

Niger

Septembre 2021

Due to the growing insecurity in **Maradi** region, the number of **internally displaced persons** has raised up sharply and reached **17,262 persons**.

The number of **IDPs in Tillabéri and Tahoua regions** has increased with **54%** over the last 12 months. At least **155,498** persons are internally displaced.

With the support of the EU, UNHCR has constructed **3,266 social houses** for the most vulnerable refugees and Nigeriens in **Diffa region**.

KEY INDICATORS

580,838*

Persons who have fled their home countries or are internally displaced and living in Niger.

48%*

Internally displaced persons displaced

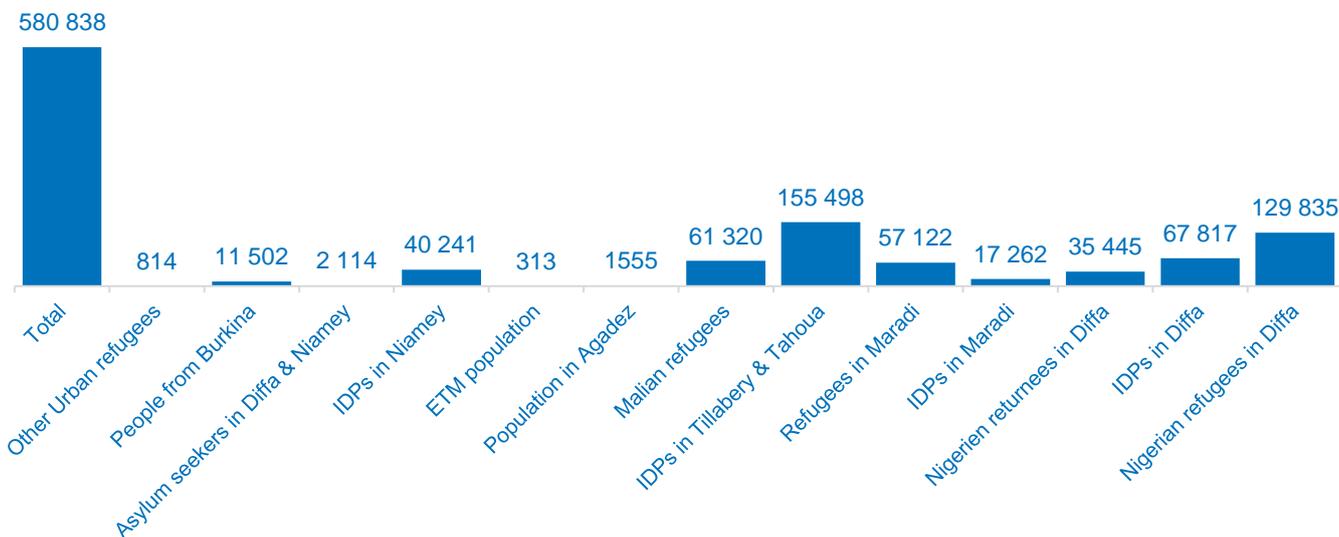
3,361*

Persons in detention evacuated from Libya.



In October, refugee and internally displaced children were able to return to school and study in classrooms built thanks to the support of the EUTF in Abala, Tillabéri region. © UNHCR/ Moustapha Djibrilla.

UNHCR NIGER POPULATION OF CONCERN.



Operational context and Achievements

73% of refugees in Niger are from Nigeria, 21 % from Mali and 6 % from other countries. The population is predominantly young (58 % youths), with women accounting for 53 %. As a result of a continuous deterioration of security in its border, Niger has been accumulating situations of forced displacement (out and in) since 2012, including the latest waves from Burkina Faso, Mali and the north-western Nigeria.

UNHCR's work in Niger focuses on the provision of a holistic assistance and comprehensive protection and solutions for persons of concern including PSEA with particular attention to women, children and other persons with specific needs guided by a community-based approach and supported by a Nexus approach thanks to urbanization projects and livelihood opportunities.

Niger is the first country to allow the establishment of an Emergency Transit Mechanism/ETM for vulnerable refugees from Libya.

Since 2020, prevention and response to the global COVID-19 pandemic is key to the agency. While UNHCR continues to deliver aid, the organization has set up a coordination strategy with the Government and other stakeholders to respond to the COVID-19. Prevention is paramount and carried out through communication campaigns, distribution of hygiene kits to the Government and refugees, and site planning.

UNHCR has donated tons of medical supplies and equipment to the Government of Niger, including Refugee Housing Units (RHU) to isolate confirmed cases. An estimated **5,992,023.00 USD** is needed this year to continue and scale up UNHCR's field operations to help respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and prevent further spread.

The Sahel situation

- UNHCR and the Government of Niger have developed a **joint strategy** to close refugee camps in the Tillabéri region and to support the socio-economic integration of **61,320 Malian refugees** into the country. With the support of the EU Trust Fund and GIZ, as well as development partners such as the World Bank and ILO, Malian refugees and their host communities have access to land, housing, and livelihood opportunities, while national health, education and water infrastructures are being reinforced. The security situation in the tri-border region including in the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua has sharply deteriorated. 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 centres and other infrastructures.
- The deteriorating security situation has caused the **internal displacement of 155,498 persons** in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. **Protection monitoring**, especially in the border areas, and an adequate protection response for identified cases is ongoing. Since the closer of the Refugee Hosting Area of Intikane (ZAR) in June 2021, refugees have settled in more than 25 villages in the Tahoua region. UNHCR is offering **protection services and basic needs relief items**.
- Armed incursions of Burkina Faso's armed groups into Niger Territory have also caused internal displacements. The forced displaced people are stuck in inaccessible areas near the border. From the beginning of 2020 to date, UNHCR Niger has registered **11,502 Burkinabe refugees** in the Tillabéri region. However, their number may be higher due to lack of access to areas where they have settled.

The Lac Chad situation

- To date, there are almost **269,589 forced displaced persons** in the Diffa region (including **129,835 refugees, 67,817 IDPs, 35,445 returnees and 2,114 asylum seekers**). Many of them are in secondary movement. The majority live in spontaneous sites or with the local population, while UNHCR manages the Sayam Forage refugee camp, with over **30,329 people**.
- On 20th June 2021, Nigerien authorities have committed to facilitate the return in villages of origin of all IDPs. **As of 31st August; 7,376 households of 40,138 persons have returned in 24 villages of origin, decreasing the total number of IDPs in the region to 22,197 households of 67,817 individuals.**
- The regional committee for the return of IDPs, composed of united nations agencies, local and international NGO's, supports the government initiative by **providing transportation for people and their belongings**, assisting them with food (cereals, vegetables, oil, sugar, salt, etc.) and non-food items (shelter, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, blankets, etc.).

The Nigerian situation

- For more than two years, non-state armed groups (NSAG) activism in Nigeria northwest states **has forced more than 80,000 Nigerians** to flee to Maradi region in Niger. In addition, repeated intrusions of armed bandits, on the Nigerien Territory have triggered the internal displacement of some 26,000 people. Threats of organized crime in Niger villages, bordering the states of Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina in north western Nigeria characterize the security context in the region.
- Armed criminal gangs operate regularly on both sides of the border mainly targeting farmers and breeders and kidnapping for ransom. Security measures have been strengthened along the border with the deployment since January 2021 of **the military operation 'faraouta bouchia'** in the departments of Guidan Roudji and Madaroumfa in the southwest of the region. However, regular incursions have resulted in deaths and gunshot injuries of both civilians and the defence and security forces (FDS) during clashes and caused population movements.
- UNHCR response in Maradi focuses on the relocation of refugees away from the border to ensure their security and ease the pressure on host communities. Refugee sites have been built nearby rural villages. Services such as **water adduction, health, education, and protection assistance** are provided to both refugees and host communities.
- The operational context is also marked by an **ongoing cholera outbreak** affecting the Maradi region. 30 deaths have been recorded as of end August with 1,690 registered cases. Due the rapid spread of the epidemic and the increased number of cases, regional authorities suspended registration activities, relocation and general food distribution for refugee and host communities in host villages, leading to a severe deterioration of the socio-economic situation for all population groups. Refugees and host community who were already struggling to cover their daily costs have become more vulnerable.
- As of 31st August, UNHCR supported the Government of Niger (National Eligibility Commission, CNE) to **biometrically register 57,122 Nigerian refugees** (14,575 households), 69% of whom are minors, 23% women and 8% men. In addition, **an estimated 23,774 non-biometrically registered refugee live in the area**. The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has significantly increased since March 2020 as security deteriorates sharply in the border region. **17,262 IDPs** have been registered in the Maradi region. However, new arrivals have been reported bringing the **estimated total number of IDPs to nearly 26,000 individuals**.

Mixed movements situation

- As of 28 September 2021, **3,361 persons have been evacuated to Niger** through the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)**; 249 are still in Niamey while 3,190 have already left Niger, and 101 departures are pending.
- Niger is situated in **a geopolitically sensitive area linking the Sahara Desert with the Sahel, and West with Central Africa**. The country has become a major hub for mixed movements northwards to Libya, Algeria, and the Mediterranean, while at the same time witnessing an increasing number of people fleeing Libya or being deported from Algeria to Niger. These migratory flows constitute mixed movements, including economic migrants as well as persons in need of international protection.
- UNHCR's main objective is to ensure that people in need of international protection have access to protection, receive assistance and have access to asylum. Therefore, UNHCR Niger invests in **the structural strengthening of the Nigerien asylum system** and implements **all the needed activities to support and assist beneficiaries in the region**. Moreover, UNHCR gives assistance to people under its mandate and aims to find durable solutions, such as resettlement, local integration, or voluntary return to the country of origin if the security conditions allow. Complementary legal pathways, such as family reunification, study visa or humanitarian evacuations are also examined.
- The Government of Niger, UNHCR, IOM and NGO partners identify asylum seekers within the migratory flows and provide them with information and assistance.
- As of 30 September 2021, UNHCR and its partners has identified and biometrically registered **1,555 individuals** in need of international protection. The most vulnerable are currently hosted in **six guesthouses in Agadez** where they benefit from a protection response and assistance, while the others are hosted in the **Humanitarian Center** built in the outskirts of the city.
- UNHCR and its partners provide meals, water, sanitation, health, education, and all other basic services. UNHCR Niger promotes access to solutions (asylum, readmission, repatriation, regularization of stay) for the different groups identified in the mixed movements.
- UNHCR Niger guarantee the follow-up of all cases of persons of concern proposed for Resettlement or other Complementary Pathways in third countries: Preparation of files, eligibility procedures, request of laissez-passer to the Government for persons of concern on departure, transfer to Niamey pre-departure, medical screening procedures, etc.

Urbans

- As of 30th June 2021, the capital Niamey hosts **4,449 refugees and 347 asylum-seekers**. While the refugee population is diverse, with nationalities including Yemen, Sudan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central African Republic, 90 % (3,982) of refugees in Niamey are from Mali. Under Nigerien law, Malian refugees **are recognized on a prima facie basis** while other nationalities undergo the regular governmental procedure.
- The urban setting of Niamey prompted UNHCR to bring together the partners involved in the implementation of interventions aimed at the protection and assistance of urban refugees and asylum seekers in one physical structure, called the **One-Stop-Shop**. The One-Stop-Shop has the advantage of reducing costs and allows for an integrated approach, as well as better coordination of the interventions of the different partners. At the same time, UNHCR and its partner organizations regularly conducts home visits and monitors the well-being of beneficiaries around the five communes of Niamey to ensure that everyone has access to adequate services.

- The security situation in Niamey is stable, allowing for a favourable protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers alike. Meanwhile, **UNHCR manages several temporary housing facilities in cooperation with implementing partners organizations to ensure adequate protection for persons with specific vulnerabilities.** To ensure inclusivity and accountability, UNHCR and the Government of Niger regularly cooperates and supports the **Central Refugee Committee of Niamey**, comprised of refugee leaders from various communities. The Committee has played an integral part in outreach efforts, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Protection Cluster

UNHCR has the Lead of the Protection Cluster at national level. Its role is to ensure the centrality of the protection in all humanitarian interventions in the country.

The Protection Cluster coordinates the design and validation of the protection strategy and its action plan, as well as protection actors' interventions, and the sub-Cluster, task forces and protection working groups.

It ensures the collection, management and information sharing to guide the protection and multi-sectoral response.

Working in partnership

UNHCR interventions have long been targeting refugees, IDPs and 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 (GCR) and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. This approach is at the core of the joint Government of Niger and UNHCR's **out of camp vision** and its operationalization through ongoing collaborations with the World Bank Group (WBG), the German Development Agency (GIZ), the European Union (EUTF) and the ILO amongst other UN agencies. UNHCR is also looking into strengthening relationships with private sector actors as they are a crucial partner for boosting economic growth and job creation. Increasing collaboration with International and National NGOs with a comparative advantage on delivering economic inclusion programs on the ground, including through livelihood initiatives is also at the core of the strategic approach to development solutions of the GCR.

External / Donors Relations

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1. Contributions to Niger are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.
2. Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Niger. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.
3. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contribution \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

Contacts

Ms. Gloria Ramazani, Associate External Relations Officer, ramazang@unhcr.org,

Tel : +227 80 06 81 83

Ms. Valeria DELL'AQUILA, Associate Reporting Officer (Inter-Agency), dellaqui@unhcr.org,

Tel: +227 92 18 58 32

Mr. Jean-Sébastien JOSSET, Associate Communications Officer, josset@unhcr.org,

Tel : +227 90 76 69 77 (*Press*)

Mr. Moustapha Djibrilla, External Relations Associate, djibrill@unhcr.org ,

Tel: +227 80 09 61 41

Operational Data portal