

MALI

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Quarterly | January-March 2025



STATISTICS / MAP

Key figures on population displacement

307,474

Malian refugees in asylum countries (UNHCR)

87,628

Malian refugees returnees (Government, DNDS)

378,363

IDPs (Government, DNDS)

854,956

IDP returnees (Government, CNCR)

135,538

Refugees in Mali (Government, CNCR)

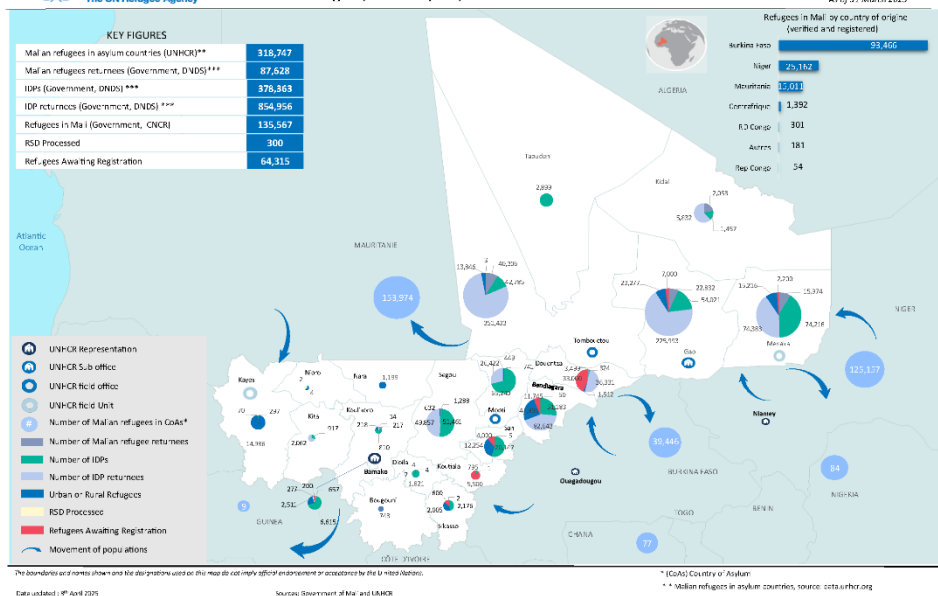
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Asylum Seekers in Mali


MALI

Situation of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees

As of 31 March 2025



Key achievements


7,262

school kits donated by CORUS international were distributed by UNHCR to pupils in 53 schools


5,924

Refugee certificates and identity cards distributed


4,209

Households Received cash assistance


459

refugees received medical assistance in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, Ménaka, Kayes, Bamako and Bandiagara


789

displaced and host community families received shelter kits

27

people were registered and 78 documents issued, including refugee attestations and travel documents



A market gardening site supported by UNHCR in Bagoundje/Gao is strengthening self-reliance for hundreds of refugees, IDPs, and host communities. ©UNHCR/Cheick Diouara)

Operational Context

During the first quarter of 2025, Mali continued to face serious security challenges, marked by persistent attacks by non-state armed groups particularly around Ansongo, Ménaka, and the Tri-border area shared with Burkina Faso and Niger. These ongoing hostilities triggered new waves of displacement, both within Mali and across its borders.

Between January and March, more than 60 000 of refugees and asylum-seekers—mainly from Burkina Faso’s Sahel region—sought safety in the Mopti and Bandiagara regions, fleeing a surge in armed violence and government security operations. In March, in coordination with the Malian authorities, UNHCR pre-registered 685 individuals (110 households).

As of 31 March 2025, the total number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Mali had soared to 199,567, of whom 135,538 were registered. This represents a significant increase of over 65 per cent compared to March 2024, with 88,829 registered. By the end of March, some 64,000 individuals, including 55,115 Burkinabé and 9,200 Nigeriens, remained unregistered. There were also 378,363 internally displaced people in the country, by 31 March 2025.

Mali is also dealing with spontaneous returns of an estimated 2,649 Malian refugees from Mauritania since 2024. These returns took place under

precarious conditions, with restricted humanitarian access and scant resources in areas of origin due to ongoing insecurity.

Meanwhile, several northern and western localities in Mali have become key transit points for mixed movements of people, comprising Malian and foreign nationals, hoping to travel northwards or onward to Europe via the Mediterranean. These groups face heightened risks of refoulement, expulsion, and widespread violence. Information about their numbers, profiles, and specific needs remains limited.

The displacement situation is further exacerbated by the lingering effects of severe flooding, which persisted into March and affected more than 350,000 people, leading to additional displacement and compounding existing vulnerabilities. With the coming rainy season, there are renewed risks of flooding in certain regions.

Despite the volatile security environment, complex political dynamics, and severe funding shortfalls—driven in part by sharp reductions in contributions from key donors such as the United States—UNHCR and its partners have continued to deliver life-saving assistance, protection services, and solutions to displaced and vulnerable host populations.

Main achievements in sectors

Protection:

In Dianke, Timbuktu region, UNHCR and other Protection Cluster members conducted a rapid needs assessment in March, for internally displaced people. The assessment revealed that 1,886 IDPs (349 households) were in dire need of food, shelter, non-food items (NFIs), health assistance and civil documents necessary to strengthen their protection.

In Mopti, UNHCR and its partners provided two wheelchairs to two host community members with special needs, easing their movements and strengthening their protection.

Registration and documentation:

In Timbuktu, UNHCR donated ICT and office materials to the seven council, to support civil

registry services and ease the establishment of documentation for forcibly displaced people. The donations included computers, printers, ink, stationery, and office furniture.

In Mopti and Bamako 27 people were registered and 78 documents issued, including refugee attestations and travel documents.

Some 1,500 birth certificate extracts were issued to IDPs and host communities in the regions of Mopti, Bandiagara, and Douentza in January, as part of the project supporting late birth registration for displaced and vulnerable host community children.

In Ménaka, UNHCR facilitated the issuance by Malian National Refugee Commission (CNCR) of attestations in lieu of birth certificates to 140 Nigerien refugee children.

Violence against women and girls:

Between January and March, UNHCR and its partners provided multi-sectoral assistance to 93 survivors of violence against women and girls, including 64 women, 25 girls, and four boys, in the localities of Bamako, Kayes, Mopti, Koro, Douentza, Gao, Gourma Rharous, Ansongo, and Ménaka. Of these cases, 79 individuals received psychosocial support, 15 received medical care, and six were provided with dignity kits. Among those assisted, 55 were refugees and asylum-seekers, 20 were IDPs and 17 were members of the host community. In addition, 73 awareness-raising sessions were conducted across several regions, reaching 4,311 people, including 2,463 women.

Solutions: returns

In March, 112 spontaneous returns from Mauritania were observed and registered by the Direction Régionale du Développement Social et de l'Économie Solidaire (DRDSES) in the communes of Timbuktu, Léré, and Gargando in Timbuktu region. Additionally, 65 Malians (20 households) returning from Burkina Faso were registered by DRDSES at the Gao registration point for the commune of N'Tillit in the Gao region. Since January 2025, UNHCR and its partners have registered 403 returnees from Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger—mostly to the regions of Timbuktu

and Gao. UNHCR is assisting these returnees by facilitating the issuance of civil documentation and providing access to education.

Education:

UNHCR and its partners distributed 7,262 school kits donated by the NGO CORUS international, to pupils in 53 schools in the regions of Bamako, Bogouni, Mopti, Bandiagara, Timbuktu and Gao. The kits comprised and helped to improve the quality of learning for displaced and host community children.

443 refugee, IDP, and host community children were enrolled in 15 accelerated learning centres in the regions of Bandiagara and San, allowing them to join the mainstream system.

Health:

Between January and March, UNHCR and its partners provided medical assistance to 459 refugees in Gao, Timbuktu, Ménaka, Kayes, Bamako and Bandiagara. This included free medical consultations, laboratory tests and the distribution of essential drugs.

Basic needs: non-food items, cash assistance

In Timbuktu, over 2,631 people who were affected by severe flooding during the rainy season that stretched into March, received essential lifesaving non-food items.

In addition, 3,293 people, including refugees and IDPs, received blankets donated by CORUS International through UNHCR, in the regions of Kayes, Bamako, Bougouni, Tombouctou, Mopti, and Bandiagara.

UNHCR provided multipurpose cash assistance to 4,209 refugees in Ansongo, Gao region, to cover the basic needs of refugees severely affected by floods.

Shelter:

Within the first quarter of the year, UNHCR and its partners provided shelter support to 789 people in Timbuktu and Bla. The assistance covered the construction of disaster-resilient shelters for 520 displaced and vulnerable host community people in Bla, the distribution of shelter construction materials to 269 flood-affected people in Timbuktu.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):

UNHCR and its partners, built drainage infrastructures in the districts of Bla and Timbuktu, severely affected by floods, were built for a long range of up to 1 kilometre and 200 meters, respectively, strengthening municipal and human settlements.

Partnerships with development actors:

Following UNHCR's advocacy efforts, Mali has, since March 2025, begun receiving World Bank support to include refugees and internally displaced persons in national socio-economic statistics. This initiative, carried out in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), aims to improve data collection and inform planning for 2025 and beyond.

Funding cuts and efficiency measures

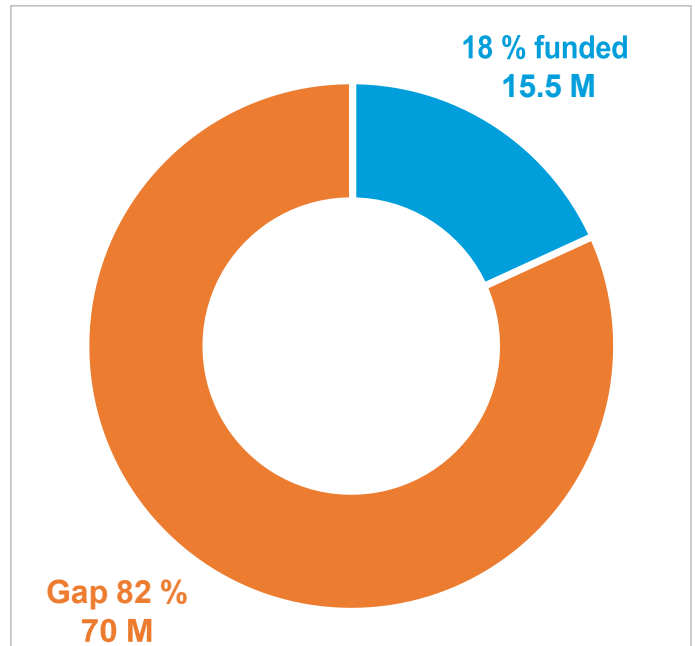
The suspension of U.S. humanitarian funding in January 2025 has significantly impacted UNHCR's response capacity, affecting thousands of vulnerable refugees and displaced persons. As a result, biometric registration has been suspended indefinitely, leaving 64,315 asylum-seekers without formal status or access to services. Key services addressing violence against women and girls, including psychosocial and trauma support, have been halted. Livelihood programmes have been deprioritized, limiting self-reliance opportunities. With resettlement and durable solutions frozen, around 900,000 refugees and IDPs are left without adequate assistance or protection.

In response to the consequences of reduced funding, the operation in Mali is focusing its efforts on the emergency unfolding in the central region of the country, where thousands of asylum seekers—mainly from Burkina Faso and Niger—continue to arrive.

In this context, assistance to long-standing refugees is being deprioritized, although they continue to benefit from international protection. Priority is given to the most vulnerable among the affected populations.

FUNDING AS OF 31 MARCH 2025

USD 85 million Required by Mali in 2025



UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of its donors who have provided earmarked and flexible funding to support operations in Mali in 2025.



UNHCR thanks donors of flexible funds

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Contacts:

- **Brahim Kane**, Associate External Relations and Reporting Officer, kaneb@unhcr.org, Tel : +223 75 99 72 36
 - **Cheick Amadou Diouara**, Associate Communication Officer, diouara@unhcr.org, Tel: +223 76 90 90 00
 - **Mahamadou Diallo**, Associate External Relations, diallmah@unhcr.org, Tél : +223 79 34 00
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