

# GREAT LAKES

Burundi  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Republic of the Congo  
Rwanda

United Republic of Tanzania



## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Despite some signs of improvement early in 1999, the situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa deteriorated during the latter months of the year. A brief surge of optimism prevailed in Burundi as the Arusha peace process gained momentum and the leaders of the region lifted economic sanctions on the country (imposed since July 1996). This initial optimism faded, however, as the country witnessed intensified rebel attacks in the eastern province and increasing violence around the capital. A large number of the population fled to neighbouring countries, notably to the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania). During the course of an official visit to Rutana Province on 12 October, a convoy of humanitarian workers was attacked by rebels, and nine persons (including two UN international staff) lost their lives. Following that incident, the UN imposed country-wide security restrictions that led to

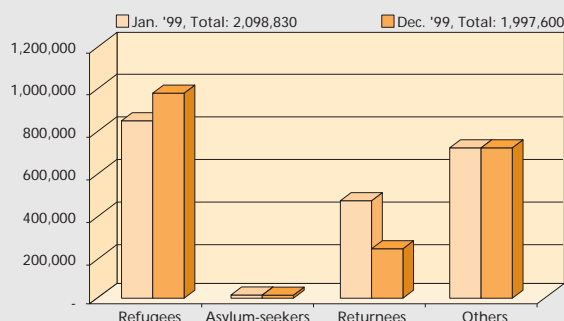
the evacuation of all non-essential UN staff and the suspension of UN activities (life-sustaining activities continued). Furthermore, the untimely death on 14 October of the facilitator of the peace negotiations, Mwalimu Nyerere, cast uncertainty over the peace process. The peace process was nevertheless re-launched with the appointment on 1 December of former South African President Nelson Mandela (as facilitator of the peace talks) by the regional Heads of States.

The Lusaka cease-fire agreement, signed in July by Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, initially raised hopes for peace and stability in the region. However, the armed rebellion in the DRC, which began in August 1998, continued to spread to various parts of the country, prompting new refugee outflows and displacing large numbers of people inside the country. The majority of the refugees fled to Tanzania,

while others sought refuge in neighbouring countries, such as the Central African Republic, Malawi, the Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Zambia and other countries. The conflicts in Angola, Sudan and Uganda also caused refugee outflows affecting stability in the countries of the Great Lakes region. In 1999, some 16,000 Angolans fled to the DRC, which was also already hosting Sudanese and Ugandan refugees.

The peace process for the Republic of the Congo, on the other hand, showed some positive developments. Following the signing of a cease-fire accord at the end of the year, fighting in the country ended and the Government regained control of most of the territory. The improved security situation encouraged many persons who had been displaced by the civil war in 1998 to return to their homes. Following the return of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees to their country in 1996 and 1997, developments in Rwanda appeared promising, although security remained precarious. On 23 December, 31 people were killed in Gisenyi Prefecture by a group of armed infiltrators from the DRC. Although described by the Government as an isolated incident, it raised serious concerns and led to heightened security precautions.

Persons of Concern to UNHCR



## CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Developments in 1999 illustrated the volatility and unpredictability of the situation in the region. Some of the assumptions upon which plans were based at the beginning of the year proved to be over-optimistic, such as progress in the Arusha peace process followed by increased voluntary repatriation. This called for a greater degree of flexibility on the part of UNHCR, which had to shift its programme from a focus on repatriation to emergency response. Emergency preparedness measures in place enabled UNHCR to respond to major influxes of refugees (40,000 Burundians over a three-month period) into Tanzania. By the end of the

year, however, most of the camps were full and UNHCR had to identify other sites to receive new arrivals. Some emergencies in the region went largely unnoticed by the international community, such as a major influx of 60,000 Congolese (Brazzaville) refugees into the Bas-Congo region of the DRC. These refugees experienced considerable suffering, as they remained trapped for months without humanitarian assistance (UNHCR staff had been evacuated from that region in 1998).

Access to refugees in large areas of the DRC and the Republic of the Congo remained difficult, owing to security constraints and logistical difficulties. Amid deteriorating security, many UNHCR offices were closed or run by a skeleton staff of national officers. In both countries, the shortage of staff and funds affected the Office's ability to respond to humanitarian needs.

Furthermore, the region's traditional hospitality and consequent respect for the rights of refugees, long taken for granted, came under threat as tensions developed between refugees and local populations. Suspicion towards refugees originating from countries involved in on-going conflicts increased and UNHCR was often pressured to transfer refugees to specific areas. Proximity to the border exposed refugee camps to armed conflicts raging in neighbouring countries; at the same time, refugees continued to face threats to their physical safety inside the camps from criminal elements within the refugee communities. Women were often victims of sexual violence. Allegations about the use of refugee camps as bases for armed cross-border activity continued to be levelled against Tanzania, leading to tension with Burundi. Discussions between Burundi and Tanzania through the tripartite mechanism on the issue of repatriation experienced a setback when a meeting scheduled earlier in the year was postponed indefinitely.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

Overall, the peace processes for Burundi and the DRC did not progress sufficiently to have a significant impact in terms of durable solutions for refugees throughout the region. The repatriation programme to Burundi was suspended in October and some small-scale individual returns took place to the DRC, as well as from the DRC to neighbouring countries, but it was not possible to implement the planned repatriation programme.

Some progress was nevertheless made towards durable solutions. In Burundi, prior to the dramatic events of

October, UNHCR continued to monitor the return of 12,200 refugees, enabling the returnees to reintegrate without discrimination in the relatively safe and stable provinces. In the DRC, UNHCR continued to facilitate repatriation whenever feasible, and capitalised on relative stability in the Republic of the Congo to successfully repatriate 41,400 Congolese refugees. In the Republic of the Congo, while continuing to pursue repatriation, UNHCR facilitated the local settlement of Rwandan refugees (who were unwilling to repatriate) by initiating their transfer to villages in the interior of the country. In the spring, UNHCR was able to re-establish a limited presence in North Kivu (DRC) to assist the repatriation of Rwandan refugees. Some 38,228 Rwandan refugees repatriated to their country, where UNHCR facilitated their reintegration. UNHCR also reinforced the local settlement of Angolan, Sudanese and Ugandan refugees in the DRC. In Tanzania, UNHCR provided protection and assistance to 420,900 refugees out of a total refugee population of 620,900 (200,000 were Burundi refugees resident in the country since 1972). During the year, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of 11,300 Burundi refugees and 1,000 Rwandan refugees. Another 166 refugees were resettled to third countries. UNHCR continued to provide support to the National Eligibility Committee, which held four sessions during the year. As a result, 4,000 Rwandans received Convention status. UNHCR continued to strengthen local institutions and infrastructure in refugee-hosting areas, through the rehabilitation of services. By supporting the Tanzanian authorities' efforts to provide security in the refugee camps, UNHCR ensured that the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps was, to a large extent, preserved. Furthermore, UNHCR and its partners addressed the problem of sexual and gender-based violence, through a comprehensive approach of awareness raising at community level and the provision of legal, medical and psycho-social support to victims.

## OPERATIONS

UNHCR implemented two major Special Programmes in the region: the Great Lakes Operation (covering Burundi, the DRC, the Republic of the Congo and Tanzania) and the Special Programme in Rwanda. These are described in separate chapters. The following is an account of UNHCR's General Programme activities, which were implemented in three of the five countries in the region.

In February 1999, much of the fighting in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** shifted to the western region of the country, allowing a measure of calm to return to parts of the Province Orientale. UNHCR had evacuated its international staff in August 1998, but the Office was able to resume its assistance activities for the Sudanese and Ugandan refugees in those provinces in May 1999. These refugees had been forced to return to their country or dispersed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in late 1998. As the situation became relatively stable, most returned to the same areas during the year, while some remained scattered in the border areas. Of the 68,000 Sudanese refugees in the country, UNHCR gave assistance to 37,600 of them in an effort not only to re-establish basic services, but also to promote self-sufficiency through agriculture and income-generation projects. The assistance also benefited the local communities. The 3,200 Ugandan refugees received only limited assistance due to limited access to this group. Of the 150,000 Angolan refugees present in the DRC at the end of 1999, UNHCR provided assistance to some 88,000 of them. Some were assisted in Kinshasa, while the majority were assisted in Bas-Congo, Bandundu and Katanga. Given the impossibility to repatriate, UNHCR helped them to integrate locally and achieve a degree of self-reliance. This included: the rehabilitation of six nutrition and feeding centres in Bandundu and Katanga; primary and secondary school education for 8,425 boys and 7,052 girls; and the distribution of seeds and tools to 11,500 refugees and 1,500 local farmers in Katanga. UNHCR also gave assistance to 3,600 urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi by providing a six-month housing and food subsistence allowance and funding 45 income-generation projects.

Of the 20,600 Angolan refugees (from the region of Cabinda) present in the **Republic of the Congo** by the end of 1999, UNHCR provided assistance to some 6,000 of them to help them become more self-sufficient. These refugees arrived in the country between 1993 and 1998. Assistance included the supply of building materials to rehabilitate shelters, the rehabilitation of roads and bridges, the distribution of seeds and tools, education for 371 boys and 266 girls and funding for 22 income-generation projects. UNHCR also facilitated the repatriation of 110 of these refugees. In addition, UNHCR helped 300 urban refugees in Brazzaville and 250 in Pointe-Noire, by providing a six-month housing and food subsistence allowance and funding 14 income-generation projects.

UNHCR continued to provide protection and assis-

tance to about 3,300 Somali refugees in Mkuyu settlement in the Tanga region of the **United Republic of Tanzania**, while encouraging the Government to provide a new site for a local settlement programme for them. In late 1999, the Government allocated a site at Chogo, and preparatory activities began at the end of the year for the establishment of the settlement. As WFP ceased to provide food for these refugees, UNHCR had to undertake local procurement. UNHCR also gave assistance to about 200 urban refugees in Dar es Salaam. These were mostly vulnerable people with physical and mental illnesses, not recognised as refugees by the Government, but who were nonetheless covered under UNHCR's mandate. Assistance consisted of a housing and food subsistence allowance and medical care. In addition, UNHCR assisted 212 Burundi refugees (resident in the country since 1972) with secondary school education, including vocational training. All refugees in Tanzania were provided with the basic life-sustaining assistance and legal assistance for the eligibility procedure. Apart

from the Burundi and Congolese refugees from the DRC, all refugees entering Tanzania must undergo individual refugee status determination.

## FUNDING

As in 1998, UNHCR failed to receive the required level of funding for the Great Lakes region in 1999. Repeated budget cuts had a detrimental effect even on well-established and smooth-running assistance programmes. However, donors showed interest in providing support bilaterally for specific country programmes. The Tanzania programme, for instance, benefited from active donor support in 1999. In preparation for an eventual UNHCR phase-out, UNHCR plans to assist governments in the design of small-scale development projects to be funded directly by donors. These are intended to reduce dependency on humanitarian assistance and meet the long-term development needs of refugee-hosting communities.





## Voluntary Contributions - Earmarked (USD)

Donor	Earmarking*	General Programmes		Special Programmes/OTF	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
<b>BELGIUM</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	525,198	525,198
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	525,198	525,198
<b>DENMARK</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	695,410	695,410
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	4,995,568	4,995,568
<b>FINLAND</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	1,568,321	1,568,321
<b>FRANCE</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	326,795	326,794
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	571,104	571,104
<b>GERMANY</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	300,000	300,000
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	1,200,000	1,200,000
<b>IRELAND</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	191,804	191,804
<b>JAPAN</b>					
	Republic of the Congo	130,000	130,000	0	0
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	720,000	720,000	0	0
	United Republic of Tanzania	250,000	250,000	0	0
	Rwanda	0	0	3,160,000	3,160,000
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	7,750,000	7,750,000
<b>THE NETHERLANDS</b>					
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	8,615	0	0	0
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	475,163	475,163
<b>NORWAY</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	500,000	500,000
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	3,275,549	3,275,549
<b>SWEDEN</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	236,740	236,740
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	1,725,080	1,725,080
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	1,976,970	1,976,970
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	320,000	320,000
<b>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	5,186,000	5,186,000
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	16,825,000	16,825,000
<b>EUROPEAN COMMISSION</b>					
	Republic of the Congo	3,108	0	21,108	0
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	363,922	363,922	0	0
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	4,185,395	2,795,192
	United Republic of Tanzania	964	0	0	0
<b>IBRD (UNO)</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	300,000	300,000
<b>DENRYOKU SOREN (JPN)</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	8,308	8,308
<b>DEUTSCHE STIFTUNG (GFR)</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	134,268	134,268
<b>ESPAÑA CON ACNUR (SPA)</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	73,507	96,652

Donor	Earmarking*	General Programmes		Special Programmes/OTF	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
<b>SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL (JPN)</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	15,591	15,591
<b>SHIN-NYO-EN FOUNDATION (JPN)</b>					
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	102,462	102,462
<b>PRIVATE DONORS CÔTE D'IVOIRE</b>					
	Republic of the Congo	787	787	0	0
<b>PRIVATE DONORS JAPAN</b>					
	Rwanda	0	0	121	121
	Great Lakes Operation**	0	0	87	87
	Tanzania	265	265	0	0
<b>TOTAL***</b>		<b>1,477,661</b>	<b>1,464,974</b>	<b>57,170,747</b>	<b>55,782,580</b>

\* For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

\*\* The Special Programme "Great Lakes Operation" excludes Rwanda.

\*\*\* Total funds available for obligation in the region also included unearmarked voluntary contributions, lightly earmarked contributions, opening balances and adjustments.

## Budget and Expenditure (USD)

Country	Working Budget*		Expenditure*	
	General Programmes	Special Programmes	General Programmes	Special Programmes
Burundi	0	11,415,202	0	9,524,021
Democratic Republic of the Congo	13,251,673	9,679,470	11,600,657	8,065,054
Republic of the Congo	1,510,459	2,261,390	1,350,167	2,227,798
Rwanda	0	27,938,922	0	26,506,449
United Republic of Tanzania	4,486,696	28,001,969	4,142,578	27,088,447
Other Countries**	0	4,555,795	0	3,127,773
Regional Projects	0	9,700,190	0	9,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,248,828</b>	<b>93,552,938</b>	<b>17,093,402</b>	<b>85,539,542</b>

\* Figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

\*\* Includes costs in Angola, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Uganda.