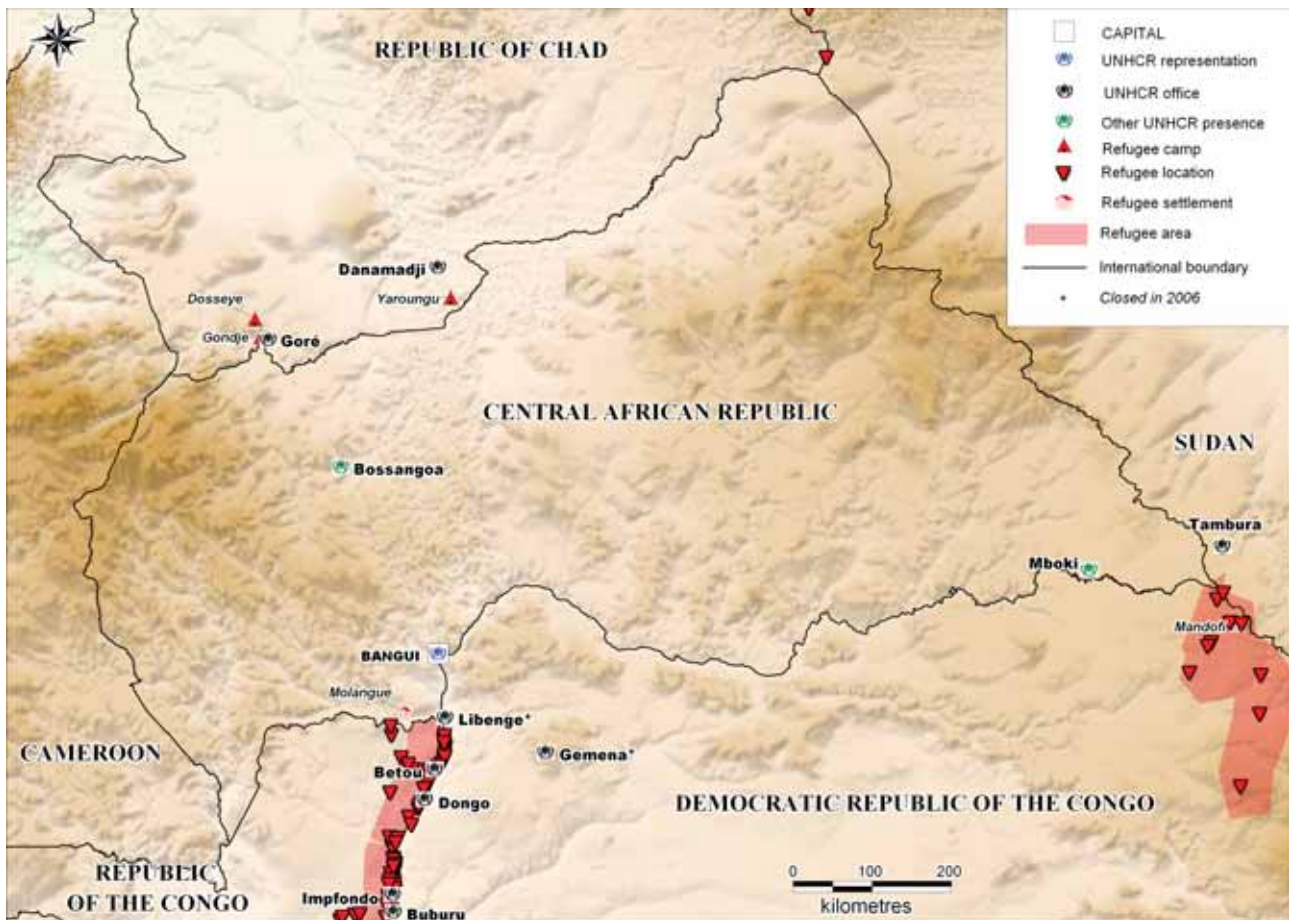


Central African Republic



Operational highlights

- UNHCR registered all the refugees in Bangui – more than 5,100 people.
- The Office helped 56 refugees from Angola and 480 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) return home in safety and dignity.
- Thirty-three urban refugees of various nationalities were resettled with UNHCR's assistance.
- Since the launch of the repatriation operation in February 2006 some 4,500 Sudanese refugees returned to Southern Sudan with UNHCR's support.
- From mid-2006 onwards UNHCR protected and assisted some 50,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north-west of the country.

Working environment

Clashes between militant groups and the army affected the civilian population and caused major displacements in all the northern areas of the Central African Republic (CAR). By the end of the year some 150,000 people had been internally displaced. Another 70,000 had fled to Chad and Cameroon.

The voluntary repatriation of Southern Sudanese refugees was launched in February following the signing of a tripartite agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of the CAR and Sudan. However, due to security incidents at the CAR-Sudan border and its subsequent closure, the repatriation had to be suspended for eight months. Similarly, the repatriation of refugees from the DRC was suspended from April to December due to political uncertainty following elections in that country.

The CAR has some of the world's worst social indicators, with low life expectancy, high infant mortality rates, the highest prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the region and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. IDPs, the majority of whom are hiding in the bush with no access to basic services, are among the most vulnerable.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

UNHCR's objectives were to protect and assist all refugees in the country, particularly those with special

needs; facilitate the local integration of refugees unwilling or unable to return home; and promote resettlement for refugees with special needs and for whom neither repatriation nor local integration was viable. The Office also aimed to organize the voluntary return of Sudanese and DRC refugees and strengthen national capacities in protection and asylum-related matters.

Given the security situation, UNHCR did not facilitate the return of CAR refugees from neighbouring countries as planned. Instead, the Office focused on monitoring, protecting and assisting IDPs in the conflict-ridden northern prefectures.

Protection and solutions

UNHCR helped the Government draft a refugee law, which is expected to be presented to the National Assembly for adoption in 2007.

The repatriation of Sudanese refugees living in Mboki settlement had to be suspended from mid-April to mid-December. Still, UNHCR and IOM organized air transport for more than 3,200 Sudanese refugees and helped an additional 1,200 return under the assisted self-repatriation scheme. Repatriation to the DRC was also suspended from April, but UNHCR plans to complete the operation in the first quarter of 2007 by assisting the 1,000 refugees who are willing to return.

UNHCR led interventions by the UN Country Team and NGOs to alleviate the suffering of IDPs in northern CAR. The Office was responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of an integrated protection strategy. This included sensitizing key government and non-government actors to IDP issues, monitoring protection and tracking new displacements, and assisting victims of human rights abuses.

Activities and assistance

Community services: UNHCR provided financial assistance and vocational training to urban refugees, giving priority to single women. More than 100 refugee students in secondary and tertiary education received financial assistance. Under a strategy to assist urban refugee children attending primary school in the academic year 2006-2007, UNHCR provided school kits and helped with enrolment and exam fees.

Crop production: Congolese refugees in Molangue were trained by an agricultural expert. These refugees were then able not only to cover their subsistence needs but also to increase their household income by selling surplus produce.

Domestic needs and household support: UNHCR gave monthly financial assistance to 60 urban refugee families with special needs, including single women and people living with HIV.

Education: UNHCR helped refugees pay for school fees and distributed school kits. The primary school enrolment rate for refugee children in 42 schools in Bangui was more than 38 per cent. Refugee girls received special assistance to encourage them to go to school, and almost 37 per cent of them were enrolled at the end of the year. However, the primary school completion rate has continued to decline, with nearly half the refugee students dropping out after the fourth year. A refugee education committee was set up in Bangui.

Food: Although Sudanese refugees had been nearly self-sufficient through farming, most stopped cultivation in anticipation of their return to Sudan. Thus, when the repatriation operation was suspended, UNHCR had to distribute 50 tonnes of food to the neediest among them.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Sudan	7,900	700	45	40
	DRC	3,000	1,000	46	57
	Chad	900	300	51	33
	Various	500	200	46	55
Asylum-seekers	DRC	700	-	45	51
	Chad	600	-	32	31
	Sudan	400	-	59	17
	Various	200	-	42	47
IDPs		147,000	50,000	50	45
Total		161,200	52,200		



UNHCR/D. W. Gill

Southern Sudanese refugees in Mboki prepare to board the plane that will take them home.

Health and nutrition: Urban refugees had access to the medical service of the National Refugee Commission (CNR). Refugees in Mboki could use the services of a hospital run by the CNR, and refugees in Molangue could visit a CNR health centre. Twenty-four information sessions on reproductive health were conducted in Molangue. The crude adult mortality rate was reduced to 23 per 1,000 persons per year thanks to improved primary health care and medical evacuations to Bangui. A cold chain for the conservation of medicines was operational throughout the year in Mboki.

Legal assistance: All urban refugees in Bangui – over 5,100 people – were registered in March. The UNHCR database was updated using the *proGres* registration software to account for new arrivals, asylum-seekers who had obtained refugee status, and those who had repatriated or been resettled. UNHCR assisted the National Eligibility Commission, which granted refugee status to 263 out of 367 applicants. The Office helped the Government draft the national refugee law, which is to be presented to Parliament in 2007.

UNHCR and its partners established a monitoring network in four conflict- and displacement-affected areas and trained 24 humanitarian observers to assess household needs in about 60 villages. Moreover, the Office organized three workshops to sensitize national, regional and local authorities to them *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and had them translated into Sango, the national language.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR gave financial, logistical and technical support and advice to its partners.

Sanitation: Eight additional latrines were constructed in Mboki. All were well maintained. Fumigation products were provided at the transit centre to ensure good hygiene.

Shelter and infrastructure: Mboki transit centre was fully rehabilitated to provide adequate shelter, safety and facilities to those repatriating to Southern Sudan.

Transport and logistics: While UNHCR's logistical capacities were stretched to their limits, most operations continued without major problems. However, there was a shortage of vehicles for missions as many were required to cope with the increase in UNHCR's work with IDPs in the north.

Water: Water pumps in Molangue and Mboki were well maintained, ensuring access to safe drinking water for Sudanese and DRC refugees.

Constraints

Due to the serious deterioration in security, human rights and socio-economic conditions in the CAR, the planned return of CAR refugees from Chad could not take place. Similarly, the Southern Sudan and DRC repatriation operations were suspended for several months due to events beyond UNHCR's control.

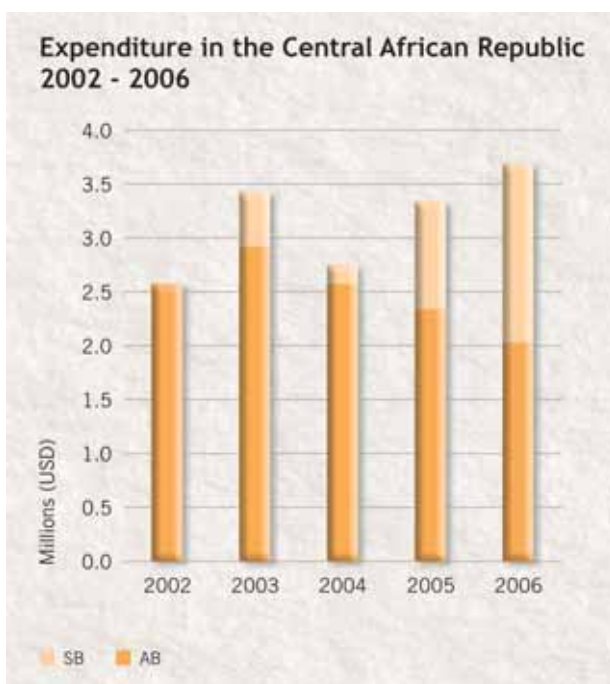
Furthermore, UNHCR could not provide adequate protection to the growing number of IDPs in conflict-affected areas due to a lack of resources and insecure conditions.

Another constraint was the dearth of partners in affected areas. For instance, even though sexual and gender-based violence was identified as a major protection issue, no implementing partner could be found to respond to it in 2006.

Financial information

The reduction in funding for the CAR programme over the past two years has seriously affected UNHCR's assistance to refugees in the country. Staffing proved barely sufficient to manage the three initially planned programmes. Indeed, UNHCR had to rely on Surge and ProCap deployees to develop and implement its IDP protection strategy in north-western CAR, which was funded by the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund.

UNHCR's expenditures under its annual programme gradually decreased from 2003 onwards. In addition to its annual programme, UNHCR spent about 500,000 USD in the context of the "All Africa" special appeal in 2003. From 2004, UNHCR was increasingly engaged in the repatriation of Sudanese refugees, and from 2005 also helped DRC refugees return home under the respective supplementary programmes. Its protection and assistance activities for IDPs in 2006 were budgeted under the annual programme.



Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR had a representation in Bangui, a field office in Mboki and two protection officers deployed for its IDP programme in Bossangoa, where UNHCR shared an office with UNICEF. The Office had six international staff (including two United Nations Volunteers), plus two temporarily deployed protection officers and 19 national staff (including two UNVs).

Working with others

The establishment of thematic working groups, including a protection group chaired by UNHCR, greatly improved the coordination of humanitarian interventions in the CAR. UNHCR continued to work closely with its government partner, the National Refugee Commission, which acted as implementing partner for programmes in Bangui, Molangue and Mboki. The voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Mboki was carried out with the help of IOM.

Overall assessment

UNHCR's activities in the CAR in 2006, particularly repatriation, were very affected by regional developments. As the situation in the north deteriorated, the Office moved quickly to protect IDPs by establishing a presence in Bossangoa. As international interest in the situation in the CAR grew and UNHCR came under pressure to upscale its IDP protection activities, the arrival of potential partners with strong protection expertise was crucial for the operation.

Looking ahead, UNHCR foresees that its greater involvement with IDPs in the CAR will require opening new offices in places like Paoua (to cover the north-west) and Kaga-Bandoro (to cover the north-central areas), along with more human and logistical resources.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: *Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés (CNR).*

NGOs: CARITAS.

Others: IOM.

Operational partners

NGOs: *Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Médecins Sans Frontières (Spain), Solidarités.*

Others: FAO, ICRC, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

	Final budget ¹	Income from contributions ²	Other funds available ³	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	3,340,148	1,910,128	272,791	2,182,919	2,026,044
South Sudan SB ⁴	1,868,442	0	1,497,896	1,497,896	1,497,896
DRC SB ⁵	412,004	0	172,188	172,188	172,188
Total	5,620,594	1,910,128	1,942,875	3,853,003	3,696,128

¹ The supplementary budgets do not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

³ Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

⁴ The SB figures apply to the Return and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees to Southern Sudan.

⁵ The SB figures apply to the Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese Refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Previous years' projects
	AB	SB	Total	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	435,969	344,582	780,552	0
Community services	18,590	0	18,590	7,411
Crop production	1,680	0	1,680	359
Domestic needs and household support	21,964	73,989	95,953	4,484
Education	67,613	0	67,613	48,056
Food	56,008	0	56,008	0
Fisheries	54	0	54	0
Health and nutrition	115,066	9,267	124,333	62,828
Income generation	0	0	0	1,517
Legal assistance	72,020	12,564	84,584	15,775
Operational support (to agencies)	117,372	70,317	187,688	22,888
Sanitation	0	9	9	0
Shelter and infrastructure	0	12,147	12,147	0
Transport and logistics	122,453	802,006	924,458	19,891
Water	629	17,542	18,170	400
Instalments with implementing partners	150,373	258,978	409,352	(183,609)
Sub-total operational activities	1,179,790	1,601,399	2,781,190	0
Programme support	846,253	68,685	914,938	0
Total expenditure	2,026,044	1,670,084	3,696,128	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(19,071)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	400,091	258,978	659,069	
Reporting received	(249,717)	0	(249,717)	
Balance	150,373	258,978	409,352	
Previous years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1st January				411,798
Reporting received				(183,609)
Refunded to UNHCR				(58,053)
Adjustments				0
Balance				170,136