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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES

Letter dated 5 January 1983 from the Permanent Representative of China
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my letter dated 14 July 1981 (see A/36/582), I made observations and recommendations on "International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees" and elaborated on the basic position of the Chinese Government on this agenda item. In the light of the discussion of this topic by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, I wish to make further observations as follows.

1. It is essential that the General Assembly make a concrete analysis of the numerous cases of massive flows of refugees that persist in the world, namely, the refugee problems in Indo-China, Afghanistan, southern Africa and Palestine, and try to solve them, instead of speaking in generalities; otherwise, it will not find practical solutions to these problems.
2. For the permanent settlement of these problems, it is essential to grasp firmly the political and ethnic causes that have created these massive flows of refugees and to eradicate them.

We believe that the only sure way to deal with and prevent such flows of refugees is to put an end to the military aggression and occupation of Afghanistan and Indo-China by the Soviet Union and Viet Nam, the Israeli aggression and expansion in the Middle East and the racist practices of the South African authorities. The States concerned should implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, desist from their aggression against and enslavement of small and weak countries and nations, and work for the realization of the purpose of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the maintenance of international peace, thereby preventing people from becoming displaced persons and refugees.

3. The views expressed by the Vietnamese Government (see A/37/416) ignore the substance of the question. They make no mention of the real causes that have created the flows of Indo-Chinese refugees and use all sorts of pretexts to evade the question and sidetrack the issue. This is absolutely unacceptable.

It is a well-known fact that the massive flows of Indo-Chinese refugees began in 1978, when Viet Nam launched its open armed aggression against independent and non-aligned Democratic Kampuchea, while fomenting all sorts of fallacies in the country, and adopted racially discriminatory policies against citizens of Viet Nam of non-Vietnamese descent. By early 1979, the Vietnamese authorities had already expelled several hundred thousand refugees. Some 190,000 refugees were forced into exile in China. Hundreds of thousands of the refugees thus expelled were left to drift on the high seas before reaching other countries and areas in South-East Asia, while countless others perished by drowning. This is the tragedy created by the Vietnamese authorities for Vietnamese refugees, on which the world is now focusing its attention. At the same time, with the expansion of Kampuchean territories occupied by Vietnamese aggression forces, large numbers of innocent Kampuchean civilians have fled to Thailand. Nearly 400,000 Kampuchean refugees have left their homes and live in exile in areas near the Kampuchean-Thai border. Confronted by these hard facts, all the attempts made by the representative of Viet Nam to explain away the criminal acts of his Government are futile. The fact that the Vietnamese authorities have taken irresponsible positions against its citizens, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international justice, is there for all to see, has evoked universal condemnation and cannot be denied.

We believe that, in order to achieve permanent settlement of the question of Indo-Chinese refugees, the international community must compel the Vietnamese authorities to implement the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its various sessions since 1979, cease its aggression against Kampuchea, withdraw its aggression forces from Kampuchea, and abandon its hegemonistic policies in Indo-China. Only this will make it possible for the people of Kampuchea to return to their homes and for Vietnamese citizens of different ethnic origins to live in peace and happiness, and only this can prevent new waves of refugees.

I request Your Excellency to have this letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees".

(Signed) LING Qing
Permanent Representative
of the People's Republic
of China to the United Nations
