



UPROOTED PEOPLE

A Newsletter of the Ecumenical Network of churches in solidarity with people compelled by severe political, economic and social conditions to leave their land and culture

Contents

2 *Network News:*
Vatican highlights migration / Migration policy courses begin / New Year changes at RMS / Canadian campaign / poem



Don Edkins/WCC

Two orphaned girls from Rwanda camping in Ngara, Tanzania. How can their rights be included in development planning? See article on page 6.

4 *Advocacy and human rights*
Interview: Protecting human rights: a key to the solution

6 **Towards "an ethic of inclusion"**

7 **Lessons learnt**

8 **Useful materials / letters / announcements**

Supplement: Using human rights standards for uprooted people: Why and how they apply

Human rights for all

The central notion of human rights is "the implicit assertion that certain principles are true and valid for all peoples, in all societies, under all conditions of economic, political, ethnic and cultural life." Human rights are universal – they apply everywhere; indivisible - in the sense that political and civil rights cannot be separated from social and cultural rights; and, inalienable – they cannot be denied to any human being.

This is the basis of the concept of "human rights for all" articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 50 years ago this month.

Without question, that respect for human rights extends to all uprooted people.

Nonetheless, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons present among the most profound dilemmas for human rights today. Firstly, their very displacement is a direct consequence of violations of human rights in countries of origin. Secondly, migrants and refugees have become the victims of increasingly violent abuses of basic human rights in host countries.

Which path ahead?

As the current "global economic crisis" intensifies, we may be at a crossroads in the future of human rights. Positions taken by some governments at the World Conference on

Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 signalled a challenge to the several decades of progress in expansion and extension of human rights towards full universality, indivisibility and inalienability.

In previous decades, international treaties were elaborated to explicitly ensure application of basic human rights to all, including "vulnerable groups". The conventions regarding women, children and victims of racism and discrimination have been widely ratified. Now, however, a resistance is growing towards the recognition of rights of the two main remaining vulnerable groups, namely migrants and indigenous peoples. The International Convention on migrants rights is not yet in force, and ratifications are slow in coming. Progress on an instrument to recognise the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly their collective rights, has stalled.

At the forefront of dilemmas posed by uprooted people is the fact that many are displaced due to violations of their economic, social and cultural rights, both individual and collective. However, current international law and

(continued)

Uprooted people are those who are forced to leave their communities: those who flee because of persecution and war, those who are forcibly displaced because of environmental devastation, and those who are compelled to seek sustenance in a city or abroad because they cannot survive at home... World Council of Churches policy statement, 1995.