



Vegetable gardens in Djidara managed by refugee returnees and host communities in Gao region, credit ©UNHCR Gao

MALI

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

01 - 31 May 2016

KEY FIGURES

243

Mauritanian refugees and community members are learning basic literacy skills in nine literacy centres in the region of Kayes.

1,691

refugee returnees have been identified in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu to receive a one-time cash-based assistance.

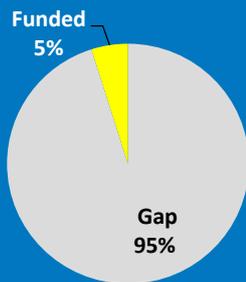
749

Mauritanian refugees participated in sensitization sessions related to the importance of birth certificates and the process for naturalization.

FUNDING

USD 49.2 million

requested for the operation

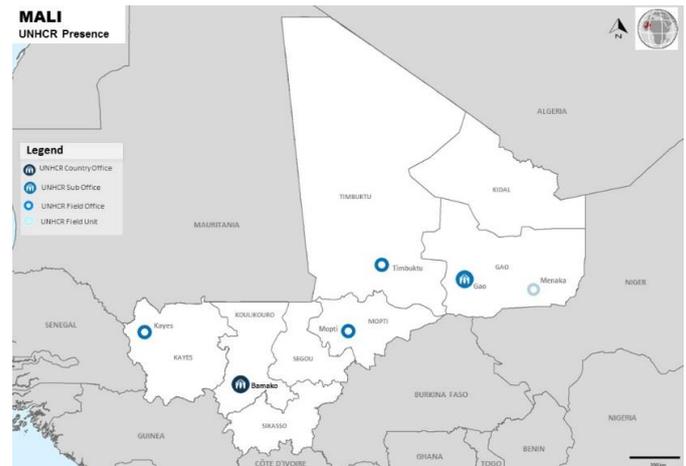


PRIORITIES

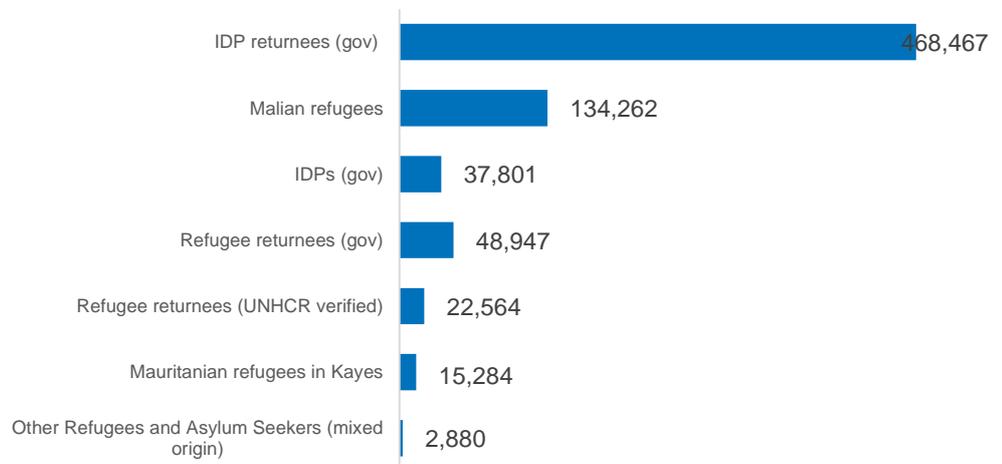
- 850 Malian IDP returnee households targeted to receive adequate and durable shelter
- 6,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive a one-time cash-based assistance
- 2,500 Mauritanian refugees and local community members targeted to receive improved access to potable water
- 1,000 refugee children targeted to receive educational support

HIGHLIGHTS

- Six groups of 50 young Mauritanian refugees earned approximately US\$ 14,532 by conducting cattle fattening activities, as part of the 'Youth at Work' UNHCR-FAO project in Kayes.
- 120 protection monitors - through UNHCR's partner AMSS- were deployed to the regions of Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Menaka and Timbuktu to collect, refer and report protection risks and human rights violations faced by refugee returnees, IDPs and host populations.
- 1,691 refugee returnees were identified by Mercy Corps, UNHCR's partner, in the regions of Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu to receive a one-time cash-based assistance to help them reintegrate in a safer and dignified manner.



Population of concern (May 2016)



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Mali continues to experience a volatile security situation with deteriorating conditions in certain parts of the North and Centre where terrorist and criminal attacks are on the rise. Violations of basic human rights are still reported, prices of basic necessities are high, and local populations are in dire need of access to public services, documentation, water, and food security. Some 134,262 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries and 37,801 internally displaced persons in Mali are waiting to see whether conditions in their area of origin improve to enable them to return in safety and dignity.

The Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed one year ago, continues to face difficult challenges as a result of the slow implementation of security-related matters (e.g. cantonment and DDR), national reconciliation and confidence-building measures. Terrorist and criminal groups continue to exploit the slow progress of the peace process and the growing discontent of local populations over the lack of access to basic services and other concerns. This led to a visible rise in attacks against national and international security forces over the past month with international civilian personnel increasingly at risk of being targeted. Recent attacks directed against MINUSMA Force led to the deaths of 12 peacekeepers with many more injured during the month of May alone.

In Gao and Menaka regions, the security situation has largely deteriorated with an increasing number of attacks against national and international security forces, a rise of criminality in urban centres and security incidents along the main highway connecting the two regions. During the month of May, more than 15 incidents of robberies and looting by armed individuals were reported, especially along the route of Ansongo linking Gao to Menaka. In the region of Timbuktu, an elevated number of criminal incidents have also been reported in the district of Goundam and Timbuktu, particularly along the Timbuktu-Goundam route.

In the district of Tenenkou in Mopti region, violent inter-community conflict between members of the Bambara community (agriculturalists) and Fula community (pastoralists) at the beginning of the month triggered a forced internal displacement of 137 persons; as well an estimated 800 persons were forced to flee an inter-community conflict in the district of Niono in Segou region, contributing to the observed tendency of sliding of insecurity issues from the north to the centre of Mali. Government mediation efforts and social cohesion sensitizations were carried out in the aftermath of the violent clashes, but the tensions remain high.

The absence of government authorities in several localities in the north and centre, the uncontrolled circulation of arms and armed individuals as well as delays in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and the cantonment process are some factors leading to the rise of insecurity throughout the regions.

The ongoing insecurity continues to destabilize local communities, jeopardizing the protection of civilians, and preventing forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes, while further threatening their access to already limited basic social services. The insecurity also compromises their ability to re-engage in socio-economic activities critical to rebuilding their lives. Access to persons of concern to deliver humanitarian protection and assistance in the north and centre of Mali has become a significant challenge for UNHCR and other actors. The need to uphold humanitarian principles is of utmost importance to counter the shrinking of humanitarian space necessary to conduct life-saving activities. Incorporating protection mainstreaming principles and promoting a meaningful access, safety and dignity for humanitarian aid remains key to humanitarian actors.

Achievements



Protection

Protection Cluster

- On 4 - 5 May, the Protection Cluster in Timbuktu held a training session for 36 participants from international organizations, national NGOs and government technical experts on *inter alia* protection coordination mechanism, humanitarian reform, Protection Mainstreaming, the Kampala Convention, strategies for durable solutions for IDPs and returnees and humanitarian principles.
 - A Protection Cluster meeting in Timbuktu on 24 May highlighted protection risks, particularly for children, following the discovery of explosive remnants of war (ERWs) along the canal in the periphery of the city of Timbuktu. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has deployed agents to raise awareness about ERWs among urban communities and to clean up the canal.
 - The Protection Cluster of Gao is renewing efforts to advocate for the protection of civilians and humanitarians in the field, as well as for the acceleration of the DDR process in order to re-establish better security conditions in the region. There is also a need to intensify sensitization campaigns on mines and ERWs in order to prevent further casualties.
 - A new Protection Sub-Cluster was set-up in Menaka. On 18-19 May, 30 actors from protection and humanitarian agencies participated in trainings on coordination and management of the Protection Sub-Cluster, Protection Mainstreaming, the Kampala Convention and strategies for durable solutions for IDPs and returnees.
 - The National Protection Cluster produced a Note on the current challenges of protecting civilians in Mali for the Security Council Informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians (POC) in view of the renewing of MINUSMA's Mandate.
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Training session with humanitarian actors in Menaka, credit © UNHCR Gao
- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR, through its partner Association Malienne pour la Survie du Sahel (AMSS), finalized the deployment of 120 protection monitors in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Menaka and Timbuktu. They will collect, refer and report protection risks and human rights violations faced by IDPs and other affected populations.
 - **Registration:** The Directeur régional du développement social et de l'économie solidaire du district (DRDSES) registered 735 refugee returnee households (2,506 individuals) in the north and centre of Mali, including 109 households (365 individuals) in Gao, 19 households (87 individuals) in Kidal, 523 households (1,686 individuals) in Timbuktu and 84 households (281 individuals) in Mopti. Some of the challenges faced by registration agents in the region of Gao and Kidal include their mobility due to security concerns, the provision of registration forms to remote areas outside of Gao, and the multiple functions carried out by some of them.
 - **Documentation:**
 - Nineteen sensitization campaigns on the importance of birth certificates were carried out by UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, in 28 sites in the region of Kayes reaching 607 Mauritanian refugees. As a result of these sensitization activities, two births were registered in the commune of Djélébou. Another 142 Mauritanian refugees participated in discussions on the process of naturalization held by community workers in six sites in the region of Kayes to help them gain access to available basic services in Mali.
 - In the region of Mopti, UNHCR donated office and computer equipment to the Government's civil registration centres in order to strengthen civil documentation processes as well as support the fight against statelessness.

- **Training:** UNHCR staff provided training on the protection of refugees and IDPs to 30 students at the École de Maintien de la Paix (EMP) Alioune Blondin Beye in Bamako as part of a peace building program.
- **Mission:** A joint OCHA-UNHCR mission to Mopti took place between 18 to 20 May to support the regional humanitarian team responding to the protection and assistance needs of IDPs in the districts of Tenenkou (Mopti) and Niono (Segou). Following discussions with Government, MINUSMA and humanitarian actors, the mission put forward a series of recommendations calling for risk reduction measures to reinforce humanitarian access and humanitarian principles, as well as strengthen the protection of civilian.

Education

- In an effort to promote peaceful coexistence between local communities and promote refugee children's access to education, UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, carried out 15 sensitization campaigns on the importance of education, community mobilization around education, and using wagons to transport children to schools in the region of Kayes. These campaigns reached 303 members of the Mauritanian refugee and host communities.
- In the refugee site of Nagara in Kayes region, a community meeting was organized to discuss the implementation of boarding options for refugee children to attend school in that area. The discussions led to the village chief of Nagara offering space for refugees to build a welcome centre for refugees from the sites of Guimba, El Maloum, El M'Barké 1 and El M'Barké 2.
- Nine out of ten literacy centres in the region of Kayes are functioning with 243 adult learners from the refugee and host communities currently participating in basic reading, writing and mathematics classes. The literacy centres have empowered communities by allowing refugees to use their skills to teach peers, develop basic literacy skills in order to become more self-reliant and reinforce the socio-economic fabric between different communities. The support has helped create self-sustaining literacy centres built, funded and maintained by the communities.

Health

- UNHCR referred two refugee returnees with urgent medical needs in the commune of Anderamboukane, in Menaka region, to Médecins du Monde (MdM) Belgique for treatment and support.
- Two sensitization sessions on voluntary screening for HIV/AIDS were held in the refugee sites of Kounougale and El Mbarke 2 reaching 98 members of the Mauritanian refugee and host communities in the region of Kayes. In addition, 84 refugees and host community members were sensitized on giving birth in health centres and pre-natal consultations through five sensitization sessions in five refugee sites.
- The Union Technique de la Mutualité Malienne, a health insurance association, subscribed 18 refugee households (40 people) to health insurance plans in the region of Kayes to help them gain better access to medical services.
- UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, supports urban refugees gain access to basic health services as well as reinforce their knowledge of preventive healthcare. Three sensitizations on 'Malaria Prevention' were carried out in the neighborhoods of Magnambougou, Sogoniko and Dravela Bolibana in Bamako whereby 193 urban refugees learnt about ways to prevent malaria ahead of the rainy season. ACTED also reinforced the access to medical services of 47 urban refugees with special needs by helping them access medical support for chronic illnesses (36), protection support (3), and timely coverage of specific needs (8).

Food Security and Nutrition

- Food security has been identified by protection monitors as a critical need for vulnerable refugee returnee households reintegrating in difficult zones in the region of Gao during the hunger gap period. Through advocacy efforts with UNHCR's strategic partner, the Norwegian Refugee Council, three food vouchers were provided in Menaka to help three refugee returnee households identified as very vulnerable.

Water and Sanitation

- A mission to the village of Serenaty in the region of Kayes took place to engage and inform local community members about the option to put in place a water point in the site of Bakayara. The members rejected the offer because of concerns regarding expropriation of cultivable land and the difficulty of co-habitation between agriculturalists of Serenaty and pastoralists of Bakayara. As a result of these discussions, UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, will build the water point in the site of Khairou.

Shelter and NFIs

Shelter and NFI Cluster

- On 26 May, the Shelter and NFI Cluster reviewed rapid multi-sectoral needs assessment reports produced by CARE and MINUSMA on the IDP situation in Niono in Segou. According to the reports, the clash led to the displacement of 800 families that required immediate assistance in shelter and NFI needs. Cluster members commissioned STOP Sahel to conduct a needs assessment to get qualitative and quantitative information on shelter and NFI needs.
 - Shelter and NFI Cluster members have approved an NFI minimum standard kit. The approved kit contains commonly used household items such as a cooking set, soap, bucket, blanket, jerry can and mosquito net.
 - The Sub-National Shelter and NFI Cluster in Gao validated its terms of reference on 19 May.
- UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, formed and trained members of nine shelter committees in the six localities of Gao, Karou, Labbézanga, Gossi, Ménaka and Anderamboukane in the regions of Gao and Menaka. In the town of Gao, 58 refugee returnees, returnees and host community members received shelter tool kits and 15 refugee returnees received construction material kits to help them rebuild their homes. The shelter assistance in the regions of Gao and Menaka will help 250 households (1,500 individuals) regain their dignity and privacy with the security of a house. The project also aims to foster social cohesion within families and between communities.
 - Following a Government request to help IDPs and refugee returnees in Mopti, UNHCR provided NFI stocks (557 buckets, 1,655 blankets, 300 mats and 15,180 soaps). These items will be distributed in the districts of Mopti, Tenenkou, Youwarou and Douentza.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- **Cash-Based Interventions (CBI):** The roll-out for cash-based interventions (CBI) for refugee returnees in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu is underway. To date, 1,691 refugee returnees were identified by UNHCR's partner, Mercy Corps, with 1,144 from Gao, 339 from Timbuktu and 208 from Mopti. The CBI will support the safe and swift reintegration of refugee returnees into their communities, gain greater self-reliance, and/or assist them with the coverage of their basic needs based on their own priorities. The identification of refugee returnees eligible for CBI assistance has been a challenging process due to difficulties in accessing returnees in north and central Mali who often relocate after arrival and volatile security conditions. Challenges were analysed and measures have been taken to ease the process so new refugee returnees get timely CBI.



Identification and registration of refugee returnees beneficiaries for cash assistance in Timbuktu, credit © Mercy Corps

- **Income-generating activities:**
 - UNHCR, through its partner Mercy Corps, will support 15 agricultural groups composed of refugee returnees and host community members with their vegetable gardening activities to diversify their vegetable garden products and prevent malnutrition among village members in the region of Timbuktu. Among the five vegetable garden groups supported by UNHCR in Gao, Achinowafayake, a women's association, produced encouraging results with market sales from their 1.5 hectare vegetable garden generating revenues of approximately US\$3,940.
 - After consulting with village leaders and community members in the region of Timbuktu, seven villages in six priority communes (Alafia, Timbuktu, Rharous, Gari, Soboundou and Soumpi) have been identified to receive livestock support.
 - In the region of Kayes, numerous agricultural production and livestock activities are underway to improve the self-reliance of refugee and host communities, including through the purchase of chickens and goats, the construction of cereal banks, and the provision of ploughs and seeds for vulnerable households. Activities to facilitate access to employment and entrepreneurship produced positive results, including the mobilization of communities in the sites of Kounougale and Heremakono to make financial contributions to build a windmill in their communities. Earlier support for the construction of cereal banks has helped communities not only meet basic food needs, but also build a working capital that has been reinvested to acquire supplies to maintain the cereal banks.
 - 14 village savings and credit associations in the region of Mopti received support from UNHCR's partner, Mercy Corps, to develop and validate operational terms of reference to assist vulnerable households gain access to finance.

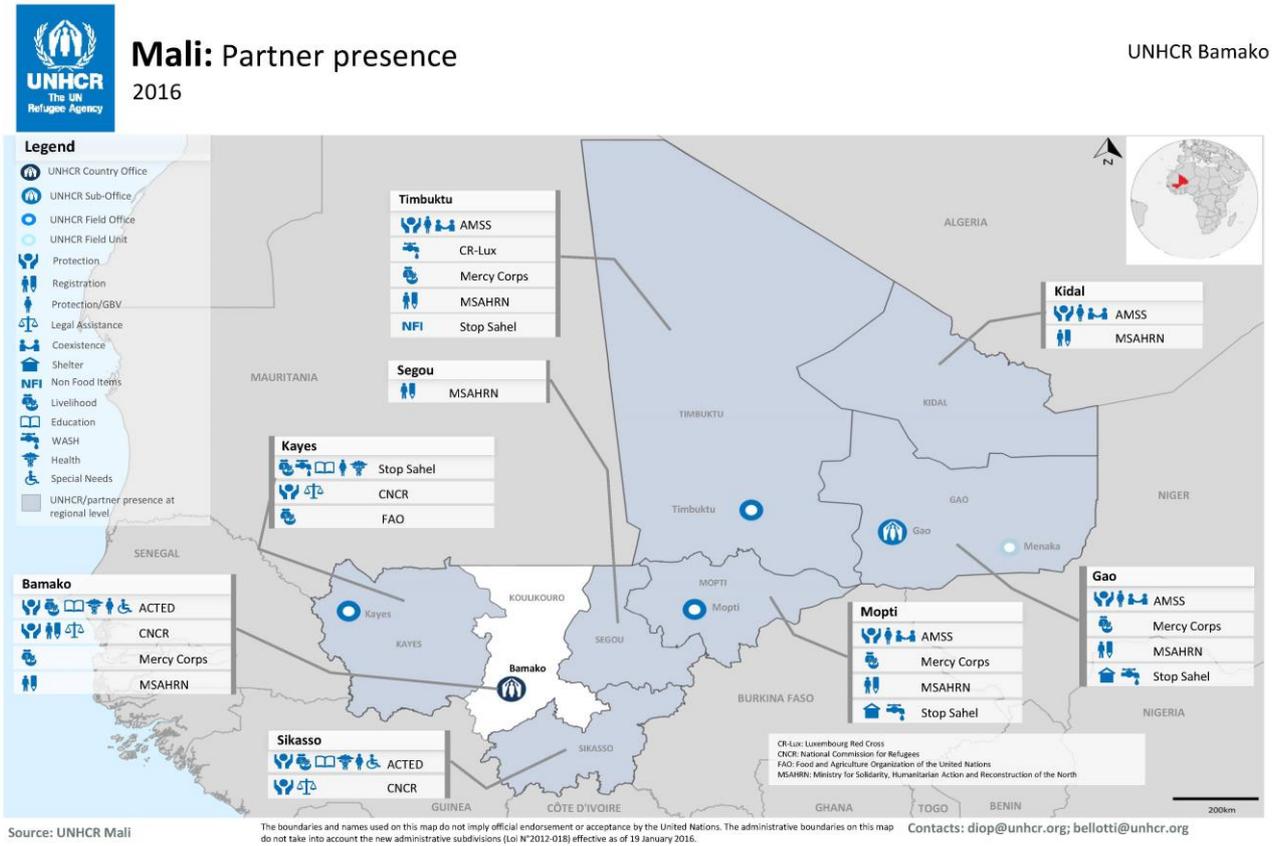
- **Youth at Work:** A joint project between UNHCR and FAO supporting 50 Mauritanian refugee youths and 50 host community youths aims to reduce rural poverty, improve food security, and reinforce peaceful coexistence between host and refugee communities. So far, the project has distributed kits to 10 refugee groups in four communes of Guidimakan Kéry Kafo, Sahel, Karakoro, and Djelebou to support activities related to cattle and sheep fattening, as well as dairy milk production from cows and goats. The construction of stables to provide shelter for livestock is ongoing in some of these refugee sites. Six groups pursuing cattle fattening activities sold their cattle and collectively earned 8,550,000 CFA (approx. US\$14,532). These groups are now in the process of re-investing their proceeds to buy new cattle.



Mauritanian refugee with cattle from yjr 'Youth at Work' project in Kayes region, credit © UNHCR Kayes

- **Sexual and Gender-based Violence:** With an aim to reduce the risk of sexual violence and promote greater community participation in the prevention of SGBV, 17 sensitization campaigns were organized by UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, on the economic and social consequences of excision reaching 397 Mauritanian refugees of which 202 women participated in 23 sites. In addition, two sessions on the consequences of early marriage in the refugee sites of Hèrèmakono and Afroye were held reaching 56 refugees. In Bamako, UNHCR's partner, ACTED, held a training session with 25 urban refugees to introduce them to different forms of SGBV and methods to prevent and protect against SGBV. Financial support was also provided to three SGBV monitoring committees in Bamako in order to help them with their internal organization. One SGBV survivor was identified in May and referred to a health centre for support. Since the beginning of the year, eight SGBV survivors among urban refugees have been identified and referred for medical support.

Working in partnership

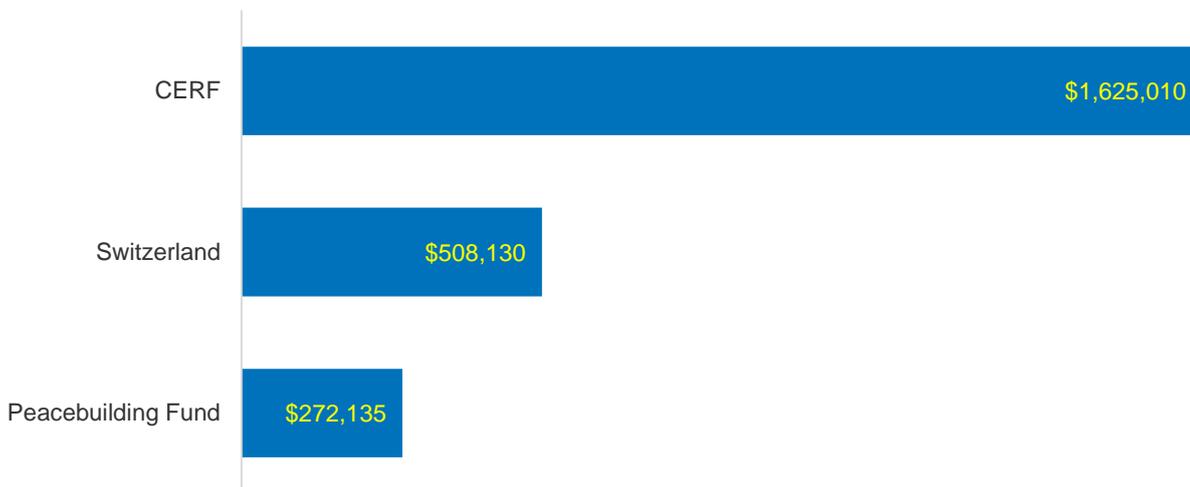


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **USD 2,405,275**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors that have contributed to this operation.

Funding received in USD

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