

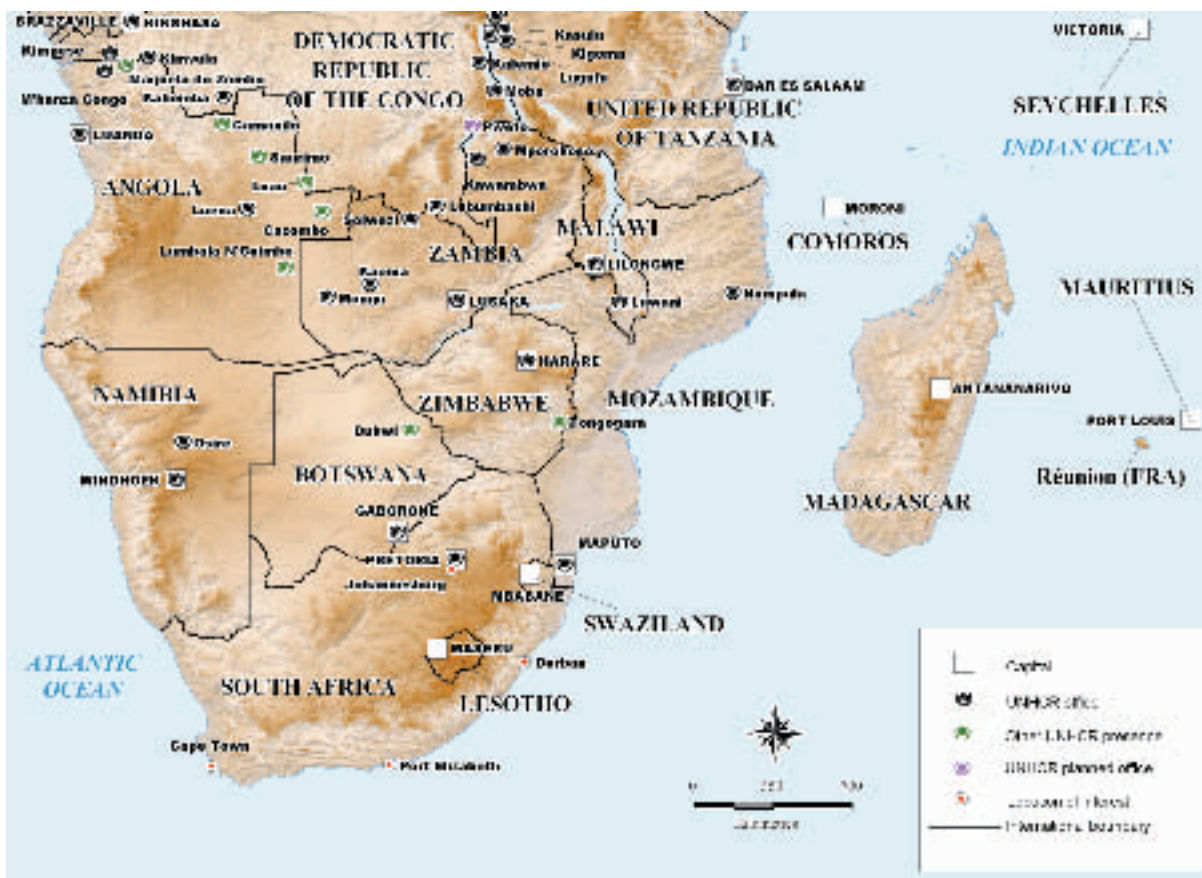
Southern Africa

Recent developments

Angola
Botswana
Comoros
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Seychelles
South Africa
Swaziland
Zambia
Zimbabwe

The organized repatriation of Angolan refugees is drawing to a close. Over a three-year period, UNHCR and its partners have assisted the return of more than 200,000 refugees. In 2005, the Government of Angola, supported by UNHCR, launched the Sustainable Reintegration Initiative targeting key districts of return. Detailed assessments have already been completed in each district highlighting major gaps in social services, transport infrastructure and economic opportunities, and identifying key development priorities, in line with existing national and provincial development plans. At the same time, UNHCR is working with national authorities in the countries of asylum to identify durable solutions for the remaining Angolan refugees. In Zambia, the cornerstone of local integration is the Zambia Initiative, under which substantial progress has been made in 2005, including a significant increase in school enrolment, the repair of rural feeder roads and the implementation of a comprehensive agricultural credit scheme.

With the improving situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), refugees have begun returning spontaneously from Zambia to Katanga



province. At the same time, preparatory work for the organized voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees is under way in north-eastern Zambia, where more than 60,000 DRC refugees reside, with the first movements expected early in 2006. In Angola, UNHCR has already facilitated one movement to Katanga. Elsewhere in the region, similar activities are under way in countries hosting DRC refugees. Out of a total population of some 100,000 DRC refugees, roughly 25,000 are expected to repatriate, assuming stable conditions in Katanga and the Kivus, the main areas of return.

New registration systems have been launched in Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. In all three countries, a credible database of refugees and asylum-seekers now exists, enabling the issuance of documentation compliant with international standards and facilitating a more targeted approach in the provision of protection and assistance and the identification of durable solutions.

The refugee status determination (RSD) system in many countries in the region continues to be extremely cumbersome. Most notably, South

Africa faces a backlog of more than 115,000 pending asylum applications. Other countries face similar problems, albeit on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique have all launched aggressive efforts, with the assistance of UNHCR, to remedy the deficiencies in their RSD systems.

In 2005, UNHCR and its implementing partners made substantial strides towards strengthening programmes on HIV/AIDS for refugees in a region grappling with the highest rates of HIV prevalence in the world. Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) programmes were initiated in a number of camps, and urban-based refugees in many areas gained access to national HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment programmes, including antiretroviral therapy. HIV/AIDS prevention messages were integrated into refugee youth and women's activities, and information materials on HIV/AIDS were developed and provided in several languages spoken by refugees.

Strategic objectives

2006 will be a crucial year for the region. This will entail starting the facilitated repatriation of Congolese refugees from DRC, the consolidation of the remaining camps housing Angolan refugee populations, and a further stage of sustainable reintegration of Angolans into their communities, in close partnership with developmental agencies and financial institutions. At the same time, UNHCR will focus on creating a legal environment conducive to sustainable local integration of refugees who may opt to remain indefinitely in their countries of asylum. Furthermore, innovative strategies will be adopted to encourage more Rwandan refugees to repatriate voluntarily.

The Office will continue working closely with host countries to harmonize their refugee and asylum legislation. Particular emphasis will be placed on helping relevant governmental institutions to acquire the capacity to handle asylum applications more effectively and efficiently. UNHCR will also work to consolidate the success of the refugee registration initiative, ensuring that governments have the capacity to manage the newly established systems.

In order to keep pace with rapidly developing national HIV/AIDS programmes in Southern Africa, UNHCR will need to continue focusing on building partner capacity to implement HIV/AIDS programmes, to mobilize the funds needed to deliver services of a high quality, and to undertake inter-agency advocacy efforts for the coverage of refugees by national and regional initiatives. The Office will continue to build up HIV/AIDS-related skills among refugee community members. These skills, invaluable upon return to countries of origin such as Angola and the DRC, will involve activities to combat stigma and discrimination, and to promote acceptance and support for refugees living with HIV/AIDS. As voluntary counselling and testing continues to be the critical entry point for access to antiretroviral treatment, further expansion of VCT services will target pregnant women and other key groups such as youth.

An overarching principle in the Southern Africa operation is to ensure gender equality and the rights of refugees of all ages and all backgrounds. The application of the gender, age and diversity mainstreaming approach will continue. Four existing multifunctional teams (MFTs) will be supported by headquarters and regional staff, and new teams will be trained for the remaining countries of the region. A participatory assessment, developed by the MFTs through consultation with refugees, will form the basis for all protection and programme planning. Throughout the region, the MFTs will meet with refugees of different age groups to identify their specific protection needs. Two areas of major focus will be supporting refugee, national and regional capacities to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and developing strategies to encourage community-based support of older refugees, many of whom have been forced to care for their grandchildren.

Operations

Operations in the region encompass 14 countries. The country programmes in **Angola**, **South Africa** and **Zambia** are presented in separate chapters. UNHCR also has operations in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The region also includes Swaziland, Lesotho and the Indian Ocean Island States of Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles.

In **Botswana**, the population of concern decreased during 2005 to approximately 3,000 with the ongoing repatriation of Angolan refugees. In 2006, UNHCR will focus on finding durable solutions for the remaining Angolans, as well as the other two main groups of refugees in Botswana – Namibians and Somalis. For those Angolans who did not repatriate in 2005, the emphasis will be on local integration – both the legal framework and economic self-sufficiency.

Repatriation will continue to be promoted for the approximately 1,200 Namibian refugees originating from the Caprivi region. For the small Somali refugee population, cases will be examined on an individual basis to identify the most durable solution. Moreover, UNHCR will work with the



A repatriation convoy sets off from Kiowa reception centre, in northern Angola, which has been used to house transiting returnees from the DRC. *UNHCR / M. Benevides*

Government of Botswana to review the status of some 480 rejected asylum-seekers, primarily Somali, who are currently still living in Dukwi camp. The infrastructure in one sector of Dukwi camp will be upgraded in line with UNHCR’s minimum standards in anticipation of a consolidation of the remaining population and an eventual handover of the settlement to the Government of Botswana.

UNHCR will prioritize the strengthening of the new registration system introduced in 2005. The emphasis will be on ensuring that the Government has the capacity to fully manage the database and ensure that standard operating procedures for registration are consistent with international standards, and that identity documents issued are fully recognized by authorities, banks and

other key entities. UNHCR will also work with the Botswana authorities to strengthen the refugee status determination process in line with international standards.

In the Indian Ocean Island States, UNHCR will continue its efforts to persuade **Comoros** and **Mauritius** to accede to the main international refugee instruments. Assistance to the small number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Comoros and **Madagascar** will continue to be provided through UNDP.

UNHCR operations in **Malawi** will continue to assist an estimated 7,000 refugees, the majority of them from the Great Lakes region. The refugees started to arrive in early 2001 (reaching a peak in late 2002 and early 2003) following the conflict in

that region and the application of the cessation clause for Rwandan refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania in 2002. The majority live in Dzaleka camp.

Programme activities will be put in place to meet and sustain the minimum standards of humanitarian assistance across the sectors of health and nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, and community social services. UNHCR will shift its budget allocation towards meeting infrastructural needs to improve the road network, construction of a footbridge to shorten the distance to the camp and possible provision of electricity to the camp. Furthermore, there will be a need to drill additional boreholes for the anticipated increase of the camp population. An irrigation scheme, started in 2005, will continue to be funded to support the economic and social empowerment of refugees and asylum-seekers, but also to improve conditions for Malawians in the Luwani area. UNHCR will strengthen activities geared towards local integration of refugees in Luwani camp and at the same time direct a slow phase-out of assistance to Dzaleka camp. Refugees who may choose to remain in Dzaleka camp will be supported to attain some level of self-sufficiency prior to UNHCR's complete withdrawal. Those who choose to transfer to Luwani will be supported with adequate farmland. The Government of Malawi will continue to provide additional land for cultivation in Luwani in the event of large movement. UNHCR will also ensure the full operation of the irrigation scheme and its continued use and maintenance through ownership by the refugees and the surrounding local population.

In 2006, UNHCR's strategy will include the promotion of local integration in Luwani, to increase self-sufficiency amongst those refugees who wish to stay in Malawi. Another important element of the strategy is to strengthen the Government's protection capacity in order to speed up the eventual phase-out of UNHCR from Malawi. This will entail training in refugee status determination, refugee law and various aspects of management. UNHCR will press for the expeditious amendment of the refugee law to create an enabling environment that will promote the process of local integration. Resettlement will also be pursued in a few

cases when other durable solutions are not feasible.

In **Mozambique**, the population of concern continues to grow slowly, with a steady flow of new arrivals from the Great Lakes region, reaching some 6,000 by the end of 2005. In 2006, the Office will focus on building the capacity of the Government of Mozambique to conduct RSD in accordance with its international obligations. Currently, the country is faced with a backlog of well over 4,000 pending asylum claims, with asylum-seekers often having to wait years for a decision. UNHCR will also support the Government in the maintenance of the registration database established in 2005.

Refugees and asylum-seekers will continue to be assisted in Marratane settlement in northern Mozambique. However, UNHCR will focus its efforts on implementing a comprehensive self-reliance strategy, given that the Government allows refugees and asylum-seekers to live outside Marratane if they are self-sufficient. During the year, UNHCR anticipates that the implementation of a number of activities in Marratane will be handed over to local NGOs and line ministries, in anticipation of an eventual handover of the settlement to the Mozambican Government. UNHCR will also advocate for a legal framework for local integration, permitting refugees to settle permanently in the country, if voluntary repatriation is not an alternative.

With improving conditions in the Great Lakes region, UNHCR will facilitate the return of those persons wishing to repatriate, particularly to DRC and Burundi. Resettlement will continue to be pursued on an individual basis, building on the success of efforts in 2005 in which 330 cases were approved by the United States and Canada.

In 2006, **Namibia** will host a registered camp-based refugee population of almost 6,400 individuals, of whom 5,200 are Angolans. Others originate mainly from the Great Lakes region. There are also another estimated 6,000 persons of concern who registered in the camp as refugees but subsequently decided to live elsewhere.

In 2006, UNHCR operations in Namibia will focus on long-term solutions – including local integration and resettlement – for those refugees from the Great Lakes region who are unable to return due to unfavourable conditions in their home countries.

Namibia continues to receive new refugees from various countries in small numbers. The main entry points for new arrivals into Namibia are in the north-eastern regions of Kavango and Caprivi. Despite the closure of the UNHCR's office in Rundu, in 2005, UNHCR will directly monitor the situation of the new arrivals together with the authorities.

Gender mainstreaming in all sectors of protection and assistance will be strengthened. Refugee women's empowerment will be pursued and women will be encouraged to take an active part in camp management and in the distribution of food and other items. Sanitary materials will continue to be provided to all refugee women of reproductive age. Awareness campaigns on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and HIV/AIDS will also be undertaken for the benefit of groups with special needs like the elderly and disabled.

In **Swaziland**, UNHCR has phased out assistance to refugees in Malindza camp who are self-sufficient. In 2006, the programme will be reorientated along the lines of the South Africa urban-based operation with a focus on self-reliance activities and short-term assistance only for the most vulnerable people.

In 2005, **Zimbabwe** hosted 10,800 refugees, more than 1,500 in Tongogara camp and the majority in urban areas. In July 2005, a government operation called *Operation Restore Order* caused the destruction of shelters and shacks occupied by both refugees and nationals living in the urban areas and displaced thousands of refugees. An estimated 1,000 were relocated to Tongogara camp, causing overcrowding and overstressing the camp's resources. WFP made an emergency donation of three months' food supply for an estimated 4,500 people.

The main protection and operational goals for the Zimbabwe programme in 2006 will be as follows: ensure the integrity of the institution of asylum in Zimbabwe, promote voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees, strengthen identification of resettlement cases and self-reliance activities.

Budget (USD)			
Country	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget ²	Total
Angola	23,568,521	497,500	24,066,021
Botswana	2,295,356	0	2,295,356
Malawi	2,581,443	0	2,581,443
Mozambique	2,847,320	0	2,847,320
Namibia	2,243,872	0	2,243,872
South Africa	5,181,084	0	5,181,084
Zambia	11,836,159	2,825,365	14,661,524
Zimbabwe	2,303,349	0	2,303,349
Regional activities ¹	3,300,000	2,630,000	5,930,000
Total	56,157,104	5,952,865	62,109,969

¹ Includes external relations and public awareness activities, local integration and resettlement of refugees, registration of persons of concerns in Southern Africa, scholarships for refugee students and strengthening emergency response capacity in Southern African countries.

² The figures refer to the supplementary programme for the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese (DRC) refugees.

Note: The Supplementary Programme Budget does not include a 7% support cost (USD 416,700) that is recovered from each contribution received to meet indirect costs in UNHCR (field and headquarters).