



Some 700 Sudanese refugees departed Kenya and resettled in the United States during 2002 as part of a formal international resettlement program. Approximately 50 were Sudanese boys and young men known as the “lost boys” of Sudan because many of them had been separated from their families for nearly a decade. More than 3,000 Sudanese have resettled in the United States during the past three years as part of the program.

Refugees from Ethiopia Some 10,000 Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers lived in Kenya at the end of 2002, including about 2,000 in the Dadaab camps and about 2,000 in the Kakuma camps.

More than 5,000 Ethiopians applied for refugee status with UNHCR during 2002.

Internally Displaced Kenyans Violence has displaced up to 400,000 people in eastern, western, and northern Kenya during the past decade. In most cases, political discontent, simmering land disputes, and ethnic tensions were at the root of Kenya’s domestic conflicts.

The Kenyan government’s Presidential Commission on the Ethnic Clashes concluded nearly a year of hearings into the country’s violent population displacement in 1999 and submitted a report to then President Daniel arap Moi. After years of delay, the Kenyan government finally released the report publicly in October 2002. The report confirmed that “prominent ruling party politicians have fueled multiple incidents of so-called ethnic clashes in Kenya since 1991” by inciting mobs to seize land from perceived political opponents. The government failed to announce any formal action on the report’s findings.

Many internally displaced families surrendered their land titles under duress during the 1990s, and sought shelter in towns and cities. The government then seized and nationalized their land. Most displaced Kenyans were rural farmers and herders ill-equipped to provide for their families in urban areas.

Pockets of violence and actions by the Kenyan government caused an estimated 15,000 additional Kenyans to flee their homes during 2002. In March, local authorities demolished more than 1,000 makeshift shelters in and around the coastal town of Mombasa, displacing an estimated 7,000 people. Most displaced families sought temporary shelter in churches and mosques and survived with minimal humanitarian assistance. Many remained homeless at year’s end.

Raids by cattle-rustlers in Kenya’s Central Province killed 15 people and displaced more than 3,000 others in September. Most of the newly uprooted people feared further violence and refused pleas from authorities to return home. A local church provided some 200 families with temporary shelter and food. Most others camped near government buildings and received limited humanitarian assistance.

Unknown assailants razed several houses and crops near the village of Migori in southwest Kenya’s Nyanza Province in December, displacing nearly 3,000 people. Many of the displaced continued to reside in temporary camps and with relatives at the end of 2002.

Relatively peaceful nationwide elections produced a new Kenyan president in 2002. In December, voters elected Mwai Kibaki, an opposition party candidate who replaced the president of 24 years, Daniel arap Moi. The elections proceeded without any of the large-scale violence that marred presidential elections in 1992 and 1997.

Liberia

Approximately 380,000 or more Liberians were uprooted at the end of 2002, including an estimated 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers, and 100,000 to 150,000 internally displaced persons. At least 200,000 Liberians fled their homes during the year, although some returned home before year’s end.

The nearly 280,000 Liberian refugees and asylum seekers included some 110,000 in Guinea, about 60,000 in Sierra Leone, some 50,000 in Côte d’Ivoire, up to 35,000 in Ghana, about 2,000 in various other West African countries, and some 20,000 in the United States and other industrialized countries.

Approximately 65,000 refugees lived in Liberia at the end of 2002, including an estimated 40,000 from Sierra Leone, nearly 20,000 from Côte d’Ivoire, and some 5,000 from various other West African countries.

Pre-2002 Events A seven-year civil war ended in 1996 after killing an estimated 150,000 people and uprooting more than 1.5 million. Peaceful elections in 1997 gave the presidency to former rebel leader Charles Taylor. Most Liberian refugees and displaced persons returned home, although about 130,000 remained uprooted.

Armed insurgents—known as Liberians United for Reconstruction and Development (LURD)—launched isolated attacks during 1998–99 in the country’s remote Lofa County, near Liberia’s border with Guinea. Intensified attacks during 2000–2001 pushed more than 100,000 people from their homes and triggered increasingly harsh human rights violations by government forces.

The UN Security Council imposed economic sanctions and an arms embargo on Liberia in an effort to moderate President Taylor’s policies. The Liberian government easily procured new weapons despite the embargo, and accused Guinea of supporting insurgent attacks.

At the end of 2002, at least 250,000 Liberians remained uprooted.

2002 Politics and Violence Attacks by LURD rebels widened during 2002 and struck within 50 miles (80 km) of

Monrovia, the capital. LURD temporarily captured towns in western Liberia's Bomi and Cape Mount Counties before a government counterattack pushed the rebels back to northern border areas in Lofa County by year's end.

The war often adopted a surreal quality. Although numerous LURD attacks occurred, Liberian journalists and some international aid workers charged that the government was "stage-managing" much of the violence in an effort to gain international sympathy and end the UN arms embargo. As a result, international observers and many Liberians them-

selves struggled to determine the accuracy of basic facts and the real identity of perpetrators of specific violent incidents.

Government troops committed widespread human rights violations, including killings, rapes, looting civilians in conflict zones, and forcibly conscripting young males off the street into military service. LURD rebels blocked thousands of people from fleeing and pressed many into forced labor.

UN humanitarian officials warned in late 2002 that "the overall security situation in Liberia remains precarious."



A malnourished Liberian refugee boy awaits his turn at a water pump in Guinea, having just fled civil war and human rights violations in Liberia. At least 200,000 Liberians newly fled their homes during 2002. Photo: USCR/J. Drumtra

Uprooted Liberians At least 200,000 people fled their homes during 2002, including 80,000 or more who left the country to live at refugee sites in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and other nearby countries. Newly uprooted families joined hundreds of thousands of other refugees and internally displaced Liberians who had fled in earlier years.

"The ongoing conflict continues to take a huge toll on the Liberian population, in terms of growing numbers of dead and wounded, population displacement, and the attendant human suffering," a report by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in October.

Most population upheaval occurred in the western half of the country, where the war regularly overran sites sheltering displaced Liberians and forced already uprooted populations to flee repeatedly. Some families fled as many as six times from one location to another in a desperate effort to stay one step ahead of the war and pervasive looting and abductions by soldiers.

"Displacement sites virtually have become the front lines in a Liberian war otherwise lacking clear battle lines," the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) reported after visiting the region in mid-year.

Government and rebel combatants deliberately blocked civilians from fleeing and forced others to pay fees or perform hard labor before allowing them to reach safety. "A cruel and pervasive system of 'pay to escape' has taken root in Liberia, trapping thousands of would-be refugees," a USCR report stated.

Guinean officials closed their border for much of the year, impeding, but not entirely stopping new Liberian refugees. Hundreds, perhaps thousands,



of families became separated while struggling to reach safe areas inside or outside Liberia.

Tens of thousands of uprooted Liberians took shelter in a dozen displacement camps near Monrovia and elsewhere. Some 30,000 displaced persons settled next to existing camps for Sierra Leonean refugees near Monrovia, apparently hoping proximity to the camps would bring protection and humanitarian aid. Thousands of others found shelter with friends and relatives in Monrovia, where they lived uncounted and unregistered.

International relief organizations struggled to keep pace with the large population movements. The World Food Program provided food to internally displaced Liberians, but had to cut rations in half for two months because of slow food shipments into the country. Many newly uprooted persons reportedly failed to receive food aid for months because of administrative delays in registering them.

Health conditions varied greatly. Some displacement camps and local communities suffered a cholera outbreak in September. A health survey by the International Rescue Committee found high death rates in some camps, severe shortages of latrines, and poor water supplies.

"The humanitarian response is weak and inadequate, and the basic needs of the civilians caught in this conflict are not being met," *Médecins Sans Frontières* stated.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) extended its mandate to address the needs of internally displaced Liberians, particularly those living adjacent to refugee camps. UNHCR provided blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, cooking utensils, and medical care at some sites. Many at-risk populations received no outside assistance, however.

"Humanitarian agencies still have no access to several parts...of the country and no information is available on refugees and internally displaced persons trapped in these conflict zones," UNHCR reported in late 2002.

By year's end, the actual number of internally displaced Liberians remained unclear and was a matter of controversy. Most aid workers charged that Liberian authorities were inflating the official number of displaced persons in a bid for more aid dollars. The International Committee of the Red Cross noted that many Liberians, although not uprooted, registered as displaced persons because they were destitute in a wrecked economy.

USCR estimated that 100,000 to 150,000 Liberians were internally displaced at the end of 2002, including about 75,000 in camps and tens of thousands of others living with friends and relatives.

The U.S. government granted Temporary Protected Status in October to Liberians already residing or visiting in the United States. The U.S. declaration granted safe haven for a year to an estimated 15,000 or more Liberians whose right to remain in the United States otherwise would have expired. In addition, some 2,000 asylum applications by Liberians remained under consideration by U.S. authorities.

Repatriation and Reintegration Approximately 400,000 Liberian refugees have repatriated since 1997. About 20,000 repatriated during 2002 from Côte d'Ivoire because of a new civil war in that country.

Refugees' spontaneous return from Côte d'Ivoire late in the year caught aid agencies unprepared because their return was largely an unplanned evacuation from conflict. UNHCR chartered two dozen trucks to transport returnees from the border to their home areas. Liberian authorities temporarily detained about 25 refugees who repatriated from Côte d'Ivoire by air in December. Officials suspected the returnees of being rebel sympathizers.

Reintegration assistance for the returnees was minimal despite Liberia's miserable living conditions. "Over 80 percent of the population live below the poverty line, and more than half live in abject poverty. The unemployment is at a high of 85 percent," reported UNICEF.

Refugees from Sierra Leone Tens of thousands of refugees fled from Sierra Leone to Liberia during the 1990s to escape civil war. Thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated in during 2001-2002 as peace has returned to their country and warfare has resumed in Liberia. An estimated 30,000 Sierra Leonean refugees returned home from Liberia during 2002, leaving approximately 40,000 in Liberia at year's end.

At the beginning of 2002, about half of the refugee population lived on their own in Lofa County, near the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, where violence rendered them largely inaccessible to relief workers. The remaining 30,000 refugees resided in five designated camps closer to Monrovia.

Liberia's widening war blocked a key highway and made the largest refugee camp, Sinje, inaccessible to aid workers for several weeks early in the year. In June, combatants destroyed Sinje and forced the camp's 10,000 to 15,000 refugees to flee. At least four refugees died in the attack on Sinje, and combatants abducted five Liberian aid workers from the camp before releasing them two months later.

The destruction of Sinje pushed Sierra Leonean refugees in two directions: westward back to Sierra Leone, and eastward to four remaining refugee camps on the outskirts of Monrovia. By mid-year, about 10,000 refugees lived in VOA camp, some 5,000 resided in Samukai camp, more than 3,000 occupied Zuannah camp, and 2,000 or more lived in Banjor camp.

A USCR site visit to Liberia in July concluded that the country's four remaining refugee camps were potential targets for additional attacks, given Liberian combatants' repeated tactic of attacking and looting sites housing uprooted people. USCR urged UNHCR to redouble its efforts to persuade Sierra Leonean refugees to repatriate voluntarily for their own safety.

"The security threat that Sierra Leonean refugees face in Liberia is more dangerous than the protection and integration problems awaiting them in Sierra Leone," USCR

asserted. UNHCR agreed that “Sierra Leonean refugees remain at risk of being uprooted from camps” by violence on the outskirts of Monrovia.

Most refugees living in the camps, however, declined offers of repatriation assistance and chose to remain in Liberia because of business and educational opportunities there.

Most of the estimated 30,000 refugees who repatriated to Sierra Leone during 2002 did so in the first half of the year, before or immediately after the attack on Sinje camp. Some traveled in organized repatriation convoys or aboard boats chartered by UNHCR. Others repatriated on foot without assistance.

The 20,000 who remained in refugee camps at year’s end received regular food distributions. Refugee families farmed about 110 acres (45 hectares) of land near their camps, and aid workers distributed seeds and tools as needed. Health clinics provided vaccinations and medicines for basic illnesses. Malaria and sexually transmitted diseases remained common among the refugee population and local residents.

More than 5,000 students attended refugee schools that were generally superior to schools available in Sierra Leone. Despite the readily available humanitarian assistance, many refugees struggled to support themselves in Liberia’s poor economy. “The employment prospects for refugees in Liberia are negligible,” UNHCR reported. Many refugees feared that conditions in Sierra Leone were even worse, however.

Government security personnel continued to harass and intimidate some refugees, and petty theft in refugee camps remained a problem. Unarmed uniformed guards patrolled camps in an effort to improve security. UNHCR conducted training sessions for government security personnel and border officials in hopes of curtailing official harassment of refugees.

A report by Save the Children Federation/United Kingdom and UNHCR consultants in February charged that many refugees in West Africa suffered sexual exploitation at the hands of relief workers, security personnel, and refugee leaders. In Liberia, authorities formally charged at least three persons of sexually exploiting refugees.

In response to the sexual exploitation scandal, government officials and virtually all humanitarian aid workers in Liberia participated in workshops to review proper standards of conduct. Relief organizations attempted to strengthen their ability to monitor food distributions, and employed more women to monitor the conduct of mostly male teachers at refugee schools. Relief groups altered sanitation facilities at some camps to improve privacy and protection for females.

Some relief workers privately criticized the steps as inadequate to protect female refugees from exploitation and called for more vigorous prosecution of offenders. The impact of the reforms remained uncertain at year’s end.

Refugees from Côte d’Ivoire An estimated 20,000 Ivorian refugees fled into remote border areas of eastern Liberia in late 2002 to escape an eruption of civil war in their country. Several thousand immigrant workers from Burkina Faso and other countries, who had lived in Côte d’Ivoire, also fled to Liberia.

The new arrivals congregated at overcrowded border villages, where aid workers rushed to deliver food, water, and medical care while constructing temporary transit camps. UNHCR shipped 25,000 blankets, thousands of cooking utensils, and material for makeshift tents into Liberia for distribution to the new refugees.

As the year ended, UNHCR officials were reluctant to establish long-term camps for the refugee population because of uncertainty about the duration of the emergency, as well as concerns about difficult logistics and poor security in Liberia’s border area.

Libya

Libya hosted about 12,000 refugees at the end of 2002, including approximately 9,000 Palestinians and nearly 3,000 refugees from Somalia.

About 1,000 Libyans were asylum seekers in various European countries.

Refugees in Libya Approximately 9,000 Palestinians lived in Libya as refugees registered by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Libyan government estimated that the actual number of Palestinian refugees was about 30,000.

During 2002, some 1,000 Palestinians deemed vulnerable by UNHCR received a monthly living stipend, medical assistance, and skills training.

Most of the nearly 3,000 Somali refugees in Libya resided in the capital, Tripoli. About 1,000 lived in a dilapidated government-donated building in central Tripoli before UNHCR and the Libyan government relocated them to a new facility about six miles (10 km) outside of the capital. Refugee residents at the new facility had access to education, a health center, and recreational facilities.

Malawi

Malawi hosted some 13,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including more than 7,000 from Rwanda, nearly 3,000 from Burundi, and about 3,000 from Congo-Kinshasa. Approximately 7,000 new refugees and asylum seekers arrived during the year.

Refugee Conditions The number of refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi has increased dramatically in recent



years—doubling during 2002 alone and more than tripling in the past two years. New Congolese and Burundian refugees fled civil wars, while many Rwandan refugees moved to Malawi from camps in Tanzania where officials were pressuring them to go home.

About 6,000 refugees lived in Malawi's only refugee camp, Dzaleka, where aid workers provided food, water, health services, and nonfood items.

The majority of refugees, however, lived on their own and struggled mightily to cope with Malawi's nationwide food shortage, which had been caused by severe drought. The World Food Program originally planned to assist 8,000 refugees, but found its resources straining to help feed nearly twice that many in a country where 3 million local residents also required emergency food relief.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided seeds and fertilizers to several hundred refugee families, and gave financial loans to the most vulnerable refugees who lived on their own. Malawian officials allowed refugees to work and attend local schools. More than half of the refugee population was under age 18.

"Unfortunately, UNHCR's efforts in 2002 to provide adequate protection, including social and community services, were often hampered by a continued lack of funding and other resources," a UNHCR report on Malawi and neighboring countries stated late in the year.

Malawian authorities attempted to conduct interviews with all newly arrived asylum seekers to judge their claims to refugee status, but the interviews failed to keep pace with the influx.

Mali

Mali hosted some 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, primarily from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. About 5,000 people from Mauritania lived in Mali in refugee-like circumstances.

Nearly 3,000 Malians were asylum applicants in Europe and other industrialized countries during 2002. About 4,000 Malians continued to live in Mauritania in refugee-like circumstances.

Summary Mauritians in southwestern Mali's Kayes region were locally integrated and largely supported themselves without assistance. They were unlikely to return home, but technically had no legal right to remain in Mali, prompting the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) to classify them as refugee-like without counting them as refugees.

Similarly, Malians who originally fled to Mauritania in the early 1990s because of Mali's armed insurgency appeared to be permanently settled in Mauritania despite peace in Mali since the mid-1990s. Therefore, USCR classifies them as refugee-like, but does not count them as refugees.

Having closed its office in Mali in 2001, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees monitored the country's

refugee and refugee-like populations from the agency's Senegal office during 2002.

Mauritania

Mauritania hosted about 25,000 refugees from Western Sahara at the end of 2002. Nearly 4,000 persons from Mali continued to reside in Mauritania in refugee-like circumstances.

More than 45,000 Mauritians were refugees or asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including an estimated 40,000 in Senegal and 7,000 asylum seekers in Europe and other Western countries. About 5,000 Mauritians lived in Mali in refugee-like circumstances.

Refugees from Western Sahara Ethnic Sahrawi refugees from Western Sahara fled to Mauritania during the 1970s to escape a war of independence in their homeland. In 2002, as in previous years, uncertainty about the political future of Western Sahara deterred the refugee population from returning home.

Sahrawi refugees in Mauritania were largely self-sufficient, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other aid agencies had virtually no contact with them. Most lived in the northwest village of Zouerte and the town of Nouahdibou on Mauritania's coastal border with Western Sahara. Sahrawi refugees traveled frequently between Mauritania and Algeria to visit family members.

Populations from Mali About 4,000 Malians who fled to Mauritania in the mid-1990s remained there during 2002 despite peace in Mali.

The Malian population lived without assistance in southeastern Mauritania's remote Bassikounou area near the Mali border. Neither UNHCR nor Mauritanian officials had much contact with the population. UNHCR has encouraged the Malian population to return home since the late-1990s, but most of the population remained unwilling to repatriate and appeared to be permanently settled in Mauritania. The U.S. Committee for Refugees considered the Malians to be living in refugee-like circumstances.

Refugees from Mauritania Following ethnic conflict, the government expelled approximately 75,000 black Mauritians from the country during 1989–90, primarily to Senegal. Some human rights organizations at the time accused the government of practicing apartheid. Mauritanian authorities also barred some 15,000 nomadic Mauritians from returning home from Mali.

Mauritanian officials claimed that the refugee populations were not Mauritanian citizens. However, international human rights organizations charged that Mauritanian leaders—predominantly fair-skinned, Arabic-speaking Moors—sought to purge their country's black population

and confiscated vacant property left behind by the refugees.

The exact number of Mauritanian refugees in 2002 and the total number who have gradually repatriated since the mid-1990s were uncertain. Mauritanian human rights organizations estimated that 60,000 or more people were still refugees, while UNHCR estimated that fewer than half that number remained refugees. Approximately 30,000 to 60,000 refugees have repatriated to Mauritania since the late 1990s.

A "Declaration of Mauritanian Refugees" issued by Mauritanian refugee groups in 2000 charged that most refugees who repatriated did not receive official citizenship cards and lacked freedom of movement inside Mauritania. UNHCR has offered a more positive assessment, however, reporting that most returnees recovered their land and identity papers.

UNHCR did not regularly monitor southern Mauritania's returnee areas, which historically have been beset by ethnic tensions, banditry, and drought.

Mozambique

Mozambique hosted about 7,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including some 4,000 from Congo-Kinshasa, about 2,000 from Rwanda, and some 1,000 from Burundi. More than 1,000 new asylum seekers arrived during the year.

Refugee Influx and Assistance The refugee population in Mozambique has tripled during the past two years because of war in Congo-Kinshasa and Burundi, as well as a spontaneous decision by many Rwandan refugees to move to Mozambique from camps in Tanzania where officials were pressuring them to go home.

About half of the refugees and asylum seekers lived in or near the Mozambican capital, Maputo, where they received little or no humanitarian assistance. Although government officials placed restrictions on urban refugees' property rights, employment, freedom of movement, and access to education, many refugees and asylum seekers—particularly young males—chose to remain in the Maputo area where they evaded employment restrictions and, in some cases, sought entry into neighboring South Africa.

Officials continued efforts to encourage 1,000 refugees living in overcrowded Bobole camp on the outskirts of Maputo to transfer to a relatively new camp in northern Mozambique's Nampula Province. Some 500 refugees in the Maputo area registered for relocation to the new camp, Maratane, and the International Organization for Migration began to transfer refugees in December. Authorities planned to close Bobole, but it remained open at the end of 2002.

The Mozambican government continued to insist that only refugees living in Maratane camp should receive full humanitarian assistance. The camp's 2,000 residents

received food, shelter, health care, water, schooling, language training, and other social service programs. Officials made more than 7,000 acres (about 3,000 hectares) near the camp available for farming.

Local government authorities complained that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was expanding the infrastructure of Maratane camp too slowly to accommodate the camp's growing population. Adequate supplies of drinking water were a particular concern.

Ethnic tensions among Congolese refugees triggered violence at Maratane camp in September, resulting in the arrest of some refugees. Local officials warned that tensions could peak again if services at the camp fail to keep pace with new refugee arrivals.

The government's Refugee Eligibility Committee conducted four meetings during the year, but failed to pass judgment on any asylum claims among the more than 6,000 claims backlogged in the government's asylum system.

Namibia

Namibia hosted approximately 25,000 refugees at the end of 2002, primarily from Angola. About 1,000 refugees from various other countries also lived in Namibia. More than 3,000 new refugees and asylum seekers arrived during the year.

About 1,000 Namibians were refugees in Botswana at the end of 2002. Some 1,000 Namibian refugees repatriated during the year.

Refugees from Angola A long civil war in Angola pushed growing numbers of refugees into Namibia, including at least 15,000 new arrivals since 1999. Although Angola's war ended in mid-2002, some 3,000 new Angolan refugees arrived in Namibia seeking to escape their country's food shortages and reunite with family members who had fled earlier. Relatively few refugees repatriated during the year.

Up to 25,000 Angolan refugees remained in Namibia at the end of 2002, including 20,000 at Osire camp near the Namibian capital, Windhoek. Some 5,000 others lived on their own in urban areas or near the Namibia-Angola border. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted a census in July to verify refugee numbers.

Aid workers distributed food, mattresses, blankets, and cooking utensils to newly arrived refugees at Osire camp. As in previous years, long-term residents of the camp received regular food distributions, health care, and housing construction materials. More than three-dozen hand pumps provided up to 25 liters of water per refugee per day. Nearly 7,000 refugee students attended kindergarten and primary schools. A camp hospital began operation in mid-year to provide medical care unavailable at the camp's overcrowded health clinic.

Despite generally acceptable conditions at the camp, problems existed. A housing shortage forced some



refugee families to live in tents. UNHCR reported a need for more latrines. Although refugees constructed 16 new classrooms, overcrowding forced camp schools to conduct some classes outside. The classroom shortage also caused 600 refugee students to attend schools outside the camp.

Government harassment and detention of refugees diminished during 2002 as security improved along the Namibia-Angola border. In contrast to previous years, security personnel detained and deported fewer refugees and asylum seekers during security sweeps, although the problem did not disappear entirely.

Authorities continued to restrict the mobility of refugees living in Osire, granting travel permits only for medical, educational, and other special reasons. The government's Ministry of Home Affairs refused to ease the travel restrictions despite requests by UNHCR.

The Namibia Refugee Committee, created by the government, began to screen new asylum seekers in December to determine whether they merited refugee status.

Refugees from Namibia A violent secessionist movement in northern Namibia's remote Caprivi Strip, fueled by the area's economic and political marginalization, caused several thousand residents to flee the area during 1998–2000. As conditions calmed during 2001 and 2002, the Namibian government invited the refugees to return home, pledged to restore their land and property, and promised not to harass returnees sympathetic to the secessionist movement.

UNHCR encouraged the refugee population to return home and, during 2002, began an organized repatriation program to transport refugee families from their camp in neighboring Botswana to their homes in the Caprivi Strip region. Local and national officials greeted the first busloads of returnees in August in an emotional homecoming.

Government officials provided food aid, while UNHCR offered cooking utensils and cash grants equivalent to \$20. Additional returnees arrived in bus convoys in October.

Aid workers from UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross closely monitored the needs of returnees and reported few protection problems. However, the Caprivi Strip lacked health clinics, schools, and upgraded water systems, making reintegration difficult.

A drought throughout southern Africa exacerbated conditions and prompted unconfirmed reports in Namibian newspapers that some returnees faced severe hunger. Funding constraints frustrated aid workers' plans to launch community development projects and training programs in returnee areas.

At least 1,000 refugees returned home by the end of 2002. An equal number of refugees remained in Botswana.

Nigeria

Massive communal violence temporarily displaced approximately 100,000 Nigerians during 2002. It is believed that 50,000 people were still internally displaced at year's end, but accurate information was unavailable and the actual number might have been substantially more or significantly less.

Nearly 30,000 Nigerians were refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including an estimated 15,000 in Cameroon, some 14,000 asylum applicants in Western countries, and several hundred in various other African nations. Up to 10,000 other Nigerians who fled the country during 2002 managed to return before the year ended.

Nigeria hosted more than 7,000 refugees at the end of 2002, including more than 3,000 from Chad, about 2,000 from Sierra Leone, and nearly 2,000 from Liberia.

Uprooted Nigerians Localized violence linked to political, religious, and ethnic differences rocked Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, for the fourth consecutive year in 2002.

Decisions by state governments—primarily in the north—to adopt Muslim-based *sharia* laws have aggravated simmering religious tensions. In other areas, disagreements among ethnic groups over land use or local political power have triggered violence. An estimated 5,000 or more people died in communal riots during 1999–2001. Some estimates suggested twice that number of deaths.

During 2002, violence and widespread riots claimed approximately 1,000 lives, destroyed thousands of homes and other buildings, damaged livestock herds and crops, and uprooted 85,000 to 125,000 people for weeks or months. The violence primarily occurred in northern and central regions of the country, the main city of Lagos, in southwestern Nigeria, and in other areas of Nigeria that previously had avoided bloodshed.

The first wave of ethnic violence erupted over the local ownership of a fishpond in central Nigeria's Nasarawa State in January. The clashes, which spread across eight villages, left at least 100 people dead and displaced several thousand others from their homes. Many uprooted families fled south to neighboring Benue State, joining approximately 50,000 civilians still displaced from ethnic violence that unfolded in Nasarawa State during 2001.

A dispute between Muslim ethnic Fulani herders and Christian farmers over traditional grazing lands in eastern Nigeria's Taraba State sparked violence that reportedly killed nearly 100 herdsmen and 50,000 head of cattle, and pushed an estimated 20,000 Fulani people into neighboring Cameroon.

Consecutive days of violence in February between ethnic Yoruba and ethnic Hausa street gangs in Lagos razed 1,000 homes, temporarily displaced an estimated 3,000 families, and left more than 100 people dead.

During April, renewed clashes between herders and

farmers in Taraba State and similar violence in Plateau State left 50 people dead and forced several thousand ethnic Fulani residents to flee to Cameroon. An estimated 8,000 refugees spontaneously returned to Nigeria by year's end.

A newspaper article allegedly offensive to Muslims about an international beauty pageant triggered ethnic clashes in the city of Kaduna, in Nigeria's central Kaduna State, in November. The violence killed at least 200 people, injured more than 1,000, and temporarily displaced an estimated 30,000 people. Hundreds of uprooted families sought refuge in police and military barracks until the violence subsided. Others fled to their areas of origin in neighboring states, where they permanently resettled.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo gave the government's National Commission for Refugees responsibility for responding to the humanitarian needs of internally displaced Nigerians. State governments provided limited short-term assistance to small numbers of uprooted persons during the year. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Nigerian Red Cross occasionally distributed blankets, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, buckets, soap, and cooking utensils. Most internally displaced Nigerians relied on friends and relatives for their basic needs.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees estimated that 50,000 persons remained uprooted at year's end, but the actual number was unknown because the affected population was dispersed and authorities did not record information systematically.

Refugees in Nigeria The refugee population in Nigeria remained relatively stable during 2002.

The majority of refugees have lived in the country for many years and support themselves. Several thousand, however, received partial assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). More than 3,500 refugees resided at Oru camp, in southwest Nigeria's Ogun State, about 250 miles (400 km) southwest of the capital, Abuja.

UNHCR provided uniforms and educational materials to approximately 250 children at Oru primary schools, and offered skills training and micro-credit programs to promote refugees' self-sufficiency.

Some 60 refugees in Nigeria permanently resettled abroad as part of an international resettlement program.

Refugees from Chad Several thousand Chadians fled to Nigeria years ago to escape insurgencies and repression in Chad and have lived in Nigeria without humanitarian assistance. Many were expected to repatriate during 2001–2002 because of improved conditions in their homeland, but administrative delays and some refugees' reluctance to leave Nigeria delayed their repatriation. More than 3,000 Chadians remained in Nigeria at year's end.

Refugees from Sierra Leone Nearly 2,000 Sierra Leonean refugees lived at Oru camp. UNHCR continued to provide

them with basic shelter and medical assistance. UNHCR halted food assistance to nearly all Sierra Leonean refugees during 2002 after judging them to be capable of supporting themselves. Some 200 women and children deemed vulnerable by UNHCR continued to receive rice, beans, and cooking oil.

About 200 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated from Nigeria during the year.

Refugees from Liberia Most of the approximately 2,000 Liberian refugees in Nigeria lived at Oru camp, while others lived on their own in urban areas. Fewer than 200 Liberian refugees received food assistance.

Rwanda

Nearly 50,000 Rwandans were refugees or asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including nearly 20,000 in Uganda, about 7,000 in Malawi, some 5,000 each in Congo-Brazzaville and in Zambia, approximately 3,000 in Zimbabwe, about 3,000 in Tanzania, some 2,000 in Mozambique, nearly 1,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, approximately 1,000 in Burundi, and about 1,000 in South Africa. More than 2,000 Rwandans were seeking asylum in Europe.

More than 30,000 Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers repatriated during the year. An estimated 25,000 Rwandans in Congo-Kinshasa were living in refugee-like circumstances, their entitlement to full refugee status uncertain pending full screening.

Rwanda hosted nearly 35,000 refugees at year's end, including more than 30,000 from Congo-Kinshasa and at least 2,000 from Burundi.

Approximately 7,000 Congolese refugees were forcibly repatriated from Rwanda to Congo-Kinshasa during 2002.

Political and Social Background Rwanda has been a major source of refugees for decades.

Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Tutsi Rwandans fled the country during the 1950s and 1960s and remained refugees for more than 30 years before returning in the mid-1990s. A civil war in the early 1990s between Tutsi rebel exiles and a Hutu-dominated government produced a short-lived peace accord in 1993 that officially welcomed Tutsi refugees back to the country after a generation in exile.

Hutu extremists, however, launched a genocide in 1994 against the Tutsi population and politically moderate Hutu leaders. Between a 500,000 and 1 million persons, overwhelmingly Tutsi, were massacred, and tens of thousands of women and young girls were raped during 100 days of horrific bloodshed. The scale and intensity of the killing was "unprecedented in the history of the...entire African continent," a UN report concluded.

Tutsi rebels militarily defeated the government's



Hutu-dominated army in 1994, bringing the genocide to an end. Some 1.7 million Rwandan Hutu then fled, many of them forced to leave by their own Hutu political leaders. Large-scale repatriation of Hutu refugees has occurred annually since late-1996. Rwanda's government—ethnically mixed, but dominated by Tutsi officials in key positions—has generally encouraged Hutu refugees to repatriate.

Attacks by Rwandan Hutu insurgents claimed thousands of lives in northwest Rwanda during 1994–99, inflaming tensions that lingered after the 1994 genocide. The insurgency weakened in 1999 after Rwandan government troops invaded Congo-Kinshasa and pushed insurgents away from Rwanda's border. There were no reported insurgent attacks during 2002.

Some 2.5 million Hutu and Tutsi former refugees—nearly one-third of Rwanda's population—have attempted to reintegrate since 1994 in a country that has one of the highest population densities in Africa. "Rarely in human history has a society insisted that all its people live together again, side by side, in the aftermath of genocide," asserted *Life After Death*, a 1998 report by the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR).

Social and Political Issues in 2002 Most of Rwanda enjoyed relative peace during the year, despite social tensions linked to widespread poverty, refugee reintegration, land shortages, and continued ethnic distrust. The gradual reintegration of millions of former refugees and displaced persons continued quietly in a country still scarred by extreme poverty and the legacy of genocide.

The Rwandan government reported that more than 1 million persons suffered from malaria annually, making the disease the leading cause of death in the country. More than 500,000 Rwandans were infected with HIV/AIDS, according to estimates. Health experts projected that the average life expectancy of Rwandan citizens would soon fall below 40 years because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

UNICEF reported in November that Rwanda was home to more than 1 million orphaned children. "Such children live in households run by minors, in the street, or in foster homes. They are in trouble with the law, and are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation," the report concluded.

Locally elected judges presided over some 700 courts established throughout the country under a semi-traditional judicial system, known as *gacaca*, to bring to trial more than 100,000 individuals accused of complicity in the 1994 genocide. The *gacaca* courts compiled comprehensive lists of citizens killed, citizens accused, and crimes committed during the genocide, but issued no judgments during the year.

Rwandan authorities expelled without explanation a senior UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) official in December.

Repatriation to Rwanda More than 30,000 refugees repatriated to Rwanda during 2002, primarily from Tanzania and Congo-Kinshasa. Approximately 100,000 Rwandan refugees have repatriated since 1999, virtually all of them Hutu.

Rwandan government authorities continued to encourage refugees' return. "We are calling them to come back and work together to rebuild our country, which was devastated by the genocide," a Rwandan official announced in May.

UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of approximately 9,000 Rwandan refugees during the first nine months of 2002, primarily from Tanzania. In September, a Tripartite Agreement among the governments of Rwanda and Tanzania and UNHCR decreed that Rwandan refugees in Tanzania should return home by December 31, 2002. Under the new agreement, some 19,000 refugees repatriated during November–December, including more than 1,000 who had fled Rwanda earlier in the year. UNHCR declared the operation officially completed at year's end.

Upon arrival in Rwanda, returnees received a three-month food supply from the World Food Program (WFP). UNHCR provided returnee families with blankets, soap, plastic sheeting, used clothing, seeds and farming tools, and transportation to their villages of origin.

International observers, including USCR, questioned whether the return was voluntary, and noted that UNHCR/Rwanda was initially caught by surprise by the repatriation deadline. A USCR site visit to Rwanda in November concluded that UNHCR reacted slowly in providing the assistance and protection monitoring needed in Rwanda to ensure that refugees repatriated in safety and dignity. Despite the significant number of returnees during 2002, funding constraints forced UNHCR to halt returnee-monitoring activities and reduce other reintegration assistance.

Refugees from Congo-Kinshasa Most Congolese refugees in Rwanda were ethnic Tutsi who fled war and ethnic violence in Congo-Kinshasa in the mid-1990s. Some 32,000 Congolese lived in two refugee camps at the start of 2002: approximately 17,000 in Gihembe camp, in north central Rwanda's Byumba Province, and an estimated 15,000 in Kiziba camp, in western Kibuye Province.

Nearly every Congolese refugee relied exclusively on UNHCR for basic needs, including food, water, health care, education, and clothing. UNHCR distributed fuel-efficient cooking stoves to some 3,500 families. Refugees received health education on the prevention and spread of HIV/AIDS. Aid workers curtailed income generation projects among refugees because of funding constraints.

UNHCR made several improvements in Rwanda's camps during the year. Workers built more than 300 new shelters in Kiziba to curb overcrowding and accommodate newly arrived refugees. New latrines constructed in Kiziba reduced the ratio of persons per latrine by 50 percent. Workers constructed some 500 new earthen homes in Gihembe camp.

In late 2002, Rwandan government authorities and representatives of a Congolese rebel group backed by Rwanda, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD-Goma), forcibly repatriated some 7,000 Congolese refugees residing in Gihembe and Kiziba camps. More than 1,000 homes and other camp infrastructure were destroyed in Gihembe as a result of the forced repatriation campaign.

A USCR site visit to Rwanda in November concluded that Rwandan government officials and RCD-Goma representatives misled Congolese refugees in Gihembe and Kiziba to believe that peace, land, and humanitarian assistance awaited returnees to eastern Congo-Kinshasa.

"Frightened refugees have reported intimidation from local security forces as the primary reason that they have decamped Gihembe and Kiziba," USCR wrote Rwandan President Kagame in September. "We strongly urge your government to avoid any further activity, including threats of forcible removal, that might influence Congolese refugees to return home against their will."

More than 1,000 forcibly repatriated Congolese refugees returned to Rwanda by year's end because of unstable conditions in Congo-Kinshasa. They experienced dif-

ficulties resettling in Rwanda because they had lost their possessions and housing when forced to leave Rwanda a few weeks earlier.

UNHCR reported that violence among refugees and against refugee women and young girls declined during 2002 because of education programs and improved discussions among camp elders and women's groups.

Rwanda is party to the UN Refugee Convention. In March, the Rwandan government enacted a national law relating to refugees. UNHCR praised the law, which provided legal protection to refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR vowed to assist the Rwandan government build its capacity to implement the law and eventually assume the responsibilities of refugee management.

Refugees from Burundi More than 2,000 Burundian refugees lived in Rwanda, including about 500 who arrived during 2002. About 500 refugees resided at Kigeme camp, in Rwanda's southern Gikongoro Province; the remainder lived on their own, primarily in urban areas.

Most Burundian refugees arrived in the 1990s. While small numbers have integrated locally, the majority



A Rwandan refugee repatriates from Tanzania with her child. More than 30,000 Rwandan refugees repatriated from Tanzania during 2002. International observers, including U.S. Committee for Refugees, questioned whether the return was voluntary. Photo: USCR/J. Frushone



continued to struggle in Kigeme camp on limited humanitarian assistance. UNHCR distributed blankets, plastic mats, water containers, and kitchen utensils to camp residents. WFP provided monthly food rations. Refugees in Kigeme also had access to health and nutrition services. About 200 refugee students attended primary and secondary school in the camp.

Senegal

Approximately 10,000 Senegalese were refugees at the end of 2002, including some 6,000 in Guinea-Bissau and about 5,000 in Gambia. An estimated 5,000 people were internally displaced. At least 10,000 Senegalese became newly uprooted during 2002, but many of them returned home a few weeks or months later.

Senegal hosted nearly 45,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including an estimated 40,000 from Mauritania, and about 5,000 from various other countries.

Uprooted Senegalese A low-level armed insurgency has continued sporadically in southern Senegal's Casamance Province for 20 years, forcing thousands of Senegalese from their homes. Insurgent leaders have charged that Casamance Province is politically and economically marginalized, and have demanded independence or greater political autonomy.

A cease-fire negotiated in 1999 curtailed violence, and a peace agreement in 2001 pledged the safe return of all refugees, the release of prisoners, clearance of landmines, and economic support for demobilized combatants.

Some rebel factions opposed the accord and renewed their attacks in mid-2001, temporarily pushing more than 10,000 new refugees into neighboring countries that year. A highway ambush by rebel combatants in early 2002 killed several politicians of Senegal's ruling party and triggered forceful counterinsurgency measures by government troops, including artillery shelling against rebel strongholds.

The government military offensive caused 10,000 to 20,000 Senegalese to flee their homes during May and June. About half fled to neighboring Gambia, while others sought safety at the homes of friends and relatives inside Senegal. Most newly uprooted families rapidly returned home when violence subsided in the second half of the year.

The International Committee of the Red Cross conducted training sessions in Casamance Province for government soldiers and civilians about humanitarian law and combatants' obligations in conflicts.

Refugees from Mauritania An estimated 40,000 refugees who had fled Mauritania more than ten years ago continued to live in Senegal during 2002. The Mauritanian government originally expelled the population during 1989–90, claiming they were Senegalese nationals rather than Mauritanian citizens.

The exact number of refugees was uncertain because authorities have not conducted a formal census since 1995. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which maintained only limited contact with the refugee population, estimated that some 20,000 remained in Senegal. A Mauritanian exile group claimed that nearly three times that number resided in Senegal.

Most refugee families remained settled at 200 sites stretching some 400 miles (approximately 600 km) along the Senegal River, which forms the border with Mauritania. Since 1996, most have supported themselves with minimal help from UNHCR. Some refugees received modest assistance for health care, education, and access to clean drinking water.

In 2000, the Senegalese government abruptly halted efforts to register Mauritanian refugees and provide them with identity cards. The government initially cited planned changes in its refugee administrative system as the reason for the delay. The registration process remained stalled in 2002. Some 500 Mauritanian refugees applied for permanent residency in Senegal several years ago, but Senegalese authorities have not acted on their request.

Refugee leaders have regularly asserted that the population will not repatriate from Senegal until the Mauritanian government guarantees their citizenship and reimburses them for lost property.

Sierra Leone

More than 130,000 Sierra Leoneans remained refugees or asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including some 70,000 in Guinea, an estimated 40,000 in Liberia, about 5,000 in Ghana, 5,000 in Gambia, 2,000 in Nigeria, and about 10,000 Sierra Leonean asylum seekers in the United States and other industrialized countries.

More than 200,000 Sierra Leoneans uprooted by war returned to their home areas during the year, including some 90,000 refugees who repatriated.

Sierra Leone hosted about 60,000 refugees from Liberia, including some 40,000 who arrived during 2002.

Pre-2002 Events Ten years of civil war and massive human rights violations by combatants killed 50,000 or more people and forced an estimated three-quarters of a million Sierra Leoneans to flee their homes during the 1990s. Rebels known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) gained international notoriety for their practice of cutting off civilians' hands and ears. The rebels lacked a clear political ideology, but controlled lucrative diamond mines in eastern areas that fueled their war effort.

RUF suffered military setbacks during 2000–2001 after British government forces and UN peacekeeping troops intervened. Government troops from neighboring Guinea also attacked RUF rebels in Sierra Leone's border area. Rebel

leaders agreed to a cease-fire in mid-2001, and 45,000 rebel and pro-government militia disarmed by year's end. The UN peacekeeping contingent expanded to 17,000 soldiers, making it the largest UN military operation in the world.

Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced civilians returned to their homes in 2001, and an estimated 80,000 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated.

Peace Consolidated in 2002 Sierra Leoneans made rapid progress toward permanent peace during 2002. Some 1.8 million people voted in democratic national elections in May, and thousands of former combatants reintegrated back to normal life. Local government officials gradually resumed their work in regions that had long been under rebel control.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, created by the UN and the Sierra Leonean government to prosecute war crimes, began to function in July. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission gradually began to document war-related atrocities despite receiving only \$2 million of the \$10 million requested from international donor nations to support its work. UN peacekeeping troops widened their deployment to all areas of the country.

Sierra Leoneans and international diplomats expressed confidence that the country's civil war was finished. Intensified warfare in neighboring Liberia, however, raised security concerns in border areas. "Peace in Sierra Leone could...be jeopardized by the escalating crisis in Liberia," a UN report warned late in the year.

The U.S. government continued to grant Temporary Protected Status to about 2,000 Sierra Leoneans already residing or visiting in the United States. The U.S. policy has provided temporary safe haven to Sierra Leoneans on a year-by-year basis since 1999.

Population Movements Toward Home Uprooted Sierra Leoneans returned home rapidly and in massive numbers during 2002, particularly early in the year before the country's national elections in May and the planting season during May-June.

More than 100,000 internally displaced persons went back to their home communities during the year, and some 90,000 refugees repatriated after years of exile in Guinea, Liberia, and other West African countries. About 30,000 refugees hastily repatriated to Sierra Leone under duress when their refugee camp in Liberia came under attack by combatants in that country's civil war.

About half of the returning refugees received assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other aid agencies in the form of transportation, cooked meals, and medical care during the journey home, or overnight accommodations at transit centers. About 8,000 repatriated by boat to Freetown, the capital.

UNHCR suspended the organized repatriation flow for six weeks during the middle of the year because an influx of Liberian refugees into eastern Sierra Leone forced

the agency to divert trucks to that emergency from the repatriation program. Budget constraints and concerns about conditions in returnee areas (see *Reintegration Conditions* below) prompted UNHCR to cease repatriation movements late in the year, although some refugees continued to trickle home on their own.

The large and often uncontrollable population movements, while welcomed as a sign that peace had taken root, placed a burden on key towns where tens of thousands of returnees congregated for months while rebuilding their houses in rural areas or while making their own assessments of local security conditions. UNHCR provided water, sanitation, and health care services to alleviate overcrowding in the host communities.

The largest population returns during 2002 occurred in the remote eastern districts of Kailahun and Kono—previously the heart of rebel territory and the most heavily damaged regions during the war. More than 90 percent of all refugees who repatriated during the year returned to Kailahun and Kono, as did tens of thousands of internally displaced persons.

Reintegration Conditions According to a study by the UN Development Program, Sierra Leone ranked as the poorest, least developed country in the world during 2002. Some areas of the country, dangerous and inaccessible during the decade of war, revealed extensive destruction once the war was over, making reintegration and reconstruction an immense challenge.

Major areas of population return "lack adequate basic services," a UNHCR report stated. Conditions in some former rebel-controlled regions, particularly the eastern districts of Kono and Kailahun, were "found to be far worse than previously assumed," another UNHCR report acknowledged.

Some areas could provide only 10 percent of returnees' needs for potable water and other fundamental services, according to UN aid officials. The war left more than 300,000 houses destroyed and 80 percent of schools and health clinics heavily damaged. Roads and bridges in key returnee areas awaited repairs. International agencies struggled to launch humanitarian programs in remote regions that had been virtually empty of people only a few months earlier.

Financial support for assistance efforts was minimal compared to the needs. Donor nations provided about \$60 million to UN relief and development organizations for programs in Sierra Leone, but ignored aid officials' request for nearly \$40 million more. Health programs and water and sanitation projects received about one-third of the funds requested by UN aid agencies.

Serious financial difficulties encountered by UNHCR meant that "an adequate level of staffing was never attained" in Sierra Leone, UNHCR admitted in a July report. UNHCR officials shifted money from reintegration projects to fund emergency programs for new Liberian refu-



gees in Sierra Leone. “UNHCR could not properly respond with community-based...reintegration activities as planned,” the agency stated.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) conducted a site visit to Sierra Leone in June to assess reintegration conditions. USCR found many local residents and international relief workers optimistic about the opportunity for permanent peace and reconstruction, but frustrated by inadequate financial support for basic programs.

“The simultaneous double influx of Liberian refugees and Sierra Leonean returnees into heavily damaged border areas poses a highly unusual challenge in an area that already lacks housing, medical services, water systems, and other basic services destroyed in Sierra Leone’s war,” stated a USCR report, “Upheaval in Liberia and Repatriation to Sierra Leone: Findings and Recommendations,” published in July.

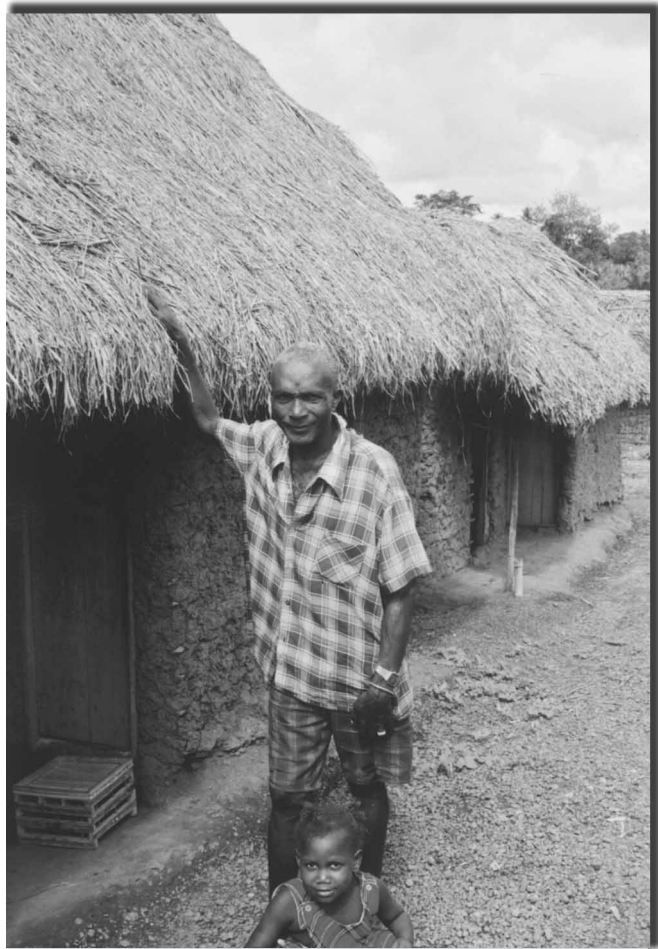
The USCR report urged more support to help returnees rebuild their homes and recommended that the Sierra Leonean government should revise its certification requirements for teachers in order to encourage more teachers to return home from refugee camps to rectify the country’s serious teacher shortage.

USCR also warned that many single women were encountering difficulties reclaiming their property and “continue to be victimized by sexual assault and domestic violence at a high rate.” USCR recommended that “consideration of the special needs of women should be built into all aid and development projects” to help women reclaim their land, build houses, start businesses, and have a role in community decision making.

Despite problems, at least minimal levels of humanitarian assistance reached all areas of the country by year’s end. Refugees and internally displaced families returning home received a two-month food supply from the World Food Program. A food assessment conducted by relief organizations in June recommended an additional four-month food distribution to needy returnees, but aid workers generally were unable to implement the recommendation because of concerns that donated food supplies were inadequate.

Many returnees received blankets, sleeping mats, cooking utensils, soap, plastic sheeting for shelter, and sanitary items for women. Aid agencies helped 3,000 families reconstruct their houses, while tens of thousands more returnees repaired their homes without assistance. Some 130,000 families received seeds, tools, and other agricultural assistance. The American Refugee Committee provided small-business loans to more than 2,000 Sierra Leoneans—overwhelmingly women—to help energize moribund local economies.

Enrollment at schools increased more than 50 percent as teachers returned and communities gradually repaired schools with help from humanitarian agencies. Some families chose to leave their children in large towns to attend schools until education systems and other basic services improved in rural areas.



Issa Toimy fled Sierra Leone’s civil war in 1991 and lived as a refugee in Guinea for 11 years before repatriating in 2002. About 90,000 Sierra Leonean refugees returned home during 2002 as peace returned to their country.

Photo: USCR/J. Drumtra

UNHCR deployed at least 20 international and local staff members to monitor protection problems encountered by returnees to Sierra Leone. In response to a study by UNHCR and Save the Children Federation/United Kingdom in February alleging widespread sexual abuse of refugees in West Africa, humanitarian agencies conducted workshops to educate aid workers about proper codes of conduct. Relief and development organizations in Sierra Leone formed a committee to recommend preventive measures “to minimize the risks of exploitation and abuse in every sector of refugee/returnee operations,” UNHCR reported.

Despite pervasive optimism about long-term peace, some residents and international analysts warned that national government officials and some local traditional chiefs were lapsing into the same corruption and cronyism that marked policymaking before the war.

“Deep-seated grievances that fueled the war in Sierra Leone still simmer and are in danger of mounting again because of grassroots dissatisfaction with the current chief-

tain system,” USCR’s report stated in July. The country initiated new elections for local chiefs late in the year in an effort to make them more responsive to their constituents.

Refugees from Liberia Widening civil war in Liberia pushed some 40,000 new Liberian refugees into Sierra Leone during 2002. They joined 15,000 to 20,000 Liberian refugees who had fled to Sierra Leone during the 1990s.

Most new refugees arrived in relatively good physical condition. They initially congregated in towns and villages along Sierra Leone’s border with Liberia, where many of them preferred to remain because of ethnic links to the local ethnic Kissi population and proximity to their homes in Liberia. Sierra Leonean officials and UNHCR regarded the border region as insecure and gradually persuaded most of the refugee population to move to designated camps a safer distance from the border.

By year’s end, about 40,000 refugees lived in seven camps near the towns of Bo and Kenema in south central Sierra Leone. Two of the camps were newly constructed, while five others previously had served as transit centers for Sierra Leonean refugees returning home. The camps ranged in size from 4,000 to 7,000 occupants.

About 20,000 Liberian refugees lived on their own, including nearly 5,000 in Freetown and more than 3,000 in Bo and Kenema. More than 10,000 continued to live in border villages with little or no assistance. Sierra Leonean officials continued to express concern that the presence of refugees at the border might inadvertently attract cross-border attacks from Liberian combatants.

Services at the seven refugee camps were inconsistent. UNHCR officials—already stretched to conduct reintegration programs for Sierra Leonean returnees—acknowledged that they lacked adequate funding and staffing to keep pace with the influx from Liberia. UNHCR’s weaknesses “made it difficult to raise assistance standards for refugees above bare basic levels,” a UNHCR report acknowledged.

Many refugees received only partial food rations for several months, until full rations began in the second half of the year. A funding dispute between aid agencies halted services at one camp for a week. Refugees at another camp rioted over poor health services. A USCR site visit to Sierra Leone in June, followed by a USCR report a month later, urged UNHCR to expand its staff in Sierra Leone “to better address the...repatriation emergency as well as the Liberian refugee influx emergency.”

Tensions between the refugees and local residents simmered throughout the year. Some Sierra Leoneans regarded the refugee population as a security threat and a competitor for the small amounts of humanitarian aid flowing into the country. Community leaders near some camps tried to restrict refugees’ movements and activities.

“Concerns persist over the infiltration of armed dissidents” from Liberia, UNHCR reported in September. “The screening of the incoming populations is therefore essen-

tial if the civilian nature of refugee camps is to be maintained.” Government authorities established a separate internment camp in October to segregate Liberian combatants from the refugee population.

Somalia

Nearly 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia lived in about two dozen countries at the end of 2002, including more than 140,000 in Kenya, nearly 80,000 in Yemen, 21,000 in Djibouti, about 20,000 in Ethiopia, some 7,000 in South Africa, about 7,000 in Egypt, more than 3,000 in Tanzania, some 3,000 in Libya, more than 2,000 in Eritrea, about 1,000 in Uganda, and more than 15,000 Somali asylum seekers in various European countries and the United States.

Approximately 350,000 Somalis were internally displaced at year’s end.

An estimated 20,000 Somali refugees repatriated during the year, primarily to northern Somalia.

Pre-2002 Events Civil war and factional fighting have besieged Somalia for more than a decade, causing more than 500,000 deaths.

Conditions were particularly severe during 1991–92, when war and massive population upheaval produced famine and left 2 million Somalis internally displaced and 800,000 as refugees. Large numbers gradually returned to their home areas during 1992–98 amid continued violence and population upheavals.

Political leaders in northern Somalia maintained autonomy from the rest of the country. Leaders in the northwest, largely of the Issaq clan, continued to rule their territory of “Somaliland,” formed in 1991. Leaders in the northeast, dominated by the Darod clan, maintained control of their territory of “Puntland,” formed in 1998. While no foreign government officially recognized either autonomous region, both regions pursued modest reconstruction efforts and population reintegration.

In 2000, a fragile new national government formed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, for the first time in a decade. The new governing body, known as the Transitional National Government (TNG), immediately encountered armed opposition from local warlords, some of whom continued to control large parts of Mogadishu, as well as significant territory outside the capital.

Violence in 2002 Escalations in violence worsened already dangerous conditions in much of Somalia during 2002. The TNG struggled to control small areas of Mogadishu, exert its authority outside of the capital, and fend off attacks by armed factions. Widespread anarchy and violence compounded the already difficult lives of people suffering from persistent drought and food shortages throughout central and southern Somalia.