

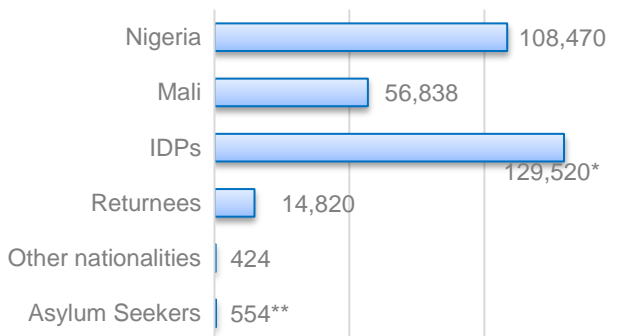
Niger

January 2018



POPULATION OF CONCERN

310,626



* This includes 129,015 IDPs registered by the Niger govt. in Diffa region as well as 505 IDPs identified by the Protection Cluster in Tillabery region, but not yet registered

**This includes 97 regular asylum seekers as well as 457 evacuees from Libya

KEY FIGURES

497

Refugees evacuated from Libya to Niger as part of the ETM from November 2017 – January 2018

1,002

Persons profiled by UNHCR in Agadez seeking asylum

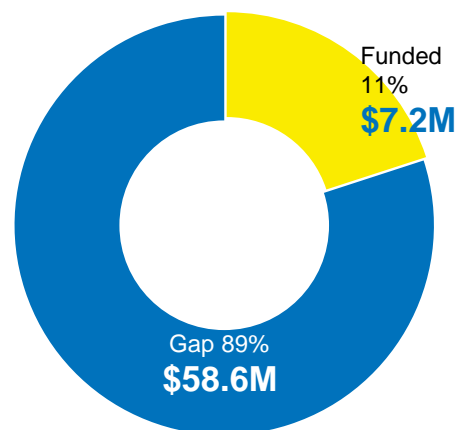
505

Persons reported internally displaced in the region of Tillabery bordering Mali

FUNDING (AS OF 31 JAN 2017)

USD \$65.8 M

requested for the Niger Country Operation



Arrival of evacuated refugees from Libya to Niger "Solidarity to create hope for the future" (UNHCR / A. Morelli)

Operational Context

The operational context in Niger has changed significantly in recent months. The beginning of 2018 marks a shift from 3 situations to 5 key situations and contexts. The operational context has become more complex, focusing not only on the Nigeria and Mali situations, but also now focusing on Mixed Migration, Emergency Evacuations and an increasingly worrying IDP situation in Tillabery region.

The **Mali situation** began in 2012 with the outbreak of conflict in northern Mali. Despite the signature of a Peace Agreement between conflicting parties in 2015, the situation has not yet stabilized. UNHCR continues to host and to welcome new Malian refugees. The regions of Tillabery and Tahoua bordering Mali and hosting the majority of Malian refugees (in 3 camps and 1 hosting area) have been victim to much insecurity in the past months, with a State of Emergency declared in several departments in March 2017. There are currently 56, 838 Malian refugees present in Niger. UNHCR's vision is to support the socio-economic integration of those refugees who do not yet wish to / cannot yet return. The aim is to support self-reliance capacities to enable the closure of the camps by the end of 2019.

In the Diffa region, the **Nigeria situation** began in 2013, with the arrival of the first Nigerian refugees across the border into Niger. The situation deteriorated further with the first attacks on Niger territory in 2015, and the unfolding of a complex and mixed displacement situation. There are currently over 250,000 displaced persons in the region (108,470 refugees, 129,015 IDPs and 14,820 returnees). The majority live in spontaneous sites or with the local population, while UNHCR manages one camp, with just over 12,000 people.

Since 2015 Niger has hosted **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** in the Diffa region. As the situation is extremely mixed, efforts are underway to complete biometric registration of all displaced persons, including IDPs, who are often faced with similar protection risks as refugees. The official number of IDPs in Diffa is 129, 015 (Govt. of Niger, October 2017). However, the situation has become more complex with increasing insecurity in the region of Tillabery. In January, attacks resulted in the internal displacement of at least 505 people for the first time. There is a major risk that the situation will deteriorate further. UNHCR also works with the government to improve the domestic legal framework.

Niger is situated in a highly geopolitically sensitive area and in the past years has developed into a major crossroads of migratory movements northwards towards Libya, Algeria and onwards to the Mediterranean. These migratory flows constitute **Mixed Migration** including not only economic migrants but also persons in need of international protection. UNHCR established a presence in the region of Agadez in 2017, with the aim of identifying asylum seekers within the migration flows. UNHCR works closely with the government, as well as IOM and a network of NGOs to identify these persons and provide them with information and assistance. However, the numbers approaching UNHCR had dramatically increased in the past months, with 1,002 persons currently profiled by UNHCR, many awaiting registration as asylum seekers with the government.

Added to the complexity of the Mixed Migration situation is the **Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM)**. This programme aims to provide life-saving assistance and solutions to the most vulnerable refugees trapped in detention in Libya, through temporary evacuation to Niger, which has temporarily extended its asylum space. The aim is to seek durable solutions, including resettlement for these refugees, who are mainly Eritrean, Somali and Ethiopian. To date, 497 people have been evacuated from Libya to Niger, whilst 25 have already been resettled to France. UNHCR is urgently seeking additional resettlement places to respond to the needs.

Security Situation

The security situation in the regions of **Tillabery** and **Tahoua** bordering Mali continues to deteriorate. In January, for the first time, UNHCR received reports of internal population movement within the region of Tillabery, following an attack resulting in the death of a civilian and the kidnapping of two others in the village of N'Zouett on the 17th of January. A joint protection mission on the 30th of January reported the presence of 505 individual IDPs in the village of Tilloa. It appears that the situation may continue to deteriorate. An analysis of the situation and the impact of insecurity and attacks emphasizes that up to 25 villages along the border area with Mali are at risk of further internal displacement (possibly up to 36,000 people). The zone has become increasingly militarized, with limited humanitarian access to certain areas.

Despite a relative reduction in the number of security related incidents in the past months, the month of January saw a resurgence of attacks by Boko Haram in the **Diffa** region. Since the beginning of the year, security incidents have led to the deaths of 10 members of the security and defense forces, and the wounding of 17 others, as well as the deaths of 7 civilians. On the 17th of January, an attack was launched against the security and defense forces in Toumour (75km east of Diffa), resulting in the deaths of 8 military officers, and the disappearance of another. Several vehicles and weapons were stolen by the attackers. On the night of the 29th of January, a second serious attack was carried out in Chetima Wango (20km south east of Diffa) against the Garde National, where 2 were killed and significant stocks and vehicles were stolen.

In the region of **Agadez**, over 700 Sudanese (Darfur) asylum seekers and refugees are seeking assistance from UNHCR. The situation is tense and must be closely monitored and analyzed, while solutions are sought for this community.

Operational Highlights

On the 31st of January, UNHCR Niger, with the presence of the Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements, as well as the Regional Refugee Coordinator Liz Ahua, launched the 2018 Nigeria Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP). The event was very well attended, with two Ministers (Minister of State and Minister of Humanitarian Action) as well as over 100 participants. The RRRP seeks \$157m to respond to the needs of the refugee population as well as host populations in Niger, Cameroon and Chad, affected by the Boko Haram crisis.



UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements with Niger Minister of State and Interior M. Bazoum, and UNHCR Niger Representative Alessandra Morelli during the launch of the Nigeria Situation RRRP 31 Jan (UNHCR / L. Donovan).

Key Developments & Achievements



PROTECTION

- In January, the Diffa Protection Working Group and national Protection Cluster nominated co-facilitators for the groups. Both Search for Common Ground and DRC will co-facilitate.
- A list of common terminology was also validated by the Protection Cluster and shared with all actors.

Nigeria situation

- The BIMS biometric registration process is progressing well in the Diffa region, outside of the camps. However, the aforementioned security incidents have caused some delays. To date, over 100,000 displaced persons have been registered through BIMS in the region. This is approximately 40% of the estimated displaced population in the region. Activities will be intensified in the months of February and March.
- A training was held for the members of the Diffa Protection Working Group (WG) at the end of January, focusing on the use of databases produced by the NGO partner REACH, to improve humanitarian planning and response. All members of the WG participated.
- Protection referral mechanisms were finalized by the Diffa Protection WG in January, for each of the Departments of the Diffa region. These clearly outline the various actors present, and the manner in which protection cases should be handled and referred. This has been shared with all protection actors in the Diffa region.
- UNHCR continues to monitor detention conditions in the Diffa region. In an effort to improve conditions and diet of persons in detention in Diffa prison, UNHCR will support the creation of a space for market gardening.

Mali situation

- UNHCR's BIMS registration exercise for the entire Malian refugee population was completed in January 2017. The total population is 56,838 – a 10% reduction on the official number registered at the end of 2016. 41,076 were biometrically enrolled in the system with fingerprinting and iris scans (the gap represents those refugees under 4 years old). 23,092 individual ID cards were issued (all refugees over 14 years old). This registration exercise is an essential protection tool, and will assist greatly in monitoring population movements.

IDP situation

- To date, 505 displaced persons have been counted in the area of Tilloa in the Tillabery region. It is expected that this figure will rise in the month of February. On the 30th of January, members of the Protection Cluster completed a protection monitoring report and analysis to assess the protection needs of the newly displaced IDP population. A mapping outlining the presence of the various protection actors throughout the region was also produced.
- UNHCR is working closely with the members of the Protection Cluster as well as OCHA, to ensure an adequate response for the newly displaced IDPs. UNHCR is focusing mainly on protection monitoring, response, and peaceful coexistence, in line with the Protection Cluster Plan of Action which was recently finalised. Modalities for the registration of the newly displaced are being discussed with the Government.

- In the Diffa region, following a violent attack in Toumour on the 17th of January, significant IDP population movements were reported from the area of Toumour to the site of Kintchandi, following a joint protection mission. Approximately 96 households were identified.



UNHCR staff in Tilloa, Tillabery region assessing the situation of newly displaced IDPs (UNHCR / A. Bardot).

Mixed Migration situation

- In the region of Agadez, unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers and refugees have approached or been referred to UNHCR for assistance. This includes a total of 1,002 persons. So far, 342 have been registered by the government (DREC-RM) and 660 are awaiting registration.
- A profiling exercise carried out from 25 – 27th January by UNHCR revealed that 51% of these people claim that they have previously been registered as either an asylum seeker, refugee, IDP or returnee in another country.
- The majority – 720, of these people are Sudanese (Darfur), many of whom are part of secondary movements from refugee camps in Chad, where they were previously registered. Others (approximately 60%) are part of movements southwards from Libya. UNHCR is working to identify and seek solutions for these people.
- The first step in providing response and solutions will be the verification of the identities of these people through the use of BIMS biometric identification, a cross border UNHCR tool, at the service of solutions.
- UNHCR Niger and UNHCR Chad began cross border discussions in January regarding this caseload of Sudanese refugees, to decide on the most appropriate response and solution. Those with specific protection needs will be prioritised for assistance and response.
- Two convoys of persons expelled from Algeria arrived in Agadez during the month of January. The majority were of Nigerien nationality, however UNHCR was present to identify any asylum seekers amongst the new arrivals.
- In the month of January, a Best Interest Determination (BID) panel for unaccompanied minors was established in Agadez, including UNHCR, the Niger govt., APBE and COOPI.
- UNHCR opened a second Case de Passage to accommodate highly vulnerable persons in Agadez.

Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM)

- In the month of January, a fourth evacuation flight from Libya to Niger took place on the 27th of January. This flight had to be postponed on several occasions due to conflict in Tripoli, particularly close to the airport, which was temporarily closed for several days.
- This flight included 134 refugees, bringing the total number evacuated to Niger from November to January to 361. 25 evacuated refugees have already been resettled to France in December 2017 as a result of the first OFPRA mission to Niger in November. Additionally, 43 other refugees, already present in Niger, were also accepted for resettlement by OFPRA, while 21 have already departed to France. An additional 4 evacuation flights are planned for the month of February.
- UNHCR hosted 2 more resettlement missions in January, one from the authorities responsible for refugees in Switzerland, and one from OFPRA in France. Over 150 people were interviewed for resettlement, including some of those evacuated from Libya and some refugees already present in Niger, also in need of resettlement.
- Negotiations are ongoing with more countries regarding resettlement places. Overall, UNHCR has received a total of **16,940** places for 15 countries along the Central Mediterranean route including **7,190** by European countries, out of which **2,280** are confirmed pledges for resettlement out of Niger, primarily for evacuees from Libya but some places can also for refugees already present in Niger.
- In the month of January, UNHCR Niger held a roundtable discussion with Regional Bureau for West Africa, Europe Bureau, MENA Bureau and UNHCR Libya regarding SOPs and processes around the ETM, in order to develop a common set of agreed procedures moving forward.



EDUCATION

Nigeria situation

- A recent evaluation was carried out in the region of Diffa to assess the capacities of all primary and secondary school teachers. The results were quite worrying with less than 20% of the teachers passing the evaluation. Despite this, education activities in the camp of Sayam Forage continued, with 1,213 children enrolled in the primary school.
- Within the Distance Education Programme for secondary school Nigerian refugees, the teacher examinations did not affect the centres. However challenges are being faced in ensuring access to the online educational platform in 3 of the centres, where electricity is not always available. Measures are being taken to ensure electrical capacity. This is essential in maintaining the standards required by the Nigerian National Examination Council (NECO).



HEALTH

Nigeria situation

- As part of a programme to combat HIV / AIDS in the Diffa region, 580 people were screened in January in the Sayam Forage camp. Additionally, over 600 women who visited the health centre for prenatal consultations were also all screened for HIV / AIDS. To date in the camp, 27 people who tested positive for HIV are receiving treatment.

**WATER AND SANITATION****Nigeria situation**

- Two wells were provided, in collaboration with the Regional Directorate for hydraulics and partners for the provision of water for agricultural activities (poultry, agro pastoral, fish farming and market gardening) at three sites including Bosso, Maine Soroa and Sayam Forage camp.
- Works to transform a manual water pump into a mini-AEP water network at the urbanization site of Chetimari are underway. This will include the installation of a water tower, 6 water points and a hybrid water pumping station (solar and thermal).

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE****Mali situation**

- At the end of January, UNHCR, in partnership with a local micro-finance company, distributed 'magnetic smartcards' to benefit the population of the camp of Abala, hosting over 15,000 Malian refugees. These magnetic smartcards will be used to deliver monthly cash assistance to cover the basic needs of the population. This is a new and innovative approach being piloted by UNHCR, and accompanies the 'mobile money' initiative launched in November, where cash is being distributed through mobile phones on a monthly basis.
- All cash assistance for Malian refugees is targeted based on the capacities of the households to support themselves.
- In Ayorou, activities began for the creation of market gardens for the benefit of both urban refugees as well as host population. Discussions are underway with local authorities to develop further common projects between the two communities.

Key Challenges

Mali situation

- The key challenge as regards to the Mali situation is the increasing insecurity and subsequent population movements. At the end of January at least 505 persons had been internally displaced, however this figure risks increasing significantly if attacks continue. The Protection Cluster estimate that up to 25 villages of 36,000 people are at risk. Additionally, due to insecurity in border areas, humanitarian access is not always possible. This insecurity and internal displacement risks adversely affecting ongoing programmes aiming towards the socioeconomic integration of the Malian refugee population.

Nigeria situation

- The key challenge in the region of Diffa is the increase in insecurity and targeted attacks. The number of serious attacks resulting in the deaths of military as well as civilians increased significantly in January compared to the previous months. This affects humanitarian movements and also affects the finalization of the BIMS biometric registration throughout the region of Diffa.

■ **IDP situation**

As noted, the insecurity in the regions of Tillabery and Diffa has notably increased in the month of January, with the direct result being the creation of new IDPs (Tillabery region) and the secondary movement of others (Diffa region). The situation must be rapidly responded to in order to avoid further movements where possible.

Mixed Migration

- In the Agadez region, responding to the unprecedented influx of persons of concern, mainly of Sudanese nationality, is presenting a challenge. Verifying the identity of these persons is of utmost priority, to enable an adequate response and solutions. UNHCR do not have the hosting capacity to cater to the over 1,000 persons seeking assistance, which risks resulting in tensions, while the risk of further secondary movements to Agadez is also high. UNHCR is working closely both with the local authorities, partners, as well as cross-border with Chad to seek solutions.

Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism

- The key challenge faced in the month of January was related to insecurity and conflict in Libya, which resulted in several delays of planned evacuation flights. Finally, just one flight was possible in the month of January. However, we hope that the process will become more rapid and fluid in February.
- Another challenge faced as regards to the ETM is the number of spaces allocated for resettlement. To-date, the number of places is not adequate to respond to the needs in Libya and on the ground in Niger. In particular, there are insufficient places allocated specifically for unaccompanied minors – the most vulnerable group, who require solutions urgently. UNHCR continues to advocate with the European and other countries to increase their pledges for resettlement, to provide life-saving solutions.

UNHCR Presence in Niger

Staff: 125 national, 74*international

Offices: 1 Head Office Niamey, 2 Sub-Offices Diffa and Agadez; 2 Field Offices Tillabery and Tahoua; 2 Field Unites Abala and Ouallam

**this includes international consultants*

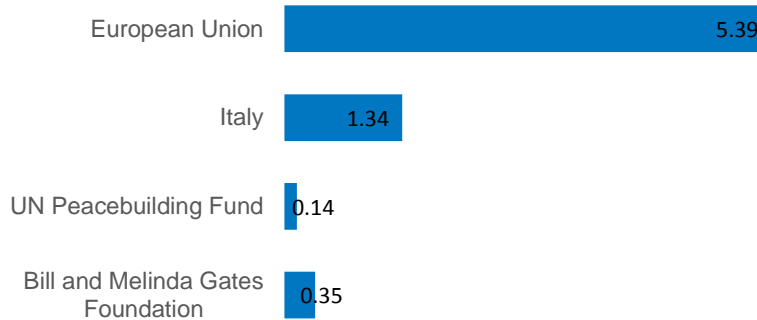
Partners

Govt. of Niger, ACTED/REACH, Adkoul, APBE, Care, CISP, COOPI, DRC, Forum Refugie Cosi, HI, IRC, KARKARA, OXFAM, QRC, SFCG, SDO, UNAIDS

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 7.24 million**,

Funding received (in million USD)



Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Sweden (98 M) | Norway (43 M) | Netherlands (39 M) | United Kingdom (32 M) | Denmark (25 M) | Australia (19 M) | Switzerland (15 M)

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 20XX

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