

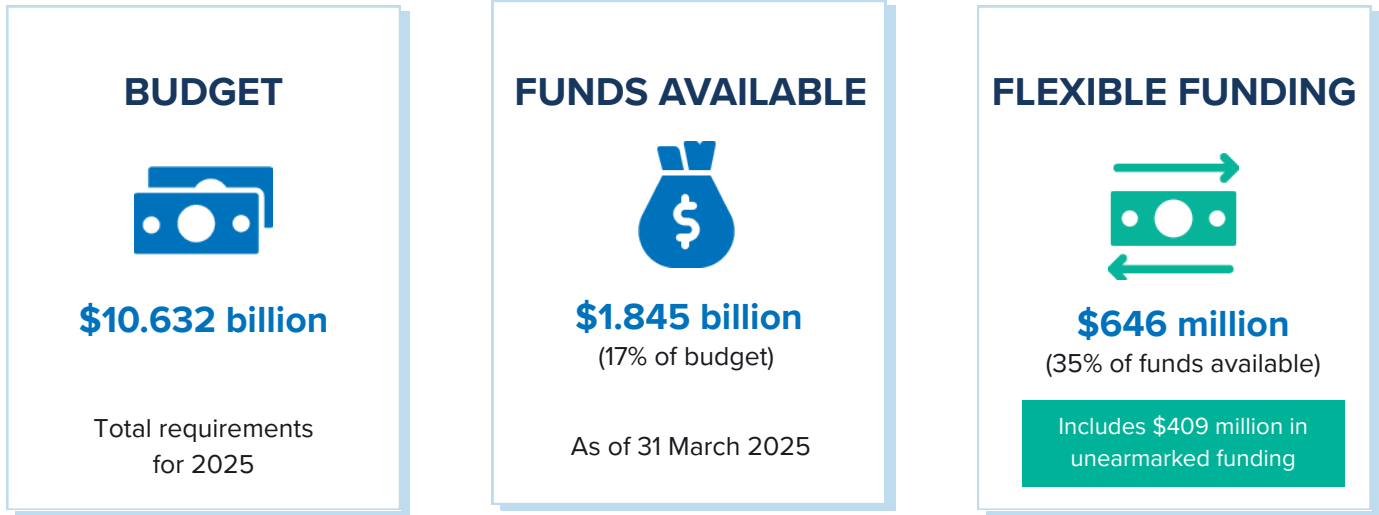
Flexible Funding

Quarterly report

January - March 2025



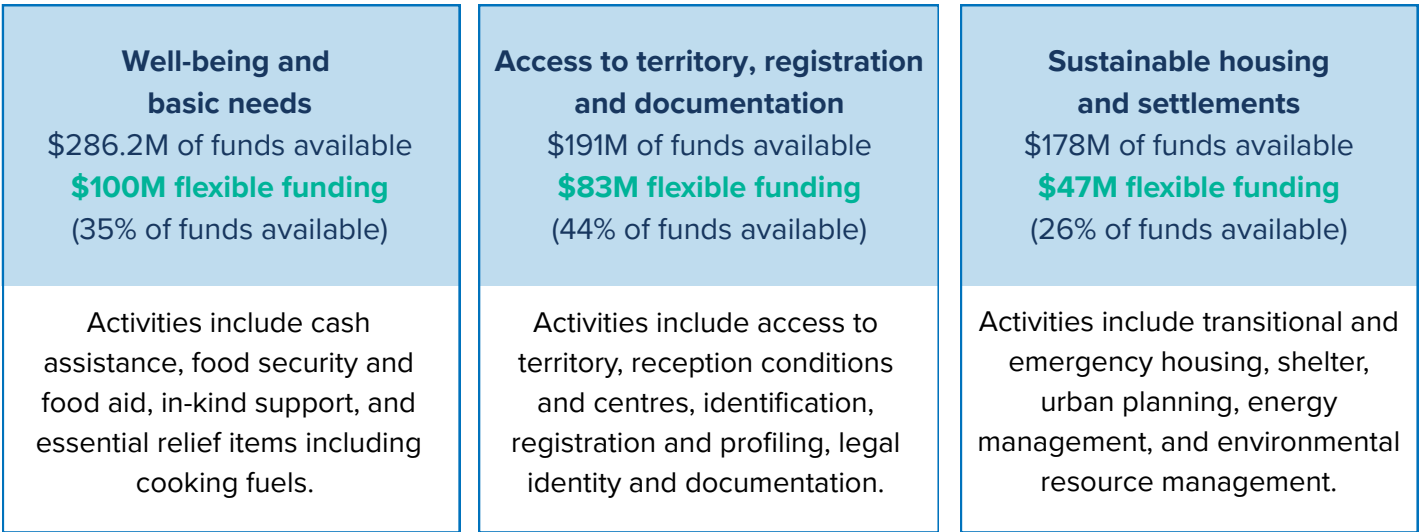
HIGHLIGHTS



Largest allocations to operations



Largest allocations to Outcome Areas



Overview

The overview of [allocations of flexible funding](#) from January to March 2025 highlights how this critical resource continues to enable UNHCR to respond swiftly, strategically, and equitably across its global operations.

Just over a third of UNHCR's available resources - \$646 million, or 35% - are flexible funds. Of total flexible funding, \$406 million is fully unearmarked, coming to 22% of available resources.

The **top ten recipient operations** of flexible funding **account for nearly 40% of the total allocated amount**. This concentration reflects both the scale and complexity of humanitarian needs in these countries. The top three Outcome Areas by funds allocated, received nearly 41% of available flexible funding.

Lebanon is the top recipient of flexible funding, with allocations having increased steadily to \$48.5 million in March, illustrative of how **flexible funding allows UNHCR to escalate its response in the face of deepening or protracted emergencies**, such as those resulting from the deterioration observed in late 2024. Other operations, including Jordan, Ethiopia, Türkiye, Uganda, Yemen, and South Sudan, also received consistent monthly allocations, allowing for needs-based responses in long-standing and underfunded crises, where predictable support is critical.

In contrast, countries such as Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo saw

significant allocations in January (\$17.6 million and \$11.6 million respectively), followed by less substantial unearmarked allocations in February or March.

This trend may reflect an increase in earmarked contributions directed to these operations as the year progressed - highlighting how **unearmarked funding often plays a catalytic role in initiating responses before earmarked funding is mobilized and absorbed**.

Large, one-time allocations to operations in Syria, Sudan, Iraq, and Kenya - particularly in February and March - highlight UNHCR's ability to pivot funding quickly and strategically in response to sudden or escalating needs. The February allocation of over \$13.5 million to Sudan, for instance, reflects renewed displacement from ongoing conflict and a surge in needs related to cross-border movements, while March's allocation of over \$11 million to Iraq supports UNHCR's efforts to strengthen legal protection and infrastructure, in line with its durable solutions agenda.

Overall, these allocation trends speak to the strategic utility of flexible funding, particularly unearmarked contributions: **enabling tailored, impartial responses based on evolving needs**, sustaining presence where other funding falls short, and ensuring no operation is left behind - whether it's in the headlines or not.

Enabling rapid emergency response

Lebanon is the top recipient of flexible funding, and UNHCR's largest operation. With a budget of \$679.6 million as of end March, it had \$98.9 million in funds available, or 15% of its needs. Of its funds available, nearly half – 49%, or \$48.5 million – was flexible funding.

Of that flexible funding, 66% or \$32 million was unearmarked funding. Lebanon is the top recipient of unearmarked funding by far, with allocations increasing each month from \$21 million in January to \$32 million in March.

These allocations to Lebanon reflect a **sustained emergency response** and evolving needs, tied for example to continued instability or spillover effects such as returns to and from Syria. The situation remains complex and fluid with many refugees having expressed the desire to return home but hesitant due to the

uncertain short-term conditions. Lebanon is a good example of how flexible funding allows for **scaling up rapidly in response to unfolding emergencies**, with UNHCR allocating 150% more flexible funding to the operation in October 2024 as the situation worsened.

The resources are being used for refugees, returning IDPs, and new arrivals from Syria, with a focus on emergency assistance, registration and documentation, and repatriation and integration with, notably, over [146,000 Syrians having crossed back from Lebanon to Syria](#) since December 2024.

Flexible funding has also assisted with key enablers such as transportation, logistics, supply chain and warehousing, and security.



People carry their luggage as they cross the Jdeidet Yabous border into Syria on foot, as the main road between the Lebanese and Syrian sides of the border has been destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in late 2024. © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri



The conflict that erupted in Yemen in 2015 has deeply impacted millions of lives, leaving many Yemenis grappling with psychological distress and in need of psychosocial support to rebuild their resilience and stability. © UNHCR/NMO

Enabling a sustained response

Beyond emergencies like Lebanon, several operations are emblematic examples of how flexible funding enables a sustained response.

Jordan, Ethiopia, Türkiye, Uganda, Yemen and South Sudan all received consistent monthly allocations. These are high-priority, **protracted crises** and some of them are among the **largest and most protracted refugee-hosting countries** in the world. In those cases, needs persist long after media attention has faded and earmarked support tends to fluctuate or decline over time.

UNHCR's allocations here support the point that flexible funding sustains responses over time in **chronically underfunded contexts**, allowing sustained and uninterrupted humanitarian responses, delivering vital protection services without delay or disruption, regardless of the status of donor engagement.

Flexible funding is a critical enabler of stability and long-term impact. Strategically, this can

also mean that operations can support governments in gradually integrating refugee response into national systems (in line with the Global Compact on Refugees) rather than only relying on short-term interventions.

Flexible funding played a vital role in 2025, enabling UNHCR to respond rapidly across Jordan, Türkiye, and Uganda.

In Jordan, nearly 19,000 families [received \\$3 million in basic needs](#) support in March alone, amid rising economic hardship. In Türkiye, over [1,700 refugees accessed legal aid](#) through Bar Associations, improving access to justice. In Uganda, following the arrival of 47,500 new refugees from the DRC, flexible funding supported [emergency health responses](#), including measles vaccinations, nutrition services, and disease surveillance for vulnerable children and mothers.

Enabling an enhanced, efficient and agile response

Ukraine is still a top recipient of flexible funding, with the **largest single allocation of softly earmarked funding**. The \$17.5 million in softly earmarked funding comes to 12% of total funds available, with the response focused on shelter, emergency response and basic needs, and registration and documentation of those in need. Allocations to Ukraine were high in January, but dipped in February and March. This shows that, even as it remains one of the operations receiving some of the highest allocations of flexible funding, UNHCR

adjusts the amounts according to, for example, the availability of other resources such as earmarked funding. This underscores the life cycle role of unearmarked funds: bridging gaps before earmarked funds arrive.

Across the Ukraine situation, including operations in particular in Moldova, Poland, Romania and Hungary, softly earmarked funding is vital in sustaining the response, allowing UNHCR to prioritise support across countries as and where needed.

Responding to airstrikes in Ukraine: UNHCR helps with quick repairs to damaged homes and support to heal mental scars



In January 2025, Nadiia was given a second chance at life. The 70-year-old was at home in Zaporizhzhia, southeastern Ukraine, with four generations of her family when everything changed in an instant: a large-scale Russian attack struck the city, devastating the neighborhood and leaving more than 50 civilians dead or injured. [Read more](#)



Congolese refugee Chancelline is settling into her new life at the Musenyi refugee site in the south of Burundi, in March 2025. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** received \$11.6 million in January, then dropped from the top 10 for February/March but is still receiving \$11.2 million.

Critical **underfunded crises** like the DRC received an early push in the absence of earmarking at the beginning of the year. With earmarked funding coming in, it still remains in the top 10 operations for allocations of unearmarked funding.

Linked to the DRC, the emergency response in **Burundi** due to the influx of Congolese refugees following the escalation of tensions due to the M23 expansion has also benefitted from injections of flexible funding.

Of the funds available to the operation, 49% or \$9 million is flexible funding. Of that flexible funding, \$5.7 million (41% of flexible funding allocations) is unearmarked.

Responding to Congolese refugees influx in Burundi

Over [70,000 refugees](#) have fled violence in the eastern DRC to Burundi. With the response only 10% funded and deeper aid cuts looming, thousands remain at risk.

Flexible funding has been vital, but far more is needed to provide life-saving shelter and protection to the most vulnerable. [Watch the video.](#)



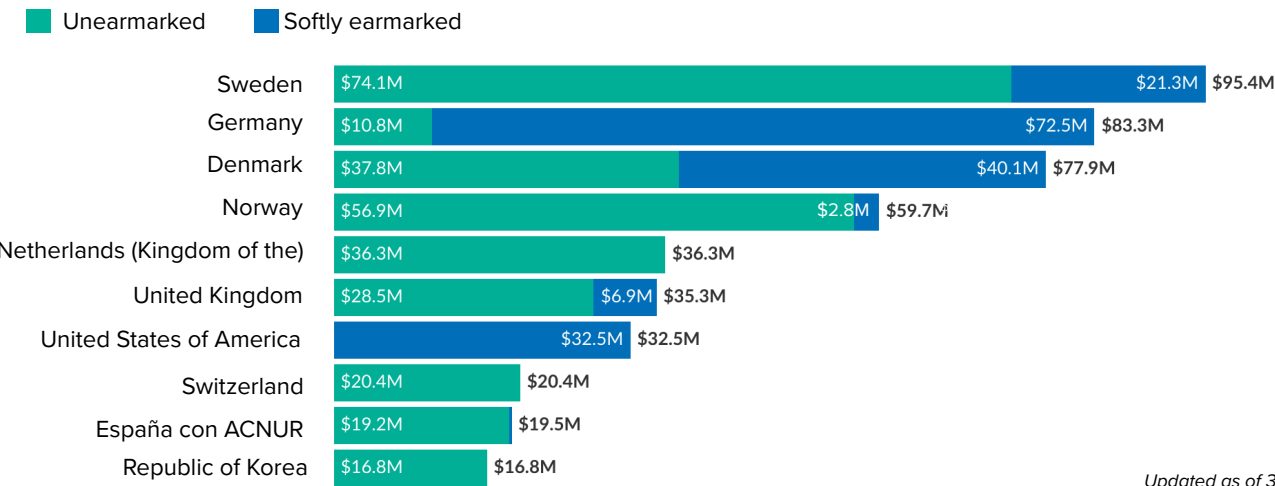
Flexible funding gives us the ability to adapt quickly

Flexible funding donors

UNHCR thanks all donors who have stepped up their support at the beginning of this year, particularly through early disbursements, flexible funding and reserve pledges. Timely and flexible funds have ensured a solid cash flow through this period of financial uncertainty, allowing us to support operations whenever and wherever the needs are greatest.

By the end of March 2025, the total amount of flexible funding received from the top 10 donors reached \$477 million - representing **74% of the total flexible funding received** (\$646 million). UNHCR appeals for continued support and solidarity from governments, the private sector and individuals to maintain its critical work for refugees, displaced and stateless people.

Top 10 donors



Updated as of 31 March 2025



Exhausted Afghan families who have returned from Pakistan. © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production