



Reporting Period: 1 Dec 2020 - 31 Jan 2021

West and Central Africa Region

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 11

United Nations Population Fund



Regional Highlights

- COVID-19 cases have steadily increased since November 2020. Top five countries with the highest confirmed cases include Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.
- This is the second wave of the pandemic in the region, with more than 150,000 additional cases reported from mid-November 2020 to the end of January 2021; almost half of the total cases reported over an eight-month period, between March and October 2020. Deaths related to COVID-19 are also on the rise.
- Following the availability of WHO-licensed vaccines, countries are working to begin vaccinations as soon as possible.
- The pandemic has taken a toll on health services and could exacerbate other existing vulnerabilities in the health sector and beyond. WHO has called for greater access to COVID-19 detection, testing and care among vulnerable populations, particularly those grappling with the impacts of protracted conflict and humanitarian emergencies across Africa.
- UNFPA has adapted its programmes, including through acquiring PPE and spreading pandemic awareness and preventive measures, especially through adolescents and young people. UNFPA interventions are focused on supporting the continuity of SRH services, including protection of health workers, and addressing gender-based violence. Special focus is placed on reaching vulnerable groups and providing integrated care to pregnant women, prenatal monitoring and delivery.

Situation in Numbers

 **471,003** Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

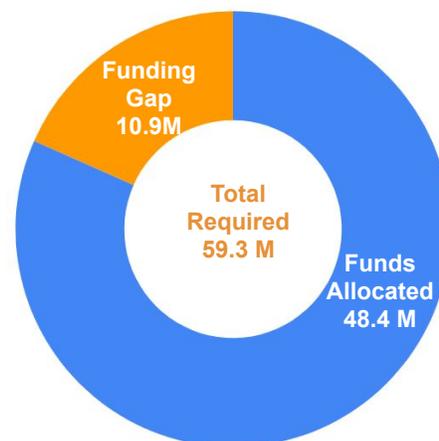
 **6,358** COVID-19 Deaths

Source: WHO, 24 February 2021

Key Population Groups

-  **13 M** Pregnant Women
-  **108 M** Women of Reproductive Age
-  **148 M** Young People (age 10-24)
-  **13 M** Older Persons (age 65+)

Funding Status for Region (US\$)



Regional Response Summary

Regional coordination and partnerships

UNFPA's response in the region aligns with the [2030 Agenda](#), [WHO global strategic preparedness and response plan](#), [UN-coordinated global humanitarian response plan](#), the [UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), and the [UNFPA COVID-19 global response plan](#).

UNFPA participates in weekly meetings of the Regional UN Sustainable Development Group for West and Central Africa, attended by Regional Directors, to coordinate the UN response to the pandemic. The health, humanitarian and socio-economic challenges brought about by the pandemic require solidarity for a global response.

Three complementary components of UN efforts to save lives, protect people and build back better:

- The humanitarian response, as detailed in the OCHA-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, focuses on responding to immediate health and multi-sectoral humanitarian needs in particularly vulnerable countries.
- The health response, led by WHO and detailed in the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, focuses on supporting public health measures to stop the transmission of the virus and to care for those affected. The Plan has six pillars: 1) country-level coordination, planning and monitoring; 2) risk communication and community engagement; 3) surveillance, laboratories and points of entry; 4) rapid response teams; 5) infection prevention and control and case management; and 6) operational support and logistics.
- The UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, to mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, focuses on supporting governments and communities through five work streams: 1) protecting health services and systems; 2) ensuring social protection and basic services; 3) protecting jobs and small- and medium-sized enterprises; 4) supporting macroeconomic choices and international cooperation and multilateralism; and 5) enhancing social cohesion and community resilience.



With UNFPA support, 60 health care providers trained in COVID-19 Infection, Prevention and Control in October 2020

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1. Continuity of SRH services and interventions, including protection of health workforce

- In 18 countries in the region, UNFPA is leading life-saving sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services through the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health in emergencies.
- 160,969 women and youth accessed integrated SRH services in UNFPA-supported facilities in Benin (1,141), Chad (49,105), Liberia (62,800), Senegal (42,832), Sierra Leone (3,189) and Guinea-Bissau (2,002).
- With UNFPA support, 13 countries provide emergency obstetric and newborn care services. (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome & Principes, Senegal and Togo).
- In 10 countries, UNFPA is leading the national COVID-19 contact-tracing and case monitoring mechanisms (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Senegal).
- At least 26,204 safe deliveries were facilitated in UNFPA-supported facilities in Benin (3,647), Chad (9746), Guinea-Bissau (114), Senegal (7,779), Sierra Leone (2,330) and Togo (2,588).
- Some 2,960 contact-tracers were trained and deployed with UNFPA support in Burkina Faso (700), Cabo Verde (60), Liberia (447), Niger (92) and Senegal (1,661).
- 2,712 contacts were traced with UNFPA support in Chad (50), Gambia (789) and Liberia (1873).

Country examples:

- **Central African Republic:** UNFPA organized training for field agents, data coordinators and supervisors on community-based surveillance of the pandemic at COVID-19 in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Pasteur Institute of Bangui and the civil protection service, reaching 186 people. UNFPA purchased protection kits (2,500 fl. oz. of hydro-alcoholic gel, 250 cloth masks, 20 boxes of soap, 20 hand washing kits, 4,000 boxes of gloves), and 80 smartphones with airtime credit for the field agents. The country office provided the Ministry of Health with RH kits and inputs for the strengthening of health facilities in emergency obstetric and newborn care.
- **Gambia:** To protect health workers from the exposure of COVID-19 and ensure the continuity of services, UNFPA provided Bundung Maternal and Child Health Hospital with PPE such as face masks and hand sanitisers.
- **Ghana:** UNFPA Ghana held an outreach at Agbobloshie and Old Fadama in the Greater Accra Region to educate residents on the importance of practising safe sex. An estimated number of 80 beneficiaries, majority adolescents, were also screened for sexually transmitted diseases including Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS. Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, with support from UNFPA, held a livelihood empowerment training in Wa for 50 girls drawn from four communities in the Municipality of the Upper West Region. The beneficiaries under the 'Sistas Club' were empowered on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections by equipping them with entrepreneurial skills. A cohort of 500 Kayayei (female head porters), benefited from the UNFPA Ghana's initiative, 'Kayayei Assistance Project' (KASPRO), by acquiring education on SRH and rights; GBV; Vocational training in business and entrepreneurial skills, free National Health Insurance Scheme registration for health care support and regular food supplies and essential items to maintain personal hygiene. With support from Prudential Life Insurance Limited, the project was part of the response to lessen their vulnerability and position them towards self-development.
- **Guinea-Bissau:** On January 23, with UNFPA support and in the presence of Minister of Health, local and religious leaders, civil society and women leaders, the Buba operating room was inaugurated. This included a delivery of medical-technical materials and equipment, such as complete cesarean section kits, hospital beds and dignity kits. In December 2020, UNFPA supported an obstetric fistula surgery campaign. About 30 women received surgery to treat the fistula.

2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence

- In 21 countries, UNFPA is leading GBV prevention and response coordination mechanisms.
- In 16 countries, there is an alert mechanism in place to identify and report cases of GBV.
- 2,254 women and girls subjected to violence, including those with disabilities, have accessed essential services (health, social, police and justice) in Burkina Faso (117), Cabo Verde (58), Cameroon (217), Chad (1326), Congo (103) and Togo (433).

Country examples:

- **CAR:** UNFPA organized a training of 30 women community leaders on COVID-19 prevention in the locality of Bimbo 3. In the same locality, UNFPA provided COVID-19 protection kits for 120 households, to be distributed in partnership with the Coalition of Women for Peace and Development.
- **Gambia:** Places of worship are important partners in the advocacy to end all forms of violence against women and girls, promote SRH and rights and information and services. They strengthen peacebuilding and social cohesion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, religious places of worship are also highly likely to contribute to the spread of the virus especially if WHO and national guidelines are not strictly adhered to. To support religious places of worship and ensure continuous partnership in advocating for the rights and wellbeing of women and girls, as well as minimise the transmission of the virus, UNFPA supported the Kanifing East Mosque with face masks including sanitary materials and a borehole to help address the water shortage within the community.



- **Ghana:** The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in collaboration with UNFPA Ghana and partners launched the 16-day activism campaign against gender-based violence with a call to desist from perpetrating violence against women and girls. The launch was on the theme: Accelerate Action to Prevent Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in the wake of COVID-19: The Role of Sustainable Funding”. UNFPA Ghana climaxed 2020’s 16 Days of Activism with an art exhibition dubbed, “Faces of Violence”. Held at the Jamestown Cafe, the art exhibition showcased portraits of survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and featured a panel discussion, where young men discussed the importance of using art as an advocacy tool in ending SGBV against women.

Stakeholders in the Bongo, Talensi, and Nabdam districts of the Upper East Region, resolved to end teenage pregnancies and child marriages in their jurisdictions during a forum organized by the Upper East Regional Coordinating Council with funding from UNFPA and the Global Affairs of Canada. The stakeholders indicated that socio-cultural practices, ineffective communication among parents and children, inaccessibility to family planning, and parental irresponsibility were major causes of teenage pregnancies and child marriages in their areas.

2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence (continued)

- **Guinea Bissau:** On December 16, 2020, a symposium of traditional and religious leaders on gender equality in Guinea Bissau began at the Azalai Hotel with 43 participants from across the region. The National Committee on the Abandonment of Traditional Practices Harmful to the Health of Women and Children, with the support of UNFPA, organized 32 community dialogue sessions on FGM, other forms of gender-based violence, SR/FP and COVID-19, in the 20 new communities of the Bambadinca and Xitole sectors, with the participation of 1832 people, including 1007 women and 825 men. Training of 60 community leaders (Imams, Regulos, Women, Youth and Adolescents) on the prevention of COVID-19, the abandonment of FGM and other GBV and SR/FP during the months of October to December.

With UNFPA's support, the Institute for Women and Children, within the framework of 16 days of activism in Reno District, sensitized people on GBV, SRH, human rights and the prevention of COVID-19. About 300 people, including government representatives and UNHCR participated, and 200 dignity kits were distributed at the event.



- **Sierra Leone:** UNFPA supported the availability of free counselling and clinical services to GBV survivors through an implementing partner - Rainbo Initiative - at the centres in Bo and Freetown. These centres offer a comprehensive package of services, offering medical treatment, legal services and psychological support to both male and female survivors. In December 2020, Rainbo centres reached and supported 124 survivors of GBV. UNFPA also supported the government to establish One-Stop Centres in July 2020, with the generous support of Irish Aid and the Government of China. One-Stop Centres offer comprehensive services for GBV survivors, and have so far reached over 500 survivors.

3. Ensuring the supply of modern contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities

- There is a significant risk of contraceptive stockouts in four countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Gambia, Mauritania).
- A total of 645,930 couple-years of protection for contraceptives were procured by UNFPA, including condoms in Benin (41,152), Chad (203,583), Senegal (281,195) and Sierra Leone (120,000).

Country examples:

- **Burkina Faso:** RH kits and safe motherhood drugs were delivered to various health districts in the country, as part of efforts to ensure continuity of SRH services, also in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ghana:** During her visit to Ghana, the UN Deputy Secretary-General (DSG), Ms Amina J. Mohammed, visited the Adabraka Polyclinic, to see the continuity of essential maternal health/SRH services, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was pleased with the uptake of Sayana Press, which has been supported by UNFPA and partners, among other family planning services. She also visited a UNFPA-UNAIDS project at Jamestown, which empowers young people living with HIV and disabilities.
- **Guinea-Bissau:** As part of the national family planning campaign, almost 900 new users participated in the health regions of Quinara and Tombali, with about 6,000 users in the country in 2020. UNFPA distributed 1.8 million male condoms in all the 11 health regions of the country, in collaboration with partners.
- **Liberia:** UNFPA supported the government to carry-out round four distribution of contraceptives in 15 counties to ensure sustained supply as well as prevent stock-outs. The Country Office has also supported the quarterly pipeline monitoring meeting on RH commodities using the quantification/forecast plan of 2020. This information will be used to inform the forecasting and quantification for 2021.
- **Mali:** To strengthen the health system and maintain continuity of services, UNFPA Mali has contributed to the Ministry of Health and Social Development through the following: delivery of 29,000 Intra-Uterine Device units to the *Pharmacie Populaire du Mali* to ensure the availability of services during this period of COVID-19 and the organization of a Channel training session for 22 service providers in Kayes, to ensure the continuity of services despite the pandemic.
- **Nigeria:** UNFPA commenced the bulk procurement of SRH supplies including male and female condoms to enhance the continuity of family planning services. In addition, UNFPA Country Representative carried out high-level visits to the Minister of Health and selected Governors including those of Lagos, Sokoto and Borno States to advocate and forge partnership for continuity of the supply chain and family planning services.
- **Sierra Leone:** UNFPA delivered injectable contraceptives to the central medical stores. It is estimated that these supplies will protect more than 140,000 couples for a period of one year. In addition, two key life-saving maternal health medicines (magnesium sulphate and oxytocin), were delivered to the central medical stores on 11 and 14 September respectively. These medicines help prevent maternal deaths due to the two major causes: post-partum haemorrhage and severe hypertension. The total value of the supplies delivered was \$511,318.

Media & Communications

UNFPA raises awareness, shares guidance and showcases achievements through media outreach.

The Regional Office continues to participate in the regional working group on Risk Communications and Community Engagement, with UNICEF as lead and WHO as co-lead. The group runs a media campaign to raise awareness on COVID-19 response through a multilingual website. The website includes local languages most spoken by people across the region.

Country examples:

Ghana:

- [Child Marriage is a crime - Gender Ministry](#)
- [Humanitarian support must include Sexual and Reproductive Health issues - UNFPA](#)
- [MyJoyOnline.com - Ghana's most comprehensive website. Credible, fearless and independent journalism](#)
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/national/henry-djaba-foundation-campaign-targets-more-than-180000-pwds>
- [International Community urged to support Ghana's 1000 Wheelchair Campaign](#)
- [MyJoyOnline.com - Ghana's most comprehensive website. Credible, fearless and independent journalism](#)
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/national/unfpa-country-director-calls-on-chiefs-celebrities-to-champion-the-fight-against-all-forms-of-violence-against-females>
- <https://newsghana.com.gh/un-deputy-secretary-general-amina-mohammed-tour-project-sites-in-accra/>
- [UNFPA's intervention improves adolescent sexual and reproductive rights](#)
- [Reinforcing the role of Muslim Clerics in achieving UNFPA's 3 Zeros](#)
- [Engaging Men and Boys to Promote Positive Masculinity](#)
- [Sharing knowledge and good practices to advance the Post Nairobi Agenda on ICPD.](#)
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/national/gender-ministry-launches-16-day-activism-campaign/>

Guinea-Bissau:

- <https://www.facebook.com/104105848001667/posts/179895390422712/?extid=0&d=n>
- <https://cutt.ly/Pfgpksw>

Mali:

- <https://www.facebook.com/IYA4D/>

Nigeria:

- [UN charges Nigerian govt. stakeholders to end shadow Pandemic. Gender-Based Violence](#)
- [Turning the Tide On Gender-Based Violence In Nigeria In the Midst of COVID-19. By Edward Kallon](#)
- [Ending child sexual abuse in Nigeria: Stakeholders proffer solutions](#)
- <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2020/11/26/in-new-un-role-ex-cnn-journalist-seeks-to-end-abuse-of-women-and-girls.html>
- [This Visual Artist Is Highlighting Nigerian Women's Stories of Gender Violence](#)

Sierra Leone:

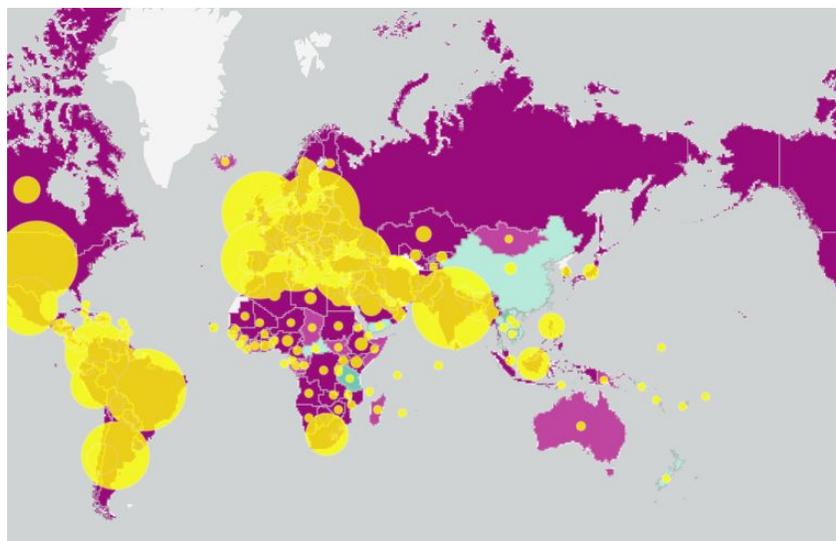
- <https://sierraleone.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-implements-numerous-measures-bo-government-hospital-improve-obstetric-care-services>
- [UNFPA provides back to school kits to 1000 adolescent girls in three districts](#)

Togo:

- [Des organisations de jeunes se forment sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive](#)
- [Togo/Santé sexuelle et reproductive: Des organisations de jeunes portent leur réflexion sur le sujet -](#)
- [Autonomisation des jeunes : l'UNFPA-Togo ouvre l'« Espace Orange Jeune »](#)
- [Togo/UNFPA: Ouverture d'un espace dédié à la jeunesse togolaise](#)
- https://youtu.be/9_XAQYhrZ8E
- [Campagne ONU75 : l'UNFPA et les jeunes préparent la contribution du Togo](#)

Confirmed Cases and Deaths (UNFPA programme countries) WHO, 24 February 2021

Country	Confirmed cases	Deaths
Benin	5,634	70
Burkina Faso	11,868	141
Cabo Verde	15,089	144
Cameroon	33,749	523
Central African Republic	4,997	63
Chad	3,882	136
Congo Republic	8,820	128
Côte d'Ivoire	32,124	188
Equatorial Guinea	5,852	91
Gabon	13,884	76
Gambia	4,612	146
Ghana	81,245	584
Guinea	15,487	87
Guinea-Bissau	3,156	47
Liberia	1,998	85
Mali	8,324	348
Mauritania	17,130	437
Niger	4,740	172
Nigeria	153,187	1,874
Sao Tome and Principe	1,655	26
Senegal	33,242	832
Sierra Leone	3,862	79
Togo	6,466	81
Total number of cases	471,003	6,358



See UNFPA's [COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard](#) for real-time updates