

# West & Central Africa

*21 Countries covered by the Regional Bureau: 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.*

13 November 2020

Although the number of active COVID-19 cases continues to decrease to reach 13,281 as of 09 November 2020, the **number of new cases marked a slight increase** in the past two weeks across West and Central Africa.

As **concerns of a possible “second wave”**, some countries are strengthening their surveillance systems, increasing screening and testing, and encouraging the wearing of masks.

As part of its **emergency response to the influx of Ivorian refugees** in Liberia and Ghana, UNHCR is working to **mitigate the risk of contamination** through health, WASH and shelter interventions in hosting areas.

POPULATION OF CONCERN	COVID-19 CASES*	FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>10,000,000</b> total PoCs</p> <p><b>5,600,000</b> IDPs</p> <p><b>1,300,000</b> Refugees</p> <p><b>1,400,000</b> Returnees</p> <p><b>1,700,000</b> Stateless</p>	<p><b>238,249</b> confirmed cases</p> <p><b>13,281</b> still active</p> <p><b>221,426</b> recovered</p> <p><b>3,542</b> deaths</p> <p><i>*source: WHO as of 09 November 2020.</i></p>	<p>for COVID-19 Response Globally</p> <p><b>US\$745 MILLION</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 5px;">Funding gap</div> <div><b>32%</b></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="background-color: #FFD700; color: black; padding: 5px;">Funding Received</div> <div><b>68%</b></div> </div>



Young internally displaced girls present hats of their own handcrafting skills in Basaki camp of Maiduguri ©UNHCR/ Dieguen

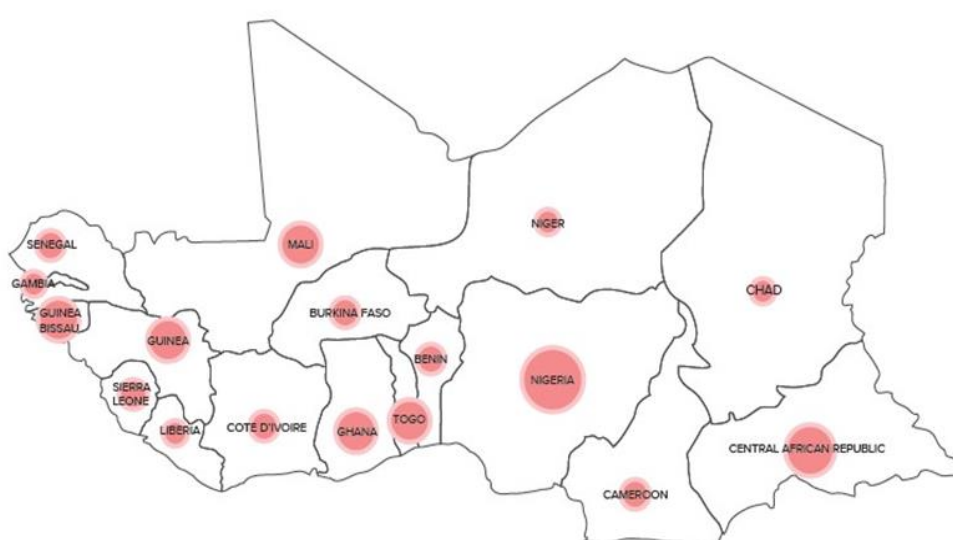
## Operational Context

- **Increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases in West and Central Africa.** Although the number of active COVID-19 cases continues to decrease to reach 13,281 as of 09 November 2020, the number of new cases marked a slight increase in the past two weeks across West and Central Africa, particularly in **Ghana** and **Nigeria**.
- **Concerns over a possible “second wave”.** While **Ghana** did not record any COVID-19 deaths in October, the number of new cases in the country increased from an average of 25 infections per day to an average of 130 per day over the past two weeks. The Ghana Health Service (GHS) has blamed the recent surge in coronavirus cases on the change in the attitude towards the safety protocols in churches, mosques and other gathering centers and warned that a second wave of the pandemic can be more terrible than the first if people do not keep to the safety protocols. The president also urged political leaders to set an example by wearing a mask during the intensified political activities and rallies ahead of general elections slated for Dec. 7, 2020. In **Nigeria**, the Lagos State Government has warned that it may impose a new lockdown and return other measures if there is a recurrence of high cases of coronavirus in the state due to the flagrant disregard for the ravaging Covid-19 pandemic protocols.
- **Current COVID-19 situation in West and Central Africa.** As of 09 November 2020, **Nigeria** with 64,090 remains with the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by **Ghana** (49,202), **Cameroon** (22,421), **Cote d’Ivoire** (20,832) and **Senegal** (15,708). In terms of active cases, **Nigeria** (3,026) has the highest number, followed by **CAR** (2,883), **Guinea** (1,523), **Ghana** (1,156) and **Cape Verde** (804).
- **Confirmed cases among PoCs.** As of 12 November 2020, 34 PoCs were tested positive including 16 refugees in **Cameroon**, 3 in **Chad**, 2 in **Togo**, 2 in **Niger**, 1 in **Gambia**, 1 in **Ghana**, 1 in **Guinea** and 1 in **Liberia** and 1 IDP in **Burkina Faso**, 3 IDPs in **Central African Republic** and 3 in **Mali**. So far, 2 refugees died in **Cameroon** and 1 in **Gambia**.

*N.B. The exact number of COVID-19 cases in the region remains uncertain and the data need to be interpreted with caution as the testing capacities remain limited in most of countries of WCAR (Ghana and Senegal are among the top countries performing the highest number of test with respectively 15 tests/1,000 population and 10.43 tests/1,000 population, compared to Italy with 172.55 tests/1,000 population). According to the World Health Organization. (OMS) more than eight out of ten Covid-19 cases in Africa are asymptomatic or show few symptoms and the death tolls may exclude people who did not die in hospital, or before they could be tested.*

- **Specific protection risks and challenges for forcibly displaced populations.** In West and Central Africa, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to represent a heavy burden on a region grappling with climate shocks, the recent floods in the region being one manifestation, endemic poverty, and chronic vulnerabilities. With limited access to water and sanitation facilities and precarious living conditions in most of the areas hosting displaced populations, basic measures such as handwashing and social distancing are extremely difficult to enforce. Forcibly displaced populations are also at heightened risk of stigmatization in situations of pandemic. In addition to these specific challenges, forcible displaced populations are also facing the risk of food insecurity in the region, particularly in the Sahel. There are also great concerns regarding gender-based violence which is on the rise since the beginning of the COVID crisis as a direct result of the preventive measures enforced and the economic strain these restrictions have put on many households. The significant disruption in the livelihoods of many forcibly displaced population is also increasing the risk of resorting to negative coping mechanisms, including child labour which UNHCR is monitoring closely.

■ **COVID-19 Cases and government measures and restrictions in West and Central Africa by Country (as of 09 November 2020):**

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Data sources: WHO, worldometers.info, Governments and local media reports. For more information or suggestions, please contact UNHCR WCA DIMA

## UNHCR Response

- **Mainstreaming COVID-19 into UNHCR's humanitarian response.** Across West and Central Africa, UNHCR operations adapted their processes and approaches to ensure continuity of assistance and mainstream COVID-19 prevention into their humanitarian response to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on forcibly displaced populations. UNHCR supports governments in the implementation of their COVID-19 response plans while directly implementing activities to support forcibly displaced populations. These include advocating for preserving access to asylum and international protection, supporting inclusive national health responses, strengthening shelter interventions to improve living conditions in hosting areas, strengthening community-based protection mechanism, livelihoods interventions to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic, and seeking durable solutions, including local integration, resettlement opportunities, complementary pathways and voluntary repatriation. Already jeopardized by insecurity in the region, education is further disrupted by the pandemic.

**HIGHLIGHT: Mainstreaming COVID-19 prevention in the emergency response to the new influx of Ivorian refugees in Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo**

In Cote d'Ivoire, violent clashes erupted after the presidential election that was held on 31 October leaving at least a dozen dead and many more injured. As a direct result of these electoral tension and unrest, it is estimated that over 10,000 Ivorian refugees have fled to Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo as of 12 November 2020.

The vast majority of these new Ivorian refugees have fled to Liberia and over 60 per cent of them are children, some of whom arrived unaccompanied or separated from their parents. Older people and pregnant women have also fled, most carrying just a few belongings and little to no food or money. Most of them have settled among local communities where there are little preventives measures are in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 contamination.



*Ivorian refugees continue to arrive in Liberia, Ghana and Togo. Most of them are women and children from Côte d'Ivoire's west and southwest regions. © UNHCR Liberia*

Despite the border restrictions due to COVID-19, the Governments of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Togo are granting Ivorian refugees access to asylum on their territory. UNHCR's teams on the ground has increased border monitoring to ensure that the new arrivals are quickly identified and receive the assistance they need. As part of its emergency response, UNHCR has also deployed technical teams to address water, sanitation, and shelter need in an effort to improve hygiene and living conditions in the main hosting areas and mitigate the risk of COVID-19 contamination.

So far, UNHCR installed handwashing points and soap at registration centres and conducted temperature screening and provides face masks upon arrival in Ghana and Liberia. In transit centres and refugee camps, UNHCR is installing additional WASH facilities (latrines and boreholes) and is conducting information and awareness-raising with the communities. Shelter interventions are also ongoing to help enforce quarantine and isolation of suspected cases and ensure social distancing in the most overcrowded settlements.



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

- UNHCR Operations continue to work to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on persons of concern by increasing communication with communities and introducing innovative approaches to address access limitations including social distancing in protection activities and remote case management. In **Cameroon**, UNHCR continues to reach to refugee and IDP communities throughout the country to raise awareness on the risk of COVID-19 and the best prevention measures to take. In total over 40,000 people have been reached through awareness raising sessions on protective measures during the past two weeks. In **Niger**, several sensitization sessions as well as distribution of masks, soap and water are conducted in all sites by UNHCR and its partners. In the Maradi region only, over 2,000 refugees and IDPs were reached by sensitizations sessions on COVID conducted by UNHCR and its partners in the past two weeks only. In **Northeast Nigeria**, UNHCR sustains its awareness-raising and sensitization effort on COVID-19 and other health and protection issues (SGBV with over 66 information session organized across the region in the past two weeks only, reaching over 3,000 persons among IDPs and their hosts. UNHCR also conducts border visits for the protection and health monitoring of returnees who continue to arrive from Cameroon, Chad and Niger despite border closures.

#### Key achievements:

- ✓ **3,9 million** displaced persons who accessed protection services
- ✓ **91%** of targeted areas where GBV services are maintained or expanded



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

- UNHCR Operations are sustaining their 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. In camps or settlements this includes identification and training of outbreak response teams, referral systems for laboratory specimens and prepositioning laboratory supplies such as transport media, swabs, specimen containers, training of staff in early identification, notification, case management and contact tracing, data collection and analysis and interpretation. In **Cameroon**, 30 healthcare providers (5 doctors, 6 midwives and 19 nurses) working with the Ministry of Public Health and UNHCR health partners were trained on “the continuity of basic maternal and child health services in the COVID-19 context in refugees-hosting areas”. The training is a joint UNHCR - UNICEF response against COVID-19 in the East and Adamawa regions and was facilitated by the Regional Health Delegation (DRSP).
- Operations are also reinforcing the WASH systems and services in the main refugee and IDP hosting areas, including by distributing soap and increasing access to water to allow for the implementation of basic preventive hygiene measures such as frequent handwashing. In **Niger**, in Agadez, UNHCR provided over 1,000 newly arrived asylum seekers hosted in the Humanitarian Centre and within the various guesthouses in the area with protective masks. In Maradi region, UNHCR continues to improve the shelter and WASH services to allow for social distances and hygiene measures. Over 60 new shelter units and over 130 new showers and latrines were built in the past two weeks only.

#### Key achievements:

- ✓ **Over 600,000** persons received essential healthcare services
- ✓ **3 million** medical masks ordered



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

- Shelter, NFI and Cash-Based Interventions remain a priority in UNHCR’s COVID-19 response in West and Central Africa.** Often residing in overcrowded sites, or among host communities in historically underserved areas, refugees and IDPs are deprived of privacy and exposed to heightened risks of contamination as COVID-19 continues to spread in the region. To address this issue, UNHCR operations are implementing targeted shelter interventions and the distributions of core relief items and exploring ways to decongest the most affected hosting areas in coordination with the national and local authorities.

**Key achievement:**

✓ **Over 80,000** individuals in households most vulnerable to/affected by COVID-19 received livelihood support

**HIGHLIGHT: In Nigeria, UNHCR promote agricultural activities to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen refugee self-reliance**

In **Southeast Nigeria**, over 60,000 Cameroonian refugees have fled the violence in the neighboring Northeast and Southeast Regions of Cameroon. Having seen income-generating opportunities disappear and savings dry up since the beginning of the pandemic, many of them are facing increasing difficulties to cover their basic needs.

During the same period, food prices have gone up mainly due to limitations of transport during the COVID-19 lock down and decrease in crops mainly rice, cassava flour and beans. In September 2020 UNHCR’s market assessment conducted in Ogoja, Cross River State and Adikpo, Benue State where some 40% of the refugees purchase core food items, the prices of core food items increased in average for 30% compared to March 2020.

To address these negative effects of COVID-19 and to help refugees secure a source of income and food, UNHCR is implementing various agricultural initiative. Among these projects, UNHCR has recently targeted 48 Cameroon refugees in Ogoja with an intensive training fish farming and provided them start-up kits for which include fingerlings and fish feeds to start their own production. The farm village in Adagom settlement includes



*The collapsible fishponds installed in the Adagom settlement to conduct fish farming activities.© UNHCR Nigeria*

collapsible fishponds, goat and poultry pens and two smoking kilns for drying/preservation. This project is an integral part of UNHCR's effort to strengthen refugee self-reliance and promote integrated farming system among the host communities in Southeast Nigeria.

UNHCR is currently conducting similar economic assessments across the region to inform and guide its efforts to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 on displaced populations and foster their economic inclusion.

- UNHCR is working to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 on displaced populations and foster their economic inclusion through direct livelihoods support and targeted cash-interventions. In **Cameroon**, UNHCR has implemented cash-based interventions for urban refugees to support the costs of COVID-19 preventive measures in this context. In the past weeks, 1,941 households in Yaoundé and Douala have been reached out of the targeted 6,726 to be benefit from this cash assistance. In **Cote d'Ivoire**, UNHCR continues to provide cash assistance to the most vulnerable refugee and asylum seekers households to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. Over 1,500 households in Abidjan, Tabou and Guiglo have benefited these cash-based interventions since the beginning of the pandemic. In **Southeast Nigeria**, in the Ikyogen settlement in Benue, UNHCR provided shelter, core relief items and cash-assistance for food to refugees that are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 100 individuals with specific needs were supported with food items including rice, salt and sugar, with shelter kits to construct their transitional shelters.



#### 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 including through the provision of personal protective equipment and by supporting the rehabilitation and cleaning of school environment. In the **Sahel** alone (incl. Mauritania), almost 2,000 teachers were trained to ensure safe practices in school upon the resumption of classes and UNHCR support refugee/IDP families across the region to ensure the re-enrolment of their children. In **Mali**, as part of the Education Cannot Wait project, UNHCR and its partners distributed over 1,300 solar radios and 1,300 school kits in schools in refugee and IDP hosting areas in the Gao and Timbuktu regions.
- Despite these efforts, many children have not been able to go back to school yet and in the countries where students have returned to class, the statistics are already showing the negative effects of COVID-19 on the schooling of refugee children. In **Chad**, increased drop-out rates have already been observed with a 22% decrease in the number of students enrolled in the final year and 25% drop for students in the last year of upper secondary compared to last year. Various issues have been reported regarding re-enrolment for the new school year. In urban areas in **Cameroon** where schools are often overcrowded, UNHCR reported that schools are trying to reduce the number of students per class by asking some families to send their children to other schools in suburban areas. This could have negative consequences on the schooling of refugee children who may not be able to afford the additional transport costs incurred.

#### Key achievements:

- ✓ **Over 35,000** children and youth supported with distance/home-based learning

## Financial Requirements

**US\$745 million** requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally.

**US\$454.2 million:** received by UNHCR against its **global COVID-19 appeal**.

**USD US\$34.2 million:** received for **COVID-19 activities in West and Central Africa**

Special thanks to the following donors for:

### **EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COVID-19 APPEAL** | USD

**United States of America** 186.3 million | **Germany** 62.7 million | **European Union** 46.3 million | **United Kingdom** 25.3 million | **African Development Bank Group** 23.9 million | **Denmark** 14.6 | **UN Foundation** 10 million | **CERF** 6.9 million | **Canada** 6.4 million | **Unilever (UK)** 5.9 million | **Education Cannot Wait** 4.7 million | **Qatar Charity** 3.5 million | **Spain** 3.5 million | **France** 3.4 million | **Ireland** 3.3 million | **Sweden** 3 million | **Sony Corporation** 2.9 million | **Austria** 2.5 million | **Finland** 2.3 million | **UNO – Fluechhelfhilfe** 1.7 million | **Private donors UK** 1.7 million | **Latter Day Saints Charities** 1.6 million | **Norway** 1.5 million | **Australia for UNHCR** 1.4 million | **USA for UNHCR** 1 million | **Espana con Acnur** 0.9 million | **Australia** 0.9 million | **Japan for UNHCR** 0.9 million | **Sawiris Foundation for Social Development** 0.9 million | **Switzerland** 0.8 million | **Country Based Pooled Funds** 0.5 million | **Badr Jafar** 0.5 million | **Private donors Canada** 0.5 million | and other donors

### **OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS** | USD

**United States of America** 679.8 million | **Canada** 47 million | **Norway** 16.8 million | **Switzerland** 12.8 million | **Sweden** 8.1 million | **France** 7.6 million | **Private donors Australia** 7.1 million | **United Kingdom** 6.9 million | **Denmark** 5 million | **Netherlands** 4.1 million | **Private donors Thailand** 3.5 million | **Republic of Korea** 3.2 million | **Luxembourg** 2.6 million | **Finland** 2.2 million

### **UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS** | USD

**Sweden** 76.4 million | **Private donors Spain** 52.9 million | **Norway** 41.4 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 27.2 million | **Germany** 25.9 million | **Private donors Japan** 21 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **France** 14 million | **Private donors Italy** 12.4 million | **Italy** 10.6 million | **Private donors Sweden** 10.5 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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