

# South Africa



## Main objectives

Help to create an environment conducive to the local integration of refugees; provide temporary assistance to the most vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees; enhance local capacity to respond to refugee needs by offering training programmes, advice and policy support to governmental and non-governmental organizations; pursue specific durable solutions for individual refugees such as voluntary repatriation, or resettlement, where appropriate.

## Impact

- The total number of persons of concern in 2003 increased to 109,600, of whom 25,900 were refugees and 83,700 were asylum-seekers. Both groups benefited from UNHCR's efforts to enhance the professional character of assistance to refugees.
- The number of pending asylum cases increased from 52,400 to 83,700. Only 4,000 decisions were taken, as the processing capacity at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) was inadequate. Efforts have been made to bolster the DHA, with some success.
- 3,748 persons of concern were provided with emergency short-term assistance (59 per cent more than in 2002). The increased numbers impelled UNHCR to lobby hard for refugees to have access to public and voluntary sector services. As a consequence, refugees became eligible for the public HIV/AIDS treatment and care programme, and refugee children became eligible to attend primary schools.
- UNHCR lobbied the DHA for improvements in the issuance of refugee identity cards. As a result 91 per cent of applicants received cards.
- Legal assistance was provided for 5,230 cases by UNHCR-funded legal counselling offices in all main refugee areas.

## Working environment

### The context

Following advocacy by various organizations, including UNHCR, the DHA produced an ambitious plan to accelerate its clearance of the backlog of asylum demands and the issuance of identity cards. To achieve this goal, DHA began to reinforce its human and material resource capacity and sought UNHCR's support in the implementation of this strategy in 2004.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has continued to be of primary concern in South Africa, and the Government's views were hotly debated. In late 2003, the Government made a long-awaited policy shift and announced the roll-out of a treatment and care programme. The Department of Health informed

UNHCR that refugees would have access to the public sector anti-retroviral treatment programme. However, government departments, and indeed existing civil society organizations, were reluctant to open their doors to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Opportunities have arisen for closer cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of South Africa in resolving some of the long-standing refugee situations in Africa. This follows from the raised international profile of South Africa, in particular, its involvement in several peace initiatives as well as strategies such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

### Constraints

The phenomenon of mixed migration movements to South Africa continues to pose a major challenge.

#### Persons of concern

Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Asylum-seekers	83,700	11,900	-	-
Democratic Republic of the Congo (refugees)	8,900	2,700	44	36
Somalia (refugees)	6,900	400	38	28
Angola (refugees)	5,800	500	40	35
Burundi (refugees)	2,000	900	42	37
Rwanda (refugees)	1,200	1,100	45	37
Republic of the Congo (refugees)	1,100	100	25	64

#### Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme and Supplementary programme budgets

	Revised budget	Income from contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other funds available <sup>2</sup>	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	4,656,182	105,600	4,258,075	4,363,675	4,363,675
SB	332,359	0	330,981	330,981	330,981
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,988,541</b>	<b>105,600</b>	<b>4,589,056</b>	<b>4,694,656</b>	<b>4,694,656</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked 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.

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.

Syndicates take advantage of the asylum system to temporarily legalize the stay of their members in order to enable them to pursue illegal activities. Such abusive claims clog the asylum system and also tarnish the image of refugees. The phenomenon contributes to the already high level of xenophobia faced by refugees on a daily basis. Many public services continue to keep their doors firmly shut to refugees, but some modest successes in securing refugee access to local services were accomplished. While UNHCR is implementing appropriate measures to enhance its capacity to meet the increasing demands in the area of RSD, there remains a great need for stronger NGO partners. A cause for concern is the high turnover of core NGO staff, such as legal counsellors and social workers.

## Funding

UNHCR does not receive sufficient funds to plug the gap left by local services to meet the pressing needs of vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR offered limited support for the self-reliance of refugees (e.g., vocational training and small business loans). UNHCR's costs soared during the year, as the local currency appreciated in value by 27 per cent against the US dollar. The revised Annual programme budget for South Africa was USD 4,656,182. Contributions earmarked for the Annual Programme amounted to USD 105,600. Transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions brought total funds available to USD 4,363,675. A Supplementary programme budget was allocated to South Africa for the repatriation of Angolan refugees.

## Achievements and impact

### Protection and solutions

UNHCR focused on legal and institutional capacity-building through the training of government staff. In particular, training of government eligibility officers was intensified to improve the country's capacity to deal with the backlog of asylum applications. One of the operational priorities of the Office was to urge the Government to issue refugee identity cards. There was a remarkable improvement in this area in 2003, and by the year's end, over 33 per cent of refugees held identity cards (compared with 11 per cent



in 2002). The Government issued three times more refugee documents than during all the previous years combined. As the issuance of identity cards improved, more refugees came forward to apply for them. The possession of a government-issued identity card is a precondition for accessing local services and thus a first step towards local integration. Towards the later part of 2003, discussions began



South Africa: Refugees in an urban centre in Cape Town. UNHCR/L. Astrom

with senior DHA officials on the development of a more comprehensive refugee database.

UNHCR provided voluntary repatriation assistance to 57 refugees on individual bases. A tripartite agreement for the repatriation of Angolan refugees was signed in December. Negotiations were initiated for similar arrangements with regard to the Rwandan

refugees. In total, 37 refugees were resettled during the year.

Direct consultations were held with the Governments of Madagascar, Mauritius and Comoros with a view to promoting accession to international instruments of refugee protection. Alternatives to the care and maintenance assistance programme currently

provided to refugees in the Indian Ocean Island States through UNDP were explored.

## Activities and assistance

**Community services:** The Office has focused its activities on expanding the availability of professional assistance services for refugees, emphasizing referral to competent services and solutions to problems in preference to continuing dependence on UNHCR's assistance. The process is nearly complete and has resulted in improved service delivery to a larger number of refugees than in 2002. This success has enabled the Office to concentrate on lobbying for refugees to have better access to public and voluntary sector services. The Office promoted the economic self-reliance of refugees through vocational skills training, language courses and support for primary and secondary education. 267 persons were trained. Language classes were taken up by 1,316 people, twice as many as in 2002 (37 per cent of them women).

**Domestic needs/ Household support:** A closer working relationship was developed with the Department of Social Welfare with a view to promoting access of eligible refugees to welfare programmes, such as the foster care grant or the disability grant. A total of 34 disabled or chronically/terminally ill refugees benefited from the latter. UNHCR also provided support to the efforts of this Department to re-establish a Refugee Relief Fund, which unfortunately remains at the planning stage.

In order to gain further insight to the situation of refugees in South Africa and to set priorities, UNHCR commissioned the second and final phase of the National Refugee Baseline Survey, which was completed at the end of the year. The survey provides critical demographic data as well as a comprehensive insight into the socio-economic situation of refugees in South Africa. The survey clarifies the lacunae in the provision of education, health care, and the issuance of identity cards. The results will help UNHCR to monitor progress and the impact of its activities.

**Education:** UNHCR urged other government departments, dealing with health, education, and social welfare, to open their programmes to refugees and asylum-seekers. Due to these efforts, refugees were declared eligible for the public HIV/AIDS

treatment and care programme, and the Department of Education recognized its responsibility to ensure that all refugee children of primary school age attend school. 119 children were enrolled in pre-school (nearly half of them girls). 785 pupils were enrolled in primary school (nearly half of them girls). UNHCR paid secondary school fees for 110 pupils (more than a third of them girls). No children dropped out of primary or secondary school. In addition, UNHCR advocated the inclusion of refugees in the social assistance laws that were proposed in 2003.

**Health/Nutrition:** Emergency material assistance in the areas of food, shelter, and medical care was provided for a limited period to the most vulnerable individuals, mainly women and children. 1,985 persons received medical assistance, while 350 referrals were obtained at no cost. As the focus of assistance activities shifted from direct assistance to referral and advocacy, increased efforts were undertaken to promote refugee access to existing public and private services. UNHCR supported the production of a training manual for health workers on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers in an effort to reduce the incidence of refusal of refugee patients by local hospitals

During 2003, the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on refugees has become increasingly visible. There was a noticeable increase in the number of asylum-seekers and refugees seeking support in relation to their HIV status. This included material and psychosocial support, voluntary repatriation and resettlement. UNHCR provided technical and financial support to home-based care programmes in Pretoria and Johannesburg, under which 24 chronically and terminally ill refugees received care and support from trained members of their communities. HIV/AIDS education and information continued to be provided in the major refugee languages. To combat SGBV, a service directory was developed for survivors of SGBV, supported by a workshop for refugee youth. All sub-agreements now include UNHCR's Code of Conduct.

**Income generation:** The Office promoted the economic self-reliance of refugees through vocational skills training, language courses and support for primary and secondary education.

**Legal assistance:** Legal assistance was provided to refugees and asylum-seekers through a network of

NGO legal counsellors located in the main refugee receiving areas. Over 5,230 cases were seen at five UNHCR-funded legal counselling offices in the main refugee areas.

**Operational support (to agencies):** Administrative costs of implementing partners were covered by UNHCR in order to ensure timely and efficient service delivery to beneficiaries.

## Organization and implementation

### Management

The Office covers South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho and the Indian Ocean Island States; in addition it provides support to the UNHCR offices in Mozambique and Botswana. During 2003, the 16 international staff (of whom seven covered the Southern Africa region) and 28 national staff were reduced to 14 international (six with regional functions) and 19 national staff. The regional functions covered human resources management; issues relating to refugee women and children; external relations; supplies; and HIV/AIDS technical/programme issues.

### Working with others

UNHCR worked with 12 implementing partners comprising two international and ten national agencies, including two universities. Close cooperation and liaison was maintained with various government departments, particularly the DHA. In addition to NGO implementing partners, UNHCR maintained close contacts with several private organizations, providing services to refugees without financial support from UNHCR, and promoted improved coordination of activities. The Office has developed a close working relationship with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which provided funding for the National Refugee Baseline Survey. UNHCR continued to participate in the UN Inter-Agency Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. Other opportunities for UN inter-agency cooperation remained limited due to the policy of the South African Government that UN agencies should concentrate on rural areas (whereas refugees are concentrated in the cities). In the Comoros, Madagascar and Mauritius, UNDP offices provided support to refugees.

## Overall assessment

In 2003, there were several indications that the activities of UNHCR and its partners are starting to have a lasting effect. There are promising signs that South Africa has made a modest start on a long process of integrating refugee rights into areas such as health, education and social welfare. These improvements have come, often agonizingly slowly, after sustained and intensive advocacy by UNHCR and its partners. Serious challenges remain, and modest successes are being achieved at a high cost in terms of time and resources.

UNHCR's concentrated efforts to enhance the professional character of service delivery to refugees were largely successful. The number of assisted refugees more than doubled in 2003, despite a significantly reduced local currency budget.

The efforts to promote improvements in the performance of the Department of Home Affairs were partly successful: the issuance of identity cards to recognized refugees has gathered pace, and the capacity problems at DHA are now being addressed.

Offices
Pretoria

  

Partners
<b>NGOs</b>
Agency for Refugee Education, Skills Training and Advocacy
Cape Town Refugee Centre
CARITAS Swaziland
Jesuit Refugee Service
Lawyers for Human Rights
Mennonite Central Committee
National Consortium for Refugee Affairs
Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa
<b>Others</b>
University of Cape Town
University of Witwatersrand-Legal Aid Clinic

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	notes	Annual and Supplementary programme budgets
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	387,661	0	387,661		0
Community Services	115,616	0	115,616		51,729
Domestic Needs/Household Support	59,621	0	59,621		20,641
Education	137,134	0	137,134		69,100
Health/Nutrition	152,047	0	152,047		66,968
Income Generation	7,877	0	7,877		9,694
Legal Assistance	94,991	0	94,991		71,134
Operational Support (to Agencies)	157,903	0	157,903		137,174
Transport/Logistics	46,932	0	46,932		6,879
Instalments with Implementing Partners	732,481	0	732,481		(405,177)
<b>Sub - total Operational</b>	<b>1,892,263</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,892,263</b>		<b>28,142</b>
Programme Support	2,325,563	289,908	2,615,471		1,033
<b>Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>4,217,826</b>	<b>289,908</b>	<b>4,507,734</b>	<sup>(3)</sup>	<b>29,175</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	145,849	41,073	186,922	<sup>(3)</sup>	0 <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,363,675</b>	<b>330,981</b>	<b>4,694,656</b>	<sup>(1) (3)</sup>	<b>29,175</b>
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>					
Payments Made	1,261,725	0	1,261,725		31,611
Reporting Received	529,244	0	529,244		436,788
<b>Balance</b>	<b>732,481</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>732,481</b>		<b>(405,177)</b>
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		399,826
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		29,223
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		34,574
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>732,481</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>732,481</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>					
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		108,802 <sup>(5)</sup>
New Obligations	4,363,675	330,981	4,694,656	<sup>(1)</sup>	0
Disbursements	4,217,826	289,908	4,507,734	<sup>(3)</sup>	29,175 <sup>(5)</sup>
Cancellations	0	0	0		79,627 <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>145,849</b>	<b>41,073</b>	<b>186,922</b>	<sup>(3)</sup>	<b>0</b> <sup>(5)</sup>

Figures which can be cross-referenced to the Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(5) Schedule 5