

Mixed movements in West and Central Africa

October 2019 – January 2020

This update covers the period **October 2019 – January 2020** and provides an overview of regional **trends** as well as **programming** by UNHCR and partners in the field of mixed movements. It includes contributions from the UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa (RBWCA) as well as UNHCR Operations in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger.

Highlights

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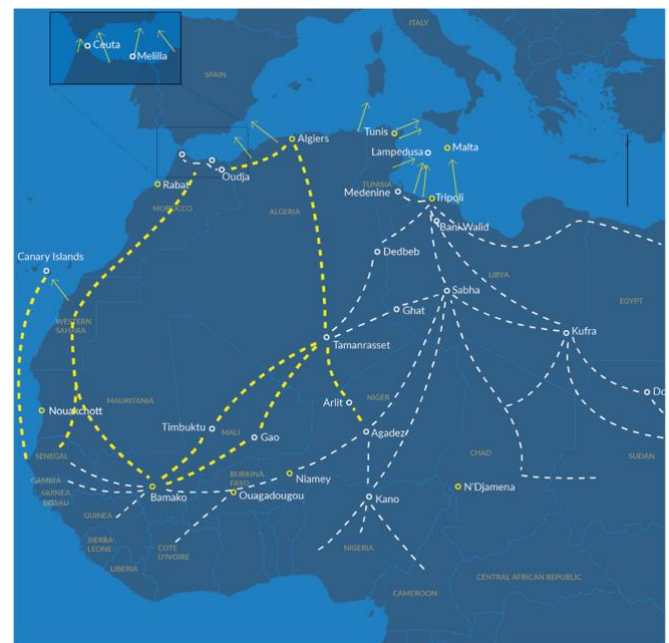
- Launch in December 2019 of a survey on **onward movements** in the Goudoubo camp among 841 Malian refugees over 15. 16% of those interviewed indicated they had intentions of moving onward.
- Conclusion of a partnership agreement between UNHCR and the Information and Training Center on Human Rights (*Centre d'information et de formation en matière de droits humains*) establishing a **legal clinic open to refugees and asylum-seekers** in Ouagadougou.
- Organization on December 10, 2019 of a workshop to follow up on the implementation of the national action plan relating to the recommendations of the December 2017 **Dakar Symposium on Asylum and Migration**.

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- **Readmission** to Chad on January 9, 2020 of a Sudanese refugee from the Tréguine camp on onward movement in Niger after more than two years away. This readmission was made possible through the active collaboration between the Chadian and Nigerien authorities as well as IOM and UNHCR.
- Grant of **education scholarships** to 597 refugee and Chadian students with a view to offer a durable solution through education in various Chadian universities.

MALI

- Organization in Tunisia on November 11-12, 2019 of a joint **cross-border meeting between UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)** on the operationalization of the July 2019 update of the **UNHCR Position on returns to Mali**.
- Launch at the national level of the **UN Network on Migration** within the framework of the Global Compact on Migration adopted on December 19, 2019 by the UN General Assembly. The executive committee of this network is composed of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNHCR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), IOM, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Development Program (UNDP). A technical meeting was held on January 20, 2020 to approve the terms of reference of the network at the national level, followed by an information workshop targeting UN bodies in Mali.
- **Expulsions from Algeria** to Mali continue.



Map of mixed movements
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- Registration by the Regional Directorate for Civil Status, Migration and Refugees (*Direction régionale de l'état civil, de la migration et des réfugiés*, DREC-M-R) on November 29, 2019 of 1,594 individuals, a flow mainly composed of Sudanese nationals [fleeing Libya](#) and in need of international protection, including unaccompanied or separated children.
- Organization in Bamako, on November 28-29, 2019 of a tripartite technical meeting on the [voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees](#) from Niger. This meeting brought together representatives of the Malian and Nigerien governments as well of the UNHCR Operations in Mali and Niger.
- Participation in Tunis, on December 9-10, 2019, to a joint meeting between UNHCR and IOM on [solutions and alternatives to save lives in Libya](#).
- Resettlement in November 2019 of 2,182 people evacuated from Libya in the context of the [Emergency Transit Evacuation \(ETM\)](#) out of a total of 2,956.
- Departure to Italy on November 5, 2019 of 108 people via [complementary pathways](#) for admission to third countries.
- [Expulsions from Algeria](#) to Niger continue.



In the humanitarian center, in Agadez, Niger (2019)
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Operational context

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Security challenges increase and attacks targeting the Defence and Security Forces (*Forces de défense et de sécurité*), state agents and civilian populations continue. At the end of January 2020, more than 600,000 persons were internally displaced, a number on the rise. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) tend to move towards the South-West of the country, an area now affected by attacks from unidentified armed groups. In November 2019, in the Cascades region, the Yendere border police station, located on the border with Côte d'Ivoire, was the target of an attack, as well as the kidnapping of four individuals. Political context is also impacted by the preparations for the November 2020 presidential elections. Electoral enrolment is underway and should be completed by the end of March 2020.

As part of a project between UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council, 279 people, including 158 men, 44 women and 77 children, were screened in transit centres and *listening points* located in the Sahel, Hauts-Bassins and Cascades regions in November and December 2019. The most common nationalities were Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. 103 persons with specific needs were identified and referred to social services and transit centres. More and more IDPs are identified (14% of those interviewed).

In the context of the collection and analysis of trends conducted by the [Mixed Migration Center and its Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism \(4Mi\)](#), 1,894 people on the move, including 65% of women, were interviewed from January to December 2019 in bus stations and border posts in Bobo Dioulasso, Dori and Kantchari. Most common nationalities include Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania. The main destinations mentioned were Europe, the United States, Libya and Morocco.

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The state of emergency declared by the Chadian authorities on August 20, 2019 in the three provinces of Ouaddaï, Sila and Tibesti came to an end on January 25, 2020. These exceptional measures resulted in the restriction of movements of populations and were adopted to put an end to recurring inter-community clashes, which have caused dozens of deaths in these three provinces of eastern and northern Chad.



Sudanese refugees in Hilouta, Chad (2020)
© UNHCR/Aristophane Ngargoune

In December 2019, an inter-community conflict between Arab and Massalit tribes in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan has displaced more than 11,000 refugees to Chad. These new arrivals are currently hosted in several villages and sites located along the border between Chad and Sudan, near the city of Adré, in the province of Ouaddaï, where 128,000 Sudanese refugees already reside. In coordination with UNHCR, the authorities have identified the new Kouchaguine-Moura site in the Amleyouna sub-prefecture to relocate these new arrivals. The first convoy of 273 refugees arrived on February 4, 2020.

In the context of the conflict between the Chadian government and residents of the Miski gold zone, 440 people have fled between October 2019 and January 2020. 97 people were arrested near Faya-Largeau, before being released a few days later.

From October 2019 to January 2020, the 100 community relays of the national Red Cross society deployed along 74 main entry and exit points in the framework of a partnership with UNHCR and the authorities have interviewed 5,958 persons on the move, bringing to 18,833 the total number of people interviewed in 2019. Chadian nationals represent more than 53% of these individuals, followed by nationals of neighbouring countries, such as Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger. The percentage of people likely to come under the competence of UNHCR is estimated to reach 15%.

MALI

Through the Inclusive National Dialogue launched in December 2019 in Mali, priority actions were identified in the short, medium and long terms, including the deployment of the reconstituted Defence and Security Forces (*Forces de défense et de sécurité*), administrative services and basic social services across the country. It also led to four major resolutions relating to the organization of legislative elections and a constitutional referendum, to security, to the redeployment of the administration, and to the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation resulting from the Algiers process. After six months of suspension due to a disagreement between the Malian government and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), the fourth session of the committee responsible for monitoring the Algiers Agreement has resumed on January 19, 2020 in Bamako with a focus on the return of the national armed forces to Kidal and the reinterpretation of certain provisions of the Agreement in accordance with the recommendations of the recent Inclusive National Dialogue.

On January 22, 2020, a meeting of the electoral college was convened for the organization of legislative elections, the first round of which is planned for March 29, 2020. The vote, originally scheduled for 2018, had been postponed due to the political and security context. Originally scheduled for January 13, 2020, the trial of General Amadou Haya Sanogo, head of the ex-junta, and his co-defendants has been delayed indefinitely.

While teachers unions are on strike, the government has announced the recruitment of more than 15,000 volunteers to replace the strikers.

Attacks against the Defence and Security Forces have increased and inter-community conflicts in the Central and Northern regions of Mali persist.

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Security environment in Agadez has remained calm but unpredictable due to the increasing criminal threats in the city of Agadez and on the main roads connecting Agadez to other regions and communities. Car thieves often target all-terrain vehicles, mainly on highways. After a rise in smuggling in November 2019, it has decreased slightly in December 2019 and January 2020. Several cases of kidnapping of Nigerien nationals using the roads connecting Niger to Libya were reported in January 2020. Humanitarian activities were not impacted.

Activities

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- On November 19-20, 2019, a [training](#) session on the national referral mechanism was organized by IOM, with the participation of various actors involved in the management of mixed movements in the Sahel region. UNHCR presented the mandate of the organisation and spoke about the Seytenga *listening center*.
- In the Hauts Bassins region, two [capacity-building](#) sessions were held on November 19-21 2019 on the identification and referral of people of concern to UNHCR and on the risks associated with irregular movements. Municipal

councillors, community leaders, associations as well as representatives of youth, women and state services were invited.

- In November and December 2019, two screenings followed by a debate, 11 educational talks animated by community relays and a theatre forum took place in the Sahel region with a view to train refugees and displaced persons as well as host communities on the protection risks encountered in the context of mixed movements. A total of 1,662 people, including 548 boys, 450 men, 364 girls and 300 women, were [sensitized](#).
- In November and December 2019, four screenings followed by a debate, three theatre forums and four [educational](#) talks were organized in the Hauts-Bassins and Cascades regions. They dealt with the various profiles and needs of persons within mixed movements, protection risks *en route* as well as with existing referral mechanisms for migrants and asylum-seekers in Burkina Faso, including the national mechanism and the mechanism set up between IOM, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees. A total of 2,551 people, including 769 women, 680 men, 492 girls and 610 boys, were reached.
- In the Cascades region, four [training](#) sessions for women in the community of Niangoloko and elected officials in the community of Sidéradoukou were held in December 2019 with a focus on international protection and protection risks faced by refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and internally displaced persons. These sessions reached 198 people, including 110 women and 88 men.
- Implementation [challenges](#) remain major for UNHCR and partners. Insecurity and the reduction of the humanitarian space hamper access to more than 3,500 Malian asylum-seekers from the North and Boucle du Mouhoun regions as well as the organization of capacity-building activities relating to international protection for newly assigned police officers. Growing stigmatization of refugees is also observed in the Sahel region and beyond, leading to arbitrary arrests in some cases.

MALI

- On 30 January 2020, the second coordination meeting on border management and cross-border crime was organized by the European External Action Service (EEAS) around the theme of [migration criminality](#). The objective was, on the one hand, to inform relevant stakeholders about existing initiatives with a view to avoid duplications and create synergies, and, on the other hand, to increase the visibility of the issue in coordination and security meetings at different levels.
- A total of 203 [awareness-raising sessions](#) were organized in Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu between October 2019 and January 2020. They reached 2,357 people on the move (incoming and outgoing flows), including 1,588 men and 769 women, and dealt with mixed movements and associated protection risks.
- On December 18, 2019, UNHCR took part in the national celebration of [International Migrants Day](#). The official ceremony was organized in Ségou by the Ministry of Malians Abroad around the question: *What type of migration governance is possible at the African level under the Malian chairmanship of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons?* During the festivities, UNHCR participated in various panels to raise the question of asylum in Mali and the role of UNHCR in the context of mixed movements.
- In Gao, UNHCR participated in an [awareness-raising](#) activity on trafficking in persons and smuggling organized by the Justice and Corrections Section of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) targeting people on the move.
- In the Timbuktu region, UNHCR, in collaboration with MINUSMA, organized a [capacity-building session](#) for 40 women leaders and local authorities in Goundam and Niafouké. The objective was to inform participants about mixed movements and UNHCR's mandate.
- In Gao, UNHCR, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), MINUSMA, UNICEF and UN WOMEN, facilitated a [capacity-building](#) session for the Defense and Security Forces and members of civil society.

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- Following the December 2019 demonstrations of refugees and asylum-seekers, approximately 335 arrests were made. Individuals were transferred to [detention centers](#) and about 86 of them are scheduled to appear in court. The DREC-MR has gained access to detention in order to ensure communication with the police, interact with refugees and asylum seekers, promote the access for humanitarian actors, ensure that rights are respected and basic needs covered. The National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance (*Agence nationale pour l'assistance juridique et judiciaire*, ANAJJ) was contacted on January 5, 2020, the day after the events, to assist refugees and asylum-seekers who had been arrested. Follow-up is ensured through UNHCR's partners, namely INTERSOS, the Regional Directorate for Child Protection (DRPE) and Juvenile court, in order to separate children from adults, guarantee the release of children under 13 and offer an alternative to detention for minors over 13.
- In Arlit, a joint [training](#) session was organized by UNHCR, the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (*Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire*, DST), the Directorate of Civil Status and Refugees and IOM with a focus on UNHCR's mandate, the national asylum framework in Niger, international protection in the context of mixed movements, statelessness and trafficking in persons. A total of 36 participants from the local Defence Forces were reached.
- In Arlit, 30 police officers assigned to border posts were [sensitized](#) on December 2-3, 2019 by the International Committee for Emergency Aid and Development (*Comité international pour l'aide d'urgence et le développement*,

CIAUD), the DST, UNHCR and IOM. This initiative is part of a wider project of monitoring of mixed movements implemented by CIAUD.

- [Information leaflets](#) for refugees and asylum-seekers were produced. They deal with the international and national asylum framework, mixed movements and the referral of people in need of international protection.
- Nine [awareness billboards](#) were developed for people on the move. They share the contacts of nearby border police stations, where CIAUD observers facilitate referral for persons likely to present needs of international protection.
- In the Agadez humanitarian center, 36 [awareness-raising](#) sessions were organized on peaceful coexistence, the status of community structures, general and environmental hygiene, procedures to request leaves of absence and internal rules. They targeted 283 people, including 50 women.
- A [training](#) was organized for state officials responsible to rule on the admissibility of applications for international protection with a view to strengthen their capacity to apply the provisions of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees dealing with the exclusion of refugee status as well as to examine applications based on gender identity and sexual orientation and those involving sexual and gender-based violence. A distinct training was organized for interpreters on interpretation in the context of asylum.
- The [development of capacities](#) of State eligibility officers in the field of refugee status determination (RSD) is underway. Observation of RSD interviews is conducted on a weekly basis with a view to strengthen interview techniques, combined with weekly meetings aimed at sharing trends and challenges encountered.

CHAD

In order to offer an alternative to irregular onward movements through [information](#) on the protection risks involved, an awareness plan was implemented from July to December 2019. Films were screened at bus stations and on buses running between N'djamena and Abéché as well as between N'djamena and the South. 106,560 persons on the move were reached. The national Red Cross society has also organized various events, such as panel discussions, plays and radio broadcasts, to raise awareness among young people.

Forthcoming

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- Completion of the annual work plan to implement the recommendations of the December 2017 Dakar Symposium on Asylum and Migration.
- Conclusion of the Asylum and Migration partnership project with the Danish Refugee Council.
- Finalisation of the survey report on onward movements of Malian refugees in the Goudoubou camp, and implementation of a project to empower young refugees with a view to offer an alternative to irregular onward movements.

CHAD

- Implementation of a monitoring of mixed movements following the renewal of the partnership agreement between UNHCR and the national Red Cross society.

MALI

- Official launch on February 13, 2020 of the UN Network on Migration at the national level.
- Implementation of awareness-raising activities on the protection risks *en route* in collaboration with the Ministry of Malians abroad.
- Signature of a standard operating procedure between IOM and UNHCR to promote identification and referral in the context of mixed flows.



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- Signing of a new memorandum of understanding between UNHCR and the government of Niger on the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) from Libya to Niger.
- Visit of the German and French authorities in charge of resettlement.
- Visit of the facilities hosting in Niamey the evacuees from the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) by the American regional coordinator for refugees based in Kampala.
- Launch in February/March 2020 of an English learning program for unaccompanied minors hosted in the Hamdallaye transit center in Niamey.
- Departure of 67 refugees for Italy scheduled for February 25, 2020.

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Operational Portal: [Asylum and Migration in West and Central Africa](#)