

Maradi Emergency Situation

February 2020

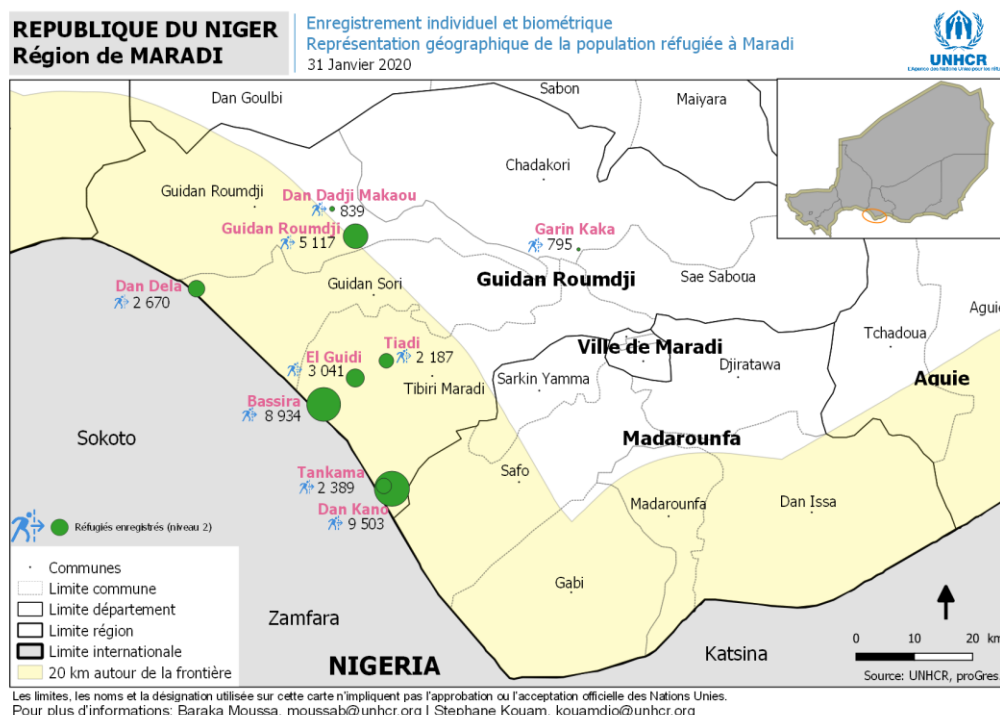
Background

Eight months after Niger's Maradi region witnessed an influx of refugees fleeing killings, kidnappings for ransom and pillaging of property in Nigeria's North West, the security situation along the border remains precarious. Violence has even spilled over into Niger, posing a threat to refugees and local communities alike, and heightening the risk of further displacements.

At the onset of the crisis, UNHCR deployed an emergency team and opened a sub-office in Maradi in September. The emergency response focused on protection and life-saving activities, including *inter alia* registration, protection and border monitoring, education, health, shelter and WASH services. An important component of the response was also the relocation of refugees to 'opportunity villages' away from the border to ensure their safety and ease pressure on the host population who generously welcomed them. This scheme contributes to developing rural areas that lack adequate infrastructure and basic services, in line with the humanitarian-development nexus, ensuring that assistance provision is sustainable and reaches the host population.

Population Statistics

UNHCR and the Government have individually registered and biometrically enrolled a total of **35,439 refugees** (9,708 households) in the Maradi region as of 31st January 2020. 23% of those registered are women, 10% are men and 67% are children. In January, new arrivals of almost 5,000 individuals have been observed in Guidan Roundji and Guidan Sori municipalities. Continuous registration and update of the database are also ongoing. On the other side of the border, in North West Nigeria, some 210,000 people are internally displaced.



Nigerian refugees in Maradi Region © UNHCR

Progress and Achievements

- **Coordination:** UNHCR has been at the forefront of coordinating the refugee and host population response in Maradi to ensure a coherent and complementary approach by all stakeholders. A coordination committee was created in September under the lead of the Government, a Protection working group and different thematic groups such as SGBV, child protection were also established to strengthen and consolidate the protection response.
- **Relocation:** UNHCR and partners kicked off in mid-October the relocation of refugees from towns along the border. As of 31st January 2020, **1,634** refugees were relocated to two of the ten identified opportunity villages, namely Garin Kaka and Dan Dadji Makaou, where infrastructure was rehabilitated and expanded to host refugees and improve living conditions for the host population. The third opportunity village Chadakori will be developed the upcoming months to continue accommodating refugees remaining along the border.
- **Basic services and infrastructural support:** Shelter, WASH, health and education services and infrastructure were supported by UNHCR and partners, in addition to the distribution of non-food items to refugees and vulnerable host populations, both in hosting villages along the border as well as in opportunity villages. In the latter for instance, transitional shelters were erected to house relocated refugee families; boreholes were drilled and water supply systems were installed to ensure adequate access to safe water; health centers were built to provide free primary health care services for the entire population in the area; and schools were upgraded and expanded to accommodate a larger number of students from both the host and the refugee communities. Education (both formal and vocational trainings) and resilience activities constitute priorities together with the infrastructure's development.
- In 2020, UNHCR has scheduled to train border guards and government officials on access to territory and refugee protection. Weekly border monitoring missions will be conducted while an adequate protection response continues for victims of gender-related violence, children, persons with specific needs or people in need of psychosocial support.

Main Challenges

- **Financial resources remain insufficient:** In 2020, UNHCR and the other actors responding to the Maradi situation require 33,6 million USD. The response plan for 2020 is about to be finalized. Concurrent needs in other Nigerien areas struggling with insecurity, namely Diffa, Tillaberi and Tahoua, further strain humanitarian actors' financial resources and hence their capacity to respond.
- **Security situation continues to be volatile:** Incursions by armed groups are still recurrent, which calls for continuous monitoring of the situation and preparedness to respond to any potential new displacements. This is more challenging in light of the lack of information on the humanitarian situation and dynamics on the other side of the border.

External / Donors Relations

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LINKS

Regional portal - UNHCR operation page - Twitter