



Resolution 1000 (1993)¹

Vietnamese migrants and asylum-seekers in Hong Kong ("boat people")

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The vast majority of Vietnamese migrants ("boat people") who sought asylum, refuge, or a better life in Hong Kong following the fall of Saigon in 1975 has been resettled in third countries. Others have returned to Vietnam in considerable numbers under the Voluntary Repatriation Programme organised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or, to a lesser extent, have been forcibly repatriated under the Orderly Return Programme negotiated by the Vietnamese, Hong Kong and United Kingdom Governments.
2. All returnees have been assured by the Vietnamese Government that they will not be persecuted for illegal exit, although those who have allegedly committed serious crimes are subject to prosecution. They receive cash grants from UNHCR, which monitors their safety, and are eligible for assistance in the form of job creation, vocational training and start-up loans under a European Community programme.
3. Some cases of persecution or threats have been reported. The Assembly is concerned that returnees may be indiscriminately subject to petty harassment, and that overall unemployment remains high.
4. The economic reform already underway in Vietnam must, in order to bear fruit, go hand in hand with political liberalisation, essential to the attraction of foreign investment, the expansion of trade, and the continued voluntary return of Vietnamese emigrants who will see in the establishment of genuine democracy the best and ultimate guarantee of their safety.
5. The Assembly emphasises that the refugee status determination procedure operated by the Hong Kong Government could still be improved in order to conform to international standards.
6. The overcrowded conditions prevailing in the reception camps in Hong Kong, which verge on the intolerable and are linked to security, must be improved as soon as permitted by departures, and information provided to inmates concerning the situation in Vietnam must be made more credible.
7. The Assembly therefore calls upon:
 - 7.1. the European Community, and UNHCR, where applicable:
 - a. to maintain their assistance programmes in the camps and in Vietnam beyond November 1994 and to ensure that these apply to all returnees and inmates;
 - b. to encourage European companies to invest in Vietnam in so far as such investment contributes to the democratisation of the country; c. to improve their information services in the refugee camps so as to ensure more complete coverage, more frequent presentations and more authentic video productions;
 - c. to improve their information services in the refugee camps so as to ensure more complete coverage, more frequent presentations and more authentic video productions;

1. Assembly debate on 14 May 1993 (37th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6818](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur: Mr Atkinson; and [Doc.6820](#), opinion of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur: Mr Panov). Text adopted by the Assembly on 14 May 1993 (37th Sitting).



7.2. the Hong Kong Government:

- a. to reduce overcrowding and lack of privacy in the refugee camps by dispersing residents as the camps become depleted;
- b. to ensure that all remaining migrants are provided with legal representation, are permitted to appear before the Refugee Status Review Board, are provided with a copy of their interview record and the reasons for the decision at the time they are notified of it, and that tape recordings of their interviews are made;
- c. to introduce more discretion into the screening process;
- d. to establish a permanent consultative process between UNHCR, the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the Refugee Status Review Board and representatives of lawyers and non-governmental organisations acting for migrants, to ensure the strict application of the screening procedure in conformity with international standards;

7.3. the Vietnamese Government:

- a. to continue to facilitate access to returnees by Amnesty International and other bona fide human rights organisations which so request in order to verify their safety;
- b. to publish the actual text of its 1992 guarantee that returnees will suffer no persecution;
- c. to end all censorship of the media, the postal services and the international press;
- d. to introduce fair and open trial for political and religious dissenters and an amnesty for all "prisoners of conscience";
- e. to develop contacts and dialogue with Vietnamese "exile" organisations abroad to discuss the conditions necessary to encourage their return with a view to contributing to national reconciliation and the reconstruction of a new Vietnam;
- f. the United States of America to lift its trade embargo so as to allow the normalisation of Vietnam's relations with the international financial institutions.