

West & Central Africa

03 June 2020

The West and Central Africa region has seen a **26% percent increase** in new confirmed COVID-19 cases **in the last week** going from 39,585 contaminations on 26 May to a total of **49,937** on 03 June 2020.

Despite the risk of a second wave of contamination, many countries in the region are continuing to **relax restriction measures** imposed to curb the spread of virus in the past two months.

The **COVID digital platform** launched by UNHCR, IOM and MSF in March 2020 reached **15 000 visitors**, making it the most popular UNHCR-related digital portal in the region.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

10,000,000 total PoCs
5,600,000 IDPs
1,300,000 Refugees
1,400,000 Returnees
1,700,000 Stateless

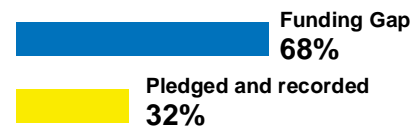
COVID-19 CASES*

49,937 total confirmed cases
27,913 still active
20,959 recovered
1,065 deaths

*source: WHO as of 02 June 2020.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

for COVID-19 Response Globally
US\$745 MILLION



Following a distribution of hygiene products to the health center of Hamdallaye, UNHCR Representative in Niger, Alessandra Morelli, took part in the planting ceremony of a dourmi tree in the village of Beri Koirra. Famous for its medicinal and healing properties, this tree is a symbol of the collective fight against COVID-19. ©UNHCR Niger / Boubacar Sidde

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 1,065 people. As of 02 June 2020, WHO statistics show 49,937 confirmed cases in the 21 countries covered by the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa with 27,913 still active and 20,959 recoveries. To date, **Nigeria** (10,819) remains with the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by **Ghana** (8,297), **Cameroon** (6,585) and **Guinea** (3,886). In terms of active cases, **Nigeria** (7,265) has the highest number, followed by **Ghana** (5,273), **Cameroon** (2,709) and **Gabon** (2,004). **Guinea** and **Senegal** join **Burkina Faso**, **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Gambia**, **Liberia**, **Mali** and **Niger** with more recovered cases than actives.
- **Confirmed cases among PoCs.** So far, seven persons of concern have been tested positive, including four refugees in **Cameroon** and three IDPs in **Mali**. 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 where 21 refugees have also been placed in quarantine preventively. As for the three IDPs in Mali, they are still active cases and being treated in the Malian health and assisted by UNHCR in the Mopti region.
- **Preventive measure in the region.** Despite the risk of a second wave of contamination, many countries in the region are continuing to relax restriction measures imposed to curb the spread of virus in the past two months. In **Benin**, places of worship and bars will reopen as of 2 June, and public transport will be authorized to circulate but the wearing of masks remains compulsory in public spaces. In **Burkina Faso**, the Government is continuing with the relaxation of COVID-19 prevention measures. The curfew from 21:00 to 04:00, which was in place since end of March will be lifted as of tomorrow, 3 June, while three classes, which have exams this year, have reopened as of yesterday 1 June. In **Cameroon**, the wearing of masks is compulsory in all public places, although social distancing measures have been relaxed. Schools also reopened on 1 June following recent government measures. In **Ghana**, while air, land and sea borders remain closed, the authorities lifted the ban imposed on in-person religious services and other public gatherings under the condition to respect social distancing and wear masks, as part of staggered measures to restore socio-economic life amid living with Covid-19. Additionally, private burials, conferences, workshops, weddings, political activities, except rallies, can also be organized but also with a maximum of 100 persons.
- **Preventive measure are maintained or strengthened** in other countries such as **CAR** which has made the wearing of masks mandatory in public places, public transport and has temporarily suspended passenger transport on certain routes in the Western Zone due to the rapid increase in the number of Covid-19 contaminations. To support the implementation of these measures, the Central African government, through the European Union's Békou Funds, has ordered 150,000 handmade masks from the Alliance Française de Bangou to be distributed to the population. In **Chad**, the

authorities have therefore stepped up measures to combat COVID-19. As of 8 May, the entry and exit of persons from N'djamena is prohibited for a period of two weeks, although goods and foodstuff are exempted from this restriction and can enter the city from 22:00, this measure has been extended to 15 June. In addition, wearing a mask is now compulsory. The Chadian government extended the national “State of Health Emergency” until 15 July 2020. In **Equatorial Guinea**, the Government decided to extend the state of emergency and associated COVID-19 restrictions until 15 June. In **Gabon**, the confinement measure was extended for 45 days on 11 May. In **Guinea**, the state of emergency has been prorogated until 19 June and schools and religious sites closed while the capital Conakry remain isolated. **Guinea-Bissau**, the state of emergency is prorogated for another until 10 June. In **Senegal**, the President announced on 29 May the extension of the state of emergency and the border closure until 30 June 2020 and the restart of schools planned for today has been postponed until further notice after several teachers tested positive for COVID-19. In **Sao Tome and Principe**, the President decided on 30 May, to extend the confinement measure for another 15 days after which, the country will explore the possibility of relaxing confinement measures, as it expects to experience a peak in late 2020.

- **Socio-economic impact of the pandemic.** The negative socio-economic impact of the pandemic and the prevention measures imposed in the region are starting to generate social unrest in some countries. In **Mali**, teachers went on strike yesterday, the first day schools reopened after being closed for two months, over fears of inadequate protection against coronavirus. In **Sierra Leone**, frontline workers have declared strike which will take effect on Monday as they push for payment of their outstanding salaries which could negatively impact the country’s fight against the coronavirus pandemic.
- **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.

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.

Highlights

COVID COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIGITAL PLATFORM

- The COVID Risk communication and community engagement digital platform launched in March 2020 has now reached 15 000 unique visitors, which puts it above any UNHCR related digital platform in the region. Twice a week, UNHCR in coordination with IOM and MSF, share dozens of new graphic, audio and video tools to help community mobilisers and other national or local platforms in their effort to disseminate prevention messages. Targeted campaigns on Instagram, Facebook and other social media are also organized to wider the scope of the audience.
- A dedicated team including UNHCR staff oversees the analysis of comments and feedbacks receive from users to adjust the content and messaging to evolving needs and best practices are gathered to inform the ongoing development of the platform.
- A survey showed that 72% of the interactive platform visitors are coming directly to the site thanks to the straightforward and neutral address: www.coronawestafrica.info; while the other visits derive from referrals from partners or thanks to the newsletter or through social media promotion.



Choisissez un contenu à partager avec vos proches




Le #COVID19 vous inquiète ? Vous voulez apprendre comment contribuer à ralentir la propagation du #Coronavirus et comment en parler aux autres ? Cette bibliothèque de vidéos, livres audio, et affiches peut vous être utile : [#labonneinfo](https://labonneinfo.org)



Covid19: Outils D'Engagement Communautaires coronawestafrica.info

Partager / Share


Joignez-vous à moi pour combattre la propagation du #COVID19 en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Cette bibliothèque offre les outils pour expliquer ce qu'est le #Coronavirus, ainsi que les mesures de protection contre la maladie. [#labonneinfo](https://labonneinfo.org)



Covid19: Outils D'Engagement Communautaires coronawestafrica.info

Partager / Share

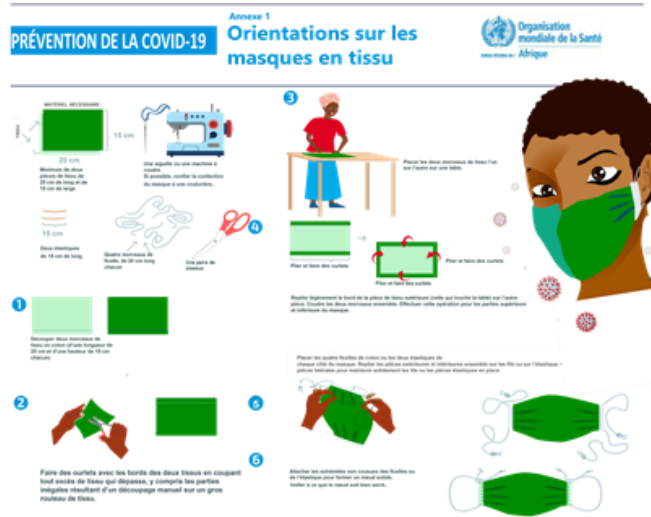
Vous êtes basé en Afrique de l'Ouest ou en Afrique Centrale ? Voici des outils de sensibilisation (vidéos, fichiers audio, affiches, etc.) - pour partager les bonnes informations avec les populations locales sur le #COVID19. [#labonneinfo](https://labonneinfo.org)



Covid19: Outils D'Engagement Communautaires coronawestafrica.info

Partager / Share

- Over 63% of visitors are from the WCA region are around 65 % of them return after a first visit, which indicates that the site serves its purpose to support field based, local community mobilisers in the prevention effort.
- With over 86% of the visitors being less than 44 years old, the platform caters to a relatively young public. Confirming the region's experience during the Ebola crisis, youth groups prove to be efficient relays to tackle the pandemic and the most downloaded and shared tools are those aimed to support awareness-raising activities for children. Music videos are also one of the most preferred features and they are widely used to sensitize displaced communities.
- Building on the early lessons learned since the launch of the platform, UNHCR and its partners are now focusing their efforts on fighting the spread of fake news, rumours and misinformation especially on false treatments. To do that, the production of audio contents that can be disseminated in rural areas will be key.





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 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 hand washing devices, balls of soaps, containers of liquid soaps, and masks. In addition, UNHCR provided in-kind donations, composed of medicine, pharmaceutical supplies and information posters on COVID-19, in the nine regions for a total amount of USD 1,089,084. On 28 May, medicine, hand-washing devices, bins, an ambulance and RHUs for the isolation centre were handed over to the authorities of Kaya, in the Region of the Centre Nord. More support has been committed and will be disbursed soon.
- In **Cameroon**, UNHCR is completing the installation of sanitation facilities and latrine blocks to accompany the COVID-19 case management centre set up by UNHCR at the Garoua-Boulai district hospital, in the East of the country. COVID-19 medical and hygiene equipment were also donated to fourteen other UNHCR partner health facilities in Meiganga (Adamawa region), Garoua Boulai (East region) and Touboro (North region), on 26, 27 and 29 May respectively. These donations contribute to and support government's efforts in ensuring the protection of health personnel as well as the refugee and Cameroonian populations settled along the corridor linking Chad and the Central African Republic.
- In **Chad**, UNHCR's guesthouse in Abéché with a capacity of 7 beds has been renovated to serve as a treatment center for the Ouaddai Province.
- In **Niger**, as part of the EUTF Project on Urbanization in Diffa, UNHCR has started the installation of water pumps and fountains to improve access to water in the districts of Diffa, Chetimara, Assaga, Toumour and Kablewa. By the end of June, a total of twelve water fountains should be functional in N'Guigmi in Maine Soroa. Powered by solar energy, they should provide water to a targeted 42,000 refugees, IDPs and local populations.
- In **Nigeria**, in Cross River State, UNHCR completed construction of a 16,000 litres capacity solar borehole with 9m tower for the Ndok community, Ogoja, in Adagom refugee host community. The water system is currently being tested before an official hand-over of the facility to the host community. In all the refugee settlements, routine

water supply from boreholes and treatment plants to refugees continued. Meanwhile, excavation of a large size waste pit was completed at the Ukende Settlement to improve environmental sanitation. Decommissioning of filled-up latrines were also undertaken in the settlements.



A solar powered well in Assaga, Niger as part of the EU Trust Fund Project on Urbanization in the Diffa region led by UNHCR. ©UNHCR Niger / Médard Monodjomi



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 **Cameroon**, UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS have put in place a protection hotline for persons of concern and in partnership with a local radio, 'Christian Broadcasting Services' in the South West Region, for wide broadcast of the toll-free number which will serve for protection and COVID-19 messages/feedback. The radio covers the North West and South West regions as well as Littoral, Bafousam (West), Yaoundé (Centre) and neighboring countries such as Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea. On 27 May, as part of an Inter-Cluster COVID-19 in the North West and South West regions, UNHCR with partners, organised a training for 88 NGO staff in the North West Region on Protection Mainstreaming and Child Protection within the context of COVID-19.
- In **Guinea**, UNHCR continues bi-weekly awareness activities about COVID-19 in the refugee camp through its partners, the National Commission for the Integration and Monitoring of Refugees (CNISR) and the Organization for Integrated and Community Development of Guinea (ODIC).
- In **Niger**, awareness on prevention measures continue in Tillabery and Tahoua regions for refugees, host communities and IDPs. However, most IDPs who are outside refugee locations such as the Refugee Hosting Area in Intikane, are difficult to reach. No prevention material is available for them.
- In **Nigeria**, UNHCR/GISCOR in collaboration with CCCM, Health, and WASH actors continued to carry out joint door to door and small group sessions- awareness on COVID-19 preventive measures in locations also using the services of PAG members and community structures. UNHCR and partner BOWDI conducted eight sensitization campaigns in IDP camps during which 603 persons were reached. Sensitizations continue to be affected by the reduction of targets to meet the WHO regulation on social distancing. The vulnerability screening exercise continues to enable identification of persons with specific needs and referrals to appropriate service providers for protection services.
- In **Senegal**, UNHCR is also working with the National Commission on Eligibility (CNE) to support the continued examination of asylum claims while respecting the distancing measures and the compulsory wearing of masks.
- In **Sierra Leone**, WASH facilities are being improved in the main refugee settlements to allow for hand washing and other basic hygiene as part of COVID-19 prevention. Public health awareness-raising campaigns are also ongoing in collaboration between the Ministry of Health, civil society organizations, local councils, media, refugee community stakeholders on COVID-19 symptoms and prevention.



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 **Cameroon**, A total of 150 transitional shelters have been rebuilt in the three sites of Lolo, Mbile and Timangolo in the East region, since the beginning of the year, out of 171 emergency shelters destroyed by bad weather, notably rains and strong winds. In the North West region, 4,802 shelter kits, 1,925 sleeping mats and 3,500 jerrycans excluding tarpaulins have been positioned for distribution in the North West region. However, implementation remains a challenge continue in areas where access is made impossible due to the rainy season and activities of Non-State Armed groups, NSAGs in targeted communities.
- In **Nigeria**, UNHCR carried out a cash distribution in Lagos benefiting eighty-three refugee and IDP households of 144 persons. Cumulatively, 713 Households of 1,350 persons have been assisted so far via bank transfer and cash in envelope on the CBI assistance to refugees and asylum seekers to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, inclusion for the provision of PPEs and hygiene materials. In Taraba State, distribution of food items such as rice, beans, cassava flour, cornflour, salt and palm-oil continued for a total of 1,339 individuals of 466 refugee households in Baissa, Abong and Sabongida communities of Kurmi LGA. In addition, 1,336 vulnerable host community members benefitted from the distribution.



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 **Burkina Faso**, with the start of classes on 1 June, UNHCR's partner DRC visited schools in refugee hosting areas so as to find places for refugee children who had fled the Goudoubo refugee camp. In Wendou, authorities have provided three classrooms to accommodate children from both the refugee and host communities living in the area.

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**:

United States	\$ 11.6
Education Cannot Wait	\$1.3 M
Luxembourg	\$0.2 M
UNCOVID-19 MDTF	\$0.2M
Monaco	\$0.1 M

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 Abdelkodous 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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