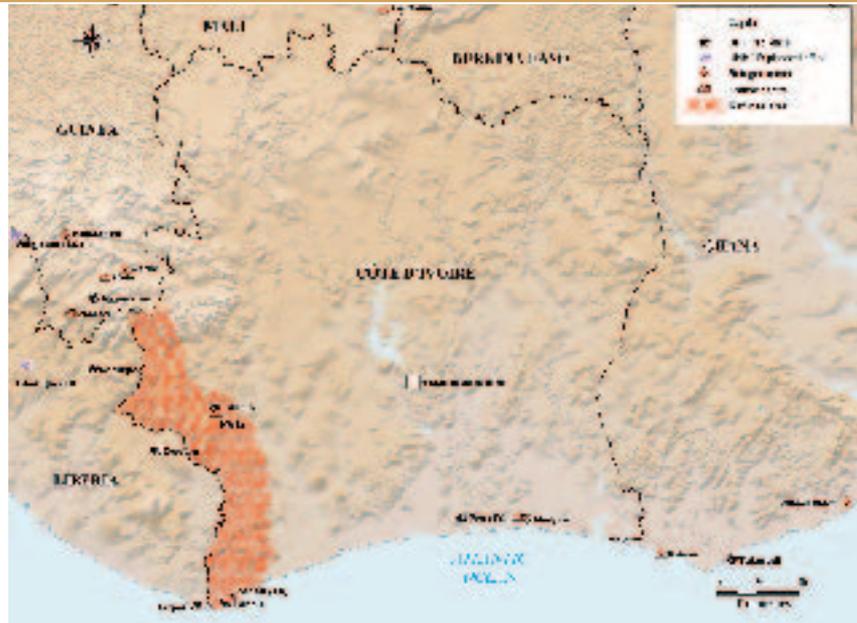


Côte d'Ivoire

Main objectives

- Secure the well-being of refugee and host community populations in the western zones of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as IDPs and other nationals living among them.
- Continue to assist urban refugees in Abidjan and pursue durable solutions for them.
- Continue to promote the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees.
- Monitor developments in Liberia that would favour safe repatriation of Liberian refugees; facilitate and subsequently promote the voluntary return of Liberian refugees as soon as circumstances are acceptable.
- Intensify cross-border collaboration with UNHCR offices in countries hosting Ivorian refugees to lay the groundwork for voluntary repatriation as soon as circumstances are acceptable.



Working environment

Major developments

More than a year after the failed *coup d'état* of September 2002, Côte d'Ivoire remains divided into two, with the northern part controlled by non-governmental forces (*forces nouvelles*). There was some optimism following the signing of the Linas-Marcousis peace agreement by all parties in January 2003. Positive indicators include the formation of a national reconciliation government, the adoption of an amnesty law and continuing political dialogue. Nevertheless, the political atmosphere remains tense, characterised by mutual mistrust between the government and the *forces nouvelles*. UN and NGO agencies stepped up humanitarian aid interventions progressively as the security situation in the country improved, although some western parts remain unsafe.

The failed *coup d'état* provoked a full-scale civil war after the emergence of various armed rebel groups. Un-

precedented social upheaval followed, with fighting, loss of life, destruction and widespread dispersal of populations. Towards the end of the year, the conflict spread to the western provinces commonly known as the *Zone d'accueil des réfugiés* (ZAR) causing a major exodus into eastern Liberia of Ivorian nationals, Liberian refugees and third country nationals. Thousands of Ivorians also fled to Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. The evolution of the humanitarian situation in western Côte d'Ivoire is inextricably linked to events in Liberia, particularly since the emergence of the MODEL rebel movement in March 2003 (also see Liberia chapter). In April, fighting in eastern counties of Liberia prompted the flight of some 45,000 new Liberian refugees into the south western border areas in Côte d'Ivoire.

In total, Côte d'Ivoire is host to some 73,000 Liberian refugees. Of these, 51,000 receive assistance in Niela camp and Tabou transit centre and in villages in the ZAR, 2,000 are in Abidjan (of whom 1,300 live in UNHCR transit centres) while the remaining 20,000 refugees are scattered in various localities such as Tolepleu, Bolequin and Danané.

Planning figures

Population	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
Liberia (refugees)	64,000	37,000
Various urban refugees	1,350	1,500
Asylum-seekers	770	620
Sierra Leone (refugees)	250	100
Other persons of concern (Ivorian returnees)	0	7,000
Total	66,370	46,220

Total requirements: 12,219,782



Côte d'Ivoire: Liberian refugees arriving on foot with their belongings at Nero border point. UNHCR / R. Wilkinson

Constraints

Poor security conditions are the main impediment to efforts to fulfil UNHCR's protection mandate and deliver humanitarian assistance effectively. Tens of thousands of IDPs and other vulnerable populations remain beyond the reach of humanitarian organisations in the west. Concerns for the safety and well-being of relief workers prevent access to areas still prey to human rights violations, including military recruitment, physical harassment, exploitation and murder.

An insidious by-product of the evolving crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has been an upsurge in negative attitudes towards refugees and other foreigners who benefited from the "open" Ivorian environment for many years. Antagonistic sentiments represent a major security threat for the refugees, especially when armed elements infiltrate refugee settlements. Armed infiltration invariably leads to forced recruitment, and an increased risk of *refoulement* for non-combatant refugee populations subsequently perceived to be associated with one armed faction or another. The problems are compounded by allegations that certain governments support some of the armed elements.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

UNHCR will continue to endeavour to strengthen the legal framework for refugee protection by assisting Government efforts to pass refugee legislation and supporting the National Eligibility Committee. UNHCR will continue to campaign widely to contain growing anti-refugee sentiments.

UNHCR will closely monitor the refugee hosting areas and undertake appropriate interventions if security conditions permit. Appropriate measures will be taken, in collaboration with government authorities, to provide refugees with recognised identification documents.

UNHCR will intensify efforts to realise durable solutions for refugee and returnee populations. When conditions in Liberia become conducive to return, UNHCR will facilitate the repatriation of Liberians who wish to return. UNHCR has identified certain refugees for whom protection would be better addressed outside Côte d'Ivoire. Accordingly, UNHCR will continue to pursue efforts to resettle them in countries outside the region. The voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali will be organised in collaboration with UNHCR offices in those countries as soon as conditions in their places of origin become conducive to return.

Assistance

Liberian refugees

In order to promote peaceful coexistence, UNHCR will continue to co-ordinate activities implemented by the international community in favour of refugees, host communities, IDPs and third country nationals in the ZAR. UNHCR will provide material assistance including shelter and domestic items as well services in the sectors of water, sanitation, health and education to assist refugees and host populations (as well as IDPs and third country nationals living among persons of concern). All refugee women aged 12-45 will receive sanitary materials. Peer support groups will be organised for refugee adolescents to prevent the spread of AIDS. UNHCR will continue to reinforce community-based NGOs working on the protection of refugee children-at-risk and refugee women from exploitation and gender-based violence.

UNHCR will facilitate the repatriation of Liberians who opt to return before the "promotion" phase of the voluntary repatriation operation. Once the criteria for promoting repatriation to Liberia are met, UNHCR will undertake mass information campaigns and provide the necessary logistical support for refugees to repatriate in safety and dignity. It is expected that up to 12,000 Liberians will spontaneously return during 2004.

Sierra Leonean refugees

UNHCR will continue to promote voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees in early 2004. Repatriating Sierra Leoneans will receive transport assistance and a reintegration package on arrival. Those refugees who opt not to return will undergo individual refugee status determination procedures aimed at identifying alternative durable solutions for them.

Urban refugees

UNHCR will continue to ensure the protection of 1,350 urban refugees of various origins in Abidjan and provide them with basic assistance. The focus will be on improving their self-sufficiency through the implementation of income-generating activities and skills training. UNHCR will sponsor 250 school age children to receive primary and secondary education. One-time assistance will be given to an additional 50 students to support their integration into the school system.

Ivorian returnees

UNHCR will strengthen cross-border collaboration with countries hosting Ivorian refugees and provide information on conditions in the main areas of origin. Should conditions favour return, UNHCR will promote identification, documentation, tracing and family reunification as well as transportation to areas of return.

The return operation will be combined with an information and sensitisation campaign.

UNHCR will undertake community-based quick impact projects aimed at reintegrating up to 7,000 Ivorian returnees. Support will be given to national health centres and hospitals in areas of return during the initial phase of reintegration through the provision of medicine, logistical support and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring access to clean water and to sanitation infrastructure in return areas. UNHCR will participate in the rehabilitation of primary and secondary schools. Counselling and rehabilitation support will be provided to victims of violence and other vulnerable groups.

Organisation and implementation

Management structure

In 2004, UNHCR will employ 64 staff: 24 international (10 of whom will have regional responsibilities) and 40 national. There will be a branch office in Abidjan, and field offices in Guiglo and Tabou.

Co-ordination

UNHCR will continue to participate in the sub-regional meetings on voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees in order to co-ordinate strategies, policies and activities.

Regarding inter-agency co-operation, in 2004, UNHCR will actively participate in the regular UN inter-agency meetings on the CCA, the UNDAF and the CAP. The co-ordination of strategies and activities by the UN humanitarian actors and agencies will be assured through weekly meetings under the leadership of the Humanitarian Co-ordinator.

Regular contacts will be maintained with UNEP and UNDP regarding the financing of environmental programmes. UNHCR will seek financial support for development programmes in the zones affected by the presence of refugees from other development agencies such as the AfDB and the World Bank.

Partners

Government agencies

Service d'aide et d'assistance aux réfugiés et aux apatrides

NGOs

Association de soutien à l'autopromotion sanitaire urbaine

Caritas (Côte d'Ivoire)

International Rescue Committee

OXFAM

Save the Children (UK)

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

UNV

IOM

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	1,373,264
Community services	284,914
Crop production	313,272
Domestic needs	569,836
Education	430,369
Health	475,152
Income generation	225,298
Legal assistance	972,381
Operational support (to agencies)	607,567
Sanitation	208,006
Shelter / other infrastructure	529,899
Transport / logistics	1,667,387
Water	474,719
Total Operations	8,132,064
Programme support	4,087,718
Total	12,219,782