

# WEST AFRICA



UNHCR

2014 - 2015  
GLOBAL APPEAL

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



Tuaregs having fled violence in Mali put up their tent in Mentanao refugee camp, Burkina Faso (June 2012)

UNHCR / J. BJÖRGVINSSON





# Overview



## Working environment

UNHCR's operations in West Africa have been characterized by: the evolving situation in Mali, including its impact on internal and external displacement of populations (into Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania); the continuation of voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees; and the invocation of the "cessation clauses" for Liberian and Rwandan refugees. Recent military and political developments inside Mali will have an impact on the initial assumptions on which the Office's 2014 planning was based.

Prevailing insecurity in this part of Africa has had an impact on humanitarian operations. Most countries in the subregion are affected or threatened by insurgency activities, including instances of kidnapping in the Sahel region and attacks in Nigeria and Niger. The security threats compound the challenges for the populations in the Sahel region, which

include pervasive poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to basic services, inadequate education and social infrastructures, high population growth, weak economies and porous borders.

Mali has remained at the centre of the humanitarian crisis which has affected more than 350,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and 175,000 refugees in neighbouring countries in the past three years. With the deployment of the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as of mid-2013, the security situation has been slowly improving and more humanitarian agencies are now able to deploy staff and operations in the north of Mali. Although the presidential elections present hope for the nation, the situation remains fragile. A process of national reconciliation, dialogue and reunification has been set up, to ensure national participation and

encourage the sustainable return of refugees and IDPs.

Nigeria currently faces security challenges from religious extremist activities in the north of the country. The impact of the ongoing militant activities has spilled over into neighbouring countries, particularly Niger and Cameroon, where over 10,000 Nigerian refugees have sought asylum to date.

The Sahel region has long been affected by drought and cyclical food insecurity which in recent years have affected some 17 million people. This has inevitably had an impact on UNHCR's refugee operations, particularly in Niger and Burkina Faso, which are characterized by persistent malnutrition. The countries in the region, in partnership with the UN country teams, are working to increase the resilience of their populations to these cyclical droughts.

## Strategies

- In 2014, UNHCR's priority in West Africa will be to reinforce the capacity of national authorities to manage asylum issues and identify and implement durable solutions for refugees. Where local integration is the most appropriate option, UNHCR will focus on documentation and helping refugees gain access to national services. Of equal importance will be the development of sustainable livelihoods for people of concern and the strengthening of partnerships. Positive lessons learned from the local integration programme currently being implemented in Benin will be applied to other protracted refugee situations.
- Resettlement will be one of UNHCR's main priorities in the subregion, as it remains the only durable solution for a sizeable number of refugees. UNHCR's Regional Office in Dakar has been helping resettlement countries identify and process submissions and will continue to do so throughout 2014. Efforts to build the capacity of national authorities to handle asylum issues and allow UNHCR to reduce its presence in the region are also underway.
- Harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, sexual mutilation, forced marriage and early marriage, are of serious concern in the various refugee communities in the subregion. In 2014, access to information, counselling, legal assistance and referral mechanisms will be key components of UNHCR's SGBV-prevention work. Workshops to roll out the organization's strategy on SGBV will be organized in the countries of the subregion. UNHCR will ensure the continuity of its SGBV programming and monitoring by developing a multi-year framework that includes capacity-building and knowledge management.
- The underlying problem facing urban refugees is the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities. In 2014, UNHCR will strengthen the implementation of its urban refugee policy to promote self-reliance and will provide assistance in health, vocational training, education and support to people of concern with special needs, including those living with HIV and AIDS. Efforts to identify those urban refugees for whom resettlement is the only possible durable solution will be a priority.
- With the entry into force in mid-2012 of the cessation clauses for Liberian refugees, in 2014 UNHCR offices in the region will focus on managing exemption applications and conducting local integration and voluntary repatriation programmes. More than 29,300 Liberian refugees have returned home, mainly from Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra Leone. The exemption process is managed by the national eligibility commissions in each of the countries of asylum. Passports are being issued by the Liberian authorities to Liberian nationals wishing to integrate locally in the countries of asylum. The processing of exemption cases is proceeding smoothly in seven countries, with the major groups being in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone.
- The experience of the Liberian cessation process has allowed UNHCR to take a similar approach with respect to the cessation clauses for Rwandan refugees. The latter came into effect on 30 June 2013. The figures are smaller, however. Only some 750 Rwandan refugees are affected by the cessation of their refugee status in West Africa. The majority of the former Rwandan refugees have opted for local integration, mainly in Benin and Burkina Faso, either through naturalization or as Rwandan nationals with work and residence permits. Almost 190 refugees in the region have applied for exemption (the largest number from Togo), and their claims are currently being assessed by national eligibility commissions.
- The improving security situation in the north of Mali has allowed UNHCR to expand its presence in the region, particularly in the city of Gao. With the help of its implementing and cluster partners in the north, both in areas of internal displacement and refugee return, UNHCR has begun protection monitoring, advocacy and SGBV-prevention activities. The training of national actors and NGOs in protection work will be intensified. In addition, the shelter, livelihood and material needs of IDPs will be met in collaboration with other cluster partners.
- Given the recent political developments in Mali, UNHCR anticipates that returns of IDPs and Malian refugees from neighbouring countries will increase in the coming months. Returnees will require assistance to meet their needs for water, health, education and shelter. However, these needs have not been included in the present Global Appeal, as a needs assessment of patterns of return, villages of destination, etc. was pending at the time UNHCR's programme budget for 2014-2015 was finalized.)
- In Nigeria, internal displacement is endemic. Recurrent ethno-religious conflicts and natural disasters have prompted people to flee their homes and seek safety elsewhere. If the general security situation remains unresolved, displacement and the need for a humanitarian response in the north of the country are likely to persist in 2014. Owing to the lack of security and limited access to affected populations, it is difficult to assess IDP numbers and needs.

## Challenges

It has been difficult to find lasting solutions for refugees in protracted situations in the subregion. This has been the case for Mauritanian refugees in Mali, as well as a residual group in Senegal. Opportunities for local integration and self-sufficiency are sparse, particularly in the Sahel area. At the same time, national, legal and policy environments in host countries place varying restrictions on self-reliance opportunities. In some cases, refugees are formally excluded from the labour market and denied access to education.

Access to employment is extremely difficult to obtain when asylum countries are struggling with high unemployment. Benin is one country which is open to

local integration; however, the process for acquiring legal documentation is extremely slow. Refugees in protracted situations often do not meet resettlement criteria.

The sociocultural background of some groups of refugees from the Sahel region may be characterized by ethnic segregation and servitude, bringing considerable protection challenges in relation to access to services and participation in decisions. In order to respond to these challenges, measures will be taken to try to address inequality among refugee groups. Assistance responses tailored to nomadic refugee populations have been developed, including the setting up of *zones d'accueil* (reception areas). These differ from traditional refugee camps as they allow refugees to move freely with their grazing livestock.

## Operations

Operations in **Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali** and **Niger** are described in separate country operation chapters.

In **Benin**, the disengagement strategy conducted with the participation of the authorities will bring closure to the protracted situation of some 5,000 Togolese refugees in the country. UNHCR will repatriate some 70 refugees, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, in 2013. It is expected that by the end of the year another 180 will be granted naturalization and some 30 Togolese refugees will be integrated locally.

The **Gambia** hosts some 9,000 Senegalese refugees from the Casamance region, 8,300 of whom live in rural areas. UNHCR will provide 1,000 households with agricultural tools to help sustain their livelihoods. It will also support some 220 households from the host communities with similar assistance.

In 2014, UNHCR will assist some 17,500 people in **Ghana**, including refugees and asylum-seekers. Ivorians make up the largest group of refugees in the country. UNHCR

## | Implementation |

is planning for the voluntary repatriation of some 500 Ivorians in 2014 and another 800 in 2015. It is also estimated that some 230 Liberian refugees will be exempted from the cessation clauses. The Office plans to conclude its involvement in local integration activities for 2,000 people, including some 1,000 Togolese, in 2014.

In **Guinea**, UNHCR will continue to assist some 3,500 Liberians affected by the cessation clauses. It will also provide some 6,500 Ivorians in Kouankan II Camp with essential services, such as education and vocational training.

In **Guinea-Bissau**, UNHCR is assisting more than 6,700 Senegalese refugees in rural villages. Activities in 2014 will aim to strengthen local integration and basic services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education. Training in health care and disease prevention will be provided for refugees. UNHCR will also support agriculture and fisheries, mainly through the granting of loans designed to improve the self-sufficiency of the refugee community.

In **Nigeria**, UNHCR will support the Government's capacity to undertake refugee status determination.

UNHCR is also engaged with the Government in establishing a national legal framework in line with the Kampala Convention. Military operations against insurgents continue to force people to flee their homes, with the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa most affected. Insurgents have also targeted civilians. As national and international organizations have not been able to reach the affected areas and populations, the actual number of IDPs impacted is unclear.

**Senegal** still hosts some 13,700 Mauritanian refugees. UNHCR and the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal will complete the repatriation of some 7,500 Mauritanians returning in 2014. For the remaining population, the Office will assist individual voluntary repatriation requests, while those not ready to return will continue to benefit from assistance with crop production, livestock herding and fisheries. UNHCR will also help refugees acquire residence permits and access legal services.

UNHCR's **Regional Office in Senegal** will oversee and support operations in West Africa through joint strategic planning and coordination with United Nations country teams, NGOs and



government counterparts. The Regional Office will also focus on collaboration with other UN agencies throughout the region. Operations affected by the Mali situation, especially with regard to returns to Mali and the process of national reconciliation in coordination with MINUSMA, will receive special support.

In **Sierra Leone**, UNHCR will protect the 4,100 refugees remaining in the country, most

of whom are Liberians. Some 2,700 of these refugees are locally integrated Liberians who will continue to benefit from activities to help strengthen their livelihoods. It is anticipated that the overall political and security situation in Sierra Leone will remain stable and economic growth will benefit the Liberians who have opted to integrate locally.

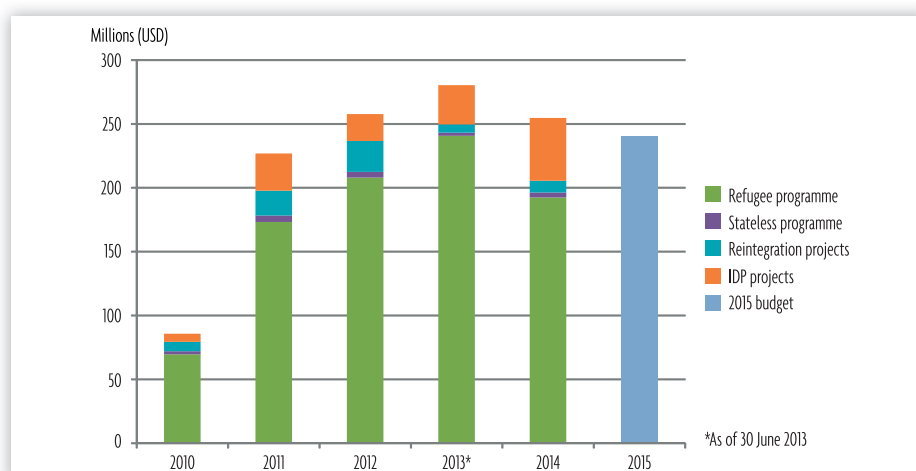
**Togo** hosts some 23,700 refugees of various nationalities, including

more than 17,000 Ghanaians. The country also hosts some 5,600 Ivorian refugees who fled the post-election violence in their country in 2011. UNHCR will repatriate those willing to return while providing support to the remaining populations in need of international protection. However, UNHCR's efforts will be challenged by high unemployment and a weak economy, especially affecting refugees in urban areas.

## Financial information

UNHCR supports and protects over a million people of concern in the West Africa subregion. In 2014, the volatile security situation is likely to mean that this number will increase. New internal displacements and movements across borders (from Mali and Nigeria) have increased financial requirements substantially in recent years. While the revised 2013 financial requirements for the subregion are USD 280.3 million, the 2014 requirements are set at USD 254.7 million. This decrease mainly results from a reduction in UNHCR's people of concern in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia, following the return of Ivorian IDPs and refugees since 2011, as well as the expected return of some 10,000 Malian refugees from Burkina Faso and Niger in 2014.

### Budgets for West Africa | 2010–2015



### Budgets for West Africa | USD

Operation	2013 REVISED BUDGET (as of 30 June 2013)	2014				TOTAL	2015
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
Burkina Faso	32,753,156	25,708,635	0	0	0	25,708,635	21,375,365
Côte d'Ivoire	27,845,564	15,734,062	2,711,306	8,889,473	0	27,334,841	26,437,761
Ghana	12,074,330	10,905,473	0	230,000	0	11,135,473	9,009,965
Guinea	5,426,493	4,873,471	0	0	0	4,873,471	3,750,401
Liberia	42,509,986	35,325,663	0	0	0	35,325,663	35,284,295
Mali	32,210,807	10,698,434	0	0	49,137,181	59,835,614	67,736,851
Niger	52,925,462	41,533,971	0	0	0	41,533,971	33,009,140
Senegal Regional Office	74,545,326	47,620,637	1,124,710	210,000	0	48,955,347	43,476,362
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,291,125</b>	<b>192,400,346</b>	<b>3,836,016</b>	<b>9,329,473</b>	<b>49,137,181</b>	<b>254,703,016</b>	<b>240,080,140</b>