Central African Republic

HIGHLIGHTS

- Violence, population movements and natural disasters continue to weigh heavily on the children of the Central African Republic. Despite some decrease in the levels of insecurity and conflict-related violence, 2.8 million people (nearly half of the country’s population) require humanitarian assistance in 2024. This includes 1.3 million children.

- UNICEF prioritizes lifesaving and multisectoral interventions strongly focused on internally displaced and returnee children and communities affected by shocks, in alignment with the inter-agency response strategy for the country. UNICEF will address humanitarian needs through humanitarian and development interventions – including a focus on durable solutions to displacement.

- UNICEF is appealing for US $65.7 million to meet the critical humanitarian needs of approximately 1 million of the most vulnerable children and their families.

KEY PLANNED TARGETS

- **283,750** children and women accessing primary health care
- **250,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water
- **350,000** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse
- **180,000** vulnerable people recently affected by shocks benefiting from life-saving multi-sectoral interventions

IN NEED

- 2.8 million people
- 1.3 million children

TO BE REACHED

- 1 million people
- 914,900 children

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- US$65.7 million

Figures aligned with the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2024. (However, nutrition targets only aligned with HNO since cluster targets focus on zones with IPC phases 3/4).
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

Violence, displacement and natural disasters continue to affect people in the Central African Republic, particularly those in the most vulnerable areas. Humanitarian needs remain significant and challenging. Between April 2023 and May 2024, more than 301,617 individuals experienced at least one shock that triggered a humanitarian rapid response. These shocks were caused primarily by violence (72 per cent) and natural disasters (20 per cent).

Internal displacement persists, and as of May 2024, 518,075 internally displaced persons were reported in the country. Coupled with this, since April 2023, the country experienced an influx of refugees and returnees, including 23,570 people fleeing conflict in the Sudan and 37,400 coming from Chad. These movements have further increased humanitarian needs, putting pressure on already fragile areas and vulnerable communities.

Humanitarian access remains a significant concern, especially in the western part of the country, due to ongoing attacks and the presence of explosive devices.

Recurring epidemics continue to take their toll on children in 2024 – this is on top of an infant mortality rate that is the fifth highest globally. Unsafe water usage contributes to the country having the fourth-highest mortality rate related to water in Africa. In 2024, 2.2 million people will require humanitarian WASH assistance, including more than 1 million children. All these circumstances impact children’s nutrition status: the number of children under 5 years of age with severe wasting is projected to reach 62,664 by the end of 2024.

Approximately 850,852 children require humanitarian protection interventions. Documented cases of grave violations against children decreased from 773 in 2022 to 414 in 2023, but there was a 4 per cent increase in victims of rape, with 76 girls being victims compared to 73 in 2022. Additionally, incidents of denial of humanitarian access increased by 20 per cent. The continuous use of explosive ordnance and ongoing military operations continue to create additional challenges for documentation in 2024. Child marriage is widespread: 61 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married or in a union before age 18.

Child marriage and early pregnancy, along with insecurity and the need to travel long distances to school, are the main factors that lead girls to drop out of school; only 38 per cent of girls reach secondary school. This year, around 1.2 million children are in need of education support.

STORY FROM THE FIELD

Before his life was turned upside down, Charles*, now 17, lived peacefully with his family in Cotonaf in Bouar, western Central African Republic. Charles used to go to school. Things were going well until an armed group settled behind his house and began harassing him to join them. Under pressure, Charles could not escape for long and was eventually forced to join the group, where he became their errand boy.

Life in the armed group was very difficult for Charles: “When I was there, they filled my head with bad ideas. They gave me drugs and I changed,” he recalls.

*Name changed.

Read more about this story here

Despite leaving an armed group in the Central African Republic, Charles, 17, still feels lonely and struggles with his full reintegration. He says he is haunted by memories of that period.
UNICEF will prioritize child-centered, life-saving and risk reduction interventions to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain dignity for displaced people, returnees and host communities, and people affected by new shocks. The UNICEF-led Rapid Response Mechanism will assess the needs of the affected population following shocks and provide critical, multisectoral life-saving interventions, including WASH and non-food items and humanitarian cash transfers. The Rapid Response Mechanism will facilitate complementary interventions in child protection, psychosocial support, and education, where needed and feasible.

The WASH sector strategy aims to improve the health, education, and nutritional status of internally displaced people and host communities affected by shocks. Short-term assistance in WASH will promote the prevention of water-borne diseases through better hygiene in areas at risk of outbreaks.

UNICEF will deliver emergency education interventions, incorporating psychosocial support, by distributing teaching and learning materials and conducting teacher training. Following the emergency response, UNICEF will introduce a broader set of interventions to enhance the community's capacity to respond to future shocks. This expanded approach will integrate protection and WASH activities into the education response, and will include community engagement.

UNICEF will prioritize the early detection of child wasting, expanding malnutrition prevention measures nationwide. Primary health care interventions will serve as the entry point for a broader support to mothers and children that will encompass nutrition services, mental health and psychosocial support, and the use of social protection platforms.

Given the increased use of explosive devices in the country, UNICEF will enhance community mine risk education. UNICEF will also continue to support the expansion of mechanisms to identify, demobilize and reintegrate children associated with armed forces and armed groups. Gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and survivor assistance interventions will also be prioritized alongside protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The strategy for social and behaviour change and accountability to affected populations focuses on empowering communities to take greater ownership of the aid delivery process. This will be achieved by establishing and enhancing community platforms, developing community-led feedback and complaint mechanisms, and reinforcing humanitarian information services.

Multipurpose cash transfer responses will be integrated into humanitarian programmes.

UNICEF will continue to ensure coordination and leadership of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, and the Nutrition, WASH and Education Clusters, as well as inter-agency efforts on Accountability to Affected People.

**2024 PROGRAMME TARGETS**

**Health and HIV/AIDS**
- 181,686 children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose
- 291,035 children 0-59 months vaccinated against polio
- 283,750 children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- 968 pregnant and lactating women living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy

**Nutrition**
- 764,891 children 6-59 months screened for wasting
- 62,664 children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- 368,918 primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- 620,077 children 6-59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation

**Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA**
- 80,000 children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- 50,000 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 350,000 people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- 700 children who have exited an armed force and groups provided with protection or reintegration support

**Education**
- 100,000 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 150,000 children receiving individual learning materials
- 1,000 teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support

**Water, sanitation and hygiene**
- 250,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- 100,000 people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- 20,000 women and girls accessing menstrual hygiene management services
- 250,000 people reached with handwashing behaviour-change programmes

**Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)**
- 10,000 households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers (including for social protection and other sectors)
- 2,800,000 affected people (children, caregivers, community members) reached with timely and life-saving information on how and where to access available services
- 700,000 people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms
- 40,000 people engaged in reflective dialogue through social media and digital platforms
- 10,000 people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms

**Rapid response mechanism**
- 180,000 Vulnerable people recently affected by shocks benefiting from life-saving multi-sectoral interventions.
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

In 2024, UNICEF is requesting US $65.7 million to meet the critical humanitarian needs of over 1 million vulnerable people in the Central African Republic – more than 90 per cent of them children. Funding requested is 10 per cent less than the 2023 appeal due to a slight reduction in the number of children in need. This appeal dovetails with UNICEF’s broader efforts to promote an effective link between humanitarian interventions and development activities, including durable solutions to displacement.

In 2024, the UNICEF programme will reach the most vulnerable children and their caregivers with comprehensive lifesaving, multisectoral assistance encompassing health, nutrition, WASH, education and protection interventions. UNICEF’s strong field presence and its reliable partnership network will support an effective response through a more localized approach.

Nearly 30 per cent of the funding requested will be used for emergency nutritional support, including for ready-to-use therapeutic food for children who are severely wasted and for the delivery of preventive interventions. UNICEF is the main provider of ready-to-use therapeutic food in the country.

Considering the country’s fragilities, the volatile security context, and the continued high level of displacement, UNICEF appeals for flexible or softly earmarked funding to enable an immediate, adaptive, and strategic response wherever new shocks occur and where children’s needs are greatest.

Without sufficient and timely funding, nearly 1 million children could go without access to essential services, including lifesaving interventions.

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### Appeal sector

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Appeal sector</th>
<th>Original 2024 HAC requirement (US$)</th>
<th>Revised 2024 HAC requirement (US$)</th>
<th>Funds available (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>Cross-sectoral</td>
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<td>Rapid Response Mechanism</td>
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<td>Cluster coordination</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>66,700,000</td>
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<td>29,290,455</td>
<td>36,409,545</td>
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</table>

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions: Health and HIV/AIDS (9.9%), Cross-sectoral (6.3%), Cluster coordination (3.0%).*
The budget requirement for the 5,000 households receiving humanitarian cash transfers through the Rapid Response Mechanism.

Furthermore, unit costs have been adjusted to account for price increases, particularly in transport costs, which have risen due to challenges (Education Cannot Wait).

Vaccination and related responses (Health and HIV/AIDS) and $6 million earmarked to support Education sector longer-term interventions (Education Cannot Wait).

In addition to the community platforms, UNICEF has also developed mobile approaches through home visits in localities identified based on the zones of humanitarian severity 3 and 4 as specified in the HNO.

The overall number is an increase compared with 2023.

In 2024 and those who left armed groups in 2023. The target of 700 such children is based on data from the annual report 2022 of the country's MRM task force (773 children documented in 2022, including 443 children recruited during the reporting year).

UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.

This target has increased based on the number of community platforms that will be active in 2024 and 2025, with nearly 200 platforms being established. In addition to the community platforms, UNICEF has also developed mobile approaches through home visits in localities located in severity zones 3 and 4, according to the HNO.

The decrease is in accordance with the trend observed by the cluster and is equivalent to 80 per cent of the national people in need number. A discrepancy between the UNICEF and the cluster targets is because the cluster aims to concentrate the entire package of activities, including prevention interventions, solely in IPC phase 3 and 4 areas.

The target was adjusted downwards to align with UNICEF's current capacity, considering that fewer than 100,000 children were reached in 2022. Additionally, it takes into account the anticipated decrease in the number of people in need for the Child Protection Cluster, which is expected to drop from 1.1 million in 2023 to approximately 900,000 in 2024.

This target has decreased due to lack of access caused by the security situation in the most affected areas.

Reintegration actions for children associated with armed forces and armed groups will prioritize children released from armed groups in 2024 and those who left armed groups in 2023. The target of 700 such children is based on data from the annual report 2022 of the country's MRM task force (773 children documented in 2022, including 443 children recruited during the reporting year).

This includes 5,000 households benefiting through the Rapid Response Mechanism and 5,000 households receiving cash through other humanitarian cash transfers. The overall number is an increase compared with 2023.

The target has been reduced in line with the new methodological instructions from the SBC section. The number of people affected is identified based on the zones of humanitarian severity 3 and 4 as specified in the HNO.

The target has increased in alignment with UNICEF’s strategy of reaching children living in areas that face Integrated Food Security Acute Malnutrition Phase Classification 3 or 4 (child wasting). Children participating in a nutrition intervention will receive an integrated primary health care package.

This includes 54 per cent of people to be reached with water (135,000), corresponding to the estimated number of adult beneficiaries of the activity with the largest target. This figure includes 51 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities.

This includes 51 per cent girls and 15 per cent children with disabilities. The gender and disability breakdown is based on Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest-coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 764,900 children aged 6–59 months screened for wasting; and 150,000 children to be reached with individual learning materials in crisis-affected areas. This also includes 54 per cent of people to be reached with water (135,000), corresponding to the estimated number of adult beneficiaries of the activity with the largest target. This figure includes 51 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities.

Endnotes:

1. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Central African Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2024
2. Ibid.
3. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest-coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 764,900 children aged 6–59 months screened for wasting; and 150,000 children to be reached with individual learning materials in crisis-affected areas. This also includes 54 per cent of people to be reached with water (135,000), corresponding to the estimated number of adult beneficiaries of the activity with the largest target. This figure includes 51 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities.
4. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
5. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest-coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 764,900 children aged 6–59 months screened for wasting; and 150,000 children to be reached with individual learning materials in crisis-affected areas. As the latter activity usually does not concern children of pre-school age in crisis-affected areas, the two targets are not expected to overlap. This total includes 51 per cent girls and 15 per cent children with disabilities. The gender and disability breakdown is based on Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

This includes $2 million for addressing gender-based violence in emergencies and for interventions linked to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
27. Include $6 million earmarked to support Education sector longer-term interventions (Education Cannot Wait).
28. This includes $2.5 million for social and behavioural change and $1 million for multisectoral humanitarian cash. It does not include the budget requirement for the 5,000 households receiving humanitarian cash transfers through the Rapid Response Mechanism.