NRC Mali/Burkina Faso - Fact Sheet

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL | NRC

Updated May 2016

Basic Info:

Map Sources: ESRI, UNCS.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in Sep 2013.
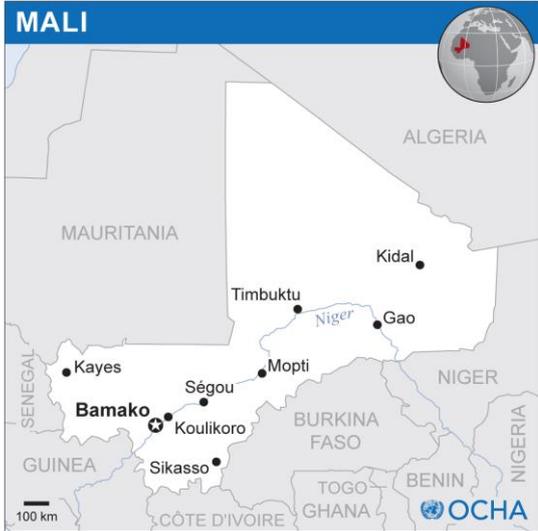
Established:	2013
Country Office:	Bamako
Field offices:	Mali : Gao, Timbuktu, Mopti and Kidal Burkina Faso: Dori, and Djibo
Budget 2016:	NOK 80 million
Budget 2015:	NOK 50 million
Country Director:	Muriel Tschopp
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International staff:	11
National staff:	124
Core Activities:	

Donors:

Mali: SIDA, NMFA, UNICEF, DFID, WFP, OFDA, ECHO
Burkina Faso: UNHCR, NMFA

Humanitarian and political context :

In 2012, Mali sustained a series of political and security crisis that culminated in the large scale takeover of northern regions by Islamist groups who proceeded to perpetrate gross human rights violations against the population under their control. Over half a million Malian people were displaced from their homes, with 150,000 Malians – mainly of Tuareg and Arab origins – taking refuge in neighboring countries, and roughly 350,000 becoming displaced inside Mali. In 2013, French military forces succeeded in retaking control of key towns and forcing the retreat of Islamist groups, and a UN peace operation – known as MINUSMA – was deployed to support the return of state authority to the north. Displaced Malians began, tentatively, to return to their areas of origin. A successful presidential election in late 2013 and the beginning of peace negotiations in early 2014 led to hopes of long lasting peace. However, the re-assertion of separatist control of Kidal region and parts of Gao region in May 2014 highlighted the fragility of the Malian Government's capacity to control the north, and precipitated the new displacement of roughly 15,000 people. The use of asymmetric tactics – such as landmines, IEDs and suicide bombing attacks – by Islamist groups against Malian, French and UN military forces increased in frequency and sophistication throughout 2014. There was also a steady increase in the frequency and intensity of armed clashes between Malian forces or pro-government militia, and separatist groups seeking greater autonomy and control of northern regions.

In 2015, the trend continued. In addition to the threats posed by armed clashes and asymmetric warfare, the constant threat of violent – and increasingly sophisticated – bandit attacks on major transport routes affected the ability of ordinary people to maintain their livelihoods. On June 20 of the same year, a peace agreement was signed between the two major coalitions of armed groups and the Government of Mali. While some progresses have been made in the implementation of the peace agreement, there are still limited peace dividends thus far resulting in frustration amongst the population and recruitment by radical groups preying on those disappointed by the peace process, in particular amongst the youth in central and northern Mali. State authorities have gradually returned to the north enabling the delivery of basic state services in the main towns. Many more remote areas remain however with limited or no basic services such as health and education due to both structural issues and fear of state employees of becoming targets of

attacks by radical groups.

Today large humanitarian needs persist, even as funding for the crisis has fallen sharply. Despite gradual movements of return, more than 52 000 people are still internally displaced and 144 000 continue to seek refuge in neighboring countries (OCHA, March 2016). Insecurity continues to prevent many people from fully returning to their homes, and disrupts the provision of basic services such as education and health. In terms of displacement two recent inter-community conflicts in the region of Menaka, triggering the displacement of more than 13,000 people, highlighted the continued fragility of the security situation (OCHA, March 2016). The people that did not flee since the beginning of the crisis often continue to be vulnerable to extreme poverty, including chronic food insecurity, and – in the case of certain marginalized groups – to the discrimination and lack of protection that they suffered from prior to the conflict.

The 2016 Mali Strategic Response Plan (SRP) estimates that aid organizations will require USD 354 million to provide the basic humanitarian needs in Mali, but only USD 42.8 million (12%) has been committed to date, making Mali one of the worst funded humanitarian appeals in the world.

NRC in Mali and Burkina Faso:

In response to the needs and gaps identified above, NRC is implementing education, shelter, food security, and ICLA programmes in Mali, and shelter and education programmes in Burkina Faso.

Education: NRC aims to increase access to formal and informal education opportunities for children and youth affected by the conflict. NRC works in collaboration with beneficiary groups, local stakeholders and education authorities to provide accelerated learning programs for out of school children and vocational training for vulnerable youth in Mali. NRC also supports the formal education system through teacher training, school rehabilitation and school kit distribution as well as community based learning in areas were no schools are functional. In Burkina Faso NRC provides support for refugee children to attend local schools as well as vocational training for youth living in the refugee camps.

ICLA: NRC assists conflict affected people to acquire civil documentation (ID cards and Birth certificates) and provides training for local authorities on the needs and rights of IDPs. NRC also helps IDPs and returnees to access their rights to housing, land and property (HLP) by providing assistance to those who have lost documentation or whose claims to land are contested. In 2016, IDPs and returnees can access ICLA services in three regions in the central and northern areas of Mali and from ICLA mobile teams that extend assistance beyond those centers. In 2016 NRC will also carry out a large study on barriers to accessing civil documentation in northern Mali in partnership with local and international partners.

Shelter: In the refugee camps in Burkina Faso, the shelter programme is building and rehabilitating shelters for vulnerable Malian families exposed to the harsh climatic conditions of the Sahel. In Mali the program provides cash for rent and voucher for construction and rehabilitation material for vulnerable households in Ansango, Menaka and Timbuktu as part of an integrated food security, shelter and ICLA program.

Food Security: NRC, in collaboration with WFP, distributes food to persons exposed to severe food insecurity in the north. NRC also assists families facing food shortages through the distribution of food vouchers redeemable for staple goods. The program also supports income generating opportunities for vulnerable households

Emergency response: In collaboration with ECHO, NRC manages a rapid response mechanism equipped to assist newly displaced families in northern Mali with emergency water, food and shelter within a week of the crisis (natural disaster or conflict).

These programs form part a resilience-focused approach, with an emphasis on the support of areas vulnerable or impacted by population movement. The projects focuses on integrated recovery programming with an emphasis on the provision of basic services, the development of economic opportunities and continued targeted support to vulnerable households across NRC's core competencies. The program is concentrated on the north with a new office in Kidal in addition to the 3 existing offices in Mali (Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu) and 2 offices in Burkina Faso. NRC also maintains a capacity to provide emergency assistance in the case of larger-scale displacement crises through the ECHO funded RRM mechanism.

Given the diminishing donor attention on Mali, a key focus of NRC in 2016 is collaborative advocacy with like-minded organisations to ensure that displacement issues, humanitarian needs and access continue to be central to the discussions of humanitarian and development actors alike.

NRC priorities for 2015 and beyond:

The peace process started to be implemented but it's facing significant delays. As a result while 2016 – 2017 will likely mark the return of a larger state presence in the main population centres in the north as well as the limited return of development actors to the north, humanitarian needs will persist in many rural or distant areas including Kidal where effective presence of the state is unlikely. This is why NRC is focusing its assistance on hard to reach / insecure areas and will aim to continue to do so in the course of 2017 depending on availability of funding. In addition to the current sectors NRC will also explore opportunities to re-launch its water and sanitation activities in country to ensure a holistic assistance package to those in need. Refugee returns are also unlikely to be at scale. As a result NRC will actively seek to support efforts related to durable solutions for Malian refugees in Burkina Faso while at the same time drawing down its operation in country and preparing a gradual transition to local partners.

As part of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and within the different clusters, NRC will continue to advocate both for continued funding for humanitarian needs and for improved coordination between emergency and development actors to ensure the most vulnerable are not left unassisted during the transition period. In Burkina Faso NRC will advocate for the need to identify durable solutions for those refugees unable to return to Mali and as a stepping-stone increased assistance to those already living outside the camp.