



Mid-term review of a
Canadian security
deployment to the
UNHCR programme
in Guinea

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Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit

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UNHCR, Canada and refugee security

1. In recent years, UNHCR's beneficiaries and employees have been confronted with mounting threats to their physical safety. In response to this situation, the organization has developed a concept known as the 'ladder of options'. This concept represents the range of different measures that UNHCR and other actors can use to enhance the security of refugees, including relatively 'soft' initiatives such as the establishment of refugee security committees, to relatively 'hard' initiatives, such as the deployment of multinational military forces.
2. One product of the consultations that UNHCR has undertaken on the 'ladder of options' concept is a paper prepared by the Canada-based Pearson Peacekeeping Institute, entitled 'Humanitarian security: operationalizing the UNHCR ladder of options'. This paper introduced the notion of 'Humanitarian Security Officers' (HSOs), identified the skills and profile required of such personnel, as well as the internal organizational structure needed to support them in field operations.
3. In a meeting with UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) and the organization's Representative in Ottawa, in December 1999, representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) expressed the Canadian government's interest in operationalizing the 'ladder of options'.
4. Earlier, the High Commissioner had raised the issue in New York with the Canadian ambassador, seeking direct technical support from Canada through a senior secondment to advise UNHCR in establishing a practical response capacity in insecure environments. The issue was further discussed with potential donors in various fora, including the Standing Committee of August 2000, and a workshop on refugee security at Oxford in July 2001.
5. Finally, the AHC wrote directly to the Canadian government, via its mission in Geneva, seeking its involvement in UNHCR's efforts to deal with the worsening security situation in Guinea. Canada's interest in this proposal stemmed not only from its established interest in the 'ladder of options', but also from the fact that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were among the first law enforcement agencies to seriously employ the concept of 'community policing' where public welfare and safety are treated as a shared concern, especially in multi-ethnic environments.

The operational environment in Guinea

6. More than 150,000 refugees are to be found in Guinea, most of them Liberians and Sierra Leoneans who have fled the longstanding armed conflicts in their countries of origin. Initially, many of the refugees settled in villages in border areas of Guinea, where they enjoyed relatively harmonious relations with the local population.
7. With time, however, the viability of this settlement pattern began to erode. Armed elements from Liberia began to cross the border and threaten the security of the local population. At the same time, reduced levels of international assistance to the refugees had an adverse effect on the local economy. In September 2000, the

murder of one UNHCR staff member and the temporary abduction of a second demonstrated how much the situation was growing out of hand.

8. With growing criticisms of the refugees by affected communities and the government in Conakry, UNHCR was compelled to relocate the refugees in camps away from the border and to look for new approaches to the task of maintaining security.

9. Some time earlier in Tanzania, UNHCR had addressed the issue of security in refugee-populated areas by providing training, financial and material support to the police - a strategy supported by the relatively well organized and disciplined nature of the Tanzanian security services. By way of contrast, Guinea's law enforcement bodies, the gendarmerie and police, had not received proper training in nearly ten years and were poorly equipped and organized. Several exploratory missions by the RCMP and UNHCR determined that any attempt to operationalize the ladder of options in the Guinean context would require a large training component.

10. Because the Canadian government and the RCMP were venturing into untested waters, a formalized agreement with UNHCR was required, necessitating the frequent intervention of legal experts in Ottawa and Geneva. Virtually one and a half years elapsed between the AHC's approach to the Canadian Ambassador in July 2001 and the eventual deployment of two RCMP officers in Guinea. During this time, questions relating to insurance coverage, the official status of the deployed RCMP officers, as well as their benefits and remuneration had to be resolved.

11. At the same time, Canada had to identifying appropriate officers with international work experience, who had the necessary language skills, and who were willing to live apart from their families for a year in a remote and isolated area. Two RCMP 'experts on mission' - a Refugee Security Liaison Officer (RSLO) and a Refugee Security Training Officer (RSTO) - finally arrived in Guinea and were deployed in Kissidougou in mid-January 2003. The terms of reference for these officers are appended to this report.

12. This mid-term review of the RCMP deployment was undertaken in accordance with Article 7.2 of the 'Agreement between the Government of Canada and UNHCR for the purpose of deploying two Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officers to the Republic of Guinea'. The mission travelled to Guinea from 3-9 July 2003 and was composed of a representative of DFAIT, two officers from the RCMP headquarters in Ottawa, as well as UNHCR staff members from EPAU and the Emergency and Security Section.

Findings and recommendations

13. The implementation of the RCMP/UNHCR pilot project in Guinea has been significantly impeded by the removal of the previous detachment of Guinean Mixed Brigade (police and gendarmerie) officers in the refugee camps, who were seen to have compromised themselves by improper behaviour during 2002. Unfortunately, they were replaced by an irregular contingent, many of whom lacked basic training as police officers or gendarmes.

14. As a result of these circumstances, it is unlikely that the RCMP will be able to complete the necessary training of the Coordinator (de-facto national counterpart to (the RSLO and the RSTO), the four TOT officers and their 120 Mixed Brigade colleagues before the end of the year. An assessment of the achievements measured against this particular objective is subsequently premature.

15. For the government of Guinea and UNHCR to fully benefit from the Canadian deployment, a number of issues should be promptly addressed by all the parties involved. Meanwhile, serious consideration should be given to extending the pilot project timeframe so that the work undertaken to date can be consolidated and the anticipated benefits of this initiative can be realized.

16. The general impression gained from a short visit to Kountoya and Telikoro camps is that those camps are relatively secure, calm and stable. The situation in Nzerekore, which the mission did not visit, is reported to be considerably more turbulent.

17. In the camps visited there are incidents of theft and fighting, although probably not with greater frequency than in comparably sized Guinean communities. The relocation of the camps has done much to improve the situation and local refugee committees, supported by security volunteers, are effective in stabilizing the communities. Food distributions, it was reported, cause the greatest disruptions to daily life.

18. The transfer of the previous detachments of the Mixed Brigade has done much to improve security and the overall confidence of refugees living in the camps. Relations with local villagers are good, and the government authorities in Kissidougou have responded positively to the presence of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees.

19. Because the training programme for the Mixed Brigade is behind schedule, it is difficult to ascertain the impact of the RCMP secondment. Both refugees and Mixed Brigade staff in the camps are aware of preparations for training and are eager for activities to begin. The arrival of the RCMP has also brought about a broader awareness of roles, responsibilities and day-to-day mechanisms in refugee camp security management, at least within the Kissidougou camps.

20. The presence of two RCMP officers in the UNHCR sub-office has been a successful, albeit a mixed experience. On a personal level relations are positive and morale is good. The two officers are clearly part of the team and are respected for their professional capacity which they bring to the UNHCR operation. However, since this is the first time the two officers have worked with UNHCR, more could have been done by the organization ensure their smooth integration into the office and to explain how the agency operates.

21. As 'experts on mission' their status in the sub-office is unclear for some UNHCR staff members, and issues such as access to office telephones for long distance calls and the use of official vehicles after working hours have generated some unnecessary irritation. Simple efforts to improve communications and to meet the personal and professional needs of the RCMP officers will help the secondment to meet its objectives. Given the one-year timeframe of the project, it is evident that the work programme of the RCMP officers must accelerate.

22. At this point it is likely that the initial training of the Coordinator and four trainers will serve as a testing of the curriculum for later application with the remaining members of the Mixed Brigade. A necessary prioritization of activities within the context of remaining time, with the possibility of a further extension of the project, will be discussed when the RCMP team and their supervisors next meet in Ottawa.

23. There is an evident need for the Refugee Security Liaison Officer (RSTO) to proactively pursue linkages with relevant bodies, such as BCNR and the Ministry of Security, in Kissidougou, Nzerekore, as well as in Conakry. He must seek to strengthen, to the extent possible, structures that support the Mixed Brigade's activities and ensure that the benefits of the RCMP's training activities do not whither away, especially after the RCMP's departure from Guinea. As well as developing skills and imparting information, security training must also ensure that an accountability framework is put into place.

24. The RCMP officers have identified a capable national counterpart in Guinea, who has recently been confirmed in the role of training focal point. This person is well respected by refugees, the Mixed Brigade, the BCR, UNHCR and the NGOs. There is a danger; however, in building a structure around a single person, rather than concentrating on the development of structures that will prevail if or when that person is transferred.

25. If the Brigade Mixed and security volunteers are to operate in a professional manner, then basic equipment is required for them to do their work. Under existing arrangements, the budget for such procurement is held by the government of Guinea under a UNHCR sub-project. Steps need to be made, in conjunction with the Branch Office, to see that this budget is fully accessible to the RCMP pilot project. The current Mixed Brigade is a reactive force. But if properly equipped and trained they can contribute to the prevention of security problems.

26. It is important to ensure that the terms of reference for the pilot project are understood by all the parties concerned and that expectations of the project are realistic. In a meeting with sub-office staff, for example, hopes were expressed that problems such as corruption would be eliminated as a consequence of the secondment. Experience suggests, however, that problems such as this cannot be eradicated by means of training alone. Similarly, UNHCR staff should not assume that core responsibilities, such as the training of Mixed Brigade on the basic principles of refugee protection, are the responsibility of the RCMP.

27. The RCMP and DFAIT should now determine whether the duration of this project can be extended, as recommended by this report. In taking this decision, the parties concerned should take account of what can reasonably be expected by the present 'experts on mission' and how, if there is an extension of the project, the new RCMP officers will pursue its objectives. This will have a bearing on whether the immediate training will focus primarily on the training of trainers (TOT) or on the training of the 120 members of the Mixed Brigade with the basic modules that are already available.

28. Closely linked, the RSLO must determine whether it is appropriate to remain in Kissidougou or whether to relocate to Nzerekore, where there is greater urgency for security interventions. In any event, the RCMP officers must assume a

countrywide responsibility. The more the programme is promoted with the Guinean authorities, the greater the likelihood that they will sustain the enhanced Mixed Brigade when the expatriate component is phased out. There will be several key changes of UNHCR personnel in Guinea over the months to come, and incoming staff must appreciate the importance of this project.

29. The collaboration between the Canadian Government and UNHCR is an important testing ground for a new format of capacity building that has broader implications beyond Guinea or the Mixed Brigade. It is important that every effort is made to help package that is offered is extremely valuable.

Mission Participants

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Terms of Reference

Refugee Security Training Officer

The Terms of Reference of the Refugee Security Training Officer (RSTO) reflect a core objective of the proposed RCMP secondment to UNHCR and deployment to the Republic of Guinea. With the aim of assisting the host government - specifically the mixed Brigade (officers of the police and gendarmerie) - in refugee camp security mechanisms, the RSTO function is supportive of and complementary to the role and responsibilities of the Refugee Security Liaison Officer (RSLO).

Advising the Government in ensuring its primary responsibility for refugee security, the operational strategy will be in capacity building measures and specific training activities. In close consultation with the RSLO and the Brigade Liaison Officer (the national counterpart of the RSLO), the RSTO will perform the following functions:

- In collaboration with UNHCR staff, the RSTO will plan, develop and assist in the implementation of a structured program entailing specific training modules for the Brigade officers and the Refugee Security Volunteers. In doing so, the RSTO must ensure that key refugee protection issues are incorporated within the curriculum. Topics would include the fundamentals of international protection and human rights, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) and gender awareness, conflict resolution, security-management systems, policing techniques and community-policing strategies;
- Assist the RSLO in developing standard instructions and a 'Code of Conduct' for the Brigade officers and the Refugee Security Volunteers and ensure a consistent application throughout all the camps;
- Assist the RSLO in the development of a standardized incident reporting system and a centralized database as a tool for monitoring, analyzing and improving refugee security within the camps;
- Provide appropriate technical assistance to the mixed Brigade;
- Ensure collaborative planning with the UNHCR Field Safety Advisors (FSA) in the context of refugee security training and management activities;
- Participate in a mid-term evaluation of the application and effectiveness of the joint RCMP/UNHCR refugee security program in Guinea;
- Report through the RSLO to the UNHCR Country Representative and provide technical advice and professional opinion on refugee security matters in Guinea.

Terms of Reference

Refugee Security Liaison Officer

Following consultation with the UNHCR Representative and senior staff in Guinea (including Field Staff Safety Advisors), the Terms of Reference for the Refugee Security Liaison Officer (RSLO) were presented by the Emergency and Security Service (ESS) of UNHCR's Headquarters in Geneva. The TOR incorporate technical components as presented by the Guinean Bureau for Refugee Coordination (BCR) and the mixed Brigade for refugee camp security. To achieve operational goals and effectively implement refugee security strategies pertinent to the Guinean situation, the TOR remain under operational review and subject to adjustment.

With the aim of maintaining the humanitarian and civilian character of the refugee camps, the RSLO has the focal point role in refugee security management and liaison activities. The overall direction of the operational strategy will be in delivering capacity building activities and timely advice to the Government in its primary responsibility for refugee security, and to UNHCR as the mandated United Nations agency for refugee protection.

The planning, application, management and monitoring of international policing standards appropriate to a complex refugee environment will allow UNHCR to directly influence and effectively support the Government in day-to-day engagement in refugee security matters. The over-riding theme of the RSLO's role and time-bound deployment will be in applying capacity-building measures and ensuring effective hand-over of task to a senior Guinean counterpart. Therefore, in order to best advise and assist both the Government and UNHCR in refugee security strategies and its component systems, the RSLO will perform the following functions:

- Ensure effective liaison between UNHCR, BCR and the Brigade on issues pertaining to refugee security within Guinea;
- Provide overall refugee security management, oversight and technical assistance to BCR and Brigade counterparts;
- Analyze existing and planned refugee security arrangements in Guinea and advise on their application and refinement;
- Provide technical advisory services to the Commanding Officers of the Brigade on refugee security management, adherence to the civilian nature of the refugee population and the preservation of law and order systems within the camps;

- Develop operational response matrices that will guide both UNHCR and the Government in effectively assessing the refugees' security situation and promote timely and credible responses to threats made on the humanitarian and civilian character of the refugee camps;
- In close support of the Refugee Security Training Officer (RSTO), assist in the development and implementation of a structured program of training for the Brigade officers and the Refugee Security Volunteers;
- Consult with UNHCR's implementing partners (the NGO community) on the development of refugee security strategies and relevant issues;
- Consult on the development and management of a specific and adequate refugee security operational budget for Guinea;
- Together with the RSTO, develop standard instructions and a 'Code of Conduct' for the Brigade and Refugee Security Volunteers and promote its consistent application throughout all the camps;
- Introduce and develop incident reporting systems consistent in application throughout all the camps and a centralized security incident database as a tool for monitoring, analyzing and improving refugee security. The system(s) and institutionalized structure should consider
 - the nature and sources of threats to the humanitarian and civilian character of the camps as well as the threat of general lawlessness;
 - the capacity and intent of local law enforcement authorities and agencies;
 - the involvement of the refugee population in the maintenance of acceptable standards of law and order in camps in a manner that conforms with the principles of community policing.
- Ensure collaborative planning, complementary strategies and joint activities with UNHCR's Field Safety Advisors (FSA) in Guinea;
- Initiate a mid-term evaluation of the application and effectiveness of the joint RCMP/UNHCR refugee security strategy in Guinea;
- Report directly to UNHCR's Country Representative (albeit, through the Head of Sub-Office) and provide timely analytical advice and professional opinion on refugee camp security matters in Guinea.

Terms of Reference

Joint mid-term review: secondment of RCMP officers to the UNHCR operation in Guinea

Background to the assessment

Over the course of the protracted refugee crisis in West Africa the issue of refugee security has been a major concern for UNHCR, the international community and donors, NGOs and regional bodies. The gravity of the situation, characterised by frequent attacks by armed elements on local citizens and refugee populations in Guinea, was dramatised in 2000 when a UNHCR staff member was killed in service and a second was abducted.

In an effort to counter the insecurity for refugees and humanitarian workers, a response included relocating refugee populations further inland and away from the border. During this time a request was made by UNHCR's Representative in Guinea, to HQ/ESS, for a Humanitarian Security Officer to provide support for refugee security within the newly located camps. A joint Commission for Human Security and UNHCR field assessment mission in February 2002 resulted in a proposal to the Canadian Government (DFAIT) which included terms of reference for a Refugee Security Liaison Officer (RSLO).

A follow-up mission two months later by representatives of DFAIT, RCMP and ESS emphasised the importance of enhancing the capacity of the Guinean Mixed Brigade, the host State body comprised of police and gendarmes responsible for refugee camp security. With this in mind, the terms of reference for a Refugee Security Training Officer (RSTO) were also developed.

Shortly after the follow-up mission, the Government of Canada offered to provide UNHCR with two Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers to serve as an RSLO and RSTO respectively. An eventual formal 'Agreement' between the RCMP and UNHCR would see the secondment of the two officers for a period of one year in Guinea to provide technical support and capacity-building measures to the Mixed Brigade, including a programme of training in community-based policing techniques and security management.

Purpose of the review

In accordance with the UNHCR programming cycle it is standard procedure to review operational progress against UNHCR country goals. This allows for any necessary programme evolution and required readjustment of specific objectives and outputs in order to maximize the effort and the resources that have been allocated. In the context of the RCMP secondment to UNHCR in Guinea, and according to the terms of the 'Agreement' between RCMP and UNHCR, it is envisaged that a more extensive mid-term review is both pertinent and warranted. The review will be under the direction of the UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPA) and will include staff from the Canadian Government (DFAIT and RCMP) and the Emergency and Security Service (ESS) of UNHCR HQ. The mid-term review will also provide the opportunity to assess the early benefits of the secondment and

consider lessons learned for possible application within other situations where refugee insecurity is a problem.

Issues to be addressed

In the course of the mid-term review mission various issues will present both a focus and guide through which the deployment will be viewed for effectiveness and practicality to-date. Among the issues are:

- The extent to which the integration of the RSLO and RSTO has proceeded within the elapsed timeframe, with attention to a) their absorption into the existing programmes of both UNHCR and the BCR / Mixed Brigade; b) the availability of the resources to ensure an effective implementation of their terms of reference; and c) the communication and liaison linkages required at the various levels;
- The contribution of the RCMP towards more structured and routine reporting by the Mixed Brigade and general [refugee] security management systems in the camps; plus, to the extent possible, to assess local attitudes relating to perceived improvements in refugee security and adherence to law and order within the camps as it relates ;
- The value of an expatriate RSLO and an /RSTO in their separate functions aimed to assist the host-State / Mixed Brigade in refugee camp security;
- Resource requirements necessary for the RSLO and RSTO to effectively undertake their work;
- Given the countrywide coverage of the RSLO and RSTO, consider the effectiveness of their geographical-based location in Kissindougou as opposed to Nzerekore;
- Refugee community involvement, especially in regard to the role played by the refugee security volunteers in the context of the community policing approach;
- The flow of communication and the level of co-operation between the various elements: RSLO/RSTO, central and local government authorities, the refugee communities and their representative committees, NGO partners and UNHCR (all units) in the support of the 'Agreement' goals for improved refugee security in Guinea ;
- Take into consideration the legal framework between the Government of Guinea and UNHCR (Protocole d'Accord) and its impact on ensuring refugee security within the refugee camps throughout the territory, and its support to the RCMP programme;
- Applicability and equity of security measures with noted attention to be given to gender-based issues;
- The structure, content and appropriateness of the 'Agreement' between the Government of Canada and UNHCR in the context of the situation in Guinea;

- Parallels and potential replicability of the RCMP secondment model to other UNHCR programmes where refugee security concerns are significant;

In the course of the review, additional issues may be raised for discussion and attention among the participants and those in the field.

Output and utilization of the review

Beyond the anticipated value of a prescribed mid-year report within the UNHCR programme cycle, the mission will have the opportunity to assess the operational arrangements and, to the extent that participants are mandated, recommend any adjustments and propose possible steps as might be feasible to further advance the work of the RSLO and RSTO.

Where required the mission will serve to amplify concerns, needs and achievements to-date from the operational areas in Guinea to the respective headquarters involved. Presumably the organizations will share their observations relating to the impact of the RCMP initiative and the Government of Canada / UNHCR partnership within the context of the working environment in which it is placed.

Ultimately a mid-term review is a management tool, which presents a stocktaking opportunity while a project is underway, enabling fine-tuning and adjustments rather than the retrospective opportunity of a lessons learned assessment. Within this particular endeavour the on-going management component will remain valid, but a further benefit will exist for the Canadian Government and UNHCR to analyse the progress and permit changes while time still exists within the operational life of the project.

The mid-term review will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with UNHCR's evaluation policy and in accordance with that policy, a report of the review will be placed in the public domain.