

Central African Republic

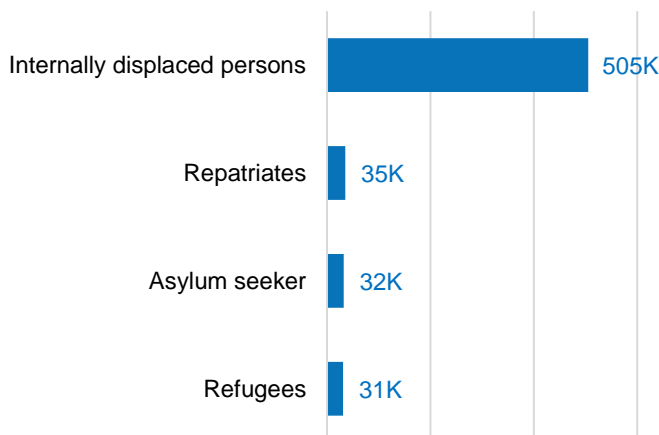
October 2023

On 31 October 2023, the Central African Republic, its six neighboring countries, UNHCR and other partners officially launched the **CAR Support Platform for Durable Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Central Africans**.

More than 24,416 people have been recorded in the Vakaga prefecture, coming from Sudan, **including 19,715 refugees and 4,701 returnees from the Central African Republic**.

As of 30 October 2023, 37,396 people from Chad crossed the Central African border, including **approximately 31,779 Chadian asylum seekers and 5,617 Central African returnees**.

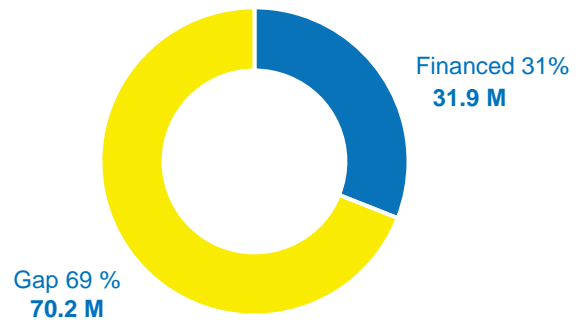
UNHCR PEOPLE OF CONCERN ON 30 OCTOBER 2023
REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, RETURNED REFUGEES AND OTHER FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE



FUNDING ON 10 NOVEMBER 2023

USD 102,9 M

Requested by UNHCR operation in 2023



Psychosocial group session with girls and women who have experienced or witnessed abuse in Sudan. © UNHCR/ Stella Fatime

Operational update

The socio-economic and political situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is making a long-term humanitarian and protection crisis, characterized by forced displacement, an extremely fragile economy and limited basic services. Gender inequalities and discrimination against specific groups persist.

Although the country has made progress towards restoring democratic governance and peace, it still faces challenges in security, protection, and the provision of basic services to the most vulnerable and forcibly displaced people.

The tradition of transhumance complicates population movements in CAR, a country serving as both a destination and transit point. This exacerbates tensions and conflicts over resources. Some communities have been displaced for more than ten years. Returns are slowly increasing in secure areas, while others are fleeing areas occupied by non-state armed groups.

To date, nearly 490,868 people are displaced within the country, and 740,833 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries. According to a national census conducted in 2020, the Central African state declared that approximately 1.1 million Central African nationals were at risk of statelessness.

UNHCR envisions the Central African Republic (CAR) as a place where refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, people at risk of statelessness and host communities coexist in peace and security, enjoying their rights without discrimination. All groups will actively participate in their own protection and have equal access to essential services and income, regardless of their needs, age, and gender, enabling them to live with dignity and find durable solutions.

Key achievements

Situation of Sudanese Refugees

Background: The war in Sudan that broke out in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), continues. Conflict-affected South Darfur borders the remote northern region of the Central African Republic, where several hundred Sudanese have found refuge in Vakaga prefecture, one of the poorest in the country. As of 30 October, 2023, an estimated 24,416 people have arrived from Sudan, including more than 19,715 Sudanese refugees and 4,701 Central African returnees. A safer site away from the border has been identified in Korsi, Birao, where refugees have been relocated since 29 May. People relocated to the Korsi site can register and receive assistance under the coordination of UNHCR. Several Sudanese found themselves in CAR when the war broke out in April 2023, with many spreads across other prefectures in the country. Most were in CAR for business or transhumance when the war broke out and were unable to return to Sudan. Arrivals continue to be reported at Amdafock, the main entry point for Sudanese refugees into CAR. UNHCR and its partners on the ground have established reception and registration mechanisms.

Four other entry points for refugees have been identified at Ndelé and Akoursoulbak in Bamingui Mbagoran, at Bambari in Ouaka, at Ouandja Kotto in Haute Kotto, at Bambari in Ouaka and in Mbomou.

Multisectoral response

2,192 people were relocated to Korsi in Birao in Vakaga by UNHCR and its partners. Spontaneous arrivals on the site continue to be recorded. Efforts are being made by UNHCR and its partners to support the National Commission for Refugees in monitoring arrivals at the relocation site, providing assistance, and continuing registration activities.

2,903 assistance cards were issued and distributed to refugees by UNHCR, allowing families to access assistance.

Awareness sessions were organized by INTERSOS, a UNHCR's partner, for women and girls. A total of 219 women and girls, comprising 156 women and 63 girls, were sensitized on the correct use of sanitary napkins and family planning.

Risk prevention/mitigation and responses to gender-based violence (GBV) are strengthened by UNHCR through ad hoc programs and increased coordination. UNHCR supports UNFPA in coordinating 14 GBV working groups on the ground and implements the Ma Mbi Si project, providing services to GBV survivors through 25 crisis centers across the country.

As part of the "Ma Mbi si" community mental health and psychosocial support program and refugee resilience, a community farming pilot project is underway at Korsi with small-scale market gardening.

UNHCR partner NOURRIR, in collaboration with WHO and International Medical Corps (IMC), jointly conducted 1,600 medical consultations in October, with an average of around 400 curative consultations per week. The main pathologies recorded included malaria, watery diarrhea, digestive bacterial infections, and acute respiratory infections at the Korsi health center.

At Ouandja-Kotto, the CNR supported by the UNHCR, carried out level 1 registration of Sudanese refugees. As of 31 October, 809 households of 2,669 refugees have been registered and benefit from ration cards to access WFP assistance.

17,810 tons of food were distributed by the WFP in collaboration with the UNHCR to 491 households' of 1601 individuals in September 2023. In addition, UNHCR assists refugee households with core relief items (CRIs) consisting of tarpaulins, buckets, jerrycans, blankets, soaps, mats, torches, and second-hand goods.

Finally, with a view to contributing to a favorable protection environment for Sudanese refugees, UNHCR organized two training courses for community leaders, local authorities, MINUSCA, international and national NGOs in Ouandja-Kotto. Participants learned about UNHCR's mandate, the people it serves, and International Protection. A total of 63 people took part in these training courses.

As part of community-based protection, refugee representatives were identified, and sessions on the rights and duties of refugees were organized for Sudanese refugees.

683 emergency shelters were built in Korsi in Birao to accommodate people relocated from transit and reception centers.

UNHCR's partner, NOURRIR, carried out a local awareness campaign among 995 households on the promotion of hygiene and sanitation.

Situation of Chadian asylum seekers

Context: UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) have pre-registered 31,799 Chadian asylum seekers and 5,617 Central African returnees, mostly children and women. Chadian asylum-seekers are located along the border in some 53 villages, which are difficult to access due to the security situation and poor road infrastructure.

UNHCR and the CNR are identifying GBV survivors and particularly traumatized asylum-seekers. Along the border, civilians continue to face protection risks due to the presence of

armed groups in the region, particularly given the porosity of the border. They have fled internal clashes that began in the Logone Oriental region. Although the situation in southern Chad is currently calm, it remains very unstable, and a greater number of asylum seekers could seek refuge in the Central African Republic in the event of new waves of violence. The government has identified a first relocation site in Betoko.

Multisectoral response



Chadian asylum seekers in Markounda, volunteer for relocation to the Betoko site. © UNHCR/ Stella.Fatime

1,233 Chadian asylum seekers, including 563 men and 670 women, were biometrically registered at the Betoko site. The CNR, with support from UNHCR, plays a central role in coordinating the protection of forced displaced people and groups of people with specific needs in host communities.

During the months of June and July 2023, UNHCR, in coordination with the CNR, organized a survey on relocation intentions among Chadian asylum-seekers part of the participatory assessment. At the end of the exercise, approximately 9,777 families expressed their intention to be relocated to Betoko.

A plan has been developed to relocate 10,000 Chadian asylum seekers from the communes of Mia-Pende (Paoua Sub-Prefecture) and Nana Markounda (Markounda Sub-Prefecture) to the Betoko site.

As of 6 October 2023, 88 shelters and sixteen latrines have been built on the relocation site provided by the local authorities in Betoko. To date, 2,000 families, representing 10,000 asylum seekers candidates for relocation have registered on the lists and will be part of the convoys that will soon be organized, starting with those of Markounda, considering the reception capacity of the Betoko site.

On 17 October, WFP distributed food to Chadians living with host families in the communes of Mia-Pende and Bah Bessar.

As part of the multisectoral humanitarian response coordinated by UNHCR, OXFAM rehabilitated 10 water points and built 100 latrines in villages hosting Chadian asylum seekers. Finally, Vision to Change the World (VCW), an operational partner in the health sector in Betoko provides care for both Chadian and the host population.

Internally displaced people

Context: As of 30 October 2023, the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in CAR is estimated at 490,868, according to the Commission for Population Movement (CMP). UNHCR in CAR is strengthening accountability towards forced displaced people through their participation in decision-making, communication, complaint mechanisms, team integrity and training on the prevention of exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA).

Internal displacement: The main causes of displacement in the Central African Republic are military operations by the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and their allies against non-state armed groups, as well as fear of abuses by parties to the conflict. Some populations perceive the threat of fighting and move to safer areas as a precaution.

Kaga-Bandoro and Bria

UNHCR is actively assisting the most vulnerable new IDPs providing non-food items (NFIs), ensuring access to shelter, social protection cash transfer and various assistance, all in coordination with the response mechanism rapid (RRM).

UNHCR is strengthening community-based protection and localization by working with local women's organizations, IDP organizations and local NGOs, and building their technical and management capacities.

The protection monitoring programme continues and enables the of needs and risks through community structures and is implemented by Intersos, COOPI and Finnish Church Aid.

UNHCR provides data on IDPs and returnees to the humanitarian community through the management of the secretariat of the Commission on Population Movement (CMP).

To support the sustainable return of IDPs, UNHCR and IOM are working together on a project funded by the Country Humanitarian Fund to construct 1,320 semi-durable shelters for returnees' households in the localities of Kaga Bandoro and 1,585 semi-durable shelters in Bria.

Prevention of statelessness risks

UNHCR continues to advocate for the accession of the Central African Republic to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons and the 1961 Convention on the reduction of statelessness, as well as the revision of the law on nationality. To this end, a plea was made by UNHCR to the President of the Central African Republic during the constitutional referendum of 30 August 2023 to revise the provisions of the new constitution that could lead to create cases of statelessness.

UNHCR is also implementing the national plan for the elimination of statelessness by supporting the Government awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of documentation, and by providing the authorities with birth certificates registers to reduce risk, with particular attention to the discriminated population groups.

Durable Solutions

The improvement in security, combined with the clear desire of Central African refugees to return to their country, enabled UNHCR to facilitate the voluntary return of 5,612 refugees to the towns of Bangui, Ombella M'poko, Nana Mambéré, Mambéré Kadéi and the prefecture of La Lobaye in 2022. These returnees come mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (60%), Cameroon (36%), the Republic of Congo (3.3%) and the rest from Benin, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Togo, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.

Voluntary repatriation: Lobaye, Nana Mambere and Mambere Kadei

The number of people benefiting from facilitated repatriation increased from 301 in 2017 to 35,253 in 2023, a significant gap that testifies the clear desire of Central African refugees to return to their country. All these facilitated returnees received a package of benefits, including a cash assistance (\$150 per adult and \$75 per minor), the equivalent of an NFI kit (around \$90), a lump sum of \$18 for the hygienic kit for women (aged 12 to 45), and food provided by WFP for a period of three months.

Specifically, in Mongoumba, repatriation began in 2018, with a total of 19,778 people from 5,294 households repatriated in 59 convoys from the two Congos, including 21 convoys by road and 38 by river. Potential areas of return to CAR include Bangui and Bimbo, Lobaye, Nana Mambere and Mambere Kadei. In the first half of 2023, 2,593 people were voluntarily repatriated to CAR.

Working in partnership

In the Central African Republic, UNHCR is leading the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and the Shelter/NFI Clusters and continues to advocate for the centrality of protection in the humanitarian response and the implementation of solutions. UNHCR-led Clusters also share information between all relevant partners, fill identified gaps and provide strategic direction to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

UNHCR aims to strengthen relationships with private sector actors, who are key to boosting economic growth and job creation, as well as to engage with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, academia, and the media. UNHCR also works with other government structures, national and international operational and project partners. Finally, UNHCR in CAR works closely with the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) to ensure adequate international protection and multi-sectoral assistance to people forced to flee.

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR's operation in CAR in 2023.

Canada | CERF | Country Based Pooled Funds | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | France | Gabon | Germany | Luxembourg | United Nations Peacebuilding Fund | United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS | United States of America.

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