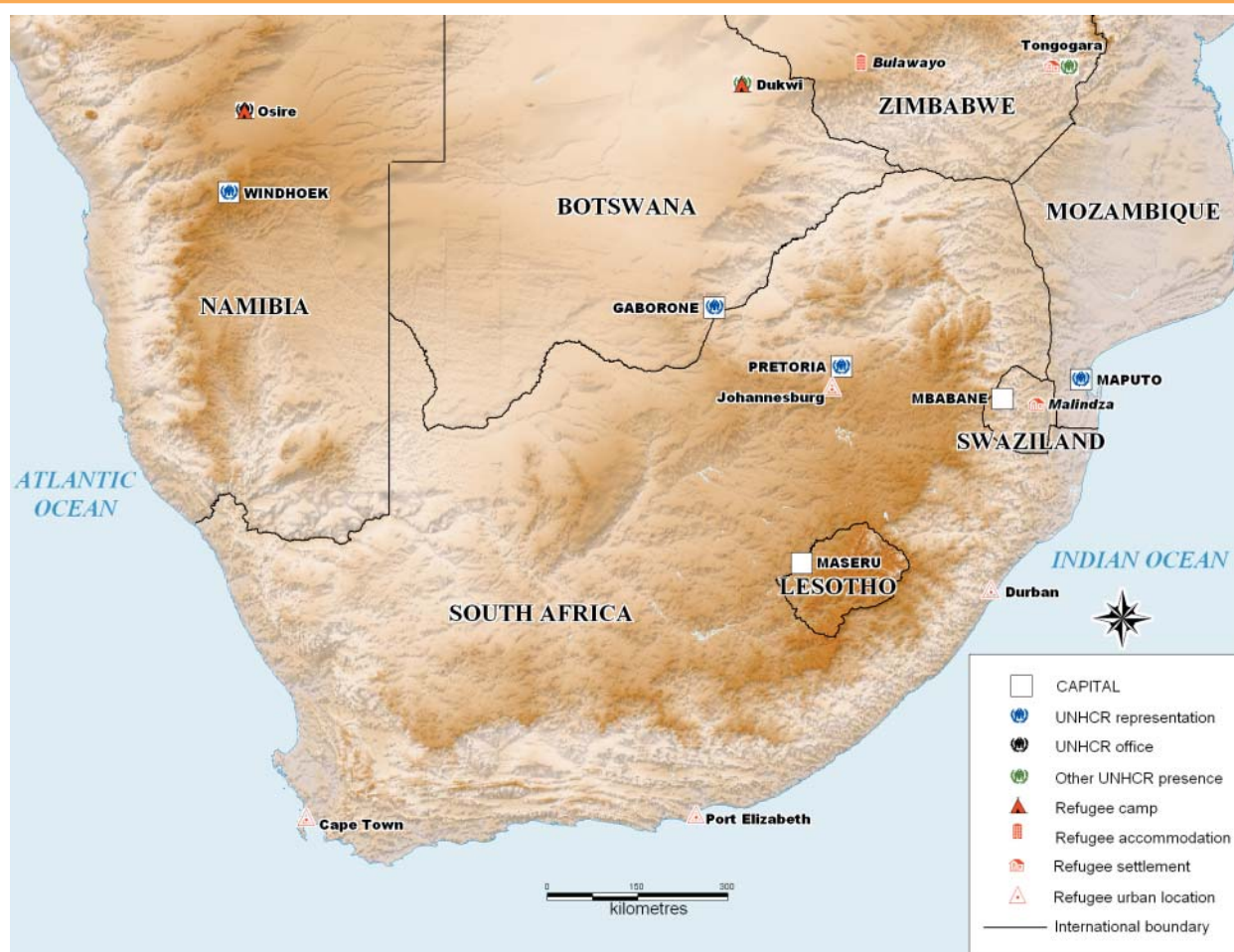


# South Africa



## Working environment

### The context

South Africa continues to maintain a liberal asylum regime, including freedom of movement, access to employment and the provision of many health and education services for refugees and asylum-seekers. As part of the Government's ambitious plan to clear a backlog of some 110,000 pending asylum claims, new asylum-processing facilities have been established in the five main urban centres in the country. This is yielding impressive results, with more than 18,000 decisions taken in the first six months of 2006.

The refugee population is slowly increasing in South Africa, and reached just over 32,000 by September 2006, with Congolese, Angolans and Somalis the most numerous. Most refugees live in the main urban centres of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Asylum-seekers continue to arrive in large numbers. New applications for asylum, particularly from Zimbabweans, Malawians, Ethiopians and Somalis, reached 30,000 in the first half of this year alone.

The phenomenon of mixed flows of migrants and refugees continues to pose a major refugee protection challenge in South Africa. The difficulty of gaining formal access to the South African labour markets puts pressure on the asylum regime, as some economic migrants attempt to regularize their stay by claiming asylum. This makes it more difficult for those with a legitimate refugee claim to have their applications assessed fairly. However, it is anticipated that faster refugee status determination (RSD) will reduce the number of economically-motivated claims by early 2007.

Interest in repatriation continues to be low, particularly among Angolan refugees who tend to be well integrated economically and socially in South Africa. However, to date the Government has not indicated if it is willing to regularize their status in the country by granting them permanent residency or citizenship.

### The needs

UNHCR's programme in South Africa for 2007 has been developed primarily through a series of strategic planning workshops involving representatives of the Office, the Government, implementing partners, church organizations,

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and refugees. Major gaps have been identified in asylum claims processing, documentation, the capacity of the Government and NGOs to assist refugees, access to employment, vocational training, emergency assistance and in the availability of resources for refugee-related initiatives.

Access to education and primary health care has been removed from the list of major gaps due to substantive progress in these areas over the past few years. The recent introduction of the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy in South Africa has also helped UNHCR and its partners identify specific gaps, particularly in the case of children and female-headed households. A lack of documentation was consistently identified by refugees and asylum-seekers as the most critical problem they are facing.

**Total requirements: USD 6,725,028**

## Main objectives

### Overall objectives

- Help the Government of South Africa clear the backlog of pending asylum claims and ensure a more rapid review of new claims.
- Bolster the capacity of the Government and civil society to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international standards.
- Ensure refugees and asylum-seekers have access to national social services, including education, health and assistance programmes.
- Mobilize resources jointly with partners for refugee assistance.
- Facilitate durable solutions for refugees, including local integration for those with limited prospects of returning home; use resettlement as a protection tool for those with particular protection needs; and aid voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity.

### Key targets for 2007

- Pending asylum claims reduced from 100,000 to 25,000 by the end of 2007.
- RSD conducted within six months and identity documents issued within three months of application, as stipulated by South African law.
- At least five new provincial or local governments support refugees with direct assistance or by transferring resources to local NGOs working with refugees.
- A child protection system for unaccompanied and separated children that meets international standards is established.
- Refugee parents and children are given foster-care grants.
- 355 refugees are resettled in third countries.
- 2,100 refugees are assisted to return home.
- 2,000 refugees are issued with certificates allowing them to apply for permanent residence and 300 refugees are granted permanent residence.

### Strategy and activities

UNHCR will continue to provide policy advice, training and material assistance to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to help it achieve two aims: clear the backlog of pending cases and review new claims in a more timely manner, as well as improve the issuance of documentation to refugees and asylum-seekers. At the same time, the Office will support legal counselling and advocacy by its NGO partners to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers have full access to asylum procedures and social services. These partners will also be helped to ensure they can respond to the increase in appeals by asylum-seekers rejected at the first instance in light of the dramatic rise in government processing of asylum claims.

### Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	DRC	12,000	4,500	17,000	4,500
	Somalia	9,000	650	12,000	650
	Burundi	2,500	900	5,000	900
	Various	20,850	3,300	37,000	3,300
Asylum-seekers	DRC	21,000	8,000	5,000	3,000
	Somalia	11,000	1,000	2,000	500
	Burundi	4,000	600	500	200
	Various	54,000	6,000	17,500	3,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>134,350</b>	<b>24,950</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>16,550</b>



Mariam Kwete, a DRC refugee in South Africa, represented the world's child refugees at the follow-up meeting of the UN Secretary-General's Study Report on Violence Against Children in May 2006. *UNHCR / J. Redden.*

UNHCR will continue to advocate that refugees are covered in existing government programmes to try and ensure that the South African Government eventually takes responsibility for all assistance to refugees. Emergency assistance will only be provided by UNHCR, through its network of national NGO partners, to the most needy refugees and asylum-seekers. In addition, UNHCR will support small-scale initiatives, such as English language lessons and vocational training, small-business loans, grants for primary school education and home-based care for the infirm.

UNHCR will help build the capacity of its implementing partners to ensure they can deliver protection and services of a high quality to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Many long-staying refugees in South Africa are well integrated socially and economically and are unable or unwilling to return home. In these cases, UNHCR will advocate the regularization of their status in the country through permanent residency or an alternative means. At the same time, UNHCR will facilitate the repatriation of all refugees wishing to return home. While interest among Angolans and Rwandans is expected to remain low, the desire to return among those originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) may rise in 2007 if the situation in their home country continues to improve. Resettlement will be used as a durable solution only for individuals facing particularly difficult protection situations and for whom local integration or voluntary repatriation are not viable options.

## Constraints

UNHCR's approved budget for South Africa in 2007 will be insufficient to meet even the most critical needs of the increasing number of refugees and asylum-seekers. These include support to unaccompanied minors, primary education, vocational training, emergency assistance, legal advice and a follow-up to the National Refugee Baseline Survey conducted in 2003. It is estimated that an additional USD 300,000 would be required to meet these outstanding needs. UNHCR will pursue fund raising at the local level, particularly in the private sector, in order to try to close this gap at least partially.

The provision of protection and assistance is complicated by the need to maintain parallel assistance structures in the five main urban centres in which refugees and asylum-seekers are located.

## Organization and implementation

### UNHCR presence

Number of offices	1
Total staff	36
International	14
National	20
JPOs	2

## Coordination

In 2007, UNHCR will work with nine implementing partners in South Africa, including two international NGOs and seven local NGOs. IOM will provide services related to repatriation from South Africa to various countries of origin and resettlement to third countries. UNHCR will continue to work directly with key government departments, including Home Affairs and Social Development, as well as the relevant provincial and local authorities.

UNHCR will also maintain close contacts with local NGOs, faith-based organizations and refugee NGOs in the main urban centres in South Africa. At the same time, UNHCR will continue its close cooperation with UN agencies, particularly with respect to the implementation of the 2006-2011 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the UN Thematic Group on

HIV/AIDS and the UN Regional Inter-Agency Coordination and Support Office (RIACSO) in Johannesburg.

Partners	
<b>Implementing partners</b>	
<b>Government agencies:</b> Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Social Development.	
<b>Operational partners</b>	
<b>NGOs:</b> <i>Bonne Espérance</i> , Cape Town Refugee Centre, Jesuit Refugee Services, Lawyers for Human Rights, Mennonite Central Committee, National Consortium on Refugee Affairs, Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, Sediba Hope.	
<b>Others:</b> IOM, Legal Aid Clinic, University of Cape Town.	

Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget <sup>1</sup>	
	2006	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	744,036	833,231
Community services	0	304,500
Domestic needs	0	207,956
Education	0	232,146
Health	0	158,977
Income generation	0	42,993
Legal assistance	0	609,958
Operational support (to agencies)	0	443,470
Transport and logistics <sup>2</sup>	1,000,000	0
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>1,744,036</b>	<b>2,833,231</b>
Programme support <sup>3</sup>	3,437,048	3,891,797
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,181,084</b>	<b>6,725,028</b>

<sup>1</sup> In 2007, requirements include activities for local settlement in South Africa. In 2006, such activities were reported as regional activities in Southern Africa subregion.

<sup>2</sup> In 2007, repatriation of individual refugees from Southern Africa subregion are included under the requirements for regional activities.

<sup>3</sup> Includes programme support costs for specific regional activities in Southern Africa, such as HIV/AIDS, refugee women and children, registration and protection.

