



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REGIONAL TRENDS:

FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

JUNE 2026



© UNHCR/Arnold Temple

This Regional Trends Summary of forced displacement in West and Central Africa presents forced displacement statistics as of April 2026. Aligned with UNHCR's Global Trends Report, it offers a regional lens on displacement dynamics, highlighting key emerging trends over the past year.



Thousands of civilians from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have crossed into Burundi, fleeing intense fighting in South Kivu. © UNHCR/Arnold Temple

Trends at a Glance

20 MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PEOPLE
in West and Central Africa as of 30 April 2026

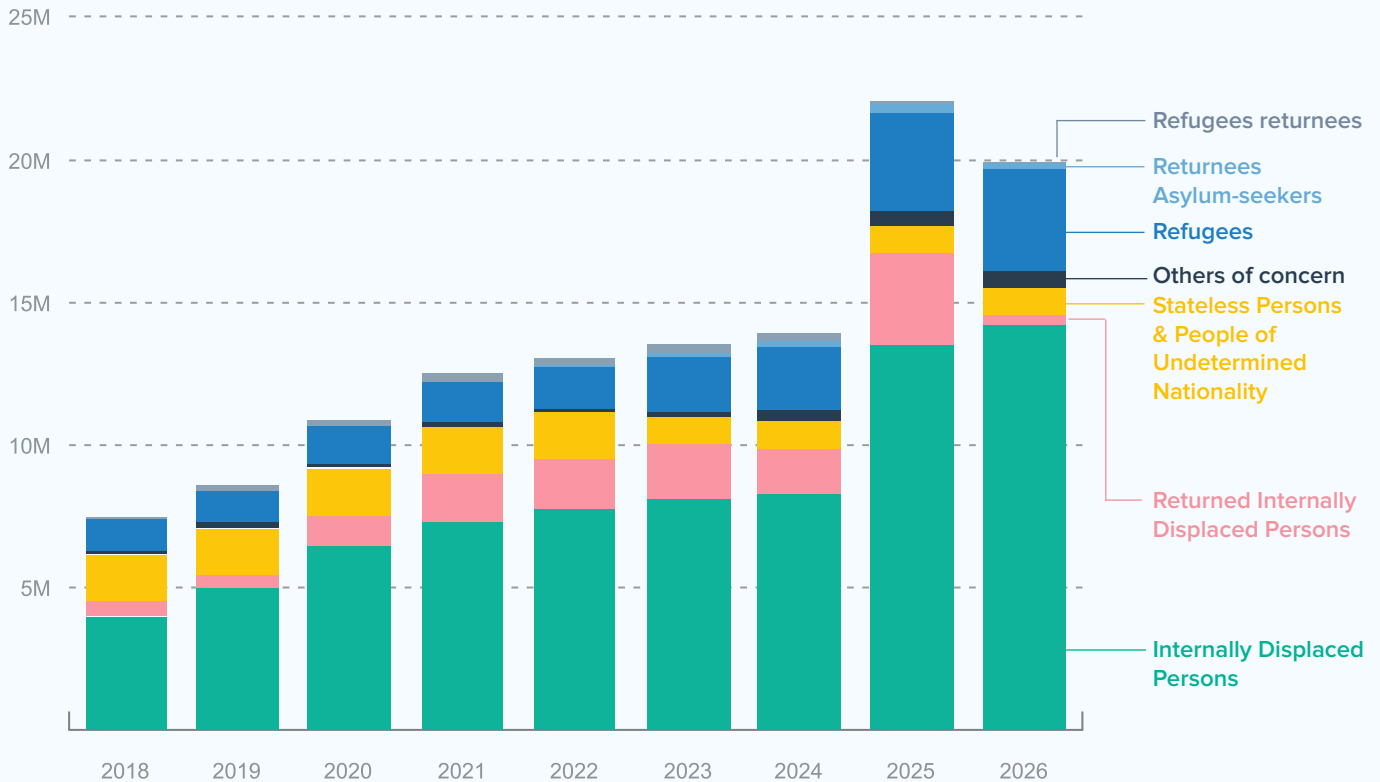


Figure 1 | Regional Trends at a Glance

71%

OF ALL FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE REGION ARE INTERNALLY DISPLACED.

19%

OF ALL FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE REGION ARE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS.

80%

OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN THE REGION ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

40%

OF REFUGEES IN THE REGION ARE IN CHAD, LARGELY FROM THE SUDAN CRISIS.

Overview of forced displacement in West and Central Africa

Between January and April 2026, around 99,800 new arrivals of refugees and asylum-seekers were registered in West and Central Africa, bringing the cumulative number of forcibly displaced people in the region to around 20 million. This represents a slight decrease of 4 per cent, compared to 20.7 million as of April 2025 and an almost 13 per cent drop compared to 23 million at the end of 2024.

While this decline is mainly due to returns to countries where conditions have become more stable, it does not signal a broader reduction in displacement pressures across the region. Conflict and insecurity remained the primary drivers of displacement, increasingly compounded by extreme weather events and rising food insecurity.



Sudanese refugees wait to be relocated from Tiné to Touloum. Since April 2023, Chad has received nearly 920,000 new refugees from Sudan.
© UNHCR/Hélène Caux

Across the region, most people forced to flee from their communities remained within their own countries, with around 14.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs) as of April 2026, representing 71 per cent of all displaced people in the region. The vast majority of IDPs were in a small number of conflict affected countries, with nearly 5.8 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), 3.7 million in Nigeria, nearly 2.1 million in Burkina Faso and 1 million in Cameroon, based on government statistics.

A growing number of people in the region also sought safety across their country's borders, with the number of refugees and asylum-seekers reaching 3.9 million as of April 2026, with more than half in protracted displacement situations for at least five consecutive years. This total represents a 23 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2025 and an 18 per cent rise compared to December 2024.

Growing cross-border movements are placing sustained pressure on asylum systems and host countries, many of which are also confronted by insecurity and weak social systems.

Chad remained the region's largest host country for refugees and asylum-seekers, with 1.5 million people—around 40 per cent of the regional total.

The DRC, Niger and Cameroon also hosted significant refugee populations, with around 606,000, 447,000 and 432,000 people respectively. Sudan, the CAR, Nigeria and Burkina Faso were the main countries of origin, accounting for 1.2 million, 897,000, 440,000 and 433,000 refugees respectively, reflecting the protracted and cyclical nature of conflict and displacement in these countries.

UNHCR estimates nearly 932,000 people are stateless or at risk of statelessness across the region and the real figure is likely far higher.

Displacement disproportionately affects women and children in West and Central Africa

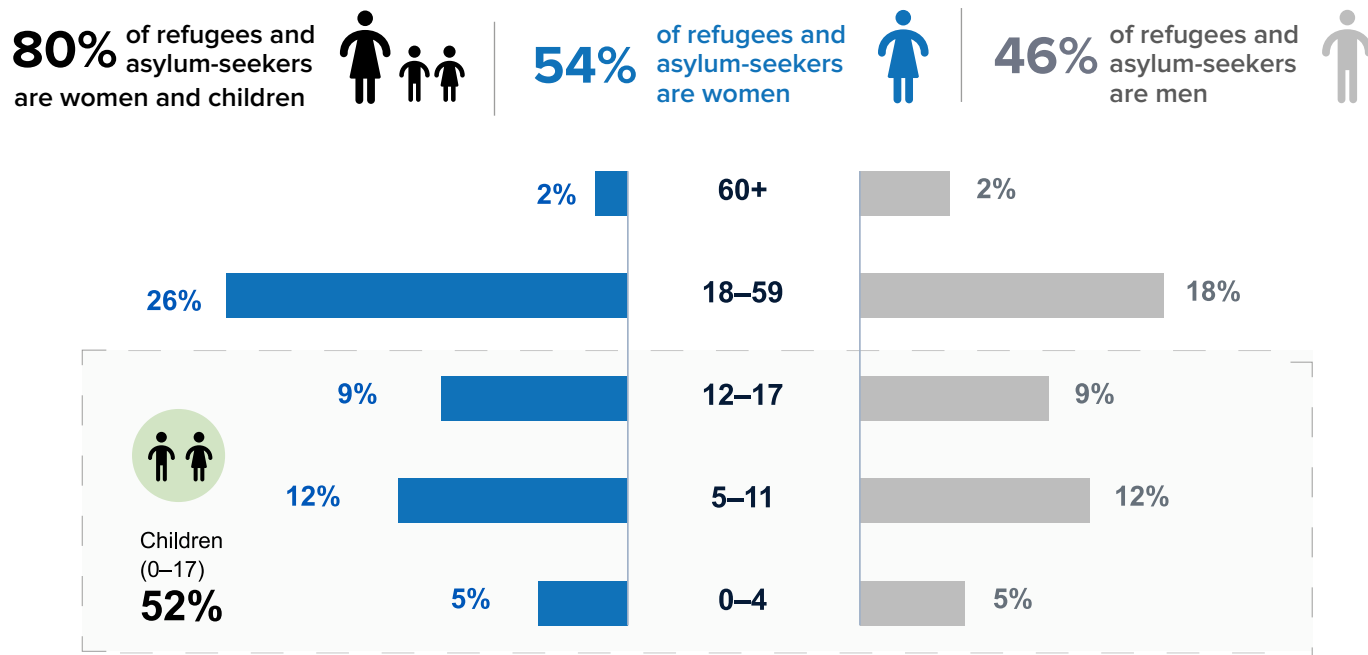


Figure 2 | Demographics on forced displacement in West and Central Africa

Across the region, women and children continue to bear the brunt of displacement, accounting for 80 per cent of all refugees and asylum-seekers. This share has remained stable since April 2025, underscoring how conflict, insecurity and protection risks continue to uproot families and disproportionately expose women and children to harm and dependency, and disrupt access to essential services. Children represent more than half of the population, while women and girls are the majority.

Around 751,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the region were identified with specific needs as of April 2026, consisting of people facing heightened protection risks or barriers to accessing rights and services because of their circumstances, discrimination, identity or other factors. Around 22 per cent of recorded needs were related to legal and physical protection, 21 per cent to children at risk, 17 per cent to women at risk, 8 per cent to people with disabilities, and 4 per cent to unaccompanied and separated children.



Khadidjaali Terap (wearing an orange and yellow dress), 40, and her family sit at the border in Tiné in eastern Chad, waiting to undergo medical screening and registration before being transported to a transit center five kilometers away, where they will be able to stay in temporary shelters and receive food. © UNHCR/Hélène Caux

Overview of forced displacement crises in the region

Trends in displacement across the region are being shaped by some conflicts within the region and in neighbouring regions, notably the Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel Plus (comprising Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, plus Mauritania and the coastal States of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo).

The Sahel Plus Crisis

SAHEL PLUS SITUATION

 **1,189,747**
REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS

 **3,078,752**
INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS



The Sahel crisis remains one of the fastest-growing and most geographically expansive displacement situations in the region. By April 2026, around 4.2 million people, were forcibly displaced within the Central Sahel comprising Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and toward the coastal countries of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, plus Mauritania.

This marked an increase of 244,000 people, or 6 per cent, compared to 4 million in April 2025, and a 100 per cent rise from 2.1 million in 2020. IDPs accounted for around 72 per cent of the total, or 3 million people, including nearly 2.1 million in Burkina Faso, 548,000 in Niger and 415,000 in Mali. Refugees and asylum-seekers reached around 1.2 million, remaining broadly stable compared to April 2025 but increasing by 26 per cent from 943,000 at the end of 2024. While forced displacement in the Sahel was largely within Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, a growing number of people sought safety in the coastal countries, comprising 222,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, up 16 per cent from 190,000 in April 2025, particularly among people fleeing Burkina Faso and Mali. In addition, Mauritania hosted 184,500 refugees as of April 2026, with the majority of them from Mali, where the security situation continued to degenerate.

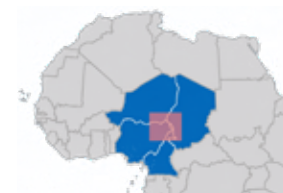
Protection risks in the Central Sahel were acute. Around 38,800 household and community consultations were conducted through the inter-agency protection monitoring system – Project 21 in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in 2025. Three in five households reported movement restrictions due to insecurity, while violence against women and girls accounted for one in four reported incidents. At the same time, 91 per cent of respondents said they felt integrated within host communities, pointing to strong social cohesion despite worsening insecurity.

Lake Chad Basin crisis

LAKE CHAD BASIN

 **369,519**
REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS

 **3,239,390**
INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS



Deteriorating insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), together with intercommunal violence and extreme weather events continued to drive large-scale displacement across the Far North region of Cameroon, Lac province of Chad, Diffa region of Niger, and the States of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe in north-east Nigeria. By April 2026, around 3.6 million people were forcibly displaced across the LCB reflecting a 4 per cent increase, from nearly 3.5 million in April 2025. Nigeria continued to host the largest displaced population, with around 2.3 million IDPs, followed by Cameroon with more than 510,800 and Chad with around 220,000. Niger hosted the largest refugee and asylum-seeker population at more than 130,000 people. The total number of refugees and asylum-seekers from the Basin reflected a 7 per cent rise, comprising 369,500 people, compared to 345,000 in April 2025.

Humanitarian needs in the Lake Chad Basin remained severe, with around 8.2 million people in need of assistance and 7.4 million facing acute food insecurity. Around 2,700 household and key informant interviews conducted by Project 21 in the LCB in the first quarter of 2026 revealed that violence against women and girls accounted for one in five reported protection incidents, while half of children lacked regular access to school—rising to more than 78 per cent in Chad—heightening risks of child labour, recruitment by armed groups and early marriage.

The Sudan crisis

CAR & CHAD
(SUDAN SITUATION)



1,224,680
REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS



6,911
REFUGEE
RETURNEES



Sudan has become a major driver of cross-border displacement into West and Central Africa, particularly into eastern Chad and the CAR. By April 2026, Chad hosted 1.2 million Sudanese refugees including 927,000 arrivals since April 2023. This total comprises 23,800 people who arrived during the first four months of 2026, compared to 55,600 during the same period in 2025. Trends in Sudanese arrivals over the last few years comprising 180,000 in 2025, 239,000 in 2024 and 485,000 in 2023 also reflect decreasing, yet persistent large-scale displacement amid ongoing violence in Sudan.

In the CAR, new arrivals from Sudan reached 43,300 people as of 30 April 2026, including 37,000 Sudanese. This represents a slight decrease in Sudanese arrivals compared to 37,500 reported in April 2025, likely due to some self-organized returns, although small numbers of Sudanese refugees continue to arrive in the CAR. Around 6,300 Central Africans also returned from Sudan under difficult conditions.

The Central African Republic Crisis

CAR SITUATION



890,268
REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS



428,226
INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS



As of 30 April 2026, around 1.3 million Central Africans remained forcibly displaced across Africa, up 16 per cent from 1.1 million during the same period in 2025 and 3 per cent from 1.28 million in April 2024. This increase reflects persistent armed group activity in the north-east and south-east, even as relative stability in much of the country enabled some returns, underscoring the increasingly protracted and uneven nature of displacement in the CAR. Of the 890,000 Central African refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries, 288,000 are in Chad, 287,000 in Cameroon and 268,000 in the DRC. By contrast, the number of IDPs in the CAR fell by 3 per cent, comprising 428,200 people, compared to 442,700 as of April 2025 and by nearly 18 per cent compared to 522,000 as of April 2024, pointing to localized improvements in security and growing interest in returns.

Democratic Republic of the Congo Crisis

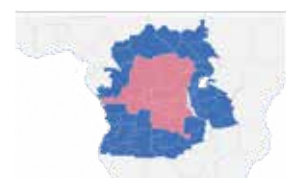
DRC SITUATION



1,297,748
REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS



5,773,180
INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS



The DRC grappled with cycles of violence and complex forced displacement due to several active armed groups in the eastern regions, disease outbreaks, floods and landslides. By the end of April 2026, around 7 million people had been uprooted from their communities. This included nearly 5.8 million IDPs, down 23 per cent from 7.5 million during the same period in 2025.

This decrease is due to large-scale returns despite a highly volatile security environment. Congolese also sought safety across their borders, with the number of refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries estimated at 1.3 million, a 9 per cent increase from 1.2 million in 2025. Uganda remained the largest host country, with around 661,300 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers, followed by Burundi (145,000), the United Republic of Tanzania (87,000) and Rwanda (80,000). Renewed violence in eastern DRC since January 2025 continues to drive displacement, with 246,000 new arrivals in neighbouring countries including 10,700 between January and April 2026.



A Sudanese family arrived by car at the Tiné border on the Chadian side. They will then be relocated by UNHCR to Touloum refugee camp, a two-and-a-half-hour drive from the border, where they can access better services. © UNHCR/Hélène Caux

Continuing mixed movements along deadlier routes

While most forcibly displaced people remained within the region, onward movements towards Europe continued, and included people in need of international protection. These movements were driven by persistent protection risks and limited solutions. The Central Mediterranean route along North Africa to Italy, remained the busiest and deadliest route, with around 8,500 arrivals, down 46 per cent, compared to April 2025. The West African Atlantic route to the Canary Islands in Spain, recorded the sharpest decline, with detections down 78 per cent, largely due to reinforced maritime controls by The Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal. Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal nevertheless remained key transit hubs, and smuggling networks continued to adapt quickly as routes shifted.

According to the [European Union Agency for Asylum](#), asylum applications in Europe declined overall, but applications by Malians rose by 28 per cent from March 2025 to March 2026. Around 85 per cent of all Malian applications were lodged in Spain, where they increased by 49 per cent comprising 17,000 applications. First-instance recognition rates for Malians remained high at 88 per cent in March 2026, underscoring significant protection needs linked to deteriorating insecurity in Mali. In France, applications by DRC nationals rose by 6 per cent, while applications by Nigerians declined by 24 per cent.

Route-based approach: strengthening protection and safer alternatives to dangerous onward movement

In response to mixed movements, UNHCR and IOM in collaboration with governments have continued to roll out the route-based approach in Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, with further operationalization in Chad and Niger.

The approach maps out protection services along key corridors, strengthens coordination, and expands access to asylum for people on the move. Multipurpose hubs in Chad and Niger are providing protection and safer alternatives to dangerous journeys, while governments' endorsement of the approach – including requests to digitalize and decentralize asylum services – signals growing national ownership and a path to scale.

Source: [UNHCR Routes Monitor](#)

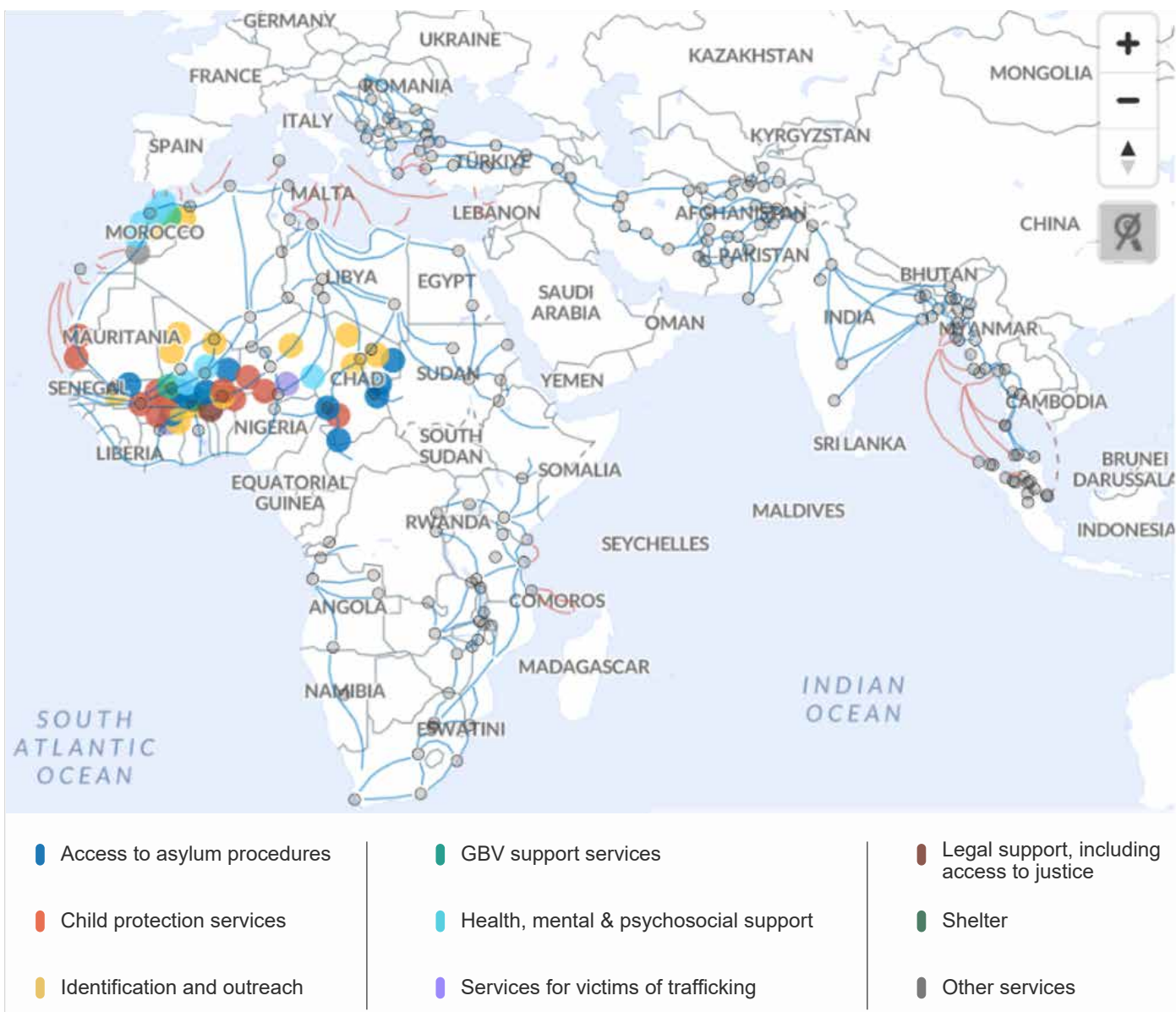


Figure 3 | Map of services along mixed movement routes

From Flight to Safety: Strengthening asylum systems in West and Central Africa

Strengthening asylum systems in the region is essential to uphold the right to safety for people forced to flee, by ensuring that access to protection is not ad hoc, but anchored in fair procedures, stronger institutions and nationally owned systems that can respond at scale. UNHCR is therefore strengthening advocacy and providing technical and financial support to governments across the region to promote greater coherence in asylum systems. UNHCR has supported 20 countries to finalize asylum system strengthening roadmaps.

The rollout of these roadmaps marks a decisive shift toward a system-based approach to asylum governance across West and Central Africa, in line with [UNHCR's Global Strategic Approach to Strengthening National Asylum Systems](#) (2025-2030). Developed with national authorities, these roadmaps operationalize UNHCR's strategic approach by supporting the gradual consolidation of asylum as a core public administration function, strengthening institutional capacity, procedural quality and system performance within nationally owned frameworks.

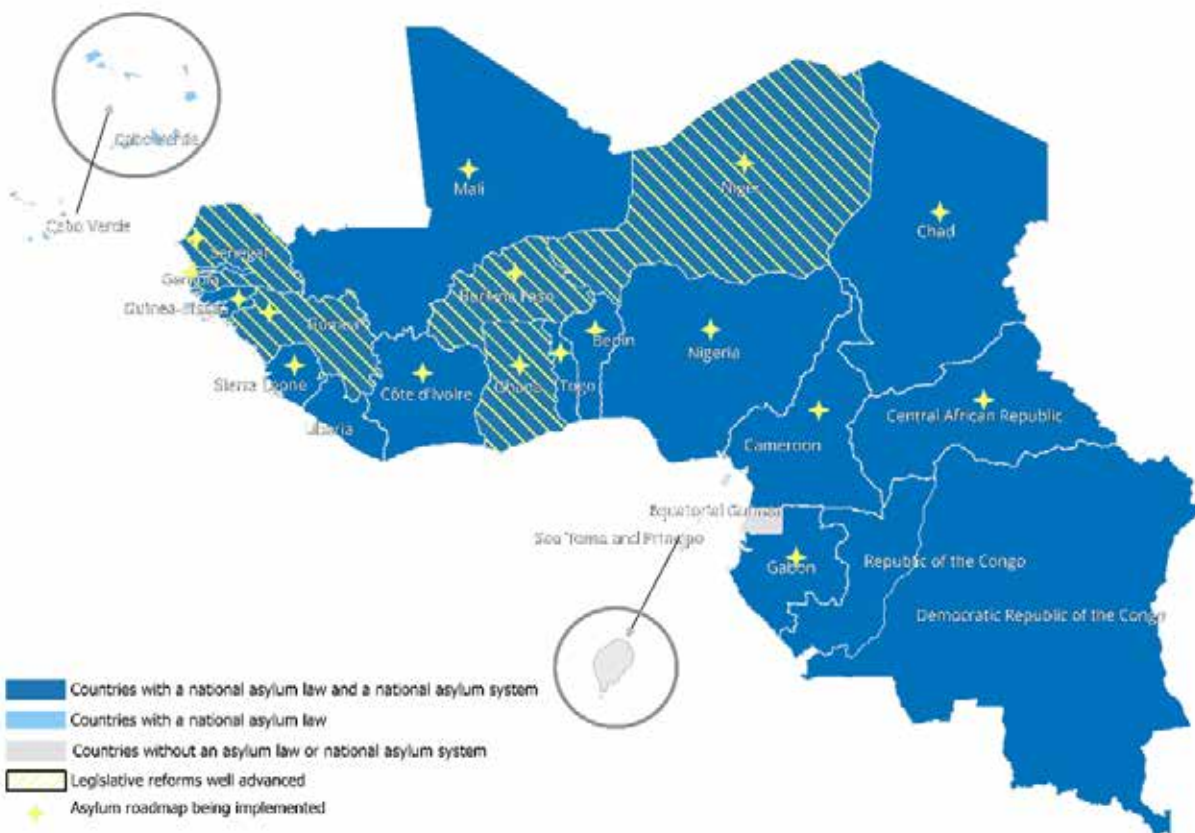


Figure 4 | Countries in West and Central Africa with national asylum frameworks as of 30 April 2026

Implementation of roadmaps is advancing across five areas: strengthening legal frameworks, improving how asylum institutions function, making procedures faster and more efficient, building the skills and capacities of officials and expanding access to information and legal assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees.

In Senegal, legal reforms have translated into the progressive operationalization of a renewed asylum system, including the establishment of a unified national body, targeted to reduce the number of unprocessed asylum cases and plans to expand access to asylum beyond the capital, Dakar. Nigeria is advancing standardized procedures, defined processing timelines and national financing mechanisms, reinforcing predictability and government ownership. Mali has introduced remote refugee status determination and budget integration measures to maintain access in complex contexts, while Niger is progressing on legal reforms, institutional strengthening and backlog reduction, including through digitalization and capacity-building.

At the regional level, these efforts are being supported through strengthened engagement with ECOWAS and ECCAS, including ongoing work to advance regional asylum policy frameworks and promote greater alignment of national systems. This regional dimension reinforces national reforms by encouraging coherence, strengthening cooperation and supporting a more consistent application of asylum standards across the region. Together, these efforts contribute to a gradual but important consolidation of asylum systems, with a growing focus on quality, sustainability and national ownership.

Protracted Refugee Situations in West and Central Africa

Extended periods of asylum are a dominant feature of forced displacement in the region. As of April 2026, almost 58 per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers in West and Central Africa, or 2.2 million people, were living in protracted situations, defined as those in which refugees from the same country of origin have been in exile in a given low- or middle-income host country for at least five consecutive years. Of this group, 34 per cent had spent more than a decade in their country of asylum and a further 24 per cent had been displaced for between five and ten years.

Average time spent in asylum in West and Central Africa

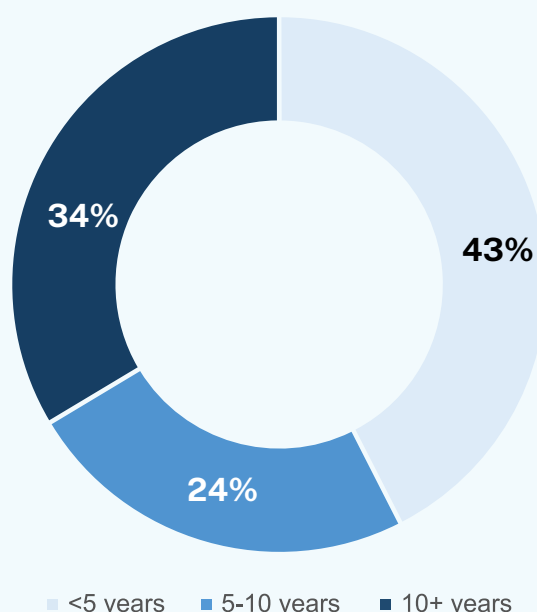


Figure 5 | Time spent in protracted displacement in the region

Refugees and asylum-seekers by duration of stay in country of asylum

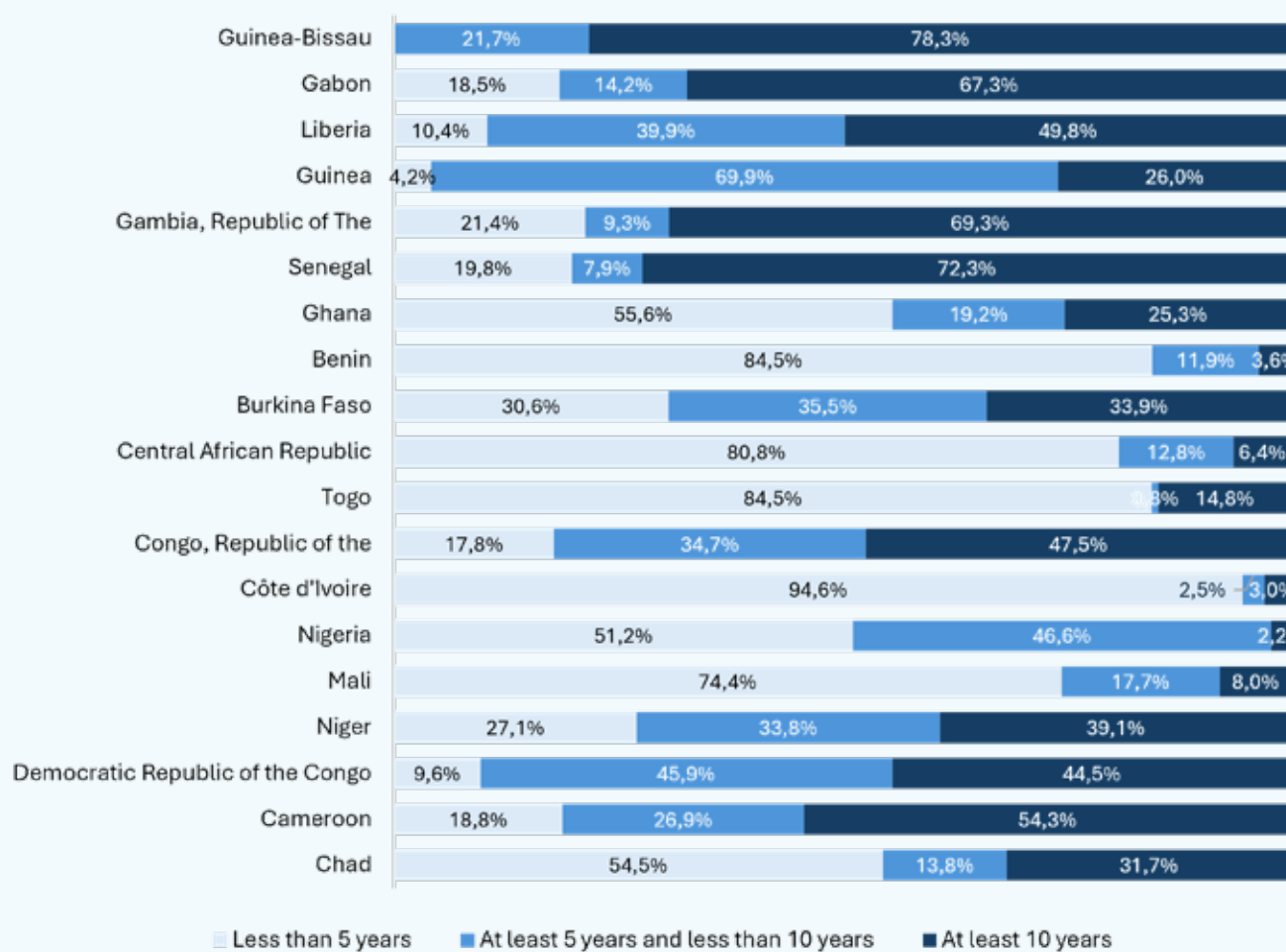


Figure 6 | Percentage and duration of stay of refugees in protracted displacement by country of asylum

More than 726,000 people, or nearly one in four refugees and asylum-seekers in the region, were born in their country of asylum, showing how displacement is becoming increasingly intergenerational. This pattern is especially visible in Senegal, where 62 per cent of refugees were born in exile, as well as in The Gambia, at 34 per cent, Cameroon, at 31 per cent, and Sierra Leone, at 31 per cent.

Around half of refugees in protracted displacement were of working age, 45 per cent were school-aged children and adolescents, and women accounted for 54 per cent of the population. Among those born in asylum, 86 per cent were children under 18.

The lengthiest stays in asylum were in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Cameroon, where around 78 per cent, 72 per cent and 54 per cent of refugees respectively have been in asylum for more than 10 years. In the DRC, around 90 per cent of refugees have spent at least five years in exile, including 45 per cent for more than a decade, while in Niger nearly 73 per cent have been displaced for five years or longer. At the same time, countries such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali are hosting predominantly newer refugee populations, with between 74 and 95 per cent of refugees having arrived within the past five years. With refugees spending an average of nine years in asylum across the region, scaling up durable solutions is no longer optional but essential to prevent displacement from becoming entrenched across generations.

Solutions



Women in Juba work together to create their own designs using bead colours provided by Roots. Through the collaboration between UNHCR and Roots, the women produce handmade pieces that provide both an income and a sense of community. © UNHCR/Ala Kheir

Vision 50by35: Ending prolonged displacement by reducing dependence on aid and expanding solutions

Vision 50by35 is UNHCR's commitment to support States and partners to halve, by 2035, the number of refugees and others in need of international protection who cannot meet their basic needs without external support. In West and Central Africa, where around 2.2 million refugees live in protracted situations, the vision provides a practical framework to move from long-term care and maintenance toward solutions, self-reliance and inclusion.

Vision 50by35 will be operationalized through four pathways: **voluntary return** and sustainable reintegration where conditions permit; **inclusion in national systems and labour markets** to enhance self-reliance in countries of asylum; **local integration, including permanent legal status and naturalization** where feasible; and **targeted third-country solutions**, including resettlement, family reunification and labour mobility.

UNHCR's interventions across the four pathways will be tailored to the realities of each country's context in the region, building on the progress already made in countries where governments and partners are advancing refugee inclusion, documentation, access to services, and opportunities for self-reliance. The goal is not a one-size-fits-all model, but gradual, protected transitions out of aid dependence and into lasting solutions.

Progress toward Solutions in West and Central Africa



Nigeria. Safe Return and Reintegration of Nigerian Refugees from Cameroon @UNHCR Nigeria

Returns of Refugees

Voluntary returns are gaining momentum in some countries, with notable progress in the CAR, the DRC and Nigeria. At the same time, many return contexts remain fragile, and conditions for large-scale, sustainable return are not yet in place across much of the region.

Between January and April 2026, around 43,700 refugees voluntarily returned home in West and Central Africa, including 39,300 people to the DRC, 3,500 to Nigeria, 600 to CAR and more than 300 to Mali. This compares to approximately 50,000 returns recorded across the full year of 2025, a decline of roughly 36 per cent from 78,000 in 2024, reflecting persistent insecurity and political developments that stalled movements in several countries.

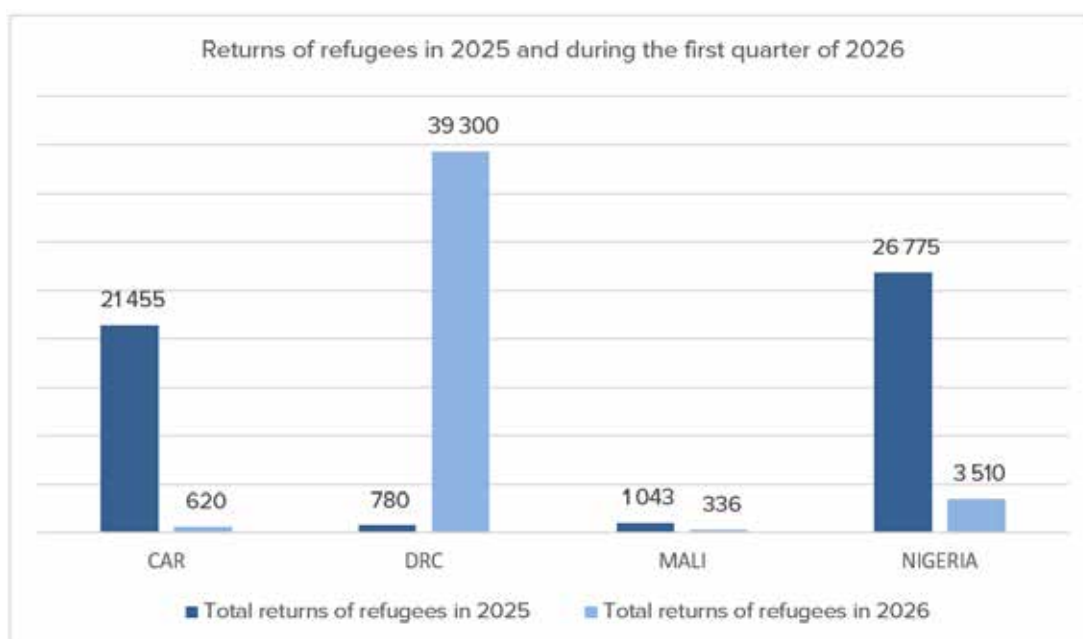


Figure 7 | Refugee returns in West and Central Africa in 2025 and 2026



Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thousands of Congolese refugees make their way home from Burundi © UNHCR/Fabrice Mbonankira

Returns to the DRC amid persistent insecurity and limited access to services

Despite persistent insecurity in parts of eastern DRC, returns from Burundi accelerated after the border reopened on 23 February 2026. By 30 April, 37,400 Congolese refugees had returned through self-organized returns to Uvira, in South Kivu, underlining how improved security in some areas and political progress can quickly trigger large-scale returns.

Facilitated voluntary returns to the DRC comprised nearly 1,900 people from different countries, including close to 1,500 from Burundi, who returned to Uvira under the tripartite agreement between UNHCR and the Governments of Burundi and the DRC. UNHCR is planning for around 1,000 returnees per week from Burundi, although the recent Ebola outbreak and persistent insecurity could slow the pace and scale of returns. These movements remain strictly voluntary and do not alter UNHCR's non-return advisory, which continues to advise against forced returns to eastern DRC, including to South Kivu, where conditions for large-scale return are still not considered to be in place. By comparison, returns to the DRC in 2025 totaled 780 people, up from 563 in 2024 but still far below the 11,000 recorded in 2022.



The arrival of repatriated refugees at the Kavimvira Transit Centre, in Uvira, South Kivu. © UNHCR/Fabrice Mbonankira

Safer and more dignified returns to Nigeria under tripartite agreements

Between January and April 2026, 3,500 refugees voluntarily repatriated from Cameroon to Nigeria within the framework of the tripartite agreement, highlighting the importance of sustained regional collaboration to ensure that all return movements are voluntary, informed, and dignified.

In 2025, returns to Nigeria were mostly organized by the Borno State Government from Niger with more than 16,000 people, from Chad with around 7,000, alongside approximately 3,000 self-organized returns from neighbouring countries. UNHCR supported limited return monitoring and advocated for the respect of key protection safeguards including informed decision and voluntariness.



Growing interest in returns to the Central African Republic

Since 2017, over 75,000 Central African refugees have returned home, including 21,400 in 2025, up from 19,800 in 2024, reflecting a progressively more favourable environment for return and reintegration. In the first quarter of 2026, around 620 refugees returned voluntarily from Cameroon and the DRC through facilitated movements, while authorities registered approximately 15,000 self-organized returnees, a clear signal that Central Africans want to go home when conditions allow. Under the Yaoundé Declaration and the CAR Solutions Support Platform, 300,000 refugee returns are projected by 2028.

In line with the Government’s «retourner pour développer vision», UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that returns form part of a broader development and stabilization approach with «14 pôles de développement» being developed to link return areas with investments in local development, livelihoods, governance and social cohesion.

Large scale IDP returns across West and Central Africa

IDP returns are increasingly shaping population movements in West and Central Africa. In 2025, governments reported more than 3.2 million IDP returns across the region, including around 3 million in the DRC, 153,000 in Mali and 74,000 in the CAR. The trend continued into 2026, with governments reporting 389,000 IDP returns in the first four months of the year, including 153,000 in Mali, and 235,000 in DRC. While some of these movements point to localized improvements in the security situation in some countries, they also underscore the urgent need for sustained investments in reintegration, basic services and protection so that returns can be safe, dignified and durable.

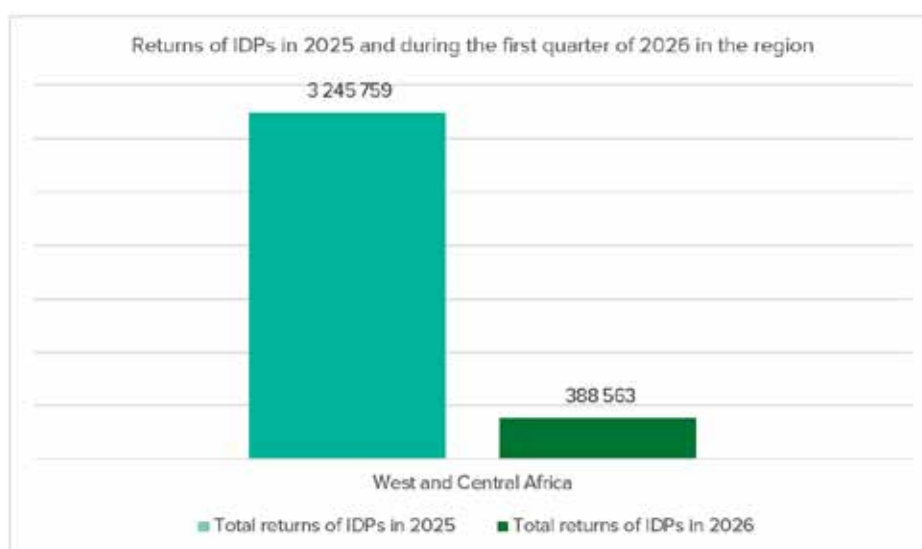


Figure 8 | Returns of IDPs in West and Central Africa

Resettlement remained a viable yet increasingly limited solution for refugees in the region

During the first four months of 2026, 382 refugees departed from countries across the region for resettlement and complementary pathways in 13 countries, representing a decrease of 49 per cent compared to 745 departures during the same period in 2025.

Overall, in 2025, nearly 1,400 refugees in the region were submitted for resettlement including refugees with high protection risk. In the context of shrinking quotas, unallocated quotas played a strategic role by enabling urgent protection needs to be addressed through resettlement for a limited group of 173 refugees. In 2025, around 1,800 individuals departed to third countries. This marked a 60 per cent decrease from 4,600 departures in 2024, due to a 74 per cent reduction in the regional resettlement quota following limited quotas offered by resettlement countries.

The highest number of departures were from Cameroon, followed by Chad and Niger while nationals of the CAR comprised the largest group of people resettled.

Of the eight destination countries, France received the highest number of refugees, followed by Canada and the USA.

Departures through complementary pathways also gained momentum, with 40 refugees accessing solutions through family reunification, tertiary education scholarships or labour mobility programmes in 2025. The region strengthened complementary pathways data, improved skills mapping efforts, and expanded engagement with recruiting and academic partners.

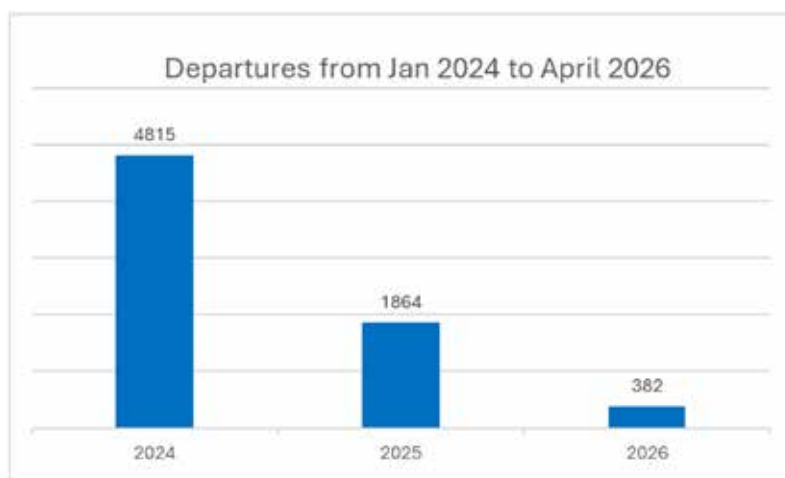
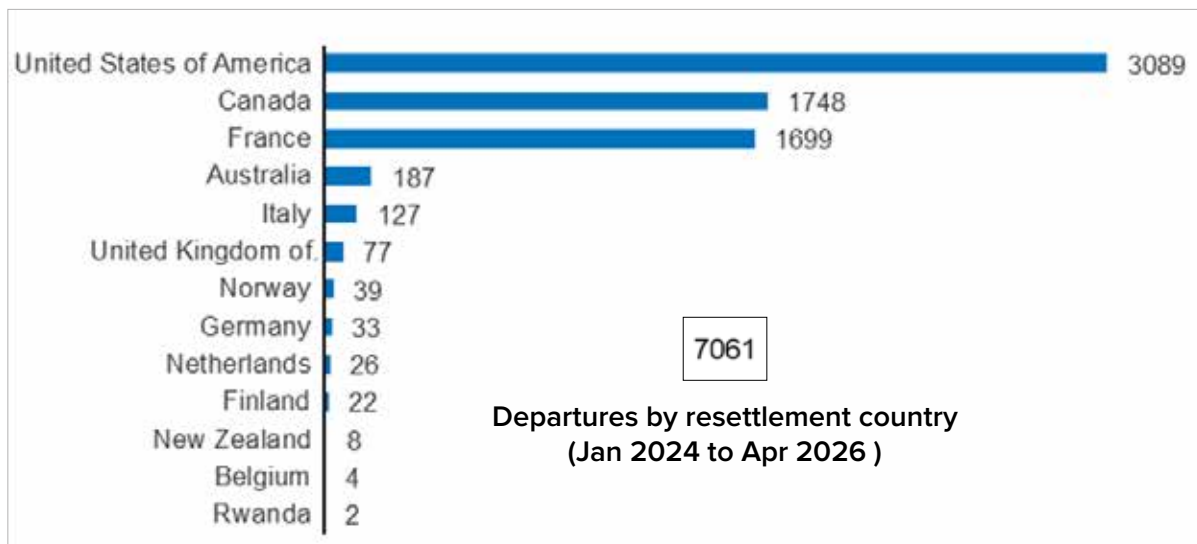


Figure 9 | Departures for resettlement and complementary pathways



In the Korsi neighborhood, which hosts Sudanese refugees on the outskirts of the town of Birao in Vakaga Prefecture in northeastern Central African Republic, Tarick Abdallah is rebuilding his life in exile—between the market, learning new skills, and the hope of a better future for his children. © UNHCR/Patrick Ariel Omonoma

Local Integration

Through UNHCR’s advocacy and technical support to governments in West and Central Africa, local solutions for refugees and stateless people recorded relative progress, both through access to permanent legal status and through inclusion in national systems.

Inclusion

Although progress has been made toward inclusion in national social protection systems across the region since 2023, no country has yet achieved full integration, and inclusion remains limited. Average coverage stands at 42 per cent despite an estimated potential of more than 70 per cent. Coverage nonetheless reached 47 per cent in Chad, 46 per cent in Côte d’Ivoire, 43 per cent in Niger and 40 per cent in Cameroon.

Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria are among the region’s more advanced local integration contexts, supported by stronger institutional frameworks and practical entry points such as social registries, identification systems, safety nets, cash transfer programmes, and health and education services. Chad and Nigeria stand out in particular, as their registries and safety net programmes already generate useful data to track inclusion, though linkages with refugee databases still need to be strengthened.

In Chad, a World Bank-supported pilot is issuing 25,000 biometric identity cards, creating a pathway for refugees’ progressive inclusion in the Unified Social Registry. In the Central African Republic, a new World Bank-funded project backed by an additional \$22 million—of which \$20 million comes from the Window for Host Communities and Refugees—is expanding social protection coverage to approximately 50,000 Sudanese refugees, or around 8,500 households, alongside host communities in eastern CAR.

Progress remains uneven and is still constrained by insecurity, limited social protection coverage and continued reliance on humanitarian assistance, particularly in Burkina Faso, the DRC and Mali. At the same time, coastal countries such as Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo are showing encouraging momentum, supported by efforts toward issuance of documentation to forcibly displaced people and partner engagement.

Going forward, stronger registries, better documentation, expanded safety nets, improved data sharing and clearer tracking by displacement status will be critical to scale inclusion and measure progress more effectively.

Access to permanent legal status

Progress on durable legal solutions was most visible in the coastal States. In line with commitments under the 2021 Abidjan Declaration, Ghana granted indefinite residence permits to nearly 500 former Ivorian refugees, while Liberia advanced the issuance of biometric documents to around 270 former refugees who have obtained residency status following the implementation of the cessation clause in June 2022. In Mali, UNHCR supported more than 300 refugees to access naturalization procedures in 2025, marking a significant advance on legal pathways to permanent status.



Democratic Republic of the Congo – Sustainable Solutions for South Sudanese Refugees. With support from UNHCR, refugees like Vicky Apuku, a widow and mother of five, can earn an income, support their families, and build greater self-reliance. © UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila



© UNOCHA/Francis Mweze



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REGIONAL TRENDS:

FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN WEST
AND CENTRAL AFRICA

JUNE 2026

This Regional Trends Summary of forced displacement in West and Central Africa presents forced displacement statistics as of April 2026. Aligned with UNHCR's Global Trends Report, it offers a regional lens on displacement dynamics, highlighting key emerging trends over the past year.