



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Rwanda

Planning Year: 2004

Rwanda: Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Populations

Political Context

Internally, Rwanda in 2003 will be facing a turning point, as the new constitution will be adopted, and Rwanda held its first multi-party elections in July 2003. The elections will attempt to bring an end to the current Transitional Government - a coalition of different political parties. There have been concerns over how much the opposition parties in the country can exercise their campaigns without restrictions imposed on them by the current government and ruling party RPF (Rwanda Patriotic Front).

The Pretoria Peace Accord signed by Presidents Kagame and Kabila on 30th July committed the DRC government to the disarmament and repatriation of Rwandan rebel groups in the DRC in exchange for the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from DRC territory. Rwanda has been reported to have successfully completed its troop withdrawal from DRC at the end of 2002. The official figure provided by the Rwandan government on the number of Rwandan troops withdrawn from the DRC is 20,941 out of a total of 23,760. MONUC statements have maintained the continued presence of Rwandan troops in the Kivus, and even the potential for a confrontation between them and detachments of Ugandan troops in Kanyabayonga.

Under the July 2002 Pretoria DRC-Rwanda Accord, the repatriation of Rwandan ex-combatants from DRC was to be completed by 27th October 2002. MONUC completed its first phase of repatriation based in Kamina, DRC on 20th November. So far, MONUC confirms that it has repatriated 800 of the ex-combatants and their families out of a total of 2,000. The number of ex-combatants in the DRC has been an issue of contention, with the different parties citing different figures of ex-combatants present in the DRC.

Security Situation

Rwanda is now at the end of a nine-year post genocide transitional phase. A new constitution and government is expected during the later part of 2003 as a national referendum and parliamentary and presidential elections are completed. The build up to these important steps has thus far been orderly and uneventful.

The security situation within Rwanda should be seen in the context of the 1994 genocide and the insurgency activities that took place in 1998 and 2001 in the northwestern provinces. The security situation in Rwanda has remained calm since then. In early 2003, security phase 3 was downgraded for the areas bordering the DRC and Burundi to security phase 1; security phase 0 was declared for the rest of the country. The withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the DRC in the latter part of 2002 further improved the perception that the GoR was intent on improved regional as well as internal security. This situation has significantly enhanced the good relations between the international community and the GoR. Recorded incidents of crime, including theft and murder have remained low. By regional standards, Rwanda can now boast one of the lowest crime and murder rates in Central and Eastern Africa and one of the most improved law and order situations.

The situation in the DRC, Rwanda's very large western neighbor and Burundi on its southern border remains serious, with a clear potential for disruption and destabilization of the security situation in Rwanda particularly along the common borders. Notwithstanding the challenges that Rwanda has faced and continues to face with its neighbors, the country has proved itself highly adept at securing its borders, and not since 2001 has the country's security been breached.

It should be noted that Rwanda will, as it has over the past few years, continue to receive and resettle returnees from various countries as well as demobilized soldiers and ex-combatants, and that this process will continue to pose security challenges to the people and government of Rwanda. Nonetheless, if recent history is anything to go by, these processes will be managed effectively and should pose no undue security concern.

Protection Issues (reasons for flight, prospects for return, etc)

As of March 2003, some 3,080,000 Rwandan refugees have returned to Rwanda following the genocide in 1994. It is estimated that some 80,000 – 100,000 Rwandan refugees remain in various African countries. Following the shift in policy from facilitation to active promotion of repatriation at the end of 2002, UNHCR will provide assistance to the Government in the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees. The policy change is the result of positive developments in Rwanda. Major reasons for flight have been addressed, making the prospects for return very encouraging. Due to notable improvement in the country, repatriation of its nationals has become one of the policy priorities for the Rwandan government, who wish to encourage as many Rwandans as possible to repatriate.

Congolese refugees

A large number of people fled the DRC in November 1996 following the war started in eastern parts of Congo (South and North Kivu). A second war broke out in 1998 when the new rebellion, Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD-Goma) backed by the Kigali Government, was launched to fight the Kinshasa Government led by Laurent Desire Kabila. The war between the RCD-Goma and the Government of Kabila also caused the movement of Congolese people into Rwanda. On the Government controlled territories, many people have been ascribed a political opinion due to their Rwandan roots i.e. backing the RCD rebellion. On the rebel-occupied territories a number of people from Kivu regions were accused of collaborating with the Government of Kinshasa and/or with other factions fighting the occupation of Rwandans in the region. In 2002, there was a forced return of Congolese refugees from Gihembe and Kiziba camps. Local authorities, in collaboration with the RCD-Goma were responsible for this movement. The authorities were convinced that the situation in Congo was acceptable for their return, however the refugees were taken to an internally displaced camp in Kichanga and not to their village of origin. UNHCR had to reaffirm the right of all refugees to a voluntary repatriation. The office's position regarding the situation in Congo at the time of this writing is that it is not one that is conducive for repatriation to eastern Congo due to on-going fighting. To address the durable solutions as well as medical and security needs of Congolese refugees, in accordance with the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, up to 700 Congolese refugees will be resettled during 2004; 600 from the camps and 100 from Kigali).

Burundi refugees (Old Caseload & New Caseload)

The first influx took place in 1972, when war and inter-ethnic violence broke out in Burundi between Hutu and Tutsi communities, leading to the persecution and massacres of Hutus by the military government of President Micombero. Following those events, there was an influx of Burundians to neighboring countries such as Tanzania, Rwanda and the DRC (ex-Zaire). A big number of Burundian refugees arrived in Rwanda in 1972, some of whom had transited through the DRC before coming to Rwanda. The second influx took place in 1988 due to the attacks in the Ntega and Marangara region by President Buyoya against suspected Hutu strongholds. A third wave of refugees came to Rwanda following the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu who was democratically elected in 1993. The prospect for return of the old caseload is limited, they have no family in Burundi and have lost contact with their places of origin. Family members who stayed behind have also left the country or are feared dead due to the ethnic clashes which still continue to this day. Some have integrated in Rwanda and do not want to return, especially mixed-marriage families. The potential return of some willing refugees has to be carefully analyzed on a case by case basis since general security is still lacking and only some regions are open for repatriation. In the meantime, UNHCR plans to resettle about 550 Burundian refugees who have been accommodated in Kigeme camp; the plan is to find a durable solution for them as well as to close the camp. Moreover, up to 400 Burundian refugees in urban centers will be identified and their files prepared for submission to resettlement countries during 2004.

UNHCR's Role

The UNHCR's role in Rwanda is to:

Provide assistance to the Government in the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees

Provide protection to refugees and monitor the situation of returnees through provision of training for the concerned national authorities responsible for returnees

Work closely with non-governmental organizations monitoring the situation of returnees in areas of return

Actively cooperate with development partners to bridge the gap between relief and development to ensure that additional strains on resources produced by returnees are mitigated and that the conditions for return are sustainable and to ensure that secondary displacement within the country is thwarted

Provide short-term reintegration assistance under the Special Budget launched in 2003

Provide extensive training for the Eligibility Commission to ensure that it will be able to implement the provisions of the asylum law in Rwanda

Assist all the concerned national institutions involved in the development of the national asylum system through provisions of training and study-tours to one of the African countries which has a functioning asylum system

Actively integrate third country resettlement in its protection framework to find durable solutions for security and medical cases recognized under the UNHCR Mandate, as well as finding durable solutions for those refugees who have been in Rwanda for decades, for whom neither local integration nor repatriation is a possibility in the near future.

Rwanda is at an important juncture with respect to the transition to democracy, and consolidating gains made in national reconciliation efforts aimed at achieving durable stability. In spite of significant progress in many areas, Rwanda still faces serious challenges concerning poverty levels and the general development of the country. The population as a whole has a literacy rate of 50% and an estimated 2/3 of the population is living under the poverty line. Land scarcity remains Rwanda's biggest socio-economic challenge with 90% of the workforce in the agricultural sector, in a country with a population density of over 300 people/sq.km. Returnees, being predominantly of rural origin, place additional strain on scarce resources upon their return. The Government is facing the ongoing task of providing shelter to some 192,000 families, including returnees, identified as living under inadequate shelter, as well as reintegrating the ex – FAR and Interahamwe demobilized under the DDRRR process. Possibly as many as 50,000 suspects from the 1994 genocide are being released after “re-education”; they will later face traditional (Gacaca) courts. These will all place an enormous demand on existing limited land and other resources and infrastructure. Returnee expectations will naturally be high, and if not met, could have a serious destabilizing effect on national security. One of the main roles of UNHCR is therefore to continue to advocate for reintegration assistance for returning Rwandans. Additional funds for a minimum return and reintegration assistance have been requested under a special budget (SB) in 2003. If funds become available, these would only cover the most basic needs of Rwandans returning in 2003 and 2004, leaving those who returned after UNHCR phased out of reintegration assistance in 2000 without assistance, except for the three-month food ration provided by WFP and the standard NFI package.

Overview of each beneficiary population and/or theme being addressed

Rwandan Returnees

It is estimated that some 80,000 – 100,000 Rwandan refugees remain in various African countries. Following the shift in policy from facilitation to active promotion of repatriation at the end of 2002, UNHCR will provide assistance to the Government in the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees. Out of a total of 60,000 Rwandan refugees expected to repatriate, half would have returned in 2003 and the other 30,000 in 2004, prior to the application of the cessation clause, anticipated by the end 2004.

Additional funds for the reintegration of 60,000 Rwandan returnees are being sought for 2003/2004. Should these funds become available, the office will launch a limited reintegration program with the dual purpose of assisting communities receiving large numbers of returnees through Quick Impact Projects and, providing returnees with a repatriation package that includes seeds and shelter materials.

Congolese refugees

In the implementation of UNHCR's mandate, the office will continue to assist the Government of Rwanda in providing protection and assistance to 30,000 Congolese refugees hosted in two refugee camps. In the absence of conditions conducive to return for the Congolese as well the minimal prospects for local integration, increased emphasis will be placed on resettlement as a durable solution for those unable to repatriate in the near future. UNHCR's planing figure for the resettlement needs of this group is 700 persons during 2004.

Burundi refugees

Rwanda hosts 552 Burundian refugees in the Kigeme camp in Gikongoro. RRF's have been prepared for 263 of them, and these will be submitted for resettlement in the course of 2003; they should depart Rwanda in early 2004. For the remaining caseload (289), RRFs will be finalized by mid-June 2003. UNHCR thus plans to close Kigeme camp, and the UNHCR office there, within the first 6 months of 2004. The RRF-based submissions will omit the potentially excludable cases, and in the meantime, it will increase the resettlement chances for the majority of refugees since their applications can be submitted and processed by all resettlement countries.

Urban caseload

A mixed urban caseload of approximately 2,100 persons has been residing in Kigali since the 1990s. The main nationalities are Congolese and Burundian, with a few cases from Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, and Ethiopia. UNHCR only assists vulnerable urban cases, which for security or medical reasons, cannot relocate to the camps. A systematic profile analysis of this caseload is underway, and up to 500 of these refugees will be submitted for third country resettlement.

Policy Issues

Rwandan Returnees

Assisting the Government in the voluntary repatriation of its nationals

Returns will be monitored and facilitated not only by UNHCR Rwanda but also by other UNHCR Offices in the region

Limited return and reintegration activities depending on the results of appeal for additional funds in 2003 for 60,000 returnees

Depending upon availability of funds, reintegration activities will target both returnees and communities receiving large numbers of returnees

Advocacy for reintegration activities to support returnee and local communities

Active cooperation and coordination with UN agencies to ensure that returnees are integrated in development projects and their return is sustainable

Provide extensive training to the national authorities on the issue of return with respect to the rights and obligations of the State to safeguard their safe return and protect their property

Considering the reduced financial resources at its disposal, BO Rwanda will be severely constrained in the number and scale of projects addressing reintegration needs. Therefore, the office will need to work closely with other institutions, such as UNDP, to assist in these areas. In particular, cooperation with development partners will be key to the successful reintegration of Rwandan returnees

Congolese Refugees

Provide basic Care and Maintenance in the camps

Explore resettlement as a possible durable solution for selected cases

Facilitate voluntary repatriation for those willing to return, security conditions permitting

Burundian Refugees

Provide basic Care and Maintenance in the camps, pending resettlement of accepted cases

Explore all possibilities for durable solutions, i.e. voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration for the remaining caseload. It is anticipated that all the Burundian refugees will be submitted for resettlement based on RRF submissions with a view to close Kigeme camp in 2004. Moreover, resettlement will be actively pursued for Burundian refugees in urban centers.

Urban Refugees

Assistance only to vulnerable urban refugees who are not able to relocate to the camps for security or medical reasons

Actively explore all possibilities for durable solutions, i.e. voluntary repatriation, local integration, and particularly third country resettlement

Promoting the resettlement of those urban Mandate refugees (up to 400) who have no prospects for local integration or repatriation.

Linkages to other countries within a defined “situation”

As at end of February 2003, there were approx. 80,000 – 100,000 Rwandan refugees on the African continent. The DRC (33,000), Uganda (18,000), Zambia (5,000), Republic of Congo (5,000) and Malawi (3,000) hosted the most significant caseloads. Tripartite Agreements on the promotion of the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees have been signed with DRC (November 1994), Burundi (December 1994), Tanzania (July 1995), the CAR (February 2002) and Zambia (January 2003). During 2003-2004, UNHCR and the Government of Rwanda hope to establish Tripartite Commissions with the Republic of Congo (tentatively slated for April 2003), Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda, with a view to invoking the cessation clause at the end of 2004. Given this emphasis on repatriation, UNHCR Rwanda worked very closely with UNHCR Tanzania, SO Ngara in particular, and UNHCR DRC, mainly SO Bukavu and FO Goma. Rwanda intends to continue this close collaboration and replicate it with the Branch Offices in the countries with which further Tripartite Agreements are to be signed.

Beyond the Tripartite Commission framework, the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR) campaign of ex-Rwandan combatants in DRC requires to maintain close contact with RO Kinshasa, SO Bukavu and FO Goma. Regular contact is also maintained with BO Kampala, BO Bujumbura, the Regional Coordinator's Office in Nairobi and the Great Lakes Operation Desk in Geneva.

Capacity and presence of implementing partners

The wake of the 1994 genocide, the restoring of peace and the massive return of Rwandan refugees from camps in the DRC resulted in a large number of NGOs, both local and international, establishing a presence in Rwanda. International NGOs present in Rwanda and acting as UNHCR's Implementing Partners include Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Jesuit Relief Services (JRS), American Refugee Committee (ARC), African Humanitarian Action (AHA), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also has an important presence in Rwanda. Areas focused on include HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, (International Rescue Committee, Population Services International), access to clean water and sanitation activities, (Oxfam-Québec, Care International), and education (Voluntary Service Overseas). Beyond these, there are an estimated 50 to 60 national NGOs operating in Rwanda.

UNHCR in the last three years has scaled down its operational presence and the number of implementing partners in Rwanda. The focus in 2003 and 2004 will be on establishing closer links with human rights organizations, especially national, that are now gaining ground and building capacity to enable them to conduct monitoring functions in returnee areas. Furthermore UNHCR will continue to play a catalytic role in attracting new funding for reintegration from the World Bank and other development partners within the DDRRR process. Moreover, UNHCR will undertake to assist and provide training for local NGOs to monitor the return process as well as provide legal counseling and representation for refugees in Rwanda.

Presence and roles of other UN agencies and international organizations

In addition to UNHCR, the following 9 UN agencies are represented in Rwanda: UNDP, WHO, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and UNIFEM. The World Bank and IMF also have offices in Rwanda, as does the International Criminal Court for Rwanda (ICTR) and the UN Military Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). OCHA is phasing out its presence at the end of March 2003. The UN Country Team meets regularly and provides a forum for information sharing and discussion of key policy issues, as well as formulating joint

projects, coordinating programs, exploiting synergies and creating common UN services and cost-sharing. The UNCT is guided in its work by the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which in Rwanda was drafted in 2000/2001 and covers the 2002-2006 programming period. Inter-agency UNDAF Theme Groups, subdivided into Task Forces, plan and manage the implementation of the UNDAF. The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) provides the mechanism for UN coordination at country level. In Rwanda, the UNDP Resident Representative also acts as the UN Resident Coordinator.

(b) Selected Program Goals and Objectives

Rwandan Returnees

Main goal: 30,000 return to Rwanda in conditions of safety and dignity to their areas of origin. All receive reintegration assistance consisting of Non-Food Items, seeds, and hoes.

Principal objectives	Related outputs
<p>The organized repatriation of 30,000 Rwandan refugees is completed in safety and dignity. Protection of returnees is ensured.</p> <p>Mechanisms in place to allow refugees to bring violations of their rights to the attention of the relevant authorities and/or UNHCR.</p> <p>Under the Special Budget - Reintegration assistance is provided to returnees and communities of return.</p>	<p>Enhanced PI campaign in countries of asylum.</p> <p>Strengthen UNHCR monitoring capacity and field presence, develop partnerships with national human rights organizations with field presence and increase their capacity.</p> <p>Campaign for projects to support GoR and partners to implement rehabilitation projects in areas of return.</p> <p>Provide individual and community – based reintegration assistance.</p>

I. Congolese refugees/asylum seekers

Main goal: 30,000 Congolese refugees/asylum seekers protected and assisted pending durable solutions

Principal objectives	Related outputs
<p>GoR is able to meet protection needs of asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <p>Care & Maintenance support is provided to 30,000 Congolese refugees hosted in 2 camps. All camp-based assistance is provided.</p>	<p>National law on refugees is implemented.</p> <p>Registration system for asylum seekers is improved.</p> <p>Camp facilities are maintained and improved to provide safe accommodation to 30,000 refugees meeting all required minimum standards. Care and Maintenance, as well as SGBV and HIV/AIDS sensitisation, primary and secondary education, vocational training are provided.</p> <p>Active refugee participation in the planning and implementation of community-based activities and delivery of services with special emphasis being paid to women refugee participation.</p> <p>System established and operational to identify refugees in need of resettlement to a third country.</p>

II. Burundi refugees	
Main goal: 534 Burundi refugees protected and assisted pending resettlement and other durable solutions	
Principal objectives	Related outputs
<p>GoR is able to meet protection needs of asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <p>Care & Maintenance support is provided to 534 Burundian refugees hosted in the camp. All camp-based assistance is provided.</p> <p>Resettlement files for the Burundian refugees will be prepared and presented to resettlement countries.</p> <p>Camp is closed during the first six months of the year.</p>	<p>National law on refugees is fully implemented.</p> <p>Registration system for asylum seekers is improved.</p> <p>Camp facilities are maintained and improved to provide safe accommodation to the refugees meeting all required minimum standards.</p> <p>Active refugee participation in the planning and implementation of community-based activities and delivery of services with special emphasis being paid to women refugee participation.</p> <p>Care and Maintenance as well as SGBV and HIV/AIDS sensitization, primary and secondary education, and vocational training is provided.</p> <p>All refugees who are not resettled and do not opt for repatriation are locally integrated.</p>

III. Urban refugees	
Main goal: Durable solutions found for majority of urban refugees	
Principal objectives	Related outputs
<p>A Durable solution is found for urban refugees on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Establishment of criteria for submission for resettlement, systematic analysis of the urban caseload, and identification of all who could be accepted and benefit from resettlement.</p> <p>Submission of cases to relevant countries and, if accepted, speedy processing of travel documents and exit visas.</p>