

GUINEA

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Continue to protect Sierra Leonean refugees and safeguard their security by relocating them away from dangerous border areas. Help local authorities in areas hosting refugees to secure the border by offering additional material and logistical support.
- Make basic humanitarian assistance available to Sierra Leonean refugees living in camps, settlements, and other hosting areas with focus on measures to increase their self-reliance (income-generating activities and skills training) and activities to prevent violence against women and young girls.
- Support the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees, if the situation in their country of origin permits.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees who express the wish to return; support programmes to enhance the self-reliance of refugees who are likely to remain in Guinea; and organise status determination of Liberian refugees who decide against repatriation.
- Mitigate environmental degradation in and around refugee-hosting areas through a prevention and rehabilitation programme.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Sierra Leonean Refugees

In the latter part of 2000, the districts of Guéckédou, Macenta and Forecariah in Guinea endured repeated cross-border attacks from neighbouring countries. As a result, UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies had to evacuate their staff from these areas. At the beginning of 2001, as the security situation started to improve, UNHCR and its partners deployed emergency teams, which were based in

Kissidougou north of Guéckédou. As a result, an estimated 65,000 refugees, mainly in the Parrot's Beak area of Guéckédou district and in the Kissidougou and Forecariah districts, received assistance during the first half of the year.

UNHCR's main challenges were to identify and develop new settlements and to relocate refugees away from the border to safer areas further inland. With the support of central and regional authorities, eight sites were identified in the districts of Dabola and Kissidougou. Four of these (Kountaya, Boreah, Telikoro and Sembounya) were developed with a total capacity of 73,000 persons. Before the new camps could be established, UNHCR and its partners had to build and rehabilitate the main access roads to Kountaya, Boreah and Sembakounya camps. Eighty-four kilometres of road needed to be rehabilitated and some 100 bridges had to be constructed. More than 70 per cent of this work had been completed by the end of June.

UNHCR then relocated 57,380 refugees to the new camps where their physical safety and protection can be ensured and where they have access to material assistance. During the relocation, special attention was given to pregnant women and other vulnerable persons who were transported in vehicles. UNHCR, with the support of an implementing partner, documented unaccompanied minors during the transfer operation and ensured that they received adequate assistance in the camps. A total of 12 former child soldiers also benefited from this programme.

The most complex part of UNHCR's operation was the relocation of some 14,000 refugees from the Parrot's Beak to the new sites. The volatile security situation, insufficient logistical support, and poor road conditions were the main constraints.

Since the relocation, only residents in the newly established camps have been receiving material assistance. WFP has been providing food (2,100 kcal per person per day) to all refugees and malnutrition rates have been kept under control. During the transfer operation, the nutritional status of 11,160 children between six months and 5 years was checked and only 4 cases of severe malnutrition were reported. Upon arrival in the new camps, refugees were given food rations, non-food items (plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and blankets) and a construction kit to build their individual shelters.

The refugees' drinking water requirements were met during the emergency phase and they continue to receive a minimum of 15 litres of potable water per person per day. A more sustainable water distribution system is being set up with 37 water points (boreholes and wells) for the four new sites. In transit centres and community shelters, where refugees have been housed temporarily, 1,795 latrines and 1,836 shower rooms were built. Refugees were provided with materials to construct shelter and sanitation facilities in the camps. Over 6,000 concrete slabs (for family latrines) and some 5,000 construction kits (for individual shelters) were thus distributed to refugees. Over 4,500 shelters are under construction, including some 500 for vulnerable groups, and it is expected that all refugees will have moved from community to family shelters before the end of the year.

Curative and preventive health care is provided free of charge to all the refugees living in the camps. Before their relocation, the refugees were medically screened and children between the ages of six and fifteen were vaccinated against measles. All camps have health posts and therapeutic feeding centres, and medical supplies are available in all new structures. Refugees suffering from serious illnesses are referred to district hospitals in Kissidougou or Dabola. On average the mortality rate has been less than one death per 10,000 per day. Cases of measles were identified during the transfer,

but a wider outbreak was prevented thanks to the immunisation campaign.

During this difficult transition period it was not possible to run regular school programmes. In the new camps, UNICEF has made several tents available and 17,430 students are currently attending school on an informal basis. Some fifty schools are needed and UNHCR has secured funds for forty of them, which, once completed, will cover eighty per cent of the needs.

The Co-operative Development Agency (CDA), a refugee co-operative with 4,000 members, of whom over 3,000 are women, has negotiated with the local population to allow refugees to use agricultural land. To support this initiative, UNHCR has organised a limited distribution of seeds and tools, allowing refugees to cultivate small gardens around the camps. A sensitisation campaign and training programme to establish a microcredit scheme are underway and nine training sessions were organised for 200 refugees, including 170 women. Some 140 women victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) received support to set up small business and were offered training grants. The major obstacle to the success of economic and income-generating activities remains the limited freedom of movement of refugees outside the camps, and the absence of markets in and around the camps.

Three workshops and several sensitisation campaigns on environmental protection were organised. As a first step, to safeguard the ecological habitat in and around the refugee camps, 17,000 trees were marked and thus protected from being cut down.

An intensive mass information campaign was launched to explain the rationale of UNHCR activities to the local population and to provide refugees with relevant information on the relocation operation. To sustain the civilian and humanitarian nature of the camps and avoid the infiltration of the camps by armed persons, the messages highlighted security-related problems.

At the request of, and with funding from UNHCR, the Government has deployed security contingents to oversee security in all camps. UNHCR has been covering transport, communication, accommodation and living costs as well as incentives for the security personnel. Two training sessions on UNHCR's mandate, as well as the rights and obligations of refugees and state authorities, have been organised for security forces who assisted in the relocation and are in charge of the camp security.

Due to the prevailing insecurity in Guinea, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of some 25,000 refugees who expressed their willingness to return to Sierra Leone. However, UNHCR did not promote repatriation because the situation in Sierra Leone was not yet considered conducive for the safe and dignified return of refugees. The return operation was organised through IOM (operating boats from Conakry to Freetown) and one of UNHCR's operational partners (for the transport from transit centres to Conakry).

The intensified cross-border attacks in the last part of 2000 had a dramatic impact on the lives of refugees in Guinea. Before September 2000, refugees lived in small sites scattered along the borders. They now either live in four densely-populated camps

in the hinterland or have chosen to return to Sierra Leone. As a result, UNHCR has had to review its planning figure of 330,000 refugees. This figure had been based on statistics available from the last refugee registration exercise, carried out in 1998 in the Guéckédou area, but which had never been accurately verified. It should be noted that, although the figure of 330,000 refugees was maintained, UNHCR provided assistance to only 190,000 Sierra Leonean refugees. By June, following a joint UN assessment mission (carried out in May), UNHCR had recorded 110,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea: 57,380 living in new sites, and some 52,000 locally-settled refugees. A comprehensive registration of refugees in all new sites will be organised in July 2001. There are several reasons for the discrepancy in figures. A significant number of refugees have lived in Guinea for over ten years and have settled in local communities in various parts of the country; however, but figures cannot be confirmed yet as the cross border attacks have resulted in large refugee population movements both inside Guinea and across the border into Sierra Leone.

UNHCR closed its offices in Guéckédou, Macenta and Forecariah and established new offices in Kissidougou, Dabola and Albadaria, from which the new camps are managed.

Progress as measured against selected indicators

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Refugees receive adequate protection and humanitarian assistance.	Over 57,000 refugees were moved to new camps away from the dangerous border areas and are living in four camps where they are assisted.
UNHCR facilitates the return of 30,000 refugees to Sierra Leone.	25,133 refugees were assisted by IOM/UNHCR to travel by boat from Conakry to Freetown.
Relations between refugees and the local population improved through a mass information campaign.	During the relocation operation no major incident between the refugees and the host community was reported.
Number of water points operational and quantity of water provided to refugees.	37 water points are fully operational in the camps and every refugee has access to 15 litres of potable water per day.
Absence of epidemics and low incidence of communicable diseases	At the end of June 2001, the mortality rate in the camps was below one death per 10,000 per day. With the exception of Kountaya camp, the under-five mortality rate was maintained at acceptable levels (between 0.23 and 2.01 deaths per 1,000 children per day). In Kountaya, the under-five mortality rate was above the threshold of two deaths per 1,000 children per day during the month of April. This was mainly due to the poorer living conditions in the camp newly established shortly after the transfer. Malaria was the main cause of death.
All refugee children have access to education.	In the four new camps school construction is under way and children will be attending school as of September 2001.

Liberian Refugees

Relations between Liberia and Guinea further deteriorated between January and June. The border between the two countries remained closed and because of the continuing insecurity in Lofa and Nimba counties in Liberia, the repatriation of Liberian refugees from Guinea had to be suspended.

On the Guinean side of the border, in the N'Zérékoré district, the prevailing insecurity limited access to most sites hosting Liberian refugees. A group of approximately 13,500 refugees, including some 9,400 who arrived during 1999, continued to receive assistance in Kouankan camp. The establishment of a local settlement project for this refugee group, however, was postponed due to security problems. Instead, UNHCR's programme concentrated on meeting the most basic needs of refugees living in the camp. Over 140 extremely vulnerable refugees, 600 unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and 100 street children living in N'zérékoré were also assisted.

During the first half of 2001, two food distributions were organised for the 13,500 refugees in the Kouankan camp as well as for some 2,000 refugees who, for security reasons, had moved from Macenta and Guéckédou to the town of N'zérékoré. The opening of a feeding centre in the Kouankan camp lowered the previously high malnutrition rate to an acceptable level. A one-time distribution of non-food items was organised and mats, used clothes, soap, kitchen sets, jerricans and lamps were provided to the camp population.

The water and sanitation system in Kouankan was improved through the construction of 10 water points, 120 latrines, and 15 blocs of shower rooms as well as the distribution of 50 garbage containers. Medical assistance was provided to refugees in Kouankan and a vaccination campaign was undertaken for children from 0 to five years of age. In N'zérékoré, 320 refugee unaccompanied minors (UAMs) were identified and taken care of. In Kouankan camp, support was provided to develop informal education and eight classrooms are

being constructed for formal education to start in the next school year.

The critical security situation all along the Liberian border, particularly in Yomo, Lola and Nzérékoré districts, has had a negative impact on the self-reliance of refugees as many have lost their farms or jobs. Despite the closure of the border, over 50 new Liberian arrivals were registered between

April and June. The Government requested that refugees living close to the border be relocated to Kola camp and to other jointly identified new sites further away from the border. Three new sites (Kola, Bola, and Foubadou) were identified north-east of Nzérékoré, with a total capacity of up to 50,000 persons. The new sites need to be developed to host Liberian refugees already in the country as well as any new arrivals.

Progress as measured against selected indicators.

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
UNHCR, in co-operation with the Government of Guinea, provides international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees.	Due to the heightened insecurity along and across the border between Guinea and Liberia it has been difficult for UNHCR and its partners to ensure the protection of refugees and to deliver humanitarian assistance. Although assurances have been given that vulnerable refugees from Liberia are allowed to enter Guinea, the border remains officially closed.
Regular distribution of food to refugees in Kouankan camp and living in Nzérékoré is ensured.	Two distributions of food were organised, 13,500 refugees of Kouankan camp and 2,000 displaced refugees in Nzérékoré received food rations amounting to 2,100 kcal per person per day.
10,500 Liberian refugees living close to the border are relocated to safer camps.	Kola camp was identified, and preliminary works for its development are ongoing.
Number of water points operational and quantity of water provided to the refugees.	Ten wells providing 18,7 litres of water per refugee per day are operational.
All refugee children have access to education.	2,070 students (41 per cent girls) are enrolled in schools in Kouankan camp. Two primary schools (32 classes) are functioning. Eight new school-buildings, a kitchen, and a school canteen are under construction. 52 teachers were recruited. Over 8,100 refugees benefit from non-formal education in the Nzérékoré region (taught by 221 teachers).

Urban Refugees

UNHCR, through its implementing partners and the Guinean Red Cross, provides assistance to a thousand refugees (mainly from Liberia and Sierra Leone) in Conakry. Based on regular needs assessments, some 540 refugees have been receiving a monthly subsistence allowance to meet their basic needs. Scholarships have been provided to 150 refugee students for vocational training in mechanics, computer science, tailoring, secretarial, and hair dressing. Another 17 students were assisted with monthly

allocations to attend university, and eight of them are due to graduate at the end of the on-going school year.

Due to the prevailing unstable situation in Conakry in early 2001, the implementation of income-generating activities was put on hold but is due to resume in the second half of the year. Refugee status determination is ongoing and the national eligibility committee has granted refugee status to 328 asylum-seekers (62 cases).

Progress as measured against selected indicators

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Refugees have access to the status-determination procedures that comply with international standards.	The eligibility committee granted status to 328 asylum seekers, but over 960 cases are pending.
Monthly subsistence allowances are provided to needy urban refugees.	Some 540 refugees received a monthly subsistence allowance.
Refugees become more self-sufficient and less dependent on UNHCR assistance as a result of income-generating activities	Over 17 per cent of the refugees attended vocational training courses yet, no micro- credit project was implemented because of the volatile security situation in Guinea during the first semester.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER

In the second half of the year UNHCR's main objectives will be that:

- The refugee population enjoys a consolidation and stabilisation of their living conditions in the camps;
- Refugees inside and outside the camps are registered and are issued identity cards;
- The refugee camp population benefits from the reinforcement of UNHCR's protection activities and the enforcement of law and order by the Guinean authorities;
- Refugees are well informed about the situation in Sierra Leone and those opting to return are assisted by UNHCR;
- UNHCR and its partners are prepared for a potential influx of 10,000 Liberian refugees;
- Liberian refugees living in border areas are relocated to new safer sites where they receive adequate protection and assistance;
- A comprehensive rehabilitation programme for regions affected by the presence of refugees is launched.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available ¹	Total Funds Obligated
APB and TF	28,512,093	29,491,152	16,175,163	16,039,593
SPB	3,045,000	2,500,000	532,146	0
Total	31,557,093	31,991,152	16,707,309	16,039,593

¹Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the regional, sub-regional and/or country level, opening balance and adjustments.