

**REGIONAL STRATEGIC PRESENTATION SUMMARY)  
TO 35<sup>th</sup> STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING (7-9 March 2006)**

**Chad / Sudan Special Operations**

**Part A. Introduction**

In **West Darfur**, security has deteriorated dramatically during the past few months, resulting in continued violations of human rights, increased violence and more population displacement. As a consequence of prevalent insecurity, most staff have been relocated, with some sent temporarily to assist with operations in South Sudan. In the circumstances, UNHCR has been compelled to downsize its operations by half in Darfur.

The security situation in **eastern Chad** has also worsened considerably. Incursions and clashes in the border area have made operations difficult. Violent incidents forced the provisional relocation of some of UNHCR'S staff from the camps at Iriba and Guereda to Abeche.

In **southern Chad**, plans to repatriate 19,500 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) were modified due to the recent deterioration in security in northern CAR, including an additional influx of 15,000 refugees.

Despite challenges, the peace process in **South Sudan** remained on track in 2005, allowing UNHCR to gear up operations and initiate refugee returns from Kenya in December 2005 and CAR in February 2006. Tripartite Agreements governing voluntary repatriation were signed with Kenya, CAR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Other organized returns are expected to start in early 2006 from the DRC, Ethiopia and Uganda.

In **eastern Sudan**, political tension remained high, compounded by the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia that could lead to massive displacement into Sudan.

**Part B. Progress on Strategic Objectives for 2006 and Implementation of the Agenda for Protection**

In **West Darfur**, UNHCR provided leadership and inputs to the Protection Working Groups as well as initiating the Return Working Groups in El Geneina and Zalingei. UNHCR actively pursued protection initiatives throughout the state. (*Strategic Objective 1/ AfP: 3.2, 3.3*)

To extend its protection coverage, UNHCR opened two additional field offices in 2005. The opening of five other offices was temporarily postponed due to the security situation. The offices are intended to allow UNHCR greater presence and access to areas of displacement and return. Despite the challenging environment, activities and interventions to enhance the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were increased throughout 2005; 150 monitoring missions were conducted to isolated villages and hamlets. However, the recent deterioration of the security situation has significantly affected the protection of IDPs. Violence has increased both outside and inside IDP camps. (*Strategic Objective: 1, 4/ AfP: 2.1, 2.4*)

UNHCR focused on providing the means to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). By December 2005, UNHCR had established 33 women's centres in IDP settlements and villages. These centres provided safe space for women to jointly address problems and find peer support. A referral system was established for SGBV survivors to obtain counselling and health care. UNHCR played a leading role in the inter-agency SGBV Working Group that proposed prevention activities such as the initiative to use fuel efficiently and income-generation activities. Such measures reduce the need

and risk of attack women face when they leave camps to collect firewood. UNHCR also established 12 youth centres where protection issues faced by adolescents are addressed. At the centres, young people obtained skills training, organized community support initiatives and recreational activities. (*Strategic Objectives 1, 2/AfP: 4.4, 6.1, 6.2*)

While the present security situation in West Darfur does not allow for the organized return of IDPs or refugees from Chad, UNHCR identified 20,000 persons who returned spontaneously to their former villages in 2005. To assist these people, UNHCR introduced community-based reintegration projects (CBRPs) in water, health and education to make their return sustainable. Projects have benefited more than 50 villages. But the destruction of villages has continued and occupation of abandoned ones increased, exacerbating the conflict and suffering. (*Strategic Objectives 1, 3/AfP: 5.2, 5.3*)

In **eastern Chad**, UNHCR, in close cooperation with the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs, provided protection and assistance to over 200,000 Sudanese refugees. The supply of potable water, the replenishment of non-food items, the provision of health, food, and community services, the mitigation of environmental degradation, education and the physical security of refugees remained major concerns and tasks for the humanitarian community. (*Strategic Objective: 1/AfP: 3.1, 3.3*)

Security remained the biggest challenge, with numerous military desertions taking place in the second half of 2005. Most deserters went to eastern Chad and Darfur. These acts were followed by armed attacks on Am Nabak and Adre. The taking at gunpoint of vehicles belonging to aid agencies increased in number. The movement of humanitarian workers to refugee camps was curtailed, including their presence in some field locations. (*Strategic Objective: 1/AfP: 4.1*)

An integrated strategy to prevent and respond to SGBV was carried out, with a referral system created in each camp and complemented by regular meetings involving focal points and partners to review and improve strategies. Training sessions for refugees and implementing partners were held. In 2006, UNHCR will introduce reproductive health programmes, promote long-term income-generating activities for women and develop protocols to prevent gender-based violence in schools. UNHCR will continue advocating for the enactment of legislation to prosecute SGBV perpetrators. (*Strategic Objective: 3, AfP: 4.4, 6.1*)

**Chad** was one of 40 countries identified for UNHCR's Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) initiative, which was carried out from 24 October to 2 November 2005. (*Strategic Objective: 3/AfP: 4.4, 6.1*)

Since the middle of 2005, the scope of UNHCR's operations in **southern Chad** has changed. A new influx of 15,000 refugees from CAR has transformed a programme for 30,000 refugees into an emergency. Additional arrivals are expected. Northern CAR has been plagued by insecurity since 2003. The situation has worsened since June 2005 when clashes between armed gangs and the CAR military were reported at Koukou-Mission, resulting in the displacement of the population and flight into Chad. Between June 2005 and January 2006, five successive waves of refugees arrived in the Chadian border villages around Gore. Of the 15,000 refugees, 5,000 were transferred to the newly established camp at Gondje. The rest are in Amboko awaiting relocation. (*Strategic Objective: 1/AfP: 1.11, 3.2, 3.3*)

A further influx into the Danamadji area of southern Chad cannot be excluded. UNHCR has revised the repatriation target from 19,500 to 3,000, representing the number of persons who may opt to repatriate in the last quarter of 2006, security in northern CAR permitting. (*Strategic Objectives: 1, 3/AfP: 5.4, 5.7*)

Owing to the influx of refugees, the following challenges defined programme priorities for southern Chad and urban centres in 2005: environmental degradation; the lack of infrastructure and economic opportunities; the absence or inadequacy of health services; and the particular vulnerability of women and children to malnutrition, malaria, discrimination and harmful cultural practices. In 2006, projects will

include the consolidation of community and shelter infrastructure in Amboko, Yaroungou and Gondje refugee camps, the promotion and implementation of agricultural activities, income-generating projects, education and community development. In the medium-to-long term, refugees are likely to attain a degree of self-reliance. *(Strategic Objectives: 1/AfP: 5.4, 5.7)*

To enhance protection activities, especially in relation to SGBV, women's vigilance committees established in Yaroungu and Amboko will be reinforced and replicated in Gondje. Increased liaison with national human rights NGOs will aim to improve women's access to legal assistance and to increase the prosecution of offenders. *(Strategic Objective: 2/AfP: 6.1)*

In October 2005, despite security problems in northern CAR, UNHCR organized the repatriation of 1,368 Chadian refugees who returned mainly to southern Chad, but some also to N'djamena and Abeche. The returnees were from among the thousands of Chadians who fled their country in the early 1980s due to civil war. UNHCR had organized the repatriation of the majority from 1999 to 2001 but 1,500 had decided to remain in CAR. Insecurity in CAR in the past several months prompted their return. *(Strategic Objective: 1, 3/AfP: 5.3)*

In May 2005, the Humanitarian Coordinator requested UNHCR to play a key coordinating role in **South Sudan** with the protection, return and reintegration of IDPs arriving in Equatoria and Blue Nile states. Together with other agencies, UNHCR developed a comprehensive protection-based return framework for both refugees and IDPs. *(Strategic Objectives 1, 3/AfP: 5.1, 5.3)*

Training on protection, including land and property restitution, was provided to community organizations, local authorities and youth and women associations. A regional protection meeting identified requirements for voluntary return and formulated draft tripartite agreements. *(Strategic Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4/AfP: 3.3, 4.4, 5, 6.1, 6.2)*

Initially, UNHCR's programme focused on addressing the immediate protection and assistance needs of spontaneous refugee and IDP returnees as well as those of receiving communities. Community Based Reintegration Projects (CBRPs) were implemented within the context of the 4Rs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) to accelerate the creation of conditions conducive for the return of 500,000 southern Sudanese refugees. Of this number, UNHCR's community-based efforts benefited 75,000 refugees and as many IDPs who returned spontaneously to South Sudan in 2005. In coordination with the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and other partner agencies, UNHCR oversaw the mapping of landmines and their clearance in return areas and routes of return. Priority roads for repatriation movements were assessed and work on setting up way-stations commenced. UNHCR established a strong presence, especially in Equatoria, to allow for organized return in 2006. *(Strategic Objectives: 1, 3, 4/AfP: 5.2, 5.3)*

Refugees were registered and verified for return in countries of asylum. Vocational training was expanded to prepare refugees for repatriation. Mass information campaigns were conducted, including on HIV/AIDS and mine risk awareness. Non-food items were pre-positioned to receive returnees. *(Strategic Objectives: 1, 3/AfP: 3.4, 5.2)*

By November, seven emergency response teams had been deployed to such strategic locations as Juba, Yei, Tambura, Kajo Keji, Bor, Malakal, Naser, Damazine and Kapoeta to conduct returnee protection monitoring and implement quick-impact CBRPs to increase the absorption capacity of receiving communities. On 17 December, UNHCR organized the first pilot movement of 131 refugees by air and road to Bor and Kapoeta. A second movement took place in February 2006 with the return of 49 persons on the first of many flights jointly organized with IOM from CAR to western Equatoria. By the end of May 2006, over 5,000 refugees are expected to have returned as part of this movement from CAR. Repatriation is also to take place during the two dry seasons from DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to Sudan's Blue Nile, Upper Nile and Jonglei States. *(Strategic Objective: 3/AfP: 5.3)*

A volatile political situation in **eastern Sudan** and the possibility of confrontation on the border have increased the risk of further displacement involving IDPs and refugees. UNHCR has strengthened its emergency response capacity in the area and steered a process to improve contingency planning and preparedness involving the Government, United Nations agencies, and NGOs. (*Strategic Objective: 4/ AfP: 3.3*)

The area also continues to host a refugee population of 116,000 mainly Eritrean refugees. Political tensions in the region make prospects of voluntary repatriation questionable. UNHCR has shifted its operational approach from care and maintenance assistance to self-reliance as a possible crucial step toward local integration. The Sustainable Options for Livelihoods Security in Eastern Sudan (SOLSES) project is instrumental in this process and a viable durable solution for those refugees who cannot return. SOLSES has been expanded to benefit hosting communities through community-based development projects involving refugees and local residents. (*Strategic Objectives: 1, 3/ AfP: 5.4*)

There was a steady arrival of Eritrean asylum-seekers in Sudan in 2005. UNHCR continued to advocate with the Government of Sudan to establish of a national asylum system compatible with internationally accepted norms and standards. In addition to providing assistance to the Government, UNHCR also trained officials to meet the protection needs of asylum-seekers and refugees. (*Strategic Objective: 1/ AfP: 1.2, 1.9, 2.1*)