

FLEXIBLE FUNDING REPORT

2024



Flexible funding: the strategic backbone
of UNHCR's response

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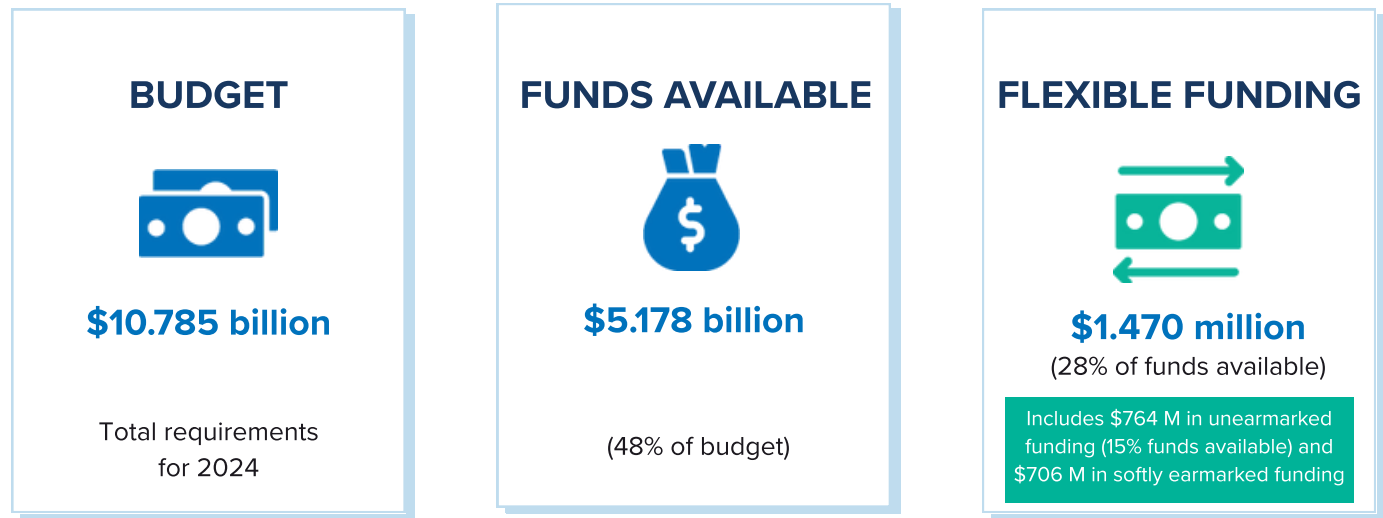
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For complete financial information on flexible funding in 2024, including tables, graphics and downloadable information, please visit the flexible funding dashboard [here](#). 



Abdulkarim Farhan, 11, a Syrian refugee in Zaatari Camp, Jordan, holds his white pigeon, Nouri. The bird, a gift from his father, is especially precious to him and reminds him of joy and peace. © UNHCR/Shawkat Alharfoush

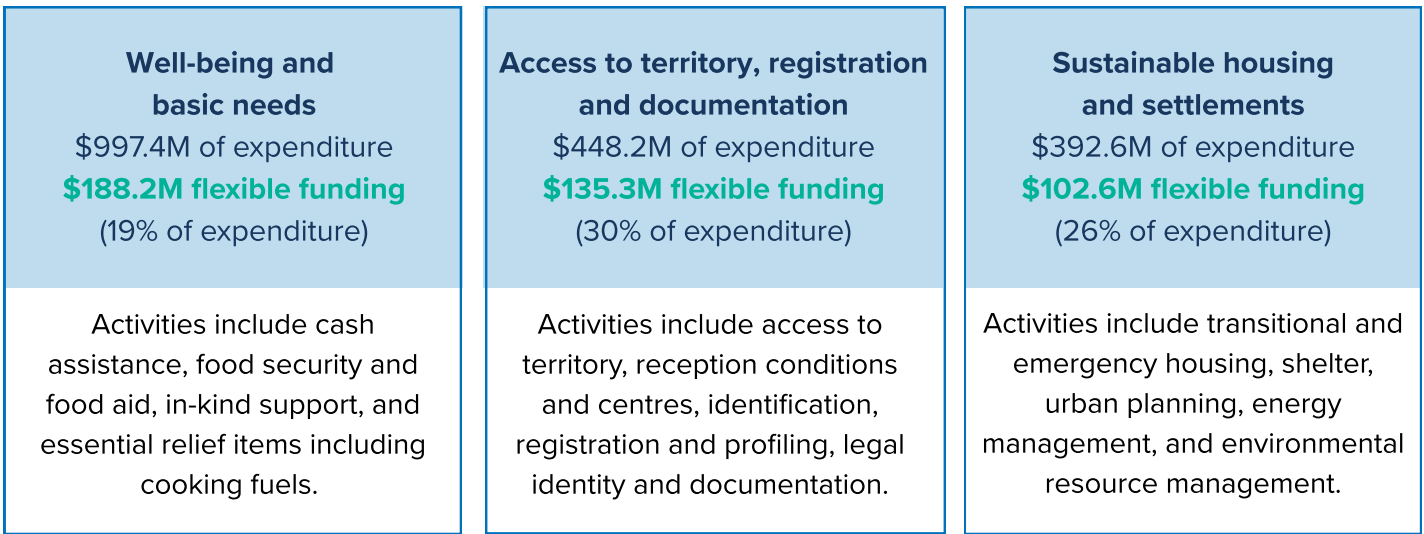
Flexible funding in 2024 - key figures



Largest allocations to UNHCR operations



Largest allocations to specific Outcome Areas



(See more details below under ‘Amounts, sources and allocations’, as well as graphics and complete financial tables [here](#)).

Overview

2024 was **a year of extremes** for forcibly displaced and stateless people, with new or protracted crises across the world, on all continents, leaving deep gaps in life-saving response and protection activities. It was also one of financial extremes for UNHCR as it worked to protect people and mitigate the effects of new or enduring conflicts and record displacement. It saw the Office end the year with a **budget** of \$10.785 billion, its **highest in the last 10 years**, and also for the first time that budget was less than 50% funded, leaving significant gaps in the planned response.

Amid this shortfall, **UNHCR received \$1.470 billion in flexible funding** – funding that was unearmarked or softly earmarked – coming to **28% of all available funds**. But these figures only tell part of the story, which was that flexible funding was a force multiplier for UNHCR, supporting almost the entirety of its work worldwide — not just one country or programme.

The flexible nature of these funds meant they could be used to fill a temporary gap in a particular country until earmarked funding arrived, at which point the flexible funds could be reallocated elsewhere. This dynamism is key to the value of flexible funding: while each allocation of tightly earmarked funding in 2024 aimed to address a particular need, flexible funding bridged dozens, perhaps hundreds, of funding gaps around the world and kept UNHCR's operations running. Static data on flexible funding shows only a snapshot of this dynamic picture at a moment in time. The dynamism is more evident from the animated graphs on the [flexible funding dashboard](#)

showing the shifting pattern of allocations during the year.

Flexible funding meant UNHCR could make every dollar work harder and keep core protection services running everywhere, allowing earlier and smarter interventions, and making us more efficient.

Three examples in particular showcase flexible funding's value:

- It **allowed UNHCR to deliver on its core mandate**, sustaining UNHCR's protection and durable solutions work, with over 30% of funds for key Outcome Areas such as Policy and law, and Return.
- It enabled **fast, effective and emergency response in 43 crises**, including conflicts in Lebanon, Sudan and climate-driven disasters affecting forcibly displaced people across the West and the Horn of Africa.
- It **supported a global response**, helping UNHCR reach over 18 million people with protection services and over 6 million with emergency relief, and enabled the registration of 3.4 million people.

Despite this, flexibility declined for the second consecutive year. Although **unearmarked funding increased by 6%** (from \$718.5 million in 2023 to \$764 million), **softly earmarked funding dropped 26%** (\$706 million in 2024 from \$959.4 million in 2023). Moreover, the majority of multi-year contributions were increasingly tied to country-level activities. A growing dependence on just five flexible funding donors (accounting for 50% of total flexible funding received in 2024) also signals fragility.

UNHCR's ability to uphold protection standards and deliver systemic solutions depends on predictable, flexible funding.

Every dollar entrusted to UNHCR flexibly multiplies our impact – reaching the underserved, enabling rapid action, and ensuring no one is left behind.

UNHCR calls on donors to safeguard and grow flexible funding — the foundation of a principled, efficient, and effective humanitarian response.



Mariam Hassan Mahamat waits at the UNHCR registration centre with her daughters Djanatte and Asra. The three crossed the border into Chad the previous day after fleeing El Geneina, in Sudan, where many of her family members had been killed by armed groups. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Flexible funding allows UNHCR to deliver on its core mandate

Flexible funding — especially unearmarked contributions — is not just a financial tool. **It is what makes UNHCR an agile, effective, and truly global organization**, and moreover is a key enabler in allowing UNHCR to deliver on its mandate, ensuring that the rights and dignity of all displaced people are protected, regardless of geography or media visibility. Flexible funding is also the **mechanism through which UNHCR upholds equity across its operations**.

Not every crisis attracts media attention and many fall out of the spotlight over time, and not every protection challenge can be overcome through earmarked funds.

In 2024, several areas of UNHCR's work — particularly activities that underpin protection and support durable solutions — were at least 30% funded by flexible contributions.

Consider, for example, UNHCR's core protection activities such as Outcome Area 1 on ensuring refugees' **Access to territory, registration and documentation**; our work on Outcome Area 2 on **Status determination**; on Outcome Area 3 on **Policy and law**; and on Outcome Areas 14, 15 and 16 on the solutions of **Return, Integration and Resettlement**. The total funds allocated to those activities came to **\$1.039 billion** in 2024. Of those funds, \$375 million, or **36%**, **were flexible funds**, with \$182 million, or 17%, fully unearmarked funding.

This underscores the critical role of unearmarked and softly earmarked funding in mandate-driven activities, which are often underfunded through earmarked streams. Other Outcome Areas were not funded to those percentage levels, demonstrating the importance UNHCR attached to these core,

mandated activities that no other UN-mandated agency can do.

Much of UNHCR's work depends on activities under Outcome Area 1, which includes ensuring access to territory, registering people who have been forced to flee, and issuing them with documentation that establishes their legal identity. This is a prerequisite for all subsequent protection and solutions work. In 2024, this critical Outcome Area was allocated over \$430 million in total funding, 33.4% of it flexible, or over \$144 million. This made it the Outcome Area with the second largest allocation of flexible funding in absolute terms, second only to Well-being and basic needs, the biggest area of expenditure overall.

The high volume of flexible funding directed to this area is a reflection of donor trust in



A man carries a suitcase on his shoulder at Mashaa, on the Lebanon-Syria border, as he prepares to cross into Syria on 9 December 2024, the day after the overthrow of the government in the Syrian Arab Republic. © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

UNHCR's ability to allocate resources where they are most needed. It is also a reflection of UNHCR's ability to respond rapidly to new displacement crises or shifts in operational contexts. Without this flexibility, the ability to uphold basic protection standards at borders and in reception facilities would be severely constrained.

The **highest proportion of flexible funding was allocated to Outcome Area 3 on Policy and law**, which encompasses support to administrative institutions, legal frameworks, and public attitudes. In 2024, 49.6% of these activities were funded through flexible sources, reflecting the strategic importance of upholding international protection standards and reinforcing national legal systems. These areas are foundational but often less visible to donors.

High allocations also went to Outcome Area 14 on Returns, Outcome Area 15 on Resettlement, and Outcome Area 16 on Integration, which support voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration.

These Outcome Areas received 40%, 30% and 37% of their funding from flexible sources respectively. These solutions-oriented interventions were essential to achieving durable outcomes for displaced populations, yet they required sustained, adaptable financing to respond to evolving political and operational contexts.

All told, **these funds were instrumental in providing protection services to 18.4 million people in 2024**. More specifically, allocations of flexible funding were vital in registering 3.4 million people and assisting 4.6 million people to obtain a form of civil status or identity. They helped over 100 countries' national systems, where UNHCR provided capacity development support to strengthen national status determination procedures. Flexible funding helped 1.4 million people receive legal assistance. It also helped UNHCR to provide over 353,000 people with repatriation counselling, assist over 136,000 people to depart on resettlement, and support over 115,000 people to acquire a nationality, permanent residency or naturalization.

Ultimately, **the true impact of flexible funding** lies not only in the numbers but in **the dignity it restores**, the rights it protects, the choices it enables and the futures it helps to rebuild.

These examples clearly show that flexible funding is not merely a financial convenience — it is a **strategic enabler**. It allows UNHCR to invest in long-term, systemic change and to maintain operational continuity in areas that are central to its mandate but may not attract earmarked donor interest. Without this flexibility, the organization's ability to respond globally and uphold protection principles would be

significantly constrained. The result would be slower, more fragmented responses, deepening gaps in core protection services, and a growing inequity between high-profile and neglected crises. Crucial interventions — such as registration, legal aid, and durable solutions — would be delayed or deprioritized, placing displaced people at greater risk and undermining long-term stability.

Without flexible funding, UNHCR would be forced to operate reactively, not strategically — responding to funding, rather than to needs.



Wali Khan with his wife and two sons, who returned with his family from Pakistan, faced harsh conditions, including arrests and the loss of all belongings. Now in Afghanistan, his main needs are shelter, food, and clothing for his children. With UNHCR's cash assistance, he plans to buy essential items. © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

Flexible funding allows UNHCR to kickstart its emergency response, and to have greater impact with limited resources

Unearmarked funding is essential for UNHCR to plan, budget and implement activities in a timely and efficient manner, and strengthens our response capacity and global reach. Unlike earmarked funds, which are tied to specific countries, sectors, or activities, **flexible funding gives UNHCR the ability to prioritize where needs are greatest, respond immediately to emergencies, and sustain operations in forgotten or underfunded contexts.** It enables coherence — allowing us to scale up protection, solutions, and inclusion efforts even in places that are not in the headlines but where lives still hang in the balance. It supports our core infrastructure — from **72h emergency deployment capacity** to registration systems and field presence.

When an **unexpected emergency** — such as an outbreak of fighting or a natural disaster — forces people to flee from their homes, it is crucial that UNHCR has the ability to meet their needs and to ensure that no one is left behind. UNHCR needs to act with speed and agility to bring life-saving support. Funds that are

reserved or earmarked for other countries cannot be used. Funds that are earmarked for specific programmes cannot be redeployed. **Flexible funding allows UNHCR to respond and deliver assistance before an emergency appeal is launched**, increasing our global presence and enabling us to reach the most marginal and vulnerable people. For example, during the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in late 2024, flexible contributions enabled UNHCR to scale up assistance within days — ensuring cash, shelter, transportation and medical support reached those in urgent need

The use of flexible funding can even remove the need for a separate emergency appeal.

Without this flexibility, UNHCR's ability to respond rapidly would be significantly constrained, delaying critical support and increasing the human and financial cost of crises. **This agility is only possible because donors place their trust in UNHCR's ability to act strategically and responsibly with their funding.**

How did flexible funding make a difference in Lebanon

Flexible funding enabled UNHCR to respond swiftly in Lebanon following hostilities and airstrikes that displaced thousands of people in late 2024.

It allowed resources to be quickly redirected to where they were needed most — from emergency relief to critical protection services. [Watch the video.](#)



In 2024, **UNHCR managed 43 active emergency declarations** across 25 countries, including 26 new emergencies declared in 2024 and 17 ongoing crises from 2023. Among the new declarations, seven were Level 3 (L3) emergencies – the highest classification under UNHCR’s policy on emergency preparedness and response – marking an increase from four in the previous year.

These L3 emergencies included the **escalating war in Sudan** – with regional impacts extending to Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, and Uganda – as well as **large-scale displacement caused by hostilities in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic** within the broader context of the Gaza conflict.

Climate-related emergencies also surged, with nine declarations compared to two in 2023, highlighting the urgent need to address the impact of climate change on forcibly displaced populations. This included severe flooding in Afghanistan, Yemen, and across East and West Africa.

UNHCR responded with strengthened and proactive emergency preparedness, conducted risk assessments, and rapidly deployed life-saving supplies.

From delivering **lifesaving aid in new emergencies** — such as escalating hostilities in Lebanon, the overthrow of the former government of the Syrian Arab Republic, gang violence in Haiti, and widespread flooding across Africa, Asia and Latin America — to **addressing protracted crises** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen, as well as **mixed refugee and migrant movements**, UNHCR remained a steadfast presence, protecting and supporting millions of displaced people.

Nearly **6 million people were assisted with emergency relief items** from UNHCR’s global stockpiles, with \$48.5 million-worth of items delivered.

Other critical assistance included 688,000 people supplied with water in Sudan; 521,000 people provided with cash assistance in Ukraine; 360,000 people receiving relief items in Myanmar following the upsurge in fighting there; 260,000 people in West Africa issued replacement documentation lost in flooding; and 100,000 people in Lebanon assisted with medical supplies.

These interventions illustrate not only the reach of UNHCR’s emergency capacity, but the **essential role** that timely, flexible funding

plays in ensuring that no one is left behind when disaster strikes.



Newly arrived Sudanese refugees are seen in the border town of Adre, in Chad. More than 700,000 refugees fleeing the violence in Sudan have crossed into Chad since the conflict began in April 2023. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Flexible funding in action: three examples

Largest allocation of flexible funding Lebanon \$95.7M (29% of expenditure for the operation)	Second largest allocation of flexible funding Afghanistan \$68.2M (47% of expenditure for the operation)	Largest allocation of softly earmarked funding Ukraine \$58.6M (19% of expenditure for the operation)
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(See as well the ‘bar racing chart’ on the [flexible funding dashboard](#)).

Flexible funding proved vital and timely in Lebanon, which received the largest allocation of flexible funding to respond to the sharp escalation of the conflict in late 2024.

The two largest Outcome Areas – which absorbed 67% of the allocation of flexible funding– were Well-being and basic needs, and Safety and access to justice.

Following the dramatic intensification of hostilities with Israel and the displacement of nearly 900,000 people, flexible contributions increased by 156% between August and October, enabling UNHCR to sustain core

activities and rapidly scale up life-saving interventions. Over half of the flexible funding supported well-being and basic needs, including expanded cash assistance that in total reached 916,000 people and non-food items delivered to over 412,000 individuals – notably including vulnerable members of host communities. Post-distribution monitoring confirmed that cash helped reduce financial stress and improve living conditions for many, despite continued hardship.

UNHCR also assisted over 60,000 people with legal assistance such as detention monitoring

or immigration status. Persons with specific needs were disproportionately impacted by the socioeconomic crisis and the conflict. UNHCR supported vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, older refugees, and women at risk, many of whom faced income loss, escalating vulnerabilities, and heightened protection risks. As part of the emergency response, UNHCR procured additional assistive devices including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and medical beds. Emergency cash was an important element of UNHCR's support to these groups, with 8,700 households assisted with cash for protection, and 28,850 households with cash for emergencies.

The surge of flexible funding allowed UNHCR and partners to respond with agility and scale, underscoring its indispensable role in protecting lives and dignity during complex, fast-moving emergencies.

The second largest allocation of flexible funding was to Afghanistan, half of which supported returns, shelter and well-being and basic needs.

The two largest Outcome Areas – which absorbed 49% of the allocation of flexible funding – were Returns, and Sustainable housing and settlements. UNHCR assisted 54,720 Afghan refugees who were returning home, the majority from Pakistan. Returnees — 78% of whom were women and children — received cash support at Encashment Centres to cover transport and immediate needs. UNHCR also provided protection services, health care, mine risk education, and post-return monitoring to ensure returns were voluntary, safe, and

dignified. Innovative tools like the Biometric Identity Management System and Kobo-based monitoring enabled strong accountability and informed planning.

UNHCR delivered shelter support to over 39,000 people, reaching 90% of its target. This included constructing over 2,500 permanent, disaster-resilient shelters, repairing 647 homes, and distributing nearly 1,000 emergency tents in response to disasters. Shelter designs prioritized local materials, resilience, and cultural fit, and were delivered with strong community involvement. As the Shelter Cluster lead, UNHCR coordinated across agencies to ensure timely and integrated responses, despite funding and access challenges.

Through cash and in-kind support, UNHCR reached thousands of vulnerable Afghans with urgently needed assistance. Over 6,300 people received cash for immediate needs, and more than 54,000 returnees received tailored support packages to facilitate reintegration. Nearly 222,000 people received winterization aid, while livelihoods, documentation, and education assistance also helped families rebuild. Monitoring showed high satisfaction, improved living conditions, and reduced stress, highlighting the effectiveness of cash-based interventions in a challenging operational environment.

Ukraine was the beneficiary of the single largest allocation of softly earmarked funding. As part of the inter-agency response, UNHCR and partners reached 1.66 million people with multi-sector support, with cash, in-kind aid, housing, and protection critical elements of the response.

The two largest Outcome Areas – which absorbed 82% of the allocation of softly earmarked funding – were Well-being and basic needs, and Sustainable housing and shelter.

In 2024, Ukraine remained the world's largest humanitarian cash operation, with UNHCR providing one third of the national multipurpose cash response. Targeted cash assistance reached over 307,000 vulnerable people, supporting winter utility payments and basic needs such as food, health, and housing. Post-distribution monitoring confirmed that cash was the preferred modality, with significant improvements in living conditions, stress reduction, and access to medical care. In-kind support, including non-food items, complemented cash where markets were disrupted, reaching nearly 190,000 people in

high-risk areas. UNHCR also delivered emergency supplies via inter-agency convoys and bolstered energy resilience for institutions and households.

UNHCR's shelter response assisted over 137,000 people through the provision of over 70,800 emergency shelter kits and supported the repair of nearly 10,000 homes and apartments. Core housing was also delivered to 149 families. Accommodation support expanded through rental assistance and rural house repairs, reaching over 8,300 individuals. Nearly 30,000 residents in collective sites benefited from improved living conditions, services, and awareness activities. As the war's intensity continued, shelter support remained a vital line of protection for displaced populations and returnees alike.



Artem stands near his damaged home in Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine, where daily shelling has become the norm. After a recent attack destroyed much of his house, UNHCR and partner Angels of Salvation helped repair part of the roof through the 'Workshop on Wheels' initiative. "I was of course affected, but there is nothing you can do about it. Life now goes this way," he says. © Angels of Salvation/Oleksiy Gutnyk



Ahmed Humda, a farmer from Sinjar, Sudan, has found refuge in Renk, South Sudan. He fled his village as conflict engulfed the area, leaving his crops and land behind. Since the outbreak of the war in Sudan, thousands have been arriving daily in Renk, fleeing the escalating conflict. © UNHCR/Reason Moses Runyanga

Flexible funding supports a global response

Flexible funding is important to UNHCR's core mandate, before, during and after any emergency: but is also important in how it can be used quickly and efficiently across the breadth and depth of UNHCR's operational response.

Flexible funding can bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises which are often

overlooked or funding support; it can enable UNHCR to maintain support in the aftermath of a crisis, as suffering does not end when the initial emergency phase is over; and it helps provide predictable financing for operations and implementing partners while earmarked funds are being raised.

Sweden and UNHCR spotlight impact on South Sudan after a year of the Sudan conflict



As displacement from the Sudan crisis continued to strain communities in South Sudan, Sweden stepped up its support to UNHCR's response. Sweden provided additional support to help meet urgent needs on the ground. This flexible funding is crucial in enabling UNHCR to respond swiftly and effectively, delivering protection and assistance to refugees and returnees in one of the region's most challenging humanitarian crises. [Read more](#)

The **top five Outcome Areas** allocated most resources in 2024 were, in order of the amount of flexible funding allocated:

- Outcome Area 8 on Well-being and basic needs
- Outcome Area 1 on Access to territory, registration and documentation
- Outcome Area 9 on Sustainable housing and settlements
- Outcome Area 7 on Community engagement and women's empowerment
- Outcome Area 10 on Healthy lives.

Collectively, these Outcome Areas were allocated \$2.467 billion, which was 50% of 2024's expenditure. This included \$571.4 million in flexible funding, which was **43% of all flexible funding**.

That flexible funding accounted for 27% of funds allocated against these Outcome Areas. The flexible funding also included \$236.4 million in unearmarked funding.

These Outcome Areas constituted some of the largest budgets, in some of the biggest operations, and were notable for some significant successes.

For example, 5.3 million people received \$650 million in cash; 3.4 million people were individually registered (see above on flexible funding and UNHCR's core mandate); 2.6 million people were assisted with emergency and durable shelters; and 4.3 million used UNHCR-supported feedback mechanisms.



Djoda Marie, 60, cares for her grandchildren at their makeshift shelter on higher ground near N'Djamena, Chad. Their village of Tougoude, just 1 km away, was submerged by sudden floods in late 2024, forcing the entire community to flee. Now displaced, they wait for the waters to recede before they can return home. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

UNHCR's global programmes also benefited from significant allocations of flexible funding.

The global programmes are centrally managed initiatives that transcend geographic boundaries, enhancing UNHCR's ability to deliver protection and solutions more efficiently, effectively, and equitably. These programmes are designed to support field operations and are mostly implemented in the field but are budgeted for and managed at Headquarters. These programmes provide technical leadership, policy direction, operational support and expand advocacy and resource mobilization across all UNHCR operations, ensuring continuity, innovation, and scale in refugee response.

In 2024, UNHCR's global programmes made significant strides across key areas. Education efforts reached 2.1 million people and exceeded global publication targets

with new reports and the launch of the Education Research Digest. Health interventions supported 15.5 million consultations, including emergency responses in Sudan, Chad, Lebanon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Digital and data services were strengthened through PRIMES, enabling registration of over 3.4 million people, while the Digital Gateway and the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center expanded access to services and data.

Protection-focused initiatives included child protection support across 54 operations, benefiting 1.5 million children and caregivers, and gender-based violence programming that reached 1.7 million people. UNHCR also advanced complementary pathways and family reunification guidance, while investment in private-sector partnerships means it is now contributing around one-third of unearmarked funding — underscoring their growing role in sustaining flexible, impactful responses.



More than 100,000 people are estimated to have crossed into Syria, following the intensification of Israeli bombings in Lebanon since 23 September 2024. © UNHCR/Farah Harwida



Sudanese refugees wait for food from a community-led kitchen at the Tine transit camp, in Chad. With limited international presence, local Chadians have been filling the gap to support Sudanese forced to flee. Many of the newly arrived refugees haven't eaten for days. © UNHCR/Caitlin Kelly

The cost of insufficient flexible funding

The reality is that flexible funding remains limited, and the demand for it exceeds availability, leaving critical gaps in response and support to forcibly displaced and stateless people worldwide.

This means UNHCR must make difficult choices — not only about *what* to fund, but *when*, *where*, and *how fast*. Every dollar of flexible funding is thus weighed against a matrix of needs, gaps, and urgency, with the aim of maximizing its impact across almost the entirety of UNHCR.

In 2024, the lack of sufficient flexible resources meant that essential protection and assistance activities were scaled back,

delayed, or deprioritized in some contexts — not because needs were lower, but because **funding was not enough.**

In **Sudan**, ongoing hostilities and large-scale regional displacement created urgent needs for legal assistance, documentation, and shelter. Despite multiple emergency declarations, funding constraints slowed the roll-out of core protection services, including gender-based violence case management and psychosocial support for survivors.

In 2024, the **Middle East and North Africa region** faced a surge in humanitarian crises, with refugee and asylum-seeker numbers soaring by 26% and displacement escalating across multiple countries. Despite these mounting needs, the \$297.9 million UNHCR could allocate fell short of what was required to respond to the scale and complexity of emergencies, from mass displacement in Lebanon, burgeoning returns in Syria, the impact in the region of the deepening crisis in Sudan, and the ongoing emergency in Yemen.

Globally, several durable solutions and legal protection initiatives — including statelessness reduction, resettlement case processing, and support for national asylum systems — remained underfunded, despite being central to UNHCR’s mandate.

These are only some examples that underscore the opportunity cost of inflexibility. When funding is delayed or restricted, it limits UNHCR’s ability to respond at the right time, in the right place, with the right interventions — and ultimately, it is displaced people who bear the consequences.

As global displacement grows, the role of flexible funding becomes even more critical — not just for UNHCR’s efficiency, but for its integrity.

It is what allows us to plan beyond the immediate, to support systemic solutions, and to remain accountable to forcibly displaced and stateless people, not just the crises that dominate headlines.



Mohammed, 80, stands beside a war-damaged car in Tyre, southern Lebanon, a day after the ceasefire began. He escaped with his life at the start of the escalation in hostilities when an Israeli missile struck just metres from his home on the first floor of a four-storey building, collapsing the surrounding buildings, including his own. © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

Amounts, sources and allocations of flexible funding

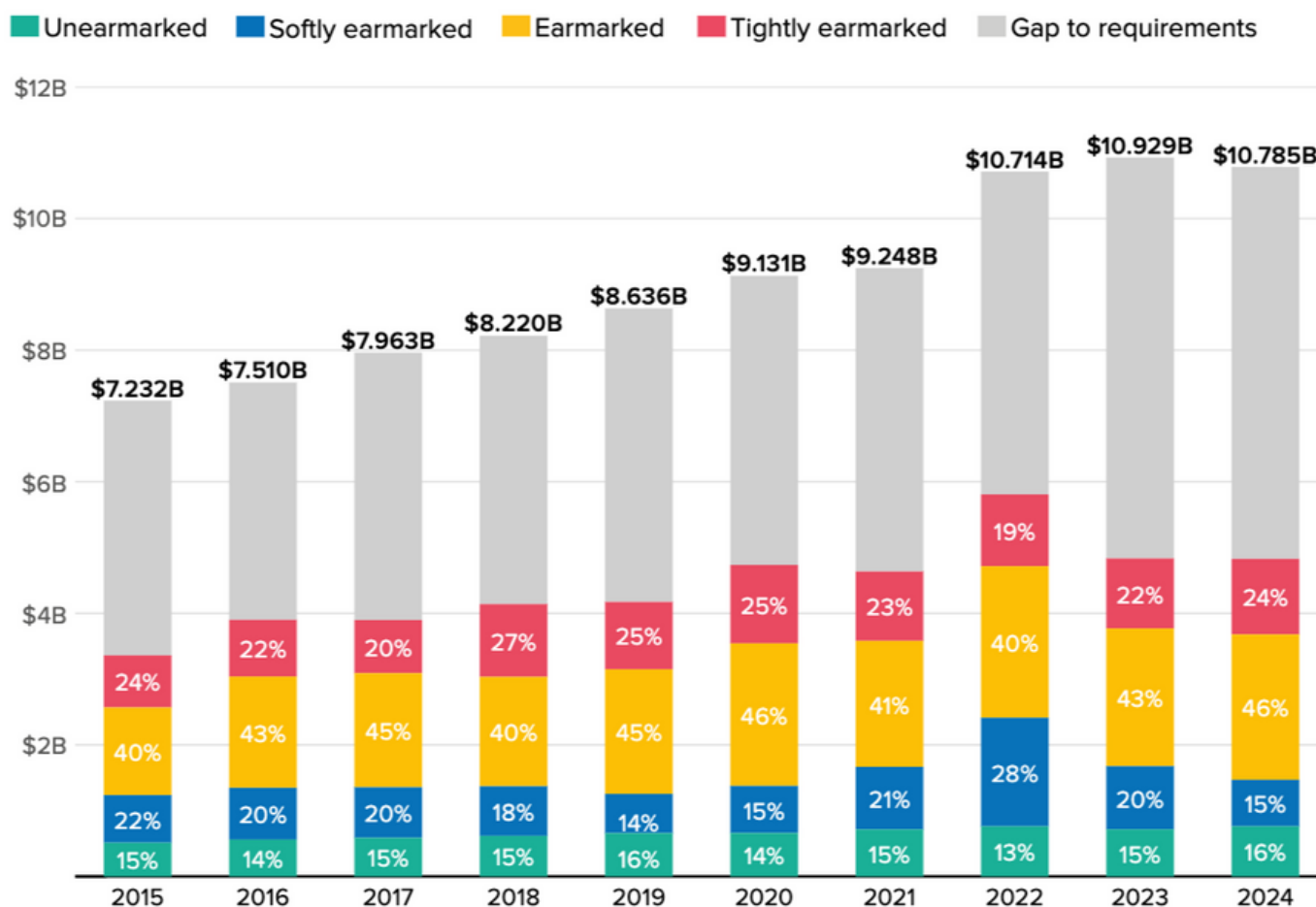
Amounts

UNHCR received \$1.470 billion in flexible funding in 2024. Unearmarked funding increased from \$718.5 million in 2023 to \$764 million in 2024, a rise of \$45.6 million or 6%, mainly due to contributions from Sweden and the Republic of Korea. However, at \$706 million, softly earmarked funding decreased by \$253.5 million or 26%, primarily due to Germany's overall funding reduction and its shift from softly earmarked to country-level funding. Both earmarked and tightly earmarked funding increased in dollar and percentage terms. Earmarking rose from \$2.093 billion in 2023 to \$2.211 billion, a rise of 6%.

Tightly earmarked funding increased from \$1.063 billion in 2023 to \$1.147 billion, a rise of 8%. The fall in softly earmarked funding coupled with the increase in tightly earmarked funding led to an overall decrease in flexibility despite the welcome 6% increase in completely unearmarked funds.

Overall, flexible funding continued its decline from 2022 when UNHCR received \$2.413 billion, largely driven by support for the Ukraine crisis. Levels of flexible funding in 2024 were similar to where they were in 2020 and 2021.

Voluntary contributions vs requirements* | 2015-2024



*UN regular budget excluded. Acknowledgment year basis.

Sources

The **top donors of flexible funding** in 2024 were Germany, the United States of America, Sweden, Denmark and *España con ACNUR* (UNHCR's National Partner in Spain). These five donors provided fully **half of all UNHCR's flexible funding**, or \$737 million.

The **top donors of unearmarked funding** deserve special recognition and include Sweden, *España con ACNUR*, Norway, Japan for UNHCR, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These five donors **contributed 44% of all unearmarked funding**, or \$340 million.

The **top donors of softly earmarked funding** were the United States of America, Germany, Denmark, *UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe* (UNHCR's National Partner in Germany), and France. These five donors contributed **74% of UNHCR's softly earmarked funding**, or \$522 million, allowing for critical flexibility at the regional or situation level.

Governments remained the **primary source of flexible funding**, contributing \$596 million or 84% of softly earmarked funds; and \$486 million or 64% of unearmarked funds.

Private sector contributions accounted for \$278 million or **36% of unearmarked funding**, including donations via UNHCR's National Partners, which provided \$164 million or 21% of overall unearmarked funding.

As outlined above under global programmes, **UNHCR's investment in the private sector** as a source of funding in general, and as a source of flexible funding in particular, is not only worthwhile in terms of engaging with individuals, but paying off in terms of funding received. **In the last ten years** and driven, for example, by advocacy, digital campaigns or other modalities, **unearmarked funding from the private sector has increased just over 180%** from the \$98.6 million received in 2014.

For more detailed information, please visit the flexible funding dashboard [here](#) 

Quality humanitarian funding - Multi-stakeholder pledge

Quality funding is a key tenet of the Grand Bargain, whose 67 signatories committed to reach a critical volume of quality funding. In addition, at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, key donors of flexible funding led a [Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Quality humanitarian funding](#) for refugee situations.

This pledge now has 11 participating members who are committed to advocating for flexible funding amongst various stakeholders and providing quality funding, enabling rapid and flexible responses to refugee situations. Current pledges include Denmark (pledge leader), Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Switzerland.

Top 20 donors of flexible funding in 2024 | USD

Donor	Unearmarked*	Softly earmarked*	Total flexible funding
Germany	25,068,736	197,510,537	222,579,273
United States of America		212,856,000	212,856,000
Sweden	112,228,197	17,301,847	129,530,044
Denmark	37,803,957	51,757,957	89,561,914
España con ACNUR (National partner in Spain)	77,511,243	4,832,631	82,343,874
Norway	58,900,524	3,925,654	62,826,177
France	34,148,547	26,064,816	60,213,363
Japan for UNHCR	49,891,333	1,641,545	51,532,877
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	41,424,530		41,424,530
Private donors in the Republic of Korea	33,925,275	6,695,062	40,620,337
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	36,307,188		36,307,188
UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe (National Partner in Germany)	42,176	33,941,954	33,984,130
Finland	7,851,994	23,095,714	30,947,708
Private donors in Italy	24,713,658	3,861,070	28,574,729
Switzerland	19,230,769	8,439,554	27,670,324
Australia	10,744,986	15,127,352	25,872,338
Sweden for UNHCR	16,669,791	8,370,964	25,040,756
Ireland	13,637,385	9,342,252	22,979,638
Belgium	14,173,468	6,578,947	20,752,416
Private donors in the Kingdom of the Netherlands	14,976,390	4,527,038	19,503,428
All other donors	134,824,803	70,046,584	204,871,387
TOTAL	764,074,951	705,917,480	1,469,992,431

*Colour bars show the portion of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds from each donor against the total.

(For more graphics and complete financial tables, please visit the [flexible funding dashboard](#)).

Allocations

Including unearmarked carryover from 2023, **\$1.358 billion** or 28% of UNHCR's total expenditure in 2024 was from flexible funding, a decline from the \$1.648 billion and 32% in 2023.

In 2024, total expenditure included \$692 million or 14% from unearmarked funding; \$618.4 million or 13% from softly earmarked funding, and \$46.3 million or 1% funding from the 2023 unearmarked carryover.

The lion's share of flexible funding expenditure was in country and regional programmes: this included \$578 million in softly earmarked funding, or 93% of softly earmarked allocations; and \$490 million in unearmarked funding, or 71% of unearmarked allocations. The remaining flexible funding was spent on UNHCR's global programmes, including the totality of the 2023 unearmarked carryover. As per standard practice, **no unearmarked funding was used to cover Headquarters costs.** ([Read more](#)).

Multi-year funding

On a final note, flexible funding includes not only unearmarked and softly earmarked funds pledged for a particular year but also funds that are pledged for 24 months or more. The value of this type of contribution is its predictability, allowing UNHCR to apportion resources where they are needed most at the beginning of the year.

Multi-year funding for use in 2024 amounted to \$850.5 million, higher than the \$746 million available for use in 2023. The top five providers of multi-year funding in 2024 were the European Union, Sweden, Denmark, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Germany.

The unearmarked portion of multi-year funding received for use in 2024 was higher compared to what was received for use in 2023 (\$297 million in 2024 compared to \$266.3 million in 2023). Nonetheless, with 67% of multi-year funding for use in 2024 still earmarked at country level or below, this meant that the level of predictability was not shared equally across operations.

This was a very significant increase on the equivalent 42% earmarked at country level or below in 2023.

For more detailed information on multi-year funding, please visit the funding section of the Global Report 2024 [here](#) ➡



Rebecca Akiza, 23, now lives at the Bushagara site for internally displaced people near Goma, North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Clashes between armed groups have forced an estimated 2.7 million people to flee within North Kivu. © UNHCR/Guerchom Ndebo



Sadeqa Bibi, and her son, are among some of the Rohingya refugees rescued in South Aceh, Indonesia, in October 2024, after enduring weeks at sea, while fleeing from Bangladesh in search of safety. Tragically, some people on board of their same boat lost their lives. © UNHCR/Amanda Jufrian

Looking ahead: strengthening flexible funding support for 2025 and beyond

The complexity and unpredictability of displacement trends make flexible funding indispensable. Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, **UNHCR is committed to reinforcing the systems, partnerships, and transparency that underpin flexible funding.**

In the coming years, UNHCR aims to increase the share of flexible funding to the level required to uphold protection standards, respond to underfunded emergencies, and sustain operations in neglected contexts.

Meeting this goal requires a renewed collective effort — not just to preserve existing contributions, but to **expand the base of flexible donors**, particularly from the private sector, development partners, and non-traditional sources.

To achieve this, UNHCR will invest in:

- **Greater visibility and transparency** on how flexible funding is allocated and what it enables;
- **Stronger donor engagement**, including clearer reporting and impact stories that demonstrate results;

- **Predictable, multi-year funding** arrangements that allow for early planning and more strategic use of resources;
- **Advocacy with Member States** and partners, ensuring that flexible contributions are recognized as core to principled and efficient humanitarian response.

UNHCR calls on its donors and partners to continue standing with displaced and stateless people — not just in moments of high visibility, but through sustained, flexible support that allows us to act early, fill critical gaps, and deliver protection and solutions everywhere we operate.

Flexible funding is not just a UNHCR financial mechanism — it **is a lifeline for people whose lives have been uprooted by conflict and forced displacement.**



Syrian returnees are greeted by their families in Dara'a, Syrian Arab Republic, after returning home from Jordan. After 14 years of conflict, millions remain displaced and in need of support as they rebuild their lives. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

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FRONT COVER

Sonia, 22, stands outside her new home in Kushk-e-Bad-e-Saba, Afghanistan, where she lives with her husband, children, and in-laws. After losing their house in an earthquake, the family spent harsh winters in a tent before receiving shelter support from UNHCR.

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