

Central African Republic (CAR)

January - February 2024

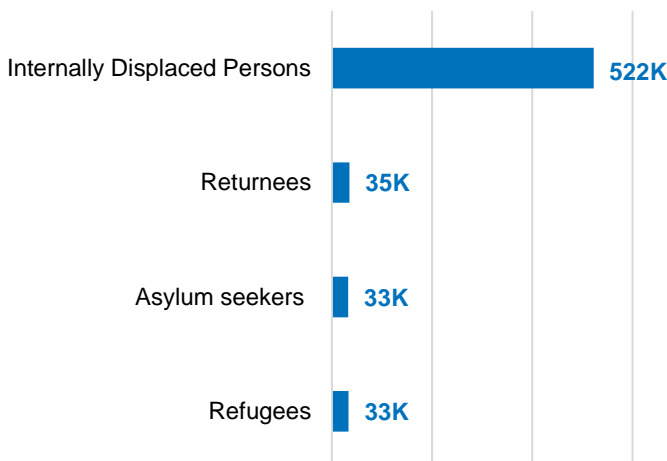
As of 31 January, the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in CAR was estimated at **522,231**, including **109,392** people living in sites, i.e. **21%** of the total, and **412,839** people living with host families, i.e. 79% of the total.

On 29 February, Korsi hosted **8,472 Sudanese refugees** (4,971 households), mainly women and children. Some **7,623 refugees** have arrived since January 1, 2024. In addition, some **10,000 Sudanese refugees** are said to be living in 13 hard-to-reach localities in extremely precarious conditions.

As of 20 February, **38,014 people had fled Chad, including 31,779 Chadian asylum seekers**, forced to take refuge in CAR due to inter-community conflicts in Chad. Meanwhile, **6,235 Central African returnees** have been received in Mia-Pende and Bah Bessar communes north of Paoua in the Ouham prefecture.

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAR

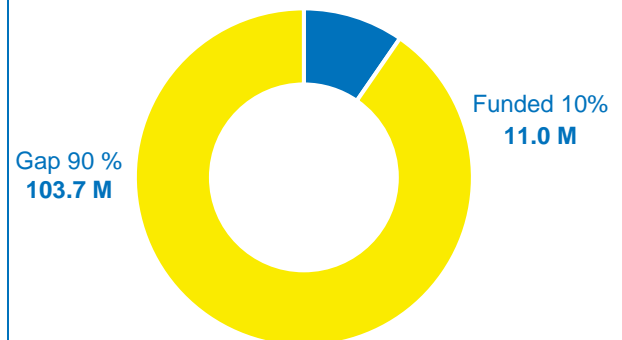
Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees and other forcibly displaced persons.



FUNDING UPDATE AS OF 29 FEBRUARY 2024

USD 114.8 M

UNHCR's financial requirements in 2024



UNDP visits Sudanese refugee registration center in Korsi. @UNHCR

Operating context

On February 29, 2023, the country hosted 66,952 refugees and asylum-seekers, or 18,608 households. The refugee community comprises different nationalities, including Sudanese, South Sudanese, Chadians, Rwandans, etc. Most (74%) live in rural areas, notably in the prefectures of Vakaga, Ouaka, Haut Mbomou, Mbomou, Haute Kotto, and Bamingi Bangoran. A total of 2,954 people (4%) are considered urban refugees, mainly in Bangui and Ombella Mpoko.

As the number of forcibly displaced people in CAR increases with the arrival of Sudanese refugees and Chadian asylum seekers since April 2023 and the urgent need to provide them with a multi-sectoral response, UNHCR's financial and human resources are becoming increasingly limited.

On the other hand, the successive crises experienced by CAR since 2013 have led to population displacements both inside and outside the country. As of January 31, 2024, there were 522,231 internally displaced people, of whom 109,392 were living in IDP sites and 412,839 were in host families. The number of Central African refugees in neighboring host countries is around 650,000.

However, certain areas have been identified as suitable for voluntary repatriation, and UNHCR supports Central African refugees in exercising their right to return as the main durable solution to their situation. From the start of voluntary repatriation in 2017 to December 31, 2023, UNHCR in CAR hosted the return of 36,667 people, including 4,017 refugees, in 2023. The main areas of return are Mongoumba, Mbaiki, Bouar, Baoro, Baboua, Bossemptele, Bangui, Carnot, and Berbérati.

Returnees benefit from a return assistance package from UNHCR and its partners. In addition, the governments of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and CAR have signed tripartite agreements enabling them to manage, within a legal framework, the voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees who so wish. Since the signing of the CAR peace agreement, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their usual places of residence has accelerated.

Main achievements

Protection activities for South Sudanese refugees, Congolese, and internally displaced persons in Obo.

The National Commission for Refugees and the UNHCR conducted outreach sessions in the refugee camp. These activities aim to raise awareness among refugee community members of the eligibility criteria for membership in community management structures and encourage women's participation and representation. This initiative is part of the revitalization and re-election of refugee steering committee members. A total of 326 people were reached, including 157 men, 83 women, 54 boys and 32 girls.

The situation of Sudanese refugees

Background: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have continued to clash since the start of the conflict in April 2023, resulting in the displacement of 28,785 people in CAR (as of February 29), of whom 22,627 are Sudanese refugees, and 6,158 are Central African forced returnees. The refugees are scattered in 13 localities in the prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou, Ouaka, Mbomou and Vakaga, notably in Birao, where 8,472 people live in the Korsi district. Of the total number of Sudanese refugees arriving in CAR, 14,305 have been biometrically registered by the government with the support of the UNHCR. UNHCR's response focuses on individual reception and registration.

Multisectoral response

Protection

Between January and February 2024, the Korsi district received 5,207 people or 2,289 families. The daily average of arrivals since January 1 is 116 people. Around 10,000 Sudanese refugees are said to be living in 13 hard-to-reach localities, exposed to very precarious conditions. Since April 2023, 28,785 forcibly displaced people have arrived in CAR, of whom 22,627 are Sudanese refugees and 6,158 are Central African returnees.

During this period, UNHCR identified around 912 people with specific needs, an average of 114 people identified weekly. These include single female heads of household, the elderly, separated children, unaccompanied children, people living with disabilities and people with severe medical conditions. In partnership with the UNHCR, INTERSOS organized some 912 individual counselling sessions, an average of 96 monthly sessions during these two months.

As part of the legal protection of Sudanese refugees who arrived in Ndélé and were registered in the UNHCR database in November 2023, 116 biometric refugee cards and 200 family composition tickets were issued in January 2024.

Prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)

As part of the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), partner INTERSOS organized 192 focus group sessions at the safe space in Korsi, with around 752 registered participants.

During this period, some 320 animation sessions were carried out with women and girls at the "Ma Mbi Si" space. These various activities brought newly arrived refugee women and girls together and helped to improve their emotional state affected by the crisis. As of February 29, 2024, 138 women and 79 girls had registered and used the safe space at the Korsi site.

Response to GBV (Case Management)

Between January and February, 31 cases of GBV were identified, including 14 cases of physical assault, six cases of rape, five cases of denial of resources, two cases of sexual assault, three cases of psychological violence and one case of forced marriage. These cases received psychosocial support and were referred to available services. At the Ma Mbi Si centers in Korsi and the health district, our partner INTERSOS provides financial and food support. Between January and February, 14 survivors benefited from this support, including three in the form of food aid and 11 in the form of financial assistance.

Health and nutrition

Between January and February 2024, partner NOURRIR and International Medical Corps (IMC) carried out around 6,500 curative medical consultations, an average of 816 consultations per week. Of these, 87 were among the host population (10.66%), and 729 were among refugees (89.33%) living in Korsi. Of these, 318 were new arrivals (39.97%).

The cumulative total of births in Korsi to February 29, 2024, was 15 for 16 newborns. In addition, 13 children received multi-antigen vaccines. During this period, ten tetanus vaccines were administered to pregnant women. In all, 30 children and 15 pregnant women have been vaccinated against tetanus since the beginning of the year.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

From January to February 2024, NOURRIR carried out awareness-raising activities on hygiene and sanitation promotion in Korsi, benefiting 7,623 refugees recently arriving on the Korsi site. Topics included good drinking water practices (the water chain), treatment with organic products in emergency latrines and disinfection.

Between January and February 2024, NOURRIR carried out awareness-raising activities on hygiene and sanitation promotion in Korsi, benefiting 7,623 newly arrived refugees. Topics covered included good drinking water practices (the water chain) and latrine maintenance.

Shelter and Core Relief Items

From January to February 08, 2024, UNICEF provided non-food and hygiene kits to 1,000 newly arrived refugee households in Korsi.

In January 2024, 675 kits of essential household items, 675 shelter kits and 573 dignity kits were distributed to Sudanese and Chadian asylum-seekers in the Bamingui Bangoran, notably in the localities of Ndélé, Akoursoulback and Zobossinda. This assistance met the urgent needs of 573 Sudanese refugee girls and women aged between 12 and 45 and 267 Chadian refugees of the same age group living in the same localities for dignity kits. 675 essential household items and shelter kits were distributed to 1,667 Sudanese refugees and 902 Chadian refugees.

Education

UNHCR enrolled 41 newly arrived refugee children in Korsi, including 16 girls and 25 boys, at the Nguerendomon school near Korsi.

A community forum on education will be held with the participation of education authorities, prefectural authorities, refugee and host community leaders, and young people to promote a collaborative dialogue on the UNHCR education project implemented by INTERSOS and ensure the participation and responsibility of affected populations.

During February, weekly awareness campaigns to encourage the enrolment of refugees in local schools and the distribution of school kits to newly enrolled pupils (222 pupils reached during the period) continue. During February 2024, refugee enrolments rose by 29%, from 532 on February 1 to 686 on February 29. Refugees now represent 41% of the total enrolment of 1,678 students in the two schools near Korsi.

To strengthen social cohesion between refugee pupils and the host community, a friendly soccer match was organized between the two elementary schools attended by refugees. UNHCR's support for refugee pupils and local schools is made possible by a grant from Education Cannot Wait's first emergency response for Sudanese refugees in the Central African Republic.

Following UNHCR's advocacy at the meeting coordinating the response to the needs of refugees living in Bamingui Bangoran, UNICEF and its partner APADE distributed school kits to 648 refugee children, including 317 girls, of whom 276 were Sudanese and 372 Chadian.

Food security

From January 02 to February 23, 2024, HCR partner NOURRIR served 62,580 hot meals in Korsi. As part of the multi-sectoral response, the World Food Program (WFP) provided 24 tons of food, including rice, beans, oil, and salt. During the same period, 65,452 breakfasts were served to Sudanese refugees forced to flee their homes.

To meet the food needs of Sudanese and Chadian refugees living in Bamingui Bangoran, 421 families comprising 2,100 people received financial assistance for two months in February. Food assistance was also provided to 200 families comprising 860 Sudanese refugees living in the Akoursoulbak camp and to 66 families comprising 207 Sudanese refugees living in the Zobossinda camp for the month of February 2024 by the WFP and its partner VERCA.

To prevent malnutrition, 367 children aged between 6 and 23 months and 284 pregnant and breastfeeding women living in the Akoursoulbak and Zobossinda camps were screened and treated by the WFP and its partner VERCA.

The World Food Program distributed food to 1,457 Central African returnees (360 families) for a three-month assistance to support their return.

The situation of Chadian asylum-seekers

Context: Since April 2023, disputes between nomadic Fulani herders and local farmers in Chad have sparked intercommunity conflicts, driving people to flee Chad for villages in the Central African Republic. On May 6, 2023, tensions intensified between the two communities when the Chadian army clashed with rebels on the border between Chad and CAR following the interception of a cargo. The confrontation resulted in the death of an army general.

Since the start of the crisis, 38,014 people have arrived in CAR, including 31,779 asylum seekers (as of January 31, 2024) and 6,235 Central African repatriates in the communes of Mia-Pende (population 44,817) and Bah Bessar (population 42,629), some 60 km north of Paoua. These localities are among the poorest in the country. A registration and assistance site for asylum seekers has been identified in Betoko. Asylum seekers are scattered in more than 53 villages in CAR along the border with Chad. 55% of them are women and children.

Multi-sectoral response



A Chadian woman carries a bucket of water on Betoko's website. © UNHCR

Registration

As of January 31, the authorities, with the support of UNHCR, had biometrically registered 2,047 asylum-seekers (521 households). The National Commission for Refugees (CNR) has not yet determined their status. Still, it plans to do so after the end of biometric registration, which is scheduled for the end of February.

In November 2023, UNHCR and its partners CNR, AIRD, FCA, NOURRIR, and VCW organized the first relocation convoy, transporting 143 families (a total of 274 people) to the Betoko site. Currently, 9,193 people are waiting to be relocated from border villages, and the next convoy is scheduled to arrive before the end of February 2024.

807 people (including 301 with special needs) and 275 families live on the Betoko site. Family documents and assistance cards have been issued and distributed, enabling families to access assistance. Some have come on their own, while others have been relocated.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Chad, 38,014 people have arrived in CAR, including 31,779 Chadian asylum seekers and 6,235 Central African returnees, divided between 10,804 families.

Protection

UNHCR's partner, Fin Church Aid (FCA), has established a border surveillance system in Markounda. Awareness-raising sessions were then organized to promote the complaints mechanism, improve communication with asylum seekers, and contribute to the quality of humanitarian assistance. Twenty perception surveys and seven border visits were carried out.

Sixteen survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) were identified and referred to appropriate service providers.

Oxfam supported 175 households in market gardening activities, contributing to family food security.

Education

During the period under review, 447 Chadian refugee children were enrolled in public schools and 60 in secondary schools in various communities around Betoko. However, difficulties linked to access to and quality of education in the region persist. In villages where community schools are operational, there is a lack of intake capacity, educational materials, school infrastructure and qualified teachers. Parents are responsible for paying community teachers and providing school supplies and uniforms. In some localities, such as Bedaka, Begouladje1, Begouladje 2, Bemaksara and Bakadon, access to education is hampered by the absence of schools. Further support will be needed to help these children integrate into the local school system to enjoy their education rights.

Health and nutrition

Partner Vision to Change the World (VCW), in collaboration with the Betoko Health Center, has conducted 629 medical consultations, 348 of which have included asylum seekers, since the beginning of November. The main pathologies recorded are malaria, respiratory infections, and diarrhoea. Fifty-one prenatal consultations (including 27 for asylum seekers) were conducted during the reference period.

Shelter

UNHCR partner NOURRIR built 370 emergency shelters in Betoko in January to accommodate people relocated from Markounda and other neighboring villages along the border with Chad. Of the two thousand shelters planned, 690 are now ready to receive people.

During the reporting period, four community sheds and a refectory were built, and a community kitchen is nearing completion. In addition, three dormitories, a kitchen, and a store have been built.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

UNHCR partner NOURRIR built 92 restrooms and showers on the Betoko site during the reporting period. UNHCR and NOURRIR provide 12,000 liters of water per day on-site to meet the various needs of the families. While waiting for the water distribution system to be set up, a borehole has been constructed to supply families with drinking water.

NOURRIR, partenaire du HCR, a construit 370 abris d'urgence à Betoko pour accueillir les personnes relocalisées de Markounda et celles provenant d'autres villages voisins le long de la frontière avec le Tchad en janvier. Sur les deux mille abris prévus, 690 sont maintenant prêts à accueillir des personnes.

Internally displaced persons

Background: As of January 31, 2024, CAR's Commission on Population Movements (CMP) estimated the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at 522,231 individuals, made up respectively of 109,392 people living in sites, or 21% of the total and 412,839 people living with host families, or 79% of the total. This represented an increase of 10,428 IDPs (2%) compared with December 2023, when the number of IDPs was estimated at 511,803.

Kaga-Bandoro and Bria

UNHCR actively assisted the most vulnerable new IDPs by providing non-food items, guaranteeing access to shelter, making social protection cash transfers, and offering various assistance, all in coordination with the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM).

UNHCR has strengthened community protection and localization by working with local women's organizations, IDP organizations and local NGOs while building their technical and management capacities.

The protection monitoring program continued, as did the assessment of protection needs and risks through community structures. INTERSOS, COOPI and Finn Church Aid implemented these activities.

UNHCR provided data on internally displaced people and returnees to the humanitarian community via the management of the Commission on Population Movements (CMP) secretariat. UNHCR partner INTERSOS not only monitored protection but also managed IDP sites and organized IDP resettlement operations.



Saint Cyr, Head of household, his wife and children, the beneficiaries of the project financed by the Humanitarian Fund for CAR, has returned to his original neighborhood in Kaga Bandoro after rebuilding his house, destroyed during the crisis in CAR. @UNHCR-Ph. Stella Fatime

Pour soutenir le retour durable des personnes déplacées internes, le Fonds Humanitaire pour la RCA a financé un projet visant à construire 638 abris semi-durables pour les familles des retournés dans les localités de Kaga Bandoro et 1 962 abris semi-durables à Bria. À ce jour, le HCR à Bria et Kaga Bandoro a assisté tous les ménages de déplacés en leur fournissant des kits pour la toiture, composés de 28 tôles, 9 kg de pointes de tôle, 18 mètres de fer ballon, 2 mètres de goudron, 4 faîtières et 4 planches pour couvrir leurs maisons afin de faciliter leur retour dans les quartiers d'origine.

Sustainable Solutions

In February 2024, UNHCR assisted 274 households of 899 spontaneous and circumstantial returnees in Birao, Vakaga, and 79 households of 156 returnees in Ombella Mpoko as part of its support for the return of internally displaced persons and returnees to their usual areas. Thanks to the support of the UN Pooled Funding for CAR, these families have settled permanently in the areas of their choice.

Reducing and preventing the risk of statelessness

The UNHCR office in Bouar organized a prefectural advocacy workshop on birth registration and the prevention of statelessness. The workshop was attended by political-administrative and judicial authorities, civil registry offices, socio-medical and gender service managers, humanitarian actors (UN agencies, UN Mission, and NGOs), representatives of returnees and civil society actors. A total of 56 people took part, including 47 men and nine women.

Modules were presented by the UNHCR and administrative and judicial authorities, and group work was carried out with a plenary presentation. At the end of the workshop's discussions, participants designated focal points for statelessness, made up of the four sub-prefects (Bouar, Baoro, Baboua and Abba), in the presence of the Secretary General of the Nana Mambéré Prefecture.

Launch in the four sub-prefectures of Nana Mambéré of the identification exercise for children without birth certificates. Due to its vulnerability and high protection risks, this exercise is aimed primarily at localities where returnees have returned, except the Abba sub-prefecture. It will provide a database of repatriated children, returnees, and residents without birth certificates to help them obtain these certificates and supplementary birth certificates, with the support of civil

registry services and NGOs running projects on access to civil documentation in the area, under the coordination of the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), UNHCR and local authorities.

Working in partnership

In the Central African Republic, UNHCR leads the Protection clusters, co-leads Camp Coordination and Management (CCCM) and Shelter/NFI and continues to advocate the centrality of protection in humanitarian response and solution implementation.

UNHCR continues its efforts to develop synergies with governmental technical services, the World Bank, the ADB and other actors (WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, UNWOMEN, UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNAIDS, OCHA, MINUSCA, UNOPS). With the influx of refugees from Sudan and asylum seekers from Chad, the refugee coordination model has been activated. UNHCR is leading and coordinating the refugee response in collaboration with the CNR.

UNHCR aims to strengthen relations with private sector players, which is essential for stimulating economic growth and job creation. It also collaborates with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, academia, and the media. It also works with other government structures, operational partners, and national and international project partners.

Finally, UNHCR in CAR works closely with the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) to ensure adequate international protection and multi-sectoral assistance for those forced to flee.

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR's CAR operation in 2024.

Education Cannot Wait | United States of America | Japan | Luxembourg | United Nations Peacebuilding Fund | United Nations HIV/AIDS Program

And thank you to the donors who have granted flexible funding to UNHCR worldwide in 2024

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