

West and Central Africa

Major developments

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Côte d'Ivoire
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Sao Tomé and Príncipe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

2002 was a year of extremes in West and Central Africa, marked by major population movements within and across national borders. It began with the declaration of the end of the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone, paving the way for thousands of refugees to return home. In contrast, Liberia produced a constant flow of refugees into neighbouring countries as fighting raged between government forces and Liberians United to Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebels. In Côte d'Ivoire, an attempt *coup d'état* in September was the precursor to a full-scale civil war, which led to the displacement of thousands of people and a breakdown in basic services and economic activity in more than half of the country. Until then, Côte d'Ivoire had for years enjoyed peace and stability, with long periods of economic prosperity. In the Central African Republic (CAR) general insecurity prevailed amidst political, economic and social turmoil. Demonstrations and strikes by civil servants over accumulated salary arrears paralysed the capital city of Bangui. A failed coup attempt in October claimed many civilian



lives, compelling leaders of the “*Communauté Economique et Monétaire des Etats d’Afrique Centrale*” (CEMAC) to deploy troops to restore security in Bangui and monitor the border between the CAR and Chad where the rebels allegedly had their base. Some 20,000 Nigerian nationals fled Taraba State (in the north of the country) following ethnic clashes in January 2002 and sought refuge in western Cameroon. In Senegal, hopes for a lasting solution to the Casamance problem faded as fighting resumed between the Government forces and the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC).

The Joint UNHCR-Save the Children Report released in January 2002, which contained grave allegations of sexual exploitation of children in West Africa, underscored the need to strengthen the fight against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). It also provided humanitarian agencies with the opportunity to collectively examine and address the vulnerability of beneficiaries vis-à-vis relief workers.

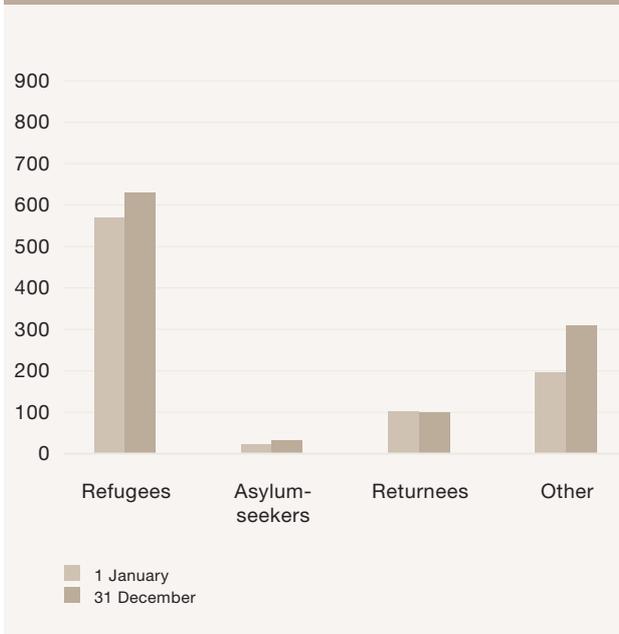
Challenges and concerns

UNHCR and its partners have often had to operate in hostile environments where minimum basic facilities were not available. In Sierra Leone, a massive rehabilitation effort is needed if there is to be any chance of peaceful cohabitation, particularly in the main areas of return, where the end of rebel rule left a scene of devastation. In the short term, there remain significant security risks, which stem primarily from the continuing war in Liberia.

Attacks on border villages by foraging combatants have taken place in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. These and the increasing phenomenon of armed elements within refugee settlement have fuelled anti-refugee sentiments. The infiltration into refugee settlements, by armed groups has often led to forced recruitment and increased the risks of *refoulement* of those attempting to seek refuge.

Of the 20,000 Nigerian refugees who fled into Cameroon, 17,000 receive limited relief and assis-

Persons of concern to UNHCR (in thousands)



tance. Although efforts have been initiated to address the causes that led to their flight, a durable solution has yet to be identified for these refugees. Similarly, no durable solution has so far been found for the 8,200 Senegalese and 26,000 Mauritanian refugees still remaining in neighbouring countries.

Efforts to investigate sexual exploitation cases are often constrained by insufficient expertise and resources on the part of both UNHCR and its partners. Furthermore, lack of investigative capacity and the weakness of police efforts have sometimes led to delays and ineffectual handling of cases. The security of staff, survivors and informers involved in investigation has also been a concern. One of the most effective means of mitigating SGBV issues clearly appears to be the sensitisation and empowerment of communities concerned, in order for them to deal with the issue.

Progress towards solutions

The volatile humanitarian environment in the region seems set to continue, with little prospect of an end to the crises in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. For the foreseeable future, it will be necessary to repeatedly adapt existing strategies and programmes to cope with continuing waves of cross-border population movements in the sub-region.

Although, contrary to expectations, the situation in their places of origin did not allow Congolese and Senegalese refugees to repatriate, some refugees have been assisted to return to their places of origin on an individual basis. Meanwhile, in Sierra Leone prospects for long-term peace and stability hinge on the reduction of poverty, economic growth and good governance. The inputs of the relevant actors, including UNHCR, in main areas of return, will be guided by the Government's National Recovery Strategy, along with elements of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UNHCR is calling for development funding to be channelled into returnee areas, and for national and international NGOs to be strengthened.

A UNHCR regional resettlement hub was established in Accra, Ghana, to strengthen the management of resettlement activities in the West and Central Africa region, and to provide technical support to 21 countries in the region. Key priorities include developing and harmonising criteria for improved planning, co-ordination, and processing of resettlement cases. Efforts to promote resettlement to Benin and Burkina Faso have not yielded the expected results, mainly due to limited opportunities for the achievement of self-sufficiency. For similar reasons, local settlement has often failed to provide a lasting solution, especially for urban refugees. Furthermore, governments are increasingly reluctant to provide long-term reintegration opportunities, as populations are increasingly hostile towards refugees in an environment of scarce resources and the increasing militarisation of camps.

Operations

Since the beginning of 2002, the office in **Benin** has been overseeing UNHCR operations in Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. Refugees in the four countries enjoy a relatively stable political situation and have an open policy towards the local integration of the refugee population. Benin had a refugee population of 5,021, of whom 152 benefited from resettlement programme to Benin and 1,159 were living in Kpomasse Camp. UNHCR provided assistance and protection to the refugee population in order to help them achieve self-reliance. In 2002, 719 asylum-seekers from various African countries were regis-

tered, 257 of whom were formally recognised as refugees. Under the repatriation programme, 28 refugees were assisted to return to their countries of origin (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda); 33 refugees were resettled in the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA. Self-reliance projects were implemented for 43 families. There were 465 school-aged children. UNHCR assisted nearly all who were in need of primary education, provided secondary educational grants for 286 students and post-secondary educational grants for another 62. Vocational training assistance was provided to 22 persons.

Burkina Faso hosted 457 refugees, including 74 who were integrated locally under the UNHCR-sponsored local settlement scheme and 377 asylum-seekers originating from Chad, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo (ROC), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

Following the closure of the UNHCR Office in Yaoundé, **Cameroon**, in 2002, protection and assistance activities in favour of urban refugees were implemented by the Cameroonian Red Cross under the umbrella of UNHCR Gabon. 41,288 refugees registered in Cameroon were mainly from the neighbouring countries, such as Chad, CAR, ROC and DRC. There were also 1107 Rwandan refugees. During 2002, 5,308 new asylum-seekers applied for refugee status. Health coverage was provided for the whole refugee population, as well as direct assistance to the most vulnerable refugees. Three micro-projects were supported, and scholarships awarded to 99 students. Due to a new influx of 17,000 Nigerian refugees who settled at the border in the area of Banyo, the Yaoundé UNHCR Office was re-opened and an emergency team was deployed to Banyo to develop an assistance programme.

In **Central African Republic**, UNHCR continued to provide protection and assistance to

36,000 Sudanese refugees in Mboki, 2,929 Congolese refugees in Molangue camp, and 11,000 urban refugees consisting mainly of Chadians, Congolese (DRC), Rwandans and Burundians. Despite difficulties and delays in the implementation of peace processes, the situation in DRC and Sudan improved sufficiently to allow repatriation to these countries. Education, health and income-generating activities were provided to the Sudanese refugees in Mboki. In 2002, a new policy of cost recovery was introduced, whereby refugees were asked to contribute to medical expenses. In Molangue, local authorities allocated 200 hectares of land to Congolese refugees for agricultural activities. At the same time, assistance was provided in the sectors of food, health education, shelter, water and sanitation. Six additional classrooms were constructed. Planned activities in the area of Bossangoa could not be carried out due to increasing insecurity in the country and the presence of rebels in the area. At the year's end, a residual caseload of 629 Chadians was still residing in Boubou Camps.

The overall situation in **Chad** was calm in 2002, apart from sporadic outbreaks of fighting in November in the north between the army and some rebel



Côte d'Ivoire: Liberian refugees, in a canoe, ready to return to Liberia.
UNHCR / G. Fardanesh

movements. The alleged involvement of Chad in the conflict in CAR created tensions between the two countries toward the end of 2002. The failure of the implementation of the Machakos peace accords shattered the Sudanese exiles' hopes for repatriation. The planned repatriation of 12,000 refugees settled in Adre could not take place due to the ongoing war in Sudan. They continued to survive through agricultural and livestock activities, having received a substantial package of material assistance in these sectors before the closure of the UNHCR office which contributed to their local integration. Urban refugees continued to be assisted in various sectors. Of 222 recognised refugees, only 138 received financial assistance. 31 schoolchildren were given school supplies and uniforms (16 at primary school, 15 at secondary school). Within the framework of national reconciliation, about 100 Chadians who were refugees in West and Central Africa, mainly in Benin, Senegal and Gabon, returned to Chad after many years in exile. They received a grant from UNHCR before departure from the various countries. Upon arrival, the returnees received a reintegration package from the Chadian Government. In 2002, 345 applications for asylum from refugees of all nationalities were reviewed. 174 cases were examined: 44 cases were accepted and 62 rejected.

Gabon hosted 13,473 refugees, mainly from ROC and DRC. Furthermore some 5,663 refugees sought asylum. UNHCR intensified its efforts to strengthen the Government's capacity to reduce the backlog of asylum applications, and about 368 cases were examined (74 were recognised). UNHCR provided health care and vocational training to urban refugees (60 per cent of women have benefited from this assistance). 2,199 schoolchildren received primary and secondary education. Market gardening proved profitable in rural areas (1,477 refugees received tools and tubers). 266 Congolese and 41 Chadians refugees from Gabon were repatriated and 19 refugees were resettled in Canada.

The **Gambia** was host to 11,896 refugees in 2002. The refugees are mainly from Sierra Leone and the Casamance region of Senegal, and 80 per cent reside in urban centres. UNHCR assists them with medical activities and they benefit from international protection. During 2002, the Gambian Immigration Authority department registered

5,000 newly arrived refugees, but 50 per cent of them preferred to return after calm was restored in their region of origin.

UNHCR's main achievements in **Ghana** in 2002 have been the reactivation of the Ghana Refugee Board and progress in refugee status determination and resettlement case processing. A regional resettlement centre for West and Central Africa was established in Accra, Ghana. Overall co-operation and co-ordination with government counterparts was strengthened. Community-based assistance was provided in both the Buduburam and Krisan refugee camps, which hosted approximately 30,000 refugees from various West and Central African countries. A programme for the prevention of SGBV was introduced.

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in **Guinea-Bissau** where 7,690 refugees are registered. They are mainly rural refugees of Senegalese origin residing in the north of the country in the Jolmète camp. There are also 371 urban refugees, mainly from Sierra Leone and Liberia. Efforts towards the adoption of a national refugee legislation were hampered by frequent changes of government in 2002.

Mali hosted 9,955 refugees and received 925 new asylum-seekers in 2002. The National Eligibility Committee conducted a registration exercise in late 2002 to identify refugees who arrived from Côte d'Ivoire following the attempted coup. At the end of 2002, 618 refugees from Côte d'Ivoire were registered. Most of them were living either in Faragouaran camp or in urban centres in the Sikasso region. It is believed that a number of refugees may have opted not to register with UNHCR. An emergency team of two international staff members was sent to Bamako in response to the Côte d'Ivoire crisis.

Niger hosted 296 urban refugees of whom 128 were rural Chadian refugees in Gouré, and 44 were asylum-seekers. The majority of the refugees originated from Chad and DRC. UNHCR successfully implemented a reintegration programme based on community assistance activities in support of 3,500 returnees from Algeria and Burkina Faso (287 refugee women benefited from income-generating activities, and over 1,000 refugee women received grants for livestock activities). 21 urban refugees received

vocational training; 25 children received scholarships for primary education, and 10 for secondary education.

Nigeria had a refugee population of 7,355, of whom 4,200 were assisted by UNHCR. These refugees, mainly from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Chad, resided in Oru Camp, some 120 km west of Lagos. Some 300 Sierra Leonean refugees were repatriated in 2002. Of 1,877 Sierra Leonean refugees, 26 persons benefited from vocational training programmes such as tailoring and hairdressing. 235 students in urban centres and Oru benefited from primary education while 60 students were enrolled in secondary schools and technical training. 15 Sierra Leoneans received micro-project assistance for farming and aquaculture. 31 Sierra Leonean refugees were resettled to Canada and Australia. Health care, accommodation and food assistance were provided to vulnerable refugees. There were 1,792 Liberian refugees, of whom 1,705 resided in Oru Camp. About 50 students attended the Oru camp primary school, 20 benefiting from secondary education and four from vocational training. 23 Liberians were resettled to Australia, Canada and the USA. 686 refugees of other nationalities received medical assistance and accommodation.

Senegal hosts 20,707 refugees. UNHCR continued to pursue durable solutions for Mauritanian refugees. Mauritanian refugee women were given agricultural, educational and vocational training assistance. Income-generating activities for rural Mauritanian refugee women took the form of micro-credit. 2,971 asylum-seekers were registered by the National Eligibility Committee. They were from Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. Although relations between Senegal and Mauritania improved significantly, the discussions on the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees remains to be pursued. Finally, vulnerable urban individuals continued to receive international protection, and humanitarian assistance when funds were available.

Togo hosted 12,257 refugees and 78 asylum-seekers, of whom 1,086 urban refugees received material assistance including primary and secondary education for 203 students, and micro-credit assistance for 30 families. 11,208 refugees from Ghana resided in rural parts of northern Togo where they are locally integrated.

Funding

Operations throughout West Africa were undermined by the overall financial constraints faced by UNHCR and the deterioration of the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia. New appeals had to be launched while regular programmes were already experiencing funding shortfalls. As a result, some activities in response to the Liberian emergency suffered delays in implementation. By the end of the year, however, the situation improved.

Voluntary Contributions – Restricted / Earmarked (USD)

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budgets	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
Benin					
	United States of America	100,000	100,000	0	0
Central African Republic					
	United States of America	529,000	529,000	0	0
Chad					
	United States of America	20,000	20,000	0	0
Cameroon					
	United States of America	30,000	30,000	0	0
Gabon					
	United States of America	870,000	870,000	0	0
Gambia					
	United States of America	60,000	60,000	0	0
Ghana					
	United States of America	560,000	560,000	0	0
Guinea					
	United States of America	5,400,000	5,400,000	0	0
	Japan	4,000,000	4,000,000	0	0
	European Commission	0	0	571,420	571,429
	Italy	375,587	375,587		
Côte d'Ivoire					
	United States of America	400,000	400,000	300,000	300,000
	United Kingdom	0	0	705,544	705,544
	Andorra	0	0	49,554	49,554
Liberia					
	Japan	1,500,000	1,500,000	0	0
	United States of America	1,230,000	1,230,000	0	0
	<i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i>	77,192	0	0	0
	European Commission	1	0	0	0
Mali					
	Italy	72,202	72,202	0	0
	France	0	0	99,108	99,108
Niger					
	Germany	106,484	106,484	0	0
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Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget		Supplementary Programme Budgets	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
>>>					
Nigeria					
	United States of America	190,000	190,000	0	0
Senegal					
	United States of America	210,000	210,000	0	0
Sierra Leone					
	United States of America	3,140,000	3,140,000	0	0
	Norway	2,863,738	2,863,738	0	0
	Japan	2,500,000	2,500,000	0	0
	Germany	2,264,899	2,264,899	1,180,425	1,180,425
	Switzerland	1,621,758	1,621,758	335,570	335,570
	Netherlands	849,000	849,000	0	0
	European Commission	415,591	415,591	1,430,027	1,455,883
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung</i> (GFR)	169,575	169,575	0	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR (JPN)	73,171	73,171	0	0
	Liechtenstein	33,557	33,557	0	0
	UK for UNHCR (GBR)	28	28	0	0
West and Central Africa					
	Sweden	6,594,049	6,594,049	563,380	563,380
	United States of America	3,380,000	3,380,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
	United Kingdom	0	0	2,343,750	2,343,750
	Denmark	1,893,939	1,893,939	0	0
	Japan	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0
	Finland	874,891	874,891	0	0
	Norway	748,867	748,867	397,878	397,878
	France	646,663	646,663	1,486,620	1,486,620
	Netherlands	0	0	471,700	471,700
	Belgium	436,432	436,432	0	0
	Luxembourg	396,432	396,432	0	0
	Canada	314,465	314,465	331,126	331,126
	Italy	0	0	198,556	198,556
	Germany	0	0	247,770	247,770
	<i>Rissho Kosei Kai</i> (JPN)	67,227	67,227	0	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung</i> (GFR)	0	0	49,068	49,068
	Liechtenstein	0	0	33,557	33,557
Total		46,014,748	45,937,555	14,295,053	14,320,918
¹ For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.					

Budget and Expenditure (USD)

Country	Revised Budget			Expenditure		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total
Benin	1,194,194	40,144	1,234,338	1,172,022	19,027	1,191,049
Cameroon	593,000	0	593,000	589,500	0	589,500
Central African Republic	2,687,445	0	2,687,445	2,575,707	0	2,575,707
Côte d'Ivoire	4,837,377	3,371,372	8,208,749	4,822,936	2,496,117	7,319,053
Gabon	1,899,928	0	1,899,928	1,874,871	0	1,874,871
Gambia	400,000	0	400,000	304,452	0	304,452
Ghana	1,547,735	42,482	1,590,217	1,505,323	25,942	1,531,265
Guinea	23,884,621	4,196,175	28,080,796	23,568,224	3,418,580	26,986,804
Liberia	8,658,576	48,000	8,706,576	8,544,741	42,889	8,587,630
Niger	110,000	0	110,000	100,404	0	100,404
Nigeria	1,044,778	0	1,044,778	974,826	0	974,826
Senegal	1,114,703	56,470	1,171,173	1,114,164	20,167	1,134,331
Sierra Leone	22,445,546	7,409,424	29,854,970	22,315,236	6,641,218	28,956,454
Regional Office (Côte d'Ivoire)	1,523,173	0	1,523,173	1,493,953	0	1,493,953
Regional Projects ¹	3,483,887	1,459,167	4,943,054	3,399,362	1,187,270	4,586,632
Total	75,424,963	16,623,234	92,048,197	74,355,721	13,851,210	88,206,931

¹ Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation and resettlement assistance for urban refugees in the sub-region, as well as scholarships for refugee students in West African countries. The Supplementary Programme Budget includes emergency assistance to Liberian returnees from Côte d'Ivoire as well as emergency assistance to Ivorian asylum-seekers in West Africa.