

Annual Results Report

2024

South Africa MCO

Acknowledgements

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Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

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- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

During 2024, asylum issues remain largely overlooked in many national political agendas, with South Africa's White Paper on Refugee Protection a key example of regressive reform. While advocacy efforts by UNHCR and its partners led to the deprioritization of South Africa's proposal to withdraw from the 1951 Refugee Convention and re-enter with reservations, the overall legal landscape for refugees and stateless persons remains deeply concerning, while the White Paper still proposes a regressive legal reform and its future legal development pose challenges. Similarly, Botswana proceeded with a regressive review of its Refugee Act, disregarding UNHCR's recommendations for alignment with international refugee law. In contrast, UNHCR is working closely with Madagascar on its first Refugee Act, which incorporates recommended progressive provisions.

Institutional instability across SAMCO countries - combined with documentation challenges, high unemployment, and rising living costs - further worsens the plight of displaced persons. Poverty and natural disasters such as floods further endanger communities in Madagascar, Comoros, and Lesotho, which are among the world's 23 least developed countries.

The 2024 elections in South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia created opportunities for renewed government engagement. However, political uncertainty, rising xenophobia, violence, and misinformation—especially in South Africa—continue to erode social cohesion. Meanwhile, strict encampment policies in Botswana and Namibia restrict refugees' movement, worsening food insecurity, limiting livelihoods, and increasing GBV risks.

By the end of 2024, the total number of displaced people in the countries covered by UNHCR's South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO) had increased to 189,602, reflecting an increase of 22,548 individuals from 167,054 in 2023.

Finally, mixed movements remain a challenge, with stricter border controls along the Southern route leading to a rise in irregular and unsafe migration. In the Indian Ocean region, Comoros lacks reception facilities for asylum-seekers, creating dangerous and unstable conditions for those seeking refuge while Madagascar and Seychelles carried out refoulements, prompting UNHCR to escalate advocacy efforts at the highest level.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

About 280 000 refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons in South Africa and the 8 multi-countries access international protection in an inclusive and favourable protection environment by 2024.

Indicator			
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2024)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence			
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

During 2024, UNHCR continued to provide remote technical support, data-quality monitoring and capacity-building training to governments and partners facilitating registration of asylum-seekers outside South Africa. In South Africa, UNHCR continued both registration and mandate refugee status determination only for the purpose of durable solutions. UNHCR has been pursuing more robust data-sharing with the Government of South Africa, and positive steps have been taken in this direction. Advocacy to build asylum systems continued in earnest, especially in the Indian Ocean Islands where no formal systems exist. UNHCR renewed the deployment of a senior staff member to Madagascar to advance advocacy discussions with the respective government.

In South Africa, high rates of rejections at first-instance refugee status determination and the appeal stage continued, while little progress was made with the targets agreed on in the asylum backlog project. UNHCR successfully implemented an operational shift in the backlog project, strengthening the capacity development component of the project through peer-to-peer support, resulting in a 15% increase in individual productivity rate of Refugee Appeals Authority of South Africa (RAASA) members (a yearly average of 217 decisions per Member in 2024, compared to 190 decisions per Member in 2023).

UNHCR continued its strong advocacy and joined other UN agencies to promote the inclusion of refugees in national systems, particularly health, education, prevention of and response to sexual violence and child protection systems. UNHCR also continued its leadership role within the Protection Working Group (PWG) - alongside Government and civil society organizations (CSOs) - and led the response of the PWG to many outbreaks of targeted violence against foreigners in South Africa in 2024.

Advocacy also continued around access to birth registration in South Africa to prevent statelessness. UNHCR and the Government of South Africa and Botswana actively pursued the completion of a statelessness study and initiated a similar one for Lesotho.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

Forcibly displaced and stateless persons meet their basic needs and their resilience capacities are fostered to help face the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

Indicator			
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2024)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work			
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	45.26%	100.00%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29.34%	100.00%

The transition to cash for basic needs in Botswana and Namibia was informed by market assessments. In Botswana, a market assessment was conducted in December 2023 in Dukwi settlement and surrounding areas/towns. The findings of the assessment indicated that key food commodities and other essential items were available at reasonable prices, sufficient in quantity and quality in the shops and supermarkets outside Dukwi settlement.

In June 2024, a new market price monitoring exercise was conducted to assess the current prices of food and other essential items, with the data collected used to determine the transfer value for cash assistance. To ensure beneficiaries are able to access to all essential goods for their families, an additional amount is provided in the transfer value as a top-up for transport to enable them to travel to purchase items from markets outside the settlement. Key findings of a post-distribution monitoring exercise carried out in October 2024, show for 96% of households, cash is the preferred modality of providing assistance. In addition, 88% of families mentioned that they are able to meet half or more their basic needs with the cash, with food remaining the top expenditure (98%), followed by hygiene items (80%). Of the households surveys, 88% advised that they are able to find items in the market, while 89% reported that items are of sufficient quality.

Similarly in Namibia, a market assessment was undertaken at Osire settlement, as well as in Otjiwarongo, the nearest town to Osire settlement. While all key goods were available in sufficient quantity, quality and at reasonable prices in Otjiwarongo, the Osire market lacked some essential items.

Restrictions on the right to work exist in Botswana, Namibia and the Indian Ocean Islands. Progress has been made to advocate with the new Government in Botswana, as well as the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Namibia, to allow for increased freedom of movement. In the Indian Ocean Islands, a draft Refugee Bill advanced slowly through Government with UNHCR support, which included provisions on accessing public services and economic inclusion. Social cohesion initiatives and services for the most vulnerable cases were bolstered, but targeted attacks against foreign nationals, especially in South Africa, are of grave concern. Close to 34,000 forcibly displaced people received protection services through UNHCR and partners. In South Africa, UNHCR has transformed its coordination mechanisms with CSOs, refugee-led organizations (RLOs) and the Government to adapt to the current context, including through innovative programming that targets youth and a scaled-up contingency and response plan within the UNHCR-Department of Justice (DoJ) chaired Protection Working Group. Targeted livelihood activities such as the Ndzevane land project in Eswatini, communal farming in Namibia and Lesotho, and advocacy for the registration of information businesses in South Africa fostered a more inclusive economic space for refugees and asylum-seekers. Seven RLOs were supported through funded partners, and UNHCR aggressively pursued 2025 funding opportunities throughout 2024 in an effort to

secure additional support for RLOs in the coming years.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

By the end of 2024, Forcibly displaced and stateless persons are granted opportunities to access sustainable and durable solutions facilitated by UNHCR, through local government, humanitarian development and peace actors.

Indicator			
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2024)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1	8
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	16	16
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2	1
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	183	1
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	183	0
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	347	575
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	13
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	2
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	4
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60	11
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	136	238
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	892	836
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3	0
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1	0
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	10
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6	6
4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed			
South Africa	Stateless Persons	0	0
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	32

In 2024, UNHCR made significant progress in facilitating sustainable and durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers across the nine countries covered under SAMCO through collaboration and advocacy with various government departments, UN agencies, resettlement countries, and diplomatic representations.

A total of 1,102 refugees departed for resettlement in 2024, which demonstrated UNHCR's commitment to providing safe and viable solutions for vulnerable individuals. The departure of refugees through resettlement not only alleviated the burden on local resources but also reinforced the collaboration between UNHCR and various governments. This facilitated improved management of refugee populations, ensuring that their protection needs were met while fostering a spirit of shared responsibility.

A total of 337 refugees opted for voluntarily repatriation with UNHCR's assistance that ensured safe and dignified return to their respective countries of origin. The voluntary returns of refugees contributed positively towards rebuilding their lives by enabling them to return and reintegrate and participate in the

socio-economic development of their communities.

A total of 1,087 individuals at risk of statelessness in Madagascar gained access to birth certificates, enhancing their legal standing, while 50 people were provided with legal advice and 18 officials were trained. Following extensive advocacy efforts in Namibia, the Government prioritized a mass registration programme resulting in the identification of 14,796 potentially stateless individuals, paving the way for granting of nationality. To further address the issue statelessness, UNHCR launched three studies in Botswana, Lesotho, and South Africa to inform legislative reform.

Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2024)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services			
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Despite the change in project modality and the increased efficiency of RAASA members, the asylum appeal backlog project in South Africa has not produced the desired results. Case processing outputs remain below the agreed targets set by South Africa’s Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and UNHCR, and there is still no effective adjudicative strategy. In addition, the absence of reliable data and trend analysis in the South African asylum system prevents the pursuit of an efficient and effective case processing strategy. Despite continuous engagement and advocacy against refoulement, UNHCR witnessed four separate refoulements in the Seychelles in 2024, and a group 47 Somalis, one Syrian and one Iraqi from Madagascar.

While the Republic of Mauritius allows UNHCR to register of asylum-seekers, the overall number of persons known to UNHCR increased in 2024 from 30 to 82 (of which only 12 are refugees). Despite the introduction of accelerated refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in Mauritius, the sharp increase in new arrivals increased the pressure on mandate RSD activities, which is not sustainable in the long run.

Encampment policies in Namibia and Botswana, along with detention in both Botswana and Comoros, are

of grave concern to UNHCR. The lack of legal framework in the Indian Ocean Islands leads to incidents of refoulement and complete exclusion from public services, resulting in grave protection and health concerns especially for children and other vulnerable groups. Livelihood interventions undertaken by UNHCR in 2024, while impactful, were few. The continued documentation crisis in South Africa left many undocumented asylum-seekers in limbo, unable to work or access support.

In 2024, UNHCR encountered challenges in addressing the needs of refugees through provision of resettlement as a durable solution. Although the resettlement quota for 2024 was met and surpassed, it was insufficient to cover the needs across the nine countries.

A total 337 individuals voluntarily returned to their countries of origin, against a target of 575. This shortfall was largely due to eligibility concerns where the majority of individuals who expressed interest were finally rejected. Moreover, complications with exit formalities and travel document issuance by embassies were observed as well as last minute drop out of interested individuals.

UNHCR's work on statelessness in 2024 was challenged by inconsistent legal frameworks, weak implementation, limited government capacity, data gaps, and lack of political will.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

UNHCR leveraged Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges made by UNCTs in Eswatini, South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana to bring in UN sister agencies to support efforts to bolster refugee inclusion, child protection and livelihoods. Some examples include complementary child protection programming with UNICEF in Limpopo, South Africa, joint response to influx in Eswatini, and technical livelihood advice from WFP on livelihoods in Namibia. UNHCR deepened its participation in the eight UNCTs (Mauritius and Seychelles UNCTs are merged). UNHCR ensured that forced displacement issues and UNHCR's mandate appeared in all UNCT country strategies.

UNHCR continued to deepen its engagement with CSOs and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) across the nine countries covered by SAMCO. In the Indian Ocean Islands, where refoulement and exclusion is an issue, NHRIs and CSOs have stepped in to fill crucial advocacy gaps. UNHCR also enhanced its collaboration with legal and academic actors in South Africa through its work with the judiciary under the European Union (EU)-funded backlog project. UNHCR added the Mixed Migration Center (MMC) as a partner in 2024 to its strategic effort to better understand the programme for increasing mixed movements in the Indian Ocean Islands.

UNHCR continued its support to RLOs wherever possible through financial and capacity building support. In 2024, seven RLOs in Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa were supported by UNHCR through funded partners.

UNHCR primarily works with Home Affairs/Foreign Affairs as well as line ministries. In 2024, UNHCR cultivated closer relationships with Education Departments in South Africa, Eswatini and Namibia through dedicated projects. UNHCR also formalized its relationship with South Africa's Border Management Authority (BMA) through the establishment of an office at Musina, the country's most strategic border city.

UNHCR continued to engage and collaborate with various development actors to address humanitarian needs and promote sustainable development and resilience. Key actors engaged include the United States, the EU, Germany, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Colombia, ECHO, China, Ashraf Aid, Norway, as well as Latin American embassies (MIKTA) - Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Türkiye and Australia, among others. UNHCR also engaged bilateral and multilateral development actors who provide financial and technical support including international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies such as UNICEF and WFP and local NGOs, among others. Good relations were successfully established and maintained with UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors and influencers.

UNHCR mobilized a wide variety of development actors to promote cultivation on the land allocated to

refugees in Ndzevane by the Eswatini Government through its 2019 GRF pledge. This included a large-scale awareness-raising and fundraising campaign, adopting a whole-of-society approach. Partners in this project included World Vision Eswatini, FAO, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, among others. In March 2024, a high-level donor mission was coordinated to Eswatini to assess the Ndzevane Economic Empowerment Project for refugees and host communities, involving donor country representatives, private donors and the UNCT.

In response to political violence in Mozambique following the October 2024 elections, UNHCR, alongside other UN agencies, the Government of Eswatini, development actors and partners, supported around 1,000 asylum-seekers arriving in Eswatini, providing essential relief items, including food, shelter, health interventions, and ensured access to clean water, sanitation, and medical care.

In South Africa, in February 2024, UNHCR supported the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection's mission, where she engaged with various actors, including the Minister of Home Affairs, Department of International Relations & Cooperation (DIRCO) senior officials, donors and partners, to discuss issues such as the Route-Based Approach and the Backlog Project, with the Government pledging full support to strengthening asylum systems.

UNHCR also supported a donor mission to South Africa with The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF), founded by Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi. They visited women and children's homes/shelters and partners in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

UNHCR leveraged its advocacy in Indian Ocean countries, conducting high-level engagements in Madagascar to engage respective governments on various topics, including advocacy for social assistance, refoulment accidents, psychosocial support, and a roadmap for asylum capacity development.

In Botswana, UNHCR maintained its collaboration with the Government by signing MoUs for various initiatives. Additionally, UNHCR engaged with the UNCTs and secured \$12,000 in funding from WHO for medical procedures provided by private practitioners to selected refugees. Meanwhile in Namibia, a Joint WFP/UNHCR Information Sharing Protocol which aims to enhance planning, communication with communities and advocacy through timely and predictable information-sharing, which is crucial given resource shortfalls, was launched in September 2024. It outlines the type of information to be shared including needs, assistance requirements, forecasted funding gaps, and changes in assistance.

Although the Strategic Development Mapping conducted under the UNHCR Global Dev UP Programme to evaluate development actors and their impact on refugees and forcibly displaced persons revealed impressive efforts and significant progress regarding the engagement with the development players, more engagements should be explored.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Government in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia have adopted functional and inclusive documentation procedures and systems by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	116
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	21
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	165
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	309
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	79
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	752
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	578
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7,086
01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	11,035

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Registration continued, with asylum-seekers and refugees receiving protection documentation, except in South Africa, where UNHCR's proGres database supports case management and UNHCR relies on Government registration figures. By end-2024, the nine countries hosted an estimated 181,488 forcibly displaced people, including 99,478 asylum-seekers, 76,926 refugees and 3,989 stateless people in Namibia, along with 175 other assisted individuals. 72% of forcibly displaced people are male, and 28% female, with the top countries of origin comprising the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia and Somalia. Between January and December 2024, 16,384 individuals received protection documentation, including civil documents issued by governments such as travel documents, birth, death, and marriage certificates.

The Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) in Botswana was finalized in 2024 and is awaiting signature, allowing the Government to access proGres and UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS). UNHCR continued supporting countries by delivering virtual and in-person registration training for newly appointed registration officers. The Data Quality Check (QC) Report, developed and launched in 2023, was further improved to maintain the registration database and ensure high-quality data collection. The QC Report is shared on a weekly basis with each country, enabling improved accuracy in registration processes. Additionally, remote technical support was available for proGres-based registrations.

UNHCR conducted verification exercises in Namibia, Lesotho, and Botswana, focusing on updating core registration and socioeconomic data, resolving registration issues, and identifying vulnerable individuals

requiring protection interventions. Each exercise was preceded by capacity-building training for participating staff to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Following verification, data cleaning was conducted to ensure accuracy in the UNHCR database.

In 2024, UNHCR observed an influx of asylum-seekers into Mauritius from Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), DRC, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Syria, Uganda, and Yemen. Due to the absence of a UNHCR office, Caritas and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as non-funded partners, referred new arrivals requesting international protection to UNHCR. Remote registration was conducted, and protection documents issued to mitigate refoulement risks. Additionally, monthly Note Verbales were shared with the Government of Mauritius, notifying them of registered new arrivals.

As part of the transition to cash assistance in Botswana and Namibia, UNHCR's Registration Unit supported the onboarding of beneficiaries with the financial service provider (FSP) by conducting biometric verification of eligible beneficiaries before their enrolment with the FSP.

In addition, with the introduction of Cash Assist, the Registration Unit provided support through target writing in cash assist.

UNHCR continued utilizing BIMS to support durable solutions, enrolling eligible asylum-seekers and refugees biometrically. This contributed to successful voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and complementary pathways, particularly in South Africa. Biometric verification also enhanced identity management, strengthening protection mechanisms and service delivery for forcibly displaced people in the region.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

By 2024, about 260 000 asylum-seekers can access RSD procedures in South Africa and Non SA countries that are accessible, fair, efficient, adaptable and which have integrity.

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR continued providing financial and technical support to the RAASA to address the appeal backlog and prevent future accumulation. However, the backlog project did not achieve the desired outcomes in 2024, as no effective adjudicative strategy was implemented, and case processing output remained below targets. RAASA finalized only 2,174 cases—43% of the 5,000 target — due to staffing shortages and unreliable data analysis. Recognizing these challenges, UNHCR has proposed a Surge Project for 2025 to enhance case processing, strengthen adjudication strategies, and prevent future backlogs at the appeal stage. This initiative aims to introduce additional processing capacity and improve the national asylum system's overall efficiency.

In Botswana, the Refugee Advisory Committee (RAC) resumed activities in 2024, determining the refugee status of 104 individuals, with a 56% rejection rate. However, despite UNHCR's advocacy and technical support, the Government finalized long-overdue amendments to the Refugee Act without considering UNHCR's recommendations. The revised law fails to align with international refugee standards, raising concerns about legal protections for asylum-seekers.

UNHCR reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Madagascar's asylum framework and capacity-building efforts in international protection. Following a 2023 workshop on refugee protection, specifically highlighting

the key elements of a strong and effective legal framework for asylum, Malagasy authorities were invited to Pretoria in June 2024 to further develop the draft asylum law. However, the Office for Refugees and Stateless People remain non-operational despite UNHCR's support.

In Lesotho, UNHCR submitted a model law for amending the 1983 Refugee Act, currently under review by the Ministry of Local Government. The law is under review by the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs, and Police's legal department. However, despite a rising number of asylum seekers awaiting refugee status determination (RSD), only one Inter-ministerial Committee meeting was convened in 2024. In Eswatini, no progress was made on implementing its 2023 GRF pledges, which included operationalizing the Refugee Appeal Board and finalizing regulations for the 2017 Refugee Act, though arrangements were made to appoint a permanent SD Officer.

Regarding mandate RSD, 68 individuals were referred for resettlement in 2024. Additionally, a 2023 IOIS audit resulted in key recommendations to enhance procedural standards, all of which were successfully implemented throughout 2024, formally closing the audit report.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

By 2024, National Laws, Policies and Practices related to asylum and statelessness are brought in line with international standards in all the nine countries

Core Outcome Indicators

Country	Indicator			
	Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol				
Botswana	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Lesotho	None	Progressing toward alignment	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Madagascar	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Mauritius	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Namibia	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Eswatini	None	Progressing toward alignment	Broadly aligned	Progressing toward alignment
Seychelles	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
South Africa	None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned
3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness				
Botswana	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Lesotho	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Madagascar	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Mauritius	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Namibia	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
Eswatini	None	Progressing toward alignment	Broadly aligned	Progressing toward alignment
Seychelles	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
South Africa	None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Seychelles	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
South Africa	Stateless Persons	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR provided advocacy, legal and technical support, and capacity building to advance national law and policy reforms. It submitted legal comments on South Africa's White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration, and Refugees and the Immigration Amendment Act. UNHCR also engaged with legislators in Botswana on citizenship and refugee law amendments and advocated in Eswatini against gender discriminatory citizenship legislation. In Lesotho, UNHCR drafted a model Refugees Act, for consideration by the Government.

Botswana enacted the Refugees (Recognition and Management) Act of 2024, which had been developed with a view to repealing the outdated Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act of 1967. Key provisions worth noting in the new Act include the establishment of an RSD appeals board and other provisions that give effect to the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969. UNHCR had provided legislative comments to the Government during the drafting phase of the new Act which were unfortunately not taken into consideration. Following several high-level interventions and the election of a new Government in Botswana that has declared its intention to align Government policy and legislation with human rights, a commitment was made by the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services to convene a workshop with UNHCR to consider the legislative comments and any other gaps that may be identified. The Minister further committed to closing the identified legislative gaps through the development of implementing regulations or outright amendments to the new Act if need be. It should be noted that the new Act is yet to be commenced by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services pending the operationalization of key sections prescribed by the Act such as the establishment of a new RSD committee, the appeals board and recruitment of the new position of Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR has since been requested to submit names of officials to serve on the RSD committee in an observer role and such has duly been transmitted to Government.

UNHCR also organized a High-Level Dialogue with South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs to discuss the Route-Based Approach. The discussion included the Special Envoy for the Western and Central Mediterranean situation to adapt the approach to the Southern Route. In December, with funding from the EU, UNHCR held a High-Level Conference with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to socialize member states on the Route-Based Approach under guidance from the Division of International Protection. While engagements with technical experts in governments is ongoing, several high-level engagements with ministers, deputy Ministers, permanent secretaries, and deputy permanent secretaries were organized to advocate for durable solutions, access to asylum, emergency assistance and legal reform. In 2024, UNHCR launched the judicial engagement initiative in South Africa, with the outcome document producing two resolutions, the first on UNHCR supporting the establishment of a mediation process between litigating NGOs and the Government, with the second outcome regarding the establishment of a subcommittee to support capacity enhancement initiatives.

To address the risk of statelessness and loss of nationality, UNHCR partnered with the Focus Development Association (FDA) in Madagascar to issue over 1,000 supplementary judgments, enabling individuals at risk of statelessness to register births and obtain birth certificates. In Namibia, UNHCR collaborated with the Government on a mass registration exercise, identifying 14,796 individuals who believed they were stateless. These individuals were registered for nationality determination and the issuance of identity documents. UNHCR partnered with the governments of South Africa, Lesotho, and Botswana to coordinate statelessness studies, recommending the inclusion of statelessness determination procedures, legislative amendments to reduce the risk of statelessness, and the collection of statelessness data through census campaigns. In preparation for the launch of the Global Alliance on Statelessness, UNHCR engaged key stakeholders, leading to three South African CSOs joining the alliance, along with Lesotho as a member state. Additionally, UNHCR drafted and submitted a model law on statelessness to the Pan-African Parliament, which is awaiting final endorsement to support continent-wide efforts to eradicate statelessness.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

GBV survivors have access to a holistic response and prevention plan by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,838

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR finalized its four-year GBV strategy aligning it to the Multi Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPSS) as well as the latest GBV global guidance.

In Botswana, UNHCR implemented a GBV project entitled “Safety on Tap,” led by the Women’s Forum in Dukwi refugee camp. This project, funded under the “Safe from the Start” PRM window, aimed to reduce GBV incidences and improve services for at-risk women, girls, and boys.

The Safety on Tap project has led to the conception of a poultry project by refugee women in Dukwi, who have procured 300 hundred broilers which will be sold locally in the camp and to the neighbouring villages in the host community. Women intend to re-invest profits into the project to expand to chicken layers. This promotes self-reliance and sustenance amongst refugee women.

These spaces were led by trained refugee volunteers, known as safe space mentors, and combined activities related to peer education, Mental and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) education, access to justice, and economic empowerment to foster long-term resilience. Six safe space groups (comprising 15-20 participants per group), of five female groups and one male group were established. An additional 310 adults and children benefitted from the activities of this project, which will continue to be sustainable going forward into 2025.

Four women-led RLOs in South Africa were provided with support for women’s empowerment, livelihood and GBV programs via UNHCR’s funded partners. This represents UNHCR’s continued shift to harnessing the power of women-led RLOs in the implementation of interventions, especially in South Africa and Botswana.

GBV services for survivors, as well as those at-risk, benefitted 2,307 persons in South Africa (1,720), Botswana (101), Namibia (481) and Eswatini (5). These services include intake/counselling, referrals to medical providers, facilitation of access to justice and family support. An additional 206 survivors in these countries took part in MHPSS programmes for survivors operated by funded partners, including group therapy.

Cash assistance roll-out and post-distribution monitoring in Botswana and pre roll-out planning in Namibia was implemented with a gender-specific lens.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

Children of concern under our mandate are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination and have access to child friendly procedures and services

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,926

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR finalized its four-year Child Protection Strategy aligning it to the MYMPSS as well as the 2024 Child Protection Policy.

UNHCR finalized a Best Interest Procedures (BIP) training pack which can be tailored to and deployed throughout all nine countries.

The new training package, rolled out during 2024, was utilized to provide training on BIP, resulting in greater awareness of child protection issues including identification, referral and BIP. The Best Interests Determination (BID) panel in South Africa primarily assesses children at extreme risk needing multi-functional team intervention, especially from the Department of Social Development (DSD), while the panels in Namibia and Botswana are more geared towards alternative care and durable solutions. Training was rolled out in Botswana in 2024, capacitating 23 members of the Government, partners and refugee welfare volunteers. In South Africa, UNHCR finalized an SOP with DHA and DSD on the registration of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) seeking asylum, with a view to ensuring improved access to asylum for this at-risk and heretofore chronically unregistered group. This process engaged over 20 CSOs and took three consultations to finalize, with endorsement from DHA pending at year-end.

UNHCR and UNICEF continued with a joint workplan in 2024, which included jointly funding child protection interventions in Limpopo Province (specifically, Musina, the busiest border entry point) through the same funded partner to ensure complementarity in programming. UNHCR and UNICEF also convened three Birth Registration Task Force (BRTF) meetings to ensure coordination around UN/CSO advocacy efforts and participated in one high-level event convened by OHCHR and University of Western Cape on documentation and birth registration. Joint advocacy through the BRTF was carried out through the Get Ready Birth Registration! Campaign, which was expanded to Limpopo Province and implemented with the Health and Home Affairs departments.

A total of 41 cases of children at-risk were paneled at BID panels in South Africa (25), Botswana (3) and Namibia (12). One additional case in Comoros was finalized directly by UNHCR due to the sensitivities on the case and the lack of a competent implementing or government partner.

A total of 1,832 children at heightened risk and/or their caregivers received protection services, including referrals to national structures, direct case management, counselling, etc. in Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa, while 75 children at-risk underwent a Best Interests Procedure. Information sessions on children's rights, including sensitization on national and international legal frameworks, birth registration, MHPSS and other crucial topics reached 1,109 children in Eswatini, South Africa and Botswana.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Access to protection services for refugees and asylum seekers, forcibly displaced and stateless people is facilitated by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,035

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

More than 10,000 people were reached through radio interviews with advice on legal identity. Following extensive advocacy efforts in Namibia, the Government prioritized a mass registration programme resulting in the identification of 14,796 potentially stateless individuals, paving the way for granting of nationality. To further address statelessness, UNHCR launched three studies in Botswana, Lesotho, and South Africa to inform legislative reform.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

Protection services for refugees and asylum seekers is enhanced by continuous community engagement and robust social cohesion initiatives

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	348
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	566
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	44
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	817
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	176
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	658
07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	548
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	766
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	144
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	110
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,207
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	226
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15,891

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In South Africa, UNHCR continued to co-chair the Protection Working Group (PWG) with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD).

A contingency plan was developed by UNHCR through the PWG and activated in 2024 to prevent, mitigate and respond to targeted incidents of violence against foreign nationals in the lead-up and aftermath of the May 2024 general elections. Throughout the year the contingency plan was activated three times (one in

Gauteng and twice in Limpopo) to enable the PWG MFT to assess and respond to needs on the ground and liaise with stakeholders following incidents of violence.

In South Africa, UNHCR secured funding to combat misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech (MDH) and promote pre-bunking among youth. Supported by Innovation Norway and in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE), DoJ&CD, and the Technical Advisory Group (including refugee youth), the project fosters ubuntu through a hope-based education approach. Consultations with 38 learners across three provinces helped shape advocacy strategies and educational materials set for rollout in 2025, with the goal of integration into the South African school curriculum. A workshop on pre-bunking and MDH fundamentals was held at UNHCR offices, bringing together over 40 representatives of the forcibly displaced population and 38 members of the Government, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

UNHCR responded to 15,233 helpline calls and 84,801 help.org page views were recorded in South Africa. Over 300 emails were responded to on individual case matters from working email addresses dedicated to the Indian Ocean Islands, Eswatini and Lesotho. The rollout of WhatsApp “channels” commenced in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and the Indian Ocean at year-end. These channels will replace the operation’s e-mailer system which sent 45 mass emailers on issued related to scholarships, anti-fraud, employment opportunities, awareness-raising and other topics. It is estimated that these emailers reached approximately 45,000 recipients through direct and onward forwarding. UNHCR engaged 2,649 forcibly displaced people in 2024, representing a 63% increase from 2023. Of the 2,649 individuals engaged, 1,075 were female and 95 were children. The feedback received helped to inform programming and fundraising efforts, especially on GBV, social cohesion and livelihood projects. Seven RLOs (four in South Africa, two in Botswana and one in Lesotho) who were funded by UNHCR via partners ran successful projects on GBV, livelihoods, education and women’s empowerment, with women’s representation in leadership comprising between 40% - 50%.

World Refugee Day celebrations took place in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Lesotho.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

Forcibly displaced people have access to basic needs to ensure their well-being and dignity by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	947
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	113
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,484
08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	46
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9,020

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In South Africa, recognized refugees continue to benefit from South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grants. In 2024, 15,638 refugees received such grants, 75% of whom benefitted from the Child

Support Grant. Although UNHCR has largely phased out multi-purpose cash in South Africa, some funded partners continue to distribute cash to very high-risk cases through other non-UNHCR grants (e.g. PRM, Elma Foundation). During 2024, 41 high-risk individuals in Madagascar (27) and Botswana (14) received multipurpose cash, mostly to assist families living with disabilities, chronic illness, or complex education needs. UNHCR assessed the needs of 239 cases in its Protection Case Conference, mostly extremely vulnerable families, and made onward referrals to durable solutions and local referrals as appropriate. Over 700 families were counselled and assessed during the “Protection Desk” set up at the Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia population verification exercises. UNHCR-funded partners carried out an additional 1,132 screenings and referrals for high-risk cases in South Africa (1,105) Lesotho (29), Botswana (6) and Madagascar (92).

UNHCR rolled out cash for basic needs in lieu of in-kind food assistance for 899 people (268 households) in Botswana, with 48 individuals supported with cash for transport to access health care outside Dukwi settlement. Prior to the roll-out of cash assistance in Botswana, a total of six general food distributions took place in addition to three ad-hoc distributions. In Namibia, 5,484 people (1,362 households) were onboarded for cash assistance with an FSP, with the first distribution to take place in January 2025. Six general food distributions were also held in Namibia throughout the year. UNHCR worked with the community and an FSP to ensure the roll out of cash assistance was protection-sensitive, in particular for women, children, older persons and persons living with disabilities. Post-distribution monitoring exercises were immediately conducted in Botswana and a feedback channel was implemented to ensure seamless transition from in-kind support to cash assistance. In Madagascar, through a UNHCR-funded partner, nine individuals were supported with cash for basic needs and 104 with cash for education. In Mauritius, seven families received food vouchers during periods of heightened vulnerability.

UNHCR provided support through its funded partner and mobilized support within the UNCT to assist over 800 individuals in Eswatini who arrived in the final days of 2024, mostly registered refugees and asylum-seekers who left Mozambique due to unrest following the October 2024 elections. This support included food and core relief items (CRIs) provided to the 800 new arrivals.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

Refugees and asylum seekers have access to public health services (including primary, secondary, and tertiary care; HIV and reproductive health; and mental health) by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services		
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	107

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

During 2024, UNHCR’s funded partners held a total of 87 information sessions on access to healthcare in South Africa (59), Eswatini (5), Botswana (10), Namibia and (13). Sessions included information on Know Your Rights, support services, HIV/AIDS prevention and referrals, sexual and reproductive health and specific sessions on prevention of cholera and mpox. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programming undertaken directly by funded partners benefitted 98 persons in South Africa (85) and Lesotho (13) and took place in both group and individual formats. For countries where MHPSS is not provided by funded partners, referrals to non-funded partners and national systems were made.

A total of 1,360 forcibly displaced people were supported to directly access medical support in Madagascar

(992), Lesotho (13), Botswana (90) and Eswatini (265). This access mostly pertains to support for secondary and tertiary-level interventions, including both chronic and emergency care, as well as transport services. UNHCR requested and received 13 Medical Assessment Forms (MAF) for high-risk cases identified in South Africa (6), Eswatini (3), Lesotho (2) and Madagascar (2) to further inform possible resettlement submission or local referrals. A new MAF doctor was identified and trained in Madagascar.

UNHCR reported on mpox and cholera throughout the year, especially during times of peak outbreaks. Sensitization campaigns were undertaken in all locations with a camp or transit center (Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini). UNHCR worked with the Ministry of Health in all locations to ensure that screening mechanisms for new arrivals were underway.

UNHCR heavily engaged the South African and Lesotho authorities through formal letters and two high-level exchanges at Director General and Ministerial level to address a “ban” on CTD holders entering the country for paid private medical care unavailable in Lesotho. Refugees holding CTDs often need to access South Africa for many services, including specialized healthcare.

11. Outcome Area: Education

All refugees and asylum seekers have access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education through national legal framework or complementary pathways by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	259
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	347
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	225

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In March 2024, UNHCR participated in the Times Higher Education Pan Africa Summit on universities which highlighted the partnerships and good practices UNHCR has formed with universities in South Africa.

Additionally, UNHCR supported two Mastercard missions to South Africa and Eswatini on a recruitment drive as they had pledged 25% of the slots towards forcibly displaced students. UNHCR through the DAFI scholarship provided tertiary education support to 53 students in Namibia, Eswatini and South Africa.

In November 2024, UNHCR further supported four DAFI students to attend the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) which further highlighted the good practices of the DAFI scholarship and called to action the different stakeholders to further support refugee higher education.

Additionally, in South Africa, UNHCR is in the process of signing an MOU with the Department of Higher Education and Training to enable the uptake of international scholarships by refugee students for a period of five years.

In Madagascar, UNHCR supported 347 refugees and asylum-seekers who benefitted from education programming. Additionally, 285 children were supported to enroll in primary education and 62 were supported to enroll in secondary education. UNHCR further supported 347 refugees in monetary or in-kind

support for any education-related costs.

In Botswana, UNHCR supported 259 refugees and asylum-seekers who benefitted from education programming. A total of 187 children were supported to enroll in primary education while 61 were supported to enroll in secondary education. UNHCR further supported 11 refugee students for tertiary education. 229 refugees were supported with monetary or in-kind support for any education-related costs.

In Eswatini, 225 children were supported and benefitted from education programming and 192 received monetary or in-kind support for any education related costs. UNHCR further supported 112 children to enroll in primary education and 85 were enrolled in secondary education, while six were supported with tertiary education and 12 were enrolled in language classes.

12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Access to safe Shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities is granted to refugees and asylum seekers in Botswana, Namibia and any other country with Settlement

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
12.1.1 Number of people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	761
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10,734
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,984

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, Botswana hosted a mission by the UNHCR Innovation Service to explore connecting power to the camp to improve shelter and living conditions. A WASH mission was also completed to examine some of the challenges regarding waste collection and high salinity in the water in Dukwi Refugee Camp, where there are 404 houses and 275 latrines. With the additional funds provided following the WASH mission, a total of 21 pit latrines were successfully de-sludged. In Namibia there are 327 functional latrines for 1,011 houses. Some refugees and asylum-seekers have also built their own latrines, as repairs stall. A total of 2,745 refugees and asylum-seekers in Botswana (761) and Eswatini (1,984) were assisted to access water and sanitation services through the restoration of boreholes, community-based WASH initiatives and trash collection. In Namibia, 320 refugees and asylum-seekers received assistance to access or improve their houses in the camp. To this end, 18 new houses were constructed in 2024. Sanitary materials were distributed to 2,021 women and girls of reproductive age in Eswatini (432) Namibia (1,388) and Botswana (201).

In Namibia, UNHCR hosted a mission by the Innovation Service to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by in the current context of the settlement. The settlement is connected to the electricity grid however electricity tariffs are extremely costly for refugees, which directly impacts their livelihood activities.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

Government procedures and systems to fulfill their GRF commitment on Refugees Self Reliance and Livelihood are established and functional

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions		
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	48
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	127

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Across SAMCO countries, Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion interventions (LEI) continued to play a crucial role during 2024 in promoting the self-reliance of refugees and asylum-seekers, with activities primarily implemented in Namibia, Lesotho, and Eswatini by UNHCR partners.

A total of 270 individuals in Namibia (48), Eswatini (127) and Lesotho (95) benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions in 2024. UNHCR's strategy to achieve outcomes was to utilize the land pledges made by the governments of these countries during the 2019 GRF, with the objective of accelerating livelihoods and economic inclusion for refugees and asylum-seekers by promoting access to land for agricultural and livestock activities including vegetable and mushroom farming, and rearing of rabbits to strengthen food security and improve self-reliance.

The Ndzevane project in Eswatini was one of the spotlight initiatives initialized in 2024 to operationalize the GRF land pledges. It attracted significant attention from donors, the private sector, UNCT and the Government. The project has huge potential for building self-reliance of forcibly displaced people hosted in Eswatini and plays a critical role in fostering social cohesion between refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities.

Although significant outcomes were not realized from the Ndzevane project in 2024 for refugees and asylum-seekers, as the focus was on preparatory actions such as land clearance, soil analysis, and beneficiary mobilization, it is hoped that in 2025, more tangible dividends for the refugees and asylum-seekers will be realized.

In addition to agricultural activities, other interventions were implemented to increase economic opportunities and self-reliance for refugees and asylum-seekers. These included business training to equip beneficiaries with entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, and market linkages where feasible in a number of areas including, for instance, Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) installation, mechanical and electric engineering, and production of cosmetics. Furthermore, seed capital was provided to support refugees and asylum-seekers to establish and expand their businesses.

The launch of cash assistance in Botswana and Namibia is also playing a role to enable financial inclusion. Over 4,500 households have been registered for mobile money services with financial service providers, hence offering these families the opportunity to enter, participate in, obtain exposure to and benefit from the formal financial system.

UNHCR will continue to leverage cash assistance to advance financial inclusion for refugees and asylum-seekers. This will involve advocating with governments to remove stringent Know Your Customer (KYC) restrictions, enabling refugees and asylum-seekers to open bank accounts and access credit.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

Identified candidates have the necessary information and resources to voluntarily return to their country of origin by 2024

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	748

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR successfully facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 337 individuals to their countries of origin, following interest expressed by 783 individuals. This included returns to the DRC (266), Burundi (70), and South Sudan (1). UNHCR facilitated these departures from South Africa (316), Eswatini (11), Botswana (8), Lesotho (1), and Mauritius (1).

This initiative was supported through four sensitization and pre-screening missions—one in Eswatini and three across South Africa with support provided to forcibly displaced people in the other countries under SAMCO, including assistance with verification with DHA, status cancellation, issuance of travel documents, and logistic arrangements – including in-country travel and issuance of air tickets.

The voluntary repatriation process was strengthened by continuous advocacy and follow-up with the Burundian and DRC embassies to ensure the timely issuance of travel documents for those interested in returning. Additionally, ongoing coordination with the DHA, including RAASA and the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs (SCRA), and the BMA was crucial in completing exit formalities, allowing individuals to depart smoothly.

Coordination with UNHCR offices in Burundi and the DRC remained ongoing to facilitate the safe arrival of returnees and provide reintegration support, ensuring a successful transition back into their communities. These comprehensive efforts not only met immediate humanitarian needs but also established a foundation for sustainable, long-term solutions, reinforcing the resilience and recovery of displaced populations.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

By 2024 opportunities for third country solutions are increased in SAMCO

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator				
Country	Population Type	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement				
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		500	13
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		500	5
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		100	9
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		10	17
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		10	5
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		1,000	715
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		500	18
Seychelles	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		10	0
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,675	1,000	883

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Seychelles	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR submitted a total of 1,665 refugees for resettlement to the United States (1,488), Canada (164), Germany (4), and New Zealand (9). These efforts surpassed the allocated quota of 1,550 individuals set for 2024.

These submissions were made from South Africa (883), Namibia (715), Eswatini (18), Lesotho (9), Madagascar (17), Mauritius (5), Botswana (13), and Comoros (5). Additionally, UNHCR addressed urgent and emergency cases involving 98 individuals across 31 cases. Of these, 30 cases were submitted under the urgent priority category whereas one case was submitted under emergency priority category from South Africa (19 cases, 74 individuals), Namibia (5 cases, 14 individuals), Eswatini (5 urgent cases and 1 emergency case, totaling 10 individuals) and Botswana (1 case).

In support of these initiatives, UNHCR assisted four circuit rides in Namibia, including three pre-screening rides and a cultural orientation ride in collaboration with IOM. These activities resulted in the pre-screening

of 836 refugee applicants and engaged 462 participants in cultural orientation.

In South Africa and Eswatini, UNHCR supported United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Circuit Rides, both virtual and in-person, spanning locations such as Pretoria, Cape Town, Gqeberha, and Durban. These included pre-screening sessions, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rides, cultural orientations, and interpreter identification activities, biometric setup, venue logistics, and participant briefings, showcasing UNHCR's extensive involvement in refugee resettlement efforts throughout the year.

UNHCR facilitated access to third-country solutions for 13 individuals through complementary pathways. The placements included eight scholarships through the Duolingo University Scholars program, one participant in the UNICORE project, and four individuals accepted into Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) labour mobility programme. A total of six individuals departed during 2024, with a family of four utilizing the EMPP program, while two scholars left for educational opportunities. In addition, 10 individuals departed to Canada through family reunification.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

By 2024, the legal framework in all the 9 countries in SAMCO develop effective framework for local Integration opportunities

Core Output Indicators

Indicator		
Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people		
Botswana	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Comoros	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Lesotho	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Madagascar	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Mauritius	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Eswatini	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
Seychelles	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Not at all
South Africa	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR made significant strides towards improving the legal frameworks for local integration opportunities across the nine countries under SAMCO. A total of 96 advocacy interventions were made in 2024 at various levels through partners to strengthen local integration initiatives.

In Eswatini, 17 families were successfully granted citizenship, demonstrating progress in local integration efforts. UNHCR actively engaged with the Ministry of Home Affairs to streamline the citizenship process, although further advocacy is essential to resolve lingering issues, such as the lack of feedback for applicants.

In Botswana, the Government extended an invitation for refugees to express their naturalization intentions, resulting in the integration of 32 refugees. Although the guidelines and service standards for applications remained unclear, the backing from the Ministry of Justice provided hope for the success of these refugees. Collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs remained ongoing to assess the integration of former Zimbabwean refugees, thereby reinforcing the commitment to local integration amidst economic challenges.

In Lesotho, UNHCR advocated for the naturalization of 14 families. While responses from the Ministry of Home Affairs were limited, ongoing discussions illustrated UNHCR's persistent efforts to facilitate integration opportunities.

In South Africa, UNHCR continued to advocate towards strengthening local integration opportunities through partners. As such, some 90 advocacy interventions were carried out with authorities, and civil society to strengthen their understanding of international protection standards especially in relation to local integration.

Partners received refresher training on PSEA to ensure their increased awareness. Feedback and support to develop workplans to improve their compliance rating was provided following an evaluation that was conducted on their compliance rating in December 2024.

Other Core Output Indicators

Country	Population Type	Actual (2024)
09.1.1 Number of people who received shelter and housing assistance		
Namibia	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	356

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

Engagement sessions with forcibly displaced people were coordinated year-round by UNHCR multi-functional teams, in collaboration with partners and governments. UNHCR implemented an online collection tool to record engagement since 2021 which is analyzed throughout the programme cycle and then formally summarized at year-end. The collection tool has been further refined over the past three years and encourages multi-sectoral input from forcibly displaced people in Focus Group Discussions (FGD), townhalls and individual settings. Special groups engaged this year included new arrivals, children, persons interested to relocate to Ndzevane (Eswatini), women, and RLOs, among others. UNHCR engaged 2,649 individuals in 2024, representing a 63% increase from 2023. Of these 2,649 engaged, 1,075 were female and 95 were children. This feedback helped to inform programming and fundraising efforts, especially on GBV, social cohesion and livelihood projects.

UNHCR ramped up its support to RLOs during 2024, providing support to four female-led RLOs through a funded partner in South Africa. One RLO in Lesotho also received support through the Innovation Fund, while two GBV and livelihood projects in Botswana were implemented through UNHCR's funded partner. RLO support was actively pursued by UNHCR in funding applications, resulting in two successful applications in 2024 (with two still pending at year-end). Forcibly displaced people sit on UNHCR's Advisory Board for two projects (digital inclusion and social cohesion), within the Protection Working Group (PWG) and participate formally in the operation's planning process.

One-way and two-way feedback mechanisms were significantly ramped up in 2024, resulting in greater access by forcibly displaced people to UNHCR and increased participation.

Section 3: Resources

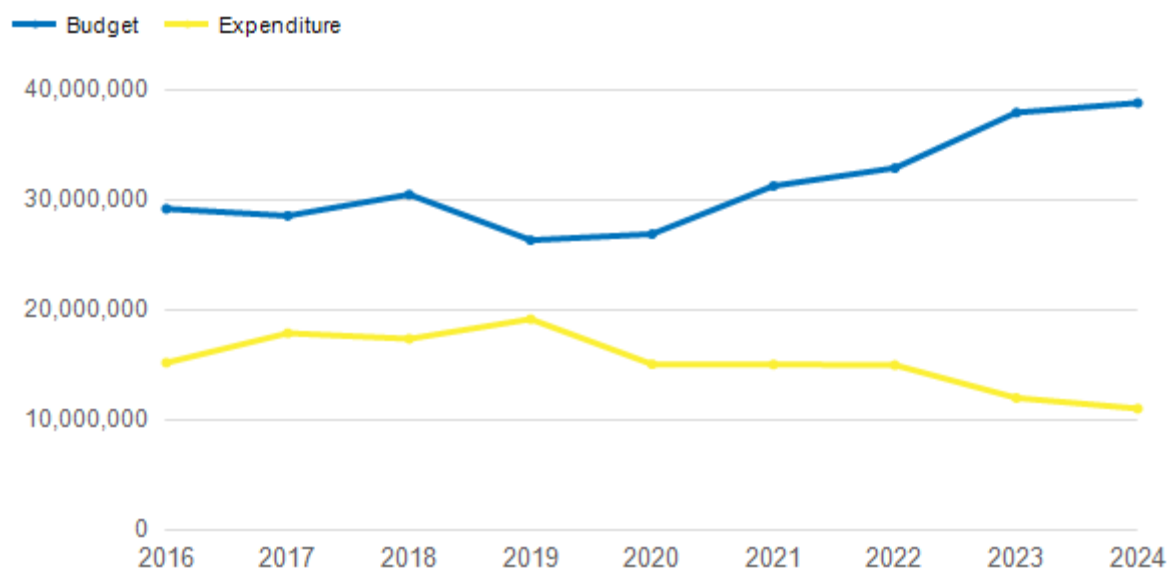
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

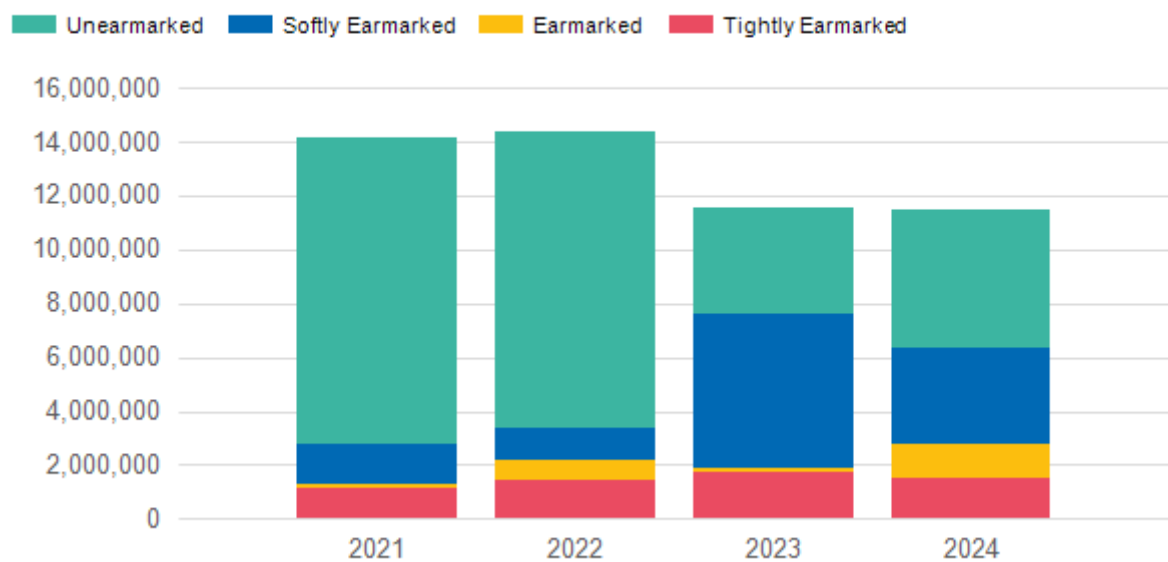
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	19,350,215	5,543,657	28.65%	5,543,657	100.00%
IA3: Empower	10,536,160	3,544,155	33.64%	3,544,155	100.00%
IA4: Solve	8,881,457	1,922,204	21.64%	1,922,204	100.00%
All Impact Areas		292,570			
Total	38,767,832	11,302,586	29.15%	11,010,016	97.41%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	2,506,910	1,206,749	48.14%	1,206,749	100.00%
OA2: Status	4,518,786	1,345,353	29.77%	1,345,353	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	2,763,479	312,536	11.31%	312,536	100.00%
OA4: GBV	1,647,088	838,016	50.88%	838,016	100.00%
OA5: Children	1,232,402	553,420	44.91%	553,420	100.00%
OA6: Justice	3,607,463	315,934	8.76%	315,934	100.00%
OA7: Community	1,270,345	200,198	15.76%	200,198	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	3,074,087	971,649	31.61%	971,649	100.00%
OA10: Health	4,658,208	821,654	17.64%	821,654	100.00%
OA11: Education	946,727	585,196	61.81%	585,196	100.00%
OA12: WASH	1,433,048	922,249	64.36%	922,249	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	2,227,831	1,014,859	45.55%	1,014,858	100.00%
OA14: Return	3,819,890	933,966	24.45%	933,966	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	2,990,446	686,687	22.96%	686,687	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	2,071,121	301,551	14.56%	301,551	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		292,570			
Total	38,767,832	11,302,586	29.15%	11,010,016	97.41%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

The 2024 budget allocation represented a fresh reduction of 10.4% which significantly impacted the delivery of protection assistance in the nine countries. UNHCR relied on food that was pre-procured to cover four months using additional funds received towards the end of 2023. As UNHCR had planned to roll-out cash assistance in the second quarter of the year, priority was given to cash assistance for food and basic needs, however provision was made to cover six months only.

Through rigorous engagement with the MFT, priority was given to life-saving activities, for instance community-based protection interventions including GBV, child protection, education, health and social

cohesion. However, significant gaps were observed throughout the implementation period as partners were unable to attract quality personnel to deliver the desired protection services, especially in the settlements. Priority was also given to food assistance to the most vulnerable cases in the Indian Ocean Islands and Lesotho.

Implementation modalities were heavily affected due to very small allocations, and the majority of the funded partners relied on other donors such as the United States PRM to continue implementation. Self-reliance interventions significantly suffered as they were not classified as lifesaving activities and also required significant funding to be able to achieve meaningful results. Minimal self-reliance interventions were supported in Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia.

UNHCR received some additional resources from several donors which helped to ease pressure. These included a multi-year funding contribution (2022-2026) from the EU for the Asylum Backlog Project and legal assistance in South Africa, HIV/AIDS funding from USAID for South Africa, Safe from Start funding for GBV in Botswana, and contributions received from Ashraf Aid and the Australian Embassy for Eswatini. UNHCR also intensified collaboration with other UN agencies in all countries, which helped improve collaboration in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. The collaboration on Children on the Move with UNICEF helped in providing the much-needed support to ensure child protection in South Africa, while the EU funding helped to ensure the availability of resources for the Asylum Backlog Project with Government and with three legal partners in South Africa. To improve efficiency, UNHCR negotiated a reduction in the number of personnel that were being funded under DHA from 26 to 10. This helped to beef up UNHCR capacity by recruiting staff with existing RSD expertise to support Government with the Asylum Backlog Project.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Key lessons learned from the Annual Strategy Implementation Review Process include the need for increased community engagement and the empowerment of (RLOs), the strengthening of advocacy in Botswana and Namibia in respect of out of camp solutions and governments to take ownership of the refugee programmes in those countries.

In addition, self-reliance and economic inclusion initiatives should be scaled up in all nine countries to ensure sustainable approach, while there should also be continued engagement with UN agencies, for example, UNICEF, on children on the move, and key stakeholders together with governments.

There is also a need for expansion of education opportunities through the DAFI Scholarship Programme, as well as continued fundraising for social cohesion related issues, especially in South Africa, to stabilize communities and reduce xenophobia.

Protection sensitive entry and admission to be continued at country borders is also required, as well as strengthening of asylum systems, prioritized for South Africa, Botswana and Eswatini.

Judicial and stakeholder engagement for objective of understanding of problems and charting the way forward is required, while

the use of mandate RSD and interventions needs to be reviewed in light of increasing risks of refoulement.

Statelessness interventions in Botswana, Namibia, Madagascar and all other countries to be prioritized, and the two Conventions on Statelessness to be ratified for relevant countries.

There is also a need to continue to encourage governments in the Indian Ocean Islands to take over registration of refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR will need to provide remote technical support to governments and partners conducting registration and documentation, where possible, with SOPs to be updated on a regular basis and data quality reports to be shared with governments and partners to rectify inconsistencies as soon as detected.

Voluntary return should be sustained and informed decisions made by forcibly displaced people in this regard.

Even though the resettlement space is shrinking, complementary pathways should be strengthened as a durable solution, especially under education, as well as humanitarian pathways.

Local integration as a durable solution should be further explored, including review of legal reforms and economic empowerment.



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