



UNHCR and its partner ADES visit a restored vegetable garden patch to support income-generating activities of women in Timbuktu. © ADES

KEY FIGURES

579

Refugee returnees and host community members from the regions of Gao and Mopti participated in sensitization sessions on the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

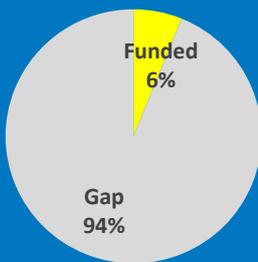
145

Birth certificates were distributed to Mauritanian refugees in Kayes region to facilitate their access to civil documentation.

FUNDING

USD 40 million

requested for the operation

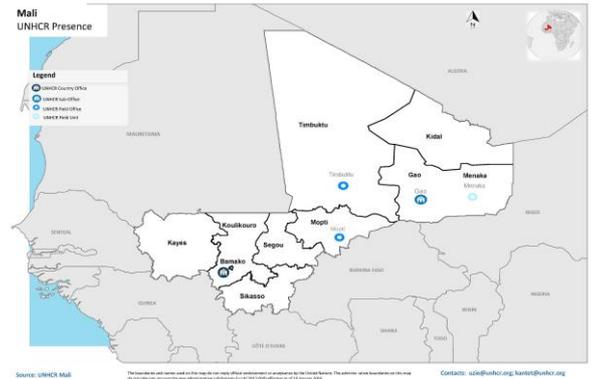


PRIORITIES

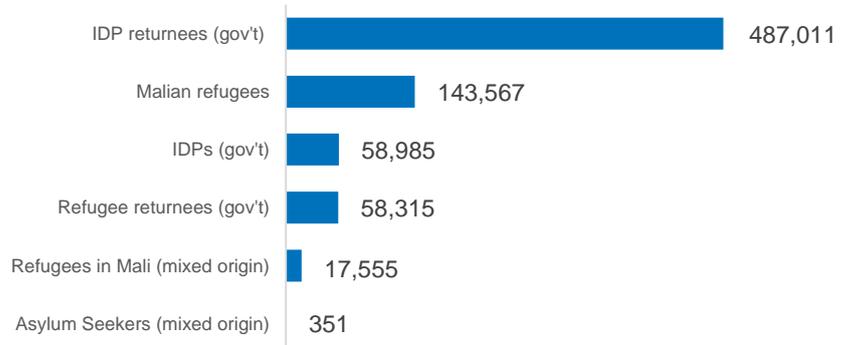
- 7 partners targeted to receive support and capacity development for the response of humanitarian needs of IDPs
- 1,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive production kits for agriculture/livestock/fishery activities
- 1,500 Mauritanian refugee children targeted to be enrolled in primary education
- 3,500 Mauritanian refugees targeted to receive production kits for agriculture/livestock/fishery activities
- 400 urban households targeted to receive cash grants

HIGHLIGHTS

- 106 protection incidents were registered in the regions of Gao, Mopti, Timbuktu, Menaka and Kidal during the month of April. The majority of incidents relate to extortion, early and forced marriage, injuries, robberies and death threats. Since January 2017, 256 incidents have been registered with the majority of incidents taking place in Gao and Timbuktu.
- On 13 April, the 5th meeting of the tripartite commission Mali-Burkina Faso-UNHCR on the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees living in Burkina Faso took place in Bamako. Work is ongoing to harmonize statistics, inform candidates for voluntary repatriation on the presence of registration points and raise awareness on the conditions for civil registration.



Population of concern (April 2017)



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR continues to operate in a volatile security environment with the threat of terrorism, criminality and intercommunity violence affecting humanitarian access in northern and central Mali. In the north, violations of basic human rights are reported and certain local populations continue to lack access to public services, documentation, water, education and food security. Recent violent clashes between armed groups and intercommunity violence in the commune of Gourma-Rharous in the region of Timbuktu led to a notable increase of IDPs from 45 766 (February 2017) to 58,985 (April 2017).

The threat of terrorism and criminality persists with national and international security forces facing daily attacks in the northern and central regions. On 18 April, non-identified armed men attacked a FAMA military camp in Gourma- Rharous located 116 km south of the town of Timbuktu, killing five soldiers, injuring dozens of others and injuring two civilians. In addition, seven vehicles were stolen and four other vehicles and military equipment were burned. A pursuit by the French counter-terrorism force, Barkhane, later neutralized the presumed terrorists. The *Group to Support Islam and Muslims* (GSIM), which claimed this attack presents a constant menace for the peace and stability of the country. Moreover, its significant mobilization capabilities present a menace to the capital of Bamako which remains under the threat of potential terrorist attacks. The central regions face a growing presence of active extremist armed groups that present heightened challenges for humanitarian access. The fragile protection environment is aggravated by the proliferation of weapons, illicit drug trafficking and the absence or limited presence of state authorities in parts of the centre and north of the country.

The threats of IED, abduction of Westerners, extortion of goods and carjacking remain prevalent concerns in the north. On 23 April, a UNHCR vehicle was stolen by armed individuals in the commune of Ansongo in the region of Gao. While UNHCR's partners escaped an attempted carjacking by armed men in the town of Timbuktu on 26 April. More frequent cases of stolen vehicles and carjackings have been observed in the town of Timbuktu.

The slow implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Accord in the face of the slow cantonment and DDR process, the reinstallation of authorities and heightened terrorism, continues to hinder the establishment of a more conducive protection environment for the voluntary return of Malian refugees in security and dignity. On the political front, interim authorities were installed in Timbuktu and Taoudeni on 20 April after several delayed attempts. The newly appointed Malian Prime Minister, Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga, announced a new cabinet amid growing social tensions and strikes in the healthcare and education sectors. A resolution was found ending the healthcare sector strike, but the ongoing strike of schoolteachers in public schools threatens to impact the rest of academic year.

Achievements

Protection

Protection Cluster

- **Train the Trainer on IDP Laws and Policies:** Between 24 to 28 April, UNHCR and the *Organisation Internationale de Droit du Developpement* (IDLO) organized a Train the Trainer workshop on the elaboration of laws and policies related to internal displacement. The training, held in Dakar, Senegal brought together representatives from the

Protection Cluster, the Malian government, civil society groups, UNHCR Mali and other francophone countries in Africa. The objective of the training was to familiarize future trainers with relevant tools and assist with the elaboration process for laws and policies on internal displacement in different countries. For Mali, it was recommended to continue developing the law related to internal displacement.

- The humanitarian response to targeted attacks in mid-February that led to the internal displacement of 10,116 persons towards the region of Segou remains slow. Among several factors, the limited number of humanitarian actors located in the districts of Macina (Mopti) and Niono (Segou) has been observed. A call was made for Protection Cluster members to expand coverage in the region of Segou and review priority zones of intervention to better adapt to changes in crises affected areas.
- In Mopti region, the regional Protection Cluster participated in meetings held by an inter-cluster coordination mission. During these meetings, numerous challenges were highlighted at the regional level including the mobilization and participation of actors, capacity building, delayed responses to urgent crises, shrinking humanitarian access, the difficult terrain and insufficient financial resources. An action plan for follow-up by each cluster is currently being developed.
- In Gao region, a working group on social cohesion analyzed factors related to reoccurring tensions between communities. It was recommended that women need to be strongly implicated in decision-making and the implementation processes; local communities need to be involved and consulted all stages of social cohesion activities; government authorities and traditional authorities need to be restored and strengthened.

- **Tripartite Commission:** On 13 April, the 5th meeting of the tripartite commission Mali-Burkina Faso-UNHCR on the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees living in Burkina Faso took place in Bamako. Since the beginning of the year, Burkina Faso has not organized facilitated returns as a result of a lack of candidates among Malian refugees. Work continues to harmonize statistics, inform candidates for voluntary repatriation on the presence of registration points and raise awareness on the conditions for civil registration.



Officials at the 5th Meeting of the Tripartite Commission Mali-Burkina Faso-UNHCR held in Bamako on 13 April. © UNHCR Mali

- **Repatriation of Ivorian refugees:** Between 19 to 23 April, UNHCR organized a mission to survey the intention to return of Ivorian refugees living in Sikasso region. 104 refugees (27 households) expressed their intention to voluntary return in May 2017. There has been a 61% increase in the number of refugees expressing an intention to return which can be explained in part by the encouraging news on the reintegration of refugees who previously returned at the end of 2016 and in March 2017. A large number of refugees are expected to voluntarily repatriate at the end of the school year in June/July 2017.
- **Repatriation of Central African refugees:** Two refugees from the Central Republic of Africa were provided with assistance for their voluntary repatriation on 27 April. Increasing requests for repatriation among Central African refugees has been observed, attributable to the growing perception of a return to peace and stability in numerous localities in the country, notably Bangui.
- **Facilitation assistance:** 832 Malian refugees (166 households) from the Camp d'Abala in Niger received facilitation assistance for their voluntary repatriation to Mali whereby they returned principally to the communes of Menaka and Anderamboukane. Among 122 children born in Niger that were repatriated, 58 received birth certificates, 28 are in the process of establishing their birth certificates, while 36 whose births were not previously declared were referred

to authorities for follow-up. Furthermore, 298 Malian refugees (76 households) in Mauritania also received facilitation assistance for their voluntary repatriation to the communes of Timbuktu and Ber.

■ **Documentation:**

- 33 focus groups on the importance of birth certificates and declarations were organized by UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, for Mauritanian refugees and host community members in Kayes region. Additionally, 145 birth certificates were distributed to Mauritanian refugees in different sites in the region of Kayes. The possession of a birth certificate facilitates access to basic services such as education and health. In addition, for those signaling an intention of voluntary integration as a durable solution, this will also facilitate their naturalization to ensure a smoother local integration.
- An information database set up in collaboration with UNHCR's partner, AMSS, indicates that 282 registered refugee returnee children do not have birth certificates and three children were born in countries of asylum with birth certificates established in those countries. The list of children will be shared with partners in the domain of documentation (NRC, Save the Children) to obtain supplementary judgments and transcripts.

■ **SGBV:**

- **Kayes:** 26 information sessions on harmful practices to the health of women and girls and the consequences of excision and early marriage were held in 28 sites across the region of Kayes. These sessions mobilized 766 persons including Mauritanian refugees and host community members. The sessions aim to inform and change behaviors to ensure the progressive abandonment of violence against women. As a result of these sessions, three persons who have abandoned the practice of excision were identified and will benefit from income-generating support to pursue new livelihood activities. One SGBV survivor was identified and provided with assistance alongside three persons with specific needs.
- **Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu:** 27 information sessions organized by UNHCR's partner AMSS on the negative consequences of SGBV, including early and forced marriage were held in priority communes in Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu. The sessions, reaching 579 refugee returnees and host community members, helped mobilize more community members to contribute to prevention efforts and responses to SGBV.

■ **Social cohesion:**

- **Gao:** 12 focus groups on the theme of peaceful coexistence were carried out in 9 sites across Gao region reaching 259 people including refugee returnees and local community members. The sessions aim to strengthen tolerance and peaceful coexistence between different communities in the zones of return.
- **Timbuktu:** 11 focus groups on the themes of social cohesion were carried out in six sites across Timbuktu region reaching 235 persons including refugee returnees and local community members.
- **Mopti:** Four information sessions on the themes of unity and reconciliation around water points were held reaching 440 persons including refugee returnees and local community members.
- **Menaka:** UNHCR is contributing to a joint project with UNDP and UNICEF to support social cohesion activities in the region of Menaka. UNHCR, through its partner Terres Sans Frontières, is supporting women's association composed of members from refugee returnee and host communities to pursue agricultural and vegetable gardening activities with the aim of strengthening social cohesion between different communities and supporting a durable reintegration for refugee returnees.

- **Social counselling:** During the weekly reception session for refugees and asylum seekers at the UNHCR representation in Bamako, 26 refugees received counselling. Major concerns relate to transport documentation, social assistance, health issues and financial assistance. Certain cases were referred to partners for assistance.

- **Protection Monitoring:** With the aim of improving the protection environment in zones of return, protection monitoring agents registered 106 protection incidents in April throughout the regions of Gao, Menaka, Timbuktu, Mopti and Kidal. Key issues revolved around extortion, forced marriages, injuries, robberies and death threats. It is observed that cases of extortion generally occur on major highways, particularly on market days. The principal factors

contributing to the fragile protection environment relate to the proliferation of weapons, the limited presence of authorities and security forces in the north and centre of the country. Since January 2017, 256 protection incidents have been registered. Protection monitoring continues to face challenges due to the limited number of protection monitors on the field as a result of limited funds, and the challenging security environment.

- **Registration:** As at 30 April, the *Commission de Mouvement de Populations* (CMP) registered 1,721 Malian refugees who voluntarily returned to Mali since the beginning of 2017. In total, there are 58 315 Malian refugees who have returned since August 2013 despite the volatile security conditions that do not yet permit for an organized return.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

Shelter/NFI cluster

- The National Coordinator for the Shelter Cluster conducted a mission to Mopti between 18 to 21 April to meet with active Cluster members to discuss projects and challenges as well as participate in an inter-cluster coordination (ICC) meeting. The key issues highlighted include access due to insecurity, the need for an exercise to identify needs and gaps with respect to the restoration of shelters and the distribution of traditional shelters, the need to update the 4W matrix and advocacy to government and technical partners for a more sustainable solution for specific and recurring issues such as flooding.
- The identification and evaluation of needs for vulnerable households affected by the crisis in northern Mali who are in need of shelter assistance is underway by UNHCR's partners (Stop Sahel, TSF and Red Cross Luxembourg) in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu. The implementation of shelter activities faces ongoing challenges in Mopti due to frequent security incidents in the zones of return.



UNHCR and its partners Red Cross Luxembourg/Red Cross Mali conduct a field visit for shelter activities in Timbuktu.
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Education

- UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, delivered furniture and equipment for literacy centers in the region of Kayes to improve the learning environment for Mauritanian refugees and host community members. One of the key challenges relates to the participation of women and girls at the literacy centers due to their heavy responsibilities with respect to domestic work.
- UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, 10 carts to eight refugee sites to assist Mauritanian refugee children to better access school sites to pursue their education. There remain major challenges for Mauritanian refugee children to access education as a result of long distances between school sites and residences, the lack of birth certificates that hinder enrollment processes, absence of school canteens and limited equipment in schools, among other issues. There are over 4,000 school aged Mauritanian refugee children (5 – 11 years old), and approximately 38.5% have received support for enrollment through UNHCR and its partners between 2012 and 2016.

Health

- **Study on Health Insurance for Urban Refugees:** With the aim of improving the health status of urban refugees, an evaluation report on healthcare plans was validated on 21 April by all actors involved in the management of healthcare assistance including CNCR, HCR, UTM and URM.

- **Health Insurance for Mauritanian refugees:** 11 sensitization sessions on the importance of health insurance were held in seven sites in the region of Kayes reaching 157 persons including 138 Mauritanian refugees and 19 host community members. This allowed for the registration of 46 households (127 persons) to health insurance plans. This aims to help households gain access to quality health care at a more affordable rate.
- **Medical assistance:** Eight persons with specific needs among the urban refugee community received assistance through UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, to address chronic illnesses and medical treatments.
- **Family planning:** Information sessions on the advantages of family planning and different methods of contraception were held in Kayes region to help populations of concern understand options for their own planning. The sessions reached 181 people including Mauritanian refugees and host community members. As a result of these sessions, two persons with specific needs were identified and provided with medical assistance.

Water and Sanitation

- In Gao, among three water points to be restored, one has been identified and two remain to be done.
- In Mopti, 240 refugee returnees and host community members participated in **four** awareness sessions to discuss hygiene and sanitation issues around water points, including waste management, water-borne diseases and unity and reconciliation around water points.

Food Security and Nutrition

- **Gao:** UNHCR successfully advocated to its partner World Food Programme (WFP) to include 1,535 facilitated refugee returnees (335 households) who returned from Burkina Faso and Niger in November 2016 to receive food assistance.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

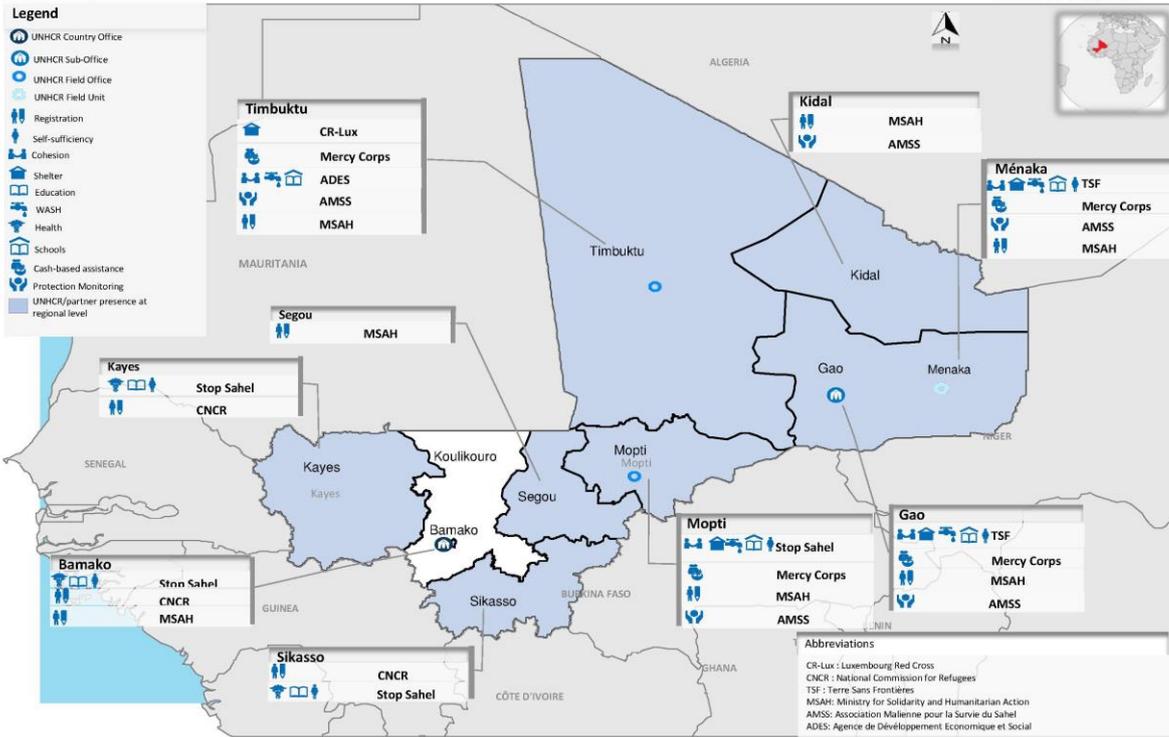
- **Cash grants for refugee returnees:** Identification activities are underway by UNHCR's partner, Mercy Corps, to identify and register eligible refugee returnees who will receive cash grants to support their basic needs and their reintegration within local communities. The identification process has faced challenges as a result of the on-going insecurity and the nomadic lifestyle of refugee returnees.
- **Self-reliance activities:**
 - **Kayes:** Construction on eight chicken coops in nine sites is complete and the construction of cereal banks in eight sites is underway in the region of Kayes. These activities support community-based livelihood projects for Mauritanian refugees and host community members. These activities have mobilized strong interest from community members who are increasingly participating and providing funds to realize infrastructure projects.
 - **Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti:** Identification and evaluation activities are underway to identify associations that include women and youth, alongside individuals among refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees and host community members that are most in need of livelihood assistance. The areas of assistance include trainings, cash grants and equipment for agricultural and pastoral activities, retail, micro-businesses and entrepreneurship, among other sectors.
- **Economic challenges:** Urban refugees continue to evoke on-going concerns with the lack of economic opportunities in the local job market that impedes their ability to become more self-reliant and autonomous. Restricted funding continues to limit UNHCR's assistance in this domain.

Working in partnership



Mali : Partner presence 2017

UNHCR Bamako



Source: UNHCR Mali

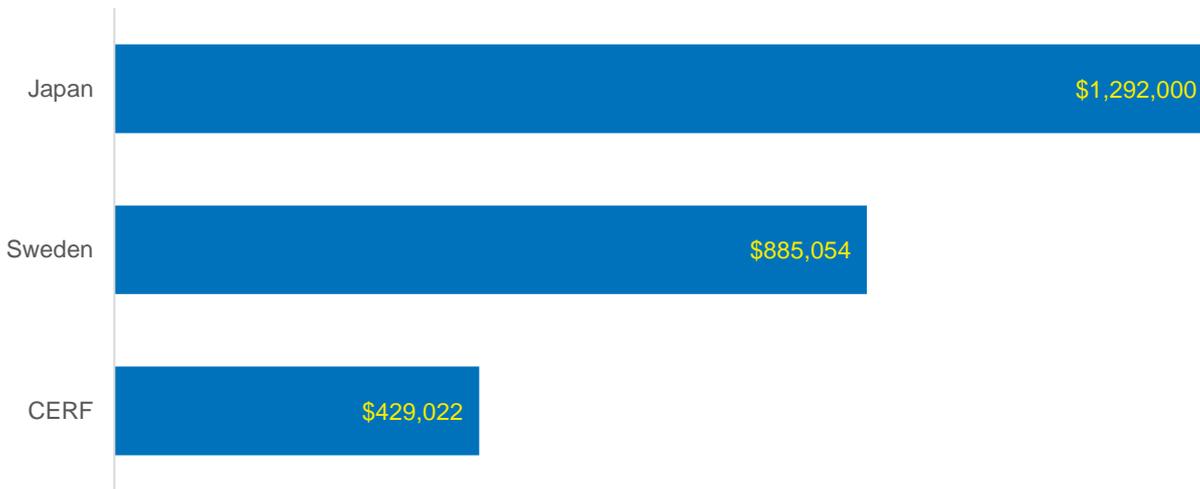
The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The administrative boundaries on this map do not take into account the new administrative subdivisions (Loi N°2012-018) effective as of 19 January 2016.

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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2017 funding in USD

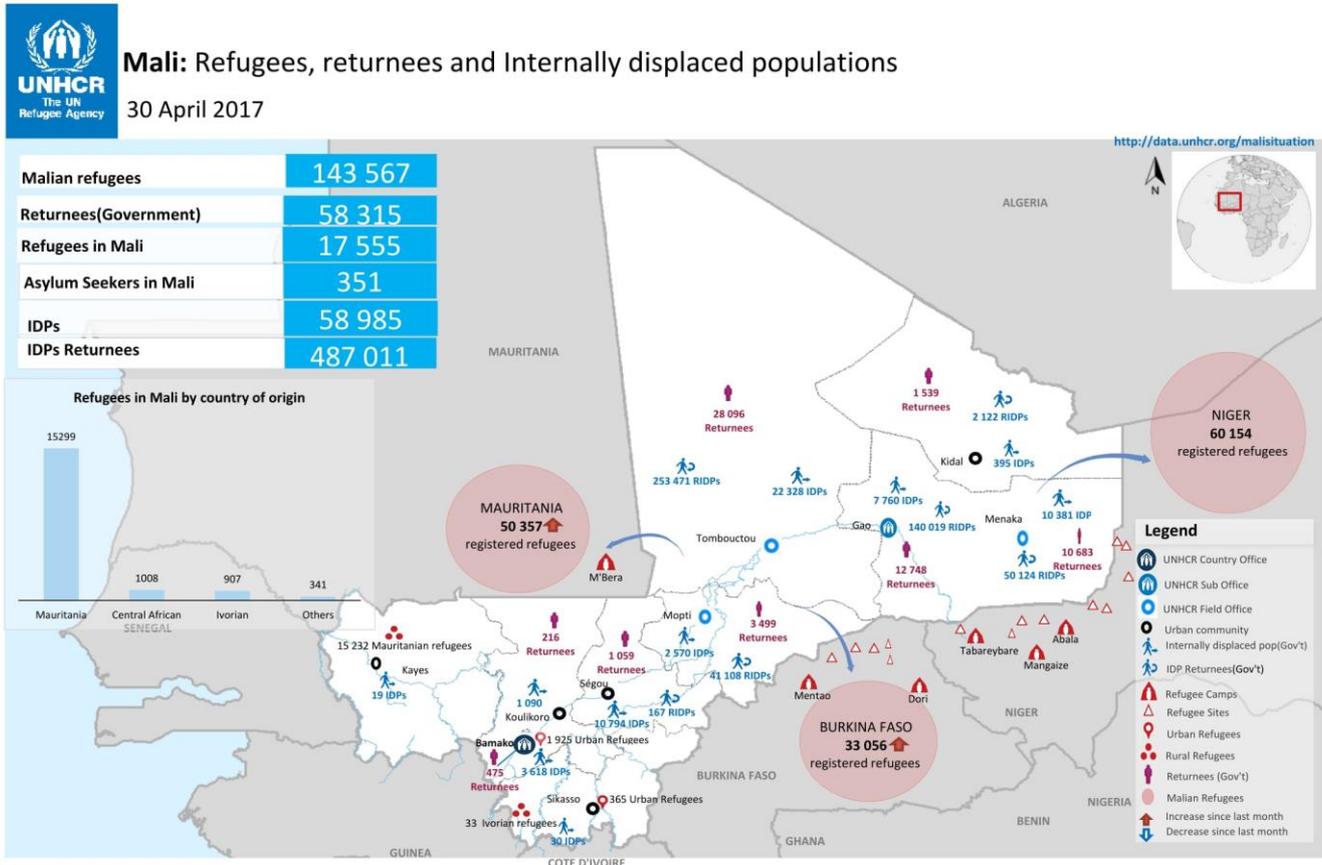


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ANNEXES

Mali situation map



* figures from Niger dated as of December 2016

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Malian refugees (Sources: UNHCR)

Refugees in Mali (Sources: Government of Mali, CNCR)

Malian Returnees and IDPs (Sources: Government of Mali, DNDS)

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