

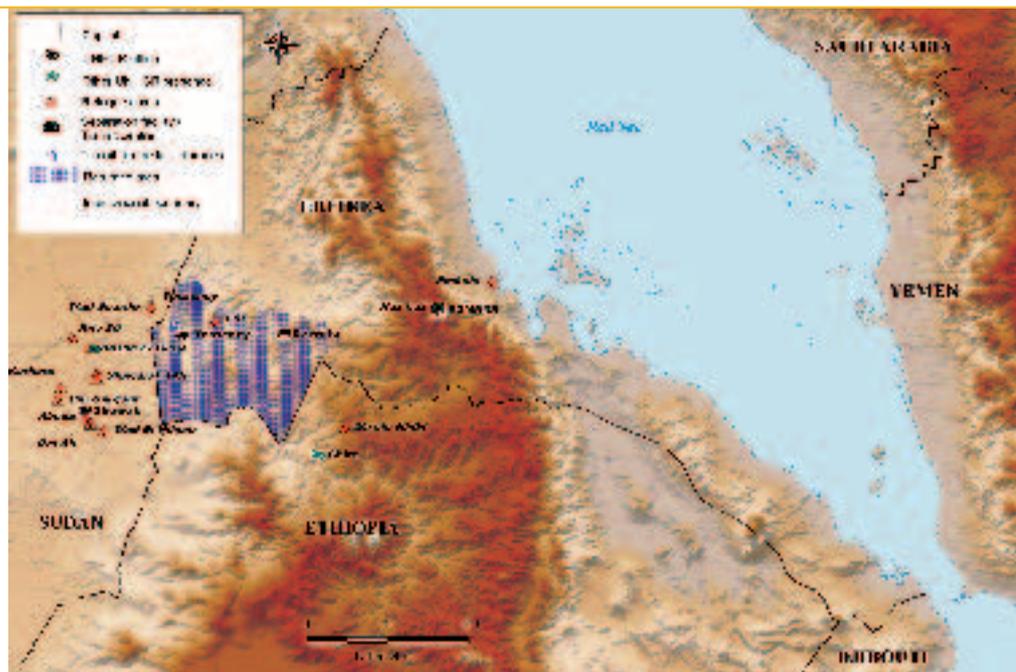
# Eritrea

## Main objectives

Provide protection and material assistance and seek durable solutions for some 3,600 Sudanese and Somali refugees; promote and facilitate the voluntary repatriation of some 60,000 Eritrean refugees from the Sudan (revised planning figure); in co-operation with other actors, provide initial reintegration assistance to over 150,000 returnees and persons in returnee-receiving communities, simultaneously engaging development agencies to address medium- to long-term reintegration needs; ensure that returnees enjoy basic rights and equal access to services; maintain a focus on vulnerable persons such as female heads of household, children, adolescents, the disabled and older refugees.

## Impact

- 19,009 Eritrean refugees were repatriated from Sudan.
- All returnees received 'reinsertion assistance' upon arrival and reintegration projects were implemented in the sectors of water, education, agriculture, sanitation, community services and health.
- UNHCR had free access to returnee sites and protection monitoring was undertaken for all returnees.
- A three-year "4R" Recovery Strategy (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) was initiated, with a view to addressing the medium- to long-term reintegration needs of returning refugees, Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) and expellees from Ethiopia.
- With the appointment of key technical staff in mid-2002, a range of initiatives addressing the special needs of vulnerable populations was developed and carried out.



- A detailed plan of action to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was put in place by the year's end.
- 1,000 "new" Somali refugees were given *prima facie* refugee status and provided with basic necessities including shelter, food, health care and non-food items.
- Eight Sudanese refugees were resettled.

## Working environment

### The context

Eritrea continued to provide protection for refugees from Sudan (620) and Somalia (2,990), all of whom received material assistance from UNHCR in two camps, Elit (Sudanese) and Emkulu (Somalis). During the year, Somali refugees continued to arrive in Eritrea (1,000 were registered). The population of Emkulu camp thus almost doubled, placing additional strain on camp capacity and infrastructure. By the year's end, progress in discussions between the Office and governmental authorities resulted in the implementation of a malnutrition study in the camp, and the re-opening of Emkulu school after nearly one year of closure.

The voluntary repatriation operation continued smoothly in the first half of 2002, but was temporarily stalled by the onset of the rainy season in July. Subsequently, the resumption of the cross-border movements was affected by an outbreak of hostilities in eastern Sudan, and the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Sudan and Eritrea was suspended. There were no further movements carried out for the remainder of 2002. As a result, only 19,009 Eritrean refugees were repatriated from Sudan in 2002 (the revised planning figure having been 60,000).

UNHCR's goal in addressing the medium- to long-term needs of returnees entailed promoting and supporting joint efforts to ensure broad involvement in reintegration programming. This resulted in a concerted effort by UN agencies and the Government of Eritrea to develop a three-year Integrated Recovery Programme (IRP). The Programme is based on the "4Rs" strategy and represents the combined efforts of relief and developmental agencies and the Government. By the end of 2002, UNHCR, in partnership with the Government and other concerned agencies, had developed a detailed plan for the Recovery Programme to be presented to bilateral and multi-lateral partners. In January 2003, a multi-donor, inter-agency mission visited Eritrea to assess and assist in the finalisation of the detailed recovery plan. This programme is one of the first examples of the implementation of the "4Rs" strategy.

## Constraints

A major constraint hampering the process of repatriation from Sudan to Eritrea has been the growing insecurity along the border, particularly in October 2002, when the Tripartite Agreement was suspended. Furthermore, land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) littered throughout the country have resulted in several incidents involving herding populations in search of better water sources. The UN Mine Action Co-ordination Centre reported 16 newly laid landmine fields in the southern borderlands in 2002. The presence of landmines repeatedly hampered UNHCR's and its partners' access to the beneficiaries.

The implementation of the reintegration programme has been negatively affected by a prolonged lack of capacity as generally, Eritrea suffers from a shortage of skilled labour. Delays in the Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme have slowed the return of demobilised ex-soldiers to their villages (only 10,000 of the planned 70,000 had returned up to the end of 2002). These factors impede the provision of goods and services, the construction of needed infrastructure and the ability to monitor and evaluate ongoing projects.

Drought throughout the country has continued into its fourth year. The areas of return, often referred to as the country's bread basket, have been particularly hard hit. International calls for assistance have focused some attention on the region,

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Returnees (from Sudan)	19,000	19,000	53	49
Somalia (Refugees)	2,990	2,990	43	45
Sudan (Refugees)	620	620	35	44

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds				
Revised Budget	Income from Contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other Funds Available <sup>2</sup>	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
20,025,348	13,784,121	2,968,384	16,752,505	16,356,362

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.  
<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.  
The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

but, according to the Government, the response has not been sufficient to lessen the severity of the problem (see Funding, below). For returnees and their communities, the drought has hampered food self-sufficiency, and agreements with WFP regarding food provision have had to be extended.

While the acceptance of the Boundary Commission ruling of April 2002, by the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea was seen as a major milestone in the peace process between the two countries, by the end of the year, demarcation of the border had yet to take place. The return of refugees to the UN-established Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) has been hampered by delays in the final settlement of this issue.

## Funding

As the repatriation operation could not resume as planned after the rainy season, expenditure was lower, with the result that programme funding was adequate. However, unresolved issues between major donors and the Government of Eritrea over internal governance issues have had an adverse effect on the identification of development funding. This may, in the future, affect the sustainability of UNHCR's repatriation and reintegration efforts.

## Achievements and impact

### Somali and Sudanese refugees Protection and solutions

New arrivals from Somalia and Sudan were granted *prima facie* refugee status and accommodated in Emkulu and Elit refugee camps respectively. Eight Sudanese refugees previously accepted for resettlement on protection-related grounds were resettled to third countries in 2002. Voluntary repatriation was not a viable option either for Somali or Sudanese refugees. UNHCR's protection activities included negotiations with the Government on improved services and safety in camps. The Office also continued to engage the Eritrean authorities in discussion on accession to the Refugee and Statelessness Conventions, and offered technical support and advice in the drafting of relevant national legislation. At the year's end, the country still had no national laws to address these issues.

## Activities and assistance

**Community services:** Both Somali and Sudanese refugees benefited from UNHCR's community services programmes, including the construction and supply of recreational and sports facilities. In addition, 16 refugee men and 35 refugee women received basic woodworking training to develop their skills and to generate additional income.

**Domestic needs/household support:** The newly arrived Somali and Sudanese refugees received non-food items such as jerry cans, blankets, bed sheets, mattresses, and three bars of soap per month. Refugee women aged 15-45 received sanitary materials every month. In addition, UNHCR provided kerosene stoves and kerosene, to help women prepare meals for their families without having to spend hours searching for firewood. This also helped to protect the already seriously degraded environment in Eritrea.

**Education:** 940 students, including 378 girls, attended primary school in both refugee camps. UNHCR provided classrooms, furniture, school supplies and also paid stipends for 24 refugee teachers. 211 refugee men and 119 refugee women attended an adult education programme.

**Food:** Food rations, procured with UNHCR resources and selected according to WFP guidelines, were distributed to all 3,612 refugees. The food basket included wheat, flour and/or rice, lentils, oil, sugar, salt, and fresh vegetables. Distribution of food items was effected through refugee committees in both camps. The participation of refugee women in these committees ensured the representation of women in the decision-making process.

**Health/nutrition:** UNHCR built a health station in Elit camp, as refugees did not have access to local health care facilities. Both refugee camps now have primary health care clinics run by senior nurses, and ambulances are on duty 24 hours a day. Patients are referred to higher-level health facilities if necessary. UNHCR employed a paediatrician on a part-time basis to address the reported high rate of malnutrition cases in Emkulu camp. A nutritional survey was carried out in Emkulu camp, which resulted in the provision of blanket wet feeding for all children under five and pregnant/lactating

women. Some 25 refugees were trained in PEER Education (Environment). The Office also carried out HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in both refugee camps to sensitise refugees and bring about a change in behaviour to combat the spread of the disease.

**Legal assistance:** Refugee identification cards were replaced as necessary, and birth and death certificates were issued. Eight Sudanese refugees were resettled to new countries.

**Operational support (to agencies):** To ensure effective management of the refugee programme, UNHCR provided operational support to its implementing partners in the form of staff costs, vehicles, office supplies, allowances for rental and utility expenses. The Head of the Operations Division in

the Department of Immigration and Nationality was sent to San Remo, Italy, for training in refugee law issues.

**Sanitation:** In both refugee camps, the camp sanitation committees organised cleaning campaigns, and UNHCR assisted in providing garbage collection barrels, cleaning agents and payment for sanitation workers. Sanitation-related diseases were kept to a minimum in the camps.

**Shelter/Other Infrastructure:** 500 refugee households received semi-permanent metal shelter structures. For reasons of convenience and security, both camps were equipped with power for electric outdoor lighting during the evenings.



Eritrean returnees who arrived from Ethiopia were given basic housing by UNHCR – they collected firewood from nearby brush.  
UNHCR / S. Boness

**Transport/logistics:** UNHCR regularly transported food and non-food items from Asmara to the refugee camps. No delays in the distribution of food and non-food items was reported in 2002.

**Water:** UNHCR ensured refugees' access to adequate quantities of potable water (20 litres per person per day). The Office also strove to ensure that water distribution points were within a reasonable distance of residential areas in the camps to reduce insecurity for refugee women fetching water.

## Refugees returning from Sudan Protection and solutions

Due to the closure of the Eritrea-Sudan border in October 2002, only 19,009 Eritrean refugees returned under the voluntary repatriation programme (UNHCR's revised planning figure was 60,000). Eritrean authorities undertook the registration of returnees in Tesseney transit centre, and UNHCR provided HIV/AIDS and mine-awareness information. Returnee monitoring was undertaken by protection staff, and humanitarian assistance was provided to a small number of "spontaneous returnees" from Sudan and the Gulf countries, as well as to 33 Eritreans deported from Sudan, in December 2002 who had already signed up for voluntary repatriation. To systematise the field monitoring, UNHCR developed a returnee-monitoring database, which expanded its capacity to track both general protection trends and the conditions and problems in returnee areas. In addition, the Office intervened with local, regional and national authorities to obtain guaranteed access to land and a relaxation of military service obligations for returnees, at least for an initial period. UNHCR continued to monitor the potentially stateless individuals who were expelled from Eritrea and Ethiopia, and drew attention to a number of cases of concern. Offers of technical assistance to the Government of Eritrea in the development of legislation on nationality and statelessness issues were renewed.

## Activities and assistance

**Crop production:** To enable returnees to become self-sufficient, UNHCR assisted them in the clearing, ploughing and harrowing of farmland. Activities included water and soil conservation projects in eight returnee sites, seed procurement and the establish-

ment of drip irrigation systems that benefited 500 families.

**Community services:** UNHCR constructed a youth centre in Goluj and a playground in Talatasher, benefiting both returnees and host communities.

**Domestic needs/household support:** A review of the repatriation package in 2002 resulted in the inclusion of additional items to facilitate reintegration. All returnees received 80-litre water containers, jerry cans, mats, plastic sheeting, wire mesh, hand tools, mosquito nets, blankets, clothes, multi-purpose soap, sanitary material for women, kerosene stoves, griddles, pots and cups. Those who opted to return to urban areas received a cash equivalent in place of some of these items. All returning refugees received small cash grants to get them started financially.

**Education:** To enable returnee students to continue their education, UNHCR constructed five elementary schools, extended another one and repaired makeshift schools. All these schools were equipped with classroom supplies, books and teaching aids. Fifty-five newly-recruited Arabic teachers received training and an initial two months' salary from UNHCR. Returnee high school students received a monthly allowance to cover boarding expenses.

**Food:** 19,009 returning refugees received hot meals in Tesseney transit centre during the repatriation movement.

**Health/nutrition:** Medical teams accompanied returnees from the point of entry to the transit centre. UNHCR also constructed two health stations in returnee areas and purchased drugs and medical supplies to be handed over to the Ministry of Health. The Office implemented community health promotion campaigns in seven communities. In addition, mobile clinics brought primary health care to remote villages. To strengthen the Ministry's capacity to deliver and monitor a sound health service to returnees, UNHCR recruited 38 medical staff and covered their initial salary for three months.

**Income generation:** Female-headed households in Adi Shegalla, Gerghef and Goluj received training on income-generating activities from UNHCR's

implementing partner. As the project started late in the year, the objectives could not be completed and activities will continue into 2003.

**Legal assistance:** Support in this sector enabled UNHCR's government partner to register and document returnees upon their arrival in Tesseney reception centre. The Office also deployed a UNV Protection Officer to monitor the situation of returnees in their chosen destinations.

**Livestock:** A livestock re-stocking programme was initiated and 46 tractor drivers received training.

**Operational support (to agencies):** Operational support for UNHCR's implementing partners allowed them to undertake their activities in a more structured way, taking into account UNHCR rules and regulations on co-ordination, reporting and financial accountability.

**Sanitation:** 11,100 returnees and locals benefited from the construction of 1,108 latrines and 2,000 garbage pits in Mogoraib, Tekreret, Adibara, Forto, Grasha, and Hademdemi. UNHCR also provided sanitation training to some 2,000 representatives from those communities.

**Shelter/other infrastructure:** UNHCR distributed a total of 2,951 shelter structures, 8,359 plastic sheets and 84,255 mats to returnees to enable them to construct their own shelters. A team of 26 shelter assistants was formed to assist vulnerable returnees in building their shelters.

**Transport/logistics:** A fleet of 59 UNHCR trucks was used to transport returnees. Commercial trucks were rented during the operation whenever needed. UNHCR set up a vehicle maintenance workshop in Tesseney and rented a warehouse.

**Water:** UNHCR's work in this sector focused on providing immediate intervention, while at the same time, identifying more sustainable solutions. UNHCR's implementing partner assisted communities receiving large numbers of returnees, where local water resources quickly became overstretched, by providing water trucks for a limited period and rehabilitating, or upgrading water equipment. In order to strengthen the existing water systems, UNHCR installed additional water

distribution systems in 12 returnee sites. Equipment such as pumps, pipes and generators were procured to reinforce existing structures. These interventions benefited both the returnees and the host communities, thus easing the reintegration process for the returnees.

## Organisation and implementation

### Management

UNHCR maintained three offices in Eritrea (Asmara, Barentu and Tesseney) with a total of 99 staff (23 international, 76 national). During the course of 2002, 13 international posts (including UNOPs staff and UNVs) and 26 national posts were regularised, thus strengthening the capacity of the Office to implement the programme. This also had a beneficial effect on the Office's continuous participation in national and international fora. In April 2002, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted an audit of UNHCR operations in Eritrea. The recommendations of the auditors were used as guidelines and most were implemented by year's end.

### Working with others

UNHCR Eritrea continued to involve UN, donor and NGO partners in assessments, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A major focus for the latter half of 2002 was the collaborative formulation of the Integrated Recovery Programme with the aid of other UN agencies, donors, the World Bank and NGOs. As part of the "4Rs" strategy of engaging the Government of Eritrea and UN agencies in the reintegration and recovery process, UNHCR signed a number of agreements for recovery activities. These included: a Letter of Understanding with the Regional Administration of Gash Barka and UNDP on recovery activities in the main returnee area; a Letter of Understanding with the Regional Administration of Gash Barka and UNICEF on joint planning and programming for water/sanitation, child protection, education, health/nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and mine-risk education; and an MOU with WFP for assistance to refugees and returnees in Eritrea, combining forces on technical assessments, work plans and programming to

address the food and nutritional needs of returnees and returnee-receiving communities.

Other collaborative activities included the Joint UN Country Team meeting in Addis Ababa in March. UNHCR also played an active role in the Sectoral Working Groups, which were constituted in 2000 with members drawn from the Government of Eritrea, UN agencies and NGOs. The Office also participated in a number of newly-formed UNDAF Thematic Groups, covering health, education, food security, agriculture, water/sanitation, social services, sustainable livelihoods and data for development. Because of the centrality of the needs of returnees and returnee-receiving areas, UNHCR co-chairs the “4Rs” Thematic Group in Eritrea, along with the Government and UNDP.

## Overall assessment

Continuing reviews and evaluative missions enabled UNHCR to further refine and enhance its assistance to Somali and Sudanese refugees. The appointment of a multi-disciplinary team of experts in key sectors has particularly strengthened UNHCR’s reintegration programme in areas of planning, implementation, monitoring and financial control. A welcome secondary effect has been the marked improvement in the living conditions of the Somali and Sudanese refugees. The Office also strengthened its ability to uphold its protection mandate through improved monitoring with the development of the returnee monitoring database. Returnee monitoring shows that returnees have access to adequate primary health care, educational facilities, agricultural assistance, accessible water, and community programmes on sanitation, income generation, HIV/AIDS and mine awareness. Over 150,000 returnees and their receiving communities have been directly assisted through UNHCR’s programme in 2002.

To keep the programme on a scale compatible with its mandate, financial limitations and relative organisational strengths, UNHCR began at an early stage, to engage in and mobilise other development actors in addressing medium- to long-term needs in the returnee areas. Particularly, during the second half of 2002, the Office focused on strategies to ensure the sustainability of return, with rapid results. The Integrated Recovery Programme led

by the Government of Eritrea, UNDP, and UNHCR with the support of concerned UN agencies – is to be officially launched in 2003. Mechanisms are thus in place for joint programme planning and implementation of reintegration projects with all concerned actors. These mechanisms are the basis for UNHCR’s overall exit strategy vis-à-vis the returnee population.

### Offices

Asmara
Barentu
Tesseney

### Partners

#### Government Agencies

Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Office of Refugee Affairs
The Gash Barka Zoba Administration

#### NGOs

International Medical Corps
INTERSOS
Japan Emergency NGOs
Lutheran World Federation
National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students
OXFAM
Refugee Trust International

#### Others

UNDP
UNICEF
UNOPS
UNV
WFP

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds		Annual Programme and Supplementary Programme Budgets	
	Current Year's Projects	notes	Prior Years' Projects	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,454,080		0	
Community Services	277,388		0	
Crop Production	570,876		0	
Domestic Needs/Household Support	1,105,790		0	
Education	773,596		0	
Food	507,968		0	
Forestry	0		0	
Health/Nutrition	383,143		0	
Legal Assistance	313,584		0	
Livestock	111,732		0	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	757,502		0	
Sanitation	252,156		0	
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	981,591		(1)	
Transport/Logistics	900,266		0	
Water	1,335,392		0	
Transit Account	11,205		0	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	2,800,811		0	
<b>Sub-total Operational</b>	<b>12,537,081</b>		<b>(1)</b>	
Programme Support	1,540,767		0	
<b>Sub-total Disbursements/Deliveries</b>	<b>14,077,848</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	2,278,514	(3)	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,356,362</b>	<b>(1) (3)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>				
Payments Made	10,176,331		0	
Reporting Received	7,375,520		0	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>2,800,811</b>		<b>0</b>	
Outstanding 1st January	0		0	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		0	
Currency Adjustment	0		0	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>2,800,811</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>				
Outstanding 1st January	0		0	(5)
New Obligations	16,356,362	(1)	0	
Disbursements	14,077,848	(3)	0	(5)
Cancellations	0		0	(5)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>2,278,514</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:				
(1) Annex to Statement 1				
(3) Schedule 3				
(5) Schedule 5				