

Niger

January 2023

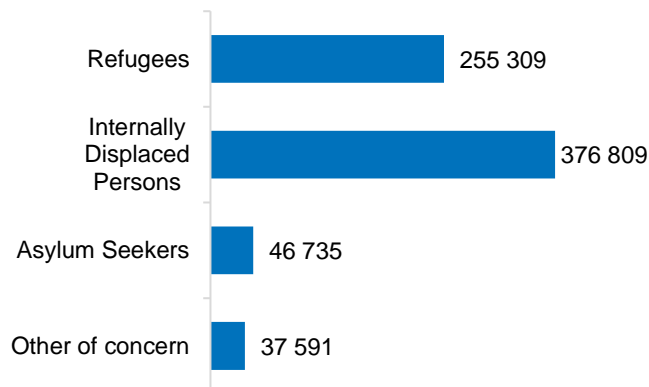
UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Mr. Raouf Mazou and Regional Director for West & Central Africa Ms. Millicent Mutuli visited Niger to attend the **third High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region in Niamey** and to visit **UNHCR's activities in Maradi**.

Since the **UNHCR Resettlement programme was first established**, a total of 5,099 refugees have left Niger. This number includes 3,526 persons evacuated from Libya through the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)** and 1,573 refugees registered through the national asylum system in Niger.

UNHCR and partners reached a total of 1,836 children with psychosocial support in child-friendly spaces in the three "opportunity villages" in Maradi. More than 2,012 children were sensitized on child protection issues such as early and forced marriage and on the importance of school attendance.

POPULATION OF CONCERN AS OF 31 JANUARY 2023

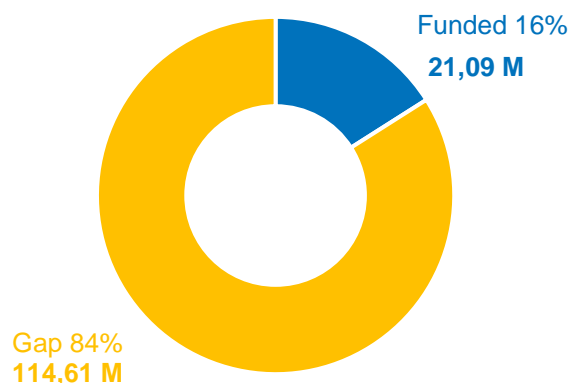
In Niger, there are **255,309** refugees, **46,735** asylum seekers, **376,809** internally displaced people, **37,591** other people of concern, such as returnees. Total number of persons of concern to UNHCR in Niger stands at **716,444**.



FUNDING AS OF 31ST JANUARY 2023

USD 135,7 M

Requested for UNHCR Niger operation in 2023



Medical screening of newly arrived Nigerian asylum seekers in a reception village in Maradi © UNHCR / Boubacar Younoussa Siddo

Operational context

Despite various conflicts in the region, **Niger has always kept its borders open**, and is currently hosting **255,309 refugees and 46,735 asylum seekers**, with 69% coming from **Nigeria**, **21 % from Mali**, **5 % from Burkina Faso**, and **5% from other countries**. Furthermore, there are more than **380,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** and Nigerien returnees (*who used to reside outside the country in areas affected by conflicts and who fled to Niger, together with fellow refugees*). UNHCR's work in Niger focuses on the **protection, assistance, and in search of solutions** for those populations, with particular attention to women, children and persons with specific needs, which is guided by a **community-based approach**. UNHCR also supports the Nigerien authorities in the search for **durable solutions** for displaced communities in Niger.

Highlight

On 23-24 January, **the third High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region, hosted by Niger, was convened by the governments of Germany, Norway, and by the United Nations (UNDP and OCHA)** in Niamey. The conference brought together representatives from various states, regional and international organizations, as well as representatives from national and international civil society organizations. The conference's main goal was to renew political and public attention on the crisis in the region and to reaffirm the commitment to address the ongoing humanitarian, security, and development challenges in the Lake Chad Basin region in a coherent, focused and coordinated manner. **The UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Mr. Raouf Mazou and Regional Director for West & Central Africa Ms. Millicent Mutuli attended the conference.**

In total, around **500 million USD in financial pledges were made during the conference**, symbolising a renewed commitment by the international community to support the Lake Chad region.



Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Raouf Mazou at the high-level conference on the Lake Chad region held in Niamey on 23 January 2023 © UNHCR / Boubacar Younoussa Sidde

Tillabéri region

Background: Since the first arrival of Malian refugees in Tillabéri in 2012, UNHCR and the Government of Niger have been working towards the **socio-economic inclusion of Malian refugees, based on a 'out-of-camp' strategy**. With the support of development actors and through the integration of Malian refugees into local communities, Malian refugees and host communities have received services, access to land, housing, and livelihood opportunities, while national health, education and water infrastructures were reinforced. To **further strengthen peaceful co-existence between the communities**, UNHCR brought together the different populations through 'common areas', such as village stores, cattle feeding areas, as well as through various mixed community committees.

- In January 2023, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management (MAH/GC), with the support of UNHCR, updated the data on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tillabéri. From

23 December 2022 to 5 January 2023, a total of **5,523 households (41,914 individuals)** were **physically** verified and registered in seven of the twelve departments housing IDPs in the Tillabéri region.

- In January, a total of **1,133 refugees and asylum seekers and 3,405 members of the host community received medical care** at the health facility in the Tillabéri region. A total of 133 women were received for prenatal consultations while 84 deliveries were assisted in the same health facility. In addition, a total of 1,027 refugee and asylum-seeking children as well as IDP children aged 0-59 months received all required vaccinations.
- In the framework of the **social housing project in Tillabéri**, a total of 2,178 houses have been built to date, including 1,350 in Abala, 790 in Ouallam and 38 in Ayorou. In addition, UNHCR and its partners have granted social plots to 2,473 households.

On 20 January, UNHCR supported a **Peace Forum in Banibangou** in the Tillabéri region, which



was launched under the leadership of the Minister of the Interior. The aim was to renew dialogue and reinforce peace between herders and farmers. Many of those community members are also forcibly displaced. The communities signed a peace agreement putting an end to a conflict that has impacted them for more than two decades and led to the death of more than 300 people and the displacement of several thousand community members.

Tahoua region

Background: As of 31 January 2023, a total of **20,622 Malian refugees** as well as **16,431 refugees and 3,465 Nigerien returnees** were registered in the Tahoua region. With the situation at the border with Mali (Menaka), new arrivals were also reported in Telemces and Tillia.

As of 31 December 2022, 5,988 households with 51,036 individuals, including 1,590 households with 13,279 newly displaced persons, were being validated by the Tahoua regional authorities. As of December 28, 2022, 2,165 households of 7,529 Nigerian asylum seekers had been biometrically registered in the commune of Bangui in the department of Madaoua.

- In January 2023, UNHCR and its partners received 419 persons for **medical consultations** in Tahoua, including 75 refugees and 344 members of the host community, of whom 29 serious cases were evacuated to regional facilities.
- More than 400 persons were reached through sensitization sessions on reproductive health conducted by UNHCR and its partner APBE, **and eight deliveries were assisted**.
- On 5 January 2023, UNHCR participated in the One HEALTH meeting to share the report on the **confirmation of bird flu** cases in the department of Bouza, rural commune of Karofane. The Direction Régionale de l'Elevage noted that avian influenza has been confirmed in the village of Alloumoudou, rural commune of Karofane, Bouza department.
- On 11 January, the UNHCR team in Madaoua conducted a **rapid protection assessment mission** to Maikourou in the commune of Bangui. This village, which hosts newly arrived Nigerian refugees who crossed into Niger in early January this year, following attacks on the Nigerian side of the two

villages of Mazaoua and Jinjinra. According to local authorities, 76 households of 663 individuals fled their village as a result. The assessment revealed the main needs are food and shelter.

Diffa region

Background: **The Diffa region has been hosting Nigerian refugees fleeing terrorist violence in the north-eastern states of Nigeria since 2013.** In the wake of the first attacks on Niger's soil in 2015, the situation has dramatically deteriorated. In May 2015, the authorities decided to evacuate the population living in the Niger region of the Lake Chad Islands.

As of 31 January 2023, a total of 235,211 forcibly displaced persons live in the Diffa region (including 129,835 refugees; 67,817 IDPs; 35,445 returnees; and 2,114 asylum seekers). Many of these people had been displaced more than once. Most of them stay in spontaneous settlements or with host communities. Refugees from Nigeria continued to arrive at Sayam Forage camp, but also at other sites in the Diffa region, mingling with the host community, seeking humanitarian assistance and security. **A total of 32,587 persons live in the Sayam Forage camp** – the only refugee camp in Niger.



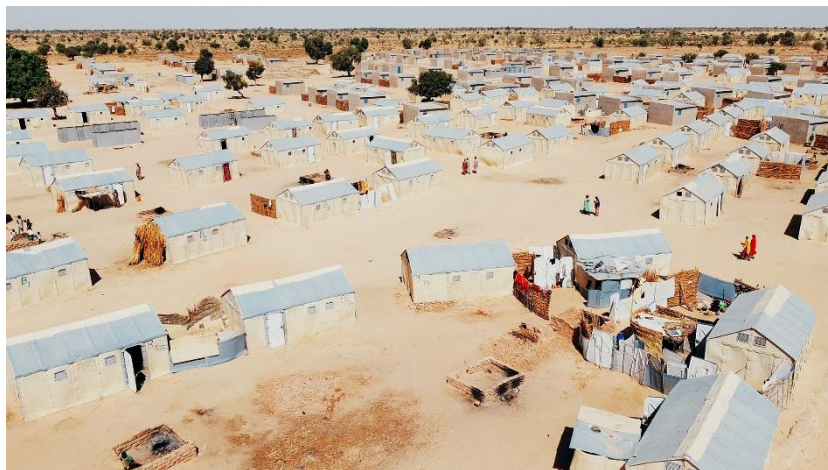
Nigerian kids at Sayam Forage refugee camp in Diffa. © UNHCR / Romain Pichon-Sintes

- In January, UNHCR identified **13 new child protection cases**, all of whom received psychosocial support. A total of 808 refugees and host community members were sensitized on child protection issues by local protection committees.
- Additional **sensitization sessions** included among others, bushfire prevention, the importance of enrolling children in school, malnutrition, malaria, domestic violence, child abuse, personal hygiene, the effects of drug use, the consequences of begging, and children's rights.
- Throughout January, a total of **1,986 refugees** received medical care at the Sayam Forage health centre. Of these, **31 were placed under observation and 17 were referred** to regional health facilities. A total of 172 women received pre-natal consultations and **42 deliveries were assisted** at the *Sayam Forage* health centre.

- As part of **the statelessness prevention activities**, UNHCR and its partners issued a total of **3,015 birth certificates under the late birth registration procedure**. These documents were issued to children aged 0-6 years. In addition, 2,070 birth certificates were facilitated to adults at risk of statelessness, who had no civil documentation. Of these, **1,129 women** were documented.
- A distribution of **hygiene and sanitation kits** to 218 households living in Sayam Forage camp took place during the last week of January. Each household received a kit composed of a broom, kettle, basin and soap.
- A total of **100 youths were trained in welding, baking and catering** and received a start-up kit to kick-off their new livelihood activities. This project is implemented by COOPI on behalf of UNHCR.

Maradi region

Background: 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 incursions of armed bandits into the territory of Niger have triggered internal displacement of around 26,000 people. Armed criminal gangs operate regularly on both sides of the border targeting mainly farmers and breeders and conducting kidnapping for ransom.



Dan Dadji Opportunity Village in Maradi, © UNHCR / Romain Pichon-Sintes

UNHCR's response in Maradi has been to support those refugees willing to do so, to relocate away from the border to ensure their safety, while at the same time, provide assistance towards refugee hosting communities to ease the pressure resulting from the large presence of refugees. Subsequently, settlements were built in nearby rural villages and services were established or reinforced, benefitting both, the refugee - and host communities, such as

water, health, education, and protection services. Those settlements were called '*Opportunity Villages*'. At the moment there are three of them in the Maradi region, near the villages of Chadakori, Dan Dadji Makaou and Garin Kaka.

- In January 2023, UNHCR and its partners reached **1,836 children with psychosocial support** in child-friendly spaces in the three "opportunity villages" and in the areas of Tiadi, Elguidi, and Dan Kano in Guidan Roumdji department. More than 2,012 children were sensitized on child protection issues such as early/forced marriage, school attendance and personal hygiene.
- Statelessness prevention activities were carried out in the municipality of Guidan Roumdji - 1,000 cases have been processed at the court.



UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, UNHCR Regional Director, and the Minister of Humanitarian Action during a focus group discussion with Nigerian refugees at the village of opportunity of Dan Daji Makaoua © UNHCR / Boubacar Younoussa Sidde

Agadez

Background: Niger is a hub for mixed movements heading northwards to Libya, Algeria, and the Mediterranean, while at the same time, it receives people fleeing Libya or being expelled from Algeria. **These migratory flows are mixed, 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, and assistance and may access the national asylum system.

UNHCR in Niger supports **the strengthening of the national asylum system** and implements a set of activities meant to ensure the protection and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers. On the longer term, UNHCR seeks to find durable solutions, such as **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 explored.

With the support of IOM, NGO partners, and the Government of Niger, UNHCR identifies asylum seekers within the migratory flows and provide them with counselling and assistance. As of 31 January, UNHCR and its partners have identified and biometrically registered **2,627 individuals** in need of international protection. These include 828 refugees and 1,773 asylum seekers. The most vulnerable are currently hosted in **five guesthouses in Agadez** where they benefit from a protection response and assistance, while the others are hosted in the **Humanitarian Centre** built in the outskirt of the city.

- In January 2023, UNHCR facilitated access to **primary and secondary health care** through the Toudou health center, located within the humanitarian center. A total of 780 refugees and 294 members of the host community received medical consultations, including 27 serious cases. The latter were referred to the regional hospital and to the mother and child health center in Agadez. The Toudou health center also provided reproductive health services and treatment for child malnutrition. In addition, 64 persons benefited from psychosocial support.
- In the second week of January, UNHCR welcomed a mission from the **Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energies** led by the Director General, Mr. Tifa Maidadji, who outlined the implementation of the energy project "HASKE", which is financed by the World Bank. The

delegation visited the Humanitarian Center to discuss with refugees and asylum seekers their domestic energy needs.

Resettlement

As of 31 January 2023, a total of **5,099 refugees have left Niger to third countries under resettlement or through complementary ways, such as study visa**. This number includes 3,526 persons evacuated from Libya through the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)** and 1,573 refugees processed and registered through the national asylum system in Niger.

Hamdallaye

Out of the **4,063 refugees evacuated from Libya between 2017 and 2023**, **640 evacuees are still in Niamey, residing at the site of Hamdallaye**, of whom 42 are awaiting imminent departure and 278 are awaiting interviews and decisions by resettlement countries.



Hamdallaye site, close to Niamey, where evacuees from Libya stay, receive assistance and Protection, © UNHCR / Romain Pichon-Sintes

Urban refugees in Niamey

As of 31 January 2023, Niamey hosts a total of **4,788 refugees and 1,001 asylum-seekers**. 88% (4,211) of refugees in Niamey are from Mali. Under Nigerien law, Malians who are victims of armed conflict in northern Mali are **recognized on a prima facie basis** while other nationalities undergo the regular procedure of refugee status determination (RSD), implemented by the authorities of Niger.

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 into 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 a better coordination of services provided by different partners. Refugees and asylum seekers receive assistance and guidance in the area of documentation, and receive information regarding various forms of assistance, such as medical

assistance, psychological support, and education. **The center also manages a hotline, which refugees can call free of charge to ask questions, to seek advice regarding assistance, or to make a complaint.**

At the same time, UNHCR and partners regularly conduct home visits and monitor the well-being of beneficiaries in Niamey. UNHCR manages several temporary guest houses (cases de passage) in cooperation with partners to ensure adequate protection for persons with specific vulnerabilities. To ensure inclusiveness and accountability, UNHCR and the Government of Niger regularly cooperate and **support the Central Refugee Committee of Niamey**, comprised of refugee leaders from the various communities.

- In January, **clothes were distributed to refugees and asylum seekers at the Guichet Unique**. This exercise started in December 2022 and up to now, a total of 4,643 persons have received clothing (completion rate of 93%). To reach the remaining community members, the distribution of clothing will continue one day a week at the Guichet Unique.
- On 26 January, UNHCR organized an **information-awareness conference on the risks of statelessness, prevention of statelessness, and on a presentation on civil status legislation** at the *Ecole de Formation Judiciaire du Niger* (EFJN). This session was facilitated by the statelessness focal point of the Ministry of Justice and by the Director of Civil Status of the General Directorate of Civil Status, Migration and Refugees. The objective was to sensitize future justice officials on the issue of civil status, nationality and statelessness.

Partnership

UNHCR is leading the Protection Cluster in Niger, which – together with all Protection partners – steers and coordinates the protection actors' interventions towards IDPs, 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 aligned with the joint Government of Niger and **UNHCR 'out of camp' policy**. UNHCR aims at strengthening relationships with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, private sector, academia, and the media. The office also works with other government bodies, national and international implementing and operational partners. UNHCR Niger works very closely with the *Direction Générale de l'Etat Civil et des Réfugiés* (DGEC-R), which is UNHCR's main counterpart, to ensure adequate international protection is provided to all refugees and asylum seekers present on the territory of Niger.

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR Niger operation in 2023

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