

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Uganda

Planning Year: 2002

Executive Committee Summary

1.1 Context and Beneficiary Populations

UNHCR's long presence in Uganda dates from the 1960s. Though the earlier arrivals of Rwandan had returned in 1994, the country still hosts about 16,859 Rwandans who are residual caseloads of the 1996 repatriation from Tanzania and other new arrivals. The majority of the refugees in the country today are southern Sudanese hosted in northern Uganda and who number about 195, 255 (88%) out of a total population of about 222,396 refugees. There are also about 8,996 DRC refugees hosted in the Southwest. Other smaller groups from Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are also catered for. Sudanese and Congolese (DRC) refugees are received on *prima facie* basis while others are dealt with case by case. Almost all the refugees fled from persecutions based on ethnic rivalries and political differences in their countries of origin.

The Government of Uganda, through the Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, carries out a liberal refugee policy. Refugees had been availed land for farming with the objective to lead them to self-sufficiency. As a result refugees in the northern settlements have been able to produce a certain percentage of their food requirement, thus correspondingly reducing the food handouts from WFP. As there appears to be no significant change in land availed to refugees, it is expected that the same effort towards self-sufficiency in food will continue in the planning year. This degree of self-sufficiency was at times interrupted by unfavourable climatic conditions.

On the other hand, it is to be noted that northern Uganda, where the large majority of refugees are settled, remains to be economically marginalised and continues to suffer from constant rebel attacks of the Lord Resistance Army. This phenomenon has also prevented refugees from accessing farmlands located at reasonable distances from the settlements. Refugee settlements on the fringes are often attacked, food looted and refugees abducted. Even though rebel attacks do not exclusively target refugees, nationals too suffer. For the planning year, the Branch Office has therefore taken into consideration precautionary security measures for staff, partners and the operation as a whole to the extent possible. The Government of Uganda does provide the necessary security for settlements as well as for nationals in the rebel prone areas though it has proved difficult to secure all areas. The hit-and-run nature of the attacks exasperates the situation.

The registered Sudanese refugees hosted in Adjumani and Moyo districts of northern Uganda number about 104,843. Of this total, 93% of them come from Eastern and Western Equatoria regions. Only 7% come from Bah-el-Gazal and the Upper Nile regions. The majority comes from agricultural background while the pastoralists Dinkas are also included. Movement of refugees from Sudan in the last two years has not been significant and we do not expect great influxes for the planning year. The few thousands that arrived in the districts of Moyo and Arua are still mentioning the cause of their flight as the on-going war. Possible causes that may trigger a big influx into northern Uganda are cited as follows:

- Some armed factions traditionally allied to the Governing National Islamic Front (NIF) in the south are now openly questioning their *raison d'être* in the war against

the South. This defiant attitude has pinned these former allies against the more zealous government militia of the Popular Defence Force.

- Another factor could be the high altitude bombing of the Government of Sudan in the South to destabilise the administration of the SPLA controlled areas.
- Some views expressed in some corners also talk of the ambivalent attitude of the SPLA leadership in the face of the newly evolving policy of the “New Sudan” as opposed to the original objective and purpose of “self-determination.”

The implication of the above scenario for the planning year is a constant analysis of the political development in Sudan and periodic revision of the Contingency Plan for the north. The assessment to be done could be carried out through co-ordination with Life Line Sudan via the Regional Office; Field visits to South Sudan and through information to be gathered through NGOs operational in South Sudan. Co-ordination with Life Line Sudan and NGOs is also expected to facilitate refugee registration for the planning year by way of controlling recyclers and irregular movers.

The 16,859 Rwandan refugees hosted in the South West are mainly under Care and Maintenance due to land shortage. Their level of self-sufficiency in food is not comparable to that of the settlements in the north. The South West in Uganda is densely populated and hence in the last two years encroachments by nationals on refugee designated land have been witnessed. Nakivale and Oruchinga are the two main Rwandan settlements. Oruchinga, the most productive in terms of agriculture could not easily accommodate all the needy while, Nakivale is not suitable for agriculture. Although voluntary repatriation had began in 1998 and was picking momentum amongst Rwandan refugees in Mbarara district, events in the second quarter of 2000 which led to the resignation of the President of Rwanda, the Prime Minister as well as the Speaker of the National Assembly had a negative impact on the voluntary repatriation of the mainly Hutu refugees.

The Branch Office is optimistic that the above status quo will change during the planning year and hopefully repatriation plans based on the 1998 experience may be reactivated. Important protection challenges for the planning year for this caseload are improvement of relationship between locals and refugees as a result of land shortage and the training of local authorities through the promotion of refugee law.

The Congolese from DRC who are hosted in Kyaka II, Kyangwali and Nakivale are about 8,996. A good number of those in Kyaka II and Kyangwali are heading for food self-sufficiency. An international agency in Kyangwali is in the process of approaching its donors for funds to take care of some two sectoral responsibilities to gradually lead the refugees to self-reliance. For 2002, there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel for repatriation of the Congolese if the international peace effort succeeds. Branch Office has already been instructed to closely follow the peace process and explore most feasible voluntary repatriation modalities.

The Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) that the Branch Office has been following since 1999 in collaboration with the Government and Implementing Partners is paying some dividends in improving the quality of asylum to some degree in the refugee settlements. Partial food self-sufficiency, albeit with intermittent dry spells, has, by and large been progressing. Integration of services like education and health has made

good progress. A favorable atmosphere towards integration of services that has taken place in 2001 is the formulation of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan. Provisions in this plan are that it will be incorporated into the District Development Plan and will render service to both nationals and refugees. Our entire health sectors NGOs are included in this plan for 2002 and it is expected that some UNHCR funded activities will be catered for by the strategic plan. Similarly, in the education sector a joint proposal by the Ministry of Finance and UNHCR is to be presented to the Education Sector Consultative Body to solicit the inclusion of refugees in the sectoral plans for the nation. Further guidelines to clarify the relationship between districts and UNHCR with regard to the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) is under discussion with the Government and it is expected this will pave the way for further integration of services for 2002 and answer some questions raised by local authorities on the question of refugee/national relationships.

An important step taken in the 2002 operational plan is to bring together the cross cutting policy priorities in education, community services and health sectors and to constantly underscore the protection linkages. For instance, health care for women and children, promotion of education for the girl child, HIV/AIDS programmes for adolescents, the community based approach of environmental concerns and programmes for refugees with special needs will all be streamlined through co-ordination mechanisms. This was as a result of an in-depth analysis of all provisions that led to common goals linked to the protection aspect of refugees. It is hoped that besides the cost effectiveness to be realized, better services could be delivered.

1.2 Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

a) Sudanese Caseload:

Name of Beneficiary Population: Sudanese Refugees	
Main Goals: Ensure International Protection for all Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Refugees attain complete or increased self-reliance. Integration of refugee services into the national structures. Ensure that all refugees have access to basic social facilities and services.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rights of refugees are well protected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host government made aware of the refugee law and officials trained through different forums. Raised awareness of refugee communities on the existing laws of the host country. Victims of insecurity resettled in third countries or relocated to safer refugee settlements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development agencies are encouraged to incorporate the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) into their programmes for refugees and Ugandan nationals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some sectors out-sourced to development agencies and implemented in favour of both refugees and nationals. Integrated system of service delivery to both refugees and nationals put in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of refugee and host communities to maintain peace and become self-supporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of refugee girls and women in community activities increased.

and responsible to their members with special needs, including women, adolescents and children is increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for skills training and income generating activities in refugee and host communities increased. • Peaceful coexistence of refugees and nationals in refugee hosting areas improved.
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b) Rwandan Caseload:

Name of Beneficiary Population: Rwandan Refugees	
Main Goals: Ensure International Protection for all Rwandan refugees in Uganda. Ensure that all refugees have access to basic social facilities and services.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees receive multi-sectoral assistance and their self-sufficiency in food production is encouraged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic social infrastructure and services put in place. • Activities to strengthen livelihood at household level, like income generation, implemented.

c) Congolese Caseload:

Name of Beneficiary Population: Congolese Refugees	
Main Goal(s): Congolese refugees benefit from care and maintenance and local settlement assistance, as appropriate. Facilitate voluntary repatriation. Ensure International Protection for all Congolese refugees in Uganda	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees benefit from multi-sectoral assistance, and where possible, their self-sufficiency in food production is increased. • Whenever possible, the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees is facilitated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential services available, basic needs met and self-sufficiency increased. • Refugees sensitised on the situation back home. • List of refugee families willing to repatriate drawn up and refugees assisted to return home.

d) Urban Caseload:

Name of Beneficiary Population: Urban Refugees	
Main Goal(s): 1. Ensure that urban refugees achieve a certain level of self-reliance. 2. Ensure International Protection for all urban refugees in Uganda	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills training for some urban refugees and asylum seekers in Kampala is vigorously promoted in order to make them more self-reliant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic needs assessment carried out. • Types of skills training selected and put in place.