



COUNTRY OPERATION PLAN

BRANCH OFFICE NAMIBIA

YEAR 2002 - 2003

**Windhoek
28 March
Year 2002**

PART I: Executive Committee Summary

a) Context and Beneficiary Populations

Namibia is host to refugees from across the African continent. The majority have come from neighbouring Angola which has been under a civil war for close to three decades. Political and military upheavals around the Great Lakes countries of former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Congo-Brazzaville have equally generated refugees into Namibia.

Some have however come from as far as Sudan, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ironical is that even countries with relative peace such as Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania. In the years before 2002, refugees came from Malawi, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. They fled their countries fearing political prosecution.

While peace prospects seemed bleak at the end of 2001, the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in February 2002, and the subsequent efforts towards a truce, have raised hopes that lasting peace will return to Angola sooner rather than later. Proactive discussions between the MPLA and UNITA movement have at least starved off the worst case scenario of political anarchy, lawlessness, increased military violence, which would have otherwise resulted in high influxes of refugees into Namibia and other neighbouring countries.

Serious cognisance should be given to the signing, on 4 April 2002, of a truce for a cease-fire in Luanda between the MPLA and UNITA, witnessed by Southern Africa Development Community member states and the United Nations Secretary-General special envoy. The passing into law of the Amnesty which was granted to all UNITA military operatives has given further impetus to the momentum for peace building in that country. If peace holds in Angola, it will finally end Africa's longest war and, consequently, facilitate the repatriation of Angolan refugees to their country.

Caution against complacency at this early stage is necessary until both parties, the ruling MPLA and UNITA, have taken concrete steps towards securing a truly democratic and integrative political environment. Under the difficult political environment, attempts to conduct elections in that country failed ominously, but so did political stability. In essence, Angola has to first traverse the more delicate next political stage - promised elections – before its displaced citizens can look forward to a voluntarily return to their country in confidence, in safety and in dignity.

Nevertheless, recent developments have not changed the inherent political landscape much, with sporadic fighting still being reported in some parts of Angola. These reports may suggest a split in UNITA's already divided camp. Perhaps as evidence that recent events should not be taken at face value, Namibia, which joined hands with the MPLA forces in 1999 to purge UNITA elements, remains militarily engaged. On its part, it has since the death of Savimbi increased security presence in readiness for a military escalation along the border with Angola. Hence, until Angola bears real political stability, Namibia is poised to remain militarily inexorable.

Outside Angola, intensified talks aimed at ending conflicts in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) have not yielded much ground for concrete peace prospects in that region. Namibia, which rendered what it termed logistical support to the Government of Joseph Kabila, pulled out of the conflict during 2001. While this decision may have signalled a return to political stability in the GLR, other more prevailing allies, Zimbabwe and Angola, have retained their strong military presence there.

Coupled with economic hardship as a result of prolonged instability, and afraid of military violence, people continue to flee from the GLR to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries, and as far away as Namibia. These refugees are mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Congo-Brazzaville. Zimbabwe's political storm seems to be over, at least for now, but it should not be ruled out that the situation there is potentially volatile. In short, the fragile nature of political stability in Africa has forced people to flee even from the relatively peaceful countries.

Both the Angolan and Great Lakes conflicts have not been without a price for their neighbours. For much of the period of instability in Angola, Namibia bore the brunt of banditry attacks which were largely put down to UNITA. Banditry attacks have been a precursor for Namibia's not-so-stable internal situation, and place the country in a state of uncertainty. With the after-effects of 2 August 1999 military attacks in the Caprivi still being felt to this day, banditry attacks not only incense the political leadership, but have led to the government taking heavy-handed action against perceived opponents of the state.

Given this political landscape, and the waves of uncertainty they convey, and mindful of the encouraging political events in neighbouring Angola, UNHCR Namibia is positioning its operational plan in readiness for the eventualities coming either as a result of realised peace or as a result of a return to the status quo of old.

Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Angolan and other refugees in Namibia

The majority of the Angolan refugees at Osire camp are from rural background with 48% females and 52% males. Of the 20,599 Angolans, 28% are females under the age of 18 and 30% are males. The adult male population aged from 18 and above accounts for 22% of this caseload.

Refugees from the Great Lakes Region and other countries make up the second biggest population at Osire camp, with 1,217 registered at the end of December 2001. Of these, 79.54% are males. Other refugees came from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania. Those from outside the Great Lakes Region originate from Cameroon, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, Ethiopia and Liberia.

Main Goal: With the situation in Angola likely to improve to influence the possibility of significant repatriation at a later stage, UNHCR will continue to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Namibia for the year 2003.

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a positive asylum climate, including admission, advocacy and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugees and asylum-seekers are granted admission and access to protection. Prevention of refoulement Pertinent Government authorities receive training on international refugee protection.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In protecting and assisting refugees, full consideration will be given to all policy priorities with regard to women and children, HIV/AIDS, vulnerable group and environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment and empowerment of refugee women body. HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention Programmes are undertaken. Refugee is access to a trauma and counselling office in the camp. Refugee women fully participate in food distribution, camp management and other related refugee activities. School-age girls are enrolled in all levels of education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved care and maintenance with regard to minimum acceptable standards (quality of assistance) and promote the social economic empowerment leading to self-reliance of refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic food items are delivered and distributed to refugees. The nutritional level of the children has improved. Implementation of Health, water and sanitation programmes is improved. More children are enrolled in Education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out and maintain registration/verification exercise, capturing all variable essentials for protection purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All refugees are registered and verified. The caseload statistics and demographic information are captured. Information on the various refugee skills is easily available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced emergency preparedness and response planning for possible voluntary repatriation and new Angolan refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock of relief items Regular monitoring visits and updates on the situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue resettlement option as a durable solution, through assessment of deserving cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable refugees that are found to be under threats or risky are resettled.