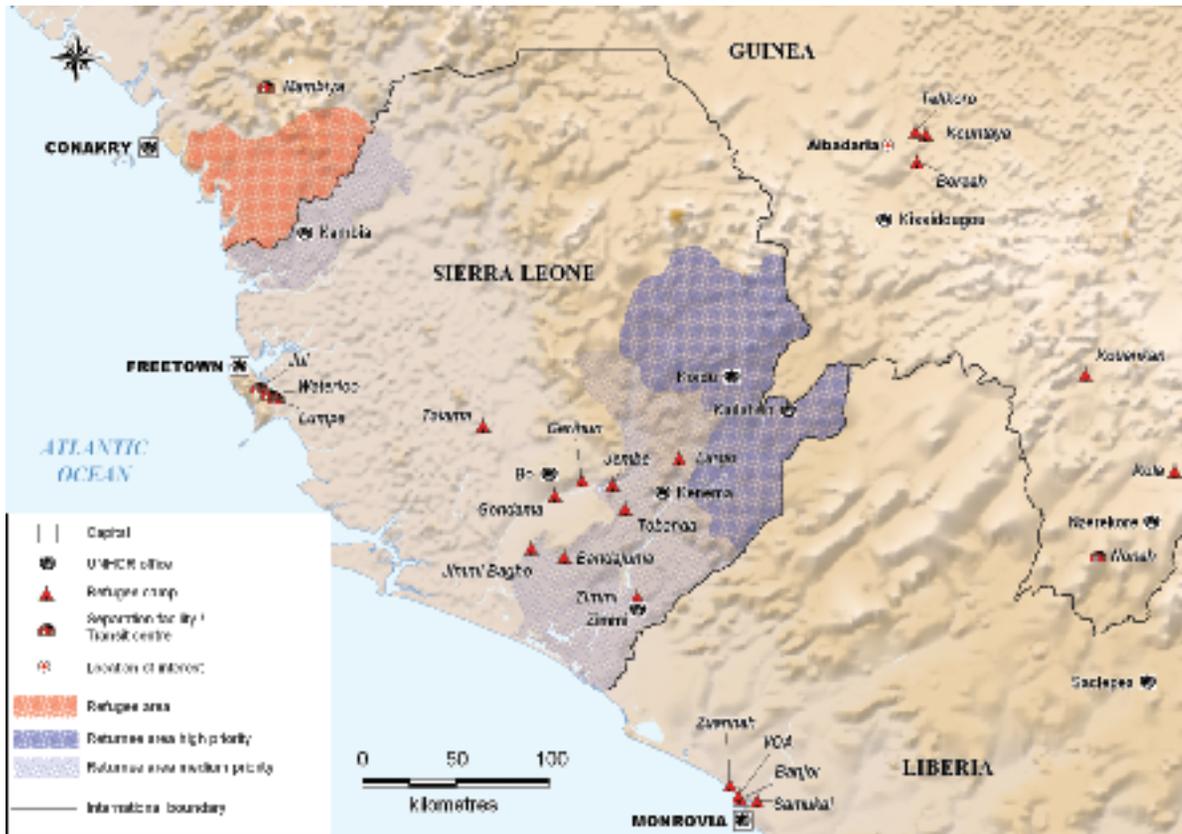


Sierra Leone



Main objectives

Provide international protection and basic humanitarian assistance to some 66,870 Liberian refugees including 10,000 “old” urban refugees; facilitate local integration, naturalization and resettlement for the Liberian refugees who arrived in Sierra Leone during the 1990s; help the Government to enact national legislation on refugees; promote and facilitate the repatriation of 80,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in conditions of safety and dignity; provide information about security and living conditions in Sierra Leone; provide transport to returnee areas upon their return to the country; collaborate with the Government of Sierra Leone and other partners on the reintegration of Sierra Leonean returnees in their places of origin.

Impact

- All refugee families in camps had individual family shelters, which helped improve living conditions

and reduced the risk of sexual abuse and other gender-related problems. On average, refugee women constituted 45 per cent of the membership of management leadership committees. Access to education was improved through the rehabilitation and construction of schools in and around refugee camps.

- A settlement was established in the Western Area near Freetown to facilitate the local integration of urban refugees who have been in Sierra Leone for over a decade. Resettlement to third countries was recommended for 668 people.
- 33,119 Sierra Leoneans were assisted to return to their places of origin, bringing the total number of returnees since 2001 to 245,815. Reintegration activities were carried out in the sectors of water, sanitation and income generation. In addition, 268 Community Empowerment Projects (CEPs) covering agriculture, education, water and roads were initiated in the districts with the highest concentrations of returnees (Kailahun, Kono, Pujehun and Kambia).

Working environment

The context

In 2003 political stability was maintained in Sierra Leone, which was still recovering from the eleven-year conflict that devastated much of the country and brought great suffering upon its people. Civil administration was reinstated throughout the country and over 543,000 displaced persons, including 245,815 refugees, returned to their homes. The progressive reduction in numbers of UNAMSIL troops, from 16,000 in 2003 to 5,000 by the end of 2004, is a direct consequence of the Government's growing ability to maintain security. The arrest and indictment by the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone of prominent local personalities created some political tension during the latter half of 2003; however this has not appeared to slow the welcome progress towards greater political and social stability.

Developments in Liberia continued to produce refugee flows into Sierra Leone, with 2,063 new arrivals registered during the first half of the year. Despite the monumental challenges posed by the needs of its own nationals, the Government of Sierra Leone continued to adopt a generous asylum policy towards Liberian refugees. It kept its borders open, accorded asylum to the Liberians, recognized them on a *prima facie* basis as refugees, and provided land

for refugee camps. Currently, there are 55,000 Liberian refugees accommodated in eight camps (Jembe, Gerihun, Taiama, Jimmi Bagbo, Bandajuma, Gondama, Largo, Tobanda) where UNHCR and its partners provide protection and assistance.

Constraints

Continued humanitarian and recovery assistance remain of crucial importance to the realization of durable solutions and the genuine reintegration of returned populations in Sierra Leone. Despite significant advances over the past three years, a massive rehabilitation and recovery effort is still needed to underpin peaceful cohabitation. Sub-standard living conditions are a reality for most of the population. The main problems faced by returnees are related to inadequate basic services such as water, shelter and health facilities. In addition, there are constraints on the social reintegration of various groups, particularly the lack of dependable, legal employment prospects for young men. There remains the theoretical, but potentially catastrophic, risk of young unskilled Sierra Leonean ex-combatants being recruited for renewed rebellion.

Funding

In 2003, UNHCR received sufficient funds to cover all of its programmed activities, enabling the Office

Persons of concern				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Liberia (refugees)	61,200	61,200	51	48
Returnees (from Guinea)	28,200	28,200	-	-
Returnees (from Liberia)	12,500	4,500	-	-
Liberia (asylum-seekers)	100	100	-	-

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme budget				
Revised budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
35,245,603	19,872,370	14,588,722	34,461,092	34,388,998

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at headquarters.

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

to carry out its protection mandate and maintain its financial obligations to implementing partners throughout the year.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

Protection activities included regular reception hours in urban centres and camps, protection monitoring and interventions on a range of issues like work permits, birth certificates, testimonials, monitoring of refugees detained in prison, family tracing

and legal aid referrals. A registration verification exercise was conducted for urban and camp-based refugees to obtain accurate data and form the basis for refugee documentation. Female spouses were documented as co-owners of family cards. A memorandum of understanding was signed between UNHCR and the Sierra Leonean Police to enhance security in refugee and returnee operations. This covers, *inter alia*, community policing in camps, and security screening at border entry points and during UNHCR registration activities.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken through inter-agency mechanisms aimed at

Liberian refugees at Largo camp collecting firewood. UNHCR/N. Behring

preventing and responding to SGBV, mostly domestic violence. SGBV committees in each camp conduct training and counselling. Efforts to prevent sexual exploitation include improvements in the distribution of assistance, reporting mechanisms as well as training initiatives for staff and refugees. However, standards of assistance must be raised, and more empowerment initiatives made available, in order to reduce the vulnerability of beneficiaries.

One important focus of UNHCR's work in Sierra Leone is to help returnees to re-establish themselves in the main return areas through village-based

CEPs. UNHCR promotes CEPs both as a bulwark of its returnee reintegration programme and as a part of its broader exit strategy. They will form a basis for larger World Bank supported projects in line with the UNHCR/UNDP/World Bank 4Rs strategy.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Communities were sensitized on HIV/AIDS, gender awareness and SGBV-prevention issues through community radio programmes, workshops and meetings. More than 80 percent of the 1,362 separated returnee and



refugee children identified at entry-points and way stations from Guinea and Liberia were subsequently reunited with their parents. Family tracing activities were strengthened through awareness raising, advocacy with local authorities and enhanced structures in 18 border towns in Kailahun, Pujehun and Kambia. The families of 89 of the 750 Sierra Leonean children on the mass tracing list were traced in the subregion.

Crop production: Sixty-nine metric tons of rice seed, 38 tons of groundnuts, 670 kits for growing vegetables, 2,017 cassava cuttings and 835 agricultural tools were provided to returnees in Kailahun, Kono and Pujehun districts. 143 refugees in the camps participated in agricultural activities and benefited from seeds and tools provided by an implementing partner with support from FAO.

Domestic needs/Household support: Returnees were transported to drop-off points and provided with various household items including 631 plastic sheets, 1,893 blankets, 1,893 mats, 631 kitchen sets, 1,893 bars of soap, 631 hurricane lamps and 785 travel bags. Returnees were also provided with a secondary transport allowance and two months' food rations. Meanwhile, household support to refugees included 7,199 plastic sheets, 210 plastic rolls, 4,007 blankets, 6,853 buckets, 77,287 bars of laundry soap, 49,955 bars of medicated soap, 6,260 sleeping mats, 2,356 plastic jerry cans, 2,193 hurricane lamps, 3,074 kitchen sets and 663 travel bags.

Education: Refugees' access to education was improved through the rehabilitation of seven temporary schools in camps and the construction of a secondary school and library in Bandajuma. Two classrooms were rehabilitated in Taiama host community. 6,200 school uniforms were supplied to refugee students and 120 benches and 31 chairs were provided for the camp schools. Libraries were established in Bo and Kenema for the urban refugees. School fees were paid for 4,200 urban refugee school children and learning materials and school uniforms provided. 85 per cent of the 1,362 separated children were enrolled in formal education or vocational training. A distance-learning programme was introduced for 200 senior secondary school pupils. Recreational and sports facilities were established in all camps.

Food: Meals were provided to refugees and returnees at way stations for overnight stops. A

memorandum of understanding was established by WFP, UNHCR and other food pipeline agencies for the distribution of food. Residents of all eight refugee camps received monthly food distributions.

Forestry: Environmental activities were covered in the former IDP camps in the Western Area and returnee communities. Activities included the formation of Environmental Action Groups, the establishment of tree nurseries with approximately 36,000 assorted trees, tree planting and the distribution of 4,000 oil palm seedlings. Over 75 training sessions on domestic energy conservation/production were conducted. These entailed the promotion of clay-based eco-stoves for more than 200 households in various communities. Similar activities were also carried out in the refugee camps and settlements, where 16,000 assorted trees were planted and 4,500 eco-stoves produced. 1,000 environmental education booklets were published and distributed in camp schools.

Health/Nutrition: To restore primary health care delivery services to the returnee communities, two additional health centres were constructed in Kailahun. Medical staff quarters with water and sanitation facilities were constructed in Bandajuma and Jimmi Bagbo. Camp management agencies and UNHCR personnel cooperated in sensitizing and mobilizing the community on health-related matters, mainly in the prevention and control of Lassa fever. An efficient health system was enforced and ambulances or hired buses were stationed in all camps for the referral of patients to the hospitals. Micro-finance grants were committed to the HIV/AIDS programme in Port Loko, which gave commercial sex workers access to loans in order to encourage them to engage in alternative economic activities.

Income generation: Micro-credit loans were extended to 7,312 people involved in small business schemes (5,710 of them embarking on new ventures); sixty per cent of them were newly arrived returnees, and 78 per cent women. Skills training in basic business planning and management was provided for some 1,258 refugees, 81 per cent of them women who had received micro-credit loans.

Legal assistance: An agreement was signed with the Lawyers' Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) to provide legal services necessary for the protection of the interests and property of refugees and

persons of concern to UNHCR. Refugees who were arrested and detained were defended by LAWCLA.

Operational support (to agencies): Twenty-one implementing partners involved in the implementation of activities were provided with operational support such as logistics, administration and staff costs for both international and national (e.g. salaries and benefits). GTZ was thus able to manage the logistics base and workshops in Kenema and Bo. With the mechanical workshop in Freetown, it has kept operational 48 trucks, 82 light vehicles, 82 motorcycles and 30 generators for UNHCR and implementing partners. Approximately 21,000 tons of all-purpose cargo was transported around the country. Communication equipment was also provided to implementing partners in order to facilitate operations and to ensure the security of UNHCR and implementing partners' staff in the field.

Sanitation: In returnee areas, 243 two-seater and three-seater pit latrines were constructed in 20 communities. 239 volunteers and water point attendants/technicians were trained to promote hygiene awareness and maintain hand pumps. Meanwhile, in refugee camps, 828 latrines, 492 showers, two laundry slabs, and 164 garbage pits were constructed, and 160 volunteers were trained and provided with 100 cleaning tools and 24 sanitation tools.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: An additional camp was established at Tobanda in April and a contingency site prepared in Nyagbebo. 2,057 shelters were constructed/rehabilitated (both communal shelters and individual family units) along with 492 showers, two laundry slabs, 164 garbage pits and 76 community kitchens.

Transport/Logistics: Repatriation from Guinea was accelerated following the construction of a temporary causeway at the border crossing in Parrot's Beak which shortened the voyage from four days to one. 3,088 returnees were repatriated by ship from Liberia. UNHCR also facilitated the return by air of 1,008 persons from Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Senegal. Upon arrival in Sierra Leone, 414 returnees who repatriated spontaneously were assisted by UNHCR. A 41 kilometer road from Yormandu to Kayima was rehabilitated in Kono District and an additional 12 kilometer feeder road repaired in Pujehun District. Five communities along the Kailahun-Buedu-Sandia axis were provided with tools to rehabilitate 4.5

kilometres of feeder roads linking Kailahun to the border areas.

Water: In more than 35 communities, 43 boreholes and 41 hand-dug wells were either constructed or rehabilitated. In 12 communities, 628 local wells were chlorinated for use by 9,077 persons. In the refugee camps, the provision of water ranged from 10 to 34 litres of water per person per day. Three camps have not yet achieved the minimum standard of 15 litres per person per day.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR had 211 staff, comprising 35 internationals, 175 nationals, and one JPO. In addition, there were eight UNVs. They operated from seven offices located in Freetown, Kenema, Bo, Koidu, Zimmi, Kailahun and Kambia. The office in Daru was closed following a sharp fall in the numbers of refugees arriving by that route. In order to harmonize repatriation activities, cross-border meetings were organized with offices in Guinea, Liberia and Senegal (covering Mali, Guinea Bissau and the Gambia).

Working with others

UNHCR implemented its programmes in concert with its government counterpart, the National Commission for Social Action, 17 international and six national non-governmental organizations. The Office collaborated with the other humanitarian agencies in the Consolidated Appeals Process and with development agencies under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UNHCR and OCHA collaborated in information management and the coordination of mapping information. UNHCR has been facilitating the field presence of development actors such as the World Bank and UNDP by making office space and communication equipment available in field locations. Community Empowerment Projects are being implemented within the framework of the 4Rs strategy to benefit the areas with the highest concentration of returnees. UNHCR continued to play a significant role in a series of multilateral initiatives (including with other UN agencies/departments,

World Bank, African Development Bank, the Government, EU, British Department for International Development) aimed at promoting lasting peace through development. UNHCR made modest inputs to building the capacity of national and international NGOs and coordinating with the Government through the relevant line Ministries, and also provided facilities and logistics support.

Overall assessment

Services for refugees and returnees were strengthened in the sectors of shelter, education, water and sanitation. General hygiene and sanitation conditions improved in the camps. An increase in reports of SGBV incidents reflected improved awareness of its seriousness. The MOU between UNHCR and the Sierra Leonean Police helped to enhance the security and general protection of refugees. Moreover, refugees in the areas surrounding Freetown had access to land to facilitate their local integration. Draft refugee legislation still awaits parliamentary assent. This should help UNHCR to pursue programmes leading to greater self-reliance for refugees who choose local integration as a durable solution. Similarly, it is hoped that the legislation will allow for more opportunities for the development of the productive capacities of the refugees in camps. Meanwhile, improvements in the political and security situation in Liberia are a welcome development both from the perspective of regional security and from the reduction in the flow of Liberian refugees, providing some respite for overstretched government bodies, host communities and humanitarian actors.

Community Empowerment Projects helped improve the overall socio-economic conditions of returnee communities. Their introduction represents an important shift in focus beyond the immediate priority of moving people and assisting them with basic shelter and domestic aid to providing opportunities through CEPs for rural communities to direct their own recovery, in terms of restoring basic social services, rural infrastructure and the capacity for collective action. Enhanced information sharing among government, humanitarian and development actors, especially at the district level, ensured a common understanding of needs for planning purposes.

Offices

Freetown

Bo
Kailahun
Kambia
Kenema
Koidu
Zimmi

Partners

Government agencies

National Commission for Social Action
Sierra Leone Roads Authority

NGOs

African Concern
African Development and Emergency Organization
American Refugee Committee
Arch Diocesan Development Office
Bo/Pujehun Development Associates
Caritas Kenema
Catholic Relief Services
Christian Children's Funds Inc.
Environmental Foundation for Africa
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Lutheran World Federation
OXFAM
Peace Winds Japan
Save the Children (UK)
Sierra Leone Red Cross
Talking Drum Studio
World Vision International

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects		Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	notes	Annual programme budget	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	5,617,139		7,276	
Community Services	1,461,726		301,489	
Crop Production	0		410,456	
Domestic Needs/Household Support	1,023,244		29,298	
Education	383,682		639,041	
Fisheries	219		0	
Food	120,237		3,603	
Forestry	86,858		(10,676)	
Health/Nutrition	404,824		262,155	
Income Generation	146,091		(62,183)	
Legal Assistance	383,262		58,316	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,264,492		535,017	
Sanitation	96,443		99,491	
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	1,913,450		860,396	
Transport/Logistics	5,824,049		555,290	
Water (non-agricultural)	479,811		221,657	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	7,466,763		(3,417,476)	
Sub - total Operational	27,672,290		493,150	
Programme Support	3,555,897		684	
Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries	31,228,187	⁽³⁾	493,834	⁽⁵⁾
Unliquidated Obligations	3,160,811	⁽³⁾	0	⁽⁵⁾
Total	34,388,998	^{(1) (3)}	493,834	
Instalments with Implementing Partners				
Payments Made	16,632,420		2,822,560	
Reporting Received	9,165,657		6,240,036	
Balance	7,466,763		(3,417,476)	
Outstanding 1st January	0		3,850,096	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		412,371	
Currency Adjustment	0		4,920	
Outstanding 31 December	7,466,763		25,169	
Unliquidated Obligations				
Outstanding 1st January	0		1,217,002	⁽⁵⁾
New Obligations	34,388,998	⁽¹⁾	0	
Disbursements	31,228,187	⁽³⁾	493,834	⁽⁵⁾
Cancellations	0		723,168	⁽⁵⁾
Outstanding 31 December	3,160,811	⁽³⁾	0	⁽⁵⁾

Figures which cross reference to the Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5