




BURKINA FASO

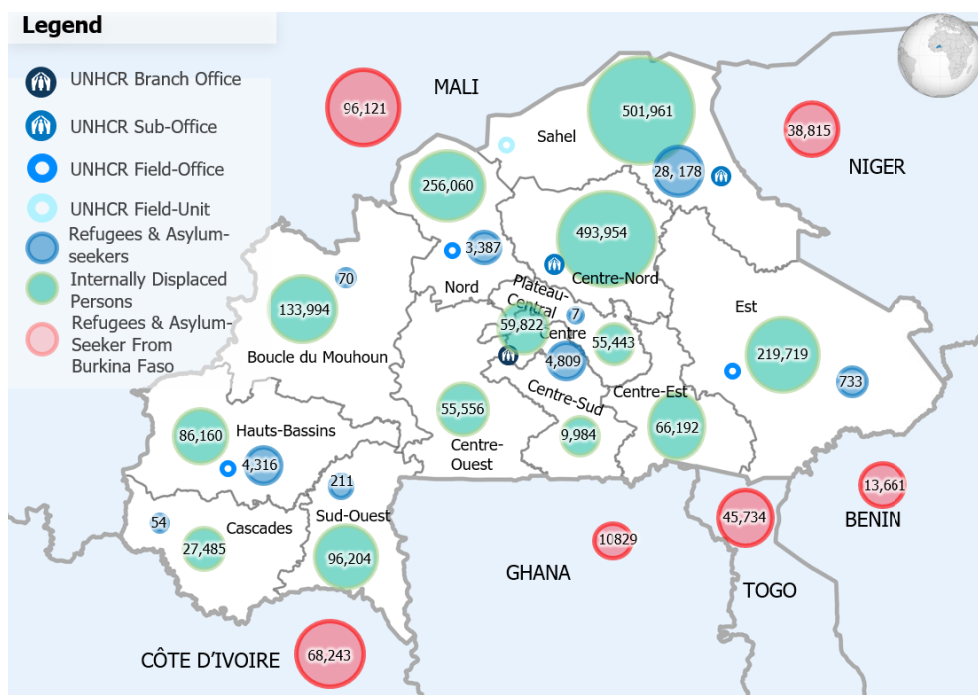
OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Quarterly | July - September 2025









STATISTICS / MAP

	2,104,513 Forcibly displaced people
	2,062,534 Internally displaced people (IDPs)
	41,979 Refugees and asylum-seekers incl. 95% from Mali



Burkina Faso continues to face one of the most severe displacement crises in the region. As of 31 March 2023, government data reported over 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), reflecting the ongoing impact of insecurity and violence on civilian populations. In addition, as of 30 September 2025, the country generously hosts 41,979 refugees, mainly from Mali, nearly 70% of whom live within host communities in the Sahel region. In total, more than 2.1 million people remain forcibly displaced across the country. UNHCR, in coordination with national authorities and partners, continues to respond to urgent protection needs while supporting longer-term efforts to strengthen resilience and inclusion.

	~ 80,000 IDPs received shelter support including emergency shelters, rehabilitation kits and essential items		+30,000 forcibly displaced persons received refugee certificates, civil and identity documentation		12,000 medical consultations provided to forcibly displaced and host communities
	~ 6,000 forcibly displaced children were enrolled in school		840 forcibly displaced persons and host supported through improved agriculture, livestock, and aquaculture practices.		345 Protection incidents documented



A refugee girl given the chance to go to school dreams of becoming a school teacher to educate children. ©UNHCR/M. BOUGMA

Operational Context

During the third quarter of the year (Q3), UNHCR operated in a complex and evolving environment in Burkina Faso. While insecurity remained a challenge in several regions, marked by incidents involving improvised explosive devices and limited access to basic services, positive developments included voluntary returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to areas showing signs of stabilization. These returns reflect local resilience and opportunities for durable solutions.

In response to the government's July announcement of a major administrative reform increasing the number of regions and provinces, UNHCR swiftly adjusted its operational coverage to remain aligned with national priorities.

Regionally, cross-border movements continue to shape the protection landscape. Nearly 1,800 individuals, mostly women and children, arrived from Ghana into Kpouéré commune, Djoro (ex-Southwest) region, following a land dispute. UNHCR, in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF) and local authorities, conducted an assessment mission, identifying urgent needs in protection, shelter, health, education, and psychosocial support. Simultaneously, returns of Burkinabè from Mali were recorded, underscoring the need for enhanced border monitoring and sustained regional coordination.

UNHCR remains actively engaged in regional dialogue, notably through the Lomé Ministerial Declaration, which promotes humane and coordinated responses to forced displacement.

Despite these efforts, funding shortfalls continue to strain the response. UNHCR is intensifying resource mobilization and advocacy with the Government and with development partners, to sustain and scale up assistance and protection, in line with growing needs.

Main Achievements in Sectors

Protection

Protection Monitoring Highlights

- A total of 345 protection incidents were documented during the third quarter of the year, showing a slight increase compared to 329 between April and June, and indicating continued protection challenges in certain areas.
- These incidents directly affected 989 civilians, nearly double the 520 recorded in the previous quarter. The breakdown includes 62% men, 24% women, 6% boys, and 8% girls.
- About 34% of surveyed households reported ongoing restrictions on movement, primarily due to terrorist threats (67%), criminal activity (47%), and the presence of explosive devices (42%). Notably, 12% of these households indicated that at least one member had experienced a protection incident in the month preceding the survey.
- According to key informants, the top priority needs remain consistent with the previous quarter: food (82%), shelter (43%), and drinking water (20%). These unmet needs continue to push affected populations toward negative coping mechanisms, increasing their exposure to protection risks.

Registration and Documentation

UNHCR and the government partner (CONAREF) improved continuous registration mechanisms, registering 97% of refugees and asylum-seekers individually, comprising a total of 41,979 people as of 30 September.

A total of 13,000 refugee certificates were issued or renewed (covering 60% of identified needs). UNHCR supported the Government of Burkina Faso in the issuance of 15,250 birth certificates, 4,576 national identity cards and 252 refugee identity cards for forcibly displaced populations, those at risk of statelessness and vulnerable members of the host community. This has contributed to strengthening legal protection, reducing the risk of statelessness, and enabling access to services and freedom of movement.

Expanding Education Opportunities for Refugee Youth

Despite ongoing challenges, between July and September, access to higher education for refugee students was expanded through scholarship opportunities shared by UNHCR and partners, including Oxford's Graduate Horizons, the Mastercard Foundation at UBC and Cambridge, and École Polytechnique de Ouagadougou. Sciences Po also launched a tailored online course, leading to the selection of nine forcibly displaced students, including four young women, for its four-week Online Programme for Refugees, offering an inclusive academic space for youth facing displacement. In preparation for the 2025–2026 school year, selection committees, comprising community leaders, UNHCR and its partners CONAREF and the Christian Relief and Development Organization (CREDO), identified over 9,000 students as eligible for educational assistance. This includes 5,200 refugee children enrolled in primary education, 680 in secondary, and 27 in higher education. Despite UNHCR's commitment to inclusive education, the process was significantly shaped by funding limitations, which forced the committees to prioritize the most vulnerable people and limit the number of beneficiaries.

All selected students will receive school kits, tuition coverage, dignity kits for girls, listening devices, and mobility aids for learners with disabilities. These targeted efforts aim to strengthen access to learning opportunities for displaced youth, even as financial constraints threaten the continuity and scale of support.

Emergency, Protection and Life-Saving Assistance

Safeguarding Refugees' Health

Despite severe funding constraints, UNHCR and its partners, maintained access to essential health and nutrition services for refugees and host communities. During the reporting period, nearly 12,000 medical consultations were provided, including 40 emergency referrals, 34% of which involved children under 5, underscoring the importance of pediatric care. In urban areas, 234 refugees were enrolled in community-based health insurance schemes, improving access to public healthcare. Malaria and acute respiratory infections remained the most common illnesses, while the national policy of free healthcare for children and pregnant women continued to ease access to primary care.

Food insecurity remains critical, particularly in the Liptako and Soum regions (formerly the Sahel), compounding the vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced populations. During the reporting period, the World Food Program (WFP) conducted three food distributions in Dori, reaching nearly 17,000 refugees, and one in Djibo for over 4,700 individuals. However, these efforts fell short of meeting the full nutritional needs. Nutrition levels remained alarming. Screening activities identified 123 cases of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 59 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among children aged 6–59 months, as well as 56 MAM and 26 SAM cases among pregnant and lactating women, all referred for treatment. To strengthen community resilience and promote better nutrition practices, eight awareness sessions were held for mothers and caregivers, focusing on infant feeding, exclusive breastfeeding, and the use of locally available foods. The scale and frequency of assistance remain constrained by funding gaps, which continue to limit the reach and impact of life-saving interventions.

Shelter/Essential Items

UNHCR, through its partners, provided 5,414 emergency shelters, 758 shelter rehabilitation kits, and 5,511 kits of essential items to nearly 80,000 people across the Liptako Soum

(ex-Sahel), Kuilse (ex-Center-North), Yaadga (ex-North), Goulmou, (ex-East), Guiriko (ex-Haut Bassin) and Bankui, Sourou (ex- Boucle du Mouhoun) regions. The basic supplies comprised mat, blanket, kitchen kit, bucket, etc. Additionally, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) distributed 2,479 emergency shelters and 1,886 basic supply kits, reaching over 39,000 individuals. These interventions were vital during the rainy season, helping to protect families, especially women and children, from exposure to elements and protection risks, while preserving their dignity. However, the growing number of displaced people and rising needs have outpaced available resources. Due to funding shortfalls, UNHCR is forced to reprioritize its shelter assistance, focusing only on life-saving interventions.

Solutions

Durable Solutions: Building Inclusion and Regional Commitment

UNHCR continued to advance durable solutions by promoting refugee inclusion in national systems and strengthening regional cooperation. Together with CONAREF, advocacy efforts with the Technical Secretariat of the Single Social Registry (RSU) led to the reaffirmation of refugee inclusion during its July 2025 steering committee session, chaired by the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity.

Following the high-level regional ministerial meeting held in July in Lomé, co-organized by the Government of Togo and UNHCR, ministerial delegations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo, alongside senior UN and UNHCR leadership, **adopted the Lomé Declaration**. This landmark commitment marks a strategic shift from securitized approaches to a collaborative and humane framework for refugee protection in the region. It provides a robust platform for advocacy, joint resource mobilization, and integrated strategies aimed at strengthening the resilience of both displaced populations and host communities.

Additionally, two highly vulnerable refugee cases were identified and are being considered for

resettlement under the Global Unallocated Quota, with casework currently underway.

Self-Reliance and Resilience through partnerships

UNHCR and its partners supported 840 individuals through agriculture, livestock, and aquaculture initiatives. 66 other people received vocational and entrepreneurship training, enhancing their income-generating capacities. Infrastructure investments, including a fish processing unit in Ouahigouya, a greenhouse in Fada, and two three-hectare vegetable sites in Fada and Bobo-Dioulasso, are promoting food security and self-reliance in underserved areas. These efforts have attracted the interest of national authorities and development actors. Following months of collaboration, UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding with Groupe Hajjar, a private company active in milling, bakery, and oil and gas, to create employment pathways for forcibly displaced youth. Internships are underway, with enrollment ongoing and joint follow-up in place. Additionally, two **MADE51** social enterprises secured \$20,000 in orders to produce silver jewelry and woven bags, revealing the potential of Burkina Faso's artisanal sector. These initiatives are fostering economic inclusion and sustainable livelihoods for refugees, IDPs, and host communities.

Route-based Approach

Responding to Complex Cross-Border Movements.

Over the reporting period, UNHCR strengthened its Route-Based Approach to address increasingly complex onward movements of refugees and migrants across the region. 2,717 individuals (559 households) were identified along key migration routes, including 1,077 IDPs crossing borders, 874 returnees, 657 asylum-seekers, mainly from Mali and Niger and nine refugee in secondary movements, while 100 other people were migrants.

These dynamics underscore the urgent need for coordinated protection and reception mechanisms. In collaboration with national authorities, IOM, and other partners, UNHCR strengthened

border monitoring, provided assistance and protection interventions to promote safe, dignified movements and to prevent forced returns.

Sustained donor support remains essential to scale up these efforts across borders.

The period also saw a sudden influx of approximately 1,800 Ghanaian asylum-seekers into the commune of Kpouéré, fleeing intercommunal violence. Government actors recorded and responded to the arrivals, highlighting the importance of preparedness and flexible response mechanisms in border areas.

Work in Partnerships

Between July and September, UNHCR strengthened strategic partnerships to advance protection, resilience, and durable solutions. The Humanitarian Forum of the Alliance of Sahel States better known by its French acronym AES, held in Bamako on 7 August, reaffirmed regional commitment to sovereign, people-centered humanitarian responses. UNHCR played a central role, aligning with principles of solidarity, localized financing, and coordinated action.

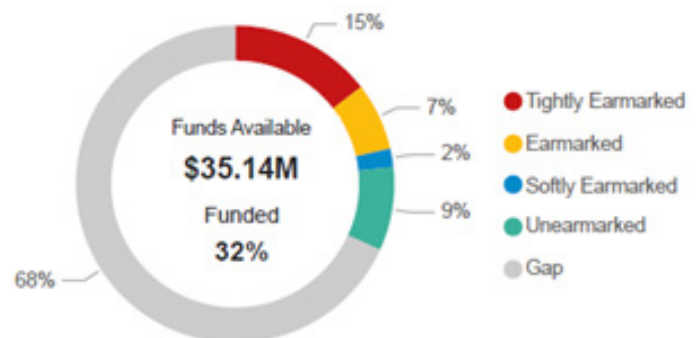
Collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) progressed toward implementing the global MoU in the AES context, while a new agreement with the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) will strengthen data on forcibly displaced and stateless populations. UNHCR also contributed to the validation of Burkina Faso's National Anticipatory Action Plan for Floods, targeting 11,400 vulnerable households.

Partnerships expanded with development actors including ENABEL, UNICEF, Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. A new collaboration with NAFASO supported over 200 refugee households with agricultural inputs. UNHCR formalized a partnership with Groupe Hajjar to create jobs for displaced youth

through bakery internships. Finally, a workshop led by UNHCR and CONASUR addressed protection risks for women and children during livelihood activities. These collaborations illustrate UNHCR's catalytic role in bridging humanitarian and development agendas to sustain inclusion and resilience in Burkina Faso.

Funding Situation

As the year draws to a close, only 32% of UNHCR's 2025 funding requirements for Burkina Faso have been met as of 30 September, leaving significant gaps at a time when humanitarian needs continue to escalate. Without urgent and sustained support, life-saving interventions and long-term solutions risk being scaled back, affecting thousands of vulnerable individuals.



UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions from its donors who have contributed earmarked and flexible funding to support operations in Burkina Faso in 2025:

