

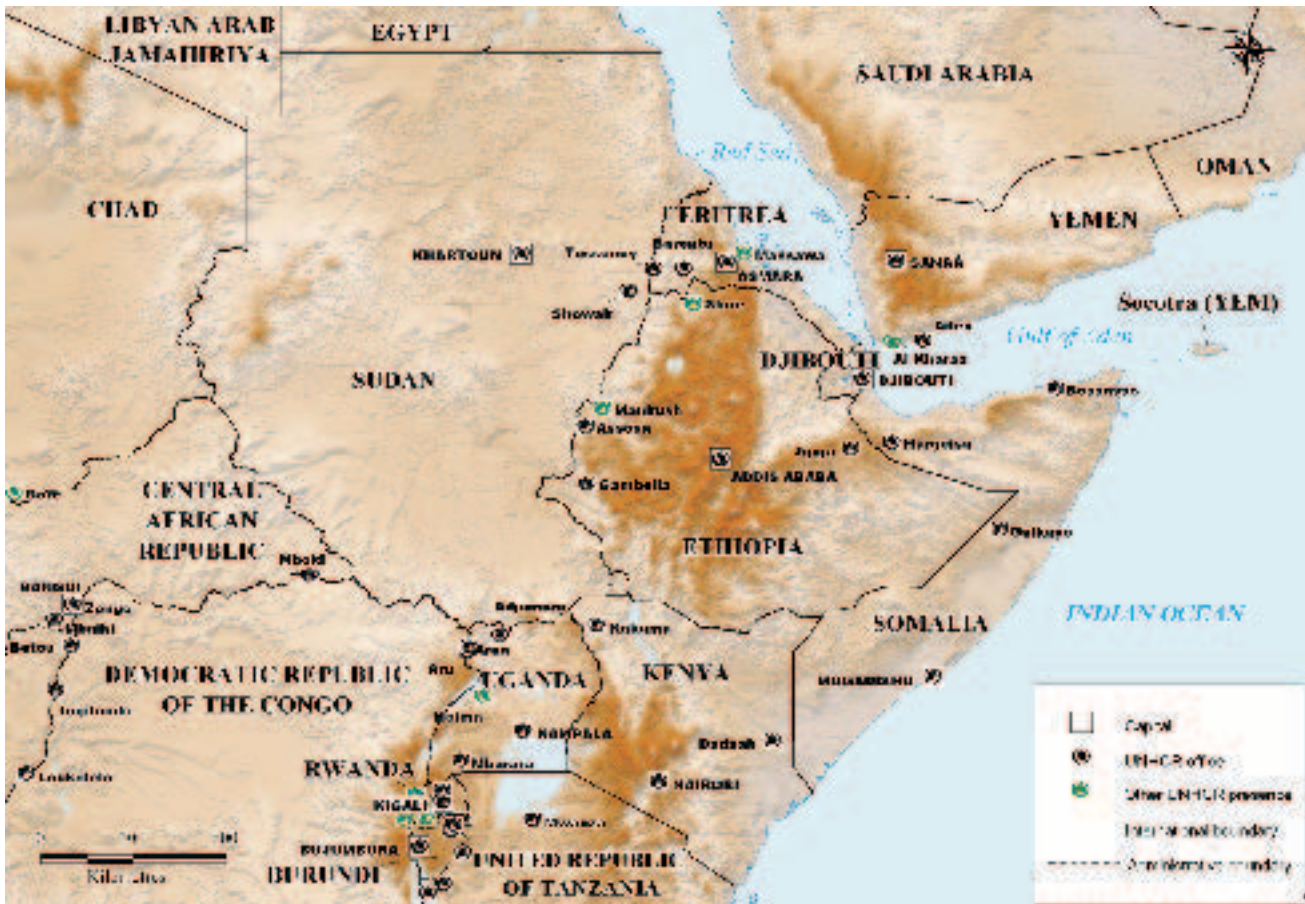
East and Horn of Africa

Recent developments

In 2003, the Sudan peace process began to bear fruit. The Machakos Agreement (Kenya) on the cessation of hostilities between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) is expected to be finalised with a lasting peace agreement. As a consequence, UNHCR anticipates that during 2004 at least 110,000 refugees will be assisted to repatriate (out of an estimated 572,000 presently hosted in neighbouring countries). In view of this encouraging development, UNHCR is preparing an operational plan, in close collaboration with UN agencies and other partners, for the voluntary repatriation of southern Sudanese.

Countries in the region continued to enjoy a degree of political stability. It was evident that greater efforts were being made to manage conflicts through dialogue and broad consultations. There was justified applause for the political breakthrough between Eritrea and Ethiopia (invoking the Algiers Peace Accord). However, there have been recent reports that the Ethiopian Government is reluctant to implement the agreed demarcation of the boundary and this has raised concern within the international community.

Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Somalia
Sudan
Uganda



The continuation of the Somali National Reconciliation Conference in Kenya, under the auspices of IGAD, is another encouraging development, though the current obstacles to peace are many and complex. It is hoped that the negotiations will result in a Peace Agreement that will lead to a comprehensive peace settlement, and thus facilitate the return of thousands of refugees to Southern Somalia. In the meantime, the voluntary repatriation to Northwest Somalia ("Somaliland") and Northeast Somalia ("Puntland") continues.

Another political development, which had a direct impact on humanitarian interventions, was the recent fighting in Bunia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, that resulted in an influx of some 10,000 new refugees into Uganda. Fortunately, the situation stabilised after the arrival of French-led EU Forces who were later replaced by a United Nations peacekeeping force in September 2003. Reports from Uganda indicate that the refugees are reluctant to move into settlements because they wish to return to their places of origin.

In July 2003, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda to promote the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees from Uganda to Rwanda. The plan foresees the repatriation of some 25,000 refugees in 2004.

Although the region is witnessing considerable progress in the promotion and implementation of durable solutions, refugee safety unfortunately remains a concern in certain areas. During 2003, in Kakuma, Kenya and in western Ethiopia, armed conflict resulted in the loss of many refugee lives. In Uganda, rebel attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army temporarily displaced thousands of refugees. Natural disasters, such as floods in Kakuma, destroyed shelters and led to the displacement of 16,000 refugees. These situations were to an extent aggravated by the lack of financial resources, which resulted in the cancellation of some activities for refugees. These cancellations undoubtedly restricted the reach of UNHCR's mandate.

Lack of food for general distribution in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti led to the establishment of supplementary feeding for the most vulnerable groups. Several breakdowns in the food pipeline resulted in the delay of repatriation from Djibouti to Somaliland.

A recent decision by the Government of Djibouti to deal with illegal migrants resulted in the establishment of a temporary transit centre, which currently accommodates roughly 7,000 people. In due course UNHCR and the National Eligibility Committee (NEC) will undertake individual refugee status determination (RSD) to screen those of concern to UNHCR.

One of the most tragic events in the region was the murder in Boroma, Somalia, of the 2003 Nansen Award winner, Dr. Annalena Tonelli on 5 October 2003. She was an Italian humanitarian worker who for more than three decades had dedicated her life to helping Somalis. Her death was a shock to all humanitarian agencies and provoked a widespread sense of outrage among the Somali population. The authorities moved with great alacrity to bring to justice those responsible for the killing.

Strategic objectives

UNHCR, in collaboration with other UN agencies, will implement plans for the repatriation of Sudanese refugees. UNHCR will also continue to support the implementation of the accords covering the Somali and Sudanese situations.

The Office will intensify its efforts to develop exit strategies. These efforts will bring together other UN agencies and

development agencies, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, through the Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) and Development through Local Integration (DLI) initiatives. UNHCR will actively pursue durable solutions and work with the Governments in the formulation of plans of action for post-conflict recovery.

UNHCR has engaged with the private sector to strengthen the education programme in the region. Building upon the results of the Comparative Study of Education for Refugee Girls which was undertaken in October 2002, a pilot project was initiated in Kenya to use sports as a tool to promote girls' integration in education.

UNHCR will intensify its training and discussions with governments, human rights groups and the refugees on various issues related to their well-being. Other priority areas will include: HIV/AIDS initiatives; the combating of practices harmful to women and children; and promoting access to education, including peace education. It is expected that these efforts will improve the quality of



Uganda: Voluntary repatriation – The departure of refugees on their way to their native land, from Kiryandongo, by truck. UNHCR / J. Hessemann

international protection and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the refugees. Other activities will include the following:

- finalisation of the individual refugee status determination of urban refugees in Sudan and Djibouti;
- consolidation of camps in Eastern Ethiopia, Djibouti and Sudan;
- continuation of the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Ethiopia and Djibouti to “Somaliland”;
- strengthening collaborative partnerships with developmental agencies, to bridge the gap between the short-term and longer-term reintegration needs of the returnees, both in Eritrea and “Somaliland”;
- spearhead rehabilitation of refugee-affected areas, in all countries of the region;
- work closely with implementing partners, host countries, governments and the United Nations Country Teams to improve safety and security in refugee camps and settlements;
- co-ordinate the preparations for possible voluntary repatriation of more than 500,000 Sudanese refugees;
- co-operate in co-ordinated efforts to deliver assistance to needy beneficiaries (this will entail participation in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Appeals process).

Operations

UNHCR’s operations in **Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan** and **Uganda** are described in separate chapters.

Djibouti

As in the other countries in the region, UNHCR’s operations in 2004 will focus on finding durable solutions for refugees. The voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees to “Somaliland” will continue. It is anticipated that some 5,000 will opt to voluntarily repatriate during the course of the year. Resettlement of refugees to third countries will also be pursued. Individual RSD of urban refugees will be undertaken in collaboration with the National Eligibility Committee.

Budget (USD)	
Country	Annual Programme
Regional Technical Support Group (Nairobi)	4,037,454
Djibouti	3,988,661
Eritrea	14,591,740
Ethiopia	16,960,794
Kenya	27,848,247
Somalia	5,749,223
Sudan	12,250,933
Uganda	15,053,601
Total	100,480,653