

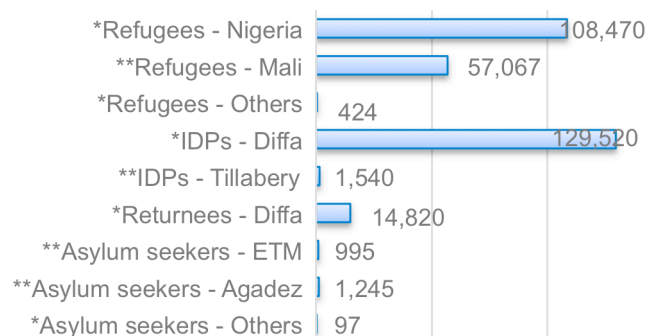
Niger

February 2018



POPULATION OF CONCERN

314,187



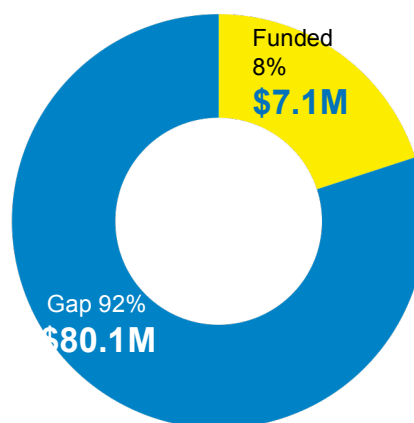
* Government of Niger official figures

** UNHCR Figures

FUNDING (AS OF 28 FEB 2018)

USD \$87.2 M

requested for the Niger Country Operation



KEY FIGURES

1,020

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

1,245

Persons profiled by UNHCR in Agadez seeking asylum

1,540

Persons internally displaced in the Tillabery region



UNHCR Niger staff guide newly arrived refugees, evacuated from Libya on 27th of February, towards buses to take them to their new temporary homes, awaiting long-term solutions (L.Donovan/ UNHCR)

Operational Context

The beginning of 2018 marked increased complexity in the operational context, and a shift from 3 to 5 key situations and contexts. The key situations include:

- 1. The Mali situation:** began in 2012 with the outbreak of conflict in northern Mali. The regions of Tillabery and Tahoua bordering Mali and hosting the majority of the refugees are affected by much insecurity. A State of Emergency was declared last year, and extended for a further 6 months in February 2018. There are 57, 067 Malian refugees in Niger. UNHCR aims to support the socio-economic integration of these refugees and the closure of the camps by the end of 2019.
- 2. The Nigeria situation:** began in 2013, with the arrival of the first Nigerian refugees across the border. The situation deteriorated with the first attacks in Niger territory in 2015. There are over 250,000 displaced persons in the region (108,470 refugees, 129,015 IDPs and 14,820 returnees – Govt. of Niger, Oct 2017). The majority live in spontaneous sites or with the local population, while UNHCR manages one camp, with just over 13,000 people.
- 3. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** In the Diffa region, 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. However, the IDP situation in Niger has become more complex with increasing insecurity in the region of Tillabery. In 2018, attacks and insecurity have resulted in the internal displacement of at least 1,540 people for the first time.
- 4. Mixed Migration:** Niger is a major crossroads of migratory movements northwards towards Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean. These migratory flows constitute mixed migration, including economic migrants and 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. 1,279 persons are currently profiled by UNHCR, awaiting registration with the government.
- 5. Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM):** This programme aims to provide life-saving assistance and long-term solutions to the most vulnerable refugees trapped in detention in Libya, through evacuation to Niger, which has temporarily extended its asylum space to welcome these people. The aim is to seek durable solutions, including resettlement for these refugees, who are mainly Eritrean, Somali, Ethiopian, Sudanese and South Sudanese. To date, 1,020 people have been evacuated from Libya to Niger. 25 refugees have already been resettled to France. UNHCR is urgently seeking resettlement places to respond to the needs.

Security Situation

The security situation in the regions of **Tahoua** and **Tillabery** in particular has continued to deteriorate. February saw serious clashes between extremist groups south of Menaka in Mali. To avoid the risk of these clashes spilling into the zone of Banibangou in Niger, on the 25th of February, the military operation in Tillabery ordered the temporary suspension of all activities and movements in the zone north of the commune of Ouallam. The Government of Niger also announced the extension for 6 months of the State of Emergency in various departments of Tillabery and Tahoua regions, which was initially declared in March 2017. Internal displacement has subsequently increased, more than tripling in the month of February from 505 to 1,540, with 43 villages at risk.

The **Diffa** region saw a relative reduction in terrorism related attacks compared to January. However, incidents of banditry, looting and kidnappings persisted. 7 people were kidnapped in February. One person was killed during a looting incident, while the security and defence forces arrested 11 persons suspected of association with the insurgent group. Nonetheless, several restrictive measures related to the State of Emergency in the region have been lifted, enabling the population to begin again to engage in income generating activities.

Key Developments & Achievements



PROTECTION

- To mark the 20 year anniversary of the Guiding Principles on IDPs, the Protection Cluster published a [summary document](#) highlighting the activities to support the engagement of IDPs in protection.

Nigeria situation

- The BIMS biometric registration of the displaced population in the Diffa region continued in February. A total of 138,214 persons have been registered in the region (40,097 households) – 55% of the total number of displaced people as indicated by the Niger government (Oct 2017). More info available [here](#).
- From the 7–9 February, UNHCR Niger and Nigeria held a cross-border workshop in Niamey to discuss registration, protection and cross border movements. A list of recommendations was generated which will be followed closely by both operations to optimize the overall response.
- Approximately 240 households reportedly arrived to the commune of Chetimari, having departed Yobe and Borno states in Nigeria, following attacks. These people state that they are of Nigerien nationality.
- As regards child protection, since January, 52 sensitization sessions have been carried out with the community, focusing on the consequences of child marriage, social cohesion, violence against children, the right to development, risks of exploitation and abuse, amongst others. A total of 3,624 persons participated. Similarly, 1,069 persons benefitted from sensitization regarding SGBV in the various communities, in the framework of the prevention of SGBV and child protection incidents.
- The population of the refugee camp of Sayam Forage has increased since the beginning of 2018 from just over 12,000 to 13,011.
- An analytical note regarding kidnappings in the region of Diffa in 2017 was published by the Protection Working Group in February, as well as a note on the right to housing, land and property in the context of displacement in Diffa, with the aim of promoting the security of land occupation for displaced persons, including refugees, IDPs and returnees.
- The Protection Cluster, with support of REACH published the Protection Endline evaluation at the end of February. This is a comprehensive evaluation of protection needs and risks throughout the Diffa region, which followed an initial Baseline evaluation published in May 2017. The Endline evaluation is available to download [here](#).

Mali situation

- As mentioned, restrictions have been put in place in all areas north of Ouallam, in the region of Tillabery. This affects humanitarian access, particularly in the area of Mangiازه refugee camp. UNHCR and partners are in close dialogue with the authorities to ensure that there is no rupture in activities.
- A joint protection mission took place to Abala from the 21-22 February. Various key findings include: preventative internal population movements in Tillabery region (see IDP section below), as well as some cross border movements to Mali. It was reported that several schools in the region have closed due to insecurity, while many health centres do not have adequate stocks of medication, while staff are not always present. It was also reported that some youth in the region are deciding to move onwards towards Algeria and Libya.

IDP situation

- Approximately 1,540 people (225 households) have reportedly been internally displaced in the region of Tillabery.
- Preventative movements from Abala and Midik towards Mali have also been reported, however figures are not yet available.
- A map showing 43 villages at risk was published by the Protection Cluster (see below), showing the 43 villages which are still at risk of further population movements, along the border with Mali.
- UNHCR continues to work closely with the members of the Protection Cluster and other humanitarian actors through OCHA – lead established mechanisms, to ensure an adequate response for the newly displaced IDPs. UNHCR focuses mainly on protection coordination, protection monitoring, and peaceful coexistence, in line with the Tillabery Plan of Action which was recently finalised. Modalities for the registration of the newly displaced are being discussed with the Government.

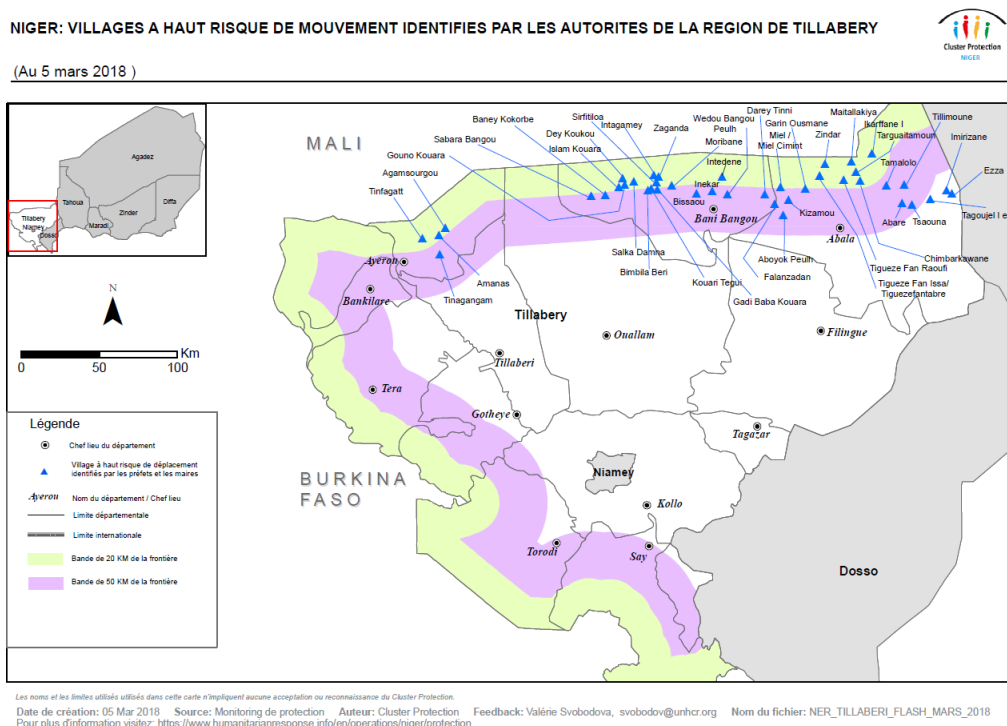


Fig. 1. Villages at risk of population movements in the region of Tillabery

Mixed Migration situation

- In the region of Agadez, 1,085 asylum seekers have been biometrically registered by UNHCR (for more info click [here](#)). The registration exercise reveals that 89% of these people are Sudanese, mainly from Darfur, approximately 60% of whom have arrived in Agadez in downwards movement from Libya.
- UNHCR provides accommodation and assistance to the most vulnerable, and is providing food and shelter to all seeking asylum, while their cases are being examined, to determine their right to international protection.
- UNHCR Niger and Chad are working closely to provide appropriate solutions to those refugees already registered in refugee camps in Chad.
- Between December 2017 and February 2018, over 5,500 persons were deported from Algeria to Niger. The majority (over 55%) of those deported are of Nigerien nationality.
- UNHCR is working closely with IOM and other partners to identify and register all of those persons of other nationalities, amongst those deported from Algeria, in order to identify asylum seekers and those in need of international protection.

- UNHCR is training municipal staff in six municipalities of Agadez on data collection and monitoring of migratory flows including the identification of asylum seekers and refugees amongst those deported from Algeria

Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM)

- February saw a marked increase in the number of evacuation flights to Niger. UNHCR facilitated the safe arrival of 5 more evacuation flights from Libya to Niger, carrying 644 vulnerable refugees. This brings the total number of refugees evacuated from Libya to Niger since November 2017 to 1,020.
- Amongst this number, 25 refugees have already been successfully resettled in France, while UNHCR is awaiting the results of two further resettlement missions (France and Switzerland). UNHCR is hopeful that the second group of refugees will be ready to depart for resettlement in the next weeks.
- Negotiations are ongoing with several European countries regarding resettlement places. Overall, UNHCR has received a total of **16,940** places for 15 countries along the Central Mediterranean route out of which **2,280** are confirmed pledges for resettlement out of Niger, primarily for evacuees from Libya but some places also for refugees already present in Niger.
- UNHCR is expecting several more resettlement missions in the next weeks from various European countries. Cases have already been submitted to various countries, while others are in the final stages of preparation.
- Efforts are ongoing on behalf of both UNHCR and resettlement countries, to ensure the facilitation and acceleration of the resettlement process, to ensure the safe departures of more refugees to third countries. More evacuation flights are planned, but there is a need for fluidity in the process, and the rapid departure of refugees accepted for resettlement following interviews with third countries.
- Approximately 30% of those evacuated are unaccompanied minors. This particularly vulnerable group are being rapidly processed, including with BID (Best Interest Determinations), to ensure that long-term solutions can be identified as quickly as possible.



EDUCATION

Nigeria situation

- In the month of February the Regional Directorates for Primary and Secondary Education carried out pedagogical training with the teachers of both the primary school and the Distance Education Centre in Sayam Forage refugee camp. This is part of the regional response in terms of increasing the overall capacities of teachers operating in the region.

Mali Situation

- In the region of Tillabery, following sand storms during the rainy season, UNHCR, the regional Directorates for Education and the local authorities completed an evaluation mission to measure the extent of the damage to school infrastructure. A joint plan of action will be developed to respond to the situation and ensure continued access to education.
- During a joint protection monitoring mission to Abala in the Tillabery region at the end of February, it was reported that several schools had closed due to the instability. UNHCR will engage in dialogue with the relevant authorities to ensure that students have access to education.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Mali situation

- In February, UNHCR, in close collaboration with a socio-anthropological research institute in Niger completed a survey on nutrition, health, hygiene and sanitation in all of the Malian refugee camps and the refugee hosting area in the regions of Tillabery and Tahoua.
- It has been reported in Abala that several health centres are running out of adequate stocks of medication to respond to the needs of the population, due to security restrictions in place in the region.
- Temporary health and nutrition facilities in the refugee hosting area (ZAR) of Intikane in the region of Tahoua which were destroyed during sand storms, have been repaired, and all activities have returned to normal.
- Additionally in Intikane ZAR, special support was provided to the local Integrated Health Centre in terms of kits for pregnant women, to encourage assisted births rather than home births.



SHELTER AND NFIS

Nigeria situation

- In the context of the Urbanization project in the Diffa region, a mission was carried out by the National Laboratory of Public Works to complete geo-technic studies on the various sites being used for the production of bricks for the construction of durable houses. A total of 12 sites were visited. A multifunctional brick production centre will be established, while the site for the centre has already been identified.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Mali situation

- In February, the population of Abala camp received their first monthly targeted cash assistance through the magnetic smartcard modality. This cash is intended to cover basic needs, and to support self-reliance. The modality is a first in Niger and will be monitored to measure its impact.
- In February, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs accompanied a delegation from the World Bank to visit the region of Tillabery, including the camp of Tabareybarey. The aim of the mission was to identify self-reliance and autonomisation projects, which may be included in an upcoming funding engagement between the WB and the Government of Niger (IDA 18).

Key Challenges

Mali situation

- The key challenge as regards to the Mali situation is the increasing insecurity, armed attacks and subsequent restrictions on movement, including humanitarian actors. To date, over 1,500 persons have been internally displaced, with an additional 43 villages at risk. 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 currently the risk of kidnapping. Although there has been a reported reduction in the number of terrorist attacks, the number of kidnappings for ransom has increased. This affects humanitarian movements and also affects the finalization of the BIMS biometric registration throughout the region of Diffa.

IDP situation

- As noted, the risk of increasing internal displacement in the Tillabery is a very concrete risk and challenge. To attract attention to the situation of IDPs in Niger, in March, UNHCR and UNDP will jointly facilitate a mission of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on IDPs to Niger.

Mixed Migration

- In the Agadez region, the increasing number of asylum seekers presents a challenge. The presence of a large group of Sudanese asylum seekers arriving from Libya risks the possible development of tensions with the host community.
- UNHCR is working to profile and identify all of those who are entitled to international protection amongst the new arrivals, in this complex situation, and continues to work closely with the government and partners.

Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism

- As regards to those refugees evacuated from Libya, the key challenge identified is in terms of improving the fluidity of the process of departures for resettlement. UNHCR continues to work in close collaboration with third countries who have accepted to resettle these refugees, to ensure that the process is as effective and efficient as possible, whilst also guaranteeing the integrity of the process.

UNHCR Presence in Niger

Staff: 135 national, 70*international

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

**this includes international consultants and affiliate workforce*

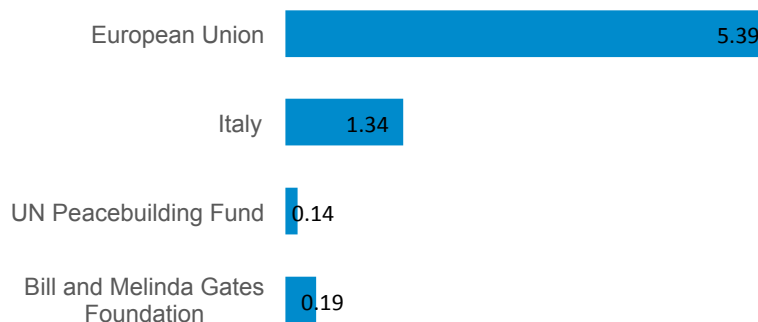
Partners

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\$ 7.1 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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