



UNHCR staff conducts follow-up with an SGBV survivor who received income-generating assistance for her socio-economic integration in Gao region. © UNHCR Mali

KEY FIGURES

1,119

Refugee returnees and host community members participated in sensitization sessions on protection-related issues including social cohesion, early and forced marriages, excision and inter-community conflicts

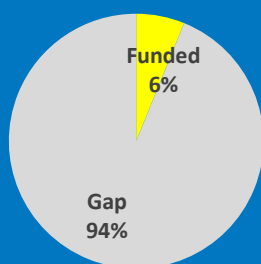
280

Birth certificates were distributed to Mauritanian refugees in Kayes region to facilitate their access to civil documentation.

FUNDING

USD 40 million

requested for the operation

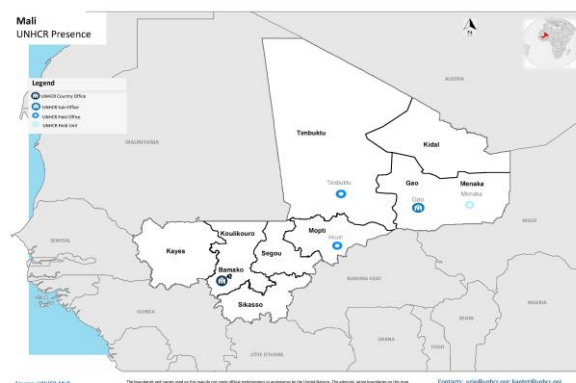


PRIORITIES

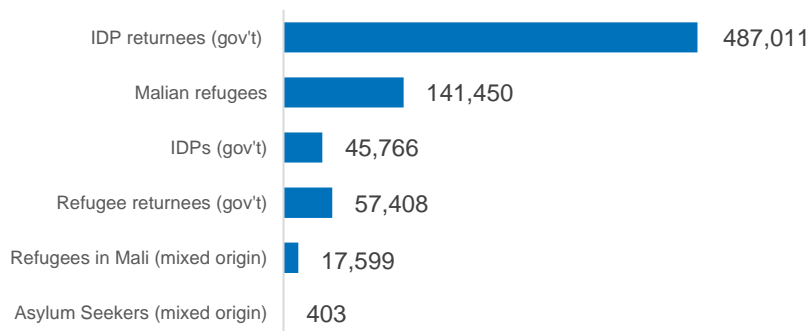
- 7 partners targeted to receive support and capacity development for the response of humanitarian needs of IDPs
- 1,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive production kits for agriculture/livestock/fishery activities
- 1,500 Mauritanian refugee children targeted to be enrolled in primary education
- 3,500 Mauritanian refugees targeted to receive production kits for agriculture/livestock/fishery activities
- 400 urban households targeted to receive cash grants

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 29 March, a convoy of 113 Ivorian refugees who opted for a voluntary return as a durable solution received assistance to facilitate their return to Cote d'Ivoire from Sikasso region in Mali. UNHCR Mali collaborated with UNHCR Cote d'Ivoire, government authorities from both countries and partners to facilitate the voluntary return of these refugees who have been in Mali since 2002.
- 42 protection incidents were registered in the regions of Gao, Mopti, Timbuktu, Menaka and Kidal during the month of March. The majority of incidents relate to extortion, early and forced marriage, injuries and death threats. Since January 2017, 108 incidents have been registered with the majority of incidents taking place in Gao and Timbuktu.
- UNHCR Mali held its Country Operation Plan (COP) consultative workshop in Bamako on 15 and 16 March with staff, persons of concern, civil society and government partners to exchange ideas on key priorities and concerns in providing protection and assistance to persons of concern for the Mali operation in 2018 and 2019.



Population of concern (February 2017)



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR continues to operate in a volatile security environment with the threat of terrorism, criminality and intercommunity violence affecting humanitarian access in northern and central Mali. In the north, violations of basic human rights are reported and certain local populations continue to lack access to public services, documentation, water, education and food security. Due to recent targeted attacks in mid-February against civilians in Mopti and Ségou regions and armed conflicts in Kidal, Menaka and Mopti regions, there has been a notable increase in Malian refugees from 134 058 (June 2016) to 141 450 (February 2017), as well as IDPs from 36 762 (May 2016) to 45 766 (February 2017). While the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Accord continues to advance, the slow pace, particularly with respect to the cantonment and DDR process, coupled with the slow reinstallation of authorities and heightened terrorism continue to foster an insecure and volatile environment, hampering the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees and IDP populations.

On 22 March, intercommunity tensions between Peulh and Bambaras in the village of Banikoro in the Ségou region resulted in 10 deaths and 14 injured. The security situation in the town of Menaka remained a concern after the assassination of an influential member of an armed group that controlled the town. Moreover, suspected terrorists were signalled in the district of Ansongo, west of Menaka. Inter-community dialogues, however, helped reinforce community-led security measures to reduce criminal activity in the town of Menaka and its environs.

The threat of terrorism and criminality persists with national and international security forces facing daily attacks in the northern and central regions. The threats of IED, abduction of Westerners, extortion of goods and carjacking remain prevalent concerns in the north, while the central regions faces increasing threats from active extremist armed groups. On 2 March, a new alliance called *Group to Support Islam and Muslims* (GSIM) was formed, composed of AQIM in Sahel, Al Mourabitoune, Macina Liberation Front and Ansar Dine. The threat of more coordinated, frequent and harmful attacks may result from this alliance. On 26 March, unidentified armed men assaulted the custom post in Ouelessebouyou, 75 km south of Bamako, killing two. This was followed by an armed attack on the 28 March against the Gendarmerie outpost in Boulkessi, 40 km southeast of Mondoro where two were killed. The second attack was claimed by GSIM. The prevailing security conditions and the influence of radical extremist groups, particularly near the border areas with Burkina Faso and Niger, continue to impact children's access to education with an estimated 436 schools still closed in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Menaka, Mopti, Segou and Timbuktu.

On a positive note, a key milestone in the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Accord was marked by the *Conference d'Entente Nationale* held between 27 March to 2 April with nearly 300 representatives from Bamako, the regions and the diaspora. While initially boycotted by both the political opposition and the *Coordination du mouvement de l'Azawad* (CMA), the conference concluded with a final report by three commissions on unity, peace and reconciliation to serve as the base for a future charter on national reconciliation. In addition, interim authorities were installed in Menaka and Gao on 2 March without any major incident and the Operational Mechanisms for Coordination (MOC) of mixed patrols continues to remain operational.

Achievements

Protection

Protection Cluster

- **2017 Protection Cluster Strategy:** A new strategy for the Protection Cluster in Mali was finalized with five key objectives that include: 1) ensure adequate analysis of the protection situation of affected populations and strengthen the capacities of protection actors, authorities and civil society; 2) strengthen the prevention and response to persons affected by the crisis in Mali; 3) strengthen the prevention and response to SGBV survivors through the adequate implementation of a strategy for referrals and the strengthening of medical, psychosocial and legal services; 4) strengthen the prevention and response in favor of children that are victims of the conflict and have suffered human rights violations; and 5) strengthen the understanding and implementation of protection mainstreaming by all actors in humanitarian interventions.
- The Protection Cluster participated in an interagency mission to conduct a rapid evaluation of the humanitarian needs of populations following targeted attacks in the districts and communes of Tenenkou, Macina and Niono in the regions of Mopti and Segou. The crisis in February led to the internal displacement of approximately 10,116 persons towards the region of Segou as recorded by the Malian government. On 1 March, the Protection Cluster concluded the strong need to carry out protection monitoring on the situation in Macina and Tenenkou with an emphasis on social cohesion and the presence of authorities. Following the evaluation of humanitarian needs, members of the regional protection cluster in Mopti including the Norwegian Refugee Council and the government agencies for social development and civil protection provided assistance in food and non-food items to 80 displaced households in the sites of Diabarabe and Diabozo.
- Members of the Protection Cluster in Bamako and Gao met with an independent expert on the human rights situation in Mali. The discussions focused on humanitarian access, access to justice, the elevated number of internally displaced persons and the inclusion of gender in expert evaluations.
- On 13 and 14 March, members of the Protection Cluster participated in a technical working group meeting organized by the United Nations University in collaboration of UNICEF as a preamble to research the causes and the avenues for recruitment and employment of children by non-state armed groups engaged in extreme violence. The group aims to produce an analytical report that will serve as a base for a prevention and response strategy to the recruitment and employment of children by armed groups.
- **Repatriation of Ivorian refugees:** On 29 March, a convoy of 113 Ivorian refugees (57 adults and 56 children) who opted for a voluntary return to Cote d'Ivoire departed Sikasso region in Mali. UNHCR collaborated with CNCR and UNHCR Cote d'Ivoire to facilitate their voluntary return in dignity and security.
- **COP 2018/2019:** UNHCR Mali held a planning and consultation workshop on 15 to 16 March with staff, persons of concern, civil society and government partners to discuss priorities for the Mali operation plan in 2018 and 2019.
- **Documentation:** UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, held 12 focus groups on the importance of birth certifications and the declaration of births in 12 sites across the region of Kayes reaching 405 participants (268 Mauritanian refugees



Ivorian refugees in Sikasso region prepare for their voluntary return back to Cote d'Ivoire on 29 March. © UNHCR Mali

and 137 host community members). As a result, more women are engaging in pre-natal consultations and deliveries at health centers in order to facilitate the declaration of births. In addition, 280 birth certificates were distributed to Mauritanian refugees in 25 different sites in the region of Kayes. The possession of a birth certificate will allow recipients to enjoy their civic rights including access to basic services such as education and health. In addition, for those signaling an intention of voluntary integration as a durable solution, this will also facilitate their naturalization to ensure a smoother local integration.

- **SGBV:** 28 information sessions on harmful practices to the health of women and girls and the consequences of excision and early marriage were held in 28 sites across the region of Kayes. These sessions mobilized 606 persons including 570 Mauritanian refugees and 36 host community members. The sessions aim to inform and change behaviors to ensure the progressive abandonment of violence against women.
- **Social cohesion:** 16 focus groups on the theme of peaceful coexistence were carried out in 16 sites across Kayes region reaching 362 people including Mauritanian refugees and host community members. The sessions aim to support better relations between communities and a smoother integration of Mauritanian refugees within their local communities.
- **International Women’s Day:** UNHCR Mali supported the participation of female refugees and other populations of concern to participate in local and national festivities to celebrate International Women’s Day on 8 March. The celebrations centered on the economic empowerment of women, celebrating their achievements and contributions in Mali.
- **Social counselling:** During the weekly reception session for refugees and asylum seekers at the UNHCR representation in Bamako, 26 refugees received counselling. Major concerns relate to transport documentation, social assistance, health issues and financial assistance. Certain cases were referred to partners for assistance.
- **Protection Monitoring:** In March, 42 protection incidents were registered with key issues relating to the extortion of goods, early and forced marriages, injuries and death threats. The regions of Gao and Timbuktu continue to record the highest number of incidents. In order to improve the protection environment in the regions and address ongoing protection concerns, UNHCR, through its partner AMSS, carried out 36 sensitization sessions in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu on the themes of excision, early and forced marriage, social cohesion and intercommunity conflicts. An estimated 1,119 persons participated in these sessions including refugee returnees and host community members to gain awareness about on the consequences and prevention of these issues. Since January 2017, 108 incidents have been registered across the regions of Gao, Menaka, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu. Protection monitoring continues to face challenges due to the limited number of protection monitors on the field as a result of limited funds, and the challenging security environment.
- **Registration:** As at 28 February, the *Commission de Mouvement de Populations* (CMP) registered 814 Malian refugees who voluntarily returned to Mali since the beginning of 2017. In total, there are 57 408 Malian refugees who have returned since August 2013 despite the volatile security conditions that do not yet permit for an organized return.



Female refugees participate International Women’s Day festivities at the *Palais de la Culture* in Bamako on 8 March.

- **Statelessness:** On 29 and 30 March, UNHCR organized a workshop on the eradication of statelessness with authorities from the region of Timbuktu. The training workshop helped 26 participants gain a better understanding of the national and global action plan to eradicate statelessness with a view of strengthening measures for the prevention and reduction in the number of cases related to statelessness. The main issues discussed relate to strengthening the delivery of civil documentation and pursuing decentralized training sessions for authorities.



The head of UNHCR’s Sub-Office in Timbuktu hands a certificate of participation to authorities following the completion of a training session on eradicating statelessness on 29 and 30 March.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

Shelter/NFI cluster

- Following a joint evaluation mission by members of the Shelter Cluster in the region of Timbuktu, 914 households in the commune of Haribomo in the district of Gourma Rharous received non-food item kits to support their urgent needs.
- The identification and evaluation of needs for vulnerable households affected by the crisis in northern Mali who are in need of shelter assistance is underway by UNHCR’s partners (Stop Sahel, TSF and Red Cross Luxembourg) in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu.

Education

- 22 information sessions on the importance of education for children were held in 13 sites across the region of Kayes. Some 684 persons participated in the sessions including 541 Mauritanian refugees and 143 host community members. There remain major challenges for Mauritanian refugee children to access education as a result of long distances between school sites and residences, lack of birth certificates which hinder enrollment processes, absence of school canteens and limited equipment in schools, among other issues. There are over 4,000 school aged Mauritanian refugee children (5 – 11 years old), and approximately 38.5% have received support for enrollment through UNHCR and its partners between 2012 and 2016.
- Between 9 to 13 March, a refresher course was held for facilitators of literacy centers in the region of Kayes. The capacity building course helped strengthen the knowledge and skills of ten participants to better understand how to prepare lessons, incorporate appropriate teaching methods and transfer knowledge of everyday skills to students including reading, writing and math.



Facilitators of literacy centres in Kayes region learn teaching methods during a refresher course organized by UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel. © Stop Sahel

Health

- **Medical Assistance:** UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, provided urgent medical assistance to 13 urban refugees including two persons with specific needs.
- **Health Insurance:** 11 sensitization sessions on the importance of health insurance were held in seven sites in the region of Kayes reaching 157 persons including 138 Mauritanian refugees and 19 host community members. This allowed for the registration of 46 households (127 persons) to health insurance plans. This aims to help households gain access to quality health care at a more affordable rate.
- **Family planning:** Information sessions on the importance of contraception and different methods of contraception were held in Kayes region to help populations of concern understand their family planning options. Held in three different sites, they reached 49 people including 35 Mauritanian refugees and 15 host community members.



Water and Sanitation

- In Mopti, awareness sessions about hygiene and social cohesion around water points and social were held in five sites located in the districts of Douentza and Mopti. The sessions reached 287 persons including 113 women and 174 men. In addition, an information session was held at the site of Tamiziguida whereby 69 refugee returnees and host community members were informed and sensitized about a project to restore and construct two water points.



Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

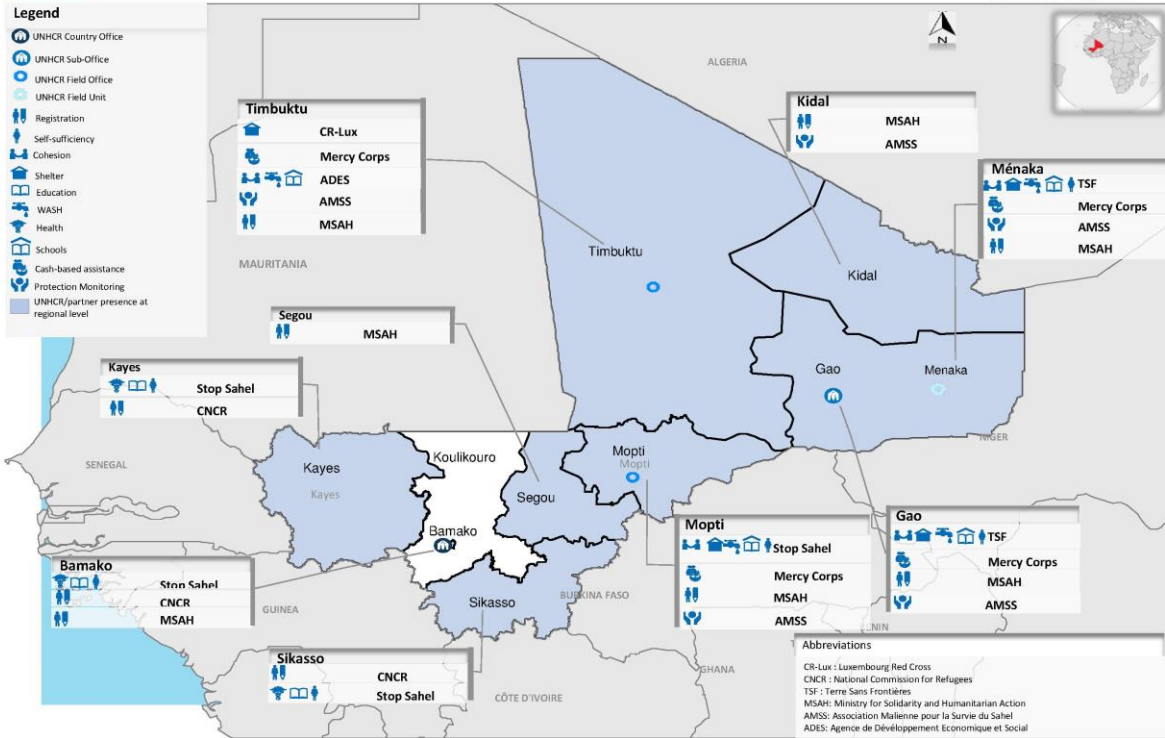
- **Cash grants for refugee returnees:** UNHCR, through its partner Mercy Corps, have identified and registered 496 refugee returnees since January 2017 who will receive cash grants to support their coverage of basic needs and their reintegration within local communities.
- **Self-reliance activities:** In Gao, a follow-up was carried out with an SGBV survivor who received psychosocial and income-generating assistance through UNHCR and its partners. As a result of the assistance, the survivor indicated a heightened capacity to reintegrate by selling traditional medicine which provided her with sufficient revenues to support the needs of her family.

Working in partnership



Mali : Partner presence 2017

UNHCR Bamako



Source: UNHCR Mali

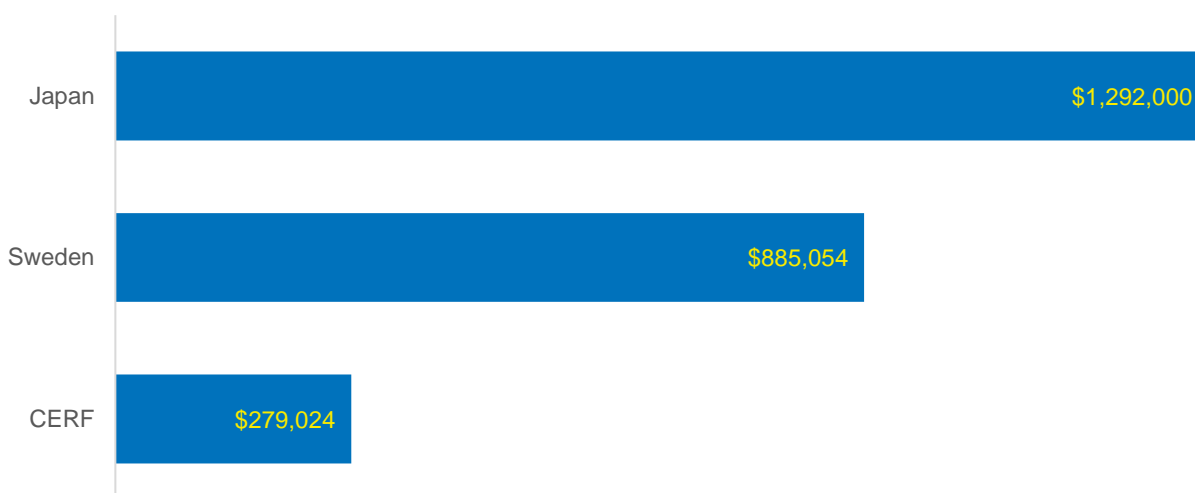
The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The administrative boundaries on this map do not take into account the new administrative subdivisions (Loi N°2012-018) effective as of 19 January 2016.

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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2017 funding in USD



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ANNEXES

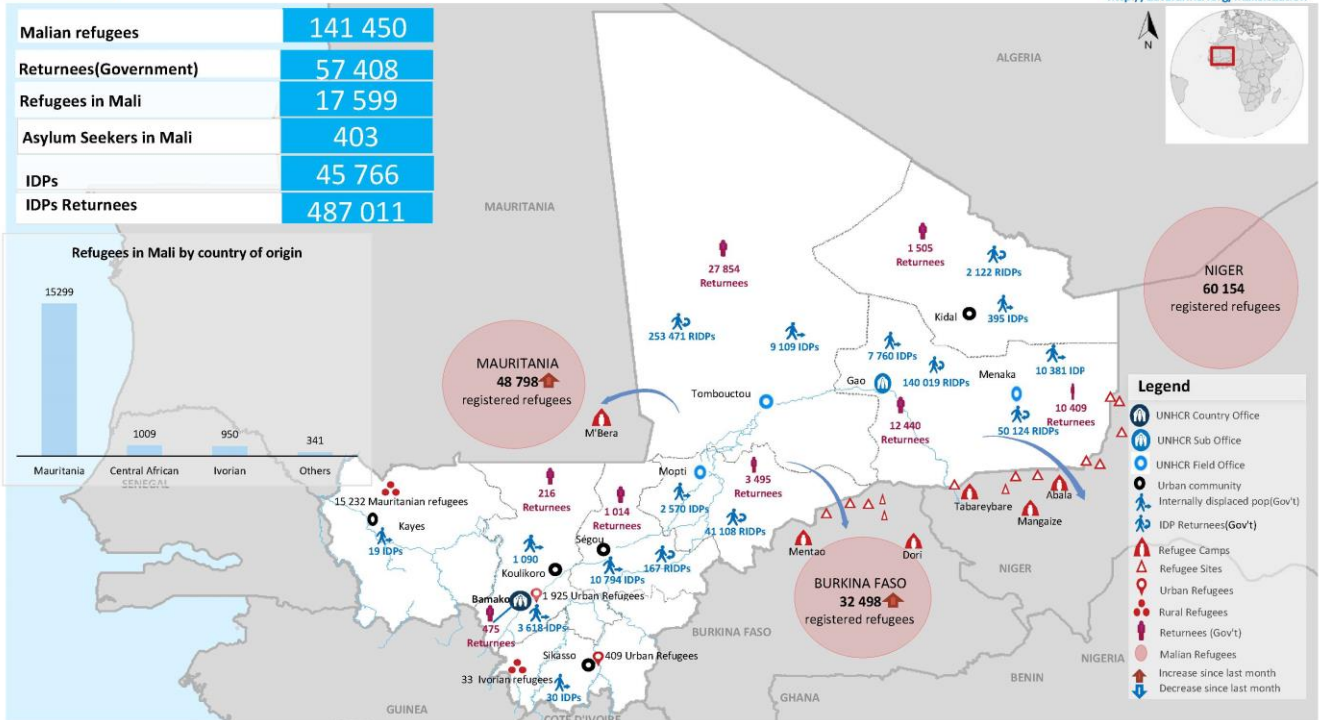
Mali situation map



Mali: Refugees, returnees and Internally displaced populations

28 February 2017

<http://data.unhcr.org/malisituation>



* figures from Niger dated as of December 2016

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Malian refugees (Sources: UNHCR)

Refugees in Mali (Sources: Government of Mali, CNCR)

Malian Returnees and IDPs (Sources: Government of Mali, DNDS)

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