

Liberia



Main objectives

Provide protection and assistance to Sierra Leonean refugees and Liberian IDPs living in the vicinity of the refugee camps, with particular emphasis on the welfare of the vulnerable; promote the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees; continue to ensure the protection of urban refugees of various nationalities and provide them with basic assistance while pursuing durable solutions for them; strengthen the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence; prepare for a possible voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries; provide international protection and seek durable solutions for Ivorian refugees

Impact

- UNHCR assisted some 4,000 Sierra Leonean refugees to repatriate to their country of origin in safety and dignity. 1,250 were evacuated to Freetown by sea in the run-up to the crisis that saw UN agency staff evacuated from Monrovia in mid-year.
- UNHCR mounted an emergency operation in eastern Liberia to respond to the needs of 38,000 Ivorian refugees, 43,000 Liberian returnees and 15,000 third country nationals who fled conflict in western Côte d'Ivoire. The operation was discontinued after two humanitarian workers were murdered.
- UNHCR helped to relocate thousands of IDPs and refugees from irregular shelters in UN compounds and public facilities in Monrovia (schools, churches and stadiums) to refugee and IDP camps after the crisis involving heavy fighting between Government troops and rebel forces in the capital.

Working environment

The context

In 2003, the situation in Liberia was characterized by intense armed conflict, mass population movement, and the intermingling of IDPs and refugees during widespread, and in some cases, multiple population displacements. The first half of the year was marked by fierce fighting between Liberian Government forces and rebels in the west of the country, causing widespread population displacement and an exodus of refugees, mainly to Guinea and Sierra Leone. Early in the year, the spread of the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire to the western *Zone d'accueil des réfugiés* precipitated the flight into eastern Liberia of thousands of Ivorians, alongside third country nationals and Liberian refugees who had sought asylum in that country. In March, the emergence of a new armed rebellion in eastern Liberia aggravated the situation, spreading insecurity and provoking further population displacements within and across the nation's borders, mainly into Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. In mid-year, three camps hosting 11,000 Sierra Leonean refugees and several IDP camps near

Monrovia were overrun during rebel incursions, causing inhabitants to flee to the city. Some refugees and IDPs lost their lives, and others were abducted or forcibly recruited by fighting factions, while many women and adolescent girls fell prey to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse.

The month of August 2003 marked an important turning point in the history of the country, raising hopes of a gradual return to stability after a decade and a half of bitter strife. The Liberian Government, rebel groups, political parties and leaders of civic and professional organizations signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, and reached consensus over the formation of a National Government of Transition (which was installed in October). In September the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) under Resolution 1509, with Chapter VII powers to restore peace. UNMIL's mandate includes *inter alia* supporting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and assisting the National Government of Transition to restructure the security sector and restore national authority throughout the country.

Persons of concern

| Main origin/Type of population | Total in country | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Liberia (IDPs) | 531,600 | - | - | - |
| Sierra Leone (refugees) | 39,100 | 13,900 | 53 | 55 |
| Côte d'Ivoire (refugees) | 35,000 | 19,200 | - | - |
| Third country nationals | 15,000 | 15,000 | - | - |
| Returnees (from Côte d'Ivoire) | 8,000 | 2,400 | - | - |

Income and expenditure (USD)

Annual programme and Supplementary programme budgets

| | Revised budget | Income from contributions ¹ | Other funds available ² | Total funds available | Total expenditure |
|--------------|-------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| AB | 7,422,725 | 5,790,717 | 1,513,273 | 7,303,990 | 7,303,990 |
| SB | 3,197,754 | 214,286 | 2,980,243 | 3,194,529 | 3,194,529 |
| Total | 10,620,479 | 6,005,003 | 4,493,516 | 10,498,519 | 10,498,519 |

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at headquarters.

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Constraints

For most of the year, insecurity prevented access by humanitarian actors to more than two-thirds of Liberia. In March the gruesome killing of two humanitarian workers led to the suspension of humanitarian operations in the east of the country, with the result that UNHCR could not provide assistance to Ivorian refugees and Liberian returnees until the end of the year. In July, the United Nations was compelled to evacuate all international staff from Liberia for a period of four weeks as rebels mounted an offensive on the capital during which the assets of humanitarian agencies were looted. The sheer scale of humanitarian needs of IDPs, refugees and residents in and around Monrovia created immense challenges for the Government and humanitarian actors, who for the most part maintained a limited workforce in the country. Throughout the country, basic infrastructure and services had crumbled away for lack of maintenance and/or war damage.

Funding

Sufficient funding was received to respond to the changing humanitarian needs in Liberia in 2003. Following the resumption of humanitarian activities in August, UNHCR adjusted its Annual Programme budget to extend support to IDPs and third country nationals in areas where they are cohabiting with refugees or returnees. The Office also presented its requirements in the *Côte d'Ivoire plus Five Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal* for assistance to Liberians affected by the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

UNHCR and partners transported new arrivals in eastern Liberia from border areas to safety in transit centres where they received food and basic assistance. Liberian returnees were provided with transport to designated points to help them reach their places of origin. Those from unsafe areas like Lofa were taken to E.J. Yancy camp and assisted. Refugees were assisted in the transit centres/camps and within the communities where many had settled along the border. Protection workshops were conducted, targeting security personnel, immigration,

and customs officers in the operational areas. These workshops covered: the definitions of a refugee, IDP or asylum-seeker; admissibility, with emphasis on the principle of *non-refoulement*; domestic legislation and practice in admitting refugees/returnees; child protection, and SGBV issues.

In Monrovia, UNHCR has played an active role in steering the response to the protection needs of IDPs since August 2003. UNHCR helped transfer IDPs from public places to camps, assisted registration efforts, distributed shelter and domestic items, and helped to rehabilitate or construct infrastructure in the sectors of water, health and sanitation. Troops of the Economic Community of West Africa Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL), vanguard of the UNMIL peace-keeping force, conducted regular patrols in and around the camps, helping to allay fears about security in camps.

Activities and assistance

Community services: More than 300 vulnerable Sierra Leonean refugee cases, comprising single women, children, elderly and handicapped persons, benefited from psychosocial counselling. 56 teenage mothers benefited from skills training in tie and dye, pastry and food preservation, and received start-up kits after graduation. Five awareness workshops on SGBV were held for over 200 participants, including border guards, members of the national police and staff of the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission. 70 women were trained as peer educators for the prevention of female genital mutilation.

Crop production: Some 950 Sierra Leonean refugee farmers received various seeds including 550 grams of eggplants, 100 grams of collard greens, 200 grams of cabbage, 850 grams of hot pepper and 1,750 grams of corn for crop production activities. About ten hectares of land in the Montserrado refugee camps were planted with vegetables while fifteen hectares were planted with roots and tubers.

Domestic needs/Household support: Two general distributions were carried out in three refugee camps to provide footwear, clothing and soap for 560 elderly persons, 1,514 women (mostly single parents and adolescent mothers), 36 disabled people and 500 children. Some 50,000 IDPs received blankets, mats, jerry cans, soap, kitchen sets, plastic

sheeting and plastic rolls. Furthermore, about 17,000 Ivorian refugees received blankets, mats and kitchen sets upon arrival in eastern Liberia.

Education: 265 adults were trained to become Peace Education community facilitators and teachers. 4,635 children of school age benefited from formal nursery and primary education in four schools in the Montserrado refugee camps. Secondary education was provided for 542 adolescents, both in the four camp schools and in private schools in Monrovia. 350 former combatants and others benefited from vocational/skills training in carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electricity, typing, pastry-making and tailoring.

Food: In the camps for Sierra Leonean refugees in Montserrado, as well as among Ivorian refugees in Eastern Liberia, approximately 58 per cent of all family heads who received food were women. WFP provided sufficient basic food commodities for the daily rations: cereal 420 grams, vegetable oil 30 grams, pulses 50 grams, salt 5 grams, and Corn Soya Blend 50 grams. 14,814 beneficiaries received 1,018 metric tons of food. Two training and sensitization workshops were held to encourage beneficiaries to participate in the food distribution process.

Health/Nutrition: 7,171 Sierra Leonean refugee and Liberian IDP women and children were immunized against measles, polio, and tetanus. 1,872 refugees and 1,358 IDPs benefited from the

UNHCR staff giving out emergency supplies to the returnees upon their arrival. *UNHCR/S. Brownell*



supplementary feeding programme. Also 540 refugees and 1,200 IDPs were referred for both medical and surgical cases. The crude mortality rate was 3.6 per cent; while under-five mortality was 1.1 per cent. 29,036 consultations took place (22,505 for refugees and 6,531 for IDPs).

Income generation: Training in small-scale business enterprise development was given to 239 refugees (220 females). Of these, 150 received repatriation start up kits. 24 vulnerable Sierra Leonean refugee women received assistance to expand their business ventures.

Legal assistance: UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding with the Liberia National Police for placing police forces in all the refugee camps. The police were provided with various supplies and transport in order to enhance their work in the camp. Counselling sessions were organized for the refugees to raise awareness in combating SGBV.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR covered the administrative costs of implementing partners, including office rental, utilities, salaries, and the procurement of equipment and office supplies to facilitate their work.

Sanitation: Eight new bathhouses were constructed and 20 filled latrines were replaced. Seven latrine blocks were rehabilitated. The user latrine ratio was 30:1. The refugee camps were fumigated twice during the year. 28 garbage pits were made available in the camps for Sierra Leonean refugees in Montserrado.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: In the E.J. Yancy camp, 101 shelters were constructed for 505 returnees from Côte d'Ivoire. A total of 181 shelters were erected to accommodate 905 IDPs in Perry Town. In Seighbeh camp 161 shelters were constructed to house about 809 IDPs. At Unification Town 800 shelters were completed for about 4,000 IDPs. 164 shelters were constructed for vulnerable people in the camps for Sierra Leonean refugees.

Transport/Logistics: Following the end of hostilities in Monrovia, UNHCR purchased 44 light vehicles and 53 trucks and renovated the maintenance workshop, which was looted during fighting. UNHCR made available its trucks to transport displaced persons from Monrovia refugee and IDP camps. A

vessel and aircraft were chartered for the repatriation of some 4,000 Sierra Leonean refugees.

Water: An average of 20 litres of water per person per day was supplied to the refugees. Of 43 functioning water points in the camps, 28 met the water quality standard. 11 wells were deepened or telescoped and four new wells were constructed. The 43 existing wells were chlorinated.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR's 2003 programme was executed from the branch office in Monrovia, with a sub-office in Saclepea, Nimba County, and two field offices in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Harper, Maryland County. The latter had been established in 2002 before the escalation of hostilities caused temporary closure in 2003. In order to enhance the protection of refugees and returnees and people of concern at the border in eastern Liberia, UNHCR recruited national staff and emergency protection staff deployed from headquarters. The extensive humanitarian needs precipitated sizeable deployments of emergency response teams to bolster the existing workforce. National and international staff participated in learning programmes in the fields of protection, resettlement, refugee status determination, programme management, repatriation and reintegration, supply chain and SGBV.

Working with others

UNHCR programme activities in Liberia in 2003 were implemented in coordination with the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) and 18 implementing partners (ten international and eight national). Monthly coordination meetings were held at the Branch Office.

Following the end of hostilities in August, UNHCR worked alongside UN agencies and NGOs to rapidly improve the situation of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees, and the Office enhanced its participation in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal process. UNHCR was the Task Manager looking into return and reintegration

during the Needs Assessment for the Donor Conference on Liberia's reconstruction and the subsequent Results-Focused Transitional Framework (RFTF). In 2004 UNHCR will coordinate return and reintegration work.

In relation to security coordination, UNHCR collaborated closely with UNMIL and provided assets to enhance security arrangements in refugee and IDP camps. UNMIL continued to provide helicopter transport and escort coverage to missions to remote locations in the country. The Office is advocating a regional approach to Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR), as Liberia has fallen prey to a dangerous combination of fighting factions supported by neighbours and a population of veterans from multiple conflicts floating in the sub-region.

Overall assessment

The general atmosphere of tension and instability constrained humanitarian agencies to provide only limited protection and assistance to needy populations in accessible areas amid serious concerns for the security and safety of staff. Nevertheless, UNHCR was able to rapidly mount emergency response operations to meet the needs of various persons of concern wherever security conditions permitted. UNHCR and partners continued to provide assistance to Sierra Leonean refugees in camps in Montserrado County despite the insecurity prevailing in the east as rebels advanced on Monrovia. When international personnel were evacuated from Monrovia, despite the perilous and traumatic situation prevailing in the city resulting from the intense warfare and overcrowding with terrified populations, national staff continued to manage operations until the international community intervened to restore security.

At the height of the political and military crisis in July, an estimated 150,000 persons who had sought refuge in Monrovia found themselves in crowded unsanitary conditions and without food. UNHCR joined the inter-agency effort to respond to the critical needs by transferring people to refugee and IDP camps that they had occupied prior to the fighting, providing expertise in registration. Together with WFP, the Office strengthened the quality of camp management, and coordinated the delivery of shelter and non-food-items with ICRC.

Offices

Monrovia

Harper
Saclepea
Zwedru

Partners

Government agencies

Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission

NGOs

Action contre la faim
Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Community Action Program
Community Empowerment and Skills Development
Community Empowerment Program
International Rescue Committee
Liberia Environmental Care Organization
Liberia Islamic Union for Reconstruction and Development
Liberians United to Serve Humanity
Lutheran World Federation/World Service
Medical Emergency Relief and Cooperative International
Save the Children Fund (GBR)
Women in Progress for Community Services

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
Liberia National Red Cross Society

Financial Report (USD)

| Expenditure breakdown | Current year's projects | | | | Prior years' projects | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|----------------|
| | Annual programme budget | Supplementary programme budget | Total | notes | Annual and Supplementary programme budgets | notes |
| Protection, Monitoring and Coordination | 666,376 | 2,147,590 | 2,813,966 | | 15,860 | |
| Community Services | 117,159 | 0 | 117,159 | | 139,626 | |
| Crop Production | 26,476 | 0 | 26,476 | | 0 | |
| Domestic Needs/Household Support | 8,650 | 0 | 8,650 | | 69,632 | |
| Education | 472,739 | 0 | 472,739 | | 320,327 | |
| Food | 45,430 | 0 | 45,430 | | 63,110 | |
| Forestry | 7,951 | 0 | 7,951 | | 0 | |
| Health/Nutrition | 244,798 | 0 | 244,798 | | 280,223 | |
| Income Generation | 18,523 | 0 | 18,523 | | 0 | |
| Legal Assistance | 121,940 | 0 | 121,940 | | 165,654 | |
| Operational Support (to Agencies) | 603,990 | 0 | 603,990 | | 339,025 | |
| Sanitation | 74,612 | 0 | 74,612 | | 105,129 | |
| Shelter/Other Infrastructure | 67,067 | 0 | 67,067 | | 163,887 | |
| Transport/Logistics | 1,619,059 | 0 | 1,619,059 | | 932,976 | |
| Water (non-agricultural) | 33,740 | 0 | 33,740 | | 53,109 | |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | 1,022,112 | 0 | 1,022,112 | | (2,071,611) | |
| Sub - total Operational | 5,150,623 | 2,147,590 | 7,298,213 | | 576,947 | |
| Programme Support | 2,095,766 | 576,172 | 2,671,938 | | 29,364 | |
| Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries | 7,246,389 | 2,723,762 | 9,970,151 | ⁽³⁾ | 606,311 | ⁽⁵⁾ |
| Unliquidated Obligations | 57,601 | 470,767 | 528,368 | ⁽³⁾ | 0 | ⁽⁵⁾ |
| Total | 7,303,990 | 3,194,529 | 10,498,519 | ^{(1) (3)} | 606,311 | |
| Instalments with Implementing Partners | | | | | | |
| Payments Made | 2,968,007 | 0 | 2,968,007 | | 471,398 | |
| Reporting Received | 1,945,895 | 0 | 1,945,895 | | 2,543,009 | |
| Balance | 1,022,112 | 0 | 1,022,112 | | (2,071,611) | |
| Outstanding 1st January | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 2,341,464 | |
| Refunded to UNHCR | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 269,046 | |
| Currency Adjustment | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| Outstanding 31 December | 1,022,112 | 0 | 1,022,112 | | 807 | |
| Unliquidated Obligations | | | | | | |
| Outstanding 1st January | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 670,809 | ⁽⁵⁾ |
| New Obligations | 7,303,990 | 3,194,529 | 10,498,519 | ⁽¹⁾ | 0 | |
| Disbursements | 7,246,389 | 2,723,762 | 9,970,151 | ⁽³⁾ | 606,311 | ⁽⁵⁾ |
| Cancellations | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 64,498 | ⁽⁵⁾ |
| Outstanding 31 December | 57,601 | 470,767 | 528,368 | ⁽³⁾ | 0 | ⁽⁵⁾ |

Figures which cross reference to the Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(5) Schedule 5