

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 16 September 2016

KEY FIGURES

1,843

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated since January 2016

112

New arrivals from Mali in 2016

4,433

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

11,547

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

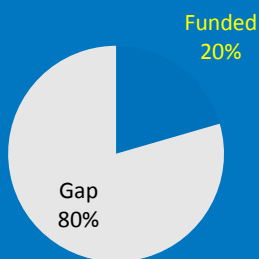
30L

of potable water available per person per day

FUNDING 2016

USD 19.4 M

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.

HIGHLIGHTS



The Refugee and Bassikounou football teams play a refugees Olympics' match for peaceful coexistence in Mbera camp. UNHCR/Ibrahima Bocoum

- In August, **2,907 families** in need, including most recent arrivals in Mbera camp, were provided with shelters. It is estimated that an additional 4,500 shelters will need to be replaced in 2016. There is growing concern that due to slow repatriation pace, increased number of shelters will need to be replaced in Mbera camp in the coming months.
- In August, more than **200 latrines** were constructed or rehabilitated in the camp. Despite efforts being made to replace and construct new toilet facilities, it is estimated that by the end of 2016 most toilets will need to be replaced. Additional resources are therefore urgently needed to proceed with the replacement of deteriorated latrines.
- The Malian refugee team and a team from the Mauritanian host community played an amicable **football match** in Mbera camp in celebration of the **refugees Olympics** to support pacific coexistence among refugees and host communities.

Population of concern (as of 1 September 2016)

A total of **43,625** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mbera camp

41,792

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,833

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

In collaboration with the Mauritanian Government who has kept its borders open to new influxes, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR continues to lead the humanitarian response for **41,792 Malian refugees in Mbera camp**. In addition, the organization ensures the protection and assistance of **1,432 urban refugees and 401 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire**.

The majority of Malian refugees living in Mbera camp arrived in 2012: violent clashes in north Mali 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 were accommodated in Mbera camp.

On 16 June 2016, **Mauritania, Mali and UNHCR** signed a **Tripartite Agreement** to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. The tripartite agreement reiterates the voluntary nature of repatriation and reconfirms the commitments of the Mauritanian and Malian states towards refugees in both countries of origin and asylum. However, despite the signing of a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015 and the voluntary return of more than 1,800 refugees from Mbera camp in 2016, the security conditions in northern Mali remain volatile. Large-scale returns of refugees are therefore not yet envisaged and UNHCR and its partners maintain their presence in Bassikounou to sustain the humanitarian response in Mbera Camp. Some **112 new arrivals** from Mali have been registered in **2016**.

UNHCR works closely with Mauritanian authorities to **enhance the protection space for refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania**, notably through the development and implementation of a national asylum law and system. Pending the adoption of a national refugee legislation, UNHCR advocates for further integration of refugees by improving access to basic services, such as health, economic opportunities but also to documentation and birth registration.

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- More than half the population** of Mbera refugee camp is **under 18 years of age**. For this reason, minors are given particular attention for protection. UNHCR, UNICEF and INTERSOS work to fight child abuse and exploitation in the camp. In August, **6 new cases** of orphans at risk were identified and assisted for family reunification; **9 new cases** of sexual and gender-based violence were identified and assisted. Among them, two rape victims were referred to MSF for medical assistance. A child protection sensitization initiative also took place, involving **160 children** and their parents with theatre performances showing the consequences of early marriages.
- 234 people with specific needs**, particularly people living with physical disability and elderly, **received tailored assistance** for food, notably transportation of food to their homes during August's general food distribution, as well as other basic items such as buckets and cups.



Under-16 girls in Mbera camp are at risk of forced marriages and school dropouts. Photo UNICEF/Agron Dragaj 2015

Education

Achievements and Impact

- **Compensatory additional courses**, for about 1,000 students who had failed in regular courses during the year, ended in August. **Final examinations** were held with a **success rate** of **70%** of students admitted to next grade.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- About **100 students** who successfully completed secondary school would like to continue their studies at university level. UNHCR lacks the resources to support a scholarship programme to expand studying opportunities for young people.



16-year-old Awa would like to continue studying to become a doctor. She needs access to scholarship opportunities. UNHCR/ Helena Pes 2016

Health

Achievements and Impact

- In August, **20 patients from Mbera camp** were referred to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals. 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.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Since the introduction of a cash component to the regular monthly food distribution, **30% of the food ration** is distributed **in cash**. During the general food distribution in August, all refugees in Mbera camp received a **food ration** composed of **rice, oil, and pulses** as well as a **nutritional supplement (CSB)**, alongside with cash, representing a total of 2,100 kcal per person/per day. The distribution was organized jointly by UNHCR and WFP through their partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire*. WFP ensured procurement and transportation of the food commodities and the distribution of cash.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR through its partner *Acción Contra el Hambre – España* ensures that all refugees in the camp have access to sanitation facilities including latrines. After more than four years, many infrastructures need to be replaced. In total, **110** new toilets were constructed and **121** existing toilets rehabilitated in August.
- In partnership with SoS Desert, UNHCR continues to carry out a **solid waste management programme** for the separation of solid waste from organic waste, which is in turn converted for gardening purpose. Through this programme, 182 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).
- As part of water, sanitation and hygiene sensitisation effort, communities are involved in regular maintenance and cleaning operations for a joint management of common water and sanitation facilities. In August, through this

participatory approach, **56 water points were fenced** to protect them from livestock incursions. 121 toilets, 22 water points and 14 common laundries were **improved** through minor maintenance works.

- UNHCR and its partner *Acción Contra el Hambre – España* continue to carry out **mass sensitization activities** to improve water quality and prevent the spread of waterborne diseases in the camp. In August, more than **1,770 people were reached through door-to-door informative sessions**, more than 1,900 people attended informative meetings to improve water management in each block of the camp, 88 cleaning campaigns and 77 jerry can cleaning sessions took place.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- It is estimated that most latrines in Mbera camp will have reached their maximum storage capacity by the end of 2016. Despite efforts being made to replace and construct new toilet facilities, UNHCR lacks resources to complete works for all latrines that need to be replaced.

Shelter and Non Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR in partnership with the World Lutheran Foundation (WLF) **distributed semi-durable shelters** for **2,907 families** in Mbera camp. The operation is part of an ongoing plan to replace deteriorated shelters in the camp but also included shelters for about 30 people who recently sought refuge in the camp following July's violent clashes in Northern Mali.



Following recent clashes in Northern Mali, 32 people found refuge and shelters in Mbera camp. UNHCR/I.Bocoum

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The ongoing shelter replacement plan will only cover the needs of about **3,000 families**, though it is estimated that an additional 4,500 shelters will need to be replaced in 2016. Furthermore, there is growing concern that the protracted violent situation in Northern Mali may cause new influxes in need of shelter in Mbera camp.

Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- Refugees among the most vulnerable in the camp continue to have access to gardening fields which were set up by UNHCR in partnership with SOS Desert. Currently, about 1,800 women have access to these fields where they produce fruits and vegetables, mostly for direct consumption but also for sale (about 20% of the production). Following the launch of a **campaign for proper water storage and gardening** in July, the first gardening products have started to be collected in 5 fields. The gardeners and their families now enjoy fresh aubergines, watermelons and beans which were cultivated thanks to the use of rain water.

- In Mbera camp, UNHCR carried out an initiative to complement moderate malnutrition treatment (CRENAM), whereby **302 persons with specific needs received a goat** and some animal feed. The activity is part of UNHCR's livelihood programme to improve food security in partnership with SOS Desert.
- Since 2013, UNHCR carries out a [self-reliance strengthening programme](#) to reduce refugees' dependency on humanitarian assistance in Mbera camp. The selection process for a **100 new income-generating** activity projects was completed in August. The beneficiaries have started undergoing training to learn how kick start their small business activities and how to manage their revenues.
- New income-generating projects have been identified and funded for **6 women groups** among **urban refugees and asylum seekers** assisted by UNHCR in Nouakchott. New projects include the launch of small business and artisanal activities such as the making of colourful **tie and dye fabrics** which will take place at the **Refugee Women's Center** of Nouakchott.



Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- To strengthen peaceful coexistence between refugees and the host community in Bassikounou region, UNHCR and its partner SOS Desert continue to carry out projects improving life-conditions in the villages surrounding the camp. In August, **770 improved woodstoves and 140 ploughs** were distributed to populations in Bassikounou and Fassala boarder area. **Rehabilitation of two wells** and the fencing of gardening areas were also completed in four villages in the areas of Fassala, Bassikounou and Dhar as well as the rehabilitation ?? of a **vaccination facility** in Bassikounou town.
- In celebrations of the **refugees Olympics**, a Malian and a Mauritanian football teams played an amicable **football match** in Mbera camp **to support peaceful coexistence** among refugees and host communities, sensitizing them on the rights of displaced people. Celebrations were animated by the music of the group Tafleust who invited refugees to adhere to the #WithRefugees campaign and to sign the petition which will be delivered to the United Nations on 19 September to ask Governments to take action for refugees' rights.
- Following the launch of the tree planting campaign "**a refugee for a tree**" in Mbera camp, more than 26,700 plants were distributed for reforestation. Given the pressure posed by Mbera refugee settlement on the scarce resources in the arid area of Bassikounou, environmental sensitization is key to promote a sustainable management of natural resources and to maintain peaceful coexistence in the camp.



The refugees and Bassikounou football teams play for refugees Olympics in Mbera camp. UNHCR/Ibrahima Bocoum

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.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions in 2016 amount to **US\$ 4.0 million** received from the **Government of Japan**, the **European Union** and **private donors in Japan**.

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.

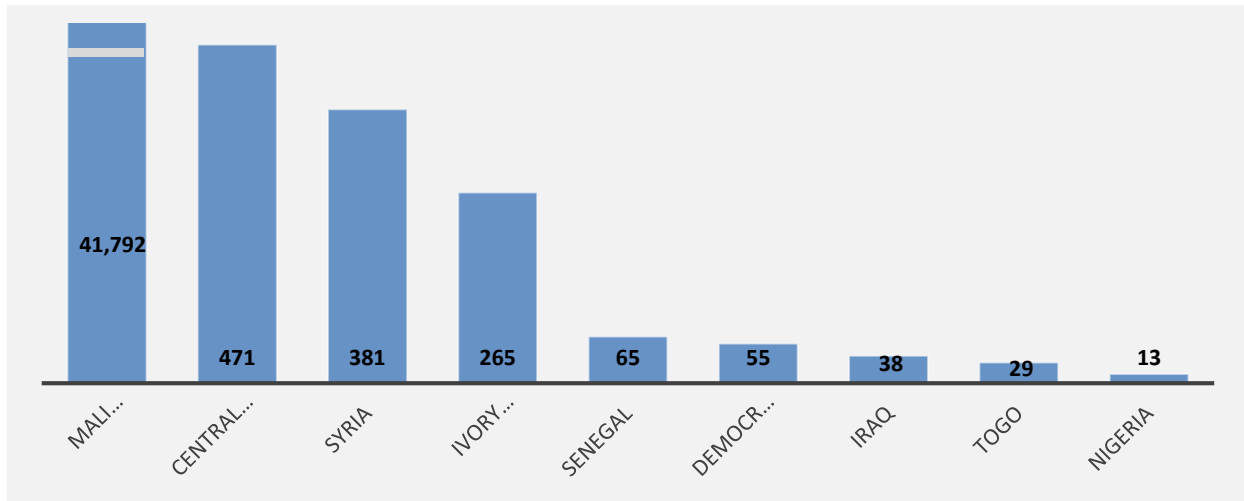
Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

United States of America (181 M) | Sweden (78 M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Norway (40 M) | Priv Donors Spain (35 M) | Australia (31 M) | Japan (24 M) | Denmark (24 M) | United Kingdom (23 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Italy (13 M) | Germany (13 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (12 M) | Priv Donors Japan (11 M) | Italy (10 M)

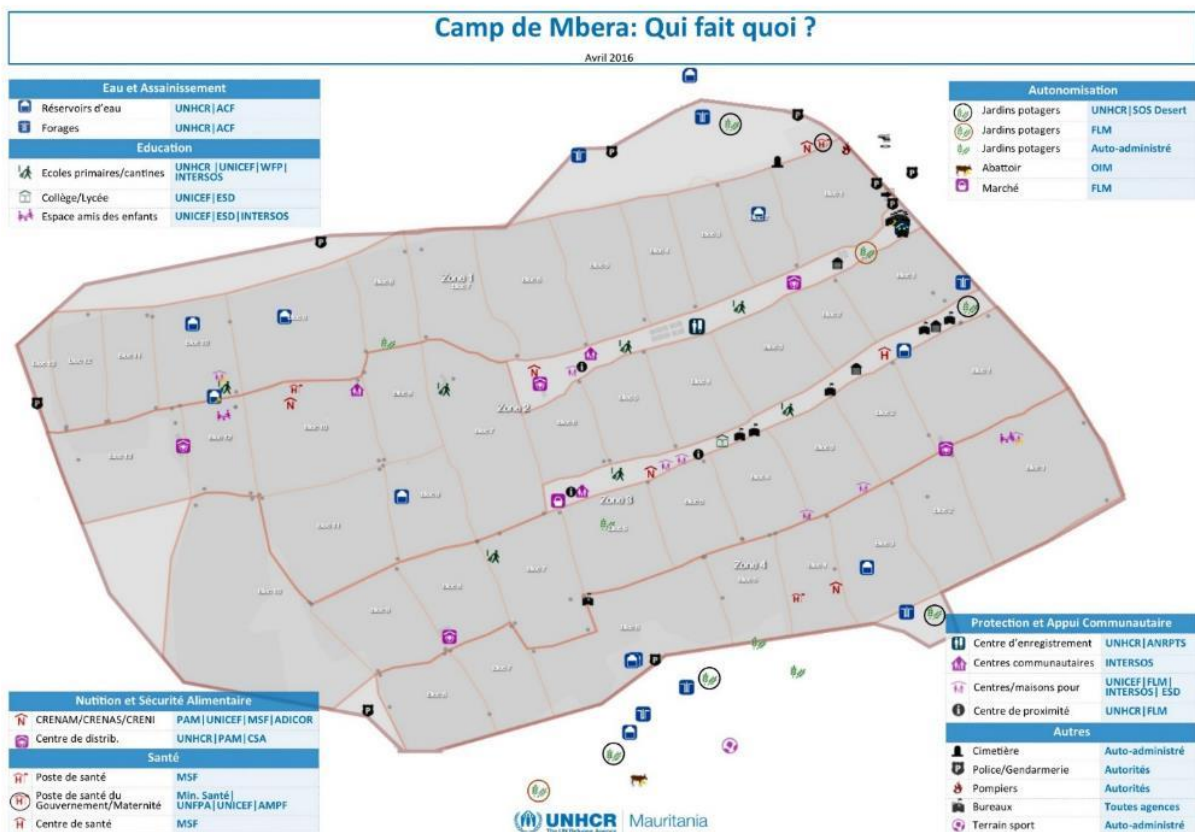
Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | Costa Rica | Ecuador | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Hungary | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Israel | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Mexico | Monaco | Mozambique | New Zealand | Peru | 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 main refugee groups in Mauritania



Annex 2– Who does what in Mbera camp – [maps.unhcr portal](http://maps.unhcr.org)



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Links:

