

KEY FIGURES (as of 31 Oct. 2020)

>**10.7 million** people of concern in West and Central Africa*

>**6.3 million** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

>**1.4 million** refugees

>**1.7 million** stateless persons

>**25,000** asylum seekers

>**1.3 million** returnees

21 countries and **4 situations**

Cameroon situation:

61,774 **Cameroonian refugees** in Nigeria.

711,056 **IDPs** in Cameroon (North-West/South-West Regions estimate).

Central African Republic situation:

626,838 **Central African refugees** in Cameroon (310,097), the DRC (172,234), Chad (95,051), the Republic of Congo (20,700), Sudan** (26,523) and South Sudan** (2,049).

641,292 **IDPs** in Central African Republic

Sahel Situation:

853,626 **refugees** in Chad (488,172), Niger (233,180), Mali (43,752) Mauritania** (64,644), and Burkina Faso (20,065).

1,915,324 **IDPs** in Burkina Faso (1,034,609), Chad (336,124), Mali (287,496) and Niger (257,095).

Nigeria Situation:

300,547 **Nigerian refugees** in Niger (165,077), Cameroon (115,774) and Chad (13,947).

2,896,548 **IDPs** in Nigeria (2,046,604), Cameroon (297,380), Chad (236,426) and Niger (125,742).

Cote d'Ivoire Emergency (as of 1 December 2020):

19,246 **Ivorian refugees** in Liberia (18,124), Ghana (704), Guinea (387), Togo (31).

**Key figures include refugees, internally displaced, stateless persons and returnees.*

***Country not in West and Central Africa*

REGIONAL OPERATIONAL UPDATE - MAIN HIGHLIGHTS**Political and security developments**

▪ Insecurity in the **Lake Chad Basin region** persists as armed groups continue to attack civilians and humanitarian workers. On 26 November, an estimated 110 farmers were killed by Boko Haram fighters in Nigeria's Borno State. This massacre follows a long series of attacks in northeastern Nigeria, including a June incident where armed groups abducted and killed five aid workers near Monguno town. Humanitarian access to refugees and internally displaced persons remains severely limited outside areas with a large military presence.

▪ In **Cameroon**, conflict in the North-West and South-West regions continues to cause mass displacement – both internally and into neighboring Nigeria – and armed groups continue to target educational institutions and civilian populations. On 3 November, armed men kidnapped eleven teachers from a school in Kumbo. On 4 November students and teachers were tortured during an attack on a college in Limbe, and on the same day nine school children were kidnapped and later released in Fundong.

▪ In **Mali**, persistent insecurity and deteriorating economic conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a steep rise in trafficking of children, forced labour and forced recruitment by armed groups across the country. According to the latest report of the UNHCR-led Global Protection Cluster, 220 cases of child recruitment were documented in the first half of 2020, compared to 215 cases in all of 2019. The victims are disproportionately boys working at eight mining sites but also Malians, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Women and girls are also victims of abduction, sexual assault and rape, and in the Mopti region alone more than 1,000 cases have been recorded \ in 2020. Many refugees and migrants heading to northern Africa and Europe through Mali are also at high risk of being trafficked and forced into labour.

▪ In **Burkina Faso**, presidential and legislative elections were successfully held on 22 November despite dire security conditions and widespread displacement across the country. UNHCR's sustained efforts to facilitate access to civil documentation for displaced persons (IDPs) has been crucial to enable their participation in the election. In 2020, over 82,500 civil documents – including national identity cards – were issued to IDPs across the country with the support of UNHCR. UNHCR is working with the authorities throughout the region to facilitate the participation of eligible displaced persons – particularly IDPs as well as refugees and returnees – in upcoming elections. Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Ghana and Niger all have national or local elections planned before the end of 2020.

Population movements

▪ UNHCR resumed the facilitation of voluntary repatriation to the **Central Africa Republic** in November following the re-opening of the borders with neighboring DRC. The operation had been on hold since March 2020 due to the

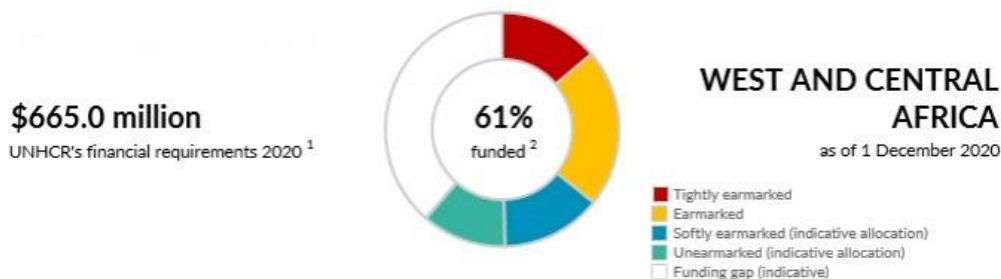
COVID-19 pandemic, and UNHCR and its partners have now strengthened health and sanitization measures by distributing face masks, screening temperatures and installing hand-washing stations. The number of refugees per convoy was also reduced to a maximum of 65 individuals to allow for distancing. UNHCR has facilitated the repatriation of a total of 2,873 refugees to CAR in 2020, out of total of 19,357 voluntary returns since 2017, in addition to an estimated 95,000 spontaneous returns. There are still more than 600,000 refugees from CAR in neighboring countries, as well as almost 650,000 IDPs within CAR. Despite significant improvements, the situation in the country remains volatile, and continued protection of displaced populations is needed for those who do not feel it is safe to return home.

- By 1 December 2020, more than 19,000 Ivorians had fled **Cote d'Ivoire** and throughout the region UNHCR is working closely with governments and partners to register Ivorian new arrivals, conduct protection and border monitoring, and provide necessary assistance. More than 94% of them are in neighboring Liberia, including a high proportion of women, children and elderly people. UNHCR recently airlifted 95 tons emergency supplies to respond to the most pressing needs of new arrivals in the counties of River Gee, Nimba and Grand Gedeh near the Ivorian border. In Liberia and in Ghana, where more than 700 Ivorian new arrivals are hosted, UNHCR is constructing shelters, canteens, toilets, bathing facilities and water distribution points. UNHCR's COVID-19 prevention efforts include the distribution of 20,000 face masks and hand sanitizers, as well as the implementation of handwashing protocols at border crossing points. The almost 400 Ivorian new arrivals in Guinea and the 31 in Togo are being hosted by families in the local community.

Key Activities

- As part of the global [16 Days of Activism](#) against Gender-Based Violence, on 25 November UNHCR and its partners launched a new digital [platform](#) to raise awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) in West and Central Africa, and to provide information and practical tools to tackle this issue. While GBV has been an existing problem throughout the region, the severe impact of COVID-19 among the most vulnerable – including forcibly displaced populations – has led to a dramatic increase in cases in 2020. Over 4,400 cases of gender-based violence were reported in Mali between January and September, but only 48 per cent of towns had GBV support services. Reports of GBV in the Central African Republic – including cases of rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage – more than doubled in 2020. In Niger, some women were tortured for engaging in economic activity outside of the home, or for not wearing full veil coverings. Beyond the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, which ends on 10 December, UNHCR has prioritized the fight against GBV across its operations and will sustain its sensitization and prevention efforts, while maintaining support to GBV survivors.

Funding Situation



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