

# UNHCR Mali Situation Update

no 1 | 8 March 2012

## Malian Refugees by Country of Asylum as at 7 March 2012

| Country of Asylum  | Malian Refugees | Others of Concern* | Source                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Niger**            | 16,134          | 8,818              | Government, CNE, UNHCR |
| Burkina Faso       | 22,639          | -                  | CONAREF                |
| Mauritania         | 34,156          | -                  | Government             |
| Togo               | 20              | -                  | Government             |
| Guinea             | 45              | -                  | Government             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>69,350</b>   | <b>8,818</b>       |                        |
| <b>Grand Total</b> |                 | <b>78,168</b>      |                        |

\*Includes 2,167 Niger returnees and 6,651 persons of different nationalities whose figure will be confirmed upon completion of registration in Abala and Tchinbadaren sites.

\*\* The figure is based on initial registration and subject to change

## Malian IDPs

as at 7 March 2012

| Population | Total number | Source     |
|------------|--------------|------------|
| IDPs       | 81,463       | Government |



IDPs in Gaouel, Northern Niger, receiving UNHCR NFIs. UNHCR/ H.Caux

## UNHCR Emergency Financial Requirements – Supplementary Appeal (in million USD)

| Country      | ExCom approved Budget | Supplementary requirements | Revised total budget |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| RO Senegal*  | 50.4                  | 25.3                       | 75.7                 |
| Mauritania   | 7.8                   | 10.3                       | 18.1                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>58.2</b>           | <b>35.6</b>                | <b>93.8</b>          |

\*The budget for UNHCR Regional Office in Senegal covers Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The supplementary financial requirements presented in this Appeal include Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Mauritania.

## Highlights

- UNHCR has deployed emergency teams to Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania and is in the process of undertaking rapid protection assessments of the displaced populations, registration, relocation of refugees to safer locations, and life-saving activities in collaboration with the respective governments, other UN agencies and partners in the affected Sahel region.
- As of 22 February, UNHCR has transported over 40 tons of core relief items from its stockpile in Douala, Cameroon by air (6 airlifts) and from Accra, Ghana by road (3 deliveries) to assist a total of 19,000 refugees (10,000 refugees in Niger, 3,000 refugees in Burkina Faso, and 6,000 refugees in Mauritania). UNHCR is also procuring items locally in the hosting countries.
- In order to continue its emergency life-saving activities, UNHCR has launched an Emergency Appeal for USD 35.6 million covering the needs of 85,000 refugees until July 2012 in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania.
- UNHCR has launched a web portal for the Mali situation which can be accessed at <http://data.unhcr.org/MaliSituation/regional.php>

- The High Commissioner has appointed Mr. Valentin Tapsoba, Regional Representative for West Africa as the UNHCR Coordinator for the Mali Situation with immediate effect for an initial period of two months. Mr. Mathijs Le Rutte, the Deputy Regional Representative in Dakar, will be Officer-in-Charge for the management of non-Mali situation activities in the subregion.

## Niger

- Initial registration with the Government is ongoing on all 4 provinces of displacement. Upon conclusion, disaggregated population data will be made available.
- Preparations are underway for the relocation of Malian refugees from the volatile border areas to safer sites.
- The first distribution of non-food items was done on 21 February at Gaouel (Ayorou).

## Burkina Faso

- Initial registration of refugees was completed in Ouagadougou and is ongoing in Ferrerio/Inabao and Mentao sites.
- Preparations are underway for the relocation of Malian refugees from the volatile border areas to safer sites (Ferreiro, Goudebo).
- WFP has now procured 250 tons of food items (for 18,000 refugees and 6,000 hosting population) and plans the distribution in Ferrerio and Mentao sites from 12 March.

## Mauritania

- Following registration by UNHCR in the Fassala site, 12,832 refugees have been relocated to Mbéra since 22 February. Convoys are being organized daily to move the remainder of 21,324 refugees to the camp.
- Refugees are being provided basic assistance in collaboration with partners and sister agencies. UNHCR has undertaken food distribution to refugees since 20 February, conducted a vaccination campaign and is conducting regular medical screening in Fassala.

## Background

Since 17 January, fighting between Tuareg rebels and Malian forces in northern Mali has been taking place in three main regions: Gao, Kidal and Tombouctou. The MNLA (Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad) is also battling the Malian Government for the independence of part of the north. The cities affected by the fighting are: Menaka, Anderboukane, Intillit, Issit, all at the border with Niger. The cities of Léré and Niafounke found at the border with Mauritania and Aguelhok and Tessalit near Algeria have also been affected. The rebels have been attacking governmental forces using small groups has caused panic among civilian populations and forced many to flee into the neighbouring countries of Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Togo and Guinea. There are indications that Malians have also fled to Algeria. As the fighting continues in northern Mali and as the attacks keep shifting from area to area, further displacement inside the country and to the neighbouring countries is likely to continue. Some 80,000 persons are reported to be displaced inside Mali.

## Profile of displaced persons

Refugees are predominantly Tuareg and the majority are pastoralists. Refugees have fled on foot, by car and some, in particular from urban areas, by plane. They have fled attacks on their villages where their homes, shops and personal belongings have been destroyed and cattle killed.

## Refugee sites in host countries

| Country | Sites  | Areas of origin of the population   |
|---------|--|---|
| Niger   | Mangaize (the refugee site is located 75 kms from the border with Mali, 150 kms north of the capital Niamey) | <b>Group of origin:</b> The population present in Mangaize is mostly comprised of Tuaregs (40%), Arabs (20%), Peuls/Bambaras (10%) and Djerma/Haoussa (30%)   |
|         |  | <b>Place of origin:</b> The majority of refugees are from around Menaka (Wagamane, Foukratane, Tinnabaou, and Delimane. Menaka is approximately 75 kms north of the Malian border (150 kms from Menaka to Mangaize) |

|                     |   |  |
|---------------------|---|--|
|                     | Chinegodrar (9 kms from the border with Mali)   | <p><b>Group of origin:</b> Majority (70%) are Tuaregs mainly from Tamazguida, Kiltilabeit, Kilagoyok and Forgerons tribes ("black Tamasheq"). Other ethnic groups mentioned include Peuls, Bambaras, Djerma and Haoussa. Among the group is a minority of Niger nationals who have been living in Mali for decades.</p> <p><b>Place of Origin:</b> While a small number of refugees came from regions further away from the border, most came from the town of Anderamboukane and its suburbs.</p> |
|                     | Ayourou town: Mbeidou and Gaouadel sites (less than 24 kms from the border with Mali)   | <p><b>Group of origin:</b> Malian refugees are settled in Gaouadel only, whereas nationals from Niger who returned can be found in both sites. Malian refugees in Goudel are 'Bella Noir' Tuaregs, some called Sourghou (nobles) and others Garassa (artisans).</p> <p><b>Place of origin:</b> The refugees originate from the Malian commune of Watagona.</p>   |
|                     | Abala town and sites of Miel, Abougoula, Kizamwe, Tiguizefa Issa, Tiguizefa Tabare  | <p><b>Group of origin:</b> Details will be known following an upcoming registration.</p> <p><b>Place of origin:</b> Details will be known following an upcoming registration.</p>  |
| <b>Burkina Faso</b> | <p><u>Odalan Province:</u> Inabao/Ferrio sites (more than 35 km from the border by air, given the absence of roads, and hence the requirement to drive around, the actual distance is estimated to be twice)</p> <p>Refugees to move to Goudebo (17 kms from Dori) if Ferrio site is filled.</p> <p><u>Soum Province:</u> Mentaou and Damba sites (Mentaou camp is 50 km away from the border with Mali.)</p> <p><u>Ouagadougou:</u> Urban refugees</p> | <p><b>Place of origin:</b> From Mopti, Gao, Telemsi, Lere, Tombouctou, Gossi in Intilit and Meneka regions in Mali</p> <p><b>Group of origin:</b> Most are Tuareg</p>  |
| <b>Mauritania</b>   | Region of Hodh el Charghi/Fassala Village (3 kms away from the border with Mali) Refugees are being relocated from Fassala to Mbera camp (located 50 kms from the border)   | <p><b>Place of origin:</b> The majority of the new arrivals are from the region of Léré in Mali. Some of the refugees also arrived from Timbuktu, Niaki, Guargandou, Tenenkou (near to Mopti) and Goundam.</p> <p><b>Group of origin:</b> 90% Tuareg and 10% Arab (Berbish)</p>  |
| <b>Mali</b>         | Gao, Tombouctou, Kidal regions  |  |

### Protection Needs/Response

Rapid Protection Assessments: UNHCR has conducted rapid protection assessments (interviews with a series of refugee focus groups) centred around the following themes: composition of the refugee population, reasons for flight, access and safety in country of asylum, civilian character of asylum, humanitarian assistance and priority needs, as well as specific protection concerns. In Niger, UNHCR has jointly conducted rapid protection assessments with the Government in Miel (29 February 2012), Chinegodar (27 February 2012), Mangaize (24 February 2012) and in Ayorou (2 March 2012). In Burkina Faso, a rapid protection assessment was conducted in the Sahel Province.

There has been no evidence of *refoulement* and refugees have been able to access the borders of neighbouring countries to seek asylum. There is no evidence of presence of armed elements in the refugee locations so far.

The refugee sites are being provided with protection from the government gendarmerie and military and safer areas are being identified for relocation. As many of them have lost livelihoods and possessions, including cattle, they are currently living on assistance provided by the host Governments, UN agencies and NGOs.

In Niger, while family separation as a result of the flight was not highlighted by the refugees as an issue, a few female-headed families were identified. Other cases of vulnerability included people with disabilities and psychological issues. Lack of livelihoods was mentioned as affecting men's morale.

In Mauritania, UNHCR conducted interviews of women heads of family in the Mbéra refugee camp. Some are widows and others have their husbands back in Mali guarding property and livestock or fighting. They have dependent children and few means of subsistence. Most of the children have never attended school and some worked as shepherds in Mali. The women declared that they felt secure in Mauritania. No cases of SGBV have been reported.

In Burkina Faso, the main protection concerns expressed by the refugees are of life-saving nature.

In Mali, UNHCR with OCHA, UNICEF, and IOM have discussed the IDP situation in northern Mali and it was agreed to set up a Humanitarian Country Team and to undertake inter-agency missions in the areas hosting IDPs, primarily where access is possible, namely in areas such as Niono (Ségou), Niafounke (Timbuctou) and Gao

Registration/Relocation: UNHCR has initiated household level registration in coordination with the Governments along with establishing a screening mechanism to identify vulnerable people in the refugee hosting countries. Government officials and partners are being trained for this purpose. In Niger, registration of refugees in all sites has been completed, except in Abala and Tchindadaren. In Burkina Faso, registration in Oudalan will be completed by 8 March. Relocation of refugees to Ferrerrio and Mentao sites will start on 10 March and be completed in 4 days. Registration in Mauritania is ongoing. The main difficulty UNHCR faces is accessing remote areas, including with security escorts, to properly undertake the exercise. While registering, vaccinations are being given to vulnerables, children and pregnant women and malnourishment testing is being undertaken.

### Life-saving assistance

In all hosting countries, UNHCR is increasing its logistics capacity to meet the transport needs of refugees for relocation as well as for transport and delivery of NFIs. Emergency shelter is being provided at major entry points, and tents and plastic sheeting for those in designated camps. Basic infrastructure is also being established on identified sites further away from the borders. Pending more permanent solutions potable water is being trucked to some sites. Communal and family latrines are being built. Partners are being identified to provide access to basic emergency health and nutrition services at reception and transit centres. Existing community clinics in areas of arrival are being identified and will be stocked with basic drugs and vaccines, 'reproductive health and dignity kits', and medical kits. Wet feeding will be available at reception and transit centers and regular food rations in designated camps.

In **Niger**, some sites have Malian refugees and Nigerien returning nationals who are being identified through the registration exercises. Shelter: Refugees and returning Nigeriens have been subsisting in difficult conditions at the border areas: in the open, in makeshift shelters, while few are with host families. Despite response from some aid agencies and from the Government, shelter, water/sanitation and health particularly for the most vulnerable are a predominant concern. Health issues include diarrhoea, respiratory problems, eye infection, and malaria and outbreaks of cholera and the lack of essential medicines. As many of those fleeing have lost livelihoods and possessions, including cattle, they are currently living on assistance provided by the host governments, UN agencies and NGOs. Refugees voiced concerns about arduous living conditions for the elderly, women and children.

Assistance to-date in **Niger** has centred on food and water and basic relief items. UNHCR supplied NFIs to Ayorou on 22 and 26 February. Plan Niger supplied the food items between 13 and 15 February. Oxfam GB has supplied some water. In terms of needs, the refugees stressed water, more non-food items and shelter materials. Water is a serious issue as the river water is muddy and there is concern about a potential cholera outbreak if the current situation is not addressed. MSF (CH) has put in place a fully functional water system in Ouallam and latrines. Education: Access to the local Nigerien schools has been possible although the schools do not have enough capacity to absorb all Malian students and curriculums are different. Nutrition: Initial rapid health assessments are being conducted with UNICEF, UNFPA, MOH, WFP, WHO, OCHA, MSF(CH) and UNAIDS as of 6 March on refugee sites. MSF conducted a mass vaccination campaign in Sinégar and a rapid nutrition screening. Refugees will be included by UNICEF in its ongoing nutrition programmes including blanket

distribution. Formal nutrition survey will be organized after refugees relocate to identified sites away from the borders. Shelter: 60 tents have been installed in Ouallam site with the support of Islamic Relief.

**In Burkina Faso**, refugees face water shortages. OXFAM will install water bladders in Oudalan. Food is a problem, as there has been sporadic food distribution by WFP and once by MSF. WFP has now procured 250 tons of food items (for 18,000 refugees and 6,000 hosting population) and plans the distribution in Ferrerio and Mentao sites from 12 March. There are no provisions for sanitation yet on the Ferrerio (in Oudalan) and Mentao (in Soum) sites. Health: Refugee children show signs of respiratory problems, dysentery has been reported. Chronically-ill refugees have no medicines. UNHCR has asked MSF to open a permanent presence in Oudalan. The local authorities, who have their own drought problem, are not able to provide material assistance other than access to school (in Ferrerio) and health care (presence of health workers on site, but no medicines). There are two medical NGOs in Soum district training local clinics, none so far in Oudalan. Education: Many refugee children have not been attending school for two to four weeks, especially in Mentao. Refugee children in Ferrerio have joined the local school and UNHCR is planning to build additional classes. There are teachers among the refugees. Distribution of 2000 essential kits for heads of families is planned during the 12 March week.

In **Mauritania**, UNHCR continues to distribute NFIs, supply water and food rations for more than 20,000 refugees. The local health services continue to conduct the medical and nutritional screening of the refugee population, with the support of UNICEF. UNHCR installed three water tanks in the refugee camp in Mbera and another tank in the refugee site in Fassala. These tanks were provided by UNICEF.

### UNHCR presence

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Niger</b>        | Niamey, Ouallam         |
| <b>Burkina Faso</b> | Ouagadougou, Dori       |
| <b>Mauritania</b>   | Nouakchott, Bassikounou |
| <b>Mali</b>         | Bamako                  |

### Working with partners

UNHCR is identifying partners and coordinating life saving activities with the following:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Niger :</b>   | Commission Nationale d'Eligibilité (CNE), Ministries of Defense, Interior and Health, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, OCHA, MSF (CH) (water/sanitation) UNAIDS, ICRC, CADEV (continuous registration system), IOM (relocation), Islamic Relief (tent installation/site clearing), AFRICARE. |
| <b>Coordination mechanisms in Niger:</b> UNHCR is part of the existing coordination mechanisms at the ministerial level, technical level and amongst UN/NGO partners. A UN cluster system is in place involving the Government and the national early warning body (Système de relevement précoce, Système d'Alerte Précoce). OCHA leads the humanitarian response with UNICEF as Protection Cluster lead and the Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP as the Resident Coordinator. |  |
| <b>Burkina Faso</b>  | CONAREF, CREDO, Comité National des Réfugiés under the umbrella of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CONASUR (Social Affairs Department), WFP, WHO, Burkina Faso Red Cross and SRDO (food/CRI distribution/community services), OXFAM.  |
| <b>Weekly coordination meetings</b> are held by UNHCR with the government, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, ADRA, CICR, ECHO, MSF and Terre des Hommes. Joint missions are undertaken with partners.  |  |
| <b>Mauritania</b>  | UNICEF, UNFPA, MSF (Belgium), Lutheran World Federation (camp management), Islamic Relief, Solidarités Internationale (water/sanitation), Intersos (community services), WFP/UNHCR (food), ALPD (NGO partner for protection monitoring, reception and registration).                 |
| <b>Daily coordination meetings:</b> UNHCR's IPs and the eleven missions of UNFPA, Initiative, ICRC, OXFAM, UNICEF, MSF Belgium, Solidarités Internationale, the Lutheran World Federation and Acord attend daily meetings lead by UNHCR in Bassikounou.  |  |
| <b>Mali</b>  | Ministry of Territorial Administration, OCHA, MSF (Health).  |
| <b>Coordination mechanisms in Mali:</b> The UN cluster system is activated for internal displacement.  |  |

As of 5th March 2012

