

Niger

July 2023

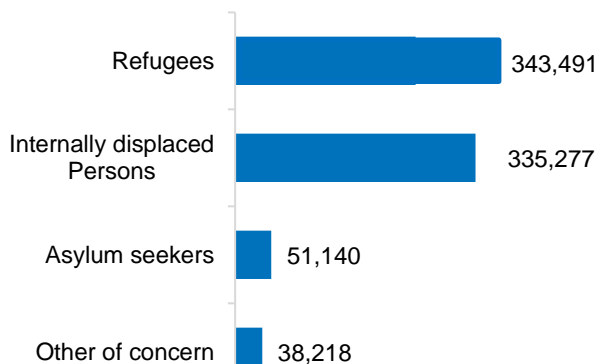
On 26 July, **Niger's Defence Forces seized power in a coup d'état**, condemned by world leaders. **ECOWAS imposed financial and economic sanctions** on Niger. Threats of military intervention to restore constitutional order exacerbated tensions, rendering the operational context challenging. **Despite these, UNHCR continued its operations across the country.**

From 3 – 5 July, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, visited Niger.** He met with refugees, Nigerien authorities, the UN country team, technical and financial partners, with the aim of strengthening the response to forced displacement. **A key topic was Niger's participation as co-convenor of the Global Refugee Forum**, scheduled for December 2023.

Since the resettlement program was set up in November 2017, 5,534 refugees have left Niger for a new life in third countries. These include 3,784 people who were evacuated from Libya to Niger under the **Emergency Transit Mechanism program (ETM)**, and 1,750 other refugees registered under the national asylum system in Niger. The Programme also promotes peaceful coexistence through quick impact projects at Hamdallaye and Agadez.

STATISTICS ON FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN NIGER (AS OF 31 JULY 2023)

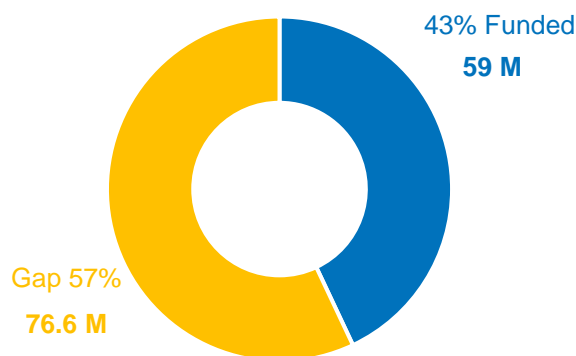
343,491* refugees (including **257,777 biometrically registered**), **51,140** asylum-seekers, **335,277** internally displaced persons, **38,218** others under UNHCR mandate, such as returnees. Total number of displaced persons under UNHCR mandate in Niger: **768,126**



FUNDING AS OF 31 JULY 2023

\$ 135,7 M

Requested by the UNHCR Operation in Niger in 2023



* These figures are estimates



Thanks to Education Cannot Wait, Lawali, a refugee child with a disability in Bangui, Madaoua Department, Tahoua Region, now eagerly anticipates riding his tricycle to school. © UNHCR / Antonia Vadala.

Operational Context

Despite the various conflicts in the region and the current situation in the country linked to the coup d'état on 26 July, **Niger continues to receive refugees and asylum-seekers** primarily from Nigeria (66%), followed by Mali (22%), Burkina Faso (10%), and 2% from other countries. Additionally, there **are more than 335,000 internally displaced people** and about 38,000 other persons under UNHCR's mandate. This group includes Nigerien returnees who were staying outside the country in areas affected by different conflicts and insecurity, which forced them to flee.

UNHCR's approach in Niger is multi-sectoral and aims to assist Nigerien authorities in **providing protection, assistance, and solutions to forcibly displaced individuals**. There's a specific focus on women, children, and people with special needs, **using a community-based approach**.

From 24 to 27 July, **UNHCR participated in the first refugee status eligibility session of 2023**, organized by the National Refugee Status Eligibility Commission (better known by its French acronym CNE) in Tahoua Region. Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, 60 cases were examined, the majority of which were Sudanese. Out of these, 40 cases received favourable opinions, 19 cases were rejected, and one case was adjourned. A day was dedicated to studying the **prima facie recognition of Burkinabè individuals** who had sought refuge in Tillabéri Region. The report of the joint CNE-UNHCR mission conducted from 21 – 26 June in the six departments of the Tillabéri Region mentioned 4,977 households with 27,955 Burkina Faso nationals.

Tillabéri Region

Context: Since the first arrival of Malian refugees in Tillabéri in 2012, UNHCR and the Government of Niger have collaborated to **enhance the socio-economic inclusion** of these refugees through an **out of camp strategy**. Through the support of development partners and integration initiatives within local communities, both Malian refugees and host communities have gained **access to various services, as well as opportunities for land, housing, and livelihoods**. Concurrently, there have been enhancements to national health, education, and water infrastructure. To strengthen **peaceful coexistence** among these communities, UNHCR has facilitated interaction via "common areas," including communal cereal banks, livestock feed shops, and through several **community committees**.

- On 3 July, UNHCR distributed emergency shelter kits to 17 households whose homes were destroyed by heavy rains in Abala, on 1 July. The destroyed houses were also rehabilitated during the second week of July. In addition, **UNHCR distributed 565 emergency shelter kits** to other displaced households living in Abala, whose shelters were dilapidated. The kits consisted of two tarpaulins, a roll of rope, six mats, a bundle of 15 pieces of 4-meter wood, and a bundle of 15 pieces of 3-meter wood.
- On 13 July, accompanied by local authorities and security officials, the Minister of Interior, Decentralization, Public Security, and Religious Affairs conducted a mission to Ouro Djaladjo village in the Say Department. The aim was to assess the situation of 8,484 new internally displaced individuals (1,212 households), forced to flee their villages due to attacks non-state armed groups. The Minister reassured the displaced individuals about the government's commitment to finding solutions to their current challenges. He also pledged to secure the villages of origin, to encourage and facilitate their safe return. To support voluntary returns, the Minister donated 65 tons of cereals and about 1,500,000 FCFA (about US \$ 2,500) to the forcibly displaced. A joint protection assessment mission by UNHCR, OCHA, and CIAUD was also conducted to Ouro Djaladjo. Their assessment highlighted critical needs for shelter, food, and protection measures, among others. To date, the Say department hosts 8,484 internally displaced persons grouped in 1,212 households and 370 Burkinabe asylum-seekers grouped in 69 households.

- **Medical consultations were provided to 1,250 refugees and 2,023 host community members** at health centres in Abala, Ayorou, and Ouallam. Among them, 133 were placed under observation, and 21 were referred to regional healthcare facilities. Additionally, 119 women received prenatal care, and **92 assisted births** took place within the health centres.
- UNHCR and its partners conducted multiple **awareness sessions** in the Tillabéri Region, benefitting over 4,500 individuals as part of their **community-based protection activities**. These sessions covered topics such as risk prevention, available care services, environmental preservation, and promoting peaceful coexistence between forcibly displaced individuals and host communities.

Tahoua Region

Context: The Tahoua Region hosts Malian and Nigerian refugees as well as returnees. Owing to persistent insecurity along the Malian border, particularly in the Ménaka area, new arrivals of refugees have been reported in recent months in Tchintabaraden, Telemces, and Tillia. Furthermore, the Madaoua Department, situated along the Nigeria border, continues to witness **inflows of asylum-seekers from Nigeria, due to recurrent incursions by non-state armed** groups into border villages.

- To strengthen self-reliance, on 5 July, UNHCR and its project partner CIAUD, distributed 35 goat kits and feed, to members of three mixed groups of livestock farmers in the Bangui municipality in Madaoua Department.
- From 18 – 19 July, UNHCR conducted a training for protection monitors from the CIAUD in the Konni, Madaoua, Tillia, Bouza, and Tahoua departments. The training covered UNHCR's mandate, international protection within mixed migration contexts, prevention of statelessness, rapid protection assessment techniques, referral mechanisms, protection monitoring tools under Project P21, and the protection of IDPs.
- In the Madaoua Department, awareness sessions on fighting deforestation and climate change were conducted for 720 internally displaced individuals in the villages of Doukoudoukou, Jataka, Bangui Kataguir, and Guidan Bagouari, enhancing their knowledge on environmental protection in the Sahel region where draughts and floods are recurrent.

Diffa Region

Context: Since 2013, the Diffa Region has been hosting Nigerian refugees fleeing terrorist violence in the northeastern states of Nigeria.

As of 31 July, the **Diffa Region is home to 314,820 forcibly displaced individuals**, including 137,573 refugees, 140,593 internally displaced persons, 34,139 returning Nigeriens, and 2,515 asylum-seekers. Many of these individuals have experienced multiple displacements, with a majority residing in spontaneous settlements or within host communities. Nigerian refugees continue to arrive, not only at the Sayam Forage camp but also at other reception sites across the Diffa region, seeking improved living conditions and enhanced security. The **Sayam Forage camp, the sole refugee camp in Niger**, accommodates 33,026 people.

- From 4 to 7 July, **UNHCR Diffa sub-office alongside regional authorities took part in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) Governors' Forum in N'Djamena, Chad**. Concurrently, UNHCR hosted a side event focusing on challenges related to forced displacements triggered by armed conflicts and climate shocks in the LCB area and sustainable solutions that strengthen assistance and protection of displaced populations.
- UNHCR and its partners identified and documented 68 new cases of gender-based violence (GBV), consisting of instances of resource denial, physical assault, psychological violence, sexual assault, and rape. **All documented GBV cases received psychosocial support**, while specific cases requiring specialized care were referred to partners. Additionally, 742 individuals benefitting from awareness raising on GBV risks and available support services.

- A total of **3,279 refugees benefitted from free medical consultations** at the Sayam Forage health centre. About 80 of them were placed under observation, while 40 were referred to regional healthcare facilities. Moreover, 186 women underwent prenatal consultations, and **32 births were assisted** by qualified attendants.
- Between 24 and 26 July, the European Union Ambassador to Niger conducted a mission to the Diffa Region. The mission involved meetings with regional authorities, humanitarian, and development actors to discuss the region's humanitarian and security situation, as well as EU's support to Niger Government decentralized services in Diffa. The Ambassador also visited projects funded by the EU, including the urbanized site of Diffa where UNHCR recently built about 3,600 durable shelters and the area of return for displaced individuals.

Maradi Region

Context: For over two years, **the conflict in northwest Nigeria has forced over 80,000 Nigerians to seek refuge in the Maradi Region**. Additionally, recurrent incursions by armed gangs into Nigerien territory have led to the internal displacement of around 26,000 individuals. These armed criminal groups operate regularly on both sides of the border, mainly targeting farmers and herders and engaging in kidnappings for ransom.

UNHCR's response in Maradi aims to **provide assistance to refugees who choose to move away from the border for their safety, while also offering support to host communities to alleviate the pressure** resulting from an increased presence of refugees. Subsequently, sites were established in neighbouring rural villages, and services were set up to benefit refugees and host communities, including water, health, education, and protection services. **These settlements are referred to as village development hubs popularly known in French as "Villages d'opportunité"**. Currently, there are three of such in the Maradi Region, located near the villages of Chadakori, Dan Dadji Makaou, and Garin Kaka.

- UNHCR continues to **support the three health centres** established in the three opportunity villages with essential drugs, equipment, and medical supplies, ensuring proper healthcare for both refugees and host community members.
- From 20 to 21 July, the Regional Civil Status Office of Maradi, with UNHCR's support, organized a capacity-building workshop on civil registration rules and procedures in Niger. The workshop targeted record keepers, authorities, and humanitarian actors in Maradi. The two-day training focused on key aspects of the national civil registration policy and techniques for filling and archiving civil registration documents.
- UNHCR and its partner ADES distributed 340 bags of fertilizer to 170 refugee and host community households in the Chadakori, helping to improve the well-being of residents and to promote peaceful coexistence.
- UNHCR **distributed goat kits**, each consisting of young animals, animal feed, and anti-parasite tablets, to 105 households, comprising 83 refugee households and 22 host community households living in the village development hubs of Dan Dadji Makaou, Garin Kaka, and Chadakori. Follow-up assessments were conducted among some refugee households who received this assistance in 2022, revealing that the animals are thriving and have multiplied, despite beneficiaries facing challenges in sourcing animal feed. An association of herders was also established in the Dan Dadji Makaou Opportunity Village. The association facilitates tracking and supervision of distributed goats, accessing



Households of refugee herders in Dan Daji Makaou receive goat kits © CIAUD

affordable animal feed, maintaining a livestock pharmacy, and organizing livestock fairs.

- UNHCR, and project partners CIAUD and RET Germany, held **awareness sessions for over 3,500 individuals**, mostly refugees, and a few members of the host community. These sessions took place in the three village development hubs and various other refugee hosting areas. Topics covered included mitigating protection risks, promoting peaceful coexistence, proper use of treated mosquito bed nets, and preventing statelessness.

Agadez Region

Context: Niger is characterized by **mixed movements towards the Mediterranean and Europe**, while also hosting **individuals fleeing from Libya or those expelled from Algeria**. These mixed migration flows consist of both economic migrants and individuals in need of international protection. The goal of UNHCR is to ensure that the latter group has **access to protection, asylum, and humanitarian assistance**.

In Niger, **UNHCR supports the strengthening of the national asylum system** and implements a range of activities to ensure the protection and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers. In the longer term, UNHCR endeavours to find **sustainable solutions**, such as local integration or voluntary return to the country of origin if security conditions permit. Complementary legal pathways, including family reunification, study visas, or humanitarian evacuations, are also explored. In partnership with IOM, NGO partners, and the Nigerien government, UNHCR identifies asylum-seekers within migration flows and provides tailored advice and assistance.

- UNHCR facilitated **access to primary and secondary healthcare at the Agadez Humanitarian Centre** for 629 refugees and 742 members of the host community. Among them, 28 severe cases were identified and referred to the regional hospital and the Agadez Mother and Child Health Centre. The Toudou health centre also provided **reproductive health services and infant malnutrition care**. Additionally, 69 individuals received psychosocial support.
- As of July 31, 2023, UNHCR and partners have identified and biometrically **registered 2,699 individuals in need of international protection**. This group includes 1,785 asylum-seekers and 914 refugees. The most vulnerable are accommodated in five transit houses in Agadez, where they receive protection and humanitarian assistance. Others are hosted at the Humanitarian Centre on the outskirts of the city.
- Following a joint UNHCR/partners and government mission to Assamaka at the border between Niger and Algeria from 8 to 13 July, UNHCR project partner APBE, distributed core relief items, clothing items and dignity kits to 170 households of Malian asylum-seekers, 50 host community individuals, and 44 vulnerable migrants. Additionally, 22 emergency shelters were constructed at the site occupied by Malian refugees.
- A **socio-professional training program**, involving five host community members and 25 refugees, was launched on 25 July in Agadez as part of the mixed migration monitoring and livelihood strengthening project. The training aims to generate income and redistribute it within the region, promoting income generation and fostering cohesion and peaceful coexistence between the two communities. Furthermore, it contributes to resilience and facilitates socio-economic integration of beneficiaries. The training duration spans 60 to 75 days and consists of theoretical classes and practical internships aligned with the chosen fields of study. 11 women and 19 men will



Refugees take pastry making classes in Agadez
 © UNHCR/ Antonia Vadala

undergo training in sectors such as sewing, mechanics, catering, and pastry-making across two centres.

Resettlement

As of 31 July, **5,534 refugees have departed from Niger for third countries through resettlement programs or complementary pathways** such as study visas. This figure comprises 3,784 individuals evacuated from Libya to Niger under the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) and 1,750 refugees processed and registered within Niger's national asylum system.

Hamdallaye / ETM

Since 2017, a total of **4,242 asylum-seekers have been evacuated from Libya to Niger under the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)**. As of July 2023, about 576 evacuees are still on-site at Hamdallaye. This remaining caseload includes 100 persons awaiting imminent departures to third countries and 230 pending interviews and decisions from resettlement countries.

Urban Refugees - Niamey

As of 30 July, the city of Niamey is hosting 4,993 refugees and 802 asylum-seekers. 4,259 (85 percent) of these refugees originate from Mali. In accordance with Nigerien law, **Malian nationals affected by the armed conflict in northern Mali are recognized as refugees, prima facie**, while people of other nationalities go through the regular government procedure for determining refugee status.

Given the urban context of Niamey, UNHCR has brought together partners involved in implementing **protection and assistance interventions for urban refugees and asylum-seekers under** a physical structure known as **the "One-Stop Shop"**. This approach serves to reduce costs, enable integrated operations, and enhance coordination of services provided by different partners. Refugees and asylum-seekers receive assistance and guidance on documentation, along with information about various forms of support such as medical care, psychological aid, and education. The centre also operates a "hotline" that refugees can call toll-free for queries, assistance advice, or complaint filing.

On 4 July, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, along with Niger's Minister of Interior and Decentralization, Hamadou Adamou Souley, co-moderated a donor roundtable. This roundtable took place as part of the **preparations for the second Global Refugee Forum**, scheduled for 13 – 15 December in Geneva. During his visit to Niger, the High Commissioner held discussions with the President



Refugee entrepreneurs pose with High Commissioner Grandi, the Director for West and Central Africa, UNHCR Niger Representative, and the UNHCR Development Advisor. © UNHCR/Hector Perez

of the Republic and the Speaker of the National Assembly, both of whom reaffirmed country's commitment to maintaining open borders and providing assistance to forcibly displaced individuals.

- The High Commissioner also engaged with young refugees aspiring to become professionals in various fields or entrepreneurs. He encouraged UNHCR staff to continue supporting these refugees to build better futures for themselves.

Partnerships

UNUNHCR oversees the coordination of the Protection Cluster in Niger, which, in collaboration with all protection partners, guides and harmonizes interventions towards internally displaced individuals, ensuring a coherent response across the country. The Cluster also shares information with all relevant partners, addresses identified gaps, and provides strategic direction for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

UNUNHCR interventions aim to progress towards economic integration and social inclusion of displaced communities. This approach is fully supported by the Government of Niger and aligns with the **Global Compact on Refugees and the Humanitarian-Development and Peace Nexus**, and with the Niger Government's out-of-camp policy. UNUNHCR seeks to enhance relationships with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, universities, and media outlets. The office also collaborates with other government bodies, operational and implementation partners both nationally and internationally. UNUNHCR Niger works closely with the Directorate General of Civil Status and Refugees (DGEC-R), the main counterpart of UNUNHCR, to ensure adequate international protection for all refugees and asylum-seekers present in Niger.

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNUNHCR Niger operation in 2023

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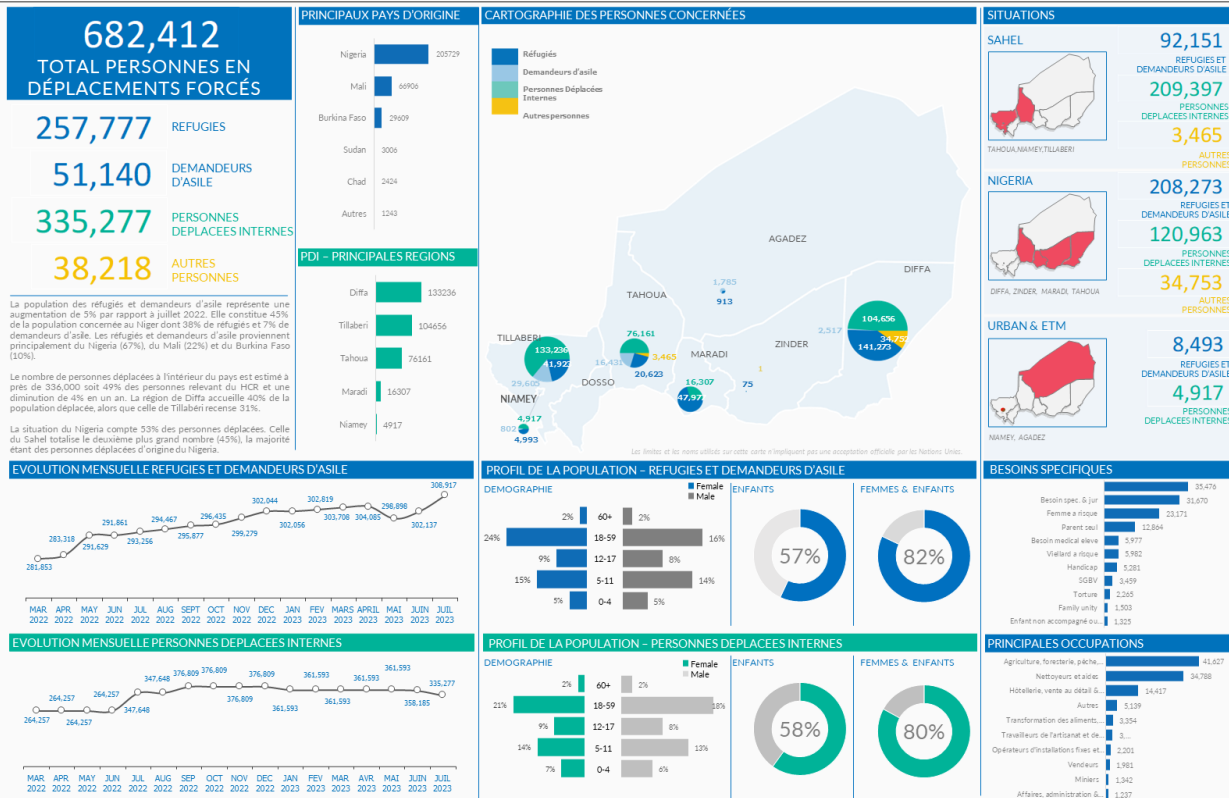
And thanks to donors who gave flexible funding to UNUNHCR globally in 2023

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Contact:

Bettina Schulte, External Relations Officer, schulte@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 82 80 39 04
Jean Sebastien Josset, Associate Communications Officer, josset@unhcr.org, Tel: +227 90766977

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*This map includes only the numbers of refugees which have been biometrically registered.