

Côte d'Ivoire

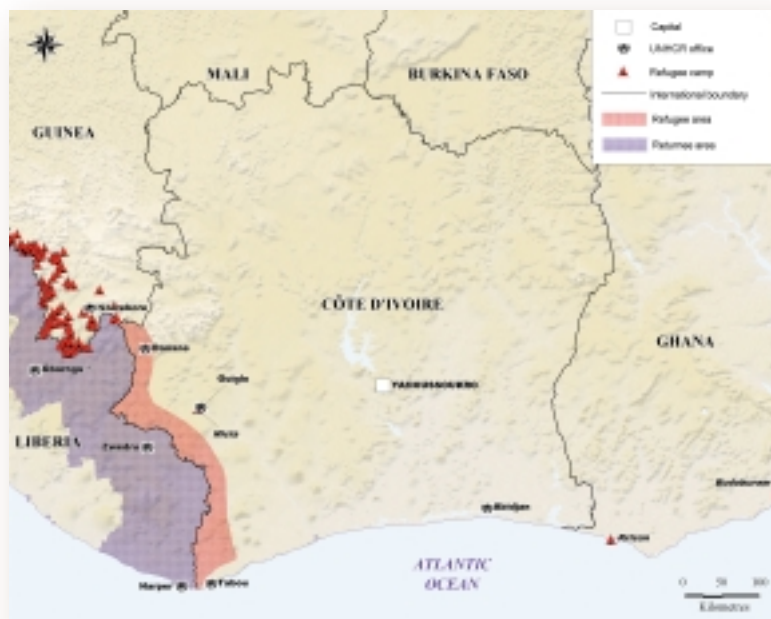
AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Provide transport assistance and/or a repatriation package to Liberian refugees; facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees (security and other conditions permitting); phase down the level of UNHCR's direct assistance to Liberian refugees and hand over to the Government health and education services; protect refugees who choose to integrate locally and increase their level of self-reliance; work with the Government to formulate and enact a national law on refugees and stateless persons.

Impact

- UNHCR helped over 17,000 Liberian refugees to return to their country of origin with transportation and/or a repatriation package.
- Thanks to its field presence, UNHCR was able to monitor the protection of refugees; the process proved to be of critical importance during this period of socio-political turmoil.
- Limited assistance was provided to Liberian, Sierra Leonean and urban refugees in circumstances of need or vulnerability.
- Preparations were made in co-operation with other UN agencies for possible new influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries.



Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Persons of Concern			
	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Liberia (Refugees)	117,700	117,700	55	58
Sierra Leone (Refugees)	1,800	1,800	51	60
Liberia (Asylum-seekers) ¹	1,200	1,200	55	58
DRC (Asylum-seekers) ¹	680	680	40	17

¹Mainly of urban origin

Income and Expenditure (USD)				
Annual Programme Budget				
Revised Budget ³	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure ³
10,771,499	3,140,869	7,222,539	10,363,408	10,130,735

¹Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

²Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³Includes budget and costs related to the Regional Director's Office (for details, please refer to the Regional Overview).

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The majority of refugees hosted in Côte d'Ivoire originate from Liberia and fled their country at the height of the war in December 1989. In September 1998, renewed incidents, in particular in Lofa county, led to a new influx of refugees into Côte d'Ivoire.

The year 2000 witnessed serious political, social and economic upheaval resulting in the erosion of national cohesion and social stability. Given the Government's more pressing domestic needs, UNHCR's local integration programmes for Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees could not move forward as planned. The gradual transfer of responsibility for education and health services to the Government had to be delayed. UNHCR therefore had to continue to provide basic assistance to refugees of whom the majority live in some 450 villages in the western part of the country, in the so-called *zone d'accueil*.

The changes in the Government and UNHCR's main counterpart also rendered the implementation of a joint strategy for refugees difficult. In February 2000, UNHCR's main counterpart in the Government, the *Comité national de coordination de l'aide aux réfugiés* (CNCAR) was replaced by the *Service d'aide et d'assistance aux réfugiés et apatrides* (SAARA) under the Ministry of Interior and Decentralisation. In August 2000, the SAARA became a sub-directorate of the *Direction de l'intégration nationale et de l'immigration*, still within the Ministry of Interior. In November

2000, a new presidential decree placed the SAARA under the direct supervision of the *Office national de la protection civile* (ONPC), within the Ministry of Defence and Civil Protection. By the end of the year, however, the actual transfer of responsibility had not taken place.

In spite of the aforementioned difficulties, there was hope at the end of the year that with the gradual restoration of a constitutional government and democratic institutions, in particular the election of a National Assembly, UNHCR would have the possibility of furthering its main objectives in 2001.

Constraints

The overall instability and frequent changes among governmental counterparts tended to hold back the effective implementation of UNHCR's programme. Although authorities at all levels remained cooperative, negotiations related to the local integration of the remaining Liberian refugees, in particular the integration of refugee children into the national education system, did not move forward as planned. The drafting and adoption of a national law on refugees foundered due to changes at key ministries and the absence of a parliament.

The violent confrontations around the elections caused great anxiety among the refugees. A number of refugees suffered from harassment and arbitrary arrest. It is however important to underline that such incidents were the result of the prevailing chaos and that refugees were not deliberately targeted. Against a background of economic hardship, refugees, like other foreigners, were all too often perceived as competing for scarce resources. Unfortunately the development of income generation schemes could not be carried out as initially planned.

Funding

The effective implementation of the programme as a whole was seriously hampered by chronic shortfalls in funding and the irregular and unpredictable cash flow. This was especially the case for voluntary repatriation, for which there was no initial allocation in 2000 and which required a release from the Operational Reserve. Moreover, the "semi-organised" repatriation, which was due to resume immedi-



ately after the completion of the organised movements at the end of June, could only resume late in the year. Under the small assistance project for urban refugees, emergency medical costs could only be covered for the most vulnerable, and rent could only be paid for the first six months of the year, leading to the eviction of a number of refugees and refugee families. Vocational training activities for refugees and nationals in the *zone d'accueil* were planned to continue for one year but had to be halted after six months.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

Over 17,000 Liberian refugees repatriated with UNHCR's assistance during the year, bringing the total number of refugees who repatriated under UNHCR's auspices since the beginning of the operation in 1997 to 70,500. No Sierra Leonean refugees expressed the wish to return in 2000, but UNHCR continued to monitor the situation in the areas of potential return in Sierra Leone.

Refugee status determination remained the joint responsibility of UNHCR and the Government represented by the *Commission nationale d'éligibilité* (CNE) in Abidjan and by the *Commission d'agrément* (CA) in the *zone d'accueil*. However, because of the political instability in the country, only ten out of the planned 24 sessions of the CNE could take place. This resulted in the build-up of a considerable backlog. By the end of the year, over 1,000 urban asylum-seekers were awaiting the determination of their status (some had been waiting for several years). In the *zone d'accueil*, the CA was not operational. By the end of the year, over 1,200 Liberian refugees who arrived in Côte d'Ivoire on or after 1 January 1999 were also awaiting the determination of their status. UNHCR carried out status determination for 400 asylum-seekers who were later issued refugee identity cards by the local authorities.

In light of the fragile political situation and the worsening economic situation in the country, the integration of Liberian refugee children into the national education system did not materialise. The draft Memorandum of Understanding on the transfer of educational activities between the Government, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP was not signed. By the end of the year however, the Minister of Education demonstrated a willingness to take on greater responsibilities in spite of a dire lack of resources. UNHCR therefore decided to act on its commitments under the

terms of the draft Memorandum of Understanding, notably to fund a second transition year.

Overall, and in spite of the unstable socio-political situation that prevailed in 2000, the Government did not change its attitude towards refugees and UNHCR maintained good relations with the authorities.

A total of 119 Liberian refugees (26 families) and 38 Congolese refugees (20 families) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were resettled in a third country. All were presented by UNHCR and, with one exception, had faced protection problems.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: 560 unaccompanied refugee children were identified in the *zone d'accueil*. A total of 305 attended day-care centres run by a national NGO in Guiglo and Tabou, where they received formal or non-formal education. At the same time, an international NGO pursued identification and tracing activities with a view to family reunification in Liberia. A special repatriation convoy was organised on behalf of 25 refugee children who were reunited with their parents in Liberia. Some 400 vulnerable refugees (women single heads of households, women victims of violence, the disabled and elderly refugees) received training and financial support to start up small businesses such as tailoring, soap production, shoe repair, hairdressing, vegetable processing, baking, dyeing and embroidery. UNHCR also provided some financial support and distributed orthopaedic devices to 51 disabled refugees unable to benefit from other types of assistance. In addition, vulnerable refugees were provided with assistance to repair their huts and some 50 malnourished children under the age of one received milk. A Christmas celebration was organised in Abidjan for 300 refugee children. Young refugees living in urban centres were enrolled in English language courses and driving courses; others were trained in computer skills, tailoring, hairdressing and electronics. At the end of the year, 50 had successfully concluded their training and were given a certificate.

Crop Production: To enhance the self-reliance of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugee farmers, UNHCR provided them with technical assistance as well as agricultural tools, fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides. In the Danane and Tabou areas, some 1,600 refugees and 650 local land owners benefited from such assistance. The main crops were rice and various vegetables (in small kitchen gardens).

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Over 1,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers were provided with support to help them cover the costs of basic medical care and

medicines, education, rent and transport. UNHCR's activities in the health and education sectors were not on a large enough scale to cater for more than the most vulnerable people. A total of 250 refugees aged 14 and above received financial support to pay for a *carte de séjour* at the reduced fee levied on nationals of countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This document is of great value as it grants its holder all the entitlements of legal residents in the country, including the right to work. In the volatile conditions prevailing during the year, the possession of a *carte de séjour* was all the more important. Repatriating Liberians received a package consisting of a plastic sheet, a jerry can, a kitchen set, two blankets and sleeping mats, as well as agricultural tools.

Education: During the first year (1999-2000) of transition of the education sector to the Government, out of 20,200 refugee children who enrolled at the beginning of the school year, 17,700 still regularly attended classes at the end. A total of 13,000 sat the final primary school exam, but only 5,930 passed. The low pass rate could mainly be attributed to the change in the language of education from English to French (three months of French language tuition proved insufficient) and the change of syllabus from the Liberian to the Ivorian. UNHCR continued to provide financial assistance to enable 1,470 children of secondary school age (990 boys and 480 girls) to complete either Junior High School (9th grade) or Senior High School (12th grade) in the Liberian syllabus. In May, a team from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) came from Liberia to supervise examinations held in three sites in the *zone d'accueil*. A total of 1,110 students sat the WAEC examinations: 700 took the Junior High School Certificate exam and 410 took the Senior High School Certificate exam. The pass rates were 59 and 71 per cent respectively. In addition, some 110 Liberian refugee students (including 40 girls) pursued post-secondary and technical studies, for which they received scholarships. At the vocational training institutes in the *zone d'accueil*, some 590 young refugees and 70 Ivorians were trained in construction, accounting, finance, economics, computer skills, electronics, mechanics, the rehabilitation of roads, plumbing and carpentry. The programme had to be curtailed by mid-year because of budgetary constraints.

Food: Some 13,600 Liberian refugees in transit centres were given hot meals prior to their repatriation journey. WFP continued to supply food rations (maize, peas, vegetable oil and salt) for school canteens during the school year. In Nicla, nearly 5,000 refugees continued to receive basic food rations provided by WFP on a monthly basis throughout the year. Food assistance was then terminated.

Forestry: During the final year of the multi-year environmental programme established in 1997 in the *zone d'accueil*, 110 hectares of agro-forestry land and over 1,000 hectares of recently planted forest were maintained. Over 800 women received training in the manufacturing, optimal use and maintenance of improved fuel-saving stoves. Some 800 new stoves were manufactured and distributed to families. At the end of the year, due to the successive changes in UNHCR's governmental counterpart, it had not been possible to secure bilateral funding for the continuation of the programme.

Health/Nutrition: Before repatriating, Liberian refugees were medically screened. Moreover, 6,400 refugees were vaccinated against yellow fever and 2,200 refugee children under the age of five were vaccinated against measles. A total of over 16,500 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees benefited from medical assistance. UNHCR also covered the costs of medicines and medical supplies for the health and feeding centres in Nicla camp. A total of 1,900 refugees attended family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention workshops organised in the camp. UNHCR provided logistical support for the national polio vaccination campaign (covering refugees and nationals equally).

Income Generation: Since the Small Economic Activities Development (SEAD) programme was launched in 1998, over 2,000 refugees (56 per cent of them women) have received loans to start up small-scale income generation projects such as bakeries and small-scale trade. The reimbursement rate for the loans was 77 per cent.

Legal Assistance: A plan to provide all refugees aged 14 and above with identity cards was launched in July 1999. This, however, fell substantially short of its goals both in terms of numbers of cards issued and their actual value. Only 10,600 refugee cards were issued since then. Furthermore, refugees regularly complained that the police and other local authorities did not consider this card to be a valid document. After a thorough review conducted jointly by the SAARA and UNHCR, the operation was suspended in November. Pending the establishment of an effective documentation process, UNHCR advocated the renewal of expired cards and intervened on several occasions when the police did not recognise the validity of the refugee identity cards.

Operational Support (to Agencies): In line with the programme objectives for local integration, assistance and repatriation, and in order to ensure an adequate field presence and expertise, UNHCR supported the work of its operational partners by covering most of their operating, staff and administrative costs.

Sanitation: To prevent the spread of communicable diseases at Nicla camp, the 100 latrine blocks, 65 shower units and 500 metres of sewage channels were regularly maintained. No epidemics were reported in the camp. Through regular monitoring visits, UNHCR also ensured satisfactory sanitary conditions at all times in the three transit centres in the *zone d'accueil* (housing Liberian refugees overnight prior to their repatriation).

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: No infrastructure was built in 2000. Only minor repairs and maintenance works were carried out at the three transit centres. All community shelters at Nicla camp were regularly maintained.

Transport/Logistics: The construction of a ferry, for repatriations to Maryland County in Liberia, was completed and the ferry was maintained in good order. A fleet of vehicles, including five trucks, 120 light vehicles and 111 motorcycles, was insured and maintained in good running condition to provide the necessary logistical support for the repatriation movements and all other project activities. Two out of ten warehouses in the *zone d'accueil* were closed during the year, leaving a total of eight stocked with relief items or agricultural inputs, managed by UNHCR and its operational partners. Stocks of relief items and non-expendable property were regularly checked throughout the *zone d'accueil*.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

In January 2000, 60 staff managed the operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ten international and 49 national staff and one UNV). By December, the number of posts had been reduced by nine (two international and seven national staff), while the office in Abidjan was strengthened by one JPO. Apart from Abidjan, UNHCR had offices in Danane, Guiglo and Tabou. Due to the extension of the deadline for repatriation to the end of 2000, the closure of the Danane and Tabou offices, planned for the end of June, did not take place. The Regional Directorate in Abidjan oversaw the overall strategy and programme management for the sub-region and provided advice and technical expertise as required. The office in Abidjan participated in regional meetings to discuss questions related to Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees as well as preparations for potential new influxes of refugees from Guinea and Liberia.

Working with Others

The programme was implemented in close coordination with the main government counterpart

responsible for refugees and asylum-seekers, and in partnership with nine NGOs, and one international organisation. UNHCR maintained close and regular contacts with UNDP, in particular in the context of the Security Management Team meetings. Discussions with UNDP were also initiated to consider ways to include refugees in micro-finance projects. Several meetings with UNICEF, WFP, the SAARA and the Ministry of Education were held to study how best to integrate Liberian refugee children into the national education system. UNHCR took part in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) process, especially in the sessions of the Education Working Group, the linkage with development agencies being of crucial importance for the effective local integration of refugees.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

In 2000, UNHCR's operations in Côte d'Ivoire were greatly hampered by the prevailing socio-political and economic situation, compounded by funding problems. In terms of durable solutions, the most visible achievement was the voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity of over 17,000 Liberian refugees.

While direct material assistance to Liberian refugees was drastically curtailed and limited to medical assistance for the vulnerable and to educational assistance for primary school children and students in their final years of Junior and High School, virtually no progress could be made in consolidating self-reliance measures for refugees remaining in Côte d'Ivoire. On the positive side, although the actual transfer of responsibility for education to the Ivorian Government could not materialise in the new school year, UNHCR was able to garner the support and active involvement of UNICEF and WFP. Moreover, towards the end of the year, there were encouraging signs of commitment from the Government.

Efforts were made to strengthen the national legal framework for refugee protection and to accelerate refugee status determination for individual asylum-seekers, but in both cases the results were disappointing.

UNHCR's presence in the *zone d'accueil* throughout the year 2000, at a time when other international and non-governmental organisations were withdrawing, proved to be essential, especially during the moments of acute tension, to mitigate the anxiety of the refugee population. Through its presence, UNHCR was also able to detect irregular activities such as the military recruitment of refugees and to elicit appropriate corrective measures from the Ivorian civilian and military authorities.

Offices	NGOs
Abidjan	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Danane	<i>Afrique secours et assistance</i>
Guiglo	<i>Association de soutien à l'autopromotion sanitaire urbaine</i>
Tabou	CARITAS (Côte d'Ivoire)
	<i>Côte d'Ivoire – ECOLOGIE</i>
	International Rescue Committee
	Save the Children Fund (UK)
	<i>Société de développement des forêts</i>
Partners	Other
Government Agencies	<i>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
<i>Service d'aide et d'assistance aux réfugiés et apatrides</i>	United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,243,973		20,096	
Community Services	137,233		533,554	
Crop Production	12,218		50,139	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	125,276		122,915	
Education	85,602		1,518,517	
Fisheries	0		(22)	
Food	12,378		24,130	
Forestry	69,226		243,146	
Health / Nutrition	124,882		276,885	
Income Generation	108,639		140,811	
Legal Assistance	174,969		223,755	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	234,246		175,927	
Sanitation	2,814		24,295	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	33,205		48,033	
Transport / Logistics	772,227		656,317	
Water	0		6,772	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	452,253		(2,977,043)	
Combined Projects	951,875		(951,875)	
Sub-total Operational	4,541,016		136,352	
Programme Support	4,820,294		208,611	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	9,361,310	(3)	344,963	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	769,425	(3)	0	
Total	10,130,735	(1) (3)	344,963	

Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	1,956,653		1,620,175	
Reporting Received	1,504,400		4,597,218	
Balance	452,253		(2,977,043)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		3,683,001	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		22,036	
Currency Adjustment	0		(31,381)	
Outstanding 31 December	452,253		652,541	

Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1 January	0		499,547	(6)
New Obligations	10,130,735	(1)	0	
Disbursements	9,361,310	(3)	344,963	(6)
Cancellations	0		138,945	(6)
Outstanding 31 December	769,425	(3)	15,639	(6)

Figures which cross reference to Accounts: (1) Annex to Statement 1 – (3) Schedule 3 – (6) Schedule 6