

# Uganda

## Main objectives

- To provide international protection and assistance to refugees whilst pursuing durable solutions for them;
- To continue to promote a strategy to attain increased self-reliance for Sudanese, Congolese and Rwandan refugees, and work towards the integration of refugee services into national structures;
- To play a catalytic role in encouraging relevant partners to incorporate the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) into their programmes (to benefit Ugandan nationals as well as refugees).



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Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
Sudan (refugees)	150,300	121,700
Rwanda (refugees) <sup>1</sup>	14,680	4,174
DRC (refugees)	12,700	14,000
Other refugees <sup>2</sup>	800	700
Asylum-seekers	690	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,170</b>	<b>140,774</b>

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that at the time of writing, the repatriation of Rwandan refugees had not occurred on the scale expected. Therefore, it is possible that there will be greater numbers of Rwandans in 2005 than estimated.

<sup>2</sup> Of the urban refugees comprising different nationalities, only about 160 receive UNHCR material support at any given point. The rest enjoy international protection as and when deemed necessary.

**Total requirements: USD 13,363,206**

## Working environment

### Recent developments

The Refugee Bill passed by the Cabinet was presented to Parliament in February 2004 for consideration and approval. The Bill seeks to reform the management of the refugee sector through integration of refugee matters into local and national development plans. It emphasizes free movement and access for refugees to social services, legal services, and employment. UNHCR will continue to assist the Government in promoting and approving the Bill.

The Government's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which



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Food distribution for refugees in Arua. UNHCR

include the priority of universal primary education by the year 2015, will continue to benefit all children, including refugee children.

In 1999, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR initiated the Self-Reliance Strategy, formalizing the integration of service delivery systems for refugees and local populations. Initially, SRS was conceived to encourage food self-sufficiency and the gradual phasing out of food assistance to the refugees. Further to the recommendations made by independent consultants in February 2004, the Government and UNHCR agreed to prepare for a new phase of transition from SRS to Development Assistance to Refugees (DAR). A plan for the gradual integration of the refugee assistance programme into local and national development plans in refugee-hosting areas is being worked out in line with Convention Plus initiatives. An SRS Secretariat has been established with appropriate support and technical input from the UNHCR office to the OPM. The main SRS-DAR activity so far has been to develop a plan through a consultative process led by the OPM. The strategic framework and the implementation plan have been discussed at various grassroots workshops, and the documents have now been finalized into an appeal for funding.

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has seen a certain degree of peace since deployment of a UN peace keeping force, ethnic conflict between the Hema and Lendu communities has continued to force thousands of asylum-seekers to flee to the Ugandan border districts of Nebbi, Hoima and Bundibujyo. Very few asylum-seekers have so far been content to settle in the designated areas proposed by the Government of Uganda. Instead, the majority have opted to remain close to the DRC border without any assistance. However these Congolese are considering alternatives as the situation in the vicinity of the border is deteriorating and the Ugandan Government and UNHCR are preparing to settle

them elsewhere.

A delegation of diplomats, donors and UN Officials has visited Madi-Okollo and Ikafe refugee settlements in Arua and Yumbe districts. The purpose of the mission was to observe the conditions of some 16,000 Sudanese refugees recently relocated from Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Masindi district, where they had been temporarily settled after being displaced from Achol-pii settlement by an LRA terror attack in August 2002. The mission noted improvements that need to be made in these new settlements, especially in the areas of water, sanitation, health and education.

### Sudanese refugees

As of July 2004, there were nearly 185,000 Sudanese refugees in Uganda. In addition there were about 40,000 self-settled Sudanese refugees who were registered for the first time in 2004. The Sudanese refugees, mainly comprising farmers displaced by the conflict in the south of Sudan, is a protracted refugee situation, dating back to 1989 (Adjumani and Moyo) and 1993 (Arua). This is a young population (more than half are below the age of 18) representing several ethnic groups.

A plan for possible voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees has been put in place further to the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). It is anticipated that some 35,000 Sudanese refugees from different locations in Uganda will repatriate to Sudan in 2005 if a situation conducive to return prevails. At the same time, UNHCR anticipates that up to 3,500 people may enter Uganda and seek asylum in 2005.

### Rwandan refugees

There were almost 15,000 registered Rwandans in July 2004. The majority of the refugees are relatively young (with nearly two-thirds of the population below the age of 18). For planning purposes, the figure for Rwandans has been increased on account of some 5,000 unregistered Rwandans in Mabirara district and more scattered in other locations. Further to the signing by Rwanda, Uganda and UNHCR in 2003 of the Tripartite Agreement on the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees, the process has begun, although still on a limited scale. In close coordination with the Government of Uganda, UNHCR has proposed a plan of action for the facilitation of repatriation. However, the Office considers the continued provision of assistance to Rwandan refugees inevitable during 2005.

### Congolese refugees

The majority of Congolese in Uganda are from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, fleeing civil conflict. By July 2004, there were about 13,000 Congolese refugees (roughly five per cent of the total refugee population in Uganda) of whom more than 60 per cent were below the age of 18. It is estimated that there will be more than 14,000 registered Congolese refugees in Uganda by the end of 2004, and probably, a continuous influx from eastern DRC during the course of 2005 – despite the peace efforts there.

### Other refugees

There are other smaller groups of refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia and Burundi. They are given material assistance whenever eligible (i.e. for

limited periods only, assistance to urban refugees being time-bound). There are currently a number of urban refugees, of whom more than 160 receive material assistance from UNHCR. At the time of writing, the Office is submitting an application for resettlement to the United States of America on behalf of a group of 800 refugees. For the purposes of protection and possible resettlement of protracted groups in 2005, profiling of selected refugee settlements will be completed before the end of 2004.

### Constraints

In general, the security situation has been calm in most of the settlements in the country. However, instability continues to be a source of concern in and around some areas, particularly in Adjumani district. Since February 2004, repeated raids by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters have displaced about 23,000 refugees and some 20,000 nationals. These raids have also disrupted the lives of refugees and nationals in relatively safer areas. The displaced refugees have had to receive emergency assistance (in operations requiring security precautions). The security situation is likely to remain unpredictable in 2005.

Drought has affected most of the settlements in the north as well as the south west of the country, causing crop failure and disrupting the production of seedlings. Refugees have been forced to sell domestic animals and poultry to survive. The Kyangwali, Kyaka II, Ikafe and Oruchinga settlements are affected by water shortages.

Continued gender sensitization initiatives are changing the attitudes of refugee communities towards girls and women, but early and forced marriages still occur. Discrimination against girls and early pregnancy are also contributing to the problem of girls dropping out of school.

While the refugee population has increased, funding of services has decreased. In addition, delays on asylum decisions by the Refugee Eligibility Committee have caused undue suffering to asylum-seekers.

## Strategy

### Protection and solutions

The Government of Uganda has maintained a liberal refugee policy through its Ministry for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees (under the OPM). The Government grants refugee status to all Sudanese and Congolese asylum-seekers, in accordance with a declaration dating back to the 1960s. However, the Sudanese new arrivals who choose to present their cases upon arrival in Kampala or in other parts of Uganda (other than entry points in the north) have to undergo the individual status determination procedures governed by the Refugee Eligibility Committee, to which other nationals are subject. UNHCR will continue to work closely with the Committee, intensifying collaboration on the provision of international protection and capacity building for relevant government and law enforcement officers.

There are positive signs for the refugees in Uganda: the almost concluded peace negotiations between the Sudanese Government and the SPLM/A; the signing of the Tripartite Agreement on repatriation of Rwandans, with the start-up of voluntary repatriation; and the presence of UN peace-keeping forces in DRC. However, the development of opportunities for voluntary repatriation will have to be underpinned by close monitoring of the situation in the region. This applies in particular to the increasing tensions which continue to cause influxes of new refugees into Uganda, especially from DRC.

### Assistance

In 2005, UNHCR will ensure basic assistance for refugees and encourage the integration of services for them into national structures, in line with SRS and the transition from SRS to DAR, which will draw on recommendations of the evaluation of SRS.

With a view to voluntary repatriation, refugees will be further prepared for successful reintegration and self reliance through skills development, notably problem-solving activities. Despite the discontinuation of some sectoral activities (only

life-saving ones being maintained), an integrated multi-sectoral community development approach including education, vocational training and income generation will be further pursued.

### Desired impact

Through SRS, the Ugandan Government will provide refugees in many settlements with adequate arable land to achieve self-sufficiency in certain foodstuffs. The Government will make the transition from SRS to DAR the basis for mainstreaming the refugee assistance programme into Local and National Development Planning procedures.

The nutritional intake of all refugees will be maintained at an acceptable level. The majority of refugees will be in a position to pay the costs of their health services and education, in addition to taking care of the vulnerable family members. The objective will be for refugees to take part in social and economic activities on a par with Ugandan citizens.

Initial preparations for possible voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees will be in place, in readiness for implementation, if the situation in Southern Sudan is favourable. Voluntary repatriation of the Rwandan refugees will be accelerated if possible.

Through the continued promotion of gender awareness, refugee women will participate fully in economic and social activities. Participation by women in refugee committees and their involvement in decision making will be actively encouraged. Refugee children will continue to have access to education. The high drop-out rate among girls in the higher classes of primary schools will be addressed by means of a specific education campaign. The issues of discrimination and violence against girls and early pregnancy will be addressed.

The cooperation of development partners and donors in the SRS-DAR transition process will help to place refugee assistance within a long term framework of local and national development, benefiting refugees and nationals alike.

## Organization and implementation

### Management structure

UNHCR's operations in Uganda are coordinated by a country office in Kampala, supported by two sub-offices in Arua and Pakelle/Adjumani, one field office in Mbarara and a satellite office in Hoima. The Uganda programme will be managed by 95 staff members.

### Coordination

UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator. The Office takes part in the preparation of Common Country Assessment (CCA), the Consolidated inter-agency Appeal (CAP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes. UNHCR maintains close working relationships with relevant government authorities, UN sister agencies (particularly with WFP and UNICEF), and other national and international NGOs.

The Representation in Kampala will continue to liaise with the Regional Technical Support Services (RTSS) in Nairobi and other UNHCR country offices in order to ensure a coordinated approach on possible voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees.

The Kampala Office will continue to strive to share information with the Government by inviting relevant UN sister agencies, donors and other development agencies to participate in the SRS-DAR process.

Offices
<b>Kampala</b>
Hoima
Mbarara
Moyo
Arua
Adjumani

Partners
<b>Government agencies</b>
District Community Department (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
<b>NGOs</b>
African Development and Emergency Organization
African Humanitarian Action
<i>Aktion Afrika Hilfe</i>
Danish Assistance to the Self-Reliance Strategy
Finish Refugee Council
German Development Services
Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust
Integrated Rural Development Initiatives
International Rescue Committee
Jesuit Refugee Services
Lutheran World Federation
Ockenden International
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
Uganda Red Cross Society

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,522,711
Community services	323,387
Crop production	144,178
Domestic needs	176,678
Education	1,804,400
Fisheries	4,000
Health	1,444,161
Income generation	24,000
Legal assistance	300,539
Livestock	12,000
Operational support (to agencies)	2,085,992
Sanitation	95,531
Shelter/other infrastructure	396,963
Transport/logistics	1,712,254
Water (non-agricultural)	228,637
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>11,275,431</b>
Programme support	2,087,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,363,206</b>

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