

# Advancing Foe Drove 250,000 From Homes

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 20—The fighting in South Vietnam in the last three weeks has driven more than 250,000 people from their homes, American and South Vietnamese officials said today.

In addition, at least 500 civilians have been killed and 1,000 wounded, a high-ranking South Vietnamese official said.

Reports from the field concerning civilian losses have been slow in reaching Saigon.

Not since the Tet offensive of 1968 have so many civilians been displaced, wounded or killed. The greatest number of refugees—150,000—have come from Quangtri, the northernmost province, abutting the de-

militarized zone. It was there that the North Vietnamese began their offensive with heavy shelling at noon on March 30.

It is estimated that 90,000 people are now living in churches, pagodas and schools in Hue, the capital of Thua-thien, the province south of Quangtri.

Yesterday American and South Vietnamese officials began airlifting 2,000 Bru hill tribesmen from refugee camps in Hue to new home sites on the central plateau east of the highlands capital of Ban-methuot. They had already agreed to participate in the Government's resettlement program and were expecting to go to the highlands in mid-April.

The Government has promised to give each family several acres of land and to help them build new homes.

Dr. Phan Quang Dan, who is directing Government aid to civilian war victims, said that in all, 10,000 refugees in Hue had accepted a Government offer of resettlement farther south.

## Some Are Going Back

Most refugees hope to return eventually to their homes as soon as it is safe. Some people have learned that the war has passed their communities and they have started trickling back.

A series of relatively unpublicized attacks in the last week, in Quangngai and Binh-dinh Provinces, half-way up the coast, have created the second largest concentration of refugees—45,000 is the estimate. The North Vietnamese have burned about 20 villages in the two provinces, according to Dr. Dan.

Dr. Dan said that most of the civilian casualties have occurred in Binhlong Province, northwest of Saigon, where the North Vietnamese have been trying for several days to take Anloc. There are 15,000 known refugees in Binhlong but, an American said, "I'd be very surprised if there weren't more like 30,000."

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