



Hamadoun, 10, a fourth-grade student in the Djinguereber neighborhood of Timbuktu, crosses a river created by recent floods to attend class, in October 2024.

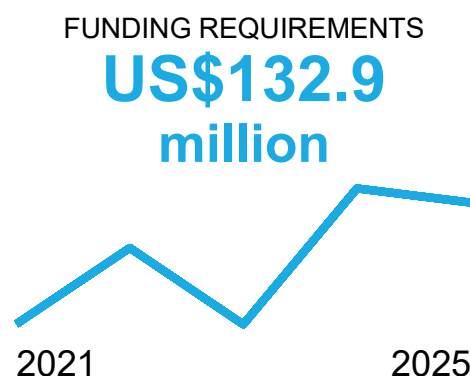
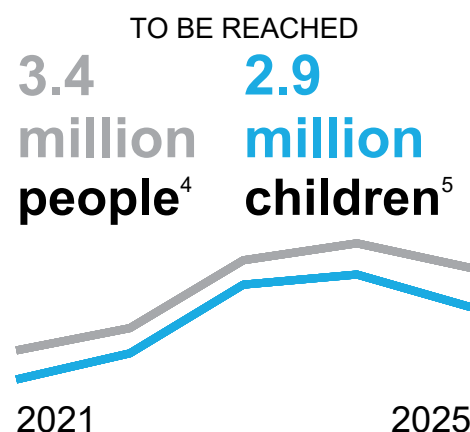
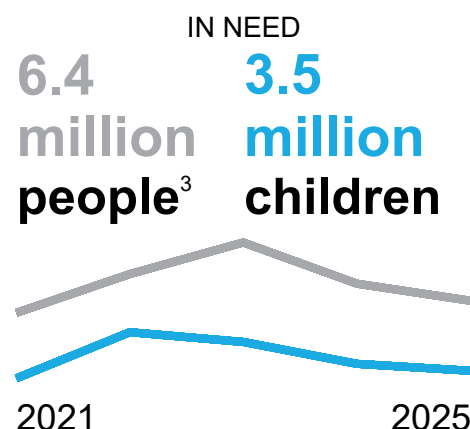
unicef   
for every child

## Humanitarian Action for Children

# Mali

## HIGHLIGHTS<sup>1</sup>

- Mali continues to experience political instability, marked by ongoing tensions, a transition process, and the withdrawal of the country from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Non-state armed groups are fueling insecurity in the central and northern regions of the country, with violence increasingly spilling into southern areas. Renewed military clashes have further exacerbated instability in the north.
- The conflict has displaced 378,000 people, further straining vulnerable communities. Due to conflict, climate change and a prolonged nutrition crisis, 6.4 million people – including 3.5 million children<sup>2</sup> – are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.
- UNICEF is strengthening its field presence and partnering with local and national systems to deliver aid. Investments in localization aim to improve access to essential services.
- To support the 2.9 million most vulnerable children in Mali, UNICEF urgently seeks \$132.9 million to provide life-saving assistance and ensure children's critical needs are met.



## KEY PLANNED TARGETS



**2.2 million**

children and women  
accessing primary health  
care



**485,598**

children/caregivers  
accessing community-  
based mental health and  
psychosocial support



**870,000**

children receiving individual  
learning materials



**369,000**

people accessing a  
sufficient quantity and  
quality of water

# HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

Children in Mali continue to endure severe hardship due to a multidimensional, protracted and complex crisis driven by escalating conflict, climate-induced disasters and sociopolitical instability. The country's 2025 exit from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), coupled with national elections, present opportunities for change but also risk causing tensions and unrest. Nearly half the population lives in poverty, and several vulnerable communities are cut off from basic services. In 2025, 6.4 million people, including 3.5 million children, will need humanitarian assistance.

Key developments in 2024 included the emergence of new armed groups and intensification of attacks targeting convoys and outposts of Malian armed forces, particularly in the central and southern regions near the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border. Armed groups have deliberately disrupted local economies through violence. Military operations have exacerbated displacement and protection risks, leading to more than 378,000 internally displaced persons.<sup>6</sup>

The overall humanitarian response remains critically underfunded, with only 38 per cent of requirements<sup>7</sup> received in 2024. Access restrictions, threats to aid workers and logistical challenges impede the delivery of assistance. Floods and droughts driven by the effects of climate change exacerbate these challenges, worsening food insecurity and malnutrition.

The nutrition crisis in conflict-affected regions is severe. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification estimates that 2.8 million people will need emergency nutrition assistance in 2025.<sup>8</sup> Among them, 1.5 million children under age 5 are expected to suffer from wasting, including 425,000 with severe wasting – a 26 per cent increase in the severe wasting caseload compared with 2024.<sup>9</sup>

Mali's health infrastructure is strained. Facilities have been damaged by conflict and there are critical shortages of staff and equipment. Four per cent of health facilities are non-functional due to insecurity. In 2024, the country faced multiple public health emergencies, including measles.<sup>10</sup>

The education sector is in crisis, and 1,984 schools have closed due to insecurity. Flooding in 2024 delayed the start of the academic year by more than a month, disrupting education for 537,600 children.

Protection needs are rising sharply. More than half of displaced persons are children, facing risks of recruitment by armed groups, family separation, child labour and gender-based violence. In 2025, an estimated 1.7 million children<sup>11</sup> will require protection services – a 33 per cent rise compared with 2024.<sup>12</sup>

The WASH sector is under pressure. Twenty-eight per cent of households lack access to clean water and sanitation – with this proportion rising to 55 per cent in severely affected regions.

## SECTOR NEEDS



**3.7 million**  
people in need of  
health assistance



**2.8 million**  
people in need of  
nutrition assistance<sup>13</sup>



**1.7 million**  
children in need of  
protection services<sup>14</sup>



**1.8 million**  
children in need of  
education support<sup>15</sup>



**3.2 million**  
people lack access to  
safe water

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



Abdel, 11, at left, plays with his foster siblings Timbuktu, Mali, in June 2024. Hundreds of children have fled their homes since 2023 to find safety in foster families.

"I feel good here. I don't want to go back to Ber. Plus, soon, I'll go to school," says Abdel, 11.

Abdel (not his real name) lived with his parents in the city of Ber, in northern Mali, before fighting broke out there. He fled the threat of forced recruitment by armed groups. "They came to take the boys and young men to fight," Abdel recalls. "I fled with the father of a neighbouring family who had a car."

Now in Timbuktu, at a site hosting internally displaced people, Abdel received psychosocial support and found refuge with Albakaye, a married father of seven, who agreed to foster Abdel with the permission of his parents, who remained behind in Ber.

Flexible funding provided by the German Federal Foreign Office has enabled UNICEF and its partners, including the NGO Terre des Hommes, to assist 35 such foster families in their support of hundreds of unaccompanied and separated children who had fled violence.

**[Read more about this story here](#)**

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In 2025, UNICEF will address the urgent needs of crisis-affected populations through multisectoral, integrated and conflict-sensitive interventions. UNICEF will promote equitable access to essential social services, enabling recovery and long-term resilience. This strategy aligns with the Mali Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 and emphasizes the protection of lives and dignity. In the context of declining humanitarian funding, UNICEF will prioritize critical needs and the most vulnerable regions.

A central pillar of the strategy involves strengthening national and local capacities for emergency preparedness and response. UNICEF will support key humanitarian planning tools, including the national multi-hazard contingency plan and the country's national flood plan, while implementing anticipatory actions and bolstering national supply chain systems. Collaboration with government services, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders – including in southern regions affected by violence and insecurity in neighboring parts of northern and central Mali – will enhance coordination and response. Additional efforts will focus on expanding field presence in hard-to-reach areas, investing in localized solutions to overcome humanitarian access barriers and supporting community initiatives.

In education, UNICEF will provide such alternative learning opportunities as accelerated programmes, community-based learning and distance education, and will strengthen capacity for education in emergencies and disaster risk reduction. Health interventions aim to bridge service delivery gaps in remote areas through mobile clinics and community health workers and to enhance epidemic preparedness and response. The nutrition strategy focuses on scaling up the prevention and treatment of malnutrition by incorporating early detection, referrals and counseling on infant and young child feeding into existing programmes. In the WASH sector, UNICEF will promote climate-resilient infrastructure and community-driven solutions to improve access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene to reduce the risk of disease and malnutrition. Child protection initiatives will prioritize psychosocial support, family reunification and care for children formerly associated with armed groups, and care for unaccompanied and separated children.<sup>16</sup>

UNICEF will continue to lead the WASH, education and nutrition clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. It will ensure a cohesive and integrated response in close coordination with the Government, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, emphasizing local leadership and community engagement for sustainable impact.

UNICEF will implement its strategy on accountability to affected populations, ensuring transparency and the active participation of affected communities. The organization will maintain its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and integrate gender-based violence risk mitigation across all sectors to enhance protection for children, women and communities.

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

## 2025 PROGRAMME TARGETS



### Health (including public health emergencies)

- 2,197,248 children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- 34,338 children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose



### Nutrition

- 222,864 children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- 657,014 primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- 150,000 children 6-59 months receiving micronutrient powder



### Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- 485,598 children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support<sup>17</sup>
- 186,867 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 527,500 people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- 450 children who have exited an armed force and groups provided with protection or reintegration support<sup>18</sup>
- 2,400 unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified
- 50,432 children provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions



### Education

- 270,000 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 870,000 children receiving individual learning materials<sup>19</sup>
- 3,000 teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support



### Water, sanitation and hygiene

- 369,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs<sup>20</sup>
- 40,000 people accessing appropriate sanitation services<sup>21</sup>
- 219,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies



### Social protection

- 100,000 households benefitting from social assistance from government funded programmes with UNICEF technical assistance



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

- 600,000 people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms
- 150,000 people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms



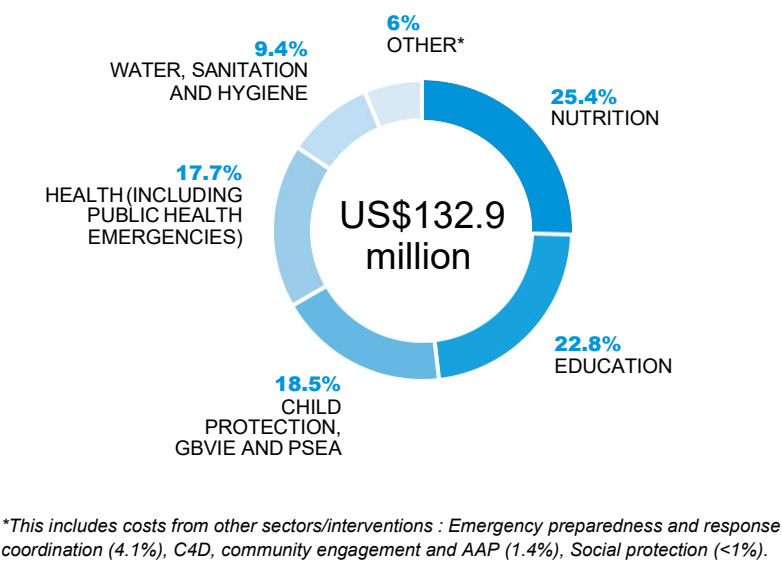
# FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2025

UNICEF is appealing for \$132.9 million in 2025 to address the urgent humanitarian needs of children in Mali, in alignment with the Mali Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025. With critical needs persisting – particularly in nutrition, education and protection – the appeal maintains the same funding level as 2024. This reflects UNICEF’s commitment to delivering life-saving support while promoting long-term resilience. Only 23 per cent of UNICEF’s revised 2024 appeal had been funded by end-2024, highlighting a concerning decline in available resources. In response to funding realities, UNICEF is prioritizing essential interventions that save lives while integrating recovery and resilience strategies into its programming. This includes linking humanitarian assistance with development initiatives (including shock-responsive social protection) and strengthening community-based systems.

Given Mali’s complex context – characterized by political instability, conflict and widespread poverty – flexible and predictable funding is essential. It enables a responsive approach that meets immediate needs while laying the foundation for long-term progress in education, healthcare and child protection.

The nutrition crisis in Mali remains particularly severe. Limited funding continues to hinder the response to wasting, placing countless children at risk. Meanwhile, approximately 2 million children in conflict-affected areas face school disruptions and increased exposure to violence and exploitation.

Without urgent and increased funding, Mali faces the risk of reversing critical gains in child survival, protection and development. The consequences of inaction extend beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis, jeopardizing the nation’s long-term stability and economic growth. Investing in humanitarian response is not only a moral imperative but a strategic necessity to safeguard Mali’s future. Increased donor commitment is crucial to protect the rights and well-being of Mali’s children, address their immediate needs and pave the way towards sustainable development.



Sector	2025 requirements (US\$)
Health (including public health emergencies)	23,500,000
Nutrition	33,800,000
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	24,550,000 <sup>22</sup>
Education	30,250,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	12,500,000
Social protection	1,000,000
C4D, community engagement and AAP	1,800,000 <sup>23</sup>
Emergency preparedness and response coordination	5,500,000
Total	132,900,000

## Who to contact for further information:

## ENDNOTES

1. Ministry of Health and Social Development, Rapport d'enquête sur les intentions futures des ménages déplacés: Cercles de Ségou, Mopti, Gao, Goundam, Ansongo, Tombouctou, Bouremet la commune 6 du District de Bamako – September 2024, Direction Nationale du Développement Social and International Organization for Migration, 11 December 2024, available at <<https://db.dnds.ml/desk/dtm-mali/>>.
2. Mali Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025.
3. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Mali is projected to decrease 9 per cent, from 7.1 million in 2024 to 6.4 million in 2025. This decline is largely attributed to the adoption of the new Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF 2.0) methodology. The introduction of JIAF 2.0 has significantly enhanced the evaluation of needs by expanding the scope of analysis to 45 out of Mali's 53 administrative circles. These areas are home to 19 million people with specific needs, out of a total population of 23.1 million, allowing for more precise identification of the most vulnerable populations. Training provided to cluster coordinators and information managers has strengthened data collection and ensured consistency across analyses, enhancing the accuracy and coherence of the findings. Additionally, the framework's consideration of vulnerability dynamics, such as the impact of displaced populations on urban host communities, has improved the ability to assess both direct and indirect effects of displacement. These advancements reflect a more accurate and targeted approach to assessing humanitarian needs, supporting more effective planning and response strategies in Mali.
4. This figure is calculated using the highest coverage programme targets: children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities (2,197,248); people accessing sufficient quantity and quality of drinking water and water for domestic needs (369,000); children to be reached with individual learning materials (870,000); 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.
5. The approach used to calculate the total number of children to be reached, according to the guidance, was a combination: the sum of multiple intervention targets where targeted groups do not overlap geographically or demographically. As with the people in need figures, UNICEF used these indicators while factoring in child disaggregation. This includes 2,197,248 people expected to access primary health care in supported facilities, of whom an estimated 1,186,514 are children (54%). In the nutrition sector, 222,864 children aged 6–59 months will be treated for severe wasting. In education, 870,000 children will receive individual learning materials. UNICEF also plans to provide community-based mental health and psychosocial support to 485,598 children, adolescents and caregivers, of whom approximately 364,199 are children (75%). In child protection, 2,400 unaccompanied and separated children will receive family reunification or alternative care. In WASH, 369,000 people will gain access to safe drinking water and water for domestic use, including around 199,260 children (54%). Combined, these child-specific targets total approximately 2,845,237 children. After accounting for overlap between sectors—since some children may benefit from more than one service—UNICEF maintains a rounded, realistic target of 2,850,000 children. This total includes 50 per cent girls and at least 15 per cent children with disabilities, reaffirming UNICEF's commitment to inclusive, needs-based humanitarian action that prioritizes the most vulnerable.
6. Ministry of Health and Social Development, Rapport d'enquête sur les intentions futures des ménages déplacés.
7. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mali: État du financement en 2024 - Financement du plan de réponse humanitaire (31 décembre 2024), OCHA, 31 December 2024, available at <<https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-etat-du-financement-en-2024-financement-du-plan-de-reponse-humanitaire-31-decembre-2024>>.
8. Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET), Mali: Food security outlook – October 2024 – May 2025, 14 November 2024. Crisis (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3) or worse outcomes are expected in northern Mali in the post-harvest period, October 2024 – May 2025.
9. In addition, data from the 2024 Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) rapid survey indicate that the circles Douentza, Bankass, Koro, Gourma-Rharous, Bourem, Ansongo and Kidal, as well as sites for internally displaced persons in Mopti, Gao, Bourem and Ménaka, are experiencing a nutritional emergency, with global acute malnutrition prevalences ranging from 15.8 per cent to 30.1 per cent.
10. According to the World Health Organization's World Malaria Report 2024, in 2023, the WHO African Region was home to 94 per cent of global malaria cases (246 million) and 95 per cent (569,000) of malaria deaths. While specific data for Mali in 2024 are not yet available, the country has historically been among those with high malaria burdens. The Malian government, in collaboration with international partners, continues to implement strategies to combat malaria, including the signing of new grants totaling €102 million to support the fight against AIDS and tuberculosis, with an additional malaria grant of up to €85 million expected to be finalized by the end of the year.
11. Of the 1.7 million children, 873,029 are girls and 855,132 are boys.
12. The ongoing conflicts, climate change-related disasters, forced displacement, insecurity, armed violence and limited access to such essential services as health care, nutrition, education, and protection have severely exacerbated mental health and psychosocial support needs in Mali. This is particularly dire for vulnerable groups including children, adolescents and their caregivers, who face profound emotional and psychological challenges as a result of compounded crises. The impact of these crises on children and adolescents is especially concerning, as they are at a higher risk of developing mental health issues, including anxiety, depression and behavioural problems. Caregivers, too, are experiencing immense stress, which further compounds the situation within families and communities. In the central and northern regions of Mali, including Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, a significant number of individuals aged 20–30 years experienced traumatic events during the occupation of their localities by armed groups more than a decade ago. These individuals are now adults, and many of them are parents. Both boys and girls from these regions have become young parents, and the trauma they endured is likely to be passed on to their children and other members of their communities. The intergenerational transmission of trauma through negative behaviour patterns and emotional distress can contribute to a vicious cycle of hardship and suffering, affecting the well-being of children and future generations. This complex and pressing situation has been confirmed by a context assessment (conducted by the MHPSS Working Group), which is currently under review. In response, UNICEF's child protection programme is advocating for a comprehensive MHPSS intervention targeting young parents and their dependents (children). This intervention aims to break the cycle of trauma and mitigate its effects by providing critical psychosocial support to those in need.
13. In 2025, the nutrition cluster will focus its interventions in 27 administrative circles identified as priority geographical areas for the emergency nutrition response, covering 80 per cent of humanitarian needs for IPC acute malnutrition Phase 3 and above. Cluster partners plan to assist 2,270,639 people in total. Of these, 1,882,578 are located within the areas covered by formal needs analyses, including the Humanitarian Needs Overview, while the remaining 388,061 people are in the circles of Kayes, Kita, Kénieba, and Bafoulabé—areas that fall outside the geographic scope of that analysis but where partners have identified needs and intend to respond nonetheless.
14. The increase in the number of children in need of protection services in 2025 is partly due to the rise in protection incidents, particularly in the central and northern regions. According to the protection monitoring system, 3,089 children (1,659 girls) were affected by protection incidents between January and September 2024, compared with 1,067 during the same period in 2023 – an increase of 190 per cent. The increased number of children in need here is also linked to a change in the methodology used by the protection cluster and areas of responsibility to determine the number of people/children in need. The updated approach incorporates more indicators of needs for 2025 than in previous years, allowing for a more accurate reflection of the actual situation. Additionally, these indicators are now quantitative and derived from national data collections, whereas expert judgment was previously the primary method.
15. This decline is largely attributed to the adoption of the new Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF 2.0) methodology.
16. Additionally, efforts will intensify to integrate mental health and psychosocial support into sectoral programming (education, health, nutrition, child protection) to tackle the needs of children and adolescents while also supporting broader sectoral outcomes by enhancing resilience, improving coping mechanisms and fostering emotional well-being, which are critical across sectors.
17. The increase in the mental health and psychosocial support target is due to a slight rise in the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR) target for 2025, which serves as the basis for its calculation. Additionally, UNICEF's programme has taken into account: UNICEF's contribution to the CPAoR response in 2024 (58 per cent) and the application of the lead agency's last resort principle, which has increased to 60 per cent compared with 36 per cent last year.

18. The reduction in this target compared with 2024 is a result of the decrease in the related CPAoR target for 2025, the basis for the calculation of the UNICEF target. This decrease is due to the reduced capacity to identify targeted children following the departure of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the response in 2024. However, the UNICEF target still represents 90 per cent of the CPAoR target.
19. The decrease from 2024 is linked to the reduction of the people in need and the cluster target. The proportion of UNICEF's target remains the same: 61 per cent of the cluster target in 2024 and 62 per cent in 2025. In 2024, UNICEF reached less than 12 per cent of its target.
20. The humanitarian WASH needs analysis conducted by the WASH cluster as part of the 2025 HPC shows a slight improvement in the severity of needs in certain districts compared with 2024. In 2025, eight districts were classified as Phase 4 (Bla, Macina, Tominian, Goundam, Gourma-Rharous, Timbuktu, Andéramboukane and Innékar), compared with 11 in 2024, and no districts were classified at severity level 5 in 2025, whereas two were in 2024. This had an impact on the cluster's target, which is based on the criticality of humanitarian needs in the sector, leading to a downward revision from 2.4 million in 2024 to **1.9** million in 2025. As the lead agency of the WASH cluster, and in line with the cluster's target, the underfunding of the 2024 UNICEF WASH response in Mali (with a 67 per cent funding gap) also contributed to the reduction of UNICEF's WASH target for 2025, which now stands at 369,000 people.
21. Over the past three years, UNICEF did not reach even 40 per cent of this programme target. What's more, considering the decline in financial resources in the current environment, UNICEF has reduced the target to 40,000 people, from 50,000 in the 2024 appeal (June 2024).
22. This includes \$1,263,320 for prevention and response to gender-based violence in emergencies and \$2,654,850 for interventions supporting protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
23. This includes \$750,000 for community engagement activities, \$150,000 for activities focused on accountability to affected populations, and \$900,000 for C4D interventions.