

Niger

Février - Mars 2023

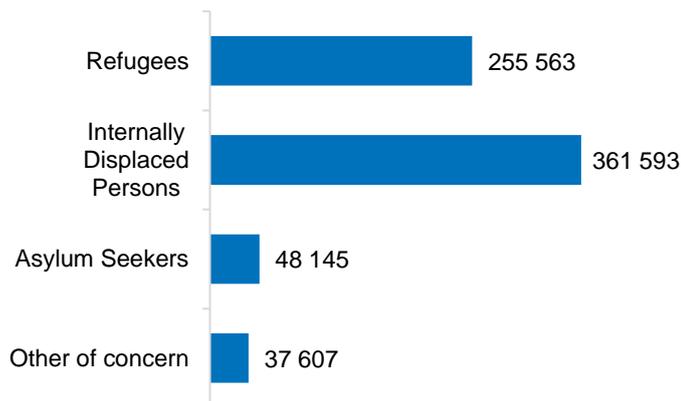
As of 31 March, about **20,622 Malian refugees**, asylum-seekers, **16,431 Nigerian asylum-seekers** and **3,465 Nigerien returnees** are registered in the Tahoua Region. With persistent insecurity at the border with Mali (Menaka), new arrivals are also being reported in the localities of Telemcess and Tillia.

Since the **establishment of the UNHCR resettlement program in Niger**, 5,090 refugees have left Niger to third countries under resettlement or through legal complementary pathways. They comprise 3,732 persons, who have been evacuated from Libya under the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)** and 1,658 refugees registered through Niger's national asylum system.

As of 31 March, Niamey hosts about **4,808 refugees** and **786 asylum seekers**. 88 percent (4,213) of refugees in Niamey are from Mali. Under Nigerien law, Malians who are victims of the armed conflict in northern Mali are **recognized on a prima facie basis** while other nationalities undergo regular government procedure for refugee status determination (DSR).

POPULATION OF CONCERN AS OF 31 MARCH 2023

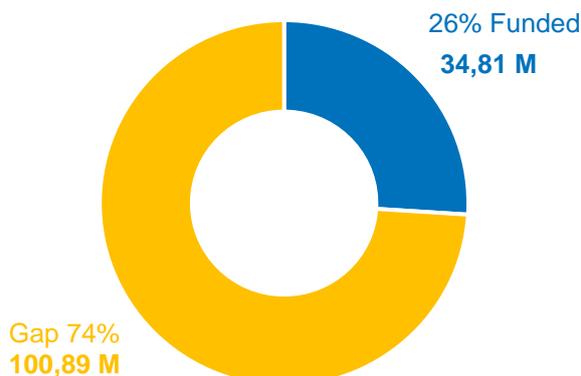
An estimated 702,908 forcibly displaced people live in Niger. They include **255,563 refugees**, **48,145 asylum-seekers**, **361,593 internally displaced people**, **37,607 other people such as returnees**.



FUNDING AS 5 APRIL 2023

USD 135,7 M

Requested for UNHCR Niger operation in 2023



Refugees contribute to the local economy through food processing and handicraft activities supported by UNHCR and its partners. © UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

Operational context

Despite various conflicts in the Sahel region, **Niger has always kept its borders open**, and is currently hosting **303,708 refugees** and **asylum-seekers**. About 70 percent of them are from Nigeria, 20 per cent from Mali, 5 percent from Burkina Faso, and 5 percent from other countries. Furthermore, there are more than **360,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** and Nigerien returnees (*who have stayed outside the country for more than 10 years and who have recently returned to Niger*). **UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, uses a community-based approach to provide protection, assistance, and solutions** for these forcibly displaced populations, with emphasis on women, children and people with special needs. UNHCR also supports the Nigerien authorities in the search for **durable solutions** for displaced communities in Niger.

Highlights

Tillabéri Region

Background: Since the first arrival of Malian refugees in Tillabéri in 2012, UNHCR and the Government of Niger have worked for the **socio-economic inclusion of Malian refugees, based on an "out of camp" strategy**. With the support of development actors and through local integration efforts, Malian refugees and host communities have benefited from services, access to land, housing, and livelihoods, while national health, education and water infrastructure have been improved. To **strengthen peaceful coexistence between communities**, UNHCR has brought the different populations together through "common areas," such as village cereal banks, livestock feed stores, and through various joint community committees.

- In February and March 2023, about **2,403 refugees and asylum-seekers and 4,297 host community members received health care in the health facility** in the Tillabéri Region. Some 374 women benefitted from prenatal consultations, while 273 births were assisted in the same health facility. In addition, 3,547 refugee and asylum-seeking children and IDPs aged between 0-59 months were inoculated during the mass vaccination drive against yellow fever, measles, and other diseases.
- Under the social **housing project in Tillabéri, 2,178 houses have been completed**, including 1,350 in Abala, 790 in Ouallam and 38 in Ayorou. UNHCR and its partners have also allocated social plots to 2,473 households of forcibly displaced people.



Awareness raising session by UNHCR and its partners prior to the allocation of social housing units to forcibly displaced people in Abala © UNHCR

- In February, a U.S. State Department delegation from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) from Dakar and Washington, visited the projects and assessed the impact of UNHCR's interventions for Malian refugees in Ouallam. The mission met with authorities, visited the school, the social housing units, the market gardening site, and spoke with refugees. Having collected preliminary elements during this visit, ILO will carry out an assessment mission to the zone, for the development of a resilience program to be implemented in Ouallam.



Members of the PRM delegation chat with forcibly displaced women beneficiaries of the Ouallam market gardening project © UNHCR / Bettina Schulte

- In February, a delegation from the British Ministry of Cooperation, accompanied by the Minister of Humanitarian Action, visited IDP assistance projects in Ouallam. The mission met with authorities and humanitarian actors and then visited the UK-funded projects implemented by World Vision, Catholic relief services (CRS) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).
- In February, UNHCR and project partner - Action Pour le Bien Être (APBE), distributed 39 bales of second-hand clothing to 2,011 IDPs and Nigerien returnees (363 households) who had recently taken refuge in the town of Filingué, following increased terrorist attacks in the Tri-border area.
- In response to human rights violations that exacerbate inter-community conflicts, particularly in the village of Inates, and with a view to restoring confidence among the population, a forum on peace and social cohesion was organized in Ayorou on 06 March, by the High Authority for Peacebuilding. Discussions at the forum, chaired by the Minister of the Interior, Public Security and Religious Affairs, focused on the return of internally displaced persons to Inates. The concerned populations have asked for time to reflect before deciding if they want/can return to Inates. The Inates military camp, located 5 kilometres from the border with Mali, was recently attacked by a suspected terrorist group, leading to the death of 70 Nigerien soldiers on December 10, 2019.

Tahoua Region

Background: As of 31 March, about **20,622 Malian refugees, 16,431 refugees and 3,465 Nigerien returnees are registered in the Tahoua Region**. New arrivals are also being reported in the localities of Telemces and Tillia, due to persistent insecurity at the border with Mali (Menaka).

As of 31 December 2022, 51,036 individuals (5,988 households) including 13,279 people (1,590 households) newly displaced persons, have been documented by Tahoua regional authorities. As of December 28, 2022, 7,529 individual (2,165 households) Nigerian asylum-seekers have been biometrically registered in the council area of Bangui in Madaoua division.

- On 27 March 27, 2023, the National Eligibility Commission (CNE) in Madaoua, **pre-registered 354 Nigerian asylum seekers (58 households)** who had taken refuge in the locality of Zango Talfa, attached to the Doukou-Doukou site hosting refugees.

- In February and March 2023, **UNHCR and its partners received 2,921 people for medical consultations** in the Tahoua Region, including 1,058 refugees, 1,409 members of the host community, and 454 IDPs.
- More than **1,800 people were reached through awareness sessions** conducted by UNHCR and its partner APBE on reproductive health, 629 women were received for prenatal consultations and **152 deliveries were assisted**.
- In February, the Tahoua Regional Directorate of Education (DREN) shared with UNHCR quarterly education data on refugees in the region. **Thus, 2,561 refugee students, including 1,108 girls and 1,453 boys, are enrolled in primary and secondary schools** in Tillia and Madaoua divisions. In addition, **22 classrooms, an administrative block and a store were built, and four schools were supported** through water sanitation and hygiene interventions, notably, the construction of latrines. About 11 awareness raising and community mobilization campaigns were conducted to



Socio-recreational activity with children in the primary school of Bangui, Madaoua division in the Tillabéri Region © Intersos

promote school attendance, 4,000 school kits were distributed and 165 teachers were trained in remedial education, GBV, mental health and psychosocial support, thanks to a generous donation from Education Cannot Wait (ECW). About 2,500 children were further enrolled in non-formal education in the locality of Bangui in Madaoua division.

- In February, UNHCR participated in a meeting of the Capacity Building for Refugees project known as RECAPREF. The project **provides training and employment opportunities for refugee and IDP students through the BIOFORCE Institute**. The objective of the project is to build the capacity of refugees and IDPs in West Africa, to become actors in the humanitarian response within the ECOWAS zone. For the March 2023 training, eleven spots will go to refugees and IDPs who have a bachelor's degree and meet the criteria for each training stream. UNHCR and its partners ADES, INTERSOS and CIAUD have identified two beneficiaries amongst the Malian refugees living in Tahoua Region.
- On 14 March, UNHCR and partners completed the **distribution of emergency shelter kits and clothing items to 11,161 people (2,647 households)** in the villages of Guidan Ahmed, Jataka, Kataguiré, Maikourou, Doukou-Doukou and Takorka in Tillia and Madaoua divisions. About 16,088 refugees (1,032 households) and 8,132 IDPs (511 households) also received core relief items (CRIs) including tarpaulins for emergency shelters, buckets, jerry cans, blankets, mosquito nets, and clothing for all age groups. This assistance has helped to improve living conditions of forcibly displaced people and vulnerable host community members
- From February 14 to 18, UNHCR and its partners conducted a **joint needs and security assessment mission in the localities of Egarek and Tillia** in the Tahoua Region, **following recent attacks by non-state armed groups, including on a refugee camp, which resulted in the death of nine refugees and the displacement of about 20,000 people in the northern divisions of Tahoua Region, as reported by local authorities**. A subsequent meeting with the Governor of Tahoua on 24 February, highlighted the deteriorating security situation in the region, the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid difficult. UNHCR and its partners have begun the **distribution of emergency kits containing basic needs items and clothing** to some forcibly displaced persons in the region, including Nigerian and Malian refugees, Nigerian returnees, and internally displaced persons.

Diffa Region

Background: **The Diffa Region has been hosting Nigerian refugees fleeing terrorist violence in the north-eastern states of Nigeria since 2013**. Since the first attacks on Niger soil in 2015, the situation has

dramatically deteriorated. In May 2015, the authorities decided to evacuate the population living in the Niger region of islands in the Lake Chad area.

As of 31 March 2023, about **314,854 forcibly displaced persons live in the Diffa Region (including 137,610 refugees; 140,593 IDPs, 35,142 returnees and 2,509 asylum-seekers)**. Many of these people have been displaced more than once. Most of them stay in spontaneous settlements or with host communities. Refugees from Nigeria have continued to arrive at Sayam Forage camp, and at other sites in the Diffa Region, cohabiting with the host community, seeking humanitarian assistance and security. An estimated 33,026 **people live in Sayam Forage** – the only refugee camp in Niger.

- In February and March, **UNHCR identified 120 new child protection cases**. They all received psychosocial support. 1,255 refugees and host community members benefitted from awareness raising on child protection issues by local protection committees and UNHCR project partners.
- During the period under review, UNHCR and its partners **identified and documented 56 new cases of gender-based violence (GBV)**, including denial of resources and opportunities, physical assault, psychological violence, sexual assault and rape. 100 percent of the documented cases received multi-sectoral assistance including psychosocial support, while the cases requiring specific management were referred to partners. In addition, 1,746 people were made aware of the risk of GBV and available management services.
- In February and March, about **5,219 refugees received medical consultations at the Sayam Forage health centre**. 89 of them were placed under observation and 24 were referred to regional health facilities. About 318 women benefitted from prenatal consultations and **85 deliveries were assisted** at the Sayam Forage health centre.
- The Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) an advanced teachers' training college of the Abdou Moumouni University (UAM) in Niamey, organized a **capacity-building workshop with the support of UNHCR, on the use of laboratory equipment for 30 physics-chemistry-biology teachers**, including 17 refugee teachers from distance education centres in the Diffa region. This training is part of the implementation of the African Centres of Excellence for Development Impact projects within partnership with the State of Niger and the World Bank.
- On 14 March, **UNHCR and UNICEF conducted a joint mission** to N'Guagam, Elhadji Mainari, and Garin Dogo in the Diffa Region to work out the details of operationalizing collaboration on **complementary interventions for the voluntary return of IDPs**. This is part of a government initiated IDP return program to communities that had been deserted for security reasons.

Maradi Region

Background: For more than two years, conflict in north-western Nigeria **has forced more than 80,000 Nigerians to flee to the Maradi Region in Niger**. In addition, repeated incursions by armed bandits on Niger territory, have triggered internal displacements of about 26,000 people. Armed criminal gangs operate regularly on both sides of the border, targeting farmers and breeders and conducting kidnapping for ransom.

UNHCR's response in Maradi has been to support refugees willing to do so, to relocate, away from the border to ensure their safety, while at the same time, provide assistance to host communities to ease the pressure resulting from the large presence of refugees. Subsequently, Village development hubs (Villages d'opportunités) have been identified in surrounding villages and are progressively being developed, providing services or improved access to potable water, health, education, and protection for both refugee and host communities. At the moment, there are three of such 'Villages d'opportunités' in Chadakori, Dan Dadji Makaou and Garin Kaka in the Maradi Region.

- In February and March, UNHCR and partners provided **psychosocial support to 2,131 children** in child-friendly spaces in Chadakori, Dan Dadji Makaou and Garin Kaka 'Villages d'opportunités' and the sites of Dan Kano, Elguidi, and Tiadi in Guidan Roudji division. Over 4,000 children benefitted from awareness raising on child protection issues such as early/forced marriages, school attendance and personal hygiene.
- In Maradi, an **upsurge of scabies cases was reported** in the host villages and village development hubs during the first week of February 2023. In close coordination with the state health structures and the partner APBE, measures are being implemented to strengthen awareness raising for beneficiaries on good hygiene practices and the care of sick persons, in order to stop the chain of contamination. Similar cases of scabies had earlier on been reported in the 'Villages d'opportunités'

of Chadakori, in October 2022, though this did not spread far thanks to strong response from health services. UNHCR and partners **plan to distribute 6,000 bars of soap to vulnerable households affected by the disease** as part of recommendations made in the wake of the previous outbreak.

- Since February, **1,500 birth certificates have been issued to forcibly displaced children and children of the host community in the municipality of Guidan Roundji** in the Maradi Region, following mobile court hearings organized by judicial authorities with UNHCR support. A UNHCR protection mission has visited the area to continue to advocate and support the process of issuing supplementary judgments to enable some 3,000 children whose births were not registered within the government-recommended timeframe, to obtain this civil status document. Another mobile court hearing will be held in Chadakori in the coming days to facilitate the issuance of birth certificates for another 1,500 children in Maradi. The regions of Dosso and Zinder will also benefit from similar sessions for approximately 4,000 children who need birth certificates and certificates of nationality.

Agadez

Background: **Niger is a hub for mixed movements heading northwards to Libya, Algeria, and the Mediterranean, while at the same time, it receives people fleeing Libya or being expelled from Algeria.** These migratory flows are mixed, including economic migrants as well as persons in need of international protection. UNHCR's main objective is to ensure that the latter have access to protection, and assistance and may access the national asylum system.

UNHCR in Niger supports the **strengthening of the national asylum system** and implements a set of activities meant to ensure the protection and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers. In the long term, UNHCR seeks to find durable solutions, such as local integration, or voluntary return to the country of origin if the security conditions allow. Complementary legal pathways, such as family reunification, study visas or humanitarian evacuations are also considered.

With the support of IOM, NGO partners, and the Government of Niger, UNHCR identifies asylum seekers within the migratory flows and provides them with counselling and assistance. As of 31 January, UNHCR and its partners have **identified and biometrically registered 2,637 individuals in need of international protection**. These include 828 refugees and 1,773 asylum seekers. The most vulnerable are currently hosted in **five guesthouses in Agadez** where they benefit from a protection response and assistance, while the others are hosted in the **Humanitarian Centre** built on the outskirts of the city.

In February and March 2023, UNHCR **facilitated access to primary and secondary health care through the health centre located in the humanitarian centre**. About 1,357 refugees and 1,294 members of the host community were received for medical consultations, including 64 serious cases. Those affected were referred to the regional hospital and the mother and child health centre in Agadez. The Toudou health centre also provided reproductive health services and treatment for child malnutrition. In addition, 155 people received psychosocial support.

The situation of mixed movements in Agadez is of growing concern to humanitarian actors due to recent waves of arrivals of official and unofficial convoys of deportees from Algeria. **As of 31 March, 11,426 people have crossed into border villages in the Agadez Region**, including 4,942 Nigeriens officially expelled from Algeria, 2,484 Guineans, 1,807 Malians, and many other nationals. The number of arrivals has increased since January: 2,581 people arrived in January, 3,584 in February, and 5,261 in March.



Awareness session for migrants and refugees returned from Algeria to Niger in Assamaka © CIAUD

Between March 21 and 25, a joint UNHCR and UNICEF mission (Direction régionale de l'état civil (Drec), Conseil régional d'Agadez (Craz), INGAL town hall, and Comité international d'aide d'urgence et de développement (CIAUD)) reported that **some 5,000 deportees were living in critical conditions around Assamaka**. Many of them have been in the streets, without shelter, food or health care. Lack of hygiene and access to sanitation facilities and overcrowding increase the risk of epidemics, as the Assamaka health centre is unable to meet the enormous and critical needs. The joint mission also found that the two IOM reception centres in Assamaka and Arlit are overcrowded, as they have far exceeded their capacity.

Resettlement

As of 31 March, about **5,390 refugees have left Niger to third countries under resettlement or through complementary** ways, such as study visas. This number includes 3,732 persons evacuated from Libya through the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) and 1,658 refugees processed and registered through the national asylum system in Niger.

Hamdallaye / ETM

Out of the **4,063 refugees evacuated from Libya** between 2017 and 2023, **439 evacuees** are still in Niamey, residing at the site of Hamdallaye, of whom 42 are awaiting imminent departure and 123 are awaiting interviews and decisions by resettlement countries.

Urban refugees in Niamey

As of 31 March, Niger's capital city – Niamey, hosts about **4,808 refugees and 786 asylum-seekers**. 88 percent (4,213) of refugees in Niamey are from Mali. Under Nigerien law, Malians who are victims of armed conflict in northern Mali are recognized on a prima facie basis while other nationalities undergo the regular procedure of refugee status determination (RSD), implemented by the authorities of Niger.

UNHCR has rallied partners involved in the implementation of protection and assistance activities for urban refugees and asylum-seekers into one physical structure, called the Guichet Unique (One-Stop-Shop). **The One-Stop-Shop has the advantage of reducing costs and allows for an integrated approach, as well as a better coordination of services provided by different partners**. Refugees and asylum seekers receive support and guidance in the area of documentation, and information regarding medical, psychological, and education and other forms of assistance. **The centre also manages a hotline, which refugees can call free of charge to ask questions, to seek advice regarding assistance, or to make a complaint**.



Joint visit by the European Union, the Government of Niger and UNHCR to the Humanitarian Site in Hamdallaye, near Niamey © HCR / Jean Sebastien

UNHCR and partners also regularly conduct home visits and monitor the well-being of beneficiaries in Niamey. Several guest houses (cases de passage) are managed by the UN Refugee Agency, in collaboration with partners, to ensure adequate protection for persons with special needs. To enhance inclusiveness and accountability, UNHCR and the Government of Niger regularly cooperate and **support the Central Refugee Committee of Niamey**, comprised of refugee leaders from the various communities.

In March, the **National Committee for the Revision and Adaptation of Niger's Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, under the**

supervisory authority of the Ministry of Justice, shared the draft penal code with the United Nations for review. UNHCR has identified some potentially problematic articles that may undermine human rights and for which advocacy for reform is underway with the government. Some of the articles contained in the draft law are related to **gender-based violence, including forced marriages, criminalization of homosexuality, and organizations that directly and indirectly support LGBTIQ+ people**. The Government of Niger to date, does not recognize these rights. It will also have implications for the community of forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ people in Niger, who recently staged protests outside the UNHCR office in Niamey, demanding international protection.

UNHCR intends to prioritize a joint approach with OHCHR to **advocate for amendments to the draft law with the Niger Ministry of Justice**. In the meantime, UNHCR has prepared a strategy paper to address LGBTIQ+ cases among forcibly displaced persons in Niger.

In the context of a multidimensional migration crisis and in support of the Government of Niger's efforts, the European Union is **supporting assistance, protection, and the search for durable solutions for asylum seekers and refugees evacuated** from Libya through the ETM project (2022-2024)" for an envelope of US\$34 million for a period of 33 months starting in April 2022. Thus, on March 28, 2023, a mission composed of the European Union ambassador, the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior, the Director General of Civil Status, Migration and Refugees, the UNHCR representative and UNHCR partners visited the Hamdallaye site.

Partnership

UNHCR is leading the Protection Cluster in Niger, which – together with all Protection partners – steers and coordinates the protection actors' interventions towards IDPs, to ensure a coherent protection response in the country. The Cluster also shares information amongst all relevant partners, bridges identified gaps, and ensures the strategic direction of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

UNHCR interventions target economic integration and social inclusion of displaced communities. This approach is fully endorsed by the Government of Niger and is aligned with the **Global Compact on Refugee (GCR), the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus** and is aligned with the joint Government of Niger and **UNHCR's 'out of camp' policy**. UNHCR seeks to strengthen relationships with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, and the media. The UN Refugee Agency also works with other government bodies, national and international project and operational partners. Lastly, UNHCR Niger works closely with the *Direction Générale de l'Etat Civil et des Réfugiés* (DGEC-R) to ensure adequate international protection

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR Niger operation in 2023

European Union | Germany | Canada | United states of America | UN Peacebuilding Fund | United Kingdom | Luxembourg | Monaco | UN Programme on HIV/AIDS | Private donors

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PERSONNES RELEVANT DE LA COMPÉTENCE DU HCR (PoC)
MARS 2023

702,908
TOTAL PERSONNES EN DÉPLACEMENTS FORCÉS

255,563 REFUGIÉS

48,145 DEMANDEURS D'ASILE

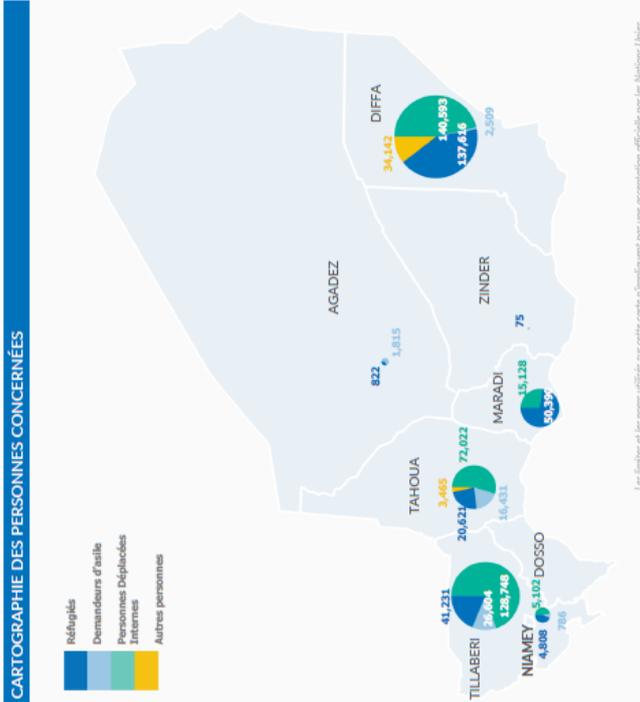
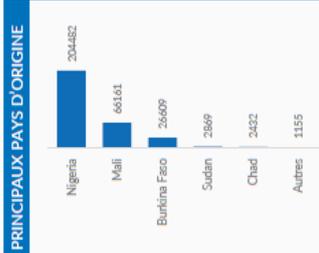
361,593 PERSONNES DÉPLACÉES INTERNES

37,607 AUTRES PERSONNES

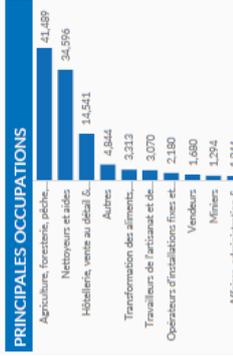
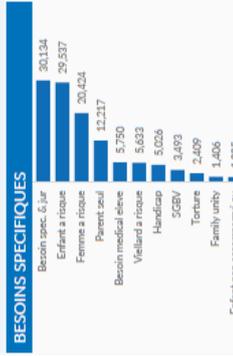
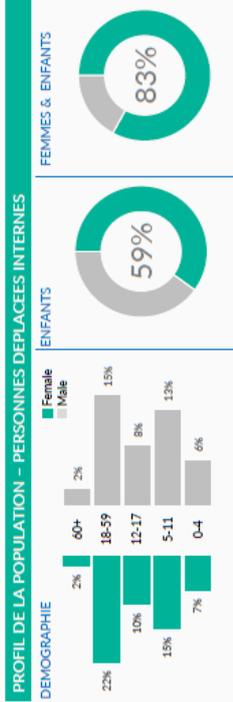
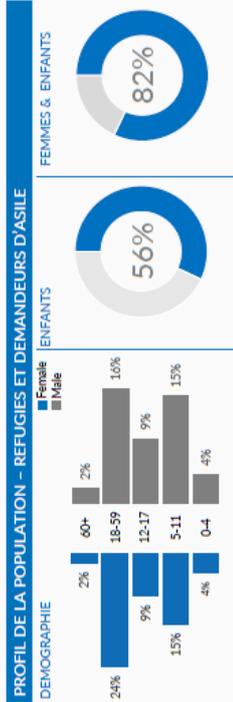
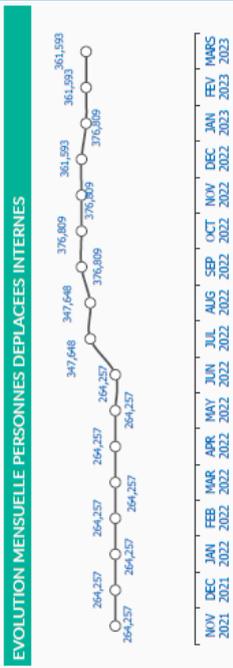
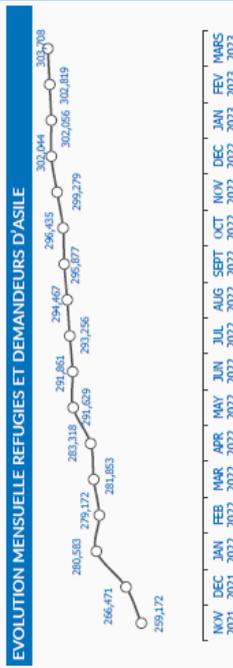
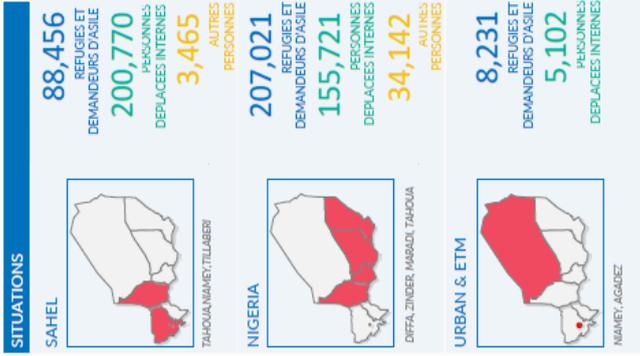
La population des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile représente une augmentation de 4% par rapport à Mars 2022. Elle constitue 43% de la population concernée au Niger dont 36% de réfugiés et 7% de demandeurs d'asile. Les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile proviennent principalement du Nigeria (67%), du Mali (22%) et du Burkina Faso (7%).

Le nombre de personnes déplacées à l'intérieur du pays est estimé à près de 362,000 soit 50% des personnes relevant du HCR et une augmentation de 17% en un an. La région de Diffa accueille 39% de la population déplacée, alors que celle de Tillabéri recense 36%.

La situation du Nigeria compte 56% des personnes déplacées. Celle du Sahel totalise le deuxième plus grand nombre (42%), la majorité étant des personnes déplacées d'origine du Nigeria.



Les limites et les noms utilisés sur cette carte n'impliquent pas une acceptation officielle par les Nations Unies.



Date de création : 15.09.2021 Sources : UNCS, Statistiques des populations - Rapports statistiques mensuels du UNHCR pour les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile, statistiques validées du comité central MAH/CC pour les IDP | Les statistiques doivent être considérées comme provisoires et sujettes à modification. | Feedback: djparad@unhcr.org