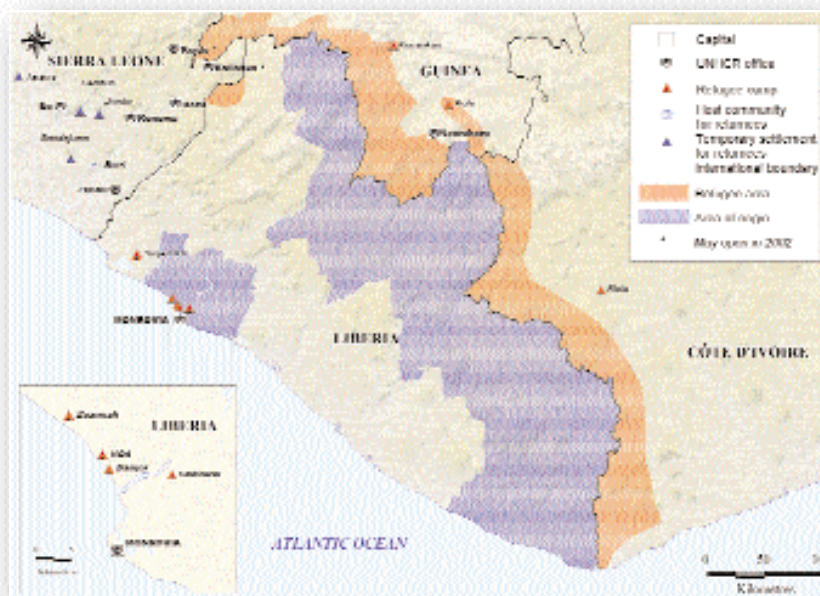


Liberia

Main Objectives

- Ensure the protection of Sierra Leonean refugees; provide basic humanitarian assistance to refugees living in camps; and organise skills training to increase their self-reliance and capacity to reintegrate when they return home.
- Closely monitor the situation in areas of origin (in co-operation with the Sierra Leone office); provide refugees with comprehensive information on aspects of repatriation and reintegration; when appropriate, prepare for mass repatriation and, in the meantime, facilitate repatriation for those individuals who already want to return.
- Continue to implement a multi-sectoral response to the problem of sexual and gender-based violence, through preventive measures and legal, medical and psychological support to the victims.
- Assist Liberian refugees in countries of asylum to return to their places of origin (on an individual basis) and ensure their protection.
- Protect and assist urban refugees (with health care, education, and subsistence allowances); and organise projects and skills training to promote their self-reliance.



PLANNING FIGURES

Population	Jan. 2002	Dec. 2002
Sierra Leonean Refugees ¹	65,000	50,000 ²
Liberian Returnees ³	377,000	382,000
Urban Refugees ⁴	50	50
Total	442,050	432,050

¹ Mass repatriation is contingent upon an improvement in the overall security situation as well as access by humanitarian agencies to main areas of return in Sierra Leone. Of an estimated 65,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia, some 34,000 in Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado counties receive assistance from UNHCR. Another 31,000 are believed to be living in Lofa county, its surrounding areas and urban centres.

² Some 15,000 Sierra Leonean refugees are expected to return home (assisted and unassisted) during 2002.

³ Repatriation depends on the security situation, particularly in Lofa county. Some 5,000 individual Liberian refugees are expected to return from various countries with UNHCR's assistance, mainly from Guinea.

⁴ Durable solutions will be offered to some urban refugees, but overall numbers are unlikely to change significantly.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

The most striking move towards peace was the resumption of political dialogue within the Mano River Union (Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone) including discussion of cross-border attacks and the safety of civilian populations. A summit of the three Heads of State of the Mano River Union, scheduled for January 2002, will look at ways to achieve peace and stability in the sub-region. The announcement by the Government of Liberia of the official re-opening of its borders with Guinea and Sierra Leone was a concrete step towards the restoration of peace.

TOTAL REQUIREMENTS • USD 6,737,148

However, the situation in Liberia has not improved. The continued engagement of humanitarian and development actors will be essential if conditions are not to slide back further, with repercussions for neighbouring countries. Intensified fighting, particularly in Lofa county, has led to the renewed displacement of significant numbers (including Liberian returnees and Sierra Leonean refugees) both within the coun-

try, and over the border to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire (and in a few cases further afield).

In May 2001, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on Liberia, and in August, highlighted the adverse effects of the prolonged conflict in north-western Liberia on civilian populations as well as on the stability of the sub-region. The Security Council also stressed the need to ensure that relief agencies have the capacity to cater for the needs of populations affected by the conflict. Given the country's pre-

The country's economic weakness has been characterised by soaring unemployment and drastically reduced government revenue. Social services were the first casualty. The majority of the local population lacks access to even the most basic health care or education. These factors have inevitably affected UNHCR's ability to facilitate the reintegration of returnees and to enhance the self-reliance of refugees. Today, average per capita GDP in Liberia is one of the lowest in the world and about 80 per cent of the population has to survive on less than two US dollars per day. If the international community fails to



Sierra Leonean refugees in Sinje and Vahun camps. *UNHCR/P. Stromberg.*

sent economic straits, and the lack of support and investment by the international community, serious doubts remain as to how these humanitarian needs are to be met.

Constraints

For UNHCR, one of the main constraints to its activities is insecurity, particularly in Lofa county, which is the main area of origin of Liberian refugees as well as being a hosting region for Sierra Leonean refugees. Since armed attacks in 1999 forced UNHCR to evacuate, it has not been possible to re-establish a presence there.

assist the country, any prospects of sustainable reintegration for Liberian returnees will probably disintegrate, and jeopardise the fragile peace in the sub-region.

STRATEGY

Sierra Leonean Refugees

It is estimated that there are currently some 65,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia. Most fled their country in a series of waves following the outbreak of civil war in 1991. Some

34,000 are sheltered in camps in Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount counties, where they are protected and receive assistance from UNHCR. At least 31,000 refugees remain in Lofa county, where they have integrated into local communities and where, for security reasons, UNHCR has not been able to monitor their situation.

In 2002, UNHCR will facilitate the repatriation of refugees who choose to return to Sierra Leone. UNHCR will not, however, promote repatriation unless it is satisfied that safety criteria have been met throughout the country and that general stability can persist. As in other countries hosting Sierra Leonean refugees, UNHCR will organise a comprehensive mass information campaign before the commencement of a voluntary repatriation operation. Armed with details of all aspects of the repatriation and reintegration programmes, refugees will then be able to make an informed decision about whether and when to repatriate. Transport will be provided by road if security permits and/or by boat from Monrovia. All refugees will be eligible for repatriation assistance, whether resident in camps or elsewhere.

In close collaboration with the Government, UNHCR will continue to ensure the protection and physical safety of refugees. Training workshops will be held for local authorities and security personnel, with an emphasis on protection and refugees' rights. Because of the high turnover of government staff, UNHCR plans to organise ten workshops during the year. In parallel, efforts will be made to reinforce the existing systems for the prevention of, and response to, sexual and gender-based violence in the refugee communities. Education will remain an essential component of that programme. Skills training and basic adult literacy courses will be organised for women and girls. Workshops on the harmful effects of violence will be organised for the first half of 2002 and both women and men will be invited to take part. Refugees who have suffered violent assault will receive individual counselling and legal representation. UNHCR plans to enhance overall camp security by setting up permanent police posts in all refugee camps in collaboration with the Government (through the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission -LRRRC- and the Liberian National Police). UNHCR will provide the police officers and security personnel with training on refugee and human rights law.

The practice of female genital mutilation is one of UNHCR's major concerns. To reduce this practice, UNHCR's office in Monrovia will redouble its efforts by: a) continuing to raise awareness among the refugee community of the harmful effects of the practice, targeting in particular the refugee leadership, traditional practitioners, and young people; b) encouraging those practitioners to take part in other activities such as skills training and income-generating projects; and c) raising the matter with government ministries that may be able to place a ban on the practice in refugee camps.

Refugees living in the six camps in Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount will be provided with basic assistance in various sectors (categories) such as food, water, shelter, sanitation, health and education. Various vocational training courses will also be organised. The training is aimed at enhancing the self-reliance of refugees and facilitating the reintegration of those who choose to repatriate. Refugees will be encouraged to become more fully involved in decision-making on camp activities.

UNHCR will work with WFP and other operational partners to ensure that all refugees receive the food ration to which they are entitled, and regular monitoring will be organised. New food distribution centres have been constructed in all camps and as a result distribution has been accelerated and monitoring is more accurate. UNHCR will also monitor the nutritional status of the refugees. Vulnerable individuals will receive supplementary food rations while refugees suffering from malnutrition will be included in the therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes. In close co-operation with the authorities, UNHCR will also seek to identify additional plots of land that could be used by refugees for agricultural activities. To date, some 250 hectares of land are already being cultivated by refugee farmers. In 2002, UNHCR will distribute seeds to all refugee farmers and agricultural tools to new beneficiaries. In addition, refugees without agricultural experience, but with an interest in farming, will receive relevant training. The programme has already demonstrated its strengths: it allows refugees to enrich their diet and become less dependent on humanitarian food aid. Through regular monitoring visits to the camps, UNHCR and its partners will also ensure that refugees have the necessary shelter materials and basic household items. Refugee committees will remain responsible for ensuring that wells are in good working order, checking water quality on a quarterly basis. The committees will receive the necessary materials and tools to complete these tasks. If refugees cannot have at least 15 litres of potable water per person per day, additional wells will be drilled. Similar refugee committees will continue to oversee maintenance and repair of the sanitation infrastructure (latrines, showers, waste pits and vector control).

The refugee population will also continue to benefit from essential health services. In addition to primary health services offered in all camp clinics, UNHCR's operational partners in the health sector will ensure the immunisation of all children under the age of five and women of child-bearing age. To meet the reproductive health needs of women and adolescents, and reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, UNHCR will ensure that reproductive health services are available in all camp clinics. Specific training will also continue on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The emphasis will be on the use of condoms distributed through health service organisations

working in the camps. Vulnerable refugees, including the elderly, the physically and mentally disabled, single parents, unaccompanied children, and victims of violence, will benefit from individual counselling and will receive any additional medical and material assistance required. Caregivers identified within the refugee community will visit and look after vulnerable individuals unable to leave their shelter on a regular basis.

Education will remain a priority. Primary school education will be offered to all refugee children in the camps. Under both formal and informal education programmes, special attention will be paid to former child soldiers deprived of their right to education during the war. Because of limited resources, the majority of refugee children will not attend secondary school in 2002. UNHCR will however endeavour to allow as many students as possible to pursue their education and existing educa-



Refugees from Sierra Leone. *UNHCR/P.Stromberg.*

tional facilities are to be expanded. It is planned that some 220 refugees will attend vocational training in the camps and some 80 students will be enabled to enrol in technical schools in Monrovia. Scholarships will be offered to about 50 students to give them higher education and the chance of a professional or academic career. Peace education will be integrated into school programmes and refugee teachers and community leaders will be offered peace education training.

To mitigate environmental degradation, households will be encouraged to use 'eco-stoves'. Plans will be developed to set up six tree nurseries in the camps. The community will be responsible for running the nurseries, each of which will aim to raise 5,000 tree seedlings for the plantation in the camps.

UNHCR will continue its capacity-building activities to enhance the performance of operational partners, in particular

national organisations. Specific technical standards will be included under the project objectives and the achievement of these objectives will be measured against well-defined indicators. Workshops will be organised to set and elicit the recognition of standards in the sectors of health, education, sanitation, micro-credit and the environment.

Liberian Returnees

Depending on the situation in Liberia, UNHCR plans to provide support to some 5,000 Liberian refugees in countries of asylum in order to enable them to return to their places of origin. Before the repatriation movement is organised, UNHCR will establish cross-border contacts with its offices in the countries of asylum to ensure that relevant information on vulnerable persons is received. This information will allow social workers to prepare for the reception of vulnerable groups.

In previous years, UNHCR's programme also included reintegration activities. For 2002, UNHCR has not planned any major reintegration activities. UNHCR will however closely monitor the situation in Liberia: if it improves and returnees numbers increase, then the current main objectives of the programme will be reviewed. UNHCR will continue to focus its efforts on monitoring the situation of returnees and ensuring their protection. Workshops will be organised for government officials and security personnel at the central and local levels. These will deal mainly with issues relating to the monitoring of returnees and human rights. Workshops will also be organised for judicial officials, law enforcement

officers, community leaders and social workers, to raise awareness of child protection and the rights of the child.

Urban Refugees

Roughly 50 refugees of various nationalities (the majority of them Sudanese) live in urban centres in Liberia. UNHCR will continue to seek appropriate durable solutions for each individual case. All urban refugees are registered by the Government of Liberia and adults receive identification cards.

UNHCR will also continue to assist refugees through the provision of subsistence allowances to cover their housing, health and education expenses. Given the economic situation in Liberia, very few refugees have succeeded in securing employment. Micro-credit projects will be made available to refugees to enhance their self-reliance.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

UNHCR's entire programme in Liberia (for Sierra Leonean and urban refugees and Liberian returnees) will be managed from the office in Monrovia. UNHCR will operate with 32 staff (five international and 27 national).

UNHCR Liberia will continue to report directly to the Regional Directorate for West and Central Africa in Abidjan on co-ordination and policy-setting issues. The technical specialists who are based in the Directorate will also provide the Liberia office with technical advice, in particular in the areas of registration of asylum-seekers and refugees, security, procurement of various items, telecoms/IT, and support to women and children. UNHCR Liberia will participate in the planning and strategy review meetings organised by the Regional Directorate. As the situations in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are interdependent, a common regional approach is essential, and these meetings will enable the offices in these countries to pursue such an approach.

Co-ordination

UNHCR will work in close collaboration with its main government counterpart, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission. The LRRRC is mandated to formulate policies on matters relating to refugees and returnees. This Commission is present in the major areas where refugees and returnees have settled including Bong, Maryland, Grand Gedeh, Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount counties. As all protection-related issues are addressed through the intermediary of the LRRRC, UNHCR also works closely with it on specific cases.

UNHCR also plans to work with five international and six national NGOs in Liberia during 2002. Joint co-ordination with the Government, operational partners, and refugee representatives as well as other bilateral agencies, will be organised on a monthly basis. Refugees will be represented by the Sierra Leonean Refugee Welfare Committee and in each camp a committee has been established to oversee activities.

Inter-agency co-ordination will be covered in sector-specific meetings. These will include meetings with WFP on food and logistics, with UNICEF on education, with the United Nations office in Liberia on peace education, with WHO on health and with UNDP on longer-term development projects.

OFFICES

Monrovia

PARTNERS

Government Agency

Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission

NGOs

Action contre la faim

Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia

Don Bosco Rehabilitation and Skills Training Programme

Family Empowerment Programme

International Rescue Committee

Liberian Islamic Union for Reconstruction and Development

Liberians United to Serve Humanity

Lutherian World Federation

Medical Emergency and Relief Co-operative International

Save the Children Fund (UK)

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

UNICEF

UNDP

WFP

WHO

BUDGET (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	573,490
Community Services	226,920
Crop Production	71,910
Domestic Needs	321,400
Education	831,804
Food	66,909
Forestry	52,150
Health	377,890
Income Generation	61,500
Legal Assistance	288,550
Livestock	15,500
Operational Support (to Agencies)	940,270
Sanitation	69,960
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	192,750
Transport/Logistics	1,143,617
Water	76,270
Total Operations	5,310,890
Programme Support	1,426,258
Total	6,737,148