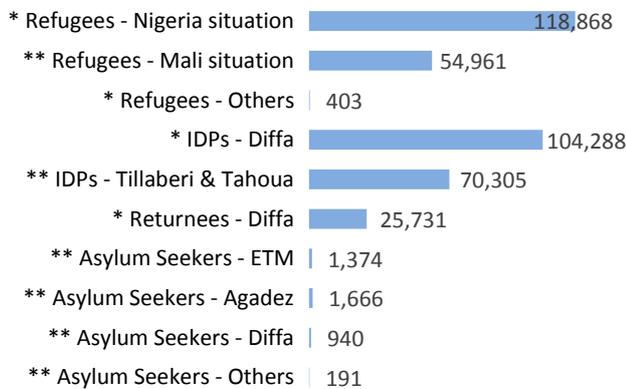


# Niger



## POPULATION OF CONCERN

**371,093**



\* Government of Niger official figures.

\*\* UNHCR figures.

## KEY INDICATORS

**2,619**

Refugees evacuated temporarily from Libya to Niger as part of the ETM (Emergency Transit Mechanism) from November 2017 – March 2019

**1,666**

Persons profiled by UNHCR in Agadez seeking asylum

**70,305**

Persons internally displaced in the Tillaberi and Tahoua regions



The arrival of the first evacuees from Libya to the new ETM centre (UNHCR, March 2019).

## Operational Context

The key situations include:

- 1. The Mali situation:** began in 2012 with the outbreak of conflict in northern Mali. The regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua bordering Mali and hosting most of the Malian refugees are increasingly affected by insecurity and terrorism. A State of Emergency was declared in 2017, and extended and further expanded to areas bordering Burkina Faso at the end of 2018. There are currently 54,961 Malian refugees in Niger. The Government of Niger and UNHCR seek to accelerate the socio-economic integration of these refugees and the closure of the camps through urbanization by the end of 2020. An EU Trust Fund supported regional project as well as a GIZ supported project are supporting these efforts at local integration and development in Tillaberi and Tahoua regions.
- 2. The Nigeria situation:** began in 2013, with the arrival of the first Nigerian refugees across the border fleeing Boko Haram. The situation deteriorated with the first attacks on Niger territory in 2015. There are almost 250,000 displaced persons in the region (including 118,868 refugees, 104,288 IDPs, and 25,731 returnees). The majority live in spontaneous sites or with the local population, while UNHCR manages one refugee camp, with 15,136 people. Since the beginning of 2019, the security situation has further deteriorated in the Diffa region, with secondary movements of over 18,000 people reported within the region in the month of March alone. In 2018, despite a complex security context, all actors agreed on the need to engage strongly in development oriented interventions. The Government of Niger, UNHCR and the World Bank are working closely in that direction. Additionally, an EU Trust Fund supported project is ongoing in Diffa region, aimed at supporting economic recovery and long term solutions through urbanization and the construction of durable housing.
- 3. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** The displaced population in the Diffa region is extremely mixed, including refugees, IDPs and returnees. However, since the beginning of 2018, the IDP situation in Niger has become more complex with increasing insecurity in the regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua, bordering Mali. In 2018, and into 2019, attacks and insecurity in the area have resulted in the internal displacement of at least 70,305 people. Protection monitoring, advocacy, capacity building and coordinated efforts with humanitarian actors and the Government of Niger are ongoing to ensure an adequate response to the situation. In December 2018, the Government of Niger adopted a national law for the assistance and protection of IDPs based on the Kampala Convention.
- 4. Mixed Movements:** Niger is a major crossroads of migratory movements northwards towards Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean. These migratory flows constitute mixed movements, including economic migrants as well as persons in need of international protection. In Agadez, UNHCR works to identify asylum seekers within the migratory flows and works with the government, as well as IOM and NGOs, to provide these persons with information and assistance. 1,666 persons, mostly Sudanese, are currently registered by UNHCR in Agadez. 25% are minors and 182 are unaccompanied or separated children. The majority are seeking asylum in Niger. The situation has become more complex, with the addition of downward movements from Libya and Algeria. A new Humanitarian Centre was built to accommodate and screen those seeking international protection in the second half of 2018. Over 1,200 asylum seekers are now accommodated at the centre, while the most vulnerable (about 300 people) are supported in 3 guesthouses in the city of Agadez.
- 5. Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM):** This unique programme aims to provide life-saving protection, assistance and long-term solutions to extremely vulnerable refugees trapped in detention in Libya, through temporary evacuation to Niger. The aim is to deliver protection and identify durable solutions, including resettlement for these refugees, who are predominantly Eritrean and Somali. Their profiles mainly include survivors of torture or other forms of violence in the country of origin and/or transit countries (e.g. Libya) and others with compelling protection needs. Many of them are unaccompanied children and women and girls at risk. To date, 2,619 persons have been evacuated to Niger – 1,374 of whom are still in Niamey while the others have already been resettled. With the support of the EU Trust Fund, a new transit centre is being built near Niamey to host the evacuees while they await resettlement to third countries. The first group of evacuated refugees were transferred there on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, while by the end of March, more than 440 refugees had been transferred to the centre.

## Security Situation

The regions of **Tahoua** and **Tillabéri** continue to be affected by non-state armed groups and inter-ethnic violence resulting in displacement of population in all the departments close to the Mali border. Movements of suspected extremists near the border have been reported, as well as incursions in villages, cattle thefts and market attacks. The situation along the border with Burkina Faso also deteriorated significantly with attacks targeting the defence and security forces (FDS) as well as the civilian population (schools burned, people abducted).

In response to the deterioration of the security situation, the 4 active military operations in the area (Dongo, G5 Sahel, Saki 2, and the joint Dongo / Barkhane operation) have increased their presence and began airborne operations. The State of Emergency, was prolonged for another 3 months on March 18. Due to the unstable security situation humanitarian workers are being urged to reduce missions/travel throughout the area.

In **Tahoua and Maradi regions**, the deterioration of the security situation at the border with Nigeria is resulting in new movements of population, arriving mostly in Maradi region. The displacements are the result of criminality and unrest in the Nigerian State of Zamfara. Activities of protection monitoring, assessment, and registration are ongoing.

In the **Diffa** region in March, the security situation continued to deteriorate and the State of Emergency, declared since 2015, was extended for another 3 months. On a more positive note, authorities lifted the prohibition on fish and pepper commerce – which was stopped 4 years ago due to security reasons and majorly affected the economic situation in the area. Unfortunately, repeated suicide attacks, assaults, and incursions perpetrated by the BH during the month of March resulted in the secondary movements of over 18,000 people within the region, mainly to the Diffa commune, as well as the site of Kindjani in the commune of Guesjerou.

The security context in the **Agadez** region continues to remain stable, despite repeated armed attacks – particularly on the main roads converging in and out of the city of Agadez, often linked to different kind of trafficking. On March 11, security officers found 4 explosive devices near the airport facility in Agadez. Authorities intervened promptly and an investigation is ongoing.

## Key Developments & Achievements

- On March 4, UNHCR welcomed a new evacuation flight from Tripoli, Libya. On board there were 128 asylum seekers, bringing the total number of evacuees from Libya to Niger to 2,619 (out of which 1,374 are still in Niamey). This was the 21<sup>st</sup> ETM flight since the beginning of the mechanism in November 2017. 120 of the newly arrived PoCs were transferred directly to the new ETM centre in the commune of Hamdallaye. Other transfers followed in March, to relocate evacuees from the guesthouses in Niamey to the new facility, bringing the total population to over 440. The most vulnerable refugees remain in guesthouses in the capital city. Construction and development of the transit facility is ongoing. The site is thus operational, while the construction of permanent facilities is still ongoing.



*Refugees evacuated from Libya settling into the new ETM facility in Hamdallaye. (UNHCR, Mar 2019).*

- On March 5-7, an evaluation mission on children's education was conducted by UNICEF in Agadez, involving all relevant partners – including UNHCR and the PoCs. A complete evaluation report, assessing the needs and giving recommendations was then drafted and shared



### Protection Cluster

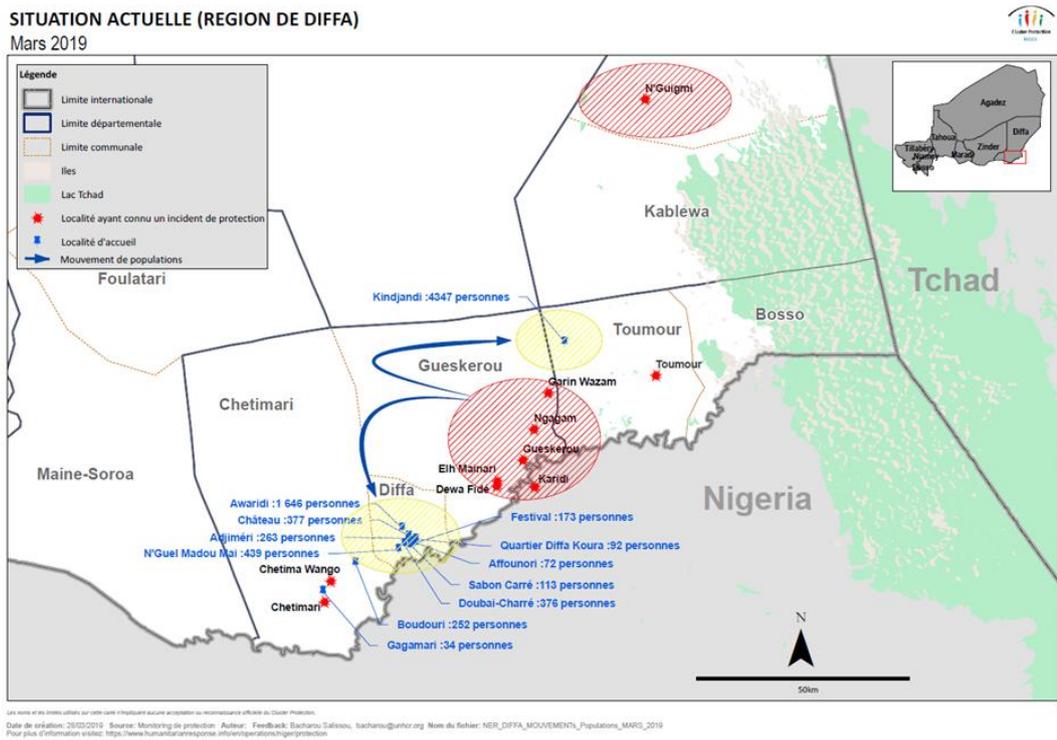
- The February 2019 cluster bulletin is available [here](#).
- More than 70,305 people have been internally displaced in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions as of the end of March.
- A quick evaluation report on Persons with disabilities in the areas affected by conflict in the Tillabéri region was published. The document is available [here](#).
- On March 21/25, a mission was conducted in the department of Tera (Tillabéri region), to monitor the protection situation in this area at the border with Burkina Faso. The mission report is available [here](#).
- An overview of the situation of internally displaced women in the region of Tillabéri have been published, underlying their effort for livelihood. The document is available [here](#).

### Mali situation

- UNHCR partner Search for Common Ground held a sensitization campaign to promote peaceful coexistence amongst the populations (locals, refugees, and IDPs) in the Tillabéri region.
- On March 18, the official installation mission of the new National Committee for Eligibility (CNE) team took place in the Refugees Hosting Area (ZAR) of Intikane, in the Tahoua region.

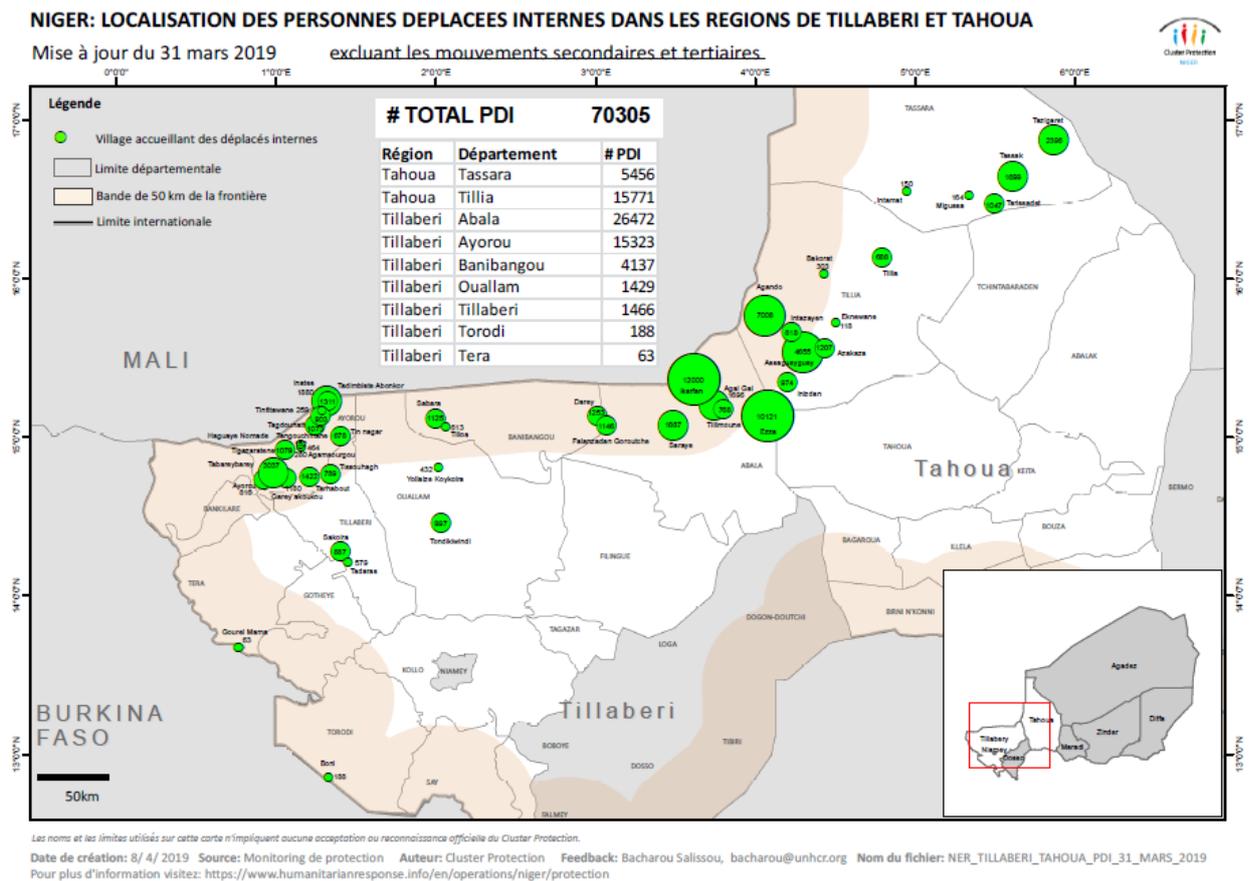
### Nigeria situation

- A joint UNHCR/DGECM-R (General Directorate for the Civil Status, Migration and Refugees) mission was conducted from March 6 to 11 in the Tahoua and Maradi regions, in order to understand the latest arrivals of population from the Katsina and Zamfara State in Nigeria, which is not related to Boko Haram but to criminality and unrest in their states of origin. As per the end of February, 858 individuals were detected in Maradi, and 751 in Madaoua.
- An increase of violent attacks by BH militants in the Diffa region during March, particularly between 21 and 27, resulted in the displacement of almost 18,000 individuals, mostly to the town of Diffa, and Kinjandi. Those are mostly refugees and IDPs already displaced because of the fragile security context in the area. Some are also reporting movements to the towns of Damasak and Maiduguri, in Nigeria. UNHCR is supporting the government of Niger in the identification and registration of the population, and is developing a voluntary relocation plan for up to 10,000 refugees, to the Sayam Forage refugee camp.
- As lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR is ensuring protection monitoring, identification of persons with specific needs, response for survivors of SGBV, and ensuring psychological support for the highly traumatised persons.



### IDP situation

- On March 19, a sensitization session on SGBV was conducted with the IDP Women's Committee in the Ouallam area.
- In March 2019, the number of IDPs in the Tillabéri and Tahoua region continued to increase due to new displacement in the area at the border with Burkina Faso. See below map. A protection evaluation was carried out in the area bordering Burkina Faso, following reports of Nigerien nationals who had been living in Burkina Faso, returning across the border to Niger.



### Mixed Movements situation

- On March 22, 4 PoCs from Sudan were successfully voluntarily readmitted into Chad, the country of their first asylum. This brings the total number of readmissions of Sudanese nationals to 10 to Chad, 1 to Benin, 1 to Cameroon, while another 9 are pending.

### Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

- To date, 2,619 people have been evacuated from Libya to Niger and a total of 1,235 individuals have departed for resettlement to Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom and The United States.

## EDUCATION

### Mali situation

- UNHCR's partner ICAHD completed a sensitization campaign throughout the first trimester, aimed at increasing school enrolment amongst Malian refugees in both the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. Over 1,800 students were enrolled.

### Mixed Movement situation

- On March 5-7, an evaluation mission on children's education was conducted by UNICEF in Agadez, involving all relevant partners – including UNHCR. A complete evaluation report, assessing the needs and giving recommendations was shared. On March 27, the Representative of UNICEF Niger went on mission to Agadez and visited the women and children living in the UNHCR Humanitarian Centre.

- On March 11, the training unit from the Regional Directorate for Primary Education (DREP) visited the Humanitarian Centre in Agadez, in order to assess the education needs and draft the ToRs to support the presence of 4 voluntary teachers on the site and the enrolment of the children in school.



### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

#### Mali situation

- The establishment of a market gardening site in the refugee camp of Abala and in the area of Moulela are ongoing. Despite initial challenges in accessing adequate water, especially in the Abala gardening site, some refugee women were able to grow onions, squash, and other vegetables.



#### Mixed Movements

- At the end of March, a joint UNHCR/DGEC-MR (General Directorate for Civil Status, Migration, and Refugees) mission was conducted in Agadez. The aim of the delegation, which included UNHCR Deputy Representative and the Assistant Representative for Protection, was to re-enhance the dialogue between authorities, host community, and the asylum seekers after several incidents risked to disrupt the local social cohesion.
- On March 30, a volleyball game between all UNHCR partners, the authorities included, and the asylum seekers in Agadez was organized at the Humanitarian center to promote peaceful coexistence among the communities.



*Images of the volleyball game in Agadez between asylum seekers, local population, local authorities and partners, March 2019.*

## Key challenges

#### Mali situation

- Increasing insecurity, due mostly to armed attacks and ethnic tensions, and a resulting lack of humanitarian access continues to pose the biggest challenge in the area of the country bordering Mali and Burkina Faso.

### Nigeria situation

- In the Diffa region, killings, lootings and kidnappings are becoming more frequent, creating tensions and fears among the local community. With 88 civilians killed in the month of March alone, further secondary movements may continue and pose a challenge in terms of security and protection for the population.

### IDP situation

- The massive increase in the magnitude of internal displacement in Tillaberi and Tahoua, increasing to over 70,305 IDPs in March, is creating significant protection challenges and is underfunded. Regular access remains the main issue, while military operations in the area are increasing.

### Mixed Movements

- In the Agadez region, UNHCR must continue strengthening cross border coordination in order to support refugees coming from the bordering countries. Work must continue to provide adequate protection to persons of concern in the humanitarian centre as well as in the guesthouses, ensuring access to international protection.

### Emergency Transit Mechanism

- For those refugees evacuated from Libya, the main challenge remains to improve the fluidity of the process of departures for resettlement, in order to free more refugees from the Libyan detention centres.

## UNHCR Presence in Niger

**Staff:** a total of 327 national and international staff (*this includes consultants and affiliate workforce*)

**Offices:** 1 Head Office Niamey, 2 Sub-Offices Diffa and Agadez; 2 Field Offices Tillaberi and Tahoua; 2 Field Units Abala and Ouallam.

## Partners

Government of Niger, ADES, ADKOUL, AIRD, ANCSB, ANTD, APBE, CARE, CDR, CIAUD, CISP, COOPI, DEDI, DRC, FRC, HI, ICHAD, INTERSOS, MEDU, SDO, SFCG.

## CONTACTS

**Giulia Raffaelli**, Associate External Relations Officer, [raffaell@unhcr.org](mailto:raffaell@unhcr.org), Tel: +227 80 06 81 51

**Louise Donovan**, Associate Public Information Officer, [donovan@unhcr.org](mailto:donovan@unhcr.org), Tel: +227 92 18 34 73

**Benoit Moreno**, External Relations Officer, [morenob@unhcr.org](mailto:morenob@unhcr.org), Tel: +227 92 19 24 17

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