



Zeinaba, 6, takes part in remedial classes to prepare for the start of the 2023–2024 school year at the UNICEF-supported Bawa site for internally displaced persons in Gao Region, Mali.

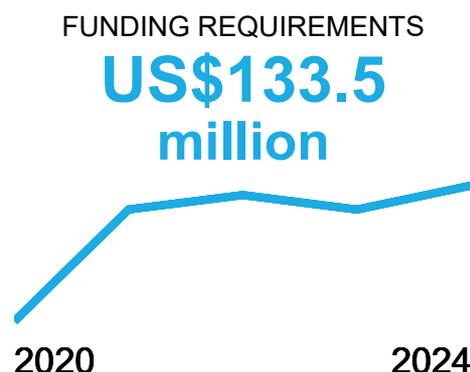
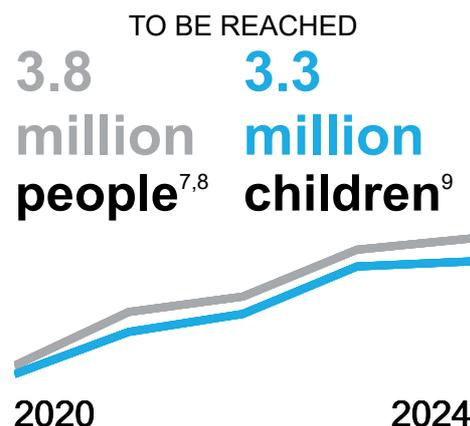
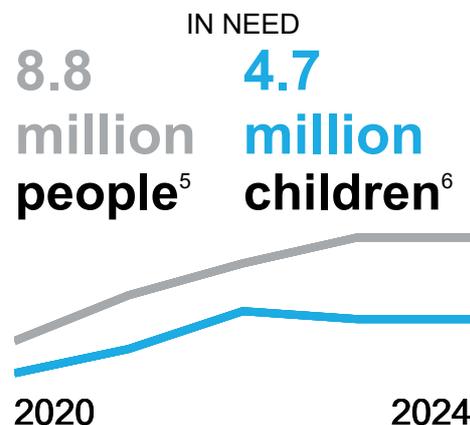
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Humanitarian Action for Children

Mali

HIGHLIGHTS¹

- Mali is experiencing unprecedented and rising humanitarian needs. An estimated 8.8 million people, more than 40 per cent of the population, are projected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024. Increasing political tensions have been undermining the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement.²
- The departure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is expected to be completed by 31 December 2023, and this has impacted conflict dynamics and resulted in fresh hostilities.³ Adapting to new operational and programmatic challenges, UNICEF, in support of the Government of Mali, has been strengthening its presence on the ground, focusing on continued basic social service delivery at local levels while strengthening national systems.
- UNICEF requires \$133.5 million⁴ to address the immediate critical needs of the 3.3 million most vulnerable girls and boys in Mali, to support their rights to basic social services.



KEY PLANNED TARGETS

 **2.2 million** children vaccinated against measles

 **201,250** children with severe wasting admitted for treatment

 **300,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning

 **523,500** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

Mali is witnessing an unprecedented escalation of conflict and violence. Attacks against civilians have been increasing in northern and central Mali. The departure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali started on 1 July 2023 and is continuing up to 31 December 2023.¹⁰ Since August 2023, non-state armed groups have created siege-like conditions in several towns in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka by blocking main supply routes. The deterioration and spread of the conflict, including the entry of new armed actors into hostilities, is expected to lead to serious humanitarian consequences if it continues.¹¹ Also of concern is the diminishing presence of non-governmental organizations in some areas due to insecurity and operational restrictions.

The combined impact of climate-related risks, persistent political and socioeconomic crisis (heightened by inflation in the prices of certain food products), insecurity and internal displacement is affecting the most vulnerable people. An estimated 2.3 million people in Mali were food insecure in 2023 and an estimated 275,700 children suffered from severe wasting.¹² More than 2,500 people face catastrophic levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 5) in Ménaka, while 76,000 people there are experiencing emergency levels of hunger (IPC phase 4).¹³ Nearly 5.1 million people¹⁴ required emergency health care in 2023, among them 3.2 million children. Routine vaccination coverage (DPT3) among children in Mali stands at 77 per cent.¹⁵ The country has experienced periodic epidemics of polio and dengue fever, and cases of measles have been reported in 32 of the country's 75 health districts in 2023.

Children's access to education in Mali is precarious, with 1,545 schools reported closed¹⁶ as of June 2023 due to insecurity and attacks on educational infrastructure and staff. This deprived more than 460,000 children of access to learning and affected more than 9,200 teachers. Children continue to be exposed to protection risks including family separation, gender-based violence and recruitment into armed forces/armed groups, leading to dire consequences on all dimensions of their lives including on their mental health and development. From January to March 2023, 260 grave violations against children were verified,¹⁷ mostly in Timbuktu, Gao, Ménaka and Kidal Regions.¹⁸ Women and children are also at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Children's Climate Risk Index rating for Mali placed the country in the high-risk category, and the impact of climate change (drought, floods) makes crises more common and harder to recover from.¹⁹ An estimated 3.2 million people,²⁰ including 1.7 million children, lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

SECTOR NEEDS



5.4 million people in need of health assistance



2.5 million people in need of nutrition assistance



1.6 million children in need of protection services



3.9 million children in need of education support



3.2 million people lack access to safe water

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Children play in the schoolyard at an early childhood development centre in Massakorobougou, in the Sikasso Region. The centre receives support from UNICEF to provide a better learning environment.

Atrocities and threats by non-state armed groups in the villages of the Gao, Kidal and Ménaka Regions in northern Mali have prompted 100,000 Malians and refugees to seek refuge in the town of Gao and the surrounding areas. More than half of these internally displaced people are children, and they are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Displaced people are living in makeshift shelters or in camps such as Bawa.

Abdouramane, 1, and his mother live in the Bawa site for internally displaced persons, where they benefit from holistic health, nutrition, child protection, education and WASH services provided by UNICEF in support of the Government of Mali.

[Read more about this story here](#)

In 2024, UNICEF will be a crucial first responder in Mali. A timely, integrated life-saving and life-sustaining response will address the acute needs of children affected by conflict and natural disasters, ensuring these children are able to hold the Government and humanitarian actors, including UNICEF, to account for promoting and protecting their rights and generating effective results for them.

UNICEF will implement preparedness activities, with a focus on strengthening national and local-level capacity for effective, principled and timely response.²⁶ Emphasis will be on reinforcing partnerships with national and international non-governmental organizations and local actors to enable increased humanitarian access and ensure community acceptance. UNICEF will closely collaborate with United Nations agencies to stay and deliver for Mali's children, and will continue to lead the WASH, Education, Nutrition Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility.

The diverse and complex needs of children and adolescents will be addressed, with a specific attention to children affected by armed conflict and displacement through such dedicated interventions as holistic care, family reunification, socioeconomic reintegration and mental health and psychosocial support. UNICEF will collaborate closely with communities to identify suitable locations and support community-based agents to ensure they are equipped to meet children's needs. Finally, due to withdrawal from Mali of the United Nations peacekeeping mission, and the temporary suspension of the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNICEF will scale up its activities in mine risk education.

To save the lives of children under 5 years of age who are severely wasted, UNICEF's nutrition response will support early detection at the community and family levels and treatment through community and health facilities. Such preventive interventions as infant and young child feeding counselling, growth and monitoring, WASH-in-nutrition and vaccination will be provided in an integrated way.²⁷

Social protection interventions will be designed to address vulnerabilities in Mali's evolving context using a cross-sectorial, multipurpose and multi-stakeholder approach. The focus will be on multipurpose humanitarian cash transfer interventions while working on bolstering the responsiveness of the national social protection system.

UNICEF has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and will continue strengthening its internal systems for the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse among implementing partners. UNICEF will accompany the integration of gender-based violence risk mitigation across all sectors with the capacity building of implementing partners, and at the same time adopt a broader view towards scaling up its transformative gender work, as part of an integrated approach. Gender-based violence risk mitigation and standard measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse are systematically integrated into all UNICEF-funded interventions.

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/mali/situation-reports>



Health (including public health emergencies)

- **2,183,930** children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose²⁹
- **1,414,957** children 0-59 months vaccinated against polio, supplemental dose



Nutrition

- **2,012,500** children 6-59 months screened for wasting
- **201,250** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **463,522** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- **333,245** children 6-59 months receiving micronutrient powder



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **384,783** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- **166,100** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **572,500** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- **700** children who have exited an armed force and groups provided with protection or reintegration support
- **2,400** unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified
- **38,268** children provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions



Education³⁰

- **300,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **1,100,000** children receiving individual learning materials
- **2,500** teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **523,500** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **50,000** people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- **336,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies³¹



Social protection

- **200,000** households benefitting from new or additional social assistance (cash/in-kind) measures from government-funded programmes with UNICEF technical assistance support



Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)

- **25,000** households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers (including for social protection and other sectors)
- **11,449,870** affected people (children, caregivers, community members) reached with timely and life-saving information on how and where to access available services³²
- **600,000** people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms³³
- **100,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms³⁴

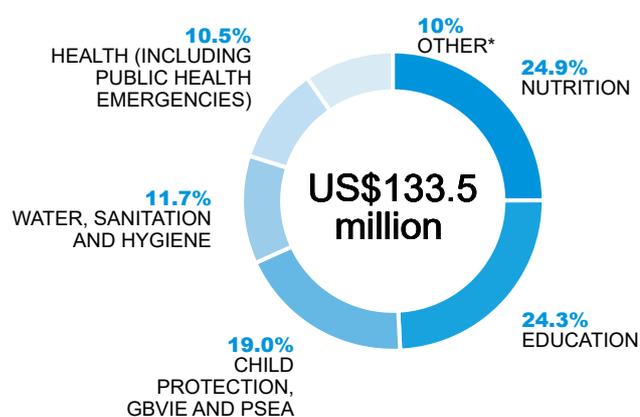
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

UNICEF is appealing for \$133.5 million in 2024 to meet the humanitarian needs of crisis-affected children in Mali, aligned with the Humanitarian Response Plan. UNICEF aims to address the most immediate needs, but also to enhance longer-term resilience of the communities and systems by focusing on strengthening links between humanitarian action and development programmes, including through support to shock-responsive social protection.

The appeal amount for 2024 is 11 per cent higher than for 2023. The budget for nutrition has increased by 6 per cent due to higher unit costs of ready-to-use therapeutic food and in-country transportation/distribution, the latter due to insecurity/access challenges. The budget for child protection has increased by 7 per cent to include mine risk education activities, which UNICEF will undertake to fill a gap created by the temporary suspension of UNMAS efforts in that area following the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping force. The budgets for education and health are both 15 per cent higher to cover the rising cost of responding in these sectors.

As of 30 September, only 33 per cent of the funds required by UNICEF to respond to humanitarian needs in Mali laid out in the 2023 appeal (revised) had been received – and in fact the resources mobilized to support the humanitarian response had dropped by \$20 million compared with the 2022 appeal. Yet these low levels of funding will only aggravate the situation children find themselves in and the humanitarian crisis they are living through. UNICEF holds a vision of Mali's children, thriving and with their rights upheld, and the support they need to get through the current difficult days is crucial to that future. At the same time, development investments must focus on building resilience and systems to avoid further deterioration in the humanitarian situation.

Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to facilitate access to quality, critical essential social services (including protection for nearly 3.3 million children affected by the crisis), respond to the needs resulting from the weakened education system or support the national response to the continuing nutrition crisis.³⁵



Sector	2024 requirements (US\$)
Health (including public health emergencies)	14,005,125
Nutrition	33,272,170
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	25,346,535 ^{36,37}
Education	32,437,460
Water, sanitation and hygiene	15,622,525
Social protection	1,000,000
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	8,815,085 ³⁸
Emergency Preparedness	3,001,100
Total	133,500,000

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (6.6%), Emergency Preparedness (2.2%), Social protection (<1%).

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ENDNOTES

1. UNICEF activated its Corporate Emergency Level 2 Scale-up Procedure for Sahel Crisis for the following period: 19 July 2022 – 19 December 2023. The status will be reviewed on that date. UNICEF Emergency Procedures are activated to ensure a timely and effective response to all crises. The emergency procedures provide a tailored package of mandatory actions and simplifications required for all offices responding to Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1 humanitarian situations.
2. In June 2015, the Government of Mali, a coalition of pro-government armed groups from northern Mali called the Platform, and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, or CMA, an alliance of non-state armed groups) convened in Bamako and signed an agreement to restore peace in the country.
3. In this changing context, UNICEF is scaling up its response to ensure the continuation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in Mali as well as mine risk education activities.
4. As provider of last resort, UNICEF has increased its targets to cover a higher proportion of needs in the context of the MINUSMA departure, which is leading to increased insecurity and fewer operational implementing partners in the field. Budgets have been increased following increases in operational costs in every sector.
5. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mali Humanitarian Response Plan 2023 and Mali Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.
6. Ibid.
7. This figure is calculated using the highest coverage programme targets of children to be reached with vaccination against measles, supplemental dose (2,183,930); people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs (523,500); children to be reached with individual learning materials (1,100,000); and unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified (2,400). This total includes 50 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities. UNICEF is committed to needs-based objectives, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
8. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
9. This figure is calculated using the highest coverage programme targets of children to be reached with vaccination against measles, supplemental dose (2,183,930); 10 per cent of people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs, representing children aged 15–18 years (52,350); children to be reached with individual learning materials (1,100,000); and unaccompanied and separated children to be reached with family-based care or a suitable alternative (2,400). This total includes 50 per cent girls and 15 per cent children with disabilities.
10. Security Council resolution 2679 specifies that the withdrawal of personnel is to be completed by December 31, 2023. In fact, some mission personnel – including a liquidation team – will have to remain beyond that date to complete the activities that can only be done after substantive staff and the majority of the military and police components have left.
11. The child protection sector will be affected, because child recruitment, along with other grave violations against children, risks increasing following the mission's departure. Moreover, the threat of explosive devices is likely to rise, exposing children to those risks.
12. Nutrition Cluster, Mali, Tableau de bord: Aperçu des besoins, cibles et résultats de la réponse nutritionnelle au niveau national (au 30 Juin 2023).
13. In addition, 200,000 children are at risk of starvation in Mali. Source: International Rescue Committee, Mali faces famine-like conditions as humanitarian situation worsens, warns IRC, press release, 12 September 2023.
14. OCHA, Mali Humanitarian Response Plan 2023 and Mali Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.
15. The routine administrative coverage from January to June 2023 is 93.6 per cent. Source: DH12 (January–June 2023).
16. Education Cluster Mali, Situation des écoles au mois de juin 2023 (toutes causes confondues), 30 June 2023.
17. In 2022, the United Nations verified 1,024 grave violations against 757 children (137 girls), including 88 children who were victims of multiple violations.
18. Child Protection, Global Protection Cluster, Bulletin d'Information Bimensuel: Mali –Mai–Juin 2023.
19. In August 2021, UNICEF launched the Children's Climate Risk Index as a geospatial analysis tool for advocacy, preparedness and action. The aim is to use data to inform governments and other decision makers so they can protect children from the worst impacts of the climate crisis; prepare children for their changing world through education, green skills and meaningful participation; prioritize children and their needs through climate finance; and prevent the worst of the crisis through mitigation. See: UNICEF, The climate crisis is a child rights crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index, UNICEF, New York, 2021, available at <www.unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis>.
20. OCHA, Mali Humanitarian Response Plan 2023 and Mali Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.
21. To ensure increased beneficiary participation, UNICEF will emphasize the human-centred approach and community engagement through strategic orientations. These strategies will be translated into community plans adapted to the local context and implemented through a mix of approaches to relay essential information to the population in equitable ways, to support and strengthen their knowledge and foster resilience. The use of the RapidPro platform and U-Report through surveys will enable UNICEF to assess opinions and perceptions of the quality of interventions. To evaluate the implementation of interventions and collect feedback from communities, a system of accountability mechanisms will be put in place.
22. UNICEF will use a cross-sectoral approach to address children's rights in humanitarian situations, given the multifaceted needs they may face: To mitigate the disruption of education caused by the conflict and displacement, UNICEF will provide cash transfers to households with children to facilitate their access to education, including covering school fees, uniforms, books, and other related expenses. To address the increased vulnerability of children to malnutrition and disease in conflict-affected areas, UNICEF will provide cash to transfers to households with children to support their access to health-care services and nutritious food. Households with children will be provided cash transfers to enable them to access protection services and psychosocial support. This can help address the psychological and emotional impact of the conflict and displacement on children and ensure their safety and well-being. This will be complemented by cash transfers targeting access to child protection services including legal assistance, family tracing and reunification and support for caregivers. This can help ensure the safety and well-being of children and prevent their exploitation and abuse in the context of armed conflict and displacement. Targeted cash transfers will be provided to households hosting displaced children, ensuring their access to essential services and support systems. Community-based cash assistance programmes will target entire communities, including households with children, to promote social cohesion, prevent conflict and strengthen community resilience. This can help address social and economic disparities exacerbated by the conflict and displacement. To help families regain their economic stability and reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance, cash transfers will be provided to households with children to support income-generating activities and livelihoods recovery.
23. This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.
24. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster coordination for the WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. All cluster coordinator costs are included in sectoral programme budgets.
25. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.
26. Localization through community engagement and the empowerment of local organizations and existing structures is the backbone of UNICEF's strategy. This allows for improved effectiveness, acceptance and enhanced access to hard-to-reach areas while increasing overall efficiency and value for money. This approach also sets the stage for longer-term interventions. In order to mitigate urgent needs and alleviate immediate impact, UNICEF will scale up localized Rapid Response Mechanism to address vulnerabilities resulting from population movements.
27. Despite security concerns, UNICEF will continue to support the national strategy for health in emergencies and public health (the national multisectoral plan to combat epidemics and disasters). This national plan is based on a set of integrated health measures with a significant impact on reducing maternal, neonatal and infant mortality, including vaccination campaigns, responses to epidemics and community interventions to prevent sporadic malaria epidemics, treatment of routine cases and prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence in emergencies, as well as building resilience by providing equipment, drugs and commodities to health facilities and infection prevention and control interventions in communities and health facilities. UNICEF will also support the Government and continue to work with nongovernmental organizations on the ground to implement the integrated health programme in conflict-affected areas.
28. Beyond the UNICEF targets for these interventions, other humanitarian partners are expected to reach the remaining children/families in need.
29. The high number of people vaccinated can be explained by the large number of epidemic districts in 2023. In several epidemic districts, the cases were scattered, making it necessary to vaccinate a larger number of people. A national follow-up campaign is planned for 2024, while in 2023 a small-scale response was organized to contain the epidemics.
30. As provider of last resort, UNICEF has increased its target to cover a higher proportion of needs in the context of the MINUSMA departure, which is expected to lead to increased insecurity and fewer implementing partners in the field.
31. UNICEF has increased the quantity of emergency WASH kits to 10,000 this year for 300,000 people in need, compared with 5,600 kits in 2023 for 168,000 people. As leader of the WASH Cluster, UNICEF has provided nearly 90 per cent of the WASH kits for the emergency response to implementing partners, mainly the Rapid Response Mechanism and decentralized government bodies. With the withdrawal of MINUSMA and increasing population displacement in the country, the future situation remains uncertain. As a result, UNICEF has increased the immediate WASH response target compared with 2023.
32. The population targeted is higher than the total number of people/children to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.
33. In 2023, UNICEF was able to work with 800,000 people engaged in dialogue through community platforms across the country. A drop in these figures is expected in 2024, as the 2023 results were mainly linked to the vaccination campaign against COVID-19, which will now be given less importance.
34. From January to October 2023, UNICEF recorded a total of 48,392 people for this indicator. It is collected only through the call centre of the Agence Nationale de Télé Santé et d'Informatique Médicale. UNICEF will set up a new system in 2024 to diversify the collection of feedback via other channels, with the aim of reaching 100,000 people.
35. The lack of funding could have serious consequences, as the population faces increased risks of malnutrition, disease and epidemics (diarrhoea, cholera, malaria, measles). In addition to health and nutrition risks, the lack of water deprives many children, especially girls, of their right to education, forcing them to travel long distances and exposing them to numerous risks. In the education sector, underfunded activities expose children to the risks of recruitment by armed groups, child marriage, exploitation and abuse and deschooling.
36. This budget line item is higher than in 2023 is due to mine action activities and an increase of targeted unaccompanied and separated children; this budget might change during revision as unit costs are revised.
37. The child protection budget (including mine action) includes \$2,807,873 for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and \$3,743,831 for gender-based violence in emergencies response.
38. Of this total of \$8,815,085, the humanitarian cash transfer budget is \$5,298,400; social and behaviour change is \$1,406,674; risk communication and community engagement is \$1,406,674; and accountability to affected populations is \$703,337.