

# Mali Situation

January - March 2019

The beginning of 2019 saw continued incidents of insecurity in the Sahel region. The security situation in **Burkina Faso, Niger** and **Mali** remained volatile with threats of terrorism, criminality and intercommunity violence, within the countries and along border areas. This situation is **impacting** negatively on the **protection environment** for civilians and limiting **humanitarian access**. The prevailing insecurity and violence is likely to continue, resulting in worsening levels of vulnerability among populations of concern and additional displacement. Although some timid returns of Malian refugees have been observed from Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania, large-scale returns are not foreseen in 2019 given that conditions for a safe and dignified return are not conducive.

## KEY STATISTICS (AS OF 31 MARCH)

**137,975** Malian refugees

in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger

**8,457** Burkinabe refugees

in Mali

**304,933** Internally Displaced Persons

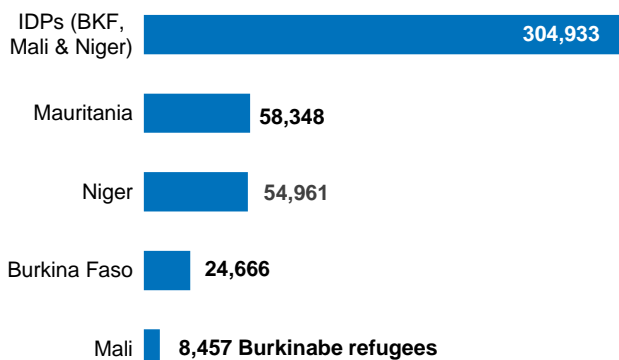
in Burkina Faso (**135,589 IDPs**) and Mali (**99,039 IDPs**) and Niger (**70,035 IDPs**)

sources: UNHCR and Governments

## MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

- On 23 March, an attack on a Fulani village in central Mali left over 160 people dead and 55 seriously wounded. According to survivors, armed ethnic Dogon hunters raided their Ogossagou village in the early hours, killing people, burning houses and other property. The attack has also forced several people to be displaced internally and across the border in Burkina Faso.
- UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (AHC-P), Volker Türk, visited Mali (5-7 February) and Mauritania (17-20 Feb). The focus of the mission was on the displacement situation in the two countries and related protection and security challenges. In Mali, the AHC-P went to Kayes where he met with refugees from Mauritania and to Timbuktu where he met IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees as well as refugees from Burkina Faso. In Mauritania, the AHC-P visited Mbera camp, host to some 57,000 Malian refugees. During field visits in both countries, the AHC-P also met with key line ministries, local authorities and partners.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN (REFUGEES AND IDPS)



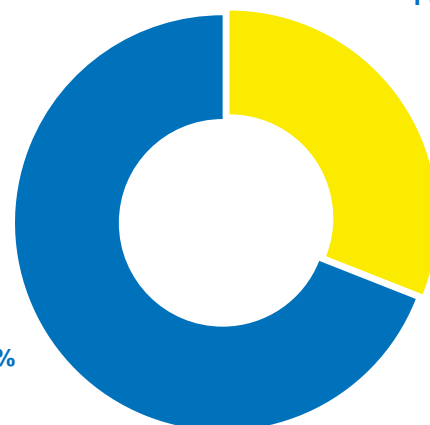
## FUNDING (AS OF 20 MARCH)

**USD 58.8 M**

requested for the Mali Situation

**Funded 35%**  
**20.6 M**

**Gap: 65%**  
**38.2M**



## OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- Members of the United Nations Security Council undertook a mission to Mali (22-23 March) and Burkina Faso (24 March). In Mali, the focus of the mission was on continued insecurity, the role of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the operationalisation of the G5-Sahel Force. In Burkina Faso, focus was on the degradation of the security situation. In addition, UNHCR's Representative in Burkina Faso participated in an exchange with the Security Council and briefed them on protection and refugee issues.
- The context of displacement in Mali remains complex and fluid due to insecurity and various different movements of internally displaced persons currently residing in the southern regions to the northern regions continue to be reported. While some displaced persons had definitively reported, others explained that they had to go back and forth between place of asylum and place of origin, to check on possibilities of return.
- In Burkina Faso, security incidents were recorded on an almost daily basis, primarily against state institutions, security services, schools and health centers. Attacks aimed at stopping children attending 'western education' have led to almost 1,000 schools being closed. Violent tensions between different communities have been recorded in Centre Nord and Sahel regions, triggering additional displacement. Insecurity has spread beyond the Sahel region and is affecting areas in the West, North, East and Southeast of the country, along border areas with conflict-affected Mali and Niger. The main consequence is the lack of humanitarian access in said border areas, where out of camp refugees are settled and the associated protection risks and risks of conflict with the local population over scarce natural resources. Burkinabe citizens have been forced to flee to Mali, Niger and Ghana.
- Even though the situation on the Mauritanian border remains quite stable, in the first three months of 2019, UNHCR registered 2,161 new arrivals from Mali. UNHCR has been preparing for the roll out of the targeted food assistance, based on the socio-economic profiling exercise of the refugee population of the camp conducted at the end of 2018, in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Food Security (CSA) and partnership with Action against Hunger (ACF) Spain.
- In Niger, the regions of Tahoua and Tillaberi are rife with armed groups and inter-ethnic violence resulting in displacement of populations in all areas close to the Mali border. Movements of suspected extremists near the border have been reported, as well as incursions in villages, cattle rustling and market attacks. The situation along the border with Burkina Faso has also deteriorated significantly with attacks targeting civilians and defence and security forces (DSF). In response to the deterioration of the security situation, the 4 active military operations in the area (Dongo, G5 Sahel, Saki 2, and the joint Dongo / Barkhane operation) have increased their presence and started airborne operations. The continuing challenging security situation in Niger has compelled the Nigerien state authorities to extend the duration for the state of emergency for another three months in the Diffa and Tillaberi regions starting 18 March. The Government of Niger first declared the state of emergency in February 2015. Thus, humanitarian agencies are being urged to reduce missions/travel throughout the Tillaberi region.

## COUNTRY UPDATES

### Burkina Faso

- Malian refugees, especially those living out of camp areas along the border, are feeling the effects of the deteriorating security situation. UNHCR and its partners have sensitized refugees living in border areas, where the G5 Sahel is active, to move to safer locations where humanitarian actors will have better access. Since beginning 2019, 153 refugees formerly settled in areas out of camp within Oudalan Provinces have decided to move to Goudoubo refugee camp.
- With the support of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and BPRM, livelihood activities continue in order to enhance the self-reliance of refugees in Mentao and Goudoubo camps.
- Artisan products produced by Malian refugees in Burkina Faso were also showcased during an international trade show in Frankfurt, Germany, from 8 to 12 February as part of the MADE51 initiative.



*Malian refugee women in Burkina Faso working on design lamps to be sold internationally through the social enterprise AAKS. UNHCR : P. Tilmant*

- UNHCR and the Government of Burkina aim to facilitate the integration of Malian refugees and gradually transform refugee camps into villages adapted to the national context and the Sahelian climate conditions. A pilot project has realized 80 clay constructions for the most vulnerable households.

## Mali

- On 27 February, humanitarian partners in Mali, launched the Humanitarian Response Plan targeting 2.3 million people and seeking funding to the tune of USD 296M. The targeted population accounts for 70% of the 3.2M people in need. According to OCHA, in January 2018, approximately 4.1M people needed assistance and 1.5 M of them were targeted. The overall reduction in the number of people in need is due both to the positive results of the crop year and to the impact of humanitarian assistance provided in 2018. A total 40% of persons targeted are in the region of Mopti. Over half of the financial support requested aims to cover acute food and nutrition needs.

## Mauritania

- The introduction of the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) has enabled UNHCR to enhance its modalities for distributing assistance and protection monitoring of children who are sent to collect food rations on behalf of their families. In March, UNHCR and World Food Programme distributed cash assistance through electronic cards to 53,841 refugees (12,862 households) and using GDT technology in collaboration with its partners, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), *Action Contre la Faim* (ACF) and Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (CSA), assisted 1,305 persons with specific needs.
- In view of widening protection space, UNHCR launched the out-of-camp registration exercise for Malian refugees living outside Mbera camp in collaboration with the National Agency for Civil Registration (ANRPTS) of Mauritania. The exercise started after a compromise with ANRPTS was found to refer registered persons to the nearest ANRPTS office for data verification and confirmation.

## Niger

- In January, mayors of the communes hosting Malian refugees and representatives of the Malian refugees in Tillabéri region, took part in a "Go and See" mission to Diffa. The objective was to share experience and lessons learned on the EU Trust Fund project (urbanization/ construction of social houses) for the implementation of a similar intervention, with the support of German cooperation (GIZ).
- On 7 February, in the Mangaize camp (in the Ouallam department, Tillabéri region), UNHCR official handed over the hydraulic infrastructure management to local authorities as part of its strategic engagement with the Government aimed at promoting the inclusion and mainstreaming of refugee services into national systems..

# KEY CHALLENGES

## Burkina Faso

- The presence of IDPs in areas hosting refugees has had a significant impact on carrying capacity of established facilities and social services, straining provision of quality health and education services, and challenging capacities of water supply systems. The deteriorating security situation in the area around Mentao camp has impacted on the mindsets of refugees who once again don't feel safe anymore.
- The rapid increase of displacement beyond the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso is creating additional operational challenges requiring an interagency response in support of the Government. The current displacement trends are expected to continue in coming months which will further strain local and humanitarian resources.

## Mali

- The major challenges in refugee assistance are essentially due to insecurity and access; they include access to documentation (especially for children), education of school-aged children, the physical security of persons and property, livelihoods, the strengthening of community protection structures and support for people with specific needs.

## Mauritania

- Refugees in Mbera camp remain dependent on food assistance due to lack of livelihood options and as a result of adverse climatic conditions. As of March 2019, WFP was facing a US\$ 4.4 million shortfall (32% of its requirements) for its assistance to Malian refugees, a situation likely to have a severe impact on their health and nutrition status.

- In view of the roll out of targeted assistance, UNHCR implemented livelihood interventions targeting Malian refugees and the host community. At this stage of the protracted situation of the Malian refugee crisis, mounting livelihoods interventions are of utmost importance to ensure that the targeted food assistance will not negatively affect refugee households, potentially leading to negative coping mechanisms and a degraded nutrition situation.
- UNHCR continues to advocate for refugees' access to civil registration, national documentation, and for the inclusion of refugees in national protection systems (health, education, child protection, SGBV).

## Niger

- Increasing insecurity, due mostly to armed attacks and ethnic tensions, and a resulting lack of humanitarian access continues to pose the biggest challenge in the areas bordering Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as along the border with Nigeria, where recurrent attacks targeting civilians continue to be reported. Challenges will lie in assisting the increasing number of displaced population and ensuring adequate protection.

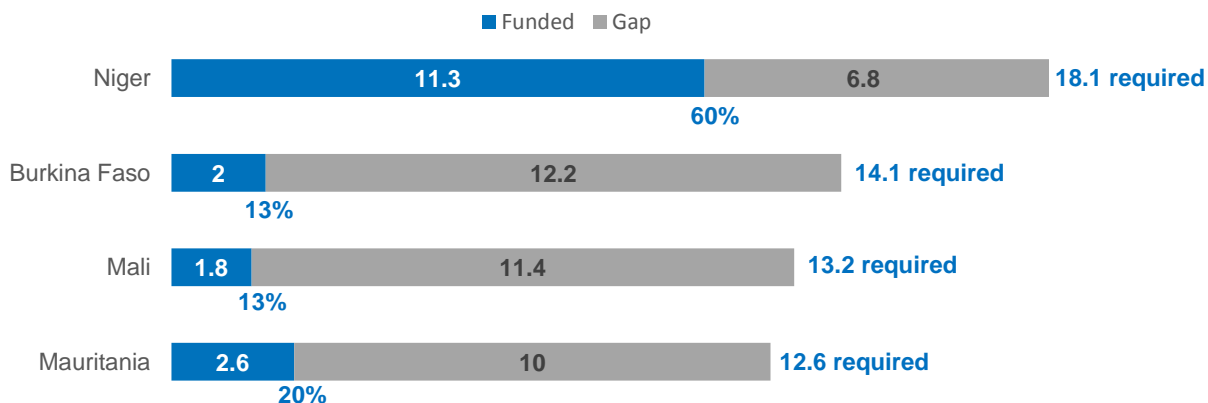
## EXTERNAL / DONOR RELATIONS

### Special thanks to the major donors who have contributed to the Mali situation in 2019

[European Union](#) | [Germany](#) | [Italy](#) | [Japan](#) | [Private Donors Spain](#) | [United States of America](#)

### Mali Situation Funding Update

A total of **US\$20.6 million** has been funded (including for the overall Situation and HQ & Regional Coordination).



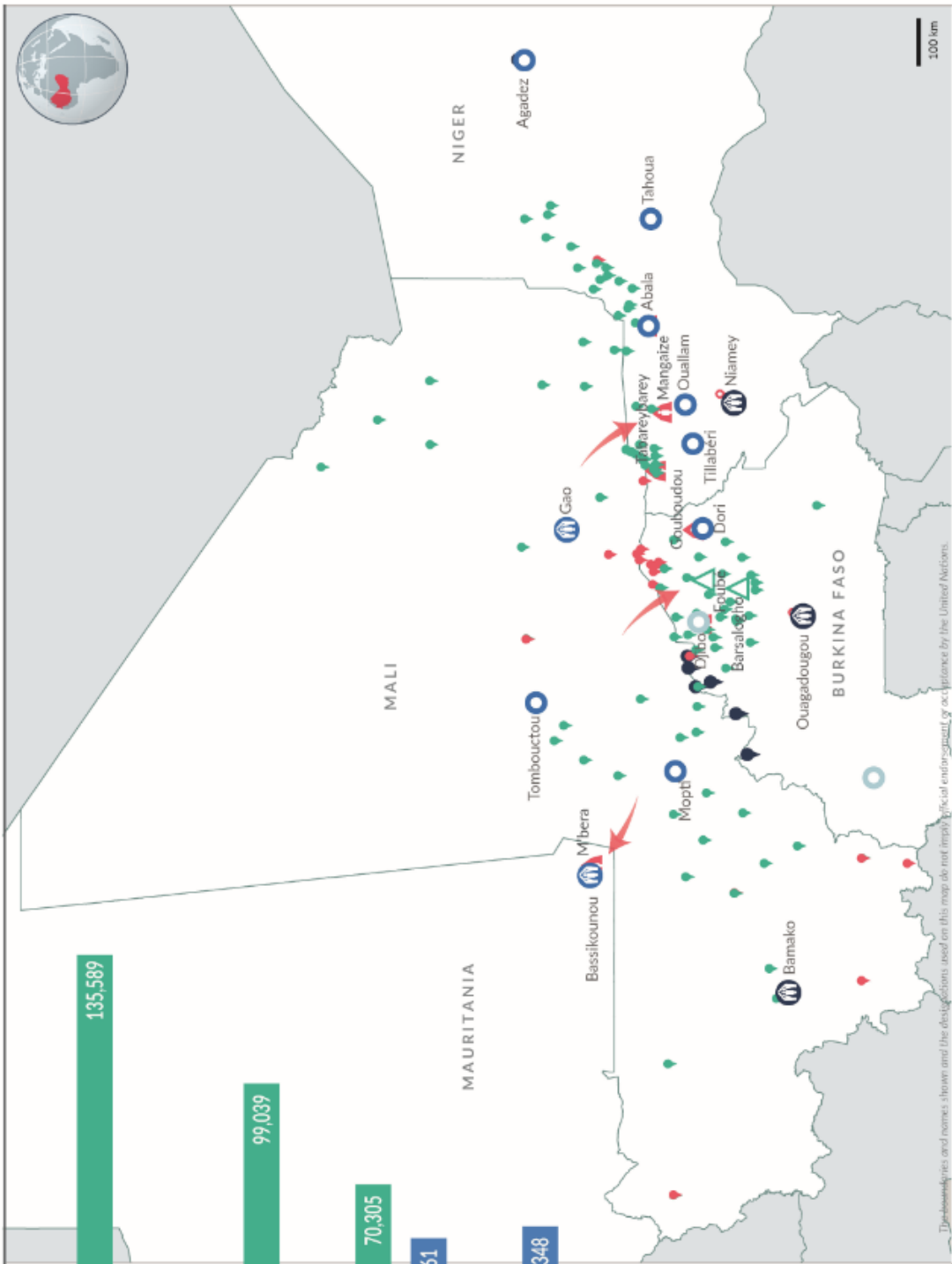
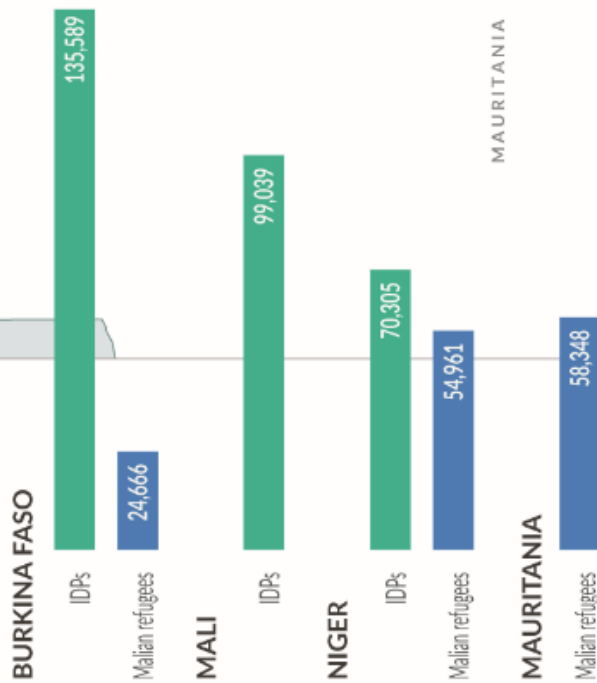
## CONTACTS

**Romain Desclous**, Senior Regional Public Information Officer  
[desclous@unhcr.org](mailto:desclous@unhcr.org), Tel: +221 78 639 6385

**Kabami Kalumiya**, Regional Reporting Officer  
[kalumiya@unhcr.org](mailto:kalumiya@unhcr.org), Tel: +221 77 332 2515

**LINKS** : Mali Situation Portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/malisituation> – Twitter : [@UNHCRWestAfrica](#) – Facebook : [UNHCR West Africa](#)  
 UNHCR Kora – Voices of refugees in West and Central Africa: <http://kora.unhcr.org/>

**MALI SITUATION**  
**Populations forcibly displaced**  
As of 31 March 2019



- UNHCR Representation
- UNHCR Sub-Office
- UNHCR Field Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- Refugee Camp
- Refugee Location
- IDP Settlement
- IDP Location
- Asylum seeker Location
- Refugee crossing

Creation date: 22.04.2019 Sources: UNHCR, Governments