

# Niger

February / March 2022

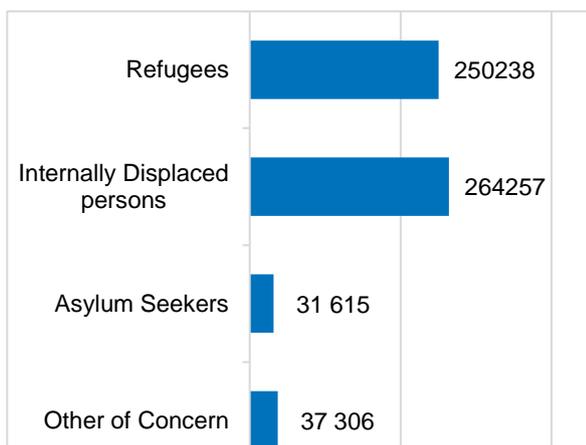
In March 2022, a total of **8,629 persons from North-West Nigeria crossed the border into Niger's Maradi** fleeing insecurity and violence. Registration, need assessments and response is ongoing.

Since the beginning of this year, Niger has witnessed various waves of Malian refugee arriving in **Aballa and Ayorou in the Tillabery region. Since January, the number has accumulated to 2,245.** In addition, 2,855 Niger nationals, reportedly come from the commune of Abala, arrived from Mali.

**Furthermore, 9,384 Malians have arrived in various waves to the Tahoua region in Niger.** Registration is ongoing

## POPULATION OF CONCERN AS OF 31 MARCH 2022

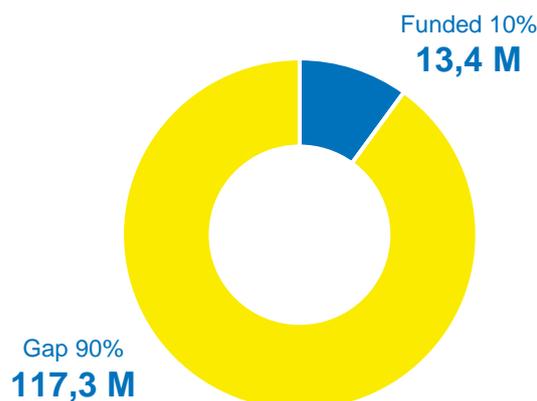
**250,238** refugees; **31,615** asylum seekers; **264,257** internally displaced persons and **37,306** other persons of concern live in Niger



## FUNDING AS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022

**USD 130,7 M**

requested for UNHCR Niger operation in 2022



*Salima Abdoulaye is 100 years old and fled armed bandit attacks in her home village of Chinkida in Katsina state in Nigeria and sought refuge at the village of Douhoun Bara in Maradi Niger © UNHCR / Younoussa Boubacar Sidde*

## Operational context

Despite various conflicts in some of its neighbouring countries, **Niger has always kept its borders open and is one of the most welcoming countries in the world**, currently hosting 281,853 refugees and asylum seekers, with 69% coming from Nigeria, 21 % from Mali, 5 % from Burkina Faso, and 5% from other countries. Furthermore, there are more than 300,000 IDPs and Nigerien returnees that have stayed outside the country for more than 10 years and who have recently returned to Niger.

UNHCR's work in Niger focuses on the **protection, assistance, and solutions** for persons of concern, with particular attention to women, children and other persons with specific needs guided by a **community-based approach**. UNHCR also supports the Nigerien authorities in the search for **durable solutions** for displaced communities in Niger.

## Key Achievements

### The Central Sahel Situation (Tillabéri & Tahoua regions)

#### Tillabéri region

UNHCR and the Government of Niger have developed a **joint strategy to further integrate Malian refugees** (61,534 as of February 2022) into the country and to find alternatives to camps in the Tillabéri region. With the support of development actors, Malian refugees and host communities have access to land, housing, and livelihood opportunities, while national health, education and water infrastructures are being reinforced. To further strengthen peaceful co-existence between the different populations, UNHCR aims to bring the populations together through 'common areas', such as village stores, cattle feeding areas, as well as through various mixed community committees.

**Since the beginning of the year, following violent fighting between the EIDGS (Etat Islamique du Grand Sahara) and the MSA (Mouvement pour le Salut de l'Azawad) in Mali, UNHCR and Nigerien authorities in Aballa and Ayorou have registered 2,245 Malian refugees. UNHCR has been conducting rapid protection assessments and assisted these households with protection, emergency shelter kits, and NFIs.**



In February with the support of **Education cannot wait** funding, UNHCR has built six classrooms and four blocks of three inclusive latrines for the benefit of the pupils of the host population of Dia koira 3 and Gao 1 primary school of Ouallam. A total of 150 table benches and six teachers' desks were donated to the two primary schools, which have a total of 292 host community students. In addition, 307 school kits were distributed to students.

*UN High Commissioner planting a tree at the garden of Ouallam managed by refugees, IDPs, and host community members during a joint UNHCR/IOM high-level visit to Niger in mid-February 2022 © UNHCR*

## Tahoua region

As of 25 February 2022; the population of the former ZAR accounts to **3,874 refugee households of 20,626 individuals** and have been traced in 26 opportunity villages in the departments of Tillia and Tassara. Besides, the **ministry of humanitarian action have registered 5,559 IDPs households of 40,416 persons** in the same area.

Depuis la fermeture de la zone d'accueil des réfugiés d'Intikane (ZAR) en juin 2021, les équipes de protection du HCR ont mené des activités de surveillance à distance, notamment le traçage des mouvements de population. En février 2022, le système de surveillance de la protection a enregistré un total de 113 incidents de protection à Tahoua. Les cas enregistrés comprenaient des meurtres et des assassinats, des vols de bétail, d'argent et de semences, des agressions physiques et sexuelles, des incendies, des menaces de mort, des enlèvements, la collecte de la zakat en espèces ou en nature auprès des villageois par des groupes armés non étatiques, des affrontements intercommunautaires et des arrestations arbitraires par les forces de défense et de sécurité.

Le HCR et ses partenaires sanitaires ont renforcé leur présence dans la région de Tahoua après la fermeture de la zone d'accueil des réfugiés (Intikane), assurant ainsi un accès continu aux soins médicaux au centre de santé de Telemcess. En février 2021, un total de **2 183 personnes** ont reçu des consultations médicales, dont **182 ont été hospitalisées**.

**Since January, 9,384 Malians have arrived in various waves in Tahoua region. Registration is ongoing.**

## The Lake Chad Situation (Diffa and Maradi regions)

### Diffa region

To date, there are almost **235,211 forcibly displaced persons residing** in the Diffa region (including **129,211 refugees, 67,817 IDPs, 35,445 returnees and 2,114 asylum seekers**). Many of them have been displaced twice or multiple times already. Most of the persons live in spontaneous settlements or sites or together with the host communities. Sayam Forage, the only actual camp in Diffa, hosts more than **31,392 people**, and is managed by UNHCR.

The refugee population continues to arrive to Sayam Forage camp not only from Nigeria, but also from other reception sites in the Diffa region in search of better humanitarian assistance and security. Indeed, 56 new households of 267 people were received at the camp's transit centre in the fortnight under review, making **a monthly total of 134 households of 494 individuals. 31,392 persons** had access to potable water produced by three pumping stations built by UNHCR at the Sayam Forage camp and trough water tracking, with an average consumption of 10 liters / person / day.

In mid-February 2022, agricultural equipment, procured by UNHCR, was received by the partner APBE in charge of camp management of Sayam camp. This equipment includes machinery (threshing machine, mill and huller), animal traction equipment (donkeys and carts, pairs of oxen and ploughs), small equipment (hoes, machetes, watering cans, sprayers), motor pumps, and fishing nets. In addition, the production of fish food continues with an average daily production of 7 kg corresponding to the needs of the fish farm.

In February 2022, **2,590 refugees received** medical consultations at the Sayam Forage Camp health facility and **12 of them were evacuated** to regional hospital health structures. A total of 215 women have been received for prenatal consultations while 49 births have been assisted at the same health facility.

The European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Mr. Lenarcic, the Ambassador of the EU to Niger and the Minister of Humanitarian Action conducted a working mission in Diffa on Wednesday, 23 February 2022. The purpose of the mission was to visit the EU funded urbanisation project in Diffa as well as to inquire about the intentions of Nigerian refugees to return to Nigeria, as well as to exchange with the humanitarian community on the challenges in Diffa.



*Mr. Janez Lenarcic, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, accompanied by the EU Ambassador to Niger and the Minister of Humanitarian Action, led a mission to Diffa on 23 February 2022.*

*The delegation discussed with Nigerian refugees their return intentions to their villages of origin © UNHCR / Moustapha Djibrilla*

## Maradi region

For more than two years, conflict in north-western Nigeria **has forced more than 80,000 Nigerians** to flee to the Maradi region in Niger. In addition, repeated intrusions of armed bandits on the Nigerian territory have triggered internal displacement of around 26,000 people. Armed criminal gangs operate regularly on both sides of the border mainly targeting farmers and breeders and conduct kidnapping with the objective of ransom. The overall strategic direction of **UNHCR's response in Maradi is to relocate refugee communities away from the border to ensure their safety**, while at the same time, easing the pressure from the host communities. Subsequently, sites have been built in nearby rural villages and services were reinforced for both, the refugee - as well as the host communities, such as access to water, health services, education, and protection assistance.

In total, UNHCR has **relocated 3,972 households of 17,713 individuals** far away from their first entry points to safe and to secured villages where protection services are available. Thus, UNHCR has relocated Nigerian refugees to three “**villages of opportunity**”. These include 7,919 refugees in Chadakori: 5,434 in Dan Dadji Makaou and 4,360 in Garin Kaka. But recent regional authority measure suspended the relocation process until further notice.



**As of 17 March 2022, a total of 8,629 Nigerian refugees have been crossing Maradi from Nigeria. 90% of the new arrivals are from Chindhinda in Jibia township in Katsina State and some from Batsari township in Zamfara State in Nigeria.** The movements were motivated by the withdrawal of the Defence

and Security Forces (FDS) from the Chinhinda position, followed by the actions of non-state armed group, looting, extortion of property, threats, assault and battery, kidnapping, ransom, etc.

In mid-March, the *Direction Régionale de l'État Civil (DREC)*, UNHCR and partners visited the villages of Angoulwrunji and the commune of Gabi in Maraka and Duhumbrara Madarounfa in the district of Madarounfa. Discussions about the needs took place with local authorities (village chiefs and administrative authorities), community leaders, and through focus group discussions. UNHCR is currently drafting an emergency response plan.



*Moutari Lawal is a 48-year-old community leader from the village of Chinkida in Katsina state in Nigeria and sought refuge in the village of Douhoun Bara in Maradi, Niger*  
© UNHCR / Younoussa Boubacar Siddo

## Mixed movements situation (Agadez)

Niger 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 the latter 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 assists 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.

With the support of IOM, NGO partners and the Government of Niger, UNHCR identifies asylum seekers within the migratory flows and provide them with adequate information and tailored assistance. As of 14 January 2022, UNHCR and its partners have identified and biometrically registered **2,277 individuals** in need of international protection. The most vulnerable are currently hosted in **two guesthouses in Agadez** where they benefit from a protection response and assistance, while the others are hosted in the **Humanitarian Centre** built in the outskirts of the city.

In February, UNHCR and its partner APBE conducted 252 awareness-raising sessions reaching 875 individuals on peaceful coexistence, personal and environmental hygiene, community coexistence within the Humanitarian Center, and on Covid-19. UNHCR and COOPI also organized 199 **recreational and cultural activities** (music, dance, card games, checkers, volleyball, soccer, gymnastics, etc.). These activities reached 1,254 people. In addition, INTERSOS provided psycho-social support to **2,183 individuals through 163 psychosocial sessions**.

UNHCR has provided first and secondary health care to all refugees and asylum seekers hosted in Agadez through the partnership with APBE. In February 2022, APBE conducted 3,103 medical consultations; 80% of those consulted were refugees, among which 45 serious cases were referred to the regional hospital and 19 to the mother and Child Health Center of Agadez. APBE also provides **reproductive health services and malnutrition management services for children**.

## Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

### Hamdallaye

As of 28 February 2022, **4,665 persons have been resettled from Niger to third countries** through the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)**; these include 3,313 evacuees from Libya and 1,352 refugees registered in Niger. Among the **3,710 persons evacuated from Libya** to Niger since November 2017, **484 evacuees** are still in Niamey including 57 refugees pending departures and 151 interviews/decisions pending by third countries.

*Colleagues from the US Embassy in Niger visited Hamdallaye on 31 March 2022 and discussed needs, hope, and challenges with refugee youth © UNHCR / Protogene Ndwanjiye*



During the month of February, UNHCR's health care implementation partner, APBE, **received 499 individuals for consultations in Hamdallaye and in the guest houses in Niamey**. 396 medical prescriptions, 57 examination forms and 15 consultation forms were issued. Of these cases, 8 were hospitalized and 57 were treated in the guest houses.

The preparation of the distribution lists of Cash Based Intervention (CBI) for the benefit of the Persons of Concern (PoCs) of Hamdallaye and those of guest houses of the month of March is finalized. A total of 436 adult PoCs households used to receiving CBI, 155 newly enrolled households (flight of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021) and 37 minors will benefit from this assistance for the month of March 2022.

## Urban refugees and asylum seekers (Niamey)

As of 28 February 2022, Niamey hosts a total of 4,369 refugees and 398 asylum-seekers. 91% (3,977) of refugees in Niamey are from Mali. Under Nigerien law, Malians who are victims of the armed conflict in northern Mali are **recognized on a prima facie basis** while other nationalities undergo the regular governmental procedure of refugee status determination (RSD).

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 **Guichet Unique (One-Stop-Shop)**. The latter 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 partners regularly conduct home visits and monitors the well-being of beneficiaries in the five communes of Niamey.

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.

In February, **161 complaints were received through the Niamey one-stop-shop hotline**, including 151 complaints from Niamey, 7 from Agadez, 2 from Ouallam and 1 from Hamdallaye. The complainants are made up of 148 refugees and 13 asylum seekers, including 107 women and 54 men. Most of the complaints are related to taking appointments for the reimbursement of prescriptions and medical acts, requesting information on the asylum application procedure, following up on applications for food assistance and shelter, and following up on applications for income-generating activities, among others.

## Working in partnership

**UNHCR is leading the Protection Cluster in Niger**, which – together with all Protection partners – steers and coordinates the protection actors' interventions, to ensure a coherent protection response in the country. The Cluster also shares information amongst all relevant partners, bridges identified gaps, and ensures the strategic direction of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

UNHCR interventions aim to move towards economic integration and social inclusion of displaced communities. This approach is fully endorsed by the Government of Niger and is aligned with the **Global Compact for Refugee (GCR) and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus** and is at the core of the joint GoN and **UNHCR's out of camp vision**. UNHCR aims at strengthening relationships with **private sector actors as they are a crucial actor for boosting economic growth** and job creation; as well as at engaging with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, academia, and the media. The office also works with other government bodies, national and international implementing and operational partners. Lastly, UNHCR Niger works closely with the National Commission for Eligibility (CNE) to ensure adequate international protection and delivery of multisectoral assistance to its persons of concern.

### **Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR Niger operation in 2022**

African Development Bank Group | Austria | CERF | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Italy | Luxembourg | Monaco | Spain | Sweden | United States of America | UN Peacebuilding Fund | UN Programme on HIV/AIDS | Private donors

### **And thanks to donors who gave flexible funding to UNHCR globally in 2022**

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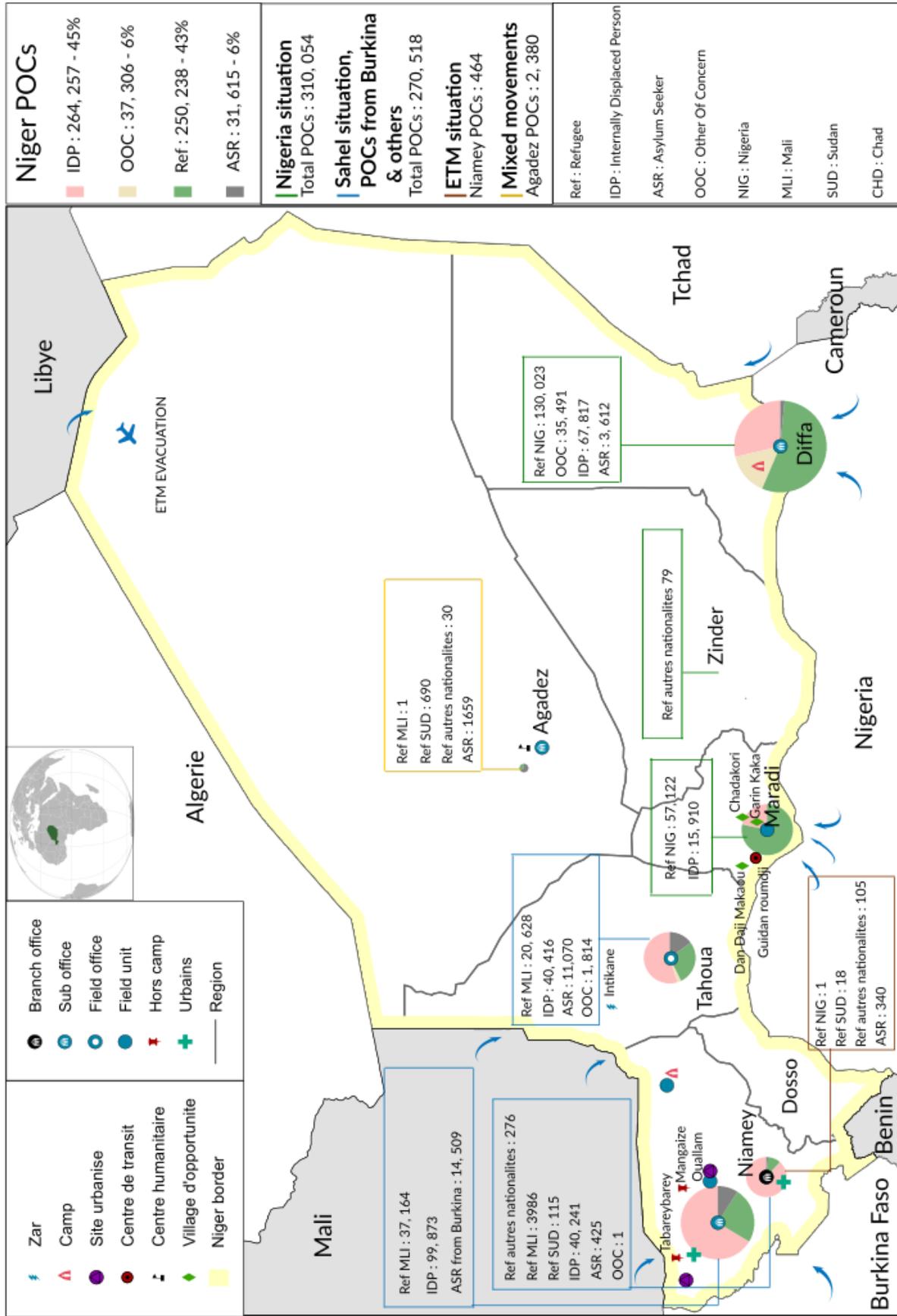
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# 583,416

Persons of concern in Niger

31 - Mar - 2022

## UNHCR | Niger Population of concern



Source : UNHCR Niger; Contacts : dipanda@unhcr.org; cherih@unhcr.org