

Sahel situation *(Tillbéri and Tahoua regions)*

April 2021

The Sahel regions have been hosting some 60,000 **Malian refugees** since 2012. They live in 3 sites in the Tillabéri region and a refugee hosting area in the Tahoua region.

The rapidly deteriorating security context has caused increased **internal displacement flows** with rising numbers every month. To date, some 140,000 IDPs are present in both regions.

The presence of armed groups across the border has caused movements of a few thousand **citizens from Burkina Faso** into Niger.

KEY INDICATORS

40,000*

Refugees in Niger who will have **access to land** according to the Government's pledge during the Global Refugee Forum.

+50%*

Increase of the number of internally displaced persons since last year.

576

Durable houses built and finalized in the Tillabéri region.

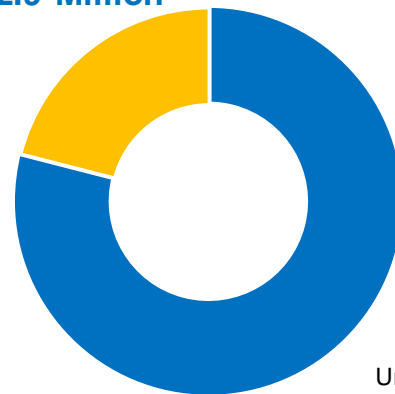
FUNDING (AS OF 30 MARCH 2021)

USD 110,5 Million

requested for UNHCR's operations in Niger

Funded 21%

22.9 Million



Unfunded 79%

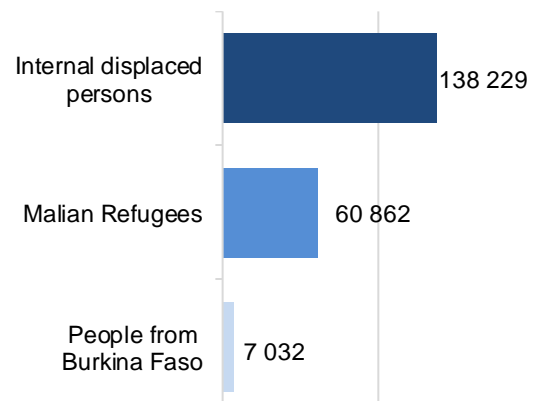
87.6 Million



*Akadanma Moussa, a 50-year-old displaced Nigerien, and his daughters, in their shelter in Intikane, Tahoua region
©UNHCR / Boubacar Younoussa Sidde*

POPULATION OF CONCERN IN NIGER'S SAHEL

(UNHCR data, 31st March 2021)



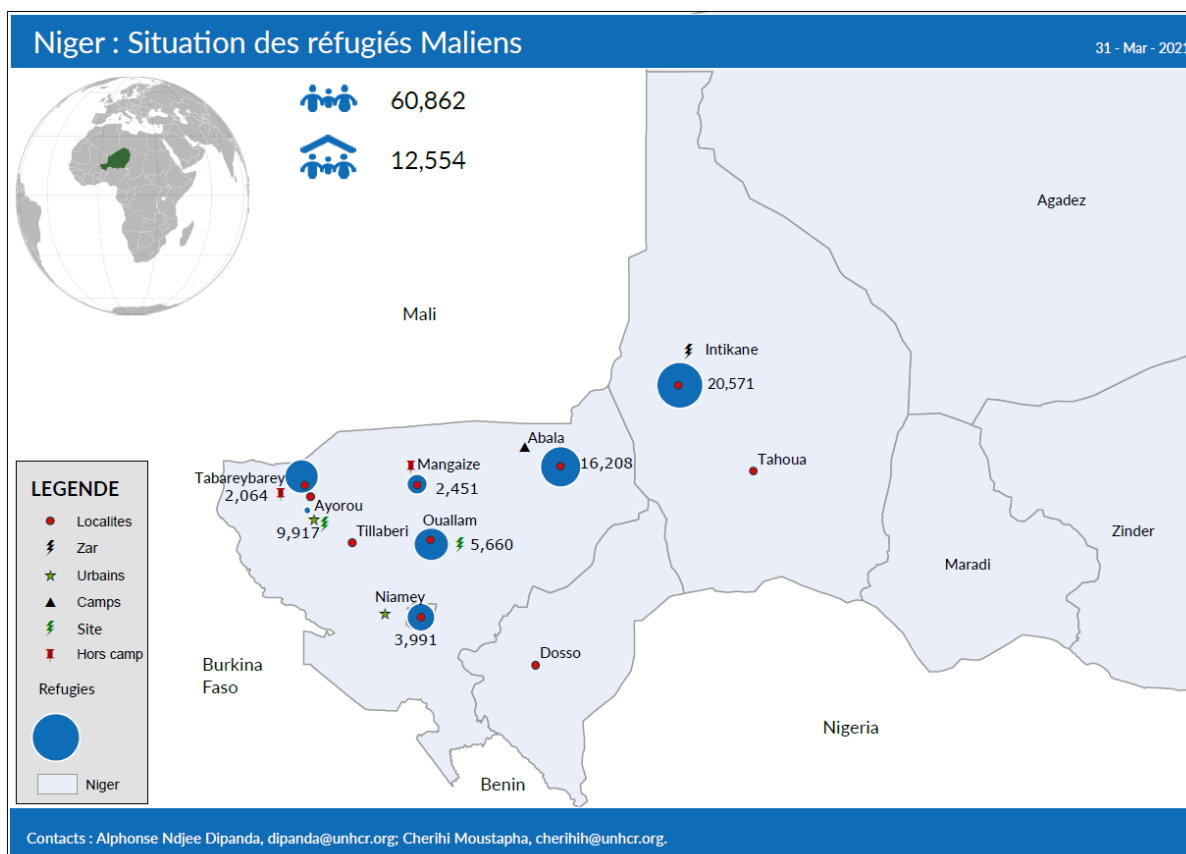
Update on Achievements

Operational Context

Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are all struggling to cope with numerous militant groups moving between the three countries. The **security situation** in the tri-border region including in the Nigerien regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua has sharply deteriorated. This threat is forcing people to flee their homes, and further deprives vulnerable communities of critical basic services as armed groups directly target schools, health centers and other infrastructure. The civilian population is victim of extortion, targeted killings, cattle theft and shop looting and threatened to leave their villages. A state of emergency was first introduced in 2017 and is still in place.

Moreover, the **global sanitary crisis and the measures taken by the Government to limit the propagation of the virus** has heavily impacted on the operational context, delaying assistance, and limiting livelihood opportunities.

Since the beginning of the year 2020, UNHCR Niger has registered refugees from Burkina Faso. Currently the country host 7,032 Burkinabe refugee in the Tillabéri region. However, their number could be more than that due the lack of humanitarian access because of the rise of insurgency in the areas where they set down.



Operational Strategy

The interventions in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions are aligned to **UNHCR's Sahel strategy**, a scaled-up response to the unprecedented violence and displacement crisis in the Sahel. Activities planned before the spread of the COVID-19 will be implemented in line with public health measures imposed because of the pandemic. Key priorities include addressing shelter needs in overcrowded settlements, supporting education in localities with large concentrations of displaced populations, providing effective response to SGBV incidents aggravated by confinement measures, and continuing other protection activities such as registration, documentation and facilitating access to asylum.

The Sahel crisis is monitored by a broad community-based network and analysis is shared with the humanitarian community. Capacity building and coordinated efforts with humanitarian actors are ongoing to ensure an adequate response to the situation. UNHCR has the lead over the national protection cluster. Legislation for assistance and protection to IDPs based on the Kampala Convention is in place.

After almost 8 years of presence in Niger, UNHCR and the Government of Niger give priority to **medium- and long-term solutions for Malian refugees** with a view to promote social cohesion, self-reliance and a durable integration into national services and systems. All Malian refugee camps have been closed in 2020 in line with the joint vision of the Government and UNHCR and given the deterioration of the protection and security context. They are settled in sites in the villages of Ayerou, Ouallam and Abala. Supported by major donors such as **GIZ and EUTF**, UNHCR gives Malian refugees access to land and housing, creates jobs, and includes them into national systems.

A **tripartite collaboration** has been developed amongst the **World Bank, the Government of Niger, and UNHCR** to improve access to basic public services and further support for economic opportunities. With the support of **ILO, PBF and Spain**, Malian refugees benefit from livelihood interventions.

Achievements

The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs produce a wide range of reports, evaluations, and infographics on the humanitarian situation in Niger. All documents can be consulted here:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/niger>

Security and displacement

- Niger has been hit in its western part, close to Mali, by the deadliest attacks by suspected jihadists in recent years. In March 21, a total of 203 people was killed in several villages and camps in the department of Tillia, in the Tahoua region and in the commune of Banibangou in Tillabéri region.
- Following intercommunity clashes and the rise of insecurity in the tri-border area around Niger-Mali-Burkina Faso, 161 Nigerien households of 921 individuals fled their villages to seek refuge and humanitarian assistance in villages located far away from the border in the Tahoua and Tillabéri regions.
- Following the attack by armed bandits on the Nigerian village of Illela located on the border with Niger, 36 Nigerian households of 154 individuals fled to settle in Konni, Tahoua region a town situated on the main highway of Niger. It is expected that more

Nigerian refugees will flee towards the South of the Tahoua region.

- In the refugee hosting area of Intikane, UNHCR has registered 220 new refugees and updated 434 births in the progress database since the beginning of 2021.
- In Ouallam, UNHCR has renewed the refuge attestations of 170 refugees. In Abala 47 new refugee attestations have been delivered to refugees among the new arrivals following recent attacks in Mali. A slow increase of arrivals of Malian refugees were noticed over last months.

Protection

- In March, UNHCR and its partners has recorded 128 protection incidents in Tahoua region and 39 in Tillabéri. The cases in need of a protection response have been referred to the partner according their needs and vulnerabilities.
- A household of 9 persons living in Tahoua region has been resettled to France in March 2021.
- In Tillabéri, UNHCR has conducted 9 awareness raising sessions on gender-based violence such as child marriage, physical and emotional violence, denial of resources and the consequences of forced and early marriage. These sensitization efforts have reached 677 persons in Ayorou, Ouallam and Abala. In Tahoua, UNHCR has identified 34 cases of GBV and 16 in Tillabéri. The survivors have been sensitized on GBV prevention and services available.
- UNHCR and its partners APBE and CIAUD have identified 260 child protection cases in Tahoua and 184 in Tillabéri regions. They were referred either to the health centers or the school's authorities for their registration to school. Sensitization efforts on child protection related topics have reached 750 in Tahoua and 870 in Tillabéri.
- UNHCR has identified 97 cases of children at risk of statelessness in the Tahoua region. They were referred to the mayor of Tillia and Tassara for establishment of birth certificates.
- In Tillabéri region, UNHCR and partners have identified 314 persons living with specific needs and 454 in Tahoua. They were documented and referred to partners.
- The main identified need is the health response. Hence sensitization sessions on the importance of hygiene and sanitation, frequentation of health facilities and services available has reached almost 1,000 individuals in the two regions.

Education



Malian refugees' girls attending classes in the primary school built by UNHCR with the support of Czech Republic in Ouallam ©UNHCR/Boubacar Younoussa Sidlo

- UNHCR continues to advocate to increase schooling rates of girls and boys, including those living with disabilities in the refugee hosting area of Intikane.
- In March, UNHCR has identified 79 child protection cases in Tillabéri. The main identified vulnerabilities are the risk of not attending school and child exploitation. They were referred to school authorities for their registration to school and the parents were sensitized on the importance of education.
- UNHCR has reached out 501 persons during awareness raising sessions on the importance of education in the Tillabéri region.

Health

- In Abala, UNHCR has inaugurated the integrated health center. This infrastructure consists of a maternity ward, a curative block, a preventive block, two housing units, an incinerator, and a waiting room. Since March 2021, refugees and host communities can receive appropriate care in this center. This was constructed throughout the previous years with the support of the [EU Trust Fund for Africa](#).



The health center built by UNHCR in Ayorou ©UNHCR / Boubacar Younoussa Sidde

Shelter

- The construction of 2,100 social houses is ongoing in the Tillabéri region among which 576 houses finalized. 1,795 persons got employed by the project among which 26% are female.
- As of end March 2021, UNHCR and its partners distributed land plots to 377 households in the Tillabéri region including 213 in Abala, 154 in Ouallam and 10 in Ayorou.
- At the refugee site of Intikane, UNHCR has constructed and finalized 285 semi-permanent houses.
- UNHCR has proceeded to the distribution of 489 Non-Food Items (NFI) and 114 emergency shelters to new arrivals of refugees and internally displaced persons that seek refuge in Tillabéri region because of recent population displacement caused by recurrent attacks against civilians. The distribution of basic domestic items is possible thanks to the support of the Zakat Refugee Fund.



*Social houses for refugees and the most vulnerable members of the community built in Ouallam
©UNHCR/Boubacar Younoussa Sidlo*

WASH

- Sensitizations on prevention against the spread of Covid-19 have reached more than 3,000 individuals on the refugee sites of Abala and Ouallam, as well as the IDP sites of Ayorou, Gotheye, Bankilaré and Torodi. 2,000 persons were reached in the Tahoua region.

NATURAL RESSOURCES

- UNHCR with the support of the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation** (AECID) is implementing a project aimed to strengthen food and nutritional security for refugee populations in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. This program is being implemented through UNHCR partner ADES (Agence de Développement Economique et Sociale) in collaboration with two government bodies such as the Regional Directorates of Rural Engineering and that of Agriculture of Tillabéri and Tahoua.
- As of 31 March 2021, 6.5 hectares have been granted for market gardening for the benefit of displaced persons who have found refuge in Ouallam. In addition, 903 beneficiaries have received animal kits consisting of one male and two females. A dairy processing unit was set up in the refugee hosting area of Intikane.

Working in partnership

For UNHCR, forced displacement requires a comprehensive approach to development and should be considered a development, poverty reduction, and climate issue. Including forcibly displaced (whether refugees or nationals) and communities in hosting regions in development interventions is now key for the transition out of poverty of the country and to boosting its resilience.

Therefore UNHCR interventions have long been targeting refugees, IDPs and host communities who live in same conditions of high vulnerability -- with a view to move towards economic integration and social inclusion. This approach of inclusion and development is fully endorsed by the Government of Niger and aligned with the Global Compact for Refugee (GCR) and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. This approach is at the core of the joint

Government of Niger and UNHCR's **OUT OF CAMP vision** and its operationalization through ongoing collaborations with the World Bank Group (WBG), the German development agency (GIZ), the European Union (EUTF) and the ILO amongst other UN agencies. With the idea of deepening its role of GCR convener, UNHCR is also looking into strengthening relationship with private sector actors as they are a crucial partner for boosting economic growth and job creation.

Increasing collaboration with International and National NGOs with a comparative advantage on delivering economic inclusion programs on the ground, including through livelihood initiatives is also at the core of the strategic approach to development solutions of the GCR, the Government of Niger, and UNHCR Niger.

In order to lend support to **protection clusters** at national level in terms of advocacy, facilitate coordination between countries and regional IASC, providing visibility through data driven analysis, and serving as a platform for information sharing and best practices, the Regional Bureau in Dakar has initiated bilateral and multilateral consultations with key stakeholders including donors to revitalize the Regional Protection Working Group (RPWG). A task force composed of UNICEF, UNFPA, OCHA, UNWOMEN, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR and SOS has been established to draft the strategy as well as the TORs which are being commented on and will be further adopted. Through the Regional Protection Working Group, appropriate support will be provided to the protection crisis in the Sahel.

Financial Information

Special thanks to the donors who have participated to UNHCR's response in the Sahel regions

Central Emergency Response Fund | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Spain

Donors who have contributed to UNHCR's response in Niger¹

African Development Bank | Central Emergency Response Fund | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Italy | Monaco | Spain | United States of America | Other Private Donors

Other softly earmarked contributions²

United States of America 12.2 million | Germany 9.2 million | Iceland | Malta | Private donors

Unearmarked contributions³

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Spain 13.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

Algeria | America | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxemburg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private Donors

1. Contributions to Niger are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.
2. Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Niger. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.
3. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contribution \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

External / Donor Relations

CONTACTS

Mr. Benoit MORENO, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator, morenob@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 92 19 24 17

Ms. Marlies CARDOEN, External Relations Officer, cardoen@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 80 06 81 49

Ms. Gloria Ramazani, Associate External Relations Officer, ramazang@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 80 06 81 83

Moustapha Djibrilla, External Relation Associate, djibrill@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 80 09 61 41

LINKS

[UNHCR country operation page - Twitter](#)