West and Central Africa Operational Update
April - June 2022

Highlights

Thousands of Ivorians were able to return home with UNHCR’s support as refugee status for Ivorians officially ended on 30 June, bringing closure to a protracted displacement situation. UNHCR is working to mitigate the effects of worsening food insecurity on people forced to flee throughout the region, and completed a Joint Assessment Mission with WFP in Chad in May. Throughout West and Central Africa, World Refugee Day on 20 June was marked by celebrations highlighting refugee’s contributions to their host countries.

Between April and June 2022:

- **6,101** people returned to Cote d’Ivoire with UNHCR’s support
- **1,088** refugees, including 745 girls, sat final year high school examinations in Chad from 6 to 14 June
- **5,155** people were reached by stateless prevention and awareness campaigns in Cote d’Ivoire and Niger
- **176** refugees received livelihood support for their cattle and arable farming activities in Ghana and Liberia
- **149** people evacuated from Libya though the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) were resettled from Niger to third countries
- **24,699** IDPs, returnees and host community members were sensitized on COVID-19 hygiene, vaccination and prevention in the BAY states in Nigeria as of 30 June 2022

After fleeing Cote d’Ivoire during the war in 2011, Elodie Guei Sahe came back to her hometown in 2020 and opened a hair salon called “Seatizi (“Peace”) with UNHCR’s support. 20 June 2022. © UNHCR / Colin Delfosse
People forced to flee in West and Central Africa

UNHCR is mandated to assist and protect **13.1 million people** in West and Central Africa, including:

- **1.6 million** refugees and asylum-seekers
- **2.1 million** refugee and IDP returnees
- **7.6 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs)
- **0.1 million** others of concern
- **1.6 million** stateless and at risk of statelessness

*(as of 31 June 2022)*

**Regional context:**
**Key developments**

- **New attacks and displacement in the Sahel:** Attacks perpetrated by extremist groups on 11 and 12 June in the locality of Seytenga in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso forced over 34,000 people to flee. During the second half of June, several attacks by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in the Menaka region in central Mali also displaced nearly 56,000 people. These attacks took place after Barkhane forces’ withdrawal from the Menaka base on 13 June, scheduled as part of the French army’s planned withdrawal from Mali. As a result of the prevailing insecurity, over 38,000 refugee arrivals from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso had been recorded in Niger as of the end of June.

- **Impact of continuous armed conflict in the region and of the war in Ukraine and in West and Central Africa War: Food insecurity** is on the rise throughout West and Central Africa, as the protracted crises in many countries in the region, the war in Ukraine and inflationary pressures continue to drive up grains and food prices. This is severely impacting refugees and host communities alike, and the critical food situation in Chad prompted the Government to declare a ‘national state of food and nutrition emergency’ on 1 June. Moreover, continuous violence against civilians hampers free movement and negatively
impacts access to arable lands and livelihoods, which are crucial to building and strengthening resilience. As such, ongoing violence often constitutes a physical obstacle to accessing livelihoods. In May, fuel shortages also started to be felt throughout the region, along with an increase in fuel prices. This impacts the protection context by preventing security forces and humanitarian actors to operate as usual, causing a lack of protection through physical presence in some areas and limiting humanitarian access. UNHCR acted swiftly to mitigate the effect of the shortages on its operations, which enabled repatriations to the Central African Republic to continue as planned even though the country was among the most affected, as was Niger.

- **Impact of the Sahel crisis on coastal countries:** The violence of non-state armed groups (NSAG) continues to spill over to the north of coastal countries (Cote d’Ivoire, Togo and Benin) where multiple attacks took place during the reporting period. Several hundred new arrivals were recorded in Togo (over 650 individuals) and Benin (over 400 individuals) following attacks in the East region of Burkina Faso. In this volatile context, UNHCR is increasing its emergency preparedness: contingency plans are in place in Cote d’Ivoire and are being drafted in Benin with the support of the Government and partners, while in Togo a multi-risk inter-agency plan is in place until August 2022, and preparations for a UNHCR contingency plan are underway.

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**Durable solutions for Ivorians**

**On 30 June 2022, refugee status officially ended for Ivorians** through the invocation of the cessation clause. This milestone heralding a new era of durable solutions for all Ivorians was made possible by the remarkable return to peace and stability experienced by Cote d’Ivoire. To celebrate this and mark UNHCR’s commitment to finding and implementing durable solutions, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi spent World Refugee Day in Côte d’Ivoire, attending a ceremony hosted by the President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire in Abidjan.

UNHCR continues to support all Ivorians wishing to return home. Since 2011, over 310,000 former refugees have returned. In 2022 alone, UNHCR and its partners helped 14,880 former Ivorian refugees return to Cote d’Ivoire as of 28 June. During the reporting period, close to 6,100 were able to return, including 1,933 from Ghana and 3,177 from Liberia. All candidates for departure from Liberia were tested for COVID-19 free of charge and no positive cases were detected. Others also returned from Guinea, Togo, Mauritania, the Gambia, Benin, Cameroon and Senegal.
Operational highlights

Burkina Faso

- **Protection:** In May 2022, 970 families, 46% of which are headed by single women were interviewed throughout 129 communes in the framework of the Project 21 protection monitoring. A total of 571 incidents were collected and documented. These protection incidents, which included violations of the right to life (30%) and violations of the right to freedom and security (27%), affected 5,300 victims and survivors within both displaced and host communities. In this context, UNHCR continued to reinforce its partners’ capacities to conduct protection monitoring activities. In addition, as part of its protection response, UNHCR supported 593 people, 187 with cash-based assistance, 48 with referrals and 358 with psychosocial support.

- **Documentation:** As part of its efforts to mitigate risks of statelessness, UNHCR provided technical and financial support to the Government through capacity building for 90 key actors (administrative authorities, community-based agents, traditional and religious authorities, and village development advisers) on legal norms governing the issuance of civil documentation in the Boucle du Mouhoun and South-West regions. UNHCR’s support made it possible to ensure continuity in the delivery of birth certificates, and to raise awareness among actors in charge of civil status administration and among the population. During the month of May, 2,381 civil status and identity documents were issued to internally displaced persons (IDPs; 1,238 women and 1,143 men) and members of the host community, allowing these individuals to exercise their rights and access basic social services.

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** To build the capacity of its partners to mainstream GBV Risk Mitigation, UNHCR organized a two-day training in the Nord and Centre Nord regions, which was attended by 60 partner organizations’ staff from different sectors. UNHCR also co-facilitated a two-day training on GBV core concepts with the Regional Directors of Action Sociale in the Cascades and Hauts-Bassins regions.

- **Shelter and Core Relief Items (CRIIs):** Between the months of April and June, 2,683 emergency shelters and 102 long-term/permanent shelters were distributed, benefitting a total number of 19,495 vulnerable members of the IDP and host communities. In addition, 15,134 people were assisted with 2,162 core relief items, provided in kind or through cash-based interventions (CBI).

Cameroon Multi-Country Office (Cameroon MCO)

Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe

- **Durable solutions:** On 1 June 2022, UNHCR resumed the voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees. By the end of June, UNHCR had facilitated the return of 527 refugees from Ngam and Lolo to the Central African Republic. In addition, a total of 334 resettlement cases were submitted for approval, including to France (230), USA (91), Canada (10) and Australia (3), despite practical challenges limiting possibilities for remote interviewing and profiling.
**Civil documentation for refugees:** For the first time in the history of Cameroon, 6,000 refugees will be issued refugee ID cards by the General Delegation for National Safety (DGSN) in application of existing laws. By 30 June 2022, the first 300 refugee cards were printed and delivered as part of a pilot operation supported by the Government of Cameroon, the World Bank and the UNHCR.

**Clean energy and sustainability initiatives in Minawao and Bogo:** As of June, a total of 463,761 seedlings were planted in Minawao refugee camp in the Far North, with an 86% of survival rate of trees, as well as 2,000 seedlings in Bogo IDP settlement. In both Minawao and Bogo, Nigerian refugees and internally displaced persons are involved in reforestation and reducing desertification. Solar plants were installed in Minawao camp and in the Gado and Mbile settlements, increasing the number of solar powered boreholes to 40 percent and resulting in a 35 percent reduction in fuel consumption for over 150,000 persons.

**Protection and livelihood support in Gabon:** In May, the Government of Gabon launched the first Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) biometric passport for refugees, which will allow enhanced free movement for forcibly displaced people in the sub-region. On World Refugee Day, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) supported eight refugees to register with the National Employment Office so that they could take advantage of training and employment opportunities.

**Capacity-building on mixed movements in Gabon:** Within the framework of the UN Joint Project on Mixed Movements, UNHCR conducted a three-day capacity building event on access to international protection and identification of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons in the context of mixed movements. The capacity building exercise targeted 18 staff members of the Government-led taskforce on migration (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of defence, Navy, Ministry of Justice and National Commission for refugees). During the sessions, participants also discussed the need to reinforce identification mechanisms.

### Central African Republic

**Protection:** From 16 to 31 May, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) organized a physical verification operation combined with a survey of intent for 3,640 Congolese refugees living in the Tokokota site in Kouango and 228 Sudanese refugees in the Pladama-Ouaka camp in Bambari. 3,231 certificates in lieu of birth documents and 125 birth documents were issued during this operation, and a donation of 8 civil registers was made to the Kouango town hall.

**Reintegration and Durables Solutions:** In light of improvements in the security context, voluntary repatriations to the Central African Republic were able to safely resume in May 2022. As of the end of June, nearly 4,000 Central Africans had been repatriated. The Declaration of Yaoundé on Solutions in the Context of forced Displacement related to the Central African Republic crisis was signed on 27 April 2022, signalling the commitment to
durable solutions of UNHCR and the seven Governments affected by the Central African displacement crisis. Durable solutions could also be found for internally displaced persons: in Bria, the Durable Solutions Working Group (SDWG) and prefectoral authorities are supporting the return of the first 150 families from the PK3 site (a site located 3km away from the city in which about 37,000 displaced people live) in two Bria districts. In Bambari (Ouaka), the rural commune of Pladama-Ouaka has designated a space located about 10 km from the town of Bambari in the Ouaka prefecture where 490 families (1,872 former displaced persons from the Elevage site) could be relocated, with the support of humanitarian actors from the Working Group on Durable Solutions and local authorities.

- **Cash-based assistance:** For June 2022, nearly 331.7 million Central African Francs (close to USD 50,700) were distributed in cash to 3,963 Central African returnees from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Togo as part of the support for voluntary repatriation. Close to 6 million Central African Francs (nearly USD 9,200) were distributed to 282 people with special needs as part of cash assistance for death, birth and social purposes. 48.4 million Central African francs were distributed to 2,691 Congolese and South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Obo.

**Chad**

- **A Refugee Response plan** for Cameroonian Refugees was launched on 18 May 2022 with 53 humanitarian partners and the Chadian Government, acting through its National Commission for the Reception and Reinsertion of Refugees (CNARR).

- **Relocation of Central African refugees in southern Chad:** On 4 April 2022, 5,541 new Central African refugees were relocated to the Moussoumba camp in Grande Silo, in the Province of Moyen-Chari.

- **Refugee consultations in Chadian camps:** From 13 to 14 May, UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) held a workshop to give feedback and consult with over 54 refugee representatives from all camps in Chad on the results of the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM). The Joint Assessment Mission was conducted in all camps in Chad to assess the nutrition, food security and livelihood situation. It highlighted the very preoccupying nature of the nutrition situation in the camps, and resulted in several recommendations to improve nutrition, food security and livelihood in Chad, where the Government declared a food and nutrition emergency on 1 June 2022.

- **Sustainability training and access to education:** 1,088 refugees, including 745 girls, sat final year high school examinations in Chad from 6 to 14 June 2022. In addition, UNCHR opened a solar training centre, which was inaugurated in Abeche on 21 May 2022 in the presence of representatives of the ministries of Education, Energy, Hydraulic and administration. The aim of the centre is to promote and share basic knowledge on solar energy for humanitarian, public, and private actors in order to improve the quality of services, and aims to benefit refugees, host communities and the humanitarian actors working with them. The first training took place from 24 to 29 May 2022, and saw 15 participants trained on applied hydrogeology and introduced to solar pumping.
Cote d’Ivoire

- **Fight against statelessness:** Two documents relating to the implementation of the National Strategy for Civil Status and Identification (SNECI) in Côte d’Ivoire were adopted during a workshop held from 30 March to 1 April, in which UNHCR participated. Over the past three months, mass awareness-raising campaigns on statelessness reached 2,555 individuals including 818 in April, 197 in May and 1,540 in June. 584 individuals received legal consultations, and 380 people identified as being at risk of statelessness were supported by UNHCR and partners.

- **Birth registration to mitigate risks of statelessness:** From 9 to 12 May, UNHCR also participated in a workshop for the development of the statistical yearbook of civil status in Côte d’Ivoire for the year 2021. During the reference year, 755,093 births were counted, but only 612,865 were registered in the civil registry, an annual registration rate of 68.2%. A total of 142,228 births representing nearly 32% were not registered, exposing those children to the risk of statelessness.

Ghana

- **Durable solutions for Ivorians wishing to stay in Ghana:** 410 exemption cases (approximately 1,400 Ivorian refugees wishing to retain their refugee status after the invocation of the cessation clause) were interviewed by the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) in various camps and in Accra. Unsuccessful applicants for exemption were given the opportunity to apply for voluntary repatriation. In addition, UNHCR is supporting Ivorians who wish to remain in their host country after cessation to apply for an alternative legal status. Ghana has confirmed that indefinite residence permits will be provided to refugees who opt for alternative legal status.

- **Refugees supported to start piggery farming:** 30 refugees from Krisan camp were supported to start piggery farming. They were given animals (15 gilts and 3 boars) and received piggery production training in May, and attended a one-day training on On-Farm Feeding and Feed Management (feed formulation) facilitated by the Department of Agriculture and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abbrem (KEEA) Municipal Assembly in June, which sought to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to formulate their own feed for pigs using locally available ingredients.

Liberia

- **Durable solutions for Ivorian refugees in Liberia:** UNHCR and Government partner LRRRC continued to carry out information campaigns explaining the durable solutions available to Ivorian refugees throughout the country and conducted an intention survey on refugees’ preferred choice. 3,505 individuals (584 cases) opted to apply for an exemption in order to keep their refugee status. Of 90 cases examined in June, 5 families (11 individuals) were granted an exemption. Following advocacy by UNHCR and its partners, the President of Liberia signed an executive order in April instituting simplified and accelerated procedures for the documentation of former refugees, and granting residence permits at reduced cost to all Ivorian refugees wishing to remain in Liberia.
▪ **Refugees’ agricultural livelihood activities supported**: As part of a joint UNDP-UNHCR Partnership Agreement, a package of agricultural hand tools and vegetable seeds was distributed to 146 refugee and host community farmers across three counties (Grand Gedeh, Maryland, and Nimba) in May and June 2022.

**Mali**

▪ **Protection evaluation in Bankass and Mopti**: Between 30 May and 3 June, UNHCR initiated two rapid protection evaluations through the Protection cluster in Bankass and Mopti, in the Mopti region. The evaluations confirmed the presence of 838 households made up of 3,087 internally displaced persons, and facilitated the organization and delivery initial multi-sectorial assistance. 343 children under 5 benefitted from malnutrition detection checks, and the nine cases requiring assistance were referred to appropriate services. 581 households received 31.37 tons of rice and 15 prenatal consultations were carried out through the mobile clinics of partner Premiere Urgence.

▪ **Sustainable shelter assistance for IDPs and IDP returnees**: During the reporting period, UNHCR provided emergency tents to 18 IDP households, of which 90 members were survivors of the seasonal fire in the Gao Municipality. UNHRC and its partners also inaugurated sustainable social housing made of Interlocking Stabilized Soil Blocks (Hydraform technology) to seven returning IDP households in the Goundam locality in the Timbuktu region. 50 Hydraform durable shelters were also constructed in the new Naata IDP site in the Gao Region.

▪ **Core relief items**: UNHCR provided 15,655 impregnated mosquito nets to 5,219 households in 13 different IDP sites in the Mopti region.

**Niger**

▪ **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) from Libya to Niger**: Since November 2017, a total of 3,710 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers have been evacuated from Libya to Niger through the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM). The aim of the ETMs is to identify durable solutions for vulnerable refugees in Libya, such as resettlement and other complementary legal pathways. Most of the 3,710 persons evacuated from Libya to Niger since November 2017 have already been resettled. 442 evacuees are still in Niamey, including 132 refugees pending departures and 167 interviews and decisions pending by third/resettlement countries. Though the last evacuation flight from Libya to Niger took place on 30 December 2021, 149 persons evacuated from Libya were resettled to third countries between April and June 2022.

▪ **Protection**: UNHCR and its partner Au secours des Oubliés (SDO) have conducted two sensitization campaigns about the prevention of statelessness in the sites of Diffa, Djorikooulo, and Awaridi, as well as in the sites of Kameroune, Dileram, Djoulari, and Klakoumana in the commune of N’Guiguimi. These activities reached 2,600 people, including 1,715 women. During the reporting period, a total of 57 births were registered at the Sayam forage refugee camp registration center. Furthermore, 246 late birth registration certificates were distributed to children aged 0 to 6 years in Diffa.
• **New national examination centre in Diffa:** A special centre for the National Examination Council (NECO) in the Republic of Niger was inaugurated and launched in Diffa, Lake Chad region, with the support of UNHCR. The opening of the centre allowed 186 Nigerian students, including 48 girls, to take their Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE) in the Nigerian curriculum. This is the first time this exam has been held in Niger since the arrival of the Nigerian refugees in the Lake Chad region in eastern Niger in 2013.

**Nigeria**

• **Cash for food and medical support for refugees in Nigeria:** As of 30 June 2022, more than 37,000 Cameroonian refugees received cash assistance to purchase food of their choice in Nigeria. UNHCR-supported health centres cared for injured refugees as over 1,000 people fled renewed violence in Cameroon’s Northwest and Southwest regions.

• **IDP protection in northeast Nigeria:** UNHCR and its partner the Nigeria Bar Association, issued 30,000 indigene certificates and 30,000 birth certificates to IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees, and host community members (including children) in Borno State – the first phase of a plan to issue 200,000 certificates across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States. In addition, a community-based approach allowed for the sensitization of 30,000 people of concern to UNHCR on key protection themes such as access to justice, child protection and gender-based violence.

• **Core relief items distributed in northeast Nigeria:** UNHCR distributed 8,841 core relief items kits to vulnerable IDPs, host community members and refugee returnees in different Local Government Areas of the BAY States as of 30 June 2022.

• **COVID-19 prevention and healthcare:** UNHCR and its partners sensitized 24,699 IDPs, returnees and host community members on COVID-19 hygiene, vaccination and prevention, and sanitary protocols in place in the BAY States as of 30 June 2022. In Taraba State, UNHCR provided 60 vaccine carrier boxes to Primary Health Centres to help preserve and transport vaccines (including against COVID-19) to difficult-to-reach areas.

### Highlights from World Refugee Day across West and Central Africa

Across West and Central Africa, World Refugee Day celebrations on 20 June were the occasion to highlight refugees’ contributions to their host communities.

In **Senegal**, a group of refugees, migrants and host community members created artworks centering around their journey in search of safety and their new life in Senegal, in collaboration with a group of Swiss artists. The artworks showcased on World Refugee Day were part of an exhibition inaugurated on 21 May and featured in the “off” programme of the 2022 Dakar art biennale.
In Nigeria, the Lagos state governor Babjide Sanwo-Olu signed the Cities with Refugees declaration on behalf of Lagos state on World Refugee. This makes Lagos the third city in Nigeria to do so after Abuja and Cross Rivers State, and evidences the city’s commitment to remaining refugee-friendly and supporting forcibly displaced people seeking to rebuild their lives. As of May 2022, Lagos hosts over 1,600 refugees and 600 asylum seekers from 34 countries.

Senegal Multi-Country Office (Senegal MCO)

Benin, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

- **Durable solutions for Ivorians in Togo:** Between 2 and 10 June, a joint mission from Cote d’Ivoire involving several Government partners (DAARA, SNEIDAI, ONECI, S/DPAF) visited Togo. With UNHCR’s support, they delivered 187 identity cards to former Ivorian refugees.

- **Employment opportunities for refugees in Togo:** Following advocacy by UNHCR, 3 refugee students were able to start a six-month internship at Ecobank.

- **Workshop for journalists on protection, statelessness and mixed movements in Benin:** UNHCR and its partner Amnesty International Benin jointly organized and facilitated a two-day workshop on 14-15 April for 30 journalists on refugee protection, fight against statelessness and ethics for journalists reporting on refugees and mixed migration.

- **Handing over of the Tenki Salon infrastructure project to the Government of Sierra Leone:** As part of the phase-down of UNHCR’s activities in Sierra Leone, the ‘Tenki Salon’ infrastructure project was officially handed back to the Government. The project sought to benefit refugee-hosting communities by reinforcing readily available services, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees’ whole-of-society approach, and allowed for the construction of 3 solarized boreholes and 3 hand pump water wells.
Financial Requirements

UNHCR’s financial requirements for the West and Central Africa region in 2022 total **USD 884.1 million.** As of 28 June, **21 per cent** of needs have been funded. UNHCR is grateful to donors who have supported operations in West and Central Africa in 2022, including:

**United States of America** 60.2 million | **France** 8.9 million | **USA for UNHCR** 6.1 million | **CERF** 4.9 million | **Canada** 4.8 million | **Denmark** 4.4 million | **Germany** 4.2 million | **Country-based Pooled Funds** 3.6 million | **Japan** 3.6 million | **Sweden** 3.5 million | **Finland** 3.4 million | **The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives** 2.9 million | **African Development Bank Group** 2.4 million | **Qatar** 2.2 million | **United Kingdom** 2 million | **Education Cannot Wait** 1.5 million | **European Union** 1.3 million | **Switzerland** 1 million

**Flexible financial support** greatly facilitates UNHCR being able to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. They enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved. UNHCR is grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions in 2022, including:

**OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD**

**United States of America** 14.5 million | **Canada** 7.8 million | **Private donors USA** 4.9 million | **Private donors Australia** 4.9 million

**UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD**

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

**Sweden** 99.3 million | **Norway** 72.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.2 million | **Denmark** 35.6 million | **Private donors Spain** 32.7 million | **United Kingdom** 28.1 million | **Germany** 27 million | **Private donors Japan** 21.8 million | **France** 18.5 million | **Switzerland** 18.4 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 16.4 million | **Private donors USA** 15 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million | **Ireland** 11.8 million | **Italy** 10 million

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