

# Mali Situation

April - June 2019

An escalation of security incidents were reported in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali during the reporting period. This situation is impacting negatively on the protection environment for civilians and limiting activities of humanitarian actors as they have in recent weeks become significant targets. Despite the deployment of Malian forces and MINUSMA as part of Operation Oryx, the central region of Mali continues to be the subject of a disturbing combination of inter-communal conflict, criminality and attacks by armed groups. The porous borders with Burkina Faso and Niger and the difficulty for government forces to deploy in the adjacent areas have allowed many non-state actors (armed groups, militias, drug traffickers) to operate freely, thereby making travel by road precarious. According to security assessments, the prevailing insecurity and violence are likely to continue and will result in worsening levels of vulnerability among populations of concern and additional forced displacements. Since the last issue of the Mali situation report (January-March 2019), the number of persons of concern has increased by 23%.

## KEY STATISTICS (AS OF 30 JUNE)

**139,994** Malian refugees

in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger

**8,457** Burkinabe refugees

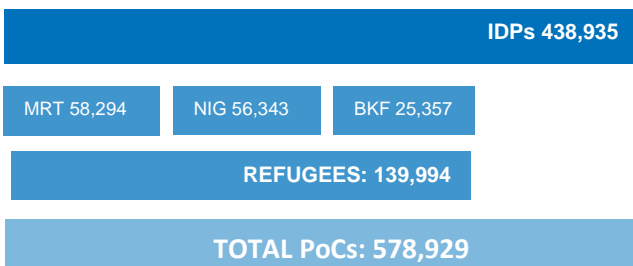
in Mali

**438,935** Internally Displaced Persons

in Burkina Faso (**219,756 IDPs**) and Mali (**147,861 IDPs**) and Niger (**71,318 IDPs**)

sources: UNHCR and Governments

**578,929** PERSONS OF CONCERN  
(REFUGEES & IDPS)



Note: Since the last reporting period (Jan-March 2019) the number of POCs has increased by 23%, including an increase of IDPs by 30%.

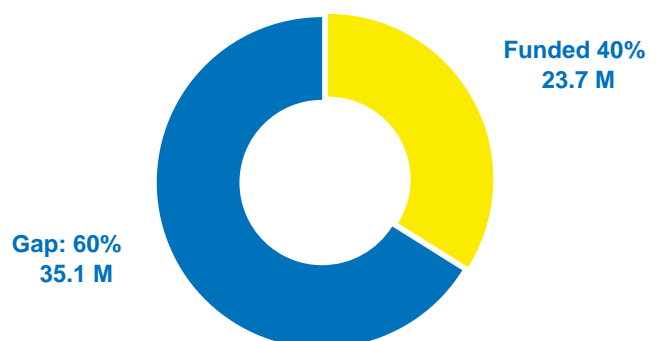
## MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

- In Mali, at least 95 people were confirmed dead and at least 19 missing following an attack on 10 June of Sobane-Kou, a village of on a rural Dogon community, ( Mopti region). Although no group has claimed responsibility, the Malian government has blamed "armed men suspected of being terrorists".
- The Chair of UNHCR's governing Executive Committee (Excom), Ambassador Boudjemaa Delmi, visited Mauritania (27-29 April) and Burkina Faso (1-4 May). In Mauritania's Mbera camp, he met with some of 57,000 Malian refugees hosted there and in Burkina Faso, he met with Malian refugees in Goudoubo refugee camp. He was pleased to see the transition from humanitarian to development interventions, funded by the EU Trust Fund, in operations that continue to be underfunded. In both countries, Ambassador Delmi also met with authorities and key partners.
- In Niger, on 26 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, undertook a mission to Diffa to evaluate the humanitarian situation linked to Boko Haram.

## FUNDING (AS OF 30 JUNE)

**USD 58.8 M**

requested for the Mali Situation



## OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- The reporting period was marred by security incidents in **Mali** that led to the death of a Nigerian UN peacekeeper in Timbuktu and a separate incident in Tessalit left three Chadian peacekeepers injured. In addition, an attack by unidentified armed men on 16 June 16 in the village of Yoro and Gangafani (Mopti region) located near the Mali-Burkina border more than 400km reportedly claimed about 41 lives. OCHA also reported that on 9 June, unidentified armed individuals attacked the village of Sobanou-Dah, located 43km north-east of the town of Bandiagara, Mopti region. According to a statement from the Government on 12 June, during the attack, 35 people, including 24 children, were killed while another 60 were reported missing. This situation of instability continues to affect populations but also humanitarian response due to the difficulty to access certain areas because of insecurity.
- The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2480 on 28 June, extending the mandate of the **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali** (MINUSMA) for another year. New in the resolution is the addition to the mandate of a second strategic priority to support the Malian authorities to address the rapidly deteriorating security situation that also concerns the center of the country. In addition, the resolution now provides MINUSMA the mandate to provide supplies to the G5 Sahel Joint Force for operations in all five countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger).
- Schools reopened on 20 May in **Mali** after the Education Unions and the Government made concessions to agree on the essentials with the support of the Conciliation Commission so as to prevent children from losing the whole academic year. Schools in certain regions of had been closed in Mali since January 2019. The regions most affected by the closure of schools are Kidal (51% of closed schools), Ménaka (50%) and Mopti (29%). The presence of armed groups, lack of school infrastructure and the absence of teachers are the main reasons.
- In **Mali**, on 18 April, following the attacks in March and amid widespread protests over an upsurge of deadly inter-communal violence, Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga resigned as Prime Minister along with his entire cabinet. The President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, named a new government on 22 April under the leadership of Prime Minister Boubou Cisse.
- In **Burkina Faso**, security incidents continue to be recorded on an almost daily basis, primarily against state institutions, security services, schools and health centers. Insecurity continues to thrive and spread beyond the Sahel region, targeting more and more civilians while exploiting underlying social tensions. Displacement patterns in the sub region are becoming more and more complex with close to 220,000 IDPs in Burkina Faso and thousands have crossed the borders to Niger, Mali and Ghana.
- Refugees, IDPs and humanitarian workers are increasingly under pressure. On 10 April an attack was carried out against the police post of Goudoubo refugee camp killing one police officer. While persons of concern and humanitarian staff were not targeted, they are affected by the event. Humanitarian activities, including food distribution, were suspended for two days later. The health center in Mentao refugee camp has been closed since 25 May following an attack targeting UNHCR's partner, *Centre de Support en Santé Internationale* (CSSI) and the kidnapping of 3 local staff - one has since been released. Construction works for a new health center (CSPS) in Mentao camp have halted since the May attack, while the schools have been closed since December 2018.
- Even though the situation on the **Mauritanian** border remains quite stable, as of 30 June, UNHCR had registered 3,550 new arrivals from Mali since the beginning of the year.
- The security situation in **Niger**, especially in the Tillaberi region continues to deteriorate. On 14 May, 29 soldiers were killed and several others were injured in an ambush against a military patrol near Tongo Tongo. On 13 May, 20 unidentified armed men on motorbikes entered Mangaize refugee camp and attempted to damage a mobile phone tower, before quickly departing towards the border with Mali. First accounts report no casualties nor injuries. A second attack on the same day targeted the high security prison of Koutoukale, 35km from Niamey with the aim of freeing some prisoners.
- Both attacks on Koutoukale and near Tongo Tongo were claimed by the terrorist group the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), an affiliate of ISIS.
- On 19 June, two policemen were killed in an attack on a police station outside the capital, Niamey, on the road to Ouallam. Security measures are being increased as Niger is getting ready to host the African Union Summit in July.
- On 30 May, a joint high level mission, led by the Minister of Humanitarian Action and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, was conducted in the Tillaberi region. The main topics discussed with the different stakeholders – including the Governor and the representatives of the security and military forces – were the ongoing security situation and the measures in place in the area, which are strongly impacting the humanitarian response.

## COUNTRY UPDATES

### Burkina Faso

- For over a year, UNHCR and its partners have sensitized Malian refugees living in border areas to move to safer locations, where humanitarian actors can better protect them. Due to increased insecurity in refugee hosting areas in Burkina Faso, 161 refugees formerly settled out of camp, in Oudalan Provinces, relocated to Goudoubo refugee camp. UNHCR has also registered 405 voluntary returns to Mali.
- The operation developed an IDP response strategy and responded to the Government's call to assist those who have been displaced. UNHCR has taken up an active role in sectoral coordination and leads the Shelter/NFI and Protection sectors.
- With the support of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), UNHCR and the Government of Burkina Faso aim to facilitate the socio-economic integration of Malian refugees and gradually transform refugee camps into villages adapted to the national context and the Sahelian climate conditions.
- The Board of the World Bank Group officially approved the project "Scale-Up and Responding to the Needs of Refugees and Host Communities Project". The project, in partnership with UNHCR, will support the Government of Burkina Faso with a USD 14 million grant for refugee households and their host communities in the Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun and Sahel regions. Focus will be on cash grants, basic social safety nets, livelihood opportunities, education and emergency preparedness.

### Mali

- From 13-14 June, UNHCR Mali and the Regional Representative for West Africa organized an internal Protection and Solutions meeting in Bamako focusing on the Mali situation. The meeting brought together UNHCR Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Algeria, the Regional Office for West Africa, and the Division of International Protection (DIP), aimed to review the current situation of protection in the countries affected by the Mali situation and to agree on key issues to be discussed during the Regional Protection and Solutions Dialogue, scheduled for 3 and 4 July 2019 in Bamako.
- From the 11-12 April, a Tripartite meeting was organized in Niamey between the Governments of Mali and Niger and UNHCR regarding the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. Due to the fragile security situation in Mali, all actors confirmed the intention not to promote voluntary repatriation, while continuing to provide assistance to those who choose to return to Mali. Indeed, on 8 April 2019, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of 2,086 Malian refugees to the areas of Goundam (81%), Nianfuke (9%) and Timbuktu (6%).

### Mauritania

- UNHCR Mauritania held participatory assessments with refugees at Mbera camp and in Nouakchott using an Age, Gender and Diversity sensitive approach in order to gather more reliable information about the protection risks refugees face and their root causes, understand their capacities and resources and allow refugees to be active part in the proposed solutions.
- UNHCR, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), distributed cash (450 MRU per person per month) with electronic cards to 54,276 refugees (12,461 families). The introduction of the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) has enabled UNHCR to enhance its distribution tracking and verification processes, and the protection of children who are sent to collect the food ration on behalf of their families.
- In April, WFP and UNHCR introduced the first phase of a progressive implementation of targeted food assistance to Malian refugees registered at Mbera camp. A total of 177 households categorised, as "catalysts" of the camp, stopped receiving food assistance. The next phase of the roll out will be implemented during the July food and cash distribution when the second group, categorized as "emerging", will no longer receive food assistance.

### Niger

- Since April 2019, due to the increasing instability in the North of Burkina Faso, a first group of 446 Burkinabe individuals arrived in Niger. As per the beginning of June, the Niger Protection Cluster estimates that the number increased to 2,190, with 1,013 Nigerien IDPs in the area at the border with Burkina Faso. These new arrivals have not been registered yet.
- At the end of May, the Protection Cluster community data collection mechanism reported 76,634 IDPs in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. Security reasons, insufficient and/or cessation of humanitarian aid, as well as the search for cropland and water points for their livestock with the onset of the rainy season are some of the causes for these movements.
- On 23 April, UNHCR held a meeting in Ouallam with the members of the farmers' bureau and the leaders of the refugee committees to discuss capacity-building in dairy processing and marketing, and in livestock breeding techniques. Newly arrived refugees will be integrated into ongoing programmes aimed at enhancing self-reliance of refugees.
- UNHCR and partners held a sensitization session on the importance of good and sustainable management of the natural resources in the Abala area (Tillabéri region). The discussion included all relevant groups involved in the life of the camp, such as the communal and traditional authorities, the camp leaders and women's group, as well as representation of the services' providers and the partners. This is particularly important in the context of peaceful coexistence with the local population.

- As a first response to the newly internally displaced in the bordering area with Burkina Faso, in the Tillabéri region, the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) was triggered and the preparation to respond to the identified first and basic needs of this population is in progress.

## KEY CHALLENGES

### Burkina Faso

- With insecurity on the rise in Burkina Faso and neighboring countries, UNHCR fears more displacement, both internally and into the neighboring countries, and increased humanitarian needs over the coming months.
- The high risk of car hijacks and kidnappings continues to pose the biggest challenge in several areas of Burkina Faso. The main consequence is the lack of humanitarian access in out of camp areas and many IDP hosting localities. This is particularly of concern in the Sahel region, where the majority of IDPs and 98% of Malian refugees have settled.
- Refugees and IDPs are subject to protection risks and risks of conflict with the local population over scarce natural resources such as firewood and water. Gender-based violence is also on the rise.
- With the upcoming rainy season, sturdy shelter for IDPs able to withstand the lashing rain and high winds is urgently needed. Many of the displaced are living with host communities already in precarious conditions, whilst others are sleeping in the open.

### Mali

- The issue of security throughout the territory continues to be a concern. The implementation of the peace agreement, the management of the social climate including the school crisis, the improvement of living conditions of Malians and the conduct of institutional reforms remains a challenge for the newly constituted government. Administrative changes may slow down the activities of current humanitarian workers and those planned with certain ministries.

### 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 May 2019, WFP was facing a US\$ 2.8 million shortfall for its assistance to Malian refugees, a situation likely to have a severe impact on their health and nutrition status.
- UNHCR is working with partners to improve access to income generating activities, gardening fields and livestock to reduce refugee dependency on food assistance. On behalf of all partners engaged in the livelihood sector, UNHCR has called for a prioritized USD 5.2 million out of a total USD 8.7 million to enable households, whose food assistance is being targeted, to bridge the gap through their engagement in economic activities.

### Niger

- Heightened insecurity, due mostly to incessant armed attacks remains a critical challenge in the areas bordering Mali and increasingly 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.
- The increase in the magnitude of internal displacement in Tillabéri and Tahoua, increasing to over 76,000 IDPs, is creating significant protection challenges and is underfunded. Regular access remains the main issue, while military operations in the area are increasing. New cross border movements into Niger are anticipated, while secondary movements have also been recorded.
- The number of kidnappings for ransom in the Diffa region has significantly increased throughout 2019. A mapping of the areas from where people have been kidnapped was developed by the Protection Cluster (see below) and shows a high concentration close to the border with Niger (100m – 5km) and the Lake Chad islands.

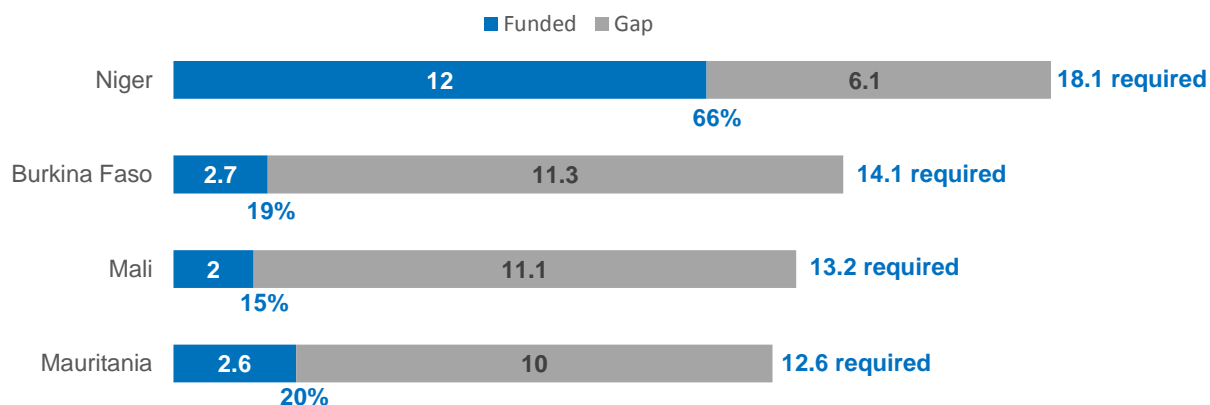
## EXTERNAL / DONOR RELATIONS

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

CERF | France | European Union | Germany | Italy | Japan | Fast Retailing Co., Ltd (UNIQLO) | Miscellaneous private donors

### Mali Situation Funding Update

A total of **US\$23.7 million** has been funded (including for the overall Situation and HQ & Regional Coordination), equivalent to 40% of the 58.8m required.



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**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/>

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