



Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cap Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

West Africa

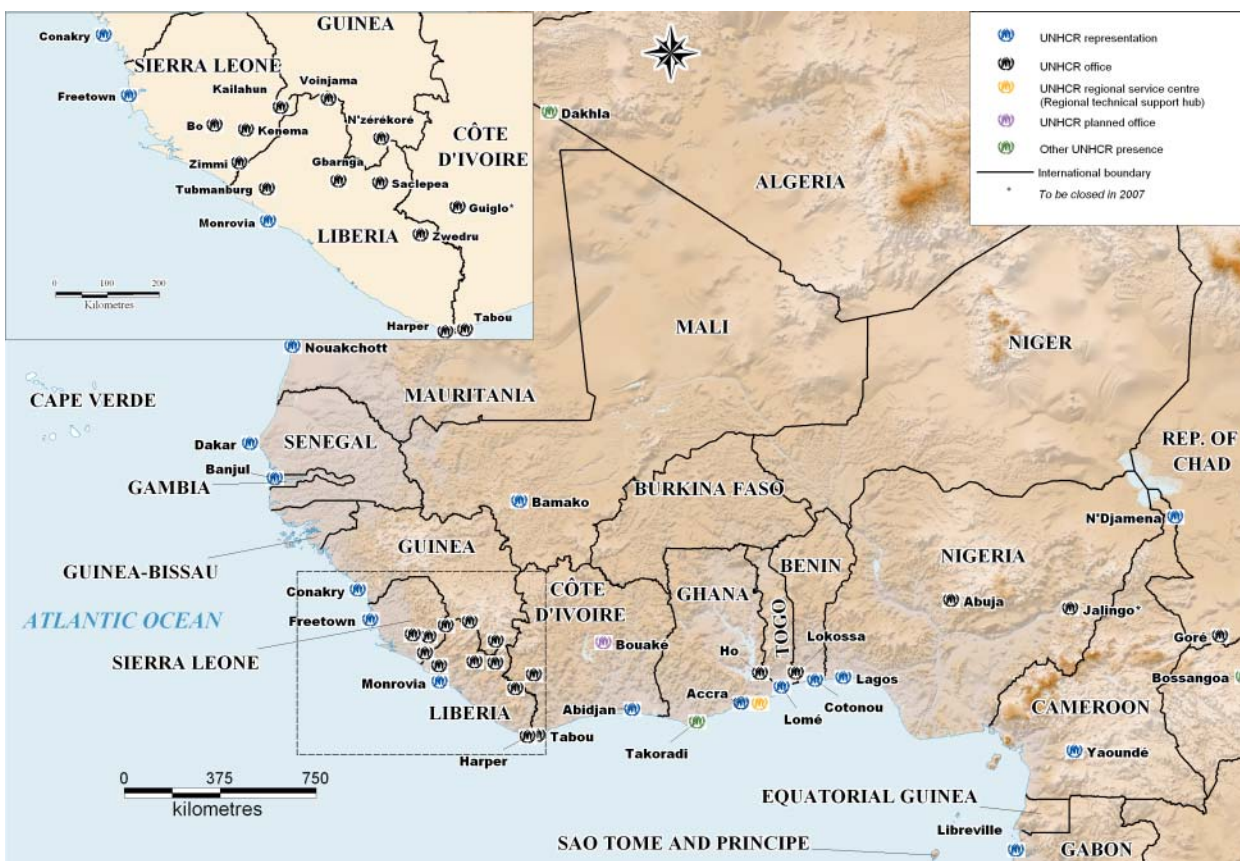
Working environment

The general situation in West Africa has shown improvement but still presents some risks, particularly during the run-up to presidential elections in 2007 in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal.

Mixed migratory movements are common in West Africa. It is mainly a region of origin and/or transit and, to a lesser extent, of destination. UNHCR will continue to develop responses which combine a coherent approach to the management of migration with the effective protection of refugees. Voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration remain the main solutions for refugees throughout the region.

At the time of writing the situation in Côte d'Ivoire was of particular concern. In January 2006 all activities in the western part of the country had to be suspended, and humanitarian staff and United Nations peacekeepers were evacuated after being targeted by armed gangs. The plight of 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the urban and rural areas of Abidjan, Daloa, Duékoué, Toulepleu and Yamoussoukro is a major concern. As the cluster lead for protection since March 2006, UNHCR, in coordination with its partners, has designed a programme to respond to the protection needs of IDPs throughout the country.

Another serious concern is that the identification process in the country, which aims to establish citizenship for some 3.5 million undocumented people, may create statelessness.



Following the successful completion of the first democratic elections in Liberia, UNHCR has begun promoting repatriation for Liberian refugees. Almost all of the internally displaced Liberians have now returned to their places of origin. In addition, by mid-September 2006 more than 80,000 Liberian refugees had been assisted to return home and an estimated 150,000 Liberian refugees — mostly unregistered — had returned spontaneously to their places of origin.

The political situation in Sierra Leone appears stable, though the country continues to face the challenges of post-conflict recovery.

The repatriation of 10,000 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon was completed in 2006 following the signing of a tripartite agreement in April 2005 between UNHCR and the two Governments.

Following the political crisis in Togo in 2005 which caused an outflow of more than 40,000 refugees to Benin and Ghana, as well as the internal displacement of some 10,000 people, a number of positive developments have taken place. The prospects for the repatriation of refugees from neighbouring countries are improving — though many are still reluctant to return. At the same time, a considerable number of Togolese refugees have returned spontaneously. The total number of Togolese refugees in Benin and Ghana now stands at 14,000.

Due to the growing tensions in Chad and the Central African Republic, contingency plans have been updated in cooperation with local authorities and the UN Country Team in Cameroon. Approximately 30,000 refugees

belonging to the Bororo ethnic group have arrived in Cameroon from the north-western part of the Central African Republic.

The situation in Guinea remains precarious. The country is plagued by a deterioration of socio-economic conditions and uncertainties relating to the political transition.

Armed confrontations in March and April 2006 on Guinea Bissau's border with Senegal led to the forced displacement of some 10,000 people within Guinea Bissau and some 2,500 into Senegal. The Senegalese army has increased its activities in the south-eastern Casamance region of the country since mid-August 2006, resulting in more fighting and displacement. More than 6,000 refugees have fled to the Gambia from the Casamance region. The present situation represents a small but acute humanitarian crisis in the Gambia and UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are mounting an emergency response.

Strategy

One of UNHCR's main objectives at the regional level is to continue to strengthen its partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The latter has been monitoring the political and security situation in countries at war or in post-conflict recovery and intervening where appropriate.

The promotion of voluntary repatriation will remain a priority for UNHCR. In 2007, it is expected that some



Liberia: Returning refugees rest at Kailahun way station, where they are provided with food and drink. They usually will stay overnight and continue the journey home the next morning. UNHCR / E. Compte Verdaguer

56,000 Liberian refugees will be assisted to return and reintegrate. Other durable solutions will be actively pursued, among them local integration and resettlement for individual refugees. UNHCR's regional strategy will ensure that, where possible, refugee camps and their facilities are rehabilitated for use by local communities and handed over to local authorities upon the departure of refugees.

In 2007, gender and age will be taken into consideration when designing self-reliance and income generation projects for refugees. Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence will remain a high priority, and training workshops will be organized to raise awareness of the issue. UNHCR will help host governments assume primary responsibility for refugee protection and will advocate for better refugee legislation.

HIV/AIDS interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings in West Africa have focused on prevention. In 2007, UNHCR and its partners plan to expand programmes for voluntary testing and counselling, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and greater access to anti-retroviral drugs.

In view of the fragile socio-economic and political situation in the region, UNHCR will review and update contingency plans to strengthen its emergency response capacity. In this context, UNHCR will maintain a regional stockpile of non-food items in Accra. With regard to IDPs, UNHCR will continue to participate in the inter-agency collaborative approach in the subregion,

and is the lead agency for protection, camp management and emergency shelter.

Constraints

Many Liberian refugees are reluctant to return home. At the same time, there is a risk of worsening instability in several countries in the region, disrupting operations. The extremely poor condition of many of the major repatriation routes is a major constraint; in addition to causing delays this increases threats to security.

Lack of funding could seriously hamper the implementation of self-reliance projects for refugees and returnees. Though economic recovery programmes are in place in post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia, the working environment still remains difficult. The main challenge for UNHCR is mobilizing development actors such as UNDP, as well as donors, to take on the work of economic and environmental recovery in a timely manner.

Operations

Operations in the region cover 16 countries. Country programmes in **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Ghana**, **Guinea**, **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone** are described in separate chapters.

In 2007, UNHCR's regional representation in **Benin** will continue to assist and protect some 15,000 refugees

mainly from Togo, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Côte d'Ivoire, and 1,300 asylum-seekers in Benin, **Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo**. Those who are unable or unwilling to return will be helped to integrate locally.

The Office will mainly focus on humanitarian assistance and international protection for the 8,100 Togolese refugees. The protection capacity of governments will be reinforced through training workshops. The voluntary repatriation programme will continue. At the same time, vocational training and income generation projects, especially those targeting female refugees, will be given priority. UNHCR will also help its implementing partners increase their intervention capacity.

According to Togo's National Plan for Return, UNHCR will participate in the establishment of welcome committees and the reconstruction of houses for the most vulnerable returnees. UNHCR will strengthen its presence in Togo and ensure that returning refugees benefit from a package which will enable them to reintegrate in their communities. In collaboration with the Government, UNHCR will increase its protection monitoring activities.

Cameroon is expected to host some 48,500 refugees and 6,000 asylum-seekers in 2007, mainly from Central and West African countries. The Office will continue to help the Government to improve the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees by helping establish a National Eligibility Committee. This panel will eventually assume full responsibility for refugee status determination (RSD). The major effort will continue in order to reduce the backlog of approximately 6,000 asylum claims and put in place an improved registration and identification system for refugees.

Under the repatriation programme which began in 2004, more than 10,000 Nigerian refugees hosted in the Adamaoua and north-west provinces of Cameroon have repatriated to Nigeria in safety and dignity. Assistance to integrate locally will be provided to 2,800 Nigerians who are not willing to repatriate.

Where appropriate, the Office will continue to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of urban refugees and to seek resettlement opportunities for refugees facing protection problems or suffering from serious medical conditions.

In 2007, the Office will extend its protection and assistance to 30,000 refugees from the Central African Republic recently settled in the east and Adamaoua provinces of Cameroon.

Nigeria hosts over 9,000 refugees and approximately 420 asylum-seekers, mainly from Liberia, the DRC, Chad and Sudan. The voluntary repatriation programme for Liberian refugees and assistance to Chadian and Sudanese refugees will continue. For the more than 7,400 Nigerians who have returned from Taraba State

in Cameroon, the Office will pursue a reintegration programme in conjunction with the Government of Nigeria and other UN agencies until December 2007. The Oru camp will be closed, rehabilitated and handed over to the authorities at the end of the year.

Through a strengthened partnership with ECOWAS, UNHCR is playing an active role in addressing issues of forced displacement in the subregion, and will work closely with the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS to develop coherent and more comprehensive approaches to:

- Maintain the civilian character of refugee camps, prevent the circulation of small arms, and encourage regional linkages for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.
- Implement the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security, with a view to addressing the root causes of forced displacement.
- Support capacity-building efforts in emergency preparedness and response.
- Implement the ECOWAS treaty and its Protocol on the free movement, right of residence and establishment of ECOWAS nationals as it pertains to persons of concern to UNHCR.
- Search for sustainable solutions through reintegration programmes and rehabilitate areas affected by forced displacement.

In 2007, UNHCR's regional office in **Senegal**, in collaboration with other humanitarian agencies in the subregion, will continue to strengthen the delivery of protection and assistance to approximately 44,000 refugees and more than 5,000 asylum-seekers in **Guinea Bissau, Mali, the Gambia** and Senegal.

The refugee population in countries covered by the regional office originates from Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal and other countries in West Africa. UNHCR will continue to promote the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees while seeking other durable solutions for refugees from other countries who cannot return home. The Office will continue to negotiate with the Governments of Senegal and Mauritania to resolve the long-standing situation of undocumented Mauritanian refugees in Senegal as well as the eventual organized voluntary repatriation of those wishing to return. Due to the renewed fighting in Senegal, voluntary repatriation for Senegalese refugees in Guinea Bissau and the Gambia has been put on hold and, at the time of writing, UNHCR had decided to maintain its office in Banjul, scheduled for closure at the end of 2006, in 2007.

The **Regional Support Hub for West and Central Africa** will continue to provide support and give technical and policy guidance to UNHCR operations on resettlement, registration, refugee women and children, health and HIV/AIDS.

Budget (USD)

Country	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Benin	1,512,089	1,991,092
Cameroon	2,338,327	2,036,177
Côte d'Ivoire	9,682,813	7,013,640
Gambia ¹	726,099	0
Ghana ²	8,531,345	9,642,754
Guinea	15,413,060	9,559,914
Liberia	39,084,990	32,265,201
Nigeria	3,440,989	2,983,129
Senegal	1,845,745	2,007,213
Sierra Leone	17,281,205	11,971,696
Togo	0	252,774
Regional activities ³	4,044,042	6,253,013
Total	103,900,704	85,976,603

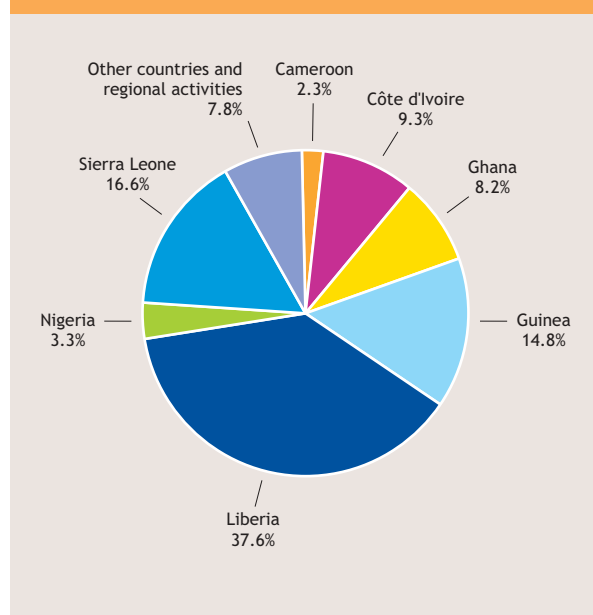
West Africa

¹ A budget for the Gambia was being established at the time of writing in view of the decision to maintain the office in Banjul in 2007.

² Includes the Regional Support Hub in Accra.

³ Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement assistance for urban refugees in Benin and Senegal, as well as assistance to Togolese refugees.

2006 Annual Programme Budget by country



2007 Annual Programme Budget by country

