

# West and Central Africa

Benin  
Burkina Faso  
Cameroon  
Cape Verde  
Central African Republic  
Chad  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Equatorial Guinea  
Gabon  
Gambia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Guinea-Bissau  
Liberia  
Mali  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Sao Tomé and Príncipe  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
Togo

## Major Developments

In 2001, the region saw major population movements within and across the borders of the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. At the beginning of 2001, UNHCR was relocating thousands of refugees from border areas in Guinea to new sites in the interior, in extremely difficult terrain and amidst widespread insecurity. In CAR, a long period of political and social unrest culminated in a failed attempted *coup d'état* in May. The turmoil and insecurity provoked an exodus of 25,000 refugees into neighbouring countries. Inside CAR brutal revenge attacks targeted urban refugees for alleged involvement in the attempted coup.

Cautious optimism prevailed in Sierra Leone, which has been ravaged by years of armed conflict and human rights abuses. The gradual return to stability opened the way for thousands of Sierra Leoneans to repatriate voluntarily, mainly from Guinea and Liberia. As the year ended, the conflict in Liberia spurred numerous Liberians to flee to neighbouring countries.



On the political front, the year was marked by elections in Chad, Gabon, Gambia and Ghana, which took place without major incidents. In Côte d'Ivoire, reconciliation between the Government and the country's main opposition groups contributed to a more stable political, social and economic environment. Despite occasional tensions between the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, political dialogue was sustained under the auspices of the Mano River Union as well as through regional and other international organisations, which also helped to promote stability in the sub-region.

## Challenges and Concerns

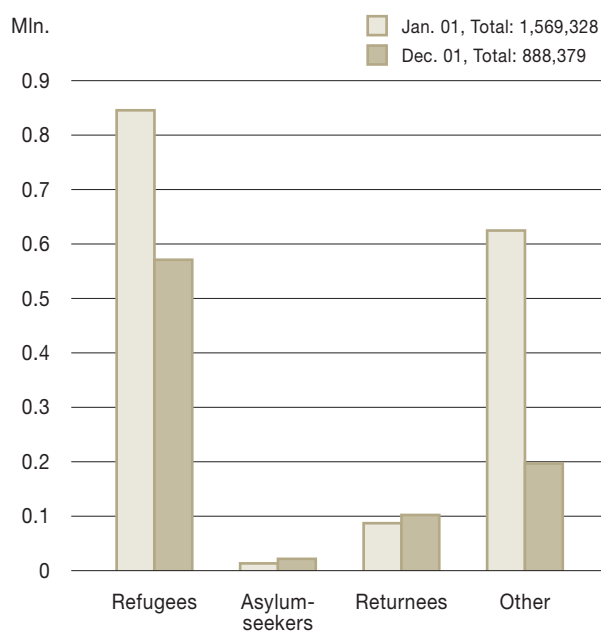
To ensure the sustainability of voluntary repatriation to Sierra Leone, returnee reintegration must be anchored in long-term political, social and economic stability. Immense challenges still face the Government, the national population and the international community: devastated infrastructure,

scarcity of resources and lack of access to basic services. The conflict in Liberia is a considerable cause for concern, as it could lead to major population displacements and threaten the fragile stability in Sierra Leone. In general terms, national protection structures and capacities need to be strengthened in order to achieve sound legal frameworks for refugee protection. In this way, refugee protection will take the form of a more strategic approach, rather than the piecemeal approach taken at present.

In CAR, prospects for a return to stability receded as Chad and Libya were drawn in to support opposing sides of the conflict. The situation remains tense and volatile and widespread insecurity continues to jeopardise humanitarian activities for the 50,000 refugees from Chad, DRC, Rwanda and Sudan who live there.

From January 2002, UNHCR's activities in **Gambia** and **Mali** are being covered from **Senegal**; **Chad** from the **Central African Republic**; and **Burkina**

## Persons of Concern to UNHCR



**Faso, Niger and Togo from Benin.** This situation poses considerable challenges in view of the limited resources available to provide refugees with protection and assistance.

## Progress Toward Solutions

The return of relative stability in the Republic of the Congo augurs well for the voluntary repatriation from **Gabon** of 17,555 Congolese refugees.



Sierra Leone: About 100,000 people have gone home since mid-2001. Here Sierra Leonean returnees arrive in their village. *UNHCR / W. Spindler*

2,000 repatriated spontaneously during 2001. A tripartite agreement was signed in September 2001 by the Governments of Gabon and RoC and UNHCR, which envisages the organised repatriation of an initial 5,000 refugees to Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.

The voluntary repatriation operation for Chadian refugees from CAR was brought to an end and Boubou camp closed. Positive political developments and a return to relative peace in the Darfour region of Sudan led some 4,000 refugees to repatriate spontaneously from Chad. Another 9,000 refugees have expressed the desire to repatriate under the auspices of UNHCR.

The UNHCR pilot scheme for resettlement of refugees in Benin and Burkina Faso has met with limited success, in part due to a shortage of resources. Evidently, motivation for local settlement remains low as the primary objective of refugees is to be settled outside the African continent.

## Operations

The following paragraphs outline UNHCR's activities in West and Central Africa by country, except for Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are described in separate chapters.

**Benin** had a refugee population of 4,800, who enjoyed free access to the local labour market. In 2001, 1,051 asylum-seekers from various countries were registered, of whom 628 were recognised under the 1969 OAU Convention refugee definition. UNHCR assists 2,286 refugees who benefit from primary healthcare services. 54 students received grants for post-secondary education. 60 per cent of school-age children were assisted by UNHCR to receive primary education. Under the UNHCR-sponsored local settlement scheme, ten families were received from camps in Tanzania and Rwanda. Self-reliance projects were implemented for 25 families. 184 persons were resettled from Benin to third countries.

**Burkina Faso** hosted 457 refugees, of whom UNHCR assisted 110 in urban areas. These beneficiaries received housing allowances and medical care as well as grants for micro projects. 72 persons were assisted to integrate locally under the UNHCR-sponsored local settlement scheme. Access

to education is emphasised under this programme. All school-age children were enrolled in public primary and secondary schools. Eighteen students received university scholarships while another 68 received grants to undertake vocational training.

In **Cameroon**, a refugee eligibility committee was not constituted in 2001 as expected. The country hosted 41,186 refugees of whom UNHCR assisted 3,471 who were mainly from Burundi, DRC, the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. There were 600 arrivals from CAR. UNHCR provided scholarships for 83 refugee students. A national NGO implemented 36 income-generation projects. UNHCR's organised repatriation of Chadian refugees was completed in early 2001. 700 DRC refugees of Tutsi origin, who had been evacuated to Cameroon from the DRC, were resettled to third countries.

In the **Central African Republic**, 2,000 Chadian refugees were assisted to repatriate from Boubou camp. UNHCR continued to provide health and education assistance to long-staying Sudanese refugees. Programmes were aimed at encouraging self-sufficiency and emphasised agricultural activities and cost-sharing for medical services. UNHCR continued to provide 2,400 Congolese refugees in Molangue camp with legal assistance, food, medical assistance, water and education. Each refugee family received 0.12 ha of arable land from the local authorities as well as tools and seeds. A few of the 11,000 strong urban refugee population benefited from limited assistance in the sectors of shelter, health, transport and vocational training; 17 refugees were resettled to third countries.

In **Chad**, UNHCR's main activities were linked to the reintegration of 5,700 Chadians who returned from Cameroon and CAR. In addition to a five-month assistance package, they benefited from education, water, agriculture and health services. In Chad, UNHCR assisted 12,950 refugees, mainly from CAR, DRC and Sudan. Local integration programmes in support of the 15,000 Sudanese refugees benefited 87 agricultural groups with 2,610 members. They harvested 4,146 tonnes of agricultural produce on 4,560 ha of land. The most vulnerable of the urban refugees received domestic items and limited subsidies; 81 persons received small sums of start-up capital for income-generating activities.

**Gabon** was host to 15,587 refugees in 2001, mostly from RoC, all beneficiaries of UNHCR assistance who were recognised under the 1969 OAU Convention refugee definition. The newly formed National Commission for Refugees conducted its first refugee status determination activities for individual asylum-seekers. Of ninety cases examined, five were recognised. The Commission began issuing identity cards to refugees and asylum-seekers in Libreville and its environs and, when necessary, intervened on their behalf (with UNHCR) before security forces and courts of law. UNHCR provided health care and vocational training. 1,848 students received primary and secondary education. Market gardening proved profitable in rural areas (refugees received tools and tubers).

The **Gambia** was host to 8,133 refugees in 2001, of whom UNHCR assisted 1,430. They were mainly from Sierra Leone and the Casamance region of Senegal. Urban refugees account for 80 per cent of the population. UNHCR provides medical and family assistance as well as supplementary food for children under five, single and pregnant women, lactating mothers, the disabled, female heads of households and the elderly (60 years and above). Following clashes in the Casamance region in mid-year, 6,000 refugees, mainly women and children below the age of three, fled from Senegal into border villages in Gambia. The majority returned to their places of origin when peace returned; 1,700 remain, in some 40 villages.

In **Ghana** the dissolution of the refugee board in October 2000 and the absence of a formal mechanism for screening new arrivals created a backlog of asylum applications in transit centres and camps. At year's end, 11,792 refugees were assisted by UNHCR. Sierra Leonean refugees benefited from multi-sectoral assistance with the emphasis on self-reliance. However, refugees were unenthusiastic about taking up viable income-generating activities for fear of subsequently being excluded from resettlement opportunities.

In **Guinea-Bissau** a registration exercise in border areas confirmed population figures of 7,332 Senegalese (Casamance) refugees and 318 Sierra Leonean asylum-seekers. They did not receive UNHCR assistance as they had integrated locally. The exception is Jolmete camp, where 519 Senegalese

refugees received community-based assistance provided through a single international NGO and local authorities. An ad-hoc National Commission was established in 2001, to carry out refugee status determination in future.

**Mali** hosted 8,439 refugees and asylum-seekers of whom 2,433 were assisted by UNHCR. Most refugees in Mali were from Mauritania and did not receive UNHCR assistance. Urban refugees from different countries of the sub-region receive international protection and basic humanitarian assistance. Of 127 asylum applications submitted (mainly by Sierra Leoneans and Liberians) 27 were approved by the National Commission for Refugees.

**Niger** hosted some 554 refugees of whom 41 were assisted by UNHCR. Community-based assistance activities in support of 3,284 Niger returnees were terminated, as the population was now largely self-reliant.

**Nigeria** had a refugee population of 7,200 of whom 4,200 were assisted by UNHCR. The refugees, mainly from Liberia and Sierra Leone, resided in Oru camp, some 120 km west of Lagos. Basic healthcare services were provided to both camp-based and urban refugees. The emphasis in 2001 was on imparting skills and promoting activity that will enable refugees to achieve a measure of self-reliance. Small-scale farming was encouraged through additional clearing of farmland, and tools and seedlings were provided to refugees; some refugees are running fish farms. UNHCR collaborated with the Government to provide primary education for 266 children. Over 162 refugees were assisted to resettle to third countries.

In **Senegal**, which hosts 20,733 refugees, UNHCR continued to identify durable solutions for Mauritanian refugees and to monitor the refugee situation in Guinea Bissau. 869 new cases of asylum seekers were registered. 76, mostly Sierra Leonean, Mauritanian and Rwandese refugees, were resettled to third countries. 17 refugees from Sierra Leone and one refugee from Chad opted for voluntary repatriation. Although relations between Senegal and Mauritania improved significantly, the issue of Mauritanian refugees remains politically sensitive. The National Committee for eligibility

met regularly. 1,500 refugees from Mauritania have expressed their wishes for naturalisation. Vulnerable urban refugees continued to be provided with humanitarian assistance and international protection. Many female refugee groups were assisted to gain more income to better meet basic needs for their families.

**Togo** hosted 12,223 refugees, of whom 737 received material assistance, including primary education for 142 children. 11,208 refugees from Ghana live in agricultural areas in the north of Togo where they are locally integrated. Although Togo has adopted a National Law on refugee status, it has not yet constituted a National Committee for eligibility.

## Funding

Overall, UNHCR helped 36,871 refugees in West and Central Africa to repatriate voluntarily to their countries of origin and helped 2,537 to resettle to third countries. UNHCR's programme for the remaining refugees suffers from the exigencies of the working environment: poor socio-economic conditions and non-existent infrastructure. If the costs of logistics, communications and administration rise, while financial resources diminish, then activities of undisputed benefit to the well-being of refugees must be cut back accordingly. Thus, healthcare, community services, education, micro projects, housing subsidies and local integration activities were maintained, but only within the limits of available funding.

Voluntary Contributions – Restricted (USD)					
Donor	Earmarking <sup>1</sup>	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds		Supplementary Programme Budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
Action Réfugiés (FRA)	West and Central Africa	59	59	0	0
Belgium	West and Central Africa	450,715	450,715	0	0
Canada	Guinea	997,793	997,793	0	0
	West and Central Africa	0	0	132,450	132,450
Denmark	West and Central Africa	3,595,399	3,595,399	0	0
España con ACNUR (SPA)	Liberia	173,116	0	0	0
European Commission	Guinea	2,742,219	2,671,415	0	0
	Liberia	16,291	0	0	0
	Sierra Leone	0	0	1,101,928	1,101,928
Finland	Guinea	451,713	451,713	0	0
	Sierra Leone	301,142	301,142	0	0
	West and Central Africa	305,796	305,796	0	0
France	Guinea	420,356	420,356	0	0
	West and Central Africa	335,680	335,680	0	0
Germany	Guinea	246,531	246,531	0	0
	Liberia	234,969	234,969	0	0
	Niger	104,661	104,661	0	0
	Sierra Leone	0	0	972,462	972,462
Ireland	Sierra Leone	0	0	336,802	336,802
Italy	Guinea	231,454	231,454	0	0
	Sierra Leone	0	0	350,000	0
Japan	Central African Republic	500,000	500,000	0	0
	Chad	300,000	300,000	0	0
	Cameroon	100,000	100,000	0	0
	Gabon	100,000	100,000	0	0
	Gambia	100,000	100,000	0	0
	Ghana	200,000	200,000	0	0
	Guinea	5,000,000	5,000,000	0	0
	Côte d'Ivoire	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0
	Liberia	1,700,000	1,700,000	0	0
	Senegal	200,000	200,000	0	0
	Sierra Leone	500,000	500,000	1,800,000	1,800,000
Luxembourg	Guinea	212,419	212,419	0	0
Netherlands	Sierra Leone	0	0	1,003,049	1,003,049
Norway	Sierra Leone	559,284	559,284	1,005,489	1,005,489
Private Donors Italy	Guinea	1,244	1,244	0	0
	Sierra Leone	0	0	1,673	1,673
Private Donors Switzerland	Guinea	3,372	3,372	0	0
Private Donors United Arab Emirates	West and Central Africa	5,023	5,023	0	0
Roe Foundation (USA)	Sierra Leone	0	0	15,000	15,000
Sokka Gakkai Youth Peac. & Conf. (JPN)	Côte d'Ivoire	400,000	400,000	0	0
South Africa	Guinea	50,093	50,093	0	0
Stichting Vluchteling (NET)	Sierra Leone	0	0	115,000	115,000
Sweden	West and Central Africa	2,916,666	2,916,666	3,333,334	3,333,334
Switzerland	Sierra Leone	0	0	872,093	872,093

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Voluntary Contributions - Restricted (USD)						
Donor	Earmarking <sup>1</sup>	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds		Supplementary Programme Budget		
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution	
UK for UNHCR (GBR)	Sierra Leone	0	0	96	96	
United Kingdom	Liberia	760,294	760,294	0	0	
	West and Central Africa	0	0	2,205,882	2,205,882	
United States of America	Central African Republic	700,000	700,000	0	0	
	Chad	200,000	200,000	0	0	
	Gabon	320,000	320,000	0	0	
	Ghana	100,000	100,000	0	0	
	Guinea	8,904,182	8,904,182	0	0	
	Côte d'Ivoire	930,000	930,000	0	0	
	Liberia	1,580,000	1,580,000	0	0	
	Nigeria	110,000	110,000	0	0	
	Senegal	130,000	130,000	0	0	
	Sierra Leone	220,000	220,000	4,234,000	4,234,000	
	USA for UNHCR (USA)	Guinea	162,600	162,600	0	0
		Sierra Leone	0	0	175,000	175,000
<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>38,573,071</b>	<b>38,312,860</b>	<b>17,654,258</b>	<b>17,304,258</b>	

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

<sup>2</sup> Total funds available for obligation in the region also included unrestricted voluntary contributions, lightly restricted contributions, opening balances and adjustments.

Budget and Expenditure (USD)						
Country	Revised Budget			Expenditure		
	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total
Benin	699,194	0	699,194	695,464	0	695,464
Burkina Faso	334,066	0	334,066	321,526	0	321,526
Cameroon	946,925	0	946,925	940,761	0	940,761
Central African Republic	3,160,359	0	3,160,359	2,800,508	0	2,800,508
Chad	1,867,451	0	1,867,451	1,682,505	0	1,682,505
Côte d'Ivoire	5,385,853	0	5,385,853	5,105,191	0	5,105,191
Gabon	2,929,156	0	2,929,156	2,722,341	0	2,722,341
Gambia	582,584	0	582,584	554,665	0	554,665
Ghana	1,009,373	0	1,009,373	916,339	0	916,339
Guinea	34,185,343	2,500,000	36,685,343	33,611,349	2,003,818	35,615,167
Liberia	7,634,110	0	7,634,110	6,772,116	0	6,772,116
Mali	342,869	0	342,869	295,235	0	295,235
Niger	333,896	0	333,896	324,639	0	324,639
Nigeria	908,119	0	908,119	866,476	0	866,476
Senegal	1,337,397	0	1,337,397	1,318,772	0	1,318,772
Sierra Leone	2,828,992	16,490,339	19,319,331	2,808,909	16,408,210	19,217,119
Togo	302,169	0	302,169	227,530	0	227,530
Regional Office (Côte d'Ivoire)	4,176,303	0	4,176,303	4,142,970	0	4,142,970
Regional Projects <sup>1</sup>	749,790	0	749,790	679,790	0	679,790
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69,713,949</b>	<b>18,990,339</b>	<b>88,704,288</b>	<b>66,787,086</b>	<b>18,412,028</b>	<b>85,199,114</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes voluntary repatriation and resettlement assistance for urban refugees, as well as scholarships for refugee students in West African countries (Annual Programme Budget).