

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cape Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

West Africa

Operational highlights

- In the four years up to July 2007, UNHCR assisted more than 350,000 Liberians to return home from five neighbouring countries.
- The Office reinforced local integration programmes for some 40,000 Liberian and 13,000 Sierra Leonean refugees, mainly in the Mano River Union countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), as well as in Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria.
- In collaboration with governments and other stakeholders, UNHCR intervened in the areas of rule of law, health, sanitation, education and infrastructure development to pave the way for the successful reintegration of returnees.
- UNHCR's field-driven approach to local integration encouraged other UN agencies, government counterparts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to participate in the process. UNHCR, ECOWAS, and the Governments of Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone have signed an agreement to ease refugees' transition to secure-residence status.



Working environment

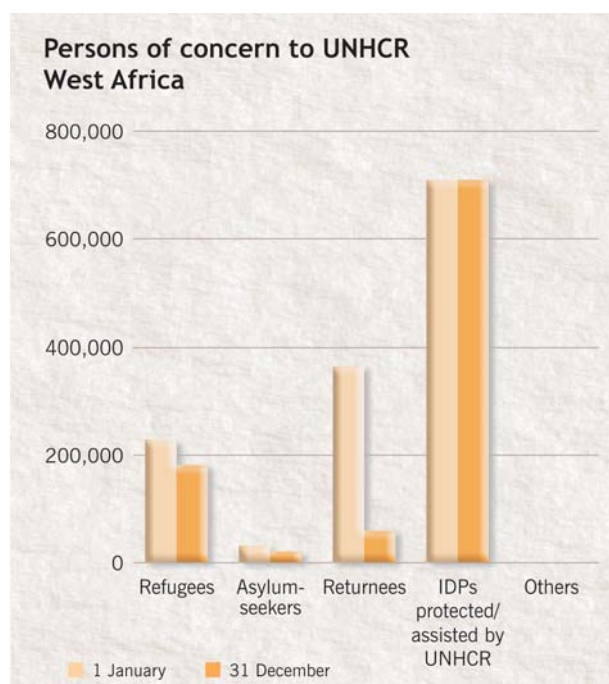
The overall situation in West Africa remained relatively stable in 2007, with the strengthening of peace and constitutional order in erstwhile war-ravaged countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. This enabled UNHCR to pursue durable solutions for refugees in the subregion through voluntary repatriation and local integration. Third-country resettlement remained a more limited option.

Though the subregion remained broadly calm, developments in Guinea in February threatened to turn into a crisis. General strikes led to the declaration of a state of emergency and the implementation of martial law for several weeks. Furthermore, Senegal's southern Casamance region remained unstable, as peace talks between the Government and armed rebels of the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* were stalled.

In Côte d'Ivoire, prospects for stability improved with the signing of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement in March. This created an enabling environment for the return of Ivorian refugees and some 700,000 people displaced within the country.

The political situation in Sierra Leone appears to have stabilized. Ernest Bai Koroma was elected president in

September in elections which international observers deemed free and fair. However, the security situation remains fragile and the country faces significant challenges in rebuilding its shattered economy.





UNHCR/B. J. Björkvinsson

Self-reliance programmes supported local integration of refugees in several West African countries.

Achievements and impact

In most countries in the subregion UNHCR helped host governments to assume greater responsibility for refugee protection. The Office advocated for appropriate refugee legislation and helped strengthen national refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. It also supported community institutions and civil society.

The promotion of voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees remained a priority for UNHCR in the first part of the year, followed by a shift from large-scale repatriation to individual returns. Smaller movements of Togolese in Benin and Ghana, Senegalese in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, and Liberians throughout the subregion were also assisted.

UNHCR made sure that wherever possible, refugee camps and their facilities were rehabilitated for use by local communities before they were handed over to local authorities. This was the case in Nigeria and Guinea.

Self-reliance and income generation projects for refugees took into consideration age, gender, and the need to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. Training workshops were organized to raise awareness on the issue.

In the health sector, UNHCR worked closely with the authorities and other partners at the country level to provide care in camps, during repatriation and local integration. Extra staff were made available for this purpose in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Preparedness and response activities included the provision of baseline medication, protection equipment and training to combat malaria, which remained the primary cause of morbidity and mortality in the region, followed by diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Basic health kits were also provided in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Liberia.

UNHCR collaborated with WFP to assist refugees and others through general and targeted food distributions, supplementary feeding, school-feeding programmes, self-reliance activities and other projects related to food security. Joint assessments and nutrition surveys were conducted to guide planning.

The Office expanded HIV and AIDS programmes in West Africa, focusing on integration programmes for IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire and returnees in Liberia. These activities led to general improvements in the health sector. Returnees at transit centres were provided with condoms and information on HIV and AIDS.

Though the subregion has enjoyed a return to stability, the fragility of the socio-political situation in some countries led UNHCR to strengthen its emergency response capacity and maintain a regional stockpile of non-food items in Accra.

With regard to IDPs, UNHCR participated in inter-agency collaborative frameworks in the subregion. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Office leads the protection, camp management and emergency shelter clusters.

At the subregional level, UNHCR strengthened its partnership with ECOWAS in post-conflict recovery and institutional capacity building. Priority areas of cooperation covered: (1) local integration, free movement, and the right of residence and establishment; (2) the asylum-migration nexus in West Africa; (3) building early warning and emergency preparedness capacity; (4) peace education, peacebuilding and conflict prevention; (5) contributing to the draft African Union Convention on IDPs in Africa; and (6) relations with subregional associations such as the West African Civil Society Forum and the West African Women Association.

Constraints

Due to unrealistic expectations of third-country resettlement, many Liberian refugees, especially in Ghana, rejected alternative durable solutions. Their reluctance to avail themselves of new opportunities for local integration in the region posed a major challenge to UNHCR and host countries.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia** and **Sierra Leone** are described in separate chapters.

The UNHCR Regional office in **Benin** addressed the needs of some 17,500 refugees in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger** and **Togo**. Refugees in the region originate mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Togo. UNHCR focused on repatriation, local integration and self-reliance activities and durable solutions. However, socio-economic conditions made self-reliance difficult to achieve. In this regard, UNHCR gave priority to education, apprenticeships, vocational training, scholarships and micro-credit programmes.

In the first half of 2007, the Office focused on the return of Togolese refugees, which gained momentum after the signing of tripartite agreements in April. The Office is currently developing a strategy for the closure of

Kpomassè camp (housing some 800 refugees) in Ouidah, Benin. Resettlement activities have been intensified for refugees in this camp.

The majority of the Togolese refugees in Benin live in Agamè Camp and in Cotonou. In Agamè Camp the number of Togolese refugees who benefited from WFP food distributions at the beginning of September decreased by some 30 per cent compared to the beginning of the year. Some 3,300 refugees still live in the camp and receive food assistance, while an estimated 1,000 Togolese refugees remain in Cotonou and other urban areas. Since the signature of tripartite agreements between the Governments of Benin, Ghana and Togo in April 2007, UNHCR has facilitated the voluntary repatriation of some 900 Togolese refugees from Benin.

In **Nigeria**, following the end of the large-scale repatriation of Liberian refugees at the end of June, UNHCR focused on implementing its exit strategy for Oru camp. The Office will progressively rehabilitate and hand over camp infrastructure and services to the authorities. At the same time, it will promote local integration for the remaining Liberian refugees. To this end it will help build government capacity in refugee status determination, emergency preparedness and response.

UNHCR's Regional Representation in Senegal protected and assisted approximately 44,000 refugees and some 5,000 asylum-seekers in **Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea Bisau** and **Mali**. At year's end, as a result of political changes in Mauritania, UNHCR and the Governments of Senegal and Mauritania reached an agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Mauritanian refugees who arrived in Senegal in the late 1980s. Likewise, solutions may be at hand for long-staying Mauritanian refugees in Mali. A profiling exercise conducted by UNHCR and the Government of Senegal found that that some 24,000 Mauritians in Senegal wished to return home.

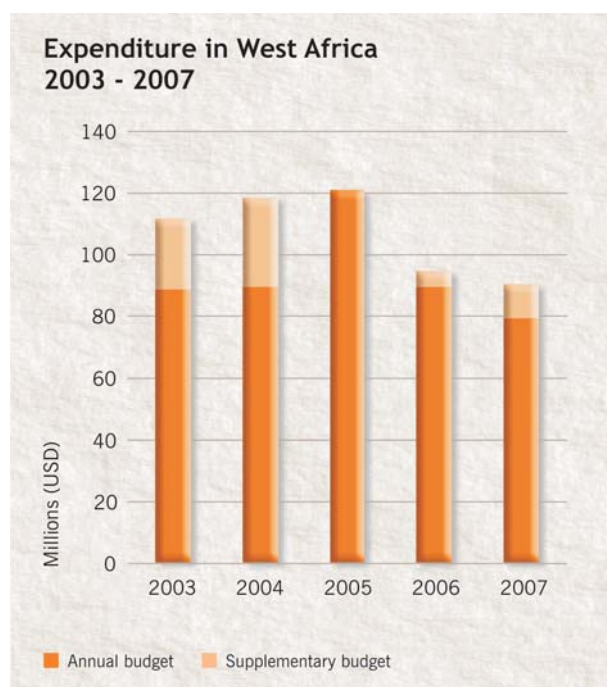
UNHCR's Regional Representation in Dakar was strengthened following the closure of the Regional Support Hub in Accra at the end of 2007 and the transfer of the regional support team to Dakar.

Financial information

Overall, the 2007 programmes in the region received funding to cover planned activities. The successful conclusion of the Liberian repatriation operation reduced beneficiary numbers by mid-year and allowed the reallocation of funds to other activities. These included the local integration initiative and the environmental rehabilitation of two camps, projects not originally budgeted for. In Ghana, unused funds of the Liberia repatriation project were used in Kisan to maintain minimum living standards and in the Volta Region to begin

the voluntary repatriation of Togolese. Donors provided the additional resources to assist flood victims.

The trend in expenditure over the past five years mirrors the overall improvement of the political situation in the region. A steady increase in expenses from 2003 to 2005 followed the attainment of peace in Liberia and the scaling-up of repatriation from countries of asylum and reintegration programmes in the country. From 2006 onwards, a decline in expenditure was observed as care and maintenance programmes for Sierra Leonean refugees and reintegration activities within Sierra Leone wound down. Finally, the year 2007 witnessed the end of the organized repatriation of Liberian refugees, allowing for a substantial reduction in expenditure when compared with 2006.



Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget ¹	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Benin	1,802,912	0	1,802,912	1,774,353	0	1,774,353
Côte d'Ivoire	7,368,137	2,349,737	9,717,874	6,965,115	1,781,399	8,746,514
Gambia	497,121	0	497,121	419,352	0	419,352
Ghana ²	9,285,918	0	9,285,918	9,187,530	0	9,187,530
Guinea	9,641,908	0	9,641,908	9,338,699	0	9,338,699
Liberia	32,315,182	11,023,119	43,338,301	31,548,541	9,077,064	40,625,605
Nigeria	3,523,556	0	3,523,556	3,380,028	0	3,380,028
Senegal	2,432,479	384,807	2,817,286	2,160,151	170,269	2,330,420
Sierra Leone	10,355,762	0	10,355,762	9,802,607	0	9,802,607
Togo	232,543	0	232,543	200,319	0	200,319
Regional activities ³	4,597,280	0	4,597,280	4,243,702	0	4,243,702
Total	82,052,799	13,757,663	95,810,462	79,020,398	11,028,732	90,049,130

¹ Excludes a seven per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes the Regional Support Hub in Accra.

³ Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement assistance for urban refugees in Benin and Senegal.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
West Africa	Canada	847,458	0
	Denmark	1,083,032	0
	Ireland	657,895	0
	Luxembourg	683,995	0
	Netherlands	90,000	0
	Sweden	8,733,624	0
	Sub-total	12,096,004	0
Benin	United Kingdom	16,735	0
	Sub-total	16,735	0
Côte d'Ivoire	Austria	0	274,336
	Ireland	657,895	0
	Luxembourg	478,796	0
	Norway	0	509,124
	OPEC Fund for International Development	175,000	0
	Private donors in Italy	0	200,000
	Private donors in Malaysia	0	276
	UNAIDS	165,000	0
	United States	1,050,000	140,187
	Sub-total	2,526,691	1,123,923
Gambia	Liechtenstein	41,667	0
	Sub-total	41,667	0
Ghana	European Commission	143,266	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	21,461	0
	UNAIDS	197,373	0
	United States	1,592,024	0
	USA for UNHCR	4,060	0
	Sub-total	1,958,185	0
Guinea	Japan	848,260	0
	United States	1,400,000	0
	Sub-total	2,248,260	0
Liberia	Denmark	0	1,114,360
	European Commission	2,649,007	400,838
	Germany	905,431	0
	Japan	3,611,062	0
	OPEC Fund for International Development	325,000	0
	Spain	1,212,352	0
	Switzerland	409,836	0
	UNAIDS	70,000	0
	United Kingdom	1,473,477	0
	United States	9,393,970	0
	Sub-total	20,050,135	1,515,198
Nigeria	United States	113,589	0
	Sub-total	113,589	0
Senegal	Liechtenstein	41,667	0
	Sub-total	41,667	0
Sierra Leone	Greece	68,399	0
	Japan	500,000	0
	Private donors in Switzerland	2,232	0
	UNAIDS	20,000	0
	United States	1,800,000	0
	Sub-total	2,390,631	0
Total		41,483,564	2,639,121

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.