

West and Central Africa Floods

Critical Needs for Displaced and Host Communities Affected by Flooding

October 2024 - March 2025



UNHCR's delivers core relief items from the first humanitarian airlift to assist those affected by the recent flooding in Goz-Amir refugee settlement. © UNHCR/ Eugene Sibomana

KEY FIGURES



330,000 forcibly displaced people affected by floods in 2024



14 million forcibly displaced people in West and Central Africa



228,000 people targeted for immediate response



\$10.6 million urgently required

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is urgently appealing for \$10.6 million¹ to address the immediate and medium-term impacts of climate-induced flooding on forcibly displaced populations and their host communities. This funding is critical to provide life-saving support, including protection, shelter, non-food items (NFIs), and to strengthen preparedness activities between October 2024

and March 2025. In alignment with government-led response plans, UNHCR's interventions will be coordinated under the Refugee Coordination Model and integrated into the Cluster System for internally displaced people (IDPs), ensuring a comprehensive approach to both immediate relief and long-term resilience.

SITUATION UPDATE

Since the onset of the rainy season, climate-induced torrential rains and severe flooding have wreaked havoc on over 5.13 million people across five countries in West and Central Africa—an alarming 485 per cent increase from the previous year. The hardest-hit nations are Chad (1.9 million affected), Niger (1.4 million), Nigeria (1.2 million), Cameroon (365,000) and Mali (260,000). All host a large number of refugees and IDPs, who are particularly vulnerable to these climate shocks.

This climate crisis has not only exacerbated existing vulnerabilities but has also triggered new waves of displacement in regions already hosting populations uprooted by conflict and insecurity. An estimated 330,000 forcibly displaced individuals have been directly affected, particularly in flood-prone areas such as Maradi in Niger, Borno State in Nigeria, the Far North of Cameroon, Gao and Segou in Mali, and various regions of Chad. The intersection of these crises underscores the urgent need for enhanced climate resilience and humanitarian responses to safeguard the most at-risk populations.

In addition, the devastating impacts of flooding are poised to extend well beyond this year's rainy season, compounding the hardships already faced

by vulnerable communities. These nations have seen unprecedented levels of displacement due to ongoing insecurity. Since 2023, displacement has surged by 17 per cent in Niger. Chad is now home to the second-largest Sudanese refugee population since conflict erupted in Sudan in April 2023, raising the total number of refugees to nearly 1.2 million. Across West and Central Africa, 14 million people have been displaced—double the number reported in 2019.

Given the vast number of people affected, their growing humanitarian needs, and worsening weather forecasts predicting more extreme rainfall, UNHCR declared a Level 1 emergency in September 2024 for Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Mali. This emergency declaration will remain in effect for six months, until March 2025.

Despite efforts to reprioritize resources internally, significant funding gaps persist. An estimated \$10 million is urgently required to meet the immediate needs of the most affected populations and enhance flood preparedness across these five countries. Without additional support, critical needs in shelter, protection, and preparedness for forcibly displaced people and their host communities risk going unmet, leaving them even more vulnerable.

¹ Requirements have been identified within approved budgets of country operations.

CAMEROON

In October 2024, torrential rains in the Far North region, particularly in Diamaré, Logone-and-Chari, Mayo-Danay, and Mayo-Tsanaga, destroyed over 56,000 homes, flooded tens of thousands of hectares of crops, and displaced livestock, affecting 356,730 people, including 21,115 refugees. Humanitarian access is severely restricted, with blocked roads and submerged grazing lands

increasing the risk of waterborne diseases, including cholera, present further challenges to the humanitarian response. UNHCR has mobilized available resources to support affected populations through a multisectoral response, prioritizing protection, shelter, and cash assistance for refugees and host communities both inside and outside the Minawao camp.

PLANNED RESPONSE

Cameroon's planned response includes the provision of 1,500 shelters (60 per cent via cash assistance and 40 per cent in-kind) in the Mayo-Danay and Logone-and-Chari regions hosting refugees, IDPs and host communities. UNHCR will ensure that the structures are resilient to climate-related shocks.

Additionally, 2,500 households of 15,000 individuals approximately will receive NFI kits in these areas to support their lives in displacement and upon return, with a focus on sustainable and environmentally friendly materials. This initiative aims to restore the dignity and protection of these vulnerable groups. UNHCR protection efforts will include implementing activities focused on preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) and providing cash assistance to 4,000 extremely vulnerable individuals with specific needs.



Refugees use plastic sheets to shelter from the rain at a spontaneous site for new arrivals from Sudan in Adre, eastern Chad. © UNHCR/Faouzia Haidara

CHAD

Since late July 2024, catastrophic floods have ravaged Chad's 23 provinces, impacting approximately 1.9 million people, causing 341 deaths, and destroying over 218,000 houses and more than 260,000 hectares of farmland. The government activated its contingency plan on 6 August 2024 in response to this escalating crisis. The floods have severely affected 15,200 households, including 2,000 in the Lake region (home to Nigerian refugees and IDPs), 5,000 in the

south (Central African refugees), and 8,200 in the east (Sudanese refugees). This disaster comes on top of an already dire humanitarian situation, with Chad hosting more than 680,000 refugees from Sudan, some 230,000 of whom are still awaiting relocation. The climate-driven floods exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, highlighting the urgent need for increased humanitarian assistance. Critical needs include food, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as healthcare services.

PLANNED RESPONSE

◆ In the East:

To support families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the floods, UNHCR plans to construct or rehabilitate shelters for 1,600 refugee households in existing and new refugee settlements across Sila, Ouaddai, Wadi Fira, and Enedi.

◆ In the Lac Province:

UNHCR will respond to the most pressing needs for shelter, water and hygiene for those affected by the floods. To ensure a more sustainable response, UNHCR will construct 100 durable shelters for families in need, in addition to 100 transitional shelters. More than 400 households will also receive cash assistance to replace essential items that were lost in the floods. To support affected communities and prevent the outbreak of disease, UNHCR will replace destroyed or damaged water and sanitation infrastructure, and rebuild latrines and hand washing stations at community, school and health centre levels. At the individual level, to support the hygiene needs of women impacted by the disaster, UNHCR will distribute dignity kits for 200 women, and will distribute special water and sanitation kits to mothers of children receiving treatment for malnutrition to provide additional protection from water-borne illnesses.

◆ In the South:

To respond to the most critical needs of people most impacted by the flooding, UNHCR will build or rehabilitate shelters and distribute NFIs to 296 households, and will build or rehabilitate 170 latrines in refugee sites to replace those damaged or destroyed by the flooding. UNHCR will also disinfect and rehabilitate wells that have contaminated by the flood water and install submersible pumps to ensure reliable access to clean drinking water. Community-based protection efforts will also be expanded.

◆ In the Lac, Mandoul, and Mayo Kebi Est Provinces:

UNHCR's intervention in these areas will focus on protection monitoring for more than 87,000 IDPs in flood-affected sites, as well as tracking population returns to guide humanitarian planning and advocacy. UNHCR will also support site management in 56 locations through relocation, multi-sectoral needs assessments, coordination of assistance with partners, and capacity building of community structures. Additionally, UNHCR will distribute 930 NFI kits, provide 4,740 households with cash-based assistance to purchase NFIs, support 1,740 households with cash for shelter repairs, and deliver multipurpose cash assistance to more than 1,600 flood-affected households for three months.

◆ In N'Djamena:

UNHCR will conduct preparedness activities in the form of shelter materials, construction tools, and cash assistance to support the well-being of populations at high risk of being impacted by flooding. These activities will benefit more than 14,500 individuals in flood-prone areas of N'Djamena to ensure these families are more resilient and better-equipped to endure the rainy season.

MALI

On 23 August 2024, Mali declared a national disaster following unprecedented torrential rains that caused severe flooding, exacerbated by climate change. By September, the floods had resulted in 55 deaths, 112 injuries, and the displacement of 73,778 individuals, of whom 72 per cent are women and children. In Gao, 3,148 households were affected, including 1,990

displaced households, while in Mopti, six IDP sites were submerged, impacting 273 households and nearly 2,000 IDPs. UNHCR is supporting the national response by assisting with water drainage and providing essential relief items such as Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), NFI kits, tarpaulins, blankets, and mosquito nets.

PLANNED RESPONSE

In Mali, UNHCR will construct 750 transitional and climate-resilient shelters to support those affected by heavy damages in Mopti, Ségou, Bandiagara and Gao, focusing on IDPs, refugees, and host communities.

UNHCR also plans to build the capacity of 7,500 people in safer shelter reconstruction by providing shelter materials and collaborating with civil protection departments.

Additionally, 1,500 households (around 7,500 people) will receive NFI kits, either in-kind or through cash assistance. UNHCR will also engage in site planning and risk mitigation for flood-prone areas in Gao and Mopti and provide support to 10,000 people affected by damages in Mopti, Bandiagara and Gao.

NIGER

As of 7 October 2024, Nigerien authorities reported that the floods had affected a total of 1.4 million individuals, resulting in 388 fatalities. The disaster has caused significant damage to infrastructure, food supplies, and livestock, critically jeopardizing livelihoods. More than 147,000 homes and 5,600 traditional huts have been destroyed, alongside losses of 24,955 livestock. Education is disrupted, with 207 classrooms and 3,787 granaries either

destroyed or turned into shelters for displaced individuals. The economic impact is severe, with an estimated loss of 26,000 tons of food supplies. Floods have directly affected nearly 9,500 refugees and asylum-seekers, creating urgent needs for food, healthcare, and shelter. The effects could extend to an additional 10,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, increasing their vulnerability to disease and economic hardship.

PLANNED RESPONSE

As part of the flood response, UNHCR plans to conduct community consultations and assess immediate protection needs in the Tillabéri and Diffa regions.

The response will focus on identifying the most vulnerable groups and providing tailored assistance, which may include cash or in-kind support, to meet the specific needs of displaced populations. Evacuation and safety measures will be implemented for affected individuals, while community protection mechanisms will be strengthened by revitalizing protection, shelter, and infrastructure committees.

Additionally, UNHCR will procure and distribute shelter and NFI kits to affected households, including IDPs, refugees, and host communities.

NIGERIA

The humanitarian situation in Nigeria is dire, with floods affecting 33 of 36 States, impacting nearly 1.2 million individuals and displacing over 731,691 people. Maiduguri, the epicentre of the crisis, has seen over 400,000 displaced since the Alau Dam collapsed on September 9, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of those already affected by past conflicts. The Nigerian government has postponed the academic year from October 2 to October 28, as schools are being used as temporary shelters for the displaced. Ongoing severe rainfall, combined with the opening of the Lagdo Dam in Cameroon, raises the risk of further flooding, with confirmed

cholera cases in Maiduguri. Additionally, refugees from Cameroon and Nigerian returnees from Niger are arriving, while the economy remains fragile with a weak Naira (NGN) and high gas prices. In response to floods in Maiduguri, UNHCR provided relief items to 40,706 affected individuals (4,707 households), including blankets, sleeping mats, and mosquito nets. Similar distributions occurred in Yobe State, with plans for Adamawa, Bauchi, and Gombe States. Additionally, UNHCR gave NGN 100,000 to 1,454 households with partially damaged homes in Gwange 1, Maiduguri.

PLANNED RESPONSE

In Nigeria, UNHCR will provide multipurpose cash assistance to 10,000 IDP households affected by the floods in Borno State, covering both return and displacement areas.

Alongside this, CRIs will be distributed to the same 10,000 households. Additionally, UNHCR will conduct protection monitoring, focusing on collecting and analyzing information on the protection environment and the risks faced by individuals and communities. Some 10,000 individuals will also be supported in obtaining documents that were lost in the floods. This protection response will span an initial period of three months across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, addressing risks and ensuring appropriate mitigation actions.

COORDINATION

UNHCR has maintained a decades-long presence in the region and has been supporting governments in coordinating refugee responses, as well as assisting IDPs through the UN Cluster System. In Cameroon, UNHCR leads the refugee and IDP response coordination as well as the protection and shelter clusters, ensuring a multistakeholder approach to immediate protection

and long-term solutions. In Nigeria, UNHCR leads the refugee response coordination as well as protection and co-leads the shelter/NFI clusters. In the Lac region of Chad and Mali, UNHCR leads the refugee response coordination as well as the protection and shelter/NFI clusters. In Niger, UNHCR leads the refugee response coordination as well as the protection cluster.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Country	Sectors	# of people targeted for immediate response	Amount requested in \$ million
Cameroon	Protection Shelter/NFIs	19,000	1.5
Chad	Shelter/NFIs WASH Protection services Preparedness activities	114,000	4.6
Mali	Shelter/NFIs Settlement	20,000	1.5
Niger	Protection Shelter/NFIs	15,000	1.5
Nigeria	Cash Assistance NFIs Documentation Protection Risk mitigation and response	60,000	1.5
Total		228,000	10.6

The importance of flexible funding

Flexible funding support helps UNHCR to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and implement programmes to their full extent. Flexible funds enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and

effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved. UNHCR is grateful to donors who have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions.

UNHCR's Climate Resilience Fund

These floods underscore critical gaps in preparedness and early action. Without adequate support to prepare for, withstand, and recover from climate-related shocks, these communities face heightened risks of further displacement and devastation. Improving climate adaptation and resilience for those forcibly displaced is crucial to reach those most in need is crucial to averting worst-case scenarios.

Therefore, UNHCR is adopting a dual approach to addressing climate change: immediate response and climate action.

In addition to addressing urgent climate disaster response needs outlined in this document, UNHCR's newly launched [Climate Resilience Fund](#) is dedicated to enhancing adaptation and resilience among forcibly displaced people and their hosts, so that they are better prepared to withstand climate shocks, thereby minimizing lives lost and destruction.

This includes initiatives like environmental restoration, improving access to renewable energy and sustainable water systems, climate-smart agriculture, and small scale infrastructure, and community preparedness efforts to mitigate the impact of climate hazards before they escalate into disasters. UNHCR aims to raise \$100 million by the end of 2025 for these vital activities.