

**EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S
KEY MESSAGES ON MALI
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I. Key Messages

1. The humanitarian situation in Mali remains extremely fragile. Close to three-quarters of a million people need immediate assistance now if we are to prevent a further deepening of the humanitarian crisis. The security situation in the north is volatile with on-going fighting and reports of human rights abuses. Since January some 65,000 people have fled, seeking safety elsewhere in Mali or across its borders. Nearly two-thirds of the 470,000 people displaced since March 2012 are in southern and central Mali, where they and the communities hosting them are still coping with the impact of last year's regional food and nutrition crisis. Resources are overstretched and people urgently need support.
2. More than 177,000 people have fled into Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, many taking their cattle with them. A further 10,000 people remain stranded near the Algerian border and need urgent aid. My thanks to neighbouring countries who have kept their borders open and welcomed Malians in distress. The national authorities and humanitarian organizations in those countries need help and funding to meet the critical needs of refugees and host communities alike.
3. Humanitarian workers need to be able to safely reach all the people in need in Mali, regardless of who or where they are. The dangerous security environment continues to make it especially difficult to reach people in rural areas in the north, slowing down critical lifesaving activities and limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to prevent and monitor abuses of human rights. It is vital that all parties to the conflict abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian law to protect civilians from the impact of the fighting and from violations of human rights.
4. The political situation in Mali is complex. It is imperative that humanitarian response efforts remain separate from the broader political and security agendas. Failure to do so would compromise the acceptance that humanitarian organizations have been able to establish so far with parties to the conflict, and endanger aid operations and access to people in need.
5. The 2013 Humanitarian Plan asks for US\$409.5 million to help Malians affected by the crisis. I ask donors to give urgently and generously so that agencies can deliver life-

For further information, please call:

OCHA New York: **Amanda Pitt**, tel. +1 917 963 4129, mobile +1 917 442 1810, pitta@un.org

OCHA Geneva: **Jens Laerke**, tel. +4122 917 1142, mobile +4179 472 9750, laerke@un.org

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The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Celebrating 20 years of coordinated humanitarian action

saving aid, including vital security and de-mining measures, and support community recovery.

6. The lack of a political solution to the crisis in Mali threatens to reverse progress in the Sahel region. Even in years with good rains and crops, millions of people don't have enough to eat in the Sahel. In 2013, 10.3 million people could go hungry, with 1.4 million children at risk of severe malnutrition. Governments, donors, humanitarian and development partners in the region must invest in community resilience programmes, so that we can reduce vulnerability to future crises.

II. Internal Guidance

If asked only

Q. What have UN agencies been able to do for people in Mali despite the operational and funding constraints?

A. In accessible areas, food distribution has so far reached nearly 200,000 people, including more than 90,000 people in the north. More than 28,400 children suffering from malnutrition have been admitted to therapeutic treatment centres nationwide. Across the country, 30,000 children received school kits and 3,000 teachers have been trained in psychological support. 31 water points have been rehabilitated, and 26,500 people received hygiene kits while 26 tons of water purification tablets and chlorine were dispatched to areas in northern and central Mali. Over 16,000 children have been vaccinated against measles; mine and UXO awareness campaigns have reached 27,000 people; while more than 64,000 people have benefited from training on child protection issues.

Q. What measures have been taken to protect civilians during armed conflict?

A. We continue to remind all parties to adhere to their obligations under International Humanitarian Law and take all appropriate measures to protect civilians from the effect of hostilities. This includes distinguishing at all times between civilians and combatants, refraining from indiscriminate attacks and taking all feasible precautions to avoid loss of life or injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. UN Security Council resolution 2085 stresses the importance of training military forces in International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.

Q. What are UN agencies and partners doing to manage the security constraints?

A. More is being done to map the security risks throughout Mali which should better inform the deployment of UN and humanitarian actors and their operations. We must, however, continue to maintain the momentum of improved security analysis and capacity. More resources will be needed, including for the redeployment of humanitarian agencies. CERF is funding additional security advisers. As northern Mali has become increasingly militarized, OCHA has increased its civil-military coordination (CMCoord) capacity. Since the de-confliction mechanism was established in late Jan 2013, there have been around 300 recorded humanitarian movements.

Q. What level of engagement do humanitarian actors have with ECOWAS and French troops?

A. UN civil-military coordination capacity (CM-Coord) has been deployed to establish and maintain dialogue, liaison and coordination with international and national militaries as a

matter of priority. This ensures a vital conduit for liaison and information-sharing on humanitarian issues with all relevant parties. CM-Coord is an essential tool in complex emergencies and high-risk environments to facilitate humanitarian access and the security of humanitarian aid workers.

Q. What is being done to pursue those responsible for human rights violations?

A. Anyone who perpetrates violations of international humanitarian and human rights law must be held accountable. The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced that it is opening an investigation into alleged war crimes committed on the territory of Mali since January 2012, following the referral by the Malian Government to the court.

Q. What are your main concerns regarding lack of protection?

A. Extensive movements of people since 2012 have made children particularly vulnerable. More than 1,500 separated or unaccompanied children have been recorded in Bamako, Segou and Mopti. An estimated 200,000 people are exposed to the dangers of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in northern Mali every day. Children have reportedly been recruited mostly in Timbuktu and Gao regions and have been directly involved in combat. Only 24 per cent of schools in Gao and 15 per cent of schools in Timbuktu are functioning. A number of them have been damaged, pillaged and occupied by the military. The health and psychosocial needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence remain of serious concern. There is an urgent need for nationwide monitoring of human rights violations within Malian borders.

Q. How would a peacekeeping operation affect the humanitarian activities?

A. We continue to emphasize how important it is to ensure that humanitarian action remains separate from the security and political agendas. A failure to do so would compromise the neutrality that humanitarian organizations have been able to establish so far and put in peril operational security, humanitarian access to all those in need, and the impartiality of humanitarian action. A peacekeeping force must have the mandate and capability to protect civilians at imminent risk, whoever the perpetrators. The posture of the mission would have consequences for how a Protection of Civilians mandate is implemented. If the mission undertakes offensive operations, the protection of civilians will depend on strict adherence to international humanitarian law and clear measures to mitigate the impact of operations on civilians and civilian objects.

Q. What impact would the re-deployment of AFISMA as a peacekeeping force have on humanitarian operations?

A. The risk of misperception, associating humanitarian action with a political agenda or military operations, would potentially increase security risks and limit access. Humanitarian assistance should be protected from political agendas, and agencies must be given the space they need to accomplish their mandate, and doing so, avoiding a humanitarian crisis. The neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian action must be upheld and preserved at all costs.

Q. Are you helping people in the south as well as in the north?

A. Two-thirds of Mali's internally displaced live in the south. Food assistance has reached over 100,000 IDPs and host families since 10 January and distributions are targeting 12,000 people in Bamako and 5,000 others in Kayes. More than 24,300 malnourished children have been newly admitted to treatment centres. The second phase of the national series of Nutrition Weeks is also

underway in Mali's five southern regions. FAO and Vétérinaires Sans Frontières-Belgique (VSF-B) have distributed veterinary kits and 230 tons of cattle feed to 1,000 IDPs and host families, while a goat vaccination campaign is also underway in the Segou region.

Q. What measures will build resilience in the Sahel and help prevent future crises?

A. Access to health and water, which are closely linked to nutrition, and on water conservation and irrigation, which are critical to improving agricultural performance, are very important. We will also support projects to distribute better seeds and fertilizers and to improve livestock management. Support for social safety nets, programmes that promote nutrition and health services, will help build resilience to future crises. In the longer term, education and livelihood diversification is also key. A combination of these interventions in the short and long term will, over time, help families to better absorb these kinds of shocks in the future.