

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: SUDAN

Planning Year: 2003

2003 COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN FOR SUDAN

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Population

Within the scope of its overall mandate, the rationale for the continued presence of UNHCR in the Sudan is to protect and provide humanitarian assistance to the residual refugees who have been in Sudan for three decades. The majority of the refugees are Eritreans who fled their country during the war of independence. The Office will be implementing the already declared Cessation Clause for Eritrean refugees in the Sudan which comes into effect on 31 December 2002. It is estimated that during 2003, 62,000 residual camp-based Eritrean refugees will be assisted to repatriate. International Protection and assistance will also be provided to the repatriants who are expected to have registered for the repatriation by 31 December 2002. Since the Government of Sudan does not favour local integration for those repatriation has not been an option, UNHCR is forced to continue with the provision of care and maintenance assistance pending a durable solution. UNHCR's efforts to pursue the issue of local integration with the Government constitutes a major part of the exit-strategy of the Office.

One of the primary objectives of UNHCR Sudan is the promotion of voluntary repatriation and the eventual phase out of the program. However, the framework for the protection of individual asylum seekers and refugees has to be maintained. With the repatriation of Eritrean refugees underway, the number of refugees enjoying prima facie refugee recognition will dwindle. The protection and assistance to individual asylum seekers and refugees in Sudan will only be maintained through a system of individual status determination. UNHCR has no role in the Government of Sudan (GOS) refugee status determination process but works towards the goal of a joint refugee status determination body. The current policy and practice is one of a parallel system - where the GOS conducts individual refugee status and provides refugee identification documents for each asylum seeker, while UNHCR conducts refugee status determination under UNHCR's mandate. Refugees of various nationalities who are recognized in Sudan by the GOS and UNHCR following individual status determination will continue to enjoy international protection and assistance. UNHCR will remain active to ensure protection and assistance, including realization of durable solutions, for those who have been granted refugee status. Many of the individual asylum seekers are based in urban areas and do not require care and maintenance assistance. Once recognized as refugees, they require temporary and partial assistance from UNHCR as they develop their links in the country and become self sufficient.

The current major caseload that UNHCR continues to assist are Eritreans, who are currently located in 18 refugee settlements in eastern Sudan and the Red Sea State. There are other minority groups benefiting from international protection and assistance. These include Congolese (DRC), Ugandans, Ethiopians and Somalis. As of December 2001, Sudan was hosting an estimated 349,209 refugees. Of these, 130,527 were residing in camps, while approximately 218,682 (Government figure) were in urban and semi-urban centres in the country.

The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), is the Government agency responsible for policy-making and the principal implementing partner of UNHCR in almost all aspects of camp management and assistance to refugees. In addition, there are eight national non-governmental organisations involved in refugee primary health care and small-scale community development activities in the refugee programme.

After the declaration of the Cessation Clause to be effective on 31 December 2002 for all Eritrean refugees, and assuming that the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia will continue to move forward, the refugee operations in the Sudan are expected to dwindle considerably by end of 2003. UNHCR Sudan plans to assist the **voluntary repatriation** for the 62,000 residual Eritrean refugees which will be concluded by the end of 2003.

A total of six Tripartite Repatriation Commission meetings comprising of the Governments of Sudan and Eritrea and UNHCR have been held in the past which have together formulated the operational strategy for a large-scale repatriation to Eritrea since May 2001. In 2002, UNHCR plans to repatriate 60,000 Eritrean refugees and the residual 62,000 by end of 2003.

UNHCR Sudan also plans to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of other caseloads composed of Ugandans and Somalis during the years 2002-2003. Parallel to its efforts towards durable solutions, UNHCR envisages the continuation of care and maintenance assistance to targeted beneficiaries, primarily the vulnerable groups and persons with special needs, most of whom reside in designated refugee settlements, as well as individual protection cases based in urban settings. UNHCR will continue to collaborate with WFP in the provision of basic food rations for the refugees.

Whilst implementing the Cessation Clause for Eritreans, Branch Office will, within the confines of its mandate and financial means, address the most critical issues arising from environmental degradation and the rehabilitation of Refugee Affected Areas. This is the second main objective for the Office as the Government of Sudan has registered its concern on the impact of refugee presence in the country for over three decades, which has had an adverse impact on environment. The main concern registered by the Government is that refugees have been in this country for well over three decades and as a gesture towards this generosity, UNHCR should at least rehabilitate the structures for use by the host communities once the refugees leave. Since Sudan is a neighbour to nine refugee potential yielding countries, this gesture is strongly supported by UNHCR Office in the Sudan both **as an exit and future links strategy**. All the emanating activities will be undertaken in conjunction with Government Line Ministries. Camp consolidation will also be carried out culminating into only two camps out of the existing 18 camps in the country. All those with compelling reasons not to return to Eritrea in the auspices of the Cessation Clause will therefore be relocated to the two camps. Other United Nations Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations operating in the areas to be vacated by the refugees, such as WFP will also have a crucial role to play in the whole exercise.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of Beneficiary Population: Eritrean Refugees	
Main Goal To promote and facilitate voluntary repatriation for 62,000 residual Eritrean refugees in 2003, and to provide international protection and material assistance during the repatriation process.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eritrean refugees voluntarily assisted to repatriate to their places of origin in safety and dignity during 2003. • Residual camp and needy urban based refugees continue to benefit from international protection and assistance. • Eritrean refugees with compelling refugee-related reasons for not repatriating, continue to benefit from international protection and assistance, as necessary. • Refugees have better access to preventive, curative, promotive and reproductive health services. • Camp based refugees consume clean and adequate quantities of water for both drinking and hygiene purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62,000 Eritrean refugees assisted voluntarily repatriate from Sudan and reintegrated in Eritrea. • International Protection and material assistance provided to needy camp and urban based Eritrean refugees. • Cases with compelling reasons not to return screened, and their status determined by screening teams. • Health services provided and the refugee health status maintained both in camps. Morbidity and mortality rates remain at an acceptable level. • Increased immunisation coverage. • Water pumping, treatment, storage and distribution systems maintained. Quality of water conformed to acceptable standards.

Name of theme: Refugees of other nationalities including Ugandans and Ethiopians.	
Main Goal To continue promoting and facilitating repatriation for the residual minority refugee groups to their countries of origin where feasible, and seek resettlement opportunities for those who meet the criteria.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When feasible, minority refugee groups are assisted to voluntarily repatriate in safety and dignity to their countries of origin. • Refugees with compelling refugee-related reasons not to return home, continue to benefit from international protection and material assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repatriation facilitated for minority refugee groups. • Procedures for obtaining residence permits for those with compelling reasons not to repatriate established and implemented.

Name of theme: Refugee women/gender equality, children and adolescents.	
Main Goal Promotion of gender equality concepts and refugee education in the camps.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee women are empowered and actively involved in leadership structures. • Refugee boys and girls have access to primary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership workshops and meetings on income generating activities and awareness raising organised and supported. • Greater involvement of refugee women in program implementation. • Primary education activities and needs delineated and supported.
Name of theme: Environmental Rehabilitation in Refugee Affected Areas	
Main Goal To mainstream environmental policies and priorities into all aspects/phases of refugee-related activities to safeguard refugee needs and those of the host communities through the promotion of sound environmental management.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees and host communities benefit from a rehabilitated environment in refugee-hosting areas. • Host communities benefit from a rehabilitated education, water and health infrastructures in and around vacated refugee camps. • Camps closed and consolidated as repatriation takes place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree nurseries, shelter belts, woodlots, homegardens, and household tree planting, and energy efficient stoves under community participation established and maintained. • 3,200 hectares severely degraded forests reserves enriched and protected. • School buildings, Hospital structures and Water systems rehabilitated before hand-over to local authorities. • 18 current camps consolidated into two by end of 2003.