

Mali

Overcoming the challenges of disability: a crucial perspective in times of conflict and economic crisis.

In Mali, the deteriorating humanitarian situation has forced more than 400,000 people to move within the country, particularly in the central and northern regions. By 2023, more than 8.8 million people, including 15% with disabilities, will be in need.

The Douentza region, in the center of the country, where indigenous and displaced people cohabit, has been hard hit by the combined effects of conflict and climate change. This is where M'Boye lives. Originally from Boni, she welcomes us into her home on her mat with a smile. She lost the use of her feet following an illness. She was 18 and had just married.



M'Boye, M'Boye, displaced person, left his village following a blockade, the IRC's client.

This 38-year-old mother and wife wants to share her story of resilience. *"The departure from our village to Douentza was improvised, we weren't prepared to leave, we were obliged. We left following the blockade imposed on our locality by armed groups. We had to flee our home, our land, without taking anything with us," she confides.*

M'Boye arrived in Douentza with her husband, two children and other villagers. They were well received by the locals. Unfortunately, the massive influx of displaced people is putting increasing pressure on dwindling resources. Everyone must share what little there is. But they can count on the support of humanitarian organizations and the authorities.



M'Boye, welcomes us into her home to share her story.

In Mali, the humanitarian organization IRC, in consortium with NRC and DRC, is working in the Mopti region (Douentza) through its "Pro Sahel" program. Funded by BHA/USAID, it aims to provide a comprehensive protection response that will meet the immediate needs of conflict-affected people in the central Sahel and prepare communities to respond to protection incidents in the future.

This involves developing a protection response based on rapid assessments, gender audits and results; improving access to comprehensive life-saving protection and legal services for survivors/survivors of harm/violations of their rights. The aim is also to strengthen the resilience of communities, services, and institutional systems.

"I received support in the form of a kit comprising mats, blankets, soap, a bucket, shoes, clothes, a torch, mosquito nets and a kettle. And the greatest support was the assistance in obtaining birth certificates for my children," says M'Boye with a smile.

Through the Protection and Rule of Law program, she was able to obtain birth certificates for her children. They were able to return to school and are now in 4th and 2nd grade.

A total of over **20,000 clients**, including **12,064 women and girls**, received assistance from the consortium between January and September 2023 in the Mopti, Gao, and Ségou regions, where the Pro Sahel program is being implemented. Of these clients, over **3,800 were** internally displaced people. In addition, more than 12,900 people, over 70% of them children, obtained their birth certificates thanks to the consortium's efforts in these areas.

"This support was crucial, because I benefited from it as soon as we arrived. Life had become almost unbearable in my village because of the lack of supplies of food and other necessities. Fleeing was the last option. The kit we received enabled us to be sheltered from the cold, mosquitoes and to have acceptable hygiene conditions."

In this difficult context, people with reduced mobility are among the most vulnerable. Yet M'Boye is not giving up. To provide for her family, she sells condiments at the market like other local women. These savings enable her to support the family's expenses.

"My appeal to people with disabilities is not to underestimate themselves, and not to isolate themselves in society. Let them know that they have rights and duties just like any other member of the community. It's up to them to choose to fight, even when it's difficult, to take charge and keep hope alive."



M'Boye would like to expand her business and have a tricycle to get around more easily. Feeling accompanied and supported has helped her regain a taste for life. She feels perfectly integrated into her community and looks to the future with greater conviction.



M'Boyé, disabled woman, the IRC's client

« In the future, I'd like to become the president of people with disabilities, to be able to defend, help and support all these people.»

In Mali, IRC and its partners are implementing multi-sectoral programs to provide relief to people affected by conflict and climatic hazards. Through the Pro-Sahel program, we are targeting +65,000 people through training, capacity-building, the creation of safe spaces for children, the management and referral of cases of GBV, assistance with dignity kits and the provision of mobility kits (crutches/tricycle) for people with disabilities.