

Niger

November 2021

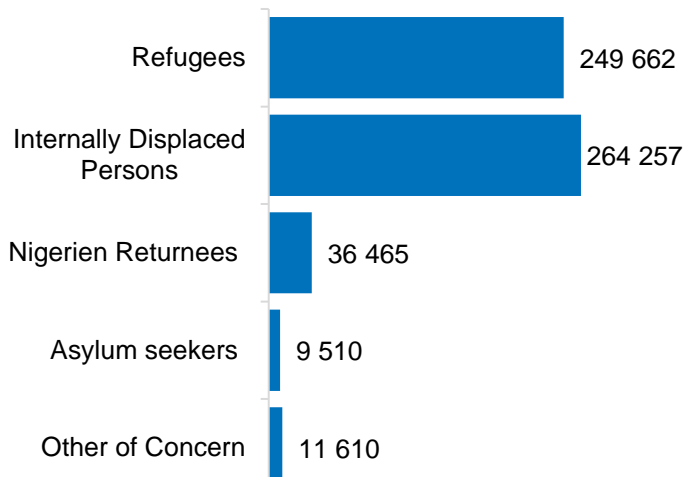
Due to killing, kidnappings, and looting; **11,070 Nigerians** of Sokoto, Zamfara and Katsina State and **1,814 Nigerien** returnees crossed the border into Niger this month to seek safety.

The number of **internally displaced persons (IDPs)** has increased by **53% in Tillabéri & Tahoua** regions in the last 12 months. The number has passed from 80,844 to 140,289 in November 2021.

Due to the growing insecurity in the region of **Maradi**, the number of IDPs has raised up sharply and reached 15,910 persons. **Diffa** region hosts 235,211 refugees, IDPS and returnees.

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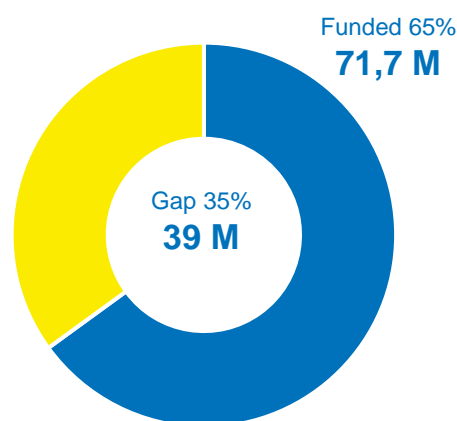
249,662 refugees, **36,465** returnees and **9,510** asylum seekers in Niger. **264,257** are internally displaced persons. **11,610** other persons of concern



FUNDING AS OF 29TH NOVEMBER 2021

USD 110,7 M

requested for UNHCR Niger operation in 2021



This month, UNHCR has registered 11,070 Nigerian refugees and 1,814 Nigerien returnees in 7 villages in the department of Madaoua in Tahoua region of Niger. © UNHCR/Boubacar Younoussa

Operational context

Despite various security challenges caused by conflicts in the region, Niger has always kept its borders open and is **currently hosting more than 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers, with 75% coming from Nigeria, 20 % from Mali, 4 % from Burkina Faso**, and 1% from other countries. Furthermore, there are more than 300,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Nigerien returnees residing in Niger, mostly in Diffa.

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-led approach**. UNHCR also supports the Nigerien authorities to find durable solutions for displaced communities in Niger.

Since 2020, **prevention and response to COVID-19 has been crucial** and in collaboration with the government of Niger, UNHCR has been providing medical supplies, equipment, and hygiene kits to persons of concern, and has conducted various communication campaigns.

Key Achievements

The Sahel situation (Tillabéri & Tahoua)

UNHCR and the Government of Niger have developed a **joint strategy to further integrate Malian refugees** (currently 61,266 as of November) 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.

This month, incursions of Burkina Faso's armed groups into Nigerien territory have caused additional internal displacements. Displaced communities have been stuck in inaccessible areas near the border. Since early 2020 to date, UNHCR Niger has registered a total of **11,605 Burkinabe refugees** in the Tillabéri region. However, their number may be higher due to lack of access to areas where they have settled. So far, UNHCR with partners have conducted an assessment to identify and address the needs of Burkinabe's refugees. To respond to the emergency, UNHCR has provided 450 dignity kits and 650 emergency shelters.

Regarding health, UNHCR and its partners consulted 3,649 individuals this month in the Tillabéri region, including 539 persons with critical conditions, who were hospitalized. Following the closure of the Refugees Hosting Area in *Intikane*, UNHCR and health partners have re-organised their presence to ensure the continuation of health care in the health centre of Telemcèss. In November, 1,494 patients including 625 members of the host community, 469 refugees and 400 IDPs were treated.



For this year's **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**, all UNHCR offices conducted several sensitization sessions and organised the distribution of dignity kits for girls and women.

UNHCR providing dignity kits to the regional directorate of women empowerment & child protection of Tillaberi © UNHCR / Mahamadou

For education, UNHCR and its partners, has launch the campaign **Back to School** in Tillaberi region, to sensitize parents to register all school-aged children. Furthermore, UNHCR has organized a training session on international protection and resettlement for its partners. As for shelter, UNHCR has donated 100 emergency shelters for IDPs in Abala while in Ouallam 47 social houses have been handed over to refugee households.

The Lake Chad situation (Diffa region)

To date, there are almost **235,211 forcibly displaced persons residing** in the Diffa region (including **129,835 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 **31,258 people**, and is managed by UNHCR.

Regarding shelter, UNHCR distributed this month **emergency shelters to 807 households**, and assisted **500 households in Sayam Forage camp with construction kits**, including plastic sheeting, square tubes, doors, and windows, to assist people with the upgrading of their homes. Some other 621 households living outside the camp have been assisted with *hydraform* social houses



A refugee family standing in front of their new hydraform house built with the support of the European Union © UNHCR

Through a partnership with **Niger's Minister of Public Health, Population and Social Action (MSP/P/AS) and the partner APBE, UNHCR is providing primary health care, reproductive health care, and HIV/AIDS** consultations to all persons of concern in the Diffa region. In November, **4,332 refugees received** medical consultations and **69 of them being evacuated** to regional hospital health structures. Furthermore, APBE has conducted awareness sessions to nearly 2,000 persons across all communities on COVID-19 and the importance of vaccination, reproductive health, and on cholera prevention.

UNHCR has assisted 17 **persons with specific needs** in *Sayam Forage* camp with technical aids for mobility and sight including three wheelchairs, two tricycles, two corrective lenses, two axillary crutches, and seven canes.

During the month of November, the adolescent and youth clubs organized 21 sensitization sessions on the **impact of GBV, the importance of registering girls at school, breastfeeding, and hygiene**, reaching 1,061 persons at all sites. Awareness raising activities were also conducted on early and forced marriage, reaching 6,731 persons across all sites. In collaboration with the regional directorate of women empowerment and child protection of Mainé-Soroa, **five separated children, aged 6 to 16 were reunited with their biological parents**. Lastly, UNHCR collected and delivered 492 birth certificates to beneficiaries living in the sites of Guidan Kadji, Sabon Gari, and Tounda Wada.

The Nigeria situation (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 Nigerien 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.

For security reasons and to cope with the sphere standards, UNHCR has **relocated 3,833 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.

During the month of November, a total of **11,070 Nigerians and 1,814 Nigeriens sought safety** in Niger's Tahoua region. The November arrivals, mostly women and children, have taken refuge in **26 villages in the rural commune of Bangui**. The area was already home to 3,500 Nigerian refugees since September. To respond, UNHCR and partners have strengthened the infrastructures and access to health and education in Bangui through the constructions of additional latrines at 12 schools and provided water access at six other schools.

Also in November, UNHCR supported the Government of Niger (National Eligibility Commission, CNE) to **biometrically register 84,370 Nigerian refugees** (14,575 households), 69% of whom are minors, 23% women and 8% men. The number of IDPs has significantly increased since March 2020 as security has deteriorated sharply in the border region. **15,910 IDPs** have been registered in the Maradi region. Finally, **UNHCR has built 281 houses** made of *banco* or raw earth in Dan Daji Makaou while the construction of 90 houses is ongoing in Chadakori.

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.

The Government of Niger, UNHCR, IOM and civil society partners identify asylum seekers within the migratory flows and provide them with adequate information and tailored assistance. As of 3 December 2021, UNHCR and partners have identified and biometrically registered **1,806 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 others are hosted in the **Humanitarian Centre** built in the outskirts of the city.

UNHCR has constructed a Humanitarian Centre built several kilometres outside of the city of Agadez. This facility was equipped with over 330 refugee housing units, WASH and latrines system, community and office space. Due to a massive fire occurred in January 2020, 80% of the refugee housing has been destroyed or damaged. UNHCR has immediately reacted by relocating all the vulnerable households within six guesthouses in the city of Agadez and **is currently constructing 200 new durable and semi-permanent structures and a permanent water pipeline supply.** UNHCR and its partners provide meals, water, sanitation, health, education, and all other basic services, and promotes access to solutions (asylum, readmission, repatriation, regularization of stay) for the different groups identified in the mixed movements.

Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

As of 30 November 2021, **3,533 persons have been evacuated to Niger** through the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)**; 367 are still in Niamey while 3,249 have already left Niger to third countries, and 87 departures are pending. During the month of November, **UNHCR organized vocational and technical training** for refugees and host community members living in ETM transit site of *Hamdallaye* and its surrounding villages. Ten youth from the host community and 12 refugees were trained in welding, while

23 girls from the host community and 10 refugee girls were trained in sewing. Additionally, 25 members of the host community and 5 refugees received training in market gardening.

UNHCR **evacuated 172 vulnerable asylum seekers from Libya to Niger** on the evening of **5 November**. This was the first evacuation flight to Niger in more than a year, following lifting of a ban on humanitarian flights by Libyan authorities. All the evacuees received food, medical care, psychosocial support and preliminary accommodation in two houses in Niamey before their transfer to the ETM transit site in *Hamdallaye* while their cases are being processed for durable solutions.



A refugee engaged in farm gardening in Hamdallaye © UNHCR

Urban refugees and asylum seekers (Niamey)

As of 30 November 2021, Niamey, the capital of Niger, hosts a total of **4,417 refugees and 367 asylum-seekers**. 90% (3,980) 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 of refugee status determination (RSD).

In Niamey, UNHCR has launched a **One-Stop-Shop**, where UNHCR and partners provide the respective services and support to urban refugees and asylum seekers. The One-Stop-Shop is an efficient and 'value for money' -way of coordinating the various services. In addition, UNHCR and partners regularly conduct home visits to ensure that everyone has access to adequate services.

UNHCR and partners manages several temporary housing facilities to ensure 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**, which is comprised of refugee leaders from various communities. The Committee has played an integral part in outreach efforts, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 of inclusion and development is fully endorsed by the Government of Niger and is 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**. UNHCR aims at strengthening relationships with **private sector actors as they are a crucial for boosting economic growth** and job creation; as well as at engaging with donors, national and international non-governmental organizations, academia, and the media.

In addition, 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. The office also works with other government bodies, national and international implementing partners, including APBE, ADKOUL, SDO, CDR, ANTD, ANCSB, DEDI, ADES, ACDD – Forge Arts, AIRD, DRC, HI, SCI, COOPI, INTERSOS, MEDU, NRC, CIAUD – Canada, SFCG, WVI.

External Engagement

In regard to missions and events, on 26 November 2021, UNHCR Niger welcomed the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (AHC/P), Gillian Triggs, who was accompanied by Xavier Creach, Head of the Protection Service at UNHCR's Regional in Dakar. While meeting with government officials and partners in Niamey, the delegation also travelled to Hamdallaye, Agadez, and to Diffa to witness first-hand the situation in different parts of Niger and to seek the opportunity to talk to refugees, IDPs, authorities, partner and staff. At the end of her visit, the Assistant High Commissioner warmly congratulated Niger for the progress made in implementing the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019.

Special thanks to donors who contributed to UNHCR Niger operation in 2021

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