

COUNTRY OPERATION

D J I B O U T I

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Repatriate 1,000 Somali refugees to areas of relative security and stability in Somalia; protect and assist Somali and Ethiopian refugees who remain in Djibouti; improve living conditions in the refugee camps; in the absence of other durable solutions for Ethiopian refugees, pursue third-country resettlement of eligible cases; use the eligibility committee for the purpose of regularising the status of urban refugees.



Impact

- The quality of services rendered improved noticeably, partly due to the calm security situation.
- A total of 328 persons of various nationalities successfully repatriated to their countries of origin and 248 individuals were resettled in third countries.
- UNHCR forged a close working relationship with the Government: this led to smooth implementation of operations.
- The implementation of UNHCR's programmes was markedly improved by moves to help partners become more efficient.

Persons of Concern

| MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION | TOTAL IN COUNTRY | OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED | PER CENT FEMALE | PER CENT < 18 |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Somalia (Refugees) | 21,650 | 20,100 | 56 | 53 |
| Ethiopia (Refugees) | 1,600 | 1,100 | 60 | 37 |
| Other Refugees | 50 | 0 | - | - |
| Asylum-seekers | 410 | 0 | - | - |

Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

| WORKING BUDGET | INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS* | OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE** | TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE | TOTAL EXPENDITURE |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 527,937 | 0 | 427,822 | 427,822 | 385,290 |

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Special Operation in East and Horn of Africa.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The over 23,000 refugees from Ethiopia and Somalia currently in Djibouti fled their countries of origin following the fall of the Mengistu and Siad Barre regimes in Ethiopia and Somalia respectively. The majority of refugees live in Ali-Adde or Hol-Hol camp. Despite the fact that some of these refugees have lived in the country since 1977/1978, they have not been able to integrate into the socio-economic structure of the country. They thus remain dependent on external assistance. Given Djibouti's acute economic difficulties, migrants and refugees are often perceived as a drain on the meagre resources available to the indigenous population.

Roughly 90 per cent of the Somali refugees are members of the Issa clan, originating from the Awdal region in north-west Somalia; the remainder are from the southern regions. Having settled in an arid area with no economic prospects, the refugees have been unable to engage in self-reliant income-generating activities. The Djibouti Government's resistance to local integration as a lasting solution reinforced this situation.

Political relations between Djibouti and the authorities in north-west Somalia were strained, partly due to the position adopted by member countries of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that Somalia should remain unified. A temporary border closure occurred as a result. Nonetheless, thanks to considerably improved security in north-west Somalia, especially in urban locations, UNHCR encouraged voluntary repatriation to safe areas as a lasting solution for Somali refugees.

Constraints

These were many and interlinked. The tension between Djibouti and north-west Somalia held up repatriation. The authorities in north-west Somalia insisted on screening all candidates for repatriation before their departure from Djibouti. Refugee leaders stipulated that, before repatriation could occur, the Awdal Region must be fully demined. Both they and the north-west Somalia authorities also insisted on the rehabilitation of schools, clinics, utilities, etc. prior to return.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

Following extensive negotiations, the Government of Djibouti agreed to revive the National Eligibility Committee to deal with refugee status determination. To support this move, UNHCR provided office equipment, logistical assistance, on-the-job staff training and coverage of administrative costs.

Although the Government of Djibouti has ratified the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, the country lacks national refugee legislation. UNHCR sought to hasten the adoption of such a legal framework by discussing with the relevant authorities a memorandum and examples of refugee legislation adopted by other countries for guidance. Although refugees in Djibouti enjoyed basic human rights, and a few urban refugees even succeeded in obtaining work permits, UNHCR remained concerned about regular police round-ups of refugees and migrants in the urban areas, and intervened to effect the release of detainees.

UNHCR conducted a workshop on international protection and continued the dialogue with government officials to increase their awareness of refugee rights. A cross-border visit was organised for refugee representatives (elders) as a way to promote repatriation to north-west Somalia. They were given the opportunity to see their places of origin in the Awdal region and to meet the relevant authorities in Hargeisa. As a consequence of the positive impressions gathered on their trip, the refugee elders started campaigning for large-scale return.

The registration of pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees wishing to repatriate was completed, and the list was submitted to the Ethiopian Embassy in Djibouti and forwarded to the UNHCR office in Addis Ababa. ARRA, the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, subsequently cleared the list of potential returnees, who are awaiting repatriation in 2000.

UNHCR staff identified seven women at risk, two of whom were later resettled in a third country. Five orphans were entrusted to the care of a refugee woman.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Campaigns were conducted regularly to raise awareness of harmful traditional practices and the use of sanitary materials. UNHCR helped 15 urban refugee families to cover funeral costs, and

supplied forty people with eye glasses or artificial limbs. Activities for women included the creation of women's committees, the construction of one delivery room in each camp, and the organisation of two bazaars for the sale of handicrafts made by refugee women. The sale garnered a profit of USD 1,350.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: As the stock of non-food items was well short of demand, distribution reached only those in greatest need. Monthly subsistence allowances were paid to urban refugees to help meet their most pressing needs. A total of 500 urban refugee families (1,500 people) benefited from this programme.

Education: School enrolment improved in general terms, but the high drop-out rate of girls after completion of the third grade remained a concern. Parents cited economic and cultural reasons for their lack of interest in schooling for girls. Seventy urban refugees attended primary school and literacy courses.

Food: WFP regularly supplied food to refugees in camps. However, corn-and-soya-blend, which is a very important component of the food basket, was out of stock for the last two months of 1999. UNHCR provided funds for the purchase and distribution of fresh food in the context of a supplementary feeding programme for the most vulnerable.

Forestry: A group of women was trained to carry out projects, including vegetable gardening, tree planting, and the introduction of energy-saving devices. These projects proved popular among refugees and locals alike. The environmental rehabilitation project was however delayed due to difficulties with the purchase of seeds from the local market. Nevertheless, land for nurseries was prepared in Hol-Hol.

Health/Nutrition: Activities in this sector succeeded in reducing an already acceptably low mortality rate to 3.1 per thousand and further extended immunisation of children below the age of five. UNHCR funded medical examinations and drug supplies for 4,160 patients, and paid for treatment of referral cases.

Legal Assistance: Refugee travel documents that had expired were renewed as needed.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR's financial and technical support for agencies resulted in timely and orderly delivery of food and non-food items,

and smooth implementation of assistance work.

Sanitation: As a result of regular garbage collection and incineration, as well as latrine maintenance, the camps were in good sanitary condition.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: UNHCR paid for accommodation of the most vulnerable urban refugees. Four families were thus given shelter.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR covered expenses for harbour clearance, and the handling and storage of food and non-food items. Transportation costs related to the repatriation of refugees (including the purchase of one vehicle) were also met by the programme.

Water: The project met its objective to provide 20 litres of clean water per person per day. The quality and quantity of water improved after the two boreholes in Ali Adde and Hol-Hol were equipped with generators.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR employed five international and 18 national staff in Djibouti. There were frequent exchange visits between the offices in Hargeisa and Addis Ababa, to enhance co-ordination and work out a common strategy on lasting solutions for Somali refugees. In February 1999, a contingency plan was drawn up for a potential refugee influx in the wake of the Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked closely with WFP to ensure timely delivery of food, and with UNESCO on education. The Office participated actively in the work of the UN Country Team, under the leadership of the UNDP Resident Co-ordinator. A new approach was adopted, whereby premises were shared and the same procurement procedures were followed. UNHCR and UNESCO collaborated effectively on a well implemented education programme for peace and repatriation.

UNHCR held regular co-ordination meetings with implementing partners, and organised a workshop on emergency management for participants from other agencies with a view to enhancing their response capacity. One local NGO staff member received training in micro-credit implementation, while three others attended workshops in Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Amman.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The volatility of politics and alliances in the Horn of Africa frequently impeded humanitarian operations and obliged agencies to continuously adjust their programmes.

Experience showed that the concept of community participation could only be translated into action if the idea was carefully explained to the refugees from the outset. In Djibouti, garbage collection was the only activity in which refugees participated voluntarily. For all other kinds of work they demanded incentive payments.

UNDP and other development agencies should generally be more involved, for instance, in the rehabilitation of refugee-affected areas.

Office

Djibouti-Ville

Partners

Government Agencies

Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés

NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors of Asia

Association pour la Protection et l'Epanouissement de la Famille

Caritas

Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Djibouti

Institut Supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherche Scientifique et Technique

Other

UNESCO

United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)

| Expenditure Breakdown | Current Year's Projects | | | Prior Years' Projects | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | General Programmes | Special Programmes | Total | General Programmes | Special Programmes | Total |
| Protection, Monitoring and Coordination | 656,926 | 148,768 | 805,693 | 3,660 | 0 | 3,660 |
| Community Services | 15,619 | 0 | 15,619 | 9,452 | 0 | 9,452 |
| Domestic Needs / Household Support | 108,760 | 21,432 | 130,192 | 8,462 | 435 | 8,897 |
| Education | 62,545 | 0 | 62,545 | 35,125 | 0 | 35,125 |
| Food | 23,524 | 0 | 23,524 | 1,869 | 0 | 1,869 |
| Forestry | 0 | 7,757 | 7,757 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Health / Nutrition | 229,900 | 0 | 229,900 | 80,542 | 0 | 80,542 |
| Legal Assistance | 25,708 | 2,149 | 27,857 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Operational Support (to Agencies) | 131,791 | 17,904 | 149,694 | 58,347 | 130 | 58,477 |
| Sanitation | 5,334 | 0 | 5,334 | 8,915 | 0 | 8,915 |
| Shelter / Other Infrastructure | 17,120 | 0 | 17,120 | 2,450 | 0 | 2,450 |
| Transport / Logistics | 32,679 | 9,447 | 42,126 | 27,438 | 7,903 | 35,341 |
| Water | 18,906 | 0 | 18,906 | 17,420 | 0 | 17,420 |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | 466,026 | 31,121 | 497,146 | (217,488) | 0 | (217,488) |
| Sub - total Operational | 1,794,837 | 238,577 | 2,033,414 | 36,191 | 8,468 | 44,659 |
| Administrative Support | 182,227 | 91,523 | 273,749 | 9,861 | 0 | 9,861 |
| Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries | 1,977,064 | 330,100 | 2,307,164 | 46,053 | 8,468 | 54,521 |
| Unliquidated Obligations | 161,105 | 55,191 | 216,296 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 2,138,169 | 385,290 | 2,523,459 | 46,053 | 8,468 | 54,521 |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | | | | | | |
| Payments Made | 846,850 | 31,121 | 877,971 | 9,512 | 0 | 9,512 |
| Reporting Received | 380,824 | 0 | 380,824 | 227,000 | 0 | 227,000 |
| Balance | 466,026 | 31,121 | 497,146 | (217,488) | 0 | (217,488) |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | 0 | 0 | 220,827 | 0 | 220,827 |
| Refunded to UNHCR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,340 | 0 | 3,340 |
| Currency Adjustment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Outstanding 31 December | 466,026 | 31,121 | 497,146 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unliquidated Obligations | | | | | | |
| Outstanding 1 January | 0 | 0 | 0 | 242,567 | 36,937 | 279,504 |
| New Obligations | 2,138,169 | 385,290 | 2,523,459 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disbursements | 1,977,064 | 330,100 | 2,307,164 | 46,053 | 8,468 | 54,521 |
| Cancellations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 196,514 | 28,469 | 224,983 |
| Outstanding 31 December | 161,105 | 55,191 | 216,296 | 0 | 0 | 0 |