

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an extraordinary and unprecedented emergency for States in West and Central Africa. In response, Governments are taking necessary and legitimate measures to prevent the spread of the virus and to protect populations. These measures are not specific to persons of concern to UNHCR, meaning refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons and refugee returnees, and bear a general scope. However, some of these measures may have a disproportionate impact on displaced population due to their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

UNHCR is committed to working in close concert with national authorities and other relevant actors to ensure that all COVID-19 related prevention and response initiatives at the national level include persons of concern, while at the same time closely monitoring the application of these measures to ensure that people are not exposed to specific protection risks.

For more information, you may consult UNHCR's Note* on the Impact of COVID-19 on the protection of displaced and stateless populations in West and Central Africa.

REFOULEMENT

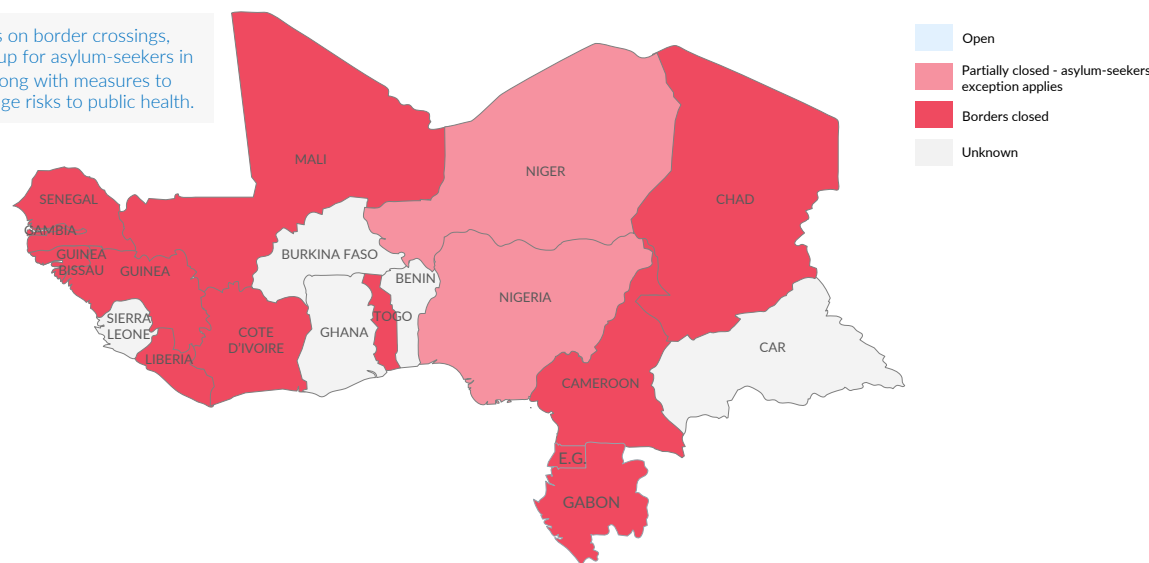
Yes



If a risk of refoulement exists in connection with border closures, no case of refoulement by West and Central African States has been confirmed. UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation.

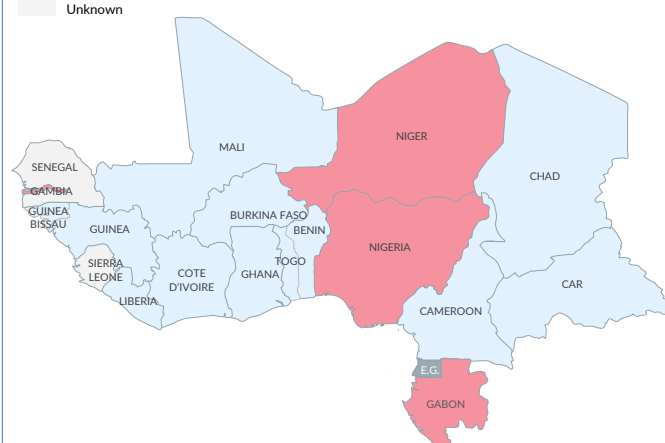
BORDER CLOSURE AND ENTRY FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Despite restrictions on border crossings, exceptions are set up for asylum-seekers in certain countries along with measures to ascertain and manage risks to public health.



ACCESS TO ASYLUM REGISTRATION

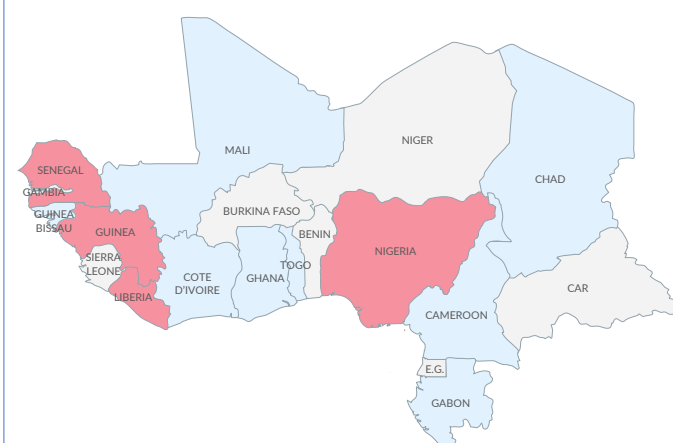
Yes
Partial
No
Not applicable
Unknown



Despite restrictions on movements and public gatherings, total or partial access to national asylum registration is maintained in most countries, including via the enforcement of protective measures.

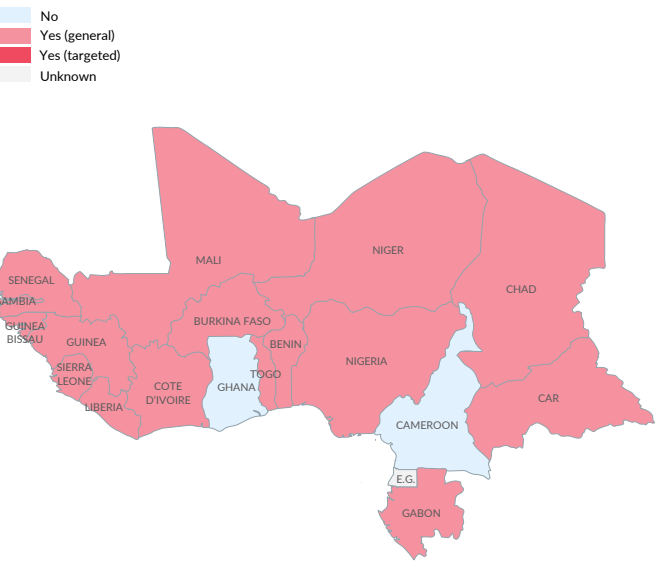
ACCESS TO CIVIL REGISTRATION

Yes
Partial
No
Unknown



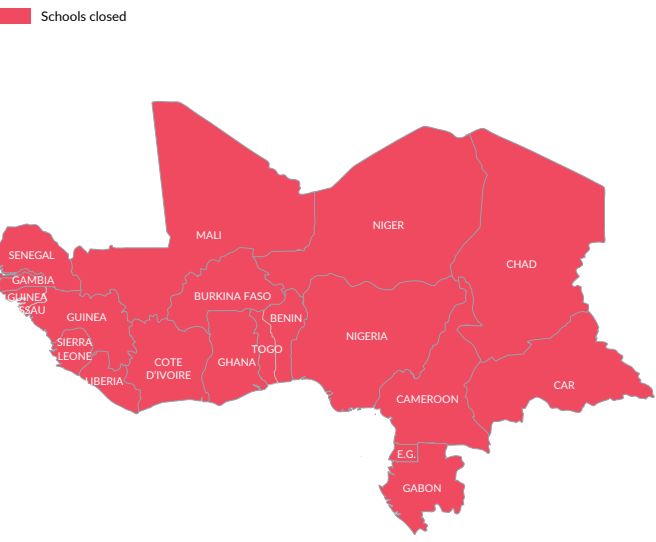
Despite restrictions on movements and public gatherings, total or partial access to national civil registration is maintained for all in most countries, including for persons of concern to UNHCR.

RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT



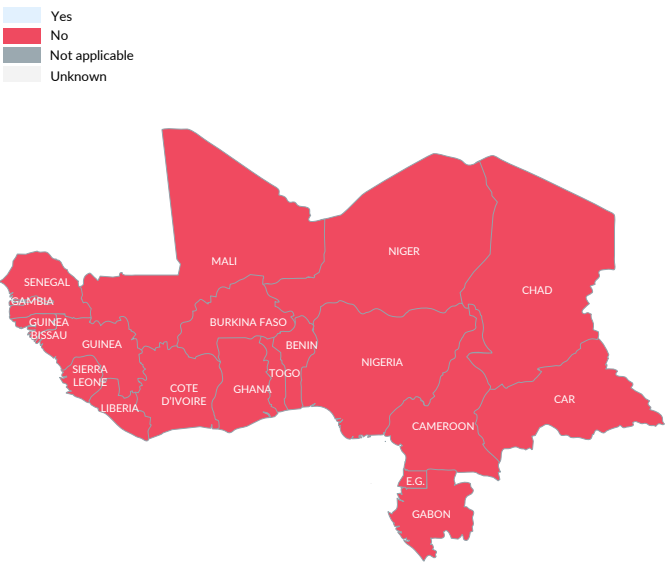
Freedom of movement has been reduced for all, including persons of concern to UNHCR in camps/camp like settings and urban areas, impacting access to services and livelihood.

NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS



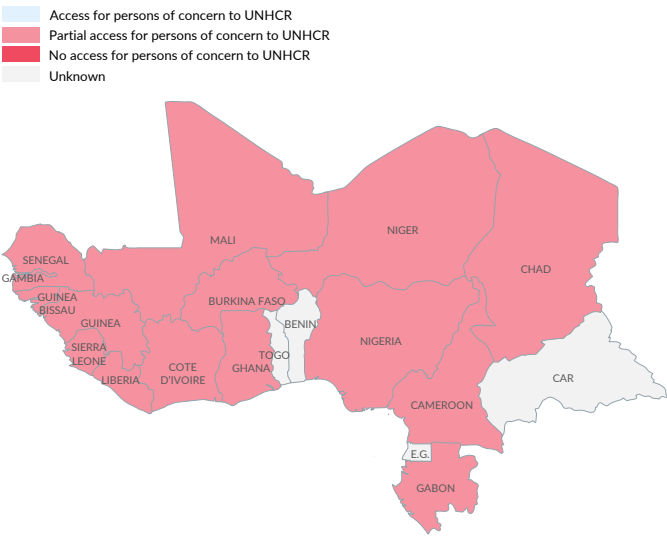
National education systems, in which persons of concern to UNHCR are included throughout the region, are directly impacted by government measures, leading to the closure of all schools.

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION



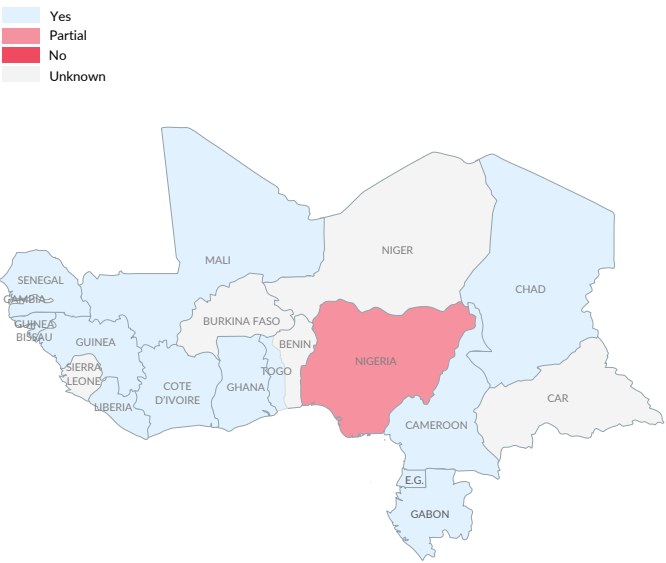
Facilitated voluntary repatriation of refugees is suspended throughout the region.

ACCESS TO DISTANCE EDUCATION



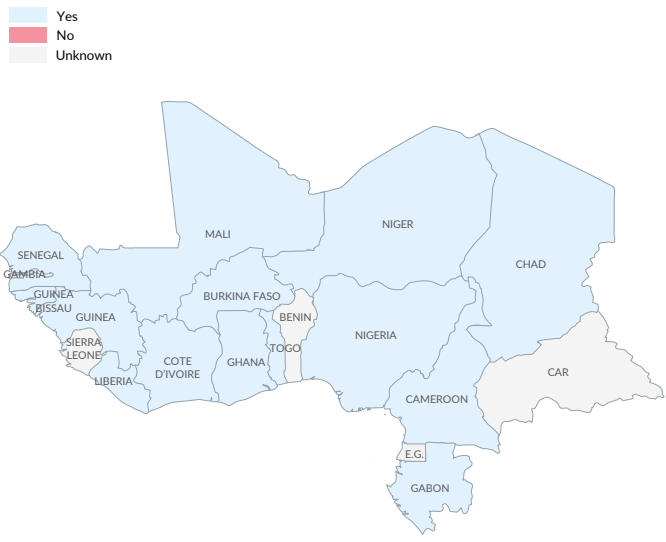
If most governments have launched distance education programs for all children regardless of status, access for forcibly displaced children and youth is partial, including due to connectivity challenges.

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES



If legal access to national health services is ensured in most countries for persons of concern to UNHCR, obstacles remain, in connection with COVID-19 (lack of equipment) or not (healthcare fees).

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITH FORCIBLY-DISPLACED COMMUNITIES



Communication channels with persons of concern to UNHCR are in place in almost all countries and include hotlines, messaging applications and social media.