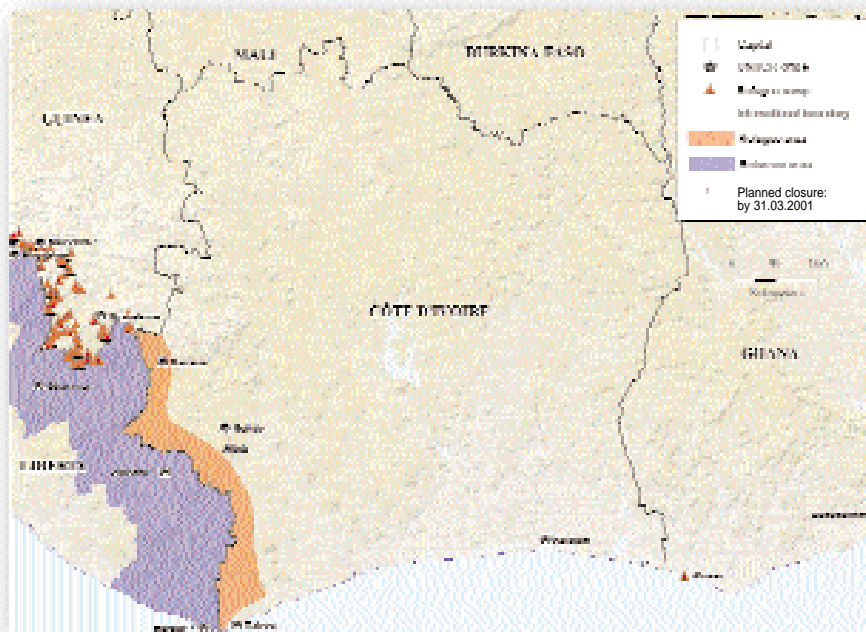


Côte d'Ivoire in short

Main Objectives

- Continue to facilitate the repatriation of newly arrived Liberian refugees (accommodated mainly in Niela camps) who wish to repatriate.
- Assist the remaining Liberian refugees to reach an adequate level of self-reliance and socio-economic integration.
- Endeavour to transfer health and educational services to the Government to allow a gradual scaling down of UNHCR's involvement.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of the small group of Sierra Leone refugees, if conditions in Sierra Leone permit.
- Support government structures, in particular the *Service d'aide et d'assistance aux réfugiés et apatrides* (SAARA), to strengthen the legal framework for refugee protection.
- Maintain preparations for possible new influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries.



PLANNING FIGURES

Population	Jan. 2001	Dec. 2001
Liberian Refugees ¹	60,000	40,000
Sierra Leonean Refugees ²	2,000	1,500
Urban Refugees	1,700	1,700
Total	63,700	43,200

¹ This figure does not include the additional 50,000 persons recorded in the Government's statistics. UNHCR expects that up to 20,000 Liberian refugees could decide to repatriate voluntarily in 2001.

² Subject to improved security in their areas of origin, some 500 Sierra Leoneans may choose voluntary repatriation.

TOTAL REQUIREMENTS • USD 10,404,346

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

Following a coup in December 1999, a military council, the *Conseil national de salut public* (CNSP), which established a transition government, ruled Côte d'Ivoire. In 2000 the political situation in the country was tense and deteriorated in October during the run-up to presidential elections. The results of the elections were contested and hundreds of persons were reported injured and killed during the ensuing unrest. Military ruler Guei fled the country and President Gbagbo was declared winner of the elections by the president of the

Supreme Court. At the same time, Côte d'Ivoire has also had to face severe economic difficulties and anti-foreigner sentiment has grown.

In February 2000 a new service for refugees was established within the Ministry of the Interior to replace the former Refugee Co-ordinating Committee. A new Minister of the Interior was appointed in May. In August, SAARA was attached to the Directorate for National Integration and Immigration (also within the Ministry of the Interior).

There has been a resurgence of conflict in the south-west of the country between the indigenous population and migrants (mainly from Burkina Faso, but also members of various Ivorian minority groups). The latest clashes have claimed several lives and caused the internal displacement of over a thousand persons. At the request of the Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR provided relief items for the displaced and transported WFP food supplies. A small local inter-agency committee (comprised of ICRC, WFP, UNHCR) was established under the leadership of the Prefect of San Pedro for the distribution of aid. Should the conflict spread, it might affect Liberian refugees living in this part of the country and could also lead to further internal displacement.

Constraints

The prospects for durable solutions for Liberian refugees in the *zone d'accueil* (the so-called reception zone abutting the Liberian border) are less promising than they were a year ago. Nevertheless, refugee may be discouraged from returning home since UNHCR's reintegration activities in Liberia are coming to an end and the level of direct development aid to Liberia has continued to drop. On the other hand, local integration in Côte d'Ivoire in the present climate may be a less viable option. The resolution of the refugee situation is currently overshadowed by more pressing domestic problems. For example, the planned enrolment of primary school aged refugee children in Ivorian schools – an important component of the integration strategy – did not materialize and refugees have set up new private schools where the Liberian curriculum is taught. This situation makes it very difficult to implement a coherent long-term strategy.

STRATEGY

UNHCR will resume discussions on draft refugee legislation with the newly elected authorities and urge its adoption. To this effect UNHCR will seek to persuade the new members of the National Assembly of its importance. Other activities are planned to hasten the passage and implementation of refugee laws.

Liberian Refugees

Since May 1997, over 70,000 refugees have repatriated from Côte d'Ivoire under UNHCR's auspices and the Office continued to facilitate voluntary repatriation throughout 2000. Fully organised repatriation was offered for the first six months of the year, while partially assisted returns took place at various times throughout the year. Initially, UNHCR made preparations for the voluntary repatriation in 2001 of the more recent Liberian arrivals (20,000 people who fled to Côte d'Ivoire following the events of September 1998). Until recently, howev-

er, very few of them expressed any desire to return to Liberia. UNHCR stands ready to continue to facilitate voluntary repatriation, mainly through the provision of an assistance package (food and household items) and medical screening.

The local integration strategy, to be modified in light of recent developments, aims to ensure the protection of refugees, firstly through personal documentation (giving them a legal status in Côte d'Ivoire recognised by the authorities) and, secondly, by helping them to become economically self-sufficient.

Since July 1999, the Ministry of the Interior has been issuing refugee identity cards to Liberian refugees aged 14 and above in the *zone d'accueil* through the SAARA and the local prefectural and sub-prefectural administrative authorities. The process, however, has been very slow. Moreover, refugees complain that police and other local authorities consider these cards to be invalid. UNHCR and the SAARA therefore jointly reviewed the process, identifying the weaknesses and obstacles, and possible options for providing documentation that would be more broadly recognised. Proper documentation for refugees remaining in Côte d'Ivoire remains a fundamental objective in 2001.

The last comprehensive refugee registration was carried out in March 1997, followed by verification in May 1998. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has requested assistance for a refugee census and UNHCR has agreed to support this exercise during the first quarter of 2001. This census should provide the Government and UNHCR with more reliable data on the remaining Liberian refugee population. It will serve as a valuable tool with which to assess the impact of the refugees on local social infrastructure and services, and enable UNHCR and its partners to better target activities for the integration of the refugees and the rehabilitation of the *zone d'accueil*.

The data obtained will be complemented by a comprehensive review of the present situation of Liberian refugees. This will assess their level of self-reliance, including long-term access to arable land and gainful employment, the sustainability of existing income-generating ventures established with small loans, the effectiveness of skills-training projects and access to basic social services.

Initial priorities in 2001 include skills training, crop production, small-scale income-generating projects, and support at the local level for state health services, including pharmaceutical services. UNHCR will also seek to ensure that national programmes supported by UNICEF and WHO in the health sector cover the refugee population.

Another important priority is education. It is hoped that the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP for the gradual incorporation of Liberian refugee children into the Ivorian school system will be signed



before the end of 2000. The MOU stipulates that UNHCR will fund an additional transitional school year for children from the time they first enrol in the state primary schools. This transitional year will help pupils who need intensive language training. UNHCR will fund the rehabilitation and construction of school infrastructure in order to give both refugee and Ivorian children a sound learning environment. The rehabilitation and expansion of school infrastructure is one element of a broad rehabilitation programme for the *zone d'accueil*, which has been seriously affected by the presence of refugees over a long period of time. UNHCR has committed itself to playing a catalytic role in the area by encouraging development agencies to invest in the zone.

UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to refugees in Nicla camp, which houses a total of over 7,300 refugees (including 3,140 long-staying refugees and 4,215 who arrived after September 1998).

Particular attention will be paid in 2001 to finding solutions for the fairly large number of vulnerable refugees, particularly the elderly and those suffering from mental illness.

Sierra Leonean Refugees

The small group of Sierra Leonean refugees in the *zone d'accueil* will receive support similar to that provided to Liberian refugees. If conditions in their country and areas of origin permit, they will be assisted to return as part of a regional repatriation project for Sierra Leonean refugees currently living in several countries in the West African sub-region. At the same time the difficult security situation in the southern border area

of Guinea has raised fears of possible new influxes of Sierra Leonean refugees living there into other countries, including Côte d'Ivoire. UNHCR has begun developing contingency planning and taken measures to be ready for a potential influx.

Urban Refugees

The majority of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Côte d'Ivoire are from the Great Lakes region (Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Congo). As in previous years, UNHCR will provide initial basic assistance, counselling, educational and medical assistance, financial assistance to recognised refugees for residence documents (*cartes de séjour*), and modest support for cultural and recreational activities through a national NGO partner. Efforts to help refugees find employment or become self-employed will be co-ordinated with the SAARA, especially to secure work permits. The assistance criteria will be refined jointly in conformity with UNHCR's policy on urban refugees, taking into account the present context in Côte d'Ivoire.

Desired Impact

By the end of 2001, refugees wishing to repatriate will have returned to their country of origin with UNHCR's assistance. Refugees remaining in Côte d'Ivoire will have attained a reasonable degree of integration. A large number of refugee children of primary school age will be enrolled in Ivorian schools for the 2001-2002 school year and will have learned French to ease their integration. Development agencies will have launched co-operative projects to build infrastructure and rehabilitate the environment in the *zone d'accueil*.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

The UNHCR Office for Côte d'Ivoire, based in Abidjan, works under the overall supervision of UNHCR's Regional Directorate for West and Central Africa, also based in Abidjan. UNHCR's operations in Côte d'Ivoire are managed by 53 staff (nine international, including one Junior Professional Officer, 43 national, and one United Nations Volunteer). UNHCR maintains three offices in the *zone d'accueil*: Danane, Guiglo and Tabou. Offices in Danane and Tabou had been scheduled for closure by 30 June 2000, but the extension of organised voluntary repatriation and the slow progress of local integration made it necessary to maintain them.

OFFICES

Abidjan	Danane
Guiglo	Tabou

Co-ordination

UNHCR will continue to work in close co-ordination with its government counterpart and with other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education. It will also continue to work closely with UNDP and other UN agencies (particularly UNICEF for the education of refugee children). In 2000 UNHCR took part in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) process undertaken by the UN agencies. The CCA will lead to the formulation

of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in 2001 and the Office will also participate in this process. The linkage with development agencies will be crucial for the success of the local integration of refugees.

Security problems in Côte d'Ivoire increased in 2000 and staff security has become a prominent element of management responsibilities. UNHCR is a core member of the Security Management Team (SMT) chaired by the Resident Co-ordinator and participates in all SMT meetings.

The Partnership in Action (PARinNAC) process was launched in Abidjan in 1996 and is chaired by a national NGO. The process suffered a setback in 2000 and needs to be re-energised. UNHCR plans to sign implementing agreements with three well-established national NGO partners. Given the new focus of the programme, UNHCR and its government partner will identify new partners with specific expertise in the development of programmes to enhance self-reliance.

PARTNERS

Government Agencies

Service d'aide et d'assistance aux réfugiés et apatrides (SAARA), Ministère de l'Intérieur

NGOs

Agence de développement et de secours adventiste

Association de soutien à l'autopromotion sanitaire et urbaine

Caritas

Other

United Nations Volunteers

BUDGET (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,370,720	0	1,370,720
Community Services	246,428	0	246,428
Crop Production	203,191	0	203,191
Domestic Needs/Household Support	128,525	0	128,525
Education	1,186,446	0	1,186,446
Health/Nutrition	294,910	10,000	304,910
Income Generation	219,589	0	219,589
Legal Assistance	184,697	20,000	204,697
Operational Support (to Agencies)	195,216	0	195,216
Sanitation	5 460	0	5,460
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	16,810	0	16,810
Transport/Logistics	304,839	400,000	704,839
Water (non-agricultural)	3,689	0	3,689
Total Operations	4,360,520	430,000	4,790,520
Programme Support ¹	5,613,826	0	5,613,826
Total	9,974,346	430,000	10,404,346

¹ Includes USD 4,825,576 for the costs of the Regional Director's office.