

Uganda

Working environment

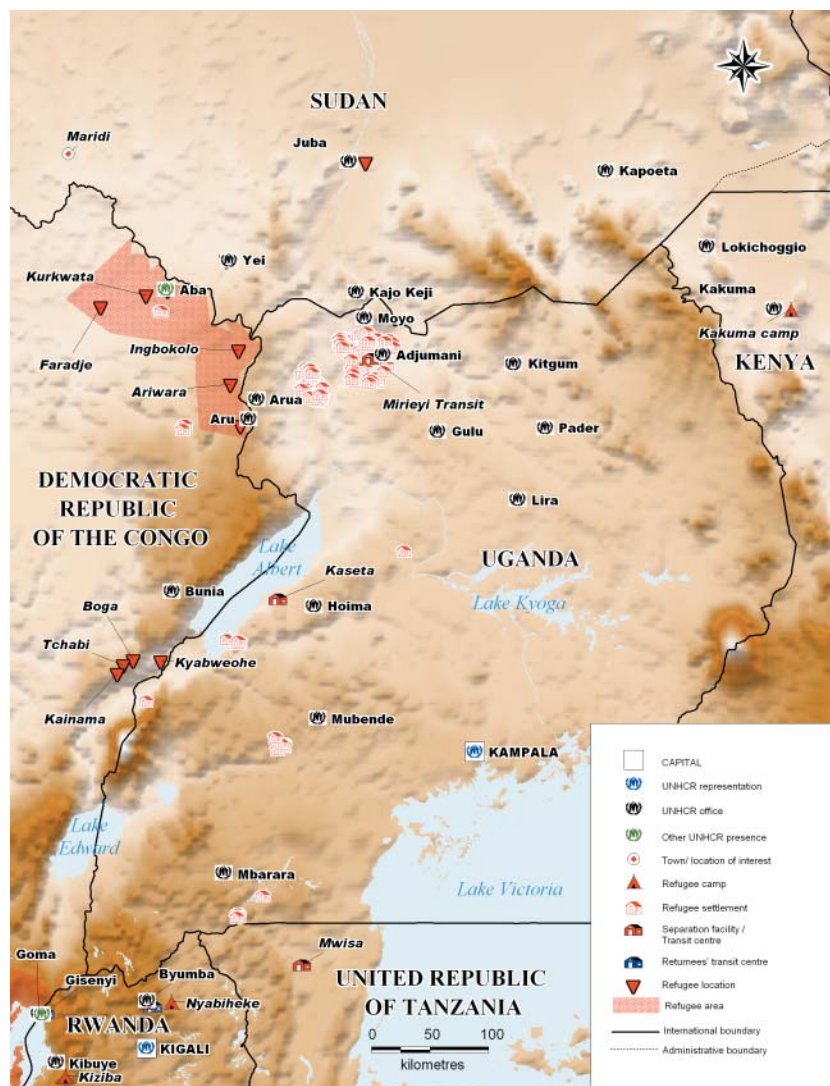
The context

In a major breakthrough in the 20-year-old conflict between the Government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the two sides held peace talks in Juba (South Sudan) under the auspices of the Government of South Sudan. A formal cessation-of-hostilities agreement was signed on 26 August 2006. The prospect of peace in Uganda has opened the way for the return home of nearly 1.6 million internally displaced people (IDPs); some 300,000 have already left IDP camps. It is also hoped that a peace agreement will encourage Sudanese refugees in camps in Uganda to return to South Sudan.

The second round of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) will have an impact on refugee flows in Uganda. Depending on the outcome of the poll, the country will either see the repatriation of DRC refugees currently in its territory or could face a new influx from its neighbour. If the situation in Somalia deteriorates, Uganda could see a new inflow from that country as well.

The adoption in March 2006 by the Ugandan Parliament of the Refugee Act will strengthen refugee protection in

the country. The challenge will be its implementation; all officials dealing with refugee issues must be well versed in the provisions of the Act and related international instruments.



Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Sudan	209,860	209,860	163,660	163,660
	DRC	27,560	27,560	19,500	19,500
	Rwanda	19,710	19,710	19,710	19,710
	Various	4,450	4,450	5,400	5,400
Returnees (Refugees)		50	50	50	50
IDPs		1,100,000	1,100,000	900,000	900,000
Returnees (IDPs)		500,000	500,000	200,000	200,000
Others of concern	Various	1,200	1,200	2,400	2,400
Total		1,862,830	1,862,830	1,310,720	1,310,720

The needs

The Ugandan Government has a generous national policy on refugees. Once their refugee status is recognized, they are granted access to land for agriculture and homes and are permitted to work. Refugees also enjoy considerable freedom of movement, and many have already attained a degree of self-sufficiency. However, they need help with basic services in the settlements, in particular water, sanitation, health and education. As part of the Development Assistance for Refugee-Hosting Areas approach, UNHCR is currently transferring responsibility for the above services to the relevant district authorities.

The reporting of cases of sexual and gender-based violence in refugee settlements is still weak due to community attitudes and the lack of adequate response systems. To help address this, more community-awareness projects are needed. Information programmes on HIV/AIDS and its impact are also required in all refugee settings.

Cases of *refoulement* and detention of refugees and asylum-seekers are still frequent. Refugees have difficulty getting legal aid when in detention. The Refugee Act and international instruments are not yet well understood and hence not properly implemented.

Total requirements: USD 17,949,014

(Annual programme only. The financial requirements for the supplementary programme for internally displaced persons (IDPs) are being finalized.)

Main objectives

- Protect all refugees and asylum-seekers, including ensuring respect for their civil, social and economic rights, and pursue all feasible opportunities for durable solutions.
- Actively promote, where appropriate, the voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of refugees.
- Put into operation the new Refugee Act and help institutionalize government protection and management structures.
- Protect the well-being of some 1.1 million IDPs by promoting freedom of movement, facilitating voluntary return when feasible and improving protection and assistance to residual populations in camps and settlements.

Key targets for 2007

- No *refoulement*, arbitrary arrest or unwarranted detention of refugees.
- Refugee status determination (RSD) transferred to the Government's Refugee Eligibility Committee.
- RSD proceeds more rapidly and the Eligibility Committee is able to process 40 to 55 per cent of the outstanding asylum claims.
- Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence are reduced by 60 per cent; cases of child abuse and neglect are documented and reviewed regularly.
- All survivors of sexual and gender-based violence receive medical certificates to be used in court (up from 60 per cent in 2006).
- The provision of at least 12 litres/person/day of drinking water to camp-based refugees is maintained.
- All refugees receive primary health care services.
- At least 90 per cent vaccination coverage for preventable diseases.
- Increased community awareness on causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS; 65 per cent of HIV/AIDS patients receive care and counselling.

Strategy and activities

Sudanese and Congolese from eastern DRC are still considered refugees on a *prima facie* basis, as are those who have fled Sudan. Asylum-seekers from other countries undergo individual status determination as defined in the new Refugee Act. However, the Government is considering changing its policy towards refugees from Sudan; new arrivals may be subject to individual status determination.

The main protection challenges in Uganda are to preserve asylum space and reduce sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and insufficient access to basic services such as water, health and education continue to plague the camps. The threat of military infiltration into settlements is of continuing concern.

Voluntary repatriation is the preferred option for the three major refugee populations: Sudanese, Congolese, and Rwandan. However, this will be contingent on appropriate conditions in their places of origin. It is anticipated that returns to South Sudan and DRC will be gradual, while returns to Rwanda will be linked to the possible introduction of cessation of refugee status. Resettlement will continue to be used as a protection tool and durable solution for some refugees with serious protection concerns.

Sudanese refugees

Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 and of the Tripartite Repatriation Agreement between the Governments of Sudan, Uganda and UNHCR in March 2006, preparations for repatriation have gathered momentum. The first movements started in May 2006, and by the end of July some 4,500 refugees had returned home. It is expected that 10,000 refugees will have repatriated by the end of 2006. The planning figure for 2007 is 46,200 returns.

Congolese refugees

The majority of the refugees from DRC have arrived in Uganda since 2002, fleeing fighting in the east of their country. Repatriation will depend on the outcome of national elections and political developments in eastern DRC.

Rwandan refugees

Rwandan refugees currently in Uganda mostly came in the mass exodus of 1994. The majority have



Bringing relief items to Rhino settlement. UNHCR / M. Pearson

repatriated; those remaining have refused to do so. Many are well integrated into local communities in south-west and central Uganda.

Pending the introduction of cessation clauses and individual status determination, only isolated repatriation movements are foreseen. The option of local integration through naturalization will be discussed with the Government.

Internally displaced people

For well over 20 years, the Government of Uganda and the LRA have been engaged in a bloody conflict, resulting in the displacement of some 1.6 million people in the north of the country. Displacement only compounded the vulnerability of these people: in their new homes they faced new threats, ranging from physical attacks to sexual and gender-based violence. The most severely affected populations were from the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader. Long-term forced displacement and lack of access to land for cultivation have left the population destitute.

The Government of Uganda responded by creating camps in the districts of Apac, Keberamaido, Katakwi, Lira and Soroti, while different humanitarian actors, including UN agencies and NGOs, assisted with basic relief. In the face of such enormous needs, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed to pilot the "cluster approach" to situations of internal displacement, with UNHCR leading the Protection, Emergency Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Management Clusters. The first step for the clusters was to carry out joint needs assessments and devise strategies for work in their different areas of expertise.

The peace talks have brought hope for peace in Uganda and have opened the way for the return of IDPs. More than 300,000 are estimated to have left the camps and returned to their communities since July 2006; many more are expected to return home as the peace talks progress. In view of this development, cluster work will continue to support returns. Assessments of conditions in returnee areas are currently under way with UNDP, the cluster leader for early recovery. For instance, these assessments have identified roads in need of repair. Repairs will be carried out by the communities themselves. They will receive support from WFP through food-for-work programmes, while UNHCR will provide tools. For those who cannot return at this stage, conditions in selected camps will be improved.

The objectives for 2007 include:

- Establishment of an IDP return monitoring framework.
- Completion of an assessment of the needs of vulnerable IDPs, linked to their return.
- Establishment of a protection monitoring and reporting mechanism in selected IDP camps.
- Training and capacity-building in protection, protection monitoring, camp management, counselling and support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and in vulnerability-related issues and return methods.

Other refugees

Small numbers of refugees from Somalia, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries in the region live in the settlements and in Kampala. UNHCR will provide them with identification documents and give needy families medical assistance. Resettlement will be sought for those with protection concerns and no options for other durable solutions.

Constraints

The working environment in Uganda is increasingly volatile. While the promotion of voluntary repatriation is one of the primary objectives of the Office in 2007, its achievement is contingent on developments in the surrounding countries. Refugee numbers have been rising in recent years: the registered population grew from almost 180,000 in 2001 to some 260,000 at the end of 2006. However, even as the refugee population grew, the annual programme budget shrank. As a result, from 2004 to 2006 only services sufficient to sustain life were provided for health, education, water, sanitation and protection. The continued return of Ugandan IDPs and refugees also depends on the outcome of the peace process.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	11
Total staff	131
International	24
National	84
UNVs	19
JPOs	2
Deployees	2

Coordination

UNHCR will continue to coordinate with the UN Country Team; UNHCR's Regional Technical Support Services (RTSS); UN agencies, particularly WFP, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, and OCHA; as well as national and international NGOs. As in previous years, the Office will participate in the preparation of the Common Country Assessment, the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes.

In addition, UNHCR coordinates the Protection Cluster with UNICEF and OHCHR, taking a lead in the sub-clusters on sexual and gender-based violence and human rights. UNHCR also coordinates implementing partners involved in monitoring protection for returning IDPs and camp coordination and camp management.

Partners

Implementing partners

NGOs: Africa Humanitarian Action, African Development and Emergency Organization, *Aktion Afrika Hilfe*, American Refugee Council, Association of Volunteers in International Service, Christian Children's Fund, Danish Refugee Council, Feed the Children (Uganda), Integrated Rural Development Initiatives, InterAid (Uganda), International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Services, Norwegian Refugee Council, Samaritan's Purse, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, Trust Uganda, Youth Anti-AIDS Service Association.

Others: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*.

Operational partners

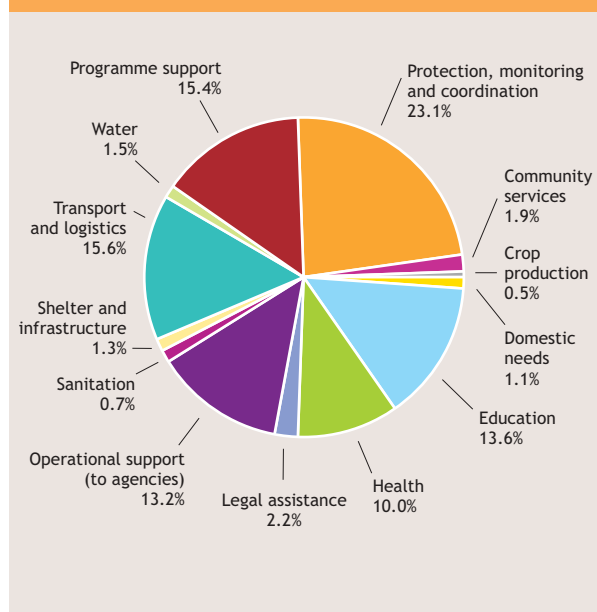
Government: Directorate of District Community Development (Arua), District Directorate of Health Services (Adjumani, Moyo and Arua districts), District Education Office (Adjumani, Moyo and Arua districts), District Forestry Office (Adjumani, Moyo and Arua districts), Office of the Prime Minister.

NGOs: Finnish Refugee Council, International Medical Corps, Right to Play, Save the Children (Uganda).

Others: IOM, UN Country Team, WFP.

Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	3,750,360	3,600,790
Community services	309,076	1,324,380
Crop production	86,226	67,724
Domestic needs	179,013	162,480
Education	2,216,355	2,002,924
Forestry	0	169,682
Health	1,620,922	2,075,398
Legal assistance	355,255	470,238
Livestock	0	18,795
Operational support (to agencies)	2,143,117	1,389,019
Sanitation	112,859	312,152
Shelter and infrastructure	205,214	551,744
Transport and logistics	2,530,464	2,002,397
Water	241,502	743,970
Total operations	13,750,363	14,891,692
Programme support	2,499,995	3,057,322
Total	16,250,358	17,949,014

2006 Annual Programme Budget by sector



2007 Annual Programme Budget by sector

