Church condemns oppressive regimes

The Church in Africa has strongly condemned the tendency by African governments to use security forces to oppress the people.

A meeting of refugee workers in churches held in Nairobi recently noted that the millions of refugees on the continent were the product of oppressive regimes. Africa is "housing" an estimated five million refugees, representing half of the entire number in the world.

Some reports from the Horn of Africa presented at the meeting noted with concern the rising number of refugees in the area, particularly in Ethiopia and the Sudan.

"As we are talking here now," a church official from the Horn of Africa observed, "the Sudanese and Ethiopian refugees are hurriedly crossing their borders in their thousands. They yearn for the churches' humanitarian help."

Delegates to the meeting, organised by the Refugee Projects Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), recommended that the AACC initiate special programmes to assist the refugees.

The AACC does not have direct refugee programmes in the region, which comprises of the Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia. Most of the refugee programmes are handled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other church and secular agencies.

Because of the rising number of refugees, the UNHCR has already made an appeal for about $94 million "to feed, shelter and avail medical care to the suffering millions of people in the region, including the Central Africa Republic."

An official of the UNHCR office in Nairobi told the APS that when it was initiating in November last year the appeal was for $13 million, then it moved to $27 million and today it stands at $94 million. "This clearly shows how serious the refugees problems is becoming in the region."

KT. 10-3-85