



UNHCR staff visits the association of returned refugees' vegetable garden in Menaka region. Photo © UNHCR Mali

KEY FIGURES

642

Refugee returnees were registered by the government coming from Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania and Algeria in December 2016

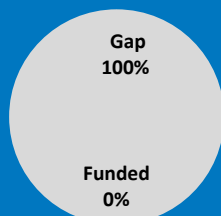
48

Protection monitoring agents have been deployed in north and central regions of Mali to document and collect protection incidents among civilian populations

FUNDING

USD 40 million

requested for the operation

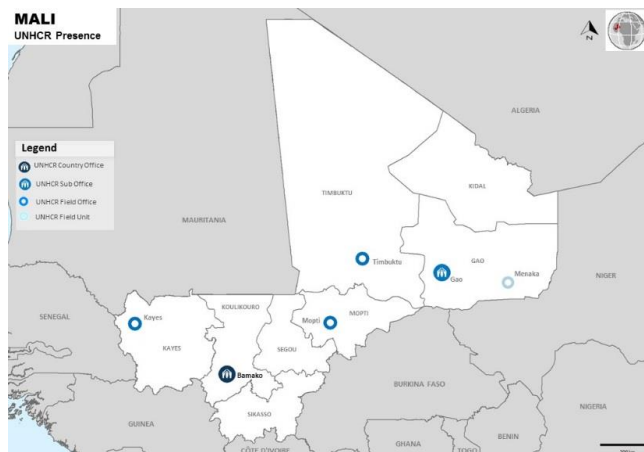


PRIORITIES

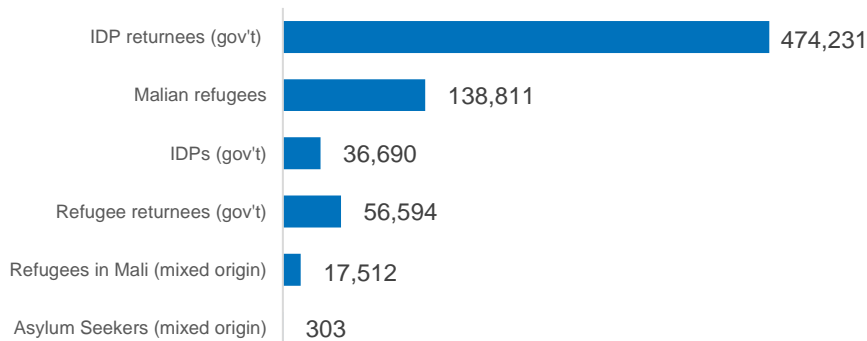
- 840 Malian IDP returnee households targeted to receive adequate and durable shelter
- 6,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive a one-time cash-based assistance
- 7,000 Mauritanian refugees children gain access to documentation through birth certificates
- 695 urban refugee children targeted to receive educational support

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR provided assistance to 18 urban refugees with specific needs to support their health and protection needs.
- UNHCR launched a pilot project to support Mauritanian refugees expressing interest in naturalization as a durable solution. The project aims to support an estimated 600 Mauritanian refugees gain access to proper documentation with a view of becoming naturalized as well as support their socio-economic integration through cash based assistance.



Population of concern (December 2016)



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR continues to operate in a volatile security environment with 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. Some 138,811 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries and 36,690 internally displaced persons in Mali are waiting to see whether conditions in their area of origin improve to enable them to return in safety and dignity. The volatile security environment continues to destabilize local communities, jeopardize the protection of civilians, and prevent forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes, while further threatening their access to already limited basic social services. The social climate remains tense with strikes called among judges, teachers and medical professionals since the end of 2016.

The threat of terrorism and criminality persists with security forces facing almost daily attacks in the northern and central regions. In the northern regions, the threats of IED and abduction of Westerners remain high, while the central regions face increasing threats from active extremist armed groups. This month was marked by a deadly car bomb (VBIED) attack inside the Operational Coordination Mechanism camp in Gao region on 18 January that killed an estimated 77 soldiers of the mixed battalion and injured 120 others. The attack, claimed by Al Mourabitoune (branch of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), caused severe damage not only to personnel, but also to the camp that housed government and rebel soldiers. Despite being viewed as a potential setback for the implementation of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, new security arrangements put in place by Malian and international forces have been cautiously welcomed by local populations. Moreover, a slight reduction in confrontations armed groups that are signatories to the peace accord has been observed.

In Kidal region, an attack claimed by Ansar Dine on two vehicles killed over 10 GATIA combattants on 21 January. A few days later, a mortar attack against the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok in Kidal region killed one peacekeeper and injured five others on 23 January. In Mopti region, the presence of presumed extremists was signalled by local populations and security forces around the district of Tenenkou where suspects fled counter-terrorism operations conducted by Malian forces. In the district of Douentza, the situation remains volatile with violence against authorities witnessed by the successive assassinations of two mayors in Boni (18 January) and in Mondoro (28 January). In the context of the Africa-France Summit hosted by the Government of Mali in Bamako on 13 and 14 January, leaders from over 30 African countries and the President of France renewed their commitment to fight terrorism and illicit trafficking.

Criminal attacks against national and international NGOs continue to reduce humanitarian access in the north and centre of Mali. UNHCR continues to work with local and international partners to locate a missing vehicle that was carjacked in the town of Timbuktu on 28 December. In addition, a French aid worker kidnapped in Gao region on 24 December remains missing. The need to uphold humanitarian principles is of utmost importance to counter the shrinking of humanitarian space necessary to conduct life-saving activities. Incorporating protection mainstreaming principles and promoting a meaningful access, safety and dignity for humanitarian aid remains key to humanitarian actors.

Achievements



Protection

Protection Cluster

- **Timbuktu:** On 3 January, the protection cluster consulted with legal and penitentiary officials of MINUSMA in support of its regional cluster strategy. The discussions focused on the absence of judges, the absence of legal and

judicial assistance for victims and the distrust of local populations towards legal institutions. It was noted that these factors risk heightening criminal incidents and the level of impunity and insecurity in the region.

- **Timbuktu:** The protection cluster has developed a cartography of cluster members in the region of Timbuktu with an aim to identify zones with gaps in protection coverage in order to advocate for the deployment of actors in those localities.
 - **Gao:** On 13 January, the protection cluster participated in a civil-military coordination meeting at OCHA. The meeting provided an opportunity to advocate to defense and security forces on the need for greater investigation and follow-up on protection incidents among civilian populations occurring on a daily basis.
 - **Gao:** The protection cluster shared its 4W Activity Tracking Matrix during a meeting with the working group on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with an aim to support and improve the collection and sharing of information about actors working on protection issues in the region, including on SGBV issues.
 - **Mopti:** The protection cluster held its first monthly meeting on 17 January to discuss plans to update the 3W Activity Tracking Matrix and to elaborate on a capacity building plan for the protection cluster and for protection actors.
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- **Humanitarian Country Team:** UNHCR's Representative to Mali, Ms. Angèle Djohossou, participated in a Humanitarian Country Team mission to Mopti region that included meetings with the Governor of the region, relevant actors to assess the regional security situation and the *Groupe Inter-Agence de Coordination (GIAC)*.
 - **Naturalization of Mauritanian Refugees:** On 11 January, UNHCR carried out a mission to Kayes region in support of Mauritanian refugees who expressed interest in naturalization as a durable solution. The pilot project aims to help 150 Mauritanian refugee households (800 individuals), primarily born in Mali, to gain proper documentation with a view of becoming naturalized and acquiring Malian citizenship. As of end of January, the project had identified 115 refugee households (600 individuals) who have birth certificates.

As part of this project, UNHCR will support the socio-economic integration of Mauritanian refugees who have opted for naturalization by providing cash based assistance to pursue their economic activities. This support will help ensure their access to documentation is accompanied by sustainable socio-economic integration.

- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR's partner, *Association Malienne pour la Survie du Sahel (AMSS)* selected and deployed 48 protection monitoring agents to collect and document protection incidents among civilian populations in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Menaka, Mopti and Timbuktu. Since the beginning of the year, 18 protection incidents have been identified with the majority taking place in Gao region, related to extortion, injuries and robbery. The objective of this activity is to make reintegration more sustainable by ensuring the collection, information sharing and referral of incidents to ensure a timely and appropriate response for affected persons.
- **Persons with Specific Needs:** UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, provided assistance to 18 urban refugees in Bamako in need of health and protection assistance.
- **Registration:** In December 2016, the *Direction Nationale du Développement Social (DNDS)* registered 642 refugee returnees from Burkina Faso (298), Mauritania (66), Niger (47) and Algeria (231). Among these people, 76 carried the Voluntary Repatriation Form.



Health

- **Community Health Agents:** UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, trained three health community agents on healthcare activities. Currently, many refugees face problems accessing healthcare facilities as a result of limited facilities in their local villages that then necessitate long distance travel to access healthcare assistance. The health community agents

in the villages where Mauritanian refugees currently reside in Kayes region will act as a first point of contact to help Mauritanian refugees access better healthcare services and information.

Water and Sanitation

■ **Construction and Restoration of Water Points**

- **Menaka:** Three boreholes that were started in 2016 in Menaka continue to experience reparation delays as a result of defective equipment. The damaged pieces are currently being repaired in Gao.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

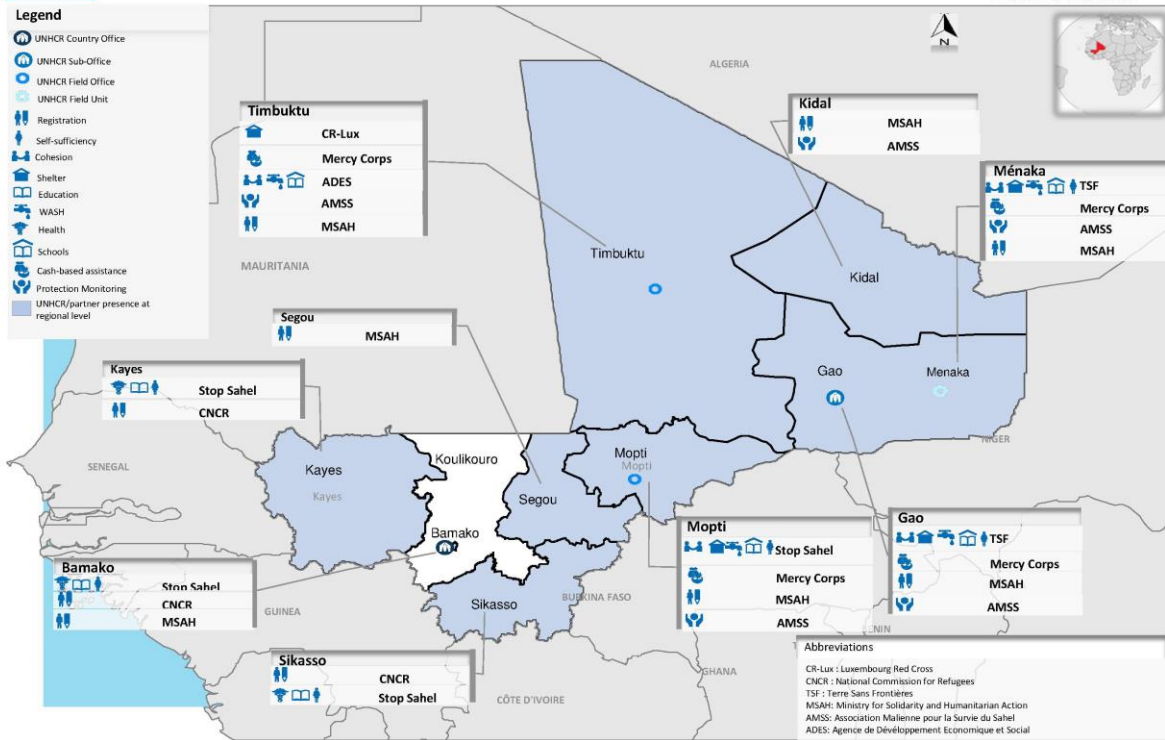
- **Community Outreach:** On 12 January, UNHCR's field office in Timbuktu launched a series of dialogues with leaders of community groups and returnee associations in the neighbourhoods of Timbuktu city to reinforce the cooperation, trust and collaboration with local communities. The meetings between UNHCR, its partners and the local communities focused on assistance needs and security issues. Four meetings with associations of female refugee returnees, IDPs and IDP returnees also revealed needs in the area of income-generating activities (vegetable gardens), livestock, shelter restoration and capacity building.
- **Promoting Income-Generating Activities:** UNHCR in conjunction with the committee of refugee returnees in Menaka region is working with ACTED to select 20 young refugee returnees primarily returning from Niger to participate in ACTED's pilot project that will support professional training in domains of auto mechanics, electricians, tailoring and catering. The training will take place over three months and selected returnees will receive starter kits valued at 250.000 CFA (approximately USD 400) to pursue their entrepreneurial activities.

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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ANNEXES

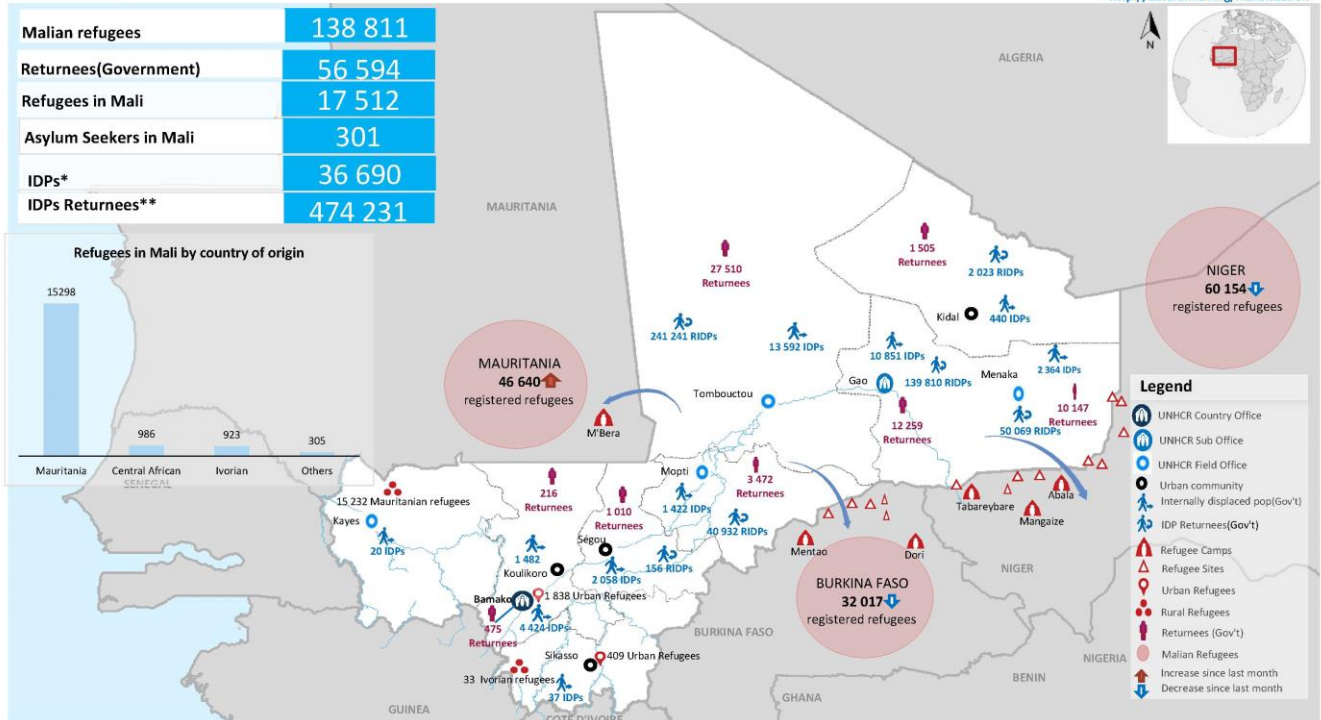
Mali situation map



Mali: Refugees, returnees and Internally displaced populations

31 December 2016

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



* Figures from IDPs dated as of October 2016

** Figures from IDPs Returnees dated as of October 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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Links:

[Mali Situation UNHCR portal](#) – [UNHCR Mali Facebook](#) - [UNHCR Mali Twitter](#)