



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES REFUGE

Vol. 14 • No. 1

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE HORN OF AFRICA

April 1994

Horn of Africa: Its Intractable Dilemmas

The Horn of Africa is a vast territory extending from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean on the south of the Arabian peninsula. Generally, the countries of the Horn include Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti. The people of this region represent a variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Due to its strategic geographical significance, the Horn of Africa has been a victim of foreign aggression for centuries. State boundaries within the Horn, for example, are the result of European colonialism. Colonial rule and the process of its establishment created additional conflict that caused the displacement of many populations in the region. After independence, the Horn was once again victimized, by the military and dictatorial regimes which replaced the former colonial authorities. Civil servants often found themselves struggling with government jobs for which they were not prepared. The result was total social, economic and political disaster for the region (Siad Barre of Somalia and Haile Mariam Mengistu of Ethiopia are but two examples).

The legacy of colonialism has been reinforced by ethnic, tribal, religious and other differences and inequalities.

Exacerbated by superpower intervention, drought and famine, this legacy has caused the mass exodus of refugees and internally displaced people in the Horn. The 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia, the 1986-88 famine in southern Sudan and the present crisis in Somalia and southern Sudan are clearly related to the colonial legacy. In fact, refugee movement within the Horn has become a vicious cycle of violence, political instability and famine. At present, there are more than five million refugees, making the refu-

gee population in the Horn the biggest in Africa and second highest in the world. This refugee problem has also become an obstacle to development. Whereas some of the obstacles to development are imposed from within, the international economic disorder also plays an important role in retarding the development of the region. As René Dumont (1969) clearly pointed out:

The looting of the Third World has never stopped since the period of slavery and colonization. It is con-

Contents

Horn of Africa: Its Intractable Dilemmas <i>Yohannes Gebresellasie</i>	1
Les Personnes Déplacées de la Corne de l'Afrique	
<i>Jean-Pierre Mputu</i>	3
Refugee Exodus from Somalia: Revisiting the Causes	
<i>Hassan A. Mohamed</i>	6
Analyse Critique d'une Politique d'Assistance aux Réfugiés:	
Les Sites d'Installations Agricoles Ouverts pour les Réfugiés	
Érythréens au Soudan <i>Shoa Asfaha et Véronique Lassailly-Jacob</i>	11
Repatriation of Sudanese Refugees from Ethiopia:	
A case study in manipulation of civilians during civil conflict	
<i>Alastair and Patta Scott-Villiers, and Cole P. Dodge</i>	19
Distributing Food Aid as a Civilization is Dismantled:	
The Case of Sudan <i>J.K. Morris</i>	26

