

GUIDELINES FOR RAPID ASSESSMENTRefugee and Displaced Populations**Introduction**

Refugees, who have left their country of origin and crossed into a neighbouring country (termed the "host" country), may either move as a large group over a short period of time or else move in small groups at a time over a period of months or years. Large numbers (sometimes hundreds of thousands) arriving abruptly in the host country create a health emergency. An assessment is usually done in response to an urgent call for help from local administrative or military officials in a border region.

Refugees may be found in the following situations:

- scattered in small groups beside a long stretch of border, in many instances living with local villagers who may be of the same ethnic group as the refugees or even relatives;
- massed in a relatively well-defined area near the border;
- located in transit camps organized by local officials not far from the border; or
- in some cases, refugees may have fled by boat and arrived in small groups scattered along the coast of the host country.

Internally displaced populations may have moved en masse to a defined area in a neighbouring region after a natural disaster or, more commonly, be scattered widely among the local population, having fled in small groups over a period of time, especially if fleeing armed conflict. Large concentrations may be found in poor, peripheral, and under-serviced sections of large cities.