

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 15 June 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

1,424

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2016

67

New arrivals from Mali in 2016

4,495

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 1 June 2016)

11,656

Malian households in Mbera camp (as of 1 June 2016)

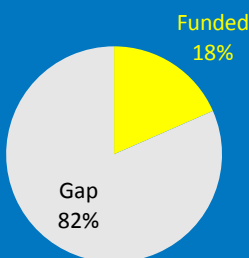
22

Persons per latrine in Mbera camp

FUNDING 2016

USD 19M

Requested for the operation



PRIORITIES

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



Renowned Cultural Group Tadiast performs in Nouakchott for World Refugee Day. UNHCR/ Helena Pes 2016

- On 31 May, **UNHCR in collaboration with the French Institute in Mauritania celebrated World Refugee Day** in Nouakchott. The event showcased a **concert**, a **photo exhibition** and an **exhibition of art crafts** made by refugees in the country. Well-**renowned Malian artists** living in Mbera camp took part in the event and played in front of hundreds of people.
- In May, UNHCR and its partner the World Lutheran Foundation facilitated **voluntary returns** for 80 families of 321 Malian refugees, mostly to the Timbuktu region of northern Mali. UNHCR Offices in Mauritania and Mali work together to ensure the best return conditions possible considering the security conditions. Since the beginning of the year, **1,424 returns to Mali have been facilitated**.

Population of concern (as of 1 June 2016)

A total of **43,353** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mbera camp

41,574

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,779

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for **41,574 Malian refugees in Mbera camp**, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government, that has kept its borders open to refugee arrivals, as well as with UN organizations and national and international NGOs. In addition, UNHCR protects and assists **1,364 urban refugees and 415 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire**.

Violent clashes in northern Mali in early 2012 triggered significant displacement of Malians into Mauritania resulting in the establishment of a refugee camp 50 Km from the Malian border in the Hodh el Charghi region. Following a military intervention in northern Mali in January 2013, a new influx of Malian refugees occurred further stretching the limited resources available in the area.

Despite signing a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015 and the voluntary return of more than 1,400 refugees from Mbera camp in 2016, the security conditions in northern Mali remain unstable. 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 Mbera Camp.

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- World Refugee Day was celebrated at the French Institute in Nouakchott** with a **concert**, a **photo display** and **exhibition of craft products** made by refugees in the country. Well-renowned **Malian artists** of the “Desert Blues” international music scene, who are now refugees in Mbera camp, took part in the event and conveyed messages of hope and unity for refugees all over the world. To sensitize the youth on asylum in Mauritania and refugees situations all over the world, UNHCR staff [held guided visits](#) to the exhibition for **6 Mauritanian schools**.
- UNHCR with its partner INTERSOS continue to fight sexual and gender-based violence and to provide **special assistance to more than 4,000 people with specific needs** in the camp through individual counselling, medical support, food transportation, shelter and cash for the most vulnerable refugees. In May, **57 victims of sexual and gender-based violence** were followed-up with home visits: four victims were referred for medical attention and **10 received cash assistance and social support**. In addition, **3 new cases** were identified and addressed.



Mauritanian students discover what life in Mbera camp is like at UNHCR photo exhibition “Mbera: Vies en Exil”. UNHCR/Helena Pes

- **648 people with specific needs**, particularly people living with physical disability and the elderly, **received tailored assistance** in terms of psychological and social support and cash; **888** were assisted with transport during general food and other distributions. As capacity to address **mental health issues** in the camp remains challenging, UNHCR through its partner INTERSOS hired a consultant psychologist to strengthen social workers' capacity in the camp.

Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- Since December 2015, some Malian refugees have expressed increased interest in voluntary repatriation. In May, UNHCR and its partner the World Lutheran Foundation facilitated **voluntary return** for **321 Malians**, some of whom have lived in Mbera camp since 2012. Most of the families come from Timbuktu region in northern Mali. Returnees received repatriation cash assistance for transportation. UNHCR Offices in Mauritania and Mali work together to ensure the best return conditions possible given the current security situation and the reintegration of returnees in their country of origin.



Syrian woman seeks assistance at a refugee registration center in Nouakchott. UNHCR/Helena Pes 2015

- In 2016, UNHCR submitted **30 cases of Syrians** living in urban areas for resettlement. UNHCR assists more than **400** Syrians in the country. Most vulnerable families are provided with school fees support for children and medical assistance in the country. Resettlement is considered for some serious medical conditions.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- Primary education plays a key role in UNHCR's self-reliance building strategy in Mbera camp. Since the onset of the refugee crisis, supporting refugee children's access to education emerged as a priority in order to avoid a **"lost generation"**. About **5,000 children** are enrolled in the **6 primary schools of the camp**.
- For the first time, students in Mbera camp could take part in the **Diplôme d'Etudes Fondamentales (DEF) examinations** in compliance with the Malian curriculum. Examination sessions started in the first week of June for **99 candidates**. Graduates will be able to continue studying at high school level.



Candidate consults DEF examinations schedules in Mbera camp. UNHCR/ Henri-Sylvain Yakara 2016

 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 Mbera camp surroundings. In May, **23 patients** were referred to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals.

 Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- During the **monthly general food distribution** in Mbera camp, all refugees received a food ration composed of rice, oil and dates, in preparation of the Ramadan fasting period which started on 6 June. The distribution was organized by UNHCR through its partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* and in collaboration with WFP which procures and transports the food rations.
- In order to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and reduce refugees' dependency on humanitarian assistance, UNHCR provided refugees with cattle **feed** for **4,575 livestock units** through its partner SOS Desert.



Livestock plays an essential nutritional role in Mbera camp.
UNHCR/ Helena Pes 2016

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- In May, due to funding shortfalls, distributed food ration represented 1,348 Kcal per person/day which is below the recommended amount of 2,100 Kcal per person/day. In 2016, food rations have been subject to shortfalls due to lack of funding. UNHCR works in partnership with WFP to identify alternative nutritional solutions and strengthen livelihood programmes in the camp.

 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Achievements and Impact

- In Mbera 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** and **177 community water points** 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 livelihood purposes.



Sensitization for jerry can washing practices is key to improve sanitation in Mbera camp.
UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

- With regard to sanitation, **2,269 semi-permanent communal latrines** (22 persons/latrine) and **2,666 communal showers** (19 persons/ shower) and **92 public laundry areas** are available in the camp. A **rehabilitation project** was launched in May in order to improve existing toilet services in the camp
- To improve sanitation in Mbera camp, a **solid waste management programme** to separate solid from organic waste is implemented by UNHCR's partner SOS Desert. Dung from livestock is regularly collected and converted to manure for gardening use. Through this programme 186 roads, 52 livestock fields, 17 public spaces and 10 animal water points are regularly cleaned. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill).
- In order to **strengthen refugees' capacity** to carry out **sustainable management** of the existing **water system**, **352 humanitarian workers** as well as **44 focal points from the refugee community** who were **trained on participatory approach** in November 2015, continue to carry out **daily door-to-door sensitization sessions** in the camp. In May, **more than 1200** people were reached through informative campaigns about **jerry can washing**.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- In May, UNHCR provided **10 semi-permanent shelters** to newly arrived refugees who sought refuge in Mbera camp following **most recent episodes of violence** in the area of **Mopti, northern Mali**. Shelters were put in place with guidance from UNHCR's partner the Lutheran World Federation (FLM).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Semi-permanent shelters distributed in 2013, which have a two-year-lifespan, need to be replaced. To do so, fabric material is urgently needed in order replace 6,000 shelters.



Self-Reliance



A collective income-generating activity for artisanal craftworks in Mbera camp
UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

Achievements and Impact

- Strengthening refugees' self-reliance in Mbera camp continues to be a priority for UNHCR to gradually reduce their dependency on humanitarian assistance. While **a hundred new projects** are under selection, the Agency continues to follow up on **195** income-generation activities funded in 2014-2015 through **Action contre la Faim-Espagne (ACF-E)**. In May, **160** collective income-generating project beneficiaries attended a training session about **management of collective assets** to strengthen cohesiveness among the groups.
- Improving cattle health and welfare is part of UNHCR's self-reliance programme. In May, UNHCR facilitated the set-up of a local committee for the sustainable management of a new slaughterhouse which was realized by the *International Organization for Migrations (IOM)*.



Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- To strengthen peaceful coexistence between refugees and the host community in the Bassikounou region, UNHCR currently carries out five projects aimed at improving life-conditions in the villages of Seremassa, Seredouba, Lemghays, Sedra and Bir el Barka, located in the surroundings of the camp. In May, **10 local committees** which were set up as discussion fora for peaceful co-existence, attended a **training on conflict resolution and humanitarian Protection** principles.
- In May, almost 3,000 Mbera camp households were reached through an environmental sensitization campaign to promote sustainable resource management in the camp. This type of programme is essential to mitigate the impact of the presence of the refugee population in the area, where natural resources remain scarce. For this reason a mixed environmental committee was set up by UNHCR through its partner SOS Desert. The committee is responsible for reaching consensus on common resource management practices between the refugee and host communities.

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 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.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions in 2016 amount to **US\$ 3.6 million** received from the Government of Japan and the European Union (ECHO).

US\$ 15.5 million is still requested for UNHCR's operation in Mauritania.

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 in 2016.

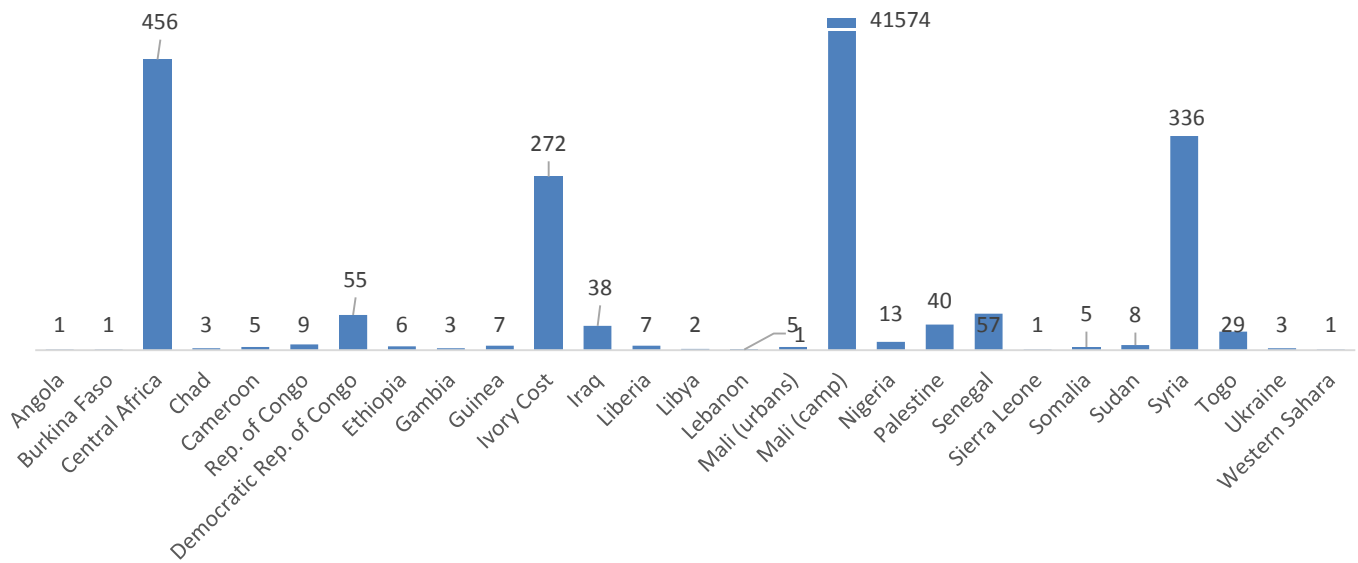
Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

Sweden (78 M) | United States of America (78 M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Norway (40 M) | Australia (31 M) | Denmark (24 M) | Priv Donors Spain (20 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Germany (13 M) | Italy (10 M)

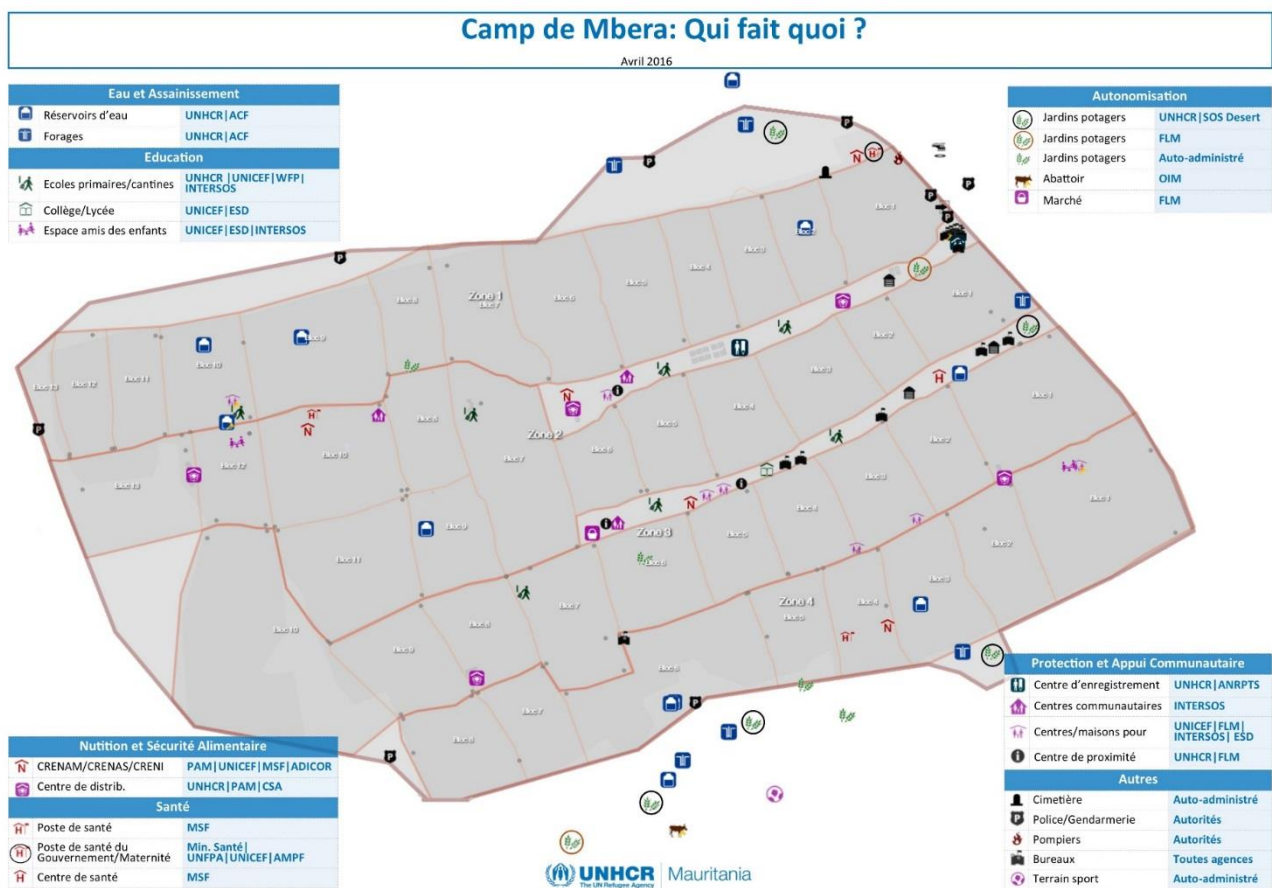
Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Monaco | Mozambique | New Zealand | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Romania | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private Donors

Annex 1 – Breakdown of the refugee population in Mauritania per origin



Annex 2– Who does what in Mbera camp ?



Contacts:

Sebastien Laroze Barrit, Associate External Relations Officer, larozes@unhcr.org +222 22 685 551

Helena B. Pes, Associate Public Information Officer, pes@unhcr.org, +222 22 887 904

Links:

