



# MALI

## UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

01 - 30 April 2016

### KEY FIGURES

**297**

Mauritan refugees and urban refugees were registered to receive health insurance to improve their access to medical services.

**1,799**

Mauritanian refugees were registered during a UNHCR verification mission in the district of Yélimané.

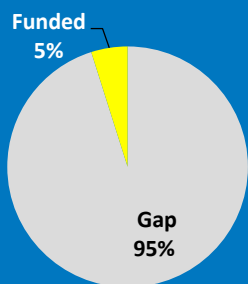
**281**

Refugee returnees and host community members in Timbuktu were selected to receive UNHCR support for agricultural projects.

### FUNDING

**USD 49.2 million**

requested for the operation



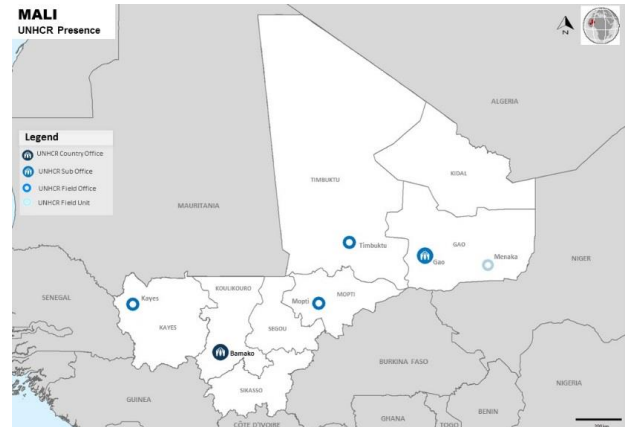
### PRIORITIES

- 850 Malian IDP returnee households targeted to receive adequate and durable shelter
- 6,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive cash vouchers
- 2,500 Mauritanian refugees and local community members targeted to receive improved access to potable water
- 1,000 refugee children targeted to receive educational support

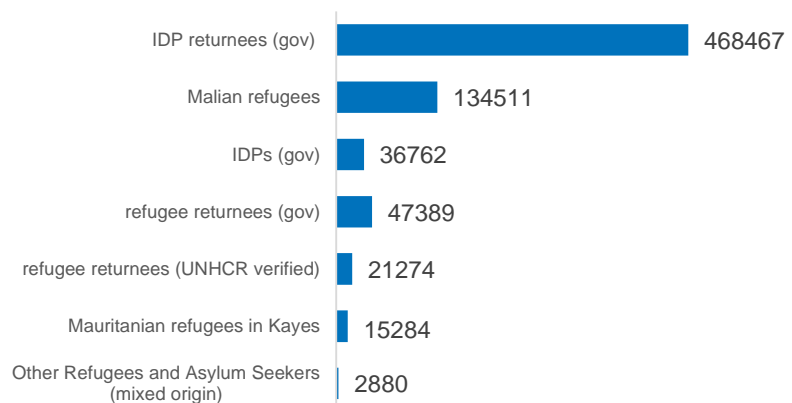
Refugee returnee identified to receive shelter support in the commune of Ansongo, credit ©UNHCR Gao

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A joint mission to the commune of Gargando in Timbuktu region verified the presence of 147 refugee returnee households (418 individuals) with proper documentation.
- Twenty-one Mauritanian refugee children from the refugee site of Hassidougou who had previously dropped out of school returned as a result of sensitization sessions on the importance of education carried out by UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, as well as support by the village of Guénaourou to provide boarding options.
- On April 28, the Malian government endorsed the establishment of a technical committee on the domestication of the Kampala Convention on internal displacement. This committee will be charged with activities related to the integration of the convention with national laws. These efforts will be facilitated with the support of UNHCR, the Global Protection Cluster and other protection actors.



### Population of concern (April 2016)



Figures as at April 30, 2016

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

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### Operational Context

Despite gradual progress in the peace and reconciliation process in Mali, the security situation remains volatile with terrorism and criminal activity continuing to hamper humanitarian operations, particularly in the north and the centre. Violations of basic human rights are still reported, prices of basic necessities are high, and local populations are in dire need of access to public services, documentation, water, and food security. Some 134,915 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries and 36,762 displaced persons in Mali are waiting to see whether conditions in their area of origin improve to allow them to return in safety and dignity.

The month of April was marked by violent protests in the region of Kidal. On 18 April, 200 to 300 people reportedly led by members of the Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), participated in violent protests in response to arrests made by the French counterterrorism operation, Barkhane, following the death of three French soldiers by an anti-tank mine on 12 April. Barkhane has carried out numerous counterterrorism operations targeting Ansar Dine, a terrorist group. The 18 April protests damaged the Kidal airfield, hindering humanitarian access in that region.

The threat of terrorism and criminality remains high in the north and centre of Mali. A reinforced presence of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the north of Timbuktu has been observed. Banditry and heightened criminality in the districts of Timbuktu, Goundam and Niafouké are of heightened concern to UNHCR given the potential presence of refugee returnees in the region. Furthermore, several terror-related incidents were recorded over the month of April including attacks on the MINUSMA camp in Ansongo in the region of Gao, an IED explosion against a MINUSMA convoy on the Tessalit-Aguelhok road in the region of Kidal, as well as an attack on a Forces Armées et de Sécurité du Mali (FAMA) checkpoint near the village of Boni in Mopti region. Ansar Dine claimed responsibility for all these attacks. During the month of April, nearly 3,242 Malian refugees based in refugee camps in Niger and Burkina Faso signalled their intent to return to the regions of Timbuktu and Gao in the near future despite the volatile security situation. According to government sources, there has been an increase of approximately 4,699 refugee returnees between the months of February (42,690) and April (47,389).

National and international counterterrorism operations have begun to dissuade some terrorist attacks in Mali, but no reduction in the threat level is expected over the near term. National and international security forces remain the targets of most attacks, but international civilian personnel are at risk for potential targets or in hostage takings or kidnappings. On 18 April, three staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were detained in the region of Kidal by Ansar Dine and then released on 22 April.

In short, terrorism and criminality continue to destabilize local communities, preventing displaced persons from returning to their homes and further threatening their access to already limited basic social services. For humanitarian actors, access to persons of concern remains one of the biggest challenges not least due to the UN-security restrictions imposed in Northern Mali. Incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity for humanitarian aid remains key for humanitarian actors.

## Achievements



### Protection

#### Protection Cluster

- The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict met with representatives of the Protection Cluster in Timbuktu to discuss challenges related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including impunity of accused perpetrators and weak protection coverage in the region due to a lack of funding.
- Plan International also reported that it helped 3,775 children affected by the crisis, including refugee returnees, IDPs and host population members, gain access to proper documentation through supplementary judgements in Timbuktu.
- In Mopti, the Protection Cluster held a capacity building workshop on 11 April with 25 members of the cluster on the topics of sectoral coordination, durable solutions, protection mainstreaming and humanitarian principles.

#### Achievements and Impact

- The third Mali-Burkina Faso-UNHCR tripartite commission on the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees living in Burkina Faso met 7-8 April in Bamako. The three parties reiterated efforts to prepare conditions for the return of refugees to Mali through strengthened registration mechanisms and improved information sharing on the evolving security and humanitarian conditions in the areas of return for refugees. During the meeting it was reported that more than 2,000 Malian refugees announced their intention to return to Mali in the near future, mainly in the communes of Gossi and Gourma Rahous in the region of Timbuktu, as well as Gao and N'Tillit in the region of Gao.
- **Statelessness:** The Menaka field unit referred 63 refugee returnee children to the Norwegian Refugee Council Information, Counselling, and Legal Assistance centre to obtain birth certificates.
- **Monitoring and Protection:** The UNHCR protection team monitored the situation of 16 refugee returnee households (60 individuals) in the commune of Anchawadi in Gao region who returned from a refugee camp in Niger. Their most pressing needs include support for food and shelter. No incident was reported.
- **Verification:**
  - A joint verification mission was conducted between 26 and 30 April to confirm the number of refugee returnees located in the commune of Gargando in Timbuktu region. This mission comes in response to reported figures published by Solidarités International indicating that 13,402 refugee returnees were identified in that commune with 67% of them returning from Mauritania. Upon completion of the mission, it was found that only 147 refugee returnee households (418 individuals) with proper documentation were living in the commune.
  - UNHCR also conducted a registration and verification mission of Mauritanian refugees between 3 and 11 April in the districts of Yelimané. The mission verified and registered 1,799 Mauritanian refugees of which 826 expressed interest in local integration as a durable solution while 771



Refugee returnees verified in the commune of Gargando in the region of Timbuktu, credit ©UNHCR Timbuktu

preferred voluntary repatriation. This mission completes an overall verification exercise of Mauritanian refugees that had started with the district of Kayes in December 2015. In total, 15284 Mauritanian refugees have been registered in the region of Kayes.

- **Registration:** 273 refugee returnee households (1,045 individuals) were registered by the Directeur régional du développement social et de l'économie solidaire du district (DRDSES) in Timbuktu as well as 350 refugee returnee households (1,390 individuals) in Gao.
- **Strategic Partnership:** UNHCR supported Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to identify refugee returnees in need of assistance in the district of Niafouké in the region of Timbuktu. CRS and its local partner, Association Subaahi Gumo (ASG), provided cash-based assistance valued at US\$65,000 to respond the needs of 805 households, including 606 refugee returnee households and 108 host family households.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The joint verification mission in the commune of Gargando highlighted numerous challenges faced by refugee returnees. These include, among others, the lack of documentation among children, the risk of child recruitment by armed groups, the occupation of schools by armed groups and the lack of access to justice. On top of that, the refugee returnees have critical needs in terms of access to potable water, food security, health and education.

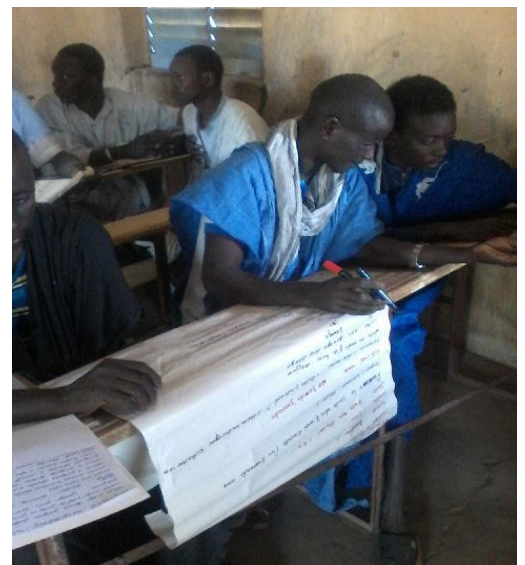
## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- 30 sensitization sessions on the importance of formal and informal education were held at seven refugee sites in the region of Kayes reaching 91 Mauritanian refugees and nine members of the local community.
- UNHCR provided 10 wagons to six refugee sites in the region of Kayes to improve school access and attendance for at least 80 students.
- In the region of Kayes, UNHCR participated in discussions among populations in refugee sites and local communities to arrange boarding options for refugee children to attend schools in the villages of Guénanourou and Troula. Twenty refugee children from the refugee site of Hassidougou are now well-integrated in the village of Guénanourou where some have been given boarding rooms while others have been placed with host families. In contrast, the host community in the village of Troula provided a plot of land where refugees could build rooms for their children, but this offer was declined by the refugee community due to concerns about the distance of the school from the refugee site. As a result of the difficult school access, 20 refugee children from Bakayara have dropped out of school.
- In the region of Kayes, 10 literacy centres were equipped with tables, chairs and easels. Courses started in nine of the literacy centres helping adults improve their basic reading and writing skills.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Finding boarding options for Mauritanian refugee children in villages where schools exist remains an urgent priority. Discussions are underway to find host families in the village of Bokédiamé and Kersignané for refugee children from Sénébodi and Gourel Hakourou to help increase their school attendance.



Participants learning at the literacy centre Alpha Mega in the region of Kayes, credit © Stop Sahel



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- Following a cervical cancer screening campaign in the region of Kayes, UNHCR provided financial support to two refugees identified as needing additional medical exams.
- UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, signed up 47 urban refugee households (130 individuals) for health insurance plans following a sensitization session held by l'Union Technique de la Mutualité (UTM) in Bamako. Additionally, sensitization sessions on the importance of health insurance were held in the neighbourhoods of Kalabancoro and Bolibana Dravela, reaching 216 urban refugees.
- UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, signed up 54 Mauritanian refugee households (167 individuals) for health insurance plans in the region of Kayes.



## Water and Sanitation

### Achievements and Impact

- In the region of Kayes, UNHCR provided five refugee sites with 10 carts to improve their means of transportation for accessing water. Moreover, the water quality produced by manually operated water pumps located in six refugee sites was deemed satisfactory by a recent evaluation. The increased access to potable water for refugee and local populations, as well as the better management of water points, are reinforcing peaceful coexistence between communities.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Refugee returnees continue to express strong demand for the restoration of water points in the region of Timbuktu.
- There are repair needs for manually operated water pumps in the refugee sites of Hassidougou, Dembadiarra and the commune of Aourou in the region of Kayes. In addition, the communities of Woulkéïdou, Gourel Hakrou and Elmbarké has been made a request for government water quality tests of three boreholes that were previously deemed unsuitable for consumption and thus were not equipped.



## Shelter and NFIs

### Shelter and NFI Cluster

- The shelter cluster is developing a sectoral database and analysis tool to collect data required to verify current shelter needs and determine the current capacities of stakeholders to provide assistance. The tool will be shared and approved by the cluster next month.
- Two transitional shelters models were constructed by Luxembourg Red Cross in the region of Koulikoro in order to test designs and begin training volunteers for the eventual construction of units in Timbuktu. Upon approval, the model will be presented to the cluster members.
- At a shelter cluster meeting in Gao on April 21, ICRC notified that it had provided and distributed NFI kits to all 1,069 displaced households that had been displaced in Inekar (Menaka).

## Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR with its partners, Luxembourg Red Cross in Timbuktu, and Stop Sahel in Gao and Mopti, are currently in the process of verifying, identifying and registering IDP returnee and vulnerable host community households with urgent shelter needs.
- In Mopti, 52 individuals, including 31 IDP returnees and 21 members of the host population, have been registered to receive sustainable shelter support. By the end of the year, 850 returnee and vulnerable host community households are expected to be provided with basic shelter.
- UNHCR distributed shelter tool kits to its partner, Stop Sahel, to assist 250 selected shelter beneficiaries in the region of Gao. The kits are composed of items such as shovels, nails, buckets, hammers, and plastic sheeting, among other items.
- Data from damage assessments of 88 out of 220 housing units has been collected and evaluated in Timbuktu. Shelter restoration is expected to begin in June.



Example of a traditional shelter to be restored for refugee returnees in the commune of Gossi in the region of Timbuktu, credit ©UNHCR Gao



## Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- Eight agricultural communities made up of 281 refugee returnees and local community members have been selected from the communes of Gari, Soumpi, Alafia and Timbuktu in the region of Timbuktu to pursue agricultural projects supported by UNHCR. Support will be provided for eight agricultural groups to develop their vegetable gardens. In addition, six of these eight will also be supported in their rice production activities.
- UNHCR donated gardening equipment (shovels, rakes, watering cans, etc.) to refugee returnee women in the neighbourhood of Djidara in the town of Gao to support their vegetable garden income-generating activities. Recipients have expressed satisfaction with the support noting that it is helping them overcome everyday challenges by gaining an economic livelihood.
- In an effort to encourage greater community participation in the prevention of SGBV, UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, held 32 focus group sessions on female genital mutilation/excision in 18 refugee sites throughout the region of Kayes, reaching 487 Mauritanian refugees and local community members. A further 20 information sessions on early/forced marriage were held in 20 refugee sites, reaching 257 Mauritanian refugees and local community members. These sessions allowed participants to become aware of the negative consequences tied to these traditional practices, as well as explore ways to give up these practices in the future.
- UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, identified and referred two urban refugees who are SGBV survivors to health centres. Since the beginning of the year, seven SGBV survivors have been identified and referred to receive support.

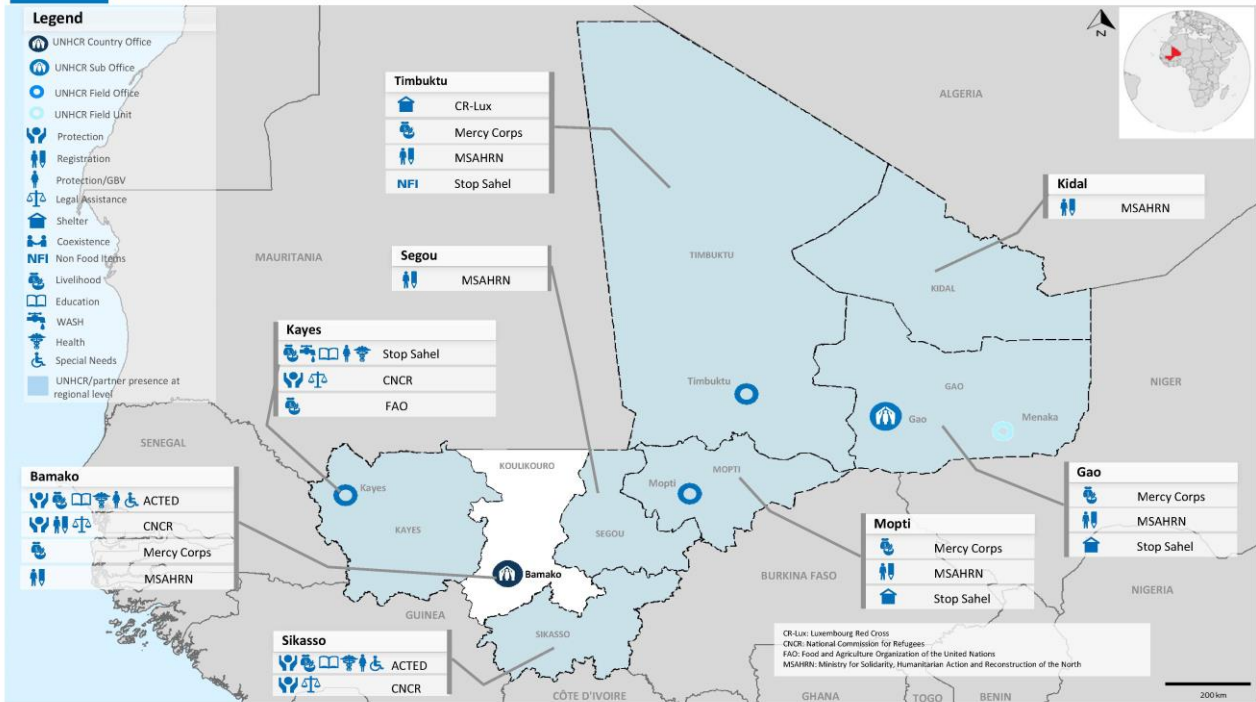
# Working in partnership



## Mali: Partner presence

30 April 2016

UNHCR Bamako



Sources: UNHCR - Programme Unit

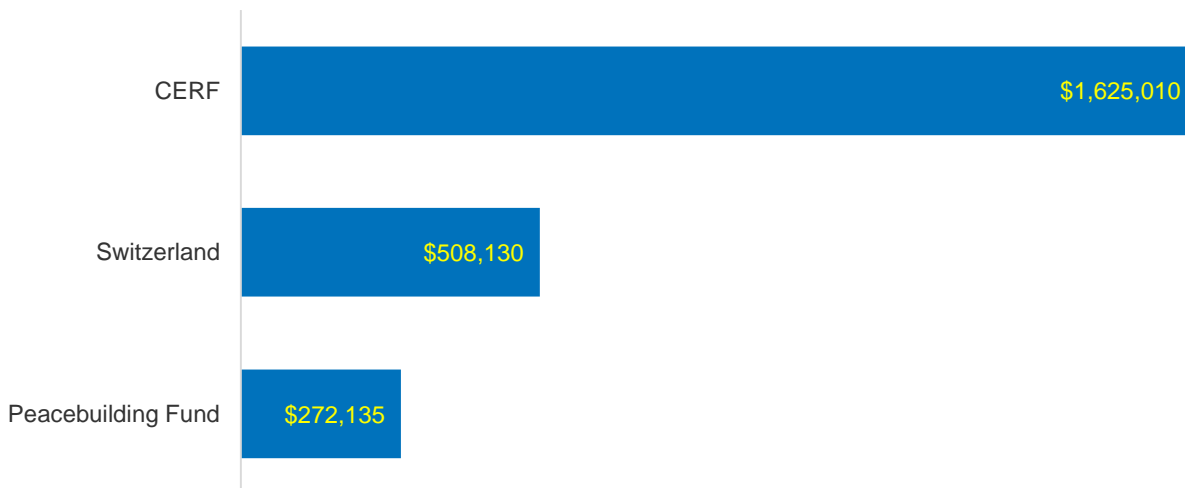
Contact : DIOP@unhcr.org/BELLOTTI@unhcr.org

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **USD 2,405,275**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors that have contributed to this operation.

### Funding received in USD



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