CINE-ONU is an initiative aimed at anyone interested in learning more about the work of the UN and provides an opportunity for the audience to view a film followed by a discussion with experts on the issue.

### Some past and future CINE-ONU events



You are invited to the world premiere of:

**HOME**

**ON JUNE 5TH WE ALL HAVE A DATE WITH THE PLANET!**

More than a movie, **HOME** will be a major event all over the globe: for the first time ever, a film will be released on the same day in over 50 countries.

In 200,000 years on Earth, humanity has spent the balance of the planet, established by nearly five billion years of evolution. The price to pay is high, but it's too late to be pessimist: humanity has barely ten years to reverse the trend, become aware of the full extent of the depletion of the Earth's riches and change its patterns of consumption.

By bringing us unique footage from over fifty countries, all seen from the air, by starting with the big wonder and his concern, with the film **Yann Arthus-Bertrand** boys a flashback on stars for the edifice that, together, we must rebuild.

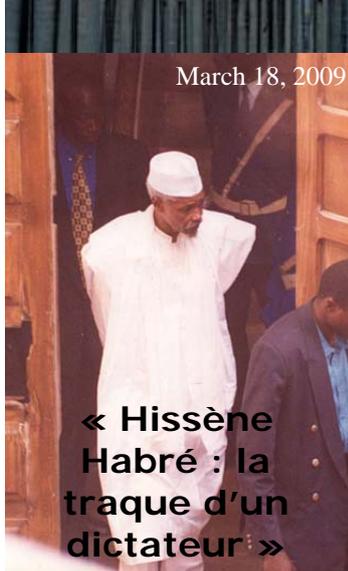
**HOME**  
A FILM BY  
YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND

Friday 5 June at 5 pm

RESIDENCE PALACE, RUE DE LA LOI/STATION, BRUSSELS

The Polak Room, Ground Floor  
Residence Palace, 155 Rue de la Loi  
Brussels 1040, Nr Schuman Metro

We kindly ask you to register  
by e-mailing: [basia@unric.org](mailto:basia@unric.org)



## The Forgotten Refugees

It's one of the biggest concentrations of refugees in the world and so far their plight has largely gone unnoticed. Thrown out of Bhutan almost 20 years ago, 100,000 Nepalese refugees live in seven camps in south east Nepal dependent on humanitarian aid.

**It's one of the biggest concentrations of refugees in the world -over a hundred thousand people crowded into seven camps in south east Nepal.**

Now the wider international community is starting to take note.

BBC correspondent Amanda Burrell travels to the camps to investigate and to see what the future holds for the refugees. She follows the lives of two in particular, Chandra a health worker and former midwife who has delivered over 500 babies, and a young man, Prem, who is about to leave the camps to start a new life in the United States.



She also makes a rare trip to Bhutan to talk to the authorities there about why the refugees were driven out in the first place.

Most of the refugees fled their homes in Bhutan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the government decided to unify the country under the dominant Druk culture. Many of the refugees – who were Hindus from Nepal – say they had no choice but to leave.

For them the refugee camps are a prison. Most are not allowed out to work and depend on humanitarian aid from the UN and European Commission for food and supplies. Feeding so many thousands of people is a massive operation.



*With no access to land for agriculture production or other employment opportunities, the refugees rely on humanitarian assistance to survive.*



**World Food Programme**



## Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

### Highlights

Programme Period:  
Jan 2009 – Dec 2010

—

Beneficiaries in 2009:  
102,000

—

Programme Cost  
(USD):  
\$26.8 million

—

Commodities (mt):  
36,859

—

Number of Camps:  
7

—

Resource Shortfall  
(USD):  
\$ 26 million

—

Camps:  
Jhapa district: Beldangi  
I, II and II Extension,  
Goldhap, Khudanabari,  
Timai;  
Morang district: Sanish-  
care

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### BACKGROUND

In the early 1990s, Bhutanese refugees began entering Nepal following the enforcement of restrictive citizenship laws by the Government of Bhutan. By August 1991, the arrival of refugees averaged 1,000 a month and peaked in early 1992 when nearly 20,000 entered Nepal within two months. Conditions in the makeshift camps were grim. Many refugees died and hundreds suffered from malnutrition and other diseases. In 1992, the Government of Nepal (GoN) requested WFP to provide food assistance to the refugees. Currently, WFP provides food to 100,000 Bhutanese refugees across seven camps in eastern Nepal.

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

As refugees in Nepal, the Bhutanese are not allowed to work outside the camps or to own land making them largely dependant upon humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, education and healthcare. WFP has adopted a three-pronged approach to support the refugees: a) bi-monthly take home rations for the general population; b) additional nutritional support through a supplemental feeding programme for vulnerable refugees, such as the elderly, pregnant and lactating women, malnourished children; and c) vocational training and loan schemes that enable refugees to earn income and to prepare them with the skills needed to rebuild their lives. To support capacity building in the local community, 50 percent of vocational training participants are from host communities.

Bi-monthly take-home rations provide up to 2,100 kilo calories per person per day. Rations consist of rice, lentils, vegetable oil, sugar, salt and fortified food also known as wheat-soya-blend (WSB).

Each year, approximately 2,100 vulnerable refugees receive additional nutritional support from fortified food (WSB) distributed under the supplementary feeding programme managed by the Association of Medical Doctors in Asia (AMDA). In 2007, WFP and UNHCR initiated a pot gardening project to increase the intake of fresh vegetables among malnourished children. As a part of the project, families receive seeds/seedlings, nutrition education and instruction on planting and cultivation.

In general, nutritional indicators show that the take-home rations and fortified food provided under the supplementary feeding programme have been effective at ensuring basic nutrition and health among the refugee population; however, recent studies have shown that anaemia rates are more than 40 percent in children under 5. In 2008 WFP and UNHCR began to distribute micronutrient packets (Vita-mix-it) to address anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies among refugee children. At present, a total of 8,381 children under 5 are receiving micronutrient packets as a part of this pilot project.

Approximately 20,000 refugees and local community members benefit from self-reliance programmes such as vocational training and micro-credit loan schemes. Managed by the Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum (BRWF), loans are available to support the start-up of small businesses aimed at supplementing the income of the refugees. Activity costs are partly supported through the sale of WFP food bags and containers.

WFP is responsible for the procurement, transport, storage and handling, and distribution of food commodities for both the general and supplementary feeding programmes. The general food ration is distributed fortnightly, carried out by the refugees under the direction of the Refugee Camp Management Committee and with support from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

WFP provides food assistance to the refugees within the framework of a Letter of Understanding with GoN and through a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR who is responsible for the overall protection of the refugees. WFP coordinates closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for managing refugee-related issues.

### DURABLE SOLUTIONS

After years of failed talks on the refugee issue between Nepal and Bhutan, in 2008 Nepal agreed to third country resettlement as one option for the refugees. The United States, Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway have offered to resettle the entire refugee population. More than 60,000 refugees have applied for third-country resettlement; approximately 12,000 have resettled so far. It will take years before all applicants are processed and for a complete resolution for the Bhutanese refugee situation to materialize. Food assistance at near current levels will be needed over the next few years to support the refugees who continue to live in the refugee camps.