

West & Central Africa

17 June 2020

The West and Central Africa region has seen a **22% percent increase** in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past week with a total of **73,664 contamination** as of 16 June compared to 60,678 on 09 June 2020.

The COVID-19 **pandemic is accelerating in Africa** and moving from the continent's main urban centers **into the remote rural areas** where it will be more challenging to contain the spread of the virus.

With the **rainy season** starting in the region, UNHCR operations strengthened their **preparedness** and emergency response mechanisms to mitigate the potential **impact of floods** in high risk hosting areas.

POPULATION OF CONCERN	COVID-19 CASES*	FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
10,000,000 total PoCs 5,600,000 IDPs 1,300,000 Refugees 1,400,000 Returnees 1,700,000 Stateless	73,664 total confirmed cases 39,075 still active 33,142 recovered 1,447 deaths <small>*source: WHO as of 16 June 2020.</small>	for COVID-19 Response Globally US\$745 MILLION <div> <div style="width: 32%;"></div> <div style="width: 68%;"></div> </div> Pledged and recorded 32% Funding Gap 68%



Learning preventive measures against COVID-19 as early as possible. This Nigerian refugee is among over 15,000 recently arrived in the Maradi region in Niger who are being relocated to villages over 20km away from the border.
 © UNHCR Niger / Selim Meddeb Hamrouni

Operational Context

- **Continuous increase of confirmed cases.** Since the first case of COVID-19 was declared in Nigeria on 28 February 2020, the pandemic has progressed steadily throughout West and Central Africa where it has killed 1,447 people. As of 16 June 2020, WHO statistics show 73,664 confirmed cases in the 21 countries covered by the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa with 39,075 still active and 33,142 recoveries. So far, **Nigeria** (17,148) remains with the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by **Ghana** (12,193), **Cameroon** (10,140) and **Cote d'Ivoire** (5,679). In terms of active cases, **Nigeria** (11,070) has the highest number, followed by **Ghana** (7,809), **Cameroon** (4,262) and **Cote d'Ivoire** (2,996).
- **Confirmed cases among PoCs.** So far, eight persons of concern including four refugees in **Cameroon**, one refugee in **Ghana** and three IDPs in **Mali** have been tested positive. Of the four refugees in Cameroon, one recovered in Yaounde, two passed away in Douala and Bertoua and one case is still active and is treated in the public health system and assisted by UNHCR in Bertoua. In Ghana, the urban-refugee who tested positive is being treated according to the national health protocols and UNHCR is following up on him and his family members. As for the three IDPs in Mopti in Mali, they are being treated in the Malian health and assisted by UNHCR.
- **Preventive measure in the region.** On 11 June, WHO reported that the [COVID-19 is accelerating in Africa](#) and moving from the continent's main urban centers into the remote rural areas where it is more challenging to contain the pandemic. Despite this continuous spread, some countries in the region have relaxed restriction measures imposed to curb the spread of virus since March while others maintain or strengthen them. In **Chad**, despite the decrease in new COVID19 cases observed, the authorities extended the national "State of Health Emergency" until 15 July 2020. In **Cote d'Ivoire**, the recent surge in new confirmed cases forced the government to tighten prevention measures. The maximum number of people allowed in the public gathering has been changed from 200 to 50. In **Ghana**, the Government has announced that the Health Minister has contracted COVID-19 as the case count surges to almost 12,000. Wearing of face masks has now been made mandatory and failure to comply is now an offence punishable by law. Final year tertiary students have resumed school on 15 June and final year Senior High School students will resume on 22 June and will be followed by final year JHS students on 29 June 2020. In **Guinea**, The National Health Security Agency (ANSS) launched on 8 June a new community strategy entitled "Stop COVID-19 in 60 days, let's mobilize". The objective is to break the community transmission chain in the Conakry-Coyah-Dubreka zone by the end of July 2020 through community actions such as community engagement and social mobilization, tracking of contacts, screening of cases, home care and confinement, referencing of cases, food and economic support to households, as well as health control in containment zones. The Government announced the distribution of 1,200,000 masks to pupils and students to

facilitate the reopening of school and the spraying of disinfectants in primary and secondary schools. In **Guinea Bissau**, the President's Decree extended the state of emergency for another 15 days, until 25 June. While the movement in the country is still subject to restrictions (prohibition of movement outside of regional geographic borders, such as the autonomous sector of Bissau and other regions. Curfew between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.), the country's borders reopened. Masks are compulsory on public roads and in commercial establishments, such as banks, public service establishments and other types of service providers. In **Senegal**, the authorities have allowed for the gradual resuming of domestic flights as of 15 June, the resuming of intercity transport, the reopening of stations, restaurants and sports halls and the organization of private meetings. These flexibility measures are subject to the compulsory wearing of a mask and respect for physical distance. The curfew is reduced from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. In **Sierra Leone**, the government announced that schools would temporarily reopen next month to allow registered students to sit for the public examinations. In **Togo**, based on favourable conditions concerning the spread of coronavirus, the Government announced the total lifting of the curfew, reopening of cities and lifting of the compulsory wearing of masks and decided to reopen schools, initially only the exam classes.

■ **Specific protection risks and challenges for forcibly displaced populations.**

Refugees and IDPs are often residing in overcrowded and precarious conditions rendering impossible social distancing or basic preventive measures such as hand washing which exposes them to heightened risks of contamination as COVID-19 cases. Although only three cases of infection were reported among UNHCR's persons of concern in Cameroon in Nigeria so far, 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.

Challenges and risks related to the rainy season. In most countries of the region, the rainy season will increase the impracticality of roads, reduce movement and access to persons of concern, affect and degrade weak infrastructures and make transportation of goods by trucks more challenging and expensive. Shelter needs will increase and UNHCR's intervention will be crucial during this period to ensure adequate the rehabilitation of dwellings and allow for more distancing and isolation in case of COVID infection. With the rainy season starting in the region, UNHCR operations are strengthening their preparedness and emergency response mechanisms to mitigate the potential impact of floods in high risk hosting areas.

UNHCR Response

UNHCR Operations are taking steps to ensure continuity of assistance and basic protection services despite movement restrictions through teleworking and remote protection and assistance. UNHCR operations are also stepping up their engagement and advocacy with Governments, the UN country teams and other Inter-Agency platforms to contribute to a coordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure that persons of concern are included in all relevant response plans.



Respecting social distancing and other preventive measures during a distribution of relief items in Gado Badzere refugee camp, Eastern region. Cameroon. ©UNHCR/Gédéon Njimbéré



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

- UNHCR Operations are increasing their direct 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. 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 **Burkina Faso**, UNHCR continues to support refugees in contributing to the country's response to COVID-19 pandemic through the making of masks. As of 11 June, 32,500 masks were produced by refugees and host community tailors in Dori. The planned 35,000 masks as part of this project will be completed by 16 June. In addition, UNHCR is strengthening WASH systems in the areas hosting IDPs, to facilitate the respect of COVID-19 preventive measures, including handwashing. To date, UNHCR and its partners distributed 2,990 hand washing devices, 22,389 balls of soaps, 9,000 containers of liquid soaps, and 37,565 masks. In addition, UNHCR has provided a truck with a capacity of 10,000 litres for water trucking purposes. Between 2 and 11 June, some 100 m³ of drinkable water was delivered for 6,000 IDPs, refugees and host communities (i.e. some 15 litres per person) living in the sites of Wendou, Petit Paris and Yanrala in Dori.



Provision of drinkable water to IDPs, refugees and host communities in Dori through water trucking.
 ©UNHCR / I.Ouedraogo

- In **Chad**, UNHCR and its health partners continue their effort to strengthen government capacity. In southern **Chad**, capacity-building training of 32 health service providers of Maro health districts on epidemiological monitoring, case investigation and medical care for COVID-19 cases. Another 23 security guards and community security teams from Maro camp were trained to monitor entry points and identify unknown persons entering refugee camps or sites and report to competent health agents for further health assessment. In eastern Chad, UNHCR, WHO and IRC organized a three-day training for 37 nurses and 2 laboratory assistants from different Amdjarass districts to strengthen nurses' abilities to treat COVID-19 cases and help to prevent the spread of the virus.



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

- UNHCR Operations are working 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, remote case management via telephone, preventive measure in registration processes, while continuing advocacy to maintain avenues for asylum seekers to access international protection and safeguarding the principle of non-refoulement. To ensure adequate assistance to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), consultation methods are being adapted to allow for remote assistance including through online/phone consultations and by integrating cash assistance interventions for women at risk and SGBV survivors into assistance.
- In **Burkina Faso**, UNHCR and its partners are enhancing sensitization on COVID-19. For instance, ICAHD broadcasted 216 awareness spots for the benefit of the people of the Centre Nord region through radio stations in Kaya, Tougouri and Kongoussi. UNHCR's partner, the Fondation Hirondelle provided technical materials, including laptops and digital recorders, to four local radio stations in Kaya to facilitate the broadcasting of information spots. The Fondation Hirondelle has also conducted a baseline study on IDP's access to information on and awareness of COVID-19. Pending validation, the first draft of the study has already allowed FH to adjust the broadcasts hours of its information spots to better accommodate the IDPs and the host communities taking into account the usual time when they listen to the radios.
- In **Chad**, the *Guichet Unique* of the UNHCR N'Djamena office continues to assist refugees and asylum-seekers remotely through phones and WhatsApp groups with some home visits for the most urgent cases. In the field, UNHCR protection team continue to provide assistance in coordination with the Association pour la Promotion de la Liberté Fondamentale au Tchad (APLFT), la Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Réintégration des Réfugiés et Rapatriés (CNARR) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) using the same protection networks to disseminate information on COVID-19 to persons of concern. In southern Chad, UNHCR supported the organization of door-to-door COVID-19 sensitization targeted at children and conducted by community child protection networks, preschool teachers, mother-teacher-associations (AME) and teachers. These door-to-door communications reached over 4,000 refugees in Haraze and Gore / Began camps. In Baga Sola, over 2,000 refugees, IDPs and hosts were reached during sensitizations on the fight against COVID-19 were organized in collaboration with the Red Cross in Chad (CRT) in the different sectors of activity at the Dar Es Salam refugee camp, in the surrounding local area and in other IDPs sites.

- In **Mali**, UNHCR pursue its information and sensitization efforts on COVID-19 prevention. In the past week only, over a thousand returning refugees and IDPs were reached during a dozen sensitization sessions organized by UNHCR and its partners AMSS, Croix Rouge and Sahel21-TF in the Gao region (Ansongo, Menaka, and Anderamboukane), Timbuktu, and Mopti. Some participants in these information sessions received cash and in-kind support including shelter material. Other sensitization activities were organized in the Mopti region by UNHCR's partner AMSS.
- In **Nigeria**, UNHCR continues to monitor the Southeastern border to provide assistants to those still arriving from the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. In the past week, over 960 newly arrived refugees were relocated to Ikyogen settlement where they are hosted at the quarantine center before being settle into the site. Sensitization activities on COVID-19 are ongoing in the refugee settlements and hosting areas in the Southeast Nigeria and reached some 1,500 persons in the past week.



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

- In many parts of the region, refugees and IDPs are residing in heavily overcrowded camps and sites exposing them to heightened risks of contamination as COVID-19 cases may soon affect most of the most of major hosting areas. To address this issue, UNHCR Operations are implementing targeted shelter interventions and distributing core relief items while decongesting the most overcrowded sites to allow for the implementation of the most basic prevention measures. UNHCR Operations is also increasing their focus on strengthening community-based protection mechanism and enhancing the capacity and self-reliance of refugee and IDP communities including through the ramping up of cash assistance.
- In **Chad**, WFP and UNHCR started food distribution to 3,800 refugees from DIBA and VOM sites in the region of Gore, in southern Chad. In Farchana in eastern **Chad**, in preparation for the return to school, UNHCR's partner JRS has completed on 8 June the construction of eight classrooms, on office and a library room in the high school of Bredjing camp. Funded by BPRM, these infrastructures will help to reduce the overcrowding of students in the future.
- In **Liberia**, as part of its effort to address the economic impact of COVID-19, UNHCR continues to provide livelihoods support, including cash-based support to refugees in PTP Settlement and host community members in Grand Gedeh to strengthen peaceful coexistence. in view to increase their self-reliance and their decision-making power on how resources can be used in meeting their needs,. In the past week, over 230 persons

benefited from Small Business Management Trainings through mentoring and coaching and received seed capita from UNHCR and its implementing partner AIRD.



Bogon Yolande is an Ivorian refugee living in PTP Settlement (Grand Gedeh) taking part in UNHCR's Small Business Management Training (SMBT). With the seed capital she received, she started a mask production during the COVID-19 pandemic. ©UNHCR/ Lucy Blaande Dweh.



Support education systems

- To ensure the continuity of learning in a protective environment and to prepare for the safe reopening of schools, UNHCR is working with Ministries of Education and education partners to support students access to distance education programmes, enhance health training for teachers, support community awareness-raising activities on COVID-19 while upgrading water and sanitation facilities in schools.
- In **Chad**, UNHCR participated in the second education cluster coordination meeting on 9 June 2020 alongside 26 other organizations including UNESCO, AFD, WFP to coordinate ahead of the reopening of schools on 25 June for students in exam class and ensure the conditions set by the Ministry of Education are met across the country. The authorities have announced that classes could not be of more than 20 students, that everyone will have to wear a face mask and that body temperature would be checked upon entering the schools.
- In **Benin**, **Gambia**, **Guinea Bissau** and **Sierra Leone**, UNHCR is supporting the authorities and other UN agencies, such as UNICEF, in their efforts to progressively reopen schools. UNHCR is contributing to sensitization and capacity-building activities for teachers, students and the community safety measures against COVID-19, the provision of personal protective equipment and the cleaning of school environment

including fumigation. UNHCR is also supporting the improvement of ICT infrastructure to facilitate distant learning methods by providing increased connectivity, expanding radio broadcast coverage, establishing Wi-Fi hotspots, and providing laptops to teachers.



Training of 18 health agents on disinfection and decontamination techniques at Dosseye camp in the Gore region in southern Chad. ©UNHCR Chad

Financial Requirements

US\$745 million requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally through December 2020. Total funding received by UNHCR against its COVID-19 appeal: **US\$237.5 million**. The following donors have provided earmarked contributions for the Coronavirus Emergency Situation in **West and Central Africa**:



Special thanks to the following donors providing:

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COVID-19 APPEAL | USD

United States of America 64 million | **Germany** 38 million | **European Union** 32.8 million | **United Kingdom** 24.8 million | **Japan** 23.9 million | **UN Foundation** 10 million | **Denmark** 14.6 million | **CERF** 6.9 million | **Canada** 6.4 million | **Private Donors** 6.3 million | **Ireland** 3.3 million | **Sony Corporation** 3 million | **Sweden** 3 million | **Finland** 2.4 million | **Education Cannot Wait** 1.8 million | **Norway** 1.5 million | **Qatar Charity** 1.5 million | **Australia** 0.8 million | **Italy** 0.5 million | **Badr Jafar** 0.5 million | **UN COVID-19 MDTF** 0.4 million | **Ahmed Abdelkoudous Ehsan** 0.4 million | **Monaco** 0.2 million | **Jersey** 0.2 million | **Estonia** 0.1 million | **Iceland** 0.1 million | **Liechtenstein** 0.1 million | **Portugal** 0.1 million | **UPS** 0.1 million | **Unilever** 0.1 million | **WFP** 0.1 million | **Russian Federation** 0.1 million | **Slovakia** 0.05 million | **Spain** 0.03

OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 210.1 million | **Canada** 45.2 million | **Japan** 18.5 million | **Norway** 16.8 million | **Switzerland** 12.8 million | **Sweden** 7.3 million | **United Kingdom** 7.1 million | **Denmark** 5 million | **Netherlands** 4.1 million | **Republic of Korea** 3.2 million | **Private donors Australia** 3 million | **Luxembourg** 2.7 million | **Finland** 2.2 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 76.4 million | **Norway** 41.4 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Private donors Spain** 26.6 million | **Germany** 25.9 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 13.9 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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