

Eastern Chad and Darfur (Supplementary programme)

(1) Eastern Chad

Working environment

Main objectives

Provide protection and assistance to Sudanese refugees in the camps and to new arrivals; relocate refugees who spontaneously settled along the 600 km border to 11 refugee camps inside Chad; undertake protection monitoring in the camps and along the Sudan-Chad border; prepare a contingency plan for a potential new mass influx from Sudan; minimize the adverse impact of a relatively large number of refugees on a fragile environment; ensure that the local population benefits proportionately from assistance activities to meet their needs, and, at the same time, to foster harmonious coexistence between them and the refugees.

The context

No other UN agency was present in eastern Chad when UNHCR and WFP started providing humanitarian assistance in 2004. Like Darfur, eastern Chad is underdeveloped and its local population lacks an essential services infrastructure.

UNHCR offices in N'djamena and in Abéché established good working relations with the central Government and with local and traditional authorities. Through these mechanisms, international and national resources were mobilized to facilitate the humanitarian response to the evolving crisis.

Impact

- UNHCR relocated, by December 2004, some 200,000 refugees who arrived in Chad in 2004 to 11 refugee camps situated 50 kms away from the border areas to ensure their safety and preserve the civilian character of the refugee sites. This was due to the nature of the influxes and the relative inaccessibility to water. One such example was the relocation of refugees from Bredjing and Farchana camps to Treguine camp in October 2004 where UNHCR was able to relieve the unsustainable pressure on the two camps. To further relieve crowding and resource pressures, a twelfth camp, Gaga, is scheduled to open in May 2005.
- Incidental consequences of the humanitarian response to the refugee presence in the area included the creation of over 2,000 jobs in the region. However, the presence of refugees in a harsh environment created tension between refugees and the local population.
- Projects benefiting the local population were developed to mitigate and address these problems; UNHCR urged the UN Country Team to become more involved in similar projects.

Constraints

Eastern Chad had less than 700,000 inhabitants before the influx of the Sudanese refugees from Darfur. Those living in the central and northern parts of eastern Chad endure the harshest conditions in terms of availability of water and vegetation as compared to those living in the southern part of eastern Chad. In eastern Chad, where water is a problem and the natural physical environment poor, the number of refugees who arrived have equalled or exceeded the indigenous population.

Logistics was another critical area for humanitarian workers in eastern Chad. The much needed assistance was difficult to deliver to beneficiaries as road infrastructure was poor at the best of times and unusable during the rainy season. Most relief items had to be airlifted to and from the capital, N'djamena.

Funding

In September 2003, UNHCR launched its first appeal to donors for the Sudan/Chad operation for an amount of USD 16.3 million to cover the needs of

65,000 to 70,000 beneficiaries. Due to the continuing influxes from Sudan, these appeal figures were repeatedly revised upwards. The last revised supplementary appeal was issued in September 2004 for USD 104 million (of which USD 88 million was for operations and USD 16 million for administration and staffing) to cover the needs of nearly 200,000 refugees. A total of USD 96 million had been received by the end of the year.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

UNHCR's principal government partner, the *Commission nationale d'accueil et de réinsertion des réfugiés* (CNAR) is the national refugee authority. Sudanese refugees were given protection status on a *prima facie* basis. In addition to the International Rescue Committee's Surge Protection Capacity deployees, Save the Children staff and UNVs, UNHCR deployed competent and dedicated individuals to each of the field offices in the subregion. Technical specialists on Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and gender and education experts were also identified and deployed to bolster protection capacity.

Security for refugees in the camps remained a top priority during the year. In August 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Chadian authorities for the provision of Gendarmerie presence at the entrance of each refugee camp. Vehicles, communications equipment, training and incentives for security forces were provided.

Activities and assistance

Community services: A network of female social workers was established in collaboration with the Chadian Ministry of Social Affairs to identify and assist vulnerable refugees. A study of the refugee population was conducted to determine how decision-making worked and how to increase the breadth and importance of women's responsibility

in such decision-making processes. Culturally appropriate responses to SGBV were developed in close collaboration with the refugees.

Crop production: Most of the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad come from a pastoral or agro-pastoral background. But the physical environment does not lend itself to the development of alternative agricultural activities. Moreover, crop production was hit by poor rainfall (this was exceptionally low, even by the region's modest standards). Refugee women were encouraged to develop small-scale gardening activities in Djabal and Goz Amer camps with support from UNHCR and FAO, but this will not allow for self-sufficiency in food. Refugees in this region will continue to require food assistance as long as they remain.

Domestic needs/Household support: UNHCR and partners distributed a number of non-food items (NFIs) that were purchased internationally and airlifted to N'djamena. These included plastic sheets, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, buckets, jerry cans, mosquito nets, and bars of soap. In 2004, the refugees were provided with non-food items in conformity with accepted international standards.

Education: While UNICEF was responsible for providing primary school education in the camps, UNHCR was involved in other activities to respond to the educational needs of refugees. More than 45,000 refugee children were enrolled in primary schools by the end of 2004. A disproportionate number were at the first grade, reflecting earlier exclusion from educational opportunities. Care was taken to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for girls and boys. Schools were also open to children from the local population.

Food: UNHCR worked closely with WFP to ensure that refugees were provided with a food basket amounting to 2,100 kcal per person per day. Through studies conducted with the Centers for Disease Control, UNHCR was able to identify the most vulnerable populations – e.g. children under five, pregnant and lactating women – and ensure targeted, supplementary feeding.

Persons of concern (SB)				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Sudan (refugees)	224,900	200,000	58	62

Forestry: Forestry and the environment were major problems in eastern Chad. Water, firewood and productive land were extremely limited. There were no alternatives to traditional sources of water. The alternatives to firewood were expensive or unsustainable or both (e.g. kerosene stoves). Refugees therefore had to share existing resources with the local population. Priorities in 2004 included the elaboration of programmes for the safe collection of firewood, the delivery and utilization of improved stoves and the kerosene to run them and the piloting of environmentally sustainable alternatives such as solar and super-efficient stoves.

Health/Nutrition: The nutritional survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in June 2004 revealed an unacceptably high rate of global malnutrition of 35.6 per cent. The malnutrition rate worsened in the camps in the north-east. A blanket feeding programme was put in place in response and the general nutritional situation of refugees improved as a consequence although pockets of elevated malnutrition remained. Blanket feeding programmes were continued in these areas. More attention was given to preventive health care, particularly systematic immunization campaigns and HIV/AIDS awareness. When an outbreak of hepatitis E was reported in Goz Beïda, preventive measures were implemented including a hygiene campaign, training and increase in the number of soap tablets given to each person.

Income generation: UNHCR supported income-generating and capacity-building activities for women's associations. These activities focus on development of basic skills, e.g. tailoring and household crafts.

Legal assistance: Refugees in all camps benefited from the protection of gendarmes provided to guard the camps by the Government of Chad. UNHCR protection staff coordinated closely with gendarmes and local and regional authorities on security issues. Refugees enjoyed access to UNHCR protection officers – at least one per camp – and increasingly throughout the year to community services personnel who shared responsibility for intervention and follow-up in cases of sexual and gender-based violence and child protection.

Livestock: Many refugees arrived in Chad with their animals. But grazing land was scarce and large numbers of animals died in and around the camps. Activities in 2004 emphasized exclusion of animals from areas where humans lived. Immunization of livestock was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. A

modest income-generating scheme was set up, involving small-scale production of chickens and rabbits.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR provided the necessary resources such as vehicles, IT equipment and radios to 22 national and international NGOs. Training on protection, community services and programme management was also provided to all implementing partners.

Sanitation: Sanitation in all camps remained below standard. The principal difficulties were semi-nomadic beneficiary populations unaccustomed to and unenthusiastic about collective latrines, the inconvenient location of latrines and inadequate drainage of stagnant water. These difficulties were partially overcome by conducting information and sensitization campaigns and shifting from collective latrines to family latrines.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: Forty thousand tents were purchased and distributed to refugees in the 11 camps, providing a ratio of one tent to five persons. The number of tents was insufficient. As it was culturally inappropriate to have more than one family per tent, additional tents and plastic sheeting were required to accommodate all refugee families.

Transport/Logistics: About 50 four-wheel drive vehicles were delivered to implementing partners and ten vehicles were provided to the Government of Chad for transporting security forces responsible for camp security. Seventy trucks were purchased for logistics support. Despite these, significant needs persisted, necessitating the rental of light vehicles and trucks at very significant expense. UNHCR, its partners and beneficiaries received air cargo assistance for 700 metric tonnes of goods from the French military during the rainy season. Similarly, Airserv flights between N'djamena and Abéché were a valuable support to the operation as air transport between Abéché and the field offices remained a necessity.

Water: There is no surface water in eastern Chad. Providing the recommended 15 litres of drinking water to each of the more than 200,000 refugees in the region remained the most significant challenge to UNHCR and its partners. Relying on satellite technology, UNHCR's hydro-geologists looked for and found water buried beneath *wadis* (dried river beds). UNHCR's partners oversaw the drilling and pumping of water. Shortages persisted, however, particularly in the most northern camps (Oure Cassoni, Touloum

and Am Nabak) which are entirely surrounded by desert. As water was not found in sufficient and sustainable quantities, UNHCR oversaw water trucking, which was expensive and unsustainable but absolutely vital for the refugees.

Organization and implementation

Management

A very high turnover of staff was the principal management challenge during 2004. The majority of staff were on temporary assignments or missions, leading to significant breaks in continuity, loss of institutional memory and insufficient accountability. This situation improved towards the end of the year. The office in N'djamena was changed from an *Office de Chargé de Mission* (OCM) to a full representational office. Besides the sub-office in Abéché, five field offices were established at Bahai, Iriba, Guéréda, Adré and Goz Beïda. General living conditions for staff remained poor throughout 2004.

Working with others

In addition to UN agencies, UNHCR worked closely with more than 22 national and international NGOs. UNHCR worked closely with the Government of Chad at the central, regional and local levels. Weekly coordination meetings took place in N'djamena, Abéché and at camp and field office levels. Periodic cross-border meetings took place between the UNHCR offices in Abéché and El Geneina, Sudan.

Overall assessment

UNHCR's response to the emergency in the east helped to eventually stabilize an evolving humanitarian crisis. While much progress has been made, challenges remain in a number of areas including the identification of adequate, sustainable water supplies, a prompt end to environmental degradation, moving beyond basic referral services to appropriate interventions for women and girls (with regard to rape and genital mutilation) and the provision of universal primary education for school-age refugee children and the local population.

Offices

N'djamena

Abéché
Bahai
Iriba
Guéréda
Adré
Goz-Beïda

Partners

Government

Commission nationale d'accueil et de réinsertion des réfugiés (CNAR)

NGOs

Action contre la faim (France)
Action for Green Sahel
AFRICARE
Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement
Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk
Bureau Consult International
CARE International
Christian Outreach Relief Development
COOPI Cooperazione Internazionale
Croix-rouge tchadienne
INTERSOS
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Médecins sans Frontières (Belgium/Netherlands)
Norwegian Church Aid
OXFAM (UK)
Première Urgence
Programme évangélique de développement
Secours catholique pour le développement
World Vision International

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
FAO
IFRC
ICRC
UNDP
UNICEF
WFP
WHO

(2) Darfur

Main objectives

Provide expertise to the Government of Sudan and other humanitarian agencies operating in Darfur in order to enhance the delivery of protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs; monitor the protection/security situation in the region and establish an environment conducive to the return of IDPs and Sudanese refugees in Chad; and facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Chadian refugees living in Darfur to their areas of origin in Chad.

Impact

- In 2004 UNHCR set up offices in Darfur (after an absence of a decade – the office was closed in 1993), sent in international protection and community services staff and took a leading role in providing and coordinating protection activities.
- By the end of 2004, UNHCR had conducted more than 70 protection monitoring field missions targeting IDP settlements and villages. A profiling exercise was carried out by an implementing partner in villages to the south of El Geneina, Habilla and Wadi Salih. The international presence in these villages helped to reduce the risk of violence and generally increase the confidence of these communities.
- Through the information collected, UNHCR provided advice to the Government and other agencies operating in Darfur, with the aim of enhancing the delivery of protection and assistance to the IDP population. This included support to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the establishment of a community-based protection network and monitoring the voluntary relocation and spontaneous return of IDPs.
- Twenty-three women's centres were constructed in IDP settlements and villages of origin. Those centres helped to prevent domestic violence and to empower women-at-risk.

Working environment

The context

The environment in Darfur changed drastically during 2003-2004. The conflict between the Government of Sudan and rebel groups started in February 2003 and reached its peak in 2004. This phase was marked by widespread atrocities against civilians. As a result, more than 200,000 Darfurians fled to Chad to seek refuge while at least another 1.6 million Sudanese were displaced within Darfur.

UNHCR established an office in El Geneina in West Darfur in June 2004 and in Nyala, South Darfur in July 2004. At the request of the United Nations Secretary-General in October 2004, UNHCR assumed "responsibility for the protection and voluntary return of IDPs to their villages of origin in West Darfur in partnership with other agencies...". Following this development, a Letter of Understanding (LOU) was to be signed between UNHCR and the Government of Sudan in January 2005. The LOU outlined provisions governing the voluntary return of displaced people to and within West Darfur, thus formalizing UNHCR's role in West Darfur.

In addition to the IDPs in the region, there are 5,000 Chadian refugees in West Darfur. Although many have been locally integrated in Darfur since the early 1990s, some 3,600 Chadian refugees approached UNHCR to request assistance to repatriate to Chad, and the Office has secured the Government's agreement to facilitate their return.

Constraints

Insecurity was the major constraint in Darfur. Ongoing conflict between government forces and rebels continued to create a hostile environment for the populations and for humanitarian workers. Difficult road conditions, particularly during the rainy season, hindered access to areas and populations of concern. The delays in granting visas/travel permits and in releasing essential humanitarian equipment and supplies for Darfur were major constraints to effective implementation of the programme. The situation improved after negotiations with the Government of Sudan in June 2004.

Funding

UNHCR began the operation in Darfur with a loan from the Operational Reserve. However, projects under the Annual Budget were eventually fully funded. Some donors initially hesitated to fund the Supplementary Appeal launched in September 2004, requesting clarification of UNHCR's strategy and role in Darfur. Funds were received only late in the year. At the same time, the implementation of different activities encountered some delays, due to the time required for UNHCR to build its capacity on the ground. Some activities were deferred to 2005.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

In West Darfur, UNHCR fielded more than 70 missions, mainly by protection officers, to various villages, IDP settlements and other locations. According to local communities, the presence and activity of international staff deterred some attacks and increased people's confidence.

UNHCR assisted the UN Advance Mission in Sudan (UNAMIS) in the drafting of the collaborative strategy paper entitled *Protection of Civilians: a Strategy for Darfur*, which was adopted by the UNCT in November 2004. UNHCR also chaired the Protection Working Group and SGBV Working Group in El Geneina, West Darfur. This led to strengthened protection capacity among agencies working in the area and better coordination.

A number of Chadian refugees living in West Darfur expressed a desire to return home, in view of the conflict in Darfur. UNHCR and the Sudanese Government Commission of Refugees (COR) agreed to facilitate their return. Movements will take place in 2005.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Twenty-three women's centres were constructed in 11 settlements and villages of origin reaching over 11,000 women. The centres gave women a safe haven where they could jointly address problems, minimize the risks they and their children faced, and find peer support. Literacy and skills training were also organized and the centres

became a forum for awareness-building and information-sharing. Furthermore, UNHCR chaired the SGBV working group in West Darfur. Through the group, a referral system was formalized to assure adequate follow-up of SGBV cases.

Domestic needs/Household support: UNHCR distributed 40,000 blankets to the IDPs in West Darfur by means of the United Nations Joint Logistics Cell (UNJLC) common pipeline. In addition, 9,000 sanitary materials and 9,000 pieces of cloth were distributed to women in IDP camps. The distribution of these items, which complemented the hygiene promotion campaign implemented by other partners, was a means of building confidence among women.

Food: Although provision was made for the distribution of food rations to Chadian refugees during their repatriation, no movement took place in 2004 and consequently no food-related activities were carried out. However, a registration exercise was undertaken.

Health/Nutrition: The plan to provide basic health services to Chadian refugees during their repatriation movements was not implemented as no movement took place during the year.

Legal assistance: UNHCR, through its implementing partner, conducted a profiling exercise in some 450 villages in the south of West Darfur to collect baseline data on the areas of origin of IDPs and Sudanese refugees currently in Chad. The results were shared with humanitarian actors in the region and will be used by UNHCR and other agencies to design projects to rehabilitate communal infrastructure. In addition to such data, the exercise also provided information on continuing human rights violations in the region such as attacks on women and young girls. Through the information collected, UNHCR provided advice to the Government and other agencies operating in Darfur in order to enhance protection and assistance to the IDPs. This included prevention of SGBV, support for survivors of rape and assault, the establishment of a community-based protection network and monitoring of voluntary relocation and the spontaneous return of IDPs.

Operational support (to agencies): Administrative support was provided to all implementing partners in the form of payment of staff costs,



Sudan: A woman selling food in the market at Riyadh camp for IDPs on the outskirts of El Geneina, capital of West Darfur, Sudan. *UNHCR/K. McKinsey*

maintenance and repair of vehicles and other equipment, insurance of vehicles, rental of premises, communication equipment, utilities and office supplies.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: UNHCR constructed 23 women’s centres in IDP camps and villages. Almost 20,000 units of plastic sheeting and 225 tents were also distributed to sites requiring urgent interventions.

Transport/Logistics: Non-food items procured from outside Sudan were transported by air and road to Darfur. In addition, implementing partners were provided with vehicles and fuel.

Water/Sanitation: The planned rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in the refugee camps after the repatriation of Chadian refugees would have benefited Sudanese refugees from Chad and IDPs. The work will be implemented in 2005, as soon as the repatriation of Chadian refugees takes place.

Organization and implementation

Management

In July 2004, UNHCR established a new management structure in Khartoum, known as the Operation for the Sudan Situation (OSS) responsible for the management of activities in Sudan and Chad. In Darfur, a suboffice in El Geneina and a field office in Nyala were established. By the end of 2004, there were 34 international and 43 national staff including UNVs, and secondees.

Working with others

In 2004, UNHCR signed agreements with INTERSOS, Save the Children (USA) and the Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR operated closely with OCHA and OHCHR in the area of protection. Furthermore, by chairing the Protection and SGBV Working Groups in West Darfur, UNHCR established a close working relationship not only with NGOs but also with ICRC and the African Union (AU). Issues raised in those two working groups were shared with the AU to seek wider support.

Overall assessment

UNHCR's protection expertise enabled it to strengthen the protection capacity of agencies working in the area and coordinate their activities. Furthermore, despite the difficult conditions in the region, UNHCR conducted regular monitoring missions throughout Darfur, West Darfur in particular, which helped to increase protection and physical security for local communities and IDPs. The establishment of women's centres positively impacted on

the lives of many vulnerable IDP women. There can be little doubt that UNHCR's vigilance helped to reduce the risk of violence. However, firmer international intervention will be needed to bring to a decisive end the climate of impunity which still plagues much of Darfur.

The repatriation of Chadian refugees who expressed their wish to repatriate did not take place in 2004. A tripartite agreement to provide an operational framework for the voluntary repatriation between the Governments of Sudan and Chad and UNHCR is due to be signed in early 2005.

Offices

Khartoum

El Geneina (re-opened in June 2004)

Nyala (opened in July 2004)

Partners

Government agencies

Humanitarian Aid Commission

Commissioner for Refugees

NGOs

Save the Children (USA)

INTEROS

Others

African Union

ICRC

OCHA

OHCHR

United Nations Joint Logistics Cell