



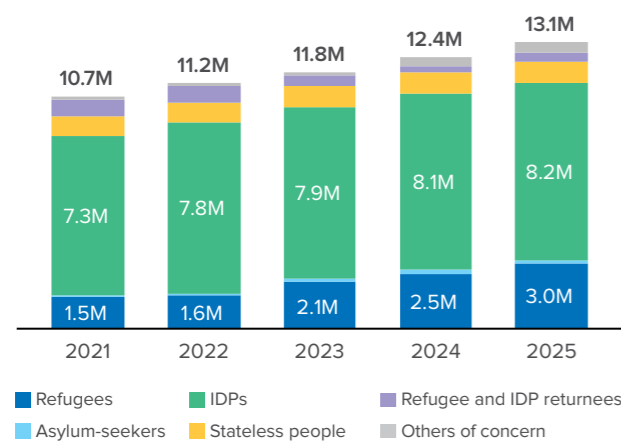
REGIONAL SUMMARY

Refugees carry firewood at Iridimi settlement near Iriba in eastern Chad, one of several long-established sites hosting Sudanese refugees displaced by the conflict in Sudan. © UNHCR/Ala Kheir

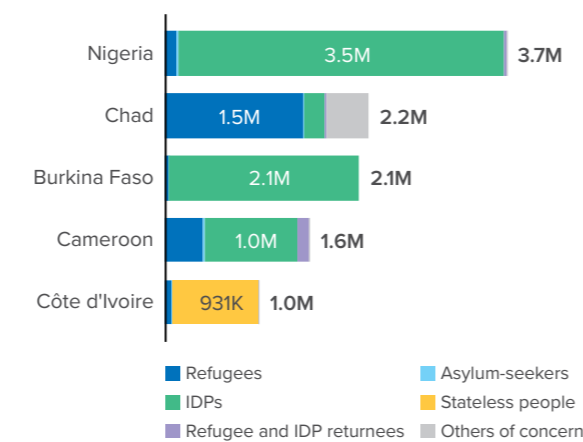
West and Central Africa

UNHCR covers **9 operations**¹ across 19 countries and territories in the region. In 2025, the region hosted **13.1 million** forcibly displaced and stateless people, a **6% increase** from 2024.

Population trend | 2021-2025



Top 5 countries by population



¹ Burkina Faso, Cameroon multi-country office, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire multi-country office, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal multi-country office.

Context

More than 13.1 million people across West and Central Africa were forcibly displaced or stateless, of whom 24% were refugees and asylum-seekers. Conflict and insecurity were the main drivers of displacement, exacerbated by extreme weather events. Food insecurity was also widespread.

Conflict in Sudan and insecurity in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger drove displacement internally and across borders. Some 180,000 new Sudanese refugees arrived in Chad and another 40,000 in the Central African Republic (CAR).

More than 360,000 IDPs and 75,600 refugees returned to areas of origin, including to the CAR, Mali and Nigeria. A further 1,200 refugees were resettled in third countries.

Insecurity worsened protection risks across the region, with 14,800 schools closing, affecting 3 million children. UNHCR's [Project 21](#) monitoring system conducted 100,000 interviews with refugees and community leaders, finding that a third of refugee households faced movement restrictions, and that attacks on women and girls accounted for 1 in 4 violent incidents.

An increasing number of people sought asylum beyond the region, reflecting limited solutions locally. Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal were key transit hubs while the Central Mediterranean route through Libya and Niger was busiest – with 63,200 transiting. Arrivals along the West African Atlantic route to the Canary Islands fell by 62% to 17,700, although new departure points emerged in the Gambia.

Following restructuring, the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa assumed oversight of operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo, which had previously fallen under the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa.

Results and achievements

UNHCR supported authorities to strengthen systems with 17 countries developing asylum capacity road maps aligned with the [2025-2030 Strategic Approach to Strengthening National Asylum Systems](#).

UNHCR strengthened IDP protection through advocacy and technical support and backed key legislation to reduce statelessness.

Nigeria achieved a critical milestone, with the passing of the African Union Convention for protection and assistance of IDPs.

Mali adopted a stateless persons equality law that provides a pathway to nationality. Burkina Faso adopted a family code improving access to civil registration for refugees and IDPs. Some 36,600 birth certificates were issued with UNHCR support in the CAR; 25,800 in Burkina Faso; and 18,100 in Niger.

UNHCR reached 279,000 children with child-friendly spaces and 28,400 with mental health support. Some 14,000 unaccompanied and separated children were placed in alternative care, and 2,000 were reunified with their families.

Awareness-raising of violence against women and girls reached 707,000 refugees, IDPs and host communities, while targeted programmes, such as clinical care for survivors of rape, supported 347 people.

The Governments of Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal implemented a [route-based approach](#) to mixed movements, mapping protection services and strengthening coordination.

Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo committed in the [Lomé Declaration](#) (in French) to strengthen refugee inclusion and enhance cross-border coordination. States also developed a subregional protection and solutions strategy for 2026-2030, during the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review.

UNHCR promoted legal frameworks guaranteeing voluntary, safe and dignified returns, through [tripartite agreements with Chad and Nigeria](#), and with Niger and Nigeria.

UNHCR worked with governments and partners towards sustainable reintegration in return areas, for example, with the [Baoro development hub](#) in the CAR.

As needs outpaced funding, UNHCR supported authorities' efforts to include refugees in national systems. Advocacy encouraged the recognition of credentials of 500 refugee health professionals in Chad, and the inclusion of refugees in Burkina Faso's national social protection registry, while refugee enrolment in national education systems in the region increased by 4%.

UNHCR advanced sustainable programming by supporting government-led initiatives, including job opportunities in Ghana and Togo; livelihood projects in Chad; irrigation schemes in Nigeria; and alternatives-to-camps in Cameroon and Niger.

UNHCR strengthened localization (40% of its partnership agreements were with local and national actors) and supported community-based protection to help children and survivors of violence against women and girls. The [eCentre Africa](#) learning platform trained 37 national and local organizations from 16 high-risk countries on core emergency response standards and coordination practices.

UNHCR strengthened work with development institutions – including the African Development Bank, World Bank and Islamic Development Bank – to support livelihoods and basic services

in the CAR, Mali and Nigeria. Forcibly displaced populations were included in national surveys and, in coordination with the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement and national statistics offices in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the CAR and Mali, progress was made towards nationally owned data on forced displacement.

Challenges

UNHCR faced funding constraints in 2025, including a 17% decrease in expenditure, which required it to reprioritize and introduce efficiency measures.

This included the closure or downgrading of 30 field offices, reducing staffing and limiting delivery of life-saving assistance and protection services. Registration was particularly impacted, leaving 700,000 refugees and asylum-seekers unregistered.

The absence of dedicated national funding left states and institutions dependent on short-term, project-based support.

UNHCR's strategic reset in 2026 targets sharper prioritization, streamlining delivery and strengthening protection and solutions.

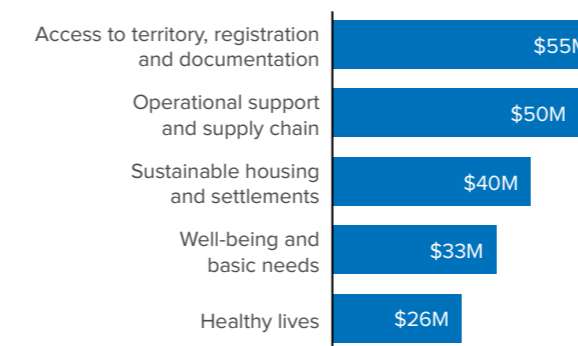
Financial overview

Regional expenditure and budget in 2025

- With funds available, UNHCR could spend **\$389 million** towards budgeted needs of **\$1.191 billion**
- **17%** decrease in expenditure compared with 2024
- **\$802 million** of unmet needs or **67%** of the budget
- **37%** of total expenditure in the region or **\$142 million** was funded by flexible funding, including **\$75 million** of unearmarked funding.

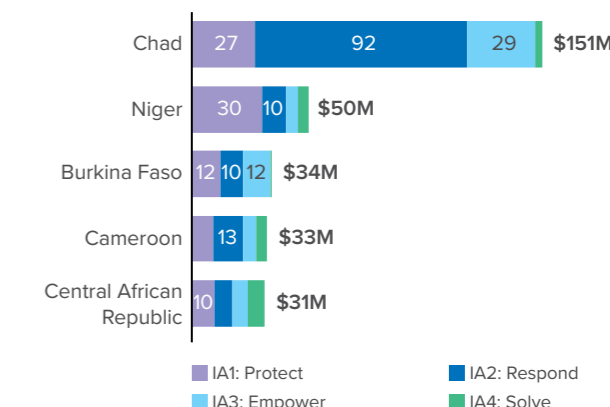
Top 5 areas of expenditure in 2025

These 5 areas accounted for **\$204 million** or **52%** of total regional expenditure



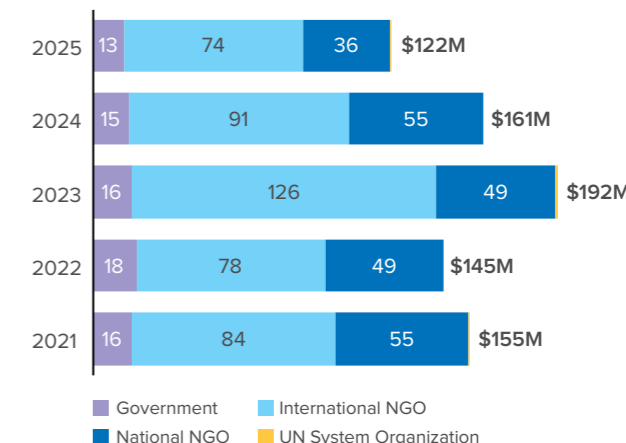
Operations with the highest expenditure

These 5 operations accounted for **\$300 million** or **77%** of total regional expenditure



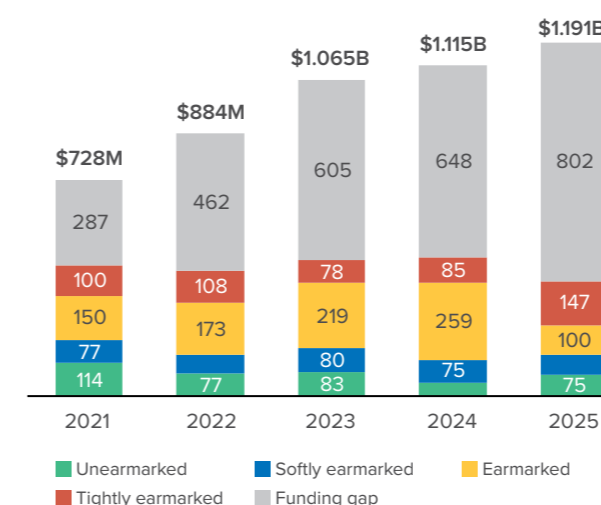
Expenditure via partners | 2021-2025

\$122 million (-24% from 2024) spent via **144 partners** (+7%) in 2025.



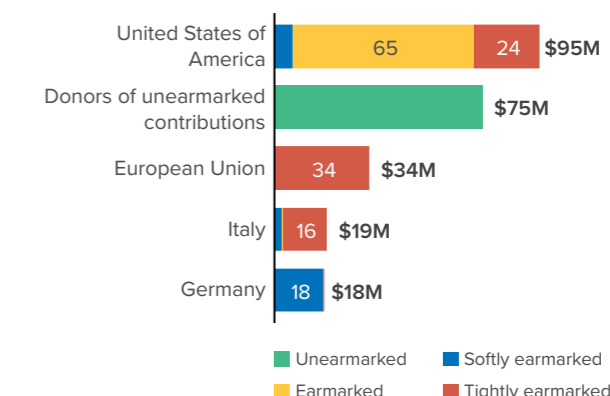
Regional funding and earmarking | 2021-2025

\$389 million funds available (**33%**) in 2025 out of the **\$1.191 billion** required



Top 5 donors of voluntary contributions | 2025

These 5 donors provided **\$240 million** or **62%** of the funds available for the region



Enhancing dignity and protection through shelter and water in Chad














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The Big Heart Foundation and Arada Foundation contributed \$3.2 million towards 3,550 durable shelters and improved access to clean water for 44,000 Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. In a context where displacement strains limited resources, access to safe shelter and clean water is critical, particularly for women and children. Durable shelters mitigate protection risks, enhance dignity, safety and privacy, and strengthen resilience against climate-related shocks. At the same time, expanded water infrastructure reduces the spread of waterborne diseases, limits exposure to risks associated with water collection and supports peaceful coexistence by easing pressure on scarce shared resources.

Core output indicators in West and Central Africa

Reporting period: 1 January – 31 December 2025

 Attaining favourable protection environments PROTECT	
 Protection	3.3 million people received protection services in 16 countries -2% vs 2024
 Access to territory, registration and documentation	458,200 people registered on an individual basis in 12 countries -57% vs 2024
 Gender-based violence	410,200 people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation in 11 countries +115% vs 2024
 Child protection	119,800 people benefited from specialized GBV programmes in 11 countries -9% vs 2024
 Safety and access to justice	68,400 children and caregivers received child protection services in 8 countries -84% vs 2024
 Safety and access to justice	58,200 people received legal assistance in 7 countries +810% vs 2024

 Empowering communities and achieving gender equality EMPOWER	
 Community engagement and women's empowerment	36,500 people consulted through participatory assessments in 11 countries -43% vs 2024
 Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods	468,100 people used UNHCR-supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/concerns/feedback in 14 countries +202% vs 2024
 Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods	59,900 people benefited from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions in 9 countries +11% vs 2024

 Realizing rights in safe environments RESPOND	
 Well-being and basic needs	944,400 people received cash assistance in 7 countries +93% vs 2024
 Sustainable housing and settlements	925,800 people received non-food items in 6 countries +34% vs 2024
 Healthy lives	96,700 people supported with improved cooking options in 5 countries +377% vs 2024
 Education	115,100 people received shelter and housing assistance in 6 countries -74% vs 2024
 Clean water, sanitation and hygiene	1.7 million individual consultations in UNHCR-supported health care services in 7 countries -20% vs 2024
 Education	48,900 consultations in UNHCR-supported mental health and psychosocial support services in 6 countries +122% vs 2024
 Education	310,900 people benefited from education programming in 9 countries -6% vs 2024
 Clean water, sanitation and hygiene	1.6 million people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services in 6 countries -4% vs 2024

 Securing solutions SOLVE	
 Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration	116,300 people received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation in 12 countries +156% vs 2024
 Local integration and local solutions	5,674 people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures in 5 countries +105% vs 2024