



Repatriation operations for Liberian refugees. UNHCR/S. Brownell

**Regional Multi-Year Operations Plan for the
Repatriation and Reintegration of Liberian Refugees
and
Internally Displaced Persons
(2004 – 2007)**

August 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I	INTRODUCTION	<i>paras 1-4</i>
II.	SETTING THE OPERATION IN CONTEXT	
	History of the conflict	<i>paras 5-11</i>
	Life in Liberia today	<i>paras 12-13</i>
	Current humanitarian situation	<i>para. 14</i>
	The broader dimension of Liberia's civil strife	<i>paras 15-16</i>
III	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	<i>paras 17-18</i>
	Conditions for UNHCR's involvement	<i>paras 19-20</i>
	The nature of UNHCR's involvement	<i>paras 21-26</i>
	Criteria for organized returns	<i>paras 22-26</i>
	UNHCR's policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	<i>paras 27-31</i>
	Residual caseloads	<i>paras 32-33</i>
IV	SETTING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	
	UNHCR's role with regard to spontaneous returnees	<i>paras 34-36</i>
	Arrangements for organized repatriation	<i>paras 37-38</i>
	Reintegration activities – a community-based approach	<i>paras 39-43</i>
	UNHCR's contribution to the DDRR process	<i>paras 44-48</i>
	Liberian combatants in asylum countries	<i>paras 49-50</i>
	Transitional planning for the 4Rs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction)	<i>paras 51-52</i>
	Participation in the electoral process	<i>para. 53</i>
	Resettlement activities under organized repatriation	<i>para. 54</i>
	Building local capacity and strengthening institutions	<i>paras 55-57</i>
V	PREPARING THE RETURN: SOME ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES	
	Mass information campaign	<i>paras 59-66</i>
	Registration for voluntary repatriation and de-registration in countries of asylum	<i>paras 67</i>
	Logistics	<i>para. 68</i>
	Conditions of roads and bridges, and trucking capacity	<i>paras 69-70</i>
	Movements by land, sea and air	<i>paras 71-73</i>
	Modes of transport from countries of asylum	<i>para. 74</i>
	Transit centres and way stations	<i>para. 75</i>
	Repatriation package and its distribution	<i>paras 76-77</i>

VI PLANNING PARAMETERS

Assumptions	<i>paras 78-79</i>
General characteristics of the refugees	<i>paras 80-82</i>
Place of origin in Liberia	<i>paras 83-84</i>
Ethnicity	<i>para. 85</i>
Educational level and skills	<i>paras 86-87</i>
Refugees with special needs	<i>para. 88</i>
Planning figures for the repatriation	<i>para. 89</i>
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	<i>paras 90-92</i>
Sub-regional and multi-dimensional aspects	<i>para. 93</i>

VII. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

Returnee and IDP monitoring	<i>para. 94</i>
Monitoring modalities	<i>paras 95-96</i>
Monitoring of persons with special needs	<i>para. 97</i>
Care and maintenance activities for remaining refugees	<i>para. 98</i>
Summary of repatriation and reintegration activities by sector	
Food	<i>paras 99-100</i>
Transport and logistics	<i>paras 101-103</i>
Domestic items and individual assistance	<i>para. 104</i>
Water and sanitation	<i>para. 105</i>
Health and nutrition	<i>paras 106-111</i>
Shelter	<i>paras 112-113</i>
Community Services	<i>paras 114-118</i>
Education	<i>paras 119-120</i>
Crop production and agriculture	<i>para. 121</i>
Livestock	<i>para. 122</i>
Fisheries	<i>para. 123</i>
Environmental protection and awareness	<i>para. 124</i>
Income-generating activities	<i>para. 125</i>
Peace building and legal assistance	<i>paras 126-129</i>
Agency operational support	<i>paras 130-131</i>
Rehabilitation of refugee-affected areas	<i>para. 132</i>

VIII. SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

Staffing	<i>paras 133-135</i>
Staff security	<i>paras 136-137</i>
Training	<i>paras 138-139</i>
Supply chain	<i>paras 140-141</i>
Communications network	<i>para. 142</i>

IX. FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Implementation arrangements	<i>paras 143-144</i>
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination	<i>paras 145-148</i>
Regional coordination	<i>para. 149</i>
Resource mobilization and public information	<i>paras 150-151</i>
Phase-out strategy	<i>paras 152-153</i>

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: List of acronyms

ANNEX 2: Table showing breakdown of Liberian refugees by gender and age

ANNEX 3: Table showing Liberian refugees by country of asylum & county of origin

ANNEX 4: Annual Work Plan

ANNEX 5: Indicative repatriation and reintegration budget 2004-2007

ANNEX 6: Map of expected number of refugee returnees per county of origin

ANNEX 7: Map of expected number of IDP returnees per county of origin

ANNEX 8: Map of expected number of returnees (refugees and IDPs) by county of origin

ANNEX 9: Map of Liberia and neighboring countries showing UNHCR field presence, over land repatriation routes & road network

ANNEX 10: Modes of Transport from Countries of Asylum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) The civil unrest in Liberia has been one of the most destructive in West Africa. The first round of the war started in 1989 and ended in 1997 with the election of Charles Taylor as President, who failed to bring peace back to Liberia. The ensuing lack of reconciliation and economic progress eventually led to the emergence early in 2000, of a new rebellion in Lofa County, in the north-western part of the country, led by a rebel group called the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In March 2003, a second group called the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) launched attacks against Government positions in eastern Liberia. According to some observers and human rights groups, over 700,000 persons may have lost their lives during the 14 years of conflict.

(ii) As of December 2003, it was known that over 340,000 Liberians were in exile in neighbouring countries while an estimated 500,000 Liberians were internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom 325,000 were living in camps run by humanitarian organizations. The war in Liberia has had a significant impact on most countries in the sub-region, and has been felt most strongly in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

(iii) As a result of concerted pressure from the international community, Charles Taylor relinquished the presidency and went into exile to Nigeria on 11 August 2003. His departure from office preceded the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 18 August 2003. Following protracted negotiations, the formation of a National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was agreed in Accra. The NTGL which took office on 14 October 2003, comprises representatives of LURD, MODEL, the civil society and all the major political parties. To support the peace process in Liberia, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent an initial peacekeeping force of 3,000, later to be joined by a larger force totalling 15,000 troops under United Nations command.

(iv) With the peacekeeping force fully deployed and faction fighters disarmed, UNHCR is optimistic that adequate security will gradually be restored throughout the country. Based on these assumptions, UNHCR is planning an organized voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees, scheduled to begin in October 2004.

(v) In 2004 it is foreseen that close to 100,000 refugees will repatriate spontaneously or through facilitated repatriation. A further 154,000 Liberians are expected to repatriate in 2005, while about 65,000 are expected to return home in 2006. Reintegration programmes will continue through 2007. A verification exercise will be organized in 2007 for the residual group of refugees in asylum countries, to determine their durable solutions needs.

(vi) In an effort to secure sustainable return, and in collaboration with other UN agencies, local and international non-governmental organizations and the donor community, UNHCR has initiated reintegration programmes in keeping with the 4Rs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction) principles. The aim is to develop effective links between start-up reintegration projects and long-term development goals. A key element of this strategy will be the community participation approach, through sectoral activities and Community Empowerment Projects (CEPs). Communities will be given the opportunity to fully participate in the planning and implementation of programmes in their localities. Programmes will endeavour to address

the needs of all displaced people and not target particular groups. However, they will be geared towards areas with high numbers of returnees (refugees and IDPs) and address the specific needs of such communities. The CEPs will form an effective basis for the introduction of Community Driven Development (CDD), funded by UNDP/World Bank, throughout the entire country, beginning in 2005.



Visit of the High Commissioner, Ruud Lubbers, to Liberia in May 2004. UNHCR/S. Brownell

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since August 2003, positive developments in the political environment have included the departure of Charles Taylor into exile on 11 August 2003, the signing of a Peace Agreement on 18 August 2003; and the consensus on the formation of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL). The NTGL took up its functions on 14 October 2003, for a two-year period, with the aim of consolidating the peace process and organizing general elections in late 2005.

2. On 19 September 2003, under Resolution 1509, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with Chapter VII powers to restore peace. UNMIL's mandate includes inter alia supporting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and assisting the National Transitional Government to revamp security arrangements and re-establish national authority throughout the country. The 15,000-strong UN Peacekeeping force reached full strength in July 2004. It is hoped that the provisions of the peace agreement will be fully adhered to.

3. In view of the need for a coordinated repatriation and reintegration and in line with the General Assembly Resolution 58/149 of 24 February 2004, on Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, UNHCR has found it necessary to prepare a multi-year regional plan of operations. The plan foresees the voluntary repatriation of some 318,000 Liberians over a three-year period. It is expected that close to 100,000 will repatriate in 2004, while approximately 154,000 and 65,000 will repatriate in 2005 and 2006, respectively. In addition

to operational support, coordination mechanisms and partnerships, the multi-year regional plan also focuses on the regional dimension of the crisis in Liberia. Attention is given to developing links between the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme for ex-combatants; the repatriation and reintegration of returnees and IDPs; the 4Rs transitional approach to recovery and development; as well as, strengthening interagency and donor collaboration.

4. Parts II - IV below provide the reader with important background information and explanations on the circumstances, objectives and strategy of the plan. Subsequent parts (V - IX) provide more specific operational details covering its many, complex dimensions. Additional information, mainly in tabular form, are to be found in the Annexes. These also include relevant maps, as well as a yearly Work Plan covering implementation of the operation for the period 2004-2007, and an indicative repatriation and reintegration budget.

II. SETTING THE OPERATION IN CONTEXT

History of the conflict

5. The origins of the Liberian conflict lie partially in the creation of the Liberian State itself on 26 July 1847, when freed slaves who had arrived from the United States declared the birth of a Republic on the territory today known as Liberia. From the very beginning, the former slaves dominated the political and economic life of the country, a position

they maintained vis-à-vis the indigenous population until the coup d'état led by Samuel K. Doe in 1980. During the tenure of Samuel K. Doe the country continued to face political and social problems.

6. In 1989, an armed rebel group known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, invaded Liberia. Government troops responded, and soon the country was in turmoil with tens of thousands of Liberians fleeing into neighbouring countries. One year later, Liberia's first indigenous ruler, Samuel K. Doe, was captured and killed. In the seven years that followed Liberia went through one of its most violent and destructive periods. The country split into several parts under the control of numerous armed groups, all pitted against the NPFL.

7. The war finally ended following a lengthy peace process involving the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which had committed a large intervention force (ECOMOG) to restore peace in Liberia and stabilize the country. The UN which had also committed a large military observer force (UNOMIL), joined forces with ECOWAS, and their efforts resulted in the general elections of 1997, that brought Charles Taylor to power.

8. Given these positive developments, UNHCR embarked on the organized repatriation of Liberian refugees. From 1997 to 1999 some 400,000 returned home spontaneously or with the assistance of UNHCR. Reintegration programmes were launched in all counties addressing needs in the sectors of health, water, sanitation, education, agriculture, roads and bridges rehabilitation and other infrastructural reconstruction.

9. But the hopes of many Liberians were dashed, as the Government of Charles Taylor failed to implement the reconciliatory policies and reconstruction programmes so badly needed, and the rift in Liberian society widened. Given the weak governance and the failing economic infrastructure, peace and security became more and more elusive.

10. In early 2000, a series of attacks on Government positions began to occur. Concentrating its efforts in the north-western part of the country, a new rebel movement known as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) emerged, bent on overthrowing the régime. During the last quarter of 2002, the conflict took on a new dimension, and a full-fledged civil war spread throughout the country. In early 2003, a second rebel group - the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) - joined the fighting, wresting large areas of the east and south-east of the country from government control. By early June 2003, the fighting had reached Monrovia, causing the evacuation from Liberia of foreigners, UN international staff and the NGO community. As of June 2003, over 340,000 Liberians were registered as refugees mostly in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, some of them having lived in exile since the early eighties. Another estimated 500,000 Liberians were displaced within the country.

11. In the meantime, peace talks had been convened at Akosombo, Ghana, on 4 June 2003, with the aim of finding a solution to the conflict. Led by ECOWAS and facilitated by the United Nations with the support of the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), the parties to the conflict agreed to a cease-fire on 17 June 2003. The fragile cease-fire accord was accompanied by an agreement to form an interim administration for Liberia that would not

include Charles Taylor, and deploy a stabilization force to monitor the implementation of the cease-fire. With mounting pressure from the international community to step down, and widespread military defeats, President Taylor finally left Liberia for exile in Nigeria on 11 August 2003. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra by rebel groups and political parties on 18 August 2003. Taylor's Vice-President, Moses Blah, completed his term of office and handed over power to an all-inclusive National Transitional Government, headed by Gyude Bryant, on 14 October 2003. The Peace Agreement stipulated that a transitional period of two years, culminating in the organization of free and fair general elections in the second half of 2005.

Life in Liberia today

12. The impact of the civil war on Liberian society has been devastating. Infrastructure was destroyed and the economy has floundered. Warring factions perpetrated serious human rights abuses. Looting was widespread and large pockets of the population forced to live for extended periods beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance. Presently, Liberia is struggling to recover from the dire socio-economic consequences of civil strife. Its citizens continue to suffer greatly from a dysfunctional economy, characterized by extremely low economic growth, a high debt burden (estimated at USD 3 billion), and soaring unemployment (85 per cent) which has undermined the coping mechanisms that used to exist among Liberians. Agricultural activity has also declined drastically, and with food in desperately short supply, people are unable to sustain their own nutritional needs.

13. Public services, such as health, education, water and electricity are

virtually non-existent. Government institutions such as local administration, law enforcement and the judiciary are rare, and practically non-existent in rural areas. In Monrovia, government property was looted so heavily that the NTGL needs support from the international community to function.

Current humanitarian situation

14. The dire humanitarian situation in Liberia has been compounded by the huge number of IDPs, estimated at 500,000, spread throughout the country. An interagency survey of IDPs carried out in April 2004, placed the official figure of IDPs in regular camps at just over 260,000. This survey provides valuable data for the comprehensive reintegration plan. Moreover, many of the Liberian refugees registered in neighbouring countries, have started to come back, often returning to less than ideal conditions. As of June 2004, up to 50,000 refugees are believed to have returned spontaneously since late 2003, from neighbouring countries mainly into the Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Montserrado, Grand Gedeh and Grand Cape Mount Counties. They have joined populations which for various reasons did not have the opportunity to flee the conflicts, and have had virtually no access to basic services for the past few years. Since late 2003, assistance is being provided by organizations which have been able to deploy to the hinterland, in spite of fragile security conditions. Close to 10,000 of these spontaneous returnees, formerly in Sierra Leone, are hosted in two camps near Monrovia and are receiving assistance from UNHCR and other agencies. Furthermore, there are significant two-way movements between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The broader dimension of Liberia's civil strife

15. From the onset, the civil strife in Liberia took on a regional dimension. For the first time the sub-region experienced mercenary-like activity. It is alleged that the subsequent war in Sierra Leone was exported from Liberia. A similar attempt is said to have been made in Guinea, and when the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire began in late 2002. The result of the conflict in Liberia, therefore, was not only that more young men and women became schooled in warfare and were remobilized from conflict to conflict, but that the culture of war was exported to neighbouring countries with disastrous effects. In addition, large numbers of people became displaced both internally and across borders with devastating consequences for the economies of both the countries at war and those receiving refugees. As other West African States grew aware of the sub-regional dimension of the conflict, ECOWAS became involved as from 1990, in an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

16. The remarkable intervention of the international community to end the war in Sierra Leone has contributed significantly to resolving the Liberian crisis. The positive developments of peace building in Sierra Leone provide encouragement for the international community to pursue similar efforts in Liberia.

III LEGAL FRAMEWORK

17. The involvement of UNHCR in a repatriation operation is subject to certain conditions, and is undertaken in accordance with generally accepted norms of refugee law. It should be voluntary and conducted under conditions of safety and dignity. The return in safety is a movement that takes place under conditions of legal security

(e.g. amnesties or public assurances of personal safety, integrity, non-discrimination, and freedom from fear of persecution or punishment upon return). The return in dignity implies inter alia, that returnees are not harassed either on departure, en route or upon arrival.

18. In the case of Liberia, UNHCR's involvement is justified by the signing of the Peace Agreement, the deployment of UN peacekeeping force, the willingness shown by the National Transitional Government of Liberia to restore law and order, its commitment to the right of return of refugees and IDPs, and its initiative for the rehabilitation and reconstruction programme. Until the end of the operation, Liberian refugees remaining in asylum will continue to be provided with international protection and material assistance. At the completion of the operation, remaining refugees will undergo verification/profiling exercise aimed at determining the most appropriate durable solution.

Conditions for UNHCR's involvement

19. The signing of the all-inclusive Peace Agreement on 18 August 2003 in Accra, between the Government of Liberia and the Liberian Parties, foresees explicitly the voluntary return of refugees and IDPs in safety and dignity. That agreement serves as the basis on which UNHCR is planning to launch its repatriation and reintegration programme.

20. The right to leave and return to one's country is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Repatriation being the best durable solution for refugee problems, every effort should be made by the international community and the Liberian Government to encourage and facilitate the return of refugees. It is encouraging that the Liberian

Government is willing to issue and promulgate a Declaration on the Rights and Security of Liberian Returnees and IDPs, which confirms its commitment regarding the rights of returnees and IDPs, and the access to and recovery of their property, including land for settlement and agricultural use. The Government also abides by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which stipulate in principle 28 that “Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or resettle voluntarily in another part of the country...”

The nature of UNHCR’s involvement

21. Repatriation may be spontaneous or organized. Spontaneous repatriation indicates the return of refugees by their own means. UNHCR’s mandate of ensuring international protection covers all refugees and returnees, even those who have opted to repatriate spontaneously. In this regard, as soon as security conditions permit, UNHCR will conduct a profiling survey and registration with a view of extending community based assistance to Liberian refugees who have spontaneously returned to their communities.

Criteria for organized returns

22. Organized repatriation operations normally comprise two phases: facilitation and promotion. During the facilitation phase UNHCR will not encourage repatriation, but respect the strong desire of refugees to return voluntarily and therefore support protection and assistance measures geared to assist them. Transport assistance may be provided although refugees are free to return on their own

after registration. The promotion phase generally relates to UNHCR’s positive assessment of the situation and advocacy role in creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation.

23. Criteria and benchmarks for the facilitation phase have been set by the NTGL Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy. The Security Assessment Committee for Resettlement at national level has been entrusted in determining safe areas of return upon recommendations by County Security Assessment Committee for Resettlement. Under the facilitation phase, the criteria for safety in areas of return will include the following:

- absence of hostilities;
- no cross-border raids (as a result of external hostilities);
- ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- security maintenance by UNMIL;
- unhindered access by humanitarian workers to areas of return;
- presence of local administration established in areas of return;
- sizeable spontaneous return movements of IDPs and returnees to areas where repatriation is to take place;
- on-going preparations for elections.

24. In addition to the criteria outlined above, UNHCR will start promoting the return following an assessment of the overall situation in the country following the holding of general elections scheduled to take place in late 2005. The safety criteria outlined for the facilitation phase should prevail throughout Liberia and in addition durable peace and stability will be prevailing after the elections in 2005.

25. Based on these criteria, UNHCR’s main tasks throughout the operation will include:

- comprehensive information campaigns in order for refugees to be aware of conditions prevailing in their places of origin;
- interviewing, counselling and registering potential candidates for return, organizing safe and orderly return movements and adequate reception arrangements;
- ensuring the voluntary character of the repatriation;
- developing and implementing (directly or through implementing partners) rehabilitation and initial reintegration programmes in areas of origin;
- monitoring the legal, physical and material security of returnees in their areas of origin.

26. To help ensure an orderly movement of returning refugees, UNHCR will promote the conclusion of Tripartite Agreements governing conditions and modalities of the voluntary repatriation exercise with the governments of countries of asylum and the Government of Liberia. These agreements will address protection issues and rights of returnees, establish the responsibilities of all parties concerned and outline the modalities for the implementation of the repatriation and reintegration operation. It is planned that the signing of Tripartite Agreements will take place by September 2004.

UNHCR's policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

27. UNHCR's Statute does not entrust the organization with any specific legal competence for internally displaced persons. However, Article 9 of the Statute provides that the High Commissioner may "engage in such activities... as the General Assembly may determine within the limits of the resources placed at his disposal." This article is the basis upon which the

General Assembly has on a number of occasions authorized the High Commissioner to act on behalf of internally displaced persons, or supported actions already taken by UNHCR with respect to IDPs.

28. The General Assembly through a number of resolutions has, inter alia, stressed UNHCR's particular humanitarian expertise in situations of internal displacement. The most important of these texts was General Assembly Resolution 48/116¹, which was referred to in EXCOM Conclusion 75 (1994) as an "appropriate framework for the involvement of the High Commissioner in situations of internal displacement." Conclusion 75 further elaborated upon aspects of Resolution 48/116, including the close affinity between internal displacement and refugee phenomena, the particular expertise of UNHCR in this field, and the need for close collaboration between UNHCR and interested organizations.

29. On the basis of General Assembly Resolution 48/116 and EXCOM Conclusion 75, the criteria for UNHCR involvement with internally displaced persons can be summarized as follows:

- A specific request for UNHCR's involvement emanating from the General Assembly, the Secretary-General or another competent principal organ of the United

¹ Reaffirms [the General Assembly's] support for the High Commissioner's efforts, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations, and the consent of the concerned State, and taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to persons displaced within their own country in specific situations calling for the Office's particular expertise, especially where such efforts contribute to the prevention or solution of refugee problems. General Assembly Resolution 48/116 December 1993.

Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council;

- The consent of the concerned State or other relevant entity;
- The relevance of UNHCR's expertise and experience to assist, protect, and seek solutions for internally displaced persons in the particular situation;
- The need for UNHCR's activities to remain within the limits of the resources placed at its disposal for the activities in question;
- UNHCR's access to IDP populations and a guarantee of safety for humanitarian personnel.

30. It should be pointed out that each of these benchmarks varies given the particular situation. For example, if UNHCR is established in a location where the internally displaced are mixed with refugee or returnee populations, or where UNHCR contemplates expansion of existing activities in order to better respond to the needs of the internally displaced, a specific request from the United Nations or express authorization of the State will not normally be a precondition for UNHCR involvement. Indeed, Conclusion No. 75 notes in paragraph (g) that in such situations, "it is neither reasonable nor feasible to treat the categories differently in responding to their needs for assistance and protection. In this scenario, UNHCR's activities on behalf of the internally displaced may be indivisible from its regular protection and assistance activities, and therefore flow from its mandated functions."²

31. The following analysis of the IDP situation in Liberia demonstrates conformity with these policy and criteria:

- The IDPs live in close proximity with refugees (Sierra Leonean and Ivorian) and returnees, in some instances in the same camps. The IDPs in Liberia

are in a similar situation to that of refugees and returnees in terms of the causes and consequences of their displacement, and their humanitarian and protection needs are no less severe. When refugees and displaced persons are generated by the same causes and straddle the border, their humanitarian needs are similar, and a solution to the refugee problem usually requires addressing simultaneously the issue of internal displacement. Differentiating between the two is neither reasonable nor feasible in responding to their needs³.

- While it is acknowledged that the primary responsibility for the welfare and protection of IDPs lies with the State concerned, it should be noted that although there is a cessation of hostilities, the Liberian Government does not currently have the capacity to provide the requisite protection and assistance to IDPs.
- UNHCR will, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator and within the context of the interagency collaborative approach, contribute to the provision of protection and assistance to IDPs in Liberia.

Residual caseloads

32. In 2007, UNHCR will undertake verification and profiling of the residual refugee caseload in the countries hosting Liberian refugees. The exercise will serve multiple purposes, including the following:

- (a) confirmation of the actual numbers involved, to enable updating of the registration data-base and refugee documentation, as well as adjustment of the assistance programme, as applicable;
- (b) analysis of the nature of the claims and reasons for non-repatriation, which

² IOM No.87/97/FOM No. 91/97 UNHCR's Role with Internally Displaced Persons Para 8 p.3

³ EXCOM Conclusion 75 (g)

would facilitate identification of cases requiring formal status determination, including cases where the exclusion clause may be applicable, and cases for whom voluntary repatriation may still be pursued within a reasonable timeframe;

(c) clarification of the socio-economic background and situation of the residual caseload in the countries of asylum, their expectations for the future in terms of durable solutions, and an evaluation of the feasibility of local integration in the countries of asylum or another durable solution.

33. It should be stressed that refugees will continue to retain prima facie refugee status until and unless the cessation clause is applied to Liberians. At a later stage, once it is clear that there has been a fundamental change of the circumstances under which Liberians were recognized as refugees, and that this fundamental change is durable, UNHCR may then decide to apply the cessation clause (article 1C 1951 Convention, article 1(4) OAU Convention). At that stage UNHCR will assist governments in the status determination of persons who may still claim refugee status.

IV. SETTING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

UNHCR's role with regard to spontaneous returnees

34. As mentioned earlier, it is estimated that as of June 2004, over 50,000 Liberian refugees previously in neighbouring countries had returned home without UNHCR assistance. Over 10,000 spontaneous returnees are hosted in IDP camps, while others are returning to their areas of origin when security conditions permit. Spontaneous returnees unable to return to their places of origin will be registered and assisted in transit camps. Names and details of these

returnees are being shared with countries of asylum in order to effect de-registration, where necessary. The returnees will be issued with documentation, which will qualify them for assistance upon return to their countries of origin. UNHCR and the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) will enhance border returnee monitoring and village assessment, in order to develop community-based projects aimed at benefiting all categories of returnees and host communities.

35. UNHCR will put in place distribution centres in locations close to main areas of return, where spontaneous returnees holding valid refugee cards will be registered and assisted. UNHCR will hire the services of an implementing partner for the profiling of spontaneous returnees, in close collaboration with LRRRC and other partners. The full names of all the family members as well as the ration card and ID numbers will be recorded on the registration form for spontaneous returns. A 4-month food assistance will be provided to beneficiaries according to a schedule agreed upon with WFP. However, arrangements should be made to distribute two months of rations during the week following their registration.

36. For spontaneous returnees who have not been registered in the countries of asylum - and who therefore do not have any identification document - no family/individual assistance will be provided. They will benefit solely from community based-projects to be implemented in their areas of return.

Arrangements for organized repatriation

37. Full details of the proposed modalities for the organized repatriation are contained in subsequent sections. It

is recalled that the facilitation phase is scheduled to begin on 1 October 2004, and will not include any repatriation to areas of origin which do not meet minimum benchmarks for safety.

38. It is envisaged that the promotion phase will start after general elections are held in the second half of 2005. However, the decision to promote repatriation will be taken only after it is clear that stability is viable, and the criteria for safety throughout the country, including in the main areas of origin, have been met.



Registration for repatriation of Liberian refugees from Mali, April 2004. UNHCR/S. Brownell

Reintegration activities - a community-based approach

39. In view of the wide-spread destruction from the war, reintegration activities will begin immediately in accessible areas. The initial reintegration assistance will consist of a combination of individual assistance for those who have registered their return with UNHCR, as well as community-based assistance. Both facilitated and spontaneous returnees will be entitled to reintegration assistance, with a view to promoting their self-reliance.

40. In order to avoid inequality between returnees and existing

communities, UNHCR will promote sustainable integration that targets the entire communities in the areas of return. The expected number of returnees to a given area will be one of the criteria for the deployment of resources. Other elements such as the overall availability of services and the presence of other actors will also be taken into account. Assistance will be geared towards the promotion of community-based activities, and seek to strengthen existing social infrastructure and improve the livelihood of the communities. Self-reliance and rehabilitation projects will be undertaken, linking up with development agencies, NGOs and relevant government institutions. Some returnees may opt to settle in urban centres rather than in their places of origin. The level and quality of assistance provided in rural areas is likely to be a determining factor in this choice.

41. The planning and implementation of community-based activities will be based on participatory planning and implementation, involving existing populations in areas of return, as well as the returnees themselves, encouraging them to participate in selecting and prioritizing schemes such as the rehabilitation of schools, water and sanitation facilities, rehabilitation of health centres, maintenance of feeder roads and bridges, etc. This direct involvement will ensure ownership and sustainability while also providing income through the supply of labour and materials.

42. Active community participation and involvement is anticipated, in particular in the implementation of Community Empowerment Projects (CEPs) allowing communities to propose and prioritize micro multi-sectoral projects based on their needs at grass roots level. These projects will be approved at field level and managed

directly by communities. Strengthening and supporting the establishment of organized community structures will be given priority, and forms the basis for this concept. CEPs will include community skills training centres, rice drying floors, youth programmes, community fishing groups, women adult literacy programmes, community schools, maintenance of village feeder roads, environmental programmes, advocacy against SGBV and HIV/AIDS, stigma and discrimination etc. Guidelines for Community Empowerment Projects have been developed and training is already underway.

43. However, the fluid situation and many uncertainties in the region (border conflicts, number and pace of returns, freedom of choice on area of return, etc.) require UNHCR to maintain a flexible approach, with an on-going assessment of operations allowing for adaptation to the changing circumstances.

UNHCR's contribution to the DDRR process

44. The success of the disarmament and demobilization of combatants in Liberia is vital for a sustainable peace process and hence a successful repatriation and reintegration operation. The DDRR process in Liberia must be part of a sub-regional effort, given the significant numbers of non-Liberians ex-combatants, as well as the presence of factions and fighters located outside Liberia. The governments of the countries whence non-Liberian fighters originate need to be prepared to receive, demobilize and reintegrate them into their respective countries.

45. Experience in Sierra Leone has shown the success of this process in getting fighters out of the bush, whereas reintegration has been more problematic. Adequate funding and programmes are

essential for the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants to take place in a relatively short period of time. Lessons can be learned from the Sierra Leone programme and a greater focus placed on a rapid reintegration process.

46. The needs of girls/children associated with fighting forces (those involved in combat and those in ancillary positions such as cooks and porters, abducted/forced "wives", etc.) were not always given the necessary attention in Sierra Leone, and some still remain against their will with ex-combatants. Future demobilization programmes will need a sharper gender focus

47. Foreign combatants have been included in the disarmament and demobilization programmes in Liberia. A legal framework for the processing of foreign combatants is being prepared by UNMIL, and steps taken by governments in the region to establish a regional approach to the issue of foreign combatants.

48. UNMIL will be responsible for the identification of foreign combatants at the cantonment sites, as well as their transportation and that of foreign women associated with the fighting forces to the capital cities of their countries of origin, while respective governments will be responsible for onward travel to the places of origin. UNHCR will conduct refugee status determinations for those seeking international protection. It will seek appropriate durable solutions for those who will be determined to be refugees.

Liberian combatants in asylum countries

49. Since 2002, there have been close to 450 new arrivals of Liberian ex-combatants, as well as Guineans, Ivorians and Sierra Leoneans who had been

fighting in the Liberia conflict, at Sierra Leone's Mapeh and Mafanta internment camps. They are mainly former members of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and pro-Taylor militias; others are members of LURD. Civilian family members of all three groups are in refugee camps and communities. There are also some 120 Liberian ex-combatants who had arrived in Sierra Leone in the 1990s and whose applications for refugee status are pending. Families of ex-combatants are also believed to be living in camps in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea. Modalities will be worked out for their return and inclusion in demobilization programmes.

50. Ex-combatants who refuse to return to Liberia given their well-founded fear of persecution, may apply for refugee status. To meet the criteria for such status, it must be established that an ex-combatant has genuinely and permanently demobilized in order to be considered a civilian, and establish if the individual meets the criteria for refugee status and does not fall within the exclusion clause of the 1951 and OAU Refugee Conventions.

Related responsibilities to be assumed by UNHCR are as follows:

- the voluntary repatriation of civilian family members, since they are considered as refugees. In accordance with the principle of family unity, the family members should be repatriated wherever possible at the same time as, and in collaboration with, governments' repatriation of ex-combatants.
- Since Liberian children associated with the fighting forces have been recognized as refugees in at least some asylum countries, UNHCR has a mandate for these children and should ensure consideration of their inclusion in the

children's DDRR programme, taking into account also the wishes of the child and family. It follows that when such children are repatriated under the ICRC cross-border family reunification programme, UNHCR, in collaboration with UNICEF and ICRC, should ensure that the children are covered by a reintegration project under the DDRR programme.

- UNHCR will assist in advocacy on issues such as an amnesty for desertion, which would encourage voluntary repatriation of AFL combatants having laid down their arms in asylum countries. UNHCR will also assist governments in cross-border issues, such as nationality issues relating to ex-combatants.
- UNHCR's monitoring of returnees in areas of return will include returnee civilian family members of ex-combatants, as well as the child and adult ex-combatants themselves, in accordance with the principle of family unity.

Transitional planning for the 4Rs (Repatriation Reintegration, Rehabilitation Reconstruction)

51. UNHCR has been fully involved in the CAP process, the preparation of the Results Focused Transitional Framework (RFTF) and other documents related to the development of poverty alleviation strategy. In line with the 4Rs approach, UNHCR will advocate for a closely coordinated interagency effort, through which reintegration programmes will link immediate relief efforts to long-term national development plans, with the involvement of the authorities at all levels. UNHCR's partners will be encouraged to work closely with line ministries at the county level, and

participate directly in capacity-building efforts in order to enhance community ownership and sustainability of projects. The 4Rs core group for Liberia, comprising NGOs representatives, donors, UN agencies and the NTGL, will meet regularly in order to coordinate and enhance the integrated planning approach to recovery efforts in Liberia.

52. The UNDP and the World Bank will be expected to play a vital role in the 4Rs planning, offering the NTGL an effective starting point to long-term sustainable development in addressing the many issues affecting displaced populations. In this regard, UNHCR and UNDP are developing a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for joint and integrated planning in the main areas of return. Although there is consensus that returnees and IDPs must participate in the reconstruction of Liberia, this must be coordinated and linked to reintegration and rehabilitation programmes aimed at rejuvenating basic social infrastructures such as roads, bridges, hospitals, health centres, schools, administrative buildings, etc. The 4Rs approach will be crucial to a sustainable repatriation operation and should contribute to the consolidation of community peace.

Participation in the electoral process

53. There are indications that a significant number of returnees will have returned to Liberia in time for voting in 2005. While UNHCR will not be directly involved in arrangements related to the electoral process, it will promote arrangements to extend voter registration deadlines for newly arriving returnees, in order that the electoral process will be as inclusive as possible.

Resettlement activities under organized repatriation

54. At regional meetings held in September 2003, November 2003 and in May 2004, the following was recommended:

- the ongoing resettlement of 7,000 at-risk refugees in Côte d'Ivoire (mainly Liberians) to the United States should continue until the goals are achieved;
- group resettlement submissions from other countries (e.g. Guinea, Sierra Leone) will be accelerated, with the aim of organizing resettlement departures to take place as far as possible before organized voluntary repatriation movements, and well before the start of the promotion phase of voluntary repatriation;
- resettlement activities for individual cases of Liberian refugees to third countries, from the various countries of asylum, will be pursued as part of protection and durable solutions strategies.

Building local capacity, and strengthening institutions

55. UNHCR will undertake the training of local NGOs, community-based organizations and the authorities at the national and county levels. These institutions will be involved in decision-making, especially when it comes to the selection of projects and the establishment of standards, as this will contribute to the sustainability of projects. Community Empowerment Projects will require the agreement of the local government at the county and district level. Operational partners will be encouraged to use locally recruited labour for rehabilitation projects as much as possible, although it will be necessary to import skilled and supervisory staff in the initial stages.

Building skills at the local level is part of the rehabilitation work.

56. Project planning will respect community skills, and endeavour to enhance the capacity of communities and local institutions in the long-term. It will endeavour to choose the appropriate technology, so that communities and local authorities will have the capacity to maintain and operate project infrastructure.

57. Rebuilding the educational system and rapidly reintegrating returnee children, are among measures which will contribute to sustainable peace and reconciliation. UNHCR will encourage the early return to their areas of origin, of teachers, medical staff, mechanics and civil servants who have been living as refugees in neighbouring countries, offering support in their areas of origin in order for them to play a part in sustaining the activities initiated by humanitarian agencies. Incentives provided will be based on the salary scale established by the Ministry of Labour.

V. PREPARING THE RETURN: SOME ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES

58. Arrangements are already underway or well advanced in their preparation in three major areas: mass information throughout the region, registration, and logistics. Major features of these activities are described below. Further details are also to be found in Part VIII below, providing a summary by sector of programmes and activities.

Mass information campaign

59. A regional mass information strategy has been developed to help refugees make informed decisions about the options that are available to them, ahead of the scheduled start of the operation, such as conditions in their country of origin and conditions of

return, as well as relevant issues pertaining to asylum in the host countries. Refugees will be informed of the shift from facilitation to promotion when it occurs. The content of the information campaign will be agreed by the NTGL, governments of the countries of asylum, UNHCR, other UN agencies and partners involved in the repatriation and reintegration programme. UNHCR will also support the Joint Planning Team (JPT) in developing a Mass information strategy for IDP return. Moreover, to ensure its sub-regional character and the dissemination of harmonized information, an agreement will be concluded with an implementing partner for mass information activities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Nigeria in close cooperation with the respective Branch Offices.

60. The mass information campaign will focus on the modalities of the repatriation and reintegration operation, and include the following elements:

- beneficiaries of the repatriation / reintegration programme;
- procedures and criteria for facilitated repatriation;
- timeframe of the operation;
- Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) registration procedures;
- travel arrangements;
- agreed border-crossing points for organized movements;
- maximum luggage entitlements per person;
- currency and customs regulations and exemptions;
- pre-departure health care requirements;
- HIV/AIDS information as well as advocacy;
- special arrangements for vulnerable groups and programmes in Liberia;
- measures to prevent family separation en route and upon return; tracing of family members; and sensitization of refugee communities, including children, to the importance of identification,

registration and available tracing services for separated minors;

- reintegration assistance; and
- accommodation facilities in transit centres,
- Reintegration Packages.

61. To ensure the information reaches all ethnic groups, and since there is a significant level of illiteracy among the population, UNHCR's information campaign will be conducted in the main languages used by Liberian refugees in the countries of asylum, including English, Grebo, Kpele, Mandingo, Krahn, Bassa, Gio, Kissi, Lorma, Guerze and Gbandi. Mass information targeted at local populations in countries of asylum will use relevant languages. Means of dissemination of information will include meetings with refugees, posters and leaflets, role-playing by local drama groups, musical performances, and radio and video broadcasts, as well as story telling by refugees and returnees.

62. Representatives of various refugee groups in countries of asylum will be encouraged to visit Liberia in order to make first-hand assessments of the prevailing conditions in areas of return. One or two adolescents, representative of the children's community in each major refugee population, should be encouraged to take part in these visits. They should also be involved in the planning of go-and-see visits appropriate for their needs and concerns. In addition, selected returnees, representatives of the Government, leading figures and members of civil society will be encouraged to visit refugees in countries of asylum. These initiatives will be expanded at the stage of promoting voluntary repatriation.

63. UNHCR will also use local radio stations to launch public awareness and reconciliation campaigns that aim to

resolve grievances, and lead to reconciliation in Liberia.

64. In conjunction with UNICEF and other child protection agencies, UNHCR will organize special information sessions for children and adolescents, in which they will be able to ask questions and freely express their fears and concerns about the repatriation process. Counselling will be made available to address the concerns and fears raised, e.g. possibilities for completing their current cycle of education before repatriation, availability of schools in Liberia and vocational skills training for adolescents, etc. Separated minors will be reassured about care arrangements and that family tracing activities will continue for them in Liberia. UNHCR is in the process of identifying competent community-based organizations in Liberia who will be responsible of the reception of people with special needs. The involvement of these organizations will ensure effective follow-up and care at the community level.

65. Refugee women will be actively involved in the planning and implementation of the mass information campaign, and be given the opportunity to express their views as designated representatives of the refugee community, as individuals and as a group. Gender-sensitive measures will be taken to ensure equal access of women and men to information on their voluntary repatriation.

66. Information on existing community structures in areas of return will also be provided, emphasizing the need to assimilate with the host communities of persons who stayed behind and who might have gone through difficult times during the conflict. There is a need to underline that those who stayed put are also needy

persons, and belong to the larger community that encompasses returnees and IDPs.

Registration for voluntary repatriation and de-registration in countries of asylum

67. Registration for voluntary repatriation is scheduled to commence on 1 September 2004, using the standard Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF). This will serve as the basic document for UNHCR's assistance and protection inside Liberia. It is also a critical tool for tracking refugee movements and protection monitoring, and will also serve as a basic identity document for returnees. Versions in English and French) will be standardized for all countries of asylum, and will be designed to meet the following objectives:

- allow verification of the identity of refugees;
- de-register the returnee from the caseload in the country of asylum;
- serve as a travel document, as well as an identity document, entitling the beneficiary to UNHCR's protection and enabling him/her to plan their return without UNHCR organized transport;
- identify vulnerable persons to ensure specific protection and assistance needs are met; and
- provide data required to plan logistics and reintegration assistance inside Liberia.



Returnees in a reception centre at Spriggs Plaine airfield near Monrovia. UNHCR/S. Brownell

Logistics

68. The organized voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees will involve enormous logistical challenges. A comprehensive regional logistics strategy paper is being finalised to meet these challenges. The operation will depend on a number of key elements which include:

- condition of roads and bridges and trucking capacity ;
- mode of transportation;
- transit centres, way stations and drop off points;
- the repatriation package and its distribution.

Condition of roads and bridges and trucking capacity

69. The vast majority of refugees living in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone will be repatriated to Liberia by land using commercial transport and UNHCR trucks. A survey of the condition of roads, bridges and boats /ferries to areas of final destination is currently being undertaken by UNMIL, UNHCR field staff and the *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)*, UNHCR's main implementing partner for logistics activities in the area.

70. UNHCR maintains a fleet of trucks in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire which will be used in coordination with the truck fleet available in Liberia. The latter will work out with asylum countries the most economical drop-off points in the counties of origin and expected turn around-time for trucks, taking into account other on-going activities in the countries of asylum.

Movements by land, sea and air

71. In order to monitor and ensure the safe passage of returnees, land convoys will be accompanied throughout the entire journey by a medical and security team, consisting of personnel from LRRRC and GTZ, as well as by UNHCR staff. Escorts will also be provided for repatriation involving sea passage. Permanent border teams managed by LRRRC will ensure an orderly handover at border points. Appropriate measures will be taken to care for vulnerable individuals, and individual files held by UNHCR and/or operational partners in the asylum country, will be transferred to UNHCR Liberia to ensure appropriate follow-up assistance. UNHCR will ensure that the special protection needs of refugee/returnee children and adolescents, especially separated minors, child-/adolescent-headed households, and women, are duly taken into consideration at all stages of the repatriation operation. Refugees returning from Sierra Leone will be subjected to special measures to prevent cross-border spreading of Lassa fever epidemic, present in the refugee camps in Sierra Leone. The measures may include: ban on food transport within the returnee luggage, disinfection of belongings and trucks on departure, establishing of disinfection points for vehicles and passengers at the border,

special pre-departure health clearance and post-arrival health monitoring.

72. The luggage entitlement per refugee will be maximum 50 kg by land or sea, and 30 kg by air. However, some flexibility in weight limitations will be maintained, and special transportation arrangements may be made for personal belongings exceeding these restrictions. A passenger list of refugees who will be assisted with transportation will be drawn up. The list, along with copies of VRFs, will be hand delivered by UNHCR or NGO staff to UNHCR colleagues at entry points in Liberia.



Trucking assistance to Liberian returnees at Bo waterside. UNHCR/S. Brownell

73. Transportation by air will be provided for specific groups of refugees coming from particular countries of asylum, and for vulnerable groups. Sea transportation will be used mainly for refugees in Ghana and other nearby regional sea port cities. Assembly points will be identified in countries of asylum for refugees who are to be repatriated.

Modes of transport from countries of asylum

74. The repatriation by land, sea and air will be undertaken according to a movement schedule to be mutually agreed upon between UNHCR and the authorities in the countries of asylum and in Liberia, also taking into consideration the local capacity to receive

the returnees. This plan has been developed and will be implemented in coordination between the Liberia operation and offices in countries of asylum. However, most refugees in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire will be expected to repatriate by road while the ones in Ghana and Nigeria will be expected to repatriate by sea. (see annex 10)

Transit centres and way stations

75. As can be seen from the map of return routes included as Annex 9, way stations, transit centres and drop off points are to be located in Bo Water Side, Sinje, Tubmanburg, Monrovia, Gbarnga, Ganta, Saclepea, Sanniquelle, Zwedru, Toe Town, Greenville, Harper, Pleebo, Salayea, Zorzor, Voinjama, Kolahun, and Foya. Way stations will be used for brief stops during the journey, while transit centres will be used for overnight stays if necessary. On arrival at destination, returnees will be accommodated in transit centres where they will be provided basic assistance in the form of water, cooked meals and health care if necessary. The stay in the transit centres at destination should not exceed two nights. Repatriation packages will be distributed, and transportation to final drop-off points in communities made available either as cash or actual transportation wherever feasible. Information concerning the distribution of other reintegration packages will also be provided.

Repatriation package and its distribution

76. Individuals claiming returnee status must present a copy of their VRF or a registration/ration card, at which point they will receive assistance in the form food and non-food items. The repatriation package will be based on the number of individuals in a family.

A standard package will include:

- four months food rations per person;
- plastic sheeting;
- jerry can;
- kitchen utensils;
- blanket;
- mat;
- soap (250 g);
- water bucket;
- lamp;
- sanitary kit;
- condoms;
- travel bag;
- HIV/AIDS information/pamphlet and condoms;
- those living in rural areas will also be provided with agricultural tools (two hoes, two cutlasses, one axe and one file);
- a shelter kit will be distributed underlining the community participatory approach taking into account other members of the community.

77. In order not to penalize refugees who will have returned on their own, UNHCR Liberia in collaboration with LRRRC and GTZ will establish distribution centres at Bo Water Side, Sinje, Tubmanburg, Monrovia, Gbarnga, Ganta, Saclepea, Sanniquelle, Zwedru, Toe Town, Greenville, Harper Pleebo, Salayea, Zorzor, Voinjama, Kolahun, and Foya for the distribution of repatriation packages to all returnees, including spontaneous returnees holding UNHCR documentation from their former countries of asylum. Through information campaigns, refugees will be encouraged to register with UNHCR even though they may not require transportation assistance to return.



Returnees receiving non-food items upon arrival in Siegbah returnee camp. UNHCR/S. Brownell

VI. PLANNING PARAMETERS

Assumptions

78. The multi-year repatriation and reintegration plan is based on the following assumptions:

- complete adherence and implementation to the Accra Peace Accord by all parties;
- full deployment of UNMIL troops;
- successful demobilization and disarmament programme of all warring groups;
- the participation of Liberians in democratic elections.

79. It should be noted, however, that despite progress made by the international community in restoring peace in Liberia, the situation remains complex and fragile. Risks still surround the progress made towards the respect of the peace agreement by belligerents. The rapid reintegration of ex-combatants could prevent them from being tempted to revert again to warfare activities. However, the fragile political situation in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea could destabilize these countries and spill over into Liberia.

General characteristics of the refugees

80. The repatriation and reintegration operation is targeted to some 340,000 Liberians who by January 2004 had sought refuge in the West Africa sub-region. Most of the refugees were in Guinea which hosted about 150,000 refugees, a further 74,000 were in Côte d'Ivoire, with Sierra Leone hosting 67,200 and Ghana 42,500. A significant number of Liberian refugees reside in other West African countries mainly Nigeria, Gambia, Mali and Senegal. However, relief agencies have estimated that more than 50,000 refugees had returned to Liberia spontaneously by June 2004. In close cooperation with partners, mechanisms are being put in place to track and profile these spontaneous returns.

81. As in many other refugee situations refugee children constitute 52 per cent, while female refugees represent 53 per cent of the total refugee population. A detailed breakdown is provided in Annex 2.

82. Of the total refugee population in the sub-region, only 4 per cent are living in urban areas, while 59 per cent are being assisted mostly in camps and transit centres. Some 37 per cent are dispersed among local populations. By contrast, the majority of refugees in the Gambia (93 per cent) live in urban areas.

Place of origin in Liberia

83. As shown in Annex 3, Liberian refugees in the sub-region originate from all 15 counties: the majority from Lofa (34 per cent), followed by Maryland (16 per cent), Montserrado (15 per cent), Nimba (10 per cent), Grand Gedeh, Bong and Grand Cape Mount (6 per cent each). The rest of the counties are expected to receive less than 2,300 returnees.

84. Refugees from Lofa account for 64 per cent of refugees in Guinea and 53 per cent in Sierra Leone, while those in Cote d'Ivoire (56 per cent) are mainly from Maryland County. Most Liberian refugees in Ghana (72 per cent) are from Montserrado County. Annex 3 provides a breakdown of this information in tabular form.

Ethnicity

85. The Grebo and Mandingo ethnic groups constitute the largest proportion of the refugee population (14 per cent and 13 per cent respectively), followed by Gbandi (11 per cent), Krahn (9 per cent), Kissi (7 per cent) and Loma (6 per cent). Kru and Mano Guerze represent 5 per cent each. Krahn constitute the majority in Ghana (25 per cent). In Côte d'Ivoire, Krahn were the majority until 2002, but since the May/June 2003 influx into the Tabou area, the Grebo outnumber them and constitute 42 per cent of the refugee population there. The Mandingo are the majority in Guinea (29 per cent) and Gambia (20 per cent), whereas in Sierra Leone 28 per cent are Gbandi and 23 per cent Kissi.

Educational level and skills

86. More than 70 per cent of the school aged children are enrolled or have completed primary schooling. Secondary and high school enrolments are minimal at 6 per cent in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, of the total refugee population, 29 per cent have received primary education, 16 per cent secondary education and 28 per cent high school education. Only 13 per cent of Liberians living in Ghana have no formal education.

87. It is estimated that 45 per cent of Liberian refugees are farmers while 23 per cent are traders. Farmers and traders constitute the majority of Liberian

refugees in Guinea (61 per cent are farmers), Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana the majority are traders. In addition there are 1,282 carpenters, 2,297 teachers, 1,125 doctors and nurses, 1,253 mechanics and 930 masons among the refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Guinea.

Refugees with special needs

88. At present 12 per cent of the assisted refugee population is considered vulnerable. Most of them are single parents, single females heads of household, chronically ill or separated children and/or unaccompanied minors. There are also significant numbers of physically disabled, unaccompanied elders, deaf/mute persons, and visually impaired individuals who will require special care during the return movements.



Child who received some food and a refreshment upon arrival. UNHCR/S. Brownell

Planning figures for the repatriation

89. The following tables show the planning figures for repatriation (spontaneous and organized) to Liberia from the main countries of asylum in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Table 1 indicates the number of returnees per country and the estimated population remaining in asylum at the end of each year. Table 2 shows the number of refugees who are expected to return spontaneously and those who will benefit from UNHCR transport assistance.

Table 1: Liberian Refugee Population and Planning Figures for Repatriation.

	2004		2005		2006		Pop. Dec. 06
	Pop. Dec. 03	Volrep	Pop. Dec. 04	Volrep	Pop. Dec. 05	Volrep	
Guinea	149,600	46,500	103,000	70,000	33,100	25,000	8,100
Sierra Leone	67,200	23,000	44,200	24,000	20,200	14,000	6,200
Côte d'Ivoire	74,200	25,000	49,200	36,000	13,200	10,000	3,200
Ghana	42,400	3000	39,400	20,000	19,400	15,000	4,400
Nigeria	6,000	1,300	4700	3,500	1,200	1000	200
Gambia	750		750	300	350	200	150
Others	1,150		1,150	200	950	200	750
Total	341,300	98,800	242,400	154,000	88,400	65,400	23,000
IDPs⁴	300,000	100,000	200,000	150,000	50,000	50,000	-

Table 2: Planning figures for spontaneous returns and beneficiaries for the facilitated/promoted phases

	Pop Dec. 03	2004		2005		2006	
		Spontaneous Returns	Organised. Returns	Spontaneous .Return	Organised Returns	Spontaneous Returns	Organised. Return
Guinea	149,600	36,500	10,000	10,000	60,000	5,000	20,000
Sierra Leone	67,200	13,000	10,000	4,000	20,000	2,000	12,000
Côte d'Ivoire	74,200	20,000	5,000	20,000	16,000	2,000	8,000
Ghana	42,400	300	2700	1,000	19,000	1,000	14,000
Nigeria	6,000	300	1,000	0	3,500	0	1,000
Gambia	750	0	0	0	300	0	200
Others	1,150		300		200		200
Total	341,300	70,100	28,700	35,000	119,000	10,000	55,400

Note: The above planning figures do not take into account possible resettlement to third countries of asylum

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

90. According to the IDP survey in May 2004, there are over 260,000 IDPs in regular camps in Montserrado, Bong and Maghibi counties. UNHCR will assist IDPs as part of the interagency collaborative approach in their return and resettlement programme. IDPs will

receive the same package as refugees during the return process.

91. In 2004, UNHCR, in collaboration with OCHA, IOM and other agencies, will organize transportation assistance for 100,000 IDPs back to their counties of origin. This will also include reintegration

⁴ It should be noted that the total IDPs in the country is estimated at 500,000 persons.

package containing food, non-food items and agriculture seed and tools, in cooperation with FAO and WFP. In 2005, as part of the interagency collaborative approach, UNHCR will provide limited assistance to 150,000 IDPs, through non-food items and agriculture seed and tools. In 2006, planning will be based on a figure of 50,000 IDPs, who will be provided with limited transportation and community-based assistance.

92. Protection and assistance to IDPs will be provided as outlined in the Liberian Government National Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy recently issued by the Government, and adopted by the Result Focused Transitional Framework working committee for Cluster #3 covering the displaced populations. The strategy outlines the planning and coordination structures, the categories of beneficiaries, return and reintegration activities as well as the 4R's Transitional Planning approach.

Sub-regional and multi-dimensional aspects

93. As noted in a number of UN reports, the underlying fragility of the economic, social and political systems is apparent in the increasingly violent and protracted conflicts that destroyed the lives and livelihoods of populations in the sub-region. To sustain the repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees, the intervention of the international community must go beyond the national borders given the sub-regional dimension of the Liberian conflict. Diplomatic efforts should be made to obtain support for the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, as well as simultaneous preventive, corrective and comprehensive humanitarian action and/or initiatives. Humanitarian action must be guided by

policy initiatives and linked closely to simultaneous macro-economic and human development measures. UN agencies, funds and programmes in the countries concerned in close co-operation with donor representations, national and international NGOs, must support various national relief, rehabilitation, reintegration and human development efforts. Since HIV does not respect borders and may thrive in post-emergency/rehabilitation situations, improved coordination and cooperation between various agencies need to occur in order to maximize interventions and reduce transmission.

VII. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

Returnee and IDP monitoring

94. As part of its mandate to seek durable solutions, UNHCR will systematically carry out returnee monitoring, and implement programmes to forge partnerships with other actors, such as non-governmental and human rights organizations, national and local government, as well as with local communities. The purpose is to promote a successful and durable reintegration with the re-establishment of an effective and durable State-citizen relationship, and the full restoration of national protection as early as possible. Returnee and IDP monitoring in Liberia will include:

- the immediate consequences of repatriation, including the fulfilment of guarantees and assurances provided to refugees prior to their return;
- the general enjoyment by returnees of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal footing with their fellow citizens, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination.

Monitoring modalities

95. UNHCR will use various means to identify returnees for monitoring purposes, including tracking of movements, information provided by LRRRC and other agencies on spontaneous returnees, identity cards and VRFs. Subject to resources, random monitoring will also be carried out in the main areas of return.

96. For monitoring purposes, UNHCR will develop a standard form which will include the issues of concern to returnees in their localities, access to communal infrastructure by all segments of the returnee population (including single-headed households, women and children) and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Protection issues relating to the assistance being provided and to their social and economic reintegration, will also be included. The monitoring form will detail needs which are a priority for the returnee communities and for the communities receiving them. The information that is obtained will be systematically compiled and analysed to allow a broader assessment of the reintegration process and the consequences of return, in addition to information on individual returnee households

Monitoring of persons with special needs

97. Particular attention will be given to women who, for a variety of reasons, do not repatriate in a family setting, as they could become more vulnerable after their return. The same applies to returnees who repatriate and live initially with social support structures, which they may lose during the reintegration process. Community services staff will develop Community Empowerment Projects at local level with relevant CBOs, which will facilitate the work of protection and field

staff in monitoring and following up on special cases at village level.

Care and maintenance activities for remaining refugees

98. For the benefit of residual caseloads, countries of asylum will continue care and maintenance assistance to Liberian refugees through to June 2007. However, this assistance programme will be adjusted over time, according to the pace of the repatriation movement.

Summary of repatriation and reintegration activities by sector

The activities summarized below form the basis of the annual work plan and indicative budgets contained in Annexes 4 and 5 respectively. The budgetary estimates (Annex 5) take account of activities as currently foreseen in 2004-2006. Those for 2007 will need to be reviewed in 2006 based on progress made, notably in the reintegration phase of the programme.

Food

99. Returning refugees and IDPs will need food security as they return to their places of origin. A food package has been agreed upon with WFP whereby all returnees and IDPs, upon arrival at their final destination, will be given food rations for at least four months, until such time they can become self-sufficient. WFP will provide assistance to refugees returning under the organized operation (with Voluntary Repatriation Forms), or to spontaneous refugees in possession of a valid refugee card. Upon completion of the four months' period, returnees will have access to other food distribution as part of a Food Support to Local Initiatives programme. Provisions will also be made for supplementary and therapeutic programmes, wherever necessary.

100. In 2004, cooked meals will also be provided to some 28,700 returnees who are expected to overnight at Transit centres during the return movement. The meals will be provided in transit centres, in addition to take-away food such as bread and biscuits. The number of beneficiaries is expected to reach 39,000 in 2005, and 23,400 in 2006. Similar arrangements will be made for IDPs in the context of the inter-agency collaborative approach.

Transport and logistics

101. An interagency evaluation of repatriation routes, bridges, ferries and warehouse capacity, and availability of suitable vehicles has been undertaken. Cost for fuel, repair and maintenance have been foreseen. In 2004, with the exception of repatriation movements from Sierra Leone, repatriation costs will be covered from the budget allocated to BO Monrovia. Existing trucks in Liberia (59) as well as those in Guinea (76) and Sierra Leone (75) will be supplemented and used as a regional fleet. Funds will be allocated to hire mini buses for the transportation of vulnerable cases from camps to drop off centres in Liberia.

102. The rental of commercial buses and chartering of a boat for transportation of returnees from Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Conakry and Freetown has also been budgeted. It is foreseen that the sea operation will be managed by IOM. Air transport may also be used. In view of the poor road conditions in Liberia, particularly during the rainy season, it is foreseen that 300 km of access roads will be repaired in 2004, possibly in conjunction with work being undertaken by UNMIL.

103. To facilitate the transportation of staff and minimize their transport by land a WFP- managed air operation will be used to support operations in West

Africa, including Liberia. Use will also be made of UNMIL air transport. Other relevant information on assistance in the sector of transport and logistics can be found in Part V, paras. 68-74.

Domestic items and individual assistance

104. Blankets, mats, kitchen sets, jerry cans and plastic sheeting will be purchased by UNHCR Liberia for pre-positioning and distribution to the 203,100 refugees expected to take part in the organized return during 2004, 2005 and 2006 (see also Part V, para. 75). Provision has also been made for 200,000 IDPs expected to return in an organized manner in 2004 and 2005.

Water and sanitation

105. Water and sanitation facilities have been greatly devastated by the conflict in Liberia. Needs have been assessed in the context of the preparation of the Result Focused Transitional Framework presented at the Liberia Reconstruction Conference in February 2004. Those counties most affected are Bong, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Maryland, Montserrado and Nimba. Planning, construction of new and rehabilitation of water points and sanitation facilities will be done in close cooperation with UNICEF and other agencies. Latrine slabs will be distributed to 7,000 families in 2004, 10,000 in 2005 and 5,000 in 2006. It is foreseen that all returnees and IDPs should have access to at least 15 litres of potable water per person, per day, and that all existing wells and hand pumps should be rehabilitated in return areas. Funds will also be made available for the construction or rehabilitation of 500 wells in 2004, 400 in 2005 and 400 in 2006.

Health and nutrition

106. In view of the serious damage to health infrastructures in Liberia, which have been assessed in the context of the Transitional Framework mentioned above, UNHCR together with UNICEF, WHO and international NGOs working in the health sector, will undertake the rehabilitation and construction of 300 primary health care facilities in the main counties of return: Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Maryland, Bong, Grand Cape Mount, Gporpolu and Bomi over a three year period. While UNHCR will focus on construction and rehabilitation of structures, pharmaceutical equipment, drugs, health staff incentives, training and assignment of health staff will be provided by other organizations. Priority will be given to the strategically located health centres, and support to main referral hospitals in Harper and Voinjama, the provision of ambulances services, and the training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs). Costs of vaccinating returnees, medical staff to accompany the convoys, and medical referrals will be covered in all concerned countries. The promotion of AIDS/HIV awareness will be conducted among returnee populations, in addition to reproductive health education.

107. HIV/AIDS is an increasing threat in Liberia. There are insufficient data to assess the prevalence of HIV in Liberia, which is tentatively estimated at 10 per cent in urban areas and is likely to be lower elsewhere. Most of the refugees live in host countries with a HIV prevalence between 3-5% with the notable exception of those in Cote d'Ivoire (see table below). Given the current unreliability of HIV data in Liberia, it is not possible to know how refugees returning home will affect the HIV epidemic. However, it is clear that, as Liberia stabilizes and road transportation improves, the spread of

HIV could increase. It must be emphasized, however, that no reliable data are currently available with respect to HIV prevalence among refugees or in most of the areas of return in Liberia. The Angolan repatriation already demonstrated that a high degree of stigma and discrimination was directed towards returnees, because it was felt they would bring and spread HIV into Angola. However, it was found that refugees often had more knowledge and better behaviour regarding HIV/AIDS than persons who had not left the country. Furthermore, refugees had developed HIV/AIDS skills that could be used when they returned (e.g. peer educators, community health workers, and other health personnel).

Country	HIV prevalence
Liberia	10% (1998)
Guinea	3.2% (2002)
Sierra Leone	3.5% (2003)
Côte d'Ivoire	9.8% (2002)
Ghana	3.4% (2002)
Nigeria	5.8% (2001)
Gambia	2.1% (2002)

108. UNHCR recommends the following HIV/AIDS activities:

In host countries:

- gathering of health and nutrition information from the refugee sites, including mortality and acute malnutrition rates, communicable disease rates including HIV prevalence rates and sexually transmitted infections incidence rates, details of programmes provided, and recording of names and intended area of return for health care workers;
- coordination and communication between health and nutrition

NGOs in countries of asylum and Liberia to ensure prevention and care links for refugees repatriating to Liberia.

In transit centres

- distribution of HIV information material and condoms in repatriation package;
- special arrangements for refugees requiring specific treatment in consultation with health authorities and agencies involved in health sector; these include those with chronic diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

In Liberia

- advocacy and training in HIV/AIDS awareness and anti-discrimination campaigning in main areas of return;
- improved protection reporting, to ensure that discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS are recorded and acted upon;
- Cooperation with authorities and other agencies to ensure minimal HIV/AIDS interventions, in accordance with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings.

109. An inadequate nutritional status of the returning population, particularly children and women could lead to disorders such as protein energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, including iodine deficiency, anaemia and vitamin A deficiency. Combined strategies will include raising community/household awareness, improving infant feeding practices and providing balanced diets for young children and young adults, ensuring nutrition requirements for lactating and pregnant women, and attending to malnutrition through case management,

rehabilitation, supplementation, food fortification and diet diversification. These activities will be developed in close coordination with UNICEF and WFP, and give emphasis to building local capacity and infrastructures through training, nutrition monitoring and joint health-nutrition activities.

110. Co-ordination and liaison between countries on health issues is imperative. Throughout the repatriation operation, country-based and regional health coordinators will ensure the adoption and implementation of health guidelines, procedures, and forms at the regional level, for all the phases of the repatriation operation. Basic health and nutritional screening will be undertaken by agencies currently involved in UNHCR health-care programmes in countries of asylum, in close cooperation with the respective Ministry of Health.

111. Tripartite Agreements to be signed by the Liberian Government with the respective countries of asylum and UNHCR will include health formalities to be undertaken on behalf of returning refugees, such as immunization against yellow fever if appropriate. Returning refugees will be encouraged, through the mass information campaign, to bring all health documents, including records of immunization, before departure. All children under 5 years of age without proof of measles immunization will be vaccinated before repatriation. UNHCR will co-ordinate with WHO in monitoring the epidemiological situation in Liberia, and will adopt appropriate immunization policies.



Returnees from Mali receiving free medical treatment upon arrival. UNHCR/S. Brownell.

Shelter

112. Shelter needs in rural Liberia are acute as many towns and villages have suffered extensive destruction. Some 70,000 returnee families will be assisted with shelter kits over the period of three years: 23,000 families in 2004; 32,000 families in 2005; and 15,000 families in 2006. UNHCR and UN Habitat in collaboration with other partners has developed a shelter kit which will include a minimum of two bundles of corrugated iron sheets and nails. Shelter assistance will be community-based at village level with the participation of beneficiaries. UNHCR may assist in the reconstruction or rehabilitation of some individual family shelters within communities in areas of return, especially for the benefit of vulnerable cases, professional teachers and nurses. The package will not, however, be provided to individual returnees, but rather through communities who show willingness to participate in the collective effort.

113. Way stations, transit centres and drop off points will be constructed at sites already listed in para. 74 above. They will accommodate between 500 and 1,000 persons. Provisions have been made for the running of these facilities.

Community services

114. Before departure, coordination between concerned countries will be ensured as regards the special needs of vulnerable groups (including separated children and survivors of violence). UNHCR will co-ordinate the design and implementation of guidelines, procedures, and forms for the implementation of the repatriation. Roles and responsibilities of different agencies on each side of the border will be clarified and reception and care facilities established in Liberia.

115. Cross-border family reunification of separated children will be ensured in Liberia. UNHCR and child protection implementing agencies will ensure that there are collaborative frameworks with the ICRC to coordinate the return of separated children and see that it is carried out in the best interests of the child, at the request of the parents and child, and only to safe areas.

116. Community development services in returnee areas of origin and the training of community counsellors will be provided in conformity with government and local administrative structures. Moreover, UNHCR will establish district community centres, with the aim of empowering community groups. It will also monitor the reintegration of women, especially single women and widows, focusing on land and property reclamation. Special care will be taken of the needs of the given to the mentally disabled (100), physically disabled (1,500), separated children (1,200), single parents (20,000), unaccompanied elders (500), unaccompanied minors (2,000), visually impaired (200), deaf and/or mute (500) and of chronically ill individuals (1,000). Community workers will be identified, hired and trained. Regular workshops on SGBV will be

conducted and programmes developed to ensure the reintegration of survivors.

117. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNHCR has developed a multi-year gender mainstreaming component in the reintegration projects, requiring experienced local partners. This will involve capacity-building of the relevant ministry at the county level, and training programmes aimed at empowering women and men at the community level.



Registration of Liberian returnees at reception point. UNHCR/F. Fontanini

118. Community Empowerment Projects (CEPs) will be initiated in the main counties of return in close collaboration with UNDP and World Bank reintegration programmes. This will entail joint training of community mobilizers to assist in capacity-building and reorganizing community structures. CEPs will not have sector preferences and will be expected to cover as many programmes as possible with community involvement at the grass roots level. A number of education, health care, agriculture, water and sanitation and income generation, fisheries and livestock related activities will therefore be budgeted under the community services sector. Funding for CEPs will have a ceiling of USD 5,000, and project approval undertaken in field offices.

Details of the micro projects that are planned can be found in Part IV, para. 42.

Education

119. Educational facilities throughout the country have been largely destroyed. In many areas of return, schools are non-existent and teachers will have to be recruited and trained. It is estimated that the repatriation will see the return of approximately 65,000 primary school-age children, and 7,000 secondary school-age youth. The needs of some 20,000 primary school-age children have been taken into consideration in 2004; 30,000 in 2005 and 15,000 in 2006. Secondary school education activities will target 2,000 students in 2004, 3,500 in 2005 and 1,500 in 2006. With a standard of 45 students per classroom, UNHCR will undertake the construction of 1,600 classrooms from 2004 to 2006 in the main areas of return. Provision will also be made for repatriating students to have access to public examination facilities.

120. In addition, UNHCR aims to provide training for at least 500 primary and secondary school teachers during 2004; 800 in 2005 and 400 in 2006. UNHCR will also endeavour to provide vocational training for some 5,000 youths in 2004; 7,000 in 2005; and 3,000 in 2006. The programme will include pre-school and day-care programmes for returnees and IDP children. Planning and implementation of these activities will be done jointly with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. UNHCR and UNICEF will advocate for the Liberian Ministry of Education to accept teacher certificates, and attestations (such as school attendance record/ report card) from countries of asylum. UNHCR, implementing partners and governments in countries of asylum will also ensure that educational and vocational training

certificates are issued prior to the departure of the repatriating refugees.

Crop production and agriculture

121. In collaboration with FAO and WFP, activities will include assistance with small-scale gardening, crop production, extension work and technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture at county level. Seeds and agricultural implements will be distributed in collaboration with FAO, and support provided to the efforts of the LRRRC efforts in its negotiations with local communities to obtain additional land for cultivation. Target beneficiaries for this assistance are some 10,000 farmers in 2004; 15,000 in 2005 and 6,000 in 2006. Further details on the repatriation package are contained para. 75 above.

Livestock

122. Community Empowerment Projects aimed at supporting animal husbandry will be developed in collaboration with FAO and will provide a source of income as well as protein for returnees and IDPs. Provision is made for the purchase of livestock and other animals for communities who have traditionally kept cattle as pastoralists. Some 300 families will be covered under the programme over a three-year period. These activities are being budgeted under community services.

Fisheries

123 Many communities living along the coast fish as a means of livelihood. CEP programmes supporting communal fish farming, fishing cooperatives and the provision of fishing equipment will be made available to community groups already involved in these activities. They will target 300 families from 2004 to

2007. These activities are being budgeted under community services.

Environmental protection and awareness

124. The environment of Liberia has undergone vast destruction during the 14-year-long civil war. This being a priority sector, UNHCR will develop activities aimed at supporting the NTGL's efforts in this domain through the Forest Development Authority (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). UNHCR will support an experienced technical partner to mainstream environmental issues within reintegration activities, and to build up the capacity of these agencies to undertake environmental protection. Activities envisaged in this sector include: community awareness programmes, environmental education in schools, tree planting and promoting energy-saving eco-stoves.

Income-generating activities

125. Income-generating and microgrants activities will be carried out in collaboration with UNDP and their relevant agencies, in order to develop a common approach at the community level. Microfinance programmes will be set up to support individual artisans and cooperative groups of artisans, including tailors, brick-makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, soap-makers, small business entrepreneurs, etc. Efforts will be made to link the programmes in the countries of asylum with the country of origin, thereby allowing refugees who have gone through skills training in the countries of asylum to set up business in the country of origin. UNHCR will work closely with UNDP in training and building up the capacity of local NGOs that have proved effective in encouraging community involvement in livelihood activities.

Peace building and legal assistance

126. After many years of conflict, the Liberian population is fragmented and in acute need of measures to rebuild community trust and coexistence. Programmes aimed at promoting peace, human rights, gender equality and legal assistance will be developed with competent partners and the government counterpart (LRRRC). UNHCR will support LRRRC in establishing offices in all major areas of return. Through its implementing partners UNHCR will develop the capacity of the local authorities to deal with all aspects of the protection of returnees, community peace consolidation and human rights activities, utilizing community structures at district level.

127. Protection measures will be undertaken to meet the special needs of women and children refugees who constitute the majority of returnees. The principle of family unity shall be adhered to, as well as the right of non-Liberian spouses and children to enter and reside in Liberia. Careful attention will also be given to resolving issues relating to custody and guardianship of children in the context of the repatriation.

128. Funds will be set aside registration and training in the context of the voluntary repatriation. At least five workshops on returnee and refugee protection and human rights issues will be held in 2004, 2005, and 2006, in order to enhance returnee monitoring and the consolidation of peace at the community level.

128. To the extent possible, UNHCR will ensure that Liberian refugees who opt for repatriation do so with their personal belongings in accordance with domestic laws, and that they reach their places of origin without being subjected to any form of harassment or persecution as a result of their ethnic origin, political opinion or religious affiliation.

Modalities for the transfer of refugee prisoners and detainees who have committed common law offences in their respective countries of asylum, and who may wish to return to their country of origin, will be worked out with the relevant authorities in the context of tripartite agreements.

129. UNHCR will undertake a returnee profiling and community needs assessment in all the counties. This work will provide vital information on return trends and needs at community level. The Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) will also be involved in this initiative.

Agency operational support

130. Allocations will be made to cover administrative costs of governmental and NGO staff associated with the implementation of the programme. Costs related to capacity-building and mass information activities (see also Part V, paras. 59-66) will be met under this sector.

131. Radio programmes on peace and reconciliation in communities of return will be broadcast on a weekly basis. Funds will be set aside for office rent, bank charges, audit fees, and general operating costs, as well as for the payment of workers' salaries.

Rehabilitation of refugee-affected areas

132. The long-time presence of large groups of refugees in rural areas has had a negative impact on the environment and infrastructure of the countries of asylum. The most affected countries have been Ghana, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. UNHCR will continue to play a central role along with relevant organizations and interested donor governments in addressing some of the infrastructural and environmental problems that have arisen.

VIII SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

Location of UNHCR offices in Liberia	Counties covered
BO Monrovia	Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa
Sub Office Saclepea	Nimba, River Cess
Field Office Gbanga	Bong
Field Office Harper	Maryland, River Gee, Grand Kru
Field Office Zwedru	Grand Gedeh, Sinoe
Sub Office Voinjama	Lofa
Field Office Tubmanburg	Gborpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi

Staffing

133. Throughout the operation besides its branch office in Monrovia, UNHCR has established sub-offices in Saclepea and Voinjama, and Field Offices in Tubmanburg, Gbarnga, Harper and Zwedru. With offices in these six locations UNHCR is in a position to adequately respond to refugee and returnee needs as regards repatriation and reintegration activities. Decisions on the locations of offices were based on the expected beneficiary populations, road conditions, as well as existing infrastructures.

134. BO Monrovia staffing has been strengthened to allow proper management and coordination of the operation. From the outset of the operation it was also deemed necessary to establish a post of Gender Advisor to ensure gender mainstreaming.

At Headquarters, a Unit responsible for Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia was created to provide support to on-going operations in the two countries covered, with a special focus on the Liberia repatriation operation. The Unit acts as a link between BO Monrovia and technical support units at Headquarters, in addition to liaising with donors in collaboration with DRRM. The Unit works in close cooperation with the West Africa Desk.

135. UNHCR offices in the sub-region will benefit from the technical support and advice from staff based in the Regional Hub in Accra, including Telecommunications, Registration, Health, Staff Welfare, Supply and Logistics, Security, SGBV, Child Policy, Resettlement, etc.

Staff security

136. Owing to the high level of concern for the safety of staff, as well as the need for constant liaising on operational matters with the stabilization force when deployed, ten Field Safety staff have been deployed to Liberia, including three expatriate Field Safety Advisors. A field security network will cover all major areas where UNHCR is operating (Monrovia, Voinjama, Saclepea, Zwedru, Harper, Bopolu, Gbarnga). Field security staff will co-ordinate closely with the national administration and maintain an exchange of security information and consultations with regional field officers and agencies. Staff travelling to Liberia on mission or re-assignment will be made aware of the security concerns on the ground.

137. When minimum security conditions cease to exist, humanitarian operations will be temporarily suspended until the restoration of acceptable security conditions. The standard criteria for operating conditions are set out in the Minimum Operational Security

Standards (MOSS) as developed by the UN Security Co-ordination Office (UNSECOORD).

Training

138. Training and workshops covering programme and reintegration management, as well as protection, voluntary repatriation and returnee monitoring will be conducted for UNHCR staff and implementing partners on a regular basis. Government officials including immigration, customs and police officers, as well as the personnel of NGOs, UNMIL and UN agencies, will also be invited to participate when appropriate.

139. The workshops (both regional and country-specific) are envisaged to help those involved in the operation better understand the issues related to the principles and procedures of voluntary repatriation and reintegration, as well as the respect for the rights of refugees and returnees. These various workshops will be instrumental in defining the roles and responsibilities of UNHCR and other parties, as well as in facilitating effective co-ordination.

Supply chain

140. The scale of such an operation will require a well-planned and coordinated supply of relief items, equipment and logistical arrangements.

141. Procurement will take place at the regional level for those items that are competitively available, but otherwise procurement will be international. Practical mechanisms will be agreed upon for the transfer of these resources, as well as trucks and vehicles, to each country in response to operational needs.

Communications network

142. An efficient communications network is being established as offices are opened both within Liberia and in the sub-region, to facilitate coordination of the repatriation and reintegration programmes. Satellite phones are being installed and the HF, VHF network is being improved and expanded.

IX. FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Implementation arrangements

143. UNHCR will assume overall supervision and coordination of the repatriation and reintegration programme for returnees and IDPs it will provide funding for. In coordinating and monitoring the use of multilateral funding needed to implement the repatriation and reintegration programmes, UNHCR will work closely with its NGO partners, particularly those who have been operational in the region.

144. The strong partnership established over the past decade with NGOs and government counterparts in the countries of asylum in the protection and assistance of refugees will be further strengthened through their active role and involvement in the implementation of the multi-year reintegration programme. Moreover, UNHCR will seek the cooperation of other stakeholders, notably local and international NGOs with the requisite experience and resources to ensure quality service in the implementation of the reintegration programme.

Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

145. The complexity of the Liberian operation will require continued and enhanced interagency cooperation in Liberia. Specific sectoral working arrangements will be developed with other U.N Country Team (UNCT) members. UNHCR will actively participate in the RFTF Working Group on cluster 3, which deals with displaced populations, and will support LRRRC in leading the Technical Committee on Return and Reintegration, in conjunction with staff in the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator. The committee is composed of key stakeholders that include UNCT, bilateral donors and members of the NGO community, and provides a forum where strategic issues related to return and reintegration can be discussed. UNHCR will maintain close working relations with the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) in order to share and disseminate information more effectively.

146. If necessary, a Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up among UNHCR, UNMIL and UN agencies, to formalize existing sectoral co-operation arrangements. These may include, among other, co-funding of projects, escorts for UNHCR missions, and joint human rights monitoring.

147. At the field level, UNHCR and LRRRC will lead coordination fora on return and reintegration within existing mechanisms in the counties of intervention. These will include inter-agency meetings, technical meetings in specific sectors and technical committee meetings on the 4Rs. Participation by local authorities will be the essential to the coordination process, with heads of specific line ministries taking the lead on sectoral issues. The field coordination

fora should be able to identify gaps and propose means to fill them according to established criteria.

148. At the Headquarters level, close co-operation between UNHCR and other agencies will be developed as early as possible, including a clear understanding of the strategy of the repatriation/reintegration operation.

Regional coordination

149. Given the magnitude, scope and complexity of the operation (involving at least six countries), regional coordination will be essential to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources during the repatriation operation. The coordination role will be entrusted to the UNHCR Office in Liberia, which will have the responsibility of initiating (i) a meeting of UNHCR Representatives in the sub-region every three months; (ii) a UNHCR technical meeting, including WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, staff from the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator every three months; and (iii) a meeting of the Tripartite Commissions every four months. The proposed schedules for the meetings are tentative, and may be convened by UNHCR Liberia whenever necessary.

Resource mobilization and public information

150. UNHCR offices will provide concerted and detailed information on the progress of the repatriation and the implementation of the reintegration programme. In Liberia, regular updates will be made through the local media and shared with the HIC to ensure public dissemination of information on repatriation through national and international media, as well as sub-regional strategy documents. Regular briefing meetings with diplomatic corps/donor representatives will be

organized by UNHCR offices, as well as field visits as necessary. Contributions to UNHCR's annual Global Appeals and Global Reports will be prepared and disseminated in a timely manner.

151. A fully integrated communications strategy on resource mobilization will be needed to ensure consistency in messages, particularly as regards the 4Rs concept that is being applied in Liberia, while exploring new opportunities for joint approaches (including joint funding submissions) and increased accountability. Liberia's reintegration programme should present opportunities to obtain financial support from non-traditional development and transition funding sources.

Phase-out strategy

152. The voluntary repatriation operation to Liberia is planned to take place between 2004 and 2006, when the majority of the returnee and IDPs are expected to return to their communities. Most of the rehabilitation needs in basic services should therefore be met during this period. It is envisaged that by 2006, linkages among the 4Rs partners especially the World Bank and UNDP should be geared towards comprehensive and integrated planning, with UNHCR playing an advocacy role in focusing projects on main returnee areas and funding specific Community Empowerment Projects. The Transitional Recovery Teams (TRTs) are expected to play a vital role in designing the phase-out strategy and the inputs required for the continuation and sustainability of the many projects initiated by UNHCR.

153. UNHCR will commence its phase-out activities in Liberia in 2007, once the development partners have effectively redirected adequate efforts to main areas of return. Most of the reintegration projects in 2007 will be implemented

through national NGOs and CBOs. However, activities related to protection monitoring and peace building will continue and will mainly be covered from strategically placed field offices. In countries of asylum, the phase-out of activities and assistance will depend upon residual caseloads, and the development of local integration programmes.

Annex 1: Acronyms

AFL: Armed Forces of Liberia	NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
BNCR: <i>Bureau national de coordination des réfugiés</i> (Guinea)	NTGL: National Transitional Government of Liberia
CDD: Community Driven Development	NPP: National Patriotic Party
CEPs: Community Empowerment Projects	OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CM: Care and Maintenance	RP: Repatriation
COA: Country of Asylum	RRRR (4Rs): Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
COO: Country of Origin	RUF: Revolutionary United Front
CRS: Catholic Relief Services	SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
DDRR: Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration	TBAs: Traditional Birth Attendants
DPKO: UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations	TCNs: Third Country Nationals
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States	TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ECOMOG: ECOWAS Monitoring Group	TRTs: Transitional Recovery Teams
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency	UNCT: United Nations Country Country Team
ExCOM: Executive Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees	UNDP: United Nations Development Program
FAO:	UNICEF: United Nations Funds for Children
FDA: Forest Development Authority	UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women
GDP: Gross Domestic Product	UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GRB: Ghana Refugee Board	UNMIL: United Nations Mission for Liberia
GTZ: <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit</i>	UNOMIL: United Nations Observer for Liberia
HIC: Humanitarian Information Centre	UNSECOORD: UN Security Co-ordination Office
ICGL: International Contact Group on Liberia	VRF: Voluntary Repatriation Form
IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons	WHO: World Health Organization
INGO: International Non Governmental Organization	WFP: World Food Programme
LRRRC: Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission	WB: World Bank
LURD: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy	
MODEL: Movement for Democracy in Liberia	
MOSS: Minimum Operational Security Standards	
MRU: Mano River Union	
NCRRR: National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (Sierra Leone)	
NFI: Non Food Items	
NGO: Non Governmental Organization	

Annex 2: Breakdown of Liberian refugees by gender and age as of January 2004

Country of asylum	Sex/Age	0-4	5-17	18-59	60 and +	Total	% (M/F)	Unknown	Grand total
Ghana	M	2,016	6,702	11,810	255	20,786	49%		
	F	2,079	7,581	11,479	536	21,680	51%		
	Total	4,095	14,283	23,289	791	42,458	100%		42,458
	% (age)	10%	34%	55%	2%	100%			
Sierra Leone	M	4,633	10,853	11,644	1,132	28,262	49%		
	F	4,634	10,945	12,552	1,311	29,442	51%		
	Total	9,267	21,798	24,196	2,443	57,704	100%	9,458	67,162
	% (age)	16%	38%	42%	4%	100%			
Côte d'Ivoire	M	6,608	12,869	13,898	1,164	34,539	47%		
	F	6,576	12,888	18,600	1,577	39,641	53%		
	Total	13,184	25,757	32,498	2,741	74,180	100%		74,180
	% (age)	18%	35%	44%	24	100%			
Gambia	M	35	77	292	2	416	54%		
	F	45	80	216	3	354	46%		
	Total	80	157	508	5	750	100%		750
	% (age)	10%	21%	68%	1%	100%			
Guinea	M	9,417	15,857	11,145	2,784	39,203	44%		
	F	9,734	16,287	19,938	4,246	50,205	56%		
	Total	19,151	32,144	31,083	7,030	89,408	100%	60,192	149,600
	% (age)	21%	36%	35%	8%	100%			
Nigeria	M	128	342	1,510	22	2,002	54%		
	F	146	348	1,154	24	1,672	46%		
	Total	274	690	2,664	46	3,674	100%	2,326	6,000
	% (age)	7%	19%	73%	1%	100%			
Elsewhere								1,150	1,150
Grand total	M	22,837	46,700	50,299	5,359	125,208	47%		
	F	23,214	48,129	63,939	7,697	142,994	53%		
	Total	46,051	94,829	114,238	13,056	268,174	100%	73,126	341,300
	% (age)	17%	35%	43%	5%	100%			

Annex 3: Liberian refugees by country of asylum and county of return (Estimates) as of January 2004

County of return / Country of asylum	BOMI	BONG	GBARPORLU	GRAND BASSA	GRAND CAPE MOUNT	GRAND GEDEH	GRAND KRU	LOFA	MARGIBI	MARYLAND	MONTERRADO	NIMBA	RIVER GEE	RIVERCESS	SINOE	UNKNOWN	Total
Ghana	249 1%	932 2%	18 0%	619 1%	160 0%	2,903 7%	143 0%	760 2%	658 2%	829 2%	30,497 72%	1,413 3%	86 0%	69 0%	495 1%	2,635 6%	42,466
Sierra Leone	1,269 2%	919 2%	2,253 4%	257 0%	14,188 25%	198 0%	155 0%	30,493 53%	574 1%	199 0%	4,170 7%	535 1%	22 0%	76 0%	245 0%	2,151 4%	*57,704
Côte d'Ivoire	11 0%	696 1%	0 0%	840 1%	88 0%	12,516 17%	1,547 2%	4,97 1%	83 0%	41,559 56%	1,248 2%	9,114 12%	1,072 1%	226 0%	1,116 2%	3,567 5%	74,180
Gambia	51 7%	66 9%	0 0%	51 7%	95 13%	32 4%	13 2%	86 12%	8 1%	28 4%	190 25%	69 9%	1 0%	3 0%	35 5%	22 3%	750
Guinea	170 0%	12,364 14%	55 0%	157 0%	145 0%	331 0%	87 0%	57,488 64%	845 1%	238 0%	2,885 3%	14,464 16%	9 0%	31 0%	134 0%	24 0%	**89,428
Grand total	1,750 1%	14,977 6%	2,326 1%	1,923 1%	14,677 6%	15,980 6%	1,945 1%	89,324 34%	2,168 1%	42,853 16%	38,990 15%	25,595 10%	1,190 0%	406 0%	2,025 1%	8,399 3%	***264,528

* Figure excludes 9,496 residing outside the camps

** Figure excludes 60,172 residing outside of camps

*** Total does not take into account 6000 refugees in Nigeria and 1150 in other countries

Annex 5				
BUDGET in USD				
Repatriation and Reintegration activities for Liberian Returnees and Assistance to IDPs				
2004 - 2007				
	2004*	2005**	2006***	2007****
Activities and Services	Requirements in USD	Requirements in USD	Requirements in USD	Requirements in USD
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	9,129,130	10,844,947	10,844,947	9,129,130
Community Services	759,799	3,464,298	3,117,868	2,338,401
Crop Production	1,530,000	723,000	650,700	488,025
Domestic Needs	2,562,280	2,499,529	2,249,576	1,687,182
Education	2,084,437	977,437	879,693	659,770
Food	336,465	459,933	413,940	310,455
Forestry	140,000	80,500	72,450	54,338
Health	1,238,343	1,942,822	1,748,540	1,311,405
Income Generation	400,000	295,000	265,500	199,125
Legal Assistance	1,178,980	1,716,792	1,545,113	1,158,835
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,023,400	1,403,591	1,263,232	947,424
Sanitation	1,055,023	728,123	655,311	491,483
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	4,000,000	6,610,136	2,800,000	2,100,000
Transport/Logistics	6,955,100	11,043,193	6,000,000	4,500,000
Water	1,177,045	618,645	556,781	417,585
Total Operations	34,570,002	43,407,946	33,063,650	25,793,157
Support Cost (7%) of Total Operations	2,279,900	0	0	0
Programme Support	4,392,082	1,645,723	1,645,723	1,234,292
Total Requirements	41,241,984	45,053,669	34,709,373	27,027,450

* 2004 Sector budgets based on UNHCR Supplementary Appeal plus USD 2,000,000 in annual budget funds for the repatriation of Liberians in Sierra Leone.

** 2005 Sector budgets based on budget approved by the Operations Review Board to be submitted to the Executive Committee in October 2004.

*** 2006 Budget based on a beneficiary population of 65,400 (Indicative).

**** 2007 phase out of activities begins (Indicative).

Expected no. of refugee returnees by county of origin As of June 2004

Catalog No: HCR_LIB_MO_01 Map No: 48

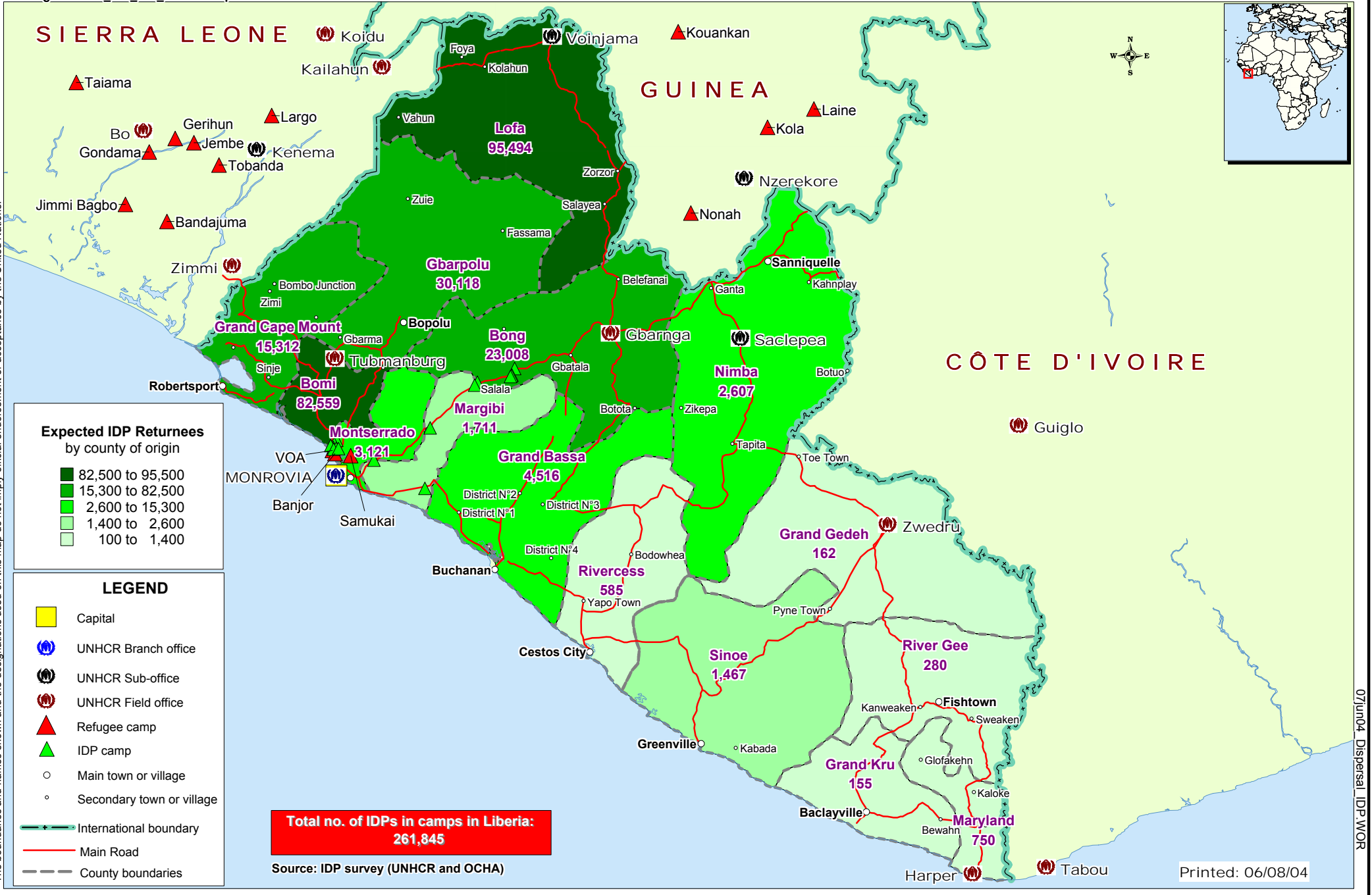


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

07Jun04 Dispersal RefWOR

Expected no. of IDP returnees by county of origin As of May 2004

Catalog No: HCR_LIB_MO_01 Map No: 50



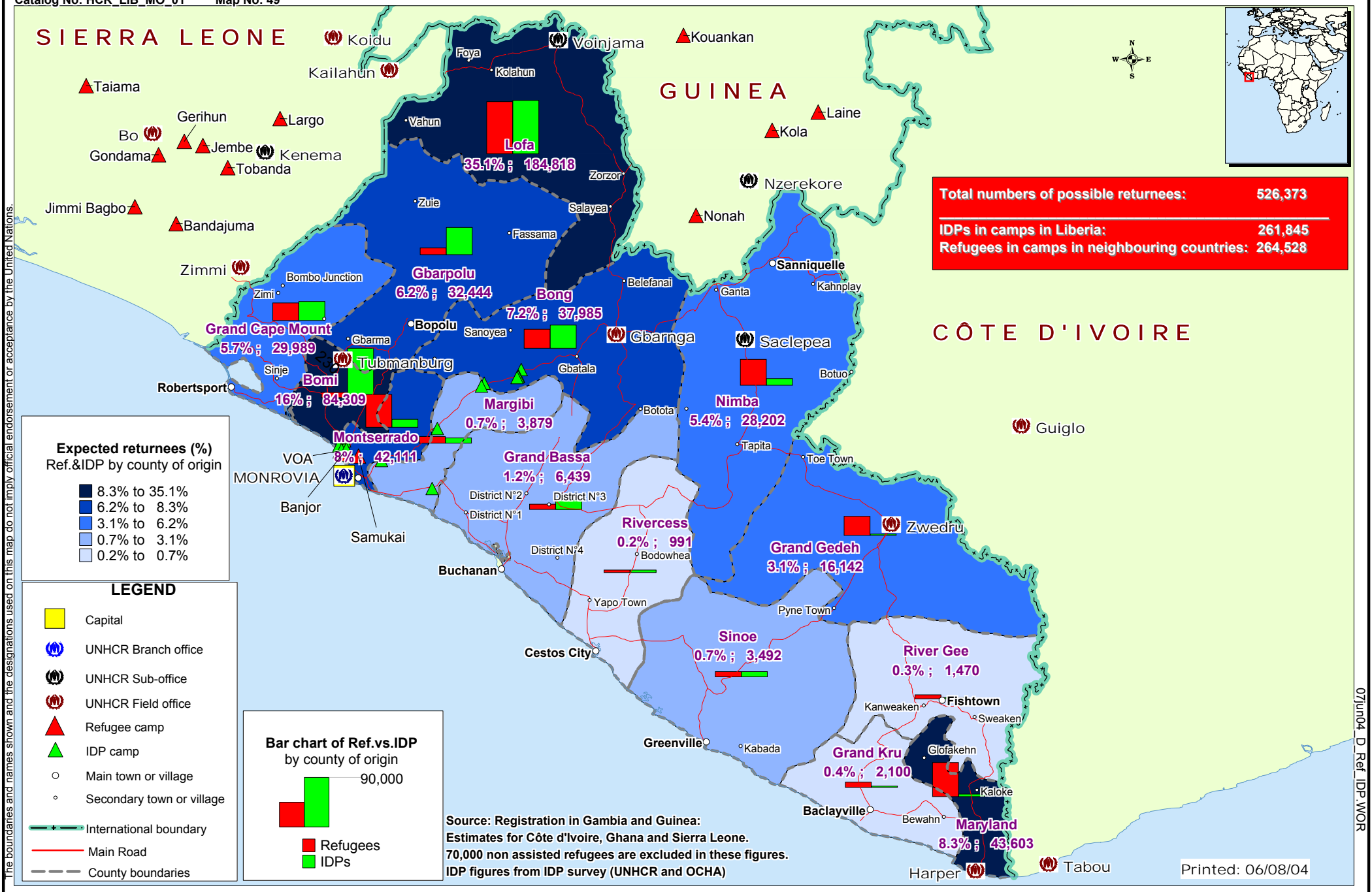
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

07Jun04 Dispersal IDP.WOR

Printed: 06/08/04

Expected no. of returnees (IDP & Ref) by county of origin As of June 2004

Catalog No: HCR_LIB_MO_01 Map No: 49



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

07Jun04 D Ref IDP WOR

Catalog No: HCR_LIB_MO_01 Map No: 51



Annex 10

Modes of Transport from Countries of Asylum

Côte d'Ivoire

Location of Refugees and Main Destination	Route	Remarks
Guiglo to Grand Gedeh	Land	Roads Accessible
Tabou to Maryland/Grand Gedeh	Land/Cavalla Ferry	Roads Accessible Cavalla Ferry to be repaired
Abidjan to Monrovia	Land/Sea/Air	Land convoys will be limited due security situation

Guinea

Location of Refugees and Main Destination	Route	Remarks
Kissidougou to Lofa	Land	Roads Accessible
Nzerekore, Macenta, Lola to Lofa, Nimba and Bong	Land	Roads Accessible
Conakry to Monrovia	Sea /Air	

Sierra Leone

Location of Refugees and Main Destination	Route	Remarks
Kenema/Bo to Grand Cape, Bomi , Gporpolu Monteserado , Bong, Nimba	Land	Roads Accessible
Kenema/Bo to Lofa	Land/Air	Road in need of repair Security concerns for Foya
Freetown to Monrovia	Land/Air/ Sea	

Ghana

Location of Refugees and Main Destination	Route	Remarks
Buduburam/Krisan to Nimba via Abidjan and Deanne	Land/Sea	Security Concerns
Buduburam/Krisan to Maryland/Grand Gedeh via Abidjan and Tabou	Land/Sea/Cavalla Ferry	Security Concerns
Accra to Monrovia	Land /Sea/Air	Preferred Mode

Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and others

Location of Refugees and Destination	Route	Remarks
Lagos to Monrovia	Sea/Air	Preferred Mode
Dakar/Banjul/Bissau/Bamako.	Sea/Air	Preferred Mode
Other countries	Sea/Air	Preferred Mode