



# STRATEGY REPORT

**Cote d'Ivoire Multi-Country Office**

**Multi-year  
2024-2026**

## Executive Summary

The countries covered by the Côte d' Ivoire Multi-Country Office (hereafter MCO CIV), namely Côte d' Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Liberia and Togo continue to be impacted by the worsening of the situation in the Sahel, mainly in Mali and Burkina Faso, leading to a significant influx of refugees fleeing violence and armed conflict. The security situation in Burkina Faso has deteriorated significantly, with an increase in attacks by non-state armed groups and an intensification of the military response. As a result, the conflict is spreading southward towards bordering countries, including Benin, Côte d' Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, further exacerbating the existing food crisis. Despite the relatively stable internal situation, security at borders areas remains highly volatile. Refugees are arriving in areas where the presence of relevant government and humanitarian actors is very limited or non-existent.

Despite the overall favourable protection environment, UNHCR is urged to strengthen its presence in the coastal countries, particularly in the areas where refugees are arriving, to ensure the provision of protection services and life-saving humanitarian assistance. UNHCR will continue to support the authorities providing technical expertise on international protection and support to enhance information management capacity to contribute to the effective overall management of the emergency. UNCHR will focus on providing multi-sectoral assistance to those most in need. The organization will provide guidance on refugee rights and international protection principles to all actors involved in reception, registration, provision of assistance and coordination. Effective protection mechanisms addressing the specific needs of forcibly displaced persons, including those with specific need, such as women at risk, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), unaccompanied and separated children, elderly, will be strengthened, and the partnership with government institutions and non-governmental organization NGOs working in the affected areas will be enhanced.

UNHCR will continue to provide technical advice to Governments to strengthen the legal framework in the areas of asylum and statelessness. Regular capacity-building will be provided to the relevant central and local authorities and ministries. Support will be provided to specific Governments' bodies responsible for refugee status and stateless determination, particularly in in Benin and Cote d'Ivoire.

Advocacy will ensure the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless populations in national and development programs, promoting their access to vocational training opportunities, and pursuing equitable access to tertiary education under the same conditions of nationals, will continue, in line with the Governments commitments to the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

With regards to statelessness, the organization will continue to support Governments in the implementation the existing National Plan of Action on the Eradication of

Statelessness where applicable, and in strengthening the Governments' leadership on finding solutions for stateless persons. The prevention of statelessness will be achieved through supporting legal reforms and the strengthening civil registration systems. Relevant advocacy activities will be undertaken for the accession of Ghana to the Statelessness Conventions.

## **Situational Analysis**

All countries covered by the MCO CIV have similarities. They are all coastal countries and all share borders with countries in the Sahel. For the past three years, all of them, except for Liberia, have experienced incursions by non-state armed groups into their northern borders, especially with Burkina Faso. This has led to the forced displacement of populations in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Liberia. To date, countries covered by MCO CIV include forcibly displaced persons (newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers, long-staying refugees or protracted cases, and internally displaced persons) and stateless persons.

In responding to the large influx of refugees fleeing the ongoing violence in the Sahel, all stakeholders involved in the reception and assistance should be familiar with the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees. These include the right to seek asylum, the right to non-discrimination, the right to freedom of movement, the right to access education and health care, and the right to work, among others. It is essential to ensure that these rights are respected and upheld in all aspects of the reception process, including registration, documentation and accommodation provision, and access to services. UNHCR will continue to advocate for access to territory to continue to be guaranteed and will offer its technical expertise to all the Governments in order to ensure the civilian character of asylum, as well as the respect of the principle of non-refoulement, and the non criminalization of irregular entry.

Efforts will be made to provide refugees and asylum seekers with comprehensive and accurate information on their rights, and on the procedures for seeking asylum and accessing available services. It is also essential to ensure that new arrivals have access to clean water, adequate sanitation facilities, primary health care services, nutritional support, education services, and adequate shelter. The specific needs and vulnerabilities of the refugees, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), unaccompanied minors, and persons living with disabilities, must be addressed through the provision of protection services and psychosocial support. This requires a coordinated and multisectoral approach by all stakeholders, with a focus on meeting the immediate needs of refugees and working on strengthening existing infrastructure and service delivery systems for long-term sustainability. UNHCR will continue to provide cash-based assistance to persons with specific needs and to offer its expertise

and support to the Government in all matters related to WASH, shelter and camp management.

In order to ensure an adequate and timely protection response the presence of government institutions and humanitarian actors in areas of arrival and settlement of forcibly displaced populations is crucial. In this context, UNHCR has reinforced its presence in Ferkessédougou and Bouna North Côte d' Ivoire, in Wa and Bolgatanga, North Ghana and Dapaong, North Togo.

As the influx of refugees from Sahel countries will put a strain on local infrastructure, resources and economic systems in border areas, thus it is essential that the UNHCR works with the Governments and other UN agencies to ensure to promote peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities, and ensure that all interventions benefit the host communities, and all have access to basic services.

Regarding the urban refugees and their access to rights, they may face barriers in accessing employment, administrative and financial services, as administrative staff knowledge of the nature and validity of refugees' documents should be enhanced. Thus, UNHCR continues to advocate for the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in all development programs at the national level, and to identify and support all initiatives aimed at facilitating their access to education, vocational training, credit, and employment opportunities.

The organization will continue to support the Governments in improving their legal frameworks on asylum and statelessness and supporting the status determination procedures as needed. UNHCR will also continue to support the identification of solutions for stateless persons and for those at risk of statelessness, including through advocacy for specific legislation to facilitate access to nationality for stateless persons in Cote d' Ivoire.

Stateless persons and persons of undetermined nationality face significant obstacles to their freedom of movement, access to education and health services, and are vulnerable to exploitation. Statelessness can lead to exclusion from the socio-economic life of the country, making it a critical development issue. As a result, of marginalization, affected individuals may resort to identity fraud to access services or livelihood opportunities. There is a need to improving the public perception of statelessness and promote its understanding as a human rights issue, in line with a communication strategy jointly developed by UNHCR, the government and all stakeholders involved.

UNHCR will continue to identify and implement durable solutions for protracted refugee populations, including resettlement, despite a limited available quota, as well as through voluntary return and local integration. Local integration of refugees has been underway for years in most contexts, with strategies and roadmaps discussed,

agreed upon, and partially implemented. However, most refugees remain in protracted situations. In positive legal and political protection environment, structural impediments need to be overcome to reach solutions.

## **Vision and Strategic Priorities**

The protection of and solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons in countries under the purview of the MCO CIV remains challenging with a volatile political and security environment, insufficient resources, a normative framework inadequate or not in line with international standards, limited implementation of existing legislation in certain cases.

In line with the national, sub-regional and international legal instruments and frameworks, such as the National Development Plans; the Abidjan Declaration of the Economic Community of West African States on Statelessness; the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; the Global Compact for Refugees; and other relevant international conventions on forcibly displaced and stateless persons; as well as taking into account the impact of the security crisis in the Sahel region on the coastal countries, UNHCR's strategic vision is to ensure that forcibly displaced and stateless persons enjoy their rights, live in dignity and achieve durable solutions.

UNHCR's key strategic priorities are the following:

1. In response to the Sahel emergency, UNHCR will, in cooperation with Governments, enhance its footprint in the affected countries, and provide protection services and life-saving humanitarian assistance. Where possible, UNHCR will enhance border and protection monitoring; support the registration of new arrivals; provide shelter; support the implementation of community-based interventions aiming at strengthening existing basic services.
2. Contribute to the establishment of a robust protection environment, encompassing a strong legal framework in line with international standards, ensuring access to legal documentation for forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and a fair, efficient, and sustainable status determination system.
3. Enhance identification of stateless populations, implementation of solutions for known existing stateless populations.
4. Contribute to the self-reliance, socio-economic resilience, and inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons by facilitating access to income-generating activities, vocational training, and to employment opportunities.
5. Identify and implement durable solutions for refugees in protracted situations.

## **Age, Gender and Diversity**

All programmes related to the influx of refugees in the north, must be inclusive and take into consideration the principles of age, gender, and diversity (AGD) from the outset. This is particularly important in relation to the current influx resulting from the Sahel crisis, considering that women and children make up 55% of the forcibly displaced population, and thus the need to address their concerns. Given the observed trend of men returning to their country of origin to work on the land at certain periods of the year, it is essential to provide a source of income for women remaining in the host country to prevent exploitation.

Livelihood activities will be implemented to reduce the vulnerability of women, as there is a risk that boys and girls may be forced to engage in hazardous work that interferes with their education or is harmful to their health and development. They may also be exposed to various forms of violence. Additionally, only a small minority of children from the new arrivals have enrolled in the two schools available at the location, and the capacity to accommodate new students is exhausted. Therefore, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Coalition 3 on Access to Education will be used to ensure that all children, especially vulnerable children, have access to education. In all interventions, UNHCR will prioritize persons with specific needs, including the elderly.

For long-staying refugees, participatory assessments through refugee leaders and community-based organizations will continue to inform the dialogue, as well as regular exchanges and routine home visits. Information and awareness -raising on statelessness will be tailored and continuously refined to ensure the understanding of all categories of persons at risk of statelessness, and to enable them to self-identify or be identified, with particular attention on those with specific needs. In Cote d' Ivoire, UNHCR, through its implementing partners, will continue to provide legal assistance to vulnerable persons at risk of statelessness with a particular focus on abandoned children. This is particularly important considering the recent change in government policy, which since 2019 allows for Ivorian nationality to be attributed even in cases where the parents' proof of nationality is absent.

## **Impact Statement**

**By 2026, forcibly displaced and stateless persons enjoy their rights.**

*Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments*

## **Outcome Statements**

**By 2026, all asylum seekers have access to territory**

*Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation*

**By 2026, harmonized and efficient registration systems is in place for new arrival**

*Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation*

**By 2026, an increased number of forcibly displaced persons and stateless persons have access to legal documentation**

*Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation*

**By 2026, all forcibly displaced persons and stateless persons have access to fair and efficient status determination procedure**

*Outcome area: Refugee status determination*

**By 2026, Protection mechanisms are in place and available to forcibly displaced persons**

*Outcome area: Protection policy and law*

**By 2026, all forcibly displaced persons receive multisectoral assistance and have access to basic services**

*Outcome area: Well-being and basic needs*

## **Impact Statement**

**By 2026, forcibly displaced and stateless persons are self-sufficient and resilient**

*Impact area: Empowering communities and achieving gender equality*

## **Outcome Statement**

**By 2026 the socioeconomic self-reliance of forcibly displaced and stateless persons is increased**

*Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods*

## **Impact Statement**

**By 2026, forcibly displaced and stateless persons achieve durable solutions**

*Impact area: Securing solutions*

## **Outcome Statements**

**By 2026, effectively legal reforms are in place to establish simplified procedure to confirm nationality**

*Outcome area: Protection policy and law*

**By 2026, forcibly displaced persons have access to voluntary return**

*Outcome area: Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration*

**By 2026, vulnerable refugees have access to solution in a third country**

*Outcome area: Resettlement and complementary pathways*

**By 2026, naturalisation is facilitated for refugees and stateless persons**

*Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions*