

UNHCR Cameroon Response

June 2023

Cameroon is confronting a **multi-faceted humanitarian and protection crisis** caused by conflict, inter-communal violence, and the impacts of climate change.

Over **two million people** have fled their homes in search of safety and security in Cameroon, including nearly **half a million refugees**.

UNHCR works to **protect and assist** forcibly displaced throughout the country, ensuring **access to basic services and** searching for **solutions**.

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS: 2,190,000

477,845

Refugees and Asylum seekers in Cameroon*

Cameroon : Statistiques des personnes déplacées de force (Juin 2023) ; Gouvernement du Cameroun avec le support du HCR –2023

1.07 million

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) **

*** IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Février 2023, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Février 2023]*

646,000

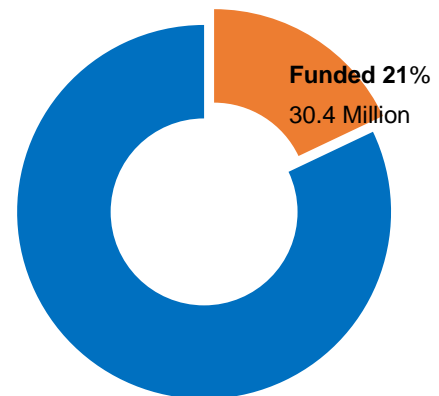
IDP returnees **

*** IOM, OCHA Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Février 2023, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Février 2023]*

FUNDING (AS OF 27 JUNE 2023)

USD 142.8 M

requested for the Cameroon Multi Country Office (MCO)



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff: 339 Staff

225 National Staff

53 International Staff

51 Affiliated Workforce

Offices:

01 Branch Office in Yaoundé

03 Sub Office: Bertoua, Maroua, and Bamenda

03 Field Office: Djohong, Meiganga, and Kousseri,

03 Field Unit: Batouri, Touboro and Douala



The community of IDPs, urban refugees, Yaoundé residents, and stakeholders attended UNHCR Open-Day, during which they gathered information and discussed challenges, pressing needs, and solutions for forcibly displaced with UNHCR teams. © UNHCR/Dieguen



Working with Partners

UNHCR works closely with wide range of partners including decentralize and Government ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, the refugee community, donors and other humanitarian actors to respond to the most pressing needs of refugees and others displaced persons across the country.

Government partners: UNHCR works in collaboration with the following ministries: In addition to reinforcing the capacities of the Secretariat Technique (Government counterpart) in handling refugees matter, UNHCR collaborates with the following ministries: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAF), the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), the Ministry of Education (MINEDUB), the Ministry of Defense (MINDEF), the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family (MINPROFF), the Ministry of Justice (MINJUSTICE), the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFEF), Ministry of environment Protection (MINEP), the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and other government institutions.

UN sister-Agencies: WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women, UNDP, UNOCHA, FAO, IOM, and WHO.

Thirteen implementing INGO and NGO partners: **International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs):** Action Citoyenne pour le Développement Communautaire (ACDC), African Humanitarian Action (AHA), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD); Agence pour le Développement Economique et Social (ADES), Développement Equité Durabilité et Innovation (DEDI), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), INTERSOS, and Plan International (Plan).


National Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs): Association au secours des orphelins et autres personnes vulnérables (ASOPV), Bihndumlem Humanitarian Association of Peace and hope (BIHAPH), Centre pour la Promotion de la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CPDH), and Research and Advocacy for Gender Justice (RAGJ).

Main Achievements



Refugee response

Protection Monitoring: UNHCR and partners have recently implemented the Project 21 Protection Monitoring Systems, an inter-agency method for collecting and analyzing protection information across the region.

 **Populations displacement and response:** In Far North, since January 2023, over 4,000 refugees have fled renewed non-state armed groups attacks into the camp of Minawao seeking protection and assistance. Most of these populations had initially fled Northeast Nigeria in 2013 and lived in Cameroonian host communities and the Nigerian border with Cameroon.

Continuous registration, biometric verification and support: As of May 2023, there were 478,106 refugees and asylum seekers in Cameroon. The 6,012 decrease in refugee numbers from January 2023 is mainly due to voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and closure of inactive cases. In the majority, refugees are 350,430 from Central African Republic (CAR) and 116,180 from Nigeria. For the past five months, UNHCR has strengthened its regulatory frameworks, protection coordination and response, including access and documentation, child protection, justice support, education, health, WASH, livelihood, and material assistance.

Reinforced Protection Space: The Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) accredited the *Comité des réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun (CRCC)*, a refugee-led organization through the legal decree number 00000039/A/MINAT/SG/DAP/SDLP/SA/CBA. This motion gives credence to their existence and operation in Cameroon.



Providing shelter and direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs: UNHCR shelter assistance has benefitted over **2,880 households of 14,400 refugee and IDP individuals** comprising emergency shelters, family shelters, shelter kits, rehabilitation, and completion of unfinished buildings and communal facilities in the Far North and Eastern regions of Cameroon. UNHCR has also provided **core relief items (CRIs) to 2,082 IDP and refugee households (10,040 individuals)** in the transit center - Far North and Southwest (to flood-affected populations), including blankets, buckets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, and detergents.



Working with the Communities

Community-based protection mechanisms are being strengthened through the engagement of traditional authorities, trained social workers; women support groups, and youth groups in the existing community support

structures. As a matter of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), regular consultations with the internally displaced and refugees, the collection of information about their situation, and feedback regarding assistance and protection services are in place.

Celebration of World Refugee Day: Several activities, including roundtable discussion, sports walk, football games, exhibition fair, and Open House Day, were conducted to commemorate the event that unfolded in the capital under the patronage of Mrs. Chantal Biya, First Lady of Cameroon.



Prevention and response to gender-based violence: UNHCR identifies and responds to gender-based violence with IDPs, refugees, host communities, partners and government officials through training and distribution of information, education sensitization and mitigation. UNHCR and its partners are working with partners in establishing and running the complaints and feedback mechanisms to prevent and end sexual exploitation and abuse. Over 92,000 IDPs, host communities and refugees were reached during the sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns conducted in Eastern, Far North, Northwest, and Southwest regions. Community-based protection structures participated and meaningfully contributed to the delivery of these activities. Themes discussed during the door-to-door group discussions and public events included Sexual and psychological assault prevention, GBV prevention and available services for survivors, Consequences of forced marriages, Sexual exploitation, and prevention, Parental responsibility in GBV prevention, Empowering women and girls as a means of combating GBV, the community role in combating sexual assault: recognizing and denouncing sexual exploitation in the community. A range of responses was provided to survivors, including legal assistance, psychosocial support, multipurpose cash assistance, and social safety nets as mitigation measures.

Peaceful coexistence: Together with IOM, UNDP and FAO, UNHCR is implementing a programme to increase stability, return, legal access, and social cohesion in Logone Birni, focusing on restoring peace, justice and livelihoods to ten (10) communities severely impacted by flood and intercommunal conflict.



Health: 50,400 health consultations have been provided to refugees (93%) and surrounding host communities (7%), of which 49,034 were new consultations and 17,653 were children under five. The most prevalent diseases were upper respiratory infections 41%, diarrhea 7%, chronic illness 7%, intestinal parasitosis 5%, skin diseases 5%, Urinary tract infections 4%, trauma 4%, eye diseases 3% and malaria 2%.

Cash-Based Interventions (CBI): In UNHCR Cameroon, CBI accounts for 2.1% of the UNHCR operational budget. Over 9,370 refugees from Central Africa (95%), Nigeria (1%), and others (2%), as well as internally displaced in host communities (2%), received USD 387,583 in response to their protection needs, including education, livelihood, Gender-Based Violence prevention and response, and to persons with specific needs.



SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

UNHCR works with the government and partners to find durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations in Cameroon. Advocacy for refugee inclusion in the country's national system (health, education, and finances) have yielded some positive results, but additional funding is needed for an effective and consistent response.

Local Integration

Documentation: 152 refugees received government-issued refugee identification cards in Douala. The document facilitates the protection of refugees' rights (education, employment, movement, and association) in Cameroon, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and international conventions on recognizing their rights. Also, UNHCR has issued refugee ID cards to all verified adult refugees in the Far North.

Education: In the 2023-2024 school year, **47,545 refugee children** have been enrolled in primary and 1,690 in secondary school, out of the 182,870 children of school age in these two cycles. UNHCR also supports the provision of stipends to 330 teachers and parents-teachers associations. Further, 92 active DAFI scholarship holders (47 female) for the academic year 2022/2023.

Green Actions: To mitigate the negative impact of refugees, IDPs, and host community activity on the environment in Far North Cameroon, nearly 500,000 forest, fruit, and nutritional seedlings have been planted by Nigerian refugees and the host community members since 2015, including 44,792 using the cocoon technique. The plant trees cover an area of 977 ha and has an 86 percent tree survival rate.

UNHCR installed 16 autonomous water stations with solar pumping in the Far North and the East regions (seven in Minawao, two in Gado, one in Mbile, one in Firkiliwa (Logone Birni), one in Almagouche (Logone Birni), and one in Lyamagra (fotkol and 1 in Blangafe (Blangoua)). The system serves over 45,000 people in refugee settlements in Cameroon.

Voluntary repatriation: UNHCR has facilitated the **voluntary repatriation of 1,714 refugees** - 1,319 Nigerian Refugees and 396 CAR refugees. During the process, UNHCR's role is to ensure return is voluntary, well-informed, and carried out in safety and dignity.

Resettlement: In 2023, UNHCR has submitted 885 individual refugees to various resettlement countries. Of these, 70% are Women and Girls at Risk, or survivors of violence. Already **565 refugees have departed to USA, France, Finland, and Canada.**

Internally Displaced Persons Protection Response



The **protection situation** in the Northwest and Southwest remains volatile, with continuous attacks on civilians and human rights violations, including GBV. Human rights violations inflicted upon the population include unlawful arrests and detention, destruction and extortion of property, threats to life, physical and sexual assaults, rape, abuse of children, and freedom of movement denial. Lack or loss of documentation puts IDPs in affected regions at high risk of statelessness.

Populations movement: Recent intercommunity conflicts in Divisions neighbouring Nigeria, coupled with the military operation have triggered population displacement and protection concerns such as an increasing rate of GBV incidents and protection risks including loss of civil status documentation, lack of access to basic needs and the deterioration of the forcibly displaced individuals' socio-economic situation.

Over 200,000 IDPs and host communities have benefitted from UNHCR protection and response including Protection Monitoring, documentation and prevention of Statelessness (birth certificates, National Identification Card and disability card), access to justice, Community-Based Protection approach, environment, GBV prevention and response, and material assistance (shelter and CRIs), and coordination activities.

Protection Monitoring: Fifteen (15) flash alerts and 382 protection incidents have been recorded - 172 in the Meme, 94 in the Fako Division, 66 rights violations in Mezam, and 50 in the Manyu divisions. Protection monitoring findings have also revealed that arbitrary arrests are used to raise income. Monies, not necessarily bail fees, have been demanded to arrest individuals to secure their release.

Documentation: 430 birth certificates and 223 National Identity Cards have been issued to vulnerable IDPs and host communities. The issuance of civil statutes documents for vulnerable young people in Northwest, Southwest, West, and Littoral regions has facilitated access to education, employment, and livelihood opportunities and their free movement within and beyond their communities. Many youths have been able to register for regular entry into schools and public exams after staying out of school for some years.

GBV response; Of the total GBV cases identified, 165 persons at risk and GBV survivors received psychosocial support. Advocacy actions with local traditional rulers to end harmful traditional practices in Wum subdivision have yielded to the engagement of 4 out of 15 traditional rulers, including the Fon of Wa'atuo, in fighting and mitigating the risk of GBV occurrence. They have been instrumental in reducing harmful traditional practices and ensuring more security for IDP and vulnerable host communities. Additional GBV responses included awareness-raising to IDPs and local communities, provision of CRIs, and socio-economic empowerment (income-generating activities) support. This latest activity was conducted to empower GBV survivors in gaining their autonomy and enabling them to take care of themselves and their family's immediate needs.

Green Action: since 2022, a total of 2,000 seedlings were planted in the IDP hosting area of Bogo, Far North.



Strengthened Coordination

UNHCR leads the response for IDPs' Protection, Shelter/NFI sector (Far-North, Northwest, and South-West) while acting under the overall leadership of the Cameroonian government. UNHCR also coordinates the refugee response's protection needs and solutions strategy (as per the Refugee Coordination Model).

Protection Cluster: UNHCR is fully committed to its leadership role; since 2022, the Agency has appointed dedicated protection coordinators at the national level, in the Northwest and Southwest (covering the Littoral and West regions) and the Far North. Regular protection meetings are held at the national and sub-national levels. The Sector and clusters have various technical working groups to support coordination. The Areas of Responsibility on Child Protection, Housing, Land and Property, and GBV (UNICEF, NRC, and UNFPA) coordinate well with the lead agency. Monthly, the Sector advocates and updates the Humanitarian Country Team on the protection trends and coordinated response. Over **40,000 IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host populations** benefitted from the Cluster response during the first 2023 quarter. UNHCR has also concluded several agreements to strengthen the coordination, notably:

- **With the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)/the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF)** to promote conservation, improve livelihood for sustainable

management of forest resources in displacement settings, and mobilize resources to implement related joint initiatives.

- **UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BUCREP**, the Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies in Cameroon for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in the 2024 country census.
- **Collaboration** with several agencies – World Bank, African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, GIZ, ILO and other private agencies - to include refugee and/or to implement resilience program in refugees hosting areas.

Several Protection Cluster Coordination training have been conducted in Douala, Bamenda and Buea, including capacitation on the HNO-HRP protection activities and their response indicators, and in collaboration with non-commissioned officers of the defense and security forces on protection issues encountered in the field, including gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection, and needs of boys and men in Buea. **Over 220 participants** **INGOS, NNGOS, UN Agencies** and other organizations and cluster coordinators benefitted from the training.

The profiling and needs assessment of flood victims jointly conducted by the Protection Cluster, Buea administrative authorities and the flood response committee revealed that 138 households (529 people) were directly affected (72 male (50%), 66 female (48%), 14 pregnant women/girls (3%), 8 persons living with disability. Also, 28% households lost their civil documents, and 73% households experienced severe damage to their local businesses (restaurants, hair salons, electronic stores, and farming/livestock), hence their livelihood, 16% households were left homeless, and the flood displaced 14% households. 52% households faced CRIs scarcity; and 28% experienced deteriorated shelter conditions, 64% households lack safe drinking water. UNHCR provided dignity kits to affected women and girls. The kits included buckets, disposable sanitary pads, underwear, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soaps, bathing slippers, T-shirts, whistles, towels, and body lotion.

Shelter Cluster – Environment workshop was held in the Far North region to define Shelter/NFI green indicator, and Training on environmental mainstreaming in the Shelter response including Nexus Environmental Assessment Tools, Shelter Score Card approaches, and a methodology for reporting on environmental mainstreaming indicators was developed in Northwest and Southwest. A total of 2,400 households were reached with environmental mainstreamed activities (replacing of plastics in kits with more sustainable materials). The coordination of the Buea flood response and lifesaving CRIs benefitted from UNHCR, DRC, and NRC benefitted 1,534 individuals.

Shelter cluster partners' response has benefitted 59,100 IDPs, refugees out of camp, returnees and vulnerable host communities out of 920,000 individual needs assessed in the Far North, Southwest, and Northwest, as of 31 May. 41,100 IDPs and host communities have received NFI assistance and 54,760 received shelter assistance in cash or nature (some beneficiaries received both shelter and NFIs kits).

Financial Information

The total recorded contributions for the Cameroon MCO amount to **30.4 million USD**. **UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed directly to this operation**, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

UNHCR Cameroon says thanks to the Government of Cameroon | United States of America | Germany | Sweden | UN Peacebuilding Fund | Canada | Toyota Tsusho Corporation | United Kingdom | UNAIDS | UN Trust Fund for Human Security.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly restricted and regional funds in 2023: United States of America 7.2 million | Canada 3.9 million | Finland 3.1 million | Private donors Australia

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2023: Sweden 69 million | Norway 63.1 million | Denmark 35.6 million | Netherlands 34.1 million | France 26.7 million | Private donors Spain 24.1 million | Germany 23.1 million | Switzerland 18.9 million | Private donors Japan 13.3 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.9 million

For more information:

Olivier Beer, UNHCR Representative in Cameroon, Email: beer@unhcr.org; Mobile: +237 699 711 004

Daena Neto, UNHCR External Relations Officer, Email: neto@unhcr.org; Mobile: +237 690 484 325