

Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan 2024

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

February
2025

Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo Regional Report



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1. Operational context

Population figures. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo experienced a significant increase in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers from the central Sahel in 2024. By the end of December, the four countries were hosting 135,300 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in their northern regions, marking an 83% increase over the year. The vast majority are from Burkina Faso, with a minority from the Niger. It is estimated that nearly 22,392 people are still awaiting registration in the four countries due to limited registration capacities caused by a lack of resources and security constraints. The total estimated number of refugees and asylum-seekers in the northern regions of the four countries is thus close to 160,000.

The increase in 2024 is driven by several factors: a) the arrival of 32,304 asylum-seekers during the year, especially in Côte d'Ivoire (80% of the arrivals), b) the gradual strengthening of registration capacities, particularly in Benin and Togo, and c) the initiation of registration in host communities in Ghana, outside the towns of Zini and Tarikom, during the second half of 2024.

By the end of 2024, the estimated number of internally displaced persons was 30,172, spread between Benin and Togo, bringing the total number of forcibly displaced persons in the northern regions of the four countries to 187,864.

Population Groups in Affected Regions		
	December 2023	December 2024
Refugees and asylum-seekers - estimate	104,000	157,692
Refugees and asylum-seekers - registered	74,021	135,300
Internally displaced persons - estimate	27,213	30,172
Internally Displaced Persons - counted	9,680	15,976

Protection environment. Forcibly displaced people continue to live within host communities in hundreds of towns and villages in the northern regions of the four countries. The Timalah and Niornigué sites in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the two settlements of Zini and Tarikom in Ghana, continue to host asylum-seekers (approximately 12,800 and 2,600 people, respectively).

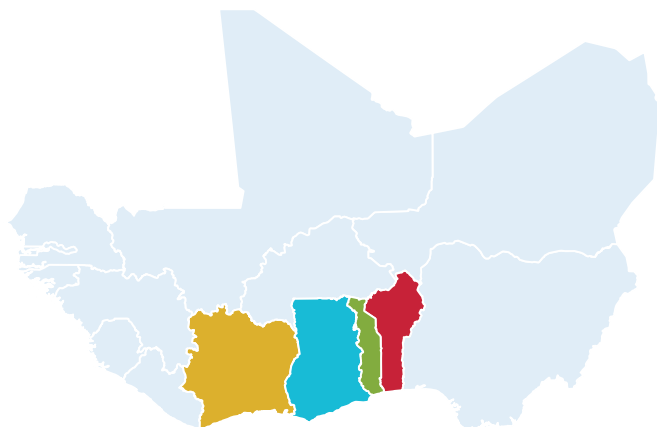
According to the Project 21 (P21) protection monitoring initiative, the majority of refugees and asylum-seekers (97%) report feeling safe in the four host countries. However, security incidents, particularly in several communes in Benin's Atacora and Alibori regions, in the Kpendjal, Kpendjal West, Tône, and Tandjoaré prefectures, in Togo's Savanes region, as well as in the town of Bawku in Ghana, are a source of concern. The main incidents reported are gender-based violence (GBV), followed by theft, abductions, and assaults.

64% of refugees and asylum-seekers have access to documentation (mainly the national identity card from their country of origin), while difficulties in obtaining identification documents are a significant constraint for those who do not have one (P21). Intercommunity tensions have been reported, mainly due to competition for natural resources, access to housing and land, and the lack of economic opportunities. Finally, the lack of access to basic social services such as education, healthcare, and clean drinking water increases the vulnerability of forcibly displaced populations. 51% of refugees and asylum-seekers do not plan to return in the immediate future, and 18% are undecided (P21).





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
393	3	15	126



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
184,482	606	2,978	7,382

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	GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN AGED 0-23 RECEIVING INFANT & YOUNG CHILD FEEDING ADVICE	CHILDREN VACCINATED AGAINST MEASLES	HEALTH CENTERS BUILT/RENOVATED
46,141	24,336	23,751	157,671	7

PEOPLE RECEIVING HYGIENE KITS (WASH)	PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER	COMMUNITY LATRINES BUILT/REHABILITATED	CLASSROOMS BUILT/RENOVATED	CHILDREN WITH LEARNING MATERIALS	CONFLICT PREVENTION MECHANISMS
36,951	214,086	527	24	76,578	66

Pillar 4. Protection

REFUGEES REGISTERED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS	PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH CIVIL STATUS DOCUMENTS	CHILDREN & CAREGIVERS RECEIVING CASE MANAGEMENT (MHPSS INCLUDED)	CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS RECEIVING PSYCHOSOCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT	UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE
				
62,484	24,368	1,388	19,097	160

CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACES BUILT & EQUIPPED	COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES CREATED/REACTIVATED	PEOPLE ACCESSING GBV RESPONSE & PREVENTION SERVICES	WOMEN & GIRL RECEIVING DIGNITY KITS
			
34	127	37,398	900



©WFP Food assistance to asylum-seekers in the Tchologo and Bounkani Regions (Côte d'Ivoire)

In 2024, humanitarian assistance and response to essential needs continued and expanded. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, this allowed for a response outside the sites of Timalah and Niornigué (Côte d'Ivoire) and the towns of Zini and Tarikom (Ghana). More specifically, the main outcomes were as follows.

Pillar 1. Data and Analysis

Protection monitoring. Protection monitoring was maintained and enhanced with the launch of the P21 initiative in Benin and Togo (in addition to Côte d'Ivoire), and in Ghana, and the extension of the existing monitoring mechanism to 60 communities.

Needs assessment. Numerous surveys were conducted to better assess needs and guide programmes, including a multisectoral assessment in Benin, a socio-economic profiling of refugees in Togo (ongoing at the end of 2024), a food security survey and the Solutions and Mobility Index (SMI) in Ghana—which assessed fragility in 175 border communities— and transhumance tracking tools reports and a water and sanitation survey in Côte d'Ivoire.

Pillar 2. Assistance

Food assistance and cash transfers. Food distributions (Togo) and cash transfers (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo) were carried out to meet the essential needs of vulnerable populations from forcibly displaced and host communities. More than 184,000 people received this assistance. This support sometimes required significant compromises: in Côte d'Ivoire, there was a noticeable increase in the number of vulnerable individuals assisted, but a 50% reduction in the amounts transferred.

Other responses and emergency preparedness. Several thousand households received non-food items in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo. In Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, 1,983 vulnerable households benefited from shelter improvement kits. Non-food items were pre-positioned in Côte d'Ivoire. In Benin, 17 municipalities were supported in their emergency preparedness.

Pillar 3. Prevention (community integration and resilience)

Health and nutrition. Strengthening public health systems, the direct provision of medical care (Timalah site in Côte d'Ivoire), and support for vaccination were implemented to varying degrees across the countries. Screening and treatment of acute malnutrition were carried out in the four countries. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, several thousand asylum-seekers were enrolled in the health insurance system (Universal Health Coverage and National Health Insurance Scheme).

Water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH). Investments were made to improve access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure. Several tens of thousands of people gained access to drinking water, for example, through the replacement or construction of 36 pumps in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo. Hygiene and sanitation services were provided to community members, including at the Timalah and Niornigué sites (latrine emptying) and the towns of Zini and Tarikom (awareness campaigns).



©UNICEF
Child protection
monitoring visit –
Koklannou (Benin)

Access to education. The Joint Response Plan strengthened education services through: a) the establishment and management of temporary schools (Timalah and Niornigué sites, Côte d'Ivoire) or supplementary schools (Zini and Tarikom towns, Ghana), b) the provision of equipment, rehabilitation, or construction of public schools (Côte d'Ivoire), c) the training of teachers, particularly in psychosocial support techniques (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo). Additionally, several tens of thousands of children from host and forcibly displaced communities were supported with school materials in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo.

Economic inclusion. Community savings and credit programs in Togo, support for agricultural activities in Ghana and Togo, and some self-employment promotion activities in Côte d'Ivoire were implemented.

Pillar 4. Protection

Registration, documentation, and protection. The four countries strengthened the registration processes for refugees and asylum-seekers to ensure their protection and access to national services. More than 60,000 additional refugees and asylum-seekers have been registered in 2024. In Togo and Benin, approximately 6,200 IDPs have also been registered throughout the year. The Lomé dialogues, bringing together representatives from the governments of the four countries, took place in April, June, and October 2024 and allowed for discussions on key protection issues.

Child protection and prevention and response to gender-based violence. The actors of the Joint Response Plan supported national mechanisms in the municipalities of Benin, Integrated Social Services and the ISS in Ghana, the establishment of community committees in Côte d'Ivoire, and the creation of 34 child-friendly spaces in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo that reached several thousand young people. Special attention was given to accountability towards affected populations across all countries, with a particular focus on Benin.

Social cohesion. Social cohesion between communities was an important cross-cutting focus in the four countries. Actions to foster rapprochement between communities and community dialogue were carried out in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo. Special attention was given to tensions related to transhumance in Côte d'Ivoire.

3. Coordination and synergy

Coordination between United Nations agencies, NGOs, and governments was strengthened in the four countries to improve the response. Collaboration between humanitarian actors and national governments notably helped strengthen the resilience of host communities. Coordination mechanisms were structured in different ways: under the Emergency Program for Strengthening Resilience and Community Security (PURS) in Togo, through strengthened relations with several government agencies in Benin, (including the Benin Civil Protection Agency), and through the adoption, at the end of 2024, of enhanced coordination models in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire. NGOs and other agencies joined the Joint Response Plan in Benin, Ghana, and Togo.

Engagement with development actors was an integral part of the strategy in the Joint Response Plan. More specifically, in 2024, Benin and Togo accessed the World Bank's Window for Host Communities and Refugees, thereby mobilizing 50 million USD for the Northern Regions Social Cohesion Project (COSO). More generally, in the four countries, with UNHCR's support, the COSO project strengthened the consideration of forced displacement in its interventions which aimed to increase access to basic services and economic activities. Other actors were encouraged to include asylum-seekers in development projects.

The agencies of the Joint Response Plan also mobilized various forms of support from development actors. A regional project funded by the European Union (INTPA) was developed by UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, and IOM in the four countries with a budget of 10 million euros. The project will support the resilience of host and forcibly displaced communities.



©UNHCR Refugee and host community women in a savings and credit association - Korbonghou, (Togo)

4. Overview of key needs and priorities in 2025

Considering the continued increase in the number of forcibly displaced people, particularly refugees and asylum-seekers, and the lack of immediate prospects for return, the continuation of socio-economic inclusion dynamics and community resilience is a priority in the four countries. This dynamic is particularly supported by the commitments made by the four governments at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023. More specifically, the main needs are as follows:

Strengthening the registration of refugees and asylum-seekers to document all individuals awaiting registration as well as new arrivals. This will also enable the collection and analysis of socio-economic data to promote better inclusion and assistance.

Increasing response capacities in terms of protection, particularly in support of protection monitoring initiatives (notably P21), but also to combat gender-based violence, which is the main security incident reported by refugees and asylum-seekers.

Continuation of food assistance, given the level of food insecurity among forcibly displaced and host communities, a significant portion of which is in a food crisis (Phase 3 of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification).

Strengthening access to social services to ensure better inclusion of forcibly displaced people in national systems, particularly in health, education, water, and social protection. The enrollment rate in primary education for refugee populations remains low (estimated at 37% in Benin, 31% in Zini and Tarikom in Ghana, and less than 15% in Côte d'Ivoire), while access to healthcare is one of the most commonly cited difficulties by refugees and asylum-seekers (29% reporting not accessing healthcare, according to P21 monitoring). This also involves supporting enrollment in health insurance mechanisms and national social safety nets.

Economic inclusion of forcibly displaced and host communities to promote self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on humanitarian aid, particularly through job creation, financial inclusion, support for agricultural opportunities, food assistance for assets, and refugee participation in development initiatives, such as the creation of agropoles in Togo.

The coordinated efforts of governments, humanitarian and development partners are essential to address the challenges related to hosting internally displaced people including refugees and asylum-seekers in the Gulf of Guinea countries.



©IOM HVA built in Koguienou, Kalamon, Boukani region (Côte d'Ivoire)

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