



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SUDAN SITUATION:
COUNTRY
SOCIOECONOMIC
PROFILE

January 2025

Country Context

The violence in Sudan has affected South Darfur, which borders the remote northern Vakaga prefecture of the Central African Republic (CAR). As of 20 January 2025, a total of 37,089 individuals have fled from Sudan into CAR, including 30,729 refugees and 6,360 refugee returnees. The Government of CAR has kept its borders open to Sudanese refugees throughout the conflict. On 19 August 2023, it granted prima facie refugee status (automatic recognition of refugee status based on readily apparent, objective circumstances in the country of origin, without individual assessments) to Sudanese nationals fleeing violence. Based on current trends, UNHCR anticipates that up to 45,000 refugees total, and 1,500 additional refugee returnees will cross into CAR by December 2025.

The government has adopted an out of camp policy, which includes the establishment of refugee settlements within existing towns and villages, as well as the effective inclusion of refugees in the national health and education systems. Most refugees from Sudan are women and children, arriving with few resources after enduring violence in their places of origin as well as during their journey. They mainly cross through the Am-Dafock border and proceed to Birao, some 65 km away, where the Korsi (which means “welcome”) refugee settlement has been established. Korsi is located in the Vakaga prefecture, one of the poorest, most remote and sparsely populated areas of the country, which is also plagued by insecurity.

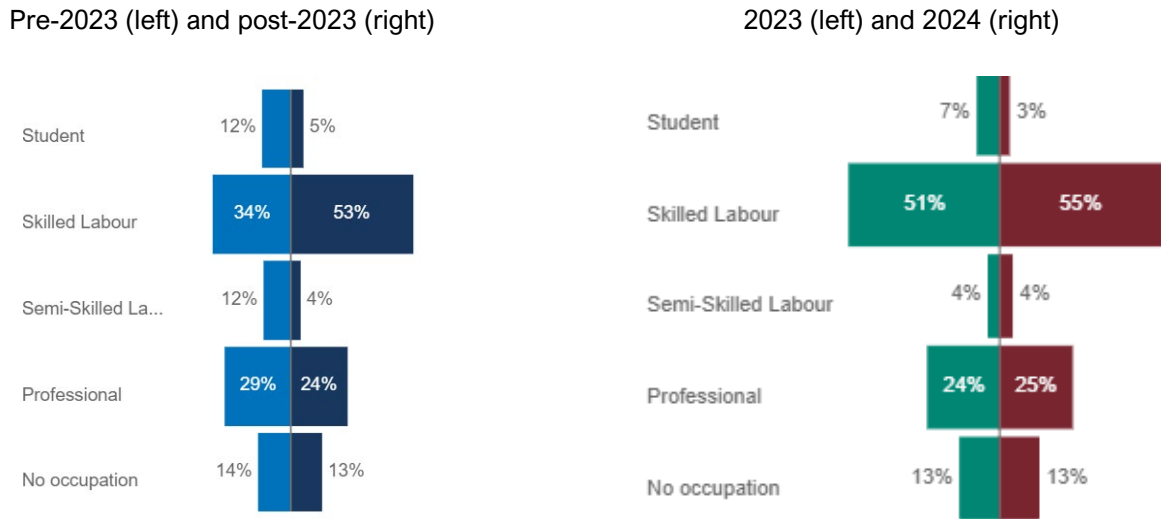
One of the 20 prefectures of CAR, Vakaga covers an area of 46,500 km² and had a population of 52,255 according to the 2003 census. Its capital, Birao, hosts 18,176 of the 30,729 Sudanese refugees registered in CAR.¹ Korsi is a neighbourhood close to essential infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and the base of the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR. Additionally, about 1,123 internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by conflict in 2019 are present in three nearby sites.

Some 12,553 refugees are scattered in other regions, in hard-to-reach areas where only protection, registration and documentation are provided due to the complex security environment and logistics challenges. These refugees are mainly “sur place” refugees – those who were in CAR when the war in Sudan intensified and are now unable to return. They are among the most vulnerable and peaceful coexistence and adapted self-reliance programmes are paramount to support them.

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Displacement

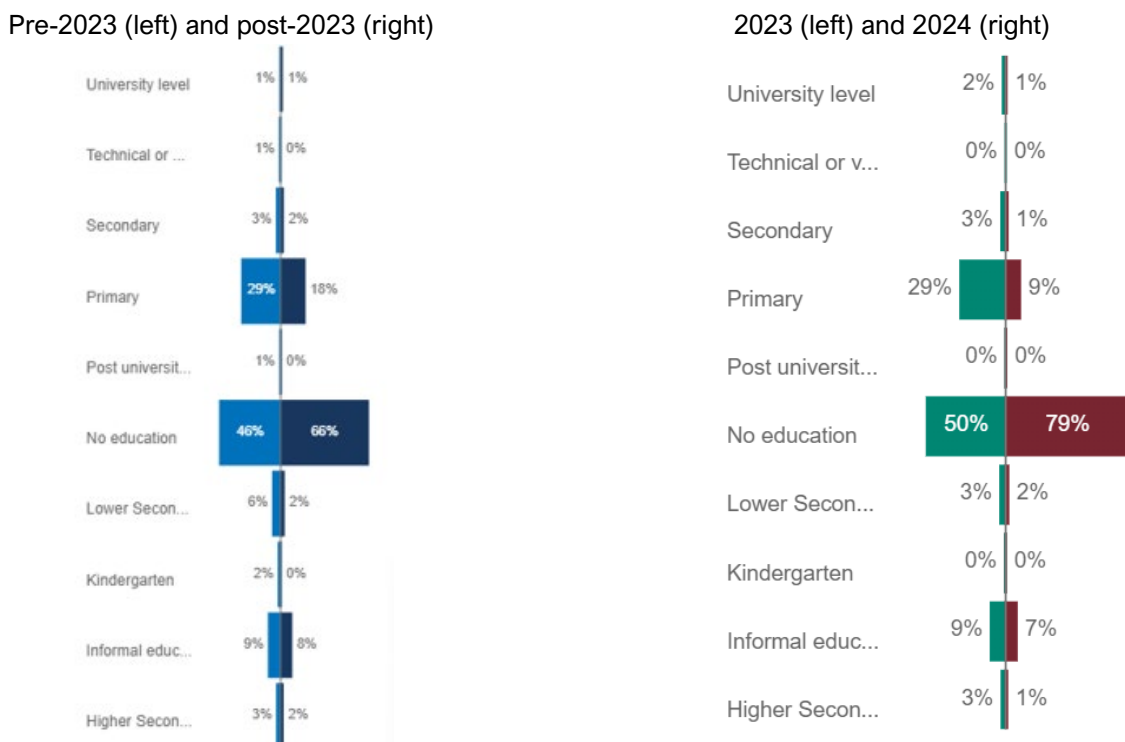
Based on UNHCR registration records, the proportion of Sudan refugees skilled labourers fleeing to CAR increased dramatically from 34% to 53% after the emergence of the conflict in April 2023. Similarly, the percentage of skilled labourers increased slightly from 51% in 2023 to 55% between 2023 and 2024. This indicates a steady rise in skilled labour among refugees, potentially because this group is more likely to secure employment in the host country, CAR, or because they are more inclined to leave Sudan during crises.

¹ UNHCR Operational Data Portal (2024)

Figure 1: Occupation


Source: UNHCR registration data

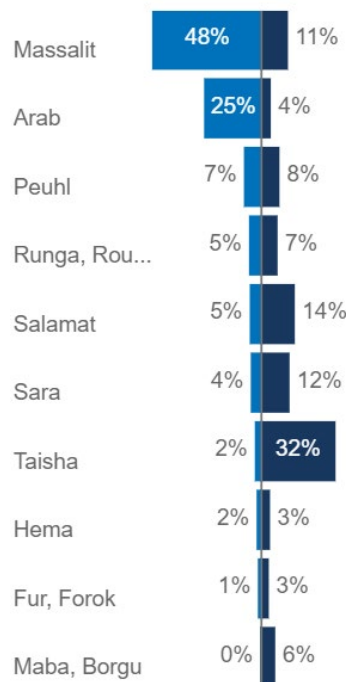
Sudanese refugees arriving to CAR since 2023 have a variety of educational backgrounds, with 18% at the primary level, 6% at the lower and upper secondary level, 1% at the university level, as well as 8% with informal education through traditional Koranic schools. Nonetheless, about two-thirds of refugees arriving to CAR since the crisis had had no education in Sudan. The educational profile of arrivals shifted from 2023 to 2024, with more highly educated Sudanese arriving at the beginning of the crisis than later on. In 2023, about 50% of refugees arriving to CAR had some level of education, while by 2024 this had decreased to only 21%. This may be related to the fact that urban centers, where education rates are higher, were more disproportionately impacted by airstrikes and conflict in the early days of the war compared to rural areas, yet as the conflict continued and the security and economic situation worsened, more and more Sudanese from rural areas, with less education, also fled to CAR for asylum.

Figure 2: Education


Source: UNHCR registration data

The ethnic composition of Sudanese refugees fleeing to the Central African Republic (CAR) has shifted significantly post-crisis. Pre-crisis, the majority were from the Massalit 48% and Arab 25% ethnic groups, but their representation has decreased to 11% and 4%, possibly due to different displacement dynamics or challenges in fleeing. In contrast, ethnic groups like the Taisha from 2% to 32%, Salamat from 5% to 14%, and Sara from 5% to 14% have seen large increases, indicating they were disproportionately affected by the conflict.

Figure 3: Ethnicity (pre-2023, left; post-2023, right)



Source: UNHCR registration data

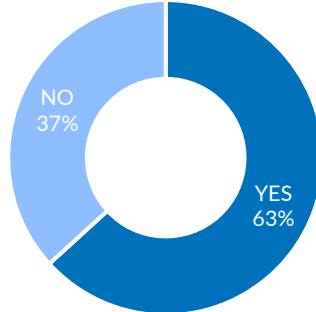
Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA) for Education (2024)

The Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) aims to provide the humanitarian community with data to better understand the nature and severity of humanitarian needs, particularly in food security, shelter, water, health, education, protection and accountability to affected populations. The following charts on education are based on data collected between June 12, 2024, and August 31, 2024, covering 18 out of 20 prefectures in the Central African Republic, based on a sample of 13,999 households comprising host populations, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees.

Around two in three school age children were enrolled in school or participating in an early childhood education programme during the school year, however, disruptions to education were common and many households struggled with the cost of education. The most common disruption was due to the absence of teachers (38%), less common was natural hazards (10%), including flooding, the school being used as shelter for displaced persons (3%) and conflict (1%). By far the most common reason for lack of access was financial means (66%).

Figure 4: Educational enrolment

% of Children enrolled in school or participated in an early childhood education program at the 2023-2024 school year

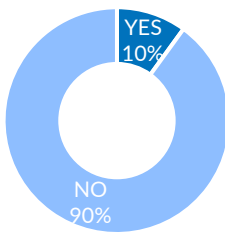


Source: CAR MSNA 2024
© REACH Central African Republic

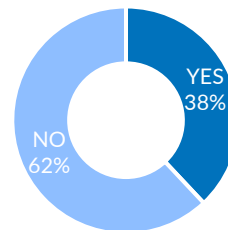
Source: CAR MSNA (2024)

Figure 5: Disruptions to education

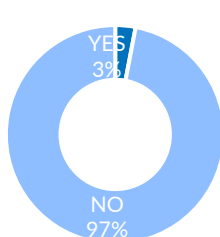
Natural hazards such as floods, drought, or wildfires



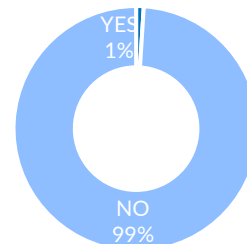
Absence of teachers (certified teachers and/or parent-teachers)



School is being used as a shelter for displaced people

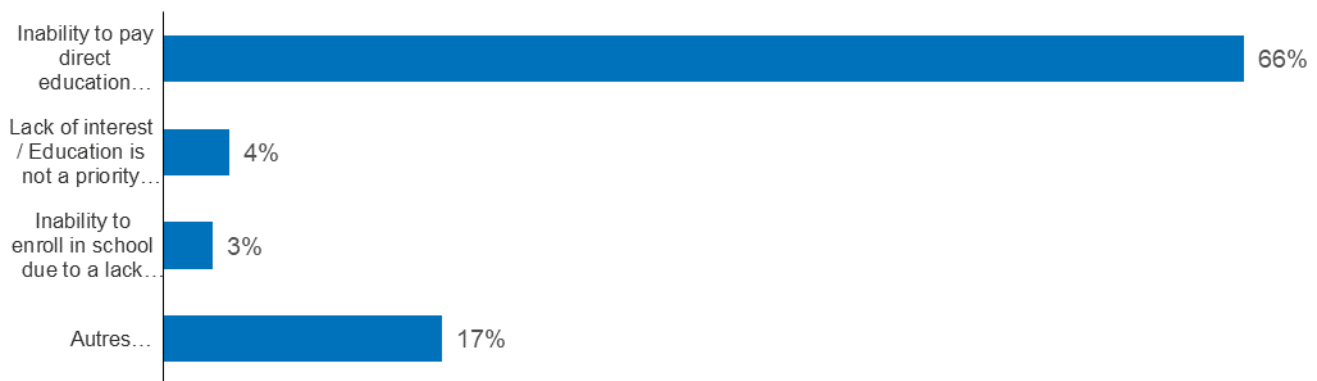


School is occupied by armed forces/armed non-state groups



Source: CAR MSNA (2024)

Figure 6: Main reason why children did not have access



Source: CAR MSNA (2024)

Learning from the National Poverty Assessment in CAR

CAR has one of the highest poverty rates in the world and faces its own significant development challenges, as well as conflict and displacement dynamics. Poverty stands at 68 percent nationally, with many IDPs in camps ([World Bank 2023](#)). Most households (9 in 10) are ‘vulnerable’ or ‘falling into poverty’, with larger households – whose heads are less educated and primarily engaged in agriculture – facing the greatest risks.

While agriculture is by far the most common activity, households involved in agriculture face significant limits on productivity and more must be done to improve access to markets and inputs for the sector to be a stable basis for self-reliance. At the same time, access to basic infrastructure – including schools, medical services, and roads – remains a significant challenge for most households. This is particularly true in the regions bordering Sudan, where the share of children within a one-hour walk to school is only 20 percent. Yet, results from the poverty assessment show those who live within a one-hour walk are 20 percent more likely to attend school than those 1-2 hours away.

The existing fragility and background of violence underscores the vital importance of programmatic responses to the new influx of refugees from Sudan, to assist host communities and incoming populations.