UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

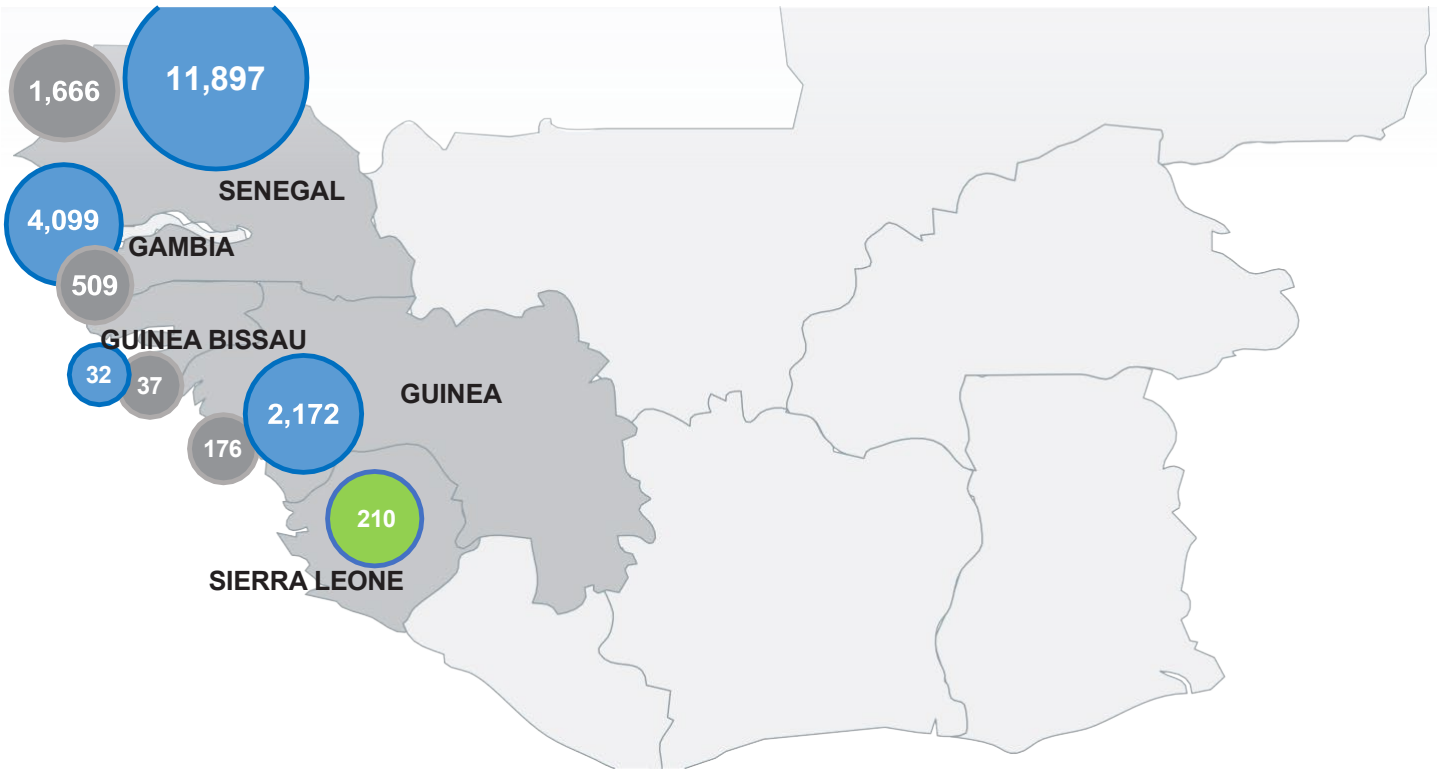
Multi Country Office SENEGAL

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Quarterly | July - September 2025

Key figures on population displacement

Statistics/Map



	20,805 Forcibly displaced people		**20,595** Refugees and asylum-seekers		**210** Others

Key achievements

	230 refugees were registered		**19** Households received cash assistance		**25** Refugees have received tuition, internship and apprenticeship support

Gambia Commission for Refugees(GCR) receiving His Excellency F. Türker OBA, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye, and Colonel M. Volkan KARALI, Counsellor for Security Cooperation and Interior Affairs ©GCR/Gambia Commission for Refugees

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 31 August 2025, a total of 20,805 forcibly displaced and stateless people were registered across these countries, including 20,595 refugees and asylum-seekers—mostly from Burkina Faso, CAR, Mauritania, Mali and.

Despite acute resource constraints, UNHCR continued to deliver essential 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 initiatives. 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 third quarter made significant headway in addressing statelessness. Efforts were focused on promoting legal identity, supporting nationality law reforms, and advancing naturalization processes. UNHCR worked closely with governments to develop roadmaps for citizenship acquisition and to raise awareness among communities and decision-makers on the rights of stateless persons.

Main achievements in sectors

PROTECTION

Mixed Movement

Under the leadership of the Senegal's National Committee for Refugees (CNRRPD), UNHCR MCO conducted a three-day mission to Bakel in response to new mixed movements arrivals from Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as additional arrivals involving Mauritanian refugees previously residing in Mali and Senegalese families returning from Mali. The mission pursued four objectives:

i. Identification of displaced persons and potential asylum-seekers in Bakel and surrounding localities.

ii. Assessment of protection concerns and basic needs, including health, education, and food assistance.

iii. Community sensitization on the roles of CNRRPD and CNESR in asylum and protection matters.

iv. Engagement with local authorities to promote international protection standards and fundamental rights.

UNHCR participated in a two-day thematic meeting titled "Bridging the Gaps: Advancing Cooperation on Missing Migrants within the Rabat Process", held in Banjul, The Gambia.

The event was organized by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) with support from the European Union. The meeting aimed to address the issue of missing migrants, strengthen cooperation among concerned states and further develop the mixed movements network. Participants included the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons, and Migrants in Africa under the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

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Discussions highlighted persistent gaps in response mechanisms and underscored the need to expand Rabat Process activities to additional countries, including The Gambia and Guinea. It was noted that nearly all states face similar challenges and require enhanced support to effectively address issues related to mixed movements.

Registration and Documentation

In The Gambia, UNHCR's government partner, the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR) as a follow-up to the nationwide training of border officials on identification and referral of asylum seekers to asylum procedure in April, conducted a five-day monitoring mission to all recognized border entry points in North Bank Region, Lower River Region and West Coast Region in September. The Commission had engagements with different border agencies including Drug Law Enforcement, State Intelligence Services, Gambia Revenue Authority, Public Health Officers and some local authorities. Discussions were centered on rights, obligations of both the state and refugees and Prevention against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Between July and September, the Commission renewed a total of 115 asylum seeker attestations and 21 refugee cards. In Senegal, 63 previously rejected cases were referred to the appeal process and were beneficiaries of legal aid as they brought their appeal to the National Eligibility Commission (CNE).

Solution: local integration

In Guinea-Bissau, UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner the National Coordinator for the Assistance of Refugees and Displaced Persons (CNRD) intensified advocacy efforts for naturalization. Engagements included visits to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Territory and Local Governance, the National Steering Committee on Local Integration, and the Office of the President of the Republic. These efforts culminated in plans to print and distribute 4,933 nationality certificates in the last quarter of 2025 after the presidential elections.

STATELESSNESS PREVENTION

The Gambian Commission for Refugees participated in high-level meetings on the status of Ghana Town residents, a group at risk of statelessness, attended by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Director General of Immigration and representatives from key ministries and the Office of the President. GCR shared findings from its recent assessment to guide government action on inclusion.

Following the July meeting, the Minister of Interior convened an urgent meeting in September to define clear legal steps for granting citizenship to Ghana Town residents in Brufut at risk of statelessness. Key stakeholders included the Attorney General's Chambers, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Department of Immigration, and GCR. The meeting agreed to invoke a presidential declaration under constitutional provisions to confer citizenship after assessments, followed by gazetting the decision. GCR will develop a roadmap and terms of reference for implementation. The Ministry of Interior will provide a written approval and request financial support, while GCR will design a survey tool covering targeted residents and their families nationwide.

As a follow up to the identification of 436 refugee children who were at risk of statelessness in Senegal in the first half of 2025, 892 birth certificates were issued during two mobile court hearings in Kanel and Bakel.

EDUCATION

Senegal partner Green Village Foundation (GVF) played an instrumental role in assisting 10 more DAFI student refugees to receive cash assistance covering various costs including tuition, accommodation and support costs for internships and research. In preparation for back-to-school season, GVF also distributed 50 school kits to refugee school children.

In The Gambia, GAFNA's facilitated payment of school tuition for six students in higher education institutions. During this period, GAFNA also conducted school visits in Foni, a rural region of The Gambia, to review the performance of refugee

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students who sat the 2024/2025 national examinations: the Grade 12 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the Grade 9 Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination (GABECE). These visits enabled GAFNA to identify high-achieving students who may qualify for future education grants.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

In August, GAFNA provided cash assistance totaling 60,000 Gambian Dalasi (GMD) to five refugee youth. This support enabled them to purchase essential tools and materials required for their practical training during apprenticeship placements in various informal vocational workshops. The assistance aimed to equip the beneficiaries with the resources needed to successfully complete hands-on components of their skills development programs.

Further GAFNA supported four skilled refugees with cash assistance totaling 125,000 GMD to acquire essential tools and materials for carpentry, tiling, and construction work to empower the beneficiaries to secure employment, improve their livelihoods, and encourage self-reliance.

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 71 forcibly displaced people.

In The Gambia, GAFNA provided cash assistance to eight forcibly displaced persons to help them access essential health services, while continuing joint counseling sessions for refugees and asylum-seekers throughout August and September. With support from UNHCR, GAFNA also conducted interviews with 19 forcibly displaced individuals to better understand their needs. Key issues discussed included health, documentation, and livelihood challenges. Based on these assessments, referrals were made to relevant partner organizations, and some individuals received direct assistance.

By delivering critical mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to refugees and host communities, GAFNA equips individuals with coping mechanisms to manage the challenges of displacement.

Shelter/Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In July 2025, GAFNA received a shelter referral from the Gambia Commission for Refugees concerning an asylum seeker experiencing accommodation challenges. Given the urgency of the situation, GAFNA provided cash assistance to address the individual's immediate needs.

Additionally, GAFNA, in collaboration with the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR), conducted a joint monitoring and evaluation mission in the Foni region. The exercise focused on assessing water facilities and shelter beneficiaries under the U.S. Embassy-funded projects initiated in June 2025. This initiative has significantly improved access to clean, safe water and adequate accommodation for beneficiaries.

Partnerships with development actors

UNHCR, through its Gambian partner GAFNA, engaged in discussions with the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Children's Affairs, particularly the Directorate of Social Welfare. During these engagements, GAFNA's Executive Director highlighted some of the limited assistance that could be extended to vulnerable groups.

Following these initial discussions, the Executive Director conducted a preliminary follow-up visit to the Ministry, meeting with staff from both the Directorate of Social Welfare and the Directorate of Children's Affairs. The dialogue focused on potential support for refugees and asylum seekers within facilities managed by the Ministry, including the Home for the Elderly and the Shelter for Children in Bakoteh.

Additionally, discussions covered the Drop-In Centre located within the same premises, which provides care for GBV survivors and children on the move. This center is funded by UNFPA and operated by the Network for Gender-Based

Violence in The Gambia. Opportunities for partnership were explored, particularly between UNHCR partners and organizations managing these facilities such as UNFPA, to identify ways to assist vulnerable asylum seekers especially in situations where budget constraints exist.

It was agreed that both Gambia partners should jointly meet with the organizations to define areas of potential collaboration. These discussions will be formalized through joint Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at strengthening support for refugees, asylum seekers, and individuals at risk of statelessness.

In September, the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR) hosted a delegation from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). The delegation was conducting an Impact Assessment of KAIPTC training courses delivered in The Gambia, as part of the Centre's commitment to evaluating program effectiveness and strengthening collaboration with national institutions. The sessions provided a valuable platform to assess how KAIPTC training has contributed to capacity building and improved performance across various functions within GCR. Staff members shared practical experiences on applying the knowledge and skills acquired through these courses, emphasizing notable improvements in operational efficiency, policy implementation, and overall service delivery.

GCR remains committed to deepening its partnership with KAIPTC and ensuring that future training initiatives continue to deliver meaningful and lasting impact on staff development and institutional effectiveness.

Progress on the implementation of Global Compact for Refugee pledges

In addressing nationality and citizenship provisions, the Gambian Parliament through the Office of the President, Department of Immigration, Chief of Staff, and other government stakeholders has engaged with persons at risk of statelessness.

As a result of these consultations, the Ministry of Interior has outlined clear steps for acquiring citizenship, including a presidential declaration, gazettement of the declaration, and a roadmap to guide implementation. These measures align with SDG 10 (reducing inequalities) and SDG 16.9 (providing legal identity for all).In line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the sustainable development goals, particularly SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 4 (quality education), cash assistance for tuition fees, apprenticeships, internships and entrepreneurship ventures is enabling refugees to pursue education and income-generating opportunities. These interventions not only foster self-reliance among refugee students but also contribute to economic growth and durable solutions.

Partnerships with Governments

MCO Senegal continues its engagement in The Gambia, working closely with the Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Office of the President, particularly on issues related to statelessness. In Senegal, UNHCR maintains strong collaboration with the National Eligibility Commission (CNE), the Interministerial Committee against Irregular Migration (CILMI), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Committee for the Management of Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Stateless Persons (CNRPD) to address challenges arising from mixed movements.

Funding cuts and efficiency measures:

Due to funding constraints, UNHCR streamlined partnership agreements for 2025 to ensure alignment with operational priorities and timelines. This approach enabled the efficient reprioritization of scheduled interventions. Consequently, available resources have been redirected toward high-impact, community-based initiatives, allowing UNHCR to address urgent needs faced by forcibly displaced populations more effectively.

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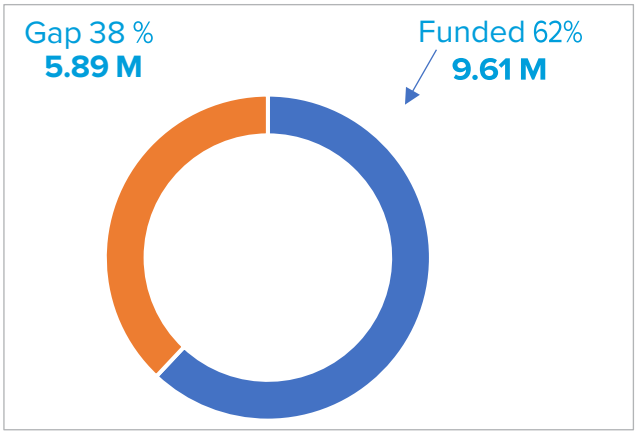
FUNDING AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

USD 15.5 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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