

Uganda

Main objectives

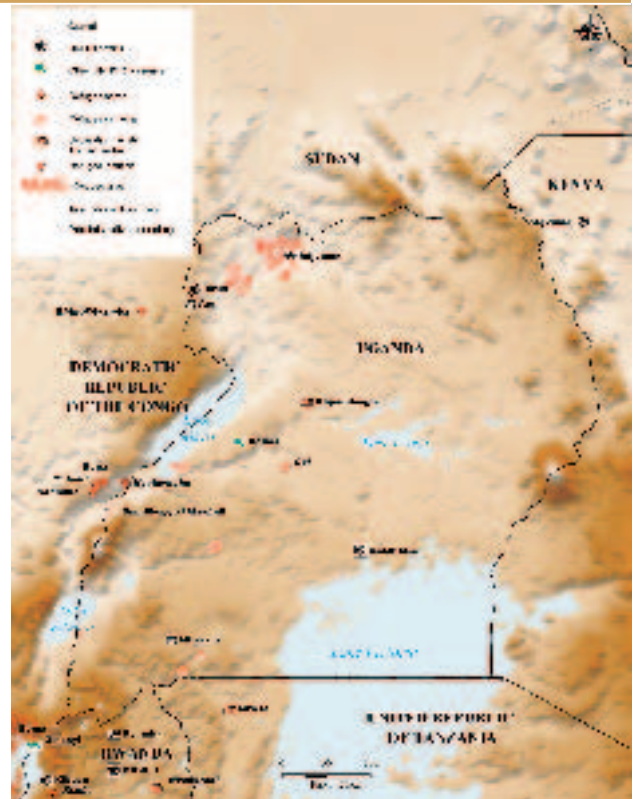
- Provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and pursue durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement for them.
- Continue to promote a self-reliance strategy (SRS) for Sudanese, Congolese and Rwandan refugees, through food production and the integration of services into existing national structures (i.e. health, education, environment, agriculture and community services).
- Promote counselling for urban refugees in Kampala.
- Play a catalytic role in encouraging development agencies and NGOs to incorporate the SRS into their programmes to benefit Ugandan nationals as well as refugees.

Working environment

Recent developments

The President of Uganda announced “Strategic Challenges and Peace” as the slogan for 2003 and urged the rebels to engage in peace talks with the Government. In spite of this, the security situation in northern Uganda remained a cause for concern, particularly in Adjumani, where a large number of refugee settlements are located. Often the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) rebels attacked the refugee settlements and villages on the outskirts of Adjumani town, looting food and taking personal belongings, killing or abducting people, including children, for forced conscription.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), ethnic conflict between the Hema and Lendu tribes forced some 13,000 Congolese asylum-seekers over the border into Nebbi district in Uganda. These asylum-seekers have been reluctant to settle in the designated settlements proposed by the Government and have opted to stay in Nebbi and in areas close to the DRC border, without any humanitarian assistance from the Government or UNHCR. Similarly, the majority of the 11,000 asylum-seekers from DRC in Bundibujyo district are unwilling to relocate to designated refugee settlements in Kyaka II, Kenjojo district.



Arrangements have been made for those willing to relocate to settlements and for those who may change their minds, given the worsening situation in Bundibujyo. In order to ensure the availability of funds to tackle these situations, an emergency appeal was issued in July 2003.

After almost one year in transit, more than 16,000 ex-Acholpii refugees were relocated, in September 2003, to new locations proposed by the Government. However, the relocation of these refugees is an operational and a funding challenge. The sites would require basic infrastructure, for which there are funding constraints. Furthermore, at the time of publication, there had been a disappointing response to the Special Appeal launched in July 2003.

Planning figures

Population	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
Sudan (refugees)	160,700	140,300
DRC (refugees)	32,000	47,000
Rwanda (refugees)	12,000	800
Other refugees	1,500	1,800
Asylum-seekers	590	690
Total	206,790	190,590

Total requirements: USD 15,053,601

In February 2003, the Government moved to offer Universal Primary Education (UPE) to all children (previously available only to a maximum of four children per family). This was in line with its commitment to the Millennium Development Goal of achieving education for all children by 2015.

Constraints

It is very difficult to predict if, and, to what extent unfavourable conditions will hamper crop production. This applies particularly to economic activities in northern Uganda, which are limited to subsistence farming and small-scale trading. A combination of climatic conditions and rebel activities can easily frustrate plans for self-sufficiency. It is nonetheless important to note that some 60 per cent of the refugees in the settlements have attained 100 per cent self-reliance in food.

The security situation in northern Uganda, particularly in Adjumani, where a large number of refugee settlements are located has seriously constrained the delivery of basic services (education, health, water) to refugees.

Early and forced marriages of young girls still take place, despite continued sensitisation efforts. However, these efforts are succeeding in gradually changing attitudes towards girls and women within the refugee community.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

The Government, through its Ministry for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees has maintained a liberal refugee policy. Sudanese and Congolese refugees continue to be recognised as refugees on a *prima facie* basis while other nationals go through individual refugee status determination under the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC). In 2004, the Government and UNHCR will continue to work closely with the REC, intensifying collaboration on providing international protection, and organising training and seminars for the relevant government and law enforcement officials. Resettlement will be facilitated for a limited number of refugees with specific protection problems.

UNHCR will also continue to monitor developments in the refugees' countries of origin to explore any opportunities for voluntary repatriation. The contingency plans that are in place will be updated for 2004.

Sudanese refugees

The presence of Sudanese refugees in Uganda dates back to 1989 (Adjumani and Moyo camps) and 1993 (Arua) when

the majority of the refugees arrived from southern Sudan. Currently, there are 172,300 Sudanese refugees in Uganda (52 per cent male, 48 per cent female, with 57 per cent under the age of 18). Most of these refugees come from Nimule, Pageri, Magwi, Agoro, Kit, Ikotos, Torit, Kajokeji, Kaya, Yei, Yambio, Wau, Upper Nile and Bar-el-Ghazel areas in Sudan. Despite reports of stability in southern Sudan, over 4,000 new arrivals were registered in 2003.

In view of the possibility of a viable Machakos (Kenya) peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a contingency plan for the voluntary repatriation of the Sudanese refugees has been prepared. The plan is built around basic data on the place of return/origin, the profile of the refugees and estimates of return to different locations. It is estimated that 35,000 Sudanese refugees will opt to repatriate with UNHCR assistance in 2004.

Rwandan refugees

As at October 2003, there were some 18,500 Rwandan refugees in the country (65 per cent under the age of 18). A Tripartite Agreement on the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees was signed in July 2003 between the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda and UNHCR. This augured well, and UNHCR then undertook to put in place a repatriation plan. The sensitisation and preparation for possible repatriation was scheduled to start during the third quarter of 2003, with some 12,000 refugees expected to repatriate by the end of 2003. However, to safeguard refugees (in case the situation changes again) humanitarian assistance for the Rwandan refugees will be continued in 2004.

Congolese refugees

The majority of Congolese refugees came to Uganda fleeing the civil conflict in the east of the DRC. In Uganda, as at October 2003, there were 8,500 registered Congolese refugees (60 per cent of them under the age of 18). There are indications of possible durable solutions for the Congolese refugees, despite the continued conflict around the Ituri region, which has been the main source of instability and the cause of the refugee influx into Uganda. The French-led EU Peace Keeping operation in Bunia succeeded in preventing the spread of violence to other areas. The United Nations peacekeeping force took over from the French peacekeepers with an expanded operational mandate to cover the Ituri region. With peace restored, there will be greater prospects for Congolese refugees voluntarily repatriating to DRC in 2004.

Other refugees

There are small groups of refugees from Burundi, Ethiopia, and Somalia in Uganda. Some 123 Kenyan refugees living in Nakivale refugee settlement (in Mbrara

district) were recently repatriated with UNHCR support. International protection is provided to all refugees, and material assistance to most of them (but urban refugees receive material assistance for a limited period only).

Assistance

UNHCR's main focus in 2004 will be to ensure basic humanitarian assistance for refugees and continue the integration of basic services (education, health, water) into national structures in line with the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS). The SRS will prepare the refugees for their eventual return and successful reintegration back home.

The overall aim of the refugee programme is to enable refugees to become self-reliant. In this respect, an integrated multi-sectoral community development approach will be implemented. The approach involves several sectors in the common objective of improved

programme implementation (more effective use of limited resources). In 2004, the priority sectors will be education and community services, health, environment and crop production, as well as income generation. UNHCR will continue to mainstream reproductive health and HIV/AIDS-related activities. UNHCR will also undertake education on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

UNHCR will contribute to local infrastructural improvements in refugee hosting areas through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These projects will ensure better services for refugees, and also promote and maintain good relations with the local populations.

Desired impact

Through the SRS, the Government of Uganda will provide refugees with adequate arable land to achieve substantial levels of self-sufficiency in food. The nutritional status



Refugees load and enter convoy truck in Kiryandongo. UNHCR / J. Hesemann

of the refugees in all settlements will be maintained at an acceptable level. Refugees will be in a position to pay for their health services, education, to look after the vulnerable members of their family, and to participate in social and economic activities in the same manner as Ugandan citizens.

Through the continued promotion of gender awareness, women will participate fully in economic and social activities and refugee committees. Their involvement in decision making will be actively encouraged. Refugee children will continue to have access to education. The high dropout rate among girls in the higher classes of primary schools will be addressed by means of a specific education campaign.

The involvement of development-oriented organisations and donors in SRS should help to enhance its contribution to the well-being of refugees.

Organisation and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR's operations in Uganda will be co-ordinated by the country office in Kampala, supported by sub-offices in Arua and Adjumani, a field office in Mbarara, and a satellite office in Hoima. The Uganda programme will be managed by a total of 93 staff members.

Co-ordination

UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team under the leadership of the UN Resident Co-ordinator. The Office takes part in the preparation of CGA, the CAP and the UNDAF processes. UNHCR also maintains a close working relationship with government authorities, United Nations agencies (particularly WFP and UNICEF), and other national and international NGOs. Participation of Government, United Nations agencies and donors in the SRS Task Force will continue in 2004.

Regional policy guidelines were adopted at the strategy meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2003. Within this policy framework, the branch office in Kampala will continue to liaise with the Regional Technical Support Services (RTSS) in Nairobi and other UNHCR offices to ensure a co-ordinated approach to voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees in the event of a peace agreement.

Offices

Kampala

Arua
Hoima
Mbarara
Pakelle/Adjumani

Partners

Government agencies

District Community Department (Arua)
District Directorate of Health Services (Adjumani, Arua and Moyo districts)
District Education Office (Adjumani, Arua and Moyo districts)
District Forestry Office (Adjumani, Arua and Moyo districts)
Office of the Prime Minister

NGOs

African Development and Emergency Organisation
African Humanitarian Action
<i>Aktion Afrika Hilfe</i>
Danish Assistance to the Self-Reliance Strategy
Finnish Refugee Council
German Development Services
Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust
Integrated Rural Development Initiatives
International Rescue Committee
Jesuit Refugee Services
Lutheran World Federation
Ockenden International
Transcultural Psycho-social Organisation
Uganda Micro-finance Union

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	2,219,869
Community services	350,677
Crop production	303,123
Domestic needs	336,959
Education	2,007,965
Fisheries	4,558
Forestry	453,581
Health	1,439,618
Income generation	70,852
Legal assistance	337,470
Livestock	46,981
Operational support (to agencies)	1,832,497
Sanitation	88,345
Shelter / other infrastructure	649,328
Transport / logistics	2,552,076
Water	223,870
Total Operations	12,917,769
Programme support	2,135,832
Total	15,053,601