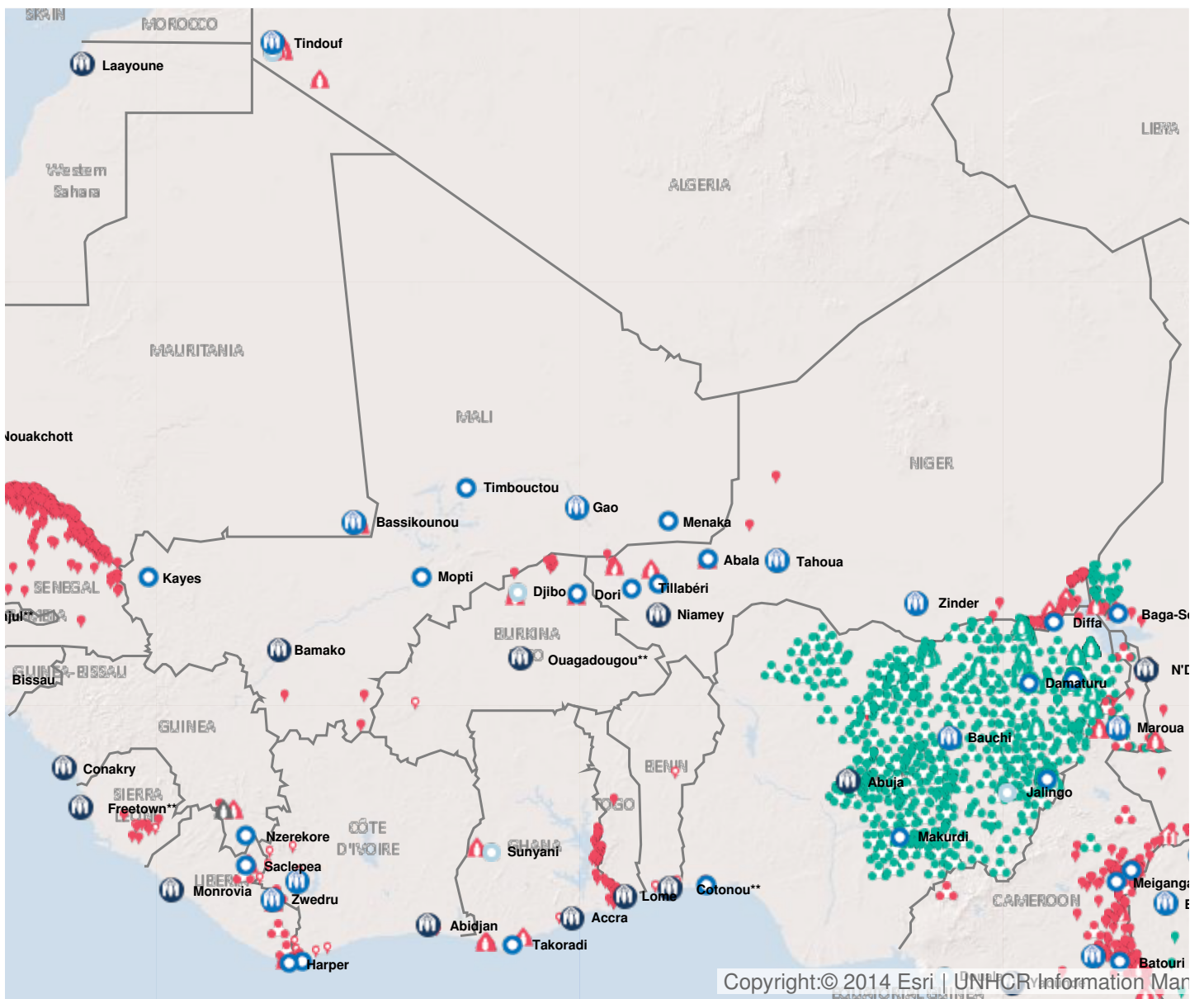


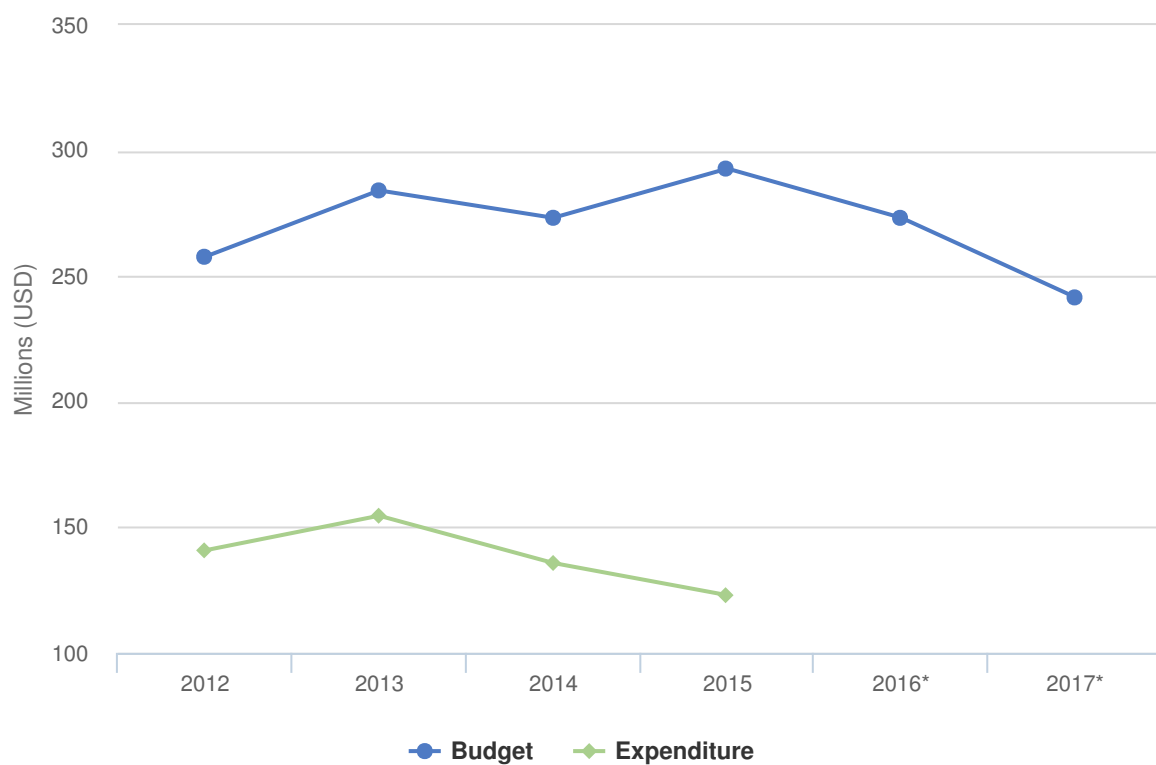
Subregion: West Africa

| Benin | Burkina Faso | Cabo Verde | Côte d'Ivoire | Gambia (the) | Ghana | Guinea | Guinea-Bissau | Liberia
 | Mali | Niger | Nigeria | Senegal | Sierra Leone | Togo |

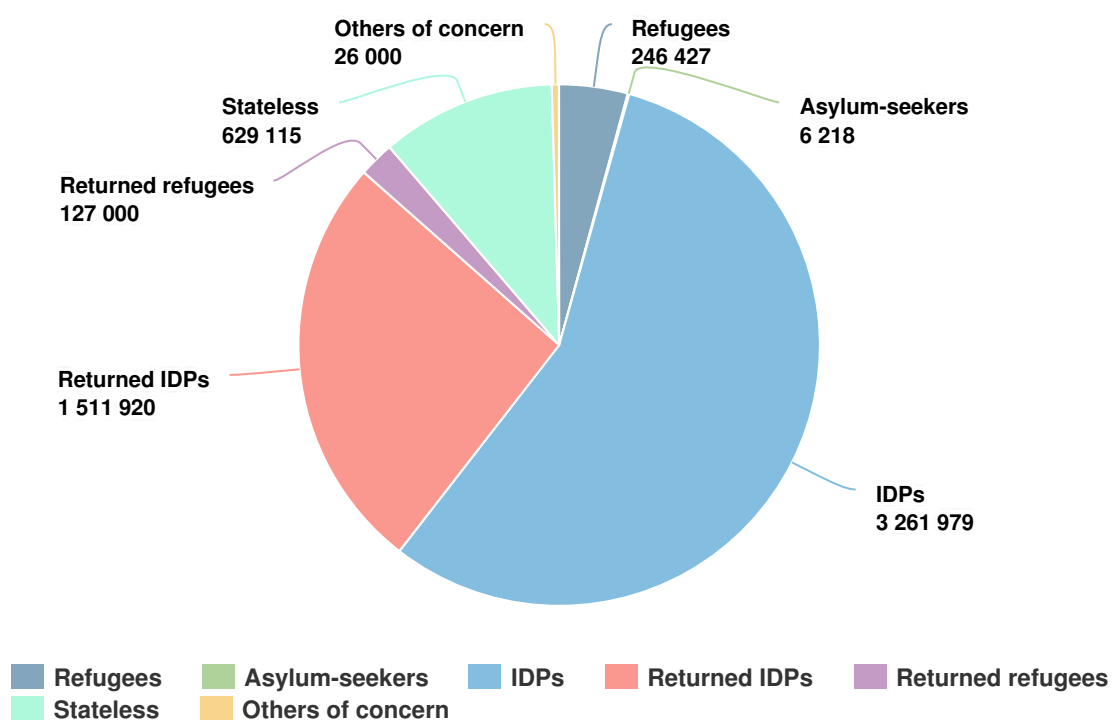


Latest update of camps and office locations **21 Nov 2016**. By clicking on the icons on the map, additional information is displayed.

Budgets and Expenditure in Subregion West Africa



People of Concern - 2017 [projected]



Operational Environment and Strategy

Countries in the subregion continue to uphold their long-standing tradition of hospitality and solidarity towards refugees. Hosting large numbers of refugees in protracted situations nevertheless present significant economic, political and security challenges. Displacement is chronic due to insecurity, the failure to address the root causes of conflict, and the significant gaps in the legislative framework and asylum procedures in some countries. This has slowed progress with respect to securing solutions for displaced people.

Meanwhile, food insecurity continues to affect refugee and IDP populations, with levels of acute malnutrition, stunting and anaemia on the rise. By mid-2015, the subregion hosted some 438,300 refugees and was home to 2.5 million IDPs. The humanitarian crises in Mali and Nigeria were the main drivers of forced displacement.

The protection environment in Mali remains a concern, particularly because of insecurity in the northern and central regions of the country. Targeted attacks against national and international government security forces have increased, while the implementation of the peace agreement signed in June 2015 has been limited. Unfavourable conditions also continue to preclude the safe return of Malians to their country of origin.

In Nigeria, widespread violence has resulted in displacement in the north-eastern region of the country and in areas bordering Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including sexual violence and exploitation, disappearances, attacks on civilian sites and forced recruitment, are abundant. The conflict between insurgents and government security forces is having a serious impact on humanitarian needs as well as on humanitarian access and response. In June 2016, the Government of Nigeria, with UNHCR's support, hosted a Regional Protection Dialogue on the Lake Chad Basin to tackle the worrisome increase in protection incidents, including cases of refoulement. At the close of the Dialogue, the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria adopted the "Abuja action statement", promising to take concrete steps to respond to the most pressing protection needs of affected populations.

In other countries hosting displaced populations, UNHCR will intensify its pursuit of solutions, particularly in protracted situations. With the support of West African States, the use of complementary pathways to protection and solutions are being increasingly explored. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreements that allow nationals of Member States to move freely and work within the subregion may help provide solutions for refugees and eventually lead to permanent residency and naturalization.

With this in mind, multi-year, operation-level, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, which were launched in 2016, will be enhanced in protracted situations, including for Senegalese refugees in Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, Mauritanian refugees in Senegal, Ghanaian refugees in Togo and Togolese refugees in Ghana, as well as for former Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees who are still in need of international protection and assistance. The repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia, Guinea, Ghana and Togo, as well as the reintegration of returnees, will continue in 2017 and, to a lesser extent, in 2018.

A regional protection and solutions strategy for nearly 1 million stateless people in West Africa will build on the momentum gained generated by the adoption of the 2015 Abidjan Declaration on the eradication of statelessness.

Response and Implementation

*Operations in **Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal Regional Office, and Nigeria** are presented in separate country pages.*

Benin

UNHCR's strategy in Benin in 2017 will focus on two main operational priorities that consist of the following:

1. Strengthening the national legal and institutional framework related to the asylum system, as well as ensuring that legal reforms are in line with international conventions, in order to identify and address protection gaps;
2. Supporting refugee self-reliance and livelihoods through the development of a strategy which includes opportunities related to vocational training, self-employment, entrepreneurship and formal employment.

Advocacy with governments will also be undertaken to help ensure refugees are included in national development programmes. Progress has been previously hindered in this regard, in large part due to lengthy procedures in government institutions.

Gambia

In Gambia, the largest population of concern are Senegalese refugees, who have limited access to basic services such as water, health care and education. In 2017, it is expected that Senegalese refugees and refugees of other nationalities that are opting for a durable solution will benefit from UNHCR's assistance, notably in the form of legal and livelihood support. Through its protection and solution strategy for Gambia (2015-2018), UNHCR will continue to implement comprehensive solutions for Senegalese refugees and a context-specific local integration and livelihoods strategy for other refugees. The key elements of the protection and solutions strategy will include the following activities:

1. Assisting the government to identify and implement durable solutions for refugees;
2. Gradually phasing out direct material assistance and continuing to promote self-reliance and partnerships with development actors;
3. Working with government and other partners to strengthen law and policy and to ensure a favourable protection environment for persons of concern to UNHCR;
4. Supporting the government to facilitate refugee access to national and local services.

Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau is host to some 9,200 Senegalese refugees and 45 refugees of other nationalities in urban areas. For Senegalese families, naturalization, along with the formalization of land ownership rights, is the most viable durable solution. As part of the UNHCR multi-year protection and solutions strategy for Guinea Bissau (2015-2017), UNHCR's response will aim to reinforce the legal framework for the protection and local integration of refugees and further promote livelihoods and self-reliance. UNHCR will also support refugees wishing to acquire the nationality of Guinea-Bissau through naturalization or long-term residence permits. By the end of 2017, 560 refugees are expected to be naturalized, and the right to ownership of 40 plots of land will be formalized. Political instability may however have an impact on the implementation of UNHCR's programmes, but some risk mitigation measures are being put in place.

Senegal

Although a voluntary repatriation exercise of Mauritanian refugees was carried out in Senegal from 2008 to 2012, some 13,700 Mauritanian refugees who have been residing in the country since 1989 have not yet benefitted from a durable solution. A refugee verification exercise has found that 60 per cent of Mauritanian refugees remaining in Senegal wish to be locally integrated. With respect to Senegalese refugees living in Gambia and Guinea-Bissau since 1980, those who have elected to voluntarily repatriate to Senegal will be assisted during their return and reintegration. The return of Senegalese refugees is of particular concern to the southern region of Casamance, where the situation has stabilized since 2012, following a ceasefire agreement, demining and investments in infrastructure.

In this context, UNHCR's multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategy for Senegal (2017-2019) has two main components: (1) the local integration of 13,687 Mauritanian refugees, including through naturalization and

long-term residence permits, and the voluntary repatriation of Mauritanian refugees living in rural areas; (2) the voluntary return and reintegration of an estimated 7,000 Senegalese refugees to Senegal, comprising some 2,000 individuals interested in voluntary repatriation and 5,000 others who have spontaneously returned from Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, UNHCR's main strategic priorities in 2017 will include building the capacity of relevant government institutions and officials with a view to handing over refugee-related activities and scaling down UNHCR operations. The Office will therefore aim to strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies, as well as government ministries and departments, to advocate for the remaining refugees to gain access to basic services and support after 2017.

Furthermore, UNHCR will support the naturalization of refugees no longer recognized as Liberian citizens due to their long-term stay in Sierra Leone, in order to avoid a statelessness situation. In this regard, UNHCR's operational plan will include the implementation of the Sierra Leone national action plan to end statelessness by 2024. Parliamentary and presidential elections, which are likely to take place in late 2017 or early 2018, may trigger political instability, potentially affecting crucial partnerships with government institutions.

Togo

Togo hosts some 13,000 refugees, the majority of whom are from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as smaller groups from other regions of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. UNHCR will work towards achieving durable solutions for refugees in protracted situations by promoting self-reliance and ensuring that refugees are productive members of their communities. Access to either local or national social protection programmes will be advocated for vulnerable individuals. Regarding Ivoirian refugees, their voluntary return will continue to be encouraged. UNHCR will also undertake increased advocacy efforts for the naturalization of Ghanaian refugees who fled conflict in 1994 and opted to stay in Togo. Self-reliance and livelihoods activities will continue to be promoted through the implementation of an agro-pastoral project. Challenges in this context include the lengthy naturalization procedure and limited engagement with government counterparts.

2017 Budget for West Africa | USD

Operation	Pillar 1 Refugee programme	Pillar 2 Stateless programme	Pillar 3 Reintegration projects	Pillar 4 IDP projects	Total
Burkina Faso	20,812,391	510,537	0	0	21,322,928
Côte d'Ivoire	3,051,362	4,174,881	13,032,206	0	20,258,448
Ghana	8,878,867	0	0	0	8,878,867
Guinea	4,471,017	0	0	0	4,471,017
Liberia	16,194,818	0	0	0	16,194,818
Mali	11,691,893	1,111,441	25,985,444	1,218,753	40,007,532
Niger	51,291,542	685,411	0	3,296,830	55,273,783
Nigeria	4,997,397	0	15,120,652	26,474,095	46,592,144
Senegal Regional Office	26,438,183	2,107,714	0	0	28,545,896
Total	147,827,470	8,589,984	54,138,302	30,989,678	241,545,433