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## **Sahel: Grandi (UN), poverty, violence, internal displacement. “Act now before the crisis becomes unmanageable”**

Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger: “The real problem is here. The emergency is here. It is here that people are suffering, people are being killed, women are being raped, small children cannot go to school. It is here that we must intervene before this crisis becomes unmanageable”. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, who has just returned from a visit to these three countries, raises the alarm. It is here that over one million refugees from neighbouring countries are sheltered. Only in Burkina Faso, we estimate that half a million people are now “internally displaced” having fled their homes in 2019 to escape the attacks, terror and destruction caused by armed groups. “The stories I heard in those countries are shocking”. 60,000 Malian refugees are currently living in Mauritania. The risk of destabilization is high throughout the region due to terror and poverty. Yet, “some of the poorest countries in the world remain some of the most generous”, said Grandi. According to the High Commissioner, “in the Sahel, the response to the crisis must not be a security one alone. The protection of those forced to flee must remain at the core”. This includes a “better coordination between civilian and military authorities to ensure humanitarian access for immediate assistance” and to create the right “conditions for humanitarian and development actors to help with solutions to the affected population”.

Valentina Bombelli