

Refugees

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Refugee situation in Nhatrang and Phu Yen

1) NHATRANG

According to officials the following is the number and classification of refugees in Nhatrang:

Civilian refugees:	
From North of 17th parallel	3,225
From Binh Dinh (Qui-Nhon)	2,864
Total Civilian refugees	<u>6,089</u>
Families of Military	16,664
Total number of refugees	<u>22,758</u>

There are no reception centers as such in Nhatrang. Over 3500 civilian refugees are said to be living in already established homes in the city of Nhatrang. Others are scattered throughout the province. I went to see the two most important resettlement sites; Luong Son and Hoa Tan.

a) Luong Son. 50 two compartment homes are being constructed for 100 families by a contractor at a cost of 5000\$I.C. per family unit. Only one refugee family is living there for the time being, but this is understandable as the construction is not fully completed. The site was selected for refugee fishermen but it seems that they prefer to resettle in or near the city of Nhatrang. Since larger numbers of refugees are anticipated from the North the authorities plan to utilize these homes as a reception center. Later it is hoped that some refugees will be resettled there. Very little land is available in the area for agriculture. This site happens to be right beside an old FOA Project where a number of refugee fishermen have been rehabilitated and live in attractive concrete homes. Local officials claim that the refugees just arriving are dissatisfied with the pailotes constructed in the resettlement site, when they see the much more attractive homes formerly constructed with ABA funds.

b) Luong Son consists of 3 groups ^{TOTALING} of 57 2-compartment homes for 114 families, all constructed at a cost of 5,000\$I.C. per family unit. One group of 12 2-family homes has been constructed by the local priest principally for farmers, another group of 20 homes by the refugees themselves principally for forestry workers, and a third group of 25 homes is being constructed by a contractor for fishermen. Most of the refugees are evacuees from the North. Little agricultural land seems to be available.

The refugee situation in Nhatrang appears to be somewhat confused and the direction of it has not been especially well conceived. Part of this is probably the result of the general deterioration of Civil Administration in the province as the result of the especially bitter conflict between the Chief of Province and the Military Commander. Mr. Ngan, for 3 1/2 years Chief of the province of Phat Diem, a refugee himself who has recently taken charge of refugee problems, seems to be a very able person, but he has not been given adequate authority and is faced with a muddled situation. First, despite all the emphasis upon registration, very few refugees arrive with registration cards or tags or in fact any identification. Moreover, a number of families of the military apply to the civilian authorities for aid. These refugees, it seems, do not usually reveal that they are immediate dependents of military and it may be that they want to take advantage of the situation to obtain assistance from both the military and civilian authorities. Also there are some evacuees who arrive in Nhatrang every day from other areas in free Viet-Nam, for example Tourane and Sai on, and usually they have no papers at all. Then there are refugees that arrive daily from Qui-Nhon. All this somewhat adds to the confusion. Obviously, effective registration of evacuees before their departure from Hai-Phong would have facilitated their reception and resettlement very much.

Mr. Ngan, the official in charge of refugee affairs, in Nhatrang, also told me that the province has not received precise instructions from the Regional Government and sometimes has received conflicting instructions, such as on payment of subsistence. One thing that Mr. Ngan has tried to do is to take refugees off the subsistence allowance as soon as possible, after one month if possible. In the past I have frequently heard that there was an abundant amount of state-owned land available for agricultural resettlement in the province of Nhatrang. It seems that refugees are not being resettled on such land. In response to my inquiries local officials that such land was available quite far from the city of Nhatrang, for example, on the road to B. Nethuat, an area where refugees did not want to go and which was unsatisfactory from the standpoint of health because of the prevalence of malaria etc...

These refugee problems at Nhatrang are hardly overwhelming. However, the Government Officials anticipate that many more refugees from North Viet-Nam and also some from other points in Central Viet-Nam will arrive. A field Representative on the spot would be of considerable help to the Government Officials in dealing with these problems.

2) PHU-YEN

It is easy to summarize the refugee situation in the province for there is not especially any problem there, with about 1000 refugees scattered throughout the area practically all from the province of Binh-Dinh (Qui-Nhon). However, in another sense most of the people in the province are refugees and displaced persons after undergoing 8-9 years of Viet-Minh rule under war time conditions. Economic rehabilitation of these people is a major undertaking.

Briefly, the 1,000 refugees are principally in Tuy-Hoa, Song Cau and other larger communities in the province. Few refugees continue to arrive in small numbers from Qui-Nhon, but others leave for Nhatrang and other areas. The Government follows the practice of giving them subsistence for a maximum period of one month. Actually, the refugees from Qui-Nhon seem to be principally rich farmers, land owners, and commercial interests, who are escaping temporarily from the Viet-Minh and will return to Qui-Nhon after the Viet-Minh evacuation. It is reported that many of them pay as much as 10,000\$I.C. to evacuate their families by boat. The Government is constructing a small number of 3 compartment homes for refugees in Tuy Hoa, at a cost of 3,333\$I.C. per family unit, with the refugees providing the labor.

cc: Director of Mission
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