

Liberia



Main objectives

- Promote the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to areas where basic security conditions are in place and ensure their safety and dignity during transit.
- Foster partnerships and complementarities with other humanitarian actors to ensure the sustainable reintegration of former refugees and internally displaced people in the context of the "4Rs" approach.
- Provide adequate support for all refugees in Liberia and seek durable solutions through local integration, repatriation or resettlement.
- Help the Government to assume the primary responsibility for protecting refugees, returnees and IDPs.
- Maintain up-to-date contingency plans for possible new emergencies.

Planning figures

	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
Population		
IDPs (non-camp-based)	186,000	55,800
Returnees	88,100 ¹	101,000 ²
IDPs (camp-based)	37,000	0
Côte d'Ivoire (refugees)	12,600	12,600
Sierra Leone (refugees)	2,240	500
Other refugees (including TCNs)	60	60
Other asylum-seekers	30	100
Total	326,030	170,060

¹Estimated number of returnees in 2005.

²Estimated number of returnees in 2006.

Total requirements: USD 39,084,990

Working environment

Recent developments

Progress continued on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in Accra in August 2003, and on the consolidation of security and stability in Liberia. By September 2005, more than 220,000 IDPs and over 39,000 refugees had received assistance with food and non-food items, transport or a transport grant to return to their communities of origin. Preparations for the October 2005 general elections were on track and over 1.3 million Liberians, out of an estimated population of 3.5 million, had registered to vote.

In September 2005, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for six months. There has been progress on the reform of the security sector. Although the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia was delayed, the demobilization of irregular armed forces personnel has made steady progress, with over 8,000 of the 9,000 armed forces personnel demobilized. The Government's objective is to form a new force expected to be 2,000-strong. However, there are still an estimated 26,000 ex-combatants in need of assistance with reintegration. By late September 2005, over 900 police officers had been redeployed to police stations in various locations in the country.

The National Transitional Government of Liberia has endorsed the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP), a joint initiative of the United Nations, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the United States, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. GEMAP will enhance the capacity of the Liberian State to collect tax revenue and ensure that the revenues, as well as Liberia's natural resources, are utilized for the benefit of all the people of Liberia.

Constraints

In spite of peacekeeping efforts law and order remains fragile, as the Government has not yet been able to firmly re-establish its presence and authority throughout the country. The Government has not yet fully assumed its coordination and leadership role countrywide, and there are concerns about the sustainability of the reconstruction effort.

The availability of basic services in main areas of return remains limited and so far there few police or other law-enforcement mechanisms to back up traditional community service structures.

The very poor roads, requiring major rehabilitation, have been a major obstacle to the repatriation operations. UNMIL plays a major role in road repairs, but it intends to upgrade the road network only as much as is required to facilitate the deployment of its forces. Resources available to humanitarian agencies for infrastructure rehabilitation are often limited, and long-term infrastructure development programmes are not yet in place.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

For the majority of Liberian refugees remaining in West African countries at the end of 2005, voluntary repatriation will be the most viable durable solution. Indeed, the *Regional Multi-Year Operations Plan for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Liberian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (2004-2007)* envisages facilitating the voluntary repatriation of this population until 2007. Following the installation of the elected Government and an assessment of the overall situation in the country, UNHCR will shift from the facilitation stage of the return, which began in October 2004, to the active promotion phase. Ensuring that refugees are well informed of existing conditions in their places of origin remains a key component of the repatriation operation.



Newly arrived returnees at Sinje transit centre wait in line to collect their belongings from the repatriation trucks. *UNHCR / R. Olchik*

Most of the 223,000 registered IDPs will have returned to their places of origin of 2006. UNHCR will therefore focus, in close cooperation with other agencies, on the provision of reintegration assistance to former refugees and IDPs. UNHCR has expanded its involvement with IDPs by assuming the principal role in coordination and management of the protection response, and in 2006 will continue to do so within the overall inter-agency collaborative approach.

In order to support the Government to assume primary responsibility for protecting refugees, returnees and IDPs, UNHCR will support and strengthen the national judicial structure, through the provision of material assistance. At the central, county and district levels, UNHCR will continue to work through existing structures, strengthening the capacity of institutions to protect refugees and returnees. UNHCR will also ensure the proper integration into society of returning populations, and that their rights are respected (including restitution of property). Development actors such

as UNDP and relevant units within UNMIL, dealing with human rights, will also ensure support to the judiciary and the police.

Programmes involving training, prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) will be set up to increase community awareness. The focus will be on sensitization, to enhance the role and value of women in decision-making and leadership. Specifically, the aim will be to increase and support girls' enrolment in school. Initiatives for adolescent needs will continue in 2006.

Urban refugees

In Monrovia there are 95 registered urban refugees and asylum-seekers, who originate from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Palestine, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Togo. It is unlikely that they will opt to return home, and it is therefore anticipated that Liberia will continue to extend its

hospitality and that they will continue to benefit from targeted individual assistance.

Sierra Leonean refugees

Although the repatriation operation for Sierra Leonean refugees ended in July 2004, the Government of Liberia will continue to extend its hospitality to the more than 2,200 remaining refugees in the country until a cessation clause is invoked. Only legal assistance is foreseen for this group in 2006.

Ivorian refugees

Over 12,000 Ivorian refugees live in Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties. The unstable political situation prevailing in Côte d'Ivoire is likely to inhibit the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees in 2006, and UNHCR plans to maintain its assistance throughout the year.

Liberian returnees and internally displaced people

It is expected that in 2006 conditions in Liberia will continue to allow for returnees and IDPs to resettle in their communities of origin. While most IDPs will already have returned to their places of origin, it is expected that some 101,000 refugees will return from neighbouring countries in 2006 with assistance from UNHCR.

Assistance

The bulk of reintegration and other programme activities related to voluntary repatriation will continue during 2006 and 2007, eventually phasing down by 2008. Operations will focus on voluntary repatriation, reintegration, community services, protection and protection monitoring of returnees and IDPs. Besides return packages, returnees will have access to community-based assistance in the areas of return. There are opportunities for humanitarian actors to lay the foundations for genuine progress in areas such as gender issues, legal assistance to SGBV survivors and psychosocial counselling, the involvement of beneficiaries in all aspects of planning and implementation, peace initiatives and

conflict resolution, coordination and resource mobilization.

It is of vital importance that UNHCR collaborate with development actors from the outset in order to ensure that they include areas of return in their plans, and thus ensure that there are no shortfalls in interventions during the transition between humanitarian relief and development assistance.

With regard to camp-based Ivorian refugees, the assistance will be community-based. However, some 590 refugees with special needs will receive regular assistance. UNHCR will seek to ensure that targeted beneficiaries have access to basic services.

Desired impact

It is hoped that UNHCR's continued support will enable the elected government to provide protection and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers. The Liberian Government's capacity to deal with persons of concern to UNHCR will be enhanced through various training activities, and also through material assistance in areas receiving high numbers of returnees. Ivorian and Sierra Leonean non-camp based refugees requiring international protection beyond 2006 will have freedom of movement and will have the possibility to settle locally if they so choose. The overall strategic and operational management of reintegration activities will focus on promoting the "4Rs" framework, so as to ensure sustainable return. Rehabilitation of local infrastructure will benefit not only returnees but the communities they return to as a whole. The appropriate mechanisms will be in place to address identified problems or gaps through a collaborative approach involving UNHCR, specialized agencies and the relevant authorities.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR will maintain its branch office in Monrovia, two sub-offices in Voinjama and Saclepea and field offices in Gbarnga, Harper, Tubmanburg and Zwedru. UNHCR will have 170 national and 50 international staff in addition to eight UNVs and five Surge project deployees and NRC secondees.

Coordination

As a member of the United Nations Country Team, UNHCR will continue to cooperate with all United Nations agencies represented in Liberia. In the context of the integrated UN Mission approach, UNHCR will also work under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in charge of humanitarian coordination. Given the need to create an environment conducive to sustainable reintegration, UNHCR will continue to participate actively in the "4Rs" Core Group in order to ensure that needs of the returning populations are factored into long-term reconstruction programmes.

As outlined in the *Regional Multi-Year Operation Plan for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Liberian refugees and Internally Displaced Persons* (2004-2007), UNHCR was entrusted with the regional coordination of this extensive and complex operation. This will preclude unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. UNHCR Representatives in the sub-region will meet periodically; other meetings, with WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and the Humanitarian Coordinator's Office, as well as with Tripartite Repatriation Commissions, will be maintained.

Offices

Monrovia

Gbarnga
Harper
Saclepea
Tubmanburg
Voinjama
Zwedru

Partners

Government agency

Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC)

NGOs

African Concern International
Africa Humanitarian Action
American Refugee Committee
CARITAS (Liberia)
Christian Assistance Programme
Christian Children Fund
Community Action Programme (Liberia)
Community Empowerment Programme (Liberia)
Concerned Christian Community
Danish Refugee Council
Development Education Network (Liberia)
Environmental Foundation for Africa
Foundation for African Development Aid
Foundation for International Dignity
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Liberia Islamic Reconstruction and Development
Liberia National Red Cross Society
Liberians United to Serve Humanity
Medical Emergency Relief Cooperative International
Medical Emergency Relief International
Norwegian Refugee Council
Peace Winds Japan
Search for Common Ground -Talking Drums Studio
Smile Africa Liberia
Special Emergency Life Food Programme
United Methodist Committee on Relief
Women in Progress for Community Services
World Vision-Liberia
ZOA Refugee Care

Others

FAO

*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische
Zusammenarbeit*

ICRC

ILO

IOM

UN-Habitat

UNDP

UNFPA

UNICEF

UNIFEM

UNMIL

WFP

Liberia

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	12,247,955
Community services	2,120,000
Crop production	450,000
Domestic needs	1,920,000
Education	910,000
Health	1,720,000
Income generation	80,000
Legal assistance	2,890,000
Livestock	205,000
Operational support (to agencies)	2,845,000
Sanitation	440,000
Shelter/other infrastructure	3,155,000
Transport/logistics	4,325,000
Water	440,000
Total operations	33,747,955
Programme support	5,337,035
Total	39,084,990