



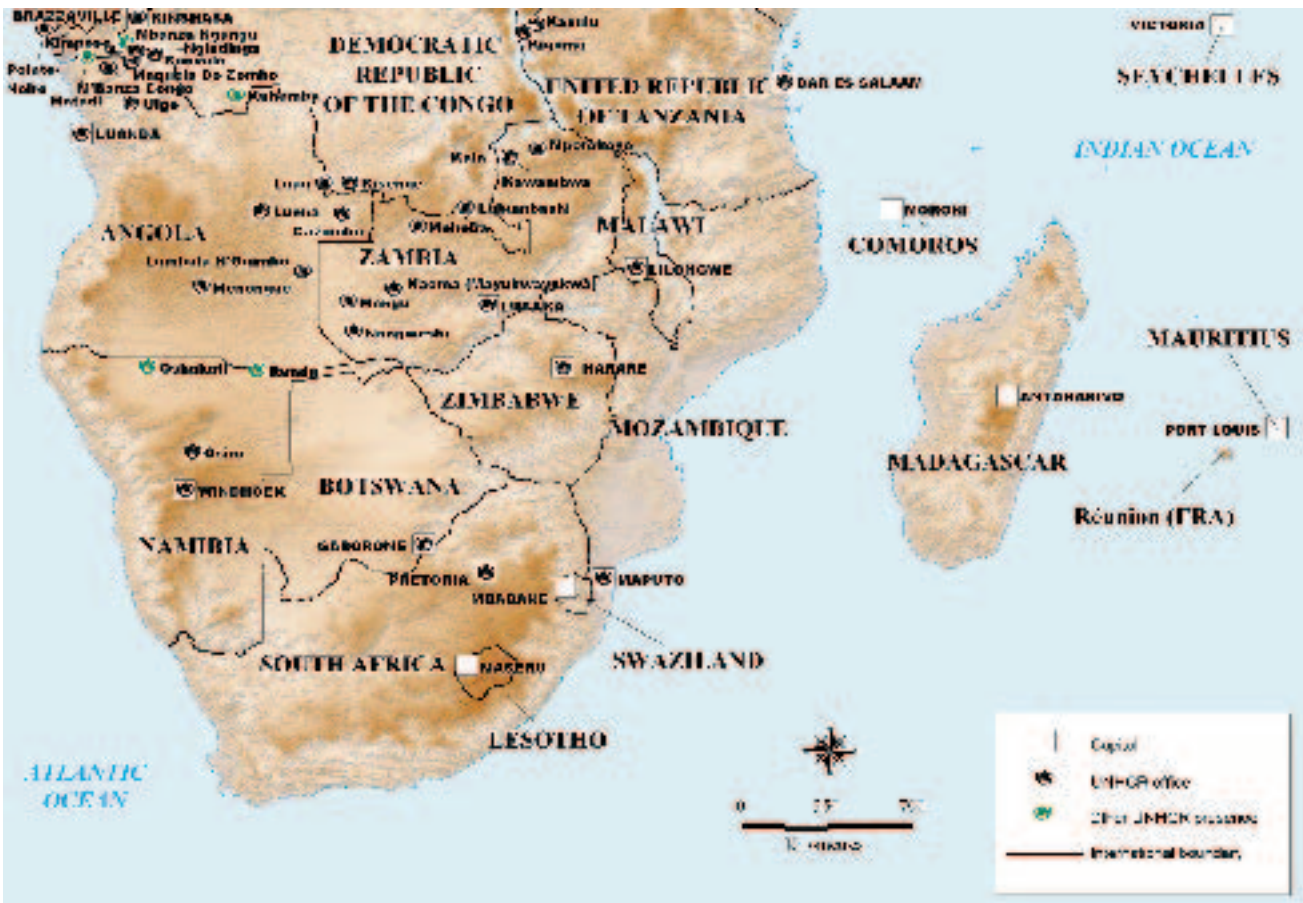
Southern Africa

Recent developments

Southern Africa has witnessed a number of positive developments conducive to durable solutions for refugees in the region. However, the irregular movement of refugees and asylum-seekers from the Great Lakes region represents a series of serious political and humanitarian challenges for UNHCR.

In Angola, the 2002 Peace Accord between the Government of Angola and UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) has held firm. The Government of Angola has committed itself to placing the situation of refugees amongst its national priorities. Returnees have been incorporated in the national reintegration plans alongside internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilised soldiers. This has created an environment conducive to mass repatriation, with 3.7 million IDPs and refugees returning home. Clearly, this massive population shift is predicated on a significantly improved humanitarian situation in the country as a whole. However, formidable constraints still prevail, including: the presence of land mines; the scarcity of potable water; lack of or poor access to roads/bridges and other infrastructure; weak local administration in remote areas; an acute shortage of social, health and education facilities; and a weak economic infrastructure with few business or employment opportunities.

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



The formation of the Government of Transition on 2 July 2003 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has improved prospects for the restoration of peace and stability. No major repatriation has occurred as a result of the latest developments, but there is some optimism regarding the voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees in the near future. UNHCR conducted a preliminary assessment of the situation of Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries in preparation for possible repatriation.

One of UNHCR's main priorities is the delivery of targeted protection of refugee women and children. Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) have been appropriately dealt with, in a co-ordinated manner, with the participation of asylum-seekers, refugees, partner agencies and host governments.

States in Southern Africa have adhered to the basic principle of granting asylum to refugees and asylum-seekers. The majority of the countries have acceded to the international refugee conventions, and adopted national refugee legislation that supports the principles enshrined in these instruments. Furthermore, the policies and practices of countries hosting refugees have generally been hospitable. However, xenophobia is on the increase in local communities and there are instances where the rights of refugees have been violated.

Strategic objectives

In 2004, UNHCR will focus on: enhanced protection, voluntary repatriation, local integration and self-reliance, resource management and operational security.

UNHCR will endeavour to ensure that States lift any reservations attached to the international instruments to which they have acceded. This is crucial for the implementation of long-term self-reliance and local integration strategies for refugees who may not opt to repatriate. In addition, the Office will work closely with governments to ensure that asylum applications are dealt with effectively. A key policy priority will be to meet the special protection needs of refugee women and refugee children.

UNHCR will support government authorities: to improve security in refugee camps and settlements; to separate armed elements from amongst refugees; and to preserve the civilian character of the institution of asylum. Given the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region, efforts to implement projects initiated jointly with other partners, to ensure that refugees benefit from national health programmes will be pursued. UNHCR will endeavour to mitigate environmental degradation in refugee hosting areas.



Zambia: Barges are the typical mode of transportation on the Zambesi river. UNHCR / L. Boldrini

Emergency responses to new refugee influxes will be undertaken in collaboration with governments, NGOs, and other partners. Furthermore, UNHCR will strenuously pursue self-reliance and local integration opportunities for refugees with no prospect of alternative durable solutions and programme implementation will be geared towards exit strategies. The local capacity of governments and NGOs will be strengthened, and refugees will be trained and provided with resources as a step towards UNHCR's planned handover of some operations by the end of 2005.

With respect to voluntary repatriation, UNHCR will accelerate the return of Angolan refugees, and ensure that safety, security and living conditions in areas of return are improved sufficiently to permit sustainable reintegration. The positive developments in the DRC will be monitored, and plans will be developed for possible repatriation of

Congolese refugees. Likewise, voluntary repatriation will be promoted amongst Rwandan refugees.

With respect to resource management, the ultimate objective will be to ensure the optimisation of the resources allocated to the sub-region. In its external relations, UNHCR will interact with regional actors within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1996.

Operations

Operations in the region encompass 14 countries including the Indian ocean islands. In addition to the country programmes in **Angola, South Africa** and

Zambia presented in separate chapters, UNHCR has operations in **Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland** and **Zimbabwe**.

In **Angola**, UNHCR will collaborate with UN agencies and other partners to ensure that Angolans who repatriated in 2003 are successfully integrated into their areas of return. Simultaneously, UNHCR will endeavour to overcome the factors limiting repatriation, and will facilitate the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of an additional 145,000 Angolan refugees during the rest of the year. Returnee programmes will be linked to national development and humanitarian aid plans for a phased scaling down of UNHCR operations.

The provision of basic humanitarian assistance to 11,800 (DRC) Congolese refugees in Angola will continue. UNHCR will pursue a strategy of preparing Congolese refugees for voluntary repatriation (in the event of a return to normality in DRC), while actively exploring the prospects of local integration.

The Office will strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities by organising training in refugee law, refugee status determination (RSD) and other related issues. In order to build up a sustainable mechanism of protection, UNHCR will provide technical advice on international protection to other UN agencies, and will enhance monitoring mechanisms.

In **Botswana**, in 2004, UNHCR will provide international protection and material assistance to 3,800 refugees and asylum-seekers comprising mainly Angolans and Namibians. The Office will maintain its harmonious working relationship with the Government and continue the dialogue which it expects will lead to a revision of the Refugee Act. This revision would offer refugees and asylum-seekers the right of local integration.

The Government of Botswana has declared a national HIV/AIDS emergency. Therefore, in consultation and co-ordination with national health authorities, UN agencies and other partners, UNHCR will develop a plan to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS, including information about the disease, and safe sex; and strengthening existing home-care support systems. Special attention will be focused on the needs of refugee women and children.

In 2003, **Malawi** experienced a sharp upsurge in the number of asylum seekers from the Great Lakes region. This led to overcrowding at the existing Dzaleka camp and necessitated the reopening of Luwani camp. The transfer of some refugees to Luwani will be completed in early 2004. In addition, UNHCR will continue its efforts to persuade the Government of Malawi to lift the legal

reservations which were attached when Malawi ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In 2003, UNHCR provided assistance to some 16,000 refugees from the Great Lakes region. The majority of the refugees come from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda. If current trends continue, the refugee population will reach 13,500 by the end of 2004. All refugees in the Dzaleka and Luwani camps will continue to receive humanitarian assistance. Refugee women and adolescents will receive HIV/AIDS awareness and safe sex information. Essential financial support will be provided, particularly to refugee women's groups, for income-generating projects.

The local authorities have become increasingly receptive to issues pertaining to local integration. The Government of Malawi consented to the reopening of Luwani camp, where more land is available for refugees to engage in self-reliance activities. The refugees in Luwani will also be provided with agricultural tools to enable them to achieve some level of self-reliance.

During 2003, UNHCR in **Mozambique**, assisted 3,791 out of 8,971 persons of concern in Marratane camp. Based on estimates of arrivals in 2003, UNHCR's planning figure for 2004 is 10,000. In 2004, UNHCR will consolidate the Marratane camp, and help refugees to initiate self-reliance activities with a view to achieving some level of self-sufficiency and possible local integration. At the same time, UNHCR will provide basic humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. Assistance will include: food; non-food items; safe water and sanitary facilities; health care; community services; support to primary and secondary education; and language training.

Although Mozambique has acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has made several reservations that restrict some of the rights of refugees. These reservations constitute a major obstacle to local integration of refugees. UNHCR will continue its dialogue with the Government with a view to having the reservations lifted.

During 2003, 18,500 out of 26,000 refugees in **Namibia** were assisted by UNHCR in Osire and Kassava camps. Some 16,500 of these refugees are Angolans, while 2,000 come from various countries including Burundi, DRC, the Republic of the Congo (RoC) and Rwanda.

The Governments of Namibia and Rwanda and UNHCR are expected to sign a Tripartite Agreement for the Repatriation of Rwandan refugees. Thereafter, UNHCR will promote the voluntary repatriation of some 577 Rwandan refugees. Furthermore, the focus will be on

the continuation of the Angolan voluntary repatriation. An estimated 10,000 refugees are expected to repatriate in 2004. Pending their return to their country, all refugees will receive shelter, food, water, non-food items, health services and education assistance.

Despite ratifying the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Government of Namibia maintains its reservation to article 26, thereby restricting the freedom of movement of refugees. UNHCR will pursue its dialogue with the authorities in order to have this reservation lifted.

In **Swaziland**, in partnership with the Royal Swazi Government and partners, UNHCR has developed a plan for the closure of the remaining refugee camp during 2004.

In **Zimbabwe**, a deepening economic crisis and political stalemate have resulted in an unpredictable situation, which UNHCR will monitor closely. In 2003, there were some 12,000 refugees based in Zimbabwe, principally from the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. There was no major refugee influx. UNHCR expects the population to rise to 16,000 in 2004. As the socio-economic problems persist, the number of urban refugees seeking relocation to Tongogara has increased dramatically. This has placed an enormous strain on resources, services and facilities. Voluntary repatriation of Angolan and Rwandan refugees will be a high priority in 2004.

In 2004, UNHCR will ensure that all refugees and asylum-seekers have full and equal access to protection and assistance. The Office continues to promote refugee law, and ongoing training, on security and protection, of government officials and implementing partners. Public awareness activities will be initiated to counteract mounting xenophobia in areas surrounding the camp. Basic assistance will include water, food, health care and sanitation services. Special attention will be given to shelter in Tongogara. Refugee women will be encouraged to become actively involved in the management of refugee affairs.

UNHCR will endeavour to accelerate the identification, assessment and processing of resettlement cases. At the same time, UNHCR will continue to lobby the Government for the development of a fair asylum policy. Support will be provided for the documentation and registration of refugees and asylum-seekers to ensure freedom of movement and equality of access to services within Zimbabwe.

Budget (USD)

| Country | Annual Programme |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Angola | 18,881,586 |
| Botswana | 2,067,665 |
| Malawi | 2,152,346 |
| Mozambique | 2,032,859 |
| Namibia | 4,260,375 |
| South Africa | 2,984,596 |
| Zambia | 15,385,352 |
| Zimbabwe | 2,332,519 |
| Regional activities ¹ | 2,374,600 |
| Total | 52,471,898 |

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