



PRESS RELEASE

1 seule personne forcée à fuir
c'est déjà trop.

Niamey, Niger

DATE: May 3, 2014

UNHCR
Boulevard des Zarmakoyes
Maurice Delens B.P. : 1221
Email : ngrni@unhcr.org
Niamey-NIGER

Contacts:

Amaria Belaskri
External Relations Officer
Email: belaskri@unhcr.org
Tel : + 227 92 19 41 10

Marie-France Ntaganira
Public information officer
E-mail : ntaganir@unhcr.org
Tel : +223 90410618

Mali, Niger and the UNHCR sign agreement on repatriation of Malian refugees.

A delegation of the Malian government headed by his Excellency the Minister of Interior and Security, General Sada Samaké, is visiting Niamey for the signing of the tripartite agreement between the governments of Mali, Niger and UNHCR for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees.

The Agreement was signed on May 3, 2014 in Niamey by the three parties. One of the immediate results of the agreement will be the creation of a tripartite commission to define the practical modalities for the implementation of the voluntary repatriation program.

UNHCR welcomes the conclusion of this agreement which provides a legal framework to support spontaneous returns already underway since 2013 and which provides additional protection to returnees. The tripartite agreement requires that the parties undertake to respect the voluntary character of repatriation in safety and dignity; while guaranteeing the right of asylum and international protection for Malian refugees who have not yet opted for return.

Since November 2013, some 5,600 refugees have so far left the refugee camps in Niger and returned home with the assistance of UNHCR and its government partner, the *National Eligibility Commission*.

Parallel to these returns, thousands of new refugee arrivals have been continuously registered. The situation in northern Mali is not yet favorable to the promotion of massive returns. However, UNHCR welcomes the cooperation between the governments of Mali and Niger and will work together with them in seeking durable solutions to the problems of refugees.

UNHCR supports the process initiated in Mali for reconciliation and for the reintegration of returning refugees. UNHCR also seizes this occasion to pay tribute to the solidarity and the generosity demonstrated by the people and the Government of Niger to the Malian refugees. It reaffirms its commitment to continue to support the authorities of Niger in providing protection and assistance to Malian refugees present on its territory and to those who continue to arrive.

Since 2012, Niger is host to approximately 50,000 Malian refugees living in the three camps of Mangaize , Tabareybarey and Abala in the Tillaberi region, the two " refugee hosting areas", of Intikane and Tazalit in the Tahoua region and within the Niamey urban area.

END