



Ivorian refugees in Mali prepare for their voluntarily repatriation to Ivory Coast on 21 December in Bamako. Photo Credit © UNHCR Mali

UNHCR MALI

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-31 December 2016

KEY FIGURES

730

birth certificates were delivered to Mauritanian refugee children in the region of Kayes

300

urban refugee children and host community children participated in UNHCR's Christmas festivities in Bamako

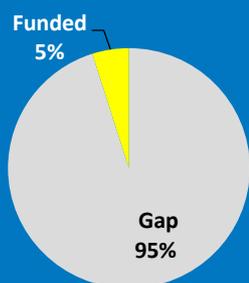
193

returned refugees and host community members participated in WASH sensitization sessions around newly restored water points in Mopti region

FUNDING

USD 49.2 million

requested for the operation

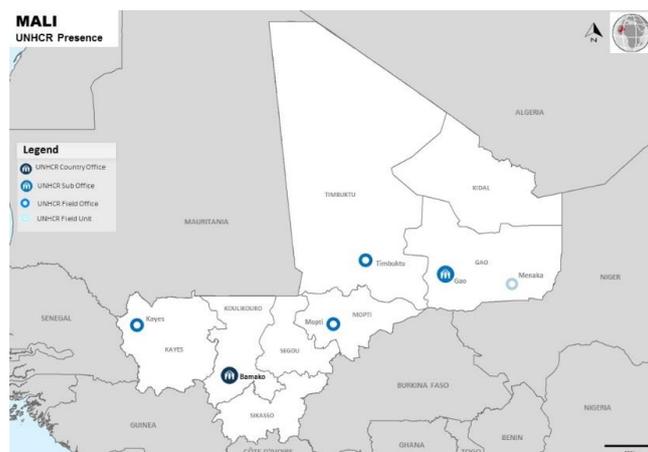


PRIORITIES

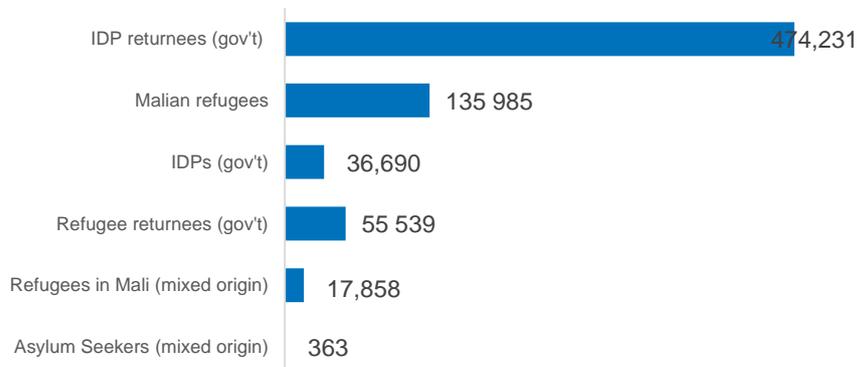
- 850 Malian IDP returnee households targeted to receive adequate and durable shelter
- 6,000 Malian refugee returnees targeted to receive a one-time cash-based assistance
- 2,500 Mauritanian refugees and local community members targeted to receive improved access to potable water
- 1,000 refugee children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

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR and its partner, *La Commission Nationale Chargée des Réfugiés* (CNCR) supported the voluntary repatriation of 94 Ivorian refugees to help them return home to Ivory Coast in safety and dignity.
- Since September 2016, UNHCR, through its partner Mercy Corps, has supported the Government of Mali in providing a one-time cash based assistance to 2,437 refugee returnees in Gao, Menaka, Mopti, and Timbuktu. This assistance supports the reintegration of refugee returnees by helping them access self-determined basic needs.
- 74 protection incidents were identified by UNHCR's partner, *Association Malienne pour la Survie du Sahel* (AMSS), among forcibly displaced persons and host community members in the regions of Gao, Menaka, Mopti, Kidal and Timbuktu.



Population of concern (October 2016)



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR continues to operate in a volatile security environment with threat of terrorism, criminality and intercommunity violence affecting humanitarian access in northern and central Mali. In the north, violations of basic human rights are reported and certain local populations continue to lack access to public services, documentation, water, education and food security. Some 135,834 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries and 36,690 internally displaced persons in Mali are waiting to see whether conditions in their area of origin improve to enable them to return in safety and dignity.

The volatile security environment continues to destabilize local communities, jeopardize the protection of civilians, and prevent forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes, while further threatening their access to already limited basic social services. In the central regions of Mopti and Ségou, it has been observed that civilian populations are facing more difficulty accessing health facilities as a result of increasing pressure (intimidation, sometimes destruction) by extremist groups. Medical personnel have been forced to flee concerned villages thus impacting civilians who need to travel longer distances to seek medical assistance.

The implementation of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation continues to face challenges though some advances were observed with respect to the deployment of mixed patrols and the cantonment process. The Operational Coordination Mechanism responsible for establishing mixed patrols and protecting cantonment sites made a decision to commence mixed patrols in early January in Gao region. The former rebel coalition *Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad* (CMA) had publicly announced its retreat from the Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA) on 19 December citing the lack of progress in the implementation of the accords and the heightened violence. The CMA called for a high level meeting with an expanded international mediation in order to preserve the credibility of the peace process and actors involved.

The threat of terrorism and criminality persists with security forces facing almost daily attacks in the northern and central regions. In the northern regions, the threats of IED and abduction of Westerners remain high, while the central regions face increasing threats from active extremist armed groups. This month saw numerous incidents affecting aid organizations. On 28 December, three UNHCR staff members were victims of a carjacking whereby the assailants stole a UNHCR armoured vehicle in the town of Timbuktu. Staff members were unharmed, but the vehicle remains missing. A French-Swiss aid worker with a local NGO was kidnapped in Gao on 24 December and remains missing. On 21 December, armed individuals brutalized a local government officer in Menaka region threatening the worker to add them onto a list of cash assistance beneficiaries. On 17 December, three armed men robbed personnel of two NGOs, including one of UNHCR’s partners, stealing money intended to assist vulnerable populations in the districts of Gargando and Bintagougou in Timbuktu region. The need to uphold humanitarian principles is of utmost importance to counter the shrinking of humanitarian space necessary to conduct life-saving activities. Incorporating protection mainstreaming principles and promoting a meaningful access, safety and dignity for humanitarian aid remains key to humanitarian actors.

Achievements

Protection

Protection Cluster

- The Norwegian Refugee Council has been chosen as the Protection Cluster co-facilitator alongside UNHCR for 2017. In December, the Protection Cluster developed a brochure to serve as a practical guide on transversal protection. The document aims to guide humanitarian actors on ways to integrate protection dimensions in everyday humanitarian activities.
- **Menaka:** On 20 December, UNHCR’s field unit in Menaka held a meeting to map out activities of protection actors currently present in region. The results revealed that at least ten actors including UNHCR are currently active

including IRC, OXFAM, ACTED, NRC, AMSS, government agencies (i.e. DNDS, Ministère de la promotion de la femme, l'enfant et la famille) and two local protection committees. UNHCR and IRC will serve as co-leads to ensure coordination among different actors.

- **Timbuktu:** On 13 December, the regional Protection Cluster met with UNICEF and *the Direction régionale de la promotion de la femme* to discuss sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and child protection issues. A key issue highlighted includes strengthening psychosocial and legal assistance to response to SGBV cases.

- **Closure of UNHCR field office in Kayes:** On 31 December, UNHCR officially closed its field office in Kayes region where it has been working to assist and protect Mauritanian refugees who were forced to flee Mauritania after 1989 following the outbreak of intercommunity conflicts. While UNHCR supported the Malian government with the identification and registration of Mauritanian refugees upon their arrival, the office expanded its presence in 2009 to support a range of activities in the areas of education, health, WASH, social cohesion, documentation and community empowerment and self-reliance. According to an identification and verification exercise in 2016, it is estimated that 15,232 Mauritanian refugees remain present in the region of Kayes. UNHCR will continue to provide protection and assistance to Mauritanian through its partners, *La Commission Nationale Chargée des Réfugiés* (CNCR) and Stop Sahel, in an effort to find durable solutions for the refugees.



UNHCR Field Office team in Kayes region. Photo Credit © UNHCR Mali

- **Facilitated Returns:** Since January 2016, 1561 Malian refugee households (6,954 individuals) from Burkina Faso (2,578), Niger (2,445), Mauritania (1,925), Nigeria (1) and Togo (5) have benefitted from UNHCR's facilitation assistance for their voluntary return to Mali.

- **Voluntary Repatriation:** Working in close collaboration with CNCR, UNHCR coordinated and organized the voluntary repatriation of 94 Ivorian refugees (39 female, 55 male) who had been forced to flee Ivory Coast following a civil war that began in 2002. Voluntary repatriation is one of three durable solutions that aims to help refugees return home in safety and dignity.



Ivorian refugees at the Bamako-Sénou International Airport in Bamako prepare to return home to Ivory Coast on 21 December. Photo Credit © UNHCR Mali

- **Cash based assistance:** From September to December, UNHCR, through its partner Mercy Corps, supported the Government of Mali in providing cash based assistance to 2,437 refugee returnees in Gao (962), Menaka (626), Mopti (141) and Timbuktu (708). Since the beginning of the year, UNHCR has provided a one-time cash assistance to 8,453 returned refugees in Gao, Menaka, Mopti and Timbuktu to help them gain access to basic needs in a safe and dignified manner. A discussion on lessons learnt for future cash based assistance identified areas for improvement including heightening interest of returned refugees to get registered with DRDSES, ensuring up-to-date and precise registration lists and updating standard operating procedures to ensure accurate and timely follow-up in response to beneficiary requests.

- **Verification Exercise:** UNHCR and its partner, CNCR, conducted a verification exercise with refugees in Bamako and Sikasso to verify their presence as well as to hold a dialogue on durable solutions with Ivorian and Congolese refugees. The verification exercise aimed to update statistics and information on refugees in the regions, as well as learn about refugees' intentions with respect to durable solutions.

- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR's partner, *Association Malienne pour la Survie du Sahel* (AMSS), identified 74 protection incidents among forcibly displaced and host community members in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu. The region of Gao recorded the highest number of incidents with more than 50% of cases relating to extortion. Other incidents were linked to injuries, death threats, theft and sexual violence. Since June 2016, 627 incidents have been identified.

■ **Documentation:**

- **Sensitization campaigns:** In Kayes region, UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, held 15 sensitization sessions on the importance of birth declarations and documentation including birth certificates and naturalization. The sessions reached 513 Mauritanian refugees and host community members with one birth declared on refugee sites as a result of the sensitization campaign.
- **Birth certificates:** 730 birth certificates were distributed throughout refugee sites in Kayes region. This documentation prevents statelessness and allows children born in Mali to exercise their rights with proper documentation. This year, UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, has supported the documentation needs of Mauritanian refugees in Kayes region by distributing 2,537 birth certificates out of 7,807 certificates that were granted by the Malian government in 2014/2015, alongside 130 identity cards. In addition, 299 refugee children received supplementary judgements that will be converted into birth certificates in 2017.



UNHCR's partner Stop Sahel distributes birth certificates to Mauritanian refugees in Kayes region. Photo Credit © Stop Sahel

■ **SGBV:**

- In the context of the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence Campaign*, UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, organized two community dialogues with refugees and host community members in the refugee sites of Kayes region on the theme of early and forced marriage. The dialogues reached 106 persons including 62 men and 44 women. Additionally, a mass sensitization campaign was held in the region of Timbuktu with diverse stakeholders to raise awareness on gender-based violence particularly in relation to female returned refugees. In Gao, a debate was held with women's associations from Gao village and the rural commune of Soni Al-Ber on the topic of durable peace and eradicating violence against women and girls in family, work and school environments.
- Seven sensitization sessions on the consequences of early marriage and excision reached 299 host community members and Mauritanian refugees in six villages of Kayes region. In addition, six sensitization sessions on the importance of family planning methods reached 101 refugees and host community members in four localities in Kayes region. These sessions helped participants gain awareness about the consequences of early/forced marriage and excision, as well as raise their level of engagement to prevent and reduce these harmful practices.
- On 14 December, four SGBV survivors referred by UNHCR's partner AMSS received support to pursue income-generating activities in Gao region that will help them regain self-reliance and reintegrate into the local community.
- On 20 December, nine students (5 SGBV survivors and 4 vulnerable returned refugees) referred by UNHCR Timbuktu to a local NGO, *Association pour la Promotion et l'Appui au Développement Local*, benefitted from school kits in order to support their return to school and reintegration into the local community.



Women and children returned refugees participate in a mass sensitization campaign to address SGBV issues in Timbuktu region in the context of the 16 days of activism campaign. Photo Credit © UNHCR Mali

- **Persons with Specific Needs:** UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, provided assistance to 38 urban refugees in Bamako in need of health and protection assistance.

- **Christmas for urban refugee children:** On 26 December, UNHCR organized a Christmas celebration for refugee children and host community children in Bamako. Approximately 300 children participate in the festivities that

included musical theatre, dance, games and food. UNHCR's partners including CNCR, ACTED, Stop Sahel and UREM participated in the festivities giving children an opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the season's festivities.



Health

- **Health Insurance:** UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, helped 5 urban refugee households (10 individuals) gain access to more affordable health care services with an aim to improve their health status. In the region of Kayes, UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, organized seven sensitization sessions to Mauritanian refugees to raise their awareness on registration procedures to access health care insurance.
- **Pre-Natal Health:** In Kayes region, UNHCR, through its partner Stop Sahel, held eight sensitization sessions on the advantages of prenatal consultations and contraception in eight sites reaching 159 participants from the Mauritanian refugee and host community communities. In addition, two sessions on the importance of family planning reached 51 female refugees at two refugee sites in Kayes region.
- **Community Health Agents:** UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, carried out three sensitization sessions that reached 62 Mauritanian refugees on the importance and utility of putting in place health community agents in the villages where Mauritanian refugees currently reside in Kayes region. Currently, many refugees face problems accessing healthcare facilities as a result of limited facilities in their local villages that then necessitate long distance travel to access healthcare assistance.



Ms. Angèle Djohossou, Representative for UNHCR in Mali, participates in a Christmas party for refugee children in Bamako on 26 December. Photo Credit © UNHCR Mali.



Water and Sanitation

- **Construction and Restoration of Water Points**
 - **Timbuktu:** Five boreholes with solar pumps and six handwashing stations have been installed to strengthen access to potable water and improve hygiene in school environments in the communes of Timbuktu, Haribomo, Tonka, Douékirié and Kaneye.
 - **Gao:** Three boreholes in Menaka continue to experience delays as a result of defective equipment requiring repairs. The boreholes are expected to be fixed in January 2017.
- **Water Management and Hygiene Sensitization Sessions**
 - **Kayes:** Two sensitization sessions on water management were held in Kayes region with five community mobilizers and 12 members of water management committees of water points located in the villages of Brala, Khairou, Sinkole and Heremakono.
 - **Mopti:** 22 sensitization sessions reaching 187 persons (87 men, 28 women, 78 children) including returnees and host community members were held around restored and constructed hydraulic structures across Mopti region to raise awareness on good health and hygiene practices around water points. Additionally, three sensitization sessions on social cohesion took place around the water points of Tamiziguida, Garmi and Boni reaching 53 persons including returned refugees and host community members in order to help reduce tensions between different groups and promote peaceful coexistence.



Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- **Promoting Income-Generating Activities:** UNHCR, through its partner Mercy Corps, is supporting refugee returnees and host community members in northern Mali to receive assistance for their income-generating activities in view of promoting a smooth reintegration and peaceful coexistence in their host communities.

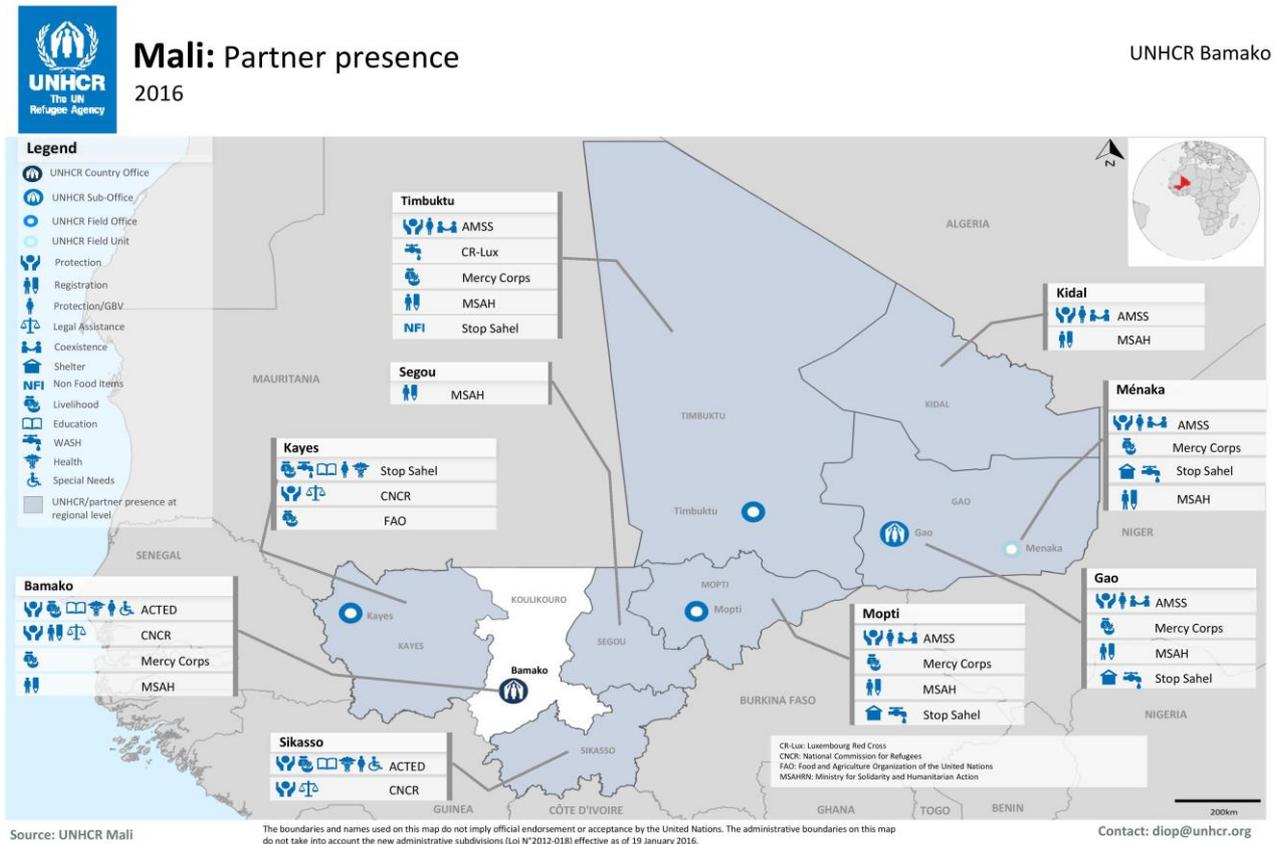
- **Timbuktu:** The women's association of returned refugees in Alamanfoua received a 600,000 CFA entrepreneurial grant to be distributed as small micro-loans to several entrepreneurs to boost their income-generating activities.
- **Bamako:** UNHCR, through its partner ACTED, provided financial assistance to five refugees (4 women, 1 man) to help them pursue income-generating activities in the areas of tailoring and clothing.

- **Cash-based assistance:** On 20 December, a training workshop was held with UNHCR's partner, Stop Sahel, in order to discuss support for naturalizing Mauritanian refugees in Kayes region accompanied by socio-economic integration.

- **Social Cohesion :** 11 sensitization sessions were organized on the theme of social cohesion to promote the improved integration of Mauritanian refugee populations within local communities in Kayes region as well as promote the implementation of joint initiatives among different community members. The sessions reached 311 persons of which 272 were refugees and 39 were host community members.

Working in partnership

- On 30 December, the Representative of UNHCR in Mali, Ms. Angèle Djohossou, organized a ceremony at the country office in Bamako with partners and members of the *union des réfugiés au Mali* to celebrate joint achievements and extend wishes for 2017.
- Stop Sahel, Terres Sans Frontières, Croix Rouge Luxembourgeoise, ADES and Mercy Corps have been selected as partners for UNHCR in Mali for 2017. They come in addition to UNHCR’s government partners, CNCR and DNDS, that remain the same and the NGO partner AMSS that was selected in 2016.

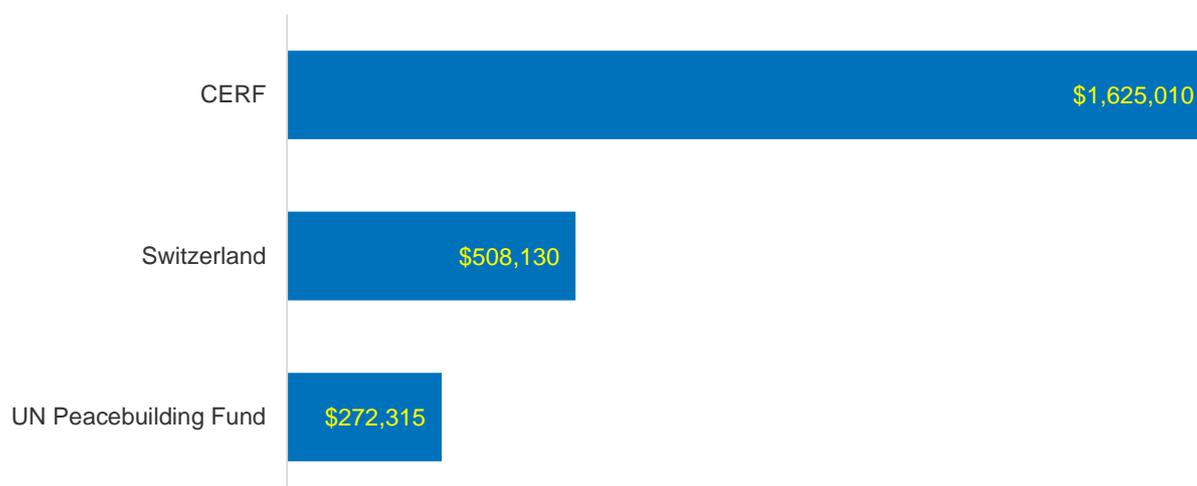


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **USD 2,405,455**.

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

Funding received in USD



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ANNEXES

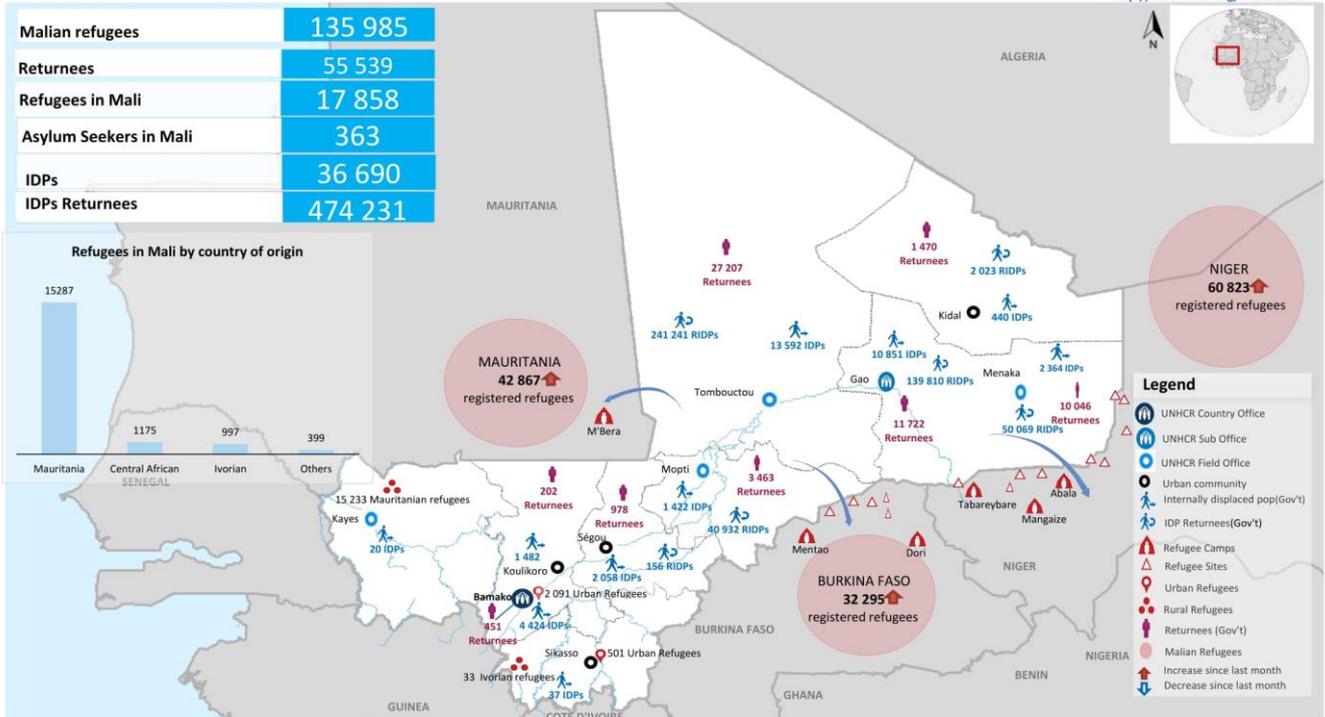
Mali situation map



Mali: Refugees, returnees and Internally displaced populations

31 October 2016

<http://data.unhcr.org/malisituation>



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Malian refugees and returnees verified (Sources: UNHCR)

Refugees in Mali (Sources: Government of Mali, CNCR)

Malian Returnees and IDPs (Sources: Government of Mali, DNDS)

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Links:

[Mali Situation UNHCR portal](#) – [UNHCR Mali Facebook](#) - [UNHCR Mali Twitter](#)