



### Contents

Foreword	3
Emergency deployment mechanisms	4
Standby Partner deployments in 2024	5
Thank you to our 2024 active Standby Partners	6
2024 in review	7
2024 Standby Partner deployments	8
Global map of 2024 deployments	10
Deployment stories	12
Danish Refugee Council: WASH expertise in Chad	13
GTH: enhancing humanitarian work with technical know-how	14
The Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS)	15
emergency.lu & Cisco Crisis Response deployments to Panama	16
SDC Deployment in Support of Localization	17
ZIF deployment bolsters shelter in West and Central Africa	18
MSB strengthens shelter and health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	20
NORCAP brings power, water and hope in Mauritania	22
RedR Australia helps protect vulnerable people displaced by Myanmar's conflict through the Standby Partnership	24
Danish Refugee Council brings an agile response to a changing Syria	26
NORCAP supports transition to social protection in Ukraine	28
UNHCR Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment – 2024 highlights	30
Afterword	31
Donor Acknowledgement	32

#### COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Newly arrived Sudanese refugees are seen in the border town of Adre, in Chad. More than 700,000 refugees fleeing the violence in Sudan have crossed into Chad since the conflict began in April 2023.© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

### **Foreword** from Ayaki Ito, Director, Division of **Emergency, Security** and Supply

In 2024, the world's forcibly displaced population surpassed 122 million as new crises erupted, old conflicts continued, and humanitarian emergencies escalated. Millions were forced to flee for a second or third time, and millions were compelled to return home under adverse conditions.

Emergency Standby Partnerships are integral to UNHCR's preparedness and response capacity.

In 2024, UNHCR facilitated 149 emergency deployments to 38 operations and HQ support functions. Nearly half of all deployments supported emergency responses to crises such as those in Sudan, the Central Sahel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Standby Partners also provided strategic support in areas such as protection, energy, solutions, and mental health and psychosocial support, while experts at the Geneva Technical Hub gave technical support to operations across the world.

UNHCR issued 43 emergency declarations in 25 countries during the year. 65% of these declarations related to crises in Africa, 23% in the Middle East and North Africa, and 12% in the Americas. Level 3 "all of UNHCR" emergencies were declared in seven countries: those most affected by the Sudan conflict - Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan itself – and Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Level 2 emergency declarations were issued for Libya and



Aiko Maekawa. @UNHCR

Uganda, scaling up the responses there as more people fled from Sudan. Other emergency declarations were issued in response to the impact of natural hazards such as flooding in Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and South Sudan, and drought in Zambia.

UNHCR's emergency responses aim to strengthen existing systems and to support local and national actors' ability to respond, rather than creating temporary or parallel structures. This helps to avoid a long-term dependence on humanitarian aid and makes it easier to shift from short-term crisis management to a sustainable response.

The importance of Standby Partners cannot be overstated. They enable UNHCR to respond rapidly and effectively, ensuring that those forced to flee receive the protection and assistance they need. The collaboration and commitment of our Standby Partners remain vital to our mission. Thank you to all our partners for your continued support.

Director, Division of Emergency, Security and Supply

### **Emergency deployment mechanisms**

6 deployment schemes used in emergencies



- Functional rosters:
  IM, Interagency
  Coordination, Registration.
- 3 UNHCR Emergency Surge Team
- Senior Corporate
  Emergency Roster (SCER)
- Deployment rosters managed by emergency Standby Partners
- Regional Bureau first responder systems and corporate missions from HQs and other operations

UNHCR's internal rosters maintain 100-150 active roster members ready for emergency deployments lasting up to three months.

In 2024, UNHCR facilitated 255 emergency deployments to 45 emergencies. 106 deployments came from global and internal surge mechanisms and 149 deployments from Standby Partners.

# **Standby Partner deployments in 2024**

A Standby Partner is an organization or entity with personnel or equipment that can be deployed upon request to enhance UNHCR's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises.

When an emergency is declared, or even before, UNHCR's operation in the country begins to identify staffing requirements. If the operation does not have the required human resources available, UNHCR may ask for support from a Standby Partner.

As well as assisting with emergencies, our Standby Partners also fill gaps in technical expertise, support strategic areas of our work, and provide service packages such as base camps for offices or staff accommodation or internet connectivity. All these partnerships greatly strengthen the response of UNHCR.

Of the 149 Standby Partner deployments in 2024,

- 40% of deployments were for emergencies,
- 38% filled strategic gaps,
- 13% filled technical expertise gaps,
- 9% were service packages.

These deployments supported operations in 38 countries and HQ support functions with a total of 26,433 working days, equivalent to 881 months of support, from 13 partners. 23 deployments were carried out with cost-sharing agreements between UNHCR operations and Standby Partners.

In addition to regular bilateral discussions with Standby Partners, UNHCR participated actively in the <u>Standby Partnership Network</u> and the <u>International Humanitarian Partnership</u>.

### **Deployment trends**

NORCAP, SDC, MSB, and CANADEM contributed the most deployments and the most working days in 2024, as in 2023. Deployments to country operations mainly related to:

- shelter and site planning (19%)
- protection (16%),
- energy and environment (13%),
- information management (13%).

51% of deployments were for refugee operations, 36% were for IDP operations, and 14% were for mixed population operations. (In 2023, refugee and IDP operations both received an equal number of deployments, with only 6% of Standby Partner deployments going to mixed population operations).

In 2024 Standby Partners were deployed to 10 countries that did not receive a deployment in 2023. Chad received the greatest number, with 10 deployments in 2024 compared only two in 2023. Chad, Ethiopia, and Ukraine had the largest number of active Standby Partner deployments in 2024 and 2023.

# Thank you to our 2024 active Standby Partners











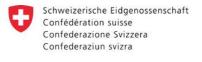












Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC





### 2024 in review

#### Overview

\$9.5 MILLION TOTAL IN-KIND SUPPORT FROM STANDBY PARTNERS

149 EMERGENCY STANDBY PARTNER DEPLOYMENTS FACILITATED BY UNHCR

..64 NEW DEPLOYMENTS IN 2024

·85 DEPLOYMENTS
THAT BEGAN
BEFORE 2024

38 COUNTRY
OPERATIONS
SUPPORTED BY STANDBY
PARTNERS

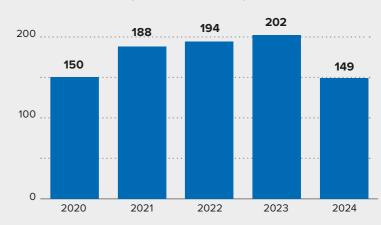
#### **Emergency Declarations in 2024**

- UNHCR responded to 43 emergencies in 25 different countries
- 26 new emergencies were declared in 20 different countries
- The situation in Sudan alone required 6 emergency declarations
- Egypt, Mali, Niger, Chad, and South Sudan all had more than one emergency declaration in 2024

#### Monthly trends of new deployments in 2024

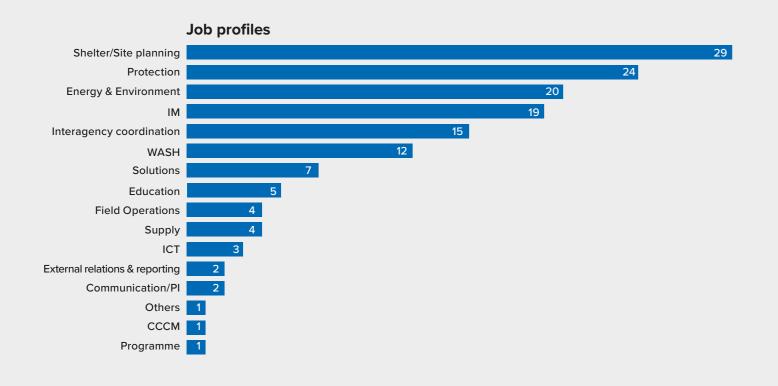


#### **Trend of Standby Partner deployments**



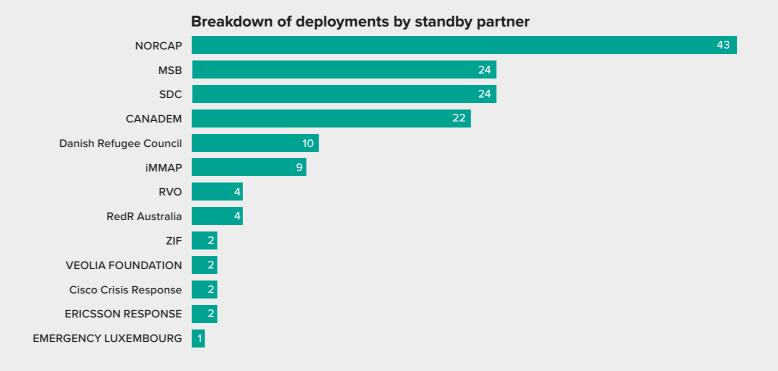
2024 IN REVIEW

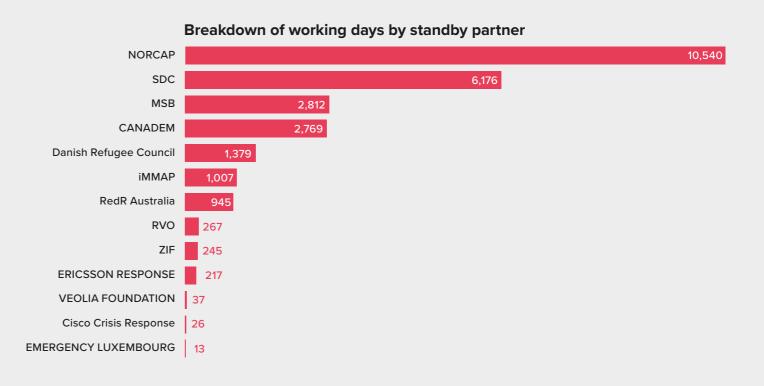
### 2024 Standby Partner deployments



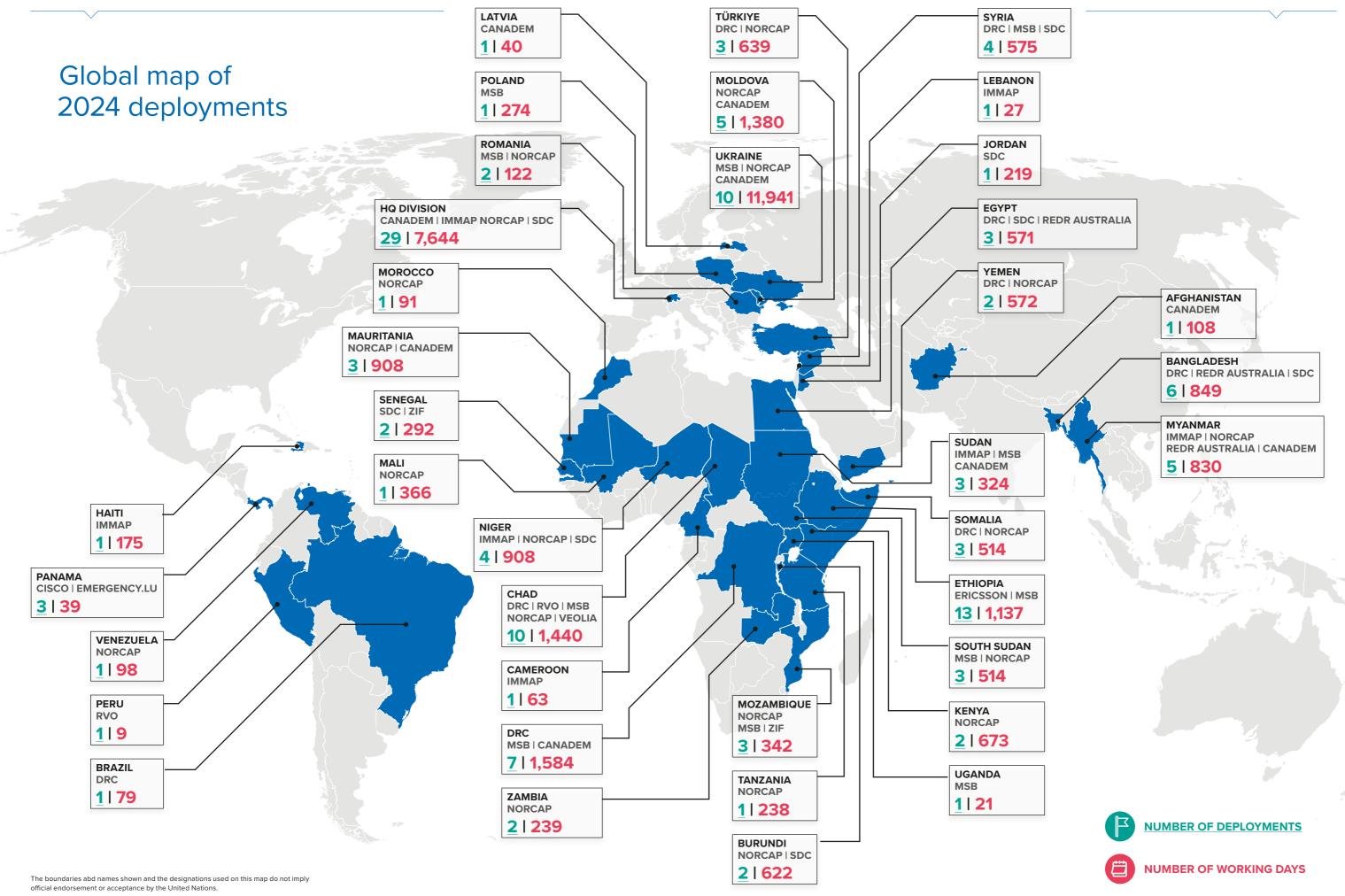
### Country operations with the most deployments Ethiopia Chad Ukraine DRC Bangladesh Moldova Sudan Myanmar Syria Niger South Sudan Türkiye Egypt Panama Mozambique

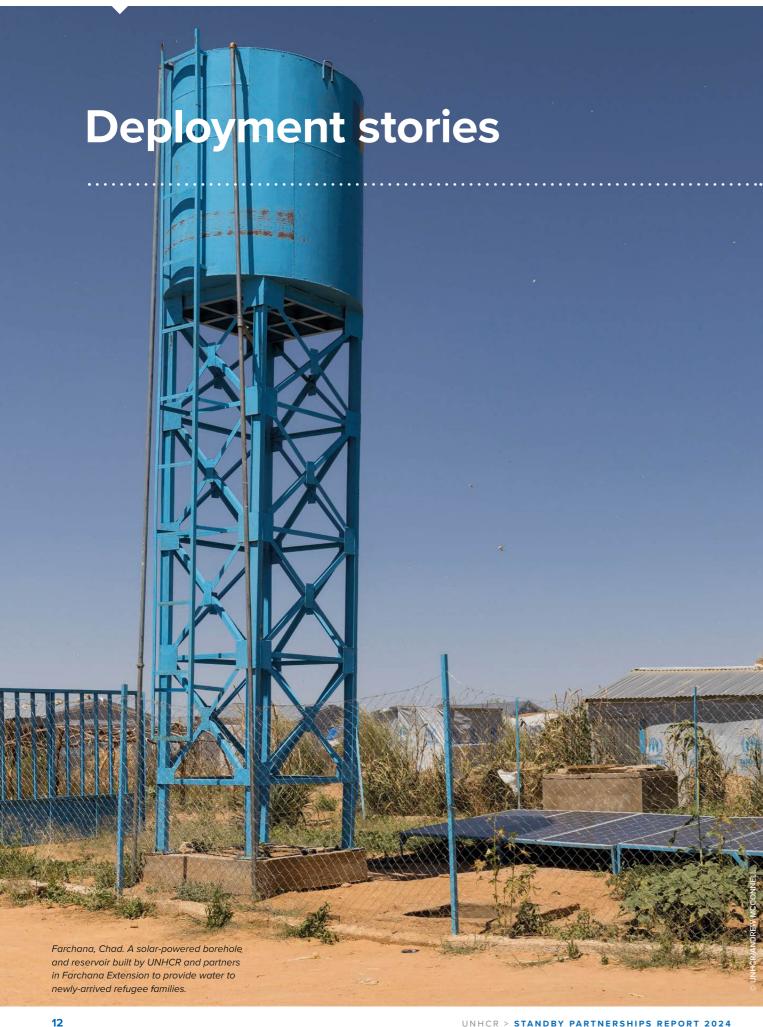






2024 IN REVIEW







# Danish Refugee Council: WASH expertise in Chad



Eric Mugabo:

WASH Officer deployed by Danish Refugee Council

Chad has a welcoming policy towards refugees and is one of the top refugee-hosting countries globally, with almost 1.3 million refugees at the end of 2024. Refugees continue to arrive from Sudan in extreme need of protection and assistance, which is why UNHCR relies on Standby Partners to deploy highly skilled individuals with experience and expertise in emergency situations.

Eric Mugabo was deployed by the **Danish** Refugee Council to coordinate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in refugee settlement in Ouaddaï province, eastern Chad, his third such deployment to UNHCR operations. While the WASH sector coordination was handed over to UNICEF in December 2024, Eric continued to support WASH sectoral coordination and UNHCR's partner activities. Motivated by the opportunity to change people's lives for the better, he helped to plan and coordinate the installation of water systems and construction of latrines. He provided guidance on community participation for the construction of family latrines in the refugee settlements. He also strengthened the capacity of partners in emergency water quality monitoring to ensure potable water is provided in refugee settlements, thereby reducing waterborne diseases.

Other experts enhanced the WASH activities coordinated by Eric. **The Geneva Technical Hub** provided vital advice on drilling boreholes, helping to enhance the success rate of drilling in the Farchana sites. **Veolia Foundation**, another Standby Partner, helped review the design of the water network system in the camps, suggesting ways to improve the water pressure and reduce costs. "They helped us reduce the number of storage tanks and the size of water networks which were planned in different sites. You can imagine how big of a budget saving that was," says Eric.

Standby Partnerships benefit the organization, says Eric, since they have had exposure to different situations and that experience contributes to innovative solutions. Eric feels fully integrated in the UNHCR operation, citing the level of teamwork and trust, and the support available.

# GTH: enhancing humanitarian work with technical know-how

The Geneva Technical Hub (GTH), funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), was established in 2021 to enhance the technical expertise available to UNHCR operations. In 2024, SDC supported the Hub with 10 experts. The GTH plays a crucial role in ensuring displaced populations are resilient and prepared in the face of climate shocks and disasters, and in minimizing environmental damage. This is life-saving work, since people who have been forced to flee are often among the most vulnerable populations globally and among the most at risk from floods, droughts and natural disasters, and they may be in an extreme environment or remote location with no support except for UNHCR and our partners.

In partnership with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), the GTH finalized and field-tested the Flood Risk Mitigation Toolbox, which will support UNHCR field staff, partners, and other practitioners to ensure there are adequate flood risk mitigation measures in humanitarian settlements

The UNHCR Shelter Sustainability Assessment
Tool, developed by GTH to support decisions on
the design and procurement of shelters, received
42 completed data entries indicating different
shelter types around the world, with an equal
distribution of emergency, transitional and durable
shelters. The East and Horn of Africa has the
highest number of the data entries (15), followed
by Asia and Pacific (12).

GTH partnered with the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag) to develop "Is biogas a feasible option?", offering guidelines on evaluating biogas as a potential energy source in humanitarian contexts. The guide explores the benefits of biogas, the types of waste that can be used to create it, and the technology and process for doing so. GTH and Eawag also developed "Guidelines for the safe disposal of solid waste in humanitarian contexts", together with a landfill area estimation tool.



# The Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS)

UNHCR coordinates the Refugee Emergency
Telecommunications Sector (RETS), which
provides internet access and security
telecommunications services for the humanitarian
community in refugee emergencies. UNHCR and
RETS work with Standby Partners such as the
Government of Luxembourg/emergency.lu,
Ericsson Response, Cisco Crisis Response and
MSB to ensure reliable connectivity, delivery of
aid and protection services to people forced to
flee, and the effective coordination of emergency
responses.

Internet access is a necessity for humanitarian work. It enables key services such as refugee registration, legal assistance, food distribution, and cash-based interventions, especially in areas with little or no infrastructure. Reliable connectivity and security telecommunications also enhance the safety of aid workers, allowing quick emergency responses and secure communications in remote locations.

With critical support from Standby Partners in 2024, UNHCR provided critical connectivity to displaced communities and humanitarian teams in Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Moldova, Niger, Panama, South Sudan, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.







# emergency.lu & Cisco Crisis Response deployments to Panama



Alain Lang

Senior ICT & Telecom Expert deployed by emergency.lu



**Matthew Altman:** 

Technical Systems Engineering Lead deployed by Cisco Crisis Response

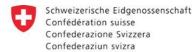
In May 2024, Alain Lang from emergency.lu, Matt Altman and Joseph Harrisson from Cisco Crisis **Response** deployed to Panama for the <u>Darien</u> Connectivity Project which is also supported by Ericsson Response. This mission aimed to install satellite-based internet equipment in three locations across Panama to provide internet services for the local community, schools, and Panama Government agencies. "At the time of the deployment, more than 1,000 refugees were arriving daily at one of the sites, which only had a population of about 450 people," Alain says. "We had to take a canoe to get there, and the closest site was 2.5 hours away and the furthest journey took five hours to get there." The local community, already small and remote, faced immense challenges in accommodating the influx of people. The internet services provided were crucial for the refugees to contact their families and the local residents to maintain their daily lives and access necessary services.

Matt has been a part of the Cisco Crisis Response team since 2006 and is motivated by "not just providing information but providing normalcy to people". Connectivity is essential for basic life, but also for knowing what services are available and getting help in security situations. The team had to

leave early each day to ensure they got back to base before dark, but they worked quickly and setting up the equipment went well. Travelling to work by canoe was a first, but the canoes were large and they felt safe.

The connectivity solution is creating new opportunities in the lives of the local community. Matt says the satellites give the community, especially the schools, an opportunity to keep up with the ever-changing technology sphere. "It's important to highlight that these services are free," says Alain. "They can just use it and don't have to worry."

The strengths and resources of the partner organizations and UNHCR came together to create new opportunities in a local community that was otherwise disconnected from the world. "It's combining all the resources you have to provide one solution," Alain says. This initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration and technology in addressing complex humanitarian crises.



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

### SDC Deployment in Support of Localization



Nadja Güggi:

Localization specialist deployed by SDC to UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

UNHCR, like many other humanitarian organizations, has pledged to advance the localization of its response, which means enhancing agency of national or local actors, including ones set up by refugees or other people who are directly affected. Localization generally involves rebalancing power and resources, including through supporting existing response capacity, fostering mutual learning between local and international actors, and removing barriers to leadership and participation. The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) deployed Nadja

Güggi, a localization specialist, to the NGO and Civil Society team in UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, to support UNHCR's localizations efforts.

Nadja's previous experience included two years in Haiti supporting OCHA with the emergency response there. "I felt from my experience in Haiti that the humanitarian system in general must do more to work more locally and give ownership and leadership to local partners." She is wary of defining localization too narrowly. "For me, it's about respecting the responsibility and leadership of local actors and existing mechanisms while understanding the gaps where the international system can support until no longer needed."

Nadja worked on the Multi-Stakeholder Pledge on Advancing Localization in Displacement and Statelessness Responses, which was backed by 43 signatories. Inputs came from member States, UN agencies, international NGOs, local and national NGOs, and refugee-led organizations. "Together we came up with concrete commitments

on what the various actors should do to advance localization specifically for refugees, IDPs, and stateless people", says Nadja. After the pledge was launched in December 2023, the focus moved to developing suitable indicators that help monitoring progress on pledge implementation.

Nadja's second task consists of developing the localization guidelines for UNHCR, which meant consulting widely, both inside and outside UNHCR. "We want to develop concrete recommendations on how UNHCR's HQ, Regional Bureaux and country operations can strengthen their efforts in how they collaborate and partner with local and national actors, while applying a common approach. We then want to support them in implementing the recommendations."

A pivotal moment during Nadja's deployment was when a member of the Advisory Board to the Task Team on engagement with organizations led by displaced and stateless persons, which Nadja co-chairs, spoke at a global event in Geneva. When supporting him in preparing his statement, he said "You know, as refugees, we just want to be heard." Soon after the event, he reached out overwhelmed and grateful, explaining: "For the first time, I felt like I'm being heard."

Nadja believes that Standby Partners bring in an external point of view and network that benefits the team, and she appreciated the collaboration with SDC during her deployment, which was an enriching chance to compare how different organizations approach localization challenges. "It helps to see how others are doing it."

17



# ZIF deployment bolsters shelter in West and Central Africa



#### **Patrick Poehlmann:**

Senior Shelter Officer deployed by the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF).

UNHCR has seven Regional Bureaux overseeing operations around the world. In Dakar, Senegal, the West and Central Africa Regional Bureau covers an area of the continent with almost 14 million forcibly displaced and stateless people at the end of 2024, and fragile economies contending with multiple humanitarian crises. Patrick Poehlmann was deployed as a Senior Shelter Officer by the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) to the Regional Bureau from August 2023 until March 2024. UNHCR is the biggest implementing agency for humanitarian shelter operations in the region.

After joining the ZIF Expert Pool in 2021, Patrick was invited by UNHCR to participate in the 2022 Workshop on Emergency Management (WEM), which prepares active Emergency Response Team roster members for emergency missions. In Senegal, he was involved in regional shelter reporting and policies, and developed a regional shelter and settlement strategy for UNHCR, which outlined the core elements to consider when designing shelter strategies. The strategy left room for the development of local shelter strategies according to the local context, and Patrick supported country operations with planning and implementing their shelter activities, and was available if they needed technical

support. Patrick's contribution included context analysis, ensuring coherence in the shelter response, validating indicators and estimating budgets.

Patrick also worked with colleagues in external relations to develop fundraising proposals for the shelter sector, and with the information management team to set up a dashboard to collect data on shelter and the distribution of core relief items across the region. Towards the end of his deployment, he worked with colleagues in Geneva to set up a week-long training course on shelter and settlement in French.

As a development and humanitarian professional, Patrick recommends the experience of being deployed through the Standby Partnership mechanism and ZIF. Although a short-term deployee, he felt like a true UNHCR colleague, Patrick remains a member of the ZIF expert Pool. Currently, he manages a GIZ water programme in the United Republic of Tanzania.





# MSB strengthens shelter and health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Youssouf Abdelsadick:

Shelter Cluster Officer deployed by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB).

The emergency in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. Decades of clashes between the Congolese armed forces and various non-State armed groups, widespread violations of human rights, and devastating incidents of gender-based violence have caused unprecedented levels of humanitarian needs, increased vulnerabilities and protection risks, displacing 7 million people within the country and forcing more than 1 million to seek asylum beyond the country's borders.

Youssouf Abdelsadick was deployed to Bukavu in South Kivu province by the **Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)** in 2024 as Shelter Cluster Coordinator. The massive displacement, heavy flooding, and health crises all combined to create an extremely complicated humanitarian situation.

As Shelter Cluster Coordinator, Youssouf led the shelter response, mobilizing partners and developing strategies aligned with UNHCR standards while ensuring that staff and partners had the knowledge and capacity to implement them effectively. He also prioritized the integration of environmental considerations into shelter planning, promoting sustainable and resilient solutions.

"At MSB that is a very important aspect that we make sure is taken into consideration,"

Youssouf says.

Amid the ongoing mpox epidemic, which has made the Democratic Republic of the Congo the country with the highest number of cases globally, Youssouf played a pivotal role in coordinating the response to cholera, mpox, and Ebola. Working with partners in infrastructure and WASH, he focused on improving shelter and sanitation conditions despite limited resources, helping to mitigate the spread of disease. "We worked to improve the shelter and WASH conditions to prevent transmission," says Youssouf, adding that he is proud of "the little contribution I made to save lives".





**OPERATED BY NRC** 

# NORCAP brings power, water and hope in Mauritania



#### **Fabrice Igor Chuente:**

Energy and Environment Technical Expert deployed by NORCAP.



#### **Carol Mungo:**

Associate Energy and Environment Expert deployed as part of NORCAP's female accelerator program, an effort to increase the number of female experts within the humanitarian energy sector.

Mauritania continues to receive thousands of Malians fleeing the humanitarian and security crisis in Mali. Malian refugee numbers doubled in 2024 to reach almost 290,000. Local resources are under great strain, exacerbated by severe desertification and drought, and crop damage and soil erosion are making it hard for rural households to survive.

These unique climate challenges prompted UNHCR to seek expert assistance from **NORCAP**, which deployed Fabrice Igor Chuente to the country office in the capital, Nouakchott, and Carol Mungo to the field office in Bassikounou, close to the Malian border which oversees Mbera refugee camp.

When they arrived, the Mbera camp and UNHCR offices were using diesel-powered generators for electricity. Igor conducted an assessment and recommended switching to solar energy. The camp and the offices now both use solar power. Students in the camp's 10 schools can now learn use IT equipment to learn.

Water is a major concern in the camp, and used to be pumped from diesel-powered boreholes, consuming costly fuel and producing significant carbon dioxide emissions. Under Project Flow, a UNHCR initiative supported by Grundfos Foundation and the Danish and German governments to solarize boreholes, the operation managed to cut the cost of supplying water to the camp, the community, and their livestock - their main source of income. Solarizing water also allows the cultivation of vegetables such as carrots, eggplants, and legumes. This generates income, reduces food insecurity and improves social cohesion between refugees and host communities, who worked together to create 45 hectares of forest from land consisting of primarily sand dunes. "Many people who come to Mauritania don't imagine you can grow things in this Sahelian context," says Carol.

Carol and Igor also worked on "Cash for Gas", a project to get refugees to cook with LPG gas instead of firewood, and around 1,000 households received cash to buy gas cylinders. As well as reducing competition for scarce resources and protecting the environment, the switch created a market for gas, stimulating the local economy.



"Cash for Gas is a good model for UNHCR and they want to replicate it for all other operations in the Sahel," says Igor.

Carol also took aim at the use of single-use plastic in the office, an ambitious target in such a hot climate, where people often drink from plastic water bottles. Her team surveyed the level of understanding about single-use plastic within the operation and presented the results to management, with the result that UNHCR switched to reusable water bottles and installed water dispensers, with no more plastic bottles in the office.

Both Carol and Igor feel fully integrated into the UNHCR operation. "Each idea we present is received by colleagues and we work together to see if it's feasible," says Igor. The work that Igor and Carol are doing with UNHCR in Mauritania, through the support of NORCAP, is changing the lives of refugees and host communities sustainably.



### RedR Australia helps protect vulnerable people displaced by Myanmar's conflict through the Standby Partnership



#### Kwanghee Kim Kay:

Disability Inclusion Community-Based Protection Officer deployed by RedR Australia for the Australia Assists Program.



#### Clementina Ashu:

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Officer deployed by RedR Australia for the Australia Assists Program.

In 2017, hundreds of thousands of stateless Rohingya fled from massive violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State and undertook a difficult and dangerous journey to reach safety in Bangladesh. Nearly 1 million are still hosted in Bangladesh, mainly in Cox's Bazar, in the world's largest refugee camp.

Community-based protection (CBP) is vital for addressing the complex needs of these refugees. Kwanghee Kim Kay was deployed as a Disability Inclusion CBP Officer to Cox's Bazar, and found refugees in the camp, particularly people with disabilities, faced barriers to accessing basic services. His role focused on ensuring that people with disabilities were included in protection efforts and humanitarian programming.

Clementina Ashu was deployed as Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Officer to Yangon, Myanmar, aiming to strengthen the affected communities and ensure they participate and are empowered through UNHCR programmes. Also, she supported the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless persons from violence and abuse, promoting access to proper humanitarian services, and building resilience.

Both Kay and Clementina were deployed by **RedR Australia**, and their deployments were made possible as part of the Australian Government's **Australia Assists** programme.

The humanitarian response to the Myanmar emergency is beset by underfunding, making it vital to find creative ways of making an impact. Forcibly displaced and stateless persons are directly involved in their own protection. To ensure that refugees with disabilities are included in the conversation, Kay researched steps taken by other operations to make their programming more accessible without straining limited resources. "I showed there's so many things we can do with the resources we have, and we need to develop tailored programmes to tackle the specific needs and challenges people with disabilities face," Kay says.

Kay developed strategies for disability inclusion. "We established 33 self-help groups composed of people with disabilities and caregivers. We had more than 1,200 members. This was the first ever structure that we made to empower people with disabilities and their caregivers." More than 4,000 refugees were working with UNHCR as volunteers,



playing an important role in sharing information in their own languages. "They are like the first responders to emergency situations."

Kay noticed that there were no refugee volunteers with disabilities on the volunteer roster, and he worked to capacitate people with disabilities to be a part of the programme and added people with disabilities to the roster. After these efforts, they found 6% of the community volunteers identified as having a disability. Their amazing contribution, as active agents making a positive difference in the community, helped to change attitudes towards people with disabilities more effectively than "providing a PowerPoint and asking people to change their mindset," Kay says.

A challenge for the operation's accountability to affected persons within Myanmar was maintaining the contact with people served by UNHCR due to continuous displacement. Clementina says the solution is to equip people with the skills and knowledge that they need to protect and support themselves, so that losing touch with UNHCR does not mean losing all their resilience. Along with UNHCR's continuous efforts to maintain communication channels open in the field, the building of resilience within communities is key to the ongoing response in Myanmar.



# Danish Refugee Council brings an agile response to a changing Syria



Juliana Coelho:

Deployed as Coordinator of the Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster for the whole of Syria by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

After almost 14 years of war, the Syrian crisis may be at an inflection point, but many millions of Syrians remain displaced, within the country and around the region, and the need for humanitarian assistance and protection is still vast.

Juliana Coelho was deployed by the **Danish** Refugee Council to Damascus to serve as Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) Cluster Coordinator for the whole of Syria. The collapse of the previous government led by Bashar al-Assad has triggered a restructuring of the humanitarian response, to meet needs including shelter, access to electricity, livelihood, food, de-mining for safe returns, protection, health, education and access to water. Juliana's role is to support development strategies and calculate the needs specifically for shelter and NFIs, by carrying out advocacy, providing technical support, building the capacity of partners and teams on the ground, and harmonizing technical documents to guide the response of shelter and NFI activities.

Juliana travelled outside Damascus to areas destroyed in the war, and to meet Syrians receiving shelter assistance and emergency relief items. Listening to their stories was hard, but real. "On one side you see vibrant and vivid area, and the on other side you see a destroyed ghost town full of memories of the people who left a long time ago," she says.

The change of government happened so fast that it is still unclear how to deliver humanitarian assistance in some areas. When she arrived in Damascus, the focus was on providing dignified shelter for displaced people living in camps and hoping for a chance to go home. Now it is about repairing, rehabilitating and reconstructing the homes of people who are returning, and protecting people without homes from the harsh winter. More than 280,000 refugees have already returned from outside Syria. "In November and December 2024, we supported 150 individuals with shelter, 61,000 with NFI, and more than 280,000 with winter NFI," Juliana says.

Partnerships are about having competent experts and making fast deployments, a boost to the UNHCR operation on the ground, Juliana says, especially in a fast-changing environment like Syria. "Syrians are extraordinary people with huge sense of community, incredible capacity, abilities, resilience. They are also people who deserve peace and in this new face of the country the humanitarian efforts are crucial to support Syria, and those that arrived here, and those that plan to come back."





**OPERATED BY NRC** 

# NORCAP supports transition to social protection in Ukraine



#### Nataliia Madzigon:

Associate Durable Solutions Officer deployed to Ukraine as part of NORCAP's approach to localization by supporting national authorities.

The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has resulted in a huge humanitarian crisis and the displacement of around one in three Ukrainians. 3.7 million are displaced within the country and 6.9 million are refugees.

After the initial emergency response, the race to provide life-saving assistance and protection is increasingly complemented with efforts to ensure that forcibly displaced people are supported through national systems, which requires central and local government to deliver services and provide social protection, health care, and affordable housing.

Nataliia, who is Ukrainian, was deployed to assist in the transfer of humanitarian activities to the State social protection system, along with colleagues from UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Nataliia assessed the gaps in the authorities' capacity to take over such activities, and how national NGOs could support them.

Nataliia was involved in a study to assess how easy it was for Ukrainians to access the State social payment system, which includes a guaranteed minimum income, housing utility costs, an allowance for internally displaced people, and payment for people with disabilities. The Access Study, which was supported by UNHCR and other agencies, was a quantitative assessment of more than 250,000 people's experiences, building a comprehensive picture of problems that people face in accessing services across different regions of Ukraine.

"There are some areas in the east with no infrastructure where people can physically go and apply for social payments, while in western Ukraine the infrastructure is there but the barriers could be things like working hours or excessive physical accessibility issues," says Nataliia. The study revealed that the number of eligible people was 50% higher than those actually receiving payments, an important finding for the government. The final report included recommendations for the government, humanitarian and development sectors, and financial advice and advocacy steps for international NGOs and national NGOs that can improve Ukrainians' access to services.

Nataliia says her experience shows how Standby Partnerships can enable UNHCR to call on outside expertise as required. "People quickly come in, get to work, complete their tasks, and then leave to another project." She felt supported by both NORCAP and UNHCR during her deployment, including support for her well-being during and after heavy attacks.



# UNHCR Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment – 2024 highlights

Since 2018, UNHCR has had a dedicated team to coordinate and guide our approach to tackling sexual misconduct, both sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH).

UNHCR is a member of ClearCheck, which prevents the re-hire of perpetrators within the UN system, and uses a similar tool for NGO partners, the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS). Both are mandatory for all international recruitment, including deployment of Standby Partner experts.

In May 2024, UNHCR published its "Policy on addressing sexual misconduct", codifying a common standard of conduct for all Agency personnel and outlining the available and appropriate measures in place for addressing sexual misconduct.

UNHCR's takes a victim-centred approach, where the needs, well-being, and expressed wishes of victims are central to all prevention and response efforts. UNHCR's Victim Care Team, comprising two clinical psychologists, provide psychosocial support, guidance and accompaniment to victims of sexual harassment, as well as advice and guidance to managers on situations of sexual misconduct.

UNHCR's NotOnlyMe platform is a confidential mechanism allowing victims of sexual harassment to report the incident via an encrypted online matching escrow system and anonymously be alerted if someone else has recorded their harasser. The tool also allows the user to anonymously chat with a Victim Care Officer for support and guidance.

In June 2024, based on identified risk areas and in response to requests for operational support, UNHCR transitioned from requiring a single completion of UN mandatory learning on PSEA to requiring all personnel to complete the training every three years.

Read more on how UNHCR is <u>tackling sexual</u> exploitation, abuse and harassment.

### **Afterword**

### from Lauren Cheshire, Standby Partnership Network Coordinator

Dear Partners,

2024 was yet another year of immense challenges and evolving humanitarian needs. With growing displacement driven by protracted conflicts, climate-related crises, and emerging emergencies, the role of Standby Partnerships has never been more critical.

The Standby Partner Network (SBPN) remains a cornerstone of humanitarian surge capacity, and UNHCR, as a major receiving agency, continues to lead and innovate, playing a pivotal role in enhancing remote deployments, improving onboarding practices, and refining impact measurement.

In 2024, UNHCR facilitated the deployment of 28 different expert profiles to its country operations, using a "right people, right place, right time" approach. Standby Partners made a significant impact in Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan in particular. The demand for protection, site planning, and energy & environment specialists remained high, underscoring the evolving operational needs of the humanitarian landscape.

However, the scale of global displacement continues to outpace available resources. In 2025, securing adequate funding will be essential to ensure we can expand our deployment capacity and respond swiftly to emerging crises. We urge donors and partners to continue investing in this critical mechanism, which allows UNHCR and its Standby Partners to deliver life-saving expertise where and when it is needed most. As humanitarian needs expand, our partnerships must evolve.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the 20 Standby Partner organizations that have signed standby agreements with UNHCR to contribute deployments and in-kind support. Your expertise, commitment, and adaptability make a tangible difference in the lives of displaced communities worldwide.

We look forward to another year of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to ensuring effective, impactful, and principled humanitarian responses.

Lauren Cheshire

Standby Partnership Network Coordinator



### **Donor Acknowledgement**

UNHCR extends its thanks to our public and private donors who donated to specific emergencies, ongoing crises and provided flexible funding for emergencies in 2024. Your support has been invaluable to help and protect millions of people forced to flee due to new and ongoing crises.

Donors that contributed \$500,000 or above to specific new emergencies, ongoing crises and general emergency preparedness and response in 2024:

Australia

Austria Canada

Central Emergency Response Fund

China

Country-based pooled funds

Denmark
Education
Cannot Wait
European Union

Finland France

Germany Iceland Ireland

Italy
Japan
Jersey

Kuwait Luxembourg

New Zealand Norway

Poland Qatar

Republic of Korea Saudi Arabia

Spain Sweden Switzerland

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland

United States of America

Adyen N.V.

Australia for UNHCR
Dutch Postcode Lottery
España con ACNUR
German Postcode Lottery
H&M Hennes & Mauritz GBC AB

Inter IKEA Group Japan for UNHCR Lengkeek Family

LetterOne Investment Holdings SA Pepsi Lipton International Ltd

Saïd Foundation Silvia Lee

Silvid Lee

Sheikha Fatima Fund for Refugee Women

Sweden for UNHCR Swedish Postcode Lottery Switzerland for UNHCR The Big Heart Foundation

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Mastercard Foundation

The Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global

UNHCR > STANDBY PARTNERSHIPS REPORT 2024

Initiatives
UK for UNHCR
UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe
USA for UNHCR

32

### unhcr.org



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

