



REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOLUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT RELATED TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CRISIS

Recommendations

I. Introduction

In close consultation with the Government of the Central African Republic, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) a Regional Ministerial Conference on Solutions in the Context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African crisis was held in Yaoundé on 27 April 2022.

During the Regional Ministerial Conference, the Governments of the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of the Sudan, and the Republic of South Sudan, with the support of regional and international institutions, resolved to deliver durable solutions for the more than 700,000 Central African refugees and 600,000 internally displaced persons within the Central African Republic, as one of the world's most protracted crisis.

This commitment is translated in the following recommendations which emphasize the actions to be carried out in the delivery of durable solutions for forcibly displaced Central African persons whilst maintaining their protection and promoting self-reliance and resilience in the countries of asylum and origin, with the support of the international community and other stakeholders.

The recommendations focus on four key thematic areas: (i) Strengthening the institutional and normative framework for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); (ii) Promoting socio-economic inclusion, resilience, and empowerment of Central African refugees; and (iii) Promoting conditions conducive to sustainable return and effective reintegration of forcibly displaced persons; and iv) Establishing a regional coordination mechanism (structure and operational modalities).

Further to the applicable international, regional, and national legal frameworks in which they are embedded, these recommendations are based on existing good practices in concerned countries towards durable solutions for the populations affected by the Central African crisis. In doing so, the Governments of the States affected by the Central African crisis express their commitment to translate them into action, with the support of the regional and international community.

The recommendations are as follow:



II./ On strengthening the institutional and normative framework for the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees

1. Ensure compliance of national legislative and administrative standards and policies regulating the management of forcibly displaced populations with international legal frameworks (including access to territory and asylum, development of fair and effective harmonized refugee status determination procedures, facilitation of free movement, and inclusion of their registration and documentation in national registration systems as well as biometric system) and ensure their effective implementation, in order to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights associated with their status;
2. Capacitate national institutions in charge of the management of refugees and internally displaced persons and guarantee their effective functioning through the allocation of adequate resources in the national budgets of their respective governments;
3. Establish primary or secondary civil registry services (including mobile services) in areas where refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced persons are hosted and ensure their effective access to these services as well as the recognition of their refugee identity cards by the public and private services, including financial institutions;
4. Facilitate access to the right to stay in accordance with bilateral and regional agreements, and under the terms of applicable laws in the countries of asylum;
5. Ensure guarantees for protection during the voluntary repatriation process through either tripartite agreements or simplified arrangements regulating the modalities of return;
6. Harmonize, to the extent possible, the frameworks for durable solutions to facilitate the implementation of a regional approach for forcibly displaced Central Africans;
7. Invite States and partners to support the Government of the Central African Republic through increased and coordinated regional engagement for the development of its institutions to strengthen its own capacity to ensure peace, security, the rule of law, and access to justice without discrimination.

III./ On the promotion of socio-economic inclusion, resilience, and empowerment of Central African refugees

1. Promote the inclusion of refugees in national and local development plans, including in the sectors of health and education, in order to strengthen, without discrimination, the resilience of communities affected by the humanitarian situation in countries of asylum. Specific attention will be paid to their sustainable socio-economic inclusion through the equal access to basic social services on par with nationals, in accordance with applicable legal provisions in countries of asylum;
2. Identify and respond to the specific learning needs of refugees and their host communities, without discrimination, in order to increase their enrollment and retention in school. This includes developing and expanding accelerated and transitional learning programs, language and academic support programs, enhance teacher capacity-building, including through the inclusion of refugee teachers in national education systems in accordance



with applicable agreements, as well as increasing the number of scholarships available for refugees in countries of asylum, including via the involvement of the private sector;

3. Ensure economic opportunities for refugees and host communities, including through facilitated access to decent employment, to arable land for agriculture and livestock, to financial services, and the right to property ownership and business creation, in accordance with existing national legislations;
4. Strengthen self-reliance mechanisms for refugees and host communities through public and private sector partnerships that contribute to the financing of livelihood programmes for refugees and local communities in hosting areas and their effective empowerment;
5. Simplify administrative procedures to ensure refugees' access to third country admission programmes (i.e., family, academic and professional mobility programmes);
6. Ensure that all interventions targeting refugees are part of an integrated area-based and conflict-sensitive approach that considers the needs of host communities and refugees and in agreement with administrative and traditional authorities, in order to strengthen security, social cohesion and foster economic development in refugee hosting areas.

IV./ On the promotion of conditions conducive to the sustainable return and effective reintegration of forcibly displaced persons

1. Strengthen efforts towards the consolidation of peace, security and stability, the restoration of the authority of the State, the rehabilitation of return areas, as well as economic revitalization and national reconciliation, in addressing the root causes of displacement, to create conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees and the return of internally displaced persons in safety and dignity;
2. Ensure that returnees and internally displaced persons enjoy their civil, political, cultural and socioeconomic rights without discrimination, and have access to public services in areas of return and settlement;
3. Promote the inclusion of returnees and internally displaced persons in development initiatives in areas of return and settlement;
4. Strengthen existing community mediation mechanisms to facilitate access and restitution of housing, land and property to returnees and internally displaced persons in areas of return;
5. Enhance the effective reintegration of returnees and internally displaced persons into the national education system (including returnee/displaced teachers) and contribute to strengthening procedures for the recognition, accreditation and equivalence of all diplomas and certificates obtained in countries of asylum;
6. Reinforce the inclusion of people affected by forced displacement in initiatives to consolidate peace, promote inter-community dialogue and national reconciliation.



V./ On establishing a regional coordination mechanism

1. Establish a solutions-oriented follow-up and coordination mechanism for countries affected by the Central African crisis, under the leadership of concerned States, with the support of regional institutions, UN agencies, development actors, financial institutions, the private sector, civil society and with the involvement of forcibly displaced persons and the international community in a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility, in accordance with the commitments made in the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR);
2. Provide this mechanism with: (i) a steering committee that includes the seven countries directly affected by the Central African crisis (with a rotating co-presidency on an annual basis, while the Central African Republic remains statutory co-president); (ii) a secretariat with UNHCR's technical support; (iii) one or several support entities such as development actors, donors, regional organizations, and UN agencies ;
3. Give mandate to UNHCR, in consultation with the Central African Republic, to lead the necessary consultations to determine the dates and venues of future ministerial conferences as well as the modalities for the implementation of the steering committee;
4. Solicit financial support for the implementation of this mechanism, including from national, regional and international partners, to ensure an adequate response to the needs of people affected by the Central African crisis.