



UNHCR
2012 GLOBAL REPORT

WEST AFRICA

Benin	Ghana	Niger
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Nigeria
Cape Verde	Guinea-Bissau	Senegal
Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia	Sierra Leone
The Gambia	Mali	Togo



Working environment

UNHCR operated in an increasingly challenging environment in West Africa, which saw major socio-political upheavals in 2012. In Mali, thousands of people were displaced as a result of clashes between government forces and armed groups and the taking of control in northern Mali by a rebel coalition. In addition to the turmoil in Mali, rioters took to the streets in election-related protests in Guinea, Senegal and Togo. In Guinea-Bissau, UNHCR had to manage political instability resulting from a *coup d'état* in April. Kidnappings in some parts of West Africa, in particular the Sahel region, and bombings in Nigeria made an already difficult working environment even more challenging.

In addition to political instability, the region also suffered from very bad weather. Unprecedented floods affected 33 of Nigeria's 36 States and displaced more than 2 million people. A very long rainy season set back implementation of UNHCR operations in Guinea-Bissau.

Achievements and impact

Favourable protection environment

- UNHCR advocated for Governments in the region to strengthen their legal frameworks on asylum, particularly in Senegal and Togo.
- The organization lobbied intensively for ratification of the African Union Convention on Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

Fair protection processes and documentation

- UNHCR negotiated with asylum countries on the conditions for the issuance of residence permits to refugees.
- With the support of UNHCR, the Liberian authorities issued passports to Liberian refugees who had previously fled the country to help them legalize their stay in their countries of asylum and integrate locally.

Durable solutions

- Major achievements were made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Durable Solutions Strategy for Liberian refugees. By the end of 2012, almost all Liberian refugees who wished to return to Liberia had been assisted to do so. UNHCR also assisted several governments to implement exemption procedures for those Liberians with a continuing need for international protection.
- In 2012, UNHCR's comprehensive regional strategy for long-staying refugees identified the major legal and socio-economic gaps in the way of appropriate durable solutions. UNHCR was able to complete the organized voluntary repatriation of some 2,700 Mauritanian refugees from Senegal in 2012, while increasing advocacy in Mali on behalf of Mauritanian refugees who wish to return home.

Community empowerment and self-reliance

- UNHCR had to surmount significant social and cultural barriers in the region to promote the rights of women and children, including the equal participation of women in leadership and decision-making. UNHCR implemented programmes to provide counselling, economic empowerment activities and skills training. For example, capacity-building programmes for urban refugee women increased their participation in decision making.

Constraints

The lack of security in the Sahel region, characterized by kidnappings and terrorism threats, seriously affected UNHCR's access to people of concern. The operations also suffered from a lack of technical capacity among partners in the subregion, resulting in delays in providing accurate information on refugees.

Furthermore, the need to give priority to the Mali situation limited the financial and human resources available for durable solutions strategies and local integration activities in West Africa.

Operations

Operations in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are described in separate chapters. A summary of UNHCR's response to the Mali situation in the countries affected in the West Africa subregion is provided in a separate box below.

UNHCR advocated for durable solutions for urban and rural refugees with the Government and other partners in **Benin**. There was a significant increase in school enrolment among refugees. Scholarships and other forms of education assistance were granted to some 200 refugee students, including 31 girls. Schools were reconstructed and equipped. Some 870 cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were reported, with more than 520 of the victims being women. Survivors received legal, medical and psychological assistance.

Mosquito nets were distributed to more than 2,000 refugees to prevent malaria in Benin. Refugees and host communities were targeted by awareness programmes covering HIV and AIDS, SGBV and family planning. HIV screening was organized for some 560 refugees, and people living with HIV received counselling and antiretroviral drugs. To promote self-reliance, UNHCR implemented vocational-training projects for refugees and helped them find jobs. Some 50 refugees were resettled, while 140 others received help to repatriate. Eleven naturalization applications were recorded, some 35 refugee status determination (RSD) sessions held and some 170 asylum-seekers granted refugee status.

Thanks to UNHCR's advocacy, **Burkina Faso** ratified the Kampala Convention in 2012. A countrywide individual registration exercise conducted between July and September for refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities enabled UNHCR to complete its database. In terms of education, 112 students were assisted with scholarships. In order to strengthen their self-reliance, 12 refugees received financial support for community-based income-generation activities in soap making, tailoring and restaurant management.

In preparation for the upcoming application of the cessation clause for Rwandan refugees, information-sharing activities were conducted to promote informed decision making on repatriation. In 2012, a total of 12 refugees were assisted to return to their countries of origin.

In the **Gambia**, UNHCR focused on improving protection, livelihoods and self-reliance for some 9,000 Senegalese refugees. The country's Refugee Commission and Immigration Office staff were trained in refugee protection and RSD. Of the 700 remaining Liberian refugees, some 340 were assisted to return to Liberia and almost 300 refugees were locally integrated.

Access for refugees to primary health care and medical referral was improved, and scholarships were granted to more than 1,100 refugee students. Agricultural and horticultural activities were supported, and water provided for people of concern and host communities. Shelter kits were distributed to vulnerable households affected by storms.

The voluntary repatriation programme for Liberians in **Ghana** was particularly successful. Some 4,700 Liberians were assisted to return, allowing UNHCR to conclude its voluntary repatriation activities in Ghana. The Government endorsed a concept paper on local integration, paving the way for concrete improvements in this area. One demonstration of the improvements was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ghana Refugee Board, UNHCR and local authorities in Gomoa East, where many Liberian refugees are settled.

More than 3,800 Liberian refugees opted for local integration in Ghana, where UNHCR continues to facilitate the provision of residence permits. UNHCR also assisted with the provision of a one-time premium payment support for more than 2,300 candidates for local integration under the national health insurance scheme. It also coordinated the provision of assistance and support to 13 survivors of SGBV in 2012 and continued to support 28 individuals whose cases were first reported in 2011.

Activities in **Guinea** focused on improving protection, livelihoods and self-reliance. Members of the *Commission nationale pour l'intégration et le suivi des réfugiés* were trained in refugee protection and RSD, including exemption procedures in relation to the cessation clauses for Liberians. Approximately 5,500 Liberians were assisted to return home, 1,100 applied for exemption and 1,000 opted for local integration.

At the end of December 2012, there were some 5,600 Ivorian refugees receiving support in Kouankan II Camp. During the year, UNHCR facilitated the return of 11 Ivorians. Primary and secondary education was provided to almost 1,900 children, including some 790 girls. Business management training and start-up kits were provided to a total of 54 refugee families.

UNHCR in **Guinea-Bissau** worked to strengthen coexistence between refugees and host communities. Housing units were built and/or rehabilitated to improve the living conditions of national health workers. New health centres were built and supplied with equipment to improve health services for both refugees and local populations. Training was provided for refugees and national experts on cross-cutting issues, including project management, reproductive health, and gender equality. New water and sanitation facilities were constructed, and education was provided for almost 50 refugees, including 27 girls. The construction of classrooms and re-opening of community schools encouraged families to enrol their children in school. Housing supplies were distributed to refugees and host communities, and both groups received agricultural assistance.

With regard to urban refugees in **Mali**, UNHCR focused on seeking durable solutions as well as on improving their protection. The tripartite agreement for the repatriation of Ivorian refugees was signed in August 2012, enabling 150 Ivorian refugees to return in 2012. Moreover, nearly 20 refugees were repatriated to Liberia and some 100 Liberian refugees opted for local integration which included provision of documentation and cash grant assistance.

In 2012, **Niger** ratified the Kampala Convention. UNHCR emphasized the need for protection and assistance for 440 urban refugees and asylum seekers, mainly originating from Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda. Access to primary health care was provided and vocational training activities were organized for 30 urban refugees. A total of 15 staff of the *Commission nationale d'éligibilité* were trained on refugee protection and RSD. Almost 100 refugees were granted scholarships while two refugee students benefited from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative.

In **Nigeria**, UNHCR provided protection to some 8,800 refugees and asylum-seekers, a figure which went down to some 4,200 with the application of the cessation clause for Liberian refugees. Only some 170 Liberian refugees expressed the desire to repatriate and they were assisted to do so. More than 500 urban refugees were enrolled in the national health insurance scheme. Advocacy for accession to the statelessness conventions included UNHCR's submission of a proposal to the National Assembly for a review of provisions on statelessness. Meanwhile, Nigeria ratified the African Union Convention on Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. UNHCR provided technical support to the Economic Community of West African States, notably on the regional Early Warning and Response Network, as well as on contingency planning.

In **Sierra Leone**, over 4,400 former Liberian refugees were issued with identity cards. Some 480 passport requests from Liberian refugees in the process of local integration were approved. Nearly 950 Liberian refugees in rural areas received shelter assistance in 2012 as part of the local integration process. In order to promote peaceful coexistence, 10 per cent of shelter units were granted to vulnerable people in host communities. In addition, both refugees and nationals received agricultural assistance, and community wells were constructed. Some 580 refugees living in rural areas received livelihoods assistance.

UNHCR organized training in refugee protection for some 220 national officials in **Senegal**. The draft of the new law on RSD was developed, and a revision of the law on nationality was undertaken. Some 8,300 refugees received identity cards, and some 5,000 obtained birth certificates. Voluntary repatriation was organized for some 2,750 Mauritanian, seven Ivorian and seven Liberian refugees, while some 20 refugees were resettled. Health assistance was provided to 1,290 refugees, and anti-malaria sensitization campaigns and the distribution of mosquito nets were carried out. A total of 15 micro-projects and other agricultural activities among rural refugees promoted their self-reliance. Access to primary health care and medical referral for refugees was ensured, and educational sponsorships provided to more than 530 refugee students.

The **Senegal Regional Office** strengthened coordination and management support for operations across the region. At the onset of the Mali crisis, the Regional Office deployed staff and managed the Niger and Burkina Faso operations. The Office recruited staff during the year to enhance its capacity to oversee growing needs in the region.

In **Togo**, almost 5,000 Ghanaians sought asylum in 2012. UNHCR worked closely with other UN agencies and partners to provide emergency assistance to the new influx of Ghanaians in northern Togo. Approximately 460 Ivorian refugees were voluntarily repatriated, while 25 Rwandan refugees were resettled. The 2012 programme for Ivorian refugees focused on local integration, with some 810 refugees receiving help to conduct income-generating activities.

Information relating to the Mali situation in **Mauritania** can be found in the dedicated country operation chapter, in the North Africa subregion.

In 2012, political upheaval in Mali triggered large waves of displacement inside Mali and into neighbouring countries, worsening the already dire humanitarian situation and exacerbating the severe food insecurity in the region. At the end of 2012, UNHCR was assisting some 38,800 and 50,200 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso and Niger respectively, as well as some 40,100 internally displaced people in Mali. UNHCR worked closely with the Governments in the subregion, other UN agencies, notably UNICEF and WFP, and non-governmental organizations to provide displaced Malians with protection and basic assistance in a timely manner.

In February 2012, the High Commissioner appointed a Regional Refugee Coordinator to lead a rapid, coherent and inclusive response to the crisis. UNHCR quickly deployed emergency teams to Burkina Faso and Niger and opened new offices in the two countries in order to get closer to the populations of concern. Working closely with national authorities and other partners, the organization led the effort to develop a regional inter-agency contingency plan to prepare hosting countries and humanitarian actors in anticipation of new refugee outflows.

In early 2012, UNHCR released an Emergency Response Appeal for the Mali situation, presenting additional requirements amounting to USD 35.6 million for Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and the Senegal Regional Office. This appeal was further revised in May, as well as in November, in line with new operational needs on the ground. At the end of 2012, UNHCR's requirements for the Mali situation, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and the Senegal Regional Office, stood at USD 123.5 million.

Achievements and impact

Protection of displaced Malians

In Mali, the lack of access to the north of the country limited the scope of UNHCR's assistance to IDPs in 2012. The organization led the Protection and the Emergency Shelter clusters within the inter-agency framework and participated in regular inter-agency meetings.

UNHCR worked with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Niger to assure refugees access to their respective territories. Some 89,000 Malian refugees were granted *prima facie* refugee status in these two countries. In order to accommodate new arrivals in 2012, three refugee camps were established in Burkina Faso and another three in Niger and emphasis was put on ensuring the civilian character of the camps and maintaining the security of the refugees and of humanitarian staff. National police officers were deployed in the camps for this purpose. In addition, two refugee sites close to the border, accommodating some 3,800 people were relocated in Burkina Faso.

With regard to status documentation, more than 32,000 people above the age of 17 were provided with a paper confirming their refugee status. In addition, nearly 300 birth certificates were issued for refugee children under

one year of age. UNHCR also made considerable efforts to protect refugees from SGBV and help victims by establishing standard operating procedures in five refugee camps.

Providing for basic needs and essential services

In Burkina Faso and Niger one of UNHCR's main priorities was to give refugees access to food, non-food items (NFIs) and essential services. More than 8,300 undernourished refugee children under the age of two benefited from a supplementary feeding programme. In addition, some 17,000 refugee households received NFIs, including soap and clothing, and more than 12,100 refugee households were provided with tents and emergency family shelters. UNHCR also identified some 32,500 people with specific needs, such as unaccompanied children, female-headed households and elderly people and supported them through multi-sectoral assistance. In Mali, 4,000 NFI kits were distributed benefiting some 40,000 IDPs.

UNHCR made it a priority to strengthen the educational infrastructure in Burkina Faso and Niger and successfully advocated for the inclusion of Malian children in the national education system. The Ministry of Education in both Niger and Burkina Faso instructed local authorities to facilitate refugees' access to public schools. Some 5,900 refugee children attended primary school, while another 420 were enrolled in secondary education. With regard to health, some 90 per cent of the 89,000 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso and Niger were given access to primary health care. UNHCR also sought to increase the amount of potable water available to refugees by constructing 36 wells and rehabilitating 10 in Burkina Faso and Niger. In addition, some 140 tonnes of firewood and 30 tonnes of charcoal were distributed among refugee families.

Challenges and unmet needs

The lack of security and instability in the north of Mali in areas controlled by armed groups impeded UNHCR's access to people of concern and the implementation of programmes. In Burkina Faso and Niger, refugees were scattered across several sites that were difficult to access and posed high security risks at the beginning of the emergency, increasing UNHCR's costs. Moreover, areas surrounding refugee camps and settlements lacked infrastructure and basic services. This, combined with UNHCR's limited capacity in-country and the high turnover of implementing partner staff, seriously affected the continuity of assistance to refugees.

In light of the above, despite UNHCR and its partners' efforts, not all identified needs could be met in 2012. For instance, more than 30,000 refugees in Burkina Faso and in Niger could not be provided with refugee identity cards, putting them at risk of detention. The availability of water and sanitation in the camps in Burkina Faso and Niger could not be brought up to UNHCR's standards. In Niger, refugees only had access to 14 litres of water per person per day. The relocation of three refugee camps and five spontaneous settlements in Burkina Faso and Niger, away from the border with Mali, was not possible, putting refugees at renewed risk. With regard to education, some 12,250 refugee children were unable to attend primary school in 2012.

Financial information

Though the bulk of the resources for the West Africa subregion in 2012 were allocated to address the Mali crisis, the essential needs of Malian refugees in the areas of health, shelter, non-food items, protection and water and sanitation could barely be met owing to the very limited funding available for the situation. This also affected the implementation of durable solutions strategies and local integration projects.

The financial requirements for UNHCR's operations in West Africa increased from almost USD 227 million in 2011 to some USD 258 million by the end of 2012, with USD 140.8 million in expenditures. The increase was mainly due to the new needs for the Mali emergency which led to the establishment of a supplementary appeal in February 2012.

Budget and expenditure in West Africa | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Côte d'Ivoire	Budget	9,595,590	3,748,462	4,997,425	13,005,333	31,346,810
	Expenditure	6,857,640	927,283	3,394,519	4,497,950	15,677,392
Ghana	Budget	10,943,538	0	1,289,055	0	12,232,593
	Expenditure	5,607,275	0	557,003	0	6,164,278
Guinea	Budget	5,146,241	0	1,435,009	0	6,581,250
	Expenditure	4,090,057	0	1,122,431	0	5,212,488
Liberia	Budget	50,698,778	0	14,117,852	0	64,816,630
	Expenditure	29,503,112	0	12,042,874	0	41,545,986
Senegal Regional Office ¹	Budget	131,647,611	717,761	2,293,021	8,093,367	142,751,760
	Expenditure	67,151,610	493,878	149,490	4,412,875	72,207,853
Total budget		208,031,758	4,466,223	24,132,362	21,098,700	257,729,043
Total expenditure		113,209,694	1,421,161	17,266,317	8,910,825	140,807,997

¹ Includes activities in Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Voluntary contributions to West Africa | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
WEST AFRICA SUBREGION						
Australia					4,162,331	4,162,331
Australia for UNHCR					592,940	592,940
Austria					331,126	331,126
Brazil					200,000	200,000
Canada					3,000,000	3,000,000
Denmark					1,802,127	1,802,127
Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe					1,270,139	1,270,139
España con ACNUR					790,029	790,029
Finland					1,072,386	1,072,386
France	657,894					657,894
Ireland					746,269	746,269
Japan					1,260,875	1,260,875
Japan Association for UNHCR					5,836	5,836
Liechtenstein					107,991	107,991
Luxembourg	1,600,000				666,667	2,266,667
Netherlands					8,571,426	8,571,426
Norway					2,479,749	2,479,749
Private donors in Canada					7,532	7,532
Private donors in Italy					164	164
Private donors in the United Kingdom					162	162

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
Private donors in the United States of America					6,500	6,500
Spain	492,210					492,210
Sweden					3,604,047	3,604,047
Switzerland	809,935				1,128,085	1,938,021
United States of America					27,000,000	27,000,000
West Africa subtotal	3,560,039	0	0	0	58,806,381	62,366,421
CÔTE D'IVOIRE						
Brazil	50,000			200,000		250,000
Central Emergency Response Fund			998,607	197,629		1,196,236
Côte d'Ivoire				102,178		102,178
Denmark					1,221,896	1,221,896
Economic Community of West African States				234,900		234,900
European Union	697,674			594,315		1,291,990
France	328,947					328,947
Japan	2,358,307		513,600	728,093		3,600,000
Norway				2,913,136		2,913,136
OPEC Fund for International Development	46,667		4,101			50,768
Private donors in Canada					202	202
Switzerland					544,070	544,070
United Nations Development Programme				26,894		26,894
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund		494,120				494,120
United States of America					2,000,000	2,000,000
Côte d'Ivoire subtotal	3,481,595	494,120	1,516,308	4,997,144	3,766,168	14,255,335
GHANA						
Brazil	362,371					362,371
Economic Community of West African States	427,900					427,900
European Union	339,627					339,627
Ghana subtotal	1,129,898	0	0	0	0	1,129,898
GUINEA						
Economic Community of West African States	116,700		488,750			605,450
Guinea subtotal	116,700	0	488,750	0	0	605,450
LIBERIA						
Denmark					1,808,407	1,808,407
Economic Community of West African States	661,950					661,950
Japan	6,000,000					6,000,000
OPEC Fund for International Development	110,024					110,024
Switzerland	761,697					761,697
United Nations Population Fund			128,935			128,935
United States of America					3,500,000	3,500,000
Liberia subtotal	7,533,671	0	128,935	0	5,308,407	12,971,013

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
SENEGAL REGIONAL OFFICE						
African Union	100,000					100,000
Central Emergency Response Fund	4,576,455			629,677		5,206,132
Economic Community of West African States	1,395,900					1,395,900
European Union	3,475,527					3,475,527
France	502,946					502,946
Germany	3,444,506					3,444,506
Italy	1,040,675					1,040,675
Nigeria	63,735					63,735
Private donors in Benin	49,779					49,779
Spain	919,118					919,118
Switzerland	518,672					518,672
Senegal Regional Office subtotal	16,087,313	0	0	629,677	0	16,716,990
Total	31,909,217	494,120	2,133,993	5,626,821	67,880,956	108,045,107

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the “New or additional activities – mandate-related” (NAM) Reserve.