

MALI SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE

December 2015 – February 2016

KEY FIGURES

144,675

Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger

5,556

Newly registered Malian refugees in Niger (December – February)

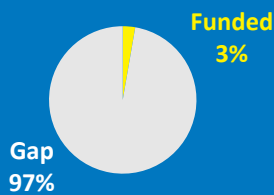
52,163

IDPs in Mali

FUNDING

USD 110.1 million

required by UNHCR for the situation in 2016



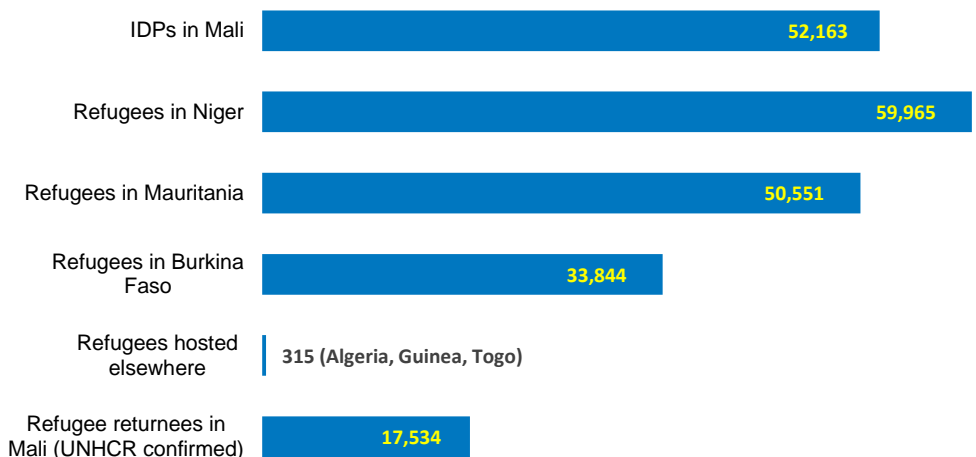
PRIORITIES

- **Mali:** identify and monitor protection risks; support vulnerable returnees with cash-assistance; advocate for adequate access to education of all returnee children.
- **Burkina Faso:** provision of individual documentation; strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance; sustain refugees' access to national public systems
- **Mauritania:** continue support to refugees' self-reliance; promote peaceful coexistence between refugees and host population.
- **Niger:** maintain emergency response capacity; promote peaceful coexistence between host communities and refugees; scale up livelihoods and self-reliance initiatives.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Security incidents and inter-communal clashes in Mali continue to trigger population displacement in the region, leading to a slight increase in the overall number of Malian refugees and a limited number of refugee returns ;
- UNHCR and WFP's ability to distribute food assistance at planned levels is severely constrained by critical funding shortfalls, especially in Burkina Faso and Mauritania;
- UNHCR and its partners are leveraging their interventions to open windows of opportunity for self-reliance for the most vulnerable people among the displaced population, promoting different forms of innovative and diversified social protection and safety net options;
- UNHCR continues to heavily invest in mitigating the crisis impact in host and local communities and strengthen peaceful coexistence.

214,372 persons of concern



Aliou Ag Ibrahi, his wife Rakaye Ahamed and their three children, newly settled in Tabareybarey refugee camp, Niger. © UNHCR/L. Donovan.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Operational Context

Sporadic clashes and security incidents limit access to people of concern

- In Mali, access to parts of the northern (Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu) and central (Segou, Mopti) regions continues to be challenging, not least because of the direct attacks against national and international security forces as well as humanitarians and civilians. The proximity of these incidents to UNHCR's operating areas means that the organization has to operate in an environment where violence and associated security risks are a regular occurrence. Tensions and clashes in and around these areas also often disrupt UNHCR operations. Northern Mali is subject to UN-security restrictions, which allow for critical missions only or require the use of escorts and armored vehicles.
- In Burkina Faso, the attack against civilians on 15 January in Ouagadougou, along with another attack close to the Malian border during the same month, signals a deterioration of the overall security situation resulting in more difficult access to refugee families living outside of camps, representing 30 per cent of the total refugee population, in the northern part of the Sahel region.
- In Niger, inter-community violence in areas close to the border with Mali have been observed, notably between Fulani and Tuareg populations, affecting the security situation in the regions of Tillabery and Tahoua where Malian refugees are settled. UNHCR border monitoring has been extremely limited in recent weeks due to the presence of armed groups in the region.

Humanitarian needs persist and returns are limited

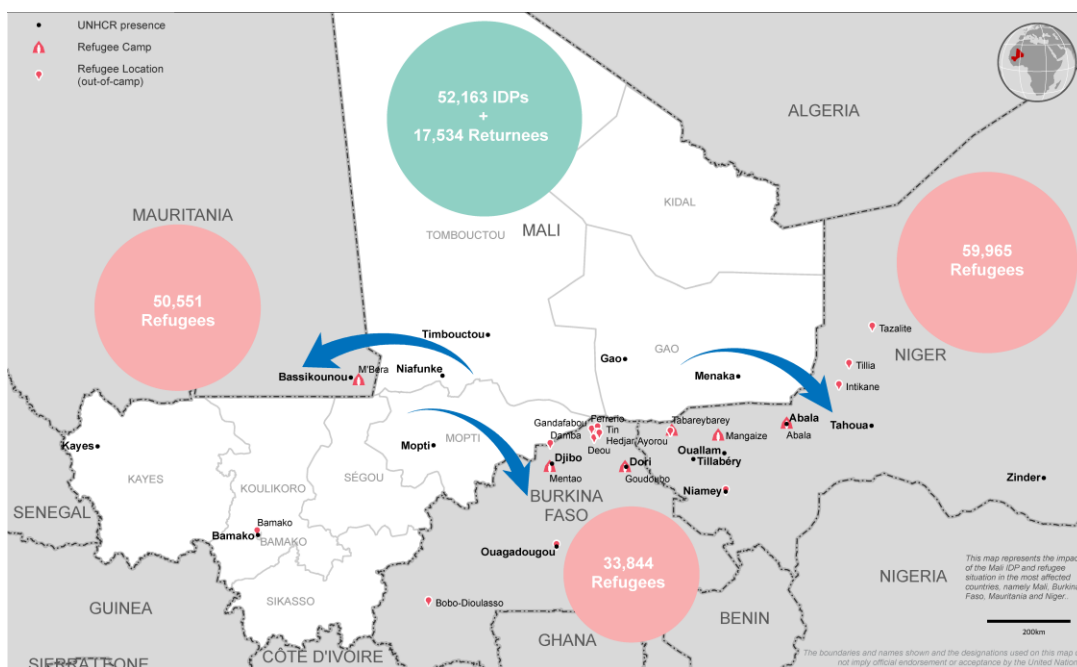
- The Malian conflict has led to a protracted humanitarian situation. This is attributable not only of the current security conditions but also of its traditionally chronic poverty rates and the impact of frequent floods and prolonged drought conditions, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of displaced populations and deteriorating their capacity to withstand shocks. Limited access to employment and livelihood opportunities are the main difficulties displaced households face in the region and many continue to depend on international assistance. In refugee hosting areas, the presence of the refugees and their livestock places an additional pressure on the environment and the scarce resources available. This context is likely to contribute to inter-community tensions, notably at a time when WFP food assistance in the region is experiencing critical [funding shortfalls](#).

- Although some internally displaced populations have started to slowly return to government-controlled areas in the north of Mali, large-scale returns are hampered by the volatile security situation. Various episodes of inter-community violence in the Menaka region have led to new displacement and an increase in the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) between January (49,883) and February (52,163). In asylum countries, whilst the overall number of refugees increased by 4 per cent when compared to the last quarter, spontaneous refugee returns continue to be reported, especially from [Burkina Faso](#), but at a low pace: in 2015, 3,500 returnees were registered, a decrease of 80 per cent when compared to 2014.

UNHCR regional strategy 2016-2017 focuses on resilience and peaceful coexistence

- As the situation continues to evolve, the population's needs are changing accordingly. [UNHCR's strategic response](#) within Mali and in the region is guided by three overarching priorities: (i) a scale up of livelihoods and resilience-based interventions alongside (ii) increased collaboration with partners to enhance peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities,

Mali Situation: Refugees, Returnees and IDPs (as at 29 February 2016)



and (iii) greater coherent and harmonized programming to ensure the viability and continuity of self-reliance efforts between countries of asylum and areas of return. Plans for 2016 build on lessons learned with a target to assist and protect some 495,000 persons of concern, i.e. IDPs, returnees in Mali, Malian refugees and host/local communities in the region.

- Closer collaboration with sister UN agencies, development organisations and other partners. In this regard, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) – is a key component of UNHCR's response, with programmes being designed to integrate service delivery into national and local systems. This approach is coupled with a strengthening of the capacities of operational partners.

Protection

MALI

- UNHCR continued to profile and monitor returns of internally displaced households. In the region of Mopti, out of 238 individuals who were reached through monitoring visits conducted by UNHCR's partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), 36 individual cases of human rights violations were identified. Appropriate support was provided by UNHCR in partnership with local authorities, MINUSMA and DRC. In addition, 170 refugee returnees were profiled to determine and better understand their vulnerabilities that need to be addressed.
- In Gao and Mopti regions, identification of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases – 80 between December and February – and community sensitization activities, reaching some 4,600 people, continued to be carried out in areas of returns. In partnership with Handicap International, Care International and the *Groupe de recherche, d'étude, de formation femme action (GREFFA)*, medical and psychosocial support, as well as legal advice were provided to survivors.

BURKINA FASO

- To mitigate protection risks related to discrimination, UNHCR continued to collaborate with Burkinabe authorities to increase the level of individual documentation for refugees. Thus far, 32 per cent of Malian refugees possess a biometric identity card. However, the issuance process has been affected by delays and difficulties stemming from the new administration that took office following the political transition.

MAURITANIA

- Through its partner Intersos, UNHCR continues to fight SGBV and is providing special assistance to people with specific needs through individual counselling, medical support, transportation, shelter and cash for the most vulnerable refugees. A team of 103 trained refugees continued to work on prevention of SGBV through peer-to-peer and awareness-raising activities. During the reporting period, more than 2,000 people among the most vulnerable were specifically assisted through counselling, home visits, cash and health care support. During the January food distribution, more than 1,500 people received tailored assistance for transport and mobility aids for the disabled and the elderly.

NIGER

- In January, following the refugee influx in the last quarter of 2015, 846 Malians were relocated from the border region of Inates to Ayouro refugee camp in Tabareybarey. Amongst the new arrivals, 30 unaccompanied children were identified and are currently being supported and provided with documentation. Furthermore, 10 cases of child marriage and 92 cases of persons with specific needs were identified and appropriate assistance was provided (e.g. psychosocial and/or medical support, provision of NFIs, medical and livelihoods assistance). In the two refugee hosting areas of the Tahoua region, registration of newly arrived refugees started and is still ongoing.



A group of Malian refugee women and children assist in the preparations, transporting mats and other household items for the arrival of up to 846 new refugees to Tabareybarey refugee camp, Niger, January 2016. © UNHCR/L. Donovan.

Education

MALI

- The education infrastructure in northern Mali was largely destroyed in the aftermath of the 2012 conflict. Many schools remain closed with students and teachers unable to return to classrooms, particularly in Timbuktu-Goundam. Important needs remain to be addressed and UNICEF estimates that more than 380,000 children between 7 and 15 years old are out of school in

areas affected by insecurity in the north and the center regions. UNHCR, through its implementing partner Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), built and equipped three new schools in N'Tillit, an area of return in the commune of Gao. UNHCR was also able to deliver school equipment in Acharane commune, in Timbuktu. The rehabilitation and strengthening of education facilities aims to encourage returnee children to go back to school and create a sense of normalcy within the community.

MAURITANIA

- The enrolment rate of primary school-aged children in Mbera camp currently stands at 60 per cent, whilst it was 46 per cent for school year 2014/2015. This sharp increase is the result of activities conducted since 2013 to promote education for all, including awareness-raising campaigns targeting parents and children, the setting up of school canteens in 2014 and the competitive recruitment of qualified teachers. As of February 2016, more than 350 adults, mostly women, are currently attending adult literacy course in Songhaï, Arabic and Tamasheq.



In Mbera camp, Mauritania, adults learn for the first time how to read thanks to literacy and numeracy classes. © UNHCR/H. Pes



Health

NIGER

- Throughout the reporting period, 2,000 refugees participated in various health-related sensitization sessions held in the camps of Abala, Ayouro and Mangaize on respiratory infections, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, hand washing, safe food preparation, breastfeeding, use of treated mosquito nets, proper use of latrines. In the two refugee hosting areas of Intikane, over 1,900 women benefited from a campaign focusing on reproductive health and family planning, with an emphasis on the importance of prenatal consultations, breastfeeding, baby feeding and birth certificates. In addition, as part of the Extended Vaccination Programme (PEV), some 650 children were vaccinated against various diseases Mangaize camp and some 570 in the refugee hosting areas of Intikane and Tazalite. The vaccination campaign targets children between 9 months and 5 years old.



Food Security and Nutrition

BURKINA FASO

- WFP food assistance to Malian refugees continued to experience funding gaps resulting in no distribution or reduction of certain food items or cash entitlements. For instance, in December, refugees did not receive food assistance. In this regard, results of the latest post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise show that 30 per cent of the refugee population is food insecure. The PDM also pointed out that crisis-related coping strategies are increasingly observed, including those resulting in food-related debt.

MAURITANIA

- In January, refugees received a reduced food ration composed of rice, pulses and oil equivalent to 90 percent of the standard food ration, while in February, no pulses were distributed due to funding shortfalls faced by WFP. In this context, on 11 February 2016, UN agencies [warned](#) that immediate funding shortfall threatens assistance to Malian refugees in Mbera.
- In February, WFP and UNHCR published the report of the [Joint Assessment Mission \(JAM\)](#) carried out in August/September 2015 in Mberra refugee camp and in four host villages. Likewise in Burkina Faso, results showed that irregular and incomplete food distributions in 2015 affected household food security and slightly increased moderate acute malnutrition rates, demonstrating the vulnerability of household food security and the dependence of refugees to food assistance as their main source of food. Findings also indicated that between seven and 32 per cent of refugee households adopted negative coping mechanisms, in particular by incurring debts and selling some of their assets, to address their food deficits. These coping strategies have compounded over time and strained relations within and amongst households and communities, showing the instability and fragility of their livelihoods and revenues.



Water and Sanitation

MALI

- Eight water management committees were created to manage new water installations in Timbuktu. UNHCR partner Stop Sahel carried out 15 water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) trainings reaching nearly 300 people in Timbuktu, while ACTED delivered 14 WASH training sessions in Gao where some 1,100 people participated, including refugee returnees, IDP returnees and members of the local population. In addition to strengthening inter- and intra-community cohabitation and

supporting communal resource management, these activities aim to support better hygiene conditions in the villages as well as contributing to prevent diarrheal illnesses.

MAURITANIA

- Refugees in Mbera camp have access to 30 litres of water per person per day, which is above the minimum humanitarian standard of 20 litres. UNHCR continues to strengthen refugees' involvement in the management of water and sanitation infrastructures in the camp. Between December and February, thousands of refugees were reached through door-to-door sensitization sessions in order to raise awareness on hygiene practices, waste management and proper toilet waste disposal. With regard to sanitation, 2,342 semi-permanent communal latrines (22 persons/latrine) and 2,666 communal showers (22 persons/shower) are operational in the camp that is above the minimum standard (20 persons/latrine).



Shelter and Non-Food Items

MALI

- Between December and February, UNHCR's partner Stop Sahel, distributed NFI kits to nearly 3,000 individuals including returned refugees, returned IDPs and vulnerable local community households in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti. Additionally, 20 shelter kits were distributed in Mopti and 100 family tents were given to IDPs in Menaka.

NIGER

- As part of the 'Urbanization Project,' UNHCR continued to assist local municipalities in Ayorou (close to Tabareybarey camp) and Abala (Tillaberi region) creating the conditions required for refugees to legally access land and housing, in particular regarding the development of new areas of serviced land appropriate for building.
- In Mangaize camp, a pilot cash-based assistance programme was rolled out in replacement of the distribution of NFIs, shelter materials, soap and other hygiene products. Under this scheme, XOF10,000 (US\$16.50) per month per household is being provided thereby giving autonomy and choice to the refugee households on how and on what to spend their money. As a result of the success of this form of assistance, UNHCR plans to scale it up in 2016, availability of funds permitting, to all Malian refugee camps, refugee hosting areas and vulnerable urban refugees.



NFI distribution by UNHCR partner Stop Sahel in Amanidarni, Timbuktu region, January 2016. © UNHCR/Stop Sahel.



Access to Energy

BURKINA FASO

- In a context where the majority of Malian refugees are hosted in one of the country's driest regions, UNHCR aims to improve refugees' access to a sustainable source of domestic energy. Firewood for cooking purposes has been provided on a regular basis, with 54 tons distributed between December and February to some 4,700 households (some 23,700 individuals) in both refugee camps. UNHCR is also developing innovative solutions in collaboration with the IKEA Foundation to increase household access to sustainable and renewable sources of energy for public lighting and household cooking.

NIGER

- In the refugee hosting area of Intikane, UNHCR's partner Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) begun distributing gas to all of the population, benefitting some 14,500 refugees, whilst the second gas distribution to vulnerable households in the local town took place in December. In Tabareybarey camp, UNHCR's partner, Plan Niger, began gas distributions to almost 1,200 households and 1,000 vulnerable host households in the local town of Ayorou. In Abala camp, UNHCR continued to provide gas to the refugee population as well as an additional 400 vulnerable households in the host population. Additional funding is being sought to expand the project to the Mangaize camp where the population have yet to receive support in terms of access to energy.



Self-Reliance and Peaceful Coexistence

MALI

- UNHCR successfully rolled-out its cash-based pilot project in return areas of Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions with visible outcomes characterized by the restoration of income-generating activities, the purchase of land, and the rehabilitation of homes. In total, the project reached some 4,300 refugee returnees and received US\$110 per adult and US\$50 per child. Whilst this type of assistance allowed beneficiaries to re-integrate their communities and gain greater self-reliance, it also helped them to cover their basic needs upon return. The project will be implemented and further expanded in 2016 subject to UNHCR's capacity to reach all refugee returnees.
- Various social cohesion and community outreach activities were carried out to strengthen the peaceful coexistence between refugee returnees and local communities. In Timbuktu, an advocacy campaign on social cohesion with radio sensitization messages reached 30,000 people; a community rally on the sustainable return and integration of returned refugees was also organized, along with a 'Women for Peace and Cohabitation Forum', engaging more than 40 participants in a dialogue on safety, stability and peace. In Gao, some 6,100 people, including refugee and IDPs returnees, participated in cultural and sport community events promoting peaceful coexistence; some 2,700 people took part to community sensitization sessions on peaceful coexistence, whilst some 2,300 people were involved in community forums to discuss the community's historic relations.

BURKINA FASO

- In order to prevent any deterioration of the protection environment, UNHCR stepped up its efforts to enhance the peaceful cohabitation between refugees and host communities. Sensitization broadcasts in different languages were released on radio and a television report was shown on national TV. Traditional leaders of refugee-hosting area in Djibo were also sensitized to inter-cultural dialogue.
- By the end of 2015, UNHCR had incorporated 2,800 refugees into the national milk "value chain." UNHCR adopts a value chain approach to achieving the socio-economic integration of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso. The "milk project" supports self-reliance through a multi-faceted lens, bringing in animal husbandry, agro-processing, pastoral resource management, income-generation/micro-enterprise development, literacy, and child nutrition. During the reporting period, some 1,800 refugees and members of host communities received technical trainings on animal health, herd management, milk production, and milk processing whilst some 1,500 refugee children under five were provided with quality milk from project-supported dairies.
- UNHCR has assisted refugee artisans to participate in the economy of their host communities and, where feasible, to link them to regional, national and global "value chains." By the end of 2015, 50 artisans were producing export-ready items whilst some 500 Malian Tuareg refugee artisans, of which 60 per cent women, received training in business skills and product design and processes. UNHCR also improved access of refugee artisans to workspaces, raw materials and production tools and equipment. UNHCR remained engaged with private sector retailers, several of which have expressed interest in sourcing and selling refugee-produced goods internationally including in Switzerland, Denmark and the United States.

MAURITANIA

- As part of the [strengthening of refugees' self-reliance](#), UNHCR continued to follow up on 195 projects of income-generation activities funded and started in 2014-2015, 100 new income-generating activities are to be selected in 2016. In particular, 1,800 refugee women continue to have access to gardening areas where they produce fruits and vegetables for their own consumption but also for sale (about 20 per cent of the production).
- To reduce the refugees' pressure on local resources, UNHCR completed rehabilitation and construction works of a well in Saramassa and Sidra host villages located close to Mbera refugee camp. UNHCR also scaled up its efforts to minimize the impact on local livelihoods by improving water systems and allow access to members of neighboring villages. In addition, in collaboration with its partner SOS Desert, UNHCR provided fencing to protect agricultural land from animal-caused soil erosion in Seredouba and Lemghays villages.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- **In Mali:** UNHCR continues to work closely with the National Department for Social Development and the National Commission for Refugees and lead the discussions, within the Protection and Shelter/NFI clusters, to ensure timely sectoral responses and promote information-sharing and advocacy.
In line with the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR has a leading role in the humanitarian response for Malian refugees in collaboration with government counterparts, United Nations organisations, national and international NGOs:
- **In Burkina Faso,** UNHCR jointly works with its government counterpart, the National Commission for Refugees, and nine implementing partners, coordinating the overall refugee response and ensuring that appropriate protection and assistance is provided to refugees.

- **In Niger**, with community-based structures taking a more central role in the management of the camps, camp management responsibilities have been handed over from the international NGO ACTED to the national NGO *Action pour le bien-être* (APBE). Also, the handover of protection activities and all identified protection cases from international NGO International Rescue Committee to the national NGO DIKO was completed in all of camps and refugee-hosting areas, following extensive capacity development and monitoring in the preceding months. In December, a sensitization session was held for all protection committee members in the camps – SGBV, persons with specific needs and child protection, in collaboration with the new protection partner.
- **In Mauritania**, in February, UNHCR organized a discussion with the authorities, donors and humanitarian and development organisations to discuss needs assessed in Mbera camp and in the host population. With some 40 participants, the meeting will help finalize UNHCR's plans for 2017.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

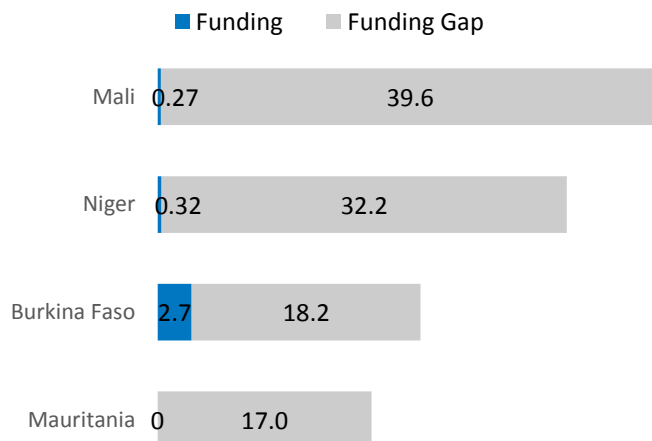
UNHCR's total financial requirements for the Mali Situation, involving operations in Mali and neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Niger) amount to **USD 110.1 million from January to December 2016**, including USD 70.2 million for the response in asylum countries. As at the end of February 2016, **the overall funding gap is USD 106.8 million**.

Donors:

IKEA Foundation
UN Peacebuilding Fund

Funding:

A total of **USD 3.3 million** has been contributed



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