

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 9 December 2015

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- In December, UNHCR Representatives for Mali and for the three main countries of asylum for Malian refugees, namely **Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger**, finalized a **2016-2017 UNHCR Regional Strategy for protection and assistance to Malian displaced**. The strategy lays out concrete solutions for a coordinated and harmonized response to the Malian crisis among concerned countries. According to this strategy, while the security situation in Mali remains volatile, UNHCR will continue to maintain **protection** for Malian displaced and reinforce **access to essential services**. Increased efforts will also be made towards strengthening **people of concern's self-reliance**. UNHCR will also work towards **durable solutions** for refugees, including voluntary repatriation. Interventions in the host population in countries of asylum are also among UNHCR's main priorities to maintain **peaceful coexistence** between the refugee and the host communities.



*"It is only by acknowledging our weaknesses that we can develop our true strengths"* Malian refugee living with disability in Mberra camp. **UNHCR/Helena Pes**

- More than **500** refugees have been mobilized during the **16 Days of Activism** campaign "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All!" which was launched on 25 December. Sensitization events were organized both in Nouakchott and Mberra camp in order to drive attention on the importance of education as a fundamental right, particularly for girls.
- To promote **social inclusion and support for people living with disabilities**, in November UNHCR carried out several training and sensitization initiatives both in Nouakchott and Mberra camp. More than a hundred humanitarian workers were trained on a better understanding of disability-related issues and actors ranging from local NGOs to local governmental agencies dealing with disable people were involved through capacity building sessions.

#### Population of concern (as of 1 December 2015)

A total of **52,127** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

<b>Malian refugees in Mberra camp</b>	<b>50,456</b>
<b>Urban refugees and asylum seekers</b>	<b>1,671</b>

#### KEY FIGURES

**486**

New arrivals from Mali (in 2015)

**14,300**

Malian households in Mberra camp (as of 30 November)

**5,476**

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 30 November)

**30L**

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

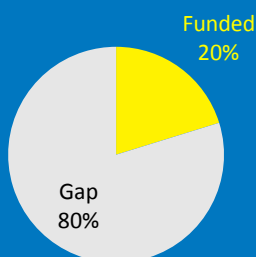
**22**

Persons per latrine in Mberra camp

#### FUNDING

**USD 24.4M**

Requested for the operation



#### PRIORITIES

- Maintain protection and assistance for all Malian refugees in Mberra camp.
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Maintain peaceful coexistence between the refugees and host communities.
- Facilitate voluntary returns.

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

Violent clashes in northern Mali in early 2012 triggered important waves of displacements into Mauritania, where a refugee camp was established 50 Km from the Malian border in the Hodh el Charghi region. Following the military intervention in northern Mali in January 2013, new influxes of Malian refugees occurred, thus further stretching the limited resources available in the area.

In collaboration with the Mauritanian Government that has kept its borders open to new influxes, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for **50,456 Malian refugees in Mberra camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1,179 urban refugees and 492 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal**.

Lately, recent violence in Northern Mali sparked new waves of displacements and **486 new arrivals in Mauritania** have been registered in 2015, despite the signing of a peace agreement in June in Mali. Large-scale returns of refugees are therefore not yet envisaged and UNHCR and its partners are maintaining their presence in Bassikounou to sustain the humanitarian response at Mberra Camp.

### Achievements



Protection

#### Achievements and Impact

- More than **500** refugees have been mobilized during the 16 Days of Activism campaign "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All!" which was launched on 25 December. Sensitization events were organized both in Nouakchott and Mberra camp in the presence of the local authorities in order to drive attention on the importance of education as a fundamental right, particularly for girls and women.
- Since its opening on 15 September, UNHCR addressed **507** individual cases at the new Protection and Community service office in Mberra camp. Cases mostly consist of **family reunions, new-born registration and other protection-related issues**. This Service aims at providing refugees' access to a safe and trustworthy place where they can express their concerns and questions on protection.
- UNHCR through its partner Intersos continues to fight sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and early marriages in Mberra camp. In November, **11 victims of SGBV** received **psychosocial assistance**.
- Through its partner Intersos, UNHCR continues to provide **special assistance to more than 5,000 people with specific needs** in the camp through individual counselling, medical support, food transportation, shelter and cash for the most vulnerable ones.



16 Days of Activism campaign Launch in Mberra camp  
UNHCR/Helena Pes

- To promote **social inclusion and support for people living with disabilities**, in November UNHCR carried out several **training and sensitization initiatives**. From 19 to 20 November, about **108 people** attended a training course organized by UNHCR for a better understanding and support of people with disabilities. The training was facilitated by two experts from UNHCR headquarter and involved staff from both UNHCR and its partner Intersos as well as refugee community leaders, representatives of refugees living with disability in the camp and the host community. From 24 to 25 November, UNHCR specialists continued their training mission in Nouakchott with a **workshop to build capacities of local NGOs, humanitarian agencies, the Mauritanian Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Families**, as well as several associations. On 3 December, on the occasion of the International Day of Persons living with Disabilities, UNHCR in collaboration with its partners *Association pour la Lutte contre la Pauvreté et le sous-développement* (ALPD) and *Association Mauritanienne pour l'Intégration et la Réhabilitation des Enfants et Adolescents Déficients Intellectuels* (AMIREADI) held a "questions and answers" session for the urban refugees committee and the representatives of refugees living with disabilities in Nouakchott. The session was aimed at strengthening inclusion of people with disabilities and promote their full and equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms in Mauritania. It also gave urban refugees living with disability an opportunity to discuss gaps and gather information about existing services for people with disabilities in Mauritania.
- On 1 December, on the occasion of **World HIV Day**, UNHCR in collaboration with its partners ALPD and the ONG Pairs Educators organized a **focus group discussion** about the **prevention of HIV/AIDS** involving about **30 refugee representatives and community leaders** in Nouakchott.
- UNHCR through its partner ALPD, held a **focus group** with 22 representatives of the Syrian refugee community in Nouakchott in order to assess their main needs and identify together appropriate assistance solutions. Since 2015, the number of **Syrian refugees** in Mauritania is on the rise with **319** refugees and asylum seekers assisted by UNHCR as of 30 November 2015, which represents a consistent increase as compared to 50 in January 2015.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra Camp, **more than 100 teachers** have resumed their **activities** following the **start of the 2015-2016 school year** in October. More than **4,500** children are currently enrolled and attending classes at the **6 primary schools** in the camp.
- More than **350 adults**, mostly women, continue to attend **alphabetization** courses in **Songhaï, Arabic and Tamasheq** languages in the camp. This activity is part of UNHCR's self-reliance promotion programme and is carried out through Intersos.



Arabic alphabetization class in Mberra Camp.  
UNHCR/Helena Pes

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Adult illiteracy in Mberra camp still represents a main challenge for the community as a whole and for the management of income-generating activities. Therefore alphabetization plays a key role in the promotion of refugees' self-reliance. However, the demand for alphabetization classes goes well beyond the funding available for this activity. Additional resources would increase the number of refugees attending classes and improve their self-reliance capacities.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to ensure **medical evacuation for secondary and tertiary medical cases** that cannot be treated in the camp. Evacuations are available for both refugees and the host population in Mberra camp surroundings. In the reporting period, **24 patients** were referred to **Nema and Nouakchott** hospitals.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- From 9 to 13 November, during the **monthly general food distribution** in Mberra camp, all Refugees received a food ration (rice, salt, pulses and oil) of more than 1,830 Kcal per day. The distribution was organized by UNHCR through its partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* and in collaboration with WFP.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

### Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, water is supplied through five boreholes equipped with submersible pumps. The five boreholes have a **maximum production capacity of 1,638 m3 of water per day**. Refugees have access to potable water through **590 water taps** located in all sections of the camp. It is estimated that 80% of water is consumed for domestic purposes, while 20% is used for gardening, livestock and other self-reliance purposes.
- With regard to sanitation, **2,342 semi-permanent communal latrines** (22 persons/latrine) and **2,666 communal showers** (22 persons/ shower) and **92 public wash areas** are available in the camp.
- In order to improve sanitation in Mberra camp, UNHCR carries out a **solid waste management programme** through its partner SOS Desert. Within this programme, manure from livestock activities is converted for gardening use in order to maximize recycling in the camp. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill) maintained by UNHCR.
- 352 water and sanitation humanitarian workers** and **44 community representatives** within the camp have been **trained on participatory approach** in order to **strengthen refugees' capacity** to carry out **sustainable management** of the existing **water system**.
- In November, **More than 5,900 refugees** in Mberra attended **sensitization sessions** carried out by UNHCR in order to raise awareness on **hand washing** and jerry cans cleaning practices, **waste management** and proper **toilet waste disposal**.



Rinsing jerrycans as part of proper water and hygiene practices in Mberra Camp. **UNHCR/Helena Pes**

## Access to Energy

### Achievements and Impact

- As part of an energy pilot project, UNHCR continues to provide gas for **200 families with specific needs** through its partner SOS Desert.

## Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, UNHCR places particular attention on strengthening refugees' **self-reliance**. More than **100 income-generating activities**, which started in 2014 have now turned into flourishing small businesses, including **sewing activities, butcheries and small shops**. In addition, **78 new small businesses** such as **restaurants, shops, artisanal crafts** making and **photography** were started in 2015 and are currently ongoing.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, continues to empower **1,872 women with access to gardening areas** now representing some **eight hectares** of arable land in the camp as well as **10 community milk-units** and **500 goat herders** who benefited from UNHCR's self-reliance strengthening programme. Gardening and other local food production activities play an important role in enriching refugees' diet and provide them with an income resulting from the sale of vegetables, fruit and other products.



Gardening fields in Mberra Camp. UNHCR/Helena Pes

## Peaceful coexistence

### Achievements and Impact

- On the occasion of the celebrations of United Nations 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a friendly football match between teams composed of refugees and people from the host community was organized in Bassikounou in order to promote peaceful coexistence.

## Working in partnership

At the request of the Mauritanian Government, UNHCR coordinates the humanitarian response to the Malian refugee situation, in close collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization and the local authorities. It also participates in the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team, and works closely with national and international NGOs. Regular coordination meetings are held in Nouakchott and Bassikounou to share information on identified needs and agree on strategies.

In November, UN organizations in Mauritania, partner agencies and the authorities celebrated the **70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations**. Events were organized in Nouakchott and in several other cities in Mauritania, including in Bassikounou where concerts, exhibition of traditional products and parades took place in the presence of hundreds of Mauritians living in the Bassikounou areas and refugees living in Mberra camp.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 4.9 million** received from the **Governments of Belgium and Japan**. In addition, this year UNHCR in Mauritania received in-kind contribution of clothes from the company **UNIQLO** and dates from the **United Arab Emirates**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

### Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2015 (in USD):

United States of America (251 M) | Sweden (80 M) | United Kingdom (53 M) | Netherlands (45 M) | Norway (44 M) | Priv Donors Spain (41 M) | Denmark (28 M) | Australia (24 M) | Japan (18 M) | Canada (18 M) | Switzerland (16 M) | Priv Donors Italy (16 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (12 M) | Priv Donors Japan (11 M) | Finland (10 M)

### Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2015:

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