

# UNHCR Cameroon Response

October 2023

Cameroon is confronting a **multi-faceted humanitarian and protection crisis** caused by conflict, inter-communal violence, and the effects of climate change.

Over **two million people** have fled their homes in search of safety and security in Cameroon, including nearly **half a million refugees**.

UNHCR works to **protect and assist** forcibly displaced throughout the country, ensuring **access to basic services and** searching for **durable solutions**.

## FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS: 2,198,347

486,347

Refugees and Asylum seekers in Cameroon\*

*Cameroon : Statistiques des personnes déplacées de force (Septembre 2023) ; Gouvernement du Cameroun avec le support du HCR –2023*

1.07 million

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) \*\*

*\*\* IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Février 2023, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Février 2023]*

645,746

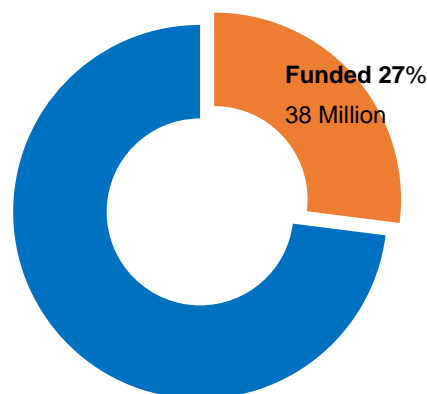
IDP returnees \*\*

*\*\* IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Février 2023, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Février 2023]*

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 OCTOBER 2023)

USD 142.8 M

requested for the Cameroon Multi Country Office (MCO)



## UNHCR PRESENCE

**Staff: 271 Staff**

**208** National Staff

**63** International Staff

**49** Affiliated Workforce

**Offices:**

**01** Branch Office in Yaoundé

**03** Sub Office: Bertoua, Maroua, and Douala

**03** Field Office: Bamenda and Meiganga,

**02** Field Unit: Batouri, Djohong and Kousseri



18 trainee refugees are developing their skills in automotive industry at Toyota. © UNHCR 2023



## Working with Partners

UNHCR works closely with wide range of partners including key Government ministries and decentralized entities, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, the refugee community, donors and other humanitarian and development actors to respond to the most pressing needs of refugees and others displaced persons across the country.

**Government partners:** UNHCR works in collaboration with the following ministries: In addition to reinforcing the capacities of the Secretariat Technique (Government counterpart) in handling refugee matters, UNHCR collaborates with the following ministries: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB), the Ministry of Defense (MINDEF), the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family (MINPROFF), the Ministry of Justice (MINJUSTICE), the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFEF), Ministry of environment Protection (MINEP), Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development (MINDDEVEL), the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and other government institutions.

**UN sister-Agencies:** WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNDP, ILO, UNOCHA, FAO, IOM, and WHO.

Thirteen implementing INGO and NGO partners:

**International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs):** African Humanitarian Action (AHA), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD); Agence pour le Développement Economique et Social (ADES), Développement Equité Durabilité et Innovation (DEDI), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), INTERSOS, and Plan International (Plan).

**National Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs):** Action Citoyenne pour le Developpement Communautaire (ACDC), Bihndumlem Humanitarian Association of Peace and hope (BIHAPH), Centre pour la Promotion de la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CPDH), Research and Advocacy for Gender Justice (RAGJ), and Publi Concern (PC)

## Main Achievements



### Refugee response

**Launch of the Durable Solutions Support Platform in CAR:** Following the Regional Ministerial Conference on Solutions on Forced Displacement in the context of the Central African crisis organized in Yaoundé on 27 April 2022, with the participation of the High Commissioner and the development of the Yaoundé Declaration, UNHCR, the Governments of the Central African Republic and Cameroon met in CAR in October 2023. During the meeting, they validated the launch of the coordination platform and underlined roles that Cameroon and ECCAS would play in the platform.

**Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR and partners continue to implement the Project 21 Protection Monitoring Systems, an inter-agency method for collecting and analyzing protection information across the region. Eastern façade has been dominated by confrontation between different NSAGs at the border town, and although populations displacement has not been noted, limited cross border movement has been noted. The most prevalent and worrisome security incident remains kidnapping for ransom. In the Far North region, insecurity due to NSAG attacks and intercommunal conflict has continued to disrupt daily activities, leading to increased tensions and violence in affected areas. Population movement has been observed, including the movement of refugees from the villages to the camp. The Minawao camp has crept past the formally designated site boundaries, and although fully saturated, the camp continues to receive new arrivals. Due to limited space, many of the open spaces within the camp have been transformed into new housing sites.

**Populations displacement and response:** In the Far North, since January 2023, over 7,000 refugees have fled renewed non-state armed group attacks at the border town with Nigeria into the Gouroungel Transit Center, seeking protection and assistance. After assessment and registration, many have been transferred to the Minawao camp, while others remain at the transit center. In October, over 1,500 refugees arrived at the transit center, an area with a capacity of 300 persons that was overcrowded. Most of these populations had initially fled Northeast Nigeria in 2013 and lived in Cameroonian host communities and the Nigerian border with Cameroon. Registration and relocation of the newly arrived are ongoing. At the North Region bordering Chad,

insecurity is ongoing following the intercommunal conflict in the Pao canton, which led to the forced displacement of more than 1,500 Chadians to the Touboro district. At the border with CAR, cross-border movement has been observed following the exaction of NSAGs at the border's town.

- **Continuous registration, biometric verification and support:** As of 30 September 2023, there were 486,347 refugees and asylum seekers in Cameroon, an increase of over 6,200 from June 2023. The fluctuation in refugee numbers is mainly due to the UNHCR verification exercise ongoing at the Far North and Eastern façade. According to data, 7,700 households were absent from the verification activities - 5,068 from the Minawao Camp, 2,629 among those living outside the camp, 1,800 reported spontaneous departures (spontaneous returns to Nigeria), 80 % were from Minawao Camp. (These departures are in addition to the organized returns of over 5,000 Nigerian refugees 2021-2023). Additional reductions come from the resettlement and closure of inactive cases. In terms of the increase in population, an estimated 5,000 refugees are not yet registered in the Far North. Another 2,500 are estimated to be unregistered in the North. In sum, the number of new arrivals from Nigeria and CAR exceeds the number of departures. UNHCR has strengthened its regulatory frameworks, protection coordination and response, including access and documentation, child protection, justice support, education, health, WASH, livelihood, and material assistance.

**Reinforced Protection Space:** The Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) accredited the *Comité des réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun (CRCC)*, a refugee-led organization through the legal decree number 0000039/A/MINAT/SG/DAP/SDLP/SA/CBA. This motion gives credence to their existence and operation in Cameroon.



**Providing shelter and direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs:** UNHCR shelter assistance has benefited over 5,318 households of 20,320 refugee and IDP individuals comprising emergency shelters, family shelters, shelter kits, rehabilitation, and completion of unfinished buildings and communal facilities in the Northwest, Southwest, Far North and Eastern regions of Cameroon. UNHCR has also provided **core relief items (CRIs) to 6,270 IDP and refugee households (59,7900 individuals)** in the transit center - Far North and Southwest (to flood-affected populations), including blankets, buckets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, and detergents.



#### Working with the Communities

**Community-based protection mechanisms are being strengthened** through the engagement of traditional authorities, trained social workers; women support groups, and youth groups in the existing community support structures. As a matter of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), regular consultations with the internally displaced and refugees, the collection of information about their situation, and feedback regarding assistance and protection services are in place.



**Prevention and response to gender-based violence:** UNHCR identifies and responds to gender-based violence with IDPs, refugees, host communities, partners and government officials **through training and distribution of information, education sensitization and mitigation.** UNHCR and its partners are working with other stakeholders in establishing and running the complaints and feedback mechanisms to prevent and end sexual exploitation and abuse. Of the total cases of GBV incidents, 98% took place in Cameroon and 2% in the countries of origin. Incidents affect most women 97% of identified survivors. The highest incidents were denial of resources and opportunities of services (41%) physical assault (19%), psychological and emotional violence (16%), rape (15%), forced marriage (5%), and sexual aggression (4%). A range of responses was provided to survivors, including psychosocial support (66%), medical assistance (58%), legal assistance (28%), material assistance (43%), socio economic support (13%), and safe shelter (17%). Over 90,000 IDPs, host communities and refugees were reached during the sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns conducted in Eastern and Far North regions and urban areas. Community-based protection structures participated and meaningfully contributed to the delivery of these activities. Themes discussed during the door-to-door group discussions and public events included Sexual and psychological assault prevention, GBV prevention and available services for survivors, Consequences of forced marriages, Sexual exploitation, and prevention, Parental responsibility in GBV prevention, Empowering women and girls as a means of combating GBV, the community role in combating sexual assault: recognizing and denouncing sexual exploitation in the community.

**Peaceful coexistence:** Together with IOM, UNDP and FAO, UNHCR is implementing a programme to increase stability, return, legal access, and social cohesion in Logone Birni, focusing on restoring peace, justice and livelihoods to ten (10) communities severely impacted by flood and intercommunal conflict.



**Health:** Refugee populations and host communities have access to primary health care in health centers in refugee camps, sites and urban settings. 147,916 health consultations have been provided to refugees (81%)

and surrounding host communities (19%). Among them, 85,599 were Nigerian refugees, 58,002 Central African refugees from Eastern facade, and 4,315 urban refugees (Yaoundé and Douala). Children under five years old represent 41% of consultations. The main diseases were Malaria (34%), Respiratory tract infections (30%), intestinal parasites (6%), diarrheal conditions (5%), skin diseases (4%), ear infections (3%), urinary tract infections (2.5%), eye infections (2.1%), and acute malnutrition (0.37%).

**Cash-Based Interventions (CBI):** In UNHCR Cameroon, CBI accounts for 7% of the UNHCR operational budget. Over 13,748 refugees from Central Africa (69%), Nigeria (1%), and others (16%), as well as internally displaced in host communities (14%), received USD 1,003,456 in response to their protection needs, including education, livelihood, Gender-Based Violence prevention and response, and to persons with specific needs.



## SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

*UNHCR works with the government and partners to find durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations in Cameroon. Advocacy for refugee inclusion in the country's national system (health, education, and finances) have yielded some positive results, but additional funding is needed for an effective and consistent response.*

### Local Integration

**Documentation:** Following UNHCR advocacy, since 2022, already 5,124 refugees received government-issued refugee identification cards. The document facilitates the protection of refugees' rights (education, employment, movement, and association) in Cameroon, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and international conventions on recognizing their rights. Also, UNHCR has issued refugee ID cards to all verified adult refugees in the Far North.

**Education:** In the 2023-2024 school year, **47,545 refugee children** have been enrolled in primary and 1,690 in secondary school, out of the 182,870 children of school age in these two cycles. UNHCR also supports the provision of stipends to 330 teachers and parents-teachers associations. Further, 86 active DAFI scholarship holders for the academic year 2023/2024.

**Green Actions:** To mitigate the negative impact of refugees, IDPs, and host community activity on the environment in Far North Cameroon, nearly 500,000 forest, fruit, and nutritional seedlings have been planted by Nigerian refugees and the host community members since 2017, including 44,792 using the cocoon technique. The plant trees cover an area of 977 ha and have an 86 percent tree survival rate. Several high-level missions have been conducted in the area. In November, the UNHCR Goodwill ambassador activist Emtithal Mahmoud visited the area to ascertain these actions.

**Real Time Monitoring:** A Pilot Project initiated by UNHCR HQ WaSH section has been implemented in Cameroon to remotely monitor, in real time, the quality and operation of drinking water systems by providing quantitative and graphical data. The RTM mission conducted from 02 to 07 October 2023 took place in the town of Garoua Bouläi and in the refugee site of Gado Badzere. During their mission, they train the WASH and ICT teams in Cameroon in handling smart sensors and transmission devices based on Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) technology. The smart sensors and devices, developed by GreenCityzen for the real-time monitoring of drinking water supply systems, was installed and test to ensure data visualization on the application platform.

UNHCR installed 16 autonomous water stations with solar pumping in the Far North and the East regions (seven in Minawao, two in Gado, one in Mbile, one in Firkiliwa (Logone Birni), one in Almagoché (Logone Birni), and one in Lyamagra (fotkol and 1 in Blangafe (Blangoua)). The system serves over 45,000 people in refugee settlements in Cameroon.

**Voluntary repatriation** - UNHCR has facilitated the **voluntary repatriation of 2,369 refugees** - 1,319 Nigerian Refugees, 997 CAR refugees and 50 urban refugees. During the process, UNHCR's role is to ensure return is voluntary, well-informed, and carried out in safety and dignity.

- **Resettlement** - In 2023, a total of 965 Individual refugee cases have been submitted from Cameroon to various resettlement countries, as 5 percent increase from the quota. Of these, 70% are Women and Girls at Risk, or survivors of violence. As of October 2023, a total of **875 refugees have departed from Cameroon to USA, France, Finland, Norway, Canada and Australia**. The last eight months, UNHCR has supported several resettlement missions: from France conducted in Douala from 20 to 24 March 2023, and from USA in Yaoundé and Douala from 24 July 2023 to 15 September 2023.



**Education pathways**- UNHCR Cameroon targets to have refugee students benefit from various scholarship opportunities in countries such as France, Germany and Italy. Currently five refugee students have been accepted under the University Corridor Program in France to pursue their master's degree at the University of Clermont Auvergne and Université Paris 1 Panthéon – Sorbonne. One student has benefited from Daad Scholarship to Saarland University in Germany to study Masters in European and International Law.

**Labor mobility** – UNHCR Cameroon is encouraging Refugees interested in Skilled Labor Program in areas such as truck drivers, cooks and nursing assistants to register their profiles through two NGOs, Talent Lift and Talent Beyond Boundaries. They match refugees with employment opportunities in third countries.

## Internally Displaced Persons Protection Response



The security and protection situation in the Northwest and Southwest (NWSW) remains volatile, with continuous attacks on civilians and human rights violations, including GBV. The past three months have seen a resurgence of crime, armed conflict, and security incidents. In Northwest and southwest, “Back to School” lockdown enforced by NSAGs, couple by attacks on a clergy and schoolteachers, as well as abduction of numerous community leaders had instilled fear in populations. Also, insecurity, unlawful arrests and detention, attacks in schools and mounting of roadblocks on major axis have left populations without access to food and vital medical treatment, creating psychosis within communities. Furthermore, reduced or poor network connection have made communication difficult between humanitarian workers, service providers and affected community members. Also, the important transportation axis has been cut off and still inaccessible.

**Abduction of humanitarian workers:** Several humanitarian staff were abducted before and during the lockdown. In the Northwest, four (4) Caritas workers were abducted in Bamessing village, and the food truck diverted by NSAGs in Bamali village. In the Southwest, 7 others Caritas workers were abducted while carrying out an assessment in Muyuka. All the humanitarian staff abducted were released unharmed after advocacy.

**Populations movement:** The prevailing situation in the NWSW have triggered population displacement prompting movement of populations within the regions, into the neighbouring regions and Nigeria.

**Over 300,000 IDPs and host communities** have benefitted from UNHCR protection and response including Protection Monitoring, documentation and prevention of Statelessness (birth certificates, National Identification Card and disability card), access to justice, Community-Based Protection approach, environment, GBV prevention and response, and material assistance (shelter and CRIs), and coordination activities since January 2023.

- **Protection Monitoring:** In Northwest and Southwest regions, protection monitoring focused on improving the protection environment and guarantee access to basic protection services including community initiatives program through quick impact projects. A total of **88 assessments monitoring missions** were conducted in 88 localities in the NWSW. These assessments revealed protection issues such as child protection issues - separated and unaccompanied children, child labor, child association with arms groups and arm forces (CAAFAG), child trafficking and abuse, GBV - denial of resources, services and opportunities, rape, sexual assault, and physical assault). As of September 2023, a total of **6,162 incidents have been recorded**, a 34 % increase of the 4,595 Protection incidents reported in 2022. In terms of response:
- **Documentations:** A total of **1,932** vulnerable young people, IDPs and host community members in Northwest, Southwest, West and Littoral regions benefitted from documentation, including: 1,526 birth certificates, 207 national Identity Cards, and 199 disability cards. The issuance of civil statutes documents has facilitated their access to education, employment and livelihood opportunities as well as facilitated their free movement within and beyond their communities. Many youths have been able to register for regular entry into schools and public exams after staying out of school for some years.
- **3,865** people received **general protection assistance** including legal assistance, livelihood and socio-economic inclusion services, and support with civil documentation. The issuance of civil statutes documents for vulnerable young people in Northwest, Southwest, West, and Littoral regions has facilitated access to education, employment, and livelihood opportunities and their free movement within and beyond their communities. Many youths have been able to register for regular entry into schools and public exams after staying out of school for some years.
- **3,404** received **Housing Land and Property (HLP) assistance** including legal assistance and counselling and capacity-building on HLP related matters.

- **10,092** received **Child Protection services** of which around 50% benefitted from Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.
- **GBV prevention and response; GBV partners reached 10,907 persons** through prevention activities, holistic support to GBV survivors, safety audits and risk & vulnerability mapping, vocation trainings-economic support-livelihood activities for women and girls.

539 GBV survivors and persons at risk of GBV benefitted from psychosocial support. Among which 451 cases were recorded and underwent tailored case management process by UNHCR's partners. Advocacy actions have equally been carried out with local traditional rulers to end harmful traditional practices, and 4 wilfully accepted to contribute to ending such practices within their community. **300 women and girls at risks of GBV**, and survivors of GBV underwent vocational training in hair dressing, dress making, tailoring, pastry, catering, embroidering, soap production, decoration, and market gardening for which they will receive cash for start-up kits to enable them start up small income generating activities. 36 protection community plans were developed by community-based protection committees.

**Complaint and feedback mechanism:** The established community-based complain mechanisms using existing community structures were reinforced through capacity building in line with Child protection. **38 Community Protection Committees** were revived, 145 focal points capacitated and the operationalization of the **toll-free helpline (8564) UNHCR/INTERSOS**. Five key messages in coordination with implementing partners were developed to address Accountability for Affected Populations and PSEA in line with the complaint mechanism and disseminated in the community during awareness sessions. A total of **145** complaints were received through the complaints mechanism and directed to available responses following the needs. In addition, 14 awareness sessions in line with the availability of complain mechanisms were organized, reaching a total of **1,152** individuals including **269** males and **883** females. This was useful to further make known the available mechanisms in the community and further build trust and confidence in the communities in line with humanitarian activities.

**Green Action:** since 2022, a total of 2,000 seedlings were planted in the IDP hosting area of Bogo, Far North.

## Strengthened Coordination

UNHCR leads the response for IDPs' Protection, Shelter/NFI sector (Far-North, Northwest, and South-West) while acting under the overall leadership of the Cameroonian government. UNHCR also coordinates the refugee response's protection needs and solutions strategy (as per the Refugee Coordination Model). UNHCR is also attending key UN meetings and actively contributing to ensure that agencies with resources and mandates consider refugees and IDPs in their response and solutions.

Partnership and MOU with:

- **Central African Police Chiefs Committee (CAPCO)** – to harmonize documentation in the Economic and Monetary Committee of Central African States (CEMAC) countries.
- **International Labour Organization (ILO)**– Social protection and inclusion of refugees in labour, labour mobility and entrepreneurship of females.
- **CIFOR ICRAF** – on climate change and mitigating the impact of refugees on the environment, promoting conservation and livelihood improvement for sustainable management of forest resources in displacement settings and mobilizing resources for joint initiatives.
- **Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development (MINDDEVEL)** – to work with the decentralized regional services.

**Protection Cluster:** UNHCR is fully committed to its leadership role; since 2022, the Agency has appointed dedicated protection coordinators at the national level, in the Northwest and Southwest (covering the Littoral and West regions) and the Far North. Regular protection meetings are held at the national and sub-national levels. The Sector and clusters have various technical working groups to support coordination. The Areas of Responsibility on Child Protection, Housing, Land and Property, and GBV coordinate well with the lead agency. Monthly, the Sector advocates and updates the Humanitarian Country Team on the protection trends and coordinated response.

According to protection monitoring report, incidents of protection are on the rise. As of end August, 4,800 protection incidents have been reported in Northwest and Southwest, a 5 % increase compared to 2022 and 352 terrorist attacks in Far North. Also, the UN Security reports (including UNHCR and UNDSS weekly sitreps) indicate a 38% increase between August 2022 and August 2023. In addition to terrorism, the most prevalent

incidents were armed crime, and conflict in NWSW and property destruction, extortions, and physical assaults in Far North.

The Protection Sector interventions reached **119,780** persons with GBV response, **17,113** child protection, **10,225** civil documentation, **21,285** sensitization on peaceful coexistence and **4,065** Housing, Land and Property. Following advocacy and its adoption by the Humanitarian Country Team, **5,135** persons have been trained on the Centrality of Protection Strategy.

**Shelter Cluster** –In the Far North the Household Standardized Assessment Tool has been finalized and uploaded on the dedicated web page. The tool will be accompanied by the raking of vulnerability indicators to support in the prioritization of SHELTER/NFI assistance. In the Far North the Assessment Registry has been posted online for partners to enter information their achieved, ongoing and planned activities.

**Shelter cluster partners' response has benefitted 147,187** IDPs, refugees out of camp, returnees, and vulnerable host communities out of 1.2 million individual needs assessed in Cameroon. Of the 700,000 individuals planned to be assisted by 14 Shelter/CRI sector partner organizations in 2023, as of September 2023, a total of 65,343 IDPs and host communities have received NFI assistance, and 89,861 received shelter assistance in cash or nature (some beneficiaries received both shelter and NFIs kits). The Shelter/NFI Sector is among the least funded sectors in Cameroon, with less than 23% of the 32.1 million USD required, according to the OCHA Financial Tracking System.

## Financial Information

The total recorded contributions for the Cameroon MCO amount to **30.4 million USD**. **UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed directly to this operation**, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

UNHCR Cameroon says thanks to the Government of Cameroon | United States of America | Germany | Sweden | UN Peacebuilding Fund | Canada | Toyota Tsusho Corporation | United Kingdom | UNAIDS | UN Trust Fund for Human Security.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly restricted and regional funds in 2023: **United States of America** 51 million | **Italy** 8.8 million | **Private donors Australia** 7.8 million | **Private donors Germany** 4.2 million | **Australia** 3.9 million | **Canada** 3.9 million | **Private donors USA** 3.2 million | **Finland** 3.1 million | **Private donors United Kingdom** 2.4 million

**Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2023:** Sweden 69 million | Norway 63.1 million | Private donors Spain 55.7 million | Netherlands 36.3 million | Denmark 35.6 million | Private donors Japan 34.1 million | United Kingdom 28.9 million | France 26.7 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 23.5 million | Germany 23.1 million | Switzerland 18.9 million | Private donors Italy 13.7 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.9 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million

### For more information:

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