



Malian refugee boys participate in discussions on education, security and camp arrangements after their arrival at Tabareybarey camp, Niger.

Ensuring Protection for People of Concern

Conflict and persecution drove more than a million people – the highest number in over a decade – to seek safety across international borders in 2012. The number of people displaced within their own countries who were under UNHCR’s protection also rose to a new record high. In a turbulent year, characterized by insecurity and unrest in the Middle East, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UNHCR had to make emergency response a key focus of its protection activities, while at the same time promoting respect for international protection principles. ●●●

PROTECTION-SENSITIVE ENTRY SYSTEMS AND MIGRATION POLICIES

Every person has the right to seek and enjoy asylum in a country other than his or her own in order to escape persecution and other serious harm. Central to the institution of asylum is the principle of *non-refoulement*, which prohibits returning anyone to a territory where he or she faces threats to their lives or freedoms. Upholding the principle of *non-refoulement* means someone may not be rejected at the frontier and must be admitted to safe territory.

In 2012, UNHCR continued its work with States to develop and implement protection-sensitive entry systems. It undertook joint border monitoring exercises, trained border officials to increase their capacity to deal with asylum issues, and developed standardized procedures for identification, registration and follow-up for asylum-seekers and refugees arriving at borders.

UNHCR's advocacy and legal interventions promoted access to safe, fair and efficient asylum procedures in many countries and regions. To address the complex issues raised by mixed migration movements, the Office continued to help develop and implement regional-level protection strategies that were based on the *10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration*. A web-based compilation of best practices related to the 10-Point Plan was launched in late 2012. For examples of progress in the above areas, see regional summary chapters.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION

Challenging government policies and practices that allow for the detention of asylum-seekers without regard to alternatives to detention is a priority for UNHCR. In 2012, the Office issued new *Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention*. The guidelines cover relevant legal issues, standards of treatment for special groups and procedural safeguards. They call for humane and dignified conditions, as well as independent monitoring and inspection.

UNHCR works with governments at the national and regional levels to improve their understanding of alternatives to detention and to share good practices. For instance, in 2012 UNHCR organized a round table with government representatives from Australia, Canada, Sweden and the United States of America, with civil-society engagement, on alternatives to detention. UNHCR also organized round tables on these themes in Latvia (for the Baltic States) and Australia.

UNHCR made representations to governments in many instances of unlawful or arbitrary detention, and successfully intervened as *amicus curiae* in two detention cases before the European Court of Human Rights. It commissioned further empirical research on detention in 2012 and worked with partners on a detention monitoring manual, both of which will be published in 2013.

ENCOURAGING LOCAL POPULATIONS TO BE RECEPTIVE TOWARDS PEOPLE OF CONCERN

UNHCR continued to express alarm about the climate of intolerance affecting people of concern in many countries. Several operations made it a priority to address racism, xenophobia or extremist politics directed at asylum-seekers or refugees. In pursuit of its note on *Combating Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance through a Strategic Approach*, UNHCR has undertaken a number of initiatives to address the issue.

As a member of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Minorities, UNHCR works with other UN entities to develop guidelines and share effective practices to combat racial discrimination. It participates in the UNDG human rights mainstreaming process, and its interaction with the UN human rights mechanisms serves as an important tool in the promotion of tolerance and diversity. In its contributions to the Universal Periodic Review, for example, UNHCR promoted the implementation of pledges related to tolerance and diversity made by States in December 2011 at the ministerial-level intergovernmental event marking the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating

UPHOLDING THE PRINCIPLE OF *NON-REFOULEMENT* MEANS SOMEONE MAY NOT BE REJECTED AT THE FRONTIER AND MUST BE ADMITTED TO SAFE TERRITORY

to the Status of Refugees and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Along with other bodies, UNHCR also contributed to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

UNHCR cooperates with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in collecting data on racist and xenophobic crimes, developing policies and programmes that address racially motivated incidents, and monitoring the effectiveness of such policies and programmes. In 2012, a total of 29 UNHCR country offices contributed to ODIHR's annual Hate Crime Report.

ADEQUATE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

In line with pledges made at the 2011 intergovernmental commemorative event, a significant number of States have started to revise or amend national refugee legislation or adopt new laws to ensure compliance with international refugee law.

Some countries that have already adopted new refugee protection-related laws or regulations include the Plurinational State of Bolivia, China, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea. Many other countries have also engaged in legislative review processes with UNHCR's support.

In the European Union, many member States have begun to review their legislation following the entry into force in early 2012 of the recast Qualification Directive on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, which needs to be transposed into national law by 21 December

2013. UNHCR and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy, organized several training courses in support of this process in 2012. UNHCR also prepared a commentary on the recast directive, which it will issue in 2013.

UNHCR convened two expert round tables in 2012, one aimed at clarifying the interpretation and application of international and regional refugee instruments to persons fleeing armed conflict and other violent situations, and the other to explore the scope, meaning and application of temporary protection with regard to mixed population movements and complex humanitarian crises. A number of research studies were commissioned and published to support these round tables. *A Compilation of Summary Conclusions from UNHCR's Expert Meetings* from the 2011 anniversary year was also published.

REGISTRATION

Emergency situations in 2012 highlighted the importance of obtaining accurate and timely information on populations of concern, underlining the value of registration as a protection tool.

The key role of registration was particularly well-illustrated in both the Mali and Syria emergencies. Difficulties in registering nomadic populations, particularly in areas inaccessible to humanitarian workers, reduced the accuracy of data collected in West Africa. This led UNHCR to review its approach to registration, documentation and assistance delivery for nomadic populations. In Jordan and Lebanon, UNHCR staff worked around the clock to reduce the waiting time between arrival and registration.

Emergency registration also took place in Burundi, the Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. By the end of 2012, registration had been concluded in all emergency locations, with the exception of Za'atri

SUPPORT TO SGBV SURVIVORS

UNHCR made significant progress in developing assistance for SGBV survivors as part of the returnee operation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The numbers of cases reported have increased significantly, and as a result 300 more survivors are receiving assistance compared to last year. This improvement was possible thanks to UNHCR's and partners' close collaboration with local military and police authorities, as well as with community leaders. UNHCR was thus able to enlarge the protection space for the returnee operation. In addition, youth networks and women's associations worked together to combat SGBV and the Office trained its partners and civil society groups on legal measures to support survivors of SGBV.

UNHCR's **Pretoria** operation, which responds to SGBV affecting urban refugees and asylum-seekers in South Africa, did not meet its 2012 objective of being able to provide support for all SGBV survivors. Violent crime and rape are especially prevalent in informal urban settlements, where most refugees are obliged to seek cheap and affordable shelter solutions. In 2012, over 300 SGBV cases were reported to UNHCR, however, only 40 per cent of survivors received support. Fearing stigma, urban refugees often do not dare to report rape and seek support. Lack of information about counselling and health services, and language barriers, also deter SGBV survivors from seeking immediate support from health services. Reaching out to urban refugees is a great challenge and can only be addressed jointly with local service providers. Together with its partners, UNHCR Pretoria plans to provide information and training sessions for women and girls on the links between SGBV and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. In addition, UNHCR will assist the Department of Health to develop an integrated "one-stop" rape support and care facility.

PARTICIPATION OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS

The **Sudan operations in Darfur** saw a dramatic improvement in the impact of their education programme. In 2012, the number of out-of-school adolescents who participated in targeted programmes increased by 30 per cent in the course of the year. More than 100 out-of-school adolescents received various vocational/skills training in food processing, metal work, auto-electricity, car driving, advanced tailoring, car mechanics, phone maintenance and construction. Recipients of these services greatly benefitted from a labour market assessment conducted by the technical and vocational education and training programme in 2012. These market assessments are used to create demand-driven skills training with strong links to market needs. In addition, parent-teacher associations pay frequent visits to parents in order to encourage them to send their children to school regularly. The support of parents was crucial to the success of this programme.

In **Yemen**, the percentage of out-of-school adolescents in targeted programmes decreased from 13 to 10 per cent throughout 2012. It was a challenge to keep track of adolescents after their registration at entry points. In addition, the poor security environment exacerbated issues of child trafficking. In 2012, Yemen piloted the 5-year child protection strategy, which outlines priority

camp in Jordan, where household-level registration was an ongoing process in view of the continuing inflow of large numbers of refugees.

Other major registration activities in 2012 included a ration card exchange in Malawi in April, validation in Zimbabwe in June and a headcount in Mozambique in July. To strengthen anti-fraud mechanisms, UNHCR rolled out standard audit reporting programmes in these three countries. In Eastern Africa, government officials in five countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda) were trained in registration standards. Registration for voluntary repatriation was conducted in Cameroon, the Congo and the DRC. The provision of individual identity cards for refugees was strengthened significantly in 2012, a year which saw cards being issued for the first time to some populations of concern in Ethiopia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

In 2012, the use of biometrics was introduced in Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia and South Sudan. In Kenya, UNHCR and WFP began using biometrics to aid food distribution programmes.

The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), an inter-agency effort led by UNHCR and overseen by a Steering Committee composed of IOM, OCHA, the Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils and UNFPA, completed its pilot phase in 2012. An external evaluation recognized the value of the JIPS in field profiling activities and as an inter-agency service. The JIPS conducted field support missions to Afghanistan, Colombia, the DRC and Mali; piloted a Profiling Coordination Training event; and launched the Profiling and Assessment Resource Kit (<http://idp-profiling.org/park-database.html>).

In July 2012, the Human Rights Council adopted a new resolution on the Human Rights of IDPs (A/HRC/20/L.14), emphasizing the effective collection of data, disaggregated by age, sex, diversity and location, and encouraging the use of the JIPS. In September, the JIPS signed a collaboration agreement with the Office of the

Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs.

BIRTH REGISTRATION AND CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

Birth registration is vital to allow children to attend school and gain access to health services. It is also an important measure to prevent statelessness. There has been a marked improvement in the number of birth registrations among newborn refugees in urban areas. However, in camps and rural non-camp locations, only half of all new born children are registered.

Accomplishments in birth registration and coordination with State authorities in 2012 include, for example, mobile birth registration campaigns to reach refugee settlements in Zambia and camps in Kenya. In Kenya, Kakuma camp reported an increase in its birth registration rate, which reached 80 per cent in 2012.

In 2012, UNHCR and Plan International released the advocacy publication, *Under the Radar and Under-Protected: The Urgent Need to Address Stateless Children's Rights*, highlighting the need for birth registration as a protection intervention. Coinciding with its publication, the High Commissioner participated in a high-level event on birth registration in New York, organized with Plan International and UNICEF, where he underscored that universal birth registration was of crucial importance in protecting refugee children and preventing statelessness.

UNHCR increased its engagement with civil registration authorities in 2012, and participated in the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in Durban, South Africa, as well as in the High-level Meeting on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand.

Information, legal aid and assistance with documentation continued to be provided to individuals at risk of becoming stateless. In the Dominican Republic, for example, UNHCR worked with

partners to ensure that migrants and others of Haitian descent had access to documentation procedures in order to mitigate statelessness among them. These efforts resulted in the delivery of more than 2,400 documents to members of these groups.

Another documentation issue of concern to the Office is the obligation of States Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954 Convention) to issue convention travel documents (CTDs) to lawfully staying refugees and stateless persons. UNHCR continued to work with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to ensure that Convention States upgrade their travel documents to meet international standards of machine readability.

In 2012, fewer than one third of the Contracting States to the 1951 and 1954 Conventions had begun to issue machine-readable Convention travel documents (MRCTDs). After November 2015, refugees and stateless persons issued with non-MRCTDs may face increasing difficulties in obtaining visas or being able to exit or enter other countries, even if a visa is not required.

Some 10 new countries began issuing MRCTDs in 2012, and UNHCR continued to assist other countries to do so. ICAO provided an update for UNHCR's Executive Committee members on the issuance of MRCTDs in June 2012, and a guide was launched in 2012 to provide advice to States on producing and issuing MRCTDs for refugees and stateless persons, based on existing standards and recommendations.

REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION (RSD)/ASYLUM SYSTEMS

The accurate and timely identification of individuals in need of international protection is fundamental to the right to seek asylum and the fulfilment by States of their obligations towards refugees. In 2012, UNHCR monitored and supported RSD procedures worldwide and developed guidelines for the effective examination of refugee claims and correct application of the criteria for international refugee protection.

Building States' capacity to determine the status of asylum-seekers on their territory as well as improving its own effectiveness in this area, are priorities for UNHCR. The Office pursued its engagement with national authorities, the judiciary and civil-society actors to provide advice and training on RSD issues, including those related to refugee protection and national security and the application of the exclusion clauses.

Regional capacity-building initiatives continued to help fortify RSD systems. A welcome development in 2012 was the commitment of States in Eastern Europe and in the Americas to participate with UNHCR in regional Quality Assurance Initiatives.

In countries where national asylum procedures do not exist or are not yet considered fully functional, UNHCR conducts RSD under its mandate; in 2012, it did so in more than 60 countries. In many of these operations significant increases in the number of asylum ap-

THE PROVISION OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY CARDS FOR REFUGEES WAS STRENGTHENED SIGNIFICANTLY IN 2012

plications created RSD backlogs and lengthy waiting periods for interviews and decisions. UNHCR sought to reduce the consequent protection gaps through the creation of new posts in key operations and the use of staff from partners.

In 2012, UNHCR undertook RSD as part of its emergency response to conflict-related displacement involving sudden influxes, high numbers of asylum-seekers with acute and immediate protection needs, and complex eligibility and security considerations. Streamlined mechanisms to identify and deploy qualified RSD staff when

- ▶ activities. In order to address trafficking, UNHCR separated concerned children from smugglers, reported cases to the police, and placed the children in a safe shelter until a host family was identified or a durable solution found. Furthermore, 1,000 refugee children were referred to the school health and education office for enrolment and age verification certificates. Finally, UNHCR encouraged its implementing partner to conduct a training session for unaccompanied minors in order to encourage them to enrol in classes. The Office hopes that these initiatives will motivate out-of-school adolescents in 2013 and beyond.

IMPROVING LAW AND POLICY FOR PROTECTION

The extent to which laws and policy on the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in **South Sudan** were consistent with international standards in 2012 far exceeded the target for 2012; however, with regard to IDP protection, targets have not yet been fully met.

UNHCR worked closely with stakeholder Ministries in the drafting of the Refugees Act which South Sudan passed in July 2012. The Refugees Act stands as a model in the region and compares favourably with similar refugee laws globally. It declares that application of the act "shall be guided by the principles laid down in relevant international instruments" and is substantially in conformity with international standards such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention (Article 38). This is a major step, although accession to key international and regional instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention has yet to occur, as the new Government is still dealing with many domestic processes. The Ministry of the Interior created the Commission of Refugee Affairs in January 2013. UNHCR is supporting this new commission with material resources and capacity building of staff, including training on status determination and other refugee protection issues.

South Sudan is one of the 39 signatory States of the Kampala Convention, but has not yet ratified it. As a newly independent state, the authorities committed to ensuring accession to key international instruments. However, with limited resources, in 2012 the Government was forced to prioritize and gave emphasis to legislation concerning refugees. In 2013, UNHCR will focus its advocacy work on an internal displacement policy including the preparation an "accession package". ●



Azad and Maha with one of their children in Domiz Camp, Iraq.

UNHCR / B. SOKOL



SPECIAL HELP FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

UNHCR BAGHDAD

DOMIZ CAMP, IRAQ, NOVEMBER 2012 |

For Syrians fleeing their homeland, it is always a difficult journey to cross borders, and especially so for people with special needs. Both Azad,* 44, and his 30-year-old wife, Maha, were stricken with polio as children.

The couple and their three children fled their home village of Qamishly in north-eastern Syria's Hassakeh governorate last August and are now in northern Iraq's Domiz refugee camp. Sitting in a wheelchair in front of the family's tent on a recent sunny day, Azad recounted their perilous escape to safety.

"It was an arduous journey," he said. "It took us an hour-and-a-half on foot between the mountains until we reached the Iraqi border. It was very difficult. Both my wife and I needed assistance. She was on crutches and I was carried the whole way by another refugee who volunteered to help me."

Shortly after their arrival and registration in the camp, they received a special shelter site for vulnerable families. "UNHCR provided us with a tent supported by a one-metre-high block wall, with an adjacent small kitchen and bathroom," Azad said. "Later, I received another 300 blocks

donated by a local construction company, and another Syrian refugee from the camp volunteered to build the walls higher so our little room is fully covered under the tent. I feel more protected from the cold winter."

Supported by her crutches, Maha was in the small kitchen preparing the food for her family. She said she appreciates the increased protection provided by the surrounding block wall. UNHCR is working to provide similar protection for all of the camp's tents, but for the time being the improved structures are going first to vulnerable families and recent arrivals.

"I feel more comfortable here," said Maha, noting the difficulties of living with special needs in this tented camp of some 23,000 people, nearly all of them Syrian Kurds. "I feel I have privacy here. We have our own bathroom and I can cook, wash dishes and do the laundry in my own space."

There are at least 158 other Syrian refugees with special needs in Domiz Camp. In partnership with local Kurdish authorities, UNHCR is providing all of them with the reinforced block walls and extra space for their own kitchen and bathroom. Over time, the plan is to provide everyone in the camp with similar

facilities. So far, some 1,500 families have benefitted from the improved shelters, with another 1,300 to go.

The conflict in Syria, which began in March 2011, forced Azad to close his small grocery store in Qamishly, leaving the family without adequate income to feed their three children, Hakim, 10, Haven, 8, and Shekria, 5.

"Despite the improved accommodation, humanitarian aid and hygiene kits we received from UNHCR [and other organizations], financial income is still the main challenge I face," Azad said. "I cannot move easily, it is my son, Hakim, who helps me to move around. Therefore, I can only do easy jobs. I need to start my own business. I need to become independent again. I don't like being dependent anymore," he added, wiping away tears.

But for the time being, Azad and his family do not feel it's safe to go back home. "There were power cuts all the time. I lost my job, and prices have risen significantly. My brother was killed two months ago. I do not want to lose my son as well. So I prefer to stay here until it is safe to go back." ■

** All names changed for protection reasons.*

and where needed, and improved coordination between RSD and closely related protection activities (in particular registration, community services and resettlement), strengthened protection in these challenging contexts.

ENHANCING THE PROVISION OF PROTECTION INFORMATION

To help in assessing the protection needs of asylum-seekers, UNHCR issued Eligibility Guidelines containing information on the security and human rights situation and the availability of protection in countries of origin. UNHCR also published non-return advisories and protection considerations papers in response to crises or other important developments in countries of origin.

Working with partners, UNHCR produced thematic and country-specific country-of-origin information (COI) compilations, in an effort to support quality asylum decision-making. Targeted training was provided to UNHCR staff, judges, government officials, legal aid providers and other relevant actors on the proper use of COI. Country information, relevant legislation and legal or policy documents pertaining to asylum decision-making were continuously uploaded to the *Refworld* database [www.refworld.org], which is being upgraded and modernized in light of feedback received in a 2012 user survey.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Refugee flight often results in the dispersal of family members. UNHCR advocates for a flexible approach to the principle of family unity in facilitating the reunion of family members, covering relationships beyond parents and children and including common-law and same-sex partnerships. When the whereabouts of relatives are unknown, UNHCR works closely with ICRC to help restore family links. It also supports family reunification for children when this is considered to be in their best interests.

UNHCR continues to seek family reunification by submitting resettlement cases under the family reunification category and supporting family reunification under States' immigration or hu-

manitarian programmes, in close coordination with IOM and NGOs. It arranges for travel documentation, entry and exit permits and the provision of financial assistance for special protection cases.

AGE, GENDER AND DIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING

One of the challenges UNHCR has faced since the introduction of its age, gender and diversity (AGD) mainstreaming policy has been in calibrating its results-based management framework to capture the operational effectiveness of the policy and show how it has improved protection for persons of concern.

To address this challenge, in 2012 UNHCR undertook an extensive review of the elements within the results framework that relate to the AGD policy. The review involved an analysis with field practitioners of the relevance and accessibility of AGD-related information and the manner of its collection, as well as an analysis with technical units of the quality and significance of the AGD-related data received from field operations.

Based on these findings, a significant number of adjustments were made to the impact indicators being used under the results framework. As a result, the AGD-related impact indicators will provide a fuller picture, including: better representation of sex-and age-disaggregated data in a number of key protection areas; an improved cross-sectoral view of the protection environment for specific groups; and important information about groups with specific needs that were previously not represented in the results-based framework.

PROTECTING PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

In 2012, UNHCR issued two notes on the protection of individuals with specific needs: *Working with Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Forced Displacement*, and *Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement*, in order to broaden the understanding of the diversity element in UNHCR's AGD policies.

In addition to issuing *Guidelines on International Protection on Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity*,

UNHCR worked with expert partners to convene the first comprehensive regional training event designed to strengthen the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) asylum-seekers and refugees. The focus was on awareness-raising for all staff, identifying solutions to the protection issues faced by LGBTI people, and adjudicating LGBTI refugee claims. A set of LGBTI-related indicators was added to the results framework in order to gauge the impact of UNHCR's work in this area.

A series of disability inclusion trainings and programme planning workshops for country teams, their partners and disability organizations led to a number of positive developments. These included: improved protection outcomes in India; the moving of the UNHCR registration office to a more accessible location for people of concern with disabilities in Bangladesh; and in Uganda, the launch of a project to support an association formed by refugees with disabilities (see also News and Views story *Special help for special needs*).

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN

Recommendations made during the Regional Dialogues with Women and Girls in 2011, led to describes initiatives in several key areas, such as increasing access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); improving accessibility to sanitary materials; and enabling women to participate in community decision-making.

Adjustments to UNHCR's results-based management framework to better reflect age, gender and diversity mean that henceforth 18 indicators will be disaggregated by sex, and eight will be gender-specific. This will enable UNHCR to further refine understanding of the protection needs of women and girls, and to tailor responses accordingly.

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

UNHCR continued to roll out its updated strategy on SGBV, with an emphasis on emergencies in 2012. Fifteen operations had developed five-year strategies by the end of the year. UNHCR staff and partners in 41 countries received support in SGBV strategy development and monitoring through four regional workshops. The High Commissioner funded multi-sectoral projects in aid of SGBV prevention and response. This contributed to increased quality of services to SGBV survivors and strengthened preventive measures. These included programmes for educational and recreational activities for children and youth in refugee camps in Chad; the engagement of IDP communities, especially men, in South Kivu (DRC) to prevent SGBV; improvements in inter-agency data collection and monitoring of SGBV activities for Colombian IDPs; and the provision of safe spaces in Haiti, Georgia, Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As part of these projects, quality counselling and recreational activities reached SGBV survivors and women and girls at risk in 10 countries, with new approaches, such as art therapy, being introduced for refugees in Ecuador and Georgia. Improved access to justice was achieved in nine countries through activities designed in relation to each particular context. These included legal counselling for SGBV survivors; a revision to the Criminal Code in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; mobile legal counselling for refugees in Ecuador; strengthening of judiciary police protection for IDPs in north Kivu (DRC); and a comprehensive approach to legal services for refugees in Nepal. The prevention of SGBV was addressed through multi-sectoral approaches, including support for livelihoods and self-reliance of SGBV survivors and women and girls at risk in nine operations. The High Commissioner's special projects

UNHCR CONTINUED TO FACE CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGES IN CHILD PROTECTION

also put priority on the provision of sanitary materials for women and girls in 27 countries, and a regional project to prevent female genital mutilation in the Horn of Africa region focused on awareness-raising and the provision of health services.

UNHCR launched a comprehensive SGBV e-learning course which saw the participation of 660 staff members, including senior managers. A facilitator's guide on SGBV with training modules adapted for different audience groups is also under preparation.

Special emphasis on monitoring and evaluation in 2012 included technical support to field operations and a revision of the results framework. This will improve the quality of data on SGBV and facilitate planning, programming and reporting. UNHCR continued to implement its GBV Information Management System.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

In 2012, UNHCR launched a global framework for the protection of children. This was the product of extensive consultations with refugee children and communities, staff and partners, and marked an institutional shift from focusing on specific categories of children to strengthening and establishing systems to prevent, mitigate and respond to protection concerns facing all children of concern.

Eleven country operations have received technical support, including the deployment of child-protection specialists, training interventions and assistance in developing and implementing longer-term, country-level child protection strategies. With the cooperation of standby partners, 19 child protection specialists were deployed to 15 countries, representing a 19 per cent increase in dedicated staff resources since 2011.

The trafficking and smuggling route to and through the Sinai presented serious child protection concerns. In 2012, child protection specialists were deployed to key operations along the route in northern Ethiopia, eastern Sudan and Cairo, Egypt, helping to strengthen child protection and counter-trafficking initiatives in the region.

Despite these positive developments, UNHCR continued to face considerable challenges in child protection. The rise in the number of children at risk was particularly apparent in East Africa. In response to this, a regional child protection/best interest determination (BID) advisor was deployed to Nairobi to support operations in the East and Horn of Africa. BID e-learning and child protection self-learning programmes will be released in 2013 and 400 staff registered for the first web seminar linked to the launch of the global framework for the protection of children. These initiatives and related training events are designed to increase the child protection capacity of all UNHCR staff. ■