

Working environment

The context

Presidential and parliamentary elections are due in Ghana at the end of 2008. The general security situation in the country remains calm, though there have been intermittent disputes between community leaders in the north-east.

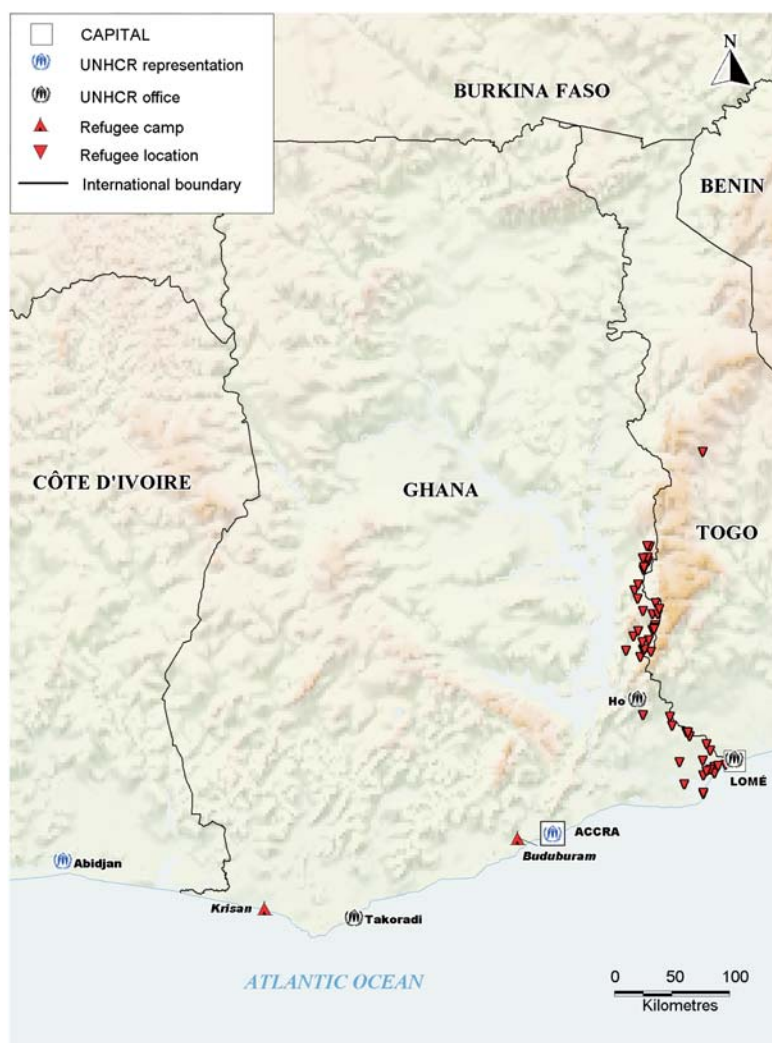
With more than 31,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in its territory, Ghana hosts the largest refugee population in West Africa. Most of the refugees are from Liberia and live in the Buduburam settlement near Accra. In April 2008, in response to protests by a number of Liberians seeking resettlement, the Government arrested and deported 16 of them—including 13 refugees.

In 2008, the Governments of Ghana and Liberia along with UNHCR decided to re-initiate the voluntary repatriation of Liberians from Ghana for six months in order to offer some 12,000 refugees (50 per cent of the remaining Liberian refugee population in Ghana) a chance to return home. Since the beginning of this operation in April 2008, UNHCR has assisted some 7,500 Liberians in repatriating by air. Others are returning spontaneously.

Ghana also hosts refugees of various nationalities in the remote Krisan camp some 250 kilometres west of Accra. Togolese refugees in the country live among host communities in the Volta region, while urban refugees and asylum-seekers are dispersed in and around Accra. Ghanaian law allows asylum-seekers to remain in the country until they have exhausted all means of obtaining refugee status.

The needs

UNHCR and the Government will discuss the local integration of Liberian refugees when the repatriation objectives set by the tripartite agreement between the Office, Liberia and Ghana are achieved. In 2009, the Government may seek to close Buduburam camp and move the remaining Liberian refugees into Ghanaian communities.



UNHCR will provide legal assistance and self-reliance programmes to help both Liberian and Togolese refugees integrate locally. UNHCR also plans to close Krisan camp in 2009 and seek durable solutions for the remaining refugees. The Office will complete the profiling of urban refugees and asylum-seekers and streamline assistance for these groups in coordination with other UNHCR offices in West Africa.

Main objectives

- Support the efforts of the remaining Liberian and Togolese refugees in Ghana to attain economic self-reliance.
- In cooperation with other UNHCR offices in the ECOWAS region, pursue alternative legal residence status for the remaining long-staying refugees.
- Support the incorporation of Buduburam camp infrastructure into district development plans, consistent with refugee and host population needs and priorities.

- Find durable solutions for refugees remaining in Krisan camp.
- Assist the Ghana Refugee Board to fulfil Ghana's obligations to make decisions on long-standing asylum claims.

Key targets

- Liberian and Togolese refugees who are unable to return to their countries of origin are granted a wider range of rights and entitlements similar to those enjoyed by Ghanaian citizens.
- All Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees are informed of the modalities and implications of the cessation clause, and the Government is assisted to cope with an increase in refugee status determination (RSD) claims.
- Buduburam camp infrastructure is incorporated in district development plans in consultation with the Government and the local population.
- Refugees of various nationalities repatriate to their countries of origin with the assistance of the regional repatriation project for West Africa.
- Asylum-seekers have their claims processed expeditiously by the Ghana Refugee Board.

Strategy and activities

Refugees from Liberia in Buduburam camp

The feasibility and consequences of the Government's decision to move the remaining Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp into smaller communities will be fully assessed by UNHCR in close coordination with the UN Country Team, NGO partners and donors. Meanwhile, UNHCR will continue to support structural reforms in Buduburam, such as improvements in living conditions and the integration of the site into the community. All camp infrastructure and services including education and health will be handed over to the local authorities in 2009.

The Office will also promote improvements in the legal and socio-economic rights of refugees in Ghana, and seek self-reliance opportunities for them. UNHCR will lobby for the granting of residency rights as called for in ECOWAS protocols, consistent with the practice of other refugee hosting countries in the region. The Office will help pay the cost of issuing documents, such as consular cards or ECOWAS passports. It will also support the Government's decision to grant citizenship and permanent residence to any interested refugee who has parental or matrimonial ties with Ghanaian nationals.

Refugees from Togo

Some 3,500 refugees have benefited from UNHCR's repatriation assistance under a tripartite agreement signed in April 2007. The repatriation programme will end in 2008. Self-reliance and community projects in agriculture, small business and fisheries will help refugees opting for local integration in Ghana. Host populations will also benefit from these projects.

Refugees in Krisan camp

UNHCR will find durable solutions for complex, protracted cases. In line with priorities set through participatory assessments, the Office will adjust its assistance in the areas of security, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, health, food, education and non-food items to sustain basic living standards. All women of childbearing age will receive sanitary materials.

Urban refugees

Urban refugees find it difficult to become self-reliant. Many will require tailored local-integration solutions. Urban refugees in need of medical assistance will be referred to government hospitals and clinics for treatment. People with specific needs will be accommodated in transit centres, where they will be given blankets, cooking utensils and sanitary materials.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Liberia	15,000	15,000	8,000	8,000
	Togo	4,000	4,000	2,000	2,000
	Sudan	400	400	200	200
	Various	70	70	100	100
Asylum-seekers	Various	110	110	100	100
Total		19,580	19,580	10,400	10,400

Constraints

The Government's decision to close Buduburam camp and move the remaining Liberian refugees into Ghanaian communities could present financial and logistical challenges, and will affect both refugees and local communities. Some refugees in Buduburam and Krisan camps continue to insist that resettlement is the only durable solution for them.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	2
Total staff	40
International	5
National	35

Coordination

All refugee operations are coordinated with the Ghana Refugee Board. An ad-hoc task force on durable solutions for refugees, established within the framework of the UN Country Team, engages with the Government on post-repatriation issues. Since 2007, UNIDO, FAO and UNHCR have cooperated in a two-year programme to support refugees and their host communities in Buduburam and Krisan.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Services, Ghana Refugee Board, Ministry of the Interior, National Disaster Management Organization

NGOs: Assemblies of God Relief and Development Service, Christian Council of Ghana, National Catholic Secretariat, Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment

Others: Ghana Red Cross Society, Right to Play

Operational partners

Others: FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNDP, WFP, WHO

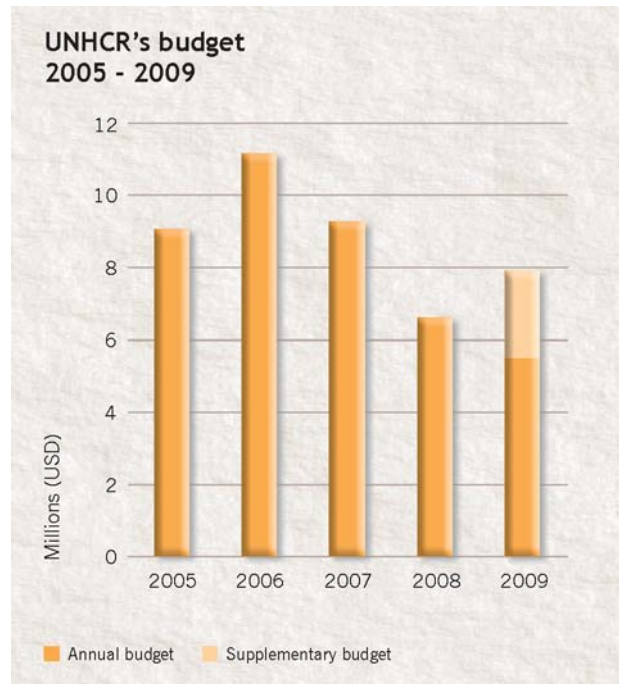


Liberian refugees are returning home from Ghana.

Financial information

The overall budget, which topped USD 8.5 million at the peak of the refugee operation in Ghana in 2006, has decreased to USD 5.5 million for 2009. The decline is the result of the success of repatriation activities in the region. The annual budget will be complemented by a supplementary budget of USD 2,350,000 covering additional needs for local integration in Ghana.

The regional supplementary programme to support the local integration of residual groups of refugees in West Africa is described in the West Africa subregional chapter.



Budget (USD)				
Activities and services	2008		2009	
	Annual budget	Annual budget	Supplementary budget Local integration of Liberian refugees	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,712,653	1,533,247	342,500	1,875,747
Community services	296,200	245,539	80,412	325,951
Crop production	60,000	43,150	29,381	72,531
Domestic needs	64,273	31,605	0	31,605
Education	394,125	286,958	108,763	395,721
Health	435,885	398,713	250,000	648,713
Income generation	20,000	21,256	375,000	396,256
Legal assistance	487,375	361,355	325,000	686,355
Operational support (to agencies)	386,632	215,028	80,391	295,419
Sanitation	223,709	191,305	100,000	291,305
Shelter and infrastructure	514,307	398,713	663,431	1,062,144
Transport and logistics	406,936	629,470	0	629,470
Water	168,677	116,908	0	116,908
Total operations	5,170,773	4,473,247	2,354,878	6,828,125
Programme support	966,755	1,069,946	0	1,069,946
Total	6,137,528	5,543,193	2,354,878	7,898,071