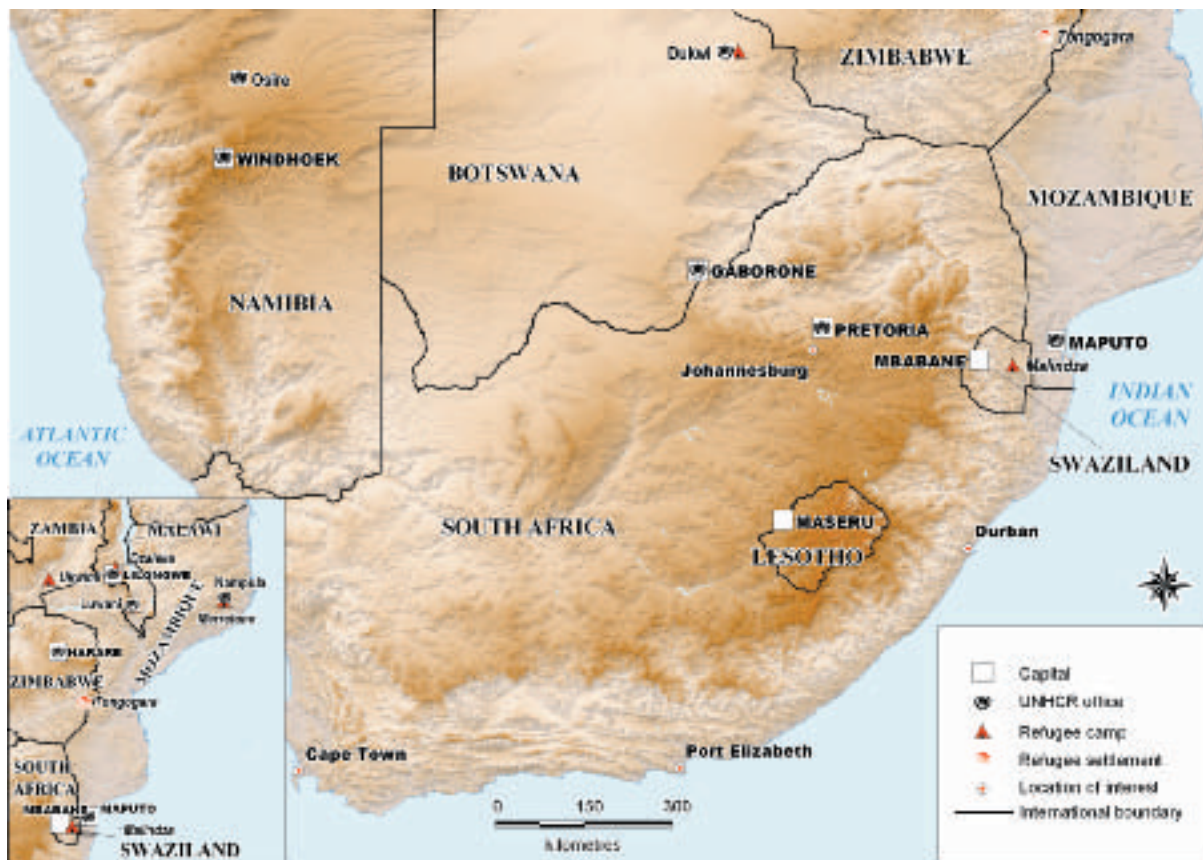


# South Africa

South Africa



## Main objectives

- Build the capacity of government and civil society partners to provide protection and assistance to refugees.
- Promote access to locally available services for refugees to facilitate self-reliance and address the basic needs of vulnerable groups.
- Facilitate alternative durable solutions for refugees.
- Enhance the visibility of UNHCR and public awareness on the situation of refugees.

## Planning figures

Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
Asylum-seekers	105,000	91,500
DRC (refugees)	12,000	9,000
Somalia (refugees)	7,000	6,000
Angola (refugees)	6,000	3,000
Other refugees	5,000	4,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>135,000</b>	<b>114,000</b>

**Total requirements: USD 4,038,695**

## Working environment

### Recent developments

By June 2004, the ongoing flow of new arrivals brought the total number of persons of concern

to 117,500 (90,600 asylum-seekers and 26,900 recognized refugees). There was a marked increase in applications from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe. As the processing capacity of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) remained limited, the backlog of pending asylum applications reached an unprecedented level. However, DHA has drawn up an ambitious plan to upgrade its effectiveness by reinforcing human and material resources capacity. This initiative, for which UNHCR will provide technical and financial support, addresses many of the concerns highlighted by UNHCR.

Following the release in December 2003 of the final report of the National Refugee Baseline Survey, which highlighted a number of serious concerns regarding refugees' access to services in South Africa, UNHCR and its partners intensified advocacy efforts. There were positive results, with refugees enjoying improved access to local services. Refugees were declared eligible for treatment and care under the public HIV/AIDS programme; the Department of Education has acknowledged its responsibility to ensure that all refugee children attend school; identity documents are being issued much more quickly and asylum-seekers have been granted the right to work and study immediately after their asylum application is filed.

UNHCR's focus in 2004 was on enhancing the quality of assistance to vulnerable refugees by its partners. By emphasizing solutions to problems and referrals to competent local services, UNHCR was able to bring about a significant improvement in service delivery, within the same budgetary allocation.

In the long term, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) will continue to offer opportunities for closer cooperation between UNHCR and South Africa in resolving some of the refugee situations on the continent.

### **Constraints**

The growing backlog of asylum applications has further lengthened the asylum procedure, making it harder for refugees to find a place in South African society. Although procedures for the issuance of

refugee identity documents have been improved, many remain without such documents and, as a result, face problems in accessing formal employment. These challenges are compounded by high unemployment, over-stretched social services and widespread xenophobia among the local population and government service providers alike.

Despite the recent advances in the provision of social and material assistance to refugees there remains a significant gap between non-responsive local services and the pressing needs of vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. Funding constraints oblige UNHCR to apply extremely restrictive criteria to ensure that assistance is provided only to those in greatest need. As a consequence, many vulnerable refugees who would in the past have qualified for assistance now remain without support. This problem is compounded by the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on refugees and asylum-seekers, further stretching the capacity of UNHCR and its partners to provide adequate assistance.

## **Strategy**

### **Protection and solutions**

In 2005, UNHCR will support the DHA's new "Backlog Project", launched to clear the backlog of pending asylum applications by providing protection training to the increased number of newly recruited refugee and immigration officials. UNHCR will also provide technical and material support to DHA's plans to computerize the registration of asylum-seekers and refugees and upgrade its refugee database to ensure an up-to-date record of the population of concern.

UNHCR will continue to support legal counselling and advocacy by its non-governmental partners (this support will include capacity-building initiatives). At the same time, UNHCR will intensify the "Roll Back Xenophobia" public awareness campaign through the mass media and education of local communities.



Some refugees like this family receive assistance to help them to integrate locally. *UNHCR / L. Gubb*

Following the signing of a tripartite agreement on the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees, UNHCR launched an information campaign aimed at facilitating the return of Angolan refugees and asylum-seekers. It is expected that the bulk of returns will take place during 2005. Similarly, a tripartite agreement with Rwanda will be pursued. In addition, UNHCR will facilitate the voluntary repatriation of individuals to various other countries, if and when conditions are sufficiently safe. Eligible refugees will be processed and recommended for resettlement.

In all the Indian Ocean Island States (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles), UNHCR will continue to promote accession to the international refugee instruments, the enactment of national legislation and the establishment of eligibility procedures to provide protection to persons seeking asylum. In cooperation with UNDP, prospects for the local integration of refugees will be pursued as an alternative to resettlement.

### **Assistance**

UNHCR will continue to call for public and civil society services to open their doors to asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR will address the basic needs of vulnerable individuals through local NGOs, with established UNHCR standards and indicators to serve as a baseline. Persons with

special needs, the disabled and the chronically or terminally ill, will benefit from a special assistance programme, until they are included under existing governmental social grant schemes. Special home-based care programmes will be supported for refugees with advanced symptoms of AIDS, pending their transfer to existing local programmes. The involvement of trained refugee workers is important, as they provide care in the language of the refugee patients and in accordance with their culture.

English language and vocational skills training, as well as small business loans, will be provided in order to increase refugees' self-sufficiency and prospects of successful local integration.

### **Desired impact**

In 2005, UNHCR will implement activities intended to ensure that South African society (both the Government and civil society) continues to assume increasing responsibility for providing protection and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees. At the same time, a further reduction in xenophobia is expected, somewhat decreasing the challenges facing refugees settling in South Africa. For individual refugees and asylum-seekers, appropriate durable solutions will be identified, including voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement for eligible candidates. For

UNHCR, an exit strategy will be very difficult to implement in the near future as there are no self-sustaining organizations able to take over current activities on a permanent basis.

## Organization and implementation

### Management structure

For 2005, UNHCR will have a total of 30 staff: 10 international, including two JPOs, and 20 national staff.

The Pretoria office is directly responsible for the Swaziland country programme, provides support to the offices in Botswana and Mozambique, and gives administrative support to four regional technical posts.

### Coordination

UNHCR will continue to work with governmental and non-governmental partners in South Africa. Cooperation is well established with UNDP offices in the Indian Ocean Island States. Formal and informal consultations will take place on a continuous basis with sector specialists based in South Africa.

UNHCR will actively participate in the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS. While practical cooperation with other development agencies will remain limited due to the relatively small-scale and rural locations of UN-funded development programmes, UNHCR will pursue an active role in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) deliberations and will contribute to the drafting of the Common Country Assessment document. The Office will continue to engage government institutions in broader humanitarian efforts, as South Africa is in a position to play an influential role in the international humanitarian community.

### Offices

**Pretoria**

### Partners

#### Government agencies

Department of Education  
 Department of Health  
 Department of Home Affairs  
 Department of Social Development  
 Ministry of Home Affairs, Swaziland

#### NGOs

*Bonne Espérance*  
 Cape Town Refugee Centre  
 Caritas (Swaziland)  
 Community Agency for Social Enquiry  
 Jesuit Refugee Service  
 Lawyers for Human Rights  
 Mennonite Central Committee  
 National Consortium on Refugee Affairs  
 Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa  
 South African Human Rights Commission  
 University of Cape Town, Legal Aid Clinic  
 University of Witwatersrand, Law Clinic

#### Others

IOM  
 UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS  
 UNDP (Madagascar and Comoros)

South Africa

### Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and coordination	497,330
Operational support (to agencies)	100,000
Transport/logistics	900,000
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>1,497,330</b>
Programme support	2,541,365
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,038,695</b>