

Country Operations Plan

Country: Liberia

Planning Year: 2002

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

The Liberian civil war (1989-1996), and the intermittent but bloody civil strife in Sierra Leone (1991-1999), generated huge population displacements, both within the borders of the two countries and across into neighbouring countries such as Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Liberian refugees also fled to Sierra Leone, and in reverse, Sierra Leoneans sought asylum in Liberia.

The impact of the civil war on Liberian society was devastating. Infrastructure was destroyed and the conventional economy floundered. Warring factions perpetrated grave human rights abuses, looting was widespread and large pockets of the population were forced to live for extended periods beyond the reach of humanitarian aid. At present Liberia is struggling to recover from the socio-economic consequences of civil strife and ordinary citizens continue to suffer greatly from a dysfunctional economy, characterised by extremely low economic growth, a high debt burden, high formal sector unemployment and little prospect for improvement in the foreseeable future. Physical and services of infrastructure in the public sector (health, education, water, power) are for all inadequate. National reconciliation efforts to date have failed to produce incoming results. Institutions of government, such as local administration, law enforcement and the judiciary, need to be enhanced particularly in the rural areas with adequate resources.

The background and operational environment of Liberia can be summarised as one of a nation emerging from almost a decade of intense and widespread civil conflict and which is struggling to inspire international interest to achieve recovery, reconstruction and development. Although considerable optimism initially followed the president's election in mid-1997, only a small fraction of international assistance pledges materialised and donor support has since further declined. Motivated by a variety of policy concerns, largely attributed to the perceived negative role played by Liberia in the sub-region, recurrent insecurity and human rights violations, major donors now exhibit an overt disinterest in the country's fate. Therefore, although some 377,000 Liberians have returned since 1997, their livelihood prospects and reintegration benefits have become dim.

Lofa County, the area of potential return for the majority of the Liberian refugees, remains essentially a no-man's land for humanitarian assistance since armed attacks in 1999 forced the closure of most operations (although some assistance has been organised on a small scale in a particular zone by NGOs). Subsequent acts of violence since September 2000 further exacerbated the situation. However, the ongoing disturbances in the county have not overtly spilled over to the other parts of the country. Furthermore, despite the reports of fighting, significant permanent population movements have not taken place.

Liberia offers sanctuary to some 70,000 Sierra Leonean refugees, of which approximately 34,000 are located among the six UNHCR-assisted camps, another 30,000 are located in Lofa County where they have integrated into local communities and the remainder is scattered in different pockets of the country. A small number of urban refugees from different countries have also found refuge in Liberia. The

Government has always maintained a generous open-door policy to refugees. Camp residents are provided with all essential services, although the reduction of the food basket has had an adverse effect on some of the population with signs of apparent malnutrition.

In this context, the overall objectives of UNHCR's programme in Liberia from 1996 through 2000 were to help enhance durable solutions for Liberian refugees returning home to their communities of origin through repatriation and reintegration support. Also, it provided care and maintenance assistance and protection for the large, mainly Sierra Leonean, refugee population in Liberia as consistent with UNHCR's Mission Statement. Since January 2001, the care and maintenance programme has continued unabated while UNHCR's reintegration activities have been deferred, for Lofa County only, until the county is considered conducive for repatriation. Monitoring and protection of returning Liberians still remains in focus.

The main objectives for the year 2002 are:

- to provide international protection and assistance as required for up to 34,000 Sierra Leonean refugees, with progressive focus on facilitation of voluntary repatriation as the peace process gains ground in Sierra Leone and;
- to provide individual repatriation assistance for up to 5,000 Liberian refugees in various countries of asylum.

Continued emphasis will be placed on bolstering the capacities of all implementing partners, especially local organisations, in order to increase overall efficiency to the advantage of the beneficiary population. Partner agencies will be consolidated to permit only one agency per sector in most cases. UNHCR will continue to provide assistance of all sectors as the government is still in need of support. Further pertaining to refugee care, objectives include the provision of educational scholarships and subsistence allowances for the small number of urban refugees while exploring permanent resettlement solutions for those urban refugees who qualify. Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence in refugee communities will also be sustained.

(b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

<p>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Sierra Leonean Refugees in Liberia</p> <p>Main Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pending durable solutions, to ensure protection and assistance in conformity with international standards for Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia. • To continue to support established systems of multi-sectoral approach for the prevention of, and response to, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the refugee community. • To facilitate the voluntary return, in safety and dignity, of Sierra Leonean refugees living in Liberia and to monitor those that choose to return spontaneously. • To empower eligible Sierra Leonean refugees to acquire useful skills and gain capacity to serve their societies upon return.

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<p>Ensure that the combined efforts of food assistance, food production, etc., together with the refugees' own coping mechanisms, sustain them and maintain the acceptable nutrition level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General food distribution and food basket monitoring conducted on a monthly basis to ensure 100% of population receives 100% of appropriate rations; • 75% of refugees with special needs identified and provided supplementary food; • Food for work projects identified for the refugees as required; • Provision of extension services to farmers; • Distribution of farming implements and seeds for the extension of existing farms as well as for new farmers.
<p>Provide comprehensive and integrated health care (curative, preventive and promotional) to the refugees, as well as the host community, to satisfy WHO guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Mother Child Health care to all ante-natal and post natal mothers and their infants; • Provision of Out Patient Department services as needed to the target population on a 24 hour basis; • Daily immunisation services carried out through Expanded Programme of Immunisation to all children <5 and to all fertile women; • Provision of reproductive health facilities in clinics and at community health level on a daily basis.
<p>Respond to special needs of vulnerable refugees through community-based activities and approaches with full emphasis on refugees taking care of their own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One support group established for each block in all camps; • Shelter provided for all vulnerables; • Vulnerables adequately clothed; • Vulnerables demonstrate their ability to meet their daily needs and number of registered vulnerable refugees decreases; • 100% of identified refugees receive the needed counselling/assistance; • All disabled refugees receive medical, physical, economic and skills training assistance; • All separated children identified, registered and documented for reunification or provision of assistance.

Provide primary education for all school-aged children by qualified teachers, and secondary education or vocational training to select students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of primary school-aged children attend school; • 500 secondary students receive scholarships; • 130 adolescents receive vocational training; • 100% of teachers attend at least one teacher training module.
Improve environmental management by encouraging households to use improved stoves, planting and maintaining trees, as well as integrating environmental education into the school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of households use eco-stoves; • 5 refugee schools integrate environmental education into curriculum; • 6 community based tree nurseries are maintained and 5,000 trees per nursery are transplanted in camps and environs.
Interceded on behalf of refugees in conflict with the law and promote refugee law by conducting workshops for refugees, government, and NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of refugees requiring legal representation receive it; • 10 workshops and training sessions are organised to enhance understanding of human rights and international protection; • Reliable data base in use; • ID cards provided to all family heads.

Ensure protection against and prevention of sexual violence, while providing timely response for all refugees, by increasing the capacity and awareness of refugees, NGOs and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of training to 1100 women and girls in various skills and basic adult literacy for survival; • Provision of psychosocial support in the form of sensitisation, mobilisation, recreation and family forum; • Continuation of monthly meetings and 6 formal workshops on harmful effects of SGBV organised, while providing appropriate intervention for the survivors; • Provision of legal representation to reported cases of sexual harassment; • Provision of individual counselling to victims of sexual violence.
Provide transport and individual assistance to all refugees who express their willingness to return to Sierra Leone in close collaboration with staff in country of origin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,500 registered refugees assisted with transport to their places of origin in Sierra Leone; • Non Food Items and two months food provided to all registered refugees; • Spontaneous repatriation of 7,500 non-assisted monitored.

Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Liberian Returnees	
Main Goal(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a regional repatriation programme in order to assist individual Liberian refugees who voluntarily desire to return home from the countries of asylum. However, no reintegration programme will be implemented in Liberia. 	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Liberian refugees, on an individual basis, to return to their places of origin, or choice, in Liberia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All registered returnees provided with transportation assistance and repatriation package (plastic sheeting, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats and two months food ration).

Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Urban Refugees	
Main Goal(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pending durable solutions, to ensure protection, in conformity with international standards, to urban refugees in Liberia and support their welfare through provision of subsistence allowances, education grants and medical care. 	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue resettlement for long stayers who have no durable solutions prospects. • Provide subsistence allowance to minimum urban refugees to enable them to cover basic living costs in Liberia as well as provide shelter, medical and education (primary) for all school assistance on the same level as camp resident; • Intercede on behalf of refugees in conflict with the law or refugees arbitrarily arrested and or detained. • Providing support to the Asylum and Appeal Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resettlement process enacted for long stayers in Liberia among the urban refugees; • 90% or refugees able to meet basic human needs; • All refugees receive necessary medical assistance; • 80% of children attend school; • All refugees receive the requisite legal representation; • The Asylum and Appeal Committee will meet for RSD of new arrivals.