

UNHCR 2003 Country Operations Plan

Executive Summary

Libya

Context and Beneficiary Populations

Although Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, it has ratified the OAU Convention of 1969. The Government has not yet developed a specific administrative structure to respond to asylum-seekers and refugees. As such, refugee-related legislation has not yet been enacted. Within its open door policy towards Arabs and Africans, the Libyan Government considers refugees and asylum seekers as foreigners residing in Libya. Various rules and regulations applicable to foreigners are being therefore applied to refugees.

UNHCR will endeavour to reach a provisional framework towards protection and assistance of refugees and asylum seekers with the Libyan Government through a Memorandum of Understanding, which would serve framework for constructive dialogue with the local authorities.

With the developments taking place in their countries of origin, prospects for return for Somalis (3,000 refugees) and Sierra Leoneans (100) do exist and will continue to be actively explored. Subject to improved security environment in the countries of origin, it is expected that a significant proportion of refugees will return home from Libya.

UNHCR's role

UNHCR assures reception of asylum seekers and processes their refugee status applications. UNHCR will continue to provide basic assistance to the most needy and vulnerable refugees, while empowering them and exploring all opportunities for their voluntary repatriation and self-reliance/local integration, thus reducing their protracted dependency (over 10 years) vis-à-vis care and maintenance provided by UNHCR and its partners.

As the Libyan Government and public are not yet very familiar with UNHCR's mandate, UNHCR will conduct various local capacity building, awareness-raising, advocacy and other promotional activities towards Parliamentary institutions, Government bodies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and civil society.

Refugees

As of 31 December 2001, there are some 12,000 urban refugees registered with UNHCR Libya. The largest majority of the refugees are Palestinians (8,584, 73%) followed by Somalis (2,906, 25%), Sierra Leoneans (107, 0.9%), Iraqis (55, 0.4%), Sudanese (10, 0.08%) and persons from various African and Arab countries. Around 54% of this population are female, while around 35% of the total population consists of children between age of 0-17, including boys and girls.

Policy issues

The implementation of UNHCR policy on refugees in urban areas should permit the development of specific guidelines for protection, assistance and durable solutions for the urban refugee caseload in Libya. The appropriate understanding and endorsement of such central policy by the Government counterparts, NGO operational partners and refugees themselves would be one of the main challenges in 2002/2003 for a successful reorientation of the current protracted care and maintenance programme towards self-sustainability, refugee participation, empowerment and self-reliance. The UNHCR policies on refugee women, gender equality, children and elderly persons would remain other major guidelines for priority setting and the planning, implementation, monitoring of the office activities and overall operations. These policies will be mainstreamed throughout the programme cycle, while specific projects to address specific needs will be developed in cooperation with local NGOs and foundations (i.e. GIFCA, Aisha Charity Association, WICS, LRC, international and bilateral organizations and private companies locally represented in Libya).

Linkages to other countries

UNHCR Tripoli will co-ordinate with relevant countries in the Middle East and North Africa in various aspects of protection and assistance. RSD and resettlement procedures will be harmonized with UNHCR offices in relevant neighbouring countries. Information on irregular movers will also be shared with a view to coordinating policies with other offices.

Capacity and presence of Implementing Partners

The main Implementing Partners, AL Wafa and the Libyan Red Crescent, will be responsible, in coordination with UNHCR, for assessing the needs of most vulnerable individual refugees and providing them with temporary basic care and maintenance assistance, while reorienting progressively activities towards self-sustainability and refugee self-reliance.

AL Wafa will especially provide refugees with social counseling, basic assistance, job-oriented vocational training and other self-reliance activities, while the Red Crescent will look after medical care (curative and preventive) for refugees. It is expected that another local NGO will be soon identified and involved in income generation/micro-credit.

In addition to the above-mentioned NGOs, UNHCR also signed PARinAC agreements in 2000 with two other Libyan NGOs, namely, Gaddahi International Foundation for Charity Associations (GIFCA) and World Islamic Call Society (WICS). Both NGOs have been willing to assist refugees outside Libya, and UNHCR looks forward to more closely involving them in refugee activities. Partnership with other relevant local partners will be further explored in 2003 in order to expand and consolidate the local implementing capacity and create conditions for effective promotion of self-reliance and voluntary repatriation.

Presence and roles of other UN agencies and international organizations

UNHCR Tripoli will continue to actively participate in the UN inter-agency forum (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO), under the Resident Coordinator system, in order to explore opportunities that could benefit refugees. Initiatives taken in 2002 to include refugees in relevant UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO projects will be pursued. No UN agencies are involved yet in assisting refugees under their programmes in Libya. UNHCR Tripoli will identify inter-agency openings for self-reliance

and local integration opportunities for refugees. Operational linkages will be developed with other UN and bilateral programmes available aimed to reduce UNHCR's assistance progressively, whilst working to promote the provision of refugee service into relevant local structures.

Efforts initiated in 2003 towards cooperation with bilateral organizations of donor countries will be pursued. Moreover, job-placement of refugees into projects of national public/private enterprises and those of international private companies in Libya will be also an important element of the UNHCR country self-reliance strategy.

Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of beneficiary population: Urban Refugees	
Main Goal (one): To advance the UNHCR advocacy agenda, enlarge the protection space and strengthen asylum, protection and assistance to refugees	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better understanding of UNHCR mandate is reached by the Government/Parliament and awareness created among local major partners (Government, Parliament, NGOs) on refugee matters and legal instruments related to Refugee Law. • Asylum seekers are provided with effective access to RSD procedures and are adequately protected under current arrangements with GOL. • Most needy / vulnerable groups are provided with relevant protection and basic assistance pending durable solutions (voluntary repatriation, self-reliance). • Specific needs of refugee women and children are addressed. • Create awareness and gain more support from Government and civil society and extend/consolidate partnership with Government partners, NGOs, civil society, private sector and locally represented international/ diplomatic organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement should be signed with GOL, while PARinAC Agreements and cooperative MOUs signed with main local partners (NGOs, Universities, Foundations). • RSD procedures streamlined and delays in decision significantly reduced. • Refugees secured and protected against “refoulement”. • Registration/Verification undertaken and refugee database updated/properly maintained. • Refugee and asylum seekers cards prepared/ issued (in place of attestations). • Government and non-governmental partners trained and local capacity building enhanced. • Advisory support to Government, Parliament and Local Humanitarian Foundations provided on humanitarian/refugee matters. • Minimal subsistence allowances and/or one-time ad-hoc assistance provided to vulnerable groups, based on needs/resources assessment and clear-cut eligibility criteria. • Ad-hoc medical assistance provided to most vulnerable groups on a cost-sharing basis. • Specific activities geared towards needy women carried out. • Most needy refugee children (with at least 50% of girls) assisted to attend primary schools. • Reproductive health, hygiene and other courses (drug control, HIV/AIDS, home economics,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living conditions of refugees in the Somali compound improved 	<p>environmental awareness...).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various promotional activities / external relations and public information campaigns carried out on refugee laws and principles. • Basic rehabilitation and regular maintenance of the refugee Somali compound/camp carried out.
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Main Goal (Two): Re-orient assistance programme from care and maintenance towards durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation and self-reliance.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee applicants for voluntary repatriation assisted to return home in safety and dignity. • Refugees meeting resettlement criteria accepted by receiving countries. • Target groups, particularly most needy households, improve their incomes and degree of self-sufficiency. • Target refugee groups benefit from the national / public social services (e.g. health, education, housing, counseling) existing for Libyan citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information campaigns carried out as appropriate. • Repatriation-oriented vocational training undertaken. • Repatriation packages and transport provided. • Resettlement submissions made on timely basis. • Emergency/protection cases only addressed. • Job-oriented vocational training provided to target groups. • Job-placement mechanisms put in place. • Revolving fund-based income generation activities carried out. • Subsistence allowance further reduced by 50% and provided only to most needy/vulnerable groups. • Insertion of refugees in other Agencies' projects pursued and enhanced. • Access to public health services provided free of charge to target groups. • Access to primary education provided to most needy refugee children (free of charge).

Main Goal (Three): To foster political support to UNHCR, consolidate partnership with line departments, NGOs, UN Agencies, bilateral, Private companies and broaden the fund raising base in the country.

Principal Objectives	Related outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR politically supported and relations with the Government, non-governmental and international bodies (UN, diplomatic missions) strengthened. • Financial support of the Government and Non-Government Organizations to UNHCR programmes in Libya and outside (in particular in Africa) broadened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination meetings and information sharing mechanisms put in place. • Involvement of local partners in UNHCR activities expanded and consolidated. • Refugee issues included in the agenda of relevant line departments, UN and other bilateral Agencies/Missions. • Implementing partners identified and involved in UNHCR activities. • Network of support [Friends of UNHCR] put in place. • Targeted PI campaign carried out. • Contributions from local organizations such as GIFCA, WICS and other donors, to UNHCR operations in Libya obtained. • Refugee needs (re-education, health care and other social benefits) addressed by the local structures. • Maintenance and rehabilitation costs related to refugee “Somali Compound” covered by the Libyan Government. • Local contributions (in kind and cash) to UNHCR operations outside Libya (in particular in Africa) provided.