

# Sahel situation

September 2020

The Sahel regions have been hosting **Malian refugees** since 2012. They live in 3 sites in the Tillabery region and a refugee hosting area in the Tahoua region.

The rapidly deteriorating security context has caused increasing **internal displacement flows in the same regions** with rising numbers every month.

The presence of armed groups across the border has caused the internal displacement of a few thousand **citizens from Burkina Faso** into Niger.

## KEY INDICATORS

**40,000\***

Number of refugees in Niger who will have access to land according to the Government's pledge during the Global Refugee Forum

**+37%\***

**Increase** of the number of internally displaced persons since January to date.

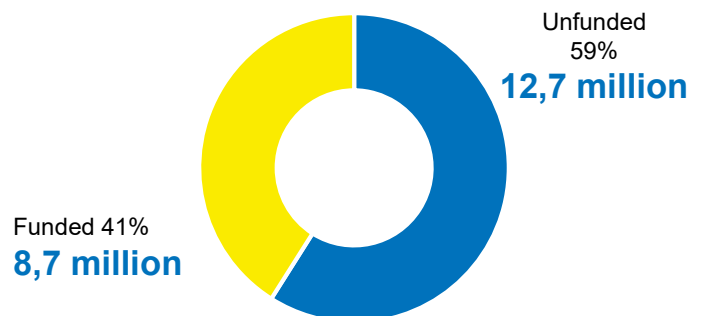
**4,516**

As of 31 August 2020, emergency shelter kits that have

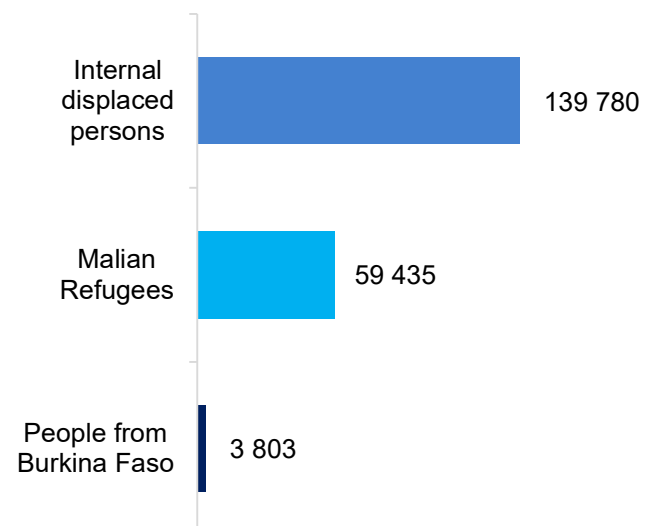
## FUNDING (AS OF SEPTEMBER)

**USD 21,4 million**

requested for the Niger situation

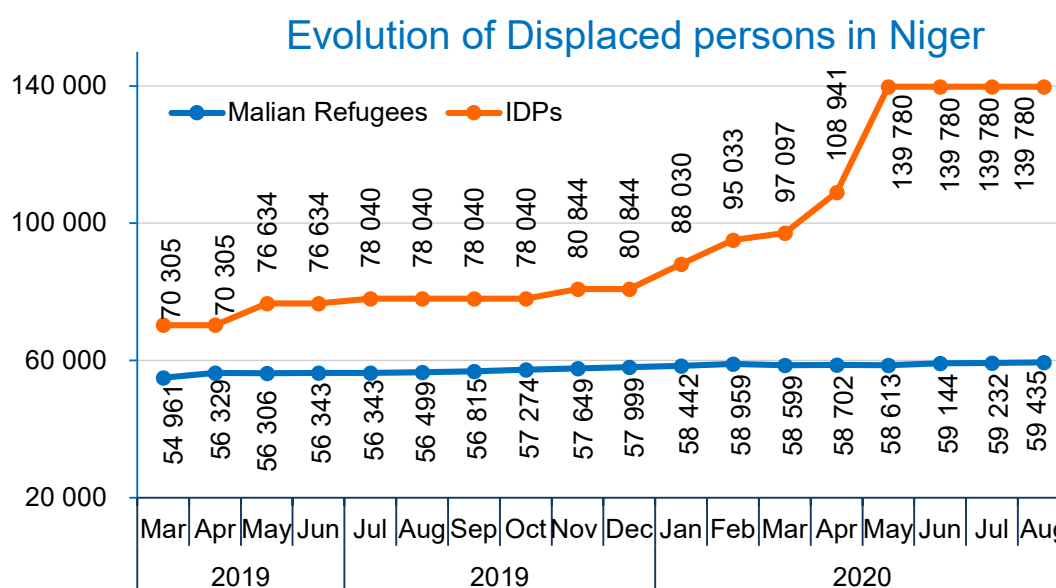


## POPULATION OF CONCERN IN NIGER



# Update on Achievements

## Operational Context



Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are all struggling to cope with numerous militant groups moving between the three countries. The security situation in the tri-border region of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali and hence the situation in the Nigerien regions of Tillabery and Tahoua has sharply deteriorated in recent years. This threat is forcing people to flee their homes, and further deprives vulnerable communities of critical basic services as armed groups directly target schools, health centers and other infrastructure. The civilian population is victim of extortion, targeted killings, cattle theft and shop looting and threatened to leave their villages. The national government of Niger has recently extended a state of emergency in the Tillabery region which was first introduced in 2017.

Since the beginning of the year, the security situation has been extremely volatile and worrisome with successive lethal attacks against military positions in Inates, Sine Godar and Agando. Several military positions have been abandoned by the defense and security forces and a resurgence of massive attacks targeting the civilian population has been noted. These attacks have triggered several waves of forced displacement of populations to more secure areas.

The armed groups have increasingly contaminated all the villages, killing mayors and local leaders, looting shops, stealing cattle, recruiting combatants, collecting forcibly the Islamic tax and threatening villagers to leave their homes. They have also systematically destroyed

the education facilities with teachers being forced to flee. Thousands of children have been unable to attend school for a year. A constant pressure is exercised on the population that is submitted to severe reprisals in case of cooperation with the military and police forces. The fluid occupation (insurrectional tactics of permanent control without permanent presence) has been expanding constantly.

The national government of Niger has recently extended a state of emergency in the Tillabery region which was first introduced in 2017. Mandatory military escorts and other measures render humanitarian access to several IDP hosting sites challenging and have delayed assistance to those in need.

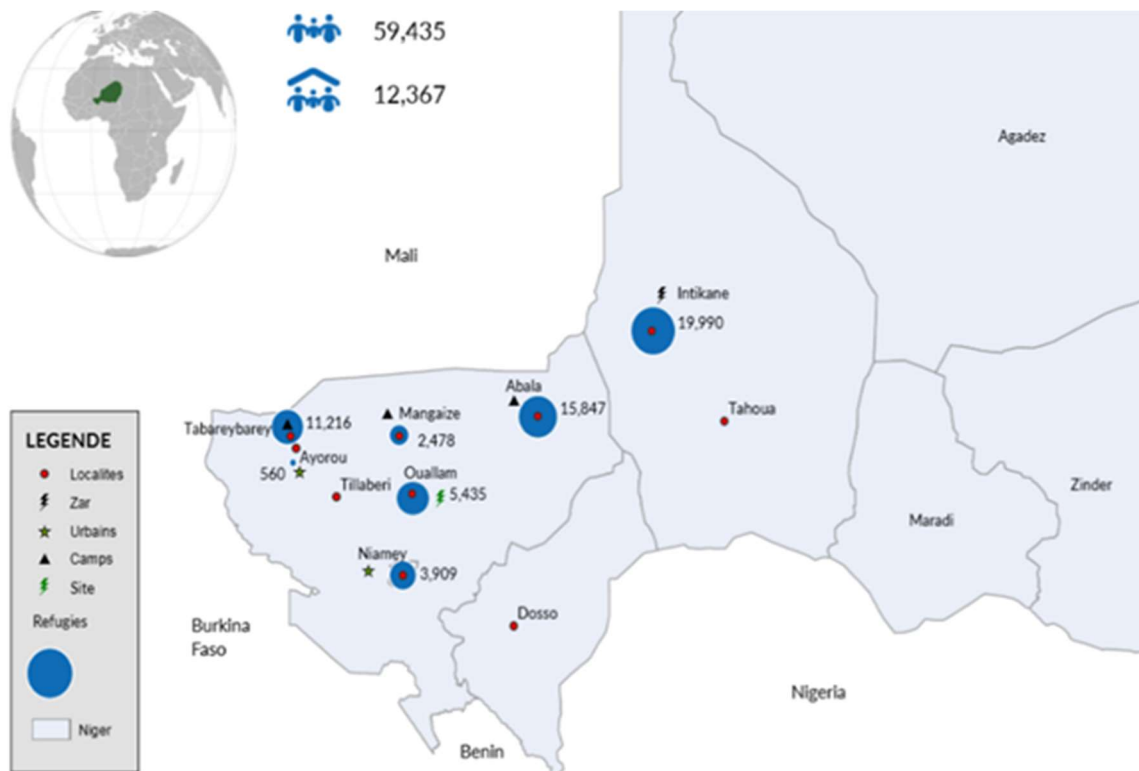
The global sanitary crisis has heavily impacted on the operational context, including due to measures taken by the Government of Niger to limit the propagation of the virus. These measures had important consequences for humanitarian actors in the field.

During the month of August, insecurity continued in the Tillabery and Tahoua regions. The situation was marked by the killing of 7 humanitarian workers for the NGO ACTED in the natural reserve of Kouré, as well as their guide. More and more roads in departments bordering the Malian border become too dangerous to take, which hinders humanitarian access and impacts on the protection environment in the broader region.

In the light of the above, UNHCR has issued an Emergency Declaration and declared a Level 2 Emergency in Niger in February 2020, which was extended for another 6 months in September 2020.



## Operational Strategy



The interventions in the Tillabery and Tahoua regions are aligned to **UNHCR's Sahel strategy**, a scaled-up response to the unprecedented violence and displacement crisis in the Sahel. Activities planned pre-COVID 19 will be implemented in line with public health measures imposed as a result of the pandemic. Key priorities include addressing shelter needs in overcrowded settlements, supporting distance education, providing effective response to SGBV incidents aggravated by confinement measures, and continuing other protection activities such as registration, documentation and facilitating access to asylum

**With the support of CERF and ECHO**, the Sahel crisis is monitored by a broad community-based network and analysis is shared with the humanitarian community. Capacity building and coordinated efforts with humanitarian actors are ongoing to ensure an adequate response to the situation. UNHCR has the lead over the national protection cluster. Legislation for assistance and protection to IDPs based on the Kampala Convention is in place.

After almost 8 years of presence in Niger, UNHCR and the Government of Niger give priority to **medium- and long-term solutions for Malian refugees** with a view to promote social cohesion, self-reliance and a durable integration into national services and systems. All Malian refugee camps have been closed in 2020 in line with the joint vision of the

Government and UNHCR and given the deterioration of the protection and security context. They are now settled in sites in the villages of Ayerou, Ouallam and Abala. Supported by major donors such as GIZ and EUTF, UNHCR gives Malian refugees access to land and housing, creates jobs and includes them into national systems.

A strong **tripartite collaboration** has been developed amongst the **World Bank, the Government of Niger, and UNHCR** to improve access to basic public services and further support for economic opportunities. With the support of **ILO and Spain**, Malian refugees benefit from livelihood interventions.

## Achievements

### Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR and co-led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs produces a monthly report on the Tillabery and Tahoua regions which can be consulted here:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/op%C3%A9rations/niger>

- During the month of August 2020, 35,449 Malian refugees and 35,449 IDPs were registered in the Tillabery region; While in the Tahoua region 19,990 Malian refugees and 55,625 IDPs were registered. Refugees at the Telemcess temporary site have been sensitized on the facilitated return to Mali, so that they can register with the Commission Nationale d'Eligibilité au statut de réfugié (CNE) despite the extremely problematic conditions of dignified and safe return. UNHCR population of concern living on the temporary site of Telemcess have also been sensitized on the availability of a hotline, where they can report any behavior or incident that could affect safety.
- 120 households of 515 people living on the temporary site of Telemcess were relocated in dignity and safety to the ZAR of Intikane while 231 IDPs households of 1,387 individuals moved to the temporary Telemcess site. For the specific case of the ZAR Intikane, all movement of UNHCR staff and its partners is suspended, except for the facilitated return operation of refugees and IDPs from Telemcess to Intikane duly under military escort within a very short period of 6 days.
- In Ayorou, 98 households of 361 individuals who have benefited the voluntary return have returned; 88 households of 320 individuals were screened and validated in the database. These households claim to have left their return area following the resurgence of insecurity due to increased insurgent attacks and inter-community conflict, especially between the Fulani and the Tuareg. Moreover, In Ayorou, some 875 households of 1,153 individuals against 227 households of 1,100 in Ouallam, have confirmed their intention to return to Mali.

- In Ayorou, a mass awareness and recruitment campaign for children on age to attend the school year 2020-2021 school has been conducted, thus 22 children (13 girls and 9 boys) were identified and registered.
- UNHCR has conducted a training on resettlement and complementary pathways which emphasis on external referral of cases. The partners of the Tahoua region: CNE, APBE, ADKOUL and ADES have benefited of this training in order to boost the protection response.
- UNHCR continues also to protect and assist persons under it's mandate who live in the Telemcess temporary site and the Tahoua region. Thus 23 cases of persons with specific needs and 75 cases of child protection were identified among IDPs living in the villages of Tagalalte, Azakaza, Bakorat, Miguiza and Tassak. The child protection cases include risk of statelessness, child labor and diseases, mainly malaria. All cases were referred to partners either for registration in the list of children awaiting a fairground hearing in order to obtain an identity document or to health facilities for better care. For people with specific needs, the main vulnerabilities identified are pregnant and breastfeeding women and physical disabilities. The list of children awaiting which include 750 refugee children, 312 indigenous children and 564 internally displaced children at risk of statelessness has been updated in collaboration with partners and a ToR has already been made for the organization of the hearing at the Intikane ZAR. The population of the Telemcess temporary site were also sensitized on the resumption of facilitated return to Intikane; and the services available at the site (health, Wash and protection).
- The NGOs World Vision, ADRA and the Spanish Red Cross are UNHCR's partners in the construction of latrines in the refugee sites in the Tillabery region. UNHCR is seeking additional funds or partners to construct more latrines in the Tillabery region.
- With the support of GIZ, UNHCR and its partners have given land plots to 339 refugees in Ayorou and 598 refugees in Ouallam. A total number of 149 constructions of social houses is ongoing in the Tillabery region. 877 bricks were made in the Tillabery region and 3 houses were built in Ouallam while 107 are in progress in Ayorou. As of ending of August 42 houses have been build. During the third quarter of 2020, the project employs 537 refugees and 246 members of the host community, both in brick production and in construction of social houses.
- In the ZAR of Intikane, 750 bricks were made for the purpose of building 48 housing units.
- UNHCR and its partners collected 37.20 m3 of solid waste in Ouallam against 6 m3 on the temporary site of Telemcess. In the implementation of their action plans, the 30 young girls aged 15-24 and the tutors organized on Wednesday August 26/2020 a sanitation session at the health facility of Sanam followed by a sensitization on the use of mosquito nets.

- Throughout August 2020, Water trucking distributed 1,440 m<sup>3</sup> of water to the temporary Telemcess site and 6 m<sup>3</sup> of solid waste collected was collected.
- 50 *Azadirachta indica* and 10 fruit trees including 6 mango trees, 2 papayas and 2 guavas have been distributed to the refugee living in the urbanized site of Ouallam, 450 forest plants have been also been planted in the site. 3 sensitization sessions on health, climate change and environmental safeguard have reached 204 persons living in the urbanized site of Ouallam.
- At the Innizadan site 300 *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* plants have been planted.
- As part of the reforestation of the replanted block plantations and the dissemination of 10 fruit plants by the refugees were facilitated by the animators, the refugees, the host population and the agents of the Tillia environmental service. 450 forest seedlings were planted on the former land reclamation site of the Intikane ZAR.
- As of August 31, 2020, emergency shelter kits have been distributed to 1,100 refugee households and 400 IDP households living in the Intikane ZAR; while in the Tillabery region, 1,265 refugee households and 4,116 IDP households have benefited from the same type of assistance; a distribution of 500 other shelter kits is being prepared.
- During the month of August, 947 curative consultations including 822 refugees and 125 indigenous people were registered and taken care of at the temporary site of Telemcess.
- In the Tillabéry region 11 cases of measles were reported and malaria reached significant peaks with an average of 50 cases recorded each day in the health centers of Ouallam, Ayorou and Abala. Malnutrition also continues to affect children from displaced families living in the Tillabéry region.

## Working in partnership

- For UNHCR forced displacement requires a **comprehensive approach to development** and should be considered a development, poverty reduction and climate issue. Including forcibly displaced and their hosts in development interventions is key for the transition out of poverty of the country and to boosting resilience. UNHCR interventions target not only refugees and IDPs, but also host communities who live in same conditions of high vulnerability -- with a view to move towards economic integration and social inclusion. This approach of inclusion and development is fully endorsed by the Government of Niger and aligned with the Global Compact for Refugee and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. This approach is at the core of UNHCR's OUT OF CAMP strategy and is operationalized through ongoing collaborations with the World Bank Group, the German development agency (GIZ) and the European Union (EUTF) and the ILO. With the idea of deepening its role of convener, UNHCR is also looking into strengthening

relationship with private sector actors as they are a crucial partner for boosting economic growth and job creation.

- In order to lend support to **protection clusters** at national level in terms of advocacy, facilitate coordination between countries and regional IASC, providing visibility through data driven analysis, and serving as a platform for information sharing and best practices, the Regional Bureau in Dakar has initiated bilateral and multilateral consultations with key stakeholders including donors to revitalize the Regional Protection Working Group (RPWG). A task force composed of UNICEF, UNFPA, OCHA, UNWOMEN, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR and SOS has been established to draft the strategy as well as the TORs which are being commented on and will be further adopted. Through the Regional Protection Working Group, appropriate support will be provided to the protection crisis in the Sahel.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS

CERF | European Union | France | Germany | Japan | United States of America | Refugee Zakat Fund

## External / Donor Relations

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### LINKS

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