

Liberia



Main objectives

Support the Government of Liberia to create a positive international protection regime to safeguard the rights of Ivorian, Sierra Leonean and urban refugees currently in the country; seek durable solutions for refugees through the coordinated use of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement; in particular, pursue local integration options for Sierra Leonean refugees wishing to remain in Liberia; continue to provide assistance to Ivorian refugees; conduct contingency planning and establish measures to respond to new refugee influxes from Côte d'Ivoire, where the political and security situation remains tense and volatile; facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees who express the desire to return to areas with acceptable security and infrastructure; promote participatory community development approaches and ensure linkages between the four processes of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction; implement community-based reintegration

activities in the main areas of return and strengthen collaboration on medium- to long-term reconstruction and recovery programmes; support the return and reintegration of IDPs and ex-combatants.

Impact

- UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 16,000 Liberians during the last quarter of 2004. The Office also received over 56,000 spontaneous returnees, accommodated 20,000 of them in IDP camps (as most counties had not been declared safe) and assisted those who could to return to their places of origin.
- The Office was among the leading agencies providing assistance to IDPs in camps around Monrovia and facilitating their return to counties of origin under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator.
- UNHCR resumed assistance to Ivorian refugees in the eastern counties of Liberia. Field monitoring activities revealed that over 11,700 were residing

in border villages, mostly among local communities. UNHCR mounted a response operation to meet the needs of some 10,000 Ivorian refugees who fled into eastern Liberia in November amid fears of imminent conflict in western Côte d'Ivoire.

- UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of some 13,400 Sierra Leonean refugees, mostly by road. Camp-based assistance to this population ended on 30 June 2004.

Working environment

The context

The National Transitional Government of Liberia has remained committed to the implementation of the

Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003. Central government control was gradually re-established outside Monrovia. Previous factional disputes soon died down in a society hungry for peace and reconciliation. A number of civil administrators and law enforcement officials were appointed to provide local government. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Civilian Police and the Liberia National Police worked together to re-establish the rule of law. The courts resumed their work in some parts of the country. A new Electoral Reform Law was passed in December 2004. It sets out the requirements for the elections scheduled for October 2005 (including voter registration procedures and location of polling stations). Practical measures discussed by UNMIL, UNHCR and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) will facilitate the participation of returnees and IDPs in the electoral process.

Persons of concern

Main origin / Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
IDPs	490,000	-	-	-
Guinea (returnees)	22,500	1,389	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire (returnees)	16,800	47	-	-
Third Country Nationals	15,000	15,000	-	-
Sierra Leone (returnees)	14,775	12,200		
Côte d'Ivoire (refugees)	12,400	620	34	34
Sierra Leone (refugees)	2,700	2,700	46	46
Ghana (returnees)	1,900	1,377	-	-
Nigeria (returnees)	903	903	-	-

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual and Supplementary programme budgets

	Revised budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	5,125,991	3,335,486	1,834,299	5,169,785	5,099,149
SB³	13,243,927	7,875,741	3,241,860	11,117,601	11,117,601
Total	18,369,918	11,211,227	5,076,159	16,287,386	16,216,750

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The supplementary programme figures apply to the Supplementary Appeal for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Liberian refugees. The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

Note: The supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

As confidence in the peace process grew, thousands of displaced Liberians began to return home from IDP camps and from neighbouring countries. The deployment of the 15,000-strong UNMIL peace-keeping force was a major inducement in this regard and enabled humanitarian agencies to work in areas that had been unsafe for years. UNMIL completed the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants in October 2004. UNHCR re-established its presence in six field locations to provide coverage for all 15 counties.

Tension in Côte d'Ivoire continued throughout the year. In November, fears of an outbreak of fighting precipitated an influx of some 10,000 Ivorian refugees into eastern Liberia. Most preferred to remain in border villages and many have since returned home. Altogether, there are more than 15,000 Ivorian refugees in Liberia, mostly in border villages with the local population. About 700 are in camps in four counties bordering with Côte d'Ivoire.

Constraints

The security risks of the recent past have now largely dissipated. However, the return of humanitarian agencies to the interior of the country revealed impoverished communities in acute need of water, sanitation, health and education services. Poor governance and war have torn apart the institutional, economic and social fabric of every community. There is little, if any, capacity to receive returning refugees and IDPs, who constitute up to five per cent of the total population.

Political and social tensions in Côte d'Ivoire continue to cast a long shadow over the hopes of continued recovery in Liberia. Of particular concern are recent reports by UN peacekeeping missions about recruitment of former combatants from Liberia to fight for armed groups in Côte d'Ivoire. As Liberia shares a largely porous 525-kilometre border with Côte d'Ivoire, militia groups and arms could easily move back and forth, spreading anarchy.



Liberia: Camps for new arrivals from Côte d'Ivoire were constructed near Butuo entry point. *UNHCR/F. Fontanini*

Funding

Of the total financial requirements of USD 46 million, USD 39 million comprised the Supplementary Programme (SB) for the repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees and IDPs. The initial donor response was lukewarm with the exception of a single contribution of some 30 per cent of the SB requirements. Nevertheless, by the end of the third quarter, sufficient funds had been received to enable the Office to mobilize staff, equipment and relief items, re-establish its field presence, launch the facilitated voluntary repatriation operation and respond to the needs of spontaneous returnees and IDPs.

Throughout the year, sufficient resources were available under the Annual Programme to respond to the needs of Ivorian and Sierra Leonean refugees, including the sudden influx from Côte d'Ivoire in November.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

Tripartite agreements were signed by the National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNHCR and Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone. These agreements provide the legal framework for the repatriation of Liberian refugees and spell out the rights and obligations of all parties. The new Electoral Reform Bill carefully addresses the special needs of returnees and IDPs.

UNHCR continued to seek appropriate durable solutions on a case-by-case basis for the 72 registered urban refugees of various nationalities residing in and around Monrovia.

Mass information campaigns targeted Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia as well as Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries to inform them about political developments in their respective countries as well as the socio-economic and security situation in their areas of origin. With the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia officially at an end, local integration is being considered for those refugees who chose to stay in Liberia. In August, over 2,700 Sierra Leonean refugees were interviewed and re-registered; nearly half of them are expected to integrate locally. A project

will be set up to implement the integration process, in accordance with Liberian domestic laws and the provision under the ECOWAS Treaty for "community citizens". UNHCR pursued resettlement opportunities for nine Sierra Leonean refugees and two medical cases were approved for resettlement to third countries.

In pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals on gender equality, endeavours were made to mainstream gender concerns into project identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with UNIFEM. A specialized NGO was engaged to conduct capacity building, including assessing learning needs, gender development, leadership training, rural appraisal and adult literacy activities, targeting UNHCR and implementing partner staff, community-based organizations, local NGOs and education authorities. UNHCR supported the Ministry of Gender to set up offices for gender coordinators in five counties in collaboration with UNIFEM.

An important focus of UNHCR's work in Liberia is to support returnees by increasing opportunities for rural communities to direct the processes of restoring basic social services, rural infrastructure and their own capacity for collective action through village-based community empowerment programmes (CEPs). UNHCR is promoting community empowerment, along with 4Rs partners, both as an adjunct to its returnee reintegration programme and as part of its broader exit strategy. CEPs promise a means for UNHCR to protect and empower persons of concern in areas of return.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Thirty organizations benefited from SGBV training workshops. UNHCR organized 50 awareness sessions in Ivorian and Sierra Leonean refugee camps. Counselling services were provided to survivors of violence; material and other social support was provided on the basis of assessed needs. All reported cases of violence were referred, with appropriate medical intervention. Monitoring and follow-up services ensured adequate integration of survivors. Meanwhile, over 740 CEPs each costing up to USD 5,000 were implemented, primarily to rehabilitate and establish basic services in agriculture, education, health (including HIV/AIDS sessions), water, sanitation and livelihoods focusing on agriculture,

income generation, skills training, infrastructure peace building, women's empowerment and other advocacy programmes aimed at consolidating peace (including SGBV prevention and response workshops as well as youth programmes).

To enhance advocacy on environmental protection two demonstration centres were established (in Nimba and Montserrado). They provided training, production of energy-saving stoves, tree nursery management and the use of environmentally-friendly construction technology. Environmental education programmes were organised in 15 schools in Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba. Workshops were held jointly with UNHCR field staff, partners and community-based organizations.

Crop production: Agricultural tools and seeds were distributed to over 800 Ivorian refugee families and 20 vulnerable host community families in the south-east of Liberia. Some 7,500 returnee and IDP farming families received agricultural tools and seeds, while FAO provided technical support in five counties.

Domestic needs/Household support: Assorted relief items were distributed to 11,500 Ivorian refugees and over 100,000 IDPs in camps around Monrovia. The 16,000 returnees who were assisted to repatriate voluntarily with UNHCR's assistance received repatriation packages containing basic domestic and personal items. The items included: blankets, mosquito nets, lanterns, plastic mats, plastic sheets, buckets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, soap and travel bags. Sanitary supplies were distributed to over 31,000 refugee and returnee girls and women aged 13-49 (5,000 refugees and 26,000 returnees and IDPs).

Education: Although camp-based education programmes for Sierra Leonean refugees were discontinued in June 2004, 14 Sierra Leonean university students benefited from scholarships. Where camps were in close proximity, Sierra Leonean refugee children attended classes together with IDPs. Ivorian children received schooling in French in camps in Nimba and Maryland. In Grand Gedeh a school was constructed for Ivorian refugees and the host community. Community peace education workshops were attended by 1,600 refugees. Peace education lessons were given to over 4,500 school-age children, almost half of whom were female. 119 primary schools were rehabilitated in the main counties of return, including installation of water and sanitation facilities and provision of

furniture. UNHCR participated in education coordination meetings and provided support for the transport of teachers, education officers and educational materials to rural areas.

Food: Eighty Ivorian refugee children benefited from cooked food in Saclepea camp, where WFP provided monthly food rations for about 600 Ivorian refugees. Some 5,000 Ivorian refugees who arrived in November were provided with one-time food rations in collaboration with WFP. All Liberians who returned with UNHCR's assistance were provided with hot meals during transit.

Health/Nutrition: Sierra Leonean refugees received individual health support after assistance programmes were halted in June. Some 230 out of 500 pre-war clinics and health centres were rehabilitated. A number of health centres and clinics and related water points, latrines and incinerators were rehabilitated through community participation in six counties with high returns of IDPs and refugees. Returnees were screened in transit centres; the sick received medical treatment and children were vaccinated. Capacity-building workshops were conducted for health-care providers. Ten ambulances were used for referral of refugee, returnee and IDP patients. Five HIV/AIDS awareness workshops were held; several other public awareness campaigns were carried out; information, education and communication materials were distributed. Condom use was promoted and condoms were distributed.

Income generation: Self-reliance grants and business management training were provided to 16 heads of families, mainly urban refugee women, to start small businesses (of which more than half turned a profit). Rural income-generation activities were mainly aimed at women; training was provided in soap making, baking, tie-and-dye fabric production and dressmaking. A micro grants scheme was initiated in Lofa involving 100 women. Agricultural activities focused primarily on vegetable production.

Legal assistance: Training was conducted for immigration and security officials during the influx of Ivorian refugees. Urban refugees were assisted to obtain resident permits, and legal support was provided for a refugee woman who was arbitrarily arrested. Returnee monitoring activities were conducted in all counties through implementing and operational partners, including registration and enumeration of beneficiaries.

Operational support (to agencies): Major investments in infrastructure enabled offices to become operational. This included the purchase of generators and water pumps as well as computer, satellite and telecommunications equipment. UNHCR covered the administrative costs of implementing partners, including office rental, utilities, salaries, equipment and office supplies.

Sanitation: Some 8,500 people benefited directly from the construction and rehabilitation of over 400 latrines and 140 bath facilities.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: 12 transit centres/way-stations were constructed; 90 kilometres of road and 21 bridges/culverts were repaired. Some 23 ha of land were prepared through, sloping, levelling and brushing activities for construction of the refugee/IDP camp facilities inclusive of shelters, water distribution system, latrines, baths, health centres, warehouses, camp streets, truck/ car parking lots, schools, community centres, UNHCR's and implementing partners' offices. Support was provided for the construction of over 450 shelters benefiting some 2,200 refugees, returnees and IDPs in Nimba, Lofa and Maryland. About 5,000 shelters for IDPs were constructed in the camps in Montserrado County.

Transport/Logistics: Vehicles were purchased to support operations to transport beneficiaries and relief items. Vehicle maintenance workshops were set up. Warehouses were established in different field locations. Relief items were delivered from Monrovia to field locations and transit centres. Transport was provided to operational and implementing partners, particularly in the context of the inter-agency collaborative response to the needs of IDPs.

Water: Some 250 wells were constructed, benefiting some 72,600 refugees, IDPs and local communities (roughly 300 persons per water point). Community outreach programmes focussed on management of water facilities and resources.

Organization and implementation

Management

In 2004, the branch office in Monrovia coordinated operations and provided support to the field offices.

A field unit based in Monrovia managed operations in Grand Bassa, Montserrado and Margibi counties. Offices were re-established in Gbarnga (Bong county), Harper (Maryland, River Gee, Grand Kru counties), Saclepea (Nimba, Rivercess), Tubmanburg (Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount), Voinjama (Lofa), and Zwedru (Grand Gedeh, Sinoe).

Working with others

UNHCR's programme in Liberia was implemented through 31 partners: one governmental, 28 non-governmental, and two others. Of the NGOs, 18 were international and 10 were national. Most of the international partners were engaged in similar programmes in the subregion.

UNHCR collaborated closely with the LRRRC, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. Liaison with the National AIDS Control Programme was maintained and refugee needs highlighted in the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. UNHCR was an active member of the UN Country Team and the "4Rs" Core Group comprising Government, UN agencies and donors. There was close collaboration with ICRC, UNICEF and other protection agencies working with children and SGBV issues. Common approaches to mapping and prioritization of basic services were developed in collaboration with UNICEF. WFP played its traditional role of distributing food rations for refugees, returnees and IDPs. UNHCR and FAO signed an agreement for cooperation in the agriculture sector and with UNDP for joint implementation of community development activities. An Exchange of Letters was signed with IOM for the transportation of IDPs from the camps. UNHCR and UNDP signed a Memorandum of Understanding which provides a framework for collaboration on the 4Rs approach and integrated planning in the recovery process.

Overall assessment

Since most counties were not declared safe for return until mid-year, many activities did not start until the third quarter. Initial efforts were centred on helping to stabilize the IDP population, which was emerging from severe conflict and trauma, as well as protecting and assisting spontaneous returnees (mostly from Sierra Leone) who could not return to

their places of origin for security reasons. As access to the interior was gained, offices were rapidly established, despite less than ideal living conditions, and the infrastructure put in place to receive returning populations. A healthy partnership was developed with the LRRRC, which serves as the interface between the Liberian Government and UNHCR. At the inter-agency level, institutional collaboration on the "4Rs" process was in evidence from the outset, with the signature of various agreements to help communities to rebuild.

Returnee monitoring presented particular challenges. A large proportion of returnees are going back to border areas. The challenge is to identify those communities to which people are returning on their own and then to respond to the collective needs of returnees and receiving communities. By contrast, persons who are assisted to repatriate by UNHCR are a clearly identified group – their destinations are known and they are provided with a safety net of non-food items and WFP food rations upon return. The overall health and nutritional status of camp-based refugees improved as evidenced by acceptable morbidity and mortality figures (see standards and indicators tables in the Annexes). Health care coverage improved nationally. Health committees were established and strengthened in most of the priority counties of return through inter-agency efforts. Although no national nutritional surveys were conducted, limited surveys in Nimba and Lofa Counties showed a decrease in malnutrition from 25 per cent in 2001 to 19.2 per cent in Nimba border villages with Côte d'Ivoire (UNICEF/UNHCR) and 2.6 per cent in Lofa (IMC/ACF) in 2004. Liberian refugees and IDPs attached great importance to the local availability of health facilities when deciding whether to return.

Despite the precarious socio-economic environment, Liberians generally believe in their new-found peace, and the international community's demonstrable commitment to it. A modest investment by aid agencies is already transforming the lives of a population that was disenfranchised for decades. However, a massive effort is needed at the humanitarian, political and military levels to ensure that the peace process holds and progressively to rebuild communities that have endured the ravages of multiple cycles of conflict and wanton violence.

Offices

Monrovia

Gbarnga
Harper
Saclepea
Tubmanburg
Voinjama
Zwedru

Partners

Government agencies

Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission

NGOs

Africa Humanitarian Action
African Concern International
American Refugee Committee
CARITAS Cape Palmas
Community Action Program
Community Empowerment and Skills Development
Community Empowerment Program
Concerned Christian Community
Danish Refugee Council
Development Education Network Liberia
Environmental Foundation for Africa
Hope International Mission in Liberia
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Liberia National Red Cross Society
Liberian Islamic Union for Reconstruction and Development
Liberians United to Serve Humanity
Lutheran World Federation/World Service
Medical Emergency Relief and Cooperative International
Medical Emergency Relief International
Norwegian Refugee Council
Peace Winds Japan
Save the Children Fund
Search for Common Ground
Women in Progress for Community Services
World Vision International
ZOA Refugee Care

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
FAO

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' project
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and Supplementary programme budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	735,323	5,149,983	5,885,306	0
Community services	114,538	0	114,538	79,346
Crop production	6,425	0	6,425	850
Domestic needs / household support	24,662	79,460	104,121	0
Education	126,290	0	126,290	158,878
Food	29,581	0	29,581	6,918
Health and nutrition	213,081	0	213,081	147,433
Income generation	19,626	0	19,626	6,730
Legal assistance	109,750	0	109,750	29,815
Operational support (to agencies)	514,126	585,148	1,099,274	158,238
Sanitation	57,668	0	57,668	29,070
Shelter and infrastructure	11,803	0	11,803	4,545
Transport and logistics	495,082	117,594	612,676	139,012
Water	30,548	0	30,548	34,928
Instalments with implementing partners	358,451	0	358,451	(795,764)
Sub-total operational activities	2,846,953	5,932,184	8,779,137	0
Programme support	2,252,196	5,185,417	7,437,613	0
Total disbursements	5,099,149	11,117,601	16,216,750	0
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	1,205,764	0	1,205,764	
Reporting received	(847,313)	0	(847,313)	
Balance	358,451	0	358,451	
Prior years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1 January				1,022,112
Reporting received				(795,764)
Refunded to UNHCR				(54,383)
Balance				171,965
Unliquidated obligations				
Outstanding 1 January				528,368
Disbursements				(408,075)
Cancellations				(120,293)
Outstanding 31 December				0