

West & Central Africa

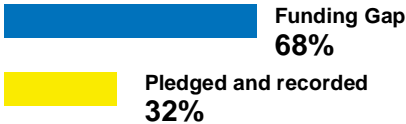
21 Countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

05 August 2020

The West and Central Africa region has seen a **18% percent increase** in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks with a total of **167,912 contaminations** as of 03 August compared to 141,891 on 20 July 2020.

Since the beginning of the rainy season, **heavy rainfalls and floods have hit several hosting areas**, especially in the Sahel and Nigeria. This represents an **additional challenge** to the implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19.

As countries are relaxing their restrictions on movement, UNHCR is stepping up the dissemination of **tools and guidance to safely resume in-person protection activities** and community engagement.

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|--|---|--|
| POPULATION OF CONCERN 10,000,000 total PoCs 5,600,000 IDPs 1,300,000 Refugees 1,400,000 Returnees 1,700,000 Stateless | COVID-19 CASES* 167,912 confirmed cases 48,353 still active 116,928 recovered 2,631 deaths <small>*source: WHO as of 03 August 2020</small> | FUNDING REQUIREMENTS for COVID-19 Response Globally US\$745 MILLION  |
|--|---|--|



Sensitization and information-sharing session on COVID-19 preventive measures in Damasak, in Borno State, Nigeria. ©UNHCR Nigeria

Operational Context

- Continuous increase in COVID-19 cases in West and Central Africa.** The West and Central Africa region has seen a 18% percent increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks with a total of 167,912 contamination as of 03 August compared to 141,891 on 20 July 2020. **Nigeria** (44,129) remains with the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by **Ghana** (37,812), **Cameroon** (17,255), **Cote d'Ivoire** (16,220) and **Senegal** (10,432). The number of active cases is stagnating at regional level, **Nigeria** (22,570) has the highest number, followed by **Cote d'Ivoire** (4,231), **Ghana** (3,307), **Senegal** (3,298) and **CAR** (2,920). The exact number of COVID-19 cases in the region remains uncertain, particularly given the low levels of testing. Death tolls are also unreliable as they may exclude people who did not die in a hospital, or who died before they could be tested.

- COVID-19 Cases in West and Central Africa by Country:**

| Countries | Confirmed | Deaths | Recovered | Active |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Benin | 1,805 | 36 | 1,036 | 733 |
| Burkina Faso | 1,153 | 53 | 947 | 153 |
| Cape Verde | 2,583 | 25 | 1,911 | 647 |
| Cameroon | 17,255 | 391 | 15,320 | 1,544 |
| CAR | 4,614 | 59 | 1,635 | 2,920 |
| Chad | 936 | 75 | 814 | 47 |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 16,220 | 102 | 11,887 | 4,231 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 4,821 | 83 | 2,182 | 2,556 |
| Gabon | 7,646 | 51 | 5,408 | 2,187 |
| Gambia | 498 | 9 | 68 | 421 |
| Ghana | 37,812 | 192 | 34,313 | 3,307 |
| Guinea | 7,418 | 46 | 6,523 | 849 |
| Guinea Bissau | 1,981 | 27 | 803 | 1,151 |
| Liberia | 1,216 | 78 | 698 | 440 |
| Mali | 2,543 | 124 | 1,943 | 476 |
| Niger | 1,152 | 69 | 1,032 | 51 |
| Nigeria | 44,129 | 896 | 20,663 | 22,570 |
| Sao Tome | 874 | 15 | 787 | 72 |
| Senegal | 10,432 | 214 | 6,920 | 3,298 |
| Sierra Leone | 1,848 | 67 | 1,375 | 406 |
| Togo | 976 | 19 | 663 | 294 |
| Total (WCA) | 167,912 | 2,631 | 116,928 | 48,353 |

- **Relaxing of movement restrictions across the region.** In West and Central Africa, governments are still grappling with the negative health and socio-economic impact of **COVID-19**. Despite the rising number of cases, most states are gradually lifting the preventive measures initially adopted in order to mitigate the social tension and economic slowdown they triggered.
- **Increasing food insecurity in the region.** Many refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) faced a significant disruption in their livelihoods and are now at risk of food insecurity. Supply chain challenges, rising food prices and loss of income threaten to leave millions without food across Africa. Levels of acute malnutrition, stunting and anemia are expected to rise with forcibly displaced population being in particularly vulnerable. In this context, WFP and UNHCR have issued a [joint statement](#) calling for urgent support from donors and urging governments to ensure that refugees and other displaced populations are included in social safety nets and COVID-19 response plans to ensure their access to food and emergency cash assistance. In **Cameroon**, WFP was forced to reduce its assistance to refugees from the Central African Republic by 50% in May and June due to funding gaps and, based on current funding levels, will have to stop cash assistance entirely from August. Cuts in rations are also expected for Nigerian refugees in the country.



Flood in the Gubio Road Camp, in Borno State, Nigeria.
©UNHCR Nigeria

- **The rainy season adding to existing operational challenges.** Since the beginning of the rainy season, heavy rainfalls and floods have hit several hosting areas, especially in the Sahel and in Nigeria. This represents an additional challenge to the implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19. In **Burkina Faso**, insecurity continues to represent a major challenge to the implementation of UNHCR's COVID-19 response. The rainy season brought heavy rainfalls further reducing access to displaced populations many of whom are living in flood-prone areas making it harder for them to enforce basic preventive measures against COVID-19. UNHCR is currently working with the authorities to identify safer sites to relocate those most at risk of floods. In **Cameroon**, the security situation continues to deteriorate in the Far North, hindering UNHCR's response. On 2 August, an attack on a site hosting 800 IDPs near the village of Nguetchewe, in Cameroon's Far North region caused the death of 18 people. This attack follows a significant rise in violent incidents in Cameroon's Far-North Region over in July, including looting and kidnapping by Boko Haram and other armed groups active in the region. In **CAR**, the insecurity and the political instability related to the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections is of concern and hinders UNHCR's COVID-19 response, in a country where health and WASH facilities are extremely rare. In **Mali**, the current political tension limits the central government's ability to focus on the COVID-19 response in a context where regional public health structures have limited capacity and decision-making power. In addition, the security constraints along with the recent rainfalls and floods in high-risk areas where displaced populations are living in Kayes, Gao, Koulikoro, Mopti and Timbuktu, further limit access to remote areas where many Persons of Concern (PoC) are located. In **Niger**, especially in the regions of Maradi in the South and Tahoua and Tillabery in the Western part of the country, UNHCR's access is also limited due to the heavy rains and violence. In **Nigeria**, the main challenge is the difficulty to implement preventive measures in overcrowded IDP sites where recent fire outbreaks and heavy rainfalls hindered UNHCR's decongestion efforts.

UNHCR Response

- As countries are relaxing their restrictions on movement, UNHCR is starting to reinstate in-person activities while **stepping up the dissemination of tools and guidance to help operations mitigate the risk of contamination** during these community engagements. UNHCR continues to provide PoC and host communities with relevant and **accessible information on the pandemic** through the Regional COVID-19 Information Platform in partnership with IOM. UNHCR Operations continue to **provide direct support to national health systems** to strengthen their infection prevention and healthcare responses, including through the provision of medical equipment and supplies and training of health personnel. With the beginning of the rainy season, UNHCR operations are stepping up their **shelter interventions and NFI distributions** to rebuild damaged houses and community building while decongesting the most overcrowded and flood-prone sites. As local economies are progressively reopening,

UNHCR operations are enhancing their **livelihoods activities** to help refugees and IDPs strengthen their self-reliance. In July, UNHCR supported the authorities in their efforts to **ensure a smooth return to school** across the region by contributing to sensitization and capacity-building activities for teachers and students on safety measures against COVID-19.

Operational Highlights



Strengthen risk communication and community engagement, and critical protection case management, including protection monitoring and registration

- **Communication with Community.** As part of its regional strategy for communication with communities, UNHCR and its partners continue to engage communities remotely when movement restrictions limit access to populations. However, where countries are relaxing their preventive measures, in-person community engagement activities are increasing. To avoid any risk of contagion, UNHCR and its partners are stepping up their efforts to disseminate operational tools and guidances, to help plan safe in-person community meetings. In **Burkina Faso**, sensitization through spots and short programmes on local radios continue in French, More and Ffulde six times a day. The end of these spots and programmes is expected to take place on 5 August and 25 August 2020 respectively. In **CAR**, UNHCR continues to conduct sensitization campaigns among refugees and host communities regarding COVID-19 and prevention measures (including training of public criers and community mobilizers). An estimated 373,000 refugees, IDPs and hosts have been reached since the beginning of the pandemic. UNHCR also maintains protection activities through remote arrangements and enhanced communication with PoC. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a total of 400 mobile phones have been distributed to enable protection monitoring through community and protection committees in IDPs sites. This remote monitoring covers over 100,000 IDPs so far. In **Chad**, sensibilizations sessions on COVID-19 continued in the Bredjing, Treguine, Farchana, Gaga, and Kouchaguine Moura camps with support of teachers, community health workers and hygiene promoters and through video projections of spots in Arabic and Massalit. To date, in Ouaddaï province in Eastern Chad, over 128,000 refugees (around 96% of the refugees in the province) have been reached by COVID-19 awareness messages. In **Guinea**, UNHCR and its partners continue informing the residents in the camp about COVID-19 using flyers, video clips, radio spots and other information material, which are regularly shared with partners and refugees and are also posted in and around the camp.



Strengthen and support primary and secondary health care and selected WASH services

- **Support the national health response to COVID-19.** In **CAR**, UNHCR continues to set up isolation units in key health centers across the country. A total of 314 Refugee

Housing Units (RHUs) have been made available to WHO and the Ministry of Health to that effect since the beginning of the pandemic. In **Chad**, UNHCR supported the government's COVID-19 response through the training of additional medical staff. So far, 96 out of 176 health personnel were trained on epidemiological surveillance and COVID-19 cases management and 25 out of 75 laboratory technicians were trained in COVID-19 patient screening. In **Mali**, UNHCR donated additional health equipment to regional authorities in Gao region on 15 July. The donation included 90 hospital beds, 90 mattresses, 100 blouses, 10 stretchers and 8,100 masks. In addition, 6 ambulances will be donated to the regional health authorities of Gao, Timbuktu, Mopti, Kayes, and Bamako. In Nigeria, UNHCR has completed the rehabilitation of three isolation centers in Ogoja which will benefit some 50,000 refugees and host communities, while two other rehabilitation centers are in progress in Adikpo and in Takum.

- **WASH interventions to support preventive measure.** In **Burkina Faso**, in order to facilitate the respect of preventative measures, such as handwashing, UNHCR provided some 9,700 bars of soap to its partner for distributions in the towns of Kaya, Korsimoro, Boussouma and Kongoussi in the Centre Nord region. In addition, the distribution of hand-washing devices began on 28 July in the Boucle de Mouhoun. Over 233 devices, more than 210 cartons of soap and over 230 bins will be distributed to persons of concern. In **Nigeria**, UNHCR also distributed 41,000 pieces of disinfectant soap, 6,400 face masks, 7,500 hand sanitizers and 5,000 buckets in Ikygogen, Adagom and Okende refugee settlements benefitting some 33,000 refugees and host communities.



Ramp up cash assistance, reinforce shelters, and provide core relief items in congested urban and camps settings

- **Cash-based intervention as part of the COVID-19 response.** In **Benin**, UNHCR is planning to extend its cash-based interventions to more vulnerable refugee families. A total of 100 families will be assisted with 90,000 XOF per family over two months, in addition to 50 families already assisted with 60,000 XOF per family over two months for housing support. This assistance is delivered by bank transfer and bank checks for refugees without a bank account. In **Burkina Faso**, the second phase of the cash-based interventions distribution in the context of prevention for COVID-19 has started in Bobo Dioulasso. Between 28 and 30 July, 345 refugees were provided with cash assistance for a total amount of XOF 6,1 million (XOF 15,000 person).
- **Shelter interventions and NFI distributions to decongest overcrowded settlements.** In **CAR**, UNHCR is working on re-designing the most crowded IDP sites to reduce the risk of contagion. As part of this decongestion effort, UNHCR and its partners provided cash assistance, food and NFI (Non-Food Items) kits to 1,725 households from two IDP sites in Bambari (representing a total of 6,122 individuals) to support their return back to their villages of origin. This support will be complemented by income-generating activities to support the successful socio-economic reintegration

of these IDPs in their areas of return. In **Nigeria**, in the Maiduguri area, UNHCR continues to support camp decongestion efforts with the construction of 500 additional shelters in Banki to mitigate the protection and health risks and protect families from the impacts of rains and floods. This has been complemented by NFI distributions, including blankets, mosquito nets that are of paramount importance during the rainy and cold season. Over 6,300 NFI Kits have been distributed to IDP Households in Borno and Adamawa, to alleviate their needs for basic and domestic items during the past two weeks.

- **Livelihoods intervention to strengthen self-reliance.** In **Liberia**, UNHCR has stepped up its livelihood interventions to help refugees cope with the negative economic impact of the pandemic. So far, over 530 refugees and host communities have been supported with seeds and tools to clear land and plant various crops including corn, rice, cassava and veggies. UNHCR has obtained over 1,000 acres of land for these activities. Livestock farmers have been supported with 500 kg corn and 250 beans as animal feeds. In addition, UNHCR provided food supply to 357 vulnerable refugees and host communities in Monsterado County, to 6,842 refugees in settlements and host communities in Grand Gedeh and Maryland Counties and to 946 refugees in settlements and host communities in Nimba county.

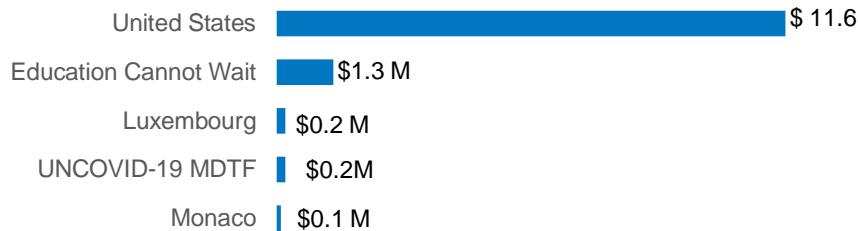


Support education systems

- **Supporting the progressive reopening of schools across West and Central Africa.** Across the region, UNHCR is supporting the authorities and other UN agencies, such as UNICEF, in their efforts to progressively reopen schools. UNHCR is contributing to sensitization and capacity-building activities for teachers, students and the community safety measures against COVID-19, the provision of personal protective equipment and the cleaning of school environment including fumigation. We are also supporting the improvement of ICT infrastructure to facilitate distant learning methods by providing increased connectivity, expanding radio broadcast coverage, establishing Wi-Fi hotspots, and providing laptops to teachers.

Financial Requirements

US\$745 million requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally through December 2020. Total funding received by UNHCR against its COVID-19 appeal: **US\$237.5 million**. The following donors have provided earmarked contributions for the Coronavirus Emergency Situation in **West and Central Africa**:



Special thanks to the following donors providing:

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COVID-19 APPEAL | USD

United States of America 64 million | **Germany** 38 million | **European Union** 32.8 million | **United Kingdom** 24.8 million | **Japan** 23.9 million | **UN Foundation** 10 million | **Denmark** 14.6 million | **CERF** 6.9 million | **Canada** 6.4 million | **Private Donors** 6.3 million | **Ireland** 3.3 million | **Sony Corporation** 3 million | **Sweden** 3 million | **Finland** 2.4 million | **Education Cannot Wait** 1.8 million | **Norway** 1.5 million | **Qatar Charity** 1.5 million | **Australia** 0.8 million | **Italy** 0.5 million | **Badr Jafar** 0.5 million | **UN COVID-19 MDTF** 0.4 million | **Ahmed Abdelkodous Ehsan** 0.4 million | **Monaco** 0.2 million | **Jersey** 0.2 million | **Estonia** 0.1 million | **Iceland** 0.1 million | **Liechtenstein** 0.1 million | **Portugal** 0.1 million | **UPS** 0.1 million | **Unilever** 0.1 million | **WFP** 0.1 million | **Russian Federation** 0.1 million | **Slovakia** 0.05 million | **Spain** 0.03

OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 210.1 million | **Canada** 45.2 million | **Japan** 18.5 million | **Norway** 16.8 million | **Switzerland** 12.8 million | **Sweden** 7.3 million | **United Kingdom** 7.1 million | **Denmark** 5 million | **Netherlands** 4.1 million | **Republic of Korea** 3.2 million | **Private donors** **Australia** 3 million | **Luxembourg** 2.7 million | **Finland** 2.2 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 76.4 million | **Norway** 41.4 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Private donors** **Spain** 26.6 million | **Germany** 25.9 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **Private donors** **Republic of Korea** 13.9 million

Notwithstanding UNHCR's COVID-19 appeal, the continuation of regular programmes in West and Central Africa remains critical. Many of these activities will also help people of concern to cope with COVID-19 and its subsequent protection and economic impact, even if not included in the prioritized appeal.

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