

Liberia



Main objectives

- Support the Government of Liberia to create a positive international protection regime to safeguard the rights of Ivorian, Sierra Leonean and urban refugees currently in the country.
- Seek durable solutions for refugees through the coordinated use of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. In particular, pursue local integration options for Sierra Leonean refugees wishing to remain in Liberia.
- Continue to provide assistance to Ivorian refugees.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees who express the desire to return to areas with acceptable levels of security and basic humanitarian conditions.
- Promote community development and ensure linkages between the four processes of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction "4Rs" by implementing community-based reintegration activities in

the main areas of return and strengthening linkages with other actors, particularly those involved in medium- to long-term reconstruction and recovery programmes.

- Support the repatriation and reintegration of IDPs and ex-combatants under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator within a collaborative multi-agency framework.

Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
IDP returnees	331,616	100,000
IDPs	200,000	100,000
Returnees	100,000	150,000
Others of concern	10,000	5,000
Côte d'Ivoire (refugees)	10,000	5,000
Sierra Leone (refugees)	3,000	2,000
Urban refugees	46	46
Asylum-seekers	4	0
Total	654,666	362,046

Total requirements: USD 44,120,090

Working environment

Recent developments

The security situation in Liberia has improved significantly since the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in August 2003. The deployment of United Nations peace-keeping troops and the ongoing disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants have created the atmosphere of security without which there could be no confidence in the peace process. At the time of writing, eight counties (out of 15) have been declared safe by the National Assessment Committee for Resettlement (the assessment was endorsed by UNMIL, the UNCT and civil society organizations). Key benchmarks for safe return include completion of disarmament, the presence of civil authorities, substantial levels of spontaneous return by IDPs and refugees, ongoing rehabilitation of basic services and unhindered access by humanitarian workers.

Meanwhile, UNHCR has established offices in six rural locations in order to cover operations in all 15 counties. Transit centres and way stations have been established to provide relief for beneficiaries during journeys to their counties of origin. Relief items have been purchased and pre-positioned for distribution to returnees and implementing arrangements concluded with various partners for the provision of services.

Throughout 2004 UNHCR has, along with other agencies, provided protection and material assistance to IDPs within the context of a collaborative inter-agency framework under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Over 200,000 IDPs living in camps around Monrovia benefited from non-food items including plastic sheeting, blankets, mats, sanitary materials, jerry cans, buckets and kitchen sets. Over 50,000 refugees have returned spontaneously to Liberia since the beginning of the year. This figure is expected to reach 100,000 persons by the end of the year. UNHCR extended IDP camps in the Monrovia area to accommodate, protect and assist some 20,000 spontaneous returnees, mainly from Sierra Leone, who could not return to their places of origin for security reasons.

In March 2004, the Humanitarian Coordinator established a 4Rs Core Group for institutional collaboration in the implementation of reintegration programmes. The Core Group is composed of the Government, UNMIL, members of the UNCT and bilateral donors. Through the Core Group, UNHCR has entered into a range of integrated planning processes with other agencies, including FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WFP. Meanwhile, in collaboration with UN country team members, community empowerment projects have been initiated throughout the country focusing on education, water, sanitation, and employment/income generation in the main returnee areas.

UNHCR completed the voluntary repatriation operation for Sierra Leonean refugees in July 2004, having assisted more than 13,000 refugees to return home since January. Meanwhile, the Office regained access to Ivorian refugees in eastern Liberia and resumed the provision of protection and assistance programmes for this population.

Constraints

Although UNMIL troops have secured most parts of the country, the absence of local authorities, including administrative and law enforcement institutions, is still a key challenge in the quest for continued stability. Failure to secure funds for the rehabilitation and reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants leaves them vulnerable to recruitment by non-State actors within and across Liberia's borders. Recovery of property and access to land are paramount concerns. Many returnees are likely to come home to find their land and houses occupied by ex-combatants and others. Most areas of return lack food, water and basic services on account of widespread dilapidation and war damage. Humanitarian needs are extensive and it will take time to build the capacity of the Government, NGOs and other partners to respond. Economic activities are limited and unemployment exceeds 80 per cent. Liberia's roads, poor at the best of times, deteriorate drastically during the rainy season, becoming almost impassable.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

The protection of refugees as well as returnees will remain the priority for 2005. UNHCR will reinforce its collaboration with the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) in its reconsideration of asylum policy. UNHCR will collaborate with LRRRC, relevant ministries, sister UN agencies, NGOs and international organizations with a view to conducting regular monitoring in refugee settlement areas and in places of return of Liberian returnees. The large numbers of IDPs returning to the same communities as refugees will be included in all return and reintegration projects. UNHCR protection activities will help to support the return of the rule of law.

UNHCR will seek to enhance the National Transitional Government's capacity to become an effective partner during implementation of the return and reintegration programme. Capacity building will be pursued for law enforcement institutions and the justice system at local level, including training on human rights. UNHCR will provide legal support to the judiciary and the para-judicial systems (including property dispute committees), set up security monitoring in camps and return areas through Community Watch Teams, and support human rights institutions operating within the country. Special attention will be paid to vulnerable groups among the returnee and IDP population, including separated children, single parents, female-headed families and victims of gender violence, by bringing them to the attention of NGO partners with the relevant expertise.

As part of its strategy for protection and legal assistance for persons of concern in Liberia, UNHCR foresees the following activities in 2005.

Sierra Leonean refugees

UNHCR will pursue the promotional phase of the voluntary repatriation on an individual case-by-case basis in 2005. UNHCR will support the local integration prospects of nearly 2,500

residual Sierra Leonean refugees by ensuring that they have access to locally available services (education, health, justice, etc.) and land for agriculture and housing purposes. UNHCR will promote their naturalization.

Ivorian refugees

Registration of the Ivorian refugees remains a key concern in Liberia and will be carried out in 2005 where feasible. Registration will ensure the security and safety of Ivorians in Liberia and will facilitate access to basic services and assistance such as food, non-food items, water and sanitation facilities. Capacity building for the local authorities includes training for immigration officials, police and the judiciary on the reception and treatment of refugees, as well as the promotion of refugee and human rights law and protection principles. In terms of durable solutions, UNHCR will explore voluntary repatriation and local integration as well as resettlement opportunities for Ivorian refugees who meet the criteria. Protection will also be reviewed for urban refugees, who include Ivorians, an increasing number of Sierra Leoneans and other nationals. A balanced programme will be developed for all nationalities, with self-reliance as the key objective.

Liberian returnees

UNHCR will continue to advocate the creation of conditions conducive to the return, reintegration and security of returnees and IDPs. This will be achieved through the establishment of effective monitoring and information-gathering systems to identify and address protection problems. UNHCR endeavours to ensure that the property rights of returnees and IDPs are respected and that mechanisms exist for reporting on security and other conditions in areas of return.

Internally displaced persons

IDPs remaining in camps will be assisted to return or to relocate under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Community-based projects focusing on agriculture and shelter for returnees will cover IDPs and refugees alike.



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UNHCR and its partners' activities help rural communities to improve their livelihoods and become self-sufficient.
ILO / J. Maillard

Assistance

UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to Ivorian refugees remaining in the country.

Protection and assistance activities will be provided in refugee camps. Conscious efforts will be made to integrate gender equality issues in each sector. Support for social and economic activities

such as human rights training, income-generating and adult literacy classes will target women in particular. Community-based SGBV response and prevention programmes will be supported in each camp. UNHCR will continue to show its commitment to the millennium development goal of primary education for all children. Limited assistance will be provided to vulnerable refugees from Sierra Leone as well as urban refugees remaining in Liberia.

In 2005, the overriding objective of UNHCR's reintegration programme in Liberia will be to support integrated inter-agency planning and implementation of reintegration programmes for returnees, IDPs and ex-combatants. This will focus on livelihoods, to help rural communities to become self-sufficient. The programme will involve local and national government authorities at all planning and implementation stages. An integrated inter-agency 4Rs programme approach will utilize existing UNCT coordination mechanisms, involving bilateral donors and NGOs. Line ministries and national NGOs and community-based organizations will be involved in the implementation of the programme at the local level to enhance sustainability of the projects.

Multi-sectoral community empowerment projects will be implemented, such as the rehabilitation of schools, clinics, roads, sanitation and water facilities. The programme will ensure sustainability by eliciting active community participation in all aspects of project activities.

Desired impact

UNHCR aims to provide multi-sectoral assistance so as to ensure an orderly movement in safety and dignity of Liberian refugees and IDPs and thus guarantee a sustainable return to their places of origin. Special attention will be paid, inter alia, to legal protection, monitoring, registration and mass information in areas of return. UNHCR will ensure international protection of Ivorian refugees while exploring the possibility of an eventual return to their country of origin. In line with the

4Rs approach, UNHCR will advocate a closely coordinated inter-agency effort, whereby reintegration programmes will interlink with immediate capacity-building efforts in order to enhance community ownership and sustainability of projects.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

A pool of professional local and international staff will manage UNHCR's operation in Liberia. The programme will be run from six locations across the country. In addition to the branch office in Monrovia, there will be two sub-offices in Saclepea and Voinjama, and four field offices in Gbarnga, Tubmanburg, Zwedru and Harper. These field and sub-offices have oversight responsibilities for various regions of the country.

Coordination

UNHCR will continue to collaborate with the National Transitional Government, other UN agencies, donors as well as local and international NGO partners in line with the 4Rs and inter-agency approach. UNHCR will continue to participate in all inter-agency coordination meetings and work closely with other specialized agencies in the delivery of services. UNHCR will further enhance its ongoing cooperation with UNMIL, UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO and UNFPA regarding implementation arrangements for interventions in specific sectors. Contacts with donor organizations will be maintained in order to exchange information on sectoral coverage and funding gaps. In order to enhance service delivery and efficiency, UNHCR will strengthen the capacity of its government counterpart, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, and local NGOs.

Offices
Monrovia
Gbarnga
Harper
Saclepea
Tubmanburg
Voinjama
Zwedru

Partners
Government agencies
Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
Ministry of Internal Affairs
NGOs
Africa Humanitarian Action
African Concern International
American Refugee Committee
Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia
CARITAS - Liberia
Community Action Program
Concerned Christian Community
Danish Refugee Council
Development Education Network Liberia
Environmental Foundation for Africa
Hope International Mission
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Liberia National Red Cross Society
Liberians United to Serve Humanity
Medical Emergency Relief and Cooperative International
Medical Emergency Relief International
Norwegian Refugee Council
Peace Winds Japan
Search for Common Ground
Women in Progress for Community Services
World Vision International
ZOA Refugee Care
Others
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
FAO
WFP

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and coordination	12,354,533
Community services	3,291,835
Crop production	594,000
Domestic needs	2,322,650
Education	782,500
Food	213,600
Forestry	60,500
Health	2,091,200
Income generation	320,000
Legal assistance	2,034,070
Operational support (to agencies)	571,235
Sanitation	688,250
Shelter/other infrastructure	8,610,000
Transport/logistics	4,965,160
Water (non-agricultural)	455,000
Total operations	39,354,533
Programme support	4,765,557
Total	44,120,090

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