

## NIGER

### Flash update # 01

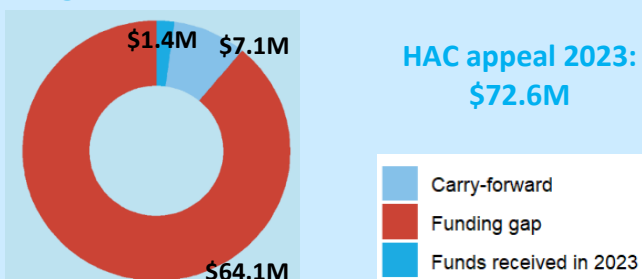
### 10 August 2023



### Humanitarian Update

- On 26 July 2023, a coup d'état occurred in Niger, following the detention of the President of the Republic by a military junta, which named itself the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (*Conseil National pour la Sauvegarde de la Patrie*).
- As a result of the coup, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) imposed sanctions, restricting Niger's access to banking services, and limiting trade and exchange with neighbouring countries, and closing borders. In addition, key donors announced funding restrictions and conditionalities with immediate effect.
- Closed borders may affect the delivery pipeline of essential supplies, including the vaccine cold chain, life-saving essential medications and Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). Since 1 August 2023, Niger's electricity grid has been operating at 70 per cent capacity.
- Non-state armed groups (NSAGs) remain active and continue to cause population displacements in Niger, particularly within the Tillabéri region. There is an increased risk of recruitment and use of children, family separation and gender-based violence, as well as negative coping strategies that could lead to child marriage and child labour.
- The coup d'état falls within Niger's rainy season. As of 7 August 2023, over 4,000 households (approximately 38,000 individuals) require urgent assistance due to flooding.
- 4,300,000 people, including 2,000,000 are already estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023 (HAC 2023).

### Funding Requirements



### Coordination, preparedness and response strategies

- UNICEF is revising its Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and updating its Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) to adapt to recent events and ensure that activities can respond quickly to the most urgent needs.
- Standby partnerships are being activated or developed to ensure the continuity of support for populations impacted by humanitarian crises.
- As part of ongoing work to coordinate humanitarian work in Niger, UNICEF continues to lead relevant Clusters, sub-Clusters and the working groups for Education, Child Protection, WASH and Nutrition sectors. UNICEF also plays an active role in the Health Cluster and Multi-Sector Cash Working Group. Meetings are held both in-person and online to revise operational tools and revise strategies.
- UNICEF is currently reviewing and adapting its programme implementation plan and supporting technical partners to implement needs assessments, the mapping of stakeholders and strengthening community structures for the humanitarian response in areas that are being impacted or are difficult to access due to changes in the situation.
- UNICEF will continue to work using different modalities, direct implementation, with NGO partners and closely with civil society organizations, youth and women's associations, as well as traditional and religious leaders.

### Impact by Sector & UNICEF's Response



#### Nutrition

- The significant increase in the prices for essential food items already observed since the coup could reduce people's access to a minimum balanced diet, leading to an increase in cases of malnutrition, particularly among children and women.
- RUTF for Quarter 3 has been delivered to the field, while quarter 4 supplies are being delivered to Niger. There is a pipeline gap expected in quarter 1 of 2024 due to funding gaps.
- Sectoral coordination is ongoing, however there is a capacity gap

noted, with only two partners having the capacity to initiate interventions in the capital area if needs arise.

- UNICEF and partners are advocating for the implementation of the annual national SMART survey to ensure the latest data on the nutritional status of children.



## Health

- Supplies, including vaccines, medicines, and equipment, are still being distributed in the field. However, the current situation may hamper their delivery and cause significant delays in the offshore procurement of medical kits, especially for vaccines. UNICEF continues to support the populations in humanitarian zones in Tillabéri region through mobile clinics providing antenatal and curative consultations, vaccinations, malnutrition screening, and treatment for childhood diseases (malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea).
- An assessment is currently underway to determine the pressing fuel requirements for the cold storage units housing 2,523,981 vaccine doses across 8 regions and 72 districts. With 95 per cent of the cold chain infrastructure reliant on electricity, the ongoing power cuts could jeopardize both the preservation of vaccines and the smooth continuation of vaccination operations.



## Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

- Approximately 50,000 people will have limited access to basic WASH services, including limited hygiene and sanitation kits due to the border closures. It is also anticipated that additional vulnerable people will be affected by recent flooding.
- The lack of water, hygiene and sanitation services for vulnerable people could lead to water related diseases, including cholera, in the city of Niamey. Poor/lack of access to such WASH services also increases the risk of gender-based violence, particularly for girls and women.



## Education

- Ensuring children's return to school is a key priority. More than 4 million school-aged children, including 3 million at the primary school level, would normally be expected to resume school in early October 2023.
- During this school holiday period, UNICEF is focusing its efforts on supporting the recovery of the education sector through Back-to-School campaigns and the procurement of teaching and learning materials to reduce the cost of basic education for families affected by the crisis.
- UNICEF has already prepositioned contingency stock for 50,000 children in the most vulnerable municipalities in Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéri, Niamey, Dosso and Zinder.



## Child Protection

- The current crisis has escalated protection needs, particularly for separated and unaccompanied children. Forced displacement and parental loss expose children to recruitment risks. The crisis could seriously disrupt the functioning of services by impacting human resources, especially social workers, due to economic sanctions. Increased financial hardship for families increases the risk of harmful coping strategies such as child labour and child marriage.
- Around 20,000 children need psychosocial support, 3,000 require alternative care arrangements, and 150,000 individuals need interventions to mitigate risks like gender-based violence (GBV) and other child protection risks such as child marriage. The opening of 50 community-based Child-Friendly Spaces in host villages supporting displaced families is essential to ensure the protection of vulnerable children, through mental health and psychosocial support, GBV prevention interventions including life skills for adolescents, recreational and leisure activities, tutoring, family and socio-economic reintegration of separated/vulnerable children, and referral to other key social services.
- A comprehensive survey conducted by the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) found that the majority of 41 child protection organizations will not be able to sustain their child protection support for more than three months. The survey also identified the critical child protection and other sectoral interventions which must be sustained if the situation deteriorates further (services to prevent and mitigate violence, including GBV, prevention of child marriage, family and socio-economic reintegration of separated children and children associated with armed groups and armed forces, referral to essential social services).
- In the event of further deterioration, protection committees with official mandates will be reinforced with technical skills and resources to provide primary child protection services and referrals, and to continue social mobilization against harmful practices such as child marriage, as security conditions allow. Where services are limited, mobile teams anchored in local organizations will provide services across the country to mitigate violence against children, including GBV, prevent family separation and child marriage and reintegrate separated children.
- The Protection Cluster has completed the analysis and documentation of the impact of ECOWAS sanctions on safeguarding populations, particularly vulnerable children. It is estimated that over 1,400,000 people, including women and children, are at increased risk of protection threats, particularly in areas affected by armed conflicts and food insecurity.



## Social Protection

- UNICEF will support a post-distribution monitoring system to monitor the impact of cash expenditure on food diversification, access to basic services and adoption of child-sensitive behaviour to assess the potential for this approach to support the needs of the population following the rising costs associated with the coup d'état.
- The one-year emergency drought cash transfer programme, targeting 26,972 households in 18 municipalities in Maradi, Zinder, Tahoua, and Agadez regions (approximately USD 75 per quarter) is due to be launched in September 2023. However, there is a need to adapt the programme to the changing circumstances to avoid the disruption of cash distributions, by adopting a resilient approach, based on alternatives to complement the Government's cash transfer system where capacity is limited. This will ensure that critical income support is provided to the most vulnerable households.



## Social and Behaviour Change

- The current situation has significantly impacted Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) interventions. The focus on political news has led to reduced attention to messages promoting social and behavioural change related to child survival and development. Educational message listenership has decreased, and leaders are hesitant to engage in radio discussions that touch upon political matters.
- Central and decentralized technical departments remain unaffected by measures taken, allowing them to continue interventions. Partner NGOs are also ensuring the continuity of interventions.
- In case of further deterioration, SBC interventions could shift focus to local and private media for educational message dissemination. Partnering with VIAMO for capacity-building and digital technology-enabled intervention monitoring could also be expanded.



## Essential Household Items

- UNICEF maintains its commitment to promptly address the critical needs of displaced families. In support of this, 8,000 non-food item kits, which include hygiene and dignity essentials, were furnished to Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) actors, and strategically positioned across four regions most impacted by the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The RRM actors will be able to use these kits to address the needs of displaced populations impacted by the coup d'état should the need arise.