

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE 68

1 – 31 May 2016

KEY FIGURES

467,796

Central African refugees in
Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Congo

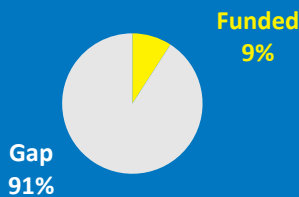
12%

IDPs in CAR living in the capital,
Bangui (sites and host families)

FUNDING

USD 225.5 million

required for the situation in 2016



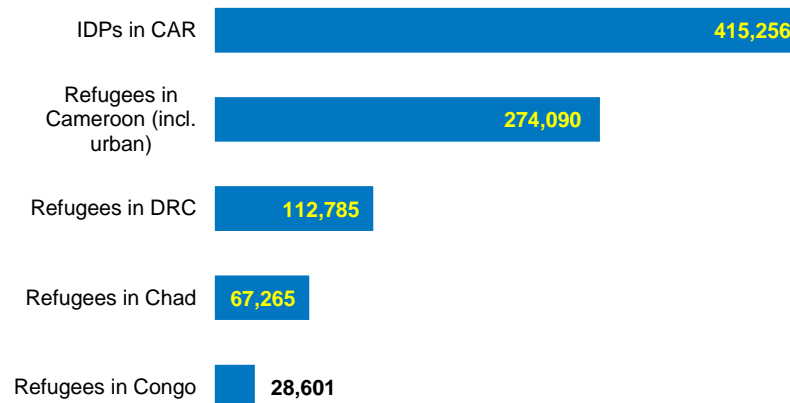
PRIORITIES

- **CAR:** Establish the working group on Return and Durable Solutions; sensitize authorities in Nana Mambéré and Mambéré Kadei Prefectures on return and related issues (housing, land and property rights; social cohesion)
- **Cameroon:** Continue biometric registration in the East region; strengthen the WASH response in all refugee sites.
- **Chad:** Pursue advocacy efforts to improve refugees' access to arable land; promote and strengthen refugees' self-reliance
- **DRC:** Continue the biometric registration in camps; strengthen shelter response.
- **RoC:** Strengthen education assistance, including secondary education and vocational

HIGHLIGHTS

- Population displacements in the **Central African Republic** are characterised by pendulum movements with a combination of IDP/refugee returns and sporadic displacement inside and outside of the country;
- In **Chad**, UNHCR signed partnership agreements with five local government departments as a way to scale up efforts to improve refugees' living conditions and self-reliance in the areas of agriculture, livestock, environment and fishery;
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, preliminary results of the biometric registration show a reduction of the camp population hosting Central African refugees by 22 per cent;
- Deterioration of the sexual health conditions in the **Republic of the Congo**, including an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, caused some Central African girls to engage in transactional sex to cover their basic needs;
- UNHCR operations in CAR and the sub-region continue to face a **lack resources** to address the urgent needs of vulnerable people of concern, with an overall funding gap of 91 per cent.

897,997 persons of concern



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

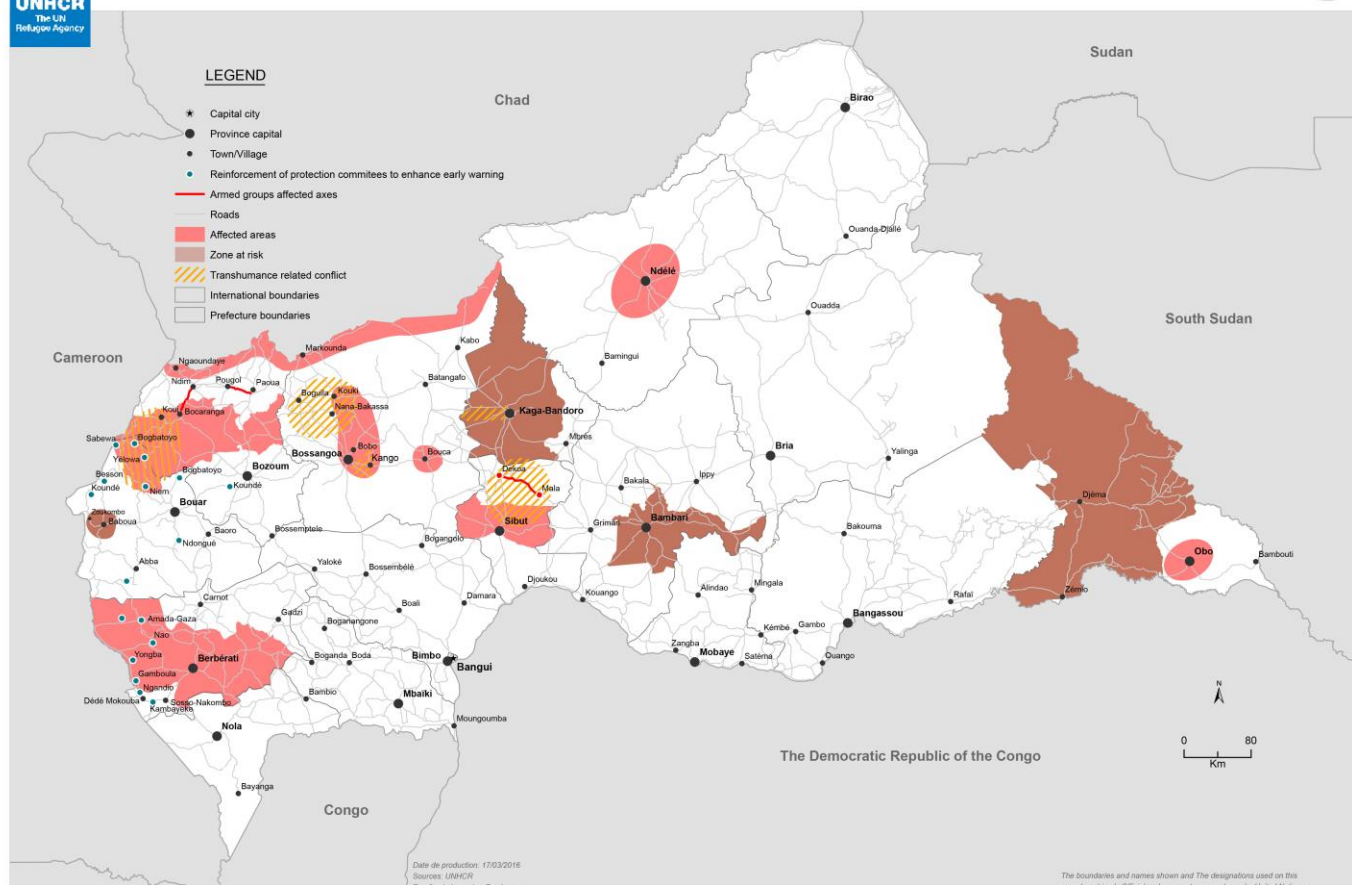
Operational Context

Persistent presence of armed groups in CAR continues to cause civilian population to live in constant fear of attacks

- The humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in the sub-region continues to be of concern, presenting multifaceted challenges, while nearly one quarter of the CAR population remains displaced with some 415,000 still internally displaced (IDPs) and some 467,700 refugees living in a prolonged exile in neighbouring countries. Displacement figures remain relatively stable when compared to last month. According to the latest figures available, 43 per cent of IDPs live in 99 IDP sites in Bangui and in the Prefectures and 56 per cent with host families. The Prefectures of Ouham and Ouaka as well as Bangui and the suburban area of Bimbo are hosting 50 per cent of the overall number of IDPs in CAR. In addition, Central Africans represent the largest refugee group in Cameroon and constitute around 25 per cent of the people having sought refuge in Chad. CAR remains one of the world's most serious protection and displacement crises.
- Armed groups continue to maintain a hold on large areas of CAR and disarmament is lagging – only a small minority of armed groups have handed in their weapons in a pre-disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme. Clashes between farmers and herders remain a major source of insecurity and instability. In Ouham Prefecture, conflicts between armed groups and intercommunity clashes have led to the displacement of 30,500 people in the Batangafo IDP site, the second biggest site in the country, according to the Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM) Cluster led by UNHCR. As Ouham Prefecture is located along the transhumance corridor, cases of cattle theft and the destruction of farms are often reported. This obstructs stability, hindering voluntary returns as it creates an environment of mistrust within communities.



Hotspots in the Central African Republic as of May 2016



Refugee and internally displaced families are returning although challenges remain in many areas

- As social cohesion has become ever more important in CAR, the country has witnessed an increase in the number and scope of initiatives that encourage IDP and refugee returns. In that sense, they have started to go back to their areas of origin, with some 6,600 spontaneous refugee returns, mainly from Cameroon, Chad, and DRC, registered by UNHCR since the start of the year and some 17,500 IDP returns witnessed in the western and central part of CAR. Although community-based

assistance is being extended to those families that exercise their right to repatriate, in line with the guidance note developed by UNHCR and UNDP and endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team in April, 2016, UNHCR does not promote the return of refugees given the current security conditions.

- In many areas of return of the country, security conditions are not met as there are no solid, sustainable mechanisms put in place to mitigate risks faced by returning refugees, including guarantees of the rule of law. For instance, in Bossangoa, the capital of Ouham Prefecture in north-western CAR, continuous inter-community tensions makes return impossible for now. In the western region, several houses belonging to Muslims have been occupied or destroyed. Buying houses and land in the provinces is often informal, normally validated by local chiefs and sometimes the mayor, without official documentation or registration. In Gamboula, Mambéré Kadei province, traders decided to oppose the return of Muslim traders in their locality as well.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Achievements and Impact

- In Berberati and Ngaoundaye sub-Prefectures, hosting ‘communities at risk’ composed predominantly of Muslims, UNHCR protection monitors reported that spontaneous Muslim returnees are victims of harassment, physical violence, looting and threats from the predominantly Christian anti-Balaka armed faction. On 20 May, anti-Balaka elements reportedly killed the muezzin of Berberati’s mosque to show their disapproval regarding the return movement. The Muslim population in Berberati is confined in two circumscribed neighbourhoods of the town with limited movements, while their return was very much motivated by the resumption of mining activities. On 28 May, four Muslim civilians were killed in Ngaoundaye sub-Prefecture by armed groups opposing their return to their area of origin. These clashes may revive communal tensions and lead to further displacement.
- Thus far, 100 local authorities and more than 3,400 IDPs were trained and sensitized on housing, land and property rights in the main return areas identified covering Bangui and the Prefectures of Nana Mambéré, Mambéré Kadei, Ouham Pendé, Ouham, and Nana Gribizi. In Nana Mambéré, following the session held by the provincial committee on Housing, Land and Property Rights on 20 April, 2016, local and administrative authorities started the identification of properties that were destroyed or illegally occupied. The committee will share the outcomes of this process with UNHCR and its partner the Norwegian Refugee Council, who support activities promoted by the committee.
- From January to May 2016, UNHCR and its NGO partners Mercy Corps, the Danish Refugee Council, INTERSOS and COOPI have identified 770 survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in six Prefectures (Nana Mambéré, Mambéré Kadei, Nana Gribizi, Ouham Pendé, Kemo and Ouaka). Findings indicated that 85 per cent of SGBV survivors were women and girls whilst 47 per cent of the alleged perpetrators were armed groups and militia men; 40 per cent were survivors of psychological violence, 29 per cent of physical violence and 18 per cent of rape. Kaga Bandoro sub-Prefecture requires particular attention and follow-up work with 66 per cent of identified rape cases perpetrated in their vast majority by armed groups. SGBV cases identified received psychological support as well as medical referrals when necessary from UNHCR partners. In addition, with technical support of the provincial health district, UNHCR’s partner Mercy Corps conducted a capacity-building training to ensure that adequate care and services be given to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The training targeted some 30 healthcare institutions and providers in the sub-Prefectures of Gamboula, Dédé Mokouba, Amada Gaza and Berberati sub prefectures in Mambéré Kadei Prefecture.
- A campaign on peace and unity was launched in Bangui (see poster inset) by UNHCR in partnership with *Afrique Secours et Assistance* (ASA) and the Central African communicator’s platform “Kalangba ti siriri” and composed of journalists and bloggers. Since 2014, UNHCR has been partnering with ASA to promote social cohesion and a culture of peace through the restoration of state authorities at local level. This year, the partnership has been focusing more in supporting the government to institutionalize traditional authority, as part of the state administrative system, to strengthen community leaders’ capacities and develop locally-based economic initiatives.



CAMEROON

Achievements and Impact

- Following an influx of Central Africans late April resulting from violent confrontations that erupted in the north-western part of CAR, UNHCR transferred 169 refugees from the border village of Yamba to the refugee site of Ngam in the Adamaoua region. This group of refugees is amongst the 716 individuals who arrived at Yamba between 24 April and 5 May.
- UNHCR continued conducting biometric registration on the refugee site of Timangolo in the eastern region where 3,246 refugees were verified. Since the beginning of this year, nearly 61,000 refugees were verified in Yaoundé, Douala, Gado, Borgop and Ngam. The exercise will be extended in Lolo and Ngarissingo.
- UNHCR's partner NGO International Medical Corps (IMC) continued its activities on sites in the region of Kadey, including the identification of SGBV cases, support for survivors, sensitization activities, case management and advocacy. Recurring types of cases of gender-based violence included denial of resources, psychological and physical violence, forced early marriage and rape. Survivors benefited from counselling, social mediation and psychological support. In Meiganga, trainings sessions on the prevention of SGBV were ongoing in Gado, Djohong, Mbaiboum, Dompla and Djom. A total of 1,157 persons (328 men, 383 women, 211 boys and 235 girls) were sensitized.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Achievements and Impact

- The biometric registration of CAR refugees was completed in Bili, Inke and Boyabu camps, where 7,852, 14,002, and 16,872 refugees were verified, and initial results indicate a 22 per cent reduction in the camp population when compared to previous figures. In Mole camp, the registration started on 17 May and is still ongoing. A survey to assess refugees' intention to return their country of origin will be carried out following the completion of the biometric registration.
- A training on Child Best Interest Determination was conducted in Inke camp on 24-25 May in which 31 persons participated, including representatives from the refugee community, partners, and government authorities involved in child protection activities. In addition, 118 SGBV cases were reported during the month, including 109 cases of sexual aggression and rape, nine of them showed signs of post-traumatic symptoms. Survivors received psychological support and complementary assistance.

Education

CAMEROON

- **Achievements and Impact.** A consultation workshop was held at Djohong on 12 May 2016 with the host community concerning the establishment of a community preschool. Participants included the divisional officer for Djohong, Lamido, community leaders, teachers in kindergartens and schools. Participants were all in favour of establishing a community preschool. In addition, 147 solar lamps were distributed to primary school students in Meiganga subdivisions and 252 to primary school students and teachers of Touboro in the North Region. The seventy-four best Cameroonian students (42 boys and 32 girls) and 40 teachers also received a solar lamp each in the Touboro. Furthermore, UNHCR's partner IMC distributed pens, books and solar lamps to 105 children there (57 girls and 48 boys).

Health

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** Malaria, intestinal infections and chronic diseases continued to be the most recurrent pathologies in refugee camps hosting Central Africans, the incidence of Malaria being 40 per cent among the refugee population. In Inke camp in particular, an increase of 30 per cent in the number of Malaria cases was reported during the last week of May. UNHCR's partner *Association pour le Développement Economique* (ADES) conducted further health sensitisation to limit the spread of the disease. Furthermore, condom distribution and further HIV sensitisation activities conducted in May in the refugee camp



Refugees gathering at the water distribution point of Bili camp, Nord Ubangi Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. © UNHCR / F.Salvi

of Mboti reached 230 refugees, including 80 men and 150 women, whilst weekly sensitization activities and health assistance were carried out throughout the period for persons with specific needs (PBS).

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** The sexual health conditions of CAR refugees has deteriorated as UNHCR faces a critical funding situation which limits its capacity to respond to actual needs. In Bétou, condoms and delivery kits are lacking. In Impfondo, several drugs are lacking or have expired. In the area of Moualé, a significant number of women are engaging in survival sex because of the daily challenges they are facing, whilst the number of pregnant teenagers is growing.



Water and Sanitation

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** Two water wells are being built in Ikpengbéle and another two at the *15 Avril* site. In addition, four blocks of latrines, two cabins and four blocks of showers were completed in the *15 Avril* site. That said, the lack of latrines and showers as a result of funding shortfalls has prompted refugees to start building their own makeshift latrines and showers in the *15 Avril* site. Whilst this new development may have negative consequences on the overall health situation in the refugee site, UNHCR is conducting awareness sessions to avoid any possible deterioration.
- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** In Ikpengbéle, hosting more than 2,000 Central Africans, refugees have been facing challenges to access potable water because of the low water table. The static level of the water table does not enable digging pits latrines beyond three meters especially in the rainy season given that tanks are flooded in high water season.



Food Security and Nutrition

CAMEROON

- **Achievements and Impact.** As part of nutrition programmes implemented in refugee sites and hosting villages, more than 145 awareness-raising sensitization sessions on best nutrition practices for children under six months and pregnant and breast-feeding women were carried out during the month reached more than 4,500 Central Africans.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** A UNHCR-WFP joint assessment mission (JAM) started in Likouala Department in the northern part of the country where close to 19,000 Central African refugees are hosted in camp and out-of-camp settings. The objective of this assessment is to analyse the food and nutrition situation of refugees, appraise the impact and appropriateness of current assistance programmes, assess the coexistence between refugees and the host population and identify unmet needs. Ultimately, the outcome is to develop a joint plan of action.



Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFIs) and Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Achievements and Impact

- Following the recent displacement of more than 16,000 people to Bocaranga, Bouar, UNHCR's NGO partner Mercy Corps undertook an emergency distribution of non-food items to internally displaced people (IDPs) in the town of Bouar, reaching some 660 IDPs living in host families. The distribution was supplemented with WFP's food rations.
- UNHCR established a partnership with the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and the Lutheran World Foundation (LWF) for the reconstruction of 1,600 houses targeting vulnerable returned households in Ouham Pendé, Nana



Distribution of NFIs in Zo Kwe Zo neighbourhood in the town of Bouar, Central African Republic © Mercy Corps

Mambéré and Mambéré Kadei Prefectures in addition to Bangui. Thus far, ACTED and LWF were able to identify 616 beneficiary households while the identification process is ongoing in the Boeing neighbourhood of Bangui, an area of former residence of many IDPs in Mpoko Airport site.

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** In response to the heavy rain that destroyed the roofs of refugees' shelters in the host village of Dembo, southern Chad, UNHCR distributed 200 pieces of plastic sheeting to 200 households including 145 refugee households and 55 host community households. Nearly 2,500 refugees have settled in Dembo village since 2014, where they live among the host community. The distribution of the plastic sheeting to members of the host community aims at strengthening the peaceful coexistence between the two communities.



Community Empowerment & Self-Reliance

CHAD

Achievements and Impact

- As part of joint efforts carried out with the government of Chad in the search for sustainable and appropriate responses to the needs of CAR refugees, UNHCR Sub-Office in Gore signed five memorandums of understanding with local government entities. Building on these entities' expertise and knowledge, the aim is to improve the refugees' living conditions and strengthen their capacities in the areas of agriculture, livestock, environment and fishery.
- On 11 May, UNHCR inaugurated a computer training centre in Maro, an area located in southern Chad at the border with CAR. The centre, serving as an Internet Café, is accessible to refugees, returnees and members of host communities. A first batch of 40 young students enrolled in a tertiary education programme were selected, among which 24 refugees, 12 from the local population and four from the returnee community, to improve their computer skills. A similar centre is under construction in Gore.
- On 12 and 13 May, UNHCR's NGO partner for the promotion of livelihood activities in Haraze, CARE International, organized this year's second edition of the beef cattle fair in Moyo refugee camp. This initiative facilitates the purchase of cattle by the beneficiaries, including refugees and members of the host community, and enrolment in self-reliance programmes funded by UNHCR. Therefore, this activity is a vector for improving peaceful coexistence and social cohesion between refugees and the Chadian host population. As refugees are allowed to participate in the cattle price negotiations, it also strengthens their role in decision-making processes. In the fair, a total of 110 oxen were bought and distributed to beneficiaries, including 80 heads to 40 refugees from Moyo camp and 30 others to Chadians settled in surrounding villages.
- As a way to improve refugees' cooking conditions, UNHCR's NGO partner LWF, distributed improved metal stoves to 190 households in Moyo camp, adding to the 570 beneficiary households. The distribution will be pursued to reach the plan target of 700 households. In Belom camp, 700 improved stoves were distributed to refugee households and a sensitization session on the rational management of wood and the importance of the use of improved stoves was conducted by LWF. In Moyo village, 500 persons with specific needs, including 417 women and 83 men, received assistance consisting of 1,000 goats and 1,000 poultry as part of the income-generating activities.



Durable Solutions

CHAD

- **Achievement and impact.** In Moyo camp, located in southern Chad, despite the closure of the border with CAR, 20 refugee households of 88 individuals have spontaneously returned to CAR in May. In other camps, those who wish to repatriate are individually registered by UNHCR's government partner *Commission Nationale d'Accueil pour la Réinsertion des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés* (CNARR) in order for them to be considered in priority once the border is opened. In Gore, a hundred refugees have already been registered for repatriation.

CAMEROON

- **Achievement and impact.** UNHCR in Yaoundé facilitated the voluntary repatriation of one individual from the Central African Republic to Bangui. UNHCR continues to receive voluntary repatriation requests. Furthermore, a mission to Meiganga and Batouri was undertaken from 30 May to 3 June 2016 to follow up on the progress of resettlement activities. In a bid to improve resettlement case identification, UNHCR held various meetings with field protection staff and partners to discuss protection issues faced by refugees in the sites. Emphasis was laid on the need to refer vulnerable and protection cases to the respective UNHCR units for further assessment and search for alternative remedies including durable solutions.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's total financial requirements for the Central African Republic Situation, involving operations in CAR and neighbouring countries (Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo) amount to **USD 225.5 million from January to December 2016**, including USD 189.5 million for the response in asylum countries. As at the end of May 2016, **the overall funding gap is USD 204.9 million (91 per cent)**.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERFUNDING

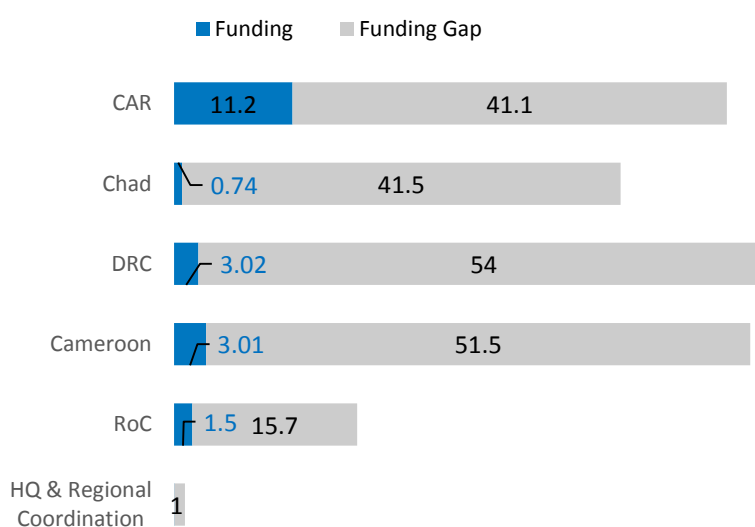
Despite unprecedented donor generosity on many fronts, the sheer magnitude of needs in CAR and the sub-region has resulted in a very large gap between needs and resources. Without additional donor contributions, UNHCR will be required to further limit the number of people supported and the quality of protection and humanitarian assistance provided to families affected by the crisis. In Cameroon for example, available funding has allowed UNHCR to support only 35,000 school-aged children while the needs are actually up to 55,000. Lack of resources has also limited the health and water & sanitation response, a situation that has led to a prevalence of acute malnutrition of 9.6 per cent among the refugee population hosted in sites. This figure is just under the 'serious' threshold established by the World Health Organisation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while WFP food assistance in camps has been reduced to 80 per cent since December 2015, UNHCR has been supporting Central African refugee 'self-sufficiency, especially in the area of agriculture. However, funding available is not sufficient to scale up such activities. Furthermore, shelter needs have become even more acute since heavy rains destroyed earlier this year 1,800 family shelters in the camps. UNHCR can only tackle this at a limited scale due to underfunding. This year, 1,190 households in need will not receive support to build or rehabilitate their shelter.

Donors who have contributed to the situation in 2016 include:

- DRC Pooled Fund
- European Union
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Holy See
- Japan
- Private donors (Australia, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy)
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- UN Development Programme
- United States of America

Funding (USD million):

A total of **USD 20.6 million** has been funded



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Links: [UNHCR Webportal](#) | [UNHCR Stories of Refugees and Aid Workers](#) | [UNHCR Voices of Refugees in West and Central Africa](#)