



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Planning Year: 2004

UNHCR Tripoli, Libya—Country Operations Plan 2004

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

Although Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, it has ratified the OAU Convention of 1969. The Government has not yet developed a specific administrative structure to deal with refugees and asylum seekers and there is no national legislation to determine refugee status.

Within its open door policy towards Arabs and Africans, the Libyan Government considers refugees and asylum seekers as foreigners residing in Libya without any specific distinction. Various rules and regulations applicable to foreigners are being, therefore, also applied to refugees. These rules are sometimes not consistent with the rights and duties of refugees. This environment justifies UNHCR's presence in Libya, and UNHCR is currently a major actor in providing, monitoring and coordinating protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers along with local non-governmental partners such as AL WAFI, Libyan Red Crescent and relevant line departments such as those in charge of Justice and Security, Africa Unity and Foreign Affairs.

In 2004, UNHCR will actively pursue its efforts and consultations to reach a formal framework towards protection and assistance of refugees and asylum seekers, with the Libyan Government by signing a Memorandum of Understanding, which could serve in the future as a basis for initiating a concrete constructive dialogue with the local authorities-.

With the developments that have been taking place in their countries of origin over the last years, prospects for return for Somalis (3,000 refugees) and Sierra Leoneans (100) do exist and are being actively explored. Subject to an adequate support to UNHCR Office in Libya and to continued stability in the areas of return, it is expected that a significant proportion of refugees will likely return home over the period 2004/2005 despite the relatively attractive economic opportunities that are existing in Libya.

Regarding the Palestinian caseload, the prevailing situation does not allow an optimistic outlook over the period considered for the return of Palestinian refugees in the coming year.

- **UNHCR's role**

UNHCR assures the reception of asylum seekers and the processing of their asylum applications. UNHCR will continue to provide basic assistance to the most needy and vulnerable refugees, while empowering them and exploring all opportunities for their voluntary repatriation and self-reliance/local integration, thus reducing their protracted dependency vis-à-vis the care and maintenance support provided by UNHCR and its partners.

UNHCR will conduct targeted local capacity building, awareness-raising, advocacy and other promotional activities towards its operational partners as well as relevant actors such as Parliamentarian institutions, Government bodies, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.

- **Overview of each beneficiary population/theme**

Beneficiary population

As of 31 December 2003, there are some 12,000 urban refugees registered with UNHCR Office in Tripoli. The largest majority of the refugees are Palestinians (8,584, 73%) followed by Somalis (2,906, 25%), Sierra Leoneans (107, 0.9%), Iraqis (55, 0.4%), Sudanese (10, 0.08%) and persons from various African and Arab countries. Around 54% of this population is female, while around 35% of the total population consists of children between age of 0-17.

UNHCR has two main beneficiary populations: Palestinians and Somalis. Both of the caseloads are considered refugees on a prima facie basis. Among Somalis, there are currently approximately 350 persons, who are residing in the new compound provided free of charge by the Libyan Government. This relocation of refugees improved tremendously the living and security conditions and offered them a much healthier environment, in particular for women and children. Although the new compound has been provided to refugees at no cost to UNHCR, recurrent costs related to its maintenance and rehabilitation are covered by UNHCR.

- **Policy issues**

The UNHCR policy on refugees in urban areas will continue to serve as a guiding tool for the development of specific parameters and criteria for protection, assistance and durable solutions for the refugee caseload in Libya. The appropriate understanding and endorsement of such central policy by the Government counterparts, NGO operational partners and refugees themselves would be one of the main challenges in 2004 for a successful reorientation of the current protracted care and maintenance programme towards self-sustainability, refugee community participation, empowerment and durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and self-reliance-based local integration. The UNHCR policies on refugee women, gender equality, children, elderly persons and environment would remain other major guidelines for priority setting and the planning, implementation, monitoring of the office activities and overall operations. These policies will be mainstreamed throughout the programme cycle, while, at the same time, specific projects to address the needs of the above specific groups will be developed in cooperation with local partners, NGOs and foundations (i.e. Gaddahi International Foundation for Charity Associations (GIFCA), Aisha Charity Association, World Islamic Call Society (WICS), Libyan Red Crescent (LRC), international and bilateral organizations and private and public companies represented in Libya.

- **Linkages to other countries within a defined "situation"**

UNHCR Tripoli will pursue a close co-ordination with relevant countries in the Middle East and North Africa in various aspects of protection and assistance. More specifically, RSD and resettlement procedures will be harmonized with UNHCR offices in relevant neighbouring countries hosting, inter alia, Somali refugees. Information on irregular movers will be shared and modalities of assisting them will be coordinated with these offices.

- **Capacity and presence of Implementing Partners**

The main UNHCR Implementing Partners, AL Wafa, the Libyan Red Crescent and the Ministry of Health-Tripoli will be responsible, in close coordination with UNHCR, for assessing the needs and resources of the most vulnerable individual refugees and for providing them with basic care and maintenance assistance, while progressively reorienting activities towards self-sustainability and durable solutions, with an enhanced focus in 2004 on voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement when relevant and feasible.

AL Wafa will provide refugees with social counseling, basic assistance, and as appropriate, assist them in job-placement. The Red Crescent will concentrate on durable solutions typically involving job-oriented vocational training, direct job-placement and revolving fund-based income generating activities, while the Ministry of health will look after medical care (curative and preventive) for refugees. It is expected that another local NGO will be identified and involved in micro-credit projects, benefiting more particularly women.

In addition to the above-mentioned NGOs, UNHCR already signed PARinAC agreements with two other Libyan NGOs, namely, Gaddahi International Foundation for Charity Associations (GIFCA) and World Islamic Call Society (WICS). More recently, in March 2003, UNHCR Tripoli and the Aisha Association Charity entered into a partnership agreement. These partners have been so far more inclined to assist refugees outside Libya as demonstrated by the joint ventures (UNHCR and GIFCA in Pakistan and UNHCR and WICS in Guinea) carried out in 2001, 2002 and 2003. For these reasons, it is a challenging task for UNHCR Tripoli to involve them significantly in in-country refugee support activities, although in-kind contributions to the refugee operation in Libya have been obtained in 2002 and 2003.

- **Presence and roles of other UN agencies and international Organizations**

UNHCR Tripoli will continue to actively participate in the UN inter-agency forum (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO), under the Resident Coordinator system, in order to explore opportunities that could benefit refugees. Initiatives taken in 2003 to include refugees in relevant UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO projects will be pursued. UNHCR Tripoli will further identify inter-agency openings for self-reliance and

local integration opportunities for refugees. Operational linkages will be developed with other UN and bilateral operations available aimed at filling the gaps in the relief-to-development continuum thus phasing down UNHCR's assistance progressively, while plugging in the "refugee services" into the relevant local structures (education, health...) and the national development initiatives.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of beneficiary population: Urban Refugees of Somali, Palestinian and other nationalities	
Main Goal (one): To provide international protection to asylum seekers, refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR, and advance the UNHCR protection agenda.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the awareness of the Government, NGOs and Parliament on refugee matters and legal instruments related to Refugee Law. • Asylum seekers are provided with effective access to appropriate reception and fair RSD procedures and adequately protected under current arrangements with GOL. • Relevant protection and basic assistance are provided to the most needy / vulnerable groups pending durable solutions (voluntary repatriation and self-reliance). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement is signed with GOL. • PARinAC Agreements signed with the local NGOs and counterparts. • Training on UNHCR Mandate is provided to Government Officials, NGOs and related counterparts. • RSD procedures streamlined and delays in decision significantly reduced. • Refugees and asylum seekers are not detained or protected against 'refoulement'. • Standard UNHCR software (RICS) installed and used to update and maintain the registration system/data base. • One-time financial assistance is provided to vulnerable and needy asylum seekers pending RSD decisions. • Regular subsistence allowance is provided to vulnerable and most needy refugees according to needs/resources assessment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee women and children benefit from special measures designed to ensure their wellbeing and to meeting their specific needs. • Gain more support from Government and civil society and extend/consolidate partnership with Government partners, NGOs, civil society, private sector and locally represented international/diplomatic organizations. • Somali refugees in the new compound are provided with adequate security arrangements in coordination with the local authorities and their living conditions improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical assistance provided according to established criteria on a cost -sharing basis. • Assistance is provided to refugee children to attend public schools without any limitation. • Women refugees are fully represented through the refugee community e.g. refugee committees. • Specific activities geared towards needy women carried out. • Reproductive health, hygiene and other courses (drug control, HIV/AIDS, home economics, environmental awareness...) were carried out. • Various promotional activities / external relations and public information campaigns carried out on refugee laws and principles. • Government and non-governmental partners trained and local capacity building enhanced. • Advisory support to Government, Parliament and Local Humanitarian Foundations provided on humanitarian/refugee matters. • Security measures put in place in consultation with the refugee committee and refugees are issued with ID cards. • Rehabilitation and regular maintenance of the refugee somali compound carried out.
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Main Goal (Two): To promote durable solutions, including:

- To reorient assistance programme from care and maintenance towards voluntary repatriation, self-reliance and local integration.

- To enhance, as appropriate, the use of resettlement as a durable solution and a tool for international protection.

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a mechanism, through implementing partners to identify and assess vulnerable groups among the refugee caseload and provide these groups with care and maintenance pending durable solutions. • Identify refugee applicants and assist them to return in safety and dignity to their country of origin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing partner trained and capacity building enhanced • Screening exercise carried out and vulnerable groups identified. • Subsistence allowance further reduced by 50% and provided only to most needy/vulnerable groups. • Access to public health services provided free of charge to target groups. • Basic rehabilitation and regular maintenance to the refugees Somali compound was carried out. • Repatriation-oriented vocational training undertaken. • Repatriation information campaigns carried out as appropriate. • Repatriation packages and transport provided. • Travel documents provided, as appropriate, to the returnees. • Coordinate with the relevant local authorities the timely delivery of exit permits for the returning refugees.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees meeting resettlement criteria are accepted by receiving countries. • Enhance refugee self-reliance and local integration by strengthening the coping capacity of the target groups and integrating ‘refugee services’ into national/public social structures (e.g health,education,housing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the UNHCR Field Offices concerned and HQs to facilitate and ensure that returnees are received back home in dignity and safety. • Resettlement submissions processed on timely basis. • Field-level resettlement management procedures . • Identify/Assess cases in need of resettlement in accordance with UNHCR’s established resettlement criteria and apply these criteria in a transparent and consistent manner. • Legal authorisation for refugee income generating activities obtained from the relevant authorities. • Socio-economic surveys carried out to identify the refugees skills. • Job-oriented vocational training provided to target groups. • Job placement mechanisms put in place. • Revolving fund-based income generation activities carried out with relevant local partners.
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Main Goal (Three): To foster political support to UNHCR, consolidate partnership with line departments, NGOs, UN Agencies, Bilateral Organisations and Private Companies, and broaden the fundraising base in the country.	
Principal Objectives	Related outputs
<p>UNHCR relations with the Government, Non-Governmental Organisations and international Bodies (UN, diplomatic missions) strengthened and UNHCR role and activities in the country enhanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination meetings and information sharing mechanisms put in place. • Involvement of local partners in UNHCR activities expanded and consolidated. • Refugee issues included in the agenda of relevant line departments, UN and other bilateral Agencies/Missions. • More implementing partners were identified and involved in UNHCR activities. • Capacity building of selected NGOs and line departments enhanced. • Network of support [Friends of UNHCR] developed and operational. • Targeted PI campaigns successfully carried out.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support of the Government and Non-Government Organizations to UNHCR programmes in Libya and outside (in particular in Africa) broadened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions from local NGOs such as GIFCA, AISHA Charity Association, Libyan Red Crescent, WICS , CEN-SAD and other donors, to UNHCR operations in Libya achieved. • Refugee needs (re-education, health care and other social benefits) addressed by the local structures. • The new Somali Compound granted by the Libyan Government to Somali refugees rehabilitated free of charge. <p>Contributions (in kind and cash) to UNHCR operations outside Libya (in particular in Africa) from local NGOs and Foundations expanded.</p>