



Mali situation

Regional External Update: January-February 2014 (UNHCR and its partners' response to the displacement of Malians in Mali and into Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. This response is led by UNHCR and is undertaken in coordination with the respective governments)

By the end of February 2014, **146,670**, refugees were out of their country as a result of the insecurity prevailing in much of the north

Mali (IDPs)

According to the CMP (Commission of Population and Movement) there are 186,884 IDPs).

Burkina Faso (Refugees)

33,781 Malian refugees are currently living in Burkina Faso mainly in Goudoubo, Mentao and Sag-nioniogo camps, in spontaneous settlements and some urban settings.

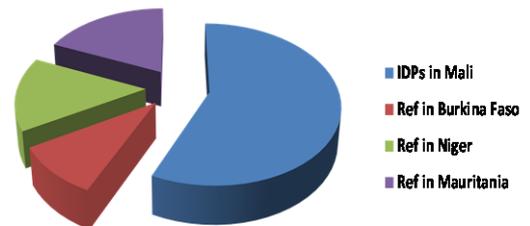
Niger (Refugees)

50,429 Malian refugees are still living in Niger mostly in Mangaize, Tabareybarey, Abala camps in refugee hosting areas (Intikane and Tezalit) and in Niamey.

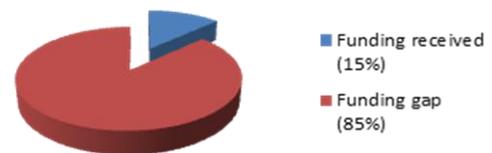
Mauritania

60,711 refugees are living in Mauritania mostly in Mbera camp

Population of Concern



Funding status for the Mali situation as at March 6



HIGHLIGHT

- Mali:** On January 21 2014 a meeting was held at the request of the Ministry of Territorial Administration with the participation of all concerned ministries and UNHCR regarding the voluntary repatriation process. The meeting was to formally launch the process of negotiations between Mali and countries of asylum for the signing of the tripartite agreements. The first step will be a visit of Malian officials to the countries of asylum to talk to their counterparts, UNHCR, and refugees.
- Mauritania:** The Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report for the food distribution of October 2013 in Mbera camp (third PDM in 2013) has been finalized jointly by WFP and UNHCR. The report concludes that the food distribution system put in place at the beginning of 2013, coupled with the different nutritional programmes established in the camp, has resulted in improved food security at household level. While the rates of global malnutrition remain stagnant (21.6% in March 2013 and 22.2% in October 2013), the rates of severe malnutrition have gone down from 13.6% in March 2013 to 2.3% in October 2013. Increasingly, households are transitioning out of severe food insecurity into a moderate food insecurity situation. As of 28 February, 12 nutritional rehabilitation centers continue to be operational in the camp.
- Niger:** The situation of malnutrition improved in the camps in 2013. Whereas end of 2012, rates of malnutrition were alarming and prompted UNHCR/WFP/UNICEF in a tripartite partnership for supplementary wet feeding, one year later end of 2013, Post Distribution Monitoring realized jointly by WFP and UNHCR revealed a global decrease of the malnutrition rates among children below the 10 percent alert threshold (8.6%). This situation confirmed the impact of the prevention, control and management of nutrition activities especially through the Wet-Feeding programme which was turned into a dry feeding programme in one pilot camp only as of March 2014. If the national nutritional survey planned in May 2014 confirms this positive development, dry feeding will be extended to all camps.

Spontaneous return to Mali

In Goudoubo camp in Burkina Faso, spontaneous return movements to Mali are still observed. In January 108 refugees (59 girls and 49 boys) mostly students, returned to Mali. In the Province of Soum, another 163 refugees (55 families) spontaneously returned to Timbuktu in Mali bringing the total of Malian returnees in January to 271. On February 8 a group of 596 persons arrived in Timbuktu from Burkina Faso. The head of the group belongs to a Tuareg Tribe of Gourma Rhaous returning home to Benguel in Timbuktu Region. Since some areas of return are not accessible to UNHCR without military escort, the office in Timbuktu, requested MINUSMA for a patrol in the area in order to ensure security during the trip. MINUSMA deployed a battalion and provided water to returnees and some mechanical assistance to the convoy as some of the vehicles transporting returnees had problems. From October 2013 to February 21, 1611 Malian refugees spontaneously returned to Mali from Burkina Faso. From Mbera camp (Mauritania), 330 refugees returned to Mali in the Timbuktu region in January and February bringing the total number of returnees since 28 June 2013 to 2,384 refugees. As far as Niger is concerned, 2,764 Malian refugees had been assisted and had returned to Mali in November and December 2013 while 1124 spontaneously returned. UNHCR has undertaken several actions to inform refugees on the risks of returning to their country where security conditions are not completely satisfactory, the basic social infrastructure not quite functional and individual assistance not guaranteed. Prior to their departure, they returned their refugee documentation to UNHCR and were issued travel documents to facilitate their journey back and their registration by UNHCR in Mali. The majority of returnees are Tuareg (97.5%) and are returning to the Gao region (99%).



In Gao, UNHCR staff is discussing with a spontaneous returnee women to assess her specific needs. UNHCR/UNHCR Gao

UNHCR in countries of asylum had confirmed the return of 7,888 Malian refugees to their country while the Malian government had registered more than 20,000 as at February through out a registration mechanism set up in 16 entry points in Northern Mali

New arrivals

As observed in the previous months, some Malians continue to flee northern Mali to seek refuge in neighboring countries namely in Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger. 62 new Malian refugees were registered in Mbera camp since the beginning of January while in Niger, most arrivals have been observed in the refugee hosting area of Intikane in Tahoua region where some 1.100 refugees have been newly registered. In Tillaberi, more than 500 persons have also arrived in the camps, including persons who had returned to Mali in previous months spontaneously or with UNHCR's assistance. The parallel movements of arrivals and returns reflect the complex situation prevailing in northern Mali where political, security, socio-economic conditions vary from one part to another. They all indicate banditry and food insecurity as reasons for their flight. They also mentioned inter-communal conflicts and the fear of retaliation, as well as fear of armed groups for looting, pillaging and violating the rights of the population.

Niger: Returns intentions and number of returns facilitated

Mangaize is the camp where refugees are most vocal about their intention to return and constantly request UNHCR's assistance. 3 reasons are commonly put forward: 1) restoration of peace, 2) others say that peace might not be totally restored and they know the State is not present in the North but decide to go home for homesick reasons, 3) women are motivated to go home because of their husband or some other family member has returned. According to the survey and lists established end of 2013, some 6000 refugees had expressed their wish to return and had requested UNHCR's assistance. As of end December 2013, 2,764 camp resident refugees were assisted and returned to Mali in November and December. During the facilitation of the repatriation exercise, it was found out that 1,124 were not in the camps anymore and were declared as "spontaneous" returns by their families or the community.

End of the biometric registration in Burkina Faso

The refugees and asylum seekers biometric registration undertaken jointly by UNHCR and the government of Burkina Faso which started on August 19 last year was completed on February 15 2014. Overall, 34, 085 refugees including 33, 781 Malian refugees have been registered. The main conclusion is that compared to last year level II figures, which showed a total of 49,975 individuals (as at 22 April 2013), biometric registration has resulted in a reduction of 31%. This decrease is attributable to either the spontaneous return to Mali, the reduction of multiple registrations which prevented theft and substitution of identity while facilitating access of genuine refugees to UNHCR services. Another reason for the decrease is linked to the transhumance or seasonal migration: most of the refugees are pastoral nomads and are moving around in search of pasture and water.



Biometric registration in Goudoubo camp (Burkina Faso). UNHCR/ M. Bah

UNHCR is closely working with the Government of Mali and other partners to determine what conditions need to be met in order to consider a voluntary repatriation operation in Burkina Faso.

UNHCR STRENGTHENS ITS PRESENCE IN NORTHERN MALI

In Mali, the office expanded its implementation capacity in the north of the country through the creation of new field office in Gao and increased partnerships in October 2013. In compliance with the Humanitarian Country team, UNHCR developed a community based assistance program, targeting host communities, returnees and IDPs in the return areas. Throughout the year 2013, over 85,000 persons were assisted with relief items. In December, the office and partners distributed over 5,000 relief-items (including plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, kitchen kits, blankets, and jerry cans) to beneficiaries in the Gao and Timbuktu regions. In addition, the agency and partners identified 700 vulnerable households who received shelter equipment for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged houses. In addition, out of the total 1,600 beneficiaries, 700 were assisted with income generating activities in Gao and Timbuktu return areas. Beneficiaries received an amount of **CFA 155,000 (USD 320 per family)** to start activities, such as petty trade, sewing and dyeing.

In 2014, the agency will notably reinforce the protection monitoring system in place to assess displacement and return areas and provide regular information to IDPs and returnees. It will also facilitate the reintegration of IDPs and returnees ensure access to civil documentation and implement peaceful coexistence with local communities.



In Gao, a returnee woman is provided with material to rehabilitate her house with unhr support. UNHCR/ UNHCR Gao

Mali, key priorities in 2014:

- Reinforce protection monitoring mechanism and assessment of return areas,
- Ensure access to civil documentation to the returnees ,
- Strengthen reintegration projects in the domain of WASH, Shelter, IGAs and rehabilitation of public infrastructure in the return areas,
- Implement peaceful coexistence programmes

Education (Primary school)

In Mentao camp (Burkina Faso) the number of children enrolled in schools increased by 9% from 1,130 in late December 2013 to 1 250 students (540 girls, 710 boys) in February 2014. In Goudoubo camp, it rose by 3% from 992 in December to 1027 (602 girls, 425 boys) children in February. This increase although slight, remains a positive sign for the educational objective of increasing the number of children who attend school. This increase is the result of an effectively run sensitization campaign in the camps focused on the importance of education. There are currently 25 teachers in Goudoubo's primary school. The student-teacher ratio in Goudoubo is 1 teacher/41 children while in Mentao the ratio is 1 teacher/52 children. The Provincial Directorate for basic education and literacy in the Province of Soum promised to fill the gap by recruiting additional teachers in Mentao.

In Mbera camp (Mauritania) as of January 31, UNHCR and its partner monitored enrolment figures and attendance rate in the six schools operational in the camp. During the period under review, 6,636 children including 5,750 in primary school, 410 in secondary school and 476 in literacy classes were enrolled. UNHCR's implementing partner, INTERSOS, continues the construction of 27 classrooms to fill the gap of classrooms available.



Malian refugees girl is attend a course in Goudoubo's camp in Burkina Faso. UNHCR/ H. Caux

A new technology to trace distribution of assistance

In Niger, UNHCR has introduced a new technological tool in all camps to trace distribution of assistance (food, NFIs, etc.) The old system consisted in paper or excel distribution reports that were not always consistent, as UNHCR has different partners in the camps dealing with many different kinds of distribution. The tool is a reader that scans the barcode in the ration card of the refugee at the time of the distribution and automatically registers in UNHCR database the assistance provided (food ration, soaps, hygienic kits, shelter, etc). In the new database, UNHCR can then have reports of NFIs distributed much more easily, so it will facilitate reporting. It also makes assistance much more effective as, from the refugee files a better traceability in respect of the last time material assistance provided to them could be seen. This also allows avoiding double distribution.



Food distribution in Mbera camp (Mauritania). UNHCR/Bassikounou

In Mauritania, the general food distribution of February 2014 was coupled with the distribution of one blanket per refugee family. This distribution covered 16,775 families of 57,602 individuals, representing 93% of the Malian refugee families registered in Mbera camp.

Persons of Concern to UNHCR 341,437 persons



146,670

Refugees

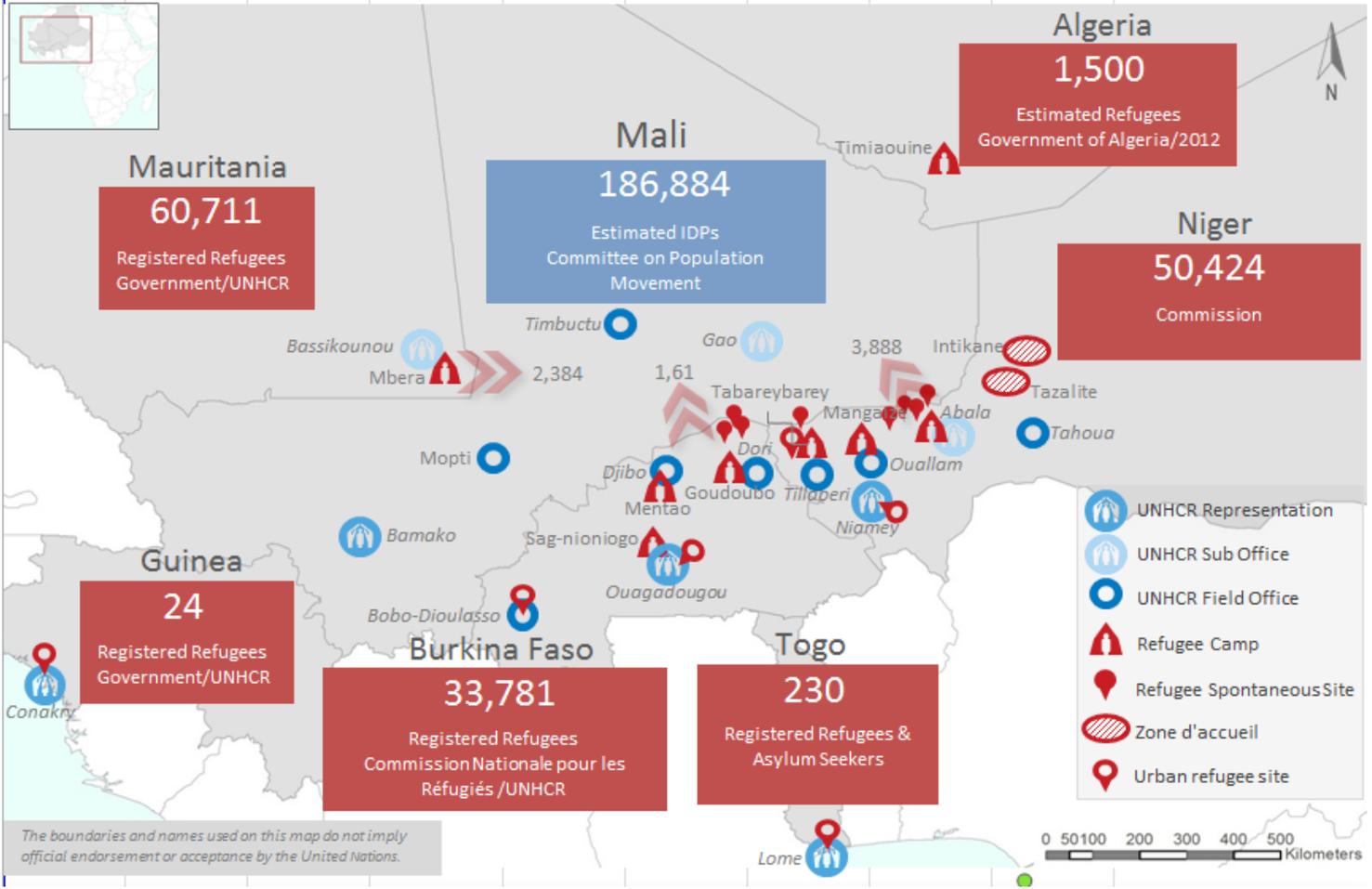
Spontaneous Refugee Returnees

7,883



186,884

Internally Displaced Persons



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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