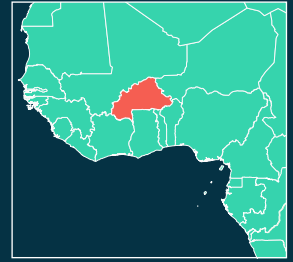


**START**  
NETWORK

THE WORLD'S MOST NEGLECTED CRISIS;  
**DISPLACEMENT**  
IN BURKINA FASO



The crisis in Burkina Faso is one of the **fastest growing humanitarian crises in the world**, with over 2 million people internally displaced and around a quarter of the country's population currently relying on humanitarian aid.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the conflict began in 2015, over the last four years there has been an increase in violence targeting civilians, forcing millions to flee their homes. In May 2023, Kongoussi, a city in the province of Bam, came under extreme pressure as an exceptional increase in violence resulted in people living in neighbouring towns and villages to relocate, with over 35,000 people arriving in the city during May alone.

The immense humanitarian need vastly outstripped the existing capacity of actors in the area. The dramatic increase in displacement prompted members to raise a Start Fund alert to support people in desperate need of shelter, WASH, and food assistance. The Start Fund is a funding mechanism designed by Start Network to enable NGOs to respond to under-the-radar, small to medium-scale crises in a timely and effective manner, disbursing funding within 72 hours of an alert being raised.

**THE START FUND IS ONE OF FASTEST HUMANITARIAN FUNDING MECHANISMS IN THE WORLD.**



**2+ million**  
PEOPLE INTERNALLY DISPLACED

**1/4**

OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION  
ARE CURRENTLY RELYING  
ON HUMANITARIAN AID



IN MAY 2023

**35,000+**



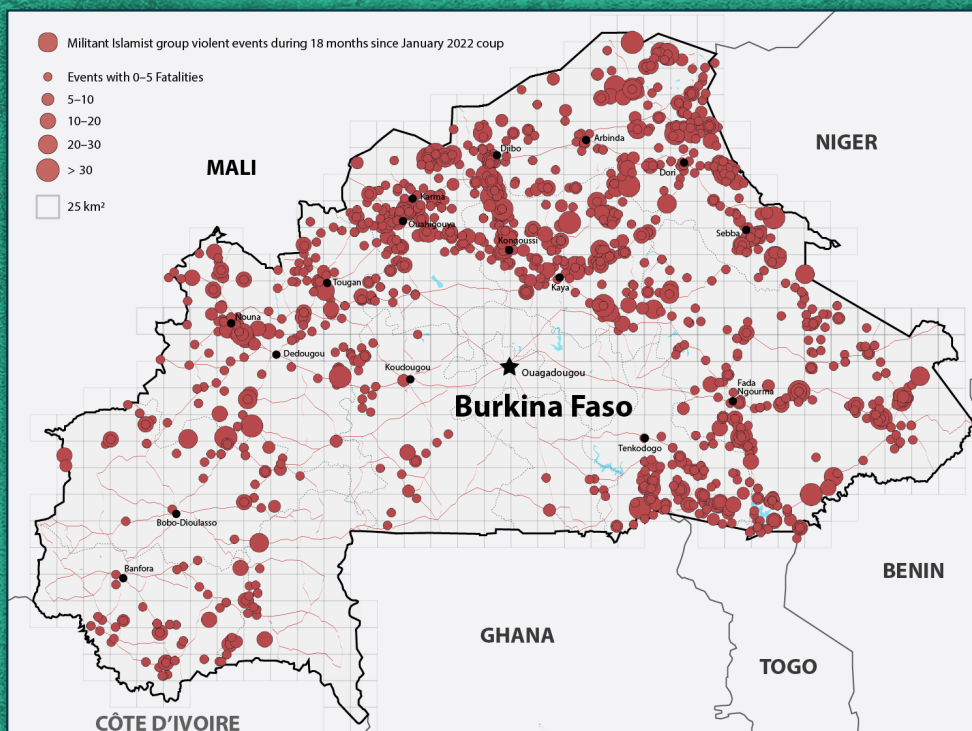
PEOPLE FLED TO THE CITY OF KONGOUSSI DUE  
TO AN EXCEPTIONAL INCREASE IN VIOLENCE



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nrc.no/news/2023/june/burkina-faso-is-the-worlds-most-neglected-crisis/>

# MILITANT ISLAMIST GROUP EVENTS AND FATALITIES SINCE FIRST BURKINA FASO COUP

Data source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project



By the end of April 2023, an estimated 150,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) had sought refuge in Kongoussi. The additional 35,000 who arrived during May 2023 alone constituted a sudden spike in a crisis of greater scope, particularly at a time when the reception capacity of local residents was saturated, NGO response capacities were exhausted, and the rainy season was setting in. This led to Start Network members raising an alert to respond to the immediate needs of IDPs arriving in Kongoussi. Given the long-standing presence of Solidarités International in the local area, the organisation was unanimously selected to receive a grant of £350,000 to implement a 45-day project.



**GRANT OF £350,000 RECEIVED TO IMPLEMENT A 45-DAY PROJECT, RESPONDING TO THE IMMEDIATE NEED OF IDPS ARRIVING IN KONGOUSSI.**

The most pressing need was shelter, with most IDPs arriving with nowhere to reside. Government response capacities were incredibly low, only capable of providing 50 shelters out of an estimated need of 10,000. In response, Solidarités International partnered with ACTED to construct 260 shelters for vulnerable households, accommodating 3,124 people arriving at the site. Solidarités International also repaired 50 emergency shelters that were damaged during heavy rains experienced during the project. The coordinated response of Solidarités International and ACTED ensured that IDPs had the materials and support to build and repair their own shelter and were able to sleep safely and protected.



**260 SHELTERS FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS WERE CONSTRUCTED, ACCOMMODATING 3,124 PEOPLE ARRIVING AT THE SITE.**

Shelter construction

© Solidarités International ACTED





**IN SEPTEMBER 2023, AN ESTIMATED 3.3 MILLION PEOPLE WERE EXPECTED TO BE FOOD INSECURE WITH 650,000 INDIVIDUALS FACING EXTREME HUNGER.**

Food insecurity is of high concern as the conflict impacts millions of people across the country. In September 2023, an estimated 3.3 million people were expected to be food insecure with 650,000 individuals facing extreme hunger. Collectively, the Burkinabe Red Cross and the World Food Programme were able to provide food assistance to a number of newly displaced households that arrived in Kongoussi since January, however this assistance did not extend to household items and materials. In response, Solidarités International distributed essential kits to 260 households (3,124 people) to prepare and cook food, as well as sleeping equipment such as torches, sleeping mats, and mosquito nets to meet their daily needs.



**FUNDS WERE USED TO BUILD A WATER STATION, COVERING THE NEEDS OF OVER 5,600 PEOPLE WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY TRAVELLED LONG DISTANCES TO ACCESS WATER.**

The mass arrival of newly displaced persons exacerbated the pressure on existing WASH facilities, largely insufficient to cover the city's rapidly expanding population. The increased demand on limited resources meant that the construction of facilities was prioritised within the first 30 days, positively impacting community dynamics and reducing the number of people utilising one water point. Funds were used to build a water station, meeting the needs of 5,600 people who had previously travelled long distances to access water. This was of particular benefit to women who, mainly responsible for water collection, were able to have additional time at home. The establishment of the water point increased the average volume of water used per person from less than 15 litres a day (the minimum standard) to 22 litres a day.



Latrine and Shower Construction  
© Solidarités International ACTED

**140 SHOWERS & LATRINES** constructed, reducing the practice of open defecation, and limiting the spread of diseases at overcrowded sites



**BENEFITTING 7,000 PEOPLE**

Community hygiene awareness sessions were led by local community members and a local theatre group led interactive plays and door-to-door sessions to disseminate information relating to accessing safe drinking water and the importance of using and maintaining latrines.

Collectively, the construction of WASH facilities, community training, and implementation of awareness raising activities strengthened WASH systems and practices for over 25,380 people.

The security situation in Kongoussi is highly insecure, with targeted attacks against the civilian population and humanitarian workers drastically limiting access to the town. With knowledge of the local context, the presence and role of local actors was crucial to ensure that those in Kongoussi received the necessary aid and support. The coordination of Solidarités International, ACTED, local authorities, community leaders, and various stakeholders who accompanied the implementation of the project, ensured that resources were effectively mobilised, and that the response was grounded in contextual knowledge to rapidly respond to the crisis. **In total, the number of people who directly benefited from the Start Fund response in Kongoussi was 10,875.**

As aid and attention has focused on the war in Ukraine, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), ranks the crisis in Burkina Faso as 'the world's most neglected crisis'. In particular, the NRC report finds that media coverage of the conflict has been minimal and international political engagement has been low, continuing to drive a 'viscous cycle of... neglect' with ever-deepening humanitarian needs. The role of the Global Start Fund in responding to small to medium crisis that fall under the radar, has ensured that those in Burkina Faso receive much needed support with **75% of beneficiaries stating that the project had effectively reduced their immediate suffering and helped them to feel protected.**



**TARGETED ATTACKS AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AND HUMANITARIAN WORKERS DRASTICALLY LIMITED ACCESS TO THE TOWN.**



**MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CONFLICT HAS BEEN MINIMAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT LOW, CONTINUING TO DRIVE A 'VISCIOUS CYCLE OF... NEGLECT' WITH EVER-DEEPENING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

**WITH THREE ALERTS RAISED TO THE START FUND FROM BURKINA FASO IN 2023, THE CRISIS IS CONTINUING TO WORSEN.**

**START NETWORK MEMBERS WILL CONTINUE TO RESPOND, ENSURING THAT THE NEEDS OF THOSE CAUGHT IN THE CONFLICT ARE MET, AND A CRITICAL GAP IN THE HUMANITARIAN AID SYSTEM IS RECOGNISED.**