

Multi Country Office **SENEGAL**

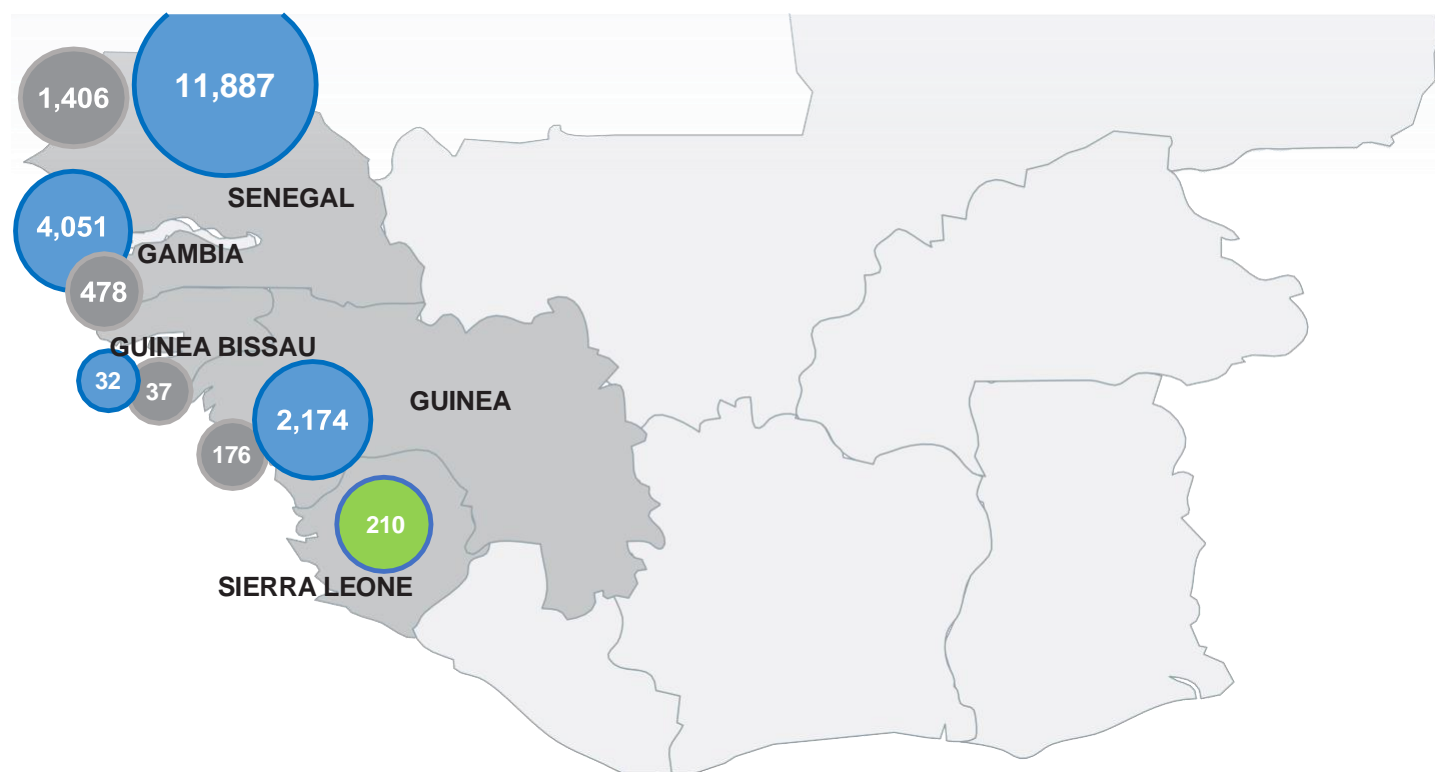
OPERATIONAL UPDATE



Quarterly | January-March 2025






Key figures on population displacement

STATISTICS / MAP



	20,451 Forcibly displaced people		20,241 Refugees and asylum-seekers		210 Others
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Key achievements

	143 refugees were registered		12 Households received cash assistance		30 Refugees have post-grad opportunities information
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Jeanne Françoise Dam, President of the Association of Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Women in Senegal (AFREDAS), and member Sophie Lokuly Ikae showcase products from their organic soap and cosmetics workshop at the Green Village Foundation (GVF), a UNHCR partner, in Dakar, Senegal. ©UNHCR/Edwina Mapenzi Ayuko Ochieng

Operational Context

UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Senegal covers six countries: Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. As of 31 March 2025, a total of 20,451 forcibly displaced and stateless people were registered across these countries, including 20,241 refugees and asylum-seekers—mostly from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Mauritania.

Despite severe funding constraints, UNHCR provided protection services and assistance to displaced populations, while supporting national authorities in strengthening their responses to forced displacement and statelessness through capacity-building and advocacy. Local integration remains the primary durable solution in the region, though naturalization processes are progressing slowly in most countries.

UNHCR and its partners are also implementing a route-based approach to ensure that people involved in mixed movements have access to accurate information, protection services, and safe alternatives—including improved livelihoods—before risking dangerous journeys across deserts

or seas. This approach addresses protection needs and promotes sustainable solutions for people on the move.

Main achievements in sectors

PROTECTION

Mixed Movement:

In January 2025, a joint mission led by Senegal's National Committee for Refugees (CNRRPD), the Interministerial Committee against Irregular Migration (CILMI), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Rosso, a rural town in the north of Senegal, to assess protection services, data gaps, and local capacities related to mixed movements. Meetings with local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and focus groups with returning migrants and refugees, resulted in the development of a tailored action plan to support people on the move—marking a first step in operationalizing the route-based approach.

Registration and Documentation

In The Gambia, UNHCR's government partner, the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR) conducted a five-day intensive exercise in March, to renew, replace and issue refugee identity cards (IDs). The exercise took place in the Foni settlement of the West-Coast Division, covering the communities of Bwiam, Sibanor, Bullock, and Kuloro Village. A total of 222 Refugee ID cards were issued.

In Guinea, the National Commission for the Integration and Monitoring of Refugees (CNISR) carried out a preliminary assessment of the situation of Malian and Burkinabe populations forcibly displaced following attacks and the destruction of their villages by terrorist groups in mid-February. The Commission estimated that over that an 10,000 people from Mali and Burkina Faso have been displaced and are now scattered across remote and landlocked villages. The Commission also identified and registered 775 people, including 475 Burkinabés and 300 Malians. Focal points identified additional 300 asylum-seekers, including 200 Burkinabés in another locality.

It was also important through this mission to distinguish between economic migrants whose presence is seasonal often attributed to traditional

gold panning and displaced people fleeing terrorist attacks in their villages. CNISR intend through this identification and assistance of UNHCR to assist these vulnerable groups to obtain identification documents to protect them from the risk of arrest and refoulement as well as access basic needs including food and non-food items.

In Senegal, 174 asylum-seekers cases were heard before the National Eligibility Commission (CNE). Depending on the outcome of the cases - granted or denied refugee status - GVF referred them to the subsequent phase. This included referring 75 rejected asylum seekers to legal aid for assistance in the appeal process.

Solution: local integration:

In Senegal, UNHCR and its partner Green Village Foundation (GVF) compiled 82 files for 530 refugees targeted for naturalization in 2025.

STATELESSNESS PREVENTION

In February 2025, the Gambian Commission for Refugees presented a report to the National Assembly's Select Committee, urging reforms to address statelessness risks in Ghana Town including gaps in nationality laws disproportionately affecting marginalized communities, perpetuating exclusion from education, healthcare, and property rights and a call to domesticate the 1954/1961 Statelessness Conventions to align national laws with international standards. GCR pledges to engage the Interior Ministry in its pursuits.

In Senegal, GVF further identified 459 refugee children who are at risk of statelessness in Senegal. These children are set to be registered in the civil registers through special mobile court sessions throughout the year, to issue birth certificates to them.

EDUCATION

Green Village Foundation played an instrumental role in assisting two refugees to obtain State-issued birth certificates allowing them to successfully register for their upcoming Baccalaureate exams. MCO Senegal partnered with Africa Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS-Senegal) in awarding post-graduate scholarships to refugees. This scholarship programme aims to provide young refugee graduates (Bachelor's level) with

access to Master's and Doctoral programs in strategic fields like Data Science and Computer Security. Covering all tuition, accommodation and support costs for internships and research, it offers a unique opportunity to promote refugee inclusion and empowerment through education.

The Gambia Food and Nutrition Agency (GAFNA), The Gambia's non-governmental partner conducted a field monitoring mission to rural Gambia in February where they facilitated a series of community meetings on refugee livelihood activities.

Community members expressed the difference access to certified Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has made within the community especially among refugee youth who are now gainfully employed and able to support themselves financially. GAFNA has continued to fund the tuition fees for asylum-seekers in various courses including tailoring, hairdressing and English especially for Francophone refugees.

HEALTH

In Senegal, Green Village Foundation, and other partners; CARITAS, Centre Africain pour la Prévention et la Résolution des Conflits (CAPREC) and the Ministry of Health and Social Action (DLSI) provided free healthcare services to 34 forcibly displaced people.

In The Gambia, in March, GAFNA revitalized joint counselling sessions for refugees and asylum-seekers. With the assistance of UNHCR, they interviewed 20 refugees and one male asylum-seeker. Some of the issues discussed included accommodation, health and livelihood challenges. Recommendations were made to assist the most vulnerable among those interviewed. Providing critical mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to refugees and their host communities equips individuals with the tools to rebuild resilience and enhance their well-being while displaced.

Shelter/Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In the Gambia, in mid-March 2025, GAFNA received a notification lifting the suspension on a \$25,000 grant from the US Embassy in Banjul. This allows for the resumption of critical interventions that were suspended due to the US funding cuts.

Among the key activities planned are; the drilling of a solar-powered borehole in Karunor, a border community hosting a 153 refugee population, and the provision of essential construction materials to 25 refugee households aimed at improving shelter conditions.

Partnerships with development actors

MCO Senegal Registration team and Senegal's National Eligibility Commission personnel conducted an exercise to reconcile the lists of asylum requests for the years 2020 and 2021 to be under one database, proGres. This aimed to ensure all registered forcibly displaced people are accounted for and to identify discrepancies in their registration in previous years. The final goal is to consolidate data between the two entities, enabling potential proGres database sharing and developing a strategy to address the identified gaps, improve coordination and enhance protection and support for asylum seekers. So far 762 requests have been verified spanning from 2021. Partner, GVF, identified 12 refugees who are eligible for resettlement and has since referred these cases to UNHCR for further processing.

Progress on the implementation of Global Compact for Refugee pledges

Addressing statelessness in Ghana Town, The Gambia will help the country contribute to the international community's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including reducing inequalities (SDG10) and providing legal identity for all (SDG16.9). Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), the AIMS post-graduate programme enables refugees to develop valuable skills and contribute to their host communities.

Partnerships with Governments

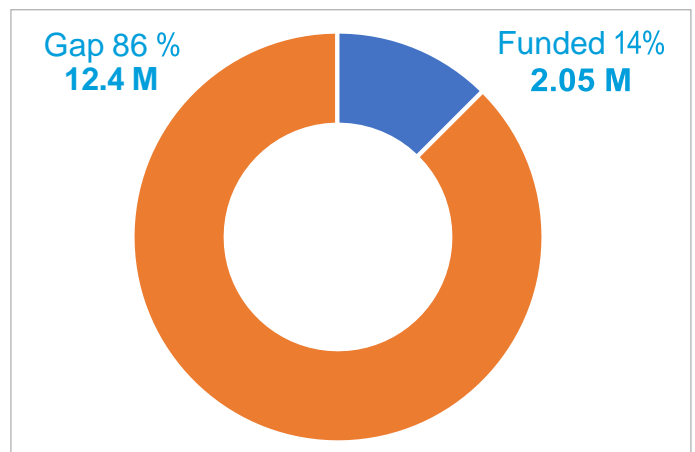
MCO Senegal continues to work on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Senegal National Gendarmerie following the fifth annual Gendarmerie Officer Training Course (CAOG) in February training about 40 officers from various African countries in International Protection and Refugee Response.

Funding cuts and efficiency measures:

Due to funding cuts the MCO Senegal carried out a budget rationalization exercise during its 2025 budget review to re-prioritize MCO activities. The reprioritization has limited MCO's capacity to monitor and support national partners and authorities in implementing key protection activities such as training of border officials. Government engagement remains a priority but is at risk of becoming severely constrained due to minimal staffing and field presence. Despite these challenges, MCO Senegal remains committed to maximizing impact through strategic partnerships, targeted interventions, and continued advocacy for sustained support.

FUNDING AS OF 31 MARCH 2025

USD 14.5 million Required by MCO Senegal in 2025



UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of its donors who have provided earmarked and flexible funding to support operations in MCO Senegal.



UNHCR thanks donors of flexible funds

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