

# GUINEA

## IN SHORT

### Main Objectives

- Continue to provide international protection and basic humanitarian assistance for Sierra Leonean refugees by supporting survivors of atrocities and sexual violence, relocating refugees from dangerous border areas, and, if possible commencing repatriation.
- Determine the status of Liberians who have chosen not to repatriate; help those who cannot be expected to return to their country to settle in Guinea; and facilitate the return of any additional candidates for repatriation.
- Phase out UNHCR's assistance for Liberian refugees.
- Encourage the Government of Guinea to adopt national legislation on refugees.

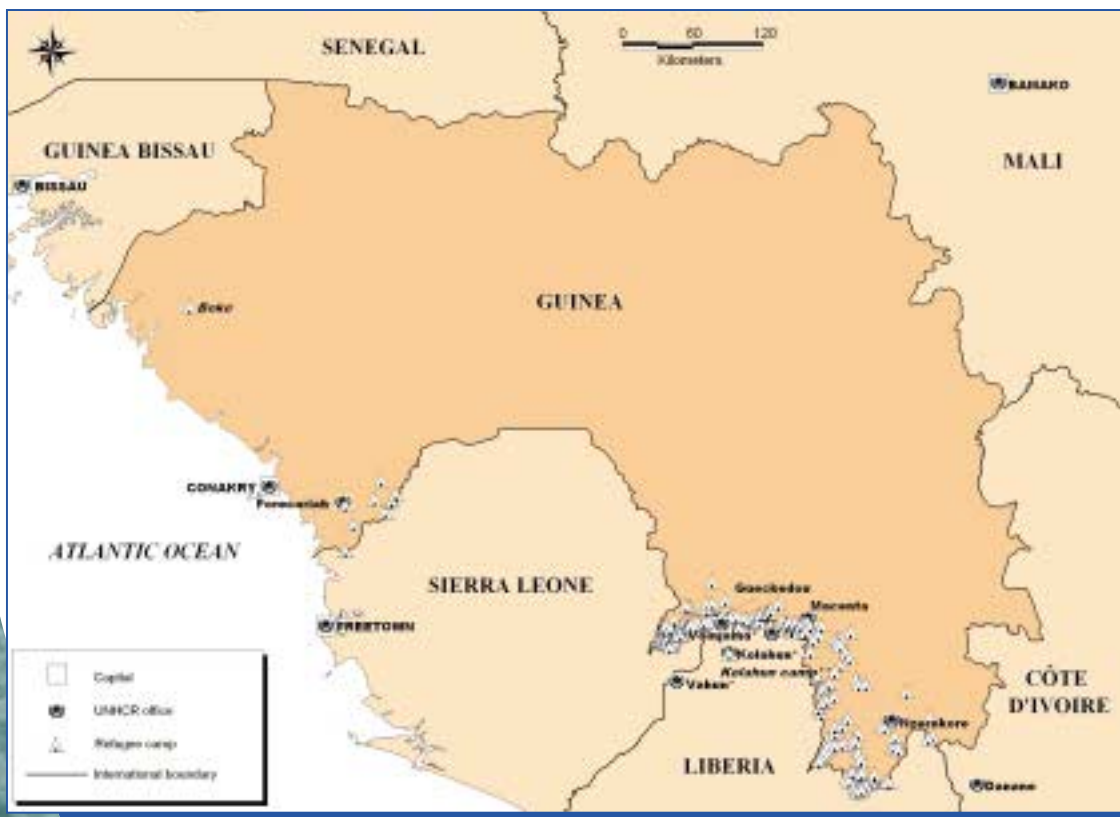


Planning Figures		
Population	Jan. 2000	Dec. 2000
Sierra Leonean Refugees*	370,000	239,000
Liberian Refugees**	107,000	70,000
Refugees from Guinea-Bissau	1,700	0
Urban Refugees	700	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>479,400</b>	<b>309,700</b>

\* UNHCR estimates that 131,000 Sierra Leoneans will repatriate in 2000, of whom 81,000 will be assisted and 50,000 spontaneous.

\*\* Thirty seven thousand Liberian refugees are expected to repatriate from Guinea in 2000; about 27,000 of them will receive a repatriation package.

**Total Requirements  
USD 31,930,514**



\*The presence of UNHCR offices in Vahun, Kolahun and Voinjama is being reviewed.  
 \*\* Refugees are being relocated from Kolahun camp to Sinje.

**Recent Developments**

At the dawn of the millennium, the 54 camps and settlements in Guinea continue to host the largest concentration of refugees on the African continent. Although the political and economic situation in Guinea remained relatively stable in 1999, security at its southern borders has been a source of concern, and Guinea closed its borders with Liberia as tension between the two countries mounted. UNHCR prepared for a renewed influx of Liberian and/or Sierra Leonean refugees into Guinea, but only a few thousand new refugees arrived during the year.

As Liberian refugees voluntarily return, the assistance programme for this group is gradually being wound down. The English education programme ended in July 1999, and the refugee children of families who do not repatriate are now integrated into the national education structure.

The Lomé Peace accord, signed in July 1999, may bring to an end the circumstances that forced nearly half a million Sierra Leoneans to live in exile, some of them for seven long years. UNHCR is now reactivating its repatriation plans, given the probability that refugees will begin to return spontaneously before the end of 1999.

**Constraints**

Guinea's hospitality towards refugees has served as a good example in Africa. But a recent series of attacks on Guinean border villages has shaken the Government's belief in an open door policy. The attacks were blamed on the rebels in Sierra Leone, and Guinean village dwellers started to believe that Sierra Leonean refugees nearby were involved. However, refugees as well as Guineans have fallen victim to the violent and sometimes deadly incursions. As regards the border with Liberia, after weeks of trading accusations of support for insurgents fighting each other's government, Guinea and Liberia pledged to end hostilities in September 1999. The closure of the border with Liberia has led to the temporary suspension of the voluntary repatriation programme in Guinea.

**Sierra Leonean Refugees**

Roughly two-thirds of the Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea were those seeking refuge from the protracted civil war that flared up again in early 1998 with a wave of terror. (Other groups of refugees had crossed into Guinea as early as 1991). Those who finally managed to cross the border into Guinea were malnourished and sick. They were also traumatised: many had experienced sexual violence, the amputation of limbs and other forms of mutilation.

Their situation is now fortunately much improved thanks to the hospitality of the Government of Guinea and the care and protection that UNHCR and its partners have been able to provide, with the support of donors. We now await the improvement in security which will allow them to return home.

Conditions are not yet right for a safe, dignified process of organised repatriation. However, it is planned that a month after the return to Freetown of the former rebel leader and the formation of a government of inclusion, UNHCR will begin to provide assistance to those refugees willing to return. If disarmament and demobilisation in Sierra Leone have progressed substantially by April 2000, then organised repatriation could begin.

Despite the peace accord between the Sierra Leonean Government and the rebels, security in the border areas remains poor. Some 15,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea had been relocated by September 1999 but 65,000 others in camps in Gueckedou and Forecariah still need to be moved further inland. UNHCR will continue to relocate them until security improves sufficiently.

UNHCR's special programme for the Sierra Leonean victims of atrocities and sexual violence also caters for appalling numbers of secondary victims, such as children who have witnessed atrocities against family members. The programme, which started in 1999, will be extended in line with policy objectives for mental, psycho-social and reproductive health.





Regular monitoring activity in the camps covers nutritional levels, mortality rates, disease statistics and water quality, to name but a few. This allows for prompt corrective action when necessary to ensure a healthy environment. A comprehensive nutritional survey will be undertaken in 2000.

Future activities will further improve refugees' nutritional intake, particularly in the case of children; improve primary school attendance; and reunite the families of unaccompanied minors.

UNHCR will offer refugee women the opportunity to improve their literacy skills and engage in income-generating activities, as part of a country-wide programme to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In all camps, women's committees will be involved in the distribution of food to ensure that vulnerable groups and individuals receive the rations they are entitled to.

The organisation is committed to alleviate the environmental damage caused by the massive presence of refugees in Guinea over some 10 years. In 2000, 180 ha of land, including the Forecariah area, will be reforested through UNHCR. In addition, a medium-term environmental strategy and action plan will be developed during 2000. The core concept is that in environments affected by refugees UNHCR has a catalytic role, bridging the gap between relief and development assistance.

In line with the High Commissioner's observations during her West Africa tour in early 1999, community-based activities like Food-for-Work programmes will also be open to the local population in areas with high refugee concentrations.

### **Liberian Refugees**

Organised repatriation to Liberia will have ceased by the end of 1999. In 2000, a major protection task for the Office in Guinea will be to help determine the status of the remaining Liberian refugees under UNHCR's protection and care. Although the Government of the host country is expected to conduct the actual status determination, UNHCR will remain very closely involved. Meanwhile, individual repatriation will still be supported by UNHCR: repatriation packages will be available to those who decide to return home. They will, however, have to organise their own transportation. For those identified as still in need of international protection, UNHCR will facilitate local settlement in Guinea. To help communities absorb their new neighbours in a positive spirit, educational and health facilities will be handed over to the appropriate local institutions. This has already begun. Material and equipment will be redeployed to other UNHCR operations or handed over to humanitarian agencies with ongoing projects in the area.

Over 75,000 Liberian refugees have repatriated from Guinea during the last two years. In line with UNHCR's repatriation and reintegration policy, assistance for this refugee group has been gradually reduced for example in health care and education. The objective has been to foster greater self-reliance in income-generating activities, including agriculture. However, special care is taken that exceptional arrangements remain in place for the most vulnerable refugees.

UNHCR strives to successfully conclude the repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees while ensuring that those who remain in Guinea for genuine safety reasons will in future benefit from appropriate and realistic solutions.

### **Refugees from Guinea Bissau**

In 1999, a small group of refugees from Guinea-Bissau in a camp near Boke were initially reluctant to repatriate, even though their fellow refugees in other countries had started to go home during the course of the year. UNHCR expects to conclude the repatriation to Guinea-Bissau in early 2000.

### **Urban Refugees**

Urban refugees in Guinea comprise Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Chadians, Rwandese and Mauritians. In line with its policy on urban refugees, UNHCR is reviewing each case to see who needs continued assistance. The number of urban refugees in Guinea is expected to decrease as a





result, although the cost of assistance could go up temporarily. Assistance under the auspices of UNHCR to the remaining group be modified: from subsistence for individuals to support for durable, preferably community-based solutions.

## ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Management Structure

For regional coordination and policy setting, UNHCR Guinea falls under the Regional Directorate for West and Central Africa, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. In Guinea, a team of 109 UNHCR staff, (28 international and 81 national staff) is dedicated to Africa's largest refugee group. The Branch Office in Conakry supervises the implementation of UNHCR's programme for all refugee groups in Guinea. In addition, it looks after the urban refugees. The sub- and field offices in Guinea are located up-country, close to the refugee camps and settlements. The office in Forecariah, some 100 km from Conakry, is in charge of day-to-day operations for Sierra Leonean refugees; the office in N'Zerekore in the south-east handles humanitarian assistance and repatriation for Liberian refugees; the two offices in Gueckedou and Macenta have mixed functions. The offices in N'Zerekore and Macenta are scheduled for closure during 2000.

### Coordination

The Representatives of UN agencies in Guinea meet on a monthly basis, and UNHCR organises a coordination meeting with all its partner NGOs every month. As far as possible, human and material resources, including vehicle fleets, are shared between offices, especially when an emergency response is needed. The majority of humanitarian partner organisations operate in all refugee sites, thus reducing the risk of duplication of resources.

Offices	
Conakry	Macenta
Forecariah	N'Zerekore
Gueckedou	
Partners	
Government Agencies	
<i>Bureau technique du génie rural-Gueckedou</i>	
<i>Bureau technique du génie rural-Nzerekore</i>	
<i>Direction nationale des forêts et de la faune</i>	
<i>Direction préfectorale de la santé</i>	
<i>Inspection régionale de l'agriculture, des eaux et forêts</i>	
<i>Ministère du plan et de la coopération internationale</i>	
NGOs	
<i>Action contre la faim</i>	
American Refugee Committee	
CARE	
<i>Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationale</i>	
<i>Centre rural pour l'éducation des adultes</i>	
<i>Comité national de l'hospitalité et de secours</i>	
<i>Croix rouge guinéenne</i>	
<i>Enfants réfugiés du monde</i>	
<i>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>	
Handicap International	
International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	
International Rescue Committee	
<i>Médecins Sans Frontières, Belgique</i>	
<i>Mission catholique pour les réfugiés</i>	
<i>Service chrétien d'animation pour le développement des oeuvres sociales et de secours</i>	

Budget (USD)			
Activities and Services	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	3,964,276	0	3,964,276
Community Services	1,565,641	20,000	1,585,641
Crop Production	1,605,906	0	1,605,906
Domestic Needs/ Household Support	530,837	950,000	1,480,837
Education	2,664,787	0	2,664,787
Forestry	250,200	0	250,200
Food	0	50,000	50,000
Health/Nutrition	1,779,407	50,000	1,829,407
Income Generation	1,540,510	0	1,540,510
Legal Assistance	1,224,573	52,000	1,276,573
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,715,739	250,000	1,965,739
Sanitation	368,541	0	368,541
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	1,419,868	220,000	1,639,868
Transport/Logistics	7,331,444	1,900,000	9,231,444
Water (non-agricultural)	684,247	0	684,247
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>26,645,976</b>	<b>3,492,000</b>	<b>30,137,976</b>
<b>Programme Support</b>	<b>1,792,538</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,792,538</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,438,514</b>	<b>3,492,000</b>	<b>31,930,514</b>