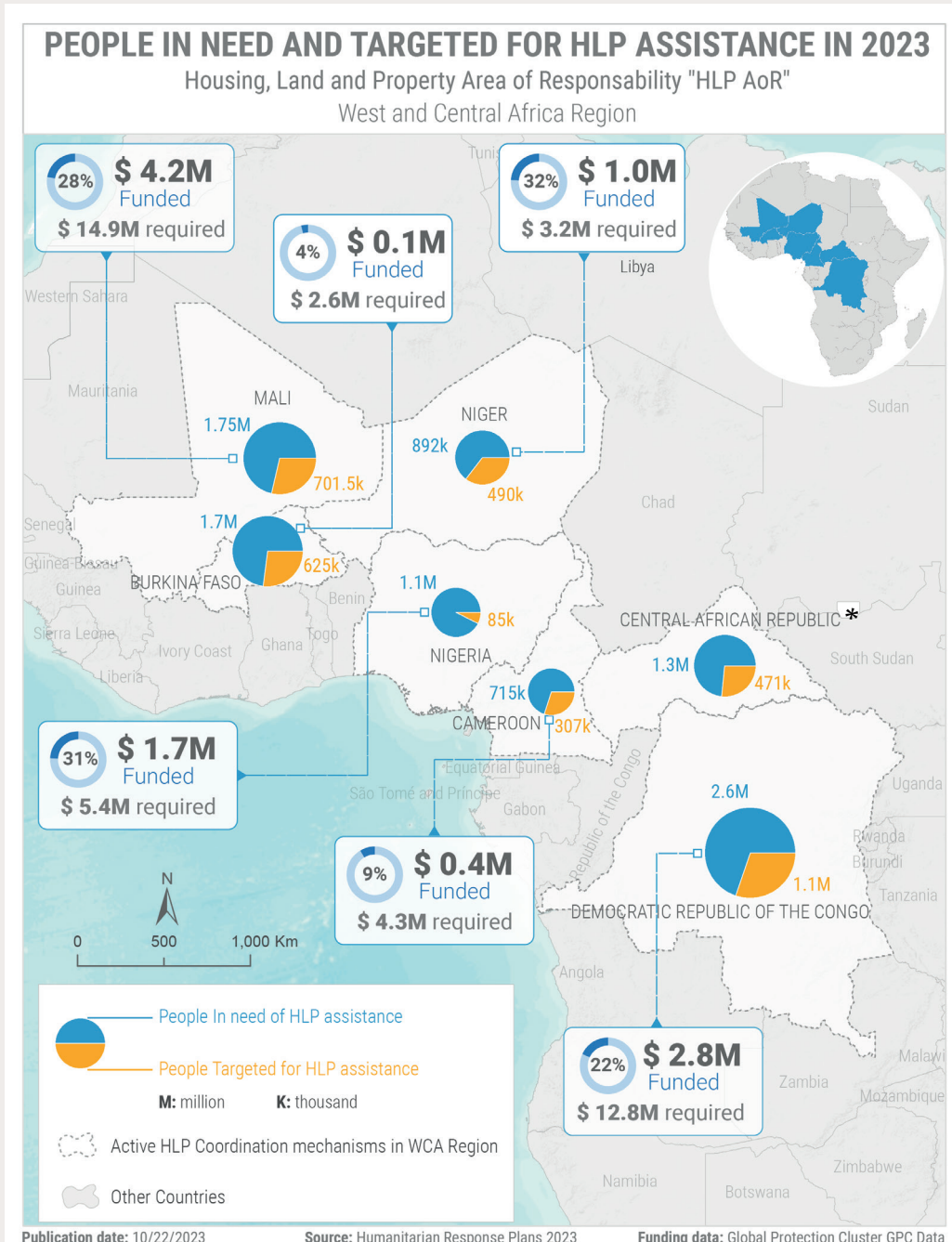


ADDRESSING HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY (HLP) RIGHTS IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES IN WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA



*HLP funding data for CAR has yet to be finalised.

What is HLP?

Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights are drawn from international law and the right to adequate housing. They are about what makes it possible for people to live on their land and use their property. In humanitarian response, HLP is about people having a home, free from the fear of forced eviction; a place that offers shelter, safety and the ability to secure a livelihood.

HLP in Emergencies

HLP issues are at the heart of displacement and significant across all phases of a response. It is crucial to address HLP issues as early as possible, particularly in relation to forced evictions, as well as for effective medium and long-term solutions. Ignoring HLP can do harm and undermine response efforts.

8 reasons why addressing HLP issues is important in humanitarian responses*

- 1 Saving lives, preventing further displacement & human rights violations
- 2 Adapting humanitarian response to complex urban environments
- 3 Ensure equal access to humanitarian assistance
- 4 Promoting access to justice in crisis contexts & contributing towards durable solutions
- 5 Protecting women & supporting their recovery
- 6 Supporting local systems & bridging transition / development gap
- 7 HLP for conflict prevention & peace building
- 8 Addressing loss of land or inability to return to land and homes after disasters

"I inherited this plot of land orally from my parents. I've always seen land as a simple natural resource that I could use to provide for myself and my family. I've seen several land conflicts in my community, and it's the village chief who manages them together with his advisors. There are cases where land is lent to individuals or displaced people for various reasons. This usually leads to conflict. Many families like mine are afraid to lend their land to relatives or IDPs who need it."
Ibrahim, farmer in Tillaberi province, Niger.

What does this mean: cross-sectoral impact during emergencies



Food Security and Livelihoods programming requires an understanding of the relation between project participants and access to their property and land, especially for agricultural land to enable livelihoods and early recovery.



For Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Education programming, land is required to provide temporary or permanent infrastructure, which in turn calls for clear criteria for site selection to avoid forced evictions, delays to construction work or occupying privately owned land without prior consent of the owner.



For actors involved in Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) it is also important to understand tenure arrangements in the context of site selection, any necessary building permissions and how to facilitate access to water and agricultural land.



Shelter actors aim to protect and uphold HLP rights through the provision of shelter assistance and NFIs. In doing so, they must carefully consider the rights of landlords, landowners and host community members in order to ensure security of tenure, prevent (forced) evictions and disputes.

What can be done?

- Recognise the critical role of HLP in emergencies by **integrating it into emergency responses from the onset**, including in inter-agency Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRMs).
- Support advocacy efforts to **improve access to HLP rights** for conflict-affected populations in emergency contexts.
- **Increase funding** to the HLP sector, particularly to strengthen coordination and data collection.
- For the leads & co-leads of HLP working groups, to develop **uniformed methodologies** to better capture HLP-related data, including the impact on other sectors of the response, as well as disaggregated data of social groups.
- Strengthen the capacity of other concerned actors (shelter, LFS, etc.) to **identify, mitigate and manage HLP-related issues within their areas of intervention**.
- **Strengthen coordination and synergies** between HLP working groups and other clusters by including their participation in HLP working groups discussions.
- **Systematically include HLP issues in strategic documents**, such as the yearly Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), with a particular focus on cross-sectoral dimensions of HLP activities in emergencies.