

Malian Refugees Returning Home Amid Food Crisis



Bamako, October 13 (RHC)-- An increasing number of Malian refugees are returning home amid a looming food crisis. Local officials say the West African country's harvest was not good last year and farmers did not have sufficient rice stocks.

Many refugees, however, are coming back to almost nothing - destroyed homes and shops and a decimated tourism economy are awaiting them back home.

More than 18 months after the end of a major fighting in northern Mali, about 54,000 refugees are still in Mauritania, in addition to some 51,000 in Niger and 33,000 in Burkina Faso, aid officials say.

Chaos broke out in Mali after President Amadou Toumani Toure was toppled in a military coup in March 2012. The coup leaders said they mounted the coup in response to the government's inability to contain the Tuareg rebellion in the north of the country.

In January 2013, France invaded its former colony under the pretext of halting the advance of the Tuareg fighters. However, the country is still grappling with insecurity despite the presence of French troops there.

Some political analysts believe that Mali's natural resources, including gold and uranium reserves, are the real reasons behind the French war.

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