

UNHCR Sahel Crisis Response

1-30 June 2020

To highlight the immense needs in the Sahel and scale up its response to the deepening crisis, **UNHCR has launched an appeal on 12 June 2020** for US\$ 186 million to scale up its shelter and education interventions and better address SGBV and other protection needs.

The security situation remains extremely precarious in the region. In response to the killing of the head of AQIM, Abdelmalek Droukdel, the Katiba Macina reportedly attacked an army convoy on 14 June killing 24 soldiers in the **deadliest attack against the Malian force** since the beginning of the year.

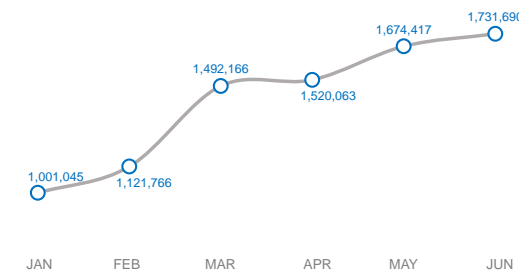
Concerned with the growing number of human rights violations in the region, **UNHCR and its humanitarian partners issued a joint statement** on 12 June calling the G5 Sahel and the international forces to commit to protect civilians and to ensure humanitarian access.

Key figures

3,363,634 PERSONS OF CONCERN
1,731,690 IDPs
836,278 REFUGEES
649,738 RETURNEES
145,928 OTHERS

Evolution of IDP population

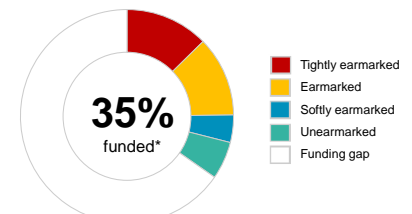
73% increase since January 2020



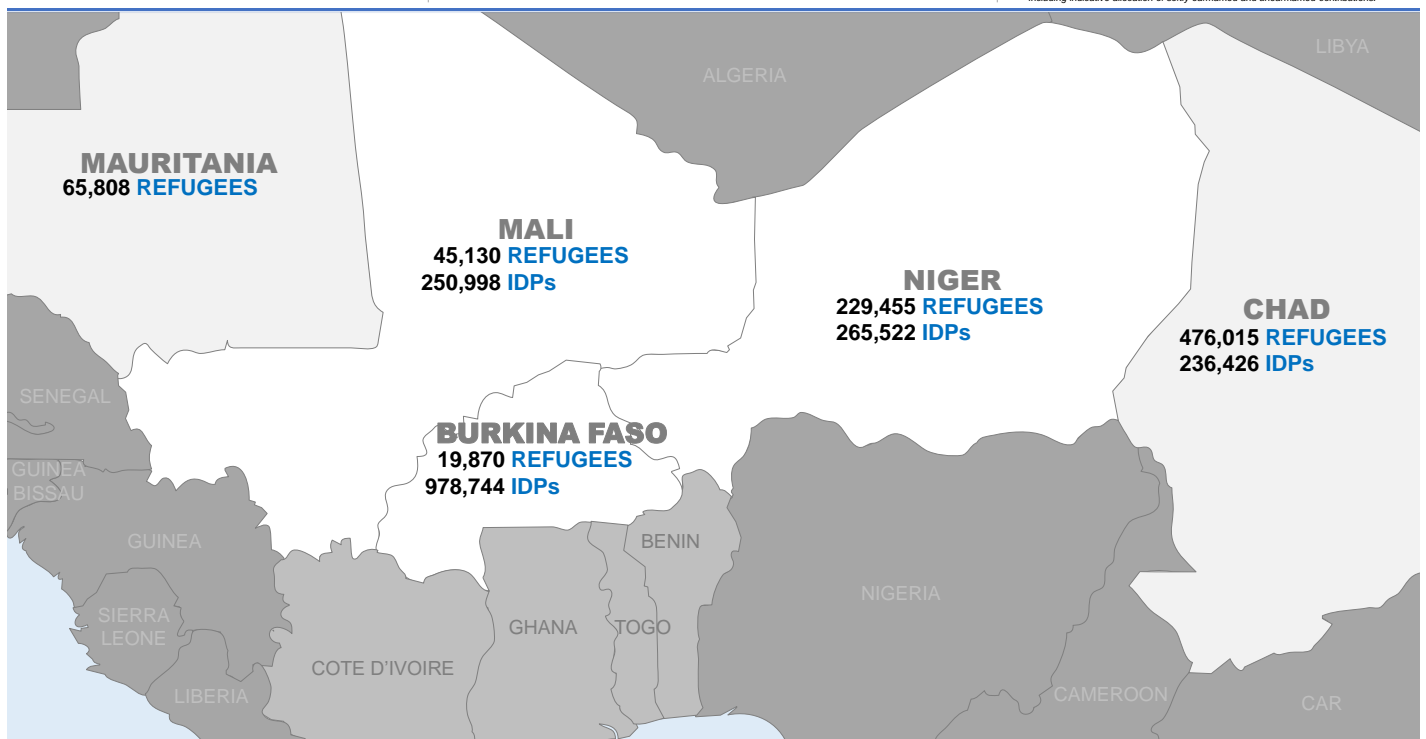
FUNDING (30 JUNE 2020)

USD 185.7 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020



* Including indicative allocation of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions.



OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Political and security developments

- The security situation continues to deteriorate rapidly in the **Sahel**, causing humanitarian needs to reach unprecedented levels and prompting the international community to reiterate its call for the protection of civilians. Conflict, climate shocks, endemic poverty, and chronic vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an additional burden on governments' limited resources. Coupled with the lean season which has just begun and is predicted to be one of the most serious in decades, it is feared that this situation will likely generate significant displacement of populations within the region and beyond: possibly southward to coastal countries, as well as northward to North Africa and Europe.
- In **Burkina Faso**, during the month of June, armed groups continued operations against Government forces and civilian populations in the regions of the Centre North, East, North and the Sahel, including through roadside ambushes and explosive devices. These groups have shown their capacity to lead coordinated operations both inside the country as well as on the other side of the borders, in particular in Mali and Niger. Recently, some incidents were reported near the border with the Cote d'Ivoire confirming that they have also been reinforcing their presence in the South West of the country. Humanitarian access continues to be impeded, especially to Djibo and the Mentao refugee camp in the Sahel region. UNHCR's beneficiaries have been directly impacted by the worsening of the situation. In particular, two refugees were injured following the detonation of an explosive device (IEDs) on the way from Djibo to Mentao refugee camp. UNHCR's health partner and the *Commission nationale pour les réfugiés* (CONAREF) facilitated their transfer to the medical centre in Djibo, where they received treatment for their injuries. In addition, two private trucks transporting food provided by WFP for refugees and IDPs in Djibo, were hijacked by armed men. This incident delayed the provision of food for UNHCR's beneficiaries for June.
- In **Mali**, the security situation remains complex and unstable, marked by extremist and criminal activities, mainly in the North and the Centre of the country. On 3 June, the Operation Barkhane announced the killing of the head of AQIM, Abdelmalek Droukdel and several of his close associates during an operation in northern Mali near the Algerian border. The Katiba Macina reportedly carried out a revenge attack against a Malian army convoy in the commune of Diabaly, Niono cercle in the Ségou region, on 14 June. A total of 24 soldiers were killed and 32 are still missing in what represents the deadliest attack against the Malian force since the beginning of the year. At the same time, social unrest further increased, with thousands of Malians taking to the streets of the capital to demand the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, on 5 and 19 June. Both social demonstrations followed a call made by the new alliance called "*Mouvement du 5 juin - Rassemblement des Forces Patriotiques*" (M5-RFP). Other smaller protests took place in other cities as well. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect almost the entire country, including the northern and central regions that lack medical facilities.
- In **Mauritania**, the overall political and security situation remains stable, though continued instability in Mali remains of major concern. The government of Mauritania has included refugees in its national health response to COVID 19 in line with its pledges during the Global Refugee Forum.
- In **Niger**, while much focus of the humanitarian and development community is now on COVID-19, conflict dynamics continued to cause forced movements of the population in the Sahel. The continuous insecurity in the Tillabery and Tahoua regions and the violent attack that took place in Intikane on 30 May 2020 continued to force a growing number of Niger citizens to flee their homes seeking safety within the country or across the border to Mali. Following the attack, a rapid protection evaluation mission as well as a security evaluation

mission were organized by UNHCR and its partners to assess the situation and respond to the most pressing needs of the populations in Intikane and those who fled.

- The past weeks have seen several documented reports, including by the MINUSMA, of very serious human rights violations (including numerous extrajudicial killings) at the hands of national security forces in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. Concerned with these growing instances of human rights violations, UNHCR along with other United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations have issued a joint-statement on 12 June calling the G5 Sahel countries and the international forces to commit to protect civilian populations during their operations and to ensure unhindered humanitarian access. In an effort to curb the escalating violence, the leaders from the **G5 Sahel** countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and French President Emmanuel Macron met in Nouakchott in Mauritania on 30 June, to discuss a common strategy to improve the security situation in the region while addressing the humanitarian and development crisis.

UNHCR Sahel Appeal. To get support for its Sahel scale up strategy, UNHCR launched an appeal on 12 June 2020. UNHCR is planning to provide more shelters to decongest the most overcrowded sites, core relief items and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, which has become widespread and aggravated by confinement and overcrowding. The scale up also aims at supporting education, rehabilitating schools and classrooms or providing distance learning opportunities. With climate change heavily impacting the Sahel, our response will follow a do-no-harm and eco-friendly approach, strengthening community-based preparedness to prevent climate related forced displacement; and supporting the use of clean energy as well as plastic and waste management.

Population Movements

- Despite official border closures to limit the spread of COVID-19, violence continues to fuel forced displacement within and across the borders of the **Sahel** countries.
- In **Burkina Faso**, the *Conseil National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation* (CONASUR) released the latest internal displacement figures show a 64% increase in the number of IDPs since the beginning of the year going from 560,033 at the end of December 2019 to 921,471 IDPs on 7 June 2020.
- In **Mali**, the security situation continues to generate forced internal and transborder displacements. Internal displacements were recorded in the communes of Pignari and Kassa occurred as a result of village attacks. In Kassa, armed groups also ransacked the village water tower. People also fled the villages of Bourra and Gossi were preventive due to growing insecurity in the area. Meanwhile, over 1,000 more people crossed into the area of Anderamboukane from Niger following the attack by a radical armed group in the Intikane camp in western Niger at the end of May as well as clashes between the Niger army and armed groups in June. To date, 13,712 Niger refugees have been registered in the Menaka area in Mali. These Niger refugees are joined by an increasing number of Malian refugees who felt compelled to return to their home country despite the security challenges in Mali.
- **Mauritania** is host to the largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with a total of 65,778 individuals, as of end of May 2020. New refugee arrivals continue to be limited due to the tightening of border controls which started in March 2020, in view of the prevention of COVID-19.
- In **Niger**, internal displacement has almost doubled in the last 12 months and figures keep climbing with each passing month in the Tillabery and Tahoua regions as armed groups are ordering populations to leave their

villages, many fleeing across the border to Mali. Over 6000 Malian refugees have left the urban site in Ayerou (Tillabery region) following threats by armed groups in February 2020 and only few of them have returned to the site so far. Following the security incident in Intikane on 30 May, over 9,200 individuals left the refugee hosting area of which some 1,000 have returned to Mali while the rest settled in the area around Telemces, a village located some 25 km from the refugee hosting area of Intikane. UNHCR is working to support the survivors and is providing urgently needed assistance – for example organizing water delivery to make sure that refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities have water available for drinking and for hand washing, which is critical in preventing COVID-19 from spreading.

Protection Monitoring

- In partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), UNHCR is spearheading the Project 21, a harmonized regional wide protection monitoring system in the three pilot countries, **Burkina Faso**, **Mali** and **Niger**. The data collection through telephone interviews continue in three countries. The system has been jointly developed by UNHCR and DRC, adapted to COVID-19 pandemics, and consulted with 20 protection monitoring actors in the pilot countries as well as at regional level for their feedbacks. This transnational project aims to bring evidence-based understanding of the protection environment, risks and needs, which allows protection actors to align protection interventions, to conduct regional advocacy, and to better coordinate protection activities. The three-months pilot phase will be followed by the system review period to prepare for an implementation in a wider region. Findings and analysis will be shared monthly in a summary snapshot and quarterly in a narrative report. DRC and UNHCR hope to make this project as participative as possible with more protection actors.
- In **Burkina Faso**, UNHCR's partners continue their protection monitoring activities, while ensuring that the preventive measures against the COVID-19 are respected. In the Centre-Nord region, the implementing partner *Initiatives de Coopération et d'Appui aux Actions Humanitaires et de Développement* (ICAHD) identified and documented 64 cases of human rights violations including Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), assaults on life, infringement of property rights, violations of physical or mental integrity and violations of liberty of movements. ICAHD also conducted awareness raising sessions for 334 individuals on prevention of COVID-19, child protection, forced marriage, gender issues including GBV, stress management, and psychosocial support.
- In **Mali**, In June, the Protection Cluster's monitoring system recorded 493 violations in Mali. With a total of 1,775 human rights violations documented from January to June 2020, this is almost equivalent to the same number of violations over the whole of 2019 (1,882 in total). This alarming increase demonstrates the intensification of the conflict, which makes the civilian population more vulnerable. This month, the 23 village attacks and five threats of village attacks reported by the flash reporting mechanism all took place in Mopti, the majority in the Koro and Bandiagara circles.
- In **Mauritania**, the most acute problems refugees face is their loss of livelihood due to the stringent measures adopted by the government in order to prevent propagation of COVID-19. According to a rapid need assessment in urban areas, 86% reported being severely affected by the Covid19 measures, including through loss of jobs and income, inability to meet most basic needs (water, food, shelter), or being at risk of eviction. In Mbera camp, despite the fact that the level of humanitarian services provided remains largely unchanged, the socio-economic impact on refugees is of major concern due to the closure of the weekly market and of small family businesses. Host communities are also negatively impacted. Furthermore, due to the prolonged period of school closure, UNHCR has witnessed an increasing number of child labour in Mbera camp. UNHCR and partners worked on the identification of these children and conducted awareness raising campaigns. In addition, it was decided to suspend the registration of the urban asylum seeker caseload, following a confirmation of one positive case in persons of concern.

UNHCR RESPONSE

Covid19

- To address the new challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Sahel, UNHCR Operations are strengthening national healthcare systems, WASH structures and services in the main hosting areas and expanding livelihoods opportunities and cash assistance to help mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of the pandemic on refugees and IDPs.

- In **Burkina Faso**, as of 30 June 2020, there have been 967 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso, including 53 deaths and 846 recoveries. While there are no confirmed cases amongst populations of concern to UNHCR and its staff, community transmissions risks remain a major concern considering the weak national healthcare system. UNHCR and its partners are therefore stepping up prevention and response activities amid growing humanitarian needs. In this context, the European Commission, Denmark and France operated the first EU Humanitarian Air Bridge to Burkina Faso on 22 June carrying much needed supplies and allowing humanitarian staff whose presence in the country will strengthen the response to the growing humanitarian needs. The EU further announced EUR 10 million for humanitarian aid in the country. Meanwhile, more than 500 members of the community-based protection committees trained by UNHCR on COVID 19 prevention measures, are sensitizing their community members, while weekly radio broadcast are running on nine radio stations in across the Centre, Centre-Nord Nord and Sahel regions in partnership with Fondation Hirondelle which produced. 56 information spots. In parallel, Refugees and host communities continue to be active agents in the fight against COVID-19 and are contributing to the respect of preventive measures in the country. For example, 10 refugee women in Dori were trained by Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi (ANPE) in partnership with Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, a UNHCR Partner, and produced solid and liquid soap. In addition, some refugee and host community tailors also completed the production of 35,000 masks which will be distributed to refugees, IDPs and host communities living in Dori. To date, UNHCR and its partners distributed 2,990 hand washing devices, 22,389 soaps bars, 9,000 containers of liquid soaps, and 37,565 masks. UNHCR also provided in-kind donations, composed of three ambulances one of which is medicalized, medicine, pharmaceutical supplies and information posters on COVID-19, to regional authorities for a total amount of USD 1,388,723 USD. Furthermore, between 01 and 30 June, UNHCR handed the authorities a 10L water truck that allowed to deliver some 180 m3 of drinkable water to 11,333 IDPs, refugees and host communities (i.e. some 15 litres per person) in the sites of Wendou, Petit Paris and Yanrala in Dori.

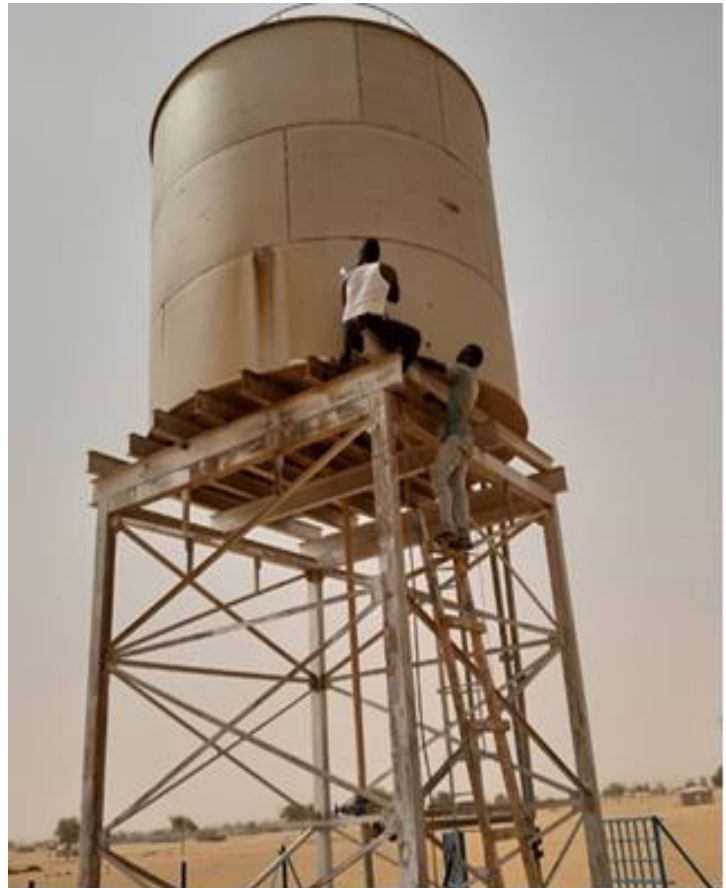


A total of 21,300 plastic sheets have arrived to Burkina Faso, as part of the humanitarian airlift kindly offered by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum of the UAE. © UNHCR / M. Bougma.

- In **Chad**, to prepare for the opening of N'Djamena airport to commercial flights, UNHCR gave a tent to the national civil aviation authority, which will serve as an air passenger quarantine. In the east of Chad, refugee

health facilities in Goz Beida received a monitoring visit by the national COVID-19 team, which donated infrared thermometers. UNHCR's office in Farchana made a donation of 125 beds and mattress, 25 sprayers, 150 buckets, 101 handwashing stations, 50 hygiene kits and one tent to the Province of Ouaddai for the COVID-19 response. In Bagasola, two additional boreholes were made to increase water availability and avoid crowding around existing waterpoints and thereby reduce transmission risk, while 26,480 bars of soap were distributed to persons of concern, including people with specific needs. 180,000 medical masks and 400,000 gloves were distributed to field offices and the branch office to be used in refugee health facilities and by UNHCR staff.

- In **Mali**, the three cases of COVID-19 reported among IDPs have recovered. No more cases among persons of concern were reported since May. Meanwhile, COVID-19 sensitization sessions continue to be organized in Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu, as well as the distribution of sanitary and hygiene kits to local authorities. World Refugee Day (WRD) was marked by the distribution of COVID-19 kits and masks, as well as the production and dissemination of a short film highlight refugees' participation in the fight against the pandemic in Bamako, Gao, Meneka, Mopti and Timbuktu. In the latter city, a symbolic donation of health and hygienic kits was also made to regional authorities during WRD.
- In **Mauritania**, the monthly food distribution took place in Mbera camp from 2 to 9 June, in coordination with WFP and partners. Distribution was extended to non-vulnerable groups on an exceptional basis to mitigate shocks due to the negative economic impact of the closure of the weekly market in the camp, price escalation and general economic slowdown as well as to protect refugees from resorting to negative coping mechanisms. Another adjustment was the decision taken by UNHCR and its partners at the end of June to limit access to Mbera camp, given the propagation of COVID-19 in the nearby town of Bassikounou. However, security, health, WASH, nutrition, and protection activities continue with fewer staff going to Mbera every day. A system of triage (for suspect and confirmed cases) has also been established in Mbera by UNHCR's health partner ALIMA.
- In **Niger**, UNHCR continues to support the authorities in their response to COVID-19. In Tillabery and Tahoua, medical supplies were donated to the various health centers in the region. In Tahoua, the authorities inaugurated a site where potential COVID-19 cases will be isolated and treated. UNHCR has donated 40 Refugee Housing Units (RHU) to set up the site. With the support of the NGOs Forge Art and ADES, UNHCR has continued to train refugees and Niger citizens in the production of bleach, soap and masks in all refugee hosting areas in both Tahoua and Tillabery regions. The production will be distributed among PoCs, vulnerable households in the hosting communities and hospitals of the areas affected by COVID-19. In Eknewane in the Tahoua region, a new generator has been installed by UNHCR and works to repair the



Reparation and improvement of water distribution network in Eknewane near Tahoua is underway. © UNHCR Niger

water distribution network are underway. In close cooperation with the local authorities and partners, registration of new arrivals is ongoing and people on the Telemces site have access to health, education and other basic services

Shelter and Core Relief Items

- *The need for shelter and basic household items are growing with the scale of displacement in the Sahel where refugees and IDPs often reside in overcrowded conditions. During the period under review, rain and flooding have caused damage to makeshift shelters, highlighting the need for decent housing for refugees and IDP communities and their hosts. UNHCR operations are working with partners to build, repair and rehabilitate shelters while distribution of shelter kits to affected populations are ongoing.*
- In **Burkina Faso**, UNHCR pursues its efforts to mitigate the impact of the rainy season, which has brought some exceptionally strong winds and heavy rainfalls this year. Almost 70,000 internally displaced persons are currently residing in flood prone areas in Centre-Nord and the Sahel regions. UNHCR and its partners estimate that, in Burkina Faso, some 890,000 people are in need of shelter assistance. Thanks to the shelter cluster partners, a total of 18,290 families received emergency shelters and 35,406 families received core relief items (CRIs). In addition, UNHCR has further supported 31,017 households with shelter materials between March and June 2020. On 19 June, a cargo flight kindly donated by his Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai landed in Ouagadougou. On board, some 88 tons of emergency aid for refugees and IDPs in Burkina Faso, including 21,300 plastic sheets to strengthen UNHCR's shelter response and improve living conditions for some 30,000 IDPs. Land availability continues to be an issue and discussions with regional authorities in order to find solutions for the relocation of individuals living in flood prone areas are on-going. During this reporting period, both the Centre-Nord, and the Nord and the Sahel have faced heavy rain and winds damaging over 623 shelters, 10 RHUs and affecting nearly 880 persons including 26 injured. Emergency tents, additional shelter support, and CRIs were distributed. In the Nord, a new site has been identified for the relocation of IDPs. In Dori, two of the four sites identified have been readied for the relocation of families living in flood prone area and some RHUs have been built to provide sturdier homes for those most at risk.



In Burkina Faso, RHUs were built to provide sturdier homes to IDP families affected by the heavy rainfalls and the floods in Wendou in the Sahel Region. ©UNHCR / S. Tchagbele

- In **Chad**, during the month of June, 131 shelters were constructed to improve the living conditions of newly settled refugees, including 100 shelters at Dar Es Salam camp in the Lake Chad zone and 31 shelters at Kerfi site in Sila Province in the east of the country. In Doholo camp in the south of Chad, 73 shelters were renovated, and 152 other roofs reinforced for better waterproofing.

- In **Mali**'s Gao region, 54 mud shelters, including 32 in Menaka, 13 in Ansongo, and 9 in Gao, were rehabilitated, on an annual objective of 130, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of returning refugees. As for traditional shelters, 18 of them were constructed in Menaka city.
- In **Mauritania**, UNHCR distributed Cash for Shelter to 599 refugee families in Mbera camp. The distribution was coupled with the awareness-raising to effectively allocate the assistance to fix their shelters, which have been severely damaged due to the harsh climatic conditions and prolonged stay in the camp.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

- *In June, UNHCR operations in the Sahel, intensified sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response program, including by expanding mobile clinic services in hard to reach areas and strengthening referral mechanisms as well as sensitization campaigns and legal assistance.*
- In **Burkina Faso**, UNHCR partners reported multiple cases of SGBV including sexual violence, rape, forced marriage and financial discrimination. Many survivors received psychosocial assistance and were also referred to other services. UNHCR sustains its efforts for the prevention of, awareness-raising on and support to survivors of SGBV. In the region of Sahel, SGBV rapid assessment data collection tools were launched, with 33 teams to be deployed in seven localities. This will contribute to the strengthening of collection and analysis on SGBV incidents. In parallel, mobile clinics for the care and support of SGBV survivors, including psychosocial, medical, material and legal support, have been established in the Centre Nord. In July and August, these clinics will also be set up in the Nord, Sahel, Hauts Bassins, Est and Plateau Central regions.
- In **Chad**, the gradual reduction of the measures taken by the government to stem and control the spread of the virus, notably; the reduction of curfew (10 PM to 5 AM), the resumption of urban and interurban transport as well as small businesses, combined with prevention activities which are carried out in compliance with barrier measures, have contributed to reducing the risk of SGBV violence. Simultaneously, monitoring of old cases and assistance (response) to new SGBV cases continued.
- In **Mali**, as part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative program, which aims to eliminate sexual and gender-based-violence (SGBV), sensitization sessions related to SGBV, including consequences of forced marriage, early marriage and psychological violence, continued to be conducted in Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu. During the reporting period, a case of rape was identified by AMSS, UNHCR's partner, in Gao region. The survivor was referred to relevant actors for psychosocial and medical care, while the survivor's family initiated legal action. The kidnapping of a 17-year-old girl was also reported. The girl was able to escape, and the case was referred, by AMSS, to local authorities for legal assistance. Furthermore, UNHCR is in the process of recruiting a consultant to conduct SGBV evaluations, in specific locations in northern and central regions. The targeted locations have a high number of persons of concern and were identified as lacking SGBV services, in comparison to other areas. This activity aims to have a baseline for the new SGBV program, as outlined in the Sahel Scale-up Strategy.
- In **Mauritania**, UNHCR is enhancing communications with both men and women on SGBV prevention and legal, safety, health, and psychosocial support. In urban areas, UNHCR partners in Nouakchott ensured the continuity of psychosocial support through counselling sessions by phone by a trained psychosocial worker. A total of 60 refugees were assisted since the beginning of the crisis. In Mbera camp, community mobilizers were trained to enhance the capacity for the identification and referral of cases. Community-based psychosocial sessions were also conducted with reduced group of participants, reaching around 100 refugees.

- In **Niger**, UNHCR and partners have identified 99 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) since the beginning of the year, 98% of them were women. The most recurrent incidents include early marriage, physical aggressions, preventing access to resources and rape. Of the identified victims, 82% have received psychosocial support, 23% a medical follow-up and 4% a legal assistance. Moreover, UNHCR has engaged in prevention activities and has reached 3824 persons with its activities. Two trainings have been organized for protection committees, which reached 27 persons.

Education

- *The month of June was marked by the reopening of schools in several countries for exam level classes. In anticipation of the school opening, and to allow for the safe return of students in the context of the pandemic UNHCR and its partners rebuilt, rehabilitated or constructing new classrooms in addition to installing water systems. UNHCR also contributed to retaining teachers by paying their salaries while schools were closed and building their capacity to offer classes remotely. UNHCR is supporting the authorities and*



In the Mopti region of #Mali Flag of Mali, children's smiles testify to the importance of education in their lives. The radios and school kits distributed by UNHCR Mali will allow them to continue to learn and develop their potential. ©UNHCR Mali

partners in their efforts to ensure a smooth return to school by contributing to sensitization and capacity-building activities for teachers, students on safety measures against COVID-19. In addition, is providing them with personal protective equipment and assists in the cleaning and fumigation of school premises. UNHCR is also supporting the improvement of ICT infrastructure to facilitate distant learning methods by providing increased connectivity, expanding radio broadcast coverage, establishing Wi-Fi hotspots, and providing laptops to teachers.

- In **Burkina Faso**, 01 June 2020 marked the resumption of classes for students in examination classes throughout the country after two months of break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of the COVID-19 activities implemented thanks to the funds by 'Education Cannot Wait' have been expanded and now include all refugee and host community children who used to attend the school in Goudoubo. All will be were provided with masks and radio sets. In addition, the government provided two masks to each refugee and host community student who are back in school and handwashing devices for schools to ensure the necessary COVID-19 protective measures are respected. The construction of additional classes, latrines and administrative blocs in four schools in Dori is progressing well and work is expected to be completed by early July.
- In **Chad**, after a few months of school closure due to COVID-19, students of the '3eme and 'Terminale' resumed their courses. Biometric enrollment of candidates for "baccalaureat" exams has also started. The exams will take place in August while respecting the protection barrier measures.

- In **Mali**, during the World Refugee Day, UNHCR in Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu distributed 405 handwashing kits to 135 schools. This contribution aims to support schools in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic, as children are back to school and are preparing for a second cycle of basic education exams. Furthermore, the construction of three classrooms in each of the two schools in Gao and Menaka has started. This activity is part of a project funded by 'Education Cannot Wait'. A total of 447 solar radios and 447 school kits were distributed and will benefit over 1,000 internal displaced, refugee and host population children.



The distribution of 405 hand washing stations to 135 schools in Mali's Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions has been completed. Around 13,500 boys & girls, in the region, will be able to learn in a more protective environment. © UNHCR Mali

- In **Mauritania**, to minimize the impact from the prolonged school closure, UNHCR has been supporting distance learning in Mbera camp, through the training of teachers on methodologies for distance learning, distribution of textbooks for distance learning to all the children at primary level and local radio programme in coordination with partners. This model established in the camp has been recognised as a successful one and has been replicated by seven other departments in the country.
- In **Niger**, 23 hand washing basins have been installed as well as 23 boxes with soap at the entry of school facilities in the Sahel regions of Tillabery and Tahoua. Additionally, 80 school kits have been distributed to 25 students in primary school and 55 students in higher educational facilities. UNHCR has rehabilitated 19 classrooms damaged by a tornado and have built 2 additional college classrooms in Ayerou and Ouallam. With the support of UNICEF, an additional 4 emergency classrooms have been installed in Ayerou. In Telemces, the high school reopened and 46 refugees from Intikane have been admitted.

Energy and Environment

- The **Sahel** is one of the regions most impacted by climate change in the world. This has been caused by decreased rainfall and a depletion of soil due to agricultural overexploitation and progressive deforestation of the original savannahs as a result of cutting firewood, bush fires and stray animals. To address this critical dimension of the regional crisis, UNHCR is adopting a do-no-harm approach and an eco-friendly response. It is to strengthening community-based preparedness to prevent climate-related forced displacement and promoting and supporting the use of clean energy as well as plastic and waste collection in areas hosting displaced populations.*
- In **Burkina Faso**, in an effort to improve living conditions and security in IDP sites, UNCR distributed solar lamps to 1,992 IDP families in Ouahigouya. In addition, to reduce the use of firewood for domestic cooking and address the risk of deforestation in the region of Sahel, UNHCR refilled bottles of gas for refugees who have self-relocated from Goudoubo and Mentao camps.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- *To support a comprehensive and sustainable response to forced displacement in the Sahel, UNHCR believes strongly in the need to build and sustain partnership and collaboration to raise awareness of the crisis and mobilize financial and technical support from all relevant stakeholders.*
- In [Burkina Faso](#), the Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, continues to enhance its support to the humanitarian country team (HCT) for protection mainstreaming and guidance on protection principles. The Peace Building Fund (PBF) financed project to strengthen youth engagement and social cohesion in the Regions of the Centre-Nord and the Sahel was launched on 9 June in Kaya and on 11 June in Dori in the presence of the IOM and UNHCR Representatives. The project will contribute to social cohesion and peace in these two regions through the promotion of joint socio-economic and cultural initiatives by young people from both host and displaced communities with a view to prevent and reduce community tensions. Due to COVID-19, this year's World Refugee Day was marked through radio programmes and quizzes to inform the general public on forced displacement issues and UNHCR's mandate.
- In [Mauritania](#), in the context of COVID-19, the UN system has organized itself in pillars to support the government in its COVID-19 response. UNHCR contributes to all pillars, especially in the region of the Hodh Ech Chargui where it is the lead UN actor on all activities, including health. At the request of a donor, UNHCR facilitated a virtual dialogue with refugee representatives in Mbera camp through a videoconference; this was the first videoconference to be held in the Mbera camp.

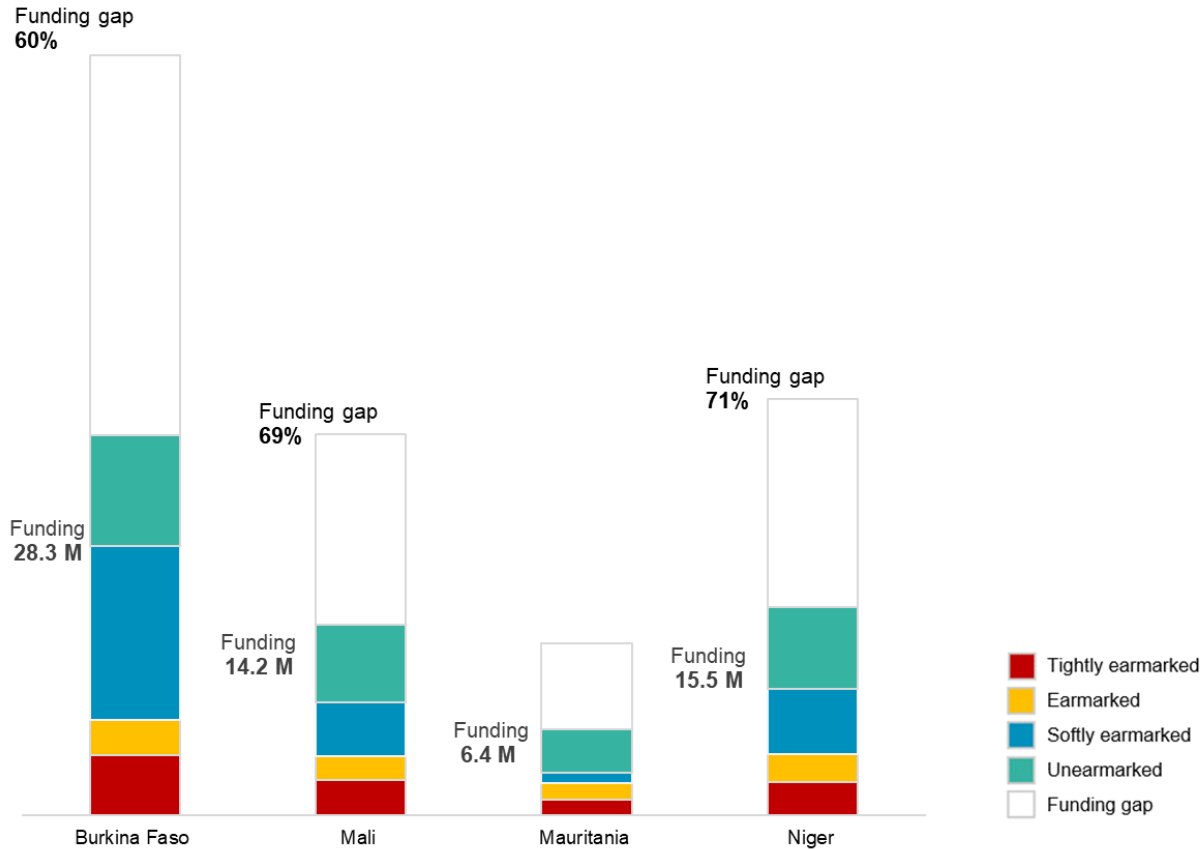
COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Communication and advocacy pieces recently published by UNHCR on the Sahel crisis:

- [UNHCR outraged at killings of two refugees and one community member in Niger](#) (UNHCR Press Release, 01 June 2020)
- [Malian refugees, local hosts flee after Sunday attack on site in western Niger](#) (UNHCR Briefing Note, 02 June 2020)
- [UNHCR airlifts emergency aid for displaced population in Burkina Faso](#) (UNHCR Broadcast, 19 June 2020)
- [UNHCR in Mali celebrates World Refugee Day with refugees, government of Mali and partners](#) (Press Briefing – UNHCR Mali, 20 June 2020)

DONORS

Sahel Appeal funding per country (USD)



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