

Settling in to sit out a sand storm in Damba camp (Burkina Faso), these **refugees from Mali** prefer to build a traditional shelter which withstands storms much better than a tent.

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



# West Africa



## | Working environment |

West Africa continued to be plagued by political upheaval in 2012. In Côte d'Ivoire, sustained efforts by the international community and the Government to improve security have met with only limited success.

Sporadic attacks on civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the military, allegedly by anti-government rebels, continue to be reported.



In Mali, the Tuareg-led uprising which began in January occurred at a particularly challenging moment for the population of the Sahel region, which was already facing a severe drought and food crisis. Some 205,000 people have been displaced within Mali consequent to the crisis and about 100,000 refugees have moved to the other Sahel countries of Burkina Faso and Niger. An escalation of the conflict in northern Mali, which is mainly controlled by Islamic rebels, would trigger more displacement in the subregion.

In April, a military coup in Guinea-Bissau brought the country to a standstill. The establishment of a transitional Government to end the stalemate has not made the political situation any less confusing.

Although the West Africa subregion is benefiting from robust economic growth, high rates of unemployment and poverty continue to foster mixed-migration movements within the subregion, as well as externally.

Following the reduction of tensions in Côte d'Ivoire, plans have been established for the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees in the region, with UNHCR and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire signing separate tripartite agreements with Ghana, Liberia, Guinea and Togo.

UNHCR will continue to implement the comprehensive solutions strategy for Liberians who ceased to hold refugee status in 2012, with an emphasis on local integration.

Approximately 168,000 refugees, mainly Ghanaians, Ivorians, Liberians, Mauritians and Senegalese, are dispersed in both urban and rural areas in several West African countries. UNHCR seeks durable solutions such as local integration and repatriation, including solutions related to the cessation clauses for these refugees.

The return of some 71,000 refugees to the subregion was expected in 2012. As of June 2012, some 83,000 voluntary returns had been recorded. Of the returnees, some 17,000, mostly Liberians, Ivorians and Mauritians, received UNHCR

assistance to facilitate their transportation to their countries, while the countries of asylum received and helped with reintegration for the entire 83,000.

## | Strategy |

In West Africa, UNHCR will continue to implement critical life-saving and protection interventions. The Office will protect and assist populations of concern scattered across 15 countries and living in both rural and urban areas. It will improve assistance in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene; health; education and in the response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The large-scale voluntary repatriation of Mauritanian refugees in the subregion will continue, with some 9,000 Mauritanian refugees in Mali having opted for return. Local integration opportunities will be pursued for those who wish to stay in their countries of asylum, in particular in Senegal.

Programmes addressing statelessness in West Africa will focus on training and building the capacity of the national authorities to prevent the problem. UNHCR will continue to help build national asylum capacity. It will advocate for appropriate legislation and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures as well as support community structures and civil society.

In view of the internal displacement situation in Mali in 2012, UNHCR will take responsibility for protection under the cluster approach.

## | Constraints |

UNHCR is hampered in its work in West Africa by difficult socio-economic conditions and fragile political and security contexts in several countries. Elections are expected to be held in

Togo, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and Mali in the last quarter of 2012. Any socio-political unrest that these elections unleash could affect UNHCR's operations and might result in massive population displacements.

## Operations

Operations in **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Liberia**, **Mali**, **Burkina Faso** and **Niger** are described in separate chapters.

In 2013, operations in West Africa will cover six refugee populations scattered among 15 countries and living in camps, as well as rural and urban areas.

UNHCR in **Togo** will focus on the reintegration of Togolese returning from Ghana and Benin. The reintegration programme will promote social cohesion in areas hosting returnees. The political situation in Togo remains calm and could convince many Togolese refugees to repatriate voluntarily. Additionally, circumstances that led to the flight of these refugees will be closely reviewed to determine the invocation of the cessation clauses.

The Government of **Benin** is expected to continue issuing and renewing the documentation of some 2,800 Togolese refugees who are still in need of international protection. UNHCR will also provide individual and collective counselling on durable solution options to these refugees.

The **Gambia** and **Guinea-Bissau** now host over 17,700 Senegalese refugees, largely in rural areas. In 2013, UNHCR will devise a new response plan to improve its preparation for any future influx of refugees. It will emphasize livelihood activities for the additional caseload and for 40 per cent of the current group of refugees who are threatened by food

insecurity. More support will be needed to boost agricultural production and facilitate access to arable land.

The process of cessation of refugee status for Liberian, Togolese and Rwandan refugees and the pursuit of durable solutions for some 10,000 Ivorian refugees will be the principal challenges facing UNHCR in **Ghana** in 2013.

In **Sierra Leone**, the "ceased circumstances" deadline of 30 June 2012 for Liberian refugees brought the bulk of UNHCR's work with these people to a close. Refugees who integrated locally are expected to be self-reliant by the time UNHCR ends its operations in Sierra Leone at the end of 2012.

UNHCR currently runs three refugee programmes in **Guinea** covering 5,400 Liberian refugees and 5,600 Ivorian refugees, as well as 300 refugees of other nationalities and asylum-seekers. Guinea has registered 44 Malian refugees since the Mali crisis and may receive more. UNHCR will use its good offices to continue to help the increasing number of Liberian refugees opting for voluntary repatriation to exercise their choice to go back home. Additionally, the Office will focus on the legal aspects of local integration and livelihoods support for persons of concern.

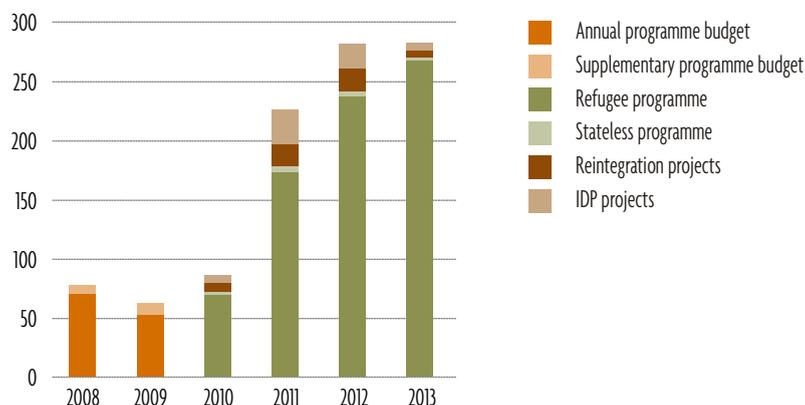
In **Nigeria** UNHCR will provide partial care and maintenance for 2,000 Cameroonian refugees in Benue and Cross River States. In addition, the Office will implement livelihood activities, such as agricultural and vocational-skills projects, for Cameroonian and Chadian refugees living in rural areas and support the voluntary repatriation of Cameroonian refugees.

In **Senegal**, UNHCR will also ensure that the 14,100 Mauritanian refugees who opted for local integration continue to have equal access to documentation, education, primary health care and HIV-prevention and treatment services.

UNHCR will give priority to local integration, self-reliance, livelihoods and refugee documentation in its advocacy with government, the private sector and implementing partners.

## UNHCR's budget in West Africa 2008 – 2013

Millions (USD)



## Financial information

The recent hostilities in Mali led to an increase in requirements for West Africa. The additional funds for 2013–2014 will cover assistance to Malian refugees and IDPs and capacity-building support for governments, particularly with regard to protection, reintegration and local integration.

## UNHCR's budget in West Africa (USD)

OPERATION	2012 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2012)	2013				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Côte d'Ivoire	31,346,810	20,021,340	1,809,192	4,632,223	1,381,809	27,844,564
Ghana	12,232,593	11,743,905	0	329,926	0	12,073,831
Guinea	6,581,250	4,106,674	0	1,319,319	0	5,425,993
Liberia	59,549,221	42,508,774	0	0	0	42,508,774
Senegal Regional Office <sup>1</sup>	173,017,923	190,054,238	582,224	230,000	4,692,640	195,559,103
<b>Total</b>	<b>282,727,796</b>	<b>268,434,931</b>	<b>2,391,416</b>	<b>6,511,468</b>	<b>6,074,449</b>	<b>283,412,264</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes activities in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.