

# Sahel situation *(Tillbéri and Tahoua regions)*

June – July 2021

The Sahel regions have been hosting some **61,348 Malian refugees** since 2012. They live in 3 sites in the Tillabéri region and a refugee hosting area in the Tahoua region.

The deteriorating security context has increased **internal displacement flows** with rising numbers every month. To date, some 157,804 IDPs are hosted in both regions.

The activism of armed groups across the border with Burkina Faso has caused movements of almost **12,000 Burkinabés citizens** into Niger.

## KEY INDICATORS

**40,000\***

Refugees in Niger who will have **access to land** according to the Government's pledge during the Global Refugee Forum.

**+50%\***

**Increase** of the number of internally displaced persons since last year.

**897**

Durable houses built and finalized in the Tillabéri region.

## FUNDING (AS OF 17 AUGUST 2021)

**USD 110,7 Million**

Requested for UNHCR's operations in Niger

Funded 55%

**60.46 Million**



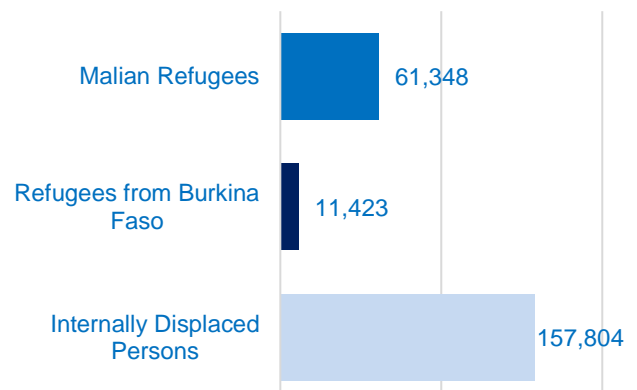
Unfunded 45%  
**50.24 Million**



Celebration of world Refugee Day in Niamey © UNHCR / Moustapha Djibrilla

## POPULATION OF CONCERN IN NIGER'S SAHEL

(UNHCR data, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021)



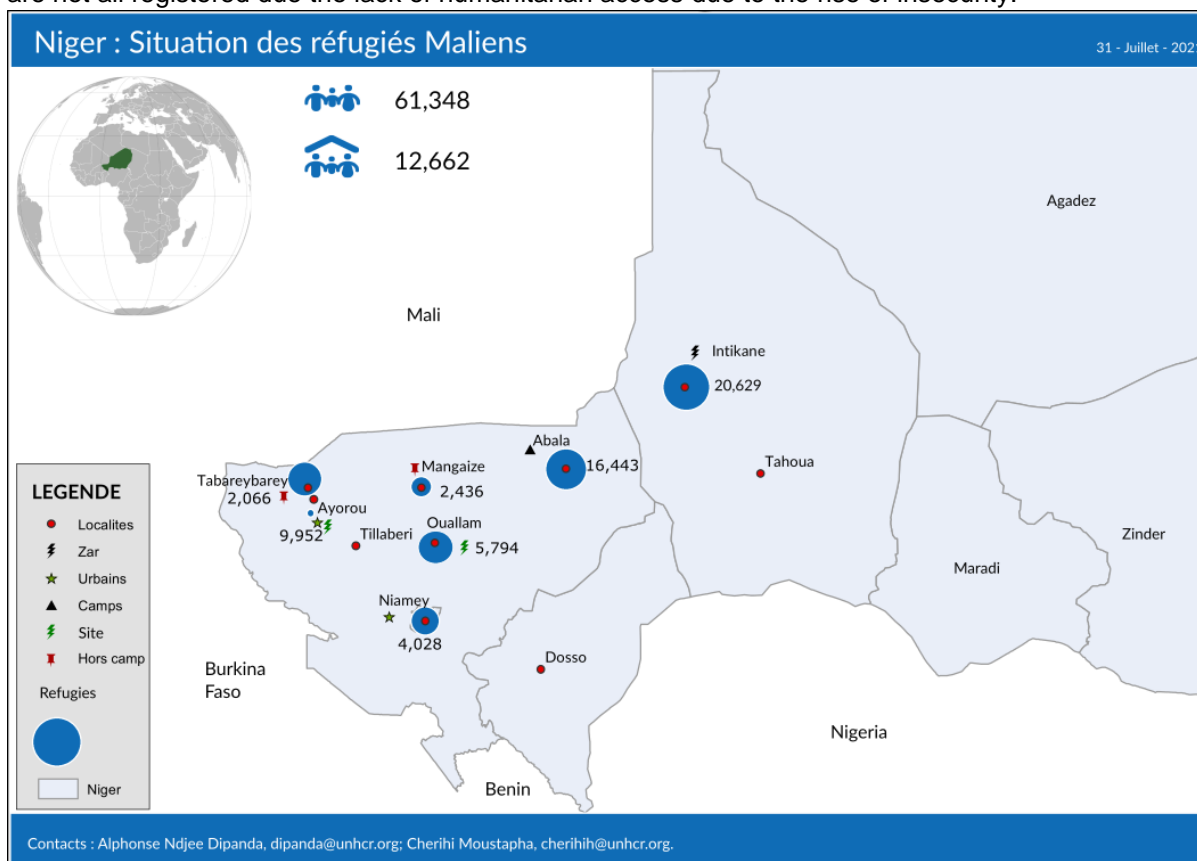
# Update on Achievements

## 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 (Niger-Mali-Burkina Faso) including in the Nigerien regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua has sharply deteriorated during the reporting period, causing internal population movements. This situation deprives vulnerable communities of critical basic services as armed groups directly target schools, health centers and other infrastructures. Civilians are victim of extortion, targeted killings, cattle theft and shop looting, and threatened to leave their villages. A state of emergency was declared in 2017 and is still in force.

Moreover, the **global sanitary crisis of the COVID-19 and the preventive measures taken by the Government of Niger** has heavily impacted UNHCR response, delaying assistance, and limiting livelihood opportunities.

UNHCR Niger register refugees from Burkina Faso since the beginning of 2020. To date 11,423 Burkinabe refugees are hosted in the Tillabéri region. However, their number could be higher as there are not all registered due the lack of humanitarian access due to the rise of insecurity.



## Security/operational context

- On June 16, 2021, Nigerien authorities announced **the closure of the Intikane refugee hosting area (ZAR)** for security reasons. The ZAR has been hosting 20,631 biometrically Malian refugees since 2013, and 65,625 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom 55,625 registered by the Ministry of Humanitarian Action since May 2020. In addition, 10,000 new arrivals were recorded following attacks on several villages and camps in the Tillia department of the Tahoua region near the Malian border, which resulted in the death of 137 civilians and the wounding of several others.

- In June, a joint mission led by the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior, with the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and UNHCR representative visited Tahoua to inform humanitarian actors, refugees, and regional authorities of the government's decision to suspend humanitarian assistance in the Intikane Refugee hosting Area (ZAR).



*UNHCR representative Emmanuel Gignac in presence of Nigerien authorities and implementing partners announcing the decision of the government to close the of Intikane Refugee Hosting Area / © UNHCR*

- The resurgence of attacks by armed groups and violence against civilians in the Tillabéri region has caused an **internal population movement of 1,643 households of 12,112 individuals** between May 14 and 15 in the communes of Anzourou and Dessa. The displaced people had settled in the surrounding villages of Namari Goungou and Sakoira. On May 21, Nigeriens regional authorities initiated the return of these IDPs to their villages of origin after having given security guarantees.

## Achievements

The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs produce a wide range of reports, evaluations, and infographics on the humanitarian situation in Niger. All documents can be consulted here:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/niger>

## General Protection

- Since the closure of the ZAR, **UNHCR's protection monitoring teams conducted remote monitoring activities including the tracing of population movements**. From 1st June to 31st July 2021, the protection monitoring system recorded a total of 372 protection incidents in Tahoua (316) and Tillabéri (56). The recorded cases included murders and assassinations; theft of livestock, money, and seeds; physical and sexual assaults; burning; death threats; kidnappings; collection of zakat in cash or in kind from villagers by non-state armed groups; intercommunity clashes and arbitrary arrests by defence and security forces.

- As of July 31, 2021; **1,900 refugee households of 10,525 individuals and 2,314 IDPs households of 16,786 persons have been traced in 20 opportunity villages** in the departments of Tillia and Tassara. They are concentrated in the villages of Telemcess (10,596 individuals, including 4,623 refugees) and Tillia (7,709 individuals, including 2,079 refugees). This can be explained by the fact that these villages are relatively secure and offer easy access to basic social services such as health, education, and water. **UNHCR protection monitoring teams recorded 221 protection incidents** in Tahoua region since the closure of the ZAR.
- As of July 15, 2021, **UNHCR has biometrically registered 998 households of 5,951 Refugees from Burkina Faso** among the **11,423** reported by protection monitoring teams and the censuses conducted by the local authorities from September 2019 to the end of May 2021. The inaccessibility of some areas due to insecurity and difficulties of access to places where they are located during the rainy season are holding up the registration exercise.
- **In response to the government's appeal** to support the return of IDPs in the Tillabéri region, UNHCR distributed 1,211 boxes of soap (48,448 pieces); 1,643 buckets, and 1,643 tarpaulins to candidates to the voluntary return.
- UNHCR **reissued 782 refugee certificates** in Ayorou, Abala and Ouallam. In addition, the national commission on eligibility for refugee status (DREC) issued **declaratory birth certificates** to parents following the mobile court hearing conducted in Tahoua and Tillabéri regions in 2020.
- Following the closure of the ZAR of Intikane, UNHCR meet with the humanitarian community and members of the government of Tahoua region to amend the contingency/response plan during the last week of June 2021.  
The plan is presented in two simulated scenarios based on possible scenarios.
  - Spontaneous settlement of refugees in host villages in Tillia department (very likely).
  - Relocation of refugees to a new site to be identified (possible) if negotiations with the government of Niger are successful (draft already available).
 UNHCR and its partners have agreed to give priority to scenario 1 in developing the response plan. Finally, the community-based protection approach will be implemented by mutual agreement with the Tillia municipality. Finally, it was recommended to map the basic social services in and around the host villages to set up an efficient referral mechanism and guarantee protection and assistance.
- On 20 June, all UNHCR offices commemorated **the World Refugee Day**. This year's theme was **"together we heal, learn and shine"**. Various activities including trainings on refugees' rights and duties, awareness raising sessions on protection issues, and many other activities were carried out in Niger.



*Gifts of art products and covid-19 prevention materials made by refugees to the UN Resident Coordinator, the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior and the UNHCR Representative in Niger. © UNHCR / Moustapha Djibrilla*

- During the reporting period, **124 cases of gender-based violence (GBV)**, including cases of early/forced marriage, sexual/physical assault, survival sex, denial of resources/opportunity, and one case of rape were identified by UNHCR and its partners in the two regions, among which **97 cases in areas where former inhabitants of the ZAR are settled**. All identified survivors benefited from psychosocial support and some others were referred to the partners for appropriate care. To prevent GBV cases, UNHCR and its partners conducted awareness sessions on the risks and consequences of sexual and gender-based violence, on referral mechanisms, as well as on available care services, **reaching more than 1,000 people** in the two regions.
- Between June and July 2021, UNHCR and its partners **identified more than 50 child protection cases** in the Tillabéri region. Most of them in IDP sites. The utmost vulnerabilities encountered by children were lack of access to education, illness, abuse, and exploitation, among others. In addition, more than 1,500 people have been sensitized on child protection issues.
- Since the closure of the ZAR on 16 June 2021, UNHCR and its partners have identified **428 children at risk of protection issues** in sites where people of concern to UNHCR had settled.

## WASH

- With support of the EUTF, UNHCR has strengthened the water infrastructure at the Abala and Ayorou sites in the Tillabéri region. This has enabled refugees and their host community to have access to clean and enough water in compliance with the sphere standards. Thus, during the month of June 1938 m<sup>3</sup> were consumed in Abala and 622 m<sup>3</sup> in Ouallam.

## Natural Resources

- Within the framework of the implementation of the economic support project for refugees and the host community of Ayorou (Tahoua region), 258 persons, including 128 refugees, have benefited from training on the transformation of domestic waste into latrine slabs, paving stones, and domestic charcoal. For this purpose, a 1000 m<sup>2</sup> site has been identified for the installation of adequate machines. In addition, two waste collection kiosks will be set up.



*Sanitation session at the Health centre built by UNHCR with the support of the EUTF in Abala © / UNHCR*

## Education

- UNHCR continues to advocate for increasing schooling rates for girls and boys, including those living with disabilities in sites hosting refugees and internally displaced persons in Tillabéri and Tahoua regions.

## Health

- 456 Malian refugees living in the Tillabéri region received their first dose of Astra Zeneca vaccine against the COVID-19 and the vaccination is ongoing.
- With the support of the European Union Trust Funds (EUTF), 691 people, including 276 refugees, 103 internally displaced persons and 312 members of the host community benefited from medical consultations in health centres type II built in Abala and Ayorou.

## Livelihood

- In July, UNHCR, as part of the regional EUTF Mali project, carried out the last Cash basic needs distribution to 948 beneficiaries, 357 in Ayorou and 189 in Ouallam. Each household beneficiaries of Ayorou and Ouallam has received 105 000 FCFA or 189 USD while each household of Abala has received 90 000 FCFA or 162 USD.

## Shelter and Non-Food Items

- As of the end of July, **1,271 social houses were under construction and 897 houses out of 2,100 planned** were built and completed in the Tillabéri region. Some 2,350,000 bricks have been produced so far as part of the project. Since the beginning of the project, 3,358 persons including refugees have been employed in brick production and another 792 persons in house construction. 437 houses have been handed over to the beneficiaries in Abala and 215 in Ouallam.



*Amina's family standing in front of their new house in Ouallam, Tillabéri region, Niger. © UNHCR / Moustapha Djibrilla*

- During the reporting period, UNHCR and the Mayor of Ouallam in the Tillabéri region agreed on the continuation of allocation of lands to refugees and the vulnerable members of the host community. The town hall of Ouallam has identified an additional 50 hectares to be allocated for the project.
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## Working in partnerships

- 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. With the idea of deepening its role of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) convener, 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, the Government of Niger, and UNHCR Niger.
- To lend support to the **Protection Cluster** 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

### Special thanks to the donors who have participated to UNHCR's response in the Sahel regions

Central Emergency Response Fund | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | Germany | Spain

### Donors who have contributed to UNHCR's response in Niger<sup>1</sup>

African Development Bank Group | Canada | Education Cannot Wait | France | European Union | Germany | Italy | Japan | Luxembourg | Monaco | Spain | United States of America | Other Private Donors

### Other softly earmarked contributions<sup>2</sup>

United States of America 33 million | Germany 17.7 million | Private donors Austria 6.2 million | Canada 5.6 million | Private donors Germany 3.1 million | Japan 2.9 million | France 2.8 million

Holy See | Iceland | Luxemburg | Malta | Norway | Private donors

### Unearmarked contributions<sup>3</sup>

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 49.7 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 25 million | Japan 23.4 million | France 20.2 million | Private donors Japan 17.6 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Private donors Italy 12.3 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million | Private donors Sweden 10.6 million

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Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

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.

## External / Donor Relations

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