

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cape Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo





Refugees receive livestock to support local integration in Sierra Leone.

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- Approximately 12,000 Mauritanian refugees were repatriated from Senegal, 140 Sierra Leonean refugees from the Gambia, 60 Liberians from Sierra Leone, 50 Liberians from Nigeria and 90 Togolese from Benin. Smaller groups of other nationalities also returned to their home countries.
- Some 880 persons were submitted for resettlement. Almost 40 refugees were resettled from the Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal, as were more than 50 from Sierra Leone and some 150 from Benin.
- Following the invocation of the cessation clause for Sierra Leonean refugees at the end of December 2008, more than 5,000 passports were issued. Sierra Leonean refugees opting for local integration were provided livelihood support.
- UNHCR took an integrated, community development approach to help urban and rural refugees obtain documentation and improve their livelihoods.
- In collaboration with UN agencies, NGOs and regional organizations, the Office tried to persuade governments to integrate refugees into national development programmes and grant them the same access to land, education and health care as provided to their citizens.
- UNHCR led and contributed to the development of regional and national contingency plans for situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau and helped these and surrounding countries build their capacities to prevent and respond to crises.



Working environment

The political and security situation in West Africa remained fragile. Recent events in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and the Casamance region in Senegal showed the potential for new crises and the need to plan for them. Severe floods affected most of the West Africa region in 2009, causing serious humanitarian consequences. In Niger, drought generated a food crisis. Due to the lack of progress on a peace agreement for Casamance, the Office promoted the local integration of the Senegalese refugees in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

A large number of refugees in West Africa live in protracted situations in urban areas. Their socio-economic integration has proven difficult, as poverty and unemployment are also widespread within the local populations. Refugee identity cards in Senegal and the Gambia have expired, limiting their holders' freedom of movement and access to services and livelihoods. On a positive note, no case of *refoulement*, expulsion or unjustified detention was reported in the region during the year.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR worked to obtain equal access to refugee status determination (RSD) for all asylum-seekers in the subregion. In Nigeria, the Government issued Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) resident permits to some 240 former refugees from Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, the Government took over RSD responsibilities, and in Benin all asylum-seekers obtained access to the RSD procedure.

In Senegal, 62 per cent of the refugees and asylum-seekers in the country had individual documentation in 2009. Negotiations were initiated with the Gambian and the Senegalese Governments for the issuance of refugee identity cards. To strengthen the RSD process in light of the cessation clause for Sierra Leonean refugees, UNHCR organized training sessions for National Eligibility Commissions in Senegal and the Gambia.

UNHCR promoted durable solutions, especially local integration, for the remaining refugee populations originating from ECOWAS countries through the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment. In November 2009, UNHCR and ECOWAS concluded an agreement on the implementation in 2010 – 2011 of durable solutions projects for refugees in Liberia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone.

The Office continued to advocate for the inclusion of people of concern in the educational system. SGBV, Public health and HIV and AIDS issues were integrated into regional strategies for local integration. Equal access to health care services, including those related to H1N1, HIV, malaria and reproductive health, were emphasized.

Constraints

The challenging socio-economic situation in the subregion and inadequate facilities in areas of return hindered reintegration, local integration and the creation of livelihood opportunities.

The issuance of birth certificates for Mauritanian children born after 1989 wishing to repatriate, and clearance

procedures in Mauritania, remained a constant challenge throughout the 2009 repatriation process. Information on the status of refugees in West Africa is often out-of-date or unavailable and the Office has been unable to adequately address this issue due to resources constraints.

Crises in various countries in the subregion and the need to prepare and lead contingency planning processes strained the resources of the regional office. Other UN agencies have assumed leadership for these activities at the regional level, as well as in Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Niger.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Liberia** are described in separate chapters.

UNHCR's Regional office in Dakar, **Senegal** protected and assisted some 35,900 refugees and asylum-seekers in the subregion. In January 2009, UNHCR operations in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo came under the responsibility of the regional office in Dakar. UNHCR submitted some 630 cases (2,100 people) from west and central Africa for resettlement.

In **Mali**, UNHCR works with more than 11,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. In April 2009, the Office conducted a registration exercise for Mauritanian refugees and opened a small office in Kayes, where most of the refugees live. Some 10,500 refugees were registered in Kayes, with a small number remaining to be registered in Bamako. Some 80 per cent of those registered asked to be repatriated; the remaining 20 per cent will be assisted by the Office to integrate locally.

In **Guinea Bissau** there are some 8,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, most of them Senegalese refugees from the Casamance area. One of the major needs of Senegalese refugees in the north of Guinea-Bissau is for valid documentation. Provision were made for the renewal of identity documents in 2010. Following the implementation of the cessation clause for Sierra Leonean refugees, UNHCR helped the National Eligibility Commission to review the cases of some 80 of them. Of these almost half opted for exemption while some 35 people opted for local integration and received passports.

In the **Gambia**, a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) at the end of 2008 recommended an increase in food distribution, particularly for those with specific needs, until the end of 2009. UNHCR and its partners developed a self-reliance strategy which included agricultural and food-for-work projects benefiting both refugees and vulnerable local communities. Some 1,030 Sierra Leonean refugees opting for local integration received residence/work permits. A partnership with a microfinance institution helped refugees gain access to small loans to support their livelihoods.

In light of the small number of refugees in **Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Niger**, UNHCR does not have offices in these countries. In Niger, some 140 people were recognized as refugees on a *prima facie* basis, and the Office worked to facilitate the issuance of permanent residence or naturalization documents for them. In 2009, the Office conducted RSD training for the National Eligibility Committee, while police and immigration officers attended courses in international protection. In April, Burkina Faso gave temporary asylum to some 20 Sudanese refugees from

Chad pending their resettlement. In **Cape Verde**, one of the major transit countries for immigration to Europe, the Office monitored the mixed migration issue.

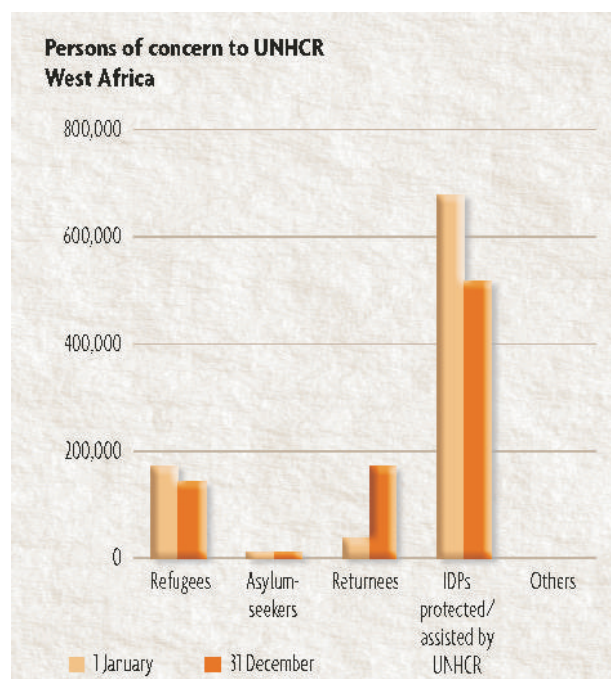
Some 12,000 Mauritanian refugees were repatriated from **Senegal** in 2009, bringing the total returns from the country to more than 19,000. All children born in Senegal returned with a birth certificate. Mauritanian refugees in urban settings were profiled in May 2009. A profiling exercise in **Mali** identified some 10,000 Mauritanian refugees, of whom some 8,000 were interested in voluntary repatriation.

In **Sierra Leone**, a significant step was made towards the local integration of more than 9,000 Liberian refugees with the signing of an agreement guaranteeing refugees the right to possess land for residential and agricultural purposes. Some 60 Liberian refugees and two Ivorians were assisted to repatriate voluntarily, and 50 individuals were resettled. Some 5,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who opted for local integration in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal received passports, and some benefited from livelihood support, including access to microfinance.

The **Benin** authorities conducted a verification exercise in and around the Agamé camp and registered almost 3,300 refugees. Some 160 refugees were repatriated from Benin, mainly to Togo and to Chad, and around 20 requests for naturalization were being processed. Some 150 refugees were resettled.

In **Nigeria**, the Office focused on durable solutions through the local integration of the remaining refugee population (some 9,100 refugees and 1,100 asylum-seekers) mainly ex-refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia, under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment.

In **Togo**, international protection was provided to more than 9,200 returnees and 9,800 refugees. All received assistance, either in support of their self-reliance or reintegration. As part of an inter-agency effort, UNHCR began to rehabilitate a health facility in the Kara area, where some 8,000 Ghanaian refugees live.



Financial information

The total budget for the regional office in West Africa was over USD 9.3 million including core activities under the annual budget for Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger and Senegal; regional repatriation and

resettlement projects; and the management of the regional Accra warehouse. These funds included special allocations for the resettlement of Sudanese refugees in Burkina Faso, supplementary budgets for local integration in the Gambia, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire as well as Guinea and funds for the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal.

Budget and expenditure in West Africa (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Benin	1,655,737	0	1,655,737	1,576,414	0	1,576,414
Côte d'Ivoire	6,238,414	3,025,139	9,263,553	6,107,562	1,630,992	7,738,554
Gambia	91,977	548,492	640,469	73,956	155,669	229,625
Ghana	5,410,570	2,354,878	7,765,448	5,000,843	583,872	5,584,715
Guinea	5,814,117	1,454,130	7,268,247	5,582,519	1,087,112	6,669,632
Guinea-Bissau	27,589		27,589	-	0	
Liberia	12,192,492	0	12,192,492	11,068,199	0	11,068,199
Mali	108,215	0	108,215	75,970	0	75,970
Nigeria	2,945,387	0	2,945,387	2,672,363	0	2,672,363
Senegal ¹	6,990,536	2,356,476	9,347,012	6,862,080	2,141,593	9,003,673
Sierra Leone	4,850,103	0	4,850,103	4,477,006	0	4,477,006
Togo	1,194,497	0	1,194,497	1,015,551	0	1,015,551
Regional activities ²	5,156,770	269,262	5,426,032	4,345,387	269,262	4,614,649
Total	52,676,404	10,008,377	62,684,781	48,857,850	5,868,500	54,726,350

¹ Includes the Regional Support Hub in Dakar.

² Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement assistance for urban refugees managed by the regional office in Senegal.

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the 'New or additional activities-mandate-related'(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to West Africa (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
West Africa subregion	Canada	1,916,933		1,916,933
	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	586,500		586,500
	Denmark	2,024,292		2,024,292
	Finland	1,430,615		1,430,615
	International Criminal Court	68,960		68,960
	Liechtenstein	95,602		95,602
	Sweden	6,501,951		6,501,951
	United States of America			883,500
West Africa subtotal		12,624,852	883,500	13,508,352
Côte d'Ivoire	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)		747,666	747,666
	OPEC Fund for International Development	167,500		167,500
	Spain		408,826	408,826
	UN Foundation (USA)	23,452		23,452
	United States of America	518,501	685,152	1,203,653
Côte d'Ivoire subtotal		709,453	1,841,644	2,551,097
Gambia	Spain		145,571	145,571
Gambia subtotal			145,571	145,571
Ghana	Spain		497,908	497,908
	UN Trust Fund for Human Security	109,461		109,461
	United States of America	2,814		2,814
Ghana subtotal		112,275	497,908	610,183

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Guinea	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	172,472		172,472
	Spain		285,824	285,824
	UN Foundation (USA)	87,000		87,000
	United States of America		651,000	651,000
Guinea subtotal		259,472	936,824	1,196,296
Liberia	Japan	206,612		206,612
	OPEC Fund for International Development	330,474		330,474
	Spain	37,037		37,037
	UN Foundation (USA)	365,000		365,000
	UN Peacebuilding Fund	1,425,003		1,425,003
	United States of America	3,067,300		3,067,300
Liberia subtotal		5,431,426		5,431,426
Nigeria	United Kingdom	8,462		8,462
Nigeria subtotal		8,462		8,462
Senegal	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	41,055		41,055
	United States of America	58,774		58,774
Senegal subtotal		99,829		99,829
Sierra Leone	UN Foundation (USA)	64,500		64,500
	United States of America	702,150		702,150
Sierra Leone subtotal		766,650		766,650
Total		20,012,419	4,305,447	24,317,867

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.