

## Main objectives

- Provide international protection and ensure that asylum-seekers continue to be granted admission through a fair refugee status determination procedure (RSD).
- Continue to promote the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees and monitor developments in Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Ivorian refugees. Continue to pursue durable solutions for (mainly urban) refugees of other nationalities.
- Provide assistance to refugees and returnees as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Liberia and third country nationals mixed with persons of concern to UNHCR.
- Initiate community-based reintegration activities in the main areas of return and, during the latter half of the year, facilitate voluntary repatriation operation to suitable areas of Liberia.



### Planning figures

Population	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
IDPs	300,000	300,000
Returnee refugees	44,000	150,000
Côte d'Ivoire (refugees)	35,000	35,000
Sierra Leone (refugees)	11,500	7,500
Urban refugees	57	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>390,557</b>	<b>492,557</b>

**Total requirements: USD 44,528,991**

## Working environment

### Major developments

In 2003, positive political developments in Liberia raised hopes of a return to long-term stability. The departure of President Charles Taylor in August was quickly followed by the signing of a peace agreement between the Government and rebel movements. Thereafter, consensus was reached by all political parties over the formation of a National Government of Transition in October 2003. The deployment of 3,500 troops of the Economic Community Military Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) under the auspices of ECOWAS brought fighting in Monrovia to an end and marked the final stage of an unpredictable and bloody military conflict.

Nevertheless the country remains divided. The western counties are occupied by the forces of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), while the eastern counties are controlled by the Movement for

Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Meanwhile, Government forces are largely confined to Monrovia, its outskirts and the north-eastern counties. Hopes are pinned on the eventual deployment of a 15,000-strong United Nations peacekeeping force and the gradual restoration of stability throughout the country.

Years of low-level warfare have ripped apart the social, political and economic fabric of Liberia and provoked mass population displacements within and across the country's borders. Currently there are more than 320,000 Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond. Another 500,000 IDPs have been scattered throughout the country during the conflict and now subsist in extreme poverty and insecurity. In addition, Liberia continues to host some 14,000 Sierra Leonean and, 38,000 Ivorian refugees and large numbers of third country nationals who fled the war in Côte d'Ivoire.

## Constraints

Poor security, which prevents access to needy populations, is the main operational problem affecting protection and assistance. Humanitarian operations were suspended in the eastern region in February, following the gruesome killing of humanitarian workers. As the conflict spread towards the capital, Monrovia in mid-2003, United Nations agencies evacuated their international staff leaving national staff to continue operations on a limited scale. With the deployment of ECOMIL troops, the UN country team resumed operations in Monrovia and its environs. Access to other parts of the country is being regained progressively and humanitarian operations will resume as soon as security conditions permit.

Lack of access to over two-thirds of the country has in the past hampered efforts to protect and assist populations of concern to UNHCR. Another constraint affecting needy populations is deficient (or absent) infrastructure. In most places, water, health and sanitation facilities are stretched well beyond the expected point of collapse. Roads that are substandard at the best of times, swiftly become impassable during the rainy season.

## Strategy

The commitment expressed thus far by major political actors and the international community to build peace in Liberia augurs well for the country's future. Significant benchmarks include the involvement of prominent permanent Security Council members in the peace process, and approval of the deployment of the peacekeeping mission.

UNHCR will continue to incorporate protection principles in the delivery of assistance to refugees and Liberian returnees. In collaboration with other humanitarian agencies, UNHCR will continue to assist IDPs where they are mixed with refugees and returnees, and where there are gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance. UNHCR will endeavour to relocate IDPs to their villages of origin as soon as security conditions permit. Meanwhile, third country nationals who are mixed with populations of concern to UNHCR will receive limited assistance. It is expected that in keeping with its commitments, IOM will provide third country nationals with assistance and facilitate their return to their respective countries of origin.

### Sierra Leonean refugees

UNHCR will continue to organise voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees until June 2004. Sierra Leonean refugees who opt not to return will undergo individual

RSD procedures aimed at identifying alternative durable solutions for them. Protection of refugees will be pursued through the promotion of refugee law, legal representation of refugees who are facing court proceedings, and continued sponsorship of Liberian police to provide security in refugee camps. UNHCR will, along with its government counterpart, ensure continuous support to activities aimed at preventing and combating sexual and gender-based violence in the refugee communities. UNHCR will pursue protection issues related to women, children and the special needs of vulnerable groups.

### Ivorian refugees and third country nationals

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in eastern Liberia in March 2003, UNHCR was providing emergency assistance to 38,354 Ivorian refugees and 15,080 third country nationals who had fled armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. Material assistance included food, domestic items and shelter as well as basic services in the critical sectors of health, water and sanitation. In 2004, as the situation stabilises throughout the country, UNHCR will continue activities in eastern Liberia to assist the remaining Ivorian refugees and third country nationals in close cooperation with IOM.

### Liberian returnees

During 2004, UNHCR will be involved in facilitating voluntary return of Liberian refugees to areas deemed to be safe according to set criteria. Voluntary repatriation will only be promoted when overall conditions are deemed conducive to safe and durable mass return. UNHCR will undertake registration and screening to ensure proper documentation; ensure an adequate field presence at border crossing and entry points, and monitor transit; provide transport and logistical support to facilitate return in safety and dignity; and implement community-based multi-sector projects.

UNHCR will collaborate with humanitarian and development partners such as UNDP and World Bank, as well as with the Government of Liberia to ensure a comprehensive and unified approach in the design and implementation of reintegration programmes. The objective is to enable returnees to resume economic activity and enjoy access to social infrastructure upon arrival in their communities of origin. UNHCR's reintegration programmes will be limited in both time and scope and will be the subject of partnerships with organisations devoted to the delivery of longer-term development activities.

In late 2002, some 43,800 Liberian returnees fled the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and were assisted by UNHCR to return to their places of origin in Liberia. However, they became displaced inside Liberia when fighting spread to their communities. In 2004, UNHCR will resume protection

and assistance activities in support of this group and at the same time prepare to assist Liberian refugees who return home spontaneously in the early months of the year.

### **Liberian IDPs**

In collaboration with the Government and other humanitarian agencies, UNHCR will provide basic humanitarian assistance, with a focus on protection, registration, camp management, the provision of shelter and non-food items, as well as transport and logistical support to facilitate return to their places of origin. Community-based reintegration activities for Liberian returnees will also target IDPs.

### **Urban refugees**

About 57 urban refugees of various nationalities (the majority are Sudanese) live in urban centres in Liberia. As in previous years UNHCR will continue to seek appropriate durable solutions, considering each individual case on

its merits. The Government of Liberia registers all urban refugees and adults receive identification cards. UNHCR will also continue to assist refugees through the provision of subsistence allowances to cover their housing, health and education expenses. Given the economic situation in Liberia, very few refugees have succeeded in securing employment. The possibility of providing small business grants will therefore be explored.

## **Organisation and implementation**

### **Management structure**

UNHCR's 2004 operation in Liberia will seek to address the protection and humanitarian needs of various refugee populations as well as Liberian returnees and IDPs. The programme will be co-ordinated from the branch office in Monrovia and two sub-offices and four field offices in the



The arrival, in early 2003, of returnees who were transported by truck from Côte d'Ivoire, where the security situation had deteriorated.  
UNHCR / B. Heger

north and east of the country. UNHCR will operate with 42 international and 146 national staff. Adjustments to this plan might become necessary as a result of repatriation activities.

## Co-ordination

In 2004, UNHCR will collaborate with the National Transitional Government of Liberia while continuing to play an active role in enhancing the inter-agency response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country. UNHCR will participate in the review process for the 2004 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal. UNHCR is currently chairing the inter-agency sectoral committee on shelter and non-food-

items. UNHCR will also participate in all co-ordination efforts in other sectors such as water and sanitation, food, health, education, protection as well as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.

### Offices

#### Monrovia

Bopolu  
Gbarnga  
Harper  
Saclapea  
Voinjama  
Zwedru

### Partners

<b>Government agencies</b>	Lutheran World Federation/World Service LWF /WS
Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission	Medical Emergency and Relief Co-operative International
	Save the Children Fund (UK)
<b>NGOs</b>	Women in Progress for Community Services
<i>Action contre la faim</i>	
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	<b>Others</b>
Community Action Program	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
Community Empowerment and Skills Development	OCHA
Community Empowerment Program	UNICEF
International Rescue Committee	UNDP
Liberia National Red Cross Society	WFP
Liberian Islamic Union for Reconstruction and Development	WHO
Liberians United to Serve Humanity	

### Budget (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	917,534	9,129,130	10,046,664
Community services	230,680	685,000	915,680
Crop production	116,120	1,530,000	1,646,120
Domestic needs	333,843	2,400,000	2,733,843
Education	440,275	2,000,000	2,440,275
Food	223,740	300,000	523,740
Forestry	59,785	100,000	159,785
Health	317,856	1,219,730	1,537,586
Income generation	121,460	400,000	521,460
Legal assistance	419,920	1,160,000	1,579,920
Livestock	4,125	0	4,125
Operational support (to agencies)	792,795	1,648,041	2,440,836
Sanitation	171,216	1,042,000	1,213,216
Shelter / other infrastructure	352,519	4,000,000	4,352,519
Transport / logistics	1,093,242	5,955,100	7,048,342
Water	125,224	1,001,000	1,126,224
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>5,720,334</b>	<b>32,570,001</b>	<b>38,290,335</b>
Programme support	1,846,574	4,392,082	6,238,656
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,566,908</b>	<b>36,962,083</b>	<b>44,528,991</b>

The supplementary programme does not include seven per cent support costs (USD 2,279,900) that are recovered from each contribution received to meet indirect costs for UNHCR (field and headquarters).