



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Executive Committee Summary

Country: Libya

Planning Year: 2007

Part I: OVERVIEW

1. Protection and socio-economic operational environment

Many foreigners come to Libya with a perspective of either improving their living standard, through seeking better employment or in search of an exit point to Southern Europe, especially Italy. The majority is regarded by the Libyan Government as “illegal migrants.” Amongst them, we also find some people who have fled their countries of origin for security reasons, either due to fear of persecution or due to internal political conflicts, in search for protection.

Since 2004, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of applicants approaching the Office of UNHCR-Tripoli seeking asylum. Such an increase is expected to continue in 2007. In 2005, a total of 12,580 Mandate refugees have been registered with UNHCR in Libya, and 579 new asylum seekers mostly from Sudan, Liberia, Eritrea, Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Palestine.

The political and security developments in Sudan, especially in the Darfour area, as well as the increasing tension between Chad and Sudan, may result in 2007 into larger numbers of asylum seekers and refugees approaching the UNHCR Office in Tripoli to seek protection and/or durable solutions. The security turmoil in Somalia may also encourage more Somalis to flee their country and enter Libya benefiting from the country’s “open door” policy.

In light of the above, the 2007 UNHCR refugee operation in Libya foresees the increase of applications for refugee status, within the current increase of transit migratory flows in the North Africa region. In the absence of a specific administrative structure and a national legislation by the Libyan Government to determine refugee status, UNHCR should reinforce its capacity to carry out the core protection activities towards asylum seekers/refugees. The promotion and facilitation of local integration through self-reliance activities, voluntary repatriation and resettlement will continue to be a fundamental feature of the country operations.

For 2007, UNHCR will continue its efforts for the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Libya as well as its lobbying efforts for the development of the asylum system and the protection of refugees within broader migration movements.

Constraints

While the EU has already indicated some interest in pursuing asylum issues with its interlocutors, it is not yet clear how it will cooperate with UNHCR in this respect. A further constraint might be Libya’s preference in forging links with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in regard to cooperation on migration-related issues, at the core of which lie asylum issues, rather than involving organizations with a refugee protection mandate such as UNHCR. In this respect, it is to be noted that Libya and IOM agreed to establish a presence in Tripoli to assist in efforts dealing with illegal migration. IOM is yet to open an office in Libya.

2. Operational goals and potential for durable solutions

In line with UNHCR's Global Objectives, the strategic goals for UNHCR in Libya in 2007 are the following:

- Conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Libya;
- Improvement of individual refugee status determination procedures;
- Protection of refugees within broader migration movements and assistance for urban refugees and asylum-seekers on the basis of assessed needs;
- Enhancement of the refugee protection environment and qualitative improvement in protection delivery, focusing particularly on the policy priorities relating to women and children, and refugees with special needs;
- Promotion of durable solutions pursuing feasible initiatives and opportunities for refugees, including enhancing their in-country coping abilities through the sustained reorientation of the overall program towards self-reliance, voluntary repatriation and resettlement, as appropriate;
- Promoting and facilitating the voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation of refugees as well as the resettlement of certain cases as a strategic option.
- Promotion of effective refugee participation and empowerment in programme activities, ensuring gender equality in line with AGD policies and guidance.
- Foster partnership and complementarities between UNHCR and other actors, particularly NGOs and UN sister agencies, as an essential platform for attaining the objectives of the 2007 program, including fund-raising;
- Raise public awareness on refugees and asylum seekers through an external relations program designed to reach the public at large, civil society and special constituencies, such as the potential local donor community.

Part II: COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS AND PARTNERSHIP

1. Outcomes of joint planning and management of identified gaps

Based on the principles of Result-Based Management and the global strategic objectives for 2007-2009, UNHCR in Tripoli has carried out a comprehensive needs assessment to determine the strategic operational objectives for 2007. The AGDM planning process adopted has strategically assisted UNHCR Tripoli to determine refugee needs (particularly those of women, children, elderly and handicapped) and seek their views on how to redress them.

Only the most vulnerable amongst the refugees will be supported with subsistence allowances, which will be time-limited and granted pending the engagement of the beneficiary in one of the durable solution options.

The Joint Assessment Advisory Committee, established in 2002, will continue to be an active part of the refugee vulnerability identification process. The Committee comprises of representatives of the refugees (especially women) and those of the implementing partners and UNHCR. The Committee regularly reviews the assessments and recommendations made by the implementing partners' social counseling and self-reliance units and advice on the type of durable solutions' options to be proposed to the beneficiaries.

The UNHCR Agenda for Protection, the framework for Durable Solutions and the policy on refugees in urban areas will continue to serve, in 2007 as a guiding tool for the development of specific parameters and criteria for protection, assistance, and durable solutions for the urban refugee caseload in Libya.

2. Contributions by Partners

a) Contributions by the host government, refugee, and/or local communities

The objective set by UNHCR Tripoli for 2007 will be to integrate the refugees into the relevant development programs (health, education, etc.) in conjunction with the relevant line departments as well as UN Agencies (WHO, UNICEF and UNDP). Moreover, efforts will continue to be deployed to ensure free access for refugees to local health and education facilities, as already obtained for Palestinian refugees.

Fund-raising efforts would be intensified, building on the results achieved over the last three years, to ensure continued contributions from the Government to the overall UNHCR Program and from the local Foundations such as GIFCA, WICS, and Watasemo Charity Association to both the UNHCR Operations in Libya as well as those UNHCR Operations in Africa and other relevant regions.

3. Implementation and co-operation

Implementation and Coordination Strategy

In 2007, the implementation of the program will be entrusted to partners such as the AL-Wafa Charity Association, WICS and Watasemo Association, while the UNHCR Office in Tripoli will retain the direct implementation of the protection component. Coordination of implementing and other operational partners will be carried out through regular strategic planning and review meetings and workshops, aimed at promoting synergies between the stakeholders and common visions vis-à-vis needs addressing and durable solutions. In line with the Office burden-sharing policy, implementing partners will be actively encouraged to contribute to selected sectors where gaps might be identified in the course of the year.

In addition to its implementing partners, OCOM Tripoli signed PARinAC agreements with Libyan NGOs such as the Ghaddafi International Foundation for Charity Associations (GIFCA), the World Islamic Call Society (WICS), the Watasemo Charity Association, and the International Organization for Peace, Care, and Relief and proposed concluding similar agreement with the High Council for Childhood. These partners have been, so far, more inclined to assist refugees outside Libya as demonstrated by the joint ventures carried out over the last five years such as UNHCR and GIFCA in Pakistan and Chad, and UNHCR and WICS in Guinea. It is to be noted that international NGOs are not present in Libya.

Cooperation within the UN system and with other agencies:

UNHCR Tripoli will continue to actively participate in the UN inter-agency forum (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO), within the Resident Coordination system, in order to

explore opportunities that could benefit refugees and persons of concern. Initiatives started in 2002 – 2006, to integrate refugees in relevant national projects supported by UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO, will be continued in 2007. As appropriate, the Office will participate in the various joint initiatives and coordination processes that take place within the UN Country Team.

4. **Multi-year Strategies**

In the field of durable solutions, the re-orientation of the residual protracted care and maintenance assistance started in 2002 towards refugee self-reliance, combined with the search for other durable solution options, will continue to be fully supported in 2007. UNHCR policies regarding women/gender equality, environment, children and refugee participation /empowerment will continue to be mainstreamed.