



Photographs and commentary by Howard Davies

No place like home

HOWARD DAVIES HAS BEEN PHOTOGRAPHING REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE SINCE 1987, COVERING MOST OF THE MAJOR REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA, ASIA, MEXICO AND THE MIDDLE EAST. HE WORKS PRIMARILY FOR AID AGENCIES, AND HIS PHOTOGRAPHS HAVE APPEARED WIDELY IN BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. AN EXHIBITION OF HIS REFUGEE PHOTOGRAPHS, "HOME AND AWAY: IMAGES OF A WORLD IN EXILE", IS TOURING BRITAIN AND EUROPE.

"My interest in refugees began with a photo documentary I undertook in 1987 looking at the experience of Vietnamese refugees living in the UK which led me to the camps in Hong Kong. Since then I have photographed refugees in over 13 countries. In Somalia and Afghanistan I looked at the causes that force refugees to leave their homes."



▲ Tamil children, just returned from refugee camps in India, gather at a reception centre for returnees in northern Sri Lanka, 1995



Croatia has taken tens of thousands of refugees from the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This group of Muslims found sanctuary in a disused train in a railway siding at Cakovec in Croatia, 1992



▲ A Somali child displaced by the civil war and famine drinks clean water from a tank provided by an aid agency, 1993

"I feel strongly that Western countries should be more tolerant of the needs of asylum seekers who are increasingly being treated with suspicion. Most refugees find sanctuary in poorer developing countries where, despite enormous existing needs, they are generally made welcome. For me there is a bitter irony here, as many of the arms, like landmines, which fuel the civil wars causing so many refugees to flee are supplied by the wealthier countries."



▲ A Cambodian child born in a refugee camp on the Thai border on his first day back in his homeland at a reception centre near Phnom Penh, 1992



A community centre has been set up by the Turkish Kurd community in north London where asylum seekers receive advice and support. 1990

“The majority of the world’s refugees are women and children, many of whom have been displaced several times over. I am often overwhelmed by their resilience and extraordinary dignity in the face of terrible adversity, and I seek to reflect this in my photographs. I have also been deeply moved in emergencies, such as the Rwanda crisis, by the compassion of the national and international aid workers who are too rarely acknowledged for their dedication.”

A Guatemalan family in El Porvenir refugee camp in Mexico
 ▼ rises at dawn to prepare food for the day. 1990



▲ Refugees fleeing the carnage of Rwanda wait by a sign welcoming visitors to their country at the Ruzizi bridge crossing to Zaire. 1994