

## **UNHCR's Operations for the Sudan/Chad Situation Executive Committee 2005**

### **Part A: Main Developments**

- Three days after taking office in June 2005, the High Commissioner travelled to northern Uganda to spend World Refugee Day among Sudanese refugees. A month later he visited Khartoum, West Darfur, Abeche, N'djamena, south Sudan and Kenya which, as part of the Sudan Situation operational area, host the largest population displacement in Africa. If attempts at implementing solutions to Sudan's conflicts fail, instability will prevail. If they succeed, the international community will have contributed to the consolidation of peace in south Sudan and secured a resolution to the crisis in Darfur. The two processes are interlinked; their outcome will have regional implications.
- The tragic death of John Garang, President of South Sudan and First Vice President of the Republic of Sudan, has caused worry about the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that in January ended 21 years of civil war. The successor, Salva Kiir, has pledged to pursue his predecessor's policies and reaffirmed the return of refugees and displaced persons to the south as one of his top priorities. These aims need concerted support.
- The security situation in refugee-hosting areas of eastern Chad remains a serious concern. UNHCR has continued to evaluate the situation and is expanding an agreement with the Government to enhance security in and around refugee camps. The High Commissioner obtained agreement from the President and senior officials to relocate two camps along the border. Prompt and targeted economic development assistance to communities in eastern Chad is urgently required to reduce rising tensions between local residents and refugees.
- In recent months, sustained assistance and more effective protection interventions have contributed to stabilizing Darfur. However, human rights violations continue and have been overshadowed by interest in the formation of a Government of National Unity, the death of John Garang, the riots that ensued and the new South Sudan leadership. The international community needs to refocus attention on Darfur and maintain pressure on all parties to achieve an early peace agreement. Such a result would lead to the restoration of security, allowing for the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin.
- Timely contributions recently received enabled UNHCR to overcome two major funding hurdles that in July threatened to reduce or halt operational activity in south Sudan and West Darfur. Despite this support, UNHCR's requirements for the remainder of 2005 are only 43 per cent funded for south Sudan and 32 per cent for West Darfur.
- UNHCR is particularly concerned over the new influx of asylum-seekers from the Central African Republic (CAR) into southern Chad. Political turmoil, lack of security and increasing lawlessness in the northern part of the CAR are forcing people to flee.

### **Part B: Progress on Global Objectives and Agenda for Protection**

#### Strengthening the refugee protection framework: Strategic Goal 1 – AfP Goal 1

- A lasting solution for over 200,000 Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad remains the conclusion of a political settlement between the authorities in Khartoum and rebel groups. The resumption of sustained negotiations in Abuja is the best hope for a people whose displacement in Chad and Darfur is untenable. In the meantime, efforts to further widen the protection regime in West Darfur are being pursued in earnest. (Strategic Goal 1.5.1, 3.3; Agenda for Protection 4.4)

- UNHCR has expanded its protection and assistance activities in West Darfur with the opening of additional field offices in Zalengi, Kulbus and Mukjar. The Office is also coordinating the management of camps for displaced persons. This activity also allows UNHCR to assist agencies by intervening on protection issues, particularly those involving sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and unaccompanied minors. (SG3.3.1; AfP6.1.2)
- To assist the authorities in Sudan address issues of internal displacement in accordance with international principles, UNHCR advised, helped fund and participated in the implementation of a Government-led survey to sample the wishes of displaced persons in the north and east about return to the south. In view of displacement in other parts of the country, UNHCR contributed funding and offered training in capacity-building for the establishment of a National IDP Centre in Khartoum. (SG4.3.2; AfP3.2.5)
- In February, UNHCR fielded a team of 13 sectoral specialists to design and implement quick-impact, community-based reintegration projects to create or improve conditions for sustainable return and reintegration. The second phase of this approach was initiated in July with the fielding of a mission to update the 2004 Regional Logistics Plan for Repatriation to Sudan and raise the capacity of offices to manage return. The mission covered western Ekuatoria and refugee settlements in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the CAR. Safety, security and transport logistics, including return by air from the CAR and ten way-stations along returnee routes, were considered. A regional protection meeting also identified requirements for voluntary return and formulated draft tripartite agreements. The first organized returns are expected to take place in October from refugee camps in the CAR and DRC, followed by those from camps in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. (SG5.1; AfP5.1.2.3)
- UNHCR was asked by the Humanitarian Coordinator to play the key agency coordinating role on protection, return and reintegration of internally displaced persons going to greater Equatoria and Blue Nile State. UNHCR also contributed to UN efforts to develop guidelines for the safe return and reintegration of displaced persons to other areas of south Sudan. Standards have been harmonized for the protection of displaced persons on levels comparable to those for returning refugees. A common integrated approach is in place, allowing UN agencies, IOM and NGOs to provide the displaced with organised transport, protection and material assistance en route at various way-stations and returnee packages in areas of origin. Communities along routes and receiving returnees will also be assisted. (SG3.1.2, 7.4; AfP5.1.2.3)
- On-going difficulties experienced by Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers in eastern Sudan are cause for concern. The situation in Eritrea continues to generate the steady arrival of persons seeking asylum. Making refugees self-reliant in a protracted situation is a constant programme challenge and objective. Through the Sustainable Options for Livelihood Security in Eastern Sudan (SOLSES) and other initiatives, UNHCR has been promoting measures to assist refugee-affected areas. At the same time, UNHCR is reviewing policies concerning the status of refugees in the east. (SG1, 3, 4; AfP1, 3.1.2.4, 5.1.4.7.8)