

PRESS RELEASE

1 seule personne forcée à fuir
c'est déjà trop.

Niger

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CNE

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Malian refugees in Tillia move further inland to Intikan, in a more familiar livelihood

During history, many caravans crossed the deserts, but this one is different: UNHCR and the Nigerian Government are moving, on 9 March 2013, thousands of Malian refugees and their animals (Camels, cattle, donkeys and sheep) from the Agando border area to Intikan in the Tillia Department, about 80 km further inland.

These nomad refugees have crossed into Niger since January 2012, fleeing a conflict in the Northern Mali which is now lasting for more than one year. The sites of Agando and Chinwaren - where they are currently staying - are located at less than 20 km from the Malian border, right in the desert, with limited access for the humanitarian workers.

« We are grateful to the Nigerian Government and to the local community for the allocation of the new area far from the border. Intekan is very suitable for the nomadic lifestyle of the Malian refugees,» says Karl Steinacker, UNHCR Representative in Niger.

Located at about 500 km north of Niamey, the Intikan refugee area has sufficient capacity to accommodate all of the 17,000 refugees currently staying at the border and enough grazing land for their domestic animals.

Aboubacar Deouda, Coordinator of the National Refugee Status Eligibility Commission (CNE) confirmed that all measures for a smooth relocation were in place.

As part of the relocation operation, all refugees are being individually registered. Prior to the relocation, sensitization and explanation campaigns were as well organized for the refugees and for the host communities in the Intikan area.

Niger is one of the three countries hosting most of the refugees from Mali (others are Burkina Faso and Mauritania). About 167,000 Malian refugees have sought refuge in these three countries. Niger alone is host more than 50,000 Malian refugees in three refugee camps in Tillaberi region, various sites in Tahoua region (including Agando, Chinwaren and Intekan mentioned in this statement) as well as in urban areas.

As the Government and UNHCR prepare for the nomadic refugees to move to Intekan, a new refugee influx of an estimated 6,000 persons is arriving elsewhere: In Tassarat district, even further north on the way to the Algerian border, new refugees are fleeing the ongoing combat in the Ifoghas mountains (Adrar d'Iforas), a landlocked area in the desert between Mali, Algeria and Niger.