

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: SOMALIA



Planning Year: 2003

Part I: Executive Summary

(A) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

Somalia is still in the process of emerging from the ashes of the civil strife which started in 1988, reached a turning point with the collapse of President Siad Barre's regime in 1991 and led to one of the fastest and largest population displacements in Africa. At the peak of the crisis, more than 800,000 Somalis were estimated to have fled into neighbouring countries, mainly Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and Djibouti. Attempts for national reconciliation have since proven elusive and Somalia has now been without a central government for more than a decade. Nevertheless, since 1991 Somalia has changed in significant and substantive ways, as those who want to hold power, including the warlords, increasingly depend on the support of the business community and their relationship with the population at large. As such, they have to build "peace constituencies", which prove the benefit of their leadership, rather than "war constituencies" to retain power.

Today, the geo-political landscape in Somalia can be divided into three major components. The North-western part of the country which self proclaimed itself the Republic of *Somaliland* in 1991, the Northeast which, in a similar move and although not declaring itself a republic, proclaimed itself the self governing "*Puntland*" State of Somalia in 1998. None of these two entities has been recognised by the international community. The third entity corresponds to the southern part of Somalia, which includes the capital Mogadishu and is made up of strongholds of various groups/factions.

One of the key achievements of the self proclaimed entity of *Somaliland* is the restoration of a relative peace which has prevailed for the past five consecutive years. Clan tradition and centuries-old cultural beliefs fortified by western democratic principles have served as a foundation for the establishment of administrative structures. Northeast Somalia (*Puntland*) is the second region to attain a similar level of stability. However a constitutional crisis within the leadership of *Puntland* in 2001 gave rise to concerns regarding a possible deterioration of the security situation and led to the temporary relocation of UN international staff from the 2nd half of 2001 to March 2002. As for Southern Somalila, it remains rife with lawlessness, violent inter-clan and sub-clan warfare.

In a bid to bring the country back together, a peace conference was held in Arta (Djibouti) and led to the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG) in Mogadishu in October 2000. But since its instatement, the TNG's authority has been challenged by the self-proclaimed administrations of the North (*Somaliland* and *Puntland*) and the Somalia Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRCC) which is an umbrella denomination for a number of militias, factions and warlords from the South. Overall, the impact of the TNG's presence is yet to be felt. That notwithstanding, all efforts of the international community have so far been geared towards the completion of the Arta peace process which envisages a transition period of three years during which the TNG and all parties are expected to attain reconciliation.

The relative security prevailing in *Somaliland* and *Puntland* has led to the spontaneous return of hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries with no recorded back-flows into exile. Authorities of these two regions have assumed the protection of the returnees and

continue to ensure that they are integrated into the mainstream society. Other refugees have also returned to less safe areas in the South, including Mogadishu. However, that part of Somalia has continued to produce refugees fleeing mainly into Northern Kenya and Yemen, and there are indications that some of the new arrivals were former returnees.

Against this background, UNHCR action will continue to comprise seeking durable solutions for Somali refugees by:

- promoting voluntary repatriation from neighbouring countries to areas of Somalia that are deemed safe. These are what the UN Country Team (UNCT) has termed “zones of recovery”. Basically, this means areas stretching north from the city of Galkayo. They incorporate “*Somaliland*” and “*Puntland*”.
- facilitating upon their request, the return of individual cases to areas of Somalia deemed less safe and stable. This policy will continue to be followed until a significant improvement takes place in security conditions in the areas south of Galkayo;
- assisting the reintegration of the returnees through community based projects aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the return and the self-reliance of the returnees. One of the key elements of this strategy consists of enhancing the absorption capacity of the areas of return to help anchor the returning populations in their communities and prevent further movements in search of basic services.

It is assumed that UNHCR will continue to be unable to perform its refugee protection function in Southern Somalia that the Office will have better, but constrained, options for so doing in *Puntland*. UNHCR will provide international protection and assistance to a small number of urban refugees in Northwest Somalia.

From the onset of the repatriation and reintegration programme in 1992 to the end of 2001, UNHCR had, in one form or the other, assisted 176,000 persons to return to *Somaliland*, 2,585 to *Puntland* and 152,132 to Southern Somalia. Furthermore, large numbers of Somali refugees repatriated spontaneously, in particular to *Somaliland*. The repatriation movements will continue through 2002 and assumptions defined at the regional level in the COP 2002 were that, by end 2003, 50,000 refugees (35,000 from Ethiopia and 5,000 each from Djibouti, Kenya and Yemen) will have repatriated mainly to *Puntland* and *Somaliland* under the auspices of UNHCR. Considering that in 2001 return from Ethiopia was slightly lower than expected, efforts will be made to repatriate in 2002 the remaining 9,000 Somali refugees from Ethiopia who should have gone home in 2001. This will result in the closure of all but one refugee camp in Ethiopia where refugees mainly from Southern Somalia will continue to be assisted. Similarly, repatriation from Djibouti which started in 2002, will continue and is expected to be completed by end 2003. Again, given that already 15,000 Somali refugees have registered in Djibouti for return to *Somaliland*, the planning figure of 5,000 for returns in 2002 may be conservative. However, as is the case for Ethiopia, a lot will depend on availability of resources and political factors which may impede that the initial planning figures are exceeded. In the absence of a political breakthrough in the South, repatriation from Kenya will remain essentially stalled for the thousands of refugees originating from Southern Somalia. UNHCR Somalia will carefully monitor the IGAD peace process and the implementation of the resolution on Somalia passed by the 9th Summit of the IGAD Heads of State and Government on 11 January 2002. However, this process remains prone with difficulties.

While, in protection terms, prospects for a continuation of the voluntary repatriation to safe areas of return in the north remain good, the lack of international assistance for a sustainable reintegration of returnees constitutes one of the major challenges to the Somalia programme.

Refugees return to peaceful but war-scarred and economically depressed *Somaliland* and *Puntland*, putting stress on their already fragile infrastructure. The ongoing ban of livestock export to the Arab Peninsula and the post-11 September 2001 closure of the most important remittance bank contribute to further stretch local coping mechanisms. Both self-proclaimed entities remain devastated and their authorities lack the institutional capacity and financial resources to address the needs of their citizens, including the returning refugees. Although some rehabilitation of social infrastructure was carried out both by UNHCR (over 600 QIPs worth over US\$16.8 million in total) and other partners, the meagre assistance of the international community over the past decade has fallen short of creating sustainable income-generation opportunities for the majority of the population. Under such circumstances, the probability is high that humanitarian assistance will continue to play a crucial, life-saving role until basic vulnerability and extreme poverty can be tackled more comprehensively. The setting up of a "Committee of Friends of Somalia" in Nairobi and New York, as proposed by the UN Secretary General and endorsed by the Security Council may be a forum to be exploited, inter alia by UNHCR, to lobby for greater recovery and development engagement by the international community.

Due to the lack of international recognition of *Somaliland* and *Puntland*, the main returnee areas are de facto disqualified from badly needed resources, as they cannot enter into formal agreements with bilateral and multilateral donors and financial institutions. To compound the overall picture, the negative reporting on Somalia which has resulted from the events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington, was counter-productive to the donor perception of the reality in areas which otherwise have achieved a relative level of peace and stability. This situation has a lot of implications for the designing of UNHCR activities in-country. Nevertheless, while UNSECOORD maintained that Somalia remains one of the most dangerous areas in which the UN operates, members of the Security Council in their open meeting of 11 March 2002 called for a greater engagement of the UN and the international community in and with Somalia towards peace-building, humanitarian assistance and aiding recovery. The UN Country Team for Somalia has made concerted and systematic efforts to promote support for Somalia, based on the "peace dividend approach" and to overcome the "black hawk down" syndrome still haunting the image of Somalia. However, as is recognized by all actors, ultimately, the solution to Somalia's problems lies in the hand of the Somalis themselves, supported by a unified approach to the peace process by Somalia's neighbours.

In *Somaliland*, the prospect of a possible completion of voluntary repatriation movements in 2003, which is an integral part of this plan, commands that a strategy be envisioned in view of a gradual exit of UNHCR. However, the bleak funding situation does not leave much room for optimism as to the readiness of key development actors to help bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and recovery/development interventions in the short term. The length of time required to bridge this gap will depend largely on the availability, preparedness and capacity of development actors to take over, build upon and complement UNHCR's efforts. A reintegration consolidation phase is therefore called for.

In line with the High Commissioner's priorities, his commitments to refugee women, the UNHCR Africa Bureau's goals, objectives and priorities (memoranda from the Director of the Africa Bureau dated 18 January 2002 and 7 February 2002 respectively) and the agreements reached at the Regional Strategic Planning meeting in Nairobi in February 2002, UNHCR's involvement countrywide will focus on three main pillars:

- In *Somaliland*, and while repatriation and reintegration activities continue, UNHCR interventions will be increasingly geared towards putting in place a concerted exit strategy. Joint action will be taken with development partners to consolidate, evaluate and revisit QIPs implemented and assess their sustainability. UNHCR will also substantially improve and strengthen its returnee monitoring capacity and systems in order to develop a comprehensive analysis of returnee rights and the socio-economic situation in the region to inform/prompt other actors on what is needed and facilitate development initiatives. The monitoring and evaluation capacity could be enhanced through secondments. UNHCR will work very closely with other agencies and donors to take action to foster reintegration and make it a priority of their plans without funding from UNHCR. Such an undertaking on UNHCR's part will, however, be very human resource intensive and in addition to the enhanced protection focus requires additional staff as well as a slight re-profiling of the workforce. It should be noted that these efforts are strongly supported by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the UN and NGO community at large, but require constant follow-up and attention to move "paper commitments" into action.

In 2000, UNHCR and UNDP developed a programme framework and a project document for the reintegration of returnees and internally displaced persons (RRIDP). Though the project was slow to get on track, it has reached its implementation phase with the appointment of a project co-ordinator in 2001. The latter is based in Hargeisa, the capital of *Somaliland*. Other UN Agencies, donors and NGOs are expected to participate in the implementation of this reintegration project. Co-operation between UNHCR and UNDP is now well underway and prospects are good that the project will play a pivotal role in the quest for a smooth transition from humanitarian assistance to development. The successful implementation of this programme will also help UNHCR do disengage itself from reintegration activities in Northwest Somalia and is thus part of UNHCR's exit-strategy in Somalia.

Protection of and assistance for urban refugees in *Somaliland* will be ensured, while durable solutions through third country resettlement, in particular, will be actively promoted.

- In *Puntland*, return programmes will continue in close co-ordination with countries of asylum. Following pilot repatriation movements in 2002, 2003 is anticipated to be the crucial year of the return of the large majority of *Puntland* refugees still in asylum countries. Efforts will be made to continue anchoring the returnee population through QIPs. Unlike earlier interventions, e.g. in *Somaliland*, emphasis will be put, at the early stages of projects, on joint planning and partnerships with development agencies. This has important financial and human resource implications, considering that UNHCR had a presence of only three national staff in *Puntland* thus far.

With an increased UNHCR presence in *Puntland*, including international staff, UNHCR aims at starting to engage cautiously in the process of dealing with asylum-seekers in *Puntland*, which was not possible earlier on. The degree of this engagement will depend on the prevailing political situation. At this stage, no assistance programme for asylum-seekers/refugees is foreseen for *Puntland*.

- Repatriation and reintegration actions in **Southern Somalia** will depend on political and security developments in that area. UNHCR will contribute to peace building and governance in the context of continued efforts towards a unified government. The Office will also continue to facilitate the return of a small number of refugees through the

dissemination of country of origin information and the obtaining of clearance from authorities. Some reintegration activities will be carried out where security permits and UNHCR will continue to build partnerships with other UN agencies and INGOs through information sharing. Should, however, the situation in Southern Somalia stabilize as a result of the IGAD peace process or otherwise and allow for larger return movements, in particular from Kenya, UNHCR will have to seriously revisit its plans, staffing and budgets for Southern Somalia, since they contain no provision for major activities in this area. UNHCR will actively monitor the peace-process and will tailor its programmes to reflect the constraints or opportunities for durable solutions which may arise from it.

Since UNHCR's presence in Southern Somalia will continue to be limited to two national staff in what is assumed to be an environment of continued instability and insecurity, no refugee status determination activities or assistance programmes for asylum-seekers and refugees are planned for 2003. However, advocacy for compliance with international refugee law and human rights standards will continue.

For a better co-ordination of overall humanitarian and developmental activities countrywide UNHCR will continue to actively participate in the Nairobi based Somalia Aid Co-ordination Body (SACB) with UN Agencies, donors and non-governmental organisations. This body has served as a framework for a wide range of innovative actions aimed at strengthening field co-ordination mechanisms and area based inter- agency planning.

With active UNHCR participation, the heads of UN Agencies for Somalia will continue to set policy directions, during regular meetings of the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the Security Management Team for Somalia which are based in Nairobi where the offices of UN agency Representatives are located. The common UN security system will continue to ensure compliance with Minimum Operating Security Standards and staff safety and security. UNHCR will also remain a member of the board of the United Nations Common Air Services to ensure that the travel needs of staff, including security and medical evacuations meet the requirements of the Office.

To carry out its objectives in the field, UNHCR will continue to work with both local and international NGOs. Over the past years, local contractors have also been associated to the implementation of QIPs, to take into consideration the political context of *Somaliland* and *Puntland* and to broaden the participation of the beneficiary population where possible. In the rest of Somalia the local administrations are the main partners. These will include the Ministry of Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MRRR) in "*Somaliland*", the Directorate of International Co-operation (DIC) in "*Puntland*", the National Refugee Commission (NRC) and other pertinent TNG authorities in Southern Somalia as well as various line ministries. In the case of "*Somaliland*", the NGOs have elected a PARinAc Focal point who is responsible for co-ordinating and facilitating cooperation between UNHCR and the international and local NGOs.

(B) Main Programme Goals and Principle Objectives

<u>Name of Beneficiary Population:</u> Somali Returnees From Asylum Countries	
<u>Main Goal(s):</u> Attainment of durable solutions through voluntary repatriation and effective reintegration for Somali refugees in Ethiopia (if not completed in 2002) Djibouti, Yemen, Kenya and elsewhere	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
- Somali refugees can voluntarily return in assisted and promoted movements to northern Somalia. - Individual cases of Somali refugees can return voluntarily in facilitated movements to areas of southern Somalia deemed less safe and stable. - Returnees benefit from UNHCR and other agencies' community-based reintegration projects aimed at ensuring their self-reliance and the sustainability of their return.	23,000 Somali refugees have been assisted to repatriate from Djibouti, Kenya and Yemen to northern Somalia. - Individual Somali refugees requesting to voluntarily repatriate to southern Somalia are assisted in their return. - Community-based reintegration projects enhancing the absorptive capacity of areas of return through extension of communal services and economic opportunities are implemented and returnees' rights are respected.

<u>Name of Beneficiary Population:</u> Urban Refugees	
<u>Main Goal(s):</u> Provide international protection and life-sustaining assistance to urban refugees and asylum seekers, while pursuing durable solutions for them	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
- Refugees in Somalia, most of whom live in urban areas, enjoy international protection. - Refugees can sustain themselves. - Refugees are offered durable solutions when possible.	- Authorities dealing with refugees are adhering to international protection standards. - Rights of refugees are respected. - Refugee status determination is undertaken in line with international standards. - Refugees receive life-sustaining assistance. - When possible, refugees are repatriated to their country of origin or resettled to third countries.