



01 - 31 March 2016

KEY FIGURES

418

Mauritanian refugees reached during sensitization campaigns on the importance of birth certificates in the region of Kayes

536

Urban refugees identified to receive hygiene kits in Bamako

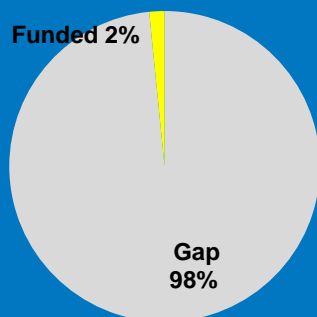
112

Mauritanian refugees and local community members benefited from WASH sensitization sessions in the region of Kayes.

FUNDING

USD 49.2 million

requested for the operation



PRIORITIES

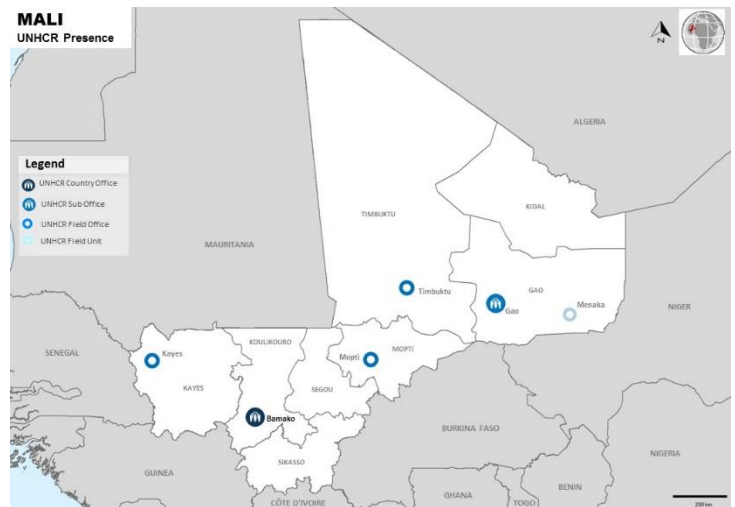
- 850 Malian IDP returnee households targeted to receive adequate and durable shelter
- 6,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive cash vouchers
- 2,500 Mauritanian refugees and local community members targeted to receive improved access to potable water
- 1,000 refugee children targeted to receive educational support

UNHCR receives Malian refugee returnees arriving from the Mbera refugee camp in Mauritania on 1 March, credit ©UNHCR Timbuktu

HIGHLIGHTS

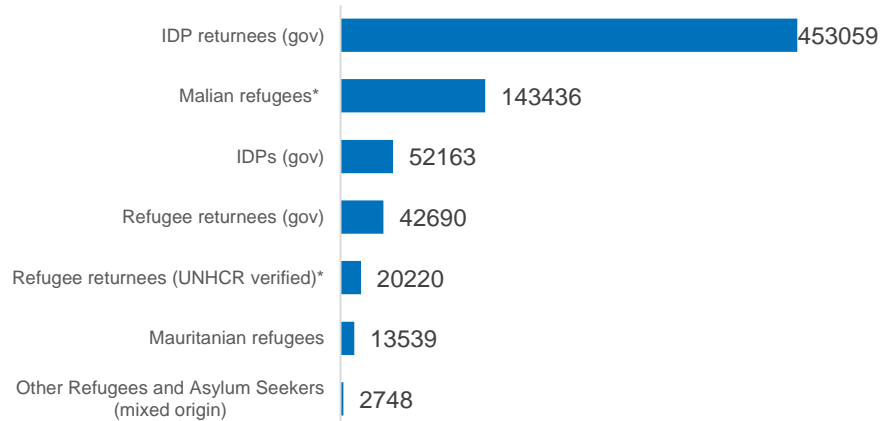
- UNHCR supported 74 refugee returnees in the regions of Mopti and Timbuktu to receive proper identity documentation.

- UNHCR donated furniture, computer and office equipment to civil registration centres in Gao and Kayes to support the Government's efforts to eradicate statelessness.



- UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, is implementing a range of activities to support the health of urban refugees, including a sensitization campaign on diarrhoeal diseases, medical assistance for eight refugees suffering from hypertension and malaria, as well as distributing nutritional and hygiene kits.

Population of concern (March 2016)



Figures as of Feb 29, 2016
* indicates figures as of March 31, 2016

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

A more stable security situation was observed in March as compared to previous months, however, the overall situation in Mali remains volatile with threats of terrorism and criminal activity continuing to affect humanitarian operations, particularly in the north and the centre. Violations of basic human rights are still reported, prices of basic necessities are high, and local populations are in dire need of access to public services, documentation, water, and food security. Some 143,436 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries (as of March 31, 2016) and 52,163 displaced persons in Mali (as of February 29, 2016) are waiting to see whether conditions in their area of origin improve to enable them to return in safety and dignity.

Following weeks of intercommunity conflict in the region of Menaka that led to the new forced displacement of an estimated 1,069 households (6,389 individuals), an accord was signed between the Imghads and Daoussaks on 8 March bringing back greater calm. Both parties agreed to stop hostilities in the region of Menaka and the district of Ansongo by forming combined teams to promote community reconciliation as well as fight against lawlessness.

Gradual advancements in the peace and reconciliation process have stabilized certain areas enabling some IDPs and Malian refugees to voluntarily return. The highly anticipated Kidal Forum for national peace and reconciliation opened on 28 March, however, neither Government leaders nor pro-government forces of Plateforme were in attendance due to the refusal by the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) to allow Malian troops to enter the city or a national flag to be flown during the Forum. It remains to be seen how the Anéfis reconciliation process between armed groups, as well as the Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, will be implemented and eventually secure peace in the northern regions of Mali.

While the presence of national and international military operations in the north and centre have begun to dissuade some terrorist attacks in Mali, there is no expected reduction in the threat level over the near term. National and international security forces remain the targets of most attacks, while international civilian personnel remain at risk of collateral damage and as potential targets for hostage taking or kidnapping. On 13 March, a terrorist attack claimed by AQIM occurred in the neighbouring country of Côte d'Ivoire where 21 people were killed including three terrorists in Grand Bassam. On 21 March, armed men also attempted to attack Hotel Azalaï Nord-Sud in Bamako, Mali, which hosts the European Union Training Mission (EUTM). One assailant was killed, no civilian casualties were reported. AQIM also claimed responsibility for that attack.

The escalating threat of terrorism is destabilizing local communities, preventing forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes and further reducing access to already limited basic social services. Humanitarian access to persons of concern remains one of the biggest challenges, all the more given the restrictive UNDSS measures to reduce the security risk of UN personal.

Achievements

Protection

Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster in Gao discussed the need for enhanced protection monitoring in the region of Menaka. Further, it was recommended that a meeting be held between the cluster co-facilitator [Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)] and the working group on justice and documentation in Bamako to harmonize and coordinate civil documentation activities among various actors in the region.

- In the frame of its coordination functions for the response of humanitarian needs of IDPs, the Protection Cluster in Timbuktu discussed the evolving security situation in Timbuktu and its implications for the movements of populations in the region, including their protection needs. The reduction in criminal activity along the Timbuktu-Goundam routes has triggered the return of displaced populations towards the areas of Goundam, Timbuktu, Léré and Niafouké. However, it was noted that the volatile security situation in the district of Niafouké and the rise in criminal activity presented potential security risks for returning displaced populations. Moreover, there have been reports of children associated with armed groups in the commune of Tilemsi in the district of Goundam heightening concerns about the vulnerability of displaced children being recruited into such groups. In the district of Goundam, displaced populations face challenges related to access to documentation because of the constant movement of administrative officials in nomadic communes.

Achievements and Impact

- **Documentation:** 28 refugee returnee children referred to NRC by UNHCR in Mopti received birth certificates. In addition, UNHCR referred 44 refugee returnees without identity cards to NRC for follow-up support to obtain proper documentation in Timbuktu.
- **Eradication of statelessness:** UNHCR donated computer equipment and furniture to the civil registration division of the Gao regional government office and to civil registration centres in the region of Kayes. This is expected to help strengthen the centres' registration capacities, and in the case of Kayes, better facilitate the documentation of Mauritanian refugee children, in the frame of UNHCR's efforts to eradicate statelessness.
- **Advocacy:** Sensitization campaigns on the importance of birth certificates for Mauritanian refugees were held in the region of Kayes reaching 418 people in 20 refugee sites, which led to the registration of five births in the village of Bafarara.
- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR monitored 65 refugee returnee households (271 individuals) in Timbuktu.
- **Registration:** 129 refugee returnee households (487 people) were registered in Gao and 296 refugee returnee households (1,185 people) were registered in Timbuktu. UNHCR supported the Direction Nationale du Développement Social (DNDS) in delivering a training session for 13 new registration agents and supervisors in Ségou between 16-18 March.
- **Profiling:** UNHCR surveyed three communes in Timbuktu region including Timbuktu, Léré and Tilemsi to obtain information on the profile and needs of persons of concerns in those places.



UNHCR equipment donation to civil registration centres in Kayes with the mayor of Gory Gopela (left) and the project manager from Stop Sahel (right), credit ©UNHCR Kayes

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Protection Monitoring:** There is a strong need for capacity building among protection monitoring actors in the region of Mopti and other surrounding areas.
Registration: During a monitoring mission conducted by the Direction Régionale du Développement Social et de l'Économie Solidaire (DRDSES) to evaluate registration centres in Gao, several challenges were highlighted including the limited knowledge among community members about where refugee returnees can access registration services and the insufficient number of registration centres for such a large area. DRDSES' registration activities are further hampered by the lack of a vehicle for monitoring purposes, weakness in information provided by community leaders, and the frequent solicitation of registration agents for assistance.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR is supporting school canteen programs for six schools attended by children from refugee returnee, IDP and host communities in the town of Menaka in the region of Menaka through the mothers' associations. This aims to improve the quality of the meals for children as well as support peaceful coexistence in the community.
- UNHCR provided school materials (e.g. notebooks and pencils) to support 10 literacy centres in the region of Kayes. Additionally, 11 trainers from the literacy centers received training in Melga in the region Kayes on how to teach reading, writing and math. Recipients of former train-the-trainer sessions from the Mauritanian refugee community led this session.



Head of UNHCR's Gao Sub-Office, Prosper Dibidibi, tastes food prepared from a school canteen program in Menaka supported by UNHCR, credit ©UNHCR Gao

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR, along with several UN agencies including OCHA, MINUSMA and UNICEF, carried out a follow-up mission on the educational situation for refugee returnee children in the Tenenkou and Youwarou districts of Mopti region. In the district of Tenenkou, schools remained closed in certain villages due to the volatile security situation and the non-return of teachers. In the district of Youwarou, most schools have reopened, but children continue to suffer psychologically due to the presence of armed forces and gunfire. In the village of Sourango, mobile and fixed schools have remain closed since the conflict started in 2012. Advocacy for the stabilization of the security situation in these zones remains a priority in order to re-establish essential social services in the area. The lack of educational services leaves many children vulnerable to the risks of abuse and exploitation, child labour, sexual violence, criminal activity and recruitment into armed groups.
- Following a joint mission by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF to Menaka in the region of Menaka, access to education for children was noted as an ongoing challenge due to the absence of teachers and the non-functionality of certain schools. It was revealed that only 108 of 312 teachers (35%) are present in 117 schools in the region. 27 of 117 elementary schools are non-functional, likewise 4 out of 7 middle schools are not functional.
- According to the Education Cluster, 52 schools remain closed in the region of Timbuktu: 24 in the district of Goundam, 14 in the district in Timbuktu, nine in the district of Gourma-Rharous, and five in Niafounké. Dire is the only district where all schools remain open. According to the Education Cluster, 62 schools also remain closed in the region of Gao and 117 in the region of Mopti.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, carried out five sensitization sessions on the registration process and benefits of health insurance in five sites in the region of Kayes reaching 175 individuals, including Mauritanian refugees and host community. During this month, the Union Technique de la Mutualité Malienne (health insurance association) indicated that 51 households (241 people) from refugee and local communities subscribed to health insurance plans.
- UNHCR is supporting the training costs of four community health workers from the refugee communities of Kounougale, Assou1, Woulkeidou and Hassidougou to take part in a nine-month health training program in Kayes.
- UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, provided medical assistance to eight urban refugees suffering from hypertension and malaria, sensitized 95 urban refugees on diarrhoeal diseases and provided nutritional kits to 16 urban refugees living with HIV/AIDS. ACTED has identified 536 urban refugees who will receive hygiene kits.



Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR supported the Gao International Junior Chamber with a donation of gardening equipment including shovels, hoes, machetes and metal cans, to support the sanitation and maintenance needs of the health centre in Gao.
- WASH sensitization sessions took place in four different sites in the region of Kayes reaching 112 participants including 93 Mauritanian refugees and 19 local community members.



Shelter and NFIs

Shelter Cluster

- The Gao Shelter Sub-Cluster in Gao met on 21 March to discuss the coordination of NFI assistance to 1,069 displaced households (6,389 individuals) in Inekar, Menaka. During the meeting, it was agreed that the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) would provide NFI kits to all 1,069 displaced households. The kits will include, among other items, mats, blankets, soap, hygiene kits, buckets, mosquito nets and kitchen sets. UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) will complement any missing items as required by ICRC. 1,069 displaced households in the provision of NFI kits and that UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) would provide missing items. The partners also agreed to harmonize items in NFI kits.
- The National Shelter Cluster approved the NFI distribution protocol and validated updates of the shelter cluster strategy during its 24 March monthly meeting.

Achievements and Impact

- 46 refugee returnee households were identified by UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, to receive support for the refurbishment of shelters in the district of Douentza in the region of Mopti.
- 36 families consisting of 23 refugee returnee households from the Mbera camp in Mauritania and 13 vulnerable households from the commune of Haribomo in the region of Timbuktu received assistance with the provision traditional shelter by the UNHCR through its partner, Luxembourg Red Cross.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Due to the dispersion of populations and their nomadic lifestyle, there are difficulties mobilizing targeted households in Mopti to participate in shelter-related activities.
- There continues to be a strong demand for shelter support in Timbuktu from refugee returnees recently arrived from Mauritania and Burkina Faso.



Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

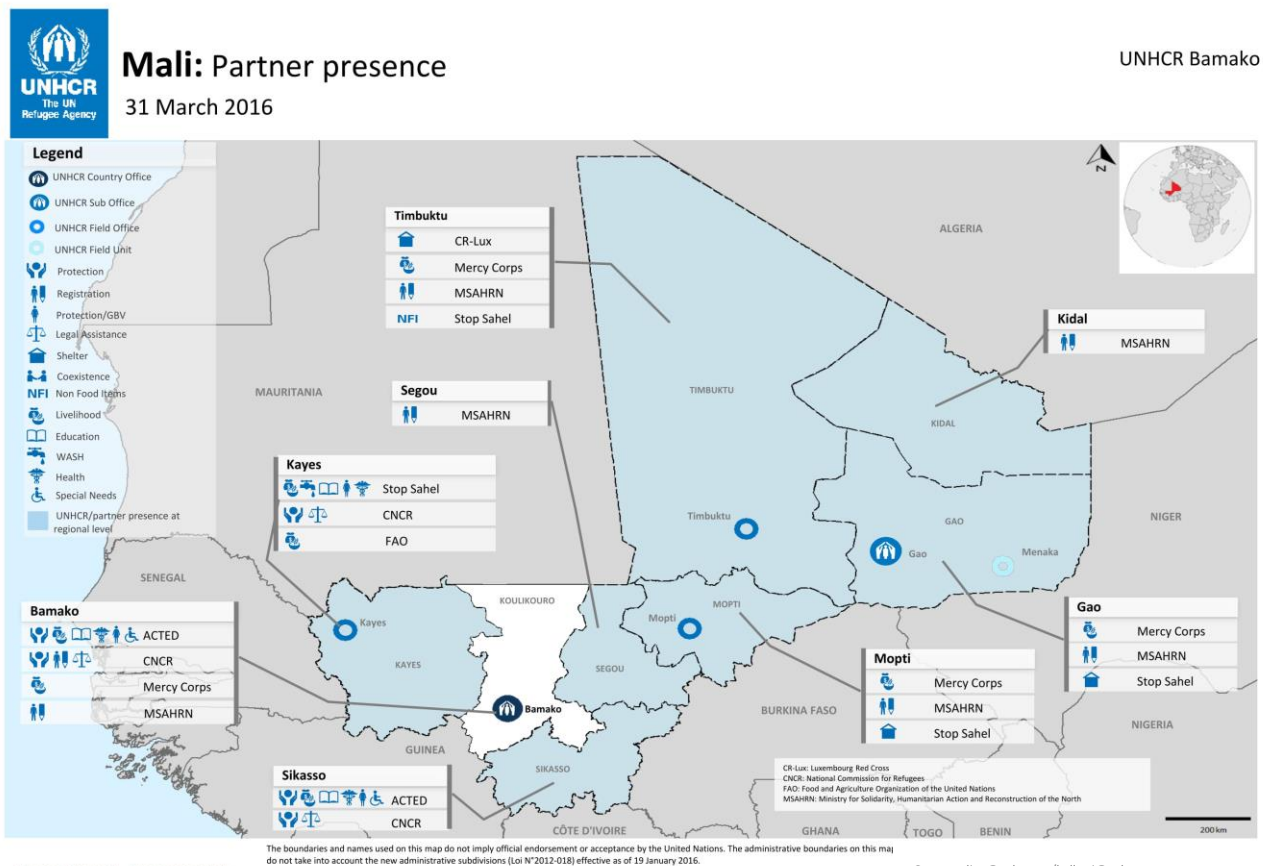
Achievements and Impact

- **Sexual and Gender-based Violence:** UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, carried out numerous activities in the region of Kayes to promote the prevention and response to SGBV, particularly on early marriage and excision. A series of trainings were held in the villages of Aourou, Bafarara and Diongaga with 103 refugee and local community members in attendance. 10 sensitization sessions in 10 refugee sites reached 272 refugees and local community members raising their awareness about voluntary screenings available on HIV/AIDS, cervical cancer, as well as family planning services.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- A multi-cluster evaluation of the forcedly displacement situation in the north of Menaka recommended increased social cohesion activities. Several protection activities have already been carried out including a forum organized by UN Women with local leaders, as well as sensitization activities carried out by the Danish Refugee Council and ACTED on peaceful coexistence.

Working in partnership



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amounts to **USD 780,445**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation.

Funding received in USD

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