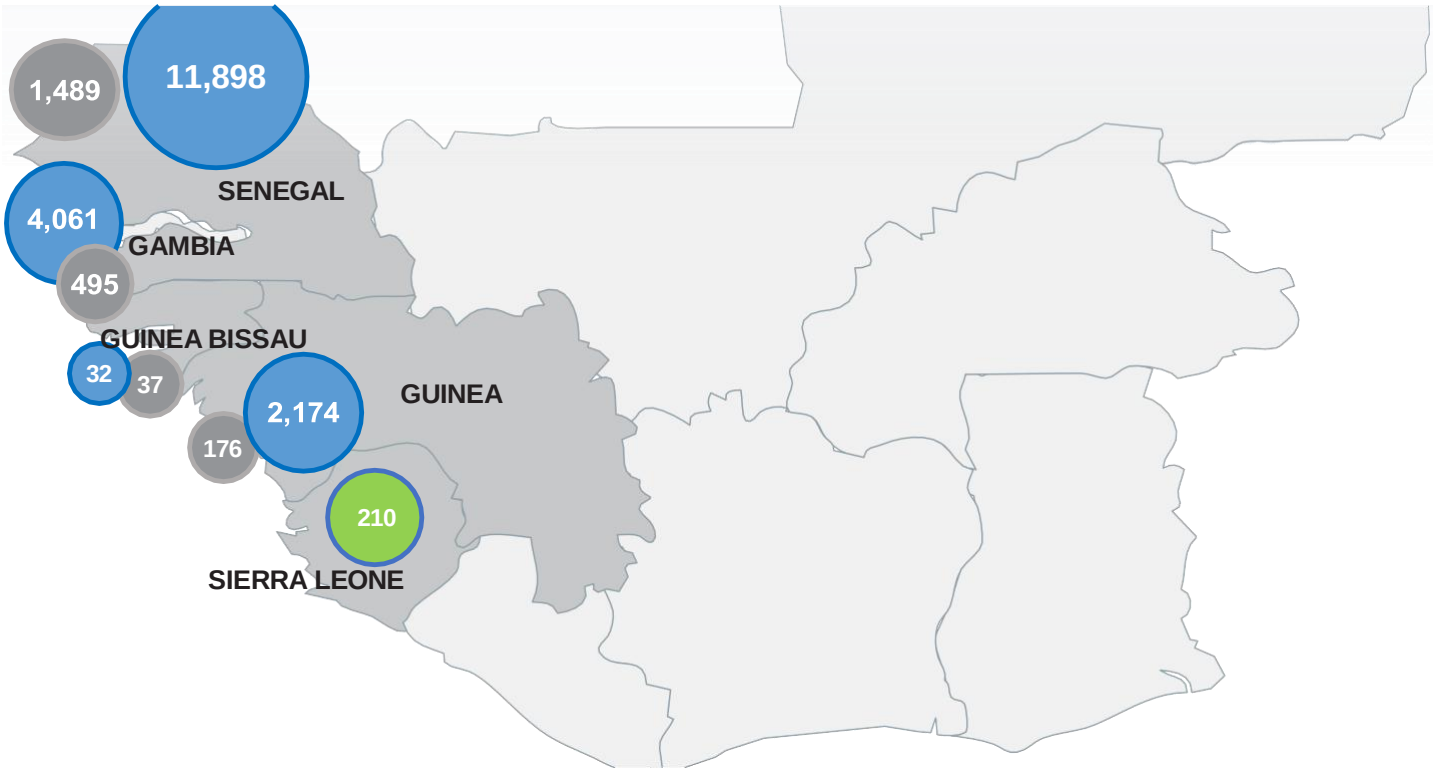
Multi Country Office SENEGAL

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Quarterly | April-June 2025

Key figures on population displacement

STATISTICS / MAP



20,575 Forcibly displaced people		**20,365** Refugees and asylum-seekers		**210** Others	

Key achievements

124 refugees were registered		**19** Households received cash assistance		**70** Refugees have participated in various workshops	

Mrs. Seynabou Thiaw, Mrs. Mariame Pam and Mr. Samba Ndiopdy Ba former Mauritanian refugees received their naturalization decrees proving their Senegalese citizenship on World Refugee Day 2025 ©UNHCR/Edwina Mapenzi Ayuko Ochieng

Operational Context

UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Senegal covers six countries: Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. As of 30 June 2025, a total of 20,575 forcibly displaced and stateless people were registered across these countries, including 20,241 refugees and asylum-seekers—mostly from Mauritania, Mali CAR and Burkina Faso.

Despite acute resource limitations, UNHCR provided protection services and assistance to displaced populations, while supporting national authorities in strengthening their responses to forced displacement and statelessness through capacity-building and advocacy. Local integration remains the primary durable solution in the region, though naturalization processes are progressing slowly in most countries. UNHCR and its partners in its second quarter made significant headway while implementing the route-based approach to ensure that people involved in mixed movements have access to accurate information, protection services, and safe alternatives—including improved livelihoods—before risking dangerous journeys across deserts or seas. This approach addresses protection needs and promotes sustainable solutions for people on the move.

Main achievements in sectors

PROTECTION

Mixed Movement:

In May, a joint mission led by Senegal's National Committee for Refugees (CNRRPD), the Interministerial Committee against Irregular Migration (CILMI), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Mbour, Ziguinchor, Kolda, Tambacounda and Bakel. The aim of the mission was to assess existing protection services, data gaps and evaluate existing protection response. Following the extensive mission, a report was produced highlighting the challenges people involved in mixed movements are facing including the lack of reception facilities, absence of livelihood opportunities becoming the trigger for youth to embark on dangerous journeys and lack of support for returnees hindering reintegration efforts.

New Implementing Partner for operationalization of the Route-Based Approach

At the end of April, the Comité International pour l'Aide d'Urgence et le Développement (CIAUD) was selected as the new Senegal partner to operationalize the route-based approach. They will work jointly with UNHCR, the government, and other stakeholders in Senegal to manage and monitor mixed movements along the identified transit points by providing a coordinated, protection-centered response and processing data of these vulnerable groups.

In the month of June CIAUD initiated collaboration with other Senegal partners including non-governmental partner Green Village Foundation (GVF), National Eligibility Commission (CNE), and National Committee for the Management of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Stateless Persons (CNRPD) providing programmatic guidance for the implementation of the Route-Based Approach. CIAUD in collaboration with UNHCR carried out a capacity-building session for newly recruited protection monitors scheduled for deployment in the next quarter.

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Registration and Documentation

In The Gambia, UNHCR's government partner, the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR) conducted a five-day intensive exercise in June, to renew, replace and issue refugee identity cards(IDs). The exercise took place in Foni settlement. The Commission was able to register 18 newborn babies, reactivate 43 refugee identity cards and issue 126 refugee identity cards.

In April the Commission further launched a three-day nationwide training of border officials on identification and referral of asylum seekers to asylum procedure in Farafenni. 40 officials from recognized border entry points of Lower River Region, Central River Region and North Bank Regions participated. The training comprised a series of presentations on: the definition of a refugee, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups, rights and obligations of refugees, the government, the principle of non-refoulement, non-discrimination and penalization.

In May GCR participated in a migration dialogue organized by the Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) Bundung Home Link which brought together National Assembly members for Bundungka Kunda and representatives from various community groups. The Commission's officials had a chance to further elaborate on asylum procedures, the functions of the Protection Unit, and the services offered to vulnerable individuals. This forum encouraged the Commission to further intensify their operations through community outreach activities to raise awareness of the Commissions presence and role, increase their digital presence which will further educate the public about GCR's mandate, services and contacts and shift the public's perception of the Commission from an enforcement body to a humanitarian entity that ensures vulnerable groups access the required assistance.

In Guinea, the situation of forcibly displaced Malians and Burkinabes remains a concern as this vulnerable group estimated at 3000 are continuously exposed to harsh weather conditions, conflict and violence, harassment from local authorities in the absence of identification documents due to limited resources.

In Senegal, 253 asylum-seekers cases were heard before the National Eligibility Commission (CNE). Depending on the outcome of the cases - granted or denied refugee status - GVF referred them to the subsequent phase.

50 previously rejected cases were referred to the appeal process. Seven of which were beneficiaries of legal aid.

Solution: local integration

In Senegal, UNHCR and its partner Green Village Foundation (GVF) through the legal agents in the Valley compiled 130 files for refugees targeted for naturalization in 2025.

STATELESSNESS PREVENTION

In May 2025, the Gambian Commission for Refugees as a follow up to the report presented to the National Assembly's Select Committee in February, urging reforms to address statelessness risks in Ghana Town, engaged the Interior Ministry. The Minister has entrusted the Commission to provide the Ministry of Justice legal opinion regarding the former President's declaration, the draft constitution with the view examining the context on nationality and citizenship laws and the nationality and citizenship laws of Ghana with a view to examine whether or not there are legal remedies for Ghana Town residents within the frameworks of the Ghana constitution and other laws governing citizenship.

In Senegal, GVF further identified 436 refugee children who are at risk of statelessness in Senegal. These children are set to be registered in the civil registers through special mobile court sessions throughout the year, to issue birth certificates to them. Within this period three statelessness awareness activities on the risks and prevention of statelessness were carried out in the field in the

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villages of Ngano in Matam, Samba Yidé and Samba Niamé in Bakel.

EDUCATION

Green Village Foundation played an instrumental role in assisting 17 DAFI student refugees to receive cash assistance covering various costs including tuition, accommodation and support costs for internships and research.

In The Gambia, GAFNA's Education Coordinator facilitated a day-long financial literacy course with the aim of equipping refugee students to manage their quarterly allowances during their sponsorship period and beyond. This training is set to equip them with skills to manage resources, make informed decisions and prepare for the long-term. GAFNA, not only supports refugee students' academic success but strengthens their capacity to rebuild their lives with dignity and confidence.

In May, GAFNA along with current DAFI students and alumni conducted a day-long sensitization mission in select senior secondary schools in the rural areas in The Gambia. The tour was done with the intention of encouraging refugee students to maintain high academic performance enhancing their prospects of qualifying for support from the DAFI program.

GAFNA's Education Coordinator also participated in the Global Action Week for Education where he delivered a statement emphasizing the critical role of education in conflict resolution and refugee integration within The Gambia and took the opportunity to appeal to the government to extend educational support to refugee youth enrolled in universities and TVET institutions. This appeal aims to complement existing assistance provided by UNHCR and GAFNA and ensure that refugee students have equitable access to higher education opportunities.

GAFNA has continued to fund the tuition fees for refugee students pursuing various courses including hair dressing, hospitality and nautical science in various higher education institutions in the country.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

The Gambia implementing partner GAFNA facilitated a two-day training of 11 refugees on business and entrepreneurship skills to enable the participants to run their business activities sustainably and for profit. After the training each of the participants were provided with cash assistance of an amount of 350 USD each to start or expand their already established businesses as part of the efforts to promote self-reliance and job creation.

GAFNA carried out an assessment prior to rolling out the training and production of cooking briquettes to curb environmental degradation working closely with another NGO, Women Initiative Gambia (WIG) in the villages of Buluntu and Karunor. The assessment confirmed the presence of community groups to implement the activity, availability of local raw materials and a necessity for alternative energy with households using up to 43USD monthly for cooking.

By early June the first cohort of refugees and their hosts in the Foni border community of Karunor were trained on the business aspect of cooking briquettes including marketing the finished product. The second phase of the training was conducted mid-June with a demonstration showcasing the production process and samples of the finished cooking briquettes during the World Refugee Day celebrations.

HEALTH

In Senegal, Green Village Foundation, and other partners; CARITAS, Centre Africain pour la Prévention et la Résolution des Conflits (CAPREC) and the Ministry of Health and Social Action (DLSI) provided free healthcare services to 48 forcibly displaced people.

In The Gambia, GAFNA provided cash assistance to 12 forcibly displaced persons to go towards their accessing health services while maintaining the joint counselling sessions for refugees and asylum- seekers in the month of

May. This time with the assistance of UNHCR, they interviewed 19 forcibly displaced persons. Some of the issues discussed included health, access to education for their children and livelihood challenges. Referrals were made on their behalf to relevant partner offices while some were assisted directly. Providing critical mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to refugees and their host communities equips individuals with the tools to cope better with displacement and on this occasion will support access to education and subsequent school retention.

Shelter/Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In the Gambia, in May 2025, GAFNA and the Small Grants Coordinator of the American Embassy embarked on a one-day monitoring mission of the American Embassy funded project sites.

The water project in Karunor Village is currently serving 200 refugees with clean water for domestic use which has encouraged residents to pursue small-scale farming.

The resources have additionally supported the construction of houses which has been critical in promoting local integration among forcibly displaced people and the host community.

In June GAFNA facilitated the first phase of the distribution of roofing materials of roughly 259 packets of corrugated iron sheets and 272 Kilos of cap nails to 22 selected vulnerable refugee households in refugee host communities who fled from the South of Senegal in the Casamance region to The Gambia in 2022. This initiative has helped provide accommodation to the beneficiaries and has been pivotal in decongesting the houses of Gambian hosts who have been sharing accommodation since their arrival in The Gambia.

Partnerships with development actors

UNHCR and IOM in Senegal are in the process of entering a formal agreement in supporting the mixed movements situation in Senegal. Both parties started working on implementation of the route-based approach (RBA). This is aimed at promoting cooperation between the two organizations to pursue their objectives; UNHCR leads and coordinate the humanitarian response in refugee settings and leads the Global Protection Cluster in non-refugee emergencies; IOM leads the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management in situations related to natural disasters and leads all activities targeting labor migrants. IOM and UNHCR have a long history of effective and demonstrated collaboration in humanitarian actions. Effective and predictable partnership leads to better results for displaced persons, affected populations and persons with whom and for whom UNHCR and IOM work.

Progress on the implementation of Global Compact for Refugee pledges

Addressing Nationality and Citizenship provisions, The Gambian parliament is in the process of debating the Constitution (Promulgation) Bill 2024 that would make provision for naturalization reducing inequalities (SDG10) and providing legal identity for all (SDG16.9). Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), the cooking briquette training activity enables refugees to generate income while contributing to clean energy solutions while reducing reliance on wood.

Partnerships with Governments

MCO Senegal continues to work with National Eligibility Commission (CNE), Interministerial Committee against Irregular Migration (CILMI), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Committee for the Management of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Stateless Persons (CNRPD) in addressing the mixed movement situation.

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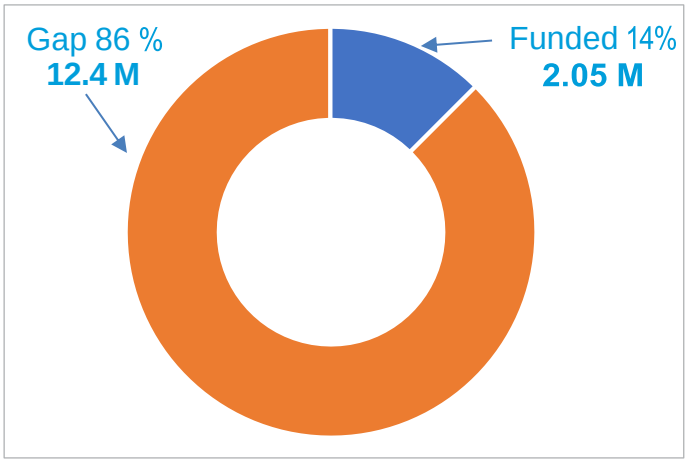
Funding cuts and efficiency measures:

Due to funding cuts the UNHCR streamlined and submitted the Route-Based Approach funding proposal concept note to re-align RBA activities alongside IOM. This allowed efficient adjustment of the scheduled activities to align on overlapping areas. This collaborative effort is intended to encourage coordinated budget optimization between the two organizations UNHCR remains committed to implementing route-based approach activities through strategic partnerships and joint efficiency initiatives.



FUNDING AS OF 30 JUNE 2025

USD 14.5 million Required by MCO Senegal in 2025

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of its donors who have provided earmarked and flexible funding to support operations in MCO Senegal.

UNHCR thanks donors of flexible funds

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