

KEY FIGURES:

>8.3 million people of concern in West and Central Africa*

>5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

>1.2 million refugees

>692,000 stateless

>27,000 asylum seekers

>1.4 million returnees

21 countries and 4 situations

Mali situation:

138,975 Malian refugees: in Niger (56,815), Mauritania** (56,668), and Burkina Faso (25,492).

838,356 IDPs: in Burkina Faso (560,003), Mali (199,385) and Niger (78,968).

Nigeria situation:

241,039 Nigerian refugees in Niger (119,541), Cameroon (109,340) and Chad (12,158).

2,569,065 IDPs in Nigeria (2,018,513), Cameroon (270,870), Chad (170,278) and Niger (109,404).

Central African Republic situation:

593,733 Central African refugees in Cameroon (292,863), the DRC (173,185), Chad (94,101), the Republic of Congo (22,198), Sudan** (9,289) and South Sudan** (2,075).

600,136 IDPs in Central African Republic

Cameroon situation:

50,443 Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria.

679,393 IDPs in Cameroon.

Chad emergency:

Estimated **14,078 Sudanese refugees** newly arrived in Chad.

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS**Political and security developments**

▪ **Sahel.** On 13 January 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron hosted his counterparts from five Sahelian countries - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger - for a critical summit to review military intervention in the region and the fight against armed groups amid a worsening security situation. It was agreed that military forces in the region would be placed under one umbrella with additional French and European troops to be sent in the coming months. This new Coalition for the Sahel will put greater emphasis on intelligence-sharing and building the military capacity of the G5 Sahel countries to address the growing insecurity in the region, especially in the Liptako-Gourma at the border between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. In a report published on 8 January 2020, the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) estimated the number of casualties from terrorist-attack in Burkina Faso Mali and Niger had leapt five-fold since 2016, with more than 4,000 deaths reported in 2019 alone as compared to some 770 three years earlier. In this difficult operational context, the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, undertook a field visit from 28 January to 4 February 2020 to Burkina Faso, Mauritania and to Niger where he met with refugee and host communities, national and local authorities and key humanitarian and development partners.

▪ **Niger.** During the month of January 2020, significant displacement has been recorded in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions after the attack that killed 89 soldiers in Chinagodar in Niger on 9 January 2020. It is estimated that more than 7,000 people fled their home that about 5,500 people have fled to the towns of Banibangou and Ouallam in Niger, where 7,326 Malians are already refugees. In Mali, over 1,000 Nigerien refugees, including unaccompanied children, have crossed the border to seek refuge in the town of Andéraboukane in the Ménaka region, which already hosts 1,024 Nigerien refugees since 2018. Forced displacement is likely to continue in this area where the number of attacks by non-state armed groups has been steadily increasing throughout 2019. As of 31 December 2019, the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions hosted over 58,000 Internally displaced persons. To address this growing crisis, UNHCR and its partners are stepping up their response.

▪ **Lake Chad Basin.** The security situation throughout Northern Nigeria remains volatile, especially around the Lake Chad Basin where the humanitarian hub in Ngala in Borno state was the direct target of a complex assault by heavily armed non-state armed groups operatives on Saturday 18 January 2020. This humanitarian hub is critical for UNHCR and its partners to provide humanitarian assistance to more than 55,000 people who sought refuge in the town of Ngala, near the border with Cameroon. Taking place shortly after the kidnapping of aid workers near Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno state, on 22 December 2019, this new incident illustrates the growing trend of attacks on aid workers in Nigeria. Twelve aid workers lost their lives in 2019, which is twice the number in the previous year.

▪ **North-West and South-West Cameroon.** As of January 2020, the conflict that erupted in 2017 in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon has killed an estimated 3,000 people and displaced over half a million, including over 50,000 refugees who fled to the neighboring regions of Nigeria, including Cross River State and Benue State. Despite the Grand National Dialogue that took place in October and the adoption by the Cameroon parliament of a bill granting "special status" to the country's Anglophone regions, the security remains volatile, limiting the prospect for refugee returns. As of 31 December 2019, a total of 51,723 Cameroonian refugees had been registered by UNHCR, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and IDPs (NCFRMI) and the National Immigration Service (NIS). The registration and verification process, started in May 2018, remains challenging due to the remoteness of some locations and poor communication networks in the main hosting areas. To strengthen collaboration and synergy between humanitarian and development actors in responding to the needs of Cameroonian refugees, UNHCR organized a high-level meeting with the Cross-River State Ministry of International Development Cooperation (MIDC), the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), MEDIATRIX Development Foundation in Calabar, Nigeria on 31 January 2020. The meeting focused on improving coordination and outlining roles and responsibilities of national and local authorities in the construction and rehabilitation of basic social services in areas hosting, in an effort to foster the socio-economic inclusion of refugees while easing pressure on host communities, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

*Key figures include refugees, internally displaced, stateless persons and returnees.
**Country not in West and Central Africa

Population movements

- **Chad.** Since December 2019, inter-communal tensions in El Geneina, in Sudan's West Darfur have triggered a refugee influx to Eastern Chad with over 14,000 arrivals as of end of January 2020. In coordination with key partners including WFP, UNICEF and IRC, UNHCR is supporting the Government of Chad in responding to this emergency and providing aid to the refugees scattered in villages around the border town of Adre in the Ouaddai province. The current conditions in hosting areas are dire with most of the refugees staying under makeshift shelters with limited access to water, food and basic health services and the needs are set to increase as the influx of refugees is expected to continue in the coming weeks. To better assess the scale of this recent displacement, UNHCR has started a registration exercise in coordination with the Chadian authorities. As of 26 January 2020, 11,030 were pre-registered, a vast majority of them children, women and elderly. This process includes medical screenings to identify those in need of immediate assistance and protection monitoring to inform planning and ensure all specific needs are address in the scale up of the emergency refugee response. In coordination with the authorities and its partners, UNHCR is increasing its operations in the Ouaddai Province focusing on health and food assistance and the distribution of shelter and core relief items while a new site has been identified with the local authorities and is being set up to relocate refugee away from the border.
- **Mixed movements.** On 04 January 2020, a small group of disgruntled refugees and asylum seekers allegedly set fire to the Humanitarian Center outside of Agadez. The fire destroyed 80 percent of the center, including of 300 shelters. UNHCR and its partners took immediate action to find alternative shelter arrangements for the victims. We also continued to provide food, medical care and other basic services to the 1,200 asylum seekers and refugees mainly from Sudan, including those detained in connection with the incident. In addition, UNHCR through the ANAJJ (National Agency for legal and judiciary Aid) provided legal assistance to the detainees. Through the Regional Entity in charge of child protection (DRPE) alternative to detention has been proposed and implemented for children who were arrested. This regrettable incident highlights the negative impact that delays in resettlement processes, lack of alternative pathways to third countries and prolonged stay in facilities such as the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) can have on the morale of highly traumatized refugees and asylum seekers. Niger is a major crossroad of northwards movements of economic migrants as well as persons in need of international protection towards Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean. UNHCR, works the Government of Niger, IOM and NGO partners to identify asylum seekers within the mixed migratory flows in view of delivering protection and assistance.
- **Voluntary repatriation to Cote d'Ivoire.** In 2019, a total of 3017 Ivorian refugees returned to their country of origin with the support of UNHCR and 3,017 returned in accordance with the Roadmap on Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration adopted in 2018 by Cote d'Ivoire and the main asylum countries.
- **Togo.** Showcasing a positive example of durable solutions for refugees, the Government of Togo, with the support of UNHCR, provided residence permits for 23 Congolese refugees to facilitate their local integration and socio-economic participation in the life of their country of asylum.

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