Populations in Niger—a landlocked, low-income country in West Africa—are vulnerable to chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, regional conflict and resultant displacement, and recurrent shocks like disease outbreaks and floods. Approximately 2.3 million people across the country require emergency assistance to meet their basic needs, according to Niger’s 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan.

**SITUATION**

- In the Lake Chad Basin, prolonged conflict perpetuated by Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-West Africa has internally displaced 104,000 people in Niger and prompted 119,000 Nigerian refugees to flee into Niger’s Diffa Region as of May. More than 30,000 Nigerian refugees were also sheltering in Niger’s Maradi Region as of July, having fled a recent surge in violence in northwestern Nigeria.

- Attacks by armed groups and intercommunal conflict have escalated since 2017 in Niger’s Tahoua and Tillabéri regions, negatively affecting civilians and driving displacement. As of May, an estimated 77,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) resided in Tahoua and Tillabéri. Additionally, western Niger hosts about 56,000 refugees from Mali, where instability has exacerbated humanitarian needs and caused regional population movements since 2012.

- Nearly 1.2 million people in Niger require urgent food assistance from June–August, a March Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis indicates; more than half of this population resides in Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabéri. Additionally, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network reports that Stressed (IPC 2) and Crisis (IPC 3) levels of acute food insecurity will persist in parts of these regions through January 2020 as conflict continues to disrupt livelihoods and undermine humanitarian access.*

*The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a standardized tool that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The IPC scale, comparable across countries, ranges from Minimal (IPC 1) to Famine (IPC 5). The CH, a similar tool used in West Africa, has a separate scale ranging from Minimal (Phase 1) to Famine (Phase 5).

**RESPONSE**

- USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP) partners with the UN World Food Program (WFP) to assist vulnerable populations in Niger through food distributions, supplementary nutrition support, and asset-building activities. FFP also enables the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to deliver ready-to-use therapeutic food to treat severely malnourished children.

- With FFP support, non-governmental organization (NGO) Mercy Corps is providing food assistance to 28,000 food-insecure Mercy Corps is providing food assistance to 28,000 food-insecure people in Tillabéri through activities in which participating households receive cash transfers in exchange for creating or repairing community assets; the partner also provides unconditional transfers to the most impoverished families.

- To assist approximately 1.2 million people in Maradi and Zinder regions, FFP recently began three long-term development activities with CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Save the Children. These activities aim to improve food security among extremely poor, chronically vulnerable households and to strengthen their resilience—the ability to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses. As integral components of the USAID Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) II initiative, these interventions work in many sectors, including agriculture, health, livelihoods, nutrition, and sanitation.

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*Photo: Moussa Mani received training to improve his crop production through a FFP-funded, CRS-implemented development activity in Niger. He notes, “I’ve seen a lot of changes using new techniques on my farm. The soil is more productive. My hope is to become self-sufficient with food.”*