

Sierra Leone



Main objectives

- Promote and accelerate the sustainable voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees.
- Promote durable solutions for urban refugees and asylum-seekers whilst improving their access to basic rights.
- Provide continuing care and protection through self-reliance for refugees still in camps.
- Identify future local integration prospects for potential residual populations.
- Support the development of national protection capacity in the Government and civil society.
- Ensure that the operation is driven by accurate and up-to-date registration data.
- Rationalize resources whenever possible by consolidating services, camps and offices.

Planning figures

Population	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
Returnees	271,000	271,000
Liberia (refugees)	51,200	30,100
Total	322,200	301,100

Total requirements: USD 17,281,205

Working environment

Recent developments

Significant progress has been achieved by UNHCR on the sustainable return of more than 270,000 returnees, representing four years of reintegration efforts between 2001 and 2004. Viable communities were rebuilt within the Kailahun, Kambia, Kono and Pujehun Districts, the main areas of

return. Local government structures have been re-established and the process of devolution of power from key line ministries to local authorities has begun. Although they still suffer from low capacity, isolation, lack of transport and chronically poor infrastructure, the newly elected councils and their few line ministry counterparts in the main returnee districts have formulated development plans, for which various sources of development funding are now becoming available. While UNHCR plans to discontinue its reintegration programmes to returnees by the end of 2005, a comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Sierra Leone has been submitted by the UN Country Team (UNCT) to the World Bank with a view to sustaining long-term development in areas of return.

The country is preparing for the departure of United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeeping forces by the end of 2005 and the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), approved through UN Security Council Resolution 1620 (2005). It is hoped that UNIOSIL will further consolidate peace by enhancing political and economic governance, building national capacity for conflict prevention and preparing for elections in 2007. The economy has been slow to take off and government revenues remain far lower than planned, though there has been progress in attracting mining investment and in curbing illegal diamond exports.

With the restoration of peace in Liberia the outlook for 2006 is for significant progress towards achieving durable solutions for Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone. The prospects of voluntary repatriation to Liberia should further improve after the presidential elections in October 2005, and with the continued efforts of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to promote reconstruction, and disarm and demobilize ex-fighters.

Constraints

Community needs in Sierra Leone remain dauntingly extensive, and civil unrest could yet result if the general standard of living fails to improve, or the departure of UNAMSIL leads to a

deterioration in security. Youth unemployment and illiteracy rates are high, roads are poor, and health services inadequate. Despite the community empowerment programmes, the local capacity to sustain reintegration will remain low in both human and financial terms.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

After UNHCR has disengaged from reintegration programmes for Sierra Leonean returnees, its main focus will be on repatriation or local integration for Liberian refugees. Despite the planned voluntary repatriation of 20,000 Liberians, including 2,500 from urban areas, there will still be over 30,000 urban and camp-based refugees country-wide in need of continued protection and assistance throughout 2006.

For those Liberian refugees opting to stay in Sierra Leone, the search for long-term local integration solutions will become a priority. Urban integration and rural settlement options will be explored through intensified dialogue with government, local and refugee communities.

Many of the urban refugees who arrived in the country in the late 1980s have been unwilling to repatriate to Liberia and have pursued resettlement or local integration options whenever possible. They continue to live in precarious circumstances, and UNHCR will continue to advocate for their basic rights, including access to health care and education, and the prevention of sexual and other forms of exploitation or abuse. The process of dialogue, profiling and counselling of urban refugees began in 2005, and the implementation of the new *proGres* registration database will deepen UNHCR's understanding of individual cases and planning for durable solutions. At the same time, the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) will be financially supported and encouraged in its efforts to build the country's protection capacities. When the draft Refugee Protection Act passes into law, it will provide a basis for clarification of the legal status of the various urban refugee groups. A limited



Liberian refugees waiting at Kenema camp to board the truck that will take them back home. UNHCR / R. Goldstein-Rodriguez

number may become eligible for naturalization. UNHCR will help to guide them through that process.

Assistance

If the repatriation of Liberian refugees takes place as planned, UNHCR will close four of the eight refugee settlements and transfer up to 12,000 refugees to the consolidated sites. The number of implementing partners will decrease and UNHCR field offices in Zimmi and Kailahun will be downsized.

Basic services for the remaining camp population will be rationalized in coordination with the European Commission's *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development* project, started in 2005. Targeted self-reliance support will be needed to help remaining camp-based refugees adapt to reduced

levels of service provision after several years of assistance.

Desired impact

The programme in Sierra Leone is designed to facilitate the most appropriate durable solutions for refugees and to increase their self-reliance wherever possible. It is assumed that the situation in Liberia will prove conducive to an accelerated facilitation of voluntary repatriation for Liberian refugees. Economic recovery and stabilization will be achieved through an effective transition from humanitarian aid to development. The Government of Sierra Leone will assume greater responsibility for the determination of asylum applications and the handling of refugee matters when the Refugee Protection Act is passed.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

In 2006, UNHCR will have a total of 177 staff, comprising 124 national, 26 international, one JPO, 11 UNVs and 15 secondees. Country operations will be implemented through the office in Freetown, a sub-office in Kenema and three field offices respectively in Bo, Kailahun and Zimmi.

Coordination

As in previous years, UNHCR's main operational government counterpart will be NaCSA. Fourteen NGOs will be implementing UNHCR projects and an inter-agency Transitional Support Team active in the major areas of return will oversee the continuation of the reintegration programmes initiated by UNHCR. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework will be the key instruments guiding donor support to Sierra Leone in 2006. UNHCR will continue its active partnership with UNDP, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIDO, WHO and FAO within the context of a joint effort to consolidate peace in areas of return.

Offices
Freetown
Bo
Kailahun
Kenema
Zimmi

Partners
Government agency
National Commission for Social Action (NACSA)

NGOs

Action contre la faim
 African Development and Emergency Organization
 American Refugee Committee
 Arch-Diocesan Development Office
 Bo Pujehun Development Associates
 Caritas Kenema Office
 Catholic Relief Service
 Christian Children's Fund
 International Rescue Committee
 Lutheran World Federation
 Network Movement for Justice and Development
 Peace Winds Japan
 Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
 Talking Drums Studio

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
Coopération française
 WFP

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,760,373
Community services	964,504
Domestic needs	314,769
Education	464,787
Food	136,128
Health	697,733
Income generation	97,046
Legal assistance	190,004
Operational support (to agencies)	2,040,557
Sanitation	121,985
Shelter/other infrastructure	342,592
Transport/logistics	2,776,331
Water	353,564
Total operations	14,260,373
Programme support	3,020,832
Total	17,281,205