



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# 2023 UNHCR STANDBY PARTNERSHIPS **REPORT**





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CHAD Refugees from Sudan fleeing conflict continue to arrive September, 2023.  
© UNHCR/HADJA LALLA SY

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CHAD UNHCR DESS Director Shoko Shimozawa converses with colleagues in Chad during her mission last October 2023. Also pictured is Mr. Mahamat Ahmat Adoum, Head of Office of CNAAR (Commission Nationale d'accueil de Réinsertion des Réfugiés).

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# Foreword from UNHCR DESS Director Shoko Shimozawa

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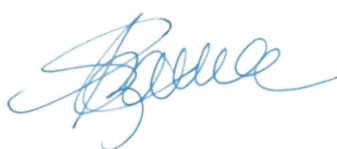
Dear Partners,

2023 was another challenging year of record displacement with 114 million refugees and displaced people. UNHCR declared 43 emergencies in 29 countries during the year, a 23% increase compared to the 35 emergencies declared in 2022. UNHCR and its partners swiftly responded with emergency deployments to protect those who had been forced to flee and to meet the most life-saving needs with registration, cash assistance, basic goods, shelter and food.

UNHCR is committed to strengthening its “right people, in the right place, at the right time” approach. UNHCR’s standby partners, through their expert deployments and service package support, immensely contribute to the emergency response in places such as Chad, Ethiopia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and Ukraine. In 2023, UNHCR benefited from more than 200 expert deployments provided by 11 standby partners, marking the highest deployment contribution by partners. UNHCR continues to further partnerships and has recently concluded an agreement with CISCO Crisis Response, as UNHCR’s 21st standby partner.

Last October, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the commendable work carried out by one of our standby partners in Farchana, at the border of Adré in eastern Chad. To respond to the Sudan emergency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) created base camps in the field and removed the commuting time for UNHCR and its partners, ensuring the work could be done even when the rainy season arrived. This is just one of many examples that illustrate the critical contribution our standby partners provide in emergencies.

Given the deteriorating humanitarian situations worldwide and the growing impact of climate change, which lead to new displacement, these partnerships are more important than ever. We express our sincere gratitude for your commitment, collaboration and partnership.



**Shoko Shimozawa,**

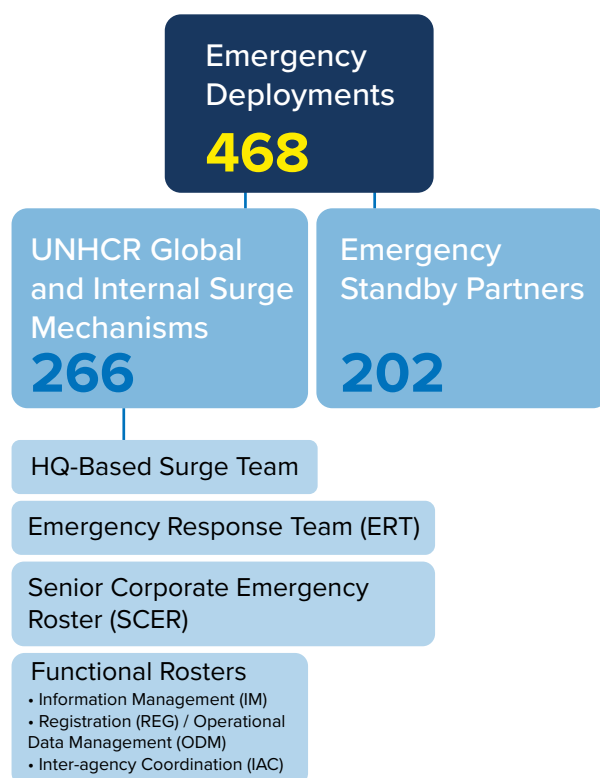
Director, Division of Emergency, Security and Supply  
UNHCR

# Emergency deployment mechanisms

UNHCR applies a two-pronged approach for deployments to emergencies: 1. Robust global and internal surge mechanisms, including a permanent surge team based at headquarters, an Emergency Response Team (ERT), a Senior Corporate Emergency Roster (SCER), and three functional rosters, including Information Management, Registration and Inter-Agency Coordination; 2. Twenty-one Emergency Standby Partnerships with surge capacity to deploy technical and specialized experts. These are complemented by regional mechanisms.

UNHCR’s internal roster mechanisms enable the organization to maintain between 100 and 150 active roster members at any given time for eventual emergency deployments of up to three months. In 2023, six in-person Workshops on Emergency Management (WEM) were organized through which some 240 new ERT roster members were trained. Four WEMs were conducted at the UNHRD (United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) in Brindisi, Italy and two more were held in Germany and Norway, hosted by the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief and the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection, respectively.

Additionally, 130 staff joined the other emergency rosters in 2023, namely the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster (SCER) and the three functional rosters. During the year, all emergency roster members were trained in UNHCR’s new [Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#).



# UNHCR emergency standby partnerships

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UNHCR draws on its twenty-one Emergency Standby Partnerships to deploy experts, primarily to emergencies, but also to fill gaps in technical expertise or support strategic areas. Standby partners also deliver service packages to ensure infrastructure, such as base camps and connectivity, is in place to allow UNHCR to operate and deliver in emergencies. In 2023, 47% of all deployments to UNHCR\* were for emergencies, 9% were service packages, 30% were to support strategic priorities and 14% were for gaps in technical expertise.

In 2023, UNHCR facilitated 202 deployments totaling 35,214 working days, equivalent to

more than 1,170 months, from 11 emergency standby partners. These deployments supported 38 country operations, representing a 4% increase from the previous year. Of these deployments, 36 were carried out with cost-sharing agreements between UNHCR operations and standby partners.

UNHCR engaged with standby partners bilaterally, through regular dialogue on priorities and urgent deployment needs. It also remained actively engaged in the Standby Partnership Network, as a member of the Steering Committee during 2023, and as a partner to the International Humanitarian Partnerships.

## DEPLOYMENT OF EXPERTS

NORCAP, MSB, CANADEM and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) remained the largest contributors of deployments both in number and fully funded workdays during 2023.

Shelter/site planning and information management were the most frequently

deployed profiles, followed by protection, inter-agency coordination and energy and environment. The deployments for energy and environment increased in 2023 by almost 19%, with 19 experts supporting UNHCR operations during the year.

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\* Including those shorter than 3 months.

## Energy and environment

In 2023, stand-by partners continued to deploy experts who provided essential technical support in energy and environment. During the year, 19 experts deployed by NORCAP (14), SDC (2), CANADEM (2) and MSB (1) supported UNHCR. Four of the deployments were based at headquarters providing technical support to various operations, the remainder were deployed to: Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

## Global operational support

The Geneva Technical Hub (GTH) was officially launched in June 2021 under UNHCR's Division of Resilience and Solutions, Technical Support Section (TSS). The GTH consists of

eight Swiss technical experts with diverse experience in humanitarian relief, academic research, and within the development and private sectors.

The GTH experts are SDC deployees located in Switzerland who work to enhance the quality of technical programming in advanced settlement planning, particularly in hydro-geology, water system optimization and sanitation; shelter and housing; and renewable energy.

In 2023, there were 30 deployments from SDC, CANADEM, iMMAP Inc. and NORCAP to headquarter divisions, including the Divisions of: External Relations, Financial and Administrative Management, International Protection, and Resilience and Solutions. Through these deployments, standby partners reinforce implementation and coordination in UNHCR-led clusters, sectors and operations across the world.

## SERVICE PACKAGES

Emergency standby partners delivered five service packages to UNHCR operations during 2023. MSB implemented base camps for the response to the earthquake in Türkiye, to the Sudan crisis in Chad and the influx of refugees from Somalia into Ethiopia. It also mobilized the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge through the European Humanitarian Response Capacity for the Chad response. Connectivity packages were delivered by Ericsson Response to Tongogara in Zimbabwe and to Bokh in Ethiopia to support the response for the influx of refugees from Somalia.

UNHCR continued to engage with private sector partners to strengthen its emergency capacity. In 2023, Ericsson Response deployed information and communication services and capacity modules to support UNHCR's work twice. During 2023, the development of a new emergency response standby agreement with CISCO Crisis Response Inc. was initiated and was concluded in 2024. CISCO Crisis Response Inc. supported UNHCR in 2022 through a joint connectivity project with MSB and Ericsson Response in Colombia.



# Year in review: standby partner deployments in 2023

## OVERVIEW

**\$14.6**  
MILLION TOTAL  
IN-KIND SUPPORT  
FROM PARTNERS

This number represents all deployments that were at least three months long. It does not include the deployments that were less than three months long.

**202** EMERGENCY STANDBY  
PARTNER DEPLOYMENTS  
FACILITATED BY UNHCR

**38** COUNTRY OPERATIONS  
SUPPORTED BY STANDBY PARTNERS

**100**  
DEPLOYMENTS  
WHICH BEGAN  
BEFORE 2023

**102** NEW  
DEPLOYMENTS  
IN 2023

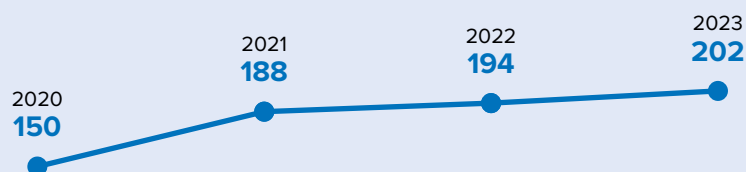
### On emergency declarations

In 2023, UNHCR declared 43 emergencies in 29 unique countries. In May 2023 alone, there were 15 emergency declarations for countries including Bangladesh, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan.

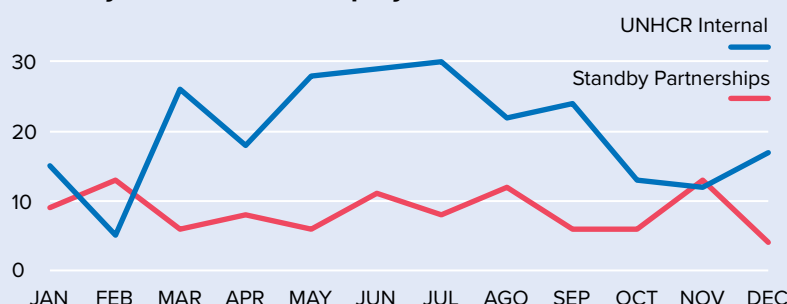
### Types of operations by deployments 2023



### Trend of standby partner deployments between 2020-2023



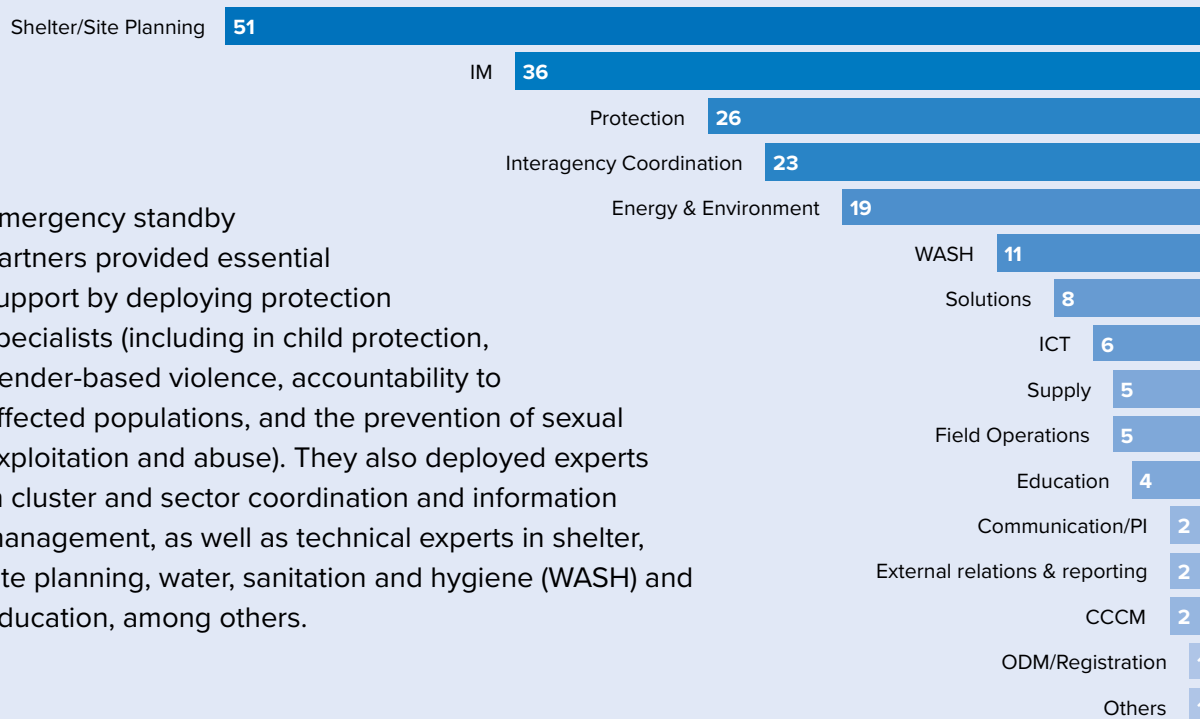
### Monthly trends of new deployments in 2023



# Year in review: standby partner deployments in 2023

## JOB PROFILES

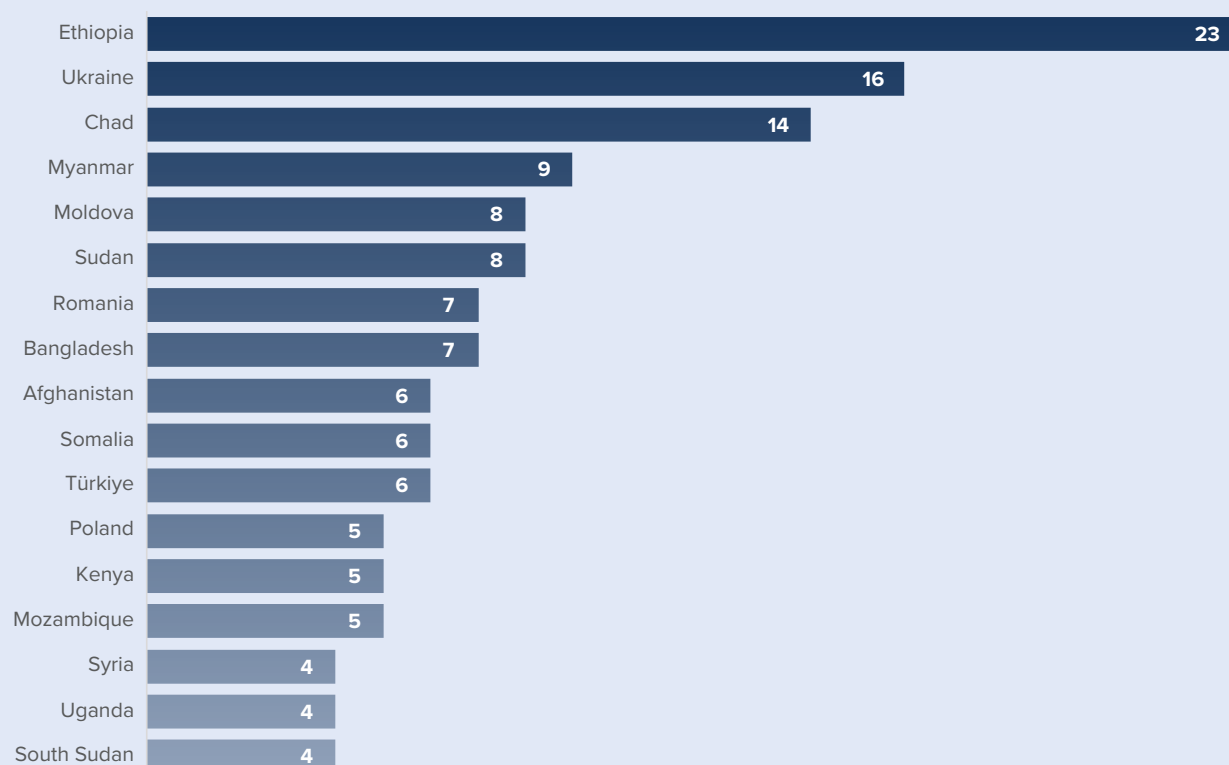
### 2023 Job Profiles



Emergency standby partners provided essential support by deploying protection specialists (including in child protection, gender-based violence, accountability to affected populations, and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse). They also deployed experts in cluster and sector coordination and information management, as well as technical experts in shelter, site planning, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education, among others.

## Locations

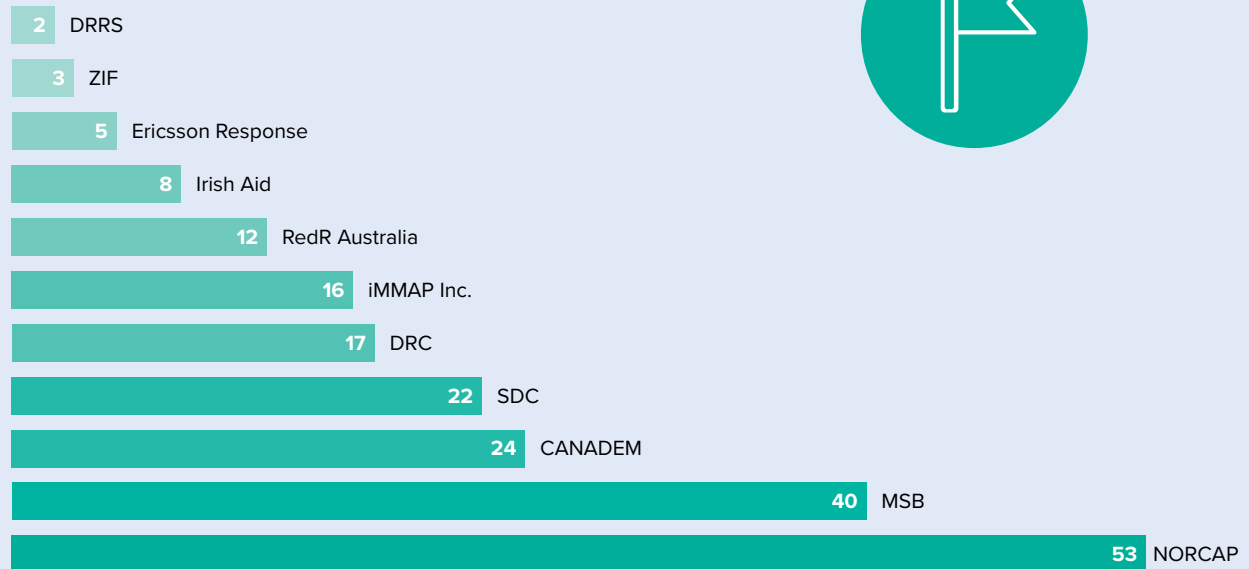
### Country operations with the most deployments in 2023



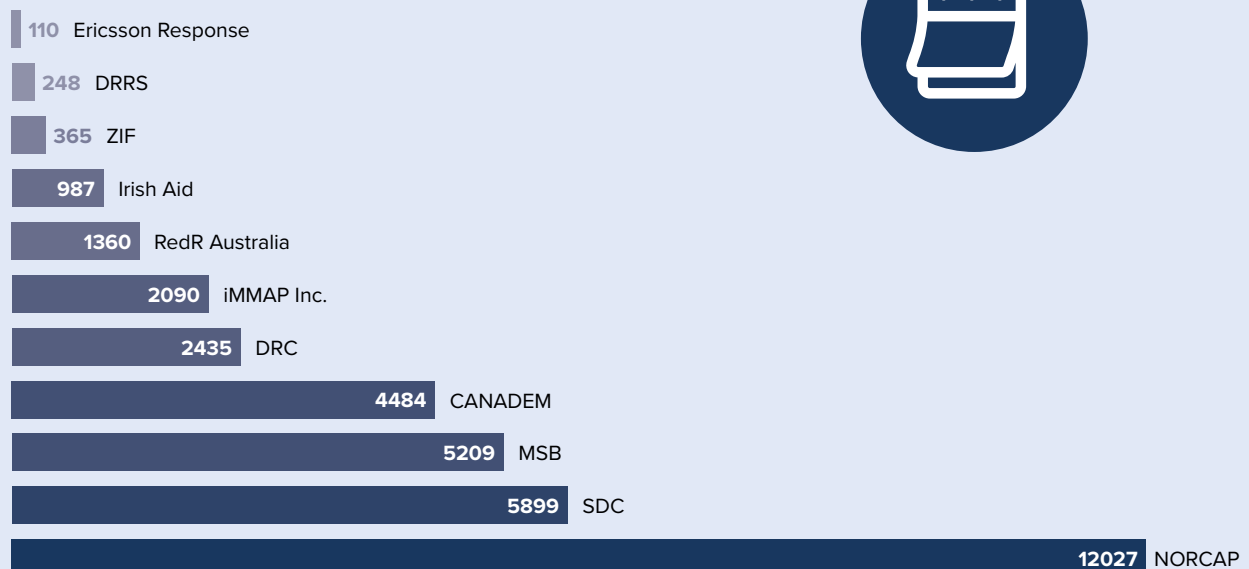
# Year in review: standby partner deployments in 2023

## BREAKDOWN BY PARTNER

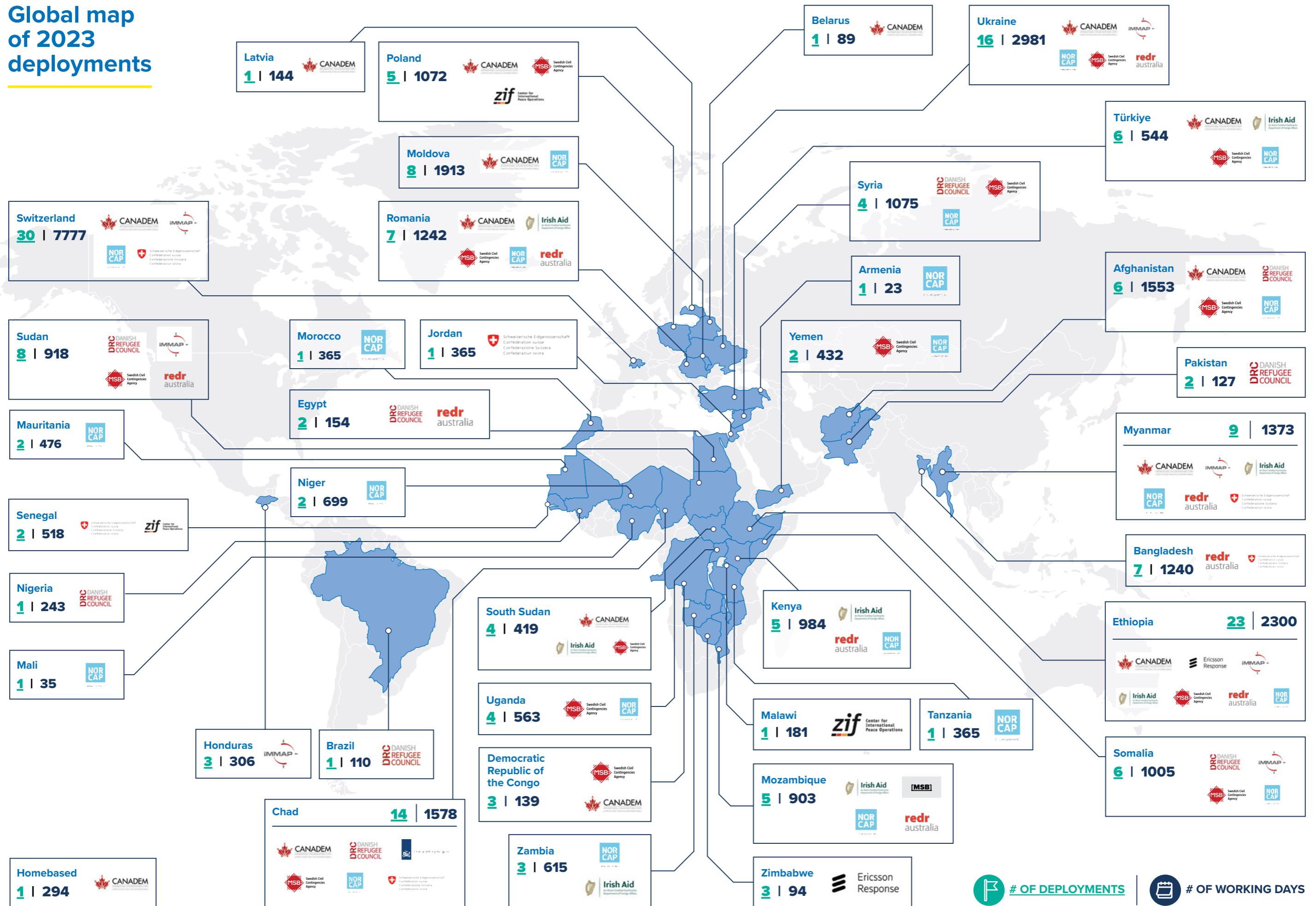
### Breakdown of deployments by standby partner



### Number of working days by standby partner



# Global map of 2023 deployments



# OF DEPLOYMENTS | # OF WORKING DAYS

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**CHAD** Sudanese refugee family in the Chadian border town of Adrè on the way to the transit centre with their belongings to embark on their new journey to Alacha refugee site. On 30 November 2023, UNHCR and partners started to relocate Sudanese refugees living in makeshift shelters in the Chadian border town of Adrè to Alacha, a newly built refugee site.  
© UNHCR/YING HU



# Standby partner stories

## SUDAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE



**Shojaat Ali:** Deployed as CCCM Cluster Coordinator to Kosti, Sudan by the Danish Refugee Council

**Apollinaire Niyonzima:** Deployed as WASH Officer to Ghz Beida, Chad by the Danish Refugee Council

**Kristin Mörth:** Deployed as Camp Manager to eastern Chad by MSB

**Carina Fritz:** Deployed as a Nurse in the camp management team to eastern Chad by MSB

Sudan and its neighbouring countries were already hosting large refugee and IDP populations before the conflict broke out in Sudan in April 2023. This resulted in millions of people becoming displaced in Sudan and seeking safety by fleeing into five neighbouring countries – the CAR, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. At the start of 2024, there were almost 1.8 million refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries and more than 6.6 million IDPs in Sudan.

**Shojaat Ali** was deployed as a CCCM Cluster Coordinator to the UNHCR operation in

Sudan by the Danish Refugee Council in January 2022. When fighting broke out in the capital city of Khartoum in mid-April 2023, he was outside the country for a break. **“I quickly began coordinating the IDP operation with partners and coworkers using an online messaging application which we also used during COVID-19”** he recounted. A few weeks later, the Danish Refugee Council and UNHCR asked if he would return to Sudan. Shojaat did so and began coordinating the identification of new sites to accommodate the IDPs in collaboration with Government and humanitarian partners. In close coordination with colleagues and partners, he promoted a cluster approach providing shelter, essential services and protection to forcibly displaced people.

UNHCR benefits from the technical expertise and experience of standby partner deployees, while technical experts also have an opportunity to gain new professional skills and insights. Shojaat felt his experience helped improve his skills and ability to coordinate and manage camps in challenging emergencies. He also learned the importance

of being physically present when working with refugees. **“Above all, it taught me that working with UNHCR entails being physically present, close to the people we serve, for better provision of protection, and understanding of the situation on the ground to trigger advocacy for resource mobilization to assist the people we serve,”** Shojaat said.

In surrounding countries like Chad, UNHCR and partners continued to support the refugees who were fleeing from the hostilities in Sudan. [Apollinaire Niyonzima](#), deployed by the Danish Refugee Council, served as a WASH Officer with UNHCR in Chad. He worked to establish emergency water systems and proper sanitation and hygiene promotion systems at entry points for forcibly displaced people and relocation zones, including in the Goz Amir, Djabal and Zabout refugee camps.

While the rainy season affected infrastructure such as water network pipes, drills and the availability of skilled workers, Apollinaire and his team managed to establish the needed infrastructure for refugees. **“Refugees arrive in the host country with nothing to survive. Because of our work on the ground, we [are able to] ensure them shelter, water, [and] sanitary infrastructure.”** Amid the challenges, his passion for his work and good team spirit kept him motivated, he added.

[Kristin Mörth](#) was deployed by MSB as a camp manager and was charged with establishing base camps in Arkoum and Zabout in Chad. **“At the time I was there, there were so many refugees in need”** she said. **“Often the refugees didn’t want to go too far into Chad and instead stayed close to where they came from. But they couldn’t all stay in one place.”**

Recalling the situation when she arrived, Kristin said **“UNHCR had to build a site from scratch to accommodate 26,000 refugees with access to infrastructures and services such as school, daycare and medical services. It was extremely challenging because there was not enough space, babies were being born, and we needed to make sure that people could feel they could stay and receive assistance.”**

[Carina Fritz](#), also part of the MSB team deployed to Chad, shared how she worked to provide staff accommodation for UNHCR so they could assist refugees. MSB and UNHCR worked together, with UNHCR building shelter for refugees and MSB building base camps for UNHCR staff.

MSB’s base camps saved UNHCR staff hours of commuting time. **“MSB and UNHCR were impressed with each other’s work. Partnership is great because everyone can focus on what they are good at, as fast and as well as they can,”** shared Kristin and Carina.

Kristin said: **“I felt good being part of a system that is making a difference. It is easy to think that maybe more could have been done, but no one can do everything, but everyone can do something.”**

Together with the Danish Refugee Council and MSB, iMMAP Inc., DRRS, CANADEM, and RedR Australia, deployed 14 experts of various profiles to UNHCR to support the response to the Sudan emergency in 2023.



**UKRAINE** As part of the winter response, aiming to assist 900,000 displaced and war-affected people or returnees across Ukraine, UNHCR and partners provide essential items like blankets, thermoses and bed linens.  
© UNHCR/MARTA KOCHERHA



# UKRAINE EMERGENCY RESPONSE



**Alberto Tonon:** Deployed as Disability and Inclusion Specialist to Chisinau, Moldova by CANADEM, with the support of FCDO

**Agnetha Ellingsen Kuwata:** Deployed as Inter-Agency Coordination Officer to Warsaw, Poland by CANADEM, funded by FCDO

The conflict in Ukraine which began in February 2022 has caused civilian casualties, destroyed vital infrastructure and caused mass displacement, forcing millions of people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance. As of March 2024, nearly 6.5 million Ukrainian refugees were recorded globally, including nearly 6 million in Europe. More than 3.5 million Ukrainians were also internally displaced within the country.

**Alberto Tonon** was deployed to UNHCR in the Republic of Moldova as a disability and inclusion specialist through CANADEM. Describing the onset of the displacement crisis, he said: **“More than 1 million people passed through Moldova. Moldova is a country of 2.4 million people, so the number that passed through was huge. At the moment, 118,000 refugees from Ukraine are staying in Moldova and seeking support.”** UNHCR maintains an important operational presence in Moldova to support those refugees and the host Government.

Notable progress has been observed overall in terms of Ukrainian refugees accessing services and being included in national systems in Europe, however specific needs, including older people with disabilities, and those with serious medical conditions,

continue to face inclusion challenges.

**“There are a lot of older people who are above 60 years old,”** Alberto explained.

**“There are many more women among the refugees than men. This meant a lot of specificity in terms of how we engage with the population, what are the needs, and how we respond to the needs.”**

Alberto also pointed out that refugees were harder to identify, particularly in Moldova’s countryside. **“The way that the refugee population was spread out also affected the data that was available and how we were able to identify and reach the refugees, as well as obtain a proper picture of the population,”** he said.

As the co-chair of the Disability and Age Task Force under the Protection Working Group, Alberto worked with organizations led by people with disabilities to ensure they are included in the response. He also coordinated with partners on the ground and worked on accountability to affected persons initiatives. **“We did a lot of capacity building work to humanitarian partners, Government institutions, and organizations led by persons with disabilities, always starting with ensuring the understanding that a human rights-based approach on disability and aging [is in place],”** he said. This work involved ensuring inclusion was prioritized throughout the response and that all 62 refugee accommodation centres in the county were accessible. Through the Accountability to Affected Persons Task Force, Alberto supported communication campaigns targeting relevant communities, including using social media tools.

Reflecting on his first deployment to a UN agency by CANADEM, Alberto said: **“I learned about the UN system from the inside, and it was great to also learn from the Government side. I was able to lean into my previous work experience, which focused on humanitarian inclusion especially regarding disabilities and the partnership approach.”**

He stressed the value of drawing from the specialized profiles on the rosters. **“This is a big value for the collaboration with UNHCR and the standby partners,”** he said. **“Standby partners can provide expertise and build the capacity of UNHCR and its partners.”**

[Agnethe Ellingsen Kuwata](#) was deployed as an inter-agency coordination officer in the Poland office, also by CANADEM: **“The context of Poland was quite different than others I have worked in before,”** she said. **“There were no refugee camps. Instead, there were collective sites and private housing.”**

Agnethe worked closely with the UNHCR external relations unit to support inter-agency coordination. **“I had been an inter-agency coordination officer before, but this was from the Resident Coordinator’s office perspective,”** she said. **“With UNHCR, it was the first time I did proper inter-agency, inter-sectoral coordination.”**

The Regional Refugee Response Plan currently covers: Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Agnethe’s primary responsibility was to support the UNHCR team and its partners in implementing the Refugee Response Plan 2023 and to develop the next one.

Localization remained a priority. **“[T]o really have a strategic approach on localization, this was the first time I experienced it, and in terms of the humanitarian needs, it really connected well. I became the localization focal point. Despite challenges, we were able to increase the number of local organizations to 67% of the Regional Refugee Response Plan’s partners. This was our main deliverable,”** Agnethe said.

This was Agnethe’s first UNHCR assignment and she regrets not learning about standby partnerships earlier. **“As soon as I heard about it, I expressed my interest and soon after I received this deployment. I was shocked at how fast the process went. Time is often the most important thing in an effective response.”**

Reflecting on the additional value she could bring to the operation, Agnethe said: **“Coming from the intensity of the first year, it really benefited my team to have a standby partner with fresh eyes come in.”** The resources provided by the standby partnerships were vital to the response, she added. **“[I]t really became the fuel in the engineering, or the glue, that made things stick together,”** she said. **“Several other colleagues were also deployed to various coordination groups. The partnerships’ readily available human resources really helped the refugee operation.”**

Together with CANADEM, NORCAP, MSB, iMMAP Inc., RedR Australia, Irish Aid and ZIF Center for International Peace Operations also contributed to the deployment of 37 experts to UNHCR operations in Belarus, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

# TÜRKIYE/SYRIA EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY RESPONSE



**Gabriel Fernández del Pino Búrdalo:**  
Deployed as Senior Shelter/NFI Cluster  
Coordinator to Gaziantep, Türkiye by Irish  
Aid

In February 2023, severe earthquakes hit southeastern Türkiye, affecting both Syria and Türkiye. In Türkiye, 11 provinces were hit, impacting more than 15.6 million people. Türkiye is one of the world's largest refugee hosting countries, hosting approximately 4 million refugees. The area affected by the earthquake hosts approximately 1.75 million of those refugees. Homes were damaged or destroyed and people needed immediate life-saving assistance.

The Syria crisis, currently in its 13th year, remains the largest displacement crisis in the world, with more than 12 million Syrians forcibly displaced in the region. The February 2023 earthquakes further exacerbated the situation for the displaced and hosting communities, destroying homes, livelihoods and vital infrastructure.

**Gabriel Fernández del Pino Búrdalo** was deployed as Senior Shelter/NFI Cluster Coordinator through Irish Aid to UNHCR in Türkiye to support the country's response. **"When I arrived, thousands of people were still in tents. Lots of people were living in containers – there were around 130,000 containers at different sites."** Having completed two other deployments with UNHCR, Gabriel was familiar with the work. However, the size and scale of the situation was new for him.

**"Another 8,000 containers were to be installed,"** Gabriel said, explaining the need to balance working quickly with ensuring the containers would be of high enough quality for the affected population. The team worked to develop technical solutions to mitigate safety and security risks.

**"It was a challenge, but the Shelter Cluster Technical Sub-Working Group that I chaired as shelter-lead for UNHCR developed technical solutions, like anchoring techniques for the wind and winterization designs,"** he explained. This included a waterproofing and insulation design for folding containers, which Gabriel worked to develop with the Türkiye Shelter Sector.

During his deployment, Gabriel supported the Shelter Cluster coordination and provided technical support as a shelter expert. **"I am taking away many things,"** he said. **"I am happy with the good work we were able to accomplish during my deployment."** He said he would gladly work with the team again.

Standby partnership agreements, such as the one between Irish Aid and UNHCR are a great tool to deploy the right expertise quickly, Gabriel added: **"It took less than a month for me to be deployed. Standby partners are able to deploy rapidly for the needs of UNHCR."**

In addition to Gabriel, three other experts were deployed by CANADEM and NORCAP to support the earthquake response in Türkiye during 2023. MSB also supported UNHCR through the immediate deployment and installation of a light base camp.

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**TÜRKIYE** Collapsed buildings and wreckage are visible all over Hatay city in Türkiye. Some 54,000 people have lost their lives in Türkiye and Syria as a result of the devastating February earthquakes, and millions have been affected.  
© UNHCR/EMRAH GÜREL



# ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE



**Noume Bazinzi: Deployed as PSEA Officer to Shire, Ethiopia by MSB**

From November 2020 to November 2022, Northern Ethiopia experienced a series of conflicts and fighting, which at its peak led to the mass displacement of people from and within the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions. The conflict also displaced refugees in the three regions, including Eritrean refugees already in Tigray and Sudanese refugees living in Amhara. The Tigray Conflict eventually came to an end, but conflict and insecurity remained. At the beginning of 2024, 4.4 million people remained internally displaced in Ethiopia, affected by conflict, hostilities and climate shocks. In addition, nearly 1 million refugees and asylum-seekers were hosted by the country at the end of 2023, with that number growing due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan. The inter-agency Ethiopia Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network works to strengthen protection for people affected by crises, such as forced displacement. [Noume Bazinzi](#) was deployed by MSB as a protection from sexual exploitation and abuse officer. She supported the Ethiopia operation throughout 2023.

The deployment was a new experience for Noume, not only because it was her first experience with MSB and UNHCR, but also because of the specific context: **“This is different because it is a mixed refugee response and then internally displaced people [are] in the same location, which comes with increased responsibilities and also flexibility [is required] in terms of how the work should be done.”**

Through Noume’s role, she supported forcibly displaced people in the three regions of Afar, Amhara and Tigray. Noume worked

with and trained UNHCR, its partners and the communities it works with. Looking back on her deployment, she said, **“We made a difference through strengthening and empowering communities. Despite all they have gone through, people have the right to make a decision, to speak up and share their voice. We built relationships, and through consultations, [people] have given us good ideas and their ways of doing things.”**

She felt supported by both MSB and UNHCR, leaning on the counseling services of the standby partner organization and the UNHCR and UN security management system in an insecure context. Noume stressed how important this support was. **“I had my colleagues and the whole office of UNHCR behind me,”** she said. **“I communicated and was guided on how to move forward.”**

Noume felt her deployment was also a rich learning and training opportunity for her. **“It gave me exposure to UNHCR work approaches, the [learning] platform, among other things. I learned from interacting with the refugees as well as the Government. I can bring this knowledge and experiences to other contexts in the future.”**

In addition to Noume who was deployed to the UNHCR response in the Ethiopia Tigray region by MSB, CANADEM, iMMAP Inc., NORCAP, RedR Australia and Irish Aid deployed an additional seven experts to UNHCR in Ethiopia in 2023. MSB and Ericsson Response also provided service packages in Bokh to support the response to the refugee influx from Somalia to the south-east of the country.

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**ETHIOPIA** *Internally displaced women and children walk in a camp hosting internally displaced people.*  
© UNHCR/TIKSA NEGERI



## BANGLADESH REFUGEE RESPONSE



**Jackline Obwanda:** Deployed as Gender Equality Officer to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh by RedR Australia and Australian Assists

**Andreas Thiess:** Deployed as Macroplanning Coordinator to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh by SDC

In August 2017, more than 750,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh following violent military crackdowns in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Since then, the humanitarian community and UNHCR have closely collaborated with the Government of Bangladesh to respond to the humanitarian needs of this massive displacement. Today, nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees live in Bangladesh, most of them in Cox's Bazar district, near the border with Myanmar. The strain on the local host community and its already stretched facilities and services has been immense.

Most Rohingya refugees are living in 33 camps in Cox's Bazar, which together make up the world's largest refugee settlement. More than six years on from the latest influx from Myanmar, this is also one of the world's largest protracted refugee situations.

Of the refugee population, more than half (52%) are women and 57% are children. [Jackline Obwanda](#) was deployed by RedR Australia and Australia Assists to UNHCR Bangladesh as a gender equality officer. Women refugees from Myanmar were experiencing barriers that impeded their full participation in refugee-led response, which Jackline worked to mitigate during her deployment. **"Gender is dynamic in every country,"** she said. **"If things cannot be solved, we work on mitigating factors."**

Social norms impact the likelihood of educational attainment, she explained, which affects leadership participation rates. **"It took**

**me a while to understand the landscape,"** she said. **"Gender is embedded in so many things; there is intersectionality in gender, age, diversity, even climate and basic needs."** Jackline used her expertise from other contexts and worked with different sectors on gender mainstreaming. She built the capacity of the operation on gender issues and participated in the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group. The work, she feels, has had a positive impact: **"We are building a community of refugees that run the projects,"** she said. **"There is self-ownership, they are well engaged, and this is a sustainable change."**

Echoing positive sentiments about the partnership, Jackline also outlined how she was able to develop her expertise. **"As a gender-based violence expert, I got to learn about UNHCR processes and systems. I learned about how to strengthen accountability and utilize the elaborate systems already in place. I never had a cross-cutting role until now."**

[Andreas Thiess](#) was deployed through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) as a macroplanning coordinator to UNHCR's response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. **"Nearly 1 million people are staying in such a small space,"** he said. **"Macroplanning means urban planning and reorganization at a large scale."** Fires are an ever-present threat in the Rohingya refugee camps, particularly during the dry season. With this in mind, Andreas and the team explored ways to reduce fire hazards in such limited spaces.

Emphasizing the collaborative approach he was a part of in Cox's Bazar, Andreas said: **"I was not doing this on my own. We had**

**a coordinated approach to reorganizing parts of camps and to working on new interventions. We were within an interagency coordination group, and we had coordinated communication with governmental agencies.”** Andreas and the team also worked on a macro resettlement tool that would increase information on the dangers of landslides and other natural hazards, taking into consideration the densities of the different camps.

Reflecting on his deployment and the partnerships that made it possible, Andreas said: **“It is important to have these partnerships. There is a bigger pool**

**of people to find particular positions, especially very quickly for the short-term.”** Highlighting the benefits to partners like SDC, he said: **“They get to be part of governmental humanitarian support and part of the cooperation within the UN.”** He also highlighted how he was able to **“get experience, [and] understand procedures, [to be better set up] for future cooperation.”**

Andreas and Jackline were deployed to UNHCR Bangladesh through SDC and RedR Australia/Australia Assists. In addition, the Danish Refugee Council and SDC deployed seven experts to support emergency and strategic priorities in the operation.

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*BANGLADESH A UNHCR youth climate group was given a \$200 grant to fund their proposal to clean up the fetid and trash-filled stream that runs by his house. The stream has been widened, increasing fivefold its capacity to handle flood water, 5,000 cubic feet of waste has been removed, 50 trees planted, and access opened up. The results are a cleaner and healthier environment, reduced flooding, deforestation, erosion and landslides, and more public space.*

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# MOZAMBIQUE EMERGENCY RESPONSE



**Patrick Tamrat: Deployed as Protection Officer to Nampula, Mozambique by NORCAP**

Mozambique remains one of the countries most adversely affected by the impacts of the climate crisis in the world. The double landfall of Tropical Cyclone Freddy in February and March 2023, just a year after the devastating Tropical Cyclone Gombe in March 2022, affected more than 1 million people, destroyed infrastructure, and displaced more than 180,000 people. As of November 2023, Mozambique hosted approximately 25,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, while more than 850,000 were people internally displaced by violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups, mainly from Cabo Delgado, as well as the impacts of the climate crisis.

**Patrick Tamrat** was deployed as a protection officer in 2023 through NORCAP to respond to the severe tropical storms experienced on the coast in Nampula, Mozambique. The Maratane settlement is the only refugee settlement in Mozambique and is located in Nampula.

In his role, he worked closely with national and local authorities to assist people that were internally displaced by the storms. Patrick also supported colleagues working with the refugee communities.

**“When you go into local communities, especially in rural areas – they can have a very limited understanding of their human**

**rights,”** Patrick said. **“We work with them and our partners to advise them of their rights according to national and humanitarian law.”** Elaborating, he offered the example that women and children were often unaware of their right to have a birth certificate.

**“As part of the protection team, I worked on strengthening partners’ monitoring activities, to make it more efficient and regular.”**

he added. He also worked to strengthen protection mainstreaming and emphasized the importance of ensuring complementary assistance such as core relief items and shelter. Patrick saw the impact of his work, including how the women’s committees he and the team had facilitated were becoming more organized.

**“Working as a deployee [with UNHCR], I never felt a difference between me and the staff,”** Patrick said. **“You work in a team. Everyone brings their own experience. Together, you better the work and the way you assist the displaced. Although I have worked with UNHCR before, every country, every area, every field office even within the same operation, is different. Colleagues, however, are the same – they try to do the best they can with what they have.”**

Patrick was deployed by NORCAP to UNHCR in Nampula. UNHCR Mozambique was supported through five deployments in 2023 from Irish Aid, MSB, NORCAP and RedR Australia.

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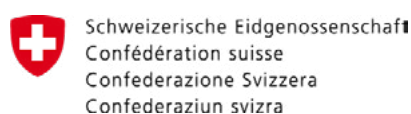
**MOZAMBIQUE** *These displaced people had found refuge in Namapa in Nampula Province, Mozambique, after fleeing attacks on their villages in Chiure district, Cabo Delgado Province, in February 2024. They are seen here walking back to a village in Cabo Delgado, just on the other side of the bridge separating the two provinces, but do not feel safe enough yet to return to their villages of origin.*

© UNHCR/HÉLÈNE CAUX



# UNHCR standby partnerships 2023

Standby partners that supported UNHCR through deployments and service packages in 2023:



# Flexible funding

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Flexible funds help UNHCR prepare for the unpredictable, kick-start an emergency response, and bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises. They also enable UNHCR to plan and manage resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is saved and transformed. Without flexible funding, UNHCR would not be able to properly prepare for any new emergency that may arise, and the first phase of its emergency responses, which usually requires thousands of emergency supplies, essential shelter and protection assistance delivered to families in need.

Flexible funding also remains vital as an emergency response develops, particularly for crises that fall out of the spotlight and remain largely neglected as people affected are suffering the most. Timely donations to specific emergency situations, particularly giving flexibly to general emergency preparedness and response, are a lifeline for people forced to flee. UNHCR could not do its job without such invaluable support, and it counts on donors' continued solidarity for people affected by emergencies in 2024.

# Donor acknowledgement

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UNHCR extends its thanks to those public and private donors who have supported specific emergencies and provided flexible funding for emergencies in 2023. Your support has been invaluable in assisting and protecting millions of people forced to flee by new and deteriorating crises.

Donors that contributed \$500,000 or more to specific new and deteriorating emergencies, as well as general emergency preparedness and response, in 2023 include:

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Central Emergency Response Fund | Country-based pooled funds | Czech Republic | Denmark | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Finland | France | Gabon | Germany | Grand Duchy of Luxemburg | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Saudi Arabia | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Private donors in Australia (Australia for UNHCR) | Private donors in Bahrain | Private donors in Canada | Private donors in

China | Private donors in Denmark | Private donors in France | Private donors in Germany (UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe) | Private donors in Italy | Private donors in Japan (Japan for UNHCR) | Private donors in MENA | Private donors in Qatar | Private donors in Spain (España con ACNUR) | Private donors in Sweden (Sweden for UNHCR) | Private donors in Switzerland (Switzerland for UNHCR) | Private donors in the Netherlands | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Private donors in the United Kingdom (UK for UNHCR) | Private donors in the United Arab Emirates | Private donors in the United States (USA for UNHCR) | Private donors in Türkiye | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Spain | Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan | State of Kuwait | Sweden | Switzerland | Türkiye | UN Joint Programmes | UN Population Fund | United Arab Emirates | United Kingdom | United Nations Children's Fund | United States of America



For more information and inquiries please contact:  
UNHCR Division of Emergency, Security and Supply  
(DESS) : [hqdeploy@unhcr.org](mailto:hqdeploy@unhcr.org)

#### PHOTO ON THE COVER

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**CHAD** *The Farchana refugee camp in Ouaddai Province, eastern Chad, currently hosts some 40,000 refugees who have fled the conflict in Sudan that erupted in April 2023. Initially established by UNHCR in January 2004 to support refugees fleeing violence in Darfur in 2003, the camp has since been extended to host the recent arrivals. UNHCR is working with partners to relocate families away from the border to safety and to provide protection and humanitarian assistance.*

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