



Global Route-Based Migration Programme 2025-2030

A route-based approach to humanitarian assistance and protection for people on the move in Africa



CONTENTS

IFRC Approach to Migration and Displacement	1
Voices from the field	2
Global Route-Based Migration Programme: People Supported	3
The Challenge	5
Proposed Solution	6
The Global Route-Based Migration Programme in Africa	8
Achievements and milestones	9
National Societies support along the route in Africa	10
Annex I	17
Annex II	18

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Contact us:

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Address: Chemin des Crêts 17, Petit-Saconnex, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal address: P.O. Box 303, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland

T +41 (0)22 730 42 22 | **F** +41 (0)22 730 42 00 | **C** secretariat@ifrc.org | **W** ifrc.org



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IFRC APPROACH TO MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

The IFRC's approach to Migration is strictly humanitarian and aligned with its Fundamental Principles. It focuses on the needs, vulnerabilities and potential of migrants, irrespective of their legal status, type or category.

The "deliberately broad" approach of the IFRC to the concept of 'migrant' aims to cover all people who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects, irrespective of their legal status. Therefore, while recognising the specific rights of different groups under international law (such as refugees and asylum seekers), it addresses the needs of and risks faced by all types of migrants including labor migrants, stateless migrants, migrants deemed irregular by

public authorities as well as refugees and asylum seekers.

This inclusive description reflects the Movement's focus on needs and vulnerabilities and emphasises that all migrants are entitled to protection under several bodies of law. The Movement does not seek to encourage, discourage or dissuade migration.

This approach is complemented by the Movement's 2009 Policy on Internal Displacement, which reaffirms the longstanding commitment and practice of addressing the needs of individuals and communities affected by internal displacement.

“

In our response to the Sudan crisis, Humanitarian Service Points have proven essential. They allow us to reach people on the move — refugees, returnees, and displaced families — with life-saving assistance, protection, and reliable information in safe and dignified spaces. This mechanism ensures that even in the most complex and fluid situations, no one is left behind.

Allamine Yacoub, Program coordinator, Chad Red Cross

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“

The introduction of Humanitarian Service Points has provided a more humane and supportive environment for migrants, offering them the services and assistance they need in these challenging circumstances. It has proven to be immensely beneficial for migrants. It has become a reliable place they can turn to for assistance, and they often refer their friends as well. As volunteers we focus on building strong relationships with the migrants to rebuild trust, and where possible, we develop genuine friendships with them.

Volunteer, The Gambia Red Cross

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The team saw a group of two people just sitting on the ground with no tree for shade, nothing around them. They stopped and brought them food and water. The migrants told the team: 'if you did not come we would have died here'. This is a great example of dedication and humanity.

Oumalkaire Houssein, Restoring Family Links Coordinator and Migration Focal Point, Djibouti Red Crescent

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“

Humanitarian diplomacy is all about building bridges between the needs of migrants and the decisions of the authorities. As we have often said, 'without dialogue, there can be no lasting protection

Mohamed Lemine Aiba, Migration Coordinator, Mauritanian Red Crescent

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**The Global
Route-Based
Migration
Programme in
Africa supported**

2,002,150

**PEOPLE ON
THE MOVE**

in 2022-2024



THE CHALLENGE

The African continent is traversed by three major migration corridors that continue to shape regional and international mobility trends.

The **Atlantic route** remains a critical pathway towards the Canary Islands, with increasing numbers of people departing from the coasts of Senegal, The Gambia, and Mauritania. Despite heightened controls and maritime surveillance, departures continue, driven by economic hardship, instability, and climate-related shocks. This route remains one of the deadliest, with a sharp increase in lives lost at sea. In 2024, over 46,877 migrants arrived in Spain's Canary Islands, marking the highest annual figure on record.¹ and that same year at least 10,457 people died or disappeared trying to reach Spain by maritime routes.²

The **Mediterranean routes**, comprising both the Centra, Eastern and Western corridors, continue to serve as primary gateways to Europe. The **Central route** runs through Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso into Libya, and onward to Italy. Although this route has historically been the most frequented, detections along this corridor fell by 70% in 2024, with about 33,500 crossings recorded due to intensified EU-funded border control and cooperation with Libyan authorities.³ The **Western corridor** traverses Mali towards Algeria and Morocco and then crosses to Spain. In 2024 it saw an almost unchanged level of illegal border crossings. Nationals of Algeria, Morocco and Mali accounted for majority of all detections. The **Eastern corridor** includes movements towards the Greeks Islands and Peninsula and Cyprus as well as

through Türkiye and Belarus. It's the second largest corridor, mainly transited by central Asian from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan but also Egyptians and Sudanese.

The **Eastern route towards the Gulf** remains one of the busiest and most dangerous corridors, despite the little attention it gets. Migrants, primarily from Ethiopia and Somalia, travel through Djibouti and Somalia, crossing the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and on to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. In 2024, more than 446,000 movements were recorded along this corridor, representing a 13% increase from 2023.⁴ Migrants face extreme risks including violence, trafficking, and detention, especially in Yemen and at the Gulf border crossings.⁵

In all three corridors, the compounding effects of **conflict, climate change, and poverty** continue to fuel displacement. In the Sahel, more than 5.9 million people are currently internally displaced, and over 2.1 million are refugees due to ongoing violence and instability.⁶ In Eastern Africa, over 24 million people are displaced, including 18.8 million IDPs and 5.7 million refugees, making it one of the most complex humanitarian settings globally.

¹According to preliminary data published by the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)

²DALV2024_EN-WEB.pdf

³Africa Center, 2025

⁴IOM, 2025

⁵Modern Diplomacy, 2025

⁶OCHA, May 2025

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CONTINUATION OF SUPPORT: FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME

In response to increasing humanitarian needs across key migratory routes, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched its Global Route Based Migration Programme in 2021⁷. This multi-regional and multi-year programme, bringing together the humanitarian operations of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East regions, **aims to improve the security and dignity of a target population of approximately 400,000 migrants and host communities in the Africa region in the period 2025-2030**, ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected from harm and are able to meet their basic needs.

The Global Route Based Migration Programme is working through a network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies facilitating a continuous and uninterrupted approach to the delivery of protection and humanitarian service delivery assistance along major migration routes. It also allows for the provision of an enabling environment for the seamless exchange of wide-ranging expertise and information as well as enhancing coordination, consistency and cross-border collaboration.

The programme is framed around three pillars:

1. Scaled up and **enhanced humanitarian assistance and protection** along migration routes, with a focus on humanitarian service points (HSP).
2. Enhanced capacities of National Societies at the local and community levels to assist and protect people on the move, including through **strengthening branches and cross-border collaboration** along migration routes.
3. **Global and local humanitarian diplomacy** and evidence-based advocacy to address humanitarian assistance and protection needs of people on the move along migration routes.

RATIONALE FOR EXTENSION

Four years after its initial launch, the second phase of the IFRC Global Route-Based Migration Programme in Africa continues to build on the foundations laid by 16 National Societies across West and Central Africa, East Africa, and the Sahel. This new phase aims to consolidate and deepen the programme's impact while maintaining its core vision: ensuring that people on the move can access humanitarian services in a safe, dignified, and consistent manner along key migratory routes.

Humanitarian assistance remains available at critical transit and destination points, enabling continuity of care and support as individuals cross borders and regions. Coordination and information sharing between National Societies and partners have been strengthened, fostering a more coherent and efficient response that spans across countries. As migration routes evolve, the programme adapts to these changes, ensuring that services remain relevant and accessible where they are most needed. Feedback mechanisms are embedded throughout the response, allowing communities to inform and shape the support they receive. This contributes to improving the quality of services over time and to ensuring they are truly people-centered.

A key focus of this second phase is to maintain a harmonized approach to service provision, aligning interventions with Movement standards and adapting them to the specific protection and assistance needs of people on the move. With a clear commitment to regional solidarity and operational collaboration, the route-based approach continues to position National Societies as essential responders along migratory routes—connecting needs to services and strengthening the humanitarian response at every stage of the journey.

TARGET REACH
400,000 PEOPLE/YEAR

RESOURCES REQUIRED
CHF 9 MILLION/YEAR

⁷IFRC Global Route Based Migration Programme

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

At the heart of the Global Route-Based Programme in Africa are three interlinked pillars, Humanitarian Assistance, Capacity Building and Coordination, and Advocacy, which continue to guide a harmonized and people-centered response across migratory routes. These pillars continue to provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the needs of people on the move, while strengthening National Societies' ability to deliver effective, relevant, and dignified support.

The first pillar, Humanitarian Assistance, focuses on ensuring the availability of **essential services to people on the move**, both in stable migratory corridors and in the context of emergency displacements. Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs), whether fixed or mobile, remain central to this approach—offering safe spaces where migrants can access immediate support such as information, food, water, basic first aid and essential non-food items. These entry points also facilitate referrals, psychosocial support, and protection services. Cash assistance is used strategically to meet basic needs and support livelihoods, including in crisis-affected areas and among returnees and stranded migrants. Restoring Family Links remains one of the key services provided in Humanitarian Service Points, allowing migrants to reconnect with their loved ones throughout their migration journeys.

Recognizing that most population movements are now influenced by climatic, political, and socio-economic stressors, the programme has started integrating anticipatory action approaches where feasible, combining risk analysis with readiness measures to support vulnerable mobile populations before crisis peaks. This includes pre-positioning assistance and alerting communities and training frontline responders when movement-related risks are likely to escalate.

The second pillar, **Capacity Building**, reinforces the ability of National Societies to provide quality and timely services at scale. This involves structured training for staff and volunteers in different thematic areas such as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), restoring family links (RFL), protection, and the management of Humanitarian Service Points. In addition, technical support is provided for the development of migration strategies and standard operating procedures that guide their work in

alignment with the Movement principles and approach to Migration and Displacement as well as operational realities. Peer learning and South-South exchanges including surge deployments to Population Movement emergencies across the continent are also one of the mechanisms to reinforce National Society capacity.

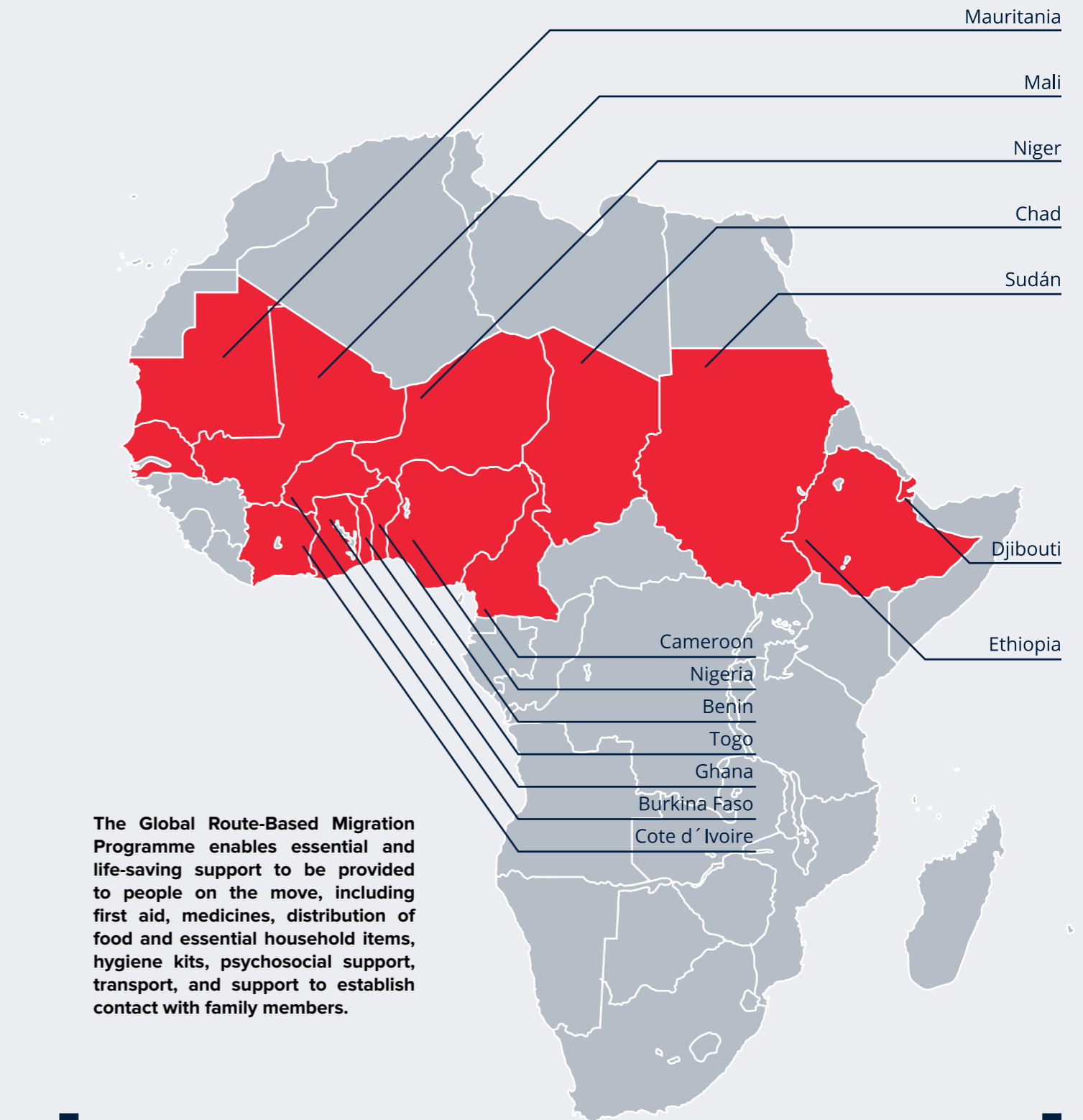
The support to the **sub-regional migration networks** such as the Sahel+ Migration Technical Group (GTMS) and the East Africa Migration Network (EAMN) continues to be a central tool to boost good practices, building collective capacity and ensuring regular cross-border exchange and collaboration.

The third pillar, **Advocacy and Coordination**, enhances the programme's ability to influence policy and ensure protection and access for people on the move. Humanitarian diplomacy remains a core activity, engaging local and national authorities to uphold migrant rights and support the delivery of essential services. National Societies actively engage in dialogue with governments at different levels (local, regional and national) to ensure and promote respect for the rights of migrants and to build awareness among authorities in these. In addition, National Societies also engage in international for a on migration such as the **UN network, the International Migration Review Forum** and the **Foundation for Humanitarian Action at Sea** and support global frameworks such as the **Global Compact for Migration**. These contribute to cross-border coordination platforms, helping to align responses and strengthen regional collaboration. Through NS's presence on national, regional, and international advocacy platforms, they promote the protection and rights of migrants, advocating for access to services without discrimination and for the recognition of their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Together, these pillars position the Route-Based Programme as a dynamic and adaptable model—able to provide services along established and emerging migration routes, respond to displacement crises, and prepare in advance for predictable movement-related risks. In doing so, the programme ensures that humanitarian support remains dignified and regionally coherent, even in the face of a rapidly evolving migration landscape.

MAP OF THE PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies part of the Programme:



The Global Route-Based Migration Programme enables essential and life-saving support to be provided to people on the move, including first aid, medicines, distribution of food and essential household items, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, transport, and support to establish contact with family members.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022-2024

The section below showcases the achievements and milestones of the implementation of the Global Route-Based Migration Programme in Africa in the period 2022-2024 with the intent to present the strengths of the Global Route-Based Migration Programme in Africa and its current approach of coordination and beyond.



2,002,150

Migrants supported



76

Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs) active



348,448

Members of host communities supported



1,746

Staff & volunteers received technical training



2

Active sub-regional migration networks



HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ALONG THE MIGRATION ROUTE IN AFRICA

The following section outlines some of the key areas of intervention and main achievements of the National Societies involved in the programme, across its three core pillars.

ETHIOPIA RED CROSS



© IFRC. Photo by Johannes Chinchilla

Since the start of the programme, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) has been among the most active National Societies in the region, offering comprehensive support to migrants, returnees, and host communities. Its operations have consistently combined humanitarian aid with durable solutions, including a strong livelihoods and reintegration component, such as savings groups (Village Savings Loan Associations -VSLA) for returnees.

In 2024, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) provided assistance to more than 139,000 people on the move.⁸ Services were offered through static and mobile Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs) and

included first aid, psychosocial support, Restoring Family Links (RFL), and referrals. ERCS also finalized and began implementing its National Society Migration Strategy which shaped the way in which the National Society operates on migration. Moreover, in April 2024, the NS hosted a training activity on the management of HSPs for several African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and later in the year, with the launch of the East Africa Migration Network, became the co-chair of the network. Ethiopia remains both a country of origin and return, with large-scale population movements influenced by economic hardship, conflict, and drought.

⁸Global Route-Based Migration Programme 2024 Annual Report

DJIBOUTI RED CRESCENT SOCIETY



© IFRC. Photo by Anne Wanjiru/IFRC

Over the past years and in response to the growing needs of people on the move in the Eastern Route, the Djibouti Red Crescent Society has scaled up its migration response through a number of activities. In particular through the regular operation of a mobile HSP operating in the route from Djibouti city southwards, more than 15,000 migrants received support including water, food, hygiene kits, and basic protection services in 2024, from around 2,100 reached in 2023. The National Society successfully secured new funding

from ECHO and received additional support from the Italian Red Cross, enabling operational expansion. Djibouti also became the first African National Society to draft an Early Action Protocol (EAP) for Population Movement, positioning it as a leader in anticipatory action for migration. Located on the Eastern Route, Djibouti continues to serve as a critical transit point for migrants moving from the Horn of Africa toward the Gulf.

SUDAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY



© IFRC. Photo by Anette Selmer-Andresen/IFRC

Despite an extremely challenging operational context, the Sudanese Red Crescent reached over 120,000 people on the move in 2024. Services focused on medical referrals, basic assistance, and humanitarian engagement at borders. The National Society drafted and updated its migration strategy and began using it to guide programming and advocacy. Through sustained

humanitarian diplomacy, it maintained access and dialogue with multiple stakeholders, despite the complex and fragmented political landscape. Sudan remains a major source and transit country for migration, with more than 2.8 million people having crossed international borders since the onset of the conflict in April 2023.

NIGER RED CROSS



© IFRC. Photo by Julien GOLDSTEIN

The Niger Red Cross has maintained a solid and consistent role in the Route-Based Migration Programme, operating along key migratory corridors such as Agadez. Over the years, the National Society has provided humanitarian assistance to both migrants in transit and returnees, with a focus on basic needs, protection, and referral services. While the scale of operations has been significant, the context has

remained complex, with political shifts and restrictions affecting humanitarian access and operations in recent cycles. Despite these challenges, the National Society has remained engaged in regional coordination and technical exchange, contributing to peer learning. Migrant flows along the Central Mediterranean route remain high, and growing needs have driven demand for both static and mobile service delivery models.

MALI RED CROSS



© IFRC. Photo by Sarah Oughton/IFRC

The Malian Red Cross has maintained steady support for people on the move throughout the programme, primarily in the conflict-affected north. It has delivered targeted aid to migrants and returnees mainly through a vast network of HSPs supported by different partners and helped strengthen protection mechanisms. Despite recurring access challenges, the

National Society has contributed to multiple regional peer-learning activities. As co-chair of the Sahel+ Migration Working Group, Mali has helped drive alignment across National Societies operating in the central Sahel. Migration through Mali remains heavily shaped by conflict, displacement, and climate-related pressures.

BURKINA FASO RED CROSS



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In 2024, the Burkinabe Red Cross supported over 1,000 people affected by displacement and migration. It maintained operations in conflict-affected regions and contributed to regional capacity building, including through staff deployments to peer National Societies. The National Society also provided

localized services through HSPs and engaged in planning and coordination for displacement-sensitive programming. Burkina Faso continues to host one of the largest internally displaced populations on the continent, which directly intersects with mobility and humanitarian access.

THE GAMBIA RED CROSS SOCIETY



© IFRC. Photo by Moustapha Diallo/IFRC

The Gambia Red Cross Society has shown consistent growth in its migration programming since the beginning of the initiative. Its mobile HSPs have supported tens of thousands of migrants, returnees, and host community members with a variety of services, from first aid, psychosocial. The National Society has also stood out for its strong volunteer training systems, having trained over 200 staff and volunteers on HSP operations and protection principles. Engagement in anticipatory planning and peer learning has further strengthened its role in the region.

In 2024, the Gambia Red Cross Society supported more than 13,000 migrants and 6,000 host community members through a network of mobile HSPs. Services included first aid, psychosocial support, hygiene kits, and CVA. The National Society engaged in regional preparedness planning and participated in peer trainings on anticipatory action. Gambia continues to experience both outward labour migration and returns, requiring integrated and coordinated services at community level.

MAURITANIA RED CRESCENT SOCIETY



© IFRC. Photo by Moustapha Diallo

Mauritania has become increasingly central to West Africa's migration landscape due to the intensification of movements along the Atlantic route. In recent years, the Mauritanian Red Crescent has significantly expanded its migration response capacity, combining direct assistance to migrants with strong coordination with authorities and international partners. In response to rising numbers of shipwrecks and maritime rescues, the National Society is now supported by the European Union to assist migrants rescued at sea, including at disembarkation points and transit centres. The National

Society has also activated a DREF for population movement and engaged in humanitarian diplomacy to improve reception conditions and referral systems, particularly in coastal regions. Beyond maritime flows, the MRC plays a growing role in supporting migrants—especially Malians—crossing the eastern border, where the regional insecurity continues to drive mobility. It has strengthened protection and Restoring Family Links mechanisms and benefited from peer-to-peer collaboration to reinforce its technical and operational capacity

SENEGAL RED CROSS SOCIETY



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The Senegalese Red Cross actively contributed to the Route-Based Migration Programme in 2023 and 2024, supporting people on the move through humanitarian assistance and referral services. While implementation remained modest in scale, the National Society played a central role in regional coordination as co-chair of

the Sahel+ Migration Working Group, contributing to harmonization of tools and joint action planning. Senegal also engaged in preparedness initiatives and anticipatory action dialogue, with growing relevance along the Atlantic route.

CHAD RED CROSS



© IFRC. Photo by Guillaume Binet

Chad's migration operations have significantly scaled up in response to cross-border movement caused by the Sudan crisis. The Red Cross of Chad has worked along border regions to assist returnees and migrants with humanitarian aid and referrals in a number of sectors. The National Society also participated in

regional training and learning exchanges, contributing to the Sahel-wide response. Chad's migration dynamics are heavily influenced by the continuous conflict in neighboring Sudan which continues to produce large inflows of migrants into the country but also as a strategic corridor in the Central Mediterranean route.

CAMEROON RED CROSS



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The Cameroon Red Cross reached a major milestone in recent years by opening its first Humanitarian Service Point, marking its transition from planning to operational delivery. Initial services included first aid, referrals, and basic protection, supported by staff trained in CVA and

humanitarian principles. The National Society has also contributed to early discussions around preparedness and regional alignment. Cameroon is both a country of origin and destination for migration, with growing relevance in the central corridor.

BENIN RED CROSS



© IFRC. Photo by Benin Red Cross

Benin Red Cross has maintained a low-profile but consistent contribution to the programme, especially in the Gulf of Guinea region. It has provided humanitarian assistance and referral services in transit areas and

engaged in early mapping of migration flows. While operational scale has been modest, its participation in regional training and coordination platforms has enhanced collective preparedness.

NIGERIA RED CROSS



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The Nigerian Red Cross Society's involvement in the programme has steadily increased over the past few years. It launched its first HSP during this period, providing protection and basic assistance in key migration corridors. It also piloted CVA for migrants and participated in regional coordination and training. Nigeria remains a major source of migration in West Africa, and programming is expected to scale up in future phases.

Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Ghana have no description since they have been mostly dormant in the Programme.

ANNEX I

ADDED VALUE OF THE PROGRAMME



Increased capacities of local actors able to assess needs and adapt services provision.



Ensured continuity of care along the route in a protracted situation.



Increased opportunities of cross-border collaboration.



Auxiliary role of RCRC NSs and privileged access to authorities for Humanitarian Diplomacy.

ANNEX II

SUMMARY OF POPULATION TARGETS AND FUNDING NEEDS

	Countries	Targets	Funding required (CHF)
East Africa	Ethiopia	150,000 persons/year	2.5m/year
	Djibouti	24,000 persons/year	500,000/year
	Sudan	80,000 persons/year	1,5m/year
Sahel	Burkina Faso	40,000 persons/year	1m/year
	Mali	14,400 persons/year	1m/year
	Mauritania	13,000 persons/year	400,000/year
	Gambia	17,000 persons/year	200,000/year
	Senegal	10,000 Persons/year	200,000/year
	Niger	45,000 persons/year	1m/year
	Chad	10,000 persons/year	200,000/year
West and Central Africa	Benin	5,000 persons/year	100,000/year
	Cameroon	4000 persons/year	100,000/year
	Nigeria	4000 persons/year	100,000/year
	Togo*	Togo – no figures	
	Ghana*	Ghana – no figures	
	Cote d'Ivoire*	Cote d'Ivoire- no figures	
Coordination		Operationalizing cross-regional Route-based programming	200,000/year
Total		400,000/year	9 million/year – total 54 million

**Note: the figures in the table above were obtained through a group consultation process with the National Societies part of the program to identify targets and funding asks needed to implement the activities under the three pillars of the programme*



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard-to-reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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