

SOMALIA

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Promote the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees to Northern Somalia and assist with their reintegration.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of individuals wishing to return to Southern Somalia.
- Provide international protection and life-sustaining assistance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers, while pursuing durable solutions for them.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED, AND CONSTRAINTS

Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees

At the end of June 2002, with the return of 11,370 refugees from Ethiopia and other countries to Somalia, the Somali refugee population still in exile was at 428,650 in comparison to 440,010 in 2001. An airlift repatriation of 220 refugees from Dadaab camps in Kenya to Northwest Somalia ("Somaliland") was successfully completed in February 2002. However, the repatriation of an ever increasing number of refugees wishing to return from Kenya to Northeast Somalia ("Puntland") was hampered by the insecurity that existed in the area during the second quarter of 2002. Reintegration projects for returnees who arrived in earlier years were nevertheless designed and launched.

Renewed fighting in the Gedo Region of Southern Somalia in April 2002 forced 3,500 Somalis from Bula Hawa into exile in Kenya. The majority, initially living in dire conditions near the town of Mandera, were relocated to the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, since there did not seem to be an imminent end to the conflict in Gedo.

All technical and practical arrangements for the repatriation operation were finalised early this year, following the agreements on

the voluntary return of Somali refugees between UNHCR, the authorities in "Somaliland" and the Government of Djibouti in late 2001. Close to 15,000 Somali refugees in Djibouti registered to return and received clearance from the authorities in "Somaliland." There were some logistical and funding difficulties at the start of the repatriation movements. Despite this, the first convoy movement of 250 returnees to Hargeisa was scheduled to take place on 13 July 2002. It is hoped that by the end of the year, the initial target of 5,000 repatriants from Djibouti can be reached, provided that conditions and finances for the repatriation operation remain favourable.

Refugee representatives and authorities from asylum countries undertook peace and confidence-building visits to the areas of return, and vice versa. These visits created a climate conducive to the voluntary return of Somalis for all actors concerned. The mission from Djibouti to "Somaliland" in April 2002 was a significant step for the facilitation of future voluntary repatriation of Somalis from Djibouti. The mission co-hosted by UNHCR and the "Somaliland" authorities, took place in the main areas of return. Visitors had the opportunity to see the situation in the country, and to inspect some of the reintegration projects implemented in these areas.

Reintegration of Somali Returnees

UNHCR's community-based reintegration activities focused on the current areas of return. The Office in co-ordination with the Ministry of Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and line ministries, undertook assessment and monitoring missions to various project sites in the regions of "Somaliland." The revised procedures for the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) were finalised and implemented by the QIP Committee. The rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, contributed to

increasing the absorption capacity of the communities and towards stabilising the population. Currently, UNHCR is implementing 37 projects in "Somaliland" through local NGOs. There are 20 projects related to education, two in health, six in water and sanitation, five in food production and four in income generation. This brings the total number of reintegration projects implemented in "Somaliland" to over 530. During the first half of the year, assistance was provided through international and local NGOs in the sectors of education, agriculture, livestock, water, and income generation. Income-generating projects specifically targeted female heads of households in the new settlements in Hargeisa and Burao.

In preparation for the repatriation of refugees to "Puntland," small-scale reintegration projects were set up through an international NGO, which working with local NGOs implemented a number of projects in the sectors of health, community services, education, fisheries and income generation. The projects focused specifically on the promotion of women's rights and gender equality, as well as on increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS and female genital mutilation. In spite of the volatile security situation, five pilot projects are being implemented in Mogadishu by local NGOs and monitored by UNHCR national staff.

UNHCR carried out further improvements to the returnee monitoring system. Initial outcomes of the monitoring system showed that the physical safety of returnees in "Somaliland" was ensured and that no returnees faced discrimination. Returnees also had access to previously owned land and some other assets. However, the weak economy, a lack of sufficient assets, drought, and the effects of the ban on livestock exports continued to severely constrain the chances for returnees to become self-reliant.

A Geographical Information System (GIS) was developed for Somalia, with assistance from the regional Geo-Data section. The

GIS is an excellent tool for planning and documenting reintegration activities, and for the systematic monitoring of returnee movements. It has enabled UNHCR to improve its information base and strengthen programme management to better improve planning, enhance inter-agency co-operation, and support long-term sustainable reintegration.

An assessment of the education of refugee/returnee girls was carried out in order to better guide interventions and programme planning for that sector. In Somalia, the main barriers to the full participation of girls in formal education are poverty, early marriage, traditional division of labour by gender, discriminatory attitudes by teachers, and the absence of employment opportunities upon completing school. UNHCR made complementary education available to refugee/returnee girls to enhance their self-image and skills, and circumvent some of the country's cultural impediments.

UNHCR continued its efforts to promote inter-agency collaboration towards sustainable reintegration, and to bridge the gap between emergency assistance and development. UNHCR participated in the preparation of the UN Joint Action Recovery Programme (JARP) plan, which aims to identify feasible short-to-medium-term projects in order to lay the foundation for long-term development projects. The projects will form the basis for the mandatory UN five-year inter-agency development plan. One of JARP's primary focus is "Protection and Integration," which includes the reintegration of returning refugees.

UNHCR and UNDP jointly implemented the Reintegration of Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Somalia (RRIDP) pilot project in "Somaliland" and "Puntland." The initiative aims to identify community-based projects linked to the capacity-building of local authorities. The assessments conducted in the new settlements in Hargeisa and Burao provided the agencies with a thorough understanding of the needs of returnees and IDPs, while taking into account the capacity

for existing communities to absorb returnees and IDPs. Assessments also showed that there were needs for a more comprehensive and effective intervention by all actors.

Joint support is provided to the Hargeisa Health Training Institute, with UNHCR and UNDP rehabilitating the physical structures; WHO donating medical equipment; and UNICEF supplying training material. Similarly, in the education sector, all assisting agencies agreed to support primary schools which are included on the priority list provided by the Ministry of Education of "Somaliland." UNICEF made a commitment to provide the scholastic material; the Ministry will employ teachers; and an international NGO will assist with management issues during the initial stages

of establishing schools, in order to ensure sustainability and improve the quality of education in all UNHCR-funded schools.

As a matter of urgency, UNHCR is also supporting the problematic Hargeisa water supply system. The initial phase aims to increase production and keep the system operational. Further funding has been secured for a later phase aimed at its long-term sustainable development. The Office in co-ordination with a municipal counterpart undertook the planning of the water supply system. An NGO will implement both phases of the project, while UNDP, UNICEF and another international NGO, are extending the water supply system to some of the new settlement areas.

Progress as measured against indicators

Impact/Performance Indicators	Actual Progress
35,000 returnees repatriated from Ethiopia, 5,000 from Djibouti, 5,000 from Kenya and 5,000 from Yemen.	11,100 were repatriated from Ethiopia, 220 from Kenya, 43 from Yemen and 4 from other destinations. A total of 11,370 were repatriated. Repatriation from Djibouti started from July.
All genuine applicants for voluntary repatriation are given clearance by the authorities.	The authorities of "Somaliland" cleared all applications and lists of persons for the voluntary repatriation of more than 30,000 returnees submitted by UNHCR.
Number of reintegrated projects implemented.	37 QIPs and 9 sub-agreements are on-going. These interventions improved access to vital communal services like water, health, education and micro-credit schemes in areas of return. Children are given access to education through construction of schools. It also helped avoid conflict over scarce resources. Women and children will have improved access to maternal health facilities.
Vulnerable groups and female-headed families move towards self-reliance, as a result of receiving micro- credit assistance.	More involvement of women in micro-credit schemes, which in turn increased their family incomes and living standards.
Women are trained in self-reliance skills.	70 women were enrolled in office management and computer classes while 20 others were enrolled in tailoring.

Urban Refugees

UNHCR worked with governments hosting Somali refugees, and UNHCR offices in countries of asylum. UNHCR provided gender-sensitive country of origin information and answered specific queries related to the asylum claims of Somalis and requests for voluntary repatriation. This resulted in the recognition of several Somali women on gender-related persecution grounds.

Due to the insecurity in Southern and Central Somalia and the difficult conditions

in "Puntland," UNHCR could not exercise its refugee protection mandate in these regions. Efforts to find durable solutions for refugees in "Somaliland" continued, and resulted in the resettlement of 88 refugees to third countries. An additional 60 applications were submitted to potential resettlement countries. 182 Ethiopian refugees were cleared for voluntary repatriation by the Government of Ethiopia and will leave in early September 2002. Out of 192 Tanzanian refugees from Zanzibar in Mogadishu, 12 requested repatriation assistance.

Progress as measured against indicators

Impact/Performance Indicators	Actual Progress
International legal protection and rights of refugees are upheld and implemented.	With the authorities, UNHCR identified weaknesses within the Immigration Department and the Civil Security sector of the Ministry of the Interior. UNHCR co-ordinated with the Ministry and UNDP on the creation of a capacity-building programme. Refugees in need of legal assistance or protection, were assisted, counselled and/or given referrals by the Office.
Less arbitrary detention.	There was only one police case in April 2002 involving 2 Ethiopian refugees who were arrested for “spreading Christianity”. UNHCR directly intervened to secure their release. As the threat of religious intolerance persists, UNHCR has begun discussions with the UNDP Civil Protection Program Unit, to ensure that issues specific to the refugee population are covered, particularly, in the training of police.
All vulnerable refugees receive a subsistence allowance.	On a monthly basis, approximately 175 individuals were assisted with cash grants. Due to budget constraints, access to primary education was not provided. However, meetings with NGOs, UNDP and the refugee community were held to discuss and prioritise refugee activities.
All refugees have access to primary health services.	All the refugees and extremely vulnerable asylum- seekers had access to health services. UNHCR in co-ordination with the partner public hospital and pharmacy reviewed the quality of the services. UNHCR identified a counsellor who is specially trained in dealing with HIV/AIDS patients in order to work with infected persons amongst the refugee population. In addition, UNHCR worked with the newly elected Refugee Committee to arrange sessions which would raise awareness on general health, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. These sessions would be carried out by WHO and specific NGOs.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR JULY – DECEMBER 2002

Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees

Due to the lack of funding for the planned airlift operation from Dadaab to “Somaliland” and “Puntland,” the repatriation of 5,000 refugees will not be carried out. Other impeding factors include the negative political developments and subsequent insecurity in “Puntland.” The planned repatriation from Yemen to “Puntland,” which has not yet started, is facing similar obstacles.

The opening of the border between Djibouti and “Somaliland,” in addition to the clearing of nearly 15,000 potential returnees by the

“Somaliland” authorities, are both positive signs. The initial figure of 5,000 persons to be repatriated during the year is realistic if funds are available. The repatriation from Ethiopia to “Somaliland” is expected to meet its target of 35,000 returnees by the end of the year.

Reintegration of Somali Refugees

Although the reintegration activities in “Somaliland” started late as staff were evacuated after security incidents, implementation accelerated rapidly, and the set objectives will most likely be met.

Political and security problems in Mogadishu, and the subsequent suspension of UN activities for an extensive period delayed the start of the planned reintegration

projects. It may only be feasible to achieve 50 per cent of the initial objective.

Urban Refugees

UNHCR continues to address the needs of ex-refugees from UNHCR camps that closed in 1998. UNHCR and WFP will assist 182 individuals to voluntarily return to Ethiopia. UNHCR will undertake another verification exercise to better understand the composition of the remaining group of Ethiopian refugees and to consider possible intervention on their behalf. The Office will develop a strategy to find durable solutions

for these refugees, particularly in relation to their legal status in “Somaliland,” applying the de facto “citizenship” laws of this unrecognised State.

Integration is difficult for any “non-Somalilander,” particularly due to cultural, ethnic and religious differences. As such, UNHCR is involved in discussions to deal with this matter at various governmental and non-governmental levels. In addition, UNHCR is assisting individual cases with socio-economic and legal integration.

Financial Data (USD)

Annual Programme Budget			
Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
8,377,519	6,884,799	3,302,363	3,296,500