

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 32,000 people displaced in 2017 due to renewed violence
- Humanitarian access: positive results of the community approach
- Prospects on cash transfers to deliver food aid in Mali
- Humanitarian partners establish a network to strengthen protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

KEY FIGURES

No. of IDPs (CMP report, May 2017)	59,000
No. of refugees in neighbouring countries (CMP report, May 2017)	143,500
No. of returnees (CMP report, May 2017)	487,000
No. of repatriated refugees (CMP report, May 2017)	58,300
No. of food insecure people (Cadre harmonisé March 2017)	3.8 million
No. of acutely malnourished children (SMART 2016)	622,350

FUNDING

\$293 million
Requested (HRP 2017)

23%
Funded



Photo: OCHA/Adiawakoye

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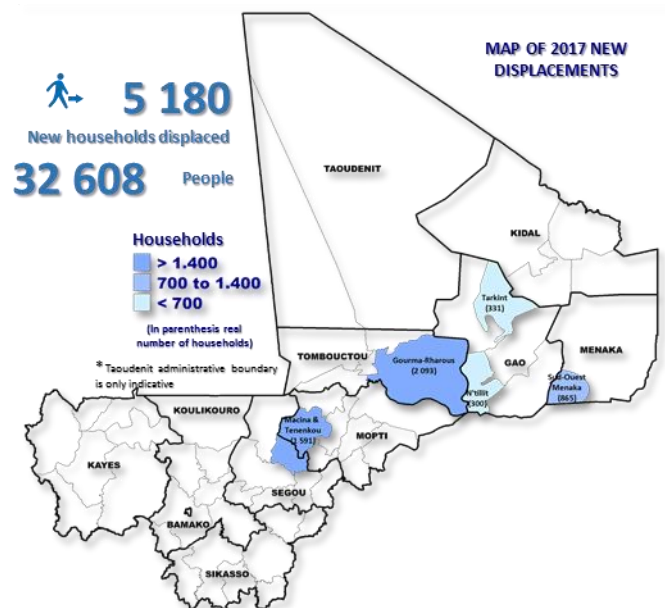
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32,000 people displaced in connection with violence in 2017

The deterioration of the security situation in the north and the centre of Mali has caused more than 32,000 people to flee since the beginning of the year, according to the data collected by humanitarian partners (reports of the Commission on population movements – CMP – and of the partners of the Rapid Response Mechanism – RRM – as at 31 May).

These movements have occurred either as a result of intercommunity conflict and tensions – often exacerbated by the presence of various armed groups and self-defence groups – or in connection with clashes between armed groups or as a result of terrorist attacks and subsequent operations by security forces.

According to assessments conducted by humanitarian actors, the displaced persons fled primarily as a preventive measure, for fear of reprisals, amalgam and/or arrests by armed elements on the ground.



Source: CMP reports and RRM reports – as of 31 May 2017

Most of the displaced persons have found refuge in makeshift camps or sites or in host communities, most often in very precarious conditions in terms of shelters and access to water and food.

Assistance to newly displaced persons

Following reports of population displacements, evaluations have been made, including through the rapid response mechanism¹, to identify and respond to priority needs. In support to the Government, various partners² have mobilized to provide emergency

¹ The rapid response mechanism (RRM) in place in Mali is funded by ECHO and USAID/OFDA. It is intended to support emergency responses of partner NGOs to sudden displacements of populations.

² The following partners have contributed to the emergency assistance to displaced persons: WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, OXFAM, ACF, NRC, CRS and AVSF.

assistance to displaced persons in the areas of food, water purification products, shelter kits and basic items, etc.

However, the prevailing insecurity, the low presence of humanitarian organizations in certain areas and the lack of funding of the humanitarian response in the country have slowed down the response and affected the effectiveness of the assistance provided.

Humanitarian access: number of incidents on the rise

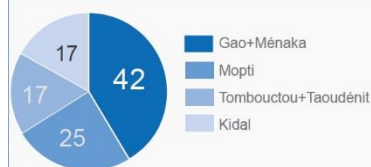
Most of the incidents observed were violence directed against humanitarian staff, property and infrastructure.

The number of incidents having affected humanitarian access during April and May remains above the monthly average observed in the country over the last three years. As at 31 May, 52 access constraints have been recorded in northern and central regions of Mali this year, compared to 68 and 77 for the full year in 2016 and 2015 respectively. Most of the incidents observed from April to May were violence directed against humanitarian staff, property and infrastructure.

Number of Access Constraints



% of access constraints per region



In particular, five humanitarian workers were abducted in two separate incidents. The workers were subsequently released unharmed through negotiations. Other cases include vehicle robberies, looting and thefts during which three staff were injured.

The area of Gao/Menaka has the highest number of incidents. However, it should be noted that the increased presence of "extremist" groups in the centre of the country makes some areas more and more difficult to access for humanitarian organizations.

Some progress made thanks to the community approach

Intensified efforts of humanitarian organizations in implementing the community approach to access have recently helped to further coordinate joint missions in areas affected by insecurity. The community approach relies on dialog with local leaders, awareness-raising on humanitarian action and its principles, and negotiation of access with armed groups present on the ground in order to promote a protective environment and secure the movements of humanitarian organizations.



Gourma Rarhous district (April 2017): Inter-agency mission participants exchange with displaced people in Borenda. Photo: OCHA

At the beginning of April, an inter-agency mission composed of United Nations agencies, NGOs, and governmental technical services visited the district of Gourma Rarhous³, in the region of Timbuktu, where population displacements and a worrisome livestock situation were reported.

The assessments conducted enabled the provision of immediate relief (food rations, shelter kits, basic items, medications, and cattle feed) to hundreds of recently displaced persons and the planning of various interventions to meet identified priority needs. For instance, food assistance is being provided to 5300 vulnerable households (32 000 people) in several Communes in the district of Gourma Rharous for four months.

In late May, a similar mission composed of United Nations agencies was conducted in the district of Bourem⁴, region of Gao, where population displacements and a lack of water were reported. According to the assessments made, access to basic services - water, education and health - is the main priority need. Actions are underway with the various humanitarian partners to mobilize resources to provide an adequate response.

Prospects on the scaling up of cash transfers to deliver food aid

A new study indicates that the conditions of markets in the north of Mali would be suitable for humanitarian actors to further use cash transfers as a means of distribution of food aid.

The survey was conducted by WFP in partnership with the Observatoire des Marchés Agricoles and several international NGOs⁵ in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. However, the analysis highlights the aspects to be considered before resorting more widely to this means of assistance.⁶



(May 2017) – Survey teams assess the functioning of a market. Photo: WFP

Humanitarian actors in the area of food security consider that when local food markets are supplied, when there is no inflation and the conditions enable the populations to go to the markets (good road conditions, security, etc.) cash transfers offer many advantages. They particularly support the local economy and food production and give the targeted households access to a more diversified food basket adapted to their food preferences. In addition, this means of assistance can be more effective in terms of cost-effectiveness as it eliminates transport and storage costs.

The assessment of the functioning of food markets in the regions covered by the survey demonstrates that some conditions are conducive to scaling up cash transfers: performance levels of market ranging from "average" to "good", basic foodstuffs available throughout the year (even during the lean period thanks to imported products, change of suppliers, storage, etc.), relatively stable prices of products (only the prices of local grains are sensitive to production), etc. The analysis also highlighted the potentially destabilizing

³ The mission visited the Communes of Hamzakoma, Serere, Banikane and Rharous.

⁴ The mission visited the sites of Tinassamed, Intagriba, Ajabagbag, Intarkad, N'tillit North.

⁵ *Market assessment: Regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal - April 2017*, WFP and Observatoire du Marche Agricole du Mali (with technical support of IRC, IEDA, Word Vision, Handicap International, Solidarite Internationale, ACTED, DRC and ACF).

⁶ Since 2013, WFP Mali has continued to increase its interventions using cash transfers, particularly in food aid and resilience programs. Support from ECHO and the World Bank has also helped to develop cash transfers in Mali through a social net approach. According to the Food Security Cluster, today cash transfers represent at least 67% of the food aid (some humanitarian partners have not reported their data).

Conditions of markets in the north of Mali would be suitable for humanitarian actors to further use cash transfers for food aid.

role of the food aid - particularly in kind – provided by humanitarian partners in the surveyed areas.

However, some disrupting factors to the functioning of markets were also identified: insecurity since the crisis of 2012, cyclical droughts and floods, the seasonality of plant and animal production, poverty and institutional weaknesses (limited investment capacity and access to credit, the existence of illicit taxes, etc.). Unsurprisingly, markets with lower performances (especially during the lean period) are those located in remote areas difficult to access due to floods or insecurity.

The study also indicates that most of the markets have the capacity to accommodate a 20 to 50 percent increase in the demand – this is an important observation since cash transfers usually lead to a rise in demand. On the other hand, in some areas, this capacity is limited by insecurity, transport issues, difficult access to loans (which affects one out of five traders) and storage (on out of five traders). It should be noted that women who are involved in food trade are more these obstacles more affected by these hindrances (limited access to loans, higher exposure to security risks, etc.)

Cash transfers: people's preferred option

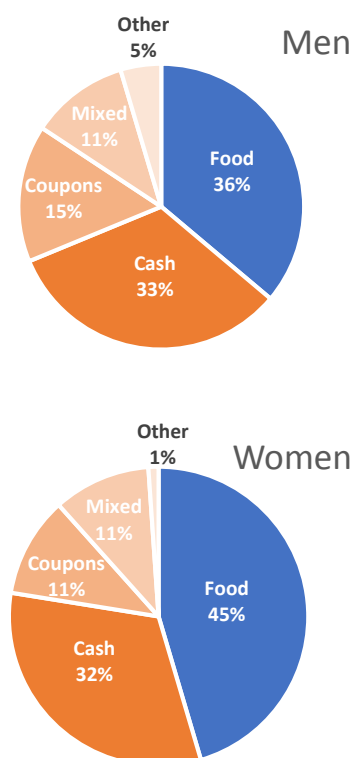
The assessment also shows that cash transfers are preferred to “in kind” food assistance by both traders and the majority of the population.

More than 80 per cent of the money received by households through a cash transfer program is spent on foodstuffs. Financial services offered by mobile telephone operators are widely used and could serve for cash transfers.

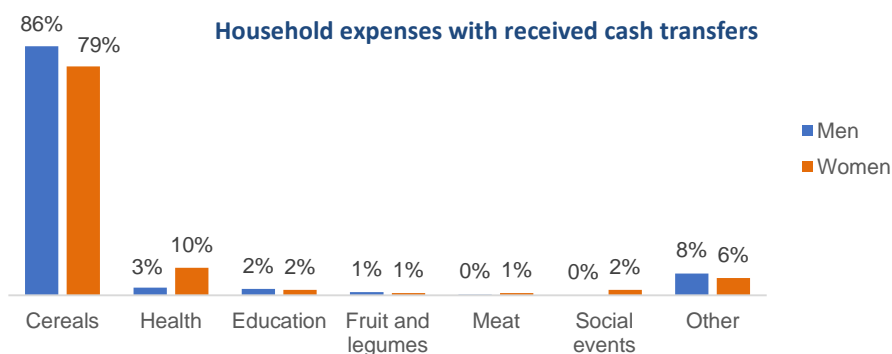
Thus, cash transfers could be further used, be well absorbed by the markets and play a positive role on the local economy, provided that they are accompanied by support to market systems (anticipated contracting, facilitation of access to loans and storage particularly for women, linking with wholesalers, etc.), measures to limit actual money transfers in insecure areas (prioritize transfers by mobile operators for example) and the establishment of a rigorous monitoring system.

The majority of the population and of traders preferred cash transfers to “in kind” food assistance.

Household preferred modality of food assistance



Household expenses with received cash transfers



Strengthening of mechanisms for prevention and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Around 50 humanitarian organizations in the country - United Nations Agencies and international and national NGOs, Ministry of Promotion of the Woman, the Child and the Family and Ministry of Health - have recently formed a national network⁷ for joint prevention of and response to potential sexual exploitation and abuse by their staff members.

The network has developed a code of conduct applicable to all the staff of the member organizations.

The network has developed a code of conduct applicable to all the staff of the member organizations. Common systems have also been adopted to report any allegation or suspected allegation at the community level, and to refer possible cases for the purpose of follow-up and care and treatment. In addition, the network has established community-based mechanisms of filing complaints in different contexts, and a single phone number (94.95.05.46)⁸ is also made available to the public.

Based on the code of conduct, the members of the network will strengthen the awareness of populations to prevent risks of sexual exploitation and abuse by the staff of humanitarian organizations and United Nations Agencies in Mali.

The network will also support the training and sensitization of humanitarian personnel as regards strict prohibitions in respect of sexual exploitation or abuse.

"The term "sexual exploitation" means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another."

"Similarly, the term "sexual abuse" means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions."

UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (ST/SGB/2003/13)

These measures are part of the international guidelines and recommendations governing the work of humanitarian organizations at the global level. In fact, over the past fifteen years, numerous reports and investigations have revealed acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel in various countries in crisis. In this context, the United Nations and major international humanitarian organizations (NGOs and International Movement of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent) have established guidelines and standards⁹ to prevent and to better respond to this phenomenon, as appropriate.

In the area of accountability, it is crucial for humanitarian actors to establish channels of communication with communities to consult them and receive their feedback on aid projects. From the onset, the populations should be informed of the steps to be followed when dealing with a case of exploitation or abuse. To be effective, these complaint mechanisms must comply with the key principles of transparency, confidentiality, impartiality and non-retaliation.

Cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by humanitarian staff are unacceptable and represent a serious failure in relation to the mandate of these organizations to protect and to assist vulnerable populations. In addition to their negative consequences on the lives of the victims, such actions violate universally recognized international norms and standards and undermine the reputation of the organizations.

⁷ The protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) network is led by UNFPA and co-led by Save the Children.

⁸ This number was put in place by the Conduct and Discipline Team at the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its use is now extended to all of the member organizations of the national network.

⁹ A working group established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) formulated the first six standards in 2002. In 2003, the UN policy of zero tolerance against acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by its staff was stated in the UN Secretary General's Circular "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse".

For more information on global efforts for the prevention of and response to cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the humanitarian assistance sector, visit: <http://pseataaskforce.org>

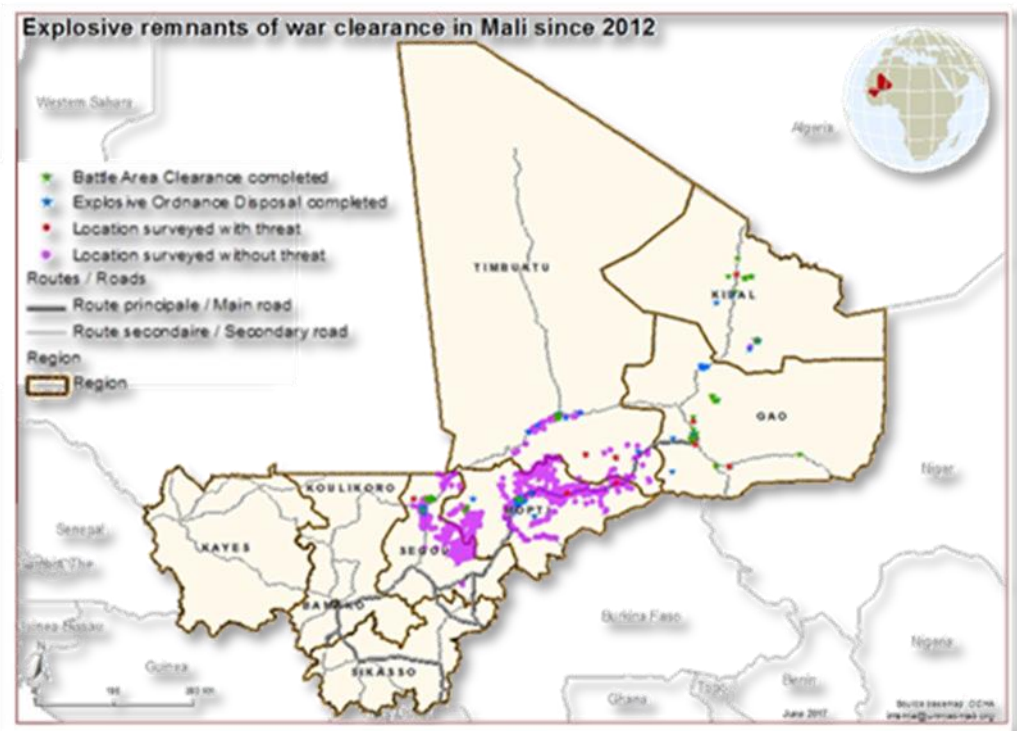
For more information about the national network in Mali, contact: Ms. Fabiola Ngeruka, ngeruka@unfpa.org, +22371590620

Four years of mine action in Mali: achievements and future prospects

The International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action was celebrated on 4 April 2017, which also marked 20 years of United Nations engagement in mine action globally to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of explosive hazards.

In Mali, for four years international and national mine action organizations, with coordination from the United Nations, have been supporting the population affected by explosive hazards which contaminate the central and northern regions of the country.

Nearly 5 million square meters of land have been cleared and 1,757 villages have been surveyed.

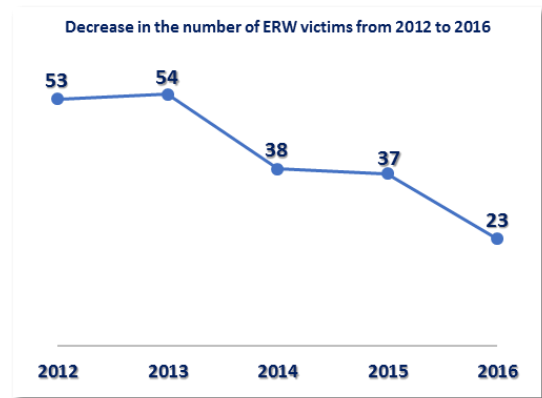


Since 2015, nearly 5 million square meters of land have been cleared; 1,757 villages have been surveyed; 1,686 explosive remnants of war (ERW) and 101,002 small arms ammunitions have been destroyed. More than one million civilians and 500 humanitarian workers have received awareness sessions on explosive hazards; and 320 victims and survivors from explosive and fire arms incidents received support. Several trainings were provided to the Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) with the aim of providing national authorities with a basic explosive ordnance disposal capacity, as well as expertise in safe weapons and ammunition management.

In support to national authorities, 490 tons of obsolete, unsafe and unserviceable ammunition have also been safely destroyed and more than 50 armouries and ammunition storage areas have been rehabilitated and secured.

These achievements have contributed to protecting civilians, with a marked decrease in the number of ERW victims, in addition to improved access to livelihoods, freedom of movement and economic recovery for the population.

Communities will continue to be affected by the presence of explosive hazards as long as violence persists in the central and northern regions of Mali.



An additional US\$2 million is needed in 2017 to continue implementing key mine action activities in Mali.



Mali (February 2015) – Children participate in an awareness raising session on explosive hazards. Photo: UNMAS

The United Nations and NGOs estimated that an additional US\$2 million is needed in 2017 to continue implementing risk education, victim assistance, armed violence reduction and local capacity development activities. To ensure sustainability, the priority is now to gradually transfer mine action responsibilities to local actors through capacity building activities, such as the training of community based organizations and of MDSF personnel, to increase ownership of mine action activities, resilience of local communities and access to affected populations.

In brief

Urgent need to mobilize resources for the response to acute malnutrition in the health district of Koro

Nutrition actors are sounding the alarm about the lack of resources to continue supporting the prevention and care and treatment of severe acute malnutrition in the health district of Koro (Mopti region). Due to lack of additional funds, the NGO ACTED that supports nutrition interventions in the district since 2015 through an ECHO funding will have to end its operation on 30 June 2017.

Yet, the district is affected by high nutritional vulnerability, particularly in connection with the persistent food insecurity poor hygiene conditions and limited access to water ([SQUEAC-ACTED](#) survey). Every year, this district exceeds the target set by the Nutrition Cluster in respect of the number of children supported for severe acute malnutrition. As at 30 April 2017, 61 per cent of this target was already reached. In the absence of humanitarian support for the health centers in the district for prevention and care and treatment of cases, the Cluster Nutrition fears an increase in acute malnutrition and child mortality in the area.

Flooding preparedness

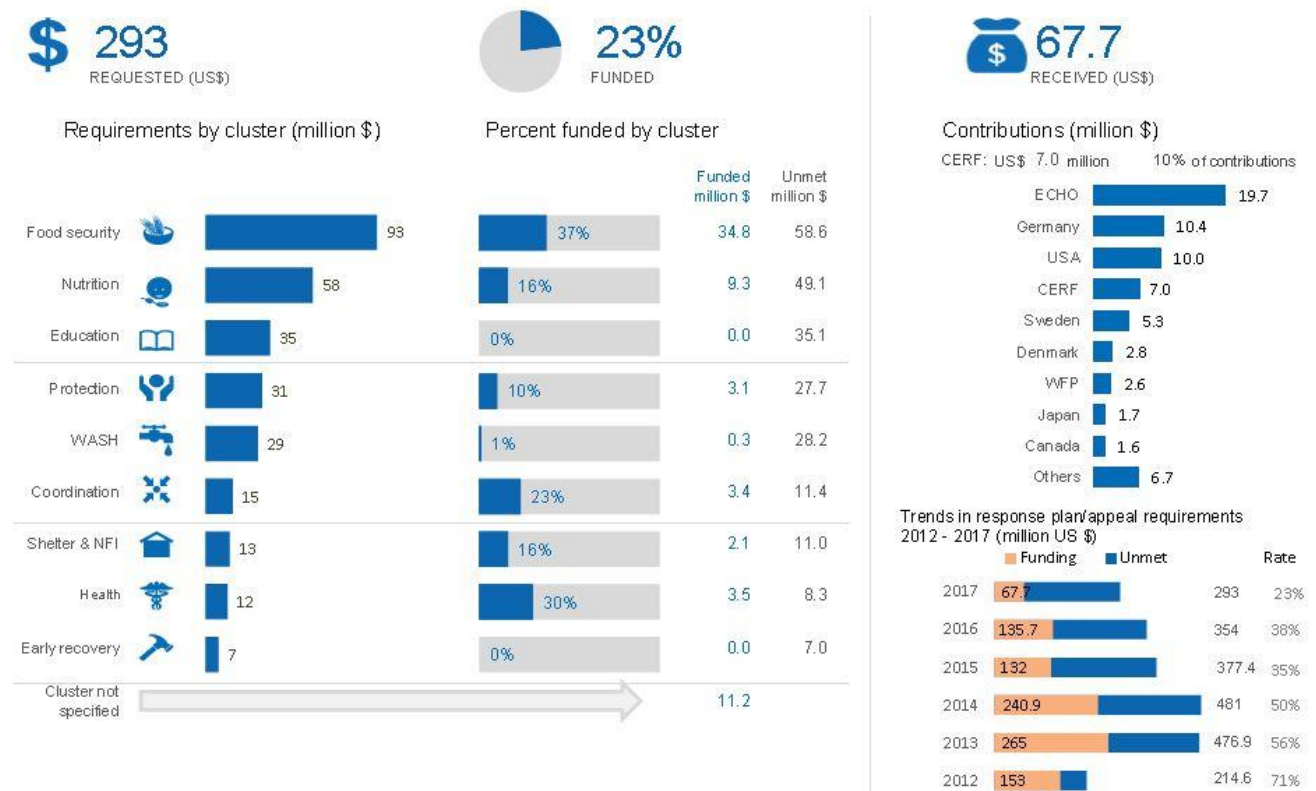
At the beginning of the rainy season, humanitarian actors are supporting the efforts of the authorities in the field of preparedness to flooding risks. Particularly, the updating of national and regional contingency plans is in progress, in accordance with the new emergency response preparedness approach recommended by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

It is estimated that 50 000 people are at risk of flooding this year in the regions of Mopti, Segou, Koulikoro, Kayes, Bamako, Sikasso, Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal, and Menaka. Relevant

governmental actors and humanitarian partners are identifying the minimum preparedness actions to be implemented in order to face different risks and are making an inventory of available emergency stocks to assist potential victims. The review and strengthening of the early warning systems are also underway. Pre-positioning of emergency supplies on the ground in areas at risk remains a key challenge to ensuring an effective response.

Funding of the Humanitarian Response Plan

As of 2 June, the \$293 million (USD) appeal to fund the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Mali has mobilized only 23 per cent of the resources required, i.e. 68 million, according to data reported in OCHA's Financial Tracking System (FTS). Moreover, an additional 25 million dollars have been allocated to humanitarian assistance to the country outside the common response plan.



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