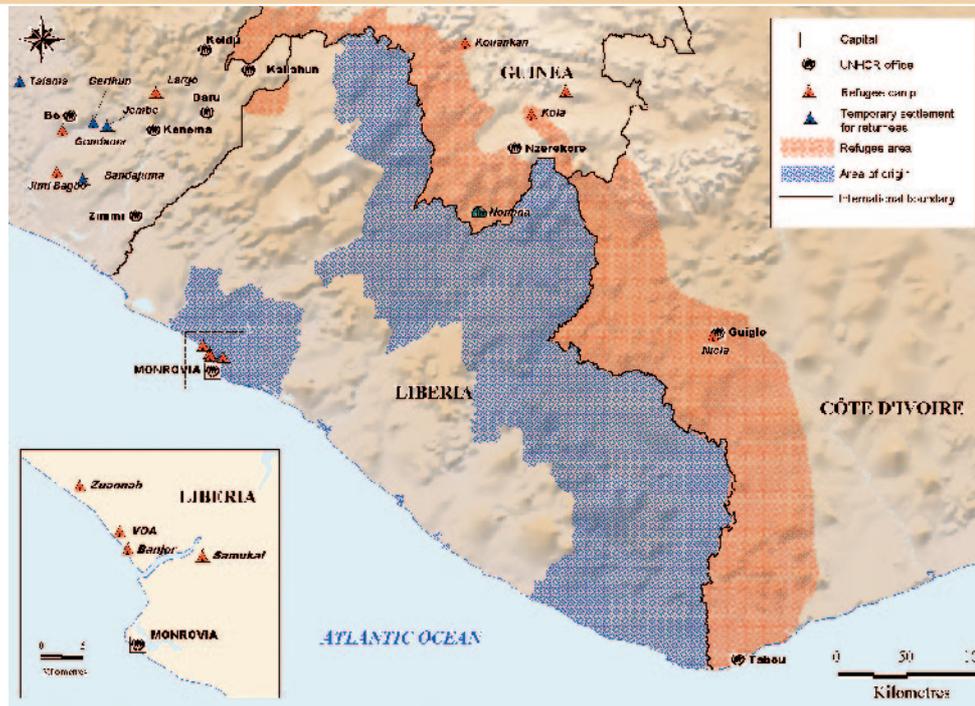


Liberia

Main Objectives

- Provide adequate protection and assistance to Sierra Leonean refugees as well as to internally displaced Liberians who live in and within the vicinity of the refugee camps, with particular emphasis on the welfare of the vulnerable.
- Promote the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees as conditions in many of their areas of origin have now improved.
- Continue to ensure the protection of urban refugees of various nationalities and provide them with assistance (healthcare, education and subsistence allowances) while pursuing durable solutions for them.
- Reinforce activities to increase refugees' awareness of HIV/AIDS and strengthen the prevention of, and response to sexual exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Prepare for a possible voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries, should the conditions in Liberia permit.



| Planning Figures | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Population | Jan. 2003 | Dec. 2003 |
| Sierra Leonean Refugees | 26,000 | 19,000 |
| Urban Refugees | 52 | 52 |
| Returns | 1,000 | 5,000 |
| Total | 27,052 | 24,052 |

Total Requirements: USD 7,297,662

of a national peace and reconciliation conference between the major political actors in Liberia is viewed as a significant initiative, which could serve as a step towards conflict resolution and peace.

However, the overall security situation in Liberia remains precarious with ongoing fighting between the Government forces and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). On 20 June 2002, five nurses (working for a UNHCR implementing partner) were abducted by dissidents during an attack on a UNHCR refugee camp, which also left four refugees dead and dislodged thousands of people in the area. Fortunately, the nurses saw an end to their ordeal after ten weeks of intense negotiations.

Working Environment

Recent Developments

The renewed dialogue among leaders of the Mano River sub-region has led to an improvement in relations between the three countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and has increased cross-border security. Also, the holding

Constraints

The main constraint faced by humanitarian actors in Liberia remains the prevailing state of insecurity, i.e. the effect of the ongoing armed conflicts on the society and the economy. Humanitarian agencies still have no access to several parts in the north and northwest of the country and no information is available on refugees and internally displaced persons trapped in these conflict zones.

Following the attack by dissidents in June 2002, UNHCR was forced to withdraw and close down the destroyed refugee camp in Sinje, Grand Cape Mount County. There are fears that the general and presidential elections set for October 2003 may not be held, which could lead to a further deterioration of the situation in the country.

Strategy

Despite the internal problems faced by the Government, Liberia continues to maintain an open door policy. Liberia presently hosts a large number of Sierra Leonean refugees and a small number of urban refugees of various nationalities.

Sierra Leonean Refugees: There are some 50,000 Sierra Leonean refugees currently in Liberia. Some 26,000 of them are assisted in Montserrado County in four UNHCR-sponsored refugee camps where all basic services are made available. These include: food, clothing, shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare and education. No detailed information is available regarding the remaining non-assisted refugees. They are scattered throughout the country in areas where insecurity has kept UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies from establishing a presence.

In 2003, working in collaboration with government counterparts as well as local and international NGOs, UNHCR will continue to ensure the physical safety of refugees in the camps. Refugee rights will be protected. In light of the recent allegations made about the sexual exploitation of refugee children in camps, systems established within the refugee communities to prevent and combat sexual exploitation will receive special attention and support. Monthly meetings will be organised on the harmful

effects of SGBV and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). At the same time psychological support and individual counselling will be offered to persons who have suffered from violence. Through the organisation of an estimated 15 workshops to be held during the course of the year, UNHCR will promote refugee law as well as human rights, children's rights and gender issues. The main participants will be government and NGO personnel. A standard of accountability clause will continue to be written into all sub-agreements signed with implementing partners. In addition, regular training will be conducted for staff within the government security apparatus to sensitise them on international humanitarian laws. Legal assistance and representation will be made available to refugees who may have no access to other forms of representation.

UNHCR, in co-operation with all humanitarian agencies, will continue to incorporate protection principles in the delivery of assistance to refugees and will build in concern for gender equality into all activities. With WFP, UNHCR will take measures to ensure that refugee women represent fifty per cent of the distributors of food and that they are also the immediate recipients of relief food. Generally, to further enhance the autonomy of the refugees, sustained efforts will be made to increase the role of the community by encouraging refugees to participate in all decisions taken regarding life in the camps. Refugee Committees will remain responsible for ensuring that wells are in good condition and that water at all water points in the camps is potable. Refugees will participate in the construction and maintenance of block latrines, bath houses and waste pits. To carry out these tasks effectively, refugees will continue to receive appropriate training. The necessary materials and tools will also be provided to the respective committees. Responsibility for the well-being of vulnerable groups will also increasingly be handed over to the community. Support groups will be established to assist the vulnerable in various tasks such as the construction and rehabilitation of their shelters as well as more generally to ensure that their daily needs are met. Vulnerable refugees will be the prime beneficiaries of the healthcare system. The existing healthcare structure will continue to take care of refugees and host communities alike. It will include the provision of mother and child care, reproductive health, outpatient services on a

24-hour basis, and daily immunization services. An additional important part of the health programme will be the control and prevention of transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The emphasis will be on the use of condoms distributed through the health services in the camps.

To allow refugees to become less dependant on humanitarian aid and better prepare them to start a new life in Sierra Leone should they choose to return, UNHCR will continue to support education projects. These will include primary and secondary education for all school-aged refugee children, as well as vocational and skills training for teenagers and adults. Unfortunately, because of the economic situation and the extremely high unemployment rate, the employment prospects for refugees in Liberia are negligible.

As in previous years, environmental issues will be considered at all stages of project planning and implementation through continued liaison with national environmental specialist agencies. To improve environment management, refugee households will be encouraged to use energy-saving stoves ('eco-stoves'). Refugees will receive training in the production and use of these stoves. Community-based plant nurseries will be developed and refugees will be able to transplant trees to the camps and the surrounding land. Finally, environmental protection will be incorporated – alongside agricultural production – into the curricula in refugee schools and skills training centres. The environmental education booklet produced by UNHCR and the Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) will be used in schools.

In early 2002, UNHCR started to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees who expressed the wish to return to Sierra Leone. By the end of September 2002, a total of 12,846 Sierra Leonean refugees had been repatriated with assistance from UNHCR. A meeting was held in Freetown to review the situation in the sub-region, to determine the feasibility of promoting the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees and to take stock of the Liberian refugee situation. The participants included staff from UNHCR's offices in the sub-region, members of Sierra Leone's National Committee for Social Affairs and Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as staff from UNAMSIL, and other UN agencies. Regarding Sierra Leonean

refugees, it was recommended that in view of the significant political and security improvements in Sierra Leone, the promotion phase of the repatriation from neighbouring countries should start immediately. This recommendation was taken up and UNHCR moved from the facilitation to the promotion of voluntary repatriation. In 2003, the Office will continue to promote this voluntary repatriation. Close cross-border co-ordination and information-sharing will be maintained with UNHCR's offices in Sierra Leone. In Liberia, UNHCR will organise the registration of refugees who choose to return. The Office will also monitor and facilitate the movements and provide a medical escort for all convoys.

Internally Displaced Liberians: As of October 2002, the number of IDPs is estimated to be 130,000. This figure includes some 31,000 IDPs who are residing in and around refugee camps. In 2002, UNHCR extended assistance to groups of IDPs living alongside Sierra Leonean refugees. In 2003, the Office plans to continue to provide them with the same limited assistance.

Urban Refugees: Urban refugees in Liberia reside in Monrovia and its surroundings. At present there are some 50 refugees, most of whom are from the Sudan. Pending the identification of durable solutions for them, this refugee population will be provided with basic education, medical care and subsistence allowances. Efforts will be made to seek opportunities for local settlement and the further development of income generation activities.

Returnees: Should the conditions in Liberia permit, UNHCR will prepare for a possible voluntary repatriation and reintegration of a limited number of Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries. In the meantime, the Office will maintain cross-border collaboration to monitor possible return movements.

Organisation and Implementation

Management Structure

UNHCR's operation in Liberia will be managed by 42 staff (nine international and 33 national). All activities will be co-ordinated from the office in Monrovia.



Refugees from Sierra Leone helped to construct the refugee camps in Vahun.
UNHCR / P. Stromberg

With the closure of the Regional Directorate for West and Central Africa, UNHCR in Liberia will report directly to the Africa Bureau at Headquarters. Information-sharing and regular consultations will characterise this interaction. The Bureau, through the Desk at headquarters, will provide, co-ordinate and channel the necessary technical guidance on policy and specialised issues.

UNHCR will pursue its work in close collaboration with the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), and the refugee community – while ensuring co-ordination through regular meetings with implementing partners. Co-ordination meetings will also be organised with agencies working in Montserrado at the camps. Roles and responsibilities in the delivery of protection and assistance will be further streamlined and defined. In 2003, UNHCR plans to work with the same ten implementing partners (four international and six national NGOs) as in 2002. UNHCR will work closely with WFP which supplies food to Sierra Leonean refugees. UNHCR also works with UNICEF under its accelerated learning programmes for refugee children. Collaboration with other UN agencies such as UNDP, WHO, FAO, and OCHA will be pursued at the project and sectoral levels.

Co-ordination

| Offices |
|----------|
| Monrovia |

| Partners |
|--|
| Government Agency |
| Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission |
| NGOs |
| Don Bosco Rehabilitation and Skills Training Programme |
| Family Empowerment Programme |
| International Rescue Committee |
| Liberia Islamic Union for Reconstruction and Development |
| Liberians United to Serve Humanity |
| Lutheran World Federation |
| Medical Emergency and Relief Co-operative |
| Save the Children Fund (UK) |
| Others |
| Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit |

| Budget (USD) | |
|--|------------------|
| Activities and Services | Annual Programme |
| Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination | 768,444 |
| Community Services | 243,120 |
| Crop Production | 56,910 |
| Domestic Needs | 335,950 |
| Education | 792,804 |
| Food | 95,909 |
| Forestry | 47,150 |
| Health | 355,890 |
| Income Generation | 56,000 |
| Legal Assistance | 260,800 |
| Livestock | 10,500 |
| Operational Support (to Agencies) | 911,420 |
| Sanitation | 74,960 |
| Shelter / Other Infrastructure | 357,050 |
| Transport / Logistics | 1,337,867 |
| Water | 46,270 |
| Total Operations | 5,751,044 |
| Programme Support | 1,546,618 |
| Total | 7,297,662 |