

Working environment

The context

In February 2002, UNHCR announced a “Ceased Circumstances” Cessation Clause affecting Eritrean refugees who had fled as a result of either the war of independence which ended in June 1991, or the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea that ended in June 2000. The Cessation Clause became effective on 31 December 2002, which was also the cut-off date for the registration for voluntary repatriation and RSD. As Sudan hosted extremely large numbers of Eritrean refugees, the Cessation Clause work was the key activity of the refugee programme in 2002. Although there was hesitation on the part of the Sudanese authorities to implement the Cessation Clause, an implementation framework was agreed upon during a Tripartite Repatriation Commission meeting held in Geneva in June 2002 between UNHCR and the Governments of Eritrea and of the Sudan. The target figure of 90,000 Eritreans to be assisted to repatriate was later revised to 60,000 to reflect actual repatriation trends on the ground.

The political scene in Sudan was dominated by the peace process under the auspices of the regional Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The signing of the Machakos Protocol between the Government of Sudan and the SPLA/M in July 2002 raised hopes for an end to Sudan’s civil

conflict, which dates back to 1983. Following the signing of the framework agreement, UNHCR prepared a contingency plan (in co-ordination with the other UN agencies) for the return and reintegration of Sudanese refugees. The plan aims at the reintegration of some 500,000 returnees from six neighbouring countries, if the peace holds.

Constraints

Following a rebel attack by the SPLM/A in October 2002, on the eastern border of Sudan, the Government closed the border with Eritrea. This led to the suspension of the repatriation that had been due to resume after the rainy season ended in October. Registration for voluntary repatriation and RSD in the eastern province of Kassala was also suspended for two months, and restrictions were imposed on UNHCR staff movements. Despite several creative proposals regarding the resumption of repatriation of Eritrean refugees, the Governments of Sudan and Eritrea had not reached agreement by the end of the year.

A UNHCR initiative to close five refugee camps was met with opposition by lack of co-operation on the part of the authorities, who insisted upon a link between camp consolidation and tangible progress on voluntary repatriation.

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Eritrea (Refugees)	305,300	110,600	49	54
Asylum-seekers	23,400	-	-	-
Ethiopia (Refugees)	14,600	720	48	50
Uganda (Refugees)	8,260	-	-	-

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme Budget				
Revised Budget	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
15,264,940	3,070,665	11,874,907	14,945,572	14,797,632

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.



Eritrean refugee cooking with a fuel-efficient stove in Es Showak camp.
UNHCR / R. Wilkinson

Funding

Budget cuts affected the implementation of a number of activities, and in particular hampered the referral of medical cases (from the camps to hospitals in Khartoum). Furthermore, funding constraints impeded the provision of sanitary materials to all refugee women and girls, enabling UNHCR to distribute such materials only to some 10,000 vulnerable women.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

The Eritrean Cessation Clause announced in February 2002 provided three options for Eritrean refugees: voluntary repatriation, individual RSD, or regularisation of status with the Sudanese authorities through national immigration laws. By the end of the year, UNHCR had assisted a total of just over 19,000 Eritrean refugees to repatriate, representing about 32 per cent of the target of 60,000. Another 32,571 refugees had registered for repatriation. In September, UNHCR and the Government launched the individual status determination process for refugees wishing to be exempted from the application of the Cessation Clause. 30 adjudication teams composed of international UNVs and Sudanese lawyers participated in the process. By the cut-off date of 31 December, applications for RSD had been received from 26,851 families, of which 4,360 had been adjudicated, representing a 30 per cent acceptance rate. The cases of 22,491 families remain to be adjudicated, a process that UNHCR aims to complete by June 2003.

UNHCR also continued to offer voluntary repatriation to

Ugandan refugees in Sudan, 236 of whom were assisted to return home in 2002. UNHCR undertook a mission to Juba in southern Sudan, where the Office has no presence, and ascertained that there were 243 Ugandan, and some 3,500 Congolese refugees, willing to repatriate. In addition, some 630 refugees in Sudan were screened for resettlement to third countries; of these, 307 individuals were accepted.

The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), UNHCR's principal partner in Sudan, continued to be responsible for policy-making, camp management and the implementation of activities aimed at protecting and assisting refugees. In addition, UNHCR organised three workshops to increase women's and children's awareness of their rights. To improve the protection of refugee women, the Office particularly encouraged their participation in services such as food distribution, reproductive health services, and awareness raising on harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM).

Activities and assistance

Community services: In addition to training workshops on the protection of women and children, UNHCR addressed women's specific needs by distributing sanitary materials to 10,000 refugee women. Refugee women distributed the sanitary materials. In order to enhance refugee communities' participation in the provision of their own services, the Office initiated community-run libraries in eight refugee camps and provided a total of 4,000 books. The libraries are stocked with a view to complementing post-primary education.

Domestic needs/household support: Some 50 older and vulnerable refugees based in Khartoum, many of whom are disabled, received basic counselling and monthly financial assistance. After Sudanese authorities arrested 38 Eritrean refugees (34 men and four women) whom they accused of spying, UNHCR provided the families of these refugees with financial assistance pending a solution.

Education: UNHCR supported primary education for 13,650 children (7,326 boys and 6,324 girls) in 32 schools fully or partially funded by UNHCR. School attendance by girls was encouraging, with an enrolment rate of 65 per cent of school-aged refugee girls. UNHCR also supported some 227 primary school teachers. A total of 53 refugee students (24 women and 29 men) were assisted by UNHCR to attend universities in Sudan. In addition, UNHCR conducted literacy classes and vocational training courses (in collaboration with several partners) for 1,299 refugees, almost all women. To improve the availability of recreational activities for adolescents, youth clubs were established in ten camps to offer drama, sports and skills training activities.

Food: WFP provided food for 91,000 refugees in refugee camps in eastern Sudan. UNHCR, through COR, was responsible for transporting and distributing the food. A card-revalidation exercise requested by WFP was finalised in 2002, and 91,000 persons were issued with new food ration cards. During the Eritrean repatriation operation, UNHCR provided ready-made food items to all 19,009 repatriating refugees.

Forestry: The promotion of community-based activities for sound natural resource management and reforestation remained a fundamental element of UNHCR's environmental projects in 2002. More than 190,500 tree seedlings were raised in eight community-based nurseries and planted in different locations. UNHCR rehabilitated 1,940 hectares of severely degraded forest reserves through the planting of seeds and seedlings. In addition, 75 hectares were cleaned and replanted with indigenous Acacia species. The average survival rate for planted trees was 92 per cent. Training on the construction and use of energy-saving stoves benefited 1,400 families in camps and villages, resulting in a 40-60 per cent saving in fuel consumption. In addition, an inter-agency mission to eastern Sudan assessed the environmental impact of the protracted refugee presence and identified a number of rehabilitation projects to redress the situation.

Health/nutrition: More than 246,700 out-patient consultations were held during the year, the majority for malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea. Some 9,300 patients were treated at in-patient facilities. UNHCR continued to support the system whereby refugees could be referred to national hospitals; this benefited 1,300 patients in 2002. In conjunction with the Ministry of Health, UNHCR ensured that all refugee children under five could benefit from the National Polio Immunisation Days. In addition, UNHCR worked with the Sudanese National AIDS Control Programme on a study of the prevalence, knowledge of and response to HIV/AIDS. The study revealed an HIV infection rate of 4.3 per cent among the refugees, as compared to an average of 1.6 per cent for the Sudanese population. UNHCR is finalising a multi-year strategic plan to address the gaps revealed by the study.

Income generation: A total of 1,080 women living in refugee camps were assisted to carry out income-

generating activities such as sewing, tailoring and food processing.

Legal assistance: The Government continued to be responsible for refugee status determination and issuance of refugee identity documents in 2002. In addition to activities designed to support the implementation of the Cessation Clause for Eritreans, some 65 Ethiopian families of Oromo origin were interviewed for RSD, and 53 families (126 individuals) were found to be of concern to UNHCR. The other 12 families (28 individuals) were not recognised as refugees. In October, 38 Eritrean refugees (including four women) were arrested and accused of spying for the Government of Eritrea. The refugees were charged and sentenced to imprisonment, payment of fines and expulsion from Sudan. UNHCR provided financial and legal support to the detainees and their families, and their sentences were dismissed by another Magistrate's Court in Khartoum. However, the 34 male refugees were re-arrested outside the court immediately after their release. As of March 2003, 15 refugees have been successful in their appeal claims, six have opted for repatriation, and UNHCR is currently processing resettlement applications for the remaining 13 men.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR provided administrative support to all its implementing partners, covering staff costs, maintenance, repair and insurance of vehicles, office rental, communications equipment and office supplies.

Sanitation: UNHCR ensured that proper sanitation standards were maintained in the camps through regular garbage collection and disposal, sufficient availability of latrines, and constant vector control to minimise malaria. The success of activities in this sector was largely attributed to the active involvement of the refugees themselves in the collection and disposal of garbage in the refugee settlements.

Shelter/other infrastructure: UNHCR, in conjunction with its partners, completed the construction of a paediatric ward, a mortuary and related works at the Girba Rural Hospital and handed over the hospital to Kassala State Ministry of Health. The Office also rehabilitated a number of buildings and constructed a car park to support the provincial authorities in El Fashaga.

Transport/logistics: UNHCR's main implementing partner maintained a fleet of 133 light vehicles and 46 trucks, which were mainly used for the repatriation of Eritrean refugees and for the transportation of food items to the 18 refugee settlements.

Water: All refugees living in camps were provided with clean drinking water (at least 20-25 litres per person per day) as well as water for their livestock.

Organisation and implementation

Management

UNHCR maintained an office in Khartoum, which was supported by a sub-office at Es Showak. For the RSD exercise, UNHCR maintained temporary presences in Port Sudan and Kassala. A total of 114 staff implemented the programme, comprising 18 international and 56 national staff, seven regular UNVs, 30 adjudicators and three consultants under the RSD project.

Working with others

UNHCR continued to work in partnership with the Commission for Refugees (COR) and the Forestry National Corporation (FNC) and seven NGO partners. UNHCR also worked closely with State Governments and refugee leaders, including women's groups. The Office continued its collaboration with other UN agencies such as WFP and UNESCO-PEER.

Overall assessment

With the organised return of 19,009 Eritrean refugees, UNHCR went some way towards its main objective of repatriating 60,000 refugees in 2002. After the rainy season, the repatriation operation could not resume due to closure of the border. UNHCR achieved its other objectives pertaining to international protection and assistance to the refugees, despite the difficulties caused by funding constraints, especially at the beginning of the year. Environmental rehabilitation efforts also proved successful, with the rehabilitation and handover of the closed Laffa and Gulsa refugee camps to the Government in early 2002. Regarding UNHCR's

exit strategy in light of decreasing numbers of refugees, the Office envisages the closure and consolidation of more refugee camps as the repatriation and RSD of Eritrean refugees draws to a close. However, this strategy must be set against the potential need for new programme activities arising from the ongoing negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the opposition faction, i.e. the eventual return of about 500,000 Sudanese returnees from neighbouring countries. UNHCR has already prepared a contingency plan for that eventuality. Large-scale repatriation to Sudan would imply an increase in UNHCR's presence in the country, especially in the south, to receive and help to reintegrate returnees.

Offices

Khartoum
Es Showak

Partners

Government Agencies

Commissioner for Refugees
Forestry National Corporation
Refugee Counselling Service

NGOs

Benevolence International Foundation
Global Health Foundation
Human Appeal International
Islamic African Relief Agency
Ockenden International
Sudan Open Learning Organisation
Sudanese Red Crescent

Others

UNESCO-PEER
UNVs
WFP

Financial Report (USD)

Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects	notes	Prior Years' Projects	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,703,391		18,631	
Community Services	15,061		62,596	
Domestic Needs/Household Support	47,628		21,240	
Education	373,703		259,860	
Food	57,713		22,850	
Forestry	347,938		205,070	
Health/Nutrition	1,104,738		594,728	
Income Generation	7,438		2,649	
Legal Assistance	875,959		106,320	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,109,724		413,775	
Sanitation	82,790		52,243	
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	106,789		53,317	
Transport/Logistics	2,143,177		964,373	
Water	209,944		191,864	
Transit Account	0		(11,980)	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	956,222		(1,748,188)	
Sub-total Operational	11,142,217		1,209,347	
Programme Support	1,632,389		5,771	
Sub-total Disbursements/Deliveries	12,774,606	(3)	1,215,117	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	2,023,026	(3)	0	
Total	14,797,632	(1) (3)	1,215,117	

Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	4,948,478		264,388	
Reporting Received	3,992,256		2,012,576	
Balance	956,222		(1,748,188)	
Outstanding 1st January	0		1,945,957	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		37,004	
Currency Adjustment	0		(9,952)	
Outstanding 31 December	956,222		150,813	

Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1st January	0		1,326,264	(5)
New Obligations	14,797,632	(1)	0	
Disbursements	12,774,606	(3)	1,215,117	(5)
Cancellations	0		111,146	(5)
Outstanding 31 December	2,023,026	(3)	0	(5)

Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5