



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

OVERVIEW

Country: Zambia

Planning Year: 2006

2006 COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN FOR ZAMBIA**Part I: OVERVIEW****1. Protection and socio-economic operational environment**

UNHCR Regional Representation in Lusaka provides protection and assistance to some 102,000 (as at Jan 2005) refugees originating from two main areas, i.e. Angola and the Great Lakes Region. The refugees are residing in five camps / settlements and in urban area (mainly Lusaka) as follows:

Camp / Settlement	Location	Total number of refugees	Main countries of origin
Meheba	North-Western Province	19,373	ANG, RWA, DRC
Mayukwayukwa	Western Province	7,184	ANG
Nangweshi	Western Province	23,444	ANG
Kala	Luapula Province	22,649	DRC
Mwange	Northern Province	24,273	DRC
Urban	Lusaka Province	4,931	DRC, RWA, SOM, BDI
Total		101,854	

In addition, according to the Government of Zambia estimates, there are some 75,000 spontaneously settled refugees living in Zambia, 65% of whom Angolans.

In the present situation of the countries of origin and Zambia, the main durable solutions to be pursued for the Angolan refugees in 2005-2006 are voluntary repatriation and local integration. Some 45,000 Angolan refugees repatriated from Zambia with the assistance of UNHCR in 2003-2004, and other 30,000-34,500 are expected to return in 2005. This operation requires continuation of the close collaboration between the UNHCR Offices in Angola and Zambia, as well as with the IOM teams in both countries. For those recognized Angolan refugees who by 2006 have not opted for voluntary repatriation, the possibility for return remains open, but UNHCR will also work with the Government of Zambia to facilitate eventual integration of these refugees in Zambian society.

For the refugees from the Great Lakes, the situation is more complex. Promotion of voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees has not resulted in meaningful numbers having returned in 2003-2004 and this is not expected to change in 2005-2006. The search for alternative solution, such as local settlement / integration, for the Rwandan refugees has to continue in 2006. For the Congolese and Burundian refugees, the security situation in the areas of origin of most refugees hosted by Zambia is expected to improve gradually, and therefore voluntary repatriation from Zambia to DRC and Burundi is projected in 2006. Resettlement to third countries such as US, Canada, Australia and the Nordic Countries is a realistic durable solution only for a limited number of refugees.

Through the Zambia Initiative (ZI) programme, UNHCR hopes to create conditions in the refugee hosting areas in Zambia that would facilitate socio-economic development of both refugees and the Zambians, and thereby the local integration of those groups of refugees who can not or do not wish to repatriate to their countries of origin.

Among the beneficiaries of the ZI are many of the estimated 49,000 spontaneously settled Angolan refugees. The Tripartite Commission for the Repatriation of Angolan Refugee took a decision in 2004 to screen these refugees in 2005, and subsequently to assist their voluntary repatriation in 2006. This will, however, depend on the availability of resources.

2006 will bring a considerable change to the partnership arrangements of UNHCR in Zambia, in particular as concerns the camps hosting Angolan refugees. As the voluntary repatriation progresses, the camp populations diminish and emphasis will be on ensuring that the remaining refugees in these camps have increased access to the services provided by the Government of Zambia. By the end of 2005, most of the NGO Implementing Partners (IPs) will have phased out their activities in these camps / settlements, and the Government departments will have taken their role in providing services such as water, sanitation, education and health care to the refugees, with the support of UNHCR. The consolidation of the camps will continue, with Nangweshi to be closed by early 2006 and the residual population moved to Mayukwyukwa settlement where access to land and services facilitates self-sufficiency of those Nangweshi refugees still remaining in Zambia.

The reorientation of the assistance programme for the Congolese refugees in the two northern camps from care and maintenance towards voluntary repatriation, assuming that the security situation in south-eastern DRC improves, is expected to have only limited implications to the partnership arrangements in those camps. The emphasis of the assistance activities by the IPs will simply be redirected towards preparations for voluntary repatriation, while the basic assistance in health care, education, water and sanitation and in livelihood in the two northern camps will continue. Launching the volrep operation from Zambia will be very much dependent on the UNHCR presence and peaceful conditions in the areas of return in Katanga Province of DRC, signature of the tripartite agreement between the Governments of Zambia and DRC and UNHCR, and on regular exchange of information on the conditions on the ground through cross-border meetings and through area of return -updates from DRC.

2. Operational goals and potential durable solutions

In line with the UNHCR global strategic objectives for 2006/2007, the following are the goals of the 2006 refugee programme in Zambia:

Angolan refugees:

- Continue providing mandated protection services to all remaining camp-based Angolan refugees (estimated at 9,000-10,000 as at 1 Jan 2006).
- As it is anticipated that many among this caseload will be the most vulnerable, social assistance will be provided to help determine individual durable solutions, with the assistance of Government and NGO partners.
- Work with the Government of Zambia to ensure that those among the remaining Angolan refugees who wish to remain in Zambia receive appropriate documents allowing their stay in accordance with the existing domestic immigration legislation.
- Strengthen the capacity of the local Government Departments allowing UNHCR to complete the hand-over from the NGO IPs to the Government Departments involved in the provision of health care, education, water and sanitation and agricultural support services to refugees, in the context of the Zambia Initiative.
- Consolidate the remaining Angolan caseload into Meheba and Mayukwayukwa so as to maximize protection and service provision, allowing closure of Nangweshi camp and hand-over of rehabilitated camp environment to local communities.
- Assist the spontaneously settled Angolan refugees (estimated at 49,000) to repatriate to Angola, subject to availability of funds, under a regional programme.

Congolese refugees:

- Provide protection and assistance services to an estimated 50,000 (as at Jan 2006) Congolese refugees in Kala, Mwange and Meheba camps, to ensure their legal protection and upholding their rights through focus on UNHCR policy priorities concerning women, children, elderly, HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental protection and enforcing the minimum standards in delivery of assistance.
- Promote and assist some 10,000 Congolese refugees to repatriate to DRC in safety and dignity, based on well-informed and voluntary decision by the refugees to repatriate, provided that the security situation in the area of origin is conducive for repatriation.
- Ensure access to resettlement services for those Congolese refugees for whom this remains the only viable durable solution, in a way that is transparent and humane.

- Improve implementation of the protection and assistance activities through training of Government and NGO IP staff in programme management, international protection and in UNHCR's policies and assistance standards.

Urban refugees:

- Provide protection services to an urban registered refugees (some 5,000), asylum seekers, etc. of various nationalities in Lusaka.
- Continue to focus on women, children and programmes for SGBV prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Provide health care, education and social assistance to the vulnerable among the urban refugee population, including those in detention or in prison.
- Monitor the security situation in Burundi, in order to determine whether or not to promote voluntary repatriation of some 650 registered urban Burundian refugees in Zambia.
- Work with the Government of Zambia to ensure that those among the urban refugees who wish to remain in Zambia receive appropriate documents allowing their stay in accordance with the existing domestic immigration legislation.
- Ensure access to resettlement services for those urban refugees of various nationalities for whom this remains the only viable durable solution, in a way that is transparent and humane.

Other refugees:

- Provide protection services to refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and other countries (estimated at 3,000-4,500 in Jan 2006) who live in the Meheba and Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements and choose not to use their right for voluntary repatriation.
- Increase the level of self-reliance and local integration of refugees of various nationalities in Meheba and Mayukwawyuka, in the context of Zambia initiative, in line with the regional strategies of UNHCR as concerns specific caseloads.
- Ensure access to resettlement services for those urban refugees of various nationalities for whom this remains the only viable durable solution, in a way that is transparent and humane.

Cross-cutting issues:

- In accordance with UNHCR's mandate, provide support to Government to improve the eligibility procedure, promote refugee law in academic institutions, the local community and selected target groups especially legislators and senior Government officials.

- Train Government and other IPs in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe on refugee protection.
- Enhance the capacities of the protection institutions, such as the Police Project, Neighbourhood Watch and the Mobile Courts, while increasing the cooperation with the Government and Parliamentarians to ensure the review of the Refugee Act with the view of abolishing the reservations Zambia made when it signed the 1951 Convention on Refugees.
- Encourage and strengthen environmental awareness, education and protection /rehabilitation in the camps / settlements using techniques that limit environmental degradation, to address the threat of land and water resource degradation and destruction of forests.
- As part of the UN Common System, liaise closely with other UN Agencies in all issues of common interest, such as provision of common services and promoting the inclusion of refugee issues in development agenda of UN in Zambia, through active participation in the working groups on HIV/AIDS, gender, MDG, CCA, etc.
- Ensure that operations and resources provided for UNHCR's use in Zambia are managed effectively and efficiently, in accordance with UNHCR's policies and guidelines.
- Ensure staff welfare, health, safety and security in collaboration with the other UN Agencies, in particular in view of the impact of HIV-related health and social problems in Zambia.
- Ensure that protection, operations management and administrative support functions continue to be appropriately staffed, in view of the shifting emphases in the country programme in 2006.
- Maintain the public interest, as well as the specific interest of Zambian decision makers, donor embassies and development and humanitarian agencies / NGOs, in the refugees' situation in Zambia.