



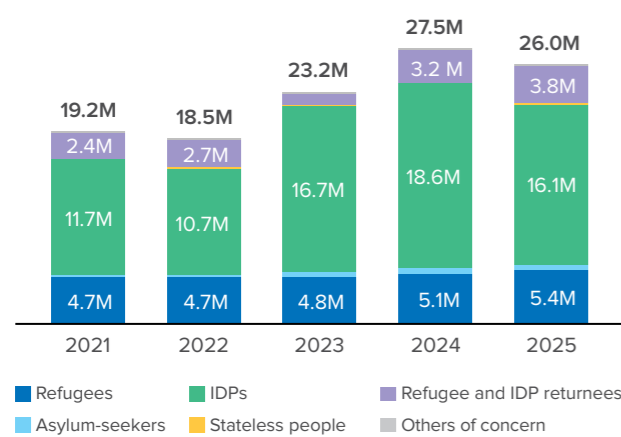
REGIONAL SUMMARY

Isra Adam, 24, and her family are sheltering at Al Afadh IDP site in Al Dabbah locality, Northern State, after fleeing El Fasher amid escalating violence. Like many newly displaced families in Sudan, they are living in precarious conditions while awaiting assistance. © UNHCR/Assadullah Nasrullah

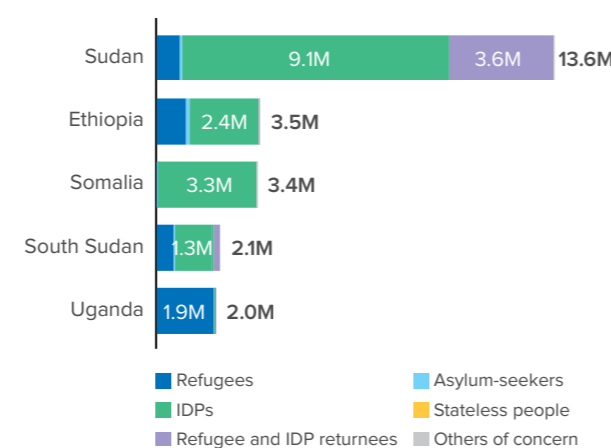
# East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes

UNHCR covers **11 country operations**<sup>1</sup> in the region. In 2025, the region hosted **26 million** forcibly displaced and stateless people, a **5% decrease** from 2024.

### Population trend | 2021-2025



### Top 5 countries by population



<sup>1</sup> Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda

## Context

The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region hosted a total of 26 million forcibly displaced, including 5.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers and 16.1 million internally displaced people (IDPs). The most significant change since 2024 was an increase of some 1 million Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, nearly 3 million Sudanese IDPs returned, mainly to Khartoum and al Jazeera.

Refugees across the region continued to face severe food insecurity in 2025, with food assistance cuts of between 30% and 80%. Ongoing resource shortages forced an accelerated move toward targeted, vulnerability-based food assistance, now applied in Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. Malnutrition remained a major concern, affecting 1 in 10 refugee children, especially new arrivals. UNHCR prioritized strengthening partnerships with WFP, FAO and international financial institutions to achieve greater self-reliance of refugees.

Some 881,000 refugees returned to their countries of origin, mainly to Sudan, South Sudan and Burundi, with smaller numbers returning to Ethiopia, Rwanda and Somalia. Sudan became the largest country of return, with over 650,000 self-organized returns, mainly from Chad, Egypt and South Sudan. South Sudan also received nearly 152,000 returnees from Sudan, and UNHCR assisted 17,779 refugees to return to Burundi.

The Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes was renamed as the Regional Bureau for Eastern and Southern Africa in the last quarter of 2025. Following the restructuring, it assumed oversight of operations in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, the South Africa multi-country office, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which had previously fallen under the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa.

## Results and achievements

In 2025, UNHCR provided cash assistance to 561,300 people. Most assistance was multi-purpose, and all emergency operations used cash as a response modality. Monitoring showed high satisfaction and improvements in living conditions, although for most households, cash assistance covered only half or less of their basic needs.

UNHCR coordinated the 2025 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, with 111 UN, NGO and other partners (up from 86 in 2024), combining life-saving protection and assistance with a resilience-oriented and sustainable responses approach. Inside Sudan, insecurity, particularly in Darfur and Kordofan, hampered UNHCR and partners' access to displaced people, protection of civilians and delivery of humanitarian aid.

UNHCR prioritized multi-country coordination, harmonized return planning and shared protection analysis. In the Yemen–Somalia return corridor, all returnees held legally recognized identity documents or credentials, reflecting safe, dignified and voluntary returns under the route-based approach.

Progress towards inclusion in national education systems continued. Rwanda integrated all refugee students into the national system. In Burundi and Kenya, governments developed strategies for refugee inclusion and returnee reintegration with a focus on access to basic social services such as education and health. In Ethiopia and South Sudan, UNHCR promoted a “solutions from the start” approach in response to the Sudan emergency, which extended government education services in refugee-hosting areas.

UNHCR submitted 6,635 refugees for resettlement, and more than 10,000 refugees departed to third countries through UNHCR programmes despite reduced staffing, funding challenges and other operational constraints. Refugees also benefited from complementary pathways, such as private sponsorship, family reunification, employment and education. The Emergency Transit Mechanism continued to evacuate vulnerable refugees from Libya to Rwanda.

Regional efforts to reduce statelessness advanced through policy support, advocacy and coordination. In Kenya, UNHCR supported State engagement with affected communities and community self-registration initiatives to strengthen data and advocacy for naturalization. UNHCR also supported judicial dialogue on statelessness and internal displacement through the 14<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges, and promoted the [AU Protocol on the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa](#).

UNHCR consolidated its efforts towards strategic development partnerships to advance inclusion and self-reliance of refugees and IDPs. Development actors – including the World Bank, European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Germany and others – offered opportunities to include refugees and IDPs in their investments. The World Bank’s IDA-21 cycle, starting mid-2025, enabled renewed dialogue on how financing can support inclusion into national systems and local economies. The African Development Bank approved new investments in Djibouti, Somalia and South Sudan, and launched a two-year joint action plan with UNHCR in Rwanda, further expanding the region’s development architecture for supporting displaced populations.

UNHCR deepened its partnerships with the private sector, development actors and international financial institutions to expand employment and livelihood opportunities, with momentum set to accelerate in 2026. The World Bank’s International Finance Corporation and UNHCR continued close collaboration in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, including through the ‘Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities’ (PROSPECTS), alongside complementary initiatives with Mastercard Foundation.

### Challenges

Access to asylum procedures in several countries remained challenging, with more than 510,000 asylum-seekers waiting for status determination. This contributed to onward movements within the region and beyond, often involving perilous journeys. According to UNHCR data, there was a 15% year-on-year increase in onward movements of refugees and asylum seekers in the region. Other challenges included limited self-reliance opportunities, restricted freedom of movement outside camps, insecurity in countries of asylum and barriers to family reunification through safe and regulated programmes.

Funding shortages sharply reduced UNHCR’s operational capacity across the region. By the end of the year, the \$2.2 billion regional response was only 32% funded, forcing cuts to protection services and support for solutions. In South Sudan, 75% of UNHCR-supported safe spaces for women and girls closed, leaving up to 80,000 refugee women and girls, including survivors of sexual violence, without medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid and essential supplies. In Kenya and Uganda, malnutrition rose after preventive nutrition programmes were discontinued.

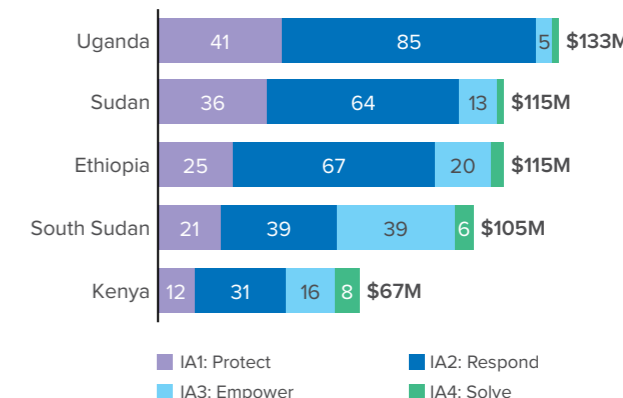
### Financial overview

#### Regional expenditure and budget in 2025

- With funds available, UNHCR could spend **\$693 million** towards budgeted needs of **\$2.185 billion**
- **23%** decrease in expenditure compared with 2024
- **\$1.492 billion** of unmet needs or **68%** of the budget
- **40%** of total expenditure in the region or **\$275 million** was funded by flexible funding, including **\$179 million** of unearmarked funding.

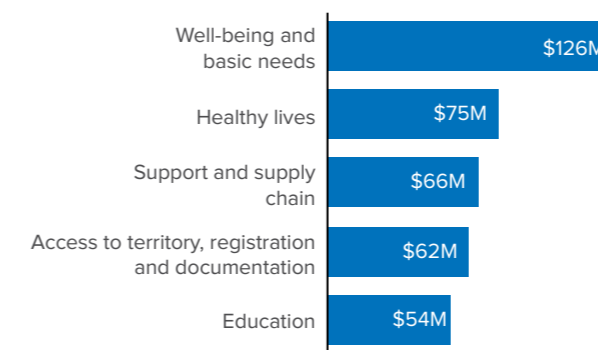
#### Operations with the highest expenditure

These 5 operations accounted for **\$536 million** or **77%** of total regional expenditure



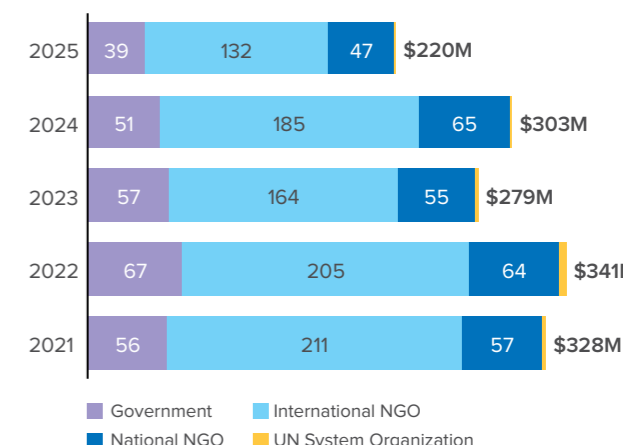
#### Top 5 areas of expenditure in 2025

These 5 areas accounted for **\$383 million** or **55%** of total regional expenditure



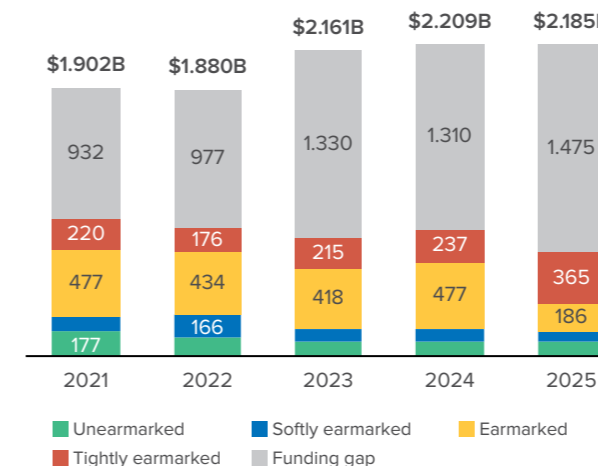
#### Expenditure via partners | 2021-2025

**\$220 million** (-28% from 2024) spent via **400 partners** (+26%) in 2025.



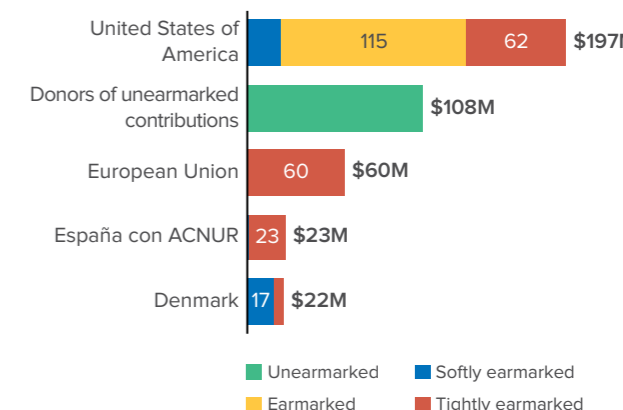
#### Regional funding and earmarking | 2021-2025

**\$734 million** funds available (**34%**) in 2025 out of the **\$2.185 billion** required



#### Top 5 donors of voluntary contributions | 2025

These 5 donors provided **\$412 million** or **56%** of the funds available for the region



### Building market solutions for forcibly displaced people in Africa





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The third [Africa Forum on Displacement](#) in Nairobi Kenya, convened more than 400 participants from










across Africa, including business leaders, investors, policymakers, development actors, refugee-led organizations and displaced entrepreneurs. More than half were from the private sector, reflecting growing business engagement in advancing solutions for refugees and displaced communities. Representatives of refugees and displaced people – including youth leaders and entrepreneurs – participated in the discussions, ensuring that those affected by displacement were part of shaping the dialogue and proposing solutions. Private sector pledges included the creation of 30,000 jobs and 5,000 training opportunities for refugees. Partners who contributed to investments in refugee education, skills development and livelihoods included the Mastercard Foundation, HACO Industries Limited, the KCB Foundation and Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group.

## Core output indicators in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes

Reporting period: 1 January – 31 December 2025

 <b>Attaining favourable protection environments</b> PROTECT		
	<b>Protection</b>	<b>3.5 million</b> people received protection services in 11 countries -6% vs 2024
	<b>Access to territory, registration and documentation</b>	<b>444,500</b> people registered on an individual basis in 10 countries -21% vs 2024
	<b>Gender-based violence</b>	<b>546,500</b> people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation in 11 countries -68% vs 2024
	<b>Child protection</b>	<b>584,500</b> people benefited from specialized GBV programmes in 10 countries +0% vs 2024
	<b>Safety and access to justice</b>	<b>362,300</b> children and caregivers received child protection services in 10 countries +41% vs 2024
	<b>Safety and access to justice</b>	<b>221,400</b> people received legal assistance in 10 countries +10% vs 2024

 <b>Empowering communities and achieving gender equality</b> EMPOWER		
	<b>Community engagement and women's empowerment</b>	<b>78,100</b> people consulted through participatory assessments in 10 countries +87% vs 2024
	<b>Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods</b>	<b>655,200</b> people used UNHCR-supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/concerns/feedback in 11 countries +10% vs 2024
	<b>Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods</b>	<b>80,800</b> people benefited from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions in 12 countries -3% vs 2024

 <b>Realizing rights in safe environments</b> RESPOND		
	<b>Well-being and basic needs</b>	<b>561,300</b> people received cash assistance in 11 countries -43% vs 2024
	<b>Sustainable housing and settlements</b>	<b>1.9 million</b> people received non-food items in 10 countries +14% vs 2024
	<b>Healthy lives</b>	<b>265,500</b> people supported with improved cooking options in 8 countries -30% vs 2024
	<b>Education</b>	<b>648,400</b> people received shelter and housing assistance in 9 countries -20% vs 2024
	<b>Clean water, sanitation and hygiene</b>	<b>6.1 million</b> individual consultations in UNHCR-supported health care services in 10 countries -15% vs 2024
	<b>Education</b>	<b>261,200</b> consultations in UNHCR-supported mental health and psychosocial support services in 10 countries +91% vs 2024
	<b>Clean water, sanitation and hygiene</b>	<b>1.3 million</b> people benefited from education programming in 10 countries -1% vs 2024
	<b>Clean water, sanitation and hygiene</b>	<b>4.8 million</b> people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services in 9 countries +4% vs 2024

 <b>Securing solutions</b> SOLVE		
	<b>Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration</b>	<b>85,100</b> people received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation in 8 countries +6% vs 2024
	<b>Local integration and local solutions</b>	<b>733</b> people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures in 2 countries -71% vs 2024