OVERVIEW

BURKINA FASO 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

CRISIS START DATE	**Earliest part of the conflict recorded in 2015 Clusters activated 5th December 2019**
PEOPLE AFFECTED	**2.9** million people*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	**1,074,993** people as of Dec 2020**
HOMES DESTROYED	**13,503** homes destroyed***
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	**960,180** people****
PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN THE RESPONSE	**28,560** HHs supported with NFIs **32,560** HHs supported with emergency shelter **556** HHs supported with semi-permanent shelter*****

Map showing Burkina Faso with neighboring countries Mali, Niger, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire. Capital: OUAGADOUGOU. Response Locations shown.

SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSE

Since 2015, Burkina Faso has faced increasing insecurity from extremist international and national groups. From 2015-2018, violence was largely concentrated in Burkina Faso's Sahel region. Beginning in January 2019, the number of displaced persons accelerated dramatically from 87,000 at that time to over 1 million as of November 2020. The shelter response scaled up to support the Government of Burkina Faso meet the challenge of providing shelter to the thousands of people living within host communities with limited lands available.
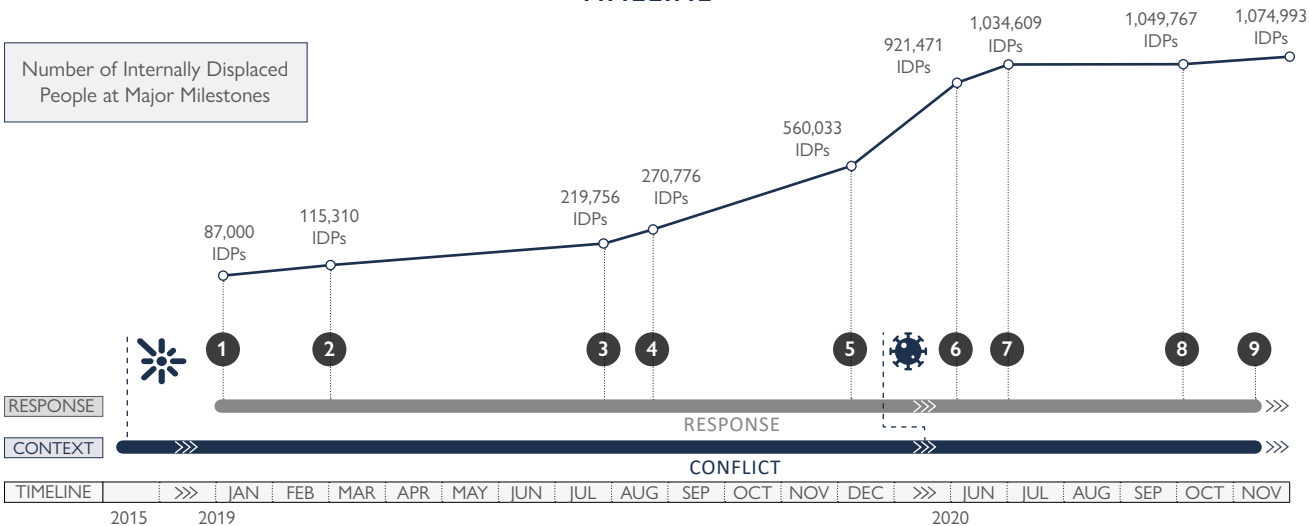
* Source: Humanitarian Response Plan 2020
** Source: Situation Report, CONASUR (Dec 2020)
*** Source: CONASUR Quarterly Dashboard (Jan 2021)

**** Source: Shelter Cluster Dashboard (Dec 2020)
***** Source: Shelter Cluster Dashboard (Dec 2020).
Figures are for Jan-Dec 2020.

TIMELINE

Number of Internally Displaced People at Major Milestones

87,000 IDPs — 115,310 IDPs — 219,756 IDPs — 270,776 IDPs — 560,033 IDPs — 921,471 IDPs — 1,034,609 IDPs — 1,049,767 IDPs — 1,074,993 IDPs

RESPONSE — RESPONSE
CONTEXT — CONFLICT

TIMELINE: 2015 ⟫⟫⟫ 2019 JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC ⟫⟫⟫ 2020 JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV

2015: Earliest part of conflict recorded in 2015.

① Jan 2019: Shelter/NFI Working Group (WG) launched.

② Mar 2019: First NFI Standard Kit Established.

③ 30 Jul 2019: First Sub-national Shelter WG in Kaya.

④ 19 Aug 2019: Deployment of National Shelter Cluster Coordinator.

⑤ 11 Dec 2019: Activation of Shelter Cluster.

11 Mar 2020: WHO declared the novel COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic.

⑥ Jun 2020: Shelter Cluster Regional Focal Points for the main regions of displacement (Boucle de Mouhoun, Est, Nord, Centre-Nord, Sahel) put in place.

⑦ Jul-Sep 2020: Rainy season complicated shelter response and adaptations made.

⑧ Oct 2020: Sub-national Shelter Cluster Coordinator deployed.

⑨ 18 Nov 2020: Strategy review workshop.

CONTEXT

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in Western Africa that shares a border with Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Burkina Faso has three climatic zones: a hot tropical savanna in the south, a hot tropical semi-arid climate reflective of the Sahel Desert in the north, and desert in the very north of the country. The majority of the population (80% of the working population) depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

The roots of the instability can be traced to the Soum region where a group called Ansarul Islam sought to create a new social order based on extremist versions of Islam, which appealed to the economic discontents of some local populations. Attacks became more widespread in 2018 through 2019 with insecurity stemming from within the country's borders. This insecurity eroded trust between some of Burkina Faso's dominant ethnic groups and challenged national authorities to reinforce security throughout the country.

SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

People lived in different types of houses across the region. In the Far North of Burkina Faso, people use traditional dome or cone like shelters which are designed to be quickly dismantled and reassembled according to the need to move long-distances with their grazing livestock. At the beginning of the crisis, this type of construction was most familiar to humanitarian actors, because a similar emergency shelter had been used in the Malian Refugee Response (from 2012) in the Sahel region. Other traditional shelters of Burkina Faso include round huts that are put in a circular plot, where each of the huts is located to reflect the traditional and political roles of the family. Huts are also used for housing animals. Urban areas have homes made of mudbrick or concrete, with roofs of thatch or corrugated iron sheeting.
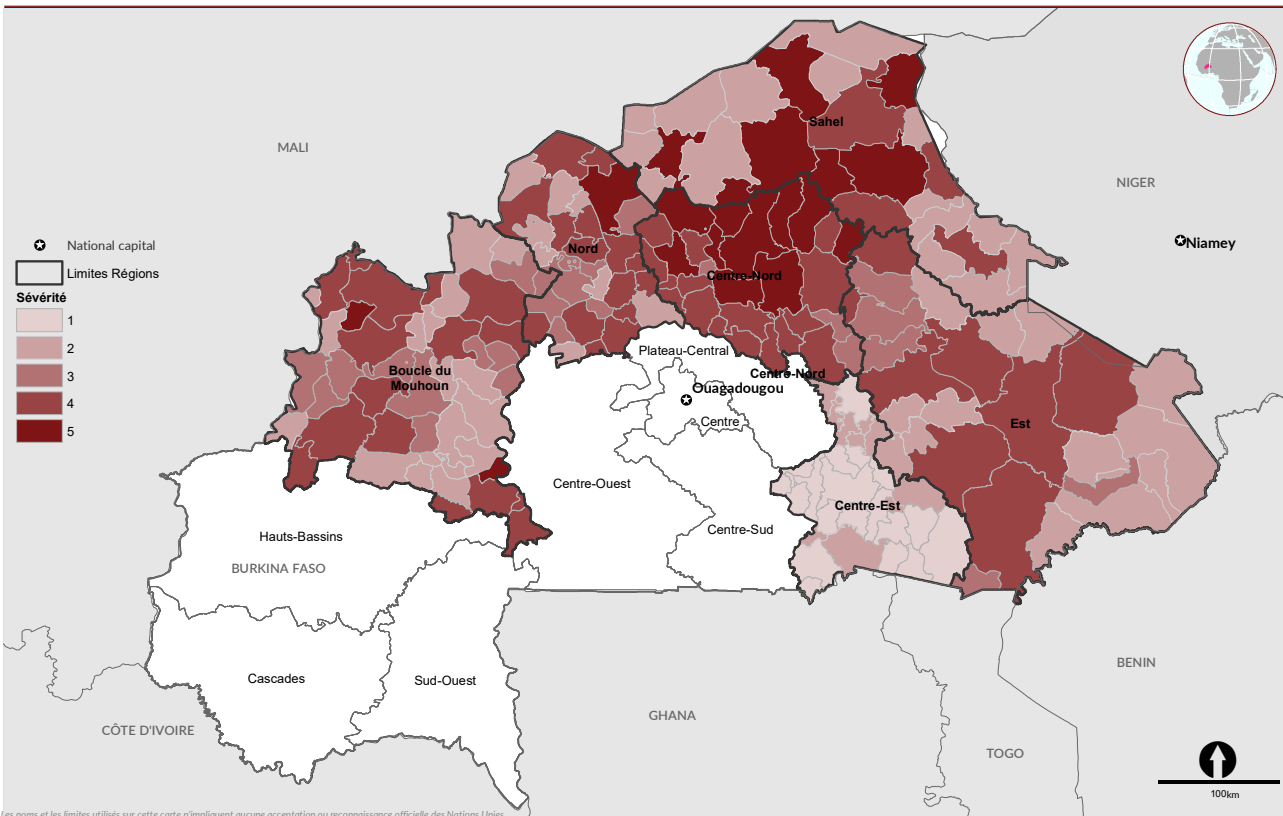
Due to rapid urbanization, Burkina Faso's government was already grappling with challenges of land and housing within urban areas prior to the crisis. In the government's land regulation, Burkina Faso has had to delineate between informal and formal land. Informal portions of settlements are referred to as 'zones non-loties'. When looking at a map of any town in Burkina Faso, these zones are non-geometrical. Typically, these zones do not have established connections to water and electricity, and these must be acquired by the individual inhabitants. People are not easily able to formalize their ownership of the land. In planned settlements or zones loties, there is a clear planned geometric shape, and access to water and electricity and land ownership is easier to establish. Despite some governmental policies, land speculation is a direct consequence of this division between the two types of land.

BURKINA FASO
Carte de Sévérité des besoins (Abris)
A la date du 23 oct. 2020

Cluster Abris Burkina Faso
ShelterCluster.org
Coordonner la Réponse en Abris

Shelter Cluster map showing the severity of shelter needs (October 2020).

SITUATION DURING/AFTER THE CRISIS

Many of the displaced people turned to host communities that they knew through relatives, or relied on the hospitality of local people. In 2019, it was estimated that over 80% of IDPs were living with host communities in urban centers where more services were available and accessible. Due to the rapid increase of the number of displaced, host communities and hosts were quickly overwhelmed by the number of people. Resources for water and energy were in short supply and pressure was put on local markets.

Shelter actors sought to immediately decongest these host community accommodations by providing emergency shelters outside of these host shelters or in zones allocated by the government (typically zones non-loties). IDPs would also flee to schools to take shelter, as they were recognized to be public spaces always open to the community. As many of the initial violent attacks would happen at nighttime, these were the most accessible. Shelter, WASH, and Education Clusters had to rush to find quick solutions to this situation in advance of the school year. In the summer of 2019, emergency shelter types were built outside of homes. Cash support also enabled IDPs to purchase and construct shelters in the zones non-loties. This put pressure on WASH Cluster partners to also ensure that these populations had access to potable water and latrines within the areas where these shelters were constructed. The Shelter Cluster strategy also immediately identified the need for stronger settlement planning in the response to facilitate both the work of Shelter and WASH Cluster partners. Due to lack of land and space, many emergency and transitional shelters are now constructed in the zones non-loties.

At the beginning of the response, the government permitted two formal camps to be established: Barsalagho which was found 5 km outside of the center of the town and Foube. These camps were acknowledged largely as the population that was settled there (largely Peul people with no ties to the community) had reasonable fears to settle within the host (Maasi) communities due to their different ethnicity. Nevertheless, there was reluctance to set up additional camps for the displaced as they have fears of these camps becoming protracted without the capacity to provide longer-term solutions for the displaced population. The Shelter Cluster and a Site Management Working Group worked with the government in order to provide land to decongest the overcrowded situations. According to the Site Management Working Group as of December 2020, 94 temporary hosting sites of both spontaneous and formal nature have been identified and tracked.

In addition to accommodation with the host community, IDPs were provided with emergency shelter solutions including, Sahelian Tents (otherwise known as Tuareg Shelters), Refugee Housing Units, and wooden framed shelters covered in plastic sheeting. Some emergency shelters were heavily damaged by the floods and strong winds during the rainy season. The technical designs were reviewed by a Technical Working Group in order to reinforce the shelters but taking also into consideration the unpredictable duration of the crisis. The shelter response shifted from emergency towards a semi-durable response. The semi-durable response is based on the local traditional construction system with sun-dried clay bricks.

IDPs at the camp in Barsalogho in 2019 several months after their displacement.

The Secretariat of the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (SP/CONASUR) has received support so that they can conduct regular IDP monitoring and registration of IDP numbers. This mechanism ensures that the government remains in the driving seat of the response, registering the specific issues of their citizens. The CONASUR regularly monitors the shelter types. As of November 2020, the CONASUR was able to register and assess the conditions of IDPs. According to their statistics, the shelter types of IDPs are the following (95,064 households recorded):

Types of shelters occupied by IDPs	
53%	Mud/brick houses
18%	Concrete housing
11%	Huts
7%	Hangars
7%	Tents
0.65%	Wood houses
0.64%	Schools
0.56%	Public buildings
0.09%	Religious buildings (Churches or Mosques)

NATIONAL SHELTER(-NFI) RESPONSE

GOVERNMENT ROLE

The main government body for the response in Burkina Faso is CONASUR. This government agency is considered the general body for response to emergencies. Whilst it does not have technical expertise in shelter and settlements, its key task is to liaise with the key government ministries of the response. At the time of setting up the Shelter Cluster, it was quickly identified that it would be necessary to set up a liaison with Burkina Faso's Ministry of Urbanism and Habitat in order to address some of the issues with lack of available land and housing stock for the displaced.

The liaison generated progress on this issue, as the Shelter Cluster has been able to secure land. The Shelter Cluster is now focusing on building the capacity of partners in the area of settlement planning, to accommodate IDPs as the host communities are overcrowded. Mayors struggle for funds, and are engaged in the local response as the displacement crisis has taken a toll on available resources for their residents and those displaced to their communities. For this reason, the support of international actors is critical to enable municipal authorities to engage in the response.

SHELTER TYPES

The Shelter Cluster's Technical Working Group on shelter has been elaborating and reviewing the specific performance standards of the shelters employed. The climatic conditions of Burkina Faso: heat, wind, rain – put pressure on Shelter Cluster partners to look at how to adapt shelters for appropriate ventilation, durability, and protection from the elements.

In November 2019, a workshop was held on the origins of the Sahel tent and how the standard kit had adapted to the elements specific to where it was distributed in Burkina Faso. Partners conducted detailed reviews of the performance of the various emergency shelter options. The work of the Technical Working Group resulted in two detailed documents, one review of the interventions implemented to date in March 2020 and another document going into more details on shelter typologies and where each shelter type may be provided. This review of shelter typologies also created specific tables for the main regions of displacement on which solutions may be appropriate for each region.

IDPs accommodated in a site with emergency and durable shelters. The shelter response is shifting progressively from emergency to semi-durable solutions.

CASH AND SHELTER

Due to the lack of resources and the supply and logistical challenges of transporting materials throughout Burkina Faso, cash was an early feature of the response. IDPs used the cash to purchase NFIs in the markets and also to purchase land in the zones non-loties and to pay laborers for the work of completing their shelters. While an efficient way to provide assistance to the displaced, it was noted that technical assistance and monitoring were two important aspects of the program that needed to be strengthened in order to meet shelter objectives.

MAIN CHALLENGES

1. One of the critical challenges to the Shelter response is that there have been inadequate resources to mobilize enough partners particularly for the shelter portion of the response.

2. A second challenge has been the reluctance of governments to establish temporary settlements in order to accommodate the additional number of people displaced by the conflict recognizing that camps are a last resort.

3. Due to insecurity and the remote nature of the Sahel, it has been challenging to get timely and up to date information on the displacement and settlement patterns to inform real time response.

WIDER IMPACTS

The insecurity in the Sahel was felt beyond Burkina Faso with a deterioration of the situation in Mali and Niger. Because of the climatic similarities between these countries, synergies and sharing between the shelter types and lessons learned were exchanged between the Shelter Clusters and the Shelter Working Group in these countries. This exchange of information contributed greatly to the efficiencies of coordination. Burkina Faso was the only country in the Sahel to be declared as an Interagency Standing Committee L3 Response, which in turn led to additional resources being invested in Mali and Niger to prevent a severe degradation in the displacement situation. The L3 designation enabled several resources to be allocated to respond to the shelter needs in the country and to set up a robust team to respond to the situation. This team in turn could share their tools with the other countries encountering similar challenges.

Sahelien tents set up by partners to accommodate IDPs living in collective centres and overcrowded shelters.

IDPs accommodated in Refugee Housing Units in order to decongest over-crowding in the town of Pissila.

Semi-durable shelter made of mud brick. IDPs are supported with technical guidance and cash for these constructions.

LESSONS LEARNED

- In areas of land management and where IDPs are often found in urban and overcrowded host communities, settlement planning is a critical aspect of the Shelter Cluster strategy. Early geospatial analysis can facilitate decision-making about where to allocate emergency shelter and set up temporary settlements which can provide relief to host communities.

- Cluster Lead Agencies should initiate the Shelter Coordination early, in order to ensure that coordination staff are in place and that minimum shelter strategies are in place to start the response.

- The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) proved a key resource to kick-start shelter and settlement response programming.

- Early coordination and support to the government is critical.

- Collaboration with the WASH Cluster is critical both for stronger NFI programming and for Shelter programming to better implement the settlement planning aspects of the Shelter Cluster strategy.