

Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan 2024

for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and host communities

February
2025

Côte d'Ivoire Response Plan Report



© UNICEF Education activities – Niornigué (Côte d'Ivoire)

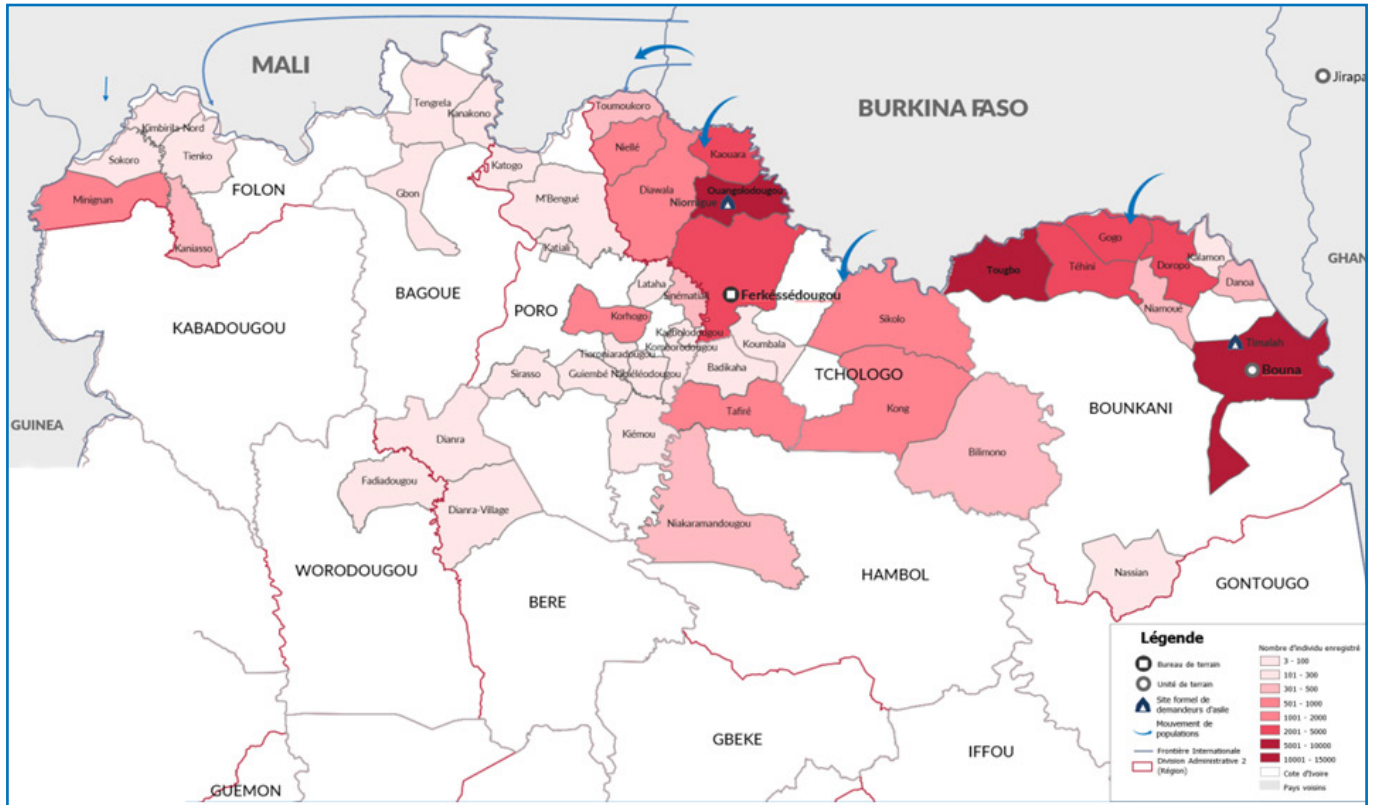
1. Operational context

MAP POPULATION OF CONCERN

09
REGIONS
IMPACTED

46
SUB-PREFECTURES
IMPACTED

254
VILLAGES OR
LOCATIONS IMPACTED



Population Groups in Affecteds Regions

	December 2023	December 2024
Refugees and asylum-seekers - estimate	45,000	70,500
Refugees and asylum-seekers - registered	36,729	65,962

Population figures. The year 2024 was marked by a significant increase in the number of registered asylum-seekers present in the northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire from 36,729 in December 2023 to 65,962 in December 2024. Registration activities carried out jointly with the national agency for refugees DAARA (Direction d'Aide et d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Apatrides) led to the registration of 29,233 individuals in 2024. This increase is largely explained by a steady influx from Burkina Faso, with a peak of arrivals at the beginning of 2024 (February-March). Approximately 4,500 individuals await registration, bringing the estimated number of forcibly displaced people in the North to over 70,000. 89% of refugees registered in 2024 arrived in the same year, while the remaining 3,312 individuals arrived earlier. By the end of 2024, nine regions in northern Côte d'Ivoire were hosting asylum-seekers, with the Bounkani region hosting 53% of all asylum-seekers and the Tchologo region hosting 38%. 20% of asylum-seekers live in the

formal sites of Timalah and Niornigué. The majority are settled in over 250 towns and villages. The total number of asylum-seekers and refugees registered throughout Côte d'Ivoire reached nearly 70,000 people by the end of 2024.

Protection environment. According to the protection monitoring data of Project 21 (P21), which conducted 6,655 household interviews in Côte d'Ivoire, nearly 64% of respondents report not having encountered any obstacles at the border. 22% claim to have been victims of extortion, 51% did not enter through official borders. Only 66% have an identity document. 10% state they were turned back before being able to enter the country. 99% feel safe in Côte d'Ivoire. Theft and looting, followed by gender-based violence (GBV), are the main protection incidents.





Regarding GBV, the greatest risks occur when going to collect water and firewood, or going to the fields. 88% believe relations between communities are good. The main causes of tension are distrust, inter-community tensions, stigmatization, access to land and housing, and access to natural resources. The lack of financial resources, due to the lack of economic opportunities, is seen as the main reason preventing children from attending school. 50% of respondents mentioned that they do not intend to return to Burkina Faso. Advocacy for the official recognition of refugee status for Burkinabe asylum-seekers continued. The conditions for voluntary, safe and sustainable return were discussed during the third Lomé Dialogue held in October 2024 with the authorities of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo.



©UNHCR Women who have fled from Burkina Faso gathered in a school (Côte d'Ivoire)

2. Main achievements

Pillar 1. Analysis: Data collection and analysis

			
FIELD VISITS TO IDENTIFY AND MONITOR PROTECTION NEEDS	MOBILITY MONITORING PUBLICATIONS (DTM)	NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	COORDINATION MEETINGS WITH AUTHORITIES
116	3	21	66









Pillar 2. Assistance: Coordinated immediate humanitarian response

			
PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED FOOD SUPPORT	PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT	HOUSEHOLDS WHO RECEIVED SHELTER SUPPORT	HOUSEHOLDS WHO RECEIVED NON-FOOD ITEMS KIT
39,413	170	983	1,893

Pillar 3. Prevention: Community integration and resilience

BENEFICIARIES OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION PREVENTION PROGRAMME	CHILDREN (6-59 MONTHS) TREATED FOR SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION TAKEN FOR TREATMENT	CHILDREN VACCINATED AGAINST MEASLES	HEALTH CENTERS BUILT/RENOVATED	PEOPLE RECEIVING HYGIENE KITS (WASH)	
4,294	4,126	40,452	7	3,057	
PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER	COMMUNITY LATRINES BUILT/REHABILITATED	CLASSROOMS BUILT/RENOVATED	CHILDREN WITH LEARNING MATERIALS	TEACHERS TRAINED IN EDUCATION	CONFLICT PREVENTION MECHANISMS
29,548	515	6	23,019	12	14

Pillar 4. Protection

REFUGEES REGISTERED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS	PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH CIVIL STATUS DOCUMENTS	CHILDREN & CAREGIVERS RECEIVING CASE MANAGEMENT (MHPSS INCLUDED)	UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE
			
29,233	5,014	455	50
CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACES BUILT & EQUIPPED	COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES CREATED/REACTIVATED	PEOPLE ACCESSING GBV RESPONSE & PREVENTION SERVICES	WOMEN & GIRL RECEIVING DIGNITY KITS
			
4	52	19,080	200

Registration and documentation. The influx of refugees required strengthening the monitoring system and the DAARA's registration capacity. These efforts allowed for the registration of asylum-seekers as they arrived and helped avoid significant delays and excessive accumulation of people awaiting registration—4,538 asylum-seekers were still awaiting registration by the end of 2024. The enrollment of asylum-seekers in the National Register of Physical Persons (RNPP) of the national office for civil status and identification ONECI (Office National de l'Etat Civil et de l'Identification) has been approved and will be implemented in 2025. To this end, a plan for transferring biometric data to ONECI is being validated to allow enrollment in the RNPP and the issuance of a unique identifier to facilitate access to services within national systems. Additionally, 181 children seeking asylum received support in obtaining birth certificate extracts.

Response to essential needs (Timalah and Niornigué sites, host communities). In 2024, the Joint Response Plan strengthened the response to essential needs at the Niornigué and Timalah sites as well as outside the sites, considering the significant increase in asylum-seekers and the increased vulnerability of host communities.

- *Food and nutrition assistance:* food assistance was maintained for asylum-seekers and their host communities, with a total of 2.98 million USD distributed directly to beneficiaries in 2024. In total, 33,881 asylum-seekers (56% women) received unconditional monthly cash transfers, representing a 142% increase compared to 2023 (13,973 asylum-seekers assisted). All asylum-seekers in the two sites of Timalah and Niornigué were supported. Asylum-seekers living outside the sites were assisted based on their vulnerability. Those in Tchologo continued to receive assistance as in 2023, and those in Bounkani were included starting in May 2024 following successful advocacy with the Government to be authorized to provide assistance. In the Tchologo region, vulnerable asylum-seekers from 80 villages/communities in the areas of Ouangolodougou, Ferkessédougou, and Kong were assisted. In the Bounkani region, 42 villages/communities in the areas of Bouna, Doropo, and Téhini were supported. Additionally, to combat food insecurity within host communities and prevent intercommunal tensions between asylum-seekers and their host communities, 681 vulnerable households from host communities, totaling 4,086 people, were assisted. They received quarterly transfers aligned with the national social safety nets programme. Due to insufficient financial resources, the food ration for asylum-seekers had to be reduced in April 2024, from 10,000 CFA francs per person per month to 5,000 CFA francs. Post-distribution surveys showed that food assistance reduced the percentage of asylum-seekers on-site with poor food consumption scores, from 22% in July 2023 to 6% in September 2024. Similarly, during the same period, for the same groups of people, there was a significant decrease in food stress, with a nearly 5-point drop (from 12 to 7) in the consumption-based coping strategy index.



©WFP Food assistance for asylum-seekers Tchologo (Côte d'Ivoire)

To prevent cases of moderate acute malnutrition, 3,184 children aged 6 to 59 months and 1,110 pregnant and breastfeeding women received nutritional assistance through the distribution of specialized nutritional foods (Super cereals, Super cereals +, and fortified vegetable oil). This assistance covered the months of July, August, and September 2024, primarily at the Timalah and Niornigué sites, but also the populations around the Timalah site in the Bounkani region. Furthermore, Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) sessions reached 2,850 people to reinforce good nutritional practices and promote healthier eating habits. Four multisectoral community nutrition platforms (FRANC) were also established at the sites and host communities in Niornigué and Timalah. These platforms play a crucial role in preventing malnutrition, promoting optimal nutritional practices, and monitoring the nutritional situation in these areas. A total of 2,021 children under five and over 700 pregnant and breastfeeding women benefited from screening services, nutritional counseling including cooking demonstrations, and early childhood development and stimulation interventions.

- *Non-food assistance:* a rapid response mechanism was also set up with civil society. This partnership focuses on the distribution of non-food kits to contribute to the socio-economic resilience of local communities. The first distribution of kits reached 61 households, totaling 422 people, displaced in the Téhini department following a security incident at the border. A total of 819 non-food kits were pre-positioned at the Timalah and Niornigué sites.



© IOM Distribution of NFI kits to asylum-seekers - Govitan (Côte d'Ivoire)

- *Education and child protection:* finally, nine new learning spaces/temporary classrooms were built, bringing the total number of learning spaces/temporary classrooms to 24, compared to 15 in the last quarter of 2023. These learning spaces allowed for the registration of 545 new asylum-seeking children, who also received individual educational materials. 932 out-of-school children from the adjacent host communities also benefited from an alternative education system. Child-friendly spaces were constructed (two at the transit sites of Timalah and Niornigué and two in the host villages of Bounkani and Tchologo). 58 at-risk children were assisted, and three training sessions were conducted for the actors working on the sites, social workers, and members of civil society in Tchologo and Bounkani. Finally, 15 child protection committees were established in Tchologo and Bounkani, including two at the Timalah and Niornigué sites, to help identify and refer cases as well as mobilize the community on child protection.

Socio-economic inclusion of asylum-seekers and strengthening social cohesion. In the absence of prospects for return in the near future, the dynamics of inclusion in the national services of forcibly displaced people during the asylum period have also been gradually strengthened. Local solutions to facilitate economic inclusion were encouraged.

- *Access to health services:* in the last quarter of 2024, 10,600 asylum-seekers from the Timalah and Niornigué sites were enrolled in Universal Health Coverage. The strengthening of the public health system took place through the rehabilitation and equipment of 14 healthcare infrastructures hosting asylum-seekers, six of which received mini water supply systems or support reservoirs. Capacity-building for health workers in five health districts of Bounkani and Tchologo was also organized, while the regional health departments of Tchologo and Bounkani received support (vehicles, biomedical equipment). Two dispensaries were built and made operational at the Niornigué and Timalah sites, currently operated by humanitarians but in close coordination with the public health system.
- *Access to education services:* access to public education services, particularly at the primary level, was also strengthened. 1,409 students were enrolled in temporary schools at the Timalah and Niornigué sites, and discussions began on transitioning to a standard curriculum. Support for the public school system was provided in the localities of Niornigué and Bouko (support for classrooms and the director's office). Three pedagogical, psychosocial, and animated reading training sessions were conducted. 1,000 school and educational kits were made available for asylum-seeking students and teachers near the transit sites. Two schools in the Bounkani region were renovated.
- *Economic empowerment:* at the local level, many host communities facilitated the participation of asylum-seekers in agricultural production so that they could meet their food needs and engage in small economic activities. A few quick-impact empowerment projects, mutually agreed upon by host and displaced communities, were also supported.



© IOM WASH training workshop for hygiene committees - Bouko (Côte d'Ivoire)

- *Social cohesion:* Cohesion between communities was maintained through community action, and the gradual influx of asylum-seekers did not generate major tensions. Reconciliation efforts between communities were notably carried out in Bounkani and Tchologo through civil society: seven community dialogue cells and local radio broadcasts were established. The Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) was implemented in the Bounkani region, which facilitated information sharing and involvement of various actors and entities such as local conflict prevention mechanisms, local state structures, herders, and farmers regarding transhumance dynamics in the Bounkani region. This tool helped strengthen dialogue at all levels and reduced the risks of conflict escalation

related to livestock movements. By actively engaging with local actors, the TTT specifically facilitated the identification of 30 areas with a high concentration of vulnerable populations (composed of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and/or herders), including 14 strategic localities for the construction of agropastoral infrastructure. The TTT's early warning system helped prevent the escalation of at least 50 conflicts related to livestock movements in 12 localities. Special attention was given to strengthening access to water, a critical resource that can lead to tensions. Nineteen human-powered pumps were replaced in Bounkani. A water, hygiene, and sanitation assessment was also conducted in October 2024 at the Timalah and Niornigué sites, as well as in six host localities. This assessment provided essential information for improving four drinking water infrastructures and solid waste management at the sites. Two hygiene and waste management committees were set up at the sites and in two host villages, in collaboration with the relevant authorities. One agropastoral water infrastructure, serving nearly 4,000 users, including asylum-seekers, was also constructed.

3. Coordination and synergy

Strengthening coordination mechanisms. In 2024, coordination was established at two levels: national and regional. Coordination is overseen by the National Security Council (CNS), which provides guidance, and at the local/regional level by the Regional Prefects. DAARA and agencies provide their expertise to the Prefects, particularly in terms of secretarial support. Regional Directors lead the various sectoral groups and report to the Prefects, who are the local coordinators. Throughout 2024, coordination meetings were held by the Regional Prefects and other sectoral meetings by the regional directors. During a workshop held in December 2024 with the CNS and several Prefects, a strengthened coordination model was defined and validated by the authorities. This model will be gradually implemented in 2025.

Engagement with development actors. In 2024, the Social Cohesion Project for the Northern Regions (COSO), funded with the support of the World Bank, strengthened the consideration of forced displacement in its interventions, aimed at increasing access to basic services and economic activities. This was reflected in a more focused approach to including the villages hosting asylum-seekers in the targeting of project sites. Additionally, participatory diagnostic and monitoring tools were revised to ensure they fully addressed the needs of forcibly displaced populations. Other actors were encouraged by UNHCR to include asylum-seekers in projects related to economic opportunities, such as GIZ through the ProRes project (Promotion of Resilience in the North). Additionally, the National Statistics Agency (AnSTAT) agreed to include asylum-seekers in the next Harmonized Household Living Conditions Survey (EHCVM), scheduled for 2025, with the support of a joint UNHCR/World Bank project. This will provide socio-economic data to guide sustainable responses. Preparatory work for this was carried out in 2024. IOM, for its part, collaborates with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as part of the UNEP-EU partnership on climate to strengthen the resilience of communities to climate-related risks and promote socio-economic stability. Agencies also pooled their efforts with those of the Government's Social Programme (PS Gouv 2) and the United Nations System's North-East Resilience Programme. UNICEF specifically collaborates with BMZ/KfW to improve access to basic social services for host communities and asylum-seekers. Finally, a UNHCR/WFP project to strengthen resilience activities and collect and analyze socio-economic data, funded by the European Union (INTPA), was validated in 2024 and is expected to be implemented in 2025 and 2026.

Expansion of the partnership framework of the Joint Response Plan. In 2024, there were no new partners associated with the Joint Response Plan. However, the plan supported the effective coordination of the response with all actors, including other UN agencies and civil society.

4. Overview of key needs and priorities in 2025

Coordination of the response. The coordination model for responding to the influx of asylum-seekers in northern Côte d'Ivoire, adopted in December 2024 (see above, Coordination and Synergy), clarifies the institutional framework for coordination and, if implemented with commitment and diligence, will promote synergies among all actors. Targeting four levels of coordination (strategic, operational, regional, and technical) and covering the humanitarian-development continuum, such a model will require resources to strengthen the capacities of the actors involved and, ultimately, enable it to function effectively. The proposed model will build on the achievements and tools developed in 2024.

Registration, data collection, and analysis related to refugees. Strengthening registration will consolidate the efforts made in 2024 (see above, Population Evolution), particularly in the event of continued influxes, as well as improve the collection of socio-economic data on refugees. This enhancement will notably involve increased support (more surveyors, training, etc.) for the DAARA teams. The socio-economic data collected will allow for the socio-economic profiling of the refugee populations. This profiling will contribute to the humanitarian response but also, and more importantly, to inclusion dynamics, especially economic inclusion. It will complement the protection monitoring data (P21), which must be maintained to identify immediate humanitarian needs, barriers to accessing services, and the perceptions of various stakeholders and their evolution over time.



©UNHCR Biometric registration of refugees/asylum-seekers (Côte d'Ivoire)

Continued humanitarian assistance. With the increase in the number of asylum-seekers, vulnerability is rising among both the asylum-seeker and the host communities. The arrival of asylum-seekers places pressure on fragile local communities and exacerbates food insecurity, especially among asylum-seekers and poor households in host communities. Over 738,000 people are expected to be in a food insecurity crisis from October to December 2024 (representing 3% of the total population of the country), and an additional 3.6 million people will be under stress (according to the October 2024 Harmonized Framework). The situation is expected to worsen during the lean season, between June and August 2025, with almost a million people in a food insecurity crisis and about four million people under stress. The regions of Bounkani and Tchologo, which host the majority of asylum-seekers, are heavily impacted, with a 133% and 96% increase in the total population in food insecurity crisis, respectively,

between October 2022 and October 2024 (from 13,316 to 52,732 in Bounkani and from 13,818 to 27,125 in Tchologo). Furthermore, the proportion of households (in both sites and host communities) unable to meet their basic needs, despite WFP cash transfers, remains high (82%). This rate is higher for asylum-seekers on-site (96%) compared to those off-site (86%).

Improving access to water also remains essential to strengthen livelihoods and ensure basic services for affected communities. Assessments carried out in host communities and transit sites report ongoing difficulties, including long waiting times at water points and inadequate hygiene practices. These issues undermine efforts to improve health, agricultural productivity, and living conditions in general. It is crucial to address the water access problem by building additional water points and promoting integrated water management systems. Therefore, maintaining humanitarian response capacities, particularly through cash distribution and improved access to water, remains necessary.



©UNICEF Children attending classes in a temporary space – Niornigué (Côte d'Ivoire)

Strengthening socio-economic inclusion and community resilience. Significant progress has been made on the socio-economic inclusion of asylum-seekers in 2024, but more remains to be done. For instance, it is estimated that the enrollment rate in primary education services is below 15%, while effective access to healthcare is cited as a major constraint by asylum-seekers (according to P21, 48% of refugees report limited access to healthcare services). Financial constraints, compounded by low economic inclusion, partly explain these difficulties. While surveys indicate that the proportion of households using emergency strategies (such as begging) has generally decreased from 6% to 4% in 2024, this decrease has not been constant, and an increase in the proportion of households resorting to emergency strategies was reported mid-year. Asylum-seekers in the Timalah and Niornigué sites particularly struggle to access sources of income, and vocational training programmes and employment services remain inaccessible for all asylum-seekers for the time being. Given the difficulties in starting an economic activity and accessing certain financial services without a unique identifier, financial inclusion is estimated to remain marginal. Other constraints, such as the absence or insufficiency of services, and administrative limitations (especially for accessing secondary education), contribute to hindering socio-economic inclusion dynamics. This situation impacts host communities, which continue to welcome asylum-seekers, increasing risks for community cohesion. In this regard, strengthening community dialogue mechanisms, promoting joint development initiatives, and addressing the root causes of disputes are essential to mitigating tensions and promoting peace in host regions.

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