

UNHCR Cameroon Response

Janvier 2025

A multi-faceted **humanitarian and protection crisis** caused by conflicts, inter-communal violence, and the effects of climate change is ongoing in Cameroon.

In 2024, UNHCR protection and response reached **700,000** refugees, returnees, IDPs, vulnerable host communities and persons at risk of statelessness in Cameroon.

107,375 forcibly displaced persons received cash assistance as a response to cover various needs, including protection, housing, shelter, livelihood, food, non-food items and others

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS: 2,121,000

426,537

Refugees and Asylum seekers in Cameroon*

Cameroon : Statistiques des personnes déplacées de force (December 2024) ; Gouvernement du Cameroun avec le support du HCR. The reduction in the number of refugees is due to ongoing continuous verification and the deactivation of absent refugees.

1.037 million

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) **

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

658,500

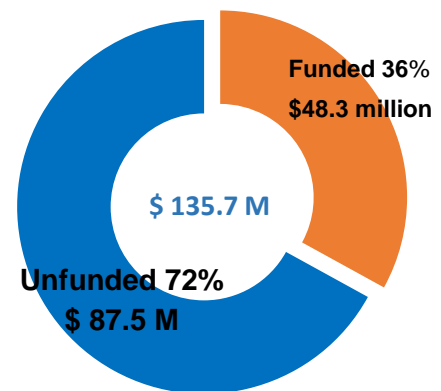
IDP returnees **

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

FUNDING (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2024)

USD 134.7 M

requested for the Cameroon Multi Country Office (MCO)



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff: 225 Staff

145 National Staff

37 International Staff

43 Affiliated Workforce

Offices:

01 Branch Office in Yaoundé

03 Sub Offices: Bertoua, Maroua, and Douala

04 Field Offices: Bamenda, Kousseri, Batouri and Meiganga



In Cameroon, 49,000 forcibly displaced children and host community children benefitted from school kits to enhance their access to education. © UNHCR/R.Mbendong 2025



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, private sector 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 collaborates with various government counterparts to ensure the protection and inclusion for persons affected by multiple humanitarian crises. Key collaborators include Secretariat Technique – facilitating the Refugee Status Determination and bridge with the Government entities; Statistical institutions, including National Institutes of Statistics (NIS), National Committee for Refugees (CNR) in Gabon and the *Bureau Central des recensements et des Etudes de Populations (BUCREP)* for registration, and socio-economic data on refugee households.

Twelve implementing **International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO)** and **National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)** partners (seven), including seven INGOs: African Humanitarian Action (AHA), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD); Développement Equité Durabilité et Innovation (DEDI), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), INTERSOS, and Plan International (Plan), and four NGOs : Action Citoyenne pour le Développement Communautaire (ACDC), Centre pour la Promotion de la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CPDH), Research and Advocacy for Gender Justice (RAGJ), and Public Concern (PC).

Main Achievements

UNHCR has strategically implemented activities aiming at the achievement of key objectives defined in its Multi-Year and Multi-Partner Strategy 2022-2026 (MYMP 2022-2026) plans. The Strategic plan is aligned with the UNHCR Global Strategic Direction 2022-2026, the Cameroon 2030 National Development Plan, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The mid-point evaluation of the 2024 execution plan shows positive progress, with UNHCR and its partners reaching nearly 700,000 refugees, IDPs, refugee returnees and other vulnerable host populations with its protection and response activities.

Protection Monitoring and Analysis: UNHCR and its partners have successfully continued the Project 21 Protection Monitoring Systems. This initiative collects and analyzes protection information to inform responses, support advocacy, and reinforce state responsibility. As of December 2024, monitoring uncovered over 20,000 incidents, with nearly 7,174 referred to protection services and legal assistance provided to 1,058 forcibly displaced persons in Cameroon. These cases involved issues such as civil and political rights, property matters, violence, theft, threats to physical integrity, arbitrary arrest, illegal custody, economic and social rights, non-payment of salaries, and wrongful dismissal.



Refugee response

UNHCR multisectoral protection and response interventions reached nearly **700,000 refugees**, IDPs, refugee returnees and other vulnerable host populations.

Biometric and continuous verification of Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigerian refugees significantly decreased due to the ongoing UNHCR verification efforts. As of December, there were 255,899 CAR refugees in Cameroon. This 14% reduction was due to the deactivation of absentees in sites and camp. In 2024, UNHCR registered 15,999 persons, including 5,004 newborns, 10,995 new arrivals mostly from CAR, Nigeria, Niger and Sudan.

Refugee profile: As of December 2024, there were 410,400 refugees and 16,137 asylum seekers in Cameroon. They originate primarily from CAR (67 %) living in Eastern regions, Nigeria (30%) mainly settled in the Far North and other nationalities (3.5%) in urban areas of Yaounde and Douala. Among them, 53% are women and girls and 56% are children. Additionally, 33% are persons specific needs, including persons with legal and protection needs (57%), children at risk (23%), women at risk (9%), single parents (9%), older adults at risk (8%), persons living with disabilities (5%), unaccompanied and separated minors (5%), and those with serious medical conditions (7%). Nearly 12% have been in Cameroon for over 11 years, 56% for 6 to 10 years, 16% for 3 to 5 years and 16% less than two years. Demographically, 8% of refugees are older adults. Living conditions vary, with 31% residing in camps or camp-like situations.

IDPs profiling for solutions: in the Far North, 17,025 IDPs have been profiled in the 20 IDPs sites of Kousseri and Logone Birni, while UNHCR conducted the socioeconomic profiling of 30,000 IDPs in the West regions.

Results and impact

- *Protect - Enhanced Protection for Refugees:*

Law and policy: The country adopted a significant number of laws enhancing the country's protection space:

Advocacy for Statelessness Conventions: UNHCR has successfully advocated for Cameroon's accession to the UN Conventions on the Status of Stateless Persons (1954) and the Reduction of Statelessness (1961). This led to the adoption of Law N°2024/006 on July 24, 2024, and Decree No. 2024/333 on July 24, 2024, formalizing Cameroon's accession to the conventions.

Civil Registration System Reform: In December 2024, the country passed the Law N°2024/016 on civil registration system reform and Law N°2024/015 on civil protection, establishing a National Civil Protection Agency. These reforms extend the time allowed for birth declarations and simplify the conditions for registering births, making it easier for refugees to obtain civil documentation.

UNHCR and the Ministry of Decentralization and Development (MINDDEVEL) secured legal backing for budgeting refugee needs in local and regional plans through Joint Circular Letter aligned with the President's budgetary policy.

Documentation: Despite the 2005 Refugee National Law enshrining freedom of movement, refugees often need a movement pass to travel within the country. To address this, UNHCR and the government have started issuing biometric refugee identity cards. In 2024, 18,050 refugees were enrolled, and 5,000 received biometric cards, enhancing their mobility, financial access, and socio-economic integration.

- **Child Protection:** Efforts to build the capacities of the social protection system have reached 14,265 forcibly displaced persons with child protection services by December 2024. Best interest assessments identified at-risk children, including unaccompanied and separated children, children without birth certificates, children with disabilities, child heads of households, victims of neglect, GBV survivors, and child marriages. In response, various support measures were implemented, including alternative care, mobility and vision equipment for children with disabilities, and participation in community-based child protection programs.
- **Gender-based Violence (GBV):** Specialized GBV services benefitted 14,500 refugees and 14,060 IDPs, including prevention and response activities. Out of the 1,118 incidents, the most frequently reported were denial of resources, opportunities, and services (38%), physical assault (29%), psychological and emotional violence (18%), rape (8%), sexual assault (4%), and forced marriage (3%). The number of child marriages has significantly decreased within the refugee community.
- **Education:** Only 27% of the 210,983 school-age refugee children in Cameroon are enrolled in school with the gross enrolment rate is 29% for girls and 35% for boys. Over 159,000 children are out of school due to a lack of secondary schools, classrooms, teachers, and the inability of parents to afford school fees, examination fees, and school materials. To enhance protection of vulnerable girls' education, the Ministry of Education issued an order to keep pregnant girls in schools to reduce inequality of opportunity.

Empower and assist – Effort has been made to enhance the well-being of refugees, including:

- **Shelter assistance:** Quality housing was provided for **71,350 vulnerable refugee, IDP and returnee households** through various mechanisms, including 34,350 refugees and IDPs benefiting from cash-based interventions (CBI) for shelter and rental assistance, 15,000 refugees and IDPs benefiting from the construction of emergency and transitional shelters, and 4,400 households (22,000 individuals) benefiting from material kits to improve their shelter.
- **Non-food Items assistance:** In 2024, **54,897 people received NFI kits** with focus on families with special needs. Of these, 30% of the kits were provided to families with more than eight members, 25% to women-headed households, 40% to elderly-headed households, and 5% to persons with disabilities. To further enhance living conditions, the NFI kits were upgraded to include mattresses and solar lamps, ensuring better comfort and safety for the recipients.
- **Persons with specific needs (PSN):** A total of 47,996 PSN were identified, with 59% being women. They received home visits, counselling, psychosocial support, assessments, equipment support, and referrals to essential services. Students with vision and hearing challenges continued their studies more easily, while adults with mobility aids engaged more fully in their communities. An MoU with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) created a framework to include elderly and disabled refugees and IDPs in social protection programs.

- **Food Assistance:** The trend is a shift from blanket and in-food distribution to targeted food assistance using cash-based modalities aimed to promote self-reliance. Despite reduced WFP funding, two distributions covering four months were completed for 54,000 refugees in Minawao camp.
- **Livelihood:** In 2024, 1,759 refugee farmers, including 1,012 women, gained access to 994 hectares of land for agricultural inputs and tools. This land comprises 483 hectares in the Eastern façade and 511 hectares in the Far North. Additionally, the Government allocated 151 hectares of land in the Far North, with 57% of the beneficiaries being women, to address food shortages.
- **Water and Sanitation:** Efforts to maintain water networks, repair hand pumps, build capacity, and improve proximity to water sources increased water supply from 14 to 16 liters per person per day in Minawao camp and 17 liters per person per day in the eastern facade. Additionally, Real-Time Monitoring (RTM) better control of the drinking water supply in Minawao and Gado.

The production of biofertilizer from 821.4 m³ of faecal sludge resulted in 360 bags of 50 kg composted manure, improving agricultural yields for refugees. Sixteen refugees managed the process, using biofertilizers to restore soil, promote organic production, and generate income by selling to farmers. Proper management of biofertilizers reduces health risks and costs.
- **Healthy environment:** 50,000 seedlings composed of fruit, forest, nutritional and pharmacopoeia trees were planted and created green spaces in 5 schools of targeted localities.
- **Healthcare:** Regarding mortalities, 336 deaths were recorded in 2024, down from 357 in 2023, with a crude mortality rate of 0.09 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants (Standard <0.75). 4,122 (97%) assisted delivery by a healthcare worker. 47,091 new enrollees brought to 93,003 refugees the total number of refugees that have access to healthcare through Universal Health Coverage. The healthcare coverage provides free or subsidized care for malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, kidney failure, and pregnant women.
- In camp, sites, and host communities, UNHCR and partner supported access to primary care for 163,914 including 114,861 Nigerian refugees, 45,904 Central African refugees, and 3,149 urban refugees. The main pathologies were respiratory infections (38%), chronic diseases (15%), and malaria (13%).
- 3,528 refugee children received the new malaria vaccine, and combined with malaria chemoprevention, Intermittent Preventive Treatment for pregnant women, and the use of insecticide-treated nets, contributed to a 30% reduction in malaria cases (20,176 in 2024 vs. 28,643 in 2023).
- 1,558 new cases of severe acute malnutrition were recorded in nutritional units, up from 1,132 in 2024, with a notable increase in the Minawao camp.
- **Cash for protection:** 82% of the targeted 128,716 beneficiaries benefitted from Cash assistance response, including, cash for protection (4%), shelter (32%), education (5%), NFIs (39%) reintegration (19%) and WaSH and livelihoods, Income-generating Activities. Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance was also provided to 18,582 refugee returnees from Chad to support their reintegration in their communities, and 1,470 Persons with specific needs and at risk as protection response.

Community Engagement/Community-based feedback mechanisms: UNHCR established complaints desks in transit centers and camps to ensure confidentially. These offices, managed by the Camp Administrator and Camp Manager, provided a secure environment for handling complaints and forwarding them to the relevant units for response. UNHCR implemented safe feedback and response mechanisms, reaching 4,234 individuals, including school-aged children and GBV survivors. These mechanisms, guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), included help desks, complaint/suggestion boxes, and helplines, ensuring that displaced populations could voice their concerns and receive appropriate support.

Gender Equality and Commitment to Women and Girls: 2,488 women (47% of community leaders) actively participated in community activities, maintaining the same level of participation as in 2023. This involvement highlights the growing recognition of the role of women and girls in community management, despite ongoing socio-cultural constraints.

Prioritizing of Persons with Disabilities (PwD): UNHCR also prioritized PwD, particularly women and girls, in its protection and response activities. These individuals received special treatment during shelter and non-food item (NFI) distributions, ensuring secure and accessible services.

Solve -- UNHCR works with the government and partners to find durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations in Cameroon.

- **Advocacy for inclusion:** UNHCR is working with the government and partners to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national systems such as health, education, and finances. While there have been positive results, additional funding is needed for a consistent and effective response.
- **Voluntary repatriation** –From January to December 2024, UNHCR has facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 7,230 refugees to CAR and Nigeria. The process ensured that returns were voluntary, well-informed, and conducted with safety and dignity. Additionally, 20,293 refugees benefited from counselling and support with information on the Country-of-origin information across the operation.

Resettlement: 1,176 refugees case submitted received positive decisions (595 females and 581 males) with majority departing within the six months of acceptance. 1,080 refugees (550 females and 530 males) departed to Australia, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Norway and the USA, contributing to the resettlement quota of 1,000 individuals for 2024.

Complementary Pathways: one refugee student has departed from Cameroon to France to pursue his Master's degree at the University of Strasbourg under the UNIV'R scholarship program.

Strategic collaboration for refugees inclusion with:

- National Institute for Statistics (NIS) for the inclusion of refugees in the fourth general population and housing census.
- Ministry of Public Health and Education for the inclusion of refugees in the national systems.
- Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development (MINDDEVEL) to support the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and forcibly displaced persons in national and local development plans,
- Ministry of Social Affairs to enhance the social protection and inclusion of forcibly displaced people in Cameroon.

Collaboration for socioeconomic opportunities: MoU with UNHCR, IHS Cameroon, and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) to promote socio-economic engagement and create opportunities for refugees, IDPs, and host communities in Cameroon's Far North Region. The initiative includes installing digital kiosks to boost internet connectivity and refurbishing the Minawao Camp's ICT center to enhance digital literacy and educational opportunities.

From humanitarian to self-reliance:

- Alternatives to Minawao Camp: Positive progress has been recorded in supporting with the clearance of the initial project proposal by country members of the European Union.
- Land for agriculture: 151 hectares of land for agricultures production provided by the Government in the Far North region.
- Training and entrepreneurship: 16 refugees graduated and received their certificate in Mechanics from the Cami Toyota training center. Many have found jobs and are leaving a meaningful life.
- Launch of the digital platform "Opportunities for Refugees" to showcase the skills and achievements of refugee graduates and help them find employment opportunities.

IDP response

- **Protection and solutions:** UNHCR has been supporting protection and solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Protection Monitoring conducted allow UNHCR and partners to assess the general protection environment in the operating areas of the Northwest, Southwest (NWSW) and Far North and guide UNHCR response. Response provided to IDPs include civil documentation, Gender-based violence prevention and response, legal assistance, feedback Mechanisms, and shelter/NFIs assistance.
- UNHCR and GIZ are collaborating on the "**Promoting Economic and Social Participation of Internally Displaced Persons and Host Population Communities (PESoP)**" project to gather and share socio-economic data on IDPs. After developing the data collection tools, a workshop was organized with the project's local committees and strategic steering committee to validate the technical tools. As of December, the socio-economic profiling data of IDPs have been collected in five municipalities and data analysis and cleaning is ongoing.

Strengthened Coordination

Significant effort have been made to support the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons:

- Ministry of Economy and Planification (MINEPAT), the World Bank, and UNHCR are collaborating to create an action plan for the effective inclusion of refugees in development projects like PACRI¹. They have agreed to meet monthly to enhance coordination and visibility.
- A Joint head count exercise was conducted in Minawao camp to improve targeting information for the food distribution. The exercise confirmed 54,000 refugees, while the total population in the camp is 79,980.

Cluster/Sector Coordination

- UNHCR leads the response for IDPs' Protection and Shelter/NFI sectors in the Far North and NWSW regions under the Cameroonian Government's leadership. The protection sector and areas of operations (AoRs) provided services to 603,100 of the 1.4 million targeted. The Coordination Team engaged actively in inter-agency consultations on GBV, Child Protection and Housing Land and Property. They held monthly meetings, offering strategic leadership for a coordinated response. Guidance notes on lockdown impacts, civil documentation, and insecurity in Far North were drafted and shared with HCT, donors, and governments.
- Around 60 organizations attended at least one of the 12 protection meetings on the situation in NWSW and Far North. Coordination highlights included strengthened protection monitoring, advocacy, and response. Data collection and analysis improved in 2024, evidenced by the production of evidence-based data, dashboards, and protection analysis updates. Reports were used for advocacy and fundraising, contributing to visibility and fundraising for floods in Far North.
- The Protection Sector Strategy, finalized after two years, provided a roadmap for priorities and joint work plan implementation. In 2024, the Coordination structure adopted a joined-up approach with AoRs on data collection and analysis using the joint inter-agency analysis framework, simplifying the HPC 2025 processes.
- The Shelter/NFI Sector prioritized capacity building for partners. In 2024, the Cluster delivered four training programs to enhance technical capacities of government counterparts, local NGOs, and partners. Six Technical Newsletters on thematic areas were developed. Advocacy efforts included 12 monthly newsletters, three Joint HCT-ISCG meetings, four donor briefings, and one advocacy paper. The Cluster provided 12 dashboard updates and four quarterly National factsheets. Fifteen partners regularly participated in UNHCR-led Cluster coordination meetings throughout 2024, facilitating additional shelter interventions supported by CERF across three regions

Financial Information

The total recorded contributions for the Cameroon MCO amount to 48,268,300 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 and other donors, including Canada | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Japan for UNHCR | UN Peacebuilding Fund | UN CERF | UNAIDS.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly restricted and regional funds in 2024: Australia for UNHCR 11.6 million | UK for UNHCR 7 million | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe 6.4 million | Norway 2.8 million | Italy 2.5 million | Private donors in Italy 2.4 million | Private donors in the Republic of Korea 2.1 million

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2024: Sweden 112.2 million | España con ACNUR 77.5 million | Norway 58.9 million | Japan for UNHCR 49.9 million | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 41.4 million | Denmark 37.8 million | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) 36.3 million | France 34.1 million | Private donors in the Republic of Korea 33.9 million | Germany 25.1 million | Private donors in Italy 24.7 million | Switzerland 19.2 million | Republic of Korea 18.1 million | Sweden for UNHCR 16.7 million | Japan 16 million | Private donors in the Netherlands 15 million | Belgium 14.2 million | Ireland 13.6 million | Australia 10.7 million |

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¹ *Projet pour l'Amélioration de la Connectivité, la Résilience, et l'Inclusion des réfugiés*