

SOUTHERN AFRICA

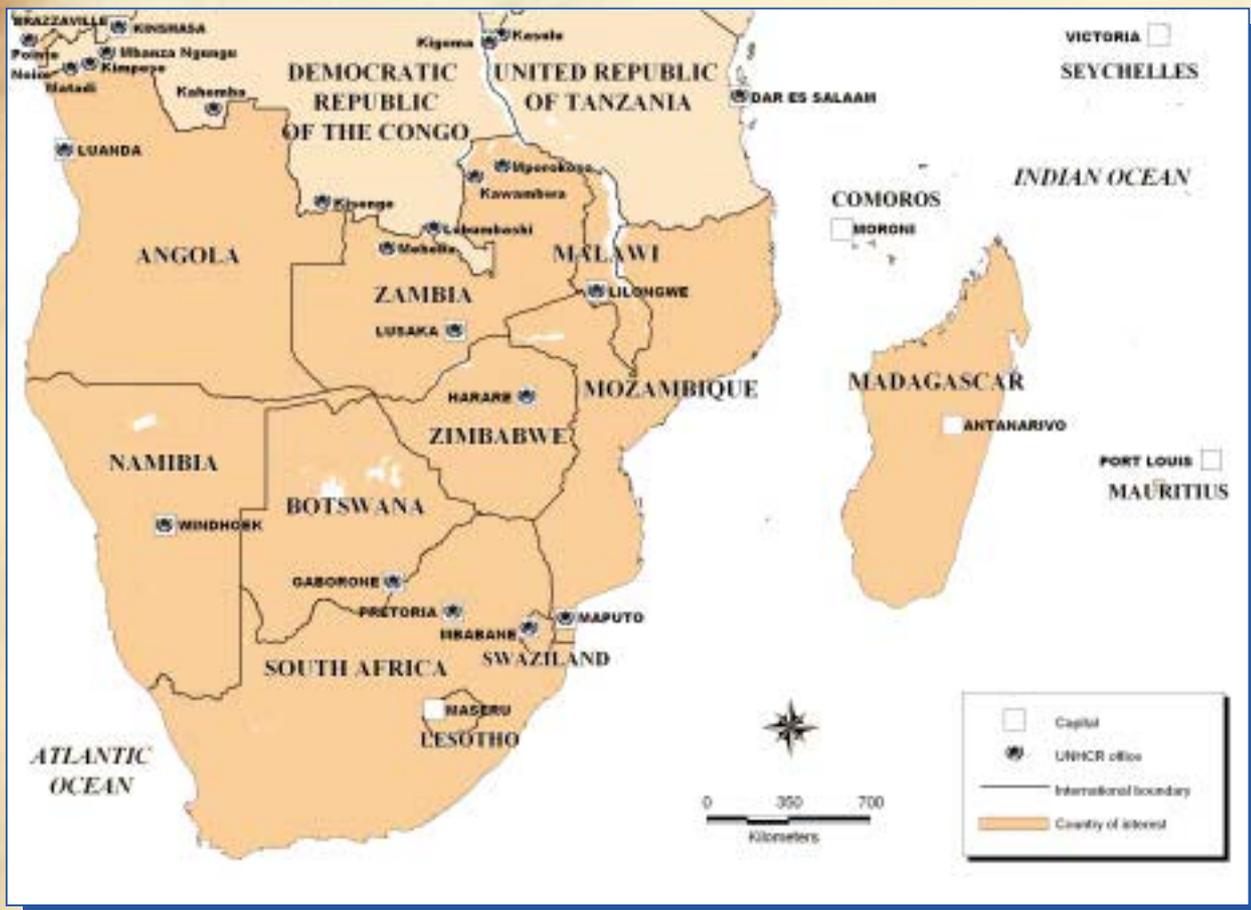
Angola,
Botswana,
Comoros,
Lesotho,
Madagascar,

Malawi,
Mauritius,
Mozambique,
Namibia,
Seychelles,

South Africa,
Swaziland,
Zambia,
Zimbabwe.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OVERVIEW

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Recent Developments

By the middle of 1999, there were some 300,000 refugees, asylum-seekers (from both urban and rural backgrounds) and returnees in the region. South Africa has the largest single concentration of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in the region. They originate from a wide range of countries, some even outside Africa. Zambia hosts the most rural refugees. Mainly from Angola, they are protected and assisted in refugee settlements and camps.

The civil wars raging in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are producing new refugee movements. The most significant numbers continue to be registered in Zambia but Namibia, notably, has had to cope with an influx of Angolan refugees twice the size of its own population. There is a brisk movement of urban asylum-seekers to and between the

countries of the region, the majority headed for South Africa. It is a complex phenomenon which includes people who move to and within the region for reasons unconnected with asylum, but who nonetheless appeal to the asylum system.

Other, non-refugee, humanitarian crises also affect the region. The most acute and dramatic of these concerns internally displaced persons and other victims of war in Angola. The number of Angolan IDPs soared in 1999 to over 2 million persons, or one sixth of that country's population.

In many respects, the challenges posed by the region's refugees and asylum-seekers are not untypical of those elsewhere. However, the region does present a few unique problems associated with the provision of protection and assistance and the search for solutions. Competition over

limited employment opportunities and social and community amenities has intensified manifestations of xenophobia towards foreigners, refugees and asylum-seekers. In parts of the region, refugees face not only restrictive official measures and policies, but also public hostility leading sometimes to attacks on foreigners. These have combined to seriously compromise refugees' safety and ability to integrate into local communities. Across the region, governments tend to neglect refugees and asylum-seekers in rural areas, becoming instead overly preoccupied with those in urban zones, whose plight is compounded by the presence of undocumented immigrants jeopardising the institutions and procedures of asylum. All these factors have created a difficult public, legal, policy and management environment, with the result that UNHCR has to face problems which, notwithstanding the relatively limited numbers involved, prove to be extremely resource-intensive.

Strategic Objectives

UNHCR's main objective in the region is to secure for refugees the right to seek and enjoy asylum and to be treated in accordance with internationally applicable protection standards. Its programmes and activities must be designed to foster an environment that is more positive, accommodating and enabling, so that refugees find not only safety, but also solutions. UNHCR's activities are designed to combat growing intolerance towards foreigners, to enable refugees to compete for employment or income-generation opportunities, to bring about local integration, and even naturalisation where feasible.

Efforts will continue to strengthen the commitment of governments to the international protection of refugees and the search for solutions to their problems. Although refugee-specific legislation has been promulgated in many of the countries, there remain serious shortcomings in its implementation. The following issues will be addressed wherever and whenever necessary: building institutions for proper refugee management; procedures for refugee status determination; accession to and ratification of international instruments on refugees and stateless persons; and municipal legislative reform.

Further efforts will be made to foster cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). UNHCR will in particular support SADC's conflict resolution initiatives and its plans for regional disaster management. Coope-

ration and collaboration will also be strengthened with the relevant sister agencies of the UN system and non-governmental organisations, above all in the context of PARinAC.

Operations

In line with the High Commissioner's decision to restructure the Africa Bureau, the Regional Directorate, based in Pretoria, covers the following countries in the region: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Regional Directorate will in 2000 operate with 24 staff (nine international and 15 national) as well as one Junior Professional Officer. The role of the Directorate is to harmonise policy-making and oversee operations in the region. The Regional Director will work closely with the other two Regional Directors to bring an Africa-wide perspective to UNHCR's interventions. Policy advice and guidance will be provided to country representatives on issues related to international protection as well as programme and financial management. In all the aforementioned countries, the thrust of UNHCR's programmes is to strengthen the legal and policy regime, structures, systems and procedures for protection as a whole and to create an environment for local integration to the fullest extent possible.

The following paragraphs provide information on objectives and activities in those countries not covered in country chapters. **Zambia and South Africa** are described in separate chapters following this regional overview.

Angola is yet again in the throes of an implacable civil war. One out of five Angolans is displaced either internally or externally. As a result of precarious security and operational conditions, Angolan repatriation and reintegration operations remain suspended. In Angola itself, UNHCR is only undertaking limited operations, on behalf of the returnees and the nearly 10,000 refugees there (almost all of them from DRC), with 50 per cent living in the capital). UNHCR nevertheless remains determined to do its best to assist those returnees who are accessible, and to provide protection and solutions for refugees granted asylum in Angola. Measures to enhance self-sufficiency and local integration of refugees will be supported as far as possible. The Office will also continue, circumstances permitting, to assist refugees from DRC wishing to return home. Readiness for possible

further refugee influxes into Angola, above all from DRC, will be maintained.

The number of refugees and asylum-seekers in **Malawi** is increasing and is expected to exceed 1,600 by January 2000. Most recent arrivals are from the countries of the Great Lakes region, 73 per cent of them women and children. UNHCR wants to help create a more supportive environment for refugee protection and solutions in Malawi, in order to favour local self-sufficiency and integration. This requires the removal by the Government of reservations to the provisions of the 1951 Convention that concern freedom of movement of refugees and access to employment. Relevant amendments to the country's refugee legislation are also being promoted.

Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles furnish a fundamental challenge: non-accession to international refugee instruments, absence of national refugee legislation and a generally unfavourable environment. UNHCR's efforts continue to be directed towards creating understanding and acceptance of a policy of asylum as such, leading to accession to the 1951 Convention and the adoption of national refugee legislation. For the time being, the Office is obliged to resort to resettlement as the only durable solution for most of the persons of concern to the Office in these countries. In **Lesotho**, the local UNDP office looks after UNHCR's interest, in particular the local integration of some 30 refugees.

In **Mozambique**, the backlog of several hundred asylum-seekers will have to be cleared. UNHCR's durable solutions project will start to provide support for pre-university education. Further inputs will also be made in the animal husbandry sector. The coverage of such a large country has also demonstrated the need to strengthen UNHCR's staffing and other operational resources, even though there are few refugees.

In **Namibia**, the Office will work towards local integration of several thousand Angolan refugees who make up the majority of the refugee population there. The number of refugees is expected to climb by the end of 1999 to at least 5,000, twice the number two years ago. UNHCR is preparing contingency plans in case more Angolans seek protection and assistance in Namibia as a result of the devastating consequences of continuing civil war. Status determination procedures should have been revamped by the end of 2000, includ-

ing an appeal procedure and identity cards for recognised refugees. Here too, the need is manifest for enhancement of all aspects of UNHCR's presence, staff and other resources.

In **Botswana**, 250 Angolan refugees should be naturalised in 2000. Although the repatriation from Botswana of approximately 2,000 Namibians from the Caprivi region of Namibia should be concluded, movements which started in May 1999 have been suspended since August 1999, when separatists in that region mounted a military action.

UNHCR protects some 600 refugees in **Swaziland** and runs an education programme which will continue in 2000.

Zimbabwe is host to some 1,000 refugees. Although in principle the Government wishes the refugees to live in the Tongogara Settlement, exceptions are made for the disabled, for parents who have children in school in the city, and similar cases. Those who continue to live in urban areas and who are not yet fully self-reliant will receive counselling and educational support for their children. Those who have failed to become self-sufficient will receive assistance to settle in Tongogara Settlement and engage in agricultural activities. Any new arrivals will be assisted in the Waterfall Transit Centre until their status is determined. After recognition, UNHCR will be able to assist them with education and income-generation, for example through micro-credits.

SOUTHERN AFRICA	
BUDGET (USD)	
Country	Annual Programme
Angola	2,555,084
Botswana	1,121,139
Malawi	890,007
Mozambique	656,660
Namibia	1,490,348
South Africa*	5,315,322
Swaziland	429,614
Zambia	5,938,363
Zimbabwe	730,688
Regional Project**	253,800
Sub-total	19,381,025
Liaison Unit at Headquarters	486,525
Total	19,867,550

* Includes administrative costs for the Regional Director's Office of USD 1,827,837 as well as operational and administrative costs in Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.
 ** Covers scholarships for refugee students in Southern African countries.