

UNHCR Cameroon Response

January – March 2025

A multi-faceted **humanitarian and protection crisis** caused by conflicts, inter-communal violence, and the effects of climate change is ongoing in Cameroon.

49,000 forcibly displaced children, including refugees, IDPs and host communities have received school kits to enhance access to quality education.

The Government has successfully enrolled **25,000 refugees** for biometric refugee identity cards, enhancing their mobility and access to essential services.

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS: 2,126,850

431,530

Refugees and Asylum seekers in Cameroon*

Cameroon : Statistiques des personnes déplacées de force (March 2025) ; Gouvernement du Cameroun avec le support du HCR. The reduction in the number of refugees is due to ongoing continuous verification and the deactivation of absent refugees.

1.037 million

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) **

*** IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA)*

658,500

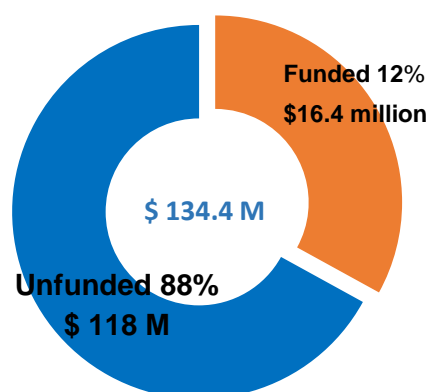
IDP returnees **

*** IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA)*

FUNDING (AS OF 31 MARCH 2024)

USD 134.4 M

requested for the Cameroon Multi Country Office (MCO)



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff: 225 Staff

145 National Staff

37 International Staff

43 Affiliated Workforce

Offices:

01 Branch Office in Yaoundé

03 Sub Offices: Bertoua, Maroua, and Douala

04 Field Offices: Bamenda, Kousseri, Batouri and Meiganga



Nearly 450,000 persons have been affected by severe floods in the Far North Cameroon. UNHCR and humanitarian partners have assisted over 20,000 with non-food items. © UNHCR/Moise Amedje.



Working with Partners

UNHCR works closely with wide range of partners including key government ministries and decentralized entities, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, the refugee community, donors, private sector and other humanitarian and development actors to respond to the most pressing needs of refugees and other displaced persons across the country.

Government partners: UNHCR collaborates with various government counterparts to ensure the protection and inclusion of people affected by multiple humanitarian crises. Key collaborators include Secretariat Technique – facilitating the Refugee Status Determination and bridge with the government entities; statistics institutions, including National Institutes of Statistics (NIS), the National Committee for Refugees (CNR) in Gabon and the *Bureau Central des recensements et des Etudes de Populations* (BUCREP) for registration, and socio-economic data on refugee households.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) and **National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)** implementing partners, including **seven INGOs**: African Humanitarian Action (AHA), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD); Développement Equité Durabilité et Innovation (DEDI), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), INTERSOS, and Plan International (Plan), and **four NNGOs**: Action Citoyenne pour le Développement Communautaire (ACDC), Centre pour la Promotion de la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CPDH), Research and Advocacy for Gender Justice (RAGJ), and Public Concern (PC).

Update on Main Achievements

The humanitarian situation in Cameroon has been deeply affected by global funding reductions, forcing humanitarian actors to reassess and reprioritize their interventions. Since January 2025, a 12.5% funding freeze on UNHCR resources has significantly undermined the organization's ability to deliver critical, life-saving assistance to refugees and forcibly displaced populations. The outlook for the coming months remains uncertain and concerning, with further constraints likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.


Despite these challenges, UNHCR remains steadfast in its commitment to providing protection, enhancing coordination, and seeking solutions for forcibly displaced persons, and people at risk of statelessness in the country. The Agency carries out its activities with the goal of achieving key objectives outlined in its Multi-Year and Multi-Partner Strategy 2022-2026 (MYMP 2022-2026). This strategic plan is aligned with the UNHCR Global Strategic Direction 2022-2026, the Cameroon 2030 National Development Plan, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Through its protection and response activities, UNHCR and its partners are reaching thousands of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and other vulnerable host populations.

A feedback workshop on the Alternatives to the Minawao Camp Survey was conducted both locally in the Far North and nationally in the capital. The workshop examined solutions to the overcrowding at Minawao Camp, which hosts over 80,000 refugees. Key resolutions included rethinking refugee management and reducing congestion at the camp. Three scenarios were proposed: (i) concentrating new arrivals and vulnerable refugees in Minawao camp; (ii) identifying villages willing to share land in exchange for investments; and (iii) facilitating the emigration of skilled workers to opportunity projects. The study also highlighted the importance of effective voluntary repatriation to Nigeria and enhancing local basic social services. Government insisted on the objective of repatriation as their major priority. Discussion is now ongoing with government and development partners to determine the way forward.

The CAR Solution Support Platform: The second session of the Steering Committee, held from 19 to 21 February 2025, in Brazzaville, allowed the signatory states of the Yaoundé Declaration of April 2022 to establish new guidelines for the year. The focus was on promoting the socio-economic inclusion of CAR refugees, supporting their dignified and sustainable return to CAR, and maintaining ongoing contact with core group members at the country level. Operationally, the resumption of convoys facilitated the voluntary

repatriation of over 800 CAR refugees from January to March 2025. Authorities are also enrolling CAR refugees to issue them biometric identity cards. The National Technical Committee continued its work by organizing a mission to assess the needs and qualifications of refugees and host communities (employment, vocational training, entrepreneurship) to better direct the socio-economic inclusion projects outlined in the national action plan.

Security incidents: UNHCR's operational areas have experienced numerous security incidents impacting humanitarian efforts and civilians. In January and February, 650 security incidents were recorded across Cameroon's Far North, Eastern side, and Northwest Southwest (NWSW) regions. The NWSW regions accounted for the highest number of incidents at 54%, followed by the Far North at 34%, and the Eastern façade at 10%. The incidents were categorized as follows: criminality (51%), terrorism (18%), armed conflict (15%), civil unrest (9%), and hazards (6%). The Far North region was primarily affected by terrorism and civil unrest, while the NWSW regions faced significant armed conflict and criminality. Of particular concern in the NWSW regions is the increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by non-states armed groups in Bamenda and Buea, posing significant risks to UN staff.

 **Protection Monitoring and Analysis:** Since January 2025, a total of 2,870 protection incidents affecting over 3,000 people have been recorded in the Far North (2,350 incidents – 53% female) and Northwest and Southwest regions (314 incidents – 67% male). The most prevalent violation in the Far North was Pillage/robbery (40%), wound/mutilation (27%), threat 6%) and extortion (5%) while the NWSW was kidnapping (40%), extortion (17%) and threats to personal security and freedom (15%), primarily by non-state armed groups (NSAGs). In response to these rights' violations, UNHCR and its partners provided response services, including protection, documentation, and legal, nutrition, health, cash, and livelihood assistance to the affected people.

UNHCR response

Protect – Effort has been made to enhance the protection of forcibly displaced persons, including:

Biometric registration and continuous verification of refugees: as of 31 March, an additional 5,720 persons have been added in the system, including newly refugee registered: 2,702 urban refugees, 1,054 from CAR and 352 from Nigeria; newborn registrations: 214 Nigeria and 1,532 CAR newborns) and reactivated cases: 65 Nigerians.

Socio-economic profiling of 32,696 IDPs in five subdivisions of the West Region revealed that over a third lack civil documentation.

Refugee profile: As of March 2025, there are 431,530 refugees and asylum-seekers in Cameroon. They originate primarily from CAR (67 %) living in Eastern regions (North, Adamawa and East regions), Nigeria (29%) mainly in the Far North and other nationalities (4%) in urban areas of Yaounde and Douala. In terms of demographic, 53% are women and girls and 53% are children. Furthermore, 32,6% are persons specific needs, including persons with legal and protection needs (57%), children at risk (23%), women at risk (9%), single parents (9%), older adults at risk (8%), persons living with disabilities (5%), unaccompanied and separated minors (5%), and those with serious medical conditions (7%). Regarding duration, 12% over 11 years, 56% 6 to 10 years, 16% 3 to 5 years and 16% less than two years. Living conditions vary, with 31% residing in camps or camp-like situations.

Documentation: The Government has successfully enrolled 25,000 refugees to receive biometric refugee identity cards. This initiative is geared at significantly enhancing refugees' freedom of movement and access to essential services, ensuring better inclusion and support within the community.

Child Protection: UNHCR continues supporting the provision of birth certificates and best interest assessment. UNHCR collaborates with *IHS Towers* to improve technology access for young people. This initiative provides youths with opportunities to engage in technology learning activities. The new learning

center is equipped with 24 computers, and the kiosk within the center includes a plasma television, printer, computers, essential products, and food items to ensure smooth operation.

Violence against women and girls (Gender-based Violence (GBV): During the first trimester, 59 new cases were reported, documented, and assisted. The most common types of violence included denial of resources (55%), psychological violence (33%), physical assaults (26%), rape (3%), and forced/early marriages (2%). Additionally, 96 previously reported cases were followed up for evaluation report finalization and action plan implementation.

In response to these incidents, 33 survivors (28 women and five girls) were referred for medical assistance, family reunification, police and gendarmerie for safety and security, and legal assistance. UNHCR provided food, shelter and non-food items to 26 survivors (23 women and three girls). In total, 12 old GBV cases were closed after achieving their case management objectives and conducting a satisfaction survey.

Furthermore, 229 learners (224 women and five girls) participated in life skills development activities such as sewing, cooking, dyeing, and baking in safe spaces for women and adolescents. Lastly, 1,742 people were educated on the causes, consequences, and risk mitigation of GBV, including 714 women, 491 men, 332 girls and 205 boys.

Education: In March, life skills workshops were held in Ngaoundéré and Douala for 216 teaching and educational support staff (including 145 women) from various ministries, with support from UNHCR. This initiative aimed to develop pedagogical approaches for integrating refugees and IDPs into new learning environments in Cameroon.

As part of the Multi-Year Resilience Programme, 49,000 forcibly displaced children, including refugees, IDPs, and host communities, have received school kits across various regions of Cameroon, enhancing their access to quality education, and fostering better learning opportunities and integration within the educational system.

Awareness Campaigns: 1,640 individuals from 746 households were sensitized on the importance of education and social cohesion.

Empower and assist – Effort has been made to enhance the well-being of refugees, including:

Food assistance through Cash: Since January, **one food** distributions have benefitting 54,590 refugees in the Minawao camp in the Far North. Additionally, **three distributions** benefitting 42,000 refugees has been conducted in the East, North, and Adamawa regions. To combat food insecurity, data collected from 547 households in Eastern Cameroon revealed that 31% have one meal per day, 45% two meals per day, and 24% three meals per day. Given the high number of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases (45) recorded and the difficulties some older people face in having one meal per day, it is essential to continue raising awareness among leaders to adopt concrete measures to fight food insecurity.

Non-food Items assistance: Since January, 656 households comprising 4,231 flood-affected people have been assisted with NFI kits in Kousséri, Far North Cameroon.

Water and Sanitation: Water supply for refugees in Minawao camp has reached 18.5 liters per person per day, an increase of 2.5 l/p/d. This improvement is due to continuous production at the Louggère and Cameroon water stations.

Healthy environment: Over 700 fruit and forest plants were distributed to 250 households (HHs) in the refugee camp and IDP sites in the Far North Cameroon.

Since January, 77,540 kg of ecological briquettes have produced by 2,990 households in the Minawao camp.

Awareness and sensitization: 1,342 individuals were sensitized on plant protection, dissemination, and use of alternative energies. A meeting was held with the community living around the green space to establish and organize a green space management committee.

Healthcare: To date, 95,000 (21%) refugees in Cameroon are enrolled in the national health insurance programme, sensitization efforts are ongoing for refugee enrolment. Refugee enrolled benefit from free or subsidized healthcare coverage for diseases like Malaria, TB, HIV and maternal health care.

According to the UNHCR Integrated Refugees Health Information System, as of 15 March, UNHCR and partners supported access to healthcare for 6,143 refugees (3,697 female and 3,071 male) and 625 host community members. Of these, 5,752 were new consultations. The most common diseases observed were upper respiratory tract infections, gastric issues, urinary tract infections, lower respiratory tract infections, skin diseases, and malaria. Additionally, anti-retroviral therapy has been provided to 770 refugee patients, with 7% of these patients being under 20 years of age.

Cash for protection reached 23,202 beneficiaries – IDPs, refugees and host populations-, including, cash to mitigate protection risk (37%), NFIs (43%), and shelter (20%). Beneficiaries also included 246 people with specific needs in urban areas.

Providing durable - Effort has been made to provide lasting solutions for refugees, including:

Voluntary repatriation of CAR refugees is continuing. Since January, UNHCR has facilitated the safe and dignified return of 1,021 CAR refugees to their country of origin. 3,316 Central Africans and 6,400 Nigerians refugees have confirmed their intention to voluntary return to their country of origin.

Resettlement: 139 refugees (males 64, female 75) have been submitted out of the 500 individual refugees to be proposed to France and Canada in 2025. Of the submitted, 77% refugees were from CAR, 20% Nigeria and 3% from other countries. A Canadian Resettlement selection mission held in Cameroon from March 2025 interviewed 157 refugees.

Departures: A total of 165 refugees (73 males and 92 females) departed to the USA and Canada. This group included 134 refugees from the Central African Republic, 25 from Nigeria, and six from other countries. Approximately 50% of the departed refugees were children.

Complementary Pathways: 33 refugee students were screened and counselled for scholarship opportunities in Belgium, with three final candidates set to benefit from the opportunity. Additionally, 26 refugees have been proposed to the Italian government for truck driving jobs, with 15 successful candidates to be offered these job opportunities.

Socio-economic inclusion of refugees:

- **First agricultural yield on land provided by the Government:** The evaluation of dry-season sorghum (Muskwari) cultivation by Nigerian refugees and the Cooperative in the Far North on 151 hectares provided by the Cameroonian Government showed that households of 200 cooperatives (COOP-CA) TINARE and 120 refugee households (about 600 individuals) exploited 110 hectares, yielding 228.8 tonnes of sorghum (2.1 tonnes per hectare). Each refugee household produced an average of 1,040 kg on 0.5 hectares.
- **Enhancing the socio-economic inclusion** in Cameroon: In preparation for the Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and the Ministry of Basic Education, UNHCR Representative met with the Minister to reinforce refugee children inclusion in the Cameroonian education system.

Strengthened Coordination

UNHCR continues to lead both Clusters - the Protection and Shelter/NFIs - ensuring coordinated efforts in providing essential services. The Protection monthly coordination meetings are respectively held with 68 Protection Clusters partners to streamline activities and address emerging challenges. In response to the global funding crisis, the Protection Cluster has reprioritized its focus, concentrating on the strategic objectives of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), specifically objectives 1 and 2, which emphasize life-saving assistance and protection. This strategic shift aims to maximize the impact of available resources by prioritizing critical interventions. The Cluster has revised its operational plans to align with these priorities,

ensuring that the most vulnerable populations receive the necessary support and protection. Through the coordinated efforts of 18 Shelter Cluster partners—including 12 local organizations—23,495 individuals received Non-Food Item (NFI) assistance and accessed adequate shelter solutions across emergency, transitional, and durable phases.

Challenges and Gaps

Funding Shortfalls: Insufficient funding is limiting UNHCR and humanitarian assistance, resulting in inadequate support for:

- **Protection Monitoring:** Without sufficient resources, forcibly displaced people and host communities are increasingly vulnerable to protection risks, security threats, and human rights violations. This destabilizes communities, disrupts local economies, heightens social tensions, and undermines humanitarian efforts.
- **Registration and Documentation:** Budget constraints hinder effective registration and verification missions, negatively impacting the protection and socio-economic inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country.
- **Civil Documentation:** Over 100,000 refugees will lack access to essential civil documentation (birth, marriage, death, disability certificates), and 200,000 adult refugees will be without government-issued biometric refugee cards. This lack of documentation hampers their protection and access to services and rights, including employment, education, movement, health, banking, and finance.
- **Solutions:** The voluntary repatriation of over 10,000 refugees will be halted.
- **Child Protection and GBV:** Limited budgets have forced UNHCR to deprioritize certain activities, leaving women and girls to rely on harmful coping mechanisms for survival. Additionally, the absence of personnel for listening, guidance, and emergency interventions may increase protection risks for children and survivors of violence.
- **Food assistance:** over 70% of the refugee population remains without regular assistance and struggles to meet their basic needs.

Financial Information

The total recorded contributions for the Cameroon MCO amount to \$16,4 million. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed directly to this operation, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

UNHCR Cameroon says thanks to the Government of Cameroon and other donors, including Canada | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Japan for UNHCR | Netherlands | Norway | Spain for UNHCR | Sweden | Switzerland | UN CERF | UNAIDS | UN Joint SDG Fund | United States of America.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly restricted and regional funds in 2025: Norway 2.8 million

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2025: Sweden 74.1 million | Norway 56.9 million | Denmark 37.8 million | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) 36.3 million | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 28.5 million | Switzerland 20.4 million | Republic of Korea 16.8 million | Australia 14.3 million | Ireland 13.6 million | Germany 10.8 million | Belgium 10.7 million

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