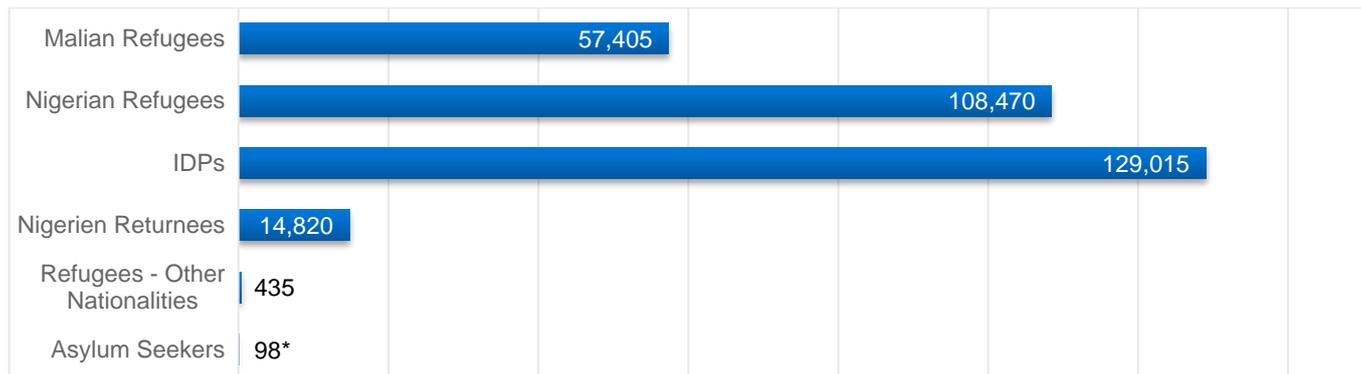


UNHCR - Niger

OCTOBER 2017

Total of **310,243** Persons of Concern

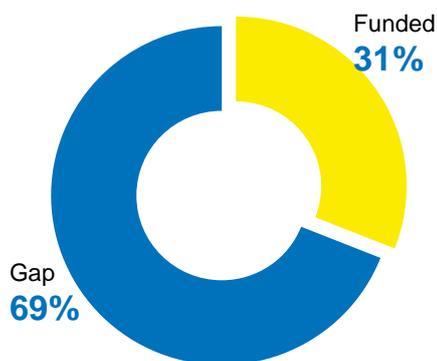


*This is the official figure however does not include those additional potential cases which have been recently referred to the Govt.

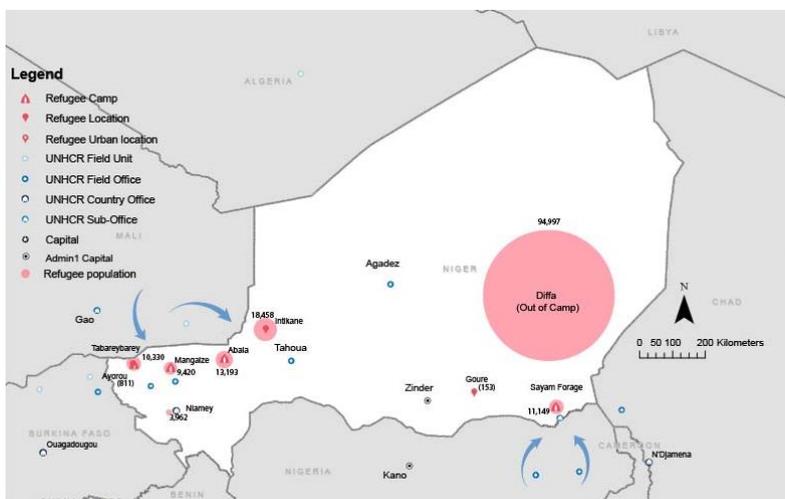
FUNDING (as of 27 October 2017)

USD 85.7 M

requested



Refugee locations



UNHCR Presence

Staff: 121 national, 37 international

Offices: 1 Head Office Niamey; 1 Sub-Office Diffa; 4 Field Offices Abala, Tillabery, Ouallam; 1 Field Unit Agadez

UNHCR Partners

Govt. of Niger, APBE, Adkoul, ACTED / REACH, Care, CISP, COOPI, Handicap International, IRC, OXFAM, Qatar Red Crescent, Search For Common Ground

Context - Background

UNHCR Niger responds to three main situations – the Mali Situation, the Nigeria Situation and the Mixed Migration.

Niger has been welcoming refugees from Mali since the outbreak of conflict in 2012, and continues to welcome new arrivals, despite the signature of a Peace Agreement in Algiers in 2015. Insecurity and conflict persist in parts of central and Northern Mali. The majority of Malian refugees are located in 3 camps in the region of Tillabery, others in a refugee hosting area in the region of Tahoua, and the remainder in urban centres in Niamey and Ayorou. There are currently 57,405 Malian refugees in Niger

The region of Diffa in the south east of Niger, in the Lake Chad Basin, has been hosting refugees since 2013, when Boko Haram violence intensified in the North Eastern Regions of Nigeria. In 2015, the conflict in Nigeria crossed the border into Niger, with the first attacks in the Diffa region reported in February 2015. There are currently over 250,000 displaced persons scattered throughout the region, including 108,470 Nigerian refugees, as well as IDPs and returnees. UNHCR manages one official camp in the region which hosts less than 12,000 refugees, while the rest choose to remain living in spontaneous sites or amongst the community.

Niger is situated in a geopolitically sensitive area, linking the Sahara desert with the Sahel, and West with Central Africa. The country has developed into a major hub of migratory movements northwards to Algeria, Libya and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to cross into Europe. With approximately 300,000 people passing through Niger per year (IOM figures), UNHCR estimate that up to 30% of these persons may be potential asylum seekers in need of international protection. UNHCR Niger is working closely with the Government of Niger to improve RSD procedures in country, as well as to identify potential asylum seekers. The aim of the intervention is to provide protection and durable solutions to the most vulnerable.



Birds eye view of the city of Agadez, where thousands of refugees and migrants pass through on their onward journey towards Libya and the Mediterranean (UNHCR, L.Donovan)

Key Achievements per sector – October 2017

Protection

- **Nigeria Situation:** A study on accountability mechanisms in the Diffa region (in a total of 147 identified sites) was completed by the Protection Working Group in October. A Plan of Action and Accountability Committee have been subsequently created. The study is available [here](#).
- **Mali Situation:** Two serious attacks in the region of Tillabery occurred on the 4th and 21st of October. The first was carried out against a group of American and Nigerien military, close to the Mali border, resulting in the deaths of 4 American and 4 Nigerien soldiers. A second attack took place in Ayorou town resulting in the deaths of 12 Nigerien soldiers. The Protection Cluster undertook a mission to Tillabery region to identify the key protection needs with a view to elaborating a joint action plan to respond to the new protection risks.
- **Mixed Migration Situation:** UNHCR and the Government of Niger will provide emergency protection and life-saving assistance for persons of concern with critical needs, identified in Libya (which is not signatory to the refugee conventions), through the establishment of an 'Emergency Transit Mechanism' (ETM). This will allow for the evacuation of highly vulnerable persons in Libya to a safe transit centre in Niger, where the cases will be processed for urgent resettlement to third countries. Niger will welcome the first group of refugees from Libya to Niamey in November.
- **Mixed Migration Situation:** Training in RSD was carried out for 34 National Eligibility Commission (CNE) members. The first CNE eligibility session of 2017 went ahead, with 17 cases adjudicated. Furthermore, UNHCR partner APBE in the region of Agadez referred approx. 100 potential asylum seeker cases to the CNE for RSD procedures.

Statelessness

- **National:** In the framework of the global fight to eradicate statelessness by 2024, Niger along with the other members of ECOWAS signed the Abidjan Declaration in February 2015. In May 2017, the member states signed the Banjul Action Plan. On the 27th of October, Niger completed the elaboration of a National Action Plan to eradicate statelessness, which was signed at a national validation workshop.

Education

- **Nigeria Situation:** Since 2015, UNHCR and partner COOPI have been running a Distance Education Programme for Nigerian refugee secondary school students in the Diffa region. Initially 4 centres were established, however due to the deterioration of the security situation in the department of Bosso, the local centre was closed. However, the centre has reopened for the 2016/2017 school year, while a fifth centre has been completed and has opened in Sayam Forage refugee camp. On the 2nd of October, 649 students enrolled in the five centres.

Cash Assistance

- **Mali Situation:** In October, UNHCR and WFP in Niger agreed to develop a joint strategy for the Mali situation. UNHCR and WFP have been working closely over the past 12 months on the elaboration of a targeting mechanism. This new strategy is essential for the response, which has seen a notable reduction in funding.
- A mission is planned for the first week of November to launch cash based assistance in the camp of Tabareybarey. This comes following the finalization of a contract between UNHCR and a mobile telephone company in Niger, to enable the use of 'mobile money', for the first time in Niger. Cash distributions will be based on vulnerability.



Nigerian refugees in one of Diffa's Distance Education Centres – Diffa (UNHCR, L.Donovan)

Key Challenges

Mali Situation

Presently the key challenge as regards to the Mali situation is in terms of the deterioration of the security situation throughout the month of October. With the two serious attacks which took place in October in the Tillabery region, coupled with a generalised increase in insecurity and cross border banditry, ensuring the safety and protection of persons of concern is a key preoccupation of UNHCR. Efforts are underway to increase the security of the camps, to enhance patrols and to ensure that humanitarian access is maintained.

In order for UNHCR to realize its vision of closure of the camps by 2019, and integration of the Malian population amongst the host communities, longer term investment from donors is required. Although the situation is no longer seen as an “emergency” situation, in the current context, it is highly possible that it could once again deteriorate, if the provision of durable solutions is not prioritized. This is particularly important in the current context, where a lack of solutions of the tens of thousands of Malian refugees in Niger may lead to secondary movements.

Nigeria Situation

Due to logistical constraints, the finalization of the BIMS biometric identification and registration project which is ongoing in the region of Diffa may be slightly delayed. The process has been completed for the entire population of the camp of Sayam Forage, while the out-of-camp component will be implemented in the coming weeks.

Mixed Migration

Some key challenges in relation to the implementation of programmes related to mixed migration include ensuring that the national asylum framework, including laws and RSD procedures, is in conformity with international asylum standards, and that an effective ICLA (Information, Counselling, and Legal Information) mechanism is fully operational.

As regards to the evacuation of refugees from Libya to Niger, it is essential that more third countries pledge additional resettlement places, to ensure that the most vulnerable have access to durable solutions, in line with the UNHCR High Commissioner's recent appeal for an additional 40,000 resettlement spaces for the region.

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017 as well as the following:

European Union / ECHO / Japan / France / Switzerland / USA / Spain / United Kingdom / CERF / Denmark /
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