



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

West Africa

| Working environment |

The post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire exacerbated the protracted refugee situation in West Africa. Whereas UNHCR had embarked on the road to downsize its operations in many countries in the subregion, the Office had to either expand or extend its presence to protect and assist the new refugees who fled from Côte d'Ivoire. In the larger context of slow economic recovery world-wide, growth in this region in 2012 is likely to fall short of any positive expectations, with unemployment and poverty rates remaining high. The combination of these various factors will continue to foster mixed migratory movements towards the north and within the region, representing a renewed challenge for UNHCR.

Numbers of forcibly displaced people in countries of West Africa have increased significantly: the estimated number of people displaced within Côte d'Ivoire peaked at one million, while those who fled to neighbouring countries reached more than 200,000, with the vast majority seeking refuge in Liberia, Ghana and Togo.

With the resolution of the crisis and proclamation of a new Government, people are progressively regaining their homes. Consequently the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has reduced to some 247,000. By contrast, more than 168,000

refugees have remained in protracted situations and are dispersed in rural as well as urban areas. These refugees come from Liberia, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo. Despite this difficult context, in 2012, UNHCR anticipates the return of some 71,000 refugees composed of 50,000 Ivorians, over 6,000 Mauritians and 15,000 Liberians in the context of the invocation of cessation clauses.

Internal displacement in Nigeria arising from ethno-religious violence has increased in frequency and scale. In the Sahel region, Niger and Mali are still confronted by a major climatic and food-security crisis which is already generating conflicts in Niger. Drought and floods in Togo and Benin too have led to internal displacements in these countries.

The planned declaration of the cessation clauses for the more than 60,000 Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone by mid-2012 is already generating a demand for several local integration schemes. There are signals that some 13,500 Mauritanian refugees, 16,000 Liberians, as well as an undetermined number of Togolese and Ivorian refugees, might opt for local integration in 2012.



Strategy

In view of the specific refugee situation in West Africa, UNHCR's objective is to implement a comprehensive protection, assistance and solutions strategy. This will involve the promotion of livelihoods and durable solutions, in particular local integration. The strategy will equally seek to strengthen partnerships with humanitarian and development actors and facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national development plans. Building the capacity of government counterparts, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders will be of paramount importance.

With regard to durable solutions, UNHCR will harmonize and develop a regional voluntary repatriation strategy for Mauritanian and Ivorian refugees, among others. In August 2011, UNHCR has signed a Tripartite Agreement with the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, providing a framework for the voluntary repatriation of Ivorians in Liberia who fled their country following the presidential elections in November 2010. In October 2011, a similar agreement was signed with the Government of Ghana.

UNHCR will aim at reaching similar agreements with Togo and other countries of asylum. It will also work closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to identify priorities in the humanitarian sector, with a focus on the reintegration of refugees and voluntary repatriation.

Constraints

The main challenges UNHCR faces in West Africa relate to the difficult socio-economic conditions and fragile political and security contexts in several countries, which reduce the prospects of local integration for refugees, and impede other

durable solutions. Elections in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo that are planned for the end of 2011 and in 2012, may give rise to additional tensions.

Operations

Operations in **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Liberia** are described in separate chapters.

Other operations in West Africa cover seven major refugee populations, scattered among 12 countries and living in rural and urban areas, as well as in camps.

In **Ghana**, as of October 2011, there are about 18,000 Ivorian refugees. This number will evolve according to developments in Côte d'Ivoire. UNHCR and its partners will continue to facilitate the transportation of asylum-seekers from border areas to camps, in order to ensure their safety. UNHCR will also gather information on intentions to return, and on people with special needs in urban areas and host communities. The Ghana Refugee Board will be assisted to conduct refugee status determination (RSD), and to develop a national strategy for the local integration of long-staying refugees.

Guinea hosts more than 2,000 new Ivorian refugees as well as close to 14,000 refugees from Liberia and other countries. UNHCR will focus on the delivery of health services, as well as opportunities for self-reliance, improved living conditions and legal aid in relation to local integration. UNHCR will continue to strengthen the Government's RSD structures, and it is expected that some 600 pending status-determination cases will be finalized. Multi-sectoral assistance to Ivorian refugees will continue in 2012, along with voluntary repatriation.

Guinea-Bissau and **the Gambia** host more than 15,000 Senegalese refugees, largely in rural areas. As the conditions in Senegal are not yet conducive to repatriation, UNHCR will continue to protect and assist these refugees. However, the lack of available land in Guinea-Bissau is an obstacle to local integration.

In **Senegal**, UNHCR's Regional Office will coordinate and support operations in the subregion. At the country-level, some 20,500 Mauritanian refugees were repatriated between January 2008 and December 2010, further to the Tripartite Agreement signed in 2007 between UNHCR and the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal. The repatriation of the last group of more than 5,000 refugees is to be carried out in 2012. The remaining 13,500 refugees will be helped to integrate locally in Senegal. With this in mind, modalities for the issuance of identity cards to refugees residing in Senegal have been discussed with the Government.

In 2012, UNHCR together with the Governments of **Mali** and **Mauritania** will explore opportunities to enter into tripartite arrangements for the voluntary repatriation of 9,000 out of the 12,000 Mauritanian refugees living in Mali.

In **Burkina Faso**, **Mali** and **Niger**, UNHCR has a limited presence, but the offices, with the support of the Regional Office in Dakar, will focus on strengthening the capacity of the Governments and their respective national refugee commissions to carry out RSD and border monitoring activities.

In **Nigeria**, UNHCR will strengthen its partnership with ECOWAS, as a key partner in ensuring a favourable protection environment for people of concern in this region, in particular through its Protocol on freedom of movement, residence and establishment, as well as in seeking durable solutions, notably through support for local-integration activities.

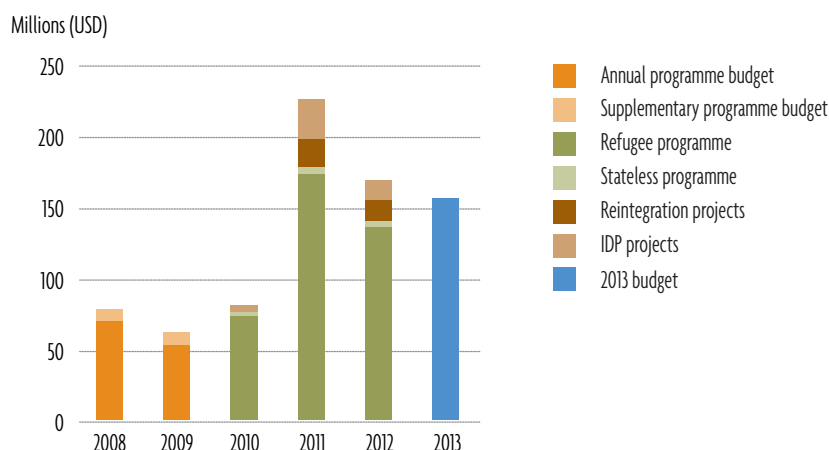
In **Togo**, some 4,700 Ivorian refugees have been registered since the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. UNHCR will address the daily needs of refugees in the camp with respect to shelter, food, water and health. UNHCR will also collaborate with the National Commission for the processing of asylum applications.

In all countries in West Africa, including **Benin** and **Sierra Leone**, UNHCR is implementing durable solutions for persons of concern.

Financial information

Although UNHCR's overall budget for West Africa had been decreasing since 2007 in line with the downsizing of its operations, the recent hostilities in Côte d'Ivoire led to a gradual increase in financial requirements in the subregion. The overall budget for the subregion will amount to USD 168.8 million in 2012 and will cover the delivery of support to people forcibly displaced, capacity-building activities for governments, particularly for protection activities, and reintegration and local-integration support.

UNHCR's budget in West Africa 2008 – 2013



UNHCR Budget in West Africa (USD)

OPERATION	2011 REVISED BUDGET	2012				TOTAL	2013
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4		
Côte d'Ivoire	47,212,208	9,591,089	3,748,462	4,997,424	13,005,332	31,342,307	26,396,000
Ghana	14,935,725	10,297,161	0	1,289,055	0	11,586,217	9,017,381
Guinea	8,122,003	4,658,142	0	1,435,009	0	6,093,151	6,000,000
Liberia	90,945,253	64,304,327	0	5,045,353	0	69,349,680	65,024,668
Senegal Regional Office	65,092,494	47,387,883	717,761	2,293,021	0	50,398,665	49,852,287
Total	226,307,683	136,238,603	4,466,223	15,059,863	13,005,332	168,770,020	156,290,336