

Ghana



Main objectives

- Support the Government of the Republic of Ghana (Ghana) to maintain a positive international protection regime.
- Work with the Government and build effective partnerships with other stakeholders to protect and assist refugees in Ghana.
- Facilitate the repatriation of Liberian refugees; in general, seek durable solutions for refugees through the coordinated use of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement.
- Develop and apply advocacy and related initiatives to safeguard the rights of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

Planning figures

Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
Liberia (refugees)	40,315	17,121
Togo (asylum-seekers)	3,050	2,042
Togo (refugees)	2,339	4,209
Other asylum-seekers	2,050	2,237
Other refugees	390	1,567
Total	48,144	27,176

Total requirements: USD 8,080,179

Working environment

Recent developments

During the past two years, armed conflict in Liberia and the western zones of Côte d'Ivoire has caused large numbers of Liberian refugees to flee to Ghana. The refugee population has risen from 3,000 (predominantly Sierra Leoneans and Togolese) to 48,000 at the time of writing. These new influxes have placed enormous pressures on limited infrastructure and resources available to refugees, particularly in Buduburam Settlement, located some 30 kms from the capital, Accra. As well as adopting a generous asylum policy towards these refugees, Ghana has remained at the forefront of regional and international initiatives to find political solutions to the crises in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, both of which have threatened stability in the subregion.

Ghana has exemplified a number of objectives outlined in the Global Consultations and the Agenda for Protection, having ratified all the relevant refugee conventions, enacted national refugee law, and established a body for the determination of asylum claims. The refugee protection regime has been substantially reinvigorated by new procedures for refugee status determination and other protection activities, at both UNHCR and the re-established Ghana Refugee Board (GRB). UNHCR has collaborated with the GRB to initiate structured refugee eligibility work and has conducted a range of training activities for Government officials. Nevertheless, vital support from UNHCR is still needed, particularly with regard to fully developing the key objective of attaining effective asylum procedures.

Constraints

By mid-2002, basic facilities in Buduburam Refugee Settlement, located in the Central Region and housing some 42,466 Liberians, had fallen to a level far below accepted international standards – due to the pressures exerted by a huge increase in population. Efforts to remedy this situation are complicated by the fact that the population is rather atypical. It is composed of a large number

of refugees who have been repeatedly displaced, and are thus more likely to be seriously traumatized, presenting a complex spectrum of special needs. These difficulties are further aggravated by problems related to infrastructure, mainly due to the non-availability of major services during the several recent years when UNHCR had no assistance programme for refugees in Ghana.

Strategy

UNHCR's strategy for 2005 is set out in a document entitled 'Strategic Directions for the Ghana Refugee Programme 2004-2005', which was drawn up in partnership with the Government, implementing partners, donors and refugees. This strategy fully incorporates all of the Organization's policy priorities and is built around UNHCR's Strategic Objectives: 2005, the Agenda for Protection, the strategic directions for UNHCR's operations in Africa and the UN Millennium Development Goals. A comprehensive approach to appropriate protection interventions and durable solutions for refugees will include voluntary repatriation to Liberia, as well as resettlement and local integration opportunities. At the same time, there are a number of other areas where the volatile political and security environment within the subregion still calls for continuous contingency planning and emergency preparedness. Particular emphasis is being placed on improving protection and assistance standards; working towards sustainability of self-reliance initiatives, including host communities; empowering refugee communities; and gender equality. A structured and significant phase-down of programme activities – to be jointly designed and agreed with the Government and other partners – is anticipated for 2006-2007.

Protection and solutions

UNHCR continues to place considerable emphasis on strengthening the protection regime in the country, through better implementation of the asylum law and furthering the goals of the Agenda for Protection. Key objectives for 2005 include the strengthening of asylum procedures; ensuring better and continuous registration and documentation of



A Togolese refugee boy. UNHCR / L. Taylor

refugees and asylum-seekers; improving the physical safety of refugees; empowering the refugees to meet their own protection needs; and meeting the special protection needs of refugee women and children.

UNHCR has empowered the refugee communities to meet their own physical protection needs through Neighbourhood Watch Team arrangements, working in close cooperation with the police service. The Office has placed considerable emphasis on issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among refugees to address the

special protection needs of refugee women and children. An experienced local NGO has been engaged to provide counselling and assistance to SGBV survivors, and conduct campaigns to raise awareness and break the cycle of violence against refugee children and women. Legal, medical, material and psychosocial support is extended to survivors of violence and their families.

With the prospects for peace in Liberia progressing, UNHCR anticipates that up to 20,000 refugees may choose to return from the Republic of Ghana in 2005. Many of these Liberians have experienced multiple displacements in the past and it is anticipated that continued assistance to Liberian refugees in Buduburam settlement will remain necessary throughout 2005 in order to meet minimal standards of assistance in the critical sectors of health, education, sanitation and security.

Overall, a comprehensive approach to appropriate protection and durable solutions for refugees will include resettlement and local integration opportunities.

At the beginning of 2004, the urban-based population was over 4,000, comprising individuals and families from Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Togo. They have varying protection needs due to their political affiliations, past claims of persecution, family and backgrounds. The group includes refugees from settlements who come to Accra pending voluntary repatriation or resettlement, vulnerable individuals with special medical needs, as well as refugees who have attained some level of self-sufficiency in the urban areas but require protection interventions. Some are accommodated and assisted in the transit centre in Accra.

Assistance

While a good number of refugee families have achieved a reasonable level of self-sufficiency, many have not been able to rebuild their lives. Consequently, the strategy has been directed towards community support, rather than a resumption of care and maintenance. At the same time, the many special needs of the population are increasingly being addressed through targeted protection and assistance interventions. Furthermore, emphasis is being placed on improving protection and assistance standards across the board, and working towards the sustainability of initiatives, self-reliance, empowerment of refugee communities (with an inclusive approach to host communities) and gender equality. A comprehensive registration and documentation exercise has helped to ascertain the numbers of refugees in the country and to provide detailed information on special needs. This information was used to enhance planning and implementation of the refugee protection and assistance programme.

Since the resumption of community-based assistance in Buduburam Refugee Settlement in 2002, UNHCR has invested considerable efforts in raising standards, in particular in the areas of health, education, water, sanitation and security. It is anticipated that the largest part of the infrastructural input required will be completed during 2004. However, some will still have to be carried out in 2005. In anticipation of substantial voluntary repatriation movements in 2005 and 2006, efforts will be intensified to help prepare refugees for a successful life in their home country, including empowerment and skills training, particularly for women and youth. Emphasis will be placed on quality primary-school education for children. A programme of vocational training introduced in 2004 will be expanded to develop skills of refugees in preparation for repatriation to Liberia, resettlement in a third country, or continuation of integration into local society in Ghana. Refugees will receive training in information technology, masonry, carpentry/joinery and road construction, which will be particularly relevant for those opting for voluntary repatriation to Liberia, where massive reconstruction is anticipated. Survivors of SGBV will benefit from protection services, and relevant preventive measures will continue.

Krisan Settlement, located in the Western Region, about 300 km from Accra, houses more than 2,000 refugees of mixed origin (including nationals of Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Togo). It is relatively isolated and conditions do not greatly favour self-sustaining activities, such as agriculture. Efforts will continue to identify durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation for those who choose to return to their countries, and resettlement in some cases. In the meantime, owing to the poor prevailing conditions, food rations will be provided on a monthly basis, as well as community-based assistance, in particular in the sectors of health, sanitation and education. A vocational training programme will aim at increasing the skills of the refugees and help to equip them for self-reliance. The refugee population will be supported and empowered to answer to a range of protection needs, with particular attention to priority categories of beneficiaries including survivors of violence, refugee women, children, older persons, people living with HIV/AIDS and refugees with disabilities.

In 2005, UNHCR will provide support to refugees who find themselves in urban areas or cannot live in the settlements. In 2004, there was a marked increase in the numbers of Sudanese in particular and it is estimated that the assisted urban population will rise to 6,000 in 2005.

Desired impact

The programme is designed to facilitate the most appropriate durable solutions for refugees, increasing their self-reliance wherever possible. Assistance to refugee populations is based on a community approach. A significant consolidation of operations in the camps is anticipated, in particular for 2006 and 2007, through comprehensive durable solutions and capacity-building efforts. It is assumed that the situation in Liberia will prove conducive to the voluntary repatriation of a substantial proportion of the population and that subregional developments will serve to preclude population flows into Ghana. However, to achieve its goals, UNHCR will have to adopt a phased approach, and a temporary increase in resources will be required for 2005.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

The UNHCR Representation in Ghana, based in Accra, is responsible for all aspects of the operation.

Coordination

Active partnerships are maintained with a range of other UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, UNIDO, FAO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, WHO, UNV, UNIC, IMF), IOM, the World Bank, NGOs in Ghana and abroad as well as the Government of Ghana at the national, regional and local levels. Collaboration is furthermore envisaged with ILO and HABITAT.

In 2005, capacity-building efforts will concentrate on the Ghana Refugee Board and local NGOs, with the aim of enhancing their ability to provide protection and other services.

UNHCR's programmes are planned and carried out in close cooperation with the Government of Ghana, both through the Ghana Refugee Board and various line ministries. UNHCR participates fully in UN inter-agency fora, including the Task Force on Contingency Planning and the fora connected with the Millennium Development Goals. UNHCR and WFP will continue to implement a joint feeding programme targeting the most vulnerable people living in Buduburam Refugee Settlement.

Offices
Accra

Partners
Government agencies Ghana Refugee Board, Ministry of the Interior
NGOs Assemblies of God Relief and Development Service Christian Council of Ghana Ghana Red Cross Society National Catholic Secretariat Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment
Others UNV WFP

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,200,344
Community services	265,045
Crop production	44,500
Domestic needs	100,156
Education	437,177
Food	239,924
Health	250,592
Income generation	95,421
Legal assistance	838,326
Operational support (to agencies)	344,178
Sanitation	156,750
Shelter/other infrastructure	165,795
Transport/logistics	1,342,894
Water (non-agricultural)	2,841
Total operations	5,483,943
Programme support	2,596,236
Total	8,080,179