

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cape Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- The Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mali
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo

West Africa





Operational highlights

- UNHCR concentrated its efforts in the region on local integration, documentation and the promotion of livelihoods for urban and rural refugees.
- The Office and its partners repatriated more than 7,000 Mauritanian refugees from Senegal, some 300 Sierra Leonean refugees from the Gambia and over 4,600 Togolese refugees from Benin and Ghana as well as smaller groups of other nationalities.
- In light of the invocation of the cessation clause for Sierra Leonean refugees at the end of 2008, the Office intensified the search for durable solutions for some 9,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in the region.
- The Office promoted the integration of refugees in national health and education systems, and lobbied other UN Agencies, NGOs, governments and regional organizations to include refugees in their development programmes.
- As part of its restructuring, UNHCR's regional office in Dakar expanded its responsibilities to Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Working environment

Although peace was restored in most West African countries, security remained fragile in some of them, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. It was feared that this could have repercussions on the entire region. Most refugees in West Africa have been in exile for protracted periods and a majority of them live in urban areas. UNHCR and its partners promoted a combination of durable solutions for them.

Protection, emergency assistance and support for self-reliance and livelihoods are key parts of the strategy for refugees in the region, with a special focus on gender and age issues as well as vulnerable cases. However, a socio-economic environment made more fragile by the food, fuel and financial crises posed difficulties.

Combined with greater emphasis on livelihood activities, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment provided a framework to secure the human rights of refugees, stranded migrants, rejected asylum-seekers and former refugees within the region.

A tripartite agreement between the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal and UNHCR, signed in November 2007, opened the door for the repatriation of refugees from Senegal. In the Gambia, a refugee bill was adopted by the National Assembly in November 2008 and is awaiting signature by the President. Guinea-Bissau's refugee law was signed by its President in May 2008.

In Benin, the Government did not reconfirm the *prima facie* refugee status of Togolese refugees who arrived in 2005. This compelled UNHCR to conduct individual refugee status determination (RSD) on behalf of the Government. UNHCR advocated for the Government's accession to international instruments on statelessness.

Achievements and impact

The promotion of local integration has led UNHCR to focus on four major activities: providing civil documentation, supporting livelihoods, integrating refugees into local and

national social systems and building the capacities of governments and partners.

UNHCR worked to raise awareness on regional refugee-protection issues. It also advocated for the local integration of residual groups of refugees from ECOWAS countries in the context of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment. Together with IOM and ECOWAS, UNHCR organized a conference on the protection of refugees and international migration in West Africa in November 2008.

Cooperation with ECOWAS led to the adoption of a region-wide approach on migration that integrated UNHCR's 10-Point Plan into the ECOWAS work plan. It also resulted in a Memorandum on Equality of Treatment of Refugees and other ECOWAS citizens, as well as the integration of humanitarian indicators into ECOWAS's early warning system, and the creation of an ECOWAS Emergency Response Team.

From October 2008, ILO and UNHCR collaborated with a regional expert on local integration and livelihoods. The expert's review provided a set of lessons learned for local-integration activities. UNHCR's collaboration with WFP has ensured food security for Senegalese refugees in the Gambia and food assistance for returnees from Benin in Togo.

The Office advocated for the inclusion of refugees and populations of concern in education, public health and HIV and AIDS services. Public health and HIV and AIDS issues have been integrated into regional strategies for local integration, reintegration, voluntary repatriation and resettlement.

UNHCR is readjusting its structure in West Africa by reinforcing its regional office in Dakar. The Office is also participating in regional inter-agency humanitarian and development activities and contingency planning, as well as the UNDAF, CAP and CERF processes and co-leading the regional inter-agency HIV-AIDS response.

| Constraints |

The challenging socio-economic situation in the region is restricting progress in the areas of local integration and livelihoods.

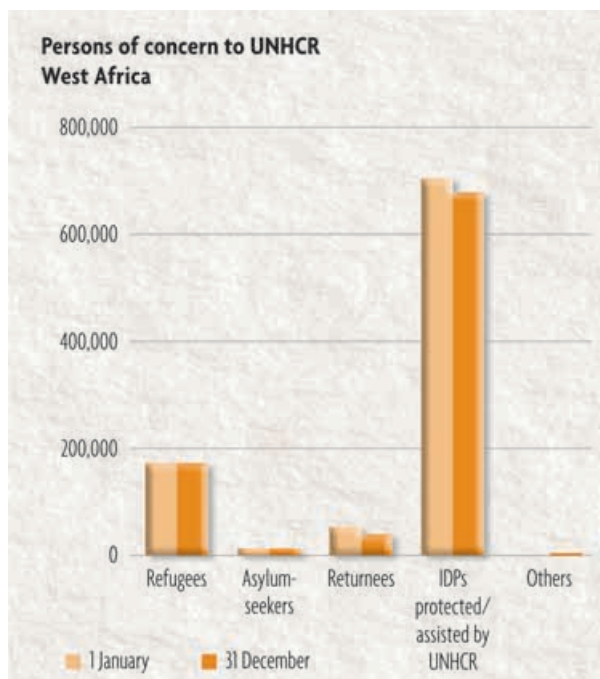
High expectations of resettlement led some 800 Sierra Leonean refugees in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria to apply for exemptions to the cessation clause. Resettlement from Benin and Nigeria also affected the voluntary repatriation of Togolese and Liberian refugees.

Difficulties have arisen in mobilizing development agencies to support durable solutions and in promoting the local integration of smaller and dispersed groups in urban areas.

| Operations |

UNHCR's operations in **Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia** and **Sierra Leone** are described in separate chapters.

UNHCR's Regional Representation Office in Dakar protected and assisted some 65,500 refugees and nearly 5,000 asylum-seekers in **the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal**. The Office focused on durable solutions, including local integration through self-reliance, as well as voluntary repatriation and resettlement.



The agreement reached between the Governments of Senegal and Mauritania in 2007 allowed the repatriation of some 7,000 Mauritanian refugees from Senegal in 2008. A re-profiling exercise has boosted the number of candidates for return among refugees in Senegal and Mali from some 25,000 to 35,000.

The Dakar office conducted a verification exercise for Sierra Leonean refugees in preparation for invocation of the cessation clause. Some 1,900 refugees applied for local integration and will be assisted in 2009 with documentation and livelihoods support. In addition, the Regional Office submitted some 1,760 cases from West and Central Africa for resettlement.

The Office in **Benin** coordinated activities for **Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo** until the end of 2008. Some 4,650 Togolese refugees repatriated, more than 4,250 of them from Ghana. The number of returnees from Benin (around 400, was much smaller than anticipated due to the security and political situation in Togo and persistent hopes of resettlement.

Returnees in Togo were assisted in the areas of education, income generation, shelter, food and basic non-food items. Some 70 refugees were resettled from Benin. Most of the Togolese refugees in Benin live in the Cotonou and Agame camps, where some 3,000 remained at the end of the year. Food assistance has been stopped in the Agame camp—except for some 300 extremely vulnerable refugees.

In **Nigeria**, the office assisted more than 10,100 refugees and some 1,200 asylum-seekers. Some 300 Liberian refugees and 70 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated in 2008. The Office continued to promote local integration for the remaining Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees. Nigeria received some 1,800 refugees from Cameroon and provided them with basic assistance. UNHCR helped build ECOWAS's capacity in emergency preparedness and response as well as risk reduction.

The Dakar regional office absorbed the former regional support hub based in Accra, and in July 2008 began supervising operations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. In January 2009 Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone also fell under the Regional Representation.

Financial information

UNHCR's operations in the West Africa subregion were fully funded. Priority was given to protection needs, and material assistance was minimal. While financial and human resources covered most voluntary repatriation and

resettlement activities, support for the local integration of refugees was inadequate. This left UNHCR unable to implement community-based rehabilitation or infrastructure projects to help refugees integrate into host communities.

Budget and expenditure in West Africa (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Benin	1,631,421	0	1,631,421	1,529,419	0	1,529,419
Côte d'Ivoire	6,934,272	2,336,449	9,270,721	6,794,155	1,581,737	8,375,892
the Gambia	81,237	0	81,237	75,455	0	75,455
Ghana	6,484,913	0	6,484,913	6,457,729	0	6,457,729
Guinea	7,948,815	0	7,948,815	7,869,544	0	7,869,544
Liberia	24,123,091	3,049,920	27,173,011	23,695,555	2,859,821	26,555,376
Mali	96,253	0	96,253	76,261	0	76,261
Nigeria	3,400,531	0	3,400,531	3,229,529	0	3,229,529
Senegal	6,397,640	2,030,493	8,428,133	6,388,126	1,810,304	8,198,430
Sierra Leone	6,523,966	150,000	6,673,966	6,472,269	147,973	6,620,242
Togo	431,138	0	431,138	379,308	0	379,308
Regional activities ¹	5,577,060	0	5,577,060	5,174,045	0	5,174,045
Total	69,630,337	7,566,862	77,197,199	68,141,395	6,399,835	74,541,230

¹ Includes the regional stockpile, voluntary repatriation for individual cases in West Africa, local integration, assistance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers, and resettlement for refugees in the West African region.

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to West Africa (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual Budget	Supplementary Budget	Total
Côte d'Ivoire	African Union		93,000	93,000
	CERF		490,296	490,296
	Italy	466,563		466,563
	UN Fund For International Partnerships	323,080		323,080
	Republic of Korea	200,000		200,000
	United States of America	1,100,000	539,952	1,639,952
Côte d'Ivoire subtotal		2,089,643	1,123,248	3,212,891
Ghana	UN Programme on HIV and AIDS	120,188		120,188
	UN Trust Fund Human Security	235,290		235,290
	United Kingdom	56,400		56,400
	United States of America	941,997		941,997
Ghana subtotal		1,353,875		1,353,875
Guinea	African Union	100,000		100,000
	United States of America	1,050,000		1,050,000
Guinea subtotal		1,150,000		1,150,000

Earmarking	Donor	Annual Budget	Supplementary Budget	Total
Liberia	African Union	200,000		200,000
	Denmark		1,857,452	1,857,452
	European Commission	855,365		855,365
	Germany	74,500		74,500
	Greece	78,864		78,864
	Italy	1,166,181		1,166,181
	The Sunmoon Peace Football Foundation (Republic of Korea)	30,000		30,000
	UN Fund For International Partnerships	110,000		110,000
	Spain	720,399		720,399
	UN Peacebuilding Fund	478,931		478,931
	United States of America	7,000,000		7,000,000
Liberia subtotal		10,714,241	1,857,452	12,571,694
Nigeria	United Kingdom	31,570		31,570
Nigeria subtotal		31,570		31,570
Senegal	CERF		325,500	325,500
	Spain		240,933	240,933
	UN Programme on HIV and AIDS	186,519		186,519
	United States of America	110,000		110,000
Senegal subtotal		296,519	566,433	862,951
Sierra Leone	African Union	200,000		200,000
	Greece	78,864		78,864
	Luxembourg	364,431		364,431
	United States of America	1,016,844		1,016,844
Sierra Leone subtotal		1,660,140		1,660,140
West Africa Suregion	Canada	664,622		664,622
	Ireland	739,645		739,645
	Liechtenstein	87,719		87,719
	Spain	452,781		452,781
	Sweden	7,704,160		7,704,160
West Africa subtotal		9,648,928		9,648,928
Total		26,944,915	3,547,133	30,492,048

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.