

UNHCR Niger – 10 June 2020

Staying and delivering for refugees amid the COVID-19 crisis

COVID-19, the coronavirus pandemic, endangers everyone on the planet – including refugees and other people displaced by conflict or persecution. **No person of concern to UNHCR has been reported as infected** in West and Central Africa, however the risk is high considering the rapid rise in the number of cases across the world.

UNHCR's priorities are outlined in the revised COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan and in its revised appeal for assistance.

Globally, UNHCR needs \$745 million to prepare and respond to the pandemic in the next nine months – out of which \$7,4 million are for Niger.

Key principles are:

- Fully supporting the national response plan;
- Looking for operational synergies with other humanitarian actors in our intervention areas;
- Maintaining life-saving activities;
- Mobilizing internal and external resources.

I. PRIORITY ACTIONS OF UNHCR TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN

The national response plan can be declined in 6 priority sectors:

1. Coordination
2. Epidemiologic surveillance
3. Infection control and prevention
4. Risk communication and social community engagement
5. Capacities of the health sector
6. Isolation sites

UNHCR intervenes in all sectors except 2.

1. Coordination

In Niamey, UNHCR is an active member of the committees set up by the Government as well as in all humanitarian forums (Humanitarian Country Team, UN Country Team, Intercluster, thematic / ad hoc meetings) linked to the emergency. UNHCR's senior management supports the field offices to look for operational synergies.

2. Infection control and prevention

The following actions are implemented in all regions where UNHCR has an operational presence (Tillabery, Tahoua, Agadez, Maradi, Diffa, Niamey):

- Support to the Regional Public Health Directorates through the **purchase of hygiene, disinfectant and protection equipment** - a total amount of **830,000 USD** has been spent. Equipment was distributed in all refugee hosting areas and to public administrations and services
- In partnership with WFP and UNDP, **training and equipping mainly female refugee beneficiaries to produce liquid soap, moringa soap, bleach and masks** to protect refugee and host communities and to support health centers. This is done in partnership with different NGOs such as Forge Arts, ADES and APBE. Over 1000 masks are to be distributed to people of concern in UNHCR's registration sites and information points.

⇒ More information on these activities on:

- [Malian refugees in Niger make face covers to prevent the coronavirus spread](#)
- [Self-help project in Niger churns out hygiene products in fight against coronavirus](#)



A refugee woman pours soap into molds at a soap factory in Niamey, Niger. The soap is distributed for free to fellow refugees and the local community. © UNHCR/Jean-Sebastien Josset

Support to the regional authorities, the Regional Directorates of Urban Planning and the humanitarian community to **identify overcrowded sites and initiate an effective site planning** which respects the necessary distance between shelters is ongoing. A transit center has been built in Sayam Forage camp (Diffa region).

3. Risk communication and social community engagement

UNHCR participates to the Government's offers to distribute messages through the following actions:

- Participation in the UN Communication Group;
- Sensitization in the field through a broad network of focal points and community liaison persons (protection monitoring focal points, community leaders, parents, public criers, door to door visits, ...)
- [When hip-hop saves lives: UNESCO, i4Policy and UNHCR joined forces in a #DontGoViral campaign to fight the infodemic around COVID-19](#)



The song "Protect Your Life" is part of the #DontGoViral campaign that has developed a series of openly licensed public service announcements, music videos, and songs as part of the UN's ongoing communication campaign to fight disinformation around COVID © Lords Coast

4. Capacities of the health sector

- Moreover, a total number of 132 persons has been trained on psychological first aid in 5 regions in partnership with partner INTERSOS.
- UNHCR has distributed protection, hygiene and disinfection equipment in all its field locations since the month of April in coordination with the national and regional coordination structures.



UNHCR Niger @UNHCRNiger · 5 mai

At Sayam Forage camp #Diffa 🇳🇮, distributions go on with partners @WFP_Niger, BNIF and @apbe_official. Since March, more than 19,000 people have received cash, soap 🧼 and food 🍌 #DeliverAsOne #LeaveNoOneBehind



5. Isolation sites

- To support authorities to **set up isolation cells** to separate potential COVID-19 cases and treat confirmed cases, UNHCR has undertaken a needs analysis with the Regional Directorates of Health.
 - In Niamey, the national stadium has been equipped with 58 Refugee Housing Units to host a total number of 100 potential patients.
 - In Tahoua, UNHCR has donated 40 Refugee Housing Units to equip the isolation and treatment center;
 - In Tillabery, a UNHCR-sponsored health center has been retained as the main isolation and treatment center for patients;
 - In Diffa, UNHCR has contributed 30,000 USD for the rehabilitation of the building identified by the Government – the building was handed over to the authorities on the 3rd of June.

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LINKS :

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