

CHAD

CHILD PROTECTION FACTSHEET

NOVEMBER 2014

CONTEXT

As of 16 November there are 461,641 refugees in Chad. Among these, more than 366,000 are from Sudan, living mainly in the East, 93,000 are from the Central African Republic (CAR) mainly in the South and close to 2,000 are Nigerians in the Lake Chad region in the West. There are also over 4,000 individuals of different nationalities who have found refuge in the capital, Ndjamen. In 2014, escalating violence in CAR and Nigeria, caused the arrival of some 20,000 newly-arrived refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria into Chad.

Today, half of the world's forcibly displaced persons in the world are children. In an effort to recognize the centrality of children's protection at the core of its work, UNHCR has elaborated a child protection systems approach, a Framework for the Protection of Children that engages duty bearers at all levels, from the families and communities to the national and international child protection systems. In this context, Chad has been chosen as one of the 11 pilot countries¹ for the implementation of this holistic strategy. **The protection of children cannot be isolated from the UNHCR Protection Strategy (2012-2016)** and its other priorities, namely to ensure access to free quality **Education** and to combat **Sexual and Gender Based Violence**.



Sudanese refugee children in Abgadam camp, 2013

Among the 461,641 refugees and asylum seekers registered by UNHCR Chad to date, 262,707 are children under the age of 18, among them 132,992 girls and 129,715 boys. This figure represents 59.45% of the total refugee population in the country. Of note is that 67.54% of the refugee population is composed of women heads-of-household who are in charge of providing for their families and specifically the care of the children.

In Chad, UNHCR has identified over 3,000 Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) who have been split from their primary caregivers. This year's reduction in food assistance to refugees living in camps is believed to have caused an increase in the number of working children as vulnerable families send their young members to help supplement the family needs. This exposes children to a higher risk of abuse and exploitation and contributes to a rise in the number of school drop-outs.

UASC: Unaccompanied children (UA) have been separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

Separated children (SC) are those separated from both parents or primary caregivers, but not necessarily from other relatives. Therefore these children may be accompanied by other adult family members.

¹ The pilot countries for UNHCR's Framework for the Protection of Children are Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, India, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda and Yemen.

KEY CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

The main child protection concerns in Chad remain **child labor, early / forced marriage** (particularly for girls aged 12 to 17), **early pregnancy, sexual exploitation** and other forms of **gender based violence, school drop-out, child recruitment into armed groups** as well as other forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Furthermore, there are some 71'000 Sudanese refugees born in Chad before the end of 2013 who lack Birth Certificates, and the birth of thousands of Sudanese and Central African refugee children born in 2014 remains, officially, unregistered. The lack of legal birth certificates / documentation directly affects children's access to health and education services, and it places them at risk of becoming 'stateless'.

- **SOUTH – Refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR):** With the escalation of violence in CAR in early December 2013, Chad has been receiving a significant number of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). To date, UNHCR has registered 1,185 UASCs in the South. These children have been particularly exposed to the risks of abuse, exploitation, forced-recruitment into armed groups, child labor, SGBV, early marriage and unwanted parenthood as well as increased risks of dropping out of school. In this context, UNHCR has also identified an upward trend in the practice of sex for survival. UNHCR and its implementing partners continue to identify children in need of protection and to provide an adequate response to these, with particular attention on providing a response to individual



CAR refugee girl in Gondje Camp, 2014

special needs. In parallel, specific programs such as income-generating activities are directed to particularly vulnerable families and UASCs in order to ensure their continued enrollment in school and to prevent refugee children from resorting to negative coping mechanisms. Regular referrals to UNHCR implementing partners continue for the provision of health care and legal and psychosocial support. Cash transfer programs directed at the most vulnerable families have proven particularly successful in 2014 in ensuring that children of extremely poor families are enrolled and remain in school.

- **EAST– Refugees from Sudan:** The Sudanese population in Chad is characterized by a more stable number of unaccompanied children but a common phenomenon of separated children living with a member of the extended family. UNHCR has identified 1,790 UASCs among the population living in the refugee camps along the eastern border. The main challenges of child protection in the East are SGBV and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage and pregnancy, child labor, and delays/gaps in the issuance of birth certificates for children. Given the sensitive nature of these issues and the challenges of accurately reporting, documenting and monitoring them, UNHCR has focused its efforts on reinforcing the already active youth committees and community-based child protection networks whose task is to identify children at risk, and to refer them for a response such as specific assistance (e.g. health care, legal, psychosocial support, etc.). Indeed, families usually do not report or reveal the identity and cases of survivors of (sexual) abuse / exploitation, early marriages and pregnancies, who are taken out of school and public view. UNHCR and its partners also focus on working with teachers and parent's associations to raise awareness on these issues and to facilitate identification of cases and referral activities.

UNHCR delivers protection to children of its concern by responding to their needs and the risks they face. This includes: protecting and advocating against all forms of discrimination; preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation; ensuring immediate access to appropriate services; and ensuring durable solutions in the child's best interest.

- **WEST– Refugees from Nigeria:** The Nigerian refugee population in the Lake Chad area is composed of 72% children (individuals under 18 years of age), of which half are girls. The major threats to young men fleeing the violence in Nigeria are forced recruitment into the ranks of Boko Haram, while young women seek refuge from the risk of forced marriage. Most of the young Nigerian refugee women are married and with children, as traditional practices favor marriage between the ages of 13 and 16. Identified vulnerabilities among the Nigerian refugee community are the lack of enrollment and/or difficult access to school, the absence of medical services, maternity care in particular, and the absence of safe spaces and activities for children. At present, 13 UASCs have been identified among the Nigerian refugees in Chad. In order to strengthen its protection and assistance activities to Nigerian refugees in the Lake region, in 2014 UNHCR established a presence in Ngouboua from where the Office will continue to monitor the situation of refugees, identify new arrivals, follow-up the implementation of activities and ensure the coordinate efforts with relevant partners. UNICEF has also planned to construct three Child Friendly Spaces in this area that will benefit refugee children.
- **N'Djamena - Urban Refugees:** Following the evacuation of Chadian nationals from Bangui to N'Djamena, organized by the Government of Chad and IOM, between 21 December 2013 and 20 February 2014, 233 UASCs from CAR/Bangui were registered by various agencies in N'Djamena earlier this year. In a coordinated effort between the Chadian Government (CNARR and Ministry of the Woman and Social Action) and international organizations such as UNICEF, IOM and ICRC, family tracing and reunification activities were conducted. As of mid-November 2014, 33 children were transferred to the South while 11 children remain in government transit centers in N'Djamena. The 33 refugee children were relocated to a refugee camp in the south where they will continue to be assisted and have access to health and education facilities, and will be closely monitored by UNHCR and its partners. UNHCR, in close collaboration with its partners, continues to pursue referral and tracing activities for these children, and to seek appropriate solutions to their situation. In the meantime, UNHCR Community Services, together with partners CSSI, CARE, and ACRA, continue to provide targeted assistance to this group of children.

Best interest procedures: Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration in providing protection to any child. This principle guides UNHCR's activities on child protection and is therefore applied in a systematic manner to any UNHCR action that affects children of concern. These procedures ensure that child participation is given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child, and without discrimination. Depending on the magnitude of the decision on the child's life, different procedural safeguards need to be put in place in order to identify which among the available options is in the child's best interest.

Best Interest of the child Assessments (BIA): will be systematically applied in a number of circumstances such as the identification of a UASC or child at risk and the search for a durable solution. This tool aims to ensure sufficient attention is always granted to the best interest of the child.

Best Interest of the child Determinations (BID): requires specific and formal procedural safeguards and involves decision-makers with relevant areas of expertise taking into consideration all relevant factors in order to assess the best option, especially when identifying: durable solutions; temporary care for UASC; and possible separation of a child from its parent(s) against his/her will.

KEY CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

- UNHCR responds to identified protection concerns through a series of activities that fall into three categories: 1) Reinforcement of **community child protection networks**, composed of members of the refugee community, is paramount for the prevention, identification, response, and referral of specific assistance of children at risk. Members of the community act as agents of change and are best placed to know the realities of life regarding their peers. As such, they are key actors of child protection and in a privileged position to identify and refer children at risk, working in favor of their

protection from within the community. 2) Creation and reinforcement of **Child Friendly Spaces** and **Youth Centers** has been central to offering secure spaces and stimulating activities for the protection, wellbeing and development of children and youth. On the other hand, 3) Capacity building including training and monitoring of activities on the **Best Interest of the Child procedures** continues, specifically with authorities, but also with all partners and organizations working on child protection issues in Chad. This contributes to the dissemination of children's rights and child friendly procedures, and the improvement of the protection provided to vulnerable children.

PARTNERS AND COORDINATION

- UNHCR works in close collaboration with its government counterpart, specifically with the *Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Réinsertion des Réfugiés (CNARR)* and the **Ministry of Women and Social Action**. UNHCR also coordinates and collaborates on a regular basis with international organizations such as UNICEF, IOM, ICRC and others. Amongst UNHCR's NGO partners for the specific implementation of child protection activities are the organizations **CARE**, **Fondazione ACRA-CCS**, **Centre de Support en Santé Internationale (CSSI)**, the **Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)** and **Association pour La Promotion des Libertés Fondamentales au Tchad (APLFT)**.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- UASC statistics for the East (Sudanese refugees) and South (Central African refugees):

| UASC Statistics: East, South and Ndjama | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Location | 0-4 | 5 to 11 | 12 to 17 | total |
| Goz Beida | 12 | 110 | 197 | 319 |
| Farchana | 3 | 58 | 204 | 265 |
| Iriba | 10 | 342 | 854 | 1206 |
| EAST - Total | | | | 1790 |
| Gore | 87 | 522 | 576 | 1185 |
| Ndjama | 0 | 8 | 52 | 60 |
| | 112 | 1040 | 1883 | 3035 |

- Registered children in the West (Nigerian refugees):

| Statistics: Nigerian Refuge Children (West) | | | | |
|---|-----|---------|----------|-------|
| Location | 0-4 | 5 to 11 | 12 to 17 | total |
| Ngouboua | 379 | 482 | 154 | 1015 |

The six goals of UNHCR's Child Protection Framework (2012)

1. Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play
2. Children's participation and capacity are integral to their protection
3. Girls and boys have access to child-friendly procedures
4. Girls and boys obtain legal documentation
5. Girls and boys with specific needs receive targeted support
6. Girls and boys achieve durable solutions in their best interests

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