

Ghana

Main objectives

- Support the Government of the Republic of Ghana to maintain a positive international protection regime.
- Promote the repatriation of Liberian refugees.
- Work with the Government and other partners to ensure protection and assistance for more than 62,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Ghana.
- Stabilize the emergency operation set up in response to the influx in 2005 of some 15,500 Togolese refugees in the Volta Region.
- Seek to safeguard the rights of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR through advocacy and related initiatives.
- Maintain and improve UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response capacity, in the context of a joint Government of Ghana/UN inter-agency approach to contingency planning.



Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
Liberia (refugees)	39,200	28,200
Togo (refugees)	16,200	18,000
Togo (asylum-seekers)	3,550	1,050
Other asylum-seekers	3,250	3,100
Other refugees	360	640
Total	62,560	50,990

Total requirements: USD 8,531,345

Working environment

Recent developments

Ghana has remained at the forefront of regional and international initiatives to find political solutions to the crises in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, all of which have threatened stability in the subregion.

The refugee protection regime in Ghana has been substantially reinvigorated by enhanced procedures for refugee status determination and other

protection activities. UNHCR has collaborated with the Ghana Refugee Board to initiate structured refugee eligibility work and has conducted a range of training activities for Government officials. Nevertheless, vital support from the Office will still be needed until sufficiently effective asylum procedures are in place, so that all responsibilities for status determination can be transferred to the Government of Ghana.

Constraints

The anticipated voluntary repatriation of about 11,000 Liberian refugees in 2006 is likely to result in a demographic shift, whereby the remaining Liberian refugee population in Ghana will include disproportionate numbers of women, children and elderly people. Many of them have been repeatedly displaced, and are thus more likely to be traumatized, presenting a complex spectrum of special needs. It is anticipated that gaps will persist in key sectors at the Buduburam refugee settlement, affecting those with the most acute needs. These difficulties are further aggravated by problems related to infrastructure, mainly due to the non-availability of major services in previous years, when UNHCR had no assistance programme for refugees in Ghana.

In the Volta Region, a lack of local NGOs reduces the scope of UNHCR's work on behalf of Togolese refugees. The Office is facing complex logistical, communication and human resource challenges when trying to obtain access to refugees living in host communities in 114 locations.

Strategy

UNHCR's strategy for 2006 was designed in partnership with the Government, implementing and operational partners, donors and refugees. The strategy is built around the High Commissioner's Strategic Objectives, the *Agenda for Protection*, the UNHCR Regional Objectives for the Africa Region, the High Commissioner's Commitments to Refugee Women and the Millennium Development Goals. Covering both voluntary repatriation and local integration opportunities for Liberian refugees, it will place special emphasis on

sustainability of initiatives, helping host communities at the same time as fostering self-reliance for refugees, empowerment of refugee communities, and gender equality. A structured and significant phasing down of programme activities is anticipated for 2006-2007. Political uncertainty in neighbouring countries giving rise to concerns of population outflows to Ghana warrants emergency preparedness. UNHCR has taken the lead in the development of regularly updated inter-agency contingency plans for the reception of any new refugee influxes.

Protection and solutions

UNHCR continues to place considerable emphasis on strengthening the protection regime in the country, through better implementation of the asylum law and furthering the goals of the *Agenda for Protection*. Key objectives for 2006 include the improvement of asylum procedures; ensuring better and continuous registration and documentation of refugees and asylum-seekers; improving the physical safety of refugees; empowering the refugees to meet their own protection needs; and meeting the special protection needs of refugee women and children. In 2006, UNHCR's work with the Ghana Refugee Board and local NGOs will enhance their ability to provide protection and other services on a long-term basis.

UNHCR has empowered the refugee communities to meet their own physical protection needs through Neighbourhood Watch Team arrangements, working in close cooperation with the police force. Measures to address the special protection needs of refugee women and children involve an emphasis on prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among refugees. An experienced local NGO will continue to be engaged to provide counselling and assistance to SGBV survivors and conduct campaigns to raise awareness and prevent further violence against refugee children and women. Legal, medical, material and psychosocial support is made available for SGBV survivors and their families.

The presence of Togolese refugees, hosted by local communities, has put considerable pressure on local resources and services, including shelter,

water, sanitation, and food. Togolese refugees in Ghana have not thus far expressed a wish to return home, and UNHCR will continue to provide basic assistance to both refugees and host communities in 2006.

In mid-2005, there were more than 4,000 urban refugees, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sudan, and Togo. They have varying protection needs due to their political affiliations, experiences of past persecution and family backgrounds. Among them are refugees from settlements who come to Accra pending voluntary repatriation or resettlement, individuals with special medical needs, as well as refugees who have attained some level of self-sufficiency in the urban areas but who require protection interventions. Some are accommodated and assisted in the UNHCR transit centre in Accra.

The restoration of peace in Liberia brings the promise of durable solutions for many Liberian refugees. Liberian refugees will be assisted to repatriate by air or by sea within the legal and operational framework of the Tripartite Repatriation Agreement with the Governments of Ghana and Liberia.

UNHCR's proposed activities are geared towards reducing activities in a number of operational areas following the repatriation operation. However, this phase-down will be balanced by intensive promotion of self-reliance and local integration for those who do not opt for repatriation. The Office will continue to collaborate with donors and other partners to increase development assistance for refugees and strengthen the framework for the process of local integration, particularly for Liberian refugees remaining in Buduburam. UNHCR will also encourage relevant partners to implement selected services with their own resources or through other funding arrangements.

Assistance

While a good number of refugee families have achieved a reasonable level of self-sufficiency, many have not been able to rebuild their lives. Consequently, the strategy has been directed

towards community support, rather than a resumption of assistance. At the same time, the many special needs of the population are increasingly being addressed through targeted protection and assistance interventions, such as the joint WFP/UNHCR feeding programme for vulnerable refugees in Ghana.

In anticipation of substantial voluntary repatriation movements in 2006, efforts will be intensified to help prepare refugees for a successful life in their home country, including skills training, particularly for women and youth, as well as good primary education for children. A programme of vocational training introduced in 2004 will continue to develop the skills of refugees in preparation for repatriation to Liberia or local integration in Ghana. Refugees will receive training in information technology, masonry, carpentry/joinery and road construction.

Krisan settlement, located in the Western Region, about 300 km from Accra, houses more than 2,000 refugees of mixed origin (from Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo). Although self-sustaining agricultural activities are limited, UNHCR will continue to identify opportunities for self-reliance and local integration as well as appropriate durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and resettlement. In the meantime, rations will continue to be provided, as well as community-based assistance in the sectors of health, sanitation and education. At the time of writing, a collaborative initiative with FAO and UNIDO was being pursued to provide training and support to refugees and local communities in and around the settlements. If this is successful, refugees will gain various means to earn a modest income, and thereby facilitate their local integration.

Desired impact

The Ghana programme is designed to facilitate the most appropriate durable solutions for refugees and to increase their self-reliance wherever possible. A significant consolidation of operations in the camps is anticipated for 2006 and 2007, through comprehensive durable solutions and capacity-building efforts. It is assumed that the situation in Liberia will prove conducive to the



Togolese refugees arriving in Ghana. UNHCR / D. Kamphuis

voluntary repatriation of a substantial proportion of the population and that subregional developments will serve to preclude population flows into Ghana. Should further influxes occur, however, UNHCR will have to adopt a phased approach, and a temporary increase in resources will be required for 2006 to ensure that sustainable durable solutions are achieved.

The Ghana Refugee Board will assume greater responsibility for the determination of asylum applications and the Ghana Immigration Service will become fully operational. It will thus handle the registration of asylum-seekers, registration and the logistics of departure arrangements during voluntary repatriation of refugees, and facilitation of local integration through documentation such as work permits or long-term residency permits.

UNHCR's strategy for Togolese refugees will play a role in the development of local communities in the Volta Region. Shelter construction and the improvement of other public goods and services are being designed to be of lasting benefit to the Ghanaian host communities, even after the departure of the Togolese refugees. Developing the infrastructure of these refugee-hosting communities will in effect make available an

immediate response mechanism in the event of new influxes into Ghana.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR will operate with 39 staff (six internationals and 33 nationals). The UNHCR Representation, based in Accra, is responsible for all aspects of the operation. A field office in Takoradi caters to the needs associated with the Kisan refugee settlement and the Western Region of Ghana, while a field office in Ho, the capital of the Volta Region, has been opened to help the recently arrived Togolese refugees.

The Regional Support Hub, though based in Accra, is an independent unit with regional responsibilities, as described in the regional overview chapter. However, the costs of the Hub are budgeted within the Ghana programme. The Hub consists of 33 staff (14 internationals, three JPOs and 16 nationals).

Coordination

Active partnerships are maintained with a range of other UN agencies, IOM, the IMF, the World Bank, NGOs, as well as with the Government of Ghana at national, regional and local levels. UNHCR's programmes are planned and carried out in close cooperation with the Government of Ghana, both through the Ghana Refugee Board and various line ministries. UNHCR participates in UN inter-agency forums, including the Task Force on Contingency Planning and those connected with the Millennium Development Goals. UNHCR and WFP will continue to implement a joint feeding programme targeting the most vulnerable people living in Buduburam refugee settlement.

Offices

Accra

Ho
Takoradi

Partners

Government agency

Ghana Refugee Board, Ministry of the Interior

NGOs

Assemblies of God Relief and Development Service
Christian Council of Ghana
Ghana Red Cross Society
National Catholic Secretariat
Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment

Others

FAO
UNFPA
UNICEF
UNIDO
UNV
WFP
WHO

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,487,787
Community services	158,601
Crop production	25,000
Domestic needs	138,633
Education	358,145
Food	116,934
Health	213,353
Income generation	42,035
Legal assistance	175,042
Operational support (to agencies)	267,174
Sanitation	29,846
Shelter/other infrastructure	50,105
Transport/logistics	1,613,427
Water	7,794
Total operations	4,683,876
Programme support ¹	3,847,469
Total	8,531,345

¹ Includes the budget of the Regional Support Hub in Accra.