

Niger

September 2023

Niger's Protection Cluster has reported that nearly 339,000 forcibly displaced people are in urgent need of protection kits. These kits include items such as dignity kits, recreational kits for children, post-rape kits, as well as cash to support people with special needs. Current stocks, in the country cover only 9 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries.

The headcount and biometric verification process for Nigerian refugees has been successfully completed in Diffa and in the Madaoua zone of Tahoua Region. About 130,320 individuals (30,212 households) got verified in Diffa Region, while 31,630 individuals (8,803 households) were registered in Madaoua. A strategy for continuous registration was set up in the event of new arrivals.

As of 30 September, UNHCR and its partners have completed the biometric verification of 2,775 people in need of international protection in Agadez Region. Of these, 1,916 are asylum-seekers and 859 are refugees. The most vulnerable have been accommodated in five transit houses in Agadez, where they receive appropriate protection and assistance. The others are housed at the Humanitarian Centre.

STATISTICS ON REGISTERED FORCIBLY DISPLACED **PEOPLE IN NIGER (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2023)**



FUNDING AS OF 04 OCTOBER 2023

\$135,7 M





UNHCR works with forcibly displaced populations (refugees & IDPs) in need of protection and assistance across Niger. UNHCR / Hector Perez



Operational Context

Despite the various conflicts in the Sahel region and the current situation in Niger following the coup d'état on 26 July, **Niger continues to receive refugees and asylum-seekers** primarily from Nigeria (68 per cent), followed by Mali (21 per cent), Burkina Faso (9 per cent), while 2 per cent are from other countries. Additionally, there **are more than 335,277 internally displaced people** and about 45,277 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 resolutely multi-sectoral, aiming to provide substantial support to the Nigerien state in the provision of protection services, assistance and solutions for forcibly displaced people. Particular attention is paid to the most vulnerable groups, including women, children and individuals with specific needs, while favoring an approach aimed at strengthening community structures.

Throughout September, UNHCR operations continued uninterrupted in Niger, except for areas designated as "military operations zones" by the authorities, where humanitarian activities have been temporarily suspended. Over time, however, the ruling authorities have introduced measures to soften this decision, thereby minimising its impact on humanitarian operations nationwide. The current authorities have given newly appointed regional governors (all members of the defence forces) responsibility for determining whether areas under their control are safe for humanitarian actors. In regions such as Diffa, the Governor has supported the joint efforts of humanitarian and development actors to continue providing assistance and support to displaced people and host communities.

UNHCR remains deeply concerned by the situation of vulnerable people in Niger, IDPs and refugees as much as for the host communities also affected by the current situation. Imposed sanctions, rising prices and the continued closure of key access points for the import of goods, such as Benin and Nigeria, continue to weaken the overall resilience of the population. **Unless there is a significant breakthrough in resolving the political crisis, the humanitarian situation of a very large segment of the population living in Niger is likely to become alarming.**

Like all other UN Agencies in Niger, UNHCR has established channels of communication with the new authorities, meeting with the Secretaries General of the Ministries of the Interior, Humanitarian Action, and Justice at a technical level. This cooperation is of crucial importance in ensuring the smooth continuity of humanitarian activities, facilitating the free flow of personnel, resources, and finances, and enabling essential tasks such as refugee status determination to be carried out.

Tillabéri Region

Context: Since the arrival of Malian refugees in Tillabéri in 2012, UNHCR and the Government of Niger have actively collaborated to **promote the socio-economic inclusion of Malian refugees withing hosting zones and communities**, by adopting an "**out-of-camp**" strategy. Thanks to the support of development actors and integration initiatives within local communities, Malian refugees and their local hosts have benefited from a diverse range of services, access to land, housing, as well as new livelihood opportunities. At the same time, significant improvements have been made to national infrastructures in the fields of health, education, and water supply.

To **foster peaceful coexistence** between the different communities, UNHCR has helped to bring them together through "common areas" such as village cereal banks and livestock feed stores, as well as through the creation of various joint community committees.



- Throughout September, about 2,607 refugees, 1,520 IDPs and 4,578 members of the host community benefited from medical consultations at the Abala, Ayorou and Ouallam integrated health centers. Of these beneficiaries, 355 were placed under observation, while 29 were referred to regional health facilities. In addition, a total of 349 benefitted from prenatal consultations, while the health centers facilitated safe deliveries of 134 babies.
- Every year, 9 September is dedicated to the International Day for the Protection of Education against Attack. To mark this occasion, the Education Cluster organized a webinar on Thursday, 7 September, through its Safe Schools Working Group. The aim of this initiative was to mobilize state and relevant organizations to promote constant vigilance in protecting schools, children, and teachers in Niger.
- A diphtheria epidemic has been identified at the Abala Malian refugee site in the Tillabéri Region. To date, some thirty cases have been recorded, including six deaths and five individuals currently undergoing treatment. Between 29 August and 1 September, UNHCR in partnership with the ministry of health, carried out a mission to Abala, during which discussions were held with local authorities to strengthen the response. Project partner BEFEN/ALIMA is providing meals for patients in the isolation centre supported by UNHCR. An emergency plan has been drawn up in collaboration with the Abala health district to deal with the situation.



In addition to a joint assessment mission to the affected area, UNHCR and project partners have erected a medical tent for patient isolation, carried out biological sampling and laboratory tests, investigated cases, conducted active community searches to identify and monitor contacts, and raised public awareness of preventive measures and vaccinations. This response is closely coordinated

with local health authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- In September, the Fabry-Perot interferometer / World Food Program (FPI/WFP) assisted 3,187 households, including 1,999 refugee, 818 returnee, and 370 IDP households, with a cash allowance of 26,000 FCFA (around 42 USD) per household. Of these households, 3,153 received the planned assistance, while 34 IDP households could not be served due to a technical problem with the Capital Finance machine. Catch-up measures are planned for these households, to enable them to obtain the necessary funds to purchase foodstuffs.
- In addition, UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner, the NGO CIAUD Canada, organized a training course covering various areas such as agri-food processing, entrepreneurship, financial education, community life, hygiene, leadership, as well as groundnut processing techniques. The training benefited five groups of 15 people in Ayorou. It was carried out with the technical support of government departments, notably agriculture and the environment, in the presence of the department's new prefect, the mayor and the prefecture's secretary general.

Tahoua Region

Context: Tahoua Region region is home to refugees from Mali and Nigeria, as well as Nigerien nationals who were resident in Mali and were later forced to flee back to their country of origin. Due to persistent insecurity along the border with Mali, particularly in the Ménaka area, new refugee arrivals have been registered in recent months in the localities of Tchintabaraden, Telemcess and Tillia. In addition, the



Madaoua department, which borders Nigeria, continues to receive asylum-seekers from Nigeria due to recurrent incursions into border villages by non-state armed groups.

On 1 September, UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner Adkoul, organized the distribution of

emergency shelter kits in the Guidan Ahmed host village, located in the Bangui council area, Madaoua department. This initiative helped a total of 24 female heads of household, 10 households with separated or unaccompanied children, nine large families, as well as seven heads of household living with disabilities. Following this distribution, 300 vulnerable households in Bangui, Kataguiri and Jataka will receive support in the form of emergency shelter kits.



Distribution of emergency kits to flood victims, Kuwait district, Tahoua UNHCR

- A registration and biometric verification exercise for Nigerian refugees was successfully completed in the Diffa Region and the Madaoua department, which is part of the Tahoua Region. In Diffa, a total of 130,320 individuals, comprising 30,212 households, were verified in accordance with established procedures. Similarly, in Madaoua, 31,630 individuals, comprising 8,803 households, were effectively registered. To anticipate the possible arrival of new refugees, a continuous registration strategy has been put in place.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, has identified 454 people at risk of statelessness in the Tahoua Region. Of these, 237 boys and 182 girls were identified in Kourfayat Malou (Konni). All cases were referred to the Konni Departmental Directorate of Civil Status. In addition, 14 boys, six men, eight women and seven girls were identified in Tillia.
- On 7 September, UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS ran a training session for girls' and women's committees from the villages of Jataka and Kataguiri, located in the Madaoua department. During the training, committee members acquired essential skills, notably in the fight against gender-based violence, child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Participants also deepened their understanding of child protection concepts, unaccompanied and separated children, and the various risks children may face. In addition, they were informed about the different forms of incidents linked to gender-based violence (GBV) and the services available to deal with them.



Distribution of non-food kits to six vulnerable children in Tillia © UNHCR

During the last week of September, UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner in charge of implementing protection activities, distributed nonfood kits to six vulnerable children, including four girls and two unaccompanied children, residing in Tillia. Each individual kit consisted of two pieces of soap, a box of ointment, a mosquito net, a set of clothes, a pair of shoes, two pairs of underpants and a blanket.



Diffa Region

Context: Since 2013, the Diffa Region has been hosting Nigerian refugees fleeing terrorist violence in the north-eastern states of Nigeria. As of 31 August, the **Diffa Region is home to 314,820 forcibly displaced individuals**, including 137,573 refugees, 140,593 internally displaced persons, 34,139 Nigeriens who were resident in Nigeria and were forced to flee back to their country of origin, 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.**

- On Thursday, 28 September, the new Governor of the Diffa Region visited the Sayam refugee camp, accompanied by the president of the regional council, representatives of UNHCR, OCHA, CIAUD, APBE, ADES, COOPI, AIRD, RET Germany, CNE, DREC, the mayor, the canton chief of the Chetimari council, technical partners, and defence and security forces officials.
- During a meeting, the Governor expressed his gratitude to UNHCR and its partners for their commitment to refugees and others who have left their places of residence for various reasons, such as persecution, widespread violence, and serious public order disturbances. He encouraged refugees to work closely

with the defence forces to promote peace, to strengthen their cooperation with the host community, to contribute to environmental preservation, and to respect their rights, duties, and the laws and regulations of the host country, including those relating to the state of emergency. The Governor spoke at length in Hausa with the refugees, addressing the various themes mentioned above.



Brigadier General Ibrahim Bagadoma, the new Governor of the Diffa Region, reiterates the new authorities' commitment to protecting and assisting refugees in the Sayam Forage camp © UNHCR

- The Governor of the Diffa Region subsequently met with humanitarian actors to discuss the suspension of humanitarian activities. He clarified that activities are only suspended in areas of military operations. Humanitarian work may continue in non-military operation zones, subject to approval by the governorate for each mission, with reference to a consolidated weekly mission plan, using existing mechanisms.
- On Thursday 7 September, UNHCR and the Commission Nationale d'Éligibilité au Statut des Réfugiés (CNE) held a meeting to review the biometric verification operation in the Diffa Region. During the meeting, it was confirmed that the verification operation had been completed. However, due to security concerns raised by the security forces, the Toumour and Boudouri sites could not be included in the operation, even with military escorts. In all, 130,320 people (30,212 households) were successfully verified, representing 91.77 per cent of the target population. It was agreed to rapidly implement a continuous registration strategy on a permanent basis, in the event of new arrivals.
- Protection monitoring data from UNHCR, and its partners highlighted the population movements of around 3,556 individuals (570 households) from Chad to the localities of Nguigmi (Boudouma Malien site), Gueskerou (Kidjandi), Bosso (Bosso) and Diffa (Djori Kolo), in the Diffa Region of Niger, between March and August 2023. The highest number of arrivals was recorded in August, representing 72 per cent of newly arrived households. These are people who reportedly fled increasing attacks by non-state



armed groups in the localities of Liwa, Baga Sola, Kangallam, Madji, Foutouna, Kiskra, Demaram and Amma in Chad. They have found refuge in Nguigmi (Boudouma Malien site), Gueskerou (Kidjandi), Bosso (Bosso) and Diffa (Djori Kolo).

- Joint needs assessments have been carried out and shared with the humanitarian community in Diffa with a view to positioning and assistance. UNHCR has held meetings with the National Eligibility Commission (CNE) to plan for the registration of new arrivals as soon as the ongoing biometric verification of Nigerian refugees in the region is completed. The CNE has proposed that these displaced populations be initially considered as asylum-seekers, and that a plea be made to the CNE/Ministry of the Interior hierarchy for possible recognition on a prima facie basis.
- UNHCR has helped 300 households living in the Sayam Forage camp in the Diffa Region (the only
 existing refugee camp in Niger, as the vast majority of refugees are integrated into villages/sites) with
 durable shelter kits (metal sheets, square tubes, cement, hooks, doors, and windows) to support selfconstruction efforts and the improvement of their homes.
- On 29 September, the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Niger accompanied by representatives of various UN agencies, including UNHCR, carried out a mission to Diffa. They held meetings with regional authorities, heads of UN sub-offices and partner NGOs to discuss the current situation and the challenges facing humanitarian activities in the region. The delegation expressed its gratitude to humanitarian actors for their commitment to helping vulnerable populations, while recommending a discreet approach in carrying out assistance operations.

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 reduce 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 village development hubs with essential drugs, equipment, and medical supplies, ensuring proper healthcare for both refugees and host community members.
- From 7 8 September, UNHCR partner CIAUD organized the third training session for members of three groups for income-generating activities (IGAs) in the Garin Kaka, Dan Dadji Makao and Chadakori "Villages d'opportunité". The training took place at the Centre de Formation aux Métiers (CFM) in Chadakori and was aimed at addressing challenges in soap and incense making identified during group monitoring. Five members of each group were trained so that they could pass on the skills they had acquired to their peers.



Family photos taken during soap and incense-making training at the Chadakori opportunity village © CIAUD



- To boost sales of articles produced by income-generating groups made up of refugees and members of host communities, UNHCR and its partners have begun talks with the managers of three "Villages d'opportunité" in the Maradi Region. The aim is to supply these sites with soap made by these groups. Each quarter, the managers of these sites receive significant quantities of soap for their sanitation activities. In the third quarter of this year, the Chadakori "Villages d'opportunité" received 400 bars of soap from this group, equivalent to a full production cycle. It should be noted that this group has the capacity to produce up to 600bars of soaps per cycle.
- On 13 September, the "Livelihood" team from UNHCR project partner CIAUD visited the Maradi Region, accompanied by the Guidan Roumdji Agricultural Directorate. They distributed 30 litres of phytosanitary products, as well as nine sets of crop treatment equipment and nine sets of safety outfits to households of forcibly displaced and host community farmers. The donation is aimed at supporting cowpea growers in the three designated village development hubs, helping them to combat insect attacks that have already been reported in some cowpea fields. The nine phytosanitary brigade members, previously trained by CIAUD, comprising three in each village, will supervise the treatment of the fields, thus contributing to improved crop health, increased yields and food security.

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 health care at the health centre of the Humanitarian Centre in Agadez for 1,449 refugees and 1,213 members of the host community. Of these, 66 serious cases were identified and referred to the regional hospital and the mother and child health center in Agadez. The Toudou health center also provided reproductive health services and treatment for child malnutrition. In addition, 57 people benefitted from psychosocial support.

On 19 September, UNHCR in collaboration with its partner RET Germany organized a training session

the prevention of sexual on exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The training session was attended by 19 participants, including representatives from the judiciary, police, gendarmerie, humanitarian sector, as well as several refugees. The aim of the session was to provide those working with refugees and asylum-seekers with an in-depth understanding of PEAS concepts, prevention mechanisms and available care services.





- By 30 September, UNHCR and its partners had identified and biometrically verified 2,775 people in need of international protection. This group comprises 1,916 asylum-seekers and 859 refugees. The most vulnerable individuals are housed in five transit houses in Agadez, where they receive protection and support. The others are housed in the Humanitarian Centre built on the outskirts of the city.
- In September, three official and three unofficial convoys, totalling 2,250 people expelled from Algeria arrived in Agadez Region. Of these arrivals, the majority were Nigerian citizens (1,659 people), while others were of various nationalities. Since the beginning of 2023, the number of people expelled from Algeria to the Agadez Region has increased considerably, reaching over 23,048 migrants and asylum-seekers.
- On 19 September, a further 141 Malian refugees, expelled by the Algerian authorities, arrived in the Assamaka border area in the Agadez Region. This brings the total number of Malian refugees expelled by Algeria since June to 1,129. Most of them come from the Menaka region of Mali, where armed groups have recently perpetrated violence. UNHCR is working with its partners and regional authorities to develop a relocation plan for these refugees.
- In the Agadez Region, UNHCR and its partners have registered 20 new arrivals (17 households) from Libya, 17 of whom are Sudanese nationals. This brings to 2,775 the total number of refugees and asylum- seekers accommodated at the Agadez Humanitarian Center and in the city's guest houses.

Resettlement / Urban Refugees / Emergency Transit Mechanism

As of 30 September, **5,534 refugees have departed from Niger for third countries through resettlement programs or complementary pathways** such as study visas. This figure comprises 3,785 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.

- Since 2017, 3,785 asylum seekers have been evacuated from Libya to Niger via the ETM. In September 2023, around 576 evacuees were still on site, with 101 awaiting imminent departure and 279 awaiting interviews and decisions from resettlement countries.
- As part of the implementation of the Emergency Transit Mechanism, 25 community members and 12 refugees were trained in sewing, a further 12 host community members and six refugees were trained in carpentry, while 13 refugees and two host community members were trained in computer skills. In addition, 92 community members and 13 refugees were involved in market gardening activities.
- At the end of September, another person left Niger to resettle in Canada, bringing to 439 the total number of people (259 evacuees and 180 refugees registered in Niger) resettled in third countries through the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Niger since January 2023. This departure was the first since the coup d'état in Niger on 26 July and raised hopes of further resettlements before the end of the year.
- For urban refugees in Niamey, as of 30 September, the city was home to 5,067 refugees and 787 asylum-seekers. Nearly 85 per cent of these refugees (4,298 people) were from Mali and are recognized prima facie as victims of the armed conflict in northern Mali under Niger law. Other nationalities are subject to the ordinary government procedure for determining refugee status.
- Niamey's urban context prompted UNHCR to set up a one-stop shop, bringing together partners involved in the protection and assistance of urban refugees and asylum seekers. This structure cuts costs, coordinates services more effectively, and offers refugees and asylum seekers simplified access to advice, documentation and various forms of assistance, notably medical and psychological.



- UNHCR and its partners also carry out regular home visits to monitor the well-being of beneficiaries in Niamey. In addition, UNHCR runs several temporary guesthouses, known as "cases de passage", in collaboration with partners, to provide adequate protection for people with specific vulnerabilities. This approach aims to ensure inclusion and responsibility. In cooperation with the government of Niger, UNHCR also supports the Niamey Central Refugee Committee, made up of refugee leaders elected by their peers.
- Niger's Protection Cluster, with UNHCR as lead agency, reports that nearly 339,000 forcibly displaced people are in need of emergency protection kits, including dignity kits, recreational kits for children, post-rape kits, and cash allowances for people with special needs. However, current stocks in the country only cover 9% of targeted beneficiaries, leaving a significant funding gap of around US\$10 million. Protection risks, including GBV for women, children and other vulnerable groups, are exacerbated by Niger's complex security situation and ongoing socio-political tensions.
- From 18-21 September, 88 children living in guest houses in Niamey took part in recreational activities. These initiatives are designed to enable children to develop through play and to strengthen their protection.
- HCR has supervised the installation of solar electrification for various infrastructures at the Hamdallaye ETM site. The 30 batteries delivered meet the required specifications. However, the company has requested an extension of 45 days to complete the work.



Refugee and asylum-seeking children from the Niamey huts during a socio-recreational activity © UNHCR

 UNHCR supervised the installation of solar electrification for various infrastructures at the Hamdallaye ETM site. The 30 batteries delivered meet the required specifications. However, the company has requested an extension of 45 days to complete the work.

Partnerships

UNHCR 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).

UNHCR's initiatives aim to **foster the economic integration and social inclusion of displaced communities**. This approach is closely aligned with the priorities of the Government of Niger, within the framework of the Global Compact for Refugees, the **Humanitarian-Development nexus** and the Nigerien government's out-of-camp policy. UNHCR also strives to strengthen its partnerships with a variety of actors, including donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions and the media. Working closely with other government agencies, operational partners and national and international project partners, the UNHCR office in Niger implements these initiatives. Close collaboration with the Direction Générale de l'Etat Civil et des Réfugiés (DGEC-R), UNHCR's main partner, guarantees adequate international protection for all refugees and asylum seekers present on Nigerien territory.

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



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Contact:

Bettina Schulte, External Relations Officer, schulte@UNHCR.org, Tel: +227 82 80 39 04 Jean-Sébastien 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.