

# Southern Africa

## Recent Developments

The positive developments in the Inter-Congolese dialogue in 2002, coupled with recent agreements between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda on the withdrawal of foreign troops from the DRC, and the announced withdrawal of Zimbabwean troops from the DRC, herald the beginning of a solution to the conflict in the Congo.

Although no major spontaneous repatriation movement has occurred as a result of these developments, it is expected that the momentum for peace created in 2002 and the expected continuation of these positive political developments in 2003 may create an environment conducive to the return of Congolese refugees from countries in the southern Africa region.

In Angola, the sudden death of the leader of UNITA, in February 2002 opened the way to peace

Angola  
Botswana  
Comoros  
Lesotho  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Seychelles  
South Africa  
Swaziland  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe



(and the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees from neighbouring countries). But the way ahead is far from clear. However, Angola still has to cope with major constraints such as: the absence of government administration in the major areas of return; the poor social and economic infrastructure; the presence of landmines; and the dilapidated and dangerous state of roads and bridges. The internal challenges associated with the demobilisation of UNITA soldiers, disarmament, extension of territorial administration and the resettlement of more than four million internally displaced persons, may affect the level of attention that the Angolan Government can pay to the refugee/returnee situation in the region.

Despite the progress made towards conflict resolution in the Great Lakes region in 2002, Southern Africa still faces serious political and humanitarian challenges.

On the other hand, refugee policies and practices in the region have generally been more favourable. All States in the region have adhered to the basic principle of admitting refugees and granting them asylum. In addition, most of the countries have acceded to international refugee conventions and have adopted national refugee legislation that supports the principles, rights and obligations laid down in these international instruments.

However, continued movements of mixed populations (refugees and other migrants), throughout the region have weakened the favourable disposition of host communities in the region. The rights of refugees and asylum-seekers have on occasion been violated and public opinion is, in general, becoming less tolerant towards refugees.

In Southern Africa, refugees are rarely able to find enough work to subsist. Unfortunately, UNHCR's efforts in 2002 to provide adequate protection,



Angola: IDPs and refugees often share the available natural resources in Luena. UNHCR / C. Sattlberger

including social and community services, were often hampered by a continued lack of funding and other resources.

## Strategic Objectives

In 2003, UNHCR's overall strategic objectives will fall into six main categories: protection, operations, voluntary repatriation, resource management, operational security, and external relations.

With regard to international protection, UNHCR will ensure that asylum-seekers are admitted to the countries of asylum and receive fair treatment in accordance with international standards of protection. Working in consultation with other UN agencies and relevant entities, UNHCR will assist government authorities to improve security in refugee camps and settlements and to separate armed elements from civilian refugees. The Office will also make every effort to consolidate camps in Mozambique to ensure that minimum standards of delivery of material assistance are met.

In 2003, UNHCR will focus particularly on the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees living in

urban areas by promoting self-reliance and durable solutions, and by encouraging relevant authorities to improve their handling of this population. A key policy priority in all cases will be to meet the special protection needs of refugee women and refugee children. UNHCR will also run environmental and HIV/AIDS projects.

In its operations, UNHCR will enhance its readiness to anticipate and respond to new refugee influxes, working in close co-operation with governments, NGOs, and other relevant actors. In responding to emergencies, UNHCR will provide relief assistance to refugees. However, it will also move progressively towards promoting refugees' ability to attain self-sufficiency. UNHCR's programme implementation and exit strategies will be geared towards phasing out these operations. At all stages, UNHCR will seek every opportunity to find durable solutions to the plight of persons of concern to the Office.

With respect to voluntary repatriation, UNHCR will focus on the repatriation of Angolan refugees from neighbouring countries and elsewhere. In this regard, a regional plan of operations has been established for the mass repatriation of refugees



from the DRC, the Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Namibia and elsewhere. In Angola, reintegration and rehabilitation activities are foreseen. These will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Government of Angola, other UN agencies and the NGO community.

With respect to resource management, the ultimate objective will be to ensure the optimisation of the resources allocated to the region. This will be achieved through regular monitoring of programmes, and authoritative guidance in compliance with UNHCR's financial and asset management regulations, and the implementation of the auditors' recommendations.

UNHCR will maintain a secure operational environment for both refugees and humanitarian personnel. UNHCR will request the co-operation of governments in the region to ensure security in the operational areas, and also to maintain the civilian character of all refugee camps.

In its external relations, UNHCR will interact with regional actors within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1996.

## Operations

Operations in the region encompass 14 countries in the Southern Africa region and Indian Ocean Islands. In addition to the country programmes in **Angola**, **South Africa** and **Zambia** presented in separate chapters, UNHCR has operations in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

In **Angola**, UNHCR will pursue its endeavours to provide international protection and basic humanitarian assistance to approximately 12,000

refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority from the DRC. Most of the refugees have been in the country for over two decades. Many rural refugees, who had achieved a degree of local integration only to be displaced once again (this time by the ongoing conflict within Angola), may now have the opportunity to integrate locally once again. UNHCR will continue its dialogue with the Government of Angola to secure arable land for them. UNHCR will assist those who do not wish to integrate locally to either voluntarily repatriate to the DRC or to resettle in a third country.

UNHCR will help national and local authorities by organising training on refugee law, refugee status determination and other related issues. In order to build up a sustainable mechanism of protection, UNHCR will provide ongoing protection expertise to other UN agencies and will work to enhance monitoring mechanisms.

In 2003, care and maintenance will be provided to some 4,500 refugees and asylum-seekers, in **Botswana**. The Office's goal in 2003 will be to provide basic humanitarian assistance for Angolan, Namibian and Somali refugees. At the same time, the Office will explore possibilities for durable solutions such as repatriation, local integration and resettlement. For Namibian refugees, who are the majority of the refugee population in the country, UNHCR's assistance activities will include distribution of food and non-food items, and the provision of health care and primary education. Repatriation of Namibian refugees to the Caprivi Strip will proceed in 2003. Most of UNHCR's activities for Angolan refugees will emphasise protection, with the Office concentrating on the issuance of identity cards and the possibility of naturalisation. In order to support local integration, UNHCR will help Somali refugees to participate in income-generating activities, but resettlement possibilities will also be explored when appropriate. In urban areas, a few grants for secondary education will be offered, on a case-by-case basis, to reduce the financial burden on families and thereby promote self-sufficiency. However, a gradual reduction of assistance is envisaged for those refugees who have stayed in the country for more than three years.

Asylum-seekers and refugees continue to stream into **Malawi** despite its clearly ailing economy and

the lengthy eligibility process. The main border crossing point into Malawi is at the Tanzanian border in Karonga, some 750 kms from Lilongwe, where screening and eventual granting of refugee status takes place. UNHCR intends to establish a regular presence in Karonga to ensure adherence to the principle of non-refoulement and proper treatment of refugees. This will be closely co-ordinated with the Department for Disaster Preparedness Relief and Rehabilitation and the Malawi Red Cross Society (the main partner responsible for maintaining refugee reception facilities).

The majority of the refugees come from Rwanda (4,200), the DRC (1,450) and Burundi (950). The remaining 500 comprise refugees from Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zimbabwe, and other countries. Given the current trends, some 2,000 new arrivals from Rwanda and 1,000 Congolese are expected in 2003. All refugees will receive UNHCR's assistance in the Dzaleka refugee camp in the Dowa district, which remains the only designated accommodation centre for refugees/asylum-seekers. UNHCR plans to set up a committee to look into the situation of urban refugees, as most arriving refugee groups come from an urban background.

The local authorities have become increasingly receptive to issues pertaining to local integration. Since 1998, the Government of Malawi has shown a more relaxed attitude, allowing access to public schools, providing work opportunities for professionally qualified refugees and allowing petty trading outside the camps. However, there are concerns about the growth of the Dzaleka camp. The camp administration has indicated that, at the current rate of population movement, it will soon reach capacity.

All refugees will continue to receive material support including shelter, food, water, non-food items, and health services, as part of the care and maintenance programme. UNHCR will support the delivery of educational services, including vocational training, and income generating ventures, to promote local integration. Refugee women and adolescents will receive AIDS awareness and safe sex information in the camp. Essential financial support will be provided, particularly to refugee women's groups, for income-generating projects.

In **Mozambique**, during 2002, UNHCR assisted 3,362 out of a population of some 6,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda and other neighbouring countries. While most of them are settled in camps, such as Massaca II and Bobole, a third of the refugee population reside in Maputo, the capital city. UNHCR's planning figure for Mozambique in 2003 is 4,609, based on an estimated new arrival rate of 100 per month.

Although Mozambique has acceded to the 1951 Convention, it has made several reservations on property rights, trade union membership, employment, professional qualifications, education and freedom of movement. At present, these reservations constitute a major obstacle to the local integration of refugees. UNHCR will strive in its dialogue with the Government to have these issues addressed.

In 2003, UNHCR will provide basic assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Mozambique. Assistance will include food, non-food items, health care, safe water and sanitary facilities, community services, support to primary and secondary education, language training and support for income-generating activities.

In **Namibia**, during 2002, UNHCR assisted some 26,000 mostly Angolan refugees and some 2,000 refugees from Burundi, DRC, RoC and Rwanda. A registration exercise carried out in mid-2002 resulted in the reduction of the number of refugees who receive material assistance from UNHCR in Osire camp and the Kassava transit centre to some 18,500. The Office also facilitated the voluntary return of 1,400 Namibian refugees from Botswana and helped with their re-integration in the Caprivi Strip in Namibia.

The main focus of the refugee programme in 2003 will be the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 10,000 refugees to their areas of origin in Angola. Following the peace agreement signed between the Government of Angola and UNITA on 4 April 2003, UNHCR believes that conditions in Angola would be conducive for the return of large numbers of Angolans by June 2002. The remaining group will continue to benefit from protection and assistance until durable solutions are found for them.

UNHCR closed its office in the **Kingdom of Swaziland** at the end of September 2001. However, the Office relies on its implementing partner to provide assistance to some 1,000 urban refugees in the country (under the supervision of the UNHCR office in Pretoria). The majority of the refugees and asylum-seekers originate from the Great Lakes region (Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda) and have lived in the country for several years on temporary residence permits.

One of the goals for UNHCR in Swaziland will be to address the challenges involved in ensuring protection for the refugees. At the same time, UNHCR will progressively reduce its material assistance in order to encourage refugees to become more self-reliant. However, basic assistance will continue to be provided on a case-by-case basis, especially to vulnerable groups, such as single mothers with children. In 2003, UNHCR will work harder to reinforce the capacity of the Kingdom's Eligibility Commission. It is expected that the Parliament will have adopted the National Refugee Bill by 2002.

**Zimbabwe** is currently experiencing a deep political and economic crisis. Nevertheless, the country continues to receive a steady influx of refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from the Great Lakes Region. Fewer refugees now arrive from Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan and the United Kingdom of Tanzania than in previous years. The refugees and asylum-seekers are accommodated in the Tongogara Camp, the Waterfalls Transit Centre and in urban areas. Given the current rate

of arrivals (about 100 asylum-seekers per month) it is expected that the total refugee population will be close to 11,000 by the beginning of 2003.

Protection will be provided through the registering of refugees, who will be issued with identity cards. This will help to ensure that asylum-seekers are granted admission in accordance with international protection standards. The Office continues to promote refugee law and ongoing training of government officials and implementing partners. Basic assistance activities, such as the provision of water, health, food and sanitation services will be provided in the camp and the transit centre.

A special emphasis will be placed on the empowerment of refugee women, encouraging their active involvement in health and education and other community services. UNHCR will support the PEER education project (on behaviour and reproductive health for young people) and community support for refugees with HIV/AIDS. UNHCR will also encourage and strengthen environmental awareness education and environmental protection or rehabilitation activities in the Tongogara camp.

UNHCR will continue to try to encourage the Governments of the **Indian Ocean islands** (the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles) to take a greater interest in the institution of asylum.

### Budget (USD)

Country	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Angola	4,136,384	20,989,409	25,125,793
Botswana	1,701,119	0	1,701,119
Malawi	1,597,105	0	1,597,105
Mozambique	1,785,728	0	1,785,728
Namibia	4,850,446	405,543	5,255,989
South Africa	4,285,940	207,730	4,493,670
Swaziland	173,600	0	173,600
Zambia	16,515,947	3,844,604	20,360,551
Zimbabwe	2,345,329	0	2,345,329
Regional Activities <sup>1</sup>	788,000	650,000	1,438,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,179,598</b>	<b>26,097,286</b>	<b>64,276,884</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes scholarships for refugee students and strengthening emergency response capacity in Southern African countries.